

# FACTS AND *FICTIONS* *FICTIONS*

10th Annual AHRA Research Student Symposium  
Abstract Reader

**3 May 2013**

LTH-School of Architecture  
Sölvegatan 24, Lund





*The symposium provides an international platform for PhD students/candidates in the architectural humanities to meet, present and discuss their work.*

## **Facts and Fictions**

Architecture is a question of both facts and fiction. There are material realities to sense, and there is a vision of possibilities for a future. Architectural research was for a long time dedicated to empirical studies that searched to define “how things are”. Issues that concerned creative judgement, critique and methodological alternatives were left to the practitioners to handle. In the wake of trans-disciplinarity, approaches like research by design and critical research became important for the domain of architecture. The scope has become wider and includes, apart from recent achievement in the arts and humanities, also the creative parts of the design practice, and this situation triggers the emergence of new theories and methods. This one-day symposium is dedicated to a critical and constructive discussion about this new landscape.

## **About AHRA**

*The Architectural Humanities Research Association*

[www.ahra-architecture.org](http://www.ahra-architecture.org)

AHRA is a non-profit academic organisation that provides an inclusive and comprehensive network for researchers in architectural humanities across the UK and overseas. It promotes, supports, develops and disseminates high-quality research in the areas of architectural history, theory, culture, design and urbanism.

## **About ResArc**

*The Swedish Research School in Architecture*

[www.resarc.se](http://www.resarc.se)

ResArc, is a collaboration between the Schools of Architecture at KTH Stockholm, Chalmers University Gothenburg, Lund University and Umeå University with the aim of strengthening architectural research, education and collaborative projects at national and international levels. ResArc was launched in February 2012 and is coordinated and administered by the Department of Architecture and Built Environment at Lund University.

# Program

## May 2

18.00 Welcome reception  
Great Hall of the School of Architecture, Sölvegatan 24

## May 3

09.00 Registration and coffee,  
Great Hall of the School of Architecture, Sölvegatan 24

09.30 Lars-Henrik Ståhl and Sarah Lappin: *Facts and Fictions* Kick-Off, Great Hall

### Session one

room	A: 4057	A: 5072
10.00	JEMMA BROWNE <i>Spatial Stories   Urban Memory</i>	JAN HIETALA <i>Closure and disclosure – a seemingly cool approach disclosing a hot subject</i>
10.30	EVA CHEUNG <i>Behaviorological Study of the Fiction in Hong Kong and Guangzhou Streetscapess</i>	LIZ WALDER <i>Smoke and mirrors: deconstructing the award of the RIBA Royal Gold Medal</i>
11.00	FREDRIK TORISSON <i>Outlines of a Utopian Platform for Architecture Research</i>	LORI SMITHEY <i>Three of Architecture's Fictions: Metaphor, Mechanism, Movement</i>
11.30	THOMAS RIVARD <i>Fictionalising Facts: Mapping and Narrative as Instruments of Performative Urbanism</i>	COSTANDIS KIZIS <i>National and International Appropriations of Architectural Archetypes</i>
12.15	Mark Jarzombek: <i>Global History in a Non-Global World</i> , Great Hall	
13.30	Lunch, Restaurant & Café Bryggan, IKDC, Sölvegatan 26	

### Session two

room	A: 4057	A: 5072
15.00	SHUNTARO NOZAWA <i>Modernity at Home: the Making of Life-style and the Quest for Shumi (Taste) in Japan, 1905-1918</i>	CHRISTIAN PARRENO <i>Boredom in Architectural Thought</i>
15.30	KASPER LAEGRIN NIELSEN <i>The Modern Movement between Formalism and Contextualism: The 1940s Monumentality Debate Revisited</i>	SAEED ASGHARZADE <i>Architectural Theory and the "Is-Ought" Problem</i>
16.00	ROBERT GASSNER <i>Diachronic Studies of Dwellings – the Case Study of Two Houses in Vanløse by Architect Edvard Heiberg</i>	DAN-IONUT JULEAN <i>Themes of the Jewish Diaspora: Facts and Fictions in Contemporary Architecture – the Case of Daniel Libeskind</i>
16.30	MARIE-MADELEINE OZDOBA <i>The « International Style » through the prism of mass media and visual culture : The General Motors Technical Center (1949-1954)</i>	ADRIAN LO <i>Eisenman's Paradoxical Traces of Fiction</i>
17.00	Coffee break	

<b>Session three</b>		
<b>room</b>	<b>A: 4057</b>	<b>A: 5057</b>
17.30	RICHARD JAMES MACCOWAN <i>Biomimicry, biomimetics, bio-what?</i>	HUI-JU CHANG <i>The Modern Transformation of Meiji Authority Architecture through 'Civilised' Agents</i>
18.00	WILTRUD SIMBÜRGER <i>Challenging the Bifurcation Monster. Towards a Generative Method for Architectural Investigation</i>	DANA POP <i>The Built Environment as a Mnemonic Device: Facts and Fiction</i>
18.30	PHILLIP LANGLEY <i>Tactile Programming: 'Material Computing' For Architectural Design</i>	SARAH RIVIÈRE <i>Sedition, Stance and Structures of Rhetoric: Stasis is Not Static</i>
19.10	Sandra Kopljar: <i>Defining Brunnsbölg - on excursion and intervention into Science Village Lund, Great Hall</i>	
19.30	Sum-up, Great Hall	
20.00	Dinner, Fullskalelaboratoriet, Lund School of Architecture, Sölvegatan 24	

## **May 4**

09.30	Mark Jarzombek: <i>Supervising Architecture Research, Great Hall</i>
10.30	Coffee break
11.00	Seminar about <i>Supervising</i> for senior researchers and supervisors, optional for PhD students, room A:4057
	<b>Or</b>
	Excursion to the Fictive and Factual landscape of a future Science Village in Lund, guided by Sandra Kopljar, PhD student
13.00	Lunch, Restaurant & Café Bryggan, IKDC, Sölvegatan 26
14.00	Departure

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### ***Architectural Theory and the “Is-Ought” Problem***

From Vitruvius’ time architectural theory has had a significant role and a great impact on the architects and designers’ minds and subsequently on the quality of the built environment in every historical period. Architectural theory as a discourse, explains the methodology of architecture and its product, and determines its challenges and limitations. It can suggest alternative solutions and provide new intellectual paradigms in dealing with different issues. It is also about the epistemology that how architectural knowledge constructs, presupposes or gives form to. This demonstrates the significant role of architectural theory to expedite the process of achieving architectural goals. But the question is how architectural theory is related to current facts and situation and how it is going to deal with future possibilities and conditions. Whether architectural theory predicts the future conditions on the basis of current situation or whether it is based on rationality and is always looking for the ideal and desired status regardless of the quality of present circumstances?

This paper first briefly considers the characteristics of architectural theory and its role in historical periods. After that, four partly different viewpoints about architectural theory (from Jon Lang, Paul-Alen Johnson, David Wang and Gary Moore) are compared and how these viewpoints deal with the “is-ought” problem, will be discussed. By studying these opinions and comparing them, some facts about the relationship between architectural theory and the “is-ought” problem is revealed. Results shows that it can be possible to provide solutions to fill the gap between “is” statements and “ought” statements and find a way to build more strict and more comprehensive theories. The results also will be useful to find general orientations in architecture and provide the possibility of more scientific and more reasonable judgments and assessments of architectural theories and products.

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### ***Spatial Stories | Urban Memory***

The city is more than a material entity; it is the sum of the stories within it and by listening to these stories, the creative process of making and building will be enriched. Jane Rendell (2002) suggests that we are all spatial story-tellers with our own personal narratives of the city, often political or historical. Their spatiality is expressed through the recall of both personal and physical journeys which then become inscribed within a new place.

They weave together the local and the global; revealing shifting identities producing a disorientating reordering of what we once understood to be 'local.' The conceptualisation of globalised space is characterised by Harvey as time-space compression. Cities pose questions of distance and proximity both in terms of what we can see and buy, but more pertinently, the distance travelled and journeys made by people living and working in them. But as Massey (2002) suggests, it is not just a question of the shortening of distance, but also who and what we look at and how.

Assman (1995) argues that a society can reproduce its identity through an understanding of shared knowledge, so it follows that objectivised culture (texts/buildings/customs) has the structure of memory. Heritage has a binding and reflexive character; societies reconstruct their pasts as opposed to making a faithful record in order to present favourable contemporaneous cultural identity. (Kammen 1991) So, it has become commonplace for the process of urban change to draw upon the collective memory of the city to construct this cultural identity in the guise of heritage. But often this becomes a selective process of remembering, or even a re-imagining of the past. Urban memory is a popular axiom for authentic in architecture and urbanism; the palimpsest of the city as 'places where lives have been lived and still felt as physically manifest' (Crinson,2005 p.xii) bringing an authentic sense of place to a project, but without theoretical rigour and representing the discourse of architects, developers and planners. This is particularly prevalent within heritage projects, which often represent 'memory with the pain taken out.' (ibid. p.xii)

In 21st century global cities, the spatialities of power and difference, manifested in 19th Century imperialism coalesce in questions surrounding regeneration. Through a study of the post-industrial city this paper explores how the process of urban change draws upon the collective memory of the city and addresses forgotten aspects of the cities identity, such as its imperial legacy. It draws on the theories from post-colonialism, specifically Said's Orientalism to exploit the niche between cultural memory and history as a spatial representation. In the tradition of postcolonial theory, it will seek to destabilise the notion of urban histories that is central to the heritage strategies employed in programmes of urban change. It also draws upon the work of Spivak to examine the problematic representation of the Other, or the subaltern and produce a more variegated representation of space in the city.

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***The modern transformation of Meiji authority architecture through ‘civilised’ agents***

Civilisation (Japanese: *bunmei*, lit. bright culture) was the fundamental philosophy in early ‘Modern’ Japan. This notion entered strongly in Japan a century after its formation in the West, filtered through a ‘contact zone’: a forced opening by major Western powers (1853–1895). The effect of this idea of civilisation was for Japanese authorities to build the image of civilised Japan to propel the country into the ‘modern’ era. Yet these activities created a schism between the past and present affecting the whole urban society in Meiji Japan: industry, engineering, constitutional politics, architecture and everyday life where time, leisure, customs, and socialising were all altered as the façade of civilisation was adopted.

Adopting a civilised image in Tokyo implies that ‘Edo’ was un-civilised. This opinion grew in strength in the architecture field through the discourse of Westerners, particularly British Victorians who did not regard Japan as a ‘race of builders’ (Fergusson, 1876: 710) and commonly believed that Japanese buildings should not be even regarded as ‘architecture’ (Conder, 1877/1878: 210).

In order to reverse this status of having cities deemed uncivilised, Japan urgently embarked upon building a new national image. Key to this was to have monumental architecture which appeared authentic to Western eyes. Josiah Conder, a young English man, was the core architectural agent who engaged Japan with ‘modernity’ after several failures; European surveyors and the French architect Charles Alfred Chastel de Boinville. Conder was the first Professor of Architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo from 1877-1884, educating the first 23 architects in Japan. He produced 97 buildings including the first museum, ballroom and national bank in Tokyo, and published 28 articles and lecture papers, and 13 books. By 1915 Tokyo Imperial University awarded him an honorary doctorate and he was considered ‘the father of Modern architecture in Japan’. (Watanabe, 1993: 43) Conder’s influence on Tokyo’s architecture is still incomparable.

This paper first looks at the idea of civilisation in Meiji Japan by first investigating the notion’s origins in the Western Europe. Being a product of the Age of Reason, to be civilised was to be progressive and Enlightened: “Progress means developing along a particular path towards... Western modernity<sup>1</sup>.” (Bowden, 2009: 71) Gerrit Gong (2001) claimed that in historical perspective modernisation should be refer to becoming civilised. Analys-

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<sup>1</sup> Modernity, Octavio Paz (1991) says, is an exclusively Western concept that has no equivalent in other civilisations.

ing uses of the idea of 'civilisation' can give a more direct impression of cultural hierarchies. Meiji Japan strove to reach and belong to this modern world after establishing a contact zone from 1853 but the relevant concepts could not be transplanted from the West in a neat package. Second the paper looks at the key figures from this contact zone in Japanese Meiji architecture, focusing on the dynamic between the Meiji state's opening to indiscriminate Westernisation, (criticised by most of civil society as disguising Japan's true nature with coats of paint. (Gavin, 1999: 14)) and the Westerners who founded 'modern' Japanese architecture. Doing so contributes a unique look at the unequal conditions that non-Western modernity is established upon.

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### ***Behaviorological Study of the Fiction in Hong Kong and Guangzhou Streetscapes***

Behaviorology in architecture is an empirical study of the reality and "how things are", implemented in the patterns and repetitions that create the collective, fictional, yet kaleidoscopic and vibrant image of the public spaces of the street within the wider cityscape. Behaviorology is derived from Atelier Bow- Wow's early observations of urban Tokyo, where they investigated the ordinary buildings to discover the comfort and attraction of vernacular architecture, despite its complexity, its occasional absence in obeying the basic rules of architecture, and the frequent misalignment between the positions of the users and the creators of the architecture that triggered the emergence of new theories and interpretations.

The study of Hong Kong and Guangzhou in the light of Behaviorology, appropriated from Atelier Bow- Wow's analysis, highlights the pragmatic and genuine behaviour of everyday practices and physical spatial qualities that have been important in producing particular pedestrianized retail streetscapes in post-metropolitan megacities. Focusing on the retail streetscapes of Hong Kong's Lockhart Road and Guangzhou's Shang Xia Jiu Plaza, the jumble of signboards feature patterns and mechanisms that reflect the adaptive methodological alternatives and interactions of the users with the architecture, which communicate the unpredictability and individual characteristics contributing to the specific and dynamic local atmosphere.

The signscape of these pedestrianised areas is not only a sequence of brands and advertisements, but can be considered as a production of kaleidoscopic interior space of the streetscape, a kind of 'superinterior' in Atelier Bow-Wow's terms, and provides a dynamic and vibrant expression of the retailers and commodities including qualities such as enclosure, diversity, and fragmentation, contributing to the typical fictional image of

Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The mass customized methodological adaptations of the street and the signs adds to the expression of the multitude of behaviours, which not only works and functions, but has its own internal logic, constituting a successful and exciting kaleidoscopic space. What appears at first sight to be an imagined perception of a complicated and chaotic popular shopping destination is in reality, conforming to certain unique architectural behaviours that relate to functions as well as producing urban spaces with positive attributes, enriching the identity and sense of place.

Behaviorology can be understood as a quantitative assessment, that is, a survey or observational study of the existing situations and hybrid conditions of the Pearl River Delta megacity region, but can also be extended to a qualitative assessment and experiential analysis, to achieve a scope like Venturi's Learning from Las Vegas and Koolhaas's Delirious New York, to gain new knowledge of a fictional and not immediately understandable environment. There are no clear explanations for these fictive perceptions, however behaviorology provides new insights and interpretations into the urban environment of Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The study contributes to the understanding of global practices in the interpretation of the facts and fictions of urban spaces while considering the individual actions and reactions in relationship to the physical infrastructure of the built environment. It therefore has productive implications: how can the unplanned streetscape achieve positive and desirable results?

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***Diachronic Studies of Dwellings – the Case Study of Two Houses in Vanløse by Architect Edvard Heiberg***

Close relationships between dwelling spaces, social relations and the course of time has recently received a considerable amount of interest in social anthropology and archaeology, as well as in material culture studies. Understandings of dwellings as “backgrounds” or “backdrops” or as a more or less defining framework for action is increasingly making way for „agency“-based models which would consider dwellings as being involved into social processes – and within time-based studies into the formation of biographies. Involvements into such social processes of e.g. negotiations, remembrance, establishing links to “the absent” etc. (following Alfred Gell's understanding as material serving as an extension of human intentionality) is delineated in research on the manners in which the dwellings' materiality plays roles within these.

However, the imagination of the ways, in which a future dwelling will be

inhabited, which architects typically use during their design projects, receives far less attention within this field of research. Scenarios of inhabitation in drawings and other representations and projections can serve as empirical material when considering this aspect of intentionalities, as these are pursued by architects, clients and inhabitants.

The case study of two houses, which the Norwegian-Danish architect Edvard Heiberg designed in the Copenhagen suburb of Vanløse immediately before and after World War II respectively, explores understandings of dwelling spaces, which focus on activities of dwelling and on the course of time. The case of these two houses is interesting, as the architect has been very outspoken about his normative intentionality when designing these dwellings, as according to his own statements, these designs should have catalyzed the introduction of alternative forms of social communities in Denmark. Many generations of inhabitants have passed-down the houses during the past 65 and 75 years respectively. Additionally, the social field of the study provides of a wealth of degrees of personal relatedness between the inhabitants and the architect.

Based on a limited number of biographical nodes, this exploration will consider imaginations and musings on the houses' spaces to come, as well as statements of intent, both from the architect and his initial clients from the time of the design process. Manifestations of later involvements of the built spaces into social processes – physically and in ideas – as well as accounts of the current inhabitants who call the houses their homes will be considered simultaneously.

The aim of these intertwined considerations of results of ethnographic interviewing along with written and graphic sources is not to profile contrasts between intentionalities and their material outcomes. The focus is rather on an enmeshed assemblage of forms of negotiations across time frames, where dwellings are involved into the formation of personal and professional biographies.

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### ***Closure and disclosure – a seemingly cool approach disclosing a hot subject***

Gender identities disclosed in architectural documents, is one subject I have analysed for the last four years, and would like to see as the starting point for a discussion about a possible influence of gender issues in architectural documents and the methodological approach I have implemented to this issue.

One of the earliest known documents in modern time disclosing a gender related matter in a document in the context of architecture, is kept in the Devonshire Collection at Chatsworth, Peak District England. It is found in an entry of Inigo Jones's 'Roman Sketchbook', commenced when the young aspiring architect conducted his second tour to Italy, accompanying his benefactor Lord Arundel. The entry is dated Thursday 19 January 1614, completed after Jones' return to England. The sentence of importance for us here today reads:

For as outwardly every wyse man carrieth a graviti in Publicke Places, whear ther is nothing els looked for, yet inwardly has his immaginancy set flee, and sumtimes licentiously flying out, as nature hirsself doeth often tymes strava-gantly, to dellight, amuse us sometimes moufe us to laughter, sumtimes to contemplation and horror, so in architecture ye outward ornaments oft to be sollid, proporsionable according to the rules, masculine and unaffected.

If we word by word deconstruct the sentence we can identify an extraordinary dichotomy consisting of a feminine interior and a masculine façade. In the interior is "imagination set free, and sometimes licentiously flying out, as nature herself does, often extravagantly, to delight, amuse and sometimes move us to laughter", Jones claims. Already at this point we should consider if it is not a female temperament Jones describes, and implicitly giving a description of a woman, to many of us perhaps stereotypic, but never the less so? Imagination, flying, extravagantly, delight, amuse, and laughter: are these words not a description of romance and joy? Naturally the analysis so far is not well founded and injudicious. But then Jones continues the sentence with a description of the interior's opposite: "in architecture the outward ornaments ought to be solid, proportional according to rules, masculine and unaffected". The expression of extreme importance is "masculine". If the interior is as vivid as "herself" then the exterior Jones depicts is as composed as himself. In one sentence Jones describes where in society a woman belongs, that is inside the walls of a building, and to which domain she belongs, that is the household, and who rules over her boundaries, that is her master represented in stone and glass, reflecting his and thus her position in society at large. It is my understanding that we can say that this is a gender based model.

The sentence describes how ornaments should be designed within decorum, in keeping the function they were intended. All fanciful ornaments should be kept within the house. Façade materials ought to be solid, of stone on a town house, possibly of brick on a country house, and of a quality in parity with the owner's social status. If the façade represents solid masculinity only in limestone, marble and brick, as Jones claims, subsequently the interior less solid and subordinated materials – plaster, wood and textiles – represents femininity. The entry by Jones written in the dead of the winter 1614 is a central notion in the conceptualisation of masculine representation in Anglo-Saxon classicism, and its normative hegemony.

This philosophy, rooted in the experience of Italy was to guide Jones architectural practice for the next quarter of a century, and its impact can still be traced.

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***Themes of the Jewish Diaspora: Facts and Fictions in Contemporary Architecture – the Case of Daniel Libeskind***

Diaspora is a source of originality for the concept of “otherness” – being “different”. For the exiled, the place of settlement can be a memorial, a recreation or a symbolic interpretation of the “lost” homeland, or, on the contrary, a very different representation of the place of origin, which recalls nothing of it and assumes a colossal effort for the preservation of the cultural heritage and the continuity of ancestral values, customs, and traditions. In this context, we might ask what exactly “Jewishness” is and how it comes to “reinvent” Jewish culture in Diaspora, especially in Europe, where we are dealing with the phenomenon of “Jewishness without Jews”. How does architecture solve this issue?

Through his Jewish works, Daniel Libeskind offers original solutions concerning the “presence of absence”. Libeskind’s attitude towards memory has opened a new direction tackling this issue: the role of architecture in context would be other than that which is immediately claimed – he points out that architecture has itself a component that enables it having always another face besides the one that is directly attributed to it, seen, or appearing to define it. Beyond visual and material perception, Libeskind’s architecture can be viscerally, emotionally, and participatory “lived”. This happens only while crossing the space: following an “initiating journey”, providing the opening to a “transcendental” space, beyond the understandable limits of the real world, shifting from past to future, to a world of “sacred” values, of intangible memory, symbols, revealing meanings, opening a “divine” path (not necessarily associated with God), like Mircea Eliade’s hierophany. Through hierophany, architecture is “endowed” with the “sacredness” that ensures it to become “real” – to reach that state of “reality” as a participatory function (by the imitative act of creation, of the “sacred” or which paves the way for the “sacred”): in the case of Libeskind, reliance on memory as the foundation of reiterating the original creation that was lost, and thus is recovered. Hence the abovementioned idea, that architecture is something “real” (a real fact), which through its “liberating” role, and potentiating spiritual perceptive sensitivity, opens a “gate” to the created world of imaginary (which is beyond the architectural space – a fiction of architecture, but as real as it can be). What is absent, invisible or desired can come true, it can be accomplished or can be achieved, passing

beyond the limits of architectural space – in fact, into fiction, which, by its “sacred” or purifying component, becomes a transcendental reality.

Architecture can be lived and, respectively, one can live through architecture – the fact becomes fiction: sources of fiction become source for architectural experience (real living). Contemporary architecture bases itself on cultural resources, memory, tradition, identity and generates other cultural resources (to another level), or spiritual resources, able to organize life and free the body. Thus, detached from context, people can follow their way, somewhere between past, present, and future, recovering the past, accepting the present, and longing for future assertion, celebrating life, which, in fact, is the inexhaustible wellspring of architecture.

#### **Acknowledgements**

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#### ***National and International Appropriations of Architectural Archetypes***

The aim of the paper is to show how an architectural fact, as rigid as an accurate archaeological or architectural survey, can be transcribed in extremely antithetical fictions, depending on the perception of regional culture.

This paper will focus on the double use of archetypes in modern architecture, as the way through which projects were justified or authenticated. On the one hand, it will examine how historiographers of architecture of the modern movement, with Giedion being the most indicative case, used archaeological evidence in order to construct architectural *archetypes*. On the other hand, it will examine how modern architects in countries that featured archaeological wealth, basically in the eastern Mediterranean (mainly Italy, Greece, Turkey and Egypt), developed narratives in which they appropriated archaeological evidence as a proof of autochthony and authenticity of *their* architecture. This paper will particularly examine the greek *megaron*, the *stoa*, the *pilotis* and the *oriel* in the narratives of Aris Konstantinidis (Greece, 1913-1993) and Sedad Hakki Eldem (Turkey, 1908 - 1988), opposed to the historiography of modern architecture, starting with Giedion’s *Eternal Present* and ending with Frampton’s Critical Regionalism.

While the modern project was only beginning to address the question of the local, peripheral architects, usually educated in Central Europe in the

thirties, were arguing about the national attributes of their modern idioms, not by being based on formal elements or ornament, but mainly by focusing on the compositional and structural elements of their proposals. Strangely, their archetypes were produced through the same abstraction on which Giedion relied. The *project* of Konstantinidis and Eldem was actually the composition of a fiction that would support not only the adaptability of modern architecture to their countries' landscapes and cityscapes, but rather that of a fiction that would prove the authentic and autochthonous values inherent in the very core of modern architecture (or at least of their idiom of modern architecture).

On the other edge of the equation, international historiographers of modern architecture were writing the fiction of ancient archetypes in modern architecture, the other way round, recognising them either as abstract evocations or as cultural liaisons, and they certainly did not address them as values of national authorship, but as elements of a universal culture. In his seminal book "The Eternal Present" Giedion actually mutated archaeological and architectural surveys of Egyptian and classical Greek monuments into abstract, almost diagrammatic, paradigms. Through this process of abstraction and due to the remoteness of antiquity, his examples were converted into archetypes, keen to provide a kind of historicity for the modern project. *Eternal* values were attributed to modern projects, saving them from the realm of the ephemeral and securing them a place in history.

Thus, both cases stand for the same invented architectural archetypes, loosely based on archaeological evidence, that were appropriated both as universal and as national –two apparently opposite stances that, somehow, are supported by the same evidence. This paradox is the ultimate centre of this investigation.

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### ***Tactile Programming: 'Material Computing' For Architectural Design***

Architects are typically consumers of software as products, rather than users of software as technology and the relationship between computers and architecture can often be fractious - viewed with either complete suspicion or total devotion. In either case the role of the computer is often seen in the same way - to supplement a pre-existing design process rather than to fundamentally change it .

This paper investigates how critical approaches to computational methods can inform a practice of architecture that is defined by computational methods, rather than simply composed of computational tools. To that

end, this paper proposes a specific method for data modelling that replaces the computer [and its software] with a physical modelling technique. This method has been developed during a series of generative and parametric workshops, entitled “Digital Design Tactics” with students of the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield .

Central to these workshops were two ideas - the basic of a computer algorithm understood through the syntax of a programming language - ‘loops’ ‘...ifs’ ‘...ands’ ‘...ors’ – as well as the use of simulation to explore emergent conditions. These are then re-conceptualized as physical, almost ‘mechanical’ processes that can be recreated through making physical models. The models created by students were based on data collected for their projects could be spatial or abstract, at the scale of the city or a the site, but were always relational. The models were used to develop strategies within complex projects that combined multiple scales, actors and changing over significant periods of time. The models became a kind of manifold for the discovery of the projects possibilities that may not otherwise have been visible.

As well as playing with the tradition of architectural model making, this is a kind of tactile programming, where the syntax and semantics are replaced with physical operations, and represents both the software and hardware of the conventional computing paradigm. Within this method, there is no longer a computer and user. The conventional notion of interface is outdated.

This proposal of material computing offers a means of democratising technology and provides a pedagogical frameworks for teaching a critical approach to such technology. The use of computers is often restricted due to the high entry requirements in terms of cost and specialist skill. By re-configuring what software and hardware represents, the ‘user/ designer’ of this new form of computer, no longer constrained, is able to create, maintain and modify their own ‘machine’. This is also then a means of technological resilience – the purpose, portability and functionality of this method are determined by the user and not other forces [i.e. software designers or hardware manufacturers] and the ‘science’ of computational technology can be appropriated separately from its physical manifestation.

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### ***Eisenman’s Paradoxical Traces of Fiction***

The trace, as employed by American architect Peter Eisenman, is an ambiguous term as regards to both his use of the word and its manifestations in his

projects. The trace, derived from his formal investigation of the positive void resulting from a transformative process marking or tracing the steps as negatives and imprints which are read as positive, is proposed as a paradoxical fictive entity. These traces, which register the process and are inscribed onto the object as indexical signs, constitute a morphological fiction or narrative which explains the formal operations from start to end.

This paper argues that these absent presences of recorded indexical traces of the process, evident since Eisenman's transformational diagrams for his early houses projects, are a paradox, in the sense that the result or outcome may not necessarily correspond to the process or sequential series of transformations. This dialectic between result and process or between outcome and sequence may be seen in relation to the tension between fiction and reality. The apparent linear 'reality' and autonomy of the published sets of transformation diagrams of Eisenman's many projects may in fact be 'fictional' and an elaborate means of storytelling as revealed in his Houses of Cards, where the various analytical sketches and studies reveal a nonlinear decisiveness.

This paradox is reiterated in the Cities of Artificial Excavation projects, where in his superimpositions of grids and figures, Eisenman produces analogies of coincidences and immanences, between various design projects, whilst displacing space and time, by overlapping the figures, scaling the various constituent historic maps, and creating a fiction of superimpositions, that is, telling stories through the processes of layering, aligning, and scaling. Eisenman searches for and articulates the alignments, coincidences, and chance encounters between the various historical and contextual information employed in his superimposition projects, in which new histories (stories and fictions) were given to the site.

Following on from his artificial excavations, Eisenman's project for the Casa Guardiola is a construction and a recording its own internal history of making, where the interstitial traces and imprints marks the movement of the transformative processes of el-forms oscillating and interweaving. In the diagrammatic formal process involving superimposition or layering of the various cubes and their iterations, the transformations are recorded, frozen, and suspended in time and space by the traces and imprints. The Casa Guardiola is a suspended history of its own construction. However, as the iterations or (re)configured el-forms are combined, their process in time and the individual iterations or layers, that is, its traces have been lost or erased. The trace is a paradox of dynamic stasis, a static record of dynamic transformative processes of formal operations. The Casa Guardiola is a record of the transformations over time, but is paradoxically flattened in the result, a monumentalized temporality providing a fictive sense of time. Hence, this paper interrogates how Eisenman's traces are paradoxical in the sense that they allow a reconstruction of the reality and the history of making, but in fact they are fictional and rhetorical.

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***Biomimicry, biomimetics, bio-what?***

**Definitions** - Using nature as inspiration involves ‘mimicking the functional basis of biological forms, processes and systems to produce sustainable solutions’ (Pawlyn, 2011). Biomimicry differs from biophilia in that it is not about the bond between nature and humans, but about learning from nature (Jana, 2011).

**Purpose** - The main aim of this paper is to investigate the use of biomimicry in architectural, landscape and urban design.

**Design/methodology/approach** - The study will explore the reasons behind using biomimicry as a design tool within the built environment design sector. An analysis of current projects will highlight the multidisciplinary approach that biomimicry utilises by bringing the ‘biologist to the design table.’ It will highlight the crossover between academic research, current practice and the need to develop new theories and methods for the changing landscape at the beginning of the 21st century.

**Potential Findings** - How we can develop multidisciplinary teams, using creative knowledge from within and out with the design sector to provide sustainable design solutions? This will be based on the authors’ current design projects within the Leeds City Region identifying how building international teams can be successful in providing design advice.

**Originality/value** - Biomimicry is an expanding subject in the urban design sector, although only a small number of projects have been realised, specifically in India and China. This paper will highlight how biomimetic urban design could be adopted in the UK, where the monetary constraints call for highly creative cost effective solutions.

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***The Modern Movement between Formalism and Contextualism: The 1940s Monumentality Debate Revisited***

Whether latently or patently, monumentality has been present throughout the history of Western architecture. Even the Modern Movement, whose followers often rejected monumentality as a desirable quality in architecture, generated a monumental expression of its own. The repression of

the monumentality question is intimately connected with the foundational myths of the Modern Movement actuated by figures such as Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, but the 1940s monumentality debate that saw participation from Sigfried Giedion, Paul Zucker, Gregor Paulsson, and many others, showed that other modernisms were possible. As early as in his 1916 book *Den nya arkitekturen* (*The New Architecture*), Paulsson discussed the question of a new monumentality in architecture, and how to achieve it. When Giedion, José Luis Sert, and Fernand Léger later took up the monumentality problem in their 1943 *Nine Points on Monumentality* manifesto, the question attracted interest from several architects and theorists from Europe and the Americas.

The monumentality debate is very much a historiographical lesson in the ‘facts and fictions’ of architecture. For a long time, the notion of naïve functionalism, as well as certain formalist principles, relegated other modernisms to the periphery of cultural debate. Today, we are experiencing a period of intense historiographical study and reinterpretation of Modernism, and a recent string of publications – most recently, Gevork Hartoonian’s *The Mental Life of the Architectural Historian: Re-opening the Early Historiography of Modern Architecture* (2011) – have breathed new life into the historiographical branch of architectural theory.

My paper explores two themes prompted by the monumentality debate of the 1940s. Firstly, one significant theme is the interrelationship of monumentality and contextualism. Giedion and Sert in particular aimed at breaking down the traditional notion of monumentality as an aesthetics of objecthood, replacing it with a contextualist definition where an ensemble of buildings and public spaces would generate a monumental effect. Due to its effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), the Hitchcock/Johnson discourse, which was heavily influenced by art historical formalism, was long regarded as the mainstream narrative, while the Giedion/Sert position was seen as a minority, maybe even retrogressive, cultural standpoint.

As I hope to demonstrate, the monumentality debate introduced modes of thought that would later become integral to the Modern Movement. For instance, in his last published work, *Vision in Motion* (1947), constructivist artist and Bauhaus educator László Moholy-Nagy expressed views on urban design similar to Sert’s and Giedion’s, and even the urban design programme of Team 10 shares many similarities with the 1943 manifesto.

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***Modernity at Home: the Making of Life-style and the Quest for Shumi (Taste) in Japan, 1905-1918***

At the beginning of the twentieth century, an increasing number of attempts to generate shumi (which means style, taste and aesthetic senses) were apparent in Japanese domestic culture. Reflecting an awareness of a clash between traditional practices and westernised modernisation, these works offered up a completely different use of domestic spaces to the repeated and cherished traditions of the preceding centuries. From a social-anthropological perspective, it could be considered that such a rupture in lifestyle was caused by the transformation of the prevailing 'media of exchange'. Japan's pre-modern society was shaped by sumptuary laws where ownership and use of land and buildings were controlled and regulated by the ruling caste. In this way the breadth and range of material goods and services accessible to each social spectrum was strictly ensured. Particular sets of rituals and their bodily expression determined daily life, the practice of which contemporaries would have conceived of as 'style' through social exchange. By contrast, our modern medium of exchange is the consumption of commodities and goods. The ability to make appropriate choices amidst a range of choices as recognised within the community was an essential skill to be obtained. Also perceived as 'style', this was skilfully manipulated by intellectual spheres in the manufacture of taste such that at the turn of the century, the Japanese were consciously making material culture in domestic life, and the moral order underpinning it, central to the acquisition of *modernity at home*.

This presentation will explore the process by which collective efforts to create life-style with shumi led to an explicit imagery of the relationship between appropriate dwelling patterns and domestic spaces during the 1900s and 1910s in Japan. It draws on the methodology of anthropological research in cultural and ethnographical studies whose approaches are always characterised by an emphasis on modern subjectivities in body, ritual and everyday life. In order to illuminate the break in lifestyle, first it outlines rituals and their physical embodiments, houses and tenements, shaped by the primitive media of exchange in the pre-modern period. Second, observing the social and educational discourses on shumi, it illustrates that recreational and leisure pursuits were regarded as vehicles to generate shumi - indeed, shumi now means of 'hobby' and 'recreations' in contemporary Japanese. Third, by examining magazines and advice manuals aimed at middle-class women, it demonstrates that the quest for shumi predicated a suburban-life ethos, and came to be related to the development of modern family relations. The fact that English, German and American life-styles were acknowledged as disciplinary models was significant, with an imagined life-style embedded in gardening practices and domestic

convenience backed up by scientific research into healthy homes, informing the housing design codes which would be widely adopted in the inter-war period. The presentation concludes by juxtaposing the unprecedented image of 'home' (consisting of garden, nursery, elderly's room and every other space for family pleasure) with housing design and domestic organisation as built during this twenty-year period.

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***The « International Style » through the prism of mass media and visual culture : The General Motors Technical Center (1949-1954)***

Conventional architectural criticism has characterized the « International Style » functionally and constructively, as well as aesthetically, as a high artistic practice<sup>1</sup>, mainly drawing on the architects' intentions and discourse... As a consequence, visual representations mostly remain confined to an illustrative function, making it easy to forget that we are not merely looking at projects or buildings, but at images of projects or buildings (drawings and photographs alike).

My PhD research is a reflexive investigation of architectural representation, which aims at exploring the aesthetics of modernist architecture through the prism of popular culture and mass media in the U.S. at mid-century. Approaching architecture as a field of visual culture, my working hypothesis is that the «International Style» refers as much to a mode of representation and publication as to mode of a building<sup>2</sup>, shifting historiographical attention from the production to the reception of architecture. Which images, imaginaries, discourses and editorial forms, borrowed from popular culture (cinema, fashion, advertising, science fiction, graphic design, etc.), have made it possible for people to project themselves into the aesthetics of the «International Style»? This research question will be discussed through the exploration of sources that remain largely unexplored by architectural historians, bringing to light the work of photographers, illustrators, cultural mediators and publishers, who have played an active part in constructing the representations and media coverage of the « International Style ».

Fiction plays a great role in this mise en scène of architecture. This can be revealed by confronting professional representations with those addressed to the general public. While the fictional dimensions of the « In-

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<sup>1</sup> The term « International Style » was inaugurated at the 1932 exhibition on modern architecture by Henri-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson at the MoMA.

<sup>2</sup> Beatriz Colomina has set the basis of this approach of media being the « true site » of architecture in *Privacy and Publicity* (1996)

ternational Style » remain implicit and barely perceptible in the context of specialized media, they are explicit and expressed in a blazing manner in popular media and advertising. At the AHRA symposium, I propose to present a short case study of « the International Style between fact and fiction » : the iconic and widely published General Motors Technical Center (1949-1954), by architect Eero Saarinen and landscape architect Thomas Church.

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### ***Boredom in Architectural Thought***

'Forum' in *Domus* 605

*Boredom is a very useful instrument with which to explore the past, and to stage a meaning between it and the present.* – Fredric Jameson, 1991

Boredom is usually defined as a negative reaction to the possibilities of the environment – an experience that alters perception and problematises spatial occupation. Its presence in architectural thought can be identified as early as in late nineteenth-century elaborations, by Adolf Göller and Heinrich Wölfflin, on 'jading' and 'blunting' as emotional instances accountable for the change of styles in architecture. Subsequently, boredom appears either as a philosophical and critical notion, in writings by authors such as Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, and Henri Lefebvre, or as an adjective to denote modern qualities of monotony and sameness, in elucidations by theorists and architects such as Charles Jencks and Rem Koolhaas.

The lack of a comprehensive investigation of the influence of this condition in conceptualisations of architecture suggests that its essence is not only ambiguous but also the result of an involuntary deficit of meaning. The qualities of boredom are not exclusive of the 'boring' object or the 'bored' subject but constitute a relation that signifies something beyond itself. Its flexibility, omnipresence, and immanence indicate a circular movement of causality that connects the exhaustion with the past to the production of the future – a topological and spatial circumstance with historical specificity.

The theorisation of boredom as a conceptual axis capable of connecting events and manifestations chronologically distant require assuming its facticity. To expose it, this paper will be divided in two parts: the first will briefly contextualise the emergence of boredom and how it has been related to spatial interrogations since the 1890's; and the second will examine the 'Forum' segment dedicated to this subject in *Domus* 605, published in April 1980. Under the direction of Alessandro Mendini, boredom was

explored through an 'organic, psychological, social and cosmic' dialogue of short entries and photographs by several artists and academics – Hermann GROSSER, Fulvio IRACE, Allan KAPROV, Nam June PAIK, and Pierre RESTANY. This strategy of juxtaposition avoided aesthetic representations and, tacitly, portrayed boredom as a modern reality concerned with the understanding of architecture as the spatial relation between the environment and the affections of the subject. The analysis of the content and composition of this editorial feature will aim to clarify the essence of this condition as a mood, or attunement, that entails a heightened subjectivity, evinced in spatial desynchronization and distributed attention.

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### ***The Built Environment as a Mnemonic Device: Facts and Fiction***

'Space, in its concrete physical form, is the outcome of a *necessity*. Its shape, its form and its function are a direct response very inhumanely linked to our needs. But, besides this very palpable layer, architectural space has a social value, cultural connotations, political implications and a theoretical message. One of its many abstract layers is its ability of becoming a *mnemonic device*. Physical settings *remind* people of what is expected of them through certain *cues* imbedded into them. It might be a certain type of behaviour or response --- a mnemonic device which deals with *how we interact with the environment and with others*. Or, it can be a reminder of who we are, what we like and to which social group we belong to --- a mnemonic device concerned with our *cultural, social or personal identity*.

As all theoretical constructs, viewing space as a mnemonic device can be argued as being a fact or fiction. Thus, the aim of this paper is to deconstruct and reconstruct this concept based on a comparative analysis of two very specialised environments: *psychiatric wards* and *office spaces*.

The first case study is focusing on an environment designed for people with very distinctive needs. People with mental disorders have problems adapting to new environments: schizophrenic patients have difficulties in distinguishing between the limits of their own bodies and that of their surrounding environment, while alzheimer patients have trouble with finding their way around. In consequence, designing spaces for the mentally impaired presupposes creating *mnemonic devices* or cues which can act as "bread crumbs", guiding people and reminding them where they are and how they can find their way around.

The second case study discusses the environment of the office, a highly impersonal space. People working in large offices often experience a feeling

of anonymity which provokes anxiety. A way of coping is by personalising their space with objects that have a special meaning for them. Such environmental bubbles have the purpose of acting as reminders of who they are. Thereby, in this case, we are observing a different feature, namely space acting as a *mnemonic device* reflecting people's interests, culture or social status. They remind them of their uniqueness, thus comforting them.

Based on the conclusions drawn from these two case studies, we could state that this way of looking at space --- as a mnemonic device --- should become a new way of understanding the world around us when designing. People feel more comfortable in spaces that can be easily "read" and in spaces which make them feel at ease, because they represent them and remind them of their identity, of who they are.

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***Fictionalising Facts: Mapping and Narrative as instruments of Performative Urbanism***

Tristan Tzara proudly proclaimed the theme of art to be "the world and all that is in it."

Tzara's enterprise proposed that creative works, and engagement with them, could tell us as much about the measure of our world as about the work itself. What better place to locate such an agenda than the city, forever an instrument for accommodating multitudes?

Instead of accepting the city as an inert agglomeration of built fabric and the resultant spaces formed by their disposition, we need to discover opportunities and create methodologies whereby we can continue this engagement: to perform the city, as well as perform in it. However, the codification of behaviour as insinuated by the fabric of the city consigns much urban action to the realms of the legislative and the consumerist; a society whose spatial structures are delineated economically by forces of capital, socially specified by cultural production and politically regulated by the state. Congruent points on the boundary of a culture that demands precision, rationality and above all clarity, these forces present a public realm that is increasingly branded, deracinated and politically circumscribed – clearly defined and delineated to its material limits.

In terms of affording a necessary ambiguity, architecture as defined by its historic points of utility is discredited: form reduced to image, function bargained down to economics, space subsumed into spectacle. The city as an organism though is fluctuating, multifunctional and ever-changing

– demanding an incompleteness that affords personal expression and individual interpretation. Given that architecture is a discipline dedicated to valorising the common, how is it then possible to create opportunities to facilitate cultural incongruity, places where a shift in perspective and perception becomes possible?

**Performative Urbanism** re-frames urban space to offer its occupants agency in determining their roles in that space. The work assumes a critical dimension, resisting descriptive objectivity in favour of a terrain of speculations, allegations and narrative. Like Piranesi's Campo Marzio, it contains within it the real and the unreal, the past as well as the future. As a decisive fragmentation of time and space, the results posit a disjointed geography of excisions and allegory; importantly, one wide open to interpretation.

Inhabitants become partial authors of their environment and well as producers (and interpreters) of their meanings, reconfiguring understandings of space so that the relationship between performative subject and the architectural object becomes “productively unclear.” Negotiating between the fictive and the real, the participant chooses – space thus defies quantification, and invites a public debate about what is.

The initial site for these investigations, Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour is a terrain vague, vacant and unencumbered space. Void as absence, but also promise – a territory for mappings and interventions that open spaces between the participants and the site, gaps between the reality of the world and our own interpretation of it.

The space of the indeterminate overlaid with the insinuation of the narrative establishes the creative context within which **Performative Urbanism** will be developed, to create new ways to both measure and invent the earth.

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### ***Sedition, Stance and Structures of Rhetoric: Stasis is Not Static***

This paper will discuss aspects of the term stasis that could have relevance to spatial practice within the complex composite that is the architectural experience. I present stasis (initially in contraposition to kinesis) as a condition of “relative and precarious stability”<sup>1</sup> that can be created from, for example, points of conflict or negotiation, and that can enable or initiate

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<sup>1</sup> Eliot, T.S. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London, 1964), p. 103 [T.S.Eliot writes, “Arnold represents a period of stasis; of relative and precarious stability, it is true, a brief halt in the endless march of humanity in some, or in any direction.”]

possible resistances to increasing (spatial or cultural) kinesis.

Referring to T.S.Eliot's description of stasis as "a brief halt in the endless march of humanity in some, or in any direction", and Sanford Kwinter's reference to the Aristotelian concept of physical existence "based on... kinesis where motion is conceived as a principle of internally driven change, transformation or becoming residing within the existent itself<sup>2</sup>", I take stasis as a term (also rooted in antiquity) to describe conditions where forms of resistance to its counterpart, kinesis, either arise or are created. I discuss past and contemporary meanings of the term stasis so as to derive its constituents and temporal nature.

My etymological research covers stasis as used to communicate ideas of stability, inactivity and stagnation; in twentieth century literature the term has been used to designate a state of unchanging equilibrium that enables experience of the sublime. Stasis also has a varied ongoing history of use in pathology (a stagnation or stoppage in the flow of body fluids), psychoanalysis (an accumulation of sexual energy), and science fiction (a protected artificial suspension of life processes). In this paper I will concentrate on the etymological roots of the term stasis in antiquity, specifically stasis in structures of rhetoric, but also including stasis as stance in boxing (involving a specific concentration of energies), and the concept of stasis as strife or sedition against the state. Overall, my work locates stasis in a historical narrative field that is dominated by increasing kinesis and flow, as well as by past forms of resistance to kinesis. While focused on architecture and the arts, I draw on a wide range of disciplines, including literature, sport, pathology, psychology, rhetoric and politics. My research aims to locate aspects of stasis that can be relevant to contemporary creative culture – that can inform conditions independent of its counterpart kinesis, as well as conditions that set up forms of resistance to kinesis. With reference to architectural space, I ask how these different aspects of the condition of stasis that I have located exist spatially; and, vice versa, how in the future these aspects could potentially inform the creation of new architectural and urban spatial conditions.

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<sup>2</sup>Sanford Kwinter, 'The "Avant Garde" in America (or the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness)' in *Far from Equilibrium: Essays on Technology and Design Culture* (Actar, 2008), pp.74-89

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***Challenging the Bifurcation Monster. Towards A Generative Method for Architectural Investigation***

“What I am essentially protesting against,  
is the bifurcation of nature into two systems of reality,  
which, in so far as they are real, are real in different senses.  
One reality would be the entities such as electrons which are the study of speculative physics.  
This would be the reality which is there for knowledge; although in this theory it is never known.  
For what is known is the other sort of reality, which is the byplay of the mind.  
Thus there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream.”  
(Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*)

Do we as architects concur with Alfred North Whitehead’s protest against a bifurcated world? What are the consequences of bifurcation and how do they affect architectural production? And if - in the end - we decide to join Whitehead in his protest: How can we make this move generative?

As cited by Bruno Latour in one of his Spinoza lectures, Whitehead dismisses the notion of two natures, one borne out of conjecture and one borne out of dream. This paper will transfer the concept of bifurcation into architecture and explore the effects of conjecture and dream as methods of investigative architectural production. Pneumatic architecture and its short-lived appearance on the architectural stage of the second half of the 20th century will serve as springboard for these investigations.

If in the 19th century air was mainly seen through the dichotomy of corruption and purification, one could argue that pneumatic architecture in the second half of the 20th century gave this view its perfect metaphorical expression. Projects by activist architects like Coop Himmelb(l)au or Haus-Rucker-Co. played with the notion of the tense, ephemeral bubble separating the stale air of the postwar years from the social and technological utopia inside the sphere. Politicized air was the stuff their dream was made of.

At the same time, in the world of conjecture, technologized air was produced. Government scientists and engineers investigated the potential of the promising new technology and published their findings at conferences and symposia. A showcase of cutting edge projects, the 1970 EXPO in Osaka dedicated many of pavilions to the technological prowess of pneumatic structures. This peak in interest, however, also seems to have been the movement’s “last gasp”, as Peter Cook noted. Soon after 1970, interest subsided rapidly, and pneumatics became an oddity on the fringes of the discipline.

This paper will investigate the impact that bifurcation into two architectural worlds had on the production, success and demise of pneumatics. It will speculate on the challenge to bifurcation. Is it futile to fight against an ever-lurking

monster that seems impossible to defeat? Or can we generate new methods for investigative production from our refusal to bifurcate? How can we weave these stubborn strands of conjecture and dream into one strong braid?

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### ***Three of Architecture's Fictions: Metaphor, Mechanism, Movement***

Architecture has long standing ties to literature from the Gothic novel to the influence of poststructuralist theory. Between these two poles lie three modes of writing that occur within quick succession of one another in nineteenth-century France: Romanticism, Realism, and Decadence. Each offers different conceptions of architecture's place in the world, and thus its potentialities. This paper looks at representative novels as case studies for architecture's fictive tropes, and asks what agency, if any, these offer.

Victory Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) is well known both for its *dictum ceci tuera cela* and its part in occasioning Viollet-le-Duc's restoration of the monument. But this paper's analysis considers the double protagonists of the novel, or rather the ways in which Esmeralda and the Paris Cathedral stand in for one another. From this metaphoric function of the building a more sinister figuring of architecture arises. Émile Zola presents the department store in *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883) as an aesthetic jewel, perhaps equal to Notre Dame, but that no longer acts as a repository of culture. Here the building serves as the very mechanism structuring a new society. This idea of architecture's inherent social, economic, and political agency has had a long shelf life, but only one year after Zola's text Joris-Karl Huysmans publishes his seminal decadent novel *À rebours* (1884). The ties between decadence and architecture have been obscured by other modes of fiction, but it provides an architectural narrative beyond the restrictions of its predecessors, both of which it remains closely tied to.

My aim is to show that though it may hide in plain sight, decadence is not a new notion within recent architectural discourse. However, the particular claims it offers our discipline have not been fully explored, historically or theoretically. One of the key questions that arise in a novel predicated on lack of plot is movement. For the decadent this is neither the expressive animation of Romanticism, nor the frozen object of academic scrutiny. Huysmans' bejeweled turtle is the figure that embodies a kind of belabored movement. Rather than an image of architecture's operations, this animal opens up questions about current interests in animation. For example, can we in fact agree with Robert Somol's claim that Peter Eisenman's series of traces and rotations prefigure animation?<sup>1</sup> And what is the vision of possible

futures implied in such a scheme? These are some of the questions decadence brings to the fore as a particular mode of fiction.

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### ***Outlines of a Utopian Platform for Architecture Research***

At present, architecture research is in the process of shifting away from analysing “*what is?*” towards a concern for “*what will be?*” and, crucially, “*what could be?*”. This shift opens up a potential for the exploration of “*what if?*”. The primary aim of this paper is to briefly conceptualise a research platform – in the form of potential theoretical framework and methodologies – that explores these questions which in turn arise from the concept of utopia in architecture.

The platform will focus on critical analysis of the past and the present, as well as how to relate these in the future. By focusing on *what if*, it will build a framework for the production of alternatives of *what could be*. “*Utopia*” will be used as a medium to propel the research and to connect the past, the present and the future. In that sense, the platform will be partly historiographical analysis of the utopias, explicit and implicit, and of past and present – sifted from the ruins, as Walter Benjamin would have put it.

The platform will furthermore be used for both the formulation of alternatives in theory as well as research by design and enactments. The contemporary mode of capitalism based on linear progress has become the dominant ideology of our time, so much so that it is politically promoted as a logical conclusion to history (the end of history). As such it is presented as scientific rather than ideological in a panglossian manner. This supposed post-ideological condition subjugates the production of viable alternatives, but the system is presumably unsustainable in the not-so-long run. The utopian platform is intended as a medium for the investigation into potential societal alternatives that radically rethink the world.

Utopian research operates on the edge of present conceptual universe, which it also aims to extend. Utopias constitute a vital medium for critique of the present societal order as well as for the production of alternatives. According to Karl Mannheim and others, utopian thinking has propelled society forward throughout history. The two perspectives of the utopian platform – historical/present and present/future – could be described as critical and projective, respectively. The critical perspective focuses on critical analysis of utopian synecdoche, prototypes and exemplars. Building on Ernst Bloch’s

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<sup>1</sup> “Dummy Text, or the Diagrammatic Basis of Contemporary Architecture” In Eisenman, P., *Diagram diaries* (London: Thames and Hudson) 1999 6-

concept of “utopian impulse”, the field of utopian architecture projects can be extended beyond its customary and narrow definition.

The utopian platform is intended as a projective medium for the investigation into potential societal alternatives that radically rethink the world. The focus will be on explorative experimentation with utopian models, primarily through “*micro-utopic modelling*” of utopian scenarios through fiction and enactments. The paper aims to clarify, develop and explore these perspectives and thereby build an outline of a potential research platform.

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### ***Smoke and mirrors: deconstructing the award of the RIBA Royal Gold Medal***

The RIBA Royal Gold Medal has been awarded on an annual basis since 1848 by the Royal Institute of British Architects. This paper will look at the myths and the reality behind one of the oldest architectural medals in architecture, still viewed by many as recognising the *crème de la crème* of the architectural world.

Perception of the medal is important and I’ve addressed this by considering how the Medal is perceived by both winners and critics. Can the negative comments in the architectural press influence the organisation to amend its process and procedure for the Medal? And what of the medallists themselves? One recent medallist described the medal as a trinket, yet was happy to receive it himself some years later.

Are winners viewed differently by their peers and their clients? I will discuss this question with particular reference to the two youngest medallists, Giles Gilbert Scott and Norman Foster. Interestingly, Gilbert Scott was unsure why he received the medal and said at his presentation, “I do not know whether it is the Cathedral or the telephone box which is responsible for this award”.

How do the facts behind the nomination procedure for the RIBA Royal Gold Medal alter the fictional belief of s/he who makes the nomination? Is a nominee with a large number of votes automatically shortlisted for the Medal? Does supporting material help to influence the jury?

Amongst the five main architectural prizes (AIA Gold Medal, Pritzker Prize, UIA Gold Medal, RIBA Royal Gold Medal and Praemium Imperiale), should one claim to be the “Nobel Prize for Architecture”, and if so, which one should it be? Two of the prizes previously mentioned consider they have the right to be. If Nobel didn’t choose to revere architecture amongst his prizes, should we? Is this a case of “smoke and mirrors” from the organisations involved to achieve the prized status of Nobel?

