Patrick Lynch studied architecture at Liverpool and Cambridge Universities and completed his PhD at the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design. He is the founding partner of Lynch Architects. Based in London, the practice has won numerous awards and its work has been published extensively internationally. Lynch Architects exhibited at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2008 and 2012, and at the Milan Triennale in 2016. Patrick is the author of *The Theatricality of the Baroque City*, 2011, and *Mimesis*, 2015, which is a companion to *Civic Ground*. He has taught at Cambridge University and the Architectural Association, and is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Liverpool.

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Civic Ground

PATRICK LYNCH

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Civic Ground

Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site

PATRICK LYNCH

In *Civic Ground: Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site*, Patrick Lynch traces the philosophical background to his work as an architect, raising ethical and aesthetic considerations about what it means to make good architecture—and good cities—today.

Lynch identifies the comparison of buildings with sculptures—and the cliche "sculptural form"— as an urban problem, critiquing this formalist tendency as one of the main failures of contemporary architecture, arguing that parallels should instead be seen in the phenomenon of rhythmic spatiality. Rhythmic spatiality situates a sculpture or a building in its physical setting and civic context, articulating the interdependence of both. These spatial and symbolic relationships are presented in a series of drawings and photographs by the author, revealing the profound reciprocity of architecture, sculpture and site.

This book, a version of his PhD dissertation, underlines why Patrick Lynch is one of the most thoughtful architects presently working in the UK, combining successful practice with a strongly argued philosophical basis to his work, analysed here alongside historical examples such as the architecture of Alberti, Palladio, Borromini, Sigurd Lewerentz, Álvaro Siza and Rafael Moneo, a critique of Peter Eisenman's work and discussion of the sculpture of Richard Serra and Eduardo Chillida.

Civic Ground is the second book published by Artifice books on architecture with Patrick Lynch, following *Mimesis*, 2015, which focused on several built projects by his practice Lynch Architects. *Civic Ground* and *Mimesis* can, indeed should, be read in conjunction. *Civic Ground* sets out the basis for the renewal of a poetics of architecture.

"Patrick Lynch is one of the few architects running a thriving and creative practice who finds time to seriously reflect upon urban design and architecture."
—Peter Carl

"Architecture and sculpture are intimately involved yet in sharp contrast, and Patrick Lynch is one of the few architects who has made both this contrast and complicity crucial to his practice and his thinking. His book makes a brilliant contribution to the making of the public realm."
—Joseph Rykwert

Civic Ground

Rhythmic Spatiality and the Communicative Movement between Architecture, Sculpture and Site

PATRICK LYNCH

Artifice
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She sang beyond the genius of the sea.
The water never formed to mind or voice,
Like a body wholly body, fluttering
Its empty sleeves; and yet its mimic motion
Made constant cry, caused constantly a cry,
That was not ours although we understood,
Inhuman, of the veritable ocean.

The sea was not a mask. No more was she.
The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard.
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.

For she was the maker of the song she sang.
The ever-hooded, tragic-gestured sea
Was merely a place by which she walked to sing.
Whose spirit is this? we said, because we knew
It was the spirit that we sought and knew
That we should ask this often as she sang.

If it was only the dark voice of the sea
That rose, or even colored by many waves;
If it was only the outer voice of sky
And cloud, of the sunken coral water-walled,
However clear, it would have been deep air,
The heaving speech of air, a summer sound
Repeated in a summer without end
And sound alone. But it was more than that,
More even than her voice, and ours, among
The meaningless plungings of water and the wind,
Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres
Of sky and sea.

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing.
She measured to the hour its solitude.
She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker. Then we,
As we beheld her striding there alone,
Knew that there never was a world for her
Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
Why, when the singing ended and we turned
Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.
—Wallace Stevens, *The Idea of Order at Key West*

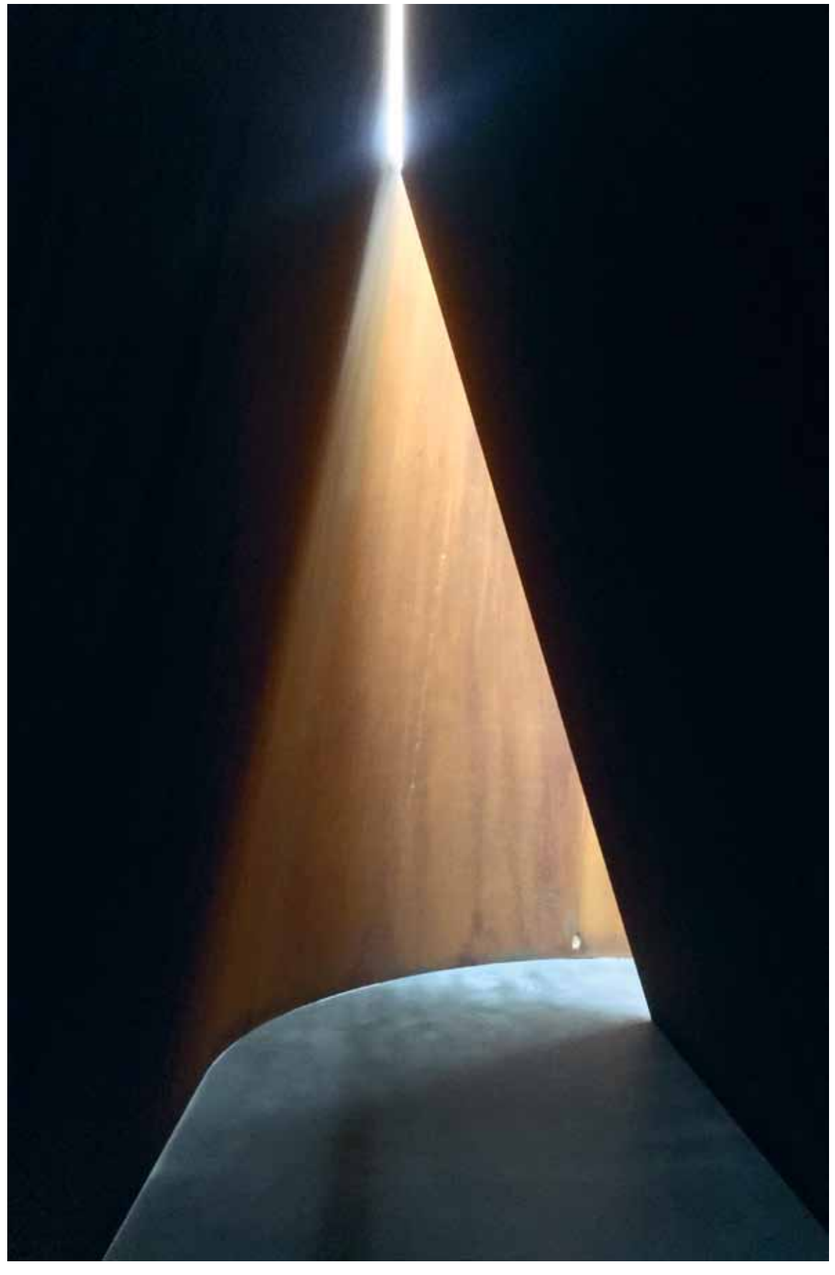
We can only hear the rhythm that is immanent within a given form if we ourselves introduce rhythm into it. That means we must really be actively involved ourselves in order to elicit rhythm at all. Every work of art imposes its own temporality upon us, not only the transitory arts of language, music, and dance. When considering the static arts, we should remember that we also construct and read pictures, that we also have to enter into and explore the forms of architecture. These too are temporal processes. One picture may not become accessible to us as quickly as another. And this is especially true of architecture… we have to go up to a building and wander around it, both inside and out. Only in this way can we acquire a sense of what the work holds in store for us and allow it to enhance our feeling for life.
—Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*

… one has to be willing at some point in his reflections to turn from it to the bustling, arguing, acutely sensitive Athenian citizens, with civic sense identified with a civic religion, of whose experience the temple was an expression, and who built it not as a work of art but as a civic commemoration.… The one who sets out to theorize about the esthetic experience embodied in the Parthenon must realize in thought what the people had in common, as creators and as those who were satisfied with it, with people in our own homes and on our own streets.
—John Dewey, *Art as Experience*

There is no such thing as an absence of content, no gap between the practical and the symbolic, only progressively more explicit modes of symbolic representation.
—Peter Carl, *City as Image Versus Topography of Praxis*

"Every perception is an act of creation" as [Gerald] Edelman says. As we move about, our sense organs take samplings of the world, and from these, maps are created in the brain. There then occurs with experience a selective strengthening of those mappings that correspond to successful perceptions —successful in that they prove the most useful and powerful for the building of "reality"… "signals were going back and forth in all kinds of hidden ways (as you usually get them by the non-verbal interactions between the players) that make the whole set of sounds a unified ensemble".… The players are connected. Each player, interpreting the music individually, constantly modulates and is modulated by others.… This is Edelman's picture of the brain, as an orchestra, an ensemble, but without a conductor, an orchestra which makes its own music. When I walked back to my hotel after dinner with Gerry that evening, I found myself in a sort of rapture. It seemed to me that the moon over the Arno was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I had the feeling of being liberated from decades of epistemological despair—from a world of shallow, irrelevant computer analogies into one full of rich biological meaning, one which corresponded with the reality of brain and mind.
—Oliver Sacks, *On the Move*

When new factors intervene, the law must be reformulated because of new observations and new conditions. Aristotle's *causa efficiens* still belongs to the natural, prescientific worldview.… The Greeks distinguished four causes: material, formal, final, and efficient. Let's take the example of a silversmith who is going to make a bowl. Four causes must be distinguished in making it: the order (to make the bowl) is the determining factor, "what ought to be done", something final, the "for the sake of which".… The second cause is the shape of the bowl which the silversmith must have in mind as its form. This is the eidos. *Forma* is already a reinterpretation of eidos, which means (visible) shape. The final and the formal cause are interrelated. Together they determine the third cause, the material… here, the silver. The fourth cause: this is the *causa efficiens*, the production, poiesis…; this is the craftsman. The modern *causa efficiens* is no longer the same! Poiesis and praxis are not the same: making and doing. Praxis has a motivation! In the modern sense, causality presupposes a process of nature, not a poiesis.… In today's science we find the desire to have nature at one's disposal, to make it useful, to be able to calculate it in advance, to predetermine how the process of nature occurs so that I can relate it to safety.… That which can be calculated in advance and that which is measurable—only that is real.… In physics, the law of causality has a reality (*Wirklichkeit*), but even there only in a very limited way. What Aristotle said is true according to the worldview of those days: the Aristotelian concept of motion for instance… means that a body is transported from one place to another, to *its* place. Galileo abandoned notions of above and below, right and left. Physical space is homogenous. No point is more distinctive than any other. Only this conception of space makes it possible to determine locomotion. Space must be homogenous because the laws of motion must be the same everywhere. Only then can every process be calculated and measured. Nature is viewed in a very specific way to satisfy the conditions of measurability. Beings acquire the character of being mere objects and of being objectified.… Being "an object" only makes its appearance in modern natural science. The human being then becomes a "subject" in the sense of Descartes. Without these presuppositions, the expression "objective" is meaningless… Is our totally different conception of space merely subjective?… This is already a glimpse of being! A genuine insight! It's a different kind of truth than in physics, perhaps a higher one! If one sees that, then one has a free stance towards science.
—Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*



Richard Serra, *NJ-2*, Rounds: Equal Weight, Unequal Measure, Rotate, Gagosian Gallery, Britannia Street, London, 1 October 2016–10 March 2017.

Double Frontispiece: Adolphe Appia, etching of stage set for *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Act II, "The Descent into the Underworld", 1926.

Preface

This is the third in a series of books, written over a 20-year period, which consider the architectural and urban significance of different aspects of poetics: theatricality, *mimesis*, and now rhythm.

Civic Ground is my interpretation of the civic and philosophical character of architectural poetics. The heft and urgency of my argument stems from the need to promote and to protect these values in the face of their vulnerability from formalism, cynicism and nihilistic irony.

I have attempted to reveal the persistence of an authentic tradition of poetics in imaginative creative work and critical thinking in major modern thinkers—and their interpretations of Plato and Aristotle—despite the clichés and bad faith of much twentieth-century art history, architecture and design culture.

Civic Ground concerns the public nature of artistic experience, its fundamental position in our culture, and the role that architecture, sculpture and landscape play in articulating this. "Civic" does not refer to a use class as such, ie a town hall, but to something which orients architecture towards the shared conditions of urbanity. The term "common ground" gets close to the original meaning of "civilitas", which more properly means civic order.[1] Its use in English law as common public grazing land, and its survival as "digital commons", suggests its participatory character. However, the ground itself is not simply a matter of property or of one's "rights" to use it, nor is it just a metaphor or a philosophical construction, but it is the basis and grounds for life itself. Martin Heidegger claimed that its central orienting importance for human affairs might be best described as "motive" (what Aristotle called "mythos" or plot) and wrote that: "Motive is a ground for human action.... All different grounds are themselves based on the principle of ground. All that is has a ground."[2] The term "motive" fuses together the representational and practical aspects of architecture as the expression of civic ground.

Similarly, rhythm is also a universal phenomenon, and its manifestation in culture—as festival, architectural decor, performance, sculptural spatiality etc—is one way in which the primary conditions of the natural world and the recurring social aspects of reality become sensible to us.

The traditional appreciation of rhythm in the visual arts is fragmented and disrupted, and so the location of my arguments and the instances of its possible renewal range widely across time and geography. This book is not a literature survey, nor an attempt to demonstrate a preconceived theory: it presents certain prejudices and experiences of a practicing architect, and involved my participation in a number of events and conversations.

It demands this of a reader too. It is phenomenology in the sense that writing and reading this book was and is a participatory experience. It is an example of hermeneutic enquiry in terms of an interpretation of symbolic meanings revealed in everyday life. The serious and playful wit of Sigurd Lewerentz, for example, only becomes apparent if you engage with his spaces in the ways he intended.

Unusually perhaps, interpretation in this book often began with drawings, both as memories of events and places as well as in situ observations.

My conclusions are derived from a form of *praxis* and engagement with artworks and architectural settings, situating them in their social and political and physical topography, and from my own creative attempts as a designer to situate my work in a continuum of civic culture.

My aim has been to uncover the grounds for the recuperation of civic values in architecture, and to make a case for the renewed vitality and relevance of the poetic imagination. These are obviously highly hubristic aims, but I hope that the profound significance of the contributions of the artists and architects discussed on the following pages is nonetheless useful in re-establishing its potential today. In particular, the profound influence of modern philosophy upon modern artists suggests that the ideas that informed twentieth-century visual culture still remain vital today. Coincidentally, as I write this, on 5 October 2016, Richard Serra is exhibiting a new sculpture, *NJ-2*, a few hundred yards away from Artifice's offices at London's King's Cross. Talking about *NJ-2*, and his life's work, Serra provides a coda for this book, and a fitting introduction to its thesis:

> Matter informs form... the rhythm of your body deals with time in relation to space... as the piece changes, you have to change, and either hasten your stride or turn in ways you hadn't anticipated.... Time enters into the equation of your bodily rhythms as you move through the work. It alters the time of your experience.... All our gestures, all our movements, the rhythm of our body, every time we turn, every time we take a step, every time we move, the gravitational load impinges on us.... It is a defining factor in how we know our bodily movements through space and time. And no one pays attention to that... lightness does seem to be the way the evolution of the planet is going in terms of microchips or whatever. But in terms of understanding your presence on the earth, we're all bound by weight and gravity.[3]

1 See Temple, Nick, "Rites of Intent: The Participatory Dimension of the City", in *Cityscapes in History: The Urban Experience*, Heléna Tóth and Katrina Gulliver ed, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, pp 155–78 and *Renovatio Urbis: Architecture, Urbanism and Ceremony in the Rome of Julius II (The Classical Tradition in Architecture)*, London: Routledge, 2011.

2 Heidegger, Martin, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*, Medard Boss ed, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001, p 23.

3 "Richard Serra and Michael Craig-Martin's 50-year conversation about art", *The Guardian*, 1 October 2016. In suggesting that in his sculptural work "formal and material imagination", inform each other, Serra is surely elliptically referring to the work of Gaston Bachelard, who "defined a new concept" that "images of matter... the material imagination... [is] necessarily required for a complete philosophical study of poetic creation". Gilson, Etienne, "Foreword" in *The Poetics of Space*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, p ix. Serra refers at length to his problems with architects (and their lack of understanding and appreciation of sculpture, place, topography, weight etc) and to the influence of architectural space, tectonics, and the importance of phenomenological aspects of perception upon his work in *Writings/Interviews: Richard Serra*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994. The influence of phenomenology upon post-war American sculptors arguably originated in the teaching and early writings of Rosalind E Krauss, and is suggested in her book *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, originally published in 1977 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001, pp 239–40). Its continuing relevance to critical appreciation of American land art, and in particular the importance of spatiality and of Martin Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art", is noted by Geoff Dyer in his essay about Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field* (Catron County, New Mexico, 1977), "Space in Time" in *White Sands: Experiences from the Outside World*, London: Canongate, 2016, pp 76–77. I examine below Heidegger's significant interaction with the artist Eduardo Chillida—and perhaps also surprisingly, the profound role that sculpture played in articulating his views on spatiality and temporal experience. Despite his abhorrent political views, Heidegger's influence on artists is profound; anyone seriously interested in modern sculpture cannot ignore this, I fear.

The Vulnerability and Re-emergence of Civic Ground: The Problem of Sculptural Form versus Sculptural Spatiality

Friendship seems to hold cities together, and lawmakers seem to take it more seriously than justice.
—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*[1]

Do you not seek great praise, glory, and immortality in this magnanimity of yours? Not only with pomp; not with ostentation, nor with crowds of flatterers will you earn real whole-hearted praise, for this can only be won by virtue.
—Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*[2]

The narcissist has no interest in the future because, in part, he has so little interest in the past.... In a narcissistic society—a society that gives increasing prominence and encouragement to narcissistic traits—the cultural devaluation of the past reflects not only the poverty of the prevailing ideologies, which have lost their grip on reality and abandoned the attempt to master it, but the poverty of the narcissist's inner life. A society that has made "nostalgia" a marketable commodity on the cultural exchange quickly repudiates the suggestion that life in the past was in any important way better than life today.
—Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*[3]

Civil and Military Architecture

Until the twentieth century, architectural treatises were almost invariably concerned with "*architettura civile*" or "*architettura civile militare*", drawing what used to be an obvious distinction between the two.[4] Civic architecture was primarily oriented towards an urban context, and its architects were predominantly concerned with the order of the city; military buildings, by nature of their defensive role and singular purpose could, to some degree, avoid the questions of urbanity and "*decorum*" that ground all other types of architecture in civic life. In particular, the closed nature of modern military architecture finds its echo in military parades, which are a sort of parody of secular and religious festivals, and of everyday life.

Frontispieces to architectural treatises by Sanmicheli and Guarini.

Despite the modern tendency to associate forts or military camps with utilitarian values, Medieval castles and Renaissance fortifications adopted a quasi-representational and emphatically communicative role in the life of a city by establishing a recognisable high point on the horizon of a town and demarcating a clear border between urban and rural territory. This act of fortification and definition was understood in intellectual terms to represent some degree of equilibrium between the cultural and natural worlds. Furthermore, the role of *civilitas* in architecture is closely related to notions of good government and well-being, ideals that coalesced in Renaissance Italy around the Humanist conception of the recuperation of the importance of *decorum* in classical aesthetics and philosophical thinking. The civic role of architecture re-emerged in fifteenth-century Italian cities as a way to unite, to accommodate and to represent abstract concepts such as justice. This drive towards visualising and embodying philosophical ideals was manifest in changed attitudes towards wealth and sexual love, with an ethos oriented towards a sense of the appropriateness of ornament and public display in the visual arts and in rhetoric, and in political life in general. Architecture's civic dimension represented an idealised and actual spatial continuity—a balance between the intimate and representational dimensions of city life.

This is one reason why Renaissance cities are often described as the birthplaces of modern consciousness. Terry Comito and Robin Evans emphasise the gregariously physical character of this sort of society—the embodied and carnal nature of civic life.[5] Architects such as Michelangelo or Francesco Borromini would not have described their architecture in terms of "space" or "function"—as something abstract. Architecture was a matter of rhythm and proportion, the latter a mode of analogy of natural law and mediation of temporal circumstances and cosmic conditions. Geometry was a means to demonstrate mediation in architecture, embodying the invisible aspects of reality. Architecture coordinated and oriented the civil aspects of law and religion within the specific conditions of a town or city (or even a village church). Renaissance patrons self-consciously demanded representation of urbanity and early modern city settings were attempts to mediate the "intolerable strains on communal institutions".[6] The so-called "natural states" of the Italian Republics commingled political with religious power, and the dominant *doxas* of church and state were often made up of members of the same family. Renaissance architecture therefore reflects the extremely mediated character of society, and one very clearly sees the theatrical character of this sort of public life in the gestural corporeality of Michelangelo's thresholds.[7]

In general terms, Renaissance architecture represents the tense nature of efforts to reconcile familial loyalties—and domestic spatial typologies—within a public realm that was made up of series of

1 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Joe Sachs trans, Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002.

2 Cited in Borsi, Franco, *Leon Battista Alberti: The Complete Works*, London: Harper and Row, 1977, p 20.

3 Lasch, Christopher, preface of *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, New York: WW Norton & Company, 1991, pp xvi–xvii.

4 See for example the treatises of Guarino, Sanmicheli, Orsini, Fonda etc. Aldo Rossi made a similar point at the beginning of his career in his article "*Il concetto di tradizione nell'architettura neoclassica milanese*" ["The Concept of Tradition in Neo-Classical Milanese Architecture"]: "Despite their different origins, architects like Cantoni, Antonelli, Cagnola or Canonica represent among their diverse personalities the manifest intention of a renovation of architecture towards a moral and political conception linked to social life and its civic aspect", *Società* 12, no 3, June 1956, p 482. Cited in Lopes, Diogo Seixas, *Melancholy and Architecture: On Aldo Rossi*, Zurich: Park Books, 2015.

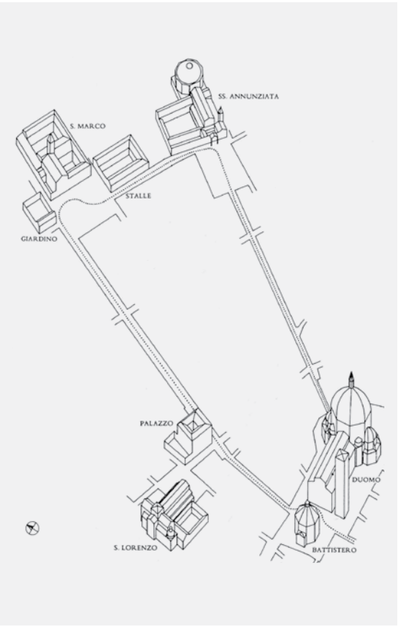
5 Comito, Terry, *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986; Evans, Robin,"Figures, Doors and Passages", *Translations from Drawing to Building and other essays*, London: Architectural Association Publications, 1996; see also Brothers, Cammy, *Michelangelo, Drawing and the Invention of Architecture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

6 Martines, Lauro, *Power and Imagination: City States in Renaissance Italy*, London: Pimlico, 2002, p 97; see also Tafuri, Manfredo, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

7 Lynch, Patrick, "Only Fire Forges Iron: On the Architectural Drawings of Michelangelo", *Drawing: The Process*, London: Intellect Press, 2005.

Michelangelo, drawing for Porta Pia, Rome, c 1560.

C Elam, drawing of processional route for visiting dignitaries in Florence during the fifteenth century showing Medici properties, 1978.



layers of material and habitual territories, access to which was mediated by gestures as well as architectural thresholds. This network is clear in the way in which families such as the Medici consolidated their power and articulated their influence in the appropriation of parts of the city of Florence. In the creation of a series of representational *topoi* and buildings, articulated by artworks and embodied in festive movement, wealth was oriented by rhetoric, and specifically oriented by architecture towards civic virtue.

In seeing modern cities in utilitarian terms, we have extended the essential characteristics of "military architecture" into the design of modern urban architecture generally, having forgotten about its civic aspects. What we might call a "military-industrial aesthetic" has become the dominant expression of almost all urban buildings, especially so in the case of office building design, much housing and even modern universities and schools. Arguably, a process of aesthetic transference occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century whereby what was previously typical for barracks and factories only—a lack of ornament and a utilitarian appearance—became the norm for almost all buildings regardless of their use or context. We can see the influence of this thinking in the use of militaristic terms to describe design as "avant-garde", "cutting edge" or its even more aggressive cousin "bleeding edge"—often with regards to technology. This tendency originates in "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, in which he declared that "we intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap", and he explicitly admitted, "We will glorify war."[8] Contemporary architecture still suffers from the mistaken belief that any futuristic aesthetic must be aggressive.[9]

In contrast to this bombast, civic architecture is informed by the rhythms of civic life; one of the primary characteristics of civic ground is a tacit, latent quality of imminence. Hans-Georg Gadamer called this quality "festive quiet".[10]

When we contemplate aesthetic questions today, especially the task of creating an ecological aesthetic, we are also confronting, I believe, questions of *decorum* and ethics. Civic architecture is obviously also the expression of civic values; and this derives as much from a response to solar orientation and the rhythms of the natural world, as the expression of a building's use and its urban orientation.

In other words, the role of civic ground, and in particular its rhythmic spatial character, informs the design not only of what is now known as "the public realm", but also the physiognomy, porosity and character of buildings. This book seeks to correct the twentieth-century prejudice for militaristic design—and its revival today in parametric formalism—stating the case instead for a modern, spatial, civic architecture. In part this is a project of recovery—recovery and

8 Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism", *Le Figaro*, 20 February, 1909, cited in *Documents of 20th Century Art: Futurist Manifestos*, Robert Brain, RW Flint and JC Higgitt trans, Caroline Tisdall, Umbro Apollonio ed, New York: Viking Press, 1973, pp 19–24.

9 See for example Rowan Moore's obituary for Dame Zaha Hadid in which he quotes Sir Peter Cook from an article in *Viz*, 1978, on the work of OMA: "I would hate", he concluded, "to live with their buildings. I would run screaming from among their barrack-like walls and their prison-like cages: I would look anxiously upwards to see whether their absurd sculpted heads are going to shout slogans at me. So, if the office does start to build, I hope—despite my prejudices—that the viciousness is retained, the spirit is retained, the spirit is turned into awesome, upsetting flesh." Moore, Rowan, "Zaha Hadid, 1950–2016: an appreciation", *The Observer* (online), 3 April 2016.

10 Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p 40.

recuperation of ideas and an understanding of history that situates modern architecture in a continuum of social creativity. Writing in the late 1970s and then again in the early 1990s, the cultural historian Christopher Lasch describes the contempt that narcissistic societies have for history as symptomatic of "a state of restless, perpetually unsatisfied desire":

> Having trivialized the past by equating it with outmoded styles of consumption, discarded fashions and attitudes, people today resent anyone who draws on the past in a serious discussion of contemporary conditions or attempts to use the past as a standard by which to judge the present. Current critical dogma equates every such reference to the past as itself an expression of nostalgia.[11]

Lasch claims that "much of what currently goes under the name of radicalism" and involves the rejection of the past is in fact a symptom of individual and cultural narcissism. He insists that in contrast "many radical movements in the past have drawn strength and sustenance from the myth or memory of a golden age in the still more distant past."[12] Acceptance of the value of history, he contends, "by no means rests on a sentimental illusion; nor does it lead to a backward looking, reactionary paralysis of the political will". In our own discipline, however, architects continue to elide futuristic style with the idea that this somehow inevitably equates to progressive social values; equate technological advances with formal spectacle and novelty; remain seemingly unable to accept the potential of modern construction techniques; and at the same time adopt a sceptical approach towards the dangers and damage that result from the misapplication of technology to urban situations. New Urbanism seems incapable of accommodating new urban typologies; avant-garde architects refuse any political dimension to design. In both instances, the civic character of architecture suffers. The problem of narcissism that Lasch describes is a psychological and urban phenomenon, and so it is not surprising that Lasch discusses Richard Sennett's book *The Fall of Public Man* at length as both the diagnosis of and the potential antidote to the narcissistic character of American culture.[13] What is at stake in the work of Lasch and Sennett is the survival of urban culture, and this primarily involves the communal character of human identity.

Joseph Rykwert first stated over 50 years ago that "all the great civilizations… have mythical accounts of [their] origins, and rituals which guide the planner and the builder".[14] In *The Idea of a Town* he proposed an "anthropology" of architecture to counter the prevailing contemporary tendency to see urban settlement in terms of efficiency and "transport engineering":

> The rectilineal patterns of the Roman towns, which survive in the street patterns and even the country lanes of old imperial lands, from Scotland to Sudan, are often thought to be the by-product of a utilitarian surveying technique. This is not how the Romans themselves saw it: the city was organized according to divine laws.[15]

Rykwert demonstrated how "the elaborate geometrical and topographical structure of the Roman town" was not primarily the result of a picturesque or utilitarian compositional system—ie modern prejudices, but rather something "growing out of and growing around a system of custom and belief which made it a perfect vehicle for a culture and a way of life". In particular, he demonstrated that:

> [Whilst] the convention is that the Roman town was a more formal version of a military camp… the convention inverts the truth. The Roman town was not a formalized and enlarged camp. On the contrary, the Roman military camp was a diagrammatic evocation of the city of Rome, an *anamnesis* of *imperium*. The Romans did not treat the setting up of camp as a makeshift for a night's sleep: it was part of the daily military routine that no army was permitted to settle down for the night without setting up camp ceremonially.[16]

Establishing a Roman camp was essentially a rhythmic ritual. Aligning habitation with the cardinal axis of the sun grounded the architecture in the customs and habits of Rome and in the local conditions of a place; the army literally woke and slept facing the sun. Roman architecture is thus revealed to be impervious to any modern formalism that obscures the symbolic and spatial role of nature in civic architecture. In contrast to the formalistic "natural metaphors" that afflicted urban design discourse directly after the war—"images drawn from nature… a tree, a leaf, a piece of skin tissue, a hand and so on"—Rykwert claims that "the town is not really like a natural phenomenon. Rather, it is an artefact—an artefact of a curious kind, compounded by willed and random events, imperfectly controlled. If it is related to physiology at all, it is more like a dream than anything else."[17] This observation led him to question the unlimited growth of cities suggested by neo-liberal economics ("Fear of restriction often appears in the form of fear of cramping autonomous growth") and to question the invisible ideology or "conceptual framework" that "is designed to evade the issue of imposing any order of an extra-economic nature on the city".[18]

Rykwert's study was subtitled "On the Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World" and it extended beyond Europe to consider the symbolic role of myth and ceremonial rites in the foundation of Chinese, Indian, Tibetan, African, South American, Greek and even Aboriginal and Sioux settlements. His work is less that of an antiquarian, as has been claimed, but concerns rather "cosmic man" and the psychological and spatial aspects of culture as they manifest themselves in human behaviour across time and in variously diverse climates, topography, and

11 Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, p xvii. See Hadid's comments in her RIBA Gold Medal acceptance speech: "I have always believed in progress and in creativity's role in progress. That's why I remain critical of any traditionalism. I worry about the dominance of neo-rationalism in London's current transformation," cited in Clark, Tim, "Gold medal winner Hadid marks award with 'traditionalism' fears", *Building Design* (online), 4 February 2016.

12 Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, pp xvi–xvii.

13 Sennett, Richard, *The Fall of Public Man,* New York: Knopf, 1977.

14 Rykwert, Joseph, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988, p 26.

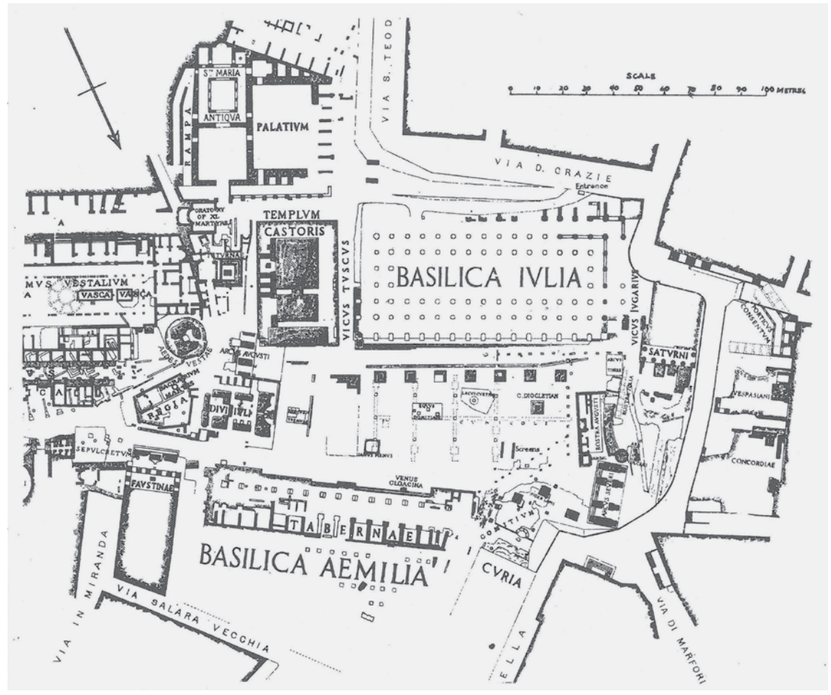
15 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 25.

16 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 68: "The first act was to plant the general's *vexillum* at a chosen spot. It was from the *vexillum* that the *praetorium* was paced out. On the border of the *praetorium* and the principal road a *groma* was stood to ensure that the streets were laid out at right angles. The line between the *vexillum* and the *groma* gave the surveyor the main axis of the camp… it gave the direction of the *cardo maximus* of the camp, and led to the *Porta Praetoria*, the principle of the four camp gates…. To the right of the *praetorium* was the *auguraculum*, the place where the commander sacrificed and omens were read, so the essential decisions about the future of the campaign were taken according to the will of the gods."

17 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 24.

18 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 24.

The Roman Forum, from the House of the Vestal Virgins to the foot of the Capitol. The north point corresponds to that of the Domus Caligulae.



19 See "The Wobble: The Cat with Nine Lives": in discussion with Peter Eisenman, Mark Wigley claimed that "Rykwert is an antiquarian" at a graduate seminar at Columbia University School of Architecture, September 2012.

20 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, p 202.

21 Quoted in Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 189.

22 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town,* p 189.

23 See "The Cultural Significance of Architecture: In Memory of Dalibor Vesely", Emmanuel College Cambridge, 10 April 2016: "Poetics is symbolism, it's just Catholic propaganda", declared Fred Scott.

religious and everyday activities.[19] Rykwert's main *animus* is the paucity of the modern understanding of city formation, and the subsequent impoverished character of twentieth-century urbanism, in theory and in practice. He does not prescribe an easy way to recover a symbolic conception of urban form, but concludes that whilst "we have lost all certainty about the way the world works… this does not absolve us from looking for some ground of certainty in our attempts to give form to human environment".

The ancient Roman believed that "the whole universe and its meaning could be spelt out of his civic institutions", Rykwert claims.[20] Baron Haussmann, the military architect of the reconstructed "efficient" plan for Paris, asked himself rhetorically: "What municipal bonds link the two million inhabitants who crowd into Paris?… For them Paris is a great consumers' market, a vast workshop, and arena for ambition."[21] Rykwert's conclusion is that the latter tendency is not enough to establish the grounds for meaningful human habitation. However, he does not have any faith in attempts to reconstruct or to resurrect copies of traditional urban form solely in terms of style. His message is ambiguous; it is not a lament, nor is it a theory in the modern sense of a manual for reconstruction of lost artefacts or a prescription for political action. In fact Rykwert reaches the very modern conclusion that since "the cosmologists are constantly reshaping" the world "round us" and we are "not even sure if it is expanding or contracting or is constantly renewing itself" humans today must "look for it inside ourselves: in the constitution and structure of the human person".[22]

Rykwert's criticism of capitalist "growth" and of the instrumentalist paradigm in general implies at once a rejection of both picturesque formalism and of any systematic approach towards urban design. Whilst his conclusion suggests that reflection might be a better way to think about the cosmic dimension of existence, his project primarily concerns the *polis*, not the individual psyche.

Civic life (or the life of the *polis*) cannot be reduced, Rykwert suggests, to questions about drainage or transport; in his view, urban culture transcends utilitarianism.

This view remains contentious, and the suggestion of the relevance of any legitimate survival of symbolic content in urban life remains difficult for many critics to accept.[23]

Nonetheless, the symbolic power of the public realm and of civic architecture remains strong. Beyond the world of professional architectural discourse the fundamental importance of civic ground continues

Place de la République, Paris, redesign by TVK (Pierre Alain Trévelo and Antoine Viger-Kohler), 2013.

to reassert itself, and architectural projects remain capable of contributing to its articulation, often without the prior permission of authorities responsible for the official formation of the urban realm. For example, our understanding of the significance of "informal settlements" remains somewhat trapped in a utilitarian interpretation of "refugee camps" as places that can be primarily defined in terms of a lack of sanitation. However, recent events in the "Jungle" refugee camp at Calais reveal the persistence of some profound aspects of human inhabitation, despite limited resources and a transient population. The creation of a Christian church by refugees was quickly followed by the erection of some ad hoc civic structures. In some cases, this initiative was supported by construction industry professionals amongst the camp population, and in others it was abetted by professional architects from Ireland. The five structures erected by Gráinne Hassett's team of volunteers can only be described in civic terms (as "a medical centre", "a women's centre" etc).[24] Their combined effect was to create a town. The aesthetic may have been provisional and the various uses defined simply by different coloured tarpaulins, but nonetheless they combined to define the camp as civic ground.[25]

Whilst this description might seem fanciful, the reaction of the British and French governments to the spontaneous formation of an informal and yet increasingly civic settlement was swift and brutally destructive. Only a few weeks after the erection of the first symbolic structures, police raids in February 2016 targeted not only the civic architecture but also its domestic hinterland.[26] In some cases the "public buildings" were torched immediately; whilst in other instances the clearing of dwellings destroyed the layers of urban depth that enabled the emergence of a recognisable "high street". The destruction of the hinterland and of the most articulate civic buildings was an explicit attack on urban order. The interdependence of both the hinterland of dwellings and the foreground of public buildings reveals their profound reciprocity. In some cases it was the hinterland that was attacked first, leading then to the isolation and ultimate end of the civic structures, and in other cases the high street itself was attacked first.

What is unusual in this instance is that a coherent urban metabolism was articulated and embodied in the formation of a recognisably permanent, civic dimension to the camp. This civic dimension was a manifestation of what Peter Carl calls "urban depth".[27] I would like to suggest that the revelation of civic ground (by its occupants' communal symbolic and practical action) led to its perception as a threat to the established political order, and ultimately to attempts at its erasure. French police were also prepared to destroy the makeshift chapel and a mosque.[28]

French public life is unusually secular for a predominantly Christian country, and its popular civic culture is largely proudly non-symbolic in any traditional sense. Nonetheless, it is the tacit dimension of civic culture that has been attacked in the recent terrorist atrocities in Paris. Bars, restaurants, publishing houses, theatres, and the street life of a modern secular city have been the targets; civic ground, and the unspoken assumption of its existence, is at stake in Paris today.

24 Gráinne Hassett, in conversation with the author, 15 March 2016. See also Siggins, Lorna, "The Irish Architect Determined to Defend the 'Jungle'", *The Irish Times* (online), 5 March 2016.

25 Robert Mull, in conversation with the author, 15 March 2016: "Walking around on duckboards, I felt as if I were in a Medieval village, without plumbing of course, but in that sense almost exactly like a Medieval village with its church, public buildings and more or less private domains facing onto streets and public spaces."

26 "Calais 'Jungle camp': clashes as authorities demolish homes", *The Guardian* (online), 1 March 2016.

27 See Carl, Peter, "Civic Depth", *Mimesis: Lynch Architects*, London: Artifice books on architecture, 2015, pp 113–134.

28 "Calais 'Jungle': Migrant church and mosque demolished", *BBC News* (online), 1 February 2015. The final destruction of the Jungle refugee camp at Calais, by French police, occurred at the end of October 2016.

Calais Women's Centre, by Gráinne Hassett et al, 2015–2016.

Photographs of the Calais Women's Centre by Gráinne Hassett, 28 February 2016, and her plan of the Calais Refugee Camp, 2015–2016. Population: 5,497. An area of homes of over 3,455 people at the bottom half of this map was subsequently demolished by the Calais Prefecture. The proto-town area held shops, restaurants, schools, mosques, churches, a theatre, a nightclub, a legal centre, a women and children's centre and vaccination and medical centres. Violent demolition commenced on 29 February 2016, days after the Court of Lille had on 23 February given an order to preserve community buildings and to initiate eviction in a planned manner over several weeks. Only 300 beds were made available to refugees. There were 445 children in the demolition area, of whom 305 were separated and unaccompanied. ©Gráinne Hassett, The Calais Builds Project.

The responses by Parisians to this attack vividly demonstrate the continuing power of civic ground to act as the setting and support for civic life. Until recently the Place de la République was a roundabout and yet its rehabilitation as a site of political *agon* cannot be clearer. It remains the place where many festivals begin and end, operating as a playground every day, and can be said to be the centre of official and unofficial political protest and action in France.[29] What has enabled its re-emergence as a site of public discourse and protest and solidarity? Partly it is the simple act of the removal of cars from what was originally common ground—it is now one of the largest open spaces in central Paris. Additionally, the civic importance of a place named after an act of political liberation cannot be underestimated even within a culture of *laïcité* and general aversion to any form of mass communication beyond sport and the pursuit of pleasure. The architects have created a pleasant enough space: areas of shade, an acknowledgement of the previous presence of a water tower in some inoffensive ponds, areas for children to play etc. What pre-exists however is not simply the memory of another more articulate civic tradition, but also its concrete presence in the sculptured figures of Marianne and the secular trinity of civic graces, *Liberté*, *Egalité* and *Fraternité*. In other words, the deep resonance of the Place de la République within the urban metabolism of Paris and the civic consciousness of Parisians was latent and arguably imminent. Attacks upon the civic virtues of the French Republic in actual terms then demanded, it seems, an actual and symbolic response. Its spontaneity and specificity points towards the abiding power of civic ground and its primary characteristics as the combined articulated power of the arts of architecture, landscape and sculpture. Their profound contribution together in the articulation of civic ground is the topic of this book.

What may have been the spontaneous recovery of a public voice in the Place de la République was possible because its spatial rehabilitation was instigated by the mayor Bertrand Delanoë. "My predecessors handed the square over to the car. We wanted to put beauty, the values of the République, and a joie de vivre at the heart of this transformation", he declared shortly after its reopening in June 2013.[30]

My aim is to reveal that the possibility of the renewal of civic architecture lies in the social and physical conditions of civic ground. Civic architecture might be said, in fact, to be the articulation of the communicative and rhythmic character of these conditions. However, these conditions are mostly obscured by the elision of aesthetic questions with social ones—as if new social conditions arise naturally from new aesthetics.

The continuing aggressive reassertion of this possibility (even its inevitability) is one of the most problematic characteristics of contemporary architectural discourse that continues to obscure and even to deny architecture's civic potential.[31] I will begin with exposing the damaging consequences of this assertion and attempt to reveal in particular the problematic consequences of neo-liberal (aesthetic) architectural theory in urbanistic terms. In contrast to this, the central role of rhythm will return as a *leitmotif*, revealing its centrality in spatiality generally, and as a primary characteristic of classical architectural theory, modern aesthetic philosophy and contemporary artistic *praxis*.

The contemporary manifestation of urbanism as window-dressing for "a great consumer market", as Haussmann saw nineteenth-century Paris, is referred to by Rykwert as "Emirates Style",[32] whereby "access to tall buildings is determined by road engineering, the traffic engineers are back in control".[33] "Emirates Style" might be seen as a sad parody of avant-garde architecture—a parody of "world class icons" erected in the hope that somehow a "world class city" might emerge despite the dominance of "road engineering" and without the urban metabolism, symbolic structure or orientation towards urban depth of serious civic design.[34] Arguably, the problems and origins of Emirates Style can be traced to the 1980s IBA projects in West Berlin of Peter Eisenman, Peter Cook, et al. It remains impossible to imagine a high street, never mind a city quarter, made up of "icon" buildings.

Similarly, despite various attempts to mimic traditional culture it is impossible to see Poundbury, UK, as anything other than a suburban car-based settlement, despite its creators' intentions to offer an alternative to this pattern of development.

My intention is to investigate the reciprocity between site, architecture and sculpture as a characteristic of civic ground. Specifically, the character of the recurring rhythmic continuity and communication between site and architecture—its disruption, or arrhythmia, and possible recuperation, is the subject of this book. This potential continuity will be investigated as a series of characteristics that can be summarised as a number of critical terms—urban topography, communicative and rhythmic spatiality, ornament, decorum, nature, second nature, representation etc—and these terms will be explored in exemplary case studies. My "method" is to look at built examples of the rhythmic continuity between architecture, site and sculpture in different contexts and at different times, looking for lessons that might account for its persistence as a mode of critical imaginative discourse and *praxis*. In other words, I proceed from theory to *praxis*, whilst keeping alive the traditional Greek idea that these terms are not exclusive and that the former is no guarantee of the success of the latter. At a couple of points I have introduced quite long footnotes in order not to interrupt the flow of the argument, whilst referring to contemporary examples today that are evidence of the misunderstanding of certain philosophical or artistic principles. My approach seeks continuity of philosophical themes across time, and is also a critique of the corruption of these themes by architects who have misconstrued their meaning. In particular, I will reveal the central importance of

29 Annabel Gray, in conversation with the author, 31 March 2016. See also "TVK: Place de la République", *domus* (online), 2 August 2013; and also Kamdar, Mira, "In Paris, a Protest Movement Awakens", *The New York Times* (online), 14 April 2016; and Mathiesen, Karl, "Peaceful Paris climate gathering descends into clashes with police", *The Guardian* (online), 29 November 2015.

30 Willsher, Kim, "Paris mayor praises beauty of revamped Place de la République", *The Guardian* (online), 16 June 2013.

31 See Schumacher, Patrik, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture Volume 1: A New Framework for Architecture*, and *Volume 2: A New Agenda for Architecture*, London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2010 and 2012.

32 Rykwert, Joseph, *The Judicious Eye: Architecture Against the Other Arts*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p 243.

33 Joseph Rykwert in conversation with the author, "Inhabitable Models: Eric Parry, Haworth Tompkins, Lynch Architects", Common Ground, Venice Biennale of Architecture, 2012. The interview was presented as a soundtrack to a film, and considered the intellectual context in which Rykwert wrote *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* in the 1950s. This was arguably the first example of an attempt to counter technological-functionalist attitudes towards "road engineering" with an appreciation of the ritualistic basis for what might more properly be called "civic design". In a discussion with Mark Wigley at a graduate seminar at Colombia University a few weeks after the Biennale opened in September 2012, Eisenman asked himself aloud, presumably rhetorically, "Why did Colin Rowe ask me to attack Rykwert?" ("The Wobble", graduate seminar at Columbia University School of Architecture, Peter Eisenman and Mark Wigley, September 2012.) Eisenman was angry and amazed that "phenomenology" had reappeared at the Biennale, something which he and Wigley "thought we had killed off" ("they took your *alma mater*, your old mother, Cambridge University, and corrupted her" etc). Whilst it is not wholly accurate to describe Rykwert's work as "phenomenology", it is an attempt to create a more profound discourse for architecture than narrow technical functionalism or pseudo-intellectual formalism. This study is inspired by such endeavours also, and by the sense that if one took seriously the question of sculpture and architecture, and more generally examined the relationships between philosophy and architecture, one might arrive at somewhat different conclusions than the literalism of Eisenman and Rowe.

34 See for example "Dubai: World-class Infrastructure and a Global Hub for Trade, Transport and Tourism", *Articles, Economic Development, Forbes Custom* (online) and Mayo, Anthony, Nitin Nohria, Umaimah Mendhro and Johnathan Cromwell, "Sheikh Mohammed and the Making of 'Dubai, Inc.'", HBS Case Collection, Harvard Business School website, last updated August 2010.

35 Gadamer, "Art as Play Symbol and Festival", *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, pp 44–45; see also Dewey, John, *Art as Experience*, New York: Perigee Books, 2005, pp 14–15, pp 153–157, pp 165–193.

36 On the one hand, this is the basis of an augment that Heidegger articulates as earth/world = conditions/possibilities (which is what one might also call the ethical basis for any artistic or practical "commission"); which is why it is possible for him to claim that "the city gives a direction to nature" (I will investigate the historical basis for this claim in some detail below: it is interesting to note that orientation is implied in the notion of a commission, and that it shares a common etymological ground with "missile"). On the other hand, we now find ourselves in a condition of committing to "nature" as a way to orient our cities with regards to natural conditions, ecology, ethical and sustainable architecture and food production etc.

37 Gadamer, "Hermeneutics as Practical Philosophy", *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, p 90. William Blake reminds us that, "Energy is eternal delight!"

38 *Praxis* in this sense should not be confused with "action", as it is in much contemporary political thought; *praxis* is also a mode of contemplation.

39 Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1993, pp 124–125.

40 See Harman, Graham, et al, "Is there an Object Oriented Architecture?" for The Architecture Exchange, London, May–June 2013. NB: Harman is now a professor of architectural theory at Sci-Arc, Los Angeles.

41 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p 315: "the prior knowledge involved in a techne cannot be called 'theoretical', especially since experience is automatically acquired in using this knowledge. For, as knowledge, it is always related to practical application, and even if recalcitrant material does not always obey the person who has learnt his craft, Aristotle can still rightly quote the words of the poet: 'Techne love tyche (luck) and tyche loves techne.' This means that the person who has been taught his trade will have the most luck."

42 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p 316.

eurhythmia in Greek aesthetics—in dance, poetry and architecture—as a form of measure, and as the pause in movement that makes it communicative.

Gadamer believed that rhythm plays a central role in revealing the participatory character of artworks, and that this establishes the grounds for the continuous "relevance of the beautiful":

> The autonomous temporality of the artwork is illustrated particularly well by our experience of rhythm. What a remarkable phenomenon rhythm is! Psychological research tells us that rhythm is a factor in our hearing and understanding. If we produce a series of sounds or notes repeated at regular intervals, we find that the listener cannot help introducing rhythm into the series. But where precisely is this rhythm? Is it to be found in the objective and physical temporal relations between the sounds, in the wavelengths, frequencies, and so on? Or is it in the mind of the listener? It is clearly inadequate to conceive the matter in terms of such a crude set of alternatives. It is as true to say that we … perceive it there. Of course, our example of the rhythm to be perceived within a monotonous series is not an example drawn from art. Nevertheless, it shows that we can only hear the rhythm that is immanent within a given form if we ourselves introduce the rhythm into it. That means we must really be actively involved ourselves in order to elicit the rhythm at all. Every work of art imposes its own temporality upon us, not only the transitory arts of language, music, and dance. When considering the static arts, we should remember that we also construct and read pictures, that we also have to enter into and explore the forms of architecture. These too are temporal processes. One picture may not become accessible to us as quickly as another. And this is especially true of architecture. Our contemporary forms of technical reproduction have so deceived us, that when we actually stand before one of the great architectural monuments of human culture for the first time, we are apt to experience a certain disappointment. They do not look as "painterly" as they seem from the photographic reproductions that are so familiar to us. In fact, this feeling of disappointment only shows that we still have to go beyond the purely artistic quality of the building considered as an image and actually approach it as architectural art in its own right. To do that, we have to go up to a building and wander around it, both inside and out. Only in this way can we acquire a sense of what the work holds in store for us and allow it to enrich our feeling for life.[35]

I would like to suggest that the rhythmic character of the typical situations that one finds in buildings, and in urban settings generally (as rooms), is accompanied also by the rhythmic character of architectural facades and thresholds (as niches, windows, doorways etc). Both enable the hinterland of building interiors and of civic territories to coexist in the rhythm of city life, animated by both social occasion and analogues of myth, tradition, and the effects of weather, the seasons, natural and second nature etc.

Gadamer foregrounds the organic nature of humanity whilst emphasising "a decisive difference between animal and human being. The way of life of human beings is not so fixed by nature as is that of other living beings". He makes it clear that "animals too have *praxis* and *bios*… a way of life", whilst emphasising the role that the horizon of language plays in reason; the role this plays in choice defines humanity, just as natural conditions define the basis for freedom as "freedom from".[36] I write as a practising architect, not just as a theoretician; whilst I am concerned with the philosophical importance of civic ground as the site of human self-consciousness and action, my work is primarily oriented towards *praxis*. It is my belief that civic ground reveals the poetic nature of practical life and the practical character of poetics; the contribution they make together to the revelation of the full potential of civic life points to the shared character of creativity and the civic nature of the architectural imagination. *Praxis* is central to human life, since practice is "the mode of behaviour of that which is living in the broadest sense", Gadamer claims:

> Practice, as the character of being alive, stands between activity and situatedness. As such it is not confined to human beings, who alone are active on the basis of free choice (*prohairesis*). Practice means instead the articulation of life (*energia*) of anything alive, to which corresponds a life, a way of life, a life that is led in a certain way (*bios*).[37]

Praxis is thus an ethos (way of life) with energy and orientation.[38]

The character of *praxis* is closely related to both practical everyday life and to festive time. A participant in an ancient Greek festival was called a "*theoros*" Gadamer reminds us, and he defines theory as "true participation, not something active but something passive (*pathos*), namely being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees".[39] Modern theory does not define itself in terms of passive participation, but rather as productive knowledge. In the discipline of architectural education, the goal of theory is most often the desire to assert the dominance of reason; it is ordinarily manifest in systematic architecture and in its attempted autonomy from human situations and ecology.[40] Theory has become simultaneously divorced from practical life and somehow imbued with a spirit of automatic production—it is as if theory can stand in for experience and craft in assuring the success of an act of imagination. The character of this production is curiously sealed off from the traditional relationship between skill and luck that typifies the classical concept of creativity,[41] and also from the traditional character of artistic work as a kind of "self knowledge".[42]

Yet even contemporary architects and theorists otherwise convinced by its autonomy are beginning to question the limits of the possibility of systematic architecture, and do so by invoking notions of topography.[43] A sense of the deprived quality of abstract space leads those otherwise concerned with the autonomy of systematic or "parametric" architecture towards attempts to resituate their computational abstractions in concrete situations, albeit in ones in which "depth" and "landscape" become formalist metaphors.

Bacteria Navigating a Nutrient Gradient:
The Schumacher-Eisenman Interview

An amusing, if also somewhat bemusing example of this type of confused systematic attitude towards theory and practice was published in 2013 in *Log* magazine. In discussion with Peter Eisenman, Patrik Schumacher declares:

> Each point in the urban field of our master-plan is embedded in a sequence of transformation that modulates building height, block size, grid density and directionality. Each block is also located within a typological morphing series. So urban dwellers and visitors can navigate the field according to all these gradients, like bacteria are navigating a nutrition gradient.[44]

Eisenman responds, suggesting that he has also recently become increasingly concerned with variety and locale:

> Give me any collage of initially unrelated elements and I can generate connections, resonances, invent correlations. I reject the pure interruption, the pure discontinuity, collage. That doesn't mean I'm not craving for as much versatility and diversity within this coherent texture.

However, despite referring to "texture", their primary design intent is "systems", "rules" and "aesthetic sensibility", attempting to combine "intuitive knowledge" with "order"—understood as self-consistent system, like apodictic geometry, ie a pile of rubbish has an order, as does improvisation—in an attempt to "simulate natural processes" and only then to allow these metaphoric and mechanistic "natural processes" to approach life. Schumacher admits to Eisenman, rather bizarrely—since they have both just professed little respect for Peter Zumthor (apparently he is not "critical" like "Rem")—that:

> I criticize your work to some extent because I think you're a great innovator on the level of concept and process—reflecting process and making it productive—but when I look at your work I feel that you could have benefitted from reflecting the phenomenological dimension better.... It needs to acquire a sense of phenomenological presence that comes with attention to materiality and light. I think we sense our environment not only visually, but with the whole body where we feel lightness, heaviness, and that's the way we orient and navigate space. I feel sometimes, and this may be harsh, that you don't do that, that the environments you create don't have the force required to truly stimulate and you don't give your structures the material power and force that compels our attention and trust in them as forces to be reckoned with; you don't deliver sufficient presence. It's not substantial enough to draw you in. Your works are like stage sets; it doesn't give me the sense of reality that would compel me to pay attention to its ordering suggestions. Plaster and sheet rock cannot compete with concrete, steel, stone. Even the material magic of carbon fibre compels attention. So it's not heaviness, it's character that comes with material performances and specific affordances; the different characteristic presences and levels of force to draw you and propel you. These are mediated via phenomenology, ie via visual, tactile, acoustic as well as proprioception and vestibular perception etc. Initially I'm always going by my intuitions and by what I am feeling, asking why I am attracted to this, why I am exhilarated here; and then I am trying to analyze what it is that works and what doesn't work intuitively. This way I can rationally validate or critique my aesthetic reactions. But there is a caution to be observed: the architect needs to distinguish and assess the difference between one's professional sensibilities as designers, the way we read and evaluate buildings as expert connoisseurs versus how the ordinary users of the buildings would experience them. The purpose must be to construct successful, innovative, productive spaces for users who are in the midst of their high performance pursuits: spatial orders and spaces that communicate and frame communication on a new level of complexity and intensity.

Schumacher seems to sense that there might be something else missing in a diagrammatic approach to architecture, which he approaches—as it were, from above (topography looks like a gradient graph when seen from above)—as the problem not only of the meaning of space, but also the problem of meaning understood as experience.[45] The problem remains for him not one of culture—or of wit or talent or rhetoric—but of how to relate abstract measurements and digital information to the lived world of a room, situated somewhere in a city. Except he doesn't start with a room, but with systems, and so his comments are at once poignant and sometimes unintentionally humorous:

> I found a way to integrate the semantic layer, the meaning layer, into the digital design model. I get the meaning layer as another correlated subsystem

43 See Autonomous Architecture exhibition as part of Common Ground, Venice Biennale of Architecture 2012, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Peter Eisenman, et al.

44 "I Am Trying to Imagine a Radical Free Market Urbanism: Conversation between Peter Eisenman and Patrik Schumacher", New York 2013, *Log 28*, Anyone Corporation, summer 2013. All quotes from Eisenman and Schumacher in this section are from the *Log* article cited above. The *Log* essay shows that Schumacher's comments at the World Architecture Festival in November 2016—in which he called for an end to state-owned public space and an end to the funding of affordable housing via taxation on new development—were the demonstration of a long-held "radical free-market" neo-liberal political attitude, not a sudden thought experiment.

45 Ie bringing him close, somewhat unwillingly perhaps, to Borromini's intentions, wit, and sense of *decorum* in play at the Roman Oratory—see below.

46 "I Am Trying to Imagine a Radical Free Market Urbanism". Schumacher seems to be unwittingly imitating the *Landscape Urbanism Bullshit Generator* website. See http://www.ruderal.com/bullshit/bullshit.htm.

47 "I Am Trying to Imagine a Radical Free Market Urbanism". As before, all quotes from Eisenman and Schumacher in this section are from the *Log* article, cited above.

48 See Giedion, Sigfried, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951.

49 See "The Wobble", and *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, Kipnis, Jeffrey and Thomas Lesser eds, New York: Monacelli Press, 1997.

50 Ansari, Iman, "Interview: Peter Eisenman", *The Architectural Review*, 26 April 2013: "Through my psychoanalysis sessions I realised that what was wrong with my architecture was that it wasn't from the ground, from inside the unconscious, beneath the surface. So the first evidence of this occurs in Cannaregio where for the first time I do a project that is totally in the ground. And it's not only in the ground, it's also urban. But it's also not real. It's conceptual; and uses Corbusier's unbuilt hospital project as an initial context. This is in 1978."

51 Kimmelman, Michael, "The Craving for Public Squares", *The New York Review of Books* (online), 7 April 2016.

in my multi-system parametric model. The signifying relation is another correlation within the logic of associative modeling. Specifically, I'm taking agent-based crowd modeling as this meaning layer and program agents to be responsive to designed environmental clues in their behavior; their behavior is modulated by architectural articulation. Any feature of the environment might modulate their behavior, and thus becomes an effective sign or communication. That's the signifying relation proper for architecture. In the end the meaning of the space is what takes place within it, that's what it should be communicating. The designated, designed space is a framing communication that invites potential participants to share a certain particular communicative situation. The meaning is the use, the social function. I can bring that social function into the model by crowd modeling and by scripting individual actors' behavioral rules relative to spatial distinctions. Agents might come into a space and slow down as they move from a marble floor onto a carpet, gather around a central position that they're invited to gather around by a territorializing ceiling feature. These are not key-frame animations, they are literally programmed agents that move autonomously according to stochastic rules that change in dependency to spatial markers, thresholds, gradients etc. The agents are scripted, modulate their behavior relative to selected stimuli, which are the features of the model, the designer. So I can say carpet means "slow down and orient towards others" (private places), hard surface means "move independently and ignore other agents" (public spaces). That's operationalized, parametric semiology.[46]

Despite his perhaps deliberately oxymoronic phrase "autopoiesis" (from *poiesis*, to make), what Schumacher is trying to explain—the rhythmic character of *decorum* and the occasion for spontaneity and recognition in urban situations—might be better called "practical poetics". Whilst aspects of a city are systematic—drainage, traffic, IT etc, the question facing architects today is: how can one absorb these systems into buildings and places? I argue that this is only possible via imagination, because one cannot derive *decorum* from systems. City life mirrors human creativity generally in this regard, since making in general, and poetry in particular, are anything but systematic or automatic.[47]

Schumacher's attempts to engage systematic thinking with specificity are hampered by the fact that his thinking is derived from the legacy of modern architectural theory. In the twentieth century, critics typically discussed design in terms of its distinct aspects—the clichés of space, function and form—rather than as the manifestation of a particular commission. Even if some modern architectural theorists attempted to try to recombine these atomised parts into a theoretical whole, this task has not been helped, I suggest, by accepting definitions of architecture that are not conducive to the tradition of "rhythmic spatiality"—of which architecture is the most stable representation.[48]

In contrast to modern theory in general—of which architectural theory is symptomatic—the traditional relationship between culture and life (*theoria*) is built upwards from natural conditions and from embodied experience of the world, towards the more articulate realm of concepts and symbols. Modern theory in contrast—and most contemporary architecture—works downwards, attempting to embed "forms" in the quality-less *res extensa* of the Cartesian universe.

For example, the term "common ground" is seen as deeply problematic by Peter Eisenman, even though he agreed to participate in David Chipperfield's Biennale at Venice in 2012 with this title. In fact, "ground" itself is a highly problematic notion for Eisenman in "epistemological terms". He has regularly referred to its broken status in post-nineteenth-century metaphysics as the justification for his inability to engage with ground as the basis of architectural presence.[49] His elision of ground as the basis for representation with epistemology is curious, and symptomatic of a misunderstanding of ground as the foundation of ontological experience. Ground is not simply a linguistic construct, and its revelation as something common is a political and spatial act.

One can see the problem of common ground not as a philosophical problem of selfhood or of certainty (what Eisenman calls "tradition" or "traditional metaphysics"), but as an actual architectural question. In contrast to Eisenman's "aesthetic" problems (which are arguably largely questions of self-representation for him), a recent example of the ontological and spatial relevance of civic ground can be found in the example of the creation of a public square, another informal settlement, and its transformation into a place.[50]

Michael Kimmelman writes about the project by Palestinian architect Sandi Hilal at the Fawwar refugee camp in the West Bank to create the first permanent spatial structure there since its formation in 1974.[51] Initially, camp inhabitants were suspicious of the architects' attempts to create a public space, anxious that this would signify the semi-permanent nature of their inhabitation and thus endorse Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian homelands. Kimmelman writes:

> For Palestinian refugees, the creation of any urban amenity, by implying normalcy and permanence, undermines their fundamental self-image, even after several generations have passed, as temporary occupants of the camps who preserve the right of return to Israel. Moreover, in refugee camps, public and private do not really exist as they do elsewhere. There is, strictly speaking, no private property in the camps. Refugees do not own their homes. Streets are not municipal properties, as they are in cities, because refugees are not citizens of their host

New Public Square, Fawwar refugee camp, West Bank, by Sandi Hilal, 2015.

countries, and the camp is not really a city. The legal notion of a refugee camp, according to the United Nations, is a temporary site for displaced, stateless individuals, not a civic body.

Specifically, the camp leaders were concerned with the visibility of women in public space. Yet it was their wives' insistence upon the need for a public space that persuaded the men to allow the project to proceed. Its success lies, Kimmerman claims, in the fact that:

> The square has given children a place to play other than crowded streets. Mothers who rarely felt free to leave their homes to socialize in public now meet there to talk and weave, selling what they make in the square, an enterprise that is entirely new in the community and that one of the mothers told me "gives us self-esteem and a sense of worth, like the men have". "For me", another mother said, "the radical change is that men here now look at women in a public square as a normal phenomenon. I can bring my kids. I can meet my friends here. We are in our homes all the time. We need to get out. We want to be free. Here, in the public square, we feel free."

The square is made of stone and defined into thirds by a wall behind which the women trade. It has been used as an external classroom and the addition of draped fabric transforms the space into a civic room. Its success seems to lie less in any explicit attempt to address questions of representation, and one can applaud its architectural character; the themes of embodiment and materiality are nicely handled. But its great contribution to the lives of the camp occupants is primarily spatial, and by this I mean its social and material significance as the backdrop for the daily, seasonal and ritualistic rhythms of a "city". In this way, the formation of a civic ground establishes the primary conditions of urbanity.

One cannot distinguish between function and form, or between meaning and pragmatics in communicative architecture, and the use of these terms in modern architectural theory is confusing and misleading; it leads to the diminishing of architecture's primary civic role and in its contribution to city life. The problems with a formalist approach will be investigated in some detail in this book, as its influence is profound and continues to dominate academic life in North America, especially at graduate level on non-professional Masters courses. In discussing historical and modern examples alongside exemplary contemporary projects and projects built with scarce resources, my intention is to reveal the continuity of thematic content across cultures and across "epochs". In doing so I hope to undermine the assumption that there is a legitimate theoretical approach to architecture that asserts its autonomy from and derides popular culture. In particular, my intention is to demonstrate that the idea that there is an academic or theoretical architecture in conflict with practical design is specious. My approach is to reveal the weakness of systematic and formalist theoretical approaches towards architecture, in philosophical and artistic terms.

52 Ansari, Iman, "Eisenman's Evolution: Architecture, Syntax, and New Subjectivity: Interview with Peter Eisenman", *Architecture Daily* (online), 13 September 2013; Brillembourg, Carlos, "Peter Eisenman by Carlos Brillembourg", *Bomb Magazine* (online), no 117, fall 2011.

53 Ansari, "Eisenman's Evolution: Architecture, Syntax, and New Subjectivity".

54 Brillembourg, Carlos, "Peter Eisenman by Carlos Brillembourg", *Bomb Magazine* 94, winter 2006.

55 Rowe, Colin, *The Architecture of Good Intentions*, London: Academy Edition, 1994, pp 28–29.

56 Rowe, *The Architecture of Good Intentions*, p 49.

57 Rowe, *The Architecture of Good Intentions*, pp 52–65.

The Cardboard Architecture of Peter Eisenman

Certain contemporary architects seem to have an antagonistic relationship with sculptors (particularly in America) one that is founded on a misunderstanding of the spatial aspects of sculpture in favour of "sculptural form". This problem, I suggest, profoundly effects the quality of American architecture and, as a consequence, the cities where it is built.

It is instructive to consider the example of a recent attempt by an architect to re-establish a working relationship with a sculptor—albeit in the deprived context of Peter Eisenman's formalistic and pseudo-philosophical discourse—if only to see how problematic such collaborations can be.

Contemporary collaborations between architects and sculptors are often fraught with misunderstanding and not a little aggression from both sides. Indeed, claiming kinship with sculpture is almost a cliché for a certain sort of architect, presumably because one influence of "sculptural form" has been to create rivalry, jealousy and also the need to be taken seriously as an "artist".[52]

However, his particular view of architecture as an art form disregards the traditional notions of craft and poetics in favour of conceptualism and formalism—which led to tension in his working relationship with Richard Serra.

Eisenman is emphatic that:

> If there is a debate in architecture today, the lasting debate is between architecture as a conceptual, cultural, and intellectual enterprise, and architecture as a phenomenological enterprise—that is, the experience of the subject in architecture, the experience of materiality, of light, of color, of space, etc. I have always been on the side opposed to phenomenology. I'm not interested in Peter Zumthor's work or people who spend their time worrying about the details or the grain of wood on one side or the color of the material on the surface, etc. I couldn't care less. That having been said, it is still necessary to build. But the whole notion of the idea of "cardboard architecture" meant that the materiality of the work was important as an "anti-material" statement. Probably the most important work I did in the conceptualist realm was the cardboard architecture houses. Pictures of House II, for instance, were taken without sunlight so you have no shadows, and no reveals or things like this, and in fact one of the pictures we took of House II was in a French magazine that said it was a "model of House II". So I achieved what I wanted to achieve, which was to lessen the difference between the built form and the model. I was always trying to say "built model" as the conceptual reality of architecture. So when you see these houses and you visit them you realize that they were very didactic and very important exercises—each one had a different thematic—but they were concerned not with meaning in the social sense of the word or the cultural sense, but in the "architectural meaning". What meaning they had and what role they played in the critical culture of architecture as it evolved over time. So while the work was interested in syntax and grammar, it was interesting to see what the analogical relationships were between language and architecture. And of course that's when I get into working with Jacques Derrida.[53]

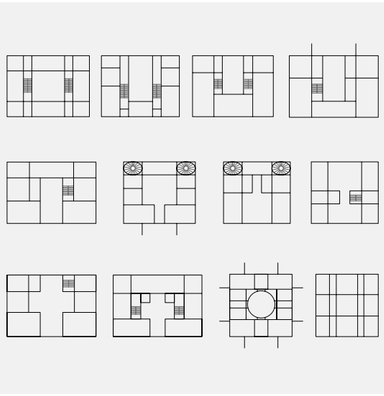
I believe that his interest in analogy has been hampered by a formalist conception of language, and is, as a consequence, quite superficial. Arguably, Eisenman changes what he says about his work depending upon the audience, and after the 2012 Venice Biennale he has begun to temper his statements about the supposedly autonomous nature of architecture in favour of a quasi-sculptural approach. For example, when interviewed by Carlos Brillembourg for *Bomb Magazine* he claimed that:

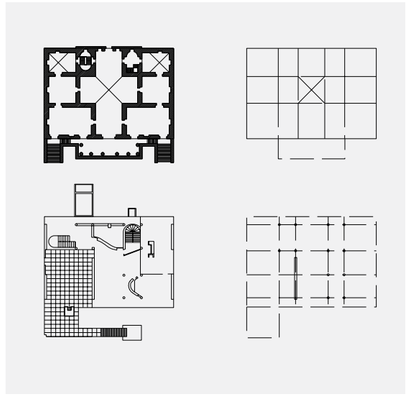
> The energy of Terragni permeated my early work; House I is certainly Terragni, but House II is much more influenced by, say, Rosalind Krauss' writing on contemporary art at the time and the idea of sculpture in the expanded field and the work of minimalist sculptors Robert Morris and Sol LeWitt. By House II, Krauss and I were working closely—she eventually wrote "Notes on the Index" in *October* 3 and 4, which became key to House IV.[54]

Brillembourg then asked "What about Donald Judd?", to which Eisenman claimed, "We did a project with him, and one with Michael Heizer. By then I had put the Terragni book aside and was working on my own project, which was more influenced by conceptual art, by colour field painting, by Krauss's, Michael Fried's, and Clement Greenberg's writings."

**Collisive Fields and Bricolage:
Colin Rowe on Urbanism as Architectural Form**

Peter Eisenman is arguably the most prominent exponent of this sort of confused attitude towards architecture as sculpture, although I'd also suggest that the formalist tendencies of Eisenman, Jeffrey Kipnis and Greg Lynn et al derive from Colin Rowe's emphasis upon the urban form of Rome and his notion of "collage city". This might initially seem a perverse assertion, since Rowe was also concerned in *The Architecture of Good Intentions* with utopia and metaphysics as much as with form.[55] However, both of these themes derive from his thesis that architecture expresses "cultural concepts", that buildings operate as a "theatre of prophecy".[56] Against this idealism and literalism, Rowe used the example of gestalt diagrams to try to articulate the need for backgrounds for prominent "built objects", what he called the "predicament of texture".[57] I will return to the problematic nature of these seductive visual

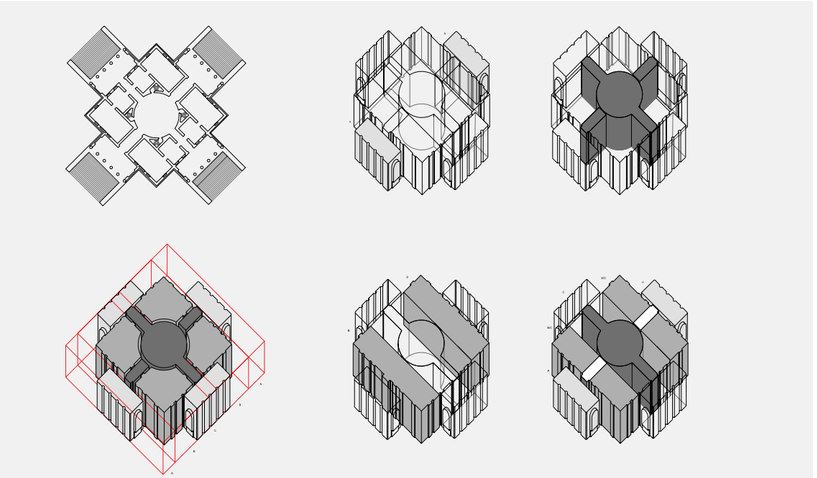




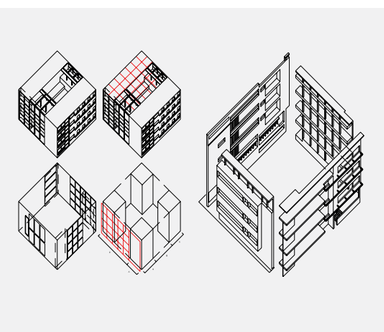
Left: "Schematized plans of eleven of Palladio's villas", from Rudolf Wittkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (redrawn by Lynch Architects).

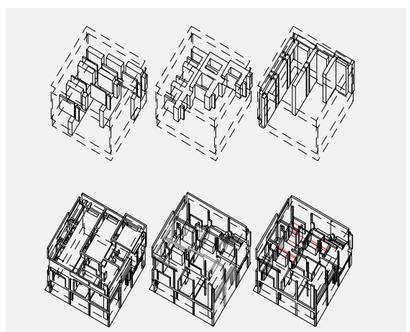
Right: Plan drawings of Palladio's Villa Foscari/La Malcontenta and Le Corbusier's Villa Stein, from Colin Rowe's *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* (redrawn by Lynch Architects).

Opposite: Drawings of Zurich (left) and Wiesbaden (right) from Colin Rowe's studio at Cornell University.



"Ideal and virtual diagrams of Rotonda. Spatial layerings", from Peter Eisenman's *Palladio Virtuel* (redrawn by Lynch Architects).





Left: "Casa del Fascio. Axonometric diagram showing the four-tower palazzo conception, which gives rise to a tri-partite A-B-A, solid-void-solid, rhythm", from Peter Eisenman's *Giuseppe Terragni Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques* (redrawn by Lynch Architects).

Right: Axonometric diagrams of House II by Peter Eisenman (redrawn by Lynch Architects).

58 Dalibor Vesely acknowledges a debt to Rowe in the introduction to his book, but reminds us in it of the problem with "Gestalt" theories of architecture: "The nature of vision manifests itself in its most elementary form as a tendency to experience reality in terms of visual patterns and identifiable configurations, a tendency conventionally described as eidetic vision or Gestalt. Unfortunately, many interpret Gestalt principles as if they were a law establishing the formal identity of objects or object-like structures, forgetting that Gestalt is always situated in the intentionality of our life and therefore closely linked with the meaning of some potential or actual action." Vesely, Dalibor, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004, p 84.

59 James Stirling being Rowe's other very famous student. Unlike Eisenman, Stirling latterly wrote little, but his impatience with systematic architecture is clear in his essays in "The Black Notebook" (see Crinson, Mark ed, *James Stirling: Early Unpublished Writings on Architecture*, London: Routledge, 2009) and they took very different approaches towards the role of history in design (see Maxwell, Robert, "Situating Stirling", *The Architectural Review*, 30 March 2011.

60 Eisenman, Peter, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, PhD Dissertation, Cambridge University, 1963; Facsimile published by Lars Muller, 2006.

61 Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, p 31.

62 Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, p 30.

63 Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, p 29.

64 See Wilson, Colin St John, "Albert Speer and the Fear of Freedom", *Architectural Reflections*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

65 The mistranslation of philosophical terms, and also Beaux Arts themes, by Anglo-Saxon theorists, is part of the problem that afflicts our discipline today, eg, "*genre*" did not mean "type" for Durand etc.

66 See Vesely, Dalibor, "Architecture and the Conflict of Representation", *AA Files* 8, 1985.

67 Rowe, Colin, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, (1947) 1987.

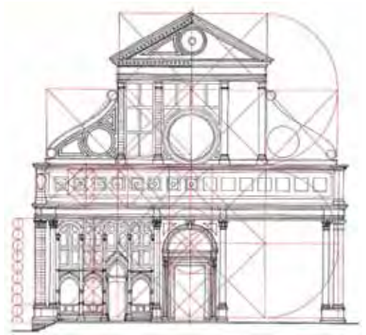
68 Rowe, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal", *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays.*

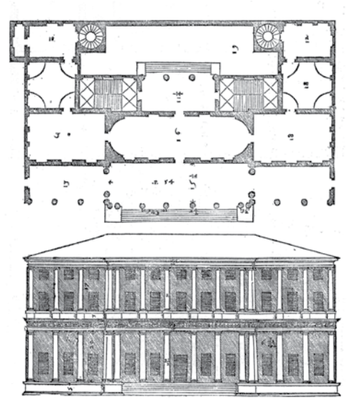
metaphors shortly. Rowe's writings are obviously far from the apraxic language that Dalibor Vesely identifies as typical of contemporary technical design culture. Yet, nonetheless, the elision of historical time and of geological processes with visual imagery—and thence with the "gestalt" or "form" of cities in his work—typifies modern architects' causist approach to history and to reality generally.[58] This approach is exemplified by the theoretical and built work of his student Peter Eisenman.[59]

Eisenman's PhD, "The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture", was supervised by Colin Rowe at Cambridge University and completed in 1963.[60] He declares in the introduction that "a specific situation, by its relative nature, limits us to relative ends".[61] Instead, Eisenman claims, what matters is "form", and "total external order is our absolute".[62] The term "formal" is used in an attempt to limit and to control "individual expression", which Eisenman accepts as "legitimate", but which needs to be controlled for the sake of "the comprehensibility of the environment as a whole".[63] It is perhaps no surprise that it is Terragni's architecture that is seen by Eisenman as the means by which individualism can be subjugated to absolute (formalist) order—as, arguably, fascism arose as a response to nineteenth-century Romantic individualism.[64] Whilst Eisenman categorises "generic form in its Platonic sense", no mention is made of Plato's understanding of Cosmos, geometry or analogy. The influence of Rowe's art history studies at the Warburg Institute coincided in Eisenman's dissertation with Rowe's attempts to create a historical legitimacy for modern architecture based upon geometry and proportion understood as form. Neither are historically or philosophically precise.[65] Plato sees *eidos*—often wrongly translated as form, when it more closely means ideas (which in turn is not the Kantian idea of a concept, but rather a noetic symbol)—embodied in certain geometric relationships as analogous of the relative degree of embodiment (of, for example, an individual soul in the world-soul).[66]

"Formal" is perhaps the most pernicious of these mistranslations, as it corrupts the language that we use so that the meaning of formal loses its connotations of "correct", "proper" and "appropriate". The result is that the *decorum* of a specific situation—that is implicit in any discussion of the formal aspects of architecture—is forgotten in favour of abstractions. Whilst Colin Rowe's description of the arrangement of spatial dimensions in the plan of Le Corbusier's and Palladio's villas is rhythmic in "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa",[67] and his essay "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal" is evidence of an interest in experience in architecture, the overriding emphasis in his writing is upon composition as metaphor.[68]

Arguably, Rowe was the first English-speaking architect to adopt the critical perspectives of the German School of Erwin Panofsky and Rudolf Wittkower. It was his graduate work with Wittkower at the Warburg Institute in London that led to Rowe's "ambiguous article, which has received too much extensive/obsessive attention", "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa", published in *The Architectural Review* in 1947. Rowe famously compared Palladio's villas with those of Le Corbusier, suggesting that they shared geometric and rhythmic similarities largely based on the prevalence of certain compositional figures such as squares and "golden rectangles". This method evolved from Wittkower's own analysis of Palladio's plans as pure types, which were eventually published in 1949





Left: Analysis of proportions and "lineaments" in the facade of Alberti's Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1470, from *On Alberti and the Art of Building* by Robert Tavernor.

Right: Plan and facade drawings of Palladio's Palazzo Chiericati, Vicenza, 1680, from Palladio's *The Four Books of Architecture*.

in *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*.[69] According to Rowe, however, "Wittkower didn't like the article… Rudy saw it as lacking in scholarship and frivolous."[70] In suggesting that architecture could be analysed, like music, in terms of "composition", they were both responding to Palladio's method of publishing plans and elevations of his buildings (in *The Four Books of Architecture*, self-published in Venice in 1570), without any drawn information about their context, de-situated and seemingly autonomous. Wittkower elides music and Pythagorean mathematics, something which he claims Palladio applied to architecture following Leon Battista Alberti's example. Wittkower's argument is based on his claim that Palladio was a Humanist, despite the fact that unlike Alberti—a graduate of Padua University, Professor of Rhetoric at Florence, Papal Envoy etc—Palladio was not university educated and had little theoretical knowledge of the Medieval curriculum nor Renaissance Neo-Platonism.[71]

In contrast to Alberti's *Ten Books*,[72] Palladio produced a profoundly simplified form of architectural theory, which in turn was exceptionally influential on those architects similarly lacking a Neo-Platonic Humanist education.[73] Palladio's work emphasises Alberti's theory of "lineaments", whereby the proportions and ratios of parts of a building's plan resemble a bodily whole, and enable one to project appropriate sectional drawings. Alberti's work emphasised the study of relationships, and his method of analysis of existing buildings was tempered, in terms of its relevance to design, by the corrective role of "perspective" upon the ratios of facades and specifically their civic presence when experienced within a city context. Recent scholarship has revealed that Alberti's architectural theory was tempered by a pragmatic and situated approach to composition and his buildings' proportions do not precisely adhere to the principles that he sets out in his books.[74] Alberti's theory of *concinnitas*—harmony or congruity of parts—was interpreted by Wittkower as analogous of musical relationships that can be expressed in simple diagrammatic plans; this abstraction inevitably isolates architecture (and geometry) from its cultural and symbolic roles.[75] In particular, the role that architecture played in civic life and its traditional relationship with virtue has been largely lost today as a result of the dominance of this sort of formalist analysis.[76]

Despite its attraction as a way to teach "principles" of analysis, Wittkower's approach was first distorted by Rowe, and then deformed by his student Peter Eisenman, into a theory of composition. In particular, the role that ornament plays in the *decorum* of urban buildings was largely cast off and ignored in the "formal" analysis of buildings as plans, and yet Alberti was sensitive to advising his readers, whom he knew would be patrons as much as artists, to exercise prudence and to acknowledge the civic dimension of their work.[77] Palladio is careful to refer his readers to this too, urging that "an edifice may be esteemed commodious, when every part or member stands in its due place and fit situation, neither above or below its dignity and use; or when the *loggia's* [sic] halls, chambers, cellars and granaries are conveniently disposed, and in their proper places."[78]

Arguably, what was being studied by Rowe and Eisenman wasn't buildings, but Palladio's drawings of his buildings—drawing attention away from their tectonic and civic reality. Palladio's self-promotional treatise was an attempt to dignify his edifices, and in order to do so he sought to emphasise their independence from use, situation, topography, tradition, urbanity, *decorum* etc.[79] In studying Palladio's projects as an abstract combination of grids, and extrapolating from this that Le Corbusier and Terragni's architecture

69 Wittkower, Rudolf, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 2nd edition, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

70 Rowe, Colin, "Excursus on Contessa Priuli-Bon", *AA Files* 72, 2016, p 71.

71 Palladio's patrons included the poet Gian Giorgio Trissino, who urged him to travel to Rome and introduced him to the noblemen of the Veneto.

72 Alberti, Leon Battista, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, Robert Tavernor trans, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988; see also Borsi, *Leon Battista Alberti: The Complete Works*.

73 "Palladianism" is perhaps the inevitable result of the relatively ill-educated nature of most architects from the sixteenth century onwards. Palladio provided almost the only education that generations of gentleman architects received outside of their Grand Tour—hence the success of his work as a model for a large number of country houses in Britain and America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Tavernor, Robert, *Palladio and Palladianism*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1991. Sadly, Alberti's work, which emphasised analogy, was much less easy to understand and to copy.

74 See Tavernor, Robert, "Beauty in Art and Building", *On Alberti and the Art of Building*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, pp 39–48: on the unorthodox proportions of the upper storeys of the facade of Palazzo Rucellai at Florence, their relationship with the Stoa and the point at which one encounters the building in the streetscape.

75 See Tavernor, Robert, "Concinnitas in the architectural theory and practice of Leon Battista Alberti", unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1985 (and Tavernor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building*).

76 Formalism is perhaps a series of attempted mechanistic short cuts to architectural glory. It seems suited to certain political situations, working perhaps best to glorify particularly autocratic regimes: "Do you not seek great praise, glory, and immortality in this magnanimity of yours? Not only with pomp: not with ostentation, nor with crowds of flatterers will you earn real whole-hearted praise, for this can only be won by virtue." Leon Battista Alberti, cited by Borsi, *Leon Battista Alberti: The Complete Works*, p 20.

77 See Alberti, "Ornament to Private Buildings", *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, (411, 162–175v), pp 298–319.

78 Ware, Isaac, *The Four Books of Andrea Palladio's Architecture*, dedicated to Lord Burlington, 1738; New York: Dover Publications, 1965, p 1.

79 Arguably, Palladio goes some way towards beginning the process of distancing his work from its context, which Wittkower, in attempting to overcome aesthetic appreciation, pushes further towards abstraction by emphasising its quasi-Pythagorean character. We will see how Palladio's work is grounded in the life of Verona below, and see how Alberti's work, filtered via Palladio's reading of Vitruvius, is also profoundly urban.

80 Goldberger, Paul, "The Museum That Theory Built", *The New York Times*, 5 November 1989. See also Langdon, David, "AD Classics: Wexner Center for the Arts/Peter Eisenman", *archdaily*, 17 October 2014.

81 See Rowe, Colin, "Cornell Studio Projects and Theses", *As I was Saying: Recollections and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol 3, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

82 Rowe, Colin and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978, pp 106 –107. Rowe's student projects formed the basis of international design charrettes such as "Roma Interrotta" in 1978, whereby eminent architects took parts of the city and proposed urban redesign without commissions or reference to patrons or clients. The participating architects were Piero Sartogo, Costantino Dardi, Antoine Grumbach, James Stirling, Paolo Portoghesi, Romaldo Giurgola, Venturi and Rauch, Colin Rowe, Michael Graves, Rob Krier, Aldo Rossi and Léon Krier. The competition and all 12 entries are examined in detail in *Architectural Design*, Profile 20, no 3–4, 1979, which was guest edited by Michael Graves.

83 See Rowe, "Ideas, Talent, Poetics: A Problem of Manifesto", *As I was Saying: Recollections and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol 2.

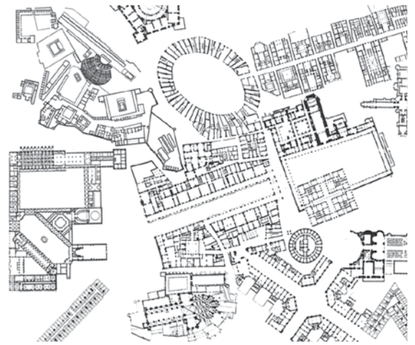
84 Rowe, *Collage City*, p 106.

85 Rowe, *Collage City*, p 106.

86 Rowe, *Collage City*, p 107.

can similarly be reduced to this, it is perhaps no surprise to find that the dominant characteristic of design teaching derived (as an unintended consequence) from Wittkower's historical studies is an architecture based on the manipulation of grids.

The success of this approach, in Eisenman's and his students' buildings, is questionable. The Wexner Centre for the Arts at Ohio State University, 1989, was memorably described by Paul Goldberg as "the museum that theory built".[80] The collision of city block grids with distorted typological fragments recalls very strongly Rowe's design students' urban scale projects at Cornell University, albeit in a more frantically "deconstructivist" rather than neo-classical mode of post-modernist "historicity". At the heart of their endeavours, both drawn and written, lies a superabundance of historical quotation and words, and a love of superfluidity and restless flow at the expense of the civic values that informed Renaissance architecture. Arguably, architects and critics today are still reeling from their disorienting effects.



Hans Kollhoff and David Griffin, *City of Composite Presence*, drawing of historical typologies assembled to form a conceivable urban texture, from *Collage City* by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter.

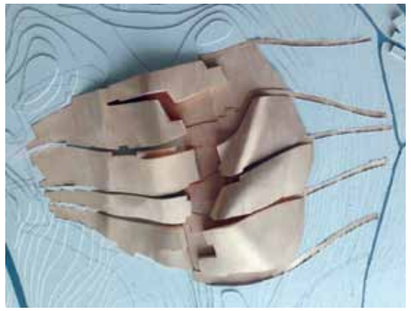
In particular, it is the elision of formalistic building analysis with formalistic city analysis that is most damaging. Rowe's *Collage City* exhibits a formalist approach to architectural urbanism that ignores the social forces that shaped the architecture of the past. His appreciation of neo-classical town planning principles, and his fondness for the picturesque tradition, created in his Cornell students' projects an eclectic mixture of fragments,[81] which he called, after Levi-Strauss, "bricolage".[82] The site of this eclecticism was not the modern city as we encounter it as architects working for private or commercial or institutional clients, but an academic view of the historical city as a formal system. Rowe's city was one filtered through a transformation of the Nolli Plan of Rome (1748) into the figure-field dialectic imported from gestalt psychology; hence the predominance of the term "analysis". This formalist reading of cities tended to ignore the intentionality of the various agents who paid for and made the civic monuments and dwellings that make up a city; everything is talent and/or ideas.[83] There is an unresolved conflict in Rowe's work, between the life of the nineteenth-century city depicted so brilliantly in *The Architecture of Good Intentions* and his theory of design, in which, arguably, there is no mediation, no economy and no representation beyond form. For example, in *Collage City* Rome is described with fizzing verbal brio as:

> a collision of palaces… an anthology of closed compositions and ad hoc stuff in-between which is simultaneously a dialectic of ideal types plus a dialectic of ideal types with empirical context… something of the bricolage mentality at its most lavish.[84]

Rowe's exuberant descriptions disguise rather than explain the life of the city, and his desire to impose verbal order—of a sort—upon what he sees as "a traffic jam of intentions" reveals also a certain relish in using visual metaphors to illustrate generalisations. Rowe's prose flits between the universal and the particular, like a low-flying pilot turning verbal stunts. Rowe's prose strains to lift up the city so that it becomes a record of ideals, emancipating it as "some sort of model which might be envisaged in contrast to the disastrous urbanism of social engineering and total design". He claims that whilst it is "products of a specific topography and two particular but not wholly separate cultures" (imperial and Catholic), Rome is actually "a style of argument which is not lacking in universality". Unlike many of his contemporaries, Rowe's universality of form was not propelled by science, efficiency or technology, but instead visual metaphors that elide history with quasi-natural processes. Rowe's views of cities resemble at once a parachutist's (he was in the Parachute Regiment in the Second World War), and a Baedeker guide (plans and history and novels) and his imagery recalls film stills, time-lapse photography and speeded up sections of a disaster movie:

> The physique and politics of Rome provide perhaps the most graphic example of collisive [sic] fields and interstitial debris, there are the calmer versions of equivalent interests, which are not hard to find.[85]

Rowe claims—somewhat *ex-cathedra*—that his flippant description of "the politics of bricolage" that characterises "the Rome-London Model" is sufficient that it "may, of course, perfectly well be expanded to provide comparable interpretations of a Houston or a Los Angeles. It is simply a question of a frame of mind with which one visits places".[86] The use of the phrase "a Houston" reveals that Rowe has no interest in the actual Houston in Texas, beyond its capacity to reveal the efficacy of his methodology, which he summarised with breathtaking bathos as "a frame of mind". The uninteresting parts of cities, to a formalist "frame of



City of Culture, Santiago de Compostela by Peter Eisenman, 2010, model photograph (left) and photograph from carpark (right).

mind", are dismissed as "interstitial debris", leading to the tendency of American architects to concern themselves with replicating or simulating the effects of imaginary "collisive fields" [sic] .[87]

Similarly, Peter Eisenman uses almost the same visual metaphor to attempt to ground his City of Culture outside Santiago de Compostela in a plausible imitation of public topography as geology. Unfortunately, it is only a visual metaphor, not an actual city. In William JR Curtis's view the project is in fact a copy of an artwork:

> Eisenman's (competition) presentation was accompanied by computer drawings which gave the impression that the project had been "generated" by scanning the structure of the old city then distorting it in a fractured geometry. The plan shape of the vast new "city" was also traced to the shape of a shell, the emblem of Saint James and of the pilgrimage route. There was in turn an overlaid grid (a customary Eisenman device). The complex thus combined several geometrical systems and emerged as a sort of palimpsest, supposedly filtering the natural surroundings into the artificial world of the architecture. Eisenman's project for Galicia summed up several years of research into fragmentation, striation, and interstitial space. Folds, of course, were very much in fashion at the time and Eisenman was forever sexing up his dossiers with a little French theory, for example quotations from Deleuze on *Le Pli* (The Fold). Some of his followers in turn introduced a pseudo-scientific badinage concerning strings and algorithmic transformations. Behind the smokescreen of pretentious theorising, Eisenman is in fact a formalist who raids sources and manipulates forms for their own sake, leaving aside the problem of content. For all the promotional chatter, the City of Culture in Galicia seems to have been inspired fairly directly by an example in the realm of land art: Grande Cretto in Gibellina, Sicily (1985–1989) designed by Alberto Burri as a memorial to the earthquake of 1968. This takes the form of a solidified "map" of the destroyed city made from concrete and rubble, with folding shapes, incised streets, and the striations of a distorted grid laid out across the landscape. 11 years later Eisenman's project for the City of Culture is less than half constructed and the original budget of a little over 100 million euros has more than quadrupled; the programme has also continued to change, with talk now of a major centre of contemporary art. There is enough already built to get some idea of how things may look, and one section is even open to the public. The project promoted for its topographical sensitivity in fact required the complete decapitation of *Monte Gaias* and the removal of millions of cubic metres of soil.[88]

Eisenman's formalistic attitudes towards city-scale buildings reveal the profound problems that arise when pseudo-philosophical metaphors become confused with pseudo-artistic manoeuvres. This confusion of architecture with sculpture (and of sculpture as "form") is in fact a sort of running battle between American architects and sculptors, particularly obvious in the rancour between Peter Eisenman and Richard Serra that first manifested 35 years ago.

Architecture and Sculpture:
The Eisenman-Serra Interview

> When sculpture enters the realm of the non-institution, when it leaves the gallery or museum to occupy the same space and place as architecture, when it redefines space and place in terms of sculptural necessities, architects become annoyed. Not only is their concept of space being changed, but for the most part it is being criticized. The criticism can come into effect only when architectural scale, methods, materials, and procedures are being used. Comparisons are provoked. Every language has a structure about which nothing critical in that language can be said. To criticize a language there must be a second language dealing with the structure of the first but possessing a new structure.
> —Richard Serra (in an interview with Peter Eisenman), *Perspecta 19*, 1982

87 See Cooper Union dormitory block Manhattan designed by Ohlhausen DuBois Architects, whose "form" is based upon the observation that the grid of Alphabet City "collides", with the Lower Manhattan Grid, which commences at this point—all of which is supposed to be significant and a useful reason to design the building. Sunlight, views, *decorum*, use: all of these design principles are subjugated to the "formal manipulation" of a series of cubes and grids, which is only contextual in the sense that this is the design methodology taught by Eisenman, his ex-students and his associates to the second year architecture students at Cooper Union. See John Hejduk, "Centralized Relief upon a Tableau", in John Hejduk's *Mask of Medusa Works 1947–1983*, New York: Rizzoli, 1985, pp 66–67, cited in Jasper, Michael, "Thinking Through the Architecture Studio: Two Models of Research", *Artifact*, vol 3, no 2, 2014, p 3.1: "The architect starts with the abstract world, and due to the nature of his work, works towards the real world. The significant architect is one who, when finished with a work, is as close to that original as he could possibly be". Jasper compares and contrasts Hejduk's studio teaching at Cooper Union between 1964 and 2000, and Rowe's at Cornell 1963–1988: the former was typified by "the pedagogical use of exemplary or abstract problems… removed from real implementation or function", the latter also by "grid collisions, and the use of figure/ground as the predominant realm of representation and investigation… conceptualising the city as a (single) gestalt…. A limited number of design problems: figure, field, pattern texture, edge, axis", pp 3.7–3.9. In both cases, design is taught without reference to use or ecology. See also Jasper, Michael "Embracing Ambiguity in the Teaching Practices of Peter Eisenman and Colin Rowe", *Nordes Design Ecologies*, no 6, 2015.

88 See Curtis, William JR, "Galicia, Spain—Peter Eisenman fails to translate a seductive proposal into a successful City of Culture for Spain", *The Architectural Review* (online), 22 September 2010. The project also bears some resemblance to Michael Heizer's mile-long earth work *The City* (see Kimmelman, Michael, "Michael Heizer's Big Work and Long View", *The New York Times* (online), 13 May 2015).

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, by Peter Eisenman (and originally also Richard Serra), 2005.

Richard Serra was invited by Peter Eisenman in 1981 to discuss the relationship between sculpture and architecture, in an interview that was published in *Perspecta*, the journal of the Yale School of Architecture, the next year. Serra established immediately his distaste for postmodernist architecture and, in particular, the ways in which architects appropriate sculptures in aid of a supposed "humanist project":

> The biggest break in the history of sculpture in the twentieth century occurred when the pedestal was removed… the need architects feel today to repress the history of sculpture since Rodin is based upon their desire to represent questionable symbolic values under the guise of questionable humanism. The fact of the matter is that symbolic values have become synonymous with advertisements… trying to convince people that placing a contraposto figure atop a column serves humanistic needs.[89]

Serra continued his attack asking if "Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans, for instance", isn't just "a little condescending?" He claimed that "one reason architects consume and use traditional sculpture is to control and domesticize art", continuing, "architects are openly reactionary in their adaptation of watered-down artistic conventions. Their continual misuse of art as ornamentation, decoration, and garnish denies the inventions of the past."[90] He attacked also Michael Grave's "Portlandia logo for the Portland building" and what he called "Johnson/Burgee's 'Golden Boy' for the AT&T Building", concluding the interview with the observation that "postmodernists also believe in the future: the future of AT&T and corporate America".[91] Arguably the symbolic advertising content of capitalist America had evolved by the time it reached Bilbao, by which point it was freedom and creativity that were being celebrated, just as in Berlin the IBA projects promoted these values towards the Soviet Bloc. Presumably Serra was not aware in 1982 of the CIA's tacit financial support of Abstract Expressionism and its support for Jackson Pollock?[92] Nonetheless, his attack upon architects was not simply political, but artistic. On the one hand Serra repeats the Kantian view that "to deprive art of its uselessness is to make it other than art", and on the other hand his disdain for ornament mirrors modernist architects' misunderstanding of the communicative depth that can be articulated in architecture. Certainly, the fate of the *Tilted Arc* sculpture in Manhattan—which was originally commissioned by the United States General Services Administration Arts-in-Architecture programme for the Foley Federal Plaza in front of the Jacob K Javits Federal Building, installed in 1981 and then removed in 1989 after a public controversy—reveals something of the hubris of his disavowal of the ornamental or communicative aspects of sculpture—its civic spatial role.[93]

Serra is at loggerheads with Eisenman throughout most of the interview, but for the most part their differences are superficial and personal (Eisenman talks about Pollock's works being "not representations" but "expressions of his feelings… pulsations"; Serra replies, "I have great difficulty with spurious psychological interpretations"). Both subscribe to the view that art is best when useless, except that Eisenman seems to think that architecture is also best when useless. Serra believes that "the internal necessities and motivations" of "sculpture and painting" have the "potential to alter the construction, function, and meaning of architecture" and he claims that "Le Corbusier understood this" potential in his Soviet projects.[94]

89 Serra, Richard, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp 141–142. Serra's observation is very insightful and he is right to suggest that architects continue to use outdated artistic conventions. In the twentieth century, a number of modernist architects incorporated sculptures on pedestals within their buildings, long after sculptors themselves had begun to abandon this way of working, and Penelope Curtis investigates this tendency in *Patio and Pavilion: The Place of Sculpture in Modern Architecture*, London: Ridinghouse and the J Paul Getty Museum, 2007. She also considers the work of sculptors such as Dan Graham, whose work is "semi-architectural", and architects such as Frank Gehry whose buildings are "semi-sculptural". My interest is slightly different, and following conversation with Curtis I decided to take Serra's assertion that "the biggest break in the history of sculpture in the twentieth century occurred when the pedestal was removed" as the basis for a discussion about what is particular about modern sculpture—which according to Serra is its "site-specific" character. It seems to me that that is something that sculpture shares, or could share with architecture. Arguably, as sculptors became more interested in specificity, architects became more interested in serialisation and autonomy, mistaking this for "sculptural form", which confirms Serra's belief that "architects are openly reactionary in their adaptation of watered-down artistic conventions."

90 Serra, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, p 142.

91 Serra, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, p 154.

92 Saunders, Frances Stonor, "Modern Art was CIA Weapon", *The Independent on Sunday*, 22 October 1995.

93 Kammen, Michael, *Visual Shock*, New York: First Vintage Books Edition, 2007, p 238. See also Hopkins, David, *After Modern Art: 1945–2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p 159.

94 Hopkins, *After Modern Art: 1945–2000*, p 142. (See his letter to Viktor Nekrasov, 20 December 1932, in *Oppositions* 23, 1981, p 133).

The Harvest of a Seed:
Le Corbusier and the Synthesis of the Arts

Le Corbusier was quite willing to jump on the bandwagon of Constructivism in an attempt to win work in Russia.[95] However, his dedication to artistic integration, to the "plastic incident", is clear in his work from the 1950s. He declares in the introduction of volume six of *Oeuvre Complete*, published in 1957, that whilst "in our century it is not permitted in the eyes of the 'organizers of work' to be a man of different arts—one must be specialized", what he aspires to is the "act of unity" of a "poetic incident". In this unity, "architecture, sculpture, painting, that is to say one volume, form, colour and rhythm are incommensurable or synchronous—synchronous and symphonic".[96] This highly ambiguous phrase was written when Le Corbusier was "in his seventieth year", and is the "harvest" of a "seed" that had been planted "50 years ago", he claims, for which he had only recently been able to find "expression". Le Corbusier worked as a writer or painter each working morning, and he worked as a stained glass artist at Ronchamp.[97] In the same way, Le Corbusier acted as a textile artist at the Palais de Justice building at Chandigarh, commissioning and collaborating with the Mill Owners' Cooperative upon several massive hanging tapestries, amplifying the use and *decorum* of the building through ornamental artwork. Le Corbusier's attitude towards representation remained highly figurative, both in terms of spatial typology (altars, porticos, kitchens, cloisters etc), and in sculptural terms (bull's horns, shell roofs etc).

Palace of Assembly, Chandigarh, India, by Le Corbusier, 1963.

Le Corbusier's architecture is undoubtedly a form of ornament, where the figural elements are embedded in geometric armatures; his comparisons between his paintings and architectural plans (*Modulor*) are not strictly formal, as Colin Rowe imagined, but analogical.[98] Peter Carl demonstrates this in the opening argument in his essay "Architecture and Time: A Prolegomena", stating of Le Corbusier's "comprehensiveness of the algebra of signs", "in so far as this code is possessed of content, it resides in the 'marriage of the human and cosmic orders', for which the *Modulor* provides the paradigm".[99]

Door of Legislative Assembly, Chandigarh, India, by Le Corbusier, 1963.

Carl goes on to demonstrate that Le Corbusier's "whole enterprise" is summarised in this declaration from his *Le poème de l'angle droit*:

> This for Urb(anism)
> architecture
> painting
> for dialogue
> for exegesis
> essay (writing)[100]

Furthermore, Carl shows that "proportion" relates these "categories" in a way that makes sense of Le Corbusier's assertion that "music is like architecture, is time and space. Music and architecture alike are a form of measurement".[101] He does so by referring us back to the origins of architectural discourse (of Vitruvius) in rhetoric (Cicero):

> In this discussion of *ornatus* (and notably, the section on *numerus*, "rhythmic utterance" recalling both ritual speech and the presence of "discourse" and "ratio" in *logos*), Cicero remarks that good oratory must have *utilias*, *dignitas*, and *venustas* (beauty).[102]

Le Corbusier was attempting to articulate the unity or "harmony" of the arts that are combined together in architecture via analogue, as geometry, and in rhythm. For Le Corbusier, ornament is the articulation of spatial rhythm as geometry.[103] He struggled to recover the analogical significance of proportion from the purely aesthetic use to which it had descended. There are roughly four layers to Le Corbusier's "geometric play", Carl contends:

> A geometric figure, by virtue of participation in "golden" ratios offers a paradigmatic sequence of relations (implicitly recovering Neo-Platonic harmonic hierarchies but displaced from Pythagorean harmonics to a logarithmic visual

95 See Starr, Frederick, "Le Corbusier and the USSR: New Documentation", *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, vol 21, no 21–22, 1980, pp 209–221; and Cohen, JL, *Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the USSR: Theories and Projects for Moscow 1928–1936*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992.

96 Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complete*, vol 6, Boston: Birkhäuser, 1957, pp 8–9.

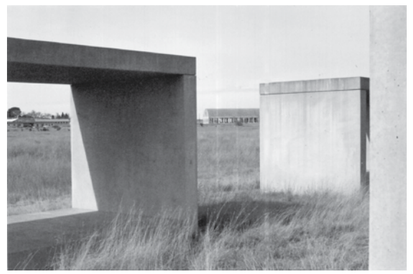
97 Peter Carl notes that Le Corbusier was not at all the first to "revive" this art—its revival begins in the nineteenth century—eg the cathedral at Christ Church Oxford—and continues unabated through arts and crafts to folk like Leger. His early watercolours from *Voyage en Orient* are full of Ruskinian attention to the synthesis of stone carved and coloured, mosaic, fresco; and he went through the stages of painting via Expressionism to Cubism. The early Purist buildings were white articulated with colour, but Pessac was seen to be an urban scheme articulated through paint (on the exterior). In the late 1920s, his painting shifts from the "harmony" of the still lifes to figural (and more mystical) themes; that is to say, situational. Admittedly, these were situations in an emblematic space—like those illustrating Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens*—but the insight corresponded to what he was trying to do with the architecture: create settings in which these relationships and their meanings (according to him—as in the *Le poème de l'angle droit*) became evident (the emblematic approach makes these situations easier to reconcile with the generally ornamental order, as below). The *synthese des arts* text in volume six is important, to which the *porte molitor* exhibition proposal also belongs; these and Ronchamp are all happening at the same time, and that building and Chandigarh are the most explicit iconographically in his oeuvre. Otherwise, he is quite aniconic, and it was not until well after his death that people began to wake up to what he was doing. The iconographic work was explicit in Ronchamp and Chandigarh and otherwise conveyed in photos and in his paintings/graphic work. What is constant is the reciprocity of a structured spatial field and situational requirements—a basis for all metaphoric or thematic development. Email to the author, 29 August 2013.

98 Rowe, Colin, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa: Palladio and Le Corbusier Compared", *The Architectural Review*, March 1947 (published also in Rowe, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*).

99 Carl, Peter, "Architecture and Time: A Prolegomena", *AA Files* 22, 1991, p 50.

100 Carl, "Architecture and Time", p 49.

Site-specific artworks by Donald Judd at Marfa, Texas showing their integration into interiors and landscapes.



101 Carl, "Architecture and Time", p 48.

102 Carl, Peter, "Ornament and Time: A Prolegomena", *AA Files* 23, 1992, p 50.

103 See pp 15–16 of the *Le poème de l'angle droit* by Le Corbusier, where he moves from his head in a stone to a stone inscribed with the golden ratio geometry to the "dance" of the earth, moon, sun, to the annual day-night cycles—solstice/equinox, in which golden-section geometry is cast as mediation between opposites embodied materially.

104 Paraphrased from an email discussion with the author, 29 August 2013.

105 McGuirk, Justin, "The Matter of Time", *ICON*, no 26, August 2005.

106 McGuirk, "The Matter of Time": "It is nearly 40 years since Serra started leaning steel slabs against each other like playing cards. Far from the very basic power of those early works, The Matter of Time has a fluency, you might even say a facility. Serra has mastered his material, and as far as he is concerned materials give form. That is why the building rankles him. Standing in the middle of the spiral piece, he looks up at the arcing horizon and the way it frames Gehry's elaborate ceiling. 'Is that real?' he asks, pointing at the ceiling. 'As architecture it's junk.' He is confident; he knows that his works are doing exactly what they appear to be doing, whereas the building is mostly hollow and ornamental—in short, that the building is bluffing. Serra describes the piece at the end of the hall as the installation's ballast, and in a way the whole ensemble is the building's ballast. The museum needed content, and now it has it. Serra looks up again. 'I don't think of my piece as a container for the superfluousness of the architecture,' he says. 'It ain't a trash can.'" Throughout his career, Gehry has produced objects which might be called "Design Art". Rather predictably, he thinks "the lines are kind of blurry" between sculpture and architecture (interview with Deborah McLeod, *Gagosian Quarterly*, September–October 2016, pp 99–100).

107 Judd, Donald, "Specific Objects", *Complete Writings 1959–1975*, Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Press, 2005, p 181.

108 See Davidovici, Irina, "Marfa, Texas: Art and Exile", *Scroope: Cambridge Architecture Journal*, no 15, 2003.

109 Judd, Donald, "Nie Wieder Krieg", *Donald Judd: Architecture*, Peter Noever ed, Berlin: Cantz Verlag, 2003.

110 Judd, "Nie Wieder Krieg".

cone he called "visual acoustics"). Secondly this is given dimensional significance through correlation with a putative human standard (reinterpreting *Vitruvian* man via a London bobby). Thirdly, a geometric armature contains within it the potential for figuration according to standard ornamental procedures (his buildings are effectively enlarged portions of ornament) and as deployed in his paintings (for which the Cubist 2D/3D fluctuation is essential). The basic role of ornament is to mediate between the primordial natural conditions and human history. Finally, certain geometric armatures contain "arguments" that can be deployed architecturally to locate key settings, walls, columns, *promenades architecturales* etc—for example the double square with slipped third square (mediation of the *coincidentia oppositorum*) that constructs the *Modulor* and underlay the plan of the chapel at Ronchamp.[104]

Le Corbusier's insistence upon the power of art to transform architecture was a valid point for Serra to make, even if it is somewhat weakened by Serra's insistence upon the "uselessness" of art, and his refusal to accept the orientation that "ornamentation" provides both art and architecture.

Sculpture versus Architecture:
Serra and Judd on Eisenman and Gehry

Writing in 2005, Justin McGuirk suggested that: "If Gehry shows us how to do architecture as sculpture, then Serra has returned the favour by showing us sculpture as building."[105] However, in an interview with McGuirk Serra is contemptuous of Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao, stating, "As architecture, it's junk."[106]

A passionate line of criticism of modern architecture came directly from sculptors, who saw architects' attempts to usurp their discipline as specious and immoral. Donald Judd developed from philosopher to art critic to artist, and then towards architecture and finally polemic. Judd's 1964 essay "Specific Objects" rails against Yves Klein's blue-daubed female bodies, fabricating against this spectacle a case for considering perception itself to be the subject of modern art.[107] When challenged by the "art world" to justify himself, Judd produced a series of cubic sculptures that draw attention to the specific tectonic character of each object—in other words, exposing to public scrutiny the fallacy that objects lack specificity. Judd cites the influence of *The Phenomenology of Perception* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty upon his thinking and art, and although "Specific Objects" work well as experiential sculptures and as a provocative essay, the repetition of this approach at Marfa in Texas revealed the limits of an object-based approach to place making.[108]

Arguably, Judd's most insightful contribution to architectural criticism is his essay "Nie Wieder Krieg" written just before the First Gulf War in 1991 and his death three years later.[109] Discussing the effects of "the war machine" upon culture generally, he sees American foreign policy as imperial and colonial, as a way of "opening up markets" for exploitation. American architects are complicit in this process of invasion, he declared, as the destruction of cities creates perfect opportunities for international modern architecture. Judd is belligerently damning of those architects who present their work as art, and in fact of the whole economy of the art world. Long before Richard Serra's memorable phrase "the wafer thin junk culture of the Guggenheim", Judd decries the "horrifying design of Frank Gehry's museum of design for Vitra. These buildings make a joke of art, of culture, of the community, and of the whole society", he declares. Judd goes on to suggest, however, that the design is a symptom of a general problem:

> The consequence of a fake economy, which is a war economy, is a fake society. One consequence of this is fake art and architecture.... The art museum becomes exquisitely pointless, a fake for fakes, a double fake, the inner sanctum of a fake society.[110]

Such damning dismissal of the work of this architect and of a whole culture is touched with righteous indignation and a sort of despair (and is not dissimilar to the critique of Henri Lefebvre, which we will look at in some detail below). Beyond aesthetic or personal moral distaste for the complicit nature of architecture, what is at stake in Judd's despair? I believe that this

despair derives from what he sees as the powerlessness of architects and artists, and that the search for autonomy in "specific objects", or the anonymity of "collisive fields", are two sides of the same problem—the problem of imaginative agency in "creative" work today. This is ultimately not an ontological problem—although we each have to try to resolve our feelings of powerlessness in the face of the world—but an ethical problem, a problem of civic culture generally.

It was somewhat naïve of Serra and Judd (and Heizer and Smithson), to say the least, to suggest that this condition might be challenged by an authentic encounter with "place" mediated by artworks. Yet this is exactly what they advocated in experience of their large, external sculptures. This work did not resolve the problem of "our persistent inability to make decent cities", of course—and the prevalence of what James Wines called "the turd in the piazza" makes one wonder if sculptures are not supposed to stand in not only for "public art" but also for "public life" itself.[111] The encounter of architecture with sculpture in the 1970s and 1980s—and the confrontations between architects and sculptors—generated some friction, though, and opened up the possibility of "site-specific architecture", if only as a throwaway comment in a conversation.

Serra's most effective, and critical, attack upon architecture is informed by Land art. Eisenman continues to use phrases that he had presumably ingested from neo-classical misreadings of Vitruvius via Rowe, viz "it seems that you ultimately reject this idea of dis-equilibrium in your work and that you reject it because it implies formalist notions of balance, symmetry, and, finally, composition"; and "is there a notion of scale specificity that is not anthropomorphic, not related to man, but related to the intrinsic being of sculpture?"[112] In contrast, Serra rejects formalist descriptions of sculpture, and instead replies specifically: "I use gravity as a building principle. I am not particularly interested in dis-equilibrium"; "I don't think it's related to the intrinsic being of sculpture. I think that it's related to site and context."[113] In particular, Serra is keen to challenge architecture through sculpture, and he uses the exemplar sculpture offers of both scale and context to attack both the theory and practice of formalism generally:

> You can't build a work in one context, indiscriminately place it in another, and expect the scale relation to remain. Scale is dependent on context. Portable objects moved from one place to another most often fail for this reason. Henry Moore's work is the most glaring example of this site-adjusted folly. An iron deer on the proverbial front lawn has more contextual significance. Architects suffer from the same studio syndrome. They work out of their offices, terrace the landscape, and place their buildings into a carved site. As a result, the studio-designed then site adjusted buildings look like blown-up cardboard models.[114]

Sculpture challenges architecture as a mode of *praxis*, Serra suggests, by being "site-specific". It also challenges what architects call "context", and "contextualist architects" generally (Eisenman claims that Serra criticises "specifically Robert Venturi"—in fact he doesn't mention Venturi):

> For "contextualists" to build site-specific means to analyse the context and the content of an indigenous cultural situation, then to conclude that what's needed is to maintain the status quo. That's how they seek meaning. They give a great deal of priority to the person who laid down the first rock as well as the last person who put up a signboard.[115]

Eisenman's response to this accusation is to accept it and to propose that "there could be site-specific architecture that is critical, that attempts something other than an affirmation that everything pre-existing on the site is good". He then suggests that "Piranesi's recreations and Palladio's redrawings were inventions and not so much concerned with what had actually been on a site". In doing so, he immediately distances himself from the problems of "critical site-specific architecture" in favour of fictional and formalistic abstractions of architectural language. Eisenman seems to have instigated the interview with Serra because he felt genuine "interest" in his work. However, he cannot cope with the challenge that Serra makes to formalism.

Furniture design and architecture by Donald Judd at Marfa, Texas.

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe: The Eisenman-Serra Collaboration at Berlin and Rachel Whiteread's Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial at Vienna

Superficially, Serra and Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial is heavily indebted, at least formally, to Serra's early work, in particular *Shift*, 1970–1972.[116] However, Shift is a situational and a geometric construction not a formal one. Serra describes it very precisely as a way in which "looking back across the valley, images and thoughts are remembered which were initiated by the consciousness of having experienced them". Eisenman and Serra's response to the broken nature of Berlin, in Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, refers

111 Wines, James, *De-Architecture*, New York: Rizzoli International, 1987.

112 Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*.

113 Serra, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, p 145.

114 Serra, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, pp 145–146. Serra continues however to declare that "There are exceptions: the work of Le Corbusier, Wright, Kahn, Gehry…". Presumably, at this point Gehry was still friendly with the Venice Beach crowd that included Robert Irwin, et al. For a description of this scene see Weschler, Lawrence, *Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

115 Serra, *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, p 147.

116 Serra left the project unexpectedly in 1998 before a winner was announced. See Andrews, Edmund L, "Serra Quits Berlin's Holocaust Memorial Project", *The New York Times* (online), 4 June 1998.

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, by Peter Eisenman (and Richard Serra), 2005, showing a plaque explaining what visitors cannot do there, and people ignoring this nonetheless.

117 See von Buttlar, Adrian, *Neues Museum Berlin: Architectural Guide*, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 2010, in which he describes how close Frank Gehry came to winning the competition to refurbish the museum, with a scheme that certain members of the jury thought might replicate the "commercial success" of the Bilbao Guggenheim. Gehry's proposals contained elements with formal similarities to his projects in Spain and elsewhere, which are often considered to possess rhythm. My aim is to situate this quality as an aspect of spatiality, not as a description of shapes.

118 Adorno, Theodor, "Cultural Criticism and Society", 1951: "*Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frißt auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreibe."*

us to its historical situation via disorientation, ie as one walks through it one experiences fear, as one's companions temporarily disappear.

Despite its formal abstraction, the work is illustrative of a predetermined position, an emotional response to a somewhat hokey metaphor ("Berlin is broken") and an emotionally manipulative experience ("your loved ones disappear"). Serra dropped out of the collaboration before winning the competition, presumably before the pragmatic aspects of the project became so unbearably demanding, leaving Eisenman to try to incorporate disabled entrances into a project that is at once a monument and also a small museum. The functional architectural elements struggle to continue the formal language of the "stelai" columns, but fail to reconcile the site-specific aspects of the design within a convincing architectural setting. There is no rhythmical communication between the practical and the poetic aspects of the project, and one is left wondering if this is a failure of design, or whether it fails as art, or in fact, it simply fails as both.

This is in stark contrast to the immediate context of *Unter den Linden*, *Brandenburger Tor* and *Tiergarten*. Boulevard , city gate and park manage to both define and allude to a typical and an actual city. Whilst Eisenman's memorial structure has a powerfully morbid presence, it fails to offer the freedom of the neighbouring park, or of a typical civic square. In fact, security guards stop spontaneous games and the typical activities that constitute the public life of an urban space.

The project seems to be a metaphor, but its meaning is confusing; are the "stelai" tombs or people? Is the site a representation of a graveyard, or sacred ground? Or a representation of a city? It is impossible to participate with the structure, nor to make any other reading of the artwork than a literal one (stelai = tombs).

In contrast, the reconstructed colonnade that winds around David Chipperfield's imaginative reconstruction of the Neues Museum recovers the rhythm of central Berlin, albeit interrupted and scarred by evidence of the city's ignoble past.[117] Part of the problem that Eisenman's project poses is the impossibility of forgetting, in this context, Theodor Adorno's statement—usually mistranslated—that there should be "no poetry after Auschwitz".[118] Eisenman's memorial has a peculiar sort of haunting quality, but it is neither particularly communicative nor a mundane city square; it neither offers a "time out of time" experience, like a graveyard or a festive space, nor is it capable of transformation, like most other parts of most cities.

Arguably, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum had already provided for Berlin spaces both within and around its galleries that act as series of powerful memorials of absences—and it achieved this in making a critique of the Humanist conventions of museum culture and of neo-classical architecture without claiming to be sculpture. Crucially, it acts as a critique of semiotic and visual formalism and achieves this in spatial terms.

In contrast, Rachel Whiteread's Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial, opened in Vienna in 2000, succeeds as a public sculpture and as part of a city for a number of reasons. Firstly, the solid concrete block is situated in a city space that was traditionally the centre of Jewish life in the city, and which is used everyday as a route, and so one's encounter with it—and its power—is not dependent upon its disconnection from city life. Secondly, since the memorial sits in front of, and tacitly defines the forecourt of, the Viennese Jewish Museum (whose cafe acts also as an informal community centre); it is part of the everyday experience of Jewish and non-Jewish life

Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial, Vienna, by Rachel Whiteread, 2000.

119 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, *Nathan the Wise: A dramatic poem in five acts*, Leo Markun trans and ed, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius Co, 1926. See also his essay of 1766, *Laocoon: An essay upon the limits of painting and poetry: With remarks illustrative of various points in the history of ancient art*, Ellen Frothingham trans, Boston: Little Brown, 1904. In this essay Lessing criticises the trend to accept Horace's *ut pictura poesis* (as painting, so poetry) as definitive also for literature: "In other words, he objected to trying to write poetry using the same devices as one would in painting. Instead, poetry and painting each has its character (the former is extended in time; the latter is extended in space). This is related to Lessing's turn from French classicism to Aristotelian *mimesis*." "Gotthold Ephraim Lessing", *Wikipedia*, accessed 7 October 2014.

120 Serra, Richard,"Shift", *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, pp 11–12.

121 Serra, Richard,"Shift", *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews*, p 13. It is debatable whether he actually meant to praise Copernicus!

122 Serra seems to have been referring to Thomas Kuhn's *The Copernican Revolution*, originally published by Harvard in 1957, which introduced the phrase "paradigm shift".

123 Smithson, Robert, "The Topography of the Mind", *Robert Smithson: The Complete Writings*, Jack Flam ed, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1979.

in Vienna. Thirdly, the intellectual, material and figurative content of the artwork brilliantly conveys both the scale of a single room, and represents the absence of a multitude. It also operates as a poetic image that resonates with Jewish cultural and religious metaphors—a room of books, an impenetrable ark, the world petrified in unreadable and unspeakable words.

Eisenman attempts in his memorial to represent the terrible nature of loss, the loss of a multitude of human figures, reified as stones, and, arguably, objectified as guilt. It is as if Germans and Germany can never be forgiven, can never recover, even if the city of Berlin belies this. Whiteread's memorial resonates because it is a fragment of what is lost, leaving visitors' imaginations to occupy the silence—a typical room that has been suddenly brought forward from the domestic into the civic realm. The major achievement of the sculpture resides in the way that the civic depth of the site is revealed. The simultaneous presence and absence of human voices resides in a petrified image of devastated Jewish *Mittel European* culture—a memento mori that succeeds through the figurative character and scale of a room. One's hands are drawn to touch the books, and the implacable withdrawn resistance of the concrete somehow manages to evoke its opposite, burnt books, burning hands. This mimetic inversion occurs on the "outside" of a room that one cannot enter, whose interior is paradoxically suddenly all around you in the city. The Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial faces a nineteenth-century bronze statue of the playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, which is seated on a granite plinth approximately the same height as the Holocaust Memorial. Lessing's attempts to reveal the equality of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in his play *Nathan the Wise*, 1779, led to his commemoration in Judenplatz, and his continued rebuke to chauvinism helps to situate Whiteread's work in an urban and cultural continuum.[119] The situation of Jewish culture in Berlin and Vienna is of course very different, but the condition of urban depth is typical; in the former it is occluded by the artwork, in the latter, revealed.

Shift by Richard Serra

In contrast to his collaboration with Eisenman in Berlin, Serra insists plausibly that *Shift* was made as a discovery:

> We discovered that two people walking the distance of the field opposite one another, attempting to keep each other in view despite the curvature of the land, would mutually determine a topographical definition of the space. The boundary of the work became the maximum distance two people could occupy and still keep each other in view. The horizon of the work was established by the possibility of maintaining this viewpoint... a dialectic between one's perception of the place in totality and one's relation to the field as walked. The result is a way of measuring oneself against the indeterminacy of the land.[120]

In contrast to what Serra calls "the machinery of Renaissance space" (by which he means perspective I presume) that "depends on measurements remaining fixed and immutable, these steps relate to a continually shifting horizon, and as measurements they are totally transitive... the line, as a visual element, per step, becomes a transitive verb". In other words, in contrast to a picturesque or formalist approach to sculpture and to spatiality generally—and revealing also their causal link—*Shift* makes a case for a phenomenological approach to sculptural spatiality.

Due to the role memory plays in one's experience of place, "the work does not concern itself with centering", Serra concludes. Rather, whilst there are two vaguely symmetrical forms created by the walls, your experience of them as you walk on them is not of things; instead, "this alignment contracts the intervals of space—not as drawing (or linear configuration) but as volume (as space contained)". As a result of participation in the artwork, which is a way of participating with the site (hence "site-specific" artwork), "the expanse of the work allows one to perceive and locate a multiplicity of centres". He concludes that the work "shifts" perception from objects to the spaces described by figures walking on them, and so its name refers to how it is perceived cognitively, not what it looks like metaphorically. Cognition is involved, however; not simply visual perception, but also a geometric experience of something described by one's involvement with the site, and with someone else there:

> Similar elevations—elevations equal in height—in an open field, on a flat floor, shift both horizontally and vertically in relation to one's locomotion. Because of this, the centre, or the question of centering, is dislocated from the physical centre of the work and found in a moving centre. Hats off Galileo.[121]

As well as a critique of perspectival space, Serra reveals in the last line of his description of the artwork—itself a critical part of one's experience of it—what can only be described as literally a cosmic dimension to *Shift*. One's perception of it echoes the elliptical orbit of planets.

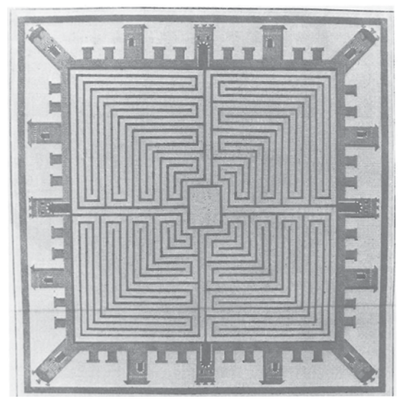
Not only did Copernicus (Serra mistakes him for Galileo) "shift" the centre of the cosmos from the Earth to the Sun, he also set in motion a new mental image of the place of mankind on Earth in relation to tradition, the Church etc.[122] Perception was shown to be a construction that could alter with knowledge, and through action. Serra's friend Robert Smithson refers to this as "the topography of the mind" whereby mental processes occur like tectonic shifts, rock falls etc.[123] Land art reproduces the processes of the mind, not by imitating the appearance of mental topography as a visual metaphor, but by offering

Left and top right: Richard Serra, *Shift*, 1970, King City, Ontario.

Bottom right: sketch, Patrick Lynch.

Left: Disabled entrance with cleaner's equipment at Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin by Peter Eisenman (and Richard Serra), 2005.

Right: Roman floor mosaic of the Late Republic showing fortified labyrinth, from *The Idea of a Town* by Joseph Rykwert.



experiences in which perception shifts, making one aware of the gravity of thought and its contingency dependent upon situations.

Rhythm and the Recuperation of Civic Ground

Rhythm is of course ubiquitous—it is present in all aspects of life. Whilst it is possible to say that the Jewish memorial in Berlin is rhythmic in the sense that there is a formally rhythmic composition of blocks, it is cut off from the actual rhythms of life of the city—its institutions and everyday life—its civic depth. What one might call the rhythms of city life include the possibility for spontaneity and also for highly structured representation.

Despite his attempts to elide architecture with sculpture, Eisenman's memorial in Berlin isn't a gallery piece, it's part of the city. One can't help but think that the need for a private police force to control the space—to have to constantly tell children and teenagers off for walking on the blocks—reveals that something is fundamentally lacking in the project; what is lacking is any civic imagination and anticipation of how the work of art might work in its site as an articulate example of civic ground.[124] Eisenman's gridded blocks in Berlin are a visually arresting example of repetition standing in for a sort of civic rhythm—if only as a cliché for order—and yet one cannot help but notice the disjunctions between the monument and the life of the city, manifest also in the unwanted and slightly embarrassing presence of cleaners' equipment and the unresolved urban presence of disabled entrances etc. One of the ironies of Eisenman's "Formalist" design method—in contrast to the rhythmic character of civic architecture—is that it seemingly inevitably results in inarticulate "formlessness". In other words, rhythmic spatiality is not simply picturesque asymmetry, but an existential aspect of our encounter with reality, mediated by architecture and artworks.

In *Shift*, Serra succeeds in revealing that the "grounds of being" are at once bodily and imaginative. Despite being in a field in the middle of the countryside, it is communicative in the sense that it throws the participant beyond themselves into the world. In experiential and geometric terms, its centre is displaced.[125] In his book *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*, David Leatherbarrow describes what he calls "aliocentric architecture":

> Always a matter of degree, the individuality of a building, like that of a person, is measured by its participation in shared conditions. With this observation in mind, one can also say that the disintegration of urban order is the precondition for the building's objectlike independence. More positively, the dependence assumed in both sharing and privation suggests that the building is codetermined by conditions that are not of its own making. This means that the definition of a location involves a corresponding act of dislocation, a centering of the building outside itself. Orientation is nothing other than the acknowledgement of this *ecstasis* or *allocentricity*.[126]

I'd like to suggest that "*ecstasis*" is an aspect of the civic potential of imagination, experienced as spatial rhythm. Rhythm establishes the possibility of communicative reference between site, architecture and sculpture as an innate and latent aspect of the encounter between the imagination and the world.[127] My aim in this book is to offer a critical framework to discuss the potential for the renewal of civic ground—what might be called, hubristically, "the Rebirth of Public Man"—and the grounds thereon for the renewal of a practical poetics of civic architecture.[128]What follows is a description of the central role that rhythmic spatiality plays in urban architecture, concluding with the specific example of Victoria Street in London's Westminster; and in particular, my collaborative efforts with artists and landscape architects to recover the tradition of civic ground there.

124 This is a failure of imagination I suggest, and arguably derives from an obsession with formal patterns over actions, ie, is a direct result, I would argue, of Eisenman's formalistic theoretical position, which arguably exaggerates and distorts Rowe's own work.

125 *Shift* is located in King City, Ontario, Canada about 50 kilometres north of Toronto. The work was commissioned in 1970 by art collector Roger Davidson and installed on his family property.

126 Leatherbarrow, David, *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009, p 11.

127 Heidegger was influenced a great deal by the concept of *Umwelt* developed by Jakob von Uexküll, Tim Ingold claims in "Point, Line, Counterpoint: From Environment to Fluid Space", *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, London: Routledge, 2011, p 81. For von Uexküll "every creature is equivalent to a melody in counterpoint", and it seems that Gilles Deleuze may have also been aware of this metaphor when he claimed that to improvise is "to join with the world or meld with it. One ventures home on the thread of a tune." (Cited by Ingold, "Point, Line, Counterpoint", p 84). In contrast, my thesis is that it is the rhythm of situations that structures one's movement each day, and that architecture supports, enables and re-presents the rhythmic character of situations in its physiognomy and spatial order.

128 See Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*.