Résumés / Abstracts

Deborah Ascher Barnstone: "Text & Architecture at the Behnisch Bundeshaus"

In the hands of Guenter Behnisch and his firm, Behnisch & Partner, the Bonn Bundeshaus became an essay in the potential relationships between architecture and text. Designed using formal, material and spatial transparency to reflect the new transparency in postwar West German government and society, the Bundeshaus also uses text in a multitude of ways to extend the symbolic message inherent in the building's form, material and space. Text is inscribed on glass facades, suspended from ceilings, supported on conventional signs, and hung from furniture. The text therefore becomes a part of the architecture as much as it is inscribed upon it, acting both as space-making element and information giving element. The types of text used are words and phrases from conventional signage, excerpts from the German Constitution, the Basic Law, and poems related to life in West Germany since 1945. The text therefore goes far beyond typical signage to make a commentary on the building's function in German democracy and offer a potential critique of the relationship between building and government. Here, text is architecture and architecture is text.

Laurence Bélingard: "Religious Drama, Theatrical Architecture and the Battle for Power in Late Medieval England"

From the plain and didactic liturgical drama of the twelfth century to the elaborate theatrical productions of the sixteenth century, the birth and early development of theatre as a literary genre has entailed a displacement of the performing context that finally resulted in the creation of theatres as architectural units. The numinous archi-

tecture of the church or cathedral, the free open space of the street, and finally build-ings dedicated exclusively to the art of comedy have successively provided various types of performance with settings largely depending on and thus representing institu-tions or pressure groups. The actors' quest for a home reflects the question of the place of theatre in society—and the place of man in the universe. The solutions left by the authorities reflect their desire to keep a potentially subversive profession under control. In the process of settlement, theatre lost some of its freedom. Playwrights were limited to a single architectural space that also served as scenery, but on the other hand, these physical constraints are also largely responsible for the dynamism of theatrical creation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This paper focuses on a process that began in the Middle Ages and led to the birth of indoor and open-air theatres as architectural entities in sixteenth-century England. The influence of reli-gious and secular authorities on the creation of these spaces, and the consequential writing constraints as stage shows moved from one place to the other, will be the main issues of this study.

Donna L. Cohen: "The Roofed Letters: Sukkah, Text as Architecture"

This paper was developed for Interfaces after Donna Cohen led two design studios which focused on the design and construction of the sukkah. As the complex and seem-ingly contradictory regulations for the sukkah were studied, it became clear that the festival structure itself is an embodiment of sacred text. To dwell in the Sukkah is to dwell within, and be protected by, the space of the word and image of G-d. The sukkah is at once an intentionally fragile hut which sways in the wind, and an immeasurably strong spatial embodiment of text.

Nathaniel Coleman: "Words of Desire: Envisaging Architecture"

If language shapes reality and architecture gives form to settings for the variety and vicissitudes of life, it may be that architecture and words cohabitate in the mind, the one corresponding to the other in an interdependent manner. This paper explores just such a possibility by considering the work of American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) and the buildings and writing of Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck (1918-1999). Architecture depends on language, texts even, to provide access to the vital desire it can give a form. Consequently, a pre-verbal, or pre-linguistic, architecture is a near impossibility. Radical subjectivity notwithstanding, comprehensibility of the constructed environment remains a real possibility so long as its invention and making occurs within a horizon of shared experience graspable by a language capable of giving form to desire—textually as much as architecturally. Interestingly, this assertion is supported by Vitruvius, the ancient Roman architectural theorist, who encouraged contemplation of architecture as inexorably bound to words, and thus texts. Architecture may provide a stage for an unfolding of human reality but that reality is most graspable when language configures thought by making it knowable. It thus seems conceivable that a thoughtful architecture is an architecture that lends itself to description, not so much in technical or formal terms as in social and emotional ones.

Muriel Cunin: "'Look then to be well edified': Mental, Textual, and Architectural (Re)construction in the Renaissance"

The Renaissance is marked by a constant tension between destruction and death on the one hand and (re)construction and edification on the other. The link between this tension and architecture can be literal or metaphorical. Indeed, Time plays an essential but ambivalent role in the architectural process—it is both destructive and edifying—and this ambivalence is stressed in architectural treatises (Leon Battista Alberti's De re aedificatoria) as well as in literary works (Francesco Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili). The dialectical relationship between text and monument

is further reinforced by the Renaissance passion for archaeology: the study of ruins leads to tentative mental and textual reconstruction that can take the form of a treaty (Alberti's Descriptio urbis Romae, Poggio Bracciolini's Ruinarum urbis Romae descriptio) or of a literary work (Francesco Colonna, Edmund Spenser's Ruines of Time and Ruines of Rome). Memory therefore plays an essential part in the process of reconstruction and edification. It can manifest itself through various media, all of which are linked with architecture so that (re)construction can be mental (ars memoriae), literal (funeral monuments) or literary (poetic monuments, epitaphs, title-pages).

Ralph Deconink: "At the Threshold of the Book-as-Monument: The Architectural Imagery of the Frontispiece in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century"

The frontispiece of a book can be said to reveal its "être-figure" to borrow an expression of Yves Delègue. The book-as-temple, the book-as-tomb, the book-as-garden, the book-as-gallery—from the outset the reader is invited to carry out a sort of "composition of place," to create a mental representation which will also function as a mnemonic device, a mental locus to store the verbal and graphic images found in the book. Taking examples from 17th century literature, this paper aims to show how this architectural imaginary of the book evolved between the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and more particularly how these changes influenced the relationship between visibility and legibility.

Patricio del Real: "Architecture's Poetic Service: Amereida and Building a Space for Poetry"

The spirit of the machine, coupled with the dominance of science, became the benchmark of a new aesthetic of the modern, and served as the frame for all its definitions.

The School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Valparaiso in Chile (founded in 1954), rejects the "mechanical sense" as the source of modernity and instead inherits Mallarmé's demand that the initiative of modernity "be given only to the word." The school's epistemological ground is poetic discourse. They present this understanding through a text called amereida which forwards a tectonics of language, a spatialization of poetry, that guides the building activities of the school, manifesting the word in space. The Valparaiso group sees language, not the mechanical event, as the foundation of technology, for they understand language to be the first technology. By looking at modernity through language, they distance themselves from the main architectural sources of the modern movement and instead place themselves within the core of a modern praxis.

Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé: "Stone rebus and calligrams in the Songe de Poliphile (1546) : the speaking architectures of the perfect language"

Since Antiquity, the relations between literature and architecture have been one of modelisation/modelling. While the writer was considered an architect or a mason, and the text a building, architecture was conceived of as cosa mentale, sharing an intellectual origin with the other artes liberales. This was particularly prominent during the Renaissance when an architect like Alberti derived some of his theoretical principles from rhetoric. When it comes to consider architecture as the primary material of the narrative, especially in the form of architectural descriptions, the relationship proves more problematic: architectural ekphrasis may appear at odds with the poetic fiction in which it is included, and even as a disruptive element in the progression of the narrative. The Songe de Poliphile or Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, first published in 1499 by Aldus and translated into French in 1546 by Jean Martin, is a case in point. It is nearly all made of descriptions of ruins, statues, monumental fountains, graves, and palaces. 169 woodcuts accompanied the Italian version and were even more numerous in the French translation. The text relates the amorous initiation quest of Poliphile, in search of his beloved Polia. While dreaming, Poliphile engages on a journey, encoun-

tering and depicting Ancient architectures, ornamented with enigmatic rebus, hiero-glyphs, symbols and inscriptions in Greek and Latin that the hero must decipher in order to go on his quest. While the woodcuts represent the rebus and inscriptions, the text is arranged in calligrams around theses images. The narrative is thus composed of an interweaving of text and image which embodies the speaking architectures of the quest. The Songe transforms the architectures of stone into words and arranges the text like an image.

Robert Mankin: "Fictional Knowledge: Libraries in Gibbon's Decline and Fall"

Architecture represents an important idiom in Edward Gibbon's conception of histori-cal narrative. After alluding to the range of his references to architecture in The De-cline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788), this study focuses on two particular structures, the library and the temple, in Gibbon's monumental work. His sense that architecture can be a spiritual form of artistic and mechanical endeavour, and at the same time that it is subject, in ways that the historian cannot overlook, to destruction, are viewed as forming a casuistry central to the historian's task.

Serge Paul: "Robert Smithson and Apocalyptic Architecture"

Throughout his career Robert Smithson (1938-1973) explored two opposite architec-tural directions, staging in turn absolute order and absolute chaos. Commentators ascribe this tendency to a desire to transcend the New Jersey vernacular of his child-hood, but few have recognized the signs of an apocalyptic mind. His "earthworks" conjure up biblical deserts and cataclysms, whereas his early proto-minimal sculp-tures or "new monuments" call to mind the crystalline architecture of the New Jeru-salem. Some of his wordworks, drawings, and collages also illustrate such disparate architectonic visions. The artist went through so many stylistic changes in the sixties,

skipping from figuration to minimal sculpture in 1963, and finally to earth art after 1967, that one hardly finds any overall consistency. These pages are an attempt to bring out a common denominator by reassessing Smithson's architectural projects and fantasies in the light of his cultural, essentially millenarian influences.

Virginia Raguin: "Architecture as Frame for Narrative in Stained Glass"

The Renaissance system of artificial perspective places special emphasis on the mediation between realms on either side of the picture plane. A study of five works in stained glass reveals how the projected reality of the architectural perspective was a vital part of the narrative. A panel of Tamar crying and consoled by Absalom, circle of Bernard van Orley, ca. 1535-40, condenses three episodes—one dramatic moment commanding the foreground, and prior and subsequent events in the background. Internal shifts in architectural perspective created additional meanings. In a roundel Birth, Circumcision, and Naming of John the Baptist, attributed to Pieter Cornelisz. Kunst, ca. 1525, perspective lines unite the upper architectural frame but isolate the floor patterns, creating a separation between the three episodes. A roundel attributed to Pieter Cornelisz Kunst about ca. 1525, Mardochai overhearing the Conspiracy of Bagathan and Thares, links the placement of the buildings and characters to the empathy conjured in the spectator. In certain cases, the architecture itself could become dramatis personae. In a panel of Esther presented before Assuerus ca. 1525-30, attributed to Dirik Vellert Aman's greed is demonstrated through the architectural backdrop.

David Samson: "Philip Johnson, *Architecture, and the Rebellion of the Text: 1930-1934*"

The early history of the Modern Movement in America, especially the period 1925-49, is noteworthy for the importance assumed by texts rather than buildings. The architect

Philip Johnson began his very long career in 1930 as a creator of historical and polemical texts and exhibits on modernism for the Museum of Modern Art. Johnson's mentors there encouraged him to use the standard discourse of the art historian, the artist monograph and the synthetic "textbook" overview, to make modernism's case. However, Johnson also thought of modernism in terms of avant-garde agonism, issuing manifestoes of active rebellion against an establishment. As a self-styled leader of a revolutionary cultural youth movement, Johnson wrote on modern architecture as aesthetic rebellion, using a Salon des Refusés trope of art history; but as an art historian, he described modernism as the de-radicalization of the Industrial Revolution into static works of art in closed historical sequences. Pursuing this contradictory course largely as self-therapy, Johnson came to decide that architecture was less catharitic than fascist revolution, the aim of the political career he pursued from 1934 to 1940. By the time Johnson entered architectural practice in the 1940s, the simultaneous rebellion and stability Johnson conveyed in his early texts had helped make the International Style attractive to American architecture culture.