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100 Observation/Construction

Observation and construction exist in simultaneity. A reality of certain tenure is built in seeing; it is constituted within the inseparable, cyclical coupling of the world with its subject, what it sees and what the thing it sees does. This reality is always defined in passing and can be characterized as an incomplete totality. It is not foolish to argue that the role of the heroic modern architect was to use intention and pen to the end of completing this imperfect whole.

Intention, a product of the drive to shift the world to a position where the maker is a stake-holder must always be contended with as it conditions any act of observation / construction. Gaining ground on ones own drive implies to undo it to the extent by which it can be dominated and ridden to fame and glory. This undoing or decomposition is a form of disciplined training, ultimately geared toward honing a world view and its by-products, such as architecture, to an end where its subject is invested in its fate as one with the world and its maker, namely, himself.

*"Seeing everything in relationship"*¹, as Moholy-Nagy defines in his primer for a redefined Bauhaus, and by extension all the tools we devise to reconstruct the world in the undoing of the observer such as drawing - is part of the toolset of dismantling that one must be trained in, in order to steer and belong to (or own) the world.

Drawing is an open ended tool with the simultaneous ability to translate drive into intention into reality into drive, and the subject that plays with it into a monstrous other, where one reality is constructed as another is sacrificed and an author is, again and again, self-made and validated. Drawing, as an agent for

architecture is another primer of communication, discovery and transformation that *"falls in passing"* ².

200 Montage/Disjunction

If we accept that the location of the subject of drawing is always in motion, we must pay attention to the positions (and techniques) that have been assembled to contend with its uncertainty. The modern era, as the project of humanist synthesis that gelled in the mid-seventeenth and arguably went into comma in the twentieth, drove its agenda towards the project of unifying the previously identified incomplete whole. A culture of objectivity ensued, where tools attempted to become ideal bridges between project and world.

However, it is possible to say that some agitators rode this euphoria of unification to the end of intensifying what was inherently impossible to unify. Sergei Eisenstein developed a film language based on a gap in the process of translating wholesome parts into another controlled yet incomplete totality. In montage, Eisenstein contended, one had to juxtapose neutral images - a shot as *"a molecule of the montage"* ³, using the cut, to throw the story forward by virtue of the conflict they generate when spliced.

Bernard Tschumi, years later, contended that this very gap was the place where architecture defined itself, stating that the crisis in meaning was never a crisis but instead unbound dark fertility. He founded his position by sentencing that the *"long-standing modern practice, which accentuates synthesis, harmony, the composition of elements and the seamless coincidence of potentially disparate parts, becomes estranged from its external culture, from contemporary cultural conditions."*⁴

In his radical proposition that the gap in meaning left behind by the modern era must be proactively ridden, he then stated that *"the concept of disjunction is incompatible with a static, autonomous, structural view of architecture. But it is not anti-autonomy or anti-structure; it simply implies constant, mechanical operations that systematically produce dissociation in space and time, where an*

*architectural element only functions by colliding with a programmatic element, with the movement of bodies..."*⁵

In Manhattan Transcripts, Tschumi uses the open ended disposition of drawing to weave a spatio-temporal storyboard where architecture and the disparate events that coexist with it. This leverages that dark gap where a newfound architectural narrative, with all its iterations, comes to light.

300 Notes

1. See Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion, page 63.

"The training is directed towards imagination, fantasy and inventiveness, a basic conditioning to the ever-changing industrial scene, to the technology-in-flux. This works "forward" as well as "backward": that is concerning future developments or old-fashioned tasks.

The last step in this technique is the emphasis on integration through a conscious search for relationships - artistic, scientific, technical, as well as social. The intuitive working mechanics of the genius gives a clue to this process. The unique ability of the genius can be approximated by everyone if only its essential feature be apprehended: the flash-like act of connecting elements not obviously belonging together. Their constructive relationships, unnoticed before, produce the new result.

If the same methodology were used generally in all fields we would have the key to our age - seeing everything in relationship."

2. See Joan Ockman, The Pragmatist Imagination, page 27.

"What really exists is not things but things in the making. Once made, they are dead, and an infinite number of alternative conceptual decompositions can be used in defining them. But put yourself in the making by a stroke of intuitive sympathy with the thing, and the whole range of possible decompositions coming at once in your possession, you are no longer troubled with the question which of them is the more absolutely true. Reality falls in passing into conceptual analysis; it mounts in living its own undivided life - it buds and burgeons, changes and creates."

(cf William James in "Bergson and his Critique of Intellectualism". In A Pluralistic Universe)

3. See Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form, page 53.

"The shot is by no means an element of montage. The shot is a montage cell or molecule."

(cf "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form").

4. See Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, page 208.

5. See Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, pages 212 and 213.