

LYNN & IAN BADER
ORGANIZED BY PATRICIA C. PHILLIPS
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ARTISTS SPACE
223 WEST BROADWAY, NEW YORK

LYNN & IAN BADER

*"The truth about the future does not take the form of a verification of data which differ from others only in having some special importance. Rather, man's own will plays a part in that truth, and he may not take his ease if the prognosis is to come true."*¹

This is a time of some despair and much confusion in architecture, but there is reason for optimism based on a sense that the current whirlwinds and ideological gusts may clear the stale air of calcified dialogue. The freshness is a consequence of tenacious and tired debates that now seem finally beside the point. In the 1960s and 1970s a breach in architecture occurred between the polemicists and the practitioners, the visionaries and the builders, and those involved in drawing and those engaged in construction. In the 1980s, these oppositions, still doggedly maintained by some, are simply too comforting, too easy; there is a new cautionary tale based on intersection and coincidence rather than parallelism. The rejectors of architectural practice are not always, or only, the brave avant-garde innovators, nor are the builders necessarily the defenders or conservators of the architectural mechanism of satisfaction and accommodation. The subversives in architecture are now located within the edges of both traditions. It is a complex reconfiguration that requires more than reflexive response from the public, and, especially, the critics.

Ian Bader and his associate Lynn Bader have always sought to build architecture throughout their young careers; this is one of many reasons that they now reside in the United States. Over six years ago they left Johannesburg, South Africa for political, practical, and professional convictions. These personal and cultural histories are part of the generative material and sources that propel the Baders' creative work. It is in the tangled constraints and contradictions of constructing buildings that philosophical, linguistic, religious, and narrative ideas are inscribed and overlaid in tension. In theory and in practice, the Baders express both the hermeneutics of suspicion and the hermeneutics of the sacred that Paul Ricoeur saw as the contemporary condition. The architecture both discloses and confirms, perpetuating a sense of puzzlement as apparent and hidden meanings coincide.

Architecture is ultimately a bourgeois activ-

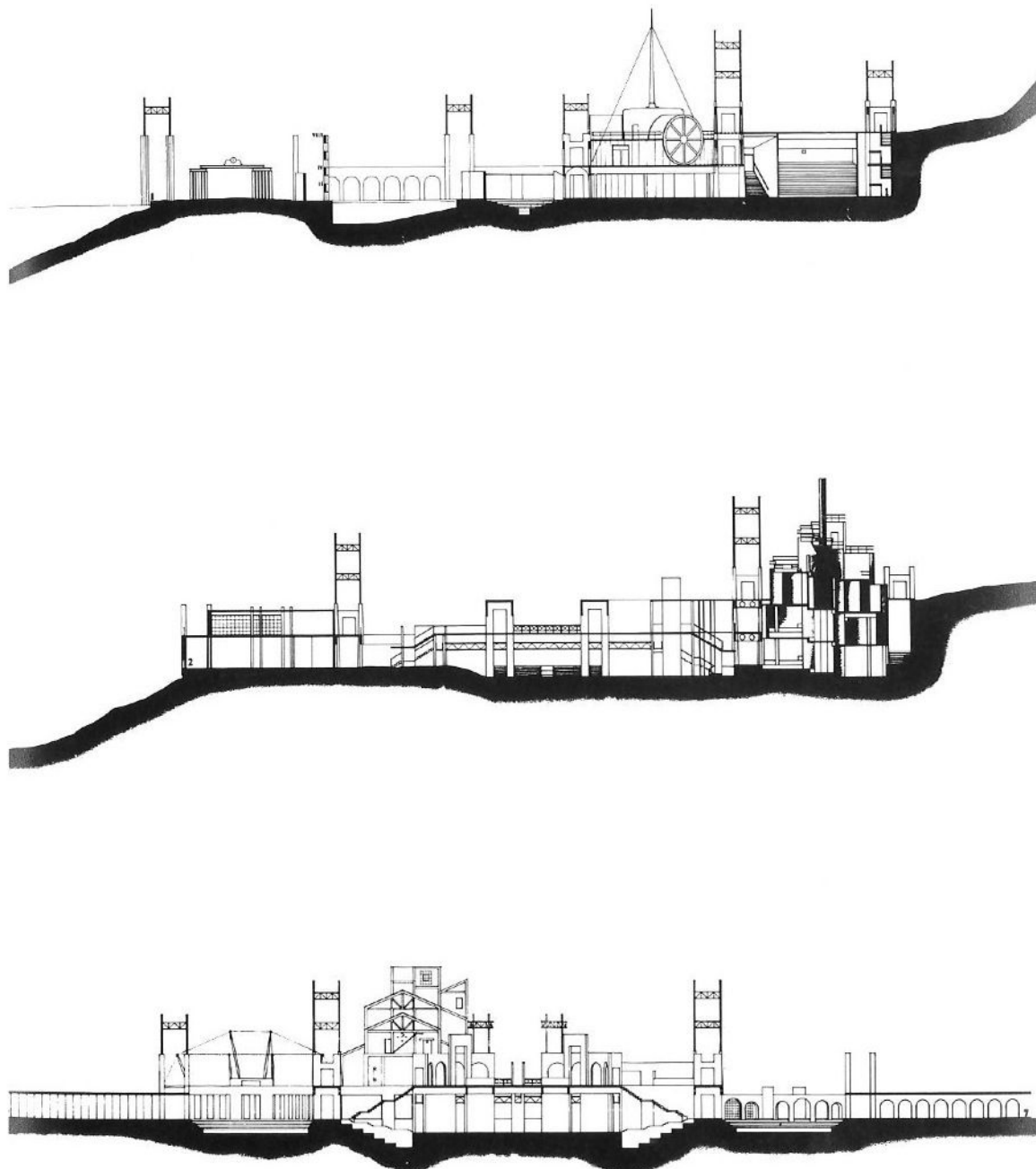
ity and it is in the irrepressible banality of clients' demands, budgets, and limited and limiting sites and conditions that theory is tested for both its influence on built work and for its independent itinerary. Ian Bader considers the client a "ready-made." The client represents the found object, the pre-existing condition which the contemporary artist chooses to accept. The requirements and expectations of the client are the everyday subject matter; each brings his or her own peculiarities to each project, but the artist and architect must face them all with some indifference and great openness. It is the very commonplace nature of the architect-client relationship that carries speculation beyond issues of form, space, and the manifestation of the art habit, to questions of production, the planned, and the incalculable. Of course, the great irony of Duchamp's ready-mades is that they became sought-after art objects; the ubiquitous became unique. Meaning was changed, enriched, and complicated beyond the intentions of the artist.

The client as ready-made is a metaphor that expands beyond concerns of practice; the larger context is, in fact, another great ready-made. The Baders are exiles in New York. As architecture students in Johannesburg the secure and enveloping embrace of tradition was potent and problematic. As residents of the United States, they are equally arrested by the restless turnover as the new sweeps aside that which is only recently old. The country that Henry Adams and Henry James sought to escape in order to understand, the Baders have sought as a sheltering stimulant. Their work is an intense silence in this cacophony of discovery.

Some architects who choose not to build buildings, construct laboratory-like controls. The Baders' working environment is constantly contaminated. Meaning is attenuated by random events. New York dust falls on the work and transit from the studio to the outside world is often risk-filled. Like Duchamp, they see these invasions as a process of esthetic invention that is not entirely monopolized by the architect. The critique of architecture is made explicit by their will to build and by their participation in a process that makes them exiles again and again.

Patricia C. Phillips

Max Horkheimer. "Postscript". *Critical Theory*. Continuum Publishing Co., New York, 1972. pp. 251.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS BIOGRAPHIES

Ian and Lynn Bader's Architecture Project is the second of a series presented at Artists Space during the 1986-87 season. There are few outlets for the exhibition of experimental or conceptual projects by architects. Over the years Artists Space has been able to play an important role in presenting the work of emerging architects. Ian and Lynn Bader's project was selected by Patricia C. Phillips who has also written an insightful essay on their work for the publication. I am grateful to her for her careful selection and for her enthusiasm and encouragement. Phillips is a freelance critic and curator. She is currently Associate Chairperson of Environmental Design at Parsons School of Design and also teaches architectural design criticism in the Masters program at the New School for Social Research.

Also thanks are due to the New York State Council on the Arts which has awarded Artists Space a first time grant this season to present projects by architects.

I also very much appreciate the enthusiastic cooperation of Ian and Lynn Bader who have made this project such a pleasure to present.

Susan Wyatt
Executive Director

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Ian Bader was born in 1954 in Springs, South Africa.

He studied architecture under the aegis of Pancho Guedes at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he received a Bachelor of Architecture in 1977 and a Master of Architecture in 1980.

Dissertation—"Architecture, Truth and the Work of Art."

He arrived in New York in 1980 and began working in the office of I. M. Pei and Partners.

Ian Bader has taught at Parsons School of Design; participated in the exhibition and publication of *40 Under 40* (1986); FIT exhibition of *Experimental furniture: the architect's alternative* (1984); and collaborated with Tom Otterness and Richard Flood for Creative Time at Art on the Beach (1983).

Lynn Bader was born in 1955 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

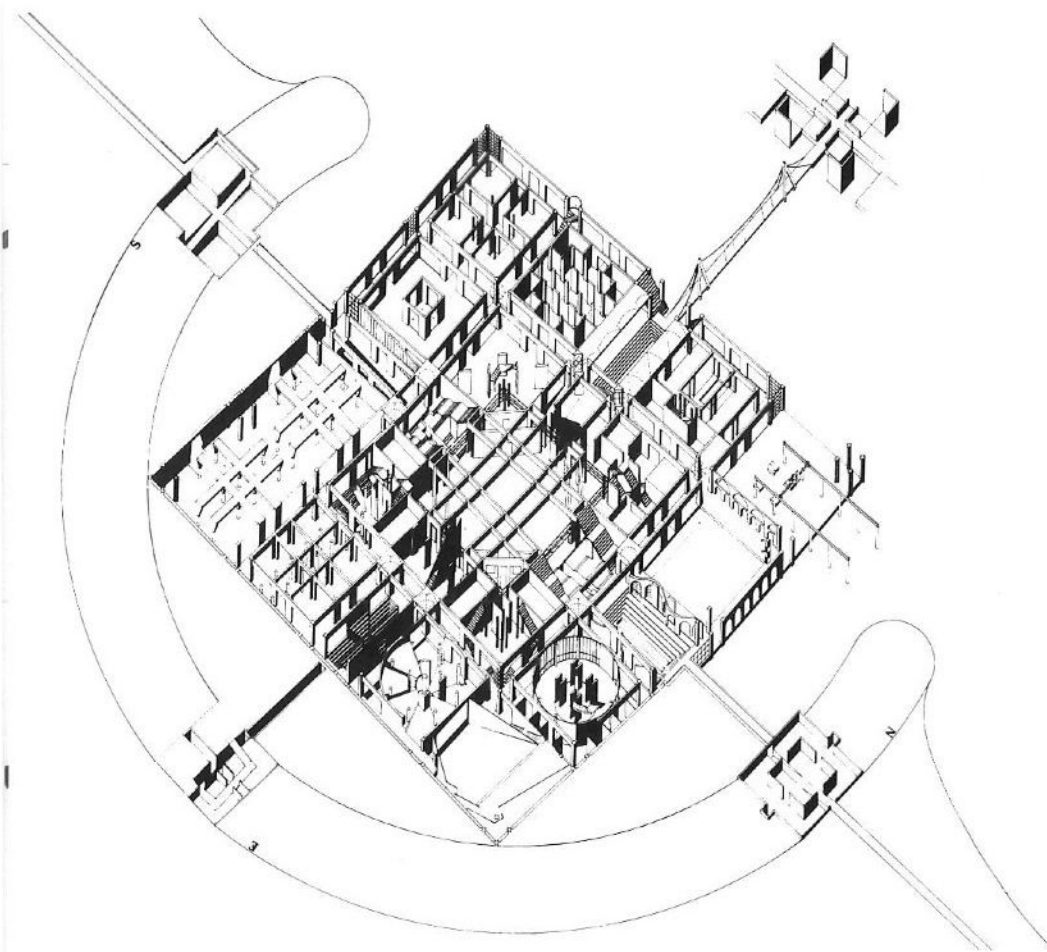
She studied architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand and graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1978.

She has worked with Ian Bader in New York on a series of projects since 1980.

Lynn Bader participated in the exhibition and publication of *40 Under 40* (1986); and the FIT exhibition of *Experimental Furniture: the architect's alternative* (1984).

List of projects:

House, Spring Valley, New York (1987)
Split House, proposed project (1983, 1987)
Hannukiah, 72nd Street and Broadway, New York (1985)
Tower, Battery Park City Landfill, New York (1983)
Town Houses, Riviera, Johannesburg (1983-1985)
Intervention, existing synagogue building, Riverdale, New York (1980)
Urban Intervention, Hurva Synagogue, Jerusalem (1978-1980)
Spalation Clock, communal building, Ormonde, Johannesburg (1977)



Captions

Ian Bader, *Spalation Clock*, 1977, Axonometric
Ian Bader, *Spalation Clock*, 1977, Sections

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