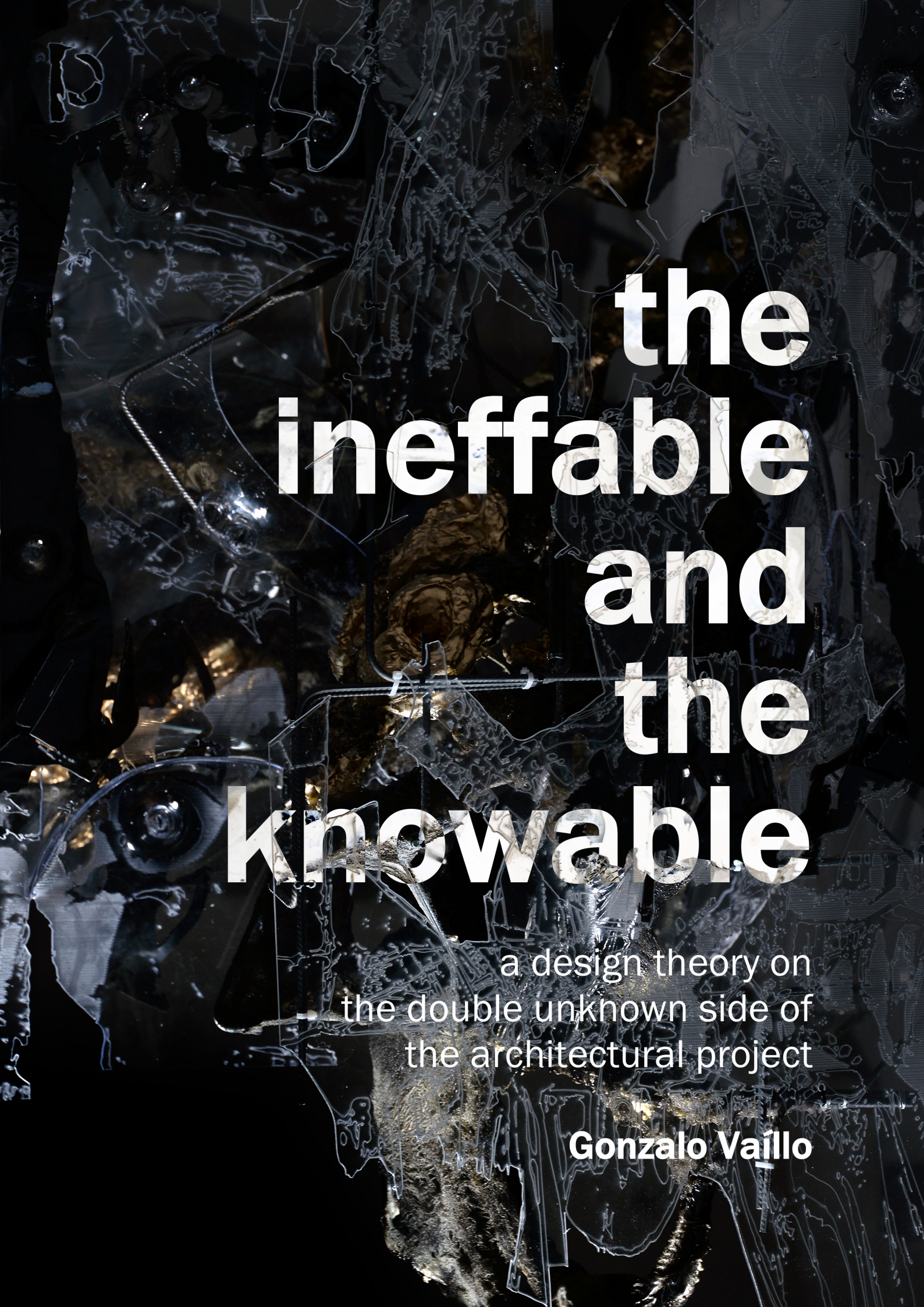


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The Ineffable and the Knowable

A Design Theory on the Double Unknown Side of the Architectural Project

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Abstract EN

The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to elaborate a theoretical-practical framework on the architectural project (abbreviated AP), to explore its conceptions, possibilities, and impacts on the activity of spatial design and occupation under a contemporary anti-exceptionalism of the human subject. Assuming the end of modernity—and its critical postmodern project within it—based on an anthropocentric worldview, the question is how architectural discourse and practice can be articulated under a subjectless scheme. Adopting a realist view in which every object is irreducible to how it is apprehended, the AP stands as an autonomous One/Many entity: each AP is an indivisible package of a unitary existence or being coupled with a heterogeneous multiplicity of manifestations. How does our approach to the free-standing AP deal with its ontological condition of unity-multiplicity? What does it mean for the cognitive activities of designing and inhabiting that what the AP is, as well as what it does and what composes it, cannot be fully encompassed? This double impossibility of faithfully attaining the existential depth and material extension of the AP, instead of unfavorable, is precisely conducive to addressing its double unknown as a cognitive challenge. For this, aesthetics becomes the means to enter into the project's depth and openness. On the one hand, the unitary being of each AP—or One—reveals itself ineffable to experience. Its deep aesthetic register can be intuited but escapes material articulation. On the other hand, the AP's qualitative cornucopia—or Many—incites a pluralization of its remnant myriad of appearances and effects beyond its biographical and present state. Since there are no essential expressions or authoritative approaches, each observer can freely engage with the project. Such emancipation of the cognizer suggests a form of socio-political equality that derives from the AP's autonomous and ontological condition, rather than from moral or rational imperatives formulated by the subject.

Methodologically, the development of the AP's ineffability and knowability stems from two main references: Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) and the oeuvre of Enric Miralles. The first is a contemporary philosophical school that accounts for the autonomy of any entity in the cosmos, regardless of how it is composed or perceived. The influence of this movement on architectural discourse is significant since the early 2010s; an agenda on the representational displacement of the real in architecture into which this thesis joins affirmatively, critically, and expansively. The second, the work of the architect Enric Miralles, emerges as a recent historical reference on which to vindicate and broaden the postulates of OOO in architectural design. Through this binomial, the present theory advocates the design process—and not only the user's experience—as a fundamentally aesthetic activity.

The thesis also presents its own design account and methodology for the production of architectural expressions capable of inducing the unknown double tension in the design process and architectural occupation and use, in each case differently. A particular understanding of abstraction and part-whole composition as design tools characterizes this approach.

Kurzfassung DE

Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es, einen theoretisch-praktischen Rahmen für das architektonische Projekt (abgekürzt AP) zu entwickeln, um seine Konzepte, Potenziale und Effekte auf die Tätigkeit der Raumgestaltung und -nutzung im Rahmen eines zeitgenössischen Anti-Exzeptionalismus des menschlichen Subjekts zu untersuchen. Unter der Annahme, dass das Ende der Moderne—und das kritische postmoderne Projekt—auf einer anthropozentrischen Weltansicht basiert, stellt sich die Frage, wie sich der architektonische Diskurs und die Praxis unter einem subjektlosen Schema artikulieren können. Ausgehend von einer realistischen Sichtweise, in der jedes Objekt irreduzibel auf die Art und Weise ist, wie es wahrgenommen wird, steht das AP als autonome One/Many-Entität da: Jedes AP ist ein unteilbares Paket einer einheitlichen Existenz oder Seins, das mit einer heterogenen Vielfalt von Manifestationen verbunden ist. Wie geht unsere Herangehensweise an das freistehende AP mit seiner ontologischen Bedingung der Einheit-Mannigfaltigkeit um? Was bedeutet es für die kognitiven Aktivitäten des Entwerfens und Bewohnens, dass das, was das AP ist, was es tut und was es ausmacht, nicht vollständig erfasst werden kann? Diese doppelte Unmöglichkeit, die existentielle Tiefe und die materielle Extension des AP genau zu erfassen, ist nicht nachteilig, sondern gerade förderlich, um seine doppelte Unbekanntheit als kognitive Herausforderung anzusprechen. Hierfür wird die Ästhetik zum Mittel, um in die Tiefe und Offenheit des Projekts einzudringen. Einerseits offenbart sich das einheitliche Sein jedes AP—One—für die Erfahrung unbeschreibbar. Sein tiefes ästhetisches Register kann erahnt werden, entzieht sich aber materieller Artikulation. Andererseits führt die qualitative Mannigfaltigkeit der AP—Many—zu einer Pluralisierung ihrer verbleibenden Myriade von Erscheinungen und Wirkungen jenseits ihres biografischen und gegenwärtigen Zustands. Da es keine essentiellen Formulierungen oder autoritativen Ansätze gibt, kann sich jede/r Betrachter/in frei auf das Projekt einlassen. Diese Emanzipation des Erkennenden suggeriert eine Form der soziopolitischen Gleichheit, die sich aus der autonomen und ontologischen Bedingung des AP ergibt und nicht aus moralischen oder rationalen Imperativen, die vom Subjekt formuliert werden.

Methodologisch gesehen ergibt sich die Entwicklung der Unsagbarkeit und Erkennbarkeit des AP aus zwei Hauptbezügen: Objektorientierte Ontologie (OOO) und das Oeuvre von Enric Miralles. Erstere ist eine zeitgenössische philosophische Schule, die die Autonomie jeder Entität im Kosmos anerkennt, unabhängig davon, wie sie zusammengesetzt ist oder wahrgenommen wird. Der Einfluss dieser Bewegung auf den architektonischen Diskurs ist seit den frühen 2010er Jahren signifikant; eine Agenda über die repräsentative Verschiebung des Realen in der Architektur, in die sich diese Arbeit affirmativ, kritisch und expansiv einfügt. Die zweite, die Arbeit des Architekten Enric Miralles, erscheint als eine neuere historische Referenz, um die Postulate der OOO in der Architektur zu rechtfertigen und zu erweitern. Durch dieses Binom wird in der vorliegenden Theorie der Entwurfsprozess—und nicht nur die Erfahrung des Benutzers—als eine grundlegend ästhetische Tätigkeit betrachtet.

Die Dissertation stellt auch einen eigenen Entwurfsansatz und Methoden für die Produktion von architektonischen Erscheinungen vor, die in der Lage sind, die unbekannte doppelte Spannung im Entwurfsprozess und in der architektonischen Nutzung zu erzeugen, und zwar in jedem Fall auf unterschiedliche Weise. Ein besonderes Verständnis von Abstraktion und Teil-Ganzes-Komposition als Gestaltungsmittel charakterisiert diesen Ansatz.

Resumen ES

El propósito de esta tesis doctoral es la elaboración de un marco teórico-práctico sobre el proyecto arquitectónico (abreviado PA), para explorar sus concepciones, posibilidades e impactos en la actividad de diseño y ocupación espacial bajo el antiexcepcionalismo contemporáneo del sujeto humano. Asumiendo el fin de la modernidad—y su proyecto crítico postmoderno dentro de ella—basado en una visión antropocéntrica del mundo, la cuestión es cómo el discurso y la práctica arquitectónica pueden articularse bajo un esquema sin sujeto. Adoptando un punto de vista realista en el que todo objeto es irreductible a cómo se aprehende, el PA se erige como una entidad autónoma Uno/Muchos: cada PA es un paquete indivisible de una existencia o ser unitario acoplado a una multiplicidad heterogénea de manifestaciones. ¿Cómo abordar un enfoque al PA autónomo en su condición ontológica de unidad-multiplicidad? ¿Qué significa para las actividades cognitivas de diseñar y habitar el hecho de que lo que el AP es, asi como lo que hace y lo que compone, no se pueda abarcar por completo? Esta doble imposibilidad de alcanzar fielmente la profundidad existencial y la extensión material del PA, en lugar de desfavorable, es precisamente conductora hacia su doble incógnita como desafío cognitivo. Para ello, la estética se convierte en el medio para entrar en la profundidad y la apertura del proyecto. Por una parte, el ser unitario de cada PA—o Uno—se revela inefable a la experiencia. Su registro estético profundo puede intuirse, pero escapa a la articulación material. Por otro lado, la cornucopia cualitativa del PA—o Muchos—incita a una pluralización de su miríada remanente de apariencias y efectos más allá de su estado biográfico y presente. Al no existir expresiones esenciales ni enfoques autoritarios, cada observador puede implicarse libremente con el proyecto. Tal emancipación del cognoscente sugiere una forma de igualdad sociopolítica que proviene de la condición autónoma y ontológica del PA, en vez de los imperativos morales o racionales formulados por el sujeto.

Metodológicamente, el desarrollo de la inefabilidad y la cognoscibilidad del PA surge de dos referencias principales: la Ontología Orientada a Objetos (OOO) y la obra de Enric Miralles. La primera es una escuela filosófica contemporánea que reivindica la autonomía de cualquier entidad del cosmos, independientemente de su composición o percepción. La influencia de este movimiento en el discurso arquitectónico es significativa desde principios de la década de 2010; una agenda sobre el desplazamiento representacional de lo real en la arquitectura a la que esta tesis se suma afirmativa, crítica y expansivamente. El segundo, el trabajo del arquitecto Enric Miralles, emerge como un referente histórico reciente sobre el que reivindicar y ampliar los postulados de OOO en el diseño arquitectónico. A través de este binomio, la presente teoría aboga por el proceso de diseño—y no sólo la experiencia del usuario—como una actividad fundamentalmente estética.

La tesis también presenta su propio enfoque y metodología de diseño para la producción de expresiones arquitectónicas capaces de inducir la doble tensión desconocida tanto en el proceso de diseño como en la ocupación y uso arquitectónico, en cada caso de manera diferente. Este planteamiento se caracteriza por una particular comprensión de la abstracción y la composición parte-todo como herramientas de diseño.

Acknowledgements

As I suppose happens also in many other cases, this dissertation started long before the official research period without being aware of it. Whatever the reasons, my practice and design background had never instilled in me enough time for and interest in the development of theoretical work. However, I have always felt those designs—or my reading of them—to be somewhat incomplete and limited. Perhaps that is why when I was faced with the possibility of pursuing a doctoral thesis, a research opportunity that I must confess I never thought about, the theoretical format was presented as a completely alien but pending scenario. Countless friends, colleagues, peers, students, bosses, partners, and institutions have helped me articulate design and theory.

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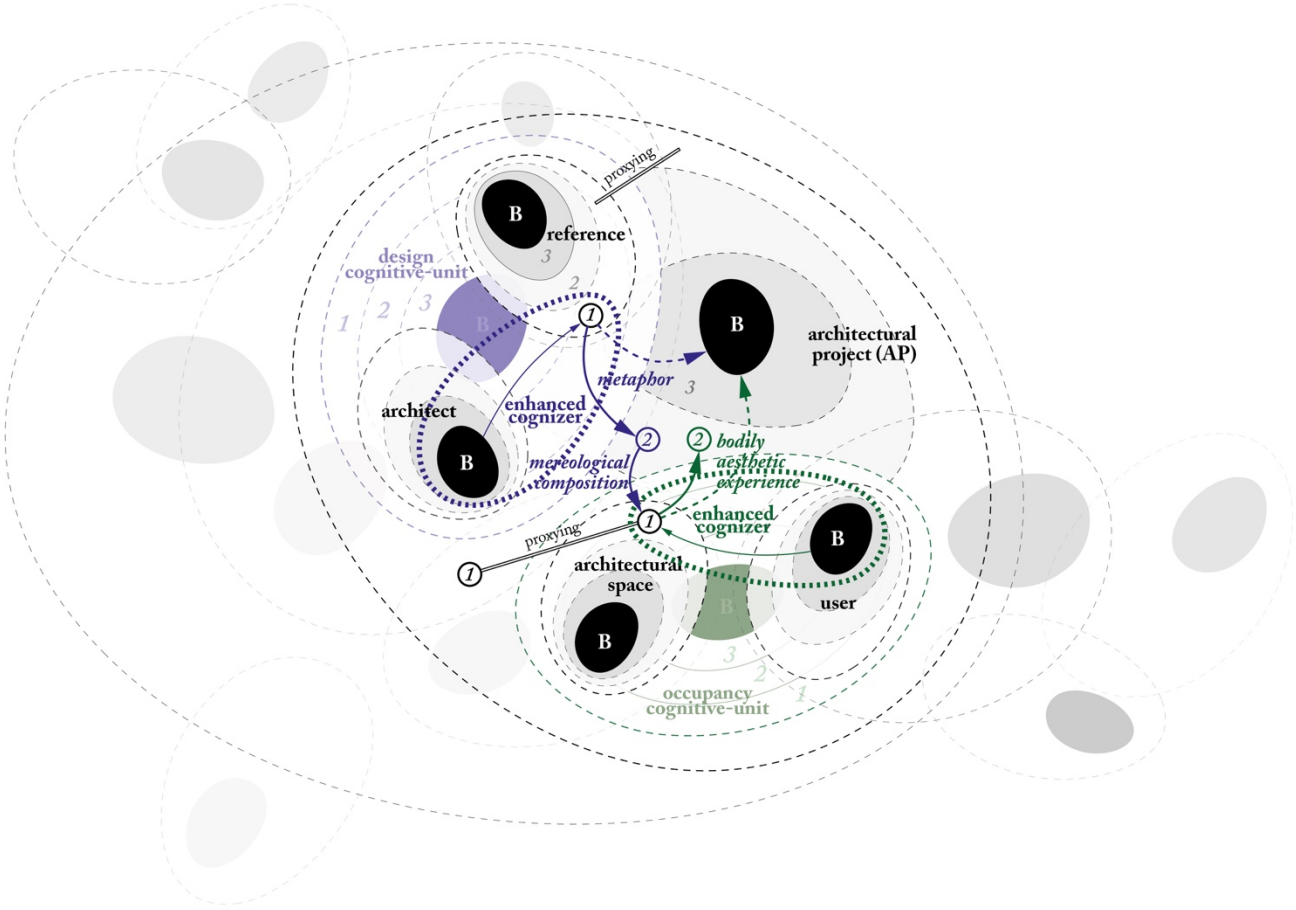
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Then a boundless depth opens up, effaces the walls, drives away contingent presences, accomplishes the miracle of ineffable space.—Le Corbusier, "Ineffable Space."

Challenging one to engage in unceasing daily discovery that led to no specific outcome, nothing that could be exploited, unless perhaps for keeping possibilities open—discovery as a way of keeping possibilities open?—Peter Handke, *Der Bildverlust*.



Thesis diagram

Introduction

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0.1. Object of the investigation and hypothesis

This doctoral thesis investigates the architectural project (abbreviated AP) as an entity in its own right and the implications of such an autonomous status for the design and occupation of space. Developed as a design theory, the approach to the AP hinges on a contemporary view of the anti-exceptionalism of the human subject, which reveals the impossibility of factual and absolute knowledge about the spaces we design and inhabit. Rather than unfavorable, it is conducive to, first, a deeper engagement with the AP that sustains them and, second, to an opening and pluralization of its possibilities. In other words, the subjectless autonomy of the architectural project opens up the cognitive dimensions of its ineffability and knowability. Aesthetics is the adopted method that allows this double inquiry.

Therefore, this scope automatically excludes any attempt to inquire into any definitive or essential content of the AP, whether it aims at an absolute disciplinary pretension or a mere personal understanding. If architectural discourse is typically an ongoing conversation that deploys definitions of what architecture is, this thesis aims to contribute to this discussion precisely by not presenting any definition of what architecture is. The exercise proposed here consists of *accessing* the architectural project, rather than gaining and managing any of its material taken as pseudo-objective or essential. How we see the AP influences how we relate to it and what emanates from it. As mentioned, aesthetics is the vehicle for such access. Much of the efforts of this work will be devoted to arguing the non-existence of objective knowledge and the counter-productiveness of such epistemological reduction. In this terrain, the unknowability of the project can be seen as its exchange value, and is considered present in all experiential levels (conceptual, emotional, pragmatic, bodily, sensorial) and situations (design, theorization, historicization, occupation, inhabitation).

The question of access to the project is discussed in its broadest sense, referring to its experience, understanding, production, sensation, use, and so on. *Cognition* is the technical term adopted here to encompass all these relational approaches. But the cognition of the project does not override the project as such. As will be seen, both are considered self-standing entities in an interrelationship whereby the object of experience is contained in the AP, i.e, architectural cognition occurs from the inside. Before that, it is still reasonable to ask what is meant here by "architectural project" and what kind of approximate contextualization of it is possible, even if it is not intended to arrive at a conclusive definition that would obstruct further interpretations. In such situations, a negative explanation is always a useful starting point.

By "architectural project" I do not mean "building," although I consider the building to be an instance of the AP. In this sense, this thesis posits the AP as irreducible to any qualitative expression or medium, even though it contains multiple expressions in disparate media. That is, the project can be tackled from its planimetric, procedural, physical, visual, psychological executions; whether from a human, animal, mechanic, or any other sort of intelligibility.[1] In turn, each of these bodies and events are manifestations of the AP. But in no case are such expressions and impressions the AP-in-itself, even though they are all housed in it. In a positive attempt, an AP is seen as an autonomous unit of existence

[1] Although this thesis will focus its study on human cognition, understood as a hybrid, cognition is not restricted to biological or artificial forms of intelligence. Typically, inert or non-conscious entities (a stone, the wind or the sun, to mention a few) are also considered intelligible cognizers of architecture.

surrounded by a specific set of vast qualities and effects: a One/Many, a being/plenty indivisible package.

Within this framework, the AP is not understood here as a holistic system of the type "all APs derive from a single, all-encompassing AP." Rather, each project is taken as a *discrete object*, i.e., each is a specific unit-multiplicity entity. Each AP exerts a particular *internal policy of selection* with what can constitute and cognize it, and how. Just as water arises from hydrogen and oxygen—and not from rhodium—in a certain ratio, and the ink in my e-reader is surely unsuitable to relate to water at all, an AP admits some elements and relationships while excluding others. Fundamental here is to understand that this condition is a competence of the AP itself, and not of our experience and consciousness of it. On this basis, and informed by contemporary scholarly work that accounts for multispecies, multi-actants entanglements between "others," motley multiplicities mark the constitution and manifestations of both the AP. In other words, a project emerges from a selective myriad of (non)human, (in)organic, technological, cultural, and natural things. In addition to this foundational interrelatedness, the project presents another selective myriad of expressions in a variety of media: buildings, drawings, models, functions. Therein, architectural experience, both in design and occupancy, is considered as part of the AP's set of manifestations. Uses, conceptions, or impressions of a project are among its expressions. And given the (human) cognizer's finitude, both the AP's constitutive and representative abundance can only be partially known, with its being lying behind them. As noted, the AP unifies what constitutes and represents it.

A few more things should be noted. First, although not developed in this thesis, the architectural cognizer, whether human or non-human, is also acknowledged as a heterogeneous composite. Second, the attention given to the architectural cognition by the human (especially the emotional material) must be seen as part of a larger architectural production process in which the human is embedded. This more holistic interweaving of technical, conceptual, historical, economical, and other means, as well as the just mentioned hybrid condition of the human, is left here as a black box. It is important to note that these contexts are not rejected. They are simply not the objects of study in this case. Third, the fact that this thesis focuses the study on the cognitive relationship between the project and the human being does not rule out the multiplicity and diversity of other entities that relate cognitively—in the broad sense of the word—to architecture.

Some of these ideas resonate with the modern position of Helio Piñón, who has extensively theorized about the architectural project, when he says: "The [architectural project] should not be confused with the building: the [AP] is what would remain if the material were to disappear, that is, the system of principles and criteria that have determined its form."[2] Such "system of principles and criteria" can be read as what is called here "the AP's selectivity." From this agreement on the non-material basis of the project, the main departure from Piñón—and from modernism, in general—is twofold. First, while for modernism such selectivity is intelligible, this thesis recognizes the impossibility of such objective understanding. The AP is then considered here *subjectless*: there is no observer capable of reducing the project's selfhood to what is apprehended of it. Second, and even when experience is out of the equation, it is argued that such internal criteria are not the AP-in-itself either. Its substantial core is claimed to be *existentialist* here rather than essentialist: a pluralized existentialism present in all the entities of the world (including

[2] Helio Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto* (2006; repr., Madrid: Ediciones Asimétricas, 2020), back cover, [author's translation].

APs) in which there is no internal group of attributes that define and validate its being, and much less from an external formulation. The mere fact of its unitary existence *is* the project. Therefore, selectivity is not the AP's being, but an internal dependency to constitute its existence and manifestations. It follows that a project's selfhood cannot be known first and foremost because its in-itself is not qualitative.

Aesthetics is the discipline used here to approach the AP under an existentialist and subjectless condition. Here, it is important to clarify two things. First, this thesis' advocacy of an aesthetic cognition without subject does not imply the elimination of the human from art and architecture. The human remains a constitutive part of it. But from a cognitive angle, it means the dissolution of the figure of the subject as constructor of the world to its measure and understanding in favor of the figure of the *cognizer* as innocuous extractor or activator of and in it. As mentioned a couple of paragraphs above, although it will not be the object of study of this dissertation, the human must be understood with the same hybrid constitutive logic of the project. Whether in the role of ingredient or cognizer, each human being emerges from a mestizo set of biological, cultural, and technological elements. This implies that the human body and mind are not ultimate and pure, but each is a mixture. Therefore, whenever I refer to the "naked human" in this work, it will not relate to any traditional or classical notion of the human as a special entity above the rest of the cosmos, but to each individual (post-)human interiority derived from such crossbred foundations.

Second, aesthetics is a theoretical discipline with a much broader scope than mere stylistic and calligraphic analysis. To confine it merely to such an exercise on the tangible qualities of an artwork is to turn it into a factual science; it is promoting knowledge as truth. On the contrary, aesthetics is adopted here as a mode of cognition that deals precisely with what is beyond any exposed quality. It establishes a regime of access relevant to the double unknown of an AP, that is, to what is ineffable and knowable about the project in question.

In short, this thesis' object of research is the internal rift of two realms of the architectural project: what it is and how it appears, functions, and affects. The constitutive heterogeneity of both the AP and the cognizer (human, in this case) will be considered but not explicitly studied. This work does not focus in detail on the formation of these two entities, but on their cognitive relationship. Architectural experience (design, occupancy, conceptualization, etc.) is situated in the AP's appearance-reality gulf. This means that cognition becomes an internal and representative part of the project, while individually aspiring to its ineffable existence and knowable material.

Armed with these concepts, we can now establish the central hypothesis of this thesis on a possible reconfiguration of architectural purposes and methods, as well as its reflections in the public sphere, derived from approaching the AP as an unknown entity. The conjecture is self-reflective: the awareness that I cannot reliably apprehend something will change my mode of access to that something. For the present case, this means that acknowledging the impossibility of defining *what-an-AP-is* and *what-an-AP-is-about* will alter the ethos of how these two issues can be approached.

Not knowing what-an-AP-is suggests abandoning the epistemological enterprises of directly grasping its core in favor of *indirect access* to it. Here, the cognitive ambition aspires to sensing the project's being or existence, rather than the control of some supposedly fundamental but delusive characteristics of it. This form of engagement will be referred to as *deep cognition*, making *ineffable* what-an-AP-is. The project can only be alluded to tangentially. This means that it cannot be put in qualitative form, whether conceptual, visual, physical, psychological, literary, mathematical, or any other, and

whether it is dependent or independent of cognition.

Likewise, not knowing what-an-AP-is-about promises, paradoxically, to open such a question. It invites a multiplication of speculations about the project's nature and purposes. All these formulations are not guided by authoritative points of measurement—nor do they establish new ones—about what is correct when it comes to the AP. However, rejecting objective knowledge does not mean completely annulling the knowledge about a project. It means making it orbital and unstable. Our apprehensions fly around a center on which we cannot land, so the best we can do is to keep exploring from its tangent. Here, the cognitive ambition aspires to expand the possibilities of the project for each experience of it, rather than establishing truths that limit its navigation. A truth about something redirects attention to itself rather than to the thing at issue. This form of engagement will be referred to as *open cognition*, leveraging an area always *knowable* of what-a-AP-is-about.

In short, the ineffable and the knowable are the AP's *double unknown*, accessible through deep and open cognition. This willingness or mode of cognition is expected to reverberate not only at the disciplinary but also at the socio-political level. On the academic side, I am aware of the difficulties in accommodating an approach that starts precisely by questioning its quintessential knowledge, because it ultimately rejects the specificity of the discipline based on epistemological constructions. (Proof of this are the heated responses received at various conferences and symposia attended during the production framework of this dissertation.) In this sense, and as paradoxical as it may seem, it is intended to demonstrate that the strategy of blurring disciplinary taxonomies can precisely generate more profound and richer understandings and debates on architecture. The same logic of fuzziness is applied to the architectural project for the purpose of its openness. To be clear, it is not the scope of this thesis to propose a concrete definition of architecture or its projects. Any architectural definition—be it conceptual, academic, ethical, practical, or emotional—should be sincere enough to admit the opposite of its claim; that is, to acknowledge being a drop in the ocean and, thus, to admit its inability to be what it pretends to be for the others: a definition.[3] If half of the goal is to present a theory that endorses a cognitive regime for a deeper immersion of the project at stake, the other half aims at the pluralization and multiplication of "weak definitions" about it, since the ocean cannot be literalized in any of its drops. That means encouraging the production of contexts of concerns and approximations robust enough to make their predicaments productive at the disciplinary and public level, plastic enough to accommodate disparity, and volatile enough to admit dissolution at any time. Certainly, there are a good number of these models of knowledge production and organization.[4]

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[3] A definition of something, insofar as it is inevitably dictated from a position different from that of what it is intended to define (a dislocation that is also present in self-reflection), is always relative to the subject that formulates it. This does not mean that it is invalid, but simply partial and incomplete. The subject and the definition itself are incapable of embracing the totality of the thing.

[4] For example, Socrates claimed to know and master nothing, precisely as the first steps toward wisdom. Nicholas Cusanus embraced a "learned ignorance" [docta ignorantia] that admitted the limits of rational knowledge and embraced speculation. In the twentieth century, Paul Feyerabend objected to the prescription of scientific methods as limiting scientific activity and its progress. Jacques Rancière shows a non-hierarchical pedagogical model, where there is no concrete transmission of knowledge. Instead, what is learned is to learn by one's own means. Or, more recently, Graham Harman calls for a "knowledge without truth." See respectively, Plato, *Early Socratic Dialogues* (London: Penguin Books, 1987); Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, trans. Germain Heron (1440; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), https://books.google.at/books?id=vQtKAwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&pg=PR3#v=onepage&q&f=false; Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, Third edition (London: Verso,

That being said, absolute neutrality cannot be expected from this assignment, as I will inevitably expose personal views and conceptions. These statements are to be taken as neither right nor wrong, since not accepting the condition of truth, in fact, eradicates such a binary judgment. They aspire to be simply one of many possibilities of contributing to a heterogeneous collective knowledge rooted in conflict and diversity, rather than a homogeneous one either informed by consensus or imposition—which in the end are both equally exclusionary.

On the other hand, the openness of the project seeks to engage not only with an enclosed academic discourse, but, more broadly, to enmesh itself (physically, digitally, conceptually, historically) with the community in which it is situated. When the project appears as a plurality, it is hypothesized that it will involve a plurality of approaches. In such a circumstance, the value of multiple perspectives and diverse voices on any object (an architectural project, in this case) would not be a social and ethical imperative of justice and integration, but the natural cognition that each thing offers about itself. This implies that, in the face of today's socio-political urgencies, the problem-solving method is not the only strategy. Interpreting Rancière, instead of rationalizing and moralizing inequality to turn it into equality, an open project that lacks truthful knowledge also lacks authority.[5] This suggests a liberation of how to understand and relate to the architecture in unsuspected manners. If the pretense of direct access turned into certainties has resulted in the selection of privileged actors that block other ways of approximation and expression, completely discarding such a possibility promises not only a proliferation of engagements with what is at stake. Each of them will also be equally (in)complete. In this light, the first de-hierarchization to be noted is that of the architect and the user. In an open cognitive regime, there will always be a gap between the two. One will not restrict the other, and vice versa. Each approach is legitimate. Moreover, when each cognizer carries a singular approach, each cognition will reveal something new about the AP. Design pluralizes, as it becomes then a matter of architects, users, passersby, critics, historians, curators. However, this view does not entail the dissolution of the figure of the design architect and of design expertise in favor of a positivist collaborative design.[6] The authorship of any cognizer remains in force. What is banished is authority, wherever it comes from. More aptly, the death of author-ity suggests the pluralization of author-ship.

1993); Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Graham Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything* (London: Penguin UK, 2017), 185–93.

[5] Jacques Rancière, "The Method of Equality: Politics and Poetics," in *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality, and Identity*, ed. Katia Genel and Jean-Philippe Deranty (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 133–55.

[6] In a defense of participatory art under an aesthetic angle, Claire Bishop aptly exposed the shortcomings of moralizing a community's engagement in the production of art (and architecture). As she writes: "In insisting upon consensual dialogue, sensitivity to difference risks becoming a new kind of repressive norm – one in which artistic strategies of disruption, intervention or over-identification are immediately ruled out as 'unethical' because all forms of authorship are equated with authority and indicted as totalising." Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 25.

0.2. Conceptual and historical framework

0.2.1. Classicism and modernism

Writing about the contemporary condition or about something that is in progress implies that one is acting from within it. If to this is added any willingness to contribute to this enterprise in perpetual gestation (because it simply runs in the present), one often succumbs to the innocence of contemplating it as a break with the immediate past. Yet given that the theorization of the architectural project is a quite old activity, the question is with what eyes we look at it today. It is here when historical disruption—gullible as it may be—is set in motion.

For theorists and practitioners like Peter Eisenman or Helio Piñón, there are two major systems in the Western architectural tradition: classicism and modernism.[7] This thesis will align with neither of the two. The point of friction is their anthropocentrism: the reduction of what is observed to the precepts of the human who observes. It can be argued that classical architecture is human-centered in a threefold logic. First, it constructs a *type* (as Helio Piñón calls it) relative to the human and elevates it to an ideal or canon. The Renaissance deified man's body, in the sense that it provides the proportions as a compositional order (like Vitruvian man or any representation of God with the appearance of man) (Fig. 0-1). The Enlightenment deified his mind.[8]

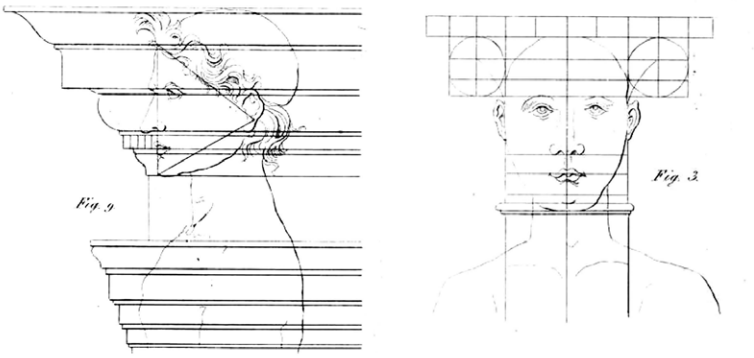


Figure 0-1. Francesco di Giorgio, *Trattato di architettura civile e militare*, Ill. Figs. 9 and 3, 1482.

In a second step, design production adopts a mimetic activity that pursuits the laws from which it starts; a mimesis that, of course, is mediated by human understanding. Finally, the validity of the anthropomorphized structures, i.e, what constitutes its harmony, resides in its accuracy according to a human subject in reproducing and being faithful to the generalized order that institutes it. In this context, classical architecture finds its reason-

[7] See Peter Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out: Selected Writings, 1963-1988*, ed. Mark Rakatansky (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 83–87; Helio Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto* (Barcelona: Ediciones UPC Universitat Politécnica de Catalunya, 2006). Here, I simply take "classical" relative to "classicism," although Eisenman split both terms, as well as from "classic." Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 156, footnote #2.

[8] Peter Eisenman draws this transition as follows: "[The architect Jean-Nicolas-Louis] Durand embodies this moment of the supreme authority of reason. In his treatises, formal orders become type forms, and natural and divine origins are replaced by rational solutions to the problems of accommodation and construction." Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," 160. For Helio Piñón, the classical type in architecture is a "normative authority [...] a conventional entity, with social and historical validity," that propels a determination for mimesis. Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 22, [author's translation].

to-be outside itself, in the ideal human-based type as a driving and generic element of control. Man is then ball, player, and referee. From him come the initial values that motivate the works, which are the same ones that architecture must reach. Likewise, it is again the human subject who legitimizes whether this objective has been satisfactorily fulfilled or not. In short, classical architecture is a closed design scheme *of* and *for* man.[9]

On the other hand, it can be said that modernism stands on two main principles: the separation of the object and the subject and the conception of the world in two, and only two, poles: humans and non-humans.[10] The former seems to fit to this thesis' commitment to the subjectless AP mentioned above. But if we scratch a little more on this modern proposition, we will arrive—through a more intricate path, it is true—at the classical subordination of the object to the subject.

The generalized conception of modernism is a cultural movement that diverges from classicism inasmuch as the object acquires its own autonomy. Formalism is the modern school *par excellence* that, in its aesthetic branch, propels a centripetal disposition of the work of art. That is to say, the object finds meaning in itself, rather than in an external referentiality.[11] However, this thesis will criticize that the effective realization of this provision is inconsistent the moment the subject dictates the nature of such meaning. In other words, the object's autonomy is different from axiomatizing what is thought to constitute its autonomy. I argue that this self-delusion finds its origin in Kant's apriorism, whereby a logical or teleological judgment is valid only if something's representation completes the given concept of it.[12] But this judgment is not about the thing; it is about the conditions of the judgment about the thing. The autonomy of the object is then incongruent because it is mediated; a mediator that, moreover, can only be human, as we shall see in a moment. When this is so, modern aesthetics cannot be modern, since its execution confuses the aesthetic judgment of what can be called a "conceptuality without concept"—derived from Kant's "purposiveness without purpose" and which constitutes the modern aesthetic maxim—into the logical judgment of a "self-reflective concept."[13] Under this umbrella, a work of art or architecture can only find its legitimacy in the subject's rational judgment on the rules that he himself establishes: objects are autonomous only if the subject's experience of them finds in an intelligible way a link back to the principles from which they start. But these principles are not the objects in themselves; they are what

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[9] As Eisenman writes on the classical: "The perspective of the end thus directed the strategy for beginning. Therefore, as Alberti first defined it in *Della Pittura*, composition was not an open-ended or neutral process of transformation, but rather a strategy for arriving at a predetermined goal." Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," 159.

[10] About the former, Eisenman claims that the nature of modernist thought entails "a displacement of the man away from the center of his world. […] Objects are seen as ideas independent of man." Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 84.

[11] Its extreme moment can be found in mid-twentieth century in North America with the High Modernist art critics Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried leading the scene. In architecture, it is Eisenman who pushed modernism from a formalist perspective.

[12] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (1790; repr., Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 27–28.

[13] For example, Clement Greenberg said that painting finds its autonomy in flatness. But I argue that "flatness" is a human reduction of painting's selfhood, not painting as such. In this light, flatness is the Kantian "given concept" against which the autonomy of painting is tested teleologically. Similarly, Eisenman's autonomy for architecture finds its specificity in the logical judgment that the "centroidal and linear forms" are the essential characteristic from which any specific architecture derives. But such known features are not architecture-in-itself. They are an understanding of architecture on which to contrast the architectural experience.

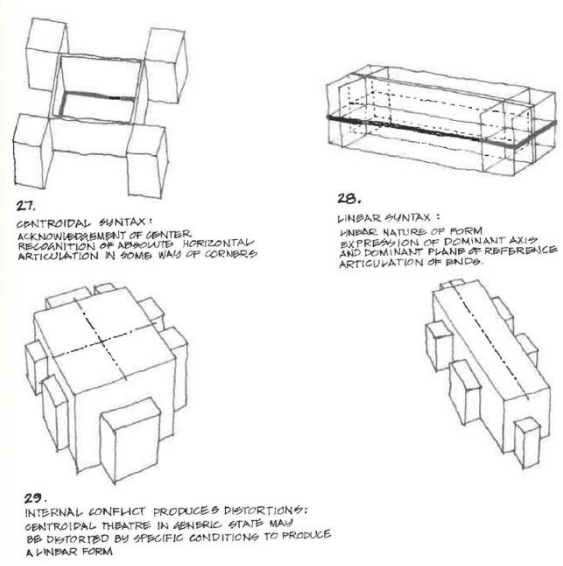


Figure 0-2. Peter Eisenman, from *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 114, 1963.

the (cultural) subject sets about each of them.[14]

But, is this not the same experiential and judgment scheme of classicism? It is clear that in modernism, the human body and mind are not the tangible references from which everything else is articulated. Modernism diversified its essences by categorizing them in the specificity of *media* (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, etc.). But it commits the same cognitive vice of classicism: it empowers the figure of the human subject by crediting him with the determining capacity of defining, first, what is the core and nature of these media—assuming also that the medium is the only possibility of reality—and, second, the validity of its representations according to the medium it is supposed to belong to. Continuing with the sports metaphor: if in classicism the human is ball, player, and referee; in modernism, he is player and referee.

If this critique is accepted, modern formalism—polemic as it sounds—falls into what Quentin Meillassoux calls today *correlationism*: "the idea [that] we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other."[15] This inconsistent object/subject division derives directly from the other main pillar of modernism, of modernity in general: the split of the world in the two poles of humans and non-humans, or thought and world, which Graham Harman calls *onto-taxonomy*.[16] In this universal dualism, humans stand as privileged ontological entities

[14] For example, in Greenberg's case, the better a painting reflects the principles of its own medium (its flatness), and which are also the starting point of the painting, the better that painting will be. The same is true of Eisenman: the more clearly a building reveals the original principles of what emerges (the "generic form," in this theory) to the user, the better the value of the building. See Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (1940; repr., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 562–68; Peter Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture* (1963; repr., Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2006), 55.

[15] Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008), 5.

[16] Graham Harman, "The Only Exit From Modern Philosophy," *Open Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 132–46, https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2020-0009. See also Niki Young, "Only Two Peas in a Pod: On the Overcoming of Ontological Taxonomies," *Symposia Melitensia* 17 (2021): 27–36. Many of Harman's insights in this regard derive from Bruno Latour's anti-modernism. See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

demarcated from all other existents, assuming that the only beings that require attention in their own right are humans. Everything else thus falls into the same non-human container, which is, paradoxically, categorized according to the logics coming from the other pole. By inclusion, architecture and its projects are what we can think about them. With this, we arrive at the modern equation of pairing its two main oppositions: subject/object and human/non-human. We can identify an Axis 1 where the "subject" can only be "human," and an Axis 2, where the "object" is always "non-human." But it is in these pairings and in the attempt to coordinate them that the modern project fails, as one pushes in the opposite direction to the other. How to account for a non-human object in itself if the only case study is the human subject and what he thinks of the rest of the world? How to reconcile both trajectories when one is clearly favored? These vectors are mutually exclusive and modernism needs *both* to be modern.

It is in this context that theories like those of Fiedler, Greenberg, Fried, or Eisenman acquire specificity in the way they attempt to articulate both axes. While it is true that each author emphasizes one pole more than the other, none of them falls completely into the exclusivity of either. Thus, with greater or lesser exacerbation, we always find in any modern theory statements along Axis 2 (object-nonhuman) whereby the work cannot derive from or present human traits. In these cases, it is about the medium as such; one that is established as an evaluative reference by the human for his own judgment. Greenberg is the master of this modernism. Likewise, Axis 1 statements (subject-human) tend to shape a special type of subject by suspending subjectivity in favor of universal and unequivocal reasoning. Thus, aesthetic judgment under modern formalism finds its plenitude, paradoxically, in the rational process capable of immobilizing the subject's will. Fried's "the new-'subject'" is illustrative of this view.[17] But again, this is the same subject who, in accordance with his reason, dictates which are the non-human principles that make the experienced work autonomous (the simultaneous player and referee).[18]

When epistemological principles become ontological, we enter the regime of truths, which is detrimental from at least two perspectives. On the one hand, a truth is always partial with respect to the object at stake. In the end, an axiomatic predicament is always relative to the position from which it is asserted, no matter whether it is intended to be legitimized from the authority of history, reason, or morality. On the other hand, the naturalization of truth directly affects the social subject. Truth formulations automatically imply questions of power distribution. Who establishes these truths and for whom is a political matter. I believe that the social inequalities derived from the modern model are evident to all in our present moment. Stated differently, the continuing error of the modern subject has been to naturalize the proposed definitions: to take them as complete, that is, to adopt a particular masking of what a thing can offer and export it as the only valid one. When this masking is perpetuated historically, it becomes culturally axiomatic and performs a blocking of other executable accesses to what is under consideration. Therefore, insofar as how a thing is approached also constitutes a form of individual or communitarian expression, its limitation through the imposition of truths represses the frustrated

[17] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 104.

[18] For example, Fried rejects the "theatricality" of minimalism as bringing the subjective and the uncontrolled into the experience, and thus distorting the work of art. In this debate, I find more affinities with Piñón's theory than with twenty-century American formalism, since the Spanish architect sees in subjectivity the core of modernism. See, respectively, Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148–72; and Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 34.

individual or community. The nature of these obstructions then does not stem from biological impediments; they are fundamentally cultural. These reflections should not be seen as a denial of culture. Quite the contrary. Cultural achievements enhance deeper and broader inquiries. It is a matter of dispelling those that propitiate the opposite. Many sides of modern anthropocentrism are fundamentally androcentric and elitist. In this system, the more the imposed is naturally assumed, the more the blockage is reinforced. The more rooted a truth is, the more silently the voice that constructs it is empowered. As we know, this is the origin of all socio-political inequality. In the face of this, the act of designing architecture cannot be seen as extraneous to this phenomenon, since, in its own way, it is both victim and executioner of it.

Within this historical and cultural context, it is not my intention to rethink modernism outside of its classical bias where everything comes back to the subject and the human. Here I side with Morton when he says that "we *have* been modern, and that we are only just learning how not to be."[19] In my view, the human/non-human onto-taxonomy is too deeply rooted in the modern spirit to decouple it from the division between object and subject. I prefer rather to examine the latter with current lenses, of which there are quite a few as will be seen below. In any case, this will not preclude appropriating modern aspects, if they are still pertinent to the task. In other words, this thesis will adopt a perspective that dissolves the two modern pairings of object-nonhuman and subject-human. Following this deconstruction, the human/non-human division is fully rejected as the basis of the world, but the object/subject division is reattempted. This enterprise will rest on two contemporary notions to be outlined in the next pages: *flat ontology* and *subjectlessness*. The first means that all entities in the cosmos—(non)human, organic, synthetic, durable, volatile, imaginary, or physical—have the same ontological status. The second means that the subject is discarded as the purveyor and validator of everything else's reality. Instead, the figure of the *cognizer* is accounted for, not as constructor but extractor. This entails that the enemy of this thesis' incursions into the architectural project is the subject, not the human.

0.2.2. Current intellectual landscape

Having argued the failure of modernism—and within it, I also include that of its postmodern critical project—because of its cult of the human subject, it seems worthy to draw where the contemporary intellectual landscape is today in relation to this dissertation's subjectless ambitions for the AP.[20]

If human-centrism is problematic, the alternative seems to be human anti-exceptionalism, which I replace by a *subject anti-exceptionalism*. This point of view is also

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[19] Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 19.

[20] From the second half of the twentieth century, postmodernism brought skepticism and criticism to modernity. Social, political, and economic inequalities and the drawbacks of an exacerbated technological positivism became untenable. Critical theory began to reflect on modern society and cultural systems to reveal the shortcomings of their structures. In architecture, postmodernism has revisited history and its memory to develop a language game of classical forms with a state of technological progress at a minimum. However, as Gausa and Vivaldi point out: "Postmodernism evolved rapidly from a critical and transgressive movement into a complacent and historicist discourse." Manuel Gausa and Jordi Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture: Conformative, Distributive and Expansive Protocols for an Informational Practice: 1990-2020* (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2021), 15. In this light, postmodernism cannot be considered as a shift from modernism. Its mission is restricted to criticism, which continues to operate under the object/subject and human/non-human considerations.

often referred to as *the posthuman*.[21] Whatever one wants to call it, the point is that this position rejects *Cartesian dualism*, understood as the privileging of the human mind over the rest. Along these lines, discarding human hegemony means recognizing other-than-human selfhood, a move that apparently promises the relocation of intellectual endeavor from epistemology (how and what we know about things) to ontology (what things are). To some extent, any school of thought that accepts the existence of reality independent of the human mind is a form of *realism*. But from this common ground, disparities arise among scholarly works basically on how things exist in the world, and architecture is not immune to the debate. Two main avenues can be distinguished: relational ontologies based on *agency* versus ontologies of objects that assert *being*.

Agency and being are commonly considered interchangeable terms, but this is certainly not the case in philosophical discourse. Agency is the mode of action of something. Being is the mode of existence of something. Agency implies that something has the capacity to act independently, and that it is something when it acts. Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is a good example of this; especially in social theory, according to which everything exists in constantly changing networks and relations.[22] In architecture, it is the theoretical work of Albena Yaneva that has most directly addressed ANT's possibilities within architectural design. As she remarks: "An ANT approach to design would consist in investigating the culture and the practices of designers […], i.e. to follow *what designers and users do* in their daily and routine actions."[23]

The other big example of relationality is *monism*. Its metaphysical treatment accounts for *processes*, all of them starting from the same virtual point. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *plane of immanence or consistency* is surely the best-known monist model: there is a cosmic corner that fragments progressively into multiple ramifications until it becomes present or actualized in a concrete state.[24] Within that model, the immanent entity consists of connections, which occur in temporal flows and fluxes. Everything is relationally embedded with and through multiple links to other (non)humans. Combined with the growing impact of the digital world, this connectivity paradigm has had enormous influence on architecture since the turn of the century. Different information systems in continuous flow of data overlapping each other, gradients, growths, interactivity, deformations, and networking populated the architectural vocabulary and methods. Stan Allen's diagrams on "field conditions" or Greg Lynn's *Animate Form* stand out on this front.[25]

A parallel path to the notion of agency through the monistic premises of connections has emerged with the New Materialism movement of the twenty-first century. As Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin describe it: "[New Materialism] explores a *monist* perspective, devoid of the dualisms that have dominated the humanities (and sciences) until today, by giving special attention to matter, which has been so neglected by dualist

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[21] For an overview of the associated terms and schools within it, see Francesca Ferrando, *Philosophical Posthumanism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

[22] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[23] Albena Yaneva, "Making the Social Hold: Towards an Actor-Network Theory of Design," *Design and Culture* 1, no. 3 (November 1, 2009): 282, https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2009.11643291.

[24] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 35–60. See also Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), chap. 5.

[25] Stan Allen, "From Object To Field," *Architectural Design* 67 (June 1997): 24–31; Greg Lynn, *Animate Form* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

thought."[26] In its feminist orientation, most of the times closer to a human-exceptionalist pluralism than to an ontologically non-anthropocentric materialism, the vocation of relationality promotes alignment between the multiple freed from culturally imposed modes of interaction and action.[27] This allows for the proliferation of relational bonds not governed or mediated by patriarchal exclusivity, which is the ground from which historical oppressions and inequalities start by dictating who acts and how. Instead, since everything has its own capacity to perform with something else, namely, has agency, everything can freely establish connections of kinship, solidarity, and coexistence with others. Most current New Materialist theories and practices derive from this democratization of agency, which, with unequivocal socio-political commitment, emphasizes the capacity for action and decision of previously unimaginable or despised actors: non-human species, technological artifacts, historically oppressed groups of people and communities.[28] In architecture, the theoretical work of Hélène Frichot or the research practice of Feminist Architecture Collaborative are notorious examples of this approach.[29]

However, one problem with New Materialism is that it cannot conceive of the world without human participation. True, it rejects the human mediation of modernity. That our role is no longer that of the conductor but one of the members of the orchestra explains the emphasis on the *material practices* of current relational stances as simultaneously constitutive of reality and knowledge. In terms of our sports metaphor: we are now only a player, but the most important one. We must play always, because there is no game without our participation. By dissolving the ontological and epistemological rupture, New Materialism requires that we (humans) must be a ubiquitous ingredient in all world entanglements.[30]

What all these positions that account for agency through relational models have in common is an aversion to essence, which for now can be taken simply as equivalent to being.[31] If agency has to do with immanence, being has to do with transcendence. That means that while the former accounts for the effects of things derived from their relations, the latter accounts for a substantial core beyond the relations of something. Given this, the

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[26] Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 85.

[27] My critique here is that many of the critical, reactionary, and activist discourses of the twenty-first century—mostly encompassed under the New-Materialist attitudes—that operate against the social and ecological crises derived from the anthropocentric vision of modernity still follow postmodern principles and strategies. As noted in the text, the (post)modern method is subject-based in character. That means that, in many positions of New Materialism, the same anthropocentric game is still being played with different cards; one that continues in eternal love with epistemology as the foundational basis for all. Turning the Western, traditional, patriarchal elitism of human exceptionalism into a democratic and pluralistic human exceptionalism has its undeniable improvements, but it remains rooted in the same flawed vector: rationality and morality, carriers of humanocentrism par excellence, continue to govern everything else. This model is present today in numerous architectural fronts, most often conducted under problem-solving methods: collaborative design processes with communities, sustainability with green and blue relevance, scientific and technological positivism, socially responsible and inclusive buildings, user-friendly designs, net-zero carbon built environments, etc. Obviously, I am not against these achievements. My concern lies in what other achievements we may be losing by the rational and moral imposition of these ones.

[28] See, for example, Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Helen Hester, *Xenofeminism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018).

[29] Hélène Frichot, *Creative Ecologies: Theorizing the Practice of Architecture* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

[30] See Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

[31] As Manuel DeLanda condemns: "The most important transcendent entity that we must confront and eliminate is the one postulated to explain the existence and endurance of autonomous entities: essences." DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 139.

main difference is that agency-oriented theories have nothing to say or even annul the self, while being-oriented theories make room for agency, even though they focus on being.

In the ontologies of objects, there is a gap between being and its appearances (and relations) because the former is irreducible to the latter. Being is the reality that transcends how something looks and affects other things. In the history of philosophy, we find numerous authors who have offered concepts to this end: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's *monads*, Immanuel Kant's *thing-in-itself*, Martin Heidegger's *Being*, or, more recently, Graham Harman's *real object* in his Object-Oriented Ontology (abbreviated OOO). From this transcendentalist trajectory, it is Harman who, in a gesture of pluralization imported from the relational theories of Latour and DeLanda, recognizes the reality of the individual and autonomous being of every thing in the cosmos—be it living, inanimate, imaginary, actual, physical, biological, geological, conceptual, large, medium, small, and so on.[32] This is what has been described above as *flat ontology*, and the reason why the architectural project can be approached as something in its own dimension.[33] If everything is an object, the AP—insofar as it exists—is also an object.

In relation to the present comparison between relational ontologies versus object-oriented ones, Harman states in his book *Immaterialism* that "a thing acts because it exists rather than existing because it acts."[34] That means that, relational theories are more interested in what the thing *does* rather than what the thing *is*.[35] And a few pages later, he concludes that whereas "a relational metaphysics can only handle relations and not objects, a nonrelational metaphysics can handle both, since it is able to treat relations adequately as new compound objects."[36]

As will be developed in the dissertation, every object arises from relations. Nothing can exist without its components and their interactions. According to Harman's theory, objects are within objects which in turn are within objects.[37] But a thing stands in itself, autonomously, over and above its constitutive conditions. As strange as it may sound, dependency and autonomy go hand in hand, although they are not interchangeable. Here is where most relational theories overlook that there is always an autonomous entity that arises from any dependency process. In turn, it can be said that relational and object-oriented theories align themselves with the diversity and plurality that populate constitutive encounters. Such entanglements must never be framed within a rational purity exclusive to the physical medium and a seamless spatial scale *à la* Charles Eames' *Powers of Ten*. A

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[32] That means that the cognitive gap is not exclusive of the human sphere, but is consistent also in every relation between non-human entities. In other words, cognition is always incomplete for any kind of cognizer. Modern transcendentalist authors such as Kant or Heidegger are far from recognizing the expansion of this double democratization to non-human entities. (Double because of the ontological recognition of a thing and its finitude to relate to other things.) That is why they are modern thinkers. See Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*, 2011 reprint (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 2002), 220.

[33] The term "flat ontology" was coined by DeLanda to indicate that, although things are different from each other, they do not differ in ontological status. Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (2002; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 51. OOO authors have adopted this principle as the basis of their theories. See Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2011); Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

[34] Graham Harman, *Immaterialism: Objects and Social Theory* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 7.

[35] Ibid., 14–16.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2005), 158.

thing's constitution is much more promiscuous. Objects are not only solid, durable, and physical. Therefore, the distance between OOO and other contemporary schools of thought in this respect is certainly less than what typically emanates from scholarly debates.[38] Within this idea of heterogeneous composition, the AP can be taken as a composite of elements and forces of disparate natures, media, and temporalities that intertwine within each other. Given this, what relational theories can take from object-oriented ones is the very discretization of their relations. This means taking them as objects, each with its own capacity to be and function in its own terms. Each relation would account for its own particular range of action, moving between the impossible infinity of relating to everything else in the cosmos and becoming a different relation each time its acting terms change. As stated above, each object is selective in what relates to it (constitutionally and cognitively).[39]

To the mereological structure of the world in levels where autonomous things relate selectively both horizontally and vertically, we need to cross the One/Many model of each individual. As the OOO affine author Ian Bogost says in this regard: "things can *be* many and various, specific and concrete, while their *being* remains identical."[40] This means that, in addition to the foundational activity from which it springs and that which it performs to comprise other things, an entity is the bearer of a multiplicity of articulations of its selfhood. For example, a building taken as an object in the OOO sense can arise—among many other things—from its building components, cultural milieu, and economic factors. But none of these *constitutive* conditions is the building as such. Likewise, the building shows itself in a plurality of *manifestations*, which may involve changes in its spatial configuration without this building becoming another one.[41]

These expressions are the basis of experience. From an epistemological point of view, the building engenders an abundance of effects in the way it is received or used. It is in acquiring these insights that we gain information about the building. But they are not the building-in-itself. Against this reductionism typical of our knowledge about things, Harman establishes the "mining" critique. We *undermine* things when we reduce them downward to its components, history, or process. We *overmine* things when we reduce them upward to its effects; and we *duomine* things when these two occur simultaneously.[42] That means that the object in OOO withdraws from each of these factual propositions of it, additionally carrying a reserve or surplus of more proportions beyond those historical and current ones. In this context, *ontological realism*—like OOO—must not be confused with *epistemological or naïve realism*. The latter acknowledges the existence of the exterior world outside of the mind, but claims to have direct access to it, whereas the former does not.[43] If naïve realism accepts factual knowledge about the ontological content of the world, ontological realism sees this enterprise as impossible and sets its epistemological interest on the access to the word.

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[38] See an example that reconciling Harman's OOO and Braidotti's posthuman theory in Jordi Vivaldi, "Xenological Subjectivity: Rosi Braidotti and Object-Oriented Ontology," *Open Philosophy* 4 (2021): 311–34, https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2020-0187.

[39] See Graham Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer* (London: Repeater Books, 2016), secs. 2.c.

[40] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 12.

[41] Rossi's findings on permanence demonstrate this One/Many condition in buildings. Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (1966; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984).

[42] Graham Harman, "Undermining, Overmining, and Duomining: A Critique," in *ADD Metaphysics*, ed. Jenna Sutela (Helsinki: Aalto University Design Research Laboratory, 2013), 40–51.

[43] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 18.

With all this, OOO provides this thesis with a theoretical ground in which to argue not only the architectural project's own dimension but also that of its design process, its occupancy activity, and the different spatial manifestations in which it shows itself; all of this without renouncing the interconnectedness that enmeshes them. From a practical standpoint, the surplus of each of these different stacked objects offers a continuous and always incomplete knowable space appealing for any design endeavor, an area for navigation that is neither anchored nor contributes to the immobility of partial truths.

To summarize, truth imposed by the subject is the main obstruction to account for entities in their own right and their multifariousness. One possibility to resolve the situation is by pluralizing truth. In the face of socio-political and environmental inequalities, democratic and pluralistic human exceptionalism may win immediate battles, but it remains stuck in the same anthropocentric narrative where everything requires external and human validation or participation. Indeed, many activisms and criticisms base their methods of emancipation precisely on the same reasoning and moralization from which they seek to escape. The second possibility is to follow relational dispositions, which, it is true, could not care less about the question of truth other than to reject it.[44] But they present a problem of identity relative to change: they cannot maintain a unified plurality. The third possibility is to decouple the historical truth-essence construct to discard the former and retain the latter.[45] This implies acknowledging that being is truly transcendental, i.e., that no epistemological approach—no matter how true it may seem—can govern it. This is OOO's neither-true-nor-false realism. Reality is subjectless. It exists autonomously, irreducible to what can be known of it.[46] Its consequence: access to the object's being promises pluralization, since nothing can claim privileged access to it. If so, the condition of equality is achieved not by rational or moral impositions, but by ontological disposition.

Within this framework, the most interesting aspects of OOO for this thesis are, first, the possibility of considering the AP, its experience, and manifestations as entities in their own right without any subject approving them; second, exploring their offered multiplicity; and third, addressing their interrelationships without subordinating one to the others. These and other considerations have led a number of architects to engage with OOO since early 2010.

0.2.3. Object-Oriented Ontology in architecture

The twentieth century is surely the most intense—or at least the most explicit—period in history in creating bonds between architecture and philosophy. Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze are some prominent figures—certainly not the only ones—who have enriched the architectural discourse since the 1950s. Not only did they make their own incursions into the architectural field, but also demonstrated the fruitfulness of intellectual exchanges between the two disciplines. Figures such as Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Greg Lynn attest to this. As seen before, the interdisciplinary between architecture and philosophy remains active today with reinterpretations of the still

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[44] See Latour difference between "matters of fact" and "matters of concern" in Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry*, Special issue on the Future of Critique, 30, no. 2 (2004): 225–48.

[45] See Deleuze's rejection of the traditional One/Many because of its dependency on the human subject in Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 13–14.

[46] Harman, *Immaterialism*, 17. See also Harman's concept of "knowledge without truth" in Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 185–93.

lengthening shadow of old acquaintances such as Deleuze and new introductions like Latour's ANT and Harman's OOO. Within this panorama, the latter has been the most constant and active participant in the activities of our field in recent years, as evidenced by his 2016 appointment as Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc).

In the early 2010s, architect and theorist David Ruy, Harman's former classmate at St. John's College, introduced the ideas of OOO to his peers in the United States. Most of them are trained in the first wave of the digital project—many of them at Columbia University in the 1990s—and active participants in it during the 2000s.[47] However, at the turn of that decade, there was a generalized sense of exhaustion of the so-called *continuous or folding architecture*, whose agenda sought innovation at all costs through the unpacking of ever new experimental shapes and fabrication techniques drawn from digital tools coupled with an ideology of "becoming" as the main architectural narrative. For some architects, the development of this approach results in a lack of any kind of internal meaning due to the repetitive outputs of the digital procedures. It made the work feel empty and mechanical, as Ferda Kolatan reflects.[48] In addition, the scientification of design following strict information-based processes, the increase of environmental obligations as the only architectural possibility, and the final touch with the arrival of Patrick Schumacher's parametric manifesto as a global proclamation of what has been precisely seen as exhausted, completed a final split.[49] As Tom Wiscombe comments: "Today, the model of world-as-open-network is no longer a matter of speculation. It has been consumed and reified."[50]

In this context, the proposed architectural agenda returns to the humanist path—some call it post-human—without the classical and modern centralization of the human subject, but with an eco-centric or flat ontological spirit. At the same time, it also abandons the technological positivism of the turn of the century, yet without renouncing digital and computational power—some call it post-digital. The role and mode of experience has then become a central means through which to rethink architectural purposes and methods, precisely, under the object-oriented realist tenets according to which the object cannot be directly grasped. If, as we have seen, modern architecture sought rational clarity and intelligibility on all its experiential fronts, the architectural approach informed by the conceptual armature of OOO fosters the opposite. *Mystery* and *estrangement* become the effects for entering into an aesthetic entanglement with architecture. There is a desire to "break" the representational system of the object in a Heideggerian sense; that is to say, to invert the automatic and habitual apprehension of an architecture that typically works in the background of our experience. Experience seeks to be surprised by the powers of architecture, while becoming aware of the presence of its self-standing reality. If Harman's theory is a form of philosophical realism that accentuates the permanent displacement between reality and its apprehension to the point of making the sensation of reality speculative and weird, we cannot assure the veracity of what we perceive. "[T]here is a representational problem with regard to the real," according to Ruy, "and this is where I

[47] Some of the architects who have been most active on this front for the past ten years include David Ruy himself, Ferda Kolatan, Michael Young, Tom Wiscombe, Mark Foster Gage, and Peter Trummer.
[48] Ferda Kolatan, Interview with Ferda Kolatan, interview by Gonzalo Vaíllo, May 26, 2020.
[49] Patrik Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture, Volume I: A New Framework for Architecture* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2011).
[50] Todd Gannon et al., "The Object Turn. A Conversation," *Log* 33 (Winter 2015): 76.

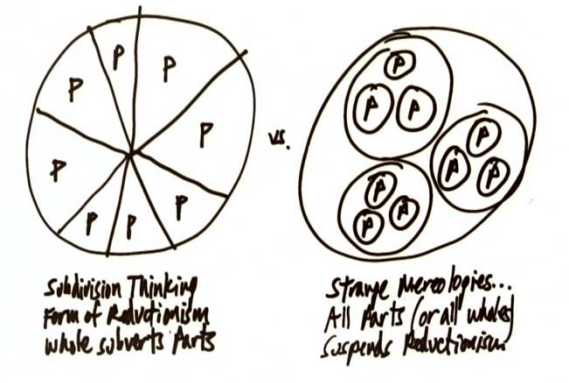


Figure 0-3. Tom Wiscombe, *Objects Models Worlds Abridged*, 59, 2021.

think architecture emerges at its best."[51] In short, uncertainty of the real becomes the exchange value where before there was certainty of truth. This is one of the reasons for understanding the close connection of this architectural proposition with the arts and aesthetic discourse.

Under this umbrella, the way architects have informed design procedures, techniques, and lexicons is varied. On a practical basis, there is a general tendency to think in terms of chunks, gaps, parts, joints, and mismatches as opposed to smooth, intricate surface topologies; something especially evident in Wiscombe's design methodologies.[52] This contrast is reinforced by the dissolution of a hierarchical organization system in which the parts are subdivisions of a larger whole—hence dependent on it—for a model in which the entities stand on their own as composites of composites (Fig. 0-3). With the same mindset, another vector has developed diverse techniques of aggregation and hybridization of familiar elements—whether coming from architecture itself (Peter Trummer and Ferda Kolatan) or popular culture (Mark F. Gage)—employing various compositional logics to give rise to new meanings away from pre-established symbolisms.[53]

In its theoretical development, this architectural current has not only engaged with the metaphysics of OOO. The works of Timothy Morton and Jacques Rancière have intersected with those of Harman.[54] It is important to note that the three philosophers share a common interest in aesthetics, albeit oriented in different ways. For Harman, "aesthetics is the root of all philosophy," theorizing a method of how to indirectly access withdrawn reality. He focuses thus on the interior of the thing.[55] Also under an object-oriented perspective, Morton pairs aesthetics with ecology, showing how emotional responses pave the way for a philosophical approach to the ecological crisis.[56] And Rancière—coming from a different philosophical tradition—ties politics and the

[51] David Ruy, "Weird Realism," in *The Estranged Object*, ed. Michael Young (Chicago, IL: Graham Foundation, 2015), 8.
[52] See Tom Wiscombe, "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture," *Project*, no. 3 (Spring 2014).
[53] See different accounts in Peter Trummer, "An Object Oriented Approach to Architecture and Its City," *IaaC Bits*, no. 6 (2014); Mark Foster Gage, "Towards an Inexhaustible Architecture. Interview," *Architecture and Urbanism (A+u)*, 2017; Ferda Kolatan, "Genuine Hybrids: Towards an Architecture with No Origin," *Architectural Design* 90, no. 5 (2020): 40–49, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2609.
[54] Other influential philosophers include Levi R. Bryant, Ian Bogost, and Tristan Garcia. See Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*; Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*; Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things* (2010; repr., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
[55] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, chap. 2.
[56] See Morton, *Hyperobjects*. Timothy Morton, *All Art Is Ecological*, eBook (London: Penguin Books, 2021).

possibilities of social equality to the aesthetic perspective.[57] The conjunction of these three fronts has resulted in a conceptual apparatus for architecture around aesthetics that has made it possible to simultaneously articulate the interior of the object, its ecological implication, and its socio-political dimension in architectural terms.[58]

For architects like Michael Young and David Ruy, the visual arts (painting, sculpture, and photography) have also been a reliable means of interpreting this theoretical ground for architecture. Indeed, the question of the image as a mediator between reality and apprehension has become—especially for these two authors—one of the main focuses of architectural research. They are also the ones who have dealt most intensely with the question of estrangement, in particular through the technique of *defamiliarization*.[59] Defamiliarization can be understood as the tactic of displacing and challenging conventions to produce an aesthetic effect of irritation or perturbation, namely, of estrangement of one's assumed background.

These insights developed since the early 2010s and still in force provide valuable disciplinary material on which works such as the present one can establish direct relation—both critical and affirmative—as a basis for any intended contribution. In this light, this dissertation directly engages with the overall ethos of this movement, whereby the approach to architecture in any of its modes of expression arises as a representational and cognitive displacement from reality with an ambition for the profound and the multiple—here termed the "double unknown." For the particular interrelation between OOO and architecture, this work intends to broaden the perspectives on which to approach this double goal, giving space to authors, architects, and artists not contemplated so far in this development (e.g., Eco or Dufrenne). Furthermore, it is intended to explicitly address architectural design under the cognitive regime of aesthetics. This means not confining aesthetics as an exclusive phenomenon of the spectator or the user, but also framing it as the experiential basis of the architect in the design process. In turn, design will be a matter of both actors in their respective reception ambits.

On a more specific level, this thesis will raise a critical view of the technique of defamiliarization, precisely in reference to its inability to disengage completely from automatic apprehension. The ability of the precedent to generate meaning outside its domain will be questioned. It will be argued that any inscription of a familiar referent in its reformulated proposition can never overcome the semantic charge from which it comes. It always involves a certain historical continuity that, to a greater or lesser degree, fixes experience in a form of re-cognition rather than cognition. Against that, this dissertation will propose not to start from the quotidian as a material or referential basis for design in order to transform it until it reaches a strange familiarity. It will propose directly the not-known as the material and state of the unfamiliar. I will call it *abstraction*; not only as an aesthetic affect of estrangement—to which Young has already contributed important insights—but also as the syntax that offers no semantic resemblance to anything previously

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[57] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004).

[58] See, for example, Mark Foster Gage, *Designing Social Equality: Architecture, Aesthetics, and the Perception of Democracy* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2019); Mark Foster Gage, ed., *Aesthetics Equals Politics: New Discourses across Art, Architecture, and Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019); Michael Young, "The Art of the Plausible and the Aesthetics of Doubt," Log, Fall 2017.

[59] See Michael Young, *The Estranged Object* (Chicago, IL: Graham Foundation, 2015). Michael Young, *Reality Modeled After Images: Architecture and Aesthetics after the Digital Image* (New York and London: Routledge, 2021); David Ruy, *Techniques of Estrangement* (Staedelschule Architecture Class, Frankfurt, 2015), https://youtu.be/6fTQJljCtrg.

experienced (visually or conceptually), nor literalizes its own morphological aspects.[60] This will lead us to revisit the abstract movements of the twentieth century, although not with the aim of reviving their formal languages.[61] These currents will be valued for their determination to produce objects as worlds in themselves to inscribe them in everyday life, rather than to produce objects from the world.

In any case, among all the references that will help in specific aspects of this thesis, there is one that will remain constant on almost all fronts: the architect Enric Miralles.

0.2.4. Enric Miralles

Miralles is a figure that stands out reliably to develop this thesis' particular project. Bearing in mind that this work must be understood within the current development of OOO in architecture, it is nevertheless well known that making excursions into other cultural circles is always useful to broaden one's own, either by looking at other disciplines or by trying to find antecedents that can reinforce common trans-historical principles and enrich perspectives that the current state-of-the-art has overlooked. This dissertation proceeds under the latter umbrella. That means that it is not my intention to formulate a review of what architecture has developed so far around OOO, nor to attempt an applied philosophy for architectural design—something I do not believe in at all. For the same reason, this thesis is not a monographic study on Miralles. There are already magnificent and more profound investigations into his work and methods. Nevertheless, this will not be an impediment for this thesis to draw conclusions for the benefit of its main references in the course of its exploitation. In the case of Miralles, the lack of English translations of his writings, lectures, and interviews, as well as the fact that many of the reflections and academic works on his oeuvre remain exclusively in Spanish, has caused his theoretical and conceptual material to go unnoticed internationally.[62] At least this is the case if we compare it with the wide diffusion of his built and graphic creations. In this sense, a secondary contribution of this dissertation is the exposition of some glimpses of Miralles' thought. As just noted, one should not expect to find an exhaustive study of the architect's conceptual corpus. But given that it will be used to shape this particular theory of design, it is inevitable that characteristic aspects of the instruments used for this task will surface. This means that what is gathered from Miralles and Harman is a similar ethos that inspires and influences every page of this thesis to the point of not being able to quote in detail everything that comes from them. But I also think—I hope—that the thesis has a value of its own, which leads to approaching these two authors as tools and not as goals for the present research on the architectural project. Having outlined Harman's OOO and its relationship to architecture, we can now introduce the architect.

Enric Miralles Moya (1955-2000) was a Barcelona-based architect and educator at

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[60] Michael Young, "The Aesthetics of Abstraction," in *Aesthetics Equals Politics*, ed. Mark Foster Gage (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 127–48.

[61] To be clear, by abstract syntax, I do not mean a reuse of the particular geometric and compositional lexicon typical of the abstract movements of the twentieth century. That would have been abstract at the time. To propose an architecture today on the basis of these precedents would be a form of defamiliarization rather than abstraction.

[62] Only recently has Fernández Contreras' doctoral thesis on Miralles arrived in English, which is a formal-analytical investigation of his work, and a collection of writings and interviews of Miralles' friends and former collaborators edited by Catherine Spellman. Javier Fernández Contreras, *The Miralles Projection: Thinking and Representation in the Architecture of Enric Miralles* (San Rafael, CA: Oro Editions, 2020); Catherine Spellman, *Conversations and Allusions: Enric Miralles* (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019).

several international institutions whose practice developed initially with Carme Pinós (1985-1991), followed by a period in which he worked alone (1991-1994), and finally in partnership with Benedetta Tagliabue (1994-2000). Like any other, Miralles' work is impossible to understand without the people he collaborated with. Therefore, if this thesis relies on him as a case study, it is not to mask the importance of Pinós and Tagliabue in the projects produced jointly. Instead, it is to methodologically centralize a way of understanding design in a figure who has gone through different partnerships. The task would certainly have been more complicated if the study would have been compartmentalized in each of the offices in specific time periods, given also the fact that both Pinós and Tagliabue have continued their professional careers individually after the associations with Miralles. If the metaphor serves, this dissertation focuses attention on the musician or the sport player who has participated in different bands or teams, rather than on the bands or teams as such.

In addition, current interest in the Spanish architect is not so much focused on his physical and graphic work as on the disposition or attitude towards it.[63] The quality of his buildings is beyond doubt. Even in a non-analytical study like this one, they will help to get this dissertation out of trouble and contradiction more than once. That means that Miralles' built work has the capacity, not only to speak for itself, but to absorb anything that is thrown at it—including this thesis' premises. But trying to understand factually Miralles' thought and his oeuvre—or even daring to methodologize it in the academic sense of the term—would be like "trying to catch the fist with the hand, the former being only one of the concrete forms that the hand can adopt," relocating Emmánuel Lizcano's words to the present context.[64] Therefore, what is borrowed from him is something more ethereal, a spirit or willingness towards things.

Precisely because of the general obsession with categorizing everything, there is a general understanding of Miralles as a deconstructivist. After all, the times of his practice and the broken and superimposed language seem to coincide with such compositional principles. This acceptance is certainly satisfactory for those who tiptoe through his work and through Deconstructivism in general. As I see it, this pairing is tenable, albeit half-hearted and for reasons other than compositional ones. On the one hand, judging Miralles and Deconstructivism by compositional rules is unfairly shallow for both. As Jones Peter Blundell writes: "[Miralles] is not averse to literary Deconstruction, yet sceptical about how it can be applied to architecture, recognising that much of the discussion in the discipline has not gone beyond superficial issues of style."[65] On the other hand, Miralles' link to deconstructivist architecture can be anchored more deeply in a commitment to the "blind spot" of the work deployed unconsciously, rather than in a specific calligraphic or stylistic enunciation.[66] And at the same time, I contend that this attention to the unconscious is only operative in and not constitutive of the work in the Spanish architect. For architecture

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[63] For a complete biographical introduction of Miralles in relation to his formal and technical development, see Javier Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles: Representación y pensamiento en la Arquitectura de Enric Miralles" (Madrid, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid ETSAM, 2013), 14–83, http://oa.upm.es/22386/.

[64] Emmánuel Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos Piensan: sobre Ciencia, Democracia y otras Poderosas Ficciones* (Madrid: Traficantes de sueños, 2006), 54, [author's translation].

[65] Peter Blundell Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante* (Fellbach: Edition Axel Menges, 1995), 11.

[66] The centrality of the unconscious and this "blind spot" of the work is what Wolf D. Prix claims of Derrida as the nature of deconstructivism in architecture. Wolf D. Prix and Thom Mayne, *DigitalFUTURES: From Decon to AI: AI and Architectural Practice*, 2020, min. 38:00, https://youtu.be/OlvYzmWuMsU.

not to be reduced to the architect's unconsciousness, it is necessary to acknowledge a commitment to something even deeper: the architectural project as an entity in itself. This realist and formalist perspective, overlooked in Miralles, will be argued to be decisive in his design approach.

For now, the important thing is to avoid approaching Miralles' oeuvre from a compositional angle. As a matter of fact, the architect himself explicitly discourages approaching it by focusing on the visual and geometric aspects of the shapes; certainly a difficult task given their attractiveness and peculiarity.[67] "I do not care at all about the shape [*forma*] of a building," he says.[68] This should not be seen as discrediting physical and geometric form altogether—the level to which Miralles elevates it is out of question. Rather, it indicates not to stop at its superficiality, not to remain in the most obvious visual and performative aspects as the ultimate ends of the work. (At this point, a shared interest between Miralles in Harman in what lies behind the visible form may have become apparent.)[69] To arrive at an architectural formulation capable of embodying its own profundity, the practice of design is for Miralles a continuous tangling and untangling—a readiness that connects with this thesis' vocation to access the AP.[70] The architect comments in this regard:

> The issue of access. I will only make this modification: instead of accessing, as if it were something written, easy, and working, I will focus on this thing of "wanting to get into" [*quererse adentrar*], because in my projects I have almost never done anything else. That is to say, they are almost to start and to move on. […] I would change the word "access" to "untangle." The serious, external work of a project is to untangle the thinking that has made it succumb, and I say untangle to use an easy word. When you are working on things, in the end you produce a big mess; a whole tangle of things.[71]

Such complexity and mystery that was the project for him was himself for anyone who tried to enter seriously into his work. "The complexity of his way of thinking about architecture or life," Carolina B. García-Estévez writes, "the indiscriminate presence of heteroclite sources, or the impenetrable cosmos of a private world to which no one has been able to gain access have built an erratic, distant and vaporous figure."[72] In this sense, the tangible work is of interest here to understand in a reverse engineering manner the character's *modus operandi*; the work as a way to undo what you find already done. This task will be aided by the numerous interviews, transcripts of lectures, and quite a few short texts by Miralles himself. Like his built and graphic production, all this written material is formulated in an

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[67] Enric Miralles, Emilio Tuñon, and Luis Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," in *Enric Miralles + Benedetta Tagliabue 1995-2000*, vol. 100+101 (Madrid: El Croquis, 2000), 21.

[68] Anatxu Zabalbeascoa and Javier Rodriguez Marcos, eds., *Arquitecturas Del Tiempo, Miralles Tagliabue* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1999), 63, [author's translation].

[69] Significant is how both also use the word "caricature" to refer to the material or visual reduction of the project or object. See Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21; Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.

[70] See an enlightening interpretation of Josep M. Rovira on this issue in Miralles in Josep M. Rovira, "Enredar, Desenredar," in *Enric Miralles: Aprendizajes Del Arquitecto*, vol. 15, Documental (Barcelona: arquia, 2002), 11–16.

[71] Enric Miralles, "Acceder. Transcription of Miralles' Lecture at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo de Santander.," in *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, ed. Carolina B. Garcia Estevez, DC Papers 17–18 (1993; repr., Barcelona: Departament de Composició Arquitectònica UPC, 2009), 19, [author's translation].

[72] Ibid., 7, [author's translation].

indirect and cryptic communicative style.[73]

Fragments, in the plural, may be one of the words to enter into Miralles' design thinking, as it applies along all fronts of his architecture. For example, the projects always start from a constellation of disparate referential pieces, including literature, architectural precedents, the visual arts, site conditions, popular traditions, etc. They are articulated in a way that Salvador Gilabert has called "oblique poetry" [*poesía oblicua*], already telling us that their hybridization—far from clarity—is evocatively generative.[74] In this design approach, there is no preconceived idea or anticipated outcome. It is a thinking-by-doing strategy. Word, drawing, and thought intertwine; or become entangled, to continue with the terminology. These three instances are, again, fragments; each is different in its own medium, leading one to the others, and all speaking of the same thing tangentially. Miralles thematized this phenomenon in his doctoral thesis.[75]

The drawings of the Grand Tour travelers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with an abundance of literary and philosophical quotations from all kinds of currents, provide the backdrop for his 1987 dissertation. The manuscript combines in a fragmentary and codified manner—far from the required academic clarity—sketches and text to discuss a personal understanding of "notating" [*anotar*] in relation to "thinking."[76] The act of drawing, like that of writing, is opposed to the mimicking of something preconceived or given. It is the register of a thought; a thought that is not the result of prejudices, but is constructed *with* the drawing. It is simultaneous. In other words, the sketch and the drawing are not reliable and precise visual mirrors of the outside world and the mind. The kind of sketches that his dissertation promotes are graphic records of the travelers' thoughts that the drawing produces at the moment of its notation (Fig. 0-4). They are fragments of a thought that is also fragmented. There is no time for details, whether on the paper or in the mind. The hand is direct and immediate to record the indefinable of thought: "The immediate is indefinable…[…] this path is, that of immediacy, through this kind of writing: notating, which is not language, it is where we advance."[77]

The same fragmentation that characterizes the discovery of the project is also present—with its own logic—in the spatial organization, resulting in architectural pieces being superimposed, dispersed, and juxtaposed to each other. Miralles' buildings leave a sensation of incompleteness only comparable to that of the ellipsis that ends all his sentences. This fragmentary approach leads to a verbal, written, drawn, physical, thought, used, and experienced architecture that is not finished, i.e., that is open.

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[73] See the anthology of the complete writings of Enric Miralles in Enric Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, ed. Carolina B. Garcia Estevez and Josep M. Rovira (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2020).

[74] Salvador Gilabert Sanz, *Enric Miralles, Procesos y Experimentos* (Madrid: Ediciones Asimétricas, 2021), 63–72.

[75] Enric Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)" (Barcelona, Universidad Politécnica de Barcelona - ETSAB, 1987).

[76] Such distancing from academic formality led the evaluation committee to reject his first submittal. See Rafael Moneo, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y Derecha (Sin Gafas). Un Comentario a La Tesis Doctoral de Enric Miralles Moya, 1987," in *Enric Miralles. 1955-2000*, ed. Carolina B. Garcia Estevez, DC Papers 17–18 (Barcelona: Departament de Composició Arquitectònica UPC, 2009), 115–28.

[77] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:22, [author's translation]. This fragmentation and text-drawing coupling should not be confused then with the deconstructivist model and its language games. In architecture, Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi had interpreted Derrida in a more academic way.



Figure 0-4. Robert Adam, sketch of a Roman ruin. In Enric Miralles, *Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y Derecha (Sin Gafas)*, vol. II, 35, 1987.

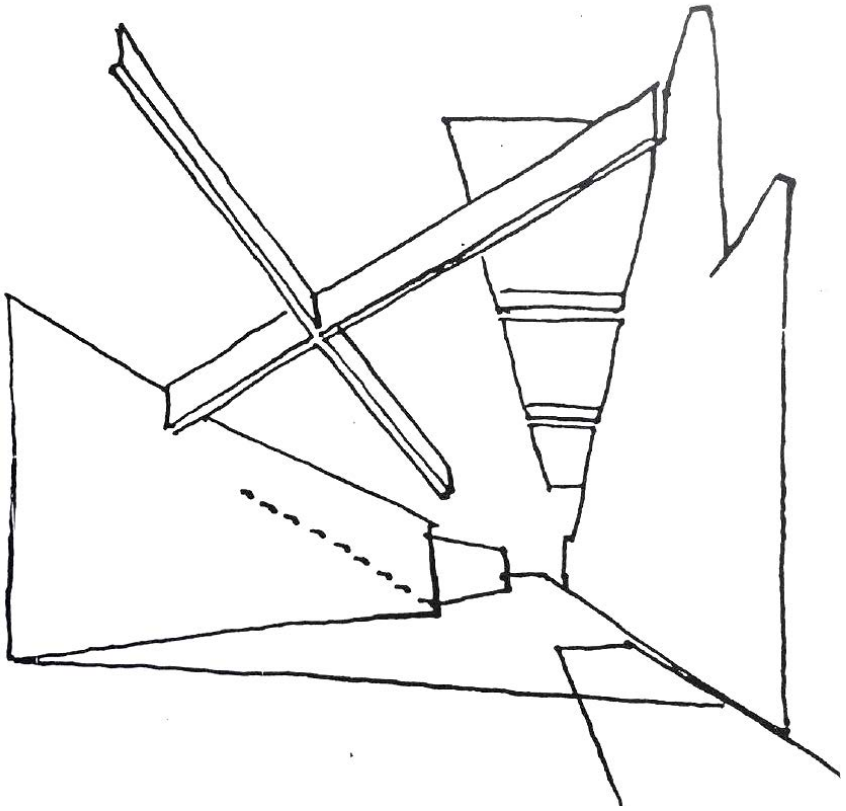


Figure 0-5. Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós, sketch of the Igualada Cemetery. In Enric Miralles, *Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y Derecha (Sin Gafas)*, vol. III, 43, 1987.

Fragments can thus be seen as a method to leave the architecture in the same state in which it has been found: in permanent uncertainty and suspension. What is this if not an invitation to participate in the finishing of any of these representations? A completion that, obviously, far from being clear about how to finish it, gives room for a multiplicity of propositions.

0.3. Research methodology and format

The research methods of this thesis are fundamentally qualitative, if one follows Ajla Akšamija's classification.[78] According to her, qualitative methods in architectural research focus on human, social, behavioral, cultural, historical, or theoretical aspects. They collect data from observations, archival research, interviews, existing documents, and concept groups to describe—and I might add, formulate—concepts, theories, design approaches, and design outcomes.[79] In this scope, and in order to constitute a theoretical corpus on the architectural project's double unknown (its ineffable and knowable sides), this thesis employs and intermingles various methodological fronts within qualitative research.

The *interpretative method* entails the main research procedure, first, conducting a literature review of existing publications associated with the topics and authors of reference relevant to the research objectives, and second, drawing lines of connection between them to fill the identified and unexplored area of knowledge; in this case, the architectural project's double unknown. Within this framework, the main theoretical and philosophical source of this dissertation is Object-Oriented Ontology, whose data accumulation and theoretical terminology has resulted from the literature review of its main authors: Graham Harman, Timothy Morton, Levi R. Bryant, Ian Bogost, and Tristan Garcia (although the latter has developed his theory in parallel to the others). Publications and lectures by architects involved with OOO should be included in this consideration. On the other hand, Enric Miralles is the main architectural reference of this dissertation. As already noted, his built work as such is not the main focus of interest, but rather his design approach. It has been addressed mainly through his written publications and interviews, as well as the researches undertaken on him; especially those of Josep M. Rovira, Carolina B. García-Estévez, Javier Fernández Contreras, and Salvador Gilabert.

On this cartography, the thesis interprets Miralles through OOO to formulate its own understanding of the architectural project and its design and occupancy dimensions. It should be noted that this pairing of OOO with Miralles moves in an undefined terrain between retrospection and continuity, that is, of interpretation and reaffirmation. It is an interpretative retrospective insofar as Miralles never had contact with Harman's texts. The arrival of this philosophical movement in architecture occurred more than a decade after the architect's death. Thus, approaching Miralles through OOO's lenses opens up new perspectives on him that also enrich the current debate on objects in architecture. But the binomial is also a continuation that reaffirms a similar approach to things, leading Miralles

[78] According to her, there are three main research methods for architecture: qualitative, quantitative, and experimental. As she writes: "Qualitative methods use non-numerical strategies, including archival research, interviews, focus groups, observations, qualitative surveys, and case study research. Quantitative methods use numerical approaches for investigating research questions, including simulations and modeling, quantitative surveys, and correlational research. Experimental methods rely on prototyping, testing, and experimental studies." Ajla Aksamija, *Research Methods for the Architectural Profession*, eBook (Routledge, 2021), sec. 3.1.
[79] Ibid.

and Harman at times to even use the same terminology. Aesthetics is what constitutes their common approach to the world. It is for this reason that a second literature on this matter arises to assist this thesis' view on each side of the AP's double unknown. That means that the ineffable side is addressed additionally through aesthetic formalist theories, such as those of Fiedler, Greenberg, Fried, or Eisenman. The knowable side is tackled through theories that understand aesthetics from a meaning production and socio-political dimension, such as Umberto Eco or Jacques Rancière.

Archival research has focused mainly on the work of Miralles, collecting unpublished and non-digitized data. Lectures, interviews, writings, and graphic works have been gathered in a series of visits to the Architects Association of Catalonia COAC, the Fundació Enric Miralles, and the library and archives of the Schools of Architecture ETSAB in Barcelona and the ETSAM in Madrid. Because most of this material is in Spanish, its inclusion in this thesis has required translation into English by the author. The purpose of these visits was mainly focused on the consultation and storage of the numerous out-of-print or out-of-stock publications: mainly specialized magazines, exhibition catalogs, and monographs from the late eighties and the decade of the nineties, as well as working material directly accessed from the original project folders. Among these documents, of special relevance for this work are the three volumes plus annexes of Miralles' 1987 doctoral thesis, and the working material of the Alicante and Huesca stadiums. Some documents of the latter see the light for the first time in this dissertation, courtesy of the Fundació Enric Miralles.

Interviews have been conducted to explore and understand the opinions, preferences, experiences, attitudes, and design methods of a particular focus group: some of the leading voices in the architectural discourse under an OOO orientation. The interviewees included, in chronological order between 2019 and 2021: Mark F. Gage, Michael Young, Graham Harman, Ferda Kolatan, and David Ruy.[80] The interviews have maintained a consistent structure around three specific topics of interest: first, the interviewee's understanding and opinion of the general context of OOO and architecture; second, the interviewee's personal design procedures, writings, and design works within it; and third, the interviewee's view on some topics of interest for this dissertation (autonomy, aesthetics, assemblage, etc.). On the other hand, there has been no systematic method in the interviews. They have been carried out either in person, by videoconference, or with written questions and recorded answers, according to the particular conditions of each event. The transcripts of such interviews are not included in this thesis; perhaps they will appear in some future publication.

Personal and pedagogical experience has also been a fundamental means of research for shaping this work. Field research has been carried out by visiting Miralles buildings in Spain, Scotland, and Germany. Graphic documentation, mostly photographs, has been compiled and accompanies this text. Likewise, during these visits immaterial data—hardly achievable through publications—have been obtained, informing the development of the text. In addition, the theoretical concepts of this dissertation have also been put into practice to a greater or lesser extent both in my practice MORPHtopia and in design studios conducted at the Institute for Experimental Architecture.Hochbau under the Chair of Professor Karolin Schmidbaur since 2018 and in a visiting professorship at Gabriel Esquivel's T4T Lab at Texas A&M University in 2020. Some of this material produced with and by students is included in the manuscript.

[80] With other architects, the requested interviews unfortunately fell by the wayside without ever taking place.

In terms of format, the dissertation is configured as a *design theory* on the architectural project as an autonomous object. Undertaking such a task with the contemporary condition of OOO as a background requires, then, addressing the latter to understand the former. This indicates that, in spite of being its main theoretical source, the development of this thesis is not exempt from criticism of the referential foundations from which it springs. Thus, points of friction will also arise with Harman and Bryant—the two OOO authors mainly addressed here—to sketch alternative positions within particular aspects of this school of thought.

The format of a theory of design is intended to confer a multidimensionality to the object of study ranging from its ontological conception, its cognitive approach, its socio-political dimension, and a particular design methodology. That means that it is not intended to prescribe a set of design protocols. A design theory is not a recipe whose application can lead to the production of a satisfactory architecture. If we are to look for the pragmatics of this theory—any theory— beyond its own validity, its efficacy is much more indirect, subtle, profound. In my opinion, it acts on dispositions and attitudes, something with much more scope than the mere execution of certain production techniques and stylistic discussions. Working on the former should lead to personalized extensions of the latter, and the reverse is not always the case. In this sense, I directly appropriate Piñón's words on his theory of the architectural project as also valid for this thesis: "Since it is not a matter of 'finding out the truth or teaching it'—architecture is not based on truths, but on convictions—I will try to explore the framework and show the objectives so that it will be easier for each one to establish the strategies to achieve them."[81] However, the solution should never be justified from its theoretical source. A few pages further on, he comments: "theory enhances consciousness, so that it clarifies the scope of the solution, but does not prescribe it or guarantee its solvency."[82] In the same spirit, Marjan Colletti writes: "An architectural design theory is not a rule. It wants to be useful. And it is only useful if it is suggestive and indicative: propositional and speculative."[83] Following Piñón's thinking, there is no conviction without criteria. A design theory requires a set of values that can shape an operability for the experiential judgment of design and inhabiting. Given the impossibility of the truth about the project, the epistemological values theorized in this dissertation are *depth* and *openness* as respective means toward the AP's ineffable and knowable sides. To this end, aesthetics appears as a reliable method and discourse. This implies that, in this dissertation, there will inevitably be an overlap between the study and the proposition of theoretical understandings of aesthetics, so that many concepts will be elaborated in the discussion of works of art and not only of architecture.

Also related to format issues, the writing style of the thesis follows a simultaneously critical and propositional method that applies equally to general and specific issues. Its basic structure is as follows. First, a discussion context is formulated around the topic in question by mapping various sources and authors. This is one of the reasons for the large number of references and concepts examined. Second, this context is problematized, providing a critical understanding from which concrete propositions can emerge comparatively. Third, the propositions are articulated in their own terms. Fourth, possible criticisms of them are

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[81] Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 14, [author's translation].
[82] Ibid., 18, [author's translation].
[83] Marjan Colletti, *Digital Poetics: An Open Theory of Design-Research in Architecture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), 3.

conjectured in order to generate counterarguments that solidify the proposition or highlight irresolvable points of confrontation.

Finally, I should note the annex attached at the end of the manuscript. It constitutes a graphic comparison between Miralles' numerous references in the construction of the project and its architectural expression. These pairings are not my interpretations, but links explicitly established by the architect. The authorship of such connections is confirmed either because they are stated directly by Miralles in his texts or lectures, or in the writings of other authors about him that attest to it. In this vein, I also include works and referrals from my practice. The layout of the coupling between the references and the resulting architecture—usually presented in a drawing—is borrowed from O.M. Ungers' book *Morphologie: City Metaphors*.[84]

0.4. Structure of the thesis

The dissertation organizes around three main questions:

1. What does an AP as an object mean?
2. What are the experiential conditions and possibilities for the architect and the user when the architectural project's nature is considered beyond our sensory, cognitive, and cultural competences?
3. What architectural expressions emerge by virtue of this cognitive incapacity in the design process and are able to keep such unknowability active and productive in the users as well?

From there follows a structure in three parts, each thematizing a particular aspect the architectural project posited in the question: so Part One is about the AP as such, Part Two on the object of its experience, and Part Three on a particular architectural expression of it. Although these three main questions always refer to the AP and its double material unknown to its experience, each one also presents a particular perspective to such an object of study. This means that, even if the thesis attempts an integral elaboration that builds upon itself, each part is also considered autonomous from the whole they compose. The possibility of their independent reading is facilitated by the inclusion of separate introductions and concluding remarks in each of them. Each part is further divided into chapters, sections, and subsections, and additional vignettes will sporadically appear to comment on concrete examples related to the topic in question.

To address the architectural project as an autonomous object within Part One, Chapter 1 examines in a more philosophical tone the ontological implications of considering the project as an entity in itself. In a first step, and starting from the realist postulates of OOO, it is argued that the AP follows the same structure as any other object in the world: it is a unit of existence surrounded by a set of qualities and effects. What this being is and what manifests it is particular—hence discrete—for each entity. The AP appears then as a material multiplicity unified under a single self. The nature of the project will be declared phantasmal, given the strange condition of being represented normally through the pieces that compose it. Secondly, and contrary to essentialist theories, the concept of *flat representativity* will be introduced to claim that none of these manifestations

[84] Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie: City Metaphors* (1982; repr., Cologne: Walther König, 2011).

is placed on a higher plane to represent the project's being. On this basis, the existence of an internal connectivity will be examined: not only between the manifestations of the AP and its self, but also between the manifestations. In a third movement, the phantom character of the project evidences its lack of medium-specificity. This means that the AP embodies itself in disparate media. Beyond the accepted ones (building, drawings, models, texts, images) the human body and mind emerge as another of its means of expression.

But discussing the autonomy of the project requires reviewing what the discipline of architecture has said about it so far. For this, Chapter 2 problematizes the main theories of twentieth century architectural autonomy in light of the OOO idea of the object. Despite the differences between the insights of Emil Kaufmann, Aldo Rossi, Manfredo Tafuri, and Peter Eisenman, a common critique will be raised against their writings: in one way or another, their notions of project or architectural autonomy are subject-dependent formulations. They seek to specify descriptively what are the particular qualities and conditions under which autonomous architecture can take place. By contrast, this thesis does not seek to turn autonomy into a question of knowledge of the object. The position adopted here accounts for the ontological basis of the project's autonomy, rather than attempting to deploy any characteristic conducive to such a status. This is not only because of the impossibility of directly accessing its autonomous core, but mainly because this core is argued to be non-qualitative. In short, autonomy equals being. Within this framework, the practical aspects of autonomy for architectural design will be premised precisely on such impossibility. In order to understand the possibilities of an architectural design without a subject, it is necessary to first recognize the subjectless autonomy of the project.

Having clarified the stand-alone status of the project, Part Two deals with the experience of the project in three chapters. Chapter 3 establishes the ground for acknowledging cognition also as autonomous, like the AP or any other object. From this follows a personalized division of the AP affordances according to the relational capacities of the cognizer at a given moment. What will be called the *structure of (un)knowledge* theorizes that in any experiential encounter with the project we can distinguish (1) what is known, (2) what can be known, and (3) what can never be known of the project, as well as its unitary being (B). It is here that the project's double unknown, the main objective for cognition in this thesis, is identified: (B) as the AP's ineffable unitary existence and (2) as the knowable multiple material. Aesthetics will be invoked as the cognitive mode capable of *simultaneously* engaging these two ambitions, which are developed separately in the following two chapters.

Chapter 4 focuses on the aesthetic access to (B), the AP's being, in what will be called *deep cognition*. It is an experiential mode that feels the vibrations of the AP's existence intangibly. Aesthetic formalist theories will be foregrounded as having historically dealt with the profound look at the artwork. However, their various policies on the role of the beholder in relation to the work will be problematized to argue for an *object-oriented formalism*. Following Harman's principles, this formalist variant lies in the intimate and autonomous relation of experience between the AP and the cognizer. Since deep cognition is concerned with a subterranean reality beyond direct apprehension, the chapter will also discuss what the current context of OOO-related architecture means by "reality" and how it is instrumentalized differently for architectural design.

On the other hand, Chapter 5 examines the aesthetic incursion into the knowable qualities and effects of (2), in what will be called *open cognition*. Aesthetic theories that celebrate the plurality of impressions of the artwork will prepare a form of knowledge causation that unfolds manifestations from manifestations, and which will be termed *chain*

of multiplicity. Miralles' design approach will be examined in light of this concept, spotlighting *metaphor* as an aesthetic mechanism for unveiling the project's inner instances. Since the same unrestrained engagement of the design process is intended for the inhabiting, open cognition requires the emancipation of the user from the architect's personal inscription in the distributed architecture. Therefore, a complete separation between two actors on the same AP will be postulated. Finally, the user's aesthetic experiential activity will not be limited to a psychological reception, but will account for an active bodily participation with the space as another form of aesthetic expression.

After examining the AP in its own terms and the cognition that lives in it, Part Three is this dissertation's particular proposal for an architectural formulation capable of inducing cognition towards the project's double unknown. To this end, Chapter 6 advocates *abstraction* in a twofold register: as an aesthetic effect capable of irritating the automatic and normative cognition of architecture and as a characteristic of spaces devoid of semantics and their own syntactic charge. The limitations of the precedents for inferring new meanings will be discussed and a particular notion of Abstract Space will be articulated. Based on this, Chapter 7 elaborates a particular design methodology premised on interpretations of part-whole discourses. This mereological strategy is illustrated through Miralles' procedure of considering the whole and the parts of the project simultaneously and individually; a design conception that will be linked to some OOO theoretical principles.

By way of conclusion, various themes covered in the development of the dissertation will be closed and others suggested as future research fronts. The importance of understanding that the question of the real is always symbolic within the project will be recalled. Symbolism is claimed as a condition present in every one of its expressions. It is thus an activity internal to it and independent of the subject, contrary to how symbolism has been understood until postmodernism. And given that our cognitions are also partial and incomplete in relation to the AP's reality without being completely detached from its selfhood or turning it into a simulacrum, cognition is another symbolic expression of the project. Extending this line of argumentation, the AP's disparate plurality that occurs both at its constitutive and representational—or symbolic—levels will be underscored. The technical term of *xenoaesthetics of abstraction* will be further elaborated, stressing the weight of not diluting the figure of the emergent project in the disparate biological, technological, cultural, and geological agents that form it. Without such existence unity, the project's equally heterogeneous set of manifestations could not exist. As an introduction to possible more detailed research in the future, the political notion of *agonistics* is introduced as a way of organizing the plurality of diverse architectural impressions in the public sphere. The prevalence of conflict over consensus as an agonistic basis of democracy will serve to propose structural strategies around the aesthetics of abstraction to address current socio-political inequalities. Finally, an account will be given of the affinities between Miralles and Harman, as well as the mutual contributions of their pairing.

With all this in mind, this dissertation aims to explore the cognitive possibilities of the architectural project when considered as an entity in its own right. The enemy of this enterprise are those apprehensions that claim to be the entity they grasp. They are dangerous not because they do not belong to the thing in question; insofar as they are impressions of it, they do belong to the thing. They are dangerous because they block, automate, naturalize, and impose a particular and biased vision of what is at stake. In *Discusión* (1932), Jorge Luis Borges writes:

> "The greatest sorcerer (Novalis memorably writes) would be the one who bewitches to the point of taking his/her own phantasmagoria for autonomous apparitions. Would this not be our case?" I conjecture that it is so. We (the undivided divinity that operates in us) have dreamed the world. We have dreamed it resistant, mysterious, visible, ubiquitous in space and firm in time; but we have indulged in its architecture tenuous and eternal chinks of unreason to know that it is false.[85]

This thesis clings to those chinks of unreason in architectural design not only to unmask such autonomized phantasmagorias, but to multiply and pluralize them; chinks capable even of intuiting what lies behind them. These loopholes remind us that those propositions that we assume to be naturalized and well-established are, perhaps, not completely false as Borges says, but definitely not unequivocally true. They are, among other things, suggesting an open and profound route as a form of cognition.

[85] Jorge Luis Borges, *Borges. Obras Completas*, ed. Carlos V. Frías (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1974), 258, [author's translation].

Part One

The autonomous architectural project

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Introduction to Part One

Establishing an architectural design approach that accounts for autonomous objects in a subjectless, non-factual, transcendental manner requires preliminary framework preparation. In this case, it is necessary to determine what is understood by the concepts of *object* and *autonomy* in their architectural dimension to be able to address later specific design issues coherently. This groundwork is the purpose of Part One. Realism is the school that will provide the tools.

First and foremost, realistic representations of what we perceive and think must not be confused with realism as a current of thought. The latter's metaphysics postulates the autonomous existence of things, with an epistemological approach that focuses on the tension between the reality of this existence and its representations. The realist premises followed here acknowledge the gap between something's reality or being and how it manifests itself in the word. This material provides the basis for experience, which is considered here as another expression of the reality of what we experience. Thus, our apprehensions maintain the dislocation of the real on its own terms. In other words, we cannot assure the originality and fullness of what we see, feel, and think, because the phenomena on which these experiential acts take place cannot fulfill its own reality either. This idea is opposed to naïve realism, the school that recognizes the independent existence of reality outside the human mind, but argues that the external word can be reached directly. For them, there is no gap, since substance can be known.[1]

When centering the question of reality and being in architectural design, what exactly are we referring to in the first place: the discipline or the architectural object? For DeLanda: "A scientific field can be modelled as the assemblage formed by a domain of objective phenomena, a community of practitioners, and the laboratory instruments and machines that allow the latter to interact with the former."[2] With more or less modifications, this definition can be imported into any disciplinary area, including architecture. However, it seems to me that addressing disciplines as the object of inquiry under such a definition does not imply strict design considerations, but rather analysis-oriented competencies that are much more developed in other areas of study and specialization—e.g., cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. This does not mean that architects cannot work on defining their own discipline, as the history of architectural theory demonstrates. But since in this case we are dealing with an architectural *design* theory, the architectural object, rather than the disciplinary field, seems more appropriate for the task.

The question then arises: what is an architectural object? The immediate and usual answer is the building. And it certainly is, but as noted in the introduction, OOO's notion of object is not limited to physical entities. In any case, I think it is clear that architectural design, or architecture at large, is not only concerned with buildings. Architects do not only design buildings, and buildings are not only designed by architects, as will be seen in Part Two. Then, one can extend the idea of architectural object to other typical architectural expressions, like drawings, models, images, texts, etc. However, following this path, the limitation to the physical or material simply repeats itself for each case or its sum, and other non-physical avenues remain unexplored. Is the function of a space an object? What about its experience and impressions?

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[1] For a comparison between different realist positions, see Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 18–19.
[2] DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 88, [emphasis removed].

It seems that we need a dimension of the architectural object that encompasses these multiple notions of the term and can unfold others beyond traditional canons. Therefore, I will account for the sense of *architectural project* (hereinafter abbreviated as AP) as architectural object. This term intends to unify—among others—the material, functional, emotional, process, cultural, natural, technological, and conceptual objects of architecture. So "project" will be equivalent to "object" in its architectural designation. Stated differently, the AP will be examined as a particular type of object whose reality is beyond any means of expression, but, at the same time, it is an object with multiple bodies and capacities. Like a company, a nation, or a discipline, the AP presents itself as medium-promiscuous. Therefore, it is here addressed as an *immaterial object*, following Harman's term.[3] For these reasons, the AP as an object appears as a convenient case study to elaborate a design theory in architecture. It is sufficiently broad not to be reduced to the elements that compose and manifest it, and sufficiently concrete not to be diluted in the disciplinary issues in which it participates.

When speaking of the AP, I will refer to the particular individuality of each one of them, and not to *the* AP as a single, all-encompassing being from which any design could emerge. The latter would be too close to the monistic method discarded in the introduction. Here it is adopted the discrete scheme that acknowledges each AP's identity in its locality. In short, there are many AP*s*, in the plural, rather than *one* AP for all designs.

From this standpoint, Part One has two chapters. With the requirement of a certain philosophical commitment, Chapter 1 will discuss how the architectural project is an object in OOO's sense, introducing punctual deviations from Harman's theory. Three central issues will be addressed. First, the AP's internal structure will be considered as a singular piece of reality surrounded by a qualitative set of phenomena: the *unity-multiplicity scheme*. Second, the concept of *flat representativity* will be presented, according to which any quality, expression, or capacity of the project is ontologically capable of representing the project's being. Thirdly, it will be argued that the AP's qualitative realm is *multifarious*, as it will embrace a diversity of expressions and media beyond what is typically considered as architectural. Subsequently, Chapter 2 will examine the question of the autonomy of the architectural project in a comparison with the main theories on autonomy in twentieth century architecture.

[3] See Harman, *Immaterialism*.

Chapter 1. The architectural project as an object

1.1. Unity and multiplicity

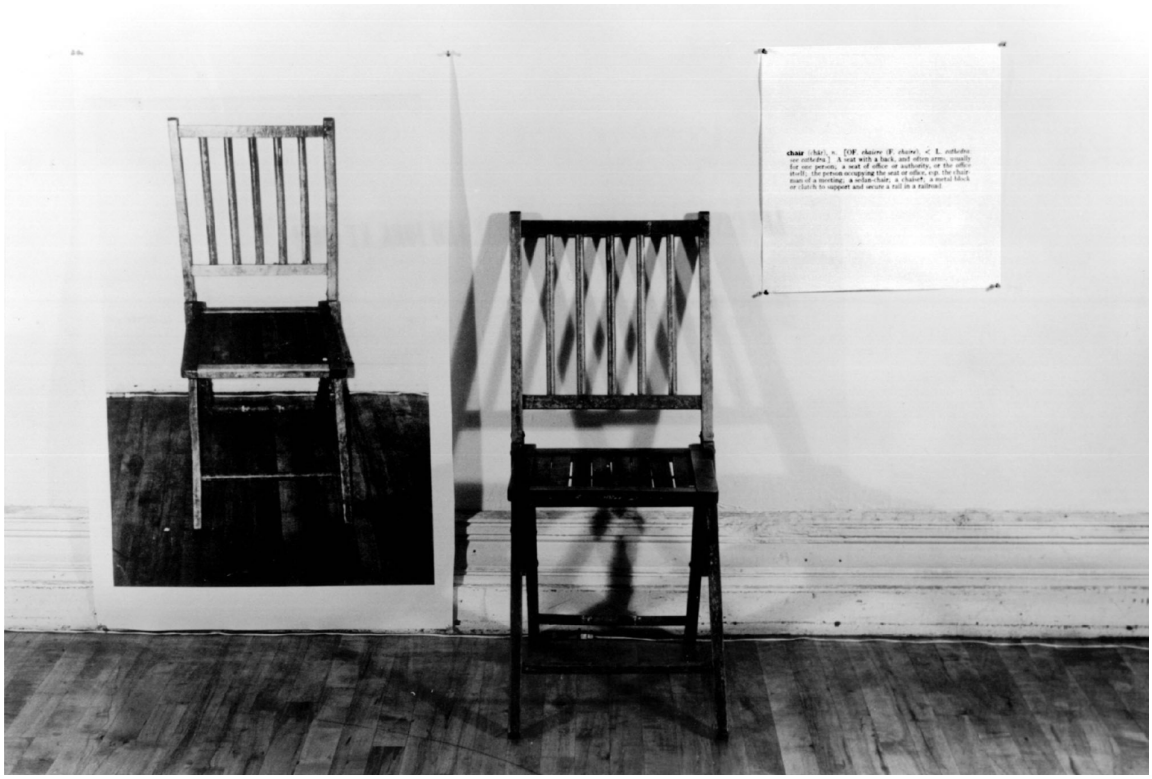


Figure 1-1. Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965.

In *One and Three Chairs* (Fig. 1-1), conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth presents three instances in three different media that refer to the same entity. The situation is not very different if we think of an architectural project with, for example, its building, floor plan, and written description. Kosuth's piece problematizes the relationship between concept and presentation by making evident the incompleteness of each representation in what they are supposed to represent. In a broader scope, this artwork embodies many of Kosuth's artistic interests theorized in his famous essay "Art after Philosophy" (1969). The text criticizes American formalist criticism and its incipient obsession with the work's morphological aspects and claims that art resides in the *idea* or *concept* rather than in the object itself. Kosuth is ultimately interested in "definitions of art" for art to be art.[1] As he notes:

> The 'value' of particular artists after Duchamp can be weighed according to how much they

[1] Joseph Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990*, ed. Gabriele Guercio (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 20.

> questioned the nature of art; which is another way of saying "what they *added* to the conception of art" or what wasn't there before they started. Artists question the nature of art by presenting new propositions as to art's nature.[2]

Implicit in this view is the requirement of a historical context to contrast what has previously been understood as art, and for Kosuth, this is a task reserved only for the artist. This means that what art is depends exclusively on the artist's intentionality in how to contribute to such an epistemological framework. Kosuth calls this "conceptual growth."[3] However, posed in this way, the question is certainly inconsistent with Kosuth's defense of the tautological condition of art, i.e., art for art's sake.[4] This additive approach to art by definitions is, first, restricted to an elite called "artists," and second, is constantly discursive about *our* concept of art rather than about art itself. In other words, art is always in negative dialogue—but dialogue nonetheless—with what has been previously understood as art rather than with art itself. The nature of art is then relational on an epistemological basis, a historical continuity that operates by opposition.

Moreover, Kosuth's essay laments High Modernism's taxonomization of consolidated physical media, like painting or sculpture. As he provocatively puts it: "If you make paintings you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of art."[5] Yet if one follows his premise of "art as idea," it can be argued that the end of this argument is the paradoxical confinement of art to a single medium: the human mind, especially in its rational activity. That means that the physical artwork is here a mediation subsumed to the artist's intellectual proposition. For such an endeavor, rather than focusing on what art is in itself, Kosuth claims that "what is important in art is what one *brings* to it."[6] However, this disposition leads to another inconsistency when compared to the article's other major assertion that works of art "provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact."[7] What is Kosuth's "conceptual growth" and the equating of art with *definitions* of art but precisely the provision of information about *our* understanding of art?

To avoid these incongruities, we must fundamentally differentiate between two attitudes towards art in *One and Three Chairs*: (a) to question our understanding of the nature of art is different from (b) to evidence the existence of the nature of art itself. Kosuth affiliates with the former. Approach (a) requires a semantic commitment to contribute rationally to art, to the point of expelling experiential qualities and aesthetic issues "outside" of art considerations.[8] The root of this disposition takes us back to the idealist view for which something is as we understand it, and it is constructed as we understand it. According to David Hume's bundle theory, we perceive things as indiscriminate sets of perceptions based on their appearances, to which *we* attribute an idea or identity.[9] In this view, the One Chair of *One and Three Chairs* is unified by and in the mind, rather than itself. *Our* understanding of the Chair—our idea of it—*is* the Chair.

Against this idealistic disposition, two philosophical paths can be distinguished in (b): the phenomenological and the realist approach. In the former, the non-material One

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[2] Ibid., 18.
[3] Ibid., 20.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 18.
[6] Ibid., 21.
[7] Ibid., 20.
[8] Ibid., 22.
[9] David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 1888th ed. (1739; repr., London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pt. 1:4.

Chair is an *intentional object* deeper than its three chair representations or *adumbrations*. This refers to Edmund Husserl's approach. Its drawback is that, according to the phenomenological school, the tension between the unified non-material Thing and its set of diverse and incomplete representations can only take place in the mind. The human remains the most fundamental part of the world's reality. The alternative is realism. Like phenomenology, realism also admits the limitations of the Chair's manifestations in achieving its Oneness. Where realism surpasses phenomenology is in recognizing that such a transcendental structure remains valid even if there is no one in the room perceiving the installation or thinking of it elsewhere. In other words, the absence of cognitive intentionality does not invalidate reality. The mind, or any other kind of subject, is completely irrelevant to the Chair's being. Under a realist perspective, One Chair with its three chairs can exist on its own terms apart from whether or not it is experienced. Its autonomy results from the simple fact of existing and is recognized when accepting that the subject's cognition is irrelevant for the constitution of this existence. Moreover, the Chair's identity can only endure if it is a substance that transcends its manifestation *and* performances. That means that, because it is substantial and transcendental to any of its states and relations, its Oneness remains in force even though its power of action or agency is not exercised. As noted in the introduction, ANT and New Materialism are far from accepting this possibility. Stated differently, the Chair is no more Chair—it is no more real—because someone sits in its physical representation, sees its photograph, thinks of it two days after visiting the exhibition, or remains utterly ignored forever.

These two tenets—autonomy and substance or being—should suffice to develop the purposes of Part One by following a "substantial-existential-realist baseline" for structuring the architectural project (AP). On this footing, there is no need to be afraid of terms like "substance, "being," or "autonomy," as the thesis aims to show that engaging with them does not automatically lead to archaic, traditional, and limiting stances. Quite the opposite. The interaction of multiple and heterogeneous entities will be claimed as the compositional basis of the AP, which also shows an abundance of articulations and actions. But for these pluralities to be maintained, it is necessary to account for the figure of the AP as an autonomous, single, subjectless existence beyond them. To better elucidate this unity-multiplicity scheme, it is necessary to refine partnerships. For that, we need an additional ramification within the school of realism to clarify what is at stake about the One of *One and Three Chairs*. As noted, the general principle of realism accepts the existence of things in their own right. However, whereas *naïve or epistemological realism* claims knowledge and direct access to them, this is impossible for *ontological realism*—the branch adopted here. Levi R. Bryant puts it plainly:

> *Epistemological* realism argues that our representations and language are accurate mirrors of the world as it actually is, regardless of whether or not we exist. It seeks to distinguish between true representations and phantasms. *Ontological* realism, by contrast, is not a thesis about our *knowledge* of objects, but about the being of objects themselves, whether or not we exist to represent them.[10]

As also observed in the introduction, basing a world model on objective access and knowledge as truth is the anthropocentric approach that has proven to be the most significant source of social inequalities. Faced with this, one option is subjectlessness, something that only ontological realism and, in particular, Object-Oriented Ontology

[10] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 18.

(OOO), provides within the contemporary intellectual landscape. This philosophical movement contends that there is *no direct access* to things, since reality always recedes from representation. Yet it is not intimidated by the reality-appearance gap either. OOO says that reality—One Chair, in our example—can be accessed *indirectly*. What does it mean? As a preview of Part Two, *aesthetics* establishes a mode of cognition capable of grasping a thing's being *intangibly*. Reality is not what we perceive directly and literally, but the closest our cognition can get is its suggestion and insinuation. That is why aesthetics moves by allusions and innuendos. Aesthetic experience cannot formulate in factual and measurable terms what the thing is; therefore, it remains ineffable for us. But aesthetics can provide a sensation of its being, a register of its existence. Is this not precisely what *One and Three Chairs* does? Kosuth's installation presents a set of tangible and measurable phenomena that transcend their material presentness to point to their unitary and unparaphrasable existence.

Under this umbrella, what requires demystification is the understanding—or misunderstanding—that Conceptual Art somehow establishes a reliable method towards what art or the artwork is. Here, I follow Harman's argument that reality withdraws both conceptually and sensitively.[11] The mind is as inefficient as our senses and feelings in giving a clear picture of the real. Therefore, Conceptual Art is an epistemological race to see who most challenges what has been said so far in the history of art concepts. The being of the artistic discipline is renounced in favor of a perpetual subject-centered construct, which also relegates artworks themselves to a secondary concern. Yet, interestingly and perhaps unintentionally, many conceptual artworks brilliantly address the question of the real. Kosuth situates his artistic mechanism directly in the fissure between appearance and reality, even though he foregoes a realist reading of it. Most of his artworks are a semantic game that plays with the relationality of how a familiar object is simultaneously represented and referred to in various formats.[12] Its aesthetic consequence consists of making us aware that the everyday thing that we normally confront separately and automatically in our daily routine is something much deeper and no longer so familiar. However, this semantic exercise should not be seen as a constitutive world model, but a particular artistic technique or access device within much more profound ontological dimension.[13]

In this sense, *One and Three Chairs* can be seen as a Heideggerian example in which the "breaking" of the factual trivialities of its three *beings* brings its deepest One-*Being* to the fore of our consciousness. How architectural design can make operative such a transcendental tension through aesthetics is the theme of Part Two. Which design mechanisms—other than semantic techniques—can account for such depth in architectural practice and experience are the propositional concerns of Part Three. Indeed, and contrary to Kosuth's aversion to it, delving into morphological concerns will be argued to be productive for the *deep* and *open* realist task. All this does not mean that the aesthetic method cannot contribute to the intellectual question of our understanding of art and architecture, as Conceptual Art pursues in the first place. It will do so but by virtue of first acknowledging the autonomous existence of artistic and architectural objects. Knowledge derives from reality, rather than from constructing it.

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[11] For Harman, any method of access fails to grasp what the thing in question is. Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.

[12] See other Kosuth's artworks like *Leaning Glass* (1965), *Neon* (1965), or 1*,2,3,4* (1993).

[13] Although for the moment I concede the corruption of everyday elements as a means of altering automatic perception in order to reach a deeper layer of reality, the limitations of the precedent as design material will be discussed at length in Chapter 6. It will be argued its impossibility to completely dissociate itself from its assumed meanings.

Before that, we can refine why the architectural project is an object and examine its general structure. What can be considered a "thing" with its own inwardness is a flexible territory that each philosophical school has delimited differently: only human, or only humans and some animals, perhaps sentient beings, only applicable to physical entities, etc. For the present case, I follow OOO's maxim that *everything is an object*: an airplane, a thought, my cousin, France, how a dolphin moves in the water, Hercule Poirot, eating, a mathematical theory. The cosmic territory has no fences that determine what is and what is not a thing. The moment something *is* is a thing, as tautological as it may sound. The fashionable term today that recognizes this condition is *flat ontology*. Manuel DeLanda describes such a regime as "one made exclusively of unique, singular individuals, differing in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status."[14] In other words, everything has the right to exit on its own terms, or as Ian Bogost puts it: "all things equally exist, yet they do not exist equally."[15] Then, the argument as to why an architectural project is an object and can be considered ontologically is certainly a simple one: because it exists.

Given this, we can now explore which structural model of the AP emanates from a realist perspective. In modern philosophy, the main concept that speaks of the two conditions of autonomy and transcendental substance is that of Immanuel Kant's *thing-in-itself* [*Ding an sich*]. Kant comments on the limitation of rational access and a deeper existence beyond phenomena in the following manner: "The estimate of our rational cognition *a priori* at which we arrive is that it has only to do with phenomena, and that things in themselves, while possessing a real existence, lie beyond its sphere."[16] This is one of the central themes of OOO: the tension between objects and qualities, between one and many. Its immediate reference is found in Heidegger's concept of *ontological difference*, which occurs between the ontic and the ontological. In other words, there is a distinction between facts about entities and the meaning of Being beyond the factual.[17] I think that Kosuth's installation makes this tension evident in *One and Three Chairs,* giving us a preliminary unity-multiplicity structure in which the chairs stand for the same One. In general terms, each object can be seen as an indivisible package of a set of manifestations associated with a unit of reality. The *onion diagram* proposed here (Fig. 1-2) accounts for this structure of one-and-many, and which will gain in detail in the course of the thesis.

A *substantial or existential* realm and a *qualitative* realm are constantly in conjunction and separation within each object. This structure directly derives from Harman's general distinction between *objects* and *qualities*.[18] But a terminological caveat must be noted here. What Harman calls "object," or more aptly, "real object," I call "being," and by "object" I refer to the overall conjunction—united but not mixed—of being and qualities. This means that, for me, "object" conceptually operates one level above Harman's. I speak of an "object's being" and the "object's qualities," instead of opposing "object" to

[14] DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, 51.
[15] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 11, [emphasis removed].
[16] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (1781; repr., London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), XXX.
[17] See Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (1927; repr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 318–30.
[18] The object/quality rift is one of two tensions in Harman's theory. The other is the real/sensual. Mixing these two pairings, he establishes the fourfold diagram of objects, which is not exactly the same as the onion diagram proposed here. See Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Alresford, UK: Zero Books, 2011).

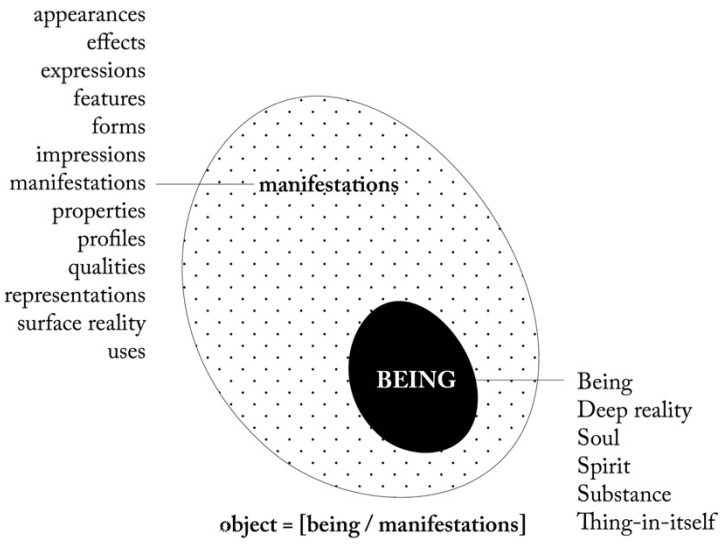


Figure 1-2. Onion diagram: unity-multiplicity structure with list of synonyms. Compact version of Figure 1-3.

"qualities." In both versions, there is no deep reality—call it being or object—without qualities, and these two realms never intersect each other but are in tension.

In this context, the reading I make of *One and Three Chairs* is that no chair-manifestation reveals its underlying Chair-substance as such or, conversely, no substance consistently presents itself in a body or event (experiential or otherwise). This view stems from Bryant's version of OOO, according to which "[q]ualities reside in substances, they are predicated of substances, whereas substances are not predicated of anything."[19] As will be further discussed below, this is not possible for Harman, for whom substances are predicates of essential qualities. Before that, it is important to clarify three points.

First, for the sake of closeness to common speech, I find words like "spirit" or "soul" more akin to the notion of "being" rather than the term "object"—in Harman's sense—whose popular understanding is too much anchored precisely in the ontic or factual sphere that OOO wants to avoid.

Secondly, the notion of reality—or deep reality—is not reduced to what is actual, physical, and present to our sensory radar. Despite everyday understanding, the real is not in opposition to the false, imaginary, or abstract, since they also exist. The (deep) real is not the opposite of the mental. It is the deepest dimension of existence—i.e., being—irreducible to qualities, whether physical, mental, or otherwise. In turn, the qualitative realm is not fictitious or abstract in itself either. It is not a simulacrum as opposed to an "authentic" realm. Qualities—and experiences therein—are as real as their deep being for the simple fact that they also exist, even though they are incomplete to embody their own selves.

Third, ontological realism is a subject-independent model, in which both being *and* qualities exist without such a figure. In its radical form, an object that exists without being in any relation at all with other entities—at least temporarily—is what Harman calls *dormant object*.[20] Among other things, this implies that a dormant object cannot be experienced by anything or anyone, but that it can come and go in experience without dying and being born each time. Fashion trends come immediately to mind as an example of a dormant object. For our purposes, "dormant" qualifies a state that is perfect for

[19] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 72.
[20] Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re.press, 2009), 214.

understanding the irrelevance of cognition in something's existence. In this line, subjectlessness is claimed as the key condition for reconsidering the One/Many structure after its Deleuzian destitution. The French philosopher dismissed such an ancient philosophical scheme because it was always relative to the figure of the (human) subject in one way or another.[21] He had every reason to do so, given the modern precedents of Kant and Heidegger where the One/Many rift was a matter exclusive to the human mind. But with the arrival of OOO, two things can be argued for reconsidering the One/Many structure. On the one hand, the relational incompleteness or finitude of capturing the thing-in-itself of something or oneself is extended to *any* entity.[22] On the other hand, the figure of the subject, whether human or non-human, is rejected altogether.[23] To put it plainly, OOO not only rejects the human subject, it rejects *all* subjects. Nothing can define another something or oneself *cognitively*. One consequence derived from this idea is that human mediation and participation are not a necessary requirement of relationality or causality between non-human entities, something that agential and materialist theories do not contemplate.[24] Acknowledging subjectless One/Many structures means the elimination of the figure of the *subject* as the one who dictates and defines from the outside—the one who constructs truths—in favor of the *cognizer* as the innocuous explorer, discoverer, and performer of a being's manifestations. What epistemologically is at stake in this framework is what *subjectless cognition* means, the underlying question that runs through the whole thesis for the cases of architectural experience (both in design and occupation).

All this entails that an object's concrete pool of manifestations, which Bryant specifies as "local," provides the basis of the cognizer's experience and *is part of it*. As he comments: "Experience is a subset of local manifestation, but the set comprised of local manifestations is infinitely larger than the set consisting of experience."[25] In Timothy Morton's parlance: "Intersubjectivity can be considered a small region of a larger interobjective possibility space."[26] What is of special interest for this thesis is that at times cognitive activity actualizes or activates manifestations in the world, as architectural design does when the architect or user unfolds new aspects of a project (Chapter 5).

We said that being is unitary for each object, but how is the multiplicity of an object? How many and what kind of manifestations and capacities do each object involve in addition to our experiences of it? The sincere answer is that it cannot be known. But such uncertainty turns into both the Achilles heel and the goose that lays the golden eggs of epistemology. On the one hand, it does not matter how much we dodge the situation in daily life or how well we "objectify" things through logic, mathematics, and other rational methods: we never know for sure what we are dealing with. Any objectification of experience is an embargo on the depth and extension of what is observed for the sake of self-reaffirmation. Is this harmfulness to the object pernicious to all aspects of life? Of course not. There are countless cases where superficiality is required before profundity. But for our particular case in the investigation of the AP's double unknown, it is.

On the other hand, this does not mean that knowledge is futile and disposable.

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[21] Deleuze, *Foucault*, 13–14.
[22] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 169–73.
[23] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 19–33.
[24] By not distinguishing between ontology and epistemology, agential and materialist theories can only account for material practices in which a human is involved, ignoring all other things and interactions in which humans are not involved.
[25] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.
[26] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 82.

Quite the contrary. Such cognitive deficiency is what nourishes the collective project of knowledge. Emmánuel Lizcano draws an epistemological scenario for his case study—"the imaginary"—that is pertinent to the present realist disposition: "[Things] educate the gaze, a gaze that never looks directly at things: it looks at them through the thing's disparate configurations in which the eye is fed."[27] Kosuth gives us three chairs in relation to One. How many and which others can be unfolded from its qualitative domain is the epistemological challenge. To our advantage, architecture as a design discipline is in a privileged position to pursue this task; not only because of its speculative nature, but also because of its ability to address large audiences. It is a perfect platform to undertake such a collective challenge through individual approaches (see also in Chapter 5).

Within this framework, we can assume, then, the paradoxical condition that an architectural project's qualitative domain, like that of any other object, is finite and inexhaustible. How? It must be *ontologically finite* and unique, as it is difficult to imagine two distinct substances with exactly the same set of qualities. If it were infinite, any representation would simultaneously represent everything else in the world.[28] At the same time, an object's qualitative domain can be considered *epistemologically or cognitively inexhaustible*. Each cognizer has particular, hence limited, cognitive capacities towards each particular thing.[29] This suggests that there is always the possibility of apprehending something more than what we have sensorially or conceptually experienced. Since our cognition is within the cognized, as we have seen previously with Bryant, what we perceive and think about something is always less than what can be perceived and thought about that something. To be detailed in Chapter 3, the distance between what I have cognized and what I can cognize of an AP is the *space of abundance* or *the knowable* of this AP for me; a surplus that is argued to be qualitative, local, and specific of the AP. Then, such excess also runs behind direct apprehension parallel to the non-predicative being. Given this, the vertigo that things sometimes produce in us is thus an *illusion* of infinity that occurs in the awareness of our uncertainty of a bing's withdrawal and its very large qualitative finitude.[30] Another term for this vertigo is the sublime. If things escape definition, it is because the moment something is defined, we block its double vertigo for ourselves. Coming back to Lizcano as if he were discussing the AP:

> […] the [AP] is not susceptible to definition. For the simple reason that it is the source of [its] definitions. […] Trying to define it is a task similar to that of—according to the Chinese proverb—trying to catch the fist with the hand, the former being only one of the concrete forms that the hand can adopt. But its indefiniteness does not reveal a defect or lack, but, on the contrary, an excess or richness. The [AP] exceeds what can be said of it, for it is from it that what is said can be said. For this reason, the [AP] can only be alluded to by indirect references, especially by means of metaphors and analogies.[31]

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[27] Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos piensan*, 42, [author's translation].

[28] For a more detailed discussion of the finitude of the object's qualitative domain, see Gonzalo Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation: Adding Aesthetics to 'Knowledge without Truth,'" *Open Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2021): 50–51, https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2020-0150.

[29] As said in the introduction, by "cognition" I mean any kind of non-constitutive relation to the object in question, whether mental, physical, spiritual, sensory, perceptual, or any other.

[30] Timothy Morton makes this point when he talks about our ease of handling infinity as a concept as opposed to a very large finitude. Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 40.

[31] Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos piensan*, 54, [author's translation].

Although they will be expanded in Part Two, it is important to note now that these dualities of the veiled versus the unveiled and the inexhaustibility of the finite are the fundamental cognitive concerns on which this design theory is cemented: the AP's ineffable reality that escapes direct access and the knowable manifestations within its qualitative surplus for a given cognizer.

But before that point, preparation work still needs to be done. Part of this consists of emphasizing that an object's qualitative multiplicity is as subject-independent as its substantial realm. It is pre-cognitive, with cognition sometimes being instrumental in activating expressions that await activation. "[E]ach [object] marks an encirclement fence, its fence," Lizcano writes, "but it also opens a whole range of possibilities, its possibilities."[32] Kosuth exposes three possibilities of that Chair. Wallace Stevens accounts for "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" in his famous poem.[33] In 2014, the competition for the Guggenheim Helsinki received 1,715 submissions. "[T]hings can *be* many and various, specific and concrete, while their *being* remains identical," Ian Bogost says.[34]

This multifarious condition is enhanced when the thing is irreducible to a medium of expression. We usually speak of physical, non-physical, mental, fictional, actual, organizational, relational, theoretical entities, and so on. In our discipline, the general understanding of the form/function dichotomy has led to the reductionist view that architecture deals with physical objects (buildings) and/or relational ones (events). But where does this leave the AP? I argue that the project's multiplicity is too colorful for architectural design to continue just playing with black and white. The AP can neither be a physical object nor a relational one. What kind of entity could it be, then?

In the book *Immaterialism*, Harman uses the example of the Dutch East India Company to formalize the relevance of his notion of "object" for social theory.[35] He examines how the conglomeration of ships, contracts, people, routes, spices, and ports give rise to an entity of its own: the Company.[36] A similar multitude can be acknowledged for Kosuth's One Chair, as well as any architectural project composed of other particular objects, like drawings, project descriptions, models, structure calculations, the inhabitations of its spaces. Do the Company, Kosuth's One Chair, or the AP have a singular mode of manifestation? I argue that no, they do not. They are composed and expressed by many objects in different media. At the same time, it can be said that each of these component parts can be seen as another expression of the composed object. A ship is not only a constitutive element of the larger assemblage of the Dutch East India Company. It is also an entity in itself, independent of what it composes. But unlike the Company, *this* Physical Ship has a precise medium of expression: the physical. It should be noted that the physicality, or any other media characteristic of a thing, in no way compromises its subterranean being. (Another battle is the fact that such medium-specificity and dependence on material expressions constitute a more evident danger for the epistemological acknowledgment of the existence of such an elusive self.) The same applies to the physical, photographed, or verbal chair in Kosuth's artwork. They are three different objects, besides representations of the One Chair. Similarly, the building or drawing of a project entails this Physical Building and that 2D Drawing as such. From this, it follows

[32] Ibid., 43, [author's translation].
[33] Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 92–95.
[34] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 12.
[35] Harman, *Immaterialism*.
[36] A similar reading can be seen in DeLanda's notion of "social assemblage" in Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (Continuum, 2006).

that behind every instance within a qualitative domain there is an object in itself, which surely provides some of its profiles to other causes. For example, a company representative employs certain competencies towards the company other than towards this person's family or bowling team. And what such a person does for these involvements at any given time is less than his or her total capabilities for each of these tasks. It is under this logic that, for example, the programmatic versatility, the plurality of impressions, or the wide range of spatial versions of the same project can be argued.

Put differently, the current participation of object A in the constitution or representation of object B is always less than its total capacity for such activities. Object A always has an abundance specific to B that has not yet been actualized, as well as a surplus for objects other than B. In this regard, Morton provocatively states that "the whole is always weirdly *less* than the sum of its parts."[37] But there are also competencies of object A that are completely inadequate for object B, suggesting that entities are never fully integrated into others. They always have a step outside of any involvement (Fig. 1-3).

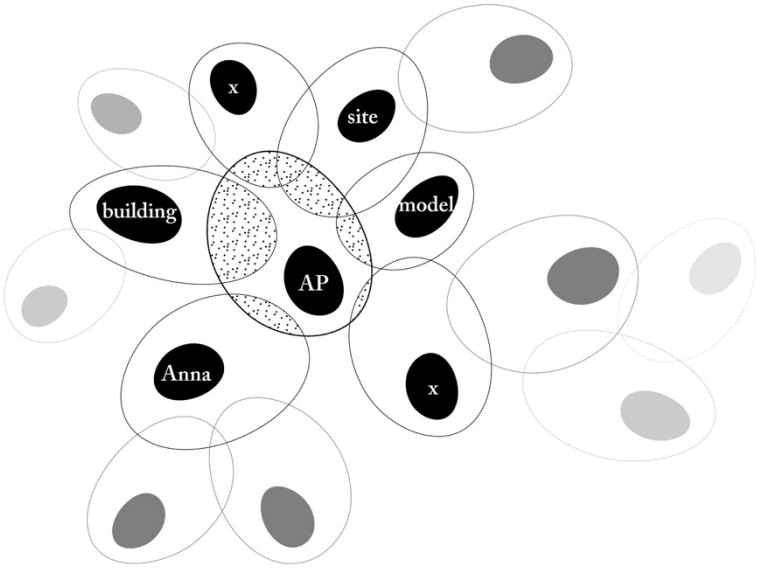


Figure 1-3. Diverse and shared composition and/or representation of the AP with participants' half-hearted involvement. Expanded version of Fig. 1-2.

This halfway commitment, which is an unmistakable sign of the serving objects' own autonomy, does not dissipate that in many entities—especially in phantom objects such as the Dutch East India Company, Kosuth's installation, or an AP—their constitutive elements cede their qualitative profiles also as bodies of expression to the larger objects they compose. In such cases, the parts are specific to a medium, while the wholes they institute are not. These emerging entities are literally multimedia and multifaceted. We can refer to them as *phantom objects*, as they use others' bodies to manifest themselves. As noted, many times they are the bodies of their components, which then play the dual but separate role of composition and representation. In other words, phantom entities are medium-promiscuous insofar as their heterogeneous compositions are also part of their expressions. This subrogation does not invalidate the irreducibility of the phantom object's being to its yielded components, nor that of each part's being to what it composes. However, this does

[37] And he continues immediately: "There is literally more non-Tim Morton DNA in Tim Morton than there is Tim Morton DNA, as a condition of possibility for Tim Morton's existence." Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 71.

not mean that a phantom object does not have *emergent properties* over and above those of its parts. For example, the impact of a company on the market is not a repeated effect of some of its component elements. It is an emergent manifestation of the Company. The same can occur with a building in a city; e.g., the Guggenheim Museum's impact on Bilbao is something that none of its pieces can do on its own.

The qualitative and multiple domain of the AP as a phantom object can then be considered as a mixture of emergent and repeated qualities. This condition is at least more evident than in other medium- and form-specific entities, for example, physical water. The properties of its components do not appear in the emergent composite. In fact, they are contrary, as hydrogen and oxygen expel fire, while water extinguishes it. From this perspective, the immaterial or phantom object resonates with Morton's *hyperobjects*. "Hyperobjects […] are 'hyper' in relation to some other entity," he notes.[38] What is *the* representation of climate change?

Similar to Morton's "hyper," what makes a phantom object "phantom" is its overwhelming, heterogeneous extension and depth for a given cognizer, whether this one is human or other-than-human. In this light, the architectural project is phantom and hyper. It can be argued that the phantom object is paradigmatic in showing OOO's notion of withdrawal. It makes us aware of the inadequacy of appearances to embody the substantial dimension of things, as well as of the existence of qualities and effects proper to it other than those historically assumed. From a cognitive standpoint, the "phantom" and "hyper" conditions lead to a "multi"—multi-media, multi-faceted, multi-effectual—that appears promising for any field of design. It allows us to consider media and expressions other than the traditional and naturalized ones in architecture without leaving the qualitative sphere of the project in question.

To summarize what has been said so far for the architectural project:

First, the AP can only exist in its own right under a world model that rejects the figure of the subject as ontological provider and recognizes the autonomous existence of things. Put bluntly, the AP is independent of the architect and the user, as well as the production and surrounding conditions. In approaching things through its discreetness, each AP is unique not only with respect to other entities but also to other APs. *This* AP is an individual distinct from *that* AP.

Second, there is an internal gap within each project, establishing two realms that always go together: a unitary being and a multiplicity of appearances and effects; a substantial and a qualitative realm, respectively. No single quality or the sum of all of them can define what the unitary reality is, since it is predicative of nothing but its existence. Moreover, the experience of a project is part of its qualitative content. This means that experience, intellectual or sensory, is simultaneously an expression of the project but incomplete in such representation.

Third, within this general structure for any object in the cosmos, the AP is a particular type of object: a phantom or immaterial one. It lacks a definite medium of expression, which makes its plural and diverse set of qualities a mixture of emerging manifestations exclusive to itself and repeated ones stemming from its component parts.

Fourth, the qualitative domain of an AP is ontologically finite and epistemologically inexhaustible, if well oriented.

[38] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 1.

1.2. Flat representativity

Having defined objects' structure as finite multitudes of profiles unified in single beings, this section will focus on the types of internal relations within them. From this will follow the argument that any expression, quality, appearance, or effect of the object is legitimate in representing the substance in which it is housed, as well as its neighboring profiles. It will be called *flat representativity*.

OOO authors usually distinguish two types of relationships: *domestic* and *foreign* relations (Harman), or *endo-* and e*xo-relationships* (Bryant), respectively. In Harman's words, "there is an absolute distinction between the domestic relations that a thing needs to some extent in order to exist, and the external alliances that it does not need."[39] For Bryant: "Endo-relations constitute the internal structure of objects independent of all other objects, while exo-relations are relations that objects enter into with other objects."[40] To propose a third terminology, there are *constitutive relations* between the component parts of an object and *cognitive relations* in how that object is perceived, used, thought, felt, understood, etc. Whether or not one or another entity—for example, a human and a stone—participates in one or both types of relationality as an ingredient and/or cognizer depends on the selectivity policy of the object to which it relates (Section 2.2). Thus, cognition is not understood here as a human-specific process, but, more generally, as non-constitutive relationality between any kind of objects, whether or not humans are involved. At the same time, every cognitive relation is also constitutive in itself, as it configures another entity: the cognitive object composed of the cognizer and the cognized. For instance, an architectural model as an entity in its own right can be composed of wooden, cardboard, and 3D-printed pieces organized in a certain way. Without these pieces related in such a manner, the model would not exist. These are the model's *constitutive* parts and relationships. On the contrary, me inspecting the model, turning it over, or thinking about it once I have left the studio are *cognitive* relationships that are innocuous to the model's existential mode. In addition, the cognitive act of apprehending the model is another entity in itself composed by me and the model. Within this framework, it is important to note that, although constitutive relations provide the basis of existence, they *do not* define what the being is or how it exists, and cognitive relations are even less so. Constitutive dependency is paramount for autonomy to occur, but they are not the same thing. This is why OOO insists on the irreducibility of being to any kind of relation.[41]

Within this framework, cognitive relations are also *representational relations*, since they are part of the object's manifestations. As a reminder, "[e]xperience is a subset of local manifestation," says Bryant.[42] Before examining how cognition operates, it is necessary to make some preliminary notes.

In the first place, the sense of "representation" addressed here is closer to the legislative sense of the action of representing and being represented than that of showing or exhibiting. The latter is rather a presentation. A *re*presentation is a delegation of something or someone to another something or someone. The representative stands or acts *on behalf of* the represented and, therefore, the former is never equal to the latter. Hence, representation always entails *translation*: same content with different shell.

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[39] Harman, *Prince of Networks*, 135.
[40] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 68.
[41] Graham Harman, "The Third Table," *100 Notes-100 Thoughts*, Documenta Series 085, 2012.
[42] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.

Second, we should not reduce the idea of representation to the physical format, but rather, and as a general rule, every expression in any medium is always representing something internally. This implies neither that a representation represents everything else in the world, nor that every object contains representations of itself in every medium. As noted in the previous section, each qualitative realm is finite and it is each object's internal policy to establish its representations and by what means they are expressed (more on "selectivity" in Section 2.2).

Third, representations are not representations-*for* a subject, who mediates the link between two phenomena for his/her/its/their own elucidations. Classical mimesis is perhaps the most obvious example of subject-centered representation. This is but one possibility among the plethora of a given set of qualities as representations. It should be clear that classical mimesis—as any other cognitive mode—should not be expelled from the object's representational realm; it is part of it. What must be dismantled is its elevation as the only expressive possibility of the thing. In other words, even if some continue with the stubborn anthropocentric stance of only considering representations-for the human subject, it should at least be granted that those representations-for are multiple because the human subject is a disparate collective. Here is where many intellectual projects, criticisms, and activisms operate in relation to the question of social and ecological equality. Each of us never employs the totality of our interpretative capacities for a given cognitive situation, and each of us has different cognitive abilities. There is no universal subject (singular), but individual and diverse cognizers (plural). Therefore, there is no absolute and naturalized representation-for. This mono-vision has dominated Western culture since modernity. It has led to cultural and social advances, but it has also established dogmatic and oppressive conditions that many contemporary discourses seek to pluralize, like postcolonial, queer, and feminist studies, to name a few. But, as commented earlier, human exceptionalism, even if plural, is also cognitively limiting to entangle with all that stands in an object apart from pre-oriented human receptions. One strategy to go beyond the representation-for a pluralized subject is to consider a subjectless representation-*of* the object, given that the former is contained in latter.[43]

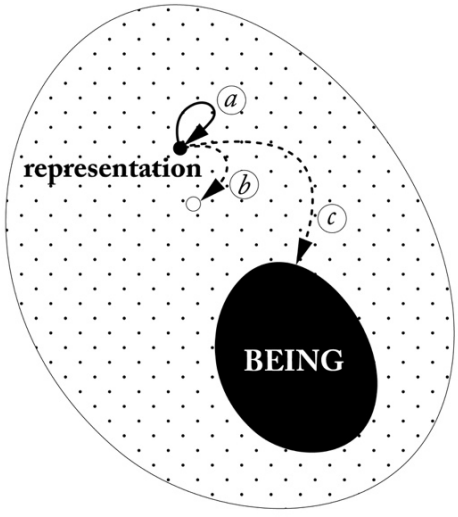


Figure 1-4. Onion diagram: three internal representational relationships.

[43] For a detailed discussion of the distinction between representation-for and representation-of, renamed "representation of objects" and "objects of representation," see Garcia, *Form and Object*, 242–48.

Within this framework, three types of internal representational relations can be distinguished for any given expression. All three occur simultaneously for the same representation, whether a cognizer is aware of it or not. Every manifestation is a representation of (a) itself, (b) the object's other manifestations, and (c) the underlying being (Fig. 1-4).

Type A internal representativity. The first refers to a manifestation representing itself. It is a self-representation of its qualitative basis, so it is more appropriate to speak of a *presentation*. This is the surface and material world as it comes directly to experience. The idea of "material" here is to be understood broadly: it encompasses anything qualitative, not only physical matter. Modern knowledge and the sciences feed from here, and even seemingly contradictory theories find overlaps in their interests in presentations. For example, Hume's bundle theory, based on lists of exhibited properties, and (New)Materialism or ANT, which, while not reducing the qualitative spectrum to what the mind can grasp as Hume does, very much like Hume, account exclusively for the qualitative surface of things. Haraway's *worlding* and Latour's *earthing* are illustrative of presentation theories.[44] The criticism of the transcendentalist positions to these frontal approaches is precisely that presentations overlook what is beyond their material presence (matter or effects). "By literalism," Harman writes, "I mean the doctrine, or often the unstated assumption, that an artwork or any object can be adequately paraphrased by describing the qualities it possesses, which ultimately means by describing the relation in which it stands to us or something else."[45] And Han laments: "Only emptiness is entirely transparent."[46] Literalism and transparency turn representations into presentations. In those cases, identity is at odds with changes and variations. A thing that manifests itself as presentation has no internal multiplicity, because its powers are fully and uniformly exposed at all times. Monotonous qualitative present is the only cognitive exchange value.

Type B internal representativity. Within an entity's qualitative realm, the second type of representational relationships implies that a given profile also represents its qualitative siblings. In this case, representation should be understood not as a mere signaling, but as a channel to reach the represented. This is especially evident between the three chairs of Kosuth's installation. The verbal chair represents (leads us to) the physical and the 2D instances, and vice versa. The same happens within the manifestations of an architectural project: a render represents its floor plan, building, MEP calculations, and a vast number of other profiles of the object. The latter means that the whole array of representational interconnections offered by a manifestation is beyond the cognitive capabilities of the cognizer. Each expression emanates a multi-directional halo where each vector or thread leads to each of the other profiles of the object (Fig. 1-5), with our expressions and reactions among them. Each expression is a "thickened appearance," as Lars Spuybroek says. "The true extensiveness or weight of a thing lies in its radiance, in the thickening of its appearance."[47] And he continues a few paragraphs later: "The best way to explain the rays

[44] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*; Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018).
[45] Graham Harman, *Art and Objects* (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2020), x.
[46] Byung-Chul Han, *The Transparency Society* (2012; repr., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 40.
[47] Lars Spuybroek, "Charis and Radiance: The Ontological Dimensions of Beauty," in *Giving and Taking: Antidotes to a Culture of Greed*, ed. J. Brouwer S. Van Tuinen (Rotterdam: V2_Publishing, 2014), 136. For a

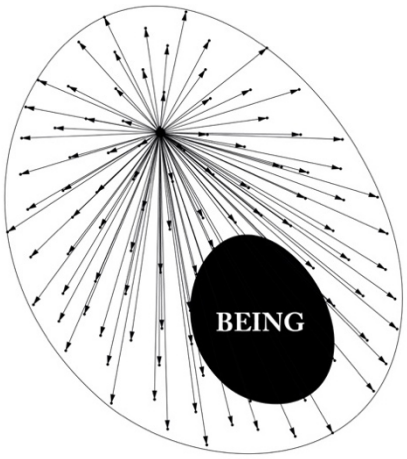


Figure 1-5. Type B internal representativity, where each manifestation emanates a halo of interconnections towards each of the other object's expressions.

of radiance is to imagine them as 'half-relations,' as relations emanating from an object that have not yet connected to other things."[48] This means that the manifestation's multiplicity—i.e., the spectrum of what it shows, its generosity—exists in full from the first moment, even though not all of its possibilities have been actualized yet. Such plentifulness is for him a *superactuality*, rather than a virtuality or a hidden reserve.[49]

From here, if each manifestation simultaneously represents each of the others of the object, in turn, it follows that, first, each manifestation is represented differently by each of the others, and second, none of these representational relations between internal expressions has a definite mode of representation.

The latter suggests that each act of representing another manifestation within a given object is also an object in itself, with its own representational qualitative surplus. For example, the definition of Kosuth's verbal chairs says: "A seat with a back, and often arms, usually for one person." This expression can be reformulated as "a structure with a horizontal and a vertical surface on which the back and the bottom of a human body can rest." No word is repeated between the two manifestations and still both refer to the same physical chair. Nevertheless, that every quality within the same being is interconnected should not be extrapolated to the outward condition that every being relates to any other, since each has its own selective rules of constitutive and cognitive relationality. As a reminder, a thing's qualitative realm is particular and limited. But the internal profiles of an object are already in relation to each other by the mere fact of being *within* the same set of qualities for such an object. "Limits are […] strict but open," back to Spuybroek.[50]

About the former (each manifestation is represented differently by each of the others), it would be erroneous to consider accuracy or privileged directionalities in the representational relations between an object's manifolds from an ontological perspective. "The rendering represents the building better than the project description" or "a conceptual hand sketch represents the project's functions better than the building's structural calculations" are value judgments that may be instrumentalized for epistemological interests. But since we are dealing with a subjectless condition in the first place whereby

more detailed elaboration of the question of halo and radiance by this same author, see Lars Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity: Architectures of the Figure* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

[48] Spuybroek, "Charis and Radiance," 137.

[49] Ibid., 136-37.

[50] Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 27.

the subject does not define others' lives and their structures, there is no reason not to consider the internal representational relations between an object's qualities of equal importance to each other. This is the main principle of flat representability.

But from an epistemological perspective, cognitive limitations, both biological and cultural, inevitably mask the all-connected network of a thing's inner pool of qualities. There is no super-cognizer capable of grasping and performing the totality of an object's luminosity or set of manifestations; not even the thing itself. What is at stake here is precisely this masking's field of action, which is fundamentally a political question. Rationalized maskings—the systematization of how we address things and what we get out of them—are what constitute epistemological orders. As Bryant pertinently notes: "questions of knowledge are not innocent questions. Rather, they are questions intimately related to life, governance, and freedom."[51] Taken as a brief note of what will be expanded in Part Two, authoritarian constructs—androcentrism being the most flagrant—have shrunk the masking of things; their radiance is cut off. In this socio-cognitive regime, a vast portion of something's phenomena is omitted; material that is cognitively unattainable not because of biological limitations but because of cultural impositions. This is not only a problem for the object's expressive possibilities, but it also generates social inequality among the cognizer according to how their access is pre-regulated. Obviously, not all cultural and historical processes are constraining; many are expansive, stretching the mask's limits drawn by biological factors. But it is in the face of reductionism that any emancipation movement seeks to unchain itself from the masking of the masking. It is about not shrinking or re-masking the masking that the object already offers us according to our cognitive power. It is about not naturalizing a masking constructed by a third subject, but enhancing the maximum and individualized extension of each cognizer's masking on a thing's manifoldness. For example, Jacques Rancière's political theory is all about that: to "redistribute the sensible" means to account for the full amplitude of the natural masking that each cognizer establishes individually on a thing's sensible material.[52]

In this scenario, the typical unfolding of masked patterns of qualities normally proceeds in two ways: emotional or rational. I do not understand the categorical distinction in the valuation of the contents extracted through each of these two methods, whereby only the latter is considered a form of knowledge. Their only difference is the mode of cognition employed. But given the same object, these procedures act on the *same* qualitative basis. Thus, to the extent that one representation or datum yields to others, and these to others and so on, all within the same qualitative set, I see no need to discredit one form of access and advancement from the other. In Chapter 5, I will call the navigation through these masked patterns the *chain of multiplicity*. Metaphor, as an aesthetic device that occurs within the cognized object, will be studied as an internal representational relation of type B with repercussions in the knowledge production about the project. (As a note, this thesis will only deal with the aesthetic method, often dismissing reason as what makes things literal. However, this should not be taken as a general rule, since logical reasoning can also end up in aesthetic displacements.) Metaphors will be argued as internal affairs and not forms of external and exceptional connection between two foreign entities, as they are popularly assumed. Metaphors evidence *for us* the representational relationship between manifestations of the same object, regardless of our initial impression that two completely

[51] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 17.
[52] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009).

different things seem to be related. For our architectural purposes, the chain of multiplicity and the metaphor are fundamental devices on which this thesis proposes the practical approach to design and space occupation. Its aesthetic character shapes a cognitive mode that amplifies the cognizer's current masking to make its way through the AP's network of qualities and effects.

Type C internal representativity. The third internal representational relation is that in which a manifestation represents its being. Martin Heidegger is surely the twentieth century philosopher who has explored this topic the most under his "as-structure" concept, "the structure of *something as something*."[53] This "as" refers to the aforementioned act of delegation present in any act of representation. The "as" always implies translation. Elsewhere, Heidegger states: "Being [substance] is indeed also already unveiled in the understanding of being [manifestation]."[54] Here, we should be cautious and read this quote with subjectless lenses; that is, "understanding" is understanding-of a being, rather than the mediated understanding-for a subject. Heidegger's words suggest that being is in each of its expressions, or put the other way around, that there is no expression of a being that does not contain it. (This point will be important in a moment to set the idea of flat representativity.) At the same time, the evidence of the existence of this transcendental connection whereby something's being is somewhat always present in its expressions in no way softens Heidegger's concept of *ontological difference* by which Being [*das Sein*] is distinguished from beings [*das Seiende*]. In his study on the German philosopher, Harman remarks on the "as-structure" that "the thing 'as' thing is not the same as the thing itself, which can *never* be openly encountered. The broken hammer never offers direct revelation of its own being, but exhibits this being only within the theater of the *as*."[55] This simultaneous *jein* ("yes-and-no" in German) of a thing's representation that is and is not the thing is again clear in *One and Three Chairs*. Each of the three instances represents the same underlying One *as* the Chair, although none of them equals it. In other words, that a substance lingers in its representations does not annul that its in-itselfness lies beyond all of them. The "as-structure" implies a simultaneous condition of *(in)completeness* of any manifestation relative to its being.

In this light, Heidegger's quote is of crucial importance because it suggests that Being is already present in *all* its representations, representations that are attached to its Being by instantiation. So why does our cognition not account for such a condition? Well, it does, but only under certain types of representations that instill in us an alternative cognition to the usual direct one. As Harman observes, when we think about things, we tend to focus either on (1) what they are made of or their historical trajectory, (2) what they do to other things, or (3) both at the same time. These are modes of direct cognition based on the presentation of qualities. They are proper to the type A above, reducing the thing to its cognitive relation to us. They are about how we apprehend things directly, literally, transparently. Harman criticizes the reductionism of this type of direct cognitions as "undermining" for (1), "overmining" for (2) and "duomining" for (3).[56]

Conversely, to account for the intangible presence of being that is already in the quality, we must turn our attention away from the presentation. We must surpass the

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[53] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (1927; repr., Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 139.
[54] Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 321.
[55] Harman, *Tool-Being*, 69.
[56] Harman, "Undermining, Overmining, and Duomining."

quality itself. This maneuver gives access to what remains in the quality without the quality, which is not nothing but two depths: the thing's being and the siblings of the presented manifestation. The cognitive path towards the first refers to the just mentioned Heideggerian "as-structure," the relation of the manifestation to its being (the here counted "internal representativity of type C"). The cognitive path to the second is the above named type B, in which one manifestation leads to another one of the same entity. Therefore, unlike the directness of the presentation of type A, the internal representativity of the types B and C are *indirect* and *opaque* modes of access. They inquire through the qualities by surpassing them. What can be a possible cognitive mode that does not pay attention to qualities as such? *Aesthetics*; not in its surface-oriented and analytical facet of appearances and styles, but as an instrument of cognitive depth and openness. Thus, if the representational mode of type A is at odds with those of B and C, I argue that the latter two always go together. As will be further discussed in Part Two, aesthetic cognition is twofold because it simultaneously engages the being and the abundance of an AP. Moreover, since it is clear that qualities play a crucial role, not in order to present themselves but to allow cognition to go beyond them, morphological aspects are of pivotal importance. In Michael Young's words: "there is no way to talk about aesthetics without talking about form."[57] Criticism of formalism—no less than certain formalist agendas themselves—too often confuses the dependence on the presented qualities as a tool as if it were the objective. To be clear, visual form is an instrument of aesthetic inquiry, and this thesis is interested in queries of tangible form as a means to depth and openness. It is formalist not for the purposes of presentational qualities, but in all that these visual aspects entail behind. Therefore, the present design theory is *existentialist* and *deep formalist* on the AP's double unknowability, which, as just noted, refers to its ineffable reality by means of internal representational relations of type C and its knowable manifestation by means of those of type B.

It is from this ambition of profoundity and openness that this study relies on Enric Miralles' design approach and Graham Harman's OOO. The architect prevented us from addressing his work superficially, that is, capitalizing on the presentation of formal aspects. As he stated: "formal descriptions or […] surfaces, folds, shifts, etc. […] are excessively distant definitions that make the projects seem more like caricatures."[58] I think no one would dispute the value of such caricatures, but the powers of this architecture lie beyond such presentations. With this, Miralles' work is asyntactic, i.e., paradigmatic in reconciling syntactic investigation and aesthetic depth and extension, contrary to Kosuth's anti-morphological belief that formal investigation is exclusive to its own presentational sake.[59] For that reason, this thesis vindicates qualitative form (morphology) as an instrument for the AP's double unknown (Part Three).

Like Miralles, Harman also criticizes our erroneous tendency to reduce "objects to a mere caricature of their total reality."[60] In this light, OOO cares about the tension between the object and the qualities. Being recedes or "withdraws" from its manifestations.[61] We can identify this ethos in Miralles when he affirmed that "[w]e move on the surface without

[57] Michael Young, Interview with Michael Young, interview by Gonzalo Vaíllo, January 24, 2020.
[58] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21.
[59] Unlike this thesis, Kosuth holds that "formalist art and criticism accepts as a definition of art one which exists solely on morphological grounds." Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After*, 17.
[60] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.
[61] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, chap. 3.

knowing what we have below."[62] This transcendence beyond the exposed and the sensual instills a constant feeling of (in)completeness that leads to "sacrifice[e] the specific nature of the [tangible] situation to the application of a distant reality…" said the architect somewhere else.[63] More directly, Miralles was interested in "the complexity that comes from the real, the complexity of the things."[64]

However, an important discrepancy between Harman's theory and the one presented here should be noted. For him, not all qualities are of equal importance in the way that being delegates itself to them. This is at odds with the concept of flat representativity for what each expression has the capacity to represent its being differently.[65] Harman acknowledges a distinction between "real qualities" and "sensual qualities." Sensual qualities come and go dynamically from the surface exposed to someone or something's cognition at any given time, and they are disposable in constituting the identity of a being. In contrast, real qualities configure a stable ontological basis that differentiates individuals and are never directly graspable. As he writes on the latter:

> […] the real [object, i.e., being] is not a sheer empty unit, but has a multitude of real qualities of its own. This is clear from some remarks of Leibniz, who observes that even though each monad must be one monad, each also needs a multitude of qualities to be what it is, to differ from other monads rather than being interchangeable with them.[66]

But it is precisely the coupling of identity with qualities that I disagree with. The core of the discussion lies in how the *distinction* between entities is understood, i.e., what constitutes the *uniqueness* of a thing. For the avoidance of doubt, I am not referring here to distinction-for a subject as a form of identification; e.g., how a cognizer differentiates an apple from an airplane according to sensual experience. I refer to the distinction-of the object from another one ontologically; what makes a thing subjectless singular. The dimension of mediated experience is completely irrelevant. In this context, differentiation and uniqueness is *qualitative* for Harman, while for me it is *existential*.[67] In this sense, my view is here closer to that of Bryant, where being or substance is predicative of nothing. When so, there can be no essential qualities and, consequently, no disposable ones either. That means that the real object is a "sheer empty unit" of qualities and a sheer full unit of existence; an existence that withdraws from all its profiles and not only those captured in experience. In this light, each One is singular by itself, not by a selection of its Many. Identity and being converge, establishing a form of non-qualitative discretism whereby singularity rests in being.

This position may seem close to the concept of *bare particulars*, which accounts for singularity through numerical difference. As Edwin B. Allaire explains,

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[62] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:14, [author's translation].
[63] Enric Miralles and Alejandro Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," in *Enric Miralles 1990-1994*, vol. 72 [II] (Madrid: El Croquis, 1995), 266.
[64] Carles Muro, ed., *Conversaciones con Enric Miralles* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2016), 37, [author's translation].
[65] As may already be evident, the principles of flat representativity are based on those of flat ontology applied internally to the qualitative domain of each entity.
[66] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 49.
[67] More precisely, what I do not follow is what Harman calls in *Tool-Being* the "second axis" and which he bases on the writings of Xavier Zubiri. "Instead of qualities belonging to a substance," Harman remarks, "Zubiri's notes [or properties] are the reality of the thing itself." Harman, *Tool-Being*, 246–47. See also Harman's discussion of this issue in Manuel DeLanda and Graham Harman, *The Rise of Realism* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 59–61.

> […] difference is the numerically different individuals. No character, or group of characters can do that. Thus, to say that there are individuals is to say that things may be merely numerically different. No matter what description one proposes, the numerical difference of two things which are alike in all (nonrelational) respects must be accounted for.[68]

Although I agree that difference does not come from a group of attributes, I reject this position because it does not account for existential singularity. It remains qualitative in nature. Bare particulars are not concerned with non-qualitative beings, but stick to the only possible quality that discrete beings cannot get rid of: that of being quantifiable. But the capacity to be distinctively counted as individual is not decisive in determining a being's uniqueness in the first place. Furthermore, locating the condition of differentiation and singularity in the domain of being does not imply that two entities can contain the same pool of qualities. What was said above in this respect remains intact. Instead, it means that ontological uniqueness between entities occurs at the level of being *before* the uniqueness of two objects' qualitative realms.

Again, this view is not possible for Harman, who maintains that "no quality can be added to a thing by way of relations if that thing began as a simple lump of unity. The qualities of the monad belong to it just as much as its unity does."[69] But if we accept that behind any quality representing an object there is another object, acknowledging real qualities means converting uniqueness into relational. Why? Because the identity of object A will depend on its relationship to object B with some qualities of B mediating the encounter and elevated as essential to A. The only way for a being to be completely non-relational is to consider its identity within the substantial, existential realm. All this does not mean that being can exist alone by itself. Dependence and autonomy go separately together. One/Many or being/manifestations is an indivisible conjunction. But no manifestation *is* being.

It follows that the design theory here present cannot be essentialist, if we understand by essence a subjectless predicate of certain qualities that make a being what it is. Much less can it be a subject-based predicate. This is the reason for not including "essence" in the right-hand list of Fig. 1-2; and it may have already been noticed that I use "substance" as a synonym for "being" and not of "essence."[70] This is why, as I see it, identity is not qualitative but existential. Contradicting redundancy, any form of individuation is not characterized by a set of essential characteristics in the first place, but rather by the simple fact of existing individually. As I see it, existential pluralism can be considered directly without involving qualities for discretization, and, from there, accounting for the internal associations of each individual with a particular set of non-hierarchized attributes. As already noted a few times, One/Many always comes together.

We can come back now to Heidegger's quote mentioned above. Let me refresh it: "Being [substance] is indeed also already unveiled in the understanding of being [manifestation]." Taken in a discretized way in which each Being-substance is understood-

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[68] Edwin B. Allaire, "Bare Particulars," Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition 14, no. 1/2 (1963): 7.

[69] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 77.

[70] For this reason, this thesis shows partial sympathy for some of Jean-Paul Sartre's work about how existence is independent of essence. However, what is not followed from his theory is the idea that a being, which moreover is only contemplated as human, can construct its own identity by being free of all essential nature. It seems to me that Sartre's view is excessively contextualist, and his interest ultimately has more to do with a question of identification than with subjectless identity per se. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* (1943; repr., New York: Pocket Books, 1978).

of in its being-expressions, it suggests that a thing's qualitative domain is *dense everywhere* with respect to its unitary reality. This is what flat representativity means: no manifestation is disposable to represent its being differently. That means that no quality within an object represents or unfolds it better than its neighbors. Similar to the internal representativity of type B between an entity's manifestations, the essential/accidental categorization of qualities is claimed to operate only at the epistemological level. Continuing with another illustrative long quote by Lizcano as if he would speak of the AP:

> […] the [AP] is […] "dense everywhere." That is, it remains inextricably linked to any of its emergences and can, therefore, be traced in any of its instituted forms. […] Each datum, each fact, each concept, is thus never a 'mere datum', a 'bare fact', a 'pure concept'… for it is loaded with the [AP's] significations that have made it, it in-corporates in its own body the presuppositions from which it has been conceived, it is coated with the magmatic fabric whose flow has been dammed up in it.[71]

The passage expresses the subjectless, equally intense representational relationship between a One and each of the instances of its Many. And Lizcano continues, this time noting the epistemological consequences and challenges of the "dense everywhere" approach: "The [AP], therefore, is not only where it is usually assumed […] It is also where it is less assumed […] I would say that it is precisely there where it finds its best refuge."[72] For cognitive benefit, such a refuge is not a refuge-for the thing-in-itself, but its refuge-from the subject. In being's tendency not to expose itself frontally, it eludes direct cognition through those profiles that are more familiar and automated for the cognizer. For the propositional Part Three, I will follow Lizcano's suggestion that in order to find the AP, we have to look in our "less assumed" corners about it; i.e., in those "chinks of unreason" that Borges indicated (see last quote of the introduction). For this thesis, unpacking the abstract (as the asemic and the asyntactic) as the refuges where the project is best hidden will be the way to find it.

In summary, three types of representational relations can be accounted for each AP's manifestation: one that represents its own qualitative presence to the world (presentation), a second that represents the AP's other manifestations, and a third that represents the AP itself. This dissertation is about the last two and uses the first as a gateway to the other's depth and openness. In this sense, a manifestation is like an actor or an actress who conveys characters that they are not, but connects us with them and tells us something about them. The notion of flat representativity elaborated here posits the capacity and right of any representation to exert these three types of representations simultaneously. However, the question of flat representativity is detached from the question of identity, which belongs to the sphere of the substantial and not the qualitative.

In its epistemological practicality, flat representativity directly refutes three problems of modern representation. First, it makes evident the absurdity of the naturalization of historical and unitarian constructs imposed as truths about what things are on the basis of their composition and performance. How humans can mask entities, i.e., how each of us can access and navigate things, is not universal, absolute, and unequivocal. Second, the exclusive focus on a representation-*for* a subject (universal or plural) prevents acknowledging the vastness of the subjectless representations-*of* the object. Moreover, human mediation is not a necessary requirement for representation to occur. Third, an exclusive focus on representation-for a subject (universal or plural) prevents acknowledging

[71] Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos piensan*, 56, [author's translation].
[72] Ibid., 56-57, [author's translation].

that representation-*for* is in fact, first and foremost, a representation-*of* the object. The multiplicity of objects' qualitative domain calls to a plurality of different cognitions by different cognizers, because the latter are part of the former. In other words, our physical, sensory, emotional, utilitarian, and conceptual impressions about a project are among the representational expressions of that project. Therefore, both constitutive and cognitive relations can be also representational. Constitutive affairs can be so because of the notion of "repeated qualities," where the properties of the composing element are also those of the composed. Cognitive affairs are also representations in that the experience is a subset of the thing's manifestation, following Bryant's premise. The latter is an important point for the next section on what types of manifestations and media are to be found in an AP.

1.3. Multimedia multiplicity

Following the unity-multiplicity structure and the internal flat representativity of things, this section will discuss the multimediality of the AP's qualitative domain. It will do so by highlighting, in the first place, the condition of media promiscuity proper to what are here called "phantom objects." This point of view will oppose the modern axiom of the specificity of the medium as a mechanism to categorize entities overcoming their individuality. Acknowledging the multimedia nature of the AP's multiplicity does not aim to define all possible means of expressions of a project. This is an unachievable cognitive task. If the totality of an object's instances is unknown, so is the totality of the media through which they are rendered. But even so, the AP's multimediality will help to account for architectural expressions that have been historically neglected or ignored, like, for instance, human impressions. In this sense, understanding our subjectivity on a project as expressive material proper to it will imply that the human appears as another means of instantiation.

To get a little closer to what an AP shares with *One and Three Chairs*, let us apply the same examination method used in Kosuth's installation, this time to the object of Venice. Now, one immediately recalls the city of canals and gondolas, characterized by St. Mark's Square and the Rialto Bridge. Parallel to the built city, consider one of Canaletto's *capriccios* of the city: the *Capriccio with Palladian buildings* (Fig. 1-6). The painting includes built and unbuilt projects from Venice and Vicenza by Andrea Palladio. Suddenly, the non-physical instantiation of the city is not perfectly synchronized with the physical one for us.

What is real and what is false? The popular answer is that the built city is real and Canaletto's vision is false, fictitious, and imaginary. However, this epistemological judgment is as valid as its opposite if the value framework also flips. The validity of either conclusion lies in the strength of the valuation—i.e., in its conviction—rather than in what is being valued. Each judgment hinges on the proximity of the perceived relative to a given system of values that precisely animates the judgment. This closed system based on the subject has been criticized in the introduction as the modern cognition in its teleological register. Therefore, building any kind of truth on this self-reflective basis is a serious problem if one wants to address all that the painting and the constructed city contain behind their qualities and the categorical valuations they induced, that is, its shared being and multiplicity. That means that the question "what is real or false" is meaningless for the subjectless cognition attempted here, because it does seek to inquire into the manifestations' depth. It is rather a subject-oriented concern.

From a flat representativity angle, both the built Venice and Canaletto's painting are representations that belong to the domain of the object of Venice. Both are

representations that mediate the cognitive relations between Venice-being and each of us, to the extent that our apprehensions of these profiles also belong to the object of Venice. It is not a controversy to claim that certain representations suggest more clearly the specificity and identity of an object than others for one or another cognizer. This in no way invalidates flat representativity, as such cognitive clarity depends on how one masks the given Many. The problem arises when a few determine over the rest that their revelatory representation must be accepted as an unquestionable ontological axiom, which, once matured, will establish a general system of valuation and categorization that all must take for granted. This naturalization of an epistemological concern turned into an ontological law is the greatest artifice perpetuated throughout history, whose oppression, depending on the life aspect under consideration, is no longer tolerated.

The fact that Canaletto's painting may be closer for many to the reality or substance of Venice than its physical register does directly challenge the way we understand the world based on the dogmatization of media. This is perhaps one of the purposes of art. Similar to the *capriccios*, a profound approximation to the city's selfhood may be possible for others through William Turner's watercolors (Fig. 1-7). These may be instances that facilitate even more the immersion in the object of Venice, since, unlike Canaletto, we are less reminded of the realistic image of the built city. Abruptly, the fact that Venice is physically constructed—a medium of expression that we were told lays the foundation for our judgments of cities and buildings better than any other—is superseded by other expressions in a different medium: the two-dimensional canvas of Canaletto and Turner. One more example, this time with architecture playing a pre-assumed secondary or subjugated role: Is Giuseppe Terragni's Danteum less close to The Divine Comedy than Dante's text?

Stated differently, the problem of categorization occurs when certain representations or particular means of expression, like the physical environment in this case, are elevated and taken for granted not only as the only legitimate manifestation, but are intended to acquire an exclusive status of reality. This is a widespread endemic problem in architecture. This does not mean discarding physical space all of a sudden, or turning buildings into discardable accidents. It is a matter of acknowledging the AP in its broadest scope, transversing media and decoupling automated values from media taxonomization. These arguments are neither revolutionary nor new.[73] They are simply ignored or largely forgotten.

Medium-specificity is characteristic of modernity, and paradoxically, a way to claim the autonomy of reality. As Michalle Gal comments on British Aestheticism at the end of the nineteenth century:

> […] the aestheticist concept of autonomy conveys a deep internal commitment to the essence of each medium, and it indicates a devotion to the formal necessities of that medium. According to Aestheticism, the medium possesses an authoritative power that leads the conduct of the creative process, including the execution of the work itself.[74]

[73] See, for example,Jonathan Hill, "Designs on History," *Journal of Architectural Education* 67, no. 2 (October 2013): 258–63; Michael Young, Michael Young: What is architecture?, July 17, 2020, https://youtu.be/ErseWS57C64.

[74] Michalle Gal, *Aestheticism: Deep Formalism and the Emergence of Modernist Aesthetics* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2015), 50.



Figure 1-6. Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto), *Capriccio with Palladian buildings*, c. 1745.



Figure 1-7. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Venetian Scene*, c. 1840–5.

In modernity, the possibilities of the work depend on each artistic medium, or as Gal continues even more clearly: "the imperiousness of the medium is the source of the work."[75] This suggests that, for aestheticism, each work of art is independent of the others not within a medium, but especially by being situated in different media. This is the underlying motivation that established clear boundaries between the different arts. As the aesthetician Walter Pater said: "each art has its incommunicable element, its *untranslatable* order of impressions."[76] And yet, aestheticism can still be read as medium-specific rather than medium-oriented. Each artistic medium provided an operational framework that accentuated the segregation of art from the outside world, as well as between the arts to address their internal motivations according to their media specifications. In other words, the medium was still considered the tool for regulating artistic activity and not the artistic goal itself. Medium-oriented art found its fulfillment later in the mid-twentieth century with American Formalism.

As Rosalind Krauss reflects on that period: "This pointing-to-itself came to be called *specificity* and entered the discourse of modernist criticism as *medium specificity*."[77] In "Towards a Newer Laocoon," Clement Greenberg makes evident the supremacy of each medium as the *raison d'être* of each art, especially in his studies on painting. This means that the existence of differentiating boundaries between the various arts established by the aestheticians is not only reaffirmed but overcome, since the value and purpose of each art resides in the particularity of its own medium. As we can read in the article, with the first sentence being the definitive proof of the teleological incongruity of modernism:

> Purity in art consists in the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art. […] The arts, then, have been hunted back to their mediums, and there they have been isolated, concentrated and defined. It is by virtue of its medium that each art is unique and strictly itself. To restore the identity of an art the opacity of its medium must be emphasized. […] Overpower the medium to the point where all sense of its resistance disappears.[78]

At this point, one may ask what kind of relationship exists between each particular painting and its support for mid-twentieth century extreme formalism, as Gal calls it.[79] According to Harman's examination of Greenberg in *Art and Objects*, such a relationship echoes Heidegger's ontological difference, which stresses the veiled/unveiled tension. But, as in the case of the German philosopher, where there is *one* Being for all beings, for the American critic, all the paintings in the world stand for *the* canvas as painting's unifying being. Ontological discretization is out of consideration. As Harman notes: "for Greenberg, all paintings share the flat canvas background as their single medium. […] [T]he flatness is the same flatness for every painting."[80] If Greenberg had paid as much attention to architecture as he did to painting, he would probably have ended up advocating *builtness* as the substance of the discipline, excluding or dismissing anything that did not present itself in that format. Still today, the prevailing notion in our field, both inside and outside, is that "architecture is about buildings."

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[75] Ibid., 53.
[76] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. Donald L. Hill (1893; repr., Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 109, [emphasis added].
[77] Rosalind E. Krauss, *Under Blue Cup* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 4.
[78] Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," 566.
[79] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 14.
[80] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 101.

What modernism sought to avoid at all costs was the external referentiality of classicism and its cognitive method of mimesis. There, the subject mediates the legitimization of a representation according to the canonical values of the "original" or "type," as Helio Piñón calls it.[81] The refuge against this externality was the capitalization of the medium *an sich* and the rejection of human traits as pollutants. But it should be noted that both stances are subject-dependent reductions. In classicism, the subject not only constructs the canon according to a set of tangible and factual characteristics, but also dictates the relationship between the two phenomena by discriminating what is real and what is a replica. In medium-oriented formalism, the subject also constructs the specificity of each medium. Admittedly, unlike classicism, the modern does so in a much less explicit manner, but clearly enough to elevate his taxonomy as the bedrock of reality. For High Modernists like Marshall McLuhan in media theory or Greenberg in art criticism, the ultimate layer of reality is the medium. It is true that this approach is arguable as a realist One/Many structure, but, as noted, under a version of the scheme that continues to rely on the subject and in a non-discretized fashion. Each One, i.e., each medium as category, is a human subject construct that epistemologically defines their individuality. Hence, reality remains subject-dependent in character.

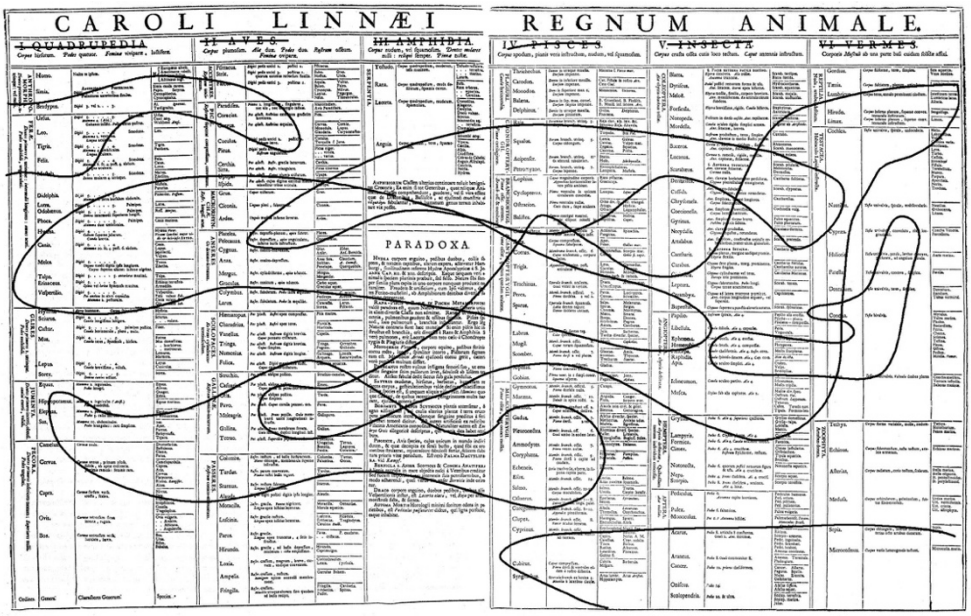


Figure 1-8. Traversing epistemological categories. Lines on Carl Linnaeus' *Regnum Animale* (1735) by the author. Subjectless objects do not follow but cross and exceed anthropocentric orders of genre, gender, and media taxonomy.

Against both anthropocentric dependencies, what we need is a subjectless version of the One/Many structure, coupled with a subjectless cognition (Part Two). As already announced a few times, aesthetics will provide the method for the latter task. It will find one of its fundamental pillars in Harman's idea that "for the aesthetics of OOO, it is the allure of individual objects that lies at the center of the artwork, rather than the draw of the medium itself."[82]

Bruno Latour has worked extensively on the dissolution of constructed categories. Criticizing the modern construction that divides non-human nature and human culture, the French philosopher demonstrates the inconsistency of such binarism, and dissolves it

[81] Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 22.
[82] Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, sec. 2c.

through the idea of *hybrids*.[83] But we can travel back to the modernity at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century to find a counter view of both the subject and the specificity of the medium: Alois Riegl's notion of *Kunstwollen* (will or art or artistic volition), and which largely nourishes the principles of flat representativity, multimedia multiplicity, and autonomy advocated here. In short, it resembles the subjectless One/Many scheme.

In art theory, Kunstwollen has been differently interpreted, as Riegl himself never explicitly addressed it, but took it almost for granted.[84] In the present reading, I follow those positions in which the term refers neither to structural aspects of the artworks, nor to the subject, whether as an individual subjectivity or collective orientation. These reflections on the artwork and the subject are rather consequences or representations of the Kunstwollen, not of the concept as such. In other words, it is important to discard that, first, the Kunstwollen stems from a psychological dimension or dependence of the subject, and second, it refers to the material surface of the artwork. Riegl's concept involves what is beyond them. This twofold view is clear in Erwin Panofsky's interpretation of the term, when he stated that the Kunstwollen is

> a concept which does not designate the phenomenal characteristics of the appearance in question as a generic concept found by abstraction, but reveals its immanent meaning as a fundamental concept exposing the most actual root of its being. […] The Kunstwollen can—if otherwise this expression is not to designate either a psychological reality or an abstracted term of classification—be nothing other than that which (not for us, but objectively) "lies" as the final ultimate meaning in the artistic phenomenon.[85]

Here rests the foundation for equating the Kunstwollen with One—any One—whether the being of art in general, of the artwork in particular, or of the architectural project. I think it is not too far-fetched to pair Riegl's term with Kant's thing-in-itself, Heidegger's Being, and Harman's real object. As Barasch puts it: "Kunstwollen always refers to something that is behind the immediately visible or tangible work. […] This something that is behind the work and its style, is Kunstwollen. […] We simply do not have direct access to the Kunstwollen."[86]

On the other hand, artistic volition also can be paired to the Many, i.e., to the multifaceted and multimedia plurality of a substance. With the being of nature as the background of the discussion, Lambert Wiesing observes how Riegl's acknowledgment of the indeterminacy of nature releases its multiplicity of expressions. In other words, since Riegl accounts for a "polymorphous state of being," as Wiesing puts it, it is impossible to arrive at artistic representations that materially expose the nature of being. This was one of the main arguments of Riegl's anti-materialism against the Semperianist technical-materialist view of the epoch.[87] The impossibility of embodying something's Kunstwollen in an expression leads to the blossoming of a myriad of representations, each one revealing

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[83] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

[84] Moshe Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2: From Impressionism to Kandinsky* (New York City, NY: NYU Press, 1998), 164.

[85] Erwin Panofsky, "Der Begriff Des Kunstwollens," in *Zeitschrift Für Ästhetik Und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, ed. Max Dessoir, vol. 14 (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1920), 330, [author's translation].

[86] Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 165, [emphasis removed].

[87] See Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes (1901; repr., Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985), 4.

something different from the being in question. In considering how different cultures have unfolded the object of nature, Riegl comments: "each style of art strives for a true representation of nature and nothing else and each has indeed its own perception of nature in that he views a very particular phenomenon of it."[88] The pluralization of "true representations" for a given thing implies that there is no superior one. This idea connects directly with the notion of flat representativity, whereby each representation is legitimized to stand for its being. Since each one is different, there is a manifoldness about the same thing that can enrich the collective approach to it, that which we call knowledge.

In this context, it should be noted that if each being is polymorphous, each manifestation can be polysemic. This means that a manifestation may refer to several beings and, consequently, that it can be involved in more than one pool of qualities. It is not prescriptive that an expression must be exclusive to a single object. This idea has been sketched before around Fig. 1-3, where a component or a representation is involved in some way and not others depending on which object it encounters. For example, the building of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao can be considered as an entity that simultaneously refers to itself as a physical object, its AP, the city of Bilbao, and Deconstructivism as an architectural movement, among others. These entities are autonomous and self-standing; each with its particular multiplicity, although the building is a member of all of them performing differently. This means that we can assume that an object's complete pool of qualities is distinct and specific, while its manifestations may each belong to several Manies, and hence to several objects.

Returning to Riegl and the discussion on multimediality, it should be noted that the art historian did not intend to reject the means of expression, since his studies are to some extent based on their division.[89] But the significance he assigned to Kunstwollen *beyond* media—which, according to him, "rules them all"—offers an alternative path to the medium-oriented Formalism of the mid-twentieth century, and its still prevalent understanding of the world.[90] Riegl's disposition is followed here by rejecting the link between the medium and its instrumentalization as a device of final categorization and valuation. My point is the need to dissolve modern thinking: to dissociate the fields of study and practice of the medium and what we believe to be its specificity. This will allow a more promiscuous transversality between disciplines and the annulment of their dogmatism or academicism grounded in technical-material taxonomizations. The medium is neither the target nor the message. The word itself already tells us: it is a means.

Seen in this way, the architectural project's multiplicity can be addressed in its multimediality. This suggests the end of the exclusive battle between form and content as the basis of reality. According to Husserl, the usual, albeit erroneous, understanding of any manifestation is either through its physical expression or its mental state associated with such a sign, that is, its sense or meaning for us.[91] In architecture, the typical understanding of form and content is deeply anchored in this dichotomy. While form refers to (our relation to) the syntax, shape, morphology, and physical and material mass that establishes the boundaries and enclosure of spaces, content refers not only to meaning but also concerns function and program. This form-function paradigm gained disciplinary presence in the

[88] Ibid., 226.
[89] For example, in *Late Roman Art Industry*, Riegl divided the chapters into Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, and The Art Industry. Unlike the medium specificity of American Formalism, this maneuver should be seen as a method rather than a goal.
[90] Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, 15.
[91] Edmund Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations* (1900; repr., New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 105.

mid-nineteenth century in English and French architectural circles. Afterwards, it was central to the Modern Movement and the subject of debate from the 1960s onwards, with Eisenman and Tschumi arguing for each of the opposing poles.

Against this reduction, form and content or function require reformulation and de-empowerment. As seen in this thesis, they are among the profiles that populate a being's qualitative domain, neither of which can completely host the project-in-itself. Function is not the antithesis of physical or geometric form, and meaning is not the ultimate basis of both, or vice versa. Recalling Heidegger's "as-structure," they are (in)complete modulations of the AP in question. In short, shape, function, and meaning are *some* AP's forms. In this vein, it can be argued that everything in the qualitative realm is a form of a given thing. Here, the term "form" is taken in its double sense: as way or manner and as articulation. The former denotes plentifulness and diversity, the latter order. But form is not only relative to a physical medium or mode of expression, like geometry. Every individual profile has a particular structure within a particular medium of formalization. A sketch on a napkin, a physical model of the structural system, the architect's idea of how to circulate inside the building, the constructed building, a photograph of the previous physical model, a lecture in the building's conference room, the circulation of a group of people inside the building, my impression as a designer of the possibility of instilling an aesthetic impression when the sunlight passes through the stained glass windows, the actual event of the sunlight passing through the stained glass windows, or your aesthetic impression as an observer in experiencing the sunlight passing through the stained glass windows are some of the forms of the AP in question. The AP exerts each of these qualitative forms in different media of expression. The AP is an existence that can manifest itself differently, as it has a vast finitude of forms. On this basis, form includes shapes, materials, ideas, meanings, emotions, bodies, thoughts, events, functions, uses, and so on. The key point here is that form is anything that shows articulation on a qualitative level. It is anything that possesses a particular order and structure. And distinct, yet inseparable, from qualitative form is its immaterial being.

It is important to point out that the multimediality of an architectural project does not consist solely of the accumulation of various known or traditional media (building, drawing, text, mind, body, etc.). This thesis embraces architectural expressions also of mixed media, or totally new media.[92] It is not only that the AP's collection of manifestations is multimedia because it has expressions in different means of articulation. It is also that many of these instances are multimedia in their own composition. This is the way in which this thesis engages with contemporary materialist discourses on multi-species and multi-agents; especially Jordi Vivaldi's idea of "xenology," which fosters the material mixture of biological, technological, and geological ingredients in architectural formulations.[93] (Admittedly, this point of multimedia or cross-media expressions will not be detailed in this dissertation; indeed, the type of architectural composition examined in Chapter 7 will focus on a single-medium design method. This will not be for lack of interest, but to stick to Enric Miralles as a case study—his architecture did not address the interweaving of elements and media of different natures.)

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[92] For example, see the architectural works of Daniela Mitterberger and Tiziano Derme (MAEID), Philip Beesley, David Benjamin (The Living), or Neri Oxman.

[93] See Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 220–307; and Vivaldi, "Xenological Subjectivity."

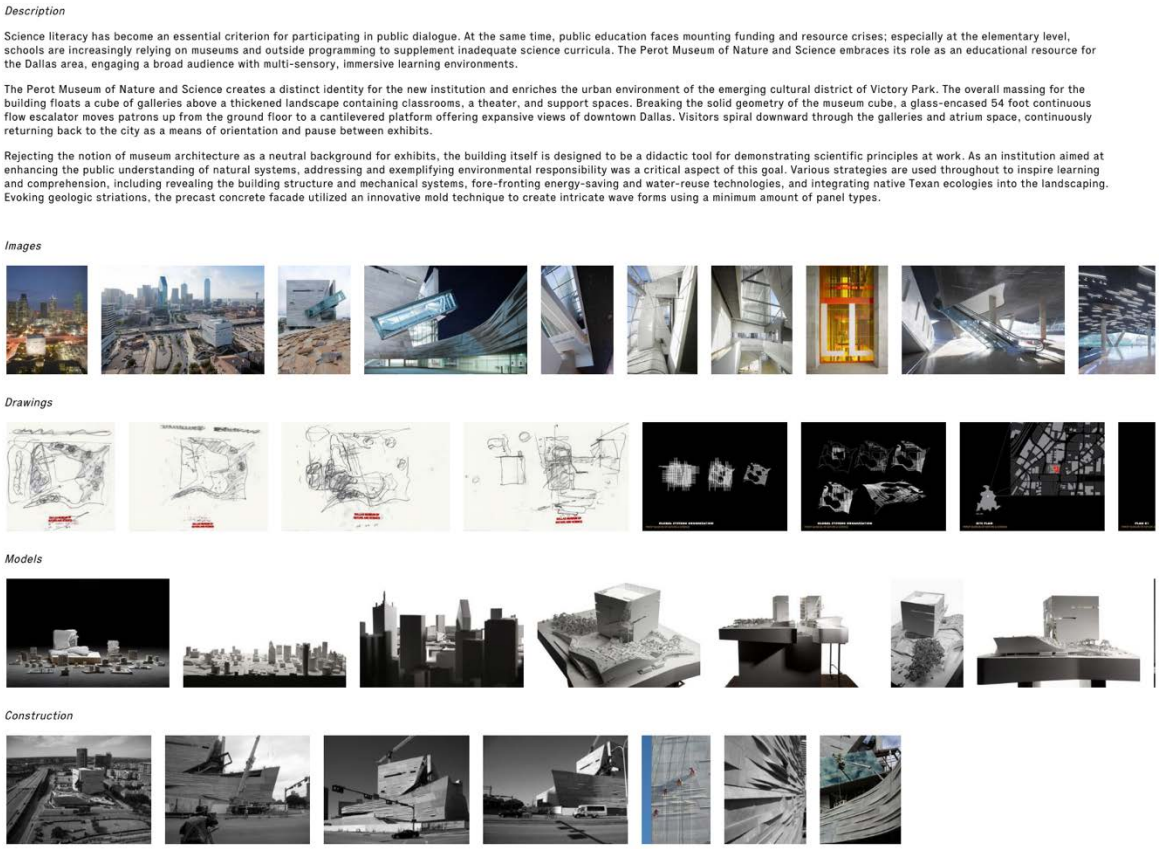


Figure 1-9. Morphosis, *Perot Museum of Nature and Science*, 2008-2012. Diverse expressions in various media. Morphosis' website, accessed December 6, 2021.

As noted above, accounting for means of physical expression of a project other than the building—texts, drawings, models, renderings, images, or mixed media—may not be the prevalent view of architecture, but it is an architecture widely accepted as such. In addition, there is also an established tradition of directly involving the user in the performance of the space as what constitutes architecture (e.g., Tschumi or Koolhaas). However, more profound responses, like feelings or emotions, are not usually taken into account within the spectrum of architectural manifestations, which, for the discipline, are seen as something completely reserved for the private sphere that does not transcend the public and utilitarian character of architecture. The same did not occur in the arts with movements such as Aestheticism and what some authors have called German Sensualism, in which emotions were taken as an internal aspect of the artwork.[94] For example, in *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture*, Heinrich Wölfflin states: "We designate the effect that we receive the *impression*. And we understand this impression to be the *expression* of the object."[95] Or as Spuybroek more recently notes: "Yes, we have feelings, but […] we

[94] In England, Roger Fry and Clive Bell vindicated the importance of the beholder's emotions as part of the artistic work. See Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920), 194; and Clive Bell, *Art*, eBook, 1914, chap. 1. In addition, Ernest K. Mundt defines as German Sensualism the emotional orientation of the aesthetic theories of Robert Vischer, Theodor Lipps, and Wilhelm Worringer, all of them related to the notion of empathy. Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 17, no. 3 (1959): 287–310.

[95] Heinrich Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," in *Empathy, Form, and Space*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (1886; repr., Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 150.

do not own those feelings, because they are instigated by and correspond to objects."[96]

Within the present discussion on multimedia and flat representativity, the apprehension of a project through one of its physical manifestations by a human cognizer is considered another manifestation of that project. That implies taking the human as another medium of expression of the AP. Impressions—bodily or psychological—are as articulated as a drawing or a model. Emotions are structured material of the project. As long as it is not disputed that my feelings about a given space are somewhat different from someone else's feelings about the same space on a qualitative comparison, each of these feelings have a particular order and structure that differentiates it from the other.[97] The point here is not to get trapped by our epistemological assumption toward measurable or physical means of expression as the only ones that possess articulation. My psychological and bodily impressions of a project situated on me as a medium are on the same representational footing as the particular articulation of a building situated in the construction realm.

Seen in this light, it suggests that what I call "cognitive relations," or Harman terms "foreign relations," are not external to the object but internal to it. They involved both the internal representational relations of type B and C in the previous section. In this line, the form-function relationship of a project is a representational relationship between some of its internal manifestations. I think Harman would disagree with this view, since the root of the friction stems from something deeper.

The second technical point of contention with Harman's theory is whether the effects of a thing pertain to that thing or to the separated relation between the thing affecting and the thing affected. He argues for the latter, whereas I argue for the former. As he points out: "it's true that [an object] can affect things differently from how it currently does, but my position is that when it does have these different effects, they do not belong to the [object], but to a new entity composed of the [object] and something else."[98] His argument is not to assign a multitude of pre-existing capacities as possibilities. My critique is that if the effects are outside the thing, they can never be attributed to that thing at all. From that point of view, we can never have knowledge about things, but only knowledge about knowledge as such. That is to say, about the objects of access, understood as the foreign or cognitive relation between subject and object. This gesture seems to me too close to epistemological idealism.[99] In contrast, I consider qualities and effects, as well as the relations that unfolded them, to be aspects that are not constitutive of the object but belong to its qualitative sphere. Like Harman, I recognize the object of cognition. But I situate it within the thing, so that the material it unfolds is of the thing and not of itself. Cognition is thus innocuous to the observed and internal to it. It activates one or other of its manifestations, rather than producing them *ex novo* in its own cognitive process. If under this scheme the extension of a qualitative domain seems excessively large because it must contemplate numerous possibilities that will probably never be executed, it is only on the basis of an epistemological appraisal. The Many of an object remains an immensely vast finitude. The extreme of the argument is that even the destruction of a thing by another one is an affordance of itself. For instance, in the relation fire burning cotton (Harman's

[96] Lars Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things: Ruskin and the Ecology of Design*, 2nd edition (2011; repr., London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 124–25, [emphasis removed].

[97] Emotions as AP expressions should not be confused with sensations about the AP's being, which are aesthetic intuitions that lack articulation, since being has no qualities (see Section 4.2).

[98] DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 69–70.

[99] See my argument in detail in Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation," 51–54.

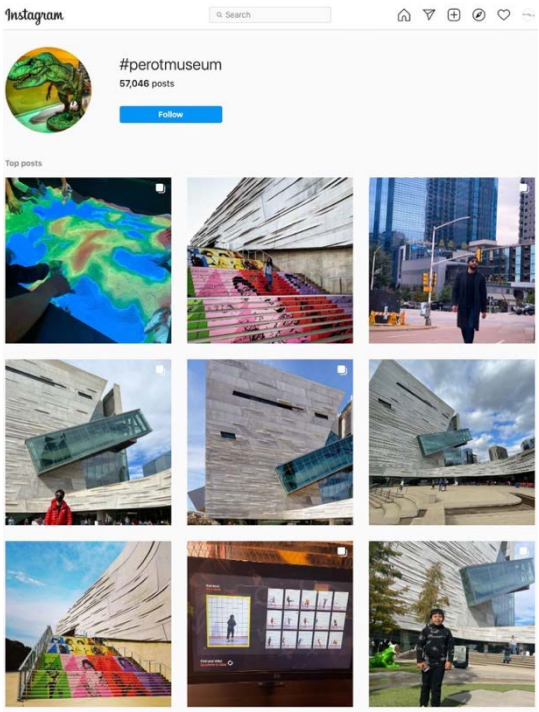


Figure 1-10. Instagram archive of *#perotmuseum*, accessed December 6, 2021.

typical example), fire is argued here to be *cognitively* innocuous for cotton. Being burned is cotton's own capacity, only activated by the harmless cognitive burning performance of fire. And fire burning, understood as cognitive activity under cotton's affordances of being cognized, is an expression of cotton. This point is important for understanding the human cognizer (in the role of fire) as a means of expression of the architectural project (in its role of cotton).

In this role of the human as medium of an AP, the relevance, distribution, and ubiquity of the emotional layer of architecture as its expression is more evident today than ever before due to the exposure of the cognizers' private architectural experiences, behaviors, and tastes in the public sphere of social networks. Irrespective of ethical and technical concerns, the use of platforms such as Instagram or Pinterest as market guides to inform designs through machine learning protocols is increasingly present in architectural offices.[100] This way of seeing and describing is comparable to the more traditional sketches or working models as a simultaneous inquiry and expression of the project. At the cognitive level, the proliferation and massive distribution of emotional representations of a project as a new medium of articulation entails at the same time a new form of sensibility that Derme, Mitterberger, Vivaldi, and I have called *sliding perception*. As we put it:

> sliding perception is, above all, a scrolled perception based on perpetual replacement and iterative substitution. […] Always doubting between the "enough" and the "more", always alternating between the "tedious" and the "colorful", sliding perception does not imply a

[100] Yoojin and Lee Han, "Exploring the Key Attributes of Lifestyle Hotels: A Content Analysis of User-Created Content on Instagram," in *A. Globa, J. van Ameijde, A. Fingrut, N. Kim, T.T.S. Lo (Eds.), PROJECTIONS - Proceedings of the 26th CAADRIA Conference - Volume 1, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Online, Hong Kong, 29 March - 1 April 2021, Pp. 71-80*, vol. 1 (PROJECTIONS - 26th CAADRIA Conference, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Online, 2021), 71–80. Sümeyye Ta°delen and Leman Gül, "Social Network Analysis of Digital Design Actors: Exploratory Study Covering the Journal Architectural Design" (Architecture in the Age of Disruptive Technologies: Transformations and Challenges - 9th ASCAAD Conference, Cairo (Online): CUMINCAD, 2021), 280–92.

> mere de-sensibilization, but a re-sensibilization orchestrating a twofold action: the eye is being hipo-sensitized as a tool for sensing differentiation while is being hyper-sensitized as a tool for sensing repetition.[101]

As said before, each emotional realization of a project is a form of subjectivity that, in turn, informs the cognizer's identity even though it also belongs to the AP in question (Chapter 3). As Mikel Dufrenne notes: "the correlation of the object with the act which grasps it does not subordinate the object to that act."[102] Acknowledging the psychological dimension as an expression of a being does not mean equating the being with its reception. Conversely, acknowledging the substantial dimension of being does not exclude the human as one of its media. As mentioned earlier, the psychological facet of Kunstwollen is not Kunstwollen, but one of its means of formalization. Andrea Reichenberger notes on Riegl's key concept that "[i]t is not we who have to say to art what it has to want, rather it is art that has something to say to us in its 'style' of how it *wants* to represent things."[103] This approach entails an alternative way of considering authorship. It is no longer that the architect is the sole author of the unfolded manifestation, but every cognizer, beholder, or user of the project is also an author of the manifestation deployed in or through that person (Chapter 5). From this point of view, the AP is epistemologically multi-authored.

The human being as a medium is also clear in Harman's aesthetic theory, especially in his notion of metaphor and mimesis (Section 4.2). Such instrumentalization of us by the thing—what Dufrenne calls the "demand" of the thing to us—is the foundation on which to argue for what this thesis calls *subjectless cognition*. Although it will be detailed in Chapter 3, it can be noted now that it involves a way of cognizing from the *inside* of the object, a stance that resonates with Morton's perception of hyperobjects.[104] This mode of seeing is impossible for modernity. The modern subject looks at the world from the outside on the basis of its anthropocentric human/non-human division. To the contrary, in the subjectless cognition of a project, which some may call "ecological vision" or Morton terms "ecognosis," we do not embrace the thing.[105] It is the opposite: we cognize what embraces us. Here it is important to remember that, nevertheless, we are also with one foot out of such a cognitive event, as we may be involved in others performing differently. But the architectural cognition of a project is always embedded within this AP larger than itself, experiencing it from its inside. In this light, we sense upwards by looking downwards. We approximate the AP's being by exploring its delegated material and spatial expressions, and our impressions of them are another of such delegations.

Therefore, an architectural project *does not* end in the four walls of its built realization, in the cognizer's psychological formulation, in its production process, or in its impact on the discipline or the community in which it is situated. Here rests the cognitive inexhaustibility of not knowing factually and truly its limits. This openness is accentuated by what Morton calls "nonlocality," which is a way of accounting for the diverse distribution

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[101] Tiziano Derme et al., "There Has Never Been a Patient Zero," vol. II (Distributed Proximities - 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture, Online + Global, 2020), 262–65.

[102] Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. Edward S. Casey (1953; repr., Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), li.

[103] Andrea Reichenberger, "Kunstwollen. Riegl's Plädoyer für die Freiheit der Kunst," *kritische berichte – Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften* 31, no. 1 (2003): 71, [author's translation].

[104] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 81–95.

[105] Morton, *Dark Ecology*, 5.

and multimediality of a project.[106] Cognition about something is open but not open-ended, because, at the same time, each project is a contained and specific package. Under this umbrella, this thesis' interest lies in the zone between what we think are the limits of the projects (their four walls, our apprehensions, etc.) and its subjectless ontological limits. This in-betweenness is envisioned as the AP's double unknown with the cognitive possibility of rendering ineffable and knowable.

In summary, the AP is irreducible to any medium. It rather cuts across them. Things-in-themselves—at least, those phantom or hyper—are not exclusive to any kind of medium, but are selective in what mediates their realization. At the same time, a medium remains an object in its own right, although it does not define everything that can be expressed through it. In other words, modern medium vocation is not annulled, but rather de-hegemonized as the only possible model of reality. There are more substances than media in the cosmos. In doing so, the automatic valorization historically constructed around media as categories is dissolved. That means that the immediate epistemological benefit of dealing with phantom or immaterial objects rather than medium-oriented ones is that one is freed from modernity's obsession with taxonomies. Things are no longer listenable in columns of properties according to the particularities of their means of expression, but their manifestations slip between them and others still unknown (Fig. 1-8).

This chapter has addressed the architectural project as an entity in its own right. It has been considered as a subjectless existential unit in partnerships with a double heterogeneous multiplicity of qualities: one for its constitution and the other for its expression, sometimes coinciding. The suppression of the subject does not mean the suppression of the human from architectural activity, but its imposing determination on the construction of truths as ultimate architectural realities. Within the AP's inner activity, each manifestation has been identified as a representation of itself, of its neighboring profiles, and of its unifying being. This thesis is interested in the last two. Within that internal abundance of a project, each architectural expression is equally capable of realizing that triple representativity, and the multimediality of the AP's qualitative totality has been argued. This means taking into consideration architectural expressions and media typically not approached as such. Human cognitive activity on behalf of the project has been one of them.

The subjectlessness examined in this chapter has been fundamental to understanding the autonomy of the project from a realist perspective. From there, we could immediately enter into an examination of the implications that this ontological scheme can bring to architectural design. But this study must be postponed for a later chapter given the broad and diverse treatment that the question of autonomy has received in architectural discourse. This means that it is necessary to first understand where the idea of subjectless or ontological autonomy of the AP stands in relation to other theories of architectural autonomy.

[106] For Morton, hyperobjects are massively distributed in space and time. He gives the example of global warming, which has a multitude of registers in different places and periods, but none of them is global warming as such. Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 38–54.

Chapter 2. Autonomy

In the discussion of how a philosophical theory like OOO can inform architectural practice and theory, the issue of *autonomy* is an inescapable "must" that requires attention. This is because the concept of autonomy is both a cornerstone of OOO and an important theme in architectural theory, especially in postwar twentieth-century architecture. Against this background, this chapter aims to reevaluate the notion of autonomy in architecture from an OOO perspective. What are the "in its own right" circumstances by which something can be assumed to be autonomous? What does it mean to consider the AP as an object in itself? Autonomy has a long philosophical and architectural treatment; so much so that it is common today to see the topic as unfruitful, outdated, and exhausted. I hold the opposite. I see it as a central pillar on which architectural design and occupation can develop a deep and open mode of cognition and production, precisely by not reducing the AP's autonomous condition to cognitive and production concerns. I must again caution that it is not my intention to offer a comprehensive historical overview on a topic already extensively treated and even hackneyed, nor to document or reformulate what OOO-related philosophers and architects mean by autonomy. I will discuss past and present specific aspects of autonomy, drawing lines of connection between them, only to articulate this thesis' particular position and understanding on the term. Recalling Aldo Rossi's words: "I prefer to discuss only the works of those authors who seem to be fundamental for a study of this kind."[1] Therefore, over-, under-, and mis-interpretations of the employed sources are to be expected.

The notion of autonomy adopted here will rest on the subjectless and metaphysical dimension of the project. To put it clearly from the outset, autonomy is indissoluble to being, and since being has been argued to be a substance that is not qualitative but an "existentiale," following Heidegger's terminology, autonomy cannot be defined through attributes; let alone relational or epistemological insights determined from the subject's standpoint. Therefore, this position is fundamentally at odds with previous formulations on autonomy in architecture. Theories such as those of Emil Kauffman, Aldo Rossi, or Manfredo Tafuri, leading voices on the subject, never acknowledged an indescribable architecture *an sich*. Instead, they established their own visions of autonomy from qualitative aspects: Kaufmann with formal and compositional features, Tafuri with adjustments in relation to politics and ongoing production processes, and Rossi with a middle position between these two. "I have never spoken of an absolute autonomy of architecture or of an architecture *an sich*; as some presume I have;" Rossi states, "I have primarily been concerned with establishing some of the characteristic propositions of architecture."[2] But it is precisely this subject-centered approach to cognitively define the particularities of something else's existence—even if only to grant it autonomous characteristics—that this thesis rejects at all costs. This position has been emphasized by

[1] Ibid., 24.
[2] Ibid., 169.

the non-acceptance of essential qualities even in ontological considerations (Section 1.2). On the other hand, the ontic considerations of these architectural theorists as the basis of autonomy might suggest a greater affinity with Eisenman's stance, since the American architect addressed the question with a deep ontological commitment in his early writings. However, his methods and conclusions on autonomy will also be refuted as being as descriptive and relational, i.e., subject-centered, as the theories mentioned before.

Methodologically, Immanuel Kant's insight of *external and internal inclinations* as heteronomous determinations will help to argue negatively why these modern and postmodern architectural theories are insufficient to account for a subjectless autonomy of the architectural project. In other words, while it is usually accepted that external conditions of a project, like economic or technological factors, do not constitute its autonomy, the assumption of certain features as proper to the discipline, like shape or politics, will be argued as internal inclinations that entail other forms of heteronomy. However, this opposition will not preclude drawing useful lessons and principles from each of these authors. For this task, this chapter will problematize the notions of autonomy of Kaufmann, Rossi, Tafuri, and Eisenman to lay a comparative basis on which to conclude with this thesis' understanding of the term and its consequences for architectural design.

2.1. Subject-dependent autonomies

As a starting background, the question of autonomy in Kant's philosophy is aligned with that of freedom within the context of a person's will. For someone to choose and act freely, Kant offers a positive and a negative definition of autonomy. In its positive register, autonomy is consolidated as a universal law in relation to moral principles devoid of personal interests: the will is free insofar as it acts in accordance with its own unconditional law.[3] The practicality of such a condition establishes a principle whereby, in Paul Guyer's interpretation, to arrive at autonomous actions of the will at the expense of heteronomous ones requires discipline and self-mastery.[4] Seen in this light, autonomy is a *method* to achieve a universal principle. However, I am not interested here in following either Kant's positive definition or Guyer's practical exercise. This is so because, first, I will situate autonomy positively at the existential foundation of being independent of any (rational) power of decision and action. Second, its practical aspects will neither be methodological nor lead to any taxonomy of what can be qualitatively counted as autonomous or heteronomous. Something's autonomy should be sufficiently robust in itself to neutralize any subject's impulse to cognitively dominate or literalize it (Section 2.2). This does not imply a complete disregard of Kant's theory of autonomy. Instead, I would like to examine the twentieth-century architectural registers of autonomy in architecture under Kant's *negative* understanding of the term. This path will lead to the conclusion that, contrary to their purposes and beliefs, such architectural theories were based on heteronomous propositions. They dominate and constrain architecture's freestanding autonomy. What then is Kant's negative definition of autonomy in relation to freedom? Guyer comments:

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[3] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (1785; repr., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40.

[4] Paul Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 136–41.

> In a number of passages, notably in his lectures on ethics, Kant suggests a bipartite account of freedom in choice and action. On the one hand, freedom consists in a person's ability to determine his[/her] ends independently of domination by his[/her] *own* inclinations and desires; on the other hand, freedom consists in a person's ability to select and pursue his[/her] own ends independently of domination by *other* persons.[5]

One is free and acts autonomously not only when not dominated by another person, when one is not alienated, but also when one is free from the quest for one's own benefit. Therefore, autonomy occurs negatively in the absence of *external and internal inclinations*, i.e., when there is no determination by the interest of another person or oneself. When the discussion is broadened beyond the domains of the human being and situated in the present case of the architectural project, what usually counts as external inclinations is more or less clear: anything that reduces architecture to a *by-product* of some other force or need. Harman identifies the rebellion against external instrumentalization in the tradition of *formalism* in ethics and aesthetics. As he says:

> the formalist option allows us to focus on the autonomy of any discipline from extraneous concerns that belong to neighboring disciplines. At the present time this is really the only way to protect specific disciplines from the overly moralistic spirit that has taken over politics, the social sciences, philosophy, art, and ecology.[6]

Any architect keen on the integrity of the discipline will not accept downgrading the architectural work as a service to other motivations. This is the basic tenet from which theories of autonomy in architecture emerge in the twentieth century. For example, according to Kaufmann, Baroque buildings responded to doctrines other than architecture. Faced with the dissolution of principles internal to architecture, the Austrian art historian harbors the specificity of architecture in identifiable, geometrically clean, and practical shapes. Rossi does the same in the face of modern functionalism, seeking refuge in the permanence of certain historical compositions as opposed to other volatile ones, while attributing to them an additional political character. Tafuri unchains architecture from its capitalist servitude by reconsidering alternative capitalist productions proper to architecture. And like Rossi, Eisenman eschews functionalist advocacy and isolates architecture in the exclusive issue of form. As is evident, every period and context has its own architectural external inclinations. Today, besides the constantly updated and ever-present economic and technological factors, social inequalities and environmental urgencies are the main premises to which architecture must respond. How to articulate a discourse and a practice that does not condemn architecture to a service, but also does not ignore its surroundings to maintain its reason-to-be? I see in subjectless autonomy a possible direction of inquiry for this question.

In the face of (the belief of) external forces subjugating architecture, the reactionary impulse is typically to cut off such relationships and build a bunker with what each considers the true internal qualitative material of the discipline and its projects. However, it is argued that this method cannot cement autonomy for three reasons.

First, the privileged qualities and forces in each case taken as essential should be considered internal inclinations in the Kantian sense. If so, they are forms of heteronomy. If for Kant a decision is autonomous when it does not respond to others' and one's own

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[5] Ibid., 118, [emphasis added].
[6] Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, chap. 2.c, [emphasis removed].

interests, the theories of autonomy of the past century follow a very clear internal inclination: they seek the ulterior reward of protecting architecture so that it can give an account of itself. But, pushing Kant's logics, architecture cannot be autonomous if the purpose of its practice is precisely its autonomy. It is the pursuit of such a *benefit* that constitutes a form of heteronomy. (Again, acknowledging Kant's negative definition does not imply endorsing the positive one, which resides in his moral autonomy as a categorical imperative.)

Second, architectural autonomy is, in each of these cases, incongruently established on a subject-oriented determination. What is problematic is not only the benefit of autonomy itself, but its *pursuit* that seeks to establish it. In other words, any attempt to ground autonomy through some inclination implies a reduction of such autonomy to the *relationality* that produces it. Against that, the aim of this section is to unmask the incongruity of pretending to establish the autonomy of architecture from a cognitive dictate. Put another way, the action of enclosing architecture promoted by the theories of autonomy of the last century is not something derived from architecture itself but is the proposition of a subject; in those cases, architects, or society at large, conceding where architecture gains its autonomous status. Such an act of indulgence is nothing but another domination: "you are not free or autonomous because it is the natural condition of your existence; it is because I grant it to you." The methodology of this autonomy by concession consists of the cognitive selection of certain elevated features as the quintessence of architectural self-standing. As has already been argued several times, the definition of a concept as ontologically axiomatic by a subject in order to establish the validity of judgment is the anthropocentric closed system typical of modernity. This view will be most evident in Eisenman's case and his metaphysical characterization of generic or essential form, something that is unthinkable in Harman's theory. In his object-oriented perspective, essential or real qualities are never directly apprehensible and manageable.

Third, all these propositions posit a *qualitative* autonomy for architecture, contrary to the premise defended here whereby there is no such thing as a qualitative essence. Therefore, autonomy has no attributes. Autonomy equals being. Both are existential in a non-qualitative terrain.

From these points, and accepting Kant's negative method that autonomy cannot respond to any inclination, the distinction between external and internal domination renders itself meaningless. What does it change whether the AP is under the force of technology taken as an external agent or form as an internal one? Nothing, heteronomy is there anyway, and the classification of "internal" versus "external" is again subjectocentric. Stated differently, on what ontological evidence does the taxonomy of a project's appropriateness or inappropriateness rely to determine it as a possible form of autonomy or heteronomy? Under an ontological realist perspective, there is none.

But even more, heteronomy here does not consist only in the subject's selection of some attributes or circumstances taken as alienating, but in any *qualitative* reduction or "literalization" (in Harman's sense) of the project or its autonomy.[7] This includes any definition of autonomy insofar as it is qualitative, both in relation to a subject and to any internal set of unknowable attributes. Cognitively, and insofar as literalization is the subject's activity *par excellence*, we require a subjectless autonomy. Ontologically, and insofar as literalization is essence's activity *par excellence*, we also require a non-qualitative autonomy.

[7] See Harman's idea of "literalism" in the arts in Harman, *Art and Objects*, chap. 3.

Let us consolidate this argument by problematizing the theories of Kaufmann, Rossi, Tafuri, Eisenman, and Harman. This journey shall not be entirely negative, but many positive reflections will be collected from these authors to formulate this thesis' sense of autonomy at the end of the chapter.

2.1.1. Kaufmann

Emil Kaufmann is a pivotal reference in any discussion of autonomy in architecture.[8] Of his work, it is *From Ledoux to Le Corbusier: Origin and Development of Autonomous Architecture* (1933) where Kaufmann addresses the question of autonomy in architecture most explicitly through the French architect Claud-Nicholas Ledoux (1736-1806), who is depicted in the book as a key figure in the transition from baroque to neoclassicism and as an important influence on modernism.[9] Kaufmann saw in Ledoux's work the end of the *Baroque unity*, which led to the establishment of a series of principles understood as proper to architecture. In other words, if Baroque architecture operated through extra- or supra-architectural motivations, mainly universal doctrines on beauty that sought the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total artwork) as the fusion of all the arts, and therefore, the dissolution of the specificity of each of them; Ledoux proposed a new system involving, according to Kaufmann, the principles of architectural autonomy.[10] This emancipatory model of architecture results from two main compositional dispositions that articulate autonomy: (1) the purification and simplification of geometric forms and (2) the disaggregation of elements and masses in the design.

1) The first seeks clarity. The building should speak for itself, that is, the basic and bare forms should sufficiently evidence the function they served. The new architecture, in opposition to the baroque tendency, was based on solid geometric blocks and reduced ornamentation for a transparent identification of its purposes.[11] This new self-reflective symbolism, which reverses architectural legitimization by excluding external referentiality, is what Kaufmann called "architecture parlante." "A church should arouse sublime feelings, a prison should instill fear," and in particular on Ledoux, "[t]he cube of his «House of Peace» seemed legitimized to him by being this the symbol of stability and justice."[12] In conducting a retrospective theorization similar to that of Kaufmann with Ledoux, Pier Vittorio Aureli

[8] Emil Kaufmann (1891-1953) was an art and architecture historian whose writings focused primarily on French architecture of the late eighteenth century. As Anthony Vidler writes: "Of all the writers and architects who have contributed over a century or more to the debate over autonomy, the Viennese historian, Emil Kaufmann, stands out as a consistent reference point for all subsequent discussions." Anthony Vidler, "The Ledoux Effect: Emil Kaufmann and the Claims of Kantian Autonomy," *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 16. Some other important publications that have dealt with Kaufmann's influence on architectural theory are Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), chap. 1; or Michael Osman et al., eds., *Mining Autonomy*, Perspecta 33 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
[9] Emil Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier: origen y desarrollo de la arquitectura autónoma*, trans. Reinald Bernet (1933; repr., Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1982), 21–30. The other two key publications by Kaufmann are *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu* (1952), in which, as opposed to the exposition of his personal project of autonomy present in the first book, Kaufmann presented a more scholarly and descriptive perspective on the history and work of the three French architects; and *Architecture in the Age of Reason: Baroque and Post-Baroque in England, Italy, and France* (1955), published posthumously, and which Aldo Rossi took as a milestone for the development of his theoretical agenda.
[10] Ibid., 33–35.
[11] Vidler, "The Ledoux Effect," 17–18.
[12] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 53-54, [author's translation].

draws analogous principles from Étienne-Louis Boullée, contemporary of Ledoux. Boullée's "architecture of shadows" and bare volumes also imply that "a library is a monument to 'science,' a museum is a temple to 'culture.'"[13] This search for sincerity also extended to materials and architectural elements. "For post-revolutionary architecture, stone becomes stone again," notes Kaufmann.[14] In this line, Hubert Damisch expands the Kaufmannian process of architectural autonomization beyond the explicit expression of the building's program or its materials, also involving its constructive logic. If a baroque column follows anthropomorphic principles, in the new architecture, "a simple cylinder will do the job."[15] However, the French philosopher brings a critical point to this maneuver. As he writes:

> If architecture is no more than the expression of a constructive logic, its reason for being should be sought in the act of building. In these terms, architecture, from the moment it obeyed an *external determination*, would be no longer autonomous but rather the object of empirical knowledge, technical and experimental, whatever the contributions of calculation.[16]

To put it another way, Damisch does not accept Kaufmann's idea of expressive functionality as the foundation of architectural autonomy. For him, the act of building suggests an "external determination" away from architecture itself, which he does not even concede as an internal inclination. In fact, Damisch laments that Kaufmann's autonomy can only be achieved through expressions that reflect *to a subject* ("empirical knowledge…") its own programmatic and constructive purposes. But these two conditions are considered precisely the aesthetic nucleus of modernity, at least in Helio Piñón's theory of the architectural project. According to him, construction and program are the primary stimuli behind the system of principles of modern form in architecture.[17] In turn, Piñón—like Kaufmann—automatically dissolves any possibility of subjectless architecture or architecture *an sich* the moment he admits that "form has no real existence, but is the result of the projection of an apriorism of the subject on reality, so that it is transformed with artistic criteria."[18] I think that modern teleology and its onto-taxonomy of humans and everything else cannot be expressed more clearly.

Another reading against the self-referentiality of the revolutionary architecture's clean and simple tectonics as a manifestation of its principles of autonomy is that such symbolism was not actually as self-referential as one might first think. Perhaps unintentionally, but it is Damisch, Vidler, and Aureli who reveal the inconsistency of any attempt to proclaim a purely self-referential autonomy of visual forms. They do so by demonstrating that the French architecture at the turn of the eighteenth century was a response to the social and political circumstances of the time—that of autonomous and free individuals—before or, at least, parallel to a statement of own architectural principles.[19] As

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[13] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 142.
[14] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 72, [author's translation]. Kaufmann contrasts the exposure of natural material logics to the illusory and forced games of the Baroque, e.g., the suppression of wild nature to strict geometric formulations or the perceptual distortion of spaces by painting ceilings and walls.
[15] Hubert Damisch, "Ledoux with Kant," trans. Erin Williams, *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 13.
[16] Ibid., 13, [emphasis added].
[17] Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 22, 42. It is important to note that Piñón does not understand "form" as "appearance," but as the manifestation of an organizing structure.
[18] Ibid., 40, [author's translation].
[19] Damisch, "Ledoux with Kant," 14. Vidler, "The Ledoux Effect," 19.

Aureli notes on Boullée's raw compositions: "Boullée wanted this anonymous, primary, and empirical experience of bare volumes projecting shadows to be the main attribute of the public monument dedicated to the free citizen."[20]

A formalist like Conrad Fielder would certainly have rejected this notion of autonomy. Seen like this, architecture is subservient to socio-political forces. It is mobilized to provide an image of the collective spirit of its time.[21] From this point of view, there is not much difference between baroque and post-revolutionary architecture concerning the question of autonomy, contrary to Kaufmann's thought. Both are applied demonstrations of their respective social and ideological contexts. Is an architecture born from the principles of human autonomy (modernity) more autonomous than one coming from anthropomorphic notions of beauty (baroque)? I firmly argue that it *is not*. Under this thesis' understanding of the term in discussion, both architectures are equally autonomous by the mere fact of existing. In turn, both are equally heteronomous by the same fact of reducing such existential autonomy—or reason-to-be, if preferred—to their respective enabling factors and definitions. In other words, something is not more autonomous because it is claimed to arise from what is thought to be the principles of autonomy. The heteronomous danger of heteronomy does not hinge on a content claimed to be more or less autonomous, but the *literalization* of something's ontologically autonomous mode of existence to cognitive or epistemological axioms; even if those axioms pursue autonomy in good faith.

This perspective should not fall into the misconception that all traces of the cognizer must be discredited to attain autonomy, as extreme formalisms like that of Fielder holds. I consider his position too radical and conducive to isolation rather than autonomy; two issues that I take as different from one another. Indeed, I will posit in Section 3.1 that social subjectivities reflected in architectural expressions do not preclude the AP's autonomy. Before that, we continue with Kaufmann.

2) The second gesture that the Austrian architectural historian identified in Ledoux to proclaim an autonomy of architecture is the acknowledgement of the individuality of the parts that comprise a design. This is especially evident in the French architect's so-called *pavilion system* (Fig. 2-1).[22] As he put it:

> Particularly characteristic is the juxtaposed arrangement of the parts [...] In classical-baroque art, all parts were intimately united as if they were cast in one piece. Now, despite the fact that the parts appear united, they are viable independently. In other words, the pavilion system can be recognized in the architectural body of the building itself.[23]

Kaufmann did not limit this idea only to large complexes of buildings-within-a-building, but argued for the autonomy of the parts also through the compositional elements of Ledoux's *barrière*s, smaller and freestanding buildings that served as tool offices (Fig. 2-2).[24]

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[20] Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, 142.

[21] For Fiedler, religious, ethical, social, and political concerns were outside of what is exclusively a problem of form. See Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 30.

[22] The pavilion system refers to the physical separation of large building complexes into distanced and smaller constructions (pavilions) visible in projects like the Market, the Cannon Foundry Factory or the Credit Bank—all of them for Ledoux's Ideal City of Chaux.

[23] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 70, [author's translation].

[24] Ibid., 70–71.

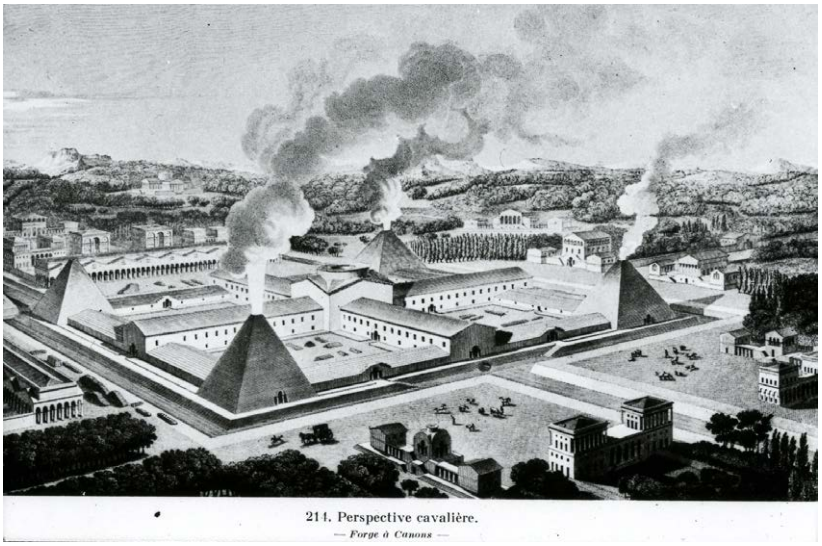


Figure 2-1. Claude Nicolas Ledoux, *Cannon Foundry Factory*, Chaux, 1775-79.

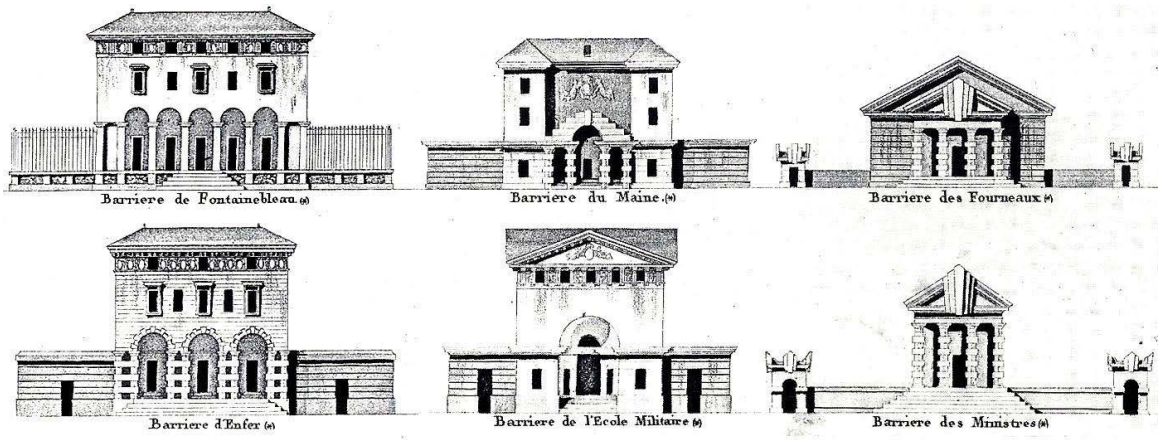


Figure 2-2. Claude Nicolas Ledoux, *Barrières*, published in 1804.

It is important to remark that Kaufmann celebration of "the free union between individual elements that do not need to sacrifice their own existence" is a solid precedent for this thesis' understanding of autonomy.[25] It points directly to Miralles' design approach and OOO's mereological world structure. Although this will be addressed in detail in Chapter 7, it suffices now to say that Miralles proposed a design method that develops the parts and the whole of a design both autonomously and in interconnection. His architecture has even been described as "buildings-within-a-building," as has just been envisioned by Ledoux.[26] On the philosophical side of things, Bryant observes that "parts and wholes are distinct and autonomous from one another" within a given composition, and Harman develops a cosmological model of "objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects."[27] In short, every entity is autonomous despite being composed of and composing other autonomous things. If this ontological premise becomes explicit in the formulation of architecture—something that, for example, is clearer in Ledoux's clear volumes than in Miralles' intricate juxtapositions—it is a secondary concern.

Within this framework, Kaufmann's works leave us with a bittersweet taste. His idea of

[25] Ibid., 71, [author's translation].
[26] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 9.
[27] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 217; Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 158.

autonomy in architecture is too literal and too reducible to Ledoux's rules of composition. I reject his approach of taxonomizing autonomous versus heteronomous architecture on a qualitative, visual basis, a method that is relational on a cognitive basis. Acknowledging designs of easily legible and distributed stereotomic shapes stripped of any superfluous ornamentation as if they were the essential and proper features of architecture does not constitute autonomy as such. It is the perception of a (collective or individual) subject about what autonomy can mean, and which imposes a cognitive mask that actually limits the possibilities of architecture itself. I maintain that autonomy lies behind any formal and visual exercise. Any architecture is autonomous *per se* and does not need any kind of blessing from a subject to be so.

In this sense, and as I will reiterate several times, the practicality of autonomy in architectural design lies elsewhere and for other purposes. In my view, it does not consist of defining what autonomy is and how it is achieved. By being aware of something's autonomous existence, the impossibility of its domination becomes evident. The possibilities of things then open up and cognition pluralizes. Therefore, acknowledging *ontological autonomy* is decisive in combating the reduction and omission of the AP's being and its rich multiplicity to one or another limiting set of attributes. Here, it is irrelevant whether such limitation comes through what one believes to be external inclinations that reduce architectural integrity to a by-product or internal presuppositions that isolate it in a fortified cognitive mask. In both cases, architecture is equated with (tangible) properties. It is literalized, as Harman says. In short, liberating architecture from external pressures to be anchored in supposed internal specificities, as Kaufmann does, can be an initial and positive gesture in admitting the *possibility* of autonomy, but it will never constitute autonomy as such. Therein lies one of the most important lessons from the architectural historian: to detect that architecture is autonomous, albeit for other reasons than he imagined. Kaufmann's other key discovery is that autonomy is not only a matter of the whole, but also a condition of the parts.

2.1.2. Rossi

After commenting on Kaufmann's idea of autonomy derived from certain visual forms, Rossi explores the relationship between these superficial results and the background context that induces them. His theory is sufficiently rich and open to elaborate a productive speculation from it. The present interpretation of Rossi's theoretical approach will be helpful in crystallizing concepts important to this thesis' notion of autonomy, but will also delineate points of demarcation. Most of the disagreements will not be structural but will pertain to the particular elements mobilized in his methodology and the design implications derived from it. These can be condensed in Rossi's over-reliance on historical precedent and its ever-associated neo-rational formal language. Much to his dismay, they will be criticized for being overly loaded with predefinitions that delimit the possibilities of access and realization of the AP. The importance that Rossi gives to visual form is well illustrated by different authors. Even following different paths, they reach similar conclusions, with the Italian architect's formal expressions being the mirror of his idea of autonomy. On the one hand, scholars like Vidler see in Rossi a pure and self-referential formal autonomy, a continuation of Kaufmann's thesis.[28] On the other hand, a more intricate tendency by Aureli argues that Rossi (and Tafuri) did not seek an autonomy of the

[28] Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present*, 55.

discipline, but the autonomy of a political subject capable of counteracting capitalist domination: something the architect methodologized through the formulation of a rational formal language.[29] Here I am closer to Aureli's opinion, as it can be argued that Rossi's shapes are an instrument rather than an end in themselves. Yet the most important point to be drawn from Rossi's theory is what can be called his *triad scheme*, which accounts for and interconnects the individuality of the city (equated here to being), the artifacts (as manifestations), and the process of formalization (as design cognition). On the former, this view will imply acknowledging the entity of the city as the underlying reality that transcends its tangible manifestations. This interpretation will recall the One/Many model claimed in Chapter 1, irrespective of the fact that Rossi was not interested in an ontological understanding of autonomy. Instead, he locates autonomy in the collective act of designing the city through its artifacts, something that will also help to advance this dissertation's advocacy for an autonomous cognitive-unit between the cognizer and the project in Part Two. Through this discussion, an important conclusion will be reached: the detachment of the produced from the producing object from one another as two different, autonomous, and irreducible entities.

Like Kaufmann's method, Rossi also begins in *The Architecture of the City* by determining what are the external inclinations from which architecture should be unchained. If for the Austrian historian the enemy was Baroque unity, this time it is modernist functionalism. For Rossi, the scientification of function as the ultimate analytical and propositional tool and the reduction of the architectural *type*—his central architectural concept—to simple organizational schemes and circulation diagrams are insufficient to account for the more complex systems that architecture entails.[30] As he notes: "a classification by functions is not an explanation but rather a descriptive system."[31] It remains valid "to provide us with a simple instrumental fact—just so long as it does not pretend that an explanation for more complex facts can be extracted from this same order."[32] Here Rossi does not intend to refute data-oriented approaches altogether, but to delimit their scope. Today we can see a similar move in Harman, according to whom objects cannot be reduced to our knowledge of them. Conversely, "knowledge is always an imperfect translation of its object," he contends.[33] As with Rossi, this does not entail the complete dissolution of facts, logics, and literal propositions, since these distortions or caricatures are beneficial and necessary on multiple fronts of life. However, the definition of a thing's being is not one of them. Although "such classifications have a certain utility," Rossi remarks, "nonetheless it is clear that they are more useful for telling us something about the point of view adopted for classification than about an element itself."[34] Against utilitarism and data reductionism, and in a statement that any OOO follower would sign today, Rossi says that "every work and every object—if it is not to be squashed on the image of its own use […]—is self-

[29] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 55–57.

[30] Rossi states very clearly his concerns about the modernist method in the section "Critique of Naive Functionalism" in his famous *The Architecture of the City*, where he excludes function as a parameter for considering the structure and formation of urban artifacts. He could not be more categorical in the following passage: "we reject that conception of functionalism dictated by an ingenuous empiricism which holds that functions bring form together and in themselves constitute urban artifacts and architecture." Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 46.

[31] Ibid., 55.

[32] Ibid., 47.

[33] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 168.

[34] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 48.

sufficient and develops a life of its own."[35]

Rossi's approach accentuates three dimensions: the material city, its intrinsic nature—which, in realist circles, would be re-branded as the appearance-reality gap—and its formation process. Unlike the present Part One, the Italian architect is not ultimately interested in the second one, since he himself admits that he has never spoken of an architectural *an sich*.[36] But it does not negate the fact that he hints at this metaphysical and concealed plane throughout *The Architecture of the City,* referring to it as an "undefinable order" or a "quasi-mystical principle of order."[37] The disinterest in strictly morphological aspects (appearance) taken as the city itself can also be seen as a gesture in this direction.[38] This is not to completely disregard physical phenomena, but such a material sphere of architectural and urban manifestations, which Rossi calls "artifacts," serves to make visible and also inform the other two invisible conditions: its hidden nature, which, again, he concedes but does not develop, and the way the artifact's formation is approached.

It is the latter that dominates much of Rossi's research and where he addresses the question of autonomy. For the Italian architect, "the principal moment of an architectural artifact is […] in the autonomous principles according to which it is founded and transmitted."[39] That means that Rossi situates autonomy in the *process of formalization*. It is thus in the mediation process performed by the human of the appearance-reality rift where Rossi sees the concept of autonomy. On its part, the distributed architecture or artifact also accounts for this autonomy insofar as it simultaneously contributes to and reflects such an unfolding. Both the event of formalizing (i.e., the process) and the formalized form (the appearance) are in relation to the veiled individuality a city (the substance).[40] As Rossi puts it: "Ultimately, the proof that the city has primarily itself as an end emerges in the artifacts themselves, in the slow unfolding of a certain idea of the city, intentionally."[41]

As a comparative note, this thesis considers Rossi's formalization process as experiential, thus resonating with what will be called *cognitive-unit* in Part Two. But such experience mobilizes different ingredients and dimensions in each case, thereby leading to separate conclusions. Rossi's study involves *the collective cognizer* and *the city*, relying on collective memory and its historical architectural expressions as what determines the possibilities of such an autonomous encounter. On the other hand, this thesis will focus in the next chapters on *the individual cognizer* and *the AP*, relying on the person's innermost determinations and intuitions, as well as on the project's abstract expressions as what determines the possibilities of such an autonomous encounter. It is from this basis that all the agreements and disagreements between Rossi's stance and this one arise.

On the one hand, this thesis celebrates and follows what can be called the *triad scheme* of Rossi's theory, which rests on the three pillars mentioned above: individuality, the

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[35] Aldo Rossi, "La Città Analoga: Tavola / The Analogous City: Panel," *Lotus International*, no. 13 (1976): 6. See also Harman's comments on Rossi, in which the former celebrates the latter's standpoint on the irreducibility of form to the contextualism and relationality of function, while lamenting the omission of function in the Italian architect's discourse. Graham Harman, *Architecture and Objects* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2022), sec. 2.D.

[36] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 169.

[37] Ibid., 128.

[38] Rossi points out that this material basis is more akin to other fields of study, like archaeology or the history of architecture and individual cities. Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 127.

[40] Ibid., 131. See also Peter Eisenman's introduction to Rossi's book, where the former comments on the relevance of the process in the latter's theory. Ibid., 3–11.

[41] Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 131.

process of unfolding, and the artifact—respectively termed here being (and addressed in Part One), cognitive-unit (Part Two), and manifestation (Part Three). As noted, Rossi's autonomy concentrates mainly on the second, but the other two also require such status. Given that Part One is devoted to the AP (what would be Rossi's city as an ontological entity), it is necessary to improve on the scant attention that the Italian architect pays to the withdrawn substance of the emergent object in favor of its production or cognitive process.

On the other hand, what this thesis rejects from Rossi's stance is the particular toolkit of his design method, as well as the conceptual and design conclusions derived therefrom. Although such differences will become evident in the progress of Part Two and Three, it can now be said that Rossi's historical approach that enabled him to recognize and operate with the triad scheme, and which served him to prepare the design apparatus of his *analogous city* and the development of a neo-rational architectural formal repertoire, are here criticized as precisely what blocks cognitive access to the architectural project's double depth.[42] In other words, while Rossi sees in history and in type the very possibility of advancing both in architecture and in the collectivity that unveils it, I see, perhaps not a total impossibility, but a serious limitation. As I see it, when the features of the past are embedded in an architectural expression, i.e., when there is a precedent that serves as a basis for elaborating the architecture to come, even if it is towards new understandings, we will be dealing to some extent with an architecture of *re*cognition rather than cognition.

Put differently, Rossi's idea of *permanence* as the endurance of certain shapes throughout history is the evidence of the existence of the object of the city beyond its volatile manifestations.[43] I admit the efficiency of this method to account for the depth of the object as an *analytical* mechanism. But in a design register with *propositional* purposes, I read such stability as a cognitive stagnation that precisely prevents from accounting for the multiplicity of the object. "Recognition, in fact, presupposes what is already known," Tafuri observes.[44] Evidence of this is Rossi's design approach and lexical development, which consists of a limited catalog of austere forms, a scarcity that also applies to the openness that each of them promotes.

In this regard, Tafuri criticizes Rossi's formal repertoire as an "architecture of cruelty" based on "language-as-a-system-of-exclusions."[45] More specifically: "Rossi shares only a sort of frustrated nostalgia for the structure of communication. But for him, it is a communication that has nothing to speak about except the finite quality of its closed system."[46] In this vein, it invokes the reiteration of previous and collectively assumed meanings that block the possibilities of access and unveiling through an intimate experience in the now. Again, this system implies a regime of re-cognition rather than cognition. That

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[42] Rossi describes his design method of the *analogous city* as "a theory of architectural design in which the elements were pre-established and formally defined, but where the significance that sprung forth at the end of the operation was the authentic, unforeseen, and original meaning of the work." Ibid., 166. Chapter 6 will deal extensively with refuting precedent-derived design approaches. Complete dissociation of pre-established meanings inscribed in known formal arrangements will be considered impossible.

[43] The physical expression becomes the material source for Rossi's design research and historical method, which consists of tracing the built structures that have endured over time, withstanding programmatic and even morphological alterations. He called this approach "permanence." Ibid., 86–92.

[44] Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d' Acierno and Robert Connolly (1980; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 4.

[45] Manfredo Tafuri, "L'Architecture Dans Le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language," trans. Victor Caliandro, *Oppositions*, no. 3 (May 1974): 53.

[46] Ibid., 42.

means that designing and occupying cannot escape preceding semantic burdens of understanding, disclosure, and use.

Within this framework, the political dimension addressed in Rossi's and this thesis' theories are also clearly different. Rossi sought in the history of a place the vehicle to summon the will of society and move away from the imposing inclinations of the capitalist and generalist city. But if one focuses on individual experiences or attends to smaller social groups, as this thesis does, it is clear that many of the impositions on the individual come precisely from the local sphere of the social and its reflection in the built environment. Seen in this light, Rossi's *locus* perpetuates a collective masking of access that cannot contemplate full alternatives of individual emancipation from such a collective masking, since it evolves in a historical continuity that feeds back on itself. In the face of this, individual liberation is intended to exercise one's own capacities to navigate within the multiplicity of things; of architectural projects, in this case. However, this personal empowerment is not a rational or moral imperative, as many criticisms and activisms reclaim today. It is a consequence of the AP's autonomous existence and qualitative abundance: the impossibility of dominating the project cognitively entails precisely the pluralization of cognitions. In turn, it is such a plethora of impressions that provides the legitimization of individual voices, since each of them is equally (in)capable of fulfilling the AP.[47]

What is also important to point out is that, under an ontological-realist vision, the autonomy of the discipline of architecture, of a city, of an architectural project, or of anything else are not incompatible with each other. They are also not contrary to the autonomy of the cognitive process that constitutes and/or reveals them. Each of these entities and events is autonomous in itself. And they can draw particular and selective relationships and influences between each other without affecting their individual autonomous natures. That is to say, autonomy is not isolation. Relationality does occur in autonomy. Following Rossi, how an artifact is shaped also shapes how it is shaped. But it is autonomy that separates these two events into two autonomous objects again. The action-reaction causation between two things is not reciprocal but asymmetrical, and each requires its own space of study.[48] It is also autonomy that prevents the reduction of what relates to each (e.g., a cognizer and an AP) to the relational terms. I believe that Rossi's theory can certainly be read in this sense.

For the purposes of this thesis, and although Rossi does not put it in these explicit terms, we can extract from his approach the separation between the producing and the produced object, the latter splitting again into the city and the artifact (here called the being and the manifestation). This gives us the opportunity to elaborate an intricate authorship model, in which to distinguish between the ontological and the epistemological creator. The first gives birth to the object, as parents do with a child, an architect with a project, or a community with a city. The second—the epistemological creator—unfolds or activates in a cognitive act the entity's qualitative content, like the development of certain skills of the child, the unraveling of an architectural expression, or the formalization of an urban artifact. The epistemological creator is not reduced, then, to an individual architect (Section 5.2). It also contemplates the user (Section 5.4), or the collective, as in Rossi's approach.

That the elements of this triad scheme are in connection with each other is

[47] For this thesis' view on the political dimension of the question of cognitive access, see Section 5.3 and the conclusion. For Rossi's explicit account, see Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 161–63. And for an extended interpretation of the Italian architect's importance of politics for the formation of a socialist city, see Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 53–69.

[48] See the idea of asymmetry in causation in Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 219–30.

indisputable, since Rossi demonstrated their relationality. But what is disputed—not in the case of Rossi—is their interchangeability, that is, that one absorbs the reality of the others or that one is any of the others. This is not a trivial conclusion, since to speak today of the transcendent side of architecture is generally scorned as a mystical act too distant from the urgencies that architecture must resolve materially. Or, more pragmatically, academia and practice are full of understandings where the context and the process of production are enough to legitimize the architecture produced. In short, the object's being is disregarded, and the manifestation is reduced to how and from what it has been generated or what it does and affects. Contemporary intellectual movements such as ANT or New Materialism provide the theoretical basis of this relational tenets. Against this view, Rossi's theory is useful to show how autonomy does not override relationality. In fact, it gives the latter their own autonomous dimension, something that Tafuri radicalized.

2.1.3. Tafuri

Manfredo Tafuri is considered one of the most—if not the most—important European theorist of autonomy in postwar architecture. His work is useful here both in affirmative and negative comparison. On the one hand, and besides the inspiring character of his texts and the literary force of his prose, this thesis will draw from his reflections the important lesson that autonomy does not equal isolation. Although at first glance it appears to be an unavoidable case of heteronomy, Tafuri situates architectural autonomy precisely in the contextual conditions of the design production. This will be interpreted as a demonstration that a process can be autonomous and that the (range of) selection of its relations and components is a manifestation of the autonomous condition of that process (or object). Such a view will be especially helpful in understanding the cognitive process also as autonomous in Part Two. On the other hand, Tafuri's radical anti-formalist perspective will be rejected. According to this, the process is autonomous at the cost of discarding the architectural object—by "architectonic object" Tafuri refers to the tangible building or the spatial artifact. Opposed to this sense of autonomy where something is so only if something else is not so, OOO's ontological discretism stands out where everything is equally autonomous. Zeroing the process, i.e., accounting for it as an autonomous One/Many object, is not incompatible with doing the same with building or the AP. Rossi's triad scheme already showed us this.

In Tafuri's theory, autonomy is inextricably tied to a critique of ideology—and capitalism, in particular—making it a fundamentally political-dependent concept. Put it this way, the distance between Tafuri's position and that of OOO appears from the outset hard to reconcile. This is so because the former presents an anti-formalist autonomy and the latter a formalist-oriented one. If Harman relies on certain formalist principles to account for the artistic and architectural object as "an independent and self-contained unit largely autonomous from its biographical, economic, cultural, and socio-political context," Tafuri consciously decides to inquire critically into extra-architectural and circumstantial aspects.[49] For the Italian critic and historian, this does not imply the dissolution of architectural formal specificity, but it determines "the real significance of planning choices within the dynamics of the productive transformations that they set into motion, that they

[49] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 32. However, we should not understand Harman's formalist stance in its traditional sense. Section 2.2 and 4.2 will detail how the OOO founder twists previous formalist registers and how this thesis accommodates all of them, but this minimal definition of formalism suffices for the present purposes.

slow up, that they try to impede."[50] In other words, Tafuri's interest lies in investigating the *dynamics of production* proper of architecture within a given cultural system. As one may already have noticed, this echoes the socio-productive basis on which Rossi addresses the city—indeed, Rossi's ideas were profoundly informed by Tafuri's thinking on the subject. In this sense, Aureli remarks that such a common ground led both Italian authors to converge "in the necessity of a theory that consisted not in the autonomy of the discipline, but in the autonomy of a political subject committed to the formulation of a cultural alternative to the bourgeois domination of the capitalist city."[51] If Rossi promotes the idea of *locus* in opposition to the generic modernist city, implementing his analytical device in a design method, Tafuri penetrates the innards of architectural making under capitalism through the critique of ideology. Diane Ghirardo makes this point clear in the article "Manfredo Tafuri and Architecture Theory in the U.S., 1970-2000." She explains that the central concern of the Italian author lay in criticizing how capitalist expansion and rationalization have instrumentalized architecture since the Enlightenment, including those avant-garde movements that *a priori* reacted against it.[52] More explicitly, she writes: "What Tafuri viewed as a tragic fate of architecture in the capitalist economic system and within the relations of production certainly drove him to the limits of despair, for he viewed capitalism as a totalizing, all-encompassing system."[53]

In the face of this subordination or external heteronomy, Tafuri decried any attempt to justify the autonomy of architecture on the basis of form, since, according to him, it remains dependent on the system from which it springs. "[H]e insisted that architecture as pure form could never rupture capitalism's stranglehold," Ghirardo remarks.[54] Tafuri's campaign against form runs counter to any post-Kantian aesthetic formalism that understands "form" as "appearance" or detached from its historical, political, economic, and social context. Therefore, the Italian critic's early writings are severe against Kaufmann's emphasis on shape. As Vidler points out: "Tafuri was to 'correct' Kaufmann's theses."[55] Moreover, this antipathy to formal qualities also implies a departure from Rossi's theory, despite their aforementioned common denomination. As seen in the previous subsection, whereas the *Tendenza* architect sees in visual form both a reflection and a determinant of the culture that generates it, such a connection is impossible for Tafuri. As the latter writes: "The higher the sublimation of the conflicts on a formal plane, the more hidden the cultural and social structures actually expressed by that sublimation."[56] In *Architecture and Utopia*, Tafuri tells us that this dissociation lies in the systematic omission of the revision of meaning when architects have reconsidered formal principles, a failure that has led to an acute crisis of values in architectural development since the Enlightenment.[57] Under this umbrella, we should read Tafuri's sense of "form" and "object" in its shallow sense, namely, as the directly graspable "visual form" and "qualities of the object" for a subject. Having done so, we can equate Tafuri's aversion to form-*for* (or shape) a subject with this

[50] Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, 15.
[51] Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 55.
[52] Diane Y. Ghirardo, "Manfredo Tafuri and Architecture Theory in the U.S., 1970-2000," *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 38.
[53] Ibid., 39.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present*, 167.
[56] Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta (1973; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), 2.
[57] Ibid., 41.

dissertation's rejection of appearances and effects as their own end: both theories eschew the literalization and automatization of superficial qualities.

Before continuing with the concurrences, a couple of discrepancies should be mentioned. Faced with such a reductionism to formal presentation, Tafuri's task is not to fix inconsistencies but to point them out. This means that no proposition can be expected once the critical method is adopted. His writing focuses on an *analytical* inquiry into the flaws of socio-political structures that concern the production of architecture under the capitalist model. Therefore, we cannot see Tafuri's criticism as the basis for redressing that which is criticized, something that Rossi improved by developing design alternatives. Critical Theory is its own end. As he himself remarks: "the critical analysis of the basic principles of contemporary architectural ideology does not pretend to have any 'revolutionary' aim. What is of interest here is the precise *identification* of those tasks which capitalist development has taken away from architecture."[58] Such a propositional paucity of the critique of ideology—the lack of action beyond raising awareness and pointing out problems of Critical Theory in general—has been problematized by several authors thereafter, and goes in the opposite direction of this design theory's generative willingness.[59]

However, the fact that "Tafuri offered no blueprints for action," as Ghirardo says, did not prevent him from exerting what the critique of ideology can positively do: identify existing orientations in line with the critic's viewpoint.[60] Tafuri does so through the German architect Ludwig Hilberseimer, who offers him the practice on which to reaffirm his theory of the failure of shape in favor of production agendas under capitalist dynamics. The following passage expresses it clearly:

> In face of the new techniques of production and the expansion and rationalization of the market, the architect as producer of objects [in its superficial sense] had indeed become an inadequate figure. It was now no longer a question of giving form to single elements of the city, nor even to simple prototypes. The real unity of the production cycle having been identified in the city, the only suitable role for the architect was as organizer of that cycle. Carrying the proposition to the extreme, the activity of deviser of models of organization, on which Hilberseimer insisted, was the only one completely reflecting both the necessity of Taylorizing building production and the new role of technician that had become so much a part of this necessity.
>
> With this outlook Hilberseimer could avoid involving himself in the "crisis of the object," noted with disquiet by architects such as Loos or Taut. For Hilberseimer, the "object" did not enter into crisis: it had already disappeared from the panorama of his considerations, and the only situation there demanding his attention was that dictated by the laws of organization.[61]

With this, we should not understand that Tafuri was promoting modernist Taylorization

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[58] Ibid., ix, [emphasis added]. Tafuri's aversion to the look of the work as the center of architectural discourse was so high as to recommend the practice of criticism to distance itself from the work in question. In his words: "In the face of such [architectural] products, the task of criticism is to begin from within the work only to escape from it as soon as possible so as not to be caught in the vicious circle of a language that speaks only of itself." Tafuri, "L'Architecture Dans Le Boudoir," May 1974, 53.

[59] See for example Jacques Rancière, "Problems and Transformations of Critiral Art," in *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (2004; repr., Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), 45–60; Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 49–53; and Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, chap. 4.

[60] Ghirardo, "Manfredo Tafuri and Architecture Theory in the U.S., 1970-2000," 39.

[61] Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 107.

for its own sake. His reading is much more abstract than any commitment to one or another particular content and ideology. In this case, Tafuri celebrates Hilberseimer's *ability* to accommodate the architectural production process to its circumstances, rather than the particularities of that action. He praises a similar recognition in Alberti and Brunelleschi with the Renaissance background.[62] Within the capitalist context, Tafuri finds in the German architect a practice that does not fall into the delusion of claiming the autonomy of the architectural element because of its semblance as salvation from capitalist alienation. Once not distracted by the visual aspect of the object, architecture can focus on the dynamics of its production under the capitalist model; precisely in order not to succumb to its engulfment. This means that Tafuri did not pursue the end of capitalism. His consciousness as an author embedded in a capitalist environment is strong enough to prevent him from breaching his own theory and embarking on the critical utopia of acting outside the system in which he is situated. This is, in fact, the critique he gives of those avant-garde movements that do fall into such a reformist impracticality.[63] As he reproaches them: "it is useless to propose purely architectural alternatives. The search for an alternative within the structures that condition the very character of architectural design is indeed an obvious contradiction of terms."[64] Instead, Tafuri challenged architectural production to find its autonomous organization alongside and within the cultural and economic system in which it is inserted.

This point of view can be related to OOO's idea that autonomy does not lead to isolation. There is no complete rupture of something with its environment, but neither its complete dissolution within it. In Bryant's words: "The point is *not* that nothing exists apart from a system […] but rather that what constitutes an element for a system does not pre-exist the system that constitutes or constructs it."[65] Everything has a *selective policy of relation* that admits some connections and not others (Subsection 2.2.4). As Bryant concludes: "the point is that substances maintain only *selective relationships* to their environment."[66] Seen in this way, it can be said that Tafuri took the architectural production process as something in itself, and investigated its selectivity to avoid its reduction to both the isolation of of the architectural product's qualities and the over-connectivity with its environment.

Tafuri's illustration of Hilberseimer to account for the figure of the architect as organizer of the production process embedded in the capitalist model finds its reference in Walter Benjamin, a frequent guest in his texts. For example, in "The Author as Producer," the German thinker confronts the work not *to* the production structure, but its position *in* them.[67] The work cannot be considered outside of its making conditions, and Tafuri

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[62] See Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, trans. Giorgio Verrecchia (1968; repr., New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 14–19.

[63] In this sense, Tafuri believed neither in historical distortions as instrumentalizations of present actions, which he denigrated as operative criticism, nor in revolutionary proclamations organized outside and as an alternative to the capitalist model. If forced to be faced with a choice between these two, Tafuri preferred the former. As he writes: "To the deceptive attempts to give architecture an ideological dress, I shall always prefer the sincerity of those who have the courage to speak of that silent and outdated 'purity' even if this, too, still harbors an ideological inspiration, pathetic in its anachronism. Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, ix.

[64] Ibid., 181.

[65] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 143.

[66] Ibid., 147, [emphasis added].

[67] Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (1934; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 81. Benjamin's central idea in this article is that if the author is not inscribed within the production process and if the productive context does not exert an alienation and transformation on the productive apparatus, such a

endorses this view for architectural theory. He writes:

> Since an individual work is no longer at stake, but rather an entire cycle of production, critical analysis has to operate on the material plane that determines that cycle of production. In other words, to shift the focus from what architecture wishes to be, or wishes to say, toward what building production represents in the economic game means that we must establish parameters of reading capable of penetrating to the heart of the role played by architecture within the capitalist system.[68]

It is the organization of the production mechanisms within the larger complex of capitalism that constitutes architectural autonomy for Tafuri. Reducing architecture to its ideological principles—regressive, revolutionary, or otherwise—or to the properties of the architectural product was the heteronomy he wanted to escape, taking refuge in the more complex conditions of production. In the case of Tafuri, and faced with the inescapable circumstances of capitalism in Western modernism, he sees autonomy not in the independence but the *autonomous integration* of the architectural productive apparatus within the almighty system that determines it. It is about operating in an enmeshed but not dominated manner. Stated differently, for Tafuri—as it would be for Benjamin—the only possibility to upgrade the architectural system of values according to the general cultural dispositions followed by capitalist dynamics is precisely to operate *within* the production cycle of capitalism, a vindication that also encompasses public experience. In his words:

> The forms and methods of industrial labor became part of the organization of design and were reflected in the proposed use of the object. […] The result of all this was the revolutionization of the aesthetic experience itself. No longer is it *objects* that presented themselves for appraisal, but an entire *process*, to be experienced and used as such.[69]

This thinking in favor of a new form of culture produced by and for the working class—in this case, within capitalism—resembles the Soviet *Proletkult*. Emerging in conjunction with the Russian Revolution, the institution, which lasted only three years (1917-1920), aimed to modify the existing artistic forms by detaching them from their bourgeois exclusivity and opening them up to the working class. As remarked by Claire Bishop, Alexander Bogdanov, one of the organization founders, sought to rationalize cultural production as if it were industry, since both labors were envisioned as sharing common methods.[70] From there follows a redefinition of authorship where—in partial tune with what Chapter 5 of this thesis advocates—creativity and design are not exclusive to the artist, but a shared effort of individuals within collective life.

From this theoretical framework set by Tafuri, contradictory reflections can be drawn. On the one hand, and as just remarked, this thesis embraces the idea of a non-authoritarian but distributed authorship. More fundamentally, it also celebrates the autonomization of the architectural production process as an entity with its own dimension

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position is inadequate for any revolutionary nature of the distributed material.

[68] Manfredo Tafuri, "L'Architecture Dans Le Boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language," in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays, trans. Pellegrino Sartarelli and Robert Connolly (1974 in Oppositions 3; repr., New York City, NY: Columbia Books of Architecture and MIT Press, 1998), 165, [emphasis removed].

[69] Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (1969; repr., New York City, NY: Columbia Books of Architecture and MIT Press, 1998), 21.

[70] Bishop, *Artificial Hell*s, 51.

that results neither in isolation from its environment nor in dissolution within it. In this regard, it should be noted that this dissertation will examine the autonomy of the architectural production process under different parameters than those of Tafuri. As a preview, Part Two will not address the organizational dimension of the architectural production system holistically. In other words, although I understand as a form of cognition how technical, human, conceptual, historical, and other means intermingle to extract some expression from a project, the present study is more restrictive on this point. It focuses mainly on the person's individuality (especially emotionally) towards the project within such a larger and more intricate cognitive apparatus. At the same time, the interdependency of the individual within such a production complex will not be contrary to considering—as I will do—the cultural milieu as excessively pressing for the execution of the person's innermost relational capacities with the AP.

On the other hand, this thesis rejects Tafuri's exclusionary scheme whereby the autonomy of production or design processes is only possible if the emergent object is vetoed from any consideration. His vision where the "individual work is no longer at stake" is incompatible with any flat-ontological attitude. In Harman's terminology, Tafuri correctly avoids "overmining" the production process to its resulting object, but, unfortunately, "undermines" the autonomy of the resulting object to its production process. By contrast, this thesis accounts for the autonomy of *each* of each of them. More aptly, it follows Rossi's triad scheme for the autonomy of the AP, the physical expressions, and its production, as well as their relationship with each other.

2.1.4. Eisenman

Although Peter Eisenman's theory and practice of architecture have progressed heterogeneously through many different articulations, embracing various philosophical schools, and developing diverse concepts turned each time into a particular conceptual and design methodology, one underlying theme and instrument has remained constant: the specificity of architecture as a cultural discipline with form as its central device. How he has approached and developed this specificity and instrumentalized this form has varied over the last five decades.[71] This means that the question of autonomy has always been present, in one way or another, in Eisenman's discourse, even if negatively.[72] Then, since the length, depth, and complexity of Eisenman's expansion on the subject requires a space and attention this thesis cannot cover, I will restrict the discussion to his early period—especially to the arguments contained in his 1963 dissertation entitled *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*. The reason for focusing on this phase is—if compared to later ones—the greater proximity to the central point of the present Part One, where the architectural project emerges as an autonomous entity beyond its tangible conditions. If Kaufmann argued for autonomy through the visible form, Tafuri situated it in the cultural production process, and Rossi involved both and their in-between, Eisenman's early proposal adopted a metaphysical and formalist attitude unseen in these previous authors.

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[71] For a comprehensive overview of Eisenman's trajectory, see Stefano Corbo, *From Formalism to Weak Form: The Architecture and Philosophy of Peter Eisenman* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014). To complete this vision with the American architect's latest argument, see Peter Eisenman and Elisa Iturbe, *Lateness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[72] In recent years, Eisenman has declared the abandonment of the autonomy project. "Peter Eisenman," *13 Ways of Thinking About Heteronomy* (SCI-Arc, Los Angeles, March 26, 2019), min. 3:55, https://youtu.be/T2JOIQkdqMM.

Within this framework, and to make it clear from the outset, what this thesis will agree with Eisenman about is the acknowledgment of depth in architecture and its projects, but not the specificities he establishes of what that depth consists of. In this sense, when he argues that some particular formal features are what underlie architecture and furnish its autonomous order, this work responds not only that no ontological substance can be known but, more directly, that autonomy has no structural properties. In other words, parallel to a conceptual affinity between this thesis and Eisenman's stance for the profundity of the architectural project, there are disagreements with his early theory. It should be noted that he himself has already questioned his own first arguments, a problematization that I will extend in the following pages. The critique will be as follows. Eisenman regrets today from his dissertation the universality he granted to form as the basis of architecture.[73] This is understandable given that the modern maxim always tended toward the absolute. To this I will add that the main problem lies not only in the possibility of an architectural universal as such, but in the claim of *knowing and defining* it cognitively. When the latter claim is made, any ontological question becomes an epistemological determination, that is to say, the former becomes a subject-dependent idealization. Ironically, the main concern in Eisenman's career has been precisely to work against this cognitive reductionism.

Like Rossi, Eisenman's predicament of autonomy starts in a fierce attack on functionalism from his earliest writings; or, more aptly, to the cultural practice of humanism at large, since he considers functionalism as a late phase of humanism.[74] For the American architect, the humanist—also referred to as classical—position is a tradition rooted in architecture for the last five centuries that has pursued the integration of the subject and the object.[75] The consequences of this mindset have led to a heteronomy in architecture that has sought legitimization and meaning outside of itself, only found in the human sphere. Against this relational relativism, Eisenman promotes the inwardness of architecture. As he writes in the article "The End of the Classical":

> A "not-classical" [or "not-humanist"] architecture is no longer a certification of experience or a simulation of history, reason, or reality in the present. Instead, it may more appropriately be described as an *other* manifestation, an architecture *as is* […] It is a representation of itself, of its own values and internal experience.[76]

This is the Eisenman with whom this thesis engages: the one who refutes cognitive constitution—the construction of reality in an anthropocentric fashion—to adopt the appearance-reality gap distinctive of any realist position. "A representation of itself" should be read as a declaration of the impossibility of faithfully exposing the hidden self of architecture and yet maintaining some kind of internal relation in the gap. It echoes Section 1.2 when it commented, following Heidegger's "as-structure," how a manifestation stands for its being (in)completely.

According to Eisenman, for architecture to be able to look at itself, it is necessary to get rid of the subject and concentrate only on the object. He finds this non-relational approach in the "not-classical" model of modernism. But in the course of this analysis, Eisenman encounters two modalities of this cultural movement. As argued in his article

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[73] Peter Eisenman and Santiago Miret, "Abstracción Como Teoría: Conversación Con Peter Eisenman," *Antagonismos*, 2020, 62.
[74] Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 85.
[75] Ibid., 136.
[76] Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," 167.

"Post-Functionalism," there is, on the one hand, the modern register in architecture where functionalism prevails as a theoretical foundation.[77] He rejects this view as still classical and humanist in nature, hence not modern. On the other hand, he accounts for a shift from humanism to modernism during the nineteenth century that has led to the subject-object separation. He celebrates this view as what constitutes *the* modern attitude: one in which the human subject is displaced from the center of the world, one in which "[o]bjects are seen as ideas independent of man."[78] In Eisenman's opinion, modern architecture has only engaged with the former, and never participated in the latter consciousness; at least, not with the conviction that painting, music, literature, or film adopted the proper modern mindset.[79] Therefore, he laments the blatant and continuous misinterpretation of the theoretical basis of architecture for the last 500 years of humanism; a confusion that was accentuated with the predication of functionalism during the first half of the twentieth century. From this point of view, the Modern Movement cannot be called "modern," since it followed functionalist, hence humanist, tenets.[80]

Seen in this way, autonomy can only be modern for Eisenman, and the autonomy of modernism *par excellence* is formalism: the celebration of the object separated from its context, production affairs, and subject's considerations. Therefore, as one may have already noticed, Eisenman's proposition for autonomy is exactly the opposite of Tafuri's. While one gets rid of the object to focus on the historical-cultural dependencies of production dynamics, the other does the reverse.[81] And because "modernism has not up to now been elaborated in architecture," as Eisenman states, the New York architect has taken the opportunity to revisit modern architecture from the genuinely modern-formalist perspective.[82] The first step of this career endeavor is his dissertation *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*. From it, the particular argument that interests us to discuss from this text is the difference that Eisenman draws between "generic form" and "specific form."

Since its first pages, form is privileged above other architectural considerations like concept, function, structure, and technics.[83] In a modern-formalist tone, there is also an explicit intention to free the formal analysis from any pretension that might refer to the symbolic content and meaning discussions, as well as to psychological issues that include perceptual and value judgment considerations—what he refers to in general as functionalist.[84] By contrast, form is what provides internal and logical consistency to architecture, a form that Eisenman subdivides in two realms: *generic form* is "an entity definable with its own inherent laws" and *specific form* is "the actual physical configuration

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[77] Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 83–87.
[78] Ibid., 86.
[79] Ibid., 85–86.
[80] As Eisenman writes in the introduction of his dissertation: "The meaning of such theoretical concepts as 'rationalism' and 'functionalism' has become obscured by the use of these terms in a historical context, this has caused a misinterpretation of the theoretical basis of architecture and more specifically of the modern movement." Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 13.
[81] See Eisenman's critique of Tafuri's notion of autonomy in Peter Eisenman, "The Wicked Critic," *ANY: Architecture New York*, no. 25/26 (2000): 66–70.
[82] Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 86.
[83] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 25, 33.
[84] As written in the introduction: "Although an analysis of the symbolic content of a building and its meaning may be considered crucial, by their exclusion it will not be necessary to discuss any value-judgments in relation to formal content. Equally in suppressing perceptual considerations, optical refinements, and those illusions which are sometimes thought of as largely contributing to the vitality of a building, their inherent psychological problems can be avoided." Ibid., 15–17.

realized in response to a specific intention and function."[85] In this way, each specific form is always derived from a generic one according to its adaptation to the relative circumstances of a given context, and the tension between the generic and the specific appears as an "order" that entails the main task of the architect.[86]

At first glance, this scheme does not seem to differ much from the unity-multiplicity structure of the AP defended in Section 1.1, since both theses recognize the manifold of surface profiles of a veiled substance that unifies them. But divergences arise when Eisenman delves into the specificity of his two domains of form. About specific form, Eisenman has told us that it is "the actual physical configuration," which means that its scope of operation is restricted to tangible buildings as a particular medium of expression. In addition, and as noted above, Eisenman is not interested in acknowledging the psychological dimension of architecture. This means that he assumes the policy of experience typical of formalism, splitting the subject in two: the personal is banned in favor of a subjective universality promoted since Kant. On the one hand, individual impressions are rejected as contaminations of the generic form, since they pave distractions such as social and political issues. On the other hand, the subject as realization of the object is preserved, which refers to the deep experience or "pure visibility" of the generic form. As Helio Piñón would argue, this modern subject requires a subjectivity that is not personal but universal.[87] Michael Fried calls it the "new-'subject'" (Section 4.2).[88] This modern subject is also present in Eisenman's notion of *movement*. In a nutshell, Eisenman's idea of movement is fundamental to the (universal) experience of architecture and is defined as the accumulation of partial experiences. According to him, although each of these experiences derives primarily from a visual apprehension, their whole or synthesis emerges conceptually, rather than perceptually. Architectural experience finds clarity, as Eisenman pursues, when such a conceptual result equals the very concept of generic form. This is the reason why he argues that movement is a property of generic form, which is ubiquitous for all modern constructions.[89]

All this means that the execution of specific form rests on the modern taxonomization of disciplines through the particularities of each medium of expression and the dismissal of the subject's personal apprehensions. In this way, Eisenman shows the modern nature of his thinking. By contrast, this thesis has rejected medium-specificity (Section 1.3) and will also account for the personal as the object's fundamental material of

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[85] Ibid., 33–35.

[86] As Eisenman puts it: "This order can be regarded as a complex dialectic resulting from the respective demands of generic and specific form within the design process. Form in its generic state will provide the conceptual reference for all physical manifestations of specific form, as well as give the basis for the specific orderings of this form." Ibid., 85.

[87] In his theory of the architectural project, the Spanish scholar separates "subjectivity" from "the personal" as a fundamental principle of modernism. The former is the aesthetic form of judgment against a set of universal values. The latter relies on arbitrariness; for there is no common ground, it cannot be judged except against itself. As he remarks: "If there is no tendency towards the universal, the subjective becomes merely personal—idiosyncratic—and the artistic experience is perverted: there is no recognition possible; judgment disappears, supplanted by mere compliance with the arbitrariness of others." Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 52–54.

[88] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104.

[89] See Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 71–73. I hold that this equating of the conceptual view with the generic form is Eisenman's particular approach to "pure visibility," to use Fiedler's formalist terms, and why I do not share Aureli's argument that Eisenman's thesis diverges from the traditional context of "purevisibilism." See Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Chi Ha Paura Della Forma? Origini e Sviluppo Del Formalismo Nel Moderno e La Base Formale Dell'architettura Moderna Di Peter Eisenman," in *La Base Formale Dell'architettura Moderna* (Bologna: Edizioni Pendragon, 2009).

experience (Chapter 5). On this footing, this design theory has no other escape but to declare itself "not-modern." Yet it is also "not-classical," following Eisenman's jargon, since the recognition of individual cognitions does not imply the certification of the observed on a subject-dependent and mimetic basis. As stated in Chapter 1, personal apprehensions are *some* of the multiple and *multimedia* manifestations of a project. Therefore, unlike Eisenman, this work accounts for psychological aspects as another specific form and medium of the underlying generic form.

Furthermore, disputes become even more acute when the generic form comes into play. Three points can be made. The first objection criticizes Eisenman's model as holistic, rather than discrete. His domain of the generic—what in OOO would be the real—is single rather than plural; or more accurately, it is *dual*, because it accounts for two, and only two, possibilities of generic form: linear and centroidal.[90] This means that the present proposition of this dissertation, whereby each architectural project is an individual ontological entity, proves impossible for Eisenman. In his case, the individuality of each project is a superficial question, since they all derive from a subterranean centroid and/or linear kernel. There is no autonomous project distinct from *that* other autonomous project. All projects are unified under the same genre. This is again another modern vice, which is in direct connection with the premise of medium-specificity to demarcate artistic disciplines. For example, Greenberg considers all paintings to be instances of the single canvas medium, as Harman observes.[91]

The second disagreement on generic form complains that Eisenman yields an *autonomy of isolation*, a tremendously unfortunate but widespread notion that too often appears when the question of autonomy is on the table. Most of the time, we understand that something can be autonomous only if it remains unrelated, namely, if it does not interact with or depend on anything else. This is the basis on which Eisenman's autonomy rests: the generic form is self-sufficient because it is its own ultimate element. Nothing composes it but itself, so it does not need anything or anyone to exist. It is here that anti-formalists, not without reason, find a source of criticism to debunk formalist autonomy as indifferent to everyday dynamics, urgencies, and so on. As will be detailed in the next section, this thesis separates autonomy from isolation. Following an object-oriented perspective, an entity does emerge from relations of dependency, which were termed in Chapter 1 "domestic or constitutive relations." They involve many different, but not all, forces and agents in the task, and no entity will exist without them. What is at stake in the discussion is an autonomy of the emergent object, whose existence hangs on vital connections, which is not equated with such constitutive dependencies. That gives us an autonomy that admits—needs!—relations but is not subsumed under them. Eisenman's generic form is far from being composed of any domestic relationship, finding both constitution and autonomy in the same isolated ingredient: generic form.

The third and last point in dispute on generic form is the most problematic, since it puts Eisenman's whole argument into question. Namely, I argue that what counts for him as generic form—what is supposed to be an abstract, transcendent, subject-independent, self-sufficient, non-constituted generic form—is defined from a subjective standpoint. Let me explain why. In speaking of the nature of the centroidal form, one of the two generic kinds, Eisenman comments on some qualities of the cube: "The cube as a centroidal form evolves equally in a vertical and a horizontal direction from a defined

[90] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 35.
[91] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 101.

centrum."[92] Nobody would say otherwise. But such a tacit agreement, even if it provides a fundamental and historically immovable common denominator for understanding between humans, *is not* a sufficient condition to elevate it to an ontological axiom. It may be a collective dictum that has remained and perhaps will remain forever unshakable throughout civilizations. Even so, seeing it as "inherent characteristics which can only be considered in an objective sense; [which] they establish the absolute nature of generic, form and by definitions its transcendency over specific form," as Eisenman posits, is an epistemological assessment elevated to metaphysical standing.[93] Although defended through different notes, here Eisenman adopts Rossi's method of *permanence* to determine what are the features that constitute the field of architecture: not historical but logical. But there is no more idealist gesture than to presume an enduring epistemological proposition as universal. This is the teleological failure of modernity in general in its formalist attempt. In the terms of this chapter, this view exemplifies a heteronomy driven by the generic form understood as an internal inclination.

The generic is thus, in Eisenman's theory, a relational proposition dictated from the subject's position, a proposition to which one can do nothing else but take it for granted in its aspiration to universality. As he writes: "It is not a question of our liking or disliking a cube: it is a question of our accepting its existence and recognising its inherent properties."[94] Contrary to this thesis, instead of accepting that what architecture *is* is an unknown condition, Eisenman erroneously imposes such knowledge by (1) reducing the whole ontological question of architecture to a problem of geometrical form, implying that he knows that architecture is exclusively an isolated problem of geometry, and once this is assumed, (2) selecting certain visual forms (shapes) over others as "generic"—centroidal and linear forms, in his case. But this selection is criticized here for being based on the historical and cultural status of the Platonic solid, something he takes for granted as an enduring epistemological view turned into a universal by and for us. As he writes: "the Platonic solid and the Platonic idea are closely related."[95] Therefore, Eisenman erroneously assumes the *a priori* knowledge of Platonic visual forms as transcendental, and uses it as a background to contrast the objectivity of architectural experience with its conceptual synthesis. In Kant's teleological or logical judgment, the German philosopher requires a *given concept* on which to compare its representation.[96] But to assume such a given concept as cognitively objective is a fallacy, since one constructs an illusory background of transcendental measurement. In this vein, Kant's apriorism is an extremely harmful apparatus for the autonomy of the thing-in-itself. It ultimately establishes the terms in which this thing is apprehended on the basis of epistemological, hence incomplete, presuppositions. Let me repeat Piñón's words on modern architecture: "form has no real existence, but is the result of the projection of an apriorism of the subject on reality."[97] This is contrary to ontological realism or any subjectless account in general, according to which the object's interiority cannot be factually qualified. Eisenman commits to this modern maxim by taking his generic form as *a priori* knowledge and attempts to demonstrate such an elevated objectivity directly attainable through conceptual registration by discrediting perceptual responses of an aesthetic or subjective character. As he continues with the centroidal, this time on a dome in its specific

[92] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 35.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 37.
[95] Ibid., 43.
[96] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 27–28.
[97] Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 40, [author's translation].

articulation:

> An engineer might see [a dome] only in terms of how it is supported and the problem inherent in its construction, such as edge stresses, continuous surfaces etc. A religious leader might think of this same structure in its mystical connotations and its relation to church liturgy. A psychologist might think of its sexual association, and so on. These are all types of responses to the percept 'dome' as a specific form. But there is also a range of responses to the concept 'dome' which are of a generic nature. A dome is centroidal. It is equally expansible in all directions. It suggests centrifugal motion. These are formal absolutes.[98]

This passage makes clear how Eisenman equates conceptual apprehension with the generic absolute. Generic form is exalted to the oxymoronic status of ontologically known from an epistemological position. From an object-oriented angle, there is no difference in the direct approach to the deep dome between the psychologist's view and its mathematical formulation as centroidal. Both are equally incompetent at the task. In this light, the problem with Eisenman's theory lies in differentiating the perceptual from the conceptual, granting the latter the delusive capacity of direct access to the thing's core. But the conceptual is as perceptual as what Eisenman calls "perceptual," as criticized in Chapter 1 on Kosuth's conceptual art. As Harman reminds us, intellectual and sensory apprehension are equally incapable of literalizing profound insight; something he explicitly extends to Eisenman's case.[99]

Nevertheless, there is a common ground between Eisenman and Harman: they are essentialists. Both accept the existence of real or essential qualities underlying sensual or perceptual traits. Their fundamental difference is that, whereas Eisenman claims to *know* what these qualitative features are, for Harman they *withdraw* from experience as much as the real object (the thing's being). To this critique, this thesis adds the view of the non-existence of essential properties. In Section 1.2, it was stated that the hierarchy of the qualitative domain of an entity is not an ontological possibility, but a cognitive instrumentalization. Consequently, Eisenman's position on generic form is dismantled on a twofold basis: it is not only that the alleged knowledge about the concealed generic form is impossible, it is that such generic form has no features. It is objectively indescribable, because it is directly inaccessible *and* non-qualitative.

In summary, Eisenman's early question of autonomy fails for two main reasons: isolating architecture in the ingredient of form and imposing such a transcendental condition from a cognitive standpoint. If the American architect flees from the corruption of subjective-personal perception to preserve the core of architecture in a formal proposition set on a conceptual ground, the whole argument fails as soon as it is accepted that the conceptual is another form of perceptual relationship. Consequently, both the conceptual and the perceptual corrupt the AP's substantial domain by being relational.

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[98] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 45.

[99] In the letter "Zero Form- Zero Function," Harman said: "For me, this is making the same basic mistake as Meillassoux does. It's thinking that the mathematical is somehow absolute when it's actually completely relative. Anything mathematical geometrical is going to have its reality based on how it affects us; even Eisenman admits that the cube has certain effects on its environment. It's a relational thing. There's nothing absolute about a mathematical structure as far as I can see. It doesn't accomplish anything to distinguish between the generic and specific. You have to distinguish between the relation and the non-relational." Graham Harman, *Zero Form - Zero Function* (University of Innsbruck, 2014), min. 51:02, https://vimeo.com/85437398 [author's transcription]. See also Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, sec. 5.b.

2.2. Subjectless and existentialist autonomy

Now that Chapter 1 has consolidated the architectural project as an entity in its own right following realist premises, Chapter 2 interrogates what autonomy means for the "in-itself" condition of the AP. The need to undertake such an exploration is largely due to the great attention that the question of autonomy received in the architectural debate of the twentieth century. At the beginning of this chapter, a critical apparatus has been furnished using Kant's "external and internal inclinations" as determinants of heteronomy, and it has been applied to the four main theses on autonomy of the past century. As a result of this problematization, it can be said that the question of architectural autonomy has followed a steady scheme throughout modernism and postmodernism: architecture is unchained from heteronomy-from inclinations to be consecrated to an autonomy-for the subject. However, an *autonomy-of* the thing-in-itself has never been seriously adopted. In other words, the inquiry into autonomy has historically been defined by excluding certain agents as external nuisances to determine others as the internal heroes whose characteristics lay the locus of architectural autonomy. But this autonomy-for coming from some basic properties has been accused of being relational in a twofold manner: first, because of relying on inclinations and second, because of making them dependent on a subject's definition. In this sense, the critique is not only whether the inclination is internal or external according to a subjective vision—which is also the case—but to equate autonomy to inclinations in general; that is, to endow it with a *qualitative essence*. This has been especially evident in the cases of Kaufmann and Eisenman.

Against this backdrop, it seems clear then that, to achieve an autonomy-of—as this section pursues—two moves are required. It is necessary to abandon both external and internal inclinations, as well as their dependence on the subject. As already discussed but reinforced in this section, we can follow Harman for the latter, since he cuts off cognitive or foreign relationality as the basis of autonomy. But for the former, we must depart from his theory, since the sense of "real qualities" of the object is too close to the "internal inclinations" criticized here, even if no subject is involved in their definition. Divested of them, it is possible to posit an autonomy-of on a non-qualitative ground. That entails equating autonomy with being in the substantial realm, a discussion that brings us back to the argument of a being without qualities of Section 1.2. Put differently, while the majority of theoretical reflections result in the definition of what autonomy in architecture is on a qualitative basis, i.e., it is then known what it is, the notion presented here accepts its complete unknowability because it directly rests on no attributes. This will be a sufficient condition to establish an operative design framework from the mere condition of being aware of the AP's unattainable existence. Again, autonomy will equal being, an ontological condition that cannot be known but only considered. This will be the cornerstone for understanding the AP as an autonomous entity that stands over and above its cognitions and constitutive or production process.

To this end, this section will proceed as follows. It will be necessary to summarize what has been learned from the theories of autonomy reviewed above. This will lead us to discuss what Harman says about autonomy in architecture. Throughout the discussion, a subjectless, existentialist, and ontological autonomy of the AP will emerge, as well as the notion of *selectivity*. Selectivity is not autonomy, but a conceptual mark that helps to clarify the autonomous condition of things.

2.2.1. A world structure of autonomous entities

The first step is to recall that embracing Kant's negative disposition at the beginning of the chapter does not mean following his positive definition of autonomy set in the universal law of moral disinterestedness. As a reminder, an action is autonomous for Kant if there is no ulterior reward motivating its exertion. But this criterion commits the same reduction back to the subject as what he criticizes as heteronomous. It does not account for the action itself, but makes it relative to the state of interest or disinterest of the performer. In other words, it may be a first step towards what autonomy is not, but it is not sufficient for what autonomy is. In this respect, Kant's taxonomy of autonomous actions motivated by the (disinterested) activity of the will versus heteronomous actions driven by (self-interested) external or internal inclinations is of little help for a positive understanding of the autonomy-of the action itself. Against that, what is to be taken from Kant is the *Ding-an-sich*, which is autonomous alone and on its own. Stated differently, the moment Kant seeks to justify whether the autonomous or heteronomous nature of an action stems from a causality of noble selflessness or discredited egoism, the question of the autonomy of action moves away from the action as such and turns to its production motivation under a moral framework.[100] Against this, autonomy is understood here not as a mechanism for evaluating the subject's (dis)interest in the action performed, a disinterest that Kantian authors claim can be mastered.[101] Instead, when it is a matter of considering the practical aspects of autonomy, this thesis accounts for its dual function of keeping the thing-in-itself in place, while reminding cognition of its impossibility of dominating it. In other words, if the autonomy of the thing serves to sustain its in-selfness, it makes evident the inadequacy of what is around it and is not-itself. That includes production, the cognitive act, moral principles (universal or constructed), as well as interior, essential attributes. At the same time, this does not mean that such peripheral elements cannot be autonomous; they are so insofar as they are-in-themselves. It means that they cannot establish the autonomy of something that is-not-themselves. But before going further in this direction, let us recapitulate what has been said about the previous theories of architectural autonomy.

From Kaufmann, we have drawn, first of all, the possibility of considering architecture as autonomous and, on a more specific level, that not only the whole but also the parts are elements in their own right. This was evident both in the *spatial* scale configurations of Ledoux's projects—in his pavilion system with independent buildings within a larger complex—and in the *constructive* scale, like in the French architect's *barrières* with recognizable building elements treated as independent units. In reading Rossi, the differentiation between the entity of the city, its unfolding process, and the physical artifact was important; a separation termed here the *triad scheme*. Tafuri radicalized the issue of the production process, erasing the architectural manifestation altogether and seeing in its creation and contextual circumstances the precise possibility of disciplinary autonomy. Opposed to this view, Eisenman adopted a formalist stance that reclaimed the object as such and rejected any subjective, aesthetic perception as properly architectural. The object's deep core, which he calls "generic form," is what lies beneath the physical building or

[100] I argue that it is irrelevant for the action's autonomy whether it arises from causation motivated by the performer's external or internal inclinations or by his/her free will. This may be a cognitive mechanism relevant to our awareness of the autonomy of action, but such awareness is not the autonomy in question. Thus, granting autonomy on a causal basis is criticized her in Kantian autonomy as a relational practice dependent on the subject that has no ontological validity over what is observed or exercised.

[101] Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom*, 136–41.

"specific form."

Against this theoretical background, is there a possibility to maintain the autonomy of the AP, the production and experience process, and the architectural expression simultaneously? Certainly yes, there is. And, in my view, it is quite simple: taking each of them as autonomous in its own right. This is the basic holding of OOO, here interpreted under the principle that something is autonomous by the mere fact of its existence. Another question is the observer's awareness of something as autonomous, which is a cognitive concern; therefore, irrelevant to the thing's autonomy.[102] Then, if everything is autonomous, the Tafuri-Eisenman dispute turns pointless. For Tafuri, architecture can only be autonomous when the human-involved production process devours the physical architectural object, and Eisenman claims the opposite. But the mistake is precisely to think that something can be autonomous only if something else ceases to be so. To this critique, one might counter that what is at stake in this debate is the identity of architecture as a whole, with autonomy being the device of inquiry. But this perspective would be committing the same error. It would be to reduce the identity of one object to another according to the mediating action of the subject. It is an identity of re-cognition, of cognizing again pre-established principles as what is thought to be the nature of something. Therefore, it is important to account for an autonomy discretized among objects. The *autonomous discipline of architecture*, which, among other things, contains *autonomous architectural projects*, are separate conditions. They influence each other, but each retains their own self. In the same way, and as discussed in Section 1.3, each AP comprises various other *autonomous architectural objects,* including *autonomous cognitions* with and about it and *autonomous production processes* of it. Some of these internal objects' reflections serve the AP as its manifestations. All this constitutes a Matryoshka world model in which autonomous entities are contained in autonomous entities; but always with one foot out of any particular participation.

But that each thing has its own right of autonomous existence does not mean that it lives in isolation. As I criticized Eisenman above, an autonomous object is not its own ultimate and single component unrelated to its physical, economic, political, and historical context. On the contrary, and as will be further argued in Chapter 7, things enter into constitutive relationships with each other, perturbing their upstairs and downstairs neighbors, but all of them maintaining their individual autonomous status beyond these relationships. Kaufmann's part-whole system already recognizes this scheme of autonomous levels, although he conceived it only for the visible form. And Rossi's triad scheme already considers autonomy in entities of different nature and scale, although it does not explicitly stack them. Then, repeating the words of Harman's statement: "objects [are] wrapped in objects wrapped in objects"; each with its own autonomy.[103] Bryant has an enlightening passage on the topic:

> From a certain perspective it can thus be said that all objects are a crowd. Every object is populated by other objects that it enlists in maintaining its own existence. As a consequence, we must avoid reducing objects to the manner in which they are enlisted by other objects

[102] In this sense, I argue that, even when something is cognitively dominated, reduced, or literalized, the epistemological cancellation of autonomy is not ontologically canceled. The thing's autonomous status remains impassive under the cognitive misfortunes of being unable to grasp its self-standing nature.
[103] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 158.

precisely because the objects enlisted are always themselves autonomous objects.[104]

Let me stress the main point of the discussion: there is a clear difference between accounting for the autonomy of an architectural project—or another object—over and above its contextual and biographical conditions *without* annulling their central role in the constitution of the thing, and canceling such conditions as a means of achieving autonomy. The extreme formalism of authors such as Fiedler, Greenberg, or Eisenman, commits to the latter, that is, to cancel *all* relations with the world to ensure the thing's objecthood. This is isolation. Against that, this thesis advocates the first view. "The true formalist principle," Harman writes, "is not that objects do not relate, but that these relations are always limited in number."[105] This selectivity—further discussed below—is also embraced by this thesis, but with a twist. Whereas for Harman relational constraints are the *basis* of the thing's autonomy, for this thesis it is a *sign* of such a condition. This divergence is rooted in the discussion in Section 1.2, on whether "essence" and "being" go together or not. As a reminder, in his theory, "essence" is the tension between the "real object" (what is here called "being") and the "real qualities" (the thing's main features that escape apprehension).[106] Thus, Harman's formalism is partially qualitative and, thus, relational in a discrete fashion. This is so because these main properties stem from the interaction of other objects.[107] But since this thesis has rejected the internal hierarchy that "real qualities" entails within an object's qualitative sphere (Section 1.2), its formalism is committed to being: an *existentialist formalism* or an *existentialist autonomy*. To put it clearly, this thesis' theory accounts for constitutive relations as what the object and its autonomy depend on for its continued existence, holding that such fundamental relations are not existence itself.

2.2.2. Existentialist autonomy

By "existentialist autonomy" I simply equate autonomy with the self of the entity: the automatization for what something, for the mere fact of existing, is autonomous. Therefore, autonomy is not to be constructed, whether from subjective considerations or internal articulation. Autonomy is neither what a subject dictates or identifies it as, nor what rests on a qualitative terrain. It is argued that there is no architectural manifestation capable of embodying its autonomous condition, i.e., no object's expression is its being (Section 1.1). On top of that, when it comes to cognition, there is no set of attributes and arrangements that can establish an order for a subject to differentiate an autonomous architecture from a heteronomous one—despite Kaufmann, Rossi and Eisenman's claims to the contrary. These positions objectify subjectively (the oxymoron is intentional) which architectures seem more autonomous to our understanding according to a preconceived idea. But this is not acknowledging the autonomy of architecture itself. It is to follow the Kantian mind-dependent approach to focus everything on our cognitive mechanisms. In that framework, what is at stake is not what things *are*, but how we *apprehend* what things are. Kaufmann's "architecture parlante" is the explicit evidence of such an idealist evaluation disguised as false realism: the architecture that "speaks" to the subject is to establish an epistemological criterion of categorization. But autonomy is neither the illusion of a sincere exposition of

[104] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 217.
[105] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, Introduction.
[106] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 101.
[107] In Harman's theory, the relations from which the "real qualities" arise and the "foreign relations" that give rise to and hold the object in place should not be confused.

what we believe to be the essential features of an entity, nor are there essential features that enshrine an internal validity.

This view can be related to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, which separates existence from essence. But the agreements with his theory end there. Explained briefly, I agree with the French philosopher that existence does not rest on given qualitative essences and that existence brings with it subjectivity. However, that such subjectivity is what constitutes autonomy—as he claims—is disputed here. In other words, for Sartre, "man is nothing other than what he makes of himself."[108] For him, the self is not determined by social, biological, or moral pressures, i.e., by external inclinations. He anchors it to internal decisions (not necessarily rational ones). Sartre's existentialist autonomy is the capacity to choose one's own nature without the constraint of any principle other than one's own choice. But this means, first, that I am the subject that inspects and determines myself (self-reflection); which is nothing more than a subject-dependent situation. As Harman provocatively puts it: "I do not coincide with myself in introspection any more than I coincide with the being of a crocodile when seeing it."[109] Second, the result of such individual choices is a self-selected set of particular conditions and attributes. For these reasons, Sartre's stance suffers from the same cognitive and qualitative footing of most subject-oriented essentialist theories: it is subject- and quality-based. The fact that his method comes from another angle and may induce other social and political consequences is a secondary matter in this discussion. Against that, the existentialist autonomy advocated here is one where the existence of the thing is simply its autonomy.

With this concept in mind, we can focus the line of argument on the architectural sphere and examine what Harman offers in this regard. So far, the main give-and-take with his theory is following positively an ontological model in which (1) everything stands on its own, (2) there is no direct apprehension capable of reaching the thing-in-itself, and (3) things entail a surplus. On the other hand, controversies have arisen around (a) the notion of essential qualities and (b) whether such surplus is internal qualitative or external performative to the object in question. To these lists, and the topics of the next two subsections, we can add to the agreement side that (4) visual form or shape is one of many ways to approach formalism and (5) autonomy does not cancel relationality. The main disagreement that accompanies them is (c) his proposal of essential characteristics for architecture.

2.2.3. Formalism beyond shape and subject

Especially in the field of architecture, one is (typically accused of being) a formalist if appearance, through its geometric and physical form, is privileged over function; and of being a functionalist if the opposite is the case. These poor understandings are unfortunately widespread in practice and academia. However, there are not a few architects who have passed beyond such limited registers in our field. [110] Belonging to this trajectory, we can consider *Architecture and Objects*, where Harman offers a broader sense of these terms and how both can be formalized; that is, how they can constitute an autonomy in themselves

[108] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (1996; repr., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 22. See also Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*.
[109] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 27.
[110] For a historical review of authors and periods that have articulated richer notions of "form" and "function" in architecture, see Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (New York City, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 149–95.

without canceling each other out. On form, he writes:

> by "form" I mean the reality of a thing apart from any of the relations in which it engages. This obviously excludes most utilitarian function. But it also excludes the visual *look* of a thing –even though this is precisely what many people mean by aesthetic "form"– since this look is partly dependent on the beholder, and therefore belongs to the sensual realm of experience rather than to the reality of form in its own right.

Similar notions where visual form and solid form (shape) are not the "form of the object" are also present—among other authors—in Helio Piñón's architectural theory or Alois Riegl's aesthetic stance. The Spanish architect distinguishes "figure" from "form." The latter is an organizational structure intrinsic to the work, apart from its concrete look and materiality.[111] To a certain extent, this thinking resembles Aristotelian hylomorphism. If in a wooden cube the cube is the form and the wood the matter, form is the organizational system that results if matter is eliminated. Or form in a piece of music is what remains if sound is ignored. Riegl's formalism also presents such a dismissal to superficial form. As Lamberg Wiesing writes about the Austrian historian: "His entire theory is based on the view that a visible form cannot be fully explained and calculated either through psychological reflections on the production process or through physical reflections on the medium."[112]

Turning now to function, Harman says:

> By "function" I refer not just to the narrowly practical results of a thing, but to *any of its relations*, even if these might seem purely cosmetic or conceptual.[113]

For readers familiar with OOO concepts, this form/function opposition is another way of expressing the "real-sensual axis," i.e., what is cognized and what is beneath it.[114] Or as Harman indicates: "it is therefore possible to replace the form/function pair with that of reality/relation."[115] Following this insight, since this tension is present in all objects in the world and formalism requires commitment only to the deep side of the split (the real or the substantial rather than the relational), every object is susceptible of formalist undertaking. Coupled with the fact that it is not an imperative that geometrical or solid form—much to Kaufmann's and Eisenman's regret—is the sole basis of architecture, there is no restriction on applying a formalist approach to other architectural elements. This argument is what legitimizes the way that the present Part One approaches the architectural project—understood in its dimension of phantom object (Section 1.1)—from a formalist perspective. The same is what drives Harman to pursue the "formalization of function" beyond the already extensively covered formalization of shape by theorists in art and architecture.[116]

His strategy for this is to change the relative framing of the object, that is to say, to understand function not with respect to form, but function as such. We already touched on

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[111] Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 38–42.

[112] Lambert Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image: History and Perspectives of Formal Aesthetics* (1997; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 52. "In depiction," the quote continues, "something autonomous is always left to specify, something he calls Kunstwollen." Here I would like to reiterate that this dissertation interprets Kunstwollen in an existentialist modulation, rather than in a qualitative essentialism.

[113] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 2.

[114] See Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, chaps. 2-3.

[115] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 2.

[116] Ibid., chap. 5.

this maneuver in Section 1.2, where a cognitive relation is the constitutive one of itself. An external relation is its own internal relation, giving rise to itself as a new object. In the words of Harman: "every relation is also *ipso facto* a new entity."[117] Thus, there is a formalist autonomy in the individuality of the architectural relationship composed of the solid form (e.g., a building) and the user. Architectural experience is then understood under the umbrella of what Harman generally calls "function."

When this encounter is approached not from the solid form as such but in itself, even though the solid form is inside now as a component, experience as function is autonomized, formalized, or "zeroed."[118] (This autonomization of experience is fundamental for Part Two as it will pave the examination of the architectural encounter between the architect or user and the AP in the design or occupation process.) As Harman writes: "we are taking something that is not initially a unified object –myself plus the [building]– and actually turning it into one."[119] In this light, the architectural autonomy of function always requires human participation, since, obviously, there is no human experience without humans. This is the reason that Harman asserts that "[t]here is no architecture without humans."[120] Using his terminology, the beholder of the form is also an ingredient of the function.[121] For the latter framing, the technical term he uses for such an experiential composite is "architectural cell"—called "cognitive-unit" in Part Two.[122]

Within this framework, I would like to problematize Harman's notion of architectural autonomy around two points: the relevance of the AP as a unifier of his architectural senses of form and function, and a critique of his proposal of disciplinary partitions. About the first, and although Harman (to my knowledge) does not express it in these terms but I think it is implicit in his architectural theory, his idea of "architectural object" or "architectural form" should not be taken as exclusive of the solid, physical building.[123] It follows that it also extends to other architectural entities such as drawings, models, construction elements, and others; all in the same ontological and profound register. Likewise, the idea of function, in addition to the fact that he explicitly addresses it relative to human experience, suggests not being confined to the relationality of such architectural elements with humans. It can also occur within any interaction without human participation: for example, the intimate relationship of a drawing to the building, this one with an insect, or the AP with any of them. This internal relationality has been discussed in Section 1.2, and it has also been explained how the project repeats some of the profiles of its constitutive elements to populate its qualitative domain (Fig. 1-3).[124]

In considering the figure of the AP as encompassing, it can be said that there is no difference between form and function. A building, a human being, or the experience they compose—each as a One/Many entity—are equally relational or functional to the AP. My point is to reinforce the multimediality of the project already commented on Section 1.3 by asserting that there is no ontological and representational difference between architectural

[117] Harman, *Tool-Being*, 284.
[118] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 5.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., chap. 4.
[122] Ibid., chap. 5.
[123] Even for this case, the building is to be understood in its deep sense.
[124] Here it would take more time to discuss whether this internal relationality without human mediation is a form of architecture or not. I am of the opinion that it is. Why should the internal interaction between the building and the drawing, or the building and the bird, not be considered as architectural? If they are, there will be also an architecture without humans.

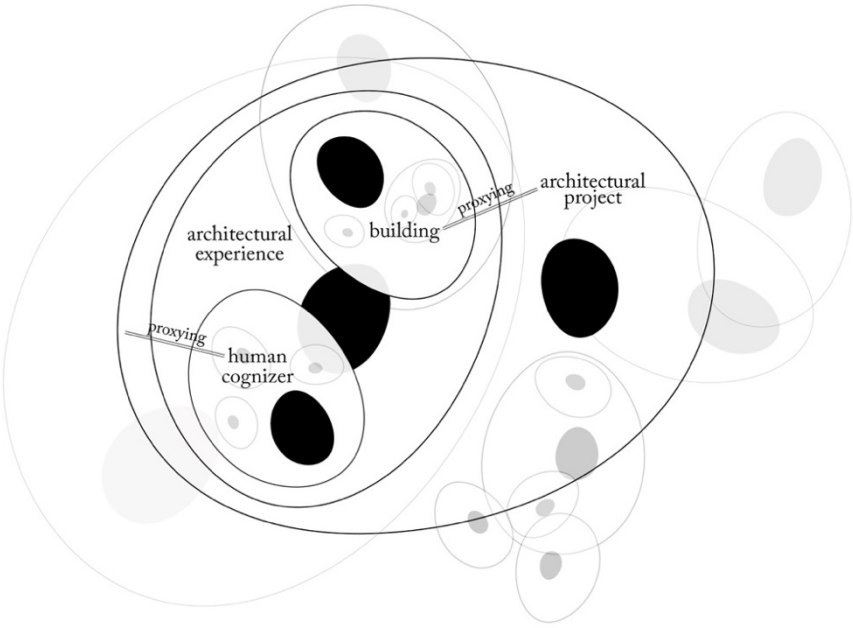


Figure 2-3. Mereological structure of an AP. This Matryoshka model has however cracks: the parts are never completely encapsulated in the whole, as each one participates in other sets differently.

manifestations when the AP comprises them all. Although, for example, a building-form is within an experience-form, both are equally internal functions or relational within the AP-form (Fig. 2-3).

Following the mereological model that OOO espouses, the project lives *above* all architectural forms and functions. When this is so, the AP avoids the possibility of situating the architecture in *two* types of objects: form and function, as Harman does.[125] The AP does not annul but unify them under a unity-multiplicity structure. It brings together in a One all the plurality that each of these entities involves by their means relative to the project. Therefore, in the Matryoshka structure of architecture with each entity living autonomously but in constitutive and/or cognitive relation to the others, the AP is above the material and experiential conditions of architecture and below its disciplinary dimension, whatever that may be. This means that the AP is at the same time involved in larger and varied tasks of constitution and representation. But it should also be noted that each of the components and manifestations that are within the AP are never completely encapsulated by it: in this mereological structure, parts are partial participations of other objects. A part is never exhausted by the whole(s) in which it is located. Therefore, it is both smaller and larger than its whole(s). This point is expanded upon in Chapter 7.

The second note criticizes the still modern disciplinary demarcation that Harman proposes in his first book devoted to architecture, and which, I argue, performs a similar method to that of Eisenman's "generic form": it is dictated from a subject's standpoint that claims to know or identify the internal vicissitudes of architecture. This critique will lead us to strengthen the cognitive commitment to the individual AP free from the certification of the disciplinary and academic framework.

One of the main questions Harman addresses in this book is what differentiates architecture from the visual arts, especially sculpture and painting. His analysis results in

[125] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 5.

determining "function" and "time" as distinctive of architecture.[126]

Time is the device that helps him to distinguish between artistic fields that are experienced instantaneously, like painting, and others that require the sequencing of appreciations and memory to formulate a judgment, like architecture (as well as sculpture, music, literature).[127] I see this analysis as consistent for an epistemological pursuit, but dubious from an ontological angle. As stated in the introduction, naïve realism aims to achieve tangible content in the form of knowledge, whereas the cognitive ambitions of ontological realism lie in concerns of access. Given this, my critique is that the inquiry that Harman presents in *Architecture and Objects* about the distinction between architecture and the visual arts is not of an object-oriented nature. It is of an epistemological one, conducting a sort of subject-based taxonomy reminiscent of modernism. In this case, Harman's division is not medium-specificity but *experience-specificity* as what delimits artistic disciplines.[128] Such a specificity is identified and certified from a cognitive determination, thus implicitly *knowing* which experiential features are essential and unique to one or the other practice.

Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (Fig. 1-1) is again useful here. Under Harman's argument, if I experience each instance of the Chair separately, the particularity of each apprehension would refer to each of the artistic modalities that underlie them: reading the verbal chair would be about literature, walking around the physical chair about sculpture, and looking at the picture chair about photography. In my opinion, this sounds too Greenbergian. Where should the work of André Bloc or Richard Serra be placed: sculpture or architecture? Or contemporary practices such as MAEID or Neri Oxman, are they architecture, art, bioengineering? For the same reason that there is no categorical knowledge to know what differentiates one thing from another—whether it is alleged that there is no access to essential qualities (Harman) or that there are no essential qualities at all (this thesis)—there is also no possibility of knowing the ontological distinction between disciplines. In the end, a discipline is nothing more than another particular entity in itself whose self-standing, deep identity is inscrutable.

Much of my concerns here lie precisely in the cognitive limitations invoked by this type of epistemological approach, a modern tactic where—at least in the arts—the category prevails over the single work. Even if for—or mostly for—design purposes, the disciplinary question is secondary to this thesis, and the reason for focusing on the individuality of the AP. I see the extrapolation of assumed disciplinary and general assessments to the particularities of individual projects as problematic, because the separation of artistic fields—or any other specialization—obstructs the access possibilities of their individuals.[129] Put differently, the reduction of the individual to its genus constrains the overlapping zone between a project's qualities for a person and this person's faculties towards them. In architectural design, most of the time there is an unfortunate disciplinary value, usually marked by segregation according to the medium, which hovers above the individual project, and to which cognition usually attends before whatever the project itself has to show us.

There is no doubt about the difference in the cognition of an AP's physical building and a floor plan of it. But this distinction cannot result in dismissing the latter as non-

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] In this sense, it is pertinent to recall that experience has been considered as a medium of expression in Section 1.3, so that, from the angle of this thesis, the division still remains medium-based.

[129] Someone may argue against it that this thesis is endorsing the same approach I am criticizing, since I am reading the AP from the expressions of its parts. However, the main difference is that, in this case, there is no claim as to which particular expressions or features are proper to the object in question.

architectural and relating it to painting, since its instantaneous experience is closer to that discipline. The concepts of flat representativity and multimediality, no less than the AP as an object in itself works to revoke this modern view of categories. The unity of the project absorbs the dispute of media and experience types to focus on the possibilities of itself through these or other instruments of expression. In any case, the challenge of this debate does not lie, in my opinion, in arguing for the general or the particular, but in tackling each of them in their own right without canceling or reducing one over the other.[130]

The other point of contention is Harman's consideration that function is not present in either painting or sculpture, the second parameter that, according to him, differentiates architecture from other artistic fields.[131] But if function has been referred to "not just to the narrowly practical results of a thing, but to *any of its relations*," then any experience is function; including also those apprehensions of paintings and sculptures. After all, aesthetic experience is as cellular for architecture as for any other art, as developed in *Art and Objects*.[132] The debate then can only be redirected towards which functions or experiences are proper to each artistic category. But this is a return to the discussion of the previous point where cognitively determined experience-specificity validates which experience belongs to which artistic field. Stated differently, in his method for formalizing function, Harman does not aim to suppress the practical function of architecture, as he criticizes in the case of Eisenman's numbered houses.[133] His method takes practical function as the starting point to divide its already fused components (the architectural element and the beholder) just before complete detachment.[134] This movement seeks the sublimation of practical function, so that it can enter into the aesthetic dimension; a realm historically reserved to physical form. In this case, what is pushed is the aesthetic experience of the experience or use of the space, comparable to a theater actor gaining aesthetic insight into his/her own performance. In this framework, the question under debate is the specificity of this deep cognition: if it is possible to know whether the result of such an aestheticization of an architectural practical experience is also architectural. But the success of this enterprise implies knowing (directly grasping) the profound nature of this aesthetic encounter. Thus, it is ruined by the subject's meddling, like Eisenman's knowledge of the essential characteristics of the solid form as "centroidal" and "linear." Against that, it is argued that this inquiry is irresolvable the moment it is accepted that there is no knowledge about the cognition of the thing-in-itself; or, more precisely, of the function-in-itself.

Let me take the critique a step further. Let us leave for a moment our ontological-realist position for a naïve-realist one, for we can establish absolute truths through perception.[135] Whether, as a consequence of Harman's proposal of quasi-fissuring the object of function between the architectural form and the beholder, the deep experiential outcome remains architecturally practical or, instead, leads to another kind of experience (sculptural or otherwise) is not addressed by Harman. If the former is the case, if the

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[130] In this sense, I consider the general apple as a type or genus, this red apple, and that green apple each as individuals. The latter two can be stacked with the first, sharing or repeating qualities. But each remains autonomous in its own right, that is, irreducible to one another.

[131] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 5.

[132] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 175.

[133] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 5.

[134] Ibid.

[135] As Bryant explains: "[Epistemological realists] wish to distinguish between true representations and mere imaginings, arguing that true representations mirror the world as is, reflecting a world as it is regardless of whether any represents it." Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 15.

functional or experiential difference between architecture and other artistic areas ultimately rests on practicality and utility also in the deep apprehension of the object of function, I see the "formalization of function" returning to architectural modernism in the vindication of program as what animates its formal constitution.[136] If so, practical function remains what separates artistic fields, both on the surface and in the depth of its realization. Instead, if the latter is the case, i.e., that aestheticized experiences fade into a myriad of indeterminate impressions and performances, experience-specific is then an inconclusive means of categorizing disciplines.

In this context, either by the impossibility of accessing the core of an architectural experience or by the indeterminacy of the plethora of its possibilities, it is argued that no disciplinary demarcation concerning the type of experience can be established from an epistemological perspective.

To summarize the discussion on Harman's architectural theory: architecture is not about the autonomization of form (Eisenman), nor of its production process (Tafuri), nor of its form, function, and time (Harman, with the last two terms distinguishing architecture from the visual arts). As stated above, the discipline of architecture is irreducible to any of its components and relations, be they the AP, one of the just mentioned, or any other. As I have argued, this attempt at disciplinary division perpetuates the modern error of subjectively establishing the essential qualities of a discipline to test later experiences against them. In so doing, the specificity of each individual evaporates in favor of the genre, established either by the specificity of the medium or its experience. Both cases naturalize epistemological axioms; propositions that must be accepted as an unshakable basis. In this vein, the failure of modern autonomy has been argued for its dependence on the subject and the account of essential traits.[137] Harman's proposition can be considered a step forward with respect to the latter: the idea that aestheticization in architecture is not only about solid and visual form, but, along with other theories such as Piñón's, also includes function. However, the specification of experience maintains the same vice of a modern formalism that can determine the essences of the entity in question, be it a discipline or an individual within it.

2.2.4. Selectivity

After this reflection, the other point that is to be drawn from Harman's position is that autonomy does not annul relationality. If so, there will be no emergent entity at all. Therefore, once again, autonomy does not lead to isolation, something we have also learned from Tafuri and Rossi. But, at the same time, autonomy is irreducible to relationality. An object's autonomy is not its constitutive relations, although the object needs such a grounding activity to be. In other words, it is clear that constitution entails a dependency to engender and maintain the object in the world. But this vital causation is not the thing-in-itself or its autonomy-of condition. As Harman writes: "the radical [or deep] reality of the [object] also recedes from any *causal* interaction," a transcendence that, for instance,

[136] For Piñón, program, together with construction and site, is what characterizes the formal principles of modern architecture. As he points out: "Modern architecture is functional insofar as it finds in the program the basic stimulus for its constitution, without this meaning that the verification of the quality of the artifact can be reduced to a mere verification of the degree of functional satisfaction it provides." Piñón, *Teoría Del Proyecto*, 2006, 42, [author's translation].

[137] As demonstrated by Eisenman's case, the modern premise of the separation between object and subject was illusory, since the former was always subjugated to the latter. Eisenman modernism is still classical.

DeLanda is far from conceding.[138]

What denotes such relationality under the object's autonomy is *selectivity*.[139] Something relates to *many* things, but not to *all* things; an argument that Harman repeatedly presses in his books. That everything has interconnections is irrefutable. But that everything is interconnected with everything else is refuted. Relationships are discrete and specific, involving some elements and not others, and performing in some ways and not others. Building elements (like stairs, roofs, and slabs) interact with each other to configure a building as an entity in its own right. Economic and cultural dynamics, no less than climate and geological conditions, also participate in its constitution and endurance. The list of foundational elements and how they relate to each other to give birth to and maintain the building in-the-world is greater than any precise analysis we can make of it. But it does not imply that everything in the cosmos—for example, the cartoon of a panda bear—is involved in the formation of *that* building. That we cannot cognitively apprehend the totality of a thing's finitude cannot lead to proclaiming that thing to be infinite, as argued in Section 1.1.

By the same token, the qualification "a-range-of-particular" must precede each of the types of elements and relations that constitute a thing. Not all the beams that exist or may exist engage or may engage in the cause of that building, but a particular range of them. Not all the economic fluctuations affect the possibility and continuity of the building. It is the building itself that establishes these relational constraints on what affects it and what it affects. At the same time, and as is obvious, the activation of such possibilities is not the sole business of the building. It requires other agents for the task. This is what any relation requires to be effective. As DeLanda says: "a capacity to affect must always be coupled to a capacity to be affected."[140] What follows from these observations is that each being has its own *selective policy* that admits a series of connections and elements but not others. A thing is a curator of itself, of what and how things relate to it. As Harman points out about the arts: "an artwork [or any other entity] either admits or forbids its surroundings to enter through a *fairly rigorous process of selection*."[141]

For the same reason that selectivity determines an object's constitutive relations, it also applies to its qualitative and representational sphere, including its cognitions. Both the cognized and the cognizer have a particular selective policy. It is when the two overlap that the act of cognition occurs. It is assumed that this overlap is always partial, since no entity devotes its full potential to a specific relation. Within that, the affecting-affected overlap is masked for each given space-time. No super-cognizer is capable of exhausting what a thing has to offer it at once. The remnant that falls out of the masking at a certain moment but remains in the overlap is the qualitative surplus of the thing for that cognizer, which in Chapter 3 will be called "the knowable." Stated differently, I cannot grasp something's profile that does not belong to it, or I cannot grasp something's being that it is-not-itself. This is where the object's selectivity operates internally in delimiting its expressive and constitutive domain, a task independent of the beholder. A thing's selectivity, as well as its

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[138] Harman, *Tool-Being*, 247. DeLanda sees in the foundational causality or "maintenance process" that allows the thing to endure, one of the main conditions for defining something's identity. The other is the emergent properties that arise from the interactions of the components. DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 12. See also a discussion on the topic between the two philosophers in DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 75–90.

[139] For view from where the "selectivity" advocated here stems, see Harman's idea of "selective intentionality" in Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, secs. 2.c.

[140] DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, viii.

[141] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 102, [emphasis added].

autonomy, are thus subjectless.

At the same time, and as trivial as it may sound, I cannot cognize something that does not allow me to cognize it. But the interesting point here is that, if we narrow down the discussion to the context of the human for clarity, this cognitive impossibility may be due to biological or cultural blockages. Many technological developments act on the former to expand our anatomical capacities of perception. Architectural design is not immune to these improvements, with artificial intelligence (AI) and extended reality (XR) shaping current interests in this direction. However, that is not the field of research of this thesis, whose concern focuses on the cultural blockage. How many design possibilities do we miss when designing a project or occupying a space due to cultural automatisms? I have just criticized the excessive influence of disciplinary concerns in our relationship with individual projects as one of these blockages—this is but one among many other pressures. And when do these preconceptions allow of a deeper sense of the self of the project we are dealing with? Certainly never, since habit and assumption generate a shortening or "algebraization" of perception that results in a lack of impression, as Viktor Shklovsky laments.[142] From a practical point of view, the autonomy of the AP advocated here may avoid such transparent perceptions. By focusing on the object (by being object-oriented), autonomy-of evidences the weakness of cognition to apprehend reliably. This cognitive clumsiness precisely leads to a particular operability in accessing things, as we shall see in what follows.

2.2.5. The practicalities of autonomy

To speak of practicalities of autonomy is directly contrary to Kantian disinterestedness as what provides autonomy. But since his approach has been criticized as relational and autonomy considered unattainable and non-qualitative, such an unknowability unfolds precisely as operative. As will become the underlying theme of Part Two and Part Three, the AP's double unknown is only reachable if the vices and impositions that block the relational possibilities in the design and occupation of space are overcome. The strategy to tear down these culturally assumed cognitive barriers will consist of accounting for the impossibility of knowing what the project is, that is to say, letting autonomy-of do its work. This pursues two things: (1) a greater imbrication between the qualitative part that an architectural project allows us to selectively know about and the natural and augmented capacity we have to apprehend that curated cognitive space for each of us, and (2) a deeper sense of the project's nucleus. These two aspects give the title to this thesis: the AP's *ineffable* being and its *knowable* manifestations. In short, autonomy has been defended as the fundamental pillar that sustains the thing's self. On its part, selectivity is what consolidates the being's constitutive relations, and institutes its set of manifestations, including what can cognize it. They do so independently of any cognitive process. Therefore, when cognition overcomes the presentness of the exhibited qualities, it ends nowhere. Instead, it enters into all that which the object's autonomy and selectivity hold together: the thing-in-itself and its latent expressions. It is on this basis that the double deep inquiry into its being and its multiplicity becomes possible.

Let me put the importance of autonomy from another perspective. This thesis does not pretend to provide an answer to "what is architecture," "what is the AP," or "what makes them autonomous." From an ontological-realist perspective, there is no conclusive

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[142] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device," in *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (1917; repr., Elmwood Park, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991), 5.

definition of these questions, as I hope has become clear in Chapter 1. Not only because there is no direct access to a thing's substance, but also because of the non-qualitative nature of being. These two points are what has supported this thesis' view on a subjectless and existentialist autonomy-of. To repeat once again what was said in the introduction: the epistemological project of ontological realism does not lie in the content of the thing but in the *access* to it. In this light, the best we can do is to assume the failure of knowing the AP-in-itself and its autonomy to establish operational concerns. That is to say, any knowledge about the AP and its autonomy must be taken as perpetually partial and unstable, so the wheel that renews it must be kept in motion indefinitely. The hypothesis is that the broader and richer different approaches on the same AP can be unfolded, the more we will encompass the qualitative possibilities or luminosity that this entity already has for (each of) us. This will be the argument in Chapter 5. An object is always greater than anything we can think or perform of it, by the mere fact that our cognition is always inside it; it is part of it (Section 3.1). Coupled with this, Chapter 4 will consider that the deeper our appreciations of these profiles are, so penetrating that their exposed characteristics become irrelevant to us, the closer we will come to the thing's being. Both apprehensions, to be termed *open and deep cognition*, are argued to occur simultaneously in aesthetic experience. Moreover, this twofold cognitive register promises a socially engaged architecture through aesthetics. Not because the proposed design is specifically developed to solve a certain identified social problem, but "because the undecidability of aesthetic experience," as Bishop comments on Rancière's work, "implies a questioning of how the world is organised, and therefore the possibility of changing or redistributing that same world."[143] For that, "art [and architecture] must paradoxically remain autonomous in order to initiate or achieve a model for social change."[144]

Under this umbrella, this thesis is interested in the cognitive implications—modes of designing, occupying and understanding space—whereby what an architectural project is lies outside the cognitive sphere. Posed in the form of a research question: what are the consequences for architectural expressions and impressions when what architecture is lies outside our knowledge of it? To proceed in this direction, the autonomous condition of both the project and the cognition (or production) is central, and an artistic approach to the issue is the key to its success. It is precisely engaging with an autonomy-of what I consider necessary to broaden architectural understanding and rethink its socio-political impact, as contradictory as it may appear at first glance. In this journey, autonomy will not lead us again to the secure epistemological framework on which to reaffirm previous realizations, nor to keep anchoring autonomy to a cognitive authority mainly orchestrated through rational and moral means. Continuing with Bishop: "the aesthetic in the sense of *aisthesis* [is] an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality."[145] It is precisely in the aesthetic awareness of the inability to confine a project on a subject-dependent disciplinary ground what opens up a speculative range of action. As noted, Rancière has written extensively on this. But this range of speculation is again autonomous-of itself, as Harman's notion of function demonstrates. The encounter of the project and the person is selective. Its surplus is limited in its own terms, while constituting an enormously finite material curated for inexhaustible exploration. From this point of view, undertaking architectural paths that cannot be legitimized from academicism and

[143] Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 27.
[144] Ibid., 27, [emphasis removed].
[145] Ibid., 18.

popular standardizations should not be condemned. Precisely to reach those deeper and more open areas, it is necessary to overcome such canonical frameworks. Not doing architecture appears as an approach to do profound and expansive architecture. This is what is found in Enric Miralles.

To argue that Miralles is an architect of autonomy is ridiculous only if he is coupled with any of the four previous positions that have dominated the discourse of autonomy in architecture since the last century. But to maintain that Miralles is an architect who suspends superficiality to account for "what is beyond," for "what is not seen," is not so surprising. Several authors have already pointed this out.[146] In fact, Miralles himself told us that "[w]e move on the surface without knowing what we have below."[147] And he expressed his "desire to enter" ("*quererse adentrar*") into the project.[148] It is also not surprising to read Miralles as someone who discards categorical and preconceived knowledge in the act of designing in order to exploit vague estimations and variations; someone who "like[s] to approach things always through approximated solutions."[149] Therefore, like Harman, he conceives of all these superficial propositions as "caricatures."[150] Moreover, Miralles himself suffered the difficulties of not following academicism.[151] If Tafuri aimed at a disciplinary order founded on the integration of architecture with its own time, Miralles, as Mark Wigley says, was an architect outside of his time. The New York-based critic portrays Miralles as someone who is not obliged to the contextualism of his Zeitgeist, who does not represent it. This does not cancel the fact that contextual circumstances (site, history, culture) deeply nourish his architecture.[152] Miralles developed a cognitive process that was influenced by innumerable things, but which remains autonomous (i.e. selective and irreducible) from all of them.

My argument is that all of this together—all these fragmented clues that the Spanish architect left disseminated here and there, with more to be found in the following two parts of the thesis—constitutes an ethos of design that can only come through a commitment to the autonomy of the project and its access. And not seeing Miralles as an architect of autonomy by the fact that he never explicitly put such an expression when talking about his work is to betray his world view by remaining within the strict superficiality of his words.

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[146] Josep M. Rovira, in registering the complexity of Miralles' architecture and the architect's own disinterest in the visual aspects, states that what matters in his architecture is what lies beyond the superficial matters. Josep M. Rovira, ed., *Enric Miralles 1972-2000*, Colección Arquia/Temas 33 (Barcelona: Fundación Arquia, 2011), 8.

[147] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:14, [author's translation].

[148] Miralles, "Acceder," 19, [author's translation].

[149] Enric Miralles, "Interview to Enric Miralles, Cronotopias," *Metalocus*, no. 3 (1999): 14–31 [author's translation].

[150] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21; Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.

[151] Miralles' first submission of his dissertation was rejected. The committee alleged illegibility of the writing and lack of adequate academic content. See Moneo, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y Derecha (Sin Gafas). Un Comentario a La Tesis Doctoral de Enric Miralles Moya, 1987."

[152] Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, *Homenatge a Enric Miralles* (COAC Barcelona, 2021), min. 49:50, https://youtu.be/GLTcuqYO6Sc.

Summary of Part One

Part One has addressed the figure of the architectural project (AP) in its ontological dimension. The AP has been considered as an entity in itself, a condition further contextualized within the twentieth century debate of autonomy in architecture. In this task, the adopted approach has followed the realist tradition. Things stand as a single unit of reality or existence surrounded by a plurality of expressions, injecting them with a dose of *subjectlessness*. In Chapter 1, such a One/Many structure has been situated as inherent also to each AP. This is not because the AP is an entity with an ontological footing different from others, but because everything in the world exists individually under this unity-multiplicity tension. The democratization (to use Bryant's term) of the right of each entity to exist in its own terms derives from the notion of *flat ontology* and Harman's rejection of the "modern split between human beings on one side and everything else on the other."[1] This is the context that has allowed us to extend the One/Many model from its historical exclusivity to—or somehow dependent on—the human subject to any natural, artificial, imaginary, physical, cultural object. Insofar as an AP exists, it is a being with a myriad of manifestations. Under this umbrella, various points have been considered about the project.

First, the AP is an object in a realist sense: an indivisible package of a being and a set of qualities. It is not considered as a holistic entity that contains all the particular projects or that each of them derives from a specific superior unit. The AP is not even taken as a type. Instead, speaking of "the AP" is a literary shortcut that refers to each architectural project individually and without any purpose of generalization. Each AP is taken in a discrete manner. Like Morton's hyperobject of global warming, the AP has been considered a *phantom object* that does not formalize itself in a concrete expression or medium, but appropriates multiple manifestations of its components as its own.

Second, in addition to the unity-multiplicity scheme, the AP is entangled in a world structure of things-within-things-within-things. This means that, in the architectural case, the constitutive elements often serve also as representation, but the opposite is not always the case. In any case, and regardless of their enlistment, relationality, and position in such a stacked structure, each entity remains autonomous. This means that the range of capabilities of each compound assigned to its relation to the AP is partial when compared to its fullness (Fig. 1-3).

Third, each AP, like any other entity, is subjectless. That a project is a cultural entity arising from human activity does not mean that its selfhood is dictated by how humans engage with and understand it; just as a child's being is irreducible to its parents. More broadly, the figure of the subject should not be understood as exclusive to the human realm, but extended to anything that enters in a non-constitutive relation with another thing; e.g., the sun shining on a building. For the same reason that we would not accept that the nature of the building is what the sun determines of it, the existence of the building must be considered immune also to human cognition. This leads us to reject the figure of the subject

[1] Harman, *Immaterialism*, 4.

in favor of the *cognizer*. The former cognitively determines what is cognized. The second cognizes without determining what is cognized.

Fourth, the irreducibility of an AP's being concerns not only the (human) subject but also its process of production and any of its manifestations. The latter implies that no element of a Many faithfully embodies or is the One. This point entails a divergence from Harman's position. While for him the withdrawal of the thing is only relative to an external agent but not its essential qualities, for this thesis, it is both external and internal. In short, a being withdraws from its environment no less than from *all* its inner qualities, which has led to the rejection of the possibility of "real qualities." This equal recession of a being from all corners of its qualitative stock results in each of these profiles representing equally its unifying being, something that has been called *flat representativity*.

Fifth, three types of internal representativity have been identified within an AP. Viewed from the perspective of the expression, each of them represents (1) itself, hence it is a presentation of its qualities, (2) its peers of the thing's qualitative pool, and (3) the thing-in-itself. The latter means that, although being is none of its profiles, it is embodied in each of them. Following Heidegger's "as-structure," each manifestation represents its being (in)completely. This thesis is interested in the cognitive development of the latter two relations for architectural design and occupation. As will be elaborated in Part Two, (2) promises cognition to move from vine to vine; from one manifestation to another, establishing a form of orbital knowledge. For its part, (3) promises to put us in non-qualitative contact with the project's unitary substance.

Sixth, the AP's phantomness makes its qualitative domain medium-promiscuous. The project has no privileged means of expression. Inter alia, this implies dissolving the discussion about whether architecture is a matter of form or function (of visual appearance or practical use). Both physical, geometric form and practical uses are one of the many representations of the project. It follows that not only other typically architectural manifestations (drawings, models, renderings) are positioned on the same representational plane as the building thanks to the notion of flat representativity. It also leads us to think of other media as belonging to the project, such as our cognitions. Considering our impressions as other expressions of the AP stems from Bryant's idea that experience is a subset of an object's manifestations.[2] Under this umbrella, what have been viewed as external, cognitive, or extraneous relations to the project are actually internal instances of it. The human is another medium of the project. As will be detailed in Section 3.1, we encounter the project from within.

These points give us a clearer picture of the configuration of the AP, setting the basis for this thesis' three-part structure: the architectural project as such (Part One), the design and occupation cognition within and on the AP (Part Two), and the spatial expression capable of the project's double unknown for a cognizer (Part Three).

Furthermore, with these ontological postulates, the AP as an object in itself has been contrasted with the four main theories of autonomy in architecture of the twentieth century (Kaufmann, Rossi, Tafuri and Eisenman). From Kaufmann has been drawn the very idea that architecture can be approached as an autonomous entity, despite his method of identifying such a condition in cognitive perceptions about visual form. In Rossi, hints about the three parts just mentioned have been identified in what has been called the triad scheme, despite the fact that he himself did not consider his theory to address the project and architecture *an sich*. Tafuri's reflections on the production process as the main focus of

[2] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.

architectural autonomy have been interpreted as the possibility of considering cognition itself as an autonomous entity within its environment. What has been rejected from his writings is the complete dissolution of the emergent object and the excessively contextual pressure on the act of production. Eisenman has appeared as the complete opposite of Tafuri: his formalism has attempted to apply to architecture the modern taxonomization of the object and the human subject. In this case, his metaphysical commitment is a reliable precedent for understanding the possibility of a deep dimension of the AP beyond its visual impressions. With all this, the problematization of this heterogeneous context has nevertheless been criticized under the same argument: all these theories define the autonomy of architecture (and of projects) on a subject-dependent and qualitative basis. Each of them, in its own way, establishes a series of properties predicating the essence and characteristics of architecture from the subject's viewpoint.

In this framework, the autonomy enacted in this thesis points in the opposite direction: it does not acknowledge essential features, whether validated from an interiority or a cognitive or epistemological propositions. It simply equates autonomy with being. This means that the AP's selfhood is autonomous by the mere fact of existing. In this light, autonomy emerges as a device that ensures the irreducibility of a being to anything other than itself, dismantling two widespread assumptions in the field of architecture. Following Harman's insights, it has been claimed that, first, autonomy is not a matter of visual or geometric form, as it would be relational to a subject (and also qualitative), and second, autonomy does not lead to isolation. The latter means that autonomy depends on certain relations and elements to be. In other words, without the constitutive activity between the elements that compose the project as a whole, the being of the AP would not exist. But this dependence is not autonomy or being as such. Autonomy is being.

With the OOO approach adopted here, any factual and absolute knowledge becomes impossible, since there is no truthful access to the thing-in-itself. Therefore, and after establishing a theoretical armature on the AP as an autonomous object, the epistemological efforts of this thesis can now be oriented precisely towards the question of access (Part Two) and which architectural propositions can induce in the public a deep and open architectural experience (Part Three); i.e., spaces whose impressions and uses do not confirm previously assumed architectural truths or set new ones. On the contrary, a cognition with a twofold aim will be pursued: grasping the non-qualitative being of the project and producing a volatile knowledge of it. Autonomy is cognitively fundamental to remember that any relation—whether constitutive or cognitive—is always insufficient to determine something's autonomous existence. The consequence of this impossibility is the establishment of an open sense of knowledge: an orbiting without landing, without points of epistemological measurement. That is to say, there is no condition of correctness on which to validate cognitive propositions.

To this end, and like the AP, the object of the architectural experience—both of designing and of occupying space—will be approached in its ontologically autonomous and multiple condition. This makes it clear that the AP is not its profiles, including physical, geometric, conceptual, and cognitive ones. Rather, each of them, in addition to operating for its project in a certain way, is also an object that can be considered autonomously. In other words, the project of autonomy in architecture today is crucial in order not to surrender the AP—any object—to the conditions of architectural production and cognition (whether contextual or ideological). What we need is precisely a notion of autonomy stripped of production and cognition that accounts for the AP in itself. But from the side of production or cognition, its autonomy guarantees that processes and experiences operate

on their own terms. When so, cognitive and production processes are irreducible not only to external pressures but also to their components. This baseline is crucial for addressing an autonomous cognition in the next chapters.

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Introduction to Part Two

After commenting on the architectural project (AP) in its ontological dimension as an entity in its own right, its epistemological (cognitive, productive, and design) approach is certainly broad. After all, this is where its irreducible autonomy leads us. For this task, this dissertation decides to involve two *concerns* revolving around two questions.[1] The first question, developed in this Part Two, is: what can be an approach to the project in tune with its dual condition of unitary reality and multiplicity of manifestations? Asked another way: what mode of cognition can be considered when the architectural project's nature is considered beyond our sensory, cognitive, and cultural competences? I will posit *aesthetics* as such a mode for such a mode of cognition. The second question, developed in Part Three, is: what means of architecture allows such a discussion? I will tackle it through the architectural medium of *space*.[2] And within the latter, what kind of architectural expressions do allow for an aesthetic cognition to take place? What architectural expressions emerge by virtue of this cognitive incapacity in the design process and are able to keep such unknowability active and productive in the users as well? I will advocate for an abstract, asemic, asyntactic, open space, configured in heterogeneous, saturated, multi-scale material interlacements and with the capacity to evoke other expressions inherent to the project when experienced.[3] This space will be called *aesthetic architectural space* or *opaque-productive space*. To put it clearly, the architectural interests of the next two parts are *aesthetic cognition* and *opaque-productive space*, which derives from Michalle Gal's idea of "opaque-productive symbol."[4]

The first concern—a form of relation with the AP in consonance with its autonomous condition—should imply a mode of cognition regulated neither by the subject's imposing logic (idealism), nor a rejection of the observer as what contaminates the observed (extreme formalism). The first cannot contemplate existence outside cognition. The latter promotes a singular reality without plurality, a reality so profound that any cognitive attempt tarnishes its purity. Against such stances, an alternative path is proposed: one that preserves the unique integrity of the object, while requiring the singularity of each observer to navigate within the numerous instances of the observed object. This encounter is a new object; a *cognitive-unit* composed of two entities with the same ontological condition: the AP and the cognizer. The latter is understood as the architect or the user, depending on the experience to which we refer (space design or occupancy). To maintain

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[1] The distinction between "concern" and "fact" should be highlighted. Disciplinary concerns, in the plural, can be seen as *assumptions* or *convictions*. For example, the way architects discuss "space" is different from what psychologists or geographers do. Therefore, disciplinary concerns are reductions. The question is how to make them sharp enough to open up more possibilities about the object of study, instead of turning them into dogmatic barriers. That means that "matters-of-concern" (using Latour's word) cannot establish an ontological state, but they define dispositions, approaches, opinions, stances. For more about the different between "matter-of-fact" and "matter-of-concern," see Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?"

[2] As discussed in Part One, I understand "form" as any qualitative instance of the project, regardless of its medium of representation. Anything with qualities, order, structure, or articulation is formed. Thus, form can be psychological, physical, material, geometric, etc.

[3] Despite not being explicitly addressed in this dissertation so as not to stray from Enric Miralles as a case study, it should be noted that I advocate for spatial formations that, in addition to the aforementioned characteristics, are also multi-species, multi-actants, and multi-media. They are spaces that emerge abstractly from what Jordi Vivaldi calls the "xenological condition" as the entanglements of algorithmic, technological, biological, geological, and ecological objects. I only hint at this readiness in the conclusion as a future enterprise to be developed. Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 220–307.

[4] Gal, *Aestheticism*.

consistency with what was stated in Part One, the AP and the cognizer are not archetypes but individuals. There are no two identical projects or cognizers. Therefore, there are no two identical cognitive-units either.

On this basis, each cognizer structures the AP's qualitative domain according to the person's biological faculties, cultural determinations, and technological enhancements into at least three sub-domains at any given time: what is directly known, what might be known, and what can never be known. By the root "known" and its derivatives, I mean not only knowledge as the retention of the qualities of the object, but more broadly any of its phenomena that appear in experience. As usual, the project's deep, unitary reality remains evasive for any appearance and cognitive effort. This means that there is always a twofold limitation in the apprehension of any object: one towards the underlying unitary essence and a second towards the remnant of unknown manifestations. It is what has been defined—giving title to this thesis—as *the ineffable and the knowable*, respectively. Both produce a constant feeling of (in)completeness for different reasons. One because it is non-qualitative; the other because it always has some further quality to unveil.

However, this is not our general approach to things, neither in everyday life nor in academia. In contrast, Harman reminds us that we tend to reduce objects to our knowledge of them, to "caricatures" of them.[5] As previously noted, we misconstrue ontological circumstances to epistemological considerations in performing such reductions.[6] Thus, our standardized form of cognition lies in the superficiality of things, whether through their appearances or effects. Heidegger calls such a superficial apprehension *ontic*: "What is ontically nearest and familiar is ontologically the farthest, unrecognized and constantly overlooked in its ontological significance."[7] Stated differently, our typical way of relating to the world is direct and literal, i.e., manifestations *we* have made *transparent*, using Byung-Chul Han's term. As he claims: "Things prove transparent when they abandon their singularity and find expression through their price alone," meaning in the sole exposure of its surface characteristics.[8] They are phenomena that interest us only for their immediate qualities; phenomena that, paradoxically, we flatten in their exhibiting aspects. Letting cognition operate exclusively at such a shallow level precludes any possible connection to their depths. Shklovsky called it "automatic perception":

> […] we apprehend objects only as shapes with imprecise extensions; we do not see them in their entirety but rather recognize them by their main characteristics. We see the object as though it were enveloped in a sack. We know what it is by its configuration, but we see only its silhouette. The object, perceived thus in the manner of prose [as opposed to poetic] perception, fades and does not leave even a first impression.[9]

Against an automatic perception without impressions, the present agenda seeks the AP's double unknown, i.e., the substantial and the qualitative unknown beyond the immediately tangible. Such twofold material will be the basis of architectural creation and the objective

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[5] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.

[6] In the Introduction to *The Democracy of Objects*, Levi R. Bryant clearly explains how considerations about the being of objects are different from our knowledge of objects and our access to them. According to him, questions of ontology must precede those of epistemology. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 18.

[7] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 41.

[8] Han, *The Transparency Society*, 1–2.

[9] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 1971, 2, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/first/en122/lecturelist-2015-16-2/shklovsky.pdf.

of the architectural experience. As for the substantial unknown or AP's being, it becomes unparaphrasable or ineffable. It escapes direct perception and has no-qualities, as discussed in Part One. The cognitive challenge here lies in making the existence of the AP evident. What for? Continuing with Shklovsky: "to make one feel things, to make the stone stony."[10] As for the qualitative unknown, there is a particular excess of manifestations that the project already offers for each cognizer, alternative expressions of how it can appear and perform to us. In this context, the aim is to maintain a continuous flow of access and revelation of these knowable manifestations. With all this, what is beyond the superficial matters twice: both substantially and qualitatively.

However, the surface of things remains of vital importance as what gives access to the ineffable and the knowable. The surface is the door to the object's double unknown. In practical terms, architectural design will seek the AP's profiles whose twofold internal referentiality is not yet obstructed by our automatic perception. These open phenomena will be defined later as o*paque-productive form*. To this end, any assumptions about the object prior to its experience will inevitably be called into question. Indeed, anything that is taken for granted arises as a stumbling block to consider beyond what is already accepted. In our case, any pre-assumed condition of the project "automates" design in one way or another. Against that, we seek a kind of surface that, in Miralles words, "leads us on its paths 'to the depths'."[11]

Therefore, these motivations require the possibility of a design strategy and a policy of experiencing the project that transcends the architect's, spectator's, and user's apriorisms, but does not eliminate their cognitive specificities or individualities. Indeed, the latter—the variety of individual procedures within several cognizers—will result in a collective device for addressing the diversity of the AP's expressions. There is no single way or method of feeling the unitary thing-in-itself at issue. There is no single appearance to apprehend and no single effect to perform. There is a plentifulness in every project. The plurality of the AP's qualitative realm needs the diversity of a plural public to make itself visible, something that relates to what Umberto Eco calls "openness." As he puts it:

> A work of art, therefore, is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity.[12]

How to tackle the ineffable deep reality and the knowable multiplicity of manifestations of a project maintaining the individuality of each cognizer? What should be an open *modus operandi* of the cognitive-unit—whether in designing or inhabiting—that considers the singularities of its two compounds: project and architect, or project and inhabitant? For the architect, an additional responsibility arises: how to formalize what the designer does not know about the project in an architecture that maintains the same sense of unknowability for the audience?

To address these questions, this dissertation finds in Harman and Miralles an

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:14, [author's translation].

[12] Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (1962; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4, [emphasis removed]. As a comment to the quote, the multiplicity of interpretations can be enormous but never "countless." As argued in Part One the sensual manifestations of an object are a finite, albeit inexhaustible, compendium. If it were infinite, any representation or interpretation would belong to each other object.

analogous form of cognition: *aesthetics*. For the philosopher, aesthetics is the study between reality and its qualities.[13] For the architect, it implies an evaluation based on intuition that is far from moral values and conventions.[14] In my words, by aesthetics I mean a mode of cognition that accounts for what is beyond the manifestations that provide the basis of experience. Aesthetics arises as an approach to any project that immerses itself in alternative representations beyond the cognizer's knowledge and assumptions, and where each registration can also refer to the thing's common and unified reality. Aesthetics simultaneously addresses the double unknown: it leads to depth and openness. In this vein, the *aesthetic-unit* is the cognitive-unit that breaks the presented manifestation's qualities, revealing its substance and more manifestations.

Methodologically, Miralles' and Harman's aesthetic understandings overlap in various aspects. In addition to or completing what has been outlined at the end of Chapter 2, it will be shown how both authors offer similar notions of *mimesis/imitation* in how the cognizer engages with the object, as well as in the *allusive* manner of making reality immaterially present. *Metaphor* will be also the leading cognitive tool in both methods.

On this basis, it is important to remark that aesthetic cognition emerges as the basis not only of architectural experience but also of the design process. More specifically, the present Part Two will propose a design process that, in a first step, goes beyond the architect's design automatisms to grasp an unexpected impression of the project. In a second step, the architect materializes such an impression in an open manifestation or opaque-productive space, whose compositional aspects will be addressed in Part Three. Once distributed, such an architecture will pursue the activation of the double unknown, this time in the beholder's experience. However, the architect is not the only cognizer dealing with the AP. The same freedom that is asked of a designer free of normativity and external interferences will be asked of the observer and the user. Therefore, the architect's understanding of the project should not restrict the occupant's engagement with it. For the "emancipation of the spectator," to use Rancière's term, there must be a gap between the architect and the user. The former must *depersonalize* the distributed architecture, something to be examined through Miralles' notion of *graphic thinking*. Within this framework, creative and experiential cognitions of multiple users will intertwine in a circularity of open qualitative forms that unveil other unexpected qualitative forms, all orbiting around the AP's nucleus. This triggering process will be called the *chain of multiplicity*.

Stated differently, each relationship between the architect or a user with the project constitutes an object in-itself, occurring within the domains of the AP (Fig. 2-3). When the nature of that cognition is aesthetic, the AP's depth opens simultaneously in two ways: towards its ineffable being and towards its knowable qualities and capacities. Thus, aesthetic cognition will be claimed as capable of dealing with the object's unity and multiplicity at the same time. In this context, faced with the twofold impossibility of objectively defining what the AP's substance is and encompassing all of its qualitative profiles, this second part of the thesis will propose a design agenda in which the main role of the architect is to unfold some instance of the AP that can trigger a myriad of registers in its users, a myriad that is proper of the project. The nature of these apprehensions will be to reveal the project's personalized characteristics for each user, as well as to realize its immaterial existence.

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[13] Harman, *Art and Objects*, xi–xii.
[14] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9.

Kant defended a universal subjectivity. It can be said that this idea underlies all of modernity; an individuality that aspires to pervasiveness. In its practical modulation in architecture, the extended and normative practice of basing architectural design on the common denominator of the users is still in place. If only for the records, this is inseparable from the ideologies behind the construction of such general users, leading to all kinds of socio-political problems. This modern phenomenon is evidently present in functionalism and is accentuated when linked to mass production. Under this modern paradigm, architecture or industrial design give rise to typological propositions that simultaneously derive from and contribute to the construction of the archetypal user.[15]

Against that, as this design theory seeks differences within the audience, it appeals to their individuality. The hypothesis is that the uniqueness of each observer will reveal a different aspect of the project when approached in a personalized way. This has obvious social and political implications, since the design looks for maximum inclusion without a homogenization of receptors. The apprehension of the AP's various knowable qualities occurs collectively, each one alluding to the same unitary reality.

At this point, it is important to make a preliminary differentiation between the cognizer as a collective and the collective implications of individual cognitions. This dissertation focuses primarily on the relationship of a project and an individual. This means that the cognizer as a collective will not be explicitly addressed. Group cognition entails an extra political and sociological dimension that is beyond the scope of this work. What will not be obviated, however, will be the social and political consequences that individual cognition entails when it becomes autonomized. This will advocate for an architectural design that is specific to each project while celebrating its colorful interior through a diversity of approaches. Hence, the design framework proposed here seeks different aesthetic responses to the work by offering an individualized sense of (in)completeness to each aesthetic-unit. The result suggests a socially engaged architecture; not because it pursues it as an end, but because it takes it as a starting point. In this sense, social diversity and inclusion under this design model are claimed from an ontologically non-anthropocentric stance (or a subjectless realism), rather than a rational and moral human-exceptionalist pluralism.

To develop these propositions, Part Two has three major chapters. The first—Chapter 3—will define the notion of *subjectless cognition* as an innocuous form of relation from the inside of the cognized. The *aesthetic-unit* will be its instantiation, deriving from the deep and open encounter between the AP and the cognizer. Within this framework, we will also discuss why aesthetics provides an appropriate approach in tune with the unity-multiplicity nature of the project. Chapter 4 will study the first of the two simultaneous aspects of aesthetics: *deep cognition* as the path towards the experience of the project's being. Since this nucleus lacks qualities, its registration will be allusive. This will be based on the diagonal access to the deep reality proposed by Harman, and which will relate to Kant's, Fiedler's, and Greenberg's notion of "aesthetic experience as an end in itself." Chapter 5 will focus on the other register of the aesthetic approach: *open cognition* as what unpacks the alternative and knowable manifestations of the project. Each architectural experience, whether of an architect or a user, will be considered as an autonomous cognitive object.

[15] The fallacy of such a scheme is surprising, since the construction of the model or universal user is not only that it is based on certain groups of privilege. It also accentuates the individual exclusion, both of those who are supposed to be under such a model and, obviously, of those who are not. In other words and examples, I return here to the problem of reducing the general to the particular, already mentioned in Part One.

Without canceling this premise, these two experiential moments of design and occupation will be accounted for separately. This will not only be due to methodological reasons to address deep and open cognition in their own dimensions, but also to emphasize their mutual distance from the constitutive relations of the perceived—only in this way can cognition and constitution be counted respectively as autonomous. The openness of an autonomous aesthetic cognition will enable free individualized exploration and the unveiling of unplanned expressions of the project. It will release the creative nature of the user, who will join the architect as another author in the unfolding of the AP's multiplicity.

Chapter 3. Subjectless cognition and the cognitive-unit

Part One has examined how an object comes packaged into a unit of existence and a pool of multiple manifestations (Fig. 1-2). Following the object-oriented assessment that everything is an object, the architectural project (AP), insofar as it is something, has been declared an object with such a One/Many structure. Furthermore, a distinction has been made between constitutive and representative relations; or domestic and foreign, as Harman calls them. The existence of the object depends on the former, while the latter—also termed here cognitive relations—are non-vital expressions. However, each relationship, constitutive or cognitive, is in fact a new object.[1] Then the interactions in which a project enters, and which are irrelevant to the constitution of its being, are nevertheless each an object in itself. This is how this chapter will deal with the interaction between the project and the human cognizer. The architect designing or the user inhabiting are claimed non-organic relationships of AP, but vital to themselves as objects of experience. Moreover, since the cognitive and the representational relationships have been flattened as one and the same in Chapter 1, experience has resulted as another expression of the project. This idea has stemmed from Bryant's ontological scheme, in which experience is a subset of the object's manifestations.

To establish a form of cognition that considers the AP's identity but not at the cost of eliminating the observer's specificity, both entities should be treated as equal. That means that the human does not subvert the project or vice versa, but both coexist, following ecocentric thinking as opposed to anthropocentrism. In other words, architectural cognition is the encounter of two entities with equal autonomous status: a cognized entity (the AP) and a cognizing one (the architect and the user/observer). This gives us a third emergent object: the *cognitive-unit* as a major concern of architecture, at least for this thesis. In this context, cognition is a particular kind of relationship taken as an object in itself characterized here as follows.

First, cognition is understood in its broadest sense as any form of relationality, whereby one entity experiences another without altering any of their ontological structures, respectively. In architecture, such experiences trigger new manifestations of the project, normally physical expressions in the design process (drawings, models, the building) or emotional and practical in experience (impressions, uses). Depending on the form of cognition, the architect and the observer can gain qualitative characteristics of the observed (knowledge), a sense of its reality (aesthetics), or both at the same time. Indeed, this thesis vindicates the simultaneity of these two aspects. To do so, we must first understand cognition, at least in its human register, as a relationship that most often requires both mental and bodily participation. It is a form of interaction that typically appears as

[1] As Harman posits: "any relation immediately generates a new object." Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 117, [emphasis removed].

perception, contemplation, affection, reflection, reasoning, association, use, handling, and so on. There is, in principle, no reason to favor one relational faculty over another. As Rudolf Steiner noted:

> thinking must also not be regarded as bringing something to the content of reality. It is no more and no less an organ of perception than the eye or ear. Just as the eye perceives colours and the ear sounds, so thinking perceives ideas.[2]

Obviously, the particularities by which the object manifests itself to experience, and this also includes the medium, will determine the faculties of the person acting in each case. A built space, according to Benjamin, is both perceived and used.[3] Therefore, it involves different cognitive processes from, for example, confronting a drawing of the same project.

Second, what cognizes does not affect the cognized, meaning cognition is a non-subordinate relationship.[4] The architect or the observer does not impose the criteria of what the project is, looks like, or does. Riegl's idea of Kunstwollen examined in Chapter 1 makes this position clear. Recalling Reichenberger: "It is not we who have to say to art what it has to want, rather it is art that has something to say to us in its 'style' of how it *wants* to represent things."[5] From here it is interpreted that the AP's being and qualities are pre-existent to the design and experience; or at least coetaneous, since impressions are also expressions. This pre-existence or simultaneity is maintained even if such qualities or capacities are not exercised. This does not imply that the project is a pre-individual or that architects cannot create the project. Of course, we can and we do. APs do not come out of nowhere, but are always the cause of something else. To be clear, architectural projects are taken as creations in which human beings participate. In this way, I do not follow the positions that assign a self-reflective and unitary authorship to architecture itself.[6] Being a human creation is irrelevant to acknowledging the AP's autonomy.

At the same time, being the *ontological author* is not incompatible with being a *medium* of expression of the project. Cognitive finitude does not change because the cognizer is also the creator, or partakes in it. Being the ontological author of something does not give privileged access to the created. In this sense, an architectural project is like a child. Parents do not have better access to their children than a non-relative. Likewise, parents do not create their children's capabilities to their liking in interactions with them. What they do is activate—make present to experience—the inherent faculties already contained in the child. The same applies to the project. An architect who originates a project is not its privileged cognizer, imposing foreign qualities in its expressions. This was clear to Miralles when, for him, designing is a matter of *dialogue* with the project rather than of imposing the architect's dogma. As he said: "I think if you work from the register, instead of imposing, you are checking from the outside. I would replace the word idea with the word dialogue—conversation more than idea."[7] The conversation within an aesthetic-

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[2] Rudolf Steiner, *Goethean Science: GA1*, trans. William Lindeman, eBook (1883–1897; repr., Toronto: The Mercury Press, 1988), chap. IX.

[3] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (1935; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 40.

[4] For Harman, "love," rather than domination or possession, regulates such a non-dependent relationship or attachment between things. For example, see Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer*, sec. 2.c.

[5] Reichenberger, "Kunstwollen. Riegl's Plädoyer für die Freiheit der Kunst," 71, [author's translation].

[6] Peter Trummer, "Zero Architecture: A Neo-Realist Approach to the Architecture of the City," *SAC Journal*, no. 5 (2019): 14–21.

[7] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 264.

unit involves a circularity around the AP. The architect extracts some features that are already in the AP, and upon which the inhabitants activate additional features through their architectural experiences.

In this sense, one can distinguish two senses of "creator" or "author." On the one hand, the architect can initially give life or participate in the birth of the AP's being. However, the AP distances itself from the designer at the very moment of its creation, gaining its own autonomous condition. In this ontological demarcation, the project produces *cognitive barriers* for any cognizer. On the other hand, the architect and the user are creators in the sense of *activators* of the project's multiple qualities. This is where to argue the multi-authored condition of a project. In this second case, the architect is then another observer with also access impediments to the AP's interior. In turn, any user can become a creator the moment that person unveils some unseen feature experiencing the project.

Third, there are as many cognitive-units for the same project as different cognizers relate to it. Each of these attachments is a new particular object. This means that the piece that changes in each relationship is the cognizer. Such a cognizer can be individual or collective, and the person's or group's characteristics determine the particularities of each encounter with this AP. That means that each project is the same autonomous thing for everyone. If various aspects (even contradictory) appear for the same project, it is because each cognizer grasps one or another from the AP's pool.

Fourth, each cognitive-unit occurs within the AP (Fig. 2-3). Cognition is one of the many different internal relations within an object. This gives a complex structure that is opposed to modern cognition, in which the subject is always outside the observed. In the present case, the act of cognition is contained in the cognized, since experience is one of the multiple manifestations of the project. This is so because it has been argued that the AP is a phantom object with numerous media, with the human being standing as one of its means of expression. This means that the cognitive-unit falls into what has been termed in Chapter 1 a representational relation that takes place within the object. In turn, it has also been said that the cognizer is never fully committed to the cognitive task at stake (Fig. 1-3).

Within this framework, we can start from the latter: how exactly does this inner, subjectless cognition work, and what does it imply for both the cognizer and the cognized? In the following section, this approach will be argued as internal and innocuous to the thing and as a constitutive part of the cognizer's subjectivity.

3.1. Subjectless cognition and subjectivity

Subjectless cognition stems from the ontological characteristics of the AP discussed in Chapter 1: its unity-multiplicity structure, the flat representativity of its inner relations, and the multimediality of its expressions. The AP has been described as a phantom object that often uses the bodies of its constitutive parts to make itself present (in)completely. That is to say, it delegates its appearances also to its components in what has been called "repeated qualities." This implies that a drawing or a building, besides being objects in themselves and foundational elements of the project, are also qualitative formalizations of the AP's being. However, it is important to remark that, although an element may simultaneously assume a constitutive and representational role for the same object, each of these tasks remains separate from each other in its own relation. For example, the way in which a façade

contributes to the constitution of a building is a different relation to the way in which this façade represents that building. In addition, these AP's material proxies are the basis on which the human cognizer engages with the project. They are the portal to the depths of the thing. It has also been argued that the cognitive relation of the human with the project through its delegations is part of the AP's qualitative whole, leading to declare the human being as another medium of the AP. In short, if experience is a subset of an object's manifestations, as Bryant claims, then experience is internal to the object. From an ontological realist view, any project's manifestation never defines what the project is. By extension, and in opposition to idealism, this equally applies to the cognizer's impressions, since they are also the object's expressions.

In this context, we require an anti-idealist or anti-anthropocentric mode of cognition that ceases to concede the impositions of the mind's logics as the basis of the other's realities. That is the argument for rejecting the idealist subject in favor of the realist cognizer. The former imposingly *constructs* the world from what is reasonable for the mind (or certain minds when cognition is politicized). The latter harmlessly *extracts* what awaits activation in the world. This is the reason to argue that architectural design is not about construction but extraction. Within this framework, two are the main characteristics of subjectless cognition: it is *internal* and *innocuous* to the cognized (Fig. 3-1). Let us examine more specifically the contextualization of this cognition.

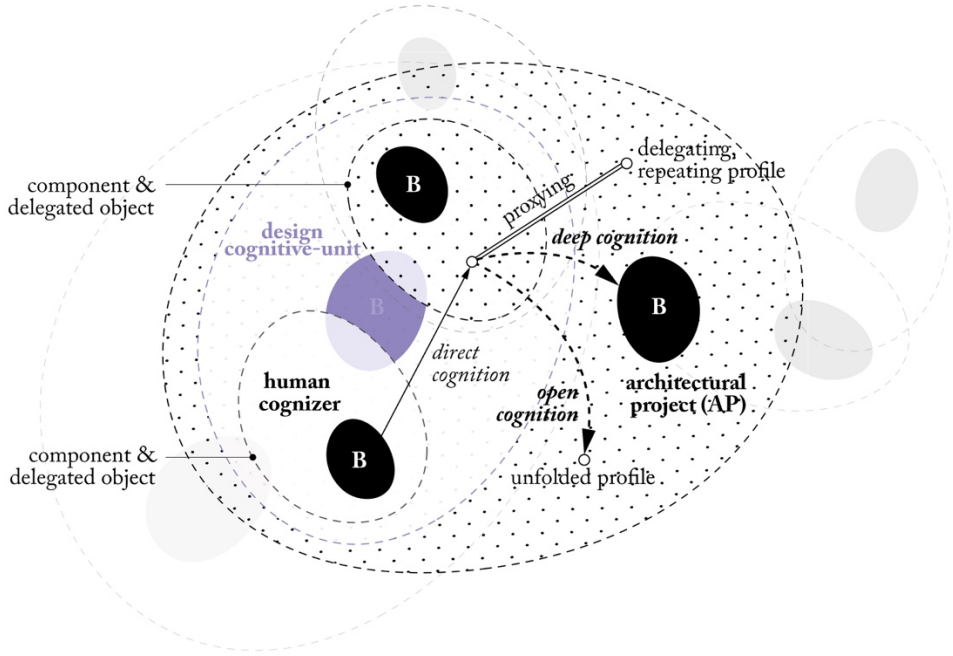


Figure 3-1. Subjectless cognition within the object's limits. Although these boundaries are ontologically concrete, they are cognitively indefinable (hence the dashed lines).

From the human cognizer's angle, the subjectless cognition scheme means that we materially, superficially, ontically encounter the AP first through some of its proxies or delegated material instantiations. For example, I relate directly through its drawings or buildings. We can call this surface encounter *direct cognition.* But for experience not to remain in the presented qualities and account for the thing's unitary being and multiple manifestations, the exposed profile must be overcome with what is here named *deep cognition* (towards being) and *open cognition* (towards multiplicity). As already announced various times, the present Part Two will vindicate aesthetics as the cognitive mode capable

of simultaneously reaching this double unknown. As a preview, it can be advanced that deep cognition consists of intuiting the immaterial existence of the project's being (Chapter 4). In parallel, at least two kinds of unfolding of qualities can be counted in the open cognition that deals with the AP's cornucopia: the aesthetic procedure and the aesthetic impression. The former is the series of actions leading to an aesthetic conclusion, and will be considered a form of practical function. It stands as a manifestation of the AP in how a user physically and aesthetically performs a space (Section 5.4). Additionally, the aesthetic impression, besides being an AP's expression in the mind, can also be seen as the triggering seed to exercise another formalization of the project, shaping what is here called an object's *chain of multiplicity* (Section 5.1).

Considering subjectless cognition from the AP's point of view, it means that human entities are not different for it from the drawing or the building, ontologically speaking. Following flat representativity, each stands equally for the project's being in a particular manner. Like them, it is argued that we (humans) are also simultaneously AP's constitutive part and medium of articulation. As just noted, and also for the case of the human, these foundational and representational relations composed of the same components (AP plus human) remain, however, separate from each other within the project's domain. This idea is clear to DeLanda and Harman when they differentiate the human as *ingredient* and the human as *beholder*.[8] Therefore, the difference between domestic and foreign relations introduced in Part One—herein renamed as constitutive and cognitive—also remains consistent in the case of human participation in the project: the human-ingredient partakes in constitutive relationships and the human-beholder does it in cognitive ones. From an OOO perspective, the same two components can engender two or more different autonomous relations, each with its own unity-multiplicity structure. This is because each of these relationships, despite having the same ingredients, has its own particular selectivity. Each one marks not only what their components are, which in this case are the same, but also the terms of their interaction. In other words, it is not just that one component may be involved in several entanglements with different partners. It is that the same group of partners can give rise to separate interactions, each with its own selfhood and extension. For example, we know this well from human relationships. I can have a family and a professional relationship with the same person, the two being completely different from each other. Or how I contribute to global warming, the society I live in, or the company where I work is not the same as how I perceive and represent each of them.

With a similar logic, at least two actions can be distinguished in the case of a human's involvement with a project: one constitutive and the other cognitive, with this thesis narrowing the study only to the latter and leaving the former for a possible future occasion. Both are separate autonomous relationships.[9] Constitution and cognition are not the same thing, or the same interaction considered from different angles. This model is possible under an OOO account because attention is oriented first to the individuality of the relationships as such and, from there, to what composes them and what they do. Within this framework, I would like to insist that both constitutive and cognitive relations are

[8] In his social theory, DeLanda makes it clear how the human can cognize the entity of the society composed of humans, with these two actions being distinct. DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*. Harman posits something similar for the arts and architecture. Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 4.

[9] This argument should not be confused with the previously explained idea that every foreign or cognitive relation is a domestic or constitutive one in itself. Such a reframing is still valid on top of the concept introduced here, whereby a relation with the same two ingredients can give rise to separate autonomous relations.

internal to the project. This may be easier to concede for the former, since it is more widely accepted that the component of a thing is contained within it. But experience is a subset of the thing's qualities, following Bryant. Cognitive or foreign relations are, in effect, internal representational relations of and inside the project, which involve all the characteristics described in Section 1.2. Morton puts it nicely:

> No longer are my intimate impressions "personal" in the sense that they are "merely mine" or "subjective only": they are footprints of hyperobjects, distorted as they always must be by the entity in which they make their mark—that is, me. I become (and so do you) a litmus test of the time of hyperobjects.[10]

Human cognition of a thing is an act of manifestation of the thing within such a thing that is incapable of attaining that thing; so "I am scooped out from the inside," Morton concludes.[11] Simply put, cognition as a manifestation is not the thing-in-itself; it is one of its multiple modulations. At the same time, there is always an autobiographical piece of me in how I encounter things. The shift from anthropocentrism and idealism to a not-only-human but more broadly *subject anti-exceptionalism* requires a harmless cognition. This does not mean leaving things—"nature" is most often claimed—in a perpetual actual state. (That pristineness is not Nature; it is the image constructed of it.) Moreover, deciding not to participate in the game in which one is already playing is also a single-voiced deterministic proposition of the subject. Against that, harmless, innocuous, or subjectless cognition means irreductionist cognition, that is, not equating the observed to the act of observing.

However, the separation of constitution and cognition, whether or not of the same components, is impossible for contemporary theories such as New Materialism or ANT. Unlike OOO, where ontology precedes and nourishes epistemology, agency-oriented authors blur both domains. For example, in Karen Barad's theory, cognition leads to constitution, and vice versa; or in more general terms, ontology and epistemology are indistinguishable.[12] Her agential realism fuses agency and being, because something *is* insofar as it *acts*. Against this type of relational ontology, Harman proposes the inverse method:

> Whether we praise objects for their agency or brashly deny that they have any, we overlook the question of what objects are when *not* acting. To treat objects solely as actors forgets that a thing acts because it exists rather than existing because it acts. Objects are sleeping giants holding their forces in reserve, and do not unleash all their energies at once.[13]

In addition to this point, it can be noted that the dissolution of ontological and epistemological issues into one another forces humans to be a permanent constitutive part of what is cognized; a kind of King Midas incapable of touching without modifying. In this model, humans are always both ingredients and beholders, erasing the possibility that often only one of these roles is played. Innocuous, subjectless cognition is impossible here. Although many agential theories acknowledge that things can exist independently of

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[10] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 5.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, 89. Although this blurring is quite widespread within New Materialism, it should be noted that it is not unified. For example, Manuel DeLanda does account for a separation between both realms. See DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 50, [DeLanda's participation].
[13] Harman, *Immaterialism*, 7.

human beings, the moment we enter the scene, even if only to "look," we change the reality of the observed into a new thing.[14] For New Materialism and other relational theories, we always interfere in the things we apprehend; certainly not as the conductor of the orchestra—since the hierarchical, idealist subject is flattened—but as one of its lifelong members. This non-imposing, albeit ubiquitous, involvement of the human explains this school's emphasis on *material practices* as simultaneously constitutive of reality and knowledge. In this scheme, the human is always interventionist; or participatory, if one prefers it in a mild tone. But from this point of view, agency and relational theories are closer to an anthropocentric pluralism than to a (human) subject anti-exceptionalism.

Stated differently, although I have argued that the human being engages both constitutively and cognitively in the present case of the architectural project, this should not be taken as a general rule, much less as an excuse to proclaim that both relationships are one. How many things exist in the world without us? How many of them can we experience without taking part in their construction? Participating in the foundation of a thing's reality does not equate to knowing it. I can contribute to the AP in many ways within the same constitutive relationship. At the same time, I can cognize or activate that entity in many manners, with those actions being innocuous—not foundational—to the observed. Of course, these activities can relate to and influence each other. There is a relationship between cognition and constitution, or epistemology and ontology. But this interaction must be elaborated and considered in its own dimension, instead of taking it for granted or ignoring it by assuming that they are one and the same, as agential theories do.

Likewise, it is certainly inaccurate to conclude that subjectless cognition ignores human concerns and needs. Some authors completely misunderstand the consequences for the human when OOO claims the end of the subject, as if this were a denigration of all that is human-related. For example, Rosi Braidotti criticizes that "[object-oriented ontologists] ignore and dismiss feminism, post-colonialism, race and ecological thinking."[15] OOO's subject abolitionism means ceasing to define the existence of entities by cognitive resolutions, whether those entities are a country, a machine, a work of art, the economic fluctuation of the market, a social group, a person or any other thing or event, and whether those definitions come from a white man, a person in social exclusion, a god, or a tropical insect. As noted in the introduction, subjectlessness rejects the subject, not the human. Consequently, subjectlessness does commit to feminist, post-colonial, anti-racial, and ecological agendas against Western androcentrism. But it does not stop there. The fight of ontological realism is not limited to an aversion to only this particular form of anthropocentrism. It extends to a rejection of *any* form of imposing unicentrism (human, non-human, class-dependent, or otherwise). As will be further elaborated in the conclusion, this subject anti-exceptionalism also prevents—among others—feminist, post-colonial, anti-racial, and ecological discourses from committing the same univocality from which they seek to emancipate themselves.

This criticism of OOO's subjectlessness can be further misinterpreted as the end of subjectivity. This misguided conception requires clarification, even though the constitution of the cognizer's subjectivity is not within this thesis' scope of study. One can argue: "if my

[14] It is for this reason that quantum physics—the background of Barad's theory—is a bastion for many New Materialisms, since the measuring device always distorts what is measured. However, I do not see this "distortion" as a cognitive construct with constitutive powers over the perceived. It is rather the empirical confirmation that the cognition of the human-apparatus tandem, in the course of its execution, translates the reality in question without altering it. This "distortion" is just another instant of the reality itself.

[15] Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, eBook (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019), chap. 2.

impressions of something are not mine but belong to the cognized thing, then subjectivity is precluded in the construction of my personal identity." This conclusion could not be more erroneous, for both actions are not mutually exclusive. What I cognize is part of the object in question. How I cognize it is part of myself. In this vein, a person's subjectivity is also an object, a thing-in-itself whose multiplicity transcends the cognizable phenomena of that person. This includes feelings, opinions, thoughts about other things or about oneself, a conglomerate that, nonetheless, also participates in the constitution of that person's being and identity. Lizcano reflects on this aspect "that the whirlwind [which is a cognized object] is permanently originating determined forms, precipitating into identities, thus conforming the world in which each human community inhabits."[16] A few pages later, he observes:

> [each cognized entity] is the locus of social creativity, and no less so of the limits and boundaries within which each community, at each moment, can deploy its imagination, its reflection and its practices… [it] is the locus of autonomy, from which each community institutes itself, but it is also the place where all social conflicts that are not limited to the mere exercise of brute force are at play.[17]

Lizcano's last comment points out that what is at stake socio-politically is how things' multiplicity is cognitively masked for the conformation of subjectivies. Authoritarian or subject-based constructs reduce and homogenize the way in which oneself, each other individual, or collective cognizer accesses or masks things. It nullifies one's navigation within the individualized abundance space that each thing has available to each cognizer. Thus, it prevents the activation of that which constitutes one's own subjectivity on the thing. It is in this oppressive reductionism that any process of emancipation seeks to unchain itself from someone else's masking, i.e., from those imposing forms of cognition that constrain one's particular masking of a thing's multifariousness. Jacques Rancière's political theory is about this: to redistribute the sensible means to account for the personalized masking of each one on the sensible offered (Section 5.3).[18]

Within this framework, the simultaneity of (1) the conformation of a subjectivity upon how an entity is approached or masked and (2) the consideration of such a subjectivity as an expression of that entity can also be found in Riegl's Kunstwollen. What I call "subjectivity" as situated both in the cognized and the cognizer can be seen as what the art historian referred to as "style." To make evident this overlap, compare these two reflections of Reichenberger on Kunstwollen. Repeated from Section 1.3, and in relation to (2), she writes: "It is not we who have to say to art what it has to want, rather it is art that has something to say to us in its 'style' of how it *wants* to represent things."[19] A few pages later under the section "*'Kunstwollen' als 'Weltanschauung'*" ["'The will of art' as 'worldview'"], and in relation to (1): "Alois Riegl's understanding of a 'determination' of art development by the 'will of art' is simply based on the realization that art always reflects an 'image' of its time."[20] It is this last aspect that fascinated Walter Benjamin about the Austrian art historian: the understanding of art within the complex of a culture and its way of life.[21]

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[16] Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos piensan*, 54, [author's translation].
[17] Ibid., 57-58, [author's translation].
[18] See Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*; and Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*.
[19] Reichenberger, "Kunstwollen. Riegl's Plädoyer für die Freiheit der Kunst," 71, [author's translation].
[20] Ibid., 74, [author's translation].
[21] Walter Benjamin, "The Rigorous Study of Art," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (1935; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008),

Without dismissing the capacity for a one-sided instrumentalization of Riegl's theory—in this case Benjamin clearly favors (1)—I argue that the power of Kunstwollen as a concept lies in the ability to conjugate (1) and (2) at the same time, not as either/or premise.

Of this double capacity of Kunstwollen, chapter 1 already commented extensively on some aspects related to (2), namely, on the cognizer's subjectivity as a means of expressing the object. Therefore, I would now like to outline some aspects of (1), of shaping the subjectivity by means of the approach to the object. First, style is not for Riegl an empirical and historical artistic fact driven by techno-material aspects. This is the Semperist materialism susceptible to definitive descriptive analysis which he opposed. Of course, he had a particular analytical method (haptic and optic). But these are tools to examine style as the *form of access* to art—what I call "masking"—of the society of a given historical time. Again, this standpoint does not cancel that style also reflects how art expresses itself through a society as a medium. Second, Riegl acknowledged the capacity of each style to stand for its culture, a view that was not commonly shared at the end of the nineteenth century.[22] This move can be argued within the notion of flat representativity, because it accounts for the validity of each representation as to its being differently. In this case, it refers to the capacity of each artistic style to be, precisely, artistic; i.e., to be an expression of Kunstwollen. As Wiesing comments: "For [Riegl], the theory of style is not a theory of art historical epochs but a transcendental theory about the possibilities of making something visible."[23] It is about "the conditions of possibility of a style." [24]

Restated in the present context, it means that the possibilities of accessing a thing's double unknown—how to approach its unitary being and mask its multiplicity otherwise than presupposed—contribute to the construction of our subjectivity as an object in itself. The formalizations or actualizations of an object's multiplicity by a human cognizer are not only the object's reflections but also those of the possibilities of its access. That is to say, they are also the reflections of the person's subjectivity. When considered not from the individual but in its collective dimension, as Riegl did, style is the mechanism that discloses traces of cultural dispositions and subjectivities of a Zeitgeist. How we mask or stylize an object determines its capabilities for us, whereas it manifests itself in the world precisely through the masking or stylization we perform. The way a society or an epoch masks and stylizes art explains aspects of that society or epoch, as well as of art itself.

This notion of style and mask in how a cognizer establishes the possibilities of a thing for that person or collective resonates with what Bryant's calls "regimes of attraction." In a nutshell, it is about how what surrounds a cognizer in a cognitive act influences what this cognition unfolds of an object. For Bryant, "regimes of attraction can include physical, biological, semiotic, social, and technological components."[25] This implies that, depending on its configuration, a regime of attraction creates more open or narrow dispositions to navigate in an exploratory or repetitive manner within a being's Many. An imposing, dogmatic, or naturalized regime of attraction "creat[es] regularities in the local manifestation of the object and produc[es] constraints on what local manifestations are

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67–74.

[22] The general perspective was, in effect, to consider certain periods such as Ancient Roman and Baroque as decadences and epigones of the more important and authoritative Ancient Greek and High Renaissance. Riegl dismissed this view by addressing each style in itself and within the larger Kunstwollen as such.

[23] Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 46.

[24] Ibid., 50.

[25] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 206.

possible."[26] It is here where forms of social oppression and inequality are to be found.

Against this, the disruption of an assumed or imposed style, mask, or regime of attraction will both re-articulate itself to unfold a thing differently and reflect the cognizer's identity. It is in this light that I understand Rancière's *re*distribution of the sensible.[27] From this point of view, what this thesis pursues is a dynamic and open notion of style, masking, or regime of attraction: a form of production that does not stagnate in the reproduction of itself. I want to insist that this does not entail the examination of the construction of the cognizer. Just as it is not the aim of this dissertation to examine the constitution of the AP, neither is it of the cognizer's subjectivity. This dissertation (Part Two) is about its cognitive encounter. Within this scope, it is clear that I cannot change the object or its expressions in a subjectless cognition. I can modify my access to it, unfolding what it has already available to me by means of one or another method of access. On this footing, we can examine now how each cognizer structures the cognitive barriers derived from the individual's or collective's style or mask on an AP's qualitative domain, and how this can be implemented in architectural design issues. This is the focus of the next section.

3.2. The masking of (un)knowledge

A cognitive-unit refers to a relation between a cognizer and an object that occurs within the latter's domain without modifying its unity-multiplicity structure. Each of these units is a particular object ruled on its own terms, because its selectivity is different in each case.[28] In other words, two different cognizers dealing with the same AP result in two different cognitive-units. The consequence of this individualization is that the same AP's qualitative domain is structured or masked differently according to each cognizer's apparatus. As noted before with Bryant's regimes of attraction, biological, cultural, and technical factors shape the relational faculties of a person or community for each given thing. When a person or a group enters a cognitive relationship with a project, we can distinguish four levels of accessibility: the known, the knowable, and the unknowable profiles, as well as its ineffable

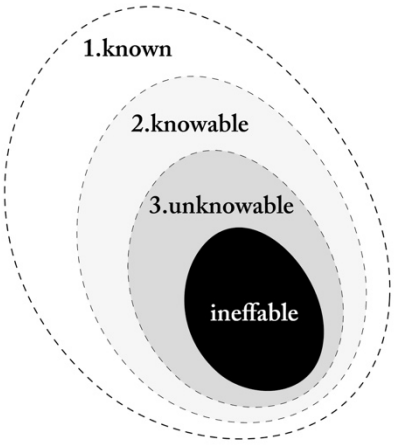


Figure 3-2. Onion diagram: the structure or masking of (un)knowledge, showing the levels of accessibility to the project according to the cognizer's faculties. The dashed lines indicate the impossibility of defining these limits cognitively.

[26] Ibid., 205.

[27] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12–19.

[28] To revisit the notion of selectivity, go to Subsection 2.2.4

reality (Fig. 3-2). In other words, the object's two realms are classified for a given moment in time into what the cognizer directly grasps, might grasp, and will never grasp. The substantial domain remains withdrawn for any tangible apprehension; thus, unspeakable Let us call this personalized categorization the *structure or masking of (un)knowledge*.

Consider again the example of Kosuth's artwork (Fig. 1-1). *One and Three Chairs* offers three direct, *known* representations of the same object to cognition. However, how the Chair's deep reality can appear is not limited to these three profiles. They are a small amount within the multiple possibilities of manifestations for *this* Chair. The physical chair can have another structural configuration—e.g., an additional arm on its left side or six wooden poles on the backrest instead of five—without being another Chair. The photograph can show it upside down or mirrored, and still refer to the same thing. Or the verbal chair can be longer, shorter or written in another language and still be called the Chair in question, as tested in Subsection 1.1.2. These *knowable* possibilities are not mere variations of the given profiles, otherwise the Chair-object would be *a priori* reduced to these three expressions. Known, knowable, and unknowable manifestations for the observer have the same right to show the Chair's myriad of qualities and capabilities, as well as to represent their elusive reality. Therefore, the biographical sequence in how the object's expressions become apparent to our cognition must not determine a hierarchy in representativity. In other words, a manifestation does not better represent an object ontologically simply because it emerges earlier or stays longer within our cognitive range, as showed in Chapter 1 with the built city of Venice and Canaletto's *capriccio* (Fig. 1-6).

That means that the knowable representations of the Chair embrace more than derivatives of the three already known modulations. This may be a little clearer when there is a change in the medium of representation. For example, when the Chair manifests itself in a painting or in a piece of music, such representation in the alternative medium will show other aspects that only this medium admits. This dismantles any assumed representability of the Chair to any specific medium or expression. This framework is not without epistemological controversy, as there will be knowable representations of the Chair in direct opposition to what we, as cognizers, understand of what the Chair should be.

Additionally, the object has a third qualitative subarea individualized for each cognitive process. This zone contains the features that the observer cannot apprehend or relate to. There will always be some characteristic or manifestations of the Chair that I will never confront. However, this impossibility is not a question of non-coincidence. It is not that the appropriate relational circumstances between the Chair and I have not yet occurred in order to grasp these knowable aspects. On the contrary, there is an inadequate coding or formatting that is impossible to pair with my faculties. My cognitive apparatus and relational skills cannot capture the type of structure of certain qualities. It is like trying to read data on a CD from a USB port; it just does not work. For example, I may never stand on the physical chair, but I can do it. Therefore, the quality (as property) of support is a plausible knowable aspect, even though it is not executed. However, the unknown features of the Chair for me are those qualities whose nature does not fit at all with my cognitive possibilities. My biological and cultural condition prevents certain ways in which I can interact with the physical chair. For example, I cannot see through it; among many other impressions I cannot even imaging.

Such a masking of (un)knowledge echoes Slavoj Žižek's fourfold pairings between the known and the unknown. As he explains them in the film *The Reality of the Virtual*:

> Let me refer to a recent paradoxical statement by none other than Donald Rumsfeld. I think that this statement was an important contribution to contemporary American philosophical debate. This happened in March, just before the war on Iraq, where Rumsfeld elaborated the relationship between "known" and "unknown." First, he said, there are "known knowns." There are things we know that we know. Like, we knew at that point that Saddam was the president of Iraq. OK, everything clear. Then, he went on, there are "known unknowns." There are things that we know that we don't know. The idea was, for example, we know that we don't know how many weapons of mass destruction Saddam has. OK, now we know he had none. It doesn't matter. At that point, it appeared like this. Then there is the "unknown unknown," things we don't know that we don't know, things which are so foreign and so unimaginable that we even don't know that we don't know. For example, maybe Saddam had some unimaginable, totally unexpected weapon. And here, unfortunately, Rumsfeld stopped, because I think he should have gone on making the next step to the fourth category, fourth variation, which is missing, which is: not the "known unknown," but the "unknown known." Things we don't know we know them. We know them, they are part of our identity, they determine our activity, but we don't know that we know them! This is what, in psychoanalysis, of course, is called unconscious.[29]

For the present case, what is interesting about Žižek's "unknown known" is not so much the justification of the subject's actions from a Freudian position, but the circumstance that there are aspects of things (appearances, uses, characteristics, features) that we have access to despite not being directly aware of them or because they have not been exerted yet. In *Designing Social Equality*, Mark F. Gage formulates a similar object's structure through "aesthetic distances." As he puts it:

> […] although they exist on an infinite gradient of lengths and intensities, we will consider three primary, but entirely metaphorical, measures of aesthetic distances: (1) those which exist between you and what is readily sensible, which we will refer to as the aesthetic foreground; (2) those which exist beyond your immediate sense but are capable of being known through some effort, the aesthetic background; and (3) those beyond both, the aesthetic unknown, which as Kant, with the Noumenon, and later Nietzsche, remind us, inherently cannot provide us with a point of reference, and therefore whose distances cannot be measured.[30]

What Žižek calls the "unknown know" and the "unknown unknown," what Gage defines as the second and third aesthetic distance, and what I refer to as the "knowable" and the "unknowable" reflect that things are richer than their biographical and current states. This resonates with what Harman calls "a surplus of reality beyond any of its discernible features."[31]

Here are two important things that, although commented upon Part One, require reaffirmation. First, the surplus or excess is not an addition to our cognitive limitation that comes from anywhere, but is inherent to the project in question.[32] The surplus material beyond direct cognition pre-exists such an experience. This is so because experience co-exists with the expression of the other object, since experience is a subject of its manifestations. All comprise the object's qualitative realm that the cognizer, in a given time,

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[29] Ben Wright and Slavoj Žižek, *The Reality of the Virtual*, 2006, min. 19:25, [author's transcription].
[30] Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, 22.
[31] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 188.
[32] In Chapter 1, I already discussed that, whereas for Harman the surplus is performative and outside the thing in question, I understand the surplus to be qualitative and inside the thing at issue.

structure in the known, the knowable, and the unknowable. This cognitive structuring or masking is innocuous under subjectless relationality, because the cognitive categorization of all manifestations of an AP does not affect its composition.

Second, excess or surplus is not infinite but particular to each project. If the opposite, any representation would refer to any other object, architectural or not. It would imply a monistic model rather than a world of discrete objects.[33] As per Chapter 2, an object's own policy of selection makes its excess limited. For each observer at any given time, any object has a *specific unknown area*. As counterintuitive as it sounds: the unknown is not boundless but particular. It is the inability to know the limits of the unknown that makes us think of it erroneously as infinite. What I do not know about Thing A differs from what I do not know about Thing B. Ignorance is compartmentalized. The finitude of objects produces an oxymoronic situation for our cognition or epistemology, according to which what we do not grasp or know of a thing is specific, concrete, and finite. Obviously, the content in question remains undetermined. I call it elsewhere "the unknown excess or space of abundance […] This space is the distance between the architect's ignorance (lack of knowledge) of the AP and the AP itself."[34] In Lars Spuybroek's terms, it would be the difference between the "superactual" and the "actual."[35]

Besides the known, the knowable, and the unknowable, which refer to the AP's multiplicity of qualities, there is a fourth distance to the unitary being. As commented in Chapter 1, the One of a One/Many object is not qualitative, but substantial. As Bryant reminds us: "Qualities reside in substances, they are predicated of substances, whereas substances are not predicated of anything."[36] In Kosuth's installation, the Chair *is* one being and *has* three expressions. However, while qualities can be categorized, achieved or not, be of different kinds, and so on; being is not. The unitary deep reality of the Chair cannot be put into qualities. It withdraws from both impressions and expression. Therefore, even in the hypothetical case that being was directly accessible in experience, its registration would still be *ineffable*. What is important to note is that this impossibility of putting being into qualities is not due to the limitations of our language or modes of expression and communication, but simply because *being has no attributes* to express or communicate itself qualitatively.[37] The opposite argument—whatever lacks articulation is a manifestation of an object's being—is not absolute either. Even apprehensions that cannot be expressed in literal terms as clearly as descriptive expressions, such as emotions or the majority of ideas, have a qualitative articulation that can be measured or formally discerned to some extent. Not everything that seems to lack order and structure is a manifestation of an immaterial unitary substance.

With the AP's being as a cognitive goal, the hypothesis in Part Two is that any access to it—which in this case will be argued to be possible through aesthetics—never occurs in isolation. Instead, it always brings with additional qualitative material of the

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[33] I elaborate on the problem of infinity and identity in Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation," 50–51.

[34] Gonzalo Vaíllo, "The Oxymoron of 'Jectivity'. A Design Process for Unveiling the Unexpected Manifestations of the Architectural Project's Reality," in *Ubiquity and Autonomy* (ACADIA 2019, The University of Texas at Austin: ACADIA, 2019), 322.

[35] In Spuybroek's theory of radiance, the superactual is where a thing reveals itself in full extent, while the actual is where it appears partially through connections with other things. See Spuybroek, "Charis and Radiance," 119–49.

[36] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 73. Also, as discussed in Part One, this is a discrepancy with Harman's "real qualities."

[37] As already discussed in Chapter 1, this is a different view from that of Harman and his notion of "real qualities."

project; for example, a structured emotion, an instinctive drawing, or an unplanned use of the given architectural space. Consequently, a distinction arises between two categories that may mistakenly appear equal at first glance: the unknowable and the ineffable (layer 3 and B in Fig. 3-2). It is true that both are inaccessible, but for two completely different reasons. For the former, the impossibility is qualitative, while for the latter, it is substantial. One is Žižek's "unknown unknown," the other is Harman's "withdrawn real object" (uncoupled from "real qualities"). In the first, there are qualities that I, as a cognizer, cannot grasp because their structure does not coincide with my senses or intellect. Perhaps for some other cognizer they do. On the other hand, the moment we agree that the basis of knowledge consists of qualities, if I cannot know the being of an object, it is because it offers nothing to know. Therefore, being is outside the domain of knowledge.

3.3. Architectural possibilities of the masking of (un)knowledge

Once the masking of (un)knowledge has been introduced, the question is: How is it relevant to architecture and how can it be implemented in design matters? Three points of interest can be drawn from it: (1) architectural design as a question of deep and open cognition, (2) the knowable and the ineffable as the primary design material of the project, and (3) the known and knowable manifestation are in constant motion for any cognizer.

1) In general, the structure of (un)knowledge is present in any cognitive process, whether or not architectural and whether or not humans are involved. That said, for our design field, the architectural cognitive-unit is understood here as the encounter of the project with a person. Any person (architect, user, critic, spectator, etc.) can compose an architectural cognitive-unit with an AP. In any of these experiences, the design challenge is to reveal some qualities of the AP and a sense of its existence. This approach to design where the material comes from the project is an alternative to the two usual conceptions of architectural design: (a) the materialization of the architect's brilliant idea—today in academic decline—or (b) the problem-solving approach in which architecture emerges as a response to the selection of specific problems (social, economic, environmental, programmatic, political, etc.)—today in academic boom. Both are subject-oriented dispositions: (a) by diminishing the autonomy-of the project and (b) by limiting its plural expressions and capacities to the cognizer's preconceptions. Likewise, both ignore the AP's deep existence. In opposition, the overlooked knowable and ineffable material offers a niche to be explored in architectural designing.

2) In relation to the mentioned niche, there are always two deeper areas beyond the directly grasped (the known) in any cognitive relationship with which the cognizer can relate: the knowable and the ineffable. For the present case, the unknowable is abandoned as unworkable. In other words, designing and inhabiting can be about the excess of qualities and the project's being. Why would they suppose a benefit for architecture? Let me first approach it negatively by inverting the question into why the known appears insufficient. Why, for example, is it not "enough" to base a building's design motivation only on a particular program, a social or an environmental urgency, or on a well-established compositional convention? Harman's "mining" criticism, Han's concept of "transparency,"

and Miralles' design ambitions offer concomitant answers.

For OOO, a limited approach to objects occurs when we consider things as either what they are made of or what produces them (undermining), what they do (overmining), or both at the same time (duomining); the "mining" critique mentioned in Chapter 1.[38] In architecture, undermining refers to the physical aspects of the project (the material base of the building, drawings, models) or the motivations of its design process (moral issues, history, environmental aspects, socio-political circumstances, technological applications, the brilliant visions of the architect). Overmining refers to the non-material manifestations (programmatic aspects, events, impressions).[39] The critique here lies in the epitomization of the AP to any or all of these epistemological matters and the denial or ignorance of what stands beyond them, both qualitatively and substantially. Any of the "mining" cases reduces the object to our cognitive capacities to accumulate what has been grasped as knowledge. Hence, when we simplify things to the superficial literalism of our knowledge about them, the object becomes a "caricature," using Harman's and Miralles' term. As the philosopher puts it: "After all, human praxis is no less guilty than explicit human perception of reducing its objects to a mere caricature of their total reality."[40] Repeating Miralles' words on it one more time: "formal descriptions or […] surfaces, folds, shifts, etc. […] are excessively distant definitions that make the projects seem more like caricatures."[41] In this light, things are more than our knowledge of them.

Moreover, the known brings with it all kinds of background burdens (cultural, ideological, moral, ethical, social, etc.) as semantics has shown. It is for this reason that I will consider familiar structures a direct problem to address a project's multiplicity, because they encapsulate the possibilities of the cognitive-unit to the preceding moments in which those qualities have appeared. When this is so, the known implies re-cognition rather than cognition. My hypothesis is that an architectural outcome free of previous connotations will more effectively expose the project's internal diversity, as well as its unitary existence. It is for this reason that I will advocate from now until the end of this work for *abstraction* as asemic (and asyntactic) architectural manifestations; abstraction not as conceptualization, but linked to the unknown (I develop a comparison between this thesis' notion of abstraction and other popular meanings of it in Subsection 6.2.1). Abstraction prevents cognition from remaining on the surface of the thing. If things are our stabilized access to them, they become repetitive and transparent.

For Han, transparency means "emptiness," i.e., it eliminates alterity.[42] As he remarks: "Actions prove transparent when they are made operational—subordinate to a calculable, steerable, and controllable process. […] Transparent language is a formal, indeed, a purely machinic, operational language that harbors no ambivalence."[43] In a similar vein, transparent actions and processes were for Miralles a dogmatic approach to design, adopting design strategies of the kind "the project is a diagram" and which resonates today

[38] Harman, "Undermining, Overmining, and Duomining."
[39] For an interpretation of Harman's "mining" critique in architecture, see Mark Foster Gage, "Killing Simplicity. Object-Oriented Philosophy in Architecture," *Log* 33 (Winter 2015): 98–102.
[40] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.
[41] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21.
[42] Han, *The Transparency Society*, 40. Although I do not agree with Han's pessimistic view of technology (for him, transparency is the consequence of "hyperinformation and hypercommunication" motivated by the contemporary technological condition), I find his analysis of how society relies too much on superficiality convincing.
[43] Ibid., 1–2.

with Gage's disapproval of "the architecture of the arrows."[44] The Spanish architect was very critical of those offices that, in his opinion, operate under a "disciplined" process—in the sense of close, mechanized, and automated method—because it "reduces the complexity that comes from the real, the complexity of the things."[45]

On this basis, it can be concluded that transparency leads to a frightening homogenization of all cognitive units through the standardization of their unique selectivities (Subsection 2.2.4), i.e., they all establish the same relational policies regardless of their components' singularities. On the one hand, this traps the cognizer in the "automatic perception" criticized by Shklovsky in which, once again, "we see only its silhouette."[46] On the other hand, the object is literalized into such an immovable epistemological silhouette, a reiterative caricature. In a cognitive regime of transparency, both components (AP and cognizer) lose their intricacy and profundity because the relationship is satisfied by the superficiality of their exposed features.

The alternative is thus a mode of cognition that does not rely on the project's superficial and impermeable layer of the known, but capitalizes on the double unknown. As Gage remarks: "The not-known and not-knowable are inexhaustible as source material for the production of a curiosity that invites human desire to address its deeper inquisitiveness."[47] In our case such a twofold depth refers to its never-governable and self-sustaining reality (the ineffable) and the cornucopia of qualities and capacities than can be potentilly grasped (the knowable) (Fig. 3-3).

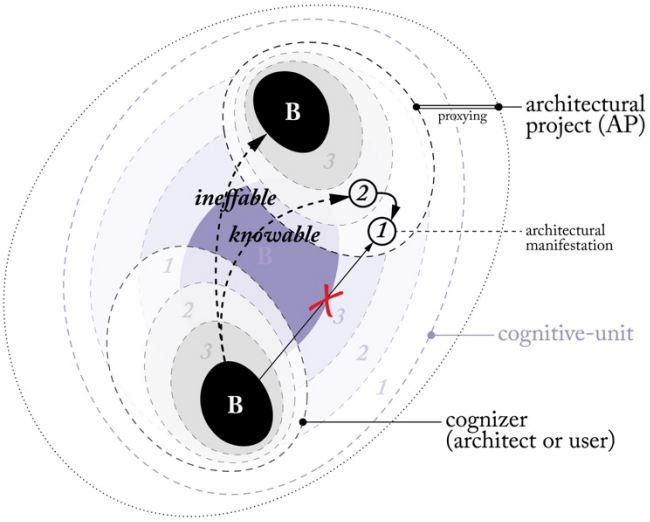


Figure 3-3. Operational proposal for the cognitive-unit in the design process and architectural experience. The cognizer aims to gain access to the knowable manifestations of the project (2) and its ineffable reality (B).

This requests a shift from a world of facts to a world of approximations. The project's inner structure is a being surrounded by a multitude of representations (the autonomous AP in Fig. 1-2), and our cognitive limitation towards them (the access barriers in Fig. 3-2) entails that the AP is *deep* and *open* epistemologically. There is no absolute representation, but the project's qualities and capacities are plural. They are fragmentary

[44] Muro, *Conversaciones con Enric Miralles*, 27 [author's translation].; Gage, "Killing Simplicity. Object-Oriented Philosophy in Architecture," 100–101.
[45] Muro, *Conversaciones con Enric Miralles*, 37, [author's translation].
[46] Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 2.
[47] Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, 32.

features that can provide some knowledge about the project through cognitive inquisitiveness, but cannot define or apprehend its ontological nature in literal terms. For this reason, one can "never understand [the] projects as terminated pieces," stated Miralles.[48] There is a constant feeling of (in)completeness that leads us to "sacrifice the specific nature of the [known] situation to the application of a distant reality..."[49] The project's full spectrum of qualities and its single substance are too large and deep for our perceptual, intellectual, and cultural apparatus. Any access to the AP that is claimed to be "stable" carries an automatic apprehension. Therefore, any cognition that aims at double depth must encourage ignorance and instability as fellow travelers, as Miralles shows in many of his designs (Vig. 3-A).

Vignette 3-A: Ines-Table by Enric Miralles

In designing a table in 1993, Miralles accumulated these ideas of vague approximations, deviations, possibilities, ambiguities, multiplicities. A French gallery asked the architect to formalize his architectural thinking into a physical object, and he chose a piece of furniture for the task. The name of the contribution is significant: *Ines-Table*, a play on words in Spanish for "unstable" (Fig. 3-4). The resulting design is an ovoid with a series of folding planes of different sizes and orientations that do not give a singular fixed disposition, but many.

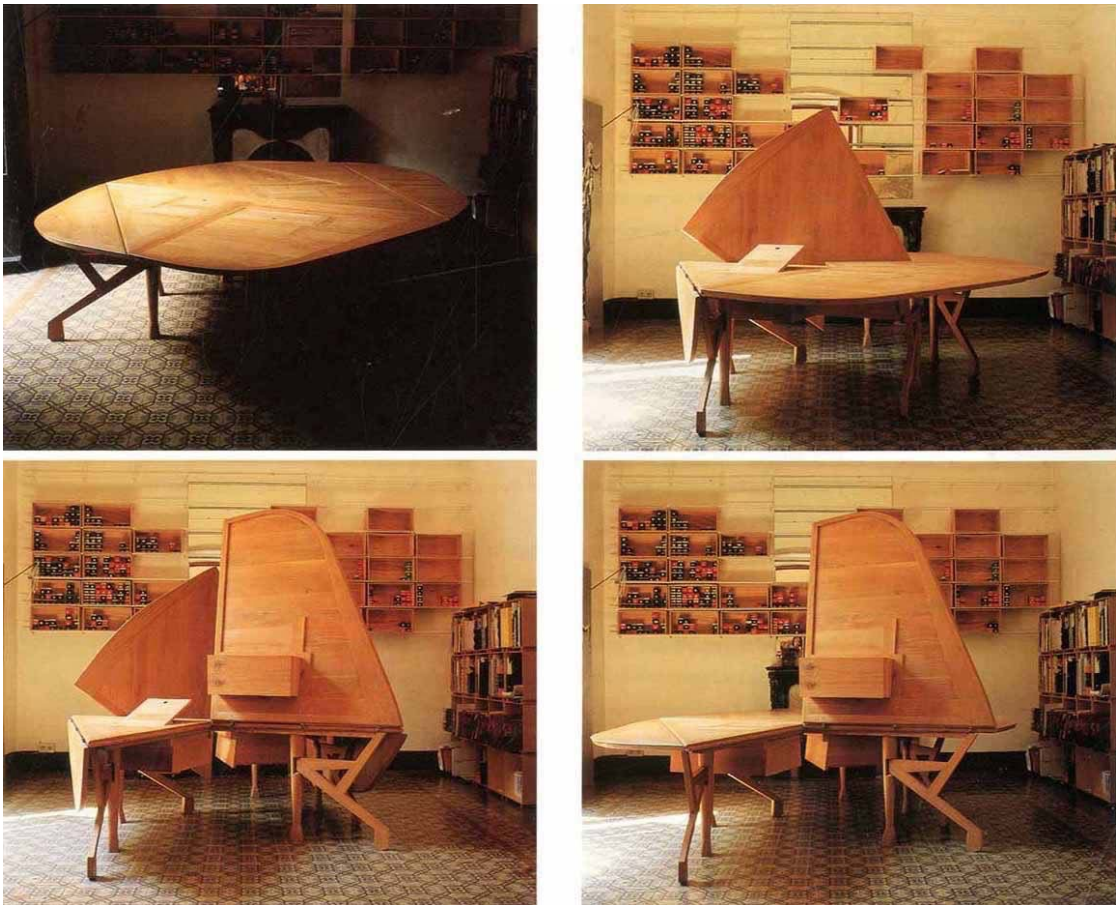


Figure 3-4. Enric Miralles, *Ines-Table* designed for the exhibition in Le Magasin, Grenoble, France, 1993.

[48] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 265.
[49] Ibid., 266.

As the architect described the design:

> [...] I was proposed for a small exhibition to build a piece that would respond to my way of thinking, or this kind of thing. I made them this proposal. I proposed them to work at this table. [...] the form that it is taking is changing. With that, it is a piece that, in addition, allows us to wrap you around yourself at the moment that you sit down or you decide in which place you are going to work. I think that it would summarize this part that I want to explain to you today almost labyrinthine in an object. [...] This piece is the one that would explain everything the most. It is a working tool that is also an instrument of reflection. It is what I would like my buildings to be, in the same sense, how the program is explained and how they are used. There, it is very difficult to establish a precise reasoning about dimension. I think that the dimension of my projects is a bit like this, the one of this table. [...] It allows you to "live" inside, but not "being" inside.[50]
>
> Like the rest of my work, the table is the product of doubt, of wondering: should it be like this... or like that?[51]
>
> As I could not decide between two designs, I had both built. They may look identical, but they are not: their differences are invisible to everyone but me. [...] But in the end, every work consists of those imperceptible differences.[52]

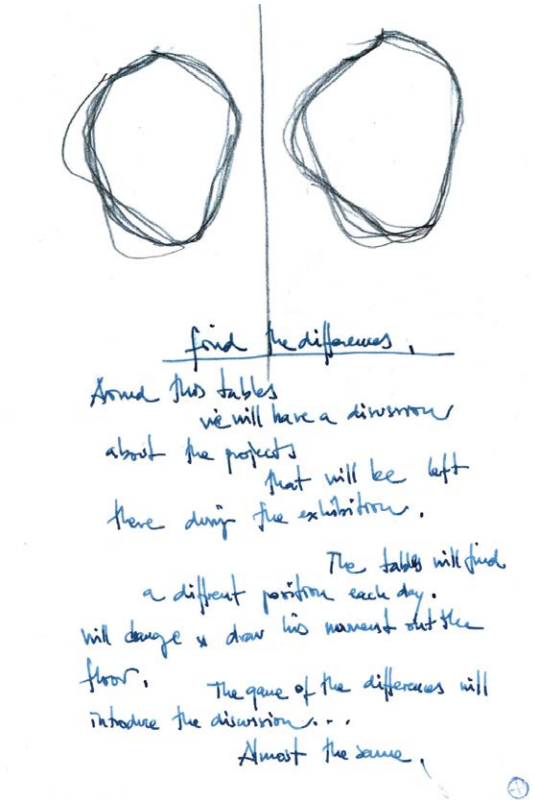


Figure 3-5. Enric Miralles, sketches and text of *Ines-Table* designed for the exhibition in Le Magasin, Grenoble, France, 1993.

This project is a paradigmatic example: the condition of built and physical is not at odds with

[50] Miralles, "Acceder," 20-22, [author's translation].
[51] Miralles' comment on *Ines-Table* from Salvador Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación" (Valencia, Universitat Politecnica e Valencia, 2015), 14, https://riunet.upv.es/handle/10251/52696 [author's translation].
[52] Enric Miralles, "Mezclas," in *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, ed. Carolina B. Garcia Estevez and Josep M. Rovira (1997; repr., Madrid: Abada Editores, 2020), 410, [author's translation].

doubt and instability. Miralles represents the plurality of the Table in two physically equal pieces that are different. The manageable scale of the table allows different configurations by folding one or other of the planes that compose it, resulting in a number of shifting spatial possibilities. For the audience, the table is an artifact that changes over time: One-table and Many-tables. It is simultaneously single and manifold. None of the layout arrangements and uses at any given time is the Table, but they all refer to it. The doubts that the piece raises in its perception due to its varying space configuration reverberate with Miralles' doubtful attitude when designing it. In my opinion, the most important aspect that can be extracted from this project is the evident (in)security produced by its openness. Miralles brings to the surface the Table's multiplicity as a reflection of its vast surplus awaiting activation. As in the case of Riegl's Kunstwollen, the Table and its tables are independent of what we want them to be.

As noted at the end of Chapter 2, the awareness of the AP's autonomous condition is fundamental for making evident not only the existence of its being but also the plurality of its profiles. This demands a non-objective approach. The project's objectivity already comprehends our subjectivity.[53] Such a willingness towards the double unknown promotes curiosity and surprise. Architectural design is an excellent device for the production of (in)conclusiveness, i.e., of architectural profiles that do not play with a false epistemological absoluteness. Miralles said: "I like to approach things always through approximated solutions."[54] The project cannot be categorically registered as truth in any of its physical or mental formalizations. The AP is One but Many. Recalling Heidegger's "as-structure," each instance of being is always incomplete and ungraspable in its totality, but also complete and graspable. An object's deep reality is not too far from its expressions and our impressions of it, nor too close to any of them. The exposed multiplicity of projects such as *Ines-Table* (Fig. 3-4) hints at the wide span and depth of things. This vocation for plenitude justifies Miralles' and Harman's interests in the *variations* in which an object can manifest. Whereas Harman claims, "I defend a method of variation, changing the exact features of [the] works…before it becomes a different work," Miralles wanted to "open up the concept of the [project] to a multiplicity of readings…"[55] "I tend to operate by variation," the architect continues, "because I want the elements to be able to incorporate this variety of material conditions. I never work by reduction: I try to reveal the multiplicities, the singularities…"[56] I will return to the question of variations in more detail in Subsection 7.3.1.

3) The third premise derived from the masking of (un)knowledge reveals the dynamism between the known and the knowable (between the layers 1 and 2 of Fig. 3-2). This means that each observer organizes or masks an object's qualitative collection in a personalized way different from that of other cognizers, but also from that of the different times of this person. The latter means that the same observer at different moments can establish another cognitive configuration of the same object, on what is known and can be known.[57]

[53] Somewhere else I call "jectivity" the interweaving of the architect's epistemological subjectivity and the project's ontological objectivity. See Vaíllo, "The Oxymoron of 'Jectivity.'"
[54] Miralles, "Interview to Enric Miralles, Cronotopias" [author's translation].
[55] Joseph Bedford, ed., *Is There an Object Oriented Architecture? Engaging Graham Harman* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 36.; Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 272.
[56] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 272.
[57] For example, my structure of (un)knowledge of what I know, can know, and will never know about the

However, this is not possible if cognition falls back repeatedly on the same automated aspects of the project, on its known silhouettes and caricatures. Then, the question of openness inevitably brings with it a problem of visual form, understood as the manifestation upon which a person establishes a direct cognitive relationship. If the qualities sought by the architect or those faced by the inhabitant are transparent, the project's double depth blocks itself from us. If the architect already knows what the project will look like and how it will be used and received before the design process begins, there is a reiteration of assumptions and conventions that limit the internal activity of the cognitive-unit between this architect and that AP. "There is no dialogue," Miralles would say. The architectural result would most probably be something repeated and inherited from elsewhere; an expression that precludes the AP's selfhood and its colorful interior to participate in the design process. A similar cognitive stagnation occurs not only in the design process but also in occupancy, when the qualities and capabilities of an architectural space are predictable or habitual to the user. As will be detailed in Chapter 6, there is no "occupancy" but "habitation." There is a "habit" that repeats the way space is performed. In those unfortunate cases, there is nothing different from the person's previous understanding and/or use of space. Shklovsky also makes this clear again: "Things that have been experienced several times begin to be experienced in terms of recognition: a thing is in front of us, we know this, but we do not see it (Shklovsky, *Voskresheniye slova*). This is why we cannot say anything about it."[58]

Against this, the cognitive relationship between the project and the architect or user should favor a continuous and active interaction, a relationship that maintains the masking of (un)knowledge dynamic. However, such dynamism or plasticity between the known and the knowable and a sense of the AP's being is not the exclusive responsibility of either the architectural representation (and by extension, of the project) or of the cognizer. It is the cognitive-unit itself, its selectivity (understood as its form or order of action for each moment). Eco is categorical in this sense:

> Neither openness nor totality is inherent in the objective stimulus, which is in itself materially determined, or in the subject, who is himself available to all sorts of openness and none; rather, they lie in the *cognitive relationship that binds them*.[59]

Within this framework, two things are requested respectively to preserve the cognitive-unit alive. The first concerns the project. It must offer manifestations whose structure remains open to the cognizer, i.e., opaque qualities that cannot be exhausted at first sight. The objective is that each experience brings the cognizer closer to the AP's being and reveals some additional knowable aspects. For this task, the authors discussed here so far—Shklovsky, Eco, Harman and Miralles—call for the same type of expression: the *artistic form*. As the Russian critic suggests: "Art has different ways of de-automatizing things."[60] As we shall see, such a form is to be found in the "openness" of Umberto Eco and the notion

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object of quantum physics differs from any of yours, and it is, for sure, miles away from the structure that Planck, Heisenberg, or Schrödinger provided to that object. Moreover, my masking about it twenty years ago, when my knowledge about quantum physics was zero, differs from today, when I have a vague idea of what it is about. And, hopefully, it will be different if I read a book on the subject, and who knows what it will be like ten years from now.

[58] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device," in *Viktor Shklovsky. A Reader*, ed. Alexandra Berlina (1917; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 81.

[59] Eco, *The Open Work*, 39, [emphasis added].

[60] Shklovsky, "Art as Device," 2016, 81.

of "opaque-productive symbol" of Michalle Gal (here renamed *opaque-productive form*). As an introduction to the latter, Gal comments:

> a symbol can be opaque, non-semantic, nonreferential, but productive. The artwork is precisely this type of symbol – one that produces new [internal] referents via opacity. […] [I]t is a symbol and a form together – a deep form.[61]

The opaque-productive form is contended here as any manifestation that, by resisting direct apprehension, is capable of the double unknown, of triggering new expressions of the same object and grasping its non-qualitative being. To be clear, these opaque productive forms or symbols are the qualitative proxies of the AP as a phantom object, as defined in Chapter 1, and their articulation varies depending on which cognitive unit is under consideration. In the design process, these forms or symbols will appear through the references that the architect uses to enter into the project, no less than the material (drawings, models, etc.) unfolding in the project making (Section 5.2). This will be Miralles' extracting-by-making design approach, devoid of preconceived ideas. In the user's architectural experience, the opaque-productive form will refer to the spatial architectural expression capable of also arousing the twofold aesthetic impression or double unknown. As a note, the opaque-productive form is not reduced to those references of the design process or to the medium of the built space in the user experience. They are the selection of this thesis to speak about manifestations as gateways to the project's unitary depth and rich extension.

In both cases, the architect and the user proactively interact with their respective opaque-productive forms in order to exploit the project's cognitive possibilities beyond their material presentations. These activities should be considered as contributing to the knowledge of the project in question. To this end, the cognitive method proposed here will depart from the typical registration of facts and truths in favor of a non-literal and ambiguous approach. In this context, two main questions arise for the architect when designing (see again Fig. 3-3): (1) How does the architect access what s/he does not know (the double unknown of the project)? That is, how to design from and within the knowable, rather than the known? (2) How does the architect formalize this profile captured in a spatial configuration that remains open to the public? For the first, *aesthetics* will be argued as the mode of action of the design process, an approach that will be developed throughout Part Two. For the second, *abstraction* and *mereology* will be this thesis' personal proposal that will be developed in Part Three.

3.4. The aesthetic approach

Aesthetics emerges as an alternative *and* complementary epistemological tool to facts as the only basis of knowledge. Despite our general tendency to associate science and technology as the ultimate all-encompassing forms of relationship with the world, I have argued that approaches to the object based solely on factual knowledge undergo a direct, literal, and rigid apprehension that remains on the surface of things, ignoring their double depth. As the art historian Conrad Fiedler stated: "scientific observation is by no means based upon complete perception."[62] However, aesthetics is a broad field and not all theories can help us

[61] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 153.
[62] Conrad Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art*, trans. Henry Schaefer-Simmern and Fulmer Mood, 2nd ed. (1876; repr., Berkeley, CA: University Of California Press, 1957), 32.

here. To detail the discussion, this dissertation is mainly interested in two types of aesthetic approaches associated with various theories and authors. On the one hand, formalism (Greenberg, Fried, Harman) and aestheticism (Pater, Gal) are used as a means to address the AP's unitary and ineffable being. On the other hand, the post-structuralist aesthetic notions of Eco and Rancière serve to tackle the AP's multiple and knowable manifestations. Obviously, each theory and author contributing to these schools is developed differently with its own expertise, method, terminology, and conclusions.

Within this theoretical background, I do not deny the polar opposites in which these two aesthetic sensibilities are situated. For example, Rancière makes explicit his distancing from Greenbergian modernism.[63] I will not try to merge these theories together seamlessly. I will only argue that their irresolvable disagreements do not make them mutually exclusive. In fact, their antagonism can—*must*—coexist, if one wants to comprehend the polarity inherent in the realist object under the One/Many structure. Each one deals with a particular side of the object's inner rift. The object does not cross being and qualities, but one cannot stand without the other either. Therefore, I hold the same for these two aesthetic attitudes. This is the main reason for claiming here the simultaneous doubleness of aesthetic cognition. It addresses in one relational act the object's being and its plurality. Yet behind this friction, what both poles coincide in is the same vocation for the autonomy of the aesthetic experience and a shared aversion to reductionism, although for different reasons and not without mutual accusations. Formalism rejects artworks that refer to external qualities, and anti-formalism does so to those that remain in the presented or internal qualities. Against this, I would like to situate the danger to the object's double unknown not in the external/internal discussion but in the reductionism to qualities as such, and to call for an aesthetic cognition whose purpose is to overcome such shallow referentiality to engage with its underlying being and multiplicity.

Since the late eighteenth century, one of the most intense discussions on aesthetics has referred to the referentiality or non-referentiality of artistic reality to phenomena outside the presented work. That is to say, whether the content of the piece refers to itself or to some external factor. For that period, Lambert Wiesing remarks that "[h]ardly any aesthetician can avoid taking a position on the relationship between form and content in works of art."[64] Two main stances can be distinguished at that time: (a) classical, reflective, and idealist models (content-oriented) versus (b) aestheticist and formalist models (form-oriented). Model (a) finds its *raison d'être* in the representation of external and pre-existing references, meanings, and ideas, and model (b) focuses on the structure of the art piece regardless of its semantic context. That means that the latter excludes, among other things, the motivations for creation of the work, its biography, or socio-political circumstances. Within position (a), John Ruskin or G. W. F. Hegel can be highlighted.[65] As Gal remarks, "Ruskin's model was a mimetic, or realist[ic], model that locates the artwork as forever standing vis-à-vis the divine order of the world and its absolute values."[66] "For idealism," Wiesing states, "the beauty of a form is based on the content expressed in that form, that is, on a relationship that extends *beyond the work*, and not on a relation immanent to the

[63] Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (2004; repr., Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), 27.
[64] Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 24.
[65] One sentence from Hegel's *Aesthetics* is enough to show the externality of his stance: "We called the beautiful the Idea of the beautiful." For more, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol. I*, trans. T. M. Knox (1835; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 106–15.
[66] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 17.

work. An idealistic understanding of beauty is bound up with the meaning, the [external] content of the work."[67] As illustrated in the introduction, this is the idea of classicism, according to which the aim of art is the imitation or registration of a natural order superior to that of the work itself. Its validity lies in its proximity to the canon, establishing a visual, semantic, or ethical relationship between the artwork as a symbol not of its being but of another pre-existing and known phenomenon.

The usual rejection of this approach alleges that the work becomes a by-product of the external, a criticism that persists in the current architectural debate. It is clear that architecture—for the most part—no longer finds its external validity in classical canons. But these legitimizing models today revolve around ingredients other than the divine order or the human body, capitalizing on technological positivism, ethical pressures, social and environmental urgencies, functionalist reminiscences, and field conditions, to name a few. The criticism to this approach is that the resulting architecture is evaluated on a never-questioned canon, a measuring rod that is as relative and subjective as the particular architecture that emerges from it. As Mark Gage states:

> The architect aims to predict these results based on what is in typical practice a cursory analysis of a given state or problem—a brief understanding of tentatively understood truths. […] for architecture, the relationship between the identification of the "true" problem and the solution in subsequent diagrams is never asked to be proved. As with advertising, architects have adopted *a priori* assumptions without *a posteriori* proof of efficacy.[68]

Against the validity from the outside, the reaction is to find refuge in the inside. The various formalisms and similar movements have elaborated on this perspective since Kant. What is at stake in every theory or version of the formalist aesthetic tradition is precisely its most fundamental principle: what counts as "interior." One way to address its various modulations is through how one takes James M. Whistler's aestheticist (and formalist) mantra "the picture ends where the frame begins."[69] Literally or metaphorically? Here, I would like to comment on two things. First, claiming interiority by literally relying on the presented and morphological qualities as such is as dangerous and limiting for the object's double unknown as arguing the work from the outside. Secondly, taking the metaphorical path of Whistler's statement invites us to examine which elements may qualify as insiders or not of the work of art. In this case, I will consider the figure of the cognizer or beholder to address this question; something that will also serve as an introduction to the next Chapters 4 and 5.

About the first, to assume Whistler's words literally means to accept that the work's interior is its morphological attributes.[70] As examined in Subsection 2.2.3 through Harman and Piñón, this is the erroneous understanding of taking the artistic or architectural project as its visual form. In this dissertation's technical terms, it refers back to the internal representational relationality of type A rejected in Section 1.2, whereby the actualized profile refers to its own qualitative aspects. In Han's jargon, this is transparency. But what all this indicates is that the troublesome aspect of artistic referentiality is not whether the work points to a quality considered as internal or external, but the reductionism that is

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[67] Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 24.
[68] Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, 29.
[69] James McNeill Whistler, *Whistler On Art: Selected Letters and Writings of James McNeill Whistler*, ed. Nigel Thorp (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 103.
[70] We have already seen in Chapter 1 that this was Kosuth's main criticism of American formalism.

exercised on such a quality. As Harman notes: "the real enemy is literalism."[71]

Following this path, the inside versus outside debate is a cognitive appreciation completely irrelevant to the subjectless condition of the thing in question.[72] Here I will go further and contend that there is no externality whatsoever in the experience of an object. For example, the apprehension of a realistic painting depicting a physical landscape is not a form of referentiality external to the artistic object. It is a literalization of one of its internal connections. Why? If experience is a subset of its manifestations and it is experience that makes the mimetic connection effective, then that connection is one of the multiple internal possibilities of that art object. Taking it as something external is the epistemological problem of the cognizer, not of the object. (This insight will be fundamental to acknowledging metaphors as internal and not external cognitions of the project in Section 5.2.)

In this vein, to ruin an entity's double unknown is to implant a cognitive barrier on it access. It is to anchor perception to the unequivocal pairing of the object with its factual and measurable qualities, regardless of whether it is considered as internal or external to it. It makes no difference whether this blockade follows the classical pattern of the realistic painting seeking mimetic approval in the physical landscape it depicts or that of modernism with an abstract painting strictly devoted to its presentational attributes. The problem is that both commit reductionism. Both rigidify cognition through different mechanisms, preventing any further access to the double interior of the object. It is true that this dissertation finds a greater affinity with abstract syntax as a more effective possibility for escaping literalism, as Chapter 6 will detail. But it does not follow that any abstract expression, by the mere fact of being abstract, is automatically irreducible to its presented qualities or visual form.

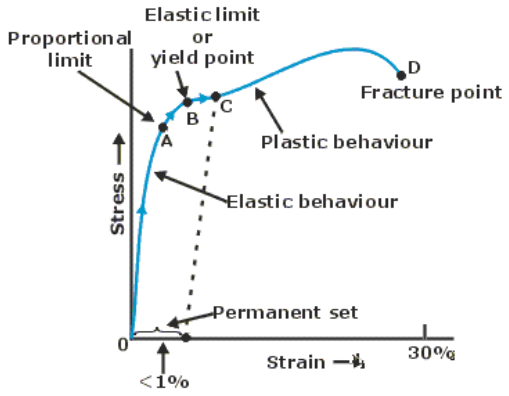


Figure 3-6. Typical stress-strain curve on the deformation of a ductile material as a comparison to cognition.

Let us consider cognition analogous to the mechanical properties of a material (Fig. 3-6). Direct, factual cognition moves in the elastic region: although it may deform slightly under high stress request, it always returns to the original configuration. On the contrary, aesthetic cognition moves in the plastic region: once in it and with very little or no stress, it acquires major and irreversible deformations. In this comparison, the yield point of cognition is the turn from direct apprehension to aesthetics, i.e., when the presentational qualities are abandoned for all that lies beyond them. And the rupture of aesthetic cognition

[71] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 141.

[72] This argument echoes the same refusal of the categorization between internal and external in Kant's heteronomous inclinations in Chapter 2.

occurs when the work of art is impenetrable because it is either too insufficient or too overwhelming to extract an impression from it, thus leading to indifference (Chapter 6). In this view, the challenge of the architectural experience for the project's double unknown is how to place it in a plastic cognition.

After examining the problems of literal formalism, let us consider a metaphorical reading of Whistler's phrase "the picture ends where the frame begins." The motto invites discussion as to what might be the components that constitute the interiority and expressions of an artistic or architectural entity. In formalist aesthetic discourse, the question of whether the beholder is an insider or not has always been at the center of this debate. As contended in Chapter 1, this thesis acknowledges the cognizer as an interior piece of the architectural project, and the following Chapters 4 and 5 will reinforce this position. For now, and serving as an introduction to address the discussion under an aesthetic perspective, some initial notes can be made. Etymologically, *aesthetic* derives from the Greek *aisthetikos*, meaning "sensitive, sentient, pertaining to sense perception," and relates to *aisthēsis*, "sensation." It follows that, for an aesthetic experience to take place, a sentient being must be there to sense and feel.[73] On this basis, I will analyze the controversy within the theories that accept the autonomy of aesthetic experience whether the field of plural individual determinations of the cognizer—especially intuition and emotions—is part of the work itself or not. This gives us two major positions: those who consider that human colorful emotions are contaminations as opposed to those who take them as part of art object's diversity.

On the one hand, theorists such as Kant, Fiedler, Greenberg, and Fried do not reject the observer *per se*, but the uncontrollable spectrum of the person's individuality as what corrupts the purity of the work. I will show that the motivations of these authors refer to what I call here an approach to the *ineffable* of the artistic and architectural object. Such an understanding of the aesthetic encounter entails a *unitary* sense of the object's reality, a sensation which, unlike the miscellaneous emotions, is singular and has no structure or articulation. I will include Harman's indirect approach to reality in this group, that is, the tension he names "space" or the "vertical" tension between the real object and its sensual qualities. The next Chapter 4, on deep cognition for the ineffable reality, will go through these positions.

On the other hand, aesthetic theories such as those of Whistler, Fry, Dufrenne, Eco, and Rancière, despite all their differences, show a primary concern for emotions as what provide different perspectives on the work in question. This variety cannot be other than qualitative (formed, structured). Thus, I will link it to the *knowable* aspects of the project, i.e., to the *multiplicity* of the qualitative capable of the sensual. Harman's tension of "time" or the "horizontal" relationship between the sensual object and the sensual qualities can be considered under this second group. Chapter 5 on open cognition for the knowable manifestations will address these topics.

As already mentioned, my point here is that what each of these groups claims separately must be considered simultaneously within the unity-multiplicity conjunction of the AP. In other words, any register of ineffable and substantial reality facilitated by an aesthetic process also reveals knowable qualitative profiles of the project.

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[73] Although the present discussion focuses on the human being, the notion of sentient being should not be reduced to its common assignment to people, animals, plants, and so on, but to *anything* that enters into a cognitive relation with something else. Spuybroek is clear on this point: "all relations between things are felt relations […]. Things feel each other." Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 197, [emphasis removed].

Chapter 4. Deep cognition and the ineffable being

This chapter covers one of the two simultaneous implications of aesthetic cognition: the indirect access to the ineffable reality of the object, here called *deep cognition*. I will discuss its definition through *formalism* in the arts. To this end, in the first place, the formalist tradition will be located in its historical contexts, highlighting some of the most relevant authors. Second, such historical positions will be contrasted with the current deviation that OOO offers to the formalist trajectory. The role of the aesthetic cognizer (beholder, user, designer) is the point of conflict in such a debate. I will show how Harman and Miralles defend a similar formalist posture, which includes the active participation of the person, through analogous senses of *mimesis/imitation* and *allusion/allure*. The third and last part of the chapter will outline some stances and design strategies of contemporary architects related to OOO who are working on the problem of the real. This will help to position this thesis within such an ongoing discourse.

4.1. Formalism: historical context

Immanuel Kant devoted half of his third critique (1790) to the aesthetic question, more specifically, to aesthetic judgment.[1] His arguments have influenced most of the discussion on aesthetics from the late eighteenth century to today. His formalist doctrine revolves around the notion of an autonomy of judging works of art in a disinterested mode of observation.[2] This means that no context or background, no previous or subsequent purposes, personal motivations, or emotions other than the aesthetic encounter itself can determine the appreciation of the artwork. Otherwise, interests make judgment partial.[3] Stated redundantly, to protect the aesthetic experience from everything that is not aesthetic

[1] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Part One.

[2] Although outlined in Chapter 2, let me refresh Kant's ideas on aesthetic autonomy. The arguments about aesthetics are in direct connection with his texts on morality and ethics, where Kant established two conditions of freedom when human beings act and choose. First, a person must account for his/her ends independently of the domination of his/her own inclinations and desires, and second, the selection and purpose of such ends must occur independently of the domination by other people. Only under these conditions, human actions are, for Kant, free and independent of the domination of someone else as well as one's own inclinations. According to him, only the actions governed by reason are genuinely autonomous and create the necessary distance from "material practical principles," meaning from the absence of any influence of inclinations. Thus, the first operation for acting autonomously for Kant consists in detaching reason from the perceptual apparatus denigrated as another form of heteronomy, similar to the inferences that others (outsiders) might produce. This becomes clear in the first critique, where he states that "freedom in the practical sense is the independence of the power of choice from necessitation by impulses of sensibility." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (1781; repr., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 533.

[3] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 54.

experience, aesthetic experience must be an end in itself.[4]

Kant's theory immediately pluralized throughout the nineteenth century, initially around the notion of *beauty*.[5] However, after some scholars worked on the subject, the following generations took other paths. As Wiesing remarks: "Instead of identifying form with beauty, it equates form with content; so for formal aesthetics, beautiful form turns into symbolic form."[6] The extreme of this transition is perhaps the work of Conrad Fiedler and the accompanying practitioners, the painter Hans von Marées and the sculptor-theorist Adolf Hildebrand. Fiedler's theory of *pure visibility* is a radicalization of Kantian aesthetics in "Fiedler's [attempts] to strike from artistic contemplation all cultural, intellectual, and emotional concerns," Mallgrave and Ikonomou remark.[7] The work of art cannot be reduced to its sensual or reference value. In Fiedler's radical formalism, autonomous art acquires a categorical determination so high as to free it from any obligation of cultural progress.[8] Art is, thus, something beyond the mediations of feelings and knowledge, i.e., something beyond personal experience and the objective comprehension of an external physical or conceptual standardized reference. On this basis, not only the standards of art and beauty are considered arbitrary and therefore rejected, but also the emotional—sometimes also the rational—system of the beholder. In other words, each person's singular faculties are another obstacle that "introduce[s] religious, ethical, social, and political concerns into what is essentially a problem of form."[9]

In the mid-twentieth century, the American formalism of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried concluded with similar principles. In our discussion of the role of the beholder, Fried's denigration of what he calls *theatricality* is significant. Based on his reading of Diderot, the theatrical implies "an artificial construction in which persuasiveness was sacrificed and dramatic illusion vitiated in the attempt to impress the beholder and solicit his applause. […] the theatrical, implying consciousness of being beheld, as synonymous with falseness."[10] According to Fried, the theatrical—as Fiedler might have argued—must be excluded if art is not to be infected by the non-artistic consequences of the beholder's presence.[11]

In other words, artistic purity is corrupted the moment the beholder experiences the work of art in a personal manner. The nature of the person's contribution to the work is considered lacking in artistic complexity. Fried makes this point clear in his famous article "Art and Objecthood." He criticizes the experimental vocation of minimalism as a "*situation*—one that virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*."[12] His concern is that, if

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[4] Ibid., 53.

[5] While Kant attributed beauty to a transcendental subject, his followers Johann Friedrich Herbart and Robert Zimmermann tried to rationalize it logically. An obvious proof of this is the unequivocal title of the latter's chief work, *General Aesthetics as a Science of Form* (1856). He used logic to describe the structural principles of pictorial form, what was called logic and formal analysis. Wiesing points out that Zimmermann's logic should not be confused with an empirical theory of knowledge derived from experiments. On the contrary, "[Zimmermann] wants to use logical precision not to discuss individual images, but to talk about the logical qualities of works as such" (22). These theorists assumed beauty in universal terms, which implies that "the beauty of something can be judged even if it has not been perceived" (35). Quotes in Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*.

[6] Ibid., 108.

[7] Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics*, 4.

[8] Wiesing, *The Visibility of the Image*, 116–17.

[9] Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 30.

[10] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 100.

[11] Ibid., 4–5.

[12] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 153.

what matters is an open experience, that is, a "situation" that is not strictly aesthetic in its purist sense, this arbitrariness can lead to the substitution of the artistic object itself.[13] In its extreme logic, that could mean the disappearance or absence of the tangible form. To avoid any kind of uncontrolled participation that leads to non-artistic content, or that can even evaporate the physical object, American formalism assigned all artistic responsibility to the object.[14] In Greenberg's case, this means subverting the surface content. His elevation of certain forms of abstract expressionism seeks to ensure the essence of art and its judgment. In attempting to achieve the depth of the painting (its flatness), the structure of the picture plane must be free of any subject matter that points to a phenomenon discernible outside the work of art. Thus, any visual arrangement that instills a three-dimensional impression is contradictory to the flat nature of the canvas. For Greenberg, any affinity capable of activating the beholder's associative capacities must be subsumed.

Reframing this account to the question of the architectural project, mid-twentieth century American formalism allocates all the pressure on the side of the AP by subverting, or more accurately, ignoring the observer's will. According to Harman, formalist theories offer two manners to get rid of human volition to ensure the purity of the artwork and the aesthetic experience. One is Kant's attention to the human condition rather than the work. His defense of the autonomy of the beholder aims to preserve the human experience of beauty from personal interest, emotions, or practicalities. The other is Greenberg's and Fried's reversal of Kant's strategy, i.e., they annul any kind of inner activity of the beholder in favor of the autonomy of a humanless artwork.[15]

However, American formalism does not eliminate the spectator completely. Once again, the Greek *aisthetikos* needs a sentient being. There is no art or architecture without humans, something that is clear even to radical stances such as those of Fiedler, Greenberg, or Fried. "Art is a matter strictly of experience," said Greenberg.[16] Although the theories discussed here do not place the observer's determinations at the center of the study, they still need human sensibility for a particular purpose: *to raise awareness of the artwork's depth*—whether it be called substance, being, deep reality, flatness, thing in-itself, or real object. Deep cognition can be defined then as the immaterial sensation of a thing's unitary being. In this context, Fiedler's theory of pure visibility emerges as a cognitive process that seeks the person's imagination *within* the domain of the work of art, an imagination that is not free but profound. As Mallgrave and Ikonomou point out about the German art historian's thesis of deep perception:

> Artistic form is an autonomous language, one capable of articulating and presenting its own world of meaning in all of its fullness. It is the world of visible form: images of the mind that are constantly being created anew. Visibility is thus no dull contemplation or perception of form but an active seeing in which the images become clarified as form and gain their unique expression. *It is very much a suspension of normal consciousness and a liberation from feeling*.[17]

Pure visibility does not mean the visual in its physiological or psychological sense, but refers

[13] To express this worry, Fried analyzes Robert Morris' work and Tony Smith's description of a car ride through the New Jersey Turnpike. In the latter case, the artist experienced an artistic feeling without a physical object as such. See Ibid., 157–59.
[14] See Harman's conclusions on this argument in Harman, *Art and Objects*, 142, 176.
[15] Ibid., 176.
[16] Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*, 1989th ed. (Beacon Press, 1961), 133.
[17] Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 31, [emphasis added].

to the immaterial exposure of the *pure form*. Pure form does not mean here the material structure or physical syntax exposed to experience but the artistic essence itself. Ernest K. Mundt observed that "Kant's intent is […] to use the word 'form' in its inclusive Aristotelian sense of *eidos*, outside of which there could exist only the utter chaos of undifferentiated matter."[18] Pure visibility—formalism, in general—rests on this hylomorphic summit. Therein, Fiedler motivates a specific cognition that produces a sensation exercised *in* the observer *on behalf of* the artistic form. The work enters into the beholder to manifest itself in the person. In short, the art form takes place inside the observer, but is not motivated by the person's will. The work of art alienates the observer to express its substance intangibly.

However, when compared to our daily factual experiences, such deep causation is of a special nature: it is ineffable. The impossibility of paraphrasing the expression of a work's being is the consistent premise through any formalist theory. As Fiedler expressed it: "The content of a work of visual art that can be grasped conceptually and expressed in verbal terms does not represent the artistic substance."[19] As seen earlier, Harman calls this reduction "literalism."[20]

In this context, it is the condition of ineffability that can confuse the observer when trying to compare the experiences of various entities. If any deep reality is a unitary substance without qualities, as argued in Part One, so is its sensation. Consequently, the pure manifestation of the substantial form is indecipherable. In this light, if the causality of feeling an object's being is unspeakable, it is not because our means of cognition and expression lack the proper means of articulation. On the contrary, deep reality and our deep cognition of it are ineffable because none of them has qualities. We can feel various substances in different ways—we intuit that they are different things, because we can sense them as such—but we cannot compare them with each other analytically. We cannot prove or say why they are different, much less get any qualitative reward from them, because they have none. This is why traditional formalism obliterates the cornucopia of sensual qualities and the observer's faculties to access them by claiming aesthetic judgment as something immediate, involuntary, and as an end in itself that only involves substantial form. As Greenberg observed: "Esthetic value is never instrumental or relative. It identifies itself by being altogether intrinsic, final—and utterly and immediately *present*."[21] For this reason, when experiencing the existence of different objects, the responses seem the same from an epistemological angle. This is so because they lack the same thing: structure. There are no qualities on which to articulate any subsequent rationalization and comparison. However, within a world of discrete objects, a non-articulated sensation of reality is specific to that entity, different from others of the same nature, even though we may not notice it. The translation of such a deep and non-qualitative experience into a material (artistic or architectural) representation, no less than the procedure to gain such a profound cognition, is what reflects the One/Many package that is a thing.

On this basis, how does OOO's aesthetic theory differ from its formalist predecessors? And how does all this relate to architecture and Miralles in particular? I think this question requires its own space, so the next section will first look at how Fried and OOO differ in their definitions of beholder, and how Harman adds an ontological plurality

[18] Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," 288.
[19] Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art*, 11.
[20] For Harman, "literalism" means that the work of art can be defined through its qualities and relationship to the beholder. Harman, *Art and Objects*, x.
[21] Clement Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.

to Greenberg's flatness. This study will show how OOO and Miralles work with the ineffable through similar notions of *mimesis/imitation* and *allusion/allure*, something that will allow for the inclusion of creative practice as a form of aesthetic cognition.

4.2. Object-oriented formalism

The two strategies mentioned above for protecting aesthetic experience—Kant's armor around the transcendental subject and Greenberg's and Fried's isolation of the work of art—are precisely Harman's two major disagreements in this regard.[22] In contrast, OOO defines a variation of formalism that fosters the autonomous union of the work of art and the beholder. In Harman's words: "the basic unit of aesthetics is neither the art object nor its beholder, but rather the two in combination as a single new object."[23] But what are the repercussions of considering the union instead of the isolated object in aesthetic cognition?

4.2.1. Works within works

In *Art and Objects*, Harman links Greenberg's idea of *flatness* with Heidegger's *Being*, and compares both with his theory of discrete entities. In Harman's view, the art critic and the German philosopher define a similar scheme in which there is a single common ground to all tangible and superficial qualities. That means that Heidegger's Being is *one* background (or object) for all beings, and Greenberg's single flat canvas contains *all* possible paintings. In architecture, this would mean that instead of each project being a particular reality, there is a single medium—let us call this object *builtness*—that contains all the buildings and their components (stairs, windows, rooms, and so on). Against this, Harman argues that a painting, or any other object, and its components are not contained in the same profound holistic medium. If so, the parts would be subordinated to the whole, i.e., the compounds of an object would not be autonomous by themselves. On the contrary, OOO establishes a model in which everything is an object for what the painting as a whole and each of its components retain their private self and depth.[24] This means that a fragment of an artwork can retain its identity, despite being embedded within a larger set of relationships. Since for OOO, objects are composed of other objects that compose more objects, a painting contains individual and autonomous entities from which the painting emerges as a whole. To this, and following the multimedia character of phantom objects (Section 1.3), I have considered another ontological layer to eliminate the dependence of the parts' and the whole's identities on any specific medium. As argued in Section 2.3, this is the figure of the AP over and above the medium specificities for—among others—the physical reality of the building or the performance reality of the function. This additional dimension encompasses more means of expression. In this way, and unlike the devotion of traditional formalism and aestheticism to artistic partitioning, objects and their components avoid reduction to a medium's laws of expression. Each can, in fact, live in different formats without affecting their constitutive and/or representational capacities. Kosuth's installation (Fig. 1-1) has appeared as an illustrative example in this regard.

Under this umbrella, Harman applies dimensionality to Greenberg's and

[22] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 176.
[23] Ibid., 8.
[24] See Harman's argument in Ibid., 97–109.

Heidegger's concepts of depth by discretizing their holistic models. This extra level comes from the principle of flat ontology by which objects can be themselves regardless of their status, including their *scale*. This will be a fundamental point in understanding Miralles' compositional strategies in which the project is composed of many projects (Chapter 7), something that is also found at a theoretical level in Emil Kaufmann's "independence of the parts" (see again Section 2.1). In addition, the figure of the AP is claimed for an OOO formalism, whereby mereological or part-whole relations are not confined to separate media. Phantom objects, like Morton's hyperobjects, are medium promiscuous, since they act transversally to them. Here, it is also important to remember that in the Russian doll-like structure of OOO's worldview, objects are never in one cluster, but in several, engaging with each other in different ways.

4.2.2. The role of the cognizer in deep cognition

A discussion on whether the material fragments of a work of art or architecture have the same ontological status as their material whole does not say much about human participation. Opening the media spectrum in accounting for phantom objects is this thesis' strategy to argue for the human as another interior element of the architectural project. To discuss the relevance of the cognizer or beholder in formalist aesthetic cognition, we can look at Harman's theory.[25]

Harman reverses Fried's negating view of the notion of the theatrical. As noted in the previous section, theatricality means for the American art historian that the presence of the spectator distorts, or more precisely, nullifies the artistic spirit. On the contrary, no art or architecture is possible without the union of object and beholder for Harman, who precisely sees in theatricality the very possibility of aesthetic cognition. Consequently, Harman demarcates his aesthetic considerations from Fried's by including the human being as a fundamental ingredient of the aesthetic act.[26]

However, this comparison is not yet complete, as Fried's subject still "experiences" the work of art. Perhaps it is just a difference in method or even terminology, but I would like to discuss the role of the human in the aesthetic unit slightly differently. That means using the theatrical not as the tool that indicates whether or not the spectator is included in the work, as Harman and even Fried himself do. Instead, I will approach the debate assuming that both positions already embrace the spectator. Theatricality is then the device to measure the degree of the person's involvement in the aesthetic experience. In short, what are the beholder's faculties that each author's definition allows for aesthetic cognition?

Let me consider Eisenman's early work as a backdrop to the discussion, a position Fried might defend because of the American architect's formalist vocation not to subordinate architecture to the particular demands of the viewer/user. As Miralles commented, "[Eisenman's work] is not idle to wonder about its utility…/ Because of how the architect has avoided this question."[27] So, *utilitas* seems to be out of question as to what can appeal to the user. However, consider the following fragment of the description of House III (Fig. 4-1): "Upon entering 'his [or her] house', the owner is an intruder

[25] Although it will not pose a problem for this task, we must not forget the difference that, for this dissertation, the cognitive-unit stands within the cognized, which in turn uses proxies for such an experiential encounter (Fig. 2-3). Since Harman does not explicitly account for the encompassing phantom object in the arts, the observed and the act of observing are separate but never united.

[26] See Harman, *Art and Objects*, chap. 3.

[27] Enric Miralles, "I, II, III, IV... IX... Etc....," *El Croquis*, 1997, 168, [author's translation].



Figure 4-1. Peter Eisenman, *House III* (Miller House), 1969-1971.

attempting to regain possession and consequently destroying, albeit in a positive sense, the initial unity and completeness of the architectural structure itself."[28]

Would Fried consider this passage the description of an aesthetic act? No, he definitely would not. The House III-owner encounter is too similar to the "situation" that the art historian condemns in Robert Morris' work; a relationship that ends in the "negation of art" because of the spectator's physical and psychological involvement.[29] So, Eisenman's description would be the antithesis of everything that Fried (and Greenberg) stands for. In this sense, the vocabulary used ("intruder," "regain[ing] possession," "destroying") would help even less to minimize the art critics' aversion.

What should be the appropriate circumstances for Fried to consider the reception of the house as an aesthetic experience? He would probably ask for a change in the person's cognitive attitude. The *user* should become a *beholder*, or a "new-'subject'," as Fried calls it. However, the human cannot make this move by him/herself. Aesthetic judgment, insofar as it is involuntary, cannot be rationalized to suppress its rich emotional side yet maintain its deep sensual capacity. According to Fried, this is the responsibility of the presentation and structure of the work of art; the main reason why, in the roulette of his formalism, he always bets everything on the artwork and relegates the cognizer to the sidelines.

4.2.3. The suppression of the cognizer's vocation

As mentioned above, Fried does not completely erase the person in aesthetic reception. He is not in favor of an art without humans. On the contrary, he seeks "a new sort of beholder—a new 'subject'—whose innermost nature would consist precisely in the conviction of his

[28] Eisenman Architects, "House III 1971," 1971 1969, https://eisenmanarchitects.com/House-III-1971.
[29] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 153–54.



Figure 4-2. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Soap Bubbles*, ca. 1733, in Fried, Michael, *Absorption and Theatricality*, (1976), 51.

[or her] absence from the scene of representation."[30] For Fried, "a painting […] had to attract the beholder, to stop him [or her] in front of itself, and to hold him [or her] in a *perfect trance of involvement*."[31] Within this context, the art historian faces a "paradox," as he calls it. For the beholder to be fully integrated into the work, the person must be fictitiously denied. As Fried puts it, "only by establishing the *fiction* of his [or her] absence or nonexistence could his [or her] actual placement before and enthrallment by the painting be secured."[32] But as just said, there is no capacity in the person to virtualize his or her non-presence and involuntary aesthetic participation with the piece. This cognitive reaction of impassibility is only possible if it is stimulated by particular articulations in the presentation of the work. In painting, Fried finds them in those settings in which the protagonists are "absorbed" in their activities and "ignore" the beholder's presence (Fig. 4-2). There is no possibility for the cognizer to dialogue with the characters portrayed. They do not pay attention to the audience. The scene is already complete by itself.[33]

For him, aesthetic cognition entails a simulation in which the person seems to be absent despite being *there*, receiving the work. (After all, performing without trying to perform is another way of performing.) In this sense, Fried's beholder resembles Kant's transcendental subject by depriving the observer of any individuality in the pursuit of modern universality. As the art historian comments in a footnote: "One might go on to

[30] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104 [emphasis added].
[31] Ibid., 103, [emphasis added].
[32] Ibid. [emphasis added].
[33] In this discussion, it cannot be ignored that Fried reconfigures this theory in the face of Manet's paintings, where the characters directly "look at" the public. Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism, or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

contrast this new sort of beholder (or new 'subject') with the profoundly different conception of the self, as in some sense *brought before* itself in the activity of representation (*Vorstellung*)."[34] In other words, the human self and psyche are not invited to participate in aesthetic cognition. Instead, the work enters the human by inducing a "perfect trance of involvement" with the additional effect of "reach[ing] the beholder's soul by way of his [or her] eyes."[35] We should read this state of trance as the suspension of human faculties. The work of art holds the beholder. In Fried's aesthetic theory, human will is frozen, passive, unable to react to anything beyond what has brought it to such a state of trance. Personal subjectivity and intuition are invalidated. We have already seen a similar strategy in Fiedler's theory of pure visibility, an indifference that has its origin in Kant's aesthetics. I quote another passage from Fiedler:

> [S/h]e who will judge [human]'s achievements must in a certain sense be indifferent to them […] In judging achievements [s/]he must be much more indifferent in that higher sense […] strictness of judgment in relation to oneself becomes a primary necessity.[36]

For these positions, aesthetic experience is only possible under the subversion of the human as local producer, but not of the beholder as motionless receptor. (To be clear, in the framework of this thesis, "local producer" means the person's capacity to structure the multiplicity offered by objects and to be able to extract from it some qualitative profile, not the *ex novo* constructions of the idealist subject). The local productivity of the self and the psyche seems too superficial for Fried. But this move, as mentioned, leads to a homogenization or universalization of the beholder. If Greenberg wanted to get rid of the superficiality of the work, Fried aims at the same thing but in the beholder. Fried seeks to get rid of what, for him, are the superficial cognitive faculties, maintaining the receptive essence that replicates itself uniformly in each individual.[37] Fried's goal for this strategy is:

> the attainment of an unprecedented level of *cognitive acuteness* with regard to the detection of proscribed actions and effects; and an abstracting in that the activity of beholding was now imagined to have found its righest occasion and most intense satisfaction in its engagement with the fully realized [object].[38]

In other words, the denial of the observer's determination sharpens, for Fried, the deepest human cognitive capacities for registering the profound reality of the work. So, what should the relationship between House III and the human be like in order to turn the "situation" of the participatory, yet destructive, owner in Eisenman's passage into a passive Friedian receptor for aesthetic cognition? As stated at the beginning, the art historian would call for a change in the cognizer's attitude, but the suppression of the self is not dependent on the person's reflective capacity. Thus, the responsibility for instilling a trance-like state in the observer falls on the side of the object and its syntax. In Fried's compositional analyses, the work has such power over the audience when its components are in an "absorptive" relationship to each other; an internal alliance that excludes the absorption of the human

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[34] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104.
[35] Ibid., 103, 92.
[36] Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art*, 70–71.
[37] Greenberg was more permissive than Fried about the spectrum of powers that the beholder can employ in artistic activity. See Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics*, 17. On the contrary, Fried, unlike Greenberg, allows diverse and rich content to populate the picture plane.
[38] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104, [emphasis added].

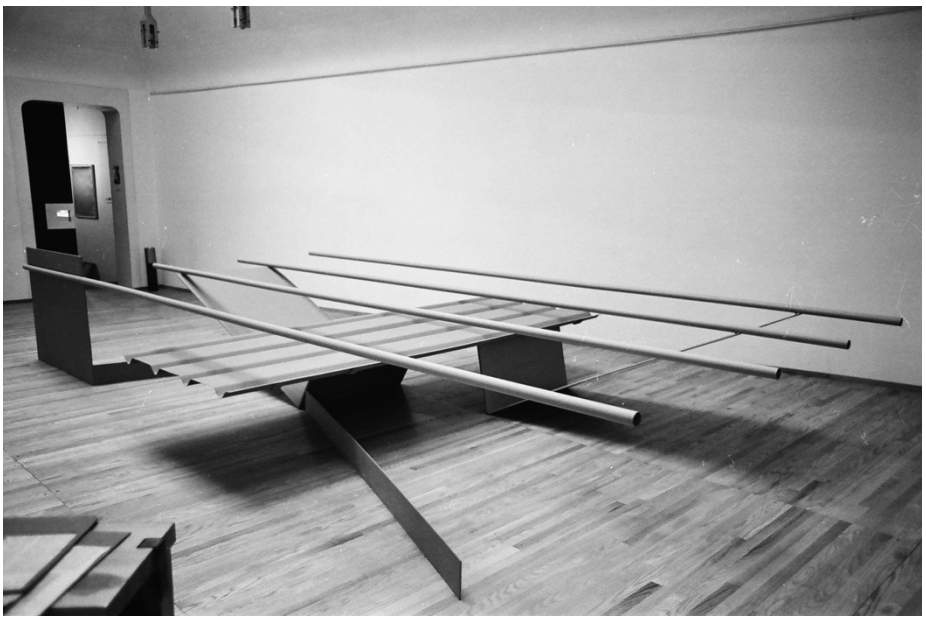


Figure 4-3. Anthony Caro, *Prairie*, 1967, in Fried, Michael, *Art and Objecthood*, (1986), Figure 43.

with the work itself. If Fried sees the completion of the work in the indifference of the depicted characters to the cognizer, he argued the same for those abstract arts in which its components related only to themselves. Fried places this closure, for example, in Anthony Caro's sculptures.[39]

Therefore, in order to instill in the person the fiction of not being there, the morphological composition of House III should change to an arrangement in which its physical elements (columns, beams, windows, etc.) enter into an intimate and close relationship with each other that avoids any dialogue with the inhabitant.[40] Whatever the architectural result emerging from this approach to aesthetics, the consequences for the audience are quite clear: the inhabitant becomes invisible in his/her own house. There is no personal involvement with the work. The composition would be presented in a way that does not allow the cognizer to participate with the space.

In this light, Fried's approach does not deny the piece's subject matter or semantic references. Proof of this are his exquisite and detailed descriptions. Unlike classicism, this referentiality is a tool. The true artistic purpose for him is the work's deep cognition, something that this thesis celebrates and appropriates. To this end, his formalism arises from condemning the emotional and subjective system as external to the aesthetic encounter, a method that this thesis absolutely rejects. In Fried's aesthetic theory, the differences between *this* person and *that* person vanish. His "new-'subject'" is a standardized profile.[41]

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[39] Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*; Fried, *Art and Objecthood,* 180–84, 189,192.

[40] My affinity with Fried's concept of the "new-'subject'" is certainly zero. Therefore, I leave it to anyone with sufficient commitment, the study of what would be the compositional and technical criteria to achieve this non-participatory architecture; one whose absorption depends only on the elements of its own composition.

[41] Fried's position is also consistent with the challenging case of Thomas Struth's series of *Museum Photographs*, which captures observers looking at paintings. Following his premises of *Absorption and Theatricality*, Fried comments that the first "world" (his term) of the paintings is close to the second of the photographed viewers, which also remain detached from our world of non-photographed observers. See Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 115–34. Thus, there is a double fictional suspension here: one registered within the photograph—at least, for those viewers, who

However, Fried's approach does not only undermine the observer's capacities. It also has consequences for the artistic or architectural entity, at least in the way this thesis understands the object as a simultaneous unitary essence with multiple features. All the corruption that the "intruder" of the house provokes by "regain[ing] possession and consequently destroying […] the initial unity and completeness of the architectural structure itself" is nothing more than the plural and qualitative realm of the work. By nullifying human individuality, Fried blocks the variety of multiple approaches needed to deal with the spectrum of known and unknown phenomena. That means that the passivity of the new-"subject" nullifies the object's qualitative domain. The One/Many package is incomplete, as only one part is of interest.

Although I believe that such a loss would not worry Fried much (it would probably reaffirm his convictions), his aesthetic position makes the art or architectural object an ultra-rigid entity with a single visibility that ignores its own plural side. Again, this unilateral imposition of the work has as a consequence not only the nullification of the observer's determination but also of its own entire qualitative domain. If my critique is accepted, the art object will always be incomplete for Fried. Only one of its two realms is considered. Aesthetic experience engages only with the ineffable side of the object. Although this position may still have defenders when it comes to the purity of the aesthetic experience as its own and exclusive end (a one-sidedness I disagree with), not counting on the qualitative depth in aesthetic terms has dire consequences for the creative act.[42]

4.2.4. Mimesis/imitation: the recovery of the cognizer's vocation

Against the suspension of the person's volition, OOO allows more flexibility for the cognizer without renouncing deep cognition. The weight of the compounds (work and person) within the aesthetic experience is balanced, since it is the encounter of two equals with the same ontological status. The internal relationship within the aesthetic-unit is the coexistence regulated by the motto: "the rights of the object end where those of the knower begin, and vice versa."[43] This certainly does not happen with idealism (denial of the object) or extreme formalism (denial of the observer's particularities). In other words, for Harman, previous formalist theories enable either the object (Greenberg and Fried) or the observer (Kant) to be autonomous, as if only one could be at a time. Instead, object-oriented formalism considers the autonomy of both compound entities *and* their aesthetic relationship.[44] In Harman words, "[the human] is an ingredient of the work no less than

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experience the paintings aesthetically in Freidian conditions—and one outside the work, that is, the non-depicted new-"subjects."

[42] One can certainly continue the examination further and speculate with a combination of Greenberg's and Fried's positions. If the former wanted to remove attention from the surface of the object, and the latter does so with the faculties of the observer, one can formulate the hypothesis that art becomes "the purest" when both cancelations work together. No face of the object and no determination of the subject would result in the ideal encounter of two depths: Object and Beholder. In OOO's terminology, this would mean a direct relationship between two real objects deprived of their sensual domains. However, as Harman correctly shows, "real objects always recede from one another. […] If contact in the realm of the real is utterly impossible, but contact in the sensual realm is an absolute requirement, then obviously the sensual realm of experience must be where all causation is triggered." Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 75. Following this indication, if art is experiential (relational), the formalist objective towards the depth of the work is a causality that must take place in "the sensual realm of experience."

[43] I call for a similar consistency of equality in Harman's concept of knowledge, which I criticize as being close to a form of epistemological idealism. See Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation," 52–53.

[44] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 69–71.

paint or marble."[45] Therefore, all aesthetic cognition involves at least three autonomous objects: (1) the work of art or architecture, (2) the beholder/designer, and (3) the cognitive relationship as such. This means two things. First, compared to Fried's "new-'subject'," the OOO cognizer recovers the person's self without diminishing that of the object. Second, with this gesture, aesthetic formalism includes in its horizon not only the ineffable substance of the artwork. It is also interested in its qualitative unknown, since the person's subjectivity on the object is part of the object's own manifestations. The preservation of the three identities—object, cognizer, and their relationship—allows simultaneous access to the double unknown of the work without subjugating one to another.

Inverting the passivity of Fried's "new-'subject'" into an active constituent of aesthetic activity in order to account for the object's plural side is not detrimental to the deep perception of its unitary existence. By precisely acknowledging the autonomy of each of the three objects—object, cognizer, and their aesthetic relation—none is reduced to another, and simultaneous access to the thing's double unknown becomes possible. "Contamination," as Fried would say, is rather internal. Harman calls *mimesis* and Miralles *imitation* the cognizer's proactive and participatory mode, by which the person becomes or enters the project.

To make it clear from the beginning, I use both "mimesis" and "imitation" as synonyms. More importantly, none of them—as used by the authors—refers to the replication of certain phenomena (physical, visual, conceptual) as a legitimizing reference. This type of mimesis/imitation must not be confused with its meaning in classicism. For the present case, reductive or literal referentiality is rejected in all cases. In fact, Miralles was a fierce detractor of figurative classical mimesis.[46] As scholars comment on the architect's approach to design: "the main obsession that always pursued him: to flee from [classical] mimesis."[47] One way or another, classical mimesis results in an experience governed by moral values, thereby simplifying the complexity of the work. But for Miralles, aesthetics precisely offers the opportunity to move experience away from moral values.[48] Classical mimesis is out of the picture for deep and open aesthetics. In Harman's case, classical mimesis refers to "(a) whether we make images of perfect form or concrete things or (b) whether those images are better or worse than the things they represent."[49] As stated above, the problem here is neither referentiality nor exteriority, the latter argued to be non-existent in experience. It is literalism: the reduction of an object to the perceived qualities and/or effects. Miralles and Harman are formalist by being anti-literalist.

But what do Miralles and Harman mean by mimesis? For the philosopher, "mimesis refers to the act of *becoming* an imitation of something, as is the case with actors, mimes, and dancers."[50] The person performs an object that s/he is not, which is exactly the opposite of Fried's thesis. I showed above how Fried's object nullifies the cognizer's plural impressions to rise his "new-'subject'": "the work of art or architecture holds the beholder." For object-oriented formalism, it is the other way around: the beholder holds the work of art or architecture by replacing its unitary substance in experience. For Harman, this is theatricality. Since the deep reality of the work withdraws from direct access, there must be

[45] Ibid., 58.
[46] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 265.
[47] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 14, [author's translation].
[48] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:8.
[49] Graham Harman, "A New Sense of Mimesis," in *Aesthetics Equals Politics: New Discourses across Art, Architecture, and Philosophy*, ed. Mark Foster Gage (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 59.
[50] Ibid., 58.

some real object that sustains the aesthetic scene. Harman assigns this role to the beholder's being, who acts "as an active performer of the missing object."[51] Miralles had a similar vision in which the person "is interested in the intimate appropriation of the work…"[52] However, one should not understand this as an imposition of the spectator on the work, which would be a form of idealism that denies the autonomous existence of the object. In this case, alienation occurs not in the sense of domination but of substitution, and without reduction but expansion of the object's space of abundance to the cognizer. The latter participates in something that is not oneself. In what can be opposed to Fried's denial of "the situation" where the beholder is a passive receptor of the work, Miralles states: "the spectator *participates* in the intuition of the work…"[53] And a few pages later: "The observer transmits his/her own movement to the observed... And in this movement, one comes to believe oneself to be identical to it. […] We must allow ourselves to be captured by the observed."[54] This act by which the cognizer imitates something it is not—feeling it and performing with, into, and by it—relates with what Spuybroek calls *sympathy*, which he distinguishes from empathy.[55] For him, "sympathy is the accordance of the activity of the one with that of the other. […] we make the activity ours where there is activity already."[56] Elsewhere, he addresses "mimesis" as a synonym for "sympathy."[57] There we can read: "Mimesis cannot be accounted for by what is traditionally called reflection, only by *absorption and incorporation*. To imitate another thing, person, or character, one has to digest and process that other, not to reflect it."[58]

On this basis, what exactly is this mimetic form of performing the object? Miralles again: "Imitation no longer proposes to linger on the external appearance and tries to copy faithfully... Imitation belongs to another sphere, to seek the *procedure*, not the result but its resulting (*resultar*)…"[59] That means that Miralles and Harman, as well as Spuybroek, use mimesis and imitation as a verb and not a noun. Mimesis is not the product of some mirrored reference, but the set of actions—the "procedure"—to become and perform as (imitate) the confronted object. In this context, we can come back to House III. Under the notion of mimesis examined here, Eisenman's account of the owner's "regaining possession" of the space and the "destruction" of the given structure gains full meaning. As the description of House III ends:

> It is not so much the completeness of the formal structure as presented by the architect as it is the environment's absence of traditional meaning that triggers this sense of exclusion, which then works dialectically to stimulate the owner to a new kind of participation in the house. Choosing finishes, adding walls, placing furniture, and installing lighting are no longer concerned with the purpose of fitting some preconceived idea of good taste or completing some "set piece" scheme of either the owner or the architect. By acting in

[51] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 136. For a comprehensive explanation of the replacement of the object's reality, see OOO's theory of metaphor in Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 81–85.
[52] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9, [author's translation].
[53] Ibid. [author's translation, emphasis added].
[54] Ibid., 1:21, [author's translation].
[55] In this context, Spuybroek's comparison between "empathy" and "sympathy" is instructive. The historical treatment of the former by authors such as Wölfflin and Vischer concerns, for him, "the proportions of forms and spaces." In contrast, sympathy, which he finds in Lipps, deals with "the relationship between movement and form." Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 132.
[56] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 135.
[57] Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 91.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9, [emphasis added, author's translation].

> response to a given structure, the owner is now almost working against this process. By working to come to terms with the system, design is not decoration but rather a *process of inquiry* into our own latent capacity to understand any man-made space.[60]

Stated differently, the presentation of the work causes an initial obstacle to the immediate inclusion of the beholder due to the lack of resemblance to previous experiences. Such absence of references is not a fiction *à la* Fried, it is a fact. However, this initial hostility is the way—at least, in aesthetic cognition—of eluding "automatic" perception (Shklovsky), transparency (Han), literalism (Harman), the first layer of the known (this thesis' term). This is what Federico Soriano calls "uncomforting" [*inconfortar*] in architecture, to move away from comfort. As he says: "It is necessary to be uncomfortable in the spaces, in the programs. […] Spaces should not adapt like boxing gloves to the conditions that dictated their conformation. Imperfect conditions can generate distortions or productive errors."[61]

In occupying House III, the owner does not surrender to cognitive displacements. If so, the relationship to the space comes to an end. Instead, uncomforting releases the person's inner explorer into the jungle of the AP's spatial possibilities. I maintain that such an imaginative and intuitive attitude is an aesthetic form of cognition insofar it challenges the person's previous assumptions about how to relate with a project by giving a sense of its deep existence. In Wilhelm Worringer's words: "instinct is now the ultimate product of cognition."[62]

The process by which the observer must resolve such a personal situation with the confronted object is the formation of the aesthetic-unit itself. Such a series of mental and physical actions is Harman's mimesis and Miralles' imitation: the "procedure" of the aesthetic act. Following the analogy of cognition and the material deformation of Fig. 3-6, the presentational qualities of House III are there to expel experience from the elastic zone of comfort to the plastic, uncomfortable zone. Mimesis and imitation are the procedures for entering the plastic or aesthetic deformations of cognition. Under this emphatic mechanism, the consequences for the beholder are that "aesthetic experience deploys our entire being," Harman concludes.[63] That means that, in the aesthetic-unit, the cognizer's One is what assumes some of the project's Many on behalf of the object's One (Fig. 3-3).[64]

Jonathan Hill provides a similar position for the active role of the architectural user; a relationship that is not exclusive to the physical architectural space, but is possible with any of the project's expressions. As Hill puts it:

> [Architecture] is, primarily, a particular relation between a subject and an object, in which the former occupies the latter, which is not necessarily a building, but can be a space, text, artwork or any other phenomenon that displays, or refers to, the subject-object relations particular to architecture.[65]

At this point, something important should be noted. Mimesis itself, whereby each cognizer enters into the project by becoming, is obviously part of the cognitive-unit. In turn, the

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[60] Eisenman Architects, "House III 1971" [emphasis added].
[61] Federico Soriano Peláez, *Encoger*© (Madrid: Fisuras, 2020), 121-122, [author's translation].
[62] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy. A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (1908; repr., Chicago, IL: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997), 18.
[63] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, sec. 1.d.
[64] See also Harman's diagram of metaphor in Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 84.
[65] Jonathan Hill, *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 8.

cognitive-unit is within the AP, acting as one of its proxies (Fig. 3-1). This means that the mimetic procedure and not only its result in the form of the cognizer's impressions are an active part of the project's qualitative multiplicity. In short, mimesis or imitation is another expression of the AP. On this basis, Section 5.4 will claim this representational condition of the mimetic process as a practical-intuitive function or use of space beyond automated use (because of being repetitive) and functionalism as scientific programmer of specific activities.

Therefore, mimesis is not only the process of accessing the AP's being. The activities that execute such deep cognition are qualitative aspects of the project, whether mental, physical, and/or collaborative with other cognitive tools. This is one of the main reasons for arguing that aesthetic cognition under a subjectless, object-oriented formalist regime is twofold: it simultaneously attends to the One and the Many of the project, rendering them ineffable and knowable, respectively. When extreme formalists like Fiedler, Greenberg, and Fried claim aesthetics as the exclusive act to arrive at the unitary depth of the artwork, their realism is unfinished. They miss half of reality. They fail to account for being-qualities as an indivisible package, making both realms mutually exclusive in epistemological inquiry.

Although the qualitative domain will be addressed in Chapter 5, it can be said for now that half of this thesis' obsession seeks the AP's personalized areas that contain those cognitive possibilities of each observer with that project, but which the person has not yet encountered. This is the knowable (Fig. 3-2). In short, aesthetic cognition entails those features of the person's intuition or imagination, particularized for each art or architectural object. "[B]y intuition I mean," Henri Bergson states, "instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely."[66] This is the standpoint from which to read the last sentence of Eisenman's quote: "a process of inquiry into [the project's and] our own latent capacity to understand any man-made space." Again, this unfolds not only the impression and how that impression can be translated into another expression. The inquiry process itself is another formal manifestation of what is inquired.

The mimetic procedure—Fried's "situation"—intertwines the object and the cognizer, pursuing the double unknown: the cognizer's deep and ineffable experience of the object's being, and the maximum overlapping of the qualitative material that this object can offer to that cognizer with that cognizer's cognitive capacity for this object. Aesthetic cognition thus deals with the unitary substance and qualitative multiplicity of the object. In its substantial register, Harman's aesthetic theory shows how the beholder overlaps with the empty place left by the object's elusive reality. "[A]esthetic participants themselves provide [the deep] medium," Harman states.[67] Aesthetic cognition is also qualitative because of (a) the mimetic procedure is composed of actions of the human being who actively performs the object's capacities, and (b) leads to new meanings and understandings, which are at the same time the potential basis for new manifestations of the object in question.

If we consider (a) from the spectator's or user's position in spatial practices such as architecture or sculpture, the person's movements are perhaps the clearest tangible

[66] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (1907; repr., New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1944), 194.

[67] Graham Harman, "Materialism Is Not the Solution. On Matter, Form, and Mimesis," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, no. 47 (2014): 109.

expression. This entering process is not only mental. It is also physical and, at the same time, overlapping with the impressions as synthesis of cognition (more on Subsection 5.4.2). This does not mean that those arts that do not exhibit physical procedures in their beholders, like painting or literature, are exempt from mimetic or imitative processes. Those arts simply do not reflect the beholder's performance in a visible way. Additionally, both (a) and (b) are the ground for arguing in favor of the aesthetic method also as a form of knowledge, since it also deals with traceable features of the qualitative.

In this context, we can elaborate further and argue that, even in Fried's theory (especially in his readings of Anthony Caro's work), there is an implicit dependence on the "situation" for aesthetic cognition to occur. The annulment of the spectator's participation is—at least—debatable when the art historian's positive criticism of Caro's *Prairie* (Fig. 4-3) acknowledges that "we *move* around the sculpture."[68] What are actions if not the "procedure" to "become" and perform as the object? In Eisenman's case, this relates to the recognition of *movement* as part of the architectural experience.[69]

Fried has already contemplated this possibility, and reserves for architecture the same anti-aesthetic place that Kant gives to our field. For the latter, architecture is incapable of inducing a pure aesthetic judgment because of its utilitarian effects, i.e., architectural experience can never occur because it always has an ulterior purpose.[70] In a similar vein, Fried argues that architecture inevitably deals with human bodies living in the physical world (with which I agree), something that automatically excludes any aesthetic or "antiliteral" possibility in architecture (with which I disagree).[71] To account for his "new-'subject'" here, the only chance would be to disavow or virtualize the very fact of the human body's presence and movement in space. And this is what Fried does explicitly: "a denial of our bodies and the world."[72]

It is clear that there are no two similar circulations in the contemplation of Caro's sculpture (nor in House III). The American critic does not deny this fact. He simply wants to ignore it as a cognitive result, because if it is computed, aesthetics is not impossible in his view. On the contrary, this dissertation does pay attention to these qualitative unfoldings, taking them as other instances of the work precisely by making the cognizer a body in the world. The piece becomes aesthetically open the moment there are several ways of approaching and interpreting it, something that is concomitant to its profound apprehension. It can be said then that, for Fried, the mimetic procedure is a necessary means to reach an aesthetic cognitive depth of the sculpture or the space (with which I agree); something that, in turn, can only be achieved if such a process of access negates itself (with which I disagree). (How can materialist positions not be against such a paradoxically extreme formalist view?)

Here I am not trying to demonstrate some kind of flaw in Fried's theory. His ideas about deep cognition are fundamental to this thesis' understanding of the experience of the ineffable. I am only exposing an irreconcilable difference between his theory and this one. And it is irreconcilable precisely because it is not based on facts, but on differing convictions. As Eric Owen Moss would say: "I'll see it when I believe in it," rather than "I'll believe in it when I see it."[73] The cognitive powers of one or the other conviction are

[68] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 181, [emphasis added].
[69] Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 57.
[70] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151.
[71] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 180.
[72] Ibid., 181.
[73] Eric Owen Moss, *Eric Owen Moss: The New City: I'll See It When I Believe It* (New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2016).

incomparable with what is assumed as factual, for the simple fact that the latter is a consequence of the former. In this context, whereas Fried believes that the qualitative material that a cognizer unfolds in deep cognition precludes deep cognition itself, I believe the opposite: they do not just coexist, they cannot live in isolation. In short, whereas for Fried deep and open cognition is a matter of either/or, for me the two are simultaneous and inseparable. The consequences of either position with the cognizer's vocation as a background are already known: if the realist object is an autonomous One/Many, Fried's theory—or that of any extreme formalist author—is concerned only with the One; whereas this dissertation is concerned with both realms aesthetically.

On this ground, the considerations mentioned so far should suffice to indicate some characteristics of what an object-oriented cognizer may be, as well as what the presentation of the work should seek in the person.[74]

First, the cognizer as an object is an autonomous entity—like the confronted object—capable of entering into several relationships that comprise larger objects or ecologies without losing its identity. This is contrary to the historical intellectual landscape in which the human being occupied the central position since the Renaissance; an anthropocentric scheme that, in spite of adopting different strategies, has remained throughout the modern era up to the present day.[75] In a more recent memory, the autonomous cognizer opposes the treatment of structuralist and poststructuralist theses, in which things are exhausted by their direct and superficial interconnections. This is to say that they always depend on a broader system of relations. The consequence is the lack of unification—loss of identity—of the different sets of networks.

Second, in considering each experiential act as autonomous, the cognizer's responses always remain within the multiplicity of each encounter. This means that each cognitive-unit carries its own closure that establishes an identity of its own different from another of the same kind. In this case, the autonomy of the object of experience consists precisely in not literalizing itself, that is, avoiding the exclusivity of the subject's experience as the only possible one, whether it comes from a personal vocation or from an apparent external imposition. The latter means being suspicious of the human capacity to be influenced by the person's context. Again, not because it is external, but literal. Within this framework, human associative capacity with pre-existing phenomena or concepts taken as the effective end of experience is a dangerous form of reductionism. This is the cognitive mode of classicism and modernism. When it comes to the substantial and the multiple, cultural, historical, and social *pressures* cannot govern the person's dispositions toward the object. These are cognitive modes that typically operate under rational or moral, rather than aesthetic, parameters. For this thesis, the latter is the only one of the three capable of a deep and open access.

Since blocking the ability to read the work in preconceived terms is not necessarily a rational act, one possibility for cutting off reductionism is that the work does not offer an

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[74] As a reminder, the notion of cognizer for OOO is not exclusive to humans, but there are cognitive relationships between non-human objects that exist without human mediation. Architecture should not be excluded from this possibility. In fact, it is logical to think that most relational objects are of this non-human type due to our tiny presence within the vast cosmos. In this framework, this dissertation studies a particular, non-exclusive case: the relationship between the artistic and architectural object and the human as cognizer.

[75] As noted in the introduction, Quentin Meillassoux coined the term "correlationism" to explain the epistemological predicament that considers exclusively the relationship between thought and being, but nothing outside it. In short, for the correlationist, reality does not exist outside the mind, but always depends on thought and its instruments of language, ideology, etc. See Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, chap. 1.

affinity with already known phenomena. In this sense, turning re-cognition into cognition is this thesis' strategy for entering the AP's double unknown. Its implementation—one of many—will consist of championing the object's manifestations that appear abstract to us. By "abstraction" I mean qualities on which the person does not draw repeated conclusions and, therefore, cannot resemble previous cognitive situations. For Harman, the danger appears in literalism as a way of reducing the object to its surface in immediate contact with us. *Repeatability* as that which creates a cognitive habit is seen here as a form of literalism.

Third, as the opposite of the previous point: the aesthetic-unit must seek the cognizer's individuality. To erase prejudices, the beholder's intuition, imagination, and emotions must drive aesthetic cognition to navigate within the work's interior. As has already been said, such a particular subjectivity overlaps with particular areas of the object, or more aptly, subjectivity are objective areas of the object. As Morton states: "what is called *intersubjectivity*—a shared space in which human meaning resonates—is a small region of a much larger interobjective configuration space."[76] It constitutes a sincere approach to the thing without taking it to be definitive. For example, in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Gilles Deleuze pointed out Bacon's need to orient the work towards the spectator's nervous system and not towards the brain. The French philosopher also connected it with Cézanne's analogous disposition to act on the person's instinct and temperament, i.e., in his/her "vital moment." With these words, Deleuze fits into the present discussion of deep cognition and the mimetic procedure: "As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed."[77] In combination with this, Jacques Rancière advocates a similar individuality and participation for the spectator in *The Emancipated Spectator*.[78] In this case, such individuality points to the object's qualitative multiplicity, as we will see in the next chapter.

Miralles also pursued the cognizer's interior as a way of escaping reductionism. In a text dedicated to the work of Josep Maria Jujol, Miralles celebrates the Art nouveau architect's ability to challenge the inhabitant in order to eliminate preconditions as a means of deep and open engagement. Here are some excerpts from the article:

> I would like to tell you where our interest in this work comes from... / From where this capacity that Jujol has to initiate a direct dialogue with those who approach it. […] It seems that in this work we find directly written down unaltered intuitions, specific emotions, individual impulses, occurrences... / They appear to be constructed without any other subordination than that of the rules that they themselves define. They seem to follow that reflection in which «the utmost rigor is at the same time the utmost freedom». / It is a work that forces us, even before starting, to judge it according to its own rules: no style, no school, no master... […] And [the work] invites us to think of a subjective soul that leaves its solutions unfinished, only initiated and to its own fate. / These remain unsettled, alone. But never disfigured to form a preconceived unity. / A discriminating eye divides, separates... And the unity is achieved by giving a visible, or more aptly, sensitive character to the auxiliary lines that construct the form. […] His work is composed of a series of echoes that need to be reflected in other people.[79]

[76] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 81.
[77] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981; repr., London: Continuum, 2003), 34–35.
[78] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*. We will return to Rancière's concept in Section 5.3.
[79] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 34-37, [author's translation].

4.2.5. The participation of the architect

However, aesthetic participation is not limited to the spectator. It is also possible in creative practice. In other words, mimesis or imitation is not exclusive to the spectator's or user's experience, but can also involve the architect while designing. Given that the practical aspects of aesthetics in design revolve around the project's qualitative rather than substantial aspects, this topic belongs to Chapter 5, dedicated to an aesthetic approach to the AP's Many. After all, "production" is about unveiling architectural attributes. For now, and following the discussion of the cognizer's role within formalist aesthetics, it suffices to problematize what would be a Friedian design process in which the architect's volition is suspended. This approach can be argued in Eisenman and contrasted with Miralles (Vig. 4-A).

In the article "The Making of the Machine," Alejandro Zaera sees in Eisenman's critical practice a singular position of resistance, because it needs neither follow nor reject the Zeitgeist in which it operates. For the Spanish architect, this is possible thanks to the subversion of the designer, something that relates directly to Fried's negation of the beholder's participation. As Zaera writes:

> [Eisenman's] absolute resistance to the space of power is produced not by exerting a subjective opposition to it but rather through the replacement of the subject, always thought to represent some form of power, by an instrumental or machinic process. By replacing origin, presence, and author with arbitrariness, absence, and machinic behavior, he has found a formula for a nonconservative critical resistance that also operates within the space of the zeitgeist. Eisenman's major discovery is to have located the space of a machinic performance as a space of absolute resistance within the zeitgeist: he has become the first truly machinic architect, not in the sense of production but in the sense of the purely ideological.[80]

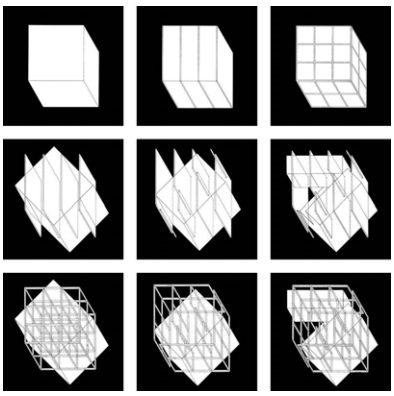


Figure 4-4. Peter Eisenman, *House III*, diagrams, 1969-1971.

[80] Alejandro Zaera Polo and Cynthia C. Davidson, "The Making of the Machine: Powerless Control as a Critical Strategy," in *Eleven Authors in Search of a Building* (New York, NY: The Monacelli Press, 1996), 29. In an interview, precisely with Zaera, Eisenman replies: "Part of being able to be an autonomous author is having such incredible control that I can let the machine run." Peter Eisenman and Alejandro Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Peter Eisenman," in *Peter Eisenman 1990-1997*, vol. 83 (Madrid: El Croquis, 1997), 17. In the article "Processes of the Insterstitial," Eisenman continues his defense against Zaera's criticism by arguing that his idea of "machinic" does not mean "mechanical," but derives from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "desiring machine." Eisenman argues that he transposes this concept to the architectural process itself as a way of escaping from given values and establishing a special kind of production: one that "never produces the same condition of becoming." Peter Eisenman, "Processes of the Interstitial," in *Peter Eisenman 1990-1997*, vol. 83 (Madrid: El Croquis, 1997), 26.

Eisenman's understanding of the cognizer's engagement with the space is the opposite of that of the design process. All the plasticity that the American architect acknowledges to the user in how to explore and merge with the architectural piece—as shown in the descriptions of House III—becomes an absence of the architect in the inquiry of the project. Such closure of the design process to the architect's active participation echoes Fried's completeness of the artwork, regardless of the beholder. In short, the architect in Eisenman's design process is Fried's "new-'subject'" in artistic experience. Zaera's words about the New York architect are also reminiscent of Fiedler's aversion to the person's rich interior, as the architect's volition "introduce[s] religious, ethical, social, and political concerns [what Zaera calls "space of power"] into what is essentially a problem of form."[81] Especially evident in his experimental houses, the set of design rules does not involve the architect actively (Fig. 4-4). They are self-enclosed procedures that are far from giving any chance of mimetic access in a Miralles' or Harman's sense.[82]

In contrast, Eisenman's design process is a game of automatic transformations (displacement, rotate, division, overlapping, etc.) that do not need an architect with whom to interact, because they already play by themselves in isolation. What interests him here is the space of possibilities given within such an enclosed system, and the fiction of the absence of the architect is sufficient to deploy the resulting operations. In this context, the designer cannot participate in the project's development. There is no doubt that the architect is the creator of the system of such automatic actions and codes, but s/he is not allowed to take part in them once they begin to run. In this sense, it is significant how Miralles saw in Eisenman a "syllogism of the kind A=A. […] [I]t is not a mechanism that gives the necessary opening to freely access the work and its use. It is a presentation that never provides the necessary vulnerability that any work[process] needs."[83] The architect does not discover, but only receives. There is no way to establish a personal mask or a particularized access mechanism. Eisenman's machinic design method suspends all kinds of subjectivity. There is no "regime of attraction," as Bryant conceives it (see Subsection 3.1.1). If Riegl's Kunstwollen simultaneously addressed the inner material of the object and the cultural disposition that unpacks it, Eisenman's automated system focuses exclusively on the former.

Contrary to such blockages to the architect's subjectivity, Miralles' notion of imitation—or mimetic procedure—appears as an *intuitive ritual* for designing: a *modus operandi*, ethos, or disposition that remains consistent with each confronted project, but which never repeats the same particular decision twice.[84] This continuous search for internal singularity is also found in Eisenman's "machine of becoming" capable of operating without an architect. Certainly, both agendas share ambitions: to seek something intrinsic and increasingly unique for each project. However, their approaches could not be more contrary. Miralles believes in the innermost human capacities to navigate the profundity of the project. Eisenman delegates the task to a meticulously designed set of rules. Eisenman's design process and Fried's readings of Caro's sculptures seek maximum conceptual abstraction as the deepest form of the work through a method that excludes human

[81] Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 30.

[82] Graphic expression is symptomatic of the human subjectivity behind a design process. Compare the diagrams of Eisenman's House III (Fig. 4-4) with Miralles' collages in the early stages of design (Figs. 5-23, 5-24, 5-25).

[83] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 82, [author's translation].

[84] The particularities that this dissertation argues that comprises Miralles' *modus operandi* are discussed in the Section 5.2 on metaphors and in Section 7.3 on mereological compositions.

individuality.[85] Miralles' interests entail much more down-to-earth strategies through tangible procedures of accessibility performed by humans. Unlike Eisenman, the ineffable reality was not the starting point, but the elusive goal for Miralles. As he himself commented on his design agenda:

> I feel I am part of the tradition that values making, manufacturing, as the origin of thinking. I feel much closer to this form of operating than to the tradition that seeks the abstract idea as the origin of the building activity.[86]

The consequence of this way of designing-by-making is the establishment of an operative framework in relation to the depths of the project, a gate that allows the architect to "enter" the work's depths. Miralles reflected the sense of this proceeding in one of his lectures: "I will focus on this thing of "wanting to enter" [*quererse adentrar*], because in my projects I have almost never done anything else. That is to say, they are almost: start and go forward [*empezar y para adelante*]"[87] A way to discover the project while doing/relating to it.

To summarize, mimesis and imitation are also present in an aesthetic understanding of the design process and not only in the occupancy of space. They are the procedures by which the cognizer (architect or spectator) assumes the active role of the object's withdrawn reality. In this encounter, the person acknowledges a deep sense of the AP and actualizes some object's characteristics already available to him/her. There is no doubt about the formal differences in the aesthetic procedures between media (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, etc.) and between cognizers (designer, user, architect, beholder, etc.). But the participatory nature of an aesthetic action for each of these cognizers in each of these media is the same. The owner of House III "choosing finishes, adding walls, [or] placing furniture" intuitively is no different from the beholder's movements around Caro's sculpture. Both are expressions of their respective objects. And in both cases, the design challenge lies in how the work is presented to trigger that aesthetic engagement in the audience. In the same vein, the architect who adopts the aesthetic path to design exercises mimetic procedures to enter the AP's double interior. Chapter 5 will examine particular aesthetic strategies in the context of both design and occupation. Before that, we shall comment on the aesthetic repercussions of deep cognition under an object-oriented formalism.

4.2.6. The ineffable allusion/allure

If mimesis and imitation are the aesthetic framework to access (Miralles) and become (Harman) the project, allusion and allure are the simultaneous aesthetic consequences or effects of such a process in relation to deep reality. In allure, the object's nucleus has a power of seduction through particular qualities that attracts the observer for replacement. In turn, the person notices the unitary existence of the thing. Allure/allusion is the aesthetic result of deep cognition. For Harman, this is the indirect access to the real object. However, this obliqueness should not be confused with the fact of capturing the thing in-itself. As he claims: "allure makes no claim to get us closer to this shadowy realm, since it plays out

[85] In Chapter 2, I discussed how Eisenman's early work originated from what he called "generic form." In mid and later Eisenman, such depth was transformed into an immanence of the design process that runs on its own terms. In Fried's writing, abstraction means anti-literality understood as profoundly artistic, something he finds in Caro's oeuvre. Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 189–92.
[86] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 273.
[87] Miralles, "Acceder," 19, [author's translation].

entirely in the realm of relations, not that of the things themselves."[88] Allure occurs when being and its qualities separate from each other in the object of experience.[89] That means that the presented manifestation does not equal its substance literally, as it occurs in the elastic or direct zone of cognition. Instead, the entity's One and their representations within its Many come into tension, as it occurs in the plastic or aesthetic zone of cognition.

On this basis, deep cognition entails an aesthetic relational mode in which the presence of the object's existence is perceptible without being qualitatively evident. It alludes to the evasive substance, something that, for Wölfflin, constitutes the very sense of beauty in the Baroque. As he points out: "beauty no longer resides in fully apprehensible clarity at all, but passes to those forms which cannot quite be apprehended and always seem to elude the spectator. Interest in moulded form yields to the interest in indeterminate, mobile appearance."[90]

As a note, I consider "allure" and "allusion" as the similar event seen from two different angles: while allure is the attraction of the object's interior on the person, allusion is the person's route into the thing's depth. Allure/allusion can encompass many different mimetic procedures for a given object. But, as far as its unitary reality is concerned, they all lead to the same and unique result: the object's unitary deep reality comes to the fore *immaterially* in the spectator's aesthetic experience. I say "immaterially" because—once again—being has no qualities for this thesis' theoretical stance, making its apprehension ineffable and untranslatable. It is for this reason that allure/allusion escapes analytical examination. It is a unique and non-paraphrasable awareness of the object's existence. We saw above this sort of registration in Fiedler's theory of pure visibility and Greenberg's idea of flatness. In OOO, Steven Shaviro describes Harman's allure as follows:

> This is the attraction of something that has retreated into its own depths. An object is alluring when it does not just display particular qualities, but also insinuates the existence of something deeper, something hidden and inaccessible, something that cannot actually be displayed. […] To be allured is to be beckoned into a realm that cannot ever be reached.[91]

As I mention somewhere else: "Like mimesis [and imitation], the current notion of allusion[/allure] does not indicate something external but is the internal contract in any aesthetic unit in which the object shows its presence to the beholder in an inarticulate way."[92] What is the mechanism of allusion? The displacement that generates a challenging presentation of the work, incapable of being digested by the instantaneity of an "automatic perception" (Shklovsky), engenders the sensation of deep reality as one of the resulting

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[88] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 143.

[89] Ibid., 153.

[90] Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, eBook (1915; repr., Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2012), chap. 5.

[91] Steven Shaviro, "The Actual Volcano: Whitehead, Harman, and the Problem of Relations," in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, ed. Levi R. Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman, 2011, 289. It should be noted that Shaviro links Harman's "withdrawal" to the Kantian "sublime." But this is only one of many other possibilities. Shaviro's comparison is only effective when the withdrawal is absolutely large or powerful, like Kant's account of the sublime. But the large and the powerful are not an exclusive condition for Harman's withdrawal to occur. The tension between the qualities and the real object can take place in other less pretentious situations. This is one of the reasons why Harman does not distinguish between "beauty" and "sublimity." See Harman's response to Shaviro's definition in Harman, *Art and Objects*, 46–47.

[92] Gonzalo Vaíllo, "The Knowable and the Ineffable: An Object-Oriented Reading of Enric Miralles' Design Approach," *Cuadernos de Proyectos Arquitectónicos*, no. 9 (2021): 92–95.

effects of any aesthetic encounter. Such cognitive perturbation prevents experience from capitalizing on the presentational qualities as such. In turn, the relation becomes aesthetic, and is oriented towards what the exposed material structure represents: the unitary being and the multiplicity of other features.

From a design perspective, what the architect or artist seeks to offer is a compositional arrangement that takes the spectator into the work's underworld. As formalist Adolf von Hildebrand claimed: "The appearance must draw the imagination into depth. It is therefore essential that the artistic representation embody a coherent *attraction* into depth."[93] When so, deep reality becomes evident in the cognizer's sensation. The object's existence in the world becomes present in experience. For Shklovsky, art is capable of that. Repeating his words: "art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony."[94] In a similar vein, Michael Fried comments on this idea of immaterial, existential presence invoked in the observer, although he sees such an object-cognizer deep relational complicity as something negative. As he puts it:

> The presence of literalist [minimalist] art, which Greenberg was the first to analyze, is basically a theatrical effect or quality—a kind of *stage* presence. It is a function not just of the obtrusiveness and, often, aggressiveness of literalist work, but of the special complicity that that work extorts from the beholder. Something is said to have presence when it demands that the beholder take it into account, that [s/]he take it seriously—and when the fulfillment of that demand consists simply in being aware of the work and, so to speak, in acting accordingly. […] [T]he experience of coming upon literalist objects unexpectedly—for example, in somewhat darkened rooms—can be strongly, if momentarily, disquieting in just this way.[95]

The object's being is felt but not perceived. Again, Fried sees such attraction and "stage presence" as anti-art. However, following Harman's aesthetic tenets, the negativity of Fried's argument is inverted as the fundamental condition of aesthetic cognition. The theatrical effect—Fried's number one enemy—imbued by the object and performed by the cognizer is for Harman and this thesis the basis of aesthetic cognition, and the main reason for acknowledging the person as a fundamental part of it. As Harman states: "The theatrical is essential to aesthetics because it alone is what saves us from the literal."[96] Theatrical, aesthetic, or plastic cognition makes an entity's being vibrate in our experience of it. It brings the existence of reality into contact with the cognizer in an immaterial, non-qualitative, and hence ineffable form. Fried's passage is also the proof that the beholder's vocation is not the isolated act of the idealist subject, but the coordination of the person with the work's substance. I cite from it again: "the special complicity that work extorts from the beholder." And how does the person experience this? "Disquietingly," uncomforted, non-automatic.

Such a profound, unsettling, and unspeakable experiential effect does not come out of nowhere. It requires an intuitive, mimetic procedure. As seen above, this set of actions

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[93] Adolf Hildebrand, "The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts," in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (1873; repr., Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 244, [emphasis added].
[94] Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 2.
[95] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 155.
[96] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 58. As seen before, Fried equates "literalism" with "theatricality," i.e., the drama that the cognizer brings to the work of art precludes its deep cognition. Harman, and this thesis with him, argues the opposite.

is part of the aesthetic cognition itself. In the example of House III, they are the owner's design decisions to regain possession of the space, or the spectator's movements around Caro's piece. On the same basis, the architect can experience the same deep sense of the project. What are those moments in a design process when two or more parallel lines of work suddenly intersect, resolving the design in an unexpected "click," if not the immaterial manifestation of the project's being that it also offers additional qualitative clairvoyance? Or vice versa, what is this disruptive event when suddenly a stable version of the design ceases to make sense if not precisely the foregrounding of the project's own existence? Heidegger would call it the "breaking of the tool," since the malfunctioning of something gives rise to its profound apprehension. But the "break" also refers to the first rhetorical question of the design solution. What is "broken" is not the thing as such, but our automatic experience of it. And the negative or positive evaluation of such cognitive break is irrelevant to the fact of the "break" itself, which is the yield point towards a deep relationship with the object in question. What intuitive and mimetic procedures can occur in designing will be addressed in section 5.2.

The ineffable awareness of being and the associated knowable discoveries are certainly not possible within a design regime based on a pre-defined idea or factual circumstances in which to test preconceived truths. However, this punctual awareness may not always be so definable in time, as a deep cognition of the AP results from an unnoticed, involuntary process that accumulates beneath our regular and literal cognition. This aesthetic progression is evident, unlike in painting, in most artistic media (literature, music, sculpture, architecture) and their aesthetic or theatrical creative acts, i.e., those design processes that are attracted by the interior of the work rather than capitalizing on its superficiality. We can call this an *elongated aesthetic cognition* in contrast to the immediate aesthetic apprehension. This is not necessarily so because the aesthetic reward expands over time. Rather, it is because it takes longer to develop. It builds through a process that spans over time, and where aesthetic judgment is masked under seemingly ordinary actions before reaching that cognitive zenith.

Within this framework, Miralles' design approach implies "[t]his allusive mode of expression."[97] As a reminder, allusion is not the literal or figurative relation to other phenomena. As the Spanish architect stated:

> I am not at all interested in allusive reality, where connections are made backwards in time, towards history, or forwards, towards a utopia; or towards a given paradigm or language… What interests me is a sort of incorporation, of infinite integration…[98]

Miralles accounted for "an interior discourse– parallel to a visual one," he said.[99] When Harman locates allusion/allure in the gap between the superficial qualities and the withdrawn reality, also known in OOO as "space," Miralles recognizes a similar relationship between the outside and the inside of things: a tension in which the surface "leads us on its paths 'to the depths' […] one resorts to evocation, metaphor, allusion. […] Immerse yourself in the artwork, make the shadows speak… […] what is not seen, 'what the tree, the tower, or a building hide from us'..."[100]

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[97] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:13, [author's translation].
[98] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 275.
[99] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:5, [author's translation]. Miralles saw this idea in the sketches of the Grand Tour travelers, the subject of his dissertation.
[100] Ibid., 1:14, 10, 2, [author's translation].

4.2.7. Summary on object-oriented formalism

To summarize this long section on object-oriented formalism, I will conclude that Harman's major distinction from Greenberg and Fried lies in the addition of *ontological scalarity* to each of their aesthetic theories. Taking the artistic or architectural object as the zero of this scale, Harman adds a point down in the work's composition. That entails that, unlike Greenberg's holistic flatness that includes all paintings and their pictorial components, Harman considers both the painting's parts and the whole as autonomous objects without canceling their interdependency. With Fried's theory, Harman adds an upward point of scale. Therein, the object is a part that relates to another part: the beholder. The union gives rise to the larger object of the aesthetic-unit. Such an experiential object is for Harman the basis of art and architecture.[101]

The imperatives of Fried and Greenberg towards the ineffable of the work of art are irrefutable. However, their methods, especially Fried's insistence on the negation of the spectator's subjectivity, are at the cost of ignoring the other depth of the work: its qualitative and knowable interior. I think that this critique would only reinforce their convictions in substantial form as the only matter of aesthetics. However, if one intends to deal with the entirety of the object, i.e., with its unitary substance and its abundant qualities, omitting the latter would result in an incomplete approach.

For this reason, historical formalist stances, which in some way or another ignore the beholder's capacities, typically contemplate the possibility of aesthetics only through the physicality and structure of material form. This is the literal, material account of Whistler's "the picture ends where the frame begins." However, when Fried's idea of the "situation" as the encounter of the work and the cognizer is not taken as something negative for aesthetics but as an autonomous object, the physical and material aspects of the work are only half of the aesthetic paths to the bowels of the object. In this context, the non-fictitious but real and deep attachment of the observer constitutes a fundamental part of the aesthetic inquiry. This becomes clear in Miralles' and Harman's notions of imitation and mimesis, in which the *mimetic procedure* gains an aesthetic scope.

Both the physical object and its experience are susceptible to aesthetic pretensions. Mid-twentieth century formalism deals exclusively with the former, reducing its field of investigation to the entity's oneness. Harman's formalism focuses on the latter, and this thesis joins this method as a way of arriving at a simultaneous registration of the object's substantive and qualitative domains. In other words, the inclusion of the cognizer's subjectivity as part of aesthetic cognition is what grants simultaneous access to the thing's unitary being and its manifold manifestations. Moreover, aesthetic cognition—in its deep and open register—is not exclusive to the beholder or the user (the audience), but is also possible in creative labor (author, designer, architect, artist). In fact, this is the very method that this thesis embraces for the architect's work process with the AP.

After examining the cognitive unification of aesthetic cognition between the work and the cognizer in relation to deep reality or being, it seems necessary to contrast such a position with the contemporary context of OOO in architecture.

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[101] However, we should not understand ontological scalarity in its ordinal meaning (order of rank) or sense of relationship (mass, length, duration, energy) but in ecological terms. In this sense, "scale" is the level at which certain types of relationships occur between collections of heterogeneous objects for the emergence of larger objects. Moreover, ecological scales are not linear but transversal and multi-directional. That means that an object can be at many scales simultaneously, as examined in Part One.

4.3. OOO and architecture

The arrival of OOO in the architectural discourse in early 2010s marked the point at which some architects, especially in the US, abandoned the theoretical premises of the last quarter of the twenty century based on networks, field conditions, and continuous flows to reorient the disciplinary debate towards the notions of reality and objects. In any case, neither this architectural agenda nor the OOO arguments that motivated it are isolated, but are situated in a broader intellectual landscape characterized by a decentralization of the human being.[102]

At the time of this writing (January 2021), there are divergent voices on the status and relevance of OOO's ideas in the theory and practice of architecture. For some authors, paradoxically those who do not work directly with these philosophical principles, it is already possible to speak of an "object-oriented architecture" with a defined formal language.[103] For others, paradoxically those who work with these realist ideas, the architecture-OOO interaction is in an experimental phase, where there are heterogeneous and unfinished lines of work. At first, the latter may mean that they are far from establishing a cohesive current.[104] However, in my opinion, the multidirectional translations of OOO in today's architecture—and to which this dissertation contributes—are nothing more than the very nature of what this philosophical school offers in its cognitive framework of depth and openness, regardless of whether we want to put its findings in the first or the second group of authors. What I want to say is that the trial-and-error phase, as opposed to the mature assimilation of principles in the relationship between architecture and OOO, do not differ from each other. The former is the *raison d'être* of the latter; at least, the "speculative" of Speculative Realism in which OOO is included informs this condition of epistemological inconclusiveness.

This is not to advance the view that OOO in architecture cannot acquire a stable status beyond the experimental or it is far from becoming "a viable paradigm," as Patrik Schumacher condemningly claims.[105] On the contrary, it is about elevating the experimental in itself, promoting the idea that cultural and disciplinary stability—or, at least, a large part of it more than it is now—may be rooted in the oxymoronic condition of unstable, contradictory, and inconsistent facts and axioms that reflect our innate cognitive finitude on the autonomous completeness of things. That is to say, to set the episteme on a flat conjectural foundation not restricted to an elite that first tests and sorts out its possibilities

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[102] Bruno Latour dissolves the culture-nature dialectic in favor of hybrids, Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*. Donna Haraway questions human exceptionalism and the notion of anthropocene in favor of the multispecism, Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*. Karen Barad's theory of agential realism proposes that things are the material possibility of the interaction ("intra-actions") of humans and non-humans, Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Timothy Morton's ecological theory problematizes, among other things, the entanglement ("mesh") and coexistence of living and non-living things, Morton, *The Ecological Thought*. Or Benjamin Bratton challenges the notion of human sovereignty, geopolitics, and social organization through the idea of "the stack" as a spontaneous mega-structure of planetary scale self-regulated by computing technology, Benjamin H. Bratton, *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty*, Software Studies (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).

[103] Patrik Schumacher, "A Critique of Object-Oriented Architecture," *CENTER 21: The Secret Life Of Buildings*, April 2018, 77–78.. In a more neutral tone, see also Bedford, *Is There an Object Oriented Architecture? Engaging Graham Harman*.

[104] In the individual interviews conducted during this dissertation, Michael Young, Ferda Kolatan, Graham Harman, and David Ruy unanimously concluded that there is no such thing as "object-oriented architecture."

[105] Schumacher, "A Critique of Object-Oriented Architecture," 88.

in order then to second deliver—or its antithesis, dogmatize how to criticize—what is expendable. What is at stake is an open platform available and explorable to society at large.[106]

Therefore, the moment our discipline ventures that the interaction with these philosophical concepts has been exhausted and establishes, or more aptly, imposes its canonical analyses and value systems to measure whether the aspirant has reached a sufficient status to be categorized as an "architectural movement," will be when the beginning of its decline is announced since, paradoxically, we will stop understanding OOO and our disciplinary relationship with it as open. In other words, we will block the access of architecture to itself, meaning to the architectural inexhaustible surplus. This is not because OOO is the one and only theory in possession of such a surplus—OOO simply establishes a metaphysical model from what we can learn a cognitive attitude towards such a surplus—but because we will cancel the indefinable autonomy of architecture in general, and with it, its capacity to surprise.

It is for this reason that this section is not an unequivocal repertoire of how to work with a theory of objects in architecture. Nor is it a comprehensive review of the current architectural positions that have emerged so far in relation to OOO. This means that I will not discuss all the authors or all their arguments, but only those aspects that seem most productive in order to position the present dissertation within such a discourse. Therefore, to contextualize the discussion in this section, it seems useful to name some architects of the first generation—if I can call it that—associated with OOO: David Ruy, Tom Wiscombe, Michael Young, Mark F. Gage, Peter Trummer, and Ferda Kolatan. As is the case with this thesis, Miralles will sporadically appear as the retrospective example in which to contrast these agendas. Another important point is that this section, insofar as it falls within the broader Part Two on cognition, will pay more attention to cognitive concerns than an exhaustive description of the compositional aspects that bring such effects into play. This means that the following pages will focus on the comparison of the different aesthetic regimes pursued by these architects over formal analyses of the architectural configurations that lead to such receptions. Nevertheless, some of these formal considerations will appear in detail in Part Three.

4.3.1. Design methods and techniques

The terminological and conceptual developments in architecture since the early 2010s have cultivated a disciplinary inquiry into the problem of what and how designers and users understand the relationship between reality and its appearances. In my opinion, the following words of David Ruy summarize the general interest within such an architectural agenda:

> there is a representational problem with regard to the real, and this is where I think architecture emerges at its best. There is no other human practice that is so much about the problem of the real. Architecture is the first thing that tells us what reality looks like. / What I think we need is weird realism. We need an architecture that is completely devoted to the problem of the real, but one that is aware of its uncertainty.[107]

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[106] See the conclusion for an extended account of the public impact of individual speculation. See also Gage, *Designing Social Equality*.

[107] Ruy, "Weird Realism," 8. As noted in the introduction, Ruy is the architect who introduced OOO into the

To draw attention to the ambiguous nature of reality, architects have been exploring design strategies over the past decade to recalibrate the spectator/user's involvement with architecture. The general tendency has been to disrupt the audience's perceptions of both their previous assumptions and the directness of the qualities and capacities presented in the work. In other words, to move architectural experience away from immediate pragmatism and everyday or "automatic" apprehension. This has turned out to be a problem of form and representation on which the architect's competencies can intervene; i.e., what qualitative configurations the work may offer to realize pretensions beyond its own presentation. Vig. 4-B examines some particular design techniques developed by these architects. Bearing that in mind, the way Miralles intended to challenge the spectator fits perfectly with today's architectural ambitions to displace perception. As the Spanish architect commented in a lecture: "it is fundamental that [the work] cannot be understood. If someone understands something…wrong! […] You make it difficult for them. […] It is a problem of attention."[108] Once again, such a "problem of attention" within the contemporary framework derives from Harman's idea that things are not what we are given directly. In short, deep reality is not what we perceive or think about it, but its nature is by default enigmatic for cognition.

Vignette 4-B: Mysterious surface

Tom Wiscombe is one of the architects most interested in exploring a regime of *mystery* in design. As he comments in an interview:

> Mystery is that thing which will, over a long period of time, draw out your perception. It will be durable. It would be something that you return to again and again. We see in the most important architecture of the world that it does that. [...] Mystery is something that you control very precisely as architect.[109]

Wiscombe is also arguably one of the most methodological practitioners in this group. In his article "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture," the architect poses clear design operations on how the building can be received in ambiguous terms. For example, most of his designs create a tension between the clarity of the outline of masses with strong, sharp silhouettes and the blurring within that outline, which disrupts the reading of the tectonic mass. To achieve this, Wiscombe uses a variety of techniques. In projects such as the National Center for Contemporary Art in Moscow (2013) (Fig. 4-5) or the Main Museum of Los Angeles Art (2014-2017), the shapes of the volumes—but not their contours—lose their explicit morphology through overlapping patterns that do not follow the geometric logic of their base mass. Wiscombe calls this technique "tattooing."[110] If in these projects, the prominence of the patterns is more evident in relation to the morphology of the volume (they have a different color or an intricate structure), recent works such as the National Museum of World Writing in South Korea (2017) (Fig. 4-6) or the Dark Chalet (2020) have turned the surface contrasts into a more subtle confrontation between the mass body and its boundary line. In this case, the pattern runs through all the volumes, but is stressed by its multiple orientations and over-dimension.

architectural discourse. Harman and Ruy both attended St. John's College in Maryland. In the late 2000s / early 2010s, the architect became interested in the philosophical writings of his former colleague.

[108] Enric Miralles, *1987 - Enric Miralles - Conferencia tarda (14.12.1987)* (Lecture at ETSA Valencia, 1987), min. 1:54:10, 1:56:08, https://youtu.be/gKFsvmj--Ng [author's transcription and translation].

[109] Tom Wiscombe, Clashes and Intersections Interview Series: Tom Wiscombe, interview by Zaid Kashef Alghata, Video, 2015, min. 40:19, https://youtu.be/60RCLLjR9ms [author's transcription].

[110] Wiscombe, "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture," 41–43.

The scale indeterminacy and the pattern-mass mismatch are intended to produce glitches in the observer's perception that he must resolve by extending the time of perception. In doing so, Wiscombe aims to "break the automatic and habitual consumption of things," as he says.[111]

In Miralles' work, we can find similar phenomenological effects against the clarity of the interior mass; for example, in the "trigger panels" of black granite and lamellae scattered throughout the volumes of the Scottish Parliament (1998-2004) (Fig. 4-7), or the colorful tiling of fruit that jumps over the folded surfaces of the roof of the *Santa Caterina Market* (1997-2005) (Fig. 4-8), both EMBT's projects. It is surely Peter Kogler's art installations that show much more radically the dissolution of the boundaries of the room by the superposition of a pattern (Fig. 4-9).

In Wiscombe's work, a more recent design technique concerning the graphic-mass tension is the involutions or retreats of some areas of the volume within itself. Visible in the Shenzhen Science Museum (2019) (Fig. 4-10), the interest of this gesture lies in the fact that the pattern does not remain flat, as in earlier projects, but takes on an additional spatial scale. Wiscombe's techniques of surface treatment in relation to the dissolution of the legibility of volume can be traced in baroque space with its *trompe l'oeil* and dimensional drawings that expand the sense of space, as well as in the excessiveness of his three-dimensional reliefs and high-resolution surface articulations.

The latter saturation has been embraced by Mark F. Gage. Projects such as the Helsinki Guggenheim Museum (2014) (Fig. 4-11) or W 57th Street Residential Tower (2015) are not much concerned with the interior Gestalt of space—both projects take from modernism the spatial repetition of stacking slabs—to focus on a very intricate 3D envelope. By encrusting the facade with pop culture figures and Gothic motifs, respectively, and playing with blurred contours, as opposed to Wiscombe's rigid outlines, Gage seeks to produce diverse information depending on the observer's point of view. As he comments:

> I'm interested in buildings that have something different to say when you're close to them and what you see from far away is different than what you see close up. That's essentially like the opposite of modernism, where you see a building as a grid from far away and, when you get closer, you see all the components are organized in a grid. There are no vast multiple ranges of details. If a classical building has like three or four ranges of details, I'm interested in using the computer to produce five or ten different levels of scale that you can read the building: far away, close up, and then multiple distances in between. Again, that allows for a wider range of encrusted qualities to be associated with the building, gives viewers much more ability to experience it in many different ways, be curious about it, and be engaged with it as opposed to just understanding it as a glass cube.[112]

[111] Sean Lally and Tom Wiscombe, "A More Robust Discipline - Tom Wiscombe," Night White Skies, n.d., min. 20:40, https://soundcloud.com/user-561947272/ep-026-tom-wiscombe-a-more [author's transcription].

[112] Mark Foster Gage, Interview with Mark F. Gage, interview by Gonzalo Vaíllo, July 17, 2019. Perhaps it is the *National Center for Science & Innovation of Lithuania* (2016) the project that most obviously shows the differentiation of information into multiple viewpoints.



Figure 4-5. Tom Wiscombe Architecture, *National Center for Contemporary Art*, Moscow, 2013.

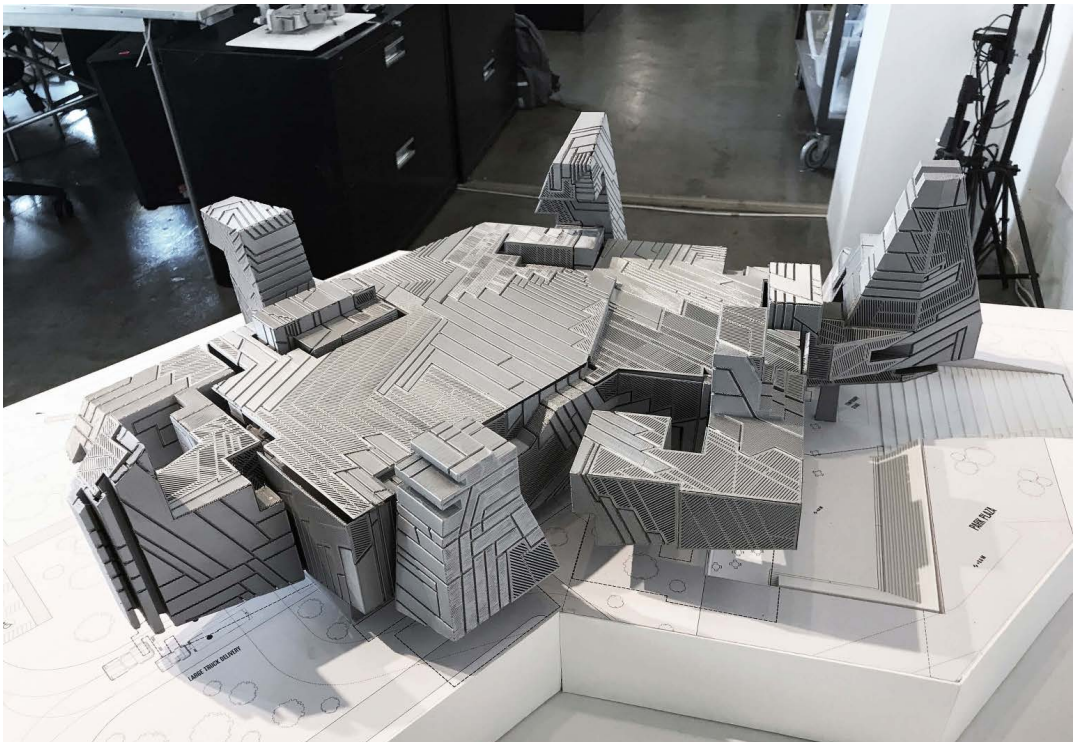


Figure 4-6. Tom Wiscombe Architecture, *National Museum of World Writing*, Incheon, South Korea, 2017.

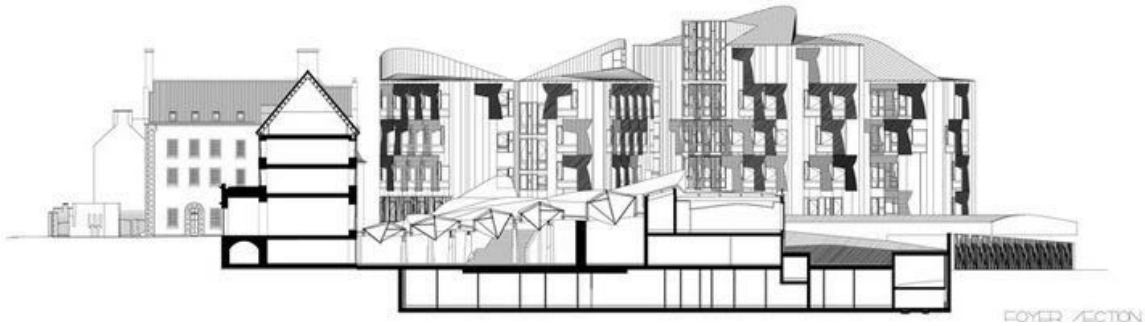


Figure 4-7. EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, Foyer Section, Edinburgh, 1998- 2004.



Figure 4-8. EMBT, *Santa Caterina Market*, Barcelona, 1997- 2005.

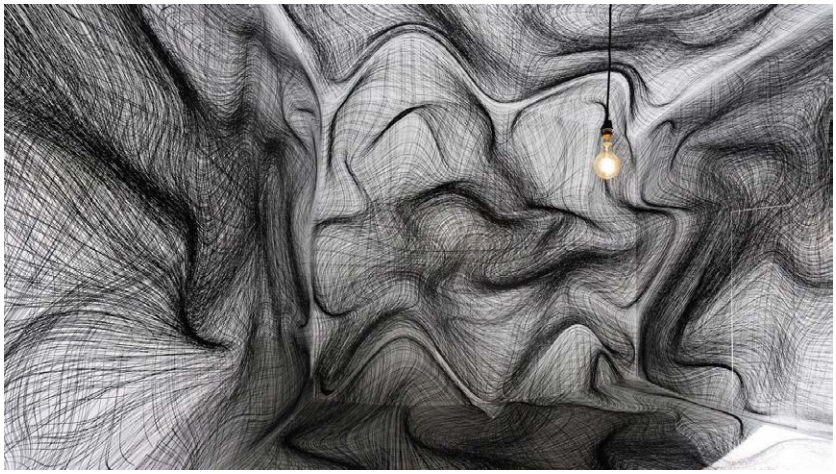


Figure 4-9. Peter Kogler, *Schauraum*, Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna, 2015.

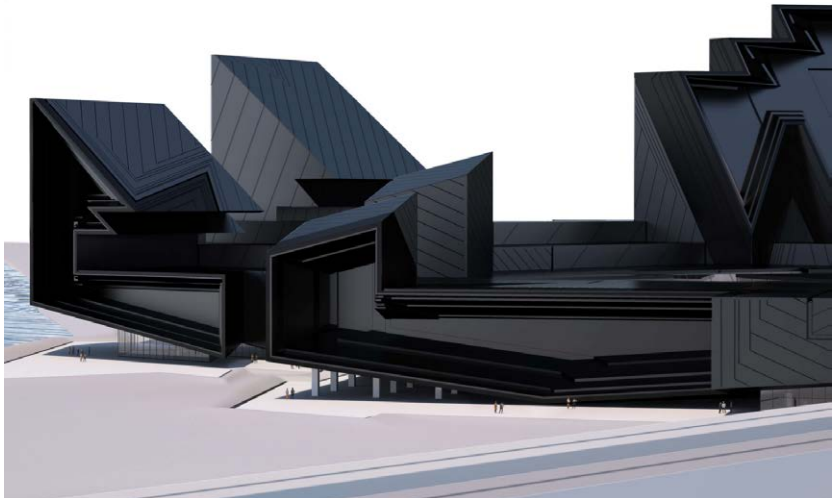


Figure 4-10. Tom Wiscombe Architecture, *Shenzhen Science Museum*, 2019.



Figure 4-11. Mark Foster Gage Architects, *Helsinki Guggenheim Museum*, 2014.

However, the word on everyone's mouth when it comes to architecture associated with OOO is undoubtedly *estrangement*.[113] Michael Young has written extensively on the subject, offering alternative accounts of how the term has previously been understood in architecture. As he notes, authors such as Anthony Vidler or Bernard Tschumi oriented estrangement towards the effect of shock, which creates a distance from the habitual and the superficial without necessarily problematizing the real. Against that, Young seeks—among other things—to disassociate the term from such a shocking repercussion in favor of a more subtle effect of attraction that can include realist concerns.[114] As he states:

> Much of what contributes to the aesthetics of realism is the allure of strange objects that appear familiar, but reveal themselves to be something other after a period of further attention. To understand what creates these effects is to focus attention onto representation itself, as an object between objects.[115]

Therefore, many contemporary design strategies propose the perceptual and conceptual irritation of everyday structures to allude to the real object as an aesthetic effect. In art, this has been termed *defamiliarization* as the technique by which seemingly ordinary things include fine alterations in their presentation that induce the audience into a state of skepticism and doubt.[116] Since the confronted phenomenon resonates in some way with the observer's previous experiences, but is not exactly the same, it forces the person to reconsider his/her assumptions about the appearances and performances of reality. In other words, by presenting a habitual world with enough alterations to make the person question the

[113] Especially after Harman's book *Weird Realism*, where he uses the work of H. P. Lovecraft to examine the philosophical implications and aesthetic effects of "horror" derived from insufficient or ambiguous descriptions that fail to provide a complete comprehension. See Graham Harman, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2012).
[114] Young, *The Estranged Object*, 29–31.
[115] Ibid., 31.
[116] The initial registrations of the term 'defamiliarization' appeared in Viktor Shklovsky's notion of *ostraninie*, and in the idea of *Verfremdungseffekt* by the theater director Bertolt Brecht.

plausibility of reality, the stabilized notion of how things are and feel goes into crisis. That moment of bewilderment twists the perception into an elongated and intense act.
This group of architects aims to create doubts about the notion of reality and, therefore, its reformulation. Their design strategies ultimately point to alternative possibilities of what we understand as reality, so these designs tend to fall into the category of the speculative. Unlike other movements such as Critical Theory or utopian/dystopian architectures, this one does not aim simply to raise awareness of the unfairness of our politics of and in reality, nor to provide a particular answer as to how the real should be understood. On the contrary, the determination of what reality should be is the responsibility of each user. What the architect does is to incite such an individual formulation. An inconclusive, and therefore plural, sense of reality dissolves the hierarchical structures of those who determine "what is real" (Vig. 4-C). It is on this basis that aesthetics gains a broader vocation than the theorization of critical art, to intervene directly onto the political and ethical plane.[117] For this, the participation of the audience's personal determinations is necessary, since the altering effects of estrangement must be resolved individually. This reaffirms the type of active cognizer addressed in the previous section.

Vignette 4-C: TE-1 by Ruy/Klein

In my opinion, one of the projects that best exemplifies this aesthetic quest on the meaning of reality through and with design means is Ruy/Klein's TE-1 (Fig. 4-12). The proposal consists of a series of artificial lagoons located near a coast that function as a power plant by regulating the water level. The interesting part comes from the nature of the client's request, as the initial proposal from the engineering firm promoting the intervention was rejected by the local community due to its industrial appearance. Ultimately, the point of debate here is the cultural image that mediates and constructs our understanding of what is synthetic and natural. In this context, the reaction of the Ruy/Klein design is to organize a set of organic-looking lagoons that, from an aerial view, appear neither artificial nor natural.

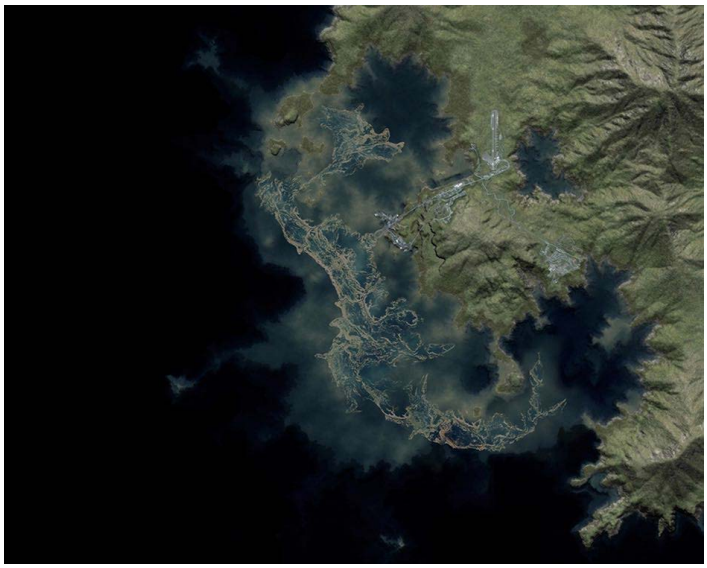


Figure 4-12. Ruy/Klein, *TE-1*, Bristol Bay, Alaska, 2013.

[117] Jacques Rancière has theorized extensively on how aesthetics involves political repercussions. For him, aesthetics seeks to reconfigure how the sensible has appeared unevenly to society for a "redistribution of the sensible," as he calls it, of egalitarian access. See Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.

Since we have no possibility of direct perception from the exosphere, our idea of nature derived from that perspective is constructed by the images and the technology that enables them (e.g., Google Earth) of those terrestrial moments. That entails that, in this case, the image medium becomes the primary source of what we understand as real nature and not our binocular registration of its physical phenomena. It is at this level in which Ruy/Klein intervene: modifying—i.e., designing—the image through which we understand the synthetic and the natural. Once the altered documentation is distributed as the basis of what constitutes the real, it forces the receiving community to come to new conclusions about the notion of natural and artificial. What they confront is a fictitious reality of nature, but a reality nonetheless. This occurs by agitating the sensual mediation of how the world can appear to us.

Stated differently, TE-1 can be examined through the lenses of *parafiction* as another technique for introducing doubt into perception. In his article "The Art of the Plausible and the Aesthetics of Doubt," Young comments: "Parafictional art intervenes in the world through constructed fictions in an attempt to open alternative plausible realities."[118] Taking as a premise the cultural acceptance of the technological software that represents the Earth from satellite imagery as a trustworthy provider of reality, TE-1 introduces with it an anomaly (i.e., a fiction, a design). The intervention does not claim to offer a conclusive resolution, but precisely its intended ambiguity makes its interpretation open. The cognizer is in the midst of a conflict between the pre-existing conviction of such satellite technology as a factual register of reality and a graft that is on the borderline of being believed or not fitting into it. If it fits for a cognizer, such aerial technology reaffirms its role as a validator of reality. It demonstrates that the oddity of the design introduced is a real possibility. Thus, it broadens what one believes to be feasible in the word. If it does not fit for a cognizer, the person puts aerial technology in crisis as a reliable source. In that case, what is reality and its means of representation is a question that the receptor has to reformulate internally.

4.3.2. Comparison with current positions

At this point, it is necessary to clarify different points of view between this thesis and some concepts that have emerged so far in the architectural agendas linked to OOO. This comparison will help to situate the present study within the contemporary heterogeneous discourse of objects in architecture. The discussion will revolve around three points: the notion of reality, the use of the familiar as a starting point for design, and the cognizer's involvement.

The first refers to the divergent notion of reality. In this sense, the positions of Ruy and Young on the subject are useful for clarifying this work's own. In my opinion, artistic techniques such as defamiliarization or parafiction reverberate on the concept of reality operating at a more superficial level, one that does not necessarily imply substantial form. Or more aptly, their positions are ultimately concerned with the object of experience, rather than the architectural object itself (as this thesis does). Ruy and Young seek to challenge the cultural understanding of what the real means in terms of its plausibility *for us*. As Ruy states: "whatever we think the real is pertains more to how we think the real should look, rather than what it *is* in an absolute sense."[119] How can the project be subjectless and

[118] Young, "The Art of the Plausible and the Aesthetics of Doubt."
[119] Ruy, "Weird Realism," 7–8.

autonomous in such a mind-centered context? How do these words escape correlationism or synthetic apriorism? In general terms, the operative interests of these architects underpin the real in the opportunities to alter and open up the cultural notion of what we assume to be possible. In terms of OOO, I argue that this position only accounts for what Harman calls the "sensual object" as the basis of reality, as Husserl did, rather than recognizing the underlying non-relational "real object."[120] In such a scenario, reality requires epistemological verification to be so.[121]

I do not question the social consequences of this approach. Indeed, shifting cognitive control from a hierarchical imposition to an open and individualized regime aligns with the purposes of this thesis of egalitarian access to the object.[122] What I do question is the need to address the notion of reality from the subject's side. It calls for validation through an epistemological act, whether on a hierarchical or egalitarian plane. For example, in the book *The Estranged Object*, Young turns the question in his examination of Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914) from "Is this Art?" to "Is this Real?" in order to problematize about "the fluctuations of the real."[123] This dissertation has presented the object as the indivisible package of a unitary reality or deep existence surrounded by multiple qualities and capacities. If this is accepted, a substance or real object cannot "fluctuate" since it has no qualities. Something is real or not depending on whether or not it exists. There are no halfway realities independent of experience. A sensual sense of reality persists in the same book—this time in Jason Payne's article—in which he asks: "How real *is* [this thing]?"[124] This formulation shows more clearly the treatment of reality as a gradient that has more to do with our management of verisimilitude than with the being qua being. Therefore, it seems to me problematic to transfer the discussion about reality—even if only terminologically—to our perception and understanding of it.

In my view, reality has nothing to do with epistemological credibility, but with ontological existence. The latter implies an autonomy of the object which, by such a condition, can establish inexhaustible cognitive processes where any phenomenon grasped is already real by default. The relationship between the unreal and the real is not in relation to consciousness. As Dufrenne remarked: "This is a transition, not from an abstract to a concrete existence, but from nonexistence to existence."[125] There is no need for the authentication of qualities, much less of substances, because any cognizable thing *is* real coming from some real source. The unreal is impossible in cognition. Even for Deleuze, it was already clear that the real is not only the actual but also the virtual, and the latter is not experiential. Put differently, what I categorize as real phenomena are what Bryant calls "local manifestations." These are not our experience-based confirmations of the existence

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[120] In Harman's theory, the "sensual object" derives from Husserl's "intentional object": the unification of appearances ("sensual qualities") in the observer's consciousness. Although it may sometimes be concurrent, the sensual object should not be confused with the "real object," which is the reality of the thing independently of experience. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, chap. 2.

[121] This vocation is clearly influenced by Rancière's discourse, which does not involve problems of deep reality, but with the way in which qualitative information is made available at large.

[122] Illustrative of this is Ruy/Klein's exhibition called *Apophenia* (2017), a continuation of the theme and techniques employed in TE-1. The term "apophenia" refers to the tendency to derive meaning through connections between apparently unrelated things, such as finding figurative forms within a cloud. In the exhibition, the architects present models and views of areas that intermingle real and fictional situations with enough intricacy and resolution to leave the production of particular meaning to each beholder.

[123] Young, *The Estranged Object*, 43–44.

[124] Ibid., 15.

[125] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 32.

of phenomena, but the existence of phenomena as such independently of experience. As Bryant points out:

> Local manifestations are *manifestations* because they are *actualizations* that occur in the world. […] local manifestations are not to be confused with manifestations *to* or *for* a subject, but are rather events that take place in the world regardless of whether or not any subjects or sentient beings exist to witness them. Consequently, local manifestation is not equivalent to the empirical or what is experienced by a subject. Experience is a subset of local manifestation, but the set comprised of local manifestations is infinitely larger than the set consisting of experience.[126]

Reality is not an experiential construct (rational or irrational)—except experience itself as its own reality. Experience is based on a given reality. Consequently, it is impossible to cognize something unreal, unless unreal means nothing. This is why it seems to me terminologically inappropriate to speak of what is "real" versus what is "false," "fake," or "fictitious" in relation to us. The "fake" is real, insofar as it exists. The problem with the "fake" is not that it is not true, but that it is literal. And that literalism of the "fake" is usually oriented to particular epistemological and political interests, most of the time unethically. In this vein, how to accommodate disparate manifestations and the value given to each of them is a different epistemological story that does not involve issues of reality. It is rather political. Bryant again on this issue: "Questions of knowledge [are] *political* questions, simultaneously targeting arguments from authority. […] No, questions of knowledge are not innocent questions. Rather, they are questions intimately related to life, governance, and freedom."[127]

Within this framework, something important should be noted. For this thesis (and I think also for most of the architectural agendas discussed in this section) and unlike many human exceptionalist pluralisms, diverse accessibility through a liberated cognizer is not a rational or ethical end. Otherwise, we are still in the Ruskinian model of "absolute values."[128] It is rather the starting point of a mode of cognition determined by the autonomous unity-multiplicity condition of the object, something that in no way diminishes or negates the social achievements of equality it entails. Therefore, concerning strategies of parity, I argue that it is the object's state of qualitative plurality that demands a plurality of approaches, and not the other way around. Multilateral accessibility cannot be an epistemological concern turned into an obligation. It is the object's natural requests, which are in tune with our social needs. As it will be further detail in the conclusion, this method is explicitly achieved by Rancière, when he accounts that "there is no path from inequality to equality. There is either a path from equality to equality or a path from inequality to inequality."[129] When Ruy/Klein introduce the disruption of assumed values about what we believe reality is, they invoke, to use Rancière's words, "a multiplicity of paths, a multiplicity of ways of constructing one's intellectual adventure."[130] This is an epistemological result with a socially engaging impact derived from the One/Many ontological condition. Section 3.1 has already outlined such a construction of object-derived subjectivities. But as it was also said there, each subjectivity (individual or

[126] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.
[127] Ibid., 16–17.
[128] For a recall of Ruskin's model of thought, see Sections 3.3 and 5.1.
[129] Rancière, "The Method of Equality," 139.
[130] Ibid.

collective), including plausible beliefs about reality, acquires a dimension of its own that must be treated separately from the object's reality. The latter cannot be reduced to the former, even if it is plural.

On this basis, while Ruy and Young work with degrees of credibility about reality, this thesis focuses on knowable/cognizable qualities. Both stances use aesthetics to displace the imposed automatic masks on cognition. But the resolution of their method ultimately requires a rational (perhaps also moral) judgment of certification. In my case, it is one of simple acceptance without reflection in the first place. One way of arguing for this divergence is that while both start from the object, such an object remains the (ontological and epistemological) goal of this thesis. Instead, they shift their conclusions to the object of experience. The credibility of the object and the object itself operate on different levels. From the perspective of the thing and although one is inside the other (Fig. 2-3), one is relational and the other autonomous.

Positions like Ruy's or Young's expand what we consider to be possible, that is, in *our* re-evaluation of reality. On the contrary, this thesis works on two simultaneous fronts: the object's double unknown, i.e., its unitary reality and multiple manifestations. On the former, my interest lies not in its validity, since it is something about which the cognizer has no competence, but in investigating cognitive modes of sensing its non-qualitative presence. The other front is about to expand what we can confront of the thing: the activation or presentness of its unknown phenomena to cognition. I see the problem of representation not primarily as a vehicle for extending what can make sense to the mind, but for all that lies behind that act of representational disruption; what the senses, the limbic system, and the intellect can register. The question of validation and its public organization is separate from that of the object's twofold dimension. Again, Ruy's and Young's positions are about the object of experience; this thesis is about the experienced object.

In this discussion, there is a second point of demarcation between certain current architectural positions around OOO and this dissertation, which, nonetheless, is intrinsically related to the previous one. This friction is more tangible in that it is methodological or practical. It refers to the capitalization of the *familiar* as a working material. As a note, Section 6.1 will examine this issue at length in relation to the role of the precedent within architectural composition. But for now, we can introduce the topic and draw some preliminary conclusions from it.

As mentioned earlier, one of the techniques of estrangement is defamiliarization: making the familiar unfamiliar, whereby some everyday qualities are altered to disrupt its familiarity. For example, Young compares in Heide Hatry's work (Fig. 4-13) the initial familiar pleasure of contemplating the beauty of a flower photograph—an easily recognizable and presumably pleasant object—with the opposite aesthetic response of realizing that it is made of animal sex organs.[131] There is no doubt about the powers of this technique to allude aesthetically to the thing's being. As Young concludes: "Hatry's flower photographs exemplify Graham Harman's category of allure."[132]

What is in dispute is the limitation of defamiliarization to broaden the possibilities of the underlying object and our relationship to its plural qualitative domain. My argument is that this expansion is regulated to some extent by the value system that we have previously attributed to these familiar aspects. This means that there will always be traces of the

[131] Young, *The Estranged Object*, 67.
[132] Ibid.

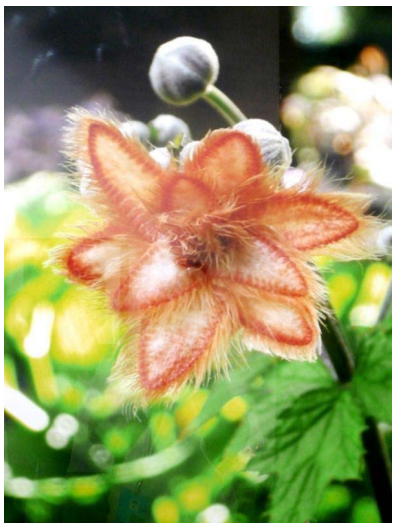


Figure 4-13. Heide Hatry, *Organa aurantiaca locustarum*, 2012, in Young, Michael, *The Estranged Object*, (2015), 66.

familiar within the defamiliarized familiar. Therein, the resulting reading will always be somewhat dependent on the presupposition of what this thing is. Consequently, cognition is restricted and biased by the recognition of the familiar in the defamiliarized. Stated differently, experiences that are confronted with defamiliarized or re-contextualized qualities, while remaining recognizable in some way, aspire to expand existing regimes of judgment and categorization. However, they will always remain within them. Despite all the associated oddities, we know that Hatry's flowers are, after all, flowers. In this cognitive regime, the observer's confirmation is ultimately required on the basis of the presupposition prior to its displacement. It is not argued that defamiliarization does not expand the possibilities of the familiar. It is criticized that it is the familiar that validates the defamiliarized rather than itself.

How can the cognitive-unit be autonomous without a total liberation from the pressure of pre-existing value systems and imposing codes of experience? In this sense, I still find more ambitious for challenging the normative and automatic the "shock effect" of Vidler or Tschumi, or the meaning-free and the arbitrary in some of Eisenman's texts that enhance the rupture with traditional modes of legitimation.[133]

Nevertheless, Ruy and Young do not anchor estrangement exclusively to the technique of defamiliarization, but also give theoretical credit to its converse: *abstraction*. In these architects' re-evaluation of the term, abstraction is also a form of realism and estrangement, a disposition to which this thesis fully engages (Chapter 6).[134] This means that, according to them, direct intervention in everyday material (defamiliarization) and its opposite (abstraction as the proposals of unrelated qualities to the known world) are possible techniques to challenge assumed conventions.[135] In the article "The Aesthetics of Abstraction," Young comments: "the aesthetics of abstraction does not require a legible precedent. What it requires is a background."[136] This means that it is not mandatory to start the design operations from what is known in order to question the existing and assumed

[133] For example, Eisenman, "The End of the Classical." or Peter Eisenman, "Processes of the Interstitial," *El Croquis*, 1997.
[134] See, Ruy, *Techniques of Estrangement*. and Young, "The Aesthetics of Abstraction."
[135] At least, this is how they reinterpret works such as Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915). See references in the previous footnote.
[136] Young, "The Aesthetics of Abstraction," 134.

milieu, which Young calls "background." Thus, while defamiliarization works from and on the everyday as both background and design material (distortion), abstraction opposes unknown qualities to the background of familiar ones (confrontation). In this sense, both techniques are "aesthetic abstractions" insofar as they question the same ethical and epistemological background, as Young formulates in the article.

This means that one can differentiate between *abstraction as a technique* and *abstraction as an effect*. Abstraction-as-effect is a synonym for estrangement by challenging the ordinary presuppositions about the world, whether by confrontation or distortion. As Young remarks:

> Abstraction within aesthetics disturbs the assumptions of the background without immediately filling them with another level of content. Instead, it intensifies or elongates the attention paid to the object or event and, in doing so, makes one doubt initial assumptions without offering an answer.[137]

In this context, defamiliarization or distortion is not a technique of abstraction, but an abstract effect; one that estranges our relation with the world. Young links abstraction (effect) and defamiliarization (technique) in this way: "Defamiliarization cracks […] smooth legibility and focuses attention onto the abstraction of the entire construct."[138]

For its part, abstraction-as-technique is the opposite of employing the familiar as source material to question the everyday, which is the twentieth century approach in the arts. To my knowledge, abstraction-as-technique is something that the current architectural discourse of objects acknowledges in theory, but has not yet explicitly put into practice. Part Three, which advocates abstract qualities, aims to contribute to that niche. As noted above, while cognitive limitations exist when defamiliarization includes in one way or other known qualities in the work's presentation, techniques of abstraction resist being placed within a given system of values or conventions. They avoid that possibility by offering no resemblance to previous concepts and experiences. This total rupture is celebrated here as a way of stripping the cognitive process of assumptions that curbs the knowable. In abstraction-as-technique, the presentational syntax excludes the cognizer's cultural system of valuation by excluding the inscription of the pre-existing recognizable reference and its semantic validity. But the abstract cannot end in its own qualitative presentation either; therefore, both morphological aspects and presupposed meanings are equally rejected. This leaves the person's innermost vocation and intuition as the driving force of the cognitive process, a sincere and autonomous attachment to the work. Therefore, this dissertation absorbs both senses of abstraction—the effectual and the technical—and leaves aside the design strategies of defamiliarization.

The third point of friction between this thesis' design theory and the contemporary positions discussed here lies in the nature of the cognizer's involvement, be it the architect or the spectator. While the previous section has argued for an aesthetic engagement of the architect in the design process, the current debate on objects in architecture—as far as I know—has not addressed this point. It has focused the discussion only on the observer's

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[137] Ibid., 139. In this sense, and in combination with his aforementioned article "The Art of the Plausible and the Aesthetics of Doubt," Young makes an important distinction between (a) the mere act of raising awareness of the unethical structures of the world without proposing alternatives (Critical Theory), (b) the alteration of reality through introducing specifically targeted content, thus with a declared intentionality (e.g., fake news), and (c) the production of doubt through aesthetics, which provides a spectrum of diverse and personal plausibilities of what can be considered as real (parafiction).

[138] Ibid., 135.

side. To this end, the way Miralles employed metaphor as a design tool (Section 5.2) will allow us to consider the design process as an aesthetic cognition, and not only place it on the side of the user or the observer.

Furthermore, how the figure of the beholder has been approached so far also requires revision. As I see it, the contemporary architectural panorama around OOO should place more emphasis on the active role of the cognizer. In this sense, it sometimes seems that the person's cognitive involvement found in the formalist tradition of painting is also the same for sculpture or architecture. I believe that Harman's idea of "anesthetization of function" in architecture—as seen in Chapter 2—is necessary within the current developments between OOO and architecture. Although I maintain my criticism of his method as a way of splitting disciplines, I think it is pertinent in remembering that it is not the same cognizing a physical space and an image; even though both may be architectural cognitions. Each medium within an AP requires its own involvement process, what I have called "mimetic procedure."

This may seem obvious, but the discourse and practice that has emerged so far around OOO principles generally deals with the user in a contemplative way, not in a physically engaging way, as does House III. The distributed architectural spaces seem to be perceived from a distant position, as in painting. Tattooing or kit-bashing techniques, no less than Ruy's and Young's specialization in the image medium, privilege the retinal aspects of cognition. I argue that these positions focus primarily on the aesthetic contemplation of the building using the same processes of involvement as if it were a canvas. These design strategies problematize the visual aspects of shape, but not the performative aspects of space. When so, aesthetics is then an exclusive matter of the eye-mind binomial under the regime of visual form and representation. The body is ignored. This could be one reason why the current condition of this architectural movement, in general terms, lacks clear lines of inquiry into how performative issues can inform spatial strategies.

This is certainly not a general rule. Not all architects or strategies employed lean in this contemplative direction. For example, Tom Wiscombe's volumes within volumes or Peter Trummer's pile concept can be considered spatial explorations involving performative architectural problems. I think more emphasis on this aspect is desirable, a lack that Jordi Vivaldi also contemplates. As he criticizes contemporary architectures that work around the ideas of OOO:

> architecture very seldom makes use of the formal renewal to transform performative disciplinary categories such as circulation, privacy, orientation, access or interiority. On the contrary, in most cases this formal renewal is limited to establishing a series of connections with the discrete thought of our days, but it is lacking in any specifically disciplinary contributions.[139]

Vivaldi's disciplinary proposal to ease this lacuna is the possibility of a new floor condition, which is neither the discrete slab repetitions of the modern movement nor the seamless floor of the first digital project, but "a floor layout that simultaneously offers a continuous reading and a discrete one."[140] In this sense, Section 5.4 will directly discuss practical possibilities of the user's bodily participation, and Part Three will propose the notion of *opaque-productive space* configured from abstract and heterogeneous fragments as a way to challenge the person's physicality.

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[139] Jordi Vivaldi, "Continuous While Discrete" (Innsbruck, University of Innsbruck, 2018), 112.
[140] Ibid.

Chapter 5. Open cognition and the knowable manifestations

After examining one implication of aesthetic cognition, that which concerns indirect access of the architect or user to the project's unitary being, this chapter will focus on the other one: how aesthetic cognition deals with its knowable plurality of qualities and capacities. As a reminder, this thesis argues for an object-cognizer relation that involves aesthetic considerations of both existence and qualities. It is a way to simultaneously address both the One and the Many sides of a project. In fact, one of such simultaneities has already been commented. The series of qualitative actions ("mimetic procedure") necessary to obtain the aesthetic presence of the AP's immaterial and existential substance are already part of its expressions. But these are not the only qualities displayed by the aesthetic experience. Through it, the cognizer's personal impressions of the project are also activated, which in turn can give rise to further architectural formulations. In fact, this scheme will be argued as the basis for the development of the design process. To this end, this chapter will propose the concept of the *chain of multiplicity* as an aesthetic causality that operates within the project's qualitative domain. Fundamental to this will be the notion of *openness*, which refers to how one representation triggers another internal representation through the participation of the spectator. Each instant of the project then becomes an "opaque-productive symbol" (Michalle Gal's term) that leads to the next one. This framework will allow us to enrich the above definition of the active cognizer by employing intuitive, emotional, and interpretative considerations through aesthetic theories like those of Dufrenne, Whistler, Eco, Rancière, and Harman.

However, the chain of multiplicity scheme presents a problem for the design process: where or how does the chain begin? In the initial phase of a creative act, there is no particular quality of the object at hand upon which the designer can proceed, and assumed reductionisms, like given conventions or particularized contextual problems, have been excluded as drivers of the project. Faced with this scenario, the first movement of the design process will be argued to be instinctively arbitrary, with no further pretensions other than the mere fact of starting the encounter with the AP. From all possible haphazard origins, the architect's intuition and subjectivity will be emphasized. More specifically, the mechanism of Harman's *metaphor* will be inverted and thus found in the early design stages of Miralles' projects. In the philosopher's usual explanation of metaphors, the properties of both object and reference are usually given, and the aesthetic act falls on the individual to make the connection.[141] In our case, the act of designing is blind. The architect can summon qualities of selected references, but there is no clear articulation of the project. It is like a mathematical problem with two unknowns, where one of them is arbitrarily defined to find an instance of the other. In this context, the ultimate purpose of the creative act is to find

[141] Nevertheless, Harman also has examples of metaphor in the creative experience of artists or authors, and not just beholders. His study of Lovecraft is perhaps the clearest example. Harman, *Weird Realism*.

qualities of such an unknown factor, namely, find an expression of the project. As expected, this incidental start will set up an initial problem of criteria for how to translate or recognize the displaced qualities of the reference as proper to the architectural object. We will see how Miralles proposed the methods of *variation* and *repetition* to identify a logic and criteria that emanate from the design process itself.

Nevertheless, this chapter will not only focus its attention on the architect's design process but also on the user's occupancy of the space. Each of these cognitive relationships will be again argued to be autonomous aesthetic-units that pursue the project's double unknown on its own terms. That means that the same freedom embraced for the architect is also claimed for the inhabitant. Thus, in order to allow a self-regulated project-user encounter, the architect cannot limit the experiences and activities of the delivered architecture. For that, the designer must depersonalize the architectural representation to make it open. A gap between the architect's and user's experiences will be established. The designer must formulate a presentation whose possibilities lie in its structural features and its capacity to call further internal expressions, rather than in the designer's intentions. Part Three will propose one of the many possibilities of what these architectural features can be.

In addition, something important to note is that the means for openness will be argued differently for the design process and occupancy. Although both starts from the same intuitive spontaneity, only the former will be further examined under the condition of repetition and expertise. Habit with the same AP will be approached as key for the architect but disastrous for the user. If for each design process intuition will specialize by iteration, space occupancy will be discussed as intuition without specialization. In the first, we will look for how the same acts of the architect can lead to different spatial manifestations; in the second, we will look for how the same spatial manifestation can generate different acts in the user. However, if I make this distinction, it is not because a repetition with aesthetic possibilities is exclusive to the design process. It has more to do with the desire to invert the typical understanding of these two cognitive forms, in which designing is the subjective and punctual impulse of the architect—therefore free of repetition—and occupying is the objective, repeated, and programmed performance of a user.

5.1. The chain of multiplicity

For the definition of the *chain of multiplicity*, the British movement of Aestheticism will help to account for the uniqueness of each representation and, while remaining so, its capacity to produce more expressions. This will be discussed through Michalle Gal's "opaque-productive symbol," a concept that she develops precisely in the aestheticist context. Following the same method of Part One, I will again argue for an additional ontological layer that will unite such a myriad of artistic responses and articulations under the same (phantom) object. This basis should be sufficient to examine the chain of multiplicity within the domain of the architectural project.

5.1.1. Lessons from aestheticism

Aestheticism took place in Britain in the late nineteenth century, emphasizing the aesthetic values of the arts rather than socio-political issues. It encompassed writers, critics, and artists, some of the most notorious being Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and James Whistler.

Along with formalism, aestheticism is another artistic and intellectual movement useful to this dissertation in various respects. First, like formalism, aestheticism reinforces the turning of art toward the work itself, a way of repealing its subordination to the contextual conditions. Second, this turn affects not only the beholder's reception but also the artist's creative freedom. Third, the uncompromising relation with the context leads to a gradual abstraction in the articulation of the artwork. Fourth, and related to the previous point, there is a distancing from the quotidian.

Before commenting on each point in detail, it is important to note that, as with formalism, what this thesis celebrates of aestheticism is not the turn to interior features as such, since they can also be literalized. What is commonly understood as "externality" is taken here to be as another form of internal representativity. Again, what is paramount is to not equate the artistic or architectural object with any of its qualities, concepts, motivations, or histories, whether considered as internal or external. With this in mind, what this thesis draws from aestheticism are its moments of irreductionism, which coincide in its case with an emancipation from contextual subjugation.

On the first point, there was a major event in the aestheticist period concerning the vindication of the artwork's interior: Whistler's lawsuit against Ruskin, in which the painter sued the critic for libel. Artistic concerns took on a legal dimension to discuss whether art—to be so—must respond to and replicate given physical or conceptual models (Ruskin), or whether artistic content can introvert into its own form (Whistler).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, James Abbott McNeill Whistler painted a series of *nocturnes* based on the banks of the Thames. These works of art refer to a pictorial style of evocative night scenes depicting foggy, veiled cityscapes. Musical titles accompanied the paintings to de-emphasize the narrative content and subject matter and focus attention on the tonal aspects of the work itself.[142] The critics of the time did not receive the works with enthusiasm, but launched harsh criticisms of a work that was branded as incomplete, unfinished, and outside the canons of painting. One of the most notorious was John Ruskin's.[143] In a review of Whistler's exhibition in 1877, the art critic noted about the painting *Nocturne in Black and Gold: the Falling Rocket* (painted at some point between 1872-77) (Fig. 5-1): "I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."[144] Whistler sued Ruskin for libel in 1878, not only to defend his persona but the new understanding of art. The jury decided in favor of Whistler,

[142] Aestheticism and formalism considered music to be one of the highest of the arts because of its non-associative capacity. In other words, the musical medium most obviously keeps the aesthetic experience tied to the internal syntax and composition of the piece, rather than being an instructive representation of something outside of its own form. Pater and Greenberg are explicit on this issue. The English essayist said: "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music." On his part, the American art critic commented about the interest of the avant-garde in music: "It was when it was discovered that the advantage of music lay chiefly in the fact that it was an 'abstract' art, an art of 'pure form'." See respectively Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 106, [emphasis removed]; and Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," 565.

[143] As briefly noted in Section 3.4, Ruskin's stance on art emphasized the truth of nature driven by absolute values and orders of the world. As Linda Merrill points out, for Ruskin, the critic's responsibility was to recommend notorious artists from among those who were not. According to Ruskin's criteria, Whistler's Nocturne in Black and Gold included no quality of noble subject matter, beauty, sincerity, or invention. Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v Ruskin* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 50.

[144] John Ruskin's words quoted from Ibid., 47.

but granted him only one penny.

Besides the painting at issue, other of Whistler's works were debated in the trial. It is worth extracting the following passage in which Whistler responses to Ruskin's lawyer (Sir John Holker) about *Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge* (ca. 1872-75) (Fig. 5-2):

> HOLKER: Do you say that this is a correct representation of Battersea Bridge?
> WHISTLER: It was not my intent simply to make a copy of Battersea Bridge. The pier in the center of the picture may not be like the piers of Battersea Bridge. I did not intend to paint a portrait of the bridge, but only a painting of a moonlight scene. As to what the picture represents, that depends upon who looks at it. To some persons it may represent all that I intended; to others it may represent nothing.[145]



Figure 5-1. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Black and Gold: the Falling Rocket*, ca. 1872-77.

[145] Ibid., 151.

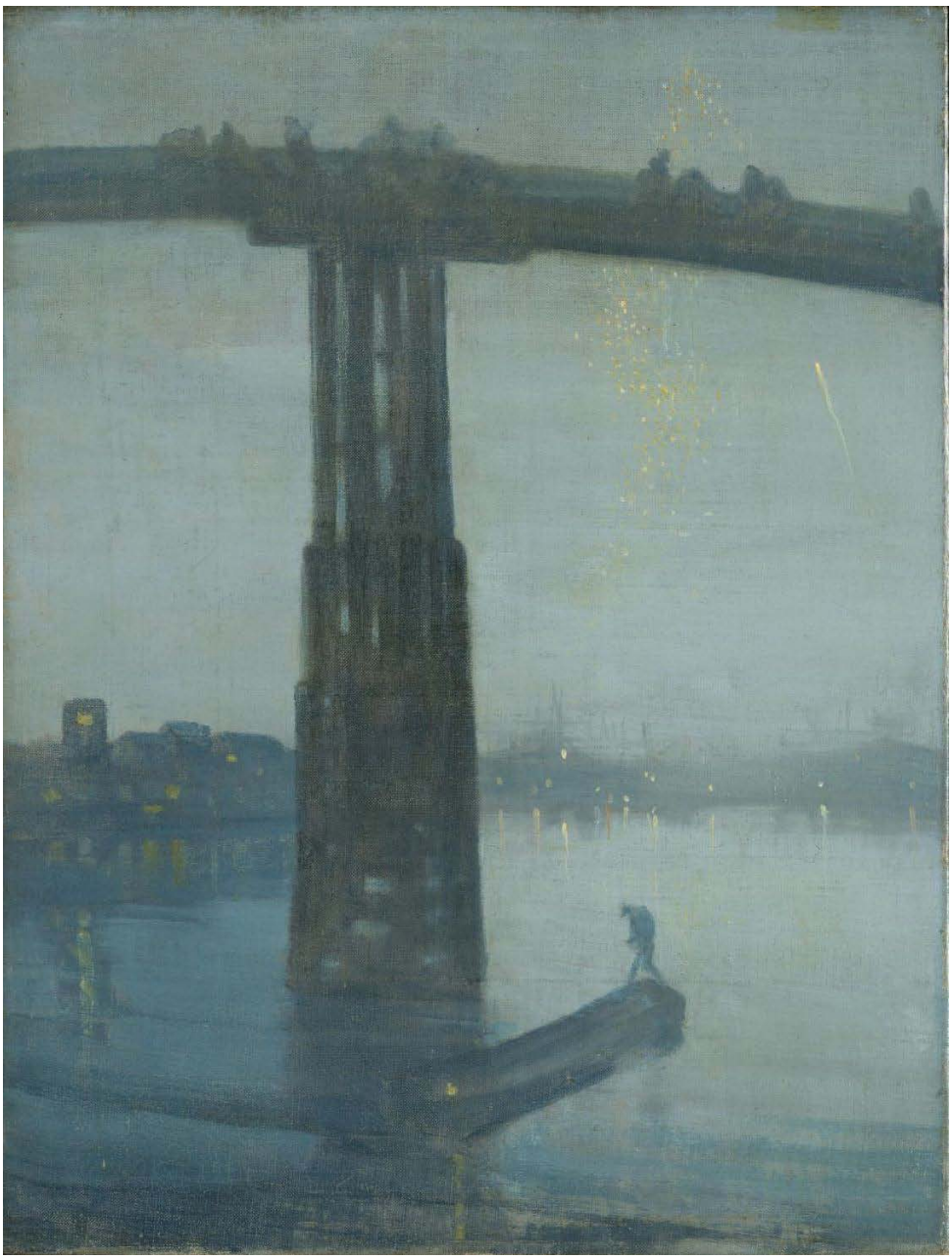


Figure 5-2. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge*, ca. 1872-75.

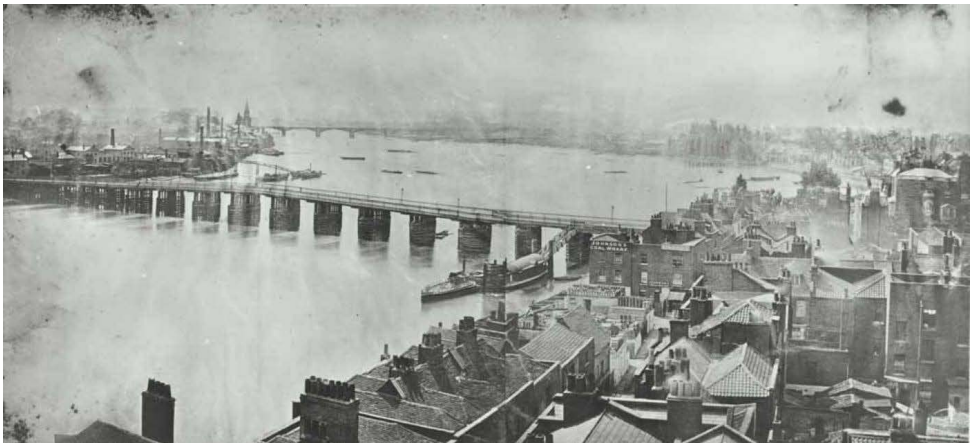


Figure 5-3. Old Battersea Bridge in 1875, (London Metropolitan Archives).

What was at stake was the recognition of an unprecedented artistic sensibility. If only for the record, the trial officially dated the shift from classicism to modernity in art.[146] That is to say, art begins to find its legitimacy not as an accurate representation of another canonized phenomenon—whether divine, moral, conceptual, or visual—but in its own laws. Aestheticism defends the independence of the artwork under the motto "art for the art's sake," denying literal externality in favor of its internal order. As Gal points out, aestheticism shifts the philosophical and critical attention from meaning to rhetoric, from semantics to syntax, and from pre-existing referents to newly produced ones.[147]

The second point learned from aestheticism is individual engagement and inquiry with the work of art—whether by the artist, the critic, or the beholder—as opposed to a blanket, unequivocal understanding of it. As just said, the Whistler vs. Ruskin trial was the confirmation of a crucial change in art history. Not because it was about one or another pictorial technique and visual style, but because artistic creation was decoupled from any dogmatic obligation to follow subjective and personal motivations. Art historian David Park Curry reflects this clearly: "The Whistler-Ruskin trial was important in so many ways. Essentially it was *aesthetics* that was on trial. It was the artist's ability to *choose* that was on trial."[148] In other words, the artist was liberated from the literal use of pre-existences and socio-political circumstances. As Curry comments elsewhere: "Whistler flatly denied Ruskin's pious equation of morality and art, insisting that moral laxity had nothing to do with limited artistic creativity."[149] In addition, the irreductionist approach to art was not exclusive to the artist. It extended to the beholder, as Whistler's quoted response indicates. The American painter was not only aiming at the author's creative freedom. He also acknowledges the viewer's ability to encounter the work at will as a way to de-literalized the aesthetic apprehension. This means that the observer's free play with the artwork follows the person's inner determinations and not the artist's dictates or the contextual conditions of the experience.

This obviously aligns with this thesis' commitment to the autonomy of each cognitive-unit. There are no true or unequivocal ways of relating to the work of art in design or experience. There are simply personal ones, and for that, the work must remain open to interpretation. In this regard, and as will be expanded upon this chapter for the architectural case, the receiver is also an artist of the work. Oscar Wilde makes this explicit in "The Critic as Artist" (1891). The article rejects obvious artistic modes that have no more than a message to deliver, because once delivered, the work becomes dumb and sterile. Instead, Wilde seeks artistic schemes that favor reverie and mood, making all interpretations true. Consequently, no interpretation is final. In this case, Wilde posits the emancipation of the critic from the artist's motivations as the reason for the work.[150] Proof of it is his poem *Symphony in Yellow* (1889), which resulted from Whistler's *Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge* (Fig. 5-2):

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[146] As noted in Chapter 2, Eisenman also identifies such a transition during the nineteenth century, and takes it as the basis for arguing for his formalism in architecture. Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 86.
[147] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 20.
[148] David Park Curry, *James McNeill Whistler: Uneasy Pieces* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 2004).
[149] David Park Curry, *James McNeill Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1984), 83.
[150] Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works*, eBook (Delphin Classics, 2013), in "The Critic as Artist."

An omnibus across the bridge
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
And, here and there, a passer-by
Shows like a little restless midge.
Big barges full of yellow hay
Are moored against the shadowy wharf,
And, like a yellow silken scarf,
The thick fog hangs along the quay.
The yellow leaves begin to fade
And flutter from the Temple elms,
And at my feet the pale green Thames
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.[151]

The built bridge (and rebuilt from scratch a few times), Whistler's painting, and Wilde's poem are a clear example of the unity-multiplicity of Battersea Bridge as a unity-multiplicity object. It also expands Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (Fig. 1-1). In this case, the entity is not only polymorphous and multi-media but also multi-authored; a threefold condition that is argued for the AP since Section 1.3.

Under this umbrella, the amplitude of each aesthetic cognition—whether for the artist, the critic, the spectator, or any other cognizer—rests on the closure of each of those encounters; that is, between the specificities of each cognizer and the specificities of the artistic object exposed through some of its manifestations. In line with the conclusion of Chapter 2, the acknowledgment of the autonomy of the work reflects in the autonomy of the cognitive-unit, without cancelling the fact that the expressions of the latter are also those of the former (see Fig. 2-3). Aesthetic attachment opens up when unequivocal apprehensions as the sole relational possibility are overcome, but it also remains contained within its cognitive limits. The space of abundance of aesthetic experience lies somewhere between the literal reading of the object—no matter whether it is taken as internal or external justification, since both are internal material of the thing—and the ontological impossibility of infinite interpretations. The layer of the knowable in Fig. 3-2 explicitly avoids both extremes in experience, as does Harman's theory. His "mining" critique of literalism and his defense of finitude or discreteness against theses where everything becomes, relates, or affects everything else also applies to cognition. After all, this too is just another object.

The third important point of aestheticism for this dissertation is that the openness of the artist's or viewer's relationship with the work is intrinsically related to the gradual abstraction of its presentation (see Fig. 5-1). Or put the other way around, abstract syntax was the tool to pursue the cognizer's unconstrained interpretation. If recognizable appearances base their cognitive validity on being precisely that, recognizable, abstract characteristics tend to activate the person's inner vocation because they are unrecognizable. This does not automatically imply that every abstract work is capable of a deep and open aesthetic registration. The danger of abstraction is not literalism, but indifference. As will be explained in Chapter 6, this occurs when the presentational qualities are excessively distant from the person's capacity for attachment. Before that, it is important to remark that referential figuration offers a didacticism that abstraction does not. This route situates

[151] Wilde, *The Complete Works*.

aesthetic experience not in a consensual or imposed reception according to rational, historical, ethical, scientific, technological, or any other pre-establishment or tautological formulation in which all the cognizers are homogenized. It is rather an intimate relationship that requires the individual's singularities to put into practice the reserve space of the entity in question for such particular access. Cognitive heterogeneity follows from individualism derived from the object's multiple qualities and capacities; hence, it is argued as a (human) subject anti-exceptionalism. For this dissertation, social equality derives from cognitive heterogeneity, rather than from moral or rational exigencies. The latter is an anthropocentric pluralism that, paradoxically, ends in cognitive homogenization, as will be detailed in the conclusion.

In this light, abstraction embraced by the British aestheticists can be argued to be subjectless. It marks the beginnings of a non-obvious compositional language irreducible to any of its cognitive articulations. As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, abstraction is considered here in two registers: as an aesthetic effect that displaces automatic perception and as a qualitative expression devoid of semantic and tautological charge. For this reason, abstraction is the cognitive and technical method proposed in this thesis to deal with the object's double unknown. This means that abstraction-as-technique, besides opening up a diverse social involvement, also offers a deep path to the withdrawn and unitary reality. This twofold objective dates back to the origins of abstraction as an artistic movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Historically, abstraction appeared in the arts with the ambition to articulate what is beyond its material qualities. Moshe Barasch is clear on this point, explaining the initial (and occultist) aspirations of abstract art as simultaneously encompassing both "spiritual reality" and "practical results," here rebranded "the ineffable and the knowable."[152] Subsection 6.2.2 "The origins of abstraction as an instrument of depth" will cover this topic in detail.

The fourth point drawn from aestheticism refers to the policy on the quotidian and is in direct relation to the question of abstraction. It is evident that the aestheticist movement of the late nineteenth century (Whistler, Rossetti, Beardsley) was still far from the pure abstract features of the early twentieth century avant-garde (Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian); although the former was one of the bases for the latter. It is still possible to see Whistler's "nocturnes" as somewhat visually mimetic (5-2). However, the duality offered by aestheticism in that familiar phenomenon can be confronted either literally or aesthetically is of interest to the dissertation, especially when related to the mechanisms of the design process.

As a preview of the section on metaphors, Miralles started all his projects from everyday references and concepts (fish, minotaurs, labyrinths, giants, etc.). But the architect read these everyday references not verbatim, but tangentially. There was no direct, literal application of what the references can offer visually or morally. It was not a matter of repeating one by one the known qualities of the domain of reference to the domain of the project, as per classicism. Nor is there an interest in the reference as such; for example, to defamiliarize it in order to open up alternative understandings of our idea of reality, as per some architectural agendas around OOO. That means that the use of the reference advocated here should not be confused with the defamiliarization technique seen above. The fundamental difference lies in that, for aestheticism or Miralles' metaphors, the everyday qualities are not important in themselves. They are a means of extracting

[152] See Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 293–308.

impressions and translating them into abstract, open formulations. In contrast, defamiliarization capitalizes on the referent to question the credibility of the everyday as what we consider the basis of reality. The reference must first be recognized in the piece in order to be questioned. On the contrary, I read that in aestheticism and in Miralles, reference animates the creative process, but there is no intention to render it explicit in the work. And if it appears, it is not to articulate the cognitive response around it. This implies that we can approach the familiar in a non-literal way and without capitalizing on it.

One can speculate that this cognitive scheme is how Whistler received the physical Battersea Bridge (Fig. 5-3) as a reference for *Nocturne in Blue and Gold* (Fig. 5-2). His encounter with the built infrastructure surely did not stop at its superficiality. The qualities of the built bridge would inform an impression that, at the same time, would be translated on the canvas without any intention of becoming the doctrine of the painting's reception. One more time, as Whistler responded in court: "It was not my intent simply to make a copy of Battersea Bridge." In turn, the painting offers the same duality of vision to the beholder: of course, there is a literal bridge depicted on the canvas, but to stop cognition in the automatism of recognizing a bridge does not comprise an aesthetic approach to the painting. On this basis, both the built bridge and the painting can be aesthetically apprehended through the rupture of their presentational qualities. In the twofold capacity of aesthetic cognition, such a rupture of the literal brings the bridge's being to the forefront of experience immaterially. But it also induces new manifestations: the built infrastructure induces the painting, and the painting does so with Wilde's poem. This triggering capacity is what turns each of these manifestations into an *opaque-productive symbol*.

5.1.2. Opaque-productive symbol

I will relate this causality to what Gal calls an "opaque-productive symbol" in her book *Aestheticism*. She compares in the following manner the symbol as a semantic instance for a given qualitative model versus the symbol as introverted, non-reflective, but productive form:

> The most significant difference between the two kinds of symbol is that the essence of the former lies in its referential transparency, that is, it sustains relationships to pre-conceived or pre-existing referents and meanings. Contrarily, the essence of the artistic symbol […] is its own structure, syntax or order, and its ability to produce *new* referents as a result of its own "material" or compositional qualities. I call this quality *productive opacity*.[153]

This thesis clearly favors the second. Later in the book, Gal says that an opaque-productive symbol is twofold, since it is complete in itself, as it needs no external validation, but also leads to other symbols of the same nature; a chain of production that she calls "forms born from form."[154] What the aestheticians of the time claimed, and which Gal supports, was that aesthetic impressions or any subsequent artistic or critical production are independent of each other. The trigger and the response are separated from each other, without considering any other relationship between the two apart from the production itself, a production that in no way justifies the *raison d'être* of the work. Wilde's poem does not have a higher aesthetic value because it refers to the Whistler's painting or the built bridge.

This dissertation finds great affinities with the concept of "opaque-productive

[153] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 13.
[154] Ibid., 122, [emphasis removed].

symbol" as aesthetic causality and the uniqueness of each new reference. This framework elevates the aesthetic method as a form of epistemological progress. As Gal remarks: "cultural development is internal, moving forward from one cultural creation to another."[155] However, there are some aspects of the term that require readjustments to fit smoothly within the present design theory.

a) *Opaque-productive symbols are not limited to works of art*. Gal contemplates productive opacity only within the realm of art objects and creative criticism.[156] I will extend this definition to any manifestation, regardless of its cultural categorization as "art." Opacity refers to the resistance exerted by any kind of qualities to be grasped in their own literal terms, as well as on behalf of previous experiences and given concepts. In addition, productivity refers to the capacity of such qualities to evoke and suggest new ones, i.e., knowable or cognizable features. If we accept these definitions, there is no reason to reduce an opaque-productive form to the realm of art, even though some works of art explicitly attempt both accomplishments. In this sense, the old Battersea Bridge, which is not a work of art, is as much an opaque-productive symbol as Whistler's painting and Wilde's poem are. Aesthetic cognition is therefore not exclusive to the arts, but broadly applicable to any phenomenon capable of breaking the superficiality of its presentation to its cognizer. This will be fundamental to understanding the kind of design process in architecture promoted here as an aesthetic cognition.

b) *Opaque-productive symbols are manifestations within the same object.* According to Gal, and in tune with traditional aestheticism and formalism, each work of art, a piece of creative criticism, and, on a larger scale, their associated artistic media are ontologically independent.[157] And this is so, since manifestations do not float freely without a being behind them. As stated in Chapter 1, the existential and qualitative spheres are necessary to comprise a complete object (Fig. 1-2). But to consider the built bridge, the painting, and the poem as separate objects related only through their production causality is not contrary to the cognitive evidence that there is also a referentiality between them. Similar to Harman's architectural case, in which he considers "form" and "function" separately, this thesis adds the layer of the "phantom object" as an encompassing and unifying entity without canceling the autonomy of each of these entities. This is made possible by the mereological world structure of objects within objects within objects. Each one stays autonomous but maintains certain relationships within the cluster, which means that each can be part of other collections.[158]

Again, the Battersea Bridge as a phantom object is polymorphous, multimedia, and multi-authored. The cognitive connection between the physical, painted, written or emotional bridge can be taken as a glimpse of the internal activity within their unifying object. In fact, this is what the concept of flat representativity introduced in Section 1.2 is all about: each representation, besides presenting itself, is able to refer to and offer different aspects of its being, and to refer to and conduct to other knowable qualities. As also said then, internal referentiality between manifestations does not mean reading any of the three

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[155] Ibid., 128.

[156] About the latter, Gal remarks Oscar Wilde's premises that the critical work is a new creation and not a descriptive repetition. In other words, criticism is not subjugated to the work of art being criticized, but is "creative and independent, is in fact an art by itself," as Wilde asserted. See Ibid., 119–21. For more, see Wilde's essay with the unequivocal title "The Critic as Artist." Wilde, *The Complete Works*.

[157] Gal, *Aestheticism*, 116, 121.

[158] For example, the bridge poem, besides being a representative part of the bridge itself, belongs to Wilde's oeuvre; something that does not happen with the built and painted bridge.

bridge instances in terms of the others; this would be literalism.[159]

A reference is always internal, otherwise cannot be cognized under the regime of the object in question. Moreover, it is the starting point of aesthetic cognition, but never its conclusion or source of legitimization. This framework gives us a preliminary pattern for aesthetic causality as a chain:

> … > (1) reference > (2) aesthetic impression > (3) artistic/architectural representation > (4) aesthetic impression > (5) new representation > …

Therein, each link is both result and reference, leading non-literally to another internal link, and each person who activates these instances is simultaneously beholder and creator.

It is irrefutable that the built bridge, the painting, the poem, and their receptions entail a degree of difference from one another. As was said concerning the three chairs of Kosuth (Fig. 1-1), each instance is an object in itself. But when considered as a cluster, each of them brings certain unique aspects and capabilities that the others do not offer. In this sense, there are features of one representation that are untranslatable to another, even if both belong to the same discrete entity. However, I argue that this difference is qualitative and not substantial. An object's qualitative realm is full of formal variations. The three physical manifestations of the bridge-object are among the abundant phenomenal profiles of the same underlying reality. And the aesthetic and emotional responses that each piece instills are also different from them and from each other, being those impressions additional profiles in either case.

My point here is that the aesthetic causality of the opaque-productive symbol is always internal, even though it generates new forms. To be so, its triggering and resulting instances have to be contained in the same object. If for aestheticism (and formalism) a painting or a poem is an autonomous circus ring, this dissertation, without annulling such an individual scene, accounts for the three-ring circus as a unifying entity; a circus that, in fact, has a vast but always finite number of rings.

In the terms of this thesis, the epistemological navigation within the Battersea Bridge's expressive diversity is a clear example of a chain of multiplicity. In inverse order of its production: the poem hides in the knowable excess of the bridge-object becoming tangible to the audience from the emotional layer of the cognizer (Wilde, in this case), which, at the same time, comes from the non-literal, ambiguous, and opaque character of the painting. The analysis of the chain continues backwards with the aesthetic impression Whistler gained from the built bridge. This epistemological scheme echoes Nelson Goodman's aesthetic theory, especially its modes or chains of reference.[160]

In any case, the chain of multiplicity, or "form born of form," is not an unstructured nebula that can unveil anything or everything. On the contrary, each qualitative domain, although epistemologically indemonstrable since its totality is ungraspable, is enormously finite. That is why it can only actualize what it already contains within the scope of the cognizer's faculties. In this light, it can be said that the chain of multiplicity is the

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[159] The example of the bridge is pertinent to evidence the impossibility of external literalism when experience is considered an internal part of the manifestations of the object. Reading Whistler's painting literally would commonly be taken as a form of external reductionism in relation to the physical bridge. But since both expressions are within the larger object-bridge, the literal must always be internal. There is no such thing as external cognition.

[160] See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968).

epistemological project of an object. It is always susceptible to becoming plural, because it includes multiple authors, spaces, and times. In this sense, Whistler's and Wilde's pieces appeared from the pool of profiles of the particular object of the Battersea Bridge, and their unquestionable talent as artists lies in the way they extracted such fascinating representations. In this sense, I acknowledge authorship not in the displayed qualities as such—since they belong to the object in question—but in how they are discovered and delivered.

c) *Opaque-productive symbols are instituted and instituting*. This point simply seeks to emphasize what has been said above that each representation is simultaneously a reference and a result. Following Gal's "form born of form," an opaque-productive manifestation is a form formed from another form that forms another form.

d) *Opaque-productive symbols add proposition-ness to "aesthetics as an end in-itself."* As discussed in Chapter 4, aesthetic experience cannot entail practicality or utility for Kant, Greenberg, and Fried. This argument induces these authors to narrow the capabilities of aesthetics to the sensation or judgment of the unitary depth. I do not dispute the elimination of the cognizer's predisposition to consciously seek an aesthetic reward. After all, aesthetic experience cannot be rationally induced; which does not imply that it cannot occur while performing a rational action. Nor does it preclude seeking appropriate conditions for such deep and open cognition to take place; as the section on metaphor in the design process will argue. This methodological maneuver obviously does not guarantee aesthetic experience.

However, aesthetics as an end in itself does not mean that the deep approach does not yield qualitative results, regardless of whether purist formalism overlooks them. This is the qualitative causality that the opaque-productive symbol emphasizes. On this basis, aesthetics is not exclusive to ineffable contemplation, but is accompanied by the discovery of knowable traits. These unfolded qualities can contribute to thicken the body of knowledge around the object in question. A type of knowledge that—most of the time—is surely not measurable in scientific terms, but an aesthetic knowledge that is as incomplete about what it tries to understand as any other form of factual knowledge.

In this sense, Umberto Eco's concept of the "open work" reinforces the definition of the opaque-productive symbol and the approach to the plural side of the object. For Eco, "the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood."[161] Eco's aesthetic openness is different from Fried's aesthetic depth. Methodologically, one annuls the person's subjectivity (a method with which I have already said I disagree), the other makes it an active part of the work (with which I agree). But as has already been said a couple of times, these aesthetic effects are not mutually exclusive but concomitant. They refer to different spheres of the object: Fried points to the unitary being and Eco to the multiple manifestations. Since this thesis is committed to the project in its totality, it considers aesthetic experience as double (deep and open), because the project's unknown is also double.

For an open, hence plural, reception, there are some characteristics that the structure and the material form of the work must instill: ambiguity, indefiniteness, suggestiveness. As Eco remarked about poetry:

> [in] poetic works that are deliberately based on suggestiveness, […] the text sets out to

[161] Eco, *The Open Work*, 3.

> stimulate the private world of the addressee so that [s/]he can draw from inside [her/]himself some deeper response that mirrors the subtler resonances underlying the text. […] The work remains inexhaustible insofar as it is "open," because in it an ordered world based on universally acknowledged laws is being replaced by a world based on ambiguity, both in the negative sense that directional centers are missing and in a positive sense, because values and dogma are constantly being placed in question.[162]

This speaks of the capacity of an open work to function as a critical tool proactively, even if "critical" and "proposition" sound contradictory. An open work, in addition to raising awareness, can offer itself as a placeholder for future revelations. Whistler's and Wilde's proposals certainly go in this direction. They did not only question the standardized and moralized Victorian artistic conventions, but propose an indeterminate albeit productive forthcoming framework. To such a plural prospective regime, we can add Eco's further observations that the nature of each of these apprehensions or interpretations of the work "*explains* the composition but does not *exhaust* it."[163]

This framework recalls the sense of epistemological inexhaustibility and flat representativity proposed in Chapter 1. On the former, an open work may instill a sense of endless openness, but its openness remains ontologically bounded. As Wölfflin observes: "the style of open form everywhere points out beyond itself and purposely looks limitless, although, of course, *secret limits* continue to exist, and make it possible for the picture to be self-contained in the aesthetic sense."[164] On flat representativity, each manifestation of an object represents its unifying being differently and never factually. Each representation is (in)complete, following Heidegger's "as-structure" (Chapter 1). Eco continues in this sense: "every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit."[165] Thus, each expression simultaneously implies a discontinuity insofar as it offers unique visions and performances, and a continuity by operating complementarily with the rest of the manifestations of the same qualitative sphere.

In this light, when does a symbol turn opaque or a work become open? It occurs at the moment when it defies the cognizer's relational automatisms and conventions, or in Eco's term, when it creates "perceptual ambiguities." According to him, this shift "indicates the availability of new cognitive positions that fall short of conventional epistemological stances and that allow the observer to conceive the world in a fresh dynamics of potentiality."[166] I argue that these fresh moments derived from the thing's multiplicity—if their apprehension rests on an aesthetic basis—also allude to the immaterial existence of the object in question. Again, this means that Fried's depth effect does not vanish with Echo's advocacy of plurality, but both coexist at the same time. Fried's unitary completeness is found in each of Eco's plural completenesses, aesthetically speaking.

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[162] Ibid., 9.
[163] Ibid., 15.
[164] Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, chap. 3, [emphasis added].
[165] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15.
[166] Ibid., 16.

5.1.3. The chain of multiplicity in the architectural project

In this framework, the architectural project—as theorized in this thesis—appears as a special type of object that epitomizes the chain of multiplicity as a collective, plural approach embedded within the object's sphere. Perhaps more evidently than other things in the world, the AP is polymorphous, multimedia, multi-authorial, with an emotional/aesthetic and deep epistemological vocation. In comparison with other fields, the artistic object typically covers the last two, namely, the passionate and the soulful. Greenberg would not speak of transdisciplinary art—there can be no painting outside the canvas-medium for him—and Fried would not consider the beholder as a creator of new expressions. On the other hand, the sciences automatically rule out such artistic points. They study the physical and actual world factually. Science aims at the measure of the surface of things.

On the contrary, the AP—again, as presented in this dissertation—is not reducible to a medium, nor to an expression. The multimedia condition of architecture is a widespread and valid conviction for a large part of the academic and disciplinary community. Architecture is not limited to buildings and the built environment, but architecture and its projects can emerge through different means. Typical ones are drawings, images, physical and digital models, texts, videos, and buildings. Something less common, yet fully taken up in this dissertation, is to consider the cognizer—architect or user—as another medium of expression of the AP. In this sense, the manifestations of a project in the person can be bodily inward (spiritual, psychological, intellectual, logical, emotional) or bodily outward (physically performative, socially interactive). About the former, Heinrich Wölfflin remarked on the emotional effects of architectural manifestations as part of such an architecture. Repeating his words from Chapter 1: "We designate the effect that we receive the *impression*. And we understand this impression to be the *expression* of the object."[167] About the latter—the person's architectural physicality—*The Manhattan Transcripts* by Bernard Tschumi immediately comes to mind.[168] The uses and movements with and within a space are also expressions of the project deployed by the inhabitants. Likewise, and as mentioned in Chapter 1, the AP's multimediality is not only a collection of separate known media, but the project also has manifestations presented in hybrid or mixed media—e.g., forming spaces articulating algorithmic, biological, and traditional building materials and components.

This plea for representational diversity aims to acknowledge that this multiplicity is the nature of an object's qualitative domain. It is its "polymorphous states of being," to echo Wiesing's view of Riegl's Kunstwollen once again. At a more disciplinary level, the historical divergence of form (as visual shape) over function, or vice versa, must be flattened and opened up. In the current context of the AP as a phantom object, both are part of a larger qualitative realm that encompasses different types of expressions. Physical form and function are just two among many others. To this end, this thesis has introduced the notion of *flat representativity* in Chapter 1, which directly challenges the historical valuation of categorizing phenomena by their similarity and utility. Instead, it proposes to treat the plural interiority of the project in a non-hierarchical manner. This flat coexistence of

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[167] Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," 150.

[168] In this theoretical project, Tschumi argues beyond space and form to account for event, action, and spatial happenings. The series of drawings indicates the movements of different protagonists in space, highlighting in the architectural representation the relationships between space and use. Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981; repr., London: Academy Editions, 1994).

multiple qualities suggests an epistemological approach by accumulation, rather than a segregation by types of expression. This means an additive and plastic knowledge without absolutism or dogmatism, which relates to what Harman calls "knowledge without truth."[169] The project shows different qualities to different people in different media and at different times. All those actualized moments and their connections are what I call *the chain of multiplicity*. As also noted in Chapter 1, the AP is not far away from Timothy Morton's definition of "hyperobject."[170]

I repeat the quote: "Hyperobjects […] are 'hyper' in relation to some other entity," Morton states.[171] An example of this "hyper" condition is how the project transcends its creator. In Chapter 2, I mentioned how the AP distances itself from its ontological creator to become an autonomous entity, offering the same kind of cognitive barriers to its creator as to any other cognizer. This establishes a second type of producer: the epistemological creator. In the Battersea Bridge example, both Whistler and Wilde are only epistemological authors, since the object was already manifested in its built variant. But following the multimedia and multiauthorship basis of the chain of multiplicity, any beholder who has unveiled some new expression through any of the three distributed representations—built infrastructure, painting, or poem—is also an epistemological author of that bridge-being.[172]

This framework has important consequences for architecture, especially with regard to the notion of authorship. The "hyper" or "phantom" condition of the project directly questions the historical relationship between (a) the architect and the project and (b) the architect and the user, relocating them within the larger context of the AP's chain of multiplicity. On (a), the project does not belong to the architect, but the latter unveils from the former some of its many instances. The architect is one among many other cognizers of a project. This gives the possibility to other designers or beholders to work with the same AP in different periods following Gal's motto "form born from form." How many manifestations of Campo Marzio are out there and how many are still to come?[173]

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[169] Harman separates knowledge from truth. For him, truth implies an impossibly direct revelation of the world. In contrast, knowledge about an object is manifold but finite, and deals with its real qualities. See Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 167–93.

[170] To refresh his concept, Morton defines five characteristics of the hyperobject: viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing, and interobjectivity. I will associate some of them with the architectural project. Obviously, each AP is a case in-itself, but in general terms, it can be argued that, for example, any manifestation of the project is not the project itself (nonlocality). The AP has a time of its own different from the human (temporal undulation); perhaps not as obvious as Morton's example of planets and black holes, but to some extent the AP does too. Or a project arises from the relationships between more than one object, some of them architectural, some of them not. Morton, *Hyperobjects*.

[171] Ibid., 1.

[172] It is important to note that there are surely more representations of the bridge's deep reality beyond these three which we have not associated as proper to that object. A beholder experiencing Whistler's painting may produce a particular facial expression within that aesthetic moment. This thesis will consider that facial expression as another manifestation of the thing in question. A second beholder who aesthetically experiences the facial expression of the first one, but not the painting, is here considered another manifestation of the same phenomenal realm, as counterintuitive as it may sound. The chain can continue until its qualitative domain is exhausted. However, the longer and more intricate the chain, the sooner our inability to trace it emerges. There is always some point (or link) at which we lose connection with the object in question, and either we remain superficial to the link's qualities, or we attribute those qualities to another object. This idea of losing track within a chain also relates to Ian Bogost's concept of "daisy chain." One rendering is the basis for the next, and the second is for the third, and so on, making each transition weaker and weaker until it does not make sense to us. See Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 80–84.

[173] Some of the well-know expression of Campo Marzio has been unfolded by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Peter Eisenman, Stan Allen, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Peter Trummer, Damjan Jovanovic, M. Casey Rehm, etc.

Vignette 5-A: The Unknown Known Houses

The principle of internal triggering exercised by several authors around the same AP establishes the design method for a design studio I conducted at Texas A&M University in the spring term of 2020. The design brief capitalizes on the APs of some of the most relevant single-family houses of the twentieth century (*Farnsworth House*, *Villa Savoye*, *Ennis House*, *Müller House*, and *Bordeaux House*). A distinction is made between the AP-house and the built manifestations. The interest lies in the former; the latter are opaque-productive symbols, as Gal would say, that can support each new design-unit [AP-House - Student X] to extract "new referents" or sensual profiles of the project in question. As the brief states:

> The Farnsworth House is not the *Farnsworth House*. The Farnsworth House that we know is the Mies van der Rohe's representation of a specific object called *Farnsworth House*. The *Farnsworth House*, as an object in-itself, does not belong to Mies. The architect and the house are two different autonomous entities whose paths crossed at some point in time for creating a temporary alliance: a compound object [Mies + *Farnsworth House*] that we call *designing* and whose goal was extracting one possible sensual profile of the *House*. [...] There is a hidden particular vastness of other phenomenological profiles of the *House*: a space of abundance of other multiple Farnsworth Houses. The studio aims to investigate and unfold these other unknown known profiles of some of the most famous houses of the XX century. Thus, students will team up with the houses as objects to form their particular *design alliances*. [...] We don't look for reinterpreting Mies' manifestation. We look for the other manifestations of the *House* itself, and in that scenario, Mies or his house has not necessarily something to say. It is the hypothesis of the studio that the unknown profiles of the *House* may be radically different between each other in terms of their material formalizations; i.e., why should there be any kind of resemblance to the Mies' version? We seek to access the objecthood of the houses, not the already given manifestations that Mies gave to us. For that, we need to detach the architect from the *House*. [...] In other words, what interests us here is neither the current well-known manifestation of the house nor the architect behind it; but the *House* as an object in-itself to unveil other of its unknown phenomena.



Figure 5-4. Left: One Bordeaux House manifestation by [*Bordeaux House* + OMA-Koolhaas], 1998; right: another Bordeaux House manifestation by [*Bordeaux House* + Ratana, Delgado, Reich], 2020.

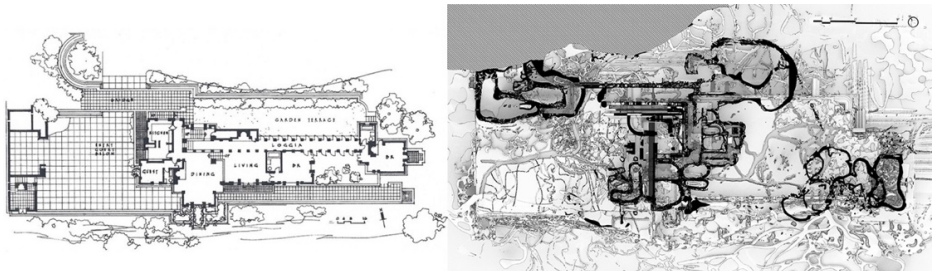


Figure 5-5. Left: One Ennis House manifestation by [*Ennis House* + F. Y. Wright], 1998; right: another Ennis House manifestation by [*Ennis House* + Gesing, Scott], 2020.

This multifarious and multi-authored context is fruitful not only in professional practice and research but also for pedagogical purposes. Students can learn about landmark buildings in the history of architecture, and at the same time—what I think is even more important—create a critical distance from them to formulate their own voices (Vig. 5-A).

About (b), the architect and the user—or any other cognizer—are among the media that express links in a timely manner and can maintain the concatenation active, which means to reveal more links to the chain in play. It is important to note that the order of the chain is not given by the object; the object offers its content. The order is established according to how and by whom it is approached. This means that there can be many chains for the same object, sometimes overlapping, intersecting, or separated from each other. Moreover, chains of multiplicity are not necessarily linear, but can go back to a previous link. Like with Piranesi's view of Campo Marzio, this occurs when a representation is interpreted in several ways, several times; the chain bifurcates. The chain of multiplicity has a capillary structure in its multi-authorship unfoldings; branching and braiding, spreading through the AP's qualitative abundance. The chain is always prone to become a mesh.

Within this framework, one thing is required of the architect: not to block the chain. The minimum request of a design is to avoid an architecture that is incapable of anything beyond what is expected of it. If so, we will inhabit a transparent architecture. Transparency eliminates the cognitive capacity to work with the excess of the project. As Han remarks: "Transparent communication is communication that has a smoothing and leveling effect. It leads to synchronization and uniformity. It eliminates Otherness. Compulsive conformity proceeds from transparency. In this way, transparency stabilizes the dominant system."[174]

In the chain of multiplicity, the epistemological creator is also the epistemological beholder. This implies that the architect is no longer the active master who controls the project, and the user is the passive receiver. On the contrary, if the latter engages with the architectural manifestation in an unplanned way, the architect has no voice in it. Only then is the cognitive-unit composed of the user and the project truly autonomous; an intimate relationship between the two without the architect interfering. In a multi-authorship cognitive regime, the user adopts an active role that performs independently of the architect's instructions. As Jonathan Hill states:

> In architecture, there are two occupations. First, the activities of the architect and, second, the actions of the user. The architect and user both produce architecture, the former by design, the latter by inhabitation. As architecture is designed and experienced, the user has as creative a role as the architect.[175]

Roland Barthes' seminal articles "The Death of the Author" and "From Work to Text" subvert the historical roles of the active and imposing writer and the passive reader in literature. I will say more about how the architectural user can become closer to a Barthes' reader in Section 5.4.

Moreover, the consequences of what I have called the chain of multiplicity bring about what Mikel Dufrenne calls "the constitution of a public." Fully in line with this design theory, the French philosopher suggests that the aesthetic object's cornucopia requires a wide and differentiated public. In his words: "because the meaning of the work is

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[174] Han, *The Transparency Society*, vii–viii.

[175] Jonathan Hill, "An Other Architect," in *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*, ed. Jonathan Hill (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 79.

inexhaustible, the aesthetic object profits from a plurality of interpretations."[176] And later on: "the aesthetic object gains being from the plurality of interpretations which attach themselves to it. The aesthetic object is enriched in the measure that the work finds a vaster public and a more multifarious meaning."[177] The fact that each cognition takes place within an autonomous relational unit does not nullify the possibility of a community. We have already seen in Chapter 3 how Riegl's aesthetic method already accounted for this collective dimension. Nor does it cancel the possibility of a group acting as one cognizer. In this vein, Dufrenne remarks that the object's plural nature allows the public to constitute itself as a group; a condition that prevents the formulation of norms and, consequently, makes the public open in character.[178] From here stems this thesis' approach to the social question: plurality and diversity come from the project, not from the dictates of the subject. And the open condition of a project also makes the cognizer to be so.

Nevertheless, and as mentioned in the introduction to Part Two, this thesis does not study what a collective of architects or users may entail in the locality of a cognitive-unit. Instead, it focuses primarily on the study of individual experiences. But what it does tackle are the public consequences of single cognitions. In Section 5.3 and the conclusion, we will see how Rancière theorizes that individuality is the basis of social equality, something that prevents the homogenization of the group's members. For now, I will add two things to Dufrenne's idea of the public. First, the public of a project is constructed through exposure to various expressions in various media, not only through a singular manifestation. The Battersea Bridge or an architectural project are good examples of this. People can relate to the bridge-object through its built, painted, or written articulation. The same applies to an AP: there is no single formulation or medium, but a multiplicity of them. Second, the public is composed of any cognizer, including the architect. As stated above, the condition of each manifestation as instituting and instituted turns each cognizer into both creator and receptor, blurring the boundaries between the two categories.

Of all the links in the chain of an AP, the following sections and chapters will deal with the particular sequence delimited between the architect and the occupant, each accessing the project's double unknown in his or her own way. The goal is to keep the chain open. When this is the case, the project's multiplicity becomes more widely actualized, thanks to each subjectivity expressing itself differently (Section 1.3). In each of these aesthetic acts, the sensation of the AP's profound existence also becomes present: there is a deeper connection with what is perceived. The sequence runs as follows (Fig. 5-6):

1) The architect partners with a reference, turning the architectural cognition into a metaphorical one (Section 5.2). This new object has enhanced access capabilities to grasp what of the project the designer cannot do alone. Operationally, metaphor reveals internal aspects of the project through the reference that the person did not know were there.

2) Once the architect acquires internal clairvoyance and orientation to navigate within the project, the goal is to extract an opaque-productive space. For that expression to be open to the public, the architect must depersonalize its formulation, that is, erase the traces of his/her determination not to constrain that of the inhabitant (Section 5.3).

3) On the compositional level, this purification will be reflected in an abstract, saturated, heterogeneous syntax made of fragments. The aim is to create a degree of

[176] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 64.
[177] Ibid., 65.
[178] Ibid., 66.

perceptual ambiguity and performative intricacy (Chapter 6).

4) Once this opaque-productive space is in the world and the architect is away of the scene, the inhabitant can interact with the piece on his or her own terms. The open character of such architecture pursues aesthetic responses capable of the project's double depth. When architecture is distributed as a building, inventive spatial engagement takes on a bodily nature. These actions will not only be the "mimetic procedures" to be performed as the AP's real object, as argued above (Section 4.2), but also additional material expressions of the AP (Section 5.4). This will suggest an aesthetic use of space.

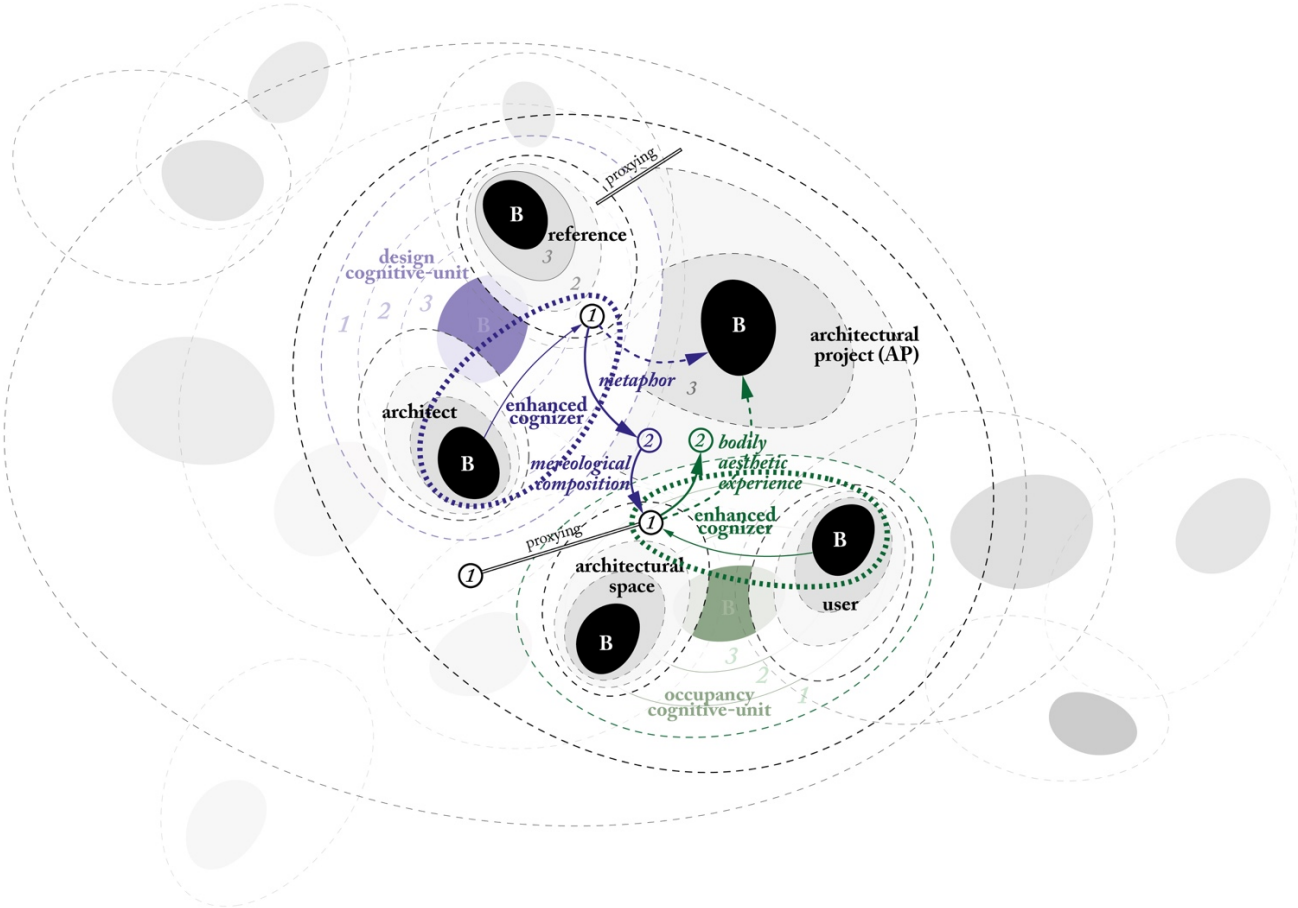


Figure 5-6. Thesis diagram: fragment of the AP's chain of multiplicity concerning the cognitive acts of design and occupancy.

5.2. Metaphor in the design process

Etymologically, *metaphorá* in Greek means "transfer", or *metapherō*, "to carry over." Lakoff and Johnson write in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."[179] Something indisputable for lovers and detractors across disciplines is that the basis of metaphor is experiential. This implies that metaphors are relational and occur within cognitive-units. In this performance, at least three ingredients are necessary for a metaphor to take place: an

[179] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980; repr., Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 6, [emphasis removed].

objective, a reference, and a performer or cognizer. It is important to note that the metaphor is argued here to be entirely internal to the architectural project. It is a particular form of aesthetic cognition. We have seen that in subjectless cognition, the cognizer is inside the observed object. This has been argued following Bryant's theory, where experience is a subset of the manifestation of the object. By the same logic, reference—insofar as it is part of the experience—is also within of the cognized project. If it is generally understood that the reference is outside the perceived entity, here it is argued that it is inside. It is also part of the subset of the object's manifestations, regardless of whether if the cognizer has not yet been aware of it. Seen in this way, both the reference of a metaphor within a design process and an aesthetically experienced building are exposed representations that serve the architect or the user, respectively, to reach the double interior of the project. Both instances belong to the AP.

The present study of metaphor will focus on the design process, which means that the architect's design activity is acknowledged to be aesthetic in nature. Underlining Miralles' design approach as paradigmatic in this respect, metaphor will allow for the discovery and development of the project while cognizing it. The metaphor is a design mechanism to engage with the AP's double unknown. This aesthetic mode of designing in the now appears as an antidote to preconceptions, assumptions and literalisms in architectural design. The coming long section on metaphor is divided into five subsections.

The first one will contextualize an approach to the topic by proposing four types of metaphors that can typically be found in architecture: (1) the habitual metaphor, (2) the explanatory metaphor, (3) the aesthetic metaphor, and (4) the generative metaphor. Obviously, a metaphor can belong to more than one category. Indeed, those that fall into the last two groups are of especial interest to this thesis, because they are capable of addressing the ineffable being and knowable expression at once. Within them, one can further differentiate between (a) metaphors that are the first contact with a project, and thus also bring it to life, and (b) metaphors that bias an already existing design disposition within it.

The second subsection will address (a) as a project or an object that precedes the architectural project itself. The uniqueness of the initiating metaphor will lie in the fact that the AP at stake is completely unknown to the designer; it is a big X.

Further elaborating on this initial design situation, the third subsection will show how Miralles' referential sources were extremely diverse. This will raise the question of the arbitrariness of his selections, which will be resolved by claiming that the project's selectivity (Subsection 2.2.4), rather than the cognizer's rationality, ensures that such randomness belongs to its domains.

The fourth part will jump from the analysis of a single metaphor to Miralles' whole design process, one that constantly employs multiple associations. His approach will appear as a simultaneous and tumultuous process of collecting references and translating them into architectural meanings. The architect referred to it as "tangling and untangling."

The fifth point will discuss the notion of coherence and criteria within such a tangle-untangle approach.

5.2.1. Four types of metaphors

1) *The habitual metaphor* or dead metaphor. Varying from one culture to another, or from one discipline to another, metaphorical expressions can become an integral part of everyday life and jargon because of their constant recurrence. For example, a frequent linguistic

metaphor is "you're wasting my time." As Lakoff and Johnson explain, this is a metaphor that relates time to money in Western culture, where time is a precious commodity.[180] This metaphorical expression has become so recursive that we do not realize it as such because it has become literalized. If one reward of metaphorical communication is to achieve new perspectives on the objective through the reference, habitual metaphors lack this condition since we, performers, have anchored the connection between the two things in a particular fashion; one that seems to exhaust the metaphor.

Emmánuel Lizcano goes so far as to argue that a metaphor underlies every concept, image, or idea. For him, when the metaphor is forgotten but its result persists, the ignorance of what has been forgotten is what—paradoxically—consolidates knowledge. For example, Lizcano offers a fascinating examination and examples of how Greek, Roman, and medieval mathematical principles—however objective they may be considered—come from plant and food metaphors, given that those societies were primarily agricultural and animistic.[181] As he states, metaphors do so because "the more dead they are, the more they inform about that world [we live in], for they bring out that which is taken for granted, which is un-accounted, that which can count and therefore cannot be counted."[182]

In architecture, Adrian Forty and Rosario Caballero-Rodriguez examine, respectively, how much of the contemporary architectural lexicon and understanding of our field derives from other disciplines, like biology and mechanics. For Forty, these imports are not literal, but take on a particular dimension distinct from that of their field of origin.[183] For example, Forty studies the term "circulation" as a standardized architectural category that today seems to have been present throughout the entire history of the discipline. As he remarks, physician Sir William Harvey coined the term in 1628 to describe the movement of blood in a body. However, "circulation" did not become common in architectural jargon until the 1850s in France.[184] "Circulation" is today indispensable to architectural vocabulary, and its use does not account for its metaphorical nature anymore. However, the term—along with the metaphor of the "machine"—is an epitome of how a metaphorical concept, even when literalized, can inform an entire period, as the Modern Movement demonstrated.[185]

2) *The explanatory metaphor*, sometimes called contracted metaphor. It is a simple and rememberable connection by which the reference explains a more abstract or complex phenomenon. The explanatory metaphor is thus normally reductionist, establishing a reverse directionality from the intricate objective to the simpler reference. Explanatory metaphors often appeal to broader audiences. As Ungerer and Schmid comment: "In politics, the explanatory function is often subjected to the goal of manipulation, which

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[180] Ibid., 9.

[181] See Lizcano, *Metáforas que nos piensan*, 61–65.

[182] Ibid., 65, [author's description].

[183] Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 86–101.; Rosario Caballero-Rodriguez, *Re-Viewing Space* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 16–22, https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110893892/html. O. M. Ungers also mentions the immersion of metaphorical expressions in the everyday language in Ungers, *Morphologie: City Metaphors*, 10.

[184] Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 88.

[185] Other examples that Forty outlines are mechanical terms such as "compression," "tension," "torsion," "equilibrium," and so on to describe formal and spatial properties. What is interesting about them is his conclusion that the mechanical metaphor has more to do with its correspondence to human states of feeling and the emotions induced by architecture than to the tectonic aspects of architecture itself. See Ibid., 95.

means that metaphors are often primarily selected for their emotional effects."[186] In such cases, metaphorical communication entails a didacticism in which the author intends to control the addressee's reception. These seem to be the main underlying reasons for Mark Gage's critique of metaphors. Regarding reductionism, he writes: "A single, often metaphorical, layer of surface information, rather than depth in a subject, is sufficient to trigger in us a form of understanding that alleviates the need for further inquiry."[187] About didacticism, he comments: "Architecture-as-advertising narratives of today that eclipse social considerations include but are not limited to easily graspable metaphors, simplified A causes-B descriptions, infantilizing narratives, or appeals to being, merely, more fun."[188] Elsewhere, Gage continues his attack on what he calls "the painfully simplistic metaphor" by listing examples that, for him, fall into this category.[189]

Although I agree with Gage's position against the danger of explanatory metaphors as simplifying and literalizing the object, to erase metaphorical processes altogether is to discard a productive cognitive tool for the exploration of the project. In the end, explanatory metaphors are not the only ones. Forty offers a good policy for handling them, when he says that "metaphors are never more than partial descriptions of the phenomena they seek to describe, they are always incomplete." And he continues: "Indeed, were they to succeed in total reproduction, they would cease to be metaphors, which subsist through likenesses drawn between inherently unlike things."[190] In this view, both habitual and explanatory metaphors may have a metaphorical structure, but they lack metaphorical effect.

3) *The poetic metaphor*. This is Harman's central cognitive tool for indirectly accounting for the thing-in-itself. His theory of metaphor derives from José Ortega y Gasset's "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface" (1914). There, the Spanish philosopher wrote: "I say the esthetic object and the metaphorical object are the same, or rather that metaphor is the elementary esthetic object, the beautiful cell."[191] In the terms of this thesis, the aesthetic-unit is the metaphorical-unit. Or, in the vocabulary of Harman's aesthetic theory, if mimesis establishes the method and allusion the effect, metaphor is the technique.[192] It is a way to experience the existence of the non-present real object or being. For Harman, this happens thanks to the theatricality of the poetic metaphor; "a touching without touching," he says.[193] Poetic metaphor is the aesthetic mechanism for the experience of the AP's ineffable reality. Vignette 5-B offers an architectural example of deep cognition through a metaphorical structure.

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[186] Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (1992; repr., New York, NY: Pearson Education, 2006).
[187] Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, 10.
[188] Ibid., 18.
[189] Gage denounces the World Trade Center Transportation Hub in New York as driven by a simplistic metaphor, where the architect, Santiago Calatrava, refers to a bird representing transportation, or Daniel Libeskind's Denver Art Museum, which is justified by the shapes of the nearby mountains. Gage, "Killing Simplicity. Object-Oriented Philosophy in Architecture," 101.
[190] Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 84.
[191] José Ortega y Gasset, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," in *Phenomenology and Art*, trans. Philip W. Silver (1912; repr., New York, NY: Norton, 1975), 140.
[192] So Harman links metaphor with mimesis as becoming or replacing the real object: "[metaphor] replaces the absent [objective's substance] with *us ourselves* as the real object that embraces the qualities of the [reference]." Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 83. For a comprehensive view of Harman's theory of metaphor, see Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, chap. 8. and Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, chap. 2.
[193] Harman, Object-Oriented Ontology, 82.

Vignette 5-B: La Tourette's north side and the corkscrew by Rowe

Passage from Colin Rowe's description of Le Corbusier's La Tourette's north façade (Fig. 5-7):

> As has been inferred, Le Corbusier presents the north side of his church to the visitor in very much the same way that in *Towards a New Architecture* he chose to illustrate the Parthenon. He provides, that is, a type of foreshortened frontal perspective which gives importance to the receding orthogonals, but which firmly insists on the priority of the transversals. He offers, in other words, a modified three quarter view rather than a definitely oblique condition; and the visitor is thus made aware of the monastery's western exposure as a significant, but as a nevertheless subordinate, component of the principal figure.
>
> But not to labour this point: at the same time that he does this, it is remarkable that Le Corbusier has also built into this frontal plane of his wall the implication of a depth which by no means exists in reality. The oblique cut of his parapet should now be noticed. It is a line so slightly out of the horizontal that the eye has an instinctive tendency to 'correct' and translate it for what average experience suggests that 'it should be'. For, being eager to see it as the eye is consequently willing to read it, not as the diagonal which physically it happens to be, but as the element in a perspective recession which psychologically it seems. Le Corbusier has established a 'false right angle'; and this *fausse équerre*, which in itself infers depth, may also be seen as sporadically collaborating with the slope of the ground further to sponsor an intermittent illusion that the building is revolving.
>
> Something of the vital animation of surface, the small but sudden tremor of mobility, in the area between bastion and belfry certainly derives from the torsion to which the wall is thus subjected; but, if this phenomenal warping of surface may be distinctly assisted by the real flexions of the bastion wall itself, then at this point it should also be observed how the three *canons à lumière* now introduce a counter-active stress.
>
> For the spectacle of the building as seen on arrival is finally predicated on a basis, not of one spiral, but of two. On the one hand there are the pseudo-orthogonals which, by the complement they provide for the genuine recession of the monastery's west façade, do stimulate an illusion of rotation and spinning. But, on the other, are those three, twisting, writhing, and even agonised, light sources - they illuminate the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament - which cause a quite independent and equally powerful moment of convolution. A pictorial opportunism lies behind the one tendency. A sculptural opportunism lies behind the other. There is a spiral in two dimensions. There is a contradictory spiral in three. A corkscrew is in competition with a restlessly deflective plane. Their equivocal interplay makes the building. And, since the coiled, columnar vortex, implied by the space rising above the chapel, is a volume which, like all vortices, has the cyclonic power to suck less energetic material in towards its axis of excitement, so the three *canons à lumière* conspire with the elements guaranteeing hallucination to act as a kind of tether securing a tensile equilibrium.[194]

Proof of the success of the theatricality of this passage—to use Fried's and Harman's term—is Forty's recognition of it as "a description that shows us more than any image possibly could."[195] In this case, it seems clear that what is "shown" is not necessarily qualitative, but primarily substantial. Additionally, this example is similar to that of Battersea Bridge studied above (Subsection 5.1.1), and reinforces the concepts of *flat representativity* and *chain of multiplicity* presented in this thesis. It shows the multimedia and multi-authorial nature of the project. The experience of Rowe's text gives an account of the project that would be impossible to apprehend by walking through the building erected by Le Corbusier. The text would never have appeared without the opacity and productivity of the building, just as Wilde would never have

[194] Colin Rowe, "Dominican Monastery of La Tourette by Le Corbusier (Eveux-Sur-Arbresle, France)," *Architectural Review* (blog), 2010, https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/dominican-monastery-of-la-tourette-by-le-corbusier-eveux-sur-arbresle-france.

[195] Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 96.

written the poem without Whistler's painting. This denotes the chain of alternative and singular manifestations produced from existing ones, all of them within the same ontological container. Additionally, the metaphors of the spirals and the corkscrew in Rowe's passage allow him to achieve a poetics that, in Eco's words, "create a halo of indefiniteness and [...] make the text pregnant with [...] suggestive possibilities."[196] Key in this sentence is *suggestiveness* (or allure) in relation to poetics, since the poetic, metaphorical effect is not literally explicit in Rowe's words or in the reader's impression. Again, this passage is not a description of the qualities of the building. It is an appeal to the existential core of the project through a metaphor.



Figure 5-7. Le Corbusier, *Dominican Monastery of Sainte-Marie de la Tourette*, Eveux-Sur-Arbresle, France, 1953-61.

4) *The generative metaphor*, sometimes creative or extended metaphor. Aristotle was one of the first philosophers to account for the power of the metaphor in creative processes, both in his *Poetics* and in *Rethoric*. As he remarks in the latter: "It is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh."[197] For Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor has a *conceptual* basis in general, present not only to the habitual and explanatory metaphor but also in the generative one. The conceptual connects metaphor to thought. That means that metaphor provides an instrument to conceptualize preexisting or new phenomena; concepts that are seen here as other expressions within the object's qualitative domain. "Imaginative and creative metaphors" (as Lakoff and Johnson call them) have the power to create new meanings and understandings to structure the experience with the capacity to modify behaviors and decisions. "If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our actions on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to."[198]

I suggest that this power of metaphor has been evident in the design process and

[196] Eco, *The Open Work*, 9.
[197] Aristotle, "Rhetorica," in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, vol. 11 (330BC; Oxford: Clarendon Press, n.d.), 1410b.
[198] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, chap. 21.

the creative thinking of architects forever, even if unconsciously or so present and clear that this process is many times taken for granted.[199] In twentieth century architecture, Juhani Pallasmaa remarks: "The timeless task of architecture is to create embodied and lived existential metaphors that concretise and structure our being in the world."[200] However, the willingness to transfer the values of a period to the sensibilities of a disciplinary field is certainly not exclusive to architecture, but to any cultural activity in general. Yet, what we tend to forget is that such processes are metaphorical in nature. At least, that is how Eco argues it. For example, he describes as an "epistemological metaphor" the art of the early sixties or "informal art," which was nourished by the scientific principles of indeterminacy, information, and entropy.[201]

Moving from the discipline of architecture—or from culture in general—to the particularities of the AP, the widespread conception of creative metaphor in architectural design is seen as a technique that helps the architect to formulate a pre-existing idea with greater clarity. It is usually thought that there is a more or less previous vision of the design, and the metaphor is the tool that provides clarification for its formalization. However, this is not the design scenario that interests this dissertation for two reasons. First, grounding a design on a prior idea is a subject-based disposition that proposes an architecture without coming into contact with the project. This imposing idea is in direct conflict with the formalist and autonomous design-unit advocated in this dissertation, because the AP as an object is overlooked. Second, the clarification of the subject's idea falls into the reductionist or explanatory metaphor. Against this, the creative metaphor is defended, as it unfolds a new thought as another expression of the AP, rather than simplifying a previous idea that is not related to the project. In this sense, "idea" and "thought" are not the same. When studying Miralles, one can notice the difference that he drew between the two terms, something important when discussing metaphors. Let us see briefly why.

In the article "A Portrait by Giacometti," Miralles recovered the following words of the painter: "It is essential to work without any preconceived idea, without knowing beforehand what the canvas is going to be like…"[202] And the architect concluded elsewhere: "I would replace the word idea with the word dialogue—conversation more than idea."[203] Consider also the following passage by Miralles/Pinós about drawings:

> Drawings, that strange testimony of some of the moments in which the project makes contact with reality. The drawings appear on paper. Drawings are not made. Someone might think that it is the place of [ideas] and present them as a worried testimony of the author. While the best drawing is the visible one. That drawing in which one looks for the beginning [is n]ot of an idea, but of the dialogue with thought. A veil, something that barely indicates anything. […] To develop these traces is to move away from the tyranny of ideas... it is the work of discovering new possibilities... projects are developed in the margins of

[199] It is already Vitruvius who uses the notion of the human body for architecture and the proportions of buildings. Or Leon Battista Alberti, who relates the composition of the body and construction. In the Enlightenment and its culmination in the Modern Movement, it is the machine that takes on this role. See also Rosario Caballero-Rodriguez, "From Design Generator to Rhetorical Device. Metaphor in Architectural Discourse," in *Metaphors in Architecture and Urbanism: An Introduction*, ed. Andri Gerber and Brent Patterson (Bielefeld, GER: transcript Verlag, 2014), 90.

[200] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1996; repr., Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 76.

[201] Eco, *The Open Work*, 87–93.

[202] Enric Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," *El Croquis*, 1995.

[203] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 264.

ideas.[204]

In Chapter 4, it was said that the "mimetic procedure" by which a cognizer enters or becomes the project's being involved two qualitative unfoldings: the actions of the procedure itself and the impression generated. The latter is what is referred to here as "thought," and is therefore an intrinsic manifestation of the project realized in the architect's mind during the design process. A thought belongs to the project. It is not a reflection on it, but a representation of it. On the contrary, an "idea" belongs to the architect; it is authoritative and idea-list. Thoughts are expressions of the project in the cognizer; ideas are impositions of the subject as the project. Metaphorizing an idea does not require the participation of the AP. On the contrary, a thought cannot be metaphorized, at least not within the same metaphorical construct. The thought is the very result of the metaphorical process. The metaphor unveils a thought for the first time in the designer's mind as an instance of the project.

If, as has been said, a metaphor requires an object, a reference, and an executor, the generative metaphor of design that will be detailed in the following subsections will have as objective the qualitative unknown of the thought to be generated and the reference will be selected intuitively by the architect as the executor of the metaphorical construction. The creative metaphor is what leads from one representation to another knowable one. It is thus a means of navigation within a project's chain of multiplicity, as it is directly in connection with Gal's motto for aestheticism "form born from form." This argument will echo the sense of "trigger or primary generator" that Caballero-Rodriguez highlights in the early stages of architectural design.[205] Moreover, Harman's notion of *fusion* will provide the framework.

In summary, four types of metaphors have been mentioned: the habitual, the explanatory, the poetic, and the generative. It has been examined how the first two result in some form of literalism. On the other hand, the third type engages with the project's being and the fourth with its plural side, utilizing the architect's mind as a medium of expression. In light of this, this dissertation is interested in the latter two: poetic and generative metaphor, which can be called *aesthetic metaphor* and equated to what has been termed deep and open cognition, respectively. This means that metaphor as an aesthetic technique of cognition acts simultaneously poetically and generatively. Or put the other way around, poetic and generative metaphor (aesthetic metaphor) deal with the ineffable and the knowable within the same metaphorical process. Harman's theory extensively addresses the indirect or metaphorical access to the object's being or real object. Complementary to that, I will examine in detail the productive repercussions of the aesthetic metaphor as a design mechanism. As a matter of fact, its general context has already been delineated in the chain of multiplicity diagram (Fig. 5-6). Aesthetically designing and inhabiting are metaphorical moves. Such experiences are always based on an expression of the AP that serves as a reference or nexus to a new articulation of it.

To realize these ambitions, we must first ensure a conceptual and terminological shift from what we normally assume about metaphors. If someone looks at this thesis' table of contents for the first time and sees "autonomy" and "metaphor," the reader will think

[204] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 215-16, [author's translation].
[205] Caballero-Rodriguez, *Re-Viewing Space*, 23. As she remarks, the term comes from Jane Darke's article "The Primary Generator and the Design Process" (1979).

about how the two antagonistic concepts can be reconciled. After all, the former is commonly understood as negation and the latter as inclusion of the external. However, it has already been explained several times and in different contexts that the internal/external dichotomy is typically assumed from an epistemological and not an ontological perspective. However, the subjectless stance admits that there is no cognitive possibility of discriminating factually which quality is or is not inside an object. Thus, it has been said that there is no such thing as externalism at all, cognitively speaking. Again, Bryant's account that experience is a subset of the thing's manifestations has supported this view. Then, what is to be avoided is reductionism or literalism, which involves equating an object with some of its expressions and regardless of whether they are taken to be internal or external. Against this background, insofar as metaphor is an experience internal to the project, so they are its ingredients (the cognizer and the reference). This means that the "externality" of reference refers to the cognizer's inability to see its features as internal proxies of the object in question. The point is not to undermine the person's capacity to perform the metaphor, even if it is thought that he or she does so by colliding two different objects. It is a matter of underlining, first, the metaphor as another manifestation of the project; and second, the diversity of its multiplicity, given that what seems to us to be two disparate meanings or qualities is rather internal to it.

Let me put the argument another way. There seems to be something inconsistent here: celebrating formalist autonomy seems to automatically accept its fierce rejection of exteriority, which is the opposite of then taking the permissive position of advocating outward excursions through metaphors. It does not seem to make much sense to champion autonomy and then use metaphor as a cognitive device with all its semantic baggage. However, that is precisely the point at stake: not all metaphors are semantically conclusive or reductionist, and no metaphor implies externalism. Metaphor is a cognitive mechanism operating within the domains of the project in question. The concept of flat representativity acknowledged that each manifestation is in connection with its neighbors within the same qualitative set (Section 1.2). Metaphor brings some of this internal referentiality into experience, making the project's chain of multiplicity lively for a cognizer.

In this context, internal referentiality fails to progress within the chain of multiplicity in at least two scenarios: (a) there is no previously known or given expression to rely on, this is the case for a design process that starts from scratch; and (b) it can also happen that the given expression is transparent, i.e., our attachment to it is already exhausted, superficial, or automatic. It is in these two cases that the use of *apparently* external attributes enables metaphorical cognition. Again, I say "apparently" because the imported qualities are already contained within the AP's domain. Otherwise, a metaphor within and of *this* object would not be possible. Metaphor makes it possible to discover characteristics intrinsic to the object in *parts* of third objects. Like any other component, the reference is half committed to the project (Fig. 1-3), and so too it is within metaphor. Under the two scenarios where metaphorical cognition is required, (a) will be a matter of inaugurating the chain, which also implies the birth of the AP as an object. In (b), a destabilizer must bring the relationship out of lethargy to contemplate the stagnant manifestation in a new light. Since it is based on a given expression, (b) involves to some extent the aforementioned defamiliarization technique used by some architects within the ongoing discourse on objects. However, to my knowledge, case (a) where there is no given preexistence that refers to the project has not been addressed in the contemporary context of OOO in architecture. I will focus for the most part on (a) in the next subsections.

5.2.2. The project of the project: unveiling the initial expression

As mentioned earlier, formalism and aestheticism celebrate the autonomy and interiority of the work by rejecting its reception depending on the contextual circumstances; something that is restated in this thesis because of literalism rather than externalism. This is so for the beholder or occupant's cognition because there is a work to be received which can be literalized. But how do these principles apply to the artist or the architect whose task is precisely to unveil the work? In my opinion, these aesthetic theories face a dilemma here, since at the initial moment of creation there is nothing recognized as proper to the project on which the designer or artist can elaborate. There is no "opaque-productive symbol" at all. How does a formalist creator approach a work that does not yet exist in a formalist fashion? I will argue that the first design maneuver is an arbitrary and intuitive impulse to find a guiding thread towards a certain clarity of internal qualities; an improvisational tour in search of what *apparently* seems exterior aspects of the project. This is contrary to the typical association of previous knowledge and solutions from past design experiences or the emergence of the design as a direct and automated reaction to circumstantial and measurable facts. Why?

In the cases where the creator is simultaneously both ontological and epistemological creator, the birth of the AP takes place together with its first appearance to experience. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, the project imposes cognitive constraints on everyone and everything, including its author, at the moment of its birth. Its selectivity (Subsection 2.2.4) becomes effective the moment it comes into existence. However, how to start a design from the knowable if the known does not even exist? (See again Fig. 3-3.) How to overcome the blank page blockage without resorting to the literal, the preconceived, or the factual? In the following passage, Miralles explains the first steps of a project:

> The usual approach to a project involves studying all the data and facts that constitute it: a program, a site, its topography, etc. But the most important thing is *the art of initiating a thought*, the way of conceiving and representing. It is not about the laborious process of architecture, but that which concerns *a project outside the project itself*. How to undertake the task, to find what surrounds, nourishes and can shape the project, that is the work itself. It is enigmatic, *related to intuition*, to the association of ideas, to everything that can be transferred from one project to another.[206]

Let me concatenate the emphasized parts: "the art of initiating a thought concerns a project outside the project itself related to intuition." Restated again, "the birth of a project is a project itself driven by intuition to generate a thought." Then, the architect needs to establish a mechanism that generates a thought as an expression of the opening of the AP, something that implicitly entails the birth of the AP in its totality.

Here, it is pertinent to point out a distinction between "origin" and "beginning," at least in the sense in which Edward Said drew it. According to the Palestinian-American scholar, an "origin" is divine, privileged, and mythical. It is taken as an act of faith. In contrast, a "beginning" is secular and intentional. It is a production of meaning and difference from pre-existing traditions and sets the threshold of what is to come.[207] In light

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[206] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 407, [author's translation, emphasis added]. About the last point, Miralles clarified later in the article: "The idea of continuity from one project to another is not contradictory to the specificity of each work." Ibid., 410, [author's translation].

[207] Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intentions and Method* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1975).

of this, how to begin a thought, then? And what is the project of the project? Although Miralles never explicitly put it this way, I contend that it is a metaphor. Or, as we shall see, it is a series of crossing metaphors, with each one operating each time as a beginning rather than as an origin. If for Gernot Böhme, "[t]he application of metaphors allows seeing the object, on which the [quality] in question is transferred, in a particular light," the initial metaphor is such a first project that sheds the very first light on, a first thought.[208]

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the initial metaphor has the problem that the element that received the referential qualities is absent. In this context, Harman's concept of *fusion*, developed along with its opposite of *fission* in his book on H. P. Lovecraft, is useful.[209] According to the OOO philosopher, the technique of fusion found in Lovecraft's literary style attaches known qualities of diverse objects to an *unknown* entity; as, for example, when the horror writer describes the unknown Cthulhu as "simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature."[210] This is not a literal description of the creature, but hints and approximations that build an ambiguity about it. Harman also accounts for the opposite technique: *fission*. It detaches the usual qualities of a given manifestation to disrupt our usual relationship to it. As he points out, one way to achieve this effect is to multiply the qualities to overload our assumed image of the thing.[211]

As may already have become apparent, fission links with Young's and Ruy's defamiliarization and parafiction (Section 4.3 and Vig. 4-C). It operates in relation to the verisimilitude of *our* experiential image of the thing, or sensual object, using OOO's technical term. In contrast, fusion "may be taken to allude to a real object, since it is one that never quite crystallizes for the reader into a palpable sensual object."[212] Fusion entails a metaphorical structure in which the creature has no precedent. "The Cthulhu description," Harman continues, "is like a metaphor with one of the terms deleted. […] 'X is an octopus-dragon-humanoid.' "[213]

Harman's studies on metaphor—like this one—aim to dismantle the separation between creation and reception, considering both as actively productive. However, most of his examples are approached from the standpoint of the beholder of the work. Without overriding the authorships of the architect and the user when performing the AP, their design mechanisms are slightly different. The most obvious distinction is perhaps, as mentioned above, that the designer has no given expression. The architect starts the design process blindly, while the user is always given an architectural expression. This is why I see Harman's concept of "fusion" as particularly pertinent to the architect's blind design situation. Indeed, I suggest connecting it with Miralles' design approach: Harman's metaphor of fusion with a big X is Miralles' "project outside the project itself."

For Lovecraft to produce the metaphor of Cthulhu that has come down to us, he himself must have experienced another metaphorical object previously and *privately*. I argued that such a metaphor of metaphor, or "project outside the project itself," is exclusive to the act of design. Moreover, it has the same mechanism as the object it generates, i.e.,

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[208] Gernot Böhme, "Metaphors in Architecture – a Metaphor?," in *Metaphors in Architecture and Urbanism: An Introduction*, ed. Andri Gerber and Brent Patterson (Bielefeld, GER: transcript Verlag, 2014), 49.
[209] Harman, *Weird Realism*, 273–81. He previously addressed it in Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 216–18.
[210] Lovecraft's words as quoted in Harman, *Weird Realism*, 273.
[211] As an example of fission, from Lovecraft's oeuvre, Harman highlights the cumulative description of the Antarctic city, which includes various types of geometric figures in an intricate compositional order. Ibid., 278.
[212] Ibid., 273.
[213] Ibid., 275. I would remove the "like" of the sentence.

an associative structure where the denoted term is unknown. Without serving as a rule, since I will later criticize the relation between the author's and the audience's metaphors in Lovecraft, it can be speculated that the writer's initial metaphor for Cthulhu may not have much difference from the metaphor he offers to the public. For Lovecraft to formalize the literary structure of the creature's description, i.e., the material expression of the fictional character through the metaphorical sentence, he must previously have experienced the three references *without the written sentence*. (Again, I speculate in this case the author would have used the octopus, the dragon, and the human for himself, and this is what he transmitted to the audience.) I see here a moment of genuine formalist creation, since there is no given trigger, but the X is something that comes out of the author's entrails.[214] In the absence of a given manifestation, the author or designer takes the first step in the conversation with the object. This is not the idealist construction of a subject-based idea disconnected from the thing in question. It is to find in oneself intuitively what belongs to the project. When this is so, creation becomes a birth in the most literal sense of the metaphor.

Put differently, let us say that "X is an octopus-dragon-humanoid" is the metaphor-project performed by Lovecraft that generated both the Cthulhu-object and its metaphorical written expression "[i]f I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing…"[215] X—what we know today as Cthulhu—participates in an earlier metaphorical object, where Lovecraft intuitively assigned to it the features of three references. The first formalization of X occurs in its transfer from the writer's stomach to his mind. I hold that this is Miralles' never-explained notion of "thought" as opposed to "idea." A thought arises from a metaphor gestated in the belly and materialized in the mind, rather than being directly imposed by the mind. Therefore, this ontology of designing can be anything but idealist. Mind is the first medium of expression employed by the project, rather than the constitutive generator and *raison d'être* of X as an object. If this were not so, X would not be X. It would not be unknown and autonomous, but what the mind dictates it to be, namely, known and correlational.

Besides Lovecraft's metaphor of the octopus-dragon-humanoid, consider Miralles and Tagliabue's metaphor of the hair or the comb for the Sports Stadium in Chemnitz (Fig. 5-8):

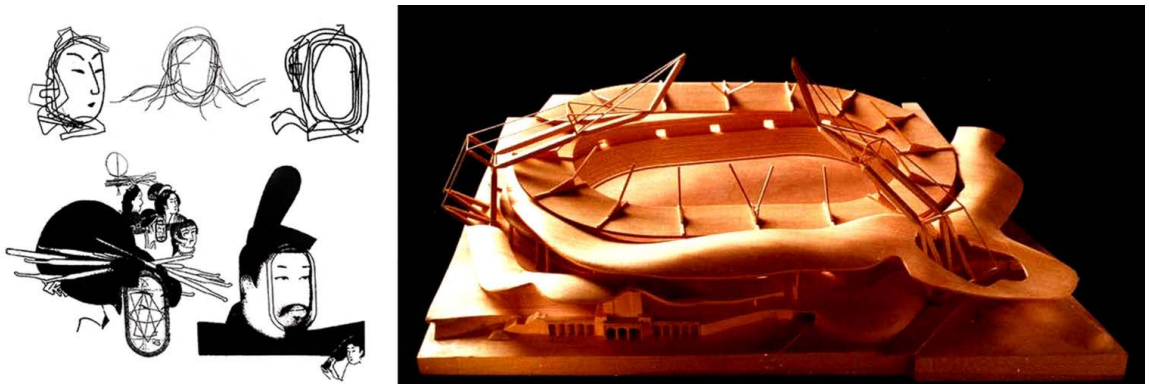


Figure 5-8. EMBT, *Sport Stadium in Chemnitz*, sketches, collages, and model, 1995.

[214] By genuine, I mean something purely internal or without given support. However, this does not entail any kind of benefit in their judgment. Genuine is not necessarily better just because it is so.
[215] Lovecraft's words as quoted in Harman, *Weird Realism*, 273.

> There is an analogy between the movement of people and hairstyle, because when you see a hairstyle, you ask, 'How can they do that?' And really, it's the same as combing your hair: half over this side and half on the other. And really, you organize people that way too. A comb is very good for organizing people.[216]

Similar to Lovecraft's creative moment, it is the properties of the comb that helped the architects to articulate a first impression of the AP. (As mentioned above, an impression is another expression of the architectural object, according to Wölfflin.) There is no given manifestation of the project before the architects started to work on it. Therefore, their selection of the reference and the reading that will help them to come to the first thought is an intuitive act. As O. M. Ungers remarked: "Designers use the metaphor as an instrument of thought that serves the function of clarity and vividness antedating or bypassing logical processes. 'A metaphor is an intuitive perception of similarities in dissimilars,' as Aristotle defined it."[217] Or of "similarities in unknowns," more appropriate to the type of metaphor being studied here. Miralles' "art of initiating a thought," as quoted above, requires intuitive moves. It demands the architect's most intimate involvement in the design process. Intuition is the basis of aesthetics and its mimetic procedure (Section 4.2). An idea is thought, but a thought that animates the project is not. It is intuited from the stomach to the mind. Miralles on these matters for the work process:

> Each project should be able to be explained without starting from a specific idea [...] to exercise myself in the development of things without thinking about them. I am interested in the fact that the decisions, the choices you make in your work, appear gradually without having decided them from the beginning.[218]

The metaphorical relation with a reference is a project in itself that initiates the architectural project in question. In other words, the designer and the reference constitute the initial metaphor or enhancer object (Fig. 5-9). Cognitively speaking, the designer or artist focuses on some immediate and known qualities to relocate them in the AP domain as the act of its inception. For Harman, this act of splitting the known qualities from the reference is a fission that precedes their fusion into the object's phenomenal domain.[219] Yet this fission is not an addition per se—remember that the surplus is not something to be added on top of the object's current state. Metaphor is an epistemological trick to overcome the limitations of direct apprehension. Its mechanism is a deception of cognition that gives it the apparent power to enrich the object with qualities it did not have. As has already been said, the traits of reference may be thought of as external to the object to which they are assigned. But this sense of externality is a cognitive shortcut that actually denotes the cognizer's impossibility of embracing the fullness of the object's qualitative sphere. The "external" reference for us is an internal proxy of the object. Such qualities already belong to its set of manifestations; otherwise, the object could not be metaphorized. Metaphor is a cognitive method for revealing something knowable, as well as for sensing the thing's being. Therefore, the metaphor draws out an intrinsic profile of the object that escaped initial graspability for us. We think we find the reference elsewhere, but, indeed, we reassign something to itself. Although metaphor may seem to be an act of exteriority, it is not. It adds nothing new to the object's qualities and capacities; it extracts them.

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[216] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 12.
[217] Ungers, *Morphologie: City Metaphors*, 11.
[218] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 426, [author's translation].
[219] See Harman, *Weird Realism*, 277.

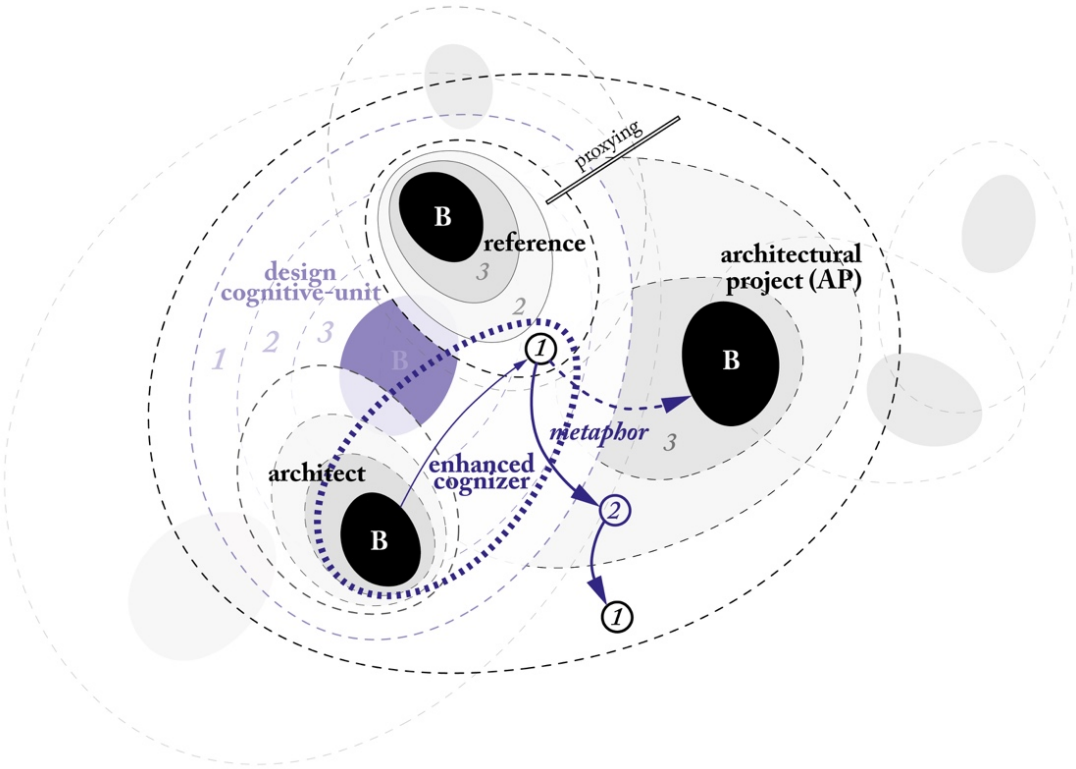


Figure 5-9. Diagram of metaphoric cognition composed between the designer, the reference, and the project.

At this point, let me summarize what the object of the metaphor simultaneously entails. First, it gives birth to the architectural project as an object, the X-reality. Second, it unveils a thought in the creator's mind that is characterized by the qualities of the reference. Given that it is the first encounter with the newborn object, there is no "known" layer. There has been no previous experience of it. Consequently, the thought must be the first knowable manifestation, which, however, the moment it is experienced, falls into the known or cognized. Third, it alludes to the unitary being or real object, since the thought is incapable of exhausting its own qualities and the newly emerged substance. A fourth point can now be added: metaphor does not create a self-evident "sensual object" either, which differs from saying that such an aesthetic encounter produces no sensual object at all.

The "sensual object" in Harman's terms, or "intentional object" in Brentano's and Husserl's, is the discernible unified image of the object in the cognizer's consciousness that remains constant despite the changing features when perceiving its various attributes or "adumbrations."[220] In other words, it is the target of identification and recognition. When I consciously distinguish one object from another, I do so on the basis of their sensual objects rather than their beings. As we already know, the latter escapes any direct formulation. Therefore, the sensual object is not the thing's unitary substance or "real object." It is a sub-object within the object for the consciousness of a given cognizer. An object can be said to have as many sensuous objects as cognizers. However, the One/Many of the sensuous object does not comprise all that such a cognizer can grasp of the main thing. In my view, this is because the sensual object primarily promotes rational cognition. The Many of a sensuous object includes all those factual, measurable, and logical qualities

[220] See Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, chap. 2.

of a thing for me. Therefore, it leaves out all the irrational, emotional, and intuitive manifestations of that object in me. Even so, the sensual object is still partially necessary for aesthetic metaphor, as we shall now see.

It has been said that a metaphor can also generate a sensual object, although not a clear one. But, again, an unclear sensual object differs from saying that the aesthetic encounter of the metaphor produces no sensual object at all. I suggest that the aesthetic metaphor generates a *half-baked sensual object* that is key to maintaining minimum conscious criteria throughout the design process.

In creative activity, the sensual object is in a state of constant instability between two poles: that of total definition in reason (factual knowledge), and that of complete disintegration in "pure aesthetics" (aesthetic judgment as an end in itself). However, if the project's sensual object falls completely into either of these extremes, the progression of the design stops for opposite reasons. In the former, the sensual object is trapped in a set of fixed presentational qualities. There is nothing but transparency (Han) and automatic perception (Shklovsky), or in OOO terms, the tension of "time" is blocked.[221] In the latter, conscious recognition of the object is absent; the sensual object is non-existent or dormant. All qualities are excessively volatile, given that there is no opportunity to tie the thing down minimally for us. Visibility is so pure (Fiedler) that there is nothing afterwards, because deep cognition without qualities is its own *cul-de-sac* (Kant, Greenberg, Fried). In OOO terms, the tension of "space" is pristine.[222]

Yet for any progression of the design, the AP's sensual object must be somewhere between the two. Miralles and Tagliabue's first thought about the Chemnitz-project generated by the metaphor has enough clear comb-qualities to comprehend an embryonic unity of the project in their consciousness. At the same time, such a sensual object cannot completely support the unclear part of the comb-based thought.[223] Therefore, the experiences of these qualities do not stop completely in themselves, nor in their unified object in the mind. They also point to the AP's core: the real object or being. In short, the sensual object must be ambiguous enough not to be anchored in the habitual. But it must also be clear enough to provide some guidance, criteria, and consistency, i.e., how to identify minimally the internal representativity between two expressions of the same project. I will argue further in Subsection 5.2.5 "Intermittent Consistency" that this consistency emerges locally in the work process.

On its part, the thought generated by the initial metaphor is the first glimpse of the AP's sensual object and one of the indirect doors to its deep reality. It is the first vibration of the triad cognizer-manifestation-substance.

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[221] For OOO, "time" is the horizontal tension between sensual qualities and the sensual object derived from Husserl's writings. This means that an object remains consistent for the observer's consciousness despite all the changing characteristics during its experience or series of experience. See Ibid., 99–102. On this basis, the cognitive situation in which the tension "time" is blocked means that there are experienced qualities that belong to an object—e.g., novel qualities—but our consciousness does not recognize them as pertaining to that object.

[222] In OOO, the vertical tension of "space" occurs between the real object and its sensual qualities. "Space" is another name for aesthetic allure (Subsection 4.2.6). See again Ibid.

[223] It is only in relation to the sensual object, not the real object, that Jason Payne's criticized question "How real *is* [this thing]?" is appropriate (see again Section 3.3). This is because the ambiguity or clarity of what the cognizer holds as real is not a simple yes-or-no condition. It is a gray scale that resides in consciousness, not in the object freed from being experienced.

5.2.3. Structural metaphor, plurality of references, and arbitrariness

Once the initial metaphor appears as the project that gives birth to the architectural project, this section sharpens the nature of that thinking/feeling mechanism and the sort of material Miralles used for the task. To this end, this subsection will, first, discuss the so-called "structural metaphor" as opposed to the "visual metaphor." The former will appear as a more fruitful ally for the elaboration of the AP's first thought or conceptual impression. Second, we will outline the varied sources to which the Spanish architect resorted in order to set this process in motion. Third, since this variety may suggest a sense of arbitrariness, the term will be considered within the limits of each design.

To the extent that a metaphor can produce a finding of the work in question, Miralles did not restrict its use to any type of creative metaphor. As a reminder from Subsection 5.2.1, the "creative metaphor" is an aesthetic mechanism that leads to knowable phenomena. It is a way of progressing through the AP's chain of multiplicity, as manifestations are born from other manifestations within the same qualitative set. Within the creative metaphor, one can distinguish between visual and structural ones. According to Caballero, the visually informed metaphors "draw upon the external similarity of the object used as the generator of a given design and the appearance of the eventual outcome."[224] This is undoubtedly the most widespread use of the metaphorical mechanism in architectural design. Visual iconism and symbolism, such as that of postmodern architecture, lives on that. Some of Miralles' works attest to this as well. For example, in the proposal for a Car Showroom, (Annex: 52), the outline of the building in plan resembles the figure of an embryo in an ultrasound image, or the recursive use of plant motifs in late projects such as the Parc des Colors (Annex: 48), the Parc de Diagonal Mar (Annex: 57), or the Scottish Parliament (Annex: 62). It should be noted that, in Miralles' oeuvre, visual transportations may be more or less literal within the design process and recognizable in the project's documentation, but they rarely jump into the public domain.[225] This means that it is extremely unusual to find explicit moments in Miralles' buildings that explicitly call back to the references that motivated the design, at least not as overtly as "duck architecture" can impose. If so, those experiences will relate more to the visual mimesis that Miralles so fervently denied.[226] Strictly speaking, we would not be in a creative metaphor but a reductive or explanatory one.Therefore, visual metaphors are not the most appealing for our design purposes, at least not when it comes to activating the designer's inner self. Their retinal literality keeps the architect's involvement at an admittedly more superficial level and reduces the possibilities of the project to morphological resemblances.

On the contrary, *conceptual or structural metaphor*s are more expansive, as they encompass broader areas of the AP's plurality. The range of translation between trigger and outcome is larger, especially in the early stages of design. At the same time, they usually require a much greater abstraction in thinking, and they are Miralles' fundamental design tool. He did not hide his associative thinking: "I would say that almost everything always stems from conceptual references."[227] For example, in the metaphor of the comb for the Sports Stadium in Chemnitz (Fig. 5-8), the reference is not approached through its visual qualities to be replicated on an architectural scale. Instead, the architects reveal the "non-

[224] Caballero-Rodriguez, *Re-Viewing Space*, 23.
[225] In the end, most people who confront the works of an architect do so through the spatiality of the buildings, rather than their floor plans, collages, or models.
[226] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 265.
[227] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 288.

obvious" knowable qualities that the comb and the AP-object may have in common, the here called "repeated or proxy qualities" of a "phantom object" (Fig. 3-1). Here, the aesthetic encounter foregrounds the organizational properties of the comb—instead of the visual ones—to inform the circulation system of the design.

The activation of this feature can be analyzed from two perspectives: that of the architects and that of the project. From Miralles and Tagliabue's point of view, i.e., from an epistemological or cognitive position, they relocate the qualities of one object into the realm of another by creating a coherence in the structure of their experience: the organizational properties of the comb inform the circulation system of the stadium. As Lakoff and Johnson explain, "structural metaphors […] use one highly structured and clearly delineated concept to structure another."[228] The structure of the comb is clear, transparent, factual. Its transportation to the context of a stadium is somewhat useful to shed light on its circulation system, but it is far from being a plain formulation. The indirect link makes vague sense in the architects' consciousness; it generates a half-baked "sensual object." The metaphorical connection is a nebulous promise that opens a research road in an unknown direction. There is a non-direct, non-literal translation of the selected qualities of the reference to the project in question to indicate to the architects a line of work for a possible circulation system.

On the other hand, from the AP's standpoint, both the stadium circulation system and the comb are half-committed objects that share part of their phenomena with it (see again Fig. 1-3). What the architects do is to bring into their experience the former through the latter. In other words, since they cannot access the AP's circulation system directly by their own means, Miralles and Tagliabue need to employ a third party—the comb, in this example—to reveal *to them* an already internal profile of the project. This is why metaphor should not be seen as an idealist imposition, but as a cognitive tool that discloses what is already proper to the object. According to the subjectless cognition advocated here (Chapter 3), metaphor—insofar as it is experiential—is within what is experienced. I repeat for the umpteenth time Bryant's idea that "[e]xperience is a subset of local manifestation."[229] Applied to this case, it means that metaphor is the mechanism that actualizes to or for a cognizer an internal aspect of the project, rather than adding it as something foreign.

Compared to the visual, the strength of the conceptual metaphor is certainly greater in exploring the architect-project relationship. However, this deep-rooted operativity can give the false impression that the metaphor fades away in the design's progression because its registration in the documents is not always clear or evidently visible. But the metaphorical result works much deeper in the shadows, unable to be measured, generating new conditions or reinforcing those extracted so far. For example, references to the hair and comb in the project in Chemnitz may be visually evident in the initial sketches and collages (Fig. 5-8), but the more the project is detailed, the more their figuration in the design vanishes to the point of being unrecognizable in the final design. The structural metaphor and all that it derives from are the ones that determinate the local chain of subsequent decisions and expressions. The vanishing of the visual presence of references in late design phases or the presented architecture, if they are conceptually consolidated in early ones, is rather a sign of its deep embodiment in the work. The fact that we do not see the comb in the stadium does not mean that the latter has not been informed by the former. The vanishing of the instruments that nurture the discovery of the project should, in fact,

[228] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 62.
[229] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.

be celebrated. As detailed in Section 5.3, this is so because the presented architecture is irreducible to its design process.

Therefore, we should not expect an unequivocal determinism in which reference-A will always lead to outcome-B. This is not a recipe in which the use of one ingredient will guarantee the success of the dish. It is only the progression of the labor which can establish this equivalence in retrospection. The competencies of a generative metaphor consist of opening paths, rather than consolidating or legitimizing them. The converse is also not true: a metaphor cannot inform everything in a project either. The metaphor as a project is an object; thus, it is multiple yet finite. Neither can the greatest metaphor lead to all results, nor is the worst limited to only one. The architect's metaphorical encounter with the project reveals already intrinsic but still unknown phenomena of the AP found in the reference.

According to Caballero, most of the metaphors in architectural design are a mixture of visual, verbal, and conceptual touches to some extent.[230] This seems appropriate for Miralles, given his ability to associate disparate references and metaphorize them in different terms. What is important in this case is the abstraction or anti-literalism resulting from this aesthetic process. As he writes in his dissertation: "The analogy of structure is sought, not of image."[231] The metaphorical approach overcomes any assumed meaning of things through a free and intuitive perception, one that is not subordinated to previous ideas and inherited recipes of factual knowledge. That means an "attitude towards things," as Miralles stated, "in which you are able to perceive more than you can think."[232]

After examining the notion of structural metaphor, let us now move on to the second point: the cornucopia of Miralles' references. (As a note, the annex of this dissertation includes several visual and/or conceptual references that Miralles claimed to use or that other authors have found he did.) As Catherine Spellman remarks:

> Enric Miralles talked a lot about the beginning of a project. How to begin, where to begin, and what to begin with? […] There are many productive ways to begin a project and each implies a certain process of working. Miralles […] said that an architectural project could begin with anything.[233]

In his dissertation, *Enric Miralles: El Dibujo de la Imaginación*, Salvador Gilabert offers a comprehensive analysis of the influences on the Spanish architect's career and a classification of his references. Among the latter, Gilabert notes "fishes," "giants," "labyrinths," and "minotaurs."[234] Although this list can be as valid as any other, what I think it misses is an emphasis on the diversity of sources and formats. What Miralles understood as "reference" for metaphorical translations ranged from the most explicit and specific aspects of a project, such as the site or its program, to the most bizarre and abstract, such as Gilabert's list, and everything in between. This means that romantic, beautiful, or dramatic references are not the only ones that can be metaphorized. If so, the selection would be prescriptive to the metaphorical process itself. Instead, facts and data are also susceptible to subjectivization. This is undoubtedly one of Miralles' greatest areas of expertise in the

[230] Caballero-Rodriguez, *Re-Viewing Space*, 23–26.
[231] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 3:5.
[232] Ibid., Annex I:34.
[233] Catherine Spellman, "Walking to Begin," in *Conversations and Allusions: Enric Miralles*, ed. Catherine Spellman (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019), 226.
[234] Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," chap. 5. His doctoral thesis has recently been published as Gilabert Sanz, *Enric Miralles, Procesos y Experimentos*.

design process: the ability to aestheticize the literal and the everyday without remaining in them. The Spanish architect indistinctly employed triviality and sublimity, factuality and ambiguity, art and architecture in non-literal manners.[235] The following five points are not intended to be a definitive list, but an attempt to give an impression of the plurality of references that the architect handled.

1) *On trivial references*: In many of Miralles/Pinós, Miralles' solo practice, and EMBT projects, there was a tendency to extract architectural content from minutiae or aspects that normally go unnoticed. The comb is a good example of it (Fig. 5-8). Other examples can be the fruits and vegetables of Santa Caterina Market or the fish biting its own tail for a church in Rome (Annex: 47). This approach to the everyday reminds us of the aestheticians discussed in Section 5.1 and their opaque-productive readings of the everyday: a form cognizing the habitual in abstract ways.

2) *On sublime references*: Other projects, or details of projects, appeared with more grandiloquent, sometimes humorous, themes. One can remark the procession of giants on Avenida Icaria (Annex: 38), the skating panels on the façade of the Scottish Parliament (Annex: 65), or the two steel colossuses of the Huesca Sports Center (Annex: 30), which were defeated during construction and have since rested, oblivious to the mission they were given.[236]

3) *On factual references*: For example, Miralles' reflections about the site conditions to initiate the project without further ado are revealing. As he commented:

> The site gives you a rhetoric of precision to which you clutch at straws [*te agarras como a un clavo ardiendo*]. A site gives you a lot of data about a project, but as you progress in the work there are other ideas that define it. Projects have a quality: they tend to become independent and not exhaust themselves in one place. For example: you do a project that fits perfectly in a place because it continues the alignment of the street, the light is perfect... What would be a disaster is if that project, when plugged in well in one place, would run out of steam. However, look at the opposite exercise: once you have finished a project that fits perfectly in one place, you take it to another, and it also fits. It is a better exercise, because the project will have the capacity to generate things [by itself], which is surely what is most interesting.[237]

The urban context and its history offer qualities that can be metaphorized, rather than responded to frontally.[238] Such an indirectness and the aesthetization of facts "have the capacity to generate [unexpected] things," as the quote states. For Peter Buchanan, Miralles/Pinós' understanding of the place had a double and simultaneous reading. As he

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[235] It should be noted that at the beginning of his career, Miralles was very cautious about revealing the references with which he worked. In the 1990s, this policy was reversed as he realized that opening up his sources offered a productive framework for conversation; something that produced feedback for the method and the works themselves. See Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 288. and Rovira, *Enric Miralles 1972-2000*, 8–9.

[236] The original roof of the Huesca Sports Center was a tensile structure that was suspended on two large steel masts on its northeast side. The roof collapsed during its construction and was redesigned without including the already built masts, which lie unemployed on the site.

[237] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 305, [author's translation].

[238] Isabel Zaragoza examines in the chapter "The Traces of Place as Metaphor" ["*Las Huellas del Lugar Como Metáfora*"] Miralles' proposal for the Frankfurt Osthafen (1992) as an example of an oblique design approach to contextual and historical circumstances. See Isabel Zaragoza de Pedro, "Entre La Geometría y La Iconografía: Notas En Los Márgenes a Documentos de Enric Miralles" (Barcelona, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2015), 98–105.

writes: "In elaborating the potentialities of place and program, design also involves intuiting the forces—visual and intangible as much as functional and physical—that do, can, or can only be imagined to exert pressure on the site."[239] The relationship with the place is fundamental in Miralles' architecture, as he himself constantly stressed.[240] Yet this relationship "involves neither mimicry of the neighbors nor the creation of continuities with them in material and detail," Buchanan concludes.[241] This would imply too direct a subjugation to the context.

A way to de-literalize a site is to account for it as an object, that is, digging into its unknown twofold dimension. The site can be taken as just one more of the entities constituting the AP, involving itself half-heartedly in the task (Fig. 1-3). This means that the relationship of a project to its site can be otherwise than its current condition, albeit within a largely limited range of possibilities. Seen in this light, it makes little sense to reduce the project to its context (as problem-solving design approaches do) or to ignore it altogether (as traditional formalism would counsel). The project as an object emerges above its component parts, and the metaphor of the site is one ingredient of this emergence.[242] "Miralles and Pinós's work is closer to site-specific sculpture," Buchanan continues, "one that focuses visual and less tangible forces in forms that might also express the resultant release (sometimes almost explosive) of latent energies. Viewers must see and feel for themselves."[243]

4) *On ambiguous references*: References are not limited to images, context conditions, or quotidian objects. Literary authors also served to initiate projects.[244] For example, in the Social Center *Círculo de Lectores* in Madrid (Annex: 40), the graphic dedications of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, no less than his poetic work, triggered the design.[245] Another example—and perhaps one of the most puzzling for us spectators—is the bridge between the descent of the crucified body from the cross and a ramp system for the Rhythmic Gymnastics Center in Alicante, and which is studied in detail in the next

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[239] Peter Buchanan, "Dialogue and Distillation," in *The Architecture of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós* (New York, NY: SITES/Lumen Books, 1990), 2.

[240] Enric Miralles, "For What Time Is This Place?," *TOPOS* 8 (1994): 102–8.; Enric Miralles, "¡Mira Qúe Habéis Hecho!," in *Ciutat Real, Ciutat Ideal: Significat i Funció a l'espai Urbà Modern*, ed. Pep Subirós (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona, 1998); Miralles, "Acceder." From other authors, see also Jose Manuel Mateo Vega, "Estrategias de Implantación En El Paisaje En Tres Obras de Enric Miralles" (Madrid, ETSAM, 2016), 347–54; Ramón Faura Coll, "Cap i Pota: Disolución de La Identidad En Miralles y Pinós," in *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, ed. Carolina B. Garcia Estevez, DC Papers 17–18 (1993; repr., Barcelona: Departament de Composició Arquitectònica UPC, 2009), 137–54. By "place," Miralles also meant not just physical location, but the place of reflection and thinking, intrinsically linked with the physical. As he mentioned: "If place is one of those moments in which thought is intertwined with the real... in this sense, the drawing, even the paper itself, is for a moment place…" in Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 340, [author's translation].

[241] Buchanan, "Dialogue and Distillation," 2.

[242] As Dennis L. Dollens clearly states about the Miralles/Pinós approach to site conditions: "*site*—metaphorically—as building material, not merely a setting, and *building* as materiality harmonized form and with the site," in Dennis L. Dollens, "The Drawing, Sitework, and Architecture of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós," in *The Architecture of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós* (New York, NY: SITES/Lumen Books, 1990), 6.

[243] Buchanan, "Dialogue and Distillation," 2.

[244] Again, Gilabert offers a great tour of some of the most influential literary authors in Miralles' architectural thinking. Among them, we can find Perec, Queneau, Kafka, García Lorca, Gómez de la Serna, or Joyce. Likewise, in Miralles' dissertation, the list of authors cited is highly diverse: Sterne, Zambrano, Cassirer, Kierkegaard, or Deleuze, to mention a few. Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)."

[245] For a detailed description of the use of references in the project design process, see Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 1/12-19.

subsections (Vig. 5-C). In Miralles, any reference, regardless of its nature and format, could be transformed into a triggering concept to the point that even concepts themselves served as metaphorized originators. For instance, the recurrent labyrinth, as Gilabert pointed out above, can be found in the catwalks of Unazuki, in the competition for a cemetery in Venice (Annex: 61), or in the interior-exterior disjunction in Alicante (Annex: 32), among other proposals. (See also this thesis' vocation for the labyrinthine in Subection 6.3.2.)

5) *On artistic and architectural references*: The list is also extensive, and just as with literary authors, the reference blurs with the influence. Le Corbusier, Asplund, Aalto, Kahn, or the Smithsons were other sources of inspiration and reference; especially their way of understanding and making architecture, more than the particular works. This shows that their reflection may be less clear in a superficial observation of Miralles' works, which in no way reduce their deep anchoring in the Spanish architect's thinking. The same goes for artists such as Giacometti, Beuys, or Klee. Still, with not much effort, localized examples, sometimes more visual, can be found in Miralles' projects. For example, John Cage's drawings and those of the Archery Range (Annex: 24) or Le Corbusier's mast and cables for the stadium of 100.000 spectators in Paris two times relocated in Huesca (Annex: 28).

Having analyzed Miralles' structural metaphor as a design tool and the incredibly extensive list of references that populate each of his projects, we can move on to the question of arbitrariness in the design process. The reference plurality leads to a discussion of two apparently opposing issues: the specificity of each metaphor for its project or aspects of them and the intuitiveness of its beginning. The first implies that Miralles never repeated a metaphor twice, which is different from using the same reference assiduously. Of course, some references may be more recursive than others, but even when so, each translation is unique. (As already announced, Vignette 5-C will show different outcomes derived from the metaphor of the cross in the stadium in Alicante.) It is not hyperbole to state that each project, and each of its corners, is one-of-a-kind.[246] Mark Wigley recalls Miralles' aversion to anything ready-made.[247] Or as Miralles observes about his own design approach, detaching it from the general concept of "method":

> let yourself be driven much more by curiosity and intuition than by the systematic. That's why I believe that method, the word, has other connotations. I would say that I don't know how to work with it. That means that, if I were to analyze my work, logically, there are some basic ideas in it, there is a way of working that, nevertheless, I would not present as a method at all.[248]

Such a method of lacking method resonates with Paul Feyerabend's critique of "methodological monism" and his advocacy of "epistemological anarchism."[249] As a

[246] This does not aim to mythologize the work, nor its architect. The condition of unrepeatability does not imply a superior aesthetic value beyond what each work can offer by itself. Bringing up the uniqueness at each moment of design is simply intended to characterize the type of design process and attitude towards the unknown that this thesis analyzes. This does not imply that it is the only way to approach the subject.

[247] Colomina and Wigley, *Homenatge a Enric Miralles*, min. 46:05.

[248] Fredy Massad, Alicia G. Yeste, and Enric Miralles, "La Arquitectura Como Sentimiento: Entrevista a Enric Miralles," *Summa+*, April 1998 [author's translation].

[249] In *Against Method*, Feyerabend speaks about the limits of progression when science assumes that only a single method can yield scientific progress. Against that, the author states that "[s]cience is an essentially anarchic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives." Feyerabend, *Against Method*, 9, [emphasis removed].

reminder, the mere fact of applying a free approach to design does not imply automatic success for the project, understanding "success" as progress in the unveiling of its aspects and an indirect connection to its substance. Instead, it establishes a promising cognitive basis in relation to the object's surplus and its epistemological inexhaustibility. As stated already a few times, the plurality of the object calls for a plurality of approaches, not the other way around. To this end, each encounter with the project must be distinct from others with the same project and from the same person's encounters with other projects. This denotes the distinctive character of each design aspect in Miralles: each time a formalist, autonomous, and distinct cognitive-unit. Thus, the metaphor as a project of the project is an object in itself, capable of nothing more than the architect-reference encounter for such a project.

The second point about arbitrariness is more controversial. We can begin its examination by returning to Spellman's words about Miralles' design approach, where "an architectural project can start with anything." This statement may seem at odds with the project's discreteness promulgated here. After all, if everything is possible, then nothing is specific and finite. Put differently, what is at stake is the legitimacy of the finitude of both the project and the initiating metaphor. If the latter rests on chance, how can the former be discrete and autonomous? While this would be a legitimate elaboration, such a criticism is only apparent. This is so because it questions the *cognitive* arbitrariness that instills a false sense of infinite possibilities, rather than the *ontological* condition of the metaphor as a cognitive-unit independent of what may be grasped of it.

This discussion brings us directly back to one of the first principles of the structure of the object as One/Many discussed in Chapter 1: the paradoxical condition that an object, however cognitive, is ontologically finite but cognitively inexhaustible. Paraphrasing what was said there, the cognitive possibilities or surplus of how I can relate metaphorically to a project through a reference are more than its current state and less than infinite. If the former, the metaphor would be literalized. If the latter, all metaphors would be the same. Thus, to call something infinite because it exceeds our capacities of comprehension is an epistemological shortcut that does not represent the finite condition of the metaphorical object. Such a cognitive impossibility is nothing but the confirmation that things cannot be reduced to our experience of them, not even the objects of experience themselves, like metaphor. Acknowledging something as infinite can be a convenient cognitive hoax to dismantle the reduction of its reality to our apprehension of it. But this does not mean that the thing's reality is infinite.

Obviously, one cannot objectively know how many registers populate a metaphor or how many references can be metaphorically employed to initiate a project. But this does not imply that there are endless metaphors or endless references to metaphorize. Nor does it imply that each or any metaphor can accomplish the task of initiating a project. Each project's selectivity also draws its limits in this respect (see Section 2.2.4). Hence, the comment "an architectural project could begin with anything" is a linguistic hyperbole rather than an ontological possibility. An architect cannot relate to all elements of the cosmos, nor can an AP begin from anything. If so, we would be in a monistic model rather than in an ontologically discrete one.[250]

Thus, if someone considers the initiation of a design process to be arbitrary because it employs an intuitive and metaphorical mechanism rather than a historical, factual, or literal one, the discreteness of arbitrariness must be considered. Arbitrariness is relative to

[250] See a more elaborated argument on this critique in Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation."

this or *that* person, *this* or *that* project, and *this* or *that* cognitive encounter. That implies that only when arbitrariness is discrete, and thus plural, are *some* (rather than all) of its aspects contingent on the cognitive-unit in question. For example, in the Chemnitz sports stadium, another architect could have selected a reference other than the comb. This is because each person has his or her own masking of (un)knowledge for each object, as shown in Section 3.2. This speaks of a randomness that is not uncountable and universal, but countable and concrete—even if we cannot measure it. This position is not without controversy, especially for those who justify a design from the approach to it, i.e., from its apparent cognitive control and intentionality. However, their virtualized objectivity constrains the possibilities of their own experience with the project, which means that they block the AP's surplus of expression.

In practice, randomness is an exercise in moving away from transparency and literalism, giving free rein to the surprising and intuitive. In this sense, I argue that the theory of discrete objects is not opposed to the arbitrary, but is a natural way of entering the thing's qualitative and substantial unknown. That such a local chance should have a greater presence in architectural design was clearly on Miralles' agenda. As he said:

> Chance... it should participate much more, I would like it to participate much more. I do everything I can to make it participate, but this has to do again with time, that is to say, chance depends on the instant... [...] Chance has a lot to do with the capacity of the moment, I think that unfortunately it participates little, which does not mean that in this spider's web there are no connections. The project is not the idea and if it is not the idea there is no radical character of chance and the instant.[251]

Chance is *this* and *that* chance. Again, arbitrariness relates half-ways to each project (Fig. 1-3). There is a limited and particular randomness, chance, or arbitrariness in each design case, even though its finitude eludes apprehension. It serves to escape from the absolute, the normative, and the assumed in order to engage with the project's double unknown.

As a note, and although I have argued above for the unrepeatability of each metaphor, it is pertinent to highlight one, and only one, metaphor that is present in all of Miralles' works: "designing is like walking." It repeats itself differently each time. Some of Miralles' projects found in "walking" and the "path" particular metaphors as design material, as in the projects of the cemetery in Igualada or the Diagonal del Mar Park.[252] However, walking is not only a localized metaphorical case of some particular projects, but is the architect's general approach to architectural design. Spellman gives an account of that in her article on Miralles titled "Walking to Begin."[253] She brilliantly links it with Henry David Thoreau's essay "Walking." As Spellman remarks: "Thoreau describes many of the commonalities between walking and writing, such as intuitive directions, physical engagement, and the search for self-awareness and iteration as the process of all creative activity."[254] Like the displacement of one of its references from its literalism to an aestheticization, the following passage jumps from the superficiality of the project description to the metaphorical explanation of Miralles' design process:

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[251] Miralles, "Interview to Enric Miralles, Cronotopias" [author's translation].
[252] See his texts "Caminar" and "Pasear" in Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 373–74, 424–25.
[253] Spellman, "Walking to Begin," 224–43.
[254] Ibid., 230.

> Tracks as writing on the surface we move or ponder on… That trace which corresponds to the movement we believe we discover in the place. That elementary sign accompanying the shift from one place to another… fragments of these movements describe a geometry linked to reality; they envelope real shapes… working from the foregoing lines; halting movement. Halting to think of something else, multiplying the forking paths, the intermediate spaces, the escape points… [255]

Walking is a way to let the project's expressions appear as you go along with it. Walking is Miralles' method of lacking method. This internal derive with(in) the AP has an inevitable Situationist flavor that so much influenced the architect, as Granell indicates.[256] Perhaps it is Spellman who best approximates Miralles' non-method or deep and open method: "As with any journey of a great adventurer, the pilgrimage was about finding the unknown and determining how to make the most of it."[257]

5.2.4. Tangling and untangling

Until now, the creative-structural metaphor has been examined, on a singular basis, as the initiator of the project: one metaphor for one project. However, things are never that simple with Miralles. Indeed, any of his projects—whether with Pinós, when he worked alone, or with Tagliabue—is a set of metaphors involving multiple references. This implies that none of his works was the translation of a single metaphor, but the intersection of many. On this basis, this subsection will tackle the activity of gathering multiple references and its opposite, that of unfolding such an accumulation of associations. As we will see, these two activities overlap and include aesthetic and part-to-whole cognitive implications. Miralles referred to this gathering-unveiling process as tangling and untangling.

When designing seeks to involve itself with the AP's multiplicity, it must avoid both (a) the direct and (b) the unequivocal: the literal and the one-sided approach, whether it emerges from direct or indirect cognition. About (a), Miralles recommended to his students:

> When you are having a problem with a design, you are focusing too much in one point. You must get away from it to find a solution. You need to go somewhere else. Go and draw somewhere else, and it will come. Go to the edges. Go to the edges, not to the point.[258]

Such a "point" can entail either transparency of qualities or the impossibility of grasping substance. Whatever the case, metaphor can take us to the perimeter of our conception of the thing and constitute—as mentioned before—a weak or half-baked sensual object: a vague reflection in consciousness of what we are observing. This can occur at any time within a design process. A new metaphor can join any phase of the design. In such cases, the mechanism may vary with respect to that of the initiating metaphor. For example, if what has been unveiled so far is too ambiguous in a work process, the designer can make use of the reductive metaphor to fix some aspects of the project. It is not then a question of initiating a thought (in expansion), but of fixing the material at hand by increasing its

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[255] Miralles and Pinós' text quoted from Ibid., 228.

[256] Enrique Granell, "Una Maleta Llena de Arquitectura," in *Enric Miralles 1972-2000*, ed. Josep M. Rovira, Colección Arquia/Temas 33 (Barcelona: Fundación Arquia, 2011), 45.

[257] Spellman, "Walking to Begin," 242.

[258] Elena Cánovas, "Drawing in the Edges," in *Conversations and Allusions: Enric Miralles*, ed. Catherine Spellman (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019), 269.

directness for us (in compression). The sensual object solidifies. On the other hand, if what has been worked on so far has become too literal and impedes progression—as the quote suggests—another creative metaphor can open up new lines of thought and bring the architect-project relationship again to its blurred cognitive perimeter. The sensual object liquefies.

On the other hand, escaping from (b)—a single approach—is a matter of involving extensive areas of the qualitative. Focusing for a moment only on such a realm and leaving aside the substantial side of the AP, a creative metaphor usually contains several meanings far from the habitual ones. The designer cannot account for all of them. As noted, a metaphor is another object with a surplus for each cognizer. That means that, in most cases, the result of a metaphor is singular. It implies *one* change of perspective: the new profile replaces the assumed one; or the absent one, if the process starts from scratch. However, if the work process aims to work with larger zones of the AP's plurality, dragging the same metaphorical result throughout its development can fall into a similar dogmatism and exhaustiveness as that of any direct and literal design agenda. In short, a metaphor may run the risk of being literalized, and thus, it would operate as the transparent point and not some edge, to use the previous quote's terms.

Miralles avoided this possibility with a simple maneuver: multiplying references, multiplying beginnings. As he himself said: "A work is done between things," in the plural.[259] Within this design scheme, a preliminary distinction can be made between the accumulation that gives rise to a heap or lump of references and the organization of such a heap.[260] As Miralles commented: "The serious […] work of a project is to untangle the thought that has made it succumb, and I say untangle to use an easy word. When you are working on things, in the end you produce a big mess; a whole tangle of things."[261]

The project's tangle comes from a potpourri of referential factors such as the program, the morphological conditions of the place (past and present), histories of the place, of the people and their culture, personal intuitions, and a long finite et cetera. In Miralles' agenda, all references are approached from their reverse side, namely, indirectly. And moreover, the majority of them are not the initiating metaphor, the one that gives ontological birth to the AP. Instead, they can enter at different stages of the work process and reorient the design-unit's cognitive trajectory. A metaphor is an object in itself, which sometimes gives birth to the AP but most of the times does not. A metaphor as a beginning added to an ongoing design process does not cancel what has been unfolded so far. It does not generate a new project as a separated ontological unit. Instead, each opens a new door towards the qualitative surplus of what is being designed. The architect accumulates the metaphorizing of some of the AP's various components (Fig. 1-3 and Fig. 5-9). "It is not about accumulating data in the most efficient way, but about multiplying forms, which allows the generation of forms that were not thought of at the beginning," Miralles commented.[262]

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[259] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 408, [author's translation].

[260] I refer here to "heap" in its Aristotelian sense, i.e., as an agglomeration of elements without unitary consistency.

[261] Miralles, "Acceder," 19, [author's translation].

[262] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 294, [author's translation].

Vignette 5-C: (Un)tangling the National Centre for Gymnastics in Alicante

The C.N.A.R., in Spanish, *Centro Nacional de Alto Rendimiento*, is a sports facility commissioned to Miralles/Pinós in 1989, and developed by Miralles' solo practice after the architects split up. The building was inaugurated in 1993. The original program comprised two large rhythmic gymnastics halls, one for public performances with a capacity of 4.000 people (west side) and one for practice (east side). A circulation spine divides the halls while connecting two sides of the plot (Fig. 5-10). On the north side, a ramp system gathers the public for competition days, while the south entrance allows direct access to the daily user spaces, such as offices and restrooms. A roof running from west to east on three axes covers all the heterogeneity of elements that occur under it.

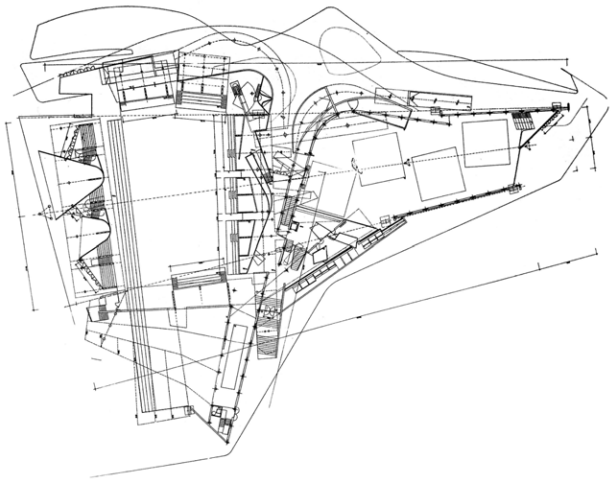
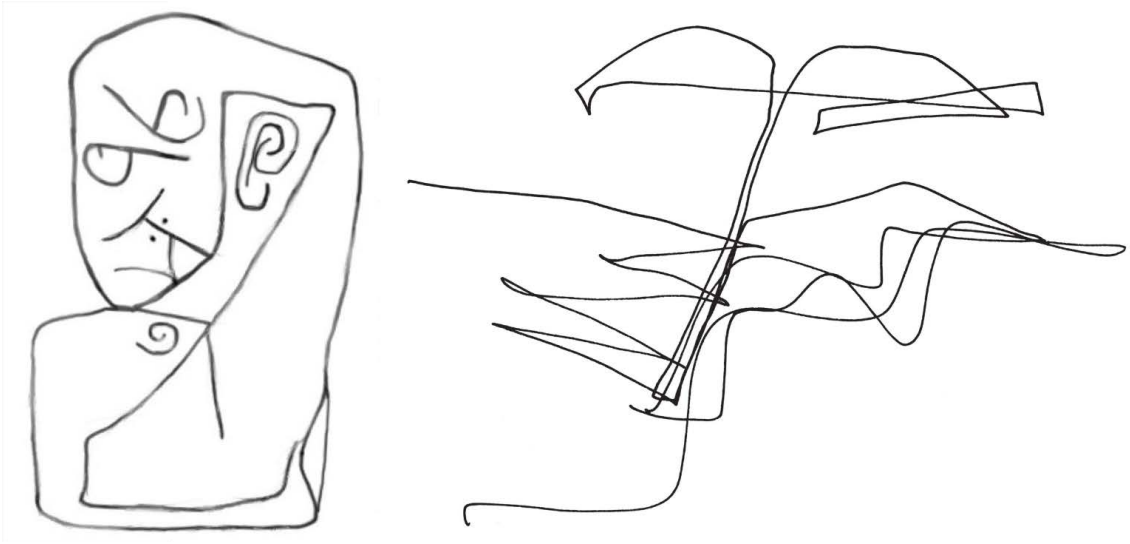


Figure 5-10. Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, floor plan +9.00, Alicante, 1989-1993.

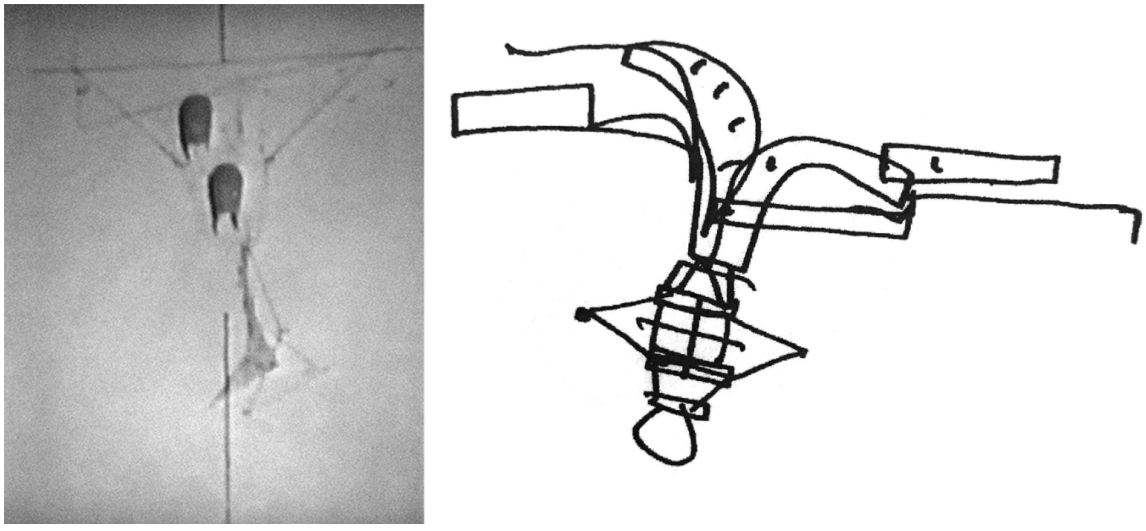
The following text is a long excerpt from Miralles' lecture at the Valencia School of Architecture in 1989 explaining the project. It is a useful piece for understanding the architect's metaphorical thinking, progression through interruptions, multiple beginnings, and cross-referencing. Some slides he showed at the lecture and some hand sketches of the project accompanied the transcript:

> [...] I tell you these things not to protect the project, far from it, but to be in the school of the concepts that you remember [at designing] and saw labyrinths or that kind of things. Surely you know one of Paul Klee's angels (Figs. 5-11 and 5-12), where an almost impossible problem is being posed. I am much more interested in these pieces as I see them through common problems rather than through an aesthetic [pure] perception, almost from this more manual point of view. It is posing you the impossibility almost to enter, to decipher this face because you can't find its master lines: the ear is thought, the eye looks inside, the nose is... but through that temptation of the continuous line that, in our case, is always that which defines what is outside and what is inside. You will never know which part is inside and which part is outside of this face or of this angel. [...] These are temptations that [the drawing] proposes to you. You would like the way to think about how to enter this building to be this. [...] It's totally far away because the tools are very different, but at least, you rely on something to be able to think that the movement of people will be able to stop [at the entrance ramps]. [...] There is this kind of stopped movement that has nothing to do with strolling. [...] You can see that there is a cross that organizes all this. [...] What happens now is that you are discovering that this possibility of organizing [in a cross], which would be the easiest, [...] reminds you of the minimal possibilities you have to move in a cruciform figure. What shapes can do this? You are looking for something like these pieces that always have an interrupted rhythm in themselves. They are placed one on top of the other rather than following a path. As if each one of them were the falling, the moving of one of these movements.



Figures 5-11 and 5-12. Left: Paul Klee, *Angel*, 1939 (displayed at the lecture). Right: Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, hand sketch, Alicante, 1989-1993.

> [...] So, you get used to these things (Fig. 5-13). You begin to see them in a very abstract way: in these small movements of descent, of interrupted movement... These are the studies they did to demonstrate that the shroud of Turin was true, because you could see if the movement of the bloodstains on a body was identical to the one on the cloth. They are really impressive studies. What interested me is that movement that stops on a cross; that does not walk on it, but almost only vibrates or moves. What happens is that the power of the cross allows that arabesque around it, which is something you wanted to run away from. [...] [It is interesting] the freedom you find in these very small movements of the human body, of the small additives.



Figures 5-13 and 5-14. Left: unknown artist, unknown name (displayed at the lecture). Right: Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, hand sketch, Alicante, 1989-1993.

> [...] In Picasso himself, you go looking for these things, which in the case of Picasso, he exceeds them (Fig. 5-15). The intuition that you always find in these characters is which form can occupy that space; occupying it and building it, repeating it... What interests you now is the body on the cross and not the wooden support. They are the things you live with [...] to find how it is possible to move around, to stop, to enter, to continue, and that this movement is not a continuous movement that exhausts itself. You see that the power of a continuous abstract stroke would not work with that movement of 500-600 people.



Figure 5-15. Pablo Picasso, *Crucifixion*, 1932 (displayed at the lecture).

[...] The images that always come are the same: those of repeated and interrupted movements, of superimpositions of things (Fig. 5-16). Not only because of a cultural will, but it is something much more artisanal or manual. You almost come across it, and that is what a group of people entering that building will do. By chance, this also coincides with what the athletes are going to do. Surely, that also makes you be close to these things. [...] Shapes that you can never think of by drawing them. [...] I would like [the project] to have some of this, that suddenly going through this wall, moving here, jumping here, coming out again... All the rhetoric of hiding and appearing on a large scale. [...] I don't know. I think that some of these intentions are being achieved at the moment.

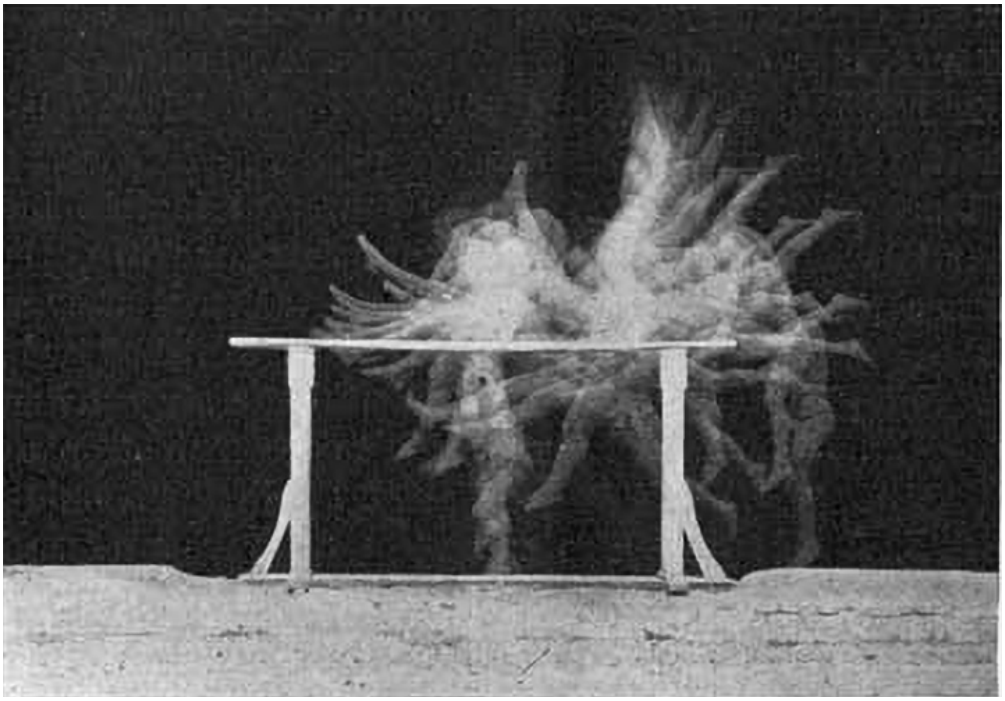


Figure 5-16. Etienne-Jules Marey, Chronophotograph from *The Human Body in Action,* 1914 (similar figure displayed at the lecture).

[…] This is a man coming down a stair (Fig. 5-17). The movement of different things in the end constructs a figure, but of different as states of repose. […] You intuit something of what the nude coming down the stairs could mean, […] these muscles interrupted in their movement. It is through the work of these people that you then identify that these shapes can happen like this. Maybe when this gets built, we'll discover something else or that it's wrong. But all of a sudden, these shapes that you are seeing are identical to those crucifixes that I was showing you before where they move slightly because of the fall of the body's own weight. This is a previous model made on paper and photocopies to tell what is this move (Fig. 5-18), almost at the moment the project is only this.



Figure 5-17. Marcel Duchamp, crop of *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 1)*, 1911 (displayed at the lecture).



Figure 5-18. Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, working model, Alicante, 1989-1993 (displayed at the lecture).

Then, surely because of exhaustion or whatever, in the end, the cross is no longer of interest and you find the body that has been crucified as the most expressive thing. As I am presenting it to you, it is impressive to see this way of entering a body. It is impressive to see how the body of the crucified person shows you the wound in his side. They are very small intuitions that you say: "Oh sure, I'm passing through! I am entering a body! I am moving, no longer between the ground and the earth, but I am entering inside!" […] In the end, the project takes on a geometry that looks a bit like this (Fig. 5-19). We were even a little scared. It is a geometry that decays… The cross is simply present in the arms that reach the ground. It's where you could go up and enter the open side [of the body]. You find these movements that maybe are also part of this thought that constructs things.



Figure 5-19. Unknown artist, unknown name (displayed at the lecture).

> [...] Simply then, what interested us was that the roof is a veil that totally covers like a mantle and that tells nothing about all this. It is a cover that falls to both sides and that covers the project independently of everything I have told you. This is still at the preliminary design level and more work needs to be done on it (Fig. 5-20). But what it does is simply to fall towards the interior of the space, leaving a central rib that is the one that redraws the other part of the more formal cross, the one that organizes the space. The one that surely is the one that helped us to start the project.



Figure 5-20. Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, working model, Alicante, 1989-1993 (displayed at the lecture).

> [...] So that's how we got into these religious matters...[263]

In other lectures and texts on the C.N.A.R., Miralles continued the explanation of the additional beginnings that overlap the associations of the cross and the body. He mentioned the metaphor of equilibrium, looking this time at Picasso's bullfighting series (Fig. 5-21).[264] For the architect, the complicated twisted figures of the human, the horse, and the bull, at the limits of balance between each other, resonate with the complicated figure of the ramp system (Fig. 5-22).

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[263] Enric Miralles, *1989 - Enric Miralles - Ultimas Obras y Proyectos (Nov 1989)* (Lecture at ETSA Valencia, 1989), 1:22:45-1:34:31, https://youtu.be/VEx8MXu2-TQ [author's transcript and translation].

[264] Enric Miralles, 1992 - Expo "Miralles - Tusquets" Conferencia Huesca, Igualada, Inestable, Alicante, Seele - YouTube, 1992, https://youtu.be/34_twpCzqtw.

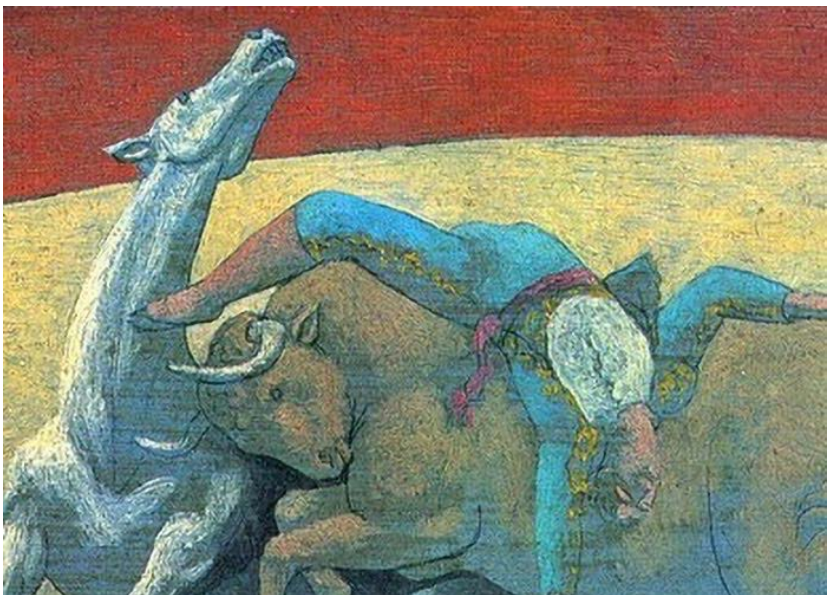


Figure 5-21. Pablo Picasso, *Corrida*, 1934 (displayed at Miralles' lecture in France in 1992).

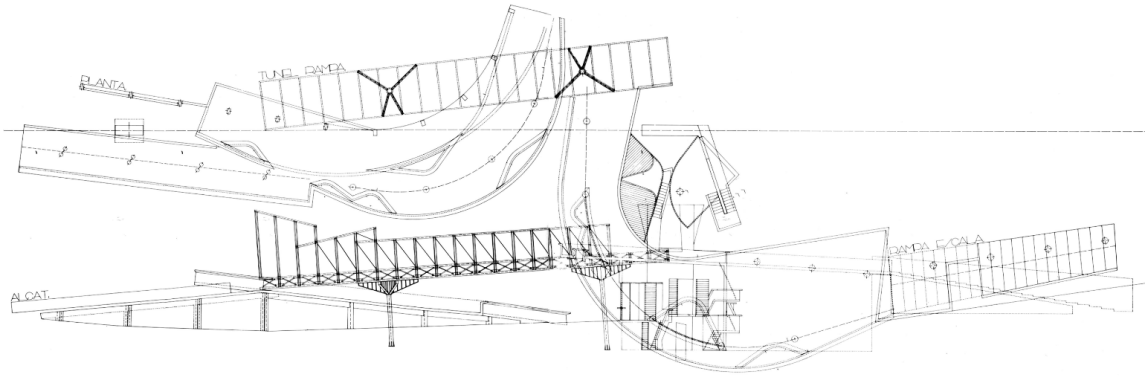


Figure 5-22. Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, ramps detail, Alicante, 1989-1993.

The tangle-untangle progression is not to be understood as a linear work in the sense of: "first, I produce the mess, and then, I repair it." Instead, tangling and untangling overlap each other continuously. These moments of disjunction register as productive "interruptions" or "successive beginnings," as Miralles called them. In the Spanish architect's way of doing architecture, metaphor most of the time means beginning. Yet beginning is not single. A project has one birth, but it does not have only one beginning, cognitively speaking. It has many. On the one hand, this allows not to limit the use of generative metaphors to the birth phase. On the other hand, the initiating metaphor does not dictate a solitary and unequivocal line of work. There are multiple beginnings, each coming from a metaphor, spread throughout the creative activity, including the construction phase.

In *Izquierda-derecha (Una nota y tres aclaraciones)*, a brief note on his doctoral thesis, Miralles advocated a design process that can absorb disparities at any time. As he wrote: "It must be established working conditions that allow constant modifications, disassemblies, new connections… In other words: progress through interruptions."[265] In the thesis itself,

[265] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 346, [author's translation].

one can read: "We will advance by interruptions."[266] Such interruptions in the project development mean that "progress is made through successive beginnings," he concluded elsewhere.[267] Interruptions means tangling and progression untangling. There is not one without the other. It is a cognitive/epistemological enterprise in which the architect discovers some unknowns of the project. Thus, each incoming metaphor is a new cognitive starting point that is added to the ongoing AP-architect relationship. So Miralles reminded us that designing is not a linear enterprise, but a fragmentary one: fragments that are each a whole and which overlap. Tangling and untangling step on each other successively. For example, the description of the stadium in Alicante can be read as an explanation of the building's performance and its design development (Vig. 5-C). Those discontinuities in the spectator's movements correlate with those that advance the design process, its numerous beginnings. The text is again reminiscent of the metaphor of walking in the act of design mentioned above, a way of walking that we have now learned is interrupted.

We can extract additional points from the passage of Miralles' lecture. For instance, the architect mentioned he did not look at the references for aesthetic purposes in themselves. This supports the discussion in Section 4.2, where we said that a creative act cannot simply fall into pure deep cognition or exclusive judgments of taste, as they are opaque but unproductive. Yet it does not obliterate aesthetics. The poetics of the architect's mimetic procedure, the aesthetic way in which Miralles enters or becomes the project, cannot be denied as a tool for discovering knowable qualities: to enter the building is to pass through the wound in the lying body's side. Or this one: the roof, like the cloak that wraps the body, is a foreign element that shrouds all the complexity beneath it with a single gesture. Miralles could have tried to move his metaphorical perception away from the reference's pure visibility (Fiedler's term) so as not to put an end to the relationship with the project, but I suggest that cognitive moments like "Oh sure, I'm passing through! I am entering a body!" returns with *aesthetic lucidity*. It denotes a double excursion.

On the one hand, the ineffable substance reaches the "nervous system," as the painter Francis Bacon would say.[268] The qualities of the metaphor are opaque. The body entered is not a literal one, made of flesh and bones. This discrepancy reveals the AP's being obliquely, as these qualities are cognitively relocated in a context other than the quotidian. On the other hand, some AP's knowable profiles emerge in consciousness. It also reaches the brain, sort of speaking. The sensual object is rawly shaped. The qualities of the metaphorical human body are productive, as they assume the basis of the translation between the AP's internal objects: from an arm touching the ground and a wound in the body's side to a ramp system elevating itself from the ground through an opening in the façade at level +9.00. The crucified body then appears as an *opaque-productive symbol*, recalling Gal's concept seen in Section 5.1.

Another point is that the example of the metaphor of the cross shows that it is an autonomous entity, and thus offers a surplus of experience. The triad architect-reference-project relationship is closed, yet cognitively open. Miralles/Pinós' intuition is not governed, for example, by the religious or cultural significance of what the body in the cross means. The cross-shaped circulation of the C.N.A.R. in the floor plan (Fig. 5-10) is ideologically the opposite of the cross-shaped naves of a Gothic cathedral in both conceptual and communicational terms. The former is openly formalist, while the latter is

[266] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:2, [author's translation].
[267] Miralles and Pinós, *El Croquis Miralles/Pinos 1984-1987*, XX, [author's translation].
[268] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 34.

reductionist. In other words, the architects confront the material structure of the reference of the cross free of pre-existing meaning and pre-conceptions. In turn, they deliver an unburdened cross in the shape of a building floor plan. As in the case of the Chemnitz stadium, the reference is far from visual or conceptual clarity in the experience of this architecture. In the act of design, the metaphor that the architects composed with the reference—the enhancer object in Fig. 5-9—produced new meanings of the body and the cross internally, meanings that are qualitative profiles of the project at issue. This dichotomy between openly formalist versus reductionist resonates with Eco's opposition between what he calls "referential and emotive function," that is,

> the distinction between messages with a *referential function* (pointing at something well defined and, if necessary, verifiable) and those with an *emotive function* (aiming at provoking certain reactions in the recipient, stimulating associations, and promoting response behaviors that go well beyond the mere recognition of a referent).[269]

I think it is clear that Miralles operates in the latter register. Furthermore, the "emotive function" of aesthetic cognition applies to architects and spectators indiscriminately. Indeed, architects—before being authors—are first spectators; more clearly in Wilde's case, he first experiences Whistler's painting and then writes the poem (Section 5.1). Miralles/Pinós confronted the cross and the body as addressees, acquiring the references' emotive function beyond their literality. Their responses and medium-translations turned them into authors of an architectural expression, which in turn is another opaque-productive reference of any experience of the project through their building. The users of the architectural cross of the building are each, again, first spectators and then authors, if their engagements trigger another emotive function. This is the working logic of the chain of multiplicity.

In what concerns the autonomy of metaphor as an instrument of beginnings, its status as an object entails that there is an excess in each of them. As has already been said, a metaphorical encounter can sometimes fall into transparency. At other times, a metaphor can be exploited in multiple ways. Proof of this is the extensive use of different transfers that Miralles/Pinós exercised in the C.N.A.R. Besides the already outlined circulation in a cross-shape and the visitors' interrupted movements as a body falling from a cross and entering through a wound (Vig. 5-C), the architects relocated other qualities of the cross and the body to other flanks of the project: for example, more visually, in the structural pillar-roof connection (Annex: 36) or in the understanding of the unloading forces of the entrance bridge as the unloading forces of an unenergized arm in Michelangelo's body studies.[270]

From a theoretical point of view, Lakoff and Johnson also elaborate on the remnant of metaphors. These authors explain how any metaphorical concept or effect always involves two sides: a highlighted one, and a hidden one. As they say: "In allowing us to focus on one aspect of a concept […], a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor."[271] For instance, in the human body's metaphor of the C.N.A.R. in Alicante, its reading as interrupted movement hides other significations that do not coincide with such an effect, like the ones

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[269] Eco, *The Open Work*, 29.

[270] See Miralles explaining such as analogies in Miralles, 1992 - Expo "Miralles - Tusquets" Conferencia Huesca, Igualada, Inestable, Alicante, Seele - YouTube, min. 1:06:14-1:12:10. and Miralles, Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000, 403–4.

[271] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

produced by the wound on one side of the body/building. However, one metaphorical result can move to the foreground, sending the other to the background in a subsequent encounter with the same reference. This tells us that reception and translation can be treated separated. At the precise moment of a *reception* of the metaphor, its aesthetic effect is isolated. However, this does not prevent the interweaving of *translations* of several effects of the same metaphor. Again, in the case of Alicante, the several translations of the cross and the body perturb each other and at the same time converge in the production of the stadium's ramp system. This is the interrupted progression of multiple overlapping beginnings. One metaphorical impression does not necessarily imply one design action, but the intermingling of several may inform one or more translations.

This means that, in Miralles' complicated design approach, another metaphorical effect always colors a metaphorical translation, either from the same metaphor or from a different one. One beginning always affects another beginning. As the architect summarizes his activities with Pinós in the Q&A of a lecture in 1989: "We have decided to be specialists in *principios*."[272] (In Spanish, *principios* means both "principles" as concepts and "beginnings" as starting points.) In practice, hand sketches, collages, and quick physical models were the techniques for registering the overlapping beginnings (Figs. 5-23, 5-24, 5-25).[273] As Miralles commented on collages:

> Collages are presented as interrupted instants of a project. […] In a certain sense, they are like simultaneous sketches, like multiple and different visions of the same moment. The collage is a document that fixes a thought in a place, but it fixes it in a vague, deformed and deformable way; it fixes a reality in order to be able to work with it. A project is always made of these moments, of these diverse moments, of diverse fragments, sometimes contradictory [...] They are like a surprise that continually opens a new definition of the limits and edges.[274]

Tangling by accumulating ingredients is untangled by discovering immanent connections between those things. In the end, a project, like any other object, emerges not just from its parts, but from its parts *and* connections. Using OOO's terms, we can say that Miralles' design process heaps ingredients upon ingredients and finds the domestic relationships between them. As the architect defined his form of cognition in designing:

> The force (of observation) does not consist of grasping the simple truth of things and expressing it with the greatest possible precision, but discovering concealed and hidden connections… We abandon the daily and habitual lanes, and we let ourselves be carried away by a surprising vision of things…[275]

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[272] Miralles, 1987 - Enric Miralles - Conferencia tarda (14.12.1987), min. 1:28:25, [author's translation].

[273] However, there are not many conceptual *collages* in Miralles' early projects. This is due to two reasons. First, in his period with Pinós (1983-1989) and in his solo practice (1989-1994), the chief instrument and medium for designing were line drawings. Second, in the early years of his career, the architect was very reluctant to reveal his sources and references. Then, it is with the formation of EMBT in 1994 with Benedetta Tagliabue where other means were included in the design process. Physical models became more present and collages were established as a fixed part of the creative act. For more about collage in Miralles' work, see Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," chap. 7 "El Collage como Nexo."

[274] Enric Miralles, "Collages," in *Enric Miralles: Obra Completa*, ed. Juan José Lahuerta, trans. Emilio Álvarez (Milan: Electa, 1996), 173 [author's translation].

[275] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9, [author's translation].

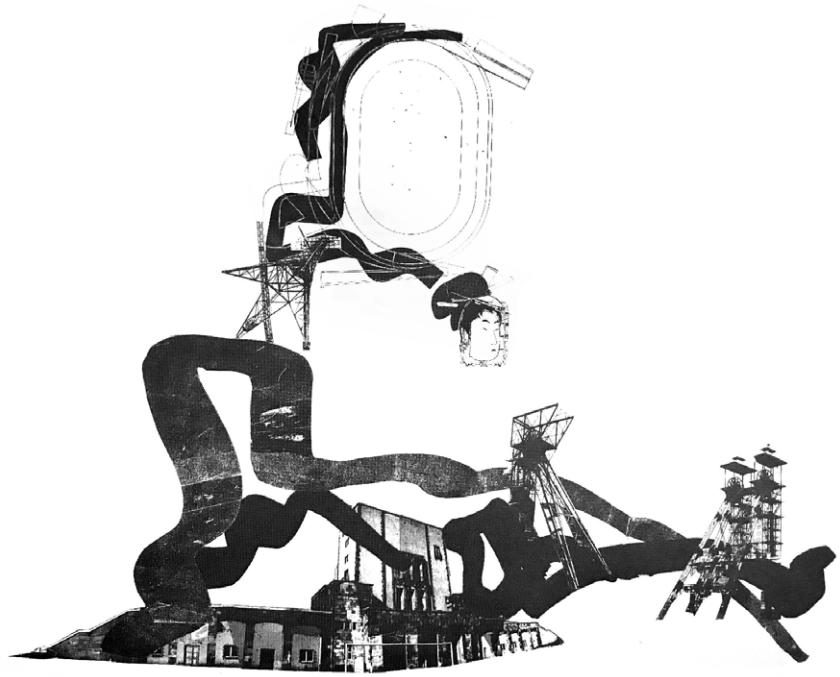


Figure 5-23. EMBT, *Sport Stadium in Chemnitz*, collage, 1995.



Figures 5-24 and 5-25. Left: EMBT, *Santa Caterina Market*, collage, 1997-1999; right: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, collage, 1998-2004.

Elsewhere, he stated: "It's like moving in a spider's web, although I hope things retain their individual character outside of those inner connections."[276] Here Miralles foreshadows one of the fundamental principles of OOO: the object's identity is irreducible to its parts and relationships. In turn, and as stated in Chapter 2, the autonomy of the object does not cancel its relationality; autonomy is not isolation, but selectivity. The spider's web is not the project, but its vastly finite system of internal referentiality. Therein, creative metaphors are a means of navigation within it, forming chains of multiplicity as cognitive routes.

Once again, it is not a matter of operating directly on the point, but on its edges; not directly on the core as a whole—otherwise it becomes literalized—but on its networked peripheral parts. These fragmentary edges and their connections are the gates for approaching the deep point beneath them. In Miralles' aesthetic approach to design, this scheme multiplies. The tangling-untangling method is the mimetic procedure of becoming the project.[277] As Miralles noted: "I would change the word 'accessing' for 'untangling'."[278] The overlapping of aesthetic metaphors is the cognitive tool that allows us to simultaneously address the AP's double unknown in the work process.

5.2.5. Intermittent consistency

However, one can criticize the tangle-untangle design method for merely lumping beginnings together and question where there is consistency and criteria in the project's cognitive progression. To some extent, this is true if one expects a direct and rational consistency in decision making in the manner of this-is-this. However, we find the opposite in Miralles: a "this is that," he stated.[279] Yet note one thing: even if one can objectively unfold the correlation between this-is-that, it will automatically turn into a this-is-this. We would not be within Miralles' agenda any more. If one can determine the precise terms that lie between the reference of the cross and that of bullfighting beyond the author's intuition and appropriate it as a formula for success, s/he will fail in its first use. Design would then be a literal repetition of Miralles' personal aesthetic procedure. Trying to objectify the tangling-untangling procedure as if it were a mathematical problem is like trying to explain why a work of art works. That entails that lacking immediate coherence does not mean lacking consistency. We saw that Miralles defined his way of doing architecture as "wandering." Yet even in those cases, one can find traces of criteria.

It is within this framework that I will propose two counter-critiques without trying to literalize the tangle-untangle complex overlaps.[280] The counter-arguments have been already employed to some extent above. The first is ontological and will address the consistency of the design's development as internal to the design-unit at issue. Whether or not the architect is aware of such a condition is irrelevant. The second is epistemological and will bifurcate into three: the consideration of each expression of the project as final, the notion of repetition, and the (in)determinacy of the OOO's sensual object outlined in

[276] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 244, [author's translation].
[277] See again the concepts of "mimesis" and "procedure" in Subsection 4.2.4.
[278] Carolina B. Garcia Estevez, ed., *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, DC Papers 17–18 (Barcelona: Departament de Composició Arquitectònica UPC, 2009), 19, [author's translation].
[279] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 3:3, [author's translation].
[280] In the article "Enredar, Desenredar," Rovira examines something similar: "Why do Miralles' projects slip through our fingers?" And the architectural historian immediately answers: "It is a matter of weaving networks of meanings. [...] It will be necessary to unravel infinite plots and warps." Josep M. Rovira, "Enredar, Desenredar," in *Aprendizajes Del Arquitecto*, vol. 15, Arquia (Fundación Caja de Arquitetos, 2004), 16, [author's tranlsation].

Subsection 5.2.2.

About the former, the design process itself is an epitome of the project's chain of multiplicity, in which one manifestation triggers the next. Sometimes the chain's rhythm is clean, linear, and sequential, while at other times—as in Miralles—it is one of overlaps and interruptions. Whatever the case may be, in cognitive progression, the chain remembers and is determined. It remembers to the extent that any manifestation, regardless of consciousness, rests somehow on those previously unveiled. It is also determined by the specificity and capacities of the two actors from which it emerges, i.e., the finiteness of the AP's qualitative side and the cognizers' faculties.

As indicated in the definition of flat representativity in Chapter 1, one of the three things that an expression represents is other expressions of the same qualitative domain. Moreover, as seen in Section 5.1, an opaque-productive symbol is both instituted and instituting. Both imply that an experienced manifestation is not only a generative basis for what is to come in the future, it is also the product of a local and historical continuity. For example, the student projects of the course "The Unknown Known Houses" (Vig. 5-A) are partially rooted in the canonical representations built, a "form born from form." In turn, all this is within the broader framework of the project of the house in question. This internal connection has no obligation of visual resonance as proof of its existence. It does not mean either that such designs are based on a factual historicism that does not admit other internal sources brought by the new authors' vocation. What internal progression means is that such manifestations do not ignore previous instances simply because new and old are part of the same object's chain. Again, this cognitive continuity does not depend on the cognizer realizing it.

Put differently, even if it is a completely unconscious progression, each expression is a bearer of the DNA of its chain's ancestors, as Michel Serres would say. Awareness plays no role in this business. In *The Incandescent*, Serres claimed that beings are immersed in a temporal structure that goes back to the very beginning of the world: "the atoms composing [my DNA] and me go back to the fabrication of hydrogen and carbon by the galactic energy of the Universe."[281] Such a chain is composed of "dormant memories" in which each new link is "a descent into the time of [present qualities]"…[282] It should be noted that, from a OOO perspective, Serres endorses an excessive, almost holistic, connectivity. There seems to be no discretized selectivity, thus, giving rise to a single cosmic object that encompasses everything and anything.[283] Nevertheless, Serres' model of historical carriers is useful here to illustrate the concept of consistency in the disclosure of design features. In this case, the framework is not the universe, but discrete entities; or more aptly, the cognitive relationships within an architectural project. In other words, Serres' model is here readjusted to the epistemological project of each AP; an object's chain of multiplicity is each a particular Serresian holism, cognitively speaking. If this transposition is accepted, novice and veteran profiles to experience are part of the same object distributed in space and time, shaping its autonomous epistemic trajectory.

For example, when we address the notion of design consistency in EMBT's stadium in Chemnitz (Fig. 5-8), the wood model carries the qualitative DNA of its initial sketches and of the first thought emerged from the metaphor of the comb. In this scheme, we stop

[281] Michel Serres, *The Incandescent* (2003; repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 7.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Against this view, see Bryant's explanation for the non-existence of the world as the ultimate container in Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 270–79.

the backward inquiry of the chain of multiplicity in the first thought as the project's initial representation.[284]

That means that, from the project's perspective, what safeguards cognitive progression about something is that design inquiries are within the project, which, as an object, is locally autonomous. It has self-selected limits. In short, cognitive navigation is consistent for the mere fact of being internal. Whether or not such intrinsic consistency is evident or controllable to the cognizer's experience is irrelevant to the consistency itself. That means that what protects such a local progression is not the author's consciousness, but the selectivity and autonomy of the AP-architect encounter situated within the AP (Fig. 2-3). This is what object-oriented, subjectless formalism applied to the design-unit means. Therefore, the specific relational capabilities of each AP and architect in the construction of *this* cognitive-unit is what determines the natural consistency of the progression of the chain of multiplicity they perform.

However, this argument of a design consistency legitimized by the mere fact of the architect's autonomous involvement with an AP may not sufficiently satisfy those who understand consistency as consistency-for. After all, the latter speaks of a sense of possessing some kind of conscious and rational control. Many will argue that the design progression must have some "logic" and "criterion" clear in the designer's decision making; a criterion that is most often based on tangible qualities. But this is precisely what this thesis' subjectlessness seeks to overcome. In the introduction, it was shown how classicism and modernism operate under the same subject-centered disposition. Although each employs different means, both validate cognition on a preconceived, subject-based canon. Again, the problem here is not externalism but literalism: the cognitive extolling of certain qualities of an object as objective and true upon which to test other impressions of the same thing. There is no cognitive system more closed than this one, and what is sought here is precisely an open cognition within the enclosure of each cognitive-unit.

Then, those who require a consistent rational design criterion as the driver of design operates within Kant's teleological judgment. Establishing a design rationale for organizing a design process—even if it is apparently constructed from its own interiority—follows the modern thinking of generating a "concept," i.e., of literalizing certain properties of the project, as the referee upon which to validate or discard any subsequent experience of it. This is the reason for dismissing the initial metaphor in the previous subsection as an unmovable guideline throughout the design process. In light of this, it is suggested that subjectless design advances through criteria based on doubts rather than steady facts, logics, or premises. Vignette 3-A showed how uncertainties moved Miralles' design approach in his *Ines-Table*. As he confirmed elsewhere: "the best way to express my work is through the freedom you have when you make decisions in the midst of doubts."[285] The interior of a project is massively finite to reduce its design exploration to a manageable set of properties or principles as design directives. Miralles again:

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[284] However, Serres would prefer to continue tracking the origin of the comb. If one follows his method to its extreme, one will find that the DNA of the comb of Chemnitz and that of Serres himself "go back to the [same] fabrication of hydrogen and carbon by the galactic energy of the Universe." The problem here is, where does an object's identity lie if there are no boundaries between them? Everything is everything with the same universal origin and horizon. Deleuze and Guattari replicated a similar issue with their plane of immanence. On the contrary, if objects have limits—they are specific and finite—one can avoid the undermining problem, as Harman would say. It consists in reducing the object to its compound parts, or as in these cases, to the ultimate historical part of the cosmos.

[285] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 413, [author's translation].

> I think that I have to accept that, in the interior of the project, things are very different; that the only thing I have to ask of a chair is that it interests me as a piece, but not to force this fictitious coherence with an imposed idea of the whole.[286]

Bearing this in mind, I will discuss four possibilities of design consistency under a subjectless approach. Three of them are given by Miralles himself: the mode of access (aesthetics, in this case) rather than the content as epistemological validator, the change of final results as discontinuous consistency, and repetition as a simultaneous act of consolidation and openness. The fourth refers to Harman's already mentioned instability of the sensual object as what provides minimal sense to the mind.

1) The first point argues that what remains consistent throughout Miralles' work processes is the way of accessing the project, rather than the content or the qualities that are extracted from it. As he says: "I do not take style to be the systematic repetition of formal gestures. It is something that comes from a way of operating."[287] And he continues: "The gestures that determine my work are born from a series of specific interests, irrespective of the spatial result they acquire."[288] In other words, what provides epistemological confidence is not the specificity of the design attributes, but how to get to them. "We accept the final result by accepting the logic to arrive at it," Miralles and Pinós comment on their first built project (the pergolas in Parets, 1985).[289] I have argued that this logic of access is aesthetic in Miralles, a mode of design that always looks behind what is directly graspable. By involving the cognizer's internal and involuntary powers as a means of the object's expression, aesthetics emerges as a sincere cognition that stays within the project's limits. This favoring of access over qualities as such is in line with two points already mentioned: Miralles' insistence on the procedure for entering the project, discussed in Section 4.2, and the epistemological interest of ontological realism in access rather than in the perceived content as the real (Introduction).

2) The second point of design consistency refers to Miralles' readiness to accept what emerges from that design procedure as final, given that the aesthetic approach situates itself within the AP. Furthermore, as multiple different outcomes emerge through the design conversation with the project, there is a concatenation of outcomes that, paradoxically, are both ultimate and replaceable. This duality refers back to another concept already discussed in Chapter 1: flat representativity, in which each manifestation is capable of standing for its being (in)completely.

Stated differently, we already know that there is no constant qualitative coherence in Miralles' design process. Progressing through interruptions precisely means that there is no obligation to *consciously* carry the initial thought from the beginning to the end of the design process. As noted above, the mission of collecting diverse data and interpreting them *at any point in the design process* is what moves cognition away from a single dogmatic viewpoint. Every metaphorical outcome can be twisted, reworked, disposed by another one. Thus, design progression is not linear in the sense that there must be a controlled initial material as a directive to a final design. This means that a design can change radically several

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[286] Ibid., 245, [author's translation].
[287] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 267.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós, "Enric Miralles y Carme Pinós," *A30 Publicación de Arquitectura*, 1987 [author's translation].

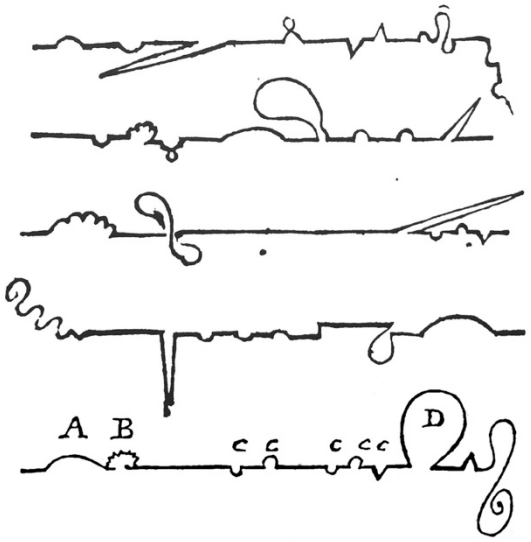


Figure 5-26. Each line represents graphically how the narrator has moved in each of the first five volumes of the novel. Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy,* Vol. VI, chap. 40, 1767. (In the original novel, the last item appeared in a separate figure.)

times in its development and still be (consistent with) itself. It is to accept every moment of the work as final and volatile.

Let us illustrate this condition graphically. Miralles' mention of Laurence Sterne's novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* in his doctoral thesis is relevant to the present discussion.[290] In the novel, Sterne included simple graphics and typographic patterns to illustrate the protagonist's life. Compared to a complete straight line as a progression, the narrator comments that he has moved like in Fig. 5-26 throughout the story.

Miralles notes on Sterne's graphics: "the line that he offers us is the discontinuity, these curves correspond to trips, pauses, digressions, detours, roundabouts…"[291] This is the design progression of multiple beginnings, one in which "we will advance by interruptions."[292] Moreover, each of these twists in the lines, each of the links of the chain is also its own end. Let me connect the notion of interrupted consistency with a passage of the project description of the extension for the Seele Glass Factory (1993) by EMBT. As Miralles wrote:

> the only criterion that I have maintained throughout this work is that all the results are final... That they all have the same importance... There is no relationship of finality between them, no linear relationships. I like to think of the independence of each one of them... And call them annotations.[293]

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[290] With the short title *Tristram Shandy*, the novel is the first-person narration of the protagonist's life story. Unable to explain even the most trivial things in a direct and simple way, each situation is a diverse and colorful tale. Shandy's life appears full of misunderstandings, humor, and irony. The narrative style is fragmentary and inconclusive, which was a departure from the novelistic tradition. Sterne even offered marbled or blank pages for readers to fill in, and thus involvement in the story's development. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Graham Petrie (1759; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1967).

[291] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:3, [author's translation].

[292] Ibid., 1:2, [author's translation].

[293] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 176, [author's description].

This operative leitmotiv applies to each of his works. Considering each instance as final does not cancel them as productive. Indeed, each triggers the cognizer to another manifestation. Each interruption as final is the manner of progressing. The possibility of multiple endings does not subvert the concepts of the chain of multiplicity and flat representativity. As just stated, when each expression is final, its individual capacity to represent the object differently and by itself becomes apparent. On its part, what establishes the productive character of an opaque-productive symbol, be it a drawing, a collage, or the building, is not the architect's intention to use it as a means to the purpose of finding the next step. If so, aesthetic cognition is not disinterested and sincere, as Kant would say. Instead, what generates productivity is the expression's opacity, namely, its openness to the cognizer. One advances throughout the design because each expression resists complete comprehension, but, in turn, each one acts "as" the project, to use Heidegger's model (Section 1.2). It is the manifestation's structure that presents itself as opaque, hence open, to the cognizer's faculties that creates channels of access for design progression and development, not the person's predisposition to produce them. Yet lacking full cognition of the project and all its expressions does not impede each interpretation from being final. Eco explained this very well. In what he labeled "open works,"

> there is a tendency to see every execution of the work of art as divorced from its ultimate definition. Every performance *explains* the composition but does not *exhaust* it. Every performance makes the work an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work. In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit.[294]

Transposing Eco's concept of openness to the creative act as aesthetic cognition, each unveiled expression is a final but not definitive composition. If combined with the accumulation of multiple perspectives of the tangling-untangling method, this is when design progression has multiple beginnings and multiple endings. They superimpose one another. Therefore, it should come as no surprise when Miralles explains his way of doing architecture also as the opposite of "all the results are final," that is, "how to work when you never obtain a final result."[295] Something final for Miralles does not mean cognitive closure but openness, just as opacity implies productivity for Gal. In the architect's words: "I have always tried to keep my projects somewhat open, resisting the tendency to structure them around a concrete and closed idea."[296] This applies both to the public of his architecture as well as to himself in the design process.

3) The third response to the critique of lack of qualitative criteria and consistency is intrinsically related to the first two. It has to do with repeating the procedure of each final result, or as Miralles put it: "To redo all the work at every moment."[297] Consistency is reconfigured and compressed for each new moment. "I like to change the project at the last minute," he noted elsewhere.[298] The epitome of this design philosophy is the article "A

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[294] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15.
[295] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 413, [author's translation].
[296] Ibid., 296, [author's translation].
[297] Ibid., 375, [author's translation].
[298] Ibid., 433, [author's translation].

Portrait by Giacometti" that Miralles dedicated to the Swiss artist's creative method, which is obviously a reflection of his own (Fig. 5-27).

So the text starts: "They are not different moments of a task. Each one is a different task. A repetition in the same place."[299] Following the previous point that each result is final, each repetition is thus unique.[300] On top of that, repetition plays a twofold role: it fixes and expands. This means that the chain of multiplicity consolidates and grows. It is a specialized openness. In other words, finding an exciting and surprising quality in a project thanks to the arbitrariness of multiple beginnings is one thing; keeping the impressions such qualities produce is another. Repetition is thus a method of loosely bounding what is found in order to be able to return to it. But in doing so, other features appear. Then, what is repeated is not the revealed qualities, but the *procedure* that led to them. In this case, it is the same sympathetic procedure in which mimesis occurs, as discussed in Chapter 4. The repetition of an action may reach a point where its automatic impressions fade in favor of the actualization of unseen qualities, accompanied by a deep awareness of the thing's unitary existence. At these moments, re-cognition vanishes in favor of cognition without abandoning the rhythmical action, i.e., the repetition. There is a "jump" where the repeated procedure, turned into a habit, manages to enter the range of surplus qualities and the unitary existence. Spuybroek elaborates on this topic in detail.

In his book *Grace and Gravity*, habit is presented as running along a horizontal, temporal axis, from which, at a given moment, an aesthetic figure jumps to inhabit a vertical, spatial one.[301] What interests us now from this model is the event where the habit becomes a mechanism of openness, rather than remaining monotonously apathetic. "Habit starts with effort and moves toward effortlessness, as if things are moving by themselves, through such a state of grace would be impossible to find without the expansion of feeling."[302] To be sure, this feeling is none other than aesthetic, which in our double account of it means that the expanded feeling of habit reaches the double unknown: the jump of habit leads then to the ineffable being and knowable manifestations. Since we are now dealing with the AP's qualitative side for the case of designing, the rhythmical procedure or habit that Miralles highlights in Giacometti's gymnastics reveals itself a form of inquiry through the acquisition—thus the learning—of certain actions for a given project. This again becomes clear in Spuybroek's theory when he looks to sport and training to illustrate the aestheticization of habit: the endless repetition of the same movements in sports training aims at constant improvement.[303] The purpose of training does not seek to obtain the same outcome, but to expand it, that is, the unfolding of knowable qualities of the sport-object in question by the athlete. Throughout this discussion, Spuybroek references an article by David Foster Wallace on tennis player Roger Federer which I repeat here:

> Repetitive practice like this often looks tedious or even cruel to an outsider, but the outsider can't feel what's going on inside the player—tiny adjustment, over and over, and a sense of each change's effects that gets more and more acute even as it recedes from normal

[299] Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 128. The article comments on the eighteen sessions Alberto Giacometti employed to the portrait of James Lord, registered by the latter in the book James Lord, *A Giacometti Portrait* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980).
[300] Gilles Deleuze's seminal book, *Difference and Repetition*, had a prominent impact on Miralles' thinking, as shown in the architect's doctoral thesis. See Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:26-30.
[301] Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*.
[302] Ibid., 22.
[303] Ibid., 25-33.

> consciousness.[304]

There is always room for improvement in the habit, and this forwardness is what Miralles was interesting in implementing in his design approach. It can be said that what the Spanish architect sought is a repetition that does not stop in habit, but is capable of transcending its own transparency to jump into the AP's vast qualitative field. The architect discovers and learns the movements to delve into what the project offers.

The act of repeating transforms the discoveries into local and personalized knowledge, a knowledge that, in turn, configures in each new iteration an internal base on which to continue making and discovering. As the Miralles' article continues: "The work is set in its time through repetition, through what is known [locally]. And now the real investigation begins."[305] This can be called *internal literacy*. Intuition unveils the knowable and repetition bounds it into the local knowledge of the design process. "[W]ith intuition, the operation is everything;" Spuybroek remarks in *The Sympathy of Things*, "its precision lies not in its outcome, which is heterogeneous by nature, but in its process, its timing."[306]

In this context, one becomes used to the material unfolded because of overexposure, material that is never exactly the same even though it comes from the same repetition. The design process accommodates itself to living with certain sort of stuff. Recalling what Miralles said above about insisting on the reference to the cross in the Alicante Sports Center (Vig. 5-C): "So, you get used to these things." But once again, this is not definitive knowledge or something that entails an automatic perception. It is just another final ending susceptible to reformulation. In an interview, Miralles commented:

> My way of working is closely linked to the idea of almost glancing around, of amusing yourself. Once the problem is set, the next step is to almost forget the purpose of what you were doing, almost as if to distract yourself. Later you reestablish the problem, but there is a part like a distraction, like erratic behaviour where the jumps are fundamental, but they are short hops, not long leaps.[307]

In the article on Giacometti's artistic method, Miralles cites the artists after concluding one of the interactions: "Something has opened up, I am sure. It is the first time that an aperture of this sort has happened to me…"[308] The spectrum specializes without narrowing or becoming linear. It deepens not in one but in several directions, as an expansion by implosion. By insisting over and over on the same aspect, additional ones emerge from it. Back to Alicante once again (Vig. 5-C): once the cross is fixed; it is forgotten, giving new specialized incursions through the body and the question of equilibrium. Nonetheless, this material was already part of what the architects initially got from the cross, although they did not know how to recognize it.[309] Those are different things about the same one. This approach circulates around the object's being. Its multiplicity is an orbital ring. As Bogost says: "things can *be* many and various, specific and concrete, while their *being* remains

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[304] David Foster Wallace, "Roger Federer as Religious Experience," *The New York Times*, August 20, 2006, sec. Sports, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/20/sports/playmagazine/20federer.html.
[305] Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 130.
[306] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 118.
[307] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 264.
[308] Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 131.
[309] See another example of Miralles explaining a series of associations in Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 158.

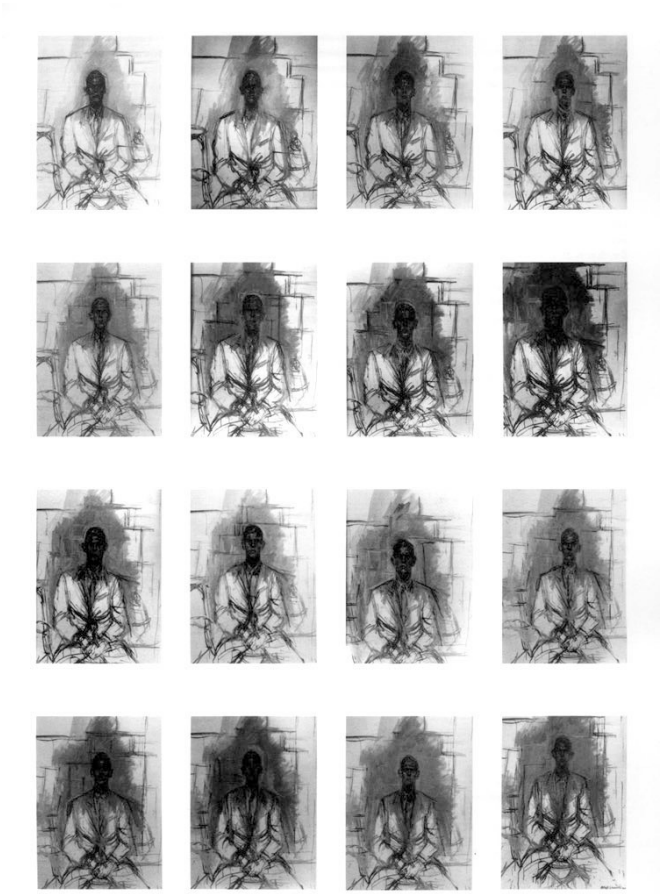


Figure 5-27. Alberto Giacometti, *James Lord*, 1964, in Miralles, Enric, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 1994.

identical."[310] Or Miralles himself: "It's a real blast when you realize the capacity that one thing has to link up with itself and, without ceasing to do so, be other things as well…"[311] In this ontological framework, "[w]hat I would like to do is to show how things appear to me…" Miralles continues quoting Giacometti.[312] And on that, the architect comments:

> It is a matter of discovering how the canvas starts to work by making the equivalent of what is seen to appear through this almost senseless repetition… What is seen is ignored, the portrait as such is irrelevant. Only what appears again in it.[313]

What is this if not leaving the point and "go to the edges"? Or more aptly, acquiring actions that lead to some edges? In this context, repetition is not the appropriation of qualities, but the very procedures that made it emerge. Repetitive acts in the making are "the equivalent of what is seen." Miralles himself, and his team as well, repeated the same drawing over and over again.[314] But what they controlled was not the project itself, or even some particular qualities of it, but the techniques of access for unfolding. Production and knowledge become interdependent under the same *technē*. In "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger links *technē* to *poiēsis* and *epistēmē*. It refers both to activities and skills in

[310] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 12.
[311] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 13.
[312] Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 130.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 267.

craftsmanship, the arts of the mind, and the fine arts, as well as to knowing; and "[s]uch knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing."[315] Understanding the design process within the notion of *technē* thus requires the simultaneous coupling of two directionalities: from the cognizer to the object and the other way around. Making with tools is a means to be attached to the object's being (to become it through mimesis) and its abundance. In turn, the object reveals "whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us," as Heidegger notes.[316] In this context, and commenting on the complex series of actions that were repeated in Giacometti's last session of the portrait as if it were the first, Miralles stated: "One must go through them. In them the requirements of the technique are distinguished independently… The instruments become specialized."[317]

Consistency, then, is not the mastery of some aspects of the project, of the morphological results that appear during the design process. If so, it would consist in the unfortunate appropriation of qualities as belonging to the cognizer. It would be a literalization of those qualities. Instead, consistency is the capacity to establish a ritual of access that is productive. As Spuybroek concludes in this regard: "Clearly, when the outcome is suspended, the required exactitude cannot be epistemological but only methodological."[318] As briefly mentioned, the specialization of the procedure and its tools as a form of consistency connects directly to the discussion of deep cognition: the repeated actions are the mimesis and imitation to become the project driven by intuition, what in Section 4.2 has been called *intuitive ritual*.[319] In short, such a ritual leads to a bringing-forth of the AP's being and cognizable manifestations.

4) The fourth and final comment on design consistency and criteria refers back to what is supposed to "make sense" to the mind in design progression, something already outlined in Subsection 5.2.2 "The Project of the Project." In that case, the notion of what I called "half-baked sensual object" (SO) referred to the metaphorical translation in which its significance lies somewhere between the rationale and the immaterial allusion of the object. Thus, it encompasses both qualities and substance without falling into either completely. In this case, the situation is somewhat similar with a slight shift: we are not in a particular experiential moment of the design process, but in the entire process itself as a cognitive enterprise.

In a design progression, an architect would not accept whatever sequence of manifestations drawn from the AP's broad spectrum of profiles and capacities. There should be a minimum cognitive clarity in the relationship between two instances of a design development, especially if they are consecutive. Even the associative pirouettes that Miralles makes in Alicante, jumping from the cross to the bullfighting via the descending body to implement the architectural design, can be analyzed rationally (Vig. 5-C). The important point here is that this reasoning is not productive but adhesive. Reason in the aesthetic process does not trigger the qualitative result, but maintains its outcome.

What I mean here is that even the most profound and open cognitive process requires glimmers of reason to function aesthetically. I insist that this reasoning is not an

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[315] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. Wililam Lovitt (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 13.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Miralles, "A Portrait by Giacometti," 131.
[318] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 118.
[319] See also the connection that Spuybroek draws between habit and mimesis in Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, chaps. 1 and 3.

excuse to legitimize the design process or the resulting architecture. If so, we end up in reductionism. But it is precisely to reinforce the mimetic attachment, i.e., to maximize the aesthetic encounter in both its depth and production by avoiding cognitive indifference. (In Chapter 6, I will address this issue more practically by proposing the cognitive "anchor points" as a design tool.) The arbitrariness of an aesthetic approach to design, as defended above, does not mean absurdity. In fact, the corruption of the literal by means of absurdity—e.g., Dada—is not aesthetic but rational.[320] Harman makes a similar point when he argues that for a metaphor to work aesthetically, the resemblance between the two elements cannot be either too explicit or too distant.[321] Within this framework, the counter-critique to a critique of aesthetic inconsistency is not to get rid of its arbitrariness in favor of the establishment of a qualitative directive that endures throughout the design process. It is to get rid of absurdity as a means of disrupting direct cognition without further ado. I believe that bringing Harman's sensual object into a minimal function in the aesthetic-unit is a necessary condition for it to attend to the AP's double unknown.

Before that, let me first insist on the problems of what a complete epistemological consistency in design would entail. In the framework of this dissertation, a complete objectification and rationalization of design progression is impossible. This is because reasoning is considered here as a special type of cognition unrelated to the aesthetic-unit.[322] Reasoning is defined here as the cognitive-unit of an observed and an observer, where the latter has literalized or restricted the amplitude of the encounter's selectivity to that which makes sense, has rational justification, and is consciously realized. In this maneuver, the cognitive-unit is virtualized from the composition of the external object and the cognizer to the subject's mind and the subject. It follows that reasoning is a cognitive process, whereby what the human being employs to apprehend the mind is the mind itself. In any case, the mind plays two different roles (generating two different objects) in this self-reflective mode: one constitutive and another cognitive.

If this view is accepted, pure deductive and logical processes cannot be included in designing *with* an autonomous thing outside the mind. There is no way to dig into mind-independent unknown phenomena, because there is no external object invited to such a self-cognitive act. What the rational method engages with is not a mind-independent object, but the object of the mind itself. Reasoning is the cognitive object of self-reflection insofar as it always encounters itself, and here it does not matter whether the self-reflected content is directly about the person's inner self or the mind's self-reflections on apparent external things. Again, in designing through pure reason, there is no autonomous AP. There is a given "concept" from which experience starts and arrives, "concept" where the experienced content is contrasted to judge the experience itself.[323] In this light, Kant's *a priori* knowledge refers to a single object: the human mind. Conversely, Miralles stated that "to judge that what you really understand by architecture is actually something that is scarcely part of your conversation."[324] This means that the assumptions of what one thinks architecture can be, what individual or collective rationality establishes by and for itself,

[320] I think Dadaist techniques succeed in disturbing automatic perception, but fail in aesthetic engagement. Their cognitive disturbances are rational, as odd as it may sound. Their means of absurdity are conscious, provoked, induced, sought. In contrast, involuntariness is aesthetics' first requirement.
[321] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 23–31.
[322] This does not imply that, although less common, aesthetic effects cannot derive from an act of reasoning. Nevertheless, this possibility is not examined in this thesis.
[323] See again, the description of cognition in classicism and modernism in the Introduction.
[324] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 19–20.

obstructs the depth and breadth of what one confronts.

But, on the one hand, reasoning can intervene *locally* by consolidating experience *a posteriori*. It is here where I suggest the formation of the sensual object (SO) in the long term of the design activity. It alone does not constitute progression as such, but the cementation in consciousness of what has been apprehended so far, both qualitatively and procedurally. (To be clear, I read the intentionality of the sensual object as always conscious and rational, i.e., there is no subconsciousness or irrationality in it.) However, the extremes of the sensual object should be avoided for aesthetic purposes. In the SO's completeness, the cognitive relationship is automatic, transparent, literal. Cognition turns into recognition. In its total absence, the architect has no capacity to unite even two distinct impressions of the same project. The latter produces an epistemological crisis that can lead to the risk of constructing multiple unrelated realities.

It should be remarked that the idea of a "half-baked sensual object" to the mind implies changes in Harman's definition of the term. To my knowledge, he refers to the SO as an essential *single* core unified to mind. It is Husserl's intentional object: a *point* that either is or is not. However, and unlike the real object (RO), I suggest that the unification of the SO is *gradual*.[325] At its highest rank, we are in transparency; at its lowest, in opacity; in its absence, either in pure and definitive aesthetics or in indifference. Hence, when the SO tends toward closure and unambiguity, the unitary substance or RO vanishes from experience. In the reverse scenario of an open and ambiguous SO, aesthetic cognition becomes twofold: substantial and qualitative.

Within this framework, I think Miralles' greatest achievement lies in the ability to reduce the AP's sensual object to its weakest and lowest grade. One that even seems not to exist, but that provides enough evidence and coherence for the jumps in his progression through interruptions. For instance, each new beginning in Alicante (Vig. 5-C) is sharper than the previous one circulated around the same theme: from the reference of the cross to the fall of the body in *La Pièta*, and then to the structural balance in Picasso's bullfighting drawings. What tied all those moments in conciseness are bits of *docta ignorantia*. The rational intellect does not add these criteria on top of the object's capacities. It is a literacy discovered and learned from the object itself: what the object teaches us is in the object. Therefore, the maximum cognitive openness of an object is found in the relational state of almost losing attachment to it, the maximum opacity just before conscious cognition collapses. However, it is this chink that allows a certain criterion of continuity. In those moments, doubt is the only source of lucidity at hand.

What I call here an inconsistent or half-baked SO may be sensed in Spellman's conclusion of Miralles' design agenda:

> a project can begin with any type of material and ideas if one accepts that the material sets you on a path of discovery that has its own logic embedded within it. This path is your walkway through the development of the project. The key is to keep walking in the direction of the logic of the project, to follow the flow of the idea and allow it to become your map and guide. […] Happy journeys.[326]

[325] It is in the grays of this sensual object rather than in the black-or-white of the real object that I situate Young's and Payne's "fluctuations of reality" discussed in Section 4.3.

[326] Spellman, "Walking to Begin," 243.

5.2.6. Summary on metaphors

To conclude the analysis of metaphor in the design process, two points can be highlighted: Miralles' design process with the project is metaphor-based, hence aesthetic, and, from there, navigation within the AP's multiplicity is an intuitive ritual.

On the first point, this section has argued that the use of third parties as references is not a form of externalism, but a cognitive maneuver to discover intrinsic qualities of the project in question. It also carries two simultaneous aesthetic consequences: one generative and the other poetic. The generative part of metaphor is the easiest to demonstrate, since the unfolding of new qualities is the natural purpose of any act of design. However, working processes such as that of the Alicante Sports Center also show the capacity for deep apprehension of the project's substance. It is difficult to deny the poetic effects of Miralles' use of the reference of the cross, the fall of the body, or bullfighting as a simple translocation of qualities (Vig. 5-C). While the poetic metaphor aims at the ineffable reality, the creative or generative metaphor works in favor of opening up the object's qualities. It is argued that both always go together, addressing respectively the unitary substantive and the multiple qualitative side of the AP. This is an *aesthetic lucidity* in which pure aesthetics as an end in itself links with the progression of openness: ineffability meets knowability. This context suggests aesthetic cognition as an additional form of knowledge. For this to be possible, the unitary image of each conscious cognition produced in the mind (Harman's "sensual object") has been argued as gradual and unstable. Although doubt and ambiguity are the triggers of deep and open cognition, for the aesthetic experience to be twofold, the sensual object must be reduced to its minimum performance: a palliative intensity sufficient to fix the vague aesthetic impression or thought.

As for the second, the design method of the mimetic procedure undertaken in the work process is based on a series of productive oxymorons. It is not only that it generates knowledge from an aesthetic act. More fundamentally, it tries to domesticate, instrumentalize, or orient involuntary impulses without annulling aesthetic judgement as such. The paradox lies in the fact that Kant's disinterestedness as a requirement of aesthetic judgment is still in force, but it is used as a means of production. It is an aesthetic approach to design that seeks nothing in particular, precisely to find something. Therefore, one has to accept what emerges from it, a material that further develops through "interrupted beginnings," as Miralles called it. I term this way of operating *intuitive rituals*, maintaining the self-contradictory sense of an involuntary and spontaneous action coupled with a performance that follows prescribed order.[327]

In Miralles' case, his picaresque guile lies not in trying to master the content that generates the aesthetic metaphor, but in the procedures that lead to it. The intuitive ritual focuses on the edges, not in the literal sense of the point—whether substance as such or qualities taken as true substantial representations. It is here where erratic design navigation makes sense: again, things are found and accepted, rather than constructed and certified. The project's knowable manifestations appear without forcing them (rationally or absurdly). Their emergence is not explicitly sought. But once found, it is about insisting on the actions that made it emerge; a repetition that, in turn, keeps on disclosing new expressions. The particularities of these iterative procedures are local. They are discovered

[327] This approach to design is not unique to Miralles, but to a whole generation of "rebel architects" of the late twentieth century who rely on affect as a design inquiry (Thom Mayne, Wolf D. Prix, Eric Owen Moss, etc.). See, for example, Thom Mayne, *The Vastness of Interconnectedness*, BAC Talks (Online, Boston Architectural College, 2020), https://youtu.be/T2Qsjqifvcs.

and learned for and within each project. Their interiorization comes from repeating them almost obsessively. (This condition of the mimetic procedure as another expression of the project capable of constituting knowledge of it will be relevant again in Section 5.4 for the user's aesthetic participation).

Within this context, approaching the design of a project "nakedly" without preconceived ideas, problems to solve, or defined goals results in unpacking an architectural content that is unique each time. This qualitative singularity evidences the project's interior diversity, which requires the disparate individuality of each cognizer. For this free engagement to be effective also in the reception of the work, the relationship between the architect and the user requires revision, theme of the next section.

5.3. The architect-user gap: Depersonalization of the architectural work

In Section 4.2, a formalism tinged with object-oriented drops has shown that the question of autonomy revolves not only around the object or the observer but also around their cognitive relation. In addition, all the efforts in the previous section on metaphor have been directed at arguing for an autonomous design encounter. To ensure this, any form of literalism has been rejected in the creative process. That implied discarding any assumption, pre-idea, disciplinary tic, or external justification. So the architect begins the design encounter blind, with no trace of the project's existence. The initiating metaphor as the first arbitrary and intuitive movement has been recognized as the creative act that gives rise to the AP's being and its initial graspable expression. But additional metaphorical inferences can appear at any point in the work process, reconfiguring the design into multiple versions and all of them final. Furthermore, it has been contended that the apparent use of external objects as reference is just that, apparent. Such associations ultimately refer to a material already internal to the project revealed through the aesthetic-unit. Aesthetic metaphor is then a design act that addresses the AP's double unknown.

However, in the observer's experience, the project is not confronted blind. There is always some given manifestation. It is very rare for an inhabitant to initiate an AP's chain of multiplicity or the project itself. Most of the time, the reception of a work is just another link in a chain already in progress. That means that there is at least one distributed expression served in at least one medium. Considering this, any architectural manifestation that aspires to lead to its apprehension in the project's double unknown must avoid heteronomy, which, as has been said more than once, is not externalism but reductionism or superficialism. Along these lines, the user's architectural experience is usually literalized when it produces a single, unequivocal, definitive impression legitimized by the presentational qualities (literal formalism), its practical use (problem-solving engineering), its symbolism (ideological or moral referentiality), or the architect's intentionality. All of them oversimplify the AP's substantial and qualitative fullness to some of these profiles. They inflict a pre-choreographed masking on the particular and larger cognitive mask of each architectural encounter. In other words, they constrict the deep and open cognitive possibilities of this AP with that cognizer.

Following again the conclusions of Chapter 2, the way to combat shallowness and account for the extension of the object is to autonomize it. This is what Part One has claimed for the AP, what the previous section on the aesthetic-unit of metaphor has done

for the architect in the design process, and what this section will do with the aesthetic-unit of the user in the architectural experience. In particular, I will focus on one of the above mentioned means of flattening the user's architectural cognition: the architect's inference. That occurs when the designer or author intervenes, directly or indirectly, in the reception of the work; when there is an intentionality on the part of the creator that determines the autonomous performance of the observer's experience.

Therefore, what will be reviewed is the relationship between the architect and the occupant. It will be argued that for an autonomous architectural reception, there must be a gap between the two cognitive-units, that of the architect and that of the inhabitant (see Fig. 5-6). This does not mean that the architect-user relationship is the only one that must be dissolved for autonomous cognition. Although not explicitly addressed in this thesis, the same gap must occur, among other agents, between the different users' cognitive units; for example, a critic dictating how a building should be experienced. To achieve the emancipation of the user from the architect, it will be proposed to strip the authoritarian connotations from the presentation of the architectural piece. The discussion will thus become a compositional matter, i.e., in how to avoid the inscription of the architect in the manifestation's syntax. This will lead to a polemical conclusion: if the user's architectural experience aims at autonomy, architecture as a means of human communication—at least in its directness and univocality—must be subverted. The architectural expression must cease to be a mediation between cognizers.

5.3.1. Conscious and direct control of the user

The architect can exert coercion over the user's experience consciously or unconsciously. Let us address the conscious form of control in this subsection and the unconscious one in the next one.

In the introduction to *Actions of Architecture*, Jonathan Hill argues that "how architects conceive the user affects what they design and the relations between the user and the architect."[328] He distinguished three types of users, summarized as follows:

> The *passive user* is predictable and unable to transform use, space and meaning. The *reactive user* modifies the physical characteristics of a space as needs change but must select from a narrow and predictable range of configurations largely defined by the architect. The *creative user* either creates a new space or gives an existing one new meanings and uses.[329]

In passive reception, the architect is hierarchically ranked above the inhabitant, either because the former denied the latter, or because there is a manipulation of the user. As Hill states: "To imply that they can predict use, architects promote models of experience that suggest a manageable and passive user, unable to transform use, space and meaning."[330] Hill foregrounds Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's design of the Frankfurt Kitchen (1927) as the epitome of "determinism [in design], the idea that the actions of the user are predictable and every event has a [foreseeable] cause."[331]

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[328] Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.
[329] Ibid., 27.
[330] Ibid., 9.
[331] Ibid., 14.

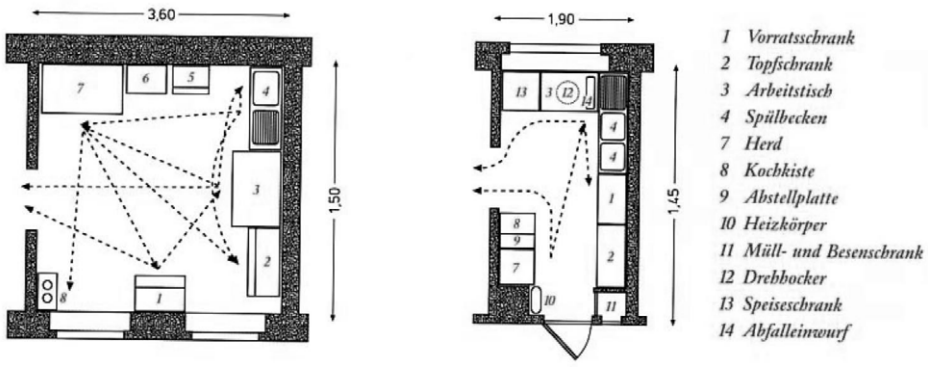


Figure 5-28. Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, comparison of an old bigger kitchen and the Frankfurt kitchen, 1927.

A design process driven by the goal of a controlled user is the radical opposite of this dissertation's plea for the unknown and the many. Designs such as the Frankfurt Kitchen do not merely limit the capabilities of the inhabitant to engage with the project, they directly override the individual's will in favor of completing a predetermined activity in the most efficient manner, in this case, quickly. Paradoxically, such approaches to design also restrict the architect's own creative-unit. The author is compelled to respond to an assumed and unequivocal social model. Jacques Rancière would criticize this piece of design as reinforcing the established "distribution of the sensible." It entails clearly oppressive socio-political repercussions, since there is, as he would condemn, "an impossibility of doing 'something else' […] This 'impossibility' is part of the incorporated conception of the community."[332] The creative attitude of the Modern Movement—the historical framework of the Frankfurt Kitchen—comprises a repetitive and corseted circularity: the design strengthens the social model that animates it. This is once again the teleological enclosure of modernism (see Introduction). In this case, the generative and certifying canon or model is the division of domestic roles and attributed labor. There is a production and transmission of unequivocal signification.

Against that, Roland Barthes enhanced "the desacralization of the image of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning."[333] It is clear that the architect is not the only one responsible for these impositions, since s/he is both the product and the contributor to a major social pressure. As Herman Hertzberger critically remarks:

> By collectively prescribing where people will have to put their tables and their beds - generation after generation - we are actually causing that uniformity. This collective coagulation of individual freedom of action has assigned a pre-determined purpose to every place in the home and in the city alike - and has done so in such an uninspired way that all the variations that make up identity are radically nipped in the bud.[334]

The same critique can be discerned in Hill's examination of the Frankfurt Kitchen as a functionalist architecture that operates under the regime of "a machine of living in." In pairing living with labor as a design strategy, Hill denounces that "the paradigmatic form

[332] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 42.
[333] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (1968; repr., London: Fontana Press, 1977), 144.
[334] Herman Hertzberger, *Lessons for Students in Architecture* (1991; repr., Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2005), 147.

of the body is the technician at work in the factory and the home. The passive user learns to operate a space the way the technician learns to operate a machine—the correct way."[335] Under this scheme, there is no gap at all between the architect's and the user's cognitions. Instead, there is a complete alienation from the first to the second. The observer's experience is heteronomous by the author governing his/her/their interactions with the provided space. For Eco, this prescriptive model of reception is typical of classical authors.[336] In the Introduction, I also criticized modern authors because of the same subject-based model.

If Hill's idea of a passive user is totally useless for an autonomous aesthetic reception, his *reactive user* may reflect a deeper attachment of the person to the confronted project; given that there is a spectrum of performance possibilities. However, it can rapidly be realized that this freedom of personal choice is a delusion, as Hill's initial quote also denotes. That the creator envisions more than one experience does not negate the fact of mediating a relationship that is not one's own. The only difference is that now, the inhabitant has a false sense of decision-making. The person may choose from a predetermined catalog of behaviors, but any selection automatically falls into the former regime of passive user.

This architect-user relationship is similar to that of the teacher-student: teaching a student *one* piece of knowledge entails the same didacticism as teaching *several* concepts. The problem does not lie in the amount: "the more content we teach, the better," or "the more uses an architect can inscribe in a space, the better." This is by no means a solution. The teacher, like the architect, does not possess all possible knowledge and cognitive possibilities of the object in question. The problem lies in the dogmatism—perhaps inadvertent—of the scene: there is an initial imbalance in which the teacher has particular knowledge that the student does not have, and it is solved by transferring such content in a literal, sometimes dogmatic, way. This is the spirit of the Frankfurt Kitchen: "you didn't know this unknown that I do; I'll teach it to you." However, Rancière identifies in this model a downside: what the teacher transfers is not only his/her knowledge, but also his/her ignorance.[337]

The result of such a hierarchical imposition is a common "inability," as the French philosopher calls it, to account for or access the transmitted ignorance. The architect or teacher transfer their blockage to something that the user or the student can potentially know. There is a transfer of someone else's access mask that invalidates the practice of one's own. And this happens both at the individual and collective level. When one explicitly learns what another knows, rather than learning to access what that other cannot, the first's possibility of such accessibility vanishes. In other words, literal pedagogy, whether in academia or in architectural design, entails a simple substitution of pieces—the pupil for the teacher—that maintains the same cognitive policies as with the object in question. The danger of this model is then the perpetual transmission of the same phenomena stagnated in the same relational conditions with the object. When the only thing that is transmitted to the ignoramus is an already known, there is no chain of multiplicity possible. There is no possible inquiry beyond a knowledge that has been made transparent.

In our field, this occurs when the architect pushes the user into passivity or false creativity. What is offered is the inaccessibility to the designer's ignorance of what the delivered architectural manifestation can do but will never be revealed. In this sense, it

[335] Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 14.
[336] Eco, *The Open Work*, 5.
[337] Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*.

matters little whether what the designer communicates to the user is a brand-new discovery emerged in the design process or well-established automated knowledge from other projects. In both cases, the inhabitant is prevented from making any personal elaboration and discovery. Users inherit that impasse of the unknown when the design presentation seeks to control the performance of the space. This is the main reason to refute designs like the Frankfurt Kitchen as groundbreaking, at least in what concerns autonomous architectural experience. Revolutionary design is not about indoctrinating the public in new ways, but giving people the means to make their own revolution.

So we come to Hill's third user: the *creative user*. As he writes in the article "The Other Architect":

> In architecture, there are two occupations. First, the activities of the architect and, second, the actions of the user. The architect and user both produce architecture, the former by design, the latter by inhabitation. As architecture is designed and experienced, the user has as creative a role as the architect.[338]

I contend that these two activities perform at their best when they are autonomous. Even more, given the historical propensity to read a work as satisfactory only if it coincides with the author's or designer's conception of it, I radicalize the present case of autonomy to independence between cognizers.[339] For Hill, "[a]rchitecture is the *gap* between building and using."[340] "Gap" does not mean "mediation," but the separation of the occupant's experiences from the architect's ones. This means that the gap arises when the architectural expression has no trace of the architect in it. There is a depersonalization of the piece. In the reverse direction, the gap is effective when the figure of the inhabitant is absent in the design process' concerns.

Within this framework, Hill's "creative user" can be linked with Rancière's "emancipated spectator." What the philosopher asks is how to transmit the notion of *path* towards the unknown, instead of teaching literal pieces of knowledge.[341] In other words, it is not about instructing a particular knowledge, not even a defined set of actions to tackle the unknown, but an *attitude* or *ethos* for self-discovery. It is about teaching how to deal with one's own ignorance of something. To that, Rancière proposes:

> The ignorant schoolmaster who can help [the student] along this path is named thus not because he [or she] knows nothing, but because he [or she] has renounced the 'knowledge of ignorance' and thereby uncoupled his [or her] mastery from his [or her] knowledge. He [or she] does not teach his [or her] pupils *his* [or *her*] knowledge but orders them to venture into the forest of things and signs, to say what they have seen and what they think of what they have seen, to verify it and have it verified.[342]

Restated to our design field, this means that the architect must renounce inscribing his/her idea of what architecture or the particular project is in the project's delivered expression. We can appreciate this commitment in Miralles. I quote again his words about one's own

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[338] Hill, "An Other Architect," 79.

[339] In Chapter 2, I showed that autonomy does not mean isolation, since certain relations are necessary for the object and its autonomy to exist. However, in this case, and assuming the risk of committing a kind of reductionism that I so insistently try to avoid, I argue for a complete separation and isolation between the cognitive units of the architect and the user.

[340] Hill, "An Other Architect," 80, [emphasis added].

[341] Here, "path" is another way of naming "procedure" as in Sections 4.2 and 5.2.

[342] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 11.

assumptions as a possibility of design: "to judge that what you really understand by architecture is actually something that is scarcely part of your conversation."[343] Not inscribing one's own impressions, knowledge, and ignorance in what is distributed, enhances the audience's disposition towards what is knowable on their own terms. What Rancière proposes is a method of indirect instruction by the teacher becoming ignorant of his/her own knowledge. He writes: "This is the meaning of the ignorant schoolmaster: from the schoolmaster the pupil learns something that the schoolmaster does not know him[/her]self."[344] The student has the power to learn his/her own ignorance by discovering his/her own means for that. This is what the design theory presented here seeks for the user of architecture: an autonomous and individualized performance of the space that leads the person to discover the project's multiplicity beyond the architect's capabilitie, as well as the sensation of its deep existence.

The transformations of the user's subjective impressions, no less than their mimetic procedures themselves, will be the basis of a later communication, as the last part of Rancière's previous block quote points out. However, the character of these qualitative exchanges is not that of categorical knowledge, otherwise it would be conducive to the very obstinacy from which it seeks to flee. Instead, sharing personal discoveries must be seen as a contribution to a collective flat epistemological effort, which is here named chain of multiplicity and which Rancière calls elsewhere "redistribution of shared experience."[345] The outcomes of each of those "ventures into the forest," as the French philosopher calls them, is an addition to what Harman calls "knowledge without truth."[346] Everyone has the capacity of their own ignorance. The accumulation of other people's experiences should in no way determine one's own, and vice versa. "This shared power of the equality of intelligence links individuals," Rancière continues, "makes them exchange their intellectual adventures, in so far as it keeps them separate from one another, equally capable of using the power every one has to plot [his/]her own path."[347]

This view relates to Dufrenne's "constitution of a public," briefly mentioned in Subsection 5.1.3 In his words: "the public is a social group because the work serves as a common denominator for consciousnesses who feel themselves counterparts."[348] With this, Dufrenne does not point to a collective consciousness, in which the group homogenizes itself by each member registering the same aspect of the object. On the contrary, it is "a consciousness directed by a common object. […] a spiritual solidarity."[349] The object in question is the same for all the cognitive-units in which it is located, but each of them is singular.

Therefore, a sense of equality in a collective does not arise from grouping equal cognitions together. Counter-intuitive as it may seem, an egalitarian community arises from the barriers that separate each cognition, making each one self-contained. This will be the basis for arguing in the conclusion in favor of agonistics as a political model for organizing such disparate and conflicting impressions in the public realm. For this, the separation between cognitions must be clear. Hill focuses his efforts on drawing this gap between the architect and the inhabitant, a gap that he argues is architecture itself. We can

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[343] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 19–20.
[344] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 14.
[345] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 17.
[346] See Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 185–93.
[347] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 17.
[348] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 68.
[349] Ibid.



Figure 5-29. Hernán Díaz Alonso, *Instruments of Manner*, silverware set, 2010.

see a similar approach in Rancière's idea of the emancipated spectator. The artistic expression is a third element lying between author and spectator; not as a mediator or nexus, but simply as something shared. Reframing the philosopher's words from teaching and theater to our discipline:

> [The architectural manifestation] is not the transmission of the artist's knowledge or inspiration to the spectator. It is the third thing that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect.[350]

Designs like Peter Eisenman's experimental houses (Fig. 4-1) or Hernán Díaz Alonso's cutlery set (Fig. 5-29) are close to an architect-user separation. They are close to be "ignorant architects" *à la* Rancière for activating "emancipated users." I say "close" and not "full" because, in these projects' design processes, the user is present in its negative form, and consequently, architects keep flying around the user's apprehensions. As Harman analyzes, "[Eisenman] aims at the deliberate obstruction of functional convenience in his buildings."[351] One of the primary motivations in Eisenman's designs, which he has discussed extensively in his writings, is to operate directly against functionalism. As he himself comments on House III and VI: "several columns 'intrude on' and 'disrupt' the living and dining areas… [and] these 'inappropriate forms' have, according to the occupants of the house, changed the dining experience in a real and, more importantly, unpredictable fashion."[352] However, this unpredictability does not come from a natural, involuntary encounter of the user with the house. It is the architect's determination who forces such a situation by deliberately canceling certain activities. It is an oriented and regulated indeterminacy. The same occurs with Díaz Alonso's design. His Instruments of Manner breaks the literal because, in the first place, they explicitly subvert the social manner of eating in a table with elbows close to the body. As the designer describes them: "The instruments prevent us physically from operating as we might have done in the past, forcing us to change our behavior."[353] Díaz Alonso himself is the provocateur of such a socially

[350] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 17.
[351] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, sec. 3.b.
[352] Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside Out*, 210.
[353] Hernán Díaz Alonso, *The Surreal Visions of Hernán Díaz Alonso/HDA-X* (London: Thames & Hudson,

awkward situation by directly intervening in the diners' experience with such knives and forks. His authority disappears only when the mess is already created and the diners take responsibility for how to resolve the situation. But the possibilities of the scene are governed by the meticulous way in which the scene has been constructed.

In both Experimental Houses and Instruments of Manner, there is no doubt that these obstructions are intended to open up the exploration of the projects' multiplicity. The designers do not dictate how a person should explicitly interact with these pieces; therefore, they do not promote the figure of the passive user. Nor do they foster the reactive user, since they do not consciously curate a range of expected uses. But I would argue that these works do not fully enhance a creative user either, as the users' cognitive engagements with these pieces are pre-oriented in terms of how explicitly they do not have to act. In other words, personal exploration of the project's multiplicity is somewhat curtailed by inhibiting ordinary uses. It is not only that the possibility of de-literalizing the automatic occupation of a domestic space or the socially approved manners of dining is removed from the user's cognitive ambit, it is that in turn the architect's own design process is to a certain extent also determined by committing to the pre-idea of explicitly suppressing these everyday acts.

Rancière's critique is still applicable to these designs by inverting the argument. It is clear that these architects do not instruct their users what they have to know, but what they *do not*. However, in doing so, they show *one* particular path towards the unknown, rather than an open frame to establish each one's own way. They tell us from which precise side we must enter the "forest," to continue with Rancière's metaphor. They invalidate the user's ability to disrupt their own assumed performance and consequently shrink the overall possibilities of a person's unknown about the object. That implies that these designs span a bridge, albeit a weak one, between the designing unit and the inhabiting one. This connection is what makes design-by-denial or design-by-criticism strategies unable to achieve full autonomy. Admittedly at a much more tepid level by operating negatively, but even so, these approaches follow the modern "concept" of generation and certification. Negation and criticism are another form of relationship and, thus, they are still capable of coercion.

Against this background, it is argued that only when use is strictly separated from design—only when architecture establishes a complete gap between the architect and the inhabitant—can their experiences be autonomous, respectively. Again, it is the autonomy of both the object and their cognitions that allows for the object's individualized excess for each cognizer in its full span. To put it clearly, designing without the occupant being present in the work process does not result in an architecture that cannot be used. It seeks the opposite: the liberation of the user through an architecture of multiple and unexpected uses, as many as the number of people interacting with the space. Likewise, claiming individualized interactions in architecture should come as no surprise. As a matter of fact, personal experiences are what we not only accept, but celebrate in any other artistic field, be it music, painting, or literature. That is what a formalist aesthetic cognition in architecture is all about. What Rancière's and Harman's theoretical framework brings is the possibility of unity without annulling heterogeneity. Harman's "surplus" is Rancière's "redistribution of the sensible." Rancière brings to Harman's theory—if only explicitly—the social dimension of individual apprehensions. In turn, Harman brings to Rancière's theory the idea of discreteness. The sensible is not unlimited and unformed, nor is each person's capacity to engage with it a nebula where everyone can know, feel, and say

2019), 108.

everything. This cognitive limitation should be read precisely as a reinforcement of the cognizer's subjectivity and identity for what Rancière calls "dissensus."[354] In this arena democratized by conflict and disagreement, individualization does not override the possibility of sharing personal experiences, but the very basis of a non-hierarchical model of collective knowledge.

5.3.2. Unconscious and indirect control of the user

Besides direct manipulation, unconscious and indirect forms of control can also be considered, usually involving aesthetic issues. On the one hand, the author's unconscious invasions come with the proposal of a particular aesthetic experience, usually his/her own, rather than the presentation of an expression to be openly explored. The observer's cognitive grip has to be that which the creator felt in the production of the work. On the other hand, indirect interference occurs when the author dictates a specific aesthetic regime.

The former entails a floating rightness in the way a work should be interpreted or interacted with, a truth that is only validated when the beholder repeats the author's impressions that motivated the creation. In "Who's Afraid of the Audience?" Lotte Philipsen asks: "if what the artists do in a process of creation automatically equals aesthetic experience of an audience?"[355] In her conclusion, which I endorse, she advocates for a form of art that differentiates between artistic creation and artistic reception. However, I disagree with the method by which she arrives at such a conclusion: Philipsen celebrates the "misinterpretations" or "failures" between the two cognitive scenarios.[356] In it, there is still a relationship of validation between the two, in which there is the author's "right" view and the user's "misguided" understanding. If there is a misinterpretation, it means that there is a correct way of interpreting; again, typically that of the creator. However, it is precisely this that what should be rejected: the creation of a measuring point. It does not matter if it comes from the author or any other imposing figure (curator, critic, a friend, etc.). A referent of rightness always brings a true-false taxonomization, even if it is not to coincide with the author's personal impressions. Yet only when such a benchmark does not exist at all, there can be no failure; either to reject or to celebrate. An experience thus becomes autonomous only when there is nothing to contrast it against, and therefore it will always be valid and legitimate by its own means. This again resembles Eco's words quoted in the previous section. Let me repeat part of it: "Every performance explains the composition but does not exhaust it. Every performance makes the work an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work."[357]

In other words, when there is an emotional author-observer communication, the excess of the object is reduced to a single aesthetic capacity: that of the creator. When the author channels his/her subjective reactions as to what experience should be, even if unconsciously, the problem is not whether they are superficial or profound. The issue is that they are those of the author and not those of the observer. There is again a substitution of positions in which the spectator replaces the author, repeating a given experience. The

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[354] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London and New York: Continuum, 2010). See also Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement. Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[355] Lotte Philipsen, "Who's Afraid of the Audience? Digital and Post-Digital Perspectives on Aesthetics," *A Peer-Reviewed Journal About* 3 (June 1, 2014): 124, https://doi.org/10.7146/aprja.v3i1.116092.

[356] Ibid., 127.

[357] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15.

content, in this case, is not direct knowledge, but emotions.

Let me return to a question I left open in the section on metaphors. At some point there, I speculated that Lovecraft's final expression of Cthulhu as octopus-dragon-humanoid was the same as the one that gave rise to it (Subsection 5.2.2). It is likely that the horror writer envisioned the monster aesthetically as the mixture of these three references. If so, there is a direct transfer of the references that governed the creation to the reception with the aim of *reproducing* a particular aesthetic response. If so, all the interpretations of the fantasy creature that have emerged since the publication of the short story *The Call of Cthulhu* have been articulated only within Lovecraft's aesthetic possibilities. He himself, rather than the monster's reality, has been present in all our registers ever since. This gives us oriented experiences where there is, first, an intention of the writer to make the reader perceive and feel the thing as he did, and second, an indirect embargo of Lovecraft's ignorance about Cthulhu. There is no possibility of accessing what he did not know about his own creation.

Despite the different nature of the elements and means used, since one is a piece of literature and the other of architecture, let us compare Cthulhu with the Alicante Sports Center (Vig. 5-C). The latter is a fiesta of references all over the creative process. However, how many of those references or impressions become the basis of the user's cognition? Zero.[358] Moreover, does anyone see traces of a comb in the drawings or the model of the Chemnitz project (Fig. 5-8)? If the stadium would have been built, would any visitor have felt him/herself as to be a hair organized by a comb? Highly improbable. In both architectural projects, the distance between the references as inputs and the proposed designs as outputs is enormous. The abstraction of the metaphorical translation is evident. That implies that these metaphors and their evocations remain private within the design-unit. They have no vocation to determine users' responses, nor to validate the unfolded design or its cognitions. This is the main reason for arguing that experience is autonomous in many of Miralles' projects. There is a strict architect-user separation. Unlike with Cthulhu, the references that informed these stadiums' expressions do not jump into the user's or visitor's apprehensions. The fact that certain aesthetic visions participated in the design process does not imply that they must be explicitly inscribed in the architectural expression. At the same time, a depersonalized manifestation does not impede aesthetic impulses in the public. Heidegger reminds us that "[w]hat is to be unveiled should become manifest, solely in view of its own self."[359] If this is so, in what exactly can the presence of the architect, or any other external agent, help in the reception of a work?

The other form of indirect coercion consists not of an extrapolation of the creator's emotions, but in inducing the observer to certain aesthetic regimes to the detriment of others. Since the advent of OOO in architecture, many practitioners have developed design strategies oriented to the production of certain aesthetic effects: mystery, weirdness, and curiosity are most prominent (see again Vig. 4-B and 4-C in Section 4.3). Like Eisenman's houses or Diaz Alonso's silverware, these obscure cognitive frameworks allow for a degree of free exploration. However, and also like Eisenman's or Díaz Alonso's aforementioned designs, the degrees of openness are delimited as to how the architects establish particular dispositions in the observer's impressions, this time with different techniques.

Works such as those of Wiscombe or Gage do not focus on the abrupt disruption

[358] At least, and if personal experience serves as an indication, none of the references Miralles used have been present in the way I have experienced the building during any of my visits to the complex.
[359] Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 320.

of a particular habit. They seek a mesmerizing effect that penetrates much more slowly into the person, controlling the user's aesthetic reception. Repeating Wiscombe's words from Section 4.3: "Mystery is something that you control very precisely as the architect."[360] If Eisenman and Díaz Alonso restricted the entrances to "the forest," Wiscombe and Gage drop us into pre-assigned exploration zones, knowing that moving from one part of the forest to another is a difficult task for the observer on the cognitive basis they propose. This is not to say that these works, like any other, cannot generate all kinds of aesthetic responses; from curiosity to repulsion and everything in between. My critique targets the initial orientation: an intentionality that creates a measuring point for the evaluation of both the work itself and its receptions.

At this point, something requires clarification, as some may read that what I am ultimately arguing is that the architect's authorship and competencies must be suspended. After all, with them out of play, the architect's authority is also removed and, therefore, gives free rein to the user's subjectivity for deep and open involvement. There are not a few artists, architects, critics, and authors who think in this direction, that is, who see it as impossible to maintain an unrelated creativity by separating design from reception. Their approach usually turns into the ethical argument of social practice: the emancipation of affective reception is only possible if the action of designing is inserted into it. In other words, design and reception merge into one and the same action. Collaborative design and participatory art are the typical forms of social practice adopted in these cases, in which authorship is transferred to the community that produces and consumes the work. Therein, "[c]onsensual collaboration is valued over artistic mastery and individualism," as Claire Bishop remarks.[361]

But, under this regime, the issue is not only that ethics becomes the judge of aesthetics, with the latter "denigrated as merely visual, superfluous, academic."[362] The problem is also that authorial renunciation does not achieve the user's enfranchisement. Given that works of art and architecture always have a public dimension, the consequence of considering the collective as the ultimate and indivisible cognitive unit is that all forms of individualism dissolve under the regime of social engagement through collaborative design; not only that of the architect, but also that of the individual user or community member.[363] As Bishop criticizes in the realm of collaborative and participatory art: "In insisting upon consensual dialogue, sensitivity to difference risks becoming a new kind of repressive norm."[364]

The question once again requires abandoning literalism to favor the double unknown. As opposed to the monochord vision of the authoritarian individual or consensual collective, multiple singularities are sought, which are those that share the cognizer's particular faculties and the object's abundance. Personal engagement with a project gives rise to a plethora of disparate, even contradictory impressions. In this light, "the specificity of pluralist democracy is precisely the recognition and the legitimation of conflict."[365] The accumulation of different cognizers around the same project is in tune with

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[360] Wiscombe, Clashes and Intersections Interview Series: Tom Wiscombe, min. 40:51.
[361] Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 19–20.
[362] Ibid., 22.
[363] Consensus always involves exclusion. See Chantal Mouffe's critique of the political process based on consensus in favor of agonistics as a democratic organization of the public based on conflict. Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).
[364] Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 25.
[365] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 7.

the manifestations of the object, which, as discussed in Chapter 1, is polymorphous and multimedia. Within this framework, this dissertation takes the position of rejecting authority but pluralizing authorship, where each cognition—whether of the architect, the user, or anyone else—is not subordinate to any of the others.

From there follows the need to account for a gap between cognitive units, including those of the architect and the user. And from here, the depersonalization or non-inscription of the architect in the delivered architecture can be argued. In this vein, it can be said that Miralles rejected not only the imposition of his (rational) idea, as seen in the section on metaphors, but also the literal translation of his (irrational) aesthetic response in the architectural formulation. In other words, the physical formalization of his projects does not aim to full fill the architect's reasoning process to a selected or disciplinary problem, nor is the one-to-one transmission of his emotional state of mind, similar to many works of art that are reduced to expressions of the artist's emotions. Both are reductionist elaborations. If desired, they can be taken as external and internal inclinations, following Kant's rejection of heteronomy as discussed Chapter 2, although I have argued that this distinction is irrelevant since the trouble is reductionism itself. An architect's ignorance and aesthetic reactions of a project are not the only impressions of such a project. If the architectural manifestation expresses the author's masking of (un)knowledge about the project (Section 3.2), the formation of other personal sets of relationships and non-relationships is prevented. If so, public cognition then becomes that of the author. In theater, Rancière requires that spectators should not become the actors. Everyone has their own attachment to the play in question, whether on stage or in the seats, and this creative condition "is our normal situation."[366]

This suggests to architecture that the creative user is not a figure to be constructed, whether directly or indirectly. It is a natural state that simply requires that it is not blocked. In other words, if the inhabitant is active by definition, as Rancière argues for teaching and theater, the task of architectural design is not to propose specific behaviors, nor to increase their ranges. Is it really possible to increase the user's creativity if the person is already creative on his/her own? The appropriation of space is a natural action that does not need to be potentiated but rather allowed. This is why I argue that strategies of enhancing activation achieve the opposite of what they seek, or at least reduce the spectrum of cognitive possibilities. Against that, this dissertation advocates *anti-blocking strategies* in the user's performance, blockages that may be conscious or unconscious on the part of the architect. Therefore, by establishing a gap between the architect's activities and intentions and those of the users, the inhabitants stand in their natural state of creative participation. The question is: how can architects depersonalize their works?

5.3.3. Graphic thinking

In the design process, the notion of *graphic thinking* can be seen as an anti-blocking strategy with consequences for both the architect and the user. It, first, liberates the architect from external pressure (disciplinary, social, political, or directly from the user's demands) and

[366] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 17. In music, Eco goes further offering examples in which not only the listener emancipates from the performer; the latter does the same from the composer. Eco, *The Open Work*, 1–3. In this sense, and unlike music or theater, the mediation between the project and the inhabitant is perhaps easier since architecture lacks the figure of professional users. The subject is no less controversial, since for Mikel Dufrenne, the role of the performer in our discipline is that of the builder. Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 21.

internal one (the author's own assumptions). Second, the process ends in a depersonalization of the architectural result, allowing the occupant for an open and individual use of space. Paul Laseau offers a comprehensive study of the different types, uses, and purposes of graphic thinking in architecture.[367] The present study will focus only on what he categorizes as drawings for "exploration," and more specifically "open-ended images," i.e., sketches that offer qualities of ambiguity and expand opportunities for design inquiry.[368] Nevertheless, an extension of Laseau's notion of sketching will be made: while he reduces it to hand drawing with pencil or pen, graphic thinking involves any media for architectural physical registration, such as computer-aided images and models, physical models, or the building itself. Vig. 5-D considers three approaches to graphic thinking in architecture.

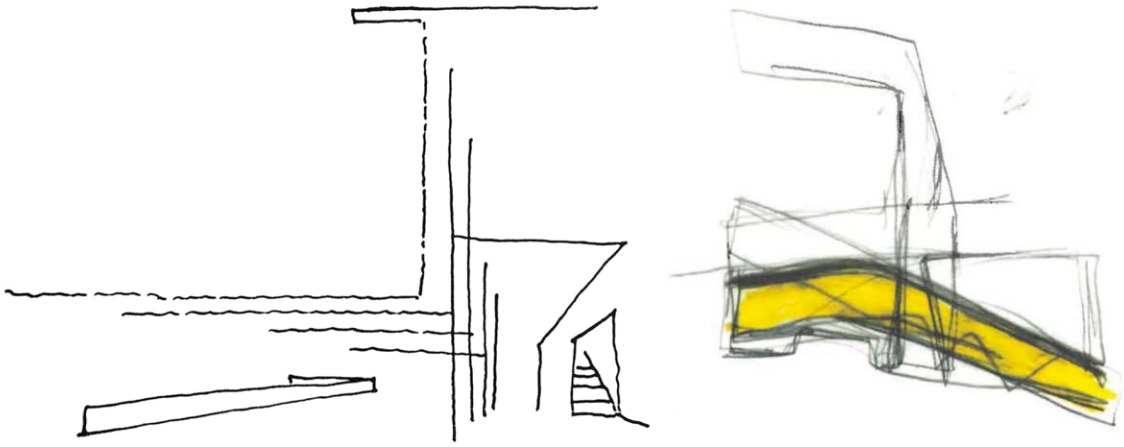
Vignette 5-D: Three examples of graphic thinking

I.

In Miralles' doctoral thesis *Things seen Left and Right (Without Glasses)* [*Cosas Vistas a Izquiera y Derecha (Sin Gafas)*], the architect examined the topic of annotation as intrinsically related to thought. As discussed in Section 5.2, a thought is an AP's expression rendered in the designer's mind. Based on the sketchbooks of the Grand Tour travelers of the eighteenth century, Miralles asked how these drawings emerged on the white pages. His argument is that both strokes and thought are intertwined, happening simultaneously. As Fernández Contreras comments about Miralles' concept of notating: "it is not a question of a continuous stroke, nor of the execution of a preconceived drawing, but rather of describing spontaneous graphics that register the thoughts at the very moment of their occurrence."[369] The annotations do not reflect the physical world. They are not mimetic representations of an external model. "There is no outside reference to what is being drawn," Miralles wrote.[370] Instead, he continued, "we follow a thought in which its graphical expression is identical to the thought that animates it..."[371] There is no temporal separation between thought and notation. For the present design theory, that means the drawing directly takes place in the metaphorical act. In other words, if a thought is the result of a metaphor and drawing occurs while thinking, the strokes on a piece of paper are the records of a metaphor (see again the hand sketches of the stadium in Alicante related to the cross in Figs. 5-12 and 5-14 of Vig. 5-C).

Furthermore, Miralles' graphic thinking does not stop at the initial hand sketch, but encompasses all the documents in the design process (Figs. 5-31, 5-32, and 5-33). Like the initial metaphor, the first drawing is not a milestone that makes everything that follows explicitly dependent on it. In Miralles/Pinós' words: "The drawing appears as the beginning of a dialogue with a first thought. The architectural drawing not as a place of thought but as something parallel to it, always unfinished..."[372] In this sense, physical models or collages were another medium to reflect those strokes of thought (see again Figs. 5-23 to 5-25).

[367] From drawings that rationalize and analyze, to others that serves a mean of communication to third parties or others for personal exploration. Paul Laseau, *Graphic Thinking for Architects and Designers*, 3rd ed. (1980; repr., Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2000).
[368] Ibid., 115–17.
[369] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 22, [author's translation].
[370] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," Annex I:21, [author's translation].
[371] Ibid. [author's translation].
[372] Miralles and Pinós, "Enric Miralles y Carme Pinós" [author's translation].



Figures 5-30 and 5-31. Left: Enric Miralles, hand sketch from his dissertation, Vol. 3, 28, 1987; right: EMBT, *Utrecht City Hall*, hand sketch iteration 67, 1997-2000.

I will go further and claim that technical drawings or the building itself are also records of graphic thinking. Despite their technicality and duration in their production, they are not the mere translation of a hand sketch. They are also direct "strokes" of the intermittent and multiple thoughts of the project. Therefore, graphic thinking is not relative to time. It is true that the shorter the time, the easier it seems for graphic thinking to occur. Reflection does not have time to intervene in the spontaneous explosiveness of a freehand sketch. But there is no rule by which graphic thinking can only take place in punctual moments of time. Rationalization can be suspended over much longer cognitions, including the whole design and construction process. This denotes a clear formalistic flavor in which the relationship with the AP only contemplates the confronted expression and nothing else, not even those of the same object.



Figures 5-32 and 5-33. Miralles/Pinós, *Cemetery in Igualada*, hand sketch and floor plan of the competitions stage, 1984-1994. (Figures inside Miralles' doctoral thesis.)

II.

Following Derrida's idea that in every composition there is a "blind spot" that governs the whole, Wolf D. Prix radicalized the unconsciousness of design in the 1982 project Open House.[373] In a maneuver to eliminate one's own drawing ability and self-assumed conventions, the hand draws with eyes closed as a form to manifest the project's unconsciousness. The process records the emotions of the space using the hand as a seismograph (Fig. 5-34).[374]

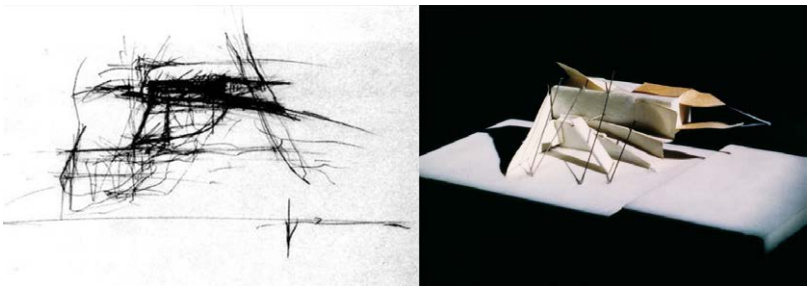


Figure 5-34. Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Open House*, hand sketch and model, Malibu, CA, 1982.

With the same spirit, and nearly four decades later, the AI research project Deep Himmelb(l)au can be seen as an attempt to reveal those blind spots that underlie the office portfolio. Here we shift from a particular architectural project to a broader office project. A neural network learns semantic features from samples of all previous Coop Himmelb(l)au's projects as a huge data set (Fig. 5-35). It could be said that if the sketch of Open House was intended to reveal a personal inner vocation—that of Prix himself—assumed as that of the project by eliminating his inner rationality and external pressures, Deep Himmelb(l)au is a graphic self-reflection: it is both cognizer and source of itself. It substitutes as cognizer the individual person for the institution and as source of multiplicity the particular project also by the institution. Similar to what DeLanda calls "social assemblage," the Viennese office—any office—is an object that emerges from sub-objects and relations (people, models, computers, the office space, contracts, finances, etc.).[375] On this basis the research project of Deep Himmelb(l)au seeks to enhance the human cognition part of the institution. In other words, the digital computational part learns from the institution as a whole, in order to reveal its unknown to the human part.

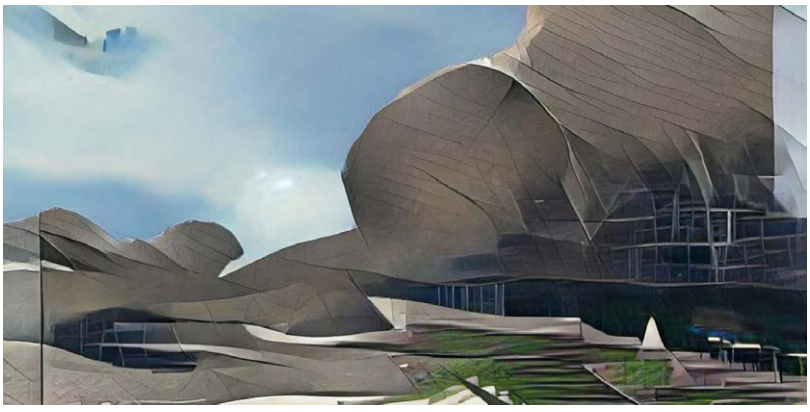


Figure 5-35. Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Deep Himmelb(l)au*, 2020-.

[373] Prix and Mayne, DigitalFUTURES: From Decon to AI: AI and Architectural Practice, min. 38:48.
[374] Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Open House*, 1982, 1982, http://www.coop-himmelblau.at/architecture/projects/open-house/.
[375] See DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*.

III.

Architect Thom Mayne (Morphosis) is interested "in drawing as a method of thinking."[376] Like Coop Himmelb(l)au, Morphosis is a clear example of the involvement of technology for creative purposes in architectural design. One sees a clear evolution of the graphic thinking technique from hand sketches in notebooks, computer-generated drawings, 3D printed models, to AI (Figs. 5-36, 5-37, 5-38).



Figures 5-36, 5-37, and 5-38. From left to right: Thom Mayne, Sketchbook, 1994; Thom Mayne with Mike Nesbit, *Composite I*, 2013; and Thom Mayne with Mike Nesbit, *Beimington 2*, 2014.

Technological means aside, the underlying interest of this material is, for Mayne, to find more complex processes beyond the capabilities of the mind. The sketches seek to reflect chance behavior and spontaneity as forms of composition; they seek to "organize the intuitive stream of consciousness" and to find formal relationships at the graphic level capable of giving coherence to architectural possibilities.[377] His criteria to evaluate the big number of variations that digital computation allows is differentiation. As Stefano Casciani remarks, Mayne's design approach operates "in an interplay between choice and chance, reason and emotion, perception and prediction."[378] These compositional tensions are then translated into notational conventions, such as floor plans, which give a more precise architectural significance (Fig. 5-39).

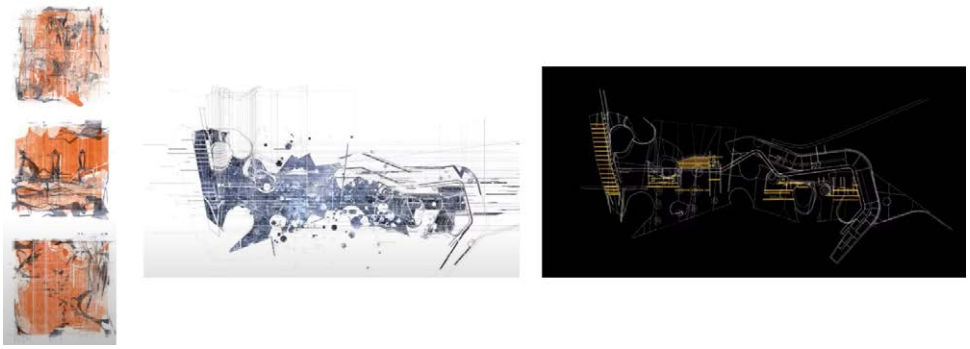


Figure 5-39. Morphosis, *Giant Group Campus*, from sketch to floor plan, Shanghai, 2005-2010.[379]

[376] Prix and Mayne, DigitalFUTURES: From Decon to AI: AI and Architectural Practice, min. 5:20, [author's transcription].
[377] Ibid. [author's transcription].
[378] Stefano Casciani, "Thom Mayne: Beauty, Chance and the Self (Looking for My Self)," in *Thom Mayne: Sculptural Drawings*, ed. Kristin Feireiss and Esenija Bannan (Berlin: Tschoban Foundation, 2020), 14.
[379] Showed at the lecture Prix and Mayne, DigitalFUTURES: From Decon to AI: AI and Architectural Practice, min. 10:45.

Following these three positions, and especially in the hand sketches of Prix and Miralles, there is no time for rational mediation. One cannot think in the thought, otherwise it would be corrupted. One can only set up a sealed hand-mind channel, understanding the mind not as a producer but as a receptor.[380] Graphic thinking entails a rejection of any self-reflection that might distort the unveiling of the physical manifestation on paper. In other words, one does not seek to reflect on paper an idea that is self-generated, but a thought that is a project's expression in one's mind.[381] "Strokes deposit the thought on things," wrote Miralles in his dissertation.[382] "Strokes in which a thought is inscribed," he continued a few pages later.[383] Personal distractions are banned to keep the AP's formalizations clean of anything that might suggest any hint of reductionism. This entails a paradox: to register in a sketch our dispositions of a project, we have to "notat[e] outside ourselves, in a carefree way," Miralles concluded.[384]

Mikel Dufrenne theorizes very well the creative process in which what has to be expressed and delivered are not the artist's unequivocal reasoning but the object's requirements. As he writes: "The creator does not see, [s/]he feels. […] [The artist] feels a desire which answers to a call: something wants to come into being."[385] For the French philosopher, creation is an act of mediation in order to manifest a *demand* coming from the object. The thing poses an internal and personalized request to the creator on what it wants to be. "The work which the artist bears within him[/her] is, on this plane, already a demand," Dufrenne writes, "[b]ut it is only a demand, one entirely inside the creator. It is nothing [s/]he can see or imitate."[386] Once again, one cannot think on the thought, but just register in physical means. In tune with the human cognizer as a medium of the project discussed in Chapter 1, Dufrenne describes the artist as an instrument of the object.[387]

In this context, graphic thinking is a method of addressing such a demand from the project, "a demand which does not come from the [artist]."[388] Hence, graphic thinking is not only a method to revealing the AP's plural interior. More ambitiously, it is a way of depersonalizing architectural expression that positions the project—rather than the architect—at the center of the expression. If for Hill "[a]rchitecture is the gap between building and using," this gap is a *placeholder*.[389] The distributed architecture that lies between the cognitive-units of the architect and the occupant is a public gateway to enter the AP's double unknown. It not only excludes the architect's direct motivations, but also his/her particular ignorance; similar to what Rancière requires for theater and teaching. When this is the case, everyone can sympathetically fuse with this placeholder, constituting

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[380] It must be noted that Miralles also established an eye-hand relation. In his doctoral thesis, the drawings of the Grand Tour travelers' displayed landscapes, ruins, and so on. Like the aestheticians of the late nineteenth century (Section 5.1), the starting point may be an external phenomenon. However, those are not mimetic but learning drawings, according to Miralles' argument. As he wrote: "Strokes that are guides—marks—where the thought advances. They add nothing." Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," Annex I:24, [author's translation]. For him, these drawings reflect the thoughts about these places, not the physicality of the place. Ibid., Annex I:27, [author's translation].

[381] See again the distinction between "idea" and "thought" in Section 5.2.

[382] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," Annex I:8, [author's translation].

[383] Ibid., Annex I:27, [author's translation].

[384] Ibid., Annex I:29, [author's translation].

[385] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 31.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid., 32.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Hill, "An Other Architect," 80.

a mimetic procedure for addressing the project's ineffable being and a personalized knowable abundance. This cognitive approach applies to the creator and the observer, respectively. Both are nothing but other cognizers within the project's collective chain of multiplicity. Put differently, the architect's ignorance and aesthetic impressions of the project are not its only ones. If the architectural representation bears them, the author will restrict the audience's cognitions. Individual access to the AP's interiors will then be predetermined.

To avoid this, Prix's and Miralles' paradoxical action of "notating outside themselves" their own impressions must be seen as a statement of intent to open up the AP's spectrum of knowable profiles beyond what their capabilities alone can address. In this sense, Coop Himmelb(l)au's design agenda can be argued to be in favor of individualized aesthetic cognition. As one of the office's statements says:

> While drawing, the architecture is put into words, the drawing is told to the other, the project is made tangible, the experienced design moment is conveyed. (We can't prove it, but we strongly suspect that the more intensively the design is experienced by the designer, the more tangible the built space becomes).[390]

When each aesthetic-unit (object plus cognizer) has its own personalized degree of unknowability, each cognizer has a personalized access to the object's being and knowable characteristics without external regulation. Again, this applies to both designing and experiencing. Miralles avoided this imposition by excluding from the result any trace of his architectural criteria, as strange as it may sound. Repeating one of his quotes for a third time: "to judge that what you really understand by architecture is actually something that is scarcely part of your conversation."[391] Miralles' and Prix's graphic thinking aims to keep the AP wide open by omitting their emotional impressions and judgment on the architectural formalization even though the sketches come from emotional impulses. Their aesthetic experience or architectural ideas in the design process become irrelevant to the architectural experience of others. In the case of the Spanish architect, proof of this is that the "comb" is not recognizably present in the Chemnitz Stadium, or the cross and the bullfighters in Alicante. The impressions of the architect do not indoctrinate or govern other's apprehensions. Hence, aesthetic metaphor is not a narrative instrument of justification and reduction of the work, but a propulsive tool of the architect. In Miralles' design approach, the metaphor dies in the design process and, therefore, does not condition the user's understanding of the AP.

Having commented on Miralles' and Prix's approaches to graphical thinking, we can briefly look at the third example presented in Vig. 5-D. Thom Mayne's digital procedure may seem at first glance closer to Eisenman's mechanistic method, which has been described as a closed system with multiple possibilities without the architect's intervention (Fig. 4-4). However, at least two distinctions can be drawn. First, Mayne seeks to reveal the possibilities of the intuitive relationship between the AP and the architect as those of the design itself, whereas Eisenman's method expels the human cognizer from the design process. The AP develops in isolation. Instead, Mayne seeks the impossible to discipline his intuition. Second, in Mayne's approach, there is a translation of the formal relationships extracted from the combinatorial exercise to the particularities of the work. In

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[390] Peter Noever, ed., Gerald Zugmann: BLUE UNIVERSE: Modelle Zu Bildern Machen (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 81.
[391] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 19–20.

Eisenman, the result of the process tends towards pristineness.[392] Depersonalization in Mayne's architecture has to do with the openness of his engagement with the project, a condition of freedom the architect aims to transport to the audience. So Casciani describes it:

> This potential indeterminacy of the design object, in its ability to be many things and very different from those the designer has envisioned, in the end also has something to do with Thom Mayne's passion, to teach other. […] the greatest satisfaction in educating new designers (or writers, musicians or painters) comes from seeing their hands and minds produce something we would not have imagined ourselves, but to which our teaching made a contribution, along mysterious paths.[393]

Casciani's words encompass not only Mayne's academic students, but also the users of his architecture. Graphic thinking denotes the desire to let the occupants find their own way with the same freedom that the architect seeks for himself. This passage epitomizes what the notion of emancipation of the pupil and the ignorant schoolmaster in Rancière's theory means to the inhabitant and architect in our discipline. Consequently, that Mayne intends to control his own intuition about the project in his cognitive-unit is not to the detriment of the intuitions of others about the same project.

One last point on graphic thinking related to technology. In recent years, digital computation has played a key role as far as the multiplication of variations is concerned in Coop Himmelb(l)au and Morphosis. This method accomplishes two things: first, it sets aside any direct expression of the architect's one-sided understanding of architecture. Second, it encourages design beyond the architect's limited production capabilities, generating more possibilities for comparison and evaluation. These local criteria bring us back to the discussion of "intermittent consistency" and chance in Miralles' tangling-untangling method (Section 5.2). As a reminder, there is a difference between personal criteria and project criteria. Depending on how they are used, machine vision can enhance the visibility of such internal logics. Chance and arbitrariness are incompressible orders of selection. They are always "hyper," in Morton's sense, always chance-for. But such an epistemological perspective does not cancel the fact that chance—once again—is locally discretized. This means that it can be utilized as a form of inquiry and of depersonalization of this and that project.

From these notes, it can be summarized that graphic thinking as a design method allows the architect to look beyond the direct pressure of the practical aspects and the problem-solving immediacy of the world, as well as to eliminate the designer's own authoritarian traces. On this basis, we can consider Coop Himmelb(l)au, Morphosis, and Miralles as three design agendas—for sure, not the only ones—that use graphic material as the project's own means of inquiry. This is to say that it is a material with its own deep and open value. Tuning Roland Barthes' words within our design discipline: "it is [the architectural] language which speaks, not the author; to [design] is, through a prerequisite impersonality […], to reach that point where only [architectural] language acts, 'performs',

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[392] Nevertheless, Eisenman's later projects seek to deal with more systems beyond the immanent geometric considerations of the design process. For example, in the *Aronoff Center for Design and Art* in Ohio (1996), there are two, rather than one, parallel systems that collide at some point: on the one hand, the classic formal operations in isolation, as with the numbered houses; on the other, the site-specific operations. For more on the design process of the Aronoff Center, see Zaera Polo and Davidson, "The Making of the Machine."

[393] Casciani, "Thom Mayne: Beauty, Chance and the Self (Looking for My Self)," 14.

and not 'me'."[394] When the architecture is burdened with the project's will or Kunstwollen, users find their own way into its double unknown without the author's reasoning or emotional charge restricting their possibilities of access. For multiplicity to be effective, the universal shared experience of the transcendental subject must be subverted. For inhabitant A to grasp some unique profiles of the project distinct from inhabitant B, there must be an individualized sense of unknowability in the cognition of any aesthetic-unit.

5.3.4. Architecture is not a means of human communication

To achieve individualism for the purpose of multiplicity, there must be cognitive barriers not only between creator and observer but also between observers. These barriers should not be misunderstood. They do not produce social distancing. Quite the contrary. They shape subjectivities and identities. Without them, the object's plurality cannot be addressed (see again Section 3.1). Without individualism, cognition is homogenized, which means that there are no differences among cognizers. We are all the same. This is the universal subject of modernity. Therefore, *naturalized* cognitive barriers should not be confused with *natural* cognitive barriers. The former are dictates that lead to literalism and transparency. They oppress individual cognition. One sees, hears, makes, and thinks as others establish it, directly or indirectly. Naturalized cognitive barriers diminish a cognizer's natural ones, which are one's own limits of experience. Here, I stress what was said in the introduction, "natural" or "naked" concerning a cognizer does not mean the human being in its classical Vitruvian sense. It involves all the possible cognitive hybridizations in which a person can participate. And of all the complexity that such a composition concerns, this thesis has studied only one aspect of it through metaphor: the natural or naked cognition of metaphor.

In this context, depersonalization of the delivered manifestation seeks to fully address the cognizer's natural cognitive capacities. Open cognition is thus opposed to naturalized or automatic cognition. To this end, openness entails, as Eco writes, "the discarding of a static, syllogistic view of order, and a corresponding devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context."[395] In architecture, one way of operating in this direction is the suppression of pre-established messages inscribed in the work by the designer that may inhibit the user to engage with the project at will. The same is claimed between users, between any cognizer. If there is a communication from the architect to the occupant through the architectural piece, we are not in an autonomous AP-user cognitive-unit. In such a case, we would be in a cognitive relationship between two people who use the mediation of architecture for communicative purposes. It would be a monologue that, instead of words, uses personalized and not impersonalized architectural languages. This can be, as any other, a legitimate way of understanding architecture. Yet, under the premises of autonomy that this thesis has elaborated, those are not forms of a subjectless architectural experience. In those cases, the AP is not at the center of cognition, but it is the architect's megaphone. Therefore, the architectural manifestation cannot be the mediation between the architect and the user, but the mediation of two separate involvements: that of the architect with the project and that of the user with the project, each operating on their own terms. The arts have accounted for this formalist account for quite some time now; and it has been commonly accepted. We take it as normal that two people's subjective impressions of a painting are different.

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[394] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 143.
[395] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15.

As shocking as it may seem in the case of architecture, rejecting human communicative purposes as a form of reductionism is typical in the arts. More aptly, it is a peculiar condition of any formalist aesthetic theory. Among other things, what is Kant's disinterested aesthetic judgment if not the depersonalization of the work of art?

In this framework, two misconceptions must be avoided. First, the AP's communicative function is not canceled. In OOO terms, this would mean sending the object to a "dormant" state by eradicating its "foreign relations." Instead, communication is not between two humans, but between a project and a person. The cognitive-unit is a communicative object in itself. What is thus annulled is the project—architecture in general—as a means of *human* communication. In the view of this thesis, architectural experience is that, experiential, not a human communicative activity. Lest there be any doubt, a project can act and participate in more than one activity and function. Architecture can indeed be a form of human expression and communication. However, in such circumstances, architecture is a means, not an end in itself. Consequently, we cannot speak of an autonomous architectural experience. Greenberg is clear in this question:

> I don't mean that art shouldn't ever be discussed in terms other than those of value or quality. Of course not. What I plead for is a more abiding awareness of the substance of art as value, and nothing but value, amid all the excavating of it for meanings that have nothing to do with art as art. But, again, I have to say that there's nothing reprehensible in itself in disregarding art as value. Historical, stylistic, scientific, sociological, psychological curiosities have the right to feed on art as well as on many other things, and more power to them in their feeding. Only let it not be thought—as it's all too much thought—that these kinds of curiosity, as valuable as they may be in themselves, have as yet discovered anything fundamentally important about the experience of art as art.[396]

Second, eliminating the author's voice from the work does not cancel design responsibility nor author-ship, but author-ity. As mentioned in the discussion of the opaque-productive symbol (Section 5.1), authorship is understood here as the architect's procedures toward the project, rather than the qualities of the project itself. Again, the latter are the qualities *of the project*, not those of the architect. Architectural experience aims to find the project, not its author. As Barthes remarks for writing: "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. […] when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained'."[397]

This should not lead to the reductionist conclusion of an architecture without architects, as I have argued earlier. On the contrary, it invites a reformulation of the role of the architect and his/her relationship to the user. Hill comments on Barthes' text that his writing "suggests a new writer as much as a new reader, both having a role in the creation of a text."[398] Therefore, eliminating the uni-vocality of a work means eliminating its unique voice, and thus, giving each individual the ability to act with a project through any of its multiple placeholders. Each placeholder is an anti-literal, hence open architectural expression: an opaque-productive symbol, "a thing without a signature!"[399] The next question is what such an autonomous experience entails for the user.

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[396] Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics*, 63.
[397] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 147.
[398] Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 69.
[399] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 230.

5.4. The physical aesthetic experience

After arguing for the autonomy of the design process and the need for an opaque-productive architectural expression, this section addresses the cognitive-unit composed of the architectural user and the AP. The focus is not only to examine a deep and open experience regime but also what the user's cognitive autonomy means for designing. Architectural experience can occur through different media, through whatever means the project finds to make itself present. As the notion of flat representativity of Chapter 1 entails, each manifestation bears some qualities and not others about the project it stands for. This limitation comes from the specificity of the representation, which, at the same time, is limited by the laws of its medium of expression. As is obvious, what a building conveys in qualitative terms is not the same as the project description or a section drawing. This implies that in all architectural cognition, there is a twofold incompleteness or distance: one between the manifestation and the project's reality (outlined in Chapter 1), and another between the manifestation and the person's cognitive capacities (subject of this section). Both distances can intertwine as in the case of aesthetics, but, in both cases, these gaps always remain open. In short, there is no representation capable of embracing its object entirely, nor any person's cognitive apparatus capable of capturing the totality of the qualities and capacities of an expression.

In this context, this section will, first, elaborate on the qualitative surplus of a given manifestation through James J. Gibson's theory of affordances. Affordances will refer to the ability of an expression relative to a cognizer to induce the latter to the AP's twofold interior. Thereafter, it will examine a particular form of architectural cognition, which is, in fact, the most widespread: that of the occupant with the built space. This will give rise to a *physical experience*, which is typically considered as the function of the space. To move beyond the superficiality of the pragmatic discussions of function, the possibilities and limitations of such a user-space relationship will be discussed in relation to an aesthetic approach to function. To achieve this intimate encounter, the configuration and presentation of space will be in charge of stimulating the free participation of the user. As noted in the previous section, this open engagement is possible when—among other things—the distributed piece is depersonalized from the intentionality of the architect or other agents. When this is the case, the act of space occupancy can gain an individualized aesthetic dimension, which will be linked to Harman's notion of *aestheticization of function*. This implies two things. First, physical-aesthetic cognition consists of the mimetic procedure towards the AP's double unknown; that is, the series of actions by which the user accesses the project's ineffable being and knowable manifestations. Second, the user becomes a more obvious medium of expression. Unlike contemplative painting or reading, the physical performance of a space emerges as another material, directly tangible representation of the project. The extraction of such AP's knowable profiles will turn the inhabitant into another creator. Without bridging the gap between architect and user defended above, it will be evaluated what consequences this context of open participation of the creative user has for the design process, which will also be compared with similar ideas from other architects; for example, Federico Soriano's concept of *deprogramming*. Different design approaches will be discussed around this term, laying the groundwork to close with a commentary on the difference between the multiplicity of experiences and an experience that is multiple.

5.4.1. Affordances

In examining the autonomous cognition between a person and a building, it seems necessary first to recall a pre-existing relation independent of experience, which, in any case, establishes the basis on which experience itself takes place. This relation is the twofold internal tension analyzed in Section 1.2 "Flat representativity," whereby each representation—in addition to presenting itself—refers to its being and to each of its sibling manifestations within the object's qualitative domain. As a reminder, both representational relations always imply irreducibility: the representing never equals but acts on behalf of the represented. Representation is always (in)complete. On this basis, a second distance appears: that of experience. Its directness occurs in the cognitive-unit of an observer with an object's qualities, particularized here in a user's interaction with a built space. Therein, the person's relational faculties relative to the manifestation's qualities and capacities are always less than the totality of what such a manifestation can offer. In short, the building offers more than what a person can grasp; it has more internal connections to other corners of the project's qualitative sphere than what the user can unfold.

Focusing on the latter—the relationship between a person and a representation—the *theory of affordances* can help the discussion. Nonetheless, some adjustments to its original definition are necessary for the purposes of this thesis. James J. Gibson coined the term "affordance" referring to an environment and an observer inserted in it. It is an ecological relationship by which the former provides information, actions, perceptions, and relationship according to the latter's capabilities.[400] In Gibson's words: "The environment constrains what the animal can do […] Affordances are properties taken with reference to the observer."[401] Or as Tim Ingold summarizes Gibson:

> What did matter was that perception, for humans and nonhumans alike, is about being alive to the world, about moving around in it, attending to it, and discovering, along the way, what it has to offer, whether for good or for ill.[402]

At first glance, the theory seems to apply well to architectural experience. The building comprises an environment in which a user finds him/herself, and the performing actions are within the possibilities or affordances of the space for that person. All this constitutes a building-user close ecological system. However, we must be cautious with the theory of affordances. It is a form of naïve realism that defends direct perception, whereby one perceives what the thing is. This is contrary to this thesis' defense of the gap between reality and appearance.[403]

So, why consider affordances? The concept of affordances is useful to explain this thesis' idea of the knowable; especially in relation to a built space, since Gibson's main reflections concern three-dimensional physical space. Affordances refer to all cognitive performances individualized for each cognizer that contain a manifestation in addition to the actual state of such experience. That is to say, all qualitative aspects of the object that can be discovered through the presented placeholder. Stated differently, affordances include

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[400] James J. Gibson developed theory during the 1960s and 1970s. Its most comprehensive elaboration is found in James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979; repr., New York City, NY: Psychology Press, 2014), 119–35.
[401] Ibid., 135.
[402] Tim Ingold, "Back to the Future with the Theory of Affordances," *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 8, no. 1–2 (2018): 39–44.
[403] See my critique of Gibson's direct perception in Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation," 39–40.

all those internal relations of the object's qualitative mesh masked by a cognizer. They are all forms that can be born from the presented form for a given beholder.

So, what is it that needs to be twisted from the original concept of affordances? The affordances of a space are not the project. As theorized by Gibson, affordances lead to literalism. But what I perceive is not what the thing is ontologically, nor the sum of all affordances give us the object. Affordances refer to qualities, not to the substance or deep existence. Consequently, from an object-oriented standpoint, it is such a reduction to qualities and presentness that is rejected. Furthermore, since a project is polymorphous and multimedia, and each representation has its own set of affordances depending on each cognizer, only accounting for the affordances of a particular representation in a particular medium would cancel out the other affordances and representations of the same object in other media. Gibson does not take into account an entity's medium-promiscuity and its multimedia relationality.

Thus, what Gibson's theory of affordances requires is the addition of two ontological layers beyond any given manifestation: first, the affordances embedded in other representations, also in different media (Fig. 1-3), and second, the reality that unifies them all (Fig. 1-2). For example, in Kosuth's installation *One and Three Chairs* (Fig. 1-1), to reduce the chair-reality to the affordances of the physical chair in relation to my capacities would nullify, first, the other set of affordances of the verbal chair, the image chair, and the other manifestations that the installation does not present to us. Second, it would also cancel the chair's reality that underlies all the affordances and their manifestations. Likewise, in architecture, a space is one of many representations of a project. Therefore, if we reduce the project to a given set of affordances contained in such a space, the other affordances located in the other representations and media will be canceled. A project has many other spaces, understood as variations and non-actualized spaces, each offering unique qualities and capacities. Moreover, if we change the medium without changing the project, a drawing has affordances that a built space can never contain. As is obvious, the specificity of the medium will always play a key role in this sense. But this tangible specificity is not a sufficient reason to taxonomize objects by media, as I have already criticized modernism in this respect (Section 1.3).

In this light, we can distinguish between the affordances of a representation and the affordances of a project in general, which respectively applies to the surplus of a representation and the surplus of the project. Affordances of the project are the qualities and capacities that the cognitive faculties of a cognizer—or group of cognizers—might grasp from the entire AP's qualitative spectrum. In Žižek's terms, this would involve the known-known, the known-unknown, and the unknown-known (Section 3.1). Or in terms of this thesis, the affordances of an object are the known and knowable layers of Fig. 3-2. The unknowable falls outside the definition of affordance, since the person cannot attain those qualities by any means.[404] On the other hand, the total affordances of a representation are distributed among several objects, because objects never fully commit to others (see again Fig. 1-3). But those which stay within the project's boundaries are proxies of it (Section 1.1). They are a fraction within the AP's larger set of manifestations. It is there, where we have to situate the question of affordances for the present section: in the possibilities of a building as a representation of the project in relation to a user.

Hence, what this thesis rejects from the original theory of affordances is the

[404] The unknowable layer, or Žižek's unknown-unknowns, would be the totality of the object's qualities minus its affordances for me, i.e., the qualities and capacities that are completely outside my cognitive possibilities.

reduction to qualities and the literalist assumption that the thing is as it is perceived. Yet Gibson's theory serves here to address the qualitative excess when considering *one* architectural representation, as is typically the case in the user's architectural experience of space. Consequently, affordances are not something that the user adds to the given expression. When I exercise some of them, others remain in the manifestation's background. This is the masking of a representation. As Gibson noted:

> The affordance of something does *not change* as the need of the observer changes. The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his[/her] needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived.[405]

Intertwining these words with Dufrenne's aesthetic theory, the user or observer, like any other cognizer including the architect, is a *witness* who "brings nothing to the work except its consecration."[406] This standpoint is consistent with this dissertation's argument that a cognitive act is *always* innocuous for the cognized object. The observer extracts or actualized some given from the object without modifying its nature and interior. A witness never alters what s/he witnesses. As already commented, "innocuous" should not be confused with static appearance or functioning. A cognitive relation can alter the visual or performative status of a thing, but these alterations are something already foreseen by the thing—including its own ways of being destroyed.[407] With this in mind, what Dufrenne called "consecration" is—in this dissertation's terminology—the upgrade of cognitive-unit to aesthetic-unit. In other words, the cognitive act becomes aesthetic when the perceived or performed qualities abandon their superficiality to allow the subterranean substance to manifest its presence ineffably and more expressions emerge from this act. Consecration by experience then takes place in the thing's double unknown.

Within this framework, affordances are pre-existent to experience and, therefore, the observer's will cannot add to it. This is why Gibson calls them "invariant." Dufrenne confirms the scheme: "I [spectator] am in the service of the work. […] The work therefore has the initiative. […] To be a witness is to be prohibited from adding anything to the work, for the work imposes itself upon the spectator."[408] This point may put the notion of the creative user in crisis, since the work seems to alienate the observer by denoting a sense of passivity in the registration of the work. But a user cannot perform something that the work has not already prepared for this person. This is what Riegl's Kunstwollen and Harman's aesthetic theory best explain: cognition does not subvert the observer to privilege the object, or vice versa. It is a unitary relationship that selectively requires both

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[405] Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, 130.

[406] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 55.

[407] This point has already emerged a few times in the thesis, so let me expand it more specifically. For Harman, an object can undergo critical and irreversible changes as it relates to other objects without ceasing to be such an object, something he calls "symbiotic transformations." I associate this concept not with an *ontological* sense of change and irreversibility, since the thing can already contemplate its own transformations and ways of being destroyed. I relate it to the modification of sensual or tangible qualities and capacities that the object has not had *in its present or past state* and that the cognizer activates. In this view, change and irreversibility are *epistemological*. Using a typical Harman's example (already commented in Section 1.3), fire burning cotton is not a symbiotic transformation, but a cognitive one. Cotton already contemplates being burned by fire. Then, since the idea of cognitive relation in this dissertation rejects the performance of any quality that the object does not have (this is to avoid any likely form of idealism), symbiotic transformation are events of a cognitive encounter, rather than intrinsic modification of the object. For more about Harman's symbiotic transformations, see Harman, *Immaterialism*, 42–51.

[408] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 59.

components, unfolding respective aspects of each of them.

Therefore, free play or open engagements always require a finite and particular context to be effective: each object's knowable side. This is also clear to Dufrenne, who reminds us "what the work expects of its witness: it expects him[/her] to play the game," a game that each time has its (very large) limitations.[409] Each architectural work has its own constraints, including on how it can be registered. This differentiation is what makes the project and its qualities discrete, otherwise it would not be *this* project. Within the autonomous architectural experience, the building guides the occupant in the sense that the latter can only fulfill the affordances that these spaces have for him/her. So the building has the initiative, as Dufrenne would say, but the user is creative in actualizing such personalized material, as Hill would say. In Chapter 1, it was said that the object is limited but inexhaustible. The same is argued now for the architectural expression as the AP's frontal proxy: the limited mesh of a manifestation to induce another of the same project does not override the user's creative and interpretive capacity. The latter operate within the former, the person navigates within the spectrum of available affordances. What does inhibit the possibilities for open engagement is the architect's or any other agent's initiative upon the user configuring the building—directly or indirectly—in such a way as to control and program its users' behaviors. If so, freedom and emancipation disappear, for both author and receptor. This is why the architect-user gap is fundamental for cognition to occur in the AP's double unknown.

In other words, the idea of emancipation has to do with making one's own cognitive relationship with the work autonomous by, among other things, annulling literal conclusions. This allows us to put into practice all my capabilities that the distributed architectural expression contains. What transparency does is anchor these competencies to a minimal, repeatable, and exhausted set of actions that perpetually obscures the other affordances of the actual expression. The place of complete emancipation for the user only occurs within the closure and specificity—in the selectivity—of the aesthetic-unit free of reductionism. In such a cognitive bunker, what openness foregrounds is a sense of (in)completeness. It indicates the existence of a remnant of unrealized affordances, which, at the same time, are not foreign to the observed. Therefore, I am only emancipated as a spectator when I find myself sealed within the object's domain through some of its manifestations. In resonance with the notion of mimesis by which I become and enter into the project aesthetically (Subsection 4.2.4), Dufrenne stated: "Far from the work's existing in us, we exist in the work."[410] And within this situation, the French philosopher continues, "[w]hat [the work] expects of the spectator corresponds to what it has planned for him[/her]."[411] This is an explicit definition of what this thesis calls "the knowable" and why cognition is a harmless relation to the object. The cognizer extracts, never constructs. In the aesthetic approach, the AP's being has the initiative in the sense that it already foresees how I am going to alienate it, how I am going to become it through its own distributed work. All the potential effects that the expression in question can produce on behalf of its substance for this person are already contained in its qualitative domain. It is a matter of a user executing one or another. Thus, the cognizer is limited to navigating, sorting, and extracting within a project's given set. The occupant cannot add or remove affordances. Unlike its activation, its existence is independent of the user. However, the user becomes

[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Ibid.

fully creative or emancipated when the overlap between what the manifestation offers and what the person can perform from them is total. This is the natural masking of open cognition. And cognition decreases its openness as the naturalized masking of literal registers increases its superimposition.

5.4.2. Bodily participatory aesthetic experience

For the purposes of multiplicity and its open cognition, it is my view that architectural design should favor spaces capable of establishing such complete natural overlap, rather than design strategies that purposely propose spatial manifestations with a richer set of affordances than others. The former seeks the "creative user," the latter the "reactive user," to use Hill's definitions. This is because, first, it is impossible to know the total number of affordances of any manifestation; thus, comparing two spaces under this parameter is pointless. Second, even if it is ontologically the case that manifestation A has more effective affordances than manifestation B, but the "overlap" or openness of B is greater than that of A, B should be favored. It will offer a stronger attachment to the user. In short, an expression with less affordances but open to cognition is preferable to an expression with more affordances but blocked.

Therefore, the question of affordances is not about the designer's predictability of multiple uses. Programing a wide range of actions is a conscious design act that foresees, hence controls, the user's behaviors. My argument has been that an emotional and aesthetic design approach that is not explicitly concerned with the functional programming of a space results in an openly usable space. Repeating Coop Himmelb(l)au's design mantra: "the more intensively the design is experienced by the designer, the more tangible the built space becomes."[412] Seen in this light, the emotional and aesthetic discourse, paradoxically, reinforces the pragmatic discourse.

As has been advocated throughout Part Two, the aesthetic approach is a subjectless cognitive mode of design and occupancy capable of accessing the AP's knowable affordances and its withdrawn, ineffable being. In Section 5.2 dedicated to the design process, we saw how the architect's employed conceptual references as expressions of the project to access it. The so-called "structural metaphor" was the mimetic procedure taking place in the architect's mind as a medium of the project. Now, in the user's aesthetic experience of a space, the mimetic procedure with the project is not merely mental—as in most design processes—but the built architectural expression requires a *physical* performance on the part of the user. In Chapter 2 we saw how "movement" is central to Eisenman's architectural experience.[413] In other words, bodily actions are a request for the performance of space to constitute the user's aesthetic-unit with the project. This means that the series of actions that induce the aesthetic apprehension of a space are also an expression of its underlying project. If it has been argued that the conceptual metaphor is part of the project, so is the bodily performance of the space. Moreover, if the metaphorical reference was the gateway to the project in the design process, so is the built space in inhabiting (Fig. 5-6).

Consider Franz West's *Passstücke* [*Adaptives*] (Fig. 5-40), which find the aesthetic act within the bodily performative. In the way each beholder relates *both* bodily and mentally to the plaster and metal pieces in a physically performative way, their aesthetic

[412] Noever, *Gerald Zugmann*, 81.
[413] See again Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 71–73.



Figure 5-40. Franz West, *Passstücke mit Box und Video*, installation view of the exhibition Franz West, Proforma, Museum moderner Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 20er Haus, Vienna, 1996.

experience is one or the other. Each engagement shows a different performance of the piece reserved for one or another individual. Can "performance" or "cognition" here be understood as "use" in both its utilitarian and aesthetic sense? I cannot say why not. Does this utilitarian sense nullify the aesthetic one? Definitely not. It is each performer (or user) who individually engages their bodily and mentally cognitive faculties to exercise one or another sensual profile of the work. We can call this mode of cognition *bodily participatory aesthetic experience*, as a way of challenging Kant's pure mental aesthetics and his restricted notion of *utilitas*. In the first, both body and mind intervene (in spite of only emphasizing the body). Bodily participation explicitly entails physicality and movement. In the second, only the mind is involved in the performance of the work.

Evidently, West's pieces cannot accommodate all possible movements of the word. Like any other (physical) form, their capacity for use is limited and particular. But each of West's four pieces can accommodate different affordances, simply because their morphological qualities are different from each other. All the movements or actions that a beholder performs with any of the pieces, plus all the other movements and actions that anyone else may perform and will never perform with this piece, are already contained in the material pieces on behalf of their underlying artistic object. All these physical and emotional possibilities are those that the pieces have already planned for us, as Dufrenne would say.[414] Or in Eco's words: "it includes all the individual emotions it produces."[415]

The *Passstücke* are opaque-productive symbols (Gal's expression in Subsection 5.1.2). It can be argued that the invitation to aesthetic inquiry they promote lies in the abstract syntax, which precludes any precondition of meaning and use. Repeating Eco's words as an appropriate description of West's artwork: "The work remains inexhaustible insofar as it is 'open', because in it an ordered world based on universally acknowledged

[414] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 59.
[415] Eco, *The Open Work*, 35.

laws is being replaced by a world based on ambiguity."[416] There is no convention on how to act with the piece or how to judge it. The morphology of the piece is such that it allows the activation of those affordances capable of the double unknown. An affordance is aesthetic when, paradoxically, it does not refer to itself, but is the basis for addressing another affordance and their unifying substance. This is Gal's "form born of form," giving shape to the object's chain of multiplicity (Subsection 5.1.3).

In the *Passstücke*, the aesthetic affordances enhance the physical exploration by letting oneself go with the physical performance. They set aside their own directly perceivable qualities to foreground, first, the emotional impressions and the performance itself as being other representations of the artistic object, and second, a sense of its deep reality. The former are the theatrical effects that Fried rejects, but which this thesis defends as fundamental to aesthetic cognition. Repeating Fried's critique from a positive interpretation within West's case: the *Passstücke* unfolds "a kind of *stage* presence. It is a function not just of the obtrusiveness and, often, aggressiveness of [the] work, but of the special complicity that that work extorts from the beholder."[417]

Bodily participatory aesthetic experiences require and trigger physical consequences: actions that are just another expression of the artistic or architectural object. This is how the user becomes creative and contributes to the chain of multiplicity. This is how the beholder becomes an author and another medium of expression of the thing. Thus, a bodily participatory aesthetic experience is defined here as an aesthetic experience that entails a causality in the beholder, which is at the same time the necessary condition for the aesthetic experience itself to occur. The emotional response goes hand in hand with this physicality. Both emotional and bodily articulations constitute the user's mimetic procedure, but also its feedback result; all of this without ceasing to be another qualitative expression of the object. Furthermore, such a bodily mimetic procedure is why the qualities of the given manifestation—the plaster and metal pieces, in this case—separate from themselves, releasing the immaterial existence of the object's deep reality.

A painting or a poem does not require and result in a physical causality in the spectator's acts other than mental action. The nature of these cognitions is contemplative. In contrast, music or architecture usually produce a physical, hence more tangible effect on the spectator. Can dancing be separated from the musical experience? How I dance and its progression affects how I experience the music that makes me dance, and vice versa, to the point that the two actions become one. In this sense, dancing is a causality of and for the aesthetic experience of a piece of music. Similarly, a user participation and interaction with a given architectural space—both bodily and mentally—is not only the necessary condition to account for the experience itself, but those actions are the performance of the space. This is the reason to account for the bodily participatory aesthetic experience on the basis of the affordances of a space as an architectural aesthetic function. My "utilitarian" (re)actions are situated within the aesthetic experience of that space. Walter Benjamin noted that: "Buildings are received in a twofold manner: by use and by perception."[418] Both are simultaneous, if not the very same action. A space can move or touch me aesthetically in the way I perceive it, which determines how I move physically in this space, and vice versa. Thus, my overall aesthetic experience is determined by how I perform the space, with performance being the alliance of perception and use.

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[416] Ibid., 9.
[417] Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 155.
[418] Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, 40.

5.4.3. Distracted ambiguity

Like any other aesthetic judgment, the bodily participatory aesthetic experience is not voluntary. In architecture, this has a double connotation. It is not just that an architectural space is aesthetically cognized involuntarily. It is that, even if not aesthetically, a building is cognized "in a state of distraction," to continue Benjamin's remarks.[419] Thus, we can first analyze the distracted performance of space from the involuntary aesthetic judgment in order to, secondly, be able to concatenate them. After all, the latter will be a consequence of the former. West's *Passstücke* offer again a well-rounded example in this regard: an aesthetic journey closer to an architectural experience than a sculptural one, despite the pieces being catalogued as sculpture.

Moreover, we can also situate Harman's notion of the *aestheticization of function* in architecture in the distracted physical cognition of space. The OOO philosopher accounts for two ways in which function can enter the domain of aesthetic experience. On the one hand, Harman proposes "a slight decomposition of purpose, pushing as close to failure as possible."[420] This option works to the extent that a specific and particular use is defined for that space, since it will be the feature to be dismantled. On the other hand, "the function [may] be rendered less specific, thereby withholding it slightly from any relation in particular."[421] This means a space whose use is unclear.[422] The latter is of great interest for this thesis, because it aligns with the question of multiplicity through ambiguity. In fact, the previous section called for an architectural design that offers spaces for free and open occupation, rather than many rules on how to occupy a space differently. Then, if we pair Harman's less specific function with Benjamin's distracted cognition, the physical performance or use of space becomes aestheticized unveiling a plurality of engagements, which again, are additional expressions of the project at issue.

Put differently, Hill argues that almost any space can be fit for another use, regardless of the architect's intentions.[423] This is not in dispute. After all, the possibility of "[p]ole vaulting in the chapel, bicycling in the laundromat, [or] sky diving in the elevator shaft" is always there, to use Tschumi's provocative examples.[424] However, bringing a well-established use to a minimum, as Harman's first option requires for the purpose of aestheticizing function, seems contrary to Benjamin's state of distraction in architecture. For example, Bruno Munari's "Seeking Comfort in an Uncomfortable Chair" (Fig. 5-41) works differently from West's *Passstücke*.[425] Both seek the excess of affordances, although,

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[419] In Benjamin's words: "the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. […] This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always offered the prototype of an artwork that is received in a state of distraction and through the collective." Ibid.

[420] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, sec. 3.C.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Subsection 6.3.1 will differentiate between the ambiguity of modern space as universal and neutral, and the ambiguity of a proposed space that is particular and highly differentiated.

[423] Hill, *Actions of Architecture*, 64.

[424] I use Tschumi's examples here in the reverse sense in which he accounts for them. I refer to them as the *unplanned* actions that a user can perform with a given space beyond what its architect might have envisioned. Instead, Tschumi offers these surreal activities as a way of challenging the architect to stop thinking only about form and engage with the same effort in the production of events. Thus, it offers them as a provocateur of *planned* actions. See Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 146.

[425] See Munari's article in Bruno Munari, "Searching for Comfort in an Uncomfortable Chair," accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.domusweb.it/en/from-the-archive/2012/03/31/searching-for-comfort-in-an-uncomfortable-chair.html.

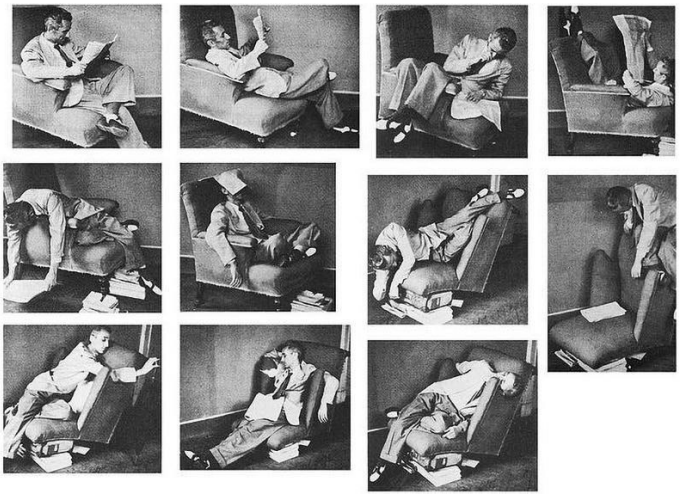


Figure 5-41. Bruno Munari, Seeking Comfort in an Uncomfortable Chair, 1944.

in the former, exceeding the familiarity of the armchair and the appropriateness of its use is not possible inattentively. In West, the pieces naturally invite inspection. The exploratory is its form of distracted cognition. In contrast, the execution of alternative uses in Munari's case falls into the category of misuses. As stated previously, if something can be misused or misinterpreted, it is because it has knowable affordances. But to get to them, one must deliberately bypass the designated proper use. In Munari, any action with the armchair is judged around such a measuring point of correctness. This is again Dada's rational disruption of automatic perception without aesthetic engagement (Subsection 5.2.5). In West, since there is no given valuation criterion, any action is subjectless: it escapes classical and modern judgment and is considered simply for what it does.

Similarly, doing laundry in the laundry room or cooking in the Frankfurt Kitchen set the standard of rightness against which to contrast any other affordance of such spaces. Given that there is an explicit normative mode of relationship, going beyond it requires in these cases a different demand on the part of the user: a conscious rather than involuntary disruption of the given regime of spatial inhabitation, thus preventing any aesthetic possibility. (In Chapter 6, I will argue that this failure occurs because of the familiarity of the precedent.) In order to subvert the habitual occupation of a given normalized space, its automatic perception must first be questioned. This means that there is an explicitly defined regime of inhabitation. But its dismantling does not necessarily imply moving closer to the double unknown of the project. Reactionary uses have a specific objective to overthrow, i.e., one must first overcome the normative before approaching occupation as such. They must first act against the given, namely, re-act. There is re-cognition prior to any possible cognition.

In these events, it is very unlikely that the architectural manifestation itself breaks a habitual use. Instead, the force of displacement will come from the user, either from a practical necessity or from a deliberate act of rebellion. If I pole vault in a chapel, an affordance that this space contains for me, it will not be due to a natural engagement with such a space. It will be an exception. A space that falls under the term or typology "chapel" carries a historical and social burden of behaviors that prevents activating its latent affordances aesthetically (involuntarily). In the event that this occurs, it is because a disorder is consciously assumed in such inherited relationships of inhabitation. My point is not against the disruption of an established order, but the dependence on such an order as a calibration cue. Here, we again orbit around epistemological points of measurement to

celebrate or deny. As argued in the previous section, the mere existence of such benchmarks instigates a relationality of evaluation that limits the possibilities of spatial performance.

On the contrary, aesthetic cognition is a smooth penetration into a double engagement with the being and manifestations of an AP. Cognition by distraction is a feasible scenario. Jeffrey Kipnis aligns with Benjamin's thesis when he defines architecture "as the [film] soundtrack that never gets turned off," in which "your goal is to work while somebody's paying attention to something else."[426] If the regime of distraction is the state of architectural experience, Harman's second option of ambiguity appears as a way of aestheticizing function that does not operate against an imposing regime of inhabiting, since there is none given. In short, aligning ambiguity with distraction seems the aesthetic way to involve the user's intuitive side. Indeed, an aesthetic occupancy of space does not need to make the user aware of the unconventional performance this person is producing. In West's pieces, since there is no correctness, neither for right nor wrong, each performance is simultaneously unique and complete. Dufrenne remarked on such a condition of one and many as follows:

> they vary like perspectives which converge at the same point, like intentions which aim at the same object, or like languages which say the same thing. The identity of the work is not altered, since its content appears and is refracted differently in different consciousnesses. All these views only display or exfoliate its possibilities, minting the capital which it conceals.[427]

5.4.4. Deprogramming

Within this framework, architectural design aims to operate without generating points of evaluation. It intends an architecture that invites the user to free and open occupation by infusing a sense of opacity (Vig. 5-E). However, such abstruseness should not occur in relation to the tasks that the architect or any social consensus assigns to certain affordances of the given space. Instead, opacity should be motivated by the syntax itself: an open structure whose reception is devoid of any pre-existing categorization of the affordances it contains. If such taxonomy exists, it typically leads to the unfortunate case of automating some uses while blocking others. By contrast, compositions that infer ambiguous and opposite interpretations avoid these categories. The following statement by Coop Himmelb(l)au summarizes this open design attitude and hints at the characteristics of the architectonic lexicon, not as their own justification, but for all that they produce:

> It would be ideal to build architecture without objectives and then release it for free use. There are no longer any enclosed spaces in these interlacing, opening buildings: only vaguely designated areas. Divided and developed however the occupants choose. The differentiated spatial situations no longer separate—at most, they present the challenge of taking possession of the space. We can't prove it, but we strongly surmise that self-confident forms, made available to use and shape freely—not repressively administrated, but run in a friendly way—must have consequences for an occupant's development of a creative self-concept.[428]

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[426] Jeffrey Kipnis, Jeffrey Kipnis: What is architecture?, May 16, 2012, min. 2:56, https://youtu.be/v4NmoUCWaEo.

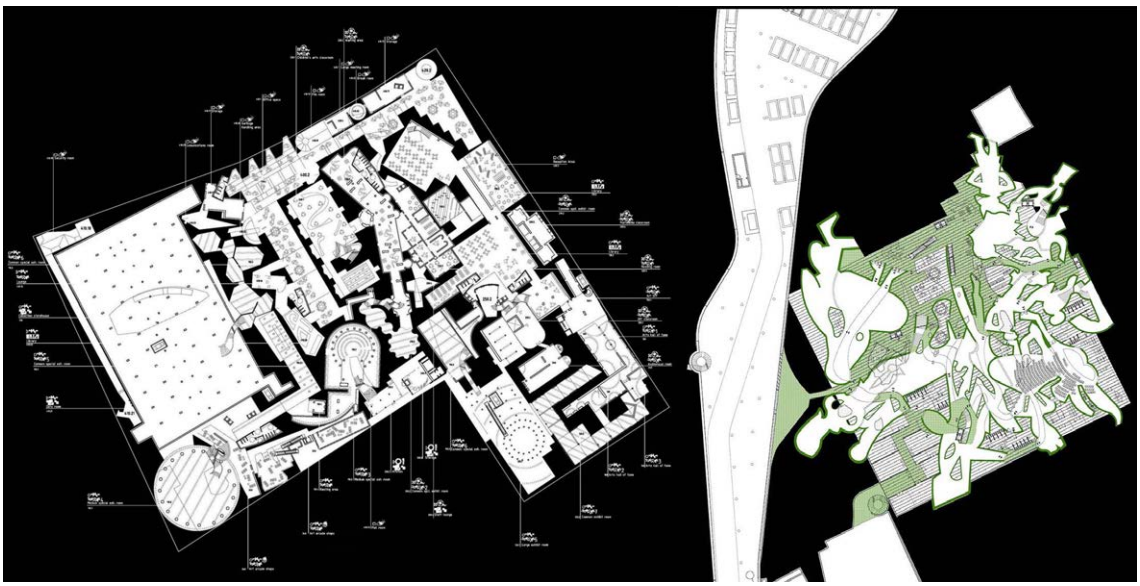
[427] Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 60.

[428] Coop Himmelb(l)au, "Open System," Coop Himmelb(l)au, 1982.

Vignette 5-E: Deprogramming

I.

For the end of free occupation, Federico Soriano proposes the concept of *deprogramming* [*desprogramar*]. As he defines it: "Deprogramming is to handle or read any architectural document without recognizing the law that generates it allowing any party to assume any other role."[429] In his book *Encoger©*, the architect presents some projects of his practice motivated under this concept. For example, the *New Taipei City Museum of Arts* (Fig. 5-42) consists of a series of fragments extracted from different museums around the world. They are composed in a montage under a non-hierarchical order, in a uniform arrangement.[430] In Soriano's words: "The parts were initially deprogrammed from their functions, awaiting eventual future programming."[431] Soriano followed a similar strategy for the *Hans Christian Andersen Museum* proposal (Fig. 5-43). "The floor plan shows an ambivalent disposition, without being able to distinguish the figure from the ground or the servant spaces from the served ones. Any element can assume any organizational function of the space at will," he comments. There is a saturation of discrete figures that leads to such cognitive blurriness, a design technique that I will expand on in Chapter 6.



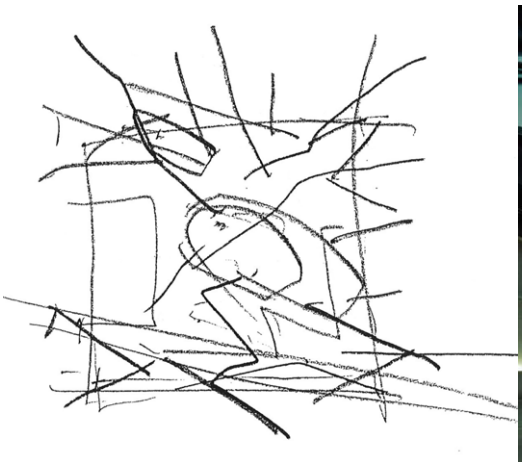
Figures 5-42 and 5-43. Soriano & Asociados arquitectos, left: *New Taipei City Museum of Art*, underground floor plan, 2011; right: *Hans Christian Andersen Museum*, Odense, underground floor plan, 2013.

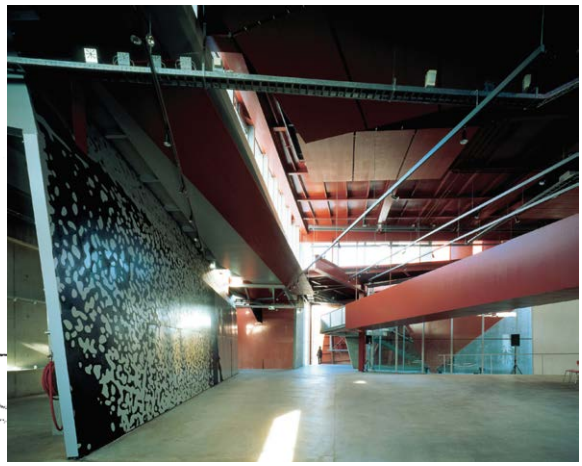
II.

The notion of deprograming can be seen also in many Coop Himmelb(l)au projects. In the *East Pavilion of the Groninger Museum*, deprograming relates to what the project calls the "dissolution of the space." Not in the neutral, homogeneous space of the Modern Moment (as discussed in Chapter 6), but in the dissolution of the re-cognition of space. The design offers a comprehensive overview of the idea of openness ranging from the graphic-thinking method in the design process (Fig. 5-44, see again Vig. 5-D) to open occupancy of the space. As a matter of fact, the indeterminate spatial structure brought the museum board—as user and curator of

[429] Soriano Peláez, *Encoger©*, 88, [author's translation].
[430] Ibid., 86.
[431] Ibid., 86, [author's translation].

the space—to adopt a different occupation than was originally required. The use changed from a space for the permanent collection of paintings to a gallery for temporary exhibitions of contemporary art (Fig. 5-45). This change is attributed to the power of space, rather than to an administrative reason or necessity. In other words, from a fixed inhabitation to a mode of occupancy that requires greater spatial freedom and polyvalence. In this vein, we can follow Herman Hertzberger's distinction between "flexibility" and "polyvalence." For the Dutch architect, flexibility leads to a loss of identity, as it forces the space into neutrality. In contrast, polyvalent forms or spaces admit multiple purposes without modification, and maintain differentiation.[432] In this terminology, this dissertation clearly advocates polyvalent over flexible space.





Figures 5-44 and 5-45. Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Groninger Museum*, hand sketch and interior view, 1993-94.

III.

Günther Domenig's *Bird "Nix-Nuz-Nix"* (1983)—a play on German words that translates as *nothing-uses-nothing*—is a statement to open architecture opposed to the imperatives of imposed functions (Fig. 5-46). The complicated and heterogeneous composition appears as a method to unfold ambiguity.[433] The piece is a small-scale reflection on which the *Steinhaus* (1982-2008) will enshrine (Fig. 5-47). As Matthias Boeckl describes it: "The *Steinhaus* removes itself from the usual functional and typological categories: it is not simply a one family house, nor an atelier, performance room, workshop or spiritual space – yet its multi-faceted usability offers space for each one of these functions."[434] Notorious for this thesis' discussion of aesthetic cognition in designing and occupying is also Thom Mayne's description of the Austrian architect's work: "Invention is Domenig's way of seeing and feeling his way into creating a building where human fragility and contingency are his subjects, accident and surprise his methodology, and lyricism his result."[435]

[432] See Hertzberger, *Lessons for Students in Architecture*, 146–49.
[433] Matthias Boeckl, ed., *Günther Domening: Recent Work* (Vienna: SpringerWienNewYork, 2005), 248.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Ibid., 6.



Figure 5-46. Günther Domenig, *Nix-Nuz-Nix*, 1983.



Figure 5-47. Günther Domenig, *Steinhaus*, interior view, construction, 1983-2008.

Releasing architectural space for open and free occupation allows each reception to discover the concepts that this space has in store for each person. This mode of inquiry cannot be other than aesthetic. For example, for Coop Himmelb(l)au, "Architektur muß brennen" [*architecture must blaze*], i.e., "we do not want to exclude everything that creates agitation in architecture."[436] An architecture of cognitive difference, as opposed to indifference, is sought. In spaces such as the Groninger Museum (Fig. 5-45), cognitive disturbance does not derive from an explicit and conscious decision of the user. Instead, it comes from the particular intricacy of the presentational qualities (displaced planes, overlapping fragments, rawness), which lead to an aesthetic use of the space. The configuration of the space does not indicate any particular use. The East Pavilion of Groninger Museum is deprogrammed, which invokes a bodily participatory aesthetic experience of it. Therein, the actions necessary for its cognition and the physical consequences of that cognition feed back into one and the same thing. In the mind, the moment of judgment and the moment of pleasure remain simultaneous, as Greenberg noted for aesthetic experience in general.[437]

Therefore, architectural aesthetic reception is mind and body active. It is more than a judgment that is its own end, since it involves both material acts and significations that are articulated parts of such experiences, hence of the object's qualitative domain. These actualized instances of the project are particular to each cognizer, thus elevating each user as another creator of the architecture. Those unveilings are reflected in the individual as a medium. In turn, the navigation device within this set of affordances is the user's subjectivity. In other words, the authorial signature of architectural experience in design or occupancy is the exertion of the person's identity. For these unplanned effects, deprogramming appears as a design instrument that leads to the indetermination and dissolution of the normative architectural space.

5.4.5. From multiple experiences to an experience that is multiple

In Miralles, deprogramming can be linked to the movement of people in their buildings. It is not that the architect did not conceive of specific circulations. It is that the formalization of them allows the possibilities of planned and unplanned movements simultaneously: a *programmed deprogramming*.[438] Spellman notes that "Miralles considered the user to be the most important element in the architectural composition of a project."[439] From here, a series of productive dichotomies arise. Assigning specific unplanned behaviors is a design contradiction that can only be aesthetically achieved in the design process. It requires specificity and openness, or more accurately, being specifically open. The user is the target, but not the driving force of the work process. In this puzzling design approach, the Spanish architect's projects are, Spellman continues, "a complex and layered experience of movements that are mostly invisible but appear when an unwitting user moves in a surprising way relative to the project."[440] Spellman points out the Cemetery at Igualada as a project with many ways of being experienced (Fig. 5-48), most of them poetically. As Carme Pinós herself remarks: "It is a project that even today, when I visit it, moves me. It

[436] Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Architektur Muss Brennen* (Graz: Institut für Gebäudelehre und Entwerfen TU Graz, 1980), 2, [author's translation].
[437] Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics*, 8.
[438] Subsection 6.3.2 will further elaborate further on this topic under Miralles' notion of *labyrinth*.
[439] Spellman, "Walking to Begin," 232.
[440] Ibid.

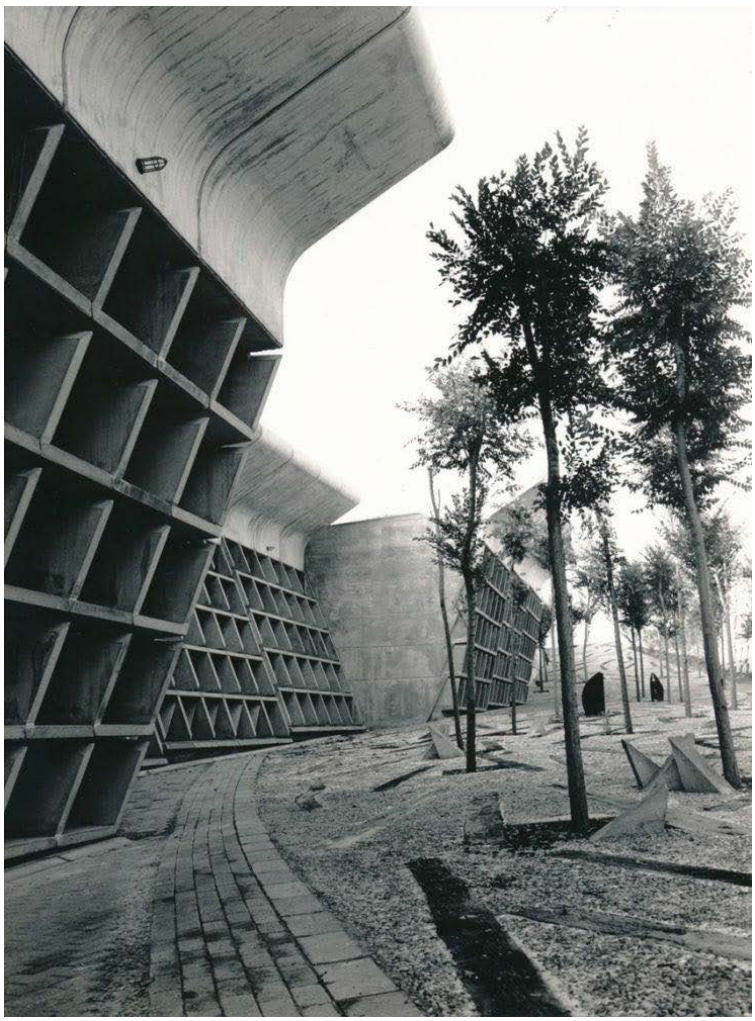


Figure 5-48. Miralles/Pinós, *Igualada Cemetery Park*, 1985-1991.

contains all the poetics and rhetorical capacity of Enric."[441]

I believe that this space does not offer multiple experiences, but an experience that is multiple. Here, we tackle a different sense of multiplicity, which does not arise from aggregates, but from a form of design proposal that is an *irreducible multiplicity*, linked to Barthes' formulation. For the French author, a work that is plural "is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural."[442] In my opinion, it is here that the sublimation of function arises; when the two apparent extremes overlap by bending the line that separates them. A programmed deprograming is the oxymoronic condition of imposing free-use. It entails more than releasing an open space with indeterminacy as the final outcome of the design process. Peter Blundell Jones writes about the C.N.A.R. in Alicante: "For the visitor a multiplicity of experiences is suggested which is somewhat open-ended, ambiguous in focus" (Fig. 5-49 and previous Fig. 5-10).[443] However, I do not think that this description captures the plural experience of the building, in the singular. Miralles' multiplicity does not work like West's.

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[441] Garcia Estevez, *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, 99, [author's translation].
[442] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (1971; repr., London: Fontana Press, 1977), 159.
[443] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 8.



Figure 5-49. Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, Alicante, 1989-1993.

In Miralles' space, there is a high degree of specificity in the way they are used. However, it is not a unique and unequivocal use, nor is it flexible, in the sense that Hertzberger denied the term. It is a simultaneous polyvalence that relates to what Barthes calls "stereographic plurality," as opposed to the mere ambiguity of the work's contents. For the French author, this idea of plurality leads to an explosion and diffusion of the work, rather than to an interpretation of it.[444] This can happen in the rare cases in which the designer proposes without imposing; or imposes the multiplicity of the project non-obviously, giving something that does not constitute itself as a measuring point for the reception. For Miralles, "the only architecture is the emotional one."[445] Yet this impression is itself multiple. Under this regime of reception, the architectural gap remains active, because if the user acts as the architect intends, it will not be because of the designer's particular orientations, but because of the irreducible multiplicity of the work. Unlike deprogramming, I believe that a programmed deprogramming is something the architect cannot deliberately account for.

[444] See Barthes, "From Work to Text," 159.

[445] Enric Miralles, "La Única Arquitectura Es La Emocionante," *La Vanguardia*, June 23, 2000 [author's translation].

Summary of Part Two

Part Two has dealt with the particularities of the human being as a cognizer of the architectural project. This means that neither other types of non-human cognizers, nor the role of the human being as a constituent element of the project have been addressed in this dissertation; open topics for future developments of this design theory.

Within this framework, a cognitive-unit is an object composed of two others: what cognizes and what is cognized. An architectural cognitive-unit is the relationship between an architectural project (AP) and a human being, whether applied to design or space occupancy in its more traditional distinction. For each of these relations at a given moment, the AP's phenomena are organized according to the person's cognitive faculties into the known, the knowable, and the unknowable. On this basis, aesthetics appears as a form of cognition capable of overcoming the superficiality of the present qualities to access the AP's double unknown for this person at that point in time: the object's being and its knowable manifestations. Since the former has no qualities, the apprehension of its existence is unparaphrasable. The latter, despite its immense finitude, remains epistemologically inexhaustible. In this context, aesthetic cognition contains a twofold capacity for inquiry: one that is an end in itself and one that is open. The first refers to the ineffable unity, the second to the knowable multiplicity. For this double endeavor, the aesthetic-unit must be autonomous and elude a clear enemy: literalism, regardless of whether it is considered external or internal. This means that the experience of the project through some of its representations cannot be reduced to the presentation qualities or to any other point of measurement, be it the architect's intentions, cultural conventions, contextual urgencies, or any other. An architectural experience is irreducible when it is cognized aesthetically and, vice versa, aesthetic experience in architecture is the cognitive mode that irreducibly addresses the project's double unknown. In there, the AP's being is irreducible because of the depth of its ineffability, its multiplicity because of the extent of its knowability.

When the cognitive-unit operates aesthetically, the cognizer's innermost and personal faculties—the person's intuition and subjectivity—can get entangled with the existential unity and the qualitative multiplicity of the project sympathetically. The unitary being requires an allusive mode of registration. The person feels the presence of the project's immaterial substance through a mimetic procedure, whereby the cognizer replaces the withdrawn deep reality. However, this alienation is part of the project's requirement of constituting its consecration. The object is complete each time an experience is aware of its deep existence. On the one hand, the intuitive rituals towards the underlying project establish a tangible series of qualitative actions and decisions. Such procedures towards that end entail causalities, which are the relational mode towards the project's qualitative abundance. In the design process, these sets of actions are the particular design techniques to enter into dialogue with the project, mostly mentally or conceptually. In the occupancy of space, they are the bodily performance of the given architectural manifestation. In both scenarios, the aesthetic encounter induces emotions, interpretations, meanings, actions. They are qualities and effects distinct from the unspeakable and allusive being, since the

former belong to the AP's phenomenal side. Therefore, the architect's and users' aesthetic experiences produce, in addition to a unified deep or pure cognition, two types of qualitative results: psychological impressions and the procedures themselves. The latter are not only the necessary paths to the ineffable reality, but, like the former, also to knowable material of the project. All these qualities, uses, and effects belong to the project. What the person does is to activate or actualize it for his/her experience. In short, the AP employs the architect and the user as a medium of expression on all their levels: emotional, mental, rational, psychological, bodily physical, spiritual.

Given the multiple singularities of each aesthetic-unit, each experience has the capacity to unfold distinct phenomena of the AP. Consequently, any cognizer—designer, user, spectator, critic, or any other—has authorial competence. The user reveals profiles that the architect cannot or has never imagined, and vice versa. Designing is an architectural experience for the architect, just as the architectural occupancy is an act of design for the user. The difference between the two figures is the immediate public vocation of the architect's experience: it is required to distribute a manifestation capable of being the experiential basis for others. Besides the immaterial fulfillment of the revelation of the AP's being, both types of aesthetic inquiry, being also about qualities, are contributions to a collective project that orbits the object's core. This is the chain of multiplicity, an epistemological mesh within the project's phenomena. It is a device that accumulates individual impressions of the same thing, and that seeks to cooperate with other traditional forms of knowledge. A project can have several chains of multiplicity. Furthermore, since aesthetics offers itself as a form of knowledge that teaches us to accommodate the differences inherent to the object, no two aesthetic experiences are alike. This suggests a general model of plastic knowledge. Rancière calls it "redistribution of shared experience."[1] For Harman, it is a "knowledge without truth."[2] And for David Paxman, "[a]esthetics [i]s epistemology, or knowledge without certainty."[3] In this sense, the chain of multiplicity operates collectively and is nurtured individually.

For the purposes of the double unknown, every experience always requires some particular manifestation as a basis. For cognition to become aesthetic, such a given must be opaque; and for cognition to progress, it must also be productive. By resisting direct apprehension, its presentational qualities vanish for the cognitive encounter. Then, the given manifestation "breaks," to use Heidegger's term, leaving room in experience for the unity and the multiplicity. In the case of the architect, this poses a challenge, since the project does not yet exist. There is nothing of its own on which to compose the design aesthetic-unit. For these situations, the metaphor appears as the project of the project. It intuitively engages with a reference to generate a first impression of the project on which to continue to unfold more of its material. For the architectural user, the typical medium of engagement is the built space. Then, what the design process distributes must invite the user's inner self to come into play. To address each person's subjectivity belonging to the project, the spatial structure must be open; a placeholder to collect a plurality of individualities and distribute them within the project. Its purpose is clear: to reach the widest possible audience. The AP's multiplicity calls for a diversity of approaches, something that implies evident social advances in terms of inclusion and equality without

[1] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 17.
[2] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 185–93.
[3] David Paxman, "Aesthetics as Epistemology, Or Knowledge Without Certainty," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26, no. 2 (1992): 285–306, https://doi.org/10.2307/2739321.

homogenizing the public.

Part Two has introduced some architectural examples characterized by an abstract, non-semantic, heterogeneous lexicon. However, their study has been oriented towards the effects, rather than the particular morphological arrangements that may invoke them. This is the subject of the following Part Three: a propositional consideration of the compositional and formal strategies for an opaque-productive space.

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Opaque-productive space

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Introduction to Part Three

Part One examined the architectural project (abbreviated AP) as an object-in-itself: the AP's ontological structure consists of a unitary deep reality and a multiplicity of qualities and capacities. The latter has appeared polymorphous and multimedia. Part Two looked inside the AP to consider the object of architectural experience: the aesthetic-unit composed of the AP itself with the architect or the user, respectively. Cognition has been stated as subjectless and internal. It is a subset of the AP's set of manifestations. This cognitive approach has made evident the project's double unknown particularized for each cognizer: the ineffable substance and its knowable manifestations. Nevertheless, for any aesthetic encounter to be possible, an *opaque* expression is needed: one that induces cognitive resistance that, in turn, entails *productivity*. The gathering of such productions has been called the AP's *chain of multiplicity*: the epistemological enterprise on a project by which an architectural expression leads to another one of the same AP. I have suggested that this scheme can be seen as a form of "knowledge production," to use academic parlance.

Now, Part Three will delve into the qualitative realm of the AP, particularly the question of its opaque-productive manifestation of space. Given that the AP has been declared medium-promiscuous in Part One, I will focus on one specific mode of expression, where architectural cognition most typically takes place: the *physical space*. (The term "building" will be consciously avoided as much as possible so as not to reduce and semantically prescribe the possibilities of the physical architectural space.) In this context, the central questions of the following two chapters are, first, what can the characteristics of an opaque-productive space be in order to accomplish the double aesthetic task of indirectly accessing the project's spirit and unfolding some of its other expressions? And second, how can such a goal be methodologized for architectural design without becoming prescriptive? The latter brings us back to a point I left open around Fig. 3-3: "How does the architect formalize the profile captured by the metaphor in a spatial configuration that remains open to the public?"

There are diverse answers as to how architectural design can address these issues. Since designing is a cognitive/epistemological inquiry and the AP is a plurality always superior to any cognitive capacity, there is no ultimate, absolute, or true approach. Given this condition, it seems appropriate to advocate a design strategy that enacts an always-open architecture. But even in the pursuit of openness as a result, it would be illogical to think that there is only one path to it. With this in mind, Part Three will present *one* of the many possible approaches to extracting spatial profiles capable of leading experiences towards the project's twofold interior. This will make Part Three the most propositional, hence personal, part of the design theory presented here. In short, this design agenda will aim to unveil at least one architectural expression of the AP in question capable of hinting aesthetically at its double unknown.

For Michael Young, "there's no way to talk about aesthetics without talking about form."[1] For the present case, that means that the question of openness and opacity in aesthetics lies in how the architectural work appears to us, meaning its compositional characteristics. As stated at the end of the last chapter, the human cognizer cannot consciously invoke aesthetic experience. Given the involuntariness of deep and open cognition, it has been concluded that it is then the responsibility of the presented manifestation to induce an aesthetic approach to itself.

[1] Young, Interview with Michael Young.

What can be the syntactic idiosyncrasies of an opaque-productive space? Part Three will propose a space characterized by being abstract, heterogeneous, fragmentary, scale indeterminate, intricate, excessive, saturated, expressive, and highly articulated. However, such a compositional and formal study of the opaque-productive space should not be understood as a stylistic problem. For the cognitive purposes of the double unknown, syntax is important as a gateway to the double unknown, not as an end in itself. The objective is not the definition of an architectural lexicon, but a design strategy or ethos that can be applied case-by-case to the formalization of each AP's specificities. I repeat Miralles' words on the question of style:

> I would like to insist that I do not take style to be the systematic repetition of formal gestures. It is something that comes from a way of operating. The gestures that determine my work are born from a series of specific interests, irrespective of the spatial result they acquire.[2]

By linking abstraction with the unknown, the architectural abstract lexicon is irreducible to one or another particular abstract formulation. I insist *ad nauseam* that the goal of cognition is not the visual form itself, nor the technical issues that lead to it, but its knowability and ineffability. Even so, there will undoubtedly still be reluctant people who will not accept a defense of expressivity precisely as a way of moving away from superficial discussions of form and composition. I am aware of the conflict. I am aware of the visual and the technical encapsulation that form and composition suffer, especially in research and academia. However, the emphasis on form and composition in the two coming chapters must be seen as a vehicle rather than an objective. In my opinion, geometric form, material, and composition are to an architect what the camera is to a photographer: a working tool, something that must be known in detail to perform the creative task. But the tool is still a tool, not the goal. As concluded in Part Two, the architectural physical expression is a placeholder towards the interior of the AP. Yet how this placeholder appears to us is fundamental, because there is no aesthetic cognition at all without it. Then, to move beyond materialist and literalist debates and without renouncing the question of shape and composition, various twentieth century artistic movements around the notion of abstraction will offer reliable support.

Within this framework, Part Three will focus on two main aspects for operating with the kind of spatial syntax proposed here: *abstraction* and *part-whole relationships*. Chapter 6 on abstraction will first address the question of the *precedent* regarding the openness of the work. To what extent does the inclusion of familiar elements in the composition of a space determine or not the openness of the work? Methodologically, parallels will be drawn between sculpture and fashion in relation to some current OOO voices in architecture. This context will allow us to position this thesis' commitment to abstract language as the maximum individualization and freedom of experience, that is, to the maximum openness of the AP's multiplicity for a particular user. The polysemy of the term "abstraction" will be specified by linking it to the question of the unknown. This will mean that abstraction is not something conceptual as opposed to the tangible and the concrete, nor is it a reduction or simplification of other phenomena. Abstraction is asemic. *Asemicism* praises the lack of assumed semantic significance. Moreover, the abstract opaque-productive space presented here will reject the homogeneous, neutral, and universal space of the Modern Movement. Instead, it will advocate for a heterogeneous, conflicting,

[2] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 267.

and distinct(ive) space local to the AP in question. Such a space has no pre-existing meaning in relation to use and understanding.

But this asemicism will not lead us to a mere capitalization of the syntactic. It is clear that in order to achieve an aesthetics of depth and openness by abstract means, cognition cannot be reduced to semantic operations, but neither to syntactic ones. For this reason, I will also vindicate *asyntacticism* to avoid what can be called a "superficial formalism," that is, the literalization of the presentational qualities of the work. Nor does this put us at the opposite extreme of a complete suppression of the syntactic—as Conceptual Art did—but, as mentioned a few paragraphs above, the visual form is the gateway or, as Barthes calls it, the "material vestibule."[3] In this context, the *labyrinthine*, the *cavernous*, and the *saturated* will be proposed as characteristics of this material vestibule that we will call Abstract Space. Nonetheless, the dangers of total abstraction will also be evaluated. That means that a theory of *anchor points* will be proposed when faced with the possibility of cognitive indifference due to an overly abstract and saturated form. Three cases will be examined to attract and absorb the observer into the abstract manifestation.

Chapter 7 will propose *mereology* as a way to instrumentalize Abstract Space for design concerns. From the Greek *meros*, meaning "part" and the suffix *-logy*, "study," mereology is the study of the parts, their interactions, and the wholes they form. Unlike the last two digital design paradigms of continuous architectural formulations and discreteness by the particle replication, a mereological composition of distinct(ive)ness will be championed; one that more clearly reflects the AP's ontological structure of disparate objects composed of objects and which compose more objects. In this context, parts and wholes will be a question of how to circumscribe scales and levels. In this cosmological structure, each entity will be simultaneously part and whole without ever losing its identity and condition of autonomous object. This model will lead to a design mechanism of projects within projects within projects. We will see how Miralles adopted this compositional method of simultaneously dealing with the overall project and fragments of it, each in their own right and at various scales. This design strategy will produce horizontal tensions between elements on the same level (part-to-part) and vertical irritations (part-to-whole). The latter will relate to Levi Bryant's concept of s*trange mereology*, where the parts perturb the whole, and vice versa. In this light, the design process will be a paradigmatic scenario in which Bryant's idea of perturbation between objects—which involves transformation, accommodation, adaptation—can be traced and operationalized for design purposes. Such an interpretation of strange mereology will also position this thesis within the current discourse of part-thinking in architectural design linked to digital computation and OOO.

[3] Barthes, "From Work to Text," 158.

Chapter 6. Abstraction

6.1. The question of the precedent

In recent years, there has been an emerging interest in the explicit disruption of the user's cognition as an approach to architectural production. Aesthetics is the discourse that architecture has embraced for this task. As examined in Part Two, aesthetics can encompass more than final pure judgments, and their effects penetrate ethical, social, and ecological levels. Even utilitarian causalities have been assigned to aesthetic cognition above. Harman's statement that "aesthetics is the root of all philosophy" is unequivocal about how this school of thought establishes an approach to the world.[1]

Staying within today's OOO-influenced architectural context, design can respond in several ways to the question of how a space can escape automatic cognition. Within this framework, most of the design strategies emerged so far have in common the rejection of the expected and the normative for the purpose of the ambiguous and the unpredictable. Practitioners and theorists have sought to distance the reception of an architectural work from what the user assumes an architectural work should be. On this ground, the question in this section is to what extent a design actually departs from given conceptions or, instead, its registration continues to depend somewhat on previous experiences and assumptions.

Since the early 2010s, most of the architectural agendas around OOO have looked into artistic methods that operate *from and within* our assumed notion of reality. The known and the familiar have set the starting point for design considerations to broaden our conception of the known and the familiar. The so-called "aesthetics of doubt," which includes practices like *parafiction* and *counterfactual history*, has drawn significant attention. Young describes them as follows:

> The contemporary practices of parafiction and counterfactual history work around interests in the aesthetics of estrangement. These practices make interventions into reality through the full engagement and expert manipulation of mediations to intensify the problems that exist in representing the real. Parafiction introduces a false condition, and then exploits all possible mediations to engender its possibility. Counterfactual history takes the facts of history, switches one fact through the application of a 'What if?' question, then plays out the implications of this adjacent reality. Both operate through the production of what Caroline Jones calls, an "aesthetics of doubt."[2]

The technique of defamiliarization can be added to what Young calls "the aesthetics of estrangement." Section 4.3 has already shown some architectural examples of these modes of practice in architecture. There, the differences in the notion of reality between current architectural positions surrounding OOO and this thesis have also been discussed. It has been concluded that the general tendency among contemporary practitioners and theorists

[1] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 59.
[2] Young, *The Estranged Object*, 65. See also Caroline Jones, "Doubt/Fear," *Art Papers*, February 2005.

in this context revolves around the cultural and historical understandings of reality. The "aesthetics of doubt" seeks to alter the verisimilitude of what seems possible in the world by operating on the means by which the world is presented to us. The correlationism of this position has been criticized, since this sort of "real" ultimately requires epistemological approval to be so. In contrast, this thesis has defended a notion of the real—both substantively and qualitatively—that is independent and prior to experience, while it provides the material for experience.[3]

In the cognitive mode of the "aesthetics of doubt," the manifestation plays with the rationality of the person asking: "am I real *for you*?" So it remains subject-dependent. This mode operates around the "sensual object," i.e., with what is understood as feasible for such a phenomenon. By contrast, in this thesis' framework, the manifestation says to the cognizer: "I am real." It is irrelevant how (un)reasonable it seems to the person. The mere fact of being cognized is a sufficient proof for the cognizer of the thing's realness and existence. My point is that this approach is completely subjectless. It does not mobilize the person's pre-ideas of what the world is to assess the perceived. It calls to his/her inner subjectivity. Therefore, the overlay of what the object's affordances offer to a cognizer is not re-filtered by the latter's presuppositions.

For approaches like Young's, the beginning of the generation of a doubt starts from the displacement of perception through an aesthetic effect and ends in acceptance or rejection based on a rational comparison with previous assumptions. The background is both what is disrupted and the measuring point for evaluating what is cognized. This thesis, on the other hand, only requires the displacement of the background assumed by the person, but does not require evaluating the content of what is experienced. There is no doubt, because what is apprehended does not call for any cognitive measuring background to be appraised. There is thus only acceptance. It can be said that Miralles was a master at exploiting aesthetics in architectural design without the need to verify it as real, but simply to take it as it comes. As he commented: "I am interested in this task of accepting the results as they appear."[4]

Building on this discussion, this section examines the origins and repercussions of this antagonism, where the *precedent* is the point of confrontation. In other words, I will discuss the link between compositional structures and aesthetic effects on the strategies of the familiar in architectural design. How does the use of precedents in a given space affect the autonomy of the cognitive-unit, and thus the depth, openness, and productivity in the performance of that space? The hypothesis is that the more evident the precedent appears in the architectural experience, the greater the pressure of its associated cultural value system. Therefore, the more restricted the access to its being and the unfolding of the work's intrinsic cornucopia of meanings and uses. Within this framework, the study will inevitably reconnect with the debates on familiar representational versus non-representational, or recognizable versus non-recognizable, a central topic in the abstract arts of the twentieth century.

Before introducing the three positions to be discussed, a preliminary definition of what I mean by "precedent" seems necessary. Precedent is simply anything previously known. It is a manifestation grasped by the senses and/or the intellect that already has an

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[3] I recall Bryant's passage once again: "Local manifestations are manifestations because they are actualizations that occur in the world. […] local manifestation is not equivalent to the empirical or what is experienced by a subject. Experience is a subset of local manifestation, but the set comprised of local manifestations is infinitely larger than the set consisting of experience." Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.

[4] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 234, [author's translation].

associated cultural identity—in OOO terms, sensual qualities in tied and unequivocal affiliation with a sensual object. The precedent will be what takes an experiential instance out of its *now*, out of the possibilities of its present moment. Moreover, the known appears in any format, scale, discipline, or material. Precedent can be a physical object (a vase), an event (a religious liturgy), a concept (love), or an architectural typology (the urban structure of a medieval city or the American suburban house). This means that precedent is not limited to previous architectural models, nor to physical things, nor is its cognition reduced to visual recognition. Again, a precedent is anything known.[5]

In any case, this dissertation shares with the stances, design examples, and authors to come the notion here called *opaque-productive form*: there is a common search for manifestations that resist immediate apprehension for the production or unfolding of unexpected and intrinsic phenomena. In this context, the following architectural positions and example will be criticized for not being *sufficiently* opaque-productive, rather than not being opaque-productive at all. In other words, the question under examination is then how far the openness of the work can be pushed: how opaque and how productive an architectural expression can be with respect to the policies applied on precedents.

Although their intensities may vary in degree and their application may be hybridized, at least three possibilities of precedent as a design material can be distinguished in architecture:

1) The *precedent as a basis*: the disciplinary quotidian constitutes its own formal basis to be transformed. In this case, precedent is attached to a discipline's trajectory, meaning that a field of study has its particularized catalog of pre-existences to be used for current purposes. Architecture is an epitome in this sense, since, for most of its community, its historical shapes and compositional logics are recursively reinterpreted, disfigured, and/or reconfigured. In each new period, the qualities of these "disciplinary shapes" are transformed in different ways to alter their meanings. As seen in Section 2.1, this approach is intrinsically related to discourses of epistemological autonomy in architecture.

2) In the *precedent as a reference*, external but known qualities invade the architectural context. The spatial manifestation is interpreted as a hybrid between the alienated and the alienating, between the terms of the architectural normative and those of the re-contextualized precedent. The *Binoculars Building* by Gehry (1985) or Calatrava's *Milwaukee Art Museum* (2001) are examples of literal and symbolic architecture using references from popular culture. If the previous precedent-as-basis narrows its scope of referentiality to what is considered internally disciplinary, precedent-as-reference operates more broadly by engaging with all sorts of cultural or popular significances. It is a play of meanings in relation to our understanding. On the other hand, a more recent formulation can be identified, which does not work with symbolism but with the ontological mixture of disparate elements. In what will be called *xenoaesthetics*, architecture relates to biological, geological, and technological agents. The results are hybrids that do not depend on how the subject receives them in the first place. In fact, they will tend to question the established categories of valuation. Their intellectual background can be found in the writings of Haraway and Latour, among others.

3) The *precedent as a linker* is included in the spatial structure with the sole function

[5] Although this issue will not be addressed in the present study, the different characteristics between cultures imply an additional dimension to the discussion, since what may be a precedent for one may not be so for another. Then, in what is to come, when speaking of the abstract, as opposed to the precedent, it must be taken from the author's Western cultural background.

of guaranteeing the existence of the experience. Faced with the possibility of cognitive indifference due to a presentation that is too distant, the familiar element introduces the user to the complexity of the space. The precedent-as-linker is a design technique within the larger theory of *anchor point* of cognition (developed in Subsection 6.3.4). The technique inserts grafts stripped of any semantic and categorical value into the architectural composition. In this manner, the precedent-as-linker will be the gateway to the scrutiny of the rest of the composition.

This thesis' position in relation to precedent will emerge in the conjugation between a particular modulation of the precedent as a reference and as a linker. More precisely, in a design approach that accounts for the ontological convergence of disparate entities—what Vivaldi will call the "xenological condition"—whose structure is so rich and complex that it needs certain cognitive catchers to pull the observer inside the work.

Methodologically, each of the following subsections will look at sculpture and fashion examples to broaden the analysis. These artistic references will serve as an introduction to the architectural case that will be studied immediately afterward. Three architectural conditions will be addressed in relation to the types of precedents listed above: typology (precedent-as-basis), hybrids (precedent-as-reference), and abstraction (precedent-as-linker).

Within this framework, consider the following three works, some of them operating between art and fashion: the series *Squishies* by Daisy Collingridge (Fig. 6-1), the human/animal-like sculpture *The Young Family* of Patricia Piccinini (Fig. 6-2), and the costume designs of Paola Idrontino, like *Silver* (Fig. 6-3). The three works have in common the inquiry of the human body. Collingridge's series is, as she defines it, "an exploration of fabric, form and flesh. Their tactile fabric bodies and inviting colour exaggerate the warmth and softness of flesh - these elements which signify a living thing."[6] Piccinini's sculpture "is a small nuclear family, which immediately draws attention to their simulated humanness," Smith and Dreyer comment.[7] And Idrontino describes her career project as being born with "the intention of exploring new ways of highlighting and dramatising the natural silhouette of the body using accessories and costumes."[8] All three place the beholder within an unusual experience by disrupting the cultural image of what a human body is about. However, the way in which each composition treats the body as a precedent entails different aesthetic consequences in relation to the multiplicity of the presented piece.

[6] Daisy Collingridge, "Daisy Collingridge," accessed April 26, 2021, http://daisycollingridge.com/about/4594752385.

[7] Andrew Smith and Elfriede Dreyer, "Themes of Genetic Engineering and the Homunculus in Patricia Piccinini's Sculptural Installation, We Are Family," *De Arte* 44 (January 1, 2009): 27, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043389.2009.11877104.

[8] Paola Idrontino, "Papayapie," Papayapie, accessed April 26, 2021, https://www.papayapie.com/pages/about/.



Figure 6-1. Daisy May Collingridge, *Hillary and the pea*, from the series *Squishies*, 2019.



Figure 6-2. Patricia Piccinini, *The Young Family*, 2002.



Figure 6-3. Paola Idrontino, *Silver*, 2017.

6.1.1. The precedent as a basis

The description of Collingridge's costume in relation to the human as a symbolic and material precedent will lead to the question of typology in architecture: first, within the postmodern context of the second half of the twentieth century through the seminal articles of Anthony Vidler and Rafael Moneo on the subject, and second, within the contemporary position of Peter Trummer.

Collingridge's suit challenges the human body by offering flesh-like deformations and bulges (Fig. 6-1). Not only the expected parts of the human anatomy that can accumulate fat volume, such as the torso, are pumped up. Other areas, such as the face, legs, or hands, are also overly inflated following customized muscle structures. *Squishies* offer alternative qualities of a human body derived—literally—from a human body. In other words, the assumed image of the human body is itself both the conceptual and material basis of the design. That means that Collingridge's piece operates under the regime of *precedent-as-basis*. The design defamiliarizes the body by modifying and transforming its familiar configuration. This approach resembles Harman's idea of *fission*, discussed in Section 5.2. Reframing his definition to *Squishies*, "the qualities of the [human being] break off from the thing as a whole and seem partially distinct from it for the first time."[9]

Pushing the precedent to expand design possibilities is defamiliarization's major achievement, but also its limitation. The precedent-as-basis works *from and within* the constraints of the existing epistemological image, a "sensual object" (Harman's term) that is always *given* and functions simultaneously as player and referee. It is both the working material that wants to stretch itself to say something more and the evaluator who pulls back on it to prevent the new signification. The design scheme of the precedent-as-basis is always relational to us, and it requires ultimate cognitive certification. It focuses then on the "sensual object" to the detriment of the "real object."[10]

Put differently, it is clear that Collingridge's costume broadens our understanding of the human body and, consequently, our attachment to it. Yet to what extent? The background she presents is unequivocal. Undoubtedly, what we have before us is a human figure, with all the protocol, ethical, and moral burden that this implies. Of course, the cognition of *Squishies* can sharpen certain understandings and behaviors that normally do not occur when facing a "standard" human figure. As the designer remarks: "There is a desire to touch [it]"; something culturally reprehensible, especially when facing unknown people.[11] However, any cognitive encounter with this piece will always orbit around the system of categorization and valuation pre-assigned to a human body. Under this umbrella, the design prevents the activation of those profiles or affordances that the design may contain for a beholder beyond what convention dictates as possible. This masking occurs for two different reasons: deliberate repression and avoided ignorance.

An extreme case of deliberate repression: I cannot take a knife and stab that thing in front of me. Yet the non-exertion of this possibility is not because the work lacks it. It is because there is a value system imposed on my experience of the work that restricts such a performance.[12] There is a conscious and automatic self-repression by the ethical laws

[9] Harman, *Weird Realism*, 279. There is then a tension, which OOO calls "time," between the identity of the thing for us—the sensual object—and the unusual manifestation confronted.

[10] Harman comes to a similar conclusion in his definition of fission. According to him, fission refers primarily to the sensual object and not to the real object. See Ibid.

[11] Collingridge, "Daisy Collingridge."

[12] In this sense, it is worth mentioning *Rhythm 0* by Marina Abramović (1974) as a counterexample of what

present in cognition. On the other hand, there is also an unconscious repression. The costume's familiar overtones force cognition to operate exclusively under a given cultural consciousness. Such an unequivocal context prevents us from reaching other qualities that the work offers but we do not see. There is no opportunity to explore our ignorance of the work beyond the imposed framework of reception. This is the degree of transparency that the technique of defamiliarization cannot overcome. For example, it is difficult to find a hidden affordance when confronting *Squishies* that does not end up back in regular interaction with a human. Here is the problem! The piece does not promote intuitive engagement and free play outside the regime of the human as a *type*. The cognizer's identity and relational capabilities fade away in favor of the subject-dependent category of valuation. Of course, we can think of using the folds of the fabric-muscles to store fruit, for example. The work itself is capable of this, and much more. However, the Dadaist effort that the beholder must make to achieve that performance, meaning to overcome the given rules around the human, is not necessarily based on a natural inner reaction of the cognitive-unit. (I repeat, this is the reason to distrust Dadaist spontaneity and absurdity. In my view, Dada is more a conscious act of rebellion against the normative for the sake of opposition than an irrational or subconscious natural and aesthetic behavior.) To be clear, the challenge here is to liberate the individuality of the presented object from its imposed context of signification. It is about how to activate the profiles of the thing outside of our assumptions about it as a type. Collingridge's design vexes this task, and the same frustration occurs in those architectures that rely on self-elevated disciplinary constructs.

Precedent-as-basis as a design strategy echoes the subject of *typology* in architecture. Anthony Vidler's article "The Third Typology" and Rafael Moneo's "On Typology" are milestones in the field in this regard.[13] Let me briefly present their ideas before entering into a criticism of them. For Moneo, the architect always starts from the "type."[14] However, architectural design based on types does not consist in a mere literal reproduction of past forms. He separates the notion of typology from the reductionist criticisms that condemn it "as a 'frozen mechanism' that denies change and emphasizes an almost automatic repetition."[15] Instead, "the very concept of type implies," for the Spanish architect, "the idea of change, or of *transformation*."[16] We see a similar approach in Anthony Vidler's definition of "the third typology."[17] Following Rossi and Krier, Vidler looks at the city as the source

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is being discussed here. The performance consisted of the artist remaining impassive in front of an audience who, provided with 72 objects that she herself curated, were invited to use them on her as they wished. The most remarkable aspect of this artistic performance is the ability to suspend for the duration of the event—six hours—the social and ethical laws linked to the human body. This approach is not formal, but contextual. That means that the dissolution of conventions in the relationship with a person does not take place by modifying the appearance of the body. On the contrary, it takes place through the circumstances that shape the event. Seen in this light, Abramović is perhaps the best "ready-made" *à la* Duchamp. In this case, people were informed that the artist will temporarily not be a person. As Abramović herself confesses, when the performance was over and the artist regained her personhood, people run away as they could not confront their actions on her. See *Marina Abramovic on Performing "Rhythm 0" 1974*, 2017, https://youtu.be/kijKz3JzoD4.

[13] Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (1977 in Oppositions 7; repr., New York City, NY: Columbia Books of Architecture and MIT Press, 1998), 288–94., Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," *Oppositions*, no. 13 (1978): 22–45.

[14] Moneo, "On Typology," 23.

[15] Ibid., 24, 28.

[16] Ibid., 24, [emphasis added].

[17] Linked to a chronological reading of history, there is, according to Vidler, a "first typology" that imitates the order of Nature and whose paradigm is the hut. There is a "second typology" that arose in the nineteenth

that offers introversion to the discipline, i.e., architecture needs not to look to anything other than architecture and the city to legitimize itself as such. As he comments: "Columns, houses, and urban spaces […] refer only to their own nature as architectural elements, and their geometries are neither naturalistic nor technical but essentially architectural."[18] In light of this, Vidler explains that the design procedures operating within such an "autonomous and specialized" approach revolve around the *transformations* of *selected* types into new entities. The potential of the result lies in the understanding of that transformation.[19] Similarly, the idea of transformation of a typology is possible for Moneo when "[t]he architect *identifies* the type on or with which he is working, but that does not necessarily imply mechanical reproduction."[20]

Vidler foregrounds Rossi's City Hall for Trieste as an illustrative example (Fig. 6-4). In the architectural historian's examination, the design entails two recognizable types: the prison and the city hall. The former is inscribed into the latter producing a "dialectic [that] is clear as a fable: the society that understands the reference to prison will still have need of the reminder, while at the very point that the image finally loses all meaning, the society will either have become entirely prison, or, perhaps, its opposite."[21] (Whether the loss of significance is complete, as Vidler claims, is certainly doubtful, as will be questioned below.) Under this umbrella, the ultimate goal of what Vidler called the "third typology" is the communion and coherence of "past fabric and present intervention to make one comprehensible experience of the city."[22] This is the historical continuity to which the third typology points.

Moneo and Vidler make it clear that typology is not a literal reproduction of some previous formal configuration. They rely on the question of transformation as a mechanism of disciplinary progression, a progression based on formal and structural historical continuity. In this light, architecture is always read with one foot in some condition of the past. Moreover, Vidler asserts that such a design strategy requires neither specific rules of transformation nor the definition of a particular set of historical precedents.[23] In an attempt to provide a margin for action, it is not so important what is done as long as it is done to some architectural preexistence.

But the critical point occurs before the discussion on formal operations. It takes place in the very act of *identification*. What Vidler calls the "selection of types" is not a cognitively innocent action. It involves all kinds of social and political dynamics. Again, it is not because the design cannot include these factors. The notion of "selectivity" in Chapter 2 makes it clear that they are also part of the AP. The problem is that the selectivity in this case is unequivocal; it is a literalism on the part of the architects. Moneo directly accounts for this subject-dependent condition when he writes: "The types […] are seen to be colored by ideology and assume meaning within the structural framework in which architecture is produced."[24] "The architect," he continues, "thus makes his[/her] 'voluntary decisions' in the world of types, and these 'voluntary decisions' explain the ideological position of the

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century and which sees architecture as a matter of technique in the age of the machine. Vidler, "The Third Typology."

[18] Ibid., 291.

[19] Ibid., 293.

[20] Moneo, "On Typology," 24-27, [emphasis added].

[21] Vidler, "The Third Typology," 293.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Moneo, "On Typology," 37.

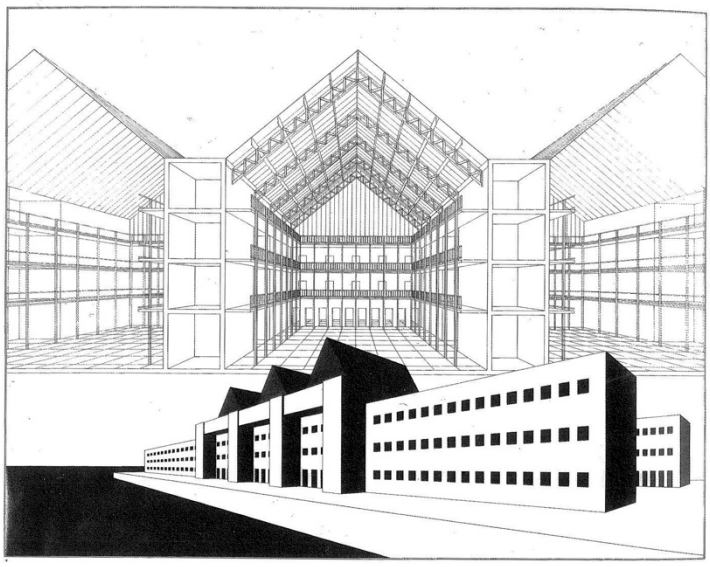


Figure 6-4. Aldo Rossi, City Hall for Trieste, 1974.

architect."[25]

The neo-rationalist architects of the sixties were also well aware of this condition. So they based their whole theoretical armature of architecture-from-and-within-architecture on the city as a political device.[26] However, this exact subordination to the subject's conscious "voluntary decisions" prevents the type from being an object in itself. Peter Trummer concludes with a similar critique of the human dependency of the rationalist type. As he comments: "What is real to [the rationalists] is just the 'eidos' or 'Zeitgeist' of which the building is a replica. To these formalists the type is real while the physical building is just the copy or replica of the type."[27]

Under this umbrella, it is difficult not to understand the postmodern type as relational, rather than ontologically autonomous. The simple act of identification is a clear epistemological act that reduces the complexity of the object of architecture to *our* idea of type. This approach establishes a point of measurement *by and for* a subject, who can act for or against such a selection. That means that types—contrary to what postmodern authors hold—do not pre-exist their identification. It is the act of identification itself that constructs the type. It is a designation rather than an extraction. In other words, what elevates a phenomenon to a type is its selection by a subject, not the object in itself.

This critique has already been raised in Chapter 2 against the theories of autonomy of the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, type and autonomy are interdependent for these architectural theories of the sixties and seventies. Employing the thesis' scheme of cognition (Fig. 3-3), the place in which to locate these architect's sense of type and autonomy is the architectural cognitive-unit, rather than the architectural project itself devoid of human cognition. The derived problem from this allocation is reducing the architectural project as an autonomous object to types selected from a cognitive position, a model that violates the conclusion of Part Two where cognition was innocuous to the

[25] Ibid.

[26] Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*.

[27] Trummer, "Zero Architecture: A Neo-Realist Approach to the Architecture of the City," 17. The real of the rationalists that Trummer describes must be confronted with his sense of reality, which refers "to what realists mean by the 'real' in an object: the endless number of realities which lie behind any object and to which we will never fully have access." Ibid., 20.

cognized object. This is the modern teleology of postmodernism: it is subject-centered. There is an *a priori* "concept" in the form of a "type," which is originating source and final validator.

If there is still any doubt about the contradiction in postmodernism of defining the ontological essence of architecture and its projects from an epistemological stance, it is enough to read the first lines of Moneo's article. As he writes:

> To raise the question of typology in architecture is to raise a question of the nature of the architectural work itself. To answer it means, for each generation, a redefinition of the essence of architecture and an explanation of all its attendant problems.[28]

Nonetheless, Moneo's case is paradoxical, since it points to a double condition in the question of typology. On the one hand, he recognizes the condition of the uniqueness of the architectural work and gives an account of it as an entity in itself.[29] With a flavor that any ontological realist author would share, he goes so far as to affirm that "the work of architecture is irreducible to any classification."[30] Yet Moneo's realism, or the apparent ontological autonomy infused into the type, is not robust enough to call into question the epistemological operability of selection and transformation of the type. On the other hand, Moneo separates his position from Rossi's and his circle arguing that "Rossi's types communicate only with themselves and their ideal context. They become only mute reminders of a more or less perfect past, a past that may not even have existed."[31] In so doing, Moneo demands a higher presence of the type in relation to the actual society. As he writes:

> If a work of architecture needs the type to establish a path for its communication—to avoid the *gap* between the past, the moment of creation, and the world in which the architecture is ultimately placed—then types must be the starting point of the design process.[32]

Here the architectural ambitions and design policies are clearly differentiated between Moneo's approach to typology and this dissertation. For the Spanish architect, architecture is based on the continuity between the past, the design process, and the architectural experience. The type is the device that enables their communication and interconnection. By contrast, this thesis celebrates the gap, and thus, the separation between these three instances (Section 5.3). This conclusion follows from the question of ontological autonomy and the search for the knowable from the unknown, rather than the unknown from the known. While the former requires anti-literal cognition in the now, the latter aims to extend the literal by establishing a continuity of the present from the past. The purpose of an open, autonomous, and actual cognition is this dissertation's reason to account for type and precedent-as-basis as forms of reductionism and, thus, to be avoided in the design process. In short, if architectural cognition aims at the AP's double unknown, the design process cannot start from the type, as Moneo suggests.

However, this thesis does not completely deny the notion of typology. After all, every project is susceptible to typological analysis. That means that the precedent-as-basis appears as a device of *retrospective analysis* that makes it incompatible with a design process

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[28] Moneo, "On Typology," 23.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 37.
[32] Ibid., 37, [emphasis added].

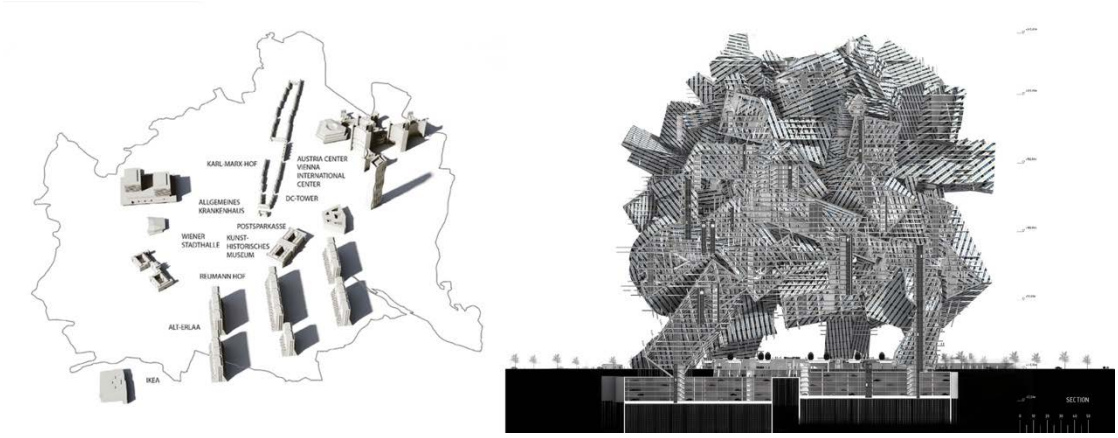


Figure 6-5. Elisabeth Sinnesberger (student) with Peter Trummer (advisor), *Pile City in Vienna*, IOUD, Innsbruck University, 2015.

that aspires to an intimate, free, present, and closed relationship between the architect and the project. This conclusion can also be applied to the contemporary formulation of the question of precedent-as-basis found in the architect and academic Peter Trummer.

Yet to understand Trummer's position on the topic, it is first necessary to outline his disciplinary approach. He inscribes a definition of *aggregated object* or *hyperbuilding* within a part-to-whole scheme (Fig. 6-5). Vivaldi writes on the topic: "Trummer's aggregated cities, in the form of pile, are the collection of a series of objects which, as opposed to being ordered on the city's 0 level, are piled in a variety of positions, orientations and heights."[33] These formal dispositions seek to alter the classic dichotomies. "In such a city we cannot distinguish between ground and figure, common and individual space, solid and void," Trummer comments.[34]

The technique of aggregation aims to unfold new ways of understanding disciplinary concerns such as circulation, spatial relations, form, function, etc. According to the Austrian architect, this new light is possible when the whole becomes unpredictable. Trummer suggests that in the accumulation of individually differentiated parts, which are recognizable in themselves, an uncertain and strange whole emerges.[35] What Trummer intends with the aggregated object's new features resonate with what DeLanda calls "emergent properties": properties of the whole that are not in the parts, but are caused by their interaction.[36] In this framework, it can be argued that the chronological modulation of the process allows Trummer to think of the aggregate object as a whole that is completely unknown to the cognizer. The parts come first, and only after their interaction can a whole emerge. The whole is then always a bottom-up causality, incapable of influencing its constituent parts in turn. (This position will be challenged in the next chapter through Levi Bryant's concept of *strange mereology*.)

In addition, Trummer also theorizes on the nature of the aggregated object's unpredictable emergence. It is not to be located in external non-disciplinary forces, such as economic agents or human volition. Instead, he upholds an internal process of architectural production. In his words: "the emergence of a [type] is […] the effect of the intrinsic qualities of any objects [as parts] capacity to merge together with other objects to form new

[33] Vivaldi, "Continuous While Discrete," 92.
[34] Peter Trummer, "The City as an Object: Thoughts on The Form of the City," *Log*, no. 27 (2013): 57.
[35] *Peter Trummer: What Is Architecture?* (Innsbruck, 2013), min., https://vimeo.com/70166958.
[36] See DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 9–29.

kind of building type."[37] Somewhere else, Trummer provides today's examples of hyperbuildings: "The current pencil-skyscrapers of Manhattan may be the fusion of the aesthetic properties of a single-family house with the Middle Ages' 'Geschlechtertürme' of Bologna; and - as in China - a shopping mall meets a village on its roof, and a radical new, prime architectural object emerges."[38] As we can see, historical architectural types are the parts that Trummer relies on to define his aggregated object.

In this context, one can see how Trummer's agenda intertwines two positions that are precisely what this thesis rejects: an extreme formalist sense of autonomy that excludes the architect's subjectivity (like that of Eisenman or Fried) and a reliance on precedent as a means of architectural production (like Moneo, Rossi, and Vidler).

The first is that Trummer accounts for the object in the OOO sense of the term, advocating—after Vidler's third—a "fourth typology" in architecture: the "typology of the thing in itself."[39] This establishes, according to him, a new sense of autonomy determined by the independent life of the city and its architectural elements. On this point, Trummer concludes that "[t]he city, as a non-human object, becomes the 'author' of its own architecture."[40] From a theoretical point of view, positions such as Moneo's or Vidler's and Trummer's converge in the idea that architecture is produced by architecture. And they differ in that, in Moneo and Vidler, the architect is actively responsible for the work using the city as a source of selection—as noted above, there is still an epistemological reductionism that impeded the self-standing of architecture. For Trummer, it is the city itself that is not only the source, but also its own designer. However, it is not clear what the role of the human being is in Trummer's case. The city as its own author resonates too closely with the extreme formalism of Fried and Eisenman, where autonomy means isolation and the cognizer's volition leads to heteronomous architecture (Section 4.2). In contrast, this thesis has accounted for two senses of authorship for the human in architecture: the human being is, along with many other objects, co-author of the AP by participating in its constitution (a relationship not studied in this thesis) and the human being is epistemological author of the AP by deploying profiles of it (as studied in Chapter 5). This point of view is similar to Harman's distinction of the human being as an "ingredient" and as a "beholder" of architecture.[41]

The second of Trummer's intertwined positions is that his design method remains postmodernist, anchored in the question of typology. It still operates under Moneo's regime of "the architect starts from the type." Indeed, there is no substantial difference between Vidler's description of Rossi's City Hall in Trieste and Trummer's aggregated object. Here I am not referring to specific design or composition strategies, whether mereological or otherwise, but to the ideology of combining and transforming selected typologies. Rossi coupled a prison with a city hall (Fig. 6-4). Similarly, Trummer offers in the cited article examples of a single-family house meeting a medieval tower or a shopping mall with a

[37] Trummer, "An Object Oriented Approach to Architecture and Its City," 8. Trummer relates this production process to Gilbert Simondon's idea of the individualization of technical objects from an abstract form to a concrete one.

[38] Trummer, "Zero Architecture: A Neo-Realist Approach to the Architecture of the City," 20.

[39] *Peter Trummer: 13 Ways of Thinking About Heteronomy Part 8*, vol. 8, 13 Ways of Thinking About Heteronomy (Los Angeles, CA, 2019), min. 3:15, https://youtu.be/kD7_0s5_IUA. Jordi Vivaldi offers a complete elaboration on the concept of the "fourth typology" in the architecture based on OOO principles in Vivaldi, "Continuous While Discrete," chap. 6.

[40] Trummer, "Zero Architecture: A Neo-Realist Approach to the Architecture of the City," 20.

[41] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 4.

village on its roof. In his teaching activities, student projects usually aggregate and collide previous buildings (in Fig. 6-5, the source and landmark constructions of Vienna). However, I argue that the result never completely loses its inherited meaning because of the semantic reliance on the precedent that is present in the delivered composition. For Trummer, "within the accumulation of the parts, there is an unpredictable whole; but the parts, they can be recognized."[42] But the latter diminishes—if it does not cancel—the former. The unpredictability of the whole is never complete, because it is masked by the familiar parts. By being present in the appearance of the building, the known limits the possibilities of understanding and performance. As Vidler remarks: "When typical forms are selected from the past of a city, they do not come, however dismembered, deprived of their original political and social meaning."[43]

To be clear, the capacity of Moneo's, Vidler's, and Trummer's approaches to generate unpredictability is not in question. What is challenged is the establishment of epistemological borders to such activity. As seen in Part Two, any cognitive encounter has its own natural constraints. The question is why add more if their effects will narrow the possibilities of the cognitive encounter. By relying on precedents and types, we allow the thing to surprise us just timidly. Our cognitive capacity to engage with the object's multiplicity is then extremely tied.

In this sense, Collingridge's and Trummer's designs share this limitation, although for opposite reasons. Whereas in *Squishies*, the precedent acts on the dimension of the whole and the parts of the costume are unrecognizable separately, in Trummer the opposite is true: the whole may be unknown but not its compound parts. The presence of the precedent in cognition—whether coming from the top or the bottom—is a guest that prevents a complete openness of the affordances of the work outside our conventions of understanding. When this happens, the reading of the work will be determined to a certain extent by the carried signification. Therefore, the opening of the work's plurality to the cognizer's capacities will never be complete insofar as the experience cannot completely erase all semantic burdens.

This comparative framework is useful in clarifying the different objectives and methods between these authors that favor the precedent-as-basis and this thesis. They seek historical continuity with a broadening of the notion of architecture from what is already understood as architecture. Instead, this work pursues the opening of the project's manifoldness by adopting a willingness that does not require an academicist definition of architecture in order to operate. In my opinion, these two paths are difficult to reconcile. The former means that the epistemological framework of precedent as a basis always remains consistent. There is a desire to expand the limits of the conventional from within. For cognitive purposes, this implies that the reception of the work takes place in the context that one expects it to take place. Collingridge's piece is presented as human in a context where we expect there might be humans. Likewise, Moneo's, Vidler's, or Trummer's architectures are "buildings"—in a typological and historical sense—delivered where there are supposed to be buildings. However, expected coherence prevents disrupting the assumptions that each of these contexts presumably contains.

This is the point that design techniques like decontextualization and composition by strangers aims to break; not without generating other kinds of problems, as we shall see in the following section.

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[42] Peter Trummer: What Is Architecture?, min. 8:22.
[43] Vidler, "The Third Typology," 293.

6.1.2. The precedent as a reference

This subsection will contemplate two frameworks in which the precedent acts as a reference. The first examines the importation of qualities into a stable disciplinary domain. If we have just examined some architectural positions that use references that are taken as unique to the architectural sphere in order to generate more architecture, there are others that use a similar mechanism but extend the referentiality to non-architectural areas. The second scheme conjugates different traits from objects of foreign domains in which the result apparently does not belong to any of its original categories. This means that, while in the former it is unequivocal that the context of reception is architecture, in the latter it is not so clear. In this discussion, the examination of Patricia Piccinini's piece *The Young Family* (2002) (Fig. 6-2) with regard to the commingling of features of foreign provenance will lead us to the discussion of *hybrids* and of the *sympoietic or xenological condition* in architecture. This implies the making of things through the cooperation of disparate actants, a compositional disposition that this thesis celebrates. But it is also critical of those theorizations that forget the emergent and autonomous object in favor of its mixed constitution.

Focusing on the first point, one of the most widespread approaches to architectural design is the grafting of familiar features of a non-architectural entity or reference into an architectural context. In this approach, architecture is assumed to be a stable domain for cognition, but its production derives from imports. We can situate Vidler's first and second typologies in such a historical tendency. In the first typology, architecture focuses on the fundamental orders of Nature. In the second, architecture assimilates the world of technique and machinery.[44] In both scenarios, those features are read with architectural lenses. In the first typology, Nature appears either as a reference in its mythical register or as a factual, scientific, and thus measurable ground. Today, this framework has been perverted toward unsuspected limits: greenwashing and positivist sustainability have acquired the biggest possible naïveté masked under market impulses. About these contemporary dynamics, Vivaldi complains:

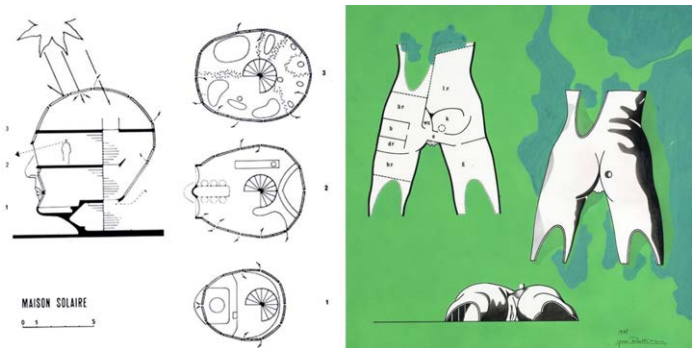
> Associated with a virginal and secularized Eden Garden, the figure of Gaia is presented as harmonic, cyclical and tender Mother Nature. Under the neoliberal notion of Green Ecology, Gaia is revealed as a new opium for the masses: a reactionary force that imposes an unquestionable authority, obstructs alternatives, identifies sins, applies punishments and, above all, defines moral values.[45]

In the second typology, Vidler identifies its origin in the Second Industrial Revolution, giving "the illusion of another nature, the nature of the machine and its artificially reproduced world."[46] The Modern Movement and the International Style were the zeniths of this paradigm, including a robust social agenda. Technological advances were seen as the salvation of industrial society. As will be further developed in Section 7.2, today's so-called *automated architecture* establishes an ideological revival of those times of mass-production with the only difference of certain upgrades of the tools at hand, i.e., mechanical production has turned into digital means of computation and fabrication.[47]

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[44] Vidler, "The Third Typology."
[45] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 231.
[46] Vidler, "The Third Typology," 290–91.
[47] See Gilles Retsin et al., eds., *Robotic Building: Architecture in the Age of Automation* (Munich: DETAIL, 2019).

In addition to Vidler's first two regimes of external referentiality, another one can be identified: free pairings. Although this design scheme exists in a wide range of modulations across history, its orientation toward the popular mass with explicit associations unfolded what Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour called "duck architecture" in the American postmodern context.[48] An explicit symbolism can be seen in projects like The Long Island Duckling (1931), Gehry's *Binoculars Building* (1985), the *Longaberger Basket Building* (1997), or Sorkin's *Jellyfish Hotel* (2010). In Europe, Guy Rottier's houses with human anatomical shells can be highlighted among many other examples that imported everyday references literally (Figs. 6-6 and 6-7). With this framework, the precedent as a reference appears as a literal one and is reminiscent of the visual and explanatory metaphor discussed in Subsection 5.2.1.



Figures 6-6 and 6-7. Left: *Maison Antti Lovag*, unknown year; right: *Maison C.U.L.*, 1978. Both projects by Guy Rottier.

All these examples have in common a subject-centered orientation. The frame of reference is set by the subject's associative understanding. Regardless of whether the elevated icon is the contemporary image of green or postmodern mass articles, this approach is a form of constitutive symbolism: the complexity of reality is reduced to the human subject's capacity for recognition.

On the other hand, we can trace a second interpretation in the use of references for architectural design, which is much more interesting for the present design theory. Of more recent history, there is an interest in intertwining features from different spheres; more aptly, in letting them intertwine by their own means. The result is a manifestation with an undefined context of cognition. Unlike the first modulation of the precedent-as-reference, the initial dichotomy between the domain of export and reception vanishes. The rules of association and cooperation between references do not depend on the mediation of the subject, but on the powers of the ingredients themselves. Indeed, this mode of interrelation and constitution is human anti-exceptionalism, which is why this thesis finds affinity with it. Its theoretical and practical framework is usually adopted by those positions that acknowledge *agency*, whether human or non-human. A couple of clarifications are needed before continuing. First, as discussed in the introduction, this thesis praises the absence of mediation—and thus of the figure of the subject—in agential relations, but claims the acknowledgement of the self over and above their activities. Second, I call the agent or ingredient "reference," because it is usually known or familiar, even though it acts individually and in an unsuspected way.

The result of the combination between disparate elements is usually ambiguous for

[48] See Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1977 Revised Edition (1972; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 87–93.

the cognizer, as it cannot be placed exactly in any pre-existing category. It does not belong to the domain of the ingredients that compose it, but neither is it completely disconnected from them. *The Young Family* by Patricia Piccinini is a revealing example in the arts concerning this second understanding of the precedent-as-reference (Fig. 6-2). This work of art will serve us to discuss the potential of a composition by strangers. In turn, it will also be the basis for criticizing an excessive reliance on composition, which, even if agentialist, cannot imply the overlooking of the emergent entity. If so, the object's being and its multiplicity is reduced to its parts and the compositional process.

As part of the larger installation *We Are Family* presented at the 2003 Venice Biennale, the Australian artist exhibited a mammal-like scene composed of a humanoid mother nursing her offspring. However, whether in an infant or adult state, the creatures are neither fully human nor fully non-human. The structure of the mother's body is reminiscent of the anatomy of an older person, with perhaps larger than usual hands. This creates preliminary friction between the youthfulness associated with a mother of newborns and her senior appearance. Can a person of such advanced age have children? Yet what disturbs her apprehension as a human figure are, first of all, the head, with a muzzle and ears that may remind of those of a dog—or features of a pig, as the artists suggests—and the breasts, which in their arrangement on the belly resemble those of a quadrupedal mammal. This fusion is all the more disconcerting when the whole amalgam is covered with uniform human skin and hair.

The background of works like Piccinini's can be situated within what Donna Haraway calls *sympoiesis* or Jordi Vivaldi defines as *Black Gaia* and the *xenological condition*. In opposition to autopoietic systems—a system able to propagate and support itself by producing its own components, like Moneo, Vidler, and Trummer's self-making discipline—a sympoietic system is composed of multiple natural, synthetic, animated, and inanimate species.[49] Sympoietic entities "become-with each other," Haraway says, "compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time."[50] Each of these identities is not in isolation; not one comes in terms of the other, yet they develop each other. In sympoiesis, Haraway continues, "[c]ritters interpenetrate one another, loop around and through one another, eat each another, get indigestion, and partially digest and partially assimilate one another."[51] In a similar vein, Black Gaia means for Vivaldi to acknowledge a plurality of beings with different conditions and natures—ecological, biological, geological, and algorithmic agents—that enter into associations with each other. As he writes: "Transgenic plants, living machines, ocean garage patches: dark bastardizations and perverse recombinations conjuring up multispecies compounds that oppose the pure and maternal spirit of Gaia. Mestizo and clandestine, Black Gaia negates Gaia."[52] *The Young Family* certainly belongs to this xenological world.[53] "Under what we define as a xenological condition," Vivaldi and Gausa write, "intimate relations in between

[49] The term "autopoiesis" was defined by biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Valera in Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (1972; repr., Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980). For an interpretation of the concept in architecture, see Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture, Volume I.*

[50] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 97.

[51] Ibid., 58.

[52] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 230.

[53] Although, for Vivaldi, Piccinini's pieces would probably lack an active and transformative materialist performativity between their ingredients to be strictly xenological.

strangers are favored."[54] Piccinini's critters are sympoietic; they are part of the Black Gaia.[55]

The artist's discourse revolves around the implications of the biotechnological advances of recent decades, certainly not exposed from a technical point of view, but an ethical one. In *The Young Family*, the artist raises the confrontation of transgenic animals at the disposal of human purposes, like organ transplants, against the existence of the animal itself.[56]

Thus, I repeat the main distinction between the two approaches of precedent-as-reference outlined here. It does not lie in whether or not the particular qualities are recognizable. In both cases, the reference identities are always familiar. The differences lie, first, in whether the associations are subject-mediated or not and, second, in whether the context of reception with its associated laws of valuation is given or not. In any of Vidler's three typologies, the architecture of the duck, or Rottier's designs, it is clear that we are dealing in an architectural context. Its referentiality is a symbolism oriented by and for the subject's mind. Instead, the xenological condition blurs the given epistemological frameworks. It prevents categorization as cognitive mode, and therefore, as an automatic judgment. Moreover, the dynamics of interaction between the references are subjectless. There is no mediation, but only depends on the elements themselves.

The members of *The Young Family* are and are not human. As Linda Michael comments about the piece: "We can list or recognise [familiar] features but not name the creature they belong to." [57] There is a taxonomical displacement. We have no category for this thing. Consequently, there is a lacuna in our value systems, to be celebrated as a form of cognitive disruption. So how does this alteration of cognition and judgment by sympoiesis or ontology of strangers work in Piccinini's work?

By presenting a family nucleus, something common to most mammals, including humans, the artist calls for an empathic engagement. There is a halo of care and protection, and thus of vulnerability, that, emphasized by integrating formal human characteristics, infuses a series of human values such as dignity, respect, acceptance, and consideration into the critters. This produces an affective attachment to them that prevents us from accepting the members of such a family as a mere utensil for humanity. It would be "inhuman." We know that it is ethically reprehensible to instrumentalize humans and, by extension, anything that recalls human traits. The reading of *The Young Family* is a tension between the ethics of life, accentuated by the presence of human signification, and life or nature as "a 'resource' to be exploited," to use Piccinini's expression.[58]

As I see it, the understanding of humanness in her work is, in the first place, relative to our relationship to the technological condition. Here we can identify two maneuvers towards technology: an accentuation of its biological sense—not yet widespread—and the humanization of such a biotechnological amplitude. The former means that the popular understanding of technology, traditionally anchored in the mechanical and increasingly in the digital, acquires in *The Young Family* a still uncanny biological dimension, as in many of Piccinini's other pieces. This, however, may easily be accepted once our experience recalls

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[54] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 30.

[55] Here we can follow Haraway's definition of "critter," which "refers promiscuously to microbes, plants, animals, humans and nonhumans, and sometimes even to machines." Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

[56] Patricia Piccinini, "The Young Family," accessed November 3, 2021, http://www.patriciapiccinini.net/writing/51/144/74.

[57] Linda Michael, "We Are Family: Patricia Piccinini at the 50th Biennale of Venice," 2003, http://www.patriciapiccinini.net/writing/27/144/55#.

[58] Piccinini, "The Young Family."

the vague image of what "biotechnology" looks like: something involving transgenic plants, laboratory work, and perhaps Dolly. In any case, it is still somewhat distant from the pristine human. But that is precisely where Piccinini's second dart hits home.

We may have already assumed that these critters are technological, but this technology offers a different image than what we are used to consuming. It is one that even offers a human flavor. This is not a minor consequence. It directly affects our approach to these unclassifiable critters and the very understanding of ourselves and technology. Stated differently, in Piccinini's work there is no longer a dialectical opposition between humans and technology. Instead, the two intermingle, acting in turn on the original categories. There is a dislocation in our typical self-understanding. The taxonomy of the human and the technological is diffused by recognizing intrinsic qualities of technology that are human, and vice versa. To this end, Piccinini's work proceeds in two steps. In the first place, she starts from a well-established premise—"we humans consider ourselves to be organic beings"—and intermingles it with a simultaneous presentation of these beings as technological products. Second, she forces an emphatic projection of ourselves onto these beings. The result is a reluctance to confront them as mere technological results, even though we know they are. Why? Because the fact that a technological entity acquires humanness alters our conception of ourselves as organic beings. It is not just that these critters can be human; it is that, in turn, it is that we are technological.

This is the basis of sympoiesis and xenology. Cognitively speaking, it produces a contradiction Piccinini seeks to naturalize. As Donna Haraway comments: "Piccinini's worlds require curiosity, emotional engagement, and investigation, and they do not yield to clean judgments or bottom lines—especially not about what is living or nonliving, organic or technological, promising or threatening."[59] The categories of modernity also become obsolete for Vivaldi. As he states: "The figure of Black Gaia not only challenges the boundaries between life and non-life, organic and inorganic, human and inhuman, but offers, above all, an alternative narrative."[60] However, this does not mean the dissolution of identity, ontologically speaking. Instead, it means the dismantling of epistemological reductionism as the definition of the world in terms of how we, human, measure and understand it.

Gausa and Vivaldi note that throughout the 2010s, architecture has deeply embraced a xenological sensibility composed by the mediation of heterogeneous agencies with a performative character.[61] Building upon this, combining multiple coherences of heterogeneous formats, logics, and natures is a design approach that reflects a non-anthropocentric awareness of the multiple associations that populate the world beyond our comprehension and control. Such an ontology of strangers inevitably impacts design concerns, awakening a particular aesthetic mode that can be called *xenoaesthetics*: a cognitive regime that through the crossbreeding of heterogeneous agents in diverse states of being blurs the rational categories of reception and their associated value system, opening the object's own terms up to the observers (Vig. 6-A). Xenoaesthetics is my proposed cognitive regime for Vivaldi's xenosophy and xenological investigations.

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[59] Donna J. Haraway, "Speculative Fabulations for Technoculture's Generations: Taking Care of Unexpected Country," in *The Multispecies Salon*, ed. Eben Kirksey, vol. 50 (2007; repr., Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 242.

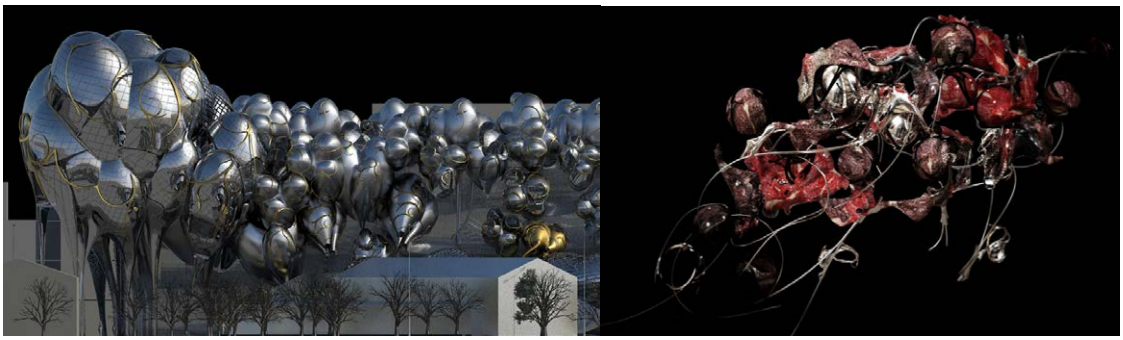
[60] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 230.

[61] "Performative" means here that, in contrast to the inert matter of architecture (mud bricks, concrete, wood, etc.) or the pre-defined mechanics of kinetic architecture, building materials in architecture become (re)active or "alive," biologically, geologically, technologically, and/or algorithmically speaking. Ibid.

Vignette 6-A: Xenoaesthetics

I.

Hernán Díaz Alonso is one of the leading voices of the last two decades in speculative design. Under what he calls "new coherences," his work is deeply grounded in experimentation with technological means, challenging since the early 2000s the pure, clinical, seamless aesthetics and positivism of the first digital era. The notion of "mutation" informs his practice which looks for incoherent—or "absurd," as he says—alleys for architectural production.[62] "I am interested in the relationship between excessiveness and speciation," Díaz Alonso writes, "and how species and systems of extreme differentiation can produce a whole, but one which does not necessarily claim homogeneity."[63] Disparate elements congeal: butchery techniques dictating digital computational protocols, monstrosity and the horrific as forms of beauty (grotesque), low- and high-end logics, the sophistication of rawness, etc. The negotiation of diverse "agents of contamination"—his term—fit well with the discussion of concomitant strangers.



Figures 6-8 and 6-9. Hernán Díaz Alonso, left: *Helsinki Central Library*, 2012; right: *Still Flesh*, 2011.

II.

Daniela Mitterberger and Tiziano Derme (MAEID)'s garden series—Pahoehoe Beauty (2018), Terrestrial Reef (2019), and Magic Queen (2021)—illustrate the collaboration between architectural, computational, human, technological, biological, and geological actants (Fig. 6-10). The 3D-printed biodegradable soil landscapes built with robotic arms intertwine the natural and the artificial. There is an ontological intertwining of organisms, mechanisms, and algorithms. For Vivaldi, Pahoehoe Beauty "does not aim for domestication and familiarity, but for wildness and alterity, for a disturbing emancipation that is not constituted as a cause for fear, but as a horizon of possibilities."[64]

In a similar vein, MAEID and MORPHtopia, proposed a *hybridscape* in the Prater Park, Vienna. The Re-mediated Zone project addresses the question of nature in the city context, intertwining digital means of production with biology and organic materials to create a new type of habitat (Fig. 6-11). It is a blurred zone between the city and nature. It is and is not city. It is and is not nature. Following the archetypes of the "Glashaus" and the "botanical garden," the design speak of the merging of architecture, technology, and biological agents. This project envisions their intermingle and collaboration, culminating in an architecture that is a technologized nature (Fig. 6-12).

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[62] Hernán Díaz Alonso, "'Sur' Realism: After Surrealism Comes Hyperrealism," *Architectural Design* 88, no. 2 (2018): 133, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2290.

[63] Hernán Díaz Alonso, "Exuberance, I Don't Know; Excess, I Like," *Architectural Design* 80, no. 2 (2010): 73, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.1046.

[64] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 274.



Figure 6-10. MAEID (Tiziano Derme / Daniela Mitterberger) and Marjan Colletti, *Pahoehoe Beauty*, exhibited at Ars Electronica, Linz, 2018.



Figure 6-11. MAEID + MORPHtopia, *Re-mediated Zone*, Prater Park, Vienna, 2020-2021.



Figure 6-12. MAEID + MORPHtopia, *Re-mediated Zone*, 1:1 prototype, overall view and detail, 2020-2021.

Chamber #07 by MORPHtopia is a speculative test tied to Re-mediated Zone (Fig. 6-13). In general terms, the Chambers series is an open research project that experiments uncompromisingly with what can be called xenoaesthetics. Each chamber is a one-off prototype that can inform some aspects of the office's future designs. Exploring formal and compositional arrangements derived from an ontology of strangers aims to operate within the contemporary framework of anti-taxonomies. Under this umbrella, Chamber #07 delves into the opaque-productive reception of what the conjugation of a dense distribution of fibrous matter and multi-textured porous tectonics can entail. At the technical level, the design is informed by an AI-GAN protocol, a generative algorithm, and manual 3D modeling.

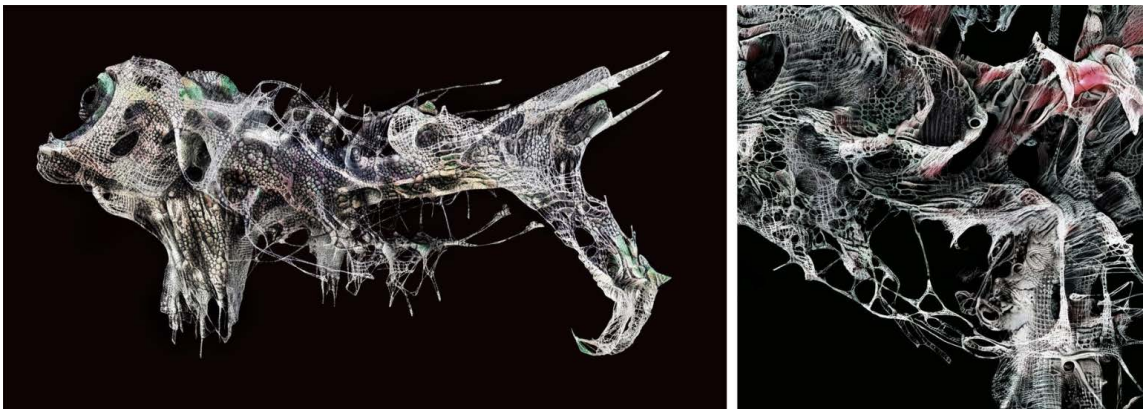


Figure 6-13. MORPHtopia, *Chamber #07*, overall view and detail, 2020.

Within this framework, it is perhaps Ferda Kolatan's notion of *hybrids* that may come the closest to a sympoietic state of being, although I will not consider it xenoaesthetic. To my knowledge, he does not explicitly use the term "xenology." However, since he follows the Latourian hybrid and Haraway's idea of "oddkin," which derives from her notion of sympoiesis, Kolatan's discourse enters into the present discussion on the subject. Focusing on an expanded concept of the digital, he proposes in his article "Genuine Hybrids" to "understand [the digital] in terms of an ecology, one in which different technological, cultural and material capacities would continually exchange, intertwine and entangle with each other and with us."[65] Like Haraway and Vivaldi, Kolatan identifies that the purity of the "rational" categories of the Enlightenment no longer apply, creating "the kind of territory in which unprecedented cross-categorical interactions and transformations can form."[66] For him, hybrid architecture emerges with no particular functions dictated by human needs. Instead, it aims to visualize in architectural terms the strange kinships that exist in the world beyond their usefulness to us.[67]

However, Kolatan's approach, as I see it, does not completely run on xenological terrain; at least, not as explicitly as MAEID's projects. Instead, his position is, ironically, a hybrid that operates comfortably between the three frameworks outlined so far in this chapter: (a) architecture using architecture (Moneo, Vidler, Trummer), (b) architecture informed with non-architecture (Rottier), (c) non-categorizable emergence from strangers

[65] Kolatan, "Genuine Hybrids," 43. See also Ferda Kolatan, "In Pursuit of The Allusive Object," in *Aesthetics Equals Politics*, ed. Mark Foster Gage (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 83–97.
[66] Kolatan, "Genuine Hybrids," 43. See also Kolatan, "In Pursuit of The Allusive Object," 83.
[67] Kolatan, Interview with Ferda Kolatan.



Figures 6-14 and 6-15. Left: Students: Andrew Homick and Yiren Weng in Ferda Kolatan's "Oddkin Architecture Istanbul" design studio, Weitzman School of Design, Philadelphia, 2018; right: Students: Calli Katzelnick and Glen Godfrey in Ferda Kolatan's "The 'Empty Architecture' of the COVID-19 City," Weitzman School of Design, Philadelphia, 2021.

(MAEID). Having exposed Kolatan's ideological affinity with the subjectlessness of (c), let us briefly comment on the subject-dependence of two other subjects. Concerning (a), he limits the diversity of "species" to enter into collaboration with what the built environment of the city offers, something that recalls principles of the precedent-as-basis position.[68]

His design research studios, like "Oddkin Architecture Istanbul" (Fig. 6-14) or "Empty Architecture" in New York (Fig. 6-15), re-configured city-based elements like "[b]uilding parts, infrastructural pieces, leftover green spaces, street furniture and forgotten historical monuments."[69] About (b), These urban artifacts start from the pre-existences of the city in question. However, they are certainly not "disciplinary" in the purist sense of the term, as Vidler or Moneo may understand the concept of type. These pre-existences are less precious elements of the city (such as water pipes, chaotic urban nodes, or ventilation towers), which are rearranged to take on a new or opposite meaning to their original assumption. With these lenses, it is inevitable to consider these hybrids also within the framework of the literal or visual references mentioned above, i.e., the first subject-based symbolist sensibility of the precedent-as-reference. In this sense, Kolatan's student works remind a Jean-Jacques Lequeu of the twenty-first century.

After introducing and briefly commenting on two ways of addressing the precedent as a reference, we can examine now how these regimes relate to the question of the opaque-productive form. In other words, after examining the importation of qualities into a stable field of architectural reception under a subject-mediated context and the subjectless association of strangers that produces an ambiguous cognitive context, how do the designs operating in each of these frameworks relate to the aesthetic question of depth and openness? The first case does not certainly align well with the question of multiplicity. The explicit inclusion of familiar references within the architectural realm involves a form of literalism that recalls the more superficial aspects of the explanatory metaphor. As discussed in Section 5.2, the explanatory or contracted metaphor simplifies the AP to easily understandable terms, thus canceling alternative access to its rich interior.

[68] In this sense, Kolatan reminds us what his field of action is: "While [Haraway] ecology aims at the scale of the earth and beyond, useful parallels can be drawn regarding the architecture of cities." Kolatan, "Genuine Hybrids," 43.
[69] Ibid., 46.

In contrast, the second position offers a much more promising operational scheme. Yet one must be cautious here, since agential, sympoietic, xenological approaches may capitalize on the compound parts to the detriment of forgetting the emerging whole.[70] Piccinini's *The Young Family* is composed of human, mammalian, and technological traits. As discussed above, the emerging critter entails expanding the categories of understanding of its parts. However, how does one approach the composed as a whole? We can methodologically apply this thesis' notion of the double unknown. As for the access to the substance, its cognition seems to acquire an aesthetic dimension capable of indirectly addressing the critter's ineffable reality. It functions like Harman's examination of Cthulhu (Subsection 5.2.2): we can sense the spirit of the entity beyond its human appearance and its technological purposes. The opening towards the qualitative is, however, more debatable.

I had the opportunity to experience some of Piccinini's sculptures in person, including *The Young Family*. The power of the conflict she creates is beyond question. As noted earlier, the emergent composite does not fit completely into any of the categories of its component parts, but it cannot escape from them either. It is the latter that I find problematic. The domains of the compound parts always limited the conclusions I came to in front of the pieces. The whole does not break the semantic load and value system that the referential qualities of its foundation entail. For this dissertation, this implies two things that are concatenated. First, the artist-observer gap is not complete. Although Piccinini's message is far away from being unequivocal and literal, she presents a framed question. There is thus an intentional communication between the artists and the beholder. That means that, second, Piccinini's proposed range of action cannot fully overlap with all the knowable possibilities of the work/critter as such. In other words, from the question of multiplicity, it can be claimed that there is always in Piccinini's beings a forgotten remnant between the frame she proposes and the possibilities of the work for each observer. And it is precisely this missing area that is proper to the emerging entity, different from the qualities that the parts repeat. This is not because I, as an observer, know what this remnant of the remnant is. It is because, in my experience with *The Young Family*, I could not come to conclusions about the critter as such, but only of its ingredients. I could not grasp the work in a superior symbiosis devoid of the weight of its parts, but as an intermittence of them: jumping from the primate to the monster, and from there, to the family or to the functional technological product by and for humanity. A very rich compositional context is carefully put in conflict, but at the same time too explicitly to move beyond compositional aspects. In this light, the effective result of cognition is the thickening of pre-existing categories and the re-articulation of their associated values, rather than a closed aesthetic encounter with the critters' double unknown.

At least for me, the ethical problem presented by Piccinini is not significantly different from that of scientific experiments on animals. In understanding the work in this literal situation, I felt that I could not come to an intimate and open apprehension. This means that the cognitive-unit formed by the creature and me could not completely lose the ballast of all its components and the ethical problem from which it was born. If such a

[70] In this context, it should be noted that there are differences between Vivaldi's "xenological condition" and contemporary notions of "agency," especially those of ANT or New Materialism. Whereas in the latter the components or agents are fully involved in their entanglements, which means that agential relations are always exhausted in their present tense; the former envisions those relations as OOO objects. There is a surplus in those "pacts of hospitality" (as Vivaldi calls them), where the participants never act in full exercise of their powers. See Vivaldi, "Xenological Subjectivity."

personal experience serves as a basis for criticism, it can be concluded that, although a component part is fundamental to the existence of the object, its partial re-cognition (as identification) in the cognition of the object diminishes its opacity. The same reflection can be applied to Kolatan's hybrids. True, the reimagining of the Arabic motifs, water pipes, and ventilation towers imbues each ingredient with new meanings, but the emerging whole also remains tied to them. It is not entirely released to act on its own.

For this reason, to fully account for the promising operative framework of xenoaesthetics, the component parts must act constitutively in the comprising of the being as a whole yet remain meaningless in its cognition. This is what I will call "a xenoaesthetics of abstraction" in the final conclusion. We saw above how the mixing of strangers has a natural capacity to displace cognition from inherited categories and values. It is here where design can cease to be subject-oriented symbolic. If so, nature—for instance—is no longer a reference that provides given meanings, as in Vidler's first typology. It is an ingredient that forms and is formed. In Piccinini, the precedent is both integrated and reductively referenced. Therefore, for a cognitive scenario that focuses on the emergent object devoid of any putative value context that allows for a maximum plurality of approaches, we need a policy of precedents that act only as constitutive ingredients, and not also as duplicators of meaning. By dissolving the pre-existing categories of human understanding, the object's presumed epistemological context vanishes. The entity's manifold terms come to light naked or non-literalized in its apprehension. When this happens, experience is exclusive of the now.

On this basis, xenoaesthetics offers a mode of cognition in which the prefix "xeno" acts on both the ontological and the epistemological plane, i.e., in its constitution and representational means. That means that the object emerges from plenty of disparate elements, and such unity offers its own plentitude of disparate qualities and capacities. Not only does the AP offer an abundance to cognition, its ontological composition derives from multiple and diverse agents (sympoiesis). Xenoaesthetics appears then as a sensual-based epistemological framework in tune with the object's mode of autonomous existence that emerged from heterogeneous components. The formation of space from strangers (xenological condition) is an important aspect of this thesis' theory. Although not discussed in its multimedia diversity given Miralles' still modern medium specificity, a composition of disparate elements (within the same construction medium) will be addressed in Chapter 7 on mereology (part-to-whole relations). Xenoaesthetics can fall into the same subject-based symbolic problems as the precedent-as-reference, where its semantically charged parts determine the reception of the emerging object. To avoid this, we must advocate abstraction as the form of composition *and* expression: a xenoaesthetics of abstraction (Conclusion).

6.1.3. The precedent as a linker

The final proposed way in which a precedent can appear in design is the precedent as a linker. It will be argued that the role of this precedent is not to imbue a pre-existing significance, but simply to link the user/observer to the composition as presented cognitively. As a preliminary note, this subsection falls somewhere between the end of the presentation of the three types of precedent and an introduction to a more detailed study of the field in which precedent as a linker operates: abstraction. Subsection 6.3.4, entitled "Anchor Points," will expand on the main task of the precedent as a linker, which is to provide the gateway to the work's abstract presentation.

As discussed in Part Two, a cognitive-unit is autonomous and internally open when a user/observer can relate one-to-one to the object through some of its manifestations. Full multiplicity occurs when there is a total overlap between (a) the capabilities of an object's expression for a cognizer and (b) the cognizer's cognitive faculties for the object's expression. We saw that assumptions and impositions of meanings imbued by a family resemblance present in the confronted manifestation constrain (b). It ostracizes the knowable qualities, which lie between the assumed and the dormant possibilities of that object's manifestation for that person (Fig. 3-2). In compositional terms, that means that the inclusion of loaded precedents restricts opacity. This has been the basic critique of the previous two subsections of the precedent as a basis and as a reference. Against that, we inevitably enter the realm of *abstraction* as a form of expression. As shall be seen in detail, the abstraction held here does not imply conceptualization or reduction. It relates to the unknown; to the asemic, which has no associated meaning, as well as to the asyntactic, which does not stop at its presentational qualities.

If we return to Paola Idrontino's costume design *Silver* (Fig. 6-3), her abstract manifestations unfold exuberantly. We face a very dense distribution of textile folds interlaced with pointed shapes, all dyed silver and interrupted only by a white field of crushed curls. In line with some of Alexander McQueen's scopes, the Italian artist also seeks to challenge the human silhouette.[71] Idrontino acknowledges that coral reefs inspire her work. To a certain extent, this becomes evident in the structure of her designs—especially now, after pointing out the reference, as Lakoff would say. However, its referential mechanism is like in Miralles' metaphors: an everyday reference is not explicitly present in the abstract expression. The creator's motivations and references are necessary for the generation of the work, but disposable for its legitimization. In Idrontino's case, it can be argued that reception transcends the marine motivations of its creative gestation. Her work offers a cognitive framework vaster than our picture of the human body and the seabed. This range is none other than the emerging qualities above its referential constituent pieces. Such a displacement speaks in favor of the designer-observer gap, which draws independent cognitive situations between the creative process and each of the receptions of the work. It matters little what the artist intends with *Silver*. It takes on a life of its own. Unlike Piccinini's sculptures (Fig. 6-2), Idrontino's parts do not monopolize the observer's interaction with the work under the ingredient's valuation regimes. The emerging dish tastes by itself beyond its ingredients.

As for the composition as a whole, the distance between Idrontino's *Silver* and Collingridge's *Squishies* (Fig. 6-1) is also evident. The latter needs the subject-dependent and known background of the familiar image of the human for its apprehension; the former refers to its own, which is the individuality of the object beneath its presentational features. Cognition focuses on the interior dimensions of what is presented, rather than *re*cognizing phenomena of what is *re*presented. The prefix "re-" always demands a duplication of something that has already taken place. When I face *Squishies*, I behave according to the human as a type. I extrapolate this moral and rational context to the concreteness of the work. On the other hand, there is no explicit background associated with *Silver*. I face the

[71] As McQueen said: "[I try to] push the silhouette. To change the silhouette is to change the thinking of how we look."Andrew Bolton and Alexander McQueen, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 150. On closer examination, one can read nods in Idrontino's works to certain collections by the acclaimed British couturier. For example, her coral series, including *Evanescent* (2016-2018) draw parallelism with McQueen's *Eshu* (coat, autumn/winter 2000-2001), *Oyster Dress* (spring/summer 2003), or more literally, *Sarabande* (spring/summer 2007).

work as such. In this sense, Idrontino's designs invite a deep and open perception through the mesmerizing of its compositional, material structure. The abstract and saturated articulation proposes no preconditions. Instead, it is vague and open, making each spectator come to interpretative directions offered by the work. As Eco remarked: "the more improbable, ambiguous, unpredictable, and disordered the structure, the greater the information—here understood as potential, as the inception of possible orders."[72]

Nonetheless, Eco is quick to remind us that an extreme openness, without the slightest hint of apparent order, is counterproductive to the purpose of multiplicity. The Italian author gives us the example *white noise*, "a noise which, logically speaking, should give us the greatest possible amount of information, but which in fact gives us none at all."[73] In other words, extreme or pure abstraction, albeit in possession of a plenty, cognitively leads not to abundance, but to the indifference of nothingness. "Deprived of all indication, all direction," Eco continues on white noise, "the listener's ear is no longer capable even of choosing; all it can do is remain passive and impotent in the face of the original chaos."[74]

The question is then, what can be the minimum indication to involve the observer actively in the object's maximal frame of action for that person? How can an expression modulate the openness to the knowable just before it is received as undifferentiated noise? This is ultimately a design problem, and this thesis response is here called *anchor points*: design elements and/or mechanisms that ensure cognitive attachment to the work without inducing pre-existing signification (expanded in Subsection 6.3.4). Within the field of anchor points, the precedent-as-linker is a particular technique based on familiar elements grafted into the abstract composition without bringing previous signification.

The EMBT's Parc dels Colors project in Mollet del Vallès (Barcelona) appears as an example of precedent-as-linker in architecture. (The following compositional-perceptual analysis deals with the project's floor plan, the design medium favored by Miralles and Tagliabue. This means that the examination is more a pictorial one than a spatial one. The built park, as a different manifestation, would require other considerations.) The architects replicated elements from David Hockney's paintings (Figs. 6-16 and 6-17). As Miralles declared: "the ground plan sketches for Mollet Park are copied from Hockney! A spitting image! Also by accepting what people said: 'You produce collages like Hockney's.' Well, in that case, let's do it!"[75] These imports have a double function: their floating position in the picture plane structures the overall composition, and they are offered to cognition as the first points of visual contact (Fig. 6-18).

From a compositional point of view, the floor plan is a jumble of things that crisscross, intersect, overlap, squeeze, expand each other (Fig. 6-19). Different languages intersect. Sinuous topographical lines spread out from a head in the lower left quadrant, some semi-arches of great width cross a linear gap that puts a pause to the density of its sides. This vertical void resembles a street or a canyon, whose lower beginning is accompanied by spots of uniform rhythm. Meanwhile, a series of self-contained objects on the left side hosts some Hockney's shapes; meanwhile on the right side, two rows of rectangles break up, recalling the benches of a church with an irregular floor plan. This project is undoubtedly Miralles' densest composition. In the opinion of Fernández Contreras, it reveals a certain *horror vacui* in the architect's compositional approach: a

[72] Eco, *The Open Work*, 93.
[73] Ibid., 96.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 14.

willingness to cover any blank space on the paper.[76]

From a cognitive standpoint, and in the wake of *Autumn Rhythm (number 30)* by Jackson Pollock—which will be discussed in the next section on abstraction, the over-densification of Mollet park's floor plan is close to becoming a uniform field, despite the heterogeneity of its pieces. It is almost white noise to use Eco's expression. What saves it from perceptual indifference is, first of all, the two circular structures in the central left part, with the innermost one double emphasized by a curvilinear band. These two whirlwinds patched with Hockney-like patterns are the primary elements that captures the first sight; not only because of their position and scale within the overall composition but also because of the familiar traits they project. Once the observer is "inside" the formal structure of shapes and lines, the eye notices that these figures develop towards the bottom. They find turns and changes of direction that make room for other imported pieces by the British artist. These silhouettes intersperse with lines of irregular offsets that crowd together until they reach their densest part. From this Medusa's head corner, the snaky topographic lines shoot the glance at every nook and cranny of the floor plan, a glance that dissolves within the composition.

In this reading, the literal references do not govern the cognitive framework of the composition, either in the abstraction of the floor plan or at the phenomenological level in the experience of the built park. Hockney's references structure and stand out in the dense composition. But they go unnoticed in bringing inherited meaning to the whole. Their own significance evaporates to collaborate with the rest of the elements in the production of emergent impressions.



Figures 6-16 and 6-17. David Hockney. Left: *Plants, trees, fields and mountains*, Kweilin, China, 1981; right: *Terrace Hollywood Hills house with banana tree*, 1983.



Figure 6-18 and 6-19. EMBT, *Parc dels Colors*, Mollet del Vallès, collage drawing and floor plan, 1992-2002.

[76] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 54.

6.1.4. Summary of the precedent

Three ways in which the precedent can act in an architectural design have been considered. In the first, the precedent is a previous piece of architecture, particular or typological. It serves as the basis for operative transformations or recombinations with other precedents of the same nature. The engagement with these pieces of architecture is always articulated, to some extent, from its ever-present historical conditions. Although the result is intended to produce emergent disciplinary meanings, the shadow of its origin prevents complete emancipation.

In the second scenario, the precedent as a reference bifurcates into two. On the one hand, the importation of external qualities, mostly popular elements, within a stable architectural context of reception produces a simplification in the apprehension of the presented work. While the received qualities are subjugated to the architectural context—they are decontextualized from their natural field of action—the latter depends on the well-known significance of the imported qualities. The architecture is then read superficially in terms of the reference. This is a reductive metaphor. This transposition as an end in itself is mediated by and for the subject.

On the other hand, the architectural composition can acquire a subjectless dimension with the autonomous participation of non-architectural objects. Instead of importation, we speak here of interaction between heterogeneous elements operating within a flat hierarchy. This sensibility has emerged strongly in the last few decades, encompassing mainly architecture, biology, sociology, technology, and computer sciences. Vivaldi refers to this intermingle as a "xenological condition." From this field of diverse constituent elements, an emergent object rises without a clear context of reception. This cognitive model has been called *xenoaesthetics*: the aesthetics of mutual strangers. This thesis celebrates this paradigm for two reasons. First, it aligns with the ontological formation of objects made of objects that compose other objects, all of them retaining their identity. The strangeness of the diversity of the components reveals the irrelevance of the subject in such articulations. Second, the emergent work lacks an obvious epistemological background. Because of this, the cognitive action focuses on the work as such rather than on given categories of valuation. To reinforce the full emergence of the object from its parts, this thesis will advocate a *xenoaesthetics of abstraction*: a milieu of objects of different nature that come together and whose result does not refer explicitly to the value of their parts, but to its plural interior and singular existence (see the thesis' final conclusion).

It is within this regime of abstract reception that the third modulation of the precedent appears. An extreme abstraction, one based on non-differentiation, leads to cognitive indifference. Against that, the familiar precedent is an element distributed in the composition that acts as captors of senses and bodies. It is a linker that initiates the cognitive encounter. However, its form of presentation is so that prevents its known meaning from interfering in the user's attachment to the work.

These observations have argued for why the precedent is in most cases dangerous to the question of the knowable and the ineffable. It tends to make the manifestation transparent and, consequently, the user's experience never reflects on the existence of its deeper reality and multiple manifestations. Against this, the following Sections 6.2 and 6.3 will address in positive definition a form of expression and reception that seeks the double unknown: *abstraction*.

6.2. The mechanisms of abstraction

This section will, first, define what this thesis means by abstraction. From the amplitude of the term, a particular orientation will be adopted: the one that reads the abstract as the unknown, particular manifestations without familiar presentational qualities and meanings. Within this framework, two senses of abstraction will be addressed: abstraction as a *technique* and abstraction as an *effect*. The former leads to the latter. This means that abstraction as a technique refers to the formal presentation of the work, not as an end but as a means. In architecture, the compositional structure of an abstract space will be both asemic and asyntactic. Its arrangement will not be read in terms of previous experiences or external phenomena, nor of its appearance. When this is achieved, abstraction as an effect occurs. Our habitual behaviors and understandings are displaced. This abstraction as displacement of our normative cognition is another way of calling the aesthetic effect. As a reminder of Part Two, aesthetics is a mode of cognition that is simultaneously concerned with the knowable qualities and ineffable reality of an object. Coming full circle, it will be argued that abstraction is a mode of expression that commits to the double unknown purpose.

To support this viewpoint, the second subsection will trace the origins of abstract art in the twentieth century. It will show how key figures such as Kandinsky or Malevich embraced the abstract expression to inquire into the spiritual depth of the artwork for the conformation of self-sufficient realities. From this historical examination, it will become clear how the search for profundity is impossible without morphological investigation investigating (composition). This is the deep connection that is always forgotten by those who use the term "formalist" pejoratively as a mere discussion of the retinal.

Building on Kandinsky's investigations on shape and color as a mechanism of cognitive depth, the third subsection will foreground a similar interest between morphology and access in Miralles; this time through expertise in technical drawing and abstract figures with multiple architectural applications. In this context, we will see how the Spanish architect developed a sensibility and a craft that challenged the nature of drawing as a medium. Miralles managed to make architectural drawing already physical space in its own right.

6.2.1. The twofold basis of abstraction

In Section 4.3, a distinction was made between abstraction as technique and abstraction as an effect. Further along these lines, it can be argued that the latter is—at least since modernity—the general goal of the arts: shifting our worldview away from what we assume to be normal and standard is an abstract effect. Any aesthetic effect always disassociates the automated path between the sensory and the intellectual. In using design techniques that question the everyday, arts and architecture can challenge our accepted conception of the word. This is the framework upon which practitioners and theorists in an architecture akin to OOO, like Ruy or Young, reexamine the term "abstraction."

For Young, the effects of aesthetic abstraction do not necessarily require an abstract syntax. As he points out: "Abstraction is active in many guises in contemporary art, and it does not need to look like geometric art, abstract expressionism, minimalism, colorfield painting, or conceptual art."[77] In this light, it has been examined how many of the

[77] Young, "The Aesthetics of Abstraction," 139.

architectures stemming from OOO start from well-established precedents. They operate directly on known qualities, and their alteration or defamiliarization abstracts our view of them. Here, abstraction and estrangement are concomitant aesthetic effects. Nevertheless, the previous section has criticized designs that capitalize on precedent as a starting point, i.e., what is known as design material. They cannot completely decouple from pre-existing understandings of reality.

To achieve such complete cognitive emancipation, abstraction as technique presents compositional structures freed from themselves and from external signification, whether to other phenomena, values, or concepts. An abstract manifestation here means the exposure of an unknown profile of an object whose apprehension is not dictated by references to previously known phenomena, nor by its own presentational value. The abstract relates to the unknown and, therefore, to the possible.[78] Abstraction is not associated with any meaning pre-established by a subject, nor does it end with its appearance. It is *asemic* and *asyntactic*. Let us look at the former first.

"Seme" is the smallest unit of meaning within semantics. In Greek, *sema* is "sign." Thus, asemic is the liberation of the sign in relation to a *given* meaning. I say "liberation" rather than "negation" because the antithesis of "semantic" is not "asemic," but more straightforwardly "non-semantic." "Asemic" thus does not imply the absence of meaning. Instead, the prefix *a-* is a disengagement from the known *seme*. A semantic expression carries an inherent significance. It is relative to pre-existing phenomena and values. On the contrary, an asemic expression excludes the external and past influence of meaning. Asemic writing is a good example of abstraction (Fig. 6-20). As Peter Schwenger defines it: "The asemic, as its name indicates, may be without meaning; but it is not without significance."[79] An asemic expression is always open to interpretation.

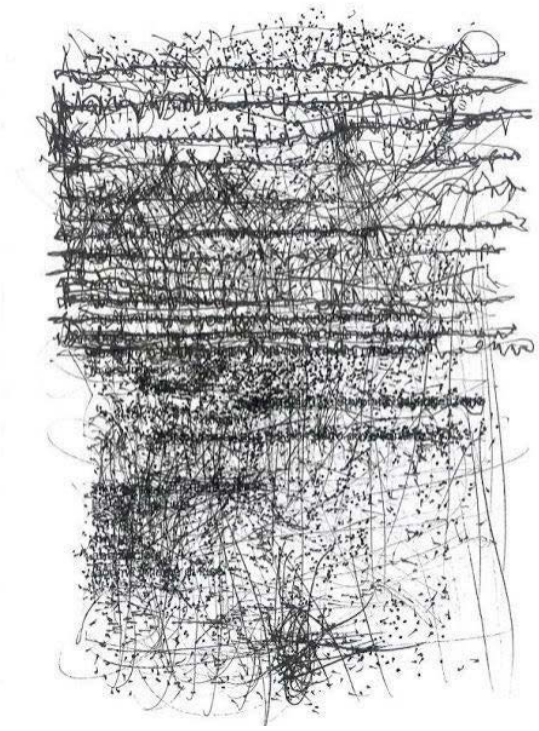


Figure 6-20. Giuseppe Pellegrino, *unknown title*, unknown date.

[78] Eco, *The Open Work*, 88.
[79] Peter Schwenger, *Asemic: The Art of Writing* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 17.

Yet, for the abstract to be so, a second premise is required: its reception cannot be reduced to the expression's surface either. Its syntactic structure must appear as a portal to the thing's twofold interior (its ineffable existence and its knowable manifestations). The syntactic must not be read as the goal of cognition, which would be a literalization similar to semantics. Shape is a vehicle for the object's being and its manifold expressions. Thus, the abstract must be thought of as asyntactic and asemic.

When there is no literalism of signification and appearance, cognition takes place in the breadth of the distributed work's limits and its deep reality. It excludes the rational categories of valuation and association, as well as its own presentation. Moreover, an abstract manifestation is opaque-productive insofar as it can elicit other unexpected expressions of the object it stands for. This is the dynamics of the chain of multiplicity stated in Section 5.1. The abstract is a form that gives birth to more forms within the object's domain. However, the use of abstract syntax as an opaque-productive expression has not always followed these premises. Therefore, this thesis' particular use of the techniques of abstraction must be distanced from certain modulations and purposes of the past.

First, by abstraction, I do not mean a simplification in the representation of another phenomenon. Abstraction here is not extraction. Reducing a higher and more complex order to a set of main guidelines for cognition implies a superficial relation between two manifestations that involves no deep reality. For example, capturing a human face with a few strokes on paper is a subtraction of qualities that do not necessarily question our vision of that face or the human reality behind it. Most of the time, it is a literal relation between two phenomena that forgets their underlying being. It is a representation of a representation in which the latter pre-exists and dominates the former. Diagrams are typically epitomes of this mode of abstraction, e.g., a physical model or drawing with regard to the building. The diagram cannot exhibit all the properties of the latter, but it is intended to show the main characteristics of the building. This type of abstraction is, therefore, a reduction. Abstraction appears then as the selection that distills the main qualities of the disposable ones. This action is clearly an epistemological simplification on the basis of the subject's capacity for comprehension. Such correlationism and signification to a qualitative precedent are the reasons for rejecting abstraction in the sense of the reduction of more complex features.

Second, abstraction is not a form of literal revelation. It is not a superior expression that presents transcendental essences or absolute truths. As in the previous point, this mode also implies a reduction. This time, it is not oriented toward another manifestation, but to formalize a substance that aims to be directly tangible. In this sense, Michael Fried's criticism of Minimalism as "literalist art" is significant."[80]

Third, abstraction is not linked to certain media or categories. The artificial, the conceptual, and the ideal are not automatically abstractions. These domains are not meta-levels, which means that abstraction is not meta-expression. A known concept is not an abstract formulation of a physical phenomenon. There is an unfortunate but widespread misunderstanding that abstraction cannot be found in nature or has no physical and actual presence. For this thesis, abstraction is always a qualification that depends on a cognitive relation. It hinges directly on how a cognizer masks the qualitative material of an object

[80] Fried criticizes the minimalist artists, who, spurred on by Greenberg's holistic idea of flatness (the irreducible essence of painting is the literal properties of the support), moved from those particular properties to literalness as such. See Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 36.

(Fig. 3-2). The abstract is the knowable. Just as there are no knowable objects as such, that is to say, just as there is no knowable without a cognizer who establishes that s/he can know that material, there are no abstract objects *per se* as opposed to concrete ones. A sphere and a tetrahedron are not abstract. Regardless of whether these figures are presented in their mathematical formulation, in a sculpture, or in a poem, they already contain an epistemological trajectory that prevents us from treating them in an abstract, knowable way. In other words, there is a semantic burden that restricts a free vision of such geometric figures.[81]

In contrast, someone encountering a platypus for the first time will consider it an abstract entity. The aesthetics of abstraction (in Young's sense) questions our stable idea of how the world looks and functions. The platypus' status as a natural being is not a proviso for excluding the animal from being abstractedly received. "'Abstract' is the term most frequently used to describe the more extreme effects of [the] impulse away from 'nature'," Alfred H. Barr Jr. claims, "[b]ut the image of a square is as much an 'object' or a 'figure' as the image of a face or a landscape."[82] Hence, abstraction is not considered the opposite of the material real, the measurable, or the factual. It is also not exclusive to the theoretical, the ideal, or the conceptual.[83] Abstract qualities are always concrete, specific, and real in themselves. They can appear in any medium of expression. The designation "abstract" is, for this thesis, an epistemological qualification that we, cognizers, apply to those features we do not have a given valuation category for.

Fourth, the abstract is ambiguous, vague, and open, but it is not universal, absolute, ubiquitous, and undifferentiated. Similar to how the unknown was examined in Section 3.1, abstraction is not neutral and formless, but specific and articulated. Following the premises of flat representativity presented in Chapter 1, every representation is one of the many instances of an object. Whether it is familiar or abstract depends on how the observer structures the object's qualitative realm. To make it clear, an abstract expression does not by itself represent its substance better than a familiar one, or vice versa. However, as this thesis argues, an abstract expression may provide *us* with superior *access* to the object's double unknown compared with a familiar manifestation. Abstraction is then neither the lack nor the true expression of identity. If anything can be extracted from a theory of discrete objects like OOO in this discussion, it is that the unknown and the abstract are not a plasma that homogenizes everything that our factual cognition cannot differentiate. The material of the unknown and the abstract are formed, structured, articulated manifestations. In architecture, the notion of Abstract Space of Section 6.3 differs sharply from the idea of abstraction of the Modern Movement. Steven K. Peterson describes the modern space as "abstract, continuous, vast, and with no form."[84] Against this, the Abstract Space defended here is ontologically differentiated, formed, finite, particular, articulated, and discrete, albeit cognitively open, multiple, and ambiguous.

Within this framework, this dissertation absorbs the two senses of abstraction:

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[81] This has been the main reason for arguing in Part One against Eisenman's "generic form," which accounts for Platonic forms as the abstract essences behind buildings.

[82] Alfred Hamilton Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 11.

[83] As discussed in Part One, the conceptual or the ideal is not superior as abstractions to tangible materializations. The mind is the deep reality of only one object: the mind. In all other cases, the mind is a medium of expression of another object. That means that something registered in the mind, unlike what exists physically or measurably for us, should not automatically be elevated to the category of abstract.

[84] Steven Kent Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 2018, 2, http://petersonlittenberg.com/Architecture-UrbanDesign/Space_Anti-Space_TOC_files/Space%20and%20Anti-Space.pdf.

abstraction as a technique relating to compositional concerns and abstraction as an aesthetic effect that shifts our vision of things. The former seeks manifestations with deep and open itineraries. In the face of an abstract syntax, you do not look and engage *through*; you look *at* and engage *with*. So the confronted manifestation acquires individuality, standing for its being and the extension of its sibling manifestations. This means, first, that abstract qualities are on the same ontological plane as any other known quality or capacity and, second, what makes cognition aesthetically abstract—other than the expected—lies in the relationship with an observer; or more aptly, in the lack of any previous relationship. The impossibility of reading the work in terms of past experiences or values is precisely a way to challenge those experiences and values, i.e., the assumed notion of the object at issue.

It is here that abstraction is not just a kind of formalism, but also becomes a form of realism, philosophically speaking. It must be noted that this interpretation of abstraction may not be the most widespread, but it is not new either. In the article "From the Easel to the Machine" (1923), Nikolai Tarabukin, a Russian art historian of the first half of the twentieth century, acknowledged that "[t]he basic stimulus for the creative aspirations of [abstract Cubism, Suprematism, and Constructivism] was realism."[85] With that, the Russian art historian pointed to the transfer of "the idea of realism from the subject to the form of a work of art, […] which is self-contained in form and content."[86] In short, abstraction was a mechanism that acted against the subject exceptionalism of idealism and constitutive symbolism. It made it evident that reality was not subject-centered.

Ruy and Young follow today a similar approach by washing the twentieth century abstract movement in the arts down with ontological-realist syrup. However, this is not without nuances. "Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Malevich were all convinced," Young writes, "that they were creating artworks that allowed access to a true reality, a deeper reality."[87] From OOO's standpoint, this explicit and transparent transcendence is not possible. Reality never comes directly to us. Therefore, the notion of abstraction as a revelation of the substantial has been rejected (second point). Nevertheless, Young interprets other consequences in these artists' work. As he continues: "They may have seen this as leading towards a higher truth, but their art initiates this through an *aesthetic provocation*, one involving abstraction."[88] Young recognizes here the causality of abstraction as an *effect* derived from abstraction as a *technique* of syntacticity, something this dissertation fully endorses. What he calls "provocation" refers to challenging the image of things we take for granted. The strategy is by opposition and not by derivation. Such a displacement between the sensory and the intelligible is what aesthetics is about, Young concludes.[89] In this rift, the object's being becomes present in experience indirectly. In this case, abstract features lead to abstract effects on reality.

Ruy comes to a similar point when commenting on Malevich's *Black Square* (1915): "What I find very interesting in these moments is the incorporation of abstraction for the purpose of estrangement; abstraction is the very thing that defamiliarizes the familiar."[90] (Here we must read "defamiliarization" as an effect, rather than as a design technique that works materially on the precedent, as it has been criticized in previous sections.) Malevich

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[85] Nikolai Tarabukin, "From the Easel to the Machine," in *Modern Art And Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (1923; repr., Nashville, TN: Westview Press, 1982), 136.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Young, "The Aesthetics of Abstraction," 138.
[88] Ibid., 138, [emphasis added].
[89] Ibid., 138.
[90] Ruy, *Techniques of Estrangement*, min. 34:52, [author's transcription].

tried to credit the existence of a reality of its own that in no case depended on the recognizable word. As he writes in the article "From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting": "The forms of Suprematism, the new realism in painting, are already proof of the construction of forms from nothing, discovered by *Intuitive Reason*."[91] Here the Russian painter inverts the idealist principle of the rational mind by elevating intuitive feeling as a higher form of deep insight, which is in tune with the aesthetic argument defended in Part Two.[92] The deductive powers of logic and reason are useless when there is nothing in the known world with which to associate the confronted abstract syntax. Following Malevich's wordplay, Logical Reason *re*cognizes (it cognizes again), while Intuitive Reason cognizes for the first time. As the painter continues:

> A face painted in a picture gives a pitiful parody of life, and this allusion is only a reminder of the living. […] Or on the contrary, a living face, a landscape in nature, reminds us of a picture. […] This is why it is strange to look at a red or black painted surface."[93]

It is strange because it is a provocation to the normative worldview. It makes us awaken or react, in the sense promoted by Coop Himmelb(l)au's motto "Architektur muss brennen" (*architecture must blaze*). For the pioneers of abstract painting, abstract syntax overrides external referentiality. But, as has already been remarked many times, this is not the only form of literalism. Reducing the object to its presentational qualities (syntacticism or superficial formalism) is one of the risks to be avoided at all costs. Only in this way does abstraction lead cognition to the thing's double unknown.

In this light, some conclusions can be drawn between the techniques of abstraction and defamiliarization, considering that both produce aesthetic effects of abstraction. Defamiliarization starts from what is known in order to modify it. A tension arises in the observer between what is assumed and what is confronted. Thus, the validity of reality takes place in the reflections of the individual. The familiar is defamiliarized in order to make the latter an extension of the original familiar. Its social repercussion lies in the individualism of the process within the epistemological limits of legitimacy allowed by this familiar reality. This means that this model remains restricted by what has been previously assumed. Its maximum success lies in how far it can stretch this understanding without breaking it.

This thesis works in reverse. It does not start from the known, but the unknown. Abstraction allows cognition to take place *ex novo*, that is, without resembling previous experiences and understandings. However, abstraction must not be understood as independent of history. It is instead deeply linked to it. Abstraction moves through the vast niches that history has not yet explored. That is what I mean by the unknown. In abstraction, the validity of reality resides in its cognitive procedures, not in its *a posteriori* rational reflections. The autonomy of the aesthetic-unit guarantees that everything that

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[91] Kasimir Malevich, "From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (1916; repr., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 179, [emphasis added]. Here Malevich argued that intuitive feeling is not part of the subconscious, but the conscious itself. From his point of view, it is Suprematism that was able to reverse this condition. A naturalization of the oxymoronic "Intuitive Reason" is intended.

[92] Malevich states: "Intuitive feeling is now becoming conscious, no longer is it subconscious." Ibid., 179. In his book "The Non-objective World", Malevich keep on insisting that the "subconscious mind [or superconscious, as he also calls it] is more infallible than the conscious." Kasimir Malevich, *The Non-Objective World*, trans. Howard Dearstyne (1926; repr., Chicago, IL: Paul Theobald and Co, 1959), 36.

[93] Malevich, "From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting," 181.

emerges from it belongs to the object in question. Reality is intuited and accepted as it comes. Some may see it as an act of faith. Perhaps it is. However, unlike other irrational acceptances, the believer is not oriented within a hierarchical and overly ruled social structure, being religion the most explicit example. Here, acceptance of reality is individually enclosed and based on personal intuition. This is the Intuitive Reason that Malevich advocated above. In this context, it can be said that the unknown leads to familiarization, but to a familiarity that has no pre-existence. Abstraction is thus a first step towards a technique of familiarization. If experience is now and autonomous, it can operate outside the limits of the previously assumed. The ultimate success of this form of cognition lies in understanding the confronted unknown in its own terms, i.e., without associating it with anything previously known.

As redundant and obvious as it may sound, abstract manifestations effectively serve the aesthetics of abstraction; "abstraction for the purpose of estrangement," to repeat Ruy's words. Abstract syntax offers a way to go beyond what we take for granted. So the abstract is linked to the unknown, becoming a promising device for the knowable and the ineffable. At best, abstract qualities preclude significations based on prior experiences and contextual values. Therefore, the syntax that we historically associate with abstraction is no longer abstract either. Painting a black square on a white canvas is nowadays more semantic than abstract. This composition has today a symbolic and ideological signification oriented to the subject that is impossible to ignore. As is evident, an abstract expression can cease to be abstract and become transparent. In other words, the figures and compositional laws of the abstract arts of the twentieth century are, for us today, precedents rather than asemic expressions. Consequently, the best abstract work is atemporal, in the sense that it resists being associated with specific values, understandings, and usages (even of itself) at any point in time. In short, the expression that remains asemic despite being repeatedly confronted is the one that is considered here as abstract. When this happens, the abstract expression can be repeatedly cognized, rather than recognized. Each time it is encountered anew.

That means that an abstract work is always present because it orients cognition neither toward an external phenomenon nor to its materiality and expressive composition, but to its double unknown. The expression remains a "material vestibule" (Barthes), a placeholder towards its interior.[94] However, access to a project's subsoil does not imply the rejection of morphological aspects. I repeat a simile used earlier: just as the photographer must know the camera inside out, the artist or the architect must be an expert in their respective material and compositional issues; precisely to overcome them.

On the one hand, an abstract expression is opaque-productive, as it resists automatic perception and infuses the generation of unexpected engagements and new forms. On the other hand, the abstract effect is the sensation of deep existence. By linking abstraction as a representational technique with abstraction as an effect, all within a metaphysics of discrete objects such as OOO, Young and Ruy open an operational framework for architecture, one which this thesis seeks to explore and exploit.

6.2.2. The origins of abstraction as an instrument of depth

Equipped with these lenses, let us continue with the historical revision of why abstraction in the visual arts is an appropriate approach to the double unknown (ineffable reality and multiple qualities), how it has been instrumentalized in architecture, especially in the work

[94] Barthes, "From Work to Text," 158.

of Miralles, and what may be its immediate future. To this end, I will restrict the discussion to movements and artists' abstract works that explicitly do not build their *raison d'être* from a known reality. In other words, in addition to what has just been said about Suprematism, I will focus on the most abstract of abstraction: from Kandinsky to Abstract Expressionism. This will leave aside a number of movements historically considered as abstract, such as Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, Fauvism, Primitivism, or Futurism, about which I consider their rupture with the referenced material world was never complete.

In relation to what is called here the ineffable unitary reality, the origins of abstract art lie in an interest in the spiritual and, more specifically, in some occult movements of the time. Art historian Moshe Barasch locates the rise of spiritual concerns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the scientific discovery of subnuclear physics commonly referred to as the "dissolution of the atom."[95] For Barasch, this event was interpreted by non-scientists (including artists) as the disintegration of the solid material world, which called for a turn to the immaterial and the spiritual. In short, reality was not material-based, but spiritual. Then what is the point of imitating matter? Occult trends of the time, such as the Theosophical Society or the Anthroposophical Society, flourished around the material crisis, attracting the attention of artists such as Kandinsky or Mondrian.[96] Shocked by the material crisis of science, these pioneers of abstract art re-considered the appearance and solidity of things as a shell of a deeper spiritual reality. Hence, the first steps of abstract art aimed at the occult beyond the material front of things. Kandinsky stated his objective clearly in *Reminiscences*: a "capacity for experiencing the spiritual in material and in abstract phenomena, which will be indispensable in the future, making unlimited kinds of experiences possible."[97] In the same vein, artist Hilla von Rebay, akin to the Russian-born painter, was categorical: "Spirit begins where materialism ends."[98] Sheldon Cheney offered another pivotal text on the subject in "Abstraction and Mysticism" (1934). For the American author, "turning abstract" entails "apperceiving a deeper meaning in objects and relations than those explainable mechanically through senses and intellect."[99]

Then, when the beginnings of abstract art rest on the spiritual, the comparisons with religion are inevitable. In his seminal *Abstraction and Empathy*, Worringer already noted that "the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world; in a religious respect it corresponds to a strongly transcendental tinge to all notions."[100] Likewise, Kandinsky explicitly recognized the connection in *Reminiscences*: "Art in many respects resembles religion."[101] On this basis, Barasch argues that one of the things Kandinsky found in religion was the very possibility

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[95] See Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 293–308. In this framework, Jerome Ashmore's article on the subject is also worthwhile, offering a comprehensive argumentation of Kandinsky's interest in the spiritual. See Jerome Ashmore, "Vasily Kandinsky and His Idea of Ultimate Reality," *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 2, no. 3 (January 1, 1979): 228–56, https://doi.org/10.3138/uram.2.3.228.

[96] In *On the Spiritual Art*, Kandinsky alludes directly to Helena Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner, the respective promoters of these movements. Wassily Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual Art* (1912; repr., New York, NY: The Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1946), 25–26.

[97] Wassily Kandinsky, *Kandinsky: Complete Writings On Art*, ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1994), 381.

[98] Hilla Rebay, "The Beaty of Non-Objectivity," in *Modern Art And Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (1937; repr., Nashville, TN: Westview Press, 1982), 145–48.

[99] Sheldon Cheney, "Abstract and Mysticism," in *Modern Art And Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (1934; repr., Nashville, TN: Westview Press, 1982), 171.

[100] Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 15.

[101] Kandinsky, *Kandinsky: Complete Writings On Art*, 377.

of spiritual reality existing in itself, although the painter was far from exploiting art for religious purposes. "This spiritual reality," the art historian writes, "is neither fully identical with the reality of material objects and bodies, nor fully exhausted in psychological experience."[102]

Barasch's sentence is candy for the cognitive approach advocated in this thesis in relation to the question of the ineffable reality. It also resembles Harman's undermining and overmining critique, whereby things are not what they are made of or what they do to us. As it could not be otherwise, the path towards the inward is an aesthetic one for Kandinsky. For the painter, this path leads to the artwork *innerer Klang* (inner sound), as the painter called it, one that makes the human soul vibrate.[103] The present theory of design then finds in the origins of abstraction a historical ally with a common ground: first, reality is irreducible both to its material basis and to experience, and second, the aesthetic-artistic question paves the way to deep reality in abstract art.

At this point, one may question what "spiritual reality" means for Kandinsky and the intellectual landscape in which he was embedded (theosophy and anthroposophy), especially in how it relates to OOO's "real object" or what it is here called the object's being. The studies on Kandinsky about this subject are controversial.[104] Therefore, I will not enter into an exhaustive examination of the debate. Instead, I will simply emphasize two significant comments by Jerome Ashmore from his article "Vasily Kandinsky and His Idea of Ultimate Reality"—both in line with this dissertation's notion of abstraction. First, as Ashmore remarks, Kandinsky preferred to use the term "concrete" rather than "abstract" to refer to his painting.[105] It suggests the rejection of abstraction as ubiquitous, formless, and universal. This point is in line with what was said in the previous subsection: the abstract is not a plasma, but its profiles are specific and particular. Second, Ashmore writes: "Kandinsky's approach to ultimate reality is *indirect*. For the most part, he was not seeking to discover what it might be in itself, but rather how it might be represented in painting."[106] This interpretation leaves an undeniable OOO-ish flavor and contradicts the general assumption that the Russian artists intended a kind of metaphysical literalism or naïve realism, i.e., any impossible attempt to unfold true reality.

In this light, Kandinsky's indirect approach to deep reality resonates with Harman's and Miralles' allusion to the object's substance (Subsection 4.2.6). In this sense, we can recall that Miralles accounted for "an interior discourse– parallel to a visual one."[107] For Harman, the way to enter into this inner world is by becoming the object (mimesis), or as

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[102] Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 306–7.

[103] Kandinsky's studies on color were intrinsically related to its influence on the human soul. As he himself writes: "As the soul generally is tightly bound to the body, it is possible that the psychic emotion may be aroused by means of association. For example, red may cause a spiritual vibration, analogous to that caused by a flame, because red is the colour of flame. […] It is, thus, evident that colour harmony can rest only on the principle of the corresponding vibration of the human soul. This basis can be considered as the principle of innermost necessity." Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual Art*, 41–43.

[104] Examining the insights of scholars Will Grohmann, Kenneth Lindsay, Sixten Ringbom, and Johannes Eichner on Kandinsky, Jerome Ashmore concludes that there is no consistent evidence on the extent to which the occult movement of theosophy affected the painter's artistic output; at least no more than the influences that art history, psychology, and physics had on him. See Ashmore, "Vasily Kandinsky and His Idea of Ultimate Reality," 233–34. On the other hand, these occult movements were essential to Kandinsky's artistic development, according to Moshe Barasch. Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 2*, 299.

[105] Ashmore, "Vasily Kandinsky and His Idea of Ultimate Reality," 254–55.

[106] Ibid., 230, [emphasis added].

[107] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:5, [author's translation].

Miralles stated: "Immerse yourself in the artwork, make the shadows speak…"[108] Kandinsky called those immaterial shadows *innerer Klang*, which is what termed Fried "stage presence." Their sensation is theatrical in nature. It makes the human soul vibrate, as the Russian painter's art pursues. The material vestibule for such profound insights was for Kandinsky, no less than for Miralles, the language of abstraction that does not include explicit or literal references to other phenomena.

6.2.3. The sense of abstraction in Miralles' architecture

As already mentioned, the crisis of matter at the beginning of the twentieth century was a catalyst for the birth of abstraction, but it did not annul the interest in matter. It turned it into non-representational matter of other phenomena. In other words, the question of superficiality was reoriented from the depiction and reference of the tangible world to matter as a vehicle to deeper realities. At stake was how to articulate matter, that is, how to turn it into form. Elizabeth Gamard notes Kandinsky's interest in a quasi-scientific sensibility capable of establishing a systematic link between the material and the spiritual.[109] Proof of this is the artist's exhaustive study of form and color in their ability to affect the human soul.[110] Such a particularization reinforces Kandinsky's idea of "concrete" in opposition to an abstract that is universal or transcendental.

This simultaneous concern in a locality that is both tangible and distant can be linked to Miralles' architectural interest in *dematerialization* at the turn of the past century. As for Kandinsky, the term "dematerialization" meant for the architect the eradication of the symbolization of the material and known world in order to orient the attention of the work's front matter to its depths. The architect commented: "I am interested in dematerialization, although I am also interested in a tactile reading of my work. [...] I would like people to pay attention to that and to the abstract aspect of my surfaces."[111] Somewhere else, Miralles is even more explicit in this duality: "In order to have an abstract value, there must be a material quality."[112] Working formally and syntactically implies overriding any inherited semantic burden, i.e., any literal obligation. When this is the case, the path to the interior of the object is freed from the associative transparency of the known world. Abstraction is thus a reality that combats reductionist symbolism. Such an approach makes reception opaque and, consequently, productive in interpretation, interaction, and sensation. In other words, attention is paid to a double distance: the concreteness of the syntax itself (tangible form, texture, morphology, order) and the profundity it represents. The former is the means to the latter.

When confronted with a Miralles 2D-plan, the general impression is that "it's hard to read" or "it doesn't look like architecture." The use of abstract, non-semantic elements in combination with intricate and complex relationships between them results in architectural manifestations that resist immediate comprehension. It is an architecture that directly questions what is taken for granted about what architecture looks like and what it does. Rovira emphasizes such a capacity of Miralles' architecture to shake up the

[108] Ibid., 1:10, [author's translation].
[109] See Elizabeth Burns Gamard, *Kurt Schwitters Merzbau: The Cathedral of Erotic Misery* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 132.
[110] See Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual Art*.
[111] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 302, [author's translation].
[112] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21.

discipline.[113]

In this context, Miralles' works are opaque-productive because of their asemicism, asyntacticism, and saturation. To achieve this abstract excessiveness, Miralles, Pinós, and Tagliabue have acquired great expertise in architectural notation. However, what is most striking in the development of this abstract architectural language is that, firstly, it is born of everyday references as discussed in Section 5.2 on metaphors, and secondly, it does not renounce the physical world, i.e., the laws of usual construction technologies, as will be argued below.

If the camera is the fundamental tool for the photographer, and color and basic geometrical shapes were for Kandinsky the material device for abstraction, Cartesian geometry was Miralles' means to translate what he gained from metaphor into an abstract architectural expression. One of the architect's most well-known texts "How to Layout a Croissant" (Fig. 6-21)—written together with his then collaborator Eva Prats in 1991—is a two-page technical manifesto that unveils a novel approach to handle geometry and notation. This technique will be key in the development of Miralles' projects from then on. It provided unprecedented freedom and confidence in technical drawing. Again, like Kandinsky's inquiries into color and shape, the Spanish architect's investigations into notational mechanisms are an operative design tool for dealing with the material vestibule of things in the interest of depth and openness.

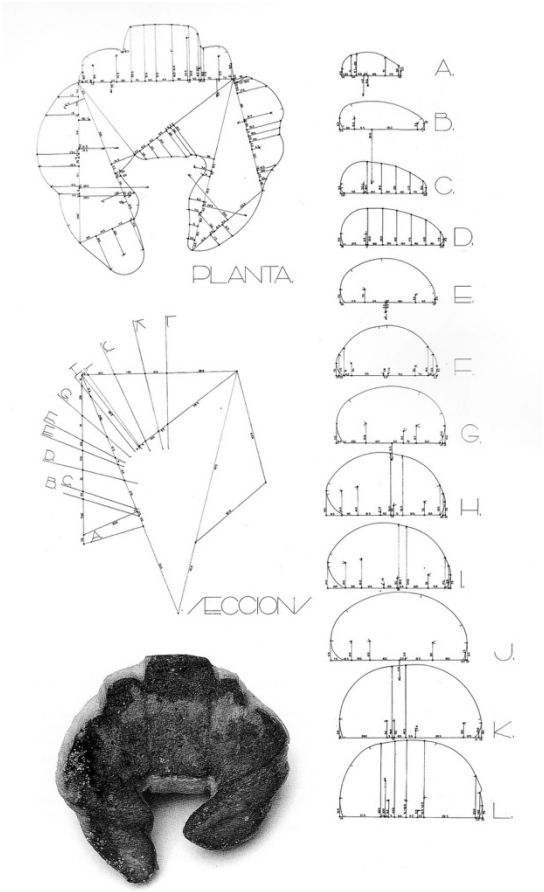


Figure 6-21. Enric Miralles with Eva Prats, *How to Layout a Croissant*, 1991.

[113] Josep M. Rovira, "Prólogo: Universos Alrededor de Una Mesa," in *Enric Miralles, Procesos y Experimentos*, by Salvador Gilabert Sanz (Madrid: Ediciones Asimétricas, 2021), 38.

In Miralles' case, the geometries of free curves, far from arbitrary, were controlled down to the millimeter. Technically speaking, Cartesian logic was pushed to the extreme in "How to Layout a Croissant." As the article states, the curves were constructed from arcs of a circle, using consecutive tangents between straight lines and arcs. Additionally, the text reflects how to dimension a 2D-curved geometry from a straight line, indicating the circumference centers and tangency points. The system is applied on the successive sections of a free-stroke curve, inserting triangles and delimiting their folds from their sides. The "free" of the free curvilinear lines does not imply a lack of control.

In general, architectural drawings are taken as information documents related to the building. This is but one of the types of representational relationships of any manifestation. As introduced in Section 1.2, any qualitative expression—whether we receive it that way or not—presents itself, represents its sibling manifestations, and stands for its project's being. It can be argued that Miralles' self-generated geometric paradigm of "How to Layout a Croissant" pushes the typical relativization of drawing to the building to acquire a wider representational scope. His architectural drawing moves in an intricate condition of being at the same time (1) an instrument of inquiry in the design process, which implies that it is not an exclusive means to arrive at the building but also at many other phenomena of the AP, (2) an architectural reality in itself with its own capacity to manifest the AP's being (in)completely, and (3) a manifestation that not only anticipates a future-built reality, but the drawing becomes a direct formulation of the physical space.[114] Luis Burrillo, Miralles' peer at the University of Barcelona in the mid-1980s, already gave similar insights on this representational simultaneity in Miralles/Pinós' blueprints four years before "How to Layout a Croissant."[115] Let us consider them individually.

About (1), and further elaborating on Burrillo's observations, Miralles' technical drawings as a tool to discover the project refers us directly to the question of *graphic thinking*. As examined in Subsection 5.3.3, graphic thinking can encompass all kinds of visual expressions, not only hand sketches. On this basis, Miralles' technical floor plans and sections are, on the one hand, documents that graphically describe the spatiality of the project according to the standards of architectural notations. Like any other architectural drawing, it represents the presentational qualities of the building through measurements, proportions, what is interior and exterior, and so on. On the other hand, Miralles' drawings also "speak." As Burrillo comments: "the first drawings already have almost more to say than the architect him- or herself, the successive drawings will come out of observing these attentively and trying to know what *they tell us*."[116] This is the basis of the "conversation" of the cognitive-unit argued for the design process in Part Two. What the project tells the architect is a qualitative aesthetic reaction produced by the drawing as an opaque-productive

[114] Unlike other graphic analyses on Miralles' work that assign a different purpose according to the drawing technique, I consider that, within each drawing, the three aforementioned qualities concur, independently of its execution technique. For example, Gilabert categorizes Miralles' drawings according to their technique, giving a different purpose to each one, and implicitly making them dependent on the different phases of design. See Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 2: 21-30.

[115] Burrillo distinguishes three types of drawings in Miralles/Pinós. First, the "spoken drawing" that configures a narrative, as in the literary world. Drawing is telling. Second, the "drawing that designs" is the designer's only means of architectural production (this condition must be understood in the pre-computerized period of the mid to late 1980s in Spain). Third, the "abstract drawing" is already architecture by its own means. It has a value prior to and is almost independent from the built work. Luis Burrillo, "Tres Notas a Los Dibujos de Miralles/Pinós," *Miralles/Pinos 1984-1987, El Croquis 30*, 1987.

[116] Ibid. [author's translation].

expression.

The drawing is thus a method of investigation capable of triggering an intuitive sensation that leads to another expression of the project—not just the building—or a refinement of the presented 2D-expression. In the case of Miralles, the non-representativity of pre-existing phenomena and abstract figuration of his geometries helped in the task. In this manner, the discovery of the project evolves graphically during the design process; all this without involving the architect's reflections. As Burrillo continues: "Any personal imposition on this process will be almost rhetorical, as if we make a character in a novel say or do something that does not correspond to him or her."[117] These words reaffirm the statement made in Subsection 5.3.3 that there is no rational mediation in graphic thinking in order to depersonalize the delivered architecture of any authoritarian traits. This approach makes the building not the only objective of the drawing. In accordance with the flat representativity whereby each representation of an object is connected with each of its other expressions, the capacity of inquiry of Miralles' drawings makes evident more connections than just with the building.

Point (2) refers to the drawing on its own terms; not in its capacity for self-presentation, which will be a form of literalism, but in its powers to make evident the deep existence of the AP. Through this drawing exercise, new architectural understandings emerge. This method has constituted a tradition of generating architectural discourse graphically, and not only from what is built. The independence between drawing and construction is more clearly recognized in our discipline than in other (visual) arts.[118] If we restrict the discussion to orthographic projections, we can find Palladio's obsession with redrawing his villas after building them, the sections of Boullée and Lequeu, or more evidently, the drawings of Neil Spiller or Perry Kulper, which discuss architectural space with no direct reference to the physical realm. Miralles' drawing also belongs to this trajectory of the architectural value of the drawing itself. As Burrillo comments on Miralles/Pinós drawings: "In their projects, the precision and attributes of architectural drawings are given a value in themselves, prior to the building and almost independent of it."[119] They can thus be discussed on their own terms. Burrillo continues: "Already in its aspect purely of abstract lines, the drawings have to meet some aesthetic attributes unrelated to the building they represent or describe."[120]

Point (3) also accounts for the drawing as an independent manifestation within the project, but it underlines the simultaneity that Miralles' drawing is inseparable from the physical space. His drawing is already physical space. It has the capacity to be built-reality without being so. Miralles was a modern architect in the sense that he believed in the exclusivity of the medium: architecture requires its built state to be architecture. However, in order to account for the project's polymorphism and multiplicity, rather than acknowledging its multimediality (as this thesis does), he extends the specificity of the built medium to other media, especially drawing. He handles the 2D medium, not as a representation of the 3D physical medium, but as the 3D physical medium itself. Therefore, geometry was, for him,

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[117] Ibid. [author's translation].

[118] More evident in the visual arts than in architecture, the former lack the capacity to generate discourse outside their principal means of expression when these are considered precisely in their modern modulation of medium-specific. For them, the reductionist view that the sketch of a painting or a sculpture is always inferior to the final piece is more deeply rooted than in architecture.

[119] Burrillo, "Tres Notas a Los Dibujos de Miralles/Pinós" [author's translation].

[120] Ibid. [author's translation].

intrinsically linked to construction; or more aptly, geometry is already construction. This enables us to deal with geometry not as a conceptual abstraction or representation of physical reality, but as a reality that can be abstract, namely, unknown.

As mentioned above, geometry is not abstract simply because of the fact of being geometry. A cube as a piece of reality on its own is not abstract or cannot be purely abstract because of its inherited meanings. When we think, see, or read a cube, we are invaded by a whole cargo of significations.[121] Conversely, it can be argued that a Miralles line is abstract because of its deprogrammed affective modalities, which is at the same time coupled with the technical laws of construction (the mechanical properties of a steel beam, the thickness of a concrete wall, the union of the façade with the roof structure, etc.). In this simultaneity, Miralles takes line drawing to a higher level than its consideration as a mere subjugate of the physical building or as a virtual architectural expression unrelated to the physical world.

Although Miralles was never predisposed to work with a material or construction system, there is a direct relationship between the descriptive geometry of the project and its physical rules of construction. The decision of one or another technical solution depends on the evolution of the drawings throughout the design process. He did not impose *a priori* the logic of a material or a structural scheme, but line and construction went together: the constructive logic arose mechanically while the geometry of the project is built. That is why the architect used to comment that his projects could start as a reinforced concrete structure and, in the end, become a steel one without changing the nature of the design. These constructive changes went together with geometric modifications. As Burrillo says: "Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós champion drawing as the place where architecture already *happens*. In this field, they are closer to the classical tradition than many current classicists."[122] This suggests that, with the classical, we must go back to pre-Renaissance periods where design and construction were one and the same before Alberti separated them. In one of his latest interviews, Miralles commented: "These plans […] are constructions from the outset," understood in their physical modulation.[123] Hence, the spatial configurations on paper entail artistic and structural-constructive concerns at the same time, to the extent of becoming one. "In other words," Miralles continued, "the one that is a plan, that uses reality as its constructive and constrictive reference point, which includes the notion of measure, the sense of the specific, etc., is already architecture."[124]

The Spanish architect's virtuosity in technical drawing allowed him to achieve a degree of freedom in the paper that, paradoxically, was neither constrained nor disconnected from the laws of the physical domain. This is the reason to argue that Miralles' architecture is always *physical*, regardless of its medium of expression. I repeat: unlike this thesis' multimedia vocation, Miralles remains within modernism. He operates in the specificity of the built, physical realm, with the twist that its laws apply to the rest of the means of architectural articulation. We can speak interchangeably of Miralles' physical space in the drawing or in the built work: drawing is already physical reality.

After examining these three aspects in Miralles' drawing, it can be concluded that abstraction is a fundamental part of their simultaneous occurrence. In other words, Miralles

[121] As an example, one can refer to Eisenman's description of a dome where there is a pre-existing bias so that several people read the same dome according to their background for such a geometric shape. Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, 45.
[122] Burrillo, "Tres Notas a Los Dibujos de Miralles/Pinós" [author's translation].
[123] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21.
[124] Ibid.

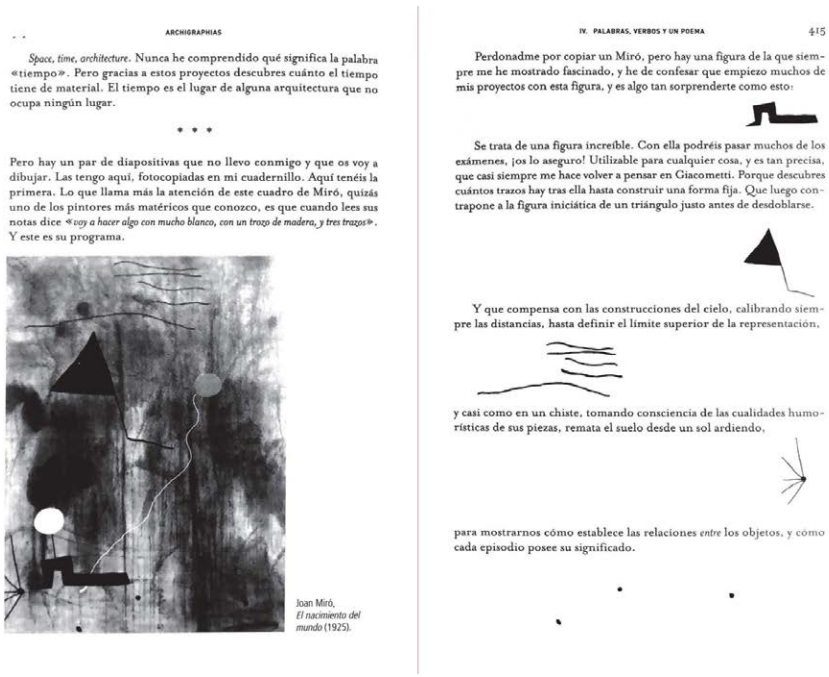
achieves to put into practice, hence not to reduce, the multi-representativity inherent in all qualitative expression thanks to the mechanisms of abstraction applied to his way of drawing. It does not mean that drawing responds to or represents already existing phenomena; this would be Miralles' aversion to classical mimesis. It means that abstract drawing makes it possible to reveal architectural phenomena by aestheticizing the laws of construction, instead of reproducing pre-existing constructive and structural examples, models, solutions.

The operative mechanism of this process is abstraction in its twofold register. On the one hand, Miralles' drawing is abstract in a syntactic, visual, calligraphic sense. This is abstraction as a technique to cut off external literalism, typical of expressionist formalism. It delivers an asemic architectural expression, i.e., physical-spatial qualities without inherited meaning or value. On the other hand, abstract drawing disrupts both its own visual qualities (asyntacticism) and the assumed notion or background of the known appearances and capacities of physical space. This is the abstraction as an aesthetic effect of realism to gain access to the project's being and unfold more of its phenomena.

Within this framework, the specificity and concreteness of Miralles' abstract syntax—abstract because it is unknown, albeit linked to the physical world—are not at odds with its evocative, emotional, and vibratory capacity. The precision of these geometrical propositions is already a physical space that displaces our worldview, attacking it from its unknown side. In other words, he seeks to open up the abstract expression, so that it shows—among many other things—its physical and constructive face as the generative basis of the architectural space. I argue that this is the ideology with which Miralles imported shapes from the abstract visual arts to his formal repertoire. The sources are diverse, including, among others, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, Federico García Lorca, David Smith, or Michael Heizer (see pairings in *Annex: metaphors*). To show Miralles' interpretation of the abstract visual arts, I will repost part of his lecture at the AA School of Architecture in 1998 on his appropriations of Joan Miró's figures. The text on the right-hand page of Fig. 6-22 reads in English:

> Forgive me for copying a Miró, but there is a figure that I have always been fascinated by, and I must confess that I start many of my projects with this figure, and it is something as surprising as this:
>
> This is an incredible figure. With it you will be able to pass many of the exams, I assure you! It can be used for anything, and it is so precise, it almost always makes me think of Giacometti. Because you discover how many strokes there are behind it to build a fixed form. Which he [Miró] then contrasts with the initiatory figure of a triangle just before unfolding.
>
> And that he compensates with the constructions of the sky, always calibrating the distances, until defining the upper limit of the representation,
>
> and almost as if in a joke, aware of the humorous qualities of his pieces, he finishes off the floor from a burning sun,
>
> to show us how he establishes the relationships *between* objects, and how each episode has its own meaning.[125]

[125] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 415, [author's translation].



ARCHIGRAPHIAS

Space, time, architecture. Nunca he comprendido qué significa la palabra «tiempo». Pero gracias a estos proyectos descubres cuánto el tiempo tiene de material. El tiempo es el lugar de alguna arquitectura que no ocupa ningún lugar.

* * *

Pero hay un par de diapositivas que no llevo conmigo y que os voy a dibujar. Las tengo aquí, fotocopiadas en mi cuadernillo. Aquí tenéis la primera. Lo que llama más la atención de este cuadro de Miró, quizás uno de los pintores más matéricos que conozco, es que cuando lees sus notas dice «*voy a hacer algo con mucho blanco, con un trozo de madera, y tres trazos*». Y este es su programa.

Joan Miró, *El nacimiento del mundo* (1925).

IV. PALABRAS, VERBOS Y UN POEMA 415

Perdonadme por copiar un Miró, pero hay una figura de la que siempre me he mostrado fascinado, y he de confesar que empiezo muchos de mis proyectos con esta figura, y es algo tan sorprenderte como esto:

Se trata de una figura increíble. Con ella podréis pasar muchos de los exámenes, ¡os lo aseguro! Utilizable para cualquier cosa, y es tan precisa, que casi siempre me hace volver a pensar en Giacometti. Porque descubres cuántos trazos hay tras ella hasta construir una forma fija. Que luego contrapone a la figura iniciática de un triángulo justo antes de desdoblarse.

Y que compensa con las construcciones del cielo, calibrando siempre las distancias, hasta definir el límite superior de la representación,

y casi como en un chiste, tomando consciencia de las cualidades humorísticas de sus piezas, remata el suelo desde un sol ardiendo,

para mostrarnos cómo establece las relaciones *entre* los objetos, y cómo cada episodio posee su significado.

Figure 6-22. Left page: Joan Miró, *The Birth of the World*, 1925. Right page: Transcription of Enric Miralles' description of Miró's elements in a lecture at the AA School of Architecture on May 19th, 1998. Pages 414 and 415 of *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, edited by Carolina B. Garcia Estevez and Josep M. Rovira. Madrid: Abada Editores, 2020.

In that lecture, Miralles was impressed by how Miró's final painting has the capacity to include all the previous thousand tries.[126] This speaks to the plurality of meanings and appearances that underlie the composition and how abstraction emphasizes such a condition of multiplicity, including their ability to align with constructive logics. The lack of given value and meaning in an abstract figure allows us to exploit its multiple internal capabilities for different constructive and spatial organizational purposes. For example, in the original design of the Huesca Sports Center, the perpendicular order of the roof structure consisting of a series of changing U-shapes reappears for the service spaces in the outdoor plaza (Fig. 6-23).

More will be said about Miralles' catalog of shapes and connections in the next chapter on mereology. For now, it suffices to conclude that what makes those figures operative and versatile was their abstract quality, i.e., their capacity to be knowable by cognitive aesthetic means. So, in the first place, Miralles' grammar does not symbolize anything known: no popular, conceptual, disciplinary, or functional precedent. They are figurative, not iconic. This is particularly evident in the architect's early collaboration with Carme Pinós and his solo practice until 1994.[127] As seen in the discussion on metaphor in Section 5.2, the beginnings of such shapes can indeed come from already known referents. But in their translation into architecture, the pieces' structure loses their recognizable meaning. You do not look *through* them, you do not *re*cognize them. You look *at* them, you cognize them. Thus, Miralles' figures operate irreducibly: they point to their underlying

[126] Enric Miralles, *Alphabets and Shadows* (AA School of Architecture, London, 1998), min. 10:40, https://youtu.be/54ZvQ5xpHcA.

[127] It can be said that with the establishment of EMBT with Benedetta Tagliabue, the formal repertoire lost abstract qualities. It took on more literal connotations, and the repertoire begins to repeat itself; especially floral and plant motifs, as shown in the Scottish Parliament or the Diagonal del Mar Park.

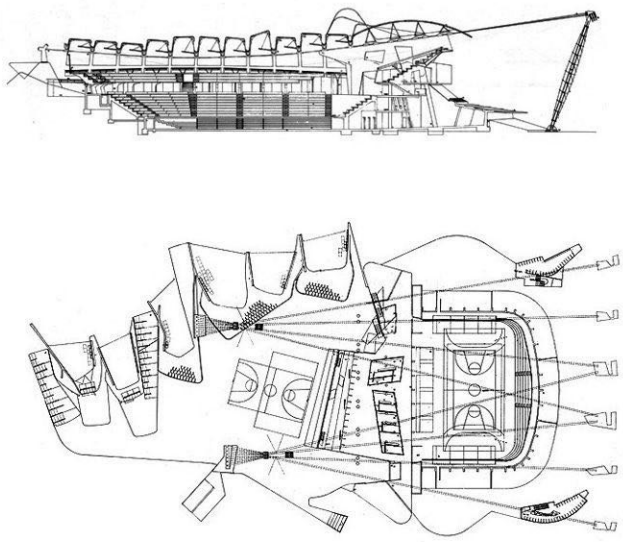


Figure 6-23. Miralles/Pinós, *Sports Center in Huesca*, preliminary design, section and floor plan, 1988-1994.

double unknown. They are abstract because of their syntacticity without being formally literal. Moreover, since those shapes have no pre-existing semantic value, their use is interchangeable within the physical realm. A figure can be used in different areas of a project without assumed restrictions of scale, function, material, and connectivity, as seen in the stadium in Huesca.

6.3. Abstract Space

As an introduction to a more particularized definition of the Abstract Space enacted here, let me recapitulate, first, why Miralles' space is abstract in the sense in which this thesis understands the term, and second, why this abstraction is a fruitful mechanism for the question of the double unknown.

As to why Miralles' space is abstract, the answer is simple: it is asemic and asyntactic. It has no pre-existing associated value, nor is it intended to end in its own presentation. His architecture cannot be read in terms of other architectures or phenomena, but on its own terms. It is for this reason that Miralles' abstract space does not symbolize or recall anything susceptible to literalization, nor even its own appearance. This lack of referentiality entails opacity. Its apprehension and interaction occur in the now. There are no prior assumptions or rational automatisms governing their apprehension.

It follows that such a cognitive resistance is productive. Because of its abstract, unknown, non-semantic nature, the openness of the space leads to an intuitive reception. Following the premises exposed in Part Two, the process of aesthetic occupation is aesthetic in two simultaneous ways. On the one hand, it unfolds knowable affordances (qualities and capacities) of the space, which are by extension of its underlying project. On the other hand, these unplanned and spontaneous experiences and performances cannot exhaust the access to the project. These knowable profiles are as inconclusive relative to the AP's wholeness as are the known and the unknowable zones (see again the "onion diagram" in Fig. 3-2). However, this inconclusiveness or irreducibility of the object brings its being (deep reality, spirit, soul, substance) to the foreground of the user's experience. As

mentioned repeatedly, this presence occurs in an intangible or, as it is called in this thesis, ineffable fashion.

Therefore, in favoring the activation of knowable actions and impressions, i.e., qualities that the user/beholder has not internalized because they are unfamiliar, aesthetic cognition takes place. Early in this chapter, it has been argued why abstract syntax withstands such interiorization or automatization better than the deformation of everyday manifestations. I suggest that repeated exposure to a defamiliarized composition—a manifestation with still recognizable precedents—favors automatic cognition more readily than an abstract arrangement. Is there any kind of surplus left when confronting Heide Hatry's flowers (Fig. 4-13) after the first time, that is, when one knows in advance that they are made of mammal parts?[128] In the same vein, I think we all agree in saying that getting used to (making transparent) architectures like Venturi's, for example—viewed as defamiliarized classical architecture—is much more instantaneous than Miralles' abstract work. If these arguments are sufficient to accept Miralles' space as abstract because of asemic and asyntatic, it seems necessary to contrast it with previous notions of abstract space.

On this ground, this section will first compare the Abstract Space defended here through Miralles with its historical understanding in modernism, in particular through Steven Peterson's concept of *Anti-Space*. Once contextualized, Abstract Space will then be delimited under its own paradigm according to three main characteristics: an abstract space that is *labyrinthine and cavernous* formed by compositional strategies of *saturation* and that includes *anchor points* for cognitive fixation.

6.3.1. Abstract Space versus Anti-space

In the article "Space and Anti-space," Steven K. Peterson confronts the spatial characteristics of pre-modern architecture and those of the Modern Movement. According to him, the former is Space, whereas the latter is Anti-space. As he remarks: "*Anti-space* is undifferentiated, formless, infinite, universal, singular, and continuous. *Space* is differentiated, formed, finite, particular, multiple, and discontinuous."[129] From this preliminary definition, Miralles' space seems to fall into the category of Space because of its singularity. Anti-space is ubiquitous; it is not placed. It is a continuum that has been encapsulated at some point. It has no form because it has not been formed. This definition ranges from the modern universal grid to the seamless topological fields of the late twentieth century and the first digital turn of the 2000s. For Peterson, Anti-space supposes the very loss of Space.[130] This means that Anti-space is antagonistic to any possible definition of a space linked to an ontology of discrete objects like OOO.

At the same time, Peterson also defines Anti-space in modernism as ambiguous and abstract; two characteristics that this thesis advocates for a differentiated, finite, and specific space, meaning Peterson's Space. More directly, the American architect states that "space is by definition neither *ineffable* nor *abstract*," when I have argued precisely the opposite.[131] Where is the misunderstanding? How can Peterson defend that abstraction is Anti-space when abstraction is at the core of Space for this thesis? How is it that "'ineffable space' […]

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[128] As a reminder, the artist plays with the beholder's doubts about the veracity of what s/he sees by offering an arrangement of mammal parts that look like flowers.
[129] Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 3.
[130] Ibid., 2.
[131] Ibid., 1.

is an Anti-space" for him, while I hold that Space is about ineffability? This is obviously due to different understandings of "abstraction" and "ineffability." While for Peterson, the abstract implies neutrality, infiniteness, and homogeneity; this thesis embraces it as difference, finiteness, and heterogeneity.

In his critique of modern Anti-space, not without reason, Peterson asserts: "The undifferentiated, uniformly-equal value of anti-space serves as the perfect equivalent of an undifferentiated society of equals."[132] Anti-space leads to the homogenization of society by forcing consensus. It entails the loss of the individual's singularity. On the contrary, when today's intellectual landscape arrives at conclusions such as Bogost's where "all things equally exist, yet they do not exist equally," equality is achieved precisely through idiosyncrasies.[133] This is where I would like to introduce abstraction as the very possibility of distinct(ive)ness.

The problem with Peterson's notion of Space is not its definition as "differentiated, formed, finite, particular, multiple, and discontinuous." The problem is anchoring this definition to a graspable human perspective. As he writes: "*Space* as opposed to *anti-space* has identity and value—it is charged with a presence. It seems to exist in itself and to have properties which are tangible: scale, proportion, shape, and size. Its configurations can be measured and its limits defined."[134] Such identity is but correlationist or subject-centered; it is reduced to our comprehension for categorization. However, when the unknown is taken as compartmentalized (discrete) and identity as *ineffable* to cognition (as this dissertation does), the finite and multifarious nature of Space becomes ontologically subjectless. Therefore, when Space overcomes the literalism of being condensed to its perceived qualities and ability to be measured, it can be experienced as Abstract Space (formed and specific). This abstract characteristic gives each time a particular indirect path to the ineffable reality of Space. Unlike Peterson's vision (of modernism, in general), the path to ineffability—no less than ineffability itself—is not universal. Each mimetic procedure—as well as each being it reaches—is different, namely, discrete.

In reference to the Five Points diagram, Peterson writes: "Le Corbusier's 'ineffable space' (intangible and inexpressible) is an Anti-space, without walls, without rooms."[135] Here I agree that the Five Points are anti-spatial in nature. They kill figural formed Space, as Anti-space is an undifferentiated continuum. However, if we accept the radical difference between Notre Dame du Haut de Ronchamp and Villa Savoye, the question of "ineffable space" cannot be applied unanimously to Le Corbusier's oeuvre. The former—like the side crypt of La Tourette, a *Fremdkörper* of the rest of the monastery—is outside the Five Points. These works are not Anti-space but follow the notion of Peterson's Space to the letter. And since they remain aesthetically "ineffable space," as Le Corbusier defended, Le Corbusier's Space is Abstract Space.

Therefore, it seems necessary to separate meanings of the ineffable. On the one hand, Peterson's idea of ineffability operates on the surface. It is relative to the subject's incapacity to measure the presented qualities of space. This ineffability derives from Le Corbusier's universality of the Five Points, from the uniformity and clinical neutrality of the qualities of Modern space. Dom-Ino House, the germ of Villa Savoye, epitomizes Anti-space as it is everywhere the same. It is formless. It is ineffable because its qualities are

[132] Ibid., 4.
[133] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 11, [emphasis removed].
[134] Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 3.
[135] Ibid., 4.

homogeneous. It does not produce any register of difference in the observer. On the other hand, the notion that Le Corbusier espouses of "ineffable space"—or at least this is how this thesis interprets it from him—is not superficial but profound. It is ineffable, not because it is qualitatively continuous and undifferentiated (without a difference). Instead, it is ineffable because it is too deep beyond its frontal qualities. In the article "Ineffable Space" (1945), Le Corbusier shows his frequently ignored formalist and spiritual DNA, where he declares an interest in the "fourth dimension" of architecture, sculpture, and painting. The following passage from that article is a verbatim summary of this dissertation's plea for deep cognition (Chapter 5):

> The fourth dimension is the moment of limitless escape evoked by an exceptionally just consonance of the plastic means employed.
>
> It is not the effect of the subject chosen; it is a victory of proportion in everything—the anatomy of the work as well as the carrying out of the artist's intentions whether consciously controlled or not. Achieved or unachieved, these intentions are always existent and are rooted in intuition, that miraculous catalyst of acquired, assimilated, even forgotten wisdom. In a complete and successful work there are hidden masses of implications, a veritable world which reveals itself to those whom it may concern, which means: to those who deserve it.
>
> Then a boundless depth opens up, effaces the walls, drives away contingent presences, *accomplishes the miracle of ineffable space*.
>
> I am not conscious of the miracle of faith, but I often live that of ineffable space, the consummation of plastic emotion.[136]

In this light, Le Corbusier's "ineffable space" has more to do with Kandinsky's "spiritual reality" than with the indifference of "[t]he undifferentiated, uniformly-equal value of *anti-space*" for which Petersons argues.[137] If the Ville Savoye, the Unité d'Habitation, and its all-encompassing scheme of the Dom-Ino House are epitomes of modern space, I agree with Peterson's idea about the "intangible and inexpressive" *qualities* of Anti-space.[138] However, we cannot deny the ineffability of Ronchamp as something deeper than its material attributes precisely because of its formal expressiveness and plasticity. Therefore, unlike Peterson's critique, the abstract is figurative—not symbolically, but syntactically, as the following section will detail. On this basis, the Abstract Space advocated here conflates the defined, formed, differentiated, composed, articulated, local, placed, and discrete *nature* of Peterson's Space with the ambiguous, indeterminate, open, and ineffable *effect* of his Anti-Space. Yet this effect is not one of indifference, but of opacity and mystery.

Under this umbrella, Miralles' space is clearly closer to Le Corbusier's one-off formed Ronchamp Chapel than to the repeatability *ad infinitum* of the unformed Dom-Ino House.[139] The former is a fundamentally prehistoric space that invokes our innermost

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[136] Le Corbusier, "Ineffable Space (inside New World of Space)," ed. Cyril Connolly, *Horizon* 106 (1948): 280.

[137] It must be noted that in the article "Ineffable Space," Le Corbusier ends by listing his Five Points as the basis for such an indescribable space. For this reason, I agree with Peterson on the failure of Le Corbusier's hypothesis that such design prescriptions could lead to his idea of "ineffable space." Conversely, I disagree with Peterson's reduction of "ineffable space" to such superficial qualities. Such a space is one of profundity.

[138] Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 4.

[139] Le Corbusier's influence on Miralles is manifest. This is reflected in many studies, and explicit statements by Miralles himself. See Faura Coll, "Cap i Pota: Disolución de La Identidad En Miralles y Pinós"; William

intuitions and irrationality, or Intuitive Reason, as Malevich called it. What is Le Corbusier's Open Hand Monument if not a regression to the origins of humanity? In the sense of Gauguin, Basquiat, or McQueen, Le Corbusier's work outside the five points and that of Miralles have primitivist and savage pretensions.

On this basis, three aspects, which will be expanded in the following subsections, define the notion of Abstract Space in this thesis. First, the *labyrinthine* and *cavernous* qualities converge the formed, defined, and articulated characteristics of Peterson's Space with the prehistoric, spiritual, and visceral engagement with the ineffable and the multiple. Second, *saturation* as a compositional approach enables playing with the tension of various spatial resolutions as a technique of differentiation. Saturation is understood here as an amplifier of the labyrinthine and the cavernous. Its multiplicity is both compositional and interpretative. It is literally saturated with elements (like a *Wunderkammer*), and cognitively saturated with affordances. Third, against the possibility of too much-distanced abstraction or white noise, *anchor points* are design strategies to favor the cognitive attachment of the user.

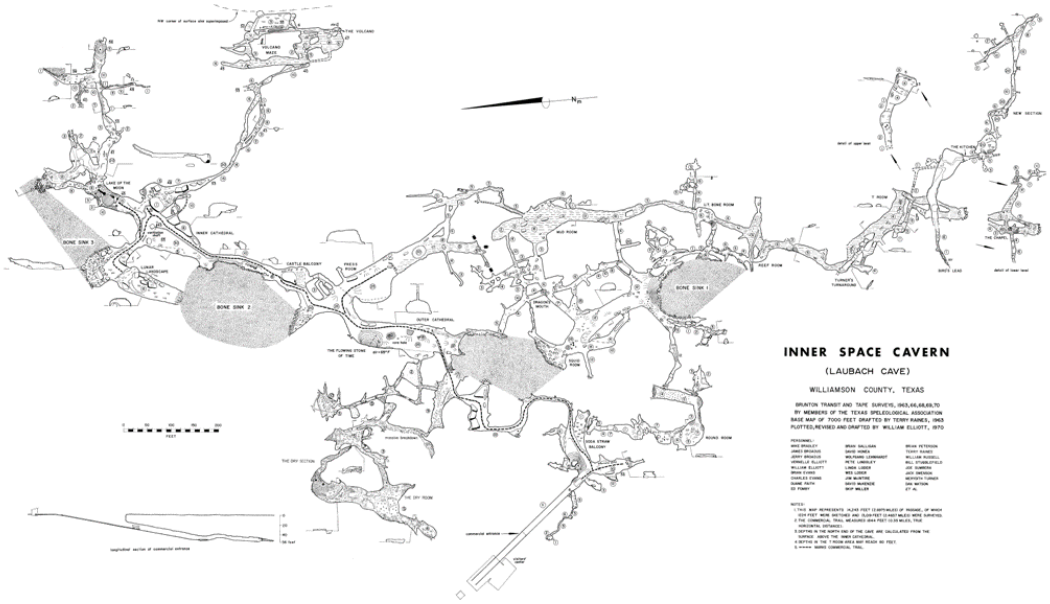


Figure 6-24. Inner Space Cavern, Georgetown, TX, planimetry.

J. R. Curtis, "Mental Maps and Social Landscapes: The Architecture of Miralles and Pinós," *El Croquis* 30+49-50 (1991): 8–23; Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 6:17-22.

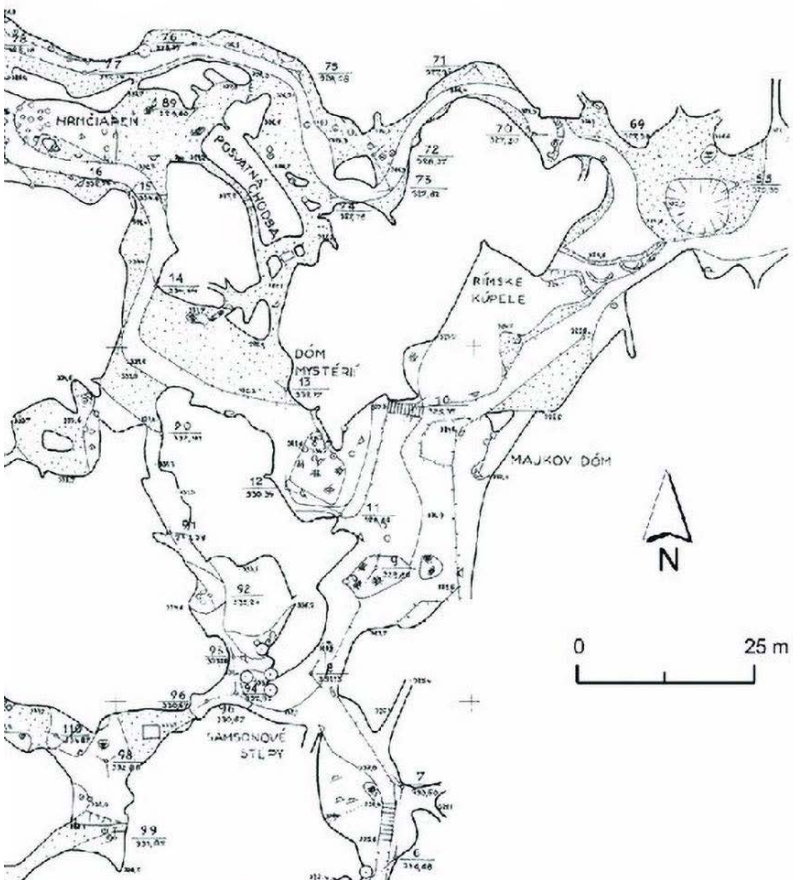


Figure 6-25. Domica Cave, Kečovo, Slovakia, planimetry.

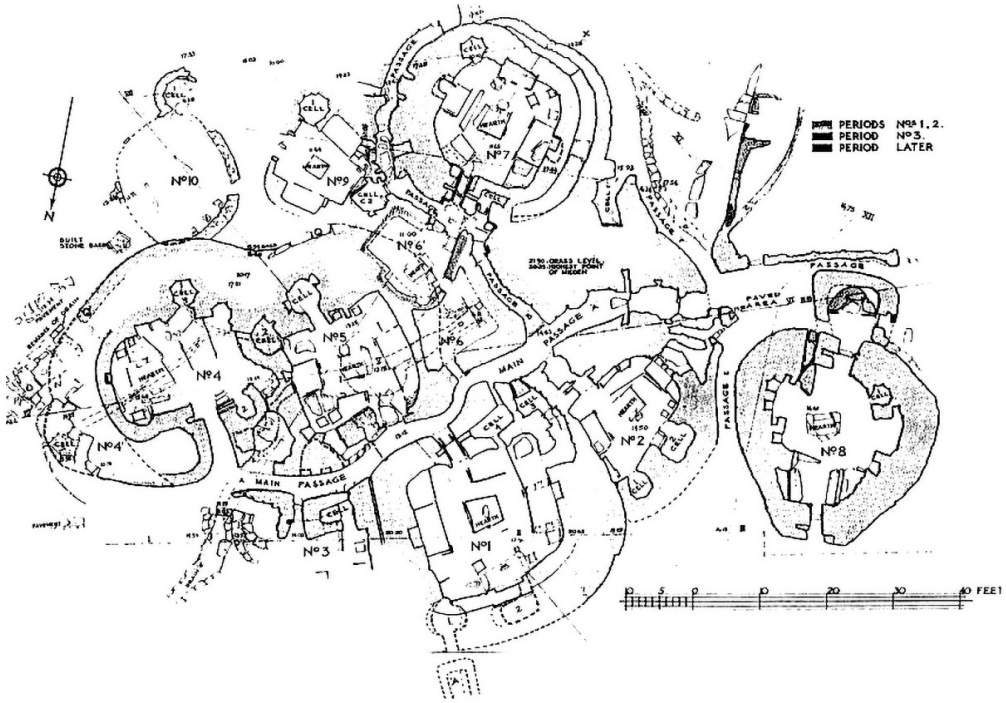


Figure 6-26. Skara Brae Prehistoric Village, occupied from 3.180 BC to 2.500 BC, Sandwick, Scotland, planimetry.

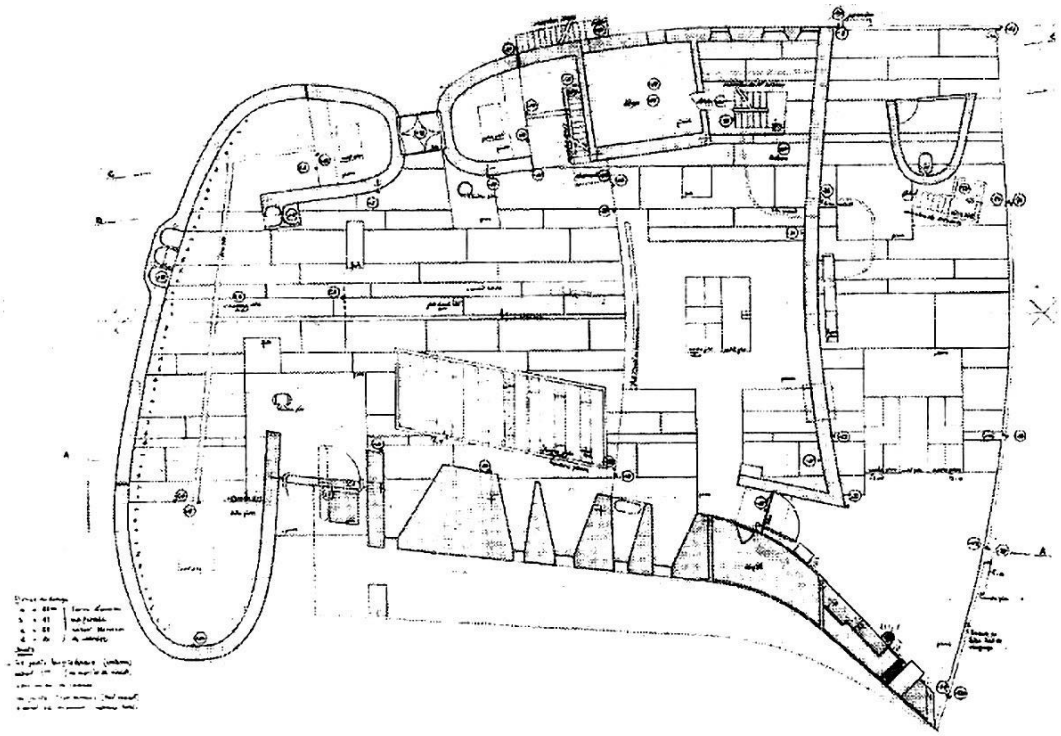


Figure 6-27. Le Corbusier, *Notre Dame du Haut de Ronchamp*, ground floor, 1950-1955.

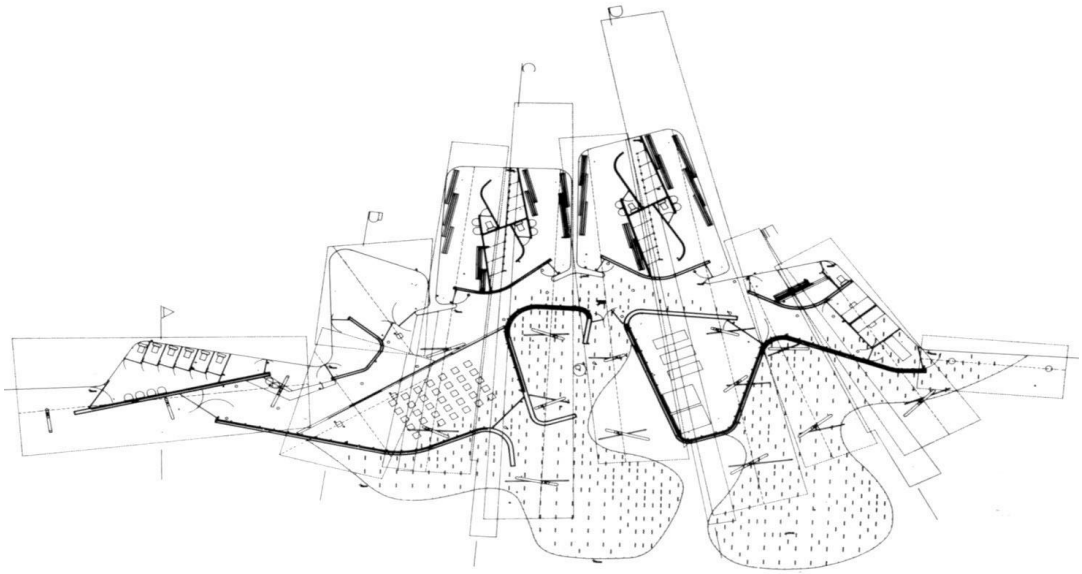


Figure 6-28. Miralles/Pinos, *Olympic Archery Range*, training building, Barcelona, ground floor, 1989-1991.

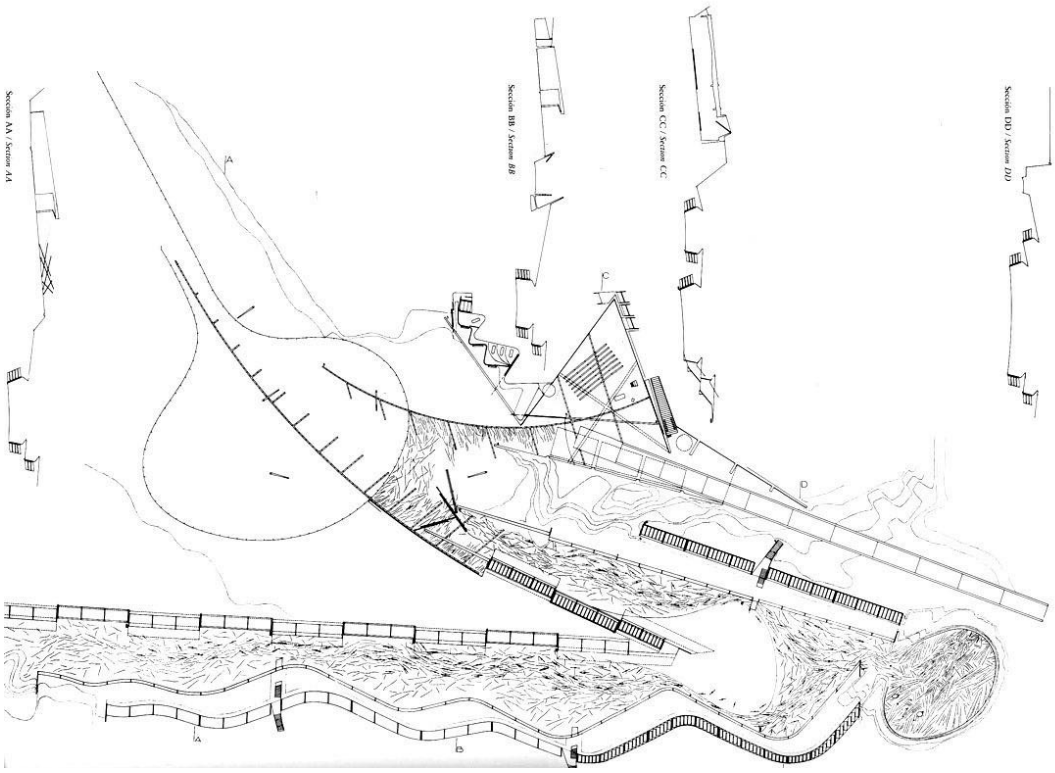


Figure 6-29. Miralles/Pinós, *Igualada Cemetery Park*, 1985-1991.

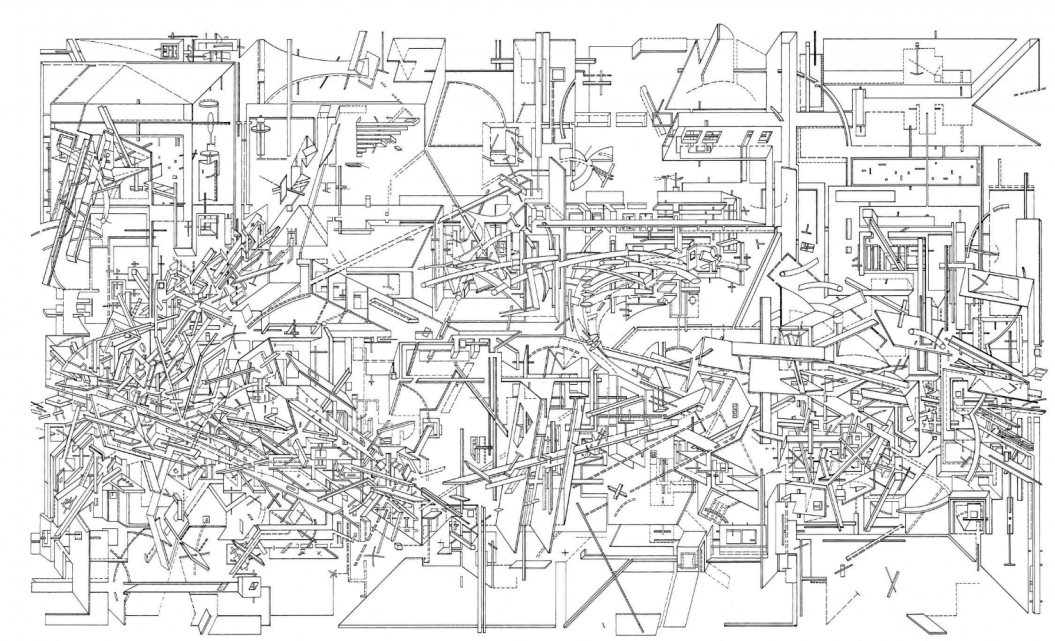


Figure 6-30. Daniel Libeskind, *Micromegas*, 1979-1983.

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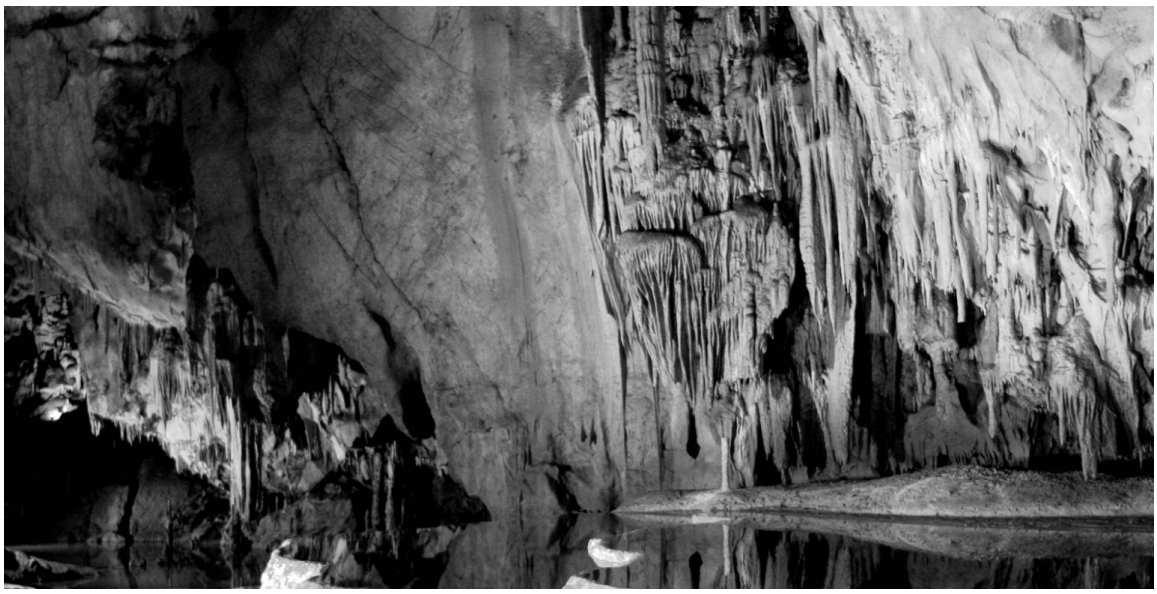


Figure 6-31. Domica Cave, Kečovo, Slovakia, interior view.

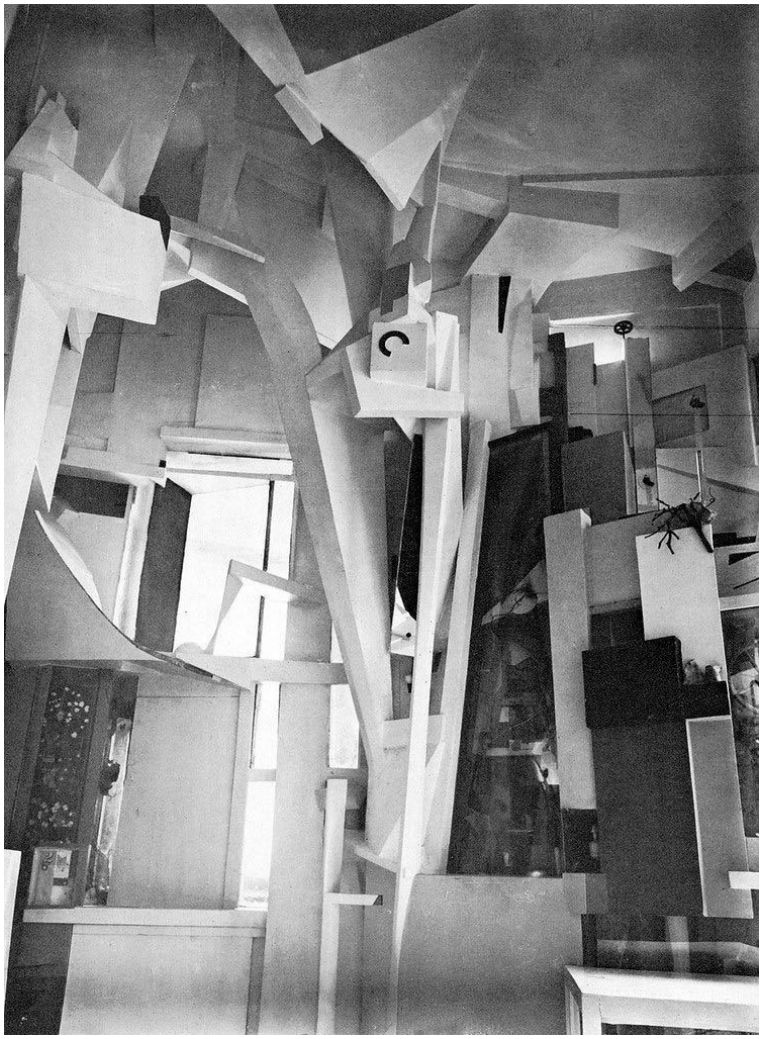


Figure 6-32. Kurz Schwitters, *Merzbau or The Cathedral of Erotic Misery*, Hannover, sometime between 1919 and 1923 to 1937.



Figure 6-33. Kurz Schwitters, *Merzbarn*, Langdale, UK, 1944-1948.



Figure 6-34. Kilclooney Dolmen, Donegal, Ireland.

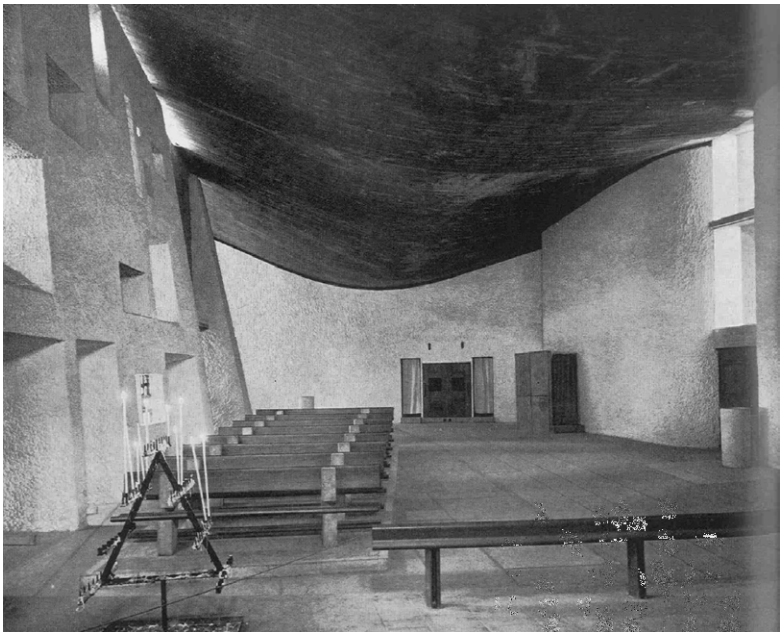


Figure 6-35. Le Corbusier, *Notre Dame du Haut de Ronchamp*, interior view, 1950-1955.

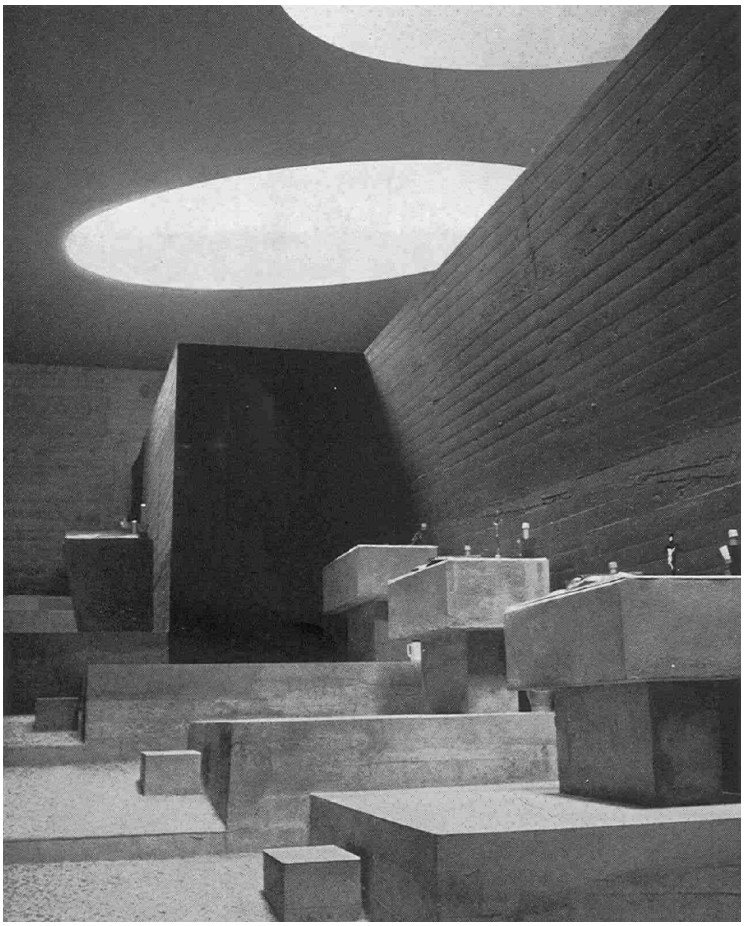


Figure 6-36. Le Corbusier, *Sainte-Marie de la Tourette*, Éveux, side crypt, 1957-1960.



Figure 6-37. Fritz Wotruba, Kirche Zur Heiligsten Dreifaltigkeit (Wotrubakirche), interior, 1957-1960.

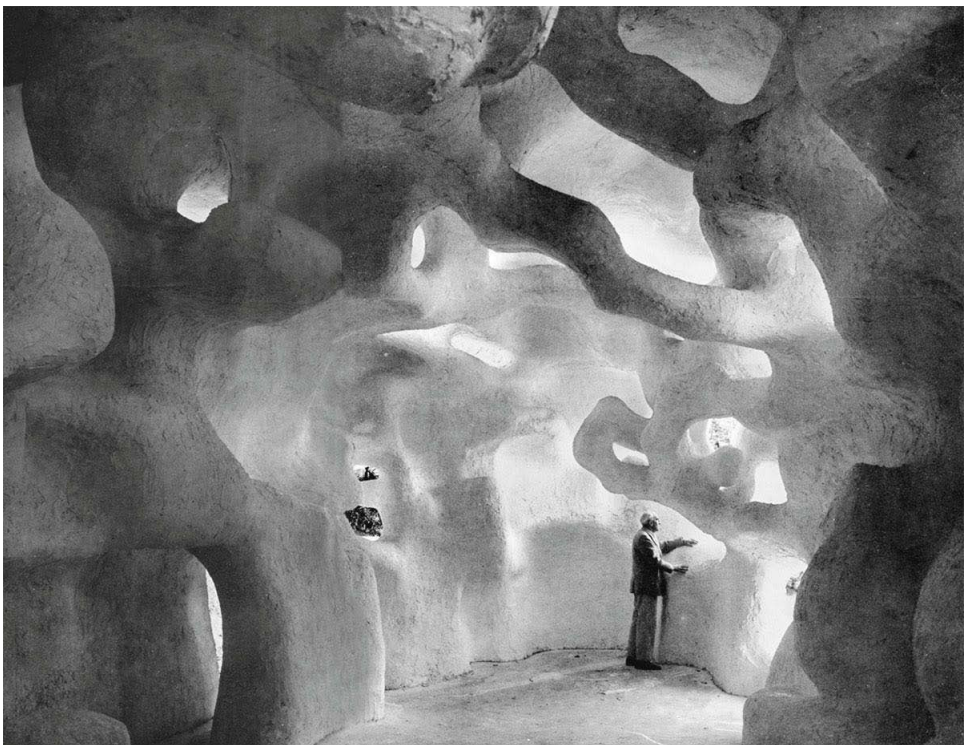


Figure 6-38. André Bloc, *Sculpture Habitacle I*, interior, 1962.

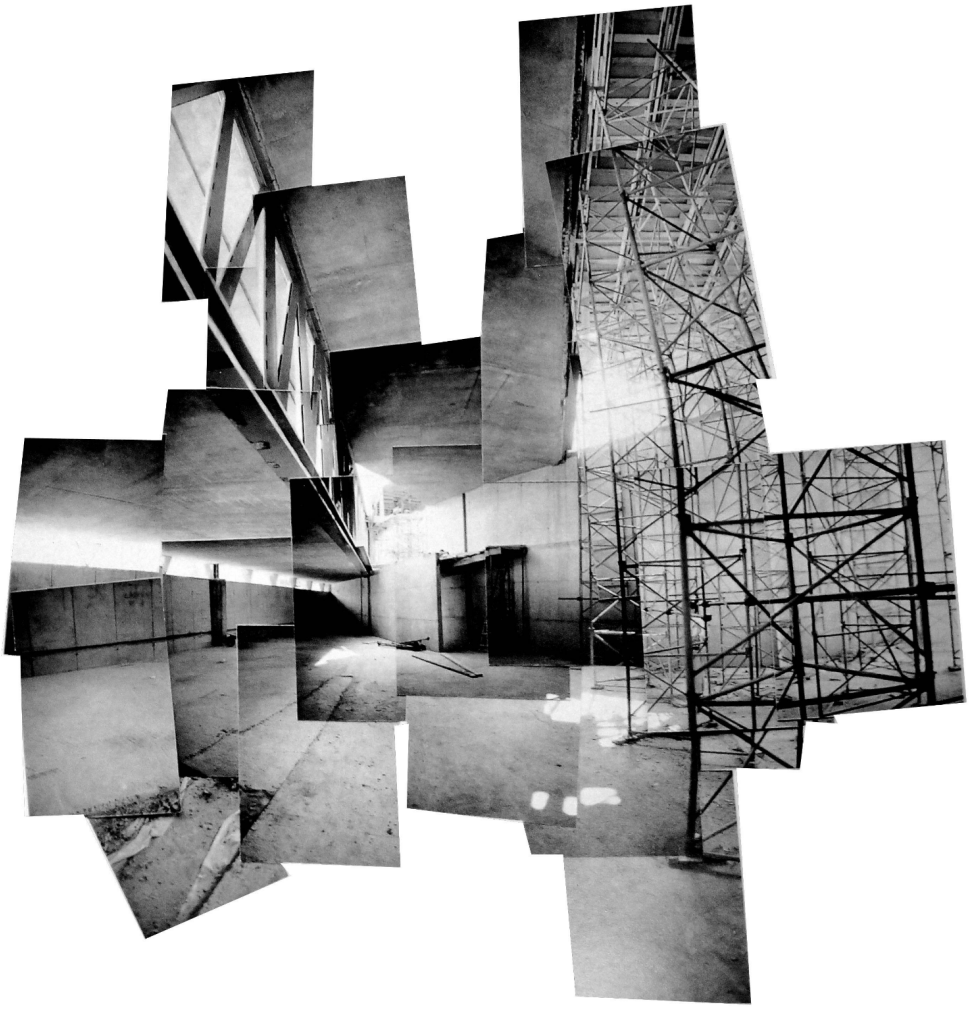


Figure 6-39. Miralles/Pinós, *Hostalets Civic Center*, interior collage, 1986 - 1992.



Figure 6-40. Miralles/Pinós, *Igualada Cemetery Park*, chapel, 1985-1991.



Figure 6-41. Christian Kerez, *Incidental Space*, Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, 2016.



Figure 6-42. Ensamble Studio, *Ca'n Terra*, Menorca, 2018.

6.3.2. The labyrinthine and the cavernous

In the article "Requiem of the Modern Plan," Peter Buchanan remarks on the occultism and references to the archaic in the Ronchamp Chapel (Figs. 6-27 and 6-35). As he writes: "The Ronchamp Chapel by Le Corbusier draws on prehistoric precedent such as dolmens and is steeped in astrological and other occult symbolism."[140] From a cognitive standpoint, we should think of this return to the primitive as a design attempt to recover the ineffable and the spiritual, no less than the multiple and the open. The cavernous and the labyrinthine are features of the prehistoric space, and they re-appear as key qualities of the Abstract Space advocated in this thesis. In this sense, the use made here of these qualities is as adjectives and not as nouns. The aim is to avoid speaking of the cave and the labyrinth from a typological basis or a superficial material angle. If so, their possibilities of expression and reception would never escape the iconic image we already have of the labyrinth and the cave. For example, in the reading of the Domica Cave (Fig. 6-31), we must look at the cavernous, not the cave.

On this basis, linking Miralles' Abstract Space with the labyrinthine is a smooth task. It is so because, first, he himself already made the connection explicit, and second, because the labyrinthine quality of his space is clearly not semantic and symbolic. It does not derive from the literal reference of the image we have of labyrinths, but the labyrinthine is a quality of the space itself. About the first, there are numerous occasions in which Miralles used the attribute of the labyrinthine to describe his work and work process.[141] More fundamentally, he did not understand "space" as "flow," but "space" as "labyrinth," as he commented once in an interview.[142] Furthermore, in what may be his most explicit definition of the term in a review of Carl Petersen's Faaborg Museum, he remarked: "In the Faaborg Museum there is a clear definition of what I would call a Labyrinth. And inside the labyrinth, the steps are ritualized. The main direction is constantly changing. [...] A whole game of successive trickery is created."[143] This character of the ritualized connects with what in Section 4.2 has been called *intuitive ritual*: the series of innate actions that constitute a protocol of a user or architect to access the ineffable indirectly (Figs. 6-43 and 6-44). In this sense, the labyrinthine always had a playful tone for Miralles, which, as in a game, makes the user get involved.[144] Due to its abstract formulation, the labyrinthine space is a challenge. It is never familiar. You never move and act there automatically. It is about discovery. The labyrinthine is always opaque. It is a complex puzzle that requires cognitive effort. It is its cognitive intricacy derived from its intricate morphology that reveals the most captivating feature of the labyrinth.

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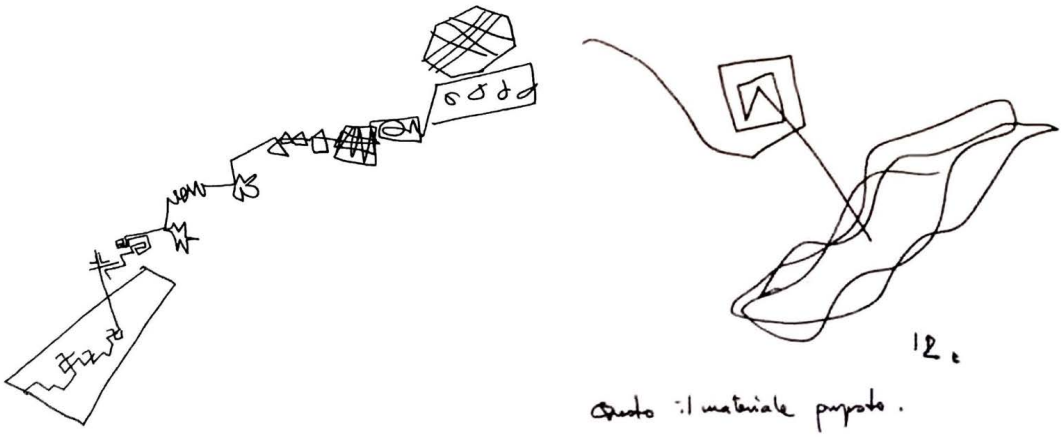
[140] Peter Buchanan, "Requiem for the Modern Plan," in *Conversations and Allusions: Enric Miralles*, ed. Catherine Spellman (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019), 86. For Buchanan, modernism also has at its core an avowedly anti-modern heart. Le Corbusier's simultaneous handling, no less than Kandinsky's in painting, of the rationally scientific and the mystical is illustrative of this duality in the first half of the twentieth century.

[141] In the lecture entitled "Acceder" (1993), it is where Miralles more stressed his projects from the perspective of the labyrinthine. See Miralles, "Acceder."

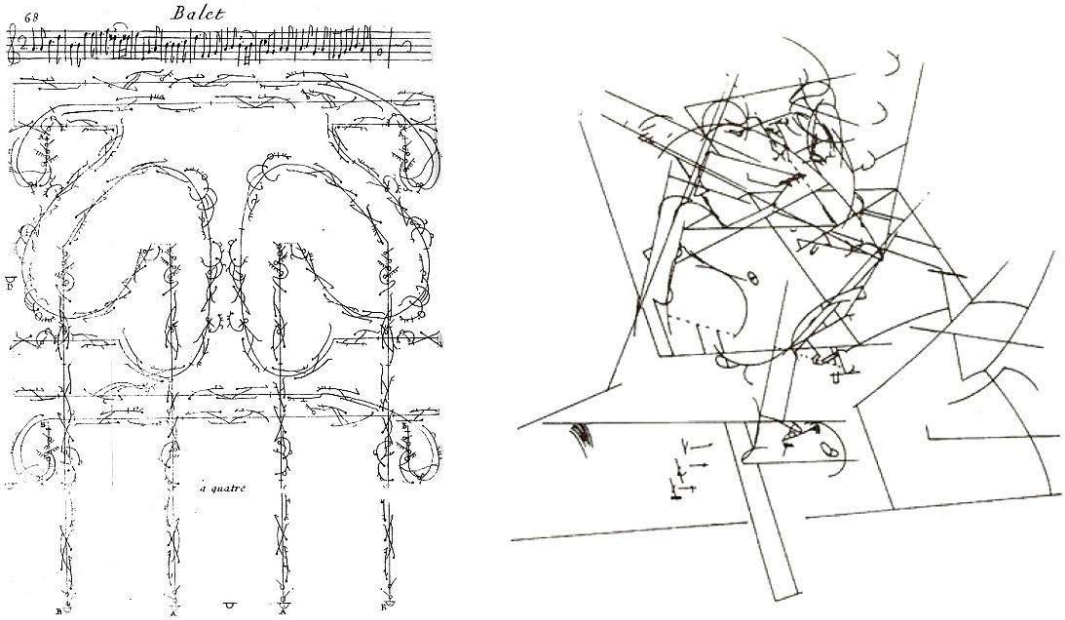
[142] Miralles, "Interview to Enric Miralles, Cronotopias."

[143] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 180, [author's tranlation].

[144] For the rehabilitation of the port of Bremerhaven, the project included a specific area called "The Labyrinth," about which Miralles said: "We imagine the labyrinth as an undulating landscape on the platform of the old harbor. Whoever wants to reach the city will have to find the way. The geometry and relief of this design are reminiscent of an archaic urban development and open up paths to walk on without knowing where they lead. This part of our project is open to constant new interpretations. Citizens will see the labyrinth as a game." Ibid., 189-190, [author's translation].



Figures 6-43 and 6-44. Left: Enric Miralles, graphic description of the labyrinthine circulation of Faaborg Museum, 1993; right: EMBT, *San Michelle Cementery*, Venice, 1998.



Figures 6-45 and 6-46. Comparison of an automated, prescriptive versus a labyrinthine, improvisational ballet performance. Left: Raoul-Auger Feuillet, from *Chorégraphie*, 1700; right: William Forsythe, sketch for *The Loss of Small Detail*, 1991.

The second point as to why Miralles' space is labyrinthine relates to Jan Pieper's emphasis on the condition of the labyrinthine as an architectural attribute rather than iconography. In his book *Das Labyrinthische*, the architectural historian writes:

> The labyrinthine is an architectural quality. […] The labyrinthine can only exist in the architecturally specific categories of space, place, and path; it transports its associations, meanings, and contents via spatial phenomena, i.e., via the architectural experience, via holistic, physical, haptic experiences, and never only via the merely visually accessible image of the labyrinth cipher.[145]

From here, it follows that the labyrinthine clearly belongs to Space rather than to modern Anti-space, using Peterson's categories. And because it is unknown, asemic, and asyntactic,

[145] Jan Pieper, *Das Labyrinthische: Über Die Idee Des Verborgenen, Rätselhaften, Schwierigen in Der Geschichte Der Architektur* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2009), 38, [author's translation].

the labyrinthine is Abstract Space. It is situated, finite, unique, articulated, ordered, and, at the same time, also open, multiple, differentiated. For example, Miralles/Pinós' Olympic Archery Range—the training building still in place—is a small service facility with changing rooms, storage rooms, a meeting room, and a cafeteria to support the nearby sports activities (Fig. 6-28). The simplicity of the program does not diminish the excitement of the spatial composition. Functionally, the building is a brittle spine full of recesses, twists, and discontinuous rhythms that give interior access to the different rooms or form spaces in themselves. Meandering walls insinuate interior and exterior spaces while providing entrances and exits to the spine. This spatial order moves away from classical axiality, although without ending in the chaotic. It is a *labyrinthine order*, an order in itself that unfolds intricately, as has just been remarked. About the difference between the labyrinthine and the chaotic, Pieper remarks:

> 'Labyrinthine' and 'chaotic', two terms that are so often confused in colloquial language, are not only conceptually far apart, they are virtually mutually exclusive. […] The labyrinthine as an ordering category of architectural space is, in a sense, the inversion of axiality and its derivatives. It is thus not in absolute opposition to classical architectural artifice; rather, in labyrinthine and axial spatial order, we recognize two complementary forms of expression of the elementary effort to establish spatial order and legibility.[146]

In the Olympic Archery Range training building, a roof with a completely different order is superimposed over the labyrinthine floor plan of curved walls. This tension reinforces the compositional abstraction by differentiation of the design. A series of fragmented planes, covering the interior and semi-interior spaces, extend in different orientations and lengths along a changing section of the terrain. This elongation blurs figuratively the borders of where the building begins and ends.

For its part, the *cavernous* is not exclusive to a stony appearance, grotto architecture, or tectonic configurations. It can also unfold in Anti-space. In other words, cave-ness can easily be found in expected architectures, such as in Gothic or Brutalist spaces—e.g., Paul Virilio's archaeological bunkers—but also in unsuspected places. For reasons that will become apparent in a moment, projects like Mies' Barcelona Pavilion (1929) or the upper floor of his Neue Nationalgalerie (1968) might be some of the most cavernous spaces ever.

Going back to prehistoric times, cave dwellers *found*, rather than constructed, subterranean spaces for living in. These natural cavities were not purposely designed to satisfy a predetermined human demand. They were found spaces for free and open occupation. When the cavernous maintains its abstractness, it does not meet any expectations. Félix Ruiz de la Puerta notes on the spatial idea of the cave that "is a place similar to a nebulous landscape."[147] Here the architect does not refer to a morphological fuzziness, as might happen in the case of continuous digital architecture, but to a cognitive fogginess. He continues: "it is a blurred architecture, the space is not zoned and what a person does in a hollow at a certain moment, defines it."[148]

In this sense, the natural cave is a revealing example of the gap between design and use, as advocated in Section 5.3: the design logic of the cave formation is independent of the cognizer's performances in it. In this context, the cavernous always refers to the

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[146] Ibid., 44, [author's translation].
[147] Félix Ruiz de la Puerta, *Principios de Arquitectura: El Bosque, El Desierto, La Cueva* (Madrid: Ediciones Asimétricas, 2014), 167, [author's translation].
[148] Ibid. [author's translation].

prehistoric act of occupying a found space. This occupation is a confrontation with the spatial structure rather than immediate assimilation and smooth consumption of it. Therefore, the cavernous space becomes an opaque-productive one: its cognition constitutes an adventure. This mode of access can only be aesthetic in nature, which means that it requires examination, interaction, interpretation, adaptation, but without completely fulfilling the nature of the space and its underlying project. Hence, the cavernous is a space that simultaneously comforts and discomforts.[149] In short, it is a space that induces exploration in its mode of occupation. This disruption of the way in which normative spaces are performed and apprehended is the aesthetic effect of abstraction. "It abstracts the assumed background," Young would say. Let me repeat an excerpt from Eisenman's House III, already mentioned in Section 4.2, which is how we can imagine the Paleolithic dweller dealing with the cave space:

> Upon entering 'his [or her] house', the owner is an intruder attempting to regain possession and consequently destroying, albeit in a positive sense, the initial unity and completeness of the architectural structure itself. […] It is not so much the completeness of the formal structure as presented by the architect as it is the environment's absence of traditional meaning that triggers this sense of exclusion, which then works dialectically to stimulate the owner to a new kind of participation in the house."[150]

In this light, Eisenman's experimental houses, no less than many of Mies' projects, are reminiscent of Atapuerca, strange as it may sound. The occupation of the cavernous space is not prescriptive according to cultural guidelines. House III, the Barcelona Pavilion, and a cave do propose an unequivocal performance. It is here that I suggest situating Miralles' space as well. It entails a primitive, visceral mode of space participation. It calls for the use of the person's inner volition and intuition. As Worringer notes: "it is as though the instinct for the 'thing in itself' were most powerful in primitive man."[151] The cavernous space is primitive because it is intrinsically emotional. In his comments on the cave space, Ruiz de la Puerta writes: "Society has achieved a high technological and social development, but as far as the emotional world is concerned, humans have not changed much."[152]

To better understand the cavernous, it is necessary to distinguish between the *occupied space* and the *inhabited space*. The cavernous is only susceptible to occupation, never to habitation. It cannot generate a *habit* of use and reception. In its psychological register, "habit" is the automatic reaction to a concrete situation. To inhabit always denotes habit; it is an internalized behavior. In inhabitation, the spatial experience is a shortcut with no room for surprise—perception is automatic, as Shklovsky would say. The habitual entails the regular, the usual, the familiar. Habitation is a mechanical mode of living. On the contrary, the cavernous requires an aesthetic mode of living, which generates an effect of abstraction in the use of the space. Occupation is always prior to habitation. The cavernous space is first occupied before being inhabited, before being habituated. When the cavernous is inhabited, when it becomes automated, it ceases to be cavernous. The same happens with labyrinthine space: a known labyrinth is not labyrinthine.

In this light, the cavernous quality can appear both in Space (Miralles, Eisenman)

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[149] In Latin, *confortare* means "to strengthen much." It derives from *com-*, an intensive prefix, and *fortis* "strong." In our case, then, "to discomfort" means to weaken a standard situation and its opposite, "to comfort," to strengthen a new one.

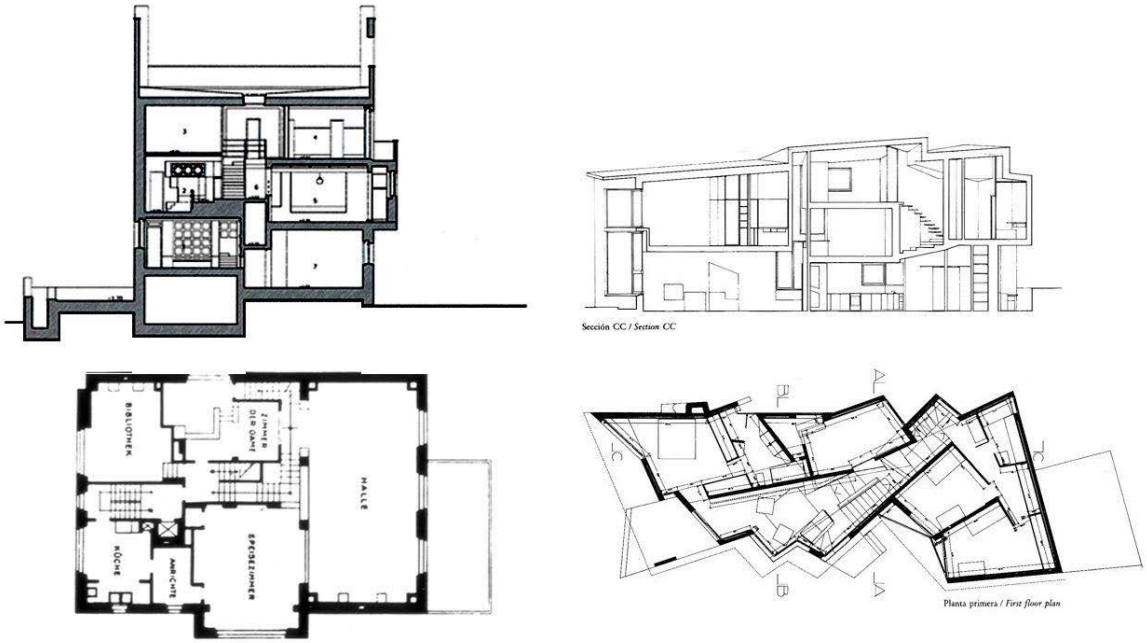
[150] Eisenman Architects, "House III 1971."

[151] Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 18.

[152] Ruiz de la Puerta, *Principios de Arquitectura: El Bosque, El Desierto, La Cueva*, 145, [author's translation].

and in Anti-space (Mies). However, since we are dealing here with Space, or more precisely with Abstract Space in its formed, specific register, it seems necessary to trace some principles of the cavernous in this direction. For this purpose, pairing it with the labyrinthine will provide a complete picture of Abstract Space.

If intricacy has been identified as a characteristic of the labyrinthine, *heterogeneity*, in addition to the aforementioned non-habitual, can be attributed to the cavernous space. It entails a condition of spatial contrasts, diversity, and variety. No two caves are alike, and no two spaces within a cave are identical (see Figs. 6-24 and 6-25). In this sense, unlike the homogeneous and continuous Anti-space, the cavernous Space is typically labyrinthine in nature. From their complex interior disposition, Müller House (1930) by Adolf Loos and Garau Agusti House (1993) by Miralles/Pinós can be argued to be labyrinthine and half-way cavernous designs (Figs. 6-47 and 6-48). Both offer an intricate gestalt of differentiated spaces that follow similar design mechanisms: split levels, lowered ceilings in recessed areas, non-axiality, multiple turns, rooms of different dimensions, diagonal views between them.[153]



Figures 6-47 and 6-48. Left: Adolf Loos, *Müller House*, Prague, 1930. Right: Miralles/Pinós, *Garau Agusti House*, Bellaterra, 1988-1993.

However, I say that the cavernous qualities of these buildings unfold "halfway" because, although they fulfill the question of spatial contrast, they fail in terms of occupation. More aptly, these houses move in a swampy terrain between inhabiting and occupying, a reading that resembles Beatriz Colomina's observations of Loos' houses. On the one hand, in a vision perfectly reminiscent of Eisenman's description of House III, the architectural historian and theorist remarks: "The subject of Loos's houses is a stranger, an intruder in his own space."[154] Her argument is that the user is at a threshold between controlling the house and being controlled by it. On the other hand, Loos' houses impose

[153] For a comprehensive vision of Loos' notion of *Raumplan* and its application see Johan van de Beek, "Adolf Loos - Patterns of Town Houses," in *Raumplan versus Plan Libre*, ed. Max Risselada (Delft: Delft University Press, 1988), 27–46.

[154] Beatriz Colomina, "Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interiors of Adolf Loos," *AA Files*, no. 20 (1990): 13.

habits of living within their labyrinthine order. In the Müller House, there is a clinical and rigid choreography of the performances of the spaces, which is at odds with the free occupation promoted by its labyrinthine order. Each space knows how it is to be used and by whom. The distribution of the spaces responds to modern standardized premises: private rooms on the upper floor, public rooms on the main floor, and services in the basement. The users are certainly prisoners of Loos' instructions for living, which at the same time respond to the social models of the time. The most fragrant and hypocritical is the small sliding window through which the user of the "Ladies' Lounge" can eavesdrop on the discussions of the gentlemen in the "Living Room." It is an explicit design feature that, condescendingly prepared by the architect, simulates in the user a rupture of the model that paradoxically imposes it—hence the hypocrisy. Although, in essence, it only reinforces it.

Less obvious but similarly affected (or more aptly, infected) the Miralles/Pinós house suffers partially from similar *mechanical* design biases—let me say, like the great majority of buildings.[155] Then, to fully embrace the labyrinthine and cavernous propositions of the Abstract Space here elaborated, the already achieved spatial complexities and diversity of these houses should have been freed from their prescriptive performances. Despite its labyrinthine organization, any of us entering the house for the first time will immediately recognize where and how to sleep, relax, eat, etc. In this sense, the ambiguity of the exterior spaces produced by the zig-zag wall of the Garau Agusti House is certainly more cavernous than its pre-programmed interior.

In this context, we can briefly return to Mies' buildings and argue that they are cavernous, but within the sphere of anti-space rather than space. They follow Peterson's definition of anti-space by being neutral, undifferentiated, and formless. But they are cavernous in inducing a primitive and intuitive mode of occupancy.

Lastly, I would like to synthesize what is—for this thesis—the paradigm of Abstract Space from a human performative point of view: the *children's playground* (Figs. 6-49, 6-50, and 6-51). Especially indoor parks (simply because they tend to be larger and have a greater abundance of differentiated features than outdoor ones), the playground is typically a heterogeneous structure of interconnected spaces of various scales, morphologies, and materials, including arrangements of spaces within spaces.[156] Its design already proposes a variety of actions but, above all, it allows unplanned behaviors emphasized by its diversity and saturated configuration. For example, when focused on circulation, users never move in a continuous rhythm, but in a labyrinthine, interrupted way within the structure: sometimes through stairs and ramps, sometimes through slides, poles, and nets, sometimes in ways in which we wonder "how did that child get there?" All this occuring within the same spatial structure. In its cavernous registration, the spaces of the playground are widened and compressed with no dedicated use other than to be temporarily occupied. As an epitome of Abstract Space, the playground is never occupied in the same manner by two users or by the same user at different times.

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[155] Here I use the term "mechanical" in the sense of Christopher Alexander. The mechanist-rationalist picture of the world is for him that order which confuses our access to things (method) with the nature of things (deep order), "as if everything really *were* a machine." See Christopher Alexander, *The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and The Nature of the Universe*, vol. 1 The Phenomenon of Life (Berkeley, CA: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2002), 15–21.

[156] In the context of playgrounds linked to the politics of child welfare, which emphasized the sense of free and intuitive use, the work of Lady Allen of Hurtwood developed in postwar Britain is seminal. For example, see Lady Allen of Hurtwood, *Planning for Play* (Thames and Hudson, 1968).

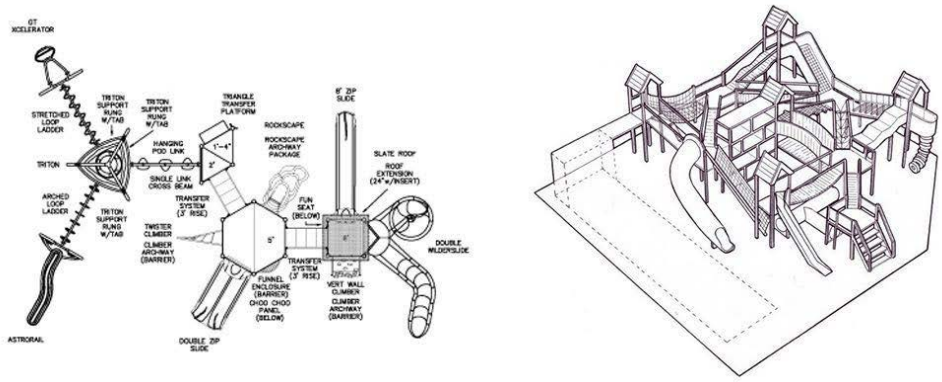


Figure 6-49. Two outdoor playground layouts.



Figure 6-50. Funtropolis, indoor playground, Fabreville, Canada.



Figure 6-51. Egon Møller-Nielsen, *Tufsen*, Stockholm, 1949.

6.3.3. Saturation

Perhaps the first clarification is why saturation is a key feature for the Abstract Space defended here. When discussing compositional density in quantitative terms, i.e., the number of elements that comprise an abstract piece of architecture or art, there are usually two polar approaches: the minimal and the saturated, or transposed to twentieth century arts, Minimalism versus Abstract Expressionism. Both approaches are perfectly capable of embracing mechanisms of abstraction for the purposes of the double unknown, although through opposite cognitive processes. In a broad definition, the minimal manifestation offers a reduced set of physical qualities. The user/beholder is forced to complete the physical expression mentally—extending lines, closing figures, connecting pieces, etc. The cognizer's subjective contribution is made by addition. As a reminder, these additions that are already present in the work—only in this way can an impression of the composition be formed. In contrast, the saturated manifestation defies automatic perception by offering an excessive amount of data. Faced with such an overwhelming expression, the user/beholder can first, as Wölfflin reminds us with respect to the Baroque, have a registration of the whole composition, and second, on closer inspection, intuitively select the fragments with which the cognitive apparatus engages at a time.[157] After that, the absorption of the rest of the piece may be gradual. The cognizer's subjective contribution is made by selection or filtering.

Apart from this difference in the way an impression is actualized, both mechanisms share individuality and irreducibility. In both the minimal and the saturated expression, if they are truly abstract, each person would complete or filter, respectively, the composition on individual terms—each of them already contemplated within the triggering capacities of the manifestation, as discussed in Part Two. Moreover, the underlying being and its qualitative multiplicity are irreducible to the displayed attributes: one because they are too little, the other because the presented qualities are too much. In short, both the abstract minimal and the abstract saturated are opaque-productive expressions. Their cognition is not literal and, therefore, entails deep receptions and open individual impressions/performances.

Within this framework, the reasons for championing the saturated over the minimal composition in this thesis are, first, Miralles' design agenda, which as guidance of the present design theory, clearly tends toward the former (see again EMBT's *Parc dels Colors* in Fig. 6-19), and second, contemporary technological means of production and consumption favors the excessive over the frugal. Stated differently, digital computing in architecture enables the handling and production of data and the relationship between data sets beyond human capability. Therefore, it is a matter of both quantity and complexity between quanta that comprise a space. Digital tools today provide the ability to continue the history of saturation as a cultural practice that finds its immediate precursors in Baroque and Abstract Expressionism. And more than ever, computer-aided design allows for high-density spatial possibilities and control over them in relation to a more attainable human labor economy that was difficult to imagine in the pre-digital era. Because of that, it seems necessary to go beyond Miralles when speaking of digital saturation, as he was a pre-digital architect.[158] Thus, to understand the Saturated Abstract Space within the contemporary

[157] Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, chap. 5.

[158] As Buchanan and Díaz Alonso have argued, and although Miralles laid a fruitful foundation for saturation design, the Spanish architect closed pre-computer modernism by raising the art of drawing to its zenith, but without embracing the digital discourse. Buchanan calls Miralles' revitalization of modern architecture a

cultural and technological condition, we must appeal to a mixture of past and present examples to propel Miralles' space.

On this basis, the art movements of saturation, such as Baroque and Abstract Expressionism, find an ideological continuity in some current architectural discourses characterized by being creative, aesthetic, speculative, and technologically oriented. Indeed, digital technologies emerge as a vehicle for creative insights and design research. Among many other practitioners and theorists, Hernán Díaz Alonso, Marjan Colletti, or Ali Rahim are worth mentioning—I will briefly focus on the first two. Fortunately for the present work, there is a direct relationship between Miralles' design approach and that of Díaz Alonso: the latter is an avowed devotee of the former.[159]

More specifically, the argument for focusing on the digital-creative profile within the breadth of the digital panorama in our discipline is threefold. First, these architects approach digital tools from their unknown or open side. There is a deliberate interest in skewing the pre-defined purposes of particular software packages and digital design protocols (like optimization and parametricism) to generate the unexpected—what is called here the knowable—as a form of cultural production. The uncommon technical utilization of digital means is an important factor in this task. Second, their engagements with the digital are primarily aesthetic. For example, Díaz Alonso looks at the monstrous and the grotesque, Colletti speaks of the poetics of the digital, and Rahim of the elegance in computer-driven technologies applied to architecture. Third, the common ground of their aesthetic agendas gravitates around the question of saturation: on the excessive (Díaz Alonso), the exuberant (Colletti), and the complex-elegant (Rahim).[160] Moreover, the structuring of saturated syntaxes each of these architects promotes is not continuous, as the paradigm of the first digital designs of the mid-1990s and 2000s. Instead, they pursue intricate assemblages of differentiated compositional idiosyncrasies, which will be further explored in the section on mereology (Chapter 7). On this basis, these architects show an evident interest in the emotional and affective power that dense articulations of space can engender; a level of saturation certainly only attainable through the computer as the means of production. As Díaz Alonso remarks:

> The word "affect" seems to be a too general and abstract way to define the behaviours of sensations that my formalism implies. If anything should be clear by now, it is that exuberance as an emergent condition is directly related to affect, and so to put in simpler terms (my kind of terms), excessive is the approach that I use to engender arousement.[161]

"sunset effect, […] how at the end of an era you get a caricatured exaggeration of only aspects of that waning epoch-like the sunset marking the fading day." Buchanan, "Requiem for the Modern Plan," 74. See also Hernán Díaz Alonso, *Enric Miralles*, Quarantine Talk (SCI-Arc, Los Angeles, 2020), min. 1:45, https://youtu.be/90e_jsG1lH8.

[159] Díaz Alonso worked in Miralles' office and the American-Argentine designer has declared on numerous occasions his affinity with the Spanish architect. See, for example, Díaz Alonso's lecture dedicated to Miralles Díaz Alonso, *Hernán Díaz Alonso*, https://youtu.be/90e_jsG1lH8.

[160] See respectively Díaz Alonso, "Exuberance, I Don't Know; Excess, I Like," 2010., Marjan Colletti, "Exuberance and Digital Virtuosity," *Architectural Design* 80, no. 2 (2010): 8–15, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.1036; and Ali Rahim and Hina Jamelle, "Elegance in the Age of Digital Technique," *Architectural Design* 77, no. 1 (2007): 6–9, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.390.

[161] Díaz Alonso, "Exuberance, I Don't Know; Excess, I Like," 2010, 73.

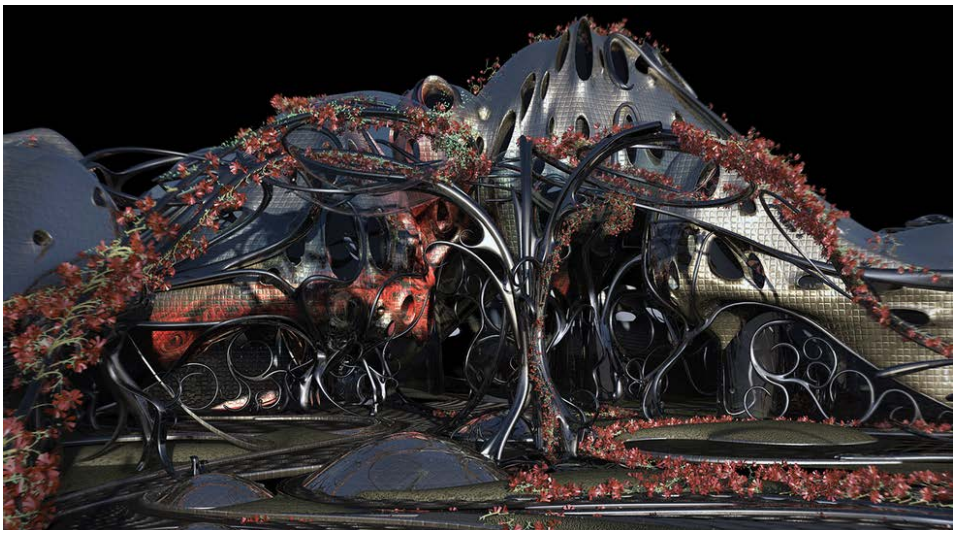


Figure 6-52. Hernán Díaz Alonso, *TBA21_1.0*, Patagonia, 2010.

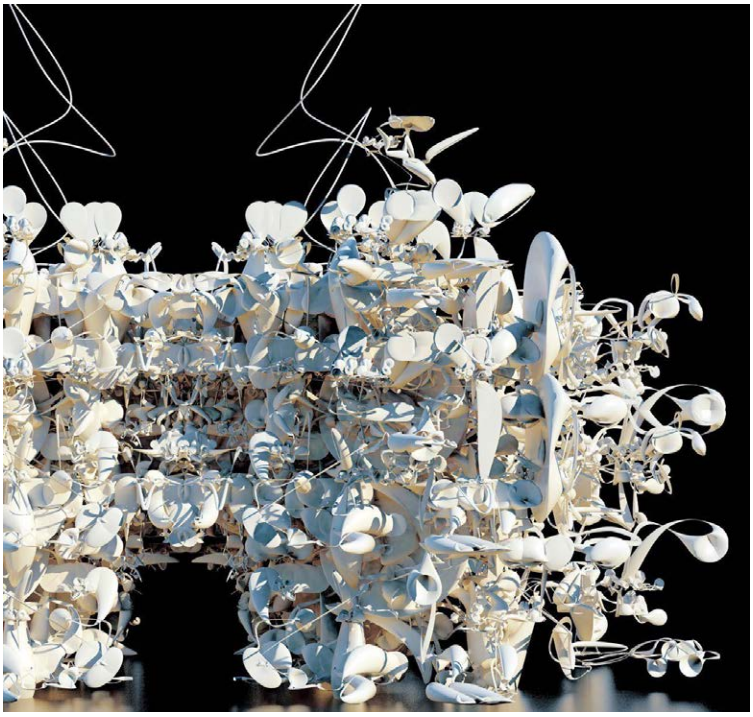


Figure 6-53. Marjan Colletti, *Xenobaroque: Stereoscopic?*, 2016.

Yet, how exactly does the mode of aesthetic cognition based on a saturated syntax work? A historical foundation can be found in the aesthetic principles of Baroque and Abstract Expressionism. About the former, Heinrich Wölfflin, in his milestone book *Principles of Art History* (1915), identified "unclarity" as one of the main characteristics of the arts in the seventeenth century.[162] According to the art historian, the Baroque sought inexhaustibility in contemplation, finding "a beauty in the darkness which swallows up the form."[163] Some pages later, and repeating the quote from Chapter 4, he states that "beauty no longer resides in fully apprehensible clarity at all, but passes to those forms which cannot quite be apprehended and always seem to elude the spectator. Interest in moulded form yields to the interest in indeterminate, mobile appearance."[164] And one more, this time explicitly to Baroque architecture: "there is a beauty which has its roots just in the not fully comprehensible, in the mystery which never quite unveils its face, in the inassimilable which seems to change at every moment."[165] Contrast, exuberant detail, and optical effects—saturation, in general terms—aim at a kind of surprise that always holds something in reserve, or as Wöllflin called it, "an unsolved remainder."[166] From here, the parallels with this thesis are immediate: there is an interest in exploiting the excess or surplus beyond the presentational manifestation, a bet for darkness and opacity that, nevertheless, needs a voluptuousness of the visual form to be effective.[167]

The contemporary digital agendas addressed here, more concerned with aesthetic than engineering issues, rest to some extent on these Baroque principles. It is perhaps Marjan Colletti who has worked most consistently on this relation. In fact, he reinterprets Wöllflin's five dichotomies within present-day architectural changes, bringing new verbal and visual vocabulary within what he calls "neo-baroque."[168] For Colletti, contemporary society is *post-digital*, which means it is hybridized between the digital, the analog, the biological, and the technological. On this basis, he asserts that "post-digital architecture is also neo-baroque in essence. It puts principles against the tenets of Modernism similar to those baroque values that Wölfflin presented against the Renaissance."[169] Colletti's design research establishes an aesthetic of saturation with multiple patterns, aggregations, and rhythms (Fig. 6-53). It is a physical saturation that can be linked to what Umberto Eco calls an "actual infinity": it is a composition physically so dense that it cannot be cognitively numbered.[170] Moreover, it is an architectural expression whose articulation gives the impression of having no boundaries. In other words, it *seems* capable of breaking its physical

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[162] In the book *Principles of Art History*, Wöllflin establishes five pairings—linear and painterly, plane and recession, closed and open form, multiplicity and unity, and clarity and unclarity—to compare Renaissance with Baroque. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*.

[163] Ibid., chap. 5.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid.

[167] To be clear, the Baroque did not advocate, according to Wöllflin, a total incomprehensibility, but rather of a "clearness of the unclear." See Ibid.

[168] Marjan Colletti, "Artist's Essay: Post-Digital Neo-Baroque: Reinterpreting Baroque Reality and Beauty in Contemporary Architectural Design," in *Neo-Baroques: From Latin America to the Hollywood Blockbuster*, ed. W. Moser, A. Ndalianis, and P. Krieger, vol. 55, 13 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill | Rodopi, 2016), 307–20, https://brill.com/abstract/title/33624.. See also Colletti, *Digital Poetics*.

[169] Colletti, "Artist's Essay: Post-Digital Neo-Baroque," 307.

[170] As an illustrative example, Eco mentioned the innumerability of the stars. For him, the artist who tries to suggest such a finite immensity can only follow the listing of certain qualities as a representative or approximate mode. See Umberto Eco, *The Infinity of Lists: An Illustrated Essay* (New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2009), 14–18.

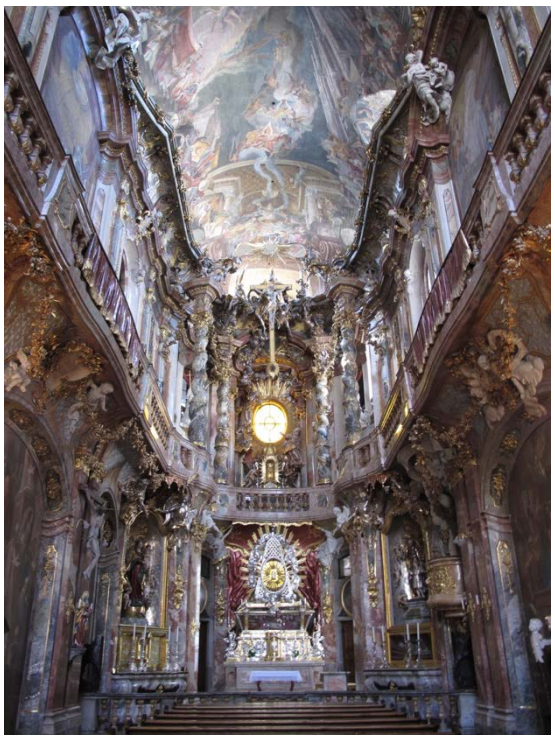


Figure 6-54. Egid Quirin Asam and Cosmas Damian Asam, *St. Johann Nepomuk* (Asamkirche), Munich, 1733-1746.

contour and extending *ad infinitum*, a compositional technique to instill unclarity.[171]

The Baroque sensibility is also present in Díaz Alonso, who reinterpreted it into his own terminology, design techniques, and syntax.[172] As he states, his notion of excess is more related to a particular logic or a methodology, and he reserves the idea of exuberance to a perceptual quality emanating from this approach.[173] In this light, Díaz Alonso's idea of "excessive" is intrinsically related to what he calls "agencies of contamination." Following the discussion of Vig. 6-A on xenoaesthetics as designing out of strangers, if for Colletti, post-digital practices reflect the condition of hybridization of disparate agents, Díaz Alonso posits the emergence of what he calls "new coherences" derived from the contagion of other non-architectural principles.[174] The horrific and the grotesque derive from this agenda of miscegenation. However, we must not see this as an intention to scare the user, but rather as an exploration of aesthetic engagements with the work. Díaz Alonso's monstrous configurations, which echo the provocations of Jean-Jacques Lequeu's visions, entail an opacity of apprehension that produces alternative understandings, interpretations, and interactions to those commonly assumed in architecture. As he points out: "The result of

[171] To clarity it again, under the premises of this thesis that infinity does not exist (see Chapter 1), Eco's "actual infinity" is to be read as a cognitive impression, rather than a possible ontological condition.

[172] It is no coincidence that one of the reference buildings for Díaz Alonso is the Sir John Soane's Museum in London. The interior walls of the museum are filled with objects and sculptures that create a 3D patina in which the individuality of the pieces is blurred in favor of an emerging saturated space.

[173] Hernán Díaz Alonso, "Exuberance, I Don't Know; Excess, I Like," *Architectural Design* 80, no. 2 (2010): 73, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.1046.

[174] Díaz Alonso distinguishes six types of "contamination agents" throughout his work: biology, ornament, cinematic effects, artificial nature, rituals, and butchery. See Hernán Díaz Alonso, *Electric Mud: Presentation of the Surreal Visions of Hernan Diaz Alonso* (Remote lecture for The Cooper Union, 2020), min. 26:12, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3vLuXaXxrw.

the intensity of the horrific is the appearance of some rare, unlikely new beauty."[175]

Technically, the computer is what, for Díaz Alonso, allows the possibility of combining these various logics for the purpose of the grotesque. In this context, his policy on the digital is essentially humanistic and cinematic, something that connects with the Baroque notion of virtuosity and movement in the Gothic. On the question of virtuosity, the computer is a craft tool. Like the violin or the paintbrush, the computer is a design instrument that requires skill, knowledge, training, and talent to execute it with a certain technical ability. These are instruments that, together with the person, form an enhancer cognizer. As for the cinematic, however, the Baroque model falls short if one does not want to argue in a merely symbolic but in a performative way. Just to mention that for this we should better situate Díaz Alonso's work in what Lars Spuybroek calls "the digital nature of the Gothic."[176] The use of animation software packages to choreograph a camera in relation to a mutant—hence variable—morphology (Fig. 7-17) by the American-Argentine architect implies that the idea of being in motion does not simply belong to the experiential act or to the representation of movement in the architectural shape. It is the very *raison d'être* and mechanism of production in the design process. As Spuybroek points out: "[The Gothic] uses movement not to break away from form but to actually create it."[177] And in a more direct comparison: "The flexibility of the elements in the Gothic is radically opposed to that found in the Baroque; there, structure comes first, and then movement is added. […] In the Gothic, the bending creates the structure; movement is the actual agent of rigidity."[178] Following this path, the animated and the cinematic (i.e., movement) in Díaz Alonso's designs go from being referential—the representation of movement in Baroque designs—to being constitutive of the design method; a dynamism that remains present in its architectural outcome.

Back to Baroque composition, the convoluted impression of the saturated manifestation points to a sense of disorder, which, however, is just that, an effect. Disorder is not intrinsic to the nature of the design. Every form has an order, whether it is perceived or not. What is different is to use that sense of disorder for aesthetic purposes. As Wölfflin reminds us about the artistic mentality of the seventeenth century: it is "not to allow disorder to usurp order, but to transform the impression of the strictly bound into the impression of the freer."[179] On this idea, saturation augments the spatial conditions of the labyrinthine and the cavernous. For example, the formal excessiveness of Díaz Alonso's TBA21_1.0 (Fig. 6-52), very much in the vein of EMBT's Parc des Colors (Fig. 6-19), stresses a spatial distribution that is labyrinthine. To quote Pieper again, it is an "inversion of axiality and its derivatives." Furthermore, the primitivism and savagery of the aesthetics of the grotesque gravitate around the notion of the cavernous insofar as it calls upon the most intimate instincts of reception. It is not by chance that "grotesque" derives from "grotto," from the Italian *grottesco*, which means "of a cave."

Now, without diminishing all the affinities that this dissertation finds in these two contemporary discourses, it is also worth noting the friction points. My concern with saturation requires compositional heterogeneity to escape neutrality and, ultimately,

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[175] Díaz Alonso, "Exuberance, I Don't Know; Excess, I Like," 2010, 73.
[176] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, chap. 1.
[177] Ibid., 15. Although not examined in detail, it is worth mentioning that the notion of savageness and grotesqueness, of "the living line" or "rib," and the convergence of structure and ornament that Spuybroek argues in the Gothic as digital in nature is to be found in Díaz Alonso's architecture.
[178] Ibid., 26, [emphasis removed].
[179] Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, chap. III.

undifferentiated noise, as will be detailed in the following subsection. With these lenses, Colletti's articulations may seem too uniform, almost white nose. The intensity of his hyper-articulations in terms of geometry, material, resolution, connections is in most designs equally distributed (see again Fig. 6-53). It is well known that an excess everywhere homogenizes compositional tensions, which means that saturation requires distinct(ive)ness to be aesthetically engaging. So, paradoxically, many of Colletti's design experiments tend to be apprehended as a continuous field, rather than maintaining their articulated nature of discrete forms.[180] On the other hand, the argument of this thesis in favor of abstraction clashes with Díaz Alonso's defense of the literal. [181] An evident example of his literality appears in the "butchery series," where the designs follow butchery techniques to carve the geometry, and which in many cases also include meat or animal skins (Fig. 6-9). See also other Díaz Alonso's projects like TBA21_2.0 (2011), Still Flesh (2011), Flower Towers (2016), or Sharpei Chairs (2018).[182] My criticism of these projects rests on situating them in what in Section 6.1 has been called "the precedent as a reference" on a subject-centered basis.

Within this framework, it is because of an aversion of the literal that the Saturated Space advocated here is akin to Abstract Expressionism.[183] Its influence on this thesis is threefold: ideological, formal, and technical.

It is ideological in that this art movement pursued the unknown in both the creation and the reception of the artworks. In a joint statement, Gottlieb, Rothko, and Newman declared: "To us art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take the risks."[184] On the creative act, the Abstract Expressionist artists appropriated from Surrealism spontaneity, automatism, and the subconscious as the driving forces of artistic production, something in tune with the claim about the depersonalization of the work in Section 5.3.[185] The maxim of the creator-beholder gap is also consistent in

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[180] In this sense, it is symptomatic that Colletti favors "fields" over "form or solids" and "gradients" over "collage," a stance still reminiscent of Deleuze's ontological continuism. See Colletti, "Artist's Essay: Post-Digital Neo-Baroque," 312–17. For the record, this thesis arises from the opposite: ontological discretism. See the difference I establish between the two, philosophically speaking, in Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation," 43–48.

[181] However, we must understand his and my positions as operative tendencies. While Díaz Alonso admits that pure literalness is never attainable in architectural form, I say the same about pure abstraction: pure abstract cognition within an absolute vacuum produces user indifference. So it can be that Díaz Alonso's literality is vicariously contaminated by abstract shades, and the other way around in my case. See Díaz Alonso's comments on the literal in Díaz Alonso, *Electric Mud: Presentation of the Surreal Visions of Hernan Diaz Alonso*, min. 33:00.

[182] See Díaz Alonso, *The Surreal Visions of Hernán Díaz Alonso/HDA-X*, 322–81.

[183] Abstract Expressionism was an American art movement developed primarily in New York City in the 1940s. Characterized by new techniques of production, such as the rejection of the easel and painting in large formats with the canvas on the floor (Pollock), the movement emphasized spontaneity and subconscious creation, aspects derived from Surrealism. Some of its main figures were Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and William de Kooning.

[184] Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman, "Statement," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (1940; repr., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 569.

[185] The idea of "graphic thinking" advocated in Part Two is empowered when compared to the "action painting" of Abstract Expressionism. Pollock's comments are revealing in this regard: "The source of my painting is the unconscious. I approach painting the same way I approach drawing. That is direct - with no preliminary studies. The drawings I do are relative to my painting but not for it." Jackson Pollock, "Two Statements," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (1940; repr., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 570–71.

this postwar art movement. In the same statement, Gottlieb, Rothko, and Newman asserted that "[the artworks'] explanation must come out of a consummated experience between picture and onlooker," abandoning the author as an indoctrinator of meaning.[186] So creation and experience are autonomous cognitive objects, that is, sealed aesthetic-units composed of the artists or observer and the artistic or architectural entity, respectively. It is no coincidence that these premises of the abstract art movements of the last century nourished Greenberg's formalism, and vice versa.

From the formal and compositional angle, such autonomous cognition implied, also enacted earlier in this chapter, the rejection of precedent as a provider of prescribed meaning. "The familiar identity of things," Rothko claimed elsewhere, "has to be pulverized in order to destroy the finite associations with which our society increasingly enshrouds every aspect of our environment."[187] Above all others, de Kooning and Pollock augmented the density and intensity of non-objective shapes on their compositions. In my view, such an excessiveness is what favored one-to-one relationships between the work and the observer, and thus, the question of multiplicity. As I shall argue in detail in the subsection, some of Pollock's paintings, like *Out of the Web (Number 7)* (1949), achieved a maximum of asemic and excessive figuration—something this thesis pursues. They achieve maximal heterogeneity, which, even virtually, was augmented through non-physical figures that appear only in reception.[188] Conversely, other pieces by the American painter, like *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)* (1950), fall into a monotonous saturation—something this dissertation rejects. Within this framework, it must be accepted that the line separating these two antagonistic situations is very fragile in any abstract-saturated piece of art or architecture. That is to say, when working at the limits of excessiveness, the possibilities of multiplicity because of high differentiation or of indifference because of white noise are always very close to each other. In my opinion, the sophistication of a saturated abstract composition lies on the edge of saying everything just before saying nothing. I shall say more on this in the subsection on "anchor points" with Pollock again serving as a backdrop to the discussion.

The last point of influence of Abstract Expressionism in this thesis, and by extension, to the aforementioned digital discourses of Díaz Alonso and Colletti, is the need for new techniques of production. It is well known how many of these American painters rejected the traditional easel model developing techniques and formats that allow them alternative forms of creation and expression. Pollock is again instructive in this regard. He developed large-format paintings that were placed on the floor and approached indiscriminately from either side. In the same spirit, the exploration and exploration of today's digital media is an intrinsic part of the abstract agenda.

In any case, when interpreting these artistic attitudes in architecture, one thing must be made clear: saturation does not have decorative purposes, at least for this thesis. The art and architecture of mere visual contemplation should be dismissed. Instead, I embrace saturation as both ornament and function in the same breath—consequently, ornament is

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[186] Gottlieb, Rothko, and Newman, "Statement," 569.

[187] Mark Rothko, "The Romantics Were Prompted...," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (1940; repr., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 571–73.

[188] As has become habitual, Fried provides many of the key concepts for an object-oriented formalism (Section 4.2), although he takes them in a negative way. In this case, the art historian calls "naive abstract figuration" the condition of evoking shapes seen against a background of indeterminate distance. Michael Fried, "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella," in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 225–26.

different from decoration. Christopher Alexander and Lars Spuybroek are reveling in this matter. The first remarks that "[o]rnament is just as important as function. Indeed, we cannot separate the two from one another."[189] For the second, structure and ornament are indivisible.[190] In this vein, I see saturation as an opportunity to articulate more spatial scales, many of them on a functional basis through ornamentation. In other words, saturation is understood here as a design mechanism that fosters a design discourse of spaces within spaces, or what can be called a *cascade of scales*. (This point will be fundamental to understanding the design policy on part-whole relationships in the coming section on mereology, which is also in tune with the ontological structure of objects within objects as established by OOO.) This saturation with ambitions of spatial multi-scalarity operates twofold: it affects the constitution of space (physical manifestation) and the nature of experience (cognition).

On the constitution of space, we typically account for four scales or distances in our concerns of architectural space: context, building, room, and detail.[191] However, many intermediate spaces can be explored between each of these categories. What allows hyper-articulation is precisely the proliferation of such middle scales. To use a simple architectural element, let us examine the wall from three angles (Fig. 6-55).

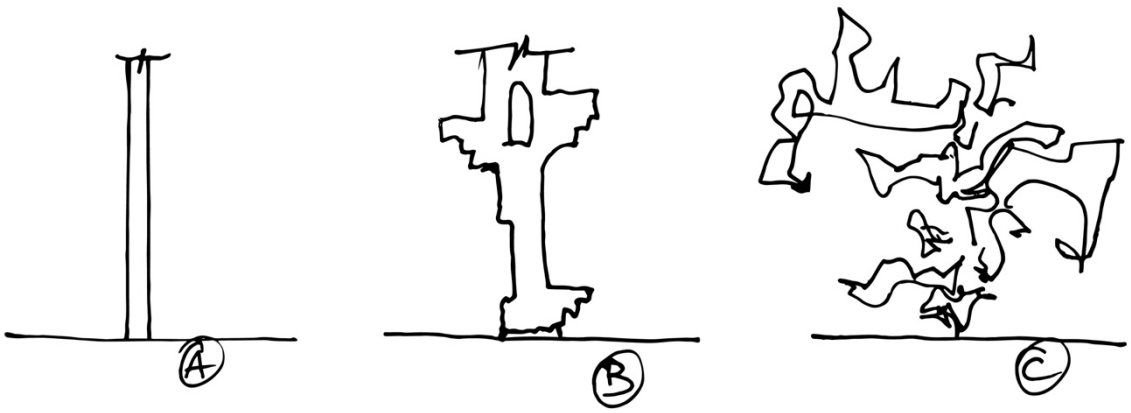


Figure 6-55. A: Modern Space; B: Classical Space; C: Saturated Space.

In its modern configuration (A), the wall is a partition that divides two spaces, either between two interiors or between an interior and an exterior space. It is a clean, hard-cut separation: a Cartesian line.

But what if the wall itself can also contain spaces? The first image that comes to mind is the classical wall (B), which is multi-functional in its plasticity of recesses and protrusions. Furthermore, it is simultaneously structural, divider of spaces, and container of more spaces. In its historical formulation, the "thick wall" engenders the *poché*. Peterson comments: "When the wall is literally solid it is poché; when it is hollowed out and accessible it becomes *negative space*, also called *habitable poché*."[192] Medieval castles, much like Baroque churches and palaces, are rich in habitable poché. In late modernism, Louis I. Kahn explored this type of space in detail, although generating virtual thicknesses. In other

[189] Alexander, *The Nature of Order, Book One*, 1 The Phenomenon of Life:415.
[190] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, chaps. 1 and 2.
[191] Here I reduce the discussion to architecture, leaving aside aspects of urbanism and urban planning, which obviously operate at larger scales. However, the principle of ambiguous scales should apply equally to these areas.
[192] Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 6.

words, how to occupy a column or a wall when its solid mass is already irrelevant to structural issues.[193]

The third possibility, the spatial scheme advocated here, is the hyper-articulated or saturated wall (C). It has four main characteristics. First, its complex morphology—coupled with the complementarity of different materials, systems, species, natures—offers a variety of spaces. Not all of them are necessarily practically functional, although many can be. Such complexity and heterogeneity are the strategy for increasing the number of affordances (see again the notion of "affordance" in Subsection 5.4.1). Second, it is abstract, insofar as its configuration does not resemble precedents, either visually, spatially, or functionality. Third, it is a wall composed of heterogeneous fragments. If in the Baroque, where the parts lose their individuality in favor of a unified whole, as Wölfflin and later Kaufmann remind us, the saturated wall maintains both coherences: that of the emerging whole and that of each of the parts.[194] Again, this point will be detailed in the next Chapter 7, where fragmentation operates simultaneously in both directions: it fragments or breaks up the whole and is a composition made from fragments. Likewise, it is important to remember that, although this thesis limits the study mainly to morphological aspects, the question of compositional heterogeneity must be understood more broadly in its xenological condition, intermingling typical materials and construction techniques with biological, geological, and digital logics.

Hence, the saturated wall differs from the (habitable) poché in that one is composed and fragmented and the other is shaped and continuous. In other words, the poché is a residual or negative space subjugated to and pressed by, literally, the forces of the divided "positive spaces," in Peterson's terms. The poché wall works from the outside in. In contrast, the spaces of the hyper-articulated wall are, conceptually, of equal status to the spaces they divide. The saturated wall works both inside out and outside in: it is a perturbation between spaces that follows Levi R. Bryant's concept of *strange mereology* (Chapter 7).

Now, the question of saturation also has experiential implications. Indeed, from a phenomenological or cognitive strategy that pursues its own disruption, as this thesis does, the exciting moment of the saturated wall is its ability to blur spatial scales. It creates a cognitive ambivalence between spaces that live at different levels without each one losing its ontological status. In case (C) of Fig. 6-55, the saturated spaces of the wall penetrate the larger ones of the rooms they divide, and vice versa, the large ones enter the hyper-articulated ones. There is a plastic border whose saturated ornamentation results in an additional spatial threshold. Stated differently, there is a *cognitive* ambiguity between the dividing and the divided space, to the extent that they become disrespectful of their original scales in the user's eyes. We can call this condition *ambiguous spatial scales*. André Bloc's *Sculpture Habitacle* series from the 1960s is enlightening in this respect (Fig. 6-38).

This perceptual ambivalence does not rest on the ontological premise of smooth transition, generating a continuous field of differentiation. It is not the space that blends into another, typical of Deleuze-influenced surface projects of the early digital era. Nor is it Wölfflin's painterly dissolution of figures or spaces in favor of its whole. I argue that it is something cognitively more complex. From an ontological framework of discrete differentiation, it is about scalar ambiguity that does not lead to visual homogenization, but

[193] See Ibid., Box 7: The Invention of Virtual Thickness.

[194] See the dissolution of the parts in the Baroque space in Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, chap. V; and Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 33–47.

a greater impression of heterogeneity—greater than the mere sum of the parts. Its cognition is unclear because it is, paradoxically, too discreetly linear. This psychological effect is evident in Rorschach's inkblots or in Pollock's paintings, such as *Out of the Web (Number 7)* (1949), discussed in the next subsection. There is an illusion of more figures and contours that stand between scalar and resolution thresholds. They are spaces without bordering matter, but not without form. They are thus spaces that do not live materially on a given scale. However, these beholder's impressions do belong to the composition; they are part of what Dufrenne called "demands" of the work discussed in Chapter 5. In short, although they are not physically in the representation, these virtual elements between scales are formally in it. Under this compositional regime of saturation, the object's spatial or figurative multiplicity blossoms before us. To some extent, this tendency to see patterns and structures that do not exist physically, but in the mind as another means of expression, is related to the psychological phenomenon of *apophenia*: it generates connections that follow specific experiences of abnormal meanings.[195] Ruy/Klein have recently explored the possibilities of apophenia through an architecture of images, meaning 2D rather than in a spatial dimension. Their first results have crystallized in an exhibition of the same name (Fig. 6-56).[196] This thesis celebrates such apophenic effects. The challenge lies in transporting them to a spatial environment in which the user is engaged intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically.

To put it plainly, Saturated Space aims to be perceived in a heterogeneous painterly fashion, but it is always constituted in a linear (discrete) manner. It turns out to be cognitively unclear. However, it is a space ontologically made up of finite fragments of different scales, even if not all of them appear physically. In this sense, the present example of the saturated wall reveals itself as a practical application of the theoretical approach here presented: a world of autonomous and discrete objects that is inexhaustibly apprehended.



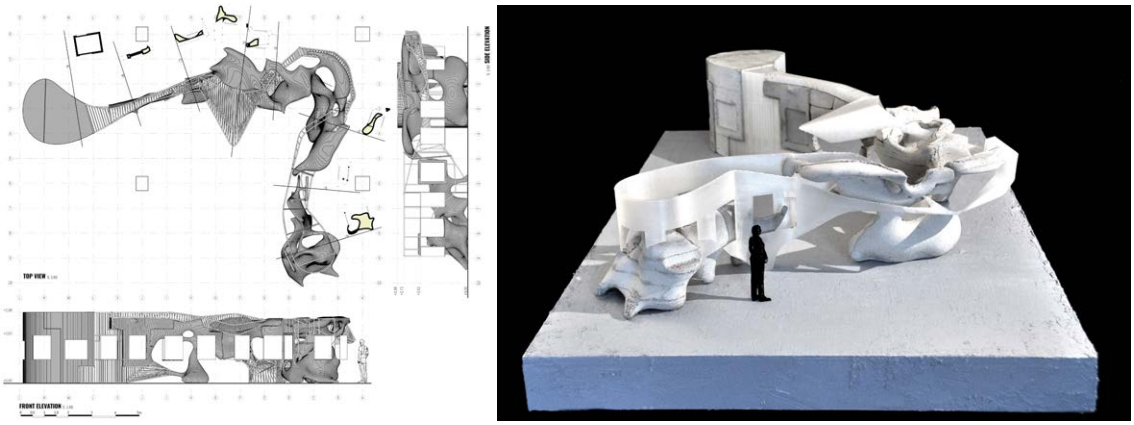
Figure 6-56. Ruy/Klein, *Apophenia*, exhibition, 2017-2018.

[195] Apophenia must not be confused with pareidolia, which is the misperception of patterns.
[196] David Ruy and Karel Klein, "Apophenia" (Exhibition, SCI-Arc Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, December 2017).

Vignette 6-B: Three saturated designs

I.

The multi-spatial and multi-experiential are two conditions of saturation explored in the Xeno-wall project (2018), whose competition brief consisted of showcasing a collection of photographs (Figs. 6-57 and 6-58). As opposed to the modern wall (A) as a simplistic display and partitioning element, the proposed design operates spatially on various levels. On the whole, it bends itself to generate a concave space. That is to say, the wall is not only a divider of two spaces but also generates an additional one of its own. Additionally, on a smaller scale, a series of abstract and intricate fragments are assembled along disparate joints. The prefix "xeno," meaning from strangers (see Vig. 6-A), refers to the differentiated morphological and material nature of the parts; it seeks to emphasize heterogeneity and diversity in the prefix "multi." The result is an interweaving of different spatial sizes within the same design, resulting in a fractured development of changing sections.



Figures 6-57 and 6-58. MORPHtopia, *Xeno-wall*, drawings and model, 2018.

II.

Chambers is an open research project that explores compositional and morphological aspects to arrive at an opaque-productive space (Fig. 6-59). In connection with the question of xenoaesthetics (Vig. 6-A), abstraction and saturation are the main instruments developed through digital media. Their formalization reveals an abstract, multi-scalar, fragmentary, and excessively dense syntax, devoid of semanticity and external precedents. In addition to this common framework, each of these exercises orbits in relation to some particular spatial issue (density, resolution, dispersion, materiality, transition, etc.).



Figure 6-59. MORPHtopia, left: *Chamber #03*, 2019; right: *Chamber #08*, 2020.

III.

The piece Fusion (Fig. 6-60) should also be situated within the present debate on abstraction and saturation as instruments of depth and openness. The work speculates on the possibility of multiple understandings of an architectural expression following three design principles. First, unlike Baroque scenography (e.g., the Bibiena family or Borromini's perspective corridor in the Palazzo Spada), the work offers no privileged vantage point for contemplation. Secondly, its medium of representation is not clear, as it is neither a 3D model nor a 2D drawing, but includes elements from both domains. Thirdly, the different levels of resolution with saturation of elements and information are intended to increase the scale thresholds. These design techniques seek to make the beholder move around the piece intuitively and find a personal distance from which to extract some of the various figures made up by the transparencies, superimpositions and fragmentations of the piece.



Figure 6-60. MORPHtopia, *Fusion*, complete piece and detail, 2021.

Within this framework, the saturation strategy is not exclusive to the wall as an architectural element. It is applicable to any scale or any other spatial component. It can take place, for instance, between a piece of furniture and the space that contains it, between the building and the street, between two districts and the district to the city, etc. More radically, we can speculate on the possibility of bypassing intermediate scales. In what can be called an *interscalar part-whole relationship*, Saturated Space as a design strategy can act, for example, between an interior piece of furniture and the street, superseding the normative scales of the room and the building. Each architectural project establishes its own multi-dimensional relationships according to the scales it encompasses. Therefore, scalar space relations need not always follow a progressive logic *à la* Eames' *Powers of Ten*. It can articulate more complex relationships that intersperse non-contiguous spatial scales. Designs based on this interscalar strategy remain to be seen; at least in my case, I have not yet addressed it in my office or in teaching.

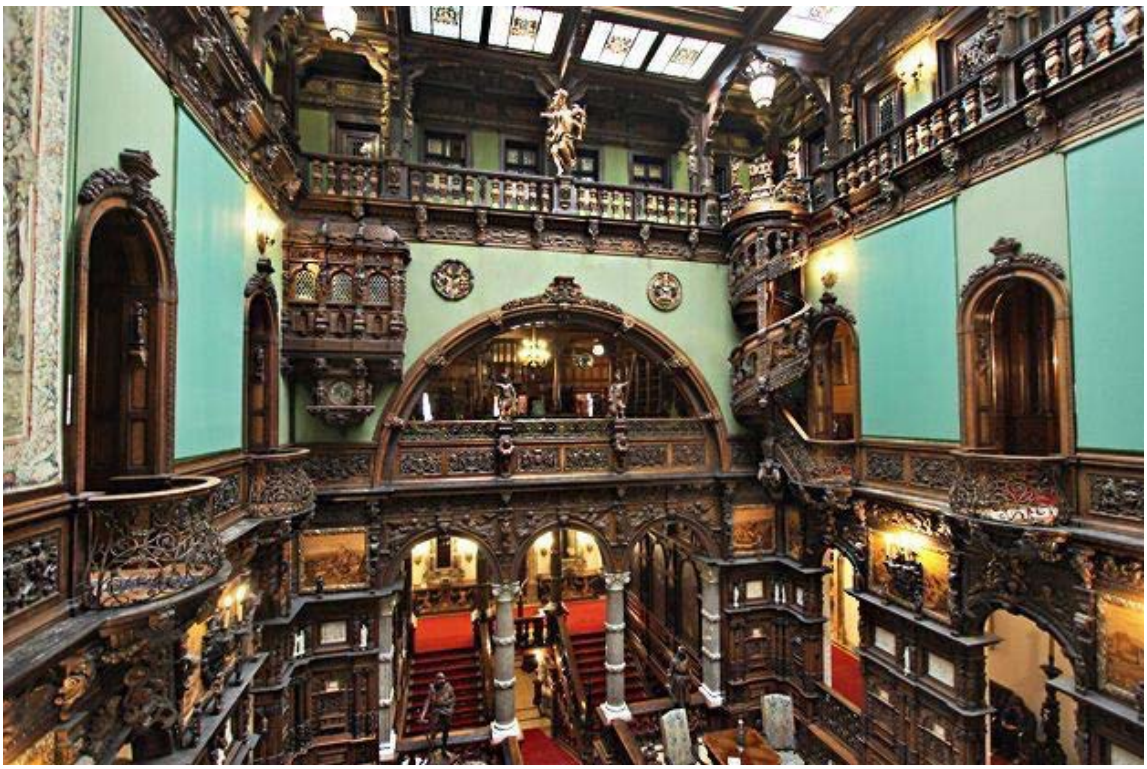


Figure 6-61. Johannes Schultz, Carol Benesch, and Karel Liman, *Peleș Castle*, Romania, construction 1873-1914.

Whether it is progressive or interscalar, the relationship between levels can be considered a Saturated Space design approach that adds spatial scales or dimensions beyond the standard ones to the architectural repertoire. As may already have become evident, this insight is likely to be complemented with ornamental vocations for the purpose of cognitive displacement and open engagement. To illustrate this question, we can look at one of the halls of the Peleș Castle in Romania (1873-1914) (Fig. 6-61). The exuberance of the Neo-Renaissance room comes from an abundance of ornamentation. Within this ocean of detailing, two inflations at the corners of the second floor subtly stand out. Each operates with a different mechanism to engage the user. A box-like element with three small latticed windows looks like it could house a space on one corner. However, one wonders how it can be reached since it is not at the floor level and there is no staircase nearby—the seed of curiosity has already been planted in us. Whether, in fact, one can enter that space or whether it is ornamental and non-occupiable is, in the first place, irrelevant. The point here is that we are challenged to explore that spatial condition. On the other corner, a spiral staircase blends into the saturated rhythm of the room, and vice versa, its figure stands out from the ornamental pattering. Is it a functional or an ornamental piece? In an Alexander-like vein, the staircase is both functional and ornamental. This example illustrates how an architecture of saturation can contain functions without falling into a poché or a purely visual/contemplative space.

However, what must be questioned in the case of the spiral staircase of the Peleș Castle is the prescriptive determination of its function: it is designed as a staircase and can only be used as a staircase. Faced with this question, the saturation strategy is promising when combined with the question of deprogramming and open occupation (see Subsection 5.4.4). This suggests that when there is a hyper-articulation of heterogeneous and deprogrammed spaces, the user can engage at will, i.e., autonomously in a free performance. The compositional complexity that leads to the disorder of not knowing in advance which

spaces are practicable and, if they are, how they work, is what drives an intuitive, and thus aesthetic, engagement with Saturated Abstract Space. When this happens, the use and occupation of the architecture go beyond those planned behaviors by the architect and the assumptions of the user. So the latter can actualize his/her knowable affordances of such space.

These thoughts on abstract saturation are the motivations also behind the LWZ 38 project (Fig. 6-62). Taking its cue from the ornamental richness of the existing building by Otto Wagner and the neighboring neo-classical constructions, the design generates space of various scales by exaggerating the golden pattern of Wagner's house. The design is a thick, plastic boundary built out of itself that presses and is pressed by the condition of the street and the existing building's interior. In other words, the project is situated in the tense interior-exterior relationship of Wagner's façade and roof.



Figure 6-62. MORPHtopia, *LWZ 38 rooftop and façade extension*, Vienna, 2017.

In summary, Abstract Saturated Space is, in its ontological register, finite, discrete, abundant, and diverse in the number and characteristics of its component elements, scales, materials, natures, and morphologies. Its phenomenological experience is messy, intricate, convoluted, heterogeneous, overwhelming, disconcerting, mysterious, and provocative. Kandinsky or Alexander tried to reach depth and life through harmony. For example, there was a peaceful relation between certain colors and forms and the vibration of the human soul for the Russian painter—a balsamic and soft path towards the spiritual. On the contrary, the saturated one presented here seeks to "burn," following the language of Coop Himmelb(l)au; to "burn" the user by awakening the person from automatic perceptions. The abstract-saturated celebrates the irritating, the disturbing, the convulsive, and the uncomfortable both in the constitution of space and in its apprehension. On the latter, it excites, irritates, and provokes. It makes us react by being disharmonious to our sense of harmony. And this disturbance is the process of abstracting the background of our presumed sense of reality. Such splitting of the qualities from the object produces the double aesthetic experience: spaces capable of immaterially grasping the AP's ineffable reality and triggering some of its knowable profiles in the user's interaction.

6.3.4. Anchor points

As mentioned in the previous subsection, the distance between an abstract-saturated composition that succeeds or fails is most of the time minimal. In other words, when designing by playing with the limits of comprehension for the purpose of multiplicity through highly articulated and dense syntaxes, achieving an expression that triggers the multifarious interior of the project or one that induces indifference can be a matter of small details. Both the multifarious and the indifferent structure are opaque, in the sense that they evade literalism. However, only one is productive, leaving the other in an agonizing state of impassibility. For Kandinsky, "[a]nyone who cannot experience the inner appeal of form (the material and particularly the abstract) will always consider such composition exceedingly arbitrary."[197] A sense of arbitrariness in the reception of a work instills a false image of an absence of order and, consequently, of infinity. And infinity is the seedbed of in-difference, of that which provides no difference. As has been repeated many times in this thesis, the infinite supposes nothing more than the homogenization of the world; the loss of identity. Everything is everything else.

Recalling Eco again, he reminds us that white noise has the most information and yet unfolds nothing. According to him, this occurs because of the lack of even minimum orientation in the work.[198] For example, many of Jean Dubuffet's *Matériologies* (Fig. 6-63), which, as Eco describes them, "are much like a road surface or other bare terrain in their attempt to reproduce the absolute freedom and unlimited suggestiveness of brute matter," appear as visual noise to us.[199] Their surely great inner richness is only blocked by their extreme compositional redundancy. The transparent and the noisy manifestation are equally unproductive for opposite reasons. If transparency entails a form of reductionism that simplifies the object to its directly apprehended qualities; in noise, the qualities are so complex that they exceed any possible assimilation. In both cases there is a lack of difference: one with regard to the cognizer's assumed background, the other because of its compositional redundancy and homogeneity. Section 6.1 has studied literalism by

[197] Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual Art*, 53.
[198] Eco, *The Open Work*, 96.
[199] Ibid., 99.

transparency due to the dependence on precedent. Let us now focus on the question of compositional noise and how can it be resolved.

In the contemporary discourse of computation and parts in architecture, Rasa Navasaityte and Daniel Köhler's teaching and professional work most clearly instill this homogenization by a saturation of elements with an excessively monotonous distribution (Fig. 6-64).

In response to a saturation that turns plain, this section introduces the notion of *anchor points*, which are design techniques that favor cognitive attachment and deep interaction with overwhelming manifestations. Three are considered: (1) a radically simplistic order on a scale above the level of complexity, such as symmetry in a Rorschach's inkblot; (2) the strategic inclusion of familiar elements without any semantic role in the composition, which is basically the "precedent-as-linker" commented at the beginning of the chapter; and (3) internal compositional tensions by heterogeneous elements and distributions. Like any other design strategy, each of these mechanisms is free to be hybridized according to particular needs.



Figure 6-63. Jean Dubuffet, *Carnaval,* (from *Matériologie*s), 1960.

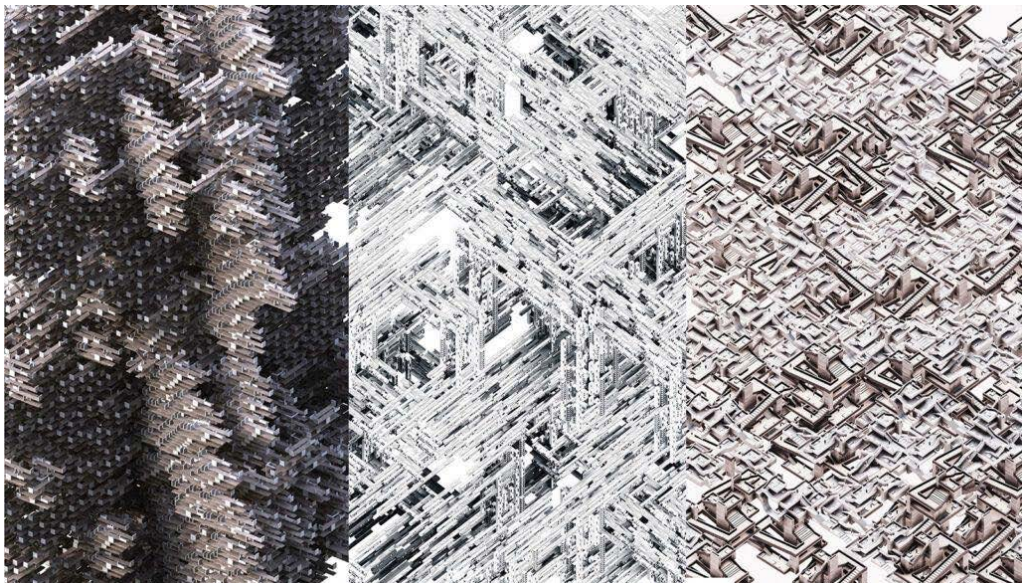


Figure 6-64. Left to right: WanderYards, 2016, Genmao Li, Chen Chen, and Xixuan Wang, 2016; Enframes, Kexin Cao, Yue Jin, Qiming Li, 2017; iiOOOI, Sheghaf Abo Saleh, Hua Li, Chuwei Ye, Yaonaijia Zhou, 2018 (right). Tutor: Daniel Köhler at RC17, MArch Urban Design, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

1) As concerns the first, let me begin with another passage from Eco's *The Open Work*:

> Suppose we take a white sheet of paper and spill some ink on it. The result will be a random image with absolutely no order. Let's now fold the paper in two so that the ink blot will spread evenly on both sides of the sheet. When we unfold the paper we will find before us an image that has a certain order—i.e., symmetrical repetition, one of the most elementary forms of redundancy as well as the simplest avatar of probability. Now, even though the drawing remains fundamentally ambiguous, the eye has a few *obvious points of reference*: indications of a particular direction, suggestions of possible connections.[200]

These "few obvious points of reference" are here called "anchor points." Evidently, Eco refers in this fragment to Hermann Rorschach's design technique for his famous psychological tests (Fig. 6-65). In this sense, the Swiss psychiatrist emerges as one of the prominent designers for the question of multiplicity. His inkblots are epitomes of opaque-productive manifestations or open forms that require aesthetic apprehension.[201] Rorschach's figures, far from being aleatory designs and despite his own labeling of them as "accidental," are meticulously intended to be as ambiguous and conflicting as possible, as the author himself acknowledges.[202] His design considerations plays with degrees of legibility, occupying an important part of the disciplinary discussions in psychology during the first half of the twentieth century. Rorschach's investigations focus on the relation between maximal plurality and a certain familiarity that still guaranteed the viewer's attachment to the confronted inkblot. According to him: "Asymmetrical figures are rejected by many subjects; symmetry supplied part of the necessary artistic composition."[203] As Eco's passage identified, symmetry provides such a minimum cognitive order. For Rorschach, that "facilitates interpretation for certain inhibited and blocked subjects"; namely, cognizers indifferent to the figure.[204] In the same page, it is also worth noting the downside of symmetry according to Rorschach: "It has a disadvantage in that it tends to make the answers somewhat stereotyped."[205] Rorschach basically faces a design problem concerning the weight of the anchor point in the composition: the conflict between the excessive ambiguity of indifference and the too explicit clarity of transparency.

In this light, I think it is clear that this thesis' interest in symmetry moves away from the classical ideal of harmony and proportion in artistic and architectural composition to address it as a mechanism that allows the observer to enter into a manifestation of complex order. This "entering into" for exploratory purposes resonates with the notion of mimesis of Chapter 3. Finding symmetry as a possible technique of a mimetic procedure, we can look at Robert Vischer's seminal dissertation *On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics* (1873). In this manuscript, Vischer elaborates on how we can respond to abstract forms, attributing an aesthetic dimension to "empathy" [*Einfühlung*]. The German

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[200] Ibid., 97-98, [emphasis added].

[201] Whether or not the ambiguity of the Rorschach test is appropriate for psychological purposes is certainly irrelevant to the present case. Disagreements about its efficacy are also well known within the psychological community. See Damion Searls, *The Inkblots: Hermann Rorschach, His Iconic Test, and the Power of Seeing* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2017). For our purposes, what is of interest here is the fact itself of generating a wide range of interpretations from the point of view of design and the aesthetic comprehension.

[202] Hermann Rorschach, *Psychodiagnostics. A Diagnostic Test Based on Perpection*, trans. Paul Lemkau and Bernard Kronenberg, Fifth Edition (1942; repr., Bern: Verlag Hans Huber, 1951), 15.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid. See also Justine Sergent and Yitzchak M. Binik, "On the Use of Symmetry in the Rorschach Test," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 43, no. 4 (1979): 355–59.

philosopher described the process as follows:

> Thus I project my own life into the lifeless form, just as I quite justifiably do with another living person. Only ostensibly do I keep my own identity although the object remains distinct. I seem merely to adapt and attach myself to it as one hand clasps another, and yet I am mysteriously transplanted and magically transformed into this Other.[206]

This way of becoming the object summons Harman's notion of "mimesis" (see Section 4.2).[207] For Vischer, the empathic process occurs through bodily identification in the first place: "Thus [the body] unconsciously projects its own bodily form—and with this also the soul—into the form of the object. From this I derived the notion that I call 'empathy' [*Einfuhlung*]."[208] Within this process of attachment to the observed form, Vischer notes that symmetry—especially vertical symmetry—is the one that most resembles our body structure, as it establishes formal similarities between us and the symmetrical confronted figure.[209] Therefore, it should be no surprise that Vischer's texts strongly influenced Rorschach's theory and the design of its famous inkblot plates, all folded vertically in the center (Fig. 6-65).[210]



Figure 6-65. Hermann Rorschach and Konrad Gehring, studies and comments on inkblots, 1911-1912.

[206] Robert Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics," in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (1873; repr., Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 104.

[207] As a matter of fact, Harman has already identified, although not yet elaborated in detail, a connection between his sense of "mimesis" and that of "empathy" in the aesthetic theory of Theodor Lipps, which was in turn based on Robert Vischer's. See Harman's comments on this issue in Harman, *Art and Objects*. and Harman, *Architecture and Objects*. For a detailed view of the topic, see Spuybroek's already mentioned differences between "empathy" and "sympathy." Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, chap. 3.

[208] Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics," 92.

[209] Ibid., 97–98.

[210] For an insight into the relationship between the two theories, see Searls, *The Inkblots*, chap. 7.

Vignette 6-C: Empathic call through symmetry

I.

The Digital Grotesque series (2013 and 2017) by Michael Hansmeyer and Benjamin Dillenburger tracks on a Rorschach-like arrangement (Fig. 6-66). On the one hand, it offers an incredible level of surface detail that generates a rich spatial structure of various scales. On the other, the composition as a whole rests on a central and vertical symmetry that, in line with Vischer's ideas, favors its overall apprehension. Moreover, the modulation of these orders in the piece follows the logic of an approach from a distance. This means that the simple and empathetic order is found in the scale of the whole, capturing the attention at a glance. Contrastingly, as one gets closer to the artwork and focuses attention on specific areas, greater complexities are revealed. Similar strategies of saturated articulation against vertical symmetries are also common in del Campo/Manninger's designs, no less than Mark F. Gage's (Fig. 4-11). Yet what is even more interesting in Hansmeyer and Dillenburger's proposal is that although the symmetry suggests that both sides are formally the same at first glance, closer inspection reveals that this is not the case. Each side of the central axis is revealed to be morphologically different, something that adds another cognitive twist to the purpose of the elongated perception.



Figure 6-66. Michael Hansmeyer and Benjamin Dillenburger, *Digital Grotesque II*, 2017.

II.

As it is evident, in Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, there is no saturated abstraction, but a minimal one.[211] However, faced with an equally possible cognitive disengagement, Robin Evans sees in the numerous symmetries that populate the building the psychological attractor that plunges the user into the depths of the building. In his article "Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries" (1990), the British architect notes that these symmetries are not formally visible in the floor plan layout and do not follow the classic vertical axiality—such as those of Hansmeyer/Dillenburger. Instead, Mies' symmetries are perceptible in the experience of the built space (Fig. 6-67). They are strategically placed on and between the vertical and horizontal planes of the building: on the mirrored and reflective glass walls and the two water surfaces, as well as the horizontal symmetry between floor and ceiling planes where the height of the eye is at its midpoint.[212]



Figure 6-67. Mies van der Rohe, *Barcelona Pavilion*, reconstruction of 1986, image from Robin Evans' article (p. 66).

In conceptualizing these premises on symmetry for design purposes, a first strategy for designing with anchor points can be established: empathetic structures that unconsciously resemble our innate notions of order—bodily or otherwise—act as a gateway to more disturbing and intricate arrangements by relying on the contrast between simple and complex order systems within the same composition. Such complex structures are precisely in conflict with our sense of harmony (pleasant order) and thus excite the multiplicity of the object. If empathy refers to the visual structure (or optical sense of form, as Vischer puts it) that resonates with our own, the process of transportation (mimesis) is a matter of sympathy, as discussed in Subsection 4.2.4.

Three additional remarks can be made concerning the possibilities of this technique. First, symmetry is but *one* tool of what may be called *empathic call*: the object arises an

[211] Robin Evans inscribes the Barcelona Pavilion within the twentieth century movements of abstraction that "has oscillated between glorification of the material surface and denial of it; between Pollock and Mondrian. […] They adopt the procedure of abstraction." Robin Evans, "Mies van Der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries," *AA Files*, no. 19 (1990): 62.

[212] Ibid., 63–66.

organizational resemblance in the cognizer, who, in turn, transports him/her/itself into the object's being.[213] Second, this method of various orders operating in different dimensions within the same expression seems promising when combined with the cascade of scales explained above: how the designer modulates the relationship between the multiple scalar levels of an architectural expression is a design problem. Third, it is important to differentiate between symmetrical organization and symmetrical form. Spuybroek criticizes how architects have systematically confused the two as if they were one and the same.[214] Formal symmetry is a compositional tool that has been used recursively and exhaustively throughout the history of architecture, to the point of automating its reception to excessively predetermined responses: ideal of harmony, classicism, etc. Such ossification has made it transparent, literal, and biased, a form of precedent that this thesis seeks to avoid. However, and interpreting Spuybroek's insights on the matter, there is a field to be explored in design if it is understood that the attracting power of symmetry resides in its organizational rather than formal aspect. This would reveal architectural manifestations that are organizationally symmetrical and formally asymmetrical, thus freed from the historicist burden of formal symmetry.

2) The second strategy proposed here for initial attraction through anchor points is recognizing some familiar element somewhere inserted within the saturated ocean of abstract forms. In Section 6.1, it has been named "precedent as a linker": a familiar element that does not provide pre-programmed significance, but is a cognitive portal to the rest of the physical composition. EMBT's Parc dels Colors was analyzed in that case (Fig. 6-19), and I interpret many of Dado's paintings in a similar guise, especially his work of the 1980s and 1990s (Fig. 6-68). I think his art—very much in tune with that of Schwitters—does not defamiliarize the familiar, but familiarizes the unfamiliar (aka abstract or unknown). Yet familiarizing the unfamiliar is not about recalling previous experiences. In the line of Vischer, we respond to true abstract expressions as such, rather than as stimuli associated with past ideas or experiences.[215] This means that abstract syntax leads to the object's wide range of meanings. In other words, when Dado includes deformed human, animal, or monstrous figures that are moderately recognizable, I do not believe that he does so in order to transform our understanding of the human, the animal, or the monstrous as such. This would be the criticized "precedent-as-basis" or the technique of defamiliarization. On the contrary, I suggest that they are vestibules of access to far more complex articulations. As I argued in the case of Miralles, these unknown formulations and their impressions are part of our knowable sensibility of reality. But what makes them especially interesting is that they do not derive from our previous understanding of it. This is basically what it means to start from the unknown as design and cognitive material.

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[213] Although the following reflection has not been elaborated in the section on mimesis and would require more space for discussion (it therefore remains in a footnote), I suggest that sympathy is not equivalent to, but encompasses both mimesis and empathy. Sympathy is empathy plus mimesis. Empathy is a call for substitution by resemblance. And once this happens, mimesis takes place. The cognizer can act as the object, imitating it. If in empathy the object takes the initiative by drawing me into itself (contrary to the active role Vischer gives to the person), in mimesis I actively perform as the thing. Within this context, sympathy is the convergence of both acts, which means that the sympathetic procedure cannot operate if either of the two is missing.

[214] As Spuybroek notes: "For architects, a symmetrical organization automatically means a symmetrical form, while human and animal bodies show them day in, day out that we take on asymmetrical forms." Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 177.

[215] See Searls, *The Inkblots*, chap. 7.

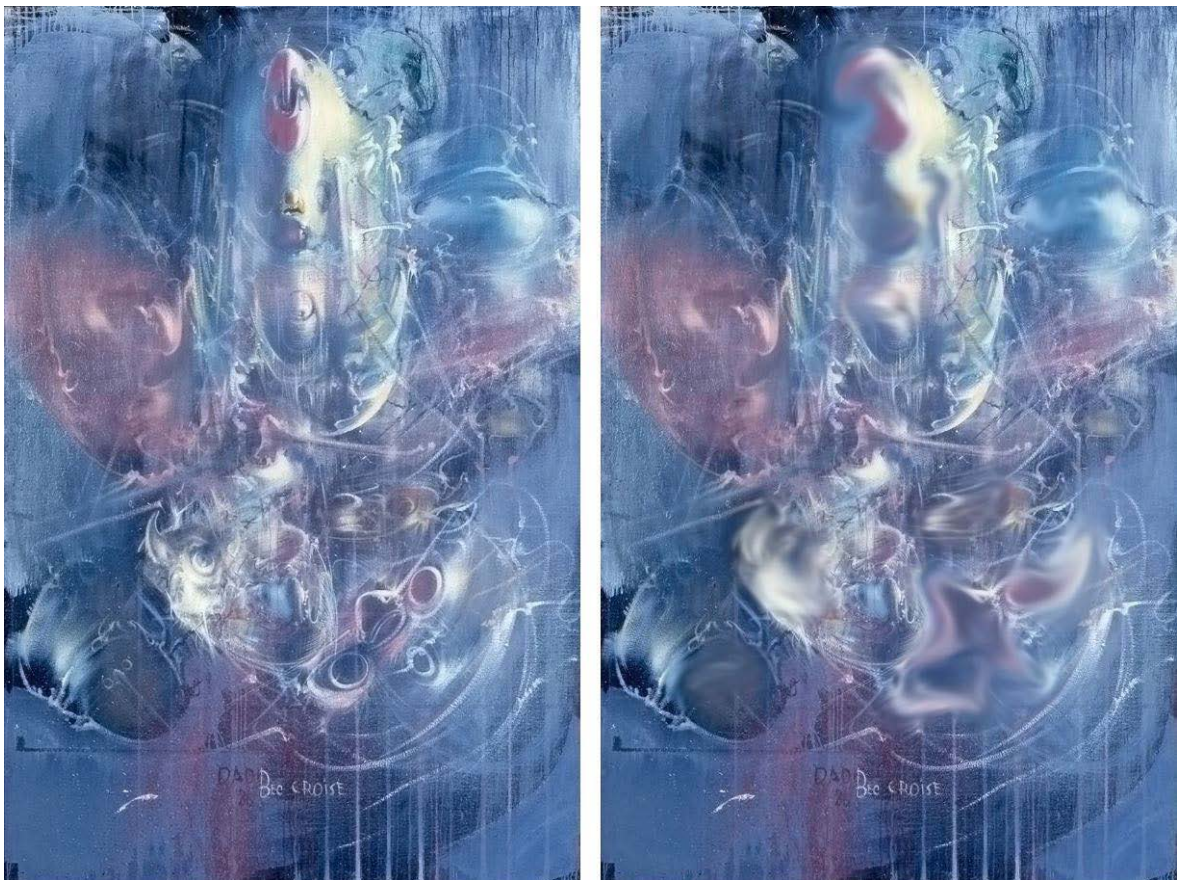


Figure 6-68. Comparison of a Dado painting with and without recognizable precedents as anchor points. Original painting on the left: Dado, *Crossbill,* 1981. On the right: the same painting with areas blurred by the author.

It is difficult to draw general compositional indications on the functioning of the precedent as a linker without falling into design recipes or stylistic concerns. Instead, it is a case-by-case exploration to discover the tension between the precedent remaining sensually recognizable but without taking on any semantic role as representative of some known phenomenon. Nevertheless, as with the first strategy of the layering of simple and complex orders (symmetry), I see that there is also much room for design research on the precedent-as-linker. As a reminder, the precedent can, in principle, be anything familiar, regardless of whether or not it is related to architecture. That means it should not be reduced only to faces, body parts, or animal shapes. To put it more precisely, an asemic precedent is not only visual. It can also be tactile, auditory, performative, etc. It can obviously also be spatial, which would bring us back to the question of typology: how to employ typological elements as signifiers without its assumed signification. However, an important difference can be drawn between what has been said about "type" in Subsection 6.1.1 and this suggestion: whereas in the former the type is the material that capitalizes the design; in the latter, it is a cognitive means of connecting with something other than itself.

Within this framework, I can offer some observations from my office and teaching work in this regard, without these being taken as rules. If we refer to the simple case of sizing and positioning cognitive catchers, it can be noted that the precedent-as-linker must occupy a rather small part of the spatial scene. Following the earlier discussion on the cascade of scales, I suggest that the familiar element, albeit asemic, works best when it is a graft or infiltration at smaller scales. In short, when it is a part among parts, rather than the whole, like Gehry's Binoculars Building. For example, in the 2217 NPL House (Fig. 6-

69), the clearly recognizable architectural element of the doorknob contrasts with the ambivalent, and therefore I would say polyvalent, rest of the room. Or a cantilevered box attached to an amorphous faceted volume in the proposal for a public library in Madrid is intended to capture the initial attention (Fig. 6-70). At other times, it can be a recognizable pattern like the tiles partially distributed within a more intricate enclosure (Fig. 6-71). In addition to these examples, I suggest the re-reading of the description of the EMBT's Parc dels Colors in the Subsection 6.1.3 "The Precedent as a Linker." Faced with a saturated space too much hostile to automatic perception, these familiar points are small oases that charge our cognitive power, reminding us that the desert, although vast, is in any case explorable.

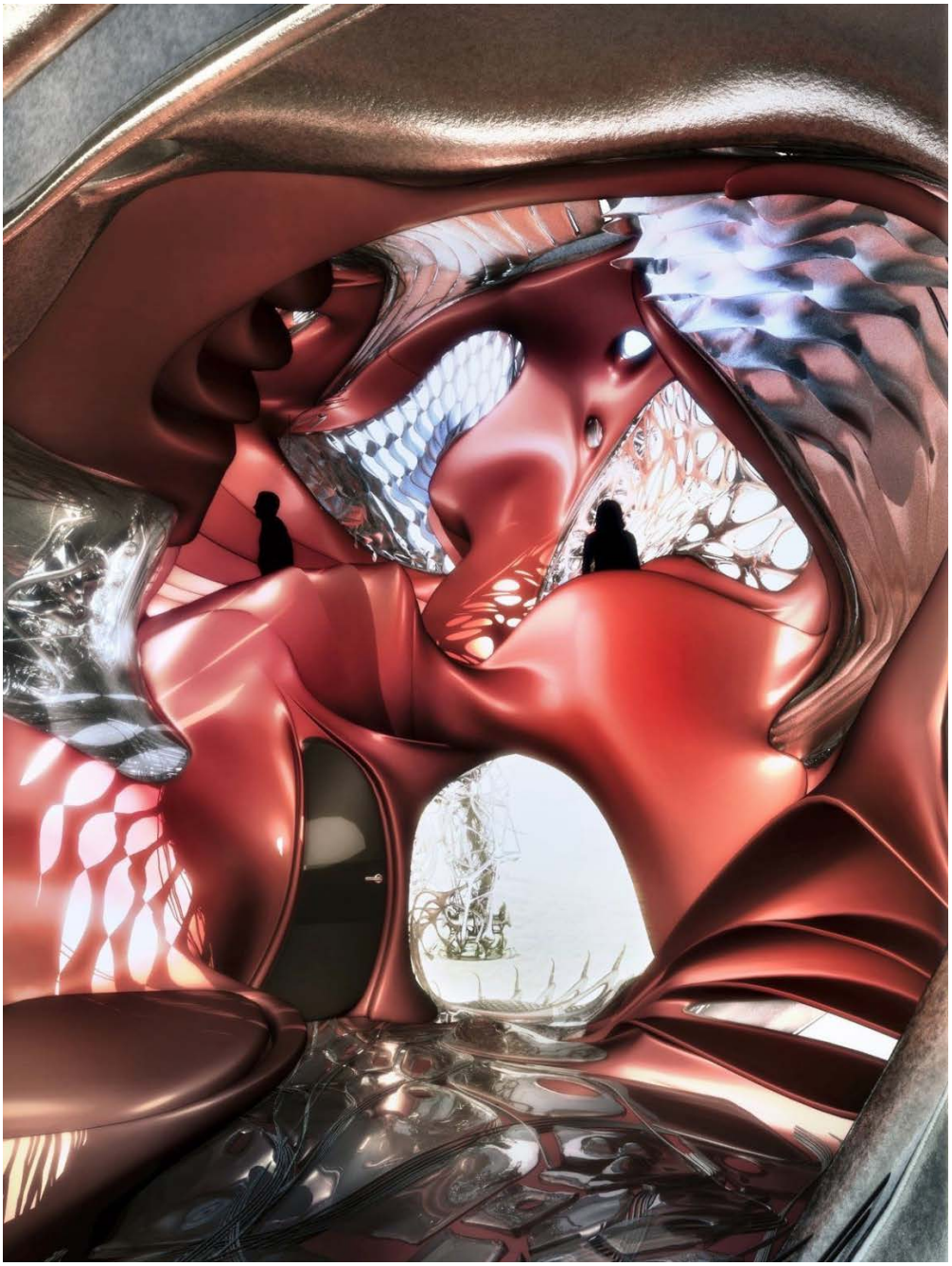


Figure 6-69. Student: Gonzalo Vaíllo. Lecturers: Hernán Díaz Alonso and José Carlos López Cervantes, *2217 NPL*, Excessive Postgraduate Program, University of Applied Arts Vienna, 2014.



Figure 6-70. MORPHtopia, *Public Library in Madrid*, 2019.



Figure 6-71. Students: Kate Gesing and John Scott. Lecturers: Gonzalo Vaíllo with Gabriel Esquivel, *Distributed Excesses*, T4T Lab Texas A&M, Spring 2020.

3) The third and final design strategy to attract and keep the spectator absorbed in the abstract-saturated expression is to put in tension different resolutions or scales. Michael Fried's reading of the work of Jackson Pollock is helpful in illustrating this point. Of great importance for this thesis is the difference that Fried establishes between "figurative" and "representational," and by extension, between "non-figurative" and "non-representational."[216] By "representational," we should understand the expression that is reduced to some existing phenomenon, physical or conceptual. It is, then, a form of semantic literalism; the *re*cognition so vehemently rejected in this work. On the contrary, the "non-representational" manifestation refers to itself and its interior. It is about the cognition in the now defended here. Abstract syntax, insofar as it is free of associative signification, is always non-representational (in Fried's sense). However, it remains internally representational, as discussed in Section 1.2. Now, keeping within the non-representational, we can continue with Fried to distinguish between the "figurative" and the "non-figurative." In the former, we receive demarcated and legible shapes or figures. Conversely, the latter is grasped as a continuous field, namely, as the absence of shapes and figures.[217] So, figure and field are antonyms.

Armed with these two conceptual axes, Fried confronts Pollock's work. Among other things, in his detailed review of the American painter in the essay "Three American Painters" (1965), Fried establishes a fundamental difference between paintings such as *Number 1, 1948* (Fig. 6-72) and *Out of the Web: Number 7, 1949* (Fig. 6-73). To the conversation, I will also add *Shadows: Number 2, 1948* (Fig. 6-73) as an augmentation of the pictorial principles of *Out of the Web*.

The former is non-representational and non-figurative. "In a painting such as *Number 1, 1948*," Fried writes, "there is only a pictorial field […] homogeneous, overall, and devoid both of recognizable objects and of abstract shapes."[218] This monotony occurs for three reasons. First, and concerning the figures, despite the fact that no two elements are exactly identical—so that they are ontologically diverse—their scale and resolution are too similar. These small differences fade even more as more elements exist in the composition. This is how a large set of differentiated figures becomes a singular homogeneous field for cognition and, consequently, uniform noise for the viewer. Two, concerning the relationship between the figures, their distribution is utterly monotonous, something that, as Fried notes, "gives the eye nowhere to rest once and for all."[219] Third, and most importantly, there is only one privileged dimension or scale of composition. The figures and their relationships all live on the same plane. There are only horizontal relationships. With these three conditioning factors, as already mentioned, contemporary architectural discourse based on parts—Retsin, Sánchez, or Köhler (Fig. 6-64)—suffer from a homogeneity similar to Pollock's *Number 1, 1948* (Fig. 6-72). These architects promote minimal or no variations in the shape, material, and size of the pieces, as Retsin's "building block." For this reason, the figures are received as a field. Such non-figurative saturation, together with a reduction to a single ontological plane, appears as an unmodulated and indistinguishable noise that leads to experiential indifference. I will continue the critique of this architectural movement in Section 7.2.

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[216] See Fried, "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella," 223–31.

[217] See Ibid., 223–25. Alfred H. Barr Jr. also came to a similar conclusion within abstract art. He noted that "the image of a square is as much an 'object' or a 'figure' as the image of a face or a landscape." Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 382.

[218] Fried, "Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella," 223–25.

[219] Ibid., 224.

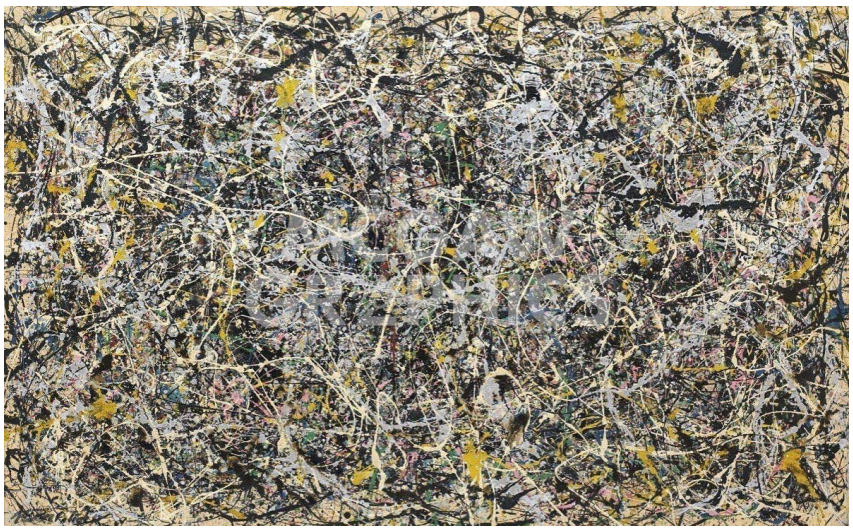


Figure 6-72. Jackson Pollock, *Number 1, 1948*, 1948.



Figure 6-73. Jackson Pollock, *Out of the Web: Number 7, 1949*, 1949.

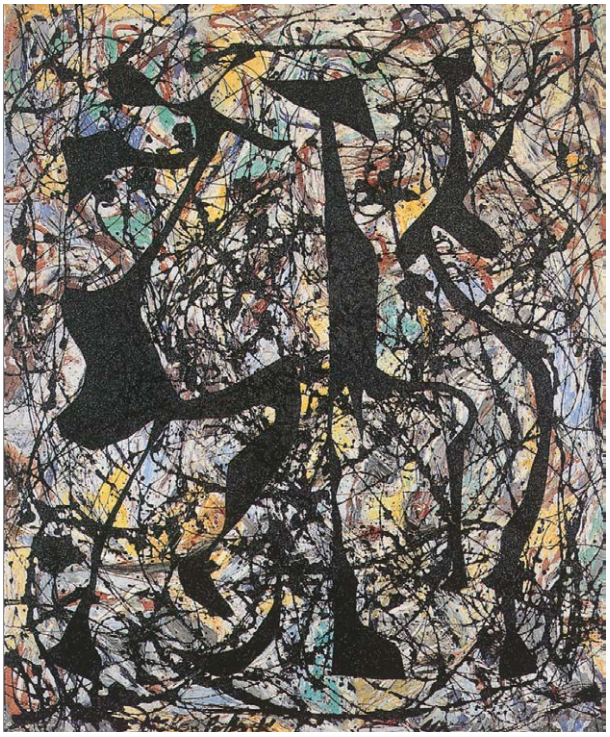


Figure 6-74. Jackson Pollock, *Shadows: Number 2, 1948*, 1948.

In contrast, *Out of the Web* (Fig. 6-73) is non-representational and figurative. There are always legible figures, albeit abstract. In Fried's view, this painting attempts—and accomplishes—the impossible: to achieve figuration with a style and a technique that precisely denies it.[220] Therefore, legibility and recognition are not the same thing. The former cognizes asemically, the latter semantically.

In this light, at least two clear scales of operation can be argued for in *Out of the Web*. First, there are shapes or figures on a larger scale with a twofold task: they speak of their own abstract syntax and relationality within their plane, but also give access to the hyper-discretized lower level. The second scale of operation in such a lower level is also cognitively figurative, despite resembling *Number 1, 1948*. However. this time, the hyper-dense level does not appear as a field, as it is additionally discretized by the upper figures. Unlike in *Number 1, 1948*, the spectator is "introduced" to that saturated level. To put it differently, the lower pictorial resolution is still similar to that of Pollock's other field paintings, or "optical" ones, as Fried calls them. What has changed is *our* perceptual resolution to that level of detail thanks to the preamble of an additional, more legible level in the work. This technique resembles the technique of symmetry discussed above in that it works by contrasting orders on different planes. Thus, it can be said that while in *Number 1, 1948*, there are only horizontal relations between the figures, something that leads to monotony as the shapes and their distribution are too similar, in *Out of the Web*, there are both horizontal and vertical tensions. There is more than one level or scale. In short, the anchor points are the figures and relationships that live on the upper more legible scale. In order to capture the saturated lower plane, it is necessary to frame its elements. Eco was already aware of the question of framing to solve the problem of homogeneous noise.[221]

In this context, accounting for the vertical and horizontal relationships within the elements of the artwork is what makes *Out of the Web* not only accessible, but also more intricate than *Number 1, 1948*. The former operates on more levels. Stated differently, in *Out of the Web*, there are multidimensional relations between elements to which perception responds simultaneously: to horizontal relations between elements of the same level (parts-to-parts and wholes-to-wholes) and of different levels (parts-to-wholes). This superior richness manifests itself in the experience through what the previous subsection called "ambiguous spatial scales." That suggests that, in addition to the large and small physical figures, several virtual ones exist between the two levels. Seen this way, the question of *scalarity* or *levels* gives artists and designers another compositional device to modulate vertical (part-to-whole) relationships according to the cognitive purposes of each design. In other words, the clarity or lack of clarity with which each level is physically modulated in relation to its superior and inferior planes is another design technique for the purpose of unfolding further personal articulations of the work.

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[220] According to Fried, Pollock's style and technique freed the line from the purpose of figuration, which ended in homogeneous field paintings such as *Number 1, 1948*. On this basis, the American painter did not abandon figuration and it is in works such as *Out of the Web*, when the aforementioned paradoxical challenge of being figurative using a non-figurative technique arises. For this reason, *Out of the Web* is the finest painting of Pollock's for Fried. Ibid., 227–29.

[221] As Eco wrote: "If I draw a square around a crack in a wall with a piece of chalk, I automatically imply that I have chosen that crack over others and now propose it as a particularly suggestive form—in other words, I have turned it into an artifact, a form of communication, simply by isolating it, by calling attention to it in a rather mechanical fashion not unlike the use of quotation marks in literature." Eco, *The Open Work*, 99.



Figure 6-75. In the vein of Fig. 6-72. Students: Silu Meng, Ruohan Xu, and Qianying Zhou in Daniel Köhler and Rasa Navasaityte's studio "NPoche,"The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL London, 2017-2018.

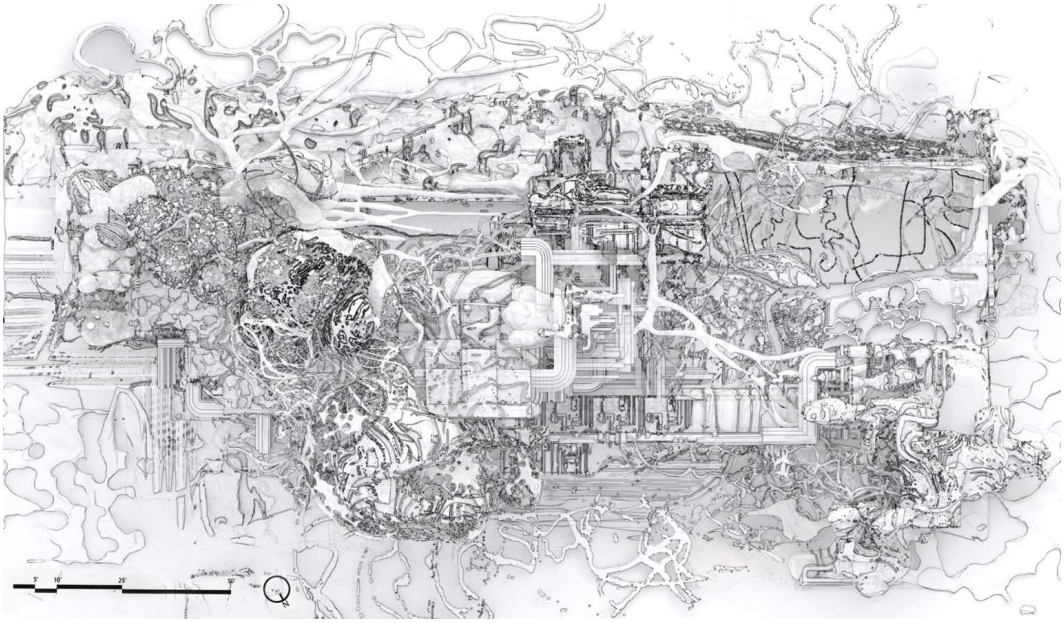


Figure 6-76. In the vein of Fig. 6-72. Students: Kate Gesing and John Scott. Lecturers: Gonzalo Vaillo with Gabriel Esquivel. T4T Lab, Texas A&M, Spring 2020.



Figure 6-77. In the vein of Fig. 6-74. Students: Yingxin Zhang and Lingyun Yang. Lecturer: Hina Jamelle. Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania, 2019.

For example, if compared with *Out of the Web*, Pollock's *Shadows: Number 2 1948* (Fig. 6-74) presents more physical scales that give an easier transition to lower levels. There are more *material* scalar steps in the size of the figures. However, this is detrimental to the actualization of *virtual* figures, as perception is more guided. From these comments on Pollock's works, I suggest that the same discussion on vertical and horizontal relationships takes place in architectural space, especially in contemporary computational discourses present in research and academia (Figs. 6-75, 6-76, and 6-77). How to methodologize this question in architectural design is the subject of the next Chapter 7.

6.4. Summary of abstraction

Here, a summary and some concluding remarks on abstraction are in order. An open and multiple space has been defined as one that aligns its affordances or capacities for a particular user with the user's cognitive abilities for that space. Building on this ground, this chapter has examined the limitations to such a purpose of multiplicity when the encounter with architectural space occurs to some extent based on past experiences and/or given significations. These cognitive limitations are formalized in the spatial arrangement by including *precedents* that can be specific to the discipline (particular designs or generalist typologies) or non-architectural references (reductive metaphors). The pre-existing semantic load in architectures that depart from the known and somehow keep it in the delivered space suppresses the intrinsic possibilities of that space. As opposed to this, abstraction emerges as a form of asemic and asyntactic expression: it does not have a determined meaning and is not exhausted in its appearance or visual configuration. Abstract language offers the possibility of the double unknown, something traceable in the history of abstraction.

On the one hand, at the beginning of the twentieth century, abstract art was born as a path to the ineffable depth beyond matter (Kandinsky) and as a way of establishing self-sustaining realities (Malevich's New Realism). In architecture, Le Corbusier was already pursuing the "ineffable space," here argued in his most expressionist works of Ronchamp and the crypt of La Tourette. In the urgency to investigate the material and the physical as a portal to his subterranean chambers, it has been observed how Miralles offered a particular vision of architectural production. His virtuosity in drafting was not a way of establishing non-physical realities, as Malevich intended, but without pointing to physical phenomena, his drawings already speak and contain the physicality of the built space. On the one hand, Miralles continues to operate in modernism by reducing architecture to the specificity of a medium, the built one in this case. On the other hand, he pursues multiplicity not by acknowledging the multimediality of the AP, as this thesis does in Section 1.3, but by mimicking—rather than representing—the logic of physical space in other means of articulation, especially 2D technical drawing.

Besides this, it has also been commented how Eco already spoke of abstract artworks in the 1960s for the purposes of multiplicity as a "field of actualized choices."[222] That is to say, abstraction is the very possibility of the possible. It is the natural expression of engaging with the multifarious. Here, I argue that what a theory of objects such as OOO provides, contra Harman's view, is that such contingency is not conjectural. It is real and enormously

[222] Ibid., 101.

finite.[223] Those manifestations that the cognizer does not grasp, either because they are not encoded for the person's cognitive system (the unknowable) or because they are not yet activated for or by him/her (the knowable), are all equally profiles and qualities of the object in question. If their number seems ridiculously large to us, it is indeed our epistemological problem.

From these historical positions, abstraction appears as a design vehicle that promotes that which resists being fixed in a static perceptual, intellectual, and utilitarian state. Instead, it promotes a continuous state of unknowability and, consequently, leads to a continuous state of knowability. Within this framework, this thesis defends an architecture of Abstract Space, sustained by three pillars. First, Abstract Space is *labyrinthine* and *cavernous*. Its spatial order is articulated in a heterogeneous, diverse, fragmented, and intricate way. Space is to be discovered, rather than assumed. This task requires the commitment of the user. It works like a cave: it has to be explored. Its uses are not normative, since it is not a space designed explicitly to satisfy particular behaviors and modes of living. For this reason, Abstract Space is highly polyvalent. A cave does not create habits of use. Rather, following the primitive cave dwellers' mode of space performance, Abstract Space is to be occupied, rather than inhabited. Second, Abstract Space is compositionally *saturated*. High-density formulations allow us to expand and modulate more instances of space. In what has been called a *cascade of scales*, saturation offers multiple levels between the regular distances with which we usually confront space (context, building, room, detail). Third, in the face of an abstract saturation that does not instill a plurality of impressions but, on the contrary, leads to cognitive indifference, a series of techniques have been presented to favor the aesthetic engagement of the user, here called *anchor points*.

The first anchor point strategy has proposed the confrontation of different resolutions of orders within the same composition. For example, an overwhelming articulation at a lower scale can be grasped if there is a simpler order governing its upper scale, like the symmetrical Rorschach's inkblots. The second strategy has included familiar precedents to capture attention, but without providing explicit significance. The third has advocated the tension of different compositional systems operating on various scales. In the latter, if a saturated expression does not want to fall into a homogeneous field, difference is achieved through tensions between legible figures.

Within the concern for opaque-productive space in the present Part Three, it can be concluded that the major difference between an abstract-saturated manifestation that is productive from one that is indifferent is figuration. The ability to express legible forms is not contrary to their reception as partially blurred and intertwined, as proposed by the technique of ambiguous scales. When objects operate not only on the same level but also between levels, there are horizontal and vertical relationships.

How to make operative as a design methodology the relationship within and between scales so as to unravel an abstract and saturated space of an AP is the topic of the next chapter.

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[223] As already mentioned, Harman seeks to abolish the proliferation of effects and qualities by attributing the emergent effect not to the object itself, but to the interaction of the object with a cognizer. See DeLanda and Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 69–70. My view is that cognition is a special kind of object in which what comes out of that encounter belongs to the cognized entity. Therefore, Part Two has repeatedly presented cognition as innocuous.

Chapter 7. Part-to-whole

Talking about architectural design under a theory of autonomous objects implies—as redundant as it may sound—dealing with objects, in the plural, and their relationships, which are also taken as objects. To formalize a design is to articulate some objects with others from which another emerges. More precisely, since designers do not have direct access to objects themselves, it is to articulate some qualities with others of other objects. Furthermore, a design strategy that deals with a theory of autonomous objects, such as OOO, can also reinforce or acquire new insights into the architectural question of levels or scales. For this philosophical school, things nest within nested things without this nesting being complete in either case. Following this path, architectural design ventures further into the discourse of wholes and parts or mereology.

Within this framework, the architect's task in deploying some AP's spatial manifestation is to find some relational order among the profiles of the compound parts, no less than the emergent profile itself. This operative mode leads to a horizontal and vertical causation between the parts and from the parts to the whole and vice versa. This activity is nothing else but to compose. In Latin, *componere* means "to put together," and a "composite" is always a thing (whole) made up of at least two other things (parts). This apparently simple condition brings us back the cosmological structure of the world configured in levels—or its synonyms: contexts, layers, planes, scales, strata.

As a refresher, Part One noted that the AP's multiplicity has two general modulations: one *representational* (appearances, effects, capacities) and the other *compositional*, which refers to its lower foundational echelons (the stratum of the parts). This distinction, however, did not cancel the possibility that both can be simultaneous: a constitutive part that is also a qualitative expression of a project. Hence, there could be elements that are both quality and constitutive part at the same time. In that case, such qualities are not *emergent* but *repeated*. As noted in Chapter 1, this is the typical condition of the architectural project as a "phantom object": one that uses the bodies of its component to represent itself as well (Fig. 1-3). This is a shared qualitative material between the part and the whole or, stated differently, a proxy. That means that whereas the emergent quality appears in the object but not in the parts, the repeated quality lies in both. So, the latter had the double function of being a constitutive part and representing the object by being repeated on it. On this ground, the question of multiplicity—be it of quality, parts, or both at the same time—derives from the condition of irreducibility of the object to its current state: every entity is more than its current material expression and performance. This is clear in Harman's "mining" critique, where an object cannot be simplified to what it is made of (undermining), what it does (overmining), or both at the same time (duomining). More generally, the question of the object as a One/Many package is irreducible to any quality, which gives rise to the cognitive condition of the double unknown, that is, of its ineffable being and its knowable manifestations. At the same time, both representations and parts are necessary. Without the former, all objects would be the same borderless isotropic existence; without the latter, the object directly would not exist. Thus, when the AP has

been described as a unity and a multiplicity, it means that the project is a single and singular piece of reality that unites both a set of representations and a set of parts, regardless of whether some of them are the same at times.

Part Two has dealt extensively with the multiplicity of representations—especially in Chapter 5—and championed aesthetics as the cognitive mode with which not only the project's deep reality can be accessed indirectly but also as a way of navigating its myriad phenomena. These cognitive encounters have been treated as "foreign relations" (Harman) or "exo-relations" (Bryant) of the project, which, in any case, each constitutes in itself another object: the one that is here called "cognitive-unit" (Chapter 3). Two main characteristics have been defined for the cognitive unit. First, it is internal to the cognized object (Fig. 2-3) and is innocuous to it, meaning that cognition modifies neither the thing's substance nor its qualities and capabilities. Cognition activates and extracts; it does not construct.

Following the sequence of the topics studied in the dissertation (1) the ontological condition of the AP and (2) the cognition of the AP, it seems that the theme now should be (3) the composition of the AP. In other words, Part One has dealt with a description of the AP as object and Part Two with the cognitive, foreign, or exo-relations with the human cognizer. It seems then that Part Three should complete the circle around the AP and deal with its constitutive, domestic, or endo-relations. As Bryant reminds us: "Domestic relations are relations that structure the internal being of an object."[1] Given the AP's multimediality in its representations, it can be assumed that its constituent material is also disseminated in different media. The question would then be: what are the relationships between these elements in different media that structure the internal being of a project?

However, there is a twist to be made. The ontological composition or constitution of the AP as an object is, in my view, primarily a philosophical, rather than a design issue. Or, if compared with other disciplines, the design scope of architecture is certainly more modest. For example, the design of a company requires addressing and mobilizing broader areas and means of its internal qualitative gearing, as for example Harman studies in the case of the Dutch East India Company.[2] On the other hand, the architect may explore the multiplicity of the project in the design process, but its typical outcome is a single expression—hence the expression "synthesis" is often used in architectural design. This does not mean that architectural design cannot deal with internal dependencies in general. But, ironically, architectural design does not normally deal with the ins and outs of the project as an object, but with some of its profiles. The direct material of design are qualities, not the entirety of the designed object. In other words, the direct practicalities of architectural design are some qualitative profile of the AP, rather than the AP as a One/Many package. Given this, this dissertation pursues that this architectural profile leads us precisely to the project's being and multiplicity. Architects do not strictly design the AP, but certain parts and expressions of it that are nevertheless intended to point to its twofold interior. It is at this point that the "design" of the present design theory acquires more strength in its popular architectural sense. Let me clarify this point further.

In Part One, it was argued that the AP is an immaterial or phantom object composed of a unitary substance surrounded by a cornucopia of phenomena in different media. One of the consequences of this phantasmality determined the AP as a medium-promiscuous entity. Like a company or a government, such a kind of object has no single

[1] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 214.
[2] Harman, *Immaterialism*.

mode of expression.[3] In this sense, refraining from speaking in terms of matter helps to conceptualize the idea of "withdrawal." The object is most obviously irreducible to its parts or effects when it lacks an explicit material basis. Its price: problems in tackling composition on a formal basis, as architectural design ultimately does. How are we to speak of architectural composition when the emerging expression is immaterial due to lack of medium specificity? One can think of employing the AP's multi-media condition as a design formulation, that is to say, delivering the project in disparate media, a logical maneuver that surely deserves to be explored. Yet to be consistent with the premise initiated in this chapter, that of approaching built space as an expression of the project, how can we speak of composition within a particular medium of expression without reducing the AP to it?

If only methodologically, I see it as more appropriate to go upwards rather than downwards: not from the AP to some manifestation and medium, but from some manifestation and medium to the AP. The consequences may look the same, but the conception is radically different. That implies approaching composition from some AP's partial means of expression separately, albeit framed within the broader domain of the project—in this case, I have decided it shall be the built space. Again, instead of discussing the composition of the AP down to some of its expressions, it is about the composition of some expressions framed in the AP. In the former method, the danger of literalism is all too present. Hence, this chapter will not elaborate on the AP's composition as such, since it has no explicit material medium. It will address the composition of some of its spaces on behalf of the entire AP. So the AP will always hover in the background of all the considerations on composition presented in the next sections.

To do so, we will have to go down one level: from the AP as an immaterial object to some of its physical parts/expressions. (I stress one more time that the decision to discuss the AP from its spatial built manifestation is purely personal and operative, as noted in the introduction of Part Three.) In this sense, the physicality of the built space will allow for a manageable discussion of composition for design purposes with the precaution of not forgetting what it represents and its role as a placeholder within the project's chain of multiplicity, i.e., as an opaque-productive manifestation.

This gesture is not entirely frivolous. In discussing the relationship between an object and its parts, Harman reminds us that "every quality of things turns out to be an object or element in its own right."[4] In our case, this suggests that the building or a built space is simultaneously one of the multiple phenomena of the AP, one of the multiple constitutive parts of it *and* an object in its own right. An architectural space is an object in itself that also acts as a proxy for the larger AP in which it is partially embedded (see again Fig. 1-3). By the same token, this quality-part-object is also made of other objects. For

[3] Let me extend even more here as to why the architectural project is an immaterial object by recalling some comments from Part One. There, it has been said that the AP, like the company, is perhaps the most illustrative entity for us to understand OOO's notion of the "withdrawn object." This is so because, in this case, the question of irreducibility and anti-literalism is more evident—there is no clear manifestation or medium of expression into which the object can be reduced. What exactly do we narrow down the reality of an AP to? The building, the plans, the functions? In the case of the company, to its products, its headquarters, its personnel, its machinery, its dividends? In the latter, none of the components or their sum nor their relationships can give us the company as such. Similarly, an AP is not its constructed building, its blueprints, its functions, and/or our impressions. Nor do the relationships between them all make the reality of the AP tangibly present. Nevertheless, in speaking of a physical object such as a building, we must not understand that its ontological dimension is reducible to that physical expression or its medium either.

[4] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 165.

example, a building is a composition of parts that appears as a qualitative and constitutive part of the AP. Yet the building is never fully active in its acts of qualification and constitution of the project. Therefore, the object withdraws from its quality as much as the part does from the object.[5] In the same vein, the building as an object in its own right recedes from us as much as the AP does cognitively. In short, this chapter will deal with the constitutive relations of the object of a space, relations that also act as representative qualities of the AP.

On this basis, the qualitative sense of multiplicity discussed in Part Two is set aside to consider some individual expressions as the project's proxies; in this case, its spatial manifestations. Hence, the angle of multiplicity addressed in the present chapter will not be representational but *compositional* within the physical medium of built space. Stated differently, the next sections will not examine what makes a manifestation advance interpretatively. Again, that has already been discussed in Part Two: its triggering capacity for other manifestations. Instead, it will examine the manifestation backward towards what composes that expression-object for such a triggering capacity. In a nutshell, we will discuss the composition of one of the AP's spaces made of many components. This will inevitably lead to addressing a part-to-whole discourse between the space as a whole and its parts—all within the broader ambit of the AP, living one level above and in an immaterial medium. In general terms, all interrelations between levels are *mereological* in character, where mereology is the theory of the parthood relations: of the parts, their relationships, and the whole they compose. Mereology appears then as an instrument to study (and speculate with) architectural composition *formally*.[6]

For the purposes of this discussion, it should be cautioned that "composition" is undoubtedly today a denigrated term in architecture. This is because it has been simplified to its classical understanding of relating geometric shapes under certain rigid rules of arrangement that produce a totalitarian and static whole. In light of this, numerous voices have called for its replacement by other freer paradigms such as systems, dynamic interconnections, performative environments, and so on—all derived from their respective theoretical sources. However, the classical notion of composition is but one entry of the term. Composition is both verb and noun: it is the action of putting together, as well as a thing made up of several elements. In a theory of objects such as OOO, we need both. In this context, nothing limits the *what* (nature of the elements to be composed), the *how* (orders of their relationship), and the *who* (authorship). The latter—the *who*—is not exclusive to the authoritarian human designer. Indeed, the *what* and the *who* increasingly tend to be the same in contemporary architectural design: *who* designs is within *what* is designed. This bias is becoming more and more present in ecological thinking, where the agency of the designer is not entirely in the hands of the human being, but is shared with other non-human actors. In these cases, there is no reason to stop talking about composition. "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'" by Bruno Latour makes this clear.[7] It matters little whether we call the design elements systems, objects, actors, or

[5] Harman makes this point clear in *Guerrilla Metaphysics.* The compound parts of an object, which are also objects in themselves, do not fully unfold into the object they comprise. That is, the constitutive participation of the part is fractional in relation to its completeness. For the same reason of simply being objects, compound objects elude our cognition as much as the composed object does. See the notion of "vicarious causation" in Ibid., chap. 10.

[6] It is Giorgio Lando who reminds us that mereology is a formal study. See Giorgio Lando, *Mereology: A Philosophical Introduction* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 2.

[7] Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto,'" *New Literary History* 41, no. 3 (2010): 471–

agents. The moment there is more than one, there is a relationship, hence a composition, thus an object. If two or more dynamic systems interact with each other in a self-regulatory manner, in what sense is its outcome not a composite? In what sense is a system itself *composed* of other systems not a composition, as something made of other things? Therefore, it is urgent to rehabilitate the term "composition" in our field instead of repressing it, because all these critical voices do not defend anything other than composition itself.

That having been clarified, composition is approached here in its simple but powerful idea of "composites-within-composites" or a "composite that composes": something that is made of more than one thing and that makes, together with other things, something else. As usual, Miralles will provide the background, which, in this case on heterogeneous composition, will refer to what Peter B. Jones calls "buildings-within-a-building" in the Spanish architect's way of designing.[8] However, it is also Miralles as a case study who will limit the discussion of architectural composition in a multimedia disposition. As has been said several times, Miralles remains modern in taxonomizing the discipline according to a specific medium. Architecture is the built medium for him. Although he pushes diversity and heterogeneity in resonance with the AP's multiplicity, his architecture remains uni-medium. Therefore, the personal interest of this design theory on multimedia composition under a sympoietic or xenological composition should be postponed for another time.

Within this framework, this chapter will first trace the philosophical and historical context of part-whole theories to its today's formulation in OOO, extracting three main principles: *emergence*, *constitutive parts and relations*, and *levels*. This overview should suffice to pave, in a second step, a critique of how some contemporary positions in architecture, especially the so-called "discrete architecture" associated with socio-technological agendas and which defends a particular discourse of parts. As an alternative to them, the third section of the chapter will examine Miralles' view and design methodology for architectural composition. His approach will be studied by retrospectively applying an interpretation of Levi Bryant's concept of "strange mereology," in which parts and wholes mutually disturb each other and in which each entity is simultaneously part and whole.

7.1. Philosophical and historical observations on part-whole schemes

If one of the fundamental questions of all philosophy and metaphysics is where reality is to be found, another, and typically linked to it, is what constitutes this reality and how. In this context, the line of thought followed here will be that of the theories investigating the structure of reality from part-whole schemes, assuming an equivalent reflection in the sensual realm. Three key concepts will be unfolded: *emergence*, *constitutive parts and relations*, and *levels*.

On the part-whole terrain, any model that accounts for individual substances and their relationships would always owe some credit to Aristotle. In his *Metaphysics*, we find that the whole is something complete. It has attributes above and beyond the sum of its

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[8] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 9.

parts. If this is not so, we will not speak of a "whole" but of a "heap."[9] Edmund Husserl, who offered the first comprehensive approach to parts and wholes in modern culture, recalled something similar. In *The Logical Investigations* (1901), the German philosopher differentiates between an "aggregate," as a mere coexistence of elements without being able to found a new object above them, and the "whole," which does.[10] Thus, the whole is irreducible to its parts. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the constitution of a whole from such upward causality is known as *emergence*: an entity has properties of its own that are not found in its parts and these new properties only appear when the parts interact. As DeLanda remarks: "if the parts stop interacting, the whole itself ceases to exist, or becomes a mere aggregation of elements."[11] The classic example is water, which has emergent properties that hydrogen or oxygen do not have.

For the present discussion, three additional key principles must be drawn from Husserl, which are present in this thesis' OOO formulation and will be important for architectural design: (1) parts and whole have the same ontological status, (2) all parts within a whole have the same status of relation to that whole, and (3) the concept of levels. The first calls the concept of flat ontology where all entities equally exist differently, regardless of the causal relationships in which they are involved. With the same logic, the second one does not mean that each part of an object relates in the same terms with the whole, and much less that all the parts are the same. Each part and each part-whole relation within an object is singular, thus *distinct*. The heart and the legs of a body are not the same and their particularities are clearly distinct when relating to the body. Yet these parts and relationships are the same because they are simply *in* the same whole. As Husserl comments: "There [are] no differences in the *form* of the relation to the whole, all parts [are] 'contained in the whole' in the same fashion."[12]

Given this general situation, specificities arise among internal relationships. One of them is whether they are constitutive, representative, or both simultaneously. As a reminder from Chapter 1, "there is an absolute distinction," Harman states, "between the domestic relations that a thing needs to some extent in order to exist, and the external alliances that it does not need."[13] At the same time, and this is worth repeating thousand times over, Harman continues: "An object cannot be exhausted by a set of alliances. But neither is it exhausted by a summary of its pieces since any genuine object will be an emergent reality over and above its components."[14] A body is not only above its heart, legs, and lungs separately, but also above *all* its components together. Thus, a building is above each of its rooms, façades, and load-bearing walls, as well as all of them as a group. However, the condition of emergence does not invalidate the existence of a dependency relationship whereby an object cannot exist without its constituent parts. In this way, we have differentiated in Chapter 1 between constitutive objects (parts) and non-constitutive objects (cognizers), which by extension establish constitutive relations (domestic ones) and non-constitutive relations (foreign ones).[15]

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[9] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, eBook, n.d., Book VII 17.
[10] Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, 177.
[11] DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 71.
[12] Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, 179.
[13] Harman, *Prince of Networks*, 135.
[14] Ibid.
[15] As a reminder, any non-constitutive relation is another object in itself. This has been, in fact, the object of study of Part Two: the cognitive-unit. In other words, I am a non-constitutive object of a project when I cognize it, and so cognition is a non-constitutive relation to the project. But cognition itself is an object in its

Before turning to the question of levels, one additional observation is in order. That a whole is irreducible to its constitutive parts because of its emergence implies, in turn, that a part never fully participates in the conformation of its whole as per Fig. 1-3. This is an important point for two things. On the one hand, the part refuses full contact with the whole, yielding a surplus of the part relative to the whole. Miralles' pieces will show such a characteristic. The question of surplus and excess is not new in this thesis. Part Two addressed it for cognitive relations. It showed that cognitive encounters never exhaust the observed object. The same will be true for constitutive relations. In this sense, the inability to comply with the fullness of what the object offers them is what both constitutive (domestic to the real domain) and cognitive (foreign to the sensual domain) relations have in common. For the present case, this means that the constitutive part is doubly partial with respect to the whole. It occupies a fragment of its foundation and, within it, it is only half-committed, since it never exhausts all its powers for the task. In OOO's fashion, the nexus between a part and its whole is the relation of two objects on two different levels. But because in the domain of the real one object never touches another directly, Harman states that this relation must be *vicarious*.[16] This applies to both constitutive and cognitive relations. Therefore, in the formation of a whole, the part offers some face as the mediation between its reality and the one it contributes to, which means that the part safeguards a constitutive excess.[17]

Within this framework, and since the part offers one or another of its profiles for the erection of a whole, the part is likely to be involved in more than one whole. Again, Fig. 1-3 is all about that. Refreshing the example of Section 1.1, David is involved in many relationships: he works in a company, lives with his family, and bowls on a team. He is a constituent part of all these different wholes and brings three different forms of engagement to each of these tasks. How he contributes to his family is different from how he contributes to his bowling team. In the same vein, the headquarters building where David works is part of a neighborhood or urban fabric, no less than of David's company as an immaterial object. So, David and the building are constitutive elements of the company-whole, contributing each at half throttle. These two conditions—partial engagement in a whole and multiple engagements with various wholes—give credit to the part to stand as an object in itself, i.e., with its own ontological status as an autonomous existence. The piece, as an object, is also selective in what it contributes to and how it does so (Subsection 2.2.4). As will be seen in detail, this is the basic principle by which Miralles' pieces are interchangeable, meaning that they can assume different positions and roles within the same project and different projects. This multiple performative capacity was already suggested in the U-shapes of the roof and walls of the outdoor facilities of the Huesca Sports Center (see the discussion around Fig. 6-23).

The third important concept when dealing with part-whole schemes is the question of *levels*, or the synonymous *contexts*, *layers*, *planes*, *strata*, or *scales*. We find that again in Husserl's theory, where he accounted for "a fixed order of 'foundations' [constitution of wholes], in which what is founded at one level serves to 'found' the level next above."[18] This means that a part contributes to the formation of a whole at an upper level, but at the level of the part, that part is also a whole that operates above its component parts at a lower level.

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own right composed of me and the project.

[16] Graham Harman, "On Vicarious Causation," *Collapse*, 2007, 171–205.

[17] See also Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 165–67.

[18] Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, 179.

In short, "one object is simultaneously a part of another object *and* an independent object in its own right," Bryant remarks.[19] What this implies is that the world is structured in levels of reality. Each of them is populated by objects that are a whole and a part at the same time. This overall scheme is what Harman refers to as "a spiraling interplay of objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects."[20]

In the contemporary discourse of objects, in addition to Harman and Bryant, the idea of levels is also consistent in the work of Tristan Garcia. In *Form and Object*, the French philosopher is interested in "the state of the composite of everything that may always act as a component."[21] This apparently simple statement already tells us that a composite operates as a component. In other words, something composed of something else also composes another something. In Garcia's words: "Each thing is in other things which are in other things."[22] One of the typical errors with this cosmological structure is to understand this nesting as exclusive of the physical.[23] Quite the contrary, the universe is a mélange of media in which objects of disparate nature interact vicariously both vertically and horizontally. Again, although this point will not be addressed in this dissertation, architecture—as a thing of the world—lives accordingly in this multimediality nesting.

Within this complex Matryoshka structure, one important question is still open: is the part of the part also part of the whole? This ontological or domestic issue seems to be clarified by following, at least for once, a cognitive or foreign example. I can see just half of Mary's face and not her whole body for my experience to point to Mary-object. Or for me, and no doubt for any rocker, it is enough to listen to the first notes of *Sweet Child O' Mine* to realize that we are in front of the whole song and not just its opening riff. Further along this line, this phenomenological intentionality is the same whether I am conscious of it or not. It also occurs the first time I confront these objects. This means that referring to a whole through the encounter with a part does not depend on whether I am aware of this condition or my memory anticipates this vertical relation. A building is never experienced in its entirety, and yet the perceived parts are enough to give a complete expression of the whole they compose, as well as being an expression of themselves. This implies that even when occupying a space for the first time—so I have no memory of such an event—the internal call between the project and its parts is there as it is subject-independent. As stated, this cognitive logic can be assumed to be ontological. As confirmed by Husserl: "pieces of pieces of a whole are themselves pieces of the whole."[24]

To come to a preliminary conclusion on the part-whole question, one of the main consequences of the three principles of emergence, constitutive parts and relations, and levels is that a part, like the whole it composes, is an autonomous object different from others. To put it in a concatenated way: the world—and by inclusion architecture, the AP, and any of its spaces—is structured in levels of reality inhabited by singular and autonomous objects that emerge from constitutive parts and relations. Let me repeat and extend a quote by Bryant from Chapter 2:

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[19] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 214.
[20] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 158.
[21] Garcia, *Form and Object*, 19.
[22] Ibid., 79. It should be noted that, despite their many coincidences—and, obviously, also disagreements—Garcia wrote *Form and Object* without knowing Harman's work.
[23] That the world is not a physical reduction is one of the fundamental distinctions to demarcate ontological realism from any (new) materialism. Its consequence is clear: while the materialist accounts for reality in the relations between matter, for the realist, reality is beyond those relations.
[24] Husserl, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, 179, [emphasis removed].

> Every object is populated by other objects that it enlists in maintaining its own existence. As a consequence, we must avoid reducing objects to the manner in which they are enlisted by other objects precisely because the objects enlisted are always themselves autonomous objects. […] [W]hat we have are relations of dependency where nonetheless parts and wholes are distinct and autonomous from one another. […] [T]he object that emerges out of other objects does not *erase* the objects out of which it is composed, but rather generates a third autonomous object related to these other autonomous objects.[25]

These three principles and their consequence that both the whole and the part are autonomous and distinct objects provide us with a conceptual device to reexamine Miralles' architecture as a mereological approach. The Spanish architect's design method reflects the condition that an object is simultaneously autonomous and enters into lateral, ascending, and descending constitutive relationships. In his design process, together with Pinós and Tagliabue, the whole and the parts develop separately and, at the same time, in an abrupt adaptation to each other.

Yet before that, let us consider that area of the contemporary landscape of advanced and academic architecture dominated by the discourse of parts. I shall demonstrate how many of the current positions on the topic, especially those concerned with bridging computational methods with socio-economic problems, violate in one way or another some of the three basic principles outlined in this section. This critique will also allow for thickening further the present theoretical arguments. The main discrepancies will gravitate around the methods towards equality: either a regime of sameness (their proposal) or distinct(ive)ness (this thesis' approach). The troubling aspect of the former is the impossibility of an autonomous whole because of the lack of ontological levels.

7.2. The discreteness of sameness: a critique

Translating the latter conclusion of the autonomous part to architectural design is certainly not new. Emil Kaufmann already identified that in Ledoux's work. As a reminder of Subsection 2.1.1, the architecture historian defined Ledoux's *Pavillonsystem* as "the free association of independent elements."[26] And more straightforwardly: "the part is free within the framework defined by the whole."[27] In examining the relationship between the social revolution of the late eighteenth century and its architecture, Kaufmann notes: "At the moment when the rights of the individual are declared on the basis of human rights, when Kant establishes autonomous morality in the place of the previous heteronomous morality, Ledoux will lay the foundations of the autonomous architecture."[28] To put it reductively, free and autonomous individuals in society equal free and autonomous parts in architecture. The dissolution of social hierarchies came through the dissolution of the French absolutist monarchy, i.e., of the totalitarian whole. In response, the Baroque unity evaporated in favor of the individuality of architectural elements and of the buildings themselves in larger complexes. As the title of Kaufmann's seminal book *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* indicates, these ideas were further extended in the Modern Movement of the twentieth century, mainly thanks to the mass-production paradigm that in architecture was epitomized by the

[25] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 217.
[26] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 38, [author's translation].
[27] Ibid., 40, [author's translation, emphasis removed].
[28] Ibid., 29, [author's translation].

Dom-Ino House. However, as also stated in Chapter 2, this translation was an act of *literal* or *constitutive symbolism* (see also the conclusion), one that operates purely on an epistemological, subject-centered basis: from the new social and ethical landscape to our perception of architecture.[29]

It is important to recall this historical position because the same subject-centered mindset and literal translation from the social to the architectural sphere is present today in some voices of "discrete architecture," in what can be called its socio-technological approach. Let us clarify the context. Two paths can be distinguished under the current notion of "discrete design": the *philosophical* and the *socio-technological*. The first relates more to OOO's texts with a compositional understanding of the autonomous part oriented to phenomenological interests, such as the search for ambiguity, strangeness, and mystery in perception. Here we identify figures such as Tom Wiscombe, Mark F. Gage, or Ferda Kolatan.[30] This thesis belongs to such a branch. The second group focuses on advanced computational methods applied to socio-economic urgencies. Within it, we find people like Gilles Retsin, Daniel Köhler, Rasa Navasaityte, Mollie Claypool, M. Casey Rehm, or José Sánchez.[31] Like Ledoux, the socio-technological approach to discrete architecture does not arise from architecture *an sich*, but social, economic, and ethical needs. Like Ledoux's methods identified by Kaufmann, there is an explicit reflection of these motivations and ideologies in architectural design. In this context, architectural design stems from subject-centered matters—something contrary to what subjectlessness entails in this thesis. I repeat once again, a subjectless approach does not mean the dissolution of the human, but that of the subject in favor of the cognizer (Section 3.1). It does not also imply that subjectlessness cannot engage with contemporary urgencies. It does so precisely by acknowledging a wider scope of what those needs are and what architecture can do with them by not reducing those urgencies to our vision of them.

There is no doubt that working on contemporary needs and matters of our ongoing crises is crucial. In this sense, any discourse, be it the "discrete" or any other, must be applauded for it. However, social, ethical, and economic commitment cannot create armor

[29] In this sense, the architecture of the so-called the "three revolutionary architects" was as propagandistic as the one left behind. For the political representationism of Boullée's architecture, see Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, chap. 4. (If "propaganda" sounds too harsh, one can use "celebration," although the undertone remains intact.) The content, ideology, and concepts disseminated by pre- and post-French Revolution architectures were obviously antagonistic. But the question of the instrumentalization of architecture for representational purposes in a literal and oriented manner remains the same. The problem here is not symbolism as such, since it is the basis of the internal representational relations of the object (Section 1.2). The issue is the subject-centered limitation and orientation of this symbolic relationship. It occurs unidirectionally from the socio-political to the architectural vision, that is, exclusively between epistemological planes. Therefore, we find in Kaufmann a symbolism that is a superficial representativity. It is measured by and for the human subject. This is what today would be criticized as "correlationism" and that ontological realism aims to correct. In other words, theories such as OOO do not aim to suppress symbolism, but frame it in the subjectless amplitude of the internal relationship between the thing and its qualities. This indicates that architecture, its projects, and its parts are autonomous not by social dictates, however progressive and necessary they may be, but by themselves. The same observation applies today to the way architecture addresses the issues of social equality and inclusion, no less than sustainability and global warming. I will give a more detailed comment on this aspect in the final conclusion of the thesis. Before that, and as concluded in Part One, it is incongruous that Kaufmann established the autonomy of the discipline, its buildings, and its parts on such a constitutive symbolic basis. The fallacy lies in stating the condition of something—whether its autonomy or another feature—from an epistemological and ethical, rather than ontological position.

[30] For an overview, see Gannon et al., "The Object Turn. A Conversation."

[31] For an overview, see Gilles Retsin, ed., *Discrete: Reappraising the Digital in Architecture*, vol. 89–2, AD Architectural Design (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2019).

against criticism. No discourse can be legitimized only for its moral motivations and good intentions. If so, we dogmatize the debate and progress is monopolized. Having said that, my main criticism to the socio-technological movement of contemporary part-thinking in architecture is obviously not against its goals of equality and environmental agenda—to which everyone commits in their own way—but against its *methods* to those purposes. In particular, I will problematize its advocacy of completely rejecting any notion of the whole, as it leads to a regime of *sameness*. Before that, credit must be given to this movement in its rejection of the totalitarian whole.

Within the part-whole question in architectural design, the all-empowered whole has been the predominant position in the Baroque no less than in the first round of digital architecture, especially in the still-present parametricism. Their maxims lie in the definition of an absolutist entity where its parts are subdued. We know from Wölfflin that the parts in the Baroque unity disappear in what they compose, so they no longer exist autonomously.[32] Something similar occurs in those architectures that are nourished by the premises of the first digital turn. Perhaps its most evident register is the well-known idea of *subdivisions*, in which a topological surface is always segmented from an upper logic. That means that such a surface or volume can never be constituted by the laws of its parts. It is a sheer top-down compositional scheme. For example, in the continuous shell of Zaha Hadid's Heydar Aliyev Center (2012) (Fig. 7-1), the panels do not have an identity of their own. They depend on the topological configuration of the higher envelope. In this regime, if the whole changes, all its parts change accordingly—this is the basis of parametric design.[33] But if the parts change by their own means, the whole does not. In turn, the parts will be expelled from the composition, as they do not have sufficient status to affect in the slightest the whole they form. Therefore, the panels of the Heydar Aliyev Center, as parts, have no ontological recognition.

Moreover, parametricism is, according to José Sánchez, an architectural embodiment of a broader paradigm of production that produces social inequalities by concentrating power in a few individuals.[34] In other words, socio-economic dynamics that favor the creation of totalitarian wholes also reflect in the architectural processes and its formalizations.

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[32] As the art historian summarizes: "On principle, the baroque no longer reckons with a multiplicity of co-ordinate units, harmoniously interdependent, but with an absolute unity in which the individual part has lost its individual rights." Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, chap. IV.

[33] In more detail, the parametric method describes the relationship between a set of data—or parameters—and the particular selection within the domain of results. In other words, the parametric model is defined in terms of the interpolation of the variables selected by the designer to produce a multiple solution space. In principle, all solutions within such a space are equally successful in answering the initial problem derived from the data selection. In architectural design, the typical parametric approach seeks to articulate a set of inputs such as program, planning regulations, or environmental conditions (solar radiation, wind orientation, etc.). The results are usually interpreted as a whole, or a tectonic solution, which, in a second step, is thought of in terms of construction following the principles of subdivision. For a complete vision of the parametric paradigm, see Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture, Volume I*. and Patrik Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture, Volume II: A New Agenda for Architecture* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).

[34] Sánchez refers here to "vertical integration" as the model whereby companies reduce costs by internalizing production. However, this neoliberal practice requires a great deal of capital that is not available to all, something that consequently produces market inequalities that lead to social division. Sánchez associates parametric design with the dynamics of vertical integration. See Jose Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons: Participatory Systems in the Age of Platforms* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 35.



Figure 7-1. Zaha Hadid Architects, *Heydar Aliyev*, Baku, 2012.

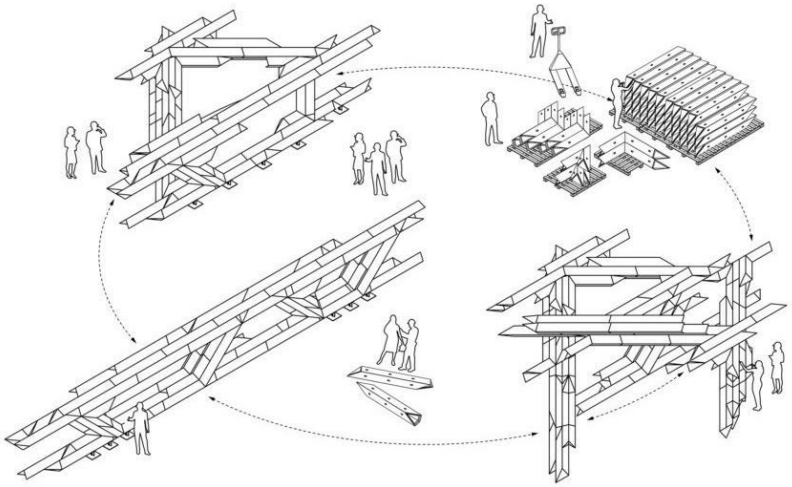


Figure 7-2. Gilles Retsin Architecture, *Tallinn Architecture Biennale Installation*, 2017.



Figure 7-3. José Sánchez and Alisa Andrasek, *Bloom*, 2012.

Against this, two related reactions spring up: (1) the dissolution of the totalitarian whole and (2) the privilege of a single part capable of everything. About the former, discrete architecture, in all its registers, rejects the holistic and all-encompassing whole. While the philosophical-oriented group continues to lend some credit to the figure of the whole, the socio-technological one proposes a discourse entirely of parts.[35] In the latter, the whole is subsidiary or outright nonexistent. As Köhler indicates, mereology here becomes a "part-to-part method," namely, "parts without wholes."[36] In the absence of a top-down organization, the emphasis is on the combinatorial capabilities of connection between the parts—hence the interest in digital computation. Under this umbrella, the multiplicity of assemblies increases. Each result appears unexpected, since there is no guideline coming from the composed. This is what Sánchez calls "open-wholes" (Figs. 7-2 and 7-3).[37] For him, the implications of combinatorics are not only formal, but socio-economic. Under a given kit of parts, design is distributed. A community can engage and organize itself collectively in assembling given kits according to its needs.[38]

On the second point of the all-encompassing part, the dissolution of the totalitarian whole leads to the designation of a single part from which everything starts. In the search for open formations, the LEGO block concept appears as the paragon of socio-technological discreteness: a single, repetitive, and cost-efficiently mass-produced unit. Its granular capacity of combination promises a diversity of outcomes. As Retsin argues: "this is not a mass customisation of form, where every building component is different, but one based on assembly, from serialised and standardised elements."[39] In other words, the defense of variation and difference, or adaptation to particular social demands, does not lie in the parts—since they are all the same—but in the connectivity between them, namely in the *pattern*.[40] Therefore, the success of this paradigm rests on the design of the simplest "building block" with the greatest combinatorial capacity. The question of the specific assembly pattern only comes in a second step, and whether it is the responsibility of the same architect who conceived the block, of another designer, or of a local community is a case-by-case matter.

Now, without diminishing any merit and credit to this agenda, the two pillars that sustain it—the dissolution of the whole and the super-part—are also susceptible to criticism. When examining the socio-technological part-thinking movement in architecture from an ontological realist perspective, some concatenated problems arise.

First, since the whole is a subsidiary consequence of its parts, there is no autonomous whole. This pure upward causation entails the complete nullification of any

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[35] For example, on the "philosophical" side of discreteness, Wiscombe's idea of "tattooing" comes to mind as bearing in mind the whole. In it, the architect problematizes the question of surface subdivision and proposes, alternatively, the insertion of figures that do not follow the geometry of the mass on which they rest. See Wiscombe, "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture," 41–43.

[36] Daniel Köhler, "Mereological Thinking: Figuring Realities within Urban Form," *Architectural Design* 89, no. 2 (2019): 35–37, https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.2409. Moreover, Köhler's interpretation of mereology is the first comprehensive approach to the subject in architecture. See Daniel Köhler, *The Mereological City: A Reading of the Works of Ludwig Hilberseimer* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016).

[37] Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons*, 64.

[38] Ibid., 80.

[39] Gilles Retsin, "Fresh From the Forest: Raw, Discrete and Fully Automated" (Space And Digital Reality: Ideas, Representations/Applications and Fabrication, Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, 2020), 102–13, https://www.artun.ee/space-and-digital-reality-ideas-representations-applications-and-fabrication-arhitektuuriteaduskonna-toimetised-10/.

[40] See Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons*, 80–82.

downward one and, therefore, the reducibility of the composed to its constituents. As we saw earlier with Husserl, parthood is only possible if a whole contains the parts. Of course, something will always result from any combination, but without any glimpse from above, dealing only with parts results in what Aristotle criticizes as "heap" and Husserl as "aggregate." There is no emergence in such formations as there is no whole to host it. Put differently, if in Aristotle both form and matter are needed to speak of a thing (hylomorphism), the discrete agenda discussed here is anti-formal: it has no whole (as form) and only accounts for matter through the accumulation of parts. It is a formless architecture made of discrete elements that, being all identical and monotonically distributed, become isotropic matter. Matter is here a field of parts that, despite being articulated with each other, cannot constitute a form—and hence remain matter. As Köhler says: "Starting with parts, a whole can just be projected into partial aspects of a part. […] [T]he whole is distributed all over the parts."[41] Again, the composed is reduced to its compound parts.

Second, the dissolution of the architectural whole comes from elevating the "building block" as the ultimate level of reality. From there, everything else is justified. To draw a parallel with Harman's criticism, this approach is a form of epistemological undermining similar to that of materialist sciences that reduce the world to the atom or quark.[42] Further along these lines, and as Vivaldi rightly observes in his article "Matter versus Parts," the condition of being one and generic makes such an ultimate block a "particle" rather than a "part."[43] This distinction is crucial. Particles, as Vivaldi notes, account for its mathematical countability, whereas parts account for ontological distinctiveness.[44] This means that, in the building-block approach, the unit is relevant not for what it is, but for a particular quality: that of being quantifiable. It counts as a grain because of its ability to be cumulative with other grains of the same type and, paradoxically, to disappear in what they combine, like a grain of sand in a desert (see again Figs. 7-2 and 7-3). Therefore, it is inadequate to speak of the autonomy of the parts in a regime of particles, an idea Sánchez tries to defend.[45] This is so because, as has been said, there are no distinct parts, but only a repetitive particle. The individuality of each gets lost in the aggregate and, in turn, the whole does not exist in itself. In this light, we are faced with an architecture in which neither the whole nor the parts are autonomous. They manage to cancel each other out, like two sound waves with the same amplitude and inverted phase. There is matter that can be articulated. But it articulates nothing.

The regime of sameness then starts when dealing with particles that are all the same and not with parts that are distinct. This is the problem of addressing equality on the basis of sameness rather than difference. When coexistence is based on consensus and not on dissensus, the identity of the individual vanishes. Things can only relate to each other by what they have in common, not by what differentiates them. (In giving an excerpt from the conclusion, that is why, on a socio-political level, the question of inclusion becomes problematic because it typically entails bringing a minority into a given mode of coexistence instead of negotiating multiple dissimilarities.) When this is the case, homogenization is inevitable, and Peterson already identified its dangers in modern Anti-space. Repeating his words again: "The undifferentiated, uniformly-equal value of anti-space serves as the

[41] Köhler, "Mereological Thinking," 37.
[42] See Harman's critique of such materialist reduction in Harman, "Materialism Is Not the Solution," 95–100.
[43] Jordi Vivaldi, "Matter versus Parts: The Immaterialist Basis of Architectural Part-Thinking," ed. Daniel Köhler, *Prospectives*, no. 1 (2020), https://journal.b-pro.org/article/matter-versus-parts/.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons*, 67.

perfect equivalent of an undifferentiated society of equals."[46]

This is the first problem of how socio-technological discrete design interprets the principles of flat ontology: the last part of "things exist equally but *differently*" is obliterated. This critique also applies to the work of Köhler and Navasaityte. Although their pieces sometimes show various morphologies, they have very similar sizes, proportions, connections, and shapes. Their catalogs can contain more than one element, but the pieces always operate at the same level with a pre-assigned function. So their designs become homogeneous like Pollock's *Number 1, 1948* (see again the comparison in Subsection 6.3.4). This approach contrasts radically with Miralles' treatment of fragments. As discussed in Section 6.2 with projects like the Huesca Sports Center (Fig. 6-23), his compositional figures are much more versatile in their application, orientation, size, and scale. This point will be extended in the next section.

Third, since there is no whole, there are no levels. When this discrete agenda seeks to erase the hierarchy of the totalitarian whole, it is, as just mentioned, at the cost of making everything the same. It sends everything to the same ontological plane. However, this is the other misinterpretation of flat ontology, one where the sense of the dissolution of hierarchies is taken too literally. Sánchez writes that "[f]lat ontology refers to a lack of hierarchy between units."[47] And this is true, but not to the extreme of eradicating all senses of hierarchy.

In the philosophical sense of the term, flat ontology refers to the rejection of hierarchical *authority* typical of the human subject, who dictates from *his* position what everything else consists of. This is the unfortunate scheme of constructing ontology from epistemology. However, this does not imply erasing the ontological organizational structure of the world of things into things, which is a form of *scalar* hierarchy, as distinct from being authoritarian. To consider one as the other is to literalize both on a subject-centered basis. Objects distribute themselves not only horizontally but also vertically. Flat ontology does not annul stacking, nesting, containing, and encompassing. When, for example, Köhler rejects Ungers' model of the "city within the city" and states that "this nesting does not exist today, you have today that in parallel," what remains then is a single level of reality for everything.[48] But where is this ultimate level? Where does The Particle live? In the plane of construction of Retsin's and Sánchez's "building blocks," or in the architectural element (wall, window, floor, staircase, sometimes the room) as with Köhler and Navasaityte?

Through these observations, it should be clear how the voices within the socio-technological part-thinking in contemporary architecture infringe in one way or another some of the three principles established in the previous section on part-whole schemes. First, this agenda cannot count on emergence, since there is no autonomous whole to house it. It is formless architecture. Second, constitutive relationships remain multiple by favoring combinatorics, but their potential is limited by considering only one constitutive element: the building block or a set of similar elements. Third, the rejection of levels implies that everything literally becomes the same. Objects lose their double condition of being simultaneously a whole and a part. On the practical level of design, the annulment of vertical causality paradoxically entails another way of operating with fields. Figuration, as the compositional tensions of disparate orders on multiple planes, is banned from the

[46] Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space," 4.
[47] Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons*, 72.
[48] Daniel Köhler, *The City as an Element of Architecture. A Mereological Survey* (Montreal: bureau d'étude de pratiques indisciplinées, 2019), min. 28:30, https://youtu.be/IBxN-tjSHgE.

repertoire of design mechanisms (Subsection 6.3.4).

Therefore, and in complete agreement with the necessity to refute the totalitarian whole, the solution of removing all its senses also appears problematic. In this case, what we need is to remove the qualification "totalitarian" and let the whole affect the parts as much as the parts affect the whole. This double direction in vertical causality is what is called *strange mereology*, this thesis' grounds for the question of composition and the subject of the next and last section. Through it, the Russian doll-like organization of the world can continue to function, something that, when combined with the concept of flat ontology and coexistence based on differences, makes it possible to address the unique individuality of each object regardless of the layer at which it lives. In short, autonomy exists within each level of reality.

7.3. The discreteness of distinct(ive)ness: Miralles' design method

The following approach to mereology as a design method will hinge on two fundamental considerations: (1) the distinct(ive)ness of each part and (2) mereological levels. Their implications will reveal how any element of a design is simultaneously a whole and a part and how there is a constant tension not only between the parts, but also between the parts and the whole. To this end, the philosophical premises outlined in the first section of the chapter will become central again for an ontological structure of levels populated by singular objects and applicable to architectural composition. Again, there will be causal relationships between the parts *and* between the parts and the whole. The latter will operate in two directions: from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts, an ascending and descending causation. This will suggest how an architectural space, like any other object, comes and stays in the world in permanent irritation, regardless of whether it may project an image of stability to us. Indeed, Miralles' design process will appear as an illustrative means to make this condition of perturbations evident in the design process. By treating the parts and the whole of a building simultaneously separately and in conjunction, the Spanish architect's design method will allow us to trace and instrumentalize the part-part and part-whole irritations through their transformations in the design process. This will demarcate the present interpretation on part-whole issues from the architectural part-thinking of the previous Section 7.2 in at least four senses: (1) there is an *autonomous whole*, which is different from a totalitarian one; (2) the parts are not only autonomous, but also *distinct* from each other; (3) there is not only horizontal but also *vertical* causation in both directions; and (4) because of these dynamics, both the part and the whole are not immobile elements, but susceptible to *transformation* without becoming something else.

Before introducing Miralles to the part-whole conversation, it is necessary to note something. It is not my intention to provide a formal analysis of Miralles' works. Other studies address this issue in-depth, especially the dissertation by Javier Fernández Contreras, on which I base some of the following remarks.[49] In the present case, the interest lies not in the particular morphologies and techniques of composition as such, but in the ideology and approach—the ethos—that motivate them. Therefore, any observation on the former should be considered as a basis for whatever conclusion we draw for the latter.

[49] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles."

Having clarified this, Peter Blundell Jones offers a starting point to bring Miralles into the theme. The architectural historian initially notes the difficulty of drawing the boundaries between interior and exterior in the Spanish architect's buildings. In other words, to account for a clear building-body as a whole.[50] Jones points out that Miralles' designs are "a series of building elements [that] come together, elements designed and dimensioned according to their own rules. […] The parts are often represented as complete in themselves."[51] This suggests a design mindset that accounts for the autonomy of the parts. Indeed, Miralles himself was unequivocal on this point. As he stated: "I like that the pieces have a recognizable character in themselves, that they can be taken out of the whole without completely losing their identity."[52]

At first glance, these observations may not differ much from the previously criticized discrete architecture of sameness, as it seems to emphasize the parts to an *a priori* oblivion of the whole. Yet this is not the case. In this context, if a whole in Miralles does not present a clear outline, it is not because it is overlooked. It is because it is intricate, abstract, saturated; configurations that we know from Chapter 6 tend to dissolve automatic perception. As we will see, Miralles' design method develops wholes and parts separately and in conjunction, because an element is both a whole and a part. That will speak of the autonomy of each thing within a nesting structure for composition in levels, which Jones describes as "buildings-within-a-building" in the case of Miralles.[53] Within this framework, any object, whether whole or part, is unique, namely, it is different from the rest. For this reason, one can properly speak of Miralles' parts as "distinct(ive) pieces" rather than "generic particles." We shall begin with this point.

7.3.1. Distinct(ive) pieces

In Miralles' portfolio, it is almost impossible to find two pieces that appear in the same way and with the same purpose, let alone any design/construction element that follows a standardized application. That speaks to an understanding of design that recognized and sought the uniqueness of each element in the work. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Spanish architect's death, Mark Wigley pointed out Miralles' absolute resistance to anything ready-made; a general phobia of ready-made shapes, details, and organizations.[54] Here, "ready-made" refers to the modern ideas of standardization, mechanization, and of the "single module"; questions whose shadow still extends to the "building block" of today's discrete architecture. Against this, Miralles expressed the failure to

> entrust the entire project to a single size, to a single module, […] according to which the entire project will be proportioned, a size that will give rhythm to the facades, to the interior atmospheres and that, in the end, will determine the quality of the result."[55]

Wigley continues his talk on Miralles exposing how problematic standardized items were

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[50] Jones, Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante, 9.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 271.
[53] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 9.
[54] Colomina and Wigley, *Homenatge a Enric Miralles*, min. 46:05.
[55] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 232, [author's translation]. In the same page, Miralles also clarifies that his rejection of the ready-made and the single module does not invalidate the question of prefabrication. In fact, he was a firm supporter of prefabrication, but of that which is manufactured on site, and for certain specific purposes within that context.

for the Spanish architect. As he comments: "I think for Enric, for example, to use a light switch that you can buy in a catalog [is] already a problem."[56] There is an aversion to repetition when it is understood as mechanical duplication. In contrast, I have explained in Part Two (Section 5.2) how metaphor was Miralles' inquiry mechanism to find particular expressions for each individuality. Let us refresh this approach with another example, which also indicates the level of singularity that Miralles intended to achieve at every level. Carme Pinós remembers about the Igualada Cemetery: "We asked ourselves, 'How do we make the door?' and Enric started studying thousands of references: the commandments, the apostles, etc."[57] As shown in Fig. 7-4 (see also Annex: 20), there is no appreciable trace of such references in the design, which speaks in favor of the gap between the architect's design motivations and the user's impressions.

That speaks to the level of tenacity in addressing each element in its uniqueness, however insignificant or small it may seem in the context of the overall design.[58] We deal here with a regime of *distinct(ive)ness*. Things are distinct by being distinctive, and vice versa; as opposed to the paradigm of sameness of the socio-technological discrete movement discussed before.[59] But Miralles' approach is also discrete. He enacted that "the pieces have a recognizable character in themselves," but one where the part is not only countable but also unique by being distinct. More aptly, each piece is "ontologically discrete," as Vivaldi would say.[60] This condition applies to *anything* within a Miralles design: from the structural system to the relationship of the building to the context, to a column, to a doorknob, a light switch, and everything in between.

This twofold condition that everything is singular and requires equal attention in the design makes them all the same, differently. The design of a door, the position of the building on the plot, or a detail of the façade meeting a slab are equally significant matters for the design.[61] In an interview, the architect said: "One very elementary technique that I am fond of is to treat everything as equal: to consider the placement of a tree, a specific program, a building, all in the same way…"[62] These few words already speak of *equality* ("to treat everything as equal" in its own right), of *distinct(ive)ness* (between a tree, a program, a building), and of *levels* (since these three elements each live on separate but interrelated planes). I hold that these three conditions are the very sense of *flat ontology*, and any architectural approach that seeks to embrace the term cannot obviate any of them. "[A]ll things equally exist, yet they do not exist equally," to recall Bogost's definition of flat ontology one more time.[63] Within this framework, it is perhaps Tom Wiscombe who offers

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[56] Colomina and Wigley, *Homenatge a Enric Miralles*, min. 46:18, [author's transcription].
[57] Garcia Estevez, *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, 99, [author's translation].
[58] Also significant is the anecdote that Eva Prats, a former collaborator of Miralles/Pinós, recalls from her time in the office. She comments how she had to draw the trees in a particular way for a bridge competition. Prats concludes: "It was amazing that how something that could be done very immediately would have so much thought into it." Eva Prats, "Drawing without Erasing," in *Conversations and Allusions: Enric Miralles*, ed. Catherine Spellman (Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019), 94–107.
[59] Here, "distinctiveness" qualifies as "uniqueness" within the individual, which implies, as its root includes, "distinct" as difference. So "distinctiveness" relates to "difference," and I often use them interchangeably. If I do not embrace the latter systematically, it is so as not to confuse its undertone with previous philosophies (e.g., Deleuze).
[60] Vivaldi, "Matter versus Parts."
[61] That the architect pays attention to every issue, detail, and layer of a design is not to the detriment of openness. Here I recall what was said in Part Two (Subsection 5.3.4): authorship and authority are two different things. There, I demonstrated that Miralles embraced the former and rejected the latter.
[62] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 263.
[63] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 11.

the most systematic interpretation of the term for architectural design in contemporary discourse.[64]

In Miralles, the spirit of treating everything the same without annulling its uniqueness applies not only to shapes and geometrical concerns—as shall be seen in a moment—but even to techniques of drafting. In his technical documents, each line is drawn with the same thickness (a very fine 0.16 point) or with the same hard lead (7H), regardless of if it is a section or elevation line.[65] This is especially evident in development drawings, where there is an eagerness to read more than what the material drawing as such offers (Figs. 7-5 and 7-6). This technique should not be read as a statement in favor of graphic homogenization, which is clearly not the case with Miralles, but as an interest in giving a comparable value to everything that can play a role in the design without standardizing it.

We find some similar flat ontological disposition with the question of time. Miralles treated equally each different historical mark left by an event or an object that has occurred in a place. In this sense, one of the drawings for the Diagonal del Mar Park project is illustrative. There, historical and geographical lines overlap in order to find design opportunities (Fig. 7-7). Each trace, representing a certain event, is unique, but all of them are considered equally by drawing them with the same weight.[66] These two techniques—uniform drawing thickness and marks overlapping—were some maneuvers Miralles used to approach things in an equally different fashion. They set up a technique that is intrinsically related to the pursuit of multiplicity through graphic thinking, which has been discussed in Subsection 5.3.3. The architect's following words are relevant to the discussion:

> At times marks have a meaning. If someone knows how to interpret them, they are understood. But very often, you have to stand as a stranger, accept the mark because it is there, because you have found it, like when you find inscriptions on a rock. I am interested in this task of accepting the results as they appear.[67]

The paradigm of distinct(ive)ness—which is that of individual objects—is also evident in formal and geometrical aspects. As mentioned above, each project, element, and corner of Miralles' architecture is singular. Each design process is an investigation into the possibilities of formalization of the project and its parts. Then, as each of them is ontologically discrete, the projects and their pieces manifest themselves idiosyncratically, regardless of the level at which they live. So we can speculate with a constellation or catalog in Miralles' career Project (Fig. 7-9). We find a similar idea in other contemporary practices (Figs. 7-10 and 7-11).

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[64] See Wiscombe, "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture." Tom Wiscombe, *Objects Models Worlds Abridged*, ed. Marrikka Trotter (Los Angeles, CA: TWA, 2021), 14–27.

[65] As Férnandez Contreras shows, Miralles' preference for this precision in drawing and a graphic style of lines of the same thickness comes to a large extent from his collaboration in the Viaplana-Piñón studio (1974-1983). Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 16.

[66] A similar strategy is visible in other projects such as the Santa Caterina Market or Bremenhaven.

[67] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 234, [author's translation].

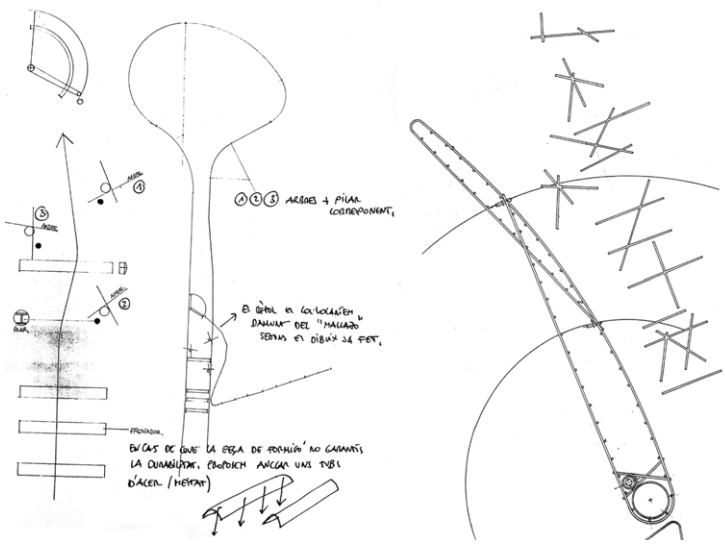
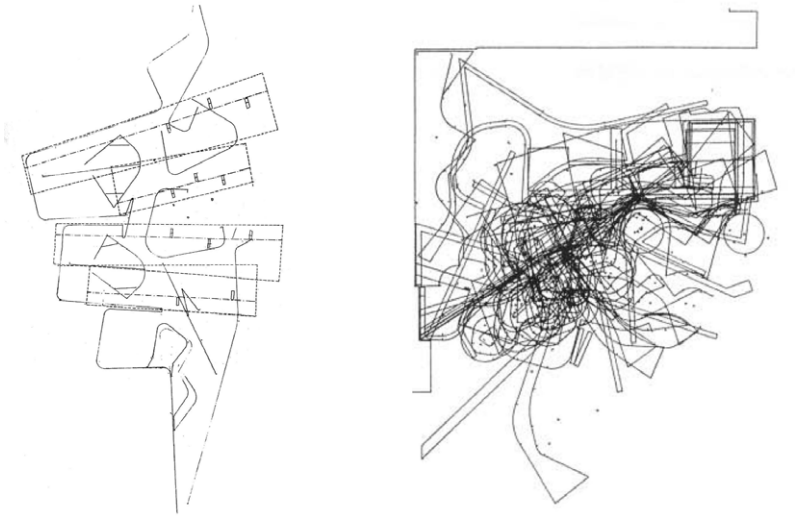


Figure 7-4. Miralles/Pinós, *Igualada Cemetery Park*, gate concept and detail, 1985-1991. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.



Figures 7-5 and 7-6. Left: Miralles/Pinós, *Olympic Archery Range*, training building, preliminary drawing, ground floor, Barcelona, 1989-1991. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles. Right: EMBT, *Hamburg Music School*, line superposition in an early design phase, 1997-2000.



Figure 7-7. EMBT, *Diagonal del Mar Park*, historical superposition, Barcelona, 1997-2002.

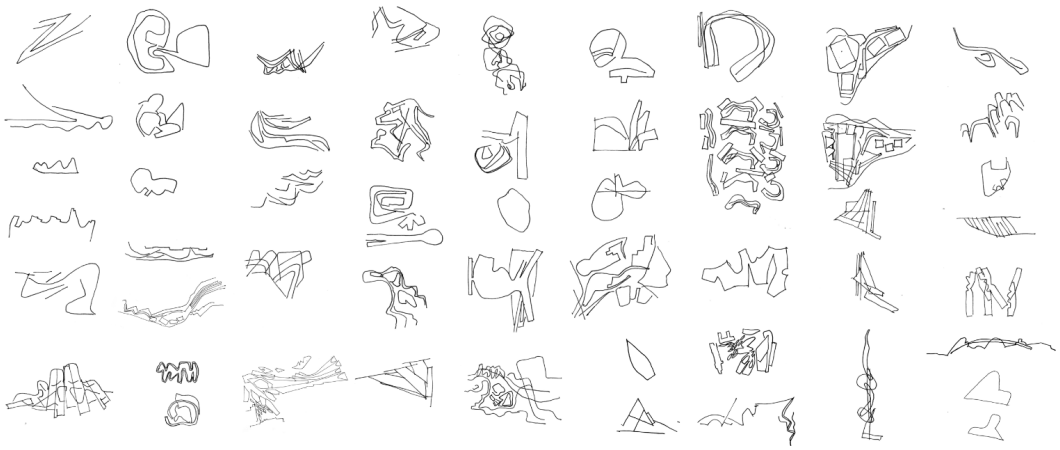


Figure 7-9. Constellation of Miralles' shapes and compositions. Matrix intermingling some buildings, parts, details, and elements always in floor plan. Sketches by the author.



Figure 7-10. Eric Owen Moss Architects.



Figure 7-11. Tom Wiscombe Architecture, *Menagerie*, 2019.

Now, someone may counter-argue that Miralles' utilization of such a formal repertoire is modern, in the mechanized sense of the term: "It is redundant since his architecture, especially the drawings, can be recognized from miles away." However, two significant points need to be emphasized in this regard. First, we should not confuse "mechanical repetition of pieces" with "systematic drawing technique." The former is not the case in Miralles, the latter is. Second, and more importantly, formal repetition does not mean duplicating a material item; repetition is *procedural*. It is a way of proceeding. It always results in formal disparity, as when trying to draw two identical circles in the sand.

About the first, it is worth noting Wigley's assertion that, for all the difference in each Miralles work or detail, the fact that each project is represented in the same way makes us, paradoxically, feel the uniqueness of each of the movements.[68] So, what makes his architecture identifiable is the personal way it is drawn, and not the duplication of figures across projects. The latter would be to create a catalog of personal "ready-mades" prior to the project, something equally declinable as if it were a standard catalog. If so, there would be a pre-existing condition, something totally incongruent with both Miralles' willingness to discover the project, as well as the notion defended here of extracting the design from the knowable (what is not yet known).

To be clear, this observation does not mean the negation of the catalog as an instrument of design. It is something that this thesis' design methodology fervently advocates. However, a catalog develops on a project-by-project basis or in the Project of an architect's career, depending on how we frame it. Focusing on the former, the catalog is a record that accompanies each design process and starts from scratch in every new AP. What is found in a project is added to its catalog. Stated differently, the catalog is a collection of the actualizations of the AP's already existing manifestations that we unfold. As a reminder, this thesis assumes that the qualities of an object pre-exist their cognition. Therefore, the catalog as a human instrument on the AP cannot pre-exist the AP, but the AP's manifestations always pre-exist the catalog.

In this vein, I suggest that if we find similar pieces—or the same piece differently used—in Miralles' designs, as is the case, it is not because they exist before the project and are thus systematically applied to it. Instead, it is due to the use of the same consistent mindset, attitude, or procedure that manifests in systematic design protocols across design acts. That means that Miralles found resonance in the projects' differences by approaching them with the same spirit. Chapter 4 has extensively discussed the topic of *procedure* in Miralles connected to Harman's mimesis, understood as becoming or entering the AP. It is on this basis where the recurrence of certain geometries in Miralles rests. In short, formal repetition is a consequence of *procedural repetition*. The morphological resemblance that crosses Miralles' projects comes from a methodical approach to the AP—including the way of representing, as Wigley puts it—rather than the mechanized application of a pre-existing inventory. The pieces are not precursors of the design process, but the opposite: the design process unfolds the pieces. Therefore, what is repeated across projects are not certain material figures but the designer's readiness, which can be formally gathered from pieces in the architect's career Project. Recalling Miralles on the topic:

> I would like to insist that I do not take style to be the systematic repetition of formal gestures. It is something that comes from a way of operating. The gestures that determine my work are born from a series of specific interests, irrespective of the spatial result they

[68] Colomina and Wigley, *Homenatge a Enric Miralles*, min. 47:10.

acquire.[69]

Hence, when certain morphologies have a formal affinity, their interconnection is beyond the visual. It is nuclear, in an authorial sense of the term. The pieces find partnership in the same personal ethos towards designing without renouncing their individuality. This, I suggest, is the epistemological explanation for the common background of Miralles' formal catalog (Fig. 7-9). Put in an obvious way, the interconnectedness of the pieces is that of having been unfolded by the same architect.

After this, to speak of the tangible consequences of this nuclear condition, i.e., to address a strictly formal analysis, we can refer to the observation made by Fernandez Contreras: "It is therefore possible to speak of 'morphologically differentiated pieces' in [Miralles'] architecture, insofar as, typological or functional issues aside, each element has a characteristic and unique shape in the floor plan."[70] They are differentiated pieces that retain an authorial linkage. Therefore, the attempt to copy Miralles' formal gestures is absolute nonsense. This is so because, first, the nature of its actualization is procedural and not visually formal and, second, the act of design as a sealed cognitive-unit of the architect's volition and the AP would try to simulate the encounter as if it were that of Miralles. You override your own subjectivity to try to perform as Miralles performed with the AP. This attempt to supplant the identity of the cognizer is not a good idea.

On this basis, an additional important point follows from Fernández's previous words: the irrelevance of typological or functional issues in Miralles' fragments. Such indifference towards typological concerns is obviously at odds with the principles of precedent-as-a-basis of Subsection 6.1.1. For those for whom architecture derives *literally* from previous architectures, the question of the part is indissoluble from the question of typology. In their argument, history consolidates certain shapes and compositions as "proper to the discipline." It is surely postmodern architecture that has most exploited this design model. Therein, as in Trummer's work, the part can remain recognizable in those cases. My critique of this approach has noted the loss of openness in its reliance on known inputs. By contrast, we find an alternative policy of pieces in Miralles. They do not spring from history; they are not typological. They are abstract. Rather than being what a subject wants them to be, they are themselves. That means that their formal configuration is devoid of any pre-associated function, scale, material, and connectivity. Fernández confirms such an a-functional character as follows: "It cannot be said that there is a form-function correspondence in [Miralles'] projects, since it is not possible to seek a programmatic justification in the geometry of their constituent parts."[71]

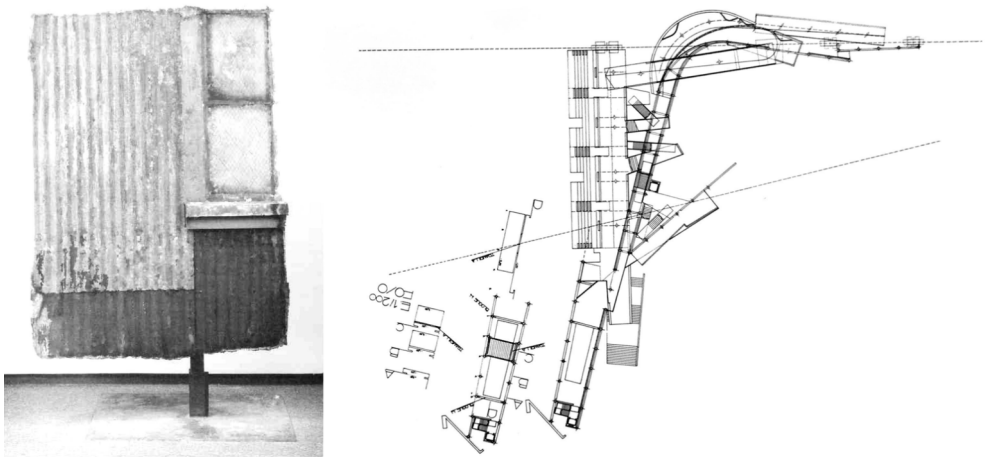
Such an a-functional and a-typological, hence abstract, nature of Miralles' fragments is evident in their *non-indexicality*. The pieces do not resemble the typical "stairs, columns, windows" classification. If so, the architectural element would index its function in the manner "the stair is a circulation element," "the column a structural one," or "the window serves as an envelope." Paradoxically, it is here that Emil Kaufmann's autonomy of the parts fails: on a sheer pragmatism based on construction and functional rules.[72] This is why the Kaufmannian method is rejected here as relational, something Hubert Damisch also criticizes in the Austrian historian's theory. Recalling Subection 2.1.1:

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[69] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 267.
[70] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 83, [author's transcription].
[71] { | Fernandez Contreras, 2013 | 83, | [author's transcription] |zu:5336048:C96YKM3P
[72] Kaufmann, *De Ledoux a Le Corbusier*, 40, 69–75.

> If architecture is no more than the expression of a constructive logic, its reason for being should be sought in the act of building. In these terms, architecture, from the moment it obeyed an external determination, would be no longer autonomous but rather the object of empirical knowledge, technical and experimental, whatever the contributions of calculation.[73]

In contrast, Miralles' pieces are non-indexical in the sense that they cannot be reduced to functional or constructive purposes. The distancing of an obvious signify/signifier relationship leads to fragments whose compositions are much more diversified: something like half of a staircase, along with what appears to be part of a wall, meeting what could potentially act as some area of the roof structure, all coexisting with other undefinable figures. The piece, as the whole it partakes, is an *abstract hybrid*, a composite of other composites. Something that might not appear to be able to participate in a roof can function as such. This is the secret life of the pieces and their capacity to surprise. Therein lies the point of abstraction as technique leading to abstraction as an effect (Chapters 4 and 6): the combination of asemic and asyntactic qualities that induce a displacement of our assumed world background and of the manifestation's own morphology gives rise to the aesthetic register of knowable qualities and to the immaterial presence of the project's being in experience.



Figures 7-12 and 7-13. Composite fragments. Left: Gordon Matta-Clark, Pier In/Out, 1973. Right: Miralles/Pinós, *C.N.A.R.*, fragment, Alicante, 1989-1993. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

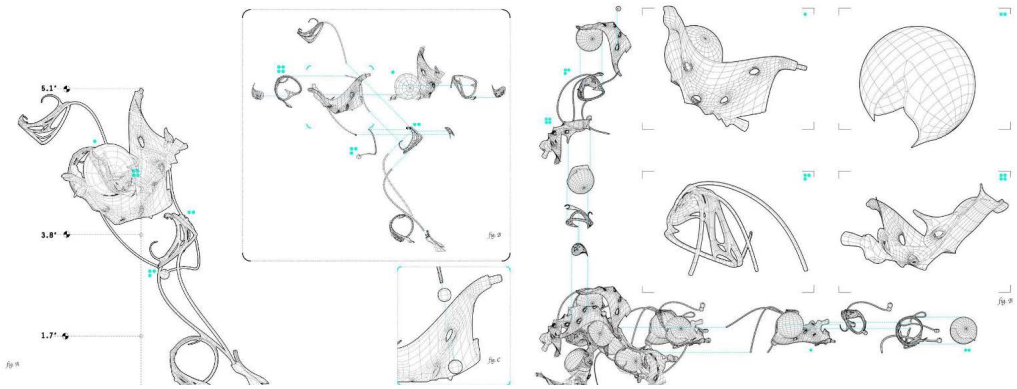


Figure 7-14. Hernán Díaz Alonso/Xefirotarch, *Still Flesh*, parts of a part, 2011.

[73] Damisch, "Ledoux with Kant," 13.

This non-normative way of looking at fragments as composites is reminiscent of Gordon Matta-Clark. The American an-architect did not cut his chunks by their function or constructive logic. The cutting logic that was followed was spatial. Matta-Clark's chunks are an abstract amalgam whose possibilities, if reintroduced into a future composition, remain open (Fig. 7-12). So are Miralles' (Fig. 7-13).

As stated, this non-indexical or asemic condition in the way the pieces are composed makes them abstract and, thus, multiple and versatile. Their knowable possibilities of appearance and application are not pre-defined but are distilled from the project's demands at the time of design. In Fig. 6-23, we have already noted how the U-shapes in the Huesca Sports Center find distinctive formalizations and roles: on the roof, on the walls of the outdoor facilities, etc. Geometries and figures also jump between projects of completely different natures and scales, such as the horseshoe-like shape between the Church in Rome (1994) and the Lelukaappi shelving unit (1995), some of whose sinuous and indented longitudinal strips re-appear in the entry proposal for the Salerno Court of Justice (1999) (Fig. 7-15). Another example of a-scalar, a-material, a-functional formal elements is the ovoid form present in the Museum of Contemporary Art of Zaragoza (1993), the first proposal for the Public Library in Palafolls (1997), as well as the pergola of the Diagonal del Mar Park (1999) (Fig. 7-16). The game of identifying shapes in Miralles' work is never-ending. This condition half echoes the diversity present in Vivaldi's xenological formations, but reduced to the sole medium of construction. Miralles' architectural expressions are heterogeneous but not multimedia.

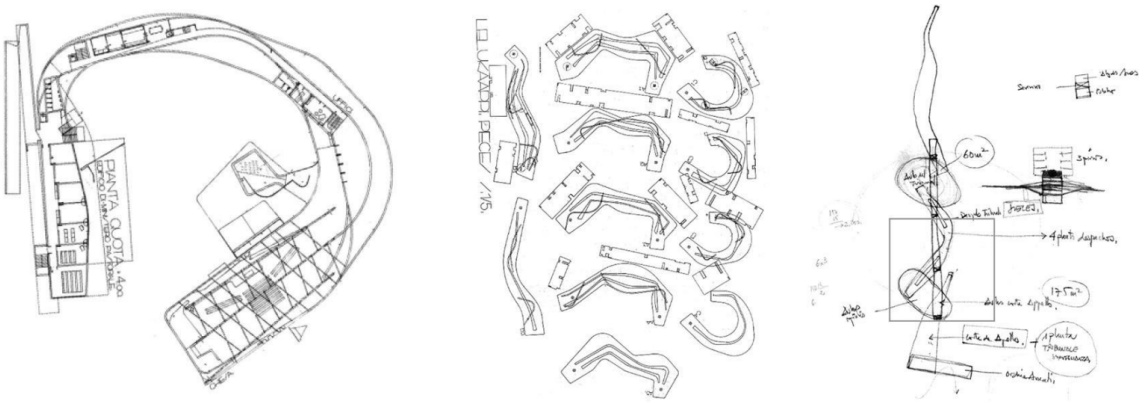


Figure 7-15. Sinuous shapes. Left: Enric Miralles, *Church in Rome*, floor plan, 1994. Center: EMBT, *Lelukaappi*, unfolded shelves, 1995. Right: EMBT, *Salerno Court of Justice*, sketch floor plan, 1999.

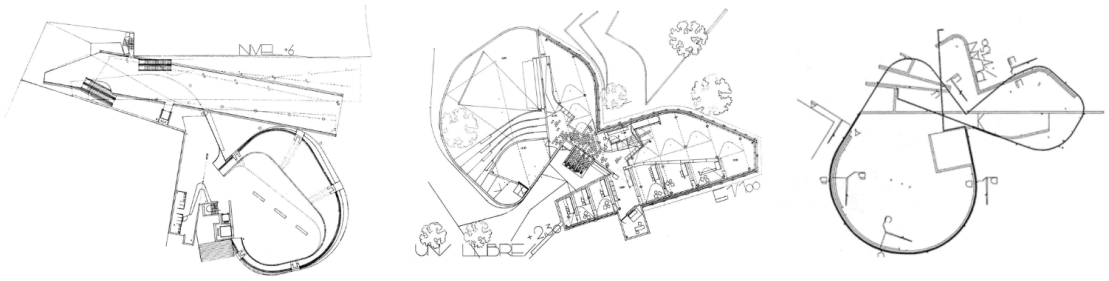


Figure 7-16. Ovoid shapes. Left: Enric Miralles, *Museum for Contemporary Art*, floor plan, Zaragoza, 1993. Center: EMBT, *Public Library*, floor plan, first design, Palafolls, 1997. Right: EMBT, *Diagonal del Mark Park*, detail of the pergola, 1999.

Returning to the topic of repetition, it has just been said that, although a figure may have a formal resemblance between projects or areas of the same project, it is improper to speak of repetition as duplication or replication. Serialization and mechanization are out of the question. Instead, repetition derives from a way of operating, an observation can be taken as an epistemological or cognitive explanation. The next question is whether it is possible to sustain the argument independently of the object of experience, i.e., from an ontological ground.

If there is no room for duplication in a regime of distinct(ive) objects, are we then facing radical individualization? Asked differently, is each figure (1) a separate object, regardless of its formal affinity with others, or are they (2) multiple, albeit similar, instances of the same unitary reality? A Miralles chunk tends to crystalize and perform very differently in each case, yet it is difficult to consider them separately every time. In examining the examples just mentioned (Figs. 7-15 and 7-16), it seems problematic to opt for (1), i.e., considering each apparition as a new piece. There should be some kind of interrelationship between these expressions beyond the fact of being activated by the same architect. On the other hand, we know that they are not plain repetitions either (again, as duplication). So how are repetition and distinct(ive)ness conciliated on an ontological plane?

A plausible answer lies again at the core of this thesis: the unity-multiplicity relation of an object. Recalling Bogost one more time: "things can *be* many and various, specific and concrete, while their *being* remains identical."[74] So it can be argued that Miralles' pieces are *objects*, in OOO' sense. In his case, figures appear in similar formal guises in multiple instances for the constitution of disparate spaces. In this light, the piece or part involved in several constitutive relations can adopt an idiosyncratic role and appearance each time without becoming something else. These actualizations are, therefore, some of the many knowable profiles of the part with foundational intentions in different parts of a project or in different projects. Nevertheless, its identity is unitary—maintained throughout each occurrence—yet the part never looks or performs the same.

For this reason, it is argued that Harman's concept of *vicarious causation*, framed within the present discussion of the constitution of objects, is present in Miralles' compositional methodology—the umpteenth overlap between the philosopher and the architect. As mentioned above, not only cognitive but also constitutive relations are vicarious for Harman.[75] In the relation between the constituted and the constituting object, the latter—the compound part—never engages itself in its entirety. This means that the beings of the whole and the part are never in direct contact, although one lives on the basis of the other. In other words, a piece is not exhausted in a specific constitutive endeavor, but is capable of dosing its foundational commitments across multiple assemblages (Fig. 1-3). For each of them, meaning for every "domestic relation," a Miralles' piece always shows a distinct(ive) face.

Two preliminary consequences can be drawn from this condition. First, exposing a singular profile each new time is a sign of the latent excess of the piece, characteristic of any object that qualifies as autonomous. Second, the regime of distinct(ive) discreteness gains another thick pillar: there is disparity within formal repetition without compromising identity.[76] The latter means that the vicariousness of a piece manifests itself, among other

[74] Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 12.
[75] See Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 165–67.
[76] To some extent, this theme relates to the question of "difference and repetition" in Deleuze. Gilles Deleuze,

aspects, in its versatility through instances and iterations at different points in time.

If we now intermingle this ontological explanation on repetition with the epistemological one (repetition is procedural), the principle of a non-mechanical repetition that is each time different within the same entity is consistent with the idea of *variation* discussed in Part Two (Section 5.2). As in Giacometti's portrait for James Lord (Fig. 5-27), variations come from repeating the actions that formalize a piece, i.e., a procedural repetition. Each new expression, whether within the same project or in another, differs from the previous one. Each instance is complete in its compositional task and they are all unified under the same part's being; so the interconnectedness between Miralles' projects can be studied beyond mere visual analysis. At the same time, each instance is also incomplete in that it does not exhaust all its foundational capacities. What Eco told us for aesthetic cognition is thus also applicable to the constitution of objects: "Every [constitutive] performance makes the [piece] an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other [constitutive] performances of the [piece]."[77]

Further along these lines, variations also relate with *transformations*—especially when framed within the idea of the chain of multiplicity, where "form born from form," as Gal says (Section 5.1). Then, in addition to the sequence of how things appear to us in different projects, it is worth noting the individual singularity of each of these transformations, which is also clear in Miralles' article on Giacometti. Thus, the idea of transformation, typically linked to the idea of evolution in creative practices, is read here not as a modification of the same expression, but as a *chronology of different manifestations* of the same object. Evolution or transformation is a particular path within the chain of multiplicity of an object. In it, links are simultaneously dependent and independent of one another. Dependent because, as seen with the example of the Battersea Bridge (Vig. 5-F), they hinge on a prior triggering instance and on how a cognizer—in this case, a designer—engages with it. But they are also independent insofar as, according to the principles of flat representativity (Chapter 1), each is distinctive from its siblings. Each offers unique aspects of the object in which it is contained and composes. Hernán Díaz Alonso's concept of "evolution of species," which is another way of saying "transformation of pieces," can be read in this twofold context, an approach that stems from Miralles' procedural repetition (Fig. 7-17).[78]

In short, the terms repetition, variation, evolution, and transformation are epistemological mechanisms that are fundamental to the present design methodology on distinct(ive) fragments. When experience is taken into account, the cognitive-unit's laws of how and when those manifestations appear to us is what comprises the AP's chain of multiplicity (Subsection 5.1.3). Therefore, it can be concluded that such terms—repetition, variation, evolution, and transformation—qualify the chain of multiplicity of a given object, rather than the object itself. They are about how and when an object's disparate manifestations become phenomena. On the other hand, when experience is not taken into account, hence we deal with ontological issues, the instances under each of these terms are flattened within the object's qualitative domain (Fig. 1-2). Evolution, change, and transformation do not exist in a dormant object. They correspond to the patterns of

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Difference and Repetition (1968; repr., London: Continuum, 2001). It should not surprise us to find such an interpretation in Miralles, since in the architect's doctoral thesis there are references to this book by Deleuze. See Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:26-30.

[77] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15.

[78] As previously note, Díaz Alonso declares almost in every of his lectures the influence Miralles has on his work.

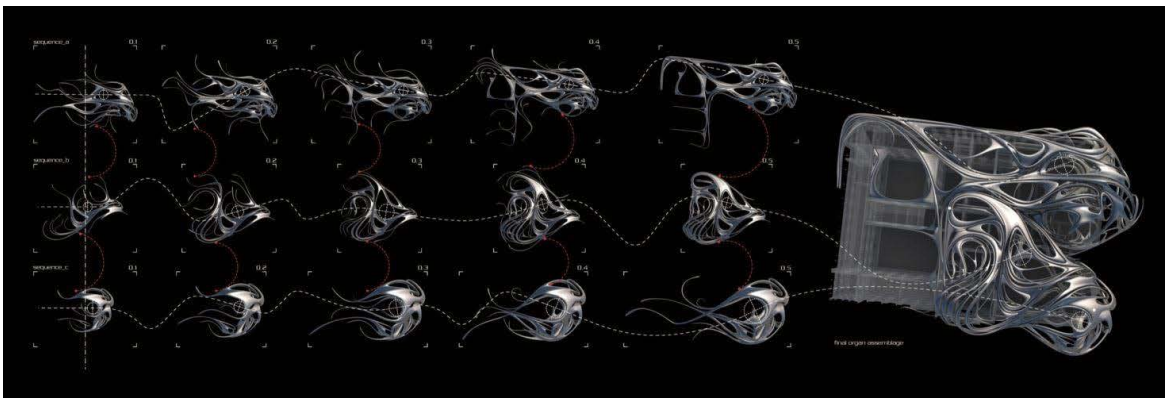


Figure 7-17. Hernán Díaz Alonso/Xefirotarch, *Tabakalera*, diagram of evolution of species, San Sebastián, 2008.

actualization of the object's manifestations, i.e., to its relational issues.

By now, it should be clear that the view that each part, object, or project is unique does not preclude grouping them into families, namely, different objects as collections. Two reasons have been outlined for this on an experiential basis: a systematic drawing technique and a sense of repetition that assumes distinction and comes from a way of operating. This contrasts with a repetition that replicates the same thing in the same way every time. In this context, it is possible to sort Miralles' figures in a *classification of abstract figures or fragments* that can be identified according to geometrical characteristics (top of Fig. 7-18). Yet, as seen in the philosophical points made at the beginning of the chapter, composition is not just a matter of physical parts, but of parts *and* relations. That means that any formal classification is always half-done without a *classification of interconnections*, and Miralles is not an exception in this regard (bottom of Fig. 7-18. As a note, the proposed classification of constitutive parts and relations partially follows that of Fernández Contreras. As expected, a project often falls into more than one category).[79] This means that the pieces alone are always insufficient. In any composition, their relationships are equally important. Therefore, if two pieces are half the story in a composition, how they interrelate is the other half. This equal need for parts and relationships contrasts with views that acknowledge only one of the two factors. In the present case, these relationships are taken as part-part relationships, complementary to the part-whole relationships of the following subsection. Within this framework, the term "classification" is analogous to "object" and crosses the individual projects.

From these observations, it follows the double capacity of a piece to be autonomous and to partake in multiple other objects (sets, clusters, or composites). This speaks of a piece's internal policy of entering into a selective variety of ensembles, such as the constitution of a bigger figure, a non-material AP, the classifications of an architect, etc. Under this umbrella, physical resemblance opposes the modern premises of mass-production and mechanical repetition, which operate in a regime of homogeneity. It also differs from the early digital era idea of continuous difference in architecture in that there is no totalitarian whole or an ultimate plane of immanence on which everything within depends. Instead, identity is not weak, but remains consistent regardless of the number of engagements in which a piece-object involves itself.

One last remark, not only the pieces, but also their relationships are entities in themselves. It would be inconsistent to think that the pieces are autonomous but their

[79] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 30–143.

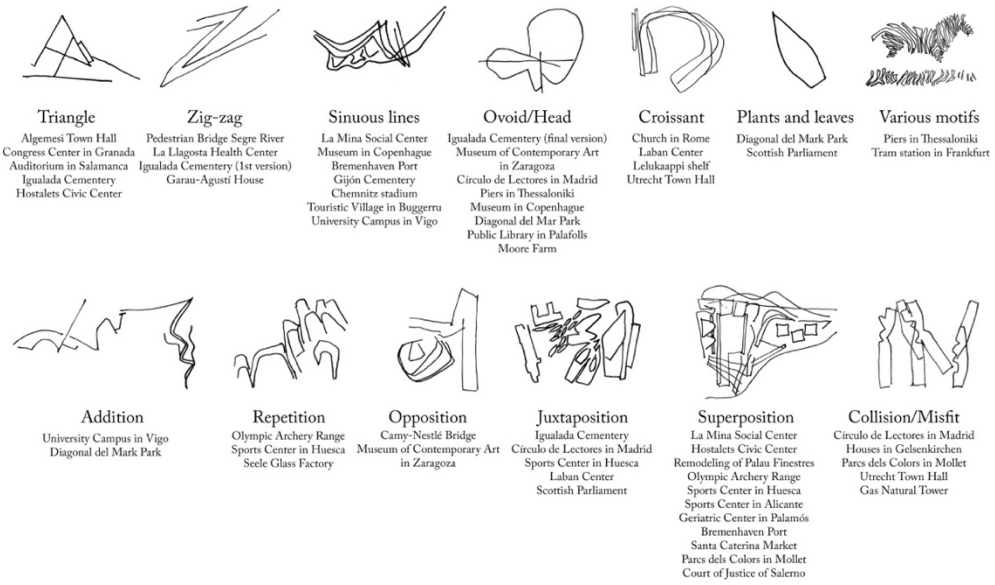


Figure 7-18. Classifications of constitutive pieces (top) and interconnections (bottom) in Miralles' work.

compositional rules are subject-dependent. On the contrary, how the fragments engage with each other is something already present in the object of relationship and is actualized by the architect's innocuous interventions. From this point of view, Miralles' pieces and compositional interrelations resonate with Spuybroek's understandin of the Gothic: "the elements are free—free beforehand, not in the sense of being loose but in the sense of being free to find each other—and when they do, they build, they hold onto each other."[80]

In summary, four points can be highlighted when considering Miralles' pieces within a regime of discrete distinct(ive)ness.

1) Each piece is autonomous in that it is not only numerical but ontologically discrete. Evidence is its differentiated morphology and functional diversity.

2) The autonomous piece is found in any aspect and scale of a Miralles' design. This speaks to a truly flat ontology that accounts for egalitarianism by considering everything equal without renouncing to its singularity, that is, without flattering the nesting structure of the world to a single ontological plane.

3) A piece is an object with a surplus: it exhibits various qualities and functions without being something else. It can engage differently in the constitution of other architectural composites. That means that the piece, as an object, is inexhaustible in its relations. In the case of Miralles, the various figurations of a piece often have geometric affinities, but each has disparate materializations, sizes, functions, and connections. Therefore, we can speak of a repetition that absorbs distinction and opposition.

4) If the pieces are so versatile, it is because they are abstract, both in the way they compose and are composed. In such constitutive relations, the parts are typically non-indexical; they do not include normative or typological elements. Their composition is much more promiscuous, admitting chunks of disparate morphologies and roles.

Having considered the piece in itself and, after some notes on their horizontal interconnections (bottom of Fig. 7-18), what requires further examination is the relation between parts and whole. This is the focus of the next subsection, which appeals in detail to mereology and levels in relation to vertical causality.

[80] Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things*, 26.

7.3.2. Mereological levels

In the book *Mereology: A Philosophical Introduction*, Lando states: "Mereology is only about the *formal* features of the relation of parthood."[81] This statement serves as a ground for a preliminary note. In architectural design, part-whole concerns are usually approached on a formal basis. When framed in a realist context of unity-multiplicity, such as the present one, it would be erroneous to understand the tangible whole as the AP itself. As noted at the beginning of the section, the material whole is a formal quality, profile, or representation of the project beneath it. This recalls a fundamental principle drawn from Aristotelian hylomorphism: form and matter are *components* of the object. Tristan Garcia adopts a similar position in his book *Form and Object* when explaining the example of a wooden box. As he notes: "The geometric figure of the cube is something that constitutes it in the same way as the wood. The cube's wood and geometric figure are equally *components* of the matter of this object, the wooden cube: they both enter into the wooden cube."[82] For the present discussion on Miralles' compositional methods, this entails that both the geometric figure of a building (form as a whole) and the geometric figures from what emerges (matter as parts, a matter that is also formal) are components of the building, which in this case, is taken as its unitary reality. For its part, the building appears as a component/expression of the larger AP-object. Having clarified this structure of proxying, we can now examine vertical relationships in architectural composition, i.e., the sort of connections between the building's emergent expression (here called "whole" and which, again, is partial relative to the objecthood of the building) and its composite elements (or "constitutive parts").

It can be argued that, for a complete mereological approach to design, four aspects require attention: (1) the whole, (2) the parts, (3) the horizontal relationships between the parts, and (4) the vertical relationships between the part and the whole in both directions. As a reminder, parametricism focuses on (1), a strictly top-down vocation in which the whole totalizes the parts. This means that, in parametricism, (4) is exclusively a descending causality and that (2) and (3) simply do not exist in this design regime. In opposition, the discreteness of sameness appears as a pure bottom-up disposition. It is about (2) and (3), hence bypassing (1) and (4). As an alternative to these two positions, Miralles' design method is fully mereological by committing to all four points.

To support this assertion, the previous subsection has argued the singularity and versatility of (1) and (2), which has led to the identification of a catalog and classification of fragments, together with the importance of (3) by establishing a classification of interconnections. It is now time to address (4) in order to demonstrate the complete mereological character of the Spanish architect's compositional strategy. On this basis, the following observations will ping-pong between two major questions: first, what is the theoretical ground for the relationships between a whole and a part, i.e., how does (4) work? And second, how can it be methodologized for architectural design?

To understand (4)—vertical relations—for a design scheme, we can apply Levi Bryant's concept of *strange mereology* to Miralles' compositional process retrospectively. On the type of mereology OOO exercises, Bryant comments: "the strangeness of this mereology lies in the fact that the subsets of a set, the smaller objects composing larger objects, are simultaneously necessary conditions for that larger object while being independent of that object."[83] In short, the part is as much an object as the whole it

[81] Lando, *Mereology*, 2, [emphasis removed].
[82] Garcia, *Form and Object*, 137.
[83] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 214.

composes. As already mentioned, this is OOO's cosmological structure of the world "of objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects," as Harman contends.[84] To this end, the question of *levels* is unavoidable, as already announced with Husserl at the beginning of the chapter.

Unlike the discrete design of sameness, which is reduced to one plane of reality, a discrete design of distinct(ive)ness accounts for a vast number of planes stacked and nested within each other. For an object to be a whole living in its own ontological plane, there must be another plane below it for the parts. Furthermore, for the same whole to be also a part, another plane must be above it to host the whole it composes. Hence, three simultaneous considerations always surface with objects: (1) when considered in isolation within its plane or level, we account for its autonomy; (2) when considered in conjunction with what it has above and below it, we account for its constitutive structure; and (3) when considered from its non-foundational relationality, we account for how it is cognized, as studied in Part Two. The first two are relevant in the present chapter, and Miralles kept simultaneous attention on both the autonomy of the parts and their relations between them and with the whole. How did he put it into practice?

In his formal studies on Miralles, Fernández Contreras differentiates between "matrix floor plans" and "partial drawings." The former establishes from the floor plan—a document privileged by Miralles over the section or the axonometric view—order and control over the pieces; the latter decontextualizes and isolates fragments of the matrix above them.[85] In this vein, it is significant that Miralles recurrently referred to the areas of a design not as "parts" but as "buildings," which means that the parts are taken as complete and independent without invalidating their foundational tasks.[86] As seen above, Peter B. Jones captures such a spirit when referring to the different pieces of the C.N.A.R. Alicante as the "buildings-within-a-building." [87]

We find this scheme in all Miralles' projects, but especially clearly in the Parc dels Colors, where the pieces come from David Hockney's paintings, as noted in Subsection 6.1.3. Fig. 7-19 shows a schematic top view that is extracted from the general or matrix floor plan (1) to organize the position and interconnection between the pieces (2). In parallel, each piece has its own sheet (A-E), where it is no longer a "part" but acts as a "whole." Each of these documents fully details the buildings-of-the-building in floor plan, section, elevation, and details at different scales of information, all compressed on the same sheet.[88] Furthermore, the different resolutions and scales of how the part appears in the matrix blueprint and its own drawing are also significant. In the former, the element appears less defined. It is a placeholder or a simplified reference whose contour and final internal arrangement are detailed in the partial drawing.

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[84] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 85.
[85] Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 84.
[86] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 114, 124, 141, 293, 398.
[87] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 9.
[88] Wiscombe does something similar in what he calls the "Godzilla drawings" where different scales of information about the same part, or "supercomponent," as he also calls it, accumulate on the same sheet. Wiscombe, *Objects Models Worlds Abridged*, 116–18.

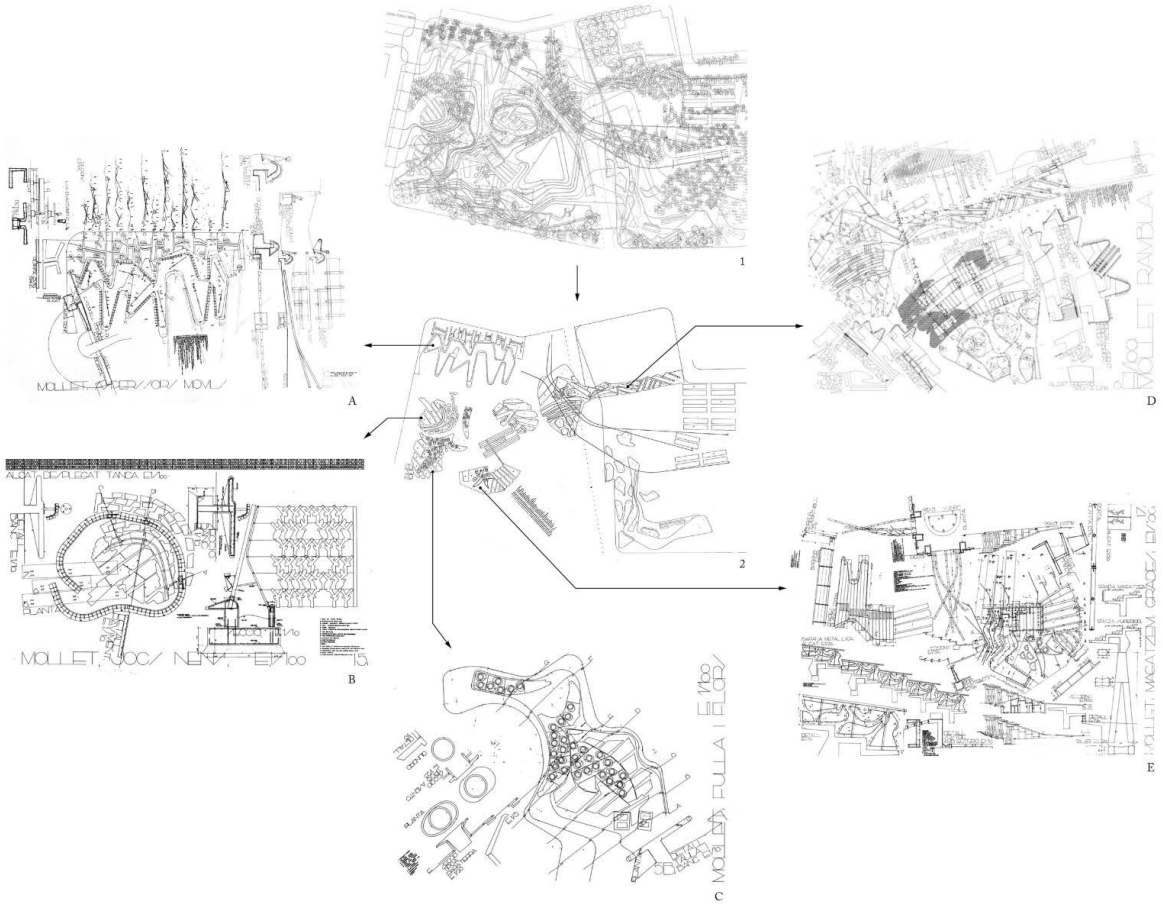


Figure 7-19. Matrix floor plan (1-2) and partial drawings (A-E). EMBT, *Parc dels Colors*, Mollet del Vallès, 1992-2002.

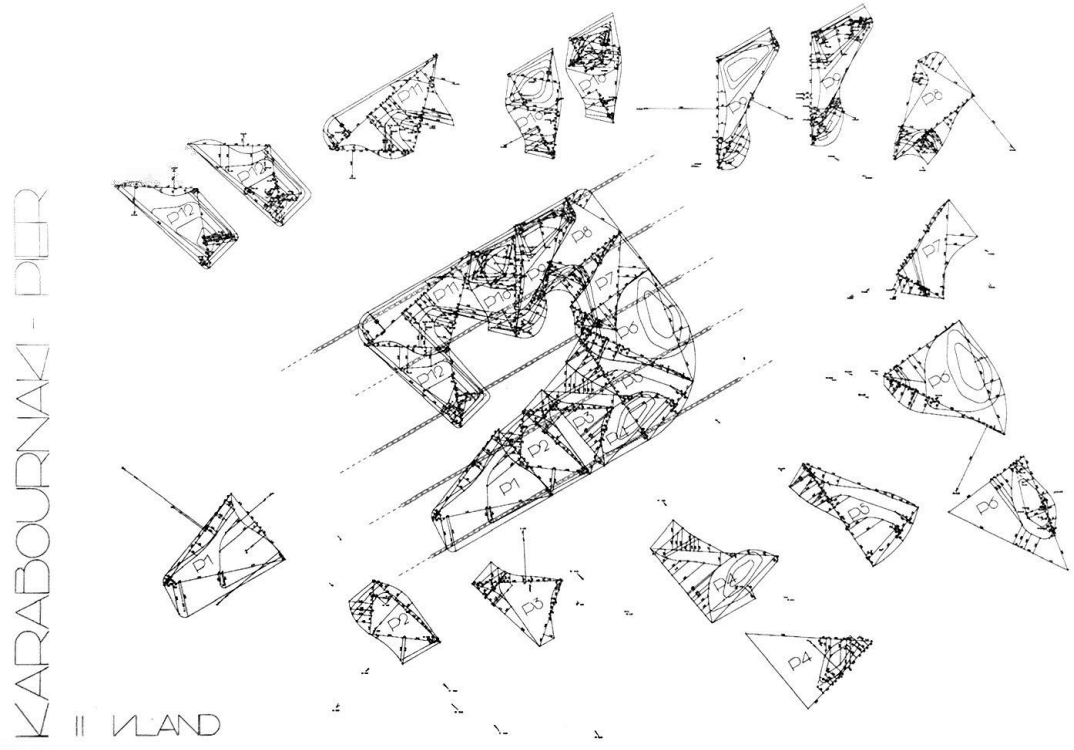


Figure 7-20. EMBT, *Pier in Thessaloniki*, floor plan and fragments of the Shipping Office, 1997.

Vignette 7-A: Redesign of a roof from the project's pieces.

In the early morning of April 13, 1993, the roof of the sports center under construction in Huesca collapsed (Figs. 7-21 and 7-22). The roof was a large floating surface tensioned between a series of buttresses working under tension on one side, and two masts, under compression, on the other. The technical investigation report revealed that the reason was the breakage of the concrete buttresses. In an execution error during the construction process, the main and secondary steel reinforcements were interchanged in their mounting. For various reasons, the original design was not reconstructed, but an alternative solution was required. The catenary curve remained but not the cables that defined it, which were replaced by a series of metal trusses (Fig. 7-23).

In one of the project folders at the Fundació Enric Miralles, there is a series of hand sketches of what seems to be the redesign of the roof after its collapse (Fig. 7-24 shows a few of them). I say "seem" because they are uncategorized and undated. Faced with this lack of archival veracity, the sketches must speak for themselves about their intentions and where to place them in time. The following narrative suggests that these sketches express the redesign of the roof based on the project's parts that remained after the collapse. Furthermore, the sketches can be located at some point in 1993. I believe this interpretation will not be far from Miralles' thoughts at the time. The design of a large roof, whether of a sports center, a concert hall, or an airport, is typically done from the section. However, it has already been mentioned that Miralles used to operate compositionally from the floor plan. This occasion is no exception, as contrary as such a design technique may seem for the task. As if it were a rehabilitation work of a ruin, his own ruin, Miralles re-designed the roof from the already constructed pieces. Upon close inspection, these hand sketches do not represent the version finally built. Instead, this proposal seems to be an intermediate one. It shows a structural solution with three main ribs, different from the built one consisting of six steel trusses on the longest span (compare Sketch #5 in Fig. 7-24 with the bottom of Fig. 7-23).

Sketch #1 shows the perimeter elements around the void of the main court. Those are the side entrance porches, the sinuous ramp, and the outdoor U-shaped walls. Above the porches, there are two ribs in symmetry. It seems that Miralles was looking for a point of support on which to place a central rib, surely necessary from a structural point of view. However, it is impossible to establish a natural symmetry because the buttresses are even, and the main grandstand is not to be used either, since it would reduce the visibility of the spectators. In these circumstances, the outdoor bleachers of the training court, slightly tilted, appear as an ally. The wall on one of its sides serves as a support from which the central rib can start to fly over the interior grandstands and the main court until it reaches one of the central buttresses on the opposite side. In sketch #2, Miralles extracts the composite figure and relates it to the lateral retaining wall and the two unused masts. This minimal composition generates an interrelation between the pieces on one side, which sketch #3 enhanced by knitting a transversal structure between the two roof ribs. The same procedure is repeated on the other side, as per sketch #4. Sketch #5 shows the principal structural lines, i.e., the three main ribs and other secondary ones starting from their midpoints to the remaining buttresses. The outer stand remains as a reference base during the whole maneuver. Sketch #7 juxtaposes both lateral figures with curved elevation cross trusses, which share the central rib. Sketch #8 reflects a quick sketch of all the main elements of the rethought design.

The location of the central rib in relation to the existing parts determines the redesign strategy for this intermediate version. Its point of reference is the piece of the outer stand, which was already related to other pieces around it. Working in levels that increasingly include adjacent figures, Miralles found a solution to arrange the transversal stitching of the new roof.




Figures 7-21 and 7-22. Miralles/Pinós, *Sports Center in Huesca*, site condition after the collapse of the original roof, 1993.

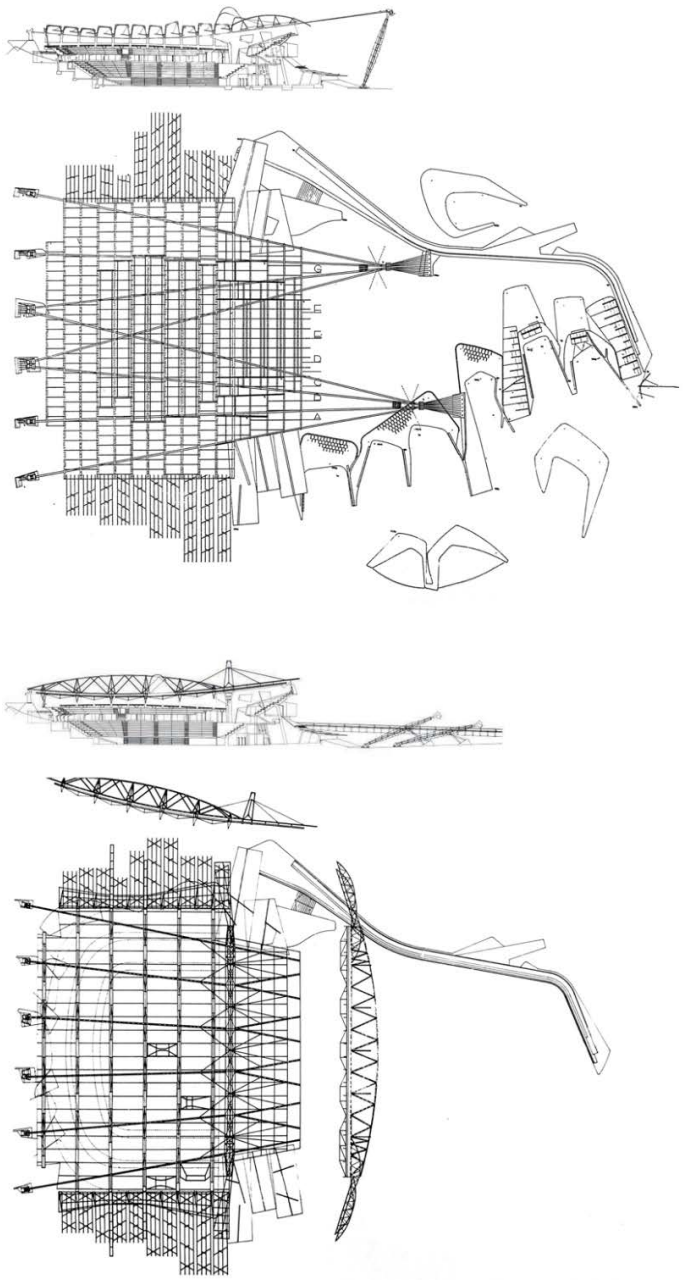


Figure 7-23. Miralles/Pinós (first version, top) and Miralles (built version, bottom), *Sports Center in Huesca*, comparison of the first and second roofing solution, 1988-1994. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

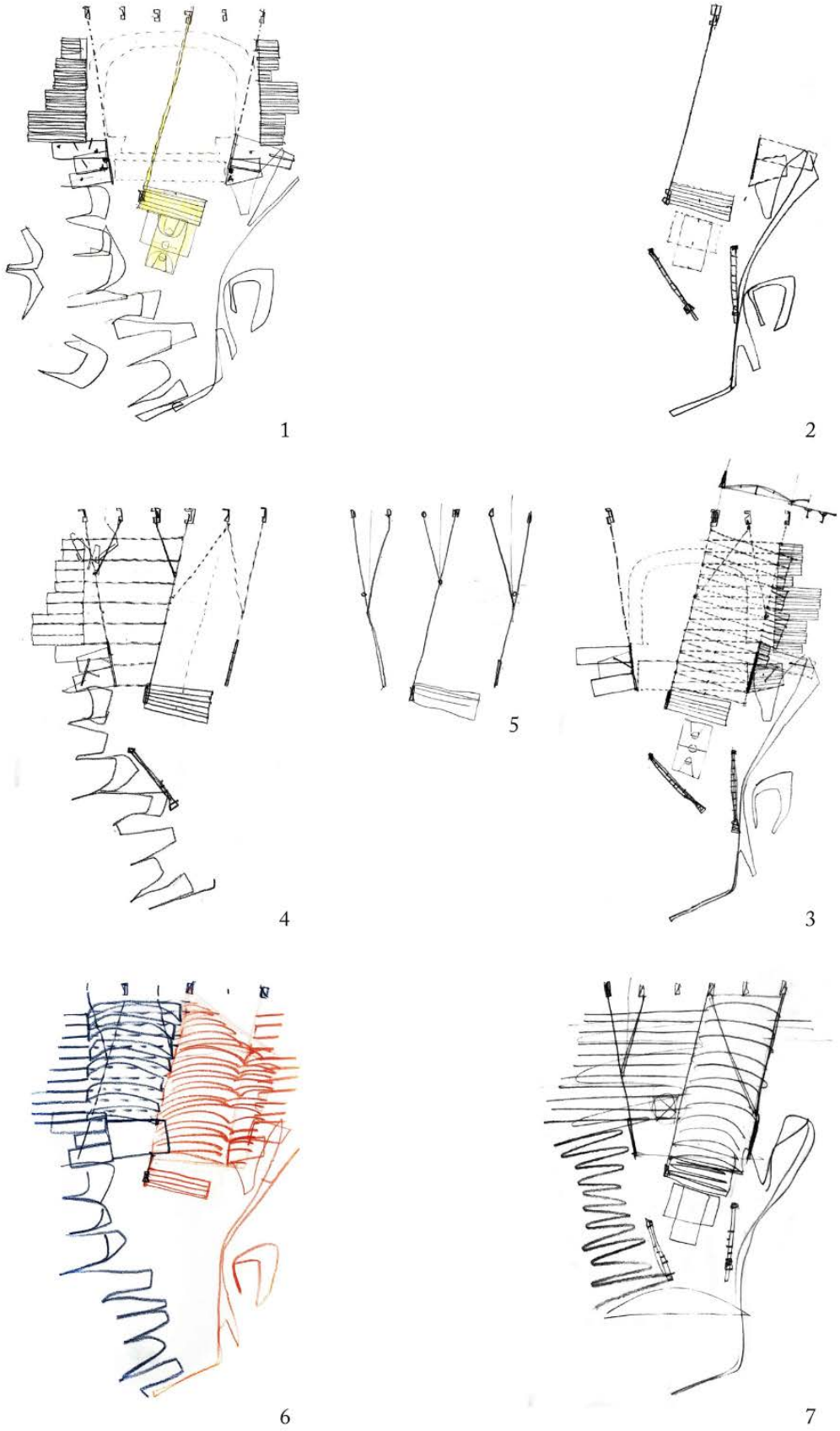


Figure 7-24. Enric Miralles, *Sports Center in Huesca*, hand sketches for roof redesign, not the constructed version, possibly 1993. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

The number of designs that run in parallel under the same project usually depends on the number of parts that constitute the building. Yet again, we must not forget that each of these parts is another project in itself, running as many partial drawings as parts compose the piece. The question of variations should be also added to each of these objects. Therefore, if for Harman the world is a spiral of "objects wrapped in objects," for Miralles a project is a vertical structure of projects within projects within projects within projects. The number of levels or contexts of a project, nonetheless, cannot be generalized. At least in Miralles, it depends on the programmatic complexity, size, and other particularities in each case.

As may already be apparent, the dynamic between the matrix drawing as a whole and the partial drawings is not the typical one in which "zooming in" on certain areas and adding details to them produces the detailing of a building. If so, that would imply a unidirectional downward causality. In contrast, the matrix and the partial drawing in Miralles run iteratively in separation and conjunction. This means a sequence of the type: extract and isolate the part from the matrix floor plan in a partial drawing; develop it in its own rules; reintroduce it back into the matrix; calibrate it with the rules proper to the whole and the other parts; restart the operation from the new state.[89]

Such an iterative process is again in close connection with the time-dependent notions of *variation* and *repetition* discussed above. How an element begins and ends, whether whole or part, within a design process is not the same, but transforms, evolves, and varies in that course. Thus, in the period of a design process, we can assume a degree of disturbance between a piece in the matrix drawing and the partial drawing (Fig. 7-25). We can think of it as a seismograph. In the beginning, the magnitude of the discrepancy is high, but with each new iteration, the needle's vibration becomes shorter and shorter until it reaches an almost straight line. At that moment, the synchronization between the two types of documents—matrix floor plan and partial drawing—is somewhat satisfactory.

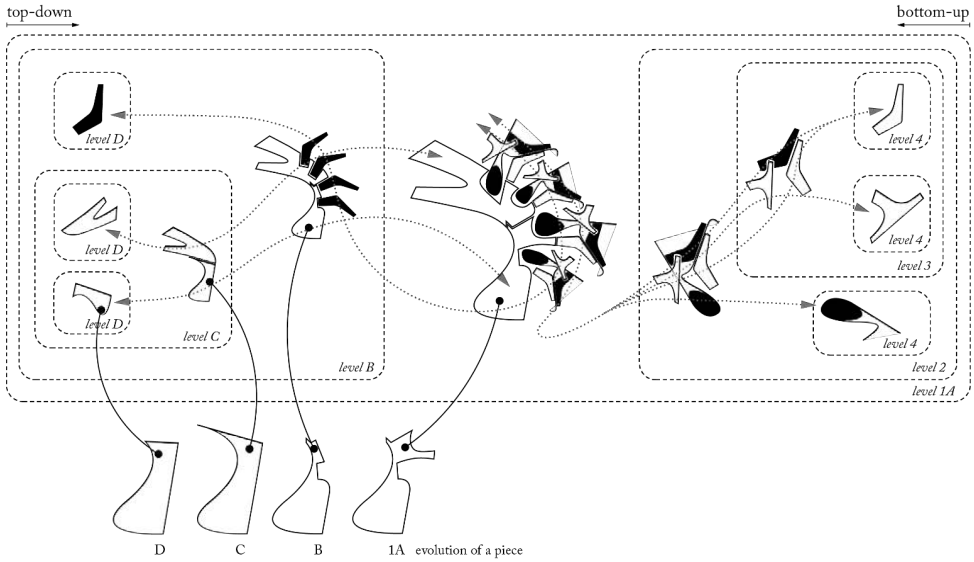


Figure 7-25. Diagram of the mereology of distinct(ive)ness and instances of one of the parts throughout the design process (evolution).

[89] Continuing with the parallelism with Wiscombe's design method, the American architect comments in this regard: "Architectural elements are pulled apart and de-stratified so they can be reassembled to produce a refreshing chunkiness and tension." Wiscombe, "Discreteness, or Towards a Flat Ontology of Architecture," 37.

I will further remark that, although such a synchronized state may mean the end of physical transformations, in no case does it imply the end of the interaction per se. On the contrary, a whole lives in constant tension with its parts, even if it is to maintain a stable state. If the part-whole and part-part relations stop, the whole will disappear. We know this from DeLanda's theory of assemblages. As he claims: "if the interactions cease to take place the emergent properties cease to exist."[90]

Continuing along these lines, I would also like to highlight the aesthetic effects of the vertical and horizontal interconnections in Miralles' works. If, for example, we look again at the constituent pieces of the Parc dels Colors (the schematic matrix drawing [2] in Fig. 7-19), the distribution of elements exhibits a constant compositional tension. Regardless of the question of individual synchronization of a part between the matrix and its partial drawing, the pieces of the park do not interact harmoniously with each other. Rather, they stand in a constant state of irritation. It is almost as if each fragment re-calibrates its position in relation to the others at every moment. We can see this plastic effect as another aesthetic technique within the framework of Miralles' abstraction, which stresses the purpose of opacity and productivity of space. Typically, in his designs, the pieces do not fit together perfectly. There is no "click" indicating the successful completion of the assembly. The "click" connection belongs to the mechanical and automatic; it only allows for *one* way of interaction.

In Miralles, by contrast, there are formal frictions and tensions between the pieces that create aesthetic frictions and tensions in the beholder. This is especially evident in his recurring use of superimposition as a compositional technique (bottom of Fig. 7-18). It is in this sense that Miralles' vertical and horizontal interrelations are also abstract. They are asemic in the sense of not being reduced to an unequivocal and given "click." The consequence of such plural connectivity is, on the one hand, variability in how two formal pieces can operate together within a project or across several projects. On the other hand, such misfits produce emerging spaces between figures: the virtual figures between the physical ones discussed in Subsection 6.3.4. The interior design of the Círculo de Lectores de Madrid (Fig. 7-26) is a good example of this.[91] The pieces are squeezed towards the perimeter wall, generating spaces in tension between them. This emerging space is only evident in the matrix drawing and, therefore, irreducible to the pieces. Such spaces between pieces can be seen as what DeLanda denominates the "emergent properties of a whole." Therefore, the question of space in Miralles is not resolved only with separate and complete parts that are then joined with others of the same character to generate a whole as a collection of perfectly fitted spatial elements. There are also emergent spaces that do not appear in the parts. In Miralles, composition is something much dirtier. His designs may seem imprecise at first glance, but one realizes the precision of such imprecision upon closer inspection. It can be argued that it is there, in the virtuosity of imperfection, where an important part of the openness and opacity-productivity as a design agenda lies.

As explained above, the matrix and partial drawings are an operational consequence of a worldview organized at levels, which is intrinsically related to the question of hierarchy. However, such a hierarchy is not in opposition to the notion of flat ontology. In this case, we should not understand the term in its epistemological dimension associated with power

[90] DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 12.
[91] Férnandez Contereras refers to this emerging space as "negative space" for this particular project in Madrid. SeeFernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 104–6.

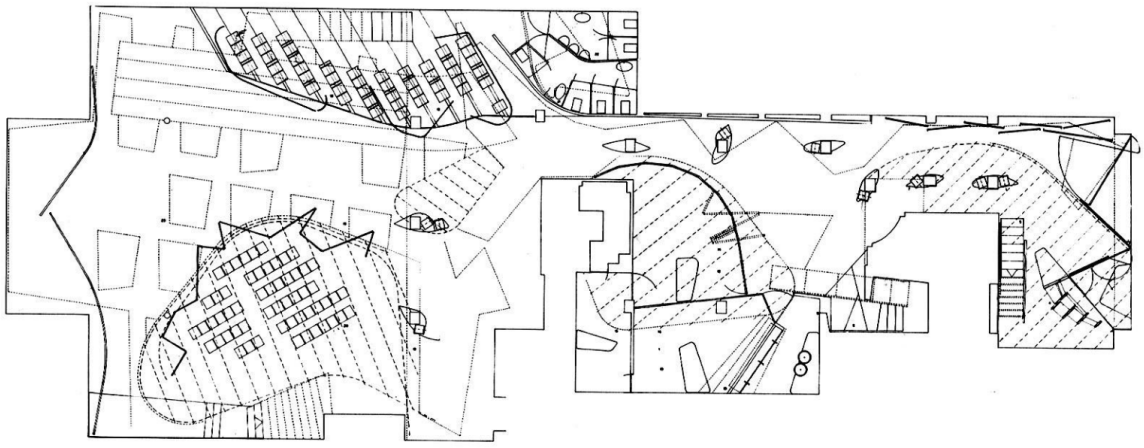


Figure 7-26. Enric Miralles, *Sede del Círculo de Lectores*, Madrid, 1990-1991.

dynamics and questions of domination and repression. Hierarchy is decoupled from totalitarianism in the way the parts affect the whole, and vice versa. In other words, an architectural composition of levels operating within the regime of distinct(ive)ness has nothing to do with authoritarian but rather with *formal* hierarchy. The elements of architecture are each unique and scattered in several layers. Nowhere in this model is it prescribed that there must be a privileged entity or level on which the others depend, as parametricism and socio-technological discreteness do, each in opposite manners. Things can be stacked and nested—a door is, ontologically speaking, inside a wall and the doorknob inside the door—but each thing plays its own role from its domain of action. So we can "look at the world one thing at a time," as Wiscombe says.[92]

At one point in the book *Atlas of Novel Tectonics*, a compilation of Reiser + Umemoto's design strategies and thinking, Jesse Reiser also addresses part-to-whole relationships similarly. As he puts it:

> We do not reject the concept of hierarchy, but rather use it in a new way. We work within a hierarchy that is not simply nested in scale and distinct from the orders that lie above and below it. Rather, we are using organizational principles that promote communication across scales, in which the particular is able to affect the general and vice versa.
>
> This requires a methodology that involves both top-down and bottom-up logics operating in a feedback loop. (Thus, hierarchy, in this case, has nothing to do with power structures and everything to do with material organization). This methodology, in contrast to the reductive models of modernism, enables the emergence of new organizations and new architectural effects out of wholes that are not reducible to their parts.[93]

These words nicely encapsulate what has been said so far, significantly reinforcing the question of tensions between and among levels. Therefore, formal hierarchy is not static. The part and the whole affect each other—the door affects the wall and vice versa.

These tensions between the whole and the part, no less than their constant adaptation, are also present in Bryant's strange mereology. In his words: "The relationship between multiples and sub-multiples or larger scale objects and smaller scale objects is one in which sub-multiples provide constant *perturbations* to multiples and where multiples

[92] Wiscombe, *Objects Models Worlds Abridged*, 15, [emphasis removed].
[93] Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto, *Atlas of Novel Tectonics* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 50.

perturb sub-multiples."[94] This suggests that within a constitutive relation, there are two simultaneous albeit separate causalities or vertical perturbations, one descending and another ascending. While parametricism accounts only for the former, the discreteness of sameness does so just for the latter. Alternative to both of them, the discreteness of distinct(ive)ness requires both of them. However, such simultaneous necessity does not imply that these relations are the same. How a part affects the whole differs from how the whole affects the part. As Harman reminds us: "There is asymmetry of this kind in all causation."[95] Within a part-whole relationship, this means that upward and downward tensions are distinct relations. Therefore, and recalling again another of Harman's premises whereby a relationship between two objects is also an object, a bottom-up causality can manifest itself differently when the part disturbs the whole otherwise—thanks to its surplus—just as the whole can affect the part in multiple ways. This lack of reciprocity—contrary to the general thought that something affects something else to the extent that the second affects the first—is an additional point that nourishes the strangeness of the mereology in question.

To implement this bidirectional relationship within the strange mereology for architectural design, I will propose the idea of *mereological cartography*. The mereological map is a document for the design process that encompasses all possible aspects in the development of a project. It is the *detective wall* for architects, so to speak, where what is pursued is to discover a spatial expression of the AP, similar to the detective seeking to discover who the murderer is. A mereological map helps to conceptualize and develop separated and in conjunction the four mereological questions for design outlined above: (1) who is the whole, (2) who are the parts, (3) how are the parts interrelated with each other, and (4) how do the whole and the parts irritate each other. The purpose of the document is to visualize and then trigger the parts and their interrelationships. It can include more than just geometrical or graphic information. It can be read as a mind map that meets a formal one. For example, the mereological cartography of Fig. 7-27 traces the interrelationships between figures, variations, references, objectives, ambitions, and so on. It is the student's particular chain of multiplicity for this project. It shows the developmental paths, but also its multiple dead ends, which are always susceptible to reopening. Other examples remain on a figurative and geometrical basis, such as those of some of my works (Figs. 7-28 and 7-29) or my attempts to re-map mereologically Miralles/Pinós' stadiums of Huesca and Alicante (Figs. 7-30 and 7-31).

To summarize, the question of levels is fundamental to account for any discussion about mereology. Various points derive from it. First, there can be emergence because there is a place to house it above what produces it. Second, an object can be part and whole at the same time because there is a cascade of layers above and below it with which to relate accordingly. Third, levels imply formal hierarchy, which is dynamic in two directions: the whole irritates the parts, and the parts irritate the whole. Each of these relationships operates in different terms. Based on these circumstances, two types of architectural documents suitable for working with these circumstances have been examined: the separation between the matrix floor plan and the partial drawings and their unification in a mereological cartography.

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[94] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 218, [emphasis added].
[95] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 219.

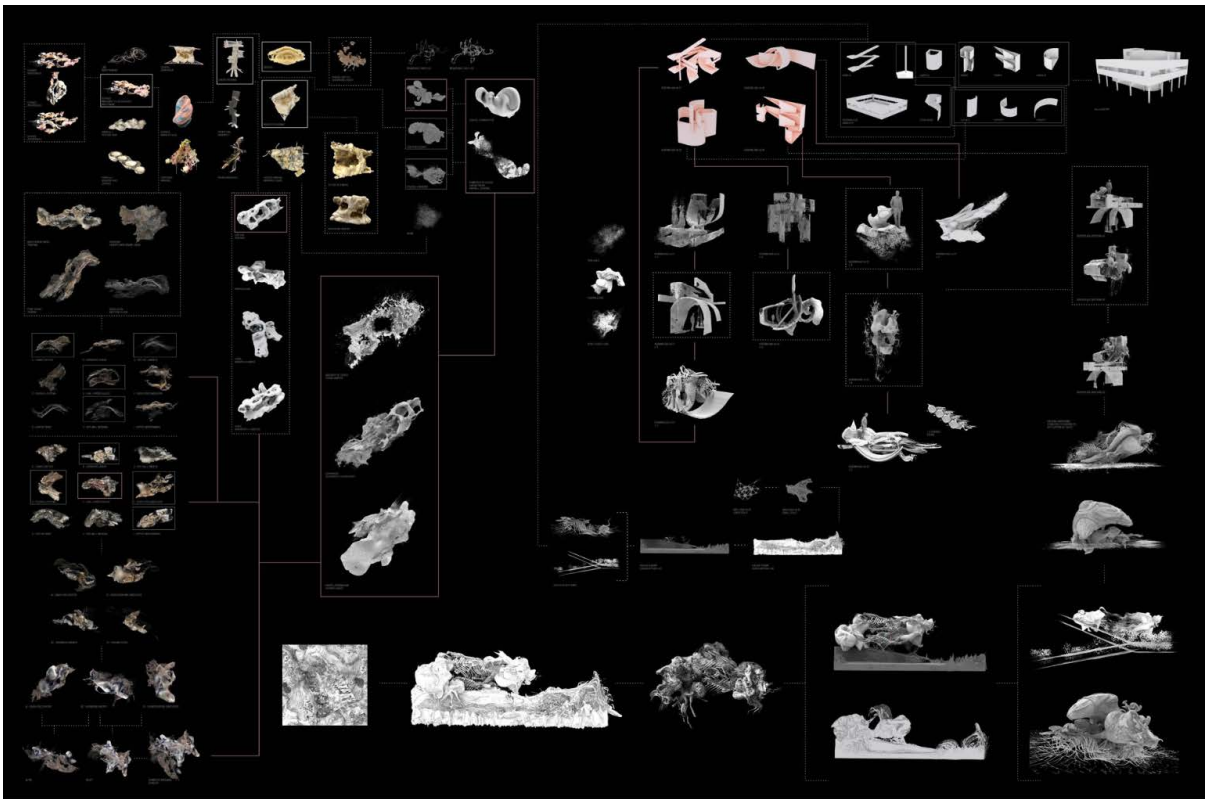


Figure 7-27. Students: Bernie Guerra and Emma Sumrow. Lecturers: Gonzalo Vaíllo with Gabriel Esquivel, *Machine Tendencies*, T4T Lab Texas A&M, Spring 2020.

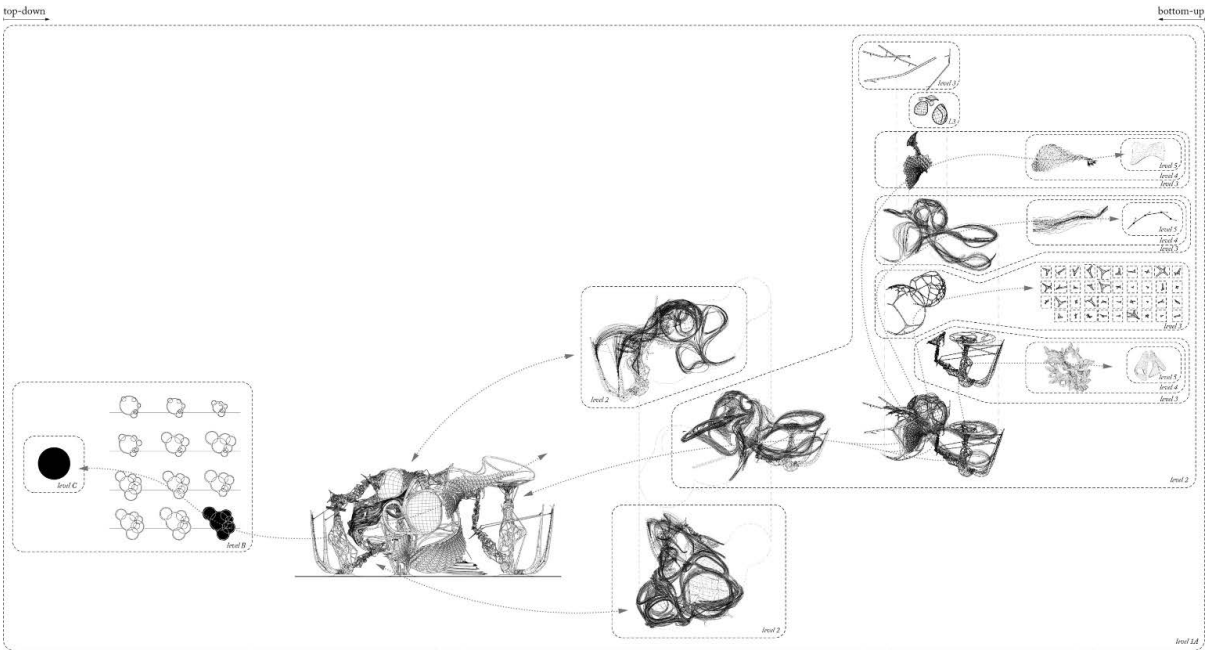


Figure 7-28. Student: Gonzalo Vaíllo. Lecturers: Hernán Díaz Alonso and José Carlos López Cervantes, *WBS House 52*, mereological levels, Excessive Postgraduate Program, University of Applied Arts Vienna, 2013. Reworked 2019.

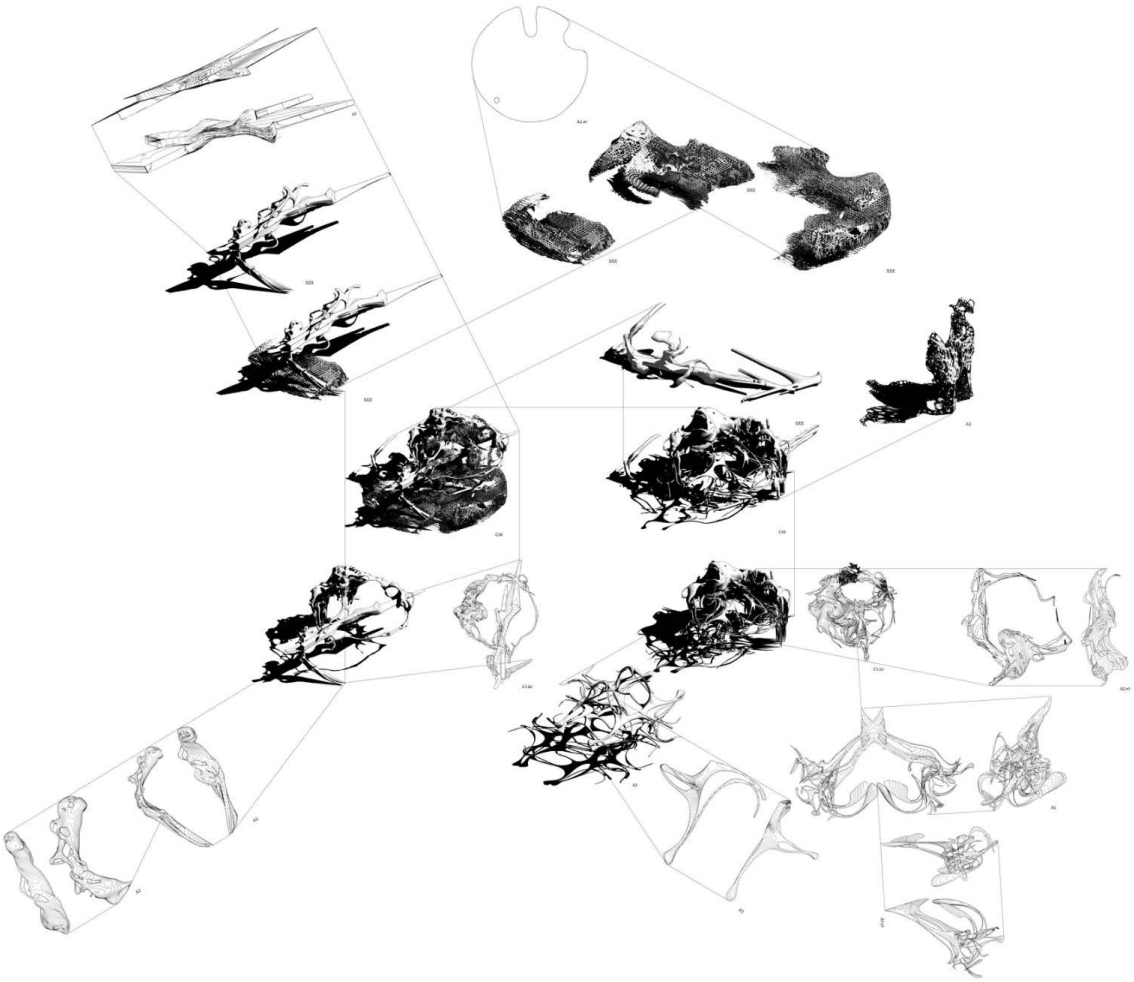


Figure 7-29. MORPHtopia, *Chamber #8*, mereological cartography, 2020.

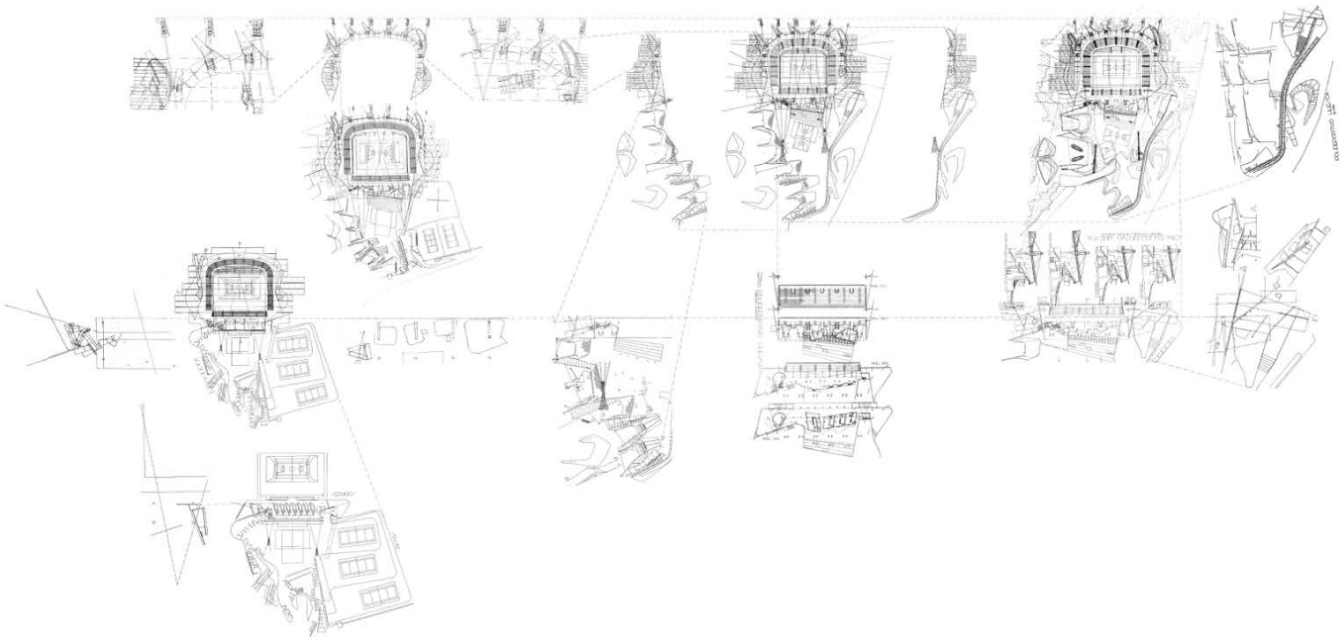


Figure 7-30. Mereological cartography of Miralles/Pinós, *Sports Center in Huesca*, 1988-1994. Mereological composition by the author. Drawings from the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

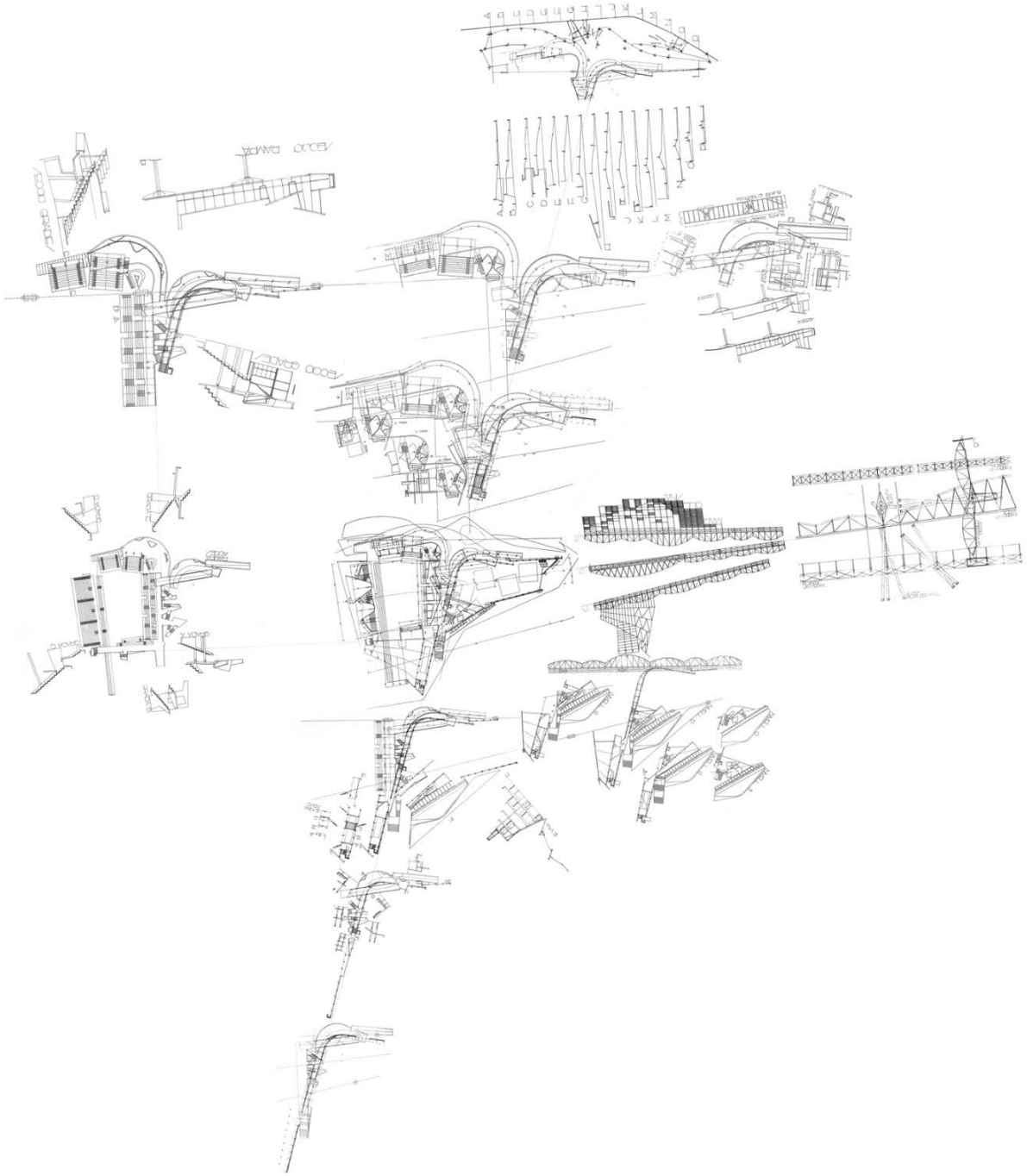


Figure 7-31. Mereological cartography through the design versions of Miralles/Pinós, *National Centre for Gymnastics in Alicante*, 1989-1993. Mereological composition by the author. Drawings from the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

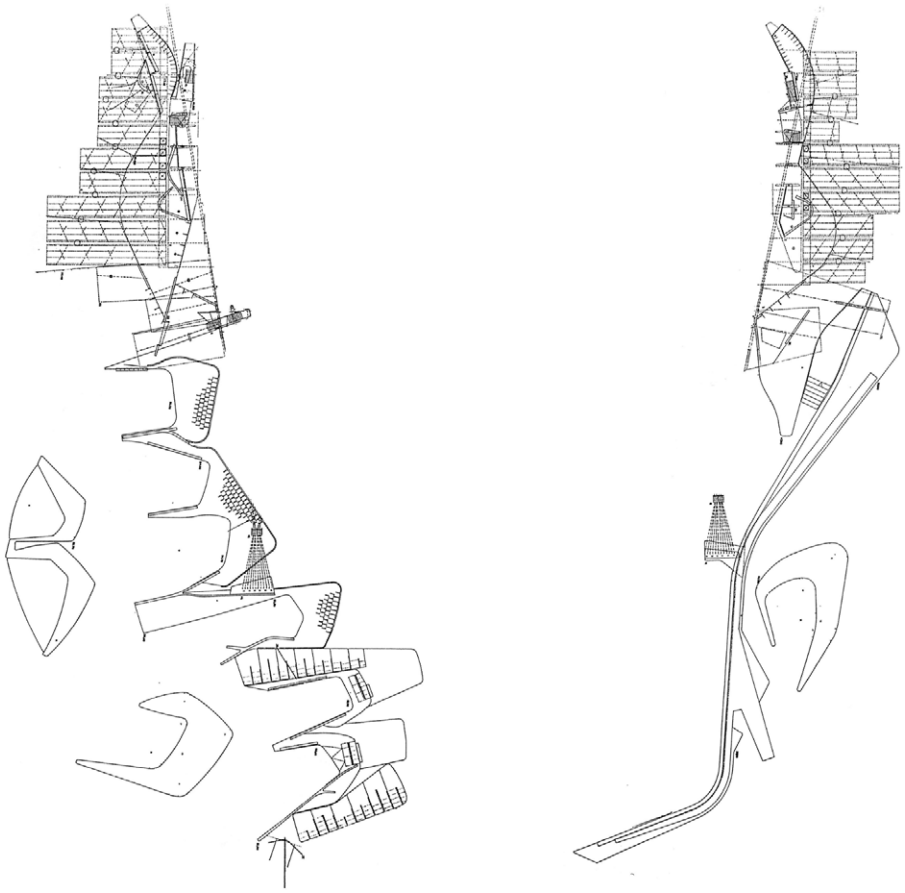


Figure 7-30. Miralles/Pinós, *Sports Center in Huesca*, side pieces, 1988-1994. From two drawings of the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

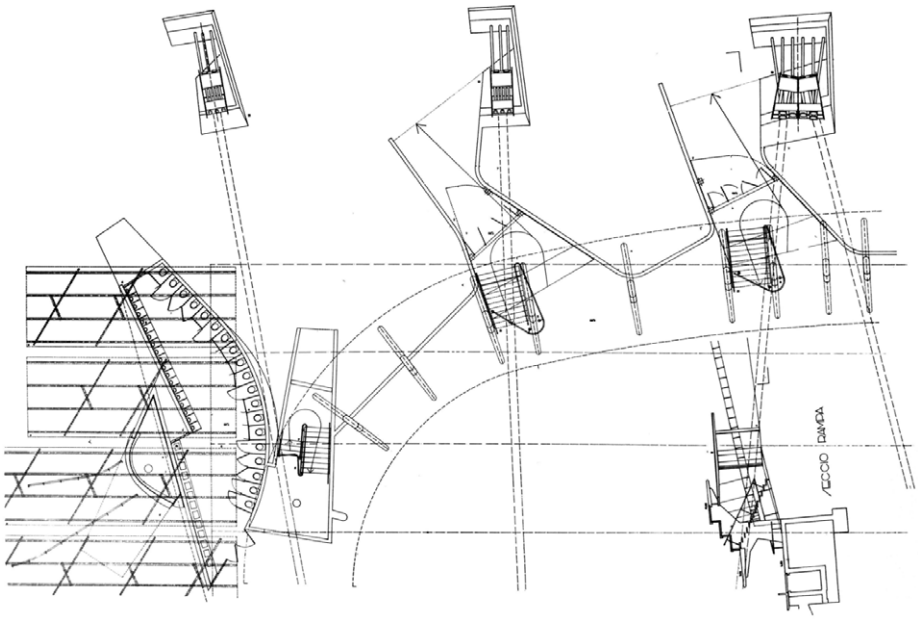


Figure 7-30. Miralles/Pinós, *Sports Center in Huesca*, sanitary and emergency stairway units, 1988-1994. From two drawings of the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

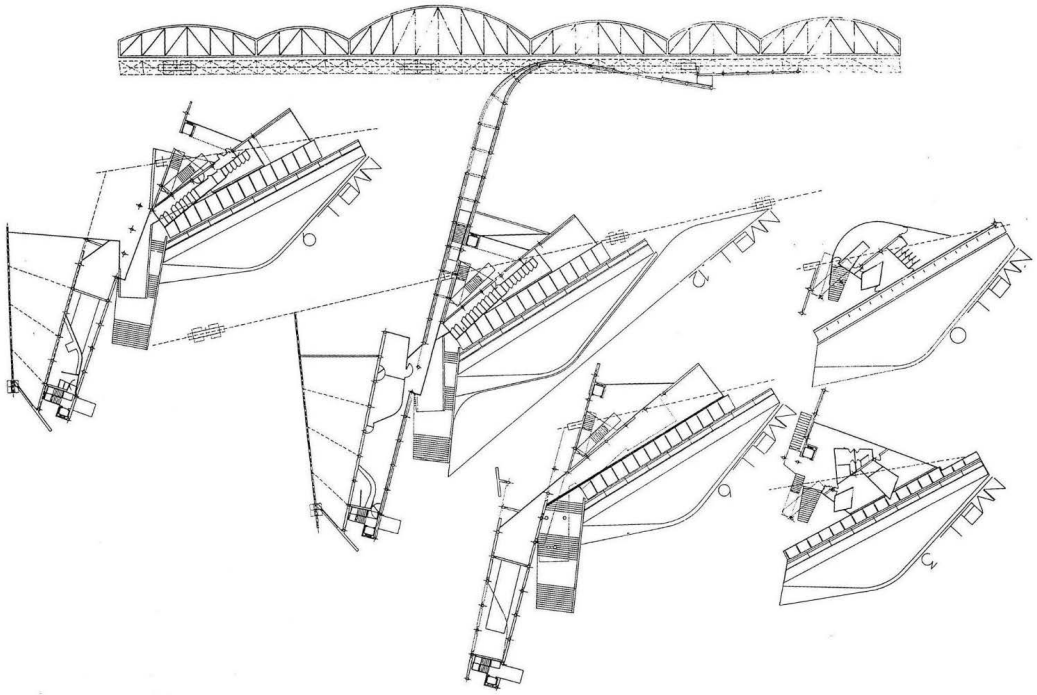


Figure 7-30. Miralles/Pinós, *National Centre for Gymnastics in Alicante*, service building, 1989-1993. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

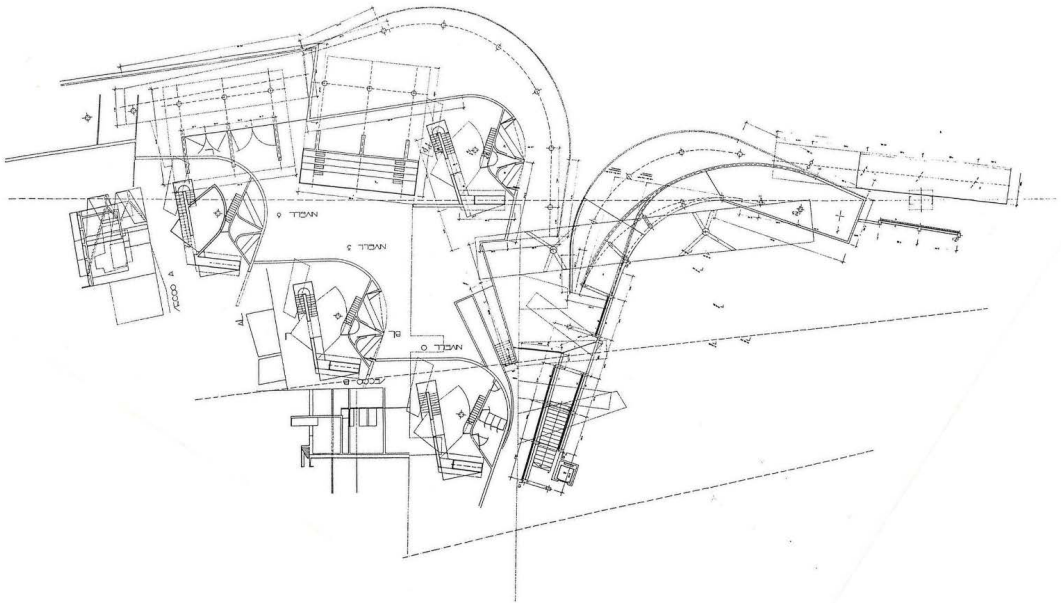


Figure 7-30. Miralles/Pinós, *National Centre for Gymnastics in Alicante*, access ramps and ticket office, 1989-1993. From the project folder. Courtesy of ©Fundació Enric Miralles.

Summary of Part Three

In Part Three, abstraction has been linked to the notion of the unknown, the asemic, and the asyntactical. This means that abstraction is not understood as the reduction of some essence of complex phenomena, nor as an instrument of conceptualization. It simply refers to that form of expression that does not find its value in the recognition of a given meaning (asemic) nor in its own appearance (asyntactic).

The vocation for abstraction has come after the study of the failure of the precedent as a provider of complete depth and open engagement. Three modulations have been studied: (1) the precedent as a base, (2) as a reference, and (3) as a linker. In (1), familiar qualities specific to the architectural realm are the material of the design. The shortcomings of typological discussions have been studied, concluding that a design result coming from a given typology cannot be emancipated precisely from what originates it. In (2), two modes of external referentiality have been addressed: one subject-centered and the other subjectless. On the former, some non-architectural features are imported into architecture as a stable domain of reception by the subject, similar to the explanatory metaphor (Subsection 5.2.1). The lack of openness and opacity, and therefore of productivity, is, in this case, the same as in (1): the known restricts freedom of engagement. On the latter, in the subjectless strategy within the precedent-as-reference, features of a disparate nature come together and perform by their own means, forming an outcome that promises cognitive ambiguity. This thesis is fully committed to such an ontological conception of a composition of strangers, but it disagrees with many of the explorations exercised so far. Their shortcomings derive from an overly explicit exposition of the compounding precedents. This means that the emergent result is still semantically anchored to its known parts. It has been argued that this occurred due to an over-reliance on composition, overlooking the emerging unitary whole. In (3), and against the possibility of a too distant expression, the precedent-as-linker appears as a non-semantic nexus between the work and the observer. Its purpose is to capture the attention of the observer and introduce the person to the depth of the work.

From there, an examination through the origins of various abstract art movements of the twentieth century has revealed abstraction as an instrument of the double unknown, that is, as a way of indirectly addressing an object's ineffable core and activating other of its knowable qualities. Within this framework, the opaque-productive space of architecture has been declared abstract in its physical articulation. This means that, due to the non-inclusion of semantic precedents in the spatial formulation, Abstract Space resists immediate comprehension (hence it is opaque) and induces alternative modes of use and interpretation (hence it is productive).

The notion of Abstract Space presented here has been interpreted differently from that of the Modern Movement, which Peterson refers to as "Anti-space." Instead of being universal, homogeneous, and neutral, Abstract Space within a world of objects is local, heterogeneous, and distinct(ive), while remaining open, ambiguous, and plural. In more detail, this type of opaque-productive space has been described as labyrinthine, cavernous,

and saturated. A labyrinthine space presents an irregular, non-axial, twisted, intricate formal order. It tends to create confusion and disorientation in experience. These initial effects are the cognitive resistance against automatic and mechanical apprehension. To overcome these nuances, the labyrinthine architecture requires exploration, a lengthening of the time of cognition to arrive at individual appreciations. The latter also refers to the cavernous, which should not be reduced to the tectonic and massive features of the grotto, but implies an aesthetic way of engaging with space. Like the primitive human, the cavernous space is occupied rather than inhabited. That means that no cognitive habit of use and understanding can be established. On the contrary, its configuration is such that each experience is demarcated from previous ones, even if they are of the same space. Each encounter requires a new act of interpretation, and it is irrelevant whether or not these impressions are contradictory to each other. Cognizing in the now means that there is no truth as a reference on which to validate what is cognized, and it does not matter if such truth comes from another person, from the social environment, or from a previous personal experience. Finally, it has been argued that Abstract Space is saturated, and most of the time, easily linked to the labyrinthine and the cavernous. A highly articulated space unfolds labyrinthically in its complex order and cavernous in its register, as its excessiveness increases the possibilities of spatial affordances. It also allows for concrete design strategies such as the fading of scales, a means of cognitive irritation and provocation, namely, of productivity.

But abstraction can also have the drawback of inducing not plurality but indifference, if deep and open engagement does not occur. Against that possibility, three cognitive scenarios have been proposed. In what has been called *anchor points*, the first proposes the superposition of different orders of complexity. Simple design organizations such as symmetry allow an empathetic inclusion of the observer in the cognitive act towards more complex orders underlying the work. The second option—the precedent as a linker—has proposed the use of familiar references without capitalizing on their semantic value, only on the purely formal one. The third possibility, which derives from the first, has accounted for the tension between resolutions at different levels of the work. For the purposes of depth and openness in experience, the characteristics of abstraction have been refined here as non-representational yet figurative, which, together with the previous concepts of scales or levels, have been revealed as the fundamental ingredients for the questions of opacity and productivity in architectural design.

In this terrain of levels and abstract, idiosyncratic figures, architectural composition has been defended and termed a *design regime of distinct(ive)ness*. Miralles' design method has been revealed to be mereological in nature for any aspect of a design, one that accounts for the whole, the parts, and their horizontal and vertical relationships. This design ethos has reflected itself consistently with the ontological structure of objects within objects. In this model, each object acts simultaneously as a whole and as a part, which has been associated with Miralles' strategies in which each of them is treated autonomously and in conjunction by differentiating between matrix and partial drawings. Finally, and in order to develop the multiple levels, interconnections, and parts within an abstract-labyrinth-cavernous-saturated space, the idea of mereological cartography has been proposed.

Conclusion

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Before entering into concluding remarks and future possibilities of this project, it seems necessary to summarize briefly the main principles elaborated in the previous seven chapters. This study has presented a subjectless realist and formalist approach to architecture in which the architectural project (abbreviated AP) has been considered an object in its own right. Like any other entity in the world, the AP consists of a unitary being (deep reality, spirit, substance) surrounded by a multiplicity of qualities (manifestations, capacities). This is an indivisible autonomous package. Yet there is an internal rift, whereby the qualities of a project never capture the being of that project. Hence, each AP's self is irreducible to any or the sum of its manifestations, regardless of whether they are perceived or not.

In addition, the project is a kind of object that appears medium-promiscuous. Apart from the typical material expressions such as drawings, models, and buildings, the architect's and user's impressions, emotions, performances, or uses have emerged as material proper to the AP's qualitative domain. This means that the human being—as well as any other non-human cognizer of the project—is another medium of the AP. The project's multimedia character reinforces the awareness of the impossibility of transcendental qualitative embodiment, i.e., the idea that there are qualities and capacities more essential than others in the internal characterization of an object is rejected.[1] Such discrimination of the object's qualitative plurality has been argued to be a cognitive rather than an ontological condition. An object is irreducible to any of its qualities, whether grasped or not. Conversely, through the concept of *flat representativity*, it has been said that every quality of a thing has an equal power to represent that thing differently. Again, if it does not come to us in such a way, it is an epistemological issue establishing a pragmatic hierarchy. Yet what this internal qualitative planarity offers is precisely the possibility of breaking the hierarchy of qualities historically built around objects by the human subject. For example, a flat-representational approach helps overcome epistemological axioms like "architecture is only about buildings or particular styles." In this context, one can question and speculate on what a building is. It is possible to reconsider, for example, other media and qualities proper of the AP that have been historically denigrated or until now dormant. If modernism hinges on a medium-specific sensibility, today's subjectlessness transverses media.

Furthermore, much like its qualities and capacities, the AP's deep reality or being is also independent of the subject. This means that the access to an AP by a cognizer—be it an architect, a user, or any other human or non-human entity—in no way determines the entity's unitary-multiplicity internal structure. Cognitive relationships may grasp and activate one or another manifestation and, when they are of an aesthetic nature, they intuit the spirit of the thing. However, these acts alter neither the thing's existential nor its qualitative sphere. Cognition has been declared innocuous. It entails the nullification of the subject as the sole sustainer of the rest of the word, which, in the case of humans, has resulted in the anthropocentric model since modern times. In short, what is rejected is the figure of the subject, not the human. In return, the cognizer appears as a harmless activator of the project's material.

On this basis, this thesis not only adopts human, but more extensively, subject anti-exceptionalism. But, again, eliminating the constitutive power of human cognition does

[1] This is a fundamental difference with Harman's theory, which, given all the qualities of a thing, recognizes a set of "real qualities" that characterize the object in an essential way and superior to others. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 49.

not imply eliminating humans entirely from constitutive tasks. For example, we partake together with other entities in the foundation of architectural projects. However, neither our cognition of the AP, nor our cognition of our participation in the AP's formation constitutes the AP. As a result, our access to the AP, rather than our foundational participation in it, has been declared inoffensive to the thing's internal articulation and organization. We are simultaneously "ingredients" and "beholders," to use DeLanda and Harman's terms. Each of these impasses, in turn, implies different relational conditions, each one constituting an object in its own right.

This condition of non-aggression of the cognizer or beholder to the nature of the cognized positions this thesis' aesthetic arguments between Greenberg's and Fried's extreme formalism of intact artworks without beholders and Harman's composite formalism, where the aesthetic question lies neither in the artwork nor in the beholder but in their autonomous relationship. From the former, the complete dissolution of the cognizer is rejected, because it homogenizes aesthetic experience by universalizing the subject. This means that there is one—and only one—aesthetic impression on a given object. Such an extreme formalism cancels both the object's qualitative multiplicity and the observer's distinct(ive)ness required to unfold it—with all its additional socio-political implications, or more precisely, the elimination of the socio-political dimension of aesthetics. On the other hand, Harman splits architectural identity into the aestheticization of two objects: the architectural object devoid of cognition (which he calls "form") and the experiential object itself ("function").[2] However, the ontological tenet of unity is unfortunately breached in this case. Furthermore, this scheme involves certain correlationist or subject-centered aspects, surprising as it may seem. They emerge when Harman locates the effects of an object, not in the object, but in its foreign or cognitive relations. When this happens, experience or cognition can only account for the experiential act itself and not for what is observed. In other words, the material I experience of an object is not of the object, but of my experience of it.[3]

My proposal for resolving mid-twentieth century extreme formalism without humans and Harman's distributed formalism is simply to account for the figure of the AP as an encompassing object. With this gesture, the AP includes the cognized (e.g., the building), the cognizer, and its cognitive relation; among many other things. Under the domain of the AP, each of these objects establishes a particular relation with the project, which can be of constitution, cognitive or representational, of both simultaneously. In its representational register, the AP proxies each of its internal parts to express itself. This means that there is no reason to expel human subjective impressions from within the AP, as extreme formalism does. They are another expression of the AP, just like the building. Indeed, it is in this proxying condition where the relationship between the elements that populate an AP also takes place. It is there where I locate cognition. Therefore, cognition is not only innocuous but also internal to the cognized entity.

For example, the phenomena of the building are representations of the AP that serve to apprehend the underlying project. And this experiential act, being within the sphere of the AP, is another of its multiple expressions. Experience is a subset of an object's manifestations, following Bryant's view.[4] So, in acknowledging the AP, Harman's notions of form and function are unified as they are interior moments of the same project, and both

[2] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 5.
[3] I make this point in Harman's theory of knowledge. Vaíllo, "Superficiality and Representation."
[4] Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 69.

maintain their autonomy within it. That means that we cognize from inside the object, with cognition being one of its manifold activities and manifestations (Fig. 2-3).

Moreover, Harman's effects are not considered outside but of the cognized object, which also act as proxy for the larger entity that encompasses them all. In our architectural example, the effects of a building activated by my experience of it—or any other cognizer, human or non-human—are of the building, which in turn are representations of the AP. Under this scheme, cognition is subjectless, namely, innocuous. The purpose of the cognitive-unit is to *extract* rather than *construct* these effects. They are already within the project's qualitative domain, distributed through its proxies awaiting activation. That an AP is irreducible to its qualities and effects automatically implies that it is also irreducible to the entanglement of how an architect or user cognizes it. The latter is a subset of the former.

It is within this framework that the AP has been declared a *phantom object* that is polymorphous, multimedia, and multi-authored.

As a clarifying note, innocuous cognition does not mean freezing an object in its present state. Let us take an extreme example: the destruction of an object. A cognitive act can destroy an object and still be innocuous to it. This is because the capacity to be destroyed is inherent to the object and is activated by the cognizer, rather than the latter imposing the capacity to destroy the object from the outside.

This scheme of a subjectless or innocuous cognition entails that a project's being eludes direct apprehension twice: because of the cognizer's limitations to the AP's full spectrum of qualities and the inability of each or the sum of those qualities, which includes cognition itself, to fully embody the deep reality it signifies.

However, it is precisely in this double impossibility where this thesis situates architectural cognition and its design and occupation possibilities. In other words, every design and experiential act always entails a cognitive problem, which I call the *double unknown*: one towards a deep reality that becomes ineffable and the other towards a set of unknown manifestations. Each cognitive-unit is unique in this sense, because it is always a singular combination of one or another AP with one or another person. The question is how to turn that problem and impossibility into an opportunity and challenge. How can ineffability be cognitively apprehensible, despite remaining inscrutable, and the unknown becomes knowable? More specifically, what does it mean for architectural design that what makes architecture being architecture is beyond our sensory and intellectual scope and that there are unraveled phenomena proper to the project in question?

This has required a shift in our approach to architecture, both for the architect and the user: from a factual, direct, measurable, and rational disposition typical of pragmatism, moralization, and rational problem-solving methods to an ambiguous, indirect, unfathomable, and irrational readiness typical of artistic practices. Aesthetics has provided a mode of cognition capable of articulating access to the AP's double unknown. By conciliating theories that exclusively envision aesthetic experience as an end in itself with those that recognize aesthetics as an open interpretive device, an aesthetic cognition has been proposed in which the intangible sensation of ineffable reality (deep cognition) is indissoluble from the activation of knowable manifestations (open cognition).

Any aesthetic act, whether in design or experience, thus appears as an inquiry into the project's double interior. In this vein, the traditional dichotomy between the creative and the propositional, hence the controlling architect and the passive and compliant, hence controlled user fades away. For this to be possible, each aesthetic-unit, which is the cognitive encounter of the AP and a cognizer in an aesthetic fashion, must again be

autonomous. When there is a gap between the various cognitions of a given project, i.e., when the architect does not inscribe him/herself in the proposed architecture by prescribing future receptions, the user is emancipated and can be as creative, independent, and deeply attached to the architectural piece as the designer. This is the purpose of a deep and open architecture. In this scheme, the exposed architecture has been declared a placeholder or a gateway to the AP's ineffable being and knowable manifestations. Abstraction has appeared as the device for the twofold cracking of the project.

More specifically, abstraction has been argued in a twofold manner. On the one hand, as an aesthetic mechanism that irritates the normative vision of architecture. Opaque spatial formulations, which disturb immediate and automatic apprehension, involve unveiling novel expressions of the AP in question and indirect access to its substantial core. It is in this unfolding of dormant phenomena through physical and psychological engagement with the space that the user's productivity has been situated. On the other hand, by offering spatial configurations devoid of familiar frames of reception, Abstract Space has demonstrated a capacity to instill individual, and therefore multiple, engagements. Contrary to previous notions of spatial abstraction that advocated ubiquity, neutrality, and continuity, the modulation advocated here has emerged as local, specific, and discrete without diminishing its ambiguous, polyvalent, and open character. The labyrinthine, the cavernous, and the saturated have oriented the main features of Abstract Space.

Particularizing this framework in the design process, the thesis has elaborated on how architects access what they do not know about a particular project and, if something is gained, how to translate it into a physical spatial expression capable of maintaining a continuing sense of double unknowability to the audience.

On the first concern, the proposed methodology has advocated the use of *metaphors* as an intuitive and emotional design approach to crack the project's superficiality. However, this aesthetic design tool has been claimed as private to the autonomous design-unit (architect plus AP). The design metaphor dies with the design process. It does not transcend into the sphere of reception, which in turn can generate its own metaphors. In other words, the references and lines of inquiry used by the architect are in no way mechanisms of architectural legitimization. They are rather personal design strategies to arrive at otherwise unforeseeable architectural expressions. Metaphor is an individual tool to navigate within the projects' abundance and towards its core. But, once the architecture is exposed, the project must speak for itself. The architect's shadow, motivations, and design procedures have no place in the architectural experience as they reduce the cognitive possibilities of the users and, consequently, also those of the project.

From here, the second design concern has revolved around strategies for transforming the architect's individual impression into an expression deep and open to the public. In other words, techniques to depersonalize what the architect has achieved individually in the metaphor into an architecture of free occupation and interpretation. Miralles was a master of such translations. Despite the abundance of references and contextual conditions that animate his design processes, none of them is explicitly formalized in the distributed expression as a governing object of the architectural experience. Here is where abstraction, coupled with a compositional regime of distinct(ive)ness, has been consolidated as a form of spatial articulation for the audience to enter individually into the AP's double unknown.

For its part, the material composition of this abstract space has been defended as

heterogeneous; or xenological, if we follow Vivaldi's technical term.[5] This means that the project's multiplicity and its expressions are not only representational but also compositional. Reframing the ontological premises of a cosmological structure of objects nested within objects for architectural design, each element has shown a double condition of being part and whole simultaneously. In other words, an entity is deeper and broader than the parts and relationships that compose it, and offers multiple faces for the entities that it composes. This model has made it possible to consider each element in separation (partial drawings) and conjunction (matrix drawings) without each time being something different. Finally, *mereological cartography* has been proposed as a document that encompasses an overall and detailed vision for developing the constitutive relationships between the different levels of a project. In addition to formal issues, mereological maps also include other registers, like temporal issues through the notion of variations or individual references, to mention a few.

Hopefully, the implications, applications, provocations, and opportunities of the study presented here are numerous—indeed, this is the goal of any design theory. From there, I will focus on five specific issues that, in my opinion, are a direct consequence of what the previous chapters have exposed, but have not concluded, sufficiently highlighted, or outright ignored.

Derived from the discussion of precedent as a reference in Subsection 6.1.2, the first observation will underline the relocation of the question of representation or symbolism from a form of categorical constitution and legitimization to a form of approximate cognition and inquiry. The second remark will address the need to capitalize cognition precisely above foundational queries. I will concur with contemporary theses' vindication of composition as the coexistence of elements of disparate natures. But, unlike most of them, I will stress the autonomy of the whole beyond its compositional aspects as the focus of cognition. For that, and following Part Two, the resulting crossbreeding object should be abstract to cognition to remain aesthetically deep and open. The third observation will discuss the collective consequences of the cognitive regime of individual apprehensions defended in this thesis. In other words, what are the socio-political implications in the public domain of a world of autonomous and private cognitions? In what I will call *practices of pluralization*, the fourth point will defend the social and environmental commitment of ontological-realist discourses through aesthetics. In connection with Rancière's thesis, this approach will posit a cognitive regime that already starts from a condition of equality, rather than an objective to be achieved. The fifth and final comment will reflect the overlaps and the mutual benefits of pairing Miralles' and Harman's oeuvres.

In general terms, this conclusion will claim the need for parallel approaches to our current socio-political and environmental challenges; issues that concern pluralities that can be addressed as multiple individualities. The following points will ask for mindsets and dispositions that not only approach those issues as continuations of the technical, scientific, and measurable rationality of modernity, nor in the directly critical, immediately activist, and moralized manner of postmodernism, but in a more subtle, pregnant, organic, and unconscious way—a stand that can be seen as attuned to Morton's aesthetic vision of

[5] However, a complete xenological composition—which accounts for material, multispecies entanglements of technological, biological, and geological objects—has not been studied in detail. This is because Miralles, the main case study of this thesis, operated within the view of the specificity of the medium as an ontological partition. Therefore, this point requires further elaboration in the future to speak of a completely subjectless, xenological composition.

ecological awareness.[6] Insofar as architectural design is involved in many contemporary urgencies, I suggest that aesthetics is a method that should be seriously considered. It is certainly less visible, vociferous, and factual. It looks like something that does nothing; a space historically considered secondary and bourgeois. Aesthetics has typically considered an extra we can afford once we have taken care of the "serious stuff." These are but shortsighted views of the powers of aesthetics. I suggest that the aesthetic approach is capable of delving deeper into the challenges at stake. Why? Because it acts on our involvement with such matters by putting us inside rather than acting (rationally or morally) from the outside. It is the aesthetic capacity to act on attitudes rather than vehemently running after what every day presents itself as a new injustice or trouble that deserves its space for action and discussion.

In any case, I see these final observations in an intermediate position between the need to finalize this dissertation in a consistent conclusion and the first steps on a vast, barely labored terrain that requires further, more precise, and detailed investigation.

From constitutive to cognitive symbolism

Before anything else, this dissertation has placed most of its efforts on the *act* of cognition. That means that the *composition* of the cognizer has not been elaborated as its complexity deserves. The human cognizer as composite and hybrid has been punctually addressed in the question of metaphor, but it requires a larger space that this work has not provided, especially in context with other technological, biological, and cultural aspects.

That said, in Chapter 6 (Subsection 6.1.2), two senses of reference have been examined: one that operates in the symbolic realm, which was sublimated in postmodernism, and a more recent one that engages known entities in constitutive labor. In both cases, the notion of precedent as a reference always implies an already existing relation to the object in question. However, in the latter, as opposed to the former register, the reference can act beyond our assumptions of it. It can exercise its abundance independently of the subject, so it can interweave in its own way with other elements beyond human approval and mediation. In short, one is subject-centered and the other subjectless.

In the latter, composition is no longer subordinated to human logic, in which combinatory laws and components' natures have to fit and "make sense" to our rationality. Instead, entities that were apparently well known to us become inexhaustible when they relate to other things that, in our view, were alien to them. As a result of this realization, many posthuman positions promote and generate heterogeneous conglomerates. It is important to note that the notion of strangeness or otherness in xenological composition does not refer in the first place to the human mediating observation, but to the performative participants. For example, the relation of a robot growing a set of plants can be xenological to the human eye, since it comprises two apparent opposites. However, the composition by strangers is genuinely xenological only when the robot is a stranger to the plants in their plant terms, or vice versa.[7]

Under this umbrella, a significant shift in the understanding of reference with *constitutive* powers takes place. We move from the subject-centered symbolic to the subjectless xenological, one that is pluri-versal (discretized) rather than uni-versal (common

[6] Morton, *All Art Is Ecological*.

[7] These oddities are what Vivaldi calls "pacts of hospitality" between others. See Vivaldi, "Xenological Subjectivity."

to all). The latter can be read as a *crossbreeding object*: a plurality of entities that, in their own way, entangle with each other in coexistence relationships within the whole they compose. This transition of the notion of reference implies two things. First, as commented in the chapter, there is no known category of valuation to situate the emergent composite. The conjugation of distinct features of objects or systems from unrelated spheres, even if they are known separately, promises a result that does not belong to any of their original or other known domains. It is then abstract. Secondly, expanded in this conclusion, the symbolic sphere ceases its *constitutive* activities exerted upon and by the subject to deal *only* with *cognitive* aspects.

These two conditions—the subversion of automatic apprehension and the de-hegemonization of the symbolic order as the basis for the existence of the world—are directly involved in the decentralization of the (human) subject as the exclusive provider of ontological content. In this connection, reference no longer contributes from a distance by creating external meaning relative to a subject, but partakes in foundational relations under its own capacities. The reference "acts" in a literal rather than metaphorical manner. It gets its hands dirty. The constitutive reference is an entity from which we may have some previous knowledge. But once such a pre-existing relation is dis-instrumentalized, the thing demonstrates to us how it can act, relate, and live by itself. A flagrant example of constitutive symbolism such as Vidler's subject-centered three typologies, based on a classical imitation and symbolic referencing of nature, industry, and city, respectively, is obsolete in this context. Now, these entities are participatory and active—that is why, among other things, nature is no longer the opposite of culture, as Latour reminds us.

However, the shift does not invalidate symbolism altogether—and by extension, all the defense of metaphors in Chapter 5 as an exploratory rather than foundational tool. It demarcates the realm in which it operates: from constitution to cognition. When the referential operates by itself, hence unmediated, for constitutive purposes, the symbolic loses such a competence. For this reason, the reductive or explanatory metaphor has been rejected as an instrument of constitution and legitimization (Subsection 5.2.1). When a metaphor is constitutive, as postmodernism has advocated, the cognized object is no longer autonomous because it becomes dependent on the subject. The observed ceases to be itself and becomes whatever the observer determines it to be.

More generally, cognitive symbolism refers to the internal referentiality of any object, whether or not there is a human cognizer in its execution (Section 1.2). Every manifestation is a symbolic expression of the object's being and its sibling expressions.

To clarify the relocation of the symbolic, I recall the difference drawn in this thesis between constitution and cognition. The latter has been argued to be innocuous for the observed object, an already formed entity that needs no symbolic approval to be itself. Yet, in cognitive engagements, which are constitutive only of themselves and not of what composes them, metaphor appears as a powerful device for the internal exploration of what is observed. Exploring implies discovering what already exists, but has remained beyond our cognitive reach. No act of exploration constructs the explored. Instead, it activates what was dormant for us. That means that metaphor operates in cognitive or foreign relations rather than constitutive or domestic—which does not invalidate the fact that every foreign relationship is *another* domestic one. Indeed, the symbolic is the way to cognize the xenological, since we have no direct access to its wholeness. I will insist on this argument from now on.

Parallel to the condition that everything composes and is composed, which configures a world structured in levels (Section 7.3), the interesting point of the sympoietic,

xenological, or crossbreed is not the dissolution of the object-human subject dichotomy, but that everything is simultaneously object and cognizer. More aptly, the transition from the all-empowered idealist subject, which only credits the human mind, to the ontologically realist cognizer does not end in a sterile and passive observer. As demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5, cognition has the dual power of addressing deep reality indirectly and activating dormant features. This requires the action and commitment of the cognizer, a cognizer that is not only the human being, but is extensible to everything—another premise derived from flat ontology.

Again, this shift does not mean the end of symbolism, but its relocation. It is clear that sympoietic and xenological thinking annuls *constitutive* symbolism, one that legitimates forms of existence from a single and self-elevated perspective. This is what subject anti-exceptionalism substitutes for anthropocentrism: the human leaves the center because the center is plural, or more aptly, there are many plural centers. But what does it mean for our approach to things?

I assert that *cognitive* symbolism as a mechanism for inquiring into pluralities that comprise individualities is what many posthuman theories overlook or, more problematically (as many new materialisms do), reject as if the constitutive process and the constituted object itself—when the latter receives any attention—can be directly accessible.[8] (This is the basis on which I will later defend the strategies of abstraction over the unequivocal, immediate, and direct methods of social and environmental activism that seek to redress the inequalities and imbalances that constitutive symbolism has historically created.) Theory and practice cannot stop at who consorts with whom and how. Whether classical, autonomous, ecological, autopoietic, sympoietic, xenological, crossbreed, or otherwise, exclusive reliance on composition constantly undermines the composed. The emerging unity of the whole cannot be ignored, nor how it is apprehended. When this is so, the object's representational multiplicity is annulled for the cognizer.

Cognitive symbolism operates in this question and can be characterized as an indirect approach. It is symbolic because an object's expressions and impressions are insufficient to encapsulate its deep reality and extension altogether. Yet cognitive symbolism is also realist—far from any sense of simulacrum—because the expression and the impression are part of the plurality of the reality in question. Aesthetics appears as a device to confront such a duality. In this context, cognitive symbolism acts within the limits of the object in question, rather than outside it (Fig. 2-3). Conversely, constitutive symbolism establishes connections from the outside that only satisfy the illusory dominance of the subject over the object. This is the anthropocentrism of modernity. Stated differently, while constitutive symbolism constructs the observed, cognitive symbolism aims at the object's double unknown. It aims to enter and become the thing (see the question of *mimesis* in Subsection 4.2.4) and extract qualities from its plethora of expressions (see Chapter 5), all without affecting the observed one iota.

From an ontological-realist point of view, all cognition is symbolic, be it architectural, literary, religious, political, critical, aesthetic, scientific, or non-human; when the cognizer is other than human. Even literalism is symbolic, and only living as literal thanks to the fact that we are not aware of such a condition—that is why it is a delusion.

In this light, aesthetics is a form of cognitive symbolism that makes us aware of how we crack the superficial layer of things. It turns the symbolically constructed and illusorily literal into a deep symbolism—one that is aware of its limitations to the real, but finds ways

[8] See Harman's critique of materialism, Harman, "Materialism Is Not the Solution."

to engage with it. This is, I claim, the twofold task of contemporary ontological realism. Authors like Morton and Harman—and I dare to include this thesis among their works—acknowledge a world of disparate compounds (constitutive condition) without forsaking the access problem (cognitive concern). By claiming it as symbolic and indirect, cognition follows ontology, not the other way around. Epistemology is but one of the many re3lational or cognitive relations that take place in an object's inner relations. In my opinion, these authors' assertions about the weirdness of the world encourage the investigation of deeper forms of symbolism for each field of action. My contribution to this enterprise from the architectural sphere is a *xenoaesthetics of abstraction*.

Towards a xenoaesthetics of abstraction

In Subsection 6.1.2, *xenoaesthetics* has been proposed from a commitment to those theories that reflect a configuration of the world based on the interrelation of autonomous and distinct(ive) entities. Particularly, it has attempted to articulate an aesthetic regime for a composition regime between strangers. However, I think these observations need further elaboration and clearer orientation for future development. To this end, I will intersect them with other themes discussed throughout the thesis. More precisely, I will insist on separating constitutive and cognitive issues from which two senses of "xenos" can be differentiated. The xenological and sympoietic condition is both constitutive and cognitive. The former is widely addressed by authors like Haraway, Braidotti, or Vivaldi. To that, I will only add the need for bidirectionality in vertical causation to those compositional theories from which xenoaesthetics springs, something already discussed in Subsection 7.3.2. For the latter—a xenological cognition or xenoaesthetics—I will suggest the connection of the xenological or crossbreed object with the question of abstraction as an instrument of deep and open inquiry studied in Section 6.2; which is to be considered as a particular form of cognitive symbolism. This will mean that not only is composition xenological, heterogeneous, disparate, diverse, but so is the cognition of the emerging compound.

Bearing in mind that the prefix "xeno-" derived from the Greek *xenos* meaning "stranger" generally implies plurality, heterogeneity, and oddity, xenology is found in various manners across fields of action and research: studies on extraterrestrial life, astrobiology, cultural studies, activism, art, or philosophy. From this variety, the line I have followed orbits around theories that posit a world populated and formed by miscellaneous entities in odd partnerships; in particular, Vivaldi's "xenological condition," characteristic of multispecies and operational entanglements. For architecture, the constitutive register of xenology entails the involvement with the "other," i.e., architecture as the conjugation of ecological, biological, geological, and algorithmic agencies.[9] This is to subjectlessly formalize some expression of the project, and where I see a first designation for *xenos* that addresses constitutive, thus compositional issues. What can be simply termed $xenos_1$ refers then to the plurality of entities each living in diversified environments (media) and associating with each other in a self-regulating, non-mediated manner to give rise to an architectural formulation. In short, $xenos_1$ deals with constitutive parts and relationships. This is the usual method of scholarly approaches like New Materialism and ANT: focus on agencies acting on each other.

It is a good subjectless starting point, but unsuccessful in stabilizing the identity of

[9] Gausa and Vivaldi, *The Threefold Logic of Advanced Architecture*, 30.

what emerges from these relationships. Why? Because these bottom-up strategies do not generally account for the whole that their rich agential encounters comprise.[10] The difficulty here is that if the interactions change, so does the emerging object's identity. The solution: to acknowledge a unitary substance that transcends these relations.[11] The interactions can be otherwise and even alter the current state of their output, but not its identity. So we move from an immanent materialism to a transcendental realism. Within this framework, I see mutual benefits in bridging a transcendental xenological model with Miralles' design approach.

On the one hand, the xenological view can push the Spanish architect's compositional heterogeneity. In Section 7.3, it has been said that Miralles operated within a regime of distinct(ive)ness that results in an architecture of morphologically differentiated pieces. However, despite their autonomy and formal-functional diversity, all his elements live in the same realm: the physical, more specifically, the modern construction logic. As the mereological maps Figs. 7-30 and 7-31 indicate, Miralles undoubtedly expanded the question of space and its morphological possibilities. However, architecture remains specific to a pre- and well-defined medium as a basis for genre and traditionally disciplinary competencies: the physical construction of concrete, still, glass, etc. As already pointed out several times, medium specificity is the typical bias of modernism (e.g., Greenberg, McLuhan), and Miralles' compositional heterogeneity sticks to the law of a single medium. In his case, the strangers have a familiar background as they all live in the midst of modern construction. That implies no distinct(ive)ness of media in the offered space, but a distinct(ive)ness within the privileged medium. Therefore, one way to extend Miralles' sense of spatial diversity is to inform it with other natures and media elements; xenologize his architecture by crossing means of articulation. Or, more promising, to articulate agents of multiple media with a Miralles-infused sense of heterogeneity and fragmentation, which does not only dwell on its compositional aspects, but on the emerging composite.

Furthermore, the architect was always interested in *deformation* and *ruin* as a balance point between deconstruction and construction, or decomposition and composition.[12] Yet this view remains subject-centered romantic rather than subjectless performative. Deformation and ruin are deformation-for and ruin-for, instead of deformation-of and ruin-of. Following the line of leaving aside constitutive symbolism, I suggest that such an interest of Miralles finds its next step in the promiscuity of media as the basis of architectural composition without renouncing his already achieved cognitive depth and openness. In his advocacy of hybrids, Latour writes: "What is to be composed may, at any point, be *de*composed."[13] But this decomposition is not mediated; it does not require the validation of the subject from some bucolic image of romantic ruin to be so. Therefore, it is the shift in which the symbolic loses its subject-dependent constitutive powers, as argued above, that gives way to xenological or sympoietic processes of (de)composition beyond linguistic and metaphorical referentiality as the basis for existence. In an architecture of disparate elements of disparate media and disparate temporalities, non-mediated or

[10] In section 7.2, I have already problematized architectural movements that overlook the whole and only account for the parts.

[11] In this context, it is important to note that Vivaldi gives depth and extension to the direct relations of New Materialism by making them an object in the sense of OOO. Vivaldi, "Xenological Subjectivity." However, this object is that of the relation, not the emergent object of this relational activity, which is what I am additionally arguing for here.

[12] Miralles, *Enric Miralles: Archigraphias. 1983-2000*, 146.

[13] Latour, "An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto,'" 474.

subjectless design involves both dynamics of constitution and de-constitution, whether partial or general, within the AP in question.

On the other hand, Miralles' design approach reminds contemporary theories and practices advocating media hybridization that such associations are never exclusively bottom-up. In linking Bryant's idea of strange mereology with Miralles' design method, it is clear that constitutive matters do not only involve horizontal relationships that produce unidirectional ascending causation—if so, there is no autonomous whole, hence no emergence can be hosted. There is also downward causation whereby the emergent whole irritates its compound parts, which may live in different media. By acknowledging causation in all directions, a xeno-architecture of strangers composing and being composed of other strangers follows a world structure in mereological levels of reality, as defended in Subsection 7.3.2.

In short, the xenological or crossbreed object can be characterized by (1) being inscribed in a cosmological structure of levels with causal dynamics in all directions, (2) being autonomous and simultaneously whole and part, (3) being composed of strange and distinct elements of several media and temporalities, and (4) operating in a context of reception devoid of assumed values and categorizations.

To underline the effectiveness of point (4), a second sense of "xenos" is required, one that does not refer to the object's disparate parts and media, but to its disparate capacities and effects. This means that *xenos*$_2$ calls the heterogeneous, strange-to-each-other, and copious phenomena surrounding an object, especially the so-called emergent properties not present in the mutually odd parts. The xenological condition also acknowledges the multiple strangers representing the object in question. To illustrate this, we can use the neologism *xenotheca*. The Latin root *-theca* points to the case that harbors a collection, like in Italian *biblioteca*, *cineteca*, *discoteca*, etc. However, we should not understand "theca" as a mere *chora* or receptacle. It is closer to the sense of being—the "theca" of a library is not the sum of its books. Each object, including an architectural project, is a xenotheca in the sense of a particular form with its own distributed space and time that houses a multiplicity of elements that are not only strange to an observer but also to each other and its own "theca." In this respect, Chapters 4 and 5 have dealt with the access to reality (the *-theca*) and its collection of strangers (the *xeno-*, in its second sense), arguing the indivisibility of the two registers in any aesthetic action. Chapter 7 has dealt with a reduced sense of xenos$_1$ in compositional terms.

The epistemological consequence of this subjectless disposition is the opening up of the cognized. This is one of the main points of this dissertation: the impossibility of truth, which is achieved by rejecting the figure of the subject, links the epistemological possibilities to the object's xenological multiplicity. Since the latter is vastly finite, diverse, plural (i.e., xenological), so becomes the discourse and the production of knowledge.

With theories and practices focused exclusively on composition—whether classical, multispecies, or multimedia—there is always a risk of undermining the composite to its parts or process of constitution. In Subsection 6.1.2, I criticized Piccinini's sculptures in this regard. Against this, abstraction appears as the means to locate cognition in the emerging whole itself that turns asemic and asyntactic above its constitution. This does not annul the xenological regime of composition with strangers—I also fervently defend xenos$_1$—but its cognitive reduction to compositional matters. In this way, the multiple qualities and capacities (xenos$_2$) can flourish. Therefore, the cognitive challenge of the compositional amalgam with strangers is that its compositional condition does not come as

the only exchange value. For this reason, abstraction is fundamental in the apprehension of xenoaesthetics so as not to fall into exclusive materialist readings of how things are composed. In this way, cognition can enter into the discourse of the surplus of things, which this thesis has elaborated as twofold (the ineffable being and the knowable manifestations).

In other words, advocating a multispecies, multimedia configuration of the world, and architecture in particular, can easily fall into self-limiting, counterproductive, and moralized territory. "No matter what it does or is at the moment it projects a message of 'multi'"; or, "it is not that something *is* hybrid, it must first *look* hybrid to be so." When so, it is nothing more than another form of constitutive symbolism that has simply exchanged its legitimization cards. Such a harmful tendency occurs when the xenological or crossbreed object is paradoxically reduced to its xenological or crossbreed condition. Again, the consequence is the loss of the emergent object, hence its double unknown as a whole, in favor of its known ingredients. At its extreme, which is already present in many posthuman discourses, composition becomes, unfortunately, a pontifical checklist that is rejected if it does not include certain components—today, those dictated mostly by social and environmental needs. Architecture is then perpetuated as a problem-solving exercise (see again Chapter 3). (I will continue with this point in the next subsection.)

In response to this, $xenos_2$ is reclaimed. Aesthetics, particularly the aesthetics of abstraction, has been argued as the path towards the thing's knowable phenomena, which are multifarious in character, hence xenological in its second register. By combining $xenos_1$ as a constitutive premise and aesthetics as an access method of $xenos_2$ and its "theca," xenoaesthetics appears as a mode of cognition that accounts for both the plethora and disparity within crossbreed objects beyond its hybrid status, as well as the object's being.

To reinforce the condition of deepness and openness, abstraction is claimed as a natural expression of xenoaesthetics. As a reminder, the abstract is understood here as the expression devoid of semantic precedent that typically constrains access to the spirit and plurality of the thing, and thus creates a disruptive cognitive effect on our generally assumed background. In this sense, abstraction offers the possibility of accounting for, first, what is unspeakable, i.e., graspable but impossible to put into literal terms, and second, articulating what is knowable about something, what is now unknown but can be known. So aesthetics always renders things simultaneously complete and provisional. By accounting for the internal qualitative abundance of the thing, abstraction offers the possibility of revising and rethinking without replicating. Repetition can entail then cognition instead of *re*cognition.

In summary, the xenoaesthetics of abstraction offers an approach in which what is cognized is a composite of entities from several natures, but is not received in terms of what composes it and how. This distancing of cognition from the material basis of the work is due to abstraction. In other words, $xenos_1$ refers to a world of disparate objects that compose disparate objects in cascade. Each of these compositions entails an autonomous One/Many structure. $Xenos_2$ refers to a multiplicity of effects derived from the multiplicity of $xenos_1$. When framed in architecture, a xenoaesthetics of abstraction then advocates spaces which, despite being constituted by strangers ($xenos_1$), remain asemic in their expression and, therefore, capable of unfolding in performance both its substantial core in an immaterial fashion and underlying qualitative many ($xenos_2$). It remains to be seen and developed what particular architectures and their constitutive and cognitive articulations derive from such a vector—at least in my design work, I feel it in an embryonic state.

An agonistic organization of the public

This thesis has approached architecture as a cognitive concern emphasizing the individuality and autonomy of three actors: the architectural project (abbreviated AP), the cognizer, and the cognitive encounter they comprise. In this light, to the question posed in Part One about what it means for architectural design and experience to locate what makes the AP such an AP outside our perceptual and conceptual realm, the answer can be divided according to each of these entities. For the perceived project, nothing and no one has power and authority over it but itself. For the cognizer, the individualist approach implies emancipation. By invoking the person's inner volition as a method of accessing the AP's double unknown, architect and user are freed from their mutual constrictions and both from literal solicitations, clichés, and impositions. For the cognitive-unit, which has been declared aesthetic as a device of deep inquiry, it means, first, that cognition is innocuous and internal to the cognized, and second, the extracted or activated phenomenon is simultaneously complete and incomplete. As Eco puts it: "Every performance explains the composition but does not exhaust it."[14] Every manifestation is a mask of the AP's sustaining it.

However, I find it imprudent to leave the present work with the impression that such a defense of private cognition and autonomous monads does not affect, or even dilute, the public sphere and its discourse. It would be wrong to understand that individualism—or at least the individualism defended here—leads to selfish and unequal conditions within the already selfish and unequal world that anthropocentrism has constructed. Much to the contrary, it fosters socio-political and ecological forms of equality without conditioning the distinct(ive)ness of the actants.

To make clear this point, I will briefly discuss in this section and in the next one the social, political, and epistemological implications of the defense of the individualist approach to architecture presented here. I will recall the ontological condition that there are at least four forms of plurality behind any individual being—living, non-living, physical, or imaginary. I will also set the affinity of the design regime of distinct(ive)ness celebrated in Chapter 7 with an *agonistic* model for politics based not on consensus but on conflict. And in the next section, I will point to the need for more organic, structural, and diverse approaches to today's social and environmental complexities through aesthetic practices.

Under the world-model of mereological levels and autonomous objects followed here, at least three forms of plurality occur: (1) what lies *inside* each individual entity is a first plurality or multiplicity of qualities and capacities, including the simultaneous cognitive relations into which an individual entity may enter; (2) what lies *beneath* it is a second plurality of compound parts; and (3) what lies *near* it—at its level—is a third plurality with which to partner to compose other individual wholes. As a reminder, each of these pluralities is finite and heterogeneous, i.e., concrete and xenological. Everything does not relate to everything else, but everything has internal policies and particular relationship dynamics. In short, each object is selective in how it relates constitutively and cognitively (Subsection 2.2.4). In this line, individualization does not annul relationality, but the thing's reduction to such a networking. Under an object-oriented approach, to discretize means to concretize: to make distinct and distinctive a plurality with its full multiplicity beyond its present state. Each multitude is bounded and, consequently, singular. Hence, each plurality is an individual.

Not understanding these three dimensions, their interconnectedness, and

[14] Eco, *The Open Work*, 15, [emphasis removed].

individualist convolution leads to shortsighted debates and actions concerning pluralism. Again, any form of plurality always folds into an individual entity, and vice versa. This is the indivisible One/Many package emphasized since Chapter 1. Therefore, I suggest that practices and approaches committed to the contemporary socio-political challenges of social equality and ecological crises must bear at least two conditions in mind. First, equality cannot lead to homogenization. This is the problem of world views with a limitless horizon in which everything is *a priori* possible. Second, the pursuit of pluralism is itself plural, which means that there is no singular path to it. Against this background, this dissertation's approach relies on the discrete ontological condition of unity-multiplicity from which epistemological concerns and socio-political urgencies can be addressed, rather than being constructed in a correlativist manner as criticism or activism tends to do.

Every plurality has a political scale, also non-human multitudes. As noted, an entity's constitutive and cognitive relations are immensely finite and can be articulated in other ways than the actual ones. It is in acknowledging individualities that are multifarious that particular surpluses are possible. Unlike a boundless horizon where everything can become everything else, the specificity of each closure entails certain future states of things and not others within a vast delimitation to cognition. Within an ontological-realist model like OOO, this discretized form of contingency applies to any object regardless of its categorization as (non)human, (non)organic, (non)living, or (non)physical. That means that every individual is a public domain in itself—a multiplicity of qualities and capacities—besides entering and shaping other public conglomerates.

Now, when particularizing the discussion of the public within the sphere of the human, the preponderant question is how individualist cognitions organize among themselves to render one or another social, political, and epistemic order. Before that, something must be clear: the methodological approach to the public cannot turn such epistemological questions into ontological ones.[15] Conversely, we must understand, first, that our access to things (epistemological concern) is different from what things are in themselves and, second, each epistemological concern, including its methods of study, is an ontological object in itself. By the same token, although often necessary as general calibrators, reason and morals cannot monopolize the approach to things because they can also render the policies of the plural unequivocal, meaning turning the object transparent. Indeed, the reason in this design theory for favoring aesthetics over reason and morals as forms of cognition is the literalism of the latter two.

Bearing that in mind, the individualist model of aesthetics establishes a framework that results in a series of different, often opposing, apprehensions as the basis of the public from a world of finite and autonomous objects. In other words, since the object's autonomy cannot be reduced to any cognitive or epistemological concern, its multiplicity (and existence) comes to the foreground of cognition. In this sense, the fostering of the multiplicity of the object calls for a multiplicity of impressions, each of which is produced in an individualist manner. Such multiplicity of impressions is what produces a disparate and heterogeneous epistemological arena, entailing an egalitarian participation of each different subjectivity. This thesis has extensively discussed the question of autonomy and the unfolding of knowable representation individually following OOO's premises (Part One and Two). The question is: with what model of public organization can this ontological approach be paired? What does it mean for our social orders and dynamics to have an architecture in which each individual's experience is legitimate simply because of

[15] See Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects*, 13–33.

existing?

To tackle these issues, architects within the OOO discourse have productively linked the realist approach with theories like Jacques Rancière's political and aesthetic philosophy.[16] To contribute to these developments, I propose to expand the theme with other allies: in this case, the work of political theorist Chantal Mouffe.[17] In her texts, the notion of *agonistic pluralism* defends a democratic scheme that emphasizes the positive aspects of organizing the plural through and by means of conflict.[18] The requirement is clear for this to be possible: it needs heterogeneous individualities—not simply as individuals, but collective unities. In an agonistic organization of the multitude, each voice does not seek to annul the other, but precisely to delimit itself. In Mouffe's terms, each "us" is always opposed to a "them."[19] As she contends, "the creation of an identity always implies the establishment of a difference."[20] Each collective stance is thus bounded and differentiated from the rest. Each is distinct(ive). It is this finitude that installs the limits of one or another political identity as a specific individuality within the public domain that echoes OOO's pluriverse of discrete objects.

Besides that, there are some other overlaps and common interests that this thesis finds in Mouffe's political theory. Here I note five:

1) *Conflict over consensus*. The championing of a design regime of distinct(ive)ness instead of sameness, discussed in Chapter 7, resonates with the agonistics' vindication of democratic conflict over consensus. Mouffe clearly states that "the search for a consensus without exclusion and the hope for a perfectly reconciled and harmonious society have to be abandoned."[21] This leads to a homogenization of the disparate perspectives, values, and identities that populate the political sphere and the cosmos in general. Against this, she asserts that "the specificity of pluralist democracy is precisely the recognition and the legitimation of conflict."[22] It is here that Mouffe defends an "agonism with antagonism," i.e., the existence of opposites is necessary for politics to be possible in the first place. In this light, each position enters into relation with "adversaries" rather than "enemies."[23] It is not a matter of imposing or being imposed, but of upholding one's ideas and position without subverting those of the other. "In a democratic polity," Mouffe writes, "conflicts and confrontations, far from being a sign of imperfection, indicate that democracy is alive and inhabited by pluralism."[24] The agonistic view then reinforces the possibility of cognitive emancipation discussed in Chapter 5. There are no pressures that predetermine one's impressions, but a pluri-vocal democratic arena to expose them.

2) *Pluralization of hegemonies*. In the previous section, it has been argued that a project's multiplicity—its $xenos_2$—is of a heterogeneous and strange character. That means that its unveilings through different individuals will most likely result in a set of antagonistic impressions around the same AP—like the opposing apprehensions of a Rorschach inkblot. On this basis, an agonistic organization of such public antagonism as defended in Mouffe's theory resonates with this thesis' notion of flat representativity. If in the latter, each quality

[16] Young, *The Estranged Object*; Gage, *Designing Social Equality*.
[17] I am grateful to David Ruy for this suggestion.
[18] This vector resonates with Rancière.See Rancière, *Disagreement*. Rancière, *Dissensus*.
[19] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 5.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., XI.
[22] Ibid., 7.
[23] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 101–4.
[24] Ibid., 34.

has the right and the capacity to represent its object, in Mouffe's idiom for pluralist democratic politics, each social order derived from a given political identity is hegemonic. It has the right and the capacity to articulate the public. Thus, the Belgian political theorist calls for a "pluralization of hegemonies" as a multipolar approach to politics.[25] Her proposal to de-hegemonize the naturalized and assumed order is indeed to increase the number of hegemonies.

With our current architectural case as a backdrop, I recall that each impression, which, again, can be antagonistic to each other in our eyes, are project expressions.[26] Therefore, it can be argued that, in a performative sense, agonistics is indeed a portion of the object's flat representativity exposed to our perception. How? While agonistics operates with a *particular* kind of the AP's phenomena in the human public domain—those we can grasp—flat representativity operates with *all* the AP's manifestations in the object's qualitative domain. In short, I suggest implementing the epistemological order from the ontological, since, in the latter, the principle of flat representativity qualifies it as agonistic. In short, epistemology—and politics within it—can be agonistic because the object multiplicity is already agonistic in its nature; it is already heteronomous and xenological. Agonistics is another way of naming the xenological condition of strangers. The agonistic organization of the AP's multiple qualities ensures that each profile is entitled to the project they all embody in a particular fashion. Each quality and capacity is hegemonic because it has the right to represent its object. This ontological baseline makes possible a democratic organization of the public based on conflict and difference. Epistemological concerns (in this case, the organization of the public) follow ontological dispositions (the principle of flat representativity), and not the other way around. The multiplicity of the project calls to a multiplicity of approaches. In short, plurality and its agonistic organization are first ontological rather than epistemological.

Now, for both the ontological-realist and the agonist-pluralist positions, it is clear that each quality and social order is limited in terms of what it stands for, respectively. This is why Mouffe sees "every order [a]s the temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices," and this thesis vindicates the openness of every individuality's remnant, excess, or surplus.[27] This means that we need to characterize contingency as always discrete. In other words, each social object has a particular, local, vastly finite set of orders of coexistence.

3) *Contaminations over negotiations*. Although conflict as a mode of organization within divergent and autonomous positions favors cognitive and expressive liberation, it does not imply complete immobility of the position apprehended. According to Mouffe, these tensions within opposites in political life lead to forms of *contamination* rather than *negotiation*, whereby one affects the other's position.[28] From there, I suggest connecting the idea of contamination with the concept of perturbations characteristic of strange mereology (Section 7.3). Although it is not a vertical relationship but horizontal between several impressions of the same project, the dynamics are similar. One position irritates and modifies the others without the latter necessarily becoming another.[29]

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[25] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, XIII.

[26] Repeating Wölfflin's statement: "We designate the effect that we receive the impression. And we understand this impression to be the expression of the object." Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," 150.

[27] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 2.

[28] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 10.

[29] For this reason, it can be argued that a quality is also an object that shows some faces but not others in the

4) *Emotions over rationality and morals*. In the formation of democratic identities, passions and affects play a crucial role in Mouffe's texts.[30] She often contrasts her agonistic model constituted from emotion-formed political positions with other political-democratic theories that derive from rational process of deliberation (Jürgen Habermas) and moral criteria (John Rawls). Mouffe's critique of Habermas stems from a rejection of processes that, being typically rational to ensure a democratic outcome, promise an absolute consensus that will effectively never be fully inclusive.[31] On Rawls, she charges that the moral approach induces a neutral state that relegates pluralism to the private sphere.[32] That is to say, a neutral public moral state is sharply demanding, categorical, and authoritarian in its manner. In both cases, rational and moral routes aim at establishing a consensus that actually eliminates pluralism.[33] They homogenize the panorama of distinct(ive)ness in the public sphere as their methods end in univocality.

Against this, Mouffe states that "the prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards democratic designs."[34] According to her, passionate affections create a strong identification with the political stance and an active engagement in the public debate.[35] As for this thesis, the aesthetic dimension is thus crucial in Mouffe's political theory. It is the call to one's innermost "libidinal instincts of love" (her expression) that Mouffe's explanation in the formation of political identities shares with this thesis' aesthetic approach. In both cases, the aesthetic method entails liberation from literal pressures to arrive at individual impressions as a basis for democratic debate, rather than accepting democratic principles elected through rational or moral processes. This point will be crucial in the following section to differentiate critical and activist practices from aesthetic ones on social and environmental issues.

5) *Artistic practice as a catalyst for agonistic pluralism*. As a consequence of the previous point (4), Mouffe finds in the arts an unavoidable partner. She acknowledges the political dimension of art and the artistic dimension of politics.[36] If her theory favors emotional identification over rational and moral deliberation, it is because of the former's superior power of engagement.[37] When combined with open (access) formulations—i.e., public spaces that are not just parks or squares, but, more generally, to any kind of expression that is accessible to everyone and open to interpretation—design practices have an undeniable opportunity: the production of "context[s] of counter-hegemonic struggles," to use Mouffe's technical term. (As a reminder, her proposal to combat the given hegemonies is the generation of more.) To put it with other Mouffe's words:

> According to the accepted view, the public space is the terrain where one aims at creating consensus. For the agonistic approach, on the contrary, the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation.[38]

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task of representation.
[30] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 95.
[31] Ibid., 45–49.
[32] Ibid., 22–26; Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 55.
[33] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 49.
[34] Ibid., 103.
[35] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 46–47.
[36] Ibid., 91.
[37] Ibid., 96.
[38] Ibid., 92.

In my own terminology, agonistics requires the production of *placeholders* that induce and publicly expose disparate subjectivities. In the case of architecture, an open space leads to a myriad of approximations and uses of the same space. This is an architecture that does not impose any authority, and no one imposes authority on it. In that architectural space, "everyone is right but nothing is correct," as Wolf D. Prix says.[39] If opaque-productive architecture implies unveiling its multiple profiles, agonistics appears as the appropriate mode to organize such singularities in the public sphere.

Then, from an ontological-realist perspective, an agonistic organization of architecture manifests the impossibility of dominating accessibility to the architectural project. In turn, there is precisely an opening in the range of accessibility; a pluralization of hegemonies takes place. Many of those impressions are unknown, and its unveiling does not necessarily entail an explicit reliance on historical continuity. In this vein, and particularizing Mouffe's words on artistic practices within the design theory presented here, opaque-productive spaces enhance "the production of new subjectivities and the elaboration of new worlds."[40] These types of statements can be found in many OOO-aligned practices and theories of architecture today, which favor speculation over criticism and problem-solving methods.[41]

Speculation is thus a mechanism in tune with the purpose of the double unknown: it deepens into the ineffable and opens up the knowable. It is characteristic of what I will call *practices of pluralization*, which operate under aesthetic principles. Faced with today's socio-political and environmental urgencies, I will contrast them with what I will call *practices of immediateness*, as those discourses with a direct and explicit approach to such issues. This is the focus of the next section.

Subjectless practices of pluralization

To be clear, the architectural design theory presented here and elaborated from an ontological-realist perspective is deeply committed to our contemporary challenges, especially socio-political inequalities and environmental unbalances. I hope that the section on agonistics has made evident the compromise in the direction of pluralism that underlies the previous seven chapters. On this ground, this section is intended to emphasize this position and change the erroneous picture that, as Rosi Braidotti writes, "[object-oriented ontologists] ignore and dismiss feminism, post-colonialism, race and ecological thinking."[42]

This thesis applauds and learns from many discourses that engage with the urgencies of our time—post-colonial, gender, feminist, anti-racist, techno-cultural, multispecies, post-human, post-carbon, ecological, and sustainability theories and practices, to name a few. Now, where it differs from most of these approaches is not in the goals but the *methods*, and that is precisely what this section also aims to do: discuss methodologies.

Before that, I would like to repeat what I said in Section 7.2: "no discourse can be legitimized only for its moral motivations and good intentions. If so, we dogmatize the debate, and progress is monopolized." In doing so, I denounce those restrictive views that believe that overly specific, rationally unequivocal, and self-moralized approaches are the

[39] Prix and Mayne, DigitalFUTURES: From Decon to AI: AI and Architectural Practice, min. 28:09.
[40] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 46.
[41] For example, see Young, "The Art of the Plausible and the Aesthetics of Doubt." Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, chap. 4.
[42] Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, chap. 2.

only legitimate voices for addressing current inequalities. For the sake of open debate, I vindicate the general ability to dissent from *any* discourse's methods—no matter how committed it may be to equality—and the possibility of expressing and implementing others. One more time, this does not lead to an "anti-" position on such practices, much less on the issues at stake, but to underline the need for alternative insights and the concomitancy to each other. In recent times, this claim has been increasing, not without controversy.[43]

A healthy open debate is not only about the possibility of dissenting, but also of dissenting from what dissents, which in no way implies a return to what is initially dissented from. Being critical, for example, of certain environmentalist or feminist discourses' *methods* in no way means being against such environmentalist or feminist discourses' *goals*. For the present case, and in parallel with the majority of these practices' directness, I will defend the space of ontology and the non-specificity of aesthetics as a field of action and participation in tackling today's crises of inequality.[44] Like Morton, "I have also come to understand […] that it is indeed on the terrain of ontology that many of the urgent ecological [and socio-political] battles need to be fought."[45]

Again, this thesis proceeds on an object-oriented basis and shares with many discourses on equality the rejection of human exceptionalism. Indeed, I have demonstrated that OOO extends the idea to a *subject* anti-exceptionalism. This does not mean the elimination of humans and subjectivity at all—I believe that Part Two makes this point sufficiently clear (see Section 1.3). Instead, it means that there is no privileged entity or entities, whether human, non-human, organic, algorithmic, divine, or mundane, toward everything else gravitates. Being is inside out, not the other way around. Herein lies my rejection of subject-centered constitutive symbolism as an ontological provider, no matter whether it professes to be authoritarian or pluralist; i.e., whether it comes from subject-oriented patriarchal, feminist, queer, ecologically-committed, or environmentally-irresponsible positions.

By way of example: this thesis, like feminist and race theories, rejects the construction and naturalization of patriarchy as political and cognitive hegemony. In general, making things transparent and literal is to assume the naturalization of a hegemony: things can only be as we were told they can be. Unfortunately, this implies accepting a certain type of subject's access as the only legitimized position. This is how such a privileged subject is empowered, with androcentrism being the most harmful extended practice in history. However, unlike many feminist and race theories, the method here is not particularized against *one* single form of historical empowerment, but against *any* form of unequivocal legitimization—including its future possibility and even if it rests on unequivocal principles of equality. The plea in Chapter 6 against precedent—any precedent or anything that can become precedent—as an assumed supplier of constitutive signification makes this claim clear.

At this point, one might ask: what is the ground for advocating effective democracy and equality if not from historical, rational, or moral re-considerations? Before that, note that any method elaborated from these perspectives will be anthropocentric in character.

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[43] See Vv.Aa., "A Letter on Justice and Open Debate," Harper's Magazine, July 7, 2020, https://harpers.org/a-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/. See also its counter-argument The Vv.Aa., "A More Specific Letter on Justice and Open Debate," The Objective, July 10, 2020, https://objectivejournalism.org/2020/07/a-more-specific-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/.

[44] For a similar approach, see Gage, *Designing Social Equality*.

[45] Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 22.

History, reason, and morals are human-constructed machines of validation, and, of course, they are not the only ones. In other words, (re)constructions of history, rationality, and morality to combat socio-political and environmental injustices are human-exceptionalist approaches to pluralism.[46] And operating explicitly from a particular cognitive/epistemological position—whether privileged or repressed, authoritarian or pluralist—that I argue are necessary but not sufficient conditions for addressing the complexity of the inequalities at stake. Why? It will always be partial and limited by the incapacities that its *direct* cognition can effectively address. In this context, the aesthetic method claimed here does not aim to compete for that space of direct action, but to explore the *indirect* path that cognition can reach. In other words, we require a subjectless approach to equality. (For the umpteenth time, this critique has nothing to do with denial or ignorance of oppressed and marginalized perspectives, but with the need for simultaneous methods to address these unacceptable facts.)

The majority of subject-centered positions' methods involve problem-solving principles. I will call these epistemological-based approaches *practices of immediateness*, since their objective is to correct a concrete urgency straightforwardly.

In the case of environmental problems, rationality rules; one that, in this case, is still anchored in its traditional bias. The common approach rests on techno-scientific positivism, clearly heir to modernity. It keeps insisting on the objectivity of science and technological advances as a salvation to the human devastation of the planet. Hopefully, it is now clear that, although science and technology play a fundamental and decisive role, they cannot win the game on their own. In addition, the danger of this approach is how it comes into public view, with fronts on opposite sides. There is a risk of a general disengagement, as if environmental issues were a matter too far away that is only in the hands of the scientific elite. Its contrary entails that the question is too close, so much that it turns transparent. For instance, the standardization of certain techniques—planting vegetation everywhere, literally—undermines their practical effectiveness only by blocking alternatives. The moralization of such a technique turned into a normative image—an ecological paradigm tied to the green—means that a building without plant-filled façades and terraces full of solar panels is no longer acceptable. This path leads to the very unfortunate perpetuation of Scott Brown, Venturi, and Izenour's diagrams of "the duck and the decorated shed" with a simple change of ingredients; or even worse, to a mere semantic change of their famous "I am a monument" for "I am ecological."[47] This is the constitutive symbolism from which this thesis flees in terror.

On the other hand, ethics and morals come explicitly to the fore in the face of socio-political injustices. The common approaches are criticism and activism, heir to postmodernism. Criticism reveals the inequalities of ruling structures—awareness-raising of an immoral situation—and appeals to a sense of justice in order to act accordingly. Activism proposes explicit forms of action and resistance against the system's oppression. In this sense, Gage's argument about the contradictory side of critical and activist procedures is worth noting. Building upon Jacques Rancière and Ruth Whippman, the architect accounts for the paradoxical "equality later" effect by which direct forms of

[46] To illustrate this point within feminist discourse, see examples of historical re-documentation in Mary Spongberg, *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); re-rationalization in Laboria Cuboniks, *The Xenofeminist Manifesto: A Politics for Alienation*, eBook (London: Verso Books, 2018); or re-moralization in Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society, and Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[47] Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 88–89, 156.

intervention against social inequalities—what I refer to practices of immediateness—actually postpone the effectiveness of equality.[48] As Gage writes: "Whippman and Rancière both identify the tendency in contemporary activism for such delayed equality—that it comes *after* one has been made aware of inequality, or *after* one has been thus improved [to a power position]."[49]

Furthermore, I recall that in Chapter 3, the drawbacks of the problem-solving methods have also been discussed. Then, again: what is the ground for advocating democracy and equality if not from historical, rational or moral re-considerations? Parallel to these subject-centered practices of immediateness, of which I refute not their achievements but their risk of univocality and limitation because of directness, an alternative is to consider ontology in the first place; in particular, an ontology that claims the equal and distinct existence of everything in its own right. This is a pluralism that does not lead to homogeneity. In other words, the foundation for addressing today's struggles is reality itself, not our (re)constructions of it. The question is how to bridge this metaphysical premise of democratic and autonomous (co)existences with epistemological practicalities.

If OOO, as the theory followed here for the task, tells us anything, it is the impossibility of a direct, hence immediate, connection between the two spheres, i.e., the ontological and the cognitive/epistemological. If there is no gap, we erroneously unleash transparency and literalism. As mentioned above, they are arguably at the root of any form of injustice, as they standardize a few forms of access to what is at stake while leaving out others. The straightforwardness of not accounting for such a gap is why any practice of immediateness also flirts with becoming literal and, paradoxically, producing a form of inequality different from the one it purports to redress. This is the first reason for arguing that non-literal methods are more structural and organic than literal ones. They work from the inside out, rather than on the factual and measurable surface of the issues at hand.

Compared to the space of action in which directness can operate, this thesis has fervently defended the non-literal method of *aesthetics*. This approach appears to be a cognitive tool capable of *indirectly* implementing the ontological principles mentioned above in epistemological possibilities. Far from the restrictive unambiguity and disengaging rationality and morality of literalism, aesthetics precisely celebrates *ambiguity* and *deep commitment* to participate in socio-political and environmental urgencies. This view refers to the emotional dimension that aesthetics imbues in the cognizer. As Mouffe reminds us, passions foster our level of involvement.[50] This is the second reason for arguing that the non-literal methods of aesthetics are more structural and organic than the literal ones, since they penetrate and impregnate the cognizer passionately.

Two main points can be made about pluralism, one epistemological and the other ontological. On the first, ambiguity and indeterminacy—the absence of an individual or collective definitive access—reveal the multiplicity of impressions coming from the thing's internal abundance; a diversity that nourishes cognitive pluralism for a democratic organization of the public. This comprehends the practical, cognitive, or epistemological side, namely, the sensual. The second point is a metaphysical one, which stems much

[48] In more detail, Gage complains about the limitation of criticism and certain forms of activism, as a mere instrument for raising awareness, but without addressing inequality itself. The hope is that this engagement will be embraced at some point in the future on the basis of the new consciousness. On the other hand, the architect stresses that the necessary act of empowerment for a parity distribution of power is not effective as such and immediately but in the future. Gage, *Designing Social Equality*, 62–63.
[49] Ibid., 63.
[50] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 46.

deeper. The so-called "human public sphere"—which, by the way, is clearly no longer solely human under a subject anti-exceptionalist view—is but a small cluster of the ontological pluralism of a world of equally autonomous entities. This suggests that we do not have to construct a plural and democratic organization, since reality is already that way. The task at the cognitive level is to extract or unveil such a condition into the practice of the sensual.

In this context, I suggest calling *subjectless practices of pluralization* the approaches that account for these two notes on pluralism. These are the two pillars of the various links that exist today in architecture between ontological realism and aesthetics in relation to politics. Mouffe's "agonistic pluralism" and Rancière's "redistribution of the sensible" show the capacity of passions derived from aesthetics to operate towards democratic and equalitarian organizations—this is the cognitive dimension of the plural.[51] But the contingency of this plural requires finitude not to fall, paradoxically, into a dissolution of identities. The distributive possibilities of the sensible within a given situation cannot be infinite. However, its discretization does not imply a fissure through which inequality can slip in. It rather safeguards pluralism itself, one free of homogenization. It is here where I see Harman's metaphysics providing, first, the necessary finitude and locality that ensures identity by acknowledging each object's autonomy and uniqueness and, second, endowing aesthetics with the capacity to bridge the gap between reality and its manifestations indirectly. As we have seen in this thesis, aesthetics encourages the disruption of the superficial, i.e., of what is taken for granted, for indirect access to the elusive deep reality and its knowable manifestations. An agonistically plural organization of the public is the ontological dimension of the multiple, which aesthetics transports into our sensual practices. From the environmental front, it is surely Morton who has given a more systematic account of this twofold sense of pluralism in ecological thinking.[52] And Young and Gage are the ones who most extensively address it in architecture.[53]

The last note to differentiate the practices of immediateness and those of pluralization in the face of the current social and environmental crises of inequality is precisely how to situate the scenarios of equality methodologically. While the former make them an explicit goal, the latter take them as a presupposed baseline. In other words, direct approaches start from the condition of admitting inequality in order to turn it, through a series of procedures, into a condition of equality. But indirect approaches operate in reverse: they start from the assumed condition of equality, leaving the result open. Rancière makes this point clear, underlining the ineffectiveness of the former by concluding that "there is no path from inequality to equality. There is either a path from equality to equality or a path from inequality to inequality."[54] As he continues:

> The method of equality supposes that you can start from any point and that there are multiple paths that can be constructed to get to another point and still another one that is not predictable. There is a multiplicity of paths, a multiplicity of ways of constructing one's intellectual adventure […].[55]

Subjectless practices of pluralization do not provide then planned goals to correct inequalities, but rather proceed from conditions of equality. Paradoxically, they can be said

[51] See Ibid., chap. 4. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.
[52] Morton, *All Art Is Ecological*.
[53] Young, *The Estranged Object*; Gage, *Aesthetics Equals Politics*.
[54] Rancière, "The Method of Equality," 139.
[55] Ibid.

to be more active and immediate forms of action than what I have called practices of immediateness. Why? They are more immediate because they do not wait to implement equality within inequality. They operate directly not *on* the unequal problem but *in* the equal scenario. And they are more active because they require deep, individual participation. Aesthetics is thus a subjectless practice of pluralization; it "transform[s] people's consciousness by acting on their sensations."[56] However, it does not pre-establish this consciousness from a historicist, rational, or moral (re)vision. It rather encourages individual "ventures into the forest," to repeat Rancière's expression used in Part Two.[57] It is in this manner how individualism leads to pluralization. Aesthetics mobilizes passions by actively engaging participants (see again Section 5.4) toward personal, unpredictable, and already equidistant scenarios, since there is no pre- or post-cognitive and definitive authority over them.

In short, subject-centered practices of immediateness adopt methods of *correcting* particular inequalities. Subjectless practices of pluralization adopt methods of *inserting* already consolidated plural and egalitarian scenarios into the actual.

What urges is the configuration of "methods of equality." As discussed throughout the text, equality cannot mean homogenization, i.e., flattening diversity into a univocal, communal voice. Maintaining distinct(ive)ness is crucial at all levels. From here onward, discussions on equality should promise a more comprehensive and less taxonomic approach. That means not compartmentalizing inequalities: human crises on one side (social, political, economic) and environmental crises on the other (global warming, species extinction, more natural catastrophes). This implies continuing with problem-solving, subject-centered dispositions. As it is already clear that the ecological is not independent of the human, the social dimensions of the human are not exclusive of the human either, Latour being the most explicit in this respect.[58] This is the basis of subject anti-exceptionalism. We must understand the intertwining of biological, geological, technological, and cultural agents beyond our human cognitive mediation to implement methods of equality that affect and involve all of us/them without dissolving the us/them condition. Abstraction, saturation, and crossbreeding composition—what I called xenoaesthetics of abstraction—have been the mechanisms proposed in this thesis to this complex and open debate.

The reciprocity between Miralles and Harman

The retrospective linkage of two main works has formed this thesis' research method: Graham Harman's Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) and Enric Miralles' design approach. As stated in the introduction, the overall objective was neither an academic study of the architect's work nor a treatise on applied philosophy (in this case, OOO) to architecture. However, in the course of the manuscript, there have been some overlaps between the two authors. It would be inappropriate to ignore them, as I believe that both works enrich each other. For this reason, this last section of the conclusion will first recall the common themes and methods explored throughout this dissertation, even though many of them have not been stated in those exact terms by their authors. These points can also be considered as key principles of this thesis' design theory. Secondly, it will remark how the

[56] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 97.
[57] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 11.
[58] See Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

oeuvres benefit from each other.

1) *The acknowledgment of the architectural project as an autonomous object (AP)*. This implies that the AP is irreducible to cognition, despite being created by the architect's cognitive act. The statement is easy for Harman, since, in his theory, *any* object is subjectless and autonomous, and so is the AP. In the case of Miralles, it has been a bit trickier, because he was never involved in discourses on autonomy, as Eisenman or Tafuri were. The way to attribute this claim to Miralles has come through reconstructing and reinterpreting the incredible legacy of broken and dissonant pieces that populate his writings and interviews. To confirm this point about Miralles, reverse engineering is required based on the following points 2 to 5.

2) *Caricatures: the rejection of appearance as the basis of reality*. Harman and Miralles dismiss the superficiality of things as what things are. This is evident when the architect stated that "formal descriptions or […] surfaces, folds, shifts, etc. […] are excessively distant definitions that make the projects seem more like caricatures."[59] In a similar vein, Harman criticizes our erroneous tendency to reduce "objects to a mere caricature of their total reality."[60]

3) *Reality is complex, unknown, and deep*. This is the central "withdrawal" in Harman's texts.[61] Miralles also hinted at this with sentences such as: "We move on the surface without knowing what we have below."[62] This constant feeling of incompleteness leads to "sacrifice the specific nature of the [tangible] situation to the application of a distant reality…" said the architect somewhere else.[63] Miralles was interested in "the complexity that comes from the real, the complexity of the things."[64]

4) *Variations*. However, both authors are aware of the impossibility of accessing the depth and extension of the real. In this way, they understand that any approach is always (in)complete. "I like to approach things always through approximated solutions," said the architect.[65] The project cannot be categorically registered as truth in any of its physical or conceptual formalizations. This justifies the architect and the philosopher's interests in the multiple *variations* in which an object can manifest. "I defend a method of variation," Harman says, "changing the exact features of […] works: expanding them, truncating them, adding or subtracting characters, just to see how far you can push a work before it becomes a different work."[66] And Miralles: "I tend to operate by variation, because I want the elements to be able to incorporate this variety of material conditions. I never work by reduction: I try to reveal the multiplicities, the singularities…"[67]

5) *Anti-literalism and je ne sais quoi*. Both authors share a strong commitment to go beyond factual and knowledge-based methods in favor of a form of cognition capable of cracking the surface of things. This leads to a common rejection of *literalism* (Harman's term), whereby something is reduced to how it comes to us. Harman makes this point even more explicitly in his books dedicated to art and architecture.[68] On his part, the following

[59] Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 21.
[60] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 74.
[61] Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, chap. 3.
[62] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:14, [author's translation].
[63] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 266.
[64] Muro, *Conversaciones con Enric Miralles*, 37, [author's translation].
[65] Miralles, "Interview to Enric Miralles, Cronotopias" [author's translation].
[66] Bedford, Is There an Object Oriented Architecture? Engaging Graham Harman, 36.
[67] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 272.
[68] Harman, *Art and Objects*, chap. 3 and 6. Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 4.

passage by Miralles gives a good account of this:

> The force (of observation) does not consist of grasping the simple truth of things and expressing it with the greatest possible precision, but discovering concealed and hidden connections… We abandon the daily and habitual lanes, and we let ourselves be carried away by a surprising vision of things…[69]

Yet the definitive fact to prove Miralles as a realist—and by extension, to take the AP as an autonomous object—is, like Harman, accepting the unattainable *je ne sais quoi*, which both recognize in aesthetic experience.[70] As Harman explains, "the *je ne sais quoi* points beyond explicit statement and hints at a vague animating charisma in the thing that lies behind all of its tangible traits."[71]

6) *Aesthetics as a cognitive approach and the key role of the cognizer*. In the first pages of his dissertation, Miralles makes clear his interest in aesthetics as a cognitive way to move beyond moral valorizations and promote intuition.[72] That speaks of the central role of the cognizer's inner will in his conception of aesthetic experience. As the architect writes: "The spectator participates in the intuition of the work…"[73] Similarly, the cognizer or beholder is half of any aesthetic experience for Harman. "[T]he basic unit of aesthetics," he writes, "is neither the art object nor its beholder, but rather the two in combination as a single new object."[74] As for the role of aesthetics in Harman's theory, one cannot be more categorical: "Aesthetics is the root of all philosophy."[75]

Now, within the amplitude of the field of aesthetics, the overlaps become even more acute and technical:

7) *Mimesis/Imitation*. In the reformulation of the term, mimesis appears in both authors as an internal procedure to enter or become the object, rather than any kind of literal referentiality that seeks to replicate any pre-existing phenomenon. In Miralles' words: "Imitation [as mimesis] no longer proposes to linger on the external appearance and tries to copy faithfully… Imitation belongs to another sphere, to seek the [architect/beholder's] procedure, not the result but its turning out [*su resultar*]…"[76] By the same token, "the question of mimesis," Harman states, "has more to do with our own role, as performers, in sustaining the work of art."[77] The authors' notion of mimesis is neither physical nor retinal, based on a subject-centered literal symbolism. It is the cognizer's *modus operandi* within the aesthetic experience. One acts *as* the object. The architect highlighted this condition during the design process in his "desire to enter" ("*quererse adentrar*") into the AP, "because I have hardly ever done anything else in my projects," Miralles said.[78] Miralles' *entering* the project is Harman's *becoming* the object.

8) *Allure/Allusion*. If mimesis is the framework for accessing and representing some knowable features, *allure* (from object to observer) and *allusion* (from observer to object) unleash the effect for an indirect connection with the AP's withdrawn reality, its *je ne sais*

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[69] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9, [author's translation].
[70] Ibid., 1:8.
[71] Harman, *Architecture and Objects*, chap. 2.
[72] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:8-11.
[73] Ibid., 1:9, [author's translation].
[74] Harman, *Art and Objects*, 8.
[75] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, chap. 2.
[76] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:9, [author's translation].
[77] Harman, "A New Sense of Mimesis," 59.
[78] Miralles, "Acceder," 19, [author's translation].

quoi. For Harman, allure/allusion is the intangible grasp of deep reality, which lacks translatability. Repeating Steven Shaviro's words on Harman's allure: "This is the attraction of something that has retreated into its own depths. An object is alluring when it does not just display particular qualities, but also insinuates the existence of something deeper, something hidden and inaccessible, something that cannot actually be displayed."[79] Miralles also accounted for "[t]his allusive mode of expression" of things, "an interior discourse–parallel to a visual one."[80] When Harman locates the allusion in the gap between superficial qualities and withdrawn reality, Miralles acknowledges a similar relationship between the outside and the inside of a thing: a tension in which the surface "leads us on its paths 'to the depths' […] one resorts to evocation, metaphor, allusion. […] Immerse yourself in the artwork, make the shadows speak… […] what is not seen, 'what the tree, the tower, or a building hide from us'…"[81]

9) *Metaphor*. In the last quote, Miralles anticipates the device of mimesis and allusion: *metaphor*. As discussed in the text (Section 5.2), the extensive use of metaphors by the architect to explore the AP is beyond doubt (see also Annex). For Harman, "metaphor is precisely what points us *towards* the depth of things."[82] The philosopher's interest in metaphor is also beyond question.[83] In both cases, metaphor is not a simplification; it is not a reductive explanation as a human communicative tool. Quite the contrary, it is a personal mechanism of exploration.

10) *A pluriverse of nested levels: autonomous parts within autonomous wholes*. Some authors have described Miralles' works as "buildings-within-a-building," in which not only the whole design but also its parts are independent of each other.[84] Miralles confirmed this by stating: "I like that the pieces have a recognizable character in themselves, that they can be taken out of the whole without completely losing their identity."[85] The idea is formalized in the design process by systematically separating the pieces ("partial drawings") and the whole ("matrix plan").[86] This Matryoshka scheme encompasses multiple scales in the architect's design process, giving rise to a cascade of levels that resonates with Harman's cosmological model of "a spiraling interplay of objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects."[87] Furthermore, it has also been argued that Harman's "vicarious causation" in the object's internal constitutive affairs reflects in Miralles' design methodology. Thanks to their autonomy, Miralles' pieces are not exhausted within a particular foundational task, but are involved in several ones and never in the same fashion. That means that there is never full contact between the pieces and the whole they compose. It is there where its polyvalence stems from, and why Morton comes to the statement that "there is always a multiplicity of parts that exceed the whole, rather than the whole swallowing the parts perfectly."[88] Yet it should be noted that this statement does not invalidate its reverse: the whole also exceeds its parts. Both together mean that an object is never reducible to its

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[79] Shaviro, "The Actual Volcano," 289.
[80] Miralles, "Cosas Vistas a Izquierda y a Derecha (Sin Gafas)," 1:13, 5, [author's translation].
[81] Ibid., 1:14, 10, 2, [author's translation].
[82] Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 204.
[83] For example, see Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, chap. 8. Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 66–89. Harman, *Art and Objects*, 23–31.
[84] Jones, *Enric Miralles. C.N.A.R., Alicante*, 9.
[85] Miralles and Zaera Polo, "A Conversation with Enric Miralles," 271.
[86] The terms are taken from Fernández Contreras' formal analysis of Miralles' works. Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles," 84.
[87] Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics*, 158.
[88] Morton, *All Art Is Ecological*.

(constitutive or cognitive) relations, whether in its role as part or whole.

11) *Time*. This is a relevant issue present in both authors that this thesis has not addressed in-depth, so it will require further examination in the future.

Following these overlaps, and although separated in time, it can be said that Enric Miralles' design approach and Graham Harman's Object-oriented Ontology coordinate smoothly with each other. Both adopted a subjectless approach in their works, where the autonomous reality of the (architectural) object is irreducible to epistemological concerns. The awareness of this metaphysical condition produces, paradoxically, an epistemological reaction in which aesthetics appears as a form of cognition that reveals the profound and exuberant interiors of the project.

On this basis, Miralles contributes to OOO by emerging as a strong precedent from which the ongoing architectural debate on objects can benefit. His epistemological approach to the AP's reality in the design phase based on aesthetic strategies is of particular interest. Miralles demonstrates that aesthetic responses are not exclusive to the user's architectural experience. Indeed, he instrumentalizes them as the very basis of architectural design. In short, the design process is an aesthetic cognition in itself. Rather than "scientifically" domesticating and controlling which spatial arrangements produce emotional or multiple responses in the public, Miralles focuses architectural design on its own aesthetic-unit in the first place.[89] At the same time, the Spanish architect places himself outside of the architectural expression, so as not to constrain the experiences of others.

In return, Harman's texts contribute to Miralles' architectural agenda by providing a theoretical and ontological framework. Josep M. Rovira—a Miralles scholar and expert—remarks on the importance of "what is beyond […] what is not seen" in the architect's work.[90] I hold that what is beyond the visible in his projects is the architectural project itself as an autonomous being with all its qualitative surplus. Moreover, Rovira describes Miralles' architecture as a "hermetic, inaccessible, difficult, seductive, and labyrinthine universe."[91] However, this is the very nature of *every* (architectural) object. In other words, a self-sufficient reality behind any architectural manifestation is not exclusive to Miralles' projects. It is the default condition of *any* project. What stands out about Miralles is how he understood this condition and developed a design approach accordingly.

Object-oriented thinking enables methods and practices, many of which remain to be seen, enhancing the depth and inexhaustibility of things without losing their identity. The design theory presented here has attempted to demonstrate this twofold state, while proposing its particular design methodology for the task. Therefore, any future architectural design approach that seeks to engage with these principles should aspire to "a boundless depth [that] opens up, effaces the walls, drives away contingent presences, accomplishes the miracle of ineffable space."[92] One possible route to achieving this is by "challenging one to engage in unceasing daily discovery that led to no specific outcome, nothing that could be exploited, unless perhaps for keeping possibilities open –discovery as a way of keeping

[89] This position contrasts with Wiscombe's assertion that "[m]ystery is something that you control very precisely as the architect." Tom Wiscombe, Clashes and Intersections Interview Series: Tom Wiscombe, interview by Zaid Kashef Alghata, accessed June 10, 2019, https://youtu.be/60RCLLjR9ms.
[90] Rovira, *Enric Miralles 1972-2000*, 8, [author's translation].
[91] Ibid., 7, [author's translation].
[92] Le Corbusier, "Ineffable Space (inside New World of Space)," 280.

possibilities open?"[93]

[93] Peter Handke, *Crossing the Sierra de Gredos (Der Bildverlust)*, trans. Krishna Winston, eBook (2002; repr., New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), chap. 9.

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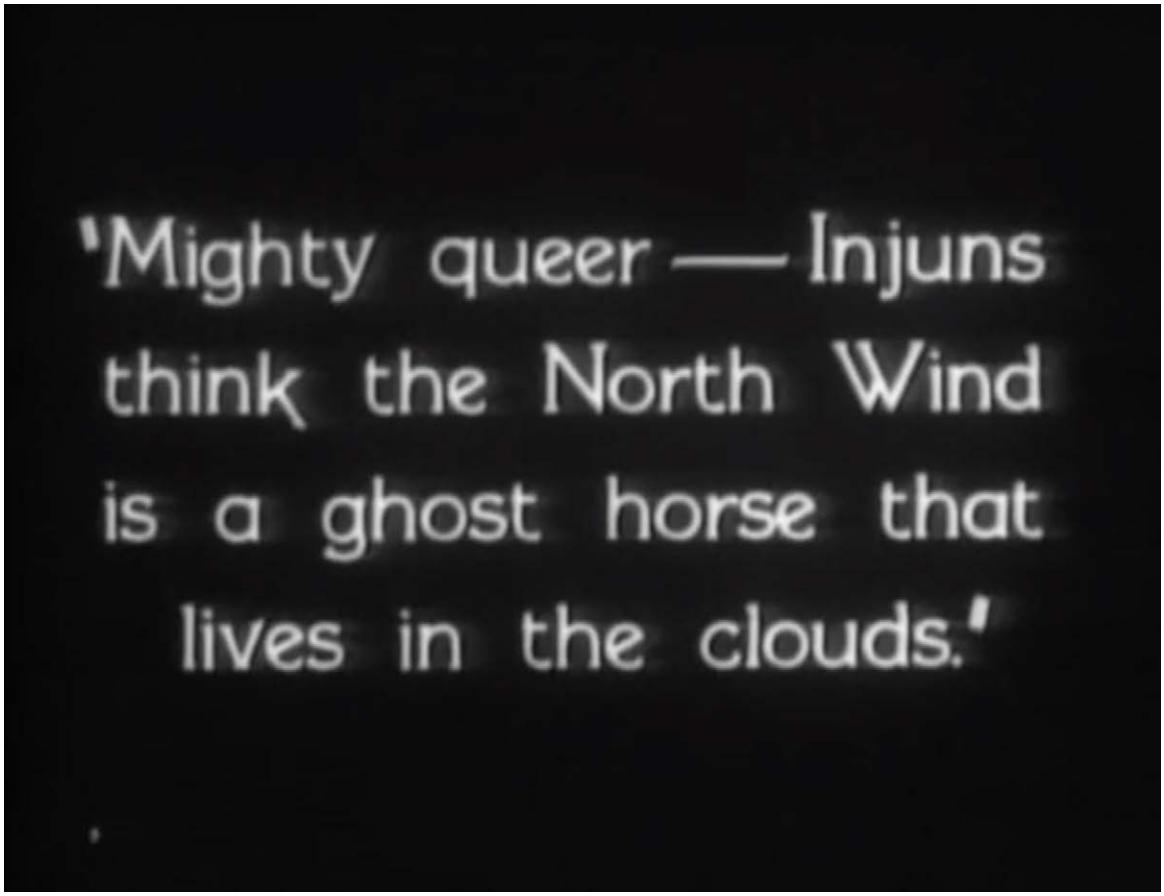
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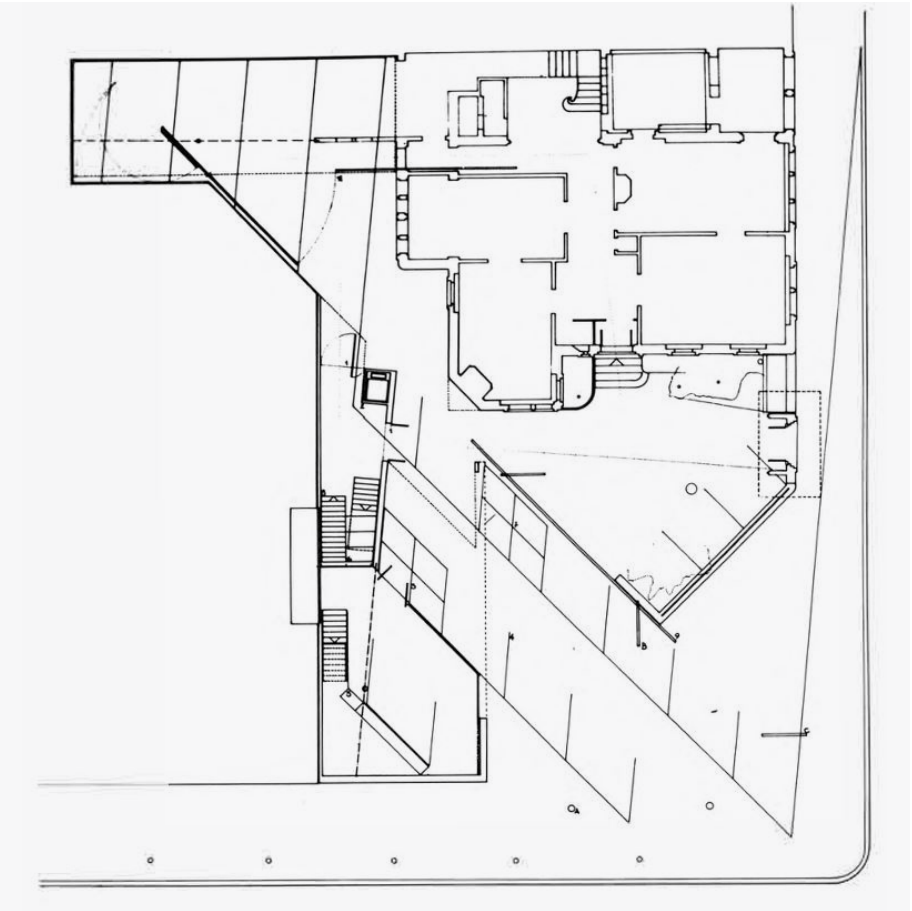
Annex

Metaphors

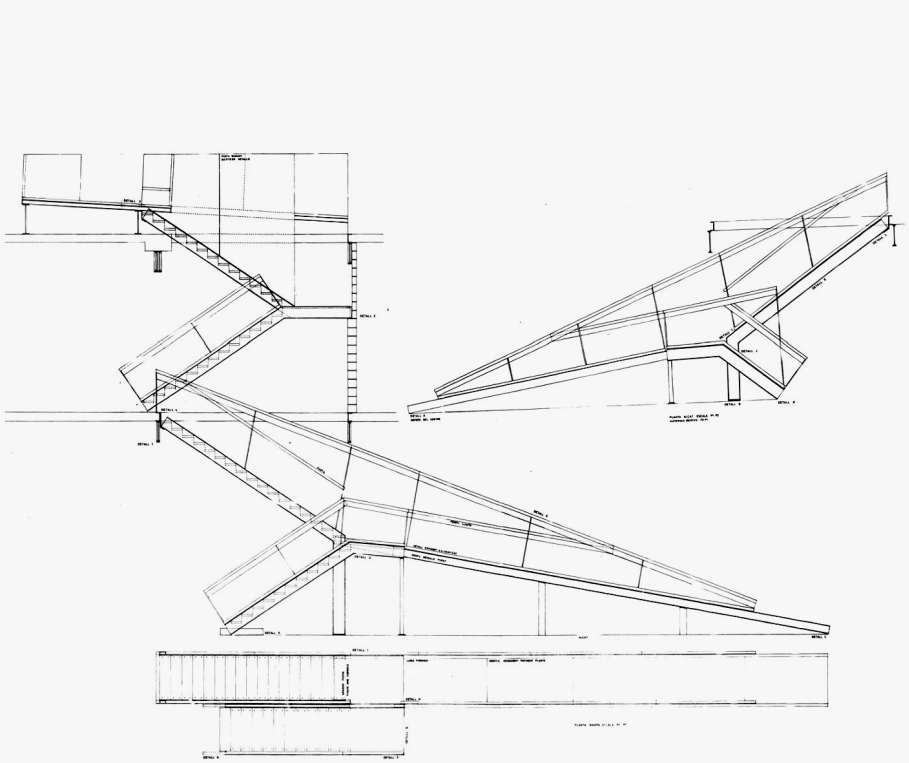

'Mighty queer — Injuns
think the North Wind
is a ghost horse that
lives in the clouds.'

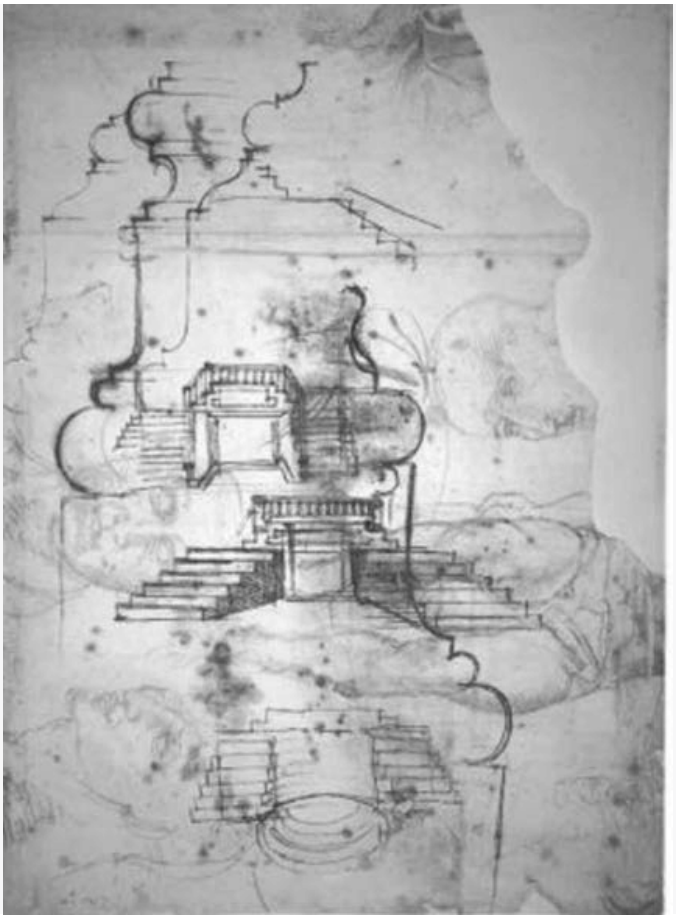


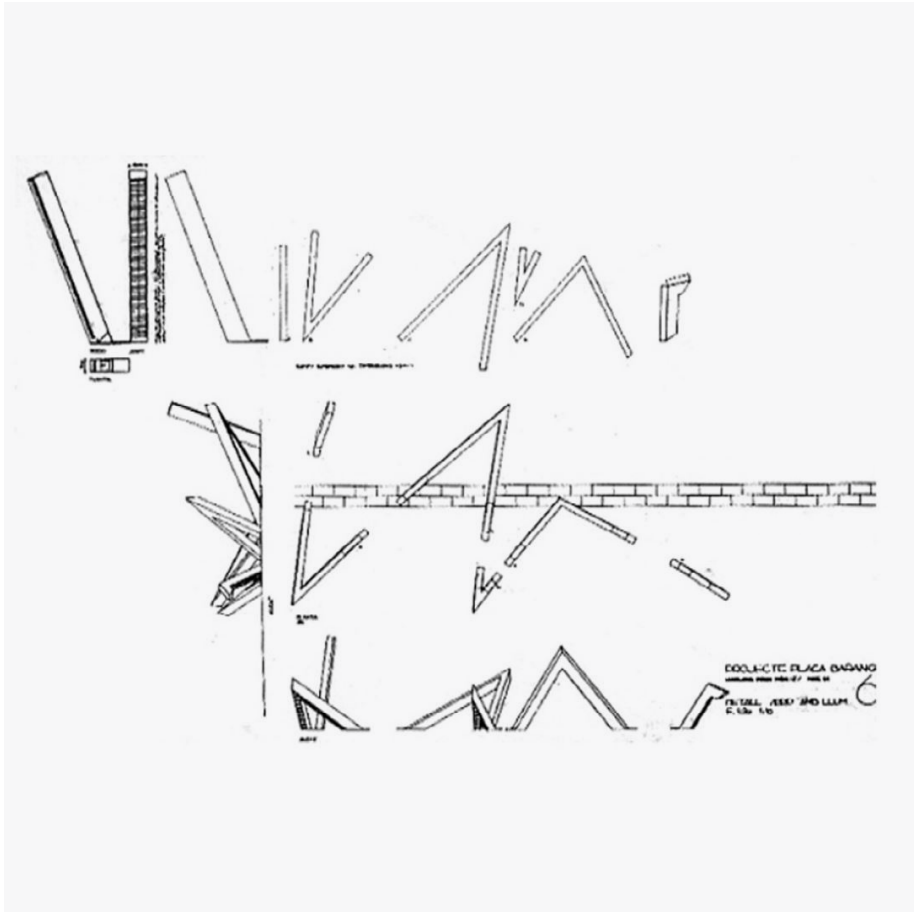
Miralles/Pinós
Enric Miralles
EMBT Miralles Tagliabue



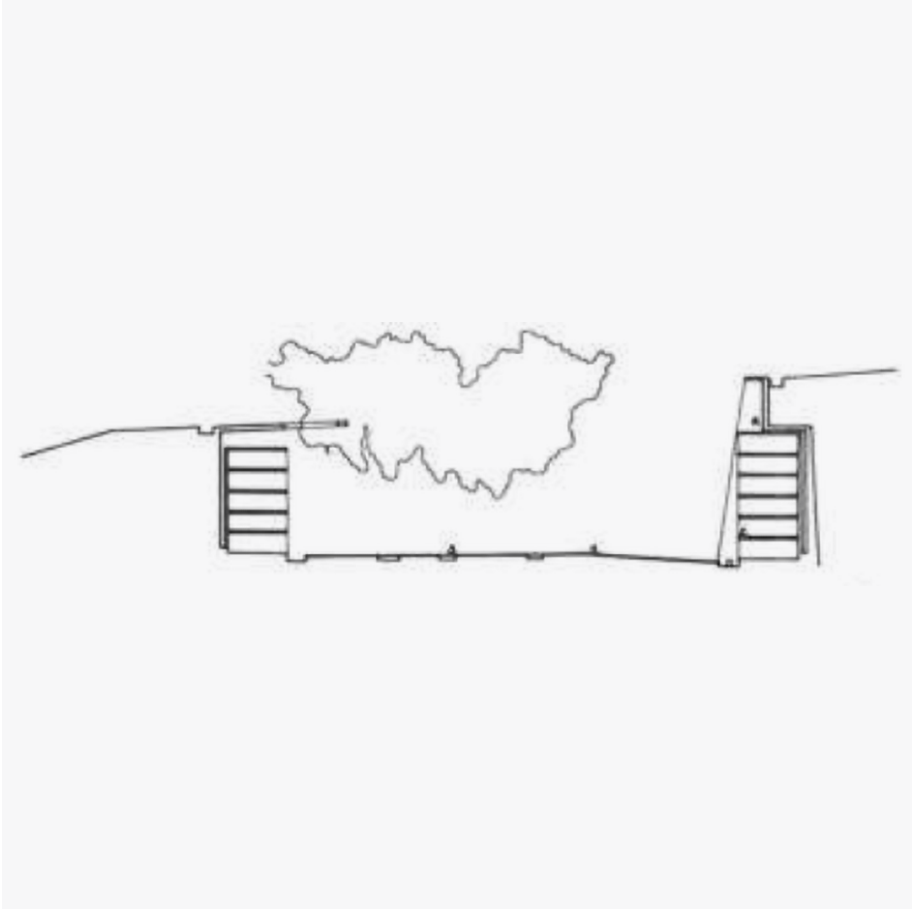




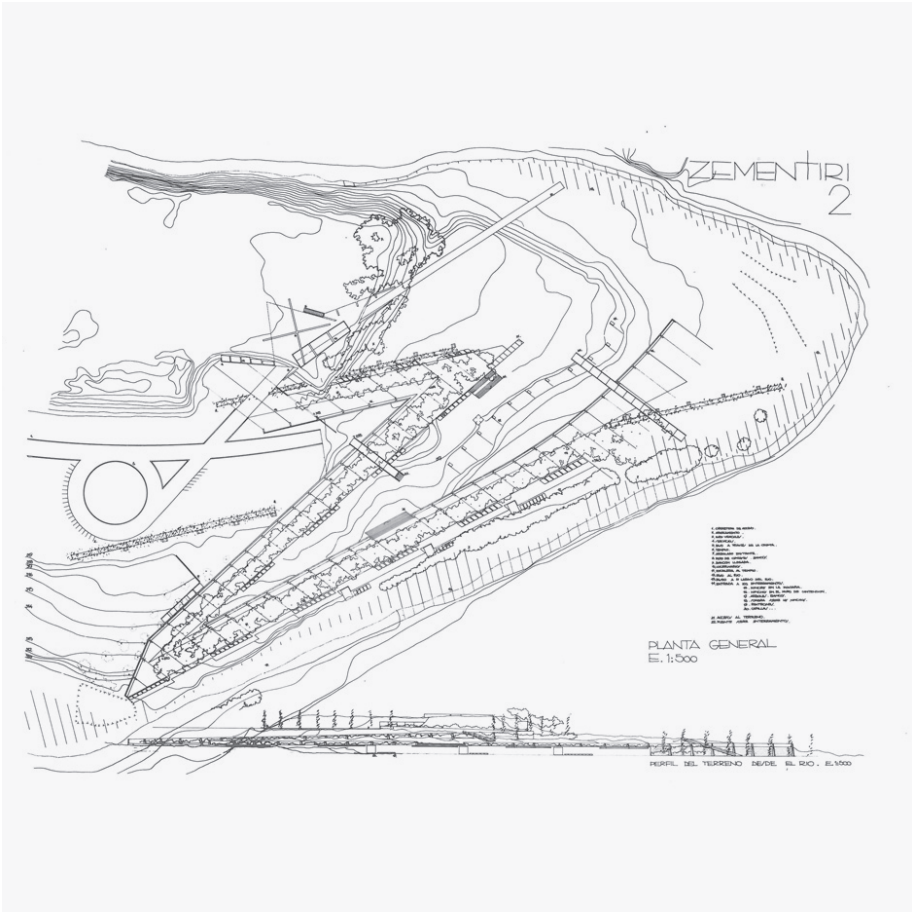


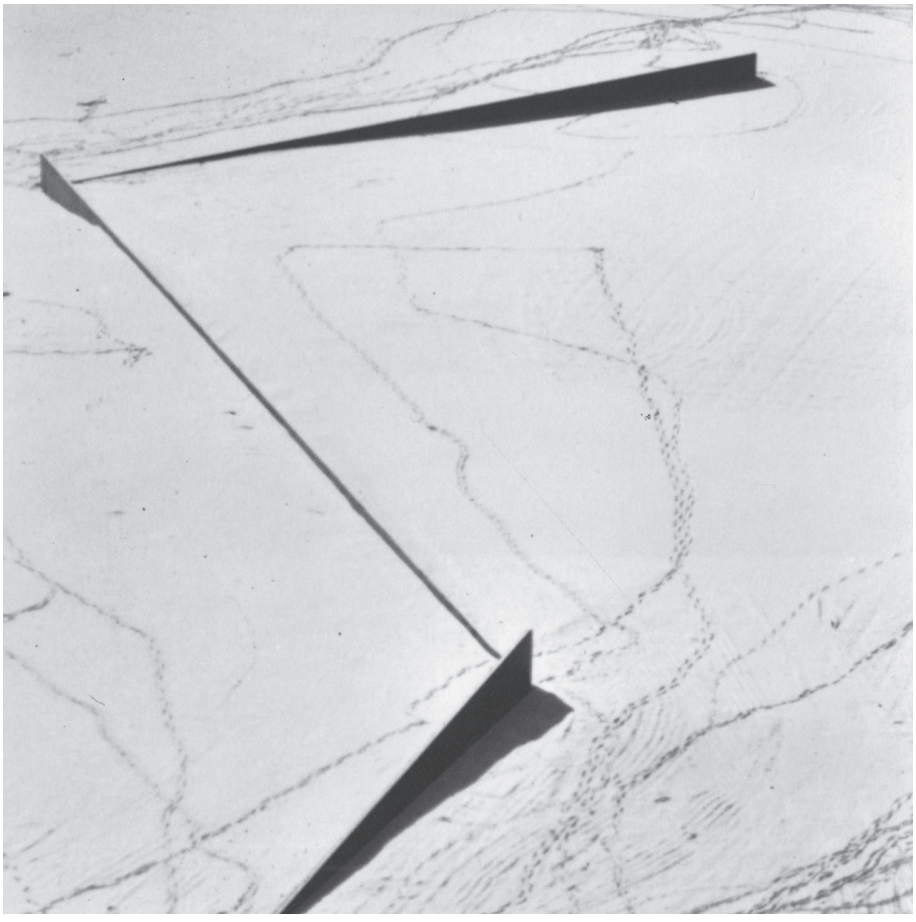




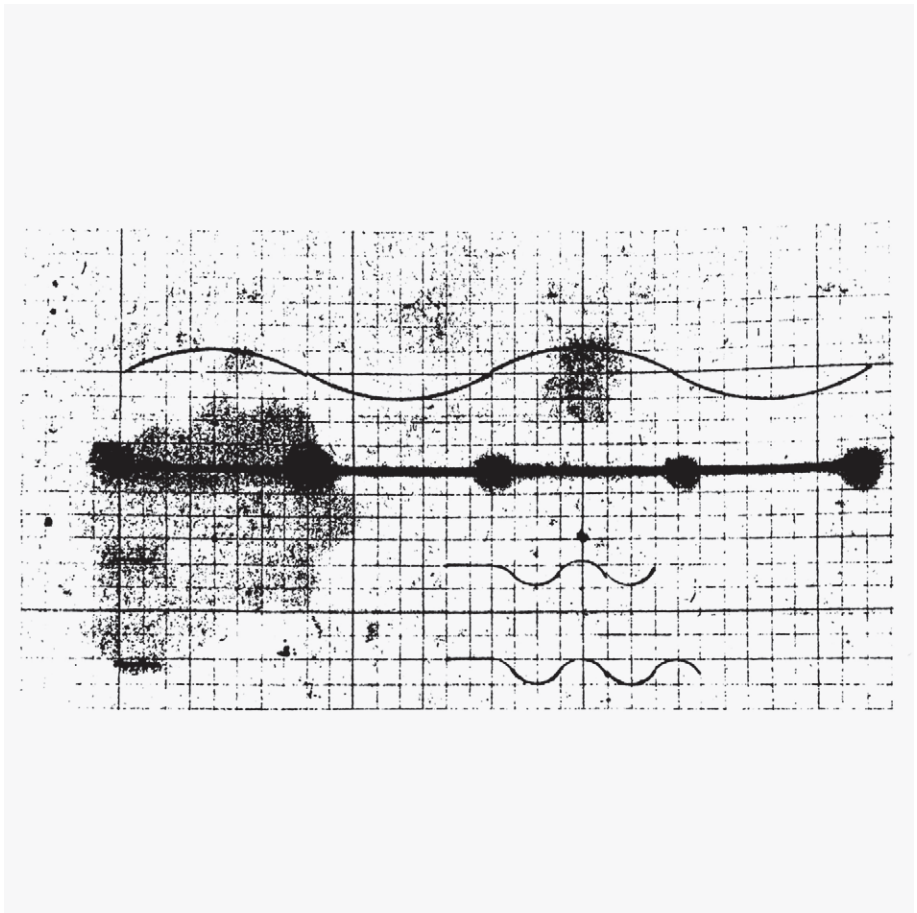


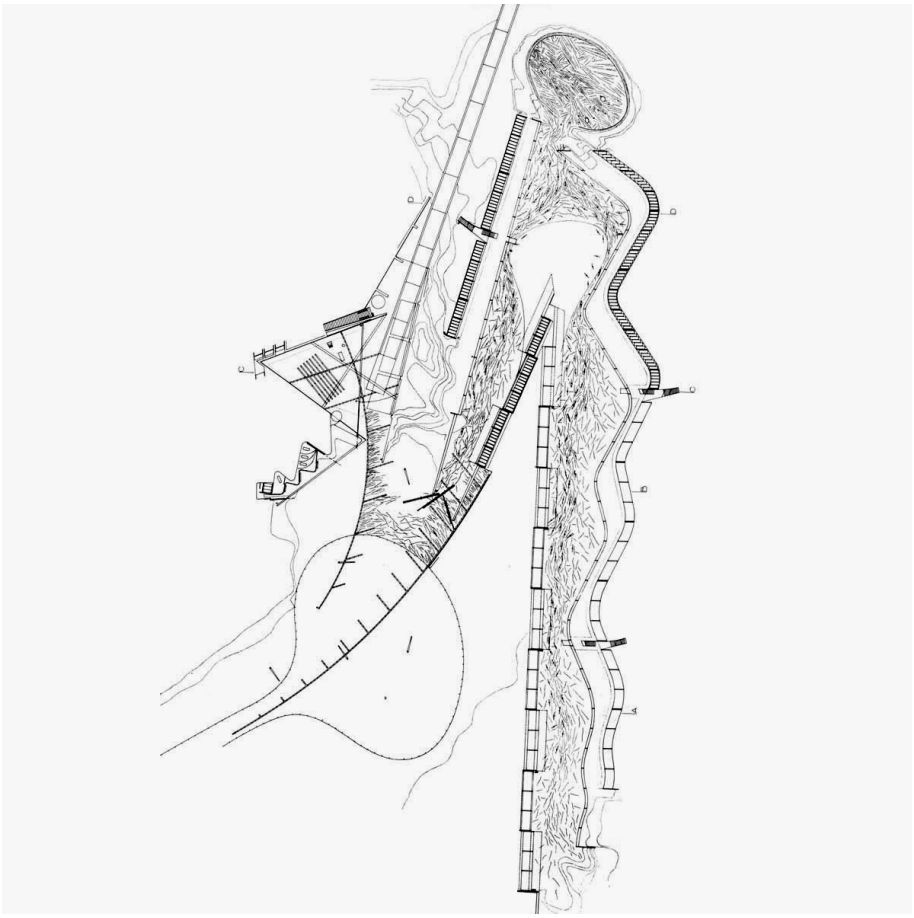


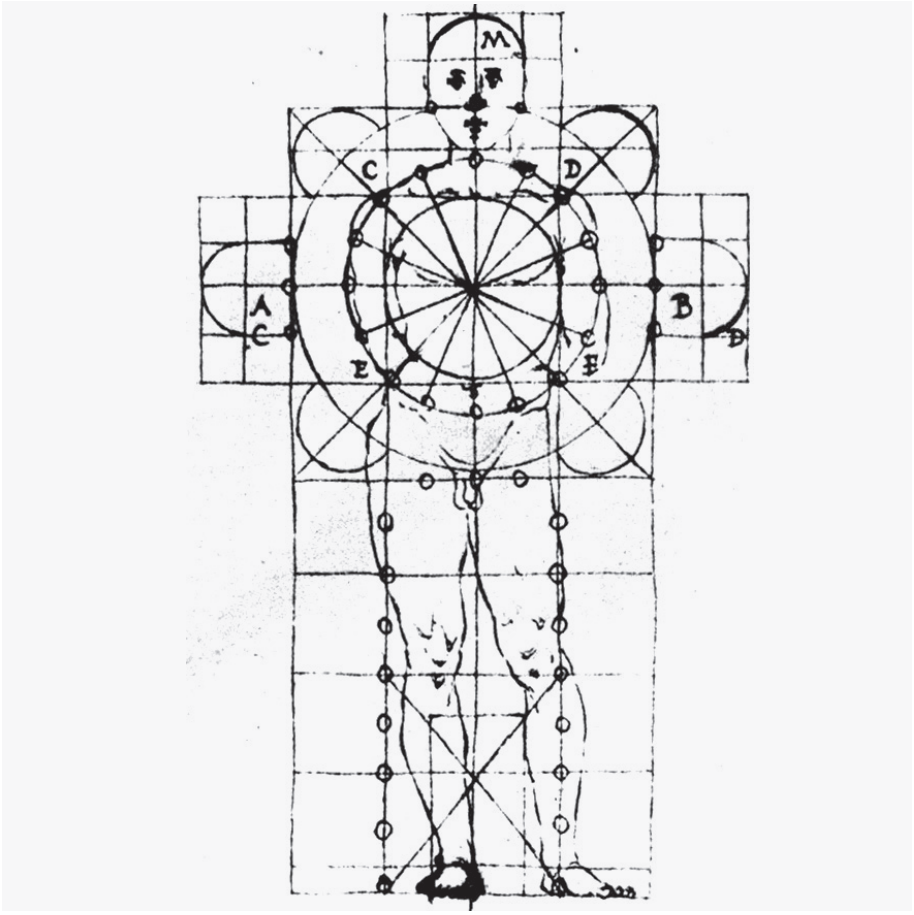

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PERFIL DEL TERRENO DESDE EL RIO . E.1/500





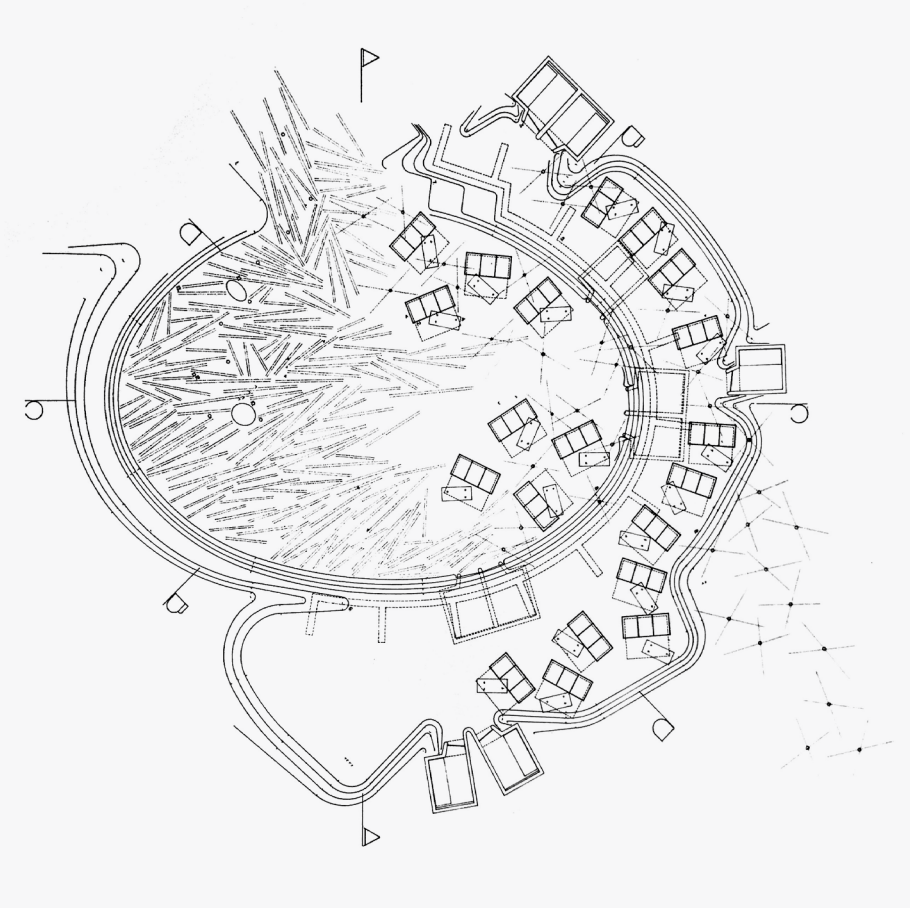


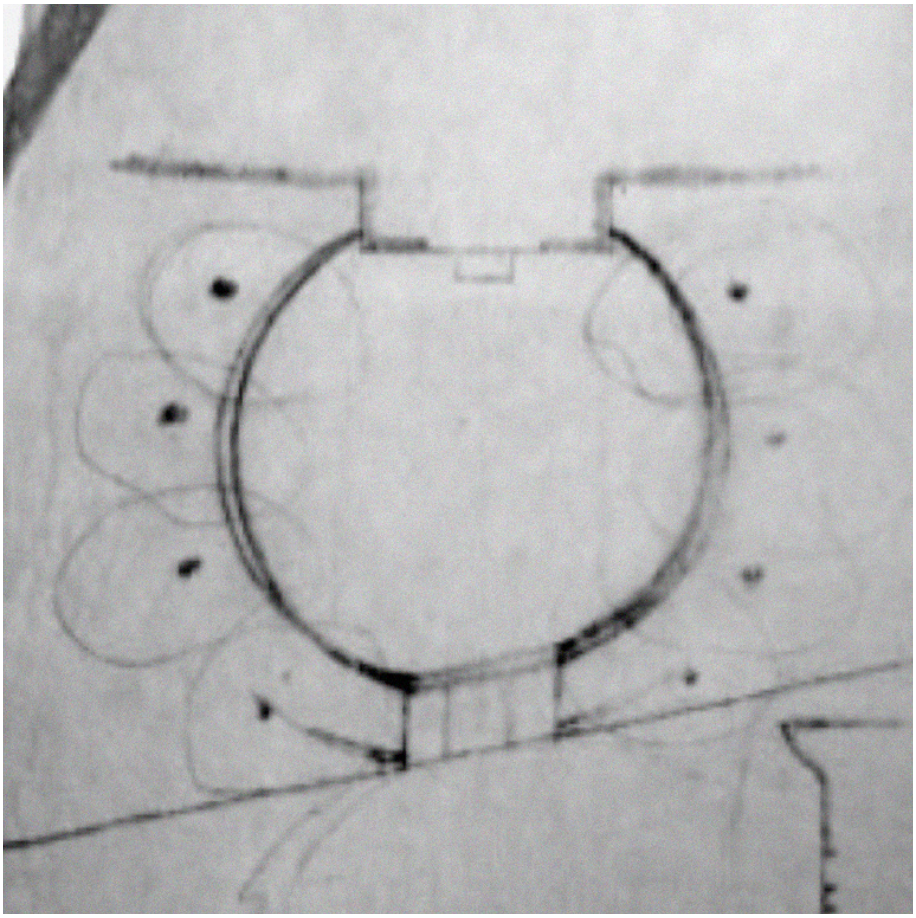


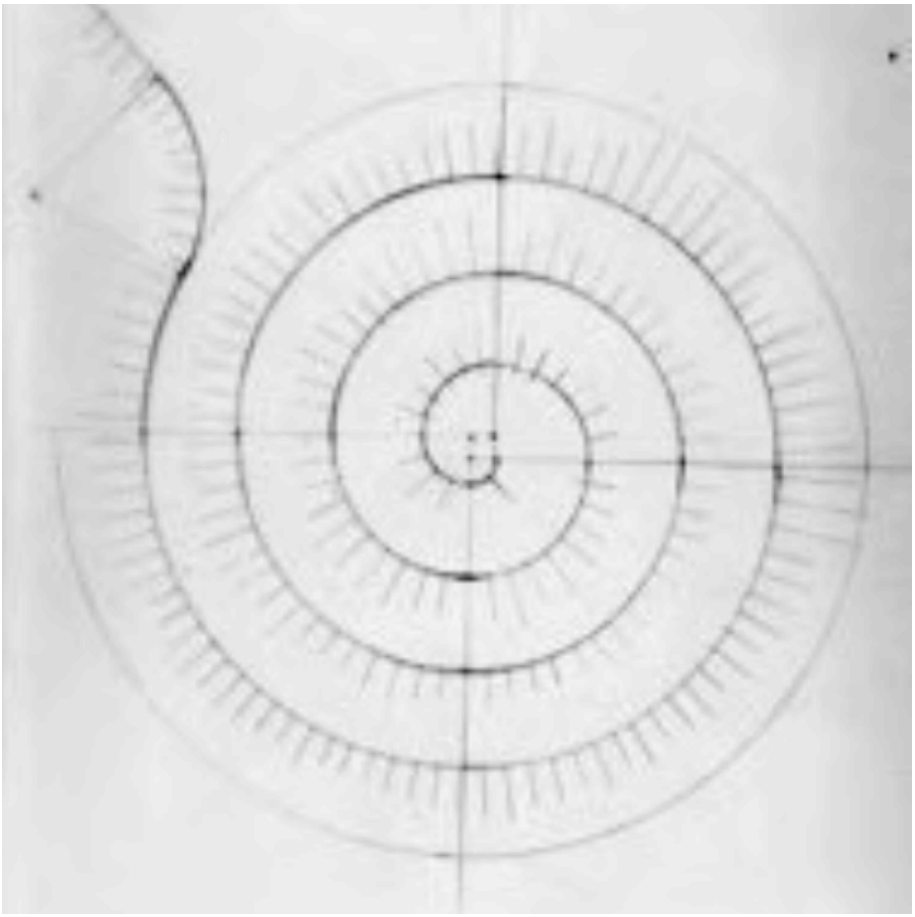

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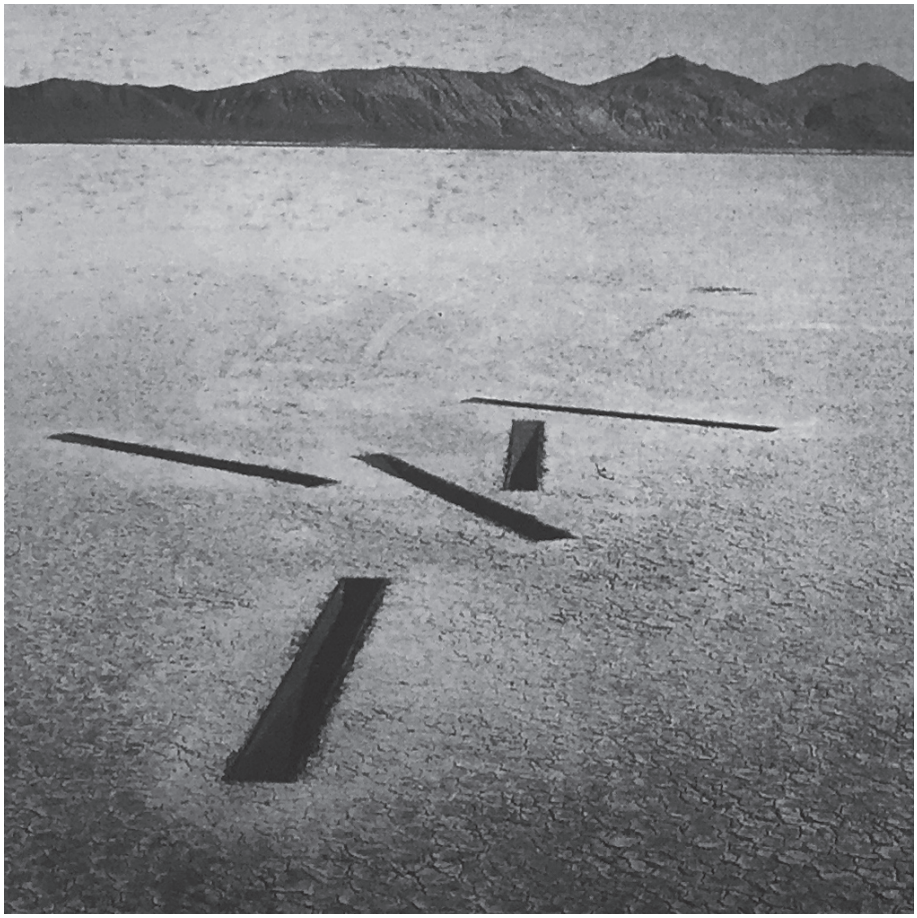







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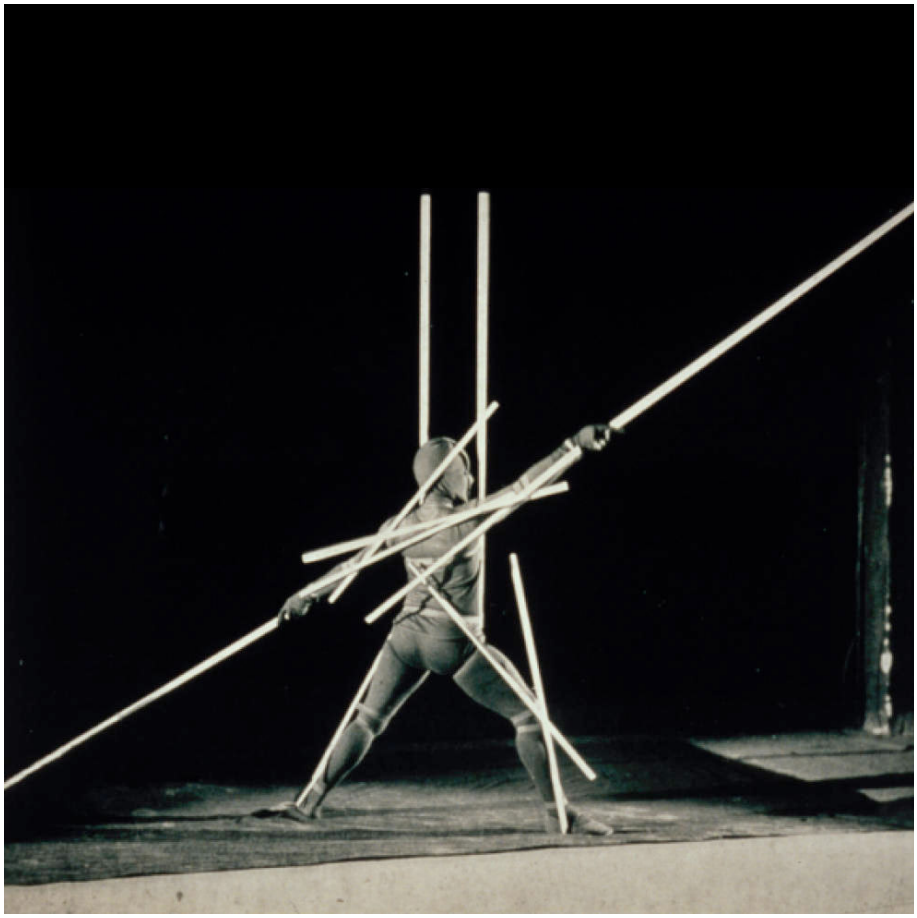


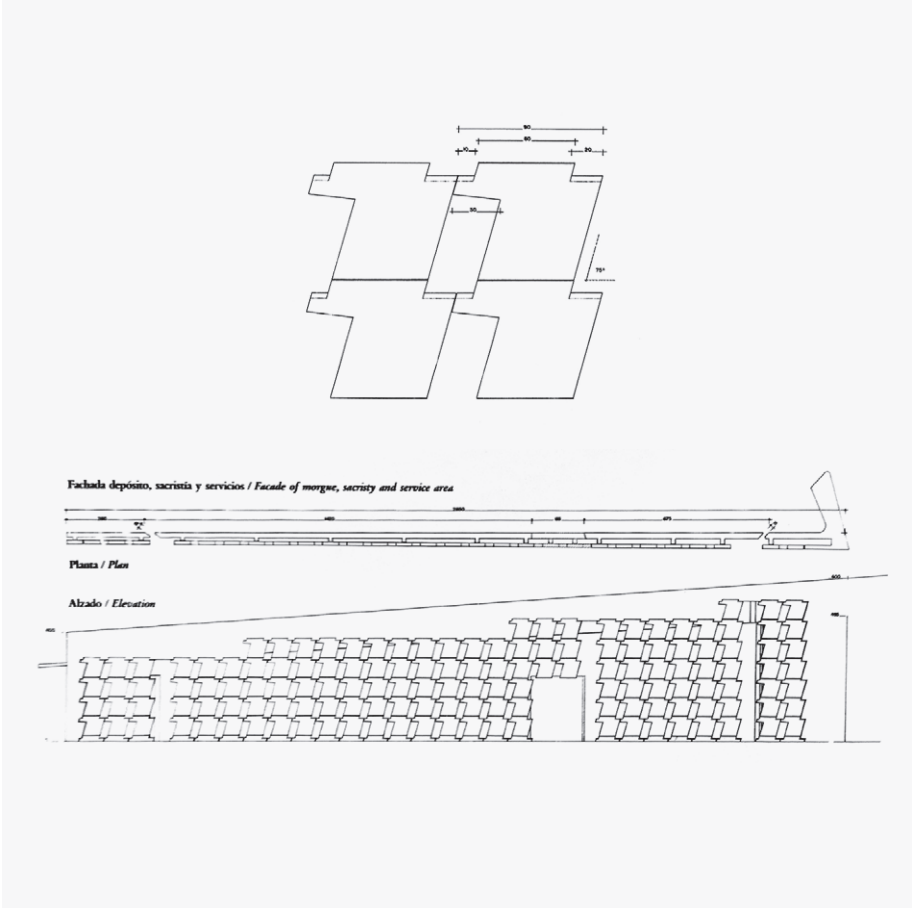


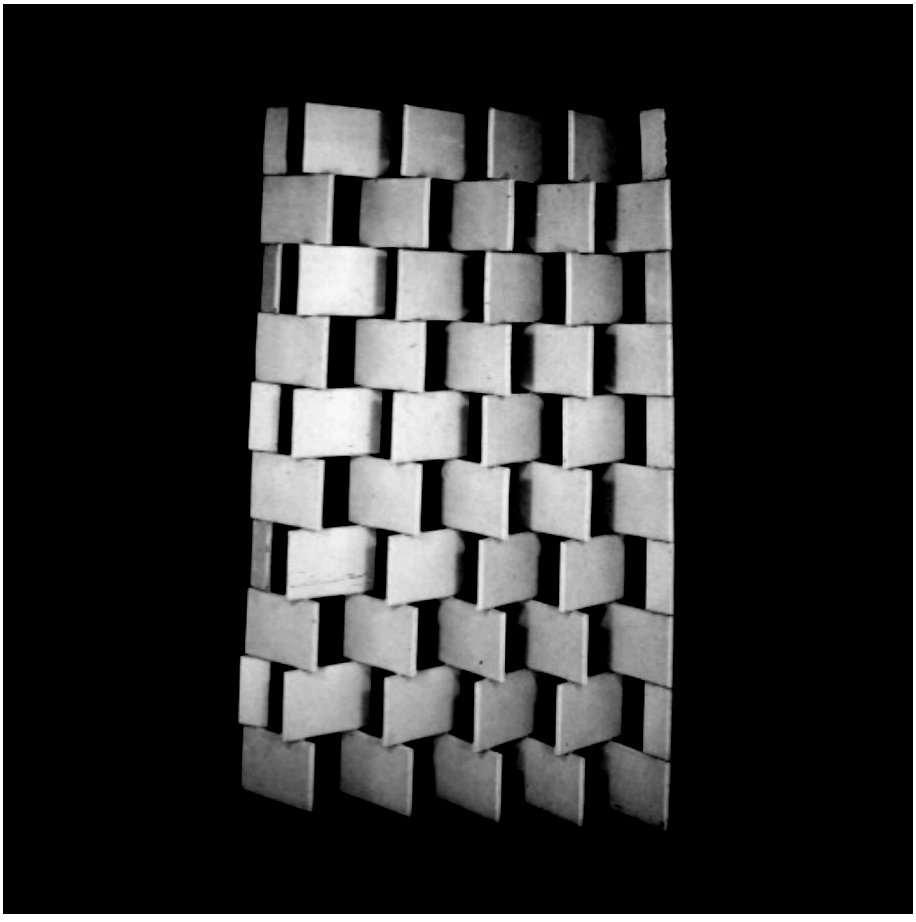


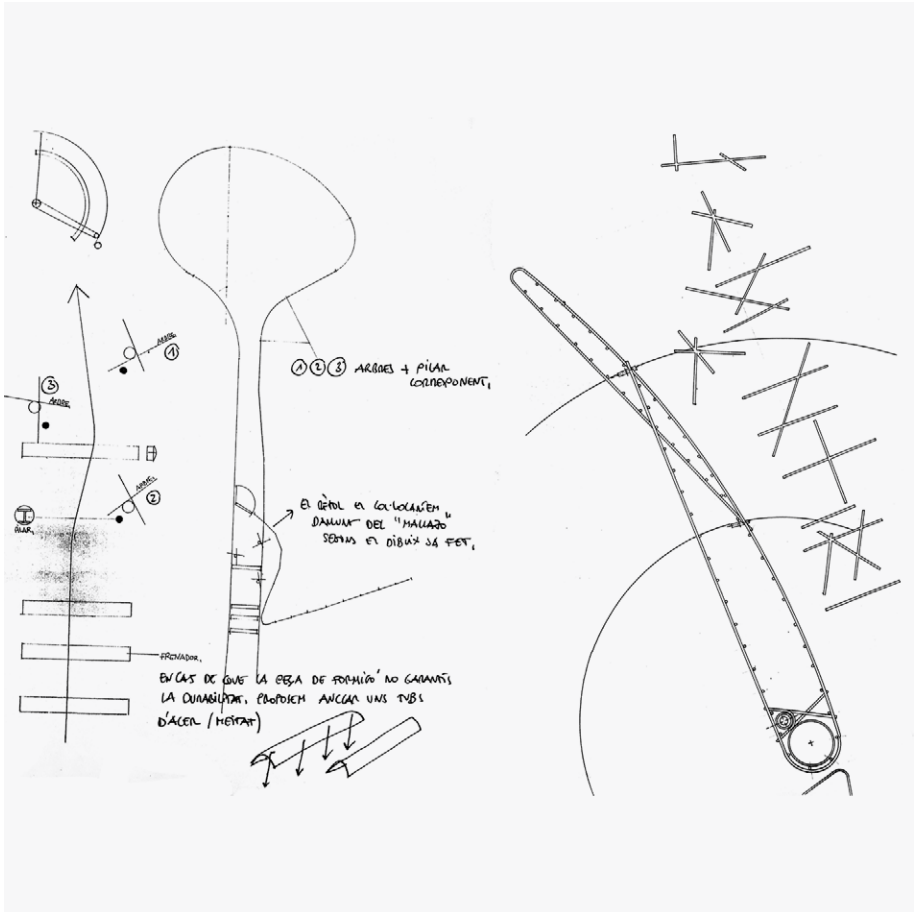


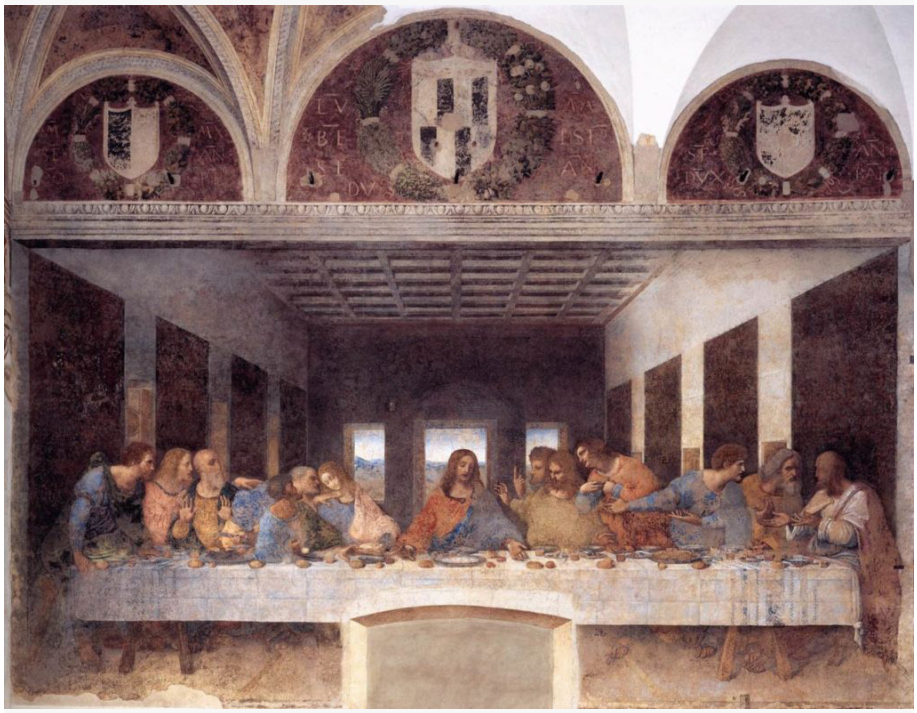




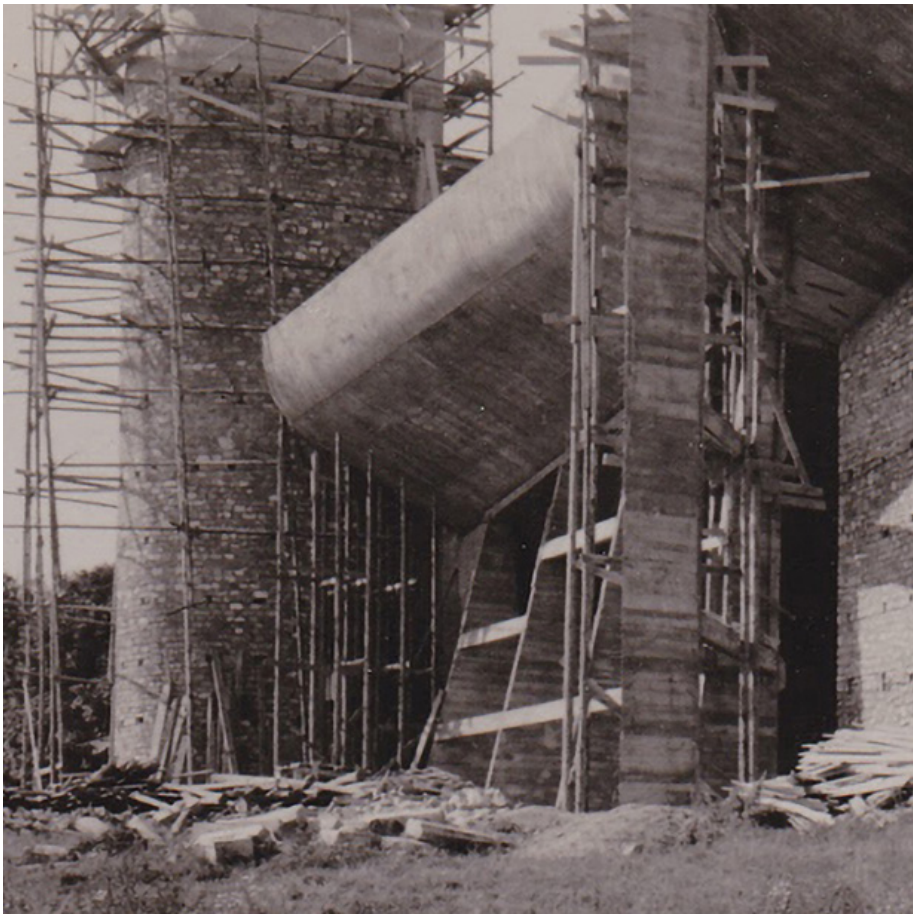

Fachada depósito, sacristía y servicios / *Facade of morgue, sacristy and service area*
Planta / *Plan*
Alzado / *Elevation*

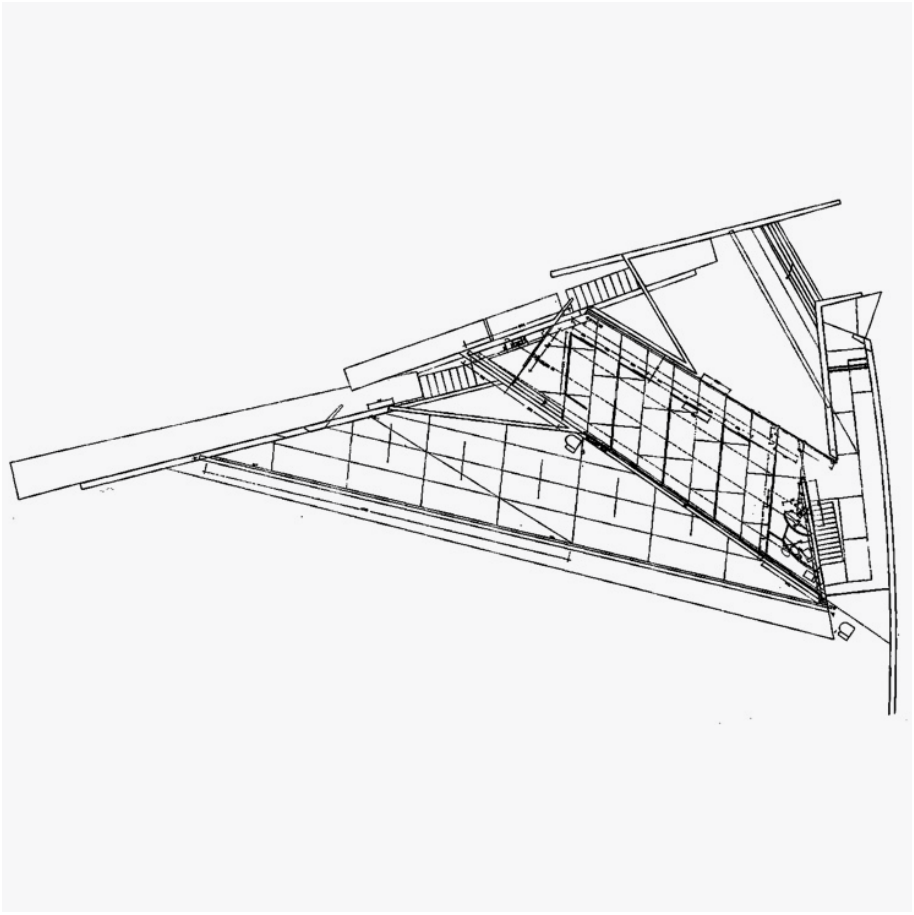


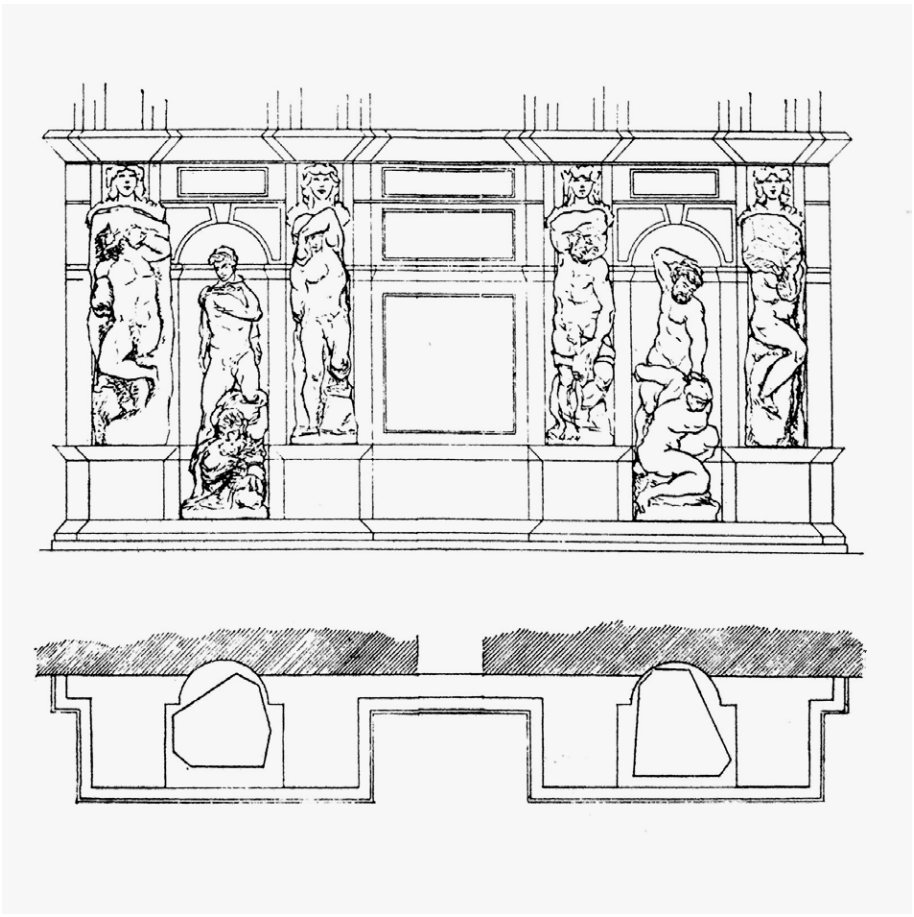

A 2 3 ARRAELS + PILAR CORRESPONENT,
EL GÈNOL EN COL·LOCARÉM DARRERA DEL "MALLADO" SEGONS EL DIBUIX JA FET,
ENCAIS DE QUE LA FEIXA DE FORMIGÓ NO GARANTIS LA DURABILITAT, PROPOSEM ANCORAR UNS TUBS D'ACER (MITJAT)

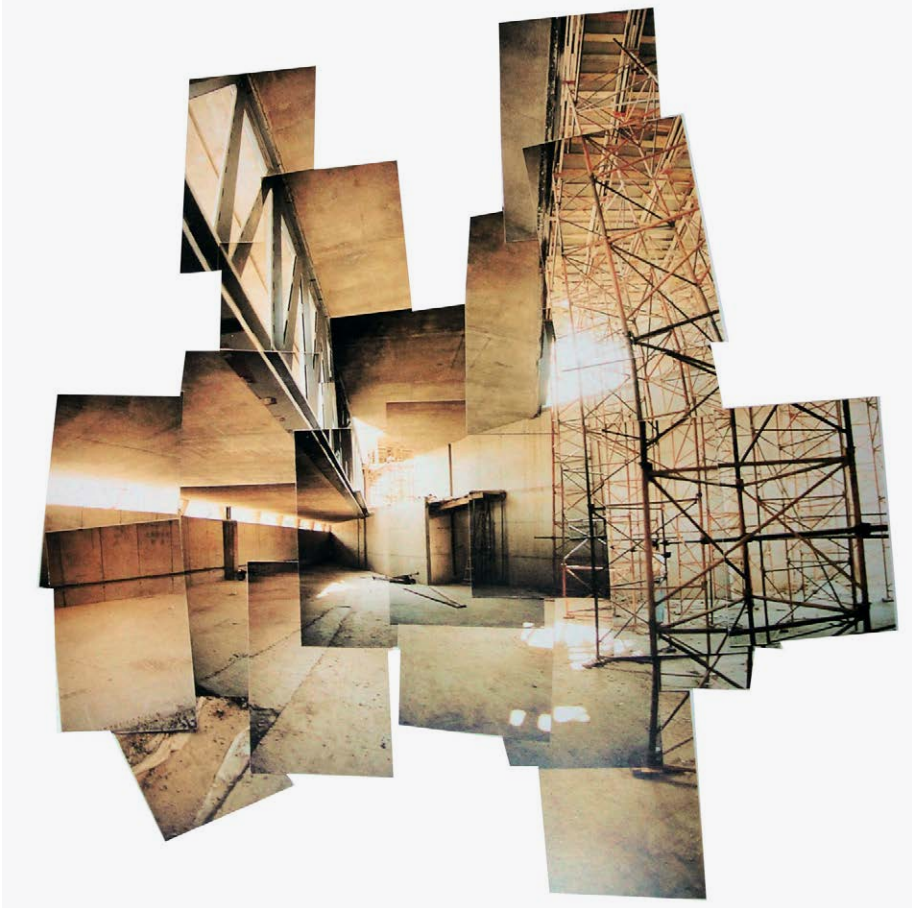




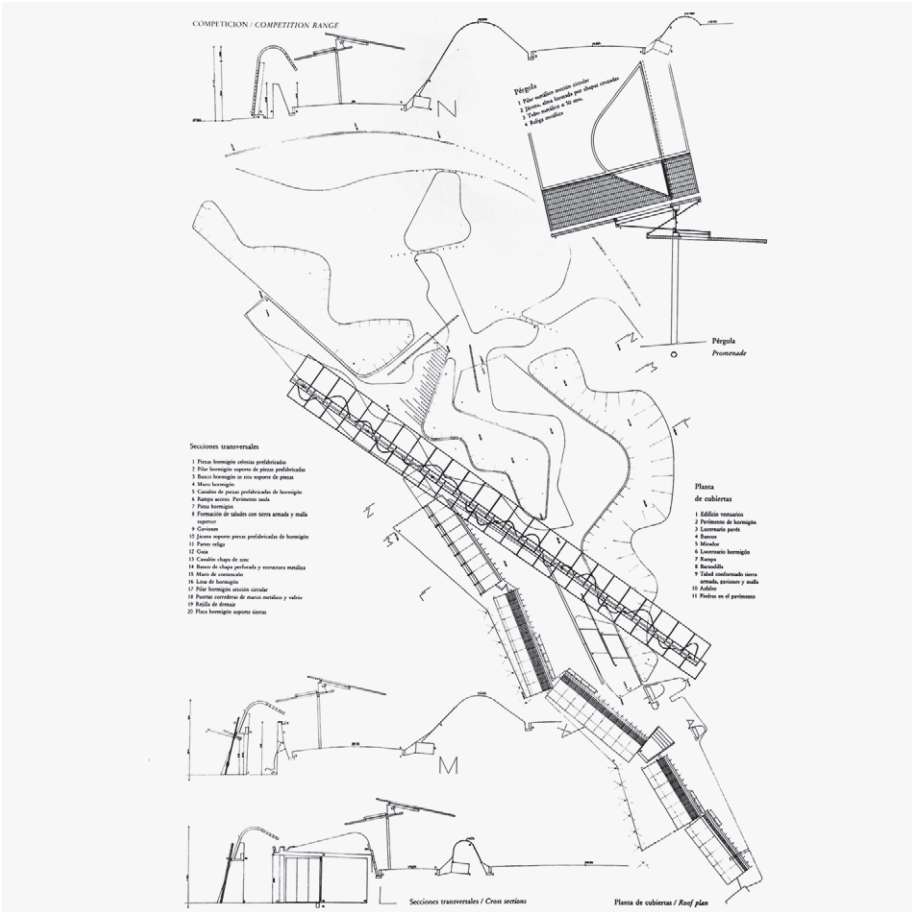


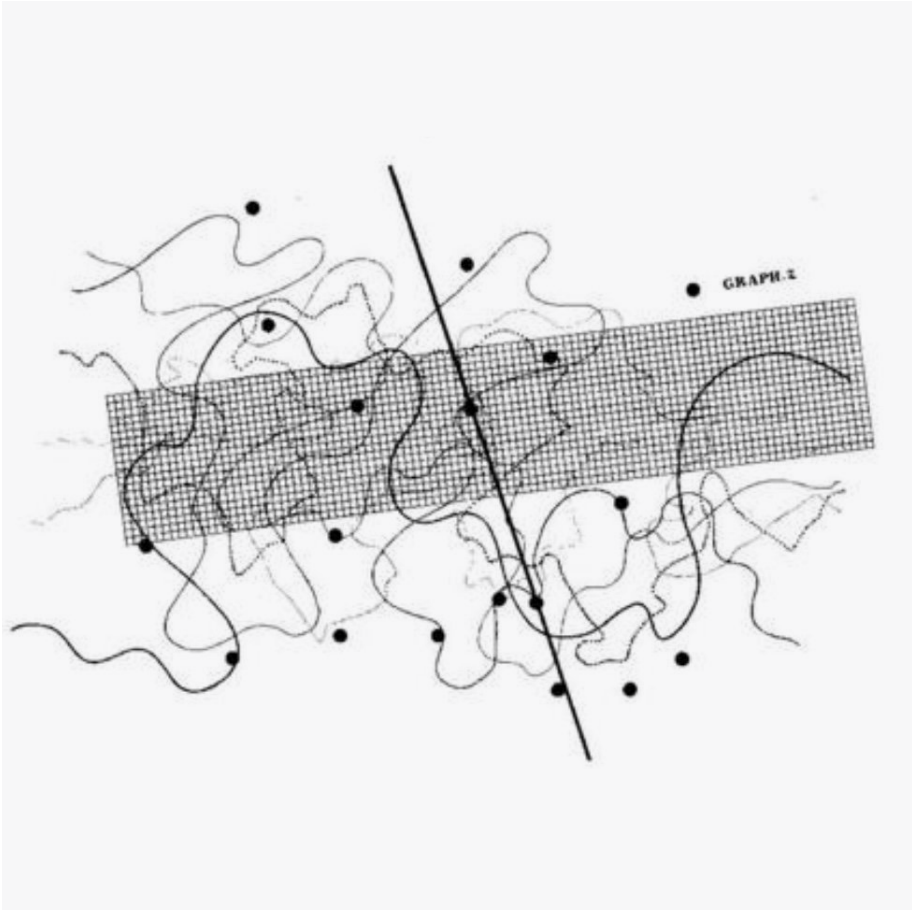


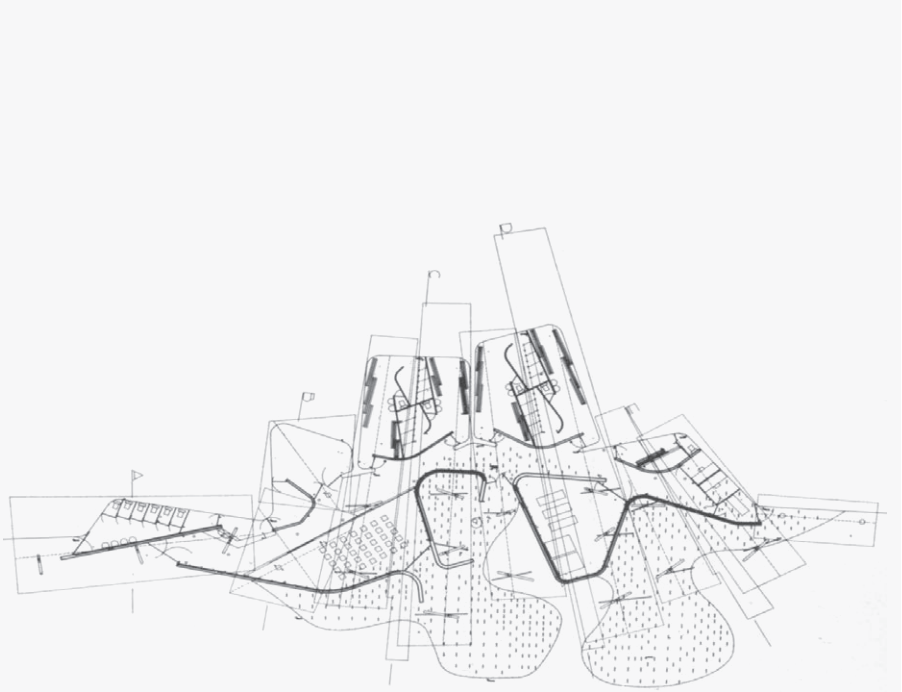


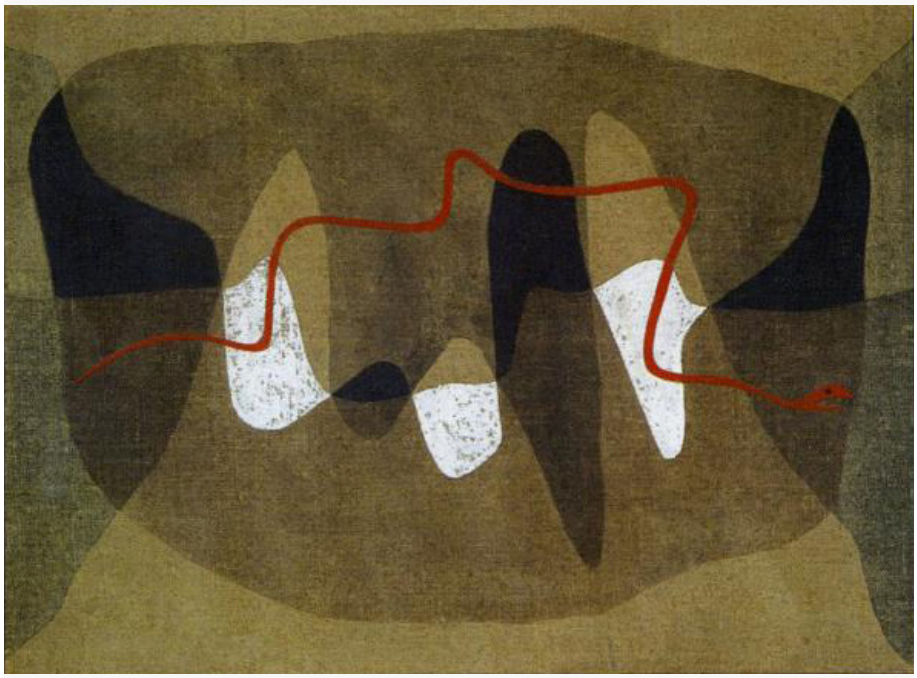





COMPETICION / COMPETITION RANGE
Pérgola
Promenade
Secciones transversales
Planta de cubiertas
Secciones transversales / Cross sections
Planta de cubiertas / Roof plan


GRAPH.E



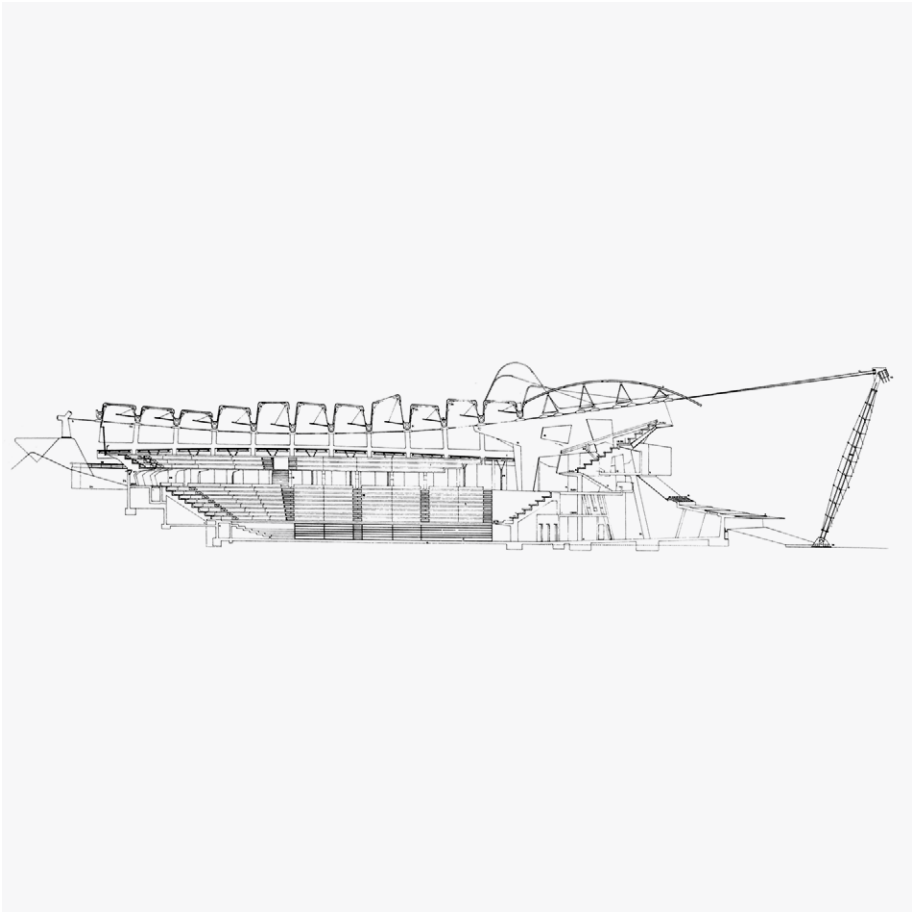


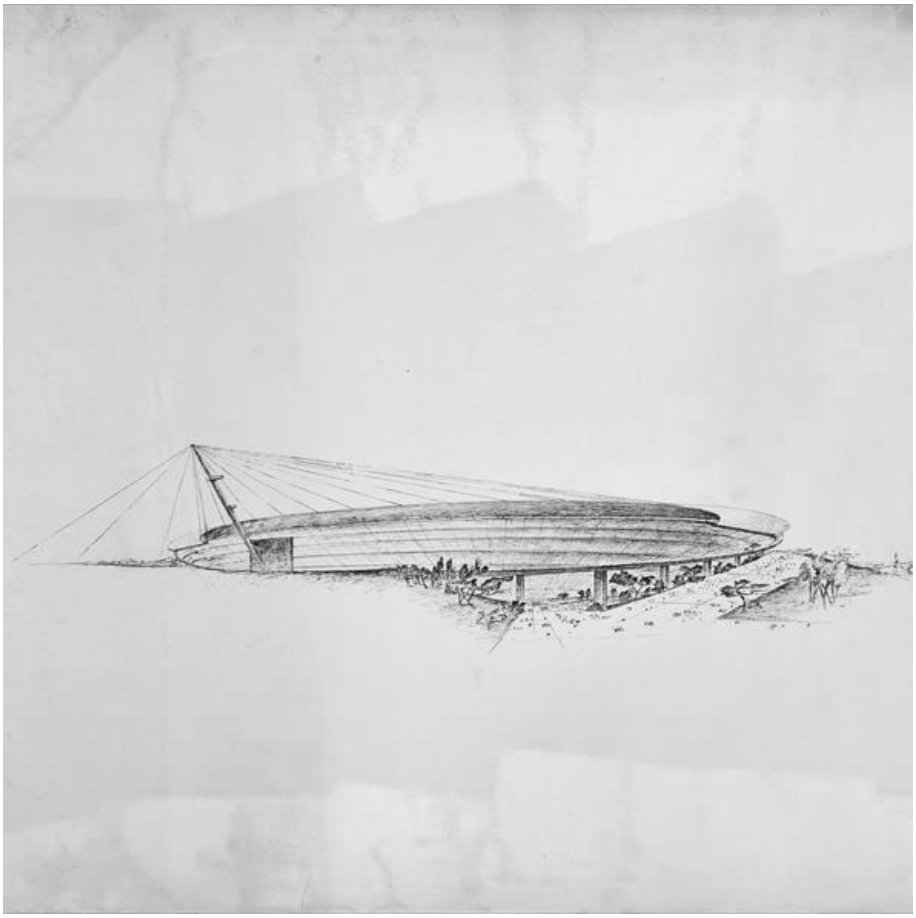


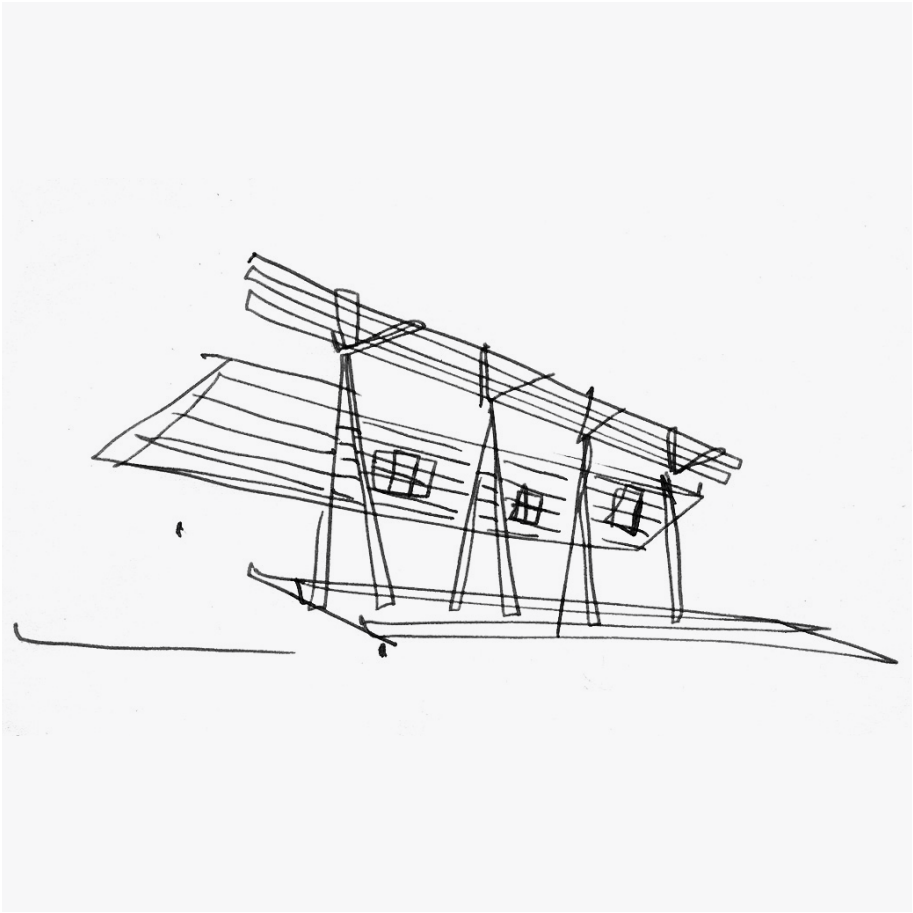








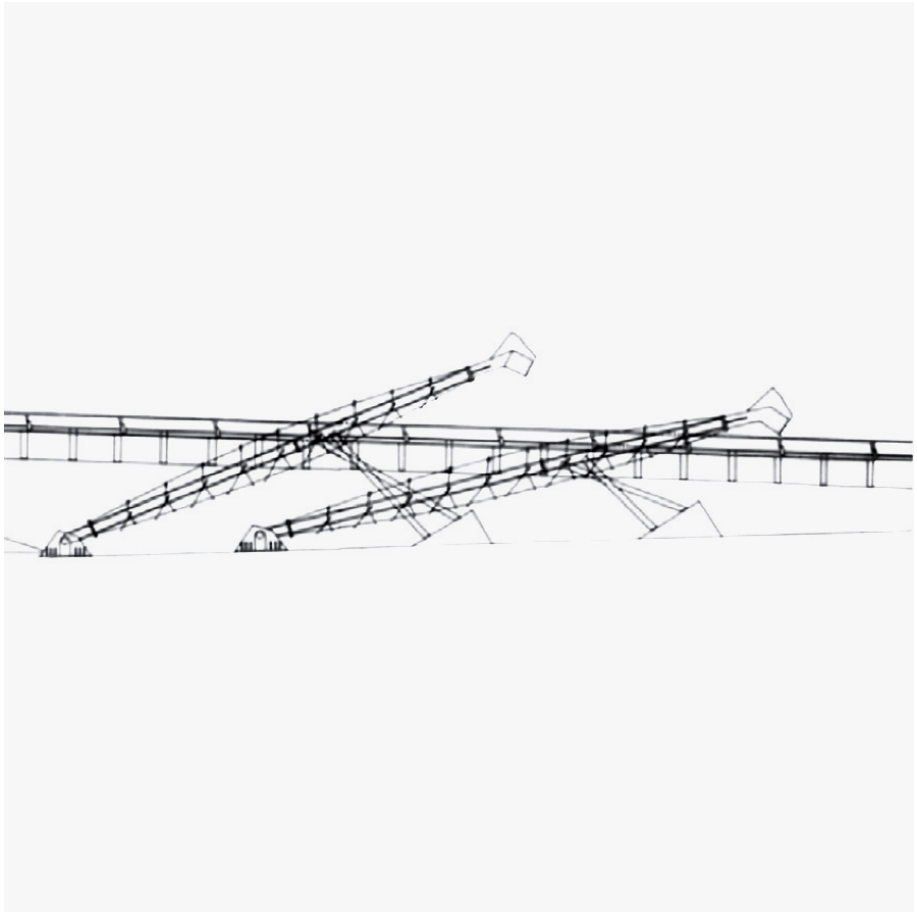




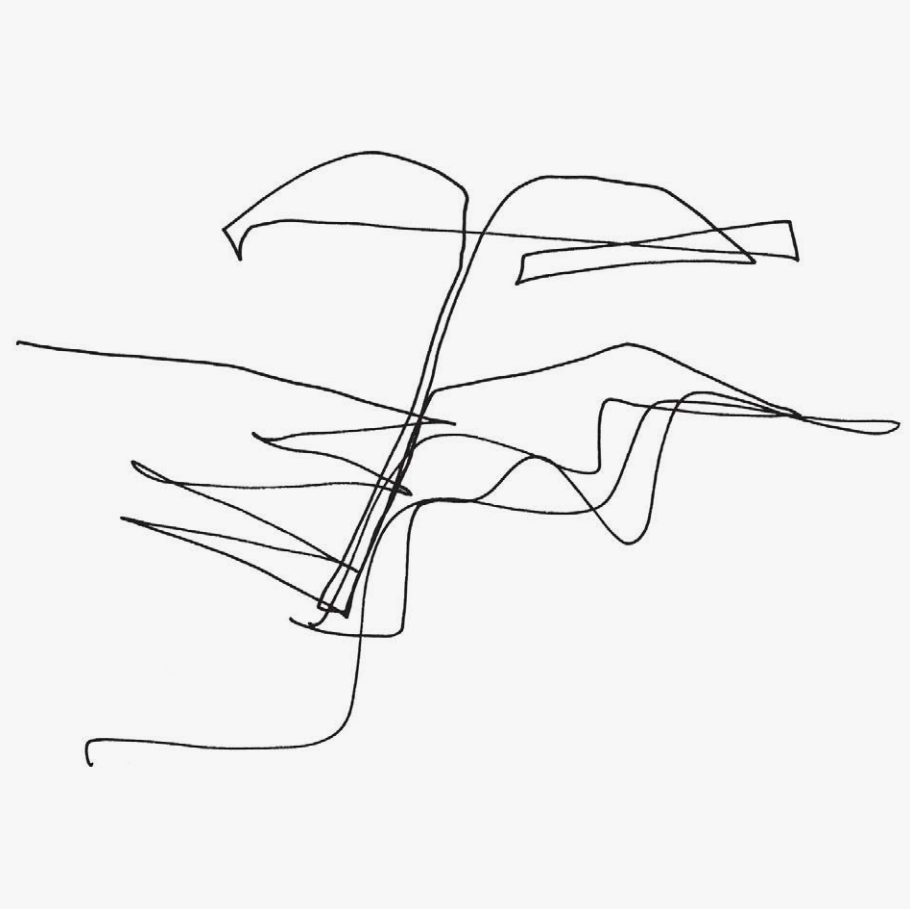


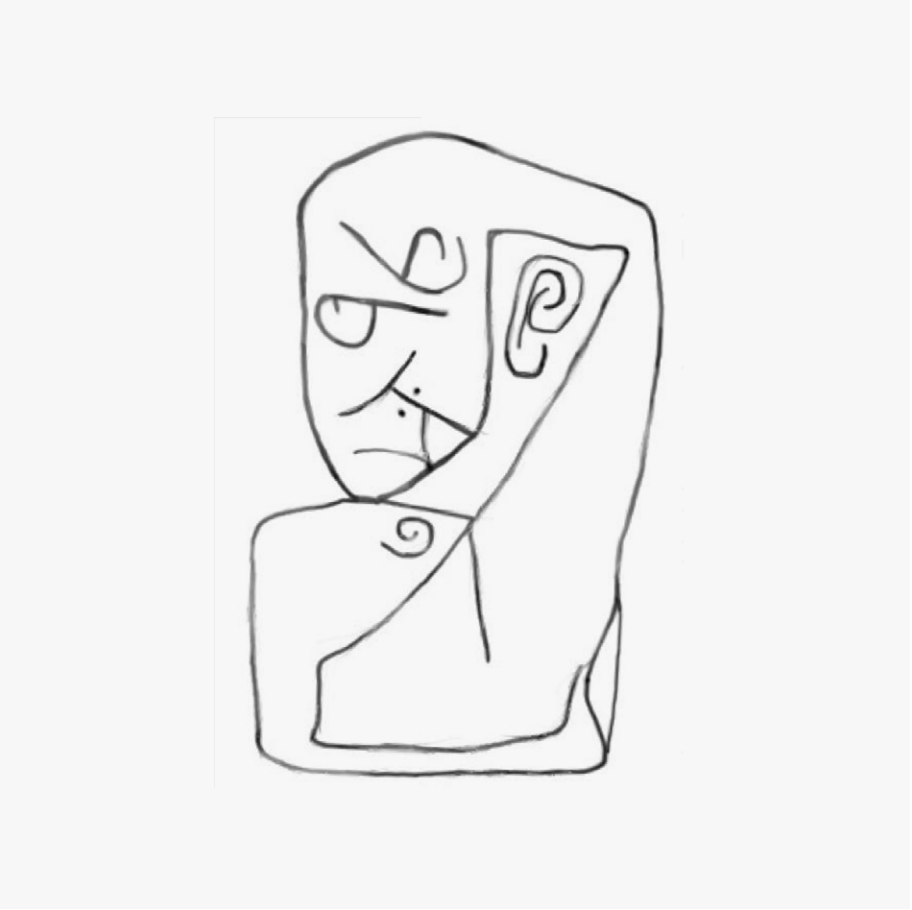


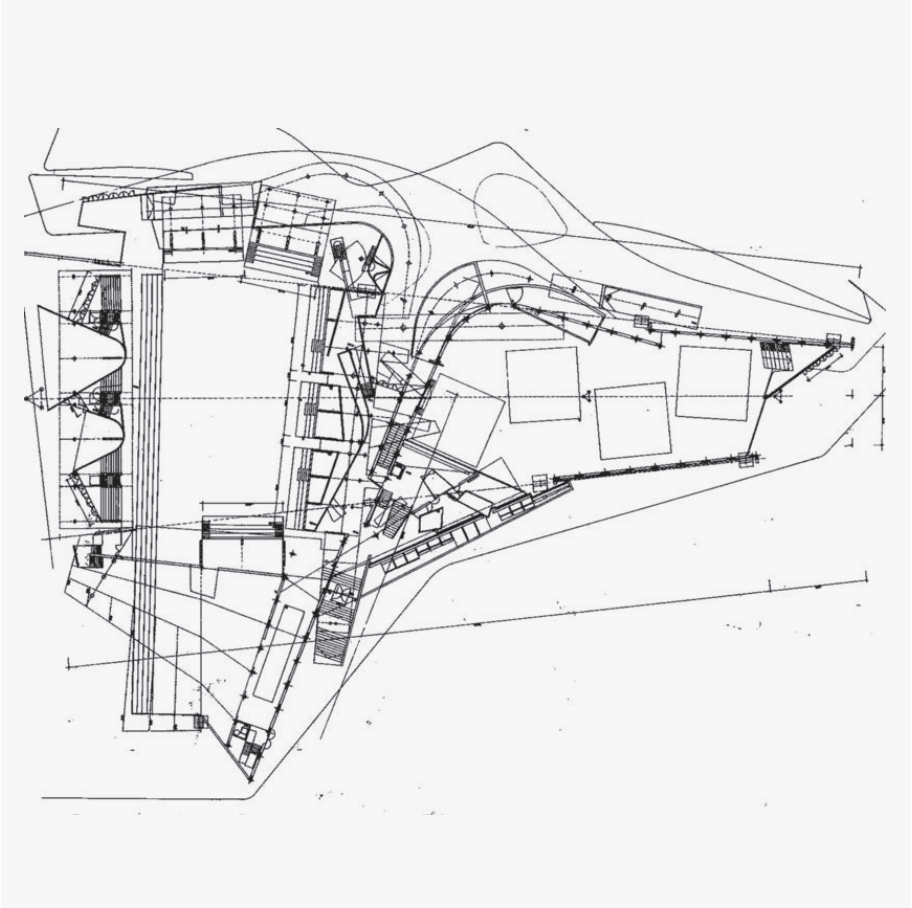


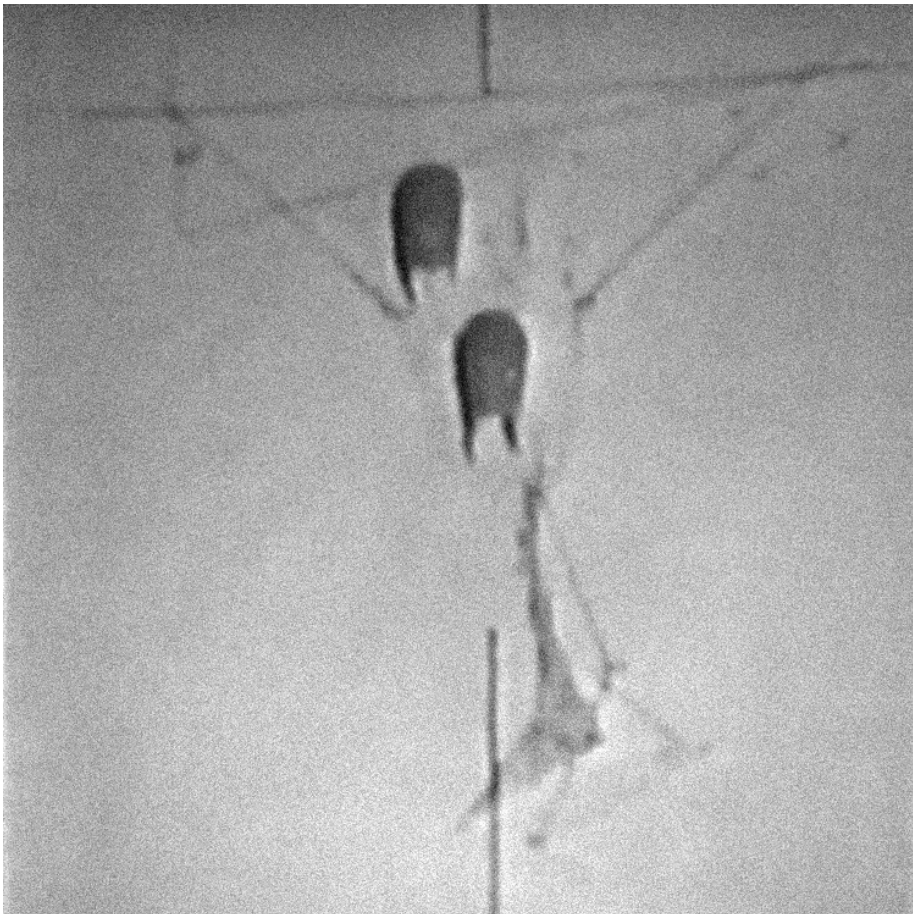


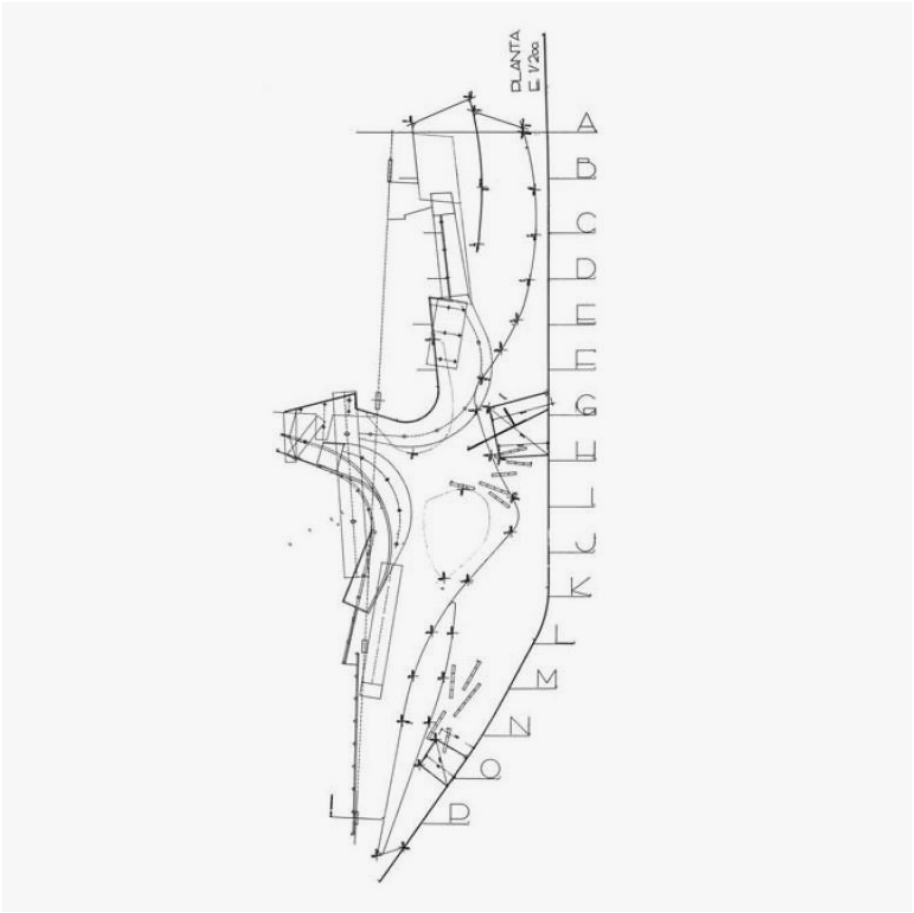


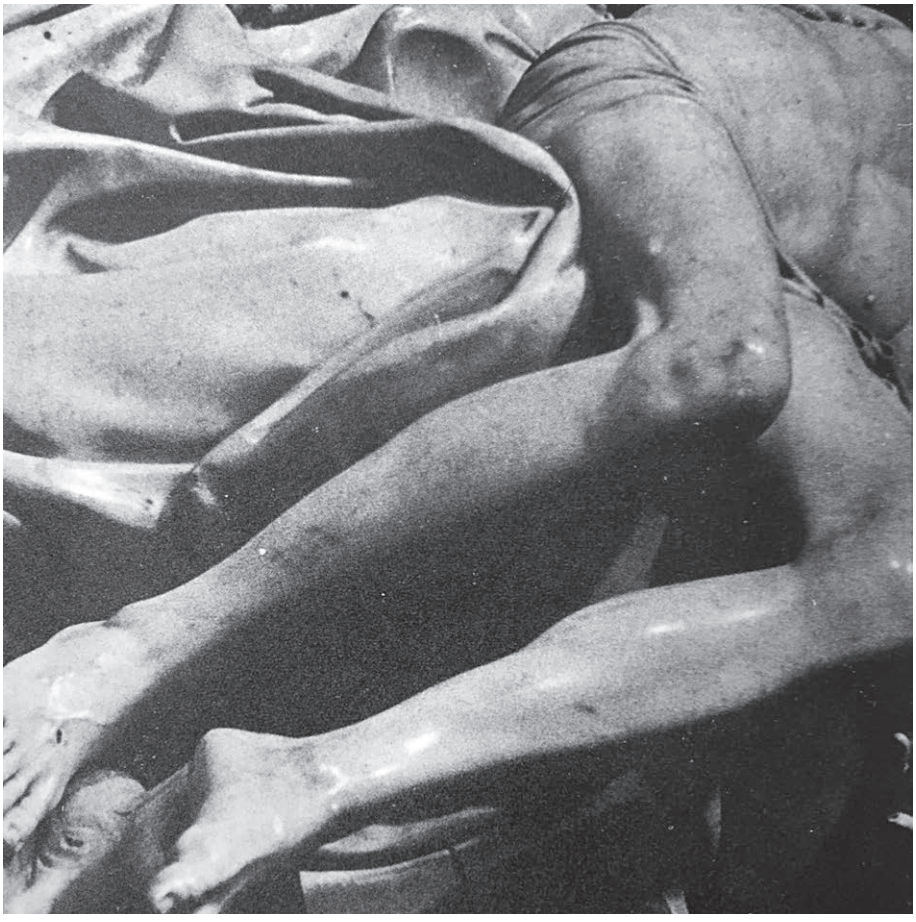


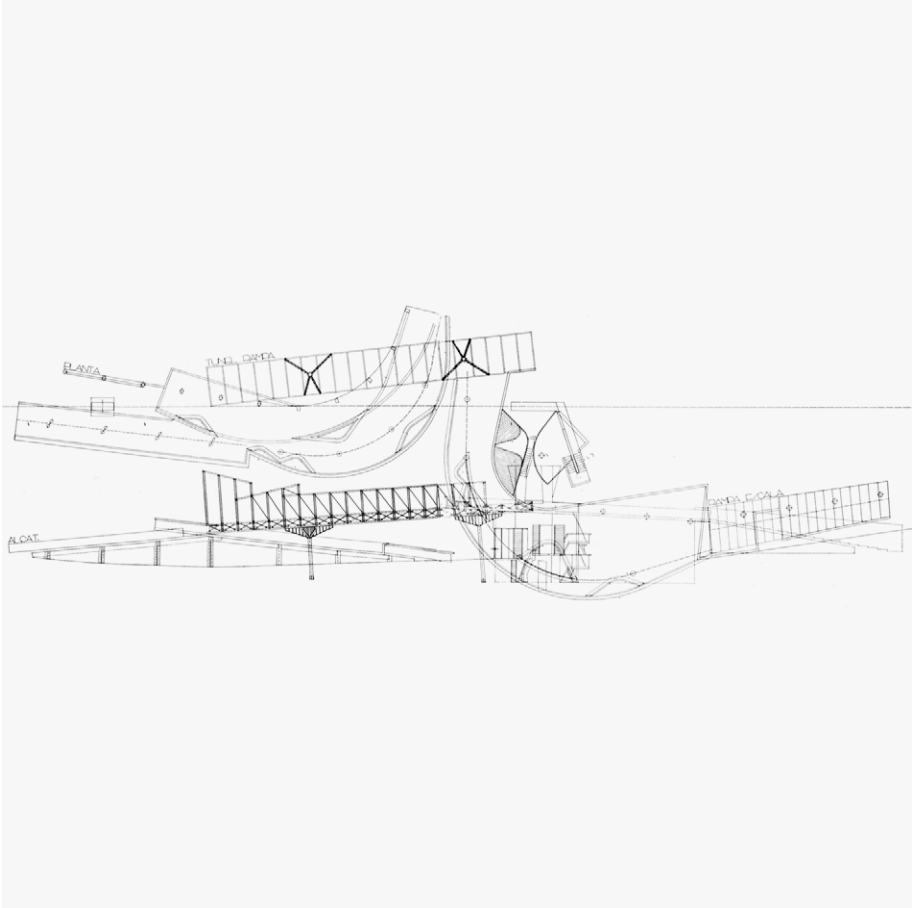


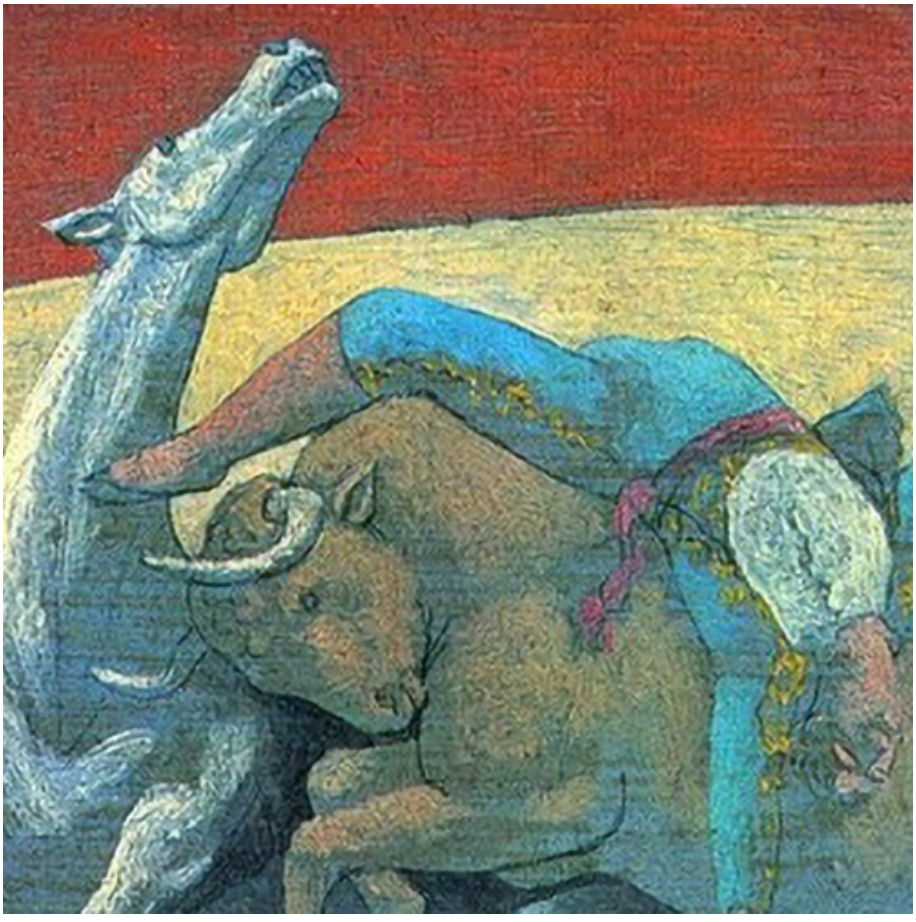


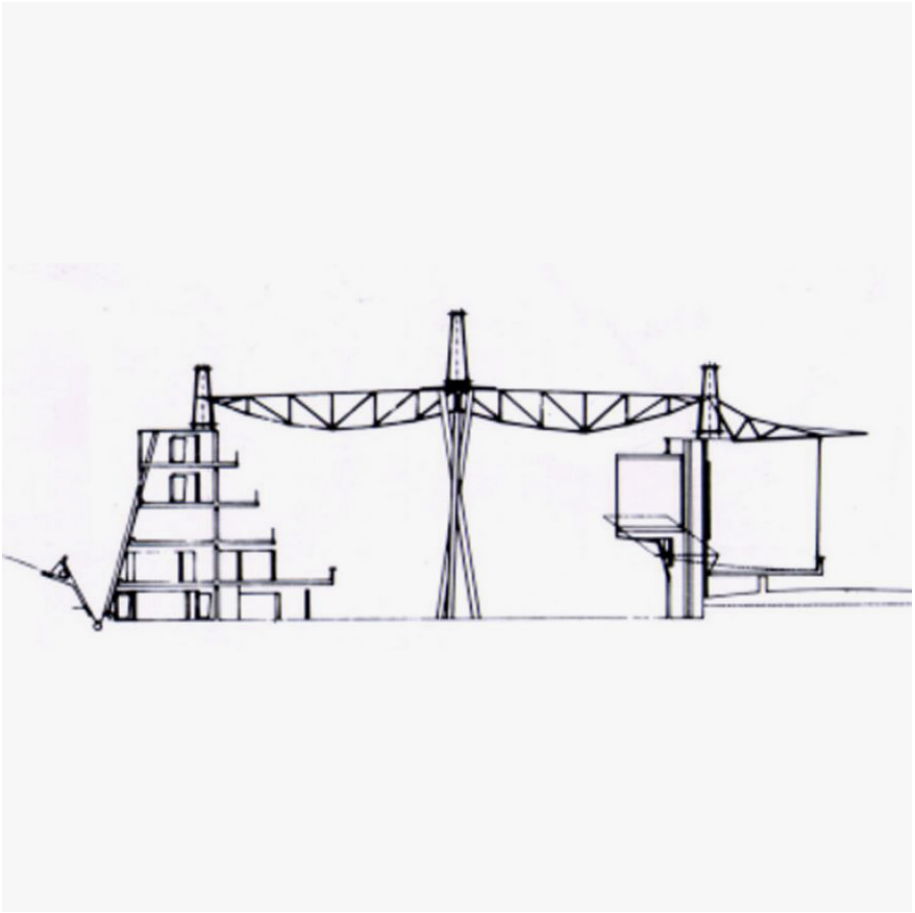



PLANTA
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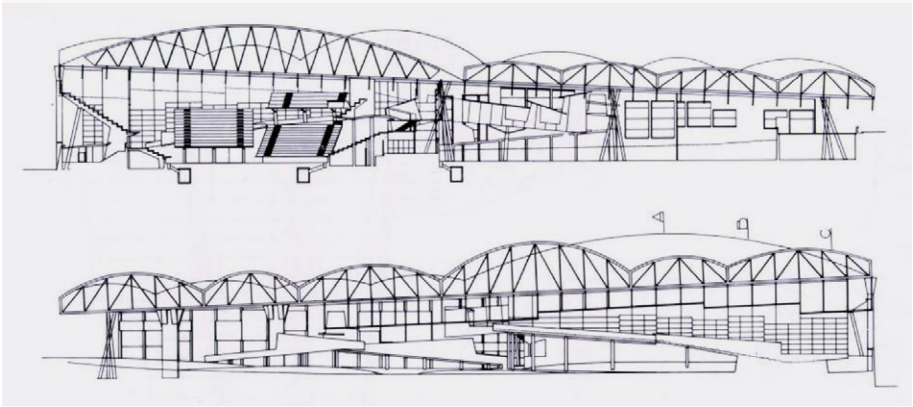


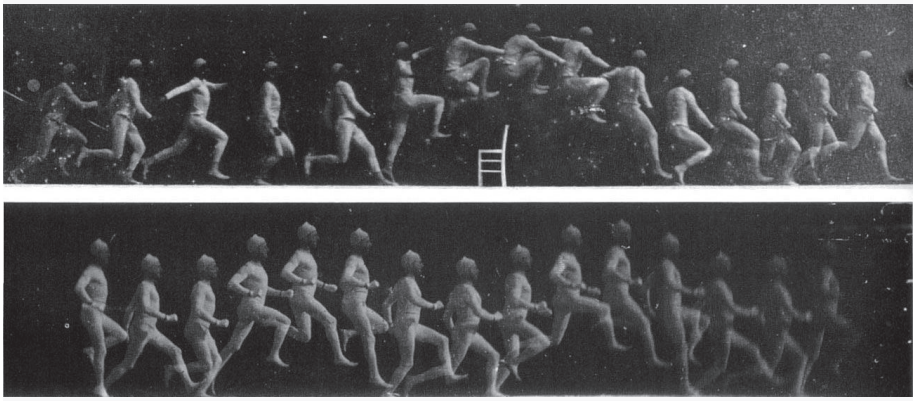

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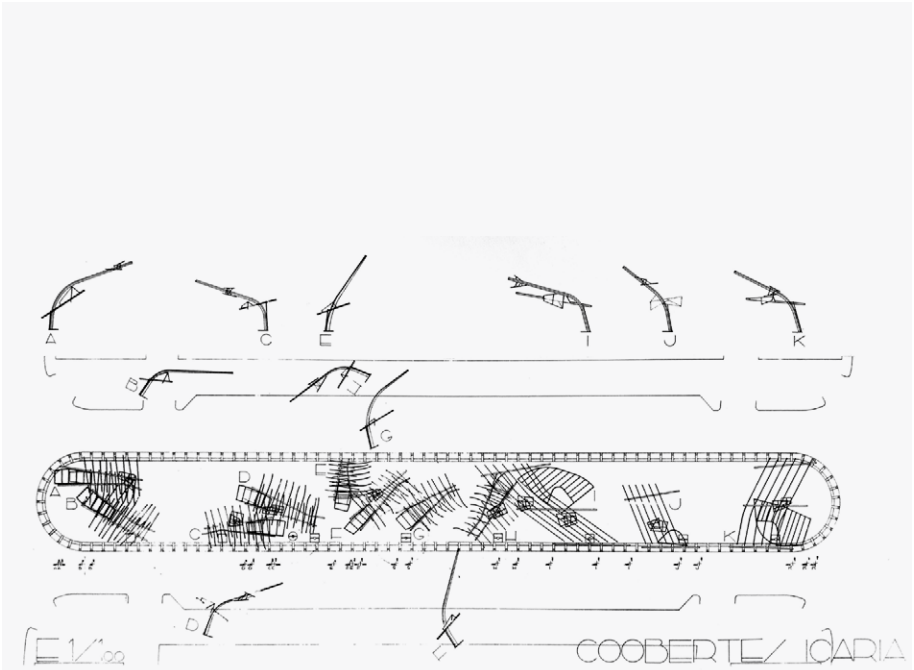


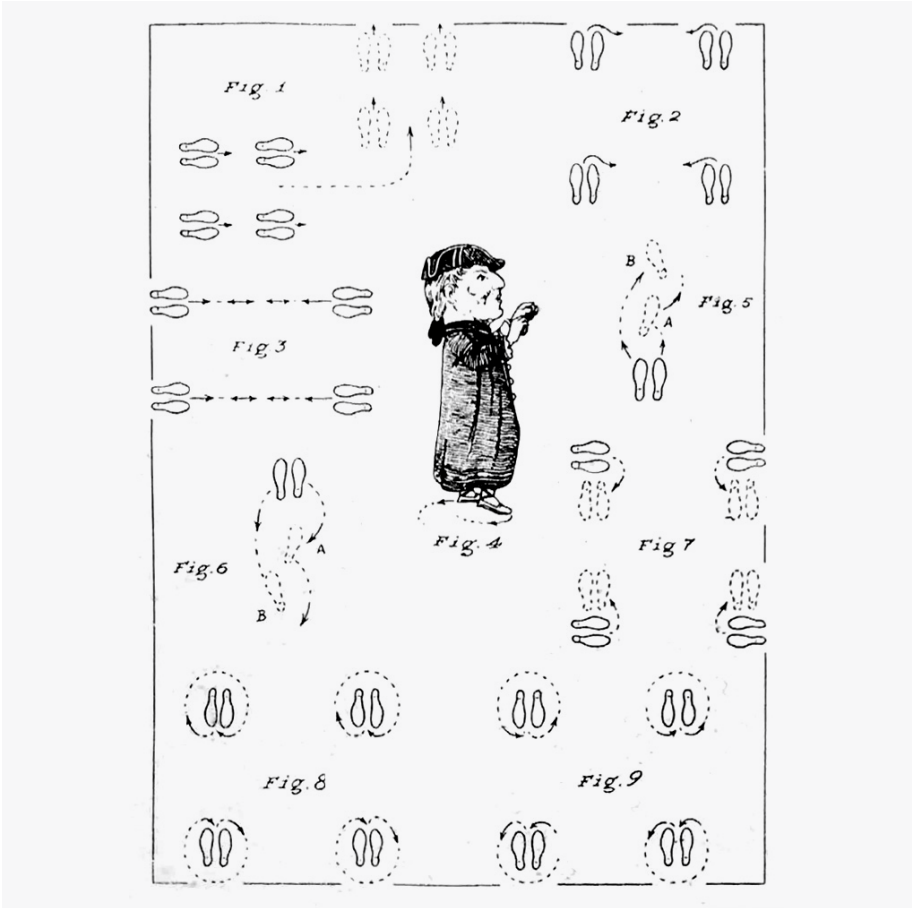


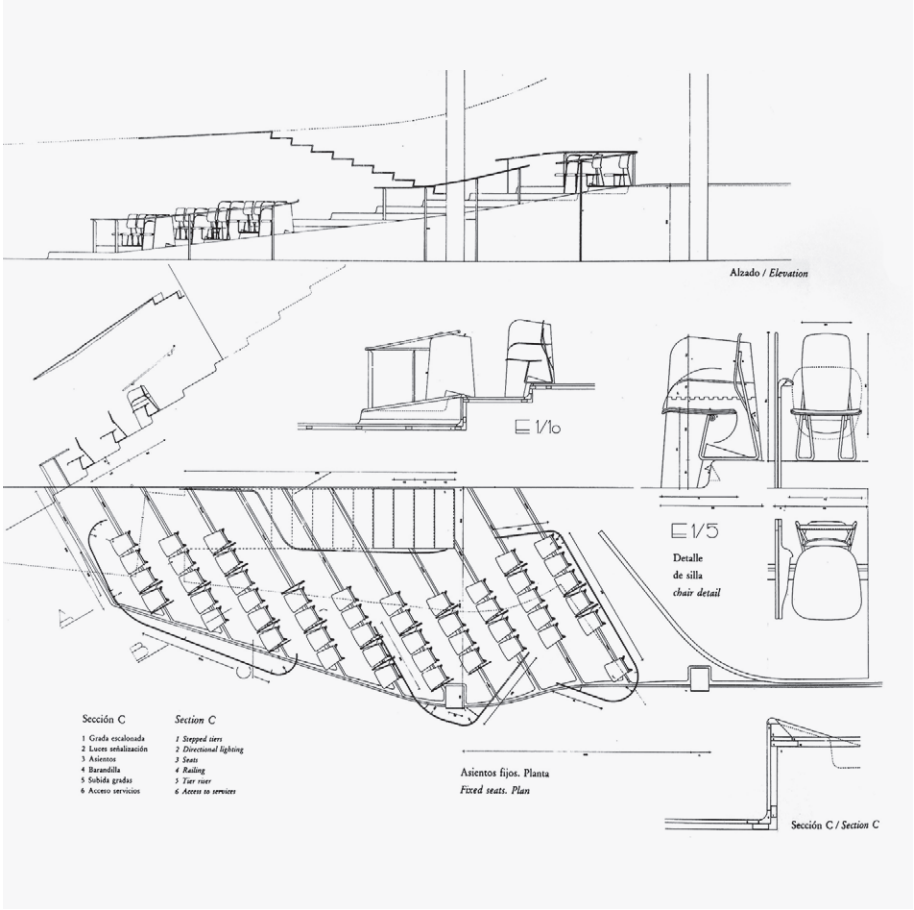




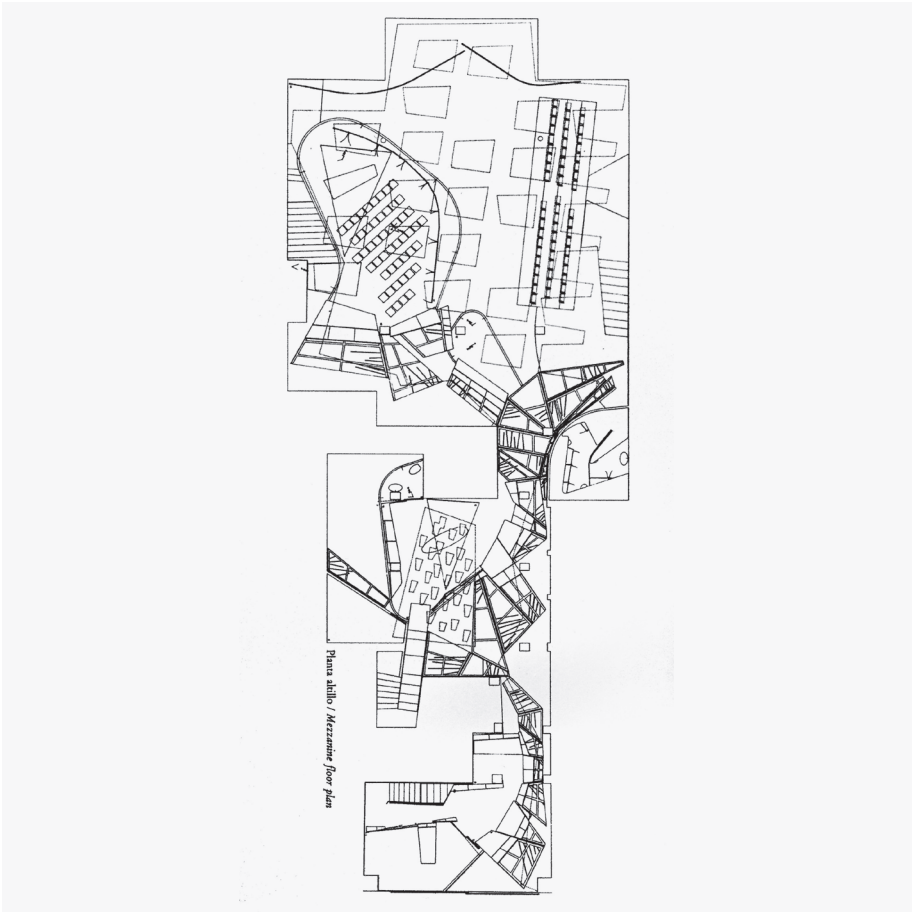



COOBERTE/IDARIA


Fig. 1
Fig. 2
Fig. 3
Fig. 4
Fig. 5
Fig. 6
Fig. 7
Fig. 8
Fig. 9

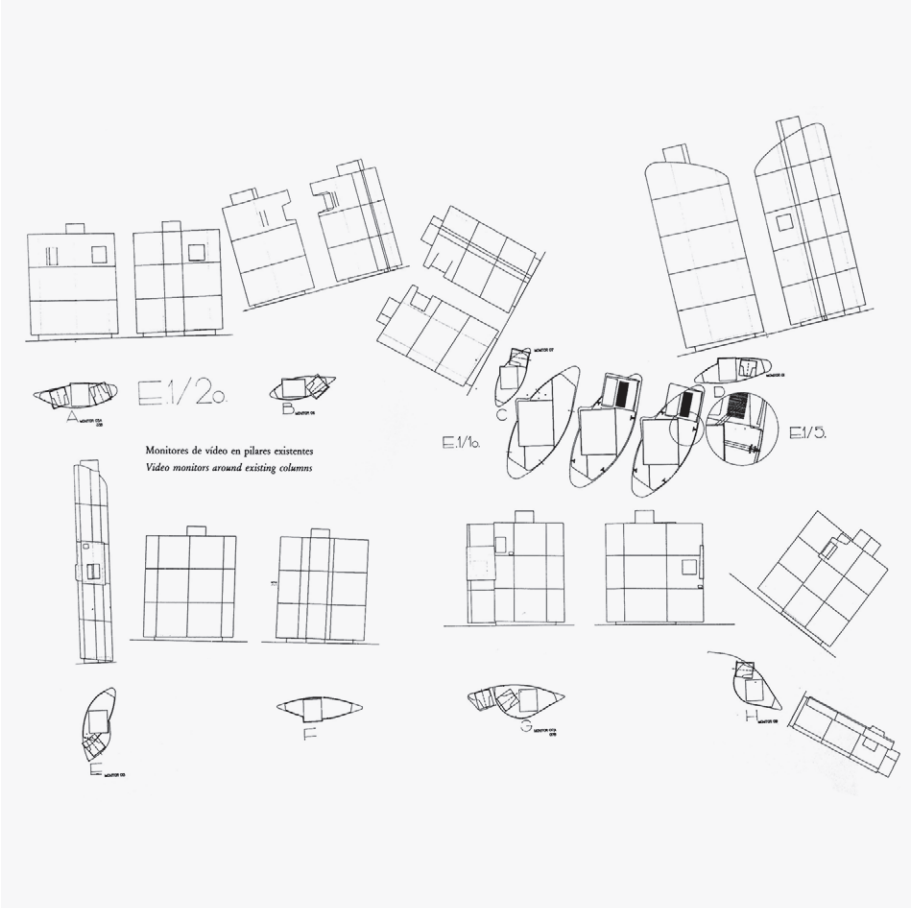

Alzado / Elevation
E 1/10
E 1/5
Detalle
de silla
chair detail
Sección C
1 Grada escalonada
2 Luces señalización
3 Asientos
4 Barandilla
5 Subida gradas
6 Acceso servicios
Section C
1 Stepped tiers
2 Directional lighting
3 Seats
4 Railing
5 Tier riser
6 Access to services
Asientos fijos. Planta
Fixed seats. Plan
Sección C / Section C

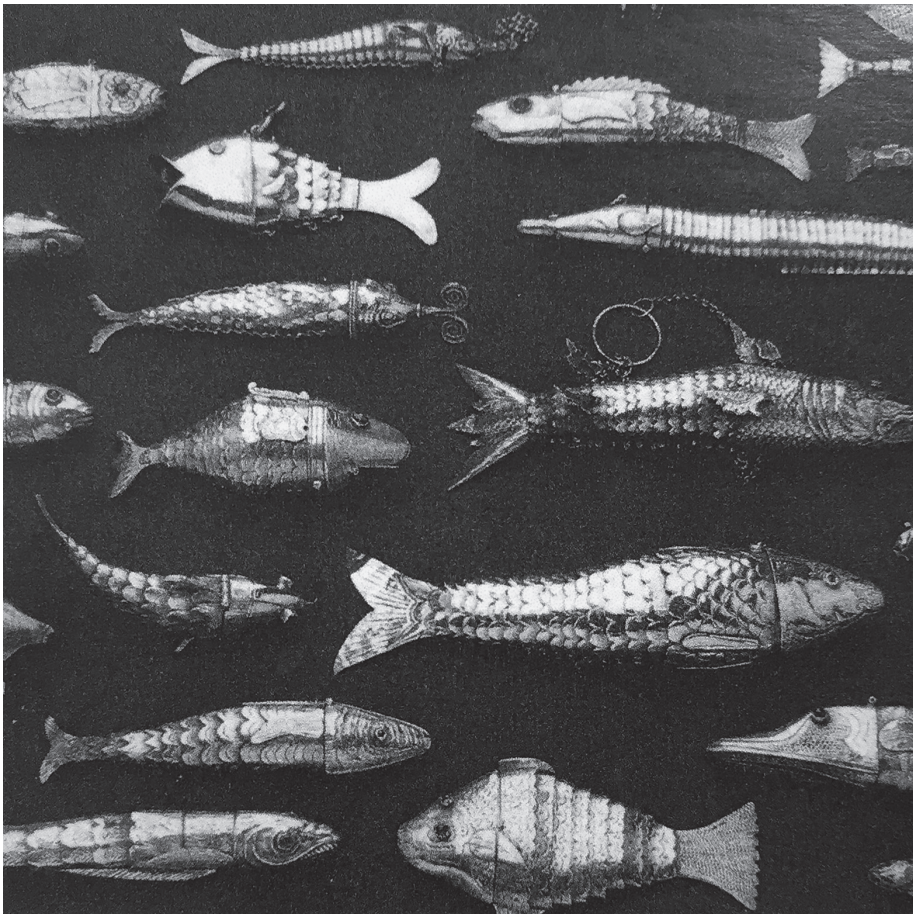


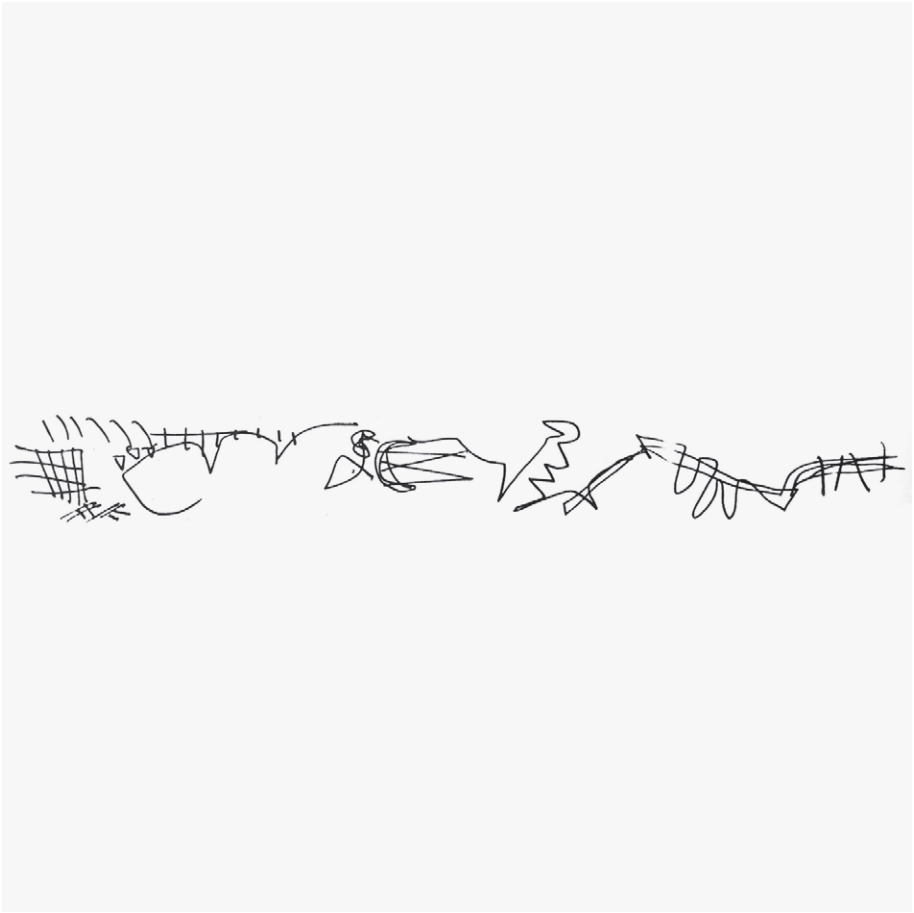


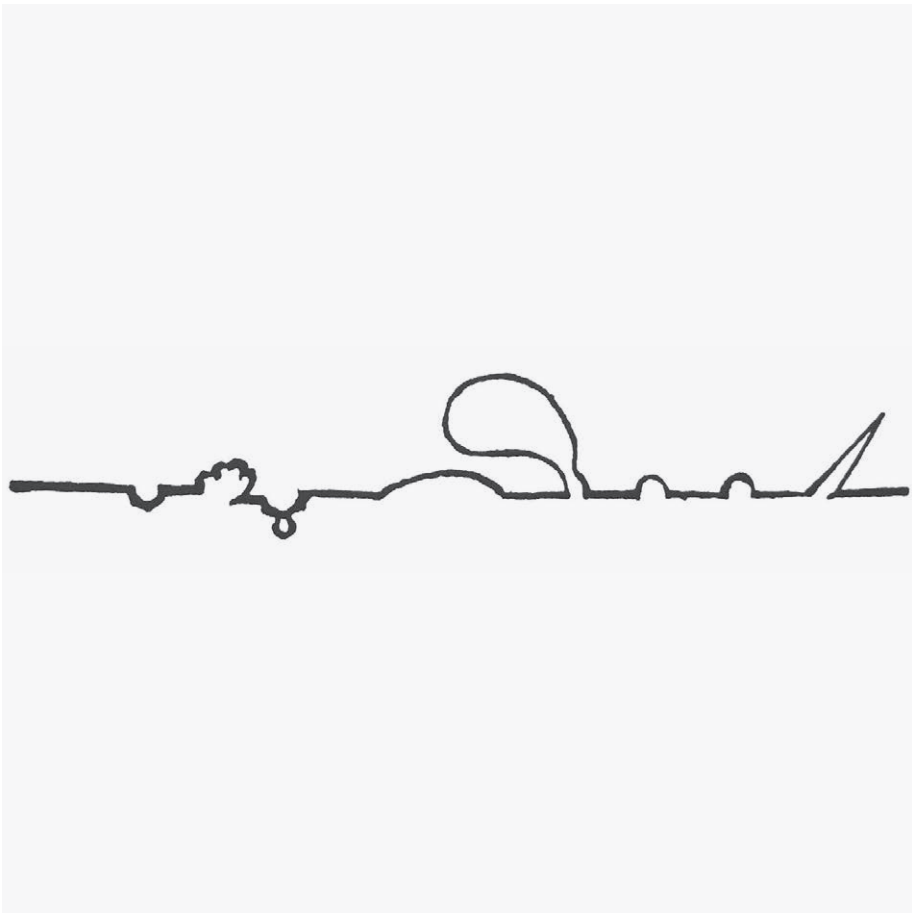
Planta altillo / *Mezzanine floor plan*




E.1/20.
E.1/10.
E1/5.
Monitores de vídeo en pilares existentes
Vídeo monitors around existing columns

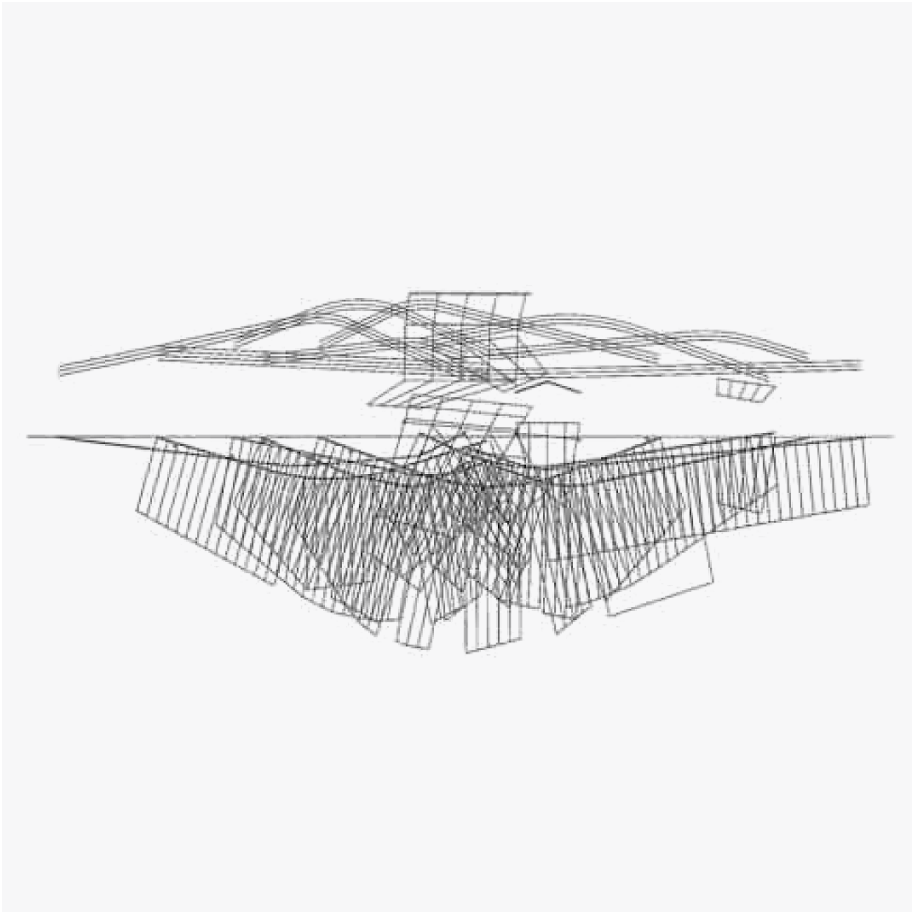


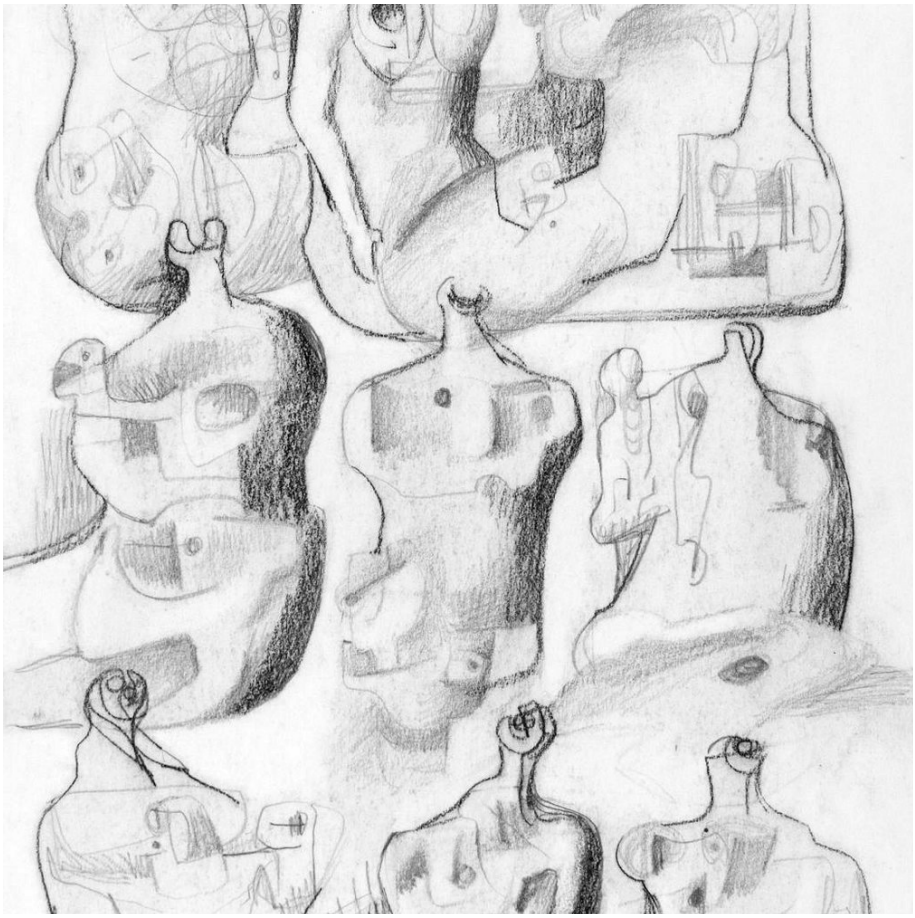


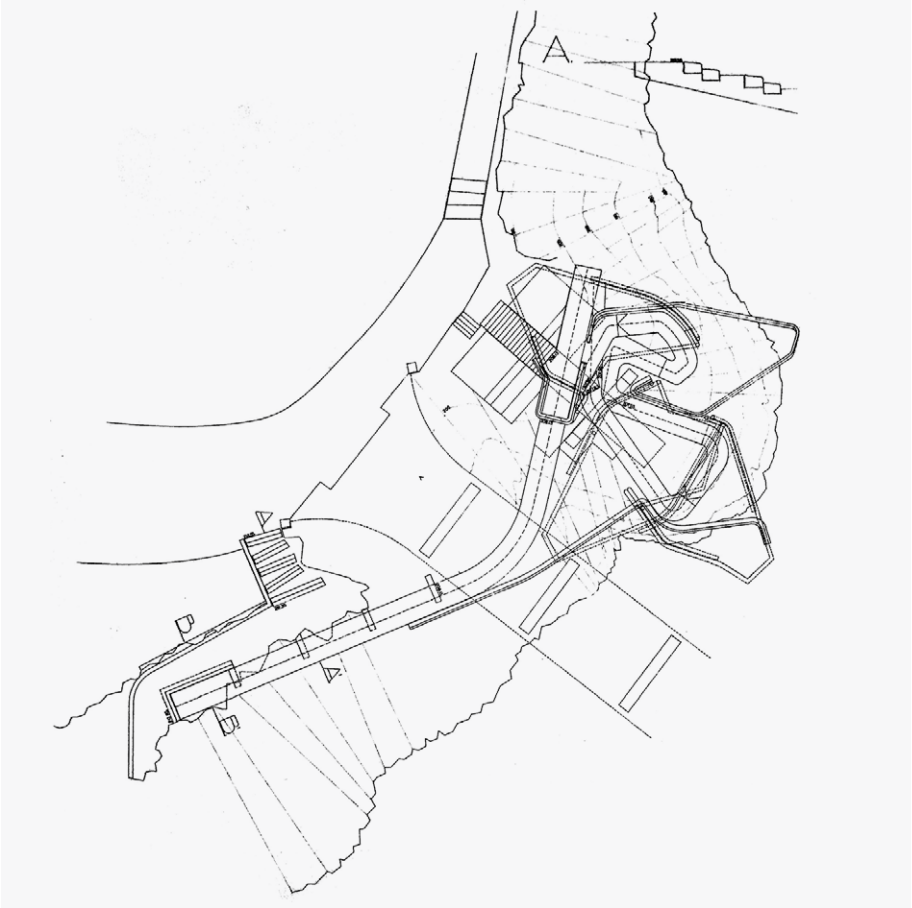


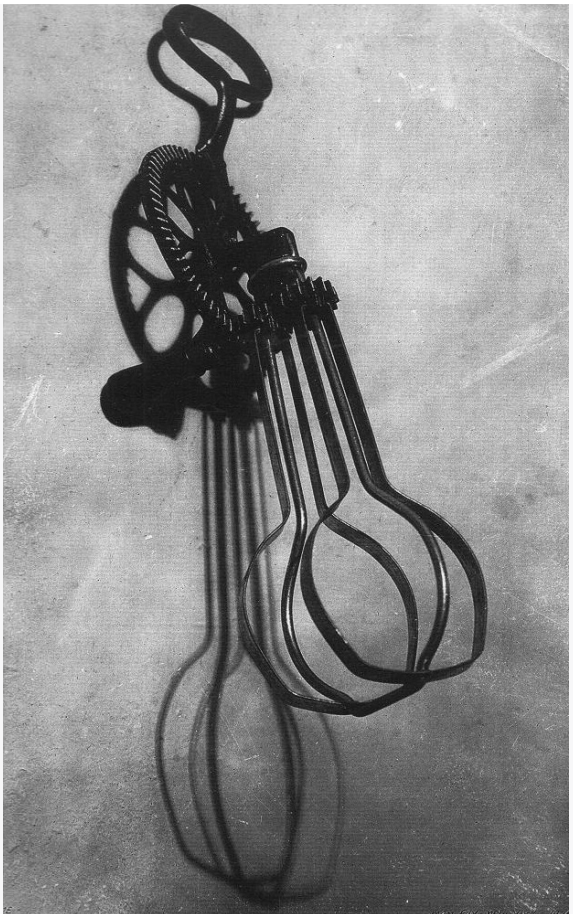


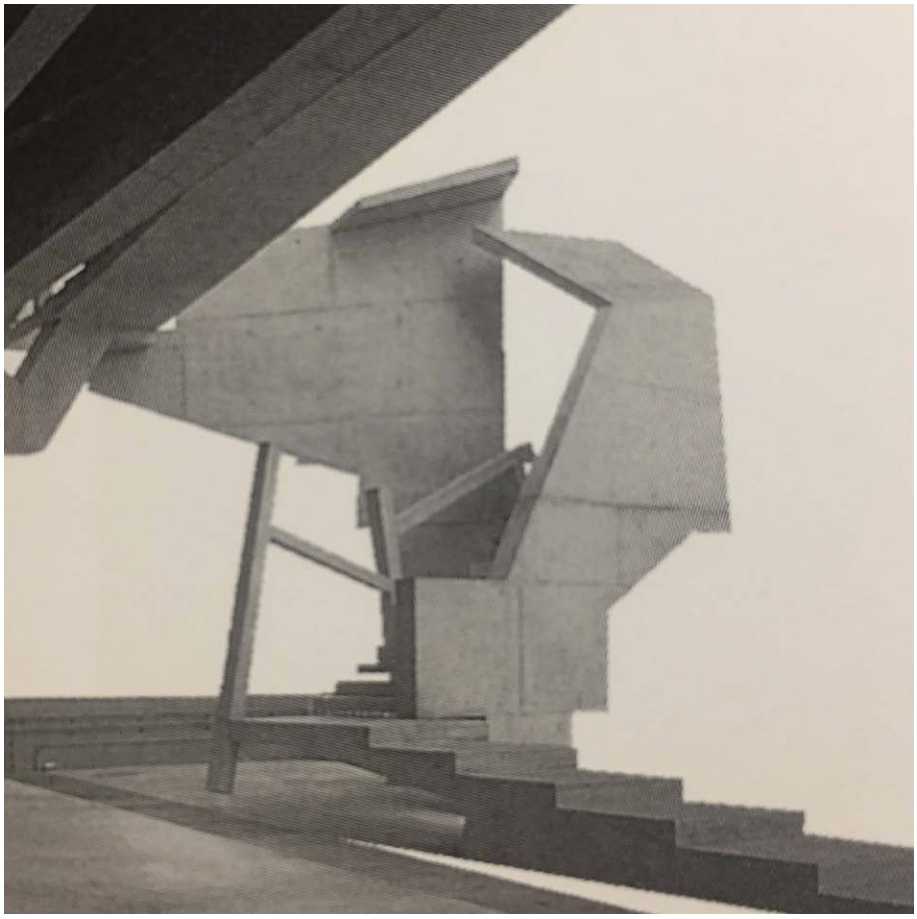




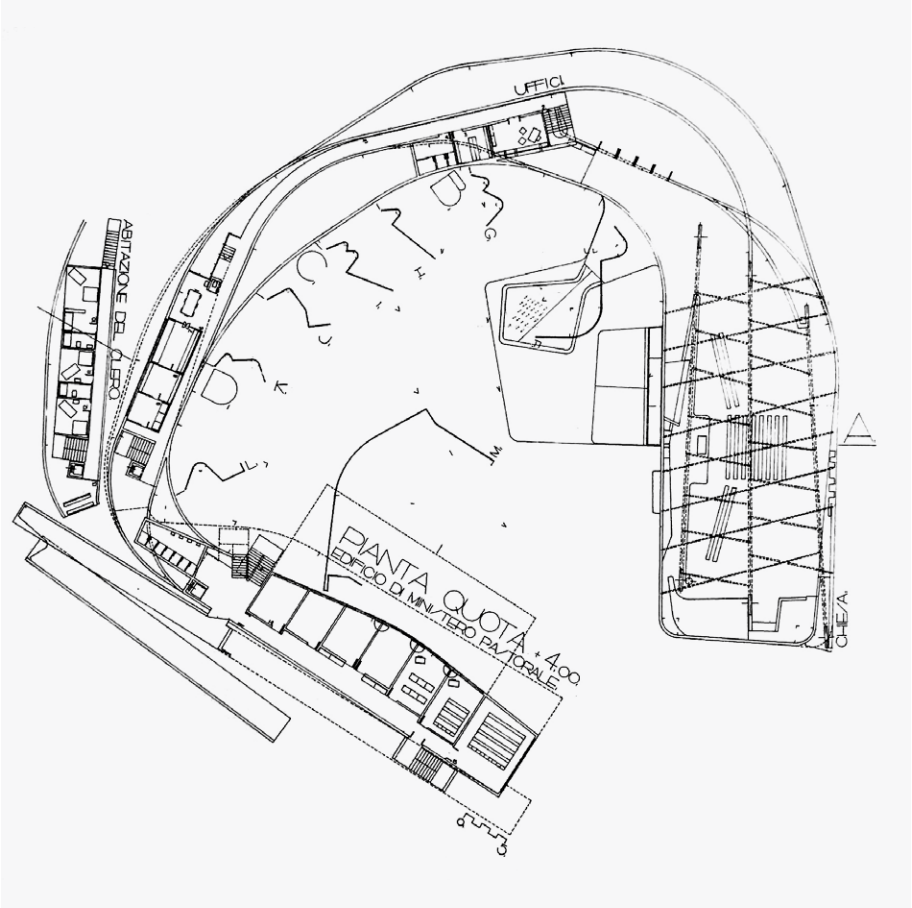



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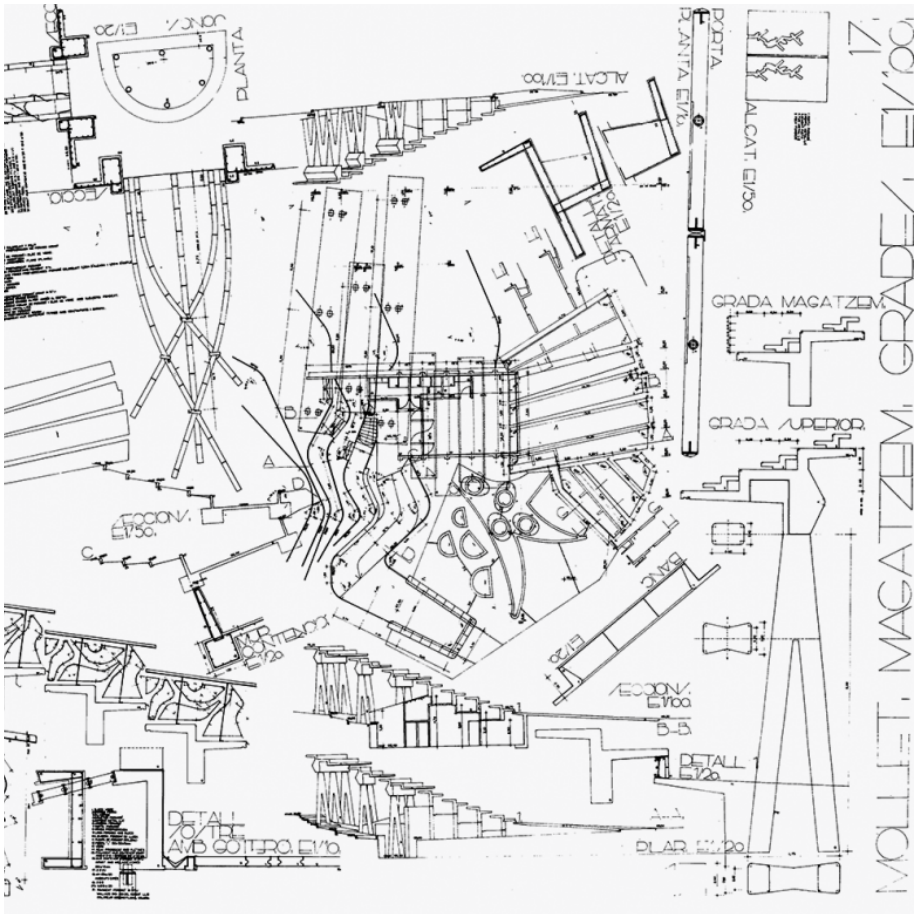


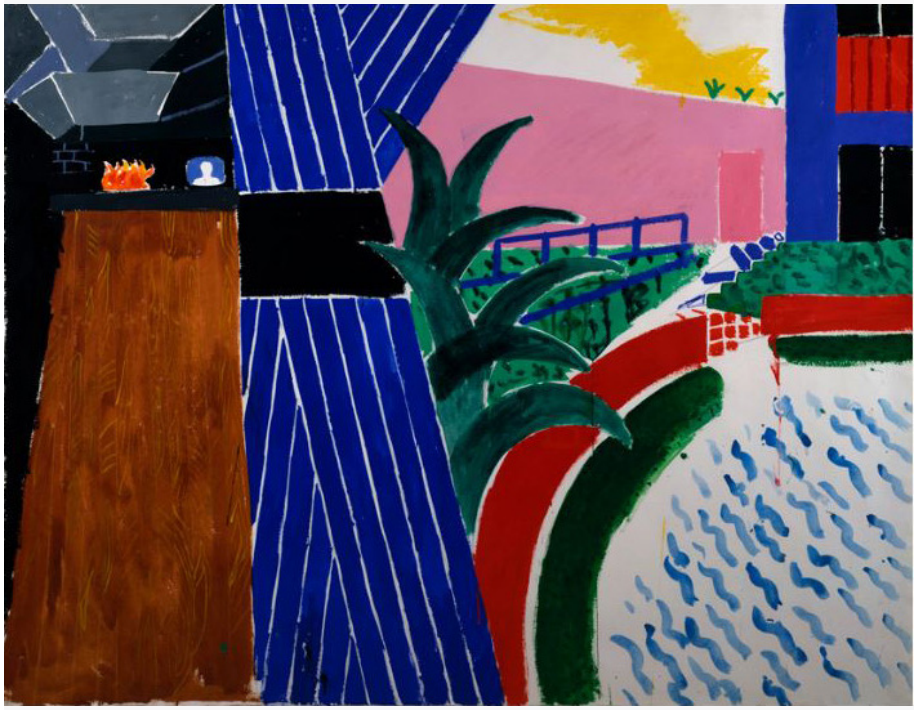


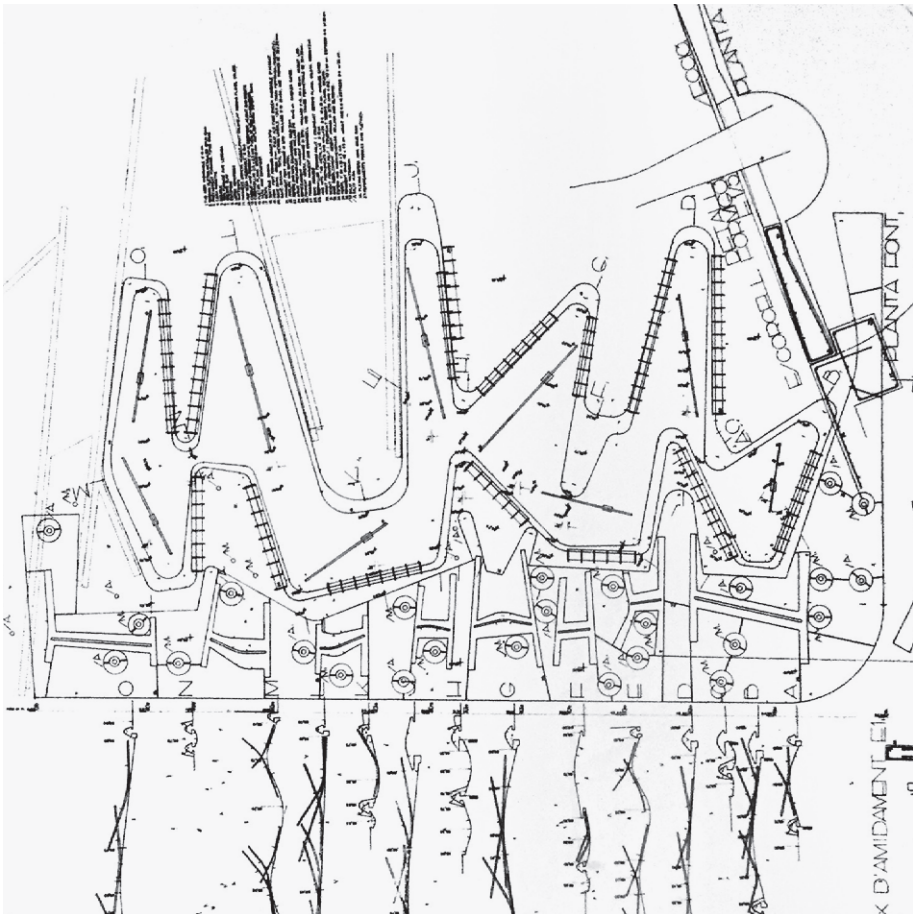



UFFICI
ABITAZIONE DEL CUSTODE
PIANTA QUOTA + 4.00
EDIFICIO DI MINISTERO PASTORALE
CHIESA

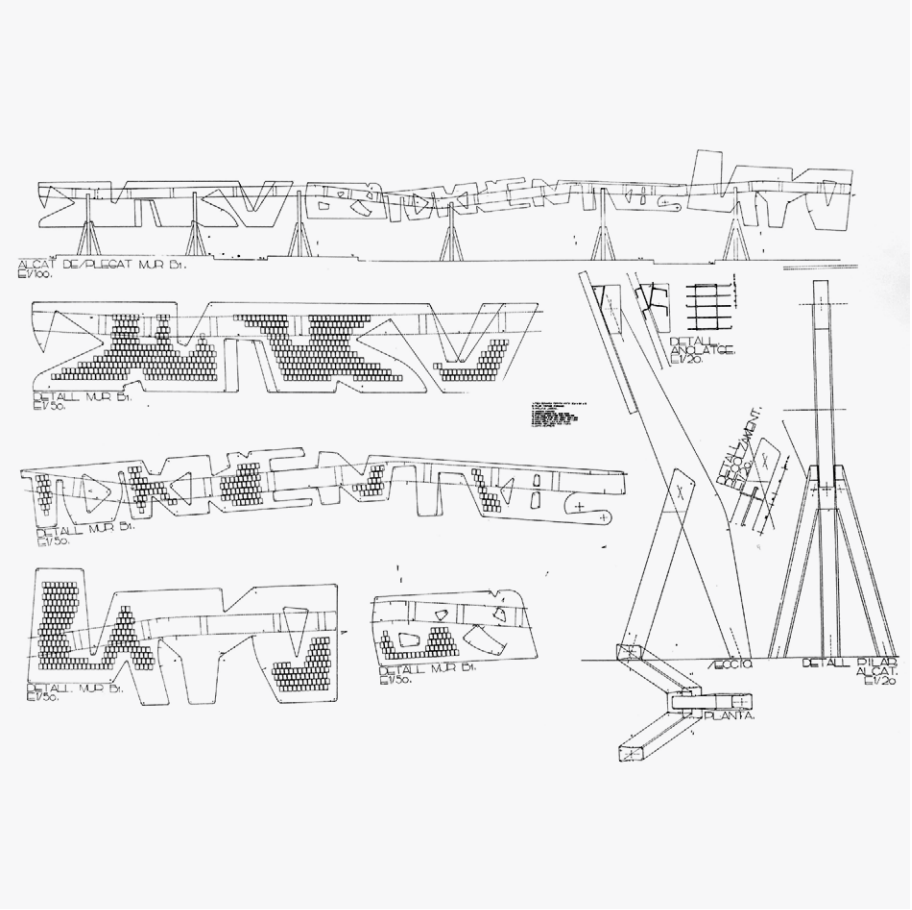



MOLLET. MAGATZEM. GRADES
PLANTA
PORTA
ALCAT. E1/50.
GRADA MAGATZEM.
GRADA SUPERIOR
DETALL 1
PILAR E1/20

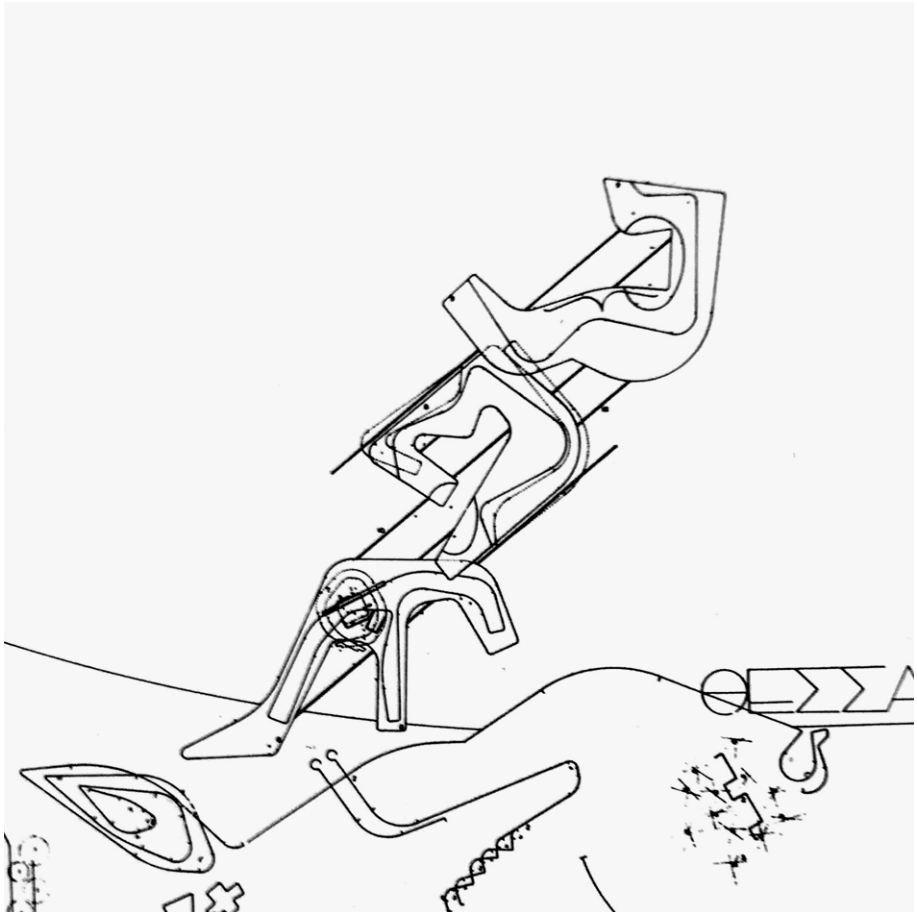




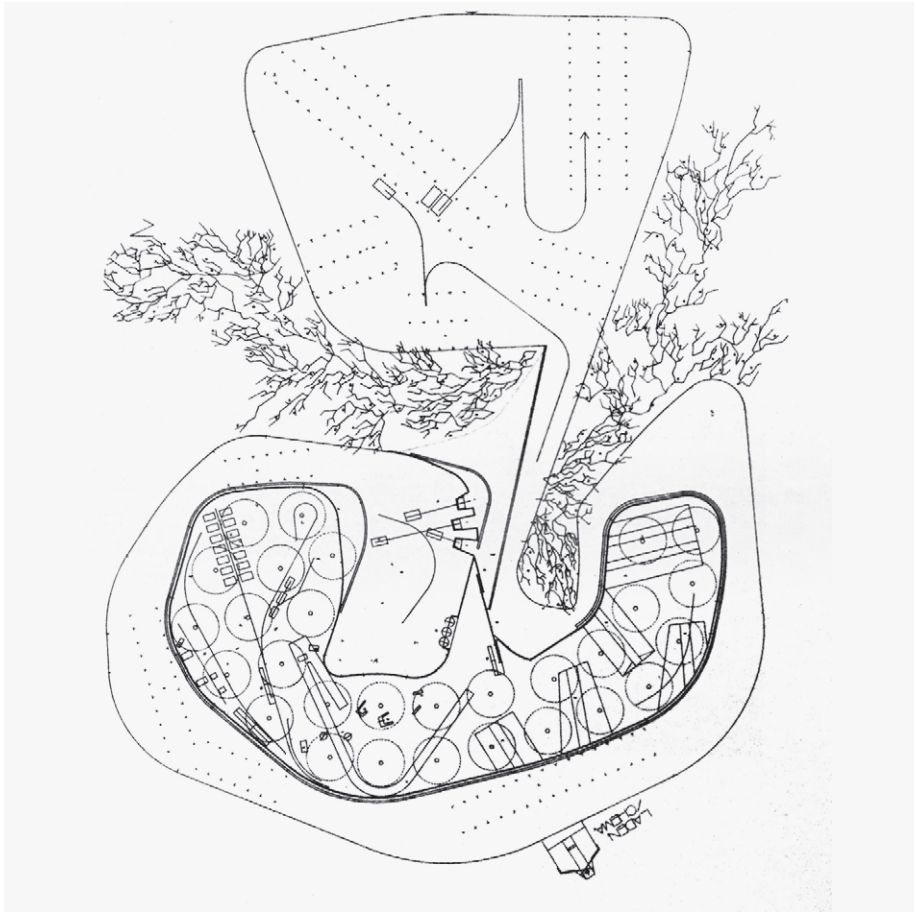



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DETALL MUR B1.
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PLANTA

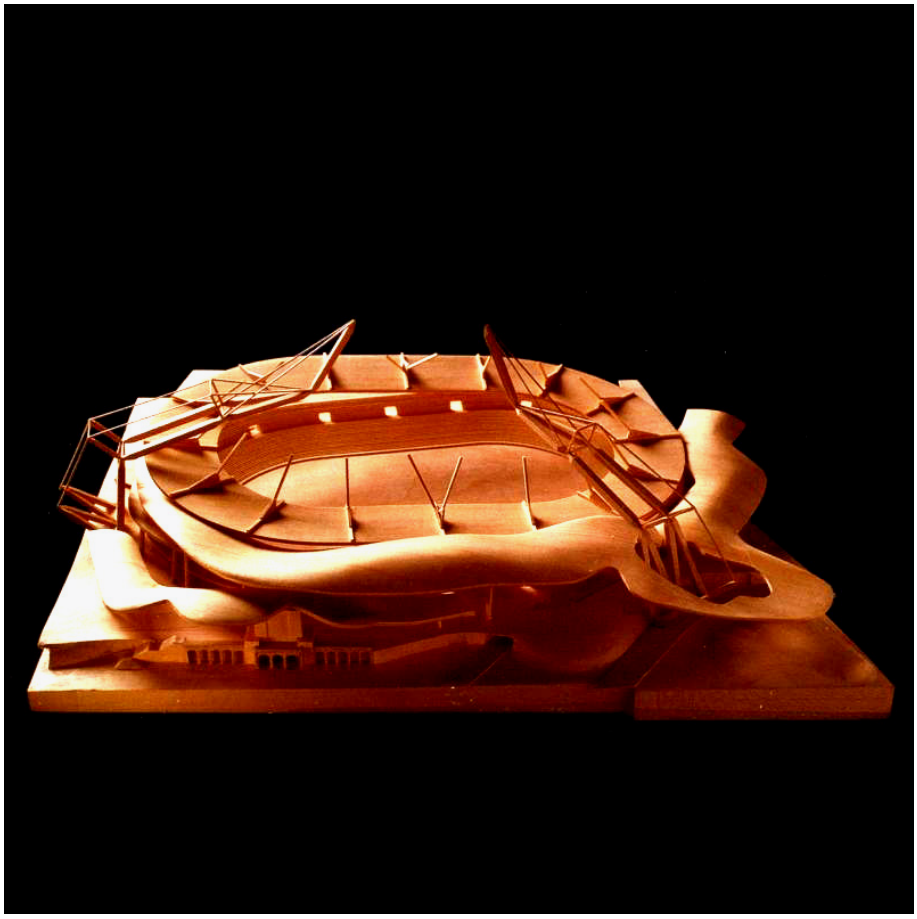


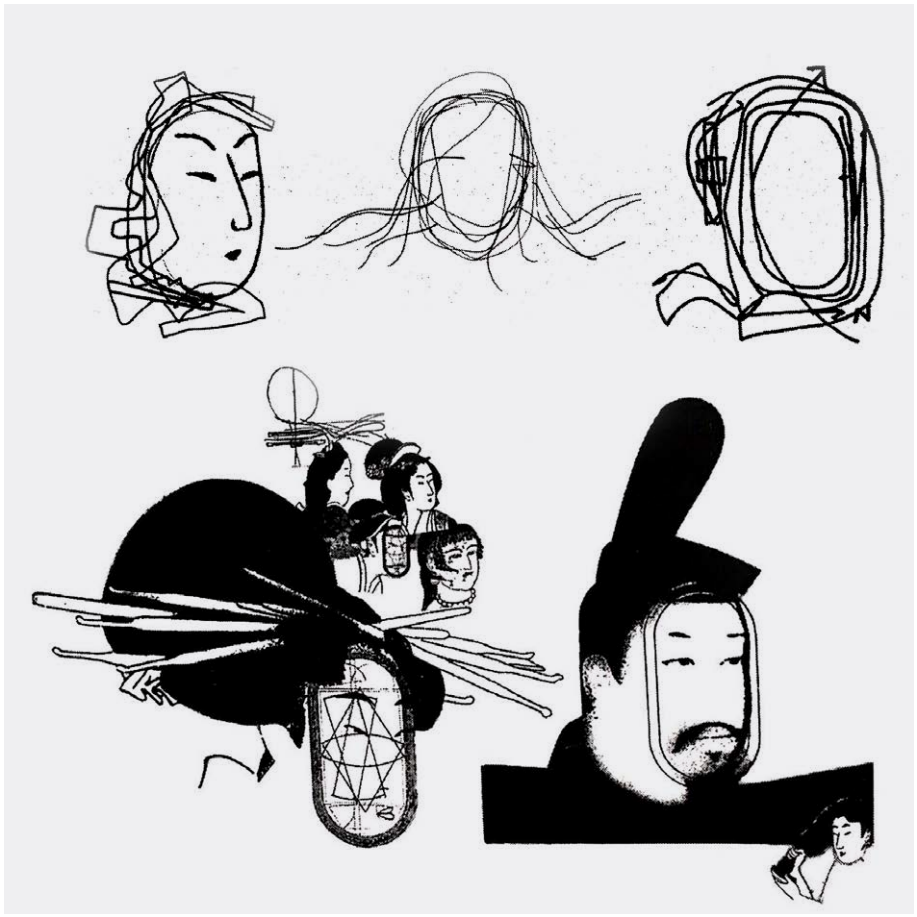


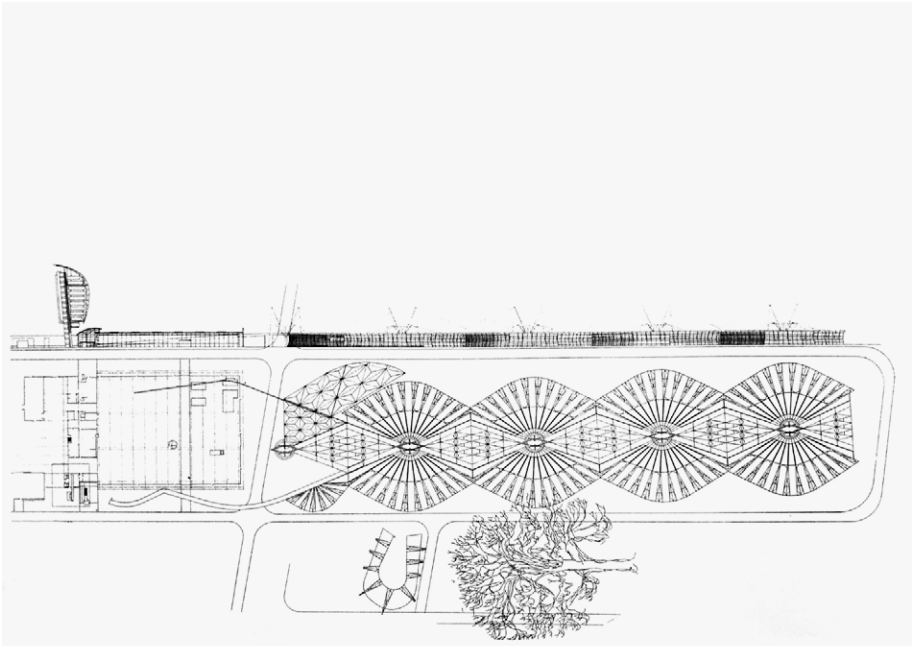

Perseus
Musca
TAURUS
Aries
Cancri
Cetus
Fig. CC.

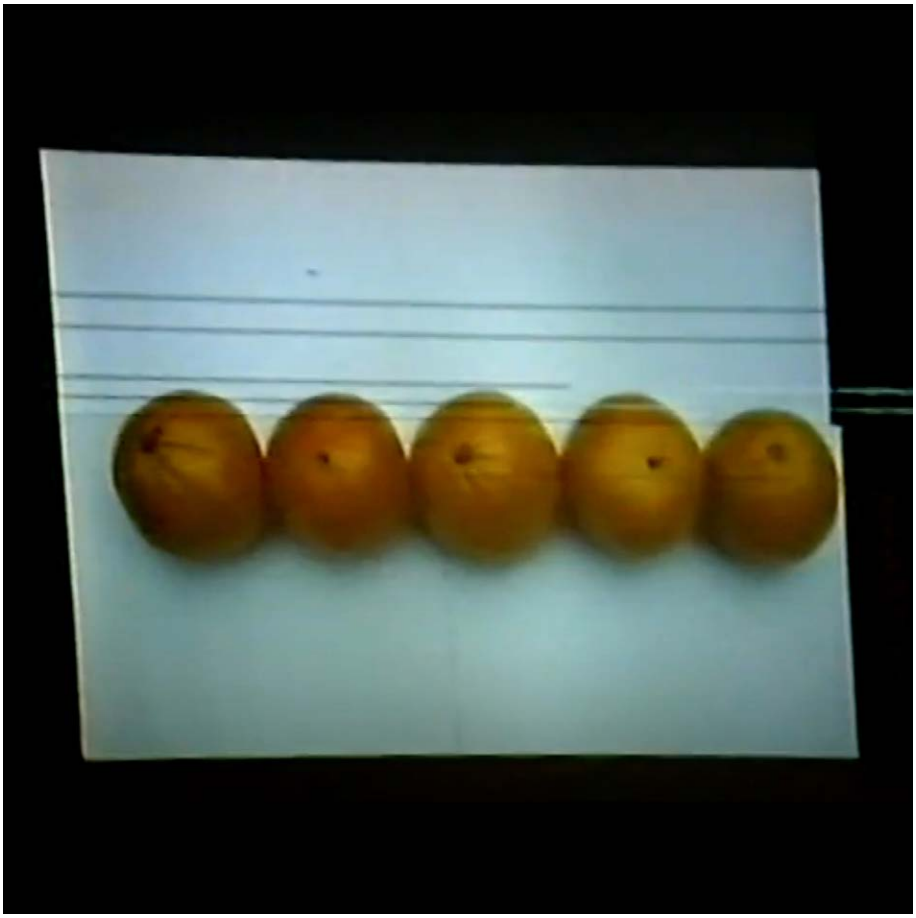


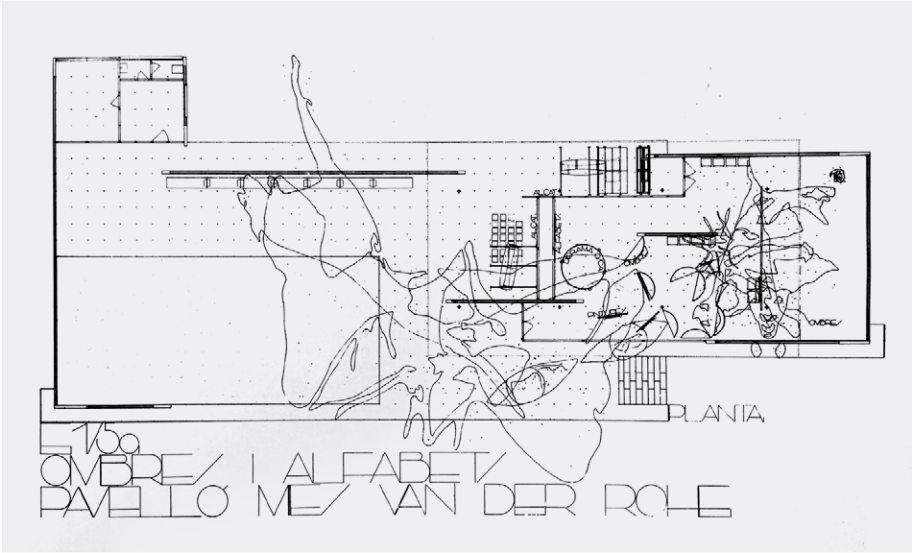








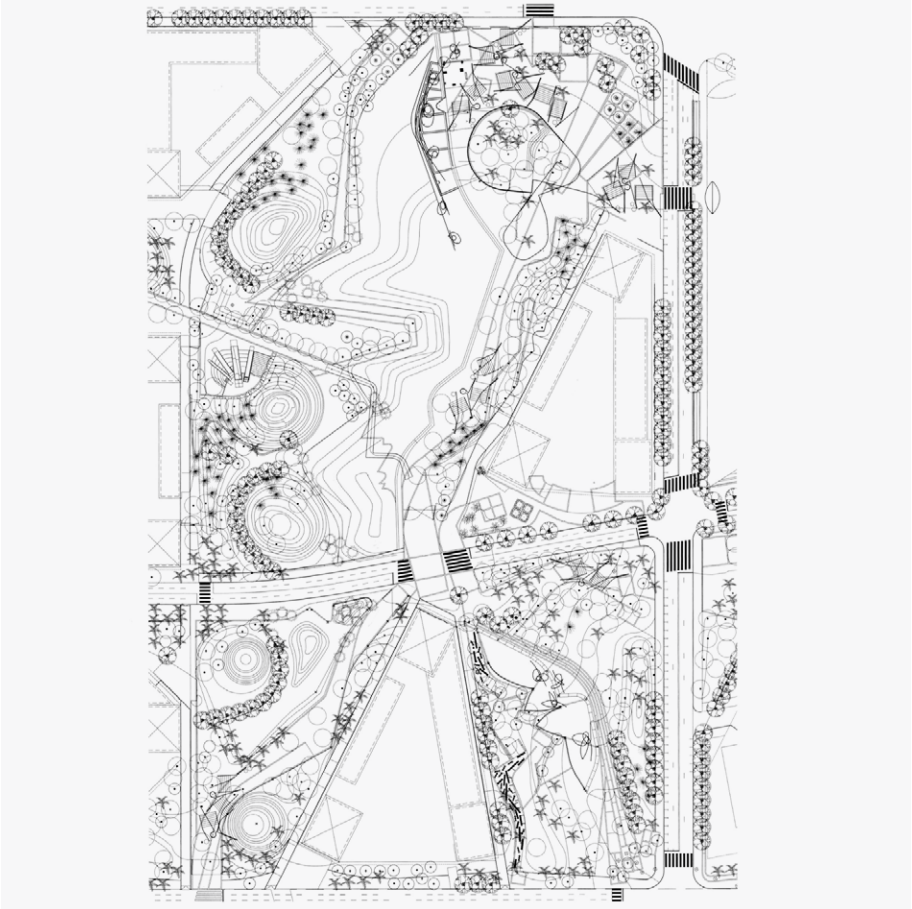


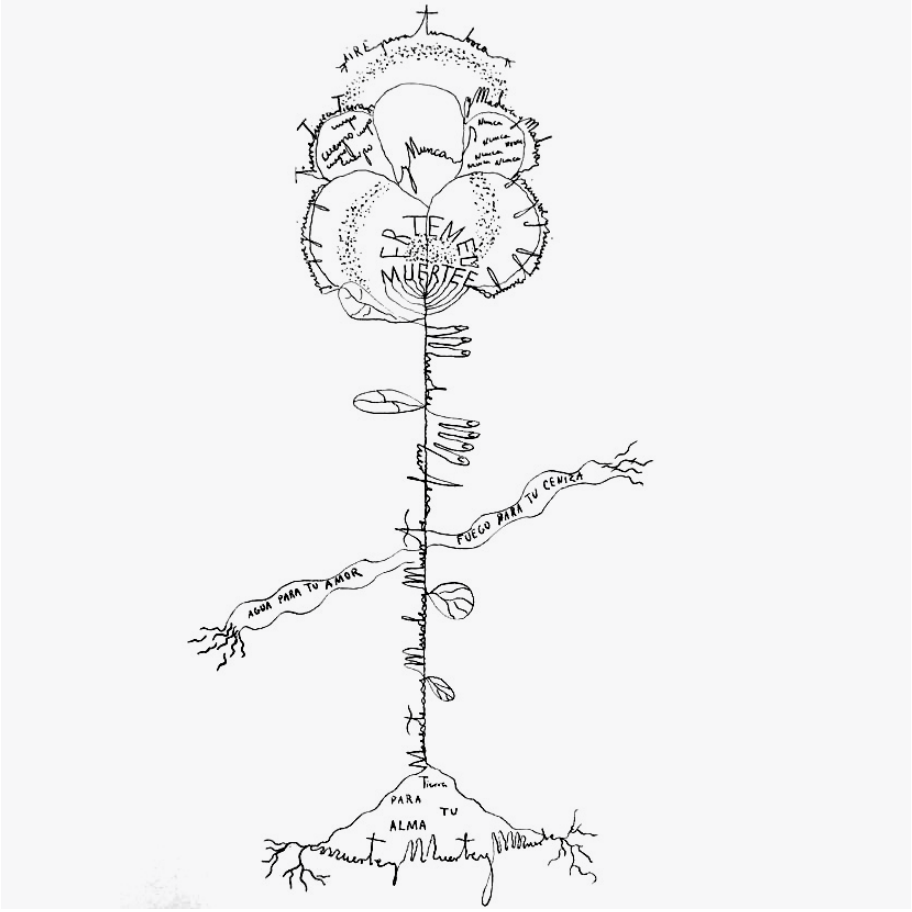

PLANTA
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pavelló mies van der rohe

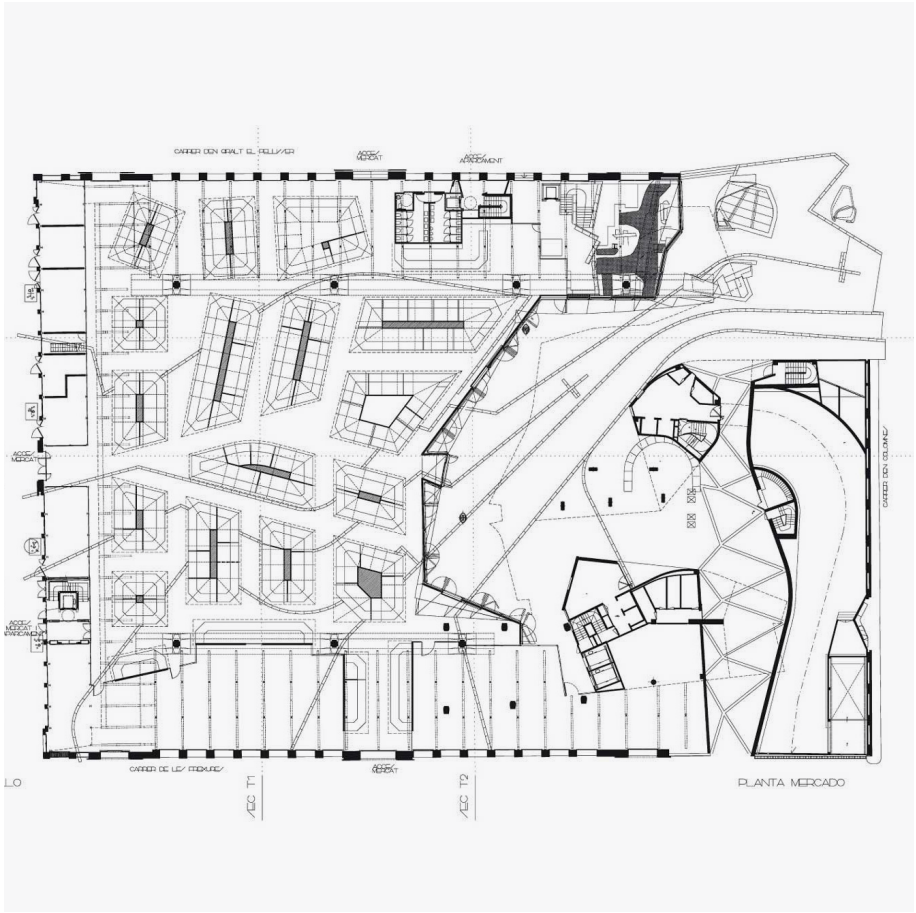




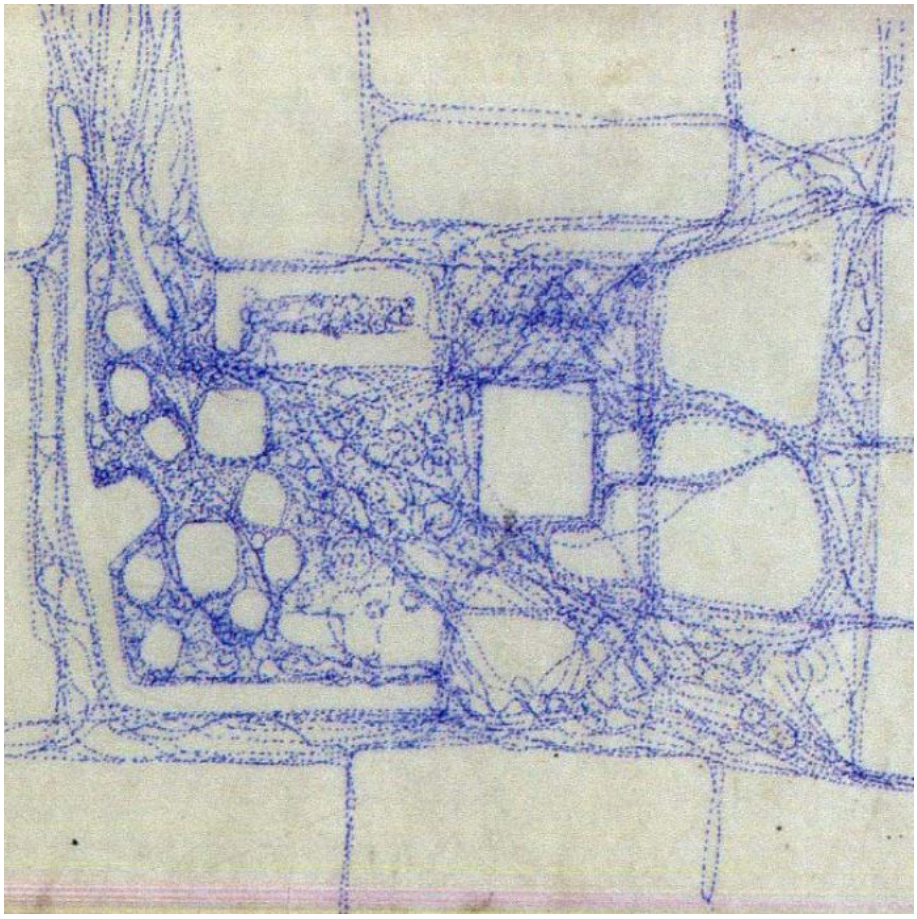




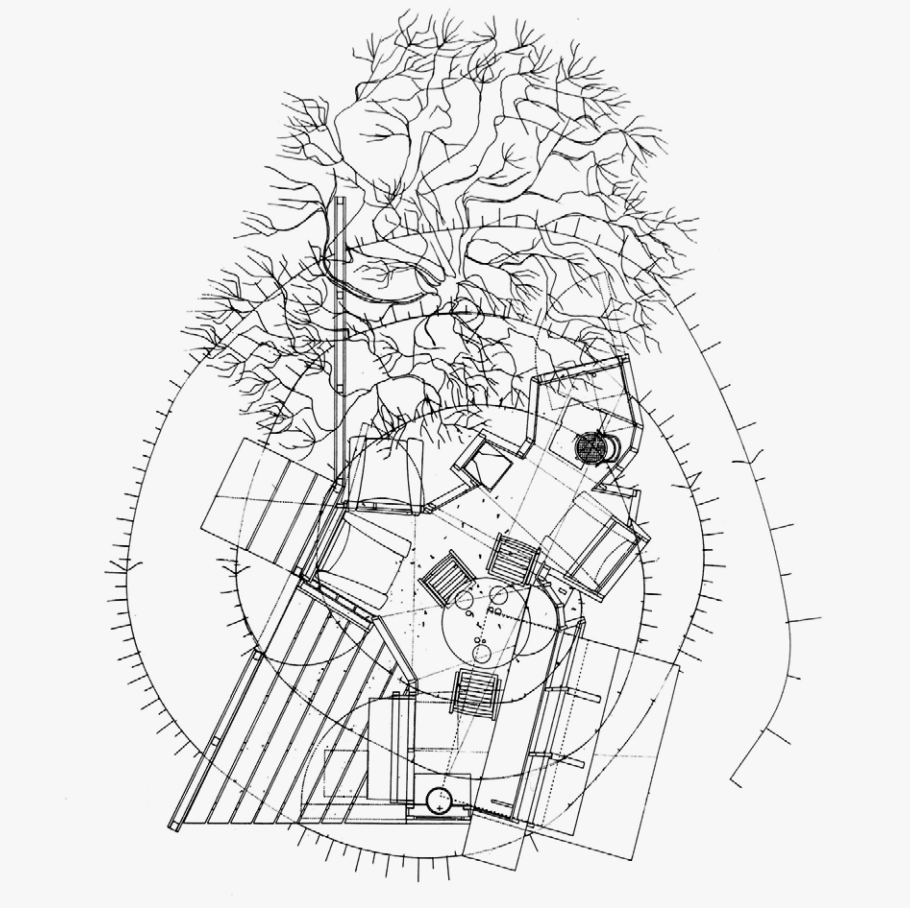

AIRE
MUERTE
FUEGO PARA TU CENIZA
AGUA PARA TU AMOR
PARA TU ALMA


CARRER DEN GRALT EL PELLICER
CARRER DE LES FERRERIES
CARRER DEL COLOMET
PLANTA MERCADO

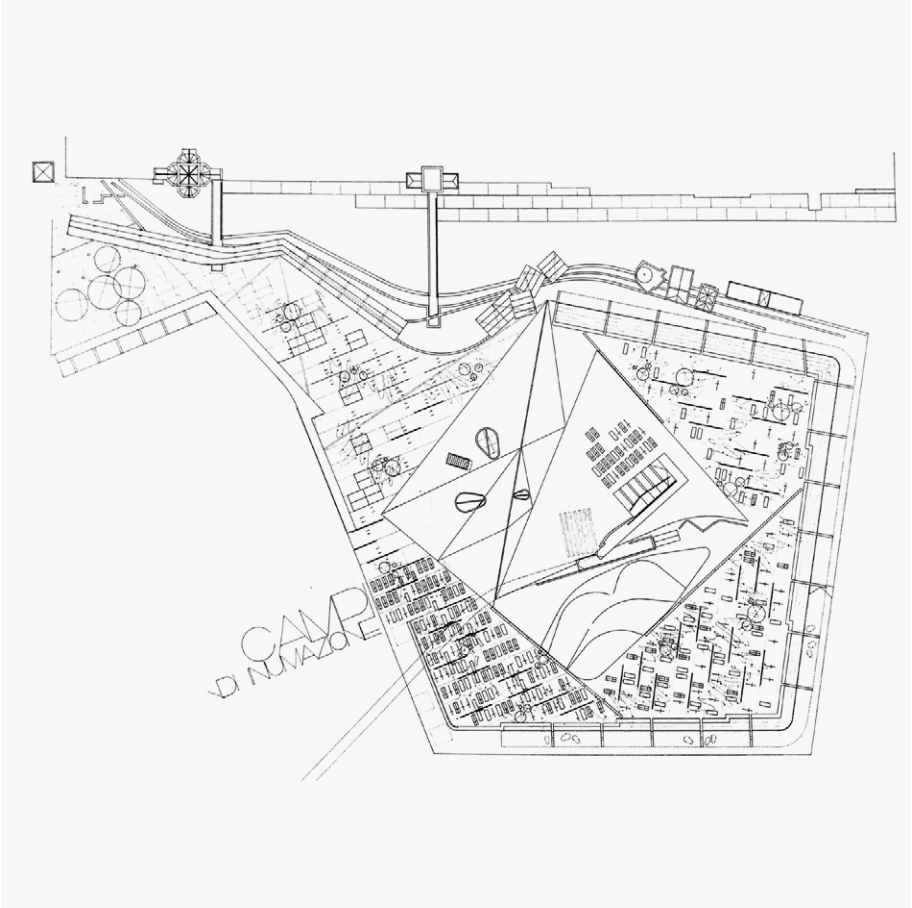




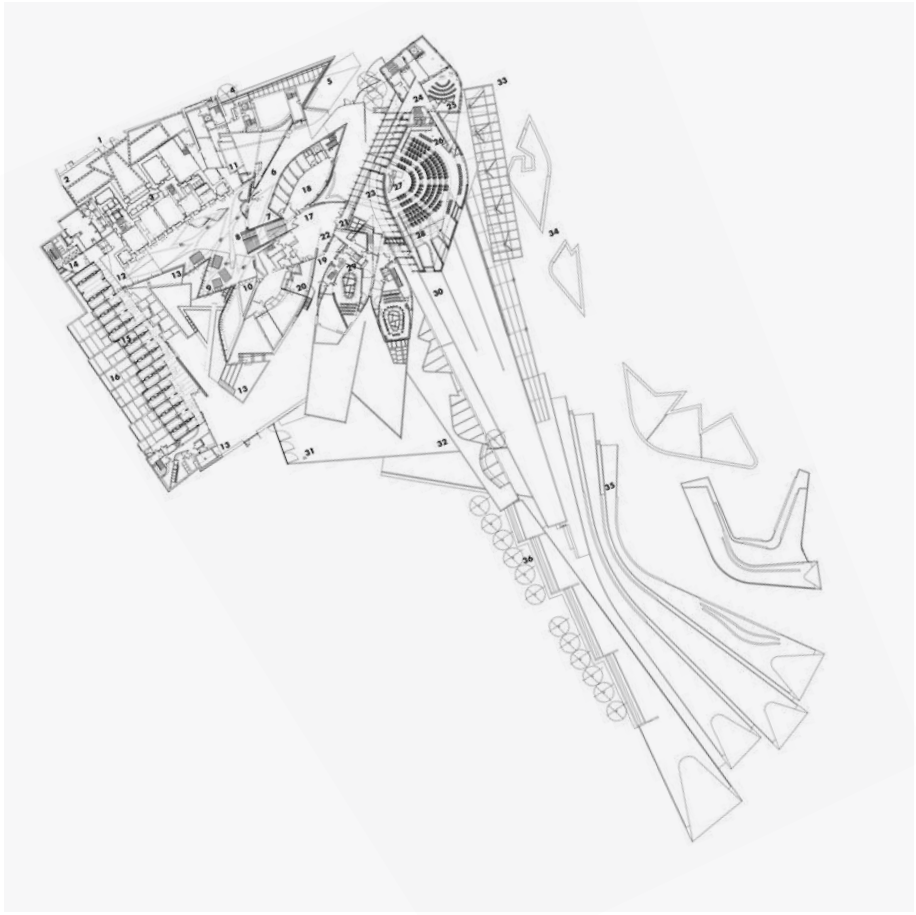




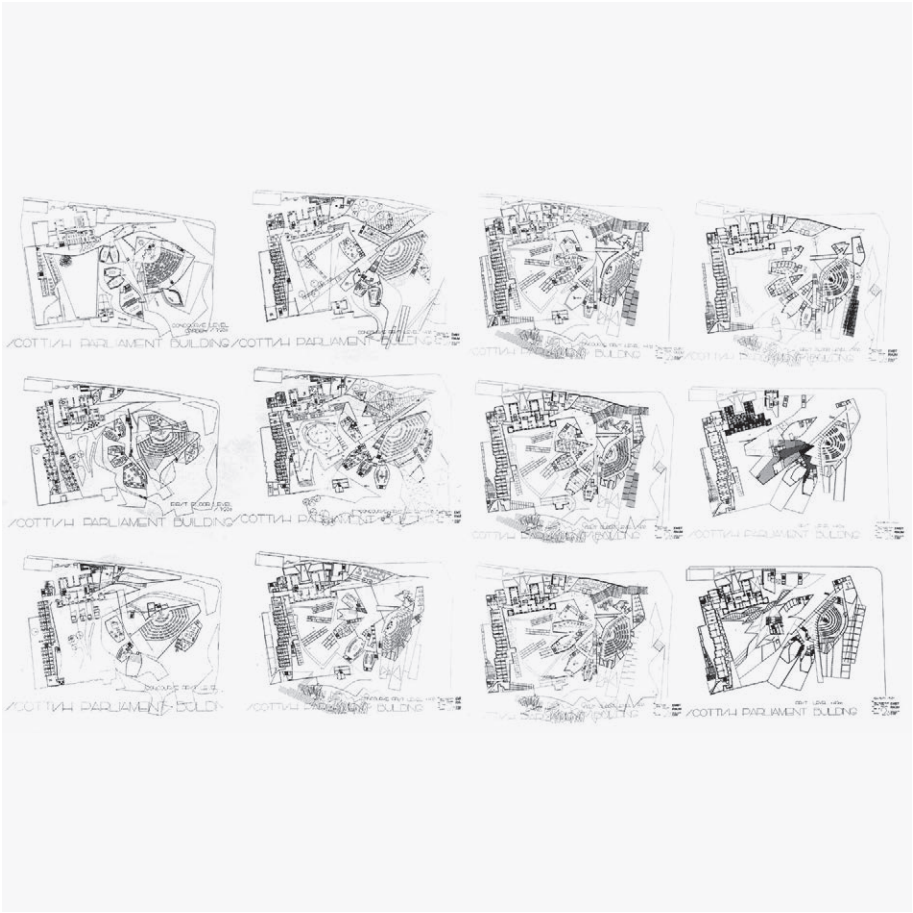

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GÄNSEDISTEL
RINGELBLUME
FELSENNELKE
MAUSEOHR
GAUCHHEIL
WEGWARTE
LÖWENZAHN
GRASLILIE
ROTES HABICHTSKR.
WUNDERBLUME
SAUERKLEE
WEISSE SEEROSE
NACHTKERZE
ROTER PIPPAU
WEISSE SEEROSE
KARTHÄUSER NELKE
RINGELBLUME
GAUCHHEIL
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SCHLIESST SICH



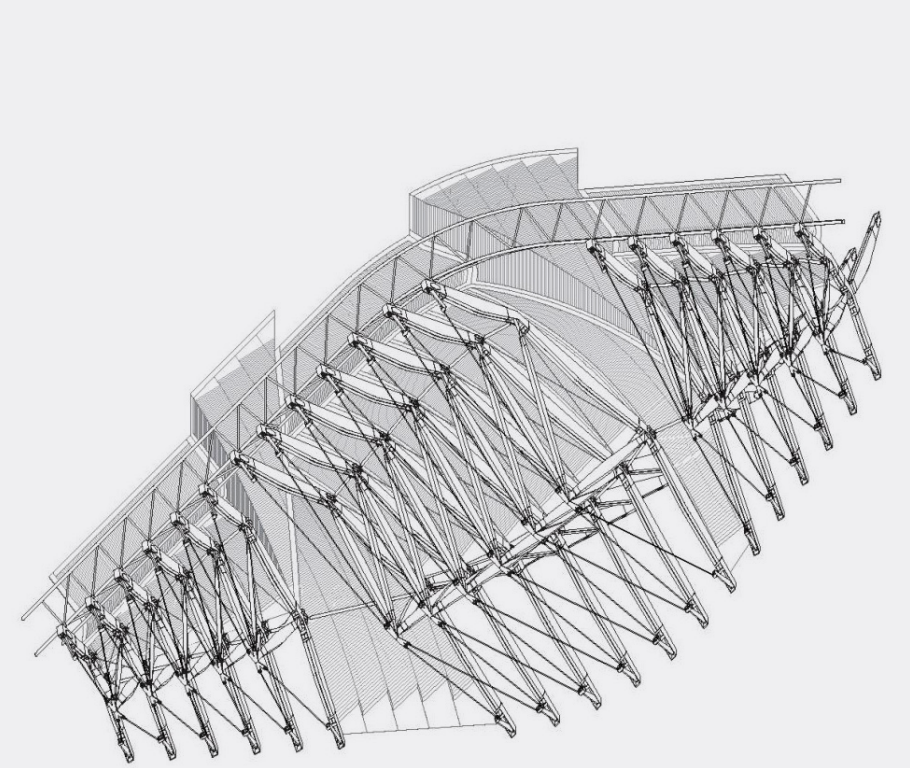


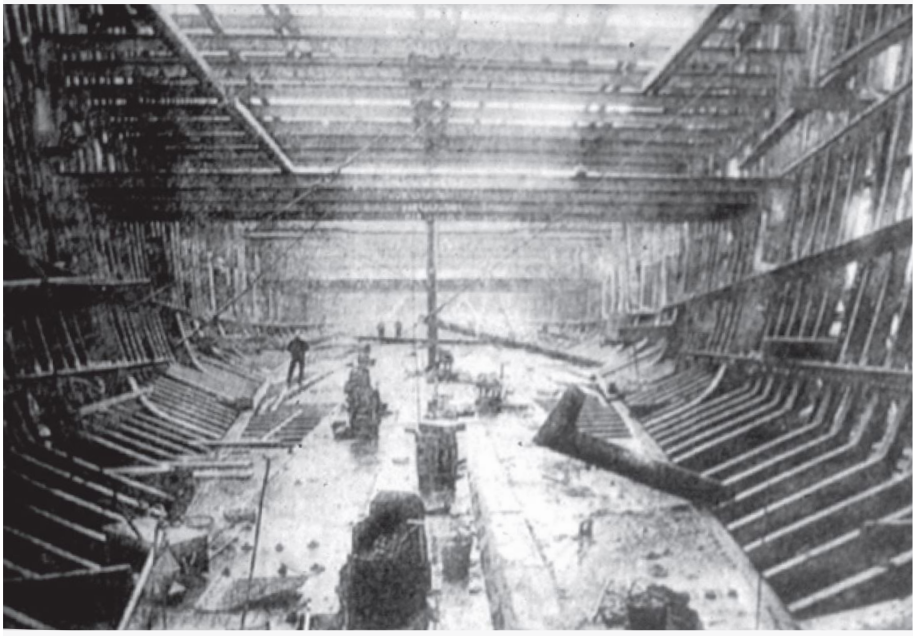


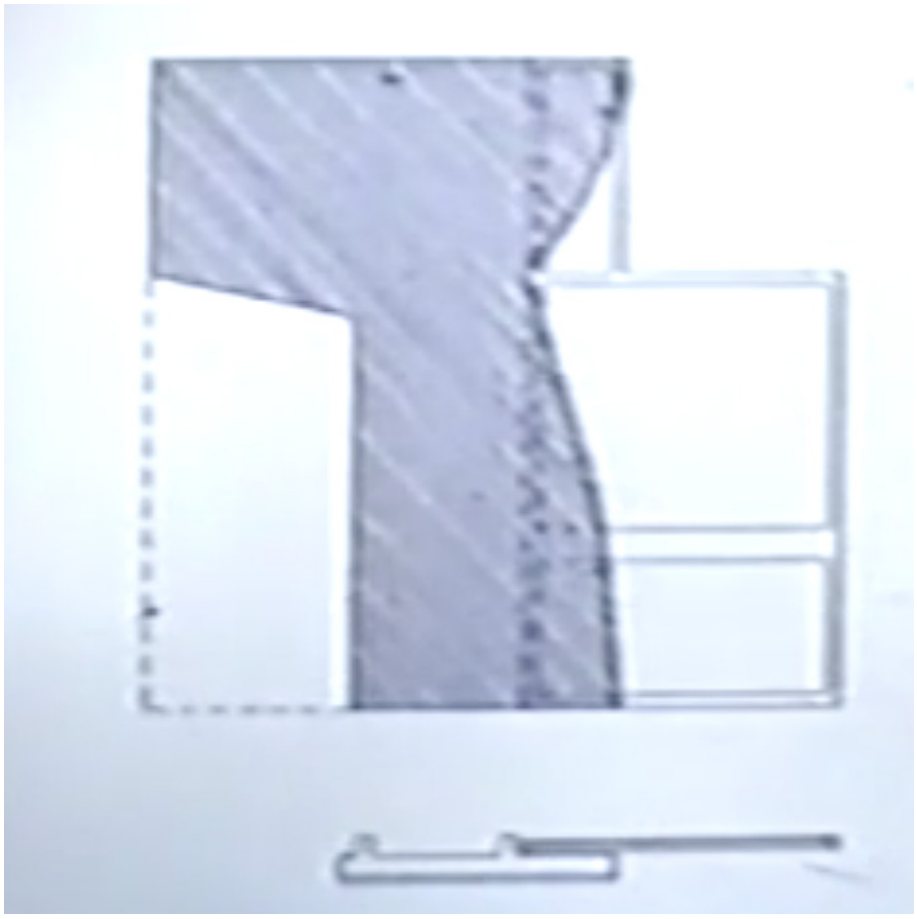

Whitefoord House
HORSE WIND
QUEEN'S DRIVE
Pavilion
Abbey Court House
Fountain
Palace Yard
ABBEY GYMKHANA
THOMSON'S COURT
King Edward VII Memorial
Abbey Sanctuary
Abbey Pub
Bowling Green
ROBERTSON COURT
Pond
Posts
Reid's Close
Brown's Close
Pitch
Cricket Pitch
Cricket Nets
Tennis Courts
Putting Green
Refreshment Hut
Toilets
Car Park
Gate
Steps
Ramp
Fence
Hedge
Trees
Shrubs
Flowers
Grass
Paths
Roads
Buildings
Walls
Railings
Gates
Lamp Posts
Benches
Signs
Notice Boards
Litter Bins
Drinking Fountains
Public Conveniences
Changing Rooms
Storage Sheds
Maintenance Yard
Workshop
Office
Residence
Staff Accommodation
Visitors Residence
Cricket Pavilion
Sports Pavilion
Clubhouse
Spectator Seating
Scoreboard
Flagpole
Memorial
Statue
Sculpture
Plaque
Information Board
Map
Key
Legend
Scale
North Arrow
Boundary
Property Line
Ownership
Lease
Rent
Rates
Insurance
Maintenance
Repairs
Improvements
Alterations
Extensions
Demolition
Construction
Materials
Labour
Contractors
Suppliers
Invoices
Payments
Receipts
Accounts
Budget
Expenditure
Income
Profit
Loss
Balance
Audit
Report
Minutes
Agenda
Meeting
Committee
Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Member
Subscription
Fee
Donation
Grant
Loan
Mortgage
Interest
Capital
Reserve
Fund
Investment
Dividend
Share
Stock
Bond
Security
Deed
Title
Conveyance
Transfer
Assignment
Mortgage
Charge
Lien
Judgment
Execution
Bankruptcy
Liquidation
Winding Up
Dissolution
Incorporation
Memorandum
Articles
Rules
Regulations
Bylaws
Ordinance
Act
Statute
Law
Court
Judge
Jury
Verdict
Sentence
Appeal
Writ
Summons
Subpoena
Affidavit
Oath
Witness
Evidence
Testimony
Cross-Examination
Direct Examination
Objection
Overruled
Sustained
Adjourned
Continued
Postponed
Dismissed
Acquitted
Convicted
Guilty
Not Guilty
Plea
Bail
Bond
Surety
Recognizance
Parole
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Guillotine
Beheading
Stoning
Burning
Drowning
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Imprisonment
Solitary Confinement
Hard Labour
Penal Servitude
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Confiscation
Sequestration
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Bona Fide Purchaser
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Fraud
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Undue Influence
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Mistake
Frustration
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Vis Major
Casus Fortuitus
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Contributory Negligence
Comparative Negligence
Last Clear Chance
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SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BUILDING

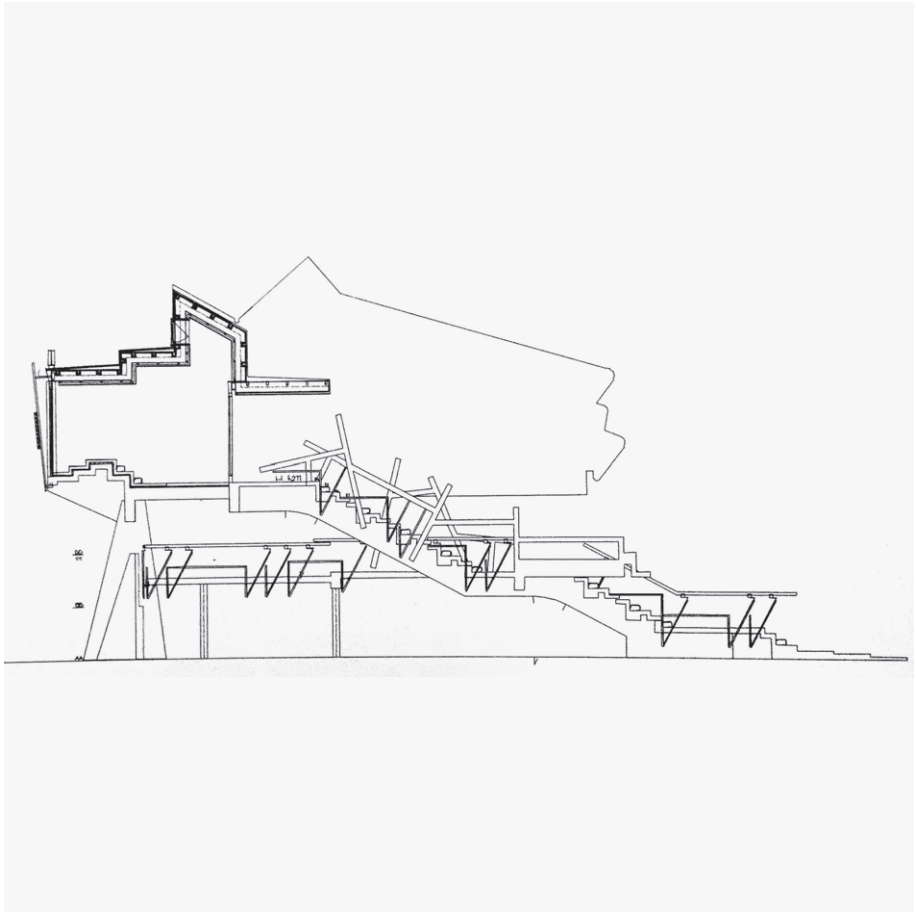






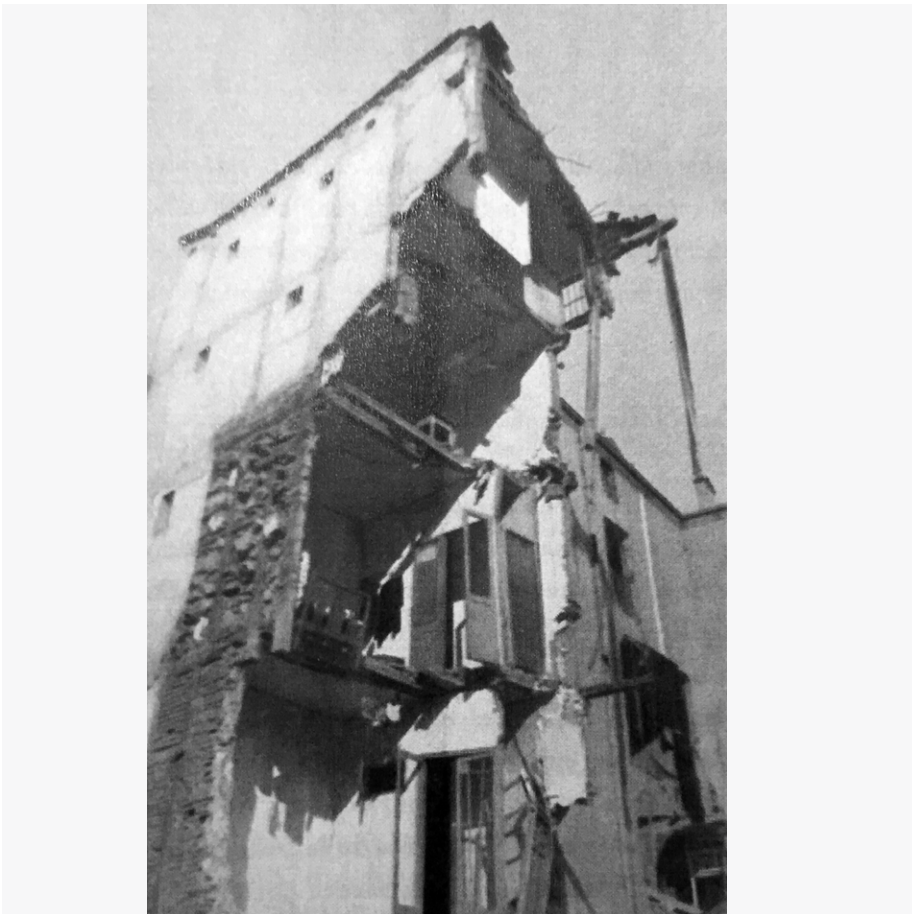




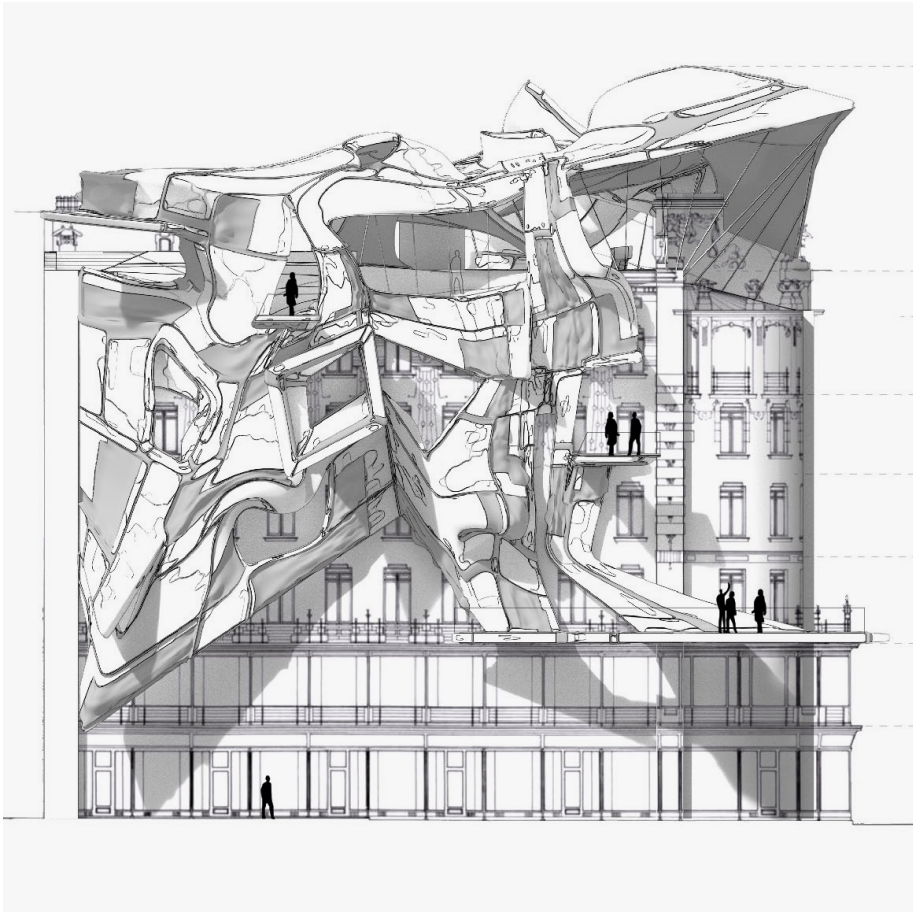




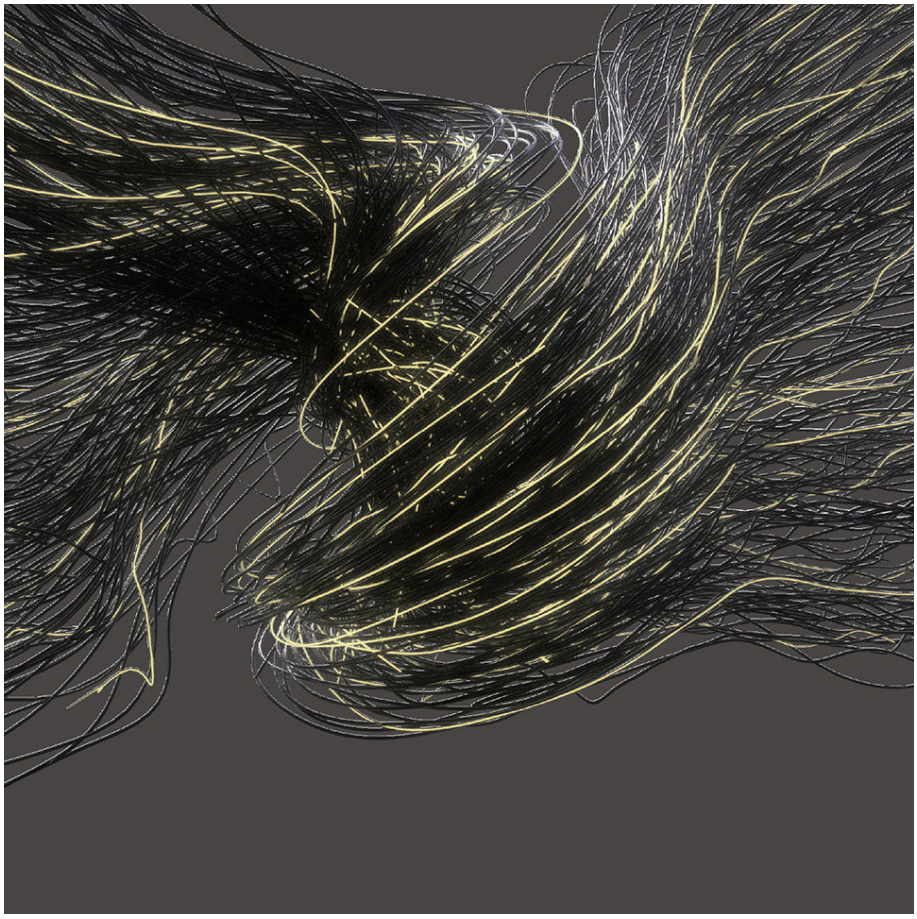




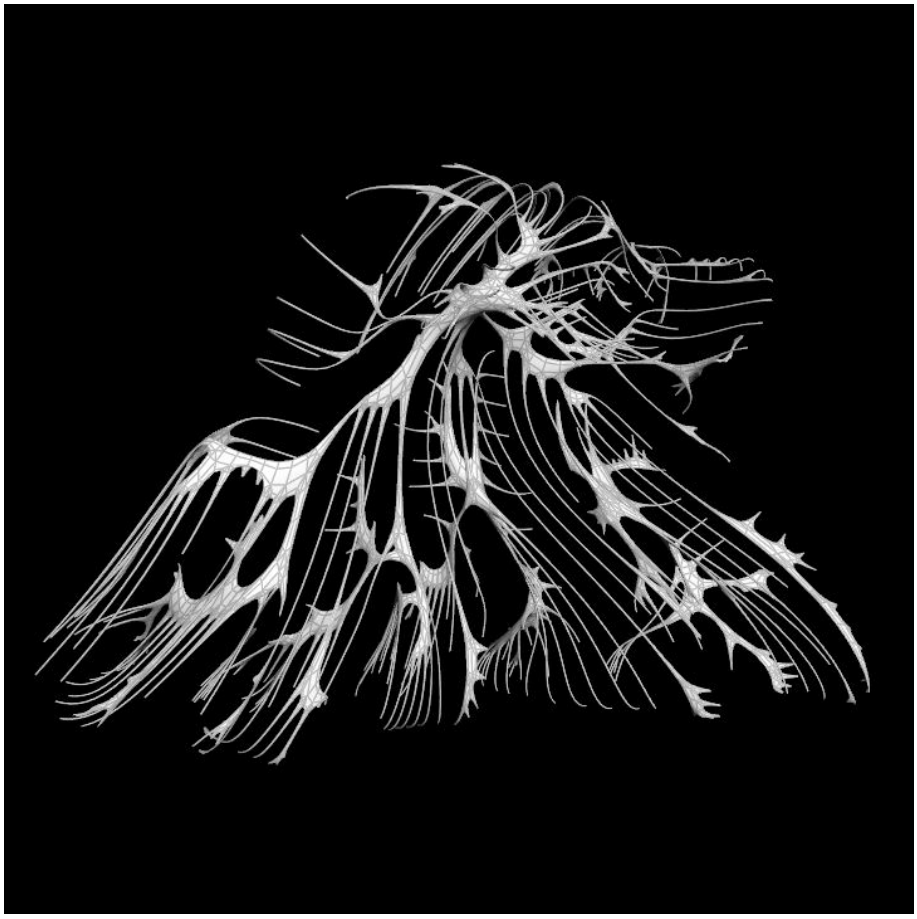
MORPHtopia




FRIES·IM·VESTIBVLE
DETAILS IN DEN HÄVSERN
VI· KESTLERGASSE
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IM VESTIBVLE
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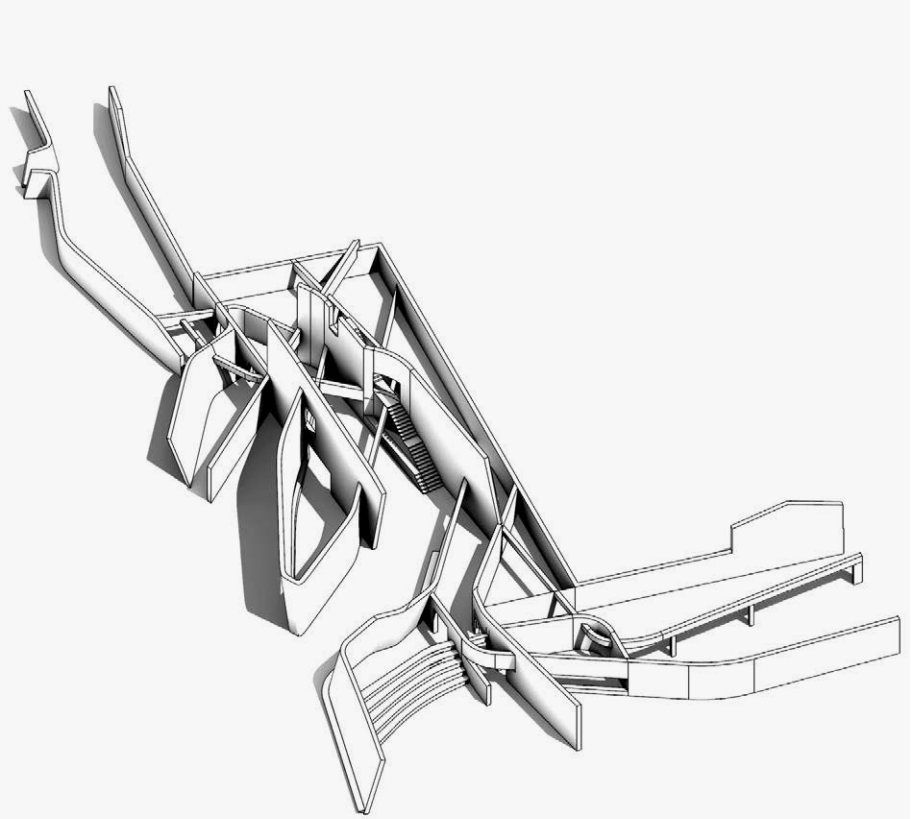


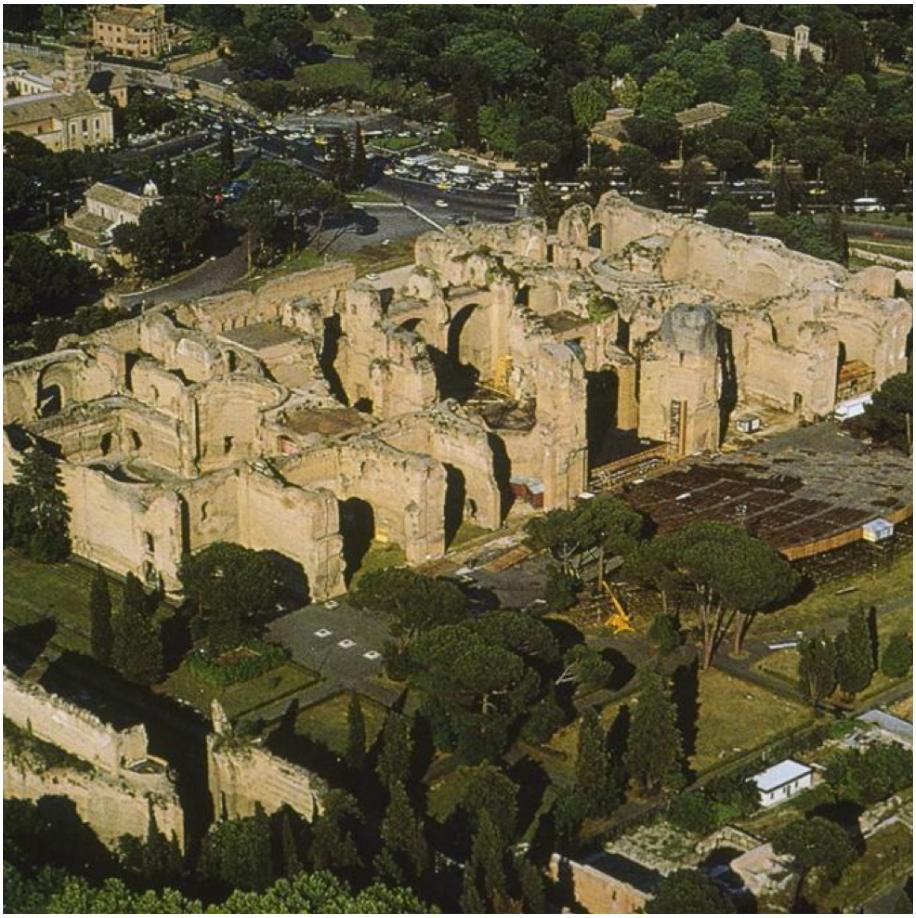


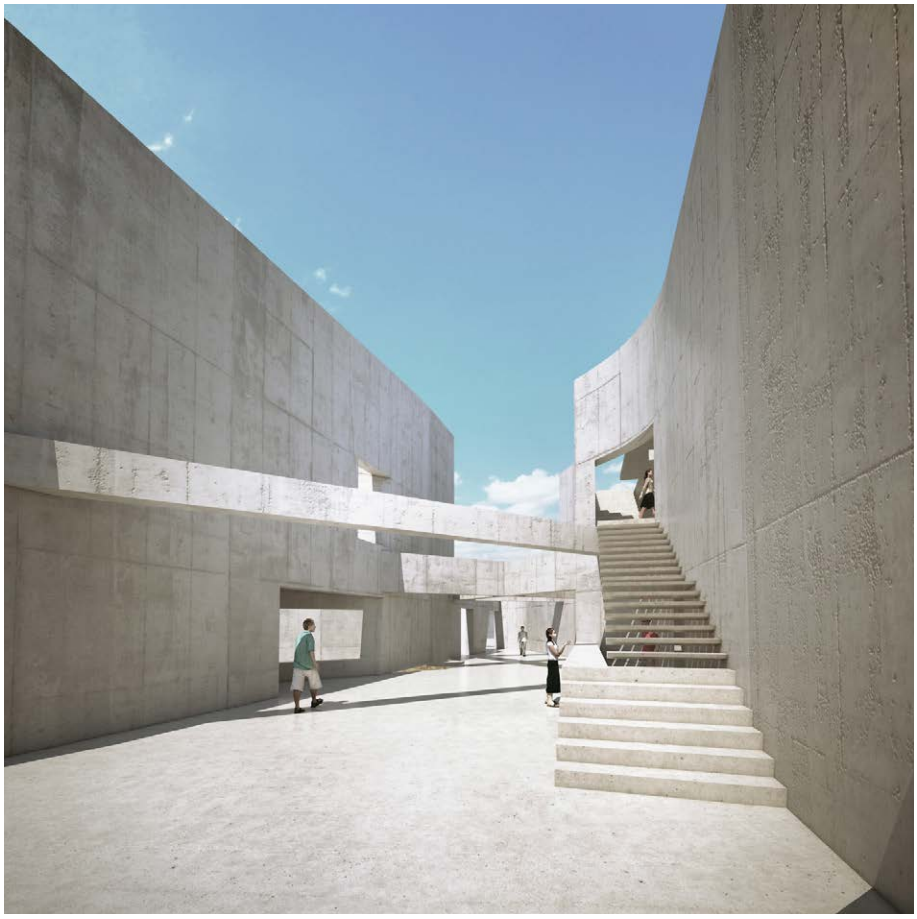


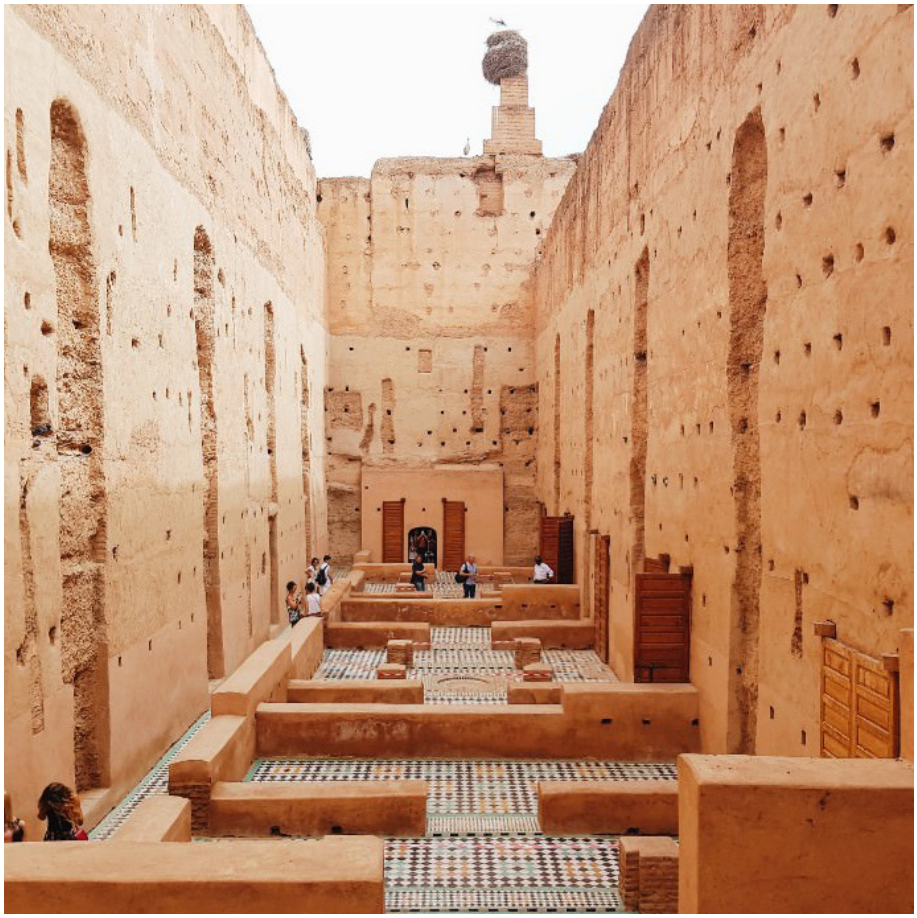


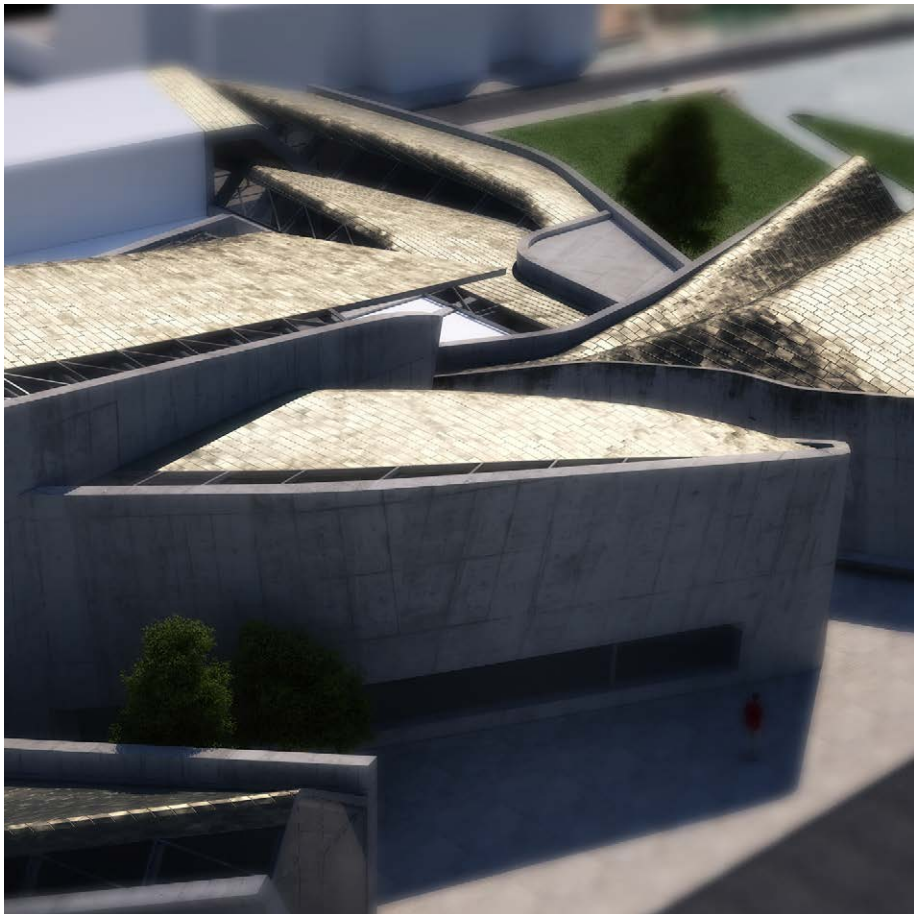




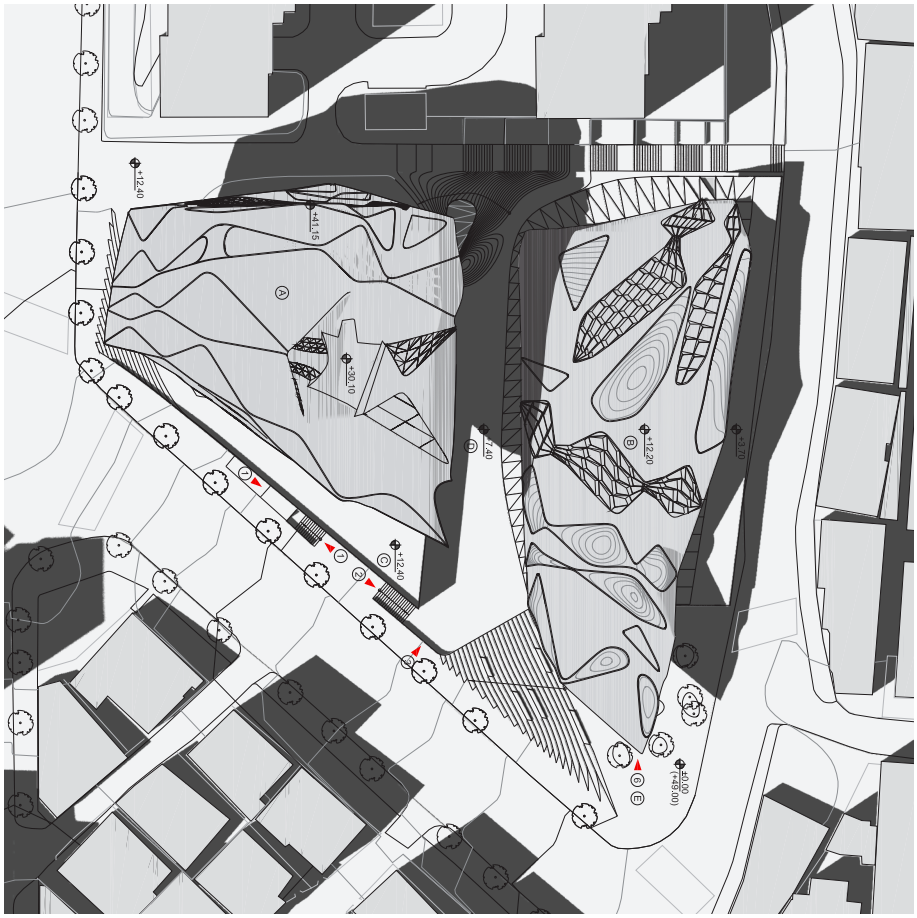











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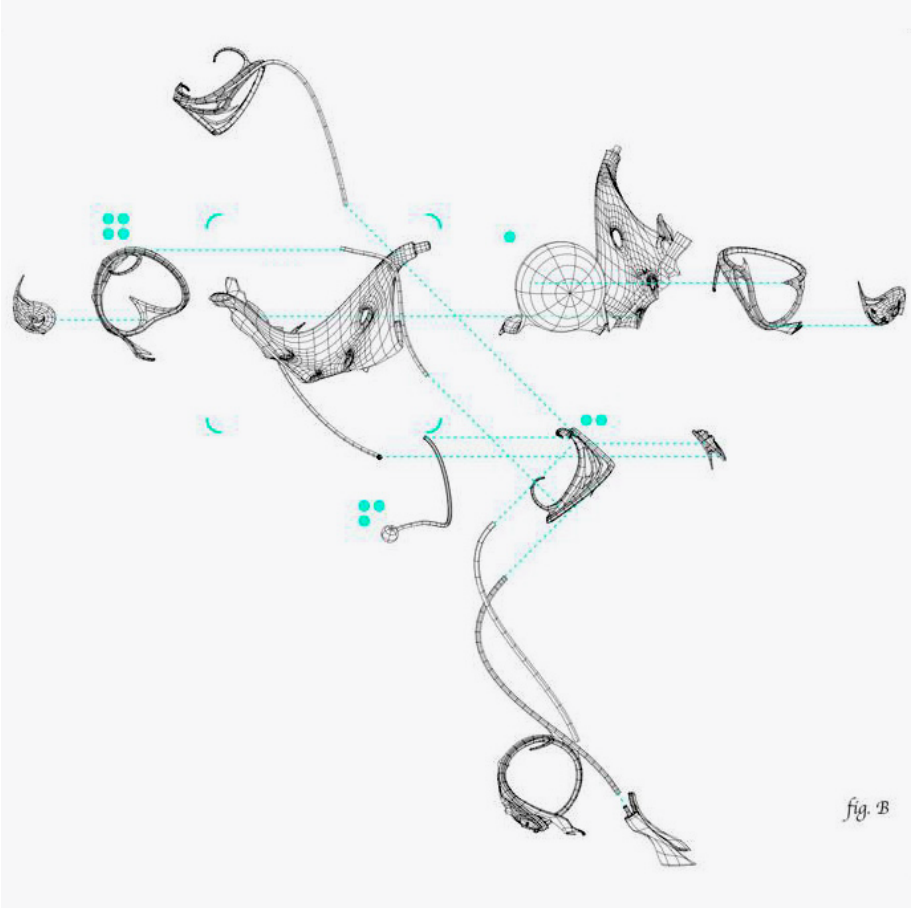
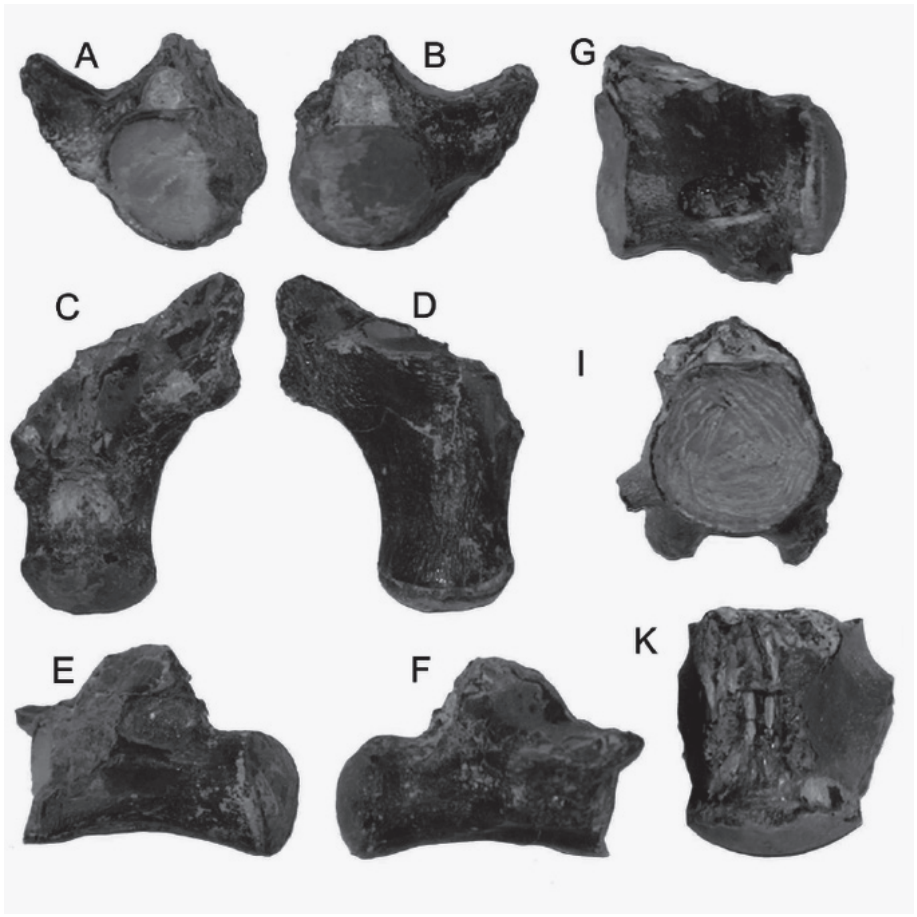
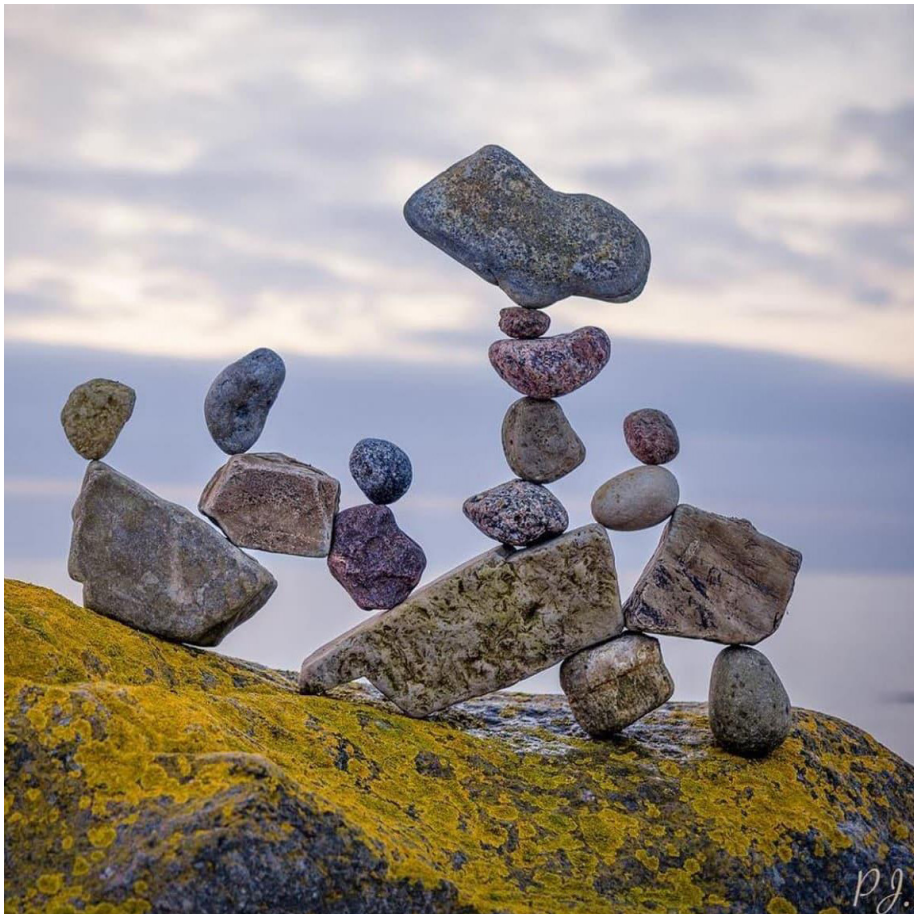


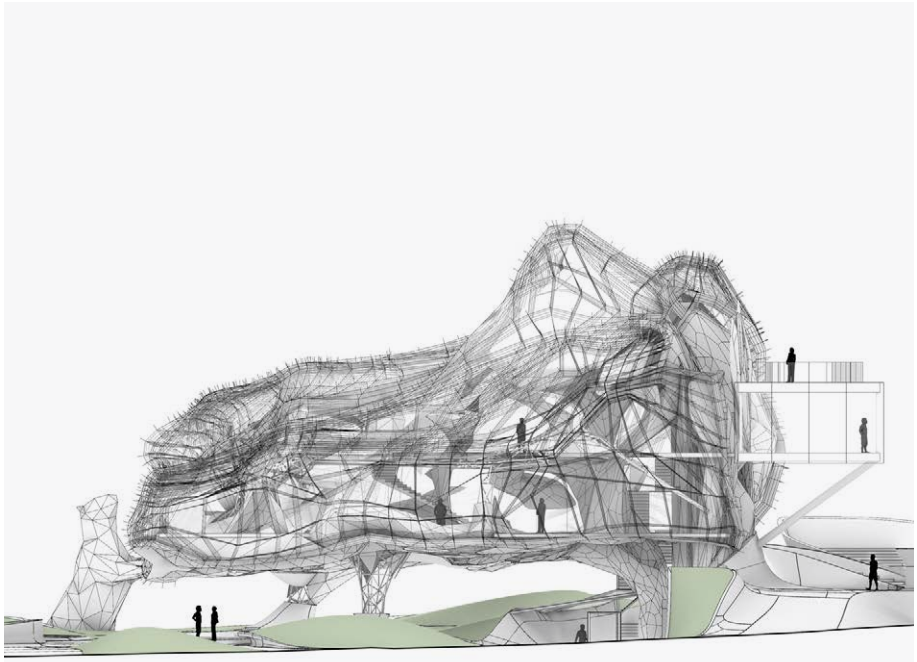
fig. 8




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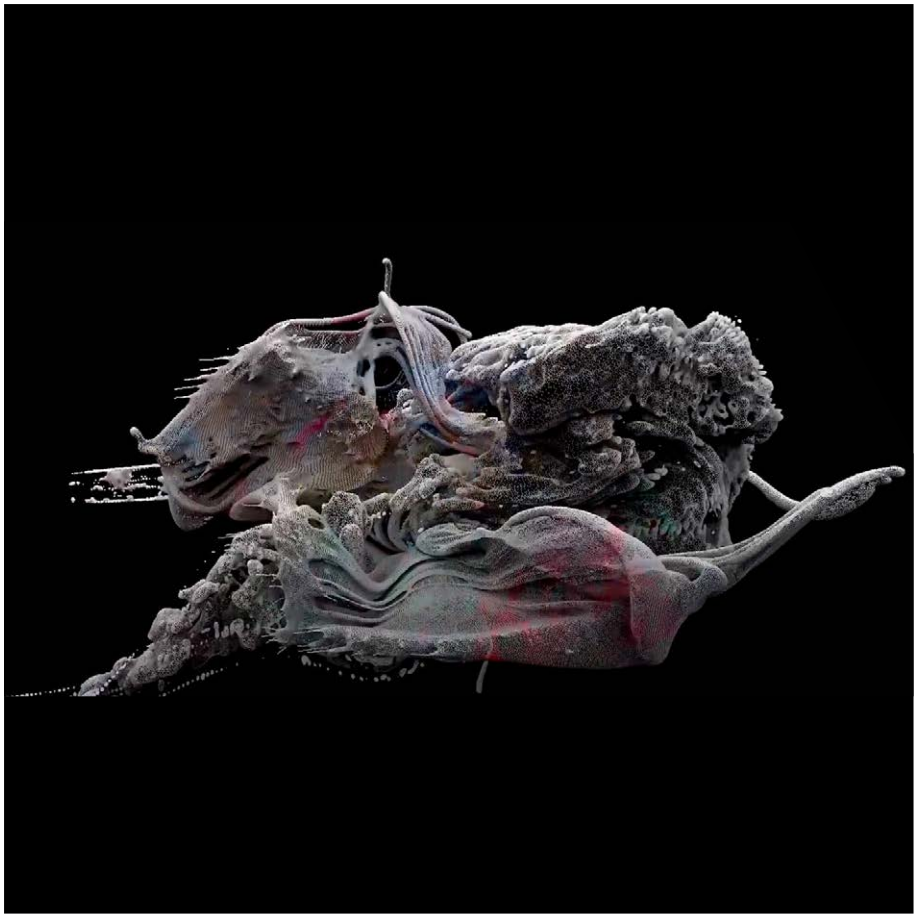

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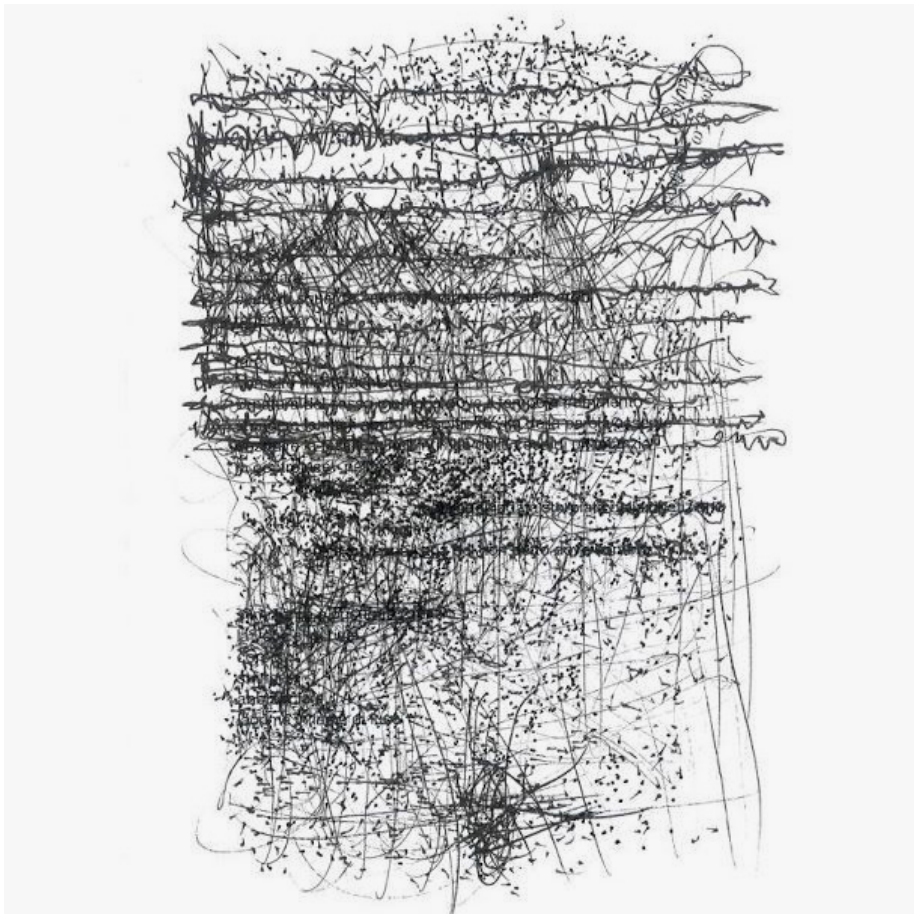


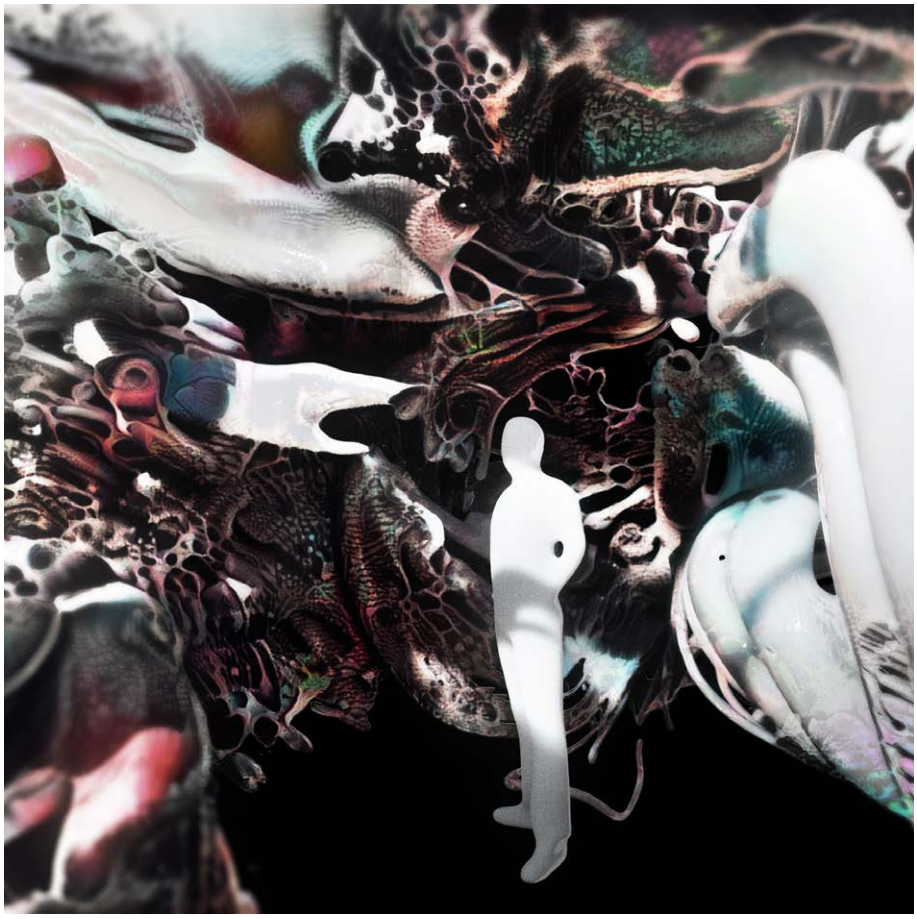




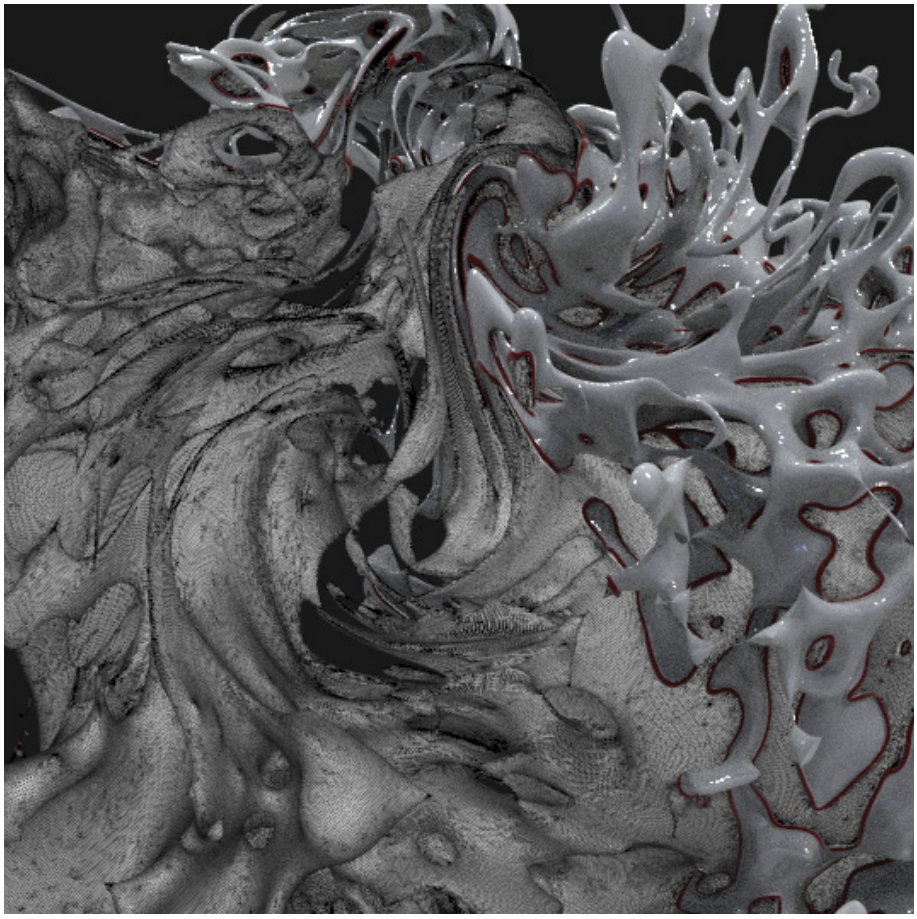




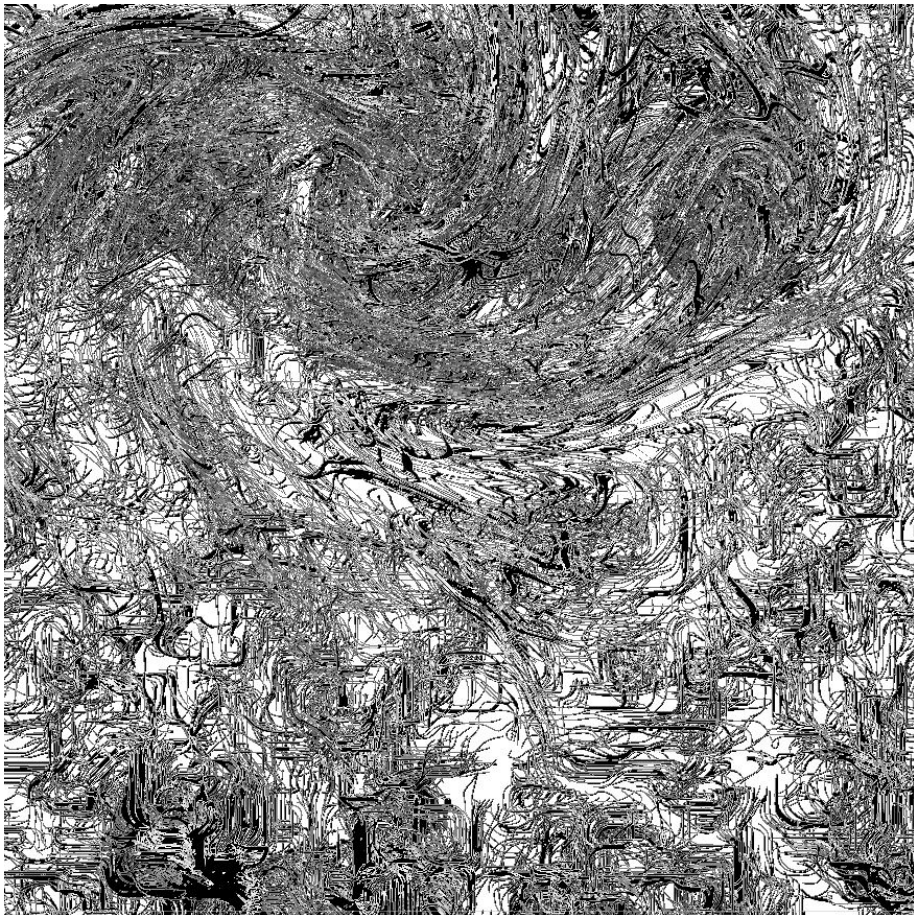






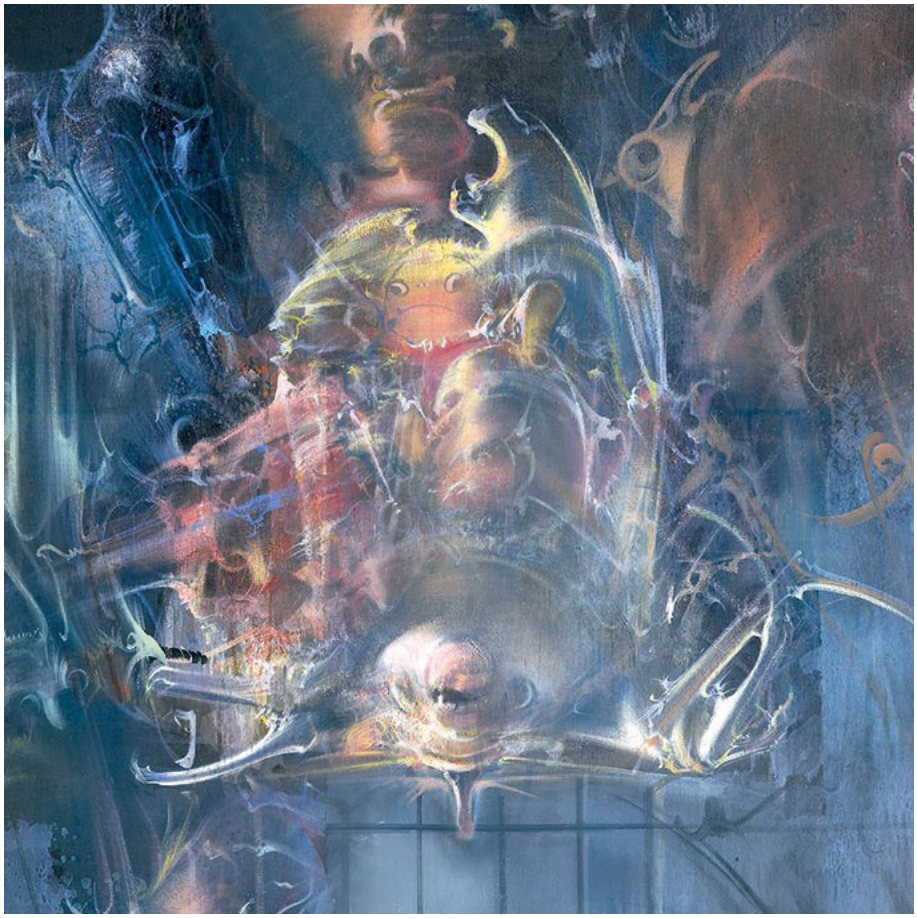










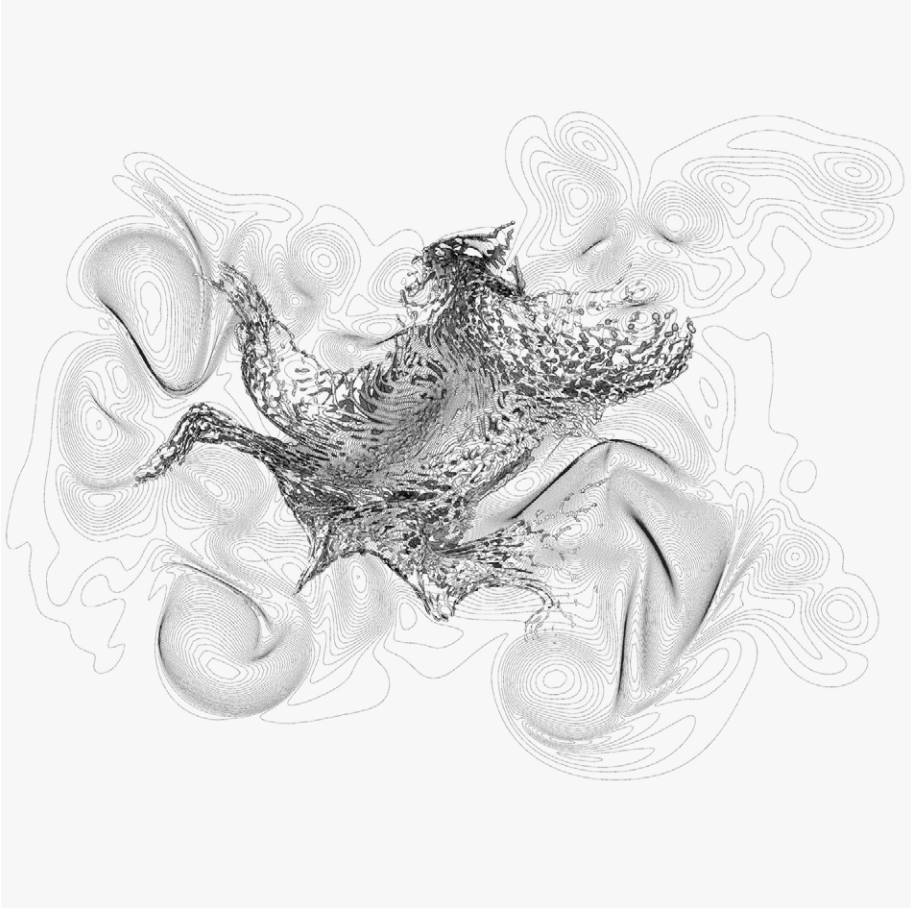


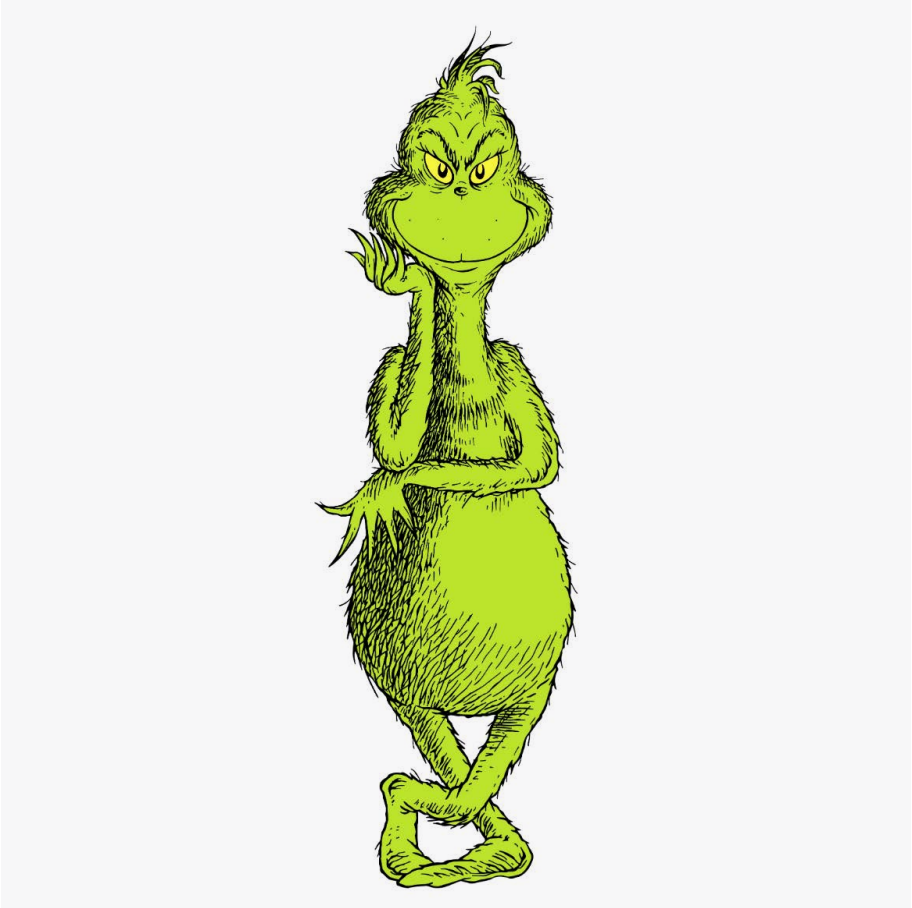






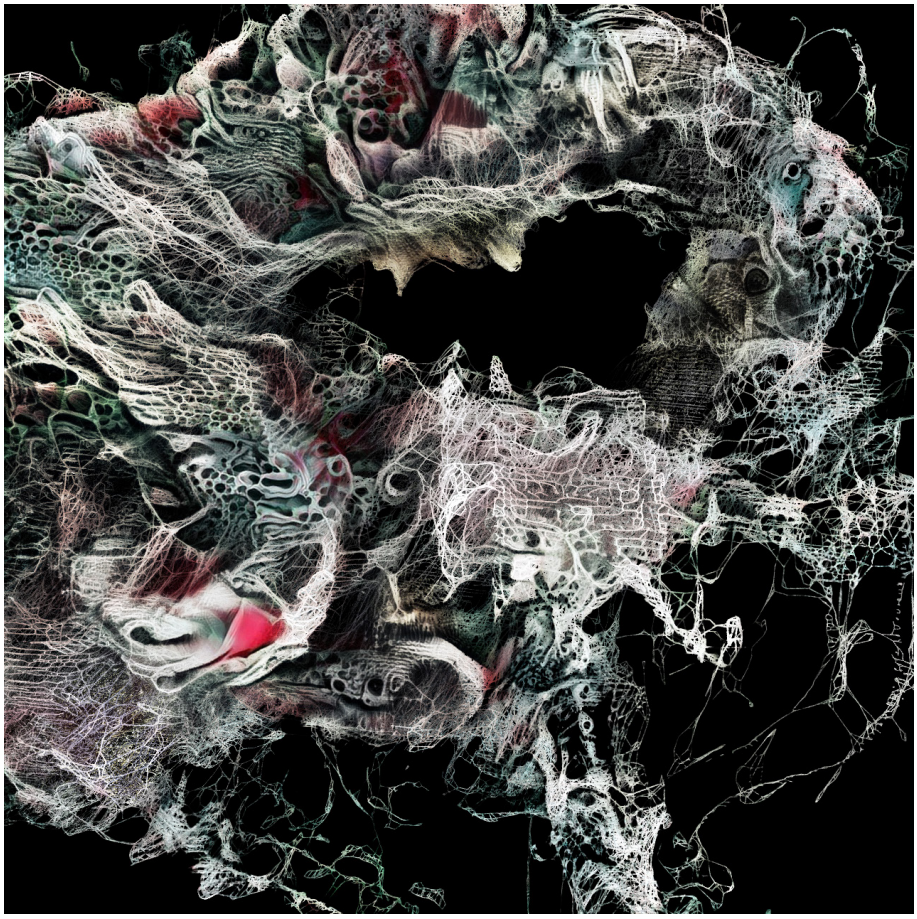


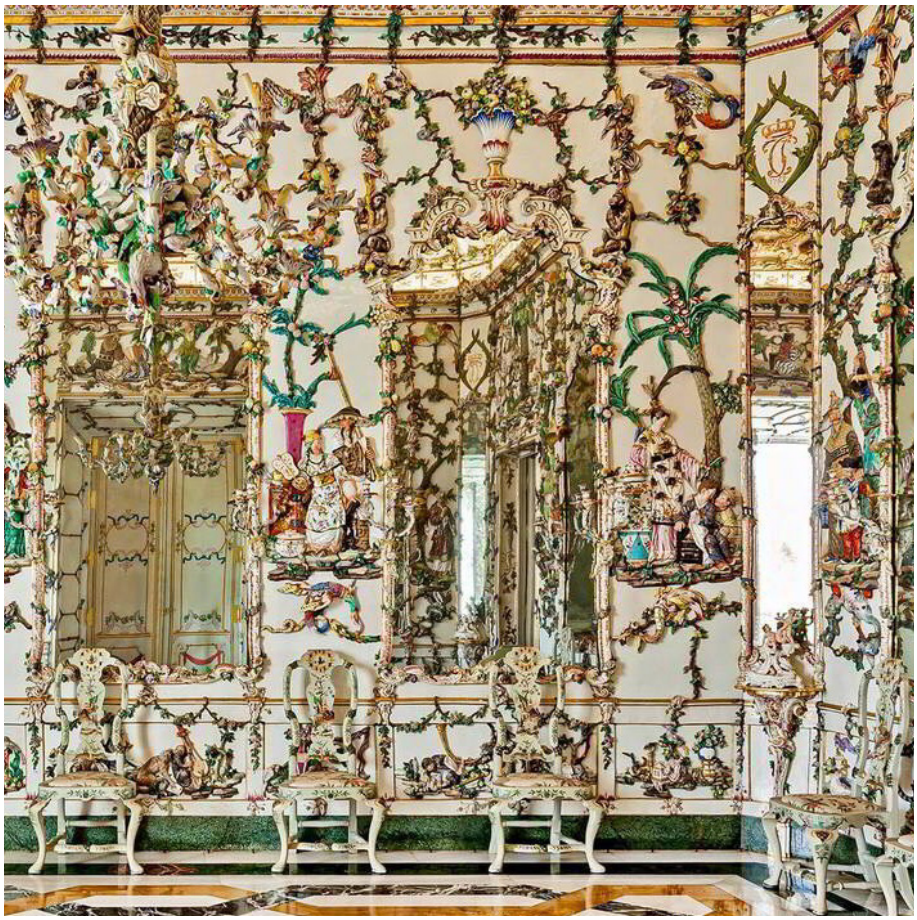




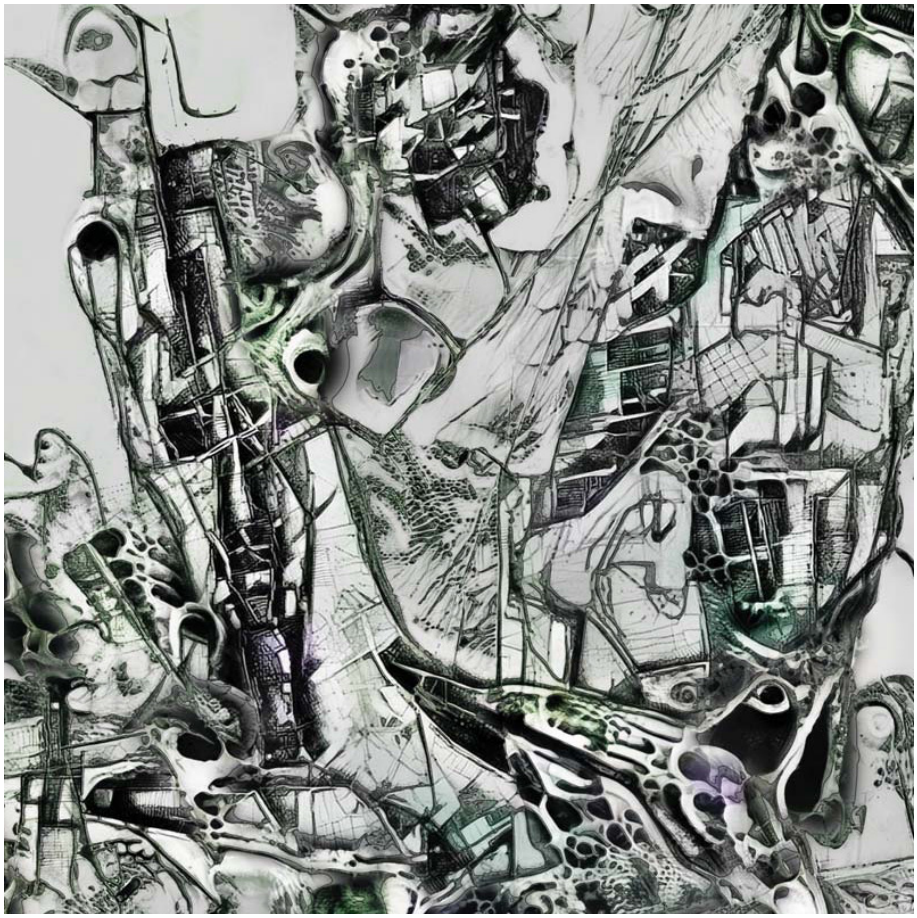




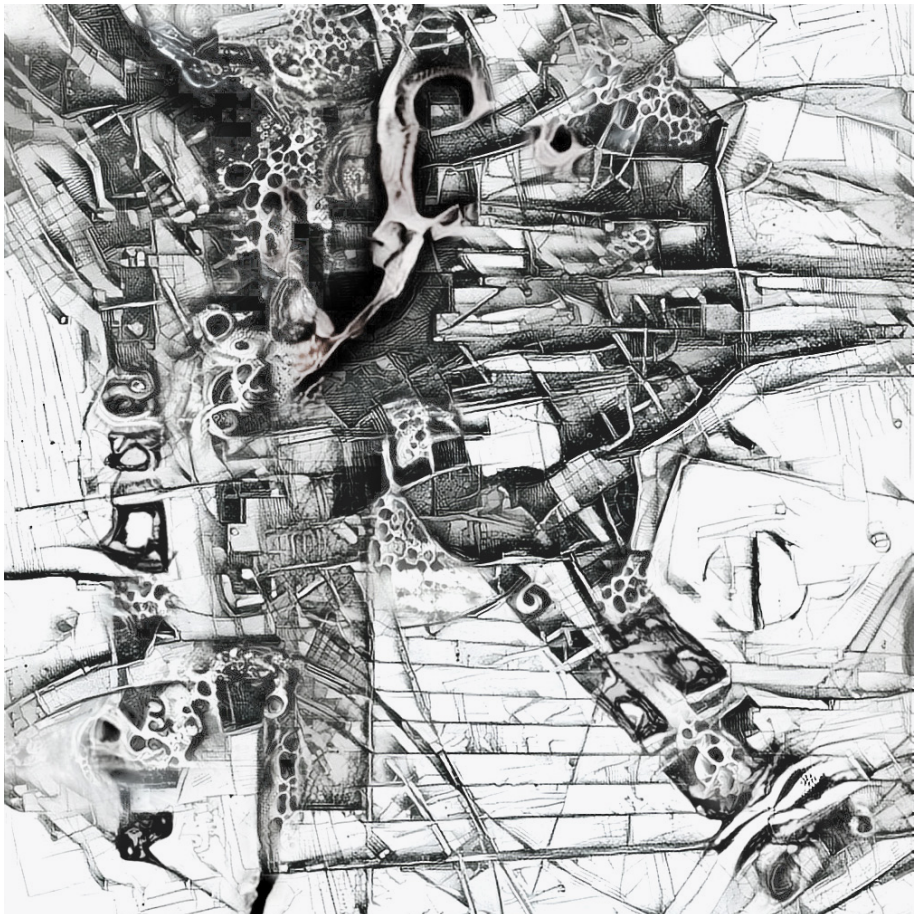












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Source: Enric Miralles, Emilio Tuñon, and Luis Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," in *Enric Miralles + Benedetta Tagliabue 1995-2000*, vol. 100+101 (Madrid: El Croquis, 2000), 12.

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40 Top: Enric Miralles, *Social Center "Círculo de lectores"*, Madrid, ceiling plan, 1990.
Bottom: Federico García Lorca, *Retrato de Salvador Dali*, 1927.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 1:13.

41 Top: Enric Miralles, *Social Center "Círculo de lectores"*, Madrid, details of the pillars, 1990.
Bottom: Postcard of fishes, Miralles' personal collection.
Source: Rovira, Enric Miralles 1972-2000, 334.

42 Top: Enric Miralles, sketch for an exhibition at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, 1993.
Bottom: Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. VI, chap. 40, 1767.
Source: author's suggestion.

43 Top: Enric Miralles, *Ines-Table*, 1993.
Bottom: Antonello da Messina, *St Jerome in His Study*, 1474.
Source: Josep M. Rovira, "Enredar, Desenredar," in *Aprendizajes Del Arquitecto*, vol. 15, Arquia (Fundación Caja de Arquitetos, 2004), 33.

44 Top: Enric Miralles, *New Entrance to Takaoka Station*, 1991-93.
Bottom: Henry Moore, Studies for *Woman*, 1958.
Source: Isabel Zaragoza de Pedro, "Entre la Geometría y la Iconografía: Notas en los Márgenes a Documentos de Enric Miralles" (Barcelona, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2015), 78.

45 Top: Enric Miralles, *Meditation Pavilion in Unazuki*, 1991-93.
Bottom: Man Ray, *L' homme*, 1918.
Source: Zaragoza de Pedro, "Entre la Geometría y la Iconografía," 82.

46 Top: Enric Miralles, stair of the *Camy-Nestlé Bridge*, Villadecamps, 1991-94.
Bottom: Robert Mallet-Stevens, Artificial Trees at the *Exposition de les Arts Decoratifs*, Paris, 1925.
Source: author's suggestion (reference image also paired with Miralles/Pinós, *Pergolas in Parets*, 1985 in Rovira, *Enric Miralles 1972-2000*, 100-01).

47 Top: Enric Miralles, *Church and Parish Center*, floor plan, 1994.
Bottom: Enric Miralles, *Church and Parish Center*, collage, 1994.
Source: *El Croquis Enric Miralles 1990-1994*, 72 [II] (Madrid: El Croquis, 1995), 342–43.

48 Top: EMBT, *Parc dels Colors*, Mollet del Vallès, detail of the fountain, 1992-2002.
Bottom: David Hockney, *Terrace Hollywood Hills house with banana tree*, 1983.

Source: Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 14.

49 Top: EMBT, *Parc dels Colors*, Mollet del Vallès, detail of the fountain, 1992-2002.
Bottom: David Hockney, *Plants, trees, fields and mountains*, Kweilin, China, 1981.
Source: Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 14.

50 Top: EMBT, *Parc dels Colors*, Mollet del Vallès, detail of the lettering wall, 1992-2002.
Bottom: Unknown artist, graffiti.
Source: *El Croquis Enric Miralles 1990-1994*, 371-72.

51 Top: EMBT, *Pier in Thessalonika*, 1997.
Bottom: Johannes Hevelius, *Taurus*, 1690.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imagin ación," 5:24-31.

52 Top: EMBT, *Car Showroom*, 1995.
Bottom: Fetal ultrasound.
Source: Javier Fernández Contreras, "La Planta Miralles: Representación y pensamiento en la Arquitectura de Enric Miralles" (Madrid, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid ETSAM, 2013), 57, http://oa.upm.es/22386/.

53 Top: EMBT, *Chemnitz Sports Stadium*, model, 1995.
Bottom: EMBT, *Chemnitz Sports Stadium*, collages, 1995.
Source: Miralles, Tuñon, and Moreno Mansilla, "Notes on an Informal Conversation," 12.

54 Top: Enric Miralles, *Seele Glass Factory*, Gersthoven, 1994.
Bottom: Oranges.
Source: Enric Miralles, 1992 - Expo "Miralles - Tusquets" Conferencia Huesca, Igualada, Inestable, Alicante, Seele - YouTube, 1992, 1:12:27, https://youtu.be/34_twpCzqtw.

55 Top: EMBT, *Shadows and Alphabets* at the Barcelona Pavilion, 1997.
Bottom: Mies van der Rohe, *The Barcelona Pavilion*, animal figures on the wall paneling, reconstruction 1986.
Source: Anatxu Zabalbeascoa and Javier Rodriguez Marcos, eds., *Arquitecturas Del Tiempo, Miralles Tagliabue* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1999), 8.

56 Top: EMBT, *Royal Theatre*, columns, Copenhagen, 1996.
Bottom: Issey Miyake, spring/summer collection 1994.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imagin ación," 5:11.

57 Top: EMBT, *Diagonal del Mark Park*, Barcelona, 1997-2002.
Bottom: Federico García Lorca, *Rosa de la Muerte*, 1931.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imagin ación," 1:21-22.

58 Top: EMBT, *Santa Caterina Market*, Barcelona, 1997-2005.
Bottom: Willem Kalf, *Still Life with Chinese Bowl and Nautilus*, 1662.
Source: Josep M. Rovira, "Santa Caterina, Vida y Muerte de un Mercado," in *Aprendizajes Del Arquitecto*, vol. 15, Arquia (Fundación Caja de Arquitetos, 2004), 52-55.

59 Top: EMBT, *Santa Caterina Market*, Barcelona, 1997-2005.
Bottom: Henri Michaux, *Dessin Mescalinien*, clipped, 1959.
Source: Rovira, "Santa Caterina, Vida y Muerte de un Mercado," 63.

60 Top: EMBT, *Kolonihaven*, Copenhagen, 1996.
Bottom: Annual calendar.
Source: *El Croquis Enric Miralles + Benedetta Tagliabue 1995-2000*, 100–101 (Madrid: El Croquis, 2000), 120.

61 Top: EMBT, Extension of the Cementery of San Michele in Isola, Venice, 1998.
Bottom: Max Bill, *Eck*, 1989.
Source: *El Croquis Enric Miralles + Benedetta Tagliabue 1995-2000*, 134.

62 Top: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, final design, 1998-2004.
Bottom: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, competition, 1998.
Source: *El Croquis Enric Miralles + Benedetta Tagliabue 1995-2000*, 142.

63 Top: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, design development, 1998-2000.
Bottom: Alberto Giacometti, *James Lord*, 1964.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 3:46-48.

64 Top: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, structure of the Meeting Hall, 1998-2004.
Bottom: Scottish shipbuilding.
Source: Gilabert Sanz, "Enric Miralles. El dibujo de la imaginación," 3:28.

65 Top: EMBT, *Scottish Parliament*, façade trigger panel, 1998-2004.
Bottom: Henri-Pierre Danloux, *The Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch (The Skating Minister)*, 1795.
Source: Rovira, Enric Miralles 1972-2000, 357.

66 Top: EMBT, *Vigo University Campus*, section, 1999-2004.
Bottom: Traditional architecture of the Galician horreo.
Source: Rovira, Enric Miralles 1972-2000, 383.

67 Top: EMBT, *Gas Natural Torre Marenostrum*, construction, 1999-2007.
Bottom: Lladó Fotógrafo, Calle de la Ruda, Madrid, 1936. Archivo Rojo, 53153.
Source: García Estevez, *Enric Miralles 1955-2000*, 229.

70 Top: MORPHtopia, *LWZ 38 Rooftop Extension*, Vienna, 2017.
Bottom: Otto Wagner, *Musenhaus*, ornament detail, Vienna, 1898.

71 Top: MORPHtopia, *Humboldt World*, Humboldt Forum Berlin, 2017.
Bottom: Two hands, in Oswald Mathias Ungers, *Morphologie: City Metaphors* (1982; repr., Cologne: Walther König, 2011), 75.

72 Top: MORPHtopia, *Untitled study*, 2019.
Bottom: Alexander McQueen, *Irere*, beige silk, spring/summer 2003.

73 Top: MORPHtopia, *The Walking Concrete*, 2018.
Bottom: Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase no 2*, 1912.

74 Top: MORPHtopia, *Cultural Center in Marchamalo*, Guadalajara, Spain, 2019.
Bottom: *Thermae of Caracalla*, Rome, AD 212-17.

75 Top: MORPHtopia, *Cultural Center in Marchamalo*, Guadalajara, Spain, 2019.
Bottom: *El Badii-Ksibat Nhass Palace*, Marrakesh, 1578-93.

76 Top: MORPHtopia, *Cultural Center in Marchamalo*, Guadalajara, Spain, 2019.
Bottom: Roofs of Marchamalo.

77 Top: MORPHtopia, *AECSC Art & Sports Center*, Seoul, 2018.
Bottom: Al Naslaa rock formation.

78 Top: MORPHtopia, drawing from the *Fusion – drawings* series, 2020.
Bottom: Thom Mayne with Mike Nesbit, *Composite I*, 2013.

79 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #08*, mereological cartography, 2020.
Bottom: Xefirotarch / Hernán Díaz Alonso, *Still Flesh*, chunk, 2011.

80 Top: MORPHtopia, *Xeno-wall*, separated fragments, 2018.
Bottom: Michael J. Polcyn, et al., *Vertebrae of a mosasaur*, 2008.

81 Top: MORPHtopia, *Xeno-wall*, 2018.
Bottom: Rock balancing.

82 Top: MORPHtopia, *Oso y Madroño*, Madrid, 2019.
Bottom: Statue of a bear and a strawberry tree in Madrid.

83 Top: MORPHtopia, *Oso y Madroño*, Madrid, 2019.
Bottom: Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Wrapped Trees*, Riehen, Switzerland, 1997-98.

84 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #03*, 2019.
Bottom: Giuseppe Pellegrino, *Unknown title*, unknown date.

85 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #03*, 2019.
Bottom: Hermann Rorschach, *Inkblots*, Card IV, 1921.

86 Top: MORPHtopia, *Untitled study*, 2019.
Bottom: Paola Idrontino, *Evanescent*, detail, 2016-2018.

87 Top: MORPHtopia, *Untitled study*, 2019.
Bottom: Paola Idrontino, *Silver*, detail, 2017.

88 Top: MORPHtopia, *Untitled study*, 2020.
Bottom: Dado, *H.N. Buffon*, 1981.

89 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #06*, 2020.
Bottom: Zdzislaw Beksinskio, *Untitled*, 1983.

90 Top: MORPHtopia, *Xeno-column*, study, 2021.
Bottom: Max Ernst, *The Eye of Silence*, crop out, 1943-44.

91 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #04*, 2020.
Bottom: Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, 1957.

92 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #08*, 2020.
Bottom: Johannes Schultz, Carol Benesch, and Karel Liman, *Peleș Castle*, Romania, construction 1873-1914.

93 Top: MORPHtopia, *Chamber #07*, 2020.
Bottom: Giuseppe Gricci, *Porcelain Cabinet* in the Royal Palace of Aranjuez, Spain, 1759-65.

94 Top: MAEID + MORPHtopia, *Re-mediated Zone*, 2021.
Bottom: MORPHtopia, drawing from the *Fusion – drawings* series, 2020.

95 Top: MORPHtopia, *Fusion*, 2021.
Bottom: MORPHtopia, drawing from the *Fusion – drawings* series, 2020.