

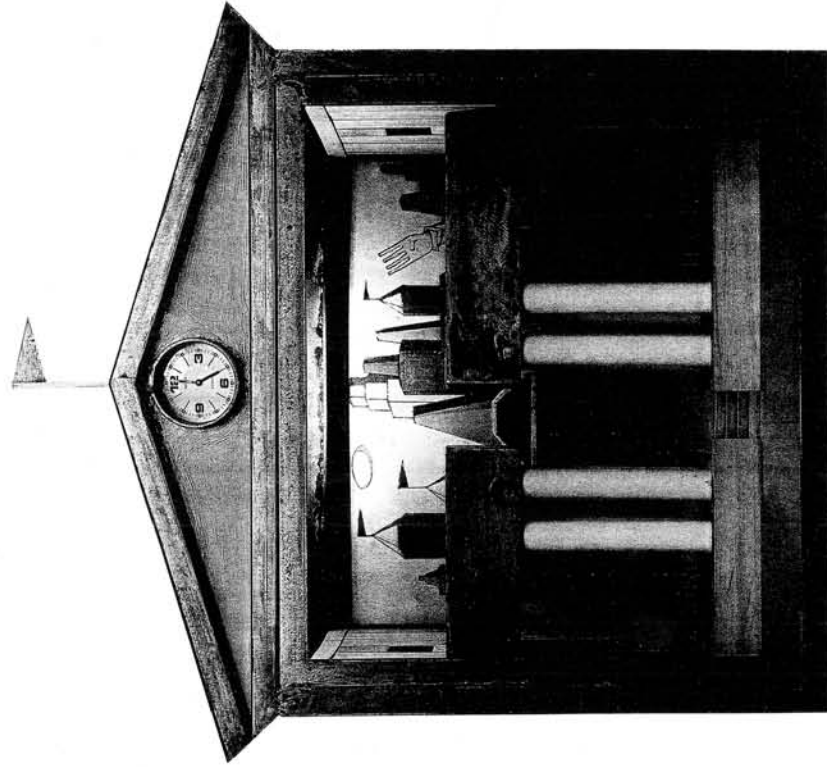
'The Ruins of Representation' Revisited

Christian Hubert

Almost 30 years ago, I published an essay entitled 'The Ruins of Representation' in a catalog essay – itself written several years after the event – for an exhibition entitled 'Idea as Model', that had been held at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York. My essay attempted to address the duality of the model, as both a sign of something other than itself and as an autonomous project in its own right. The text explored the play between the two as an artistic strategy and sought to describe the link between them in terms of imagination and desire. Written at a time when the derealisation of the real was increasingly becoming a cultural preoccupation, the essay criticised the abuse of the model's metaphorical capacities by postmodern architects invested in rewriting the history of their discipline as a return to a past that had never existed – a simulacrum. In its paraliterary 'performance', the essay displaced some of the 'recovered memories' that postmodern architects had projected into the model – fictional histories in masquerade – and condensed them into a world of Borgesian ironic insight.

Continued on p.18

Teatrino Scientifico, 1978.
Aldo Rossi.



The Ruins of Representation

Christian Hubert

Of exactitude in Science:

...In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single Province covered the space of an entire City, and the map of the Empire an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and coincided with it point for point. Less attentive to the Study of Cartography, succeeding Generations came to judge a map of such Magnitude cumbersome, and, not without Irreverence, they abandoned it to the Rigors of Sun and Rain. In the western Deserts, tattered Fragments of the Map are still to be found, Sheltering an occasional Beggar or beggar; in the whole Nation, no other relic is left of the Discipline of Geography.

From *Travels of Prussia-worthy Men* (1668)

J.A. Starzec Miranda

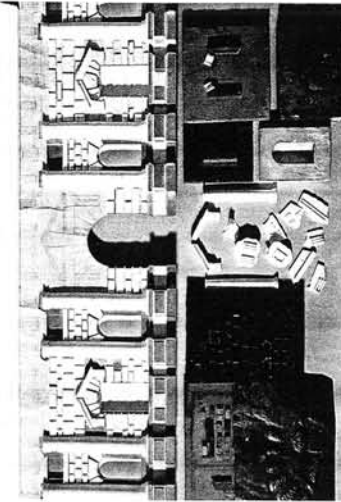
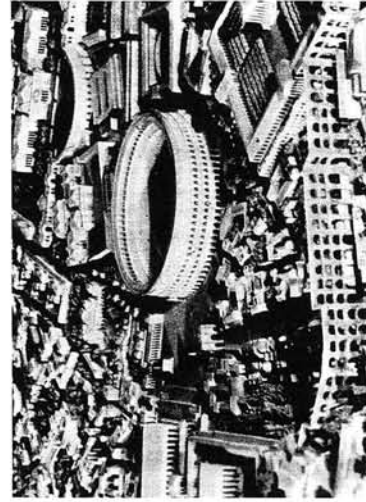
The errors of those ancient Cartographers are, of course, clear. These enormous maps were no more exact than their predecessors, for size and scale are not to be confused. Nor could these ever more cumbersome objects hope to substitute themselves for the Empire, despite an unacknowledged desire to do so. Mountains, rivers, and cities would never spring forth from them. Like written texts, they would always remain flat sheets with marks inscribed, representations of the Empire, never substitutes. Perhaps those scholars would have been wiser to have built models rather than maps. They might have created an analogical Empire, a replica fit for kings, not just for beggars or beasts (fig. 1). Thereafter, if some calamity should befall the original, the site of the Empire could simply be transposed. In retrospect, their discipline might be called Architecture.

The domain of inhabitable objects that architecture claims as its own finds its first intimation in the model. The model purports to present architecture, not represent it. Unlike the signs of language, whose signification is primarily a matter of arbitrary convention, the relation of the model to its referent appears motivated in the sense that it attempts to emulate or approximate it. Its adequacy is defined by resemblance. In Charles Peirce's terms, the model is an iconic sign, directly resembling its referent by sharing its charac-

teristics. Its colors and proportions are identical to those of its referent, and, most importantly, it is a three-dimensional object. Furthermore, the scalar relation, because of its mathematical character, does not appear as arbitrary convention but as necessary rule. If buildings are thought to be the ultimate referents for architecture, then the model could be thought of as its semi-fictitious account. The fact that the model must be built reinforces its claim to motivation. While its materials may differ, the model's fabrication itself becomes a form of surrogate building which serves to explicate the workings of architectural drawings by translating them into three-dimensional form. In this manner, the model is a sort of test of the design (fig. 3). The construction and possible deconstruction of the model have the capacity to clarify attributes of the composition or the assembly of building elements. The craft of building models may be seen as the displacement and condensation of the craft of building, an attempt to recover the aura of the work by fetishizing the faculty of surrogate objects. Model-making might be seen as playing the role that stonemaking previously played in the education of architects—their first economic marks upon material as these are inscribed into the history of building (fig. 2). Perhaps the model concretizes the ontic condition of the project. It exists as desire—in a kind of utopia, if not utopia. It holds out the promise of inhabitation, even if it does not fully afford it. The poignancy of a collection of Ledoux models constituting an ideal but unrealized "model" city, or of John Hejduk's series of models for the unbuilt Bye House (see this catalogue) conflating the progression of the design with the anticipation of its own ruin, underscores the model's condition of being just outside the limits of building.

For the space of the model lies on the border between representation and actuality. Like the frame of a painting, it demarcates a limit between the work and what lies beyond. And like the frame, the model is neither wholly inside nor wholly outside, neither pure representation nor transcendent object. It claims a certain autonomous objecthood, yet this condition is always incomplete. The model is always a model of. The desire of the model is to act as a simulacrum of another object, as a surrogate which allows for imaginative occupation.

18 1 Model of Rome in the period of the Emperor Constantine, commissioned by Mussolini and located at the Museum of Roman Civilization at E. U. E. View showing Coliseum and adjacent buildings.
2 Palazzo del Te, Mantua, 1526-1534, Giulio Romano. Analogical model by Jeanne Cottarelli and Evan Douglas, Fourth Year Studio, The Cooper Union, New York, 1980.
3 Model for the Pavia Cathedral, ca. 1488, Bramante.

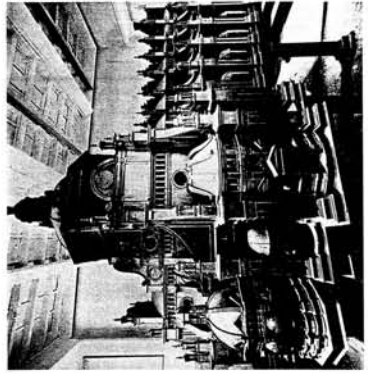


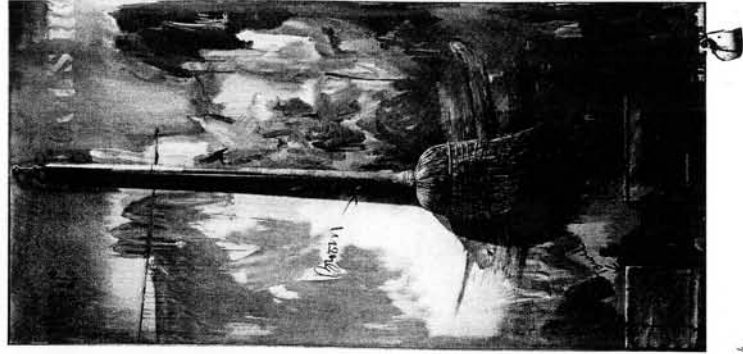
The "jealousy" of the model is perhaps most explicit in photographs of models which are virtually indistinguishable from photographs of buildings. The intervention of another form of seemingly motivated representation—namely photography—reinforces the claim to verisimilitude. But the truth of the model does not lie in its referential nature since as simulacrum the model denies the possibilities of its own autonomous objecthood and establishes the building as the ultimate referent, as a reality beyond representation.

It is perhaps the articulation of representation itself which seeks a resuscitation of a "reality" beyond the limits of the sign. In Jean Baudrillard's words, "The sign is haunted by the nostalgia for overcoming its own convention, that of being arbitrary. It is haunted by the idea of total motivation. It aims at the real as its beyond and abolition. But it cannot jump over its own shadow: this real is produced and reproduced by the sign itself. It is only its horizon. Reality is the fantasy by which the sign protects itself indefinitely from the deconstruction that haunts it."¹

Moreover, to think of buildings themselves as only referents, as pure objects, is to overlook their own participation in a process of vision and of language. Buildings too can be seen as representational. To understand a building as a concatenation of similar motifs at different scales—as in a Palladian church facade, is to apply the same mode of representational reading to buildings as is applied to models. The building may also become imprinted with the traces of its own representation. Peter Eisenman's "cardboard architecture" or the buildings of Michael Graves or Aldo Rossi come to represent their own representations. They are at once pictures and buildings.

It is in this reverse current of representation that the critical capacities of the model come into play, exposing architecture's claims to verisimilitude as based on seemingly motivated relationships, on a realism of objects in relation to their meanings and of representation to reality. Peter Eisenman has consistently sought to subvert the workings of representation. Reversing the tricks of model photography, Eisenman emphasized the cardboard qualities of his earlier houses (fig. 5). His recent axonometric models expose the





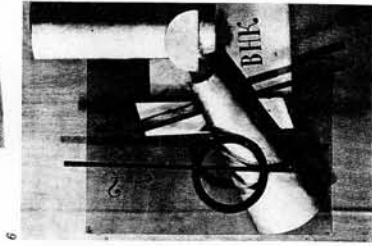
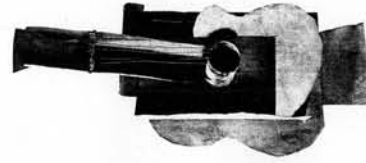
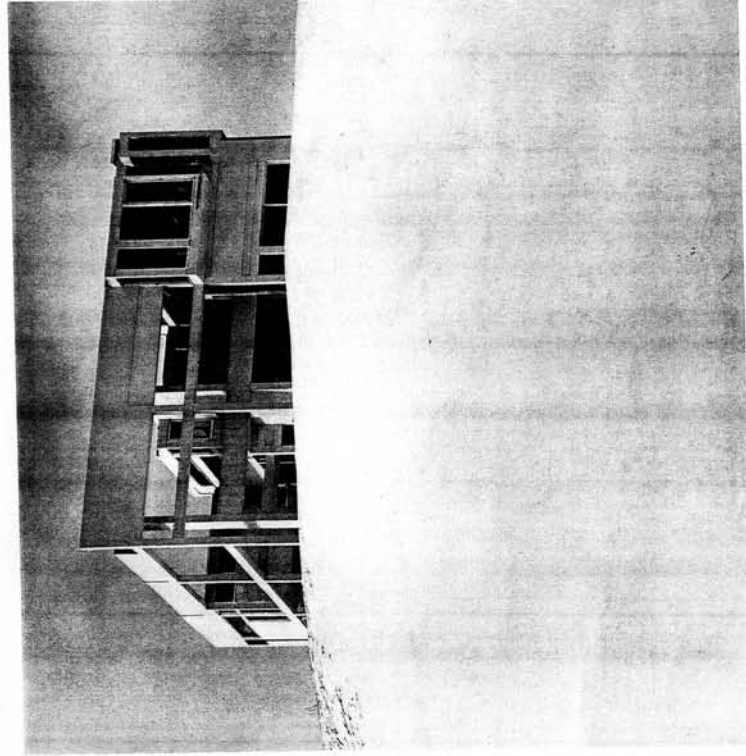
conventions of axonometric drawing by translating them literally into three-dimensional form (see interview below). The reading of a building as a model or a model as a drawing denies the epistemological fantasies of an architecture that postulates both an object and its adequate representation as its origin or end. Eisenman's deconstructive strategy puts object, process, and representation in unending play.

The play between representation and objecthood has also been of explicit interest in Modernist painting and sculpture. Much of the richness of Modernist pictorial experience lies in our perception of tensions between the actuality of the work as an object and its representational readings—between paint and picture—or else between the object and the artistic activity, as ironically described in Jasper John's "Foot's House" (fig. 4). Following the directions initiated by Picasso's guitar, which transited Cubist syntax into actual space (fig. 6), a number of works have situated themselves on the bounds of pictorialism and objecthood, locating the concerns of art at a crossroad of painting, sculpture, and architecture. In the planar construction of Russian avant-garde art, for example, the discovery of the surface and objecthood of painting intersects with the investigation of the pictorial nature of the wall to open a space in which the visual and the physical maintain an uneasy balance. This planar dimension might be considered similar to the space of the model. In Ivan Puni's relief (fig. 7), a Cubist pictorial syntax becomes a redundant supplement to actual physical form. But the shallow space of the relief and the composition of the construction are themselves spatial transition of developments in avant-garde painting. In this meeting-space of actuality and representation (which is, incidentally, flattened and obscured by photography), the most ideal conception coexists with an affirmation of the absolute materiality of the object. It allows ideas to become models. As in collage, the real becomes, to some extent, representational, and the representational real.

El Lissitzky's Pronoun Room (fig. 8) and Piet Mondrian's studio (fig. 9) might then be considered full-scale models, responding perhaps to Suarez Miranda's criteria. They announce a new relationship between painting, sculpture, and

4 Foot's House, 1962. Jasper Johns. Oil on canvas with objects, 72" x 36".

5 House II, Hardwick, Vermont, 1968. Peter Eisenman.



Theater as a Model

architecture, in which works of art are no longer contained within exhibition spaces but become continuous with them.

The stage is another privileged locus for a convergence between actual and representational space. Scenography is one of the margins of architecture in which the bounds between picture and object are effaced, and this conjunction might also afford us some understanding of the workings of the model. In the Teatro Olimpico (figs. 10, 11), built to the designs of Palladio and Scamozzi, the spaces of illusion, of Classical recall, and of actuality are united through perspective, and the theater and the city are integrated as two aspects of a single paradigm. The Teatro constitutes a strategy for the renovation of the city, through an introspective transformation of the city into a theater. Once within the theater the *frons scenae* opens up onto a "street scene" in which perspectival representation literalizes a realm lying somewhere between actuality and illusion. This, perhaps, is the space of the model. The street scene can be entered, yet its recession is rapidly foreshortened so that its representational perspectivalism is destroyed by the intrusion of the subject.

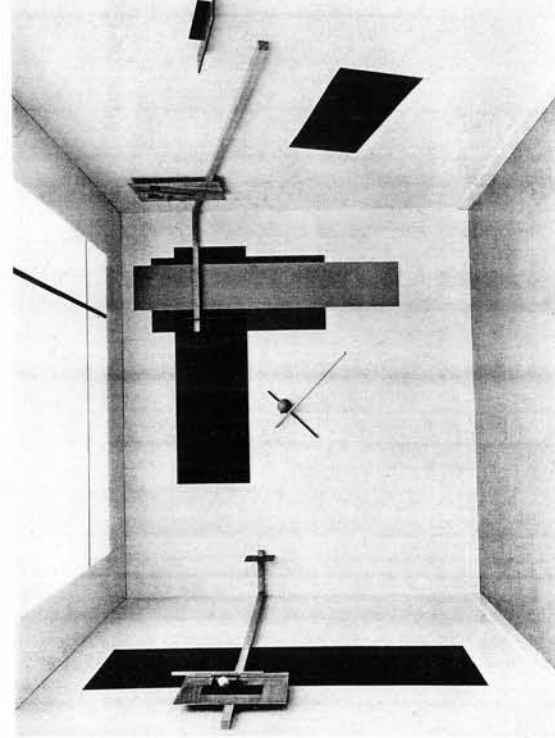
Palladio's theater finds a contemporary counterpart in Rossi's floating theater in Venice, which transforms the actual city into theater (fig. 12). In this case, the Teatro del Mondo is a full-scale model, but a model nonetheless: its juxtaposition with the church of Santa Maria della Salute underscores its representational relationship to the city, and while it is large enough to contain plays inside it, its real stage is clearly outside. At a smaller scale, Rossi's *Teatroio Scientifico* (frontispiece) returns the city to the space of the model. Within the theater there is an implied continuity between the foreground "models" of the Galaterease and the receding backdrop of the Modena cemetery. This exemplifies that preoccupation with the nature of representation in drawings, models, and buildings which is Rossi's obsessive concern. Rossi's work continuously presents and represents. His analogical enterprise, like Surrealism, juxtaposes the "real" and the imaginary, allowing for a continual interplay, a constant substitution. And like Surrealism, his work foils any attempt to find a resting point in the real.

6 Guitar, 1912. Pablo Picasso. Metal with wire.

7 Sculpture reconstructed from a 1918 drawing of the 1915 original. Ivan Puni. Partially painted wood, tin, and cardboard, 80" x 19" x 3".

The Puni relief actualizes in three

dimensions a Cubist composition. In addition, the shading on the volumes is painted. In the photograph the tensions caused by the redundancy are lost, and the painted shadows seem real.

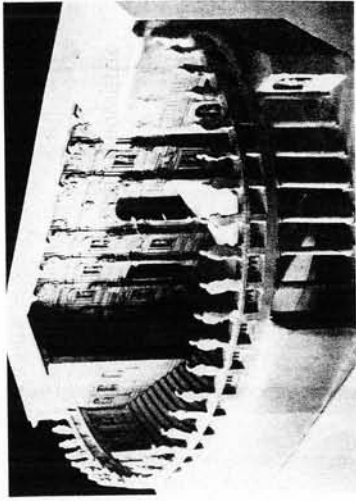


8 Pronoun Room, Berlin, 1923. El Lissitzky. Installation view of reconstruction at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979. Painted wood, 118" x 118" x 102".

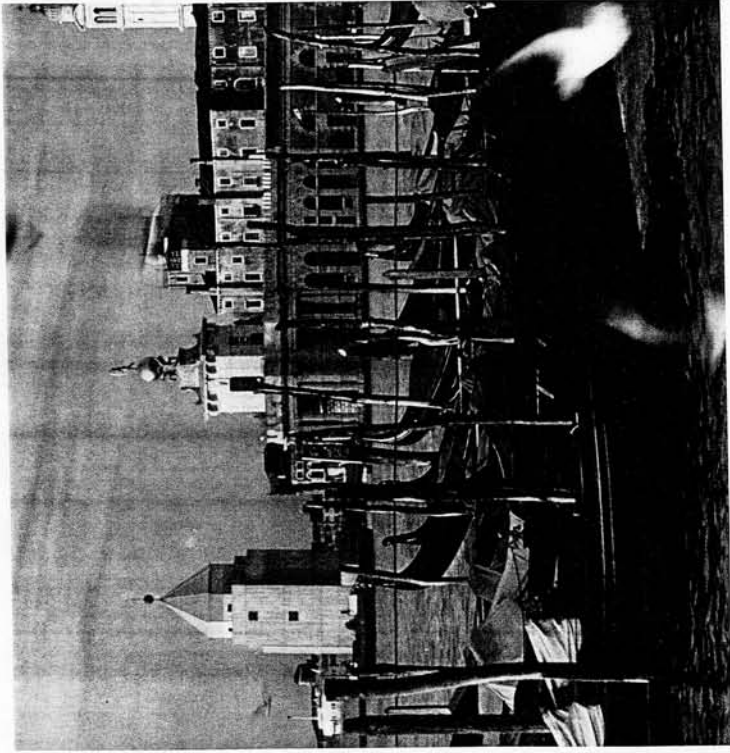
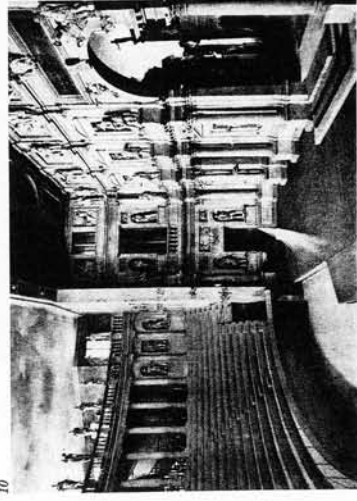
9 The Paris Studio, 1926. Piet Mondrian.



24 **Vicenza**
10 Teatro Olimpico, Venice,
1576-1584. Architect: Palladio and
Vicenzo Scamozzi. Model.

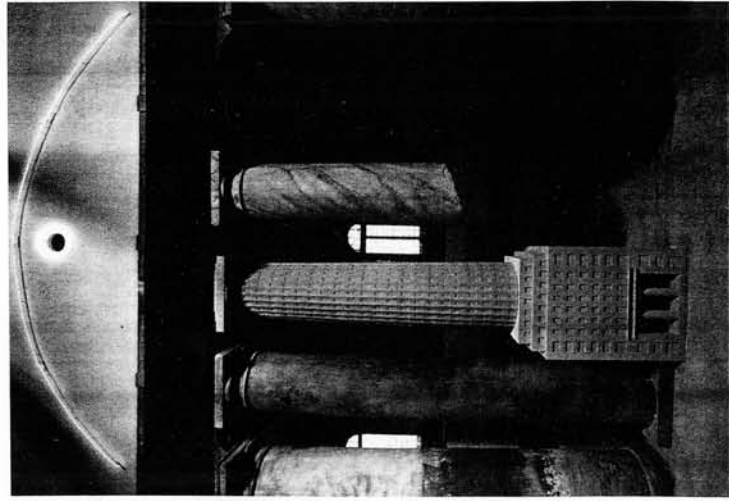


11 Teatro Olimpico,
1979-1980. Aldo Rossi.



12

26 **Vicenza**
13 Facade for Strada Novissima,
Venice Biennale, 1980.
Hans Hollein.



13

Yet the classical theater has a tradition of posing as a simulacrum of reality, in which the theater's theatricality lies in its play for the spectator, in its demand for willing suspension of disbelief without disclosing its fictional nature. At the most recent Venice Biennale, entitled *The Presence of the Past*, the theatrical capacities of the model and its potential for historical mystification were only occasionally subverted by the model's critical potential. The Strada Novissima purported to represent both the urban interventions of the Renaissance—as in the Strada Nuova in Genoa—and their theatrical counterparts—as in the Teatro Olimpico. But in this confusion of City and Theater, "history" repeats tragically in the form of farce. Like the recent repetition of the Chicago Tribune Competition, the "Post-Modern" nostalgia underlying this exhibition glorified the hollow promise of the simulacrum. The Strada Novissima, built by the technicians of *Cinecittà*, was a triumph of scenographic delusion.

Leon Krier's insistence upon real materials in his segment can be seen as the most deluded of all in its denial of the inherent representationalism of the model. On the other hand, the suspension of disbelief insisted on by Krier was undermined in Hans Hollein's sardonic exploitation of the dual capacity of the model as both object and representation. Loos's Tribune Tower proposal of 1922 parodied the iconographic and proportional problems of the skyscraper by identifying them with those of the "primary sign" of architecture, the column. Hollein's "quotation" of Loos (fig. 13) is a scale model of the skyscraper which also happens to be the size of a column. It situates the history of architecture within a broken syntagm, between nature and culture, and like Loos, makes denial the strongest affirmation.

In the world of Borgesian imagination, Suarez Miranda turns out to be as much of a fiction as the Empire he visited. Borges's quotation is finally revealed as a "quotation," a writing ironically disguised as reading. Through this oblique device Borges reminds us of our own demands for a history whose problematic is not so different from that of the model. A history permeated by nostalgia, which seeks to recuperate a lost origin of architecture, can only succeed in denying the conditions of its own making. Like the theater

and the simulacrum, it can only demand the suspension of our disbelief in order to distract and compensate for the loss of a genuine sense of historicity. It seeks to deny its own presence by a mystification in the name of the real, and proposes history as a book, open for perusal and quotation, without admitting that history is in the writing.

Notes

1. See Baudrillard, *Pour une Économie Politique du Signe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 188. Translation by author.
2. Jorge Luis Borges, "Of Exactitude in Science," in *A Universal History of Infamy* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979).
3. Figure Credits.
4. Fontaincise by Giacinto Manfredi.
5. Reprinted from *Brumante* by Arnaldo Bruschi, Thames and Hudson, London.
6. Courtesy of Les Editions de l'Architecte, New York.
7. Reprinted from *Planes*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
8. Photograph by Robert E. Mates. Courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
9. Photograph by Antonio Martelli.

It was not until long after the publication of my catalogue essay that I learned of Gordon Matta-Clark's 'intervention' at the Institute in relation to the 'Idea as Model' exhibition. Matta-Clark had been asked to participate in the first exhibit and had 'shot out' some of the windows of the exhibition space on the twentieth floor, apparently using a pellet gun borrowed from the sculptor Denis Openheim. His intention had been to paper over the broken windows with images of smashed windows in a housing project (see image). But when Peter Eisenman learned of the act, he compared it to the Nazi rampage of Kristallnacht, and any trace of the episode was fully expunged from the documentary material I had received on the exhibit.



Gordon Matta-Clark, *Window Blowout*, 1976–2006. Gelatin silver print / gelatine zilverdruk, 27.9 x 35.6 cm

When I learned about the event, I felt that the whole structure of my essay had suffered a traumatic shock, that my own call for history writing was based on a repression of actual events. I felt that that my writing had been a form of carefully fashioned 'wishful thinking'. Yet even in his *anarchitectural* attack, Matta-Clark had employed some of the same artistic strategies that I had examined in my ruminations on models. While the social conditions that Matta-Clark wanted to address at the Institute were very different from the more purely architectural concerns of the other models on display, the symbolic forms of the act were nonetheless not so dissimilar from my conception of architectural models. Even an act that had been conceived as an attack on the discipline of architecture still employed the symbolic power of the model to communicate – to be both immediately present and refer to an 'other'.



Glen Seator, 1959–2002, *B.D.O.*, 1997. Wood, steel, plasterboard, glass, electrical fittings, carpet and paint / hout, metaal, gipsplaat, glas, armaturen, tapijt en verf, 495.3 x 406.4 x 635 cm



Charles Ray, *Fire Truck*, 1993. Painted aluminum, fibreglass, plexiglass / geverfd aluminium, fiberglas, plexiglas, 3.65 x 2.44 x 14.17 m

The 'Idea as Model' exhibition was held at a moment that some architects were attempting to introduce their models and drawings into the cultural and commercial circuits of the 'art world' – through museum exhibitions, specialised galleries, or thematic exhibitions in established galleries such as Leo Castelli's, while some artists, particularly sculptors, were simultaneously 'poaching' in the thickets of the architects. Architects such as Aldo Rossi or Walter Pichler were able to present their drawings and personal imagery as works of art for sale or exhibition, although there was only a limited market for these works. Frank Gehry and Michael Graves were able to straddle the worlds of art, architecture and design, while sculptors increasingly addressed the physical context of their works, through installations or interventions in what Rosalind Krauss would subsequently call the 'expanded field'.

In subsequent years, I found some particularly striking instances of art works that resonated with the representational strategies of the model in the work of sculptors like Glen Seator or Charles Ray. Seator's replica of the Whitney Museum's director's office, made with salvaged millwork from the office itself and exhibited in the same building in the 1997 Biennale, transformed an architectural space of the museum into a sculptural object that was both minimalist and 'site specific'. The piece both belonged there and belonged nowhere. It turned the model's desire for physical actuality into a kind of anxious conundrum, and the vertigo one felt looking into the tilted room so delicately poised was matched by its conceptual instability at the dividing line between the worlds of art and architecture. Charles Ray's play with both size and scale (such as his striking figures of giant women or of children the same size as adults) have gently eroded the human body as a measure of scale. His sculpture of a fire truck, a toy truck enlarged to full size and parked on the street in front of the Whitney Museum, remind one once again of Borges' maps, and our deep desire to take our models for reality.

Today 'The Ruins of Representation' essay brings back memories of the 'Idea' of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies as a 'model' for acts of intellectual imagination in the face of the reductive banalities of architectural practice and the lack of critical discourse in America at the time. The Institute was a laboratory experiment in the creation of a conceptualised reality, in which form and myth collided. It was no accident that Rem Koolhaas was working on *Delirious New York* there, while Peter Eisenman and his colleagues tried to transform architecture into a purely intellectual and formal construct. 'The Ruins of Representation' is a relic from that far-off empire, but hopefully it retains some immediacy as well.

Een nieuwe kijk op The Ruins of Representation

Christian Hubert

Bijna dertig jaar geleden publiceerde ik een essay getiteld 'The Ruins of Representation' voor de catalogus bij de tentoonstelling 'Idea as Model', die in het Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York was gehouden. De catalogus werd pas jaren na de tentoonstelling gepubliceerd. In mijn essay probeerde ik me te verdiepen in de dualiteit van de maquette, die enerzijds naar iets anders dan zichzelf verwijst en anderzijds in zichzelf een autonoom project is. De tekst onderzocht de wisselwerking tussen beide aspecten als artistieke strategie en trachtte het verband tussen beide te beschrijven in termen van verbeelding en verlangen. In het essay, geschreven in een tijd dat de 'ontwerkelijkheid' van de werkelijkheid steeds meer een culturele preoccupatie aan het worden was, bekritiseerde ik de postmoderne architecten die de metaforische mogelijkheden van de maquette misbruikten om zo de geschiedenis van hun vak te kunnen herschrijven en als het ware terug te keren naar een verleden dat nooit heeft bestaan – een schijnbeeld. Als para-literaire 'exercitie' maakte het essay korte metten met enkele 'herontdekte herinneringen' die de postmoderne architecten op de maquette hadden geprojecteerd (fictieve geschiedenissen in vermomming), en condenseerde ze tot een wereld van Borgesians ironisch inzicht.

Lang na de publicatie van mijn essay voor de catalogus hoorde ik van de 'interventie' die Gordon Matta-Clark bij het Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies had uitgevoerd in het kader van de tentoonstelling 'Idea as Model'. Matta-Clark was gevraagd aan de tentoonstelling mee te doen en had vervolgens met hagel enkele ramen van de tentoonstellingsruimte op de twintigste verdieping 'eruit geschoten', naar verluidt met een geweer dat hij van de beeldhouwer Dennis Oppenheim had geleend. Zijn idee was de kapotte ruiten af te plakken met afbeeldingen van kapotgeslagen ruiten in een woningbouwproject (zie p. 18).

Maar toen Peter Eisenman dit hoorde, vergeleek die de ingreep met de manier waarop de nazi's tijdens de Kristallnacht hadden huisgehouden, en in het documentatiemateriaal dat ik van de tentoonstelling ontving, was elk spoor van deze episode uitgewist.

Toen ik van deze gebeurtenis hoorde, voelde het alsof de hele structuur van mijn essay een traumatische shock had opgelopen, dat mijn eigen oproep tot een andere vorm van geschiedschrijving was gebaseerd op een verdringing van werkelijke gebeurtenissen. Ik kreeg het gevoel dat ik het had geschreven vanuit een vorm van zorgvuldig gecultiveerd *wishful thinking*. Toch hanteerde Matta-Clark zelfs in zijn 'an-architectonische' aanval enkele van de artistieke strategieën die ik in mijn overpeinzing over maquettes had aangevoerd. Hoewel de sociale omstandigheden die Matta-Clark op de tentoonstelling aan de orde wilde stellen, hemelsbreed verschillen van de louter architectonische kwesties waar het bij de andere tentoongestelde maquettes om draaide, verschilden de symbolische vormen van zijn daad niet eens zoveel van mijn opvatting over de rol van architectuurmaquettes. Ook al was Matta-Clark's interventie als aanval op het vakgebied van de architectuur bedoeld, hij wendde wel de symbolische macht van de maquette aan om te communiceren – om zowel direct aanwezig te zijn als te verwijzen naar 'iets anders'.

De tentoonstelling 'Idea as Model' werd gehouden op een moment dat sommige architecten probeerden met hun maquettes en tekeningen toegang te krijgen tot de culturele en commerciële circuits van de 'kunstwereld' – via museumtentoonstellingen, gespecialiseerde galleries, of thematentoonstellingen in gevestigde galleries als die van Leo Castelli. Tegelijkertijd gingen sommige kunstenaars, in het bijzonder beeldhouwers, 'op strooptocht' in het kreupelhout van de architectuur. Architecten als Aldo Rossi en Walter Pichler slaagden erin hun tekeningen en persoonlijke beelden als kunst aan de man te brengen en tentoon te stellen, al was er voor deze werken maar een beperkte markt. Frank Gehry en Michael Graves wisten zich zowel in de wereld van de kunst als in die

van architectuur en design te manifesteren, en beeldhouwers stelden steeds vaker de fysieke context van hun werken aan de orde, via installaties of interventies in wat Rosalind Krauss vervolgens het *expanded field* zou noemen.

In de jaren daarna ontdekte ik in het oeuvre van beeldhouwers als Glen Seator en Charles Ray een aantal treffende voorbeelden van werken die overeenkomsten vertoonden met de weergavestrategieën van de maquette. Seator's replica van de directeurskamer van het Whitney Museum, gemaakt van houten onderdelen van het origineel en tijdens de Biënnale van 1997 tentoongesteld in hetzelfde gebouw, bestond uit een architectonische museumruimte, getransformeerd tot een sculpturaal object dat zowel minimalistisch als 'plaatsspecifiek' was. Het werk hoorde tegelijk daar en helemaal nergens thuis. Het streven naar 'echtheid' dat een maquette eigen is, werd hier tot een soort verontrustende puzzel, en de duizeligheid die je beving als je in de gekantelde, zorgvuldig hangende kamer keek, weerspiegelde de conceptuele instabiliteit van een object dat balanceerde op de scheidslijn tussen kunst en architectuur. Het spel dat Charles Ray speelt met zowel maat als schaal (zoals zijn treffende beelden van reuzenvrouwen of kinderen die even groot zijn als volwassenen) is een goedmoedige parodie op het menselijk lichaam als maatstaf van schaal. Zijn beeld van een brandweerauto, een tot ware grootte opgeblazen speelgoedautootje dat voor het Whitney Museum op straat werd geparkeerd, brengt de kaarten van Borges weer in herinnering, en ons diepe verlangen om maquettes voor de werkelijkheid aan te zien.

Vandaag de dag roept het essay 'The Ruins of Representation' herinneringen op aan het 'Idea' om het Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies tot een 'maquette' voor daden van intellectuele verbeeldingskracht te maken en zo tegengas te geven aan de reductieve banaliteit van de architectuurpraktijk en het gebrek aan kritisch discours in Amerika in die tijd. Het instituut was een laboratoriumexperiment in het creëren van een geconceptualiseerde werkelijkheid, waarin vorm en mythe op elkaar botsten. Het was

geen toeval dat Rem Koolhaas juist daar aan *Delirious New York* werkte, terwijl Peter Eisenman en zijn collega's de architectuur probeerden om te vormen tot een zuiver intellectueel en formeel concept. 'The Ruins of Representation' is een overblijfsel uit een ver verleden, maar heeft hopelijk ook enige urgentie behouden.

Vertaling: Bookmakers,
Auke van den Berg

Redactioneel

Maquettes
Het idee, de
verbeeldingen
het visionaire

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Maquettes vormen sinds eeuwen een vanzelfsprekend onderdeel van het architectonisch metier. Ze zijn er in verschillende soorten en maten, en worden ingezet op specifieke momenten in het ontwerp- en bouwproces. Er zijn maquettes die precies lijken op een gerealiseerd gebouw. Ze staan in de lobby van dat gebouw, of op de kamer van de opdrachtgever. Het zijn schaalmodellen, die sterk vereenzelvigd worden met de realiteit van een gebouw. Andere maquettes worden juist gebruikt om vorm, lichtval, onderlinge relaties of andere ruimtelijke principes te onderzoeken. Ze worden vaak in reeksen gemaakt: als empirie in een creatief proces. Maquettes als deze halen hun relevantie uit een groter geheel. Ze zijn onderdeel van een ontwerpproces en bestaan als overdrachtelijk middel om te communiceren over het beoogde bouwwerk.

Er zijn momenten in de architectuurgeschiedenis die worden gekenmerkt door modelmatige benadering. Van de periode van De Stijl kan worden gesteld dat er niet alleen veel met maquettes werd gewerkt, maar dat ook de architectonische uitwerking van verschillende gerealiseerde werken een maquetteachtige karakteristiek hebben gekregen. De revolutionaire jaren zestig blijven voor altijd verbonden met de maquettes en beelden van Constant's utopische *Nieuw Babylon* of Frederick Kiesler's *Endless House*. Als iets vandaag de dag de architectonische representatie kenmerkt, dan is het wel de computervisualisatie. De invloed daarvan is onmiskenbaar; ze heeft een enorme impact op de architectuur en de architectonische (re)presentatie. Desondanks heeft de opkomst van de computervisualisatie de vanzelfsprekendheid van

de maquette in het architectonisch metier niet aangetast.¹ Wellicht heeft dit te maken met het objectmatige karakter van de maquette. Waar elke architectuurtekening, computervisualisatie, foto en zelfs film, gedomineerd wordt door perspectief en uitsnede,² suggereert de maquette volledigheid en toont ze ruimtelijkheid en materialiteit.³

Echter, maquettes zijn nooit helemaal realistisch. Om op schaal gemaakt te kunnen worden, zijn praktische en pragmatische aanpassingen noodzakelijk. Zo worden gebouwen in de omgeving uit massief hout of blauw schuim opgetrokken; landschappen worden in lagen karton opgebouwd; gedroogde takken volstaan voor bomen. Het is een kleine stap om een dergelijke constructie bewust te manipuleren om daarmee een bepaald aspect sterker naar voren te brengen. Daarmee ontstaat distantie ten opzichte van de beoogde realiteit van het ontwerp, om een andere (volmaaktere of duidelijker) realiteit te tonen: die van de maquette zelf. In dit nummer van *OASE* bespreken we deze maquettes, die een stap verder gaan dan de representatie en communicatie van een toekomstige werkelijkheid. Deze maquettes zijn zelfstandige objecten of constructies, die aanzetten tot associatie, interpretatie en verbeelding. Ze laten zich niet reduceren tot instrumenten in het architectonische proces, maar zijn zelf het resultaat van dit architectonische of artistieke proces. Deze *OASE* stelt, kortom, de maquette centraal vanuit de vraag wat de maquette kan zijn en betekenen, zodra niet enkel haar representatieve karakter haar essentie is.

Dit specifieke perspectief op de maquette steunt op het intuïtieve idee dat een model op een complexe wijze verschillende realiteiten in zichzelf samenbrengt. Dat gaat niet alleen over de voor de hand liggende verknoping van de realiteit van de maquette als concreet en materieel object enerzijds en de realiteit waarnaar de maquette verwijst anderzijds, maar ook over de onvermijdelijke abstractie van het model de ruimte krijgt. Dit intuïtieve idee is gevoerd door drie observaties:

De in 1976 door het Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in