

The appalling beauty of the razorblade and the slit eye from Luis Bunuel's *Un chien andalou* has a counterpart in a photograph by Lucio Fontana that produces a very similar sense of shock. It shows an arm with an awl punching holes in a canvas. The canvas has been partially perforated already but it is clear that the hairy forearm, with its neatly rolled-up shirt sleeve and paint-splattered thumb, could strike again any moment. The photograph evokes an air of spontaneity, yet casually depicts the horror of a brutal assault. Its beauty lies in the violence with which the white, tautly mounted canvas appears to be desecrated.

In his last known interview, Fontana explained that for him the process of perforating the canvas and its outcome said something both about the art of painting and about abandoning painting or breaking down the boundaries of the profession. These holes and his later knife cuts in canvases show us space in the broadest sense of the word. To paraphrase Fontana's own words: the imagination stretches from the Argentine pampas to the infinite Universe.

The spring 1992 issue of *OASE* looked as if the binder forgot to cover the spine. On the folded sections, visible on the spine, was written the word 'zero'. Both the journal's title and issue number were gouged out of the paper like a work of art by Fontana. The title was visible only when the front cover was turned. The cuts were revealed by the movement of the cardboard. The back cover showed a silver-coloured photograph of a helmeted astronaut.

A great many *OASE* issues explored the margins of Architecture, investigating its interfaces with areas such as cinematography, philosophy, literature or urban sociology. The zero issue was like a return to the source, a return to the heart of the profession. The issue dealt with the essence of architecture, independent from debates on its manifestation or the aesthetic desires and formal preoccupations of a single, random architect. It dealt with the meaning of architecture

and its practice at a time of great prosperity and any sense of discomfort this might engender. It focused on the opposition to modernism as a style while at the same time embracing the modern condition. It explored modernity's impact on architectural principles and practice independent from any prevailing fashions. And drawing on the work of Archigram, Superstudio and the Russian NER group it explored and highlighted mass production concepts and the fight against mental erosion caused by increased prosperity and consumption.

Jurjen Zeinstra's article in the zero issue, 'Houses of the Future', looked at the concept of 'living' in the work of Alison and Peter Smithson. He paints a picture of the increasing 'mechanisation' of living via the dichotomy between the work of the Smithsons and the Archigram group. Will the house of the future be pulled from a rucksack, such as Mike Webb's Suitaloon, or does it look like a hovel from the favelas as in the Smithsons' design for the 'This Is Tomorrow' exhibition? Both designs seek meaningful interpretations of place, reclaiming some private space from the infinite void. Superstudio provides us with the most compelling image of this. A little girl is sweeping up in the post-apocalyptic remains of what may have been a home. She is surrounded by endless fencing. Having cut a rectangular base from the mirrored grid her space has been reclaimed from infinity. What we see here is the epitome of architecture in its most naked essence: it is the void that determines form.

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