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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**
FROM THE EDITOR
The street becomes a dwelling for the flâneur; he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls.

Walter Benjamin

The façade is the aspect of a building which simultaneously looks out onto and is visible from the street. As an architectural element, it ambiguously constructs artistic and philosophical thoughts. It may appear connected to the inner construction of the building or completely disconnected from it. It may emphasize the principle of the building’s purpose, such as government offices or buildings for commerce, or function as a surface covering the internal content such as the façade of residential buildings in historical quarters. In the contemporary era, it is mainly transparent or “invisible” such as the façades of many buildings in the metropolis.

As a metaphor, the ambivalence emerging from this concept of façade opens up many viewpoints indicating our attitude towards the world. Just as the façade both reveals and conceals the depth of the building behind it, so does it indicate how we move in different directions that reveal and hide our emotions, intentions and character. The aim of this fifth issue of Architext is to investigate the different aspects of façade, its importance, its location and mode of construction. This issue also discusses questions such as: Is the change in building façades universal throughout history, an example of anthropocentricity or a treatment that belongs to a certain time and place? Do the different structures and ornamentation of the façade constrain or enhance this expression or formulation of urban identity? The discussion expands to other questions such as: the public and private space in the features of the façade; the relationship between the political and the ethical as they appear in the façade.

This issue of Façade is published thanks to the collaboration with the Department of Philosophy at Stony Brook University, NY. Most of the papers were first presented as lectures at the 7th Annual Philosophy and Arts Conference entitled ‘Façades: The architecture of (In)Authenticity’ held on March 28-29, 2014 in Manhattan. We would like to thank Professor Edward S. Casey, and the organizers of the conference: Dr. Megan Craig, Dr. Amir Jaima, Seth Binstead, and Stephen Bourque.

We wish you pleasant reading
Dr. Edna Langenthal,
Itzik Elhadif, Editors
Traditionally, in western architecture, the façade has been regarded as the public face of a building which usually, but not necessarily, is located on the front side of a building. Façades mark the primary approach and entrance-place between the public domain and an enclosed interior. They address a threshold, a pause between the outdoors and the sequestered microcosm of dwelling, meeting, and working within.

The term "façade" implicates the form of the human face. Its anthropomorphic root typifies the conventional terminology of classical architectural elements such as "footing" for foundation and "capital" for the top of a post. Because the architectural term "façade" alludes to a feature innate to our bodies, it may be considered a 'conventionalized' face or 'architecturalized' facing forward.

Physical motion is absent in the rigid structure of a building or walled precinct, unlike the lived "façade" which is fluid and capable of expressing immediate emotions. Still, as children demonstrate, drawing and animating facial caricatures is not that difficult or even complicated. Indeed, scholars of facial expression have noted that there are only six graphically-explicit expressions common to all cultures which are: happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, and delight, some of which can be hybridized to evoke a nuanced range of complex emotions.

However, expressing immediate feelings is not a conventional province of the architectural façade's inclination to proclaim personal, public, or cultural values and expectations rather than emotions per se. The façade registers degrees of power, wealth, sanctity, and civility. In the mid-industrial age, it identified a variety of emerging public institutions such as a bank, office building, railroad station, barbershop, or hospital. Domestic façades might allude to some rank of social status, whereas great public façades may address the greater PLACE of a building in a natural, urban, or historic surround.

Those expressions have been achieved by a dressing up, out, and over structural facts of building. In the Renaissance, naked construction was expected to be dressed over if the
project was to be regarded as "architecture" per se. Rudiments of building (rubble) were unworthy of sight. Yet, designs of 'perfected construction', presented as conventionalized arches and columns, were made visible as architectural 'ideas' (fig.1). Incorporating the visual idea of face within the idealized fabric of architecture produced an empathic 'interface', a reflection between one's self and the 'self' of the building. Imagine the facial ghost (fig.2) in a looming entryway serving as an imagined mirror of our presence as we 'face-off' with a façade. It is within the framework of a dynamic symmetry, a chora between two beings, that a sensual convergence may generate a dynamic equilibrium between bodies in the same place at the same time. Our reaching and looking out become entangled with the other's reaching and looking back.

Let me illustrate the physical mechanics of that engagement by asking you to imagine a cat prowling down a bushy garden path. The cat is in a state of "mobile orientation" to the linear pathway which corresponds to the axis of his long feline body. His face, looking forward, serves as the leading edge of motion. Suddenly there is a rustling in the thick brush to the right and the cat rotates his head 90° to confront the threat. Immediately the muscles in his left foreleg and left rear leg are tensioned, (fig.3) to allow the cat to perform a whole-body

Figure 1: Basilica di Andrea, 1472-90, Mantua, Italy; Leon Batista Alberti architect, drawing by Kent Bloomer.

Figure 2: Mission Espada, 1690, San Antonio County, Texas, USA, drawing by Kent Bloomer.

Figure 3: Cat, drawing by Kent Bloomer.
lurch to the right. His left side has become his back side. The mobilized orientation of the cat’s face, rather than the anatomical formation of the cat’s whole body, determines his momentary orientation to front-back.

While facial orientation controls our sense of front-back, left-right, it is the earth’s gravitational force that determines our sense of up-down. Taken together, those inner and other-directed orientations entangle our bodies with our environment.

The prospect of that entanglement inspired the classical builder and architect to establish a place-of-encounter and negotiation (fig. 4) in which to entertain the moments of attraction, repulsion, invitation or forbiddance, and to instigate some respect and hesitation during a moment of arrival. An accomplished designer can then proceed to embed a chorus of values into a façade as it is dressed and embellished, and decorated with additional content and memories wrought from the larger world in which the building is situated.

Figure 4:
Winslow House, 1894, River Forest, Illinois, USA; Frank Lloyd Wright architect, drawing by Kent Bloomer.

**HONESTY**

The practice of decorating in classical façades is well-known to scholars, yet decoration, and particularly ornament, were targeted in the late 20th century schools of architecture precisely for being “dress-work,” and for employing uneconomic ‘additives’ to the basic project of building. Dress-work was even declared dishonest for covering over the materials and techniques intrinsic to the true facts of a building’s basic construction, as well as deviant,
for not foregrounding the internal programmatic functions or practical spaces rationally determined for a particular building. Façades became "unnecessary" from a 'professional' standpoint. Decoration per se became regarded as 'non-essential' because its techniques may be extrinsic to the core disciplines governing the medium of architecture per se.¹

The mid-20th century was the apex of specialization, standardization and compartmentalization in which the term "medium" became an academic way of identifying a discipline's 'essential' instruments of expression. For architecture the mediums (such as paint for paintings, carved and formed substances for sculpture-in-the-round, and composed elements of sound for music) became the materials and methods of construction, and the rational formation of useful space. Other non-essential means of expressing place, including the historic, mnemonic, and cultural narratives that fueled façades historically, became regarded as secondary to the 'essential' project of a revolutionary and more progressive architecture. A new ideology pointing to economic expressions of space appropriated the slippery slogan, "form follows function,"³ by promoting a revised and curiously edited concept of “function.” Doctrines of honesty and cleanliness emerged to privilege spatial and technical efficiency. Embellishing the intrinsic details of construction or filling-out useful space with extraneous elements would contaminate the new project of tectonic expression and spatial purity.

It is true that classical façades of architecture paid limited attention to the most efficient path of entering a building in preference to encouraging a pause to savor other agendas, some of which were meant to recall typical (yet demonstrably malleable) precedents originating in other times, places, and disciplines.

The alleged 'moral' rationale proclaimed by exponents of the newly-minted 'honest' architecture has been cited as originating in John Ruskin's famous "Lamp of Truth" from his extraordinary treatise, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, published in 1848. But consider a review of what Ruskin actually said in his famous "Lamp of Truth" by reading a few words from section VII entitled "Structural Deceits:"⁴

"I have limited these (deceits) to the determined and purposed suggestion of a mode of support other than the true one. The architect is not bound to express structure; nor are we to complain of him for concealing it, any more than we should regret that the other surfaces of the human frame conceal much of its anatomy; nevertheless, that building will generally be the noblest, which to an intelligent eye discovers the great secrets of its structure although from a careless observer they may be concealed...."
"Now there is a nice question of conscience in this which we shall hardly settle but by considering that, when the mind is informed beyond the possibility of mistake as to the true nature of things, the effecting of it with a contrary expression, however distinct, is no dishonesty, but on the contrary, a legitimate appeal to the imagination."

Ruskin goes on to say, "There is, therefore, no dishonesty, while there is much delight, in the irresistibly contrary impression." (Italics are mine.)

Ruskin is saying that the design of a building need not exclusively express its "true" structure but need only disclose an amount required to allow a sufficient discovery of its true materials and physical make-up to satisfy the "intelligent eye" as a pre-requisite to going beyond that disclosure into the world of imagination. He is declaring that we can understand both considerations at once without sacrificing one to the other.

Ruskin's reasoning makes sense. How, indeed, can a façade manifest a rich repertoire of values if its expressive features are restrained from imagining, remembering, and revering events and worlds beyond the facts of local construction and a building's rational spatial program? A prevailing default is to employ written or numerical systems of identification in lieu of decoration and ornament and thus impose the most disturbing auxiliaries to the material 'art-of-building'. Indeed, what could be more distracting than the pinning of phonetic words or numbers onto the sensual surface of architectural skins? Figures of ornament, on the other hand, physically engage and exalt the skin. But what does ornament specifically provide?

**ORNAMENT**

Let us visit Plato's Academy and review the ancient etymology of the term "ornament." Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh-century AD, the final century of the Academy, stated in his Etymologies that the Greeks compared their word "cosmos" to the Latin word "ornament" because the beauty of ornament was manifested in the motions of the heavenly bodies. By so saying, the ancient Academy provides us with a glimpse of the visual content of seminal ornament. Those words suggest that ornament presents visual attributes of an all-pervasive physical activity circulating in the 'world-at-large', in a vast surrounding region, a macrocosm containing stars, and rainbows which, while being external to a body being ornamented, also contains and informs that body. Thus ornament qua cosmos evokes the situation of a building being contiguous with the world-at-large. In his Book XIII on "De Mundos et Partibus," Isidore includes the micro-cosmos of atoms which circulate within the body. The macro-cosmos of Isidore's "mundos" is cited as harboring elements such as stars, meanders, and rainbows exhibiting eternal patterns of motion for which "no rest is allowed," a motion visualized by
ancients who assumed that earthly structures, situated within this eternal motion, were anchored to a stationary platform. In this model we might imagine the cosmos engulfing, while also moving through and around the architecture. While we no longer believe the earth is standing still, we still do assign a quality of stability to the ground upon which we build.

Unlike Isidore’s indication of the cosmos as the immense realm of “ornament,” Vitruvius, writing in the first century AD, declared, “decoration” should be treated with due regard to propriety.” The term “propriety” here is implicated with the ‘decorum’ of the intimate social world in which we live. In that light, when we combine ornament and decoration in a work of architecture we are expected to distribute ornament and its "eternal motion" within the more fixed and civilized rules of decorum causing its lively expression to be restrained by local good taste and good manners. This comprehensive ordering system requires that ornament be distributed with decoration in command and decoration be designed with the distribution of ornament in mind. Decoration, then, is the governing visual system in architecture that situates subordinate regions of decoration, the distribution of ornament, and locates the explicit 'confessions' presenting the 'true' facts of structure. Both are materially added to and embedded into the economic forms of buildings, rooms, furnishings, and bowls. Most nineteenth-century architects who enthusiastically incorporated multiple international styles into their work respected Ruskin’s thesis and limited the extent and quantity of decorated regions in order to allow parts of buildings to "confess" an amount of the basic raw structure.

It is telling that ornament may import unusually dynamic, mischievous, and rhythmized figures such as foliations, meanders, and spirals into its own finite territory within decoration. By evoking the nature of the world-at-large, the repeating figures (here I am agreeing with Owen Jones that repetition is a defining property of ornament) describe a type of order that is free from earthly gravity (the eternal motions within the cosmos) and thus allows an amount of turbulence that may be socially disciplined by decorum and anchored by the gravity of stable construction. This palette of design agendas constitutes a visual richness suitable to the design of a façade. But how do we orchestrate such a wealth of visual ideas?

ORCHESTRATION
Western façades evolved to express earthly and heavenly ideas within an intuitive triadic system of organization based on the vertical posture of the human body. Regions harboring each type of expression were conventionally situated in the vertical dimension as base, shaft, entablature, or foot, body, and head. Triadic ordering also governs decoration in a variety of scales. As a rule, the bases are the most prosaic ‘utilitarian’ and least dressed; the shafts are slightly embellished; and entablatures are the most protrusive, exuberant, and ornamented.
Rows of columns imagined as bodies firmly stand on a raised platform supporting an entablature (table) which can be roofed over to form a decorated pediment. The classical triad of the base, column, and entablature expresses the structural idea of post-and-beam construction as it simultaneously evokes a chorus of commanding human figures which, in parts and sequences, suggest male, female, and divine proportions of width and height. The brilliance of such a system is in its capacity to simultaneously embody and visualize multiple ideas found in society, myth, memory and construction. Embedding personal and cultural ideas within the intuitive corporeal framework of a façade naturally induces our gaze to move upwards from the ground through the upright stance of our body to the head with its ruminations and speculations of the civilized earth beneath and the heavens above. From the poetic body to the poetic mind, we are prepared to imagine our situation in an immense world-scape of place and memory.

Such façades were intuitive models originating in the experienced human body and woven into a tapestry of memory to govern a grammatical system of visual composition that allowed epic expressions of mind and body to become an essential, indeed a necessary, function of architecture.

The same convention is evident in the early façades of medieval cathedrals which are also beholden to abstract medieval proportions derived from Pythagorean and neo-Platonic numerology. Yet, gothic façades still managed to evoke the upright human posture. In the façade of the early-12th-century Chartres Cathedral (fig.5) we see a powerful bilateral symmetry and the ascent upward from an arched base which transforms into the heavenly circularity of the rose window. By the 13th century the vitality of flamboyant tracery began to emerge out of geometrized expressions of structure. Later on, in the English 15th century, we see a less Platonic vision of the cosmic realm with the colossal apparition of a heart-like plant in nature (fig.6) supplanting the more geometric cosmology of a pure circle. In France, the entire façade of Rouen Cathedral, completed in the 16th century, maintains the sense of a triadic order while its details effloresce into a flamboyance of foliation evoking a turbulent canopy of surrounding nature.

In the 19th century John Ruskin, the declared anti-classicist, was particularly skeptical about the efficacy of the frozen neo-Platonic geometry also found in early Gothic proportions dedicated to canons of classical perfection or classical harmonies. He admired the florid "active rigidity" of late Gothic tracery. A keen observer of natural phenomenon, he did not believe that fixed ratios could be found in nature or by proxy in the order of the world-at-large. In the Seven Lamps he proposed a livelier and more figurative system, a strategy of...
composition in which different things and agendas could be positioned side by side, rather than in the triads of humanism, similar to the way juxtapositions are found in living nature. He proposed any number of principles or “lamps” governing color, darkness, memories, and figures of life; principles that he rigorously gathered and analyzed from observing, painting, and drawing plants as well as the details of great buildings. He praised the properties in the Gothic in which he discerned a natural “changefulness.”

His international influence on the seminal industrialized architecture of the Victorian age was enormous and his thoughts became manifest in the polychrome exuberance of 19th-century façades so despised by the later 20th-century Academy. Indeed, by the early 20th century Ruskin managed to earn the wrath of both the orthodox classicists and the fledgling modernists.

Ruskin was not a practicing architect per se. He was a thinker, a painter, and a critic of architecture. He is particularly important to our discussion of the façade because of his attempts to frame an architectural language beholden to the light and the darkness of the living nature in which we are immersed. We have to look at the work of architects who were beholden to the Seven Lamps to judge the fate of the façade in the reign of his teaching, during a century when the richness of world architecture was being discovered and recorded by travelers and historians.

Despite Ruskin’s stated avoidance of anthropomorphic roots, the occult presence of the human body, which underwrote the apparition of a face, survived within Victorian architecture. Body, head, and eyes seem to appear even more frequently as they emerge from the exuberant front-oriented Victorian towers (fig.7) in ways that are more sublime than in the refined ground-level entrance portico so common in classical design. High-Victorian eyes were more ubiquitous, less rigidly governed, ferocious, and haunted.

It was the architect Owen Jones, a contemporary of Ruskin who, by rigorously analyzing the ornament of the world, (rather than confining his research to the Western excursus), illustrated the efficacy of the abstract grid for distributing ornament into an architecture of modernity. He understood that the grid was employed in ornament for thousands of years in tile work, meanders, and weaving. Jones authored the colossal encyclopedia, The Grammar of Ornament, compiled in 1856, after he spent five years helping to de-code the Moorish geometric decoration and color schemes of the Alhambra. The Grammar was a seminal step in studying, indeed defining the unique language of ornament from a global rather than a Euro-centric or Western-classical standpoint. He researched many origins of
ornament and charted their evolutions through centuries without allowing political and geographic differences to obscure its particular identity as a universal category of visual language. He demonstrated that ornament had a limited and concise vocabulary of its own kind, apart from the alphabets of other visual disciplines. Ornament was recognized by Jones as a particularly universal phenomenon employing many mediums and types of useful 'things' to be ornamented. Although he was an architect, his research also included textiles and ceramics together with a particular interest in color compositions.

Jones illustrated examples within small frames filling the pages of The Grammar. He analyzed the ways in which basic figures of ornament were connected and distributed into larger ‘diaper’ patterns described today as the repetitive square and hexagonal Cartesian grids used by geometers and cartographers to map space and to measure intricate symmetry operations.

The Grammar is remarkably rich and unbiased as it considers the original forms of many cultures beyond the Greco-Roman-Western tradition. Above all, Jones was attempting to identify ornament as a universal language ‘spoken’ and understood by all people. Initially a scholar of Islamic design, Jones neither dismissed the importance of the classic Western triadic order nor the historic evidence of figuration derived from nature. In fact, the illustrations in the Grammar revealed that the majority of repeating figures in world ornament were conventionalized leaves.

Paradoxically, the Cartesian system of infinite coordinates is particularly valuable as an instrument for orchestrating or combining ideas of construction, decoration, and ornament precisely because of the grid’s fundamental absence of substantial meaning. By themselves coordinates contain neither linguistic nor physical content. In their pure form, Cartesian coordinates are instruments of deduction without weight or dimension. They have no physical being. For Descartes they belonged exclusively to brain-work as distinguished from mind-and-body-work. For the designer continuous coordinates are guides belonging to fields waiting to be invested with concrete elements of use or to be endowed with meaningful figures.

**DISCONTINUITY**

Yet the homogeneous grid of infinity can occasionally become visually powerful and emotionally thrilling as in New York City, especially at vertices situated at the regular intersection of its streets. Cartesian axes of infinity seem to project from the ground into the third dimension to manifest extensions of up, down, and across town as they point away and into the horizon and the sky. In Manhattan we experience one of the biggest and most fantastic material
matrices ever built. It is a fabulous work of geometry that has acquired an immense amount of sensual moments as it presides over a museum-class collection of individual façades.

But its façades are not elaborations of its continuities. Their presence occurs when the grid is interrupted and when the impression of infinity is challenged. Thousands of subordinate façades were built prior to the mid-20th century exclaiming fronts, backs, and faces. As in Ruskin’s portrait of nature, those small places exist side by side along pathways as their eyes reach out and look directly at us. Their expressions change from the miniature to the magnificent, from one ethnic domain to another and, most dramatically, they glance into precincts between their personal intimacy and the public activity of the street. We are the cat and they are the eyes in the bush.

As Ed Casey realizes in his writings on "place," the porosities of a boundary embody, rather than foreclose, a condition of two or more spaces on either side. The architecture of a boundary can evoke the contents of contiguous realms which, by impinging together, may be perceived as a singular shared realm, an architectural metamorphose wrought from different states of being. A façade may momentarily fashion new shapes altogether like the glimmering ripples and transient constellations of debris upon a beach between land and sea. Elements of mediation may realize ambivalent dimensions to be visualized in the absolutely frozen forms of architecture. If a transitional realm attempts to express only the content of one of its constituents it would proclaim a border rather than a boundary.

Yet, the prevalent prescription in the late mid-20th century was to discard the imagined and remembered minutia of a façade by prioritizing an ideal expression of continuity, an ‘honest’ passageway from outside to inside a building (fig. 8). A sparse ideal of physical efficiency was registered in flow patterns of seamless ‘circulation’ throughout the regions of fundamentally heterogeneous circumstance. Recall how much we constantly witness the dreary ‘detail’ of continuity in the empty walk-straight-through spaces of entrances sometimes described in the design studio as architectural ‘openings’.

With greater orchestration, the terrains of continuity and discontinuity can be expressed simultaneously. Casey’s discourse on two-ness, as being inherent to the phenomenon of place, suggests incorporating details which express both moving and stopping, the imaginary and the concrete in which extraordinary and ordinary events are “becoming,” “colliding,” and “disappearing” at once. Designing within the space of ‘facing-each-other’ suggests allowing a condition of pause, a median moment which may negotiate with the monotony of a continuous unimpeded movement as it stirs up the abundant content delivered to ‘being-

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Figure 8: Gwathmey House, 1965, Amagansett, New York, USA; Charles Gwathmey, architect, drawing by Kent Bloomer.
in-between different things. Vital figures may pop-up or be inscribed which illuminate the intricacy of flux. In Casey’s words, such two-(or more-)ness would realize the “polyvalent primacy” of place over space.¹⁴

If a materialized vision of two-or-more-ness is to be concretized at once, one supreme location would be within the legible composition of a decorated façade. Such an architectural face would be neither a fiction nor a mask. It would ceremoniously, even theatrically, portray the actual values and expectations of the worlds situated on both sides of a porous boundary.

**THE FACE**

Many 20th-century schools of architecture not only challenged the ‘arbitrary’ designing of façade–qua-face from an ideological standpoint, they also avoided the use of that term “façade” in studio criticism. Like "ornament" and "decoration," mention of a "façade" became non-essential while integrated rational frameworks governing "spatial-program," "plan-diagram," and "tectonics" prevailed. Nevertheless, use of the term “façade” has been quietly returning over the past fifteen years, albeit curiously bereft of the original and obvious reasons for being called "façades" in the first place. For example, façades are often indiscriminately regarded as whatever side or elevation of an entire building one is observing in the line of sight. They are seldom referred as discreet or commanding compositions situated ceremoniously upon or around the center of an important entry. Indeed, entire works of architecture often seem to be critiqued as though they are ‘sculptures-in-the-round’ to be entered through openings.

Does this casual usage indicate that the term has actually lost its primordial identity to become a banal term inherited from a forgotten way of thinking? Or does the use of the term "façade" today indicate a percept based only on the orientation of the observer’s face pointing towards a ‘face-less’ building? If our sense of the lived human body, with its visceral response to sighting another body, has been separated from the way we imagine and experience our design and approach to buildings why don’t we just say “appearance” or "elevation" rather than “façade”? Perhaps the clinging to the classic term suggests that the millennial identity may be a burning ember waiting to be reignited.

Two buildings designed in the 1980s by architects rooted in modernism illustrate the absence on the one hand, and the perdurance on the other, of the primordial façade. Richard Meier’s High Museum of Art (Fig.9) in Atlanta, Georgia, 1984, presents the main entry as a target appearing as an ‘opening’ elevated at the end of a long continuous pathway. The elegant masses of the building serve as entourage to the linear approach. In 1981, James Stirling designed the entry to the Arthur M. Sackler Museum (fig.10) at Harvard University with elements of...
the façade that are more positively figural and mysterious. The doorway is guarded by two cylindrical sentries situated in front of an upright glazed standing figure cut out of the masonry wall. This entrance is not an invitation to dash in, but rather an enigmatic shrine that invites pause and a look upward to a geometric head (a mind) which looks down and over the visitor. There is a compelling tension between invitation and forbiddance.

More recently, two buildings have been awarded international recognition specifically for the design of their "façades." The term is now an official category among a taxonomy of architectural elements specified for recognition. In 2013, Benisch Architekten designed the entrance to the John and Francis Angelos Law Center (fig. 11), Baltimore University, commonly photographed towards the diagonal, an angle that visually presents the cubic sculptural massing of the architectural sculpture-in-the-round. The building is a balanced composition of textured cubes split apart by a gigantic glazed reveal which works its way from above-right to below-left to an inconspicuous opening near a corner of the base.

In 2014, the Health and Sciences Education Building, (fig. 12), University of Arizona by PTW Architects placed highest in the WAN (World Architecture News) façades category. The front of the building features a horizontal triad of solid animated wall-forms harboring the principal entry located in the center. The centerpiece is a curiously anthropomorphic standing presence housing a stairwell. Indeed, all three massive graphic elements together form a chorus of gesturing bodies, the ones to the right and left protecting the smaller and more vital central figure. While capricious, the architecture of the façade recalls the lively story-telling inclination of its ancestors by very consciously presenting an abstract narrative of postural beings which are theatrical, rather than deferential, to the practical ‘openings’ into the building. The façade provides actors that reach out, alert, and seem to look around.

Figure 11:
John and Francis Angelo Law Center, 2013, University of Baltimore, Maryland, USA; Behnisch Architeckten, drawing by Kent Bloomer.

Figure 12:
Health Sciences Education Building, 2014, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA; CO Architects, drawing by Kent Bloomer.
It is noteworthy that both the Sackler and the HSEC entrances exhibit body and head attributes which imply a corporeal reciprocity, an inter-facing with a visitor. By contrast, the High Museum and the law buildings present efficient opening of entry.

Historically façades added figuration, spaces, and disciplines to those governing the primary design of the basic building. Openings were among the details. Façades, like our faces, were a portion, a discreet physical part of a greater whole. Over the centuries they often appeared as ‘microstructures’ performing as fantastic works of architecture, albeit works that combined cosmic, public, and private space. They were only partially beholden to the technology or ‘time-period’ of the building. In the early 20th century ‘contemporary’ elements on commercial structures chose to parley with a building’s age or earlier role, while in the 19th century classical stoops often acted to grace (or antiquate) the fatigue (the homogeneity) of common construction and ‘useful’ form. Considering a façade today is to consider a place of encounter where the handmade may dance with the robotic, where the faraway may be connected to the immediate, and where a “contrary expression” may, with decorum and proportion, "appeal to the (public) imagination."

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1 Bloomer and Moore, 1977, page 40.
2 Weiss, 1961, pps. 86-87. "If we make the ornaments or figures inseparable from a building by
hammering them out of a wall, we will introduce a secondary art to supplement a primary one."

3 Sullivan, 1896, pps. 103-109. (Sullivan was describing the Wainwright Building in which a "physiological ... circulatory system" of machinery inspired the ornament of the frieze in which ornament per se may be understood as an article of function.)


5 Isidore of Seville, 2006, orig. ca. 615-630 A.D., page 271.

6 Ibid., page 271.

7 (Italics are mine) Vitruvius, page 209.

8 Jones, page 15.


10 Ibid., page 119.


12 Jones; The Grammar of Ornament includes chapters on Arabian, Turkish, Moorish, Persian, Indian, Hindu, and Chinese ornament.


14 Casey, pp. 336-337.
ARCHITECTURE AND EMBODIMENT: PLACE AND TIME IN THE NEW YORK SKYLINE

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In his essay "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," the late 19th Century art historian Heinrich Wolfflin argued that the principles of traditional architecture follow a certain logic of embodiment – that the basic principles and elements of architectural design that had been adhered to since the ancient Greeks were not matters of mere convention, but a natural expression grounded in our understanding of the world as corporeal beings. What he meant, roughly, was that buildings make sense to us as physical forms because we ourselves are physical entities. As he wrote, "physical forms possess a character only because we ourselves possess a body. If we were purely visual beings, we would always be denied an aesthetic judgment of the physical world. But as human beings with a body that teaches us the nature of gravity, contraction, strength, and so on, we gather the experience that enables us to identify with the conditions of other forms."1

(Fig. 1) We understand the physical world because we participate in it, because we move about under the aegis of the same natural laws which all the things around us are subject to; for instance, we "have carried loads and experienced pressure and counterpressure, we have collapsed to the ground when we no longer had the strength to resist the downward pull of our own bodies, and that is why we can appreciate the noble serenity of a column and understand the tendency of all matter to spread out formlessly on the ground."2

As upright bipeds, or more simply as animate beings, we are bound to the earth by gravity, yet also resist it as living organisms who move about in the world. Wolfflin calls this basic tension "(t)he opposition between matter and force of form, which sets the entire organic world in motion;" it is also "the principal theme of architecture."3 One of the more ubiquitous manifestations of this equilibrium of forces is the column: it supports the mass of a structure, yet features like fluting and volutes emphasize an upward-tending energy that balances the compressive weight of the supported mass; in the case of the acanthus leaves of traditional Corinthian columns, the vital energy of a botanical form is explicitly adopted in the service of this architectural balance. The natural experience of weight is also accommodated, for instance, (fig. 2) in the fact that rustication, which emphasizes the massiveness of materials, is nearly

Figure 1: New York City Hall

Figure 2: Cunard building rustication
always applied to the lower levels of the exteriors of structures. This is conducive to our feeling of stability, a feeling that is produced especially through our proprioceptive and vestibular senses. This stability warrants a building’s vertical ambitions.

The opposition between matter and force of form is felt kinesthetically as well: weighty elements settle toward the bases of buildings while lighter elements involving more active and playful rhythms are possible higher up. In pointing to Louis Sullivan’s prescriptions for office building facades, Kent Bloomer describes “an expression of taut firmness at the bottom, an expression of efflorescence and ornament at the top,” such that “the building in its entirety articulates the metamorphosis of an upward awakening.” (fig. 3) This is evident, for instance, in the Woolworth Building, completed in 1913 as the world’s tallest building, and still one of the two-dozen tallest in New York. The Woolworth and other buildings of its time adapted traditional architectural principles to the new form of the skyscraper. (Fig. 4)
Such traditional elements speak to several senses at once: we see their organization, we sense it haptically in the textures of its surfaces, and perhaps more than anything we feel it proprioceptively and specifically kinesthetically, in relation to their sense of movement. In particular, as upright creatures we read a certain anthropomorphism into buildings: a vertical orientation connotes a feeling of ascent, a horizontal orientation a feeling of repose. In a well-executed architectural design, these feelings will find a balance that is conducive to our natural posture and manner of moving about in the world. As Wolfflin puts it, “We expect everything to possess what we know to be the conditions of our own well-being.”

Such principles guided architectural practice since the ancient Greeks. Yet they largely went out the window with the modernist movement, just less than a hundred years ago. What happened? Why did we go, in a very short time relative to the full sweep of architectural history, from the ornamentation and multimodal sensory engagement of, for instance, the Woolworth Building (Fig. 5) to the stark and sleek simplicity of modernist high-rise buildings, particularly those of the International Style, which seem to reject such bodily engagement (Fig. 6)? It was, above all, the emergence of a new relation to time that overthrew the traditional architectural understanding.

As Charles Jencks says, the very basis of modernism has been “the myth of a romantic advance guard setting out before the rest of society to conquer new territory.” This myth is fundamentally animated by a progressive understanding of history as a teleological movement toward a liberated future. Indeed, if modernism is a framework for design proper to any place, that place is utopia, which of course is no place at all – or a place that is defined in temporal terms, as the culmination of historical progress. (fig. 7) In “Ornament and Crime,” Adolf Loos,
for instance, lamented that "the rate of cultural development is held back by those that cannot cope with the present," where the present is the moment of unfolding toward the future – a typical expression of the modernists' temporal orientation.\(^7\)

The concrete world we find ourselves in at any given moment, however, is a product of history. It is tangible, complex, and contingent, impressed with the markings of individual events. The future, by contrast, is ideal, abstract, unmarked and unmarred. In inventing the future, the avant-gardes were aspiring to an ideal state, both in the sense of their striving for utopia and in the sense that as a product of conceptualization rather than history, it would be uncompromised by the interventions of conflict and chance.

By the measure of this ideal, ornamentation would be tantamount to effacement – a corruption of the unblemished destiny of human progress. Thus Loos writes that "the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament, from objects of daily use,"\(^8\) and "those who measure everything by the past impede the cultural development of nations and of humanity itself."\(^9\) Loos' vision, like that of many of the avant-gardes, was expressed with a near-religious fervor, enraptured as it was with the absolute: "Behold! What makes our period so important is that it is incapable of producing new ornament... Soon the streets of the cities will glow like white walls! Like Zion, the Holy City, the capital of heaven. It is then that fulfilment will have come."\(^10\) (Fig. 8) As an abstract ideal, this sort of utopia can only last as long as it is unencumbered by expression of the particular; any accidental properties that might express a relation to a particular place or a unique style would cause it to fall short of the abstract ideal. Similarly, from such a perspective one must forswear embodied understanding; for to understand things bodily is to understand them as emplaced, as grounded in a particular experience at a particular time, and through the messy categories of organic existence. If the ideal is to be achieved, it has to be through the abstract concept – through purely conceptual understanding.

Such became the dominant strain in modernist architectural thought and practice. Sarah Williams Goldhagen points to the machine as the animating metaphor in the early decades of modernism, one which tied modernism to the techniques of industrial production and technological (along with economic and social) change. This metaphor was carried forward, in particular, by those practitioners she refers to as "machine consensualists," who sought to give expression to rationalism and industrial technology as the definitive features of the age.\(^11\) Their political and technological progressivism evolved into the International Style which, in the postwar years, attained "institutional, academic, and corporate hegemony."\(^12\) And it is in this style, with its elevation of the machinic and conceptual over the organic and emplaced,
that exterior building design in modernism most fully turned away from the principles of embodiment on which, according to Wolfflin, traditional architecture had been grounded.13

But it is not exactly the case that these modernists completely abandoned embodiment. Rather, they replaced fully embodied understanding with an attenuated disposition in embodiment, one which is predominantly visual. This is because it is fundamentally concerned with ideal places, conceived as totalities. Such places are like concepts of classical geometry or mathematics. (It is not a coincidence that Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant regarded appreciation for mathematical law as the highest "aesthetic sensation."14) There can be no intricacy or irregularity in ideal places, and any accommodation to the physiological demands of the human form would only detract from their abstract purity. Hence the glowing city of 'white walls' that has transcended ornament in Loos' vision – we may be responsive at a kinesthetic register to an ornamented façade, but ornament only serves to interrupt the geometrical perfection of the image. And the utopian city, like the abstract geometrical form, must first and foremost be apprehended visually.

Le Corbusier, for his part, tends to emphasize the visual by drawing a direct line from the eye to the rational mind. In Towards a New Architecture he speaks of architectural elements as "forms which our eyes see clearly and which our mind can measure."15 And while he does allow for these forms to excite the senses "physiologically,"16 there is no doubt that the highest form of physiological stimulation is that which is attained visually and comprehended rationally. Thus he writes:

Our eyes are constructed to enable us to see forms in light. Primary forms are beautiful forms because they can be clearly appreciated. Architects to-day no longer achieve these simple forms. Working by calculation, engineers employ geometrical forms, satisfying our eyes by their geometry and our understanding by their mathematics; their work is on the direct line of good art.17

In drawing the connection between vision and reason, in elevating the "spiritual" and the abstraction of the idea over instinct, in espousing the virtue of applying rational order to matter, Le Corbusier expresses the dominant strain in Western thought that distinguishes the mind from the body, and elevates the former over the latter. (He strikes a distinctly Cartesian note when he says that the "great primary forms which light reveals to advantage," such as cubes, spheres and cylinders, are the most beautiful because "the image of these is distinct and tangible within us and without ambiguity."18 He may as well refer to these forms as "clear and distinct."19) Meanwhile, relative to vision, the kinesthetic sense is debased: gothic
cathedrals, for instance, are not beautiful precisely because they stage “a fight against the force of gravity, which is a sensation of a sentimental nature.” And, while he celebrates some ornamented traditional architecture, including the Parthenon and the Tower of Pisa, he does so in respect of their adherence to “primary masses,” from which ornament can only distract.

Despite their stated commitment to functionality over ornament, Le Corbusier and other modernists were actually interested in geometrical patterning on a large scale, as we see, for instance, in Le Corbusier’s infamous Plan Voisin for Paris (Fig. 9). This plan went unrealized, but there are countless examples of this “towers-in-a-park” schema in cities across the world; in New York specifically, the most prominent examples of these include the innumerable public housing projects that were built in the post-war decades. But doesn’t this seem strange? You have to be a thousand feet in the air to appreciate these designs (Slide 10); the modernist architects and urban designers may have turned away from ornament and the particularities of historical and geographical context for the sake of achieving an abstract conceptual purity, but they nonetheless reconstituted an aesthetic dimension from a different perspective – namely, from the long-distance vision of the bird’s-eye view. Their conceptualism, in other words, was not an escape, as they might have hoped, from the particularities of place: it was the constitution of a particular relation to place, a certain embodied perspective, literally at another level.

Meanwhile, whereas Wolfflin pointed out the central importance of a sense of gravity in our experience of architecture, the dominant strain of modernism increasingly incorporated a sensibility that was almost precisely opposed to this natural experience. It is as if any adherence to the constraint of gravity impinged on the weightless conceptualism of modernist ideals. (Fig. 11) The Lever House, for instance – one of New York’s seminal modernist designs (by Gordon Bunshaft and Natalie De Blois, completed in 1952) – seems to want to levitate above the street. (Fig 12) Citigroup Center takes this antigravitational impulse to an extreme. Though the effect from an aerial perspective may be of a monument taking leave of the earth, the effect from the street is of an oppressive mass that is somewhere between indifferent and hostile to the human form.

It has been around for nearly a century now, but architectural modernism remains alive and well in New York’s skyline. (Fig. 13) Its most recent prominent addition is 432 Park Avenue which topped off, in 2014, at 57th Street and has (for now) the highest roof in the city, at 1,397 feet. The architect is Rafael Viñoly, and he says that the design is based on “the purest geometric form: the square.” According to an article in Abitare that seems to be channeling the
architect’s intention for the building’s design, “(t)here is no variation in the grid which marks the moment of contact between the imposing volume of the building and the ground, and no additional architectural sign appears on the concrete structure to signal the entrance to the building. The body of 432 Park Avenue remains abstract and radical – a pure product of the grid.”

No accommodation is made, in other words, to the concrete embodied experience of the building at street level – even to indicate the place of entrance with clarity would be too much. (Fig. 14)

This language of purity is a striking echo of Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant’s 1921 essay “Purism,” in which they declare “that anything of universal value is worth more than anything of merely individual value,” where geometrical abstractions are explicitly invoked as universal, and any sort of ornament or particular markings are individual. The conceptually abstract is thus elevated above the culturally and historically particular. (Fig. 15)

But compare this notion of geometrical purity to Wolfflin’s observation that buildings express a relation between ascent and repose. And what does Wolfflin make of the perfect square? He says that it “is called bulky, heavy, contented, plain, good-natured, stupid... We can not tell if the body is reclining or standing.”

We can extrapolate what he might make of New York’s second-tallest building.

Viñoly’s throwback aesthetics notwithstanding, there have been developments in architecture since the heyday of modernism 50-60 years ago. Yet architecture is faced with the same
existential question we all are faced with these days: how to create meaning when the
traditional ways of doing so have been ruptured? If there is one commonality among the
various strains of modernism, it is the rejection of the authority of tradition. In the wake of this
historical development, architects needn’t simply return to traditional pre-modernist practice.
One alternative response has been postmodernism. Probably the most seminal postmodern
building in New York is Philip Johnson’s Sony Tower (Fig. 16). Postmodernists have abandoned
the utopianism of modernism in favor of a pastiche of traditional design elements, including
ornament: the so-called Chippendale roof line on Johnson’s building, for instance, is purely
decorative, and along with its monumental arched entrance establishes the building as a
singular architectural presence with an intelligibly anthropomorphic dimension. A logic of
embodiment begins to return in postmodernism, but is, to use Jencks’ term, “double-coded”:
“an eclectic mix of traditional or local codes with modern ones.”

Others are more self-consciously historicist. (Fig. 17) Robert Stern’s 220 Central Park South
—a 950-foot building that is soon to go up at Central Park South. Stern’s designs employ
setbacks, limestone facades, ornament, and other elements that evoke the early days of New
York skyscraper design, when those designs were still grounded in traditional architectural
understanding. There is an effort here to respond to the history of New York, to be attentive
to place and to be attentive of our fully embodied experience.
Returning to the pre-modernist tradition would certainly be one valid way to re-discover the possibilities for fully embodied experience in architecture. But there is perhaps a danger in getting mired in the past. Not all the consequences of modernist theory and practice have been salubrious for the human experience of the built environment, but the modernists’ rejection of the authority of tradition nonetheless presents an endless field of opportunity for architecture. (Indeed, the principle surely ought to apply to the authority of the modernist tradition itself; modernism thus impels its own transformation.) A contemporary architect finds herself on the other end of any number of significant social changes that have transpired over the course of the last century; she is equipped with an array of technologies and materials unavailable to the pre-modernists; and she is living in a radically plural world, in which the texture of daily life is drawn from a range of cultural sources that is global in scope. Given this altered landscape, it seems silly to think that the only way to achieve a fully embodied disposition in architecture would be to retreat to the familiar classical tropes. And in fact, I think signs are emerging, in the New York skyline as elsewhere, of a re-discovery of multimodal experience in architectural design that marks an evolution in the field rather than simply a return to the past.

(Fig. 18) An instance of this can be found in Jean Nouvel’s design for 53W53 (formerly Torre Verre), the tower that is soon to begin construction next to MoMA. It is strikingly futuristic, yet its tapering, conical form evokes the early towers of New York, albeit in a far more radical interpretation than Stern’s. It is powerfully responsive to place – there is something manifestly Gothamesque about it. Undoubtedly it inspires an “upward awakening” in us – a powerful kinesthetic engagement; its irregular web of steel beams and the sloping facets of its façade draw the eye in an inexorable vertical kinesis that justifies its height.

In fairness, examples of a certain kinesthetic expressionism could be found within the modernist tradition, even as early as the 1970s in the case of the original World Trade Center. (Fig. 19) Minoru Yamasaki’s design is, at first glance, paradigmatically modernist. But the inclusion of the repeating ogee arches at its base (Fig. 20), and the vertical accents, like a kind of minimalist tracery, are Gothic touches that emphasized the building’s soaring height while responding to the human form at street level. (Fig. 21) This might be contrasted with the fortress-like podium of its replacement, which evinces no such grace.

(Fig. 22) Another contemporary example of an attention to kinesthetic experience is emerging in the much ballyhooed Hudson Yards megadevelopment. The two main towers are arranged in a kind of kinetic tethering – they seem to be moving around each other (in a generous light, the movement is balanced and dance-like; less generously, they resemble something more
like stumbling drunks). There is also a suggestion of anthropomorphism: the larger structure, in particular, presents a sort of "face." Still, these gestures are very broad, if not cartoonish.

More subtle is Frank Gehry’s 8 Spruce Street, formerly the Beekman Tower. (Fig. 23) The rippling glass façade suggests the movements of wind and light in the changing sky into which it projects. If, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty said, we can “hear” the shatter just by looking at shards of broken glass that lie strewn on the floor, then surely we “feel” the liquid movement when we look at the undulating glass of Gehry’s design. Gehry is using a new technology here, not to achieve the machinic perfection of an abstract geometrical form, nor to baffle us with deconstructivist discombobulations, but to open up new possibilities for embodied experience, arguably in a way that produces a feeling of what Wolfflin would call “well-being.” Still, this effect is produced at a distance; upon close approach, we find that the foundation of Gehry’s aerie is a rather bland brick cube. The engagement of the building with the street that is so important to the life of the city is missing.

(Fig. 24) Another building that is currently rising in Tribeca is 56 Leonard, by the firm Herzog and de Meuron. It seems destined to be known colloquially as the “Jenga” building for its vertiginous stacking of transparent blocks. The blocks themselves could have been created by Mies van der Rohe, so spartan is their design. But in their textured, irregular stacking they conjure a frenetic energy that speaks to the visceral excitement of the vertical city itself. Meanwhile, (Fig. 25) a reflective sculpture by Anish Kapoor will be installed at street
level, a reflective bulbous form that will give unique expression to the sense of mass and weight which Wolfflin found to be so central to the experience of architecture – the sculpture simultaneously seems to be compressed by and resist the rectilinear forms above it. In thus balancing the downward pull of gravity and that vital force which seeks vertical ascent, its function will resemble nothing so much as that of the traditional column, though its form could not be more different. It will operate on the proprioceptive, haptic, and visual senses all at once to provide a unique and engaging experience at street level.

These new additions to the New York skyline suggest an incipient re-engagement with the non-visual senses in architectural experience. So far these gestures tend to operate at the scale of the whole structure (Kapoor’s sculpture notwithstanding), and thus read best from a long-distance perspective, suggesting that there may still be more concern for how the designs appear to a fundamentally visual disposition, rather than close bodily engagement. Notably, ornament remains sparse; what gives expression to a building’s “excessive force of form” in Wolfflin’s formulation is still relatively rare. Perhaps this is partly because many of the skills and crafts involved in traditional ornament have been lost, or nearly so, due to their perceived obsolescence during the several decades of modernist hegemony. Perhaps 3-D printing or other new technologies will allow for a resurgence of ornament in novel idioms. We shall see. In any event, the door is being opened to new expressions of fully embodied experience in architecture.

Buildings are, generally speaking, made to last. In this sense, every architectural work is inherently a vision of the future. When we cast our glance around the skyline of New York, we don’t just find a mix of the old and the new, but a mixture of visions of the future from the perspective of various pasts. I would like to conclude by pointing to one particular place where the past’s future is especially present: the Chrysler Building. (Fig. 26) The art deco movement is fascinating for being the moment of acceleration away from traditionalism, wherein traditional forms were imbued with machinic speed to produce a sense of exhilaration in architecture. It is as if, in art deco, you can feel the force of time sweeping into the built environment, beginning to blow up the traditional forms from the inside. Yet there is a confidence in experimentation here that is still rooted in place, that is not yet the conceptually pure utopia of Loos’ white walls or Le Corbusier’s geometrical abstraction. Imagine the Chrysler Building as the emblem of an alternative history. What if the modernists’ rejection of the authority of tradition had led them to the conclusion that liberation was to be found not in the purity of abstract concepts, but in the textures and histories of particular places? What if they had responded to the past not with acts of erasure, but with acts of imaginative transformation that gave new expression to the richness of fully embodied experience? What if the 20th
Century hadn’t become bogged down in so many visions of brutal perfection? What sort of futures might have been possible?

References

2 Wolfflin, 151.
3 Wolfflin, 151.
4 Ibid., 159.
5 Bloomer, 83. It is ironic that the modernists’ cri de coeur that form must follow function derives
from Sullivan's declaration that "shape, form, outward expression, design, or whatever we may choose of the tall office building should in the very nature of things follow the functions of the building" (quoted in Bloomer, 81, from Sullivan, Louis H. "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," in Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings, New York: Dover, 1979. p. 208). Sullivan's point was that visual functionality could be enhanced by ornament, not that any expression that wasn't structurally necessitated ought to be suppressed. (Of course, this principle of suppression was itself, like the large-scale geometric patterning of modernist urban designs, expressed in aesthetic ways, even to the detriment of functionality; for instance, an entrance to a building, which under traditional rubrics ought to be emphasized to facilitate recognition and human interaction, is in modernist architecture often de-emphasized in a way that makes entrance into a building a more difficult, and sometimes even baffling, experience – a minimalist design sense that is nominally committed to functionality ends up actually undermining function.)

6 Wolfflin, 152.
7 Jencks (1986), 29.
8 Loos, 32.
9 Ibid., 30.
10 Ibid., 32.
11 Ibid., 30. Similarly, Le Corbusier used some of his most emphatic language in opposing the notion that traditional styles ought to be employed, even in the interest of preserving the character of historical areas: "Such methods are contrary to the great lesson of history. Never has a return to the past been recorded, never has man retraced his steps... To imitate the past slavishly is to condemn ourselves to delusion, to institute the 'false' as a principle ... (which) merely results in artificial reconstruction capable only of discrediting the authentic testimonies that we were most moved to preserve" (Le Corbusier (1973), 88-89).

12 Goldhagen, 310. Politically, these modernists generally supported extant democratic and capitalist institutions as the proper mechanisms for progressive change – hence the "consensualist" appellation.
13 Ibid.
14 Ozenfant, Amédée and Le Corbusier. "Purism," 1921, accessed from the web at http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2011/08/31/le-corbusier-and-amedee-ozenfant%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cpurism%E2%80%9D-1921/. An "elementary truth" of purism was "that anything of universal value is worth more than anything of merely individual value," where geometrical abstractions are explicitly invoked as universal, and any sort of ornament or particular markings are individual. The conceptually abstract is thus elevated above the culturally and historically particular.
15 Le Corbusier (2008), 16.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 23.
To be sure, Le Corbusier does not ignore the human body. Perhaps most notably, in The Modular he seeks to develop a system of measurement based on the proportions of the (English male) body. Yet this effort is the exception that proves the rule: even in this turn toward the importance of human form, his approach to the human body is to geometrize it; rather than allow the kinesthetic dimension of human bodily experience to inflect the geometrical abstraction of his designs, he imposes geometrical abstraction on the human form. All this is in service to the essentially oculocentric goal of designing a system of measurement “based on mathematics and the human scale” (Le Corbusier 2000, p. 60).

Contrast the adoption of this secular bird’s-eye view with traditional cathedral design, for instance. Cathedrals (Gothic ones, most exemplifyingly) are profoundly vertical in their orientation, as they express the human relation to God and the heavens; yet they express this from the human perspective, as an aspirational or yearning expression that is nonetheless rooted in the ground (though as noted above, Le Corbusier saw in this a merely “sentimental” sensation). The figure of the human is preserved even in the heights of these Cathedrals, for instance in the aedicules in their upper reaches which might be thought to metaphorically house the angels (which are themselves anthropomorphic, of course). It is tempting to wonder whether the secular clearing of the conceptual space that formerly belonged to religion might have been at some level a factor for the emergence of the modernists, who claimed occupancy for themselves in what had erstwhile been the aeries of heavenly beings.

The recently-begun 225 W. 57th St., several blocks to the west on Midtown’s nascent Billionaire’s Row, is currently planned to have a roof height of 1,479 feet (and 1,775 feet to the tip of its spire), the highest in North America.

All building heights are according to "The Skyscraper Center: The Global Tall Buildings Database of the CTBUH" (www.skyscrapercenter.org).


Wolfflin, 168.

One World Trade Center, at 1,776 feet, is officially the tallest building in the city, thanks to an architectural feature that was controversially designated as a "spire" by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitats; critics argued this feature would be more properly described as an antenna, which would have denied its inclusion in the calculation of the building’s official overall height.

32  Merleau-Ponty, 238. Wolfflin himself drew attention to the importance of such synesthetic experiences for architecture, which he referred to as “analogies of linear sensation” (Wolfflin, 158-159).
ARCHI-PORTRAITS AS AN EXTENSION OF URBAN ADORNMENT

DENIZ BALIK AND AÇALYA ALLMER
"Façade Architects"

This paper focuses on the composition of portraits as a method of decorating building façades in contemporary architecture. Giant portraits on façades are displayed for public view, and they are conceived more as images and urban adornments. In parallel with the current domination of image flood in contemporary architecture, mass media is expanding worldwide and transforming objects into images. As also stated by the French Situationist Guy Debord (1967), the accumulation of spectacles represents modern life and mediates social relations. Following the ideas of Debord, contemporary culture is defined by the acts of advertising, displaying, consuming, and commercializing. This paper explores the issue of archi-portraits, and reveals the concepts of power, memory, history, and self-display through contemporary building façades.

According to the doctrines of modern architecture, designing solely the façade of a building indicates superficiality, as it relates to designing a two-dimensional graphic element rather than a three-dimensional construction. Yet in contemporary architecture, for example in the case of BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group), the architects deliberately reduce themselves to being "façade architects," as they take it as a challenge and interpret it as a design input. Bjarke Ingels, the founder of the global Danish architecture office, further elaborates that while working on the design of the Arlanda Hotel in Stockholm, they were challenged by the strict demands of their client. As the façade was the one issue that the client had not expressed an opinion on, the architects focused on merely designing the building façades in a provocative manner, and asked themselves: "Jesus, he already designed the building – What’s left for us to do? Façades?" (2010:337). Giving primacy to the design of the façades, BIG interpreted the portraits of the Swedish royal family: Crown Princess Victoria, Princess Madeleine, and Prince Carl Philip. Furthermore, the architects intended to create a triangular prism form in order for the building to appear as a two-dimensional element (Figure 1). As Ingels (2010:340) further remarks, looking at the building from one edge of the triangular form would render the other two façades invisible. The ornamental character of the façades and the triangular form of the building thus transform the hotel into a giant advertising billboard as an urban sign.
In a similar vein, the giant portraiture on one of the façades of the Swanston Square building is thoroughly exposed to the newly-designed Swanston Square, much like a two-dimensional surface (Figure 2). The housing complex, designed by ARM Architecture and completed in 2005 in Melbourne, consists of twenty different types of residential units on each floor. The building is L-shaped, with a curved façade on one side, comprised of a portrait of William Barak, the last traditional elder of an Aboriginal clan. The portrait façade is created by attaching CNC-cut solid materials to structural elements from behind, and using them as terrace parapets throughout the whole façade. Approaching the design issue with a sense of history, the portrait is visible from a distance, but it dissolves into an ambiguous figure as one comes close.

Moreover, one of the most well-known buildings preserving the memory of historical figures is the McCormick Tribune Campus Center at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), which was designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) in 2003. In this project, OMA collaborated with graphic designer Michael Rock to design a series of icons that symbolize students’ activities at the university. The small icons, engraved on the glass walls of the building, constitute several huge portraits from a distance. On the entrance façade, the icons form a pixelated portrait of Mies van der Rohe (Figure 3). OMA intended to pay homage to the modern architect and preserve his memory, since Mies designed the campus master plan, many of the IIT buildings, and also headed the architecture department in the mid-twentieth century. Inside the building, small icons on the translucent glass walls compose pixelated portraits of many other IIT founders (Figure 4).
The portraits on the façades make the viewer focus mainly on the decipherment of the identities of the figures depicted. Yet, apart from being merely two-dimensional visual graphics, the buildings with portrait façades have intense symbolic narratives, such as preserving memory, constructing identity, and representing authority. Recalling the considerations that were also integral to architectural design before the twentieth-century modernism, the façade architects in contemporary architecture justify the application of portraits through a sense of history and extension of power.

**Portraiture as Extension of Power**

When the ornamental building façades are comprised of portraits of authority figures, they become the embodiment and extension of power, and are associated with the symbolic attributes of the figures depicted. Yet, beyond being a contemporary application, the history of portrait painting as a representation of title, status, and identity dates back to antiquity. In ancient times, the physical characteristics of authority figures were represented on statues, reliefs, wall paintings, and metal coins. In the Middle Ages, portraiture was a major medium of representing affiliation, status, and nobility among leaders and royalties. As an extension of their infinite power, authority figures were portrayed in their ideal forms and age rather than their real physical condition, (Woodall, 1997:1-3). Defined as “absolutist portraiture,” ideal portrait depiction in the Early Modern European monarchy is based on the idea of omnipresent authority: The king is everywhere and sees everything; thus nothing can escape his sight. In this sense, large portraits of the king were painted and substituted him when he was abroad. Conceiving this portrait as the representation of kingship, courtiers regularly paid their respects to it. Otherwise, it would be counted as an offense. Designated as “the contempt of Majesty,” it was forbidden for the courtiers to turn their back on the king’s portrait, as if it had been the king himself. Such metaphor-laden portraits, in particular, represent the ideal features of authorities, which are not affected by the age and other attributes of individual royalty (Mirzoeff, 2009:35-36). As elaborated by the Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti (1956:63) in his 1435 book De Pictura, the mortal life of a deceased person transforms into eternity through portrait painting. Being a symbolic construct of identity, absolutist portraiture materializes the metaphor of body politics.

The significant role of portraiture continues in contemporary architecture, and maintains its position as the representation of authority. Today, the content of portraiture has expanded from the aristocrat figure to the building investor. Parallel to this idea, the VM Houses project, designed in 2004 and 2005 in Copenhagen by Danish architects, Bjarke Ingels and Julien de Smedt, is a striking example. The buildings are designed as two monolithic and adjacent housing complexes in the shapes of V and M. As elaborated by Ingels (2010:74), when the Danish architect
and designer Arne Jacobsen was commissioned to build the Radisson Blu Hotel in Copenhagen in the 1960s, he also painted a portrait of his client, Alberto Kappenberger. The client was both the manager and the investor of the hotel; therefore, as homage, his portrait was placed on one of the walls of the Alberto K. Restaurant at the hotel (Figure 5). Ingels (2010:74) notes that, under the influence of Kappenberger’s portrait at the hotel, the architects intended to continue the tendency of homage in the VM Houses. On the entrance façade of the M-houses, the architects applied ceramic tiles of ten different colors, which compose two portraits of the building investors (Figure 6). The end product became a pixelated artwork of colorful ceramics, for which Ingels coins the term “thumbnail resolution portrait” (Figure 7). Ingels (2010:74) justifies his pragmatic approach of portraiture through the intention of overcoming blank surfaces and cold building materials. From his point of view, colored ceramics would improve the appearance of a building to a certain degree. Being colorful ornaments on a human scale, the portraits of VM Houses greet people as they enter the building. Ingels states in an interview that the composition of ceramic tiles on the walls of the VM Houses was a significant example of architectural detailing, as it also added a sense of history and identity to the building and its context (Weiss, 2012:28). The ceramic portraits on the façades signify the status of the building investors, and reveal one of the significant roles of ornament as urban portraits, which relates to the concepts of power, authority, and memory.

Figure 5:
Portrait of Alberto Kappenberger by Arne Jacobsen (Copyright: Hans Nerst, 2007)
Integrating the portraits of building investors as the representation of status and power resonates with the former role of façades as the representation of the social status of the building owner. Until the nineteenth century, façades indicated the title, position, and personal achievements of the building owner through traditional elements, such as ornaments. Being an important part of culture, it was a distinctive representation of status and prestige, which performed symbolically (Picon, 2013:48). This role is especially seen on the façades of royal buildings, such as parliaments, conference halls, and royal residences. For example, Hofburg Palace in Vienna, which contains the residence and conference halls for the royal family, is adorned with their coat of arms and emblems. In the late nineteenth century, during the reign of the Emperor Franz Joseph I, a new extension was added to the building complex. At the top of the main entrance gate of the new wing, which was named St. Michael’s Wing, a poetic and shiny ornament is clearly visible (Figure 8). Elaborated in stone, four angels are depicted carrying the coat of arms of the Emperor Franz Joseph I. Two of the angels are playing trumpets, as if to announce the emperor to public. To a great extent, ornamental details perform as a symbol to emphasize title and power, as much as they construct a visual record of history.

As the cases in this study show, the representation of power is not analogically and directly related to the design of a massive building. Michel Foucault (1997:372) further elaborates
that, in order to represent power intensively, the symbolic connotations of a building should be much more than superficial and analogical. In accord with this idea, urban portraits as building façades embody power by symbolizing the title and identity of the figures depicted, since the representation of authority connotes the signification of ideology, status, and position (Critios, 2004:194; Schmitter, 1996:264-266). The portraits of authority figures on building façades emerge as the extension of power, and the epitome of ideological aesthetics. In contrast to traditional building façades, the reading of archi-portraits are more accessible to public, since the public no longer needs to decipher the symbolic language of architectural elements. Rather, the photographic representation of power is obviously and manifestly embodied as an urban portrait.

**Façade as an Urban Portrait**

An urban portrait as the public face of a building becomes the element of public attention and exhibition. The façades of the Leadership Tower design by BIG in Dubai compose two giant portraits of Arab sheiks when seen from a distance (Figure 9). On the other hand, when seen close up, the portraits dissolve into square holes that constitute windows; yet the transparent openings on the façades do not overlap the function of the tower as office spaces. The grid pattern covers the whole surface; yet some rooms and offices on the tower have large openings, whereas some have small ones. Treating the façades as two-dimensional graphic elements, portraiture becomes BIG’s main intention while designing the Leadership Tower.

Ingels (2010:347) remarks that the images of the Arab sheiks have already been affixed to various print and digital media surfaces throughout the country, such as national stamps, billboards, and banners. As an extension of the idea of urban adornment, their portraits are replicated on the façades of the Leadership Tower beyond their physical presence. Being oversized images that intensify and reinforce the idea of authority, portrait façades contribute to the superhuman attributions of sheiks, as much as they promote BIG as the producer of media (Balık and Allmer, 2015). Urban portraits as reproduced media are perceived as the epitome of culture industry, since the reproduced image as an urban façade is the extension of the advertising medium (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002:133). The continuous multiplication and reproduction of images on various surfaces turn them into commodity, and engage them in consumer capitalism.

The cultural shift towards the image-oriented market of contemporary society influences the current course of architecture. Ornaments as urban portraits reintroduce the human in contemporary culture, while they connote ego, prestige, architecture as a commodity, and
self-promotion in the celebrity-driven world. Portrait façade is designed as the symbol of prestige, the instrument of power, and the medium of advertising, rather than being merely the representation of the building plan. For this reason, the application of façade as an urban portrait does not discriminate between a public building and a housing complex. The bodily presences of royal figures are transformed into portrait depictions on building façades, and transform the buildings into urban representations of authority. Being displayed as royal portraits, the façades are redefined as representations of power. In addition, historical figures who are transformed into façades make the buildings emerge as an extension of memory and a record of history. The urban portraits transfer information as much as the painted portraits of the figures, as they serve the preservation of collective memory. Rather than exposing plain and blank façades to the city, the buildings with portrait façades perform in-between a display surface and an advertisement billboard. The application of portraits plays with the conception of a three-dimensional building or a two-dimensional image, as if there is no differentiation between the former and the latter. Turning the buildings into images for a curious look, the façades contribute to the city by being archi-portraits.
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REVISITING THE FAÇADE OF MARCHÉ KERMEL: A TRIPARTITE INVENTED TRADITION

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Introduction

Drawing on the phrase ‘invention of tradition’ is particularly useful for a stylistic analysis of the façade of Marché Kermel in Dakar, Senegal. This is in terms of its three-layered colonial and postcolonial architectural traditions, as well as historiography and problematic. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s co-edited volume The Invention of Tradition (1983) stimulated a series of publications on the cultural politics of, and on the relationships between, the formation of state, nationalism, identity and ethnicity. Expanding on ‘neo-traditions’ within different parts of the British Empire, including Scotland, Wales, India and Africa – this volume immediately created its own subject matter. Hobsbawm defined ‘invented tradition’ as a deliberate, somewhat artificial, process that refers to old and established traditions as well as to recent and unprecedented ones. This process, during which these traditions undergo formalization and ritualization, inevitably recreates and institutionalizes them. While continuity with a chosen historical past is being established through these traditions, the result of the process of inventing is in fact a discontinuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 1983, 1-2).

Within the fields of sociology and anthropology the phrase ‘invented tradition’ has received the most pointed criticism. Considering the inherently dynamic and practical nature of all traditions and their use of history as a cement of group cohesion, the distinction between traditions that are ‘invented’ and those that are ‘genuinely’ or ‘authentically’ not, has been found hard to understand (Picton, 1989, 201). Such pragmatic approach perceives all traditions as genuine, because traditions are understood as symbolic constructs that are always defined by societies in the present (Handler and Jocelyn, 1984; Hanson, 1989; Jackson, 1995; Briggs, 1996). While this approach removes the assumed dichotomy between the ‘authentic’ and the ‘spurious’, it conceptualizes traditions as applicable and contemporaneous, and thus it is also a departure from Hobsbawm’s definition by being de-historicist (Plant, 2008, 179).

In this article, we elaborate on both the historical and the more pragmatic approaches for the phrase ‘invented tradition’ in order to evaluate the specific micro-historical context of the colonial and postcolonial architecture of Marché Kermel’s façade. Beyond this, our stylistic
Hobsbawm's pioneering introduction uses architecture as one of the first and most "striking" examples for his oxymoronic term, referring to the "deliberate choice of a Gothic style for the nineteenth-century rebuilding of the British parliament, and the equally deliberate decision after World War II to rebuild the parliamentary chamber on exactly the same basic plan as before" (Hobsbawm, 1983, 1-2). This case somewhat resembles to that of Marché Kermel, which was constructed in a neo-Moorish style in the beginning of the twentieth century and then, after a devastating fire in the 1990s, reconstructed as an exact replica of the French colonial structure. Hobsbawm's explanation for this phenomenon of factitious continuity is that it is a response to "novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition" (Ibid, 2).

This indeed coincides with our interpretation of the first neo-Moorish version of Kermel, and with the general tendency in colonial studies to emphasis the social construction of tradition by colonial authorities in order to preserve social order while subordinating indigenous societies to colonial rule (Spear, 2003, 3-4). Yet the choice to reconstruct Marché Kermel as a replica of the previous market building was not made by the same power or regime, but rather in the postcolonial period, by the independent Senegalese state. Though, as we shall see, there was a colonialist element in Kermel's reconstruction, what this still means is that colonialism – together with its built heritage – was not merely a unidirectional political phenomenon; and that discursive relations with its heritage have continued into the postcolonial period.

With regard to Africa, however, while the phrase 'invented tradition' has been employed in historical and anthropological research (Ranger, 1993; Kaler, 2001; Spear, 2003; Ingelare, 2007, 33-35), examples from studies in art and architectural research are not abundant. These include reference to French North Africa almost exclusively and are mainly preoccupied with the question of colonial pseudo-authenticity (Housefield, 1997; Girard, 2006; Jelidi, 2009, 24-26). François Béguin’s renowned book Arabisances on the French neo-Moorish buildings in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia was published in 1983, in the same year as Hobsbawn and Ranger’s, thus, Béguin did not explicitly theorize the phrase ‘invented tradition’. In 1991, Gwendolyn Wright made an
appropriate theorization, referring to the architectural politics of the French in Morocco and connecting between colonial doctrines and aesthetics (1991, 9). Our article’s contribution lies in continuing this line of thought by expanding on the reciprocal relations between (post-) colonial forms and ideologies, and in the application of these relations into sub-Saharan Africa.

**Two Layers of Invented Tradition: French Colonial Ideologies and Kermel’s Façade**

The conceptualization of Marché Kermel dates back to 1862, when Dakar was established as a colonial city following the French occupation of the Cap Vert peninsula. In the initial master plan for the city, drawn up by the head of the local Corps of Engineers, Kermel’s square is clearly visible. Breaking the orthogonal layout with its polygonal lines, this square was placed to the east of Place Prôtet – today’s Place de l’Indépendance – near the port (Charpy, 1958, 291-295) (Figure 1). The latter square still constitutes the hub of the city, with major administrative, commercial and transport functions. At this initial stage, a large shed on Kermel’s square was erected by the French administration for the protection of commodities from dust, sun, and rain. It was a relatively simple and functional structure, made of metal columns and ceiling, without any decoration (ANOM, FM SG SEN/XII/13). While some authors argue that the market was named after the navy officer Eustache Louis Jean Quernel (Sankalè, 1997), it is more likely that the name ‘Kermel’ (then Quermel) was a deviation of ‘Kernel’ (quernel) – referring to the regional commerce in grains and spices.

![Figure 1: Part of Dakar’s 1862 master plan (Courtesy of Archives Nationales du Sénégal)](image-url)
While Dakar’s master plan and Kermel’s square were a product of the French official occupation of the area and the modern imperialism and colonialism, we would like to stress here two relevant points as to the pre-modern colonialism and urbanism in the region. The first is that the Senegalese coastal towns of Saint Louis, Gorée and Rufisque, provide exceptional examples for the long presence of European settlement in West Africa. Initiated by Portuguese and Dutch seamen and merchants (from the mid-fifteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, respectively), these fortified coastal settlements were not established as ‘cities’, but rather as trading posts and depots, totally dependent for their existence on the extent and intensity of commercial exchanges, including the slave trade. Monopolised by the regime of the semi-official ‘compagnies’, these commerce was conducted by a tiny number of Europeans, a limited number of mulattos (métis), free Africans and domestic slaves, mostly women (Guèye, 2013).

Secondly, this pre-modern colonialism of the period before the consolidation of the official colonialism in the mid-nineteenth century was not rich in planning activity. Such activity was limited to the few coastal settlements alone and was quite voluntary, resulting from social status and class. Both the permanent habitations of Europeans and the métis near the forts, and habitations made of temporary materials of free Africans and domestic slaves, reflected the history of Afro-European interactions engendered by the transatlantic trade (Thiaw, 2010).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Kermel’s shed was transformed into a monumental market building – a move that was directly related to the ideological aspects of the modern French colonialism. Following the French military conquest of sub-Saharan Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century, these territories were organized hierarchically. At the top of the French West African administrative structure was the expansive AOF Federation, created in 1895; from 1902, its headquarters was the city of Dakar (see, for more, Suret-Canale, 1971). While the building impetus in Dakar was related to its conception as an imperial city in the French colonial imagination, it was also tightly related to France’s mission civilisatrice. In other words, the AOF’s autochthonous populations were perceived as too primitive for self-government, but as capable of being socially and morally uplifted. For this mission, the French considered themselves to be the best people, due to their virtually superior culture, revolutionary past and technological capacities (Conklin, 1997, 1-3).

As a result, the Eurocentric rhetoric that accompanied the mission civilisatrice was dominant in the terminology of French policy makers during the colonial period. It was closely related to the French colonial doctrine of assimilation. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the philosophy of assimilation and its complexities, we shall only point here in passing that its general aim, as asserted by the Third Republic, was to turn the colonies into an integral part of the mother country. The sixth paragraph of the third constitution of 1795
labeled the colonies as inseparable parts of the Republic and subjected them to the same laws (Lewis, 1970, 166). In line with this, following the invasion of 1848, Algeria was considered nothing less than an extension of France. Dakar was likewise proclaimed by the Colonial Congress of 1889 to be a distant suburb of Paris (Betts, 1961, 13). Consequently, colonial urban spaces, particularly in Senegal, constituted in the mind of the colonial authorities the very embodiment of ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ environments. This means that some of their African residents should be turned into évolués, and become integrated into French values (Johnson, 1971). However, the physical colonization of West Africa was oriented almost exclusively toward the material profit of France itself and its expatriates; and the actual practices of the civilizing mission were far from serving the needs of the indigenous communities (Sinou, 1993b; Conklin, 1997, 38-72).

Recruited by the colonial authorities to play a role in the colonial project, architecture had long been considered an especially effective ideological transmitter, in the face of indigenous, colonial and metropolitan societies (Wright, 1991, 1). Its visual power could be useful in providing both an answer and a reason for the imperial project, subjected to a constant surveillance and leftist critique at home. Moreover, aware of the competing British colonial empire, the French conceived Dakar as the ‘façade’ of the French colonial Empire on the Atlantic (ANOM, FM SG, SEN XII/110). The creation of such a representational façade could have been also helpful in working against the disastrous image of ‘life in the tropics’ then prevalent in the western mind: sub-Saharan Africa was popularly considered ‘terre des fièvres et de la barbarie’ (land of fevers and barbarity) (Sinou, 1993a, 94-95, 321), surrounded by ‘primitive' thatched huts.

This discourse was mirrored in the official architecture of contemporary Dakar – a major maritime port in West Africa, hub for transportation to and from the interior, and the regional capital. Yet most of its early urban development was motivated by sanitary considerations, and the simplistic administrative and military buildings were too rigid, economic and functional (ANOM, FM Guernut). In the face of this situation, the question of an appropriate architectural style was central to the debate of which models should serve as inspiration for the building of monuments in the colonies. In sub-Saharan Africa and especially in Dakar, the French traditional preference for the neo-Classical style was clearly salient at first. In the early twentieth century, when the actual version of Marché Kermel was built under the former shade, assimilationist reproduction of official French architecture was common, such as the Governor-General’s Residence, the Town Hall, and the House of Commerce (Figures 2 & 3).

Criticizing these unidirectional metropolitan-overseas ‘reproductions’, some colonial administrators, especially in North Africa, sought to produce a ‘unique’ colonial architecture.
They considered certain stylistic features in vernacular architecture as a source of inspiration, and they incorporated vernacular decorative elements in colonial architecture. In comparison to sub-Saharan Africa, colonists believed northern Africa demonstrated a certain degree of civilization. The architectural outcome, referred to as ‘neo-Moorish’ or arabisance style, was an invented colonial tradition. It suggested a decorative synthesis between two aesthetic traditions: that of the colonized indigenous societies, and that of metropolitan modernism, which already included historicist tendencies (Béguin, 1983; Wright, 1991) (Figure 4). This trend reflected the shift towards the softer colonial doctrine of association. Although this doctrine, designed to replace the heavily criticized assimilation, was never precisely defined, it was understood that a new form of cooperation between colonizer and colonized was essential. Yet this policy was not less paternalistic than its previous, since its understanding of the difference between human races was based on contemporary racial theories (Betts, 1961, 59-105).

But in sub-Saharan Africa the historicist (or neo-regional) question remained open for a while, as administrators struggled to find, amongst the vernacular mud (also called adobe or banco) and straw structures, appropriate models of inspiration. The round straw huts, of a relatively small size and height, were perceived as being identical to each other, temporary in nature and of unsophisticated technique. These features were interpreted as signs testifying to the primitive character of the African population (Weithas, 1932, 114; Prussin, 1985). Having failed in finding appropriate, appealing models in the region, the administrators turned to
their earlier North African experience, and imported the neo-Moorish style for colonial public building to sub-Saharan Africa. In their eyes, the presence of the Islamic religion on both sides of the Sahara served as a reasonable basis for this stylistic solution.

Indeed, the period between the 1860s and the 1930s constituted the heydays of the neo-regionalism, or the contextual approach of cultural relativism in modernist architecture and urban design (Wright, 1991, 6-7). In both the British and the French colonial empires, this approach resulted, aside from the utilization of the neo-Classical repertoire, in a series of ‘neo’-s styles of incorporating ‘regional’ motives in public buildings, Islamic or others. The North African arabisance therefore had its Indo-Saracenic equivalent in British India (Davies, 1985); and the British preservationist orientalism in Mandate Palestine coincided with the ‘eclectic style’ there, led by architects from the Jewish sector (Dean, 1983; Fuchs, 1992). Needless to say, none of these styles were based on accurate historicism but rather represented an amalgam of variegated visual sources subjected to western logics. Though in one respect the choice in the ‘neo-Moorish’ paradigm for Kermel’s façade, as we shall see, was exceptional in comparison to other colonialist ‘neo-s’. That is, in the importation of this invented regional style to a new environment much beyond its original regional context: from North Africa into sub-Saharan Africa. This transfer – amongst others such as the case of the ‘garden city’ (Bigon and Katz, 2014) – testifies to the transnational dissemination of urban aesthetical paradigms within the imperial spheres.

Figure 5: Postcard showing Marché Kermel in the 1910s, Dakar (authors’ private collection)

This ‘associative’ stylistic trend of North African neo-regionalism is reflected in the façade and structure of Marché Kermel, combined with a cast-iron foundation (Figure 5). Kermel’s architectural design, winner of a competition that ended on October 1907, corresponded with the polygonal square. It constituted a unique edifice in Dakar, dissimilar to any other existing structure. Work on it started in April 1908 and was completed by 1910 (Sinou, 1997, 33). It included a gallery encircling the main body of the building, a metal framework and decorative friezes. As was often the case for French colonial buildings, all materials, including the iron skeleton to the ceramic tiles, were prefabricated in France and exported to Dakar (Bigon and Sinou, 2013).

Apart from a lack of specialized manpower and enterprises in the colonies, the French also aimed at ‘return on investment’ policy by stimulating the French economy at home by exporting materials overseas (Dulucq, 1997, 75). However, this market building and its general size evoke qualities similar to the great metal markets that were established in France and in other European countries in the late nineteenth century. Lead by Britain, the European tradition of prefabricated covered markets – and train stations, colonial bungalows and other public buildings – spread quickly in the global North and South (Herbert, 1978; King, 1995).
Even in the late 1940s, French manufacturers still provided a catalogue of portable buildings including covered markets very similar to Kermel’s, for use in France itself and for overseas exports; orders from Senegal were taken (ANS, 4P 2979) (Figure 6).

At first glance, the most noticeable features in Kermel’s façade are its three great portals, each serves as an entrance to the market, endowing it with a somewhat ‘oriental’ look that was seemingly designed more for Europeans than for the Senegalese. These three portals are designed in the form of a horseshoe arch, which evokes an immediate association with Islamic North Africa. This impression is consolidated by the alternation of the then white (today yellow) and red brick colors in the portals' walls. While the horseshoe-arch shape and the brick-color are elements prevalent in medieval religious architecture in North Africa, Kermel’s arches are not part of any sacred architecture, but rather an invented French colonial style subjected to the aesthetic vocabulary of the then fashionable Art Déco (Figure 7).

In fact, the façade of Marché Kermel represents a very short period of stylistic experimentation on the part of the French colonial authorities when they attempted to use North Africa vernacular aesthetics in sub-Saharan Africa. By this act of aesthetic transfer, a double process of invented tradition was created in Dakar, resulting in a unique building, as the Marché Kermel constitutes the only neo-Moorish building in the city. Moreover, while in the colonial
period most of the official public buildings were designated for the expatriates and were generally erected in quarters reserved for them, Kermel was meant to be used by the entire urban population. It therefore formed one of the rare spaces of encounter between the various population groups of Dakar. From the 1940s onwards, however, the nearby Marché Sandaga gradually became more important at Kermel’s expense, with the latter subsequently serving as a food and artifacts market, mostly for the Senegalese bourgeoisie, foreign residents and tourists (Figure 8).

A Third Layer of Invented Tradition: Kermel’s Postcolonial Façade

On 23 September 1993 Dakar woke up to a shock: during that tragic night a devastating fire completely destroyed Marché Kermel. Its sudden disappearance caused a strong feeling of loss among the inhabitants of Dakar and was widely deplored in the Senegalese press, although it is not entirely clear what was lamented most: the loss of an important site for commercial activities, a major touristic attraction or the loss of a peculiar architectural heritage. The destruction of the marketplace was almost immediately followed by a decision to reconstruct Marché Kermel as an almost complete replica of the previous structure (Figure 9). It is difficult to trace whose initiative it actually was to rebuild the market building after the original, but its reconstruction was proudly announced by Mamadou Diop, the then Mayor of Dakar, as a “chef d’œuvre de coopération” (i.e., a masterpiece of cooperation). This is between the Municipality of Dakar, a Committee under the leadership of the Senegalese Ministry of Culture, and the European and Luxemburg development agencies (Fonds Européen de Développement and Lux-Development respectively) (Klein, Meschi and Petroni, 1997, 11). The fact that Marché Kermel, and especially the burgeoning image of its façade, had gradually became one of Dakar’s most important showpieces certainly played a decisive role in its resurrection, both for the Senegalese and their foreign partners. Kermel had been designated a UNESCO classified building in 1997, and its façade is depicted in every tourist guide as a “must-see” (see also Figure 8).

The reconstruction of Marché Kermel was an arduous undertaking, as, unaware of the circumstances, any original plan or document had been retrieved in the National Archives in Dakar. In an almost archaeological manner, by literally digging into the scattered debris of Kermel, the original materials and structure of its components, as well as the complex process of their prefabrication, was “reinvented.” Indeed, the notion of “reinventing” was used by the reconstruction team itself (Petroni, 1997).

The reconstruction started in September 1995 and was completed in April 1997, resulting in an almost exact copy of the original building, except for some details, such as the color of the bricks and some functional adjustments, like the inclusion of cold storage facilities,
to accommodate the market to modern needs. The rebuilding process was supervised by Lux-Development, even though the Municipality of Dakar was the official authority; and the total cost, of 4.85 million Euros, was financed by European donor organizations. Some of the preparatory technical studies were executed by Lux-Development in collaboration with Senegalese administrative services, but most of the work was done by a group of Luxemburg architects and engineers, named Clai and composed of the architectural offices Architecture & Environnement, Klein & Muller and the engineering firm Simon & Christiansen. These three offices still exist today under the same name. The involvement of Luxemburg was thus not limited to mere financial support, but it also included the execution of most of the construction tasks. The entire iron skeleton, for instance, was prefabricated in Luxemburg and erected in Dakar by a qualified Luxemburg assembler (Klein, 1997). Although the brickwork was executed by a local contractor and the ceramic tiles were manufactured in the Dakar-based studio of an Italian artist, this massive involvement of foreign actors in the reconstruction, as well as the significant import of materials from Europe, are clearly reminiscent of the colonial period. Therefore not only the building itself, but the entire process of its reconstruction can be considered as an ‘invented tradition.’

One could argue that the decision to produce an exact replica of Marché Kermel indicates that the colonial period and its material reminders are not necessarily synonymous with cultural and economic oppression. Seen from this perspective, the reinvention of Kermel may be understood as an expression of a colonial past that has been overcome, with only some nostalgic sentiments remaining. However, the fact that there was almost no debate about the reconstruction of a symbolic colonial building, which formed a charged place of (post-) colonial encounter between Senegalese and foreign actors (first colonizers, then tourists), also points at the distance felt by some of the present-day Senegalese agencies who deal with the technical and political process of preservation of historical monuments from the colonial period. As noted by Alain Sinou earlier on, African actors not only rarely have the expertise and resources to deal with the preservation of colonial urban space, but they also often consider this the responsibility of the former colonizer (Sinou, 2005, 19). In their turn, foreign development agencies, especially UNESCO, see the preservation of colonial heritage as a new kind of mission civilisatrice, with themselves being the experts par excellence to deal with this difficult, and above all technical, affair, thereby imposing their typical western criteria for categorization and assessment on non-western territories.

Considering the neo-colonial, or at least paternalistic, features of this foreign investment and the somewhat apathetic decision of the Senegalese to completely outsource the preservation of this built heritage, the uncritical reconstruction of Marché Kermel and its ‘iconic’ façade
can be understood as much as an expression of African under-development as a showpiece of collaboration. As architecture is intimately connected to political forces that strengthens the prevailing patterns of the global North-South relations, an attention should be given to design decisions in the South that result from the need for multilateral cooperation in terms of architectural, engineering and managerial expertise (Vale, 1992, 326). The process of decolonization, argues Lawrence Vale, "involves far more than a political change of government; it entails a far-reaching alternation of social and cultural consciousness, one not easily or fully achieved" (316). Offering partial stylistic resolution of 'critical regionalism' instead of the colonialist historicist styles, he calls for the need for architectural abstraction in postcolonial times. As an indirect regionalist reflection, this should promote more integrated, representative and inclusive approach.

Therefore, buildings are no static artifacts and constructing exact replicas of former colonial ones is not a neutral act, even though the reconstruction team implicitly wants us to believe this. The colonial built heritage may be understood as a socio-political construct and the different ways to deal with its preservation and reconstruction are inherently related to issues of national identity and belonging. By omitting the whole discussion of "whose heritage" (Hall, 2002) Marché Kermel represents and for whom it is intended, an opportunity has been missed to mobilize "this legacy as a critical filter between colonial history and postcolonial memory" (Lagae, 2008, 11). It could be true that after pursuing a laborious process of distancing, re-appropriating, negotiating and contemplating, the outcome would have been exactly the same, that is, to rebuild Marché Kermel as a copy of the original. But it is also possible that this most expensive market of Dakar would not be the somewhat 'frozen' place as it has become since its reconstruction, certainly if one compares it to the nearby vibrant Marché Sandaga. This is in spite of the fact that Sandaga's very building is degenerating at a high pace; and that all previous attempts to evacuate its merchants in order to enable renovation and conservation, have failed (Mane, 2006; Toure, 2009; Beeckmans and Bigon, 2015). Maybe we have to wait for a sudden and brutal fire to burn Marché Sandaga into ashes before we see Kermel's revival?

**Conclusion**

Our stylistic analysis of Marché Kermel with an emphasis on its façade exposed the centrality of colonial and postcolonial policies in the (re-)construction of the market. It thereby demonstrates that Dakar's oldest colonial marketplace is not only a unique building in terms of architecture and visual form, but also a site of a tripartite invention of tradition. By retracing the three layers of Kermel's invented tradition – that is, the use of the North African neo-Moorish style; the transmission of this style into West Africa; and the character of its reconstruction
– we touched upon different issues. Prominent amongst these issues are: the transnational export of architectural styles to and within the African continent; the use of architecture as an ideological conveyor in colonial and postcolonial times; and the various agencies and socio-political sensibilities at stake in the process of a re-appropriation of colonial heritage. While these issues have already been touched upon by several authors when it comes to modern architecture in (post-)colonial Africa (Vale, 1992; Le Roux (et al. eds), 2003; Lagae, 2008), Marché Kermel’s imported mixture of neo-Moorish elements and metropolitan-styled prefabricated markets forms an exceptional case. Our use of the phrase ‘invented tradition’ in this context was not aimed to differentiate between the ‘real’ and the ‘false’, the ‘authentic’ and the ‘spurious’ with regard to architectural elements. Rather, this term was useful in the case of Marché Kermel in showing that the visual language of its façade has constituted a multi-layered and site-related operational symbol throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods. Constitutive of a specific cultural, political and historical meaning, this visual language also mediates between local, regional and transnational contexts.

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1 Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983. Another catalyst was Anderson, 1991. Publications are too abundant to be listed here, for some examples see the following references in this section.

2 The (urban) history of the European presence in Senegal in the pre-modern colonial period has been the subject of many 'classic' monographs and papers, such as: Pasquier, 1957; Camara, 1968; UNESCO, 1985; Sinou, 1993a; and Thiaw, 2010. However, this paragraph and occasionaly other paragraphs are based on Bigon, 2016 (in press). We acknowledge Manchester University Press for its permission to use them in this article.

3 The factual information in the following paragraphs derives from a book that has been dedicated to the reconstruction of Marché Kermel: Klein, Ch., G. Meschi and M. Petroni (eds), 1997, Le Marché Kermel, Edizioni Percaso, Rome. Though visually and thematically outstanding, this publication is prominently an uncritical celebration of the market’s reconstruction.
BETWEEN THE INCEPTION AND THE EDGE OR, ALTERNATIVELY, WHAT IS THE QUESTION OF THE FAÇADE? AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERUSAL, AT THE GERMAN PAVILION OF MIES VAN DER ROHE IN BARCELONA.

UDI MENDELSON
"The question places the full affirmation back into the void, and enriches it with this initial void. Through the question, we give ourselves the thing, and we give ourselves the void that permits us not to have it yet, or to have it as desire. The question is the desire thought".

Maurice Blanchot. The Most Profound Question.

What is the role of a building’s façade? Because it is almost always the role of the façade to act as the boundary of the building, the question is whether it should function only as a ‘boundary’? To answer this question, we need to think deeply about the essence of the concept of ‘boundary’. If we continue this line of thinking, we may also argue that the façade does not merely constitute a boundary, but also the location of the opening. Sometimes the façade itself, as a phenomenon, constitutes the opening, therefore the façade maintains a relationship between boundary and opening; a relationship that carries many meanings worthy of examination and study.

We might interpret the boundary, as the ‘end’, and the opening as the ‘beginning’. Thus, at the façade, the meaning of end and beginning are juxtaposed. The façade is the end of the act, its completion, the physical and geographical point where the act announces its completion. Simultaneously, the façade represents the moment when the encounter between Man and The building begins, and in that sense, the façade performs an act of welcoming. The façade serves as a fine membrane, which may at times also be thick and coarse, between the space ‘outside’, and the space that the boundary creates as the ‘inside’. Hence, the façade also carries with it some connotation that derives from the initial relationship between outside and inside.

The façade, like the boundary, is a definition – the definition of an area, size and scale for a building, a definition indicating enclosure. But does this mean that the façade is somehow compelled to be just a definition, limited to something which only provides ‘answers’? Or should it perhaps also be a ‘question’? If so, we must clarify what questions the façade should ask or present to the world; and even before that, we must explore how and whether it is appropriate that an act of architectural spaces should function as a ‘question’ in the world.
It seems, therefore, that before we can think about examining the act of the architectural building – because ultimately this is the object of our hermeneutic effort – we must clarify the connection between the act of the façade and the relationship between the concept of boundary and the concept of opening. We will endeavor to enrich the aforesaid act of clarification with the philosophical significance of a debate about the act of boundary as an ‘answer’, and the act of opening as a ‘question’. We will think about the ‘answer’ and the ‘question’ as phenomena and as actions, both in the world of the consciousness and as spatial and aesthetic performance.

In order to begin discussing the ‘question of the façade’ – that is to say how the façade should function, not only in terms of shape, size, material and scale, which all seem to pertain to the ‘answer’ by virtue of them being the definition – I wish to commence my investigation by actually reading a text from a different cultural area. I choose to conduct an in-depth, multidisciplinary review of the short text that appears in Mishnah 6 of Chapter V of the Ethics of the Fathers.

"Ten things were created at twilight of Shabbat eve. These are: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the donkey, the rainbow; the manna, the staff; the Shamir worm, the script writing, the inscription and the tablets. Some say also the destructive spirits, Moses’ grave and the ram of our forefather Abraham. And some say also tongs, which are made with tongs.” (Mishnah 6, Ethics of the Fathers, Chapter Five)

In this Mishnah we are told about the things that were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. The Scripture directs the reader’s eyes to the very special moment of the boundary; the boundary between secular time and sacred time, between day and night, between matter and spirit. This is the boundary between the period of creation or formation, and the period of rest and completion. From the first reading it seems that some of the things described as the final acts of creation are some kind of openings, signs and tools all related to language and movement. We will immediately ask why it should be these acts of creation that are found at the very special borderline of Sabbath Eve twilight. After all, according to the Biblical text, the creation of Man⁴ was the last and final act in the creation of the world; so how can the Sages tell us in Mishnah 6, Ethics of the Fathers V about ten things that were created after that, and why? Do they wish to claim that G-d, as the Supreme Creator, just wanted to infuse the moment of the end, the closing and completing moment, with openings and questions? And if so, what possibilities might we offer to explain these actions?
In order to render this reading interdisciplinary in nature, we will examine this Mishnah through the article written by Maurice Blanchot – 'The Most Profound Question', in his book, The Infinite Conversation.5

Only after formulating the interpretive tools we need, with the help of insights extracted from reading texts and the philosophy of the Sages, will we be able to address the development of the architectural debate. The object of debate we have chosen to discuss is the Pavilion that represented Germany in the World’s Fair of 1929 in Barcelona, designed by Mies van der Rohe. It would be more accurate to say that we have chosen to look at a very specific and not necessarily famous picture of the project; one that documents a particular time in the life of the project, taken before the destruction of the colonnade of Greek columns.6

These columns were at the Exhibition site before the Pavilion was built, and were part of a freestanding colonnade, i.e. aligned columns with neither roof nor beams to bear. Mies chose to position the Pavilion behind and parallel to them. Thus, on the one hand, the colonnade was a kind of façade for the architectural creation and, on the other hand, it created a partition and pathway for the ceremony of climbing the stairs, the movement that leads to the space of the Pavilion.

Later on we shall attempt to trace the reason behind Mies’ insistence on changing the location chosen by the organizers for the construction of the Pavilion, to where it was actually built, behind the colonnade. We will ask whether the positioning of the building, with its main façade visible to the visitor behind the Greek colonnade, seemingly belonging to an architectural style so distant and contrary to its period and creative language, could have been part of the considerations for choosing this site for the Pavilion; and if that was the case, why? Was Mies trying to say something about the significance of the act of building this Pavilion? Did Mies take advantage of this occasion to express his ideas about the relationship between the concept of boundary and the concept of opening?

It is customary to talk about the ‘free plan’ of the modern movement, as a movement of freeing the façade’, releasing the wall of the façade from the burden of carrying the weight of the building. But if we focus on the wall itself, it seems that the wall itself in the ‘liberated’ plan is not only released from its function as a constructive and supportive act, but also from being an act of boundary. As a result, the wall, as a phenomenon and even as a concept, has become something else entirely. And thus, what?
In conclusion, and as a continuation of the earlier theoretical discussion about the place of the question in the architectural and cultural act in general, we will clarify whether Mies – not only as an architect-builder, but also a theorist and thinker – was using his works to try to provide ‘answers’ to cultural and aesthetic questions of his time; or perhaps out of concern that his actions might be thus interpreted, he decided – as part of the world view he developed at that time, on the relationship between designed architectural space and what is external to it, actually using the data of the existing exhibition site, in order to ‘charge’ his work, with another question.

Let us then read the text of Mishnah 6 in the Ethics of the Fathers, in order to commence the clarification of the relationship between boundary, opening, and the concept of question: "Ten things were created at twilight of Shabbat eve. These are: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the donkey, the rainbow; the manna, the staff; the Shamir worm, The script writing, the inscription and the tablets. Some say also the destructive spirits, Moses' grave and the ram of our forefather Abraham. And some say also tongs, which are made with tongs." (Mishnah 6, Ethics of the Fathers, Chapter Five).

In our attempt to decipher this text, which directs our attention to such a special time of edge and boundary, let us adopt the method of the author himself, and we too shall turn our attention to the boundary of the text, which supposedly acts as the ending of our chosen Mishnah: "...some say, for tongs are made with tongs". This statement represents the end of the description of the things created at twilight on Sabbath Eve. Fascinatingly, it appears that the role of this last statement is not to summarize, but rather to pose a question. The text discusses the concept of ‘beginning’, and ponders whether only the end is perceived as a boundary, or perhaps the beginning is as well.

The boundary is always seen as relative to something, to a particular exterior located beyond the end; whether it is in the space of time, place or consciousness. More profound consideration will reveal that, in fact, the starting point is a boundary no less complicated than the end. It therefore appears that this statement about the tongs is not really trying to teach us when and how the first tongs were created; its purpose is rather to open up the structure of the entire paragraph; to disrupt our perception of the boundaries of the time structure, asking us about the essence of ‘beginning’. This statement turns the beginning into a boundary, and at the same time, creates a new opening, but this time one that has no measurement. Thus we find ourselves in a space of meaning in which the end becomes the opening, one that also knows how to turn itself into an opening for the entire structure.
Let us turn to the phrase, "some say," in the statement about the first tongs. It appears at the end of a sequence of actions, but at the same time creates a new opening, again just before the final curtain comes down: "And there are some who say that... for tongs are made with tongs". The text, after all, opens with a very clear claim, describing a very unique and precise time, and a clear number of acts of symbolic significance: "Ten things were created". If that is so, what can we learn from the apparent integrity of this definition by the addition "some say"? It seems that this addition, which shifts from discussing the 'what' to question the 'how' implies that the statement presenting itself earlier as a definition actually ends up implying of a lack of completeness, and thus allows us to think that maybe this entire statement is not intended to define but rather to function as a question and as a series of openings.

The last sentence concluding the list of actions, which ostensibly served to complete the construction of the answer to the question: "What actions were created... ", like a wall demarcating the building, has turned itself into a kind of opening in the boundary, into a question about the rule, a question about the feasibility of the whole and the finite, a question that Maurice Blanchot presents as 'the most profound question', the question of our era. The act of opening, thus, as the act of the question, declares the structure, like the questioner, to be imperfect, as lacking. The question, asserts Maurice Blanchot, asks about something else, and the opening marks the attitude towards that something else, or the dependency on it which is located outside, and is thus indicative of the lack of completeness of the building and the space that it demarcates.

"To ask signifies to investigate, and to investigate signifies to seek until the end, to reach the foundation, to delve, to process the foundation and, eventually, to uproot. This uprooting which takes hold of the root is the art of questioning, the art of time."

According to Blanchot, time is not a 'container' that is supposed to serve as a location for space and for a series of events that occur and apparently will continue to occur along its axis; rather, it contains the active feature of a question. Time is an art, an art of motion, of digging, of uprooting, of holding on to the root, of questioning! Does this revolutionary assertion not somehow impact the claim that the home as a space is not just a 'container' for people, a place to reside and spend time in, and some say even to dwell inside it? How shall we react, respectively, to the claim that the home is designed to specifically pose the question, or questions, about the essence of dwelling, and how to perform the act of dwelling? Or what is the act of construction, and what is the unique role of the art of architecture?
We are used to thinking about the wall as a phenomenon intended primarily to mark boundaries, and thereby stop movement, and, as such, to define and provide answers. For example, on this side of the wall is the inside, and on the other side it is the outside. And, respectively, this place is owned by me and what is outside is owned by you, or belongs to the public, or is even abandoned. And indeed, the history of architecture describes for us the great preoccupation with the building as a shell, as a box, and less with the space itself. Bruno Zevi asserts in his book Architecture as Space that space is the true essence of architecture and the pinnacle of the art of building. The focus of most of the effort invested in the façades of the building created a situation in which most of the message the structure wished to convey about itself and its attitude toward the outside world was expressed mainly in the design of the façade. Has the façade thus become questioning speech? Or alternatively, has it become an array of answers arranged in accordance with the science of composition and theory of aesthetics?

So what will happen when architecture uses walls not as answers and definitions but rather as generators of questions? As summoning new movements? How will architecture be perceived when these cornerstones, physical, spatial and conscious alike, become tools in the art of questioning, actions of searching, of uprooting and processing until the very end? How will we react when we discover that the wall was not intended to restrict movement from the outside to the inside, but to expose a new manner of movement, a route towards a new kind of outside? A different outside? What will be the nature of the space, or the void that will be created in the world the moment that the boundaries function in this manner?

Renewing the movement

"The question is movement... in the simple grammatical structure of interrogation, we already feel this opening of questioning speech—there is a demand for something else; incomplete, the speech that questions affirms that it is only a part. In which case, contrary to what we just said, the question would be essentially partial, it would be the place where speech is always given as incomplete."18

The first man-made act of building was to defend himself against the exterior, against the 'Otherness', be it the threat of nature, animals, another person who might kill him, or death, of which time announced the inevitable arrival. Such an act of building, with its attitude towards the other, used as an act of defense and concealment, was, and always will be, an act of response.

When Adam and Eve discovered their nakedness, their weakness and sin, the first thing they created in the world was shelter and refuge from the voice of G-d who punishes, or might
punish them. They created within the space a 'response' to fear, and a response to the crying out of their naked bodies. Their attitude to what was in the space exterior to them, and their attitude towards the exterior as being an end, and time – as death – was expressed in the immediate creation of a boundary, and action that could only be interpreted as a response.

It was a special and sensitive moment of realistic observation and consciousness, a moment when man went from having the ability to create things by naming them (a verbal activity that is not a question but an answer) to the ability (and perhaps the obligation) to create with materials in space and time. And at this moment that Adam chose to conceal himself within the action of his response, G-d called on him, or perhaps asked, "Where art thou"?

Following the discussion about the act of questioning as an act that challenges the boundary, and the integrity of the definition, and the integrity of the self that asks, I could not help but immediately ask myself whether G-d's appeal was not only a question, but also an answer, or perhaps both at the same time. Perhaps with the utterance/action: "Where art thou?", did G-d choose to introduce the world to the essence of the question and thereby summon man to it?

Was this call a response to Adam's creation of a hiding place, as if to say: man's place in the world cannot be established by actions of which the essence and intent are a 'response'; actions whose intent is boundaries that stop the movement of body and consciousness. Man's place cannot be exclusively the result of fear of death, treating time and death as 'answers'. Man's place in the world cannot be created solely from an act of movement from the threatening 'exterior' to the 'interior' that provides him with an unambiguous response. Man's place in the world cannot be established only through acts whose essence and intent are a 'response'. When G-d addresses man, he calls out to him and informs him that his place and his existence will be established but only inasmuch as he confronts time and place as a question, the question of everything, the question of our era.

"a being like G-d (for example) could not put himself in question – he would not question ; the world of G-d needs man to become the question of man. (or: a man's question 'question de l'homme'). When after the fall G-d asks Adam "where are you' ? this question signifies that henceforth man can no longer be found or situated except in the place of question. Man is from now on a question for G-d Himself, Who does not question.

The Garden of Eden could thus be interpreted as a space without boundaries of time and place; a space without walls, without ceilings, doors or windows; a space in which the attitude towards everything exterior is identical and uniform. Then we would be able to define the
Garden as a space with no openings or questions, a semantic space of nouns and definitions and not of verbs and vowels.

By eating the forbidden fruit, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, man violated the only boundary that G-d had set him in the Garden, a boundary already characterized by countless commentaries, and thus created the cognizant entryway to the existence of a different exterior, or the other as the exterior.

If we try to interpret this chapter in the Biblical texts through the words of Maurice Blanchot, then we could say that God, who does not ask, created man so that he will be his question, so that he should create the openings in the boundaries, in the separations and definitions that G-d created during the first five days of Creation. This act of opening up the boundary is simultaneously an act of destruction and a question about the finality of the boundary. After all, any act of opening whatsoever breaks down, destroys and empties the boundary in order to exist inside it. Adam confronts his imperfection (and consequently himself as 'other'); he now sees himself as exposed, aware of his nakedness and the nakedness within him, but also, because G-d called out to him, a call which already heralds movement and exile, Adam becomes the questioning speech, a question on G-d’s behalf, and perhaps what the biblical translator and commentator Onkelos meant by the expression "speaking spirit" (ruah memalela). Now let us return to Mishnah 6 in Ethics of the Fathers V, the period of creation, “Erev Shabbat”- (Friday evening) at twilight, and the intention of the last acts of creation: “the mouth of the earth... the mouth of the well... the mouth of the Donkey... the Shamir, the writing, the inscription and the tablets, the staff, the rainbow and the manna”.

May we now assume that the tools, openings, signs, and even the testimony written here in sequence were created for man, a moment before that gate was locked, before the sealing of the time of the primeval creation, to remind him that he must ask,

to provide him with the tools and knowledge with which he would be able to cleave, crumble and to dissolve new openings in the physical and conscious boundaries he would encounter, and with which he would have to contend from the moment of his expulsion from the Garden of Eden? Was this list intended to remind man of the existence of tools and keys, so that he would use them later on, to renew the movement that might have ceased in the spaces and situations of ‘response’, to renew the movement from outside to inside, and from inside, again, to another outside, or to the other as the outside?
The question of the façade.

"In this habitually unary space, occasionally (but alas all too rarely) a "detail" attracts me. I feel that its mere presence changes my reading, that I am looking at a new photograph, marked in my eyes with a higher value. This "detail" is the punctum." 25

Roland Barthes.

And thus, are we now ready to discuss the phenomenon of questioning within the architectural act? Have we now succeeded in formulating the new interpretive tool with which to attempt to interpret and decipher the mystery of why Mies van der Rohe chose to position his Pavilion in Barcelona behind a Greek colonnade? The reader is already able to deduce that the mere presence of this new detail, the colonnade, has changed the mode of our observation and our perception, and to some extent has forced us to pose questions – but about what?

I must admit that a further look at the architecture of Mies van der Rohe as part of the thought about the question of the façade is not to be taken for granted. The critical, conscious and aesthetic gaze has now shifted almost obsessively to the spectacular images that the new architecture of the 21st century knows how to create. The new technology of image and perspective which, for at least the past two decades, has been expressed in the façades of contemporary buildings is overwhelming. The new technologies are turning building design into an act of statesmanship, even almost to an act of jewelry-making for its own sake. 26

These images flood our visual consciousness, but they no longer attach any importance to the question, as Roland Barthes 27 mentions in his explanation of the importance of the art of photography – was it really even there? Or is this truly present in the world? After all, by means of imaging technology, we are no longer able to know if the subject of a photograph actually exists, or will ever exist.

It was, thus, an old photograph of the original Pavilion which I came across by chance. It was shown to me – and to the other members of the final project studio – by a member of the group as part of his individual research on the concept of the relationship between boundary and opening. The picture was taken during the construction of the Pavilion, with the Greek columns before it, like relics, creating a powerful contrast between the new and innovative, and the old and crumbling; between modern and classic architecture; between what I had thus far perceived as an attempt to create perfection, and the possibility of it being chance, or perhaps even error. This event, or as Barthes calls it, the "punctum" 28 that same penetrating, surprising and random element which leaps out of the picture; that is what caught my attention. The more I looked at the picture the more weakened the place of the Pavilion became in my consciousness and memory from the time when my
classmates and I were memorizing the chapters of the history of art and architecture. For this work held pride of place in the chapter on the modern movement, but somehow the visual documentation of the work – to which the art of photography was almost entirely devoted – rather concealed the presence of the Greek colonnade, to the point where the fact of their existence is known today, in effect, only to those few who studied the Pavilion in greater depth.

As I looked at this picture, I could not reconcile the contradiction between the towering Greek colonnade not supporting anything, columns which appeared to be part of a ruin or an archaeological site, mainly because the shades of sepia, black and white of the picture itself – and the architecture which Mies was trying to present to the world at the Exhibition in 1929 – the contrast was too sharp.

As an architect also involved in design and construction, on more than one occasion I have been in a situation where a wrong or unflattering context marred that planned perfect appearance I had designed, that goal we architects so yearn for at the end of a construction process. It is that photogenic quality that we try to create and preserve to the best of our ability, as if a large part of the effort in the construction process is designed for that moment when the project becomes the picture, the photogenic façade, the perfect façade. Thus, it was hard for me to imagine that Mies van der Rohe, as one of the major architects of the 20th century, could resign himself to something like this. During the presentation of the exercise, that same student was careful to emphasize that the act of selecting the construction site for the Pavilion did not derive from necessity, but that it was Mies himself who chose to build the Pavilion structure intentionally, and with full awareness, opposite the colonnade, rather than at the location previously chosen by the Exhibition organizers. This fact puzzled me even more and led me to an awareness of curiosity and question. The picture before me, as Roland Barthes describes it, "instilled in me a spirit of life", and in fact became the catalyst for the writing of this article.

Of course the initial and obvious step in this adventure was going to the university library, to the carefully arranged shelf containing all the books dealing with Mies van der Rohe and the period of modern architecture. Indeed, the professional literature discusses Mies van der Rohe's decision not to accept the first location chosen for the German Pavilion as well as his insistence on transferring the construction of the Pavilion to where it was actually built. One can even find reference to the presence of the columns, but only in a descriptive context. The colonnade is described as being just one more physical thing already in place, something almost marginal that played no significant part in Mies’ considerations. There
was good reason, as noted above, that this marginal reference to the columns was similarly expressed in how the project was photographed and documented.

So why did Mies still insist on changing the location of the construction site? Arguments from the professional literature are far more didactic and structural than poetic. The primary argument is that Mies wanted to place the Pavilion at the end of the secondary artery, at the crossroads of the structure of the Exhibition Garden, thus making the Pavilion a kind of visual and spatial 'response' to the Spanish Pavilion, from the Neo-Renaissance period; a Pavilion which had been built a century earlier and stood opposite it, symmetrically, at the other end of the artery. 31

As a continuation of this assumption, we can make the claim that Mies was trying to create a 'critical contrast' by juxtaposing his precise, modern structure, in its new location with the architectural and aesthetic style of the exhibition buildings; as well as with the nature of the noisy and lively tourist experience. Thus we might conclude that Mies sought to place the Pavilion so that it would act as a kind of end to the stylish and behavioral phenomenon of the exhibition space, with his structure intending to create an opening towards the natural Spanish countryside (pueblo espagnol) lying behind the Pavilion, staging its background.

Other advantages of Mies’ selection 32 have been suggested, according to which the Pavilion’s location placed it perpendicular to the high blank wall above which the Spanish palace rose; a position and movement that created a contrast designed to emphasize the quiet horizontal dimension of the Pavilion and its airy and open nature, as opposed to the tall vertical wall that was the foundation for the Spanish palace that rising above it.

We may definitely accept these arguments, but can we really agree that for these reasons Mies would "sacrifice" the main façade of his project, given its short lifespan? A façade and appearance that visitors would see only for the two years that the original Pavilion remained intact before it was dismantled, visitors including King Alfonso and Queen Eugenia Victoria of Spain?

**Withdrawal of the wall**

"In the 1920’s, an alternative conception begins with Mies, away from the shape of the space determined by walls, and into the heart of the enclosure; into the "space, the void, extending rhythmically between the walls...the liveliness of which is more important than the wall" ; (August Endell)... the void becomes the "content " - the actual statement, in other words." 33
Before we continue our investigation, let us challenge the honest reader with a question that might be perceived as subversive or revolutionary; did the German Pavilion in Barcelona even have a façade - a façade whose perfection could be marred? Of course, this question refers to the façade as a boundary, closing off the interior space of the building from the outside; a façade as the ultimate exterior surface of the act of the building which directly encounters the outside, marks it and is marked by it, and welcomes it. If so, was this façade able to signal its beginning and its end, i.e. did the façade know what its boundaries were?

Let us consider together, then, the plan of the building. To do so, let us look at Bruno Zevi’s definition of the concept of the plan from his book Architecture as Space. He explains that: “The plan is an abstraction, entirely removed from any real visual experience arising from the sight of an actual building. Nevertheless, a plan is still the sole way we have of judging the architectural organism as a whole. Every architect knows that the plan, however insufficient in itself, has a distinct primacy in determining the artistic worth of a building”.34

Until the end of the 19th century, the building plan followed the façade and the ‘shell’ of the building, being subject to the array of its lines, and depending on the aesthetic and cultural message the façade is designed to transmit. The plan was also subject to the construction needs of the building which focused considerably on the design of the façade. And thus, the historic transition to the ‘free plan’, created a substantial change in this relationship. Indeed, perusing the plan of Mies’ “Brick Country Villa” we recognize a dialogue with the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, with the American need for freedom and movement; but at the same time we can recognize the impact of the abstract art of the De Stijl movement. In contrast, if we observe the façade, we will see that this is actually influenced more by the European style, which still presents the need for a demarcation and limitation of shape and space. Hence, professional literature still assigns the result of the appearance of the building as a façade for the classic plastic style.

Most of the ‘movement’ in the Brick Villa plan seems to actually be emerging from the interior, from the center, from the “living reality of the interior space”... as a central core which projects the empty spaces in all directions”. The highlight of this movement is what turns the long interior walls into external walls, leading the inside space almost into an infinite outside. This movement undoubtedly challenges the concept of boundary. This plan was clearly influenced by the plans of Frank Lloyd Wright, perhaps radicalizing them. However, when we examine the plan of the German Pavilion, we discover a type of movement that is much more complex and interesting: restrained, carefully defined and calculated. It seems that in contrast with the Brick Villa, the main wall parallel to the colonnade, invites
the outside movement inside or, perhaps, to be precise, invites the outside movement to a different kind of outdoors.

In order to do this, Mies quite literally "breaks up" the wall of the façade and allows its parts to withdraw inward; a withdrawal that responds to the movement of the gaze, as if the perspective of the person facing the façade is pushing parts of the wall inward and thus allowing its movement towards the depth of the space, and the movement of the observer along its length. This is a movement that reveals, realizes and exposes not only the space of the building, but also itself. It is these movements of walls, sights, and observer's steps that create and realize the special space of the Pavilion, which professional literature refers to as space, not designed for residential purposes but intended for observation, being, and thought. If that is so, what is the role of the walls in the German Pavilion?

The act of breaking the wall and the withdrawal of its parts into the space inside and even to the rear of the building (is it really possible to distinguish between the various sides of the building? Does this building actually have a front or rear façade?) began to question the concept of façade, or at least its integrity as a clear phenomenon of architecture.

The movement of the walls inward and sideways raises the question of whether the plane of the façade must be situated at the outer boundary of the structure, or whether in such architecture an internal wall may function as the façade? And if so, is the façade now posing a question about the boundary and about the relationship between the inside and the outside? Indeed, the walls of the Pavilion no longer function as a boundary designed to outline and define the space. In this case the walls are meant to direct the movement of the body and the gaze. Mies chose not only to bring about this movement through an innovative positioning of parts of the walls as a plan, but also made use of new transparent, shiny, reflective materials. Thus, the walls created additional movements of glossiness, reflection and duplication. The Pavilion, therefore, was not intended to enclose the space, but to grant it the possibilities of presence, movement and expansion.

Now – after having posed the question of the concept of the façade of the Pavilion – how shall we look once again at the picture of the Pavilion with the colonnade before it? Can we, or should we indeed scrutinize Mies van der Rohe’s attitudes and precise thoughts with regard to the colonnade, and the relationship created in the space as a result of positioning the Pavilion behind them? Our mission as 'researchers' in this instance is not to function as historians and investigators of dry facts, but to seek sources of inspiration which would instill us, according to Barthes, with a living spirit. Our job is to pose the right questions. If
we were to dare claim that the German Pavilion in Barcelona did not have a façade – because we assume that this structure was not designed as a façade building, but rather as a set of 'free' walls allowing movement of body and gaze – how can the colonnade mar it? If we define 'façade' as the outer plane of the building enclosing a closed internal space, a plane that forms the boundary between the interior and the exterior, the greater portion of the walls of the Pavilion do not comply with this definition.

Most of the walls, which at first glance we would define as being part of the elements of the façade, are actually meant to demarcate or wall-in spaces that are outside, the space of a pool, open emptiness or garden. Through the annexing of the colonnade as a formal 'façade' for his building, was Mies indicating something about his philosophy regarding the relationship between the interior, the exterior and the façade as phenomena and concepts? Or following this idea, did Mies, in a more sophisticated manner, appropriate the colonnade to expand his architectural act, thus increasing the area of the "outside" with which the structure creates a relationship, turning the colonnade into a functioning part of the Pavilion's structure?

I would now like to stretch the subversive range of assumptions of this article even further, and try to suggest that, by means of the act of designing and constructing the Pavilion, Mies did not choose to provide the public with an answer: "this is how architecture should be created now and in the future", but rather to activate the spatial creation of it as an open question. In the Barcelona Pavilion Mies not only created a structure whose function was to act as a question about the essence of man's place in the world, but at the same time, he created a space of being and suspension designed to entertain the possibility of actually pondering this question.

"From a dialectical aspect" as Blanchot explains, "there is no final question. Where we end, we begin". Where we begin, we only do so if the starting point is again the end of everything – in other words, it is the result – the output – of all movement, this cyclical demand. Thus the Pavilion seems to invite the possibility if this kind of cycicality.

"In the beginning" 39

In conclusion, I would like to revisit again the photograph showing the placement of the Pavilion structure behind the colonnade, this time through the insights gleaned from our work on the final statement in Mishnah 6, Ethics of the Fathers, V.

As mentioned, the last statement of the Mishnah we interpreted - "And some say also tongs which are made with tongs" – functions syntactically as an ending, but in terms of meaning it acts as a question, right 'at the point where we end'. 40 Thus this statement overcomes
its finality, assuming the meaning of edge as a phenomenon that houses the question intended to dismantle our notion of the concept of boundary as an end, and thus restart the dialectic movement between the concepts of edge and inception. Thus the final action must be carried out with forethought of the beginning, with the quality of a genesis. Now, let us try to consider what ‘genesis’ Mies was trying to bring forth and activate, which boundary he was trying to open or make use of as an opening, and what question he meant to pose.

At the beginning of his career Mies van der Rohe worked with an important architect and a teacher named Peter Behrens, who Gropius and Meyer also worked with. Behrens’ works were a significant chapter in the development of the modern architectural style in Germany. One of the major sources of inspiration for the 19th-century German architect was Karl Friedrich Schinkel, whose more mature works already started to introduce the modern style. It makes sense, therefore, that Mies van der Rohe himself was also deeply influenced by Schinkel. One of the latter’s most impressive structures which influenced Mies is the Altes Museum in Berlin.

Figure 5:
Altes Museum designed by Schinkel, Berlin 1823-1830
The Greek colonnade which constitutes the façade of the building indeed reminds us of
the colonnade in the Spanish Garden. Did Mies choose to position the Pavilion next to the
colonnade in order to act in a familiar space? Or perhaps he did so in order to give presence
in the space he chose to work in something from the inception? By choosing to make present
in this space something of his early personal creation, was Mies hoping to summon the
concept of 'time' as a phenomenon acting and asking questions into the new architectural
space he hoped to create?

From the historical aspect, we can interpret the appearance of the column as the beginning
of dissolving the immediate boundary in the architectural space – the wall. The removal of
substance from the wall until two columns were created changed the wall from being a
closed and sealed boundary into a series of openings that on one hand allow movement
of body, light and sight between the public and private space, but at the same time, enable
being in a new space that had not yet existed, a space situated between the exterior and the
interior. May we assume that Mies was dialoging with the historical action of this inception?
This new void created between the columns is a space that simultaneously makes present
the dimension of edge and the quality of inception. The empty space between the columns
is part of the colonnade as a screen, and thus as a boundary; however, this empty space also
contains something of the garden. The columns, once detached from the wall, invite the
movement that the wall restricted, and in the metaphorical dimension they function as an
abstract of tree trunks, around which we are invited to move.

"As in Behrens's earlier exhibition pavilions and gardens, the German Pavilion is at once a
building and a landscape, a house and a temple, a measuring of space and an expansion
of consciousness."43

If that is the case, the garden is thus the beginning, but also the end. In the Garden, Man first
encountered time, but simultaneously learned of its end. In the Garden the first question
about our place, our identity and our time was asked. A garden is a space without a façade;
the trees are simultaneously the wall and the boundaries, but also the movement and the
openings. The empty space between the garden’s columns is our place; it is also the foundation
of the measure of our place, and the possibility of the spreading awareness of it.

The architecture of the German Pavilion now invites us to return to the garden, in both the
physical and the experiential sense, in both the conscious and metaphorical sense. The Pavilion
built at the end of the second artery of the World's Fair Exhibition Gardens in Barcelona was
intended to be the beginning of movement back to the garden. The Greek colonnade that appears in front of the Pavilion, as the edge of the project space, functions as an inception; the beginning of the movement back to the garden, and as what marks the conversion of the complete act, namely the wall as a boundary, and the façade as an answer, into the empty space. The colonnade allows us the option of looking at the Pavilion through an initial void, one that allows us to still possess it, or to hold on to it as a yearning... the question, as stated, is the yearning of the mind.

1  Maurice Blanchot, The Infinite Conversation, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis US, 2003, translated by Susan Hanson P.12

2  The enclosure and the Gate are the original means to distinguish inside and outside, and to create a meaningful relationship between them. Christian Norberg Shultz, Architecture Meaning and Place, Rizzoli, NY (1986)3 Only when man has taken possession of space, defining what is inside and what remains outside, we may say that he dwells. In his book Citadelle, Saint Exupéry characterizes man as: "he who dwells." Ibid.

3  ibid p.33

4  (26) Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, the livestock, everything that crawls on the earth, and over the earth itself!" (27) So God created mankind in his own image; in his own image God created them; he created them male and female (28) God blessed the humans by saying to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it! Be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, and every living thing that crawls on the earth! (29) God also told them "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant that grows throughout the earth, along with every tree that grows seed-bearing fruit. They will produce your food. (30) I have given all green plants as food for every wild animal of the earth, every bird that flies, and to every living thing that crawls on the earth." And that is what happened (31) Now God saw all that he had made, and indeed, it was very good! The twilight and the dawn were the sixth day.

5  Maurice Blanchot, The Infinite Conversation. Minnesota Press, Minneapolis US, 2003, translated by Susan Hanson. This article uses selected statements of Maurice Blanchot regarding the concept of question in the world and in consciousness, and so this use will be more instrumental, and will deal less with his broader literary and philosophical discourse.

6  This picture was presented to me by a student named Asaf Dadash, as part of an exercise he submitted as research on the concept of boundary.


8  "His first Formative decision was the siting of the Pavilion. Extending up the north inclination of the hill known as Montjuich, The Barcelona fairground was composed in classical Beaux –Arts manner". Franz Schultze, Mies Van Der Rohe, A Critical Biography, The University of Chicago Press,
9. It is known that Mies read quite a lot of philosophical writings. Towards 1927 Mies began to read the writings of the neo-Catholic philosopher Rudolf Schwarz, and began to be influenced by the writings of Romano Guardini. This influence pecked away at the ideas connected to the relationship of man to nature, and therefore also the relationship between the interior and the exterior, that is the question of man’s place in relation to pure and objective nature.

10. Our reading of Mishnah 6, Ethics of the Fathers V is demanding, aiming to hone understanding of the relationship between the notions of beginning and end, boundary and opening; notions we hope to reveal as hosting the concept and phenomenon of the ‘question’ in time, place and consciousness. This chapter and Masechet Avot in general have numerous interpretations and academic studies. Its earliest interpreters include Maimonides in the 13th century, and Rabbi Ovadia from Bartenura. Its newer interpreters include Ben Zion Dinur, Masechet Avot interpreted and explained through study of the structure of its statements, their timing and circumstances (Jerusalem, 1973), Rabbi Yehudah Shabib, In the Fathers’ footsteps – Studies on Masechet Avot (Alon Shvut, 2006), and Avigdor Shenan, Ethics of the Fathers, a new Israeli interpretation (Jerusalem, 2009).

11. Where we begin, we do not truly begin unless the beginning is once again at the term of everything, that is, unless the beginning is the result -the product- of the movement of the whole. This is the demand of circularity. Maurice Blanchot, The Infinite Conversation, translated by Susan Hanson. Minnesota Press, Minneapolis US, 2003, p.15

12. Ibid. p. 13

13. Ibid. p. 12


15. Ibid. p. 13

16. Ibid. p. 12


19. Ibid. p 33

20. "We ask ourselves about our time. This question has its own characteristics. It is pressing, we cannot for an instant do without questioning. It is total, seeking only to bring to light in everything the question of everything it bears upon our time, which bears it. (qui la porte). Finally, we question ourselves in questioning this time." Ibid. p 14

21. Ibid. p 14

22. In his book C’est pour cela qu’on aime les libellules Marc-Alain Ouaknin is preoccupied with the subject of the essence of man as a question, “the man is a question” that enables him to be always
open to all of his possibilities and his future. Here Ouaknin also retaltes to gematria, finding the quality in the numerical value of the Hebrew language and identifying that the Hebrew words for 'man' and 'what"adam" and "mah" have the same gematric value of the number 45.

23 According to interpretations of the Sages 'shamir' was the name of a worm that King Solomon used to split the stones with which he built the Temple, because according to G-d's commandments it was forbidden to build a house by striking iron on stone.

24 You can compare the calling out 'where art thou' in the Garden of Eden as the command "Come out of the Ark", in the story of the flood. Both impose a renewed look to the outside, and the renewal of movement.


28 Ibid. p 42

29 Are we not in this action, creating a reverse motion and a way of describing and perceiving the creation three-dimensionally, after we had attempted to give it a return to the two-dimensional?

30 "In this touching desert I suddenly come across a specific photograph: it blows life into me and I blow life into it. Thus I must call the attraction that causes it to exist: 'Reinvigorating'. The photograph itself does not itself 'live' at all (I do not believe in 'live' photographs) but it has something which brings me to life – something which causes every adventure." Ibid p. 24

31 "Mies himself selected the site for the Pavilion (rejecting one offered by the Spanish authorities) a critical decision for this contextual, site depending building. The German pavilion established a gateway between the Grandiose, eclectic Architecture of the Exposition proper and the picturesque "Spanish village " the Pueblo Espagnol, on the hill behind the German site. Located at the terminus of an important cross axis partway up the exposition's ceremonial spine, the building was shielded quietly behind a screen of Ionic columns at the end of a long plaza. Critical references to its pendant at the other end of the plaza – the neo –Renaissance pavilion of the city of Barcelona echoed gently in its two enclosing end walls, traces of an eviscerated neoclassicism. ", T. Rily & B. Bergdoll (eds.) Mies in Berlin (2001) p. 236.

32 His decision to change this location to the final site was advantageous in several respects. "(it appears) virtually obvious, " wrote the critic Walter Genzmer, "that the main orientation of the Pavilion should be perpendicular to the Palace wall, that in contrast to the considerable height of that wall the pavilion be quite low, and that in contrast to the calm unbroken surface of the wall it be kept open and airy." F. Schultze, Mies van der Rohe, a critical biography, University of Chicago Press, USA (1985), p. 155


35 Ibid p. 71

36 "This building with its glass and water, its bright columns and its quiet girl in stone, was a place for the mind’s play more than for the business of living". Raymond McGrath, Mies in Berlin T. Rily & B. Bergdoll (eds.) (2001) p. 91

37 "The reflections shifted as he moved, Mirroring what he had seen or adding to the promise of something yet to come...Thus Movement was a factor central to the concept of form and space in the Barcelona Pavilion." Ibid. p. 156


39 One of the interesting interpretations for the first pair of words in the Bible is that G-d created the world with the help of the "genesis" B-RESHIT, means with the help of the beginning.

40 Maurice Blanchot, The Infinite Conversation, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis US, 2003, translated by Susan Hanson p. 15


42 "This public space (of the Schinkel’s Altes Museum,) is addressed publically, in the idiom of an Ionic colonnade whose regularity of march preserves the integrity of the building’s stern geometric mass. Eighteen columns move in a prolonged but stately beat, though the effect of monotony is avoided as the cadence is arrested by spur walls resolved in antae which act as monumentally conclusive clamps to the façade. The long low sweep of the Altes Museum is recapitulated in several of the pavilions of Mies’ later years, chief among them Crown Hall in Chicago and the Berlin National Gallery. P-44

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FACING THE SEA
RATIONALE

PROF. BENI REUVEN LEVY
"But what is happiness except the simple harmony between a man and the life he leads?"

Albert Camus

The agenda of the 5th year final studio projects at the Ariel University School of Architecture gives wide scope both for a personal and collective message, as part of the ethical, cultural, social and environmental approach of the School, and as part of the perspective that derives from its location, its uniqueness and its mission.

According to this approach – during the 2014 – 2015 academic year – all the students began by determining their position, independently, through the opening exercise: "Myself in a space", in which they were asked to produce and edit short videos expressing their personal worldview. During the first studio meeting the students' films were screened in sequence and a discussion ensued. This created the initial general manifest, the result of the students defining their identities and how they identify themselves within the space.

During the next stage, as part of a focused observation of the physical and cultural space of Israel, in the local and regional context, the students were asked to respond conceptually to the directive: "Facing the sea – Mare Nostrum – Our sea", and offer architectural expression to the thinking and interpretation that derive from this observation.

The term 'Mare Nostrum' was first coined by the Romans as an expression of the spirit, the nature and the common denominator of the multi-cultural communities residing in the area that is influenced by the Mediterranean, and not just along its shores. "Mediterranean" is both a quantifiable and an abstract concept – an entity that is sensed, but not really defined.

What is this elusive Mediterranean identity? How can architecture influence the character of this unique area and its inhabitants? Is it possible for Israel, which is geographically part of this space, to also integrate into it culturally? How can contemporary architectural practices integrate with the longstanding architectural heritage that has developed here in this spirit?

How is it possible to integrate the look, the vision and the skills of the digital generation with this tradition? These questions and others have been raised in the studio, as a basis for examining and clarifying the issues, and for relevant architectural and urban creation.

The work of the studio has produced projects throughout the country on different subjects and in a variety of fields, which have re-examined the places around us, and outlined a future vision of them by means of architecture.

The three projects presented below were selected for publication in the journal as a limited but representative example of the wide range of high quality work that students have conceived and created within the framework of the studio; works which may be a source of inspiration for sustainable architecture, resulting from an immanent connection to place and time.

Instructors at the Studio:
The project seeks to study the phenomenon of the separation of the various ethnic communities within urban spaces, and to ask: how can a city react to the phenomenon of separated living within it? Ethnic groups live in many cities around the world, distinguishing themselves from their urban surroundings. For some of them, the separation has obvious physical markings; while with others, the moral, religious or ideological concept is strong enough to distinguish them from their environment, even without any real separation. A city that aspires to honor and recognize all of its components needs to seriously consider such groups, and what needs to be done for them. Municipal handling of such separated spaces should be extremely sensitive and respect the physical and moral boundaries of the group. Naturally, such involvement might be architectural; because architecture can create a new and delicate relationship between the group and the city that surrounds it, without ‘invading’ its territory, and without undermining its very foundations.

Because of its unique topography consisting of mountains and valleys, Jerusalem allows the many phenomena of separation to exist within its space. The city has many groups that differentiate themselves against a background of religion, gender and ideology. Amongst them, are ones whose separation has an unmistakable physical marker – a wall for example – while for other groups the differentiation segregation is hardly noticeable. The question is: what would happen in the city if there were not those spaces where separate communities are neighbors, influenced by them, but not really interfering in their boundaries? What new path can be created in the city from a collection of contact points and familiarity with the separated communities, and what architectural and human situations is it likely to contain?

The project seeks to examine Jerusalem’s attitude towards one of the oldest separate communities living within it – the Armenian community. Due to the hardships it has suffered over the years (the genocide inflicted by the Turks starting in 1915, exile and wandering), and because it wanted to preserve the heritage and unique values, the Armenian community surrounded itself for centuries with a high wall, which isolates it, as it were, from the intense reality that bustles around it.
In the project we examine the possibility of creating a new relationship between the community and the city, by means of designing spaces that preserve the community's ability to remain separate but, at the same time, allowing it to create controlled contact with the municipality surrounding it. Two main spaces are proposed in the project: a space dealing with the memory of the Armenian genocide, and residential space for the next generation of the community that seeks an opportunity to planting its roots in the city and strengthening its sense of belonging there. The community, which today numbers over 1,600 residents, is located in two main areas: St. James Monastery complex, surrounded by a wall (which only members of the community are allowed to enter), and around this complex, additional residential homes, where there is somewhat more freedom of movement for visitors from outside.

In the southwest section of the Old City, at the foot of the wall, there is an area considered as a reserve of land belonging to the community, and is now completely empty. I felt it fitting to take advantage of this space in favor of the continued existence of the community, and to plan a new residential area in it. The new residential complex would address the needs of the youth of the community for additional housing solutions, hoping that they can inhibit their emigration from Israel, and thus ensuring the continued existence of the community in Jerusalem in the future. The planned residential complex draws from architectural elements that characterize the residences of the community inside the monastery complex, in an attempt to understand and appreciate this unique way of life. The complex consists of modestly-sized residential units situated along the length of alleyways, with a common central square behind them. The location of the residential complex alongside the wall of the Old City symbolizes the possibility, and perhaps the new desire of the community, for a gentle and controlled encounter with the universality that envelops it.
The Armenian Holocaust Memorial Site is located on Mount Zion (on the area of the existing parking lot), and brings together those visiting the holy sites in the Old City with the heritage of the community, a moment before they enter the Old City. The Mount Zion complex, which sits outside the walls of the Old City and is sacred to members of all religions that live there, served for thousands of years as the ‘outside’ that contains all the facilities that could not be encompassed in its spaces – burial sites, heritage sites, commemorative and battle sites. The selection of the complex as host to the Armenian community Memorial derives from a desire to bring together the worshippers from around the world who visit the Old City, with the private memory of the community, and to leave a lasting impression in the world.

The planning of the Memorial Site and design of the Religious Study Center that surrounds it, result from an integration between the grid of the streets coming from the Armenian Quarter within the walls, and the (orthogonal) grid that meets it, reverberating from the new city – interwoven memory and renewal. The Study Center building covers a large expanse, rises to a height and creates the walls of the complex, facing the environment that surrounds it. In contrast, the Memorial Site burrows into the heart of the square created by the Study Center, into the bowels of the earth, until it reaches the layer of rock. The private memory and universal dimension are intertwined and form a new place, which is different and multi-layered.

Dealing with this complex served as a sort of case study for me, to understand the ability to design for the sake of one separate ethnic community in the city. Working with the space of the Armenian community flooded with layers and unique architectural content, I hope that from this experience it will be possible to learn how to work with other communities, creating vital spaces for them; when, on the one hand, their possibility for segregation from the city is preserved and, on the other hand, the city is provided with the opportunity to renew acquaintance with their rich heritage.

1  The Armenian community has been living in Jerusalem since the 4th century AD, when the first Armenian pilgrims came to the city and settled there. Since then, there has been a continual Armenian settlement in the city, with the size of the population changing over the years, affected by the arrival and departure of refugees from the Armenian genocide.

2  St. James Monastery was built in the 12th century, and since then it has served as a spiritual center of the community in Israel and around the world. Initially, the residential buildings surrounding the monastery were intended for clerics and pilgrims only; today there is no clear separation between secular and religious in the community.
Figure 5:
View from the memorial site to the Center for the Study of Religions

Figure 6:
General plan - The Armenian Quarter in the face of the old city - Compounds intervention
It appears that the archaeological excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem are some of the most important and most interesting for anyone who is interested in the historical status of Jerusalem. Moreover, the Temple Mount and the Western Wall till today, remain a focus of pilgrimage for tens of thousands of people. Jerusalem is one of the few cities in the world to which pilgrimage has continued for over 2000 years. What began as a holy place for the Jewish people continued as a place that is significant for Christianity and, later on also became holy for the Muslim religion. It would seem that the main motive for many visitors coming here from Israel and the world, is a spiritual impulse – if not deriving from any particular religious belief, then at least out of a desire to experience a particular dimension of holiness, the connection with the magnificent historical past of the place.

How, then, can a place of importance be created, one that is able to provide an experiential dimension, associated with the magnificent historical past of this place? Can the place expand and also give its portent outside the Old City, surrounded by a stone wall, and can the status of the Temple Mount, as the physical, historical and spiritual center of the people of Israel, be restored as it was in ancient times?

Today the Old City of Jerusalem rests almost entirely on layers of earlier settlement; the earliest of them dating back thousands of years. Large areas of the Old City have been and are being excavated in order to enrich knowledge and deepen the study of ancient Jerusalem.

During the Roman period, Jerusalem (then – ‘Aelia Capitolina’) was based on an array of cross streets which were typical of Roman urban planning. This arrangement, which was apparently based on the alignment of existing streets, cut through the length and breadth of the city. Decumanus Street (Decumanus Maximus, one of the two main streets on an east-west axis) goes from the area of Jaffa Gate of today, towards the east, to the Temple Mount. This axis, which still exists, a key route used by tens of thousands of visitors and pilgrims of all religions making their way to the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and many other sites found throughout the Old City. The street is known
for the colorful Arab market which leads downwards from the Tower of David piazza near Jaffa Gate, the current level only a few meters higher than the original. This street has been identified as having the potential for intervention, and was selected to serve as the route guiding the creation of the project.

We will use the current format in the proposed project, our aim being to discover a route that has overall significance, that connects the Old City with the new. A route that exposes the historical, architectural and archeological past of the location, and at the same time creates a dimension of sanctity and transcendence, the closer it gets to the places of pilgrimage – the Temple Mount and the Western Wall.

The planned physical route in the proposed project opens with reference to the entrance to the Old City through Jaffa Gate. The proposal presents reworking the eastern edge of Mamilla Boulevard, and the existing "floating" plaza, and enables multi-level vertical entrance to the Old City. Breaking through the wall in this area of the Jaffa Gate is an architectural precedent for physical intervention in the values of the heritage and ancient architectural elements – this, after giving due consideration and drawing conclusions about the relative advantages. This provides us with a foothold in further planning of the area of the breakthrough, and "paving" the planned route into the depths of the Old City.

The proposed design, starting at Jaffa Gate stretches out over about 300 m, and includes an array of connections between the levels, between the spaces and the ancient architectural elements. This layout reveals to the pedestrians archaeological findings which are currently out of sight and thus out of mind; this, while creating new places for sensitive intervention. Thus, for example, we propose to reveal to the public the Byzantine bath house at the foot of the Jaffa Gate, walking along the moat of the Tower of David fortress, to cross the water reservoir from the Ayyubid period (the Ayyubid dynasty – Muslim sultanate that ruled in the Middle East at the beginning of the 12th century), to see the ancient aqueduct that brought water to Jerusalem (the upper aqueduct) and walk along the cobblestones dating back to the Decumanus Byzantine period. This section ends at a pool which is known as the Pool of Hezekiah, which is also hidden from sight and which is not very well known (despite its huge size of 70 m X 40 m). There is considerable potential for development a fascinating public space. This pool will serve as another station, before continuing the ascent to the Holy of Holies.

The planned route was created with realistic reference to the archaeological findings around the Jaffa Gate, and subsequent to the analysis of reports, maps and drawings of excavations outside the walls of the Old City as well as within them. These are findings that, despite
their historical and cultural significance, have remained unknown for whatever reasons. It is reasonable to presume that this route, which has been in existence for thousands of years, has become the ‘eternal’ route that will continue to exist in this way for many more years to come.

With the understanding that we are but a passing generation, we should prepare designs that can be sustained for a long time, that will be relevant to future generations and that will cater to continued growth of the number of people wishing to come to the holy sites. All of this, while leaving the place ‘untouched’ – so that it may be studied for generations to come, with new tools and more sophisticated insights...

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Figure 1:
Section and General View
Figure 2:
View of the Interior

Figure 3:
Section of the Path

Figure 4:
Section of the Path
Antithetic to the ‘White City’ is the Kfar Shalem neighborhood, which is an exceptional weave within the city. The Polychromatic City Project is a research housing project which draws its values from analyzing the different periods that resulted in the formation of this diverse neighborhood.

The neighborhood is located in the southeastern part of Tel Aviv, on the remains of the Arab village of Salame, the roots of which go back as far as the early 16th century. Archaeological finds from the previous decade reveal evidence of settlement in the area from the Roman period through to the ancient Moslem period.

In order to understand the current composition of the neighborhood, four layers have been selected and researched in chronological order:

The first - primordial: diverse and rare topography in the local landscape. A strategic hill, attracting inhabitants to settle there as early as in the 7th century BC.

Second - Historical: Salame, one of the Arab villages abandoned during the War of Independence. Burned, destroyed, almost completely erased. The remains delineate winding streets that relate to the topography.

Third - Zionism: temporary and random, founded as buildings added on to the remains of the abandoned village of Salame, and which developed within itself as a shantytown, composed of an assortment of materials.

Fourth – measured, economic: an "urban renewal" plan that has aroused controversy. Over the years – growing within the shantytown – are long, narrow buildings, villas and high-rises, that would obliterate all traces of what preceded them.
These four layers are woven together into a rare polychromatic tapestry and, like many rare phenomena, are in danger of total extinction.

The desire to protect rare phenomena has driven me to examine this texture of social, physical and even spiritual elements, which are worthy of preservation. For that reason I decided to define a new fifth layer that will seek its way from within, above, inside, next to, and without eradicating; independent and versatile enough so as to be able to change in accordance with its various encounters. Meticulous, yet at the same time light and airy, so that it will have room for the development of all the forces operating within it. A planned urban mold, but having almost spontaneous characteristics that allow for the formation of a homogeneous community.

The fifth layer allows for the diffusion of values back and forth from the previous layers. Thus, over the years, some of the physical manifestations of those layers will disappear, but their significant values will be preserved.

While isolating the values that characterize the neighborhood, the cornerstones for intervention in it have been defined. My aspiration was to create an architectural expression for the fifth layer. Therefore, I looked for physical expressions within the neighborhood which I would be able to latch on to. I interpreted them as 'pathways of memory'. These are the four paths where farmers in the Arab village of Salama wandered, between the wheat fields and the stone houses. The pathways have become blurred over the years. Arguments, skirmishes, changes in government and the forces of time all arose to erase them.

The pathways of memory are the foundation for the new layer, a layer that will permeate the delineation of the historic village, follow its trails and gather up all the layers that have turned the village of Salame into the Kfar Shalem neighborhood of today. The pathways of memory will, on the one hand, sharpen the internal connections within the neighborhood and, on the other, will open its doors towards the neighborhoods around it. The fifth layer is intended to create a local, contemporary identity.

**Practice:**

Solidification: the walls of the forgotten village lanes will be defined anew by an array of public buildings and public housing. The perception of the "garden city" that would occupy the grid of the old streets will be replaced by clusters of residential buildings surrounding courtyards and allowing for future internal development and the creation of a 'Kfar Shalem-type' texture in which there are small apartments that can be enlarged, as well as shared spaces.
Characterization of the public space: the center of the neighborhood, into which the pathways of memory drain, changes from being a traffic circle into a central square, combining commerce, leisure and residence. Also, the neighborhood is divided into blocks, in accordance with the original delineation. Every few blocks will have a common center.

Memory - instead of erasing: the texture of the shantytown, which integrates with the remnants of the Arab village, touches upon the walls of new construction and conducts a "give and take" relationship with it. The new construction provides the existing fabric with walls that connect it to the streets. In this way they allow it to participate in the urban experience. The new system of building clusters allows for expansion, solidification and consolidation of the texture with clear borders, while integrating commerce, small industry and residential housing. The existing fabric surrenders the high fences and makes room at its edges for the new layer.

Characterization of open public spaces – from park to park: The fifth layer is spread over many open spaces in the neighborhood which have remained untouched. As compensation, the new construction creates inner gardens, a range of squares and courtyards, highlighting the existence of the neighborhood between the Menachem Begin Park to the south and the Edith Wolfson Park to the north. The main road crossing through the length of the neighborhood will be used as a central axis connecting these two parks.

Preservation – between the physical and the spiritual through the spirit of the place: of all the various buildings in the neighborhood, only a few are worth preserving, according to government institutions. Among them are an abandoned mosque, the Sheikh’s house and other historic structures. In contrast, the shantytown – the illegal building additions and the iron fences – are slated for demolition. I felt it was proper to isolate from them values that are deserving of preservation, in order to present the argument that this rare form of construction in the landscape of the central region also deserves to be preserved, primarily to maintain and strengthen the spirit of the place. Therefore, the new system of building clusters enables their integration in it, as well as their development and expansion within its borders. The creation of new independent modes of building, similar to the existing tin shacks, will also be permitted within the new construction. The mosque and the Sheikh’s house will open their gates and become part of the neighborhood.

Tolerance – a temple without a name: there are dozens of synagogues and prayer halls operating in the neighborhood, each for use by the small community surrounding it. Towards the development and densification of the neighborhood – which is expected to absorb thousands of inhabitants – I have chosen to preserve the community temples and integrate them into the residential
building clusters. Nonetheless I chose to release them from any name and definition. These halls are designed to be used as a place of worship for every religion and community, and even as public, educational space. A place for learning, for Midrash, for reading, to strengthen the bonds of community as well as for individual and collective empowerment.

If the community of Kfar Shalem will know how to accept the fifth layer, maybe it will remain polychromatic, layered and fascinating. This, instead of the spirit of the place being erased entirely and lost forever.

Figure 4:
Sections

Figure 5:
Visualization of the Residential Complex

Figure 6:
Visualization from the Central Piazza