Thesis Submission

Radical Love: Architecture & The Efficacy of the New

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**SITE SELECTION**

**STRATEGY**

**DESIGN**
Prologue

This thesis is an interrogation of the practice of architecture and an inquisition of our current motivations regarding the art of building. It asks - do we build with love? Do we design with love? Are we committed to thinking with love in order to produce architecture of powerful significance, beauty and meaning for the world? These are difficult questions that lead us rapidly toward a very broad philosophical terrain, unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis investigation. What is beauty for example? How do we value one thing over another? What is meaning and how is it a useful instrument for our social order? These ideas will only be touched on in this thesis.

Before I begin I would like to sincerely thank Anna Ryan for her contributions to the formation of this project, her insights, suggestions and focus have been indispensible over the course of research and writing and very much appreciated. I woud equally like to thank Peter Carroll and Merritt Bucholz for their enthusiastic input, creative advice, critical suggestions and encouragement along the road. Special thanks also goes to all of my friends in SAUL and my classmates for their contributions, challenges and wonderful coffee breaks.

A digital copy of this research and work is available on the internet hosted at:

www.cargocollective/benmullen/thesis
“Love is an ontological event… it marks a rapture with what exists and the creation of the new.”

– Hardt & Negri, Artforum, October, 2009
Introduction

I would like to offer a brief introduction to this thesis document. The work that follows takes as its starting point the universal theme of love as it could (or should) relate to architecture, historically and presently. Central to the study is how love contributes an energy toward the formation of human relationships and how these relationships activate wider political and economic agencies in Western society which shape the built environment. These agencies become recognizable social structures: businesses, families, political parties, marriages, interest groups, sports teams etc. These social connections produce the necessary spatial organization that defines our idea of collective inhabitation.

Included in this work is a number of appendices that supplement the main thesis. A glossary of terms encountered from research that I have structured into a personal dictionary, a report on a visit to a Steiner Kindergarten to observe children playing and a micro-essay analyzing a set of models made in conjunction with my research into play, love and construction.

These texts are structured into a contrived ‘archive’, here imagined as an open-ended dossier of research, essays, reports, photographs and other information pertaining to the central theme of love and architecture. The structuring of this work however, is a personal interpretive re-imagining of what the archive is or could possibly become. As such the texts and documents are somewhat asynchronous so that they may be read, interpreted and structured in a variety of orders to encourage the process of cross-referencing between the texts. Further, I suggest that the reader in opening this archive is a participant in giving these ideas a form and becomes an active part of the archive while they engage it.

Ben Mullen

SAUL | 2013
Appendix A: Lexicon

What follows is the beginning of a work that forms part of a personal practice regarding an interest in architecture and semantics\textsuperscript{1} to endure beyond my thesis year. This text is a lexicon of archaic architectural forms and ideas. This list of nouns, adjectives, methodologies and antonyms begins a process of ‘defining’ the current limits of architectural language and attempts to expand our political, social and experiential vocabularies as a singular language for architectural consideration.

This lexicon’s goal is to catalogue for study a temporal splice between archaic terminology (from Ancient Empires of Greece, Rome and India) and contemporary paradigms of thought, form and ‘truth’. The archaic definitions often describe outmoded forms of governance, redundant building typologies and petrified social realities. The modern philosophic definitions describe a more recent intellectual / phenomenological foothold in the world of building and social constructions. Some of the terms conjure powerful historical ideologies which offer an unusual lens with which to review our present condition. In this way the inventory provides a unique position to study how the ideas operate in the context of today, in the now of the contemporary city for contemporary architectural thought and practice.

\textsuperscript{1}semantics (səˈmæntɪks) plural noun [usu. treated as sing.] the branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning. There are a number of branches and subbranches of semantics, including formal semantics, which studies the logical aspects of meaning, such as sense, reference, implication, and logical form, lexical semantics, which studies word meanings and word relations, and conceptual semantics, which studies the cognitive structure of meaning.

The list includes terms proper to Classical architectural discourse but simultaneously presents personal definitions of terms that begin a new localized colloquium in the context of Limerick City, 2013. Although some of the terms are more pertinent to this study that others the items are organized alphabetically with no prejudiced or hierarchy. It is a forum and a theatre of language where the potential future meanings of these words / thoughts supercedes any \textit{a priori} definition. I hope you enjoy...
A3

absence /'æbsəns/ — noun the state of being away from a place or person causing longing or pain… ultimately precedes experience of desire

Absence (2) — and the most beautiful of them shall be

Abide: — Greek word for joint, its plural meant -the membranous or membranous membrane- that first emerged from the chaos: the petrification of the first ray of light at dawn that was transformed with geometric abstraction, into the obelisk with a luminous point at its summit, the ~Benou. Benben

Ablation — the process of the psyche that is directed inward, and is in touch with the subconscious.

Apeiron — unlimited, infinite, indefinite. From a — without and point — end, limit.

Aphrodisiac — the good of sexual desire, seduction and procession

Arhaton — (Plato) "unspeakable," a concept of eternality. Comparative to anax logos — (Aristotle) "without word."

Arvaios — the Greek word for joint, its plural meant genitalia — the archetypal "joint" in western culture – a beautiful union and fusion. The conflation of the sexes. Specifically irregular in relation to the fictitious situation or the joint in 20th Century architectural discourse.

Australopethicus — the oldest evidence of the existence of man are the traces of a walk that took place 3,700,000 years ago, solidified in volcanic mud — Jean Guillaume, La Préhistoire d’un continent à l’autre, Libraire Larousse, Paris, 1989

Bb

Bauen — noun, a building verb, to dwell. To remain, to stay in place. We understand that To build is really to dwell. Building as dwelling untwists into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings. Heidegger’s hut.

Benben — The Benben stone, venerated in the temples of Heliopolis, is a monolith with a conical form and a crested bird at its summit, the ~Benou. The etymological root of the two names is he ou when "light", "brightness", "ascent". The Benben is the first apparition of the sun God –Atum-Ra, after the primordial chaos, it is the stone that first emerged from the chaos: the petrification of the first ray of sun at dawn that was transformed with geometrical abstraction, into the obelisk with a luminous point and later into the pyramid, the very image of the sun that rises and the place of union between heaven and earth.

Benou — Benou is the symbol of immortality and resurrection, it is the blue heron that sits atop the Benben.


Bios politics — the space of human affairs. (Bios thanatos). This discussion originates from Hannah Arendt's excellent 'The Human Condition' tracing the trajectory of work, life, action etc.

Boustrophedon — from left to right and from right to left. Phonetic writing as one continuous line with no spacings. The immediate precedent of the articulation of erotic space — the void. A space between letters to successfully construct words and between words to construct sentences.

Cc

Chória — human space, the underlying substance of human craft, the space of human communication, the substance of our dreams, grasped only through spurious reasoning. — without this we cannot account for reality. like love, chória grounds all relationships and makes knowledge possible. Tectonic transformation: the floor, or dance platform of the Greek theatre.

Choros — orchestral part of the theatre also known as orchestra.

Chorus — a group of dancing and singing men, lieutenants of destiny, always at the centre of the action. Gayness.

chorion — Euclidian: an area enclosed by the perimeter of a specific geometric figure. an ABSTRACT concept – the covenant. God’s love for humanity and all living space used for public meeting and markets in ancient Greece. If form follows function, the agora is the birthplace of democracy. A central gathering place.

Concrete — Lenin criticized infant Communism because it was not concrete enough. "Concrete analysis of concrete conditions..."

Coterie — (introduced by Lytle Shaw, 2006) aligns the term loosely with kinship, the manner in which we project our emotional, religious and social relationships to others. Coterie produces critical subjectivity that destabilizes modern notions of groups and gangs. The theory is complicated by the criticism that it could be read as elite and therefore antidemocratic?

Also: (a certain number of peasants united together to hold land from a lord.) a marginalized audience 

Dd

Daidalos — the archaic architectural artifact that provided Daedalus’ name. It was a wonder producing construction made of well adjusted pieces. Famous deceptive devices such as The Trojan Horse and Paiphas’ cow are daidalon. The construction is always of parts joined together to form a whole, the idea of which later led to the conception of ‘harmony’.

Différence – Déliacre / Derrida / Varnes


Dispositul — the material, social, affective and cognitive mechanisms or apparatuses of the production of subjectivity. The term is Foucault’s.

Désespoir — idea used interchangeably with morphé – form

Ekstasis — ’standing outside oneself,’ based on ek- ‘out’ and histanai ‘to place.’ Refers to an altered consciousness or state of mind, not used to describe objects. Mod. — an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state, originally one involving an experience of mystic self-transcendence.

Ektasis — — an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state, originally one involving an experience of mystic self-transcendence.

Eidos — idea — used interchangeably with morphé – form

Ekstasis — ‘standing outside oneself,’ based on ek- ‘out’ + histanai ‘to place.’ Refers to an altered consciousness or state of mind, not used to describe objects. Mod. — an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state, originally one involving an experience of mystic self-transcendence.

Eleemosunia — compassion, charity.

Epós — the memorized or retained signifier. The concept of epós is in direct contrast with mythos, which then becomes the signifier of the forgotten, the word not kept but lost. Similarly understood as the word or concept that also means nothing. It is an ontological clearing, inaugurating a new world.

Enso — linked with the discovery of the mind. The god enso could block fulfillment and turn the subject into itself. Can describe the awareness of the distance between the mind and the world revealed through desire. The formulation of eros may be a response to an understanding of death the final condition of subjectivity, selfhood. It is an invisible force to the person experiencing, yet remains at the root of our capacity to create and to comprehend the poetic image.

Erotic — the nearness of distance, a high ten-
Beyond.
The oikos proper, the center of domestic activity, Gynaikonitis Gnomon tongue. glóssa Gg

Of entertainment or leisure may possess an element of scribe. The first, harmless suggests that other forms of fun is a surprisingly difficult concept to precisely define, pleasure or leisure. Despite these definitions, quasi-structuralist philosophies.


Fun, harmless, lighthearted amusement, entertainment, pleasure or leisure. Despite these definitions, fun is a surprisingly difficult concept to precisely describe. The first, harmless suggests that other forms of entertainment or leisure may possess an element of threat or danger. Fun could also be associated with triviality.

Harmonia - originally meant ‘joining’, ‘a joint’, ‘agreement’ (or later the union of two or more parts forming a consistent and orderly whole).

Hh

Harmonia originally had nothing to do with mathematics; it was a quality of embodiment (perfect adjustment) with the ultimate aim of love². A concept of the fundamental quality of beauty. An arrangement of parts that reduces an observer and creates a significant space of participation. A quality of embodiment with the ultimate aim of love.

Héjémonikos – a reference to nature; capable of commanding, leader, to lead. Political or social dominance of one party or class over another. This first definition comes from a time when nature and the natural world was the supreme force or power in the world and that by nature power was distributed.

Hel – ‘Hell is other people’. No Exit, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Hors-sexe – ‘outside sex’. Raducu's third thesis that there is no third position to establish a cohesency of sexed subjectivity beyond man and woman. This third position essentially necessitates a singular event between the two disjoint positions: ‘the encounter’, which further suggests the availability of a truth that would transcend the disjunction. Hence truth is a transpositional occurrence.

Humanity – is singular. The support structure of genealogical procedures which are procedures of truth.

Kharism – the ka, the spirit of eternal wandering. The Egyptian concept of the ka symbolized movement, the vital force, and carried with it the memory of the infinite and perilous paleolithic migrations. –The hieroglyph of the ka is composed of two raised arms, indicating how divine energy is transmitted from god to man.

Katharsis – a purification or a reconciliation between the darkness of personal destiny and the light of divine destiny.

Kronos – time

Mania – my sadness. Also the thoughts surrounding Michael Jackson in the late 1980s.

Mimesis – not imitation, the expression of feelings and experiences through movement, musical harmonies and rhythms of speech. An acknowledgement of the body's indeterminate location between being and becoming.

Municipal - ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (originally relating to the internal affairs of a state as distinct from its foreign relations): from Latin municipalis, from municipium ‘free city,’ from municipe, municipal ‘citizen with privileges,’ from munia ‘civic offices’ + capere ‘take.’

Museum – ‘the world is the museum’. Foucault. A perpetual condition of displacement, replacement and redundancy. The death (or immortalization) of the useful. I have lost my keys, they are petrified in the world museum.
Rooms. The second part of the house, the andronitis space. The first part of the house consisted of a peristyles and had very distinct male and female

omphalos – centre, naval, one without blemish, Eve's tummy tum tum, Zeus' eagles reincarnated by James Joyce, further bifurcated by terrible poetry many years later.

Oikos - the basic unit of society in most Greek city-states, included the head of the oikos (usually the oldest male), his extended family (wife and children), and slaves living together in one domestic setting. Large oikoi also had farms that were usually tended by the slaves, which were also the basic agricultural unit of the ancient economy. The Greek oikos differed significantly from the Roman domus in architectural layout, although Greece became part of the Roman Empire for a long time. It was built around paved patios and had very distinct male and female spaces. The first part of the house consisted of a peristyles, "women's gallery" or peristyle within the oikos proper, the center of domestic activity, beyond. This latter area consisted of bedrooms and dining rooms. The second part of the house, the androni, was the focus of male activity. There one could find

more dining rooms, guest suites, and libraries.

Nominal - (chiefly in the context of space travel) functioning normally or acceptably. (confluence) (we travel between each other) This 'twoness' is established retrospectively through the event of love.

Nominal love for family members. Wishing for someone you can to bring them about.

Oikos – the basic unit of the ancient economy. The Greek word meant that at which some stops, the Greek word meant that at which something begins its-presencing. This term is closely related to horizmos – the horizon.

Oikos – civic, political body of people. The public (the men only type of public). Acropolis.

Pp

Parapole – the ‘direct act of expression’, one that refers us to the myth, Marquana for instance or Jami Hendrix or who knows what else. I encountered this term while reading about Helio Oiticica, a Brazilian artist from the late 20th Century. I love him now.

Penumbra – a shadow formed by an ellipse. The edge condition of a transitional solid and void...

Philia – more about loving than being loved, ‘social sympathy’. For Aristotle this was the solidarity that kept the polis together as a political entity. Philia prevails over the most form of justice. The unconditional love for family members. Wishing for someone what you believe to be good things, wishing this not for your own sake but for his, and acting in so far as you can to bring them about.

Play – Joyful encounters act to increase our power to act and to think. These encounters are essentially linked with an intelligence of their external cause. In order to expand our capabilities to act and think one seeks to repeat those joyful encounters. [Epinosa, Ethics]. Play marks the site of a rupture with the old and what becomes the new.

Pneuma – gas building, the entrance to the Acropolis. The first ever ‘extension’. A civic announcement. An architect's dream.

Prima materia – eternal and indestructible ‘substance’ with no definitive character or form of its own, the ultimate reality of things. Plato compares it with semen, composed of “smooth unwrapped triangles”, yet ultimately it is androgynous.


Prytanion – a civic building central to the political structure of society, often inside the agora. Most often used for banquets, hosting ambassadors and civic guests. The Prytanion also housed the altar on which the eternal holy flame of Hestria was kept. It was essential as a place of individual participation in civic life. The conceptual centre of the polis.

Pulcritudo – beauty. Latin. * inexhaustible significance lay about the building like a magical veil.* The consecration of magic and the proximity of the divine. Nietzsche couldn't see the world, poor old chap.

Pera – a boundary is not that at which something stops, the Greek word meant that at which something begins its-presencing. This term is closely related to horizmos – the horizon.

Propylaeae – the invisible limit of the containing body, architectural qualities derived from the pursuit of perfection. Solidarity – ‘I’m Spartacus!, I’m Spartacus! I am Spartacus!’

Sous-rature – “under erasure” both present and absent simultaneously. Permitted through a negation / denied through a presence.

Space – the invisible limit of the containing body, by which the container makes contact with what it contains.
- Aristotle, Physics. Qualitative, not mathematical. Never a void, but a full form.

Stadion – distancing, an interval space conditioning two beings. To me it suggests a rupturing of architectures dependency on geometry as the primary means of realizing symbolic spaces.

Stoa - a covered walkway. An experience of this space while lying in reverie, in Athens, in February 2004. harsh light.

Tt

Technepoesis – Ronseal.

Temenos - a piece of land cut off from common use, assigned the special significance of sanctuary, official domain, holy grove or precinct. The concept of temenos arose in Classical Mediterranean cultures as an area reserved for the worship of Gods. Temenos later in English Literature begins to denote a territory, plane, receptacle or field of divinity. Jung relates the temenos to a magic circle, a mental safe space where healing takes place. A place where an encounter with the unconscious can be had and where the unconscious contents can be safely brought into the light of consciousness.

Tikto – to bring forth, to produce. Greek

Timaeus – Greek name meaning Honour, a speculative Platonic monologue on the nature of the physical world and human beings.

Thanatos - (in Freudian theory) the death instinct. Often contrasted with Eros.

Topos - locus ‘Place’, ‘natural space’ as opposed to geometric space

Thaumata – objects of wonder, a reference to buildings as sets of inhabitable construction. Examples of thaumata are theatres, temples, the agora.

Thaumaturgoi – wonder workers (architects, healers)

Theatre - the bathrooom, the bedroom, the kitchen, the linen cupboard, the white painted walls, the timber floor, the ceiling reflecting its light, the space between our hands, my jumper, your skirt, an open mouth, a closed door, the white painted walls, your purse on the nightstand, your knickers on the floor, the trees in the forest behind our house, but not the space between the carriages on the train. Never there darling.

Theoria – contemplation. The experience of the eternal.

Tholos – a rare circular temple with complex foundations. The structure resolved the conflict between the circular form of the heavens and the labyrinthine form of the underworld. Architecture as an ordering device, resolving psychological conflict in society. The medicinal house.

Walking – “Walking conditioned sight, and sight conditioned walking, till it seemed only the feet could see”. Robert Smithson.

Wunian – to be at peace through dwelling. To safeguard the sphere of nature as it occurs. For Heidegger this is the fundamental character of dwelling. But he was mental I think.

Xx

Xoana + diadal – a construction of well adjusted pieces, capable of inducing wonder and providing existential safety for a community - expanded to provide us with a basis for a general theory of HARMONY.

Yy

Zz

Zonzo – in Italian, zonzo means ‘to waste time wandering aimlessly’.
Essay

Towards A New Subjectivity:

Love & Architecture
Towards A New Subjectivity:

Love & Architecture

This essay proposes a new trajectory for the practice of architecture as an embodiment of the human capacity to love. I ask: could love be a political agent capable of producing new programs necessary for the edification of new architectures? Love, as a guiding principle for design and construction holds the potential for a revitalized anthropocentric urbanism in which buildings, surfaces and made spaces radicalize the collective, what I will call a new subjectivity for new civic / social lives. My investigation of love as a precedent for construction pertains to various definitions of civic institutions rising from an Ancient Greek idea: the concept of the polis and its spatial persona: the agora. These primary institutions or civic spaces define an historical brace; of both tectonic and social construction. The built edifice in the agora is primarily an object of representation describing human relationships articulated via technepoesis or harmonious construction. This mythology of the origins of architecture will be examined in this text.

The essence of the present inquiry is to explore how the built edifice manifests itself poetically as (eran) love, (philia) friendship, (aristos) commerce, (oikos) family space with both male and female structures (gynaikonitis) (andronitis), as (temenos) healing space, (tholos) worship, (chori) spectacle, or (stoa) participation and (agora) exchange to identify just a few manifestations of ‘love’ as I here employ the term. These common soft programs take form only through collective effort and agreement, resulting in the physical alteration of the natural world. They orchestrate the birth of constructions (daidala) in every society around the world sometimes in stone, timber, earth, and water sometimes in steel, glass, concrete and plastic. These forms I argue are defined by the poetic effect of our desire for a union unachievable in the singular. This thesis explores those programs and that ancient project of building our communal desires.

To contextualize this exploration I look first to the idea of the ‘common’ as put forward by Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri in an excerpt from their text Commonwealth, first published in 2003. This work is the second installment in a triptych of texts of political philosophy examining the effects of the late global capitalist paradigm. In positioning their argument for the common as ‘a space where love consists of an action’, Hardt & Negri (writing from the far left) suggest a subverted position of the empowerment of the subject within the framework of the capitalist modes of production and consumption1.

As identified by Peter Sloterdijk, their argument goes some way towards a formal re-writing of the Communist manifesto for the 21st Century and is very much alive with Marxist sentiments. Yet while the text is a thorough analysis of a specific (contextual) situation - it fails for me to deliver a realistic program for the re-activation of the subject they celebrate within the paradigm / system they abhor2. Hardt & Negri assimilate the common as a ‘materality, with the capacity to act, a space of becoming for the subject’. This somewhat beguiling definition suggests the existence of an ideological space of inclusion, an inaccurate but useful construction for the intellectual terrain of my argument. The Common then is both -

“…the material world, the air, fruits of the soil, the water and also the results of social productivity, which govern the conditions under which social interaction and the possibilities of further production are dependent, such as knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects, and so forth.”

The inheritance of humanity as a whole, language, history, the sciences,

1 It is interesting to compare the positions of Hardt & Negri with that of Hannah Arendt on the topic of work, which she terms ‘production’. While Commonwealth describes a capitalist mode of production and consumption as a negative in the context of man’s social / spiritual freedom, Arendt suggests that work and action are the basis of not only survival but equally the social / spiritual well-being of man. Arendt, The Human Condition, (Chicago, 1998) 2 Hardt & Negri begin the process of structuring an alternate (read positive) social paradigm for late Capitalism whereby: “Capital... is not a pure form of command but a social relation, and it depends for its survival and development on productive subjectivities that are internal but antagonistic to it.” Commonwealth (p. 9) and suggesting the moral corruption of this mode of relation: “…capital not only brings together all the earth under its command but also creates, invents, and exploits social life in its entirety, ordering life according to the hierarchies of economic value.” (Ibid, p. 9)
religion and the built environment is the space of Hardt & Negri’s commonwealth. But included in this commonality is a corrupt sense of shared value which is derived from actions that constitute moral deficiency. The aim of my work this year is to uncover new ground for design methodologies through an analysis of this commonality (subjectivity) and the resultant moral deficiency. In analysing how spatial typologies constitute a moral deficiency I suggest new forms of civic interaction / inhabitation that produce new radicalized subjectivities. These forms and spaces look afresh at our current conception of architecture and planning as modes of action in the affirmative rather than symptomatic solutional actions that are remedial reactions to problematic urbanisms. In coalescence with design, I suggest that love and the common create the programs necessary for the subject / citizen to activate the city as a space of immanence, qua - a space of becoming. This new coalescence produces a rupture with stagnant traditions of civic life and current methodologies for the procurement of public buildings and properly civic spaces. Love in this architecture provides the necessary utopian matrix for the design and conception of new effective urbanisms. This process derives its core strength from the concept of play. I will consider this idea further in the following texts.

"…love then is a process of constructing the possibilities of social relations, networks and even subjectivity, a process of structuring the common. This process (of love) therefore does not create new objects or subjects in the world. Rather love becomes a process in which the world is produced, then love can be seen as a producer of new worlds and new subjectivities." (Commonwealth, p. 11)

'Structuring the common' is a phrase that presents immediate strategies for new design methodologies based around the concepts of play and commonwealth. These projects aspire to an architecture far beyond the restrictive boundaries of council micro-politics, building codes and even beyond the familiar typologies evidenced by contemporary civic architectural discourse. ‘Action defines the need’, (Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, 1998) But the question remains - why would we need a new subjectivity? And what would it look like?3

Reasons we collectively hold the idea of the Common to be ‘good’, are explored by Alberto Peréz-Goméz in his book Built Upon Love, first published under MIT in 2006. Peréz-Goméz, writing within a historically stiff academic framework, tells us about the origins of architecture in Western civilization, and consequently the origins of civilization itself, by offering a chronology of the origins of Western Civilization through the excavation of ancient architectural typologies. His investigation primarily explores the concept of the poetic image and its role in the understanding of beauty. His analysis of erōs and poēsis constructs an argument for the fulfillment of ancient relationships with the natural world and the divine. He demonstrates how mortal and divine worlds were bridged by the foundation of knowledge, the establishment of languages and the building of significant objects which all serve to safely order man’s position within the then chaotic universe. Interestingly, a key component of the attempt to understand the motivations for building in this context is the importance of semantics and language. A complex web of linguistics appears in his excavation of Greek society and many of the terms defy a contemporary definition or understanding as most are linked with archaic forms of consciousness.

Eros, for example, is not explicitly an idea of the erotic or a sexualized space of relations between bodies per se but describes a desire between what is and what is not, a threshold of being in transition and the movement of the soul between different conditions. Poēsis relates more to the relation of the technical aspects of making and the conception of use for objects and spaces rather than a construction with abstract composition or poetic effect. In Peréz-Goméz’s argument these terms begin to take on a new meaning. Through their resurrection he begins the process of retroactively

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3 The ultimate core of biopolitical production, we can see stepping back to a higher level of abstraction, is not the productive object for subjects, as a commodity production is often understood, but the production of subjectivity itself. Commonwealth, p. 11-12.

4 I refer here to an introduction of a collection of poems by EE Cummings, suggesting the potential power in the immanence of becoming in love. “We can never be born enough... he is a little more than everything; he is democracy; he is alive; he is ourselves” – EE Cummings, The Complete Works, 19-20.

5 As an illustration of design efficacy Kenya Hara outlines a history of the concept of design as it occurred in Imperial Japan as a demonstration and representation of the dynasty / state authority. Since the Modern movement began in the Western world of the 19th Century the paradigm of ‘authority’ shifted globally from state toward individual. This process authenticated the individual as free subject with the freedom to choose his or her own way of life - beyond state control. Design then becomes the process of expression of the freedom of a socio-democratic populace. Ironically this mass of freely choosing individuals organizes itself into a new authoritarian species of control, the mass consumer. Hara (along with Koolhaas and others) then aligns the immediate history of design with the economic trends of the global market place and the evident pattern of production and consumption.
programming the first civilized spaces in which men related to one another and established meaning as common ground, a central concern of this thesis. The role of the architect in this context describes a unique attitude toward beauty in construction whereby a metonymic exchange between object and space engendered both social and metaphysical orders for man's position in society and the cosmos. The architect was magician (iastronomatís), a shamanistic wonder worker, instrumental in the creation of objects and structures that provided existential safety for society as a whole. *(Built Upon Love, p.23)* This protection was a necessary establishment of order against the apparent chaos of the natural world and the perception of the powerful aleatory forces of nature.

The common as represented by a communal object like a building is a metrenome of meaning (and a basis of value) in Western civilizations. It is simultaneously a concept and a physical form, a holding of the common within the commons, one which generates a space around and through its being, similar to Hardt & Negri's understanding of the commonwealth. An example of this simultaneous formation of order and meaning become spatial typology is the *chóra*. A constructed dance platform, the *chóra* was a space joining and defining two worlds. One, a human space through which a series of allegories are explained via the exchange of actions and dance, the other an expression of love and mimesis through movement and semblance of the forces of the natural world. This process mediated between performer and audience in one fluid gesture of spectacle and participation. Music, theatre, ritual dance and divine alegory highlighted the notion of separateness represented by the essential space between audience and performers. This space was conceived of as an erotically charged space, pregnant with the potential for the poetic image to uncover the mystery of being. Here we see a politicized conception of space generating the production of the common.

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**Multiple Loves: the Politics of Unity**

Questions:

What types of architectural spaces currently create the conditions necessary for the collective production of subjectivity…? Why would this production be important for civic space? What are some alternatives?

In an essay entitled *What Is Love?* *(Conditions, 2003)*, Alain Badiou identifies a fidelity toward love as a naturally occurring event between human beings. In a similar sense I suggest a natural fidelity toward the event of being on behalf of architecture as manifest specifically through the act of dwelling. While dwelling suggests the typology of the *domus* or house, I wish to use the term to describe a broader sense of inhabitation in all building types, both public and private.

To illustrate a model, I draw a conceptual line: a circular form joining point a) *love* as an event describing an ontological surplus. The line continues a loop to point b) representing a *construction facilitating dwelling*, a representation of the ontological surplus. The line creates a circle arriving again at point a). This diagram creates a space pregnant with the affirmative actions of living and dwelling. While Badiou's text identifies love as a procedure of truth in which a (sexed) subject is fused with another, the fusion serves only to amplify the ‘disjunction’ between the subjects or sexes. A diagram of this relationship is solid and unchangeable. There is no space for dwelling or becoming in this model. It is the opposite of the previous dynamic. Badiou's philosophy paradoxically legitimates the bond between the sexes via his term ‘disjunction’ – which uses *love* as an autonomous philosophic category (beyond the two sexes) to supplant the lack of a structural ‘third position’ (there is no third sex) and the necessity of a neutral ground between the Two. This structural short-circuit portrays love as a relational event and ultimately a procedure of truth beyond conditional knowledge. It is then that the event of love becomes a fundamental human condition which necessitates being and by extension dwelling as a dynamic interaction between people and place. Architecture then is a practice of

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7  Architecture’s fidelity to the event of living is an idea expanded by Heidegger in his text *Building, Dwell ing, Thinking*. Here Heidegger’s explores a poetics of inhabitation that he structures around an etymological analysis of the various archaic verbs to dwell. See appendices for further notes on this condition.
constructing not only structures for holding and protecting this love but for producing and developing also the future programs of love and humanity.

Beginning with the rejection of existing ideological forms of love, Badiou’s thesis employs a philosophy of the ‘two’ - not as separate relational entities but as producers of truth, relating through love.

“Love is not that which makes a One in ecstasy through a Two supposedly structurally given... This is because an ecstatic One can only be supposed beyond the Two as a suppression of the multiple.”

The ideological myth of marriage (the fusion of a dynamic Two into a solid One) represents a fusional architecture that would be a collapse of two dynamic forms / spaces into a singular mute form / space. This program would lead to the reduction of truth and the further production of sedentary urban forms and domestic spaces. Such forms create a ‘deficit of being’ as identified earlier in Hardt & Negri, producing an impure ontology of civic life. Could our built environment and its streets and footpaths, its public offices be in a deficit of being or a state of spiritual decline? I suggest that the failure of civic space manifests itself in an homogenization and petrification of the dynamics of love and the movement between people, through the fabric of the city’s commons and equally through the ‘event’ of love. This idea leads us to a mystification of the current social status of human relationships – friendships, marriages, and partnerships become not an ecstasy of the one as imagined, but a suppression of the multiple as suggested by Badiou. A fissional mode of relation operates in defiance of the paradigm of joining, solidifying and consecrating relationships evident in the Western world.

Corrupt forms of Love within the Common:

‘A community is formed precisely where it is impossible to represent one.’

Describing the processes of social organization, Hardt & Negri tell us that ‘a community is formed precisely where it is impossible to represent one’ (p.7) What does this mean for civic life? Their text positions the idea of the Common as both the material world and also the results of social productivity, governing the conditions under which social interaction and the possibilities of further production are dependent. Knowledge, language, code, information all become cultures of meaning produced under the conditions prescribed by Badiou’s love. The common then holds the space between people as a spatial field of relations represented via the urban fabric of the city (the agora). A space where love consists of an action, a biopolitical event, a politics happening in every singular movement of love which correlates to the mechanics and properties of the common and to the arrangement and sequence of civic buildings in the city. Love must equally be understood as an economic power and has its position within the capitalist paradigm. Then Love is a process of constructing future social relations, networks and subjectivity, as it is the process of constructing the common. However...

“Corruption, understood as mutation, is rather the sign of “impure” ontology – an ontology of the not yet fully present, of what is inconstant, mundane or unpredictable in the everyday that we inhabit and through which we travel – but that is no less real, no less valuable.” p. 184, Empire, (Harvard University Press, 2000)

In The Coming Community, (Agamben, 2007) the theory of Love as producer of truth becomes complicated and corrupted by a theory of self-orientated love. A movement of love from the common back towards the self. This counter process is the opposite of a healthy producer of a social order which usually moves from the self outward toward the common.

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8 I refer here to Giorgio Agamben’s conclusion of the deficit of being: ‘the only ethical experience... is the experience of being (one’s own potentiality), of being (one’s own possibility) while ‘the only evil consists in the decision to remain in a deficit of existence... to regard potentiality itself, which is the most proper mode of human existence, as a fault that must always be repressed’. Agamben. Note: Can a building do this?

9 The corruption of love (or any ontology) is also excavated thoroughly by Richard Sennett’s discussion of the social phenomena of Narcissism in his work The Fall of Public Man (1977).
“We have to forget all the common place images that come to mind when we refer to imperial decadence, corruption and degeneration. Such moralism is completely misplaced here. More important is a strict argument about form, in other words, that Empire is characterized by a fluidity of form – an ebb and flow of formation and deformation, generation and degeneration... Empire requires that all relations be accidental. Imperial power is founded on the rupture of every determinate ontological relationship. Corruption is simply the sign of absences of any ontology”. Empire, (Harvard University Press, 2000).

The strict argument about form and in particular the ‘fluidity of form’ here prescribed by the characteristics of Empire could inspire a variety of architectural responses to the flow, formation and deformation, generation and degeneration of social structures and the forms of space relationships they produce.

Empire desires accidental relations. These accidental relations are abundant in the play space of children that the next text will attempt to uncode.

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10 Such is the modern incarnation of Limerick city, a network of accidental relations, stacked one on top of the other, set adjacent without consideration for the wider whole.
Appendix B

REPORTS

Steiner Kindergarten, Meath St.

Timber Models, SAUL
The content of this document is somewhere between fact and interpretation. Empirical data collected via direct observation of pupils at the Saoirse Waldorf Steiner School was subsequently subjected to critical reflection and analysis to produce this abstracted interpretation of the participational situation. On the morning of Thursday September 27th, 2012 I accompanied the Head Teacher of the Saoirse Waldorf Steiner School on Meath St. in Dublin 8 to the classroom to watch the activities of the class, in particular to observe how and why the children play. The intent of this field project was to suggest a correlation between the process of design and the activity of play as an ontological event.

Play as an activity is an innate response to the world, directed by a pure phenomenology, an action informed by the joy in being - above cultural derivatives. The hypothesis was that design may be coupled in a direct way to being and that children express this link in a very clear unrestricted manner. The simple games are designs for life, one with pure direct intentions with clear human desires and goals. Although I arrived with this intended research topic, I remained fully open to the possibility that I would observe something quite different and unexpected. This was ultimately to inform part of the process...

The Waldorf school is a kindergarten, with children ranging in age from 3 to 5. There is an even mixture of boys and girls over the class of 12 pupils. Of particular interest to me on this morning study trip was the observation of children interacting with one another, the objects they employ in the making of their games and the psychological space they create and inhabit in doing so.

NOTE > It seems an unnecessary complication to this study to note the obvious restrictions the institutional form of the school / kindergarten setting would impose on the child's normal or natural play activities as opposed to say a domestic environment or a natural setting outdoors. However I am aware of the potential conditioning a spatial typology like the classroom could inflict on this project.

This methodology proposes an adapted approach to the production of a design philosophy. By observing children playing (possessing none of the social limitations adults acquire by ‘growing up’), what became immediately evident is that human beings are born as creators of physical and social structures and environments, and that these relational spaces are seamlessly intertwined with one another in permanent metaphysical exchange. In making a game for example, or a ‘play space’, a child simultaneously imagines and inhabits an alternative pseudo-real habitat. This habitat serves its creator with an opportunity to create a psychological space in which they are master and can test (safely) a series of potential relationships with objects and other selves in the real world. NOTE > the significance of the brace: object and other being is that the child is simultaneously testing physical and emotional activities and correlating the two into a single cognitive field where physicality and psychology form a single response. It becomes increasingly clear that play is the essence of creating a collective subjectivity or what we could call a ‘relational field’. By this I mean that play is an encounter – an experience of the self with the self, a confrontation at the site of the body with the physicality of the exterior world and of the complex inter-human, aesthetically charged interface with other beings. Proximity is paramount here. Through closely connected play the formation of a common subjectivity is actualized through the senses, where the self flows in and out of the mind-body complex through the eyes, ears and skin in a multi-sensuous environment. Within this structure or under this paradigm we might call an object (a toy for example) ‘an event’, or more specifically the object is a producer of a social effect. A thought occurs here that the city is a manifestation of this complex human / objectified connectivity and is a formal representation of human relationships solidified or atemporalized by the built edifice, which becomes the object / toy of the real world.

Having compiled a set of themes to structure the research whilst in the kindergarten classroom, I have organized some of my observations under the following...
A Taxonomy of Play:

A) SIMULATION

B) SCALE (relates to ownership and control)

C) ORGANIZATION / DESTRUCTION

D) LIMITATIONS (thingness… everythingness _)

E) PLASTICITY (multiplicity)

F) IDENTITY (the gaze)

G) THE ALTAR (immortality, space of special value attribution)

H) NOISE PLACE (the throat, the ear – the locus of common language is the body)

This list of subjects structures a set of empirical observations producing two eventual outcomes. a) the description of an actual play activity and b) the evolution of an architectural methodology or design process.

SIMULATION 10:23 am

Three children were observed making a (play) ‘house’. For this activity they carried a filigree timber trellis, bound by leather straps acting as hinges, and a thin diaphanous cloth blanket, (calico or muslin) which had been died to a luminiferous orangey hue. The trellis was opened out into a tesselated space (the logical configuration of the trellis in order to maximize the economy of floor area to potential enclosure) and the cloth blanket was draped over the top and down one side of the structure. Immediately it was announced by one of the participants that inside was the kitchen and outside was the garden. (already we have engendered a domesticated politics of the imagination). Although an entrance was provided for by a parting in the walls – there was no hierarchy of front or back to the building and its surrounding environment. The significance of this detail I suggest informs a reading of the house and the society in which it stands as all inclusive, without need for the conception of neighbouring properties because all peoples dwell within. This game endured for about 15 minutes. Other games and constructions occurred in the room simultaneously.

#peras #stadion #neahgehur #tholos

NOTE> Roland Barthes, Toys – scaled down versions of the world – misrepresentations of the real and a form of social conditioning that restrains the imagination from finding its own appropriate use for new objects.

SCALE 10:47 am

A reflection on the above account of house making. The presence of scale in the game appeared to derive from a rigid dichotomy between earth and sky, floor and ceiling, above and below. This fixed binary relationship allowed the children to alternate between being very near and very far from one another. The body was transported instantly from the back of the garden to the interior of the house. I would like to suggest a reading of the thinking behind scale as a personalization of the world one creates through play – being appropriate to ones body – and circumventing the obvious conflict between the scale of the child and the scale of the adult. Hence, a play house is always an unconditioned environment to a grown adult. Also see the note under Plasticity and the Altar for an understanding of the radicalized scale of the object and the environment it creates around itself and its author.

#tholos

ORGANIZATION / DESTRUCTION 11:04 am

Central to the process of making is the equal importance given to the destruction of worlds and the morphing of objects from one condition to another – is this how a city operates? Does a city similarly mutate and become the site of a multi-valence or protean chimera? For example a basket in the room in which children gathered blocks and blankets was donned as a hat, a helmet, elevated
as a shield and finally sat in to push one another as a car. The seemingly mute object could inspire a variety of uses, actions or functions. Common use of objects was understood as a means to create a relationship with another being.

LIMITATIONS

An underdeveloped sense of ‘order’ was observed to be advantageous to the play space in which there was no such thing as a mess...no sense of disorganization or disorientation for the player within the game. The thingness of one item merged with the everythingness of the others to produce a totalized world with free exchange between all objects as a currency of creation.

#hegemonikos #dispositifs #in re

PLASTICITY (multiplicity) + THE ALTAR (immortality) (combined) – 11:37 am

One child was observed playing with bread dough, I watched as he created a boomerang. He knew not the name of the object but only its action, namely that one threw this thing and that it would return; it professed magic and technology combined in a single object. ~*~ (see not on technepoesis in codicil). Moments later he changed his mind and announced that in fact the talisman was a bridge as he proceeded to turn the small curvilinear object on its side, smiling at his own ingenuity and the potential success of the object to bridge an imaginary river. Finally this bridge was razed and it became a horse stable at which point he looked for approval from the teacher, checking presumably whether or not his game was ‘good’. When she smiled and confirmed its reality as a beautiful horse stable he got up and brought his creation to the altar in the classroom and offered it to the ‘gnomes’ I suspect in order to immortalize his creation and to insure its longevity and significance as a meaningful object and artistic achievement. The altar here was a place in the classroom, but equally a place in the child’s mind, a compartment in which to collect specialness.

#thaumata #eros #primamaterial #parangile #tikto

IDENTITY – 10:56 am

Play produces the subject as the centre of the imagined world, the operator (thus controller) of the game constellation. Some children seek to play by themselves... where does this leave society?

#anima #agape

NOISE PLACE

A frequent mechanics of relation amongst the children was to impart a specific (unusual) noise to one another within a set game space, I observed this to be the repetition of an irregular sound with a distinct correlative onomatopoeic significance: This codified sound would often sigifying the limit of the spatial dimension to those who were involved in that game because they responded to the particular noise while those who were not (although they were directly related by proximity) did not respond or even register hearing it. In this way two different games could inhabit an identical physical space while the games participants were mentally occupying radically different worlds (a jungle, an office, under the sea, a police station etc.) Further, the noises appeared to be communicating a specific action within a place in the game. Central to this occasion is the ability to abstract the mute world of things into what could be called the ‘common’ – in this instance the language of the game.

* Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Commonwealth, 2003 etc.

#philia #coterie #chorion #chora

NOTE> relate to the concept of abstract edges, legibility and order in the language of western architecture and the Greek Alphabet – vowel consonant relationship - as outlined in Pérez-Gómez

This text is purposefully presented unsupported by research into the extensive field of literature documenting and analyzing the concept and practice of play in human beings. Of particular note is the work of Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture, (Beacon Press, London, 1955).
This document forms a piece of a wider narrative I am working on through the manifold processes of making, writing, looking and re-making. The thinking space created between these modes of action offers me a space in which to critique and digest the meaning of forms – in this instance a series of timber objects / models I produced at the beginning of semester 1 in my final year at the School of Architecture University of Limerick in Ireland, (October of 2012). Simultaneously it solicits a loose interpretive reading of a text by a French artist / curator / philosopher Nicolas Bourriaud whose writing Relational Aesthetics, (les presses du reel, Paris, 2002) is interesting to read in conjunction with the analysis of this set of built objects.

The chosen method of reportage and critical analysis designs a correspondence between the models and the text, simulating a non-didactic, theoretical conversation between object and idea that explores the terrain of physical and non-physical in relation to one another. Much of the thinking contributing toward this work has been established in the previous Report on the Steiner Kindergarten where primal play methodologies were observed generating key motivators in the construction of new worlds. In that sense these models are both games and a soft matrix for new ontologies.

1 /

The Timber Object | Models

14 objects arranged on my table - they have been made in a relatively short period of time over the past two weeks. I have looked at them for some time now since their inception to better understand my process and the correlation between work and play in a creative profession.

First of all it is necessary to state that the objects have ceased to be simply objects and that they have become models through the processes of analysis and the collapse of representation. The significance of this fact initially informs us of the interchangeability of a form's meaning, fluctuating between object and model, between form and representation that is. Secondly, the process of analysis mutates an object's intention; bullying it into becoming a symbol, a metonym, or taking on the responsibility of being a sign for something else. Because as ‘models’ these objects refer to something outside of themselves, thus beginning a syntactic game of semiotic transition. One that requires decoding in order to be understood shared or enjoyed. **

The 14 models portray formal characteristics that unify their collective being. Easily identified and describable they are uniformly constructed of a sanded red deal, likely to be Scandinavian in origin. The timber is raw, untreated and machine cut to reveal the terrain of physical and non-physical in relation to one another. The uniformity of this highly aestheticized surface paradoxically has dual functions. It allows each model to perform autonomously while being understood as a variant on a theme.

#xoana #daidala

2 /

A version of the 20th C. is sketched by Bourriaud at the beginning of his text, Relational Aesthetics. He presents to us a struggle for control between two supreme visions of the world. 1) The rational modern mind, an Enlightenment construction, now well established and finding a voice for itself in the aesthetic of the modern movement. 2) The spontaneous surrealist mode of liberation associated with Dada, Surrealist and Situationist International, a resistance to the streamline clarity of modernist aspirations, a poetic
uncoupling of the conscious mind. These two diametrically opposed intellectual paradigms form their own historical context. Relational Aesthetics defines a new ahistorical paradigm, an anthropocentric philosophy of relations that is always ultra-contemporary (relevant) because it is contingent only on the public space surrounding objects where people interact in real time as opposed to the private realm of historicity. He writes:

"...the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen..." (p.13)

Architectures efficacy dominates this sphere or operability via the actualization of modes of inhabitation, dwelling, living and being in the real world i.e. beyond representational values, in the domain of the real.

3 /

Secondly, apart from status-hood as object or model, and beyond 'surface' as an aesthetic category, each model in the set describes a particular type of assembly or construction. The term 'assembly' offers up numerous philosophies*. (*note the selected definitions of assembly: 'a group of people gathered together in one place for a common purpose', 'the action of gathering together as a group for a common purpose', and 'a unit consisting of components that have been fitted together', OED). From individual pieces a new entity (a new individual collection / conglomerate piece) is born, assembled in lyrical phrases. 'Assembly' prompts a set of adjectives here; glued, bound, butted, drilled, doweled or locked to identify just a few actions present in the making of the set. And these are terms, processes, techniques, (methods!), of enhancing dramas, narratives and ways of describing the tectonic (or mannerist) meta-purposefulness of each model. Beyond a description of assembly, the models equally appear to demonstrate a singular intellectual project, an overarching governing idea describing a set of actions, (to slide, to balance, to wobble...). These constructed actions are a raison d'être for the models which become a lasting encounter.

"This is how forms come into being, from the "deviation" and random encounter between two hitherto parallel elements. In order to create a world, this encounter must be a lasting one, the elements forming it must be joined together in a form." (p.19)

The resultant objects of this design philosophy are self-referential autonomous objects that allow deeper syntactical readings of constructed form in general and of the models themselves as a formal lexicon.

#harmonia #iastromantis #daidala

4 /

Bourriaud writes:

"Producing a form is to invent possible encounters; receiving a form is to create the conditions for an exchange, the way you return the service in a game of tennis."- (p.23)

5 /

The lexicon I refer to or leitmotif is a unifying familial

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1 The critic Theodor W. Adorno, in his book In Search of Wagner (written in the 1930s), expresses the opinion that the entire concept of the leitmotif is flawed. The motif cannot be both the bearer of expression and a musical 'gesture', because that reduces emotional content to a mechanical process. He notes that "even in Wagner's own day the public made a crude link between the leitmotifs and the persons they characterised" because people's innate mental processes did not necessarily correspond with Wagner's subtle intentions or optimistic expectations. He continues: The degeneration of the leitmotiv is implicit in this [...] it leads directly to cinema music where the sole function of the leitmotiv is to announce heroes or situations so as to allow the
characteristic, an underlying genetic makeup only perceivable across the set in its totality. The genetic continuity here is a stabilizing function, summoning the concrete in a reification process that prevents the objects from the limitless dangers of total abstraction. Yet the leitmotif permits any mysterious, latent internal codifications which are ultimately properties of desire, located within historical narratives of architecture and building. The models resist historical interrogation because they are in a sense orphans, the bastard children of a superior set of timber constructions possessing a higher degree of complexity at the scale of the city, the world they playfully (and naively) model. But the naivety perhaps prepares a litmus test for orthodox joinery...

6 /

I would like to say something of the models scale and also of relation, the significance that is, of their existence between us, between you and I. One of the ultimate usefulnesses of model making is the ability on behalf of the model to allow us access large amounts of information very quickly, via the simple medium of scale.

Somewhat adjacent to the physical properties of reading models at a set scale is the social and inter-subjective potentiality of

“...the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen...” (p.13)

These models range in scale from the size of my little finger to the size of my leg. Being smaller than the body in its entirety they pronounce a scale of comfort and are prone to simple manipulation within the realm of the scale of the hand. Their conception is noticeably traceable to the size of the desk on which they sit (900mm x 2000m) and perhaps also to the tools with which they were made. This distinct quality of scale immediately suggests two things: a) a conception of use or usefulness on the parts of the objects and b) a level of comfort, recalling the familiar scale of many domestic appliances and modern electronic consumer devices, (mobile phones, kitchen appliances, office stationary etc.) items that derive the size from the scale of the dexterous hand.2

The objects appear to resist becoming representational or a circumscription of the inherent labour involved in their production / construction and somehow suggest more of themselves than the sum of their parts would necessarily permit.

Here form follows action. The models are semi-magical in that they rupture the existing varying degrees of satisfaction present in the model’s control of the space they generate and occupy.

Questions:

What do these models mean for the city? How might they inform a critical view of urbanity? Are the models urban? Are they rural? Can such a distinction be made at this scale? What are the implications for a concept of ‘form’ in such diametric contexts?

In what way do the models contribute to a collective

2 One parallel quality of smallness is the opportunity it casts for mobility and maneuverability, … / This idea historically echoes the sudden mobility and maneuverability or rapid expansion of the “self” through an expanding network of telecommunications, road and railway lines across post war Europe. (Bourriaud p.14)
elaboration of meaning? Can they perform Bourriaud’s function of ‘linkage’ (p.15)? – do they produce empathy, sharing, kinship or do they generate ‘bond’?

- the arena of exchange produced by these models must be judged and valued under a set of aesthetic criteria: the coherence of the form, the symbolic value of the ‘world’ it provokes, the set of human relations reflected by the idea and completeness of this ‘world’.

These models are the construction of an ethical practice. True or False?

Timber is psychedelic. Agree / Disagree?

The models bear no significant relation to the surface on which they sit. Is this philosophically possible?

Verum Ipsum Factum – Truth through making

An interesting question is raised (accidentally?) at the beginning of this text. This is my framing of it: - Is ‘making’ historical – if I am to make something today – is it specifically and exclusively a product of the early 21st century and equally a sum total of the historicity of making or is it a product of the materials and tools available to me at a particular time in a particular place…? Bourriaud forces the recognition that making is dependant, (inescapably historical) and has no “immutable essence”. (p.11)

Bourriaud sketches a version of the 20th C. as a struggle between two supreme visions of the world: the rational modern mind, a modest Enlightenment construct and the spontaneous surrealist mode of liberation one associated with Dada, Surrealist and Situationist.

“Otherwise put, the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen…” (p.13)

Bourriaud positions his theory of Relational Aesthetics as one in which a work’s theoretical realm lies primarily in the space of human interactions as opposed to the historic, private realm of the symbolic space of art history (which is also the historical space of made things). His theory is not a clear theory of art – more so it is a theory of form, and how this might describe the trajectory of the idea of practice.

“This is how forms come into being, from the “deviation” and random encounter between two hitherto parallel elements. In order to create a world, this encounter must be a lasting one, the elements forming it must be joined together in a form.”

“Form can be defined as a lasting encounter* - (p.19). In a similar
way, the form of this thesis operates as generator for new potentialities, (hopefully) it does not fit neatly into the type cast of essay.

"Producing a form is to invent possible encounters; receiving a form is to create the conditions for an exchange, the way you return the service in a game of tennis."" (p.23)

"Form can only come about from a meeting between two levels of reality." (p.24)

These models do not seek to construct a ‘new world’ (as the paradigm of historical evolution suggests each era must achieve), rather they create the conditions necessary to inhabit the existing world in a new way, with new rigour, energy and vitality for the made. They exhume a quiet candor...

Specifically, a philosophy of making (play, construction, relation) as it may seem instructive to the process of making architecture. Homo faber – man the maker

*Object is the term used to designate a physical thing, an item external to the thinking mind.

**The point at which an object ceases to be objective and becomes syntactically speaking, a model for something else is difficult to determine. It is important to underscore the transformation point though for the working process of this text: namely construction, description and analysis.
Site Introduction

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St. Mary's Park, King John's Island, Limerick
St. Mary’s Park, King John’s Island, Limerick

St. Mary’s Park is an urban/rural social housing project built in the early 1950’s to house families from the Arthur’s Quay tenements. It is a deeply territorial place with high unemployment rates and many difficult social realities. At present, anything built here is treated with hostility, vandalized or destroyed.

King John’s Island is an island land mass to the North of Limerick City Centre. Surrounded on 3 sides by the Abbey River and The Shannon the Island was the first point in Limerick to support significant building and inhabitation. The island has 2 distinct territories, North and South, The ‘Island field’ and Irishtown / The Medieval City.
St. Mary's Park, Built Context

Site Model exploring relationship of domestic spaces and public "wild" spaces

Photographic Essay documenting the current aesthetic value of St. Mary's Park
Sketch Model for Play Spaces
alternative regeneration patterns found amidst joyful, abstract expressions of form
This project was about making a positive intervention in a socially deprived housing estate in Limerick City. It was necessary to invent a new strategy beyond the troublesome phrase 'regeneration' for the residents of this park. The design approach was to make a contemporary agora to encourage positive social interaction. By creating a new public edge to the estate that mediated between the housing and River Shannon.

Two distinct recreational territories are created by introducing a multifunction space. An inhabitable playground, community centre, creche and adult education facility form a new edge to the pedestrian link between the Island field and the Old City.

King John’s Island is a land mass to the North of Limerick City Centre. Surrounded on 3 sides by the River Shannon and the Abbey River the Island was the first place in Limerick to host significant building and inhabitation. This project builds on that tradition of meaningful dwelling and celebrates the life of the Island as a key part in Limerick’s continuing urban development.
Islands within islands
St. Mary’s Park, King John’s Island, Limerick

The pedestrian spaces between the housing blocks prejudice the automobile. A concrete road severs any potential connective tissue creating spaces overtly dependent on the domestic interiors, which unfortunately are of a low architectural quality.

A new public garden anchors a pedestrian route surrounding the estate and marshlands behind. This garden provides a new centre of gravity to the plan. It hosts a platform for debate, performance and exchange and houses a community centre, creche and adult education facility.

The construction methodology proposes a self-build project for the residents. First the ground plane is disrupted to create a more dynamic inhabitable surface, achieved through simple cut & fill. Grass platforms and paved surfaces are layered across the site to invite horizontal movement between the water and the housing. Timber structures rise abstractly from this landscape of paths with no formal precedent, allowing new forms of occupation and dwelling.
1:500 Site Plan drawing (hand-rendered) showing context of new intervention to existing fabric of St. Mary’s Park
1:200 GA Plan (hand-rendered) portraying quality of spaces and relationship of interior to exterior plazas.
Contemporary Agora Fragments

St. Mary's Park, King John's Island, Limerick

Abstract form is elected as the only acceptable aesthetic without cultural precedent. A community led building project for a series of summer pavilions begins a discourse of building appropriately in this place.

A series of abstract timber models generate a strategy for program and construction...
View of Site Model with study models for temporary pavilions

View of Presentation with 1:1 study of Temporary Pavilion platform construction
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