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You are holding the work produced within the context of a semester long course that sought to question, explore, create and expand our notion of architecture. Boundaries is the continuation of On-Site, a self-referential student magazine produced within the architecture department about publications of architecture. Delineating boundaries is at the heart of creating architecture. As Martin Heidegger writes “[a] space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary.” The act of inclusion and exclusion inherent in the creation of a boundary is thus deeply rooted within the practice. Here we use this concept at the center of the field to critically examine our understanding of architectural theory and practice.

Each article uses the work of prominent thinkers and theorists as an entry point to articulate nuanced and bold considerations of boundaries in architecture and art. The articles are organized in a spectrum from intangible to tangible conceptions of architecture as a means to communicate the expansiveness and gradation of the field. Dealing with questions of authorship, technology, and representation, the publication aims to spark discussion of boundaries within your experience of architecture and the city.
Who deserves credit?
WHO DESERVES CREDIT?
When she received her first camera in December 1863 as a gift from her daughter and son-in-law, Cameron was forty-eight, a mother of six, and a deeply religious, well-read, somewhat eccentric friend of many notable Victorian artists, poets, and thinkers.

Koons’ works eschew typical standards of “good taste” in art and zero in rather precisely on the vulnerabilities of hierarchies and value systems. He turns the traditional cliché of the work of art inside out: Rather than embodying an expressive essence of a highly individualized artist, art here is composed from a distinctly American set of conventional middle-class values.
Barney’s ritualistic actions unfold in hybridized spaces that at once evoke a training camp and a medical-research laboratory, equipped as they are with wrestling mats and blocking sleds, sternal retractors and speculums, and a range of props often cast in, or coated with, viscous substances such as wax, tapioca, and petroleum jelly.
Charles and Ray married in 1941 and moved to California where they continued their furniture design work with molding plywood. During the war they were commissioned by the Navy to produce molded plywood splints, stretchers and experimental glider shells.
SALVADOR DALI

Dali rendered his fantastic visions with meticulous verisimilitude, giving the representations of dreams a tangible and credible appearance. Hard objects become inexplicably limp, time bends, and metal attracts ants like rotting flesh.

SUPERSTUDIO

Superstudio was a major part of the Radical architecture movement of the late 1960s. They created images of dystopian architecture, imposing massive elevated grids onto cities such as New York.
In literature there is this dialogue between the writer and the reader. That dialogue is predicated on the existence of the text. There is the idea that the audience or reader imparts some meaning onto the work.

I'm not a big fan of the death of the author as the birth of the reader. When we read together is that we are letting the text speak. That’s not about the reader. I believe that texts mean something. That sounds very old fashioned but I mean it more in a way that texts participate in a collective unconscious. They’re not exclusively from a place of authorship. They’re shared but they mean something and I don’t think it’s up to the reader to determine that.

That’s suggesting the intended interpretation is the right interpretation. It’s not that it is or it isn’t the right interpretation. Maybe questions of correctness just don’t apply. In architecture, there is authorship in representation. We talk about wether critics interpret the work the way it was intended. Just because they miss what is intended doesn't mean it wasn’t there. Maybe placing hierarchical value on one over the other is a safety measure by which a person can hold onto the idea of individual authorship.

I think part of the problem is that people get lost in their ego. They don’t think about the actual users of the building. Collaboration could fix these problems. Architecture doesn’t always collaborate with the user. It should bring in the user into the design but a lot of projects fail to do that.

Regardless of what the story may be describing there is a dialogue and an agreement between the writer and the reader. David Foster Wallace says a deal is struck between them— the writer sets up a process and rules for engagement. There is an architectural parallel there. Until a design project is occupied, “architecture,” as a medium for discourse, has not happened.

Then that means the user or occupant of the building is the reader. Does the death of the author mean the death of the architect?

Things are shifting towards collaboration in architecture. I still think having authorship does encourage innovation because you’re personally being rewarded for your successes. I think there are some positives but there’s definitely more room for collaboration. Architecture is moving away from the idea of the star architect.

In other disciplines like science, I think now especially with the public’s access to journals for example, people are trying to come up with a database for negative results. So basically if you can’t prove a hypothesis people are aiming to create a database where you can look and see if people have done these experiments before. There is this idea in science of contributing to a common knowledge and that there isn’t necessarily a distinct individual.

It’s more useful to have an interconnected model in architecture as well. Starchitects get away with things normal architects wouldn’t. Some of the buildings they come up with are very inefficient but because a star architect built it, it’s a work of art.

By only having a few single things to look at you limit your view and what you can accomplish. Architecture should always collaborate with the user. A lot of architecture looks like pieces of art rather than something people can actually inhabit.

The user might have a relationship to the architecture. Without a human occupant there is no architecture to begin with, there is no reason for that architecture to exist. It is not the
architect that generates architecture. They are the one who meets the need of the user.

There can be architecture without architects, but not without a user. Does this mean the user functions as both the reader and the author?

Sometimes, yes. Buildings are often misappropriated and repurposed. Sometimes the current state of a building no longer works for the present. This seems like a way to negate the author.

In this appropriation of existing architecture, the idea in which the intention of the author has been overwritten is not the same as misinterpreting a novelist. The original program is not misunderstood. It’s just no longer useful. Overtime this becomes a collaborative project. We are looking at conspiring authors that act separately but in collaboration on a single space. We can’t decontextualize architecture they way we could decontextualize a novel where someone can read or not read. That not the way people interact with architecture. On an individual scale, it’s a resource not an option. In these cases where architecture is misappropriated it’s no longer seen as an artistic work that has an author but as an opportunity that has its own infrastructure in which someone can plug in their life.

In literature, the extent that author has authority is also problematic. In a way all art is autobiographical but that doesn’t mean it has to be so personally autobiographical. Postmodernism really understood that Modernism had made terrible mistakes. One of these mistakes was the idea that the author is a saviour figure which does elevate authorship. They’re suspicious of the violence of the position of authorship. They place the saviour in de-construction itself—in this unravelling of authority.

A lot of authors we learn about embody broader ideas though. For example, my art humanities professor said that people were asking why we only focus on specific artists like Raphael and Michelangelo but leave out DaVinci. I think that does seem a little bit arbitrary. But, we’ll also look at their works and talk about why its very typical of a movement as a whole. We use specific artists to embody that movement as a whole. You learn specific characteristics of a movement that you can then apply to that movement as a whole.

If an author’s place is in a broader context, if he is a cultural interpreter rather than a singular creator, these grand ideas we have that art is an act of uniqueness or originality die along with the author. We like to think that an act of creativity comes from nothing, but it’s really just iteration.

The notion of inspiration, if it is understood to mean conceiving an idea out of nothing—that I can see a snowflake and be inspired to create a city—that idea is linked to creativity as a process of an idea inspired without context or impetus. When we understand creativity like that, maybe that process has meaning in other disciplines, but a I don’t want to think that architectural authorship is connected to that process or ever has been. Creativity as it exists in architecture comes rooted as a fundamental level in something tangible that you can describe. It doesn’t come from nothing. At the very least it’s in response to the earth, territory, boundaries, gravity and then there’s cultural values, political forces and economical restraints. I don’t see a crisis in authorship if we negate this singular creative spark. Architecture is always in response.
Art creates discussion. It provokes questions and inspires commentary. It poses new ways of interpretation. But the instant words are assigned to art, the meaning of the art takes shape. Place a caption on an artwork and you create meaning; you frame it. The viewer is fed meaning from one point of view, and thus the imaginative quality of the visual is diminished. In fact, the very process of describing the visual is a deterioration of the visual itself, where the intended message of the art is instantly defined. How would art be received if there was no text describing it? No captions, descriptions, blogs, commentary, or reviews. Only the visual remains; the raw emotion. Suddenly the art is truly absorbed by the viewers, giving them the power over their own interpretations and reactions. The viewers are then challenged to infuse their own opinions, creating a bond stronger than if the meaning had been imposed through text. This article explores the relationships between text and art and categorizes the respective varieties in an attempt to prompt discussion and critique regarding the ways we experience art.

Roland Barthes, a twentieth-century French literary theorist, linguist, and critic, wrote about the relationship between text and image in an essay titled “The Photographic Message”. He states that the caption in photography is “a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to ‘quicken’ it with one or more second-order signifieds”. Thus, his argument critiques this process of adding captions and highlights it as a visual crutch viewers use to quickly understand the visual. He also argues that art is comprised of two messages: a denoted message, which is that art itself, and the connoted message, relating to personal interpretation. By labeling the application of text as “connoted”, we instantly see the argument for a lack of text, with the art itself becoming the original, the pure, and the higher form. Therefore, should artists, critics, and the public stop writing about art and leave the images for the viewer to understand? The following pages thus outline and discuss four similar cases with text and image: the diagram, representation, captions, and appropriation.
If architecture creates a discussion, what happens if that discussion is not moderated through words but just through visuals? Here lies the challenge of visual representation: the diagram. In the typical architecture studio, students hear the advice: “less text, more diagrams”, in which their response is to throw themselves back into their work and attempt to visualize the adjectives floating in their head. This is no easy task, since no diagram is completely objective. Therefore, how can we ensure that the viewers understand the essence of the diagram without text or misinterpretation? How can the artist’s design speak to an audience with an enormous variety of backgrounds? We all see things differently, as a combination of our exposure to the world and our natural disposition, but the role of the architect is to bring to light the topic at hand. “You are talking way too much. Your drawings have to speak for themselves. Try to visually show what you are saying.” It's not until you get to your first studio that you hear such a sentence. The next steps are difficult. Is not simple to create a diagram for a model that represents the traffic patterns in downtown NYC through tension and movement. Although there is no obvious solution, sometimes it is worth trying something more graphic. Simple becomes the goal. REX studio’s diagram for the Museum Plaza project is simple. Their diagram highlights the main design element that makes their project unique, and just to prove the point that a simple diagram does not require text, let's leave it at that, and allow the diagram to speak for itself.
Ceci n’est pas une pipe.
"The Treachery of Images," 1928–29, is a painting by René Magritte, painted when he was 30 years old. The painting shows a pipe with the words "Ceci n’est pas une pipe.", French for “This is not a pipe.” It is hard to decide which to deny, the visual representation or the language that describes it. Both take on a notion of authority: the image with its illusionistic western art technique and the text in perfectly written script. Magritte’s commentary responds to this contradiction: “Could you stuff my pipe? No, it’s just a representation, is it not? So if I had written on my picture ‘This is a pipe’, I’d have been lying!” Of course, the pipe is a painting of a pipe, not a real pipe. The painting is merely a representation of a pipe. What is interesting, is how even the word “pipe” is not a pipe either. The result is this doubling of representation where the image contradicts the text. The text here thus amplifies the image and provokes us to think deeper about the content. Without the text, the painting would be basic, straightforward, just an image of a pipe. Once the text is added, however, we come to something much more poignant. Something that provokes. In this case, the addition of text adds a layer of meaning otherwise not present, which contradicts the theory that text degrades art. However, the text is part of the painting itself. It is thus thought of as a part of the painting still attributed to interpretation; it is still considered, as Barthes would phrase, the “denoted.”
Captions in cartoons must be witty, allude to something in the illustration, or create sarcasm. Whatever the tactic, these captions are a way to provoke and bring into discussion the very act of adding text to an image, since an image provides an endless variety of emotions and thoughts. In the example of “The Scream” by Edvard Munch, New Yorker cartoonist Roz Chast has added his own titles to poke fun at the multi-million dollar painting and bring into view the very topic under discussion: the relationship between art and text. Upon reading each caption, the viewer realizes how Munch lost an opportunity by not creating a series. More importantly, the viewer comes to understand the opportunity for a title to describe a piece. What exactly did Munch intend to describe when he titled his piece “The Scream”? Especially with a screaming figure as the central focus of the painting, it is hard to imagine that the title adds any different message to the painting than the painting can portray on its own. By adding three more “The Yawn”, “The Pout”, and “The Sigh”, Chast adds a hint of sarcasm to the very fact that this painting and title is perfectly matched, if not redundant. Therefore, the captions in this cartoon are a way of highlighting the playful variety in which artists can frame an illustration as well as point to art that uses the title as an opportunity to mirror or mimic the essence of the painting itself.
Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573
One of Duchamp’s most famous readymades is titled “Fountain”: an upside down urinal with the signature “R. Mutt”. Duchamp invented the term readymade, which are ordinary objects that the artist selected and occasionally modified. By simply choosing the object and repositioning or signing it, the object becomes art. Duchamp selected his pieces based on “visual indifference,” reflecting his sense of irony, humor and ambiguity. He said, “it was always the idea that came first, not the visual example.” Duchamp re-titled common objects to promote discussion, not even transforming the readymade itself, but rather transforming the idea of the readymade and its function in our everyday lives. In the case of “Fountain”, Duchamp has used the title as a means of reappropriating the urinal into something similar yet awkwardly related. Either the title suggests a different use for the urinal or a different design for a fountain. The title may not be something the viewer sees first, which creates even more room for thought between seeing the object and reading its title. If it was on display with the title “Urinal”, the object would be quite banal and unsurprising, if not perfect for a home improvement store. Therefore, it is in this context that the text actually creates the art. It infuses a new meaning to the object itself. This is thus an example of how adding text to art changes the meaning of the art, in this case, however, that meaning is purposefully changed.
IS TEXT AUTHOR?
HORITATIVE?
"Zoom-styling" and "blast-offs" to which Reynor Banham and Denise Scott Brown refer were key features of the "little magazines" produced during the 1960s and 1970s. These small-scale publications were often produced in academic contexts and often had short life-spans. However ephemeral they might have been, these published paper volumes were able to broadcast polemical positions about the then-current social and political realities as well as about the field of architecture itself. As Banham and Scott Brown argue, these little magazines produced by architecture's intellectual avant-garde did indeed contain vivid visions of future realities and were hoping to shape the "future architecture of democracy." However, almost half a century later, what has come into being is largely the dystopian counterpart to the hopeful visions of the future these projects present.

Archigram, Megascope, Le Carré Bleu, Forum, and other small-scale publications of the 1960s and 1970s sought both to redefine the terrain of architectural practice as well as to critique "Architecture's role within advanced capitalism" (Clip Stamp, Fold: The radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X to 197X, 13). They imagined new forms of architecture (and architectural practice) as helping to create and then inhabit a new world—a new world they understood as already in the midst of becoming a reality. Michael Webb, one of the founders of Archigram, speaks directly to this imagined transformation: "We started Archigram because we felt at the time that very exciting things were happening, as indeed they were." (Michael Webb in Clip, Stamp, Fold, 27). This excitement about the cultural developments at the time is reflected in the images they produced; as Hadas Stein notes, "[i]mages of popular culture, from those of consumerism to those of fantasy, were drawn upon to create a vision of architecture that shared in the life of the ambient urban condition" (Steiner, Beyond Archigram: The Structure of Circulation, 13).

The recent exhibition and book Clip, Stamp, Fold argues that the little magazines were in themselves a site of architectural production—of un-built architectural production. As such, they challenged the historical role of "the building as the locus of experimentation and debate" (Clip, Stamp, Fold, 8). What I explore below, via four case studies, is precisely this negotiation between the un-built imaginings of the little magazines and the built forms that followed them.

Drawing is not bound by the rules of building, and thus drawing can be a powerful tool with which to imagine ways to build alternative futures. To establish the legitimacy of the drawing as a form of architectural production is to assert its ability to imagine possibilities beyond the realm of the currently buildable—because of present technological, economic, or political realities. However, it is in exploiting the boundary between the un-built and the built—the drawing and the building—in order to subvert it that the kinds of architectural images produced in the context of the little magazines become most powerful. The un-built might influence the built; however, that was not what happened (at least not in the ways that were imagined at the time). This is not because the images were not in themselves powerfully engaging. But rather, because the images of a new world are more fully developed than the theories of social transformation backing them: Banham yet again provides important analysis. "Archigram is short on theory, long on draftsmanship" (Banham in Beyond Archigram, 10).

In the 1960s and 70s the little magazines expressed their collective aspirations towards a more democratic world order through drawing the kinds of cities and architectures that might inhabit that new world. Key elements of the fantastical structures they imagined have been constructed—the "Walking City" is realized in Nimitz-class aircraft carriers, cities informed by the promise of the airplane like "Instant City" have present day equivalents in the aviation-centered suburban development "Heaven's Landing." However, the change of the dominant political and economic ideology that was to accompany these imagined forms has not been realized. The technological metaphors and images the little magazines use seemingly pull in two directions. They intended to help us move towards greater collectivity and to foster "new approaches to the ideological and historical critiques of architecture's role within advanced capitalism" (Clip, Stamp, Fold, 13); yet the technological futures they imagine are instead realized by their neoliberal counterparts.


Levittown is the prototypical post war American suburb. It stands in for the housing landscape that was emerging in the United States as the little magazine generation of architects was coming of age. The kind of technological frameworks which allowed for the development of this mass produced housing typology are precisely those forms which Peter Cook in the context of Archigram later draws on. The photo in the middle was taken shortly after the Long Island housing development was completed in 1951; in it, little box-like houses are arranged in perfect rows. These finished built homes form an image of mass-produced simplicity which visually speaking is the antithesis of Peter Cook's "Plug-In City." The photograph on the following page, taken during construction, is another story. We see the house as its series of components: the pine clapboard, the washing machine, kitchen cabinets, bathtub, toilet, windows, staircase, and even picket fence are splayed out on its concrete slab foundation. In the distance we see other concrete slabs and hills of excavated ground awaiting their shipments of housing parts. Even on visual terms alone we can understand "Plug-In City" to be a re-appropriation of this image of American suburban development. The implication of Levittown in process is that the city—in this case, a suburb—is made up of units inserted into a matrix. This is directly what Archigram draws on, writing in the annotation to the drawing at the left "In this part you can see the habitations plugged into the giant network." They've exploited the medium of drawing to present an unbuilt scenario which is the crystallization of the built form of the American suburb during the process of its construction. In so doing it implies that the Levittowns of the world might be stopped mid-construction and reconfigured. However this does not happen. In speaking about the journal in general and "Plug-In City" in particular just a few years ago, Michael Webb recounts: "I think there was a hidden agenda, too. Architecture such as was being dreamed of in our magazines was unattainable, unachievable by the standard client-professional architect setup. You needed governments to do it. You needed huge resources. Look at Plug-in City, that would take the resources of a whole country. There was an implied suggestion that it was a different world" (Webb in Clip, Stamp, Fold, 34). What this misses though is that the kinds of architectural projects that were taking place at the time—the Levittowns for one—were being created with the resources of a whole country. Thus Plug-In City as an image implies its own dystopian counterpart because it draws so heavily on the built world as it exists—its only radical move in this sense is to imagine a reconfigured Levittown, rearranged at its moment of mid-construction. It is a reconfiguration of the forms produced from "standard client-professional architect setup" but does not yet imagine how forms might be generated outside of this paradigm; however hard it tries, the image is an image of forms not of processes.
CAn THIS MODEL BE R...
CAN THIS MODEL BE REAPPROPRIATED?
Ron Herron’s amazingly intricate “Walking City” project, seen at the left, was published in 1964. It, like many of Archigram’s projects, reveals a fascination with technological forms (really with their images) and the cities that might be created with them. In this case the city is comprised of massive structures atop long ‘legs’ interconnected by tubes to form a network. The massive structures appear like hybrids of military tanks, submarines, and skyscrapers turned on their sides. The notion that the structures might migrate, as indicated by the project’s title and image caption, implies a kind of collective nomadic city; a city infrastructure no longer tied to place. Instead it proposes a meandering city that moves between ocean, countryside, and present day metropolis. In the image on the top left we see the city creatures against the backdrop of the New York City skyline. That the machinelike forms of these structures are not foreign but appear as foreign objects against the current built forms of the metropolis speaks to the project’s aim to create or imagine a city whose form keeps pace with technological development.

Instead the technological metaphor suggested by Herron’s unbuilt provocation becomes a reality in the Nimitz Class aircraft carrier. The United States owns the ten of these behemoth ships currently in existence. Each one can carry dozens of military jets and houses over 6000 people. It is a moving city, a floating city, a self-sufficient living environment, a weapon. The unbuilt aspirations for collectivism through technology—through the image of technology—give way to a reality of militarism and technologies of war.
WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA
WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA?


III. & IV. “Heaven’s Landing,” stills from promotional video. Clayton, Georgia.
http://heavenslanding.com/mountain_estate_airpark.htm

Proceeding Page. Aerial Image, Heaven’s Landing in Clayton, Georgia.
Google Maps. https://maps.google.com/maps?ie=UTF-8&q=Heaven’s+Landing&fb=1&hq=google+maps+heaven’s+clayton+georgia&cid=5172092978086095467&ei=KtWsUu22KqKV7Aah6cD4Dw&ved=0CIQBEPwSMAs
The possibility of reaching the outer atmosphere charged much architectural discourse of the 1960s. Spurred on by NASA’s Blue Marble images, a kind of fervor developed around the idea of the planet as a closed system—a spaceship earth. The spaceship earth metaphor pulls in two directions: at once we see the earth as one big spaceship, and the home—a domestic spaceship—as a world in itself.

Little magazines, and the speculative projects within them, were a site where “architecture’s unprecedented investment in the reinvention of the household and domestic economy, as both scientific and a psychosocial project” played out (Clip, Stamp, Fold, 14). The Instant City participates in this dynamic, even though it re-imagines/reinvents the city rather than merely the household. These drawings suggest that the blimp metropolis might land gracefully amidst the rural landscape to dispatch urban culture—the blimp is a self-sufficient system whose only byproducts or outputs are that of culture. The Instant City can be understood as manifesting the spaceship earth mentality in its hopes for environmental self-sufficiency in order to promote greater cultural exchange; it is a cultural spaceship for spaceship earth.

Heaven’s Landing, a small housing development in Radburn, Georgia designed for pilots of small airplanes, provides a particularly poignant counterexample of how the spaceship earth metaphor has actually played out. The technology of flight creates a hyper-individualized domestic sphere. The individual might take to the sky, but flying solo and only to touch back down, parking their plane in their own garageturned-hangar. No more a vehicle for the spread of urban culture, the flying machine remains a wholly personal mode of conveyance between country and city (no longer imbued with any sense of environmental consciousness). You can fly to Atlanta for the day and be back to the mountains before sundown!
IS THIS THE FUTURE A DEMOCRACY?
IS THIS THE FUTURE ARCHITECTURE OF DEMOCRACY


In this final case study we depart from the ‘zoom’ and ‘blast-off’ aesthetic of Archigram and move back in time a bit to look at Yona Friedman’s drawings of the Ville Spatial and his theorizing of it in his small published manifesto Architecture Mobile. Friedman was interested in creating a kind of complex infrastructure in the city that floats above the ground and allows for the flexible expansion and change of dwelling units and circulation flows. He draws it initially in 1965 and continues to develop the concept for several more decades. The images we have of this city infrastructure place it both as a stand-alone object in a kind of fictive or empty space as well as within existing cities, floating above them and creating a wholly new city system—however one that is in dialog with the city’s existing forms. This is the visual analogue to his theoretical explanations of the project in Architecture Mobile (Spatial Agency Database, Yona Friedman, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/how/appropriation/groupe.detudes.darchitecture). In this manifesto he imagines that the less labour intensive forms of production enabled by the machine age will create new forms of urban life full of leisure. This is not an instant transformation but instead a gradual one and thus the infrastructure must adapt gradually and be principally informed by the citizens of the city rather than a predetermined plan.

Far from producing a city of leisure, automated production has generated new heightened forms of social inequality. The ‘Torre David’ in Caracas, Venezuela provides a visual and ideological counterexample to Friedman’s hopeful images of the future. Torre David is the popular name for what has become a vertical slum in the heart of Caracas, Venezuela. This building was intended to be a 45 story office tower, a symbol of the economic progress of Venezuela, however due to the collapse of the Venezuelan economy in 1994 the project was abandoned midway through construction. Shortly after the building began to be populated and is now occupied up to the 35th floor. In a powerful poetic reversal rather than a collectively conceived megastructural framework floating above the city, a vertical slum fills in the holes left by speculative real estate development.

Thus we are left again with Reynor Banham’s powerful insight that these unbuilt works draw new realities more fully than they critically analyze how to create them: “short on theory, long on draftsmanship” (Banham in Beyond Archigram, 10).
IS THIS THE CITY OF L
IS THIS THE CITY OF LEISURE?
Physical v. Digital Forms of Representation

P. Dugue
How do we shape and represent experiences?

Currently, society struggles with the limitations, benefits, disadvantages, and necessity of digital construction in the modern era to represent physical facets; do such digital constructions accurately represent reality or are they accessible, yet imperfect representations of physical experience?

Architectural drawing has shifted from hand drafting and hand renderings to computer aided drawing software and 3-D models. This shift in how projects are expressed materially has radically changed the way people view architecture. Unlike the hand rendering (figure 1) the 3-D model provides the user with an idealized view of the future building; this idealization represents the digital age. Computer aided 3-D models are neither personal nor experiential; one cannot feel the effort and weight of a line drawn in a digital drawing as one can in a hand rendering. It is the human error found in hand drawings that make the physical and analog more real.

Over the past few years, stores like Barnes and Noble, FreshDirect Museums, and other corporations have begun to make their work or products available online or have created digital models of their space for the public to access online. This shift in representation has changed the way people experience spaces. The Google Art Project seeks to bring artwork and images from exhibits in museums around the world to a user’s computer screen. While this accessibility has certainly pushed for a more educated international art audience, the feeling of being in front of a painting and surrounded by other people who appreciate art is lost in this digital representation. Therefore the essence of the museum being a communal public space is lost in the attempt to translate the physical museum into the digital world.
Like the art world and digital representations other icons that exist in the digital world rely on their physical counterpart to provide a reference. In this case the concepts of pirating and viruses utilize the negative connotations of the words in society to reinforce their meaning on the internet.

Our frame of reference for what it means to be creative, original, and inspiring has changed since the creation of digital media. We have translated physical boundaries and concepts into the digital world in order to add a level of clarity. Figures 1-4 show two concepts that exist in the physical world and their digital equivalents. The relationship between each pair of images does not stem from their form or function, but from the definition and societal connotation associated with the physical object. The translation of physical boundaries to the digital world helps maintain the interaction and understanding of both physical and digital concepts.

The concept of pirating in the digital world is only fully understood when compared to a physical pirate. The user understands the gravity of the word pirate, as it not only relates to the idea of illegal goods and stealing, but it also allows the user to immediately liken their illegal actions online with the illegal actions of pirates in the real world. Many of these crossovers between the physical to the digital world exist where the digital world has created a new boundary that is defined in the real world.

Another similar example is the idea of a virus: it’s infectious, it takes over part of one’s system, it is unwanted, it can be introduced anytime, and it can be the result of careless behavior. All of these characteristics of a human virus can be used when describing the seriousness of a computer virus. Digital users understand that it takes time and money in order to cure both a physical virus and a computer virus. By understanding the connection between a physical concept and its digital counterpart, a user is able to take the proper precautions and understand the seriousness of digital boundaries and concepts.
Just like the idea of pirating and viruses are a representation of something that exists in the physical world, digital social media is in many ways a reflection of traditional social relationships found in the physical world. The social relationships between friends, co-workers, and family are reflected in the symbols and icons that are found on Facebook. Facebook has transformed the idea of a friend and relationships to a click of a button.

A user’s public and social status on the web is partly defined by the number of friends that they have on Facebook, rather than the strength of relationships that they have built with individuals. Facebook has taken the idea of liking something with the physical action of giving someone a thumbs up. It has translated a positive action that exists in the real world to the digital world without also including the idea of disliking something with thumbs down.

The concept of maintaining a friendship online instead of maintaining a friendship through personal interaction is almost as alarming as the new concept of “de-friending.” This allows for a user to disregard and delete any interaction that they ever had with another user. In effect, they have deleted the other user from their life with a convenient click of a button. The idea of “following” someone on Facebook is another concept that does not rely on the physical understanding of the world, rather it stands on its own as a creation apart from the physical act of following. It has transformed the concept of following to a truly digital concept of constantly checking and monitoring what someone does rather than listening to someone or copying another person’s actions.

Social media websites like Facebook are certainly useful to maintain friendships between friends that are no longer in close proximity to each other. However, the clear boundaries between friends, acquaintances, fans, and enemies seen in the physical world become blurred when translated into the digital world.
In the modern era the once established boundaries between the physical and digital worlds are slowly beginning to disappear. As seen through examples such as Facebook, digital vs. physical representations of space, pirating and viruses, the digital world influences all aspects of life, including the design world.

Skeuomorphism surrounds us, especially within the world of design. Skeuomorphism attempts to create a smoother transition from the physical world to the digital world. For example, the images to the side represent two different types of skeuomorphisms: flat design vs. skeuomorphic design. For example, on your computer files are stored in a folder, unwanted files are placed into a recycling bin, and one can even take and store notes via applications like Apple’s iOS6 notes app, a digital notepad which features a yellow pad of paper with a tear at the top and a handwriting font. All of these digital interfaces have one feature in common; they are a digital replica or reference to a physical object. These references become contextual clues for the user to understand how to use a digital object.

Another version of Skeuomorphism arises from Flat Design; the most recent flat designs are exemplified by Apple’s new iOS7 and the new Windows 8 platform. Both platforms strip away unnecessary references to the physical object. For example, the Notes app from iOS7, in figure 1 strips away the archaic notion that a notepad must be yellow and have a tear at the top. It simplifies the function of a notepad to lines on a piece of paper, and because it is a digital app the idea of tearing a piece of paper is no longer present in its design.

With the increasing use of Flat Design, the physical links and connections in digital design are becoming less important as people begin to understand the digital world as a distinct platform that no longer needs to represent or copy the physical world.
The Shopping Cart and Subscriptions

With the creation of online shopping platforms, online sites have utilized skeuomorphisms in order for users to understand the function of their website. An example of this is the shopping cart on online stores like Barnes and Noble or Amazon. Although web stores like Amazon and online magazines are digital, we have inflicted physical boundaries onto these new digital interfaces.

There are physical boundaries that affect digital boundaries and subsequently, certain digital boundaries affect the physical world; for example, a store no longer needs to have a large storage space in an actual physical setting to service customers. Instead, stores like Amazon can have warehouses or local vendors located anywhere in the world and use a delivery system to bring the product to the customer. As an online store, Amazon utilizes the graphic of a shopping cart to help the user understand the concept that they are buying a product within a digital marketplace or store, that will be shipped from a remote storage space to the user’s location. Sites like Amazon also increase accessibility as a user is not limited to a physical or geographical area in order to buy a product.

From figures 2 and 4 one can see that popular ideas and physical objects have been intentionally incorporated into popular websites in order to give users a context clue as to the function of that aspect of the site. Icons such as an envelope, symbolizing an online subscription option, help the user to intuit the idea of online subscriptions, as the icon mirrors the concept of mailing a subscription card within the physical world; usually found in the center of magazines, a subscription card confirms that a customer agrees to receive future publications from the company or magazine.

The design of digital experiences, icons, and interfaces incorporate some aspect of the physical world into its use. There is a reliance on the past and the analog world, in order for users to understand the translation of physical spaces into digital ones. Digital constructions are somewhat limited in their reliance on the physical world in order to communicate concepts and because the analog and physical world still are a part of our everyday experience, the ideas that surround the physical concept cannot be redefined in the digital world.
IS THE DIGITAL A NEW VERSION OF OUR PHYSICAL REALITY?
IS THE DIGITAL A NEW VERSION OF OUR PHYSICAL REALITY?

We must deviate from the law-like allegiance to the white walled, context free, privileged gallery space, as the standardized form of displaying both art and architecture. The architecture of the modern gallery has become a prescribed design that presents a conflicting and limited dialogue between art and culture.

Brian O’Doherty, an artist and theorist, published *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* in 1976 as three separate articles in Artforum Magazine. O’Doherty provided a nuanced analysis of the typology of the modern gallery, classifying it as machine that actively resists the elements of the exterior world, or context, in order to give privilege and focus to the art, or content. As a consequence to this agenda, the architecture of the modern gallery has become an unvarying typology – windowless, white, sterile, regulated. In this division between interior and exterior, the gallery becomes a privileged space, a place with strict visiting hours, curated views and scripted experience. Within these confines the white wall serves as the surface of content but the barrier of context. The archetypal construction of the modern gallery presents a conundrum in the reception of and access to art. As Miwon Kwon in *One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity* articulates, “[t]he modern gallery/museum space, for instance, with its stark white walls, artificial lighting (no windows), controlled climate, and pristine architectonics, was perceived not solely in terms of basic dimensions and proportion but as an institutional disguise, a normative exhibition convention serving an ideological function. The seemingly benign architectural features of a gallery/museum, in other words, were deemed to be coded mechanisms that actively disassociate the space of art from the outer world, furthering the institution’s idealist imperative of rendering itself and its hierarchization of values ‘objective,’ ‘disinterested,’ and ‘true.”’

As Kwon articulates, the gallery has become an exclusive space that begins to feel uninhabitable; the physical spaces seem to be designed without the human body in mind. According to O’Doherty, “the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your own body, seem superfluous, an intrusion. The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not – or are tolerated only as kinesthetic manekins for further study.” The privileged architecture of the gallery space places the artist and the art object in a complicated relationship within the potential of the field. The lack of accessibility in conjunction with the intellectual constraints impede on the opportunity for art to be a catalyst for sociopolitical reform. The standardization of art as separate from environment discourages art from influencing environment. The architecture of the display space must fluctuate to harness the full potential of the gallery as an institution within a larger network. The opaque, windowless walls, symbolize an initial misalignment and reluctance for a sociopolitical discourse between the urban landscape and the display space.

Gaining mobility and notability, multiple artists and curators began resisting the isolated, timeless, privileged status of modern gallery space starting in the 1970s. Interventions, both physical and conceptual, started to deconstruct the complicated presence of the white wall. Michael Asher, Bruce Nauman, James Turrell and Henry Urbach are a selection of artists and curators who present works or exhibitions that challenge the norm of a context free display space.

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CASE STUDY: MICHAEL ASHER

In 1970 Michael Asher radically transformed a gallery at Pomona College into something other. With the insertion and subtraction of strategic architectural elements, the space was transformed into an inhabitable sculpture, a place where the human body was welcomed and occupation was encouraged. By eliminating the door, the archetypal and tangible division of interior from interior, the gallery became integrated into the urban context. This simple move transformed the space from the conventional typology of the modern gallery to a gallery where context became content. By resisting this trend, Asher flipped the spectacle: the inhabitable sculpture of the gallery was now framing the urban context (II). Visitors were invited from the street to look back out upon it. Rosalind Krauss explores Michael Asher’s Pomona installation in her coauthored textbook, *Art Since 1900*, Volume 2, and states, “[t]he wrenching open of the private confines of the museum to make them entirely porous to the public entry, 24 hours a day, moved the work beyond the aesthetic domain and into something that is more properly called the sociopolitical.”

In alignment with Krauss’s discussion, this intervention strips away the privileged status and presence of the gallery. Michael Asher productively complicates the position of the gallery within the public realm; he provided more than an abstract collaboration between gallery and context, he situated a gallery within context. As the term “installation” connotes, this intervention was temporary. For less than a month, February 13 to March 8, 1970, the gallery was seamlessly integrated with the street, encouraging viewers, perhaps unexpected, to engage with the permeable boundary of the gallery. However, starting March 9, the doors began to be reinstalled and the partition reinforced. The temporality of Michael Asher’s intervention illustrates the parameters and elements that the white walled gallery is constantly working to exclude.

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3 Ibid, 584.
CAN THE GALLERY BE INTEGRATED WITH THE URBAN LANDSCAPE?
can the gallery be integrated with the urban landscape?
Body Pressure

Press as much of the front surface of your body (palms in or out, left or right cheek) against the wall as possible. Press very hard and concentrate. Form an image of yourself (suppose you had just stepped forward) on the opposite side of the wall pressing back against the wall very hard. Press very hard and concentrate on the image pressing very hard. (The image of pressing very hard) press your front surface and back surface toward each other and begin to ignore or block the thickness of the wall. (Remove the wall)

Think how various parts of your body press against the wall; which parts touch and which do not. Consider the parts of your back which press against the wall; press hard and feel how the front and back of your body press together. Concentrate on the tension in the muscles, pain where bones meet, fleshy deformations that occur under pressure; consider body hair, perspiration, odors (smells). This may become a very erotic exercise.
As Brian O’Doherty articulates, the modern gallery attempts to exclude any indication of the present. The gallery has become a place to escape the spatio-temporal conditions of the exterior world, one where actively acknowledging her presence in space is avoided. In 1974, Bruce Nauman displayed “Body Pressure”, a performance, that consisted simply of a set of instructions and a wall. The display presented a series of movements and actions that the visitor was encouraged to perform within the gallery. Nauman’s work instantly resisted this dissociation with time and required the visitor to acknowledge her physical presence within the space of the gallery. As articulated by Robin Clark in Phenomenal: California Light, Space, Surface, “Asher, Irwin, Nauman, Nordman, and Turrell were keen in understanding that as the materiality of art decreased, contact became the object of focus, and that architecture, the so-called mother of the arts, is also the mother of context.”

The content was manipulated by temporal context. The architecture defines the intuition—the structure either grants or denies the permeability between exterior and interior, or in other words, time conscious and time absent.

It is through context, the awareness of bodies in space, when the art objects began to allow for connections and reflections that expand beyond the context “free” modern gallery. Bruce Nauman established unexpected spatial situations to both force the viewer to acknowledge her physical presence and curate specific actions. The tactile relationship between body and art emphasizes the ephemerality of the present. Although Nauman is actively and successfully breaking the typology of gallery as a time capsule, his piece is still deeply entrenched within the constraints of the scripted and confined prototypical display space. The clarity of instructions produce perfectly scripted movements. Despite resisting the time-absent realm, “Body Pressure” produces an equally curated museum experience. The visitor gains awareness of her body in time, but is still confined within the structure of another agenda. Although Bruce Nauman complicates the projected circulation within the modern gallery, he simply presents another system for the visitor to adhere. Bruce Nauman’s “Body Pressure” is insufficient in entirely freeing the visitor to truly inhabit the space.

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CASE STUDY: JAMES TURRELL

I. http://momaps1.org/exhibitions/view/170
II. http://momaps1.tumblr.com/post/49796091213/happy-70th-birthday-james-turrell-this-year-also
The architecture of a gallery denotes the agenda of the institution. In a sterilized gallery, where context is relentlessly resisted, art objects are presented in a pseudo “closed” or context free environment. The work becomes an object in isolation, purposefully segregated from the exterior world, and stagnant. In 1986, James Turrell cut a rectangle out of a square ceiling at MoMA PS1 in Long Island, New York. As Rosalind Krauss states, “It was an installation that threw everything onto the experience for the viewer…” In response to Turrell’s insertion the agency of reception shifts from the institution to the viewer. The installation engages in a constant dialogue between art and environment, content and context. Viewers enter the space unaware of the materiality of the ephemeral and familiar framed landscape. The forever evolving hue of the sky forces, or allows, visitors to engage with her body in a specific spatio-temporal constraint. The context is continually informing the content. A complicated discourse emerges around the installation, for any two visits can be incomparable. In the room of rectilinear extraction, the body engages with the exterior world through a crafted and meticulously curated space. Ergonomic benches line the perimeter of the square room to encourage “meetings” – to allow a perceptual discourse between body and environment to transpire. As Craig Adcock articulates in James Turrell: The Art of Light and Space, “He devised ways of persuading the walls inside architectural spaces to hold light and to engage viewers in the act of perception.” By removing a portion of the architectural element of a ceiling, the gallery is positively transformed from a space of exclusion to a place of inclusion.

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9 Rosalind Krauss, Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, London: Thames & Hudson, 698
CASE STUDY: THE GLASS HOUSE

I. http://philipjohnsonglasshouse.org/history/
III. Ibid.
IV. http://philipjohnsonglasshouse.org/history/
“What happens to the function and agenda of a gallery if it is not opaque, sterile and uninhabitable?”

question posed to Henry Urbach
at Glass House Center, 11.22.13

The Glass House, designed by Phillip Johnson in 1949, has a twofold function, as both an iconic dwelling and a place for exhibitions. In 2012, Henry Urbach became the director of the Glass House with the agenda of revitalizing the historical landmark. As director, Urbach is in charge of crafting the narrative between landscape and structure, exhibition and space, history and future. The complicated nature between history and future situates the Glass House, an exhibition space, as an anomaly within the typology of a context-free modern gallery. Before passing away, Phillip Johnson meticulously designated the location for all of his possessions throughout the multiple structures on the site in New Canaan, Connecticut. On the Mies van der Rohe table, Phillip Johnson placed both an ashtray and Giacometti sculpture entitled, Night. However before Johnson’s death, the sculpture went missing in the process of restoration. The Glass House was passed on with a void in the iconic living room. Urbach created a novel vision for the future of the program, that ingeniously integrates the contextual history of the landmark into future exhibitions. In this continued, yet remodelled, historical trajectory, the Glass House, as an exhibition space, defies the “unshawdowed, white, clean, artificial” space that O’Doherty defines of the archetypal gallery, and situates itself as a space in conversation between past and present, art and history. Urbach has created a rotating sculpture program that fills the void of the Giacometti sculpture. A new work activates the space every three to six months, drawing on the sensational experience and history of the space. The context frames the content and complicates the multilayered presence and meanings of the various sculptures. Any of these sculptures, in a context-free space, would be stagnant and unimaginative. The excitement and discourse is ignited by the contemporary adaption of a contextual framework.


Urbach, Henry, Conversation at Glass House, November 22, 2013.
Can a space function as a dwelling?
can a space function as a dwelling + a gallery?
Before describing what the gallery is today, one should first understand what it is not. The gallery today is no longer a protective shell for artwork to be displayed. It has moved away from the concept described in Brian O’Doherty’s Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space as the notion of a gallery as an “unshadowed, white, clean, artificial” space devoted to the display of art no longer applies to today (14). O’Doherty’s notion adheres to a framework of “object introduced into the gallery” which “frames the gallery and its laws.” (15) Instead, in the contemporary gallery it is the artist’s intent, perspective, and physical presence that have gained traction. The gallery’s goals have shifted, no longer seeking to exclude “from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is ‘art’” (14). Instead, it serves as a platform that denies art its isolationist components and amplifies conceptual agendas. Because personal perspective reigns in the gallery, the space has become an extension of the artistic mind to be fused with the perception and experiences of the audience.

Theories about boundaries have recently arisen as significant concepts in gallery work. Behind this emergence is the notion that the gallery has become a point of perspectival convergence, where the boundary between two minds must be crossed, broken, and redefined to result in the merging of two identities. As such, the white wall of the gallery has become obsolete, as the destruction of physical and mental boundaries has become the focus. Thus, physical distinctions brought on by the white wall are unnecessary. In the following artist case studies, different notions of boundaries are broken, explored, and constructed within the gallery space.
"Executed in January 1972, shortly after Acconci had joined the distinguished Sonnabend Gallery in the Soho section of Manhattan, the work constitutes of a prototypical instillation, a constructed intrusion into the pristine white gallery space of the period. In one section of the exhibition area Acconci built a low wooden ramp that merged gently with the floor; hidden under the ramp for the duration of the exhibition, Acconci masturbated, "spreading his seed" over the floor, urged on by the viewers' footsteps above him. Two speakers installed in the corners of the space transmitted his onanistic fantasies, spoken into a microphone thereby invoking his viewer's complicity in his activities. "You're on my left... you're moving away but I'm pushing my body against you, into the corner... you're bending your head down, over me... I'm pressing my eyes into your hair..."

- Vito Acconci by Kate Linker

Vito Acconci and “Seedbed”

As the gallery’s priorities shift from content to context, the gallery wall in this piece is liberated from its role as neutral frame for art and opens to interpretation by artists. In Seedbed, Vito Acconci ripped the white wall from its vertical axis, removed its pristine glamour, and transformed it into a ramp. Thus the floor, rather than the wall, becomes activated as he transforms the gallery into a performance space. Yet, he retains the gallery wall in its original role as an exhibition surface by involving both artist and audience in the piece itself. The two entities converge, becoming the exhibit as the platform acts not only as a boundary, but as a surface on which the artist presents his work.

While Vito Acconci deconstructs previous notions of the gallery white wall in Seedbed, he primarily examines the question of boundaries and its role in the exhibition space. His use of boundaries in the gallery is at the same time subtle and incredibly dramatic. The ramp, which gently slopes towards the floor, eases the public into the performance. While the ramp seems to separate the artist from the public, it also serves as the path into the piece. It creates the illusion of separation between the audience and the artist while in fact it is the means through which the two are brought closer to one another. In Seedbed, boundaries are used as a means to connect the artist to the public in order to merge the two perspectives into a single experience. This is supported by the reciprocal aspect of the performance.

While Acconci’s act of masturbation is in essence a solitary act, he places the public in an essential role as they become the driving elements of his fantasies. As his voice fills the space, he exerts his influence over the people present and thus acts as a dominating force in the gallery. As such, he creates a parallel between himself and the influence an art exhibit has over the gallery space. Just as a series of pieces directs the public throughout the space, Acconci creates the same effect through his presence and voice.

In essence, Acconci aims to have maximum effect on the audience through a minimal yet effective boundary. This is perhaps best described in Kate Linker’s work Vito Acconci. She describes the piece as an “indication of the capacity of such intrusions to transform the physical or affective characteristics of a space” (Linker 44). One can expand on this description and add that Seedbed is not only a study of the intrusion of boundaries but also on the limitations of physical boundaries. In his work, Acconci transforms the space in order to merge the consciousness of the participant with his own. Meanwhile, he demonstrates that while the physical boundary of the ramp can be perceived as a separating force, it in fact creates the necessary illusion of two distinctive spaces in order to bring participants into the experience.
“Imponderabilia”
by Marina Abramović and Ulay

Performed in 1977 by artistic duo Marina Abramović and Ulay at the Galleria Comunale d’Arte Moderna, Imponderabilia brings visitors into direct contact with not only the boundaries of the gallery but also those between the artist and the audience. The two artists stand upright against the white walls of the gallery, mimicking the position of an art piece exhibited in a gallery. Without clothing, the artists confronted visitors, instilling discomfort by forcing a normally taboo interaction with an art piece, provoking an examination of socially construed personal boundaries. As participants hesitate and then awkwardly make their way past the two artists, a direct relationship between artist and viewer is forcefully generated. Imponderabilia uses the inherent boundaries between art and the audience in order to create a performance that deconstructs the division between artist and viewer to create a new relationship between the two. At the same time, by dint of its confrontational nature, the experience also amplifies personal boundaries constructed by society. Imponderabilia serves as an art performance that simultaneously dissolves and reinforces the boundaries of the gallery through radical interaction between artist, art piece, and viewer.

In her three-month long performance piece, Marina Abramović yet again challenges the barrier between artist and viewer. For the months of March, April, and June in 2010, Marina Abramović captured the public’s gaze in her own from across a table set up in the Museum of Modern Art. The gallery loses all meaning in this performance. Its boundaries are no longer a force to be worked with or against as they have become negligible. The boundaries instead become entirely personal and physical. Instigating interactions in personal, intimate space that remained separated, Abramović sought to create a shared experience solely through a focused gaze. With each new visitor, she seems to have to overcome her body’s own physical and mental limitations in order to gather the entirety of her concentration and project herself forward. Only in this way could she establish a shared experience. In this instance, Marina Abramović has effectively done away with physical boundaries.

Marina Abramović and “The Artist is Present”

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Where does the gallery end?
Where does the gallery end?
“La situazione antispettiva” by Olafur Eliasson

Artist Olafur Eliasson takes another approach in the attempt to dissolve the gallery space. In Eliasson’s work, he manipulates the visual perspective of the gallery in order to create an entirely new environment. Thus he toys with the gallery’s usual ability to transport the visitor to a new environment. Yet, instead of presenting the visitor with a sterile, untouched illusion, he creates environments which inspire dramatic reactions. One example of his negation of the gallery’s influence is his installation piece “La situazione antispettiva” (2003). In this piece, first exhibited in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, Eliasson creates a compact, unique environment in which he has control of every component. As is clear in the piece, he focuses on manipulating light and its play on material in order to create a disorienting effect. While other artists interrogating the concept of boundaries found new ways of eliminating separations between the artist and the public, Olafur Eliasson reclaims that boundary and removes himself from the gallery. In “La situazione antispettiva”, Eliasson ultimately reinforces the disorienting effect of the white walled gallery and embraces it.
The four case studies, spanning over 30 years, demonstrate that the gallery has been repeatedly reinterpreted in myriad ways. In the two earlier cases, the artists remain aware of the gallery space and work against the boundaries inherent in the space. In the 21st century, artists work to negate the gallery’s influence by either denying its role as an exhibition space or creating entirely new environments in which the gallery is no longer perceivable. Despite this transformation, the underlying trend between the two is that the gallery is no longer simply an exhibition space. It has become a force against which artist consciously work. The success of all these pieces lies in the fact that they acknowledge the power of the gallery as a historical, social, and temporal force in art, but each challenges rather than succumbs to its influence. Each artist redefines the parameters of its influence, modulating the effect of context on their work. The space no longer acts as a rubric for art. Breaking from past models, it is instead the work that defines the gallery.

Cited Sources:
The boundaries between different forms of expression have been broken. How have these gained acceptance in the art world?

As we enter a gallery space, we immediately look at the white wall. Not for the purity of the white, but for the break of color from some painting or other. We go to museums to see paintings, sculptures and even photography, which has recently become an accepted form of art. In the past 5 years, the boundaries between this more conservative concept of art and different forms of expression have been broken. How have these gained acceptance in the art world? By, in some way or another, conforming to the standards required of visual art. Through various methods such as exhibiting in spaces associated with art, receiving critiques from publications centered in art, and, ultimately, penetrating the exhibitions of conventional artists, several forms of expression rise as art.

The new movements are as diverse as rap and film to the showcasing of religious practices. What they all share is a certain popularity in our everyday life that we normally do not choose to exhibit as art. In galleries today we can appreciate a shift to heighten the mainstream. On one hand, the heightening of pop culture, such as popular music and film; on the other hand, the reintegration of religion into the art world. After years of gaining inspiration from religion, the content of art became secular in an attempt to stop art from being solely representational. Now, religious practices are being displayed as art for the value in their everlasting presence in day-to-day life.

In our time, topics we encounter every day such as religion and pop culture, are over-discussed, over-exposed and, as a result, over-simplified. By bringing these subjects into the museum as objects of art, we can, in this elevated context, retrieve their value as forms of expression. As these exhibits gain forceful momentum, established artists, like Yayoi Kusama, reintegrate these practices into their own art, implicitly demonstrating the acceptance of these boundary-breaking forms of the expression in the art world.

Quotidian phenomena, when put in the context of the gallery, become easier to validate as forms of art. We can also utilize this transformative quality to put unfamiliar practices, such as rap or the whirling dervishes, into perspective as art. Through the lens of art, we can come to rediscover the importance of these topics deeply ingrained in our culture.
On July 10 2013, Jay Z performed at the Pace Gallery in New York. A gallery with white walls ready for mounting pieces of visual art or a space that could hold an exhibition of sculptures. However, in this case the exhibition centered around a performance. Thousands around the world have seen Jay Z in concert, but the few who had access to this small space not only saw and heard his performance, but became a part of it. An entangled concert.

By performing in this scale and creating a close connection to the audience, not only was the rapper’s music on display, but his energy. In itself, his presence in the room became a form of art in the way it excited and engaged those present. With this bold move out of the stadium and into the gallery space, Jay Z redefined the boundaries of art. The neutral enclosure provided an intimate stage that led to interaction with the artist, and with his art. The audience members had the chance to have a one-on-one concert and dance and sing with the rapper. He tore away at the line of bodyguards surrounding an artist at a major concert, he broke the boundary of fame. With this move, Jay Z humbled his artistry, allowing for it to grow in a different direction that we often associate with the conventional visual art displayed in a small gallery space.

This new direction allows us to reevaluate the importance of rap culture in our society. We have to face the fact that, just like today we study poets like Whitman or Keats in the classroom, in a hundred years, in order to understand our times, future generations will study our music. Street culture began out of rebellion, and grew to appeal to a much wider audience than any establishment. It is due to this overwhelming power that it deserves to be closely examined and reflected upon, in a context like that of the Pace Gallery, with rappers that have had an influence on the appearance of modern day pop culture, such as Jay-Z.
sculptures of speakers
40 speakers fill a room. Perfect black cubes with a spine of black rod ending in a tripod. The shape itself is a work of engineered art. Many engineers would deem the sheer potency of the sound system art as well. Yet as soon as these instruments begin to fill the room with the notes of the Forty-Part-Motet, appearance, or anything perceived through vision, is forgotten.

The speakers stand in a room at the Cloisters in upstate New York. This is a part of the city’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, renowned for its qualities as a sanctuary. Originally a religious center, it now remains as a testament to the power of peaceful meditation. It is in this setting that the Met decided to exhibit Janet Cardiff’s work. The melody is a wonderfully updated version of a religious chant, each note inspiring a refreshing take on religion.

The Met asks the listener to rediscover the brilliance of religion. Today, we are focused on the institutional aspects of the church as they weigh down hopes for a modernized society. This exhibit reestablishes the beauty of spirituality and the importance of heightened reflection.

Moreover, the combination of the traditional church setting holding 40 minimalist speakers in perfect technical sync raises the conversation of value. Now, we give so much importance to things that are digital, ephemeral. In this setting we can value both the permanent for its awe-inducing grandure and the gift of technology. Together, in perfect harmony, these two components create an environment for the mind to wander, to be blank and full emotion simultaneously.

In this exhibit, the setting is unconventional, the medium is unconventional, and the result is the true art-meditation.

II. http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-6Ec42hLdGvY/T7kuSlZywpi/AAAAAAAAACmU/UZnBcUhk3zs/s1600/whirling+dervish.jpg
III. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/whirling_dervishes_Rumi_Fest_2007.jpg
IV. http://www.killermoviereviews.com/uploads/Whirling%20dervishes.jpg
spinning into religion

Today, Middle Eastern culture, particularly in its relation to Islam, is the subject of daily discussion and analysis of every major media outlet. However, the association of this culture with the news distances the Western world from the reality of the spiritual aspect of the religion. Out of ignorance we seek to find out more, but, out of fear, we are biased to find only the bad.

Sufism is a religious branch of Islam that centers on mysticism. As a small component of a major religion, Sufism has slowly been overshadowed by stronger, even extreme, aspects of Islam. However, their focus on spirituality and devotion to the Sufi lifestyle is inspiring. In particular, the dedication of whirling Dervishes who, in a meditative almost trance-like state, spin for hours. The long, colorful, heavy skirts and the cyclical rotation of the neck to follow the dead-weight head make for a stunning sight. A sight the Museum of Fine Arts, determined was worthy of an exhibit.

In the middle of the lobby’s tall gallery space, the Dervish twirled for a little over half an hour, taking layers off his heavy velvet skirts to reveal vibrant colors that as he turned meshed together. There was trance-inducing music playing in the background, but the trance truly and simply began and ended with the concentration of the single Dervish spinning endlessly. The audience stares in awe, falling deeper into admiration of one man’s focus.

An aspect of religion, the religion we tend to misunderstand most, displayed for its art, for its beauty, for its power to inspire. The gallery space allows the viewer to reevaluate this religion from a spiritual point of view. It removes the threat of ignorance and provides an easier way to understand the religion, a method to relate to it based on beauty rather than feel forced to take a stand on differing principles. It can inspire the beginning of an education, inspire respect for Islam and inspire awe at the power of the context of the museum in our reevaluation of the meaning of art.
So, you go to a gallery and there are two doors leading to two distinct spaces. One of them houses over twenty of Yayoi Kusama’s colorful, renowned paintings hanging on pristine white walls. The other, pitch black with the exception of the images streaming from a floor-length screen, hosts Kusama’s experiments with poetry and the moving image and her exercise on spirituality. Which one do you choose? Try not to be influenced by the massive line outside the dark room; make this your own decision.

Yayoi Kusama has been active in Japan since 1950. She has successfully evolved over time and locations to remain relevant and fresh. This new exhibit at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York City’s Meatpacking District focuses on love and loss, as Kusama expresses her grief over the death of her partner.

The paintings in the white room are fun and bold. The lights display, the strange tentacle room, the video of Kusama playing on repeat are all also fun and bold. And interactive. These rooms appeal to senses beyond sight. The playful spatial interaction. seeing oneself in the mirrored walls as part of the art, listening to the artist’s voice draw you in with an incantation-style recitation of her poem in Japanese. These innovative elements draw people in. We live in an age of the overwhelming of the senses. A genuinely exciting sensation now necessarily must involve several senses and even appeal to transform our mental state. Kusama created a space that reflects and blocks normalcy, and channels the visitor’s thoughts in a contemplative direction.

In order to achieve this effect, Kusama employs moving image, the sound of her own voice reciting and the reversal of the white wall. These were all components used in the aforementioned examples. Kusama’s appropriations of these methods demonstrates their power as they are introduced in the art world.

Ultimately, when an artist goes for the white wall, the artists forgoes the spotlight. These exhibits that rely on the senses make the visitor the final product. It is the visitor’s mind that completes the work through the experience.

Kusama offers the curricular form of validation. An artist known for reinventing herself chooses to break the boundaries of forms of expression as her next move to remain relevant.

Art is moving in a more direct and obvious way instigate very poignant emotional reactions. Is it because we are desensitized? We need stronger emotions today. Every generation has felt that need to one-up the preceding generation. We just have so many mediums, so many combinations, so many ways to mix.
IS THIS ENOUGH TODAY?
HIS ENOUGH TODAY?
Architecture has forever been a field that challenges itself. Designers of all cultures, ages, and experiences continually develop new tendencies that evolve into world wide trends, but most often, not without some resistance. Those involved in architectural history and design have seen many styles, many buildings, that push the norm beyond what people of the times have thought to be appropriate. But when does that initial shock fade? How does an architect justify such sharp divergences that causes uproar in the architectural scene? And most importantly, what is it that makes those sharp divergences ultimately palatable?

Europe, the home of many famous architects and their architectural creations, provides for us a library of projects, that at one point caused controversy and challenged the cultural notion of tradition versus avant-garde. Over the course of stylistic development, there have always been key designs that push the limits of what is comfortable. However, the process of reacting and adjusting to these unfamiliar buildings has, ultimately, been the key to further innovation.

So where are the boundaries? There are always lines to cross when taking risks, but how do we understand where those limits lie? Ultimately, the game of architectural design, for those looking to be innovative and modern, is a game of risks. Pushing all norms in every societal, psychological, and political facet to test the lengths of architectural limits within the public sphere.

Using four case studies, we can see that architectural innovation challenges conditions such as political acceptance, aesthetic similarity to the surroundings, relative scale, and cultural purpose. What is important though, is to understand if risk is balanced with success which ultimately determines the overall acceptance of the building. While structures can completely contradict historical vernacular there is an expectation for artistic aesthetics that achieve a specific goal. If the necessary balance is maintained, we will see in the following examples that time is the best medicine for controversy.

But if risk supercedes the society’s approval in its entirety, the building is ultimately unsuccessful and achieves neither architecture nor revolution.
“a ridiculous piece of fantasy”
- Chicago Tribune

“an alien invasion on a historical landmark”
- Europe Art Forum

“Sacrilegious. A despotic act”
- National Public Radio
More than 8 million people visit the Louvre each year. “When you ask the visitors, ‘why are you coming to the Louvre?’ they give three answers,” Henri Loyrette, the president and director of the Louvre, says, “for the Mona Lisa, for the Venus de Milo, and for the pyramid.” However, the gleaming three-story piece of glass geometry was not always a destination of its own. Prior to the start of its construction and even during its initial stages, the public was hostile towards this modern divergence. Before the Louvre was a palace or a museum, it was a medieval fortress; to infiltrate that historical legacy with an installation that contradicted the established classical style seemed utterly inappropriate to locals and politicians. Yet, as we have seen over time the pyramid has not only enriched the Louvre plaza, but has also established itself as a symbol for one of the top art museums in the world. With the shift from hostile reactions in the 1980s to a world symbol only a few years after, we see that stylistic risk was balanced with honoring the cultural significance of housing world class art, by creating a symbolic installation that can be understood as art in itself.
“a tumorous monster”
-Damien Lentini, Australian Institute of Art

“looks like a discarded human organ”
-Journalist Ute Pietsch

“merely a friendly alien”
-Cook+Fournier
Kunsthaus Graz is a contemporary art museum located in Graz, Austria. The building was built as part of the European Capital of Culture celebrations in 2003 and has since become an architectural icon in the city. As proven by the quotes, the initial reactions to the way in which the museum diverged from the traditional urban landscape was somewhat uncomfortable. It became an icon in the movement of blob architecture, a symbol in the trend of “alien” art museums, and a bold statement in the Graz district. Although the original remarks were controversial, Kunsthaus Graz has evolved into a beloved icon because of its innovative design that parallels the highly advanced and technological collection within it. The building not only houses a high quality contemporary art collection, but also makes an artistic statement in its own materiality; in fact, one of the art pieces is ingrained in the external material. 930 40 Watt fluorescent rings are embedded into the outer skin, with varying levels of illumination. This piece allows the building itself to become part of the collection by fusing architecture with New Media, bold but appropriate. Over time it has truly evolved into what the architects, Cook and Fournier, consider it: the friendly alien.
“Flashy new showcase, held together by extra-strong glue, just not enough to make its parts connect.”

-Rowan Moore, The Observer

“Just does not fit in.”

-Architecturelist

“Having lived in Seville, and seen this being built, I can confirm it’s best viewed from a distance...when you are looking in the opposite direction...with your eyes closed”

-resident, interviewed in New York Times
Metropol Parasol is a structure encouraging the use of public space, located at La Encarnación square in Sevilla, Spain. Started in 2005 and finished in 2011, this project is a combination of six wooden parasols in the form of giant mushrooms, designed by J Mayer H Architects. Commonly known as “Las Setas” (meaning the mushrooms), Metropol Parasol consists of four levels that include an Antiquarium, a central market, an open air public plaza, and panoramic terraces that include a restaurant. In 2011, it was established as the world’s largest wooden structure, however, its appearance, location, delays, and cost overruns in construction resulted in public controversy. Yet, with some time, the public has warmed up to this wooden installation. Although there was slight aversion, people have begun to embrace the unique relationship between the historical and the contemporary city that the timber construction ultimately achieves. The architect’s intention was to renovate the public space, which is very important in Spanish culture. With this in mind, Metropol Parasol has successfully modified this social center with space, restaurants, tourism, and, modernity. Due to the design risks taken, the public space has been rejuvenated socially, economically, and architecturally.
“The octopus would ruin Prague’s panorama”
-Mayor of Prague

“The striking conceit is too much for the delicate grain and texture of the historic quarter.”
-Director of Prague’s National Gallery

“It reminds me of the film Flubber from 1997 starring Robin Williams.”
-Prague.net
In 2007, Jan Kaplický and his design of the green blob won the competition for the Czech National Library. Directly after the announcement both the proposal and the architect received intense criticism. Prominent figures in the Czech community, both political and artistic, found themselves battling with the idea of this design moving forward. The President of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus was overheard saying, “he would be willing to prevent the building going ahead with his own body” (Radio Prague). But is this not the same pattern of pushing the limits only to eventually receive high architectural acclaim? Couldn’t Jan Kaplický become the next protagonist of modern construction testing the boundaries of historical style? No, not this time. In 2010, after years of debate, the design was dropped, crushed, by what a former director of the National Library, called ‘Czech narrow-mindedness.’ So what prevented the Octopus from being the next big project? Was it the color, the culture, the setting, the district, the program, the politics?

(Ultimately, yes, it was everything.)