

DESIGN AGAINST



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TELESIS: DESIGN AGAINST

The College of Architecture Student Journal at
The University of Oklahoma

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A special thanks to the people who made this dream a reality.

Dr. Angela Person, thank you for believing in the vision and giving me the freedom and guidance to see this through. Director Stephanie Pilat, thank you for accepting my proposal and helping with logistics. Thanks to Stuart Coppedge and the Gibbs College of Architecture Board of Visitors for supporting this journal's publication. Credit for the quality of the work produced should go to Dr. Tiziana Proietti for guiding the team. Thanks to Sarah Melcher, Bri Rhodes, and Evan Sack for their tireless copy-editing. And the utmost praise is due to the exceptional students who worked tirelessly to curate and produce this journal. This journal is what it is because of the industrious and curious nature of those at the University of Oklahoma and beyond, and it is our greatest pleasure to share this with you.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first edition of a new era for Telesis. While Telesis was originally founded as a journal at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in the 1970s, this relaunch was conceived of in 2017. A comparative analysis of collegiate design journals gave birth to the idea that there is another way to approach these publications. This initial analysis revealed a stagnation in collegiate architectural journals; while the content within these journals is relevant to the design fields and always has been, these journals have often not been able to move with the world or reach a broader audience. While topics and ideation vary from publication to publication, these journals, when stripped down, are all the same: theoretical and built works of professionals, with limited engagement to students and amateurs of design, and a limited connection to the lives of those outside the design elite. Subsequent research reinforced this notion and led to my realization that OU was in a unique position to lead a change in the tide.

The University of Oklahoma celebrates its American School heritage, the foundation of which is the creative freedom afforded its students. This creative freedom was essential in the development of Telesis as a platform for students to use their voices as a means of influencing our environments and our futures.

Development of this journal was meant as a reinforcement of ideals established at OU decades ago. This is not the final form of this journal or this university. As the world and our students change, Telesis too shall change. Creating fixed vessels is not the future of Architecture, and we see Telesis as essential to the process of recognizing our role in this dynamic system.

Curator of the Creative,

Emily Hays

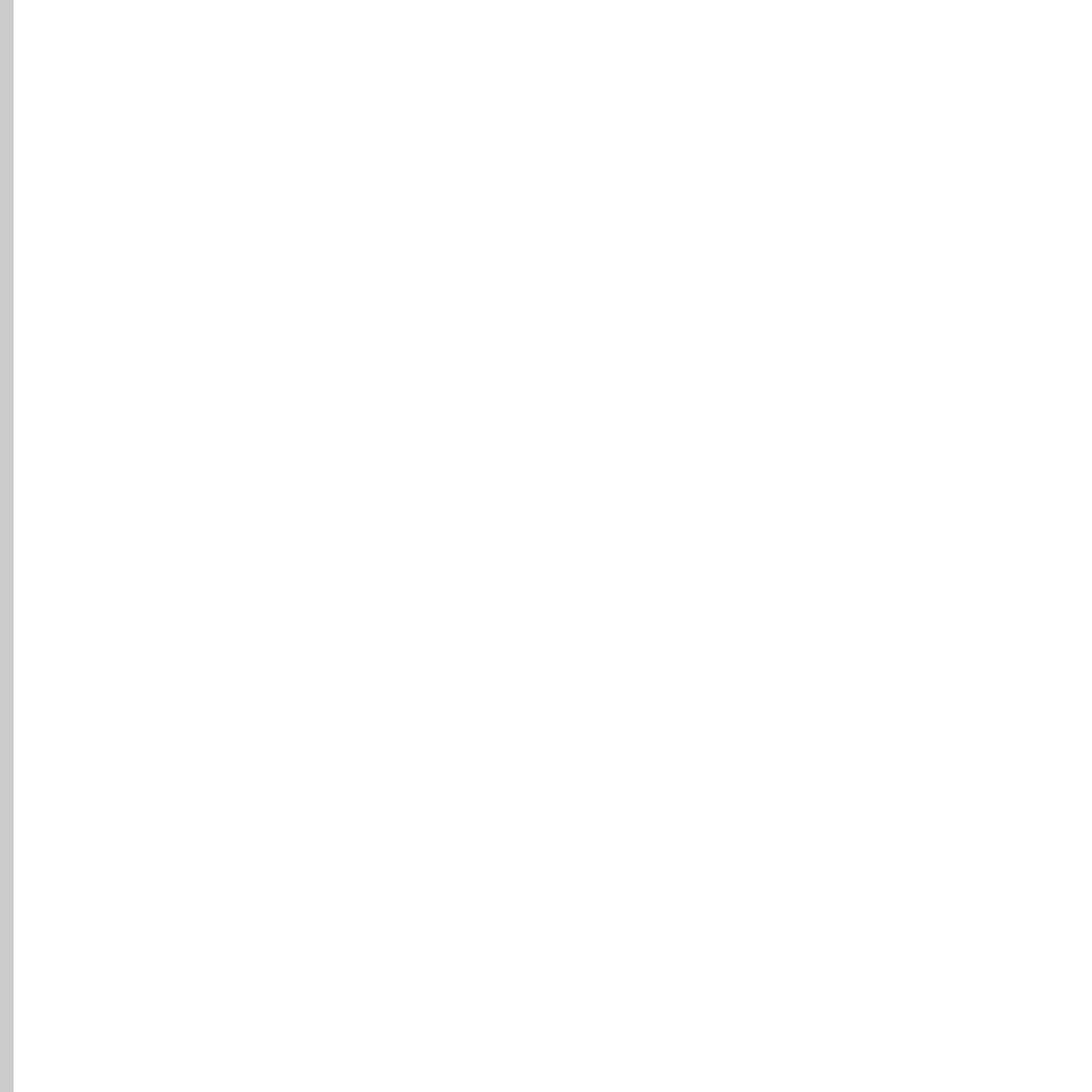
President and Student Founder of Telesis

TELEESIS

tel·e·sis

(te-lə-ses)

progress that is intelligently planned
and directed : the attainment of
desired ends by the application of
intelligent human effort to the means



Editorial	10	<i>The Telesis Team</i>
An Interview with Rex Miller	12	<i>Emily Hays</i>
Pendulum	22	<i>Ben Decuyper</i>
A Timeless Architecture	26	<i>Jose Nava</i>
Use It or Lose It	28	<i>Zach Hicks</i>
Give Me More	32	<i>Errin McKnight</i>
Re-animating the Built; De-centering the human	34	<i>Angela Person, Ph. D.</i>
Ochoquebradas House	38	<i>ELEMENTAL</i>
Are All Humans Equal	44	<i>Studio ASYNCHROME</i>
An Architecture of Language	46	<i>Evan Sack</i>
Architecture for Imprint	52	<i>Emily Homan</i>
Can You See?	58	<i>Magdalena Schaffernicht</i>
Ephemeral	60	<i>Tanaka Kawondera</i>
Below The Surface	68	<i>Yetti Obasade</i>
Growing Panes	74	<i>Haley Powell</i>
Scooters and Public Space	76	<i>Daniel Giles Helm</i>

In the process of finding a topic for the first edition of the re-birth of Telesis, we came across many different ideas. Talking about boundaries, ruins, starchitecture, isolation, static architecture, and others, we realized that what we were aiming for was a way to re-think the design process. In trying to think about issues that stimulate us to think beyond, and coming up with a topic that was broad but concise enough, we decided that our topic be the new process itself. Thus, Design Against is a methodology developed partly based on our own process and on historical references, that allows us to define the never ending aspect of the design process. Design Against is a lens through which we want to look at our context, that calls for finding a problem before claiming a solution. It feeds back on new problems this solution might arise, striving for a constant development of our now static context, which does not reflect the processes we constantly go through as humans living in society.

Then, in following this methodology, we first need to identify the problem. As aforementioned, for Telesis the problem was the current design process. As students, we have too many times encountered projects that call for us to design something without a basic analysis of the community and physical context of the site. Too many things are left aside. We see that in our own context, both in the profession and throughout in the world, there is a growing tendency to create architecture that is

either iconic for the sake of being iconic, or tries to solve problems without accounting for the needs of humans transcending basic function. As designers, as humans, we believe that there is more to a process. Today's society demands a context that is ever-changing and developing hand in hand with our communities. It is exactly here, in the post-modern society, that Design Against comes in.

In the lack of a theory pertaining to the XXI century, designers as well as other disciplines are in free roam. Since the beginning of time and art, there have been waves of style. Each responded to changes and needs in society at the time, or guided society to look a certain direction. One of the most recent examples was the switch from the enlightenment to modernism, in the rise of industrial societies. At the beginning of the XX century, with the first big wave of technological development, big cities started becoming bigger as they had to welcome migrants from the countryside. This major shift posed many questions, and the people living and designing in that era had to respond them. Thus, today we see skyscrapers, highways, suburbs, and basically life as we know it.

For us, what the early modernists did was designing against. They understood the problems industrial society was causing, and visualized a future that back then was completely out of the box of normal thought. Through examination of the current state of architecture, its values, principles, and meanings, we can question beyond any definition. All the things we take for granted, we want to take out from their very roots. From the clothes we wear, to the spaces we inhabit: we want and need to understand what makes our environment habitable and what could be changed.

The development of this process happens through pushing, pulling, and re-defining boundaries. Going beyond dualities or oppositions, Design Against asks us to consider how design might be activated as an agent of change in the world. By asking questions on specific issues that force us

EDITORIAL

On Design Against

The Telesis Team

to imagine new conditions, we can create utopias and dystopias, or as we prefer calling them: thesis and antithesis. In creating new environments based on our context, we bring to light relevant aspects of our society, be those good or bad. From this, we can come to a conclusion, a synthesis. The synthesis helps us understand how we understand these issues as related to our contexts and lives, and thus what we can do to design against them.

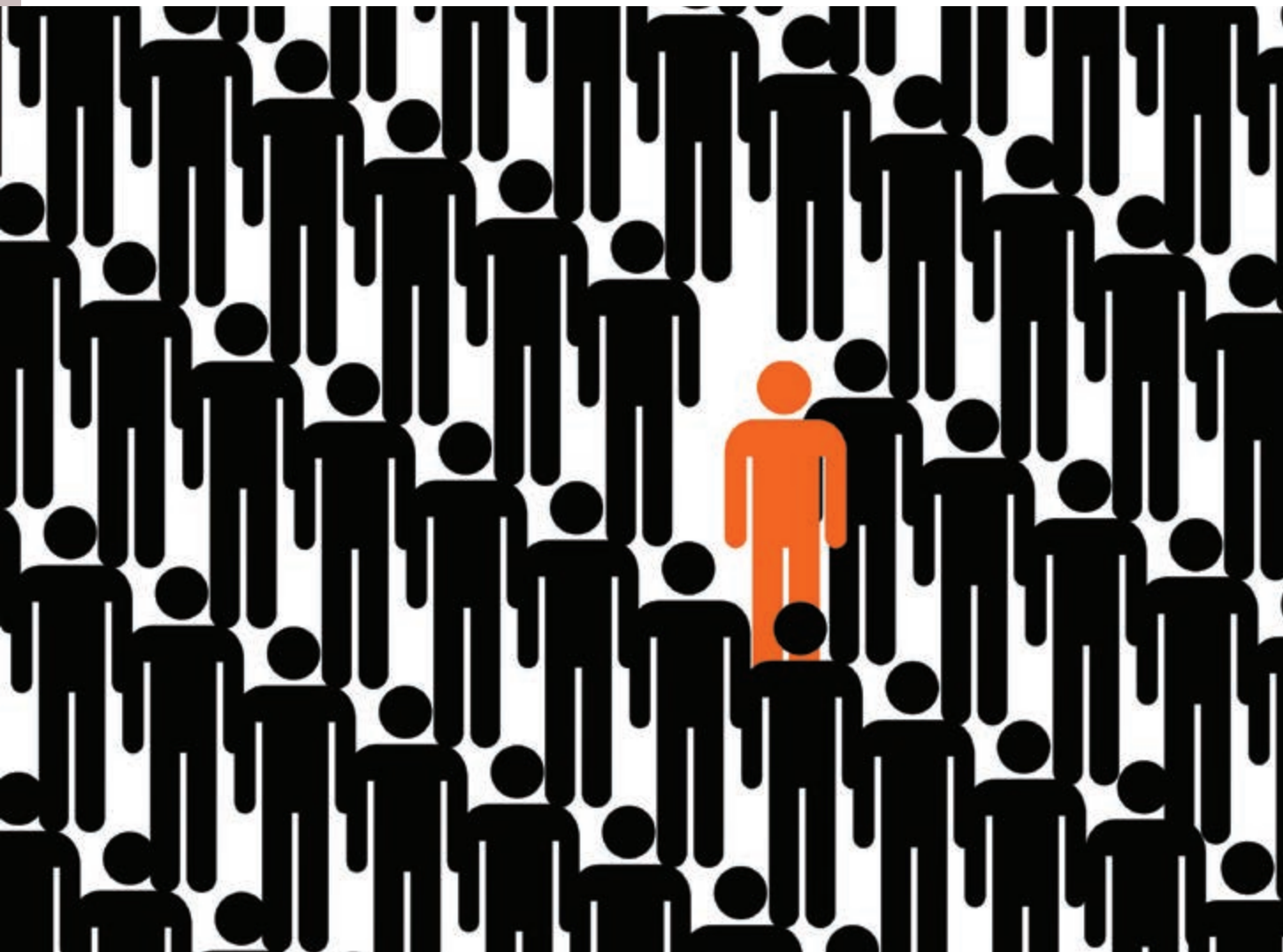
As humans, we tend to sink in our own status quo biases. Though, as societies we tend to do exactly the opposite. Thus, it is the so called visionaries who get the first say as to where or how society will change. These visionaries do not have any skill that others lack, but they have the foresight to find solutions to problems others have not even thought of. These problems, and thus their solutions, affect all of us. It is therefore that we believe that in order to create something meaningful, we must all learn something from designing against. We want to encourage everyone to think of time, scale, culture, and function. Think of these aspects of context that transcend waves of style, and how they affect our context as a whole. What effects do societal changes have in us, and how we can affect our environment.

The current design process circumvents the definition of a process by instead designing for a solution. This limits its abilities as a methodology to respond to changing societal conditions. The purpose of reimagining our ideology as design against is the provision for a critical design process that transcends scale, culture, time, and function. Design against transforms the collective psychology and redefines itself to avoid its current negative stigma. Through a renewed methodology of critical thinking, designing against aims to break the mental status quo. This is applied to all things in our context, as we believe architecture is everything and it transcends disciplines. We define the built environment, as the built environment will define us.

REFRAMING THE FUTURE

On Design Against
Emily Hays and Rex Miller

“Design Against is about questioning the status quo and redefining how we approach a problem or a solution and changing our perspectives as much as we can in the design process because that will lead to more innovative and more applicable results.”



Emily Hays: The theme of the journal is design against so several of the submissions are either like Utopias or dystopias. We are interested in the extremes of this topic, but we also want to look at real life and current situations where people are engaging with this topic. Can you tell me about how you use this topic? Are there tools you have?

Rex Miller: Scenario planning is a tool that futurists use. I'm a futurist by degree. I studied the effect on culture and a society of shifting communication technologies. We can now build 4 scenarios using current trends and events that fall into these quadrants to imagine what the world would be like. We also look at the trends. Technology is a big one. We can filter the quadrants through the technology lens. One scenario of the future is cooperative and abundant. Another could be cooperative and scarce; another could be competitive and abundant like now and finally competitive and scarce. Today we're living in a world that's very competitive and it produces lots of winners and losers, which is uneven. It's a great way to look at mapping possibilities using trends in technology, in society, in the economy, in the changing generations, etc. Then you just pick a variety of extremes and see what the world looks like.

EH: Do you think that your experience with this has shaped how you work now?

RM: Absolutely. About 25-30% of the work I do now is helping organizations not try to predict the future-because that's difficult but map a future path. How do we shift who we are today and get to something else? It's a process we have called mind shift. We've written four research books using this. The first thing we typically do is look at what the main constraints are and what the current system is. I do a lot of work with architects and construction firms. We looked at the game of bidding. What we determined is its a system where the rules dictate that the low bid typically wins. Now you can get all kinds of behaviors based on that and they're not all good behaviors. When we look at that in the future scenarios, we want to look for various

alternatives. Organizations or individuals that are actually attempting some of these non-traditional approaches are called outliers. William Gibson is a science fiction writer and he sets a standard for how to go about finding new futures. He said, **“the future is already here it’s just not evenly distributed.”** Part of our research is to go find somebody who is living aspects of the future we’ve imagined and find out how they got there. What did they do differently?

EH: That’s great! Now, we talked about it a little bit, but what drove your interest in this topic? That obviously deals with your familiarity with futurists.

RM: First it was my major that I didn’t get to use much. After I graduated from the University of Illinois with a Communications major I went to work as a project manager for a large communications company. It’s now AT&T but was Southwestern Bell then. They were going through some radical changes, one was a technology shift. From analog or mechanical switches - which you probably never heard of - to digital switches. That was a new technology that was a major breakthrough. It led to changing a regulated industry into a competitive one. So, I saw that major shift take place, and it was cool to see. I’ve watched how the business models have changed, how the work environments have changed, and how we had to move to an environment that was more flexible. When I became a subcontractor trying to promote a new product that seems like a no-brainer I ran into roadblocks and obstacles. The product had higher quality, took less time to install, did not need a lot of training to do it but people fundamentally rejected it. That drove me to want to get apply my background as a futurist, not just as a hobby. I wanted to change the industry so that it wasn’t so adversarial and so opposed to new ideas. I wanted to develop a structure that would allow people to come together early, collaborate and innovate with the owner.

EH: As a student of architecture, I am somewhat familiar with the construction industry’s practices and its inflexibility. I assume this may be the case for other Industries, as well. They learn to do something a certain way and it’s hard to change that especial-

ly from a financial perspective. Why do you think that is?

RM: The process we used to shift the industry of construction, we then applied it to companies and their cultures. We tackled education and then we went to health and wellness. The challenge is we create a business structure to facilitate doing a certain kind of work but when the world changes the structure doesn't. All the habits remain the same. First technology changes, so startups are the first most flexible, followed by small companies, then large companies, and then institutions like education. Education and healthcare are way behind and have a lot of bureaucracy. They're less able to adapt because the structure they created constrains them from being able to do different kinds of things. You've got structure then you have the process that manages the workflow. Those both have to change. Then there is the financial dimension. You will need a different kind of culture to support a different kind of talent with a different kind of training. It is easy to see why it is complex within one organization and then that organization is within a larger system-the industry.

EH: And that has to happen every time there's a major advancement or shift. So that's a lot to track.

RM: I don't know how old you were in 2007, but there was a major technological breakthrough, the iPhone. Apple wasn't in the phone business; they were making computers and iPods. But, technology was moving fast enough that they could combine three technologies: storage, telecommunications, and wireless into one package. At the time companies like Nokia, Motorola, and Blackberry were some of the largest phone manufacturers, and they were essentially out of business after that. The iPhone changed all the rules. That's what happens to companies - they have this mentality that tomorrow is going to be a little bit like today and the next day is going to be a little bit like tomorrow. It's a rational thought process, but the problem is that technology moves exponentially. I use the penny analogy with people. Would you rather have a million dollars today or a penny and double that every day for 31 days? Which one would you take?

EH: I suppose I'd choose the Penny.

RM: Yes! Many people have a hard time knowing why, though. What happens is at day 28 you've got \$628,000 so at this point a million dollars was the better choice, but suddenly on day 29 then it's \$1.2 million. Day 30 it's \$2.5 million. That's what technology does. That's what happened to Nokia. All of this development for the phone was happening visibly, but Apple came in with fresh eyes and saw that the three things can be combined. They weren't thinking of it as a phone. The same thing happened with Kodak. They made film, right, but they also invented the digital camera in 1975. In 1975 the images were lousy. Eight kB in two years became 16, in two years became 32, in 2 years became 64, and so on. Now, 20 years later this exponential rate of change is everything. Kodak thought digital images would never be any good. They stuck with the million-dollar cash cow of selling and processing film and then day 29 came and Casio had taken over in 1992. By then it was too late for Kodak to catch up. That's why it's so tough for organizations today.

EH: I remember buying a 32 Gb flash drive in 2012 and it was very expensive, and I lost it recently. When I was faced with buying a new one I hadn't realized how much had changed. I can get the same 32 Gb drive for \$5-\$10.

RM: Yeah isn't it crazy? That's why it's hard for companies to adapt. It's even harder for industries to adapt because that change happens so dramatically, quickly, and it stays invisible because you're focusing most of your effort on the primary thing you're doing. Companies need to have people keeping tabs on what's developing. Within a couple of years solar energy will be cheaper than the grid. Electric cars, in 10 years, will be cheaper than what we have now. All because of Technology.

EH: There is an increasing cost for employers covering health care costs for their employees, but companies save more money if there was more investment up front. How do you get people to care about this? Or change their mindset about Healthcare?

RM: Reduce the stress at work. This is the research from the book *The Healthy Workplace Nudge*. Healthcare costs will double in the next 10 years. You and I won't be able to afford healthcare, and neither will the country, so it's a big problem. Wellness programs attempt to change behavior. Now there are four key behaviors that drive 80% of all our health care costs: smoking, abusing drugs and alcohol, eating too much of the wrong kind of food, and sedentary lifestyle. Those things lead to what's called chronic disease. They build up in your body as inflammation and begins to wear the body down. Then we gain weight to the point that 70% of the population is either overweight or obese. 50% of the population has some form of chronic disease. This is what is driving up health costs and it is rising at a 7% compounded growth rate. Wellness programs are trying to get people to stop doing those behaviors or doing less of them. When you look at why people adopt those behaviors it is clear why wellness efforts don't work. Stress is the real killer and smoking, drinking alcohol, eating comfort food are ways people deal with stress. Unless we're really dealing with the root cause all those programs don't do anything because biology is stronger than incentives. Your body needs to cope with stress. The other thing we learned is that most people are not rational human beings. In fact, nobody is. Your brain uses 25% of your daily calories, and only 20% of the time is it focused on survival or things that are highly important to you. That is really all it has the power to do. Most of the time you're in default mode. I don't know if you've ever been to McDonalds or any place where they offer to super-size or grab a pie for a dollar. A lot of the time people just say, "sure, why not." That's because 80% of your brain is in default mode. It's called a nudge; an application of behavioral economics. One of the promising things we're seeing is that companies can use these nudges either in policy or in the environment. And that can help shift behavior towards better choices. It is effective, while traditional incentives have proven not to be effective in changing behavior.

EH: You didn't formally study architecture, but you work closely with this field now. What drew you to this and why do you think architecture is important?

RM: I was a tennis pro getting married and I needed a real job. A better job with decent hours but less pay. A friend hired me as a project manager in the architecture and construction department. What I saw was how powerful design is in the way people feel and how people work. You know it too. There are certain places you probably go to work because you like the way it feels. You like the sunlight, or you like the wood tables - whatever the sensation is. We are sensory driven beings. The environment matters. Buildings are also very important in terms of communicating what we do here. Every building tells a story, it either tells a good story or a bad story. When it's a good story the design is clear and intuitive. You know what we do here, why would we do it, what's important to us, and it even tells you who is important. It does this through corner private offices or through other mechanisms. It gives you permission about what to do and what not to do in the space. It makes it easy to navigate. Have you ever been to a hospital to visit a family member and can't figure out where their room is? Then your stress level goes up because you feel like you're in the catacombs. So, architecture has this kind of effect on us: the better we can do it the better people operate and we can actually lower the stress of people. Have you ever been in an environment that felt stressful? Or a relaxing space?

EH: Yeah, of course. I'm really sensitive to my surroundings. My partner is not from my field. He lived a very bachelor style life and when he came to my apartment the first time he said, "it feels so homey here!" He said he felt different within that space. This of course I did on purpose and he is not the first to recognize that shift in sensation.

RM: Yes Exactly. That's what architecture does. What you did was by design. That's cool.

EH: Can you talk about myths and lies perpetuated regarding the wellness industry and how misinformation can harm us?

RM: Well the wellness industry says that if you spend a dollar on preventive care (Wellness programs that includes fitbits, walking incentives,

etc.), then you will see a return on investment of \$3 or more. We spent 6-7 months trying to find the source of that information and it doesn't exist. There are two studies that people attribute this to. First, there was a Harvard study that said \$1 produces a \$3.78 return on investment, but they had to retract that report because it was bogus. Second, there was a large medical equipment company that people said made that claim. I spoke with their head of Occupational Safety and Health who had been there for 12 years. He said he was aware that they were referenced for this but had no idea where the research came from. The challenge is the research methodology. What is their Baseline measurement? Do you have a control group? Who is measuring it? Is it third party? Is the wellness vendor involved? All of this must be considered to really evaluate the number. Furthermore if it were really true, if a CFO of a company knew that he could get the 300% return on his/her investment by focusing wellness, they would be doing it. But they aren't, instead they are cutting costs. On the surface that claim doesn't make sense and that's the biggest myth that has been promoted in Wellness. There is a whole chapter in the book devoted to the myth of financial payoff.

EH: Design against is about changing the way you think and questioning whatever you're given. This is not only how you deal with problems in the book but how you work in general. What do you think is the merit of this mentality and ability to shift perspectives?

RM: That's a great question. What I've discovered is that we assume things work a certain way. When we started the research on wellness we assumed that wellness programs were good. Our intuition tells us that prevention is better than the cure. We seldom go much deeper to understand what the problem we're trying to solve is and its effectiveness. Now, because these problems are really complex and hard to unravel, my process brings in other stakeholders. We had over 130 experts from medical institutions involved in the research and none of us had the whole picture. It was only when we came together collectively and debated this that we started questioning our basic assumptions. That's when we started to uncover the real issues. I have found

that over and over in my life. You are at a certain level and then when you go a little deeper you find that you really didn't understand at all. These books are often my journey to figure things out that I assumed were true and turned out not to be. They just happened to be big topics like why education is failing.

EH: In an ideal world what is the outcome of people reading this book?

RM: Well I think the ideal outcome is that they began having the conversation internally. This is a road map to provoke discussion. We aren't saying we're the final word on this or in anything that we do. Just like we thought we were working on good assumptions in the first place - we don't know. But what it provides is a way that we can go figure this out, own our own truth, and have some ability to design our own future. I was with an inner-city school in Philadelphia a couple of weeks ago, and I shared some of the conclusions we made in education and where our research was headed. They pushed back hard on this because the research made it feel as though we were stumbling on new information on stress and fatigue. They were essentially saying this is the way it's always been, and it wasn't new information to them. That interaction helped me see that the condition is not new but our understanding of it is and that is its value. It's not that we're giving stuff out for people to take at face value we want them to wrestle with it.

EH: Can you tell me more about the Mindshift initiative?

RM: It is the process that we use when we are invited to tackle what's called a wicked problem. If you look up "wicked problems" in Wikipedia it talks about something being complex, interrelated, resistant to change, and oftentimes efforts to make improvements result in unintended negative consequences. Essentially anything that is stuck. Anything you have been trying to fix for a while we call that a wicked problem. The Mindshift process is how we go about fixing that. First thing we do is gather a "collection of the curious". These are people who are realizing there is a problem and are interested in working

on this. Then we work a bit to come to what we call the “cohort of the committee”. This is made up of those that say, “Yes we have clarity on what it is, and we want to solve it.” For example, in the construction MindShift we wanted to go from distrust and adversarial projects to trust-based projects. In education we wanted to go from a system designed to create insecurities and fear to one that fosters security, connectedness, and learning. In the workplace we wanted to go from an environment and culture that creates disengagement to one that lets people do their best work. These are all journeys. The process leads to us finding those positive outliers. Those breaking the rules and getting better results are the ones to watch. Then we can connect those dots, finding the commonalities in their behavior. Something similar that they are all doing. We then bring that together and tell a story.

EH: So, the Mindshift Initiative is the process your consultation firm uses, and you are not limited to a single industry, correct? Do you think that working with different industries on these complex problems has helped you?

RM: Anyone that is stuck in any industry, if they have a complex or even Wicked problem, then we put on our Superman capes and we show up and we play together. Working with various industries helps because what we are finding is that the human dynamics are the same. They are just in a different situation. It’s like if you’re living in a fishbowl you don’t know water is good or bad. If we jump into someone else’s fishbowl we suddenly see and feel the difference. Looking through a different lens makes it easier to understand what the problem is. It helps us to validate what we do and gives us different words, pictures, and metaphors that we can operate on and take with us to the next wicked problem.



Kengo Kuma | M2 Building

P E N D U L U M

Design Against Time

Ben Decuyper

The phrase “grandfather clock effect” is most often used in regard to politics. It is a phrase used to address our country’s inability to stick to a particular course. It’s a phrase used to quickly note our country’s willingness to test different approaches to how our country should be led or maybe to note our country’s refusal to be content. It could even be thought of as the product of viewing our country as separate presidencies, party majorities, or other forms of striation brought about by rhythmic tides or elections. We can apply the same concept to the history of architectural design at least in recent decades. We oscillate between extremes. We see this with modernism and then very directly with the movement that followed, characteristically termed postmodernism.

It’s maybe a bit idealistic or unambitious of me to say that what we have currently in the design community is a good thing, but I do feel that way. We have a good thing going in that many designers are concerned with the computer’s application within architectural practice, all the while not feeling beholden to a dominant architectural style. Instead designers are far more diverse in what they are choosing to explore due to the shock caused by the implementation of the computer in architecture.

Does the digital age cause an acceleration and dilution of “ism”? The recent influx and spread of information and publication could be causing accelerated and varied modes of thought. A potential downside, however, may be that the resultant modes of thinking do not develop or compete in competitive markets or academic circles. This concept was a topic of interest during a debate between Patrik Schumacher and Mark Foster Gage at Texas A+M in 2017. Schumacher’s

“How do we combat our trend of thinking in a pendulum driven manner? Or how has the internet potentially rendered the pendulum way of thinking obsolete”

statements were somewhat ironically attributed to the situation that his very own Parametricism would require more than a mere couple of decades to mature since the computer is such a recent advent. He then claimed that flourishing philosophies such as Object Oriented Ontology are only fads in architecture today. Gage found Schumacher’s authorship of Parametricism which entails such recent/young activities to be a revisionist history that the collective culture couldn’t have by now defined organically.

Mark Foster Gage’s approach here is far more democratic than Patrik Schumacher’s pendulum-esque attitude. That being said, there are pros and cons to pendulum discourse. The pros are that it causes us to investigate different hypotheses and venture to different extremities in a manner that allows them to develop over sizable increments of time. However, the con is that in doing so we only deal with extremes or antipodes. We will constantly be changing the field or circumnavigating its boundaries if we view the history of the profession in this way. This is largely what causes confusion for the profession. In this state, architecture isn’t nearly as palatable as it could be considering it is a part of everyone’s life. This trend of oscillating between extremes causes frustration and we see this in how

people have come to regard politics as a largely frustrating enterprise in recent decades.

How do we combat our trend of thinking in a pendulum driven manner? Or how has the internet potentially rendered the pendulum way of thinking obsolete? Brainstorming what has caused the recent oscillations to occur will help.

Some believe the end of the Modernist movement occurred on March 16, 1972 when Pruitt Igoe's failures culminated in a cadaverous heap of rubble, twisted rebar, and lost faith in architecture's capabilities. A hopeful housing project turned war zone became dust and debris, and the pendulum of architecture frozen at arc's end fell, slowly swinging once again. The modernist movement had its extremes. We see this with the modernists' approach to urbanism. We see this in the war against ornament. Keep in mind there were good intentions, however, many of the results were stark buildings or neighborhoods comprised of rigid high-rises.

What spawned the postmodern movement? I am of the likely fashionable or over dramatic opinion that it was a reaction to living in a world with the bomb. The cold war, the most ephemeral war, was carrying on and had no end in sight. A decade into this strange period, functionalism wasn't enough, wasn't necessary, wasn't adequate in addressing the culture. The result was to dip into the well of tropes from the architecture of antiquity in a very nostalgic way, and to sometimes mask it with humor, or create chaotic buildings in a time when so little was familiar.

What caused the shift from the postmodern movement to the current design mentality? Maybe 9/11. War was tangible warfare again. The jokes were over and there was a renewed desire for streamlined, no-nonsense architecture. Maybe it was the 2008 recession. There was no more need

to instigate confusion with barely discernible writings by architects who kept their thesaurus nearby. Writings which aimed to justify buildings of spectacle with their cartoonish, enlarged Greek columns or aggressively fragmented facades. The architectural profession was hit hardest in terms of unemployment maybe because many popular architects had succeeded during the postmodern period in confusing the public as to what architecture is. As a result, starchitects today fuel their legacies with over simplified diagrams turned buildings.

Next time there is a monumental cultural happening, maybe a war, a disaster, or some massive technological advancement, designers could shift again, venturing into a territory synonymous with the postmodern movement in the way it was harmful to the profession and how people view architecture. The industrial age changed our design landscape with an almost homogenous spread of Modernism. We are now in the digital age, so it is reasonable to assume that a shift is happening again.

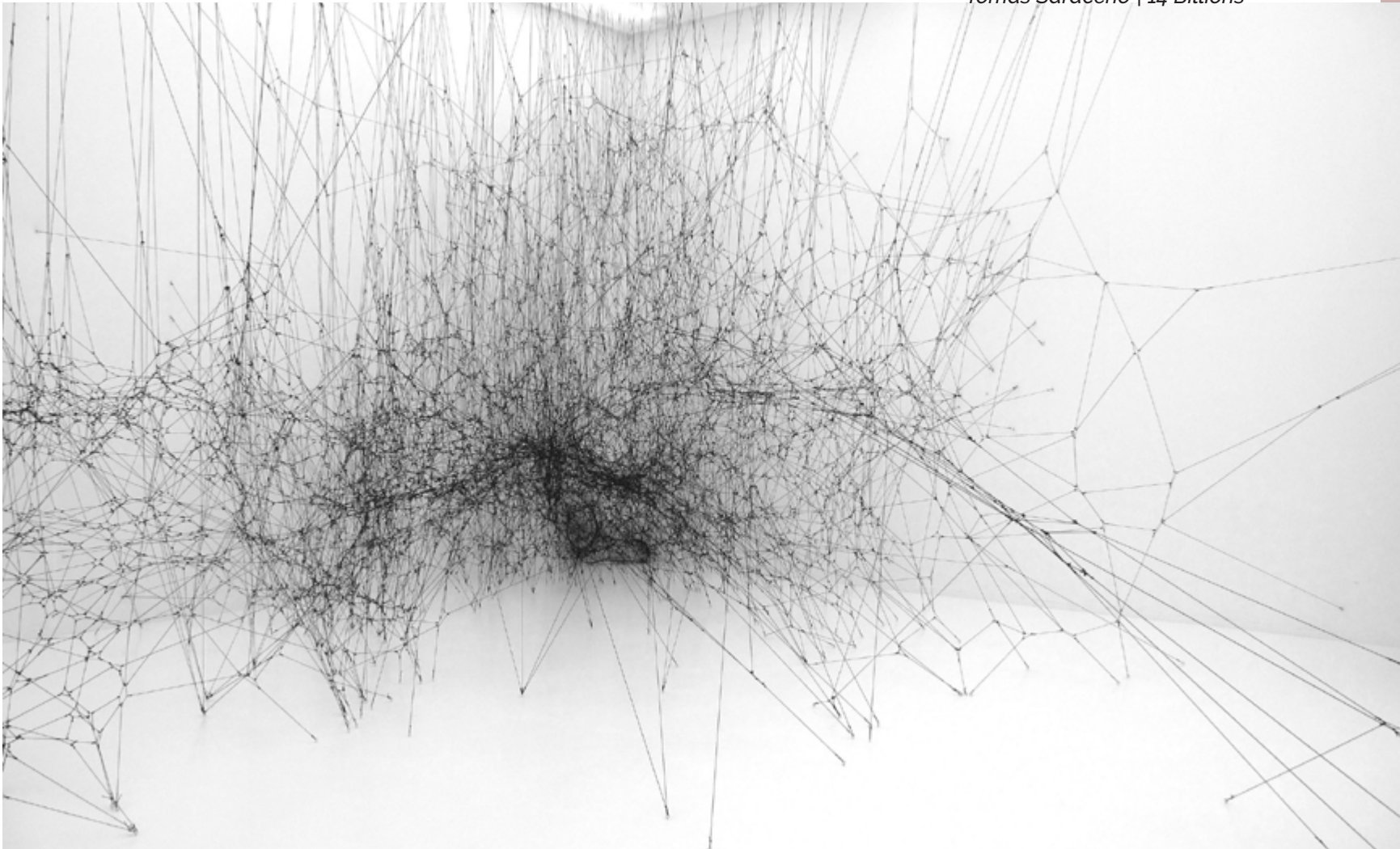
At this stage of the essay, we must forgo platitudes and generalizations. If we consider the past without cleanly defined edges or a history striated by conventional easy to remember names, we will of course see it as having been far more differentiated and diverse at the time. Within what we have identified as large collective schools of thought there were many subcategories, dissenters, and rogue individuals. The internet doesn't allow for striated documentation, segmentation, creation of chapters to occur retroactively in such a capital t true manner. Development of ideas has always been in a Deleuzian sense, rhizomatic and smooth, constantly ebbing and flowing. What is different today, however, is the presence of the internet which captures constant flux and documents it while it is happening. Everyone is an author, and everyone is a member of the audience and we are more conscious of this than ever. We are tapped into and entangled within the discourse. All the while, we truly cannot fathom what it means to have the internet at our disposal as it is far too young. There's little evidence yet of what it means on a social level, developmental level or political level. Some signs, however, are beginning to poke through. For example, social media is nearly a decade old and has already potentially challenged the framework of democracy as seen in the 2016 United States presidential election as well as the 2016 Brexit referendum. Of course, the presence of unvetted information is now a part of the authorship resulting in fewer truly educated citizens/voters.

It is going to take more than a single generation to truly develop a sound understanding of the internet's relationship with architecture. We need to attempt to convince our future designers that within the creation of new modes of thinking occurring in tandem with the current uncharted territory, not to subordinate measurable goals and current practices such as sustainable conduct.

This writing is the product of my reaction to the subject of the journal, Design Against. This idea that students are dedicating an entire student journal to "design against" may be equated to the grandfather clock still at work. While students are constantly feeling the need to "design against" things that are currently happening or things the

previous generation chose to explore, it must be thought of as a part of the discourse instead of solely reactionary or appealing to difference for the sole sake of difference. While students are preparing for their participation in this current shifting tide brought about by the digital age, students must do so in a democratic fashion and I hope students treat the continuation of architecture as one of constant change instead of stratum or pendulum oscillations.

Tomas Saraceno | 14 Billions





A TIMELESS ARCHITECTURE

Design Against Time

Jose Nava

“Design against is a form to tackle problems in today’s world such as financial, economic, technological, political, cultural, scological, and sociological in order to create futuristic ambient”

As I reach the final moments of my undergraduate career, I can’t help but question everything that I have learned in the past couple of years, and I am not questioning to challenge my professors about the material that they have provided me. I question the material for the sole purpose of gathering information for me to contribute to society as a future architect.

Design against time in order to create forms that will be able to withstand the nature of time, whether it be natural changes or social events of historical proportion. As architects move forward, we shall seek to create buildings that will be able to morph throughout the years to come in order to further challenge time socially and physically. History has provided us with the tools and examples of styles that have been able to withstand time. Although not everything that is fit for its purpose is beautiful, anything that is unfit cannot possibly be considered beautiful, unless one wants to turn architecture into a kind of crocodile paradox in which the impossibility of a satisfactory solution is inherent in the premise (Herrmann, pg 84). We have been give the tools to create timeless designs and the studies to incorporate the sustainability aspect to a building.

Designing against time seeks to intrigue and push architects to create projects that will withstand the nature of technology, globalization, and sustainability. The challenge is not only for future projects; we must seek forms to salvage those ruins and re-envision their usage. The image does not seek to point a certain location in time; what this picture seeks to do is help future architects further explore the different styles of architecture that have endured time. In order to accomplish this goal, architecture must work hand-in-hand with efforts in historic preservation. This would be an architecture that highlights the values of the old – an architecture that can be used to reintegrate history within any contemporary setting (Fredericks, pg 15). Let these examples of architecture not simply be prehistoric relics but rather be an inspiration to create timeless architecture.

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Design Against Architectural Education

Zach Hicks

Design Against is an interesting topic and there is wide spectrum of elements in the world that we can all change for the better if we pay more attention to the design of even the most mundane objects in our daily lives. Take a roll of trace for instance. How often does a roll of trace roll off your desk or start roaming around your desk as you are reaching for it? Smashing the roll down so it becomes oblong makes it impossible for it to roll away. Tired of messily torn drafting tape that is always too long or too short? Buy a cheap roll of clear scotch tape, cannibalize its serrated metal strip, fashion a jacket for your drafting tape out of chipboard, and hot-glue this strip onto the assembly. These are both small design changes that can help benefit you and start you off thinking differently about your world and the items existing within it. These are small design

However, there are also major ideas or topics that should be considered for redesign or new iterations to be tried. As a fan of Oklahoma – yes, it is understood that most cannot wait to leave – and as someone who is determined to work to make changes in this imperfect place, I am interested in asking what makes a good professor? What makes a great professor? What is the difference between a professor you will genuinely miss after graduation and those that you just need to interact with to move on to the next step of your life? These people shape us for better or worse and can be important to how we form our own approaches to design. Granted, as students, we do not get involved with the hiring and firing of professors. Nor can we help the fact that some within the college – or at the University level – are merely concerned with what it takes to get tenured. What we should stop and think about though are the course evaluations at the end of each semester. These are as important to our college and our professors as voting in elections. DO THE EVALUATIONS! Our interactions with our

“Design Against is about an awareness of the built environment around us all and using a critical eye and mind to find the less than optimal situations that can be improved or at the very least the conversation about them being started.”



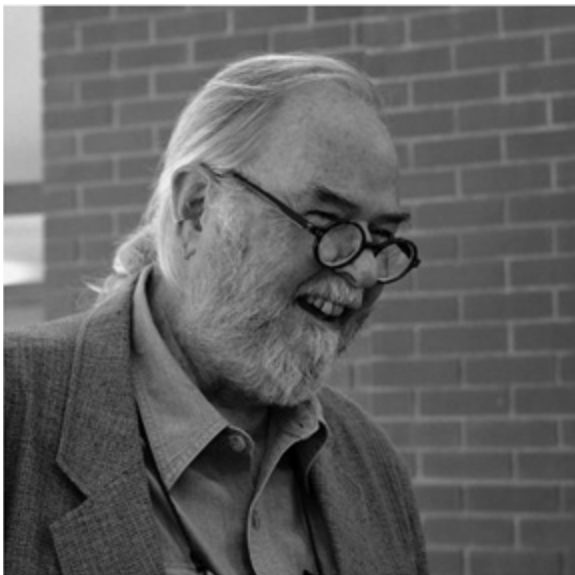
Design against messy tape



Design against runaway trace



Dean Bryant Vollendorf



Gary McCowan

professors and the projects they present us with can result in changes we want.

Maybe when you are sitting in the studio or walking around the campus at three in the morning you are thinking about all forms of anything other than architecture. Well, an interesting fact is that those great professors that are loved and remembered by the mentoring architects of our time taught their students to step out of architecture and go experience life, art, and nature. By going to concerts you may find inspiration in how the acoustics change as you move through the space or in how the music is affecting you in that moment. You could go camping or hiking and discover glimpses of untouched nature that invokes an epiphany regarding structure or biomimicry. You might even be sitting in an art appreciation class and find that artists like Albrecht Dürer painting chiaroscuro can teach you about depth and composition for renderings. Any architecture student or architect can tell people just how much their perspective of the world around them changed after going through the college of architecture.

Architects like James Schildroth, Gary McCowan, Jim Gallagher, Andrew St. John, and Herb Greene have been outspoken about their professors or mentors that shaped their understanding of architecture and each have mentioned that music was one of these stepping-out of architecture exercises they remember from their time spent in the design studios. In one instance McCowan was told by his life-long friend and studio professor Dean Bryant Vollendorf to stop looking for architectural influences and go to a concert. It may sound odd today to speak of a professor as a life-long friend or even a long-time friend but, that is exactly who Vollendorf was to his students. The idea of our college not being aware of Vollendorf was highly offensive to many of his students who have formed a group on Facebook called the Friends of Vollendorf. I have spoken with many of the members and pointed out that our American School program is righting the wrongs of time and memories fading about our past and forefathers that made the University of Oklahoma a powerhouse of architecture colleges worldwide.

Professor Vollendorf is a fascinating example of passion, dedication, inspiration, and a source of friendship to his students. Professor Vollendorf was already at the University in 1963 when student Gary McCowan met him. The two remained the best of friends until Vollendorf unfortunately passed away 2008 – although it saved him from reliving the economic events after his birth in 1929. Vollendorf is affectionately remembered by any of his students. Gary McCowan was the closest to DBV

that I spoke with and is responsible for the amazing collection housed at the Oklahoma Historical Society. Gary and I shared a “quick” lunch on a beautiful day at the Lake Hefner Louie’s where we talked about Vollendorf, the fact that organic architects aren’t being sought after enough, and the work Gary is doing for Bart Prince for three full hours.

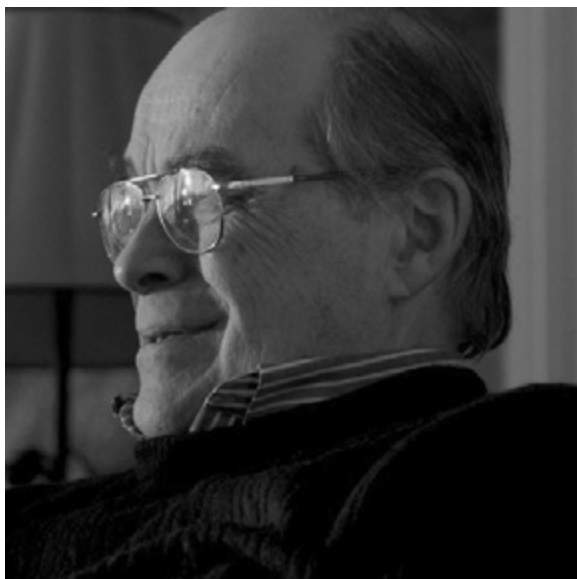
While we talked about Vollendorf, Gary shared a thesis Vollendorf wrote about architectural education with me. Vollendorf began his thesis by referring to a sensitivity plant. He points out how this plant can be caressed lightly, and the leaves will close up then later open up and continue to grow. Next, he notes that if you step on one of these plants it will die. This perspective is exactly what Goff was talking about when he told his students “do not try to remember” when designing for the present. Letting students grow and find their own vernacular was vital to a student’s growth. This is not to say that petting zoo safe spaces in a restaurant or that every idea was a good one to grow upon. You had to show talent and skill to refine designs because students from all over the world were looking to come to our university. It was very challenging and required dedication to make your space in this college your own. Vollendorf was a key element in the continuation of the organic design movement or as we are coming to know it lately, the American School of design following Goff. The Vollendorf thesis continues to talk about architecture coming from within not without – cue The Beatles Within You Without You. There is a quote by John Randal McDonald that rings true regardless of decade or profession in the thesis, “Each man should search for his own simples, that which HE does well.” Anyone that has been in Professor Cricchio’s studio may have heard him speak to the same idea. Push yourself by designing a box. The box must be beautiful. The box must be so well thought through that there is beauty in the details. The box can be the stepping off point to greater and grander ideas but the principle of refinement will follow you. Your version of the box will evolve and should be something that is clearly designed by and belonging to YOU.

The progression of the thesis immediately makes individuality the clear objective for his approach to teaching. Philosophically speaking we tend think of ourselves as either detail oriented or big picture types. Vollendorf refers to the detailed types as “explainers” and big picture types as “generators.” It should also be noted that this thesis includes a name that many have heard lately given his recent death, Robert Venturi. Venturi’s work is used as an example of an explainer. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown both understood/understand architectural history and theory

so well that they make fun of a style or embellish the characteristics of a certain style to a point that some of their work becomes a thesis in itself. Alternatively, the almost expected example of a generator comes as Frank Lloyd Wright and Bruce Goff with the Johnson Wax Building and Ford House. The philosophy of Organic Architecture is that the individual is the candle to illuminate a path of design once a spark ignites the student. Professors are either going to simply shovel information into students in order to meet requirements or they can become a great source of imagination. Dean Bryant Vollendorf did just that.

During a tour through the current American School exhibit in the Bizzell Library with fellow student Clay Dobbins and Professor Guido an older gentleman named Wayne, whom is an alumnus from the mid-sixties, stopped to talk to us with our own Dean Butzer. Wayne explained how he was a football player, member of the ROTC, AND an architecture student. Immediately you could see the pride and glow of Wayne as he opened up about his experience at OU and how it has influenced other aspects of the life he lives. In the midst of our conversation it dawned on me that he may know James Schildroth, so I asked. Wayne looked shocked to hear the name and admitted he did know James and added simply, “James Schildroth is an intense man.” I had to laugh since I can recall a week into talking with James, he scolded me for sharing a risqué post on Facebook. James, like Gary McCowan, is a deep well of Organic design knowledge and it is serious business for him. Personally, I like to think of myself as a Jim Loftus with a serious sense of humor and openly sharing it to both willing and unwilling participants. I digress.

James Schildroth was a student at the Taliesin Fellowship before he came to OU to graduate



James Schildroth

in 1965. It is hard to imagine anyone outside of Wright, Bart Prince, Robert Bowlby, Gary McCowan, or our own Dr. Luca Guido housing such an extensive knowledge about Organic Architecture other than James Schildroth. Professor Schildroth taught in Maine before calling it quits and focusing more on his architecture once again. Professor Schildroth is very detailed in his explanation of Organic Architecture but, he is every bit a generator when you read his essays. One of the most important essays on his website - of his own name - sake of course - is about Organic Space and how the use of a unit system can take a student out of the two-dimensional approach and introduce them to the third dimension of space. Something that sounds so simple is such a key element and will provide the student of architecture a vastly open sandbox world of possibilities. Again, this idea of establishing a philosophy for architecture allows a student to face their own individuality and set forth with experimenting and perhaps even failing with pride. Failure is a huge aspect of learning. As McCowan, Schildroth, and Vollendorf all ex-

pressed, a student should feel safe in failing. Safety in failing meaning you are experimenting and learning what works. Schildroth told me prior to this semester to stop talking about my thoughts and put ink to paper. There is nothing more exactly true than that.

Things today are different with professors. With the requirement of licensure for architects to call themselves such comes the necessity of accreditation. This list of mandatory items is made by the NAAB agency (National Architectural Accrediting Board) and is to be taught so the college can continue to offer degrees in architecture. This means that this is a priority to be upheld. Pair this priority with a more microcosm priority of tenure for a professor and you take a large portion of their attention away from the students as individuals. We have a few professors who are very capable of juggling their requirements while nurturing individualism within students and they are easy to identify once you get into the meat of their studio projects. The blame for professors being much more distant or keeping themselves at arms-length is not solely on them. The format that professors are facing today limits them. As a certain professor commented to me last semester during my final presentation, "it's like you are designing with one arm tied behind your back." We must take the requirements of today and find creative solutions. Frank Lloyd Wright did not have the codes or ADA to maneuver around like we have today, but there is little doubt that he still would have designed creative solutions, nonetheless. This is where our voices become important.

Those course evaluations are taken into consideration when it comes to a professor achieving tenure. What we say is taken seriously and what we produce through the semester is compiled to result in a grade for the professors. As a note, keeping your evaluations professional means they must take these comments seriously. The moment you curse in the evaluations they get dismissed and fall on deaf ears. I am sure none of us ever get so frustrated that we have had colorful language to use, but this is an example of restraint being required. So designing against a system of professors who care more about their own grades over becoming long-term positive mentors of pushing students and the profession is as important to the bigger picture as their tenure is to their own piece of the picture. We can have an impact on our college being something we are all extremely proud of which will in turn result in more of us giving back to the future generations and our school.

GIVE ME MORE

Design Against Misrepresentation

Errin McKnight

I need more.

I crave it.

I seek it...

I did not realize what I was missing until I set off on an expedition to find an architecture that looks like me. But, after searching, I began to feel a nagging emptiness. I continued searching. The absence of black women architects prompted this emptiness to fissure into a canyon.

This search began in the architecture library, where a theory assignment forced me to browse the multitude of architectural journals and magazines the university has to offer. Dozens of journals. Hundreds of copies. This is where I found my architectural cavern. The void. My antimatter. This so-called variety of journals—endless rows of journals—left me struggling to cope with the status quo.

Then, I discovered it: A journal presenting itself as a mirror which would cast the reflection I needed—craved—to see. It claimed to present the “overlooked and underrealized,” which black women clearly are among their peers in the field of architecture.

But, alas, this journal did not provide an authentic reflection of me. Its “variety,” while interesting at times, was shallow.

So.

When I lament that I cannot see me in architecture:

Don't say my complaints are unfounded

Since in the facts, my statistics are surrounded

Don't tell me women and people of color are everywhere

They are not.

“Design against is of the mind that architecture encompasses everything. By this statement, it becomes clear that when people and context are excluded from the conversations and details of design, we essentially create an incomplete architecture.”

Specifically, black women are not.

I yell it loudly.

THEY ARE NOT.

It makes my heart pound and ache.

If journals are one important lens through which we, as a society, and architecture, perceive the world around us, then I need to see people who look like me represented in these journals in order to feel like I am a part of the design; a part of the discourse.

I am tired.

I have become weary as a result of going through my academic journey alone, unable to share this brilliant experience with people who understand.

Understand ME.

Look like ME.

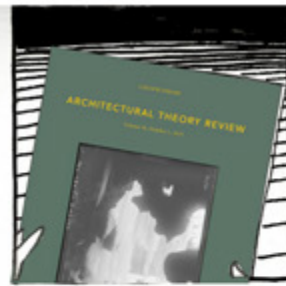
Do I need to become the recruiter and find the mirror of myself, for myself?

Architecture needs more.

I need more.

I beg of you, please, just a little more.

GIVE ME MORE.



FOCUS ON
"OVERLOOKED
AND
UNDERREALIZED"



- IN:
- EDUCATION
 - ARCHITECTURE
 - DESIGN
 - CONTRIBUTION
 - ENVIRONMENT
 - CONSTRUCTION
 - SCIENCE
 - POLICY
 - THEORY
 - MEDICINE
 - CRITIQUE
 - ART
 - ETC.

RE-ANIMATING THE BUILT; DE-CENTERING THE HUMAN

Design Against Objectification

Angela Person, Ph.D.

“As designers, we can consciously—intentionally—re-animate our environments. By seeing buildings as living organisms that co-exist with us in this complex 21st century ecosystem, we can begin to more effectively design against environmental apathy, against mindless consumerism.”

1. Jacobs writes, "... the materiality of the building is a relational effect, its 'thing-ness' is an achievement of a diverse network of associates and associations. It is what we might think of as a building event rather than simply a building. Conceived of this way, a building is always being 'made' or 'unmade'; always doing the work of holding together or pulling apart." (Jacobs 2006, 11)
2. Jacobs et al. write, with regard to decentering the human subject within their research, "Our work has always tried to see architecture as eventful, vital, and performative, much more than simply a built context for human action and more than a mere product of human action" (Jacobs et al. 2012, 128).
3. Beaugregard offers his critique of this system of thought: "To believe that humans are all that matters is to fall victim to the culture-nature divide that has plagued modernism from its inception (Latour 1993). If we are to understand how buildings are produced and cities are made to grow and develop (and to decline), we must leave behind such a human-centric, and false, view of the world." (Beaugregard 2015, 533-534)

Art and life flow together, inseparable. Architecture then concerns itself with dynamic structures: tissues, networks, matrices, heterarchies. (Woods 1997, 14)

Buildings operate as dynamic, malleable organisms in response to their social and material contexts. As organisms, they depend on their relationships with people and their physical contexts in order to exist, and their characters change as these relationships change. By turns, buildings' interactions with people are planned, unplanned, public, and private. And they are always being made or unmade.¹

Buildings have not always been understood in terms of the active manner in which they are made and unmade. Until the 1970s, buildings were broadly understood to "have meaning because architects endow them with meaning and skilled observers can decipher it" (Guggenheim 2013, 446). Later, buildings were understood as capable of projecting symbolic worldviews owing to the ways people used them (ex., Harvey 1979; Bunnell 1999; Goss 1993). More recently, however, scholars have called for more active readings of material environments (ex., Lees 2001 & Jenkins 2002). With this call, the previously held notion that buildings are designed by architects and then exist as merely

symbolic "black boxes" was problematized. For example, Jenkins suggests that:

Instead of simply treating buildings as stable, safe, and static black boxes on which we can hang our arguments and claims, no matter how laudable these accounts, we need to dispel the myth of buildings as being static, closed, and materially constant. (Jenkins 2002, 226)

Jenkins questions the tendency to understand buildings as fixed entities that "passively await manipulation" (Beaugregard 2012, 183). Counter to the idea that buildings are passive, people are now starting to understand them, as well as other material objects, as having the capacity to "make things happen" (Bennett 2010, 5).

In order to understand buildings as agents having the capacity to *make things happen*, it is necessary to decenter the human subject from our considerations of buildings.² As mentioned above, when scholars have looked at buildings, they have historically understood them as objects whose meaning was grounded in their architects' conceptions of them or in the symbolic meanings that seem to be projected by their forms. In both cases, our understandings of them are primarily derived from what we see as a building's utility to people.³

Taking a less human-centric view of buildings allows us to see buildings as agents with their own “vitality” (Jacobs et al. 2012, 135). Decentering the human subject also enables us to see “humans and non-humans alike [as] material configurations, not dividable, separate or separable, but integrated, co-constituted and co-dependent” (Tolia-Kelly 2013, 154). This idea that humans and non-humans are inseparable material configurations that co-constitute and depend on one another situates buildings as active participants in human lives, and humans as active participants in the lives of buildings.

The literature on material geography is helpful in understanding how to conceptually approach these active qualities of buildings. Recent material geographies, like the architectural geography of Jenkins (2002), look at how materials operate in “dynamic circulations” (Tolia-Kelly 2013, 155).⁴ With respect to architecture specifically, a number of scholars encourage a linguistic shift away from understanding “building” (Mimisson 2016), “architecture” (Schmidt et al. 2012), and “space” (Lees and Baxter 2011) as *nouns*, to understanding these ideas as verbs. To this end, more recent studies of architecture that look at the dialectic between people and built environments often frame buildings in relation to what they do (ex., Gieryn 2002; Strebel 2011; Guggenheim 2013). In each of these studies, buildings are framed in terms of the active roles they play in their local contexts, both material and social.

When conceptualizing buildings as living agents, people have a tendency to frame buildings’ actions in terms of the negative influence they exert in response to human intentions. For example, framing buildings as *obdurate* (Beauregard 2015, 533) or *recalcitrant* (Latour & Yaneva 2008)

conveys a negative power.⁵ However, buildings are not solely stubborn objects, but also convey a “positive, productive power” (Bennett 2010, 1). For example, buildings can connect diverse human and nonhuman actors—including planners, community members, construction workers, building materials, and electricity—through their design and construction processes (Yaneva & Heaphy 2012).⁶ This productive connection between both human and nonhuman agents is sometimes framed as an “intricate dance”⁷ (Bennett 2010, 31) or a “dance of agency” (Griswold et al. 2013, 360). Of the role people play within this dance, Bennett writes, “It is also possible to say something about the kind of *striving* that may be exercised by humans within the assemblage”⁸ (2010, 38, my emphasis). Among human and non-human agents, humans demonstrate a transformative capacity to strive or consciously exert themselves within this dance. Bennett continues:

This exertion is perhaps best understood on the model of riding a bicycle on a gravel road. One can throw one’s weight this way or that, inflect the bike one direction or toward one trajectory of motion. But the rider is but one actant operative in the moving whole. (2010, 38)

Buildings often “gain momentum” through their interactions with the people who strive to inhabit and maintain them, as well as through their interactions with their broader social and material environments (Strebel 2011, 245).⁹ Thus, buildings neither exist as impermeable black boxes nor as autonomous entities that simply carry out their architect’s bidding. In other words, “[f]or a building to take form and sustain itself as a big thing, it must ‘surrender to technologies; to engineers, to contractors, manufacturers; to politics; to others’”

4. About this dynamic quality of materials, Heatherington and Monroe (1997) suggest that we “move beyond the surface of matter, to engage with the politics, grammars and productive power of materials that are in place, shaping place and effectively making a difference to place and the place of each other” (Tolia-Kelly 2013, 154).

5. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to these understandings of material objects, such as buildings, as agents which affect their surroundings (Latour 2005). While I’m not formally framing this essay in terms of ANT, the theory’s intellectual underpinnings influence my argument that buildings operate with agency.

6. Of this capacity to connect “heterogeneous actors,” Yaneva and Heaphy (2012, 35) write, “This particular capacity of a building to associate both human and nonhuman actors makes it an important actor. The social can be found here, in the process of mobilization and enrolment of actors.”

7. As in, “Humanity and nonhumanity have always performed an intricate dance with each other” (Bennett 2010, 31).

8. Here, “assemblage” refers to the “mosaic” of relationships of human and nonhuman agents.

9. For example, Strebel (2010, 244) argues that "buildings are 'brought to life' through the work of a block check," and that "the notion of the living building ... brings to light a variety of settings in which users, workers and other actors organize their activities, not simply with respect to co-workers and other people involved, but with respect to a specific layout and arrangement of the built environment."

(Jacobs 2006, 12, quoting Koolhaas 1995, 513-514). Just as a human life is created, is sustained, and gains momentum through the interactions of a variety of natural, social, and economic processes, so, too, do buildings.

As designers, we can consciously—intentionally—re-animate our environments. By seeing buildings as *living organisms* that coexist with us in this complex 21st century ecosystem, we can begin to more effectively design against environmental

apathy, against mindless consumerism. We might then take more special care in specifying materials that will last—in identifying the “skin,” the “bones” and the “tissues” that will persist through time, that will heal quickly. We might work more tirelessly to design *sensitive* configurations that result in pleasure, in pride and in resilience, not only for people, but for the living buildings, too. Re-animating the built and decentering the human.

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OCHOQUEBRADAS HOUSE

Design Against Civilization

ELEMENTAL

OchoQuebradas (8 ravines) is a private development on the Pacific Ocean, 250 km north from Santiago, that brings together 8 Japanese (Sejima, Nishizawa, Kuma, Fujimoto, Ishigami, Atelier Bow-Wow among others) and 8 Chilean architects, each building a week-end house. There is no concrete client yet; just the developer defining a built area (250 m²), a program (4 bedrooms, living and dining area, kitchen, bathrooms and a wine cellar) and an overall budget (1/2 million dollars) that each architect has to respond to in complete freedom.

We saw the site and the fact of being a weekend house as an opportunity to explore a certain primitiveness. The geography was so brutal, that only a strong and manly set of elements was appropriate. The Pacific Ocean here is not pacific at all; the water is white due to the violence while meeting the earth.

On the other hand, a week-end house is ultimately a retreat where people allow themselves to go back to a more essential living. We used the void on the other

side of the table (the absence of a client) as an alibi to eliminate the conventions of domestic living, exploring instead the more irreducible dimensions of life. We chose to move backwards towards the archaic, not as a nostalgic escape but as a natural filter against the clichés. In an era where the hunger for novelty is threatening architecture to become immediately obsolete, we looked for timelessness.

So, we thought of 3 volumes: a horizontal one, slightly cantilevering on top of the cliff and self sufficient for the main couple to use it without having to open the rest of the house. Then a vertical one, containing all the other rooms required by the client plus a terrace on top, allowed us to reduce the footprint on the site and expand the horizon in front of the ocean vastness. And in between these two, a slightly leaning and hollowed one containing a fire; not a chimney (which is already something civilized), but a fire (which is one of the most revolutionary and most ancient achievements of man). 5 sides of the pieces are made of poured concrete; the 6th one is made out of the same wood used as a formwork for the concrete. We expect these pieces to age as a stone, acquiring some of the brutality of the place but still being gentle for people to enjoy nature and life in general.





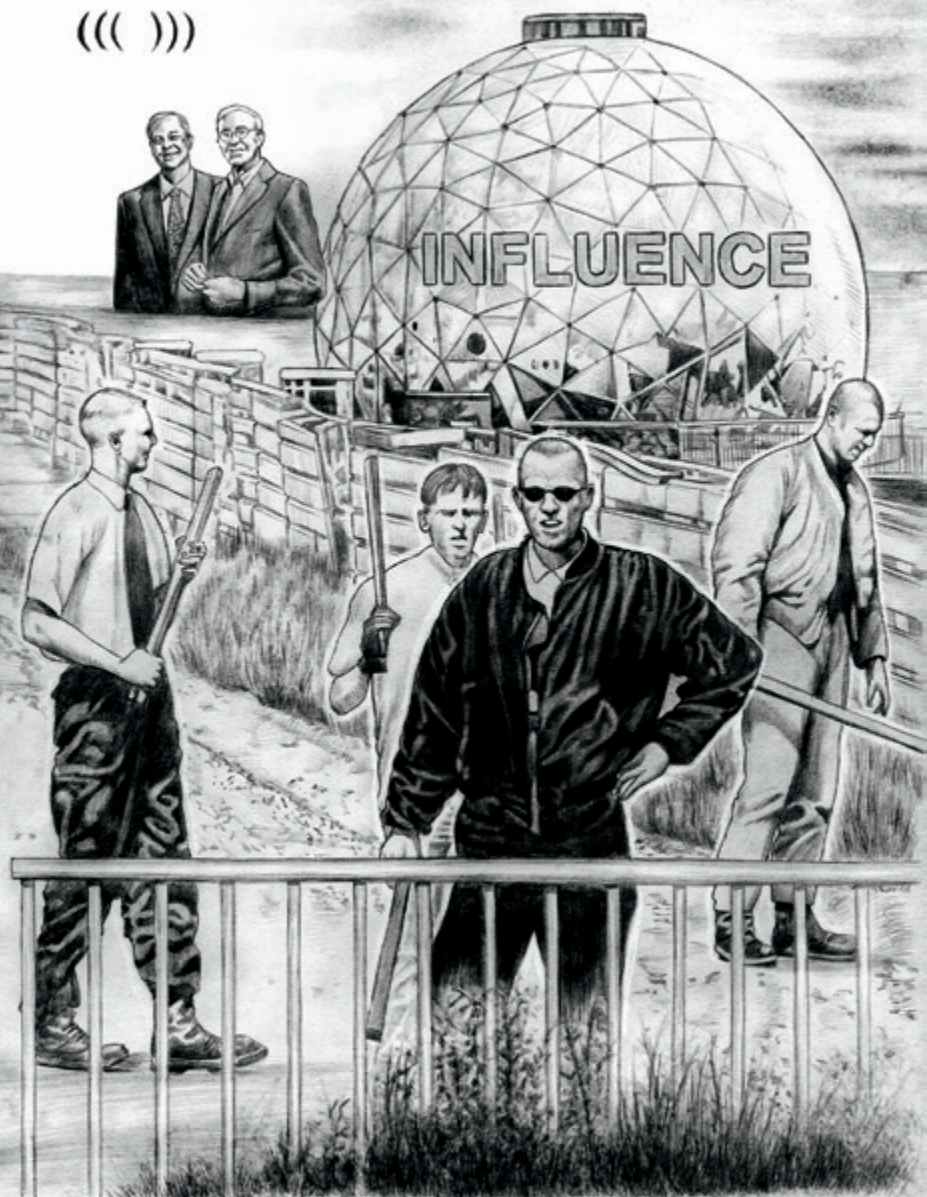








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ARE ALL HUMANS EQUAL?

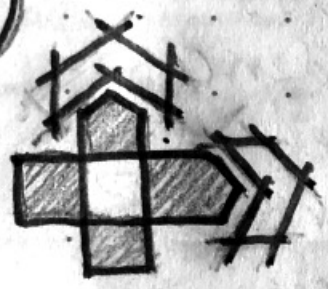
Design Against Invisibility

Studio Asynchrome

“It is extremely important to critically examine architecture again and become aware again of the relevance that, apart from the spatial task, architecture has also a great social significance. We have understood our practice as a transdisciplinary experiment on the interface between fine art and urban research”

Studio ASYNCHROME demands in their understanding Utopia as a working method to catch our neoliberal, moving surrounding and find spaces of possibilities for our common future. Who is “building” and how is global influence made? Just to understand: In 2017 more turnover was generated worldwide from data volumes than from business with crude oil. New forms of propaganda arise. The method of questioning within this drawing is dedicated to the present. Our (western) life is surrounded by gigantic (in)visible formations within a society of transparency (Byung Chul Han). Let’s bring Design Against to 4.0 as we know walls are shapeable!

diagrams (later)
w/ axon view

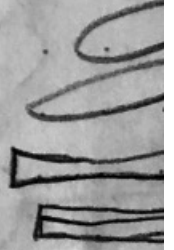
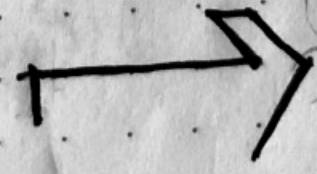
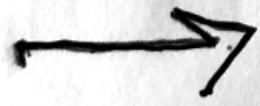
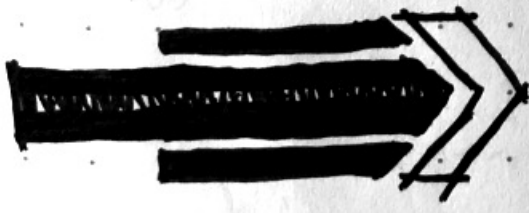


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AN ARCHITECTURE OF LANGUAGE

Design Against Drawings

Evan Sack

“Design against is a call to action for devils advocates and dissenting opinions. It is reactionary. It takes nothing for granted and makes no apologies. Its mandate is to question tirelessly and its only promise is change. Design against is the antithesis to complacency.”

The genesis of architecture will likely lurk forever in the shadows, a fact that no-doubt frustrates every historian, anthropologist, or otherwise concerned academic interested in the subject. What shrouds this pilot light is the marked lack of documentation typical of all examples of the earliest known architecture. It is in this search for the genesis of architecture that we find indications of a possibly provocative question; if architecture existed before drawings then why has the design process become so crippled by the tool of visual representation? Instead, architecture should seek a toolset that is minimally limiting to free design explorations from the grips of representational capabilities. Conceptualization must then begin with a medium capable of engaging all senses, exploring outrageous impossibilities, and expressing ideas in their purest state. These parameters present a clear case on their own for a more refined tool which has been employed for centuries; one initially derived as an improvement of visual representation: written language.

It stands to reason that architecture would begin with pictorial representations as it was one of the earliest recorded form of human history. The Sulawesi Cave paintings¹, Altamira Cave paintings², Lascaux paintings³, and Cueva de las Manos⁴ document this pictorial history across both hemispheres and more than 30,000 years of human history. As a tool, drawings and graphics are clearly one of the most inherent human forms of documentation. Yet as civilizations developed, we see an exchange of pictorial records for increasingly symbolic tools. This transition is clearly illustrated in the development of hieroglyphs as a communication tool by the Egyptian civilization. Earliest examples of this communication form date back to roughly 3400 BC at the oldest where glyphs were used for labeling jars or denoting quantities.⁵ This same civilization was simultaneously working with Cuneiform, the earliest record of written language which further abstracted these depictions to a series of characters representative of ideas and words.⁶

The progression here makes clear two values: breadth of communi-

cation, and time invested in the representation. Looking at cave paintings, the incredibly rough medium lends itself to quick representation but at the expense of limited communication. The depictions are noun and object based, with limited ability for expression of emotion – admittedly because such needs were not likely a priority in these paintings. With hieroglyphs there was an exchange made for communicating more complex cultural ideas and phenomena which notably came at the expense of speed. Cuneiform was then the most efficient and effective of the three by far and hence became the basis for modern written language. Its ability to communicate complex ideas relied heavily on the notion of society and the inherent system of shared experiences and beliefs. Simultaneously the highly abstracted forms could quickly be pressed into tablets with very simple stylus tools. These values can be seen still at the core of language today, where the breadth of communication has been expanded by a rise in societal complexity and time of representation has been brought to the scale of milliseconds in the advent of the computer.

These values should be familiar to architects and designers alike, as the goals of our own representational efforts place immense emphasis on the ability to communicate a wide conceptual range as quickly as possible to allow for the rapid prototyping of ideas. First, we can examine the latter of these two values to understand the role of drawings in quickly creating and sharing ideas.

For the architect, sketching has become second

1. Vergano, D. (2014, October 08). Cave Paintings in Indonesia Redraw Picture of Earliest Art. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141008-cave-art-sulawesi-hand-science/>
2. Augustyn, A., Bauer, P., Duignan, B., Eldridge, A., Gregerson, E., Luebering, J. E., . . . Zelazko, A. (2010, September 30). Altamira. Retrieved November 26, 2018, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Altamira>

3. Groeneveld, E. (2016, September 06). Lascaux Cave. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from https://www.ancient.eu/Lascaux_Cave/
4. Onetto, M., & Podesta, M. M. (2011). Cueva de las Manos: An Outstanding Example of a Rock Art Site in South America. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <http://cuevadelasmanos.org/pdfs/Onetto Podesta. 2011 Cueva de las Manos. An Outstanding Example of rock art....pdf>

nature and is particularly adept at providing a method for quick studies and presentation of ideas. Layers of trace paper allow for the repurposing of previous work to generate the skeleton for new ideas. Their tools of mark making have become extensions of the mind and techniques to shake lines, draw extensions, control lineweight, and imply shade or shadow all with a single pen is no longer part of their active cognition.

Yet the beginner finds sketching still laborious. The strokes are permanent and intimidating. Ink smears and is difficult to control. Focusing on shaking the lines enough but not too much while managing pressure and still keeping the overall form straight is more than one could possibly manage. It is then of little surprise that the ideas conveyed are usually underdeveloped or misrepresented in the finished work.

This is not due to an inability to think critically or meaningfully as a beginner, but instead the nature of every current conventional methodology for representation leaves beginners paralyzed. If not sketching then physical models, or painting, or sculpting, or composing, etc. Written language, and the ability to use it tactfully to present information is a skill just as initially frustrating and eventually developable as any of these. However, it is unique in the sense that it is universal, cross-disciplinary, and therefore a more justifiable genesis for design expression. Its familiarity makes it the ideal design tool for rapid exploration, adjustment, and refinement.

The second goal to communicate a breadth of concepts is dramatically limited by architectural drawings.

For the veteran and designer, again, years of practice offer the benefit of full conceptual expression, even of the most complex ideas. The translation between visual communication and ideation has become integral to the typical design process. This is limiting to the ability to convey ideas universally but provides an even greater challenge for beginners.

Drawing only becomes a tool for such representation after the necessary skills have been practiced and developed. A stunted skillset in any form of representation will consistently lead to a stunted range of abilities to communicate, written language included. However, visual representation requires additional translation of ideas native to the designer in order to communicate with others. This inherent translation prevents complete communication of an idea visually because it is only capable of engaging a single sense. In essence, we as humans think at this point with language and any other format of expressing this language inherently involves the suppression or loss of information.

Drawings and other representations at best⁷ fail to create a convincing translation of the concept and at their worst⁸ create a deceiving depiction that seduces us to ignore the conceptual flaws. Writings however communicate the idea directly, unhampered by bias and translation from the author or orator. Where drawings are representations of an architecture, writings can be used to generate an infinite architecture. The artworks of Sol LeWitt are not the imagery created, but the instruction set by which to generate them.⁹ All of design can learn from a model where the idea lives forever in writing and the resultant solution is this idea's interpretation. When this interpretation is acknowledged as independent from the conceptualization, each can also be refined independently, offering an entirely new level of control and understanding. Minute control of interpretation and conceptualization as separate entities allows the design process to more clearly define the problem for which it intends to provide a solution.

It seems fair then to conclude that perhaps writing is the better tool for statements of the problem, or even venture so far as to suggest that it

5. Mitchell, L. (1999, March/April). Earliest Egyptian Glyphs. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://archive.archaeology.org/9903/newsbriefs/egypt.html>

6. Mark, J. J. (2018, March 15). Cuneiform. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.ancient.eu/cuneiform/>

7. Merin, G. (2013, August 11). AD Classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.archdaily.com/411878/ad-classics-ville-radieuse-le-corbusier>

8. Fiederer, L. (2017, May 15). AD Classics: Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project / Minoru Yamasaki. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.archdaily.com/870685/ad-classics-pruitt-igoe-housing-project-minoru-yamasaki-st-louis-usa-modernism>

could help conceptualize a solution. But surely visual representation is the best tool for the interpretation of these expressions. The best tool to bring them into reality. Visual representation instead further immobilizes architecture by disengaging the definition of its problem-solution set from all but our sense of touch and sight. Without a doubt, drawings are a tool for expressing tactility through texture and capturing observable awe. Yet the failure to engage with our experience of the world through taste, sound, and smell limits its ability to represent reality without further supplementation.

The inherent strength of drawings in engaging visual senses does raise a question about writing's ability to evoke the same level of imagery. In 2001, a study focused on synesthesia documented two earlier studies of the bouba/kiki effect and linked it to this notion of multisensorial stimulation and the origin of language.¹⁰ This effect – which works on groups independent of native language – demonstrates that language may codify visual information at an instinctual level. It implies that we can have a fuzzy but visceral reaction to descriptions that the specificity of drawings inherently cannot match. Instead it would seem that drawing can act only as a supplement to the descriptive powers of language.

Where drawings were intrinsically limited in their descriptions, writing is decidedly unlimited. We find, most notably in creative writing, descriptions so finely crafted and focused as to transport the reader to a specific place or time. George Orwell's 1984 opens with a beautiful example of this ability:

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him. The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a colored poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to

the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a meter wide: the face of a man about forty-five, with a heavy black mustache and ruggedly handsome features.

Readers are thrust into a scene bustling with sounds, textures, sights, and smells all crafted and constructed mentally in a matter of a few seconds. Convincing and immersive, certainly thanks to the sensory heavy description, this passage hints at the exploration that makes this book in particular notable. Just as George Orwell is free to explore a world ravaged by war in 1984 architecture is free to explore the utopian/dystopian landscape.

Surely this can be acknowledged as no new freedom; utopian visions for architecture have been the subject of written discussion as much as they have through visual representation. However, the utopias and dystopias of architecture past have been no such thing simply because they are presenting themselves legitimately as realistic solutions to realistic problems. Utopias cannot exist; Dystopias cannot exist. Only reality can exist.

The statement is practically insulting in its evidence, yet architectural movements with a manifesto for a Utopic society have presented their architecture as nothing short of such. In her 1998 paper *Unredeemably Utopian: Architecture and Making/Unmaking the World* author Lynda Schneekloth presents Le Corbusier's aforementioned *Ville Radieuse*¹¹ and Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City*¹² as examples of such utopic visions. However, she also makes note of the other pole within

9. Sol LeWitt. (2007). Retrieved November 27, 2018, from https://www.sfmoma.org/artist/Sol_LeWitt

10. Ramachandran, VS & Hubbard, EM (2001). Synaesthesia--a window into perception, thought and language. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8, 3-34.

11. Merin, G. (2013, August 11). AD Classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.archdaily.com/411878/ad-classics-ville-radieuse-le-corbusier>

12. Howard, E. (n.d.). *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from <http://urbanplanning.library.cornell.edu/DOCS/howard.htm>

13. SCHNEEKLOTH, L. (1998). *Unredeemably Utopian: Architecture and Making/Unmaking the World*. *Utopian Studies*, 9(1), 1-25. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719740>

14. Ibid.

architecture which is markedly “practical” or “a-utopian”¹³ Schneekloth argues that architecture is actually something of a hybridization of the two, because while our world is not strictly utopian, it was “...predicted by utopian thinkers...” and is as such “...unredeemably utopian”.¹⁴ Logically this implies the need for a design system that can explore the irrational impossibility of a utopian society whilst also acknowledging that any approximation will be some form of compromise from the original vision. Logically we need a written architecture.

When writing *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas reasoned that we live “in an age disgusted with [manifestos.] The fatal weakness of manifestos is there inherent lack of evidence is a mountain range of evidence with no Manifesto.”¹⁵ Yet a built environment with an aversion to manifestos is unlikely to feature only a single mountain range. Instead we can surely expect it to be teeming with canyons, valleys, plains, and foothills of evidence all seeking purpose; each just as deserving of a manifesto. In order to parse the resultant built environment, the only logical architectural response is a written architecture to explore the landscape left behind. An architecture capable now of preserving the purity of an idea. An architecture with convictions for its engagements with all of our senses. An architecture with the agency to ask questions of the unknown. Perhaps not in a sense that can ever uncover architectures elusive genesis, but certainly in a form that guarantees architecture a future.

15. Koolhaas, R. (1994). *Delirious New York: A retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*. New York, NY: Monacelli Press.

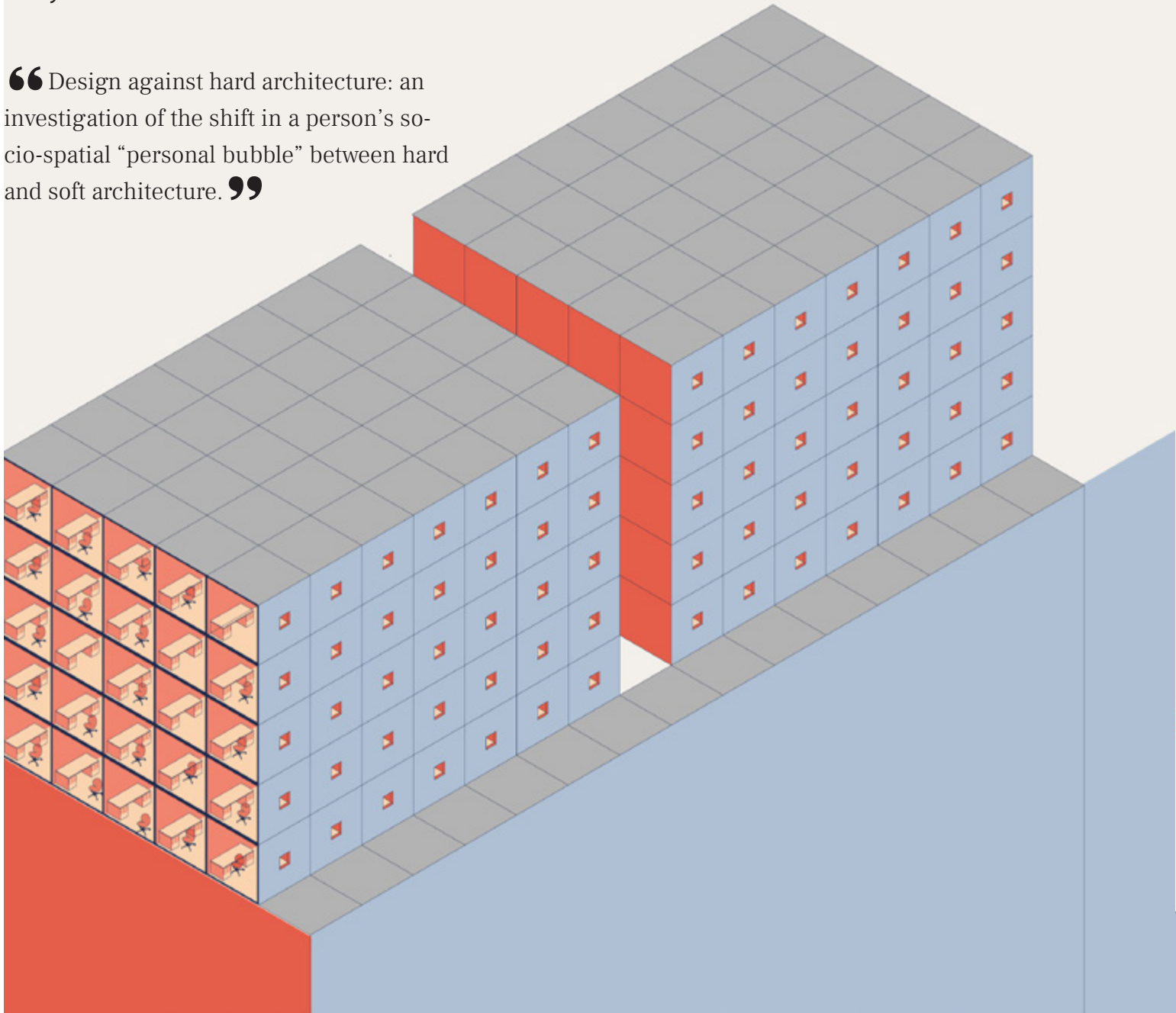
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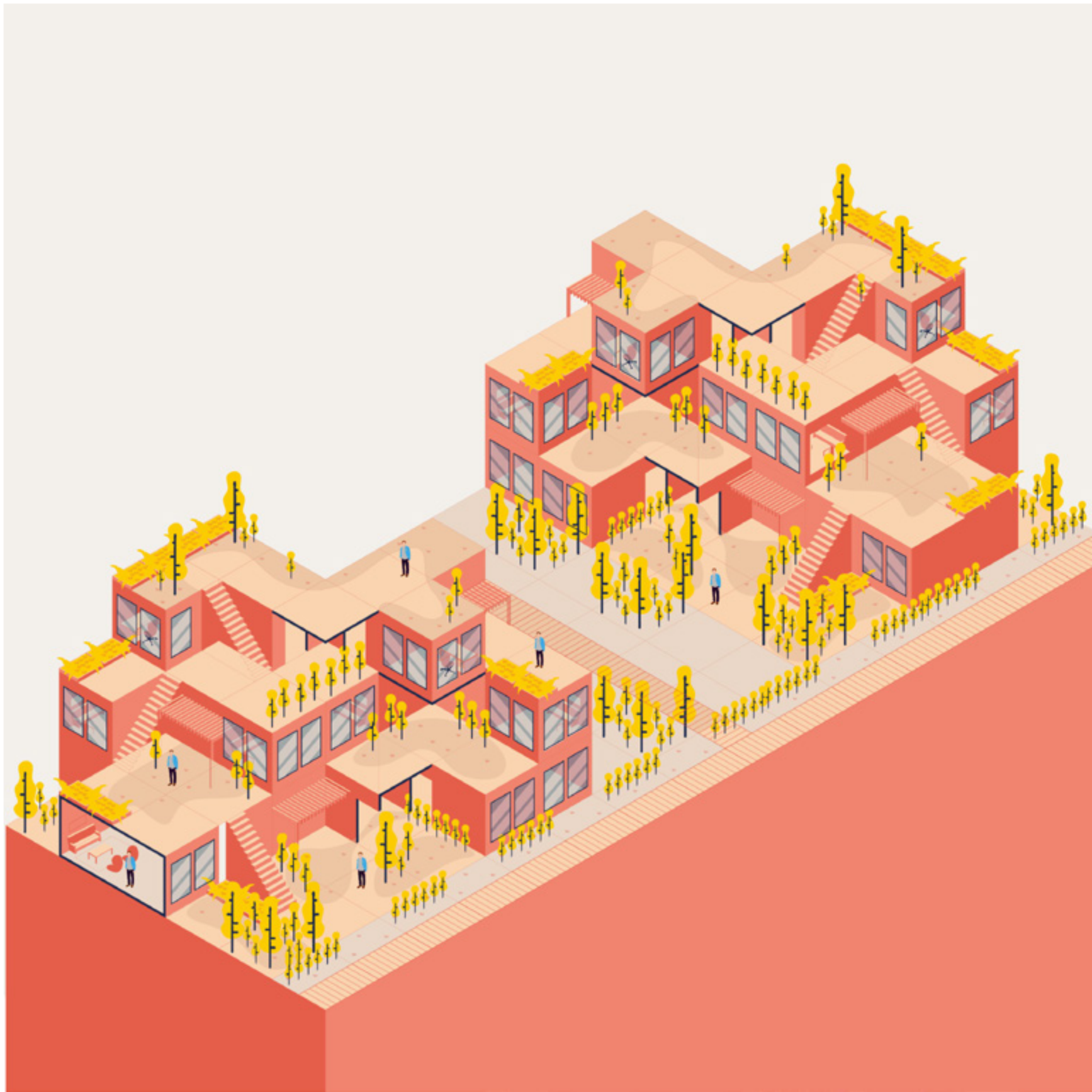
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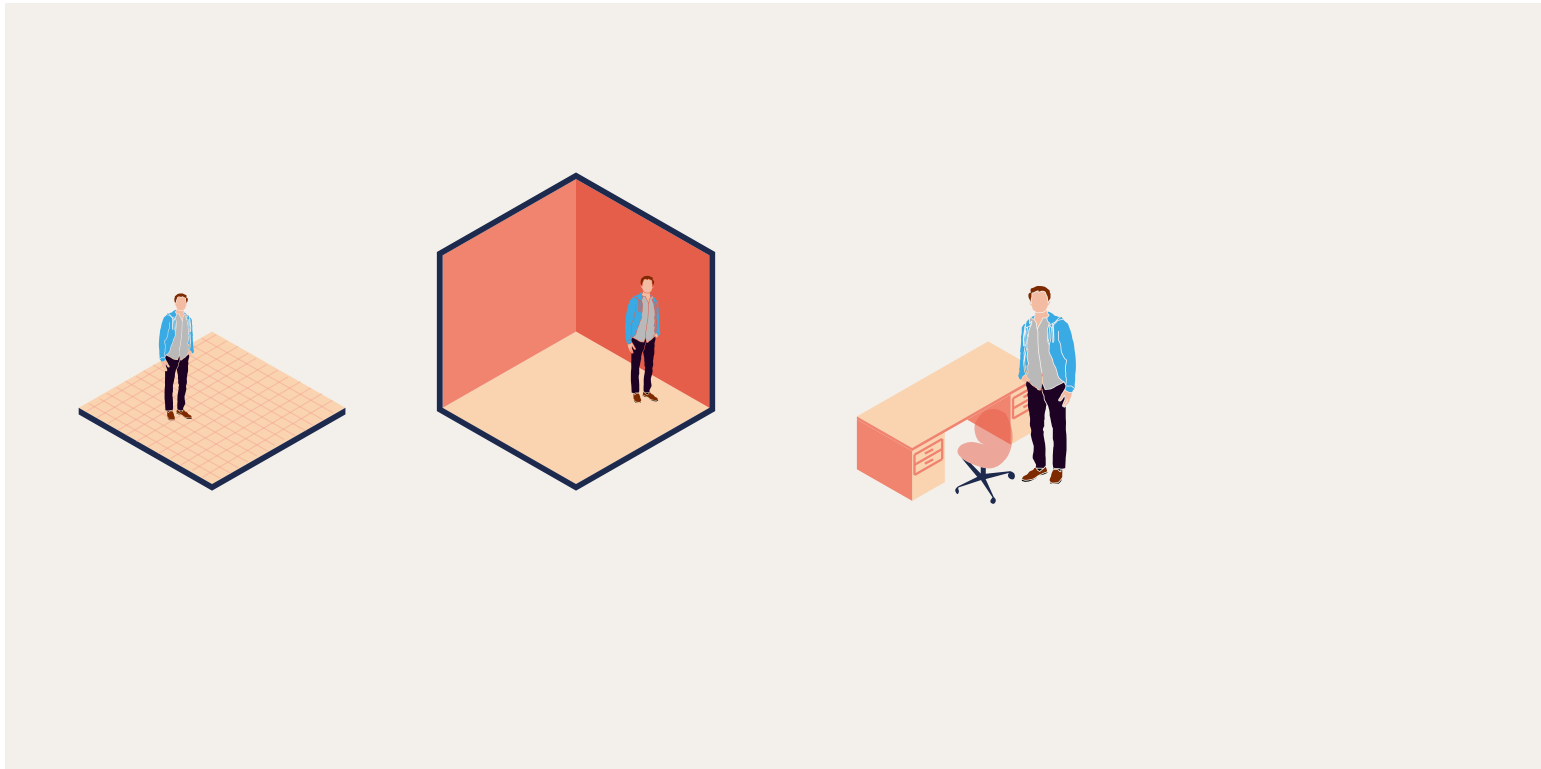
Design Against Hard Architecture

Emily Homan

“Design against hard architecture: an investigation of the shift in a person’s socio-spatial “personal bubble” between hard and soft architecture.”







Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design was published in 1969 and became cherished as a classic text on user-centered design of public spaces.¹ The author, Robert Sommer, is arguably the grandfather of the phrase “You’re invading my personal space”, an expression which sparked a “verbal expedient for siblings of a certain generation.”² In this text, Sommer explores topics such as privacy, invasion of space, and small group ecology in designed environments.

Sommer held the Chair of the Psychology Department at the University of California, Davis as well as chairs in Environmental Design, Rhetoric and Communication, and Art. These accomplishments demonstrate his broad range of interests and are convincing reasons why his books capture readers from a range of disciplines. Alan Rapp, senior editor at Chronicle Books states, “The origins of this work are as curious as its arguments are intuitively rational.”²

Most people in the architecture field are drawn to his writings about the effects of the designed environment on people. Sommer states, “All people are builders, creators, and shapers of the environment; we are the environment.” He made observations of how people behave next to each other and was known to use himself and his students to provoke unsuspecting subjects in experiments. Many times his research involved judging reactions from people that are sitting too close and studying “invisible factors that regulate human proxemics.”¹

In his book published in 1974, Tight Spaces: Hard Architecture and How to Humanize It, Sommer examines what he calls “hard architecture.” At the time the book was written he was referring to Brutalism, which was just taking off. This trend imposed windowless concrete office buildings, barren public parks, and impersonal public architecture. He argues that these alienating environments produce subtle sickening psychological effects on the people that interact with them. “Airports where chairs are bolted to the floor to drive patrons into food and drink concessions . . . picnic tables cemented into the earth, making large parties - or even sitting in the shade - impossible . . . public toilets, advertised as indestructible



by manufacturers, that drive vandals to the use of dynamite in a desperate attempt at a human imprint” are just a few examples of what Sommer calls “hard architecture.”³ Brutalism is still a style used in the present architecture scene, but it has evolved; it is important to note that presently, not all Brutalism would still be considered hard architecture. Those responsible for hard architecture are at fault for designing without their occupants in mind, without thinking about how one might use the space, and without attention to detail.

The widely-acclaimed video by William Whyte, [Social Life of Small Urban Spaces](#), shown in architecture curricula around the country, is a critical perspective of already-existing architecture plazas and how the public engages with them.⁴ This documentation puts into action some of Sommer’s behavioral research and design thinking. Though Whyte never specifically uses the terms “hard/soft architecture,” it is unmistakably a nod to Sommer’s work.

In contrast to hard architecture, Sommer proposes a type of architecture that engages the public, allows for human imprint, and is responsive to its users - or “soft architecture.” This architecture is to “welcome

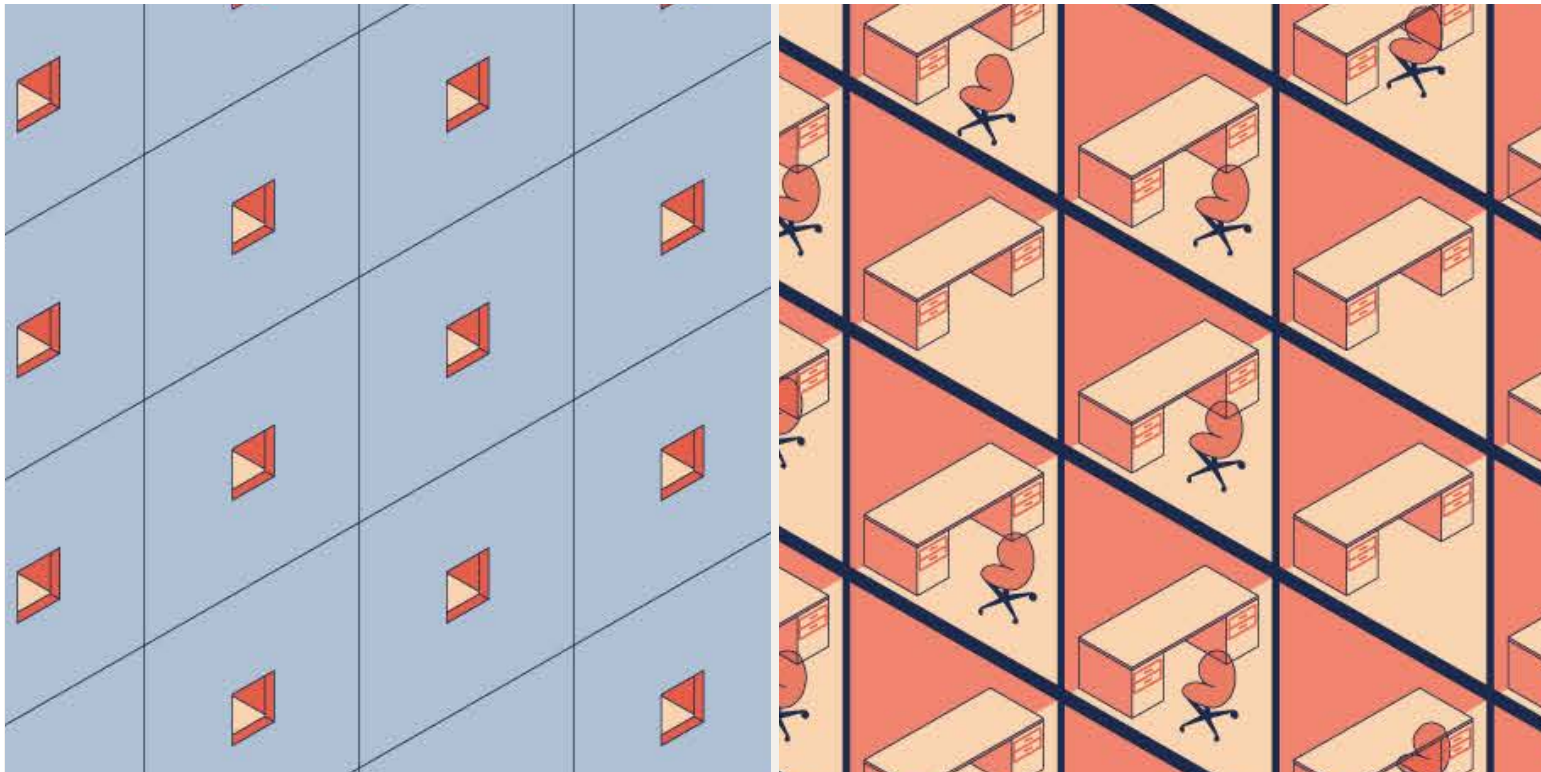
and reflect the prescence of human beings.”³ Along with flexibility, this architecture should also blur the barrier between the outdoors and indoors - bringing the outside in. Transparency, easily-manipulative furniture, and planting are key elements in the design of soft architecture.

It is important to note that not all instances of soft architecture have to be new buildings. Sometimes hard-labeled buildings could make minor adjustments to become more user-friendly. Sommer gives an example about the New York subway environment being drab and depressing. It is known for graffiti art and consequently authorities monitoring the graffiti situation. In cities with the same graffiti issue but less supervision, artists paint more than a “quick treatment” and create large-scale masterpieces. It is clear that these instances of human imprint brighten up any drab public spaces. He also gives an example of the student dormitories

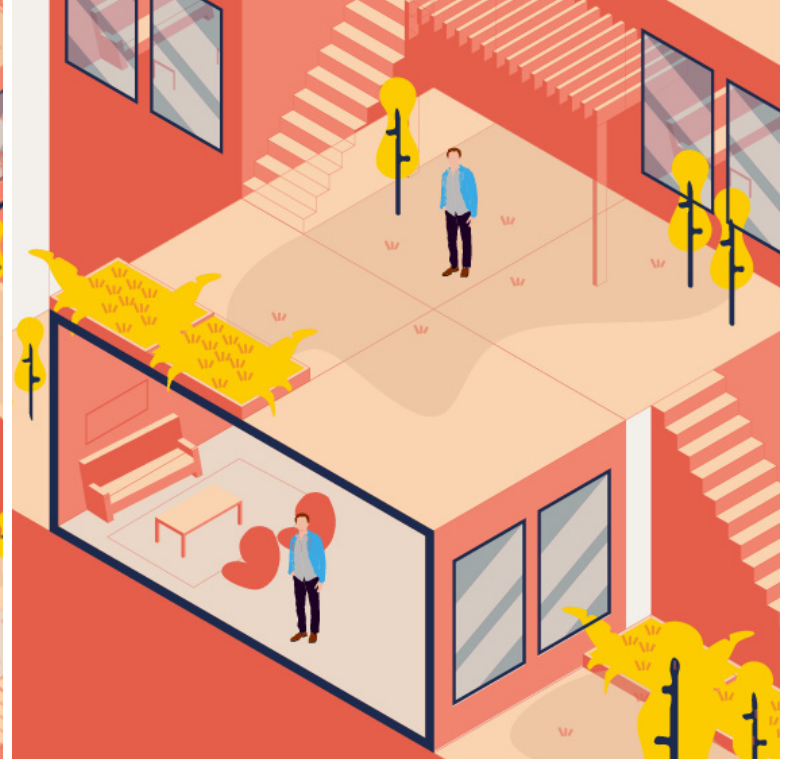
at his university. The university had strict no-poster rules with regular checks by university officials and fined offenders. This rule continued for years and was constantly violated and fairly ineffective. The university also had costly repainting bills each year. Eventually the administration decided that it would be cheaper if they allowed the students to hang anything they wanted on their walls. They supplied paint at the beginning of the year so that students could choose their color and erase damage done by the previous occupants. The university discovered that students were much happier and their painting bill each year decreased significantly.³ It is clear that there are many ways to turn hard architecture to soft, but it would be beneficial for architects to think with soft architecture methodology in mind so that their clients and building occupants can perform at their best. Jane Fulton Suri, an accomplished partner at the design consulting firm, IDEO, states, “My experience is

that [Sommer’s work still isn’t integrated, in large part due to [architecture’s] business model. Anything beyond programmatic basics aren’t followed up on. We do remedial work by pointing out bad environments.”²

When it comes to evaluating these two types of architecture at a personal level, it’s important to think about the difference in environments that these two procure. Hard architecture is infamous for oversized, abandoned, concrete plaza spaces and a stiff transition between the indoors and out. As a visitor of these type of spaces, one might feel unsafe; as if they are on display or the opposite, completely alone. In this setting, one’s socio-spatial “personal bubble” is minimal. It lies close to oneself and keeps guard. In contrast, successful soft architecture allows a person to explore a range of environments ranging from public to private and manipulate their surroundings so that they can achieve a state of contentment. In this type of environment, one’s personal bubble is permitted to drift and relax. One’s mind should be at ease and should not feel insecurity. Sommer has demonstrated characteristics of successful and unsuccessful designed spaces for the public. The next step would be to take this research into present day and perform this type of research with today’s technology as an added variable.



1. Sommer, Robert. *Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969.
2. Rapp, Alan. *Personal Space*. *Design Observer*. June 03, 2009. <https://designobserver.com/feature/personal-space/6597>
3. Sommer, Robert. *Tight Spaces: Hard Architecture and How to Humanize It*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974.
4. Whyte, William. *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, 1980.



CAN YOU SEE?

Design Against Dichotomies

Magdalena Schaffernicht

“Design against is a critical response to a pattern in our context that has not been questioned enough.”

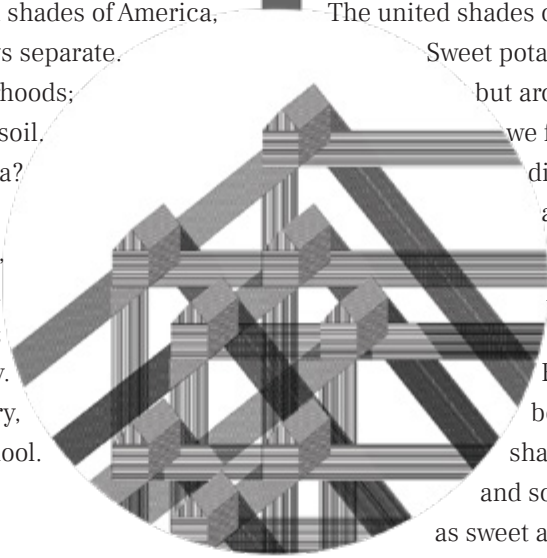


The United States of contradictions and extremes.
Where the most muscular and obese people live,
driving to run on a treadmill,
talk about freedom but not of choice.
The most disgusting richness,
the most unprotected poorness;
where modernism bloomed
replacing landscapes with streetscapes,
where satire reveals more truth than the news,
and fresh air was replaced with comfort.

The United States of contradictions and extremes.
Where you can find all different types of climate,
all different types of landscapes,
cities, cultures, people.
The most dreamed of country,
where the promise of opportunity
melts into my morning pancakes.
The truths held self-evident
in this country of many roads
is that they all lead to freedom
as we pursue happiness.

The united shades of America,
where every shade of skin stays separate.
Separate schools, culture, entertainment, neighbourhoods;
separate nations over a shared soil.
What the States of America?

The same socialist voter who elected a neoliberalist,
the same who exercises by watching the NBA.
Cookie cutter houses, cookie cutter wardrobe;
the jar gets tight holding so many.
The land of the most complex and shortest history,
the home of the free who gets shot for going to school.



The united shades of America.
Sweet potato, pumpkin pie;
but around the dining table
we forget why they told us we were so
different,
and from many, one.
A land created for creation,
a land created through migration.
Each brick a different shade,
bearing the roof that we all have to
share;
and so we sip a tea
as sweet as this land's people



Say, can you see
the United efforts to unite,
the resilience to survive.
Only in this diversity
could such nonsense get to be.

Say, can you see
the United efforts to unite,
the resiliency to survive.
Only in this diversity
could such unity get to be.

EPHEMERAL

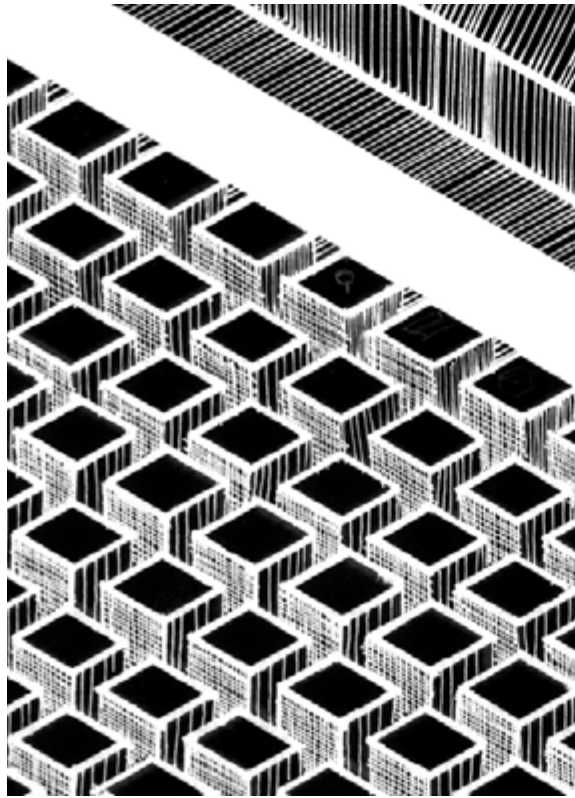
Design Against Permanence

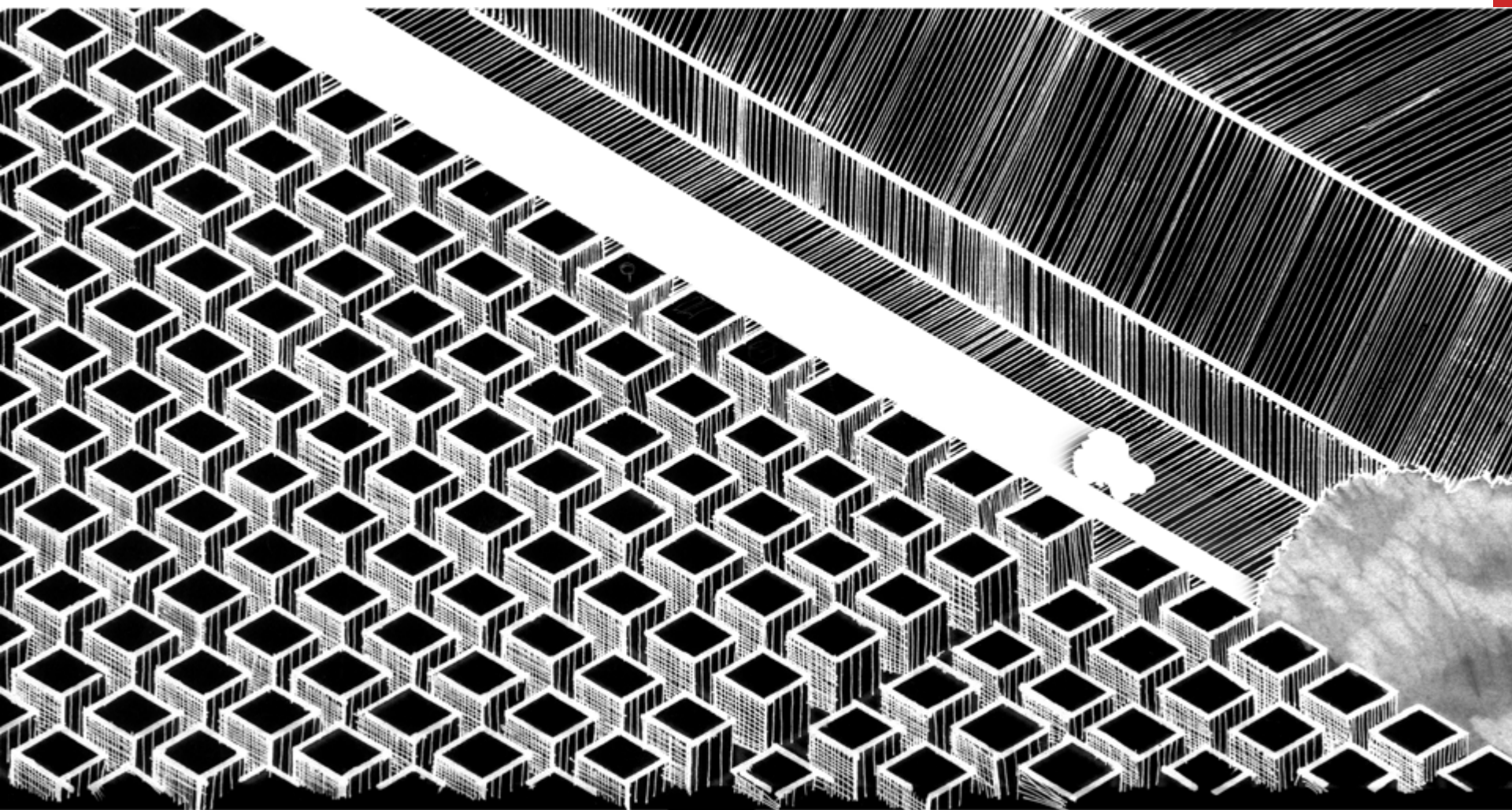
Tanaka Kawondera

“Design against is a design approach that focuses on the problem and proposes a solution that challenges the status quo biases we hold towards our environment. The drawings explore the complex relationship that architecture has with nature by analyzing two contrasting conditions to reach a solution to the problem at hand.”

STATIC

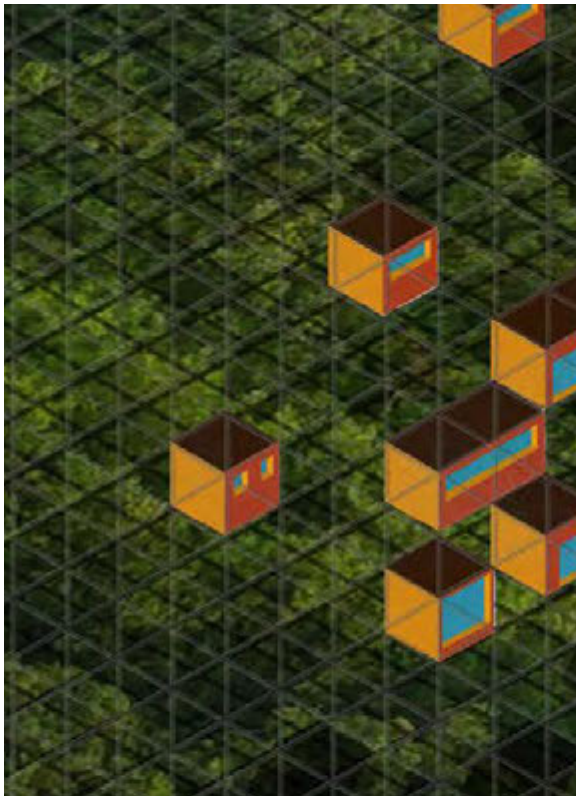
The static nature of architecture renders it victim to its site. Each building carves out a portion of nature and creates an architectonic space suited for human dwelling. The increase in conspicuous construction creates a surplus in architectonic space whilst diminishing the natural footprint. Due to its economic efficiency, the box form allows for this conspicuous construction to occur at a faster pace. Each building carves out a piece of nature replacing it with a highly functional box. The repetitive nature of this motif eradicates the sense of place as the architecture seizes to react to its vernacular conditions. This creates an unexciting monotonous environment. The box is an efficient form but its thoughtless duplication is not.

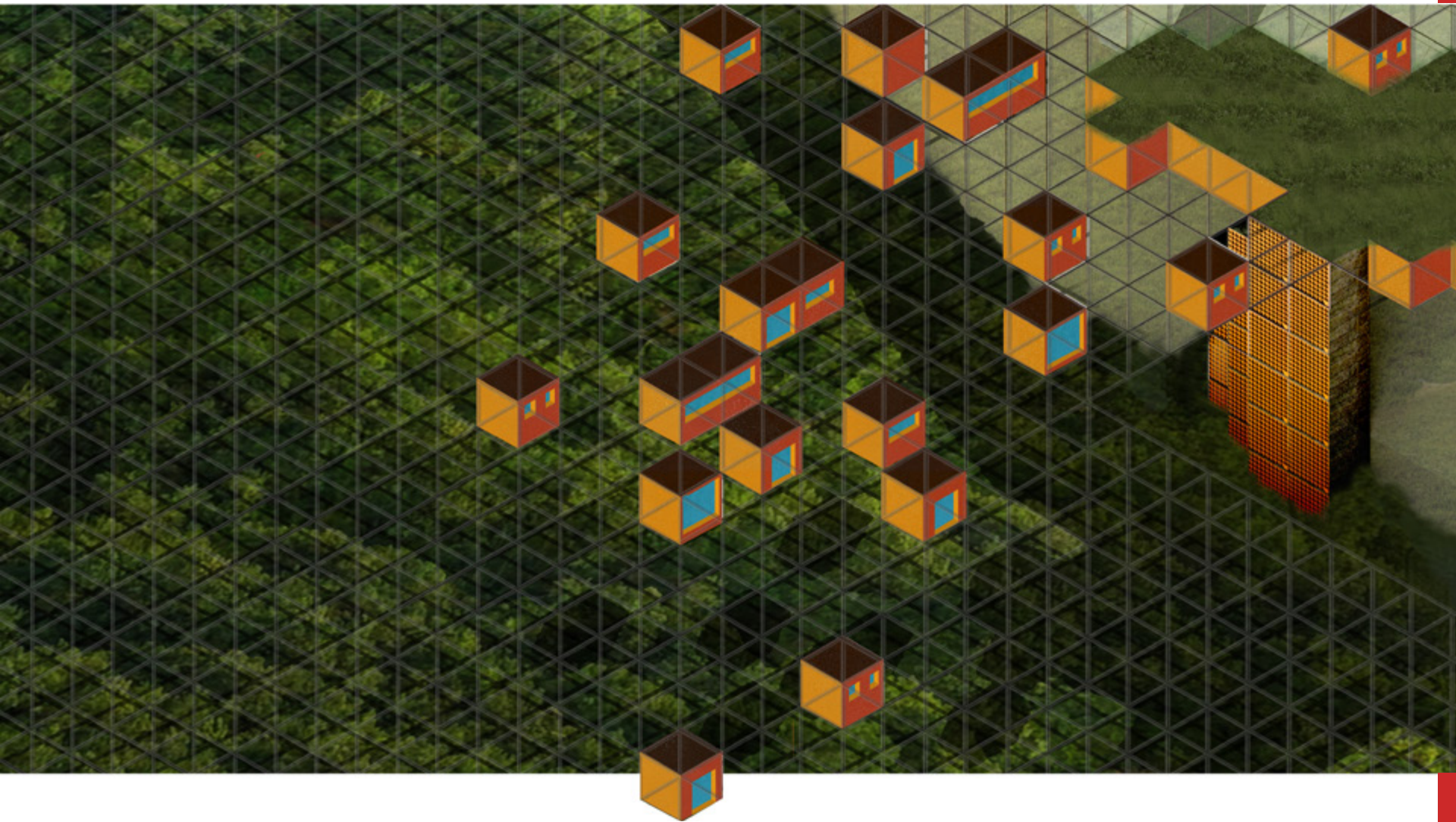




DYNAMIC

Above the ground, the highly functioning box allows the Earth to breathe. In this exaggerated version of pilotis, the mega structure spans the city and allows for the individual box to change its location. The individual compartments can be assembled to create different sized spaces in different locations reducing the repetition of forms. This nurturing act of architecture will instill the sense of place that has been lost by allowing the vernacular landscape to grow as intended without human interaction.







BELOW THE SURFACE

Design Against Environmental Preservation

Yetti Obasade

As the sun set on the horizon of the city, Diamond gazed out of a window and strapped up her boots. She checked the thermostat on her wrist watch and glanced out of the window once again, tapping her foot impatiently as the sun sunk beneath the skyline. Sweat trickled down her forehead; she hastily wiped it away. She found it an immense nuisance to wear such thick coverings and a mask when it was this hot. Rarely did she sweat, but with her watch reading 125 degrees, she felt warm this night.

“Four more minutes.”, she thought. That was the amount of time left that she needed before it was cool enough to go outside. She had travelled throughout the night for sixty days, stopping only when the sun began to rise, becoming too hot to breathe. She didn’t have to leave her underground city, but she was eager to be a part of a community that was beginning to build their own. The idea of young individuals with dreams of creating a city that focused on the cultivation of a new community was ultimately too much to resist. It had been over 1,000 years since the Great Evacuation, and only stories remained of the tragedy that took place so long ago. Life was much different now from how it was in 2050; nonetheless it was normal for Diamond. She was born into a world where living below the surface was how humans who were left during the Great Evacuation had survived; hundreds of feet below the surface, where it was just cool enough for life to be sustained.

Things on Earth had changed dramatically since the increase in the temperature breached the critical level for human safety. Natural disasters became too frequent to combat hurricanes, rising sea levels and excess rains that completely submerged parts of Asia, Africa and North America. The hole in the ozone layer had expanded so much that, in essence, there wasn’t one. Only patches covering parts of the planet remained. Certain

areas of the planet had even completely frozen over, with no human or animal able to survive the immensely low temperatures. Very few areas were able to sustain life above ground, but even then, the risk of falling prey to the natural predators that roamed the surface was ever present. There was no certain answer to how many humans were left on the planet. Many of the world’s top scholars, scientists, and those with most of the collective wealth left the planet during the Great Evacuation. Unfortunately, others either succumbed to natural disasters, or died due to a lack of protection from the temperature and the ozone, disease outbreaks caused by shortages in vaccines or food insecurity. Few people knew what it took to exist in such a desolate environment. Much of the previous knowledge left on earth was still there, but humans had to work hard to harness it to ensure the species survived. It was almost as if by chance, these remaining humans had adapted a new sense of fight or flight, and in doing so, a new way of living was developed.

The events that had taken place on Earth might have otherwise been considered a dystopian nightmare. For Diamond, however, living this life was all she knew. In the newly created, underground cities, new scholars emerged, and new methods of teaching were instilled over time. Skills were honed, and technical trades were restructured to focus on the extraction of oxygen from

what was left in the atmosphere and on the Earth's surface. Emphasis on gardening and plant growth became a high priority, and the conversion of salt water to fresh water was now a highly regarded skill. Knowledge and language became sacred, and all children who were lucky enough to survive birth were taught no less than three languages from early childhood. Humans had finally learned to appreciate life and what it meant to live. This, of course, came only after the near extinction of the human race.

Diamond's parents wanted her to learn the trade of water conversion. They knew their child, or so they thought, and they knew she would want to learn a skill that allowed her to quench her insatiable curiosity and reach her full potential. Her parents knew their daughter had the makings of a master Water Converter, and they wanted to ensure their daughter secured her future as a highly regarded advisor. Diamond, however, had other plans for her life. She wanted to learn the one skill that was held to the highest of regards. It had not been mentioned beforehand, as it was such a highly esteemed advisory position, and those who learned the trade were often the only individuals to master the field. These trade counselors had gone on to orchestrate the trade for the entirety of their lives. This was the trade of the Architect.

The Architect trade is what had made the under-

ground cities possible. This was arguably the most important position a scholar of the new world could achieve. The responsibility of the architect was to create a vast network of underground "roadways", dwellings, tall and short structures, and spaces that implemented all of these components to form a healthy living environment. The architect is also the engineer in this trade, and it was imperative that they understood the importance of being in a physically healthy environment. Healthy environments foster healthy thoughts and habits and an environment that caters to the connection between human and nature is an one that is set on cultivating positive life practices. In the new world, every life was known to be precious, so keeping up the mental, physical, and spiritual health of each human was of the utmost importance.

Diamond understood all of this too well. Ever since she was young, she had dreamed of learning the trade of the Architect. It was what she really wanted to do. She spent much of her childhood marveling at the underground city she lived in. The landscape was full of vegetation and in the distance, a large cavernous underground mountain extended high above the city. The ceiling, referred to as the "sky" by residents in the city, was illuminated so well, one could almost be tricked into thinking they were on the Earth's surface in mid-afternoon. Every building and structure was so unique to her, and she would spend hours deconstructing the designs sketch by sketch. She was sure: this was her calling. Diamond started learning the trade of the Architect when she was fifteen but by then, she had already drawn a complete blueprint of her entire city. It wasn't until she was twenty-five that she decided she was ready to migrate elsewhere to help construct a new city of her own.

The underground city was twenty miles below the Earth's surface and

it spanned nearly 300 square miles. At both the north and south end of the city, two large archways stood across from each other. In the middle of the city, on a plot of carved stone, stood a large pyramid shape made from glass and steel. The pyramid mirror was on top of a ten-mile-high tower. Its purpose was to reflect the sunlight onto the city using large, flat mirror sheets that cascaded down the cities entrance, covering the ten-mile distance from the surface to the pyramid mirror. The sunlight reflecting onto the city was a large part of how they collected heat energy and how they grew vegetation for food. The larger structures in the city were shaped in rectangular form and they extended no higher than 800 feet. It was important not to make the buildings too high or overheating issues could arise in the structures. Each rectangular structure had a transparent ceiling, as well as a transparent wall that faced the mirror tower. This allowed for almost complete illumination into each rectangular structure that was carved out of the earth's crust. For the smaller structures and dwelling units, the shapes varied, but they all included a sloped ceiling and transparent wall. Many of the dwelling units had the same shape configuration, due to the city being carved out of the rock rather than being built with other materials. This, however, still allowed for a uniqueness when it came to design. Each dwelling unit and small-scale structure had to have the sloped roof in order to activate the proper ventilation techniques. This can be described as the "chimney effect": this process vents the air into the atmosphere from an angle once the heat rises within a structure. The digital and technological aspects of each stone structure was monitored using a system developed by the first Architects of Diamond's underground city. The technology of the new world was used to assist humans rather than replacing the human functions completely. This was intentional, as the Architects did

not want future populations to hold the importance of technology over human life.

Surrounding the pyramid tower was a large lake that branched off into five winding rivers of drinkable water. These rivers extended into smaller streams that allocated a consistent flow of water to each rock structure. These streams also extended further into the city for the use of maintaining the lush vegetation that covered the landscape. With the assistance of the Botanists, the Architects designed a system of bridges grown from interlocking vines and tree branches. These bridges extended between multiple tall structures and spanned long distances to allow for easier travel for those taking a trip to the other side of the city. This was orchestrated over decades of design and plant manipulation techniques used by the Architects and the Botanists. Though the bridges were still in use, years of development allowed for new methods of transportation to be cultivated. These methods included "thermal bikes" that were charged using the heat from the earth's core. Bullet trains powered with thermal energy were also used to get from one side of the city to the other. With the modes of transportation and the city's landscape having run efficiently and smoothly for the past 1000 years, Diamond felt the need to develop a new city with new people that she could one day teach and pass on the Architect knowledge as an advisor.

Her time had come. Contact with other humans outside of the city had happened by circumstance nearly one year prior to Diamond deciding to leave. The contacted group was referred to as the Roamers. They spent a large amount of their life roaming the Earth's surface looking for shelter and food. As conditions on the surface continue to sustain the harsh environment, a group of the Roamers had decided to begin creating their own underground city. Once Diamond had heard of the outside contact, she was adamant about leaving to help with the design. Her parents gave staunch pushback on her decision, but nonetheless, Diamond was confident in her knowledge of architecture and she would not have her mind changed so easily. She felt a duty to contribute, and though she loved her city and her parents dearly, the promise of contributing to something new and much bigger called her.

Diamond glanced down at her watch again and thought, "only one more minute". She was energized, though she could feel the heat radiating through her protective gear. She knew this was her true calling as she put her hand on the door handle of the small concrete shelter she had called home for the night. "Let's do this!", she exclaimed to herself. She opened the door and began her continued journey to the new city.

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GROWING PANES

Design Against Urbanization

Haley Powell

“As humans expand and develop land, many of the native species are pushed out and forced to compete for room to survive. Designing against human exclusive spaces and challenging designers to think beyond the human perspective reflects this fragility of ecosystems and the far-reaching effects of human development”

Island state of mind

Adrift amongst the shifting sands
Of people passing by,
An island unto myself, I float,
My eyes and soul are dry,

In gaping space I walk alone,
By choice? I cannot tell,
Every one in their own orbit,
Worlds held within a cell,

I know I'm not the only,
We all are trapped inside,
Each to our own we do cling tightly,
Behind built walls we hide,

Here I stand, one of many,
In mazes daily caught,
Fractured worlds mirror fractured people
Despite what we are taught,

We love the superficial
It keeps our depths at bay,
In the messy deep lies danger,
On driest shores we stay,

Things would change if we would act,
But that's not comfortable,
To design against the shallowness

Is a nearly thankless role,

Concrete binds our bodies,
Entombed in walls of cool,
Break from the grasp, the ordinary,
Shed isolation's rule.

SCOOTERS AND PUBLIC SPACE

Design Against Birds

Daniel Giles Helm

“To design against is to subvert the oppressive and re-envision the mundane. “Design” signals a world that could be. “Designing against” is then a yearning for what won’t be. It is a symbolic act hoping to diminish our alienation and the suffering of communities in a time of collapse. Time, power, and history might not be on our side, but at least we have some CAD tools.”

I’ve been talking a lot about scooters recently. Replace “scooters” with just about any other noun and you might not know what I’m talking about, but with “scooters” you do. Those damn scooters. Racing down pedestrian sidewalks. Parked inconsiderately, often in right-of-ways. They’re aesthetically unfortunate, but more importantly, their presence is immediately redefining public spaces -- as one faculty member put it, “I know they’re new, but it’s hard to recall what it was like when they weren’t around.” Quickly woven into the built environment, their presence brings along questions of space, planning, and politics.

I’m aware of the rent-a-scooter’s utility, popularity, environmental promise, and for many, their fun and convenience. They’re so successful precisely because they fill a public transportation void that our cities and universities aren’t fulfilling. And yes, they are an electric solution in a time when we should take what we can get regarding the elimination of fossil-fuel consumption. But all of this is a part of my anger towards them. The scooters, the objects themselves, are little monuments to the failures of our communities and institutions.

The scooters call attention to spaces that we typically ignore. The passageways that we typically look past are now re-envisioned as temporary stor-

age spots for a business’s property. The scooters never seem to be parked in designated areas, such as near bike racks, but rather are littered about indiscriminately. When grouped together, they make a salesfloor out of a sidewalk, and when scattered disparately, they mark the spot of where their last rider found it most convenient to continue walking from. On sidewalks, they create an obstacle course. In entryways to buildings, they function as billboards sponsored by tax dollars and student fees. And what right do they have to be there? When a company from San Jose or San Mateo comes into our community and dumps their revenue-makers on our sidewalks, uses common spaces as a retail opportunity, and blocks the right-of-way for walkers and wheelchair users, our collective response is to spend weeks hemming and hawing about what to do about it. A city council may ask for some dollars here and there, but they don’t issue citations for public dumping. Mainly they just don’t want to risk butting heads with such a powerful business. And powerful they are. Bird Scooters, the largest such company, is valued at \$2 billion, Lime at \$1 billion. Combined that’s over 12 times the 2018 operating budget for the City of Norman.

But at least they bring jobs, right? Well, they



Revised Plan for the City of London

bring freelance positions which pit workers against one another. No matter how much you work on a given night, if someone else beats you to the punch of collecting a scooter, you get nothing. For writers, designers and other freelancers in the “gig economy,” this may seem like nothing new, but this is a service job involving physical labor. Bird hasn’t returned my emails, but they seem to have no actual employees in the state of Oklahoma. That would mean this \$2 billion company provides not a single Oklahoman with benefits, retirement, health insurance or the legal protections given to “actual”

employees.

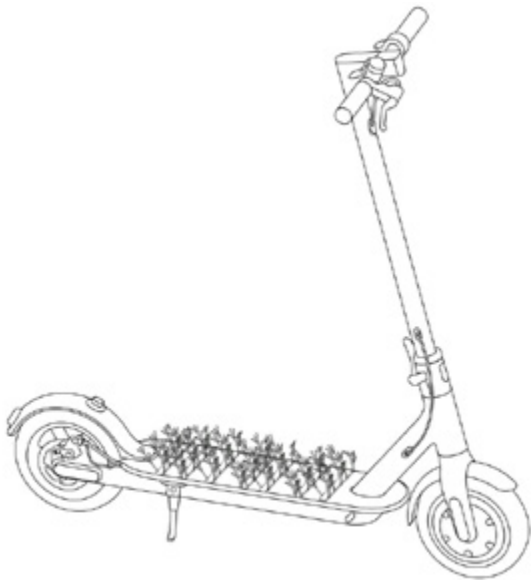
Their business model relies on the fact that municipalities will shrug, workers will always be struggling to make ends meet, the public will mostly ignore them and the frustrated by-stander will leave them alone out of a sense of civility. We’re so accustomed to constant surveillance that it’s an exhilarating act of rebellion just to move one of the damn things to a bike rack as it beeps in defiance. I hear so many casual complaints, but we collectively shrug in submission to the electronic trash of a handful of Californian millionaires. After

all, aren't there bigger issues to fret over?

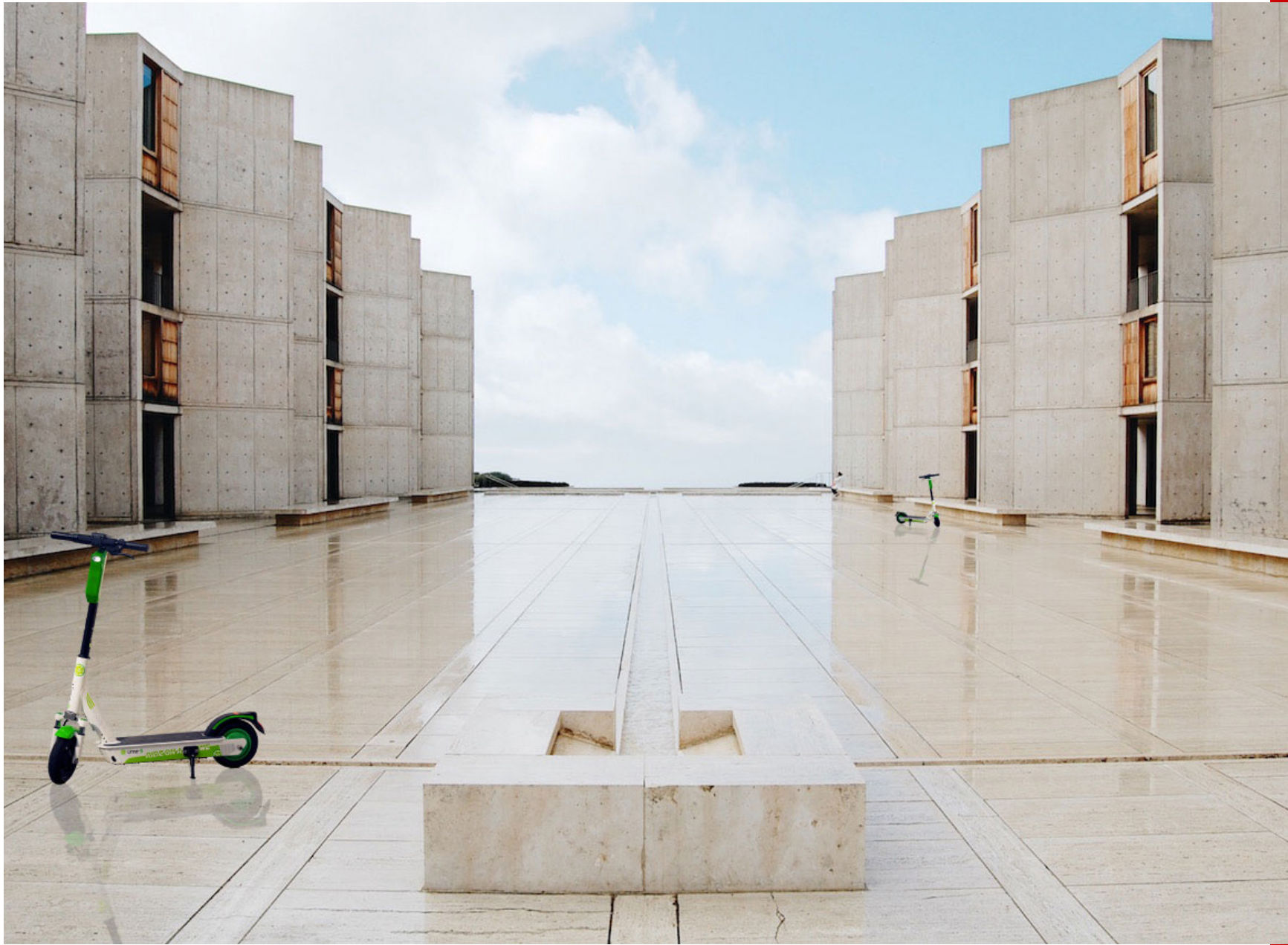
My distaste for the scooters could be rooted in their blatant mockery of the dystopian present. As they pose across the campus or whiz by me as I walk between buildings, they become a physical embodiment of my disbelief with what it is to be alive in 2019. Sure, billboards have polluted the built environment to the benefit of the highest bidder for a long time, but now we pay for the maintenance of their space. Sure, labor has been weakened to the point where full-time employment is ever more elusive, but now even physical labor is done as spec work. Sure, a building can't declare a singular message in isolation, but now the idea is mocked by an oversized consumer electronic, standing defiant against the spatial considerations of the architect. And sure, we've been surveilled and tracked by corporations while engaging with our cell phones, but now we can't even clear space on a blocked sidewalk without being concerned about its GPS device. It's not that societal norms

haven't been twisted for some time, but this is just the decade when the powerful in business and politics get to unapologetically flaunt it. The collective control over our spaces and communities has long been on the decline, but the slope is starting to feel awfully slippery.

I've been talking a lot about scooters recently, but I've also been asking: what does it mean to work against them, either as objects or as symbols? How do I incorporate these feelings into my practice? And how do I do so in a way that doesn't antagonize riders or the technology? And where exactly is the blame -- shouldn't we prioritize enjoyment over guilt when envisioning the potential solutions to our looming environmental catastrophe? I wasn't alive or making work when billboards were introduced or labor unions were all but destroyed, but I hope I would have been responding to it, despite the futility. I've been talking a lot about scooters recently, and it might just be a lot of talk.



Bird with Bird Control Spikes



*Scooters and
Kahn*

Telesis now invites you to re-think.

Everything.

From the most tangible things to the most abstract, from the dreams to the nightmares. We believe improvement is always possible and is no less than our collective responsibility. Change can only be made by challenging the status quo. No white nor black, no left nor right, no right nor wrong.

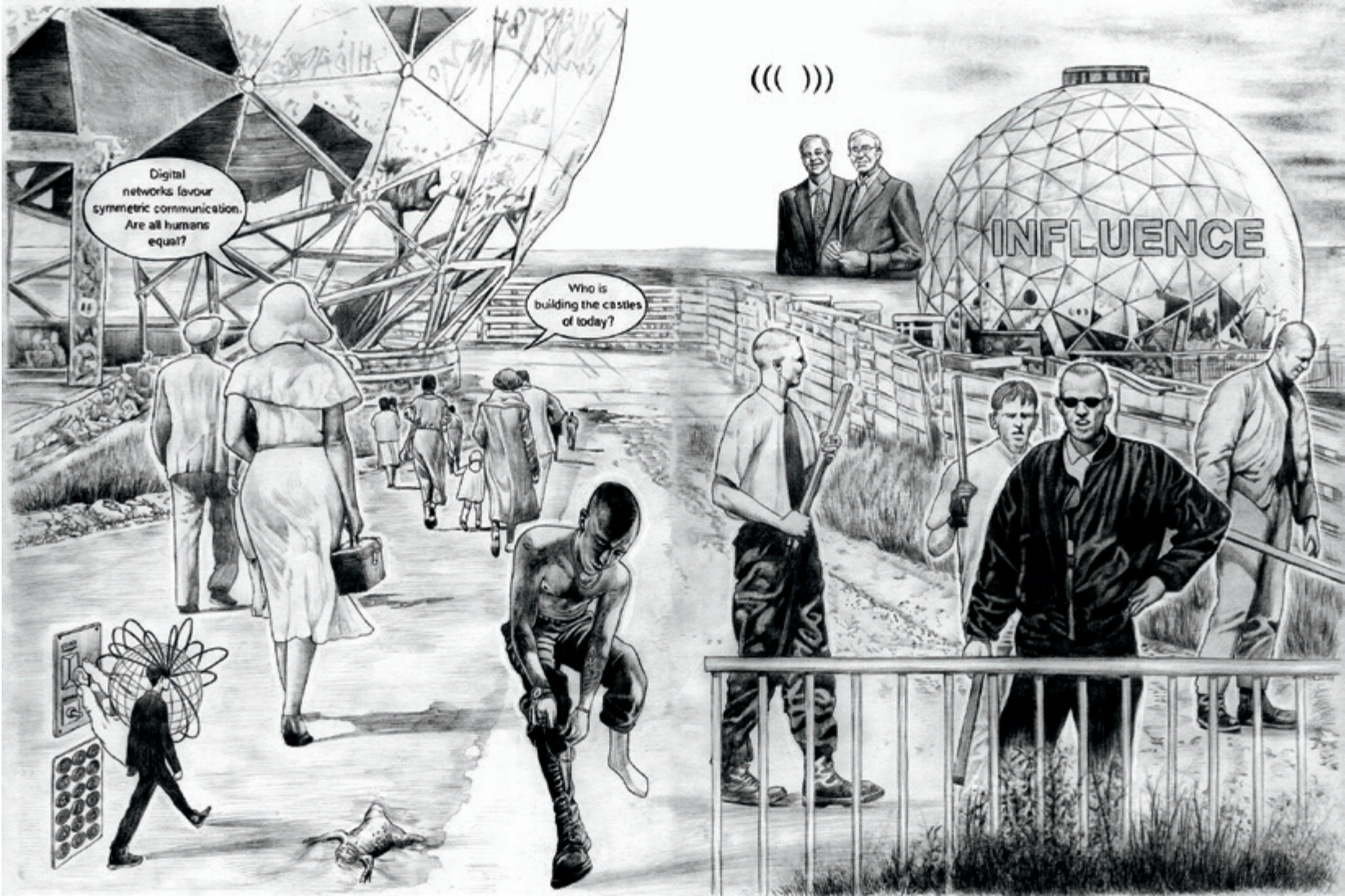
Re-think.

Re-imagine.

Design against.



DESIGNED TO IMAGINE



DESIGN AGAINST

