



Figure One – Eberswalde Technical School Library, Herzog and de Meuron

Herzog and de Meuron: Unstable Readings + *Seeing Architecture* Cumulative Workbook

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Seeing Architecture: *Theories of Architecture and its Appearance*

Submission Contents

PART A – Research Essay

Essay – **Herzog and de Meuron: Unstable Readings**

List of Illustrations

Bibliography

PART B – Cumulative Task

Week Four – Précis & Reflection

Week Five – Précis & Reflection

Week Six – Précis & Reflection

Week Seven – Précis & Reflection

Week Eight – Précis & Reflection

Week Nine – Précis & Reflection

Week Ten – Précis & Reflection

Week Eleven – Précis & Reflection

Week Twelve – Précis & Reflection

Week Thirteen – Précis & Reflection

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Personal Glossary

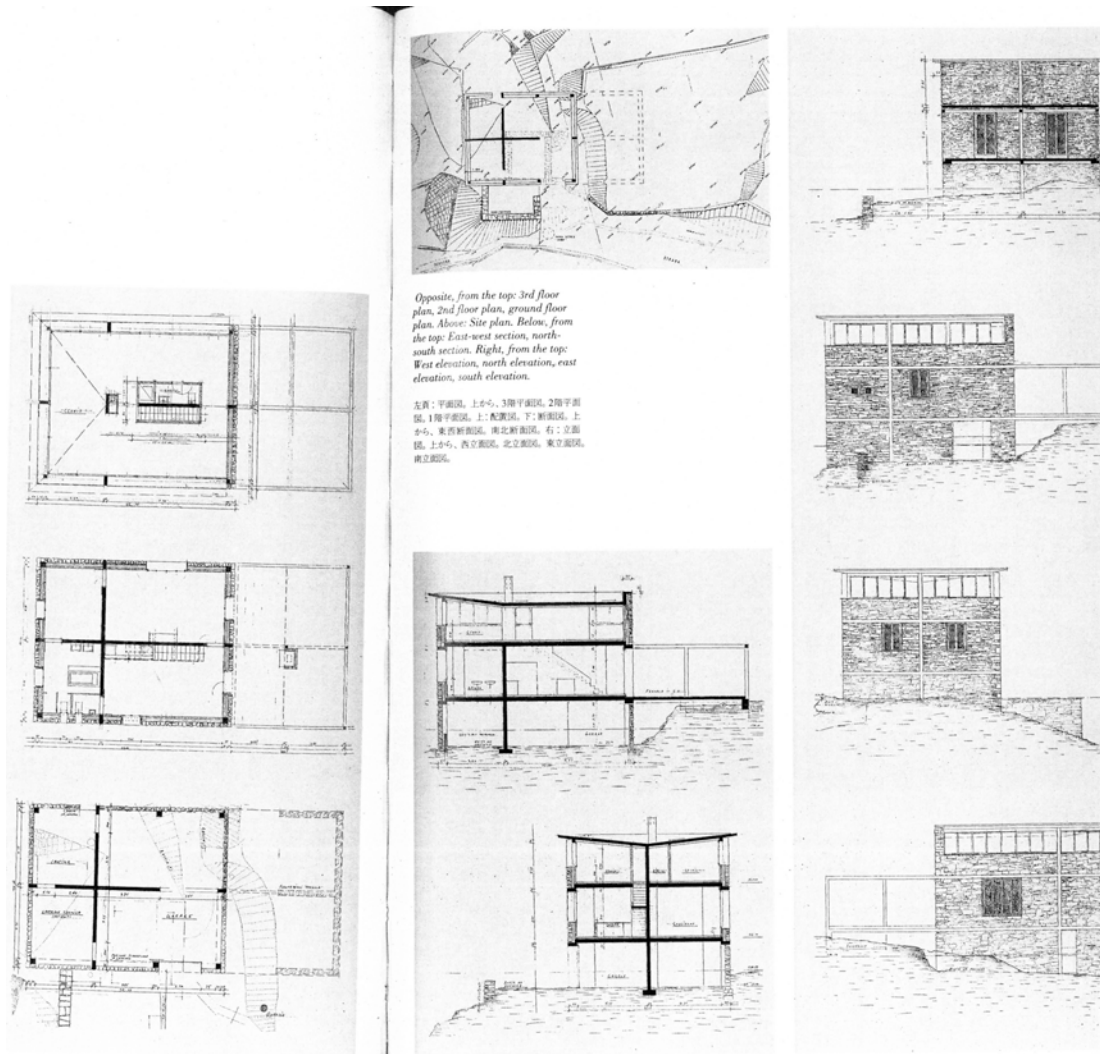


Figure Two – Stone House, Herzog and de Meuron

PART A – Research Essay

Herzog and de Meuron: Unstable Readings

In Domeisen's article *The Quest for Ornament*, he describes Herzog and de Meuron's work as creating 'unstable readings'¹. Their work falls into many contradictory categories 'oscillating between modernist perceptions of form and ornamental surface effects'². Marroquin attempts to describe all of Herzog and de Meuron's work using the following six words; '*minimalism* and *ornament*, *cosmetic* and *structural*, *image* and *body*'³. These sets of juxtapositions are some of the most loaded oppositions in the architectural discourse, which makes generally mixed readings of Herzog and de Meuron's work understandable. At the same time it is amazing that the work of a single firm can seemingly fall into so many opposing categories. In an interview in 1995, Herzog and de Meuron admitted that they often have trouble with 'ideological misunderstanding' of their work around the world⁴.

The origins of the list of categories by Marroquin will be broken down to uncover how different critics perceive the work of this Swiss firm. *Minimalism* and *Ornament* were two categories set up in an *ARCH+* article by Kuhnert in 1995⁵. He separates the firm's work into these categories and tries to understand how a single body of work can spread across these opposing categories. In 1997, Kipnis condemned the *ARCH+* article and developed his own framing of Herzog and de Meuron's work in the field of the *cosmetic*⁶ which will be developed further in this essay. Other critics see the firm's work in terms of *image* and *body*, a physical manifestation of the theories developed by Semper in the late 1800s⁷. Asman claims Herzog and de Meuron's work 'picks up where Semper's theories left off'⁸.

This essay will explore Herzog and de Meuron's relationship to Semperian ideals compared to Kipnis' framing of the firm's work in terms of the cosmetic. By discussing examples of

¹ O Domeisen, "The Quest for Ornament," *Detail* 6 (2008), 577.

² Ibid.

³ A Marroquin, "Herzog & de Meuron," <http://cultureofdesign.wordpress.com/2010/05/04/herzog-de-meuron-by-ana-marroquin/>.

⁴ N. Kuhnert, A. Schnell, and Herzog & de Meuron, "Minimalism and Ornament," *ARCH+* 129/130 (1995), 115.

⁵ Kuhnert, Schnell, and de Meuron, "Minimalism and Ornament", 115.

⁶ J Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & De Meuron," *El Croquis* 87 (1997), 22-28.

⁷ C Asman, "Ornament and Motion: Science and Art in Gottfried Semper's Theory of Adornment," in *Herzog & de Meuron: Natural History*, ed. P. Ursprung, Centre canadien d'architecture, and Herzog & de Meuron (Montreal, Quebec; Baden, Switzerland: Canadian Centre for Architecture; Lars Muller, 2002), 397.

⁸ Ibid.



Figure Three – Stone House, Herzog and de Meuron

their work, broken down into three phases over the last three decades, it will be argued that Kipnis' cosmetic conception is only applicable to phase two of Herzog and de Meuron's work, where as Semperian thinking is woven through their oeuvre from the last thirty years.

Firstly, Semper and his influence on Herzog and de Meuron's early work will be discussed. This will be strengthened with built examples by Herzog and de Meuron, including the Stone House at Tavole and the Ricola Storage Building in Laufen. These works will be compared with the firms work in phase two, the mid 1990s, which can be read in terms of Kipnis' conception of the cosmetic in architecture. The Eberswalde Library and Ricola Europe projects will be used as examples to frame Herzog and de Meuron's work in the cosmetic field. Semperian and Kipnis' cosmetic theories will then be compared and examples with mixed conceptions will be addressed. Finally, the essay will conclude by discussing the recent evolution of Herzog and de Meuron's work showing how Kipnis' cosmetic framing, does not apply to the firms work during the 2000s but a thread of Semperian thinking is still evident in their conceptions of surface, materiality and space.

Asman describes Herzog and de Meuron's work as 'a conversation between surface and space, art and architecture, for which Semper laid the theoretical ground work'⁹. Gottfried Semper was renowned for his publication *The Four Elements of Architecture* first published in 1851¹⁰ and his new conception of *Style in Technical and Tectonic Arts* first published in 1860¹¹. Semper inverted the typical hierarchy of architectural thinking where structure and form was given highest priority and suggested that ornament, decoration, surface and affect came first¹². This inverted order of priorities is also evident in the work and philosophy of Herzog and de Meuron. Semper claimed that 'ornament should be an expression of technique'¹³ and investigated textiles, textile art and the intricate craft of weaving and knotting textiles, to emphasize the importance of craftsmanship and symbolism in architecture. In Semper's theory, the textile clothing or skin would be developed first, the *gewand*, to wrap or enclose a space. This textile skin would then be supported by a

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ G Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹¹ G Semper et al., *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, or, Practical Aesthetics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004).

¹² M Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses : The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 29.

¹³ Domeisen, "The Quest for Ornament", 574.

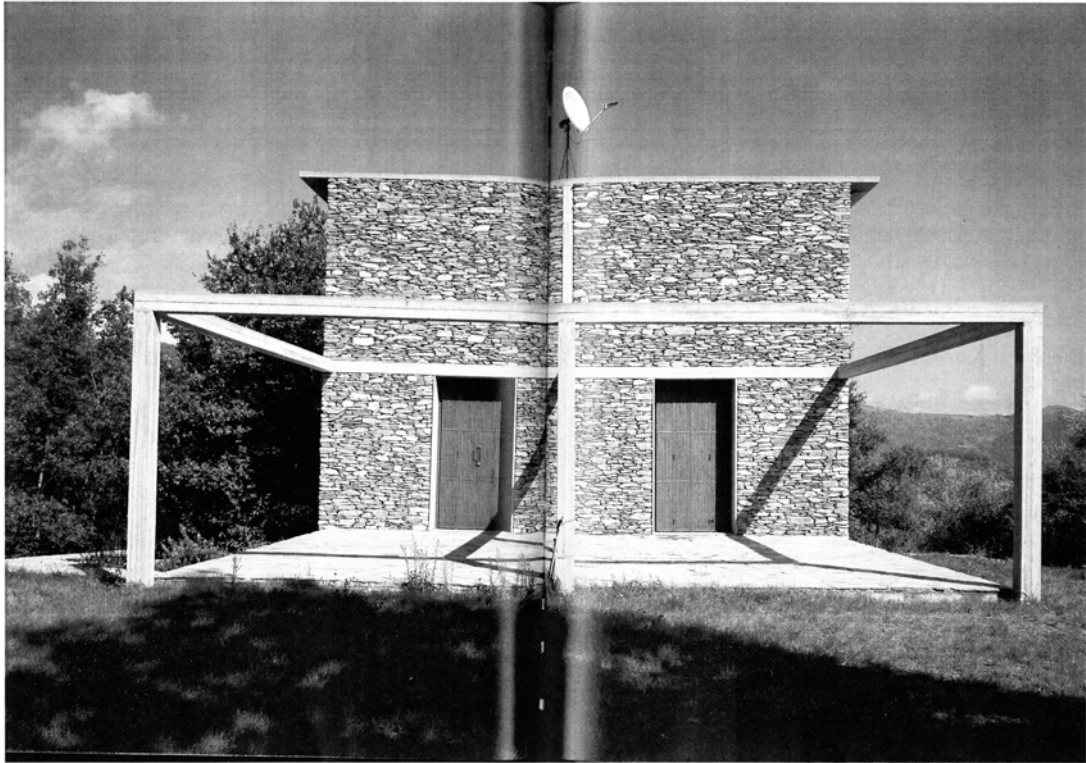


Figure Four – Stone House, Herzog and de Meuron

structure, *wand*, which would only be of secondary importance¹⁴. Semper suggests that architecture 'turns out to be nothing more than texture'¹⁵.

Forster backs up readings of Herzog and de Meuron's work in Semperian terms, claiming 'Herzog and de Meuron are indebted to Semperian thinking'¹⁶. Their Stone House at Tavole in Italy is a built example that evokes many Semperian ideals and can be seen as Herzog and de Meuron's link to Semper's Caribbean Hut and the Vitruvian Primitive Hut. The Stone House (1982-1988), was an early work of the duo¹⁷. Typical of phase one of their work, the hut embodies an exploration of materials and matter. See figure x, following Semper's principles the Stone House unites the heart, roof and terrace in 'a single line'¹⁸.

Like much of Herzog and de Meuron's work and the misreadings of it, many oppositions are at play in the Stone House. These include; natural versus artificial materials, traditional wall construction versus modern reinforced concrete construction and massive versus slender walls¹⁹. The work is neither focussing towards naturalism or the picturesque²⁰ but is an abstract exploration of stone as a material and how oppositions of tradition and modernity can work together. Although the project explores structural ideas to do with the properties of stone, the structure is not dominant and much remains masked within the walls²¹, per Semperian thinking. The abstraction in the Stone House links to Piet Mondrian and fosters Herzog and de Meuron's enduring allegiance, collaboration and interest in art.

Donald Judd developed specificity about materials in his minimalist art. In 1964, Judd published a manifesto, *Specific Objects*²². His sculptures focus predominantly on a single form and material per work, creating such specificity. Examples of materials he brought into

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses : The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, 25.

¹⁶ K. W Forster, "Pieces for Four and More Hands," in *Herzog & de Meuron: Natural History*, ed. P. Ursprung, Centre canadien d'architecture, and Herzog & de Meuron (Montreal, Quebec; Baden, Switzerland: Canadian Centre for Architecture; Lars Muller, 2002), 54.

¹⁷ A+U, "Stone House, Tavole, Italy," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 30.

¹⁸ Asman, "Ornament and Motion: Science and Art in Gottfried Semper's Theory of Adornment", 397.

¹⁹ J Lucan, "Architecture: Face to Face with Matter: Herzog & de Meuron's Buildings," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² D Judd, *Complete Writings 1959-1975 : Gallery Reviews, Book Reviews, Articles, Letters to the Editor, Reports, Statements, Complaints* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design ; New York : New York University Press, 1975).

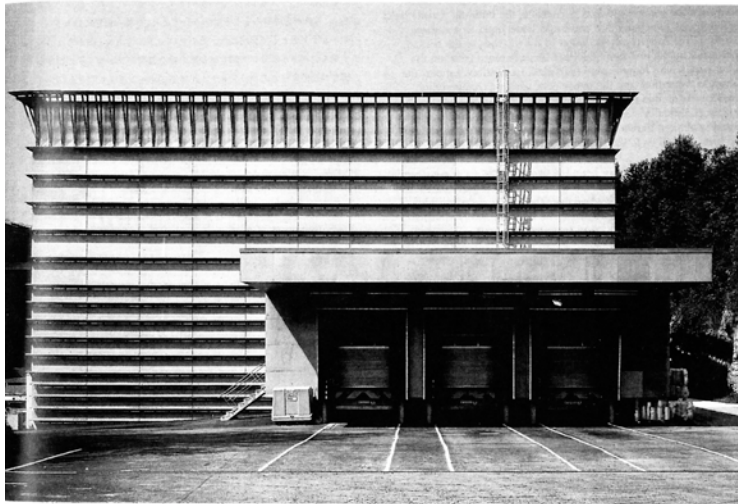


Figure Five – Ricola Warehouse Building, Herzog and de Meuron



Figure Six – Ricola Warehouse Building, Herzog and de Meuron

the world of art include aluminium and flexiglass²³. This specificity has influenced and is evident in the work of Herzog and de Meuron. Each project is original and contains a specific idea drawn out of its context. During phase one of their work Herzog and de Meuron would draw out one particular material that related to their project and focus in on the specifics of that material and how innovative ideas or approaches to that material could dematerialise it and develop its everyday appearance into a sensuous special affect. These in-depth material studies are similar to the type and depth of Semper's investigation of textiles and craft based ornament and surfaces.

In the Stone House the specific material investigated was stone in both raw traditional stacking of stones and modern concrete construction. In another project of this phase, the Ricola Storage Building in Laufen (1986-1987), Herzog and de Meuron investigated the traditional stacking of timber boards²⁴. Herzog and de Meuron applied repetition, proportion, scale and rhythm to the boards to breathe new life into this traditional material of the area and reference the quarry, which was once where the Storage factory now sits. At the end of the 1980s a period of excess, the simplest rectangular box form and everyday materials used by Herzog and de Meuron seemed refreshingly contrary to the popular field of art and architecture. This is similar to Semper's investigations, which were contrary to the canon at his time. The Ricola Storage Building, figure x, was seen as 'a seed for everything Herzog and de Meuron would do in the future'²⁵.

'Despite the inventiveness of some of Semper's ideas... his great desire was to mediate extremes and find a common language that would bring together opposing forces onto common ground'²⁶. This sentiment has strong links to Herzog and de Meuron's philosophy of using everyday materials and trying to create an affect or sensuous experience, which can influence all citizens, not just architects or the informed. Herzog and de Meuron can't stand 'art about art or architecture about architecture'²⁷, which like Semper puts them on a different conceptual level to many other architects of the 1980s and 1990s focussing on iconography, personal gestures, signature works and formal expression. Both Herzog and de

²³ H Frei, "Masked Matter and Other Diagrams," *Architectural Design Surface Consciousness*, no. 73 (2003), 46.

²⁴ A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 1978-2002*, ed. N Yoshida (Tokyo: A+U Publishing, 2002), 152.

²⁵ R Moneo, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press, 2004), 362.

²⁶ Asman, "Ornament and Motion: Science and Art in Gottfried Semper's Theory of Adornment", 386.

²⁷ Kuhnert, Schnell, and de Meuron, "Minimalism and Ornament", 115.

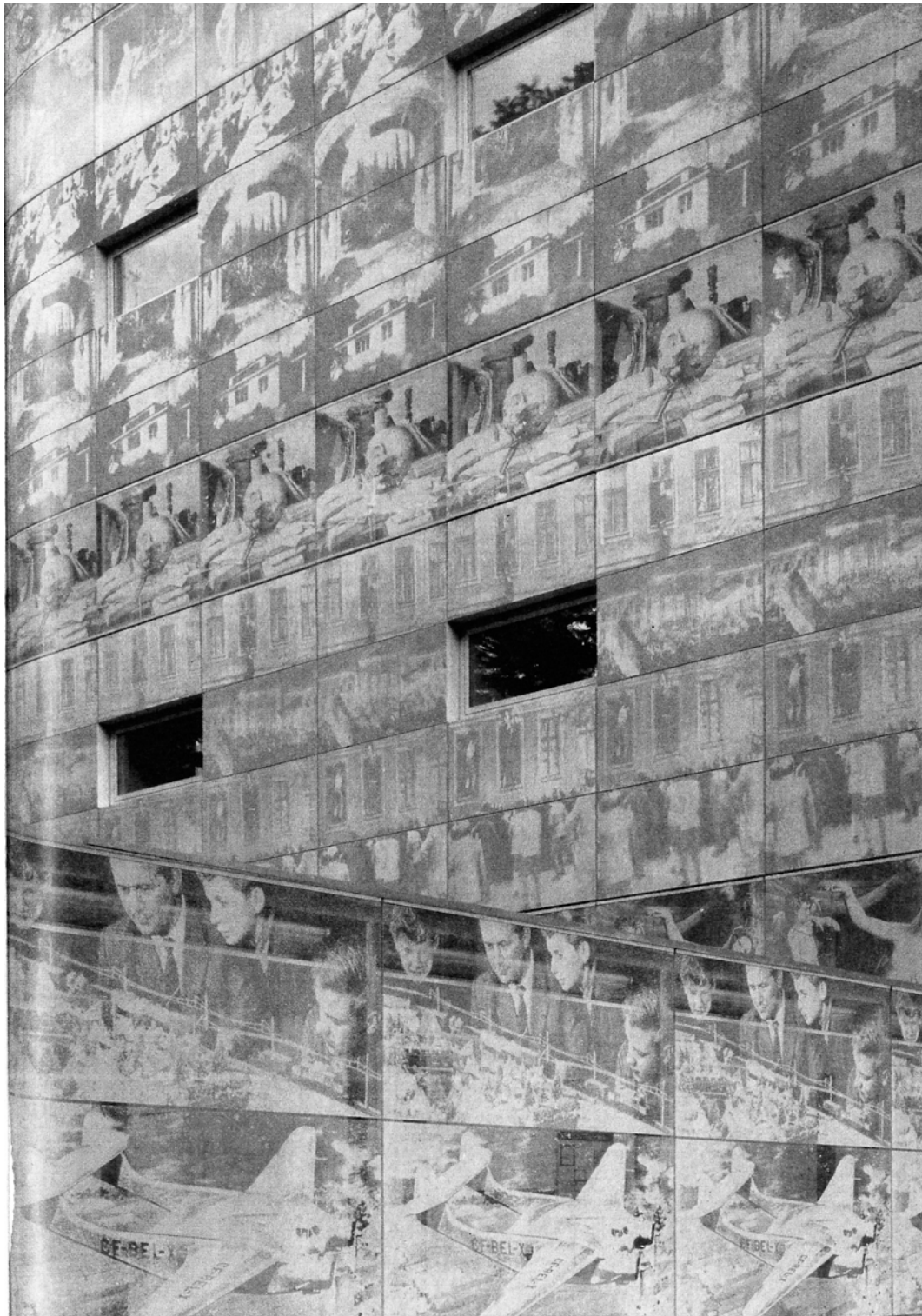


Figure Seven – Eberswalde Library, Herzog and de Meuron

Meuron and Semper's empathy and 'incessant search'²⁸ for a fundamental understanding of the perceptual affects of material and surface, linking back to the origins of architecture has, in Herzog and de Meurons case, generated a body of work, which aims to influence all who experience it. Viray explains that it is important to understand both the 'surfaces and depths of Herzog and de Meuron' and that their work is 'not the mere manipulation of surfaces but rather an understanding of materials that combines towards the recreation of an experience awakening memory and emotions in certain places and time'²⁹.

In western architecture, facades and representation seem to be inextricably linked. Semper in theory and Herzog and de Meuron in practice, approach their facades with a different set of thinking. Herzog and de Meuron are consciously anti-representational and keen to uncover the affect or sensuous play that can arise through inventive but traditional approaches to the skin and at the same time care and craft-like manipulation of traditional everyday materials. Unlike other contemporary firms striving to be anti-representational they don't stop at a merely technical level. Their combination of innovative technical aspects and innovative ideas, building on traditional materials and construction is where Semperian and cosmetic readings of the firms work begin to merge. As Domeisen suggests, once critics stop seeing modernism and ornament as opposites and start to understand how the two can work together the product can be mutually beneficial, as manifested in the work of Herzog and de Meuron³⁰.

The clean and minimal adjustments to the skin of a neutral box form, align Herzog and de Meuron with minimalist artists, such as Judd, and Kipnis's idea of the cosmetic. Their use of simple rectangular forms in phase two of their work heightens the 'power of the cosmetic'³¹ and their relationship to minimalist art. The article *The Cunning of Cosmetics* by Kipnis in 1997 begins by discussing the differences between ornament and cosmetics³². This is related to the skins of Herzog and de Meuron's buildings, which Kipnis believes cannot be classified as ornament because the image or cosmetic treatment covers the whole face of the building in a homogenous fashion and is not applied as sporadic elements across the façade.

²⁸ E Viray, "Herzog and de Meuron: A Very Temporal Spatial Experience," in *Herzog & de Meuron : 2002-2006*, ed. A+U (Tokyo: A+U Publishing, 2006), 311.

²⁹ Viray, "Herzog and de Meuron: A Very Temporal Spatial Experience", 310.

³⁰ Domeisen, "The Quest for Ornament", 577.

³¹ Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & de Meuron", 28.

³² Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & de Meuron", 26.



Figure Eight – Eberswalde Library, Herzog and de Meuron

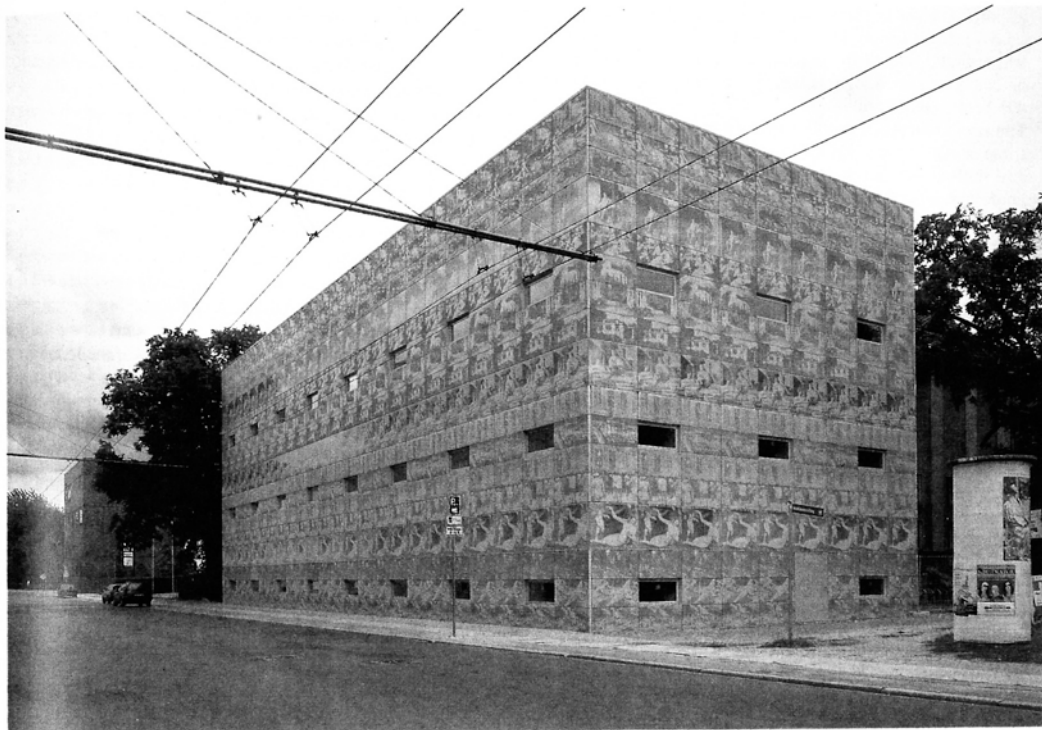


Figure Nine – Eberswalde Library, Herzog and de Meuron

For Kipnis' ornament and cosmetic are in totally different categories, ornament is a single entity where as the cosmetic is more of a 'field' or 'camouflage', which is applied to the whole skin³³. Kipnis uses the example of ornament being like jewellery, an accessory or addition, where as cosmetic treatment is an embellishment of the skin, with the thinness of blush, a shadow or highlight³⁴. For Kipnis, cosmetic treatment is turning the skin into an image and there must be an existing body or vehicle. Henry describes the body, in terms of cosmetics, as 'the host' but the intention is to work on the exterior surface³⁵. This is exemplified by the simple rectangular prism forms and focus on the skins in Herzog and de Meuron's works during the 1990s. Henry surmises that ornament aims to enhance form, where as 'cosmetic treatment will negate it'³⁶. Its important to note that Kipnis doesn't see cosmetics as applied to a building but revealed from the innate skin and orthodoxy of architecture³⁷.

The cosmetician wants a 'gaunt featureless visage' to act upon, 'a minimal body or face from which to work, in order to demonstrate the power of their work'³⁸. The 'featureless' faces Herzog and de Meuron provide in their simple forms 'emphasis the subtle articulation that occurs'³⁹. Once cosmetic treatment has been applied to the faces of Herzog and de Meuron's buildings, the brutality and starkness of their simple forms begins to fade as the cosmetic allure distracts the viewer. Kipnis, explains that the simpler 'featureless' body, heightens the affect of the cosmetic treatment⁴⁰. Henry develops this argument writing that the cosmetic treatment of the surface begins to 'redefine its relationship with the figure', giving the surface its own figuration, which is not necessarily defined by the form of the body⁴¹.

The allure of cosmetics is obvious through the experiential qualities and affect of Herzog and de Meuron's work. In an interview with Chevier, Jaques Herzog said that they 'are looking to

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ J Henry, "The Cosmetician," <http://scalardesigns.wordpress.com/2010/02/28/the-cosmetician-jonathan-henry/>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & De Meuron", 28.

³⁸ Henry, "The Cosmetician."

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & De Meuron", 26.

⁴¹ Henry, "The Cosmetician."



Figure Ten – Eberswalde Library, Herzog and de Meuron



Figure Eleven – Eberswalde Library, Herzog and de Meuron

create a physical sensuous presence⁴² in their buildings. Kipnis' attributes this allure to the use of cosmetics in their facades. The Ricola-Europe SA Production and Storage Building (1992-1993) in Mulhouse-Brunstatt France⁴³, was a catalyst for cosmetic work, which was taken on by Herzog and de Meuron in the 1990s, see figure x. The simple rectangular prism form has been opened at the ends, like 'a box lying on the ground with its flaps opened up'⁴⁴. Under the flaps abstracted images of Karl Blossfeldt's photographs of leaves have been silk-screened onto polycarbonate. Although the symbolism of the leaves has strong ties to ornament, the motif is applied and repeated at the same scale across the façade and wraps up and under the soffit, which in Kipnis' terms becomes a cosmetic field not ornament.

As a result of the silk-screened images, the face of this building is constantly changing in different light and weather. The images have a profound affect on users on the inside of the building as they filter different levels of light and cast shadows. Herzog and de Meuron have dematerialized the ordinary polycarbonate and turned it into a key material in the sensuous experience of the building, 'unleashing the power of the cosmetic'⁴⁵. Kipnis' cosmetic framing of Herzog and de Meuron's work makes sense in relation to this example.

The Library of Eberswalde Technical School in Eberswalde Germany (1994-1999)⁴⁶, is another of Herzog and de Meuron's buildings, which is an important exemplar of Kipnis' framing of their work in terms of the cosmetic. Some critics see the work as one of Herzog and de Meuron's lesser conceptions, as the project revolves entirely around the skin, which envelops a very generic rectangular library. The project was drawn out due to budgetary constraints and the clients were never able to realise the interior as designed by Herzog and de Meuron⁴⁷. True to Kipnis' cosmetic ideals, the simple rectangular form of the building disappears due to the field of repeated abstracted images covering all facades, which break down the concrete and glass panels of each face. Palma writes 'the ornament and wall are

⁴² J. Chevrier, "A Conversation with Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron," *El Croquis* 152/153 (2010), 38.

⁴³ A+U, "Ricola Europe Factory and Storage Building," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 84.

⁴⁴ W Wang, *Herzog & de Meuron*, 3rd enlarged and updated ed. (Basel ; Boston: Birkhauser, 1998), 118.

⁴⁵ Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & de Meuron", 28.

⁴⁶ A+U, "Herzog & de Meuron: Library of the Eberswalde Technical School," *A+U : architecture and urbanism* (2000), 24.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

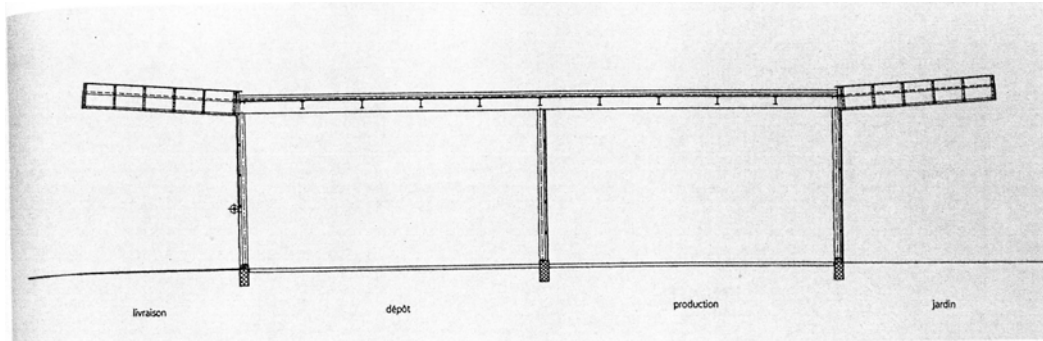


Figure Twelve – Ricola Europe, Herzog and de Meuron

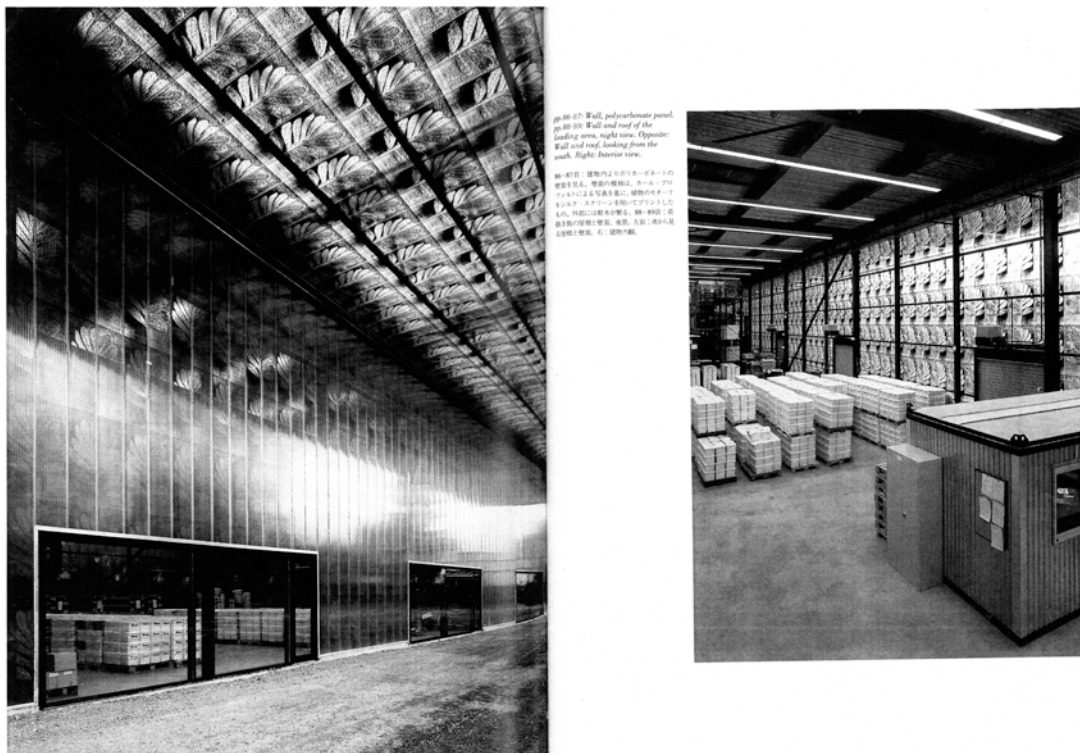


Figure Thirteen – Ricola Europe, Herzog and de Meuron

fused into a single entity⁴⁸. This comment embodies Kipnis' idea of the cosmetic as a field that envelops the entire building.

Prints of photographs collected from newspaper clippings by artist Thomas Ruff, have been etched into the prefabricated concrete panels and silk-screened onto the glass windows, which make up the skin of this building. Whilst linking into the traditional context of the area and tradition of the sgraffito technique, Herzog and de Meuron had to be quite innovative in developing a new method of printing the images into concrete. They formed a contemporary method of sgraffito by printing the images onto a film and using a curing agent to cure the concrete at different rates to develop the image⁴⁹. The repetition of the images dissolves any representation they may allude to and switches the imagery into a texture or pattern over the building⁵⁰. The images on the glass mix with the reflections of surrounding trees, leaving the image portrayed by the building in constant flux with the weather. This is an active measure taken by the ever anti-representational firm. Ryan describes the Eberswalde library as 'a box formed by taking itself apart'⁵¹.

Other critics including Henry, Walker and Palma, have followed Kipnis' lead and written about Herzog and de Meuron's work in terms of the cosmetic. Henry's writing supports the framing of Herzog and de Meuron's work in terms of the cosmetic because he sees cosmetic as 'a form of surface articulation, which embodies *minimalism* and *ornament*'⁵², a reading joining two of the opposing forces successful juxtaposed in Herzog and de Meuron's work. Henry hopes that in the future, form and cosmetics could 'work in harmony'⁵³ and the bodies for cosmetic treatment no longer have to remain 'gaunt and featureless'⁵⁴, but could become more interesting forms working with a seamless cosmetic approach to the skin. As discussed later in this essay, Herzog and de Meuron have moved away from the simple rectangular prism into more fluid forms, but cosmetic treatment and focus is no longer applied to the skin in the depth that it was during their projects in the 1990s rendering Kipnis' framing of their work as cosmetic, obsolete post 1998.

⁴⁸ V. D Palma, "Blurs, Blots and Clouds: Architecture and the Dissolution of the Surface," *AA Files* 54 (2005), 25.

⁴⁹ G. Mack and V. Liebermann, *Eberswalde Library: Herzog & de Meuron* (London: Architectural Association, 2000), 22.

⁵⁰ B Pell, *The Articulate Surface : Ornament and Technology in Contemporary Architecture* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2010), 33.

⁵¹ R Ryan, "The Eberswalde Chronicle," *A+U : architecture and urbanism* (2000), 44.

⁵² Henry, "The Cosmetician."

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & De Meuron", 26.

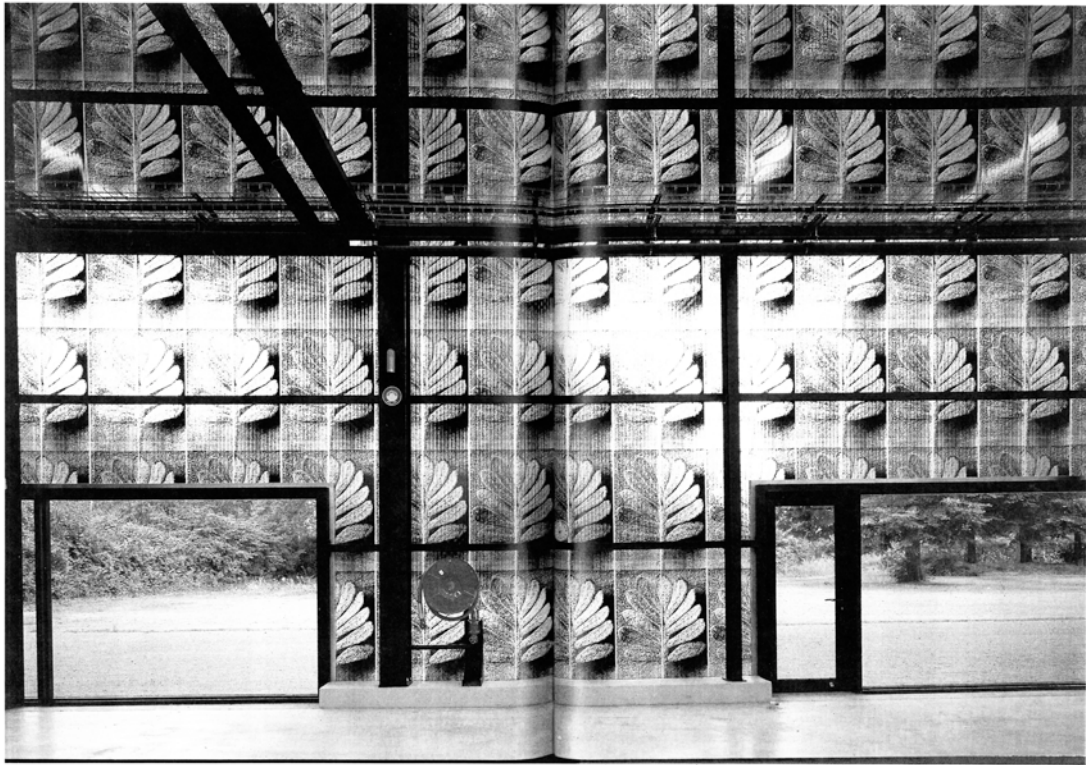


Figure Fourteen – Ricola Europe, Herzog and de Meuron



Figure Fifteen – Ricola Europe, Herzog and de Meuron

Cosmetics in architecture can be traced back to an article by Paul Rudolf in 1963. In this article Rudolf cries out for 'honesty rather than cosmetics' in the design of skyscrapers in Chicago during the 1960s. Rudolf claims the 'cosmetic skin is hiding the actual structure, bones, and ventilating systems, nostrils, of the building'⁵⁵. This statement becomes true in the cosmetic treatment of the Herzog and de Meuron's buildings, the structure of the body is always masked by the skin. This links back to Semper and his inversion of the importance of materiality, surface and spatial affect before structure. This inversion is true of nearly all Herzog and de Meuron's work and its Semperian subconscious. Here Semperian and cosmetic readings of Herzog and de Meuron's work begin to merge.

In reading the Ricola Europe building, Wang claims that the 'imprinted surfaces have a textile-like character'⁵⁶, a direct reference to the textile architecture of Semper. Moneo also reads Herzog and de Meuron's Ricola Europe building in a Semperian sense claiming 'the serigraphed panels allude unreservedly to the loss of ornamentation'⁵⁷. This is similar to Semper's arguments during the industrial revolution regarding the loss of craftsmanship and ornamentation in architecture. Moneo attributes Herzog and de Meuron's work to an 'apparent interest in ensuring that industrialised architecture doesn't lose all the attributes of traditional architecture'⁵⁸.

Frei writes that the Eberswalde library is 'contextualised by a Semperian sense of the cosmetic'⁵⁹, a clear merging of the two readings of Herzog and de Meuron's work. The texture of the etched images in the concrete create on the surface of the Eberswalde Library, links back to Semper's studies of textiles. This is because the sgraffito technique actually changes the texture of the surface opposed to simply printing on top of the surface. Mack relates this penetration of the surface to tattooing of the skin, hypothesizing that Herzog and de Meuron's building is a direct response to Semper's textiles and a challenge to Loos' perception of tattoos as ornament and crime⁶⁰.

Readings of the importance of materiality, surface affect and craftsmanship in the skins of these works, the Ricola Europe building and Eberswalde Library, link readings of Herzog and

⁵⁵ P Rudolf, "The City: Cosmetic Architecture," *TIME* Friday, June 07, 1963 (1963).

⁵⁶ Wang, *Herzog & de Meuron*, 118.

⁵⁷ Moneo, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects*, 391.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ M Taylor, "Introduction," *Architectural Design Surface Consciousness*, no. 73 (2003), 7.

⁶⁰ Mack and Liebermann, *Eberswalde Library: Herzog & de Meuron*, 23.



Figure Sixteen – Cottbus University Library, Herzog and de Meuron



Figure Seventeen – Cottbus University Library, Herzog and de Meuron

de Meuron's work in terms of Semper and Kipnis' cosmetic. Semper's principles of the kosmos can be linked to Kipnis' cosmetic. Kosmos was one of many words that contained a double meaning drawn out by Semper. In Greek, kosmos means both ornament and world order, which is expressed in English as cosmetic⁶¹. Semper tried to achieve the double meaning of kosmos in the 'mask like appearance of his buildings'⁶². He claimed there was a dialogue between his work and world order and at the same time, the mask 'concealed presence and represented the outside world'⁶³. The mask of Semper's kosmos, is a link between his theory and Kipnis' idea of the cosmetic, as well as, the obvious ties between the origins of the words kosmos and cosmetic. However, Semper's idea of the kosmos and masking delve into a spatial level of thinking, whereas Kipnis' cosmetic is purely superficial.

In the late 1990s, Herzog and de Meuron's work began to move away from focussing on surfaces, to more flowing organic plans, forms and spatial experiences. It is this pivotal point where Herzog and de Meuron abandoned their almost signature rectangular box form. The surface and minimalist form, lost their encompassing focus and significance in the firm's work. At this point Kipnis' framing of the cosmetic is no longer relevant. Herzog and de Meuron were no longer making cosmetic enhancements to the skin but now applying treatment to the spatial arrangement of the internal organs of the body or matter beneath the surface. These changes were more like cosmetic surgery, with less effect on the external appearance of their buildings. Prior to this pivot point in Herzog and de Meuron's work, it had been 'the surfaces job to throw the form into question', never as much of an exploration of form.

The design underway at this pivot point was the Cottbus University Library in Germany (1998-2003)⁶⁴. During the design competition for this project, Herzog and de Meuron presented two offset rectangular prisms but then changed their design to the amoeba plan⁶⁵, shown in figure x. Moneo wrote, 'the architect's objective was not so much the skin, the envelop of the solid, but a formal exploration'⁶⁶, this is unlike previous work and focus of Herzog and de Meuron. Although the form of the Cottbus Library looks different from every angle of approach, it remains a 'unified whole' that one expects from Herzog and de

⁶¹ Frej, "Masked Matter and Other Diagrams", 46.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 1978-2002*, 50.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Moneo, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects*, 403.



Figure Eighteen – Cottbus University Library, Herzog and de Meuron

Meuron, through its consistent skin⁶⁷. This continuous veil of faceted glass is printed with small white letters in a graffiti type font⁶⁸.

In an interview in 2001, Herzog admitted that their change from the rectangular geometry was 'a personal reaction against the ravages caused by so-called minimalism in architecture'⁶⁹, the minimalist box had become too much a 'stylistic device'⁷⁰, which Herzog and de Meuron always aimed to avoid. Throughout their career Herzog and de Meuron have continually rejected all preconceived 'morals' and 'style'⁷¹ in architecture, attempting to link back to the roots and origins of materiality and experience of architecture, in a time when the uptake of post-modernism had clearly been rejected. Their aim to link back to the material and experimental origins of architecture once again aligns them with the theories of Semper.

Herzog and de Meuron's evolution away from focus on the surface was continued in the Kramlich Residence and Media Collection in California (1999-2001). The Kramlich house (see figure x) seems to 'advocate a fluid architecture'⁷², unlike phase two of Herzog and de Meuron's work in the 1990s. The floor plan interlaces two curving walls with a labyrinth type basement below. Herzog and de Meuron explore 'entwined space'⁷³, transparency and reveal some structure in this project unlike previous works. Although opposed to previous rectangular prism forms, the curved spaces and surfaces in this project, which Frei labels as 'diagrammatic'⁷⁴, still adhere to Herzog and de Meuron's anti-representational philosophy and Semperian ideas of surfaces and their effect on space.

Although Kipnis' cosmetic reading of Herzog and de Meuron's work has been outdated in the third phase of Herzog and de Meuron's work, post 1998, as exemplified in the Cottbus Library and Kramlich Residence, a Semperian understanding and subconscious influence continues on in the firm's work. This influence is evident through their continued exploration of everyday materials, the spatial affect these materials can create and their

⁶⁷ A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 2002-2006*, ed. N Yoshida (Tokyo: A+U Publishing, 2006), 54.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ J. Kipnis, "A Conversation with Jaques Herzog," *El Croquis* 84 (1997), 18.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Moneo, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects*, 404.

⁷³ Frei, "Masked Matter and Other Diagrams", 49.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

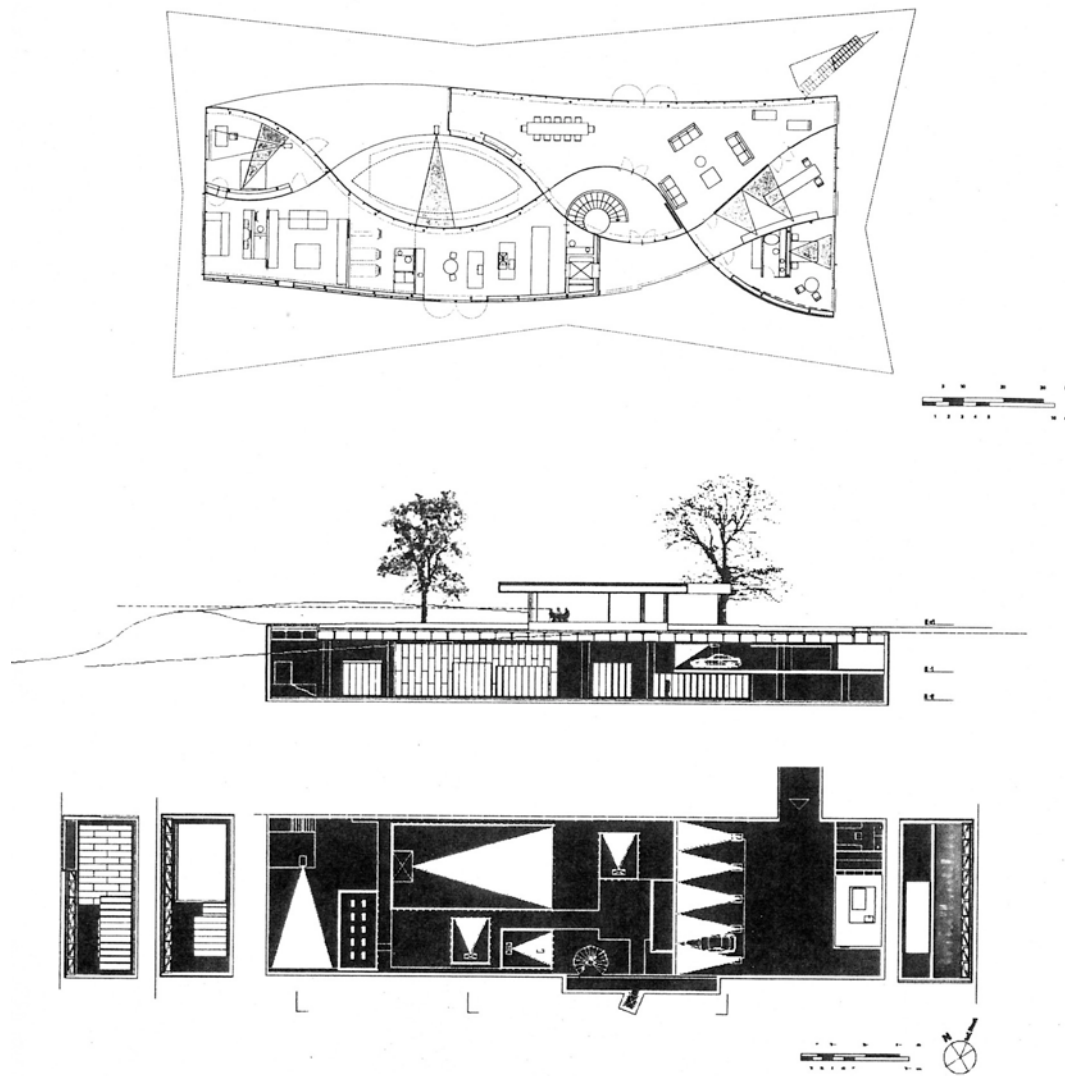


Figure Nineteen – Kramlich House, Herzog and de Meuron

continued references to the origins of architecture but at the same time developing architecture to arouse a 'sensuous experience' for all. Although Herzog and de Meuron are strictly a professional practice and argue that they are not directly influenced by anyone⁷⁵, this essay and many critics have shown that much of their work contains a Semperian subconscious.

In summary, a Semperian surface both articulates the surface but also initiates a dialogue about occupying the space, as discussed at the beginning of the essay. This articulation of the surface was profuse in Herzog and de Meuron's phase two works during the 1990s, including the Eberswalde Library and Ricola Europe Building. Finally, Herzog and de Meuron's evolution into phase three, exploring the spatial effect of an amorphous plan and how the surface which used to be only a skin condition can now wrap inside the building an envelop space. This evolution continues their trajectory of work, which can be framed in terms of Semper but leaves Kipnis' cosmetic manipulation of the skin in the 1990s.

Davidovici, academic and former employee of Herzog and de Meuron, worries that as firm moved away from a cosmetic focus on the vertical surface in the late 1990s, it has slipped into 'formal eclecticism' – 'the very current they were trying to resist'⁷⁶. This suggests that Herzog and de Meuron currently tread an unstable line between the 'formal eclecticism'⁷⁷ of their phase three work and the core surfical and material philosophies established in their first and second phases of work. This change over time has aided in the misunderstanding and 'unstable readings'⁷⁸ of the practices' oeuvre. However, it remains clear that a Semperian subconscious weaves through all Herzog and de Meurons work, while Kipnis' framing of their work as cosmetic was valid in the 1990s but has slipped away in the 2000s, as Herzog and de Meuron began to investigate the formal implications of wrapping the surface inside the body of the a building to create particular spatial affects.

⁷⁵ Kipnis, "A Conversation with Jaques Herzog", 16.

⁷⁶ I Davidovici, "Herzog & de Meuron and Peter Zumthor: The Dilemma of Authenticity in Recent German Swiss Architecture," in *Architecture and Phenomenology* (Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa: Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion, 2007).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Domeisen, "The Quest for Ornament", 577.

List of Illustrations

Figure One – Herzog & De Meuron: *Natural History*, 240.

Figure Two – A+U, "Stone House, Tavole, Italy," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 30 & 31.

Figure Three – A+U, "Stone House, Tavole, Italy," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 36.

Figure Four – A+U, "Stone House, Tavole, Italy," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 40 & 41.

Figure Five – A+U, "Ricola Warehouse Building," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 18.

Figure Six – A+U, "Ricola Warehouse Building," *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 21.

Figure Seven – A+U, "Eberswalde Library" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 25.

Figure Eight – A+U, "Eberswalde Library" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 28.

Figure Nine – A+U, "Eberswalde Library" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 29.

Figure Ten – A+U, "Eberswalde Library" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 31.

Figure Eleven – A+U, "Eberswalde Library" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 35.

Figure Twelve – A+U, "Ricola Europe" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 85.

Figure Thirteen – A+U, "Ricola Europe" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 90 & 91.

Figure Fourteen – A+U, "Ricola Europe" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 86 & 87.

Figure Fifteen – A+U, "Ricola Europe" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 300 (1995), 88 & 89.

Figure Sixteen – A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 2002-2006*, 58.

Figure Seventeen – A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 2002-2006*, 64.

Figure Eighteen – A+U, *Herzog & de Meuron : 2002-2006*, 59.

Figure Nineteen – A+U, "Kramlich House" *A+U : architecture and urbanism*, no. 352 (2000), 41.

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PART B – Cumulative Task

Week Four – Decorum and Social Order of Ornament

Peter Kohane and Michael Hill: *The Decorum of Doors and Windows, from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (2006)

Précis – 23 March 2011

The article *The Decorum of Doors and Windows from the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century* by Peter Kohane and Michael Hill was written in 2006 and is about the meaning and rules associated with thresholds at this time.

The purpose of the article is to breakdown and explain the meaning of a threshold through its different elements and show how much of this meaning has been redefined and in many cases lost in modern times. Kohane and Hill contrast the similarities and differences of a number of ideas and rules regarding windows and doors from the fifteenth century verses the eighteenth century. They particularly focus on Renaissance and Baroque examples compared to Blondel's views during the eighteenth century.

As an introduction to the ideas behind doors and windows, Kohane and Hill discuss the change in the perceived importance of thresholds over time. They begin by describing the demise of the social meaning and order behind the door in the Modernist era, as structural values took over. After the eighteenth century, they believe doors no longer embodied the theatrical threshold or *decorum* they used to.

Kohane and Hill use many architects' writing and examples from the fifteenth and eighteenth century to back up their assertions regarding the meaning implied by different elements of doors and windows from this era. They summarise the *decorum* of a door or window as its implied social meaning and relationship to the body, through elements such as proportion and ornament. They concluded that much of this so-called *decorum* is being redefined by the changing nature of building structure.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 23 March 2011

Discussion;

- The interrelation & interconnection of different determinants of windows & doors linked together in the article through the idea of *decorum*.
- The theatricality of thresholds is a recurring idea throughout. The *aedicule* is theatricalising the opening.
- Question of truth in terms of doors and windows.
- The relationship of the body and the façade.
- Conclusion: the visual order and *decorum* of a building is most important. The focus does not necessarily have to be on doors and windows, but could be accentuated by any of the determinants.

Questions & Issues today;

- What are the determinants of doors and windows today?
- Are we designing from the inside out or outside in?
- Local and international factors are influencing or decisions.
- Designs constantly attempting to display the capability of new technologies.

Further Research;

- De Stijl: dutch artistic movement, 1917-1931.
- Jean-Louis de Cordemoy: 1631-1713, French architectural historian, critical of elements of ornament and preferred architecture as working structure.
- Marc-Antoine Laugier: 1713-1769, often called the first modern architectural philosopher, famous for his *Essays on Architecture* 1753.
- Jacques-François Blondel: 1705-1774, conservation of architecture, interested in classical tradition and practice.
- Milizia: 1725-1798, architectural critic, critical of Borromini, theorist of Neoclassicism.
- Issac Ware: 1704-1766, English architect, *The Four Books of Andrea Palladio* 1738.

Week Five – Loos & Ornament

Adolf Loos: *Ornament & Crime* (1929)

Adolf Loos: *The Principle of Cladding* (1898)

Adolf Loos: *The Story of a Poor Rich Man* (1900)

Précis – 30 March 2011

The article *Ornament and Crime* originally written in 1908 by Adolf Loos, is a personal critique of ornament at that time. There is also an underlying criticism of Austrian culture, government and economic practices. Loos sees ornament as a crime and states his reasons in a number of categories. These categories include his problems with ornament and the state, individuals, producers, labourers, culture and the economy.

Firstly, Loos defines why ornament is a crime. Using an example of a tattoo and its synonymy with criminals, he extrapolates ornament as a crime. He sees ornament as an 'epidemic' which needs to be stopped and believes that in the twentieth century we have transcended ornament for minimal white walls rendering it useless – a waste of time and money.

Loos proceeds through the aforementioned categories explaining and justifying their problems with ornament. After stating his rather revolutionary view regarding ornament and individuals, who he argues are inept and behind the times, Loos admits repeatedly that his view is rather aristocratic. He explains using a shoemaker as an analogy, that many ordinary people may lose pleasure in life if all ornament was taken away from their craft. Loos accepts ornament only on a person and in circumstances where a person's whole being revolves around it.

In conclusion, Loos justifies ornament as a crime in this article and foresees a future free from ornament because he believes there is no longer need for ornament both culturally and economically. At the end of the article Loos admits that this concept may not apply to people who rely on ornament for their livelihoods but earlier suggests that ornament should also become redundant in their lives if and when cultures catch up to each other.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 30 March 2011

Discussion;

Ornament & Crime

- Loos sees himself as an evolved cultured modern man. Ornament is not a crime if you un-cultured, but if you are cultured ornament is a crime.
- *Hobgoblins* – possibly other artists and architects who are encouraging ornament or art nouveau.
- Loos' issues with ornament; its wastefulness in labour and materials, cheaper value and fashion (not long lasting).

The Principle of Cladding

- About how you should clad, according to Loos.
- A building should never pretend to be what it is.
- Loos' view of cladding is biased towards choosing a feeling or the *effect* of the interior and then working out the structure to create the desired feeling.
- Semper had a similar view to Loos. Example of the textile origins of architecture, interior cladding and feeling a room first.
- Loos is concerned about the level of truth in the cladding, the priority and significance of the cladding and the need to realise that cladding is cladding not the base material (argument against imitation).

Poor Rich Man

- Loos' argument against completeness. The architecture is so complete, it is totally inflexible and has nowhere to move.
- Art is a completed / refined work. Loos identifies the problem when architecture is seen as a completed 'art'.

Questions & Conclusions;

- Where is the line between ornament and art?
- In the three articles Loos is arguing about truth, efficiency and progress – values that become key points of Modernism. He was well ahead of his time.
- Loos is interested in external uniformity and internal expression. He commonly uses clothing analogies.

Week Six – Staged Spaces

Beatriz Colomina: *The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism* (1992)

Précis – 6 April 2011

The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism by Beatriz Colomina in 1992, is about the sequence and theatricality of *looking* in Adolf Loos' work compared with *seeing* in Le Corbusier's work. She sees the oeuvre of work by the two architects in completely contrasting ways. These contrasts are built up using detailed examples of each architect's work in relation to the experience by the viewing subject.

In Loos' projects, Colomina discusses the idea of a theatre box. The theatre box refers to certain spaces within Loos buildings, which frame views across the houses but are physically separate. The metaphor she develops regarding the theatre within Loos' houses, creates an interesting psychological effect where the visitor is the subject viewing the theatre of domestic life. Loos' placement of furniture and spatial planning of the example houses (where the viewer is constantly turned back on themselves to look back across the house) creates static views, compared with Le Corbusier's houses, which create a moving sequence of views throughout their planning.

Colomina describes Le Corbusier's projects in terms of a camera. She sees his houses as the lens through which people can see particular framed views of the outside world in a particular sequence. Hence, visitors themselves are the film-makers, capturing the view in motion as they move throughout the house.

To capture the differing *staging* techniques in these houses, Colomina concludes that the viewer in Loos' work is like a static *stage actor*, where as in Le Corbusier's work she sees a choreographed sequence of movement through a building where the viewer is a *movie actor*.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 6 April 2011

List of Projects;

Loos – Moller House, Müller House, Rufer House, Steiner House, Project for Josephine Baker (African American entertainer in Europe 1906-1975).

Le Corbusier – Immeuble Clarté, Salon d'Automne, Charles de Beistegui Penthouse, Petite Maison, Le Ville Radieuse.

Discussion;

- What was the essay about? The building edge and threshold, visual manipulation and control, how a person is viewed or is viewing, architecture as a device for seeing, occupation by looking through a space, windows, gender and representation.
- Controlling our perception of space – buildings as mechanisms for viewing.
- The degree of mediation between you and reality through the building – *framing* (not direct access).
- Representations that may only be apparent in photographs – eg. Masculinity in Le Corbusier's photographs.
- Aspects of some of the example houses which may draw together the interior and exterior - walls, which begins to contradict Loos.
- *Seeing vs looking*. Seeing maybe a particular framed view where as looking is not as conscious or contrived.
- *Detachment* – possibly feeling like an object within your own home.
- Constructing a house around the *sight* it produces not its *site*. The house is the mediation in between *sight* and *site*.
- The multiple meanings of *The Split Wall*.

Week Seven – The White Walls of Modernism

Mark Wigley: *The Emperor's New Paint* (1995)

Précis – 13 April 2011

The Emperor's New Paint written as part of Mark Wigley's *White Walls, Designer Dresses* in 1995, is a review and reflection of Le Corbusier's work and writing (*L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, 1925) regarding white walls. The historic and cultural discourse, influence and role of the white wall are discussed throughout the article.

The article begins by discussing the influence of white during the early 1900s. White clothes represented cleanliness and class. This fashion led to general hygiene and popularity of white surfaces. Wigley demonstrates that white walls were not only neutral surfaces but also 'eyes' of truth, which links to Le Corbusier's construction of a building as a 'viewing mechanism' itself.

The next part of the article deals with the historic development of the white wall leading up to Le Corbusier's work. Le Corbusier's *Law of Ripolin* leads on from Loos' ideas in *Law of Dressing*, which are developed from Semper's earlier *Principle of Dressing*. Loos develops Semper's argument regarding textiles and effect as the primary form of architecture and translates it into an argument regarding cladding and truth. Le Corbusier goes another step further distilling the cladding into a coat of paint, which Wigley argues is like a layer of fabric, linking back to Semper.

The modern man's clothes are linked to modern architecture throughout the article. A whitewash over the modern structure is the purest surface, representing the truth of modern life (not the truth of the structure). Wigley finishes the article with a discussion of whether architecture is high or low art according to Le Corbusier. He concludes that architecture is somewhere in the middle of a generic suit and a designer dress.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 13 April 2011

Further Research;

Ripolin – paint commonly used in France and Spain pre-WWI.

Stanislaus von Moos – Swiss art historian / architectural theorist.

Winckelmann – 1717-1768, German art historian, influence on neoclassical movement.

Heidegger – 1889-1976, German philosopher famous for book 'Being & Time'.

Discussion;

- What was the essay about? White wash as a machine or way of classifying – the trajectory of modernity, society, fabric and clothes.
- The white wall was transforming visibility itself and overcoming sensuality to cut straight to the truth (liberating the mind in order to be able to think clearly – intellectual rather than sensual). Therefore, the white wall is neither decoration/ornament nor structure. Wigley concludes that it is sitting somewhere between material and structure.
- Wigley is looking for a deeper understanding of the white wall and believe many theorists often skip over it and enough time hasn't been spent investigating the white wall.
- Clothes as a social dialogue. Concealing the sensual-ness of a material. Le Corbusier was getting rid of the sensual excess – keeping the clothes but changing the notion of clothing.
- Le Corbusier – white wash was a Loosian kind of cladding. Whiteness as a primal neutral position.
- Le Corbusier – Form is primary, colour and decoration secondary. White wall is masking creating a space.
- Semper – has inverted the typical hierarchy, decoration comes first. Surface articulates the space and initiates a dialogue about occupying the space.
- White wash was about communication and articulation.

Week Eight – Ducks and Decorated Sheds

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour: *Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or the Decorated Shed* (1972)

Précis – 20 April 2011

The reading *Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or the Decorated Shed* was written in 1972 by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour and appears in their book *Learning from Las Vegas: the forgotten symbolism of architectural form*. In this article they promote their work as a *decorated shed* and justify its image in modern context as a relevant approach to late twentieth century architecture, learnt from Las Vegas commercial architecture, as opposed to the *ducks* that they believe many second-generation modernists are building.

A *duck* is a building whose overall form is a symbol and it connotes general meanings. A *decorated shed* is the opposite it is an ordinary form or space with applied symbols denoting particular meaning. Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour have a problem with many modern architects shunning these buildings (*decorated sheds*) for their 'heroic and exaggerated' meanings. The writers argue that these directed meanings and symbols are more relevant to ordinary everyday society because they believe symbol is essential in architecture, even if most architects disagree.

After comparing the examples of their works as *decorated sheds* with other *ducks*, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour back up their argument with historical and theoretical examples. They show how many modern theorists omit to discuss the influence of ordinary utilitarian structures and their symbolic, structural and ornamental influence. Therefore, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour, prove that ornament and symbol are prevalent today and justify their *decorated sheds* as a way forward to meet *ordinary* needs.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 20 April 2011

Discussion;

- What was the article about? The idea of image. What symbolism or level of symbolism is relevant to our time? The scale of ornament and issues of articulation. Lessons to be learned from popular culture.
- Examples of Ducks vs. Decorated Sheds – Sydney Opera House: Duck. Renaissance Churches: Decorated Sheds (though sometimes duck like in form, eg. cruciform plan).

Week Nine – Style

Susan Sontag: *On Style* (1966)

Précis – 4 May 2011

The paper on *On Style* was written in 1965 by Susan Sontag, an American author and theorist, is discussing the age-old duality between style and content amongst critics. Sontag draws distinctions between 'style', 'stylization' and 'stylistic' decisions and devices in an attempt to clear up misconceptions often contrived by fellow critics. She is critical of how other critics are often quick to judge an artwork in terms of an artist's 'style' or 'statement', without looking at the content of the artwork. Sontag argues throughout the article that these should actually be connected.

Sontag discusses how 'style' is based on metaphors, has evolved over time and is not a transparent term. She explains how style is often thought of as the outside and matter as the inside of a work but disagrees seeing style as the 'soul' of a work and matter or content as the outside both being inseparable. Unfortunately, the form (outside only) is often judged as the 'style'.

Morality and art are also discussed. Sontag believes that they are connected in both the aesthetics in art and also the 'moral service' art performs. A moral response binds together human perceptions/experiences and form. Sontag connects morality to an artist's will and then an artist's will to 'style'.

Sontag concludes, that 'style' is linked to an artist's will and is inevitable in every piece of art. The 'style' is a primary decision of an artist that links the artwork's form and subject. Hence, 'style' is linked and not separated from content. How a piece of artwork fits into a historical context and how groups of stylistic decisions are correlated together, eg. Mannerist painting and Art Nouveau, is a different use of the word 'style', where form and content may be considered separately.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 4 May 2011

Further Research;

Ortega Y Gasset – 1883-1955: Spanish philosopher, perspectivism – no true way of seeing the world.

Robbe-Griller – 1922-2008: French writer and filmmaker.

Discussion;

- What was the article about? Clarifying how 'style' is perceived and Sontag's problems with the implied excess associated with 'style'.
- According to Sontag, style is inherent, the core of our being or artwork. Style can neither be subtracted or applied.
- 'The mask is the face' – meaning the mask is actually who the person is. We are a representation, the manner of being is who we are.
- Every time we try to remove all style, we seem to be creating a new style.
- Stylization – an intentional or conscious use of additional style for irony etc. Making the style your way of doing the artwork.
- Style vs. Stylization – the intentionality of the artist. Eg. Sternberg (film maker), in his early work style is a genuine process, but his later work becomes stylized – the style gets exhausted the more the idea is applied (eg. music and bands).
- A work of art is an experience – primary knowledge. It's a physical 'thing' not just a 'statement' or qualitative fact.
- Not all art has to have content, an artist's style overcomes content.
- Art & distance – art is an object, art both distances you from reality and then places you back in reality, you are near but there is a critical difference and distance.
- Morals & ethics – art is neutral, beyond moral judgement. Art has style beyond its content, therefore to judge art morally or ethically is of secondary concern.
- The function of style – mnemonic (collecting memory, identification and recognition through repetition) and narrowing your focus / forcing attention onto a particular aspect.
- According to Sontag, style is to be thought of in a single work of art and it is not useful to talk about style in relation to a whole lot of things. Therefore, she urges critics to focus on particular instances and not judge or generalise.

Week Ten – Herzog and De Meuron and Emerging Concepts of Surface and Ornament

Jeffrey Kipnis: *The Cunning of Cosmetics: A Personal Reflection on the Architecture of Herzog & de Meuron* (1997)

Oliver Domeisen: *The Quest for Ornament* (2008)

Précis – 11 May 2011

The article reflecting on the work of Herzog and de Meuron's work by Jeffrey Kipnis was written in 1997 and is about his perception of their work in the realm of 'the cosmetic' and its validity in the architectural canon. Kipnis begins the article explaining that as a theorist and critic he felt that he should be dismissive and dislike their work due to its articulate surface treatment and neo-modernist tendencies, which many critics see as superfluous. However, he is bemused by the compelling allure of their work which keeps pulling him in.

Kipnis refers to an Arch+ article where Herzog and de Meuron's work was separated into two categories – Minimalism and Ornament. Their surface printed works were put in the ornament category and everything else under minimalism. Kipnis doesn't understand how a single firm's body of work could be separated so definitively but admires how their work could cross paths of two irreconcilably different categories.

Using Herzog and de Meuron's Signal Box as an example, Kipnis discusses how their work should not be seen as a member of the ornamental category but as cosmetic. In Kipnis' eyes, ornament is like Jewelry, an accessory or addition. Whereas, he sees cosmetic treatment as 'indiscreet' or embellishment of the skin, the skin being innate or already there. For Kipnis, cosmetic treatment is turning a skin into an image, there needs to be an existing body or vehicle. He uses Herzog and de Meuron's Ricola Building, as an example of how the use of cosmetics in form, image and materiality can make what could have been a stark monolithic conventional building almost disappear.

Kipnis believes their use of traditional and common materials keeps H

erzog and de Meuron's work grounded in the real, unlike the work of other architects such as Eisenman whose cosmetic work steps over the line into an unreal setting. However, the way these 'real' and conventional materials and techniques are deployed by Herzog and de Meuron often creates an unrealistic image, illusion or dematerialization. For Kipnis there is no question, Herzog and de Meuron's work definitely belongs to the canon of architecture and is 'unleashing the power of the cosmetic' which has been dormant in architecture for some time.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 11 May 2011

Discussion – Oliver Domeisen: *The Quest for Ornament*

- What was the article about? The changing definition of ornament and ornament making a come back after being suppressed for almost a century.
- Contemporary issues with defining ornament, due to its suppression and multiple meanings throughout history eg. Eighteenth century – geometry and proportion, Nineteenth century Ruskin – craft and Semper – symbolic ideas.
- Commonalities between multiple definitions of ornament and the ten functions of ornament mentioned in the article were discussed.
- Examples of Semperian cladding ideas in Herzog and de Meuron's Ricolla Building are quite different to Bardill's ornament example where the motif is built in like a tattoo.
- Difference between pattern and ornament – pattern may not be as interesting or contain meaning, where as ornament is more considered but could be arranged in a pattern.

Discussion - Jeffrey Kipnis: *The Cunning of Cosmetics*

- What was the article about? Using cosmetics as a framework to discuss Herzog and de Meuron's work (because you can't talk about their surfaces as ornament).
- The difference between ornament and cosmetic – ornament is a single entity where as cosmetic is more like a field or camouflage, which is applied over a whole skin. 'The cosmetic' is not a frequently used analogy in architecture, except 'lipstick' and 'make-up' metaphors are sometimes used in negative connotations when discussing applied colour or decoration.
- The dematerialisation in Herzog and de Meuron's work is successful because they are playing within familiar and established norms. They dematerialise the materials, which consequently dematerialise the building – this is cleverer than Eisenman's dematerialisation of the whole building.
- Herzog and de Meuron's use of simple forms heightens the power of the cosmetic and relates to their link with Minimalist Art.
- Cosmetic minimalism – there is nothing left in the body underneath, its all about the effect or image enhanced by the cosmetic. Removing the body / form / substrate into pure effect
- Herzog and de Meuron overcome the conventionalists and extend convention by 'unleashing cosmetic power'.

Further Research;

Minimalist art – strong connections with the viewer’s sensuous feelings and immediate experience. Trying to distil an object right down to its essence and making your engagement with it, part of the art.

Donald Judd



(Source: <http://artobserved.com/artimages/2009/03/donald-judd-marfa1.jpg>)



(Source: http://hthomps3d.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/donald-judd_minimal.jpg)



(Source: <http://artintelligence.net/review/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/juddut66w20.jpg>)

Robert Morris



(Source: <http://search.it.online.fr/covers/wp-content/robert-morris-untitled-battered-cubes-1965.jpg>)



(Source: <http://artintelligence.net/review/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/morrisinstallgreengal61hq.jpg>)



(Source: <http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-AflP3TBu4-o/TVhY3MZpHYI/AAAAAAAAAXw/ONlxmn4exdw/s1600/morris.jpg>)

Week Eleven – Against the Surface

Neil Leach: *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* [excerpt] (1999)

Précis – 18 May 2011

The article *Saturation of the Image* from *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* by Neil Leach is about the “saturating” effect of image on society. Leach is arguing that rather than informing and benefitting society (“the information society”), the excess of exposure to image and information is having a counter effect on society, “saturating” us, leaving less and less meaning.

This argument is closely linked to one of Baudrillard, who also espouses that meaning is neutralized by the mass media. Reflecting on Baudrillard’s work, Leach questions when the imaginary becomes real and what happens to reality? Examples of hyper-reality stated include; Coca Cola, Disney and the “Eiffel Tower Experience”. Due to the disintegration of reality, according to Leach what remains is a world with an excess of images, which is exacerbated by people judging or gaining meaning purely via image.

Leach then raises the issue of how art embodies meaning, because if we live in an aestheticized world, then much of the world is becoming art. The issue is then, how meaning is portrayed through art and how a majority of the population could potentially gain meaning from a piece of art, when art is never contextualized.

Architecture is one of the disciplines most affected by the world of aestheticization. According to Leach, architecture revolves around image but is laden with economic and utilitarian concerns. In many cases, these concerns are becoming further separated from the design outcome, as the “image” of the project is privileged. Leach sees the aestheticization of architecture as “distorting” or masking reality.

In conclusion, Leach finds it interesting that what was seen as grim, harsh and unappealing in art and architecture (such as industrial factories, Abattoirs etc.) is now fashionable and at the forefront of the process of aestheticization.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 18 May 2011

Further Research;

Baudrillard – 1929-2007: French sociologist, philosopher, cultural theorist and political commentator, interested in post-modernity and mass media, ideas included hyper-reality, simulacra (likeness or similarity) and sign value (the value of an object).

Theodor Adorno – 1903-1969: German sociologist. Main areas of study were social theory and sociology but also interested in psychoanalysis, epistemology, aesthetics, musicology and mass media. Many written publications.

Marxist Art – Mid twentieth century art focussing on critiquing social history. Clement Greenberg (1909-1994), was one of the most famous marxist artists and philosophers.

Discussion;

- Article structure – contextualizing the argument and then how architecture is affected by the saturation of the image.
- Baudrillard was an extremist. In the introduction to the book (not provided) Leach acknowledges that he is taking his arguments to the extreme.
- How is meaning being taken from images? Exhausting/excess; difference between information and meaning; meaning is leaking out; information is a technical construct and meaning is attached; information destroys meaning.
- Defining hyper-reality was discussed. Reality is constantly changing, so if we are in hyper-reality, what happened to reality?
- The number of images is not the problem; it is the detachment (appreciating art through what it looks like not experiential) and loss of meaning in image. The aesthetic is now all encompassing because everything has been made into an image. This aestheticisation leads to a process of depoliticization, decontextualizing and an abstracted graphic version of reality.
- Functionalism is abstracted (eg. flat roof) – aesthetic contradictions within style.
- Brutalism is also a contradiction – trying to be unaesthetic but then the materials become aestheticised. Most people don't understand this level of abstraction by architects, hence we are creating a distorted reality.
- By aestheticising something we are over coming the bad (anaesthetic) which gives us a buffer or defence mechanism. Stripping the negative to find something positive.

Week Twelve – The Visceral and Ephemeral

Thomas Daniell: *The Visceral and the Ephemeral* (1999)

Nina Rappaport: *Deep Decoration* (2006)

Précis – 25 May 2011

The Visceral and the Ephemeral by Thomas Daniell written in 1999, discusses the differences between these two broad categories of minimalist architecture as developed in Japan through the 1980s and 1990s. *Visceral* meaning of nature or dealing with base emotions, is referring to minimalist architecture focussing on pure structure and rationality, such as the work of Louis Kahn and Tadao Ando. *Ephemeral* generally means anything short lived or lasting only a short time. In Daniell's argument *ephemeral* is referring to the Japanese architecture, which is appealing purely visually and spatially. Ephemeral minimalist architecture includes the work of Kazuo Shinohara and Toyo Ito.

Throughout the article, Daniell argues the differences between the two and points out the interesting contradictions, which surround ephemeral minimalism and the normal principles of minimalism. The first of these, is that minimalism is usually seen as reductive. For example in visceral minimalist architecture, structure is reduced to its purest state. This is not the case in ephemeral minimalism, where the structure is often masked and form making tends towards spatial effects. Secondly, references and additional meaning is usually erased in minimalist works. Ephemeral minimalism has many links to pop art through its sleek graphics, flatness etc. Finally, Daniell argues that the ephemeral minimalism is attempting to objectify architecture, taking forms that actually touch the ground and making them look as if they are floating and object like. All the lines of these forms are clean and crisp leaving singular flat surfaces with an object like appearance.

Linking back to the meaning of ephemeral as short-lived, Daniell explains how these object-like edges are achieved using silicone sealant as the finishing detail. This detail results in architecture whose quality lasts only a few years, matching the rapid evolution of fashion, architecture and culture in Japan.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 25 May 2011

Discussion – Thomas Daniell: *The Visceral and the Ephemeral*

- Visceral category – about legibility of construction, solid, basic.
- Ephemeral category – structure becomes invisible. Ambiguous and tricky to define. Relationship with pop art in its artificiality, effects and optical illusions. Even if ephemeral facades are layered they appear 2D and light (even though they maybe flat steel, eg. SANAA). Aoki – complex ephemeral looking facades.
- Due to these quite differing categories, minimalism isn't necessarily the opposite to excess. Applying a pattern to structure as done in many ephemeral works, could be considered a big contradiction to minimalism.
- Wabisabi – Japanese response to the bursting of the bubble, more subdued and restrained. The beauty of things that are imperfect. Raw materials – ceramics, natural roughness, unadorned, impoverished beauty. The changing definition of ornament and ornament making a come back after being suppressed for almost a century.
- Links to previous week's essay – *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* – ephemeral urban installations, high turn over, constant image.

Discussion – Nina Rappaport: *Deep Decoration*

- What is deep decoration? Mathematical, natural decoration linked to structure – holistic approach.
- Parametrics – algorithms with parameters eg. fractal like geometries. Structure envelopes space not just skin.
- Cosmetic vs. deep decoration.
- Biomimicry – not as new as we might think.

Week Thirteen – The Digital Surface

Ben Pell: *The Articulate Surface* [Introduction] (2010)

Précis – 1 June 2011

The introduction to the book *The Articulate Surface* by Ben Pell in 2010, offers a brief history regarding the evolution of the surface from Semperian theories in the 1800s through to buildings currently under construction. According to Pell, this evolution falls into five categories; the expressive surface (mid nineteenth century – Semper and Bötticher), the autonomous surface (early twentieth century – modernists), the communicative surface (from 1960s – Venturi, Scott, Brown), the digital surface (from early 1990s – CNC technology) and *the articulate surface* (case studies from contemporary architecture). The final category *The Articulate Surface* is broken down into chapters, which describe different surface treatments in the book; applied, perforated/cut, layered, formed/cast and stacked/tiled.

The article begins by discussing the Yale Architecture and Art building and how it has often been perceived as a mixture of styles and confusion of modernism and ornament. Pell describes how these surfaces, brought to the fore again by renovations in 2008, are actually relevant to contemporary surface articulation today.

Prior to modernism ornament and decoration were part of developing articulation of the surface, early modernists stripped back this surface and since then ornament and decoration has been seen as excess or add on. Pell argues that the Yale Art & Architecture building was a pivot point, pivoting away from the abstract modernist surface back to the expressive and experimental surface and ornament inherent in surface and structure. Pell then discusses the evolution of ornament in the categories above.

To conclude, Pell discusses four different approaches to surface articulation. Firstly *integration*, where materiality of the surface and structure and/or function of the building are linked, most like ornament. Secondly *materialization*, which involves manifestations of a narrative or images on the surface, for example Herzog and de Meuron's Ricola Factory Building. Thirdly *contradiction*, a struggle between what is being represented and what the building actually is, for example Venturi Scott Brown's *Decorated Shed* and the work of FAT. Finally *disinterest*, tacked on graphics that are immaterial and unrelated. Hence, there are many approaches to contemporary surfaces. Pell labels this as *excess* and discusses how this *excess*, which was stripped by modernists, has now become an intrinsic and important link between architecture and its cultural understanding and effect.

Rachael McCall

Reflection – 1 June 2011

Discussion

- The potential of ornament through current production methods and current disjunction between technique and content.
- The question of Why? We need to develop stronger reasons for choosing pattern and ornament today.
- Yale Art & Architecture Building – modern building but reverting back to decoration – added texture the concrete, makes it appear ‘confused’.
- The shift that has occurred with modernism – has removed the decorum and links with the public. The surface has been abstracted and ornament and decoration seen as excess, are not part of the surface.
- Semper retained symbolic content in his theory regarding cladding and developed the idea that the building needed to connect with the public. He continued the symbolic meaning of the “craft” of ornament.

APPENDIX A – Personal Glossary

Terms discovered during reading – definitions appropriated from dictionary.com

- A tour de force** – French; a mastery or brilliant feat.
- Allegorical** – a representation of abstract or spiritual meaning through material forms.
- Ally** – to achieve.
- Amenable** – ready or willing to answer.
- Amorphous** – lacking definite form.
- Analogous** – corresponding in some particular.
- Anathema** – a person or thing detested or loathed.
- Antebellum** – before the war.
- Antipathy** – an instinctive opposition in feeling.
- Antithesis** – opposite.
- Antithetical** – directly opposed or contrasted; mutually incompatible.
- Apache** – a Parisian gangster, rowdy or ruffian.
- Apologia** – an apology in defense or justification of an idea.
- Appurtenances** – something subordinate.
- Arcane** – known or understood by very few. Mysterious or secret.
- Armature** – skeletal framework.
- Ascribes** – to credit or assign.
- Au Courant** – French; abreast, up-to-date knowledge or standard.
- Avow** – to declare frankly or openly.
- Baldacchinos** – textiles for ceremonial purposes or ornamental canopy.
- Banality** – devoid of freshness or originality.
- Blandishments** – something that tends to flatter, coax or entice.
- Bourgeoisie** – the bourgeois class, primarily concerned with property values.
- Bricolage** – a construction made of whatever materials are at hand.
- Candor** – the quality of being open and honest in expression.
- Cannily** – the process of preserving.
- Carolingian** – late eight century, early ninth century, pre-romanesque, classical inspiration.
- Chiaroscuro** – the treatment of light and shade in drawing and painting.
- Coffers** – box like enclosures, often with ornament on them.
- Cogency** – persuasive relevance.
- Colloquy** – dialogue; conversational exchange.
- Complicit** – choosing to be involved in an illegal or questionable act.
- Confections** – something frivolous, amusing or decorative, object.
- Confound** – cause surprise or confusion.
- Connote** – signify or suggest in addition to the primary meaning.
- Conquistadors** – Spanish conquerors of Mexico & Peru in the sixteenth century.
- Contrapuntal** – composed of two independent things, working together.
- Contrappasto** – a representation of the human body in which the forms are organized on a varying or curving axis to provide an asymmetrical balance to the figure.
- Convolution** – rolled up or coiled together.

Corollary – a natural sequence or result.

Corporal – of the human body.

Corpus – the main body of a structure or a collection of written texts, especially on one subject or by one author.

Crypto-Modernism – secret or hidden support for modernism.

Daguerreotypes – a photograph taken by an early process of employing an iodine-sensitized silvered plate and mercury vapour.

De Rigueur – French; of rigour or strictness.

Delimiting – demarcating.

Detritus – disintegrated material.

Dichromatism – two or three primary colours.

Disavowals – denial.

Dissent – to differ in opinion.

Dissimulation – feigning, hypocrisy.

Distemper – disorder, disease, disturbance.

Distension – to spread in all directions, or to expand by stretching.

Ecosphere – part of the atmosphere where it is possible to breathe normally without aid.

Efflorescence – period of flowering.

Eluding – escape by speed.

Emphatically – emphasis.

Empirical – derived from experiment / observation rather than from theory.

Engendered – cause or give rise to a feeling, situation or condition.

Ephemeral – anything short lived or lasting only a short time.

Epistemological – theory of knowledge.

Erroneous – containing error, straying from what which is moral.

Eviscerates – disembowel.

Exegesis – critical explanation or interpretation.

Facile – easily done, moving, proceeding, agreeable.

Frontispiece – a façade or feature of a façade often highlighted by ornamentation.

Futile – incapable of producing any useful result; pointless.

Genealogy – purely visual or perceptual effects.

Gewand – (Semper, German) Garment.

Grandiloquent – expressed as pompous or bombastic.

Guile – cunning, artful deception.

Heathen – person who does not acknowledge a god.

Hegemonic – leadership, aggression to achieve world domination.

Hermetically – so as to be airtight.

Hermeneutic – explanatory, eg. hermeneutic moment.

Imperiousness – domineering, dictatorial, urgent.

Indignant – expressing strong displeasure at something.

Indissoluble – unable to be dissolved.

Initiatory – serving to initiate.

Inviolability – to do with the sanctity of life.

Lexicon – vocabulary.

Machismo – a strong or exaggerated sense of manliness, power and / or the right to dominate.

Magisterial – of, pertaining to.

Mauer – (Semper, German) Wall.

Miscegenation – marriage or cohabitation, missing, interbreeding.

Mnemonic – intending to assist the memory.

Moribund – in a dying state.

Mutatis Mutandis – the necessary changes having been made.

Narcissistic – extreme self-centeredness, self-absorption, fantasies.

Necrophilia – erotic attraction to corpses.

Nemesis – cannot achieve.

Nihilistic – pertaining to the more meaningful aspects of life.

Obfuscated – renders obscure or unclear.

Obiter Dicta – an incidental or passing remark or opinion.

Oedipal – Oedipus Greek Legend.

Oracular – ambiguous, obscure.

Ossified – hardened into bone.

Palimpsest – parchment erased to make room for new text.

Palmette – Egyptian Ornament Palmette; artistic motif, resembling the fan-shaped leaves of a palm tree.

Palpably – is perceived as.

Par Excellence – an example of excellence.

Paradigms – sets of forms which contain a particular element, model or pattern.

Parergon – accessory or embellishment.

Pastiche – in a style that imitates another work, style or artist.

Pejorative – derogatory or belittling.

Penchant – a strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something.

Physiognomy – the outward appearance of anything, taken as offering some insight into its character.

Pious – showing a dutiful spirit of reverence for God. Religious devotion.

Plebiscite – the direct vot of all the members of an electorate.

Polemic – controversial argument.

Polychrome – a variety of colours.

Pomposity – the quality of being pompous – ostentation display of pomp.

Proclivity – natural or habitual inclination or tendency.

Propter Hoc – because of this.

Protuberant – bulging out.

Pseudo – not actually, but having the appearance of.

Purport – to present, especially deliberately the appearance of being; profess or claim, often falsely.

Purveyors – suppliers.

Putti – a representation of a cherubic infant.

Recalcitrant – having an obstinately uncooperative attitude toward authority.

Rectitude – correctness.

Referents – the object or even to which a term or symbol refers.

Reprehensible – deserving reproof or blame worthy.

Rhetorical – concerned with style.

Rocaille – fantastic ornamental characteristics from the Rococo period.

Schism – division.

Semantics – the study of meaning in a language. **Semanticize** – to start an argument purely over semantics.

Seminal – pertaining to.

Semiologizing – from semiology – the study of signs and symbols, semiotics.

Sepulchral – pertaining to or serving as a tomb.

Simulacra – likeness or similarity.

Sisyphean – such that it can never be completed.

Specter – ghost.

Subjugated – subordinate.

Sublimation – to divert energy from immediate goal to one or more acceptable, social, moral or aesthetic.

Subterfuges – artificial or expedient, used to evade a rule or hide something.

Subverts – over throws / undermines.

Superfluity – superfluous.

Surfeit – an excessive amount.

Tacitly – unspoken or understood without being expressed.

Tendenza – 21 players or tendency.

Terrestrial – pertaining to Earth as opposed to other planets.

Thralldom – servitude.

Timbre – the quality of sound.

Tropes – a metaphor.

Tyrannical – characteristic of a tyrant.

Unassailed – unbeaten.

Unbridled – not controlled or restrained.

Valorised – give or ascribe value to.

Vapid – without life or spirit.

Vestigial – pertaining to a trace of something that is no longer present in existence.

Vis-à-vis – in relation to.

Visage – a person's face, with references to the form or proportions of the features.

Visceral – pertaining to the intestines or abdominal organs of the body.