

Part 5

FIELDS AND/OF OPERATIONS

Place: action, reaction, interaction
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11. REACTIVATIONS (ACTIONS-MACHINATIONS)

Field Logics: Another Logos, Another Locus

12. INTRIGUES (AND PARADOXES)

Crossing (and Looping) Trajectories: Other Formulations,
Other Statements



Elliott ERWITT. Simulated nuclear attack in a miniature battlefield, USSR, 1966. (In *Magnum Landscape*, ed. Phaidon Press, London 1996.)

11 REACTIVATIONS (ACTIONS-MACHINATIONS)

Field Logics: Another Logos, Another Locus

I. Strategies in the Era of “(Dif)fusion”

Shoots and grafts, meshes and weaving, knits and knots, ground, and undergrounds, topographies and reliefs... Many of these concepts tend to suggest a possible “(dif)fusion” and “(trans)fusion” of contemporary design, in (and with) the “milieu”, (context and environment), resulting from an increasing mistrust of the figural – objectual – presence of architecture understood (only) as a “stranded” element – figure and object: a pure, static volume, “standing out from”, “silhouetted against” and “external to” – the background of action.

This progressive interweaving – this interactive overlapping – between figure and ground, which we have touched on through the previous pages, this fusion or “coupling” – which is increasingly evident in the transition from construction to landscape, from Euclidean to topological (and/or topographical) – could be interpreted from a critical, resistant or simply skeptical perspective as a quick-change and escapist ruse, as a desertion of the traditional idea of form (a “loss” of its old “substantive” values or a “resignation” of its former – solemn – “presence-based” and “positional” mission). However, it represents an increase in a new desire for recognition and (re) definition in and of our surroundings, associated with the possibility of moving beyond the old boundaries – limits – between object, frame, ground, milieu, environment and/or system.

This rupture evidences the crisis of in very idea of a boundary as a hermetic – “categorical” or “defining” – limit, and its fluctuation in a broader field of operations and interactions, which is open to a new, more extroverted – in that it is “unlimited”, “unenclosed”, “unbounded”, not subjected or pre-established – formulation of architectural form.

A kind of form that demonstrates an “in-between” nature, in transit – trans, meta, in and between or beyond – that is called on both to direct and obstruct its own spatial and relational alignment.¹

11.1. Étienne-Jules MAREY: *Le vol des oiseaux*, in Greg LYNN: *Animate Form*, 1999

II. Criss-Crossing Again: Place at the Crossroads

The understanding of the idea of “place” as an active, fluctuating, unstable (in sum, dynamic) milieu (or environment) contemplated beyond its old semantic connotations – what has habitually been called “context” – invites the exploration of this new fluctuating nature of the old “locus” and its new evolving manifestations as a virtual “field of forces”, as a scenario for intersection and interaction.

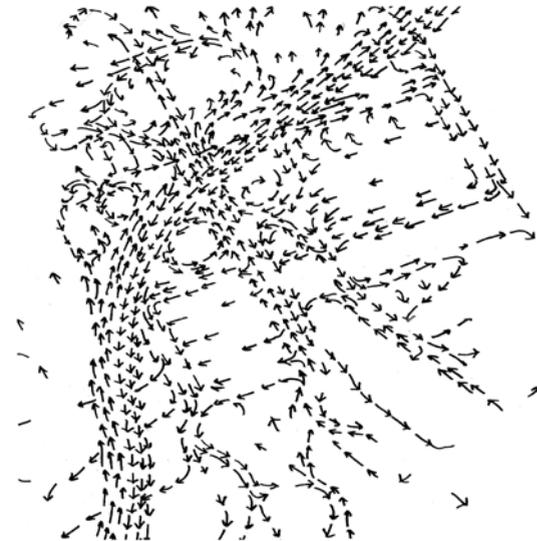
Place appears as an increasingly less stable and ritual environment, less genuine and literal, which can only be understood based on the assumption of a vibratory framework of “layers” of information in movement (a “field of forces and information”) which requires new exploration and new tools for action.²

In this sense, we could ask ourselves what we are referring to when we talk about “place”: the old essential and/or ritual framework for a scenario that is substantive and eternal in its transcendent manifestations, or a new type of scenario for the intersection of and between forces and movements, in a permanent state of latent change, – why not? – with the possible indications of a certain “immanent tonality”.

The positive comprehension of the notion of “field” (“field of forces”, “battlefield” or “field of maneuvers”, i.e., a “scenario for intersection”, as the vibratory framework for “informational” layers in “inter-action”) not only in terms of the global scale but the local scale as well, lets us effectively approach the progressively ambivalent condition of the scenario in question (space, location and framework for the action at the same time) and its capacity for innovative transformation, without giving up on expressing certain unique characteristics, beyond the old essentialist definitions of hypothetical, more or less transcendent, “signs of identity”.³

The spirit of a place (genius loci) is no longer founded on essential, unchanging and identifiable principles. It is synthesized as an active and activatable potential, within a whole broad field of “emergent”, “emerging” or “emergible” potentials – whether evident or hidden, singular or diversified at the same time – whose directed recording and construction are those of a possible design expression of “space-time” relationships between conditions and volitions, between tensions and demands in mutual vibration and interaction.⁴

Place appears as a scenario in a permanent state of “latent change”: a space that is “active and expectant at the same time”, which ties in with a new multiple and multiplied condition, “on the limit” between different phenomena, times and, above all, scales.



11.2. O.M.A.-Rem Koolhaas: Urban restructuring project (Yokohama, 1992).
Vector and flow diagram: “place” – and space in general – as a “field” of forces.

III. Non-Places, Node-Places. Con-texts and Un-texts

Beyond the distinction between “places” and “non-places” proposed by the anthropologist Marc Augé⁵ – between “positive” scenarios, with a strong specific and identity-related value, and “negative” scenarios, which are anonymous, generic, interchangeable, delocalized, etc., with a large component of “indifferent materiality” – the concept of “field” opens up the “field of action” to a broad mosaic of “multi-situations” to be explored, re/assessed, or reinvented; far from the old “morpho-typological” “signs” or the identifying and pre-established “characteristic laws” of ritual place.

With the term “non-places”, Augé proposed a possible definition for a new type of “profane places” associated with this, increasingly slippery, relationship between “city-event” and “space-use” of contemporary space. The “non-places” identified in this way constitute the most evident critical paradigms for scenarios that are suddenly dis-located; like perhaps no other phenomenon, they are intended to demonstrate this ongoing transfer between the “developmental existentialism” of the industrial era (related to the culture of materiality and necessity, of mass consumption and mass production) and a new “consumerist existentialism” (tied to a culture of diversified experience and accessible mobility, of disperse disorientation and expanded time) in new meta-urban territories.

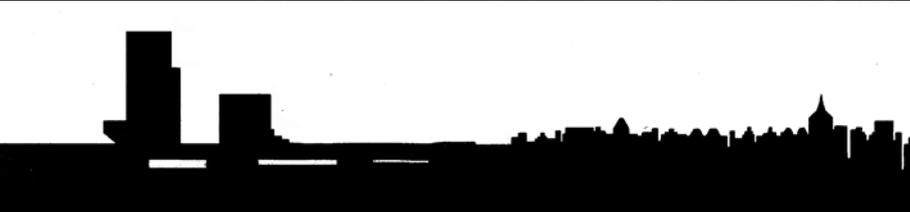
Distant and near, familiar and foreign, Augé’s non-places propose a reading and a distinction which is often too “moralizing” or “cultural-aesthetic” to take on all the complexity of the new emergent “node-places”: spaces of intersection – fields – which deal with this progressive, unstable, fluctuating dimension, “scored” by lines of force, within the contemporary scenario understood as a “multi-space” of encounter and transfer, connection and relationships – the epitome, in any case (beyond eventual specific values), of a new “woven” and many-colored mosaic of events which are sensitive to its “multi-layered” nature.

But also sensitive to their own capacity for affirmation – positive and revealing reinvention – beyond the old redemptive or re-ritualizing inertias of the old urban disciplines. Because this ambivalent “poly –” and “multi”– condition also carries with it a mutation of the traditional immanent attributes awarded to the “place-context”, not with regard to its desirable specificity or singularity, but concerning its old and hypothetical – essential and essentialist – “unambiguous identity” as the limits are increasingly blurred not only between the natural and the artificial, but between “genuine” and “foreign”, between “pure” and “crossbred”.

Today images, messages, experiences, “signs of identity” move from one place on the planet to another in an accelerated transfer between external information (transferred) and endemic (specific) information, between “endogenous” and “exogenous” information, which have the potential to influence an environment which, as we have pointed out repeatedly, has seen the dissolution of its dichotomous, linear and pure secular divisions: natural/artificial, quotidian/extraordinary, singular/plural, real/virtual.

A new hybrid and multi-faceted condition of contemporary space that – as we pointed out in Chapter 4 – suggests a possible disruption in the traditional relationships between man and milieu, beyond the old stability of what is apparently permanent; there is a general sensation of paradox (the simultaneity of contradictory realities) which – though they may seem to refer to a general impression of substantive, typological and terminological collapse – could also promote new relationship structures of decoding and recoding at the same time.

Rather than “contexts”, we should talk about “syntexts” (for synthetic and for “un-texts” – *sin-textos* in Spanish – that is to say, without any referential textualities) where possible combinations could occur between generic (systematic, abstract) logics and specific (contextual, contingent) reactions into new dispositifs “on the edge”.⁶



Place as a specific space, understood not just as a “framework” or “atmosphere” – as a “scenario” – but as a multiplied milieu – as a field of forces, is no longer a “center”, but a “limit”. A “margin for maneuvers”.

The old codified and unambiguous vision of “coherent” homogeneity and “competent” standardization is faced with a new multi-valent perception, more “consequent”, in keeping with the “transversal” value of contemporary space, interpreted as a constant “transfer” of information and energy: an “interface”, i.e., a “reactive” environment, non-transferrable and multi-transferent at the same time.

Faced with this new holistic (multiple and “multi-layered”) dimension of contemporary space, the question would not be to reject the old laws of place, imposing “deaf”, “foreign” or “autistic” actions (intended to bring about isolated positions, foreign impositions or marginal compositions). Nor would it be a question of sanctifying them (or making them over) based on the recreation of glosses and annotations understood as mere reproductions, i.e., more or less nostalgic re-propositions.

We would not be interested in omitting place or sanctifying it; neither rejecting it nor re-representing it.

The question would be only – or especially – to pay attention to its conditions and possible interactions – both material and immaterial – but also its different sounds and “music”, not always in tune or in harmony.

Establishing an ambiguous condition of resonance, interaction and synergy (strategic and tactical, resonant and transferent, local and global) among them: through the definition of “in tune” actions, in a particular “complicity”, though not necessarily interdependent or symbiotic.

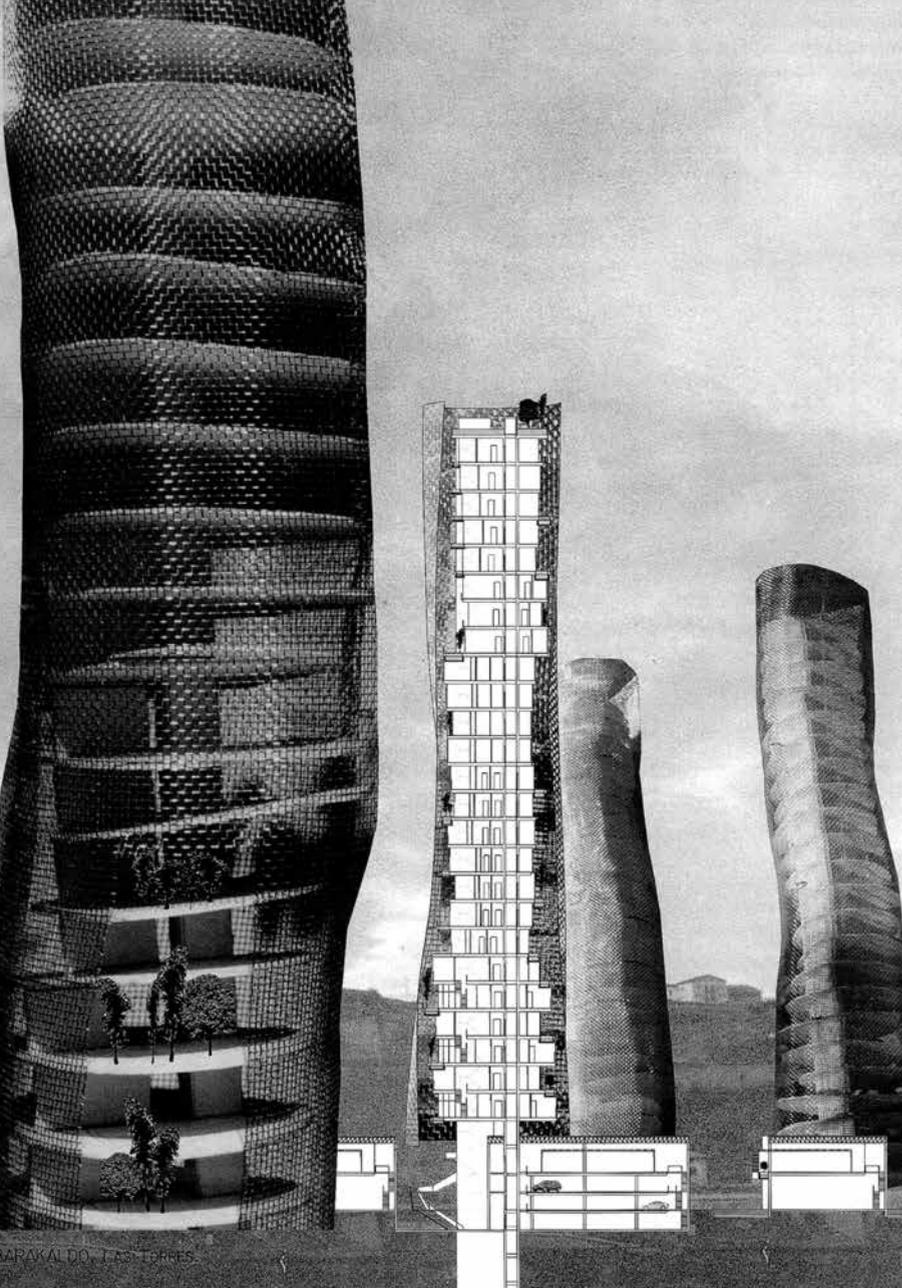
The aim is not to omit place, to reject it or redeem it; nor are we interested in recreating it or re-representing it. Rather, the idea is to pay attention to its atonal music and its reverberating sounds.

11.3. Merce Cunningham; Summerspace, 1958. Spatial structure and trajectories.

11.4. OMA-Rem Koolhaas; Zeebrugge Sea Terminal (1990).

11.5. S&Aa (Soriano-Palacios); Residential towers, Barakaldo, Europan 5 (Bilbao, 1998).

11.6. Duwensee-Kreplin. “Urban Megastructures”. Europan 2 (Rostok, 1990).



Reinforcing it with a different kind of strategies for response and spatial redefinition.

Opening up the territory to different flows that will leave their mark, while proposing new and unheard-of formulations at the same time.⁷

The true cultural dimension of contemporary architecture comes from this ability to effectively take on the apparent substantive vagueness of an environment “on the limit” between information, conditions and mutations, between times and scales (defined, beyond the old image of the place-context, as an essential, semantic, physical, atavistic or literal scenario).

Approaching it using a new operative intelligence which sees the old notion of “place” not as a protective surrounding or a secure guide, but rather as an – incomplete – situation to be re-stimulated.⁸

It is with an eye to these considerations that we have focused our exploration of some of the dynamics contemplated in this book, not only because of the potential for spatial response associated with them, but because of their implicit desire to propose new dispositional strategies that are generated in the crossroads.⁹



The project as “field” or as “environment”.

11.7. S&Aa (Soriano-Palacios): Residential towers, Barakaldo, European 5 (Bilbao, 1998).

11.8. “Diagrams of field conditions” (in Stan Allen: *Points + Lines Diagrams and Projects for the City*, ed. Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1999).

IV. “x” (not “+”, or “-” and not just “=“)

Architectural Operations, Architecture and Landscape

Many of the dispositifs we have analyzed throughout these pages are set up as scenarios on the edge: landscapes of intersection and encounter.¹⁰

Landscapes pulled by different forces: dissolving or holding fast, flowing or remaining anchored, disappearing or standing out.

Unfolding, refolding, folding.

These terms are not dissimilar to the ones which characterize the “reactive” properties of most of the contemporary dispositifs we are concerned with here (“extraction” as a “reaction” to place, “transformation” as an “action” – or “impact” – on it).

The interest of those proposals lies in “offering” relationships; promoting new links and connections; activating program, uses and scenarios; in short, multiplying identities.

Activating and positively reassessing the values to be highlighted (cultural values, but also sensory, scalar, environmental, human, and social values, among others) and redirecting other vectors which can be emphasized, maximized, or just reevaluated.

Most often, the idea is simply to expand on the potentials of a place, rather than adding or subtracting information: “x” (not “+” or “-” and not just “=“).¹¹

To be a place and bring together – or connect – many other places at the same time.

To be a place and transfer to other possible, real and virtual, places.

To be both local and global at once. Local and transversal.

To be a place and a “hyper-place”.

Introducing new information that can take advantage of the existing assets and potentials and re-stimulate them – i.e., reactivate them – both formally and spatially.

As a result, the relationship with place is, more and more simultaneously, strategic and tactical: reacting to its potentials and making them operative; promoting other – new – conditions and – possible – dimensions; resonating and transferring; multiplying potentials, both obvious and hidden.

Signifying the heterotopic nature of the project, understood as “a place in/from the place”.

Within this framework of multi-scalar exchanges, architectures work as “landscapes” (of data), and “landscapes” work as architectures (of intersection).

This compromise and coupling (recurring in contemporary culture) between the old voices of “architecture”, “place” and “landscape” takes on special connotations.

Landscape as a “scenario of movements”, but also as a “territory of notations” of reality itself.¹²

Conceiving architecture as “landscapes of intersection”, as we pointed out earlier, implies breaking down the boundaries between old substantive categories and scales – territory and city, scenario and stage, trajectory and system, figure and ground, etc. – leading to a new, more open “topos” of movements and events.¹³

In this sense, the idea of a design action associated with an interpretation of *place* as a possible landscape of encounter, operative and operativized (an open field of potentials within another open field of forces) does not involve integration, imitation, imposition or appropriation: It wants to “react” unbiasedly with the (physical and virtual) environment, introducing itself flexibly in the milieu in order to generate “topo-logical” (though not necessarily “topo-morphic”) dynamic responses: unique in their specific manifestations and generic in their possible abstract definitions. Negotiated and un-subjected at the same time.

Following pages: examples of encounters between “architecture” “landscape” and “field” in a place.

11.9. Roche & DSV & SIE: School of Architecture (Venice, 1997) Urban morphing.

11.10. Actar Arquitectura: Monte Hacho Complex (Ceuta, 1998). Territorial morphing.

Previous pages: some examples of resonance and interaction with the milieu.

11.11. O.M.A.-Rem Koolhaas: City Hall, The Hague (1986-1987).

11.12. Steven Holl: “Edges of a City.” Proposal for Manhattan (1990).

11.13. F.O.A. (Zaera-Moussavi): Entrance to the Myeongdong cathedral (Seoul, 1995).

11.14. Aranguren-Gallegos. Cultural Center and Auditorium (Benidorm, 1995).

11.15. Eduardo Arroyo-NO.Mad.Arquitectura Pamplona Auditorium, 1998.

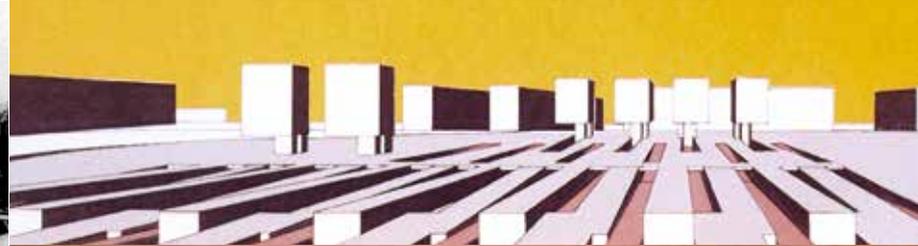
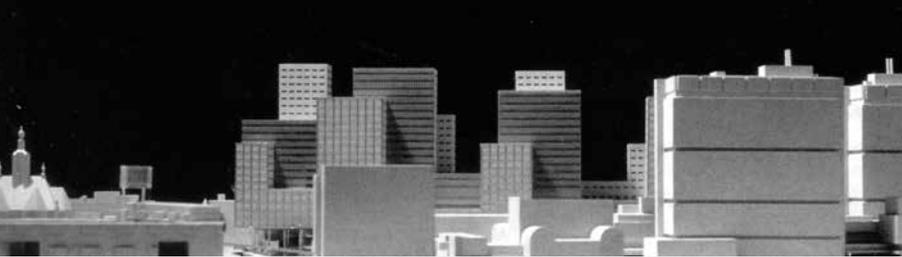
11.16. Diacomidis-Dallas-Haritos-Nikodimos-Papandreou: Meyrin, 1994.

11.17. S&Aa (Soriano-Palacios). Benidorm Cultural Center and Auditorium (Alicante, 1993).

11.18. Roche & DSV & SIE: Venice School of Architecture (Venice, 1997).

11.19. Actar Arquitectura: Vallès Technology Park (Barcelona 1997-1998).





V. “Field” Logi(sti)cs: (Re)active Environments

This topo-fluctuating – rather than iconic-positioned – condition refers back to a possible level of “resonance”, which can be established between the perception of a new “guest” landscape and a “host” landscape, manifested in its surroundings, and the clear links with the notions of “synergy” and “interaction”.

Whereas the term “resonance” refers to a modified variation of the “sounds” from the environment (created through the reflection or repercussion between different bodies or spaces in vibration), the term “interaction” translates into a “trade”, a mutual “exchange” between different stimuli, and the term “synergy” is the active participation among various synchronous efforts:

- Resonance, as a conjugation of tuned and accorded energies.
- Interaction, as an exchange of associated energies.
- Synergy as a combination of multiple or multiplying energies.

Pursuing further this idea of a “field” as an interactive “environment”, as a “scenario” or a “landscape” of encounter, but also as a possible “topo-dynamic” “distribution” of forces and movements that are “in process” reveals the new “hyper-scored” and cross-cutting condition of place as informational space.

The notions of “field” or “environment” understood as dynamic frameworks or atmospheres ties in with this ability to recognize and articulate “localized stimuli” and, at the same time, to express logics and actions which are “projected” – more or less recursively – and deployed, at the same time, in trajectories that are – actually or virtually – reactive, in that they are condensers of movements, action, and information which is processed synthetically. A spatial device, a dispositive, understood as an “open field” of movement within another “open field of forces”, as we have put forward in this book, is not integrated; it does not imitate; it does not impose itself; it does not appropriate. It “reacts” with the (physical and virtual, material and immaterial) environment, inserting itself flexibly into the milieu in order to generate cross-cutting responses that are local and global, plural and specific (architecture and landscape, architecture and infrastructure,

architecture and flow). Reactivating it and reinforcing it.¹⁴

Both the idea of “field” and the idea of place, environment or a “landscape” of intersection, exist on the basis of linking together ambiguous relationships between reaction and interaction, between independence and interconnection, between “medium and mediator” (or, ultimately, between class and case).¹⁵

Then, the project appears as a virtual “field of forces”, implanted in another “field of forces (the place) – which is, in turn, inscribed in a larger milieu (the city, which is also a dynamic system). With, in and between them, there are exchanges of energy, material and/or information. Its condition is that of a relational and operative system inscribed in a global synesthetic space.¹⁶

Based on this ambivalent condition of a (multi)field milieu and a (multi)layered action, with the ability to process (more or less significant) data and re-elaborate it spatially – to inscribe itself in a field of forces and act as a conductor – we can then interpret the new nature of contemporary design and its response to the very idea of an “inter-active” insertion in a place.

The idea of a “(re)active” environment, which refers to and calls on interventions and operations conceived in (and as) environments that are (inter)active and reactive at the same time.

Environments intended to process multiple demands – cultural and functional, programmatic and perceptive, episodic and multi-scalar – reformulating them, and compressing them, into new active dispositifs called upon to infiltrate a host space – which is “contingent” by definition (and, therefore, “incomplete”) – surpassing it and re-stimulating it at the same time. These are the terms we use to refer to this recurring, influential and incidental, aim for a new architectural action: an action that is no longer “resistant” (skeptical, defensive or questioning), but rather “remittant”: it recodes because it decodes (or uncodes).

That is to say, it reformulates, on the one hand, inertias and pre-established conditions, old accepted codes (uncoding); but it also translates phenomena – new conditions and coding – which are emergent and global (decoding). It re-informs, as such.

Again, an action that is relational and operative at the same time.

VI. Reaction and Resistance

In a new informational – real and digital – environment, this interactive nature of a possible architecture that “mediates” between times, places and scales refers back to its new and implicit condition as an interface; that of an interactive dispositif of translation and transfer – a transferent, whose nature is that of an artificial supplement (foreign, an outside, an intruder, even) – which has the ability to register, process, manipulate and crossbreed different “messages”, “data”, “codes” and “meanings” – conditions and locations, levels and layers of reality – and to synthesize them in trajectories (or constructions) of synthesis, called upon to work, precisely, with ubiquity and multiplicity, with configuration and information, at the same time. It is based on these premises that we can compare architecture with an abstract – diagrammatic – mechanism and a “processing mechanism” – (re)productive, manipulative and interactive – signifying the double condition of being both “incisive” and “incidental”, as we mentioned in the previous chapter.

Or with a “prosthesis”, if we associate the possible “mechanical and machinating” condition of an architectural dispositif with that of a “functional and operative supplement”, at the same time.

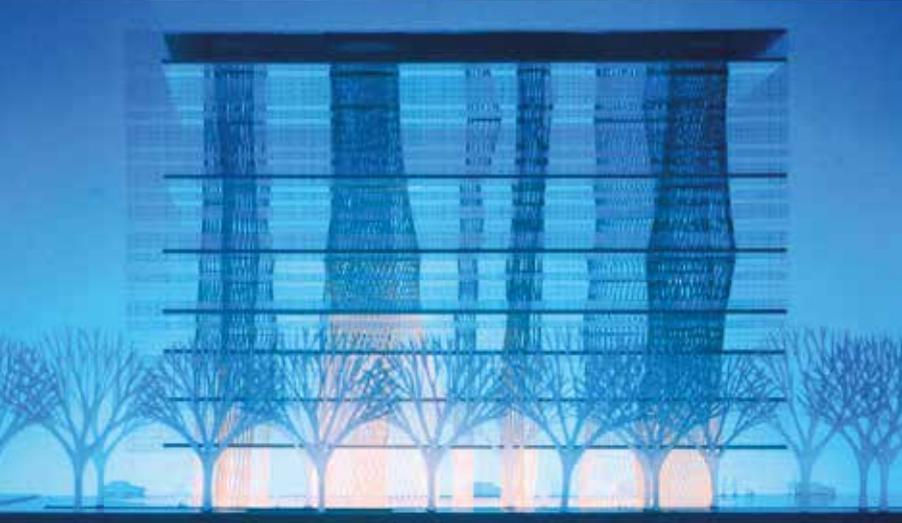
“What is it to talk of prosthesis here in architectural discourse? Or, rather, what is it to talk of it again, for was not modern architecture simply the thought of architecture as prosthesis?”

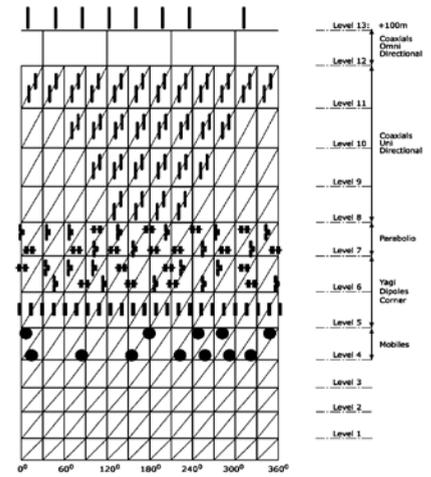
With this double question, Mark Wigley begins his essay, “Prosthetic Theory: The Disciplining of Architecture”.¹⁷

Although Wigley’s thesis and his mainly metaphorical focus (in his references to the idea of prosthesis) are meant, above all, to point out the difficulty (or the impossibility) today of constructing a true unitary theory around the idea of contemporary architecture, some of the tangential ideas he points to allow for proposing lines of discussion which are especially apropos in our case.

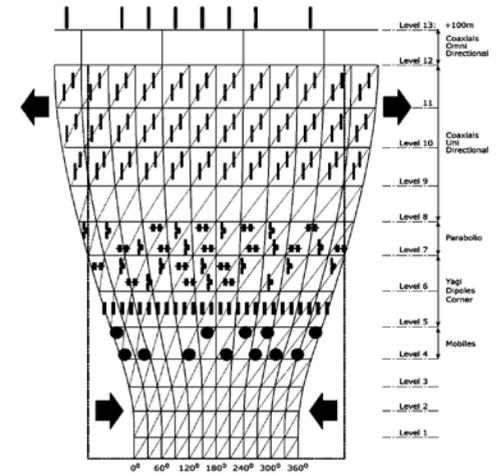
Reactive capacity, strategic disposition, synthetic abstraction and “in-between” (in) stability vs. imposed and tectonic objectuality.

11.20. in-between being matters: simulated (Star-Trek, Paramount Pictures) and virtual (Toyo Ito, Sendai Media-Centre, 2000)





String of Antennae on Cylindrical Tower



Distorted Tower Shape to Maximise Usable Surface

VII. Orthopedics and Prostheses, Inductors and Stimulators

In terms of a possible “implant” or “implantation” in the milieu (a new layer of information), we are interested in exploring this virtual prosthetic condition of contemporary architecture. The concept of a “prosthesis” does not only allude, in this sense, to the capacity for infiltration, intrusion, coupling, extension or lengthening of the architectural object in an apparently incomplete medium. Rather, it also refers to its “redefining” or “reinforcing” condition: that of a (figurative or strategic) “recoding” mechanism intended to address the hypothetical lack – or desire – in the host body.

Classic “orthopedics” (like architecture itself in the traditional city, in fact) tend to reproduce – to evoke, recreate, or re-represent – the absent element (or better, the form of it), regenerating the damaged tissue or extending its former characteristics.

In the past, orthopedic artefacts hid their foreign infrastructure under coverings which looked natural. There was a certain amount of regenerative or redemptive, in addition to “reconstructive”, formalism in all of it.

Hiding distortions. Composing “appearances”.

Recovering “what used to be”. Reconstructing the former single body.

These operations were fundamentally (re)compositional, in search of an alleged – lost and yearned for – aesthetic harmony of completion, of what is finished, cohesive.

Allegorical actions, precisely because they are evocative.

The epic of modernity aimed to substitute the old ceremonial, ritual, liturgical or allegorical “reproductions” with new functional “productions”: pragmatic artefacts strictly designed not to evoke, but to “produce”.

Vocationally prototypical, abstract simple responses and conceived as a “support for specific functions” (hold, grip, catch, move, just like sleep, work, rest, transport, etc.).

11.22. Man with “seven” feet. Fragment. Marc WIGLEY: “Prosthetic Theory,” *Assemblage* no. 15, 1993).

Genuine technical, mass-produced, typological, universal, autonomous pieces – universal prototypes – which were as strict and exact as they were “foreign” to the body – place or contact – which receives them.

“Mechanical designs” or “mechanisms” that were precise and dry, economic, rigorous and proudly abstract.

Pure form, for purist and purified.

Functional machines, tending to be both “essential” (in their abstraction) and “indifferent” in their location).¹⁸



VIII. Reaction and Reactivity

New techniques and new factors let us develop, today, new “prosthetic” machines, new more artificial artefacts, if you will, but which are also “unique” and specific. Non-transferrable. In an individual “resonance” with the milieu and the local context. The media – the broadcast of the Paralympic Games is a paradigmatic example, but so is the whole range of digital/virtual equipment – has familiarized us with the application of new “smart” implants which do not resemble the limbs where they are implanted (or for which they are a substitute), and yet they interact qualitatively with the host body, not only to recover or improve its former features, but to increase them, reaching out toward new conditions, or even dimensions.

Technological elements (i.e., preferably “infrastructural” rather than aesthetic) which, at the same time (and despite their strange artificial appearance) enter into “unique” and “personal” accord with the host body in order to better optimize their potential; transferring it, even, toward new real and “virtual” situations.

The idea, then, is not just being able to run, but to run faster; not just to see, but to see further; not just to “cover” the given needs, but to multiply the degree of response, “above and beyond” those needs.

Based on these premises, we can imagine an architecture that would not confine itself to simply “extending”, or supporting, the body; rather, it would constitute a supplement that is receptive and active at the same time; a reagent that is “singular” (in that it is “artificial”, but also “individual”); “foreign”, yet attuned to particular characteristics; capable of regulating itself while multiplying – encouraging and enlarging – the initial conditions of a pre-existing reality, in order to “transcend” them beyond their own limits.

Like a processing device in and of the milieu.
Or, better yet, an interface – rather than a machine – between

“us” and the “world”. With the potential to tune in and to transmit, to process and reinterpret or, if you will, to reformat. Ultimately, to (re)stimulate.

From a logic based, as we have said, on the topological intersection between energies, tensions, currents and forces, rather than representations.

This “unnatural” contract, which has the potential to bring together codes (and levels) of different (in)formation in a single body or environment, refers back to the formal disconnection between its parts – and the strange structural “coupling” – in contemporary design: twinning, cuttings, grafts point to recent “anti-compositional” mechanisms, which translate this desire to propose more direct and “un-subjected” actions (because they are uninhibited, unbiased) in harmony with the interpretation of – contemporary – space that can only be approached effectively from the standpoint of synchronization and the active organization of layers and networks that are overlapping and differentiated at the same time.



11.23. Prostheses for running races: Barcelona Paralympic Games, 1992 (in *Quaderns* no. 199, 1994).

El increíble golfista sin manos



The media has familiarized us with the application – often contingent, because it is tactical – of new “smart devices” which have nothing to do with the limbs in which they are implanted (or which they substitute) and which, nonetheless, interact qualitatively with the host body, improving on their former qualities.

11.24. “Vic Reis, the handless golfer” or “the champion grandfather” (archive).

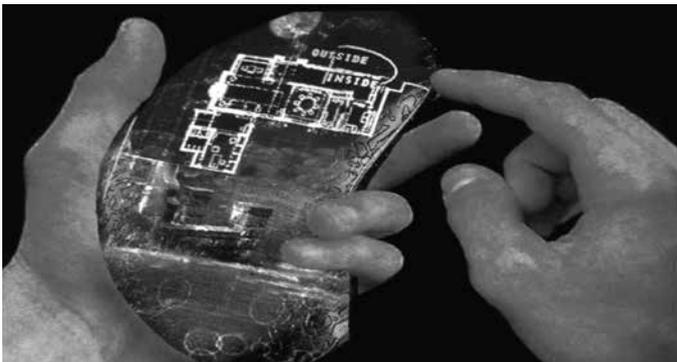
11.25. Sensor-fitted foot, designed at MIT, Boston Massachusetts (archive).

11.26. Stelarc & Merlin: *Amplified Body Event*, 1997.

11.27. “Aimé Mullins, the first model without legs” (in *I.D.*, May 1999).

X. Transfers: Leaps and (Re)stimulations Architecture as a Virtual Interface

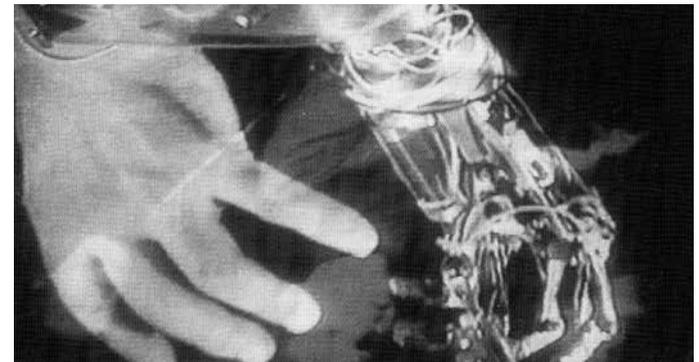
The form we might use to give meaning to our *landscapes* (contexts or scenarii) does not involve producing only constructions/buildings as evocative forms or as appropriated and/or inert objects; rather it is founded on imagining environments-dispositifs that are more receptive, more complex and “dynamic” – or virtually dynamic for “active” – with the potential to take on this role of compressor, processor, and transmitter that is organizational and narrative at the same time: “interface” (interconnectors) and “icons” (symbols) at the same time, as proposed by Aaron Betsky,¹⁹ (“interface” as a catalyst and as a channel – “reception and interaction” – “icon” as a conveyer or “transfer” – “scalar leap and vehicle for meaning”). Betsky himself dealt with this contemporary link between the milieu as space of influence and the milieu as space of event (between “architecture” and “landscape”) associating the concepts with the notions of “icon” and “interface” as environments that compress, process and transmit meanings. In a new informational – and digital – environment, which we



In a new information environment that “mediator” nature of an “architecture-machining” -more that of an “architecture-machine” - refers to its new status of interface: that of a device understood as a system, or as an operating environment.

explore at the beginning of this chapter, architecture might aim to be this possible interface – or filter, as Toyo Ito has suggested²⁰ – between a “contextual” – real and local – reality and an “inter-textual” – virtual and global – scenario further beyond. Processing, intersecting and re-stimulating different energies “codes” and “meanings” – conditions and situations – in trajectories and constructions capable of working, precisely, with ubiquity and multiplicity, condensation and dissolution at the same time.²¹

The concepts of interface and icon combined with the notion of landscape bring us back to the idea of “field”, not just as place, but also as a dispositif or device (i.e., as a “scenery” and “scenario”, as “medium” and “mediator”, as “figure” and “background”, etc.).
– Field, again, as framework and as action, as “organism” and “organization”;
– but field, also, as “*lieu and milieu*”, structure and environment; receptor and processor; “transmitter” of energies and movement, in an in-between reality – of interludes and intersections – which is ultimately paradoxical in its characteristics and in the responses associated with them.



11.28. Michael McCoy: *Haptic Software Controller*, 1995
(in Aaron BETSKY: “Landscape and the Architecture of the Self,” *Quadrans* n° 1998).
11.29. *Stelarc & Merlin: Amplified Body Event*, 1997.

1– See KUMA, Kengo: "The period of chaos: digital landscape," in *Quaderns* no. 222, 1999.
See DELCAN, Juan: "Arquitectura en la era de la electrónica. Arquitectónica," in *BAU* no. 016, 1997 and WEIBEL, Peter: "La era de la ausencia," in *BAU* no. 016, 1997.

2– We have written extensively on this subject in Chapter 4.

For an interesting reflection on these "new maps", see:

– See COSTA, Xavier and KURGAN, Laura: *You are Here: Architecture and Information Flows*, ed. MACBA, Barcelona 1995.

– BALLESTEROS, José Alfonso (editor): "La ciudad que no se ve," *Fisuras* no.5.

3– See HADJISAVVA, Dimitra: "El concepto de lugar en las teorías arquitectónicas: mutaciones," Lecture given in the context of the "UIA-Barcelona 96" congress.

4– To paraphrase Ben van Berkel, urban environments are surrounded, at the same time, by visible fields and invisible fields of "information" – data, flows and networks, stimuli, tensions, etc. – which operate simultaneously in globalized spaces and localized spaces:

"An architecture of dissipative forces should be understood as another virtual pattern rather than a set method; it is assembled as a multiple generator in a complex field of forces.

Working with these forces implies working with different organizational models, generating open energy systems, incorporating "information" that is economic, public, political, etc."

See also LYNN, Greg: "Conversation by modem with Ben van Berkel," in *El Croquis* no. 72, 1995, pg. 6.

5– See AUGÉ, Marc: *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. ed. Verso, London 1995.

See also the reference made by Xavier Costa in "Non-places and the metropolis," *Quaderns* no. 207-208-209, 1995, p.29.

6– See HADJISAVVA, Dimitra: "El concepto de lugar en las teorías arquitectónicas: mutaciones," op cit.

7– See SIMEOFORIDIS, Iorgos: "Transitions," in *EUROPAN III*, ed. European, Paris 1994. European, Paris 1994.

8– See BETSKY, Aaron: "Landscape and the Architecture of the Self" in *Quaderns* no. 220, 1998, pg. 28.

9– "Energies that are often contradictory meet and collide, bringing together virtuality and physicality."

See RAHM, Philippe: "Folds," *Quaderns* no. 220 (Operative Topographies), 1998, p. 61.

10– See KOGOD, Lauren: "The place of the contemporary project," *Quaderns* no. 199 (Armadillos) 1993, pg. 51.

11– See MORALES, José: "Terrain Vague," *Quaderns* no. 214, 1996, p.171.

See also MORALES, José: "Associate, overlap, connect", in *Quaderns* no. 211, 1996, pg. 163.

12– See SHANNON, Kelly: "Re-Politizing the Metropolis: The Strategic Project Approach." Lecture given in the context of the "UIA-Barcelona 96" congress.

13– See BRU, Eduard: "La mirada larga," in V.V.A.A: *Nous paisatges, Nous territoris*, ed. MACBA, Barcelona 1997.

14– See ALLEN, Stan: "Distributions, Combinations, Fields" in *The Berlage Cahiers* no. 5 (Fields), Rotterdam, 1996, p 72.

15– "Fields are shaped as scale-less entities, which can only be defined by certain 'limit' principles, either via coordinates or nets. They are generic configurations, which both relate and articulate specific 'events' at the same time, enriching themselves with the information from specific scenarios, programs, occurrences, interests.

They are, 'forces of risk' and they are always in a state of transformation. They are always 'in movement', in constant development; they are never reconstructed; they are dynamic and complex and they relate with a progressive process of change. [...] Architecture as a field of support, as a density of vectors, as a cluster of links, as an intensity of fields of forces attends to implementations, influences, links, attractions and repulsions; simultaneously.

It attends to the milieu as an essential artifice, taking on the category of 'milieu', whether through 'stamping' (architecture as superficial curves, the expression of a concept), 'gradients' (continuous structures read as pulses of density), 'nets' (architecture as links and nodes of transmission) or 'protrusions-peaks' (discontinuities and peculiarities). Architecture-milieu; milieu and architecture."

See PORRAS, Fernando: "Editorial," *BAU* no. 014, 1996.

16– See MOLINA, Silvia: "El espacio intermedio visual-virtual," in V.V.A.A: *Entorno. Sobre el espacio y el arte*, ed. Editorial Complutense, Madrid 1995, pg. 51.

17– See WIGLEY, Mark: "Prosthetic Theory: The Disciplining of Architecture," in *Assemblage* no. 15, 1991.

18– See SHANNON, Kelly: "Re-Politizing the Metropolis: The Strategic Project Approach." Lecture given in the context of the "UIA-Barcelona 96" congress.

19– See BETSKY, Aaron: "Landscape and the Architecture of the Self," *Quaderns* no. 220 (Operative Topographies) 1998, pg. 28.

20– See ITO, Toyo: "Architecture in a Simulated City," in *Architectural Monographs* no. 41, ed. Academy Editions.

21– In complement, see also GAUSA, Manuel: "Otro logos, otro locus," in CORTES, José Miguel: *En cualquier lugar, en ningún lugar*, ed. Centre d'art la panera, Fundación MARCO 2008.