



A&D

ARTISTS  
SPACE

# A & D

ARCHITECTURE &  
2000 -

DESIGN  
2001

ARTISTS  
NEW

SPACE  
YORK

# A & D

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## HISTORY

ARTISTS SPACE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN  
PROJECT SERIES, 1978-2000

Tschumi Install. N 78N9  
0507/11A



"Architectural Manifestoes"  
April 8-29, 1978

DATE: 1978

EXHIBITION: Architectural Manifestoes

PARTICIPANTS: Bernard Tschumi

SELECTED BY: Helene Winer

CATALOGUE WITH INTRODUCTION BY HELENE WINER

JENNY LOWE  
SEQUENCES  
ARCHITECTURE/SEQUENCES



JAN. 17 - FEB. 28, 1981  
0804/1/B  
FEB 81

DATE: 1981

EXHIBITION: Architecture: Sequences

PARTICIPANTS: Philippe Guerrier, Jenny Lowe, Lorna McNeur, Deborah Oliver, and Peter Wilson

CURATED BY: Bernard Tschumi

CATALOGUE WITH ESSAY BY BERNARD TSCHUMI



Darden  
From here to Eternity



5/24 6/28 86

1315-1-B

EN98 JUC

3

DATE: 1986

EXHIBITION: From Here to Eternity: Fact and Fiction  
in Recent Architectural Projects

PARTICIPANTS: Douglas Darden, Elizabeth Diller/Ricardo Scofidio,  
Donna Goodman, Laurie Hawkinson, Michael Kalil, Kenneth Kaplan/  
Ted Krueger/Christopher Scholz, Michael Webb, and Mark West

CURATED BY: Valerie Smith

CATALOGUE WITH INTRODUCTION BY VALERIE SMITH, ESSAY BY BEATRIZ COLOMINA

Rashid (4)

14 ARTISTS SPACE  
TV Sandins



2/5-2/11/87  
HAN/ RASHID

1410/5/A

DATE: 1987

EXHIBITION: Kursaal For An Evacuee

PARTICIPANTS: Hani Rashid

SELECTED BY: Elizabeth Diller

BROCHURE WITH INTRODUCTION BY ELIZABETH DILLER

LYNN + IAN BADER

ARCHIT. PROJ.



5/21-6/27/87

ARTISTS SPACE

14/6/11A

DATE: 1987

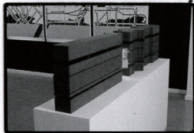
EXHIBITION: Untitled

PARTICIPANTS: Lynn and Ian Bader

SELECTED BY: Patricia C. Phillips

BROCHURE WITH ESSAY BY PATRICIA C. PHILLIPS

26 Hacker Allen.  
The London Project



4/14/88. 5/14/88  
1511-1-B

DATE: 1988

EXHIBITION: The London Project

PARTICIPANTS: Stan Allen/Marc Hacker,  
Karen Bausman/Patricia Pillette, Neil Denari,  
Leslie Gill, Jesse Reiser/Nanako Umemoto,  
Alastair Standing, and Marek Walczak

CURATED BY PARTICIPATING ARCHITECTS

CATALOGUE CO-PUBLISHED WITH PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS  
WITH FOREWORD BY JOHN HEJDUK, ESSAY BY PATRICIA C. PHILLIPS,  
AFTERWORD BY K. MICHAEL HAYS

MODEL CITY

1/13-2/18 1989

Michael Sorkin



1612/5/A

6

DATE: 1989

EXHIBITION: Model City

PARTICIPANTS: Michael Sorkin

SELECTED BY: Valerie Smith

BROCHURE WITH ESSAY BY MICHAEL SORKIN

Artists Space

top floor



7

Dress Code: Evans and Wong  
9/10 - 10/22/94

DATE: 1994

EXHIBITION: Dress Code

PARTICIPANTS: evansandwong

SELECTED BY: Denise Fasanello

**Greg Lynn Project:**  
Sept. 16, Oct. 28, 1995



**Artists Space**

DATE: 1995

EXHIBITION: *Untitled*

PARTICIPANTS: Greg Lynn

SELECTED BY: Peter Eisenman

31 ARTISTS SPACE  
project space



vincent beaurin  
new/STAN 95'-96'

DATE: 1995-1996

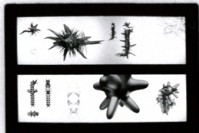
EXHIBITION: *Untitled*

PARTICIPANTS: Vincent Beaurin

SELECTED BY: André Putman

30 Rhizome

10



Polymorphous

Jan 20 - March 16 1996

DATE: 1996

EXHIBITION: Exhibit A: Design Writing Research

PARTICIPANTS: J. Abbott Miller

SELECTED BY: Claudia Gould

ARTIST'S SPACE:

Project Space

Nov. 9 - Jan. 4, 1997

11



Jeff Francis

Wigs 1996

wood, chicken wire, metal, crystals

DATE: 1996-1997

EXHIBITION: Untitled

PARTICIPANTS: Jeff Francis

SELECTED BY: Cindy Sherman



DATE: 1997

EXHIBITION: Untitled

PARTICIPANTS: Anna Gili

SELECTED BY: Alessandro Mendini



DATE: 1997

EXHIBITION: Mobile Forces

PARTICIPANTS: Ben van Berkel

SELECTED BY: Greg Lynn



ARTISTS SPACE

Project Space

Nov. 14 - Jan. 10, 1998

19



**George Ranalli**  
*Present Tense*  
installation view

DATE: 1997-1998

EXHIBITION: *Present Tense: The Architecture of George Ranalli*

PARTICIPANTS: George Ranalli

SELECTED BY: Michael Sorkin

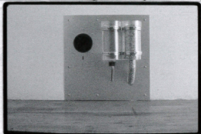
Elke Lehmann

4(to)5, 1998

Artists Space, NYC

Top  
②

Photo:  
Elke Lehmann



15

detail: amplified  
feeding station  
16"x16"x13½"

DATE: 1998

EXHIBITION: 4(to)5

PARTICIPANTS: Elke Lehmann

SELECTED BY: Dennis Adams

Artists Space  
Digital Mapping

March 28-May 23, 1998



Patrick Keane  
The Fourth Port, 1998  
video, sound, plexi, steel, foam

DATE: 1998

EXHIBITION: Digital Mapping: Architecture as Media

PARTICIPANTS: John Cleator, Ridzwa Fathan,

Patrick Keane, and Marie Sester

CURATED BY: Hani Rashid

Artists Space

FY 2000



Craig Konyk

*A Pale Soft Plane*

November 21, 1998-January 16, 1999

DATE: 1998-1999

EXHIBITION: A Pale Soft Plane

PARTICIPANTS: Craig Konyk

SELECTED BY: Claudia Gould

Kolatan/Mac Donald Studio

"Housings" 1999 18

Selected by Bernard Tschumi



Artists Space

Project Space

April 17-May 29, 1999

DATE: 1999

EXHIBITION: Housings

PARTICIPANTS: Kolatan/Mac Donald Architects

SELECTED BY: Bernard Tschumi

Artists Space

September 16- November 6, 1999 19

Project Space



Eric Zimmerman

*Push: a game for two players*

DATE: 1999

EXHIBITION: Push: a game for two players

PARTICIPANTS: Eric Zimmerman

SELECTED BY: Jenelle Porter

NEWSPAPER WITH INTERVIEW BY JENELLE PORTER WITH ERIC ZIMMERMAN

Toshiko Mori  
*Woven Inhabitation*  
 Woven Shingle Wall, Gore-Tex® remnant  
 and chicken wire



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Artists Space  
 Project Space

November 20, 1999-January 15, 2000

DATE: 1999-2000

EXHIBITION: *Woven Inhabitation*

PARTICIPANTS: Toshiko Mori

SELECTED BY: Claudia Gould

NEWSPAPER WITH INTERVIEW BY CLAUDIA GOULD WITH TOSHIKO MORI

Artists Space  
 February 3-March 25, 2000  
 Project Space

21



ARO

DATE: 2000

EXHIBITION: *Paper Wall*

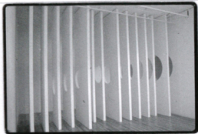
PARTICIPANTS: Architecture Research Office

SELECTED BY: Leslie Gill

NEWSPAPER WITH TEXT BY ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH OFFICE

Artists Space  
 April 1 - May 20, 2000  
 Project Space

23



Dolores Zinny + Juan Maidagan  
*Where the Lion Goes Through.*  
*Architecture of an Action.*  
 Installation.

DATE: 2000

EXHIBITION: *Where the Lion Goes Through. Architecture of an Action.*

PARTICIPANTS: Dolores Zinny and Juan Maidagan

SELECTED BY: Alfredo Jaar

NEWSPAPER WITH TEXT BY DOLORES ZINNY AND JUAN MAIDAGAN

Artists Space has programmed experimental projects by established and emerging architects for over 20 years. In April 1978, *Architectural Manifestos* by Bernard Tschumi marked the beginning of an ongoing exchange between Artists Space and architects wishing to pursue innovative ideas.

At that time in the United States, it was still rare for architects to be given the opportunity to realize their investigations within the context of a contemporary gallery space. The norm was for more traditional presentations of drawing and models organized by museums, such as The Museum of Modern Art's Architecture and Design Department, established in 1932. In 1976, The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies' exhibition *Idea as Model* had pioneered a shift towards the presentation of more conceptual projects, closely followed by Leo Castelli's *Architecture I* in 1977, and *Houses for Sale* in 1980. The group exhibition organized by Tschumi for Artists Space in 1981, titled *Architecture: Sequences*, and the collaborative exhibition *Drawings Toward a More Modern Architecture*, presented at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and the Drawing Center, continued this movement. The Storefront for Art and Architecture was founded in 1982, providing the first alternative space dedicated to the presentation of architecture in New York City.

In Europe, architects were first admitted to the Venice Biennale in 1980, and the first two museums of architecture, The Basel Museum of Architecture and the Deutsche Architekturmuseum were opened in 1984.

This brief historical review contextualizes the tremendous shift that has occurred in the consideration of architecture and design since Artists Space first

began its program.<sup>1</sup> Audiences have changed from an elite, highly specialized group, which primarily consisted of other professionals in the field, to a more generalized, yet knowledgeable, arts audience and the general public. The divisions between art forms have shifted considerably in the intervening years. There is no longer always a clear distinction between the type of work exhibited at any given time in our Architecture and Design Project Series and that in our main gallery or project room. The development of interactive media, and its use by artists in all art forms, has blurred traditional boundaries and definitions.

Our first yearbook for the Architecture and Design Project Series, this publication records the four projects undertaken in the exhibition season September 2000 to July 2001. It is our practice each year to invite noted curators, critics, designers and architects to select their peers for some of the exhibition slots in the Architecture and Design Project Space. We are honored this year to have worked with Janet Abrams, independent curator, writer and the Director of the Design Institute at the University of Minnesota, and Ronald Jones, Provost at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena.

I would like to thank the staff and committees of the Stephen A. and Diana Goldberg Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, the Greenwall Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for their generous support of our programs and their commitment to our mission.

The formidable team of Jenelle Porter, former Artists Space curator and Conny Purtil, designer, created this project together despite career changes and moves across country. I am grateful to them both for their dedication and professionalism, for their continuous support of Artists Space and their collaborative pursuit of groundbreaking ideas in design. Lisa Metcalf and Greg Hendren managed all aspects of the fiscal sponsorship of the project with supreme efficiency. The exhibitions themselves were installed with the assistance of Artists Space staff Liz Campbell and Stefanie Tjaden, and an efficient team of volunteers, too many to mention by name yet deserving of heartfelt thanks. I am grateful to artists Robert Fischer and Aaron Spangler for their technical assistance.

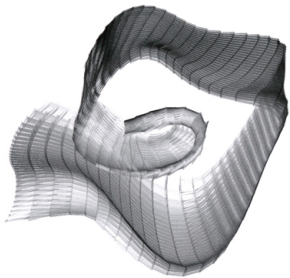
Finally, I would like to thank all of the participating artists for their drive and vision in bringing adventurous experimental projects to Artists Space.

—BARBARA HUNT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. Researched by  
Beatriz Colomina,  
catalogue series,  
for the 1980 Artists  
Space exhibition  
*From How to Economy:  
Fact and Fiction in  
Recent Architectural  
Projects*, organized  
by Valerie Smith  
and including  
the work of  
Douglas Hayden,  
Elizabeth Diller/  
Ricardo Kohn,  
Dennis Goodman,  
Laurie Hackett,  
Michael Kall,  
Kenneth Knapton/  
Ed Krugger/  
Christopher Scholz,  
Michael Webb and  
Mark Weiss.  
2. Design, as an art  
form, was added when  
Charles Gwathmey,  
Executive Director,  
formally returned  
the Architecture  
and Design Project  
Series in 1994.



# DEFECTIVE BRICK PROJECT



## DEFECTIVE BRICK PROJECT CREDITS

DESIGNER: GALIA SOLOMONOFF

ART ADVISOR: FABIAN MARCACCIO

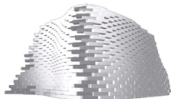
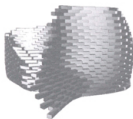
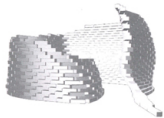
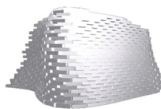
INSTALLATION ADVISOR: GISELA BAURMANN

PROJECT TEAM: ASTRID LIPKA, ALISA ANDRASEK, GERNOT RIETHER

THANKS TO: OPENOFFICE PARTNERS, LINDA TAALMAN, LYN RICE, ALAN KOCH, GREG MERRYWEATHER,

JONAS COERSMEIER, LEIF HALVERSON, JAY HINDMARSH, JOHN CONNER AND ETHAN POLLACK OF

CONNER POLLACK, CLAUDIA GOULD, AND JENELLE PORTER



## INTERVIEW: Galia Solomonoff interviewed by Jenelle Porter

Jenelle Porter: Let's begin with a straightforward question: when and how did your work with defective building elements begin?

Galia Solomonoff: As a student at Columbia, I was a teaching assistant to Kenneth Frampton. From both Frampton and from Stan Allen I learned of Mies van der Rohe's obsession with systematic precision, and perfection—the "God is in the details" issue. I started to question this architectural obsession: if God is in the details then the Devil must be there too! We all know that the perfect cube doesn't exist. It's an abstraction. We try methods of approaching these ideals, but perfection is ever elusive. Palladio, for example, made amazing buildings, but when he drew them, post-construction, he "corrected" them. When you see the drawings of Palladio you see the idealized, or perfected version of the building, not the constructed one.

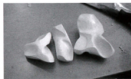
In "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," Colin Rowe demonstrates Le Corbusier's and Palladio's desire for idealized geometries and clear organizing principles for their buildings. The drawings, in many cases, came after the building, as post-building analysis. It was then that I started thinking about the actual, or "defective," nature of construction and matter rather than the idealized abstraction of it.

JP: It's ironic that we idealize Palladio's buildings as examples of perfection, of symmetry, yet he perceived them as imperfect.

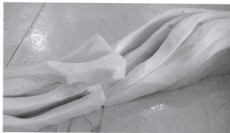
GS: Exactly. I think it reveals that the things we find in the search for perfection are much more interesting than perfection itself. JP: Some might say once we reach perfection, our search is over. Then what are we left with?

GS: Perfect, like Palladio's drawings, without gravity, in endless Cartesian sites, without bumps in the road, without lumps in the plaster. But luckily his buildings are much more complex than his drawings. We love them for their relentless search for perfection, not because they achieved it. It's in the struggle with matter, the topography of the site, the specificity of the light, that you see the many decisions and intentions.

JP: Besides Mies, Le Corbusier, and Palladio, what other sources influenced this project?



GS: Eladio Dieste, an engineer from Uruguay who built complex curvilinear buildings with the simplest material: brick. Sarah Dunn, a classmate, and I received a Kinnie Research Fellowship to travel to Uruguay in 1995 in order to study Dieste. I think about this work constantly. Also, living with an artist has influenced the way I engage matter. The expressive use of silicone in this project, for example, comes directly from Fabian Marcaccio's work.



JP: What is it about bricks that intrigues you, as opposed to other modular elements? In other words, how did you start with bricks?

GS: The way you say it is right: I started there. This project is a point of departure, and there is no closure. Most construction materials are serial, and many of them interest me, from plastics to lumber, to clays and metals. All of them come in specific sizes and sections. A lot of what architects do is figure out how size gives us freedoms and restrictions. The brick is the oldest construction unit and therefore begs to be re-conceptualized. I started with brick and silicone. The project should continue applying "defective" properties to all materials.

JP: How did the project move from bricks to the hand-cast sculptural components in the end?

GS: The process was experimental. We tried different materials in multiple directions. We cast from almost regular bricks to near-impossible shapes. We moved in an intuitive manner, addressing the idea of taking this ancient unit to the limit of what is structurally possible and formally expected. How far can one distort the brick unit and still be able to stack it, build with it, as a brick?

The first drawings were for my thesis project done at Columbia in 1994. Those were done by hand and were axonometric; the thesis also studied various building components.

For Artists Space, we took a room from the original project and modeled it as a computer generated three-dimensional element, using MAYA, a 3-D software from Alias that combines animation and modeling. Then we took a section, looking at the walls in segments, and the bricks in detail.

JP: You were headed towards the computer, and rapid prototyping, as a means of production, and then it completely shifted. The project moved from experimenting with the computer to experimenting with the hand. Why this drastic shift?



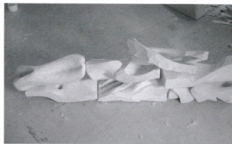
GS: From the MAYA model we produced a computer-generated model, then the budgetary restrictions hit us. We could have generated every brick prototype digitally, rather than manually, but the cost was \$700 per prototype. Instead of doing that, we decided to see what would happen if we reinserted the hand into the process, and of course, things changed. We did not set out to mimic the computer models, but to experiment with a different method. We carved the prototypes out of Styrofoam, then made silicon rubber molds from those prototypes, and then cast hydrocal bricks from those molds. In the end, it's divorced from the computer. The computer took us to a place, and then the hand took us to another place. This was not coincidental.

JP: How many "bricks" did you make?

GS: 465 units.

JP: This revised process completely changed the appearance of the final product. You originally thought the end result would be an environment, a complete structure with a cupola and a lounge area. Instead of something easily definable as "architecture" the final product looked very much like a sculpture.

GS: The project became about the limits of what was possible with a brick unit. The original plan was safer. Then it became about the edge of what was possible. There was a lot of risk, intuition and distress. People tend to think that when a construction is idiosyncratic, it is sculpture. I think architecture can be idiosyncratic as well.



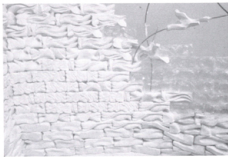
JP: It's interesting how the project itself, the concept of one defect in a brick, what a limiting factor can achieve, dovetailed with the limited time and budget. Can you expand on the fact that the circumstances of building paralleled the concept?

GS: The project became defective. The motivating logic was to move forward. The process became the project. What I knew I didn't want, at all times, was an architectural installation about architectural drawings, or about how to represent architecture. I wanted a space that was architecture. I wanted to build while enjoying the limitations of building. The demand I had on myself and the team was that the project would not be about exhibiting bricks, or about exhibiting drawings of bricks, or computer animations of bricks. It had to be about the thing itself, and the objective was to experiment with a building, however small. The freedom of working in Artists Space was a really important factor because that's nonexistent in the architecture profession. The reason the piece feels like a sculpture is because when you see it, you see all the freedoms confronted by very few restraints. When you see architecture, you see freedoms, but you see them confronted by many technical and functional demands.

JP: When you were casting the "brick" elements, did you know at that point what you would end up with?

GS: No. At the opening a friend asked me when I knew the project was going to be successful, meaning, able to stand up and be what it was. I said that I knew the night we finished the installation, not a moment sooner. He said, "That's too bad because I knew when you brought all the bricks in. I knew it was going to be new and successful." The team—Fabian, Astrid, Gernot, Gisela, Aliza—also felt confident. The project itself was about defects so I couldn't complain or fixate on problems. We moved forward without knowing what we would end up with. That's radical for an architect.

JP: That level of uncertainty, of not knowing what the final result will be, that's what we strive for in our program. That's why we invite the people we do, to do these types of projects. We want creators who will experiment with their projects and their working methods. I think the budgetary constraints often push people further. Of course, the same kinds of financial limits are part of making any building, but it's interesting to pull farther back to these modest budgets and see what can be created. Every project I've coordinated during the last three years has been challenging, and has been divorced from client-driven approaches. For instance, when Architecture Research Office made their paper wall (an experiment with laser-cut paper structures), it toppled at the opening, and they didn't care! It was part of the process.



GS: I feel like so many architecture shows are about re-stating the things we know. It's difficult to explore ideas we don't know about. The Architecture Research Office and Greg Lynn projects are good examples. These shows were about what they wanted to find out, not what they already knew.



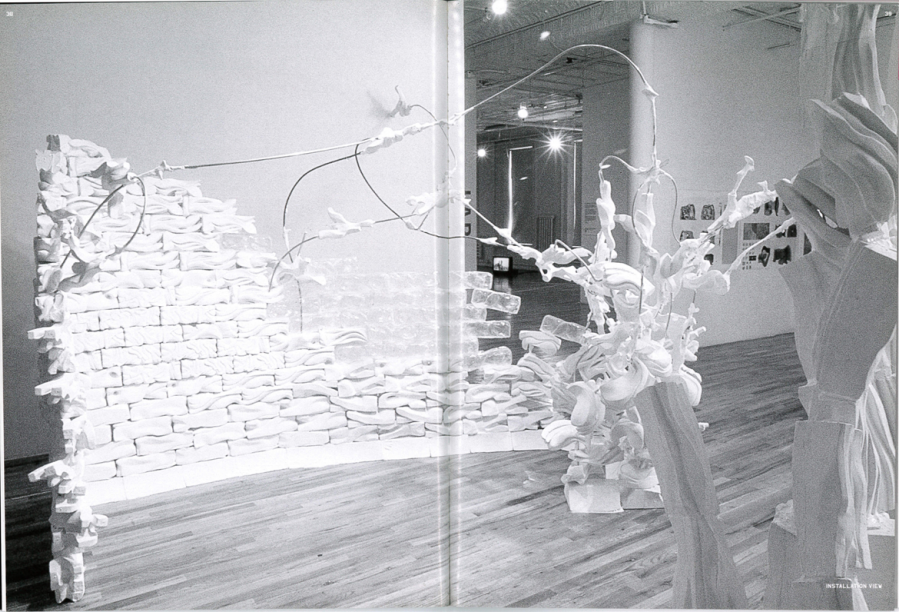
JP: Did the defective brick project contain any failures?

GS: Always, although I do not see them as failures. The budgetary restriction made us work harder. We couldn't throw anything away. The project cost approximately \$7,000 to make (in materials only). If I'd had more money, I would have experimented more. For example, I would have completed the project in an unprecedented way with translucent hollow bricks. I needed 120 vacuum-form units (at \$40 each) to do that. This project is a beginning.

JP: The Artists Space project incorporated myriad chance elements. How much is chance a factor in your studio work?

GS: I think chance is the organizing principle of the universe. I'm totally given to chance. If I run into someone on the street, I'll go have lunch or coffee. In the movie *Ran Lola Ran*, in the third segment, all the things Lola was planning don't work. She's run out of ideas. She looks up and asks herself, "What do I do?" She sees the word "Casino," and that changes her fate. Things work out in a combination of chance and intense desire.

I'm an optimist; I believe in desire. Whenever something fails, I don't obsess about it. I look up and find what else is around, how can I make it work, what are the tools, who is next to me. In order to have these chances you have to believe that life and death are good. In my everyday work I react. I'm open to others: a contractor finding a problem, a carpenter telling me that a drawing is unbuildable. If what I've drawn doesn't work, I want to know why. I want to know if there is a new idea, and how it can be resolved. I'm disappointed when I get things exactly my way. The idea of everyone being "defective" and incomplete is what makes it work. We love people for their flaws and struggles as much as for their virtues.



INSTALLATION VIEW

# LAB

Patrick Meagher

UNITBEAD 4 QUADRANTS 1.0, 2000

UPWL 3D DIGITAL MODEL





"IN THE AUTOMATED STATE, POWER RESIDES LESS IN THE CONTROL

It was in 1968 that Jack Barnham predicted a culture that would emerge in the short term, where information, not objects, would be the exemplar of power. Thirty-two years ago he envisioned a culture that would produce this exhibition.

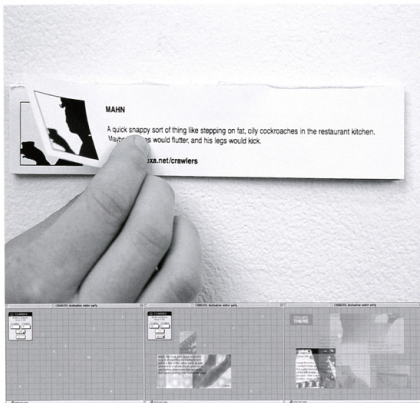
The momentum of the transition from an industrial to a media culture has now carried us well into the realm of the information age. As this transition unfolds, decisions will have to be made as to what traditions to take forward; how will we integrate them with emerging tendencies to invent the leading edge of this new culture? Many of those decisions will be made at institutions like Artists Space; indeed some of them have already been settled by the artists, architects, and designers in this exhibition.



OF THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS OF WEALTH THAN IN INFORMATION."

Within a culture where the power of creativity is increasingly understood as a product of information, how will art express itself? *Lab* features an array of artists who understand their practice as transdisciplinary. Practitioners in these fields are developing advanced technical and programming skills that enable them to more fully exploit the potentials of new media, and to create more adventurous projects that push the boundaries of interactive design to new limits. Of particular interest is a shift in the way these pioneers position themselves: rejecting an identity which places them in a single framework, they prefer to harness a fluidity and flexibility that allows them to be architect, graphic designer, artist, web designer, and inventor, as they choose.

—Ronald Jones, Exhibition Curator

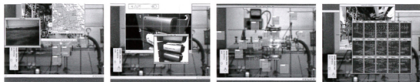
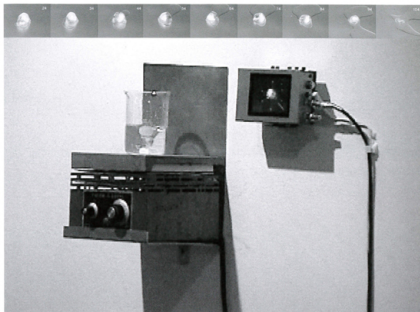


*Crawlers* is a non-linear narrative created specifically for the Web as a new form of interactive literature for the digital medium. It is based on six narrative threads accompanied by sound and images unique to the development of each character. Gallery visitors were invited to take pieces of paper from wall-mounted pads that offered enticing clues about six mysterious characters at a virtual party, alongside a web address. A collaborative project involving writers and musicians, *Crawlers* invited participants to piece together the clues to identify the characters through visits to the website.

**Isabel Chang**

*CRAWLERS*, 2000

WEBSITE AND PAPER PADS WITH TAKE-AWAY NOTES

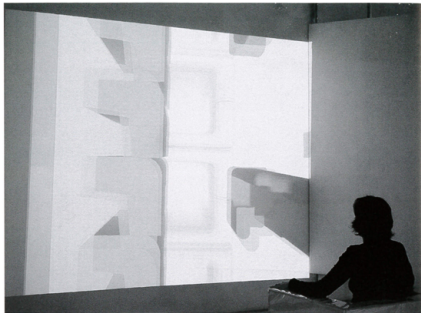


Kevin Jones presented various interactive computer-based projects, along with a visitor operated sculpture. Combining analog and digital technologies, visitors could activate, by a foot pedal, two things simultaneously: a spinning tablet in a beaker, mounted atop a laboratory hotplate; and on a small monitor, a computer animation of a spinning, melting (and re-forming) ice cube. *Regelation* investigated the theory of perpetual motion and brought into question the second law of thermodynamics.

**Kevin H. Jones**

*REGELATION*, 2000

MIXED MEDIA, BEAKER, HOTPLATE, COMPUTER

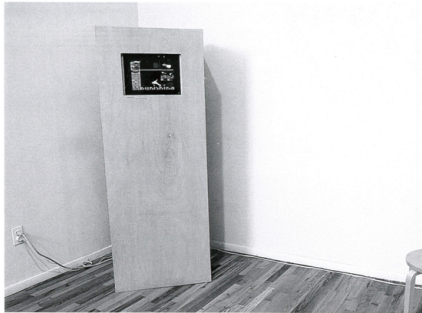


Patrick Meagher's computer-generated projection led viewers on a virtual tour through an abstract landscape theoretically located within a single unitbead of Styrofoam. The large-scale projection was experienced while seated in a sound-emitting Styrofoam chair. The vibration of the sound waves and enforced proximity to the work created a sensation of movement through the futuristic landscape. Two photographs framed with Styrofoam were displayed adjacent to the projection.

#### Patrick Meagher

INSTALLATION VIEWS

BOTTOM: *STYROSCAPES II*, 14, 2000, C-PRINTS IN STYROFOAM FRAMES



David Sun showed the beginning stages of a larger web-interactive project. In the gallery, visitors were offered two touch-screen viewing stations that displayed complex narrative threads combined with graphic sequences and modular video clips. Utilizing innovative narrative database programs designed by the artist, the piece was the first in a series of works exploring narrative, interaction and methods of "play."

#### David Sun

*ACCIDENTAL MISANTHROPE*, 2000

INTERACTIVE KIOSK



Alexander Vaindorf and Jenny Althoff created a video and installation about communication theories advanced in Sweden during the 1970s. Using documentary footage of a Swedish behavioral scientist demonstrating these theories through physical exercises with children, Vaindorf and Althoff re-staged the video at Artists Space with volunteers. Working within identical floor markings (the original video was created in a school gymnasium), the volunteers watched the video while emulating it, thereby creating a fracture. The installation showed the two videos at either end of the "court" which was divided in the middle by a wall. Clear globes—within which were inscribed communication symbols: a cloud, directional arrows, chain links—rolled freely about the gallery.



Alexander Vaindorf and Jenny Althoff

*BASIC ASSUMPTIONS, 2000*

MIXED MEDIA AND VIDEO

# THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES



← ANTENNA DESIGN: silver clothes hanger with hook painted in a silver

## INTERVIEW: Antenna Design interviewed by Janet Abrams

In January 2001, Antenna Design partners Masamichi Udagawa and Sigi Moeslinger created *The Emperor's New Clothes* installation at Artists Space. As guest curator for this exhibit in the Architecture and Design Projects Series, I invited Antenna to demonstrate the hypothesis that design today is more concerned with changing people's behavior than with the traditional modernist mantra, "form-follows-function." Antenna's project played off the notion of the typical fashion store dressing room to deliver digital fantasies of transformation, using five simple-looking clothes hangers and interactive images projected by a hidden computer onto the changing room's mirror. By entering the changing room with one of the five hangers selected from a row on the outside wall, and placing it on a hook, visitors encountered an enhanced version of themselves. But not in terms of modified apparel and personal appearance; rather, via digital riffs on metaphors implied by the abbreviations of standard clothing sizes: P, S, M, L, and X.

In June and July 2001, Antenna presented *Firefly* at the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage as part of Creative Time's summer exhibit *Massless Medium*. In this project, a combination of ethereal "real" elements of domestic furniture—a ladder, a cage, a chair, etc.—are dispersed throughout the Anchorage's crepuscular space, demarcated as outlines within the darkness using electro-luminescent tape. Each of these iconic forms is accompanied by an electronic "fount"—a Streetbeam outlet to which visitors could "beam" to receive, onto their handheld Palm Pilots, a series of brief interactive scherzi also designed by Antenna, as a counterpart to each item of "furniture."

In July, I spoke to Masamichi and Sigi about the themes connecting these two projects, and other underlying currents in their work.

**Janet Abrams:** How did *The Emperor's New Clothes* at Artists Space develop into *Firefly* at the Anchorage?

**Masamichi Udagawa:** There's continuity in the storytelling aspect. We often try to think about storytelling and—as you touched on—about manipulating people, having a little fun out of it. Or, to be a bit more subtle: about "behavior alteration." With ENC, we had a theme to work with, but then adapted this story and made the experience. *Firefly* wasn't as straightforward.

**Sigi Moeslinger:** Each of them is a separate application. Carol Stakenas [Creative Time's Associate Director] had been talking to us for some time and when she first approached us, it was about exhibition design. But in the course of development we figured it would be more interesting to do what we did. The Artists Space piece certainly helped.

**MU:** It had a great impact. She wanted us to address some of the issues derived from the show's title, *Massless Medium*, focusing on perception rather than the physical object, trying to define them as two different things. The major

emphasis was on how people perceive things, without presenting traditional heroic monumental sculptures.

**JA:** What I really liked about your intervention at the Anchorage was this notion of a gift: you go to a show and get something you can only get there—even it did have me re-setting my Palm Pilot several times!

**MU:** Yes, definitely. We actually saw a firefly in Manhattan for the first time this summer: it was a quite shocking experience. Growing up in Tokyo, I had never seen such things.

**JA:** Me too! I remember when I first saw them in this country. I was thrilled!

**MU:** Riding the subway every day, we see more and more people using Palm Pilots, especially young people, even beaming each other. When we were in the Anchorage space, somehow these things came together. We started to imagine people walking round this big, dark space beaming each other, with the backlight on—it's a similar blue-green to a firefly.

**SM:** We were already playing around with electro-luminescent material—the same stuff that's used for back-lighting in a Palm Pilot. We had used it in the head of the IBM info-portal—the one you said [in the I.D. Magazine Design Review July-August 2000] looked like a dentist's chair.

**JA:** No, a beautiful piece of dental equipment!

**SM:** We just had the material lying around, waiting for an opportunity to use it, but in a different way.

**MU:** Lewis Spitzer, the founder of Streetbeam, approached us to do a next-generation Streetbeam. The company sponsored our piece at the Anchorage, though they had to write their own software to change the operating systems.

**JA:** So was it just serendipity—you had this electro-luminescent material in your studio, saw some fireflies, and realized the similarity to the Palm Pilot? Does that mean any material lying around in your studio could potentially lead to your next project?

**SM:** It could, if there is some relation to the venue we're dealing with. Given the title *Massless Medium* and the dark setting, we knew whatever we did would revolve around light—since we're not sound artists.

**MU:** Also, we have to be sensitive to the context. In ENC, the context was SoHo. And we're fully aware of the Prada thing coming up with Rem Koolhaas' OMA/AMO, [Prada's forthcoming New York store, in the former space of the SoHo Guggenheim, will have "virtual" changing rooms that allow the guest to try on actual Prada clothes and simultaneously see themselves in different outfits pulled from the company's inventory, via a web-site projected in the cubicle. Previewed at the Fondazione Prada during the Milan Furniture Fair in April 2001, Prada's version of the electronic changing room is more literal than that of Antenna, whose ENC project debuted several months earlier at Artists Space.]

**SM:** It was really funny to see the scene at Artists Space on the opening night: people queuing up, even getting upset with other people who took two hangers at a time. It was hilarious to see how perfectly they played the part we had assigned to them. They were



INSTALLATION VIEW



*all standing in line as if there was a big sale going on.*

**MU:** Our prescribed conditioning worked very well.

**SM:** *We tried to expand on that in the Anchorage: setting up a series of conditions that make people do the things you'd like them to do.*

**MU:** By using the right theme and design, you can control people's behavior.

**SM:** *Of course, we're not asking people to do very adventurous things.*

**MU:** The Anchorage space was really the major inspiration, but so was the season: summer. From our past experience visiting previous Creative Time exhibits there, it's really a cold, damp, chilly space. That inspired not only the firefly, but also the ghostly fairytale experience.

**JA:** What's fairytale about it?

**MU:** It's common among Japanese school kids to go into a graveyard at night to show off and prove your courage. During the day, you put an object at the far end of the graveyard and when night comes, you get together again and one by one venture in to pick up the object. The Anchorage had a similar feel: spooky. **JA:** In one of the articles about your ticket vending machine for New York City's Metropolitan Transit Authority, you make a point about how people behave when they're in a utilitarian setting, such as buying a ticket or using an ATM. You said, if it's hard they won't bother, but if it's simple, logical and quick, they're more likely to give it a try. Does the exhibition setting change that?

**MU:** People's attitude and expectations are totally different when they're facing rush-hour transit. In an exhibit, or in a theme park-like extravaganza—which museums have been becoming—there's much more willingness to play. At the same time, museums have their own constraints. Especially when there aren't too many people around.

**JA:** If there are more people in the gallery, there's less inhibition?

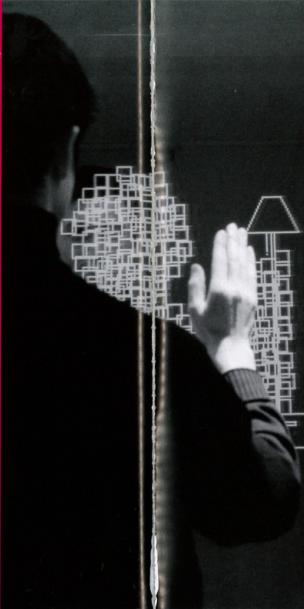
**SM:** *If someone sees someone else interacting, they'll do it too. But if they're the only one there, they're often hesitant to go ahead and touch and explore. Quite a few people who went to Artists Space looked at the wall, peeked into the dressing room, and thought that was it. We discussed whether or not to give more instructions, and decided not to. We felt that, in the exhibition context—unlike the vending machine, where it's crucial that people know how it works—a big part of it is exploring. If you give instructions, you kill it in a way. It's more important to preserve the satisfaction of figuring it out, and not the end of the world if someone doesn't. If you have no idea what's going to happen, and you engage it, and see it unfolding before your eyes—it's really wonderful.*

**MU:** Surprise is very important.

**SM:** *You don't need to have existing knowledge about computers. All you need is curiosity.*

**MU:** Actually, that's not true: if someone doesn't know the story of *The Emperor's New Clothes* it doesn't work.

**JA:** But if they've ever been in a dressing room of any sort that's surely enough. They know they're in a gallery, not a shop, and see a setting they recognize. They don't necessarily need to know the Hans Christian Andersen fable. What is the need for a story in design?



**MU:** Story is quite fundamental to how people behave. You always try to make up a story whatever the circumstances—to make sense of your action, whether it's on the job training or training for some kind of physical competition. People invent stories to cope with or just to enjoy their circumstances.

**JA:** Is that true for everything?

**MU:** Not everything. Even utilitarian things need to capture a little bit of imagination.

**SM:** *Often unintentionally, even something utilitarian has a story: the story of its use.*

**MU:** Giving people a story encourages them to act in a certain kind of way. If there's no story, people are less active. Even for a super-functional object, which may have a complicated usage mode, a story is a good way to explain things.

**JA:** Talking of functional objects, let's take a rather harsh example. If I walk into Staples and I want to buy a fax machine or a paper shredder—or just about any office technology—there are whole rows of ugly fax machines and ugly paper shredders to choose from. They probably all work fine and do what they're supposed to do. But they don't have any kind of elegance to them. Why are most consumer electronics so unattractive?

**SM:** *I don't know, but they're certainly nicer in Europe. I remember my sister once visiting me from Europe and wondering why we had this brick for a telephone.*

**MU:** One thing is that the price-point for products in Europe is much higher. When you're constrained by cost, you tend to do obvious things. Shaping a molding this way or that doesn't add any cost. But if you want to do a tight seam with less detailing, to make it really minimalist, that will cost quite a lot. So if you're constrained by cost, you beat the hell out of it and make it do whatever. **JA:** For an ordinary consumer buying almost anything that isn't a cell phone or a PDA, the choices are really disgusting. Not just the form, but the obsessive display of functionality, the willful molding changes, curvatures that are totally out of proportion to your hand. There's almost nothing you'd want to look at on a desk.

**MU:** That's true. Their designers are not in sync with the type of story people need.

**SM:** *We've been looking for a fax machine, but every time we go into a store, there's nothing we want to buy.*

**MU:** We have a certain degree of self-respect and the stuff we have to use should adhere to our values.

**JA:** How do you find out about new technologies to use in your work?

**SM:** *We're not really actively researching. We stumble on something and think, "That's interesting. What could we do with this?"*

**MU:** We tried radio-based identity tags for ENC but it wasn't quite appropriate because we wanted events to happen immediately after you took the hangers off their hooks or put the one you've chosen onto the hook in the dressing room. Physical contact was very important at the exact moment of turning the projection on or off. A radio tag doesn't require physical contact, which is precisely its advantage—it's a proximity sensor, so when you get close it already triggers.



SM: We wanted people to be really conscious that "you did this," and now "you get that" in return. Using them would have defeated the purpose of radio tags which are contact-less.

JA: Who makes them, and for what primary uses?

SM: Texas Instruments. Radio tags are generally used in warehouses for tracking objects, but also for tracking animals: they can inject really small ones into everything, from fish to birds. They even store information, not just ID, but you can also give a tag a number of properties. Bar codes require a direct line of sight, whereas you can drive by a radio tag and so long as you're in range, everything gets registered. At least we have them, so maybe we'll use them in a future project!

JA: How are the different hangers "read" by the computer?

MU: The hooks were an open circuit that gets completed through the hanger. Electricity flows through the hanger and each hanger has a different resistor, so it's reading a measure of resistance.

JA: There's a lot of talk these days about "Experience Design." Is this really a new field of design, or just a new name for a range of activities that have hitherto been the province of different kinds of designers?

MU: We've been doing it for a while. The word has just become fashionable recently.

SM: We're working on an interesting project right now for Nike, a scenario-based concept development for services and projects. They're interested in expanding their technological platform from shoes to other things. We're doing "fiction injection."

MU: We invent characters, stories based on people in popular magazines and interviews, and make a patchwork of these anecdotes. In most scenario-based design development, the definitions are fairly generic, basically using demographic data: what kind of car "he" drives, what kind of food "she" likes. They might put a name or a picture to each "character" but actually the scenario is either based on detailed task-analysis—"push-this/push-that"—or is very fragmented.

SM: And they always focus in on very obvious parts of the process.

MU: What we do is total fiction writing.

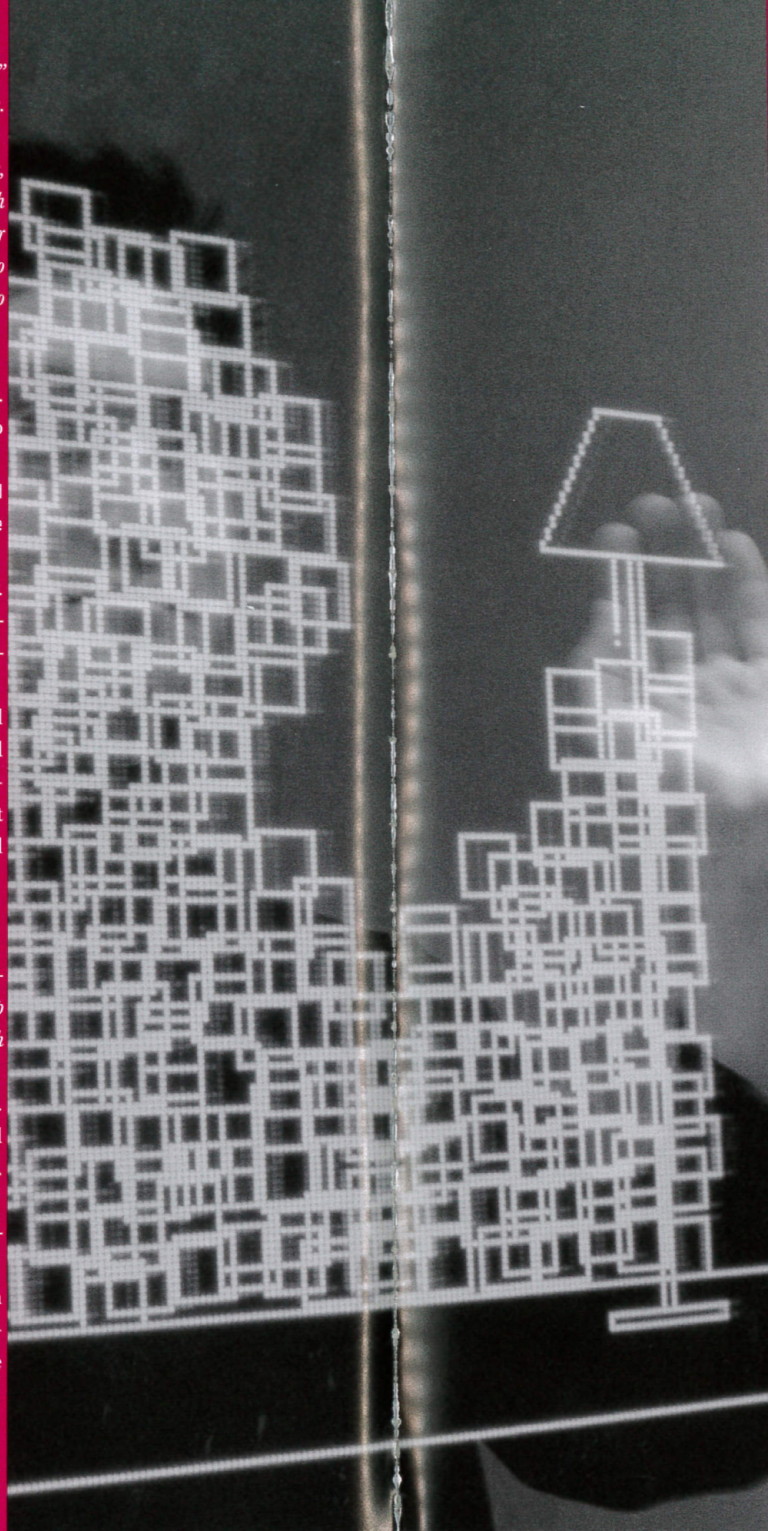
SM: Not generic, but specific. We do a trade-off; it's not scientific. In order to make a cohesive story, we have to crystallize a single narrative. Experienced designers tend to come up with every solution you can possibly think of. For us, the important thing is to define which one seems fit for a particular application. It's about crystallizing a really finite solution.

MU: By doing so, we can come up with a system-concept, rather than fragments. In order to create a particular kind of fictional story, we need this particular kind of product. And the feature set of this particular product has to be such-and-such.

JA: But that surely means it will only meet the needs of a finite user group?

SM: It's not about coming up with a solution. It's about coming up with the starting-point for a next-generation solution.

MU: The problem with the scenario-approach is that it might come up with an album of impressions, but it doesn't yield action. Rather, it works in the opposite way. The client still has to go through all those possibilities and choose among them.



SM: From our perspective, that's our job. The idea emerges when you put two things together, and the selection of those two things is really crucial.

MU: So it's problematic when the so-called creators present you with a catalogue of all these different possibilities. I'd personally rather see a well-choreographed finite piece than someone just throwing up on me.

SM: Because it leaves work for you to do. It's as if any technological product needs to be able to do anything. People seem to be afraid of saying: "No, it cannot do that. It's not meant to do that."

JA: How do you see your practice developing from here on?

MU: We'd like to make a more permanent installation. We consider installations as experiments and we enjoy them, but it would be great for those experiments to become more lasting.

SM: The audience in a gallery installation is fairly limited. We've also been wondering what there is new to do in furniture.

MU: We have to make a very precise, well-planned entry into the furniture arena. It's been bothering us.

JA: Because you don't have a chair out there?

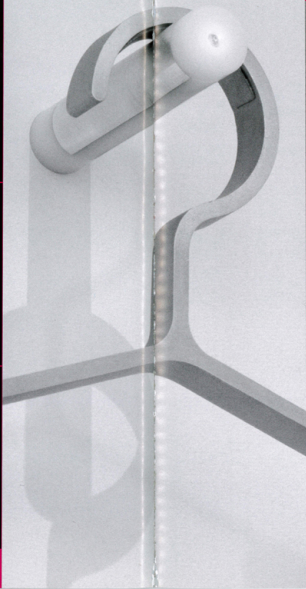
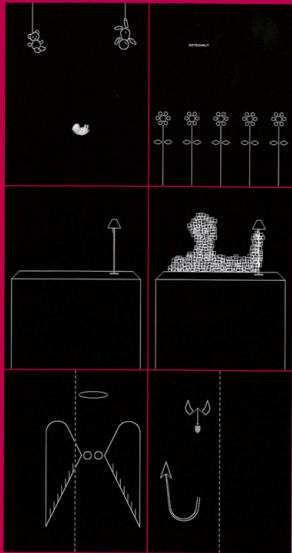
MU: Definitely. If it's done well, it lives long. A chair is one of the most difficult things to design.

SM: Successfully. Look at the office chair. The Aeron chair [by Don Chadwick and Bill Stumpff] is too much of an instrument. Once a chair has become such a machine, there's something wrong with your work. You shouldn't have to start inventing all these prosthetic devices to make your work manageable. Super gung-ho aesthetics are not what we're interested in.



INSTALLATION VIEWS





ABOVE: DEMONSTRATION OF THE "DRESSING ROOM"

LEFT PAGE: COMPUTER RENDERINGS OF HANGER'S ATTRIBUTES

TOP ROW LEFT: L FOR LIFE

TOP ROW RIGHT: M FOR METAMORPHOSIS

MIDDLE ROW: P FOR POWER

BOTTOM ROW: S FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA

# TIMELINE:

## A RETRO- ACTIVE MASTER

## PLAN FOR SILICON VALLEY



## INTERVIEW: From Metropolis to Silicon

Martin and Kodumbari Baxi interviewed by Henry Urbach

Henry Urbach: You've called *Timeline* "an urban strategy" meant to exorcise already-present qualities in Silicon Valley.\* What are the particular qualities—spatial, social, formal, economic—that interest you? And why would you want to exorcise these "qualities"?

Martin/Baxi: We would modify the term "exorcise," although in many ways it is a perfectly appropriate way to describe what we're trying to do. The reason is simple: a strategy based on exorcising already existing characteristics has become too closely associated with the promotion of a so-called "post-critical" approach to architecture and urbanism. With its origins, on the one hand, in an innovative reappraisal of the logic of pre-World War II capitalist development (i.e. "Manhattanism") and, on the other, in more recent—and decidedly reactionary—naturalization of digital technologies, this tendency is too laden with bad faith to be of use to many of us who are attempting to think differently about our post-Cold War era.

In place of "exorcise," then, we would offer a term as basic as "redistribute." On the one hand, to "redistribute" emphasizes the quantitative aspects of our enterprise (seeking out in various ways the qualities of quantity, as it were) and, on the other, redistribution suggests an ethical imperative to think of architecture in terms of resources—esthetic, spatial, social, economic, technical, natural, artificial—subject to manipulation.

To what ends? Out of loyalty to the modern avant-gardes, if nothing else. That is, we see *Timeline* as the projection of the values of the metropolis onto the suburbs, in modified form and perhaps even camouflaged. We do this as a way of extending the Modernist project of estrangement into the very spaces that have dedicated themselves, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, to the production, reproduction, and dissemination of a mind-numbing

domesticity, or "user friendliness" to be precise. In that sense, *Timeline* provokes first and foremost the alienation of the suburbs, office parks and parking lots that we want to recycle, redistribute and, yes, exorcise to maximize their salutary potential against such an onslaught.

On the architectural front, the main perpetrators of "user friendliness" are less the style-conscious, and often rather quaint, digital architects, but rather the New Urbanists. It is not at all by chance that New Urbanism has taken hold securely in Silicon Valley. Its effects are visible, if somewhat masked, in many recent corporate campuses, housing developments, and urban infrastructure strategies. Merely to assemble a self-consciously digital architecture against this, however, is to relegate oneself to the old Modernist dushin of "progress." Let's just say that neither the "post-critical" fellow traveller nor the cynical apologist appears to represent an acceptable model of architectural engagement. So we've had to look elsewhere.

HU: What sort of freedoms might flow from the strategy you pursue? What social and spatial transformations do you seek?

MB: This takes us to the affirmative side of things. Freedoms: we imagine a kind of autonomy, though less in the sense of an enlightened, self-reflective subject, than a subjectivity that differs endlessly from itself. A multiplicity. Very pretentious, we know. Although there is almost no evidence that such a project is within reach of the modest means of architectural speculation, again in a kind of perverse solidarity with the modern avant-gardes, the transformation of subjectivity remains a compelling object of aesthetic research. As for social transformations, that's rather simple: we aim to replace the corporation-as-family (an unfortunate model for social life in general, now more than ever), and a notion that has been naturalized and domesticated through the regime of user-friendliness, with a set of counter-institutions, produced in our laboratory: the corporation as a city of strangers.

### The Craco System



### The Golf Course Principle



HJ: This "city of strangers" suggests the influence of Georg Simmel among other early metropolitan thinkers on your own research. In what ways might Simmel's analysis of alienation as a productive aspect of metropolitan life animate your approach to reading and reconstructing the space of Silicon Valley?

MB: We freely admit our interest in transferring the values of the metropolis onto Silicon Valley, including the freedoms and responsibilities implicit in an ongoing encounter with strangers, including oneself. And that leads us to wonder: what would be the contemporary, ex-urban equivalent of the "biased attitude" Simmel described? Interestingly, over the past half-century, Silicon Valley has been the site of numerous intercontinental migrations. Its demographics defy traditional suburban stereotypes (although they also represent a potential source for new stereotyping, as in the so-called "model minorities"). Such regressive tendencies can only be preempted via mechanisms that refuse to offer a fixed background against which such figures can form. A city of strangers from across the globe is, in our view, far preferable to a global village.

HJ: Given the ongoing presence of the traditional metropolis, however—it continues to mutate and transform—what sorts of spatial-political relationships do you envision between the metropolis and the metropolized Silicon Valley? Do you think, for example, that the logic of Silicon Valley can anticipate new metropolitan conditions?

MB: First, I want to say that we clearly cannot think about spaces like Silicon Valley in the same way that we think about cities like New York. In northern California, as with many places across the globe, to speak about a "culture of congestion" is to speak mostly about traffic jams. Likewise, historically stimulating pathologies such as urban neurosis as depicted by, for example, Woody Allen, offer a less significant lens through which to view these conditions than, say, the phenomenon of road rage. This is why I prefer to think that we are, with this work, aiding and abetting a certain metamorphosis, in which the "values" of the metropolis take up new forms.

There are encouraging signs on many fronts, including contemporary cinema. Whatever the merits of their particular works, filmmakers like Todd Haynes (*Soyuz*), Todd Solondz (*Welcome to the Dollhouse*), and Hal Hartley (*Simple Men*) have for some time worked with material that is specifically suburban in nature. Even the popular success of *American Beauty* is encouraging. If anything, architects seem to have been caught off guard by such developments. We simply do not have the tools to deal progressively and experimentally with such an environment, despite (or perhaps because of) Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas*. Even such propositions as Rem Koolhaas' "generic city" lean so heavily on New York as a model that they remain caught in their own nostalgia for the metropolis, which takes the form of a romantic attraction to such anti-metropolises as Atlanta, in his case. We say this somewhat guiltily, sitting here in New York, looking out the window at its still-enthralling, massive, metropolitan delirium. But it must be said: Perhaps it can only be said from New York? Maybe we need to take advantage of our own perspective some parochialism? After all, all you need to do is have one look at the election-night charts of November 2000 to see how far off the map

New York is, a city that is a stranger in its own country.

HJ: What are your thoughts on density as it exists in Silicon Valley now, and as it might become?

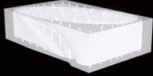
MB: This is an interesting question since we see density as a kind of paradox. On the one hand, the extremely low density of most Silicon Valley corporate campuses is environmentally irresponsible in an area as widely developed as this. This is of course the sprawl problem. But on the other hand, sprawl has its benefits—mainly as a source of the emptiness and disconnectedness we are attempting to cultivate in our work. So we are attempting to draw out, reinforce and even introduce these qualities in a more environmentally sound manner—and without drifting into any kind of "ecologism."

Feedback is our response. Or, to use a term we all remember from the 1970s, recycling. We propose to cause Silicon Valley to





DIGITAL MODELS



recycle itself—in a sense, to consume itself (in the form of available real estate, for example) but then to re-use itself. To feed Silicon Valley back into itself.

This is accomplished by drawing a line in the sand (remember that one?) at the southernmost edge of the Coyote Valley Research Park in south San Jose, the location of the proposed Cisco facility we have borrowed for our project. This would be a kind of zoning line, a provisional edge established for the Valley at its southernmost extremity. A strategy of containment, but not for the purpose of limiting growth. Instead, bounded as it is by water and hills on its other three sides, Silicon Valley would become a kind of island-like Manhattan, even. This is the deployment of The Golf Course Principle at a regional scale.

Think of urbanization here as a networked system of isolated islands, rather than as a continuous carpet. But now here's the paradox, since you might argue that this sounds suspiciously like a traditional network of regional cities—downtowns linked by rail, road, or communication lines. The difference is this: the strategy we propose takes advantage of a certain self-similarity discernible in some networks. That is, within the island thus established called Silicon Valley, we propose systems within systems of smaller islands, exemplified by The Golf Course Principle as deployed in our Cisco site plan.

By limiting sprawl you don't automatically get an old-fashioned version of urban density, but rather more—and numerically denser—sprawl. Sprawl turned in on itself. This is The Entropy Principle. As Silicon Valley's upper limits on density become increasingly obsolete over time, it recycles itself by, for example, permitting taller and taller buildings to replace lower, existing ones, or filling in the gaps between buildings with denser objects separated by just as many, but smaller, gaps. *Ad infinitum*. An internal carpet of densification, with no downturns to speak of. Unlike in a city like New York, where the buildings line the network, these buildings will be located as far apart from one another as the current parameters will permit, like "points"

in a network. From a two-dimensional notion of density (rows, or lines, of buildings), to a one-dimensional notion (buildings as infinitely dense points). This also explains why each of the buildings we have designed contains an internal vortex of pseudo-public space. It wears its city on its "inside," as it were. An implusive urbanism and an architecture of black holes, or black boxes. Take your pick.

■ What are the notions of "complexity" that have guided the development of Silicon Valley corporate campuses, and what notions of complexity would you substitute or confront them with?

MB: We'd have to say that certain ideologies of complexity, projected onto the now somewhat limp rhetorical balloon of the "new economy"—i.e. networked, dehierarchized, self-regulating, benign—have also been projected onto spaces like Silicon Valley mainly in the form of a managerial style. This is a well-worn image by now: the corporation as your best friend, its facilities designed like a village, to encourage the uncontrolled proliferation of social networks in the interest of increased productivity. A good example of this is the headquarters designed by the San Francisco-based firm Studios for Silicon Graphics. You will remember, of course, that until recently Silicon Graphics (SGI) has been the brand name that has signified all that was radical and advanced in digital architecture. For a while it was as though owning one of their devices was a prerequisite for producing an architecture of so-called "complexity." Well, as it turns out, their campus, outfitted in what can only be called "Corporate Decon"—the collage-like architectural style that their computers supposedly rendered obsolete—is a kind of village, a system of nooks and crannies crisscrossed with coffee bars and hung out spaces that would make Christopher Alexander proud.

Is there a contradiction here? Absolutely not. Since it is precisely a computer generated "complexity," with theoretical sources that have informed both Alexander (a guru for many Silicon Valley-ites, by the way) and "new economy" theorists such as Kevin Kelly, a version of complexity that digital architects and Silicon Valley



managers alike have warmly embraced. This is simply to say that yes, indeed, at all scales from the regional to the urban to the interior, Silicon Valley is more network than traditional city, a complex web of nonlinear relations. But it is precisely this idea, that complex webs of nonlinear relations are somehow more natural (work-place-beehive), and therefore better (i.e. dehierarchized, self-regulating, benign) that has returned both architectural and managerial theory to the reactionary ideologies of the village in the form of so-called "complexity."

**HD:** In what ways can this project be seen to implant your earlier work on *Entropia*? What sort of progress, and critique of progress, does it envision?

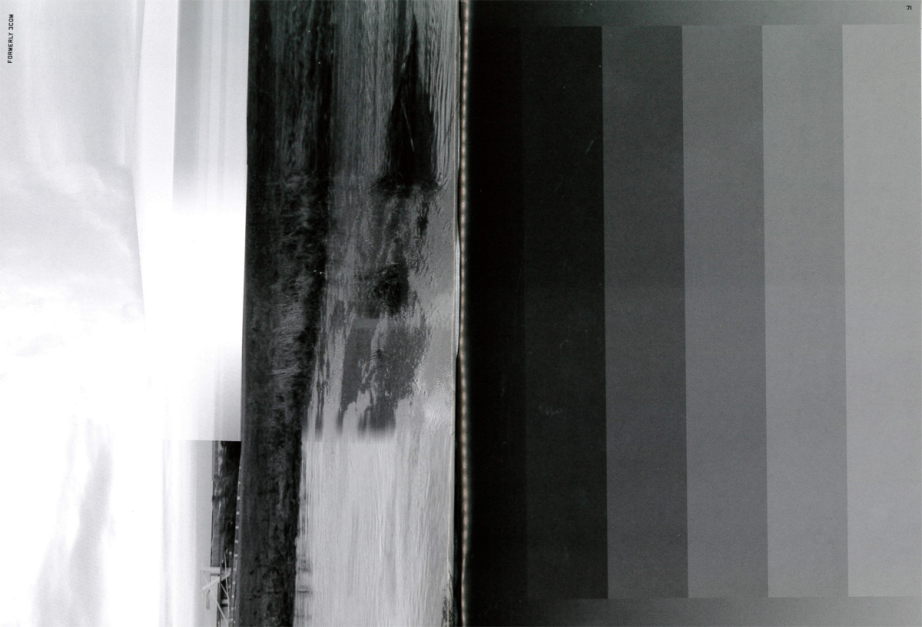
**MB:** The problem with most critiques of progress is that they assume a progression beyond the modernist notion of progress. The end of progress thus always represents in some sense a new beginning—in other words, progress. We, on the other hand, would propose a return to the old notion of progress, but purely in the interest of converting the Modernist arrow of history into a kind of circle. Replace "from-to" with "feedback." Thus also the return to the presumably outmoded notion of a "master plan"—here reactivated retroactively.

The mastery implied by this plan is not the same as that of the *Cité Industrielle* or the *Ville Radieuse*, or so we would like to think. But it is also not purely negative. In that sense, again perhaps out of perverse solidarity with the modern avant-gardes, we do indeed anticipate a kind of progress. We have named that progress, in the earlier project and publication you mention, *Entropia*. Stuck forever somewhere between Utopia and Dystopia, *Entropia*, as its name suggests, manifests an irreversible, inevitable process. It does not stand in for progress in the humanist sense (the ultimate transparency of signifier to signified, of representation to reality)—that messianic moment that would have been, but also could never have been, had Le Corbusier realized his *Plan Voisin* for example. No, *Entropia* merely occurs. And all that we have attempted with that work is to remain faithful to its logic. Thus the recycling of a Skidmore Owings Merrill

(SOM) office building, the 1964 Formica House, and the U.S. embassy in Saigon, to produce objects that only empty these abandoned figures further. This is a logic completely counter to the recent example of the reconstruction of Lever House by SOM. There, the old, Modernist notion of progress is rehearsed, by the postmodernist leaders of the current SOM, through the museification of the modern city and the relegation of its objects to the category of a fetishized "history," fall of pseudo-meaning. (An aside here: our email software has just highlighted the word "fetishized" [again!] and indicated that "this message has some language in it that might be offensive." Indeed.) In any case, we are proposing that history be approached with a much greater degree of seriousness than either former postmodernists or official, technologically sanctioned avant-gardists seem to be able to muster.

We thus consider the Silicon Valley project as an "implementation" of the ideas developed in *Entropia* insofar as it extends them into another, perhaps more tangible level of reality—if only to insist that *Entropia* was always already there to be found. Again, this is not about the "realization" of a project, the longed-for transparency of representation to reality that still haunts and impedes much of contemporary architectural discourse. Instead, like all media, the architecture in this *Retrospective Master Plan for Silicon Valley*, a timeline that goes around in circles, consists of only so many pieces of hardware that await the recognition of their utopian, and dystopian potential.





# A & D

## DEFECTIVE BRICK PROJECT

NOVEMBER 11, 2000 - JANUARY 13, 2001

## LAB

NOVEMBER 11, 2000 - JANUARY 13, 2001

## THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

JANUARY 27 - MARCH 17, 2001

## TIMELINE: A RETROACTIVE MASTER PLAN FOR SILICON VALLEY

MARCH 31 - MAY 12, 2001

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