SPECIFYING SPECTACLE: architectural representation & image-oriented society

Patrick Ruggiero
Syracuse University

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SPECIFYING SPECTACLE
architectural representation & image-oriented society
KEY TERMS

al·ter·a·tion (ôltə’rāshən) n. 1. An adjustment, change or modification. 2. The act of altering or state of being altered.

frame (’frām) v. 1. To build by putting together the structural parts of. 2. To conceive or design. 3. To arrange or adjust for a purpose. n. 1. Something composed of parts fitted and joined together. 2. A general structure or system.

hinge (hinj) n. 1. A jointed or flexible device that allows the turning or pivoting of a part, such as a door or lid, on a stationary frame. 2. A point or circumstance on which subsequent events depend. v. 1. To attach by or equip with or as if with hinges or a hinge. 2. To consider or make (something) dependent on something else.

im·age (’imaj) n. 1. A reproduction of the form of a person or object, especially a sculptured likeness. 2. One that closely or exactly resembles another; a double: He is the image of his uncle. 3. The opinion or concept of something that is held by the public. 4. The character projected to the public, as by a person or institution, especially as interpreted by the mass media. 5. A personification of something specified: That child is the image of good health. 6. A mental picture of something not real or present. 7. A vivid description or representation. 8. A concrete representation, as in art, literature, or music, that is expressive or evocative of something else: night as an image of death. 9. Obsolete An apparition.

pal·imp·sest (palimp’sest) n. Something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form.

res·to·ra·tion (restə’rāSHən) n. 1. The return of something to a former owner, place, or condition. 2. The process of repairing or renovating a building, work of art, etc., so as to restore it to its original condition.

ru·in (’rooin) n. The physical destruction or disintegration of something or the state of disintegrating or being destroyed. -v. 1. [with object] Reduce (a building or place) to a state of decay, collapse, or disintegration. 2. [no object] Literary fall headlong or with a crash.

spec·ta·cu·lar (spek’takyələr) adj. Beautiful in a dramatic and eye-catching way.

al·ter·a·tion (ôltə’rāshən) n. 1. An adjustment, change or modification. 2. The act of altering or state of being altered.
ABSTRACT

The invention of daguerreotype photography in 1836 allowed a photographer to represent the physical world through an exact image, frozen at the exact moment of capture. While not directly related, practices of preservation were also beginning to appear in architectural discourse of the same time. Walter Benjamin, in criticism of the reproduction of art stated in his 1999 essay on the commodification of art that the photograph, a mechanical reproduction of images, “may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated.” While Benjamin was referring to the photograph, his words are relevant in relation to preserved architecture as well. Does a re-purposed building hold the same value as its original?

CLAIM

The process of making and the means which architecture is received and communicated are at the crux of the origin of these issues of depreciation. By reconsidering the parallel issues of preservation and design representation through the material/process and framing modes of the visual arts, a more effective critical engagement and design representation through the material-process and framing will be forming. More specifically, by working through a collapse of process and representation, communication and content will become one.

Through this, architecture can exist and function at the level of the project. Process engages the material and by doing so proposes design concepts based in the physical. Framing communicates and situates the work in relation to cultural contexts and allows for the design to be conveyed appropriately and most effectively. This research focuses on the Bethlehem Steel Corp., once a thriving center of industry in eastern Pennsylvania, now a vast complex of ruins, shells and derelict machinery. A particularly significant tension exists over the sites and their greater context (whether perceived by the population or not) as many buildings are structurally unfit or too toxic for reuse while still perceived and literally marketed as a powerful identity of the City of Bethlehem and backdrop for economic redevelopment. The next phase of research involves physically visiting the sites of Bethlehem Steel including those reused, demolished or untouched. As many of these sites are either too hazardous for the public to enter or are closed off, literary research into their original use, and interviews of individuals who worked in those places will supplement the inability to access them. The focus of this research will be to expose the issues of authenticity, artificiality, ruin and reuse in the sites and to collect material and ideas of material to manipulate. With this understanding, a research methodology of making will take this media of the site (physical artifacts, photographs, maps) and frame it in superimposed relationships to communicate issues and through iterative production, discover new relationships between material concept and concept communication. This process will establish critical issues through physical artifacts and challenge their display in traditional architectural practices of representation.

AIMS

In search of a testing site, Bethlehem Steel was selected for it’s geographic vicinity and ability to be accessed and mined for material research. The concept of ruin is a pressing issue in architecture as cities preserve more and more architecture and postindustrial towns begin to reuse the structures for which they are in existence. The project will critique current modes of operation by a linear problem-solving design process. By acting through representation as both a vehicle for developing design and as a means of communicating and experiencing it, the project will engage the design of a tactile deployment of architecture and effective means of communicating its intent. The architecture will function in the way that the visual arts do in terms of their scale and engagement in cultural issues. Research into tangible artifacts of the site will yield a combination of image, drawing and model forms of representation.

Through this analysis, a strategy of intervention will be established and provide foundations of instillation-scaled project. The project seeks to engage production by culture, rather than a discipline of site-specific problem technical solution.

NOTES


CONTEXT

The invention of daguerreotype photography in 1836 allowed a photographer to represent the physical world through an exact image, frozen at the exact moment of capture. While not directly related, practices of preservation were also beginning to appear in architectural discourse of the same time. Walter Benjamin, in criticism of the reproduction of art stated in his 1999 essay on the commodification of art that the photograph, a mechanical reproduction of images, “may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated.” While Benjamin was referring to the photograph, his words are relevant in relation to preserved architecture as well. Does a re-purposed building hold the same value as its original?

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NOTES

The term "Bread and circuses" is a satirical metaphor originating from the Roman satirist and poet Juvenal (c. A.D. 100) and describes the shift in public approval from warranted exemplary public service to the diversion and distraction of the immediate. Bread and circuses, here are the Roman practices of providing free wheat and costly circus games as a means of gaining political power until being taken under control of the autocratic Roman emperors.

The painting Pollice Verso by Jean-Léon Gérôme in 1872 (Figure 1.1) is an appropriate depiction of the Roman penchant for spectacle. The painting depicts three main groups. In the foreground, a gladiator pauses, standing over his defeated competitor looking to the crowd for a verdict on the life of the defeated. In the middle ground, the crowd signs to the gladiator a thumbs down: death to the defeated. In the background the caesar looks uninterested, eating a fig. This narrative of the eye observing the painting elicits an extra-sensory perception of the moment. The image is viewed as slowed time, allowing the viewer to move around the scene in real time while the events depicted are slowed down. The power of this painting is in the visual effect it offers: the experience of the painting is unattainable any other way and thus a spectacular experience. The relationship between the spectacle of the content depicted and the spectacular means of the technique of painting (large format, frozen time) create a circular relationship between the representation (painting) and the content or narrative. Gérôme employed effects that were novel to painting at the time to produce a feeling or understanding of the events pictured which mirrored the content of the culture, political climate and feeling of the content pictured.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology presents contemporary art practice with a vast array of effects and an ever growing arms race of who can produce the most shocking and awe-inspiring effect. Technology’s easy of affecting our senses goes back to the advent of cinema, the first time the image was seen moving. Auguste and Louis Lumière’s 1896 film L’Arrivée d’un train en gare de La Ciotat (Figure 1.2), considered as one of the first cinematic experiences in a theater, produced such an emotional response from the viewers as a result of effect that physical reactions were elicited. In one of the final scenes, a close-up of a train arriving at a station is pictured. Upon seeing the film in large format for the first time, viewers were said to have vomited, jumped out of their seats and left the theater in reaction to seeing a moving train almost run them over in its approach.

The technology of photography and moving image allowed for not only heightened experiences of spectacle, but a wider dissemination of the new media. The invention of daguerreotype photography in 1836 allowed a photographer to represent the physical world through an exact image, frozen at the exact moment of capture. Walter Benjamin, in criticism of the reproduction of art stated in his 1969 essay on the commodification of art, that the photograph, a mechanical reproduction of images, “may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated.” Benjamin establishes the two dichotomous stances on the mechanically-produced image: on one hand, photography allowed for a potent representation of reality. On the other, Benjamin argued that the reproduction of art signals a departure from the authentic, and thus a loss of authenticity. Authentic experiences of art (the original painting, inhabiting a building and seeing it firsthand) were abandoned for the more accessible and easily distributable media of the reproduced image. Because of the effects available to photography and film such as being able to see places otherwise unseen, and experiencing events of the past, the visual culture of these media heightened a visually oriented culture. Here, truth was cast aside in exchange for stunning visual experiences and illusion.

ARCHITECTURAL IMAGERY

Visual culture has influenced architecture towards that of an architecture based on effects and ephemeral qualities. The rise of visual effects in the broader media and the integration of visualization software into the contemporary design process of architects has led to an increase of the availability of these images on the architectural market and the importance of the in disseminating design.

The separation of trades illustrates the specialization required for the image of architecture and its effectual nature. Architectural visualization firms take rudimentary form models provided by the architect and through software used by visual effect artists in the video game industry and photo augmentation software used in the same manner as painters, arCVIZ firms produce effectual environments and depict scenery and entourage with highly socially charged environments. The particular high-exposure images of public competition projects (pl. 3) are from notable architects and displayed throughout the internet and design sites. Many of these projects are unbuilt and form the oeuvre of an architecture firm’s practice, but are accepted as the most avant-garde and progressive architecture.

The second manner in which the image degrades architectural discourse is relying on the image to translate to built form and produced the same effect (Figure 1.3). Bjarke Ingles Group’s proposal for The Wave (along with many other public works projects) is declared to produce “social activation” and “vibrant community life.” However, how the design does this is the real problem with the image. While the rendering may be very exciting, the actual experience of the building is only through the image and fails to convey anything more than an ephemeral and immediate pleasure.

Public works, governmental organizations, academic institutions, private corporations and retailers have turn architectural spectacle into the bread and circuses of the Romans (pl. 3). By offering spectacle as a visual feast consumed by contemporary culture, architects are engaging in the degeneration of public space. Owners and occupants are both concerned with the image of the building as a mediator between their social relationship. The architect is put in an impossible situation to mediate and discern the role spectacle plays in the relationship of image, building and occupant.

IMAGE

The dilemma of how to represent a built or prospects piece of architecture goes back to the late Medieval and Renaissance architects. The advent of perspective and orthographic drawings as a prior design tools enabled the architect to theorize his trade. The academicism of the architectural trade was directly related the drawing and served as both promotional material for the architect and a new means of production of design. The principles of painting and geometry became directly translated to the conception of built work. The architectural treatment grew from small publications with few to no images (Alberti) to fully illustrated wood-block prints for mass production (Palladio’s Quattro Libri) to lavish illustrated 18th century illustrations in large format. Contemporary media such as Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau’s S,M,L,XL culminate the idea of drawing and graphics a means of promotion and establishment of one’s design practice in a visually-keen culture. The problem with the image in contemporary practice is delineated by Guy Debord. “All that was directly lived is now mere representation,” wrote Debord in his 1983 manifesto on Society of the Spectacle. Debord identifies with Benjamin in the role of mechanically produced images as a degradation of the work of art, but criticizes society, holistically condemning the practice of using the image as a mediator between
actual social interactions. The purchasing of luxury goods to associate imagery with status in greater society is directly related with architecture firms purchasing boutique renderings for their project competition entries. While the practice of delineators promoting architecture is not a new thing to architecture, the substitution of the image for built work is producing a period eye interested in only the image and disregarding of content.

Debord drew similar conclusions based on Manist and capitalist motivations associated with the image. In a modern capitalist notion of the image as mediator between social interaction, Debord posits, the image has been elevated to a status of mediator and symbolic interaction. Cars convey status of wealth, clothing conveys intelligence, advertisements convey sex and desire. In the realm of built works, architecture is not immune from the same forces. Architecture can, in fact, be considered a crystallized form of the spectacle, offering immediate satisfaction through atmospheric space and the preservation of buildings in a lie of authenticity and feeling. Debord traces the degradation of “authentic social life” as the replacement of authentic interaction to mere representative effect.

SEPARATION

This project takes the stance that the image cannot be completely eliminated. In contemporary context, a project cannot be promoted and a practice cannot exist and be awarded projects without the use of the image (the pages of this book would hold less relevance if published in a shoddy or sloppy manner). Instead of elimination, a practice cannot exist and be awarded projects without the use of the image. The first step in understanding this use of the image involves taking a closer look at other practices of the use of the image and its representative capacity (pl.4). In this diagram, four types of the use of the image in architecture, photography and the visual arts are categorized. The lower right quadrant separates the representation of completely banal subject in the photograph of Andreas Gursky. The spectacle of this piece lies in their method of realization and its contrast with the banal content which it conveys. Gursky’s color-saturated photograph stuns the viewer with its size and clarity of an overly saturated scene of a supermarket. The content vanishes and the viewer is consumed by the stimulation of the experience. In the upper left quadrant, representation is completely suppressed to a neutral state. These drawings pass reading through representation to the object itself. These types of projects, both built and unbuilt, offer an extremely non-biased depiction of the architecture which they represent in that there is no static or associated baggage associated with experiencing the architecture - the design is the only thing speaking.

In contrast, the upper right quadrant illustrates projects in such an exaggerated and stylized way, that it is impossible to deem them an accurate representation of built work. These images have dual voices acting: that of the spectacular, or novel content and that of the technique.

The lower left quadrant organizes banal subject matter with a neutral representation technique. While offering the least content and least rich depictions, the Bechers’ water towers produce a different effect than the other three quadrants. It is by the serial representation which they derive their meaning. By seeing a banal technique strictly arrayed, the arrangement of the pieces becomes the driving factor of meaning.

In an inversion of the figure-ground relationship between artwork and museum, Daniel Buren (Figure 1.4) questions the space of the gallery through the framing of a series of painted canvases. Buren strings a series of canvases with painted stripes upon a line which spans from the interior of a gallery to a corridor of Fifth Avenue in New York City. He directly forces the viewer to determine at which point the work of art ceases to be art and become promotion, towels hanging out to dry or a run-away piece of art. The piece, when put into the diagram of plate 4, does not fit into a single category. It constantly flips the singular nature of the representation. Buren’s conceptual criticism of the institution through zero-degree painting is a process of situating the artwork in the political and economic situation of the museum.

Similarly engaged with a singular means of operating, Christo and Jeanne-Claude explored concepts of wrapping through different scales and processes. By distilling their body of work to focus on one concept and investigate through a research of making, their works varied in scale and meaning around a singular term. Both Buren and Christo deny the image in their work, and in doing so provide a visually relevant body of work. White Buren is concerned with the greater context of the act of painting and display, Christo is concerned with the tactile and material consequences of the operations which he is performing.

NOTES

Bethlehem was founded in 1741 by Moravian missionaries along the Lehigh River and a feeding tributary, the Monocacy Creek. The Bethlehem Steel Corporation, a leading supplier of wartime ships, leveraged to establish a dual understanding of the work. Ships... (pls. 12-13), the use of representation and process are criticized and used to represent the facts of the significance of both the achievements of contributing to landmarks and the war effort. The added layer of spectacle produces a separate reading of the act of representing and conveying.
1929 North-South Civic Cores

1979-2000 Historical District

Plate 8: Map of Bethlehem, PA - 1929, 2012
Digital Collage
23 x 23 inches; 58.2 x 58.2 cm

Digital Collage
23 x 23 inches; 58.2 x 58.2 cm
It's (been) a Blast!, 2012
Blast furnace construction drawing. Check family photograph. Levitt Pavilion photograph by Paul Warchol
24 x 72 inches; 61 x 182.9 cm

It's (been) a Blast!, Author assembled images, drawings
72" x 24"
Blast furnace drawing complements of Spillman Farmer Architects
Check family photograph complements of Steel Workers Archive
Levitt Pavilion photograph by Paul Warchol
Stills from Delirious Spectacles, 2012
montage film
Steeling Landmarks, 2012
Graphite drawing with rust wash from selected Bethlehem Steel sites
framed 33 x 23 inches; 83.8 x 60.6 cm
Plate 16: Faceoff!, 2012
Assembled images
11 x 8.5 inches each; 27.9 x 21.6 cm

Plate 17: Rise and Fall, 2012
Digital collage
10 x 10 inches; 25.4 x 25.4 cm
The first methodology of research employs photography as a means of representing the geographic site of Bethlehem and uncovering social and built environment factors at work on the site. On one hand, this methodology is very much a traditional architectural site analysis. On the other, the process identifies with the discourse of the Bechers, Evans and Warhol and seeks to engage the photograph and its ability to depict phenomena.

The first series of images (pls. 18 - 21) reinterpret the Walker Evans photographs from 1934 (Figure 3.1) which made similar social commentary through the framing and positioning of the camera to depict underlying currents in the image. Evans documented and situated established subjects, making commentary on the site the relationship between work, live and death. These plates draw similar connections between the plant but do so by pairing images of current scenes of the blast furnaces with background. The first pairing takes a current viewpoint of the Evans photograph and a similar view of the parking lot for the casino. The pairing of these two viewpoints creates the metaphor between past and present work places and the analogy between the parking lot and graveyard. The second pairing, Play! pairs the foreground/background relationship of children playing soccer in the shadow of the blast furnaces and the entrance to the casino, the adult playground of Bethlehem. A further interpretation of Evans is examined with the Shrine and Tag pieces. In one instance Evans’ framed photograph augmented through the cutting out of the blast furnaces and illumination of the background in the same manner they are displayed today, with colored lights. The second instance is a graffiti tagged framed image over the blast furnaces. The graffiti stencil alluding to the trademark of the graffiti artist is aligned with the branding strategy of Bethlehem applying the graphic identity of the blast furnaces as a spectacle to anything that needs activation.

The Profit Machine takes the meaning of Evans’ photograph to the most extreme level. The slot machine is an obvious allusion to the underlying theme of the piece, however is a commentary on the use of economic stimulus plans of post industrial towns to look to unsustainable forms of income for revitalizing their towns. In the same manner that town officials take a gamble on the sources of profitable income generated in their jurisdiction, the player of the Profit Machine takes on a similar gamble with their tokens. The biggest economic drivers for Bethlehem are the largest payouts from the machine: war, union contracts and executive deals earn the player the highest jackpots.

The Fenced In: series depicts the artifacts of Bethlehem Steel in similar fashion to the Becher’s. By serially representing all of the existing uninhabited buildings through the campus, the magnitude of the buildings can be appreciated (pls. 27-43). Through photographically analyzing the sites, framing and the curation the images becomes the work produced for creating an analysis.
plate 19
Distant Reminder, Work 1, 2012
Photograph
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

plate 18
Distant Reminder, Work 2, 2012
Photograph
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
plate 22
Today's Evans, Shrine, 2012
Framed photograph, LED light, purple acetate
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

plate 23
Today's Evans, Graffiti Stencil, 2012
Framed photograph, spray paint
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Plates 24

Profit Machine, 2012
Plastic, metal, wood, glass
6 x 7 x 14 inches; 16.4 x 17.8 x 35.6 cm

Plates 25

Detail: Profit Machine, 2012
Plastic, metal, wood, glass
6 x 7 x 14 inches; 16.4 x 17.8 x 35.6 cm
Plate 27
Fenced In: Carpentry & Pattern Shop, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Plate 28
Fenced In: Electric Furnace Melting Department, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Plate 29
Fenced In: Electro-Slag Remelt, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Plate 30
Fenced In: Administrative Offices, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Fenced In: Carpentry & Pattern Shop, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day, 8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Fenced In: Central Tool Annex, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day, 8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Plate 33
Fenced In: Weldment, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Plate 34
Fenced In: Weldment, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Plate 35
Fenced In: Plant Entrance, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Plate 36
Fenced In: Administrative Offices North, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day.
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Plate 37
Fenced In: Blast Furnace, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day,
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Plate 38
Fenced In: Central Tool Annex, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day,
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Fenced In: Central Tool Shop, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day,
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

Fenced In: Iron Foundry, 2012
Black & white photograph taken on overcast day,
8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
Do Not Enter No Parking Private Property, 2012
Photograph series
2 panels; 10 x 10 inches; 25.4 x 25.4 cm each
IMPLODING IMAGE
The second methodology looks to implicate the representative image and seeks a fuller understanding of meaning by separating image from object in a serial manner. In a visit to the Bethlehem Steel Campus, six objects were collected, their location photographed and recorded. Further research was conducted as to the original function of the pieces, their manufacturing, and production processes and the way in which they came to be ruins. Through different forms of representation, this series questions origin, authenticity and the idea of display.

RUIN
When is a building in its most authentic state? When the construction documents are finished? Upon substantial completion? When it is inhabited? When it is relinquished to neglect and derelict? Depending on the source, all of these states of the building would be true. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the "cult of the ruin" dominated architectural circles in Europe. Mock ruins appeared as follies in landscape gardens and architects and artists’ attitudes towards them were two-sided. The first is archaeological, seeing artifacts as pieces to a puzzle to be reassembled to their original state. The second is a Picturesque understanding of the ruin, enabling the artist with license in arranging the artifacts in a romantic staging using chiaroscuro or mystical settings.

Piranesi’s etchings, dating from the mid 18th century hold a similar significance. The “craze” of rediscovery was fueled by architects and scholars traveling to Rome and documenting, stealing, selling, and recording. Further research was conducted as to the original function of display. Through different forms of representation, this series questions origin, authenticity and the idea of display. While such actress was not hired, this anecdote relates to Kahn’s conception of the ruin in terms of use.

Two contemporary examples of Ruskin/le-Duc ideology of the ruin are the preserved Shroeder house and the Shinto Temple in Japan. The Shroeder house, built in Utrecht in 1924 and designed by Gerrit Rietveld for Mrs. Tuus Schroeder and her three children has been a listed monument since 1976 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000 because of its iconic standing in the Modern Movement in architecture and the purity of ideas and concepts as developed by the De Stijl movement. Central to the design, a joint undertaking between architect and client, was the role that the inhabitant had in interacting with the house. With multiple moving partitions and the unique lifestyle that the family led the house accommodated a very particular and rigorous set of traditions, and rituals of the inhabitants. Thus upon restoring the structure, it was questioned whether an actress was needed to be hired to reenact the peculiar, military-like rigor of rituals which Mrs. Schroeder continued to perform into her late age with the house. While such actress was not hired, this anecdote relates to Kahn’s conception of the ruin in terms of use.

A second example of ruination in association with use is the Shinto temple in Japan. Rebuilt every twenty years, the Shinto temple is an example of the value of copying and restoring to normal. Through constant rebuilding, the Shrine is kept in impeccable condition.

NOTES
3. Ieb.

The two polar stances on the argument of restoration date back to the mid-nineteenth century, a period when restoration was first making an appearance. In favor of the authentic, John Ruskin wrote “Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible . . . to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.” Ruskin was of the belief that once a building’s construction was completed, it would never again exist that way again due to the time period, the state of materials and freshness of construction. On the other side of the argument, Eugene Viollette-le-Duc, in favor of the restored, wrote “to restore a building is not to repair it, nor to do maintenance or to rebuild, it is to reestablish it in an ultimate state that never existed before.” Viollet-le-Duc believed that the ultimate state of a building could be multiple: every time it is cleaned up, restored or acted upon the building could regain new character, compounded upon the current ideal state.

The intersection of these two mentalities came with Louis Kahn’s conception of the ruin, a cross pollination of both Ruskin and Voillet-le-Duc. "When a building is completed, it wants to say, ‘Look how I’m made,’ but nobody is listening because the building is fulfilling function. When it becomes a ruin, the way the building is made becomes clear, the spirit returns." Louis Kahn’s attitude towards the ruin was an admiration for the way in which the building revealed how it was constructed and supported; the craft and material of the work. But preserving a ruin is a peculiar habit: if ruination produced valuable result, why would further ruination not increase value? “Or could the process be reversed,” asks Rem Koolhaas in an exhibit Cronocaos at the New Museum.

Artists such as Gordon Matta-Clarke (Fig 4.4) play with this idea of ruin by introducing acts upon banal structures to be demolished. Because of the temporary nature of these building interventions (the buildings typically are slated for demolition or uninhabited) his work has been documented extensively through photographs, video and drawing. Matta-Clarke, as Smithson did, questions the architectural act by acting on non-architecture in a way which brings spectacle and artistry in a commentary on architectural production.

Chapter Twelve
Giovanni Battista Piranesi
Ruin of a Gallery of Statues in Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, c.1745
Etching

Chapter Twelve
Gordon Matta-Clarke
plate 44
Late Night Special, 2012
Steel plate, table cloth, 8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm

plate 45
Toaster (after Instagram), 2012
Computer-generated image on paper, deep fried, 8 x 10 inches; 20.32 x 25.4 cm
plate 55
Flashy Flashing, 2012
Framed computer generated image,
17 × 11 inches; 43.2 × 27.9 cm

plate 56
Flashing Artifact, 2012
Found flat roof metal flashing, felt,
8 × 8 × 8 inches; 20.32 × 20.32 × 20.32 cm
plate 59
C-channel Cross Section, 2012
Steel C-channel
2.5 x 4 x 1.25 inches; 6.35 x 10.2 x 3.13 cm

plate 60
C-channel Artifact, 2012
Steel C-channel
2.5 x 4 x 6.75 inches; 6.35 x 10.2 x 17.5 cm
New Bethlehem C50 shapes prove economical...speed erection

Thanks to the efficiency of their architect and engineers, the design of "The Rigby Warehouse" was the first U.S. big box building to benefit from the economic found in Bethlehem's new high-strength, low-cost C steel. (This new steel has been newly described to the other economic-minded builders.)

Described distributed steel columns To give the structure the crisp, clean lines you see at right, the architectural design called for 10 in. columns in the height of the building.

C50 columns weigh less, cost less

In the columns for the first six floors, where higher strength was needed, C50 shapes delivered 500 ksi minimum yield. All columns of comparable strength would have weighed considerably more. With C50, both tonnage and money were saved.

Why C50 and see other high-strength grades? Because no other grade has the attractive strength to price ratio or the good availability of the C steel.

C50 readily welded, speed erection

“The Rigby Warehouse” was designed with all welded steel frame. All the C Steel (C35, C50, C75, C100) are readily welded using normal techniques. This saves time and money in both fabrication and erection. C Steel can be fabricated by the usual methods used for structural carbon steel with adjustment of practice to allow for the lower pretension strength.

Bethlehem Steel shapes and plates come in a wide range of sections and thicknesses. Internally, C50 is planned to fill you want more about your C for value in structural steel.
Now I can eat in an authentic environment

BETHLEHEM STEEL

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PARKING | STRUCTURAL FORM FETISH

CAFE | SITE AS STAGE

SHOP | REUSED SHELL

OFFICE TOWER | PRESERVED REMAINS

GALLERY | MATERIAL ORNAMENT
New Bethlehem V50 crates prove economical...speed consumption

SHOP | REUSED SHELL
Your office has never been so secure

Office Tower | Preserved Remains

BETHLEHEM STEEL
GALLERY | MATERIAL ORNAMENT

Producing stronger, heavier materials for more secure galleries.

That’s a Bethlehem commitment. And we’re succeeding.
whereby symbols and representation trigger "automated responses" in a viewer.

Chapter on case studies of images and advertising. Particularly interesting was the creation of culture surrounding the images, of comparison.

This comparison, he names inhibited movement, the inhabitation of darkened rooms, and the inability to test reality as the basis of the modern architectural drawing is interesting, the photograph is magnificent, the building is an unfortunate but necessary stage between."

Criticism: Introductory Readings

An interview explaining how Martha Stewart's companies promote her brand and their situation in Koolhaas' discourse.


Koolhaas's criticism of mass/popular culture and the surrounding issues.


An interview explaining how Martha Stewart's companies promote her brand and their situation in Koolhaas' discourse.

In a still relevant analysis on the consumability of film and art, Benjamin writes how film and photography have transferred the meaning of art has become conceptually removed from traditional means and relies on spectacle and illusion to captivate an ever-increasingly distracted audience.


Publicity and advertising in the context of psychological visual factors. Publicity persuades by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are as a result enviable. Glamour is defined as a state of being that is envied. Publicity turns consumption into a substitute for democracy.


Colomina examines architecture of the International style in the context of publicity. The "machine age", a phrase coined by the advertising industry became something for architectural publicity to embody. Examples such as Towards a New Architecture used these images not in a representational context, but as a complement to the text. She explains media's technical connection to architecture in the way in which the camera prompted a promenade-based experience in architecture.


"...the experience of landscape space is never simply and alone an aesthetic one but is more deeply experienced as a lived-upon topological field, a highly situated network of relationships and associations that is perhaps best represented as a geographical map of collagic dimensions." The article goes on to describe the difference between painting as representation and rendering of scenographic approaches to design. The danger, Corner argues, is in making pictures as opposed to landscapes, buildings.


This chapter draws attention to the fact that figures in architectural representation (here, referencing Alberti and Piero della Francesca) and painting are given the same, if not more attention than the architectural environment, which is being designed. The gradient between a scene in architecture vs. architectural elements within a scene. The constructed space.


Article on how the craft of drawing translates (and is situated in relation to) the craft of building. Also, the story of the origin of painting, and the "chicken or egg first" conundrum translates to how architecture originates.


"The modern architectural drawing is interesting, the photograph is magnificent, the building is an unfortunate but necessary stage between."


A collection of essays about Smithson's work and the various factors of his life which influenced his work.

Shows how Piranesi’s conception of architecture was a product of the issues in architecture at the time through a comparison between his etchings and those of Graves and Le Corbusier.


Herschdorfer analyzes the process of montage-renderings of Schaefer. She compares his motives with other artists and photographers whose work that employs visual trickery to create a sense of realism. She quotes Schaefer referring to any scenario as “possible when browsing the labyrinths of databases.” He refers to the process of rendering as, “what you think you get is what you see.”


Situates Piranesi’s practice of drawing in the social context of theater. Argues that Piranesi’s etchings engaged critical issues that dominated discussion in architectural practice and theatrical circles. Early drawings occupied a territory between theater and actual architecture.


Architectural visualization firm’s online portfolio and mission statement.


Hamilton’s description of pop art is that it is “popular, transient, expendable, low cost, mass produced, young, wity, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, and big business.” Describes how pop artists were proud to disclose the manipulated maneuvers of advertising. Early conceptions of the movement used cheap, mass produced items in great quantities or with suggestions of narrative.


Loos compares plumbing in Germany to that of America and this technical distinction’s ramifications in relation to social classes and their differentiated use of space. Quoting Laube, “Germany needs a good bath… we do not really need art at all… we do not even have a culture yet… a higher standard of culture will have better art.”


Architectural visualization firm’s online portfolio and work flow with clients.


Bruce Mau and David Rockwell catalogue, discuss and interpret various cultural forms of spectacle across the globe. While the spectacles in this book tend to be events, they Mau and Rockwell show how integral spectacle is to various society’s culture.


The chapter on image as implied selling proposition discusses how “cool” imagery and other tactics in advertising can be leveraged to create an aura around a brand and associate it with status, among other things.


This book centers around questions regarding visual effects and their relation to narrative in Hollywood films. Including historical references to how technology has affected the medium in the past, McGowan discusses the difference between using effects which are narrative integrated versus externally applied effects.


In the first chapter, McGowan discusses how art translates private fantasies into public spectacles. Film lures the subject into occupying the illusion that it offers, much like the dream. “By distorting social reality through an imaginary act, fantasy creates an opening to the impossible object & thereby allows the subject to glimpse an otherwise inaccessible enjoyment.”


Neale discusses how inventions in technology were perceived and initially used by the film industry.


Fred Scott combines interior architecture with architectural theory to discuss various methods and means of altering, augmenting and restoring architecture with a broad focus and scope.


The first four chapters analyzing the macro socioeconomic factors around advertising and the economics associated with ad content.