The Machine of Architecture

A Personal Search for Understanding in Architecture

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I would like to thank my friend and teacher,
Yung-Ho Chang,
for his understanding and patience.
The following compilation of work was executed from August 1987 to May 1988. The body of work is representative of my growth and development during this period. I have no grand conclusions, no profound statements to make of architecture at this point in my life. I only wish to continue my search for an understanding of architecture and to search for my place in this world.
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Introduction
To invent anything new, a new way of thinking must coincide. The early 20th-Century Modernists had to develop, not only a new style of architecture, but also a new style of thinking to accommodate the reality of the machine. Today we have many more aspects of reality to perceive, digest, consider, and formulate. Modern society exists within a montage of time and space, the relationship of parts to the whole have been lost, dissolved, fragmented or dissected. A new way of thinking must occur.

In the summer quarter I began to probe into a montage of issues and questions about architecture and art. The project in which this was to be expressed was in an analysis of an alley; simply entitled, The Alley. This project was not supposed to resolve the issues or questions, but was only a format for the development of my research that stemmed from the issues and questions that had interested me. The focus of interest of all the questions or issues I attempted to approach was simply one of creative process.
The Alley
*The Alley* is an expression of the "event" of architecture. It is the instant of an experience made solid and three dimensional. *The Alley* is an architectonic expression of the total experience of a specific alley that I am familiar with. The experience is of the alley in every possible way: memory, perception, the occupation of its space, moving through the space, etc. To express this, all of the experiences and thoughts of the alley were compressed to form a total experience. To experience a total of all experience, a catalyst event had to occur:

...as I flashed by in a car, perpendicular to the alley
I peered down the narrow passage.
Grabbing a view, I rendered in my mind
an image, an object and a space.

This event inspired the creation of *The Alley*. *The Alley* is architecture in its purest form; abstract and metaphysical, free from all social, economic, and functional restrictions. The function of an architecture in this pure state is the expression of material, technique, space, and most importantly, it should express emotion. Architecture, such as this, should speak to people as a painting or as a poem might. "'True architecture,' according to Boullee, was not a matter of mechanical procedure but a creation of the spirit" (DeZurko 163).
The Alley
The Alley
The Alley
The Alley
The Alley
The Alley
Of Relationships
A sculpture as architecture, architecture as expression, an analysis of an alley; this was the first project in which I felt I had created architecture. This was my departure; a search for an understanding of myself within the realm of architecture and of architecture within the culture of today: a search for and exploration of what I have entitled, The Machine of Architecture.

The "machine" of architecture can be seen as the mind, capable of infinite possibilities, yet dependent upon information and its deftness of functioning. To create architecture one must understand that architecture is created for man, and therefore, man is the rule by which architecture is to be measured. Thus, to understand architecture, one must first understand man.

Architectural proportions have historically been based on the anatomical proportions of mankind. The parts or details (out of Context), when studying anatomy, machinery, or architecture, are very much alike. The piece is a part of the whole. Some pieces can be removed while others cannot. To appreciate the individual piece, joint, or member, we must first understand the individual and its relationship to the whole. To understand and perceive the whole clearly and completely, an understanding of the relationships between others must be made; such as the relationship between anatomy, machinery, or architecture. This is the relationship that became the focus of the projects that were executed during the exploration and search for an understanding of architecture and an understanding of myself.
Anatomical Studies
nude in motion
nude
nude
Marcel Duchamp was an innovator in modern aesthetic philosophy whose work has influenced virtually every artist and art movement of our age. Duchamp began to paint as an individual when he began to paint in his Cubo-Futurist style; he did not actually conform to either Cubism or Futurism but created a style all his own. The fascination with time or the fourth-dimension is quite evident in this later series of work. His study of motion was achieved by the delay of movement and the study of an instant of time. Through his studies in painting we can see his concern for the contemporary idea of time, motion, and space as it relates to the instant or continuum of time. Many of these studies were quite popular during the rise of cinematography in the early part of this century. In all of Duchamp's work, possibly more obvious in his paintings (being that they are the least abstract of his works), the modern idea of functionalism is evident. To exist in the machine age (of which a date nonot be given since the subjective understanding of machine is too varied) a person must fall under the influence of Functionalism. Fuctionalist theory has existed since Greecian times and is a major influence on our society today. Duchamp's functionalism can be seen in his studies of motion, optics, society, and parapysics as seen in his idea of mechanized sexuality in his paintings and in The Large Glass. The Large Glass is an excellent source for the study of our mechanized society. A relationship between man and woman has been captured and analyzed, the reality of time and space are prevalent, and a pata physical machine functions.

In The Large Glass Duchamp abstracts his concept of a mechanistic sexuality, an idea that speaks of the alienation and individuality of modern society, and his concept of the fourth dimension, physically and metaphysically. Four-dimensionallity is achieved in the physical sense simply by the fact that The Large Glass is executed on a glass plate; thus "the Glass cannot be looked at without being looked through at the same time, it tends to absorb into its world everything else visible around or behind it; its own background is thus an ever-changing ready-made," (Tomkins 82) and the frame contains a montage of Realities. Also, the physical aspect of time or history is also extremely important in The Large Glass, which took eleven years (1912 - 1923) for Duchamp to reach what he called its "definitive stage of completion." He also began to experiment in the fields of motion and optics in the Rotary Demi-
Sphere (1920) of which gave rise to the movement Op Art in the 60's.

"At a time when many of the Cubists were obsessed with trying to apply the most recent discoveries of science and mathematics in their work, Duchamp undertook to question the ultimate validity of science in general. Why should the 'laws' of science be revered, any more than the 'laws' of language or art? The word law was against his principles. Scientific laws, he argued, were merely convenient ways of explaining phenomena that man's limited intelligence had failed to grasp -- a situation attested to by the fact that 'every 50 years or so a new law is discovered that invalidates the old one."

(Tomkins 33)

Duchamp never joined any group or movement (although he was associated with many) so as not to stifle his creativity. "The whole idea of chance, which would assume such importance in 20th Century art, interested Duchamp primarily as an alternative to the 'laws' of science. Unlike many later artists, though, who saw in chance a way to get beyond their own personal taste, Duchamp always thought of it as an expression of each individual's subconscious personality. 'Your chance is not the same as mine,' he once explained."(Tomkins 35)

Duchamp's desire to create "a beauty free at last from the notion of beauty" was perhaps the motive force behind the ready-mades. The ready-made is perhaps Duchamp's most original contribution to the world of art. Duchamp's ready-made is an ordinary manufactured object taken out of its original context, labled, and exhibited as a work of art. "Duchamp's common objects selected from the real world vivified certain Cubist ideas about the reality of the art object. The wit was in making a common object as remarkable as an art object and making a work of art as real as an ordinary thing at the same time." (Masheck 10)

"Duchamp's ready-mades can be interpreted as individual 'demultiplications' of potentially infinite 'continua' of ready-mades coming off mass-production lines. More than this, the majority of the ready-mades have a very repetitive, geometric 'look' about them -- perhaps indicating that Duchamp's choices were not completely random... Duchamp consistently emphasized that the ready-mades were chosen from a position of aesthetic indifference, or from a position that avoided 'good or bad taste.' But this does not necessarily mean that he was indifferent to their geometry, particularly since his approach to geometry seems to have been part
of his general method of transforming aesthetic principles into more
topological categories: 'Whatever happens could have been
completely different.' The geometry itself was 'ready-made,' chosen
from the world of things that already existed." (Adcock 34)

Duchamp was perhaps one of the most advanced thinkers of our
time. His perception of the machine in our society and of modern
man and his art is perhaps the clearest vision of the 20th-Century
that anyone has ever expressed. "In this world, the human
mechanism operates like a machine and resembles the machine,
natural forces are synchronized with man-made power. Duchamp
animates the machine, mechanizes the soul. Between these counter
effects, motion becomes pure operation without objective or
consciousness" (Mashek 34) Marcel Duchamp has expressed his
abstract, pataphysical, functionalist view of the world. His works
and thoughts have influenced artists in all fields and movements and
the way society looks at itself.
Competition for the New York Waterfront
The New York Waterfront Competition was an exercise in urban planning and an experiment in chance or "automatic drawing" as a test for the ideas of Duchamp that I felt would best develop this project.

I was given a two-dimensional program of the New York waterfront: plans and an aerial photo-montage. The challenge was not necessarily to solve all of the problems in a realistic sense but to simply respond to what I was given. The obvious approach was of a two-dimensional type, remaining conscious of a four-dimensional reality. I was interested in expressing the city's own nature of spontaneous growth and its montage of time and space. The project began one morning in the corridor; as I composed a simple poem in my thoughts the conception of the project was inspired:

MANHATTAN

Shadows in the hall
struck by the morning light
reveal my concept of verticality laid flat.
Horizontal gestures, sweeping, streaking,
cutting across the floor plane for an instant.
Microscopic motion,
moving at the speed of light.

September 1987

This initial thought was the inspiration for the first level of development. In the first level of development, I generated lines of force from the corners of the buildings along the west parkway creating a grid of a crystalline pattern.

The intention of the poem was not to become a literal translation. The poem was only used as a source of inspiration to develop other disparate ideas. The second level of
development became a matter of accepting the existing conditions and making minor changes to enhance the initial concept and development thus far; such as the isolation of dilapidated dock structures to be used as elements in the architectural composition. At this point in the project, I felt it still lacked something. Unsure as to what exactly to do; I made a composite of the first two levels of development and responded with elements representing the major structures of the scheme including an overhead rail. Thus, I spontaneously created a montage of development.

New York City grows like a crystal. The city's crystalline growth is as ordered by its physical and metaphysical geometries as it is by the fractures in these geometries. It is these fractures that create the montage of time and space that dictate the character of New York City.
level one
level two
level three
composite
elevations looking west
proposed
Some Influences
There were a number of other artists and their ideas that were of influence to me during my research of Marcel Duchamp. Jean Tinguely, Picabia, Alberto Giacometti, the Dadaists, and the Surrealist artists and their ideas of creativity and art were particularly interesting, and of particular interest was the theme of the relationship with the "other" in modern, Western Civilization, particularly the "sexual relationship."

In my research I was able to work through art history and not around it. This process gave me an understanding of art, architecture, and of Western Civilization. I also began to look at sculpture as my vehicle of expression. One of my goals was to discover how I work, and since I felt that the making of things is my thoughts medium, the resolution must grow out of the process of the making of things itself. "For (Jackson) Pollock the key to creation was to enter into what he called 'contact' with the painting he had begun, so that it would guide him as if it were an outside spiritual force. 'I have no fears,' he said, 'about making changes, destroying the image, and so on, because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through.' Here, the artist conceives himself as a vehicle or medium of an entity beyond himself, a version of Rimbaud's "I is another" (Rosenberg 315). These are but a few of the ideas and influences I have attempted to approach in my work.
The Large Glass, 1912-1923 (The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even)
Woman Walking in a Box Between Two Houses.
Alberto Giacometti 1950
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine is a work conceived to represent both the metaphysical and the physical realities of our world. The "Bachelor Machine," inspired by Marcel Duchamp's Large Glass, pertains to the metaphysical and the mechanistic realm of the work. Alberto Giacometti's name in the title refers to a perception of "the other." The work, as a whole, is a perception of life at a distance, as if studied scientifically. The domination of the machine is evident while the work also speaks of the isolation of man, woman, artist, and society as a result of our mechanized and rigid environment (referred to by the upper part of the structure or "male half") and the spiritual or metaphysical aspect of the individual or of humanity as a whole (referred to by the lower portion or "female half"). The work is not necessarily my perception of reality but of a reality.
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Notes on
Alberto Giacometti’s Bachelor Machine

Alberto Giacometti’s Bachelor Machine is an illustrated equation for a social narrative. The equation is not scientific but a metaphysical one. Thus; reality is only referenced in the work and the only restrictions or existing conditions are those that the artist has placed upon himself by either focus, convention, or ignorance.

Alberto Giacometti’s Bachelor Machine is divided into two sections: the realm of the bachelor (1) and the realm of the bride (2). The separation of the two exist in a neutral zone (3) located between the two realms.

The realm of the bachelor contains the nautilus pulley (4). Representative of reason and the Ego; the nautilus pulley sustains the bachelor’s Id and Super Ego in an equilibrium and suspends the bachelor in the neutral zone beneath his realm, between reason and desire.

In the cabinet which encloses the realm of the bachelor is mounted an eyepiece (5). This eyepiece allows society to act as voyeur and policeman. The scrutiny of his thoughts and actions assist the bachelor in his decision making process. This process, illustrated by the apparatus, creates an equilibrium as well as a stagnation within the bachelor. (This dichotomy is expressed by the division of the two realms as Marcel Duchamp divided the realms of the bride and of the Bachelor in The Large Glass. Although similar; the division in Giacometti’s Bachelor Machine is not as rigid and acts more physically as a place to occupy or as a meeting place for the bride and the bachelor.)

The bachelor’s Id, represented by the conical weight (6), acts as the phallus of the apparatus and as an extension of the bachelor.

The bachelor’s Ego, as the small counter weight (7), desires utility, economy, and the survival of his individual self. The Ego is outside of the cabinet which enables self criticism and
concentration.

In the neutral zone, the bachelor identifies his "object of desire." The bachelor is divided by the upper plate (8) between head and phallus, reason and desire. The bachelor is suspended above his "object of desire" by the apparatus.

The lower plate (9), suspended above the realm of the bride, addresses the phallus of the bachelor with a female counterpart. created by the reason and desire of the bachelor, a tension exists between the upper plate and the lower plate. The tension between plates is controlled within the realm of the bride and by society via the eyepiece.

The realm of the bride is encompasses the enclosed cabinet of the lower half, the lower plate, and the area between legs which holds the conical weight in suspension.

Within the enclosed cabinet, beneath the bachelor's "object of desire," hangs a sphere (10). The sphere is the residence of unity which is controlled by the bride. As the weight of unity (or the absence of the individual) becomes greater for the bachelor; the conical weight, representative of the bachelor's Id, is pulled further into the realm of the bride and the plates are thus pulled apart by the resultant tension created.

Thus, unity and tension must be kept in an equilibrium.

Equilibrium is the responsibility of the whole apparatus.

It is not the intention of the previous "description" to "explain" Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine. The "description" is to be deciphered concurrent with the study of the actual work itself.

What one perceives in Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine is not only generated from the artist but also from the viewer. It is the viewer that is perceiving and thinking about what he looks at. It is their mind, preconceptions, and enculturation that gives something meaning independent of anything else such as the intentions of the artist.

Cory Hunnicut
16 May 1988
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Sculpture Machine
The *Sculpture Machine* is perhaps more expressive of my "not self," (Lipsey 58) something outside of myself.

The two sculptures, Alberto Giacometti's *Bachelor Machine* and *Sculpture Machine*, answered many questions. One was of a modern problem of many artists: "to reestablish a lost contact with the unconscious...with the primordial racial past and to keep and develop this contact in order to bring to the conscious mind the throbbing events of the unconscious mind" (Waldman 39).
A Critics Advise
"I wonder if the components, both of the bache or machine and of your descriptions, could benefit by expanding them. What if it (the machine) is only a sort of metaphysical section cut? Presumably when we wrench it apart, turning the column into a wall, we will find that the difference between the second and third dimensions holds a lot of surprises. In looking at Duchamp's notes for the bride (Large Glass), I'm always awed by the complex meanings projected onto each element--the discourse and the components are interdependent, and this synergy increases the depth of meaning of each."

Monte Antrim
in studio, 1988
Revisions on a Theme
The following drawings are the continuation and development of the ideas and influences that I had experienced up to this point in time. The goal of this incomplete series is architectural in nature but has not yet been realized.
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Alberto Giacometti's Bachelor Machine
Conclusion
"The twentieth-century triumph of technology and our accelerating and ever-changing life styles have created a totally new condition. These changes, despite the difficulties, have a certain exhilaration which is yet to be matched in architecture. It is that revision and the absolute need for inventiveness, imagination and interpretation that makes our role in architecture more valid. We can no longer fulfill our obligations as architects if we carry on as cake decorators. Our role is far greater than that. We, the authors of architecture, have to take on the task of reinvestigating Modernity.

An atmosphere of total hostility, where looking forward has been, and still is, seen as almost criminal makes one more adamant that there is only one way..."(Hadid) The work of the Modernists have been forgotten, distorted, and abused. "Our task is not to resurrect them but to develop them further. This task of fulfilling the proper role of architecture, not only aesthetically but: programmatically, will unveil new territories. In every project there are new territories to be invaded and others to be conquered: and this is only the beginning."(Hadid)
To understand what I had accomplished in The Alley, I had to begin from where I had started. I had to find the roots, in history, of my thinking at the time I began The Alley and wade my way through the span of history that separated my thinking at the beginning of The Alley and my thinking at the end. I was attempting to achieve a parallel in my thinking, conscious self, and my subconscious, or "not self." In short, a parallel development of the artist and architect was the process of my thesis exploration and my pursuit of understanding. I am still in pursuit...
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