

Notes on the Adaptative Reuse of Program *John Mcmorrough*

"From the antique (a world of form) to the program (a local fragment of a social pattern), this suggests a swing in the architectural psychological orientation almost too violent to be creditable."

John Summerson, "The Case for a Theory of Modern Architecture" (1957)

There are multiple definitions of program (LIST), but even within the confines of architecture the term's meaning is multiple. Its primary architectural definition is of course the "brief," that tabulation of quantities and designations constituting the initiation of the project. That is, some uses or need to which architecture is applied. The range or extent of those designations present a range from the expansive (from multi-volume reports such as the descriptions of to the terse (the brief for the Chicago Tribune completion of 1922, which comes down to "the most beautiful building in world") - the difference between these extremes demonstrates abstract difference, as well the growth of the brief over the last 80 years). If program is like a definition before the fact, the way that needs to be responded to is multifold. But interesting multiplicity is not the apparent differences in the accommodation of program, but rather the conceptual similarity that can be found in a number of architectural responses, to construct a matrix of possibility vis-à-vis program is worth exploring. This effort has been somewhat artificially confined to the adaptations of program within so-called "advanced architecture production" throughout

the twentieth century. There would be other, more fruitful, means of exploring this topic, in corporate practice, for example, but the interest here on a conceptual framework trumps the possibility of more wide spread applicability.

How do we define program and begin such a history? In delineating the problem of program, where does the story begin? The trajectory is long, in some sense it is the space of the entire history of architecture, however, in setting out the conception of the problem of program as a particularly modern issue, in distinction to historic inevitabilities, it is possible to delineate the particular object of program, especially reflecting back on John Summerson's "The Case for a Theory of Modern Architecture" of 1957 where he distinguished program as the novel innovation of modernism. In trying to establish that which is constitutively different in the modern, Summerson set out a number of plausible motivations. After rehearsing a series of false coherencies (geometry and biological metaphors) Summerson, in following Bruno Zevi on organic architecture, come to the conclusion that modern architecture is based "on a social idea and not on a figurative idea". While this position has been superseded, even by Summerson himself (contextualize this moment) it offers an intriguing premise, that it is program which is the model of coherence (or the underpinning referent) for modern architecture. To quote Summerson, "it is only in the last century or so that program has ceased to be evaluated as merely quantitatively and has come to be evaluated qualitatively. This to do with the fact that program has become more complex, more challenging, and therefore more susceptible to qualitative generalizations and evaluations". Here it could be stressed that this complexity has more than an individual significance (complex form), it is social, urban, and institutional configurations that was seen as increasing in complexity. What this means for design is quite particular; that the formal embodiment of modern architecture is based on a non-formal principle. Summerson notes this when pointing out that modernism is "missing an architectural language." Most intriguing is his conclusion, "that it is quite possible that the missing language will remain missing", that program is un-codeable in its resistance to specific configuration analogies between program and form, and the possibility, he concludes, that it will remain so. This tension may be a key motivator of architectural development throughout the twentieth century. The passage is quite useful because it posits conceptual similarity in the face of apparent difference, that apart from, or aside from appearance program provides coherence, not only at the level of building, but also at the level of the discourse modern architecture.

The effort at hand is to address the recurrent issue of program within architectural discourse, especially as it operates as a problematic evocation in relation to its (architecture's) disciplinary competencies. To that end the objective is less to delineate the status of program at this moment, but to reflect on the future of program by way of a brief genealogy of its past by modeling a series of containment strategies of program, and to discuss the idea of the adaptive re-use of program. Adaptive re-use is already an architectural term, one which describe the changing of a given structure from one use to another. The idea here is to understand program as such an existing structure, as an idea inhabited by a number of dif-

ferent architectures and their attendant ideologies. That is how the notion of program is used and re-used, affirmed and rejected - the relations to which can be seen as the primary (even hypothetically for our purposes) motivator of decisions within architecture and to examine fragmentation evidence of such a secret history in diagram, images, text, hearsay and other such imaginary relations. Program is one of many singular aspect which together defined architecture multiplicity (other include form, structure, material, construction, technique...) but an exercise at hand to sustain Summerson premise and in possibility to constructor (secrete) history which sets out program as a primary instigator of architecture.

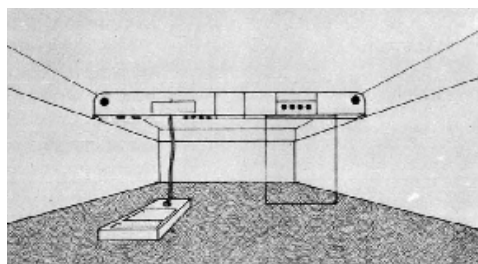
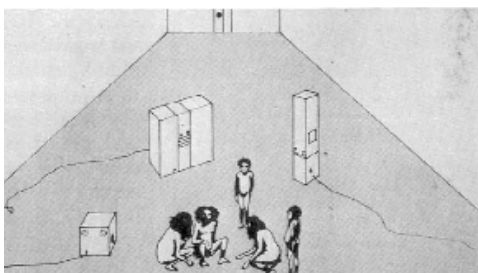
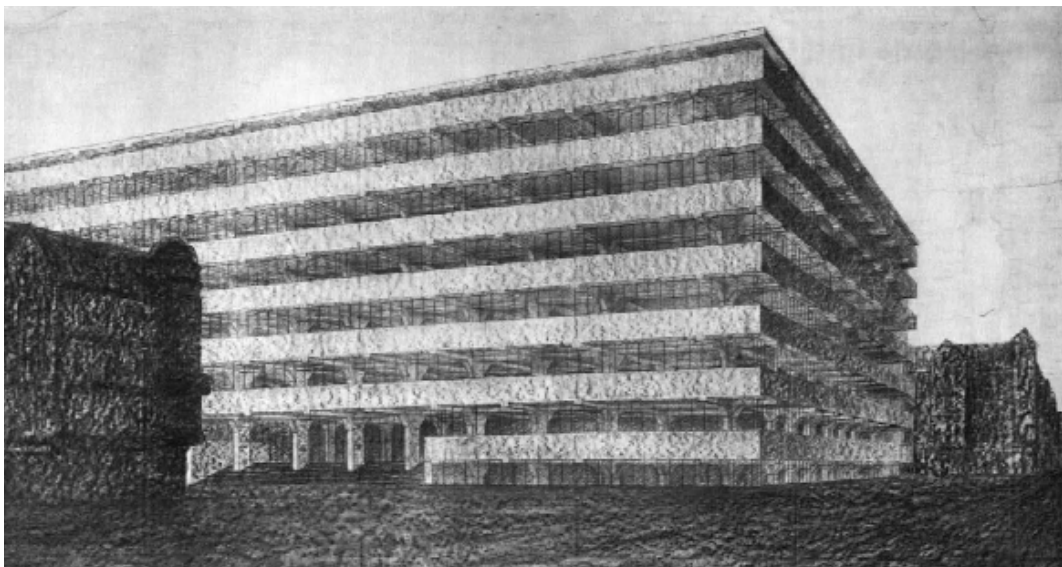
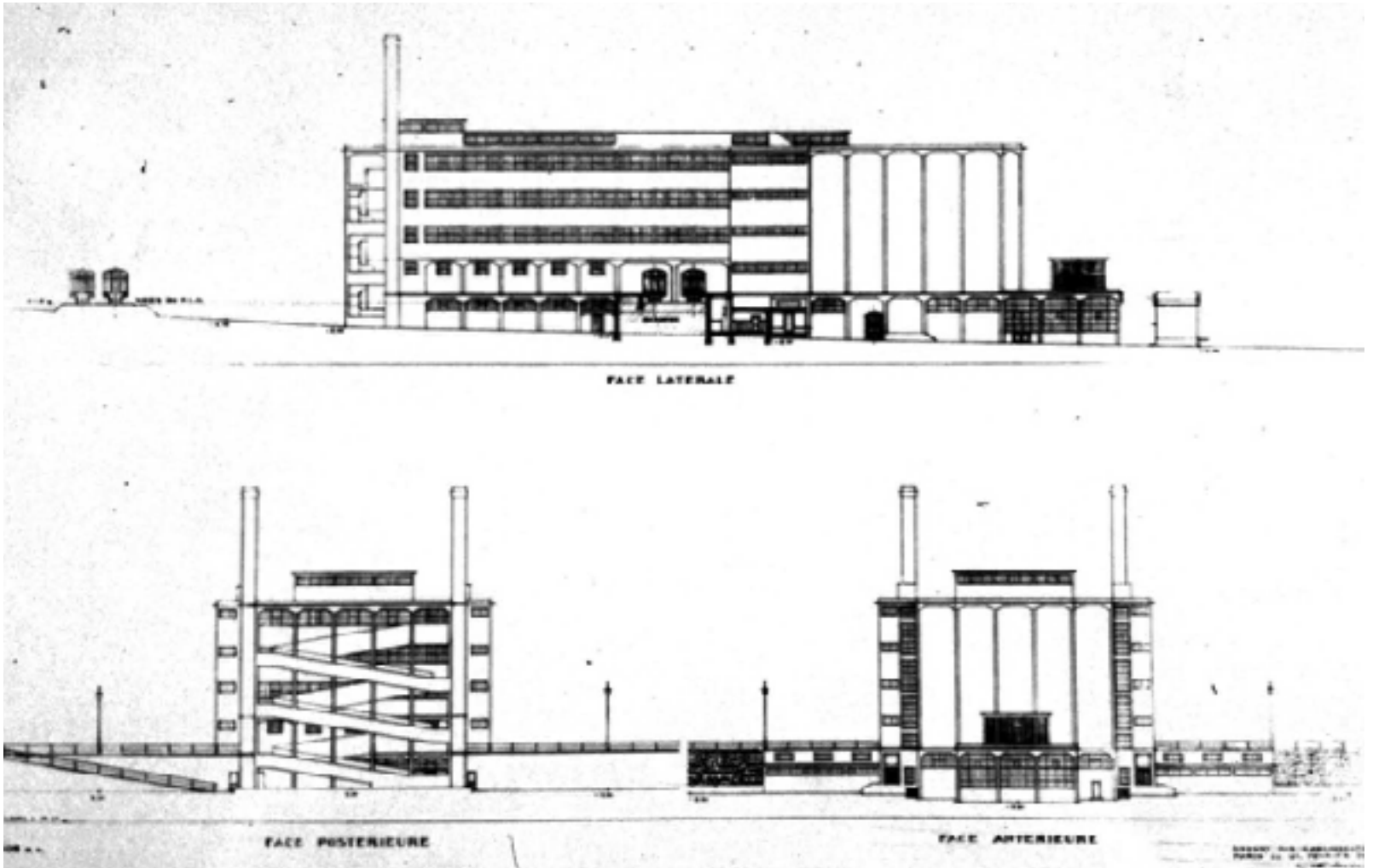
2. The Function of Program

In this note will be examined how the accommodation of program was argued (to a degree in retrospect) to be constitutive of modern architecture, and how the period examples illustrate something different.

The myth of function as it operates in early modernism is our first indication of program. This is not a history of program per se, though it is a chart, having to do with a recurrence of program, or re-tuned in this case to the conceptual /compositional problem related to the accommodation of use and its relation to form. It is a well-worn antimony for sure, but one worth rehearsing its re-occurrences. From this it follows that those programs, not form, are the motives, the agents of unity within architectural design. "Form follows function" is no doubt the best known embodiment of this idea (thought of course perceived and intend meanings are aligned, it come from Louis Sullivan himself a formalist and referrers in its initial utterance not to the dominance of the functional as activity, but rather function as a biological metaphor of form).

Where one to search the archives of modern architecture, one could scarcely do better in the attempt to find an image on the correspondence between function and its evidence than Melnikov's Rusakov Club of 1927. As the rake of the auditorium penetrates the enclosing volume of the primary volume of the building envelope one sees the assumed irrepressibility of the programmatic figure. But such correspondences are relatively infrequent occurrences, and when such clear cut correspondence can be found, we have what could be referred to as the "limited" shape of program, an example where the integration of programmatic source material has a direct and legible manifestation on the form of the building.

Looking further in early periods of evidence of the corresponding between function (program) and form the relations seem to be two alternates of more discrete accommodation. The most discrete one can find someone like Mies van der Rohe, who places a limit of the configuring impetus of program and instead uses a scalar model of accommodation. The universal space of Mies is made functionally distinct through the accommodation of the size of the volume. On the other extreme we could take the examples of Le Corbusier where the interest in formative value of functional arrangements is so great as to supersede the limit that the functional arrangements even escape the limitations of the species. Perhaps the most compelling version for this is the translations for the ramp element in Le Corbusier's work for its first occurrence in

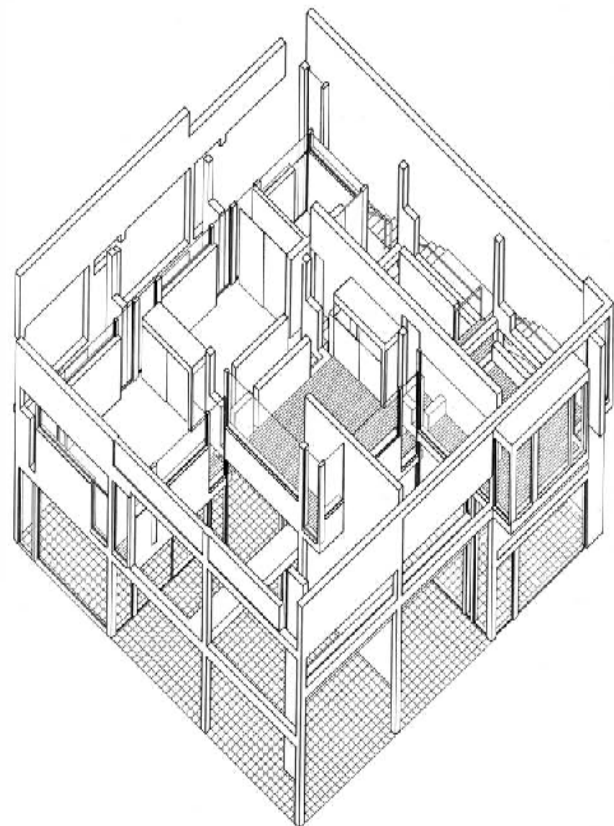
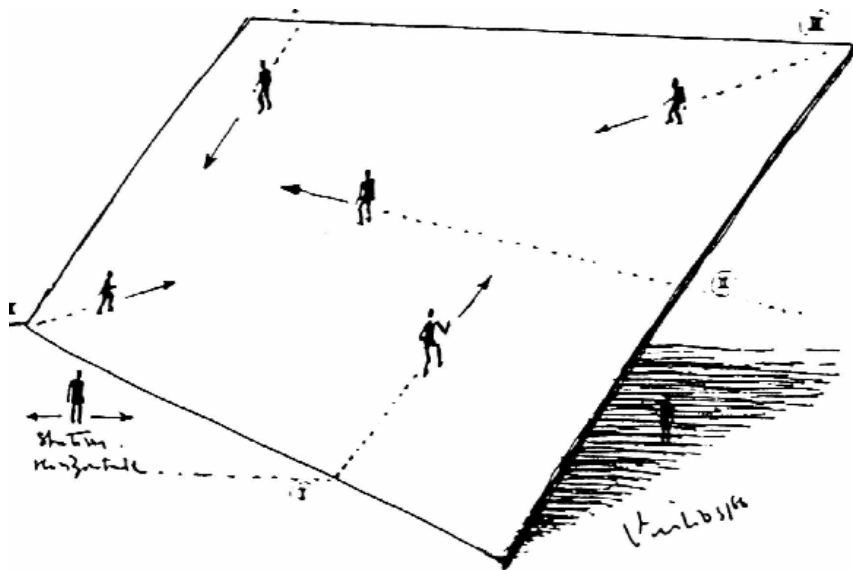
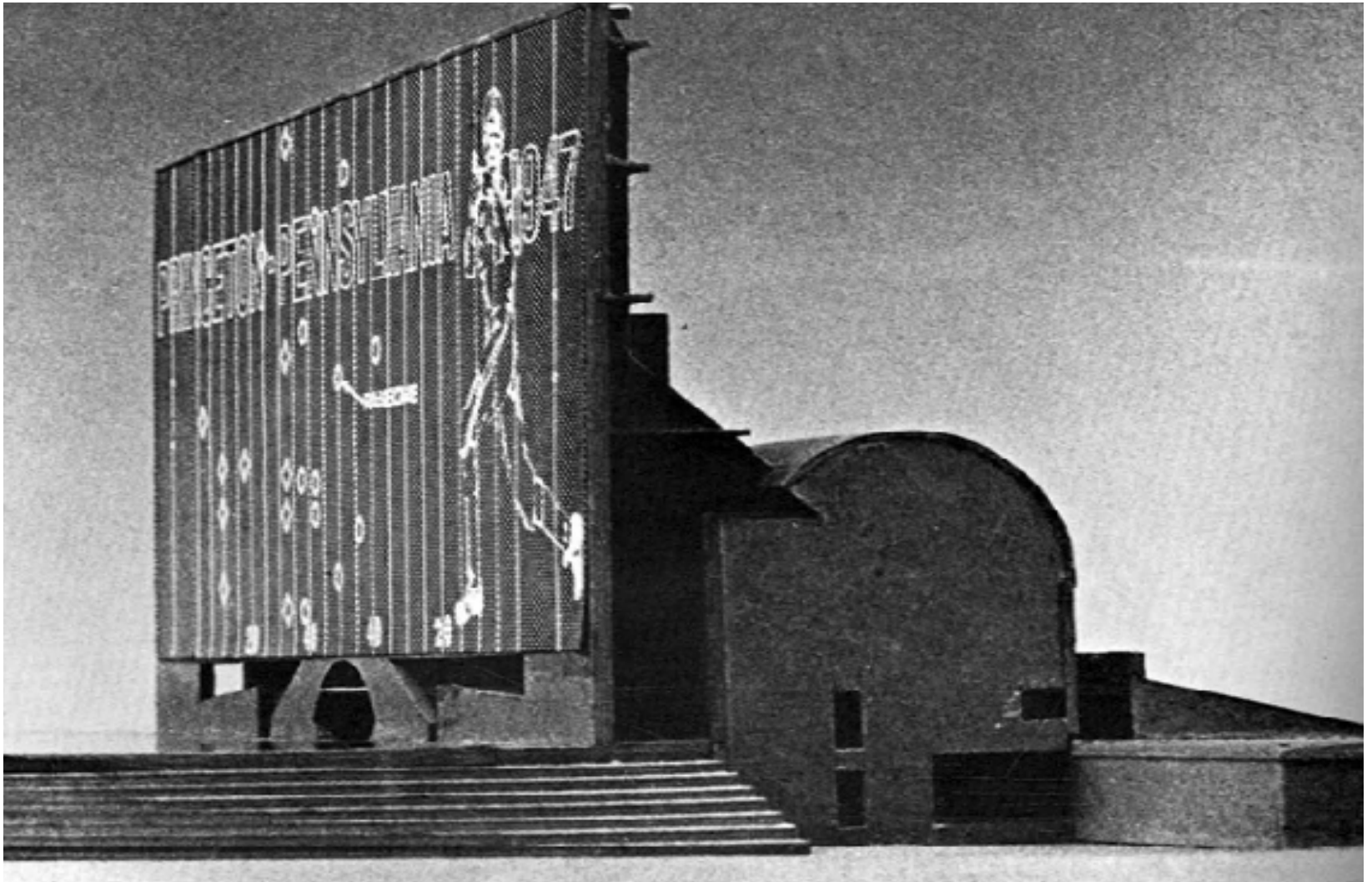
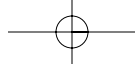


top: Thomas Struth, "Pergamon Museum I, Berlin, 2001." Denying the perfection and completion of the museum's staging of the scenario, at the lower right corner of the image, the carefully reassembled antiquity gives way to a hodgepodge of unpainted surfaces, exposed wire, duct tape, rope and scaffolding.

bottom left: Thomas Struth, "Sommerstrasse Dusseldorf" (1980).

bottom middle: Thomas Struth, "Lake Street (The Loop), Chicago" (1990).

bottom right: Thomas Struth, "Shibuya Crossing Tokyo."

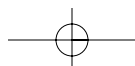


top: Thomas Struth, "Kunsthistorisches Museum III, Vienna" (1989).
Despite its simplicity, the photograph sets into motion a series of displacements of view that navigate relations between the museum visitor, the portraits and the viewers of the photograph.

bottom left: "Eleanor and Giles Robertson, Edinburgh" (1987).

bottom middle: Thomas Struth, "Giles."

bottom right: Thomas Struth, "Smith Family."



the design of a slaughter house (were the ramp was used to move cattle to the top of the building, where then gravity fed the animals through the various stages of its vivisection) to its eventual deployment in architecture as the key feature of the promenade architectural (CHECK THE FRENCH).

This somewhat capricious set of examples serves to delineate a framework of options which can be seen as recurrent throughout the development of program, which is that the designation of form and program can be seen to be exact, approximate, or other. These positions of course should not be seen as essential inevitability, but rather conceptual positions which fall out of the binary of form in its deployment to use and its accommodations. These positions can be seen to still apply (to very different ends) in the development of the radical experimentations of the 60s. If the first moment of program was concerned with the correlation of specific shapes to specific programs, this moment introduces the problematic of the unplanned, of contingency, of "open control" - the continuous interiors of Archizoom, the inclined planes of Paul Virilio and Claude Parent's *Oblique Function*, and the pneumatic volumes (of Ant Farm among many others) - make their coordinations not to given activities, but activities in general. However, all still operate within the general framework of the exact, the approximate and the other. If the differentiations of the use of program can not be determined at the level of the relations as so gross a scale as to be positioned here then it must be found in other aspects of program.

3. Counter-Program

When a building fails to perform to expectations it is an issue of concern. Such failures range from the inconvenient (list and example) to the catastrophic (complete collapse). But to some degree, the specter of building failure is not as troubling to architecture as one might expect. Apocryphal stories abound of architecture's response to minor calamity with dismissal, as in EXAMPLE. However, there is a partial type of building failure which is not reduced to mechanics, but is one of programmatic failure, caused when the configuration of the building itself is the program, and the use of the building cannot be accommodated within its own configuration. A notorious image of programming failure is the destruction of Yamasaki's 1972 Pruitt-Igoe housing blocking in St. Louis. It was a winning design in the end destroyed due to its programmatic failings. What is remarkable about such programmatic failure is its refusal to be reduced to mechanics and structure, but rather seems to fail in direct relation to its design. In the category of failure, of obsolescence, the difference between programmatic failure and technical failure has given rise to a minor industry (or pseudo-science) of the post-occupancy evaluation.

The (perceived) exhaustion of the functionalist paradigm is manifest (as a lament) within the "autonomous" architecture of the 1970s, and it is the specter of programmatic failure that marks architecture in three of the most well-known architects to emerge in the period of the 1960s and 1970s when the exhaustion of the plausibility implied by the brief were held in the highest degree of suspicion. Those architects, Robert Venturi, Peter Eisenman, and Aldo Rossi are each well-known in their positions that articulate a

strategy of resistance to the brief. Venturi's comparison of the Duck vs. Shed one can understand not only the semantic efficiencies of the sign as envisioned by Venturi, but also the corresponding muteness of program in each case. The ameliorative reaction to such a condition of impossibility is to supplement with overt strategies of signification, to attempt to over-inscribe the functional relations of the building, over and above inherent qualities. For Peter Eisenman, the work is as a counter-example to program, (most characteristically in his essay "Post-Functionalism") where is not the wholesale disvalue of which the title implies, but rather a superseding of the condition of program as instigator of architecture (it is then accommodated, rather than expressed, or constituted by), the result is to assume no causality between form and inhabitation. In the work of Aldo Rossi the absence of program is registered in the (continuing) presence of form. As Rossi states, "function alone is insufficient to explain the continuity of urban artifacts; if the origins of the typology of an urban artifact is simply function, this hardly accounts for the phenomenon of survival".

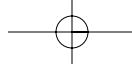
In each of these three the architecture is inoculated against the infections of program in the accommodations of use into some aspect, but also in light of another agenda, to resist deformation of program by the definition of the architecture. These three architects triangulate the major discourse of the post-modern period exposing that period as the nadir of the affirmatively programmatic, while it is whole constituted by in its rejection.

4. Reprogramming

This section reads a trajectory of work which looks to examples of institutional effects of architecture (after Foucault and Deleuze) to re-work the significance of program. Paragraph on revision of program Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisement for Architecture*, 1970s Rem Koolhaas, *Downtown Athletic Club from Delirious New York*, 1978. In these two historic examples were both subject to a re-reading of their programmatic capacities entailed within. In the other example we have Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon* of 1787. As we all know the *Panopticon* is another high point of programmatic though, where it orchestrates surveillance in the service of control. Though of course the initial idea is totally fascinating, but it is the revitalization of interest in the 1970 that is important here. Not only in Michel Foucault's reading, but also in Deleuzian re-interpretation of that reading and the concept of the diagram. This diagram of Foucault "the new cartographer" I would argue is different than the subsequent diagram of 1000 platitudes and other later work. Here activity supersedes form. Both of these models are diagrammatic in the panoptic sense of the word.

These two readings of the Deleuzian diagram mark the opposing positions of (not so recent) positions (that is the old logic of the box versus the blob) as how program informs a number of practice that have explicitly identified themselves as interested in the generative potential of the programmatic. On the one hand Functional diagram generate specific forms, on the other designation generates effect. As for other examples of current examples we can look to the footnote.

For a project which seems to occupy an interesting position in



regard to this aforementioned dualism of information and formation in current production (as well as earlier models discussed throughout this talk) I would offer the Seattle Public Library for consideration, whereas the previous two examples both stress the tightness of fit between the generation and execution of their programmatic diagrams this project seems to offer a model "loose fit". A productive reading of this diagram can be found in the interpretation of John Rajchman (CITE) where he sees it as an example of a kind of poetry concrete, in the model of M (poet), where the distortions of the poetic text itself is a compositional strategy, where the scan of the line (of poetry) has compositional as well as metrical significance. Here I would like to evoke the model of loose fit, which ties the service and the cultural declinations of program. [Add disclaimer for having worked on this project].

5. Programma

In reflecting on the ins and outs of architectural discourse, it can be seen that program is both always in and always out. In the conclusion the point will argued that while program is an unsolved antimony of the form/function antagonism, it current implications suggests yet another iteration of the debate and to claim a position for the future, for the sake a trajectory towards new territories of exploration with a few notes on what the next adaptive re-use of program could be: a programma for program. Coming out of, and in a sense rejecting the previous models of either utter openness or utter closure of programmatic thought here re-introduce the idea of adaptive re-use as speculative re-consideration of programmatic capacities.

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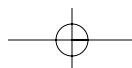
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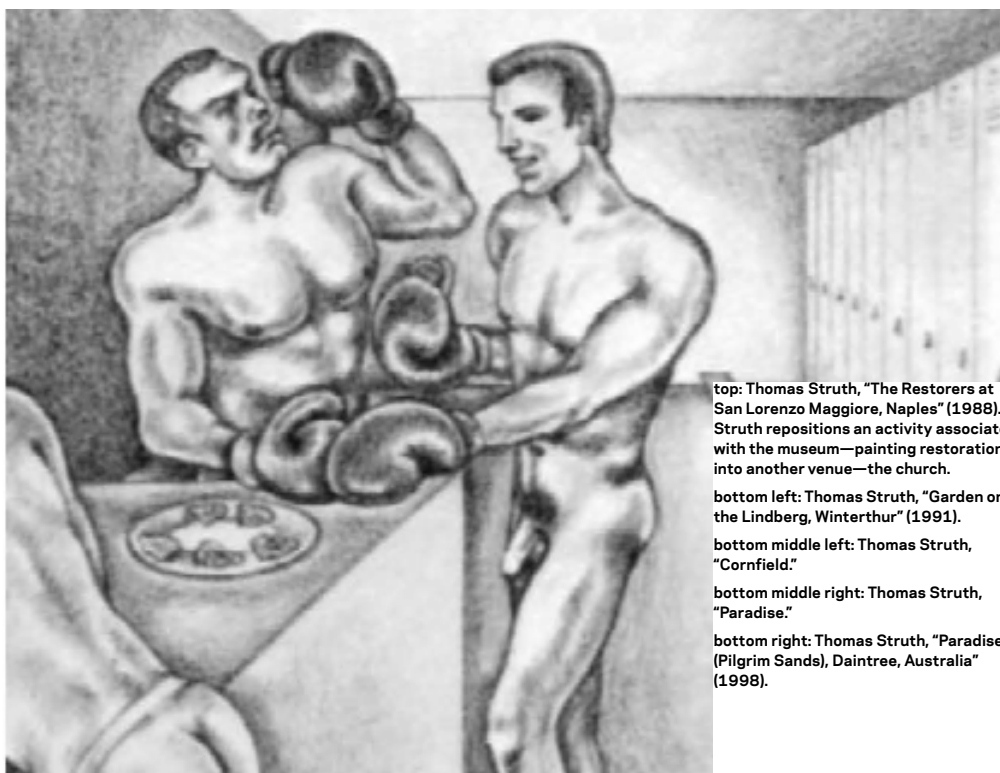
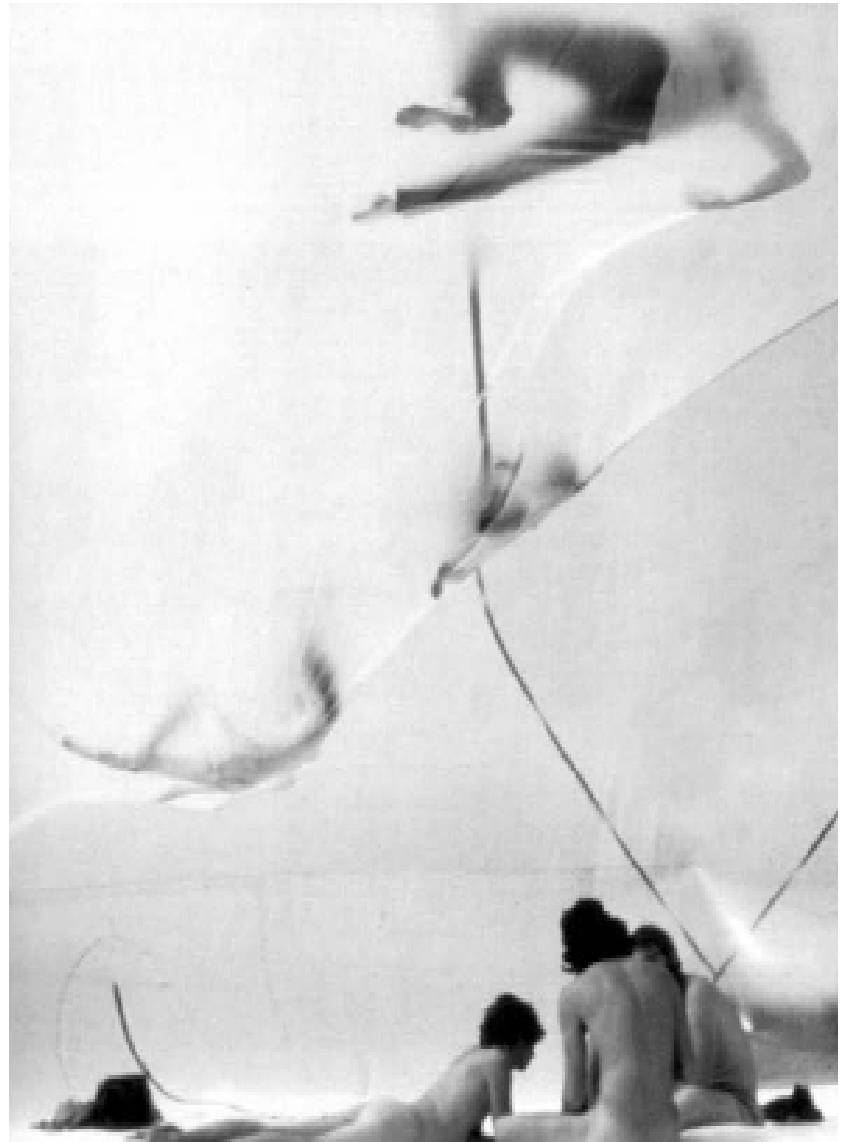
The following then is lists of the qualities of program in its reoccurrences, those factors which seem most pressing to program next adaptive re-use:



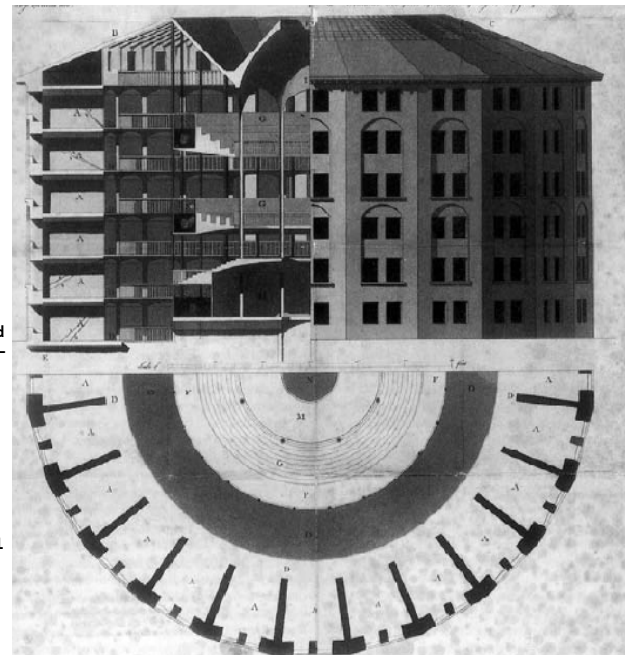
To really appreciate architecture,
you may even need to commit
a murder.

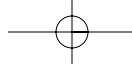


Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses
as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder
in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral
in the same way as love in the street differs from
the Street of Love. Radically.



top: Thomas Struth, "The Restorers at
San Lorenzo Maggiore, Naples" (1988).
Struth repositions an activity associated
with the museum—painting restoration—
into another venue—the church.
bottom left: Thomas Struth, "Garden on
the Lindberg, Winterthur" (1991).
bottom middle left: Thomas Struth,
"Cornfield"
bottom middle right: Thomas Struth,
"Paradise."
bottom right: Thomas Struth, "Paradise 1
(Pilgrim Sands), Daintree, Australia"
(1998).





top: Thomas Struth, "Art Institute of Chicago II, Chicago" (1990). Acted out by the museum, and defined and depicted by these photographs, are the operations of archive construction and collecting and, with them, the complex mechanisms behind the construction of knowledge, boundaries, and spaces.

o Because of its position with a project, program can be seen that which comes before and after the architectural act (in programming, in post-occupancy evaluations) in this sense program is extra-architectural.

o Program from this position of relative exteriority always makes a problematic the confines of the architectural project (from the discourses of architectures imminent or (alternately) essentialist project (of form, of constructions, of effect...)).

o In that program is closes a relations to the essentially architectural (to is disciplinary responsibilities), it opens another plane of comparison between the seeming constitutive division between advanced and corporate practices. Connecting thought on the one hand regarding the possibility of control (the rise of specific expertise in configurations - the corporate model) and the impossibility of control (the critical delimitations of program - the libratory promise of advance production).

o As program conforms to and supersedes architectural

agency and raises questions as to the performance of architecture in the world. The program (in its expanded sense) continues to operate as both objective and critical nexus through which architecture constitutes its agency.

o Final then as program both envisions and designates the world it asserts a critical normalcy.

What one makes of these positions in term of the issue of program as it applies to the questions of history, theory and practice are more implied that stated. Of these possibilities the question is how to avoid the sociological trap of the behavioral and with the evocation of program when have something more that the collection of anthropomorphic accommodation of use images, minimal passages, maximum reach, individual iterations inscribed by the bounds of the corporal. At this point program is a more general scale, while implying use and function itself, it is a more malleable conceptions within refer to assemblies of use, of function, or program itself in an attempt to designate the relation aspect to the structure of the world.

