

A SHAM DELIGHT HAS NO EXCHANGE VALUE

Henri Lefebvre and the evolution of Bernard Tschumi's early architectural theory

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Abstract

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Architecture

This thesis argues that many of Tschumi's theories were proposed in response to Lefebvre's analysis of cities and his critique of the architecture profession. Throughout the seventies Tschumi strove to extricate Architecture from its ties to capitalism and its perceived complicity in reinforcing problematic political and social structures. The architect's first published articles establish Lefebvre as a key influence upon his principles and ideology, and the architectural theory that followed these initial essays enters into a dialogue with Lefebvre's critique of architects. In the ultimate testimony of Lefebvre's influence, Tschumi directly transposes the philosopher's ideas into his own theories on space. Several scholars have analyzed the direction Tschumi's work takes after 1975, specifically the influence of French post-structural theorists, including Georges Bataille, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida. These textual analyses largely reduce the Lefebvrian undertones of Tschumi's work to a historical footnote, when, as this thesis will demonstrate, Lefebvre's influence was both formative and deeply impactful. Given that themes from Tschumi's writings in the early seventies frequently appear in his later more widely known work, it is argued here that Lefebvre's influence had a lasting impact over the course of Tschumi's career. Ultimately the initially politically charged call for revolutionary action, inspired by Lefebvre, evolves, producing theories that call for an autonomous architecture distanced from capitalist modes of production.

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As a whole these texts reiterate that architecture is never autonomous, never pure form, and, similarly, that architecture is not a matter of style and cannot be reduced to a language. Opposing an overrated notion of architectural form, they aim to reinstate the term *function* and, more particularly, to reinscribe the movements of bodies in space, together with the actions and events that take place within the social and political realm of architecture.

The direction of this research did not appear overnight. Around 1968, together with many in my generation of young architects, I was concerned with the need for an architecture that might change society—that could have a political or social effect. However, the effect of the events of 1968 has been to demonstrate, both through facts and through serious critical analysis, the difficulty of this imperative. From Marxist commentators to Henri Lefebvre and to the Situationists, the modes of analysis changed considerably, but all shared a skeptical view of the power of architecture to alter social or political structures.

—Bernard Tschumi, Introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction*, 1994

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PREFACE

This investigation into Lefebvre's influence upon Tschumi's work happened almost by accident, and has evolved over the course of the last several years. It began as a short paper comparing the space structuring elements of dance and architecture through the work of Frédéric Flamand. As director of Charleroi / Danses and the Ballet National de Marseille, Flamand has collaborated with Zaha Hadid, Dominique Perrault, and Diller + Scofidio, on works that push the boundaries of how the space of the stage is perceived. Tschumi's theory, in particular *The Manhattan Transcripts*, and Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, provided a lens with which to analyze Flamand's sets and the dancers' movements. My understanding of Lefebvre was perhaps too literal, something I accuse Tschumi of doing in this paper, but the spark was lit.

Lefebvre's and Tschumi's depictions and analyses of bodies creating space became the subject of my design thesis for the Master's of Architecture degree. While working on that first thesis I discovered the inherent difficulty of designing a building that reconciles bodies, movement, and space, without limiting or solidifying the very aspects you hope to promote. I can only assume, given the disparity between Tschumi's work and his early theory that he faced similar difficulties. Instead, that thesis

evolved into an exploration of performance spaces, and the final design was an attempt to create a new typology that dissolved the traditional boundary between performers and the audience.

During that process, phrases in Lefebvre's text would strike me for their similarity to Tschumi's text and vice versa. I soon realized that Tschumi was intimately familiar with Lefebvre's work, but that the extent of Lefebvre's contribution to Tschumi's theory had not been examined at length. The thesis that follows provides the opportunity to address this omission at greater depth than my design thesis allowed. Tschumi's relationship with other philosophers—Bataille, Hollier, Barthes, Derrida and so forth—has been dissected in recent scholarship, but the connection to Lefebvre is typically mentioned as a footnote at best. Why had Lefebvre, a scholar who is certainly in vogue in contemporary architectural scholarship, been overlooked?

One reason could be that Tschumi's most Lefebvrian work is not his most widely read, although having embarked on this investigation I would now argue that Lefebvre's influence can be found to varying degrees in Tschumi's early *and* later work. Although "The Architectural Paradox" is published in *Architecture and Disjunction*, it doesn't seem to be as likely to show up as required reading for young architects as the more scintillatingly titled "Architecture and Violence," or "Architecture and Transgression." And even fewer readers are likely to reach back into the archives of *Architectural Design* to read "The Beaux-Arts since '68" or "Sanctuaries".

Another reason could be that Tschumi's own narrative, in interviews, essays, and monographs, often glosses over this period of his work. When he began teaching at the Architectural Association he was in his twenties, and really, who among us can say that our best work was produced when we were just starting out? Tschumi's later theory is perhaps more mature, refined, or is more in line with his current interests, which results in the omission of his earliest texts in anthologies and exhibitions.

When I began this study I assumed that I was looking at a distinct phase within Tschumi's career. My initial proposals for this research all argue that Tschumi's work prior to "The Architectural Paradox" is greatly influenced by Lefebvre, and that all his work following this article is greatly influenced by the aforementioned philosophers of the *Tel Quel* group. In this version of events, 1975 is a rupture, dividing the youthful, revolutionary minded Tschumi, from the more mature architectural theorist. However, as I

came to understand Lefebvre's critique of the architectural profession, and capitalist modes of production, it seemed that all of Tschumi's written work contains a response to these concerns.

What began as a revival of a lifelong love of dance subsequently became an immersion into Marxist theory. In the process, I've gained a deeper appreciation for both Lefebvre and Tschumi's work, and am frequently struck by ways in which the conversation of the seventies mirrors the current conversation about both the role and responsibilities of the architect, and politics in general.

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In the work of remarkable writers, artists, or composers one sometimes finds disconcerting elements located at the edge of their production, at its limit. These elements, disturbing and out of character, are misfits within the artist's activity. Yet often such works reveal hidden codes and excesses hinting at other definitions, other interpretations.¹

–Bernard Tschumi, “Architecture and Limits,” 1980

¹ Bernard Tschumi, “Architecture and Limits,” in *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1994), 101. This text was originally published in the December 1980 issue of *Art Forum*, December 1980.

01. INTRODUCTION

To say that 1968 was a politically turbulent year is an understatement. The year is marked by uprisings, marches, sit-ins, and riots, of which protests against the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Prague Spring, and student riots in Paris are only a partial example. This pervasive turmoil extended to the field of architecture, which experienced its own ontological crisis in 1968. The École des Beaux-Arts—the standard bearer of architectural education since 1648—was at the epicenter of protests demanding that architects reevaluate both the pedagogy of architectural education and nature of professional practice. The heroics of Modernism and the ideology of redevelopment were questioned, and many young architects sought a more socially responsible role for themselves as designers. Society had been shaken, and architecture was experiencing the aftershocks.

Bernard Tschumi graduated from the Zurich Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and immediately took an activist stance in the debate over the future of architecture. As a student, Tschumi had participated in the riots in Paris in 1968, and the experience imparted a revolutionary spirit that

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influenced his work in the seventies. Tschumi recounted the options available to architects at the time in an interview in *Clip Stamp Fold*:

One of the slogans used in the students' revolution in 1968 was "Imagination takes power." Those two words, *imagination* and *power*, are quite striking when one puts them together. A few years later, those of us who had been most committed to the debates of the time looked at one another, asking: "Where did you go, to the side of imagination or to the side of power?"²

Tschumi, it goes without saying, was on the side of imagination. In 1970 he moved to London where a job as a lecturer at the Architectural Association provided the opportunity to challenge the architectural status quo.

Tschumi began his career at the Architectural Association as a lecturer addressing the relationship between politics and urban society.³ As an avid reader of the writings of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, Tschumi's earliest writings on urban politics demonstrate the influence of Lefebvre's studies of the same topic. Lefebvre's analysis of cities, revolutions, and the architecture and planning professions resonated with Tschumi, just as these same ideas had resonated with the student protesters in Paris in 1968. Lefebvre critiqued architects for a dogmatic adherence to formalist ideologies and aestheticism. Planners were also to blame for making decisions based only on numbers, science, and, in the worst cases, profit.⁴ Tschumi shared these concerns and sought another course for architecture. His research in the early seventies proposed the idea that space could encourage urban upheavals and "be made a peaceful instrument of social transformation,"⁵ and a "trigger for social and political change."⁶

As Tschumi's career progressed in the seventies, he continued to draw inspiration from Lefebvre's writings. Lefebvre's work was recommended reading in his seminars and studios, and Tschumi brought Lefebvre to speak at the Architectural Association in 1973. As Lefebvre's work evolved from a sociological analysis of cities to the deeper philosophical questions of space itself, Tschumi's work

² Beatriz Colomina, Craig Buckley, and Urtzi Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196x to 197x* (Barcelona, Spain: Actar, 2010), 47-8.

³ Bernard Tschumi, *Questions of Space: Lectures on Architecture*, (London: AA Publications, 1990), 9.

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, in *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 83-84.

⁵ Bernard Tschumi, "Introduction," in *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 7. Also Bernard Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," in *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*, ed. James Gowan, (London: Architectural Press, 1975), 94.

⁶ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 6. See also Lee Stickells, "Conceiving an Architecture of Movement," in which the author discusses the social nature of the ramps of Tschumi's design for Lerner Hall at Columbia University. Lee Stickells, "Conceiving an Architecture of Movement," *Arq* 14.1, (2010): 47.

developed along a similar path. In the mid 1970s both Tschumi and Lefebvre produced works that focused on the concept of space itself that are both contemporaneous and parallel. Lefebvre's *La Production de l'Espace (The Production of Space, 1974)* only marginally predates Tschumi's "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)" (1975),⁷ and the influence of Lefebvre's theoretical work is readily apparent in Tschumi's text. As Tschumi's work moved away from questions of urban space and urban uprisings, to that of architectural space, he adapts and often depoliticizes Lefebvre's theories to fit an architectural context. The desire to affect social change that appears in his early work appears to have evolved in his later work into the idea of generating events and social interactions.⁸

This thesis argues that many of Tschumi's theories were proposed in response to Lefebvre's analysis of cities and his critique of the architecture profession. Throughout the seventies Tschumi strove to extricate Architecture from its ties to capitalism and its perceived role in "perpetuating a political status quo."⁹ The architect's first published articles establish Lefebvre as a key influence upon Tschumi's principles and ideology, and the architectural theory that followed these initial essays enters into a dialogue with Lefebvre's critique of architects. In the ultimate testimony of Lefebvre's influence, Tschumi directly transposes the philosopher's ideas into his own theories on space. Several scholars have analyzed the direction Tschumi's work takes after 1975, specifically the influence of French post-structural theorists, including Georges Bataille, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida. These textual analyses largely reduce the Lefebvrian undertones of Tschumi's work to a historical footnote, when, as this thesis will demonstrate, Lefebvre's influence was both formative and deeply impactful. Given that themes from Tschumi's writings in the early seventies frequently appear in his later more widely known work, it is argued here that Lefebvre's influence had a lasting impact over the course of Tschumi's career. Ultimately the initially politically charged call for revolutionary action, inspired by Lefebvre, evolves, producing theories that call for an autonomous architecture distanced from capitalist modes of production.

⁷ "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)" was originally published in *Studio International*, September-October 1975.

⁸ Stickells, "Conceiving an Architecture of Movement," 47.

⁹ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 32.

Literature Review

Much of what has been written about Tschumi's theoretical work has been written, or narrated, by Tschumi himself. While these articles and interviews are invaluable, they are invariably biased and often lack a broader contextualization and deeper analysis of the architect's work. Some scholars have produced close readings of Tschumi's theories, but these tend to focus on his writings after 1975, and the subject of his early writings at the Architectural Association remains largely unexamined by historians. Louis Martin, Renata Hejduk, and K. Michael Hays are leading scholars in this area of research, and as such are both precedents and sources for the analysis provided in this paper. Renata Hejduk's article "Death Becomes Her: Transgression, decay, and eROTicism in Bernard Tschumi's early writings and projects," (2007) looks specifically at the influence of Georges Bataille on Tschumi's "Advertisements for Architecture" (1976-77), and "The Pleasure of Architecture" (1977). Louis Martin's "Transpositions: on the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory," published in *Assemblage* in 1990, and his 1988 thesis, *Architectural Theory after 1968: Analysis of the Works of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi*, addresses Tschumi's interpretations of Bataille, Barthes, and Derrida, among others. K. Michael Hayes recent work *Architect's Desire: Reading the Late Avant Garde* (2010) examines the architectural theory produced by Aldo Rossi, Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, and Bernard Tschumi in the postmodern era, through the specific lens of "desire," or rather avant-garde notions of what architecture's role is or could be. Although these three scholars have not addressed the direct influence of Lefebvre's writings upon Tschumi's architectural theory, their exploration of other influences upon Tschumi's work is instructive for the work to be carried out here. In addition to this body of scholarship specifically addressing Tschumi's theories, Thomas F. McDonough's texts on Guy Debord and the Situationists will be used as models for the scope of work to be found in this proposal. Like Hays, Hejduk, and Martin, McDonough's texts provide a close analytical reading of his subject's theories, but his work goes a step further to also provide a greater depth of historical and contextual background to better situate his analysis.

Tschumi's career has been thoroughly documented and curated by the architect himself, providing a wealth of material from which to begin a study of his writings. From *Bernard Tschumi:*

Architectural Manifestos (1978), a collection of short essays accompanying the eponymous exhibit shown both at Artists Space in New York and at the Architectural Association in London, to the more recent *Architecture Concepts: Red is Not a Color* (2014), Tschumi has largely directed the discourse of his life's work. In addition to the aforementioned titles, the architect has published the four volume *Event-Cities* series, several essay collections—the most popular of which is *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994)—and has been the subject of many comprehensive exhibits. The most recent exhibit, *Bernard Tschumi Architecture: Concept and Notation*, shown at the Centre Pompidou in 2014 is seemingly the most comprehensive to date, providing a wealth of images and sketches from the architect's personal archive. Both the catalogue accompanying *Bernard Tschumi Architecture: Concept and Notation*, and the panoptic monograph *Architecture Concepts: Red is Not a Color* reach back further than most, addressing Tschumi's teaching and influences at the Architectural Association, alongside some of his earliest diagrams and artwork. While these two publications are more expository than the previous monographs, it can be argued that they are still part of a controlled dialogue. Tschumi's account of his life's work more frequently speaks of the influence of film theory or contemporary dance, for example, than of the politics of space:

Allies could be found in those other fields who would help demonstrate what I perceived as blinding evidence: architecture was, by definition, by nature, *disjoined, dis-sociated*. From Foucault to Barthes, from the activities of Sollers and the Tel Quel group to the rediscovery of Bataille, Joyce, or Burroughs, from the film theories of Eisenstein and Vertov to the experiments of Welles and Godard, from conceptual art to Acconci's early performances, and enormous body of work was helping to substantiate the evidence of architecture's dissociations. ... As a practice and as theory, architecture must import and export.¹⁰

Tschumi generally gives a greater emphasis to avant-garde elements of his work, although it will be argued here that his earlier political praxis influenced his art praxis as well.

Louis Martin's 1988 thesis, *Architectural Theory after 1968: Analysis of the Works of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi*, and the subsequently published article "Transpositions: on the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory," published in *Assemblage* (1990), both resemble the scope of this paper, in that as the titles suggest, Martin is looking, in part, at the key influences upon the development of Tschumi's theories. Martin's thesis strives to answer the overarching question "what

¹⁰ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 17.

is the nature, role and aim of theory in the discourse of contemporary architects?”¹¹ Within a broader analysis of the rise of theory in the architectural discourse of the seventies and eighties, Martin uses a sampling of Koolhaas and Tschumi’s earliest works as examples of the changing mode of praxis. Martin choose to look at the work of two architects, as opposed to focusing on one actor alone, to avoid producing an analysis that is too biographical. Rather two actors provides a manageable sampling of the discourse of the period.¹² In his analysis of Tschumi, Martin addresses the influence of Barthes, Hollier, and Bataille upon “Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or Architectural Paradox)” (1975), “Le jardin de Don Juan” (1976), “Architecture and Transgression” (1976), and “The Pleasure of Architecture” (1977). He argues that Barthes is the key to understanding much of Tschumi’s work, stating that the architect “followed Barthes, step by step” during the 1970s:

Barthes understood that architecture was not a code having a definite set of meaning[s] like Tafuri believed. Urban semiology could only be an endless chain of metaphors like Lacan’s psychoanalytical studies. Tschumi’s theory was built on that premise. Then Barthes reflected on the problem of the modern avant-garde and stated that the uselessness of the text was its means of resistance to capitalist exchange. Tschumi transposed the theory in architecture with a sophisticated model that transformed completely the nature of Barthes’ argument. In 1978, Barthes introduced the theme of deconstruction in his work and as did Tschumi. In fact, all the references that Tschumi alludes to in his texts are found in Barthes. Bataille, Eisenstein, Nietzsche, Sade, Lacan, Kafka, as well as themes like eroticism, pleasure, uselessness, fragments, madness and combinatory process are all present in Barthes’ texts. Tschumi followed the mainstream of structuralist criticism and tried to translate it in architecture.¹³

Martin concludes that the purpose of Tschumi’s, and also Koolhaas’s, turn to philosophy during this period was a means of legitimizing the profession; he observes that “recent theory of architecture, in proposing the model of the architect-intellectual, is trying to augment the authority of the institution that was radically shaken in the sixties by the failure of the project of Modern Architecture.”¹⁴ While Martin’s thesis, which was clearly the genesis for the subsequent article, provides a reasonably exhaustive analysis of Tschumi’s influences, he omits any mention of Henri Lefebvre.¹⁵

¹¹ Louis Martin, “Architectural Theory after 1968: Analysis of the Works of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi,” (Master’s thesis, MIT, 1988), 208.

¹² Ibid., 20.

¹³ Ibid., 193.

¹⁴ Ibid., 220.

¹⁵ It has been argued that Lefebvre’s popularity waned in the 80s, and that the English language publication of *The Production of Space* brought about a revival of Lefebvre’s spatial theory in Architectural contexts. See Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 5. While Tschumi frequently references Lefebvre in his earliest articles for *Architectural*

In 1990 Martin published “Transpositions: on the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi’s Architectural Theory,” which narrows in scope to focus solely on Tschumi’s work. In this article he expands his earlier investigation of Tschumi’s influences to include Lefebvre, albeit briefly. As in his earlier thesis, Martin specifically connects “Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)” to Tschumi’s readings of several key authors. He explains Tschumi’s triad of “conceived,” “perceived,” and “experienced” space as a translation of Denis Hollier’s metaphor of the pyramid and the labyrinth, with the addition of Bataille’s “notion of a deep interior experience,” which led to the development of Tschumi’s theories of “architectural eroticism”.¹⁶ Continuing in this vein, Martin focuses more on Tschumi’s assimilation of the French *Tel Quel* group in the development of the architect’s writings leading up to the early 1980s:¹⁷

Tschumi incorporated into his theory strictly contemporary concepts, the most fruitful of which came from literature. After he abandoned the Situationist theories, the work of the *Tel Quel* circle became his essential reference and his key to enter the world of criticism. Following mainly Sollers (limits), Hollier (Bataille), Barthes (pleasure), Kristeva (intertext), Genette (palimpsest), and Derrida (deconstruction), Tschumi introduced into his work the major themes developed by the most visible French literary critics of the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁸

Martin mentions Tschumi’s earlier interest in the city, and the theories of Lefebvre and Guy Debord, as a distinct phase in Tschumi’s time at the Architectural Association, but only briefly explores the extent of this influence. Martin notes that during this period Tschumi “wanted to develop a theory of revolutionary architecture,” and that the architect “deriv[ed] his analytical methodology from contemporary French sociopolitical theories of urbanism of structuralist and Marxist Tendency, particularly those of Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord.”¹⁹ For Martin, the Lefebvrian phase of Tschumi’s theoretical cannon has a concrete end date of 1975. While it is true that Tschumi’s revolutionary leanings waned in the years following 1975, it is not difficult to see traces of, and even overt intertextual references to, Lefebvre’s and Debord’s theories in Tschumi’s writings and work post 1975. Martin explains that he wishes to

Design, these politically inspired articles fall outside of Martin’s scope, and as such one can justify the omission of Lefebvre’s influence.

¹⁶ Louis Martin, “Transpositions: on the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi’s Architectural Theory,” *Assemblage* 11 (1990): 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

“understand the nature of the shift in Tschumi’s research,”²⁰ but he neglects to recognize the continued influence of Lefebvre and Debord upon Tschumi’s post 1975 theoretical writings.

Similarly, Renata Hejduk has examined the theoretical influences upon Tschumi’s work in her article “Death Becomes Her: transgression, decay, and eROTicism in Bernard Tschumi’s early writings and projects,” published in 2007. Here, Hejduk focuses mostly on Tschumi’s interpretation of the element of eroticism in the work of Bataille, and the translation of that element into an architectural context:

[In this period] Tschumi begins to use the work of Georges Bataille, and in particular his understanding of eroticism, violence, and death as a theoretical framework against which to offer architecture an alternative and provocative articulation of the complex and dialectical relationship between the ideal (the conception of space) and the real (the experience of space) in architecture.²¹

To support this argument, Hejduk provides a close reading of Tschumi’s “Advertisements for Architecture” (1975) and the essays “Architecture and Transgression” (1976) and “The Pleasure of Architecture” (1977) to illustrate how Tschumi utilizes Bataille’s theories in an architectural context. Hejduk begins by summarizing Bataille’s 1957 work *Eroticism*, and subsequently proceeds to analyze Tschumi’s use of the central tenets of eroticism, violence, pleasure, and decay in his writings. Like Martin, Hejduk notes Tschumi’s use of the Lefebvrian concept of producing space, and his use of Bataille’s theory to reconcile “ideal” and “real” space.²² As is appropriate for her focus, Hejduk does not provide a larger analysis of the Lefebvrian constructs in Tschumi’s work, keeping Bataille as the primary actor.

In the search for Tschumi’s primary influencers Martin has identified Barthes, Hejduk points to Bataille, and this thesis identifies Lefebvre. At this point a reader might ask whether or not these positions are in opposition to each other. The answer is that they can be reconciled, and there are a few ways to go about this task. The first is to note that Martin, Hejduk, and this thesis each focus on phases of Tschumi’s career that are overlapping but not identical, and the fact is that Tschumi’s work does evolve to reflect different interests at different times. The second, and more pertinent point, is that these three divergent analyses can be synthesized to resolve any perceived omissions. For example, in an instance where Martin credits Bataille with the evolution of Tschumi’s triad following “The Architectural Paradox”,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Renata Hejduk, “Death Becomes Her: Transgression, Decay, and Eroticism in Bernard Tschumi’s Early Writings and Projects,” *The Journal of Architecture*, 12.4 (2007): 393.

²² Hejduk, “Death Becomes Her,” 398.

he proposes that the dualism of perceived and conceived space can be “dissolved with the introduction of a third term: Bataille’s intense inner experience.”²³ As this thesis will show, Lefebvre greatly contributed to Tschumi’s formulation of the first two terms; given Tschumi’s dexterity with philosophical concepts, it makes sense to acknowledge that he draws his inspiration from more than one source. Similarly, a recently written article by Claire Jamieson and Rebecca Roberts-Hughes, which looks at Tschumi’s use of literary devices in his studios at the AA and Princeton, notes Tschumi’s idea of transgression stems from Bataille, but that it contains elements of revolution not found in Bataille’s work.²⁴ Here again it can be argued that the missing element is Lefebvre’s influence, which inspired a revolutionary ethos that underlies much of Tschumi’s theory.

An analysis of why philosophy became so integral to the architectural discourse during this period can be found in K. Michael Hays 2010 book *Architecture’s Desire*. K. Michael Hays has written, and edited, several works pertaining to the architecture from the 1960s to the present day. His earlier studies of Tschumi’s work includes a monograph of Tschumi’s projects, *Bernard Tschumi* (2003), and an anthology of architectural theory, *Architectural Theory Since 1968* (1998). In *Architecture’s Desire* Hays states that he wants to “investigate a moment in history when certain ways of practicing architecture still had philosophical aspirations”²⁵ In this work Hays looks at the theories of Aldo Rossi, John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, and Bernard Tschumi in the time period spanning from 1966 to 1983.²⁶ Hays is concerned with the production of architectural theory in a period when architecture has lost use value:

In short, my thesis is that having long since been deprived of its immediate use value, architecture in the 1970s found itself challenged as a mode of cultural representation by more commercially lubricated media.²⁷

During this period, the identity of architecture changes, reflects upon itself, and ultimately “becomes a symbol”²⁸:

²³ Martin, “Architectural Theory after 1968,” 185.

²⁴ Claire Jamieson and Rebecca Roberts-Hughes, “Two modes of a literary architecture: Bernard Tschumi and Nigel Coates,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 2015): 110-122.

²⁵ K. Michael Hays, *Architecture’s Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 2.

²⁶ Hays, *Architecture’s Desire*, 2. Hays notes that portions of *Architecture’s Desire* are reprinted from *Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988* (1994), *Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk* (2002), and *Bernard Tschumi* (2003).

²⁷ Hays, *Architecture’s Desire*, 12-13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

For as soon as architecture's need is articulated as *symbolic*—as soon as the architectural object is presented anew, repeated as *symbolized*—an inquiry is launched into architecture's possibilities rather than its actualities: Where does architecture come from, and what authorizes its existence as architecture—beyond the particular constitutions already in place? This is the query of the late avant-garde.²⁹

In his “obsessive search for architecture's fundamental codes and principals”³⁰ Hays appears to be less interested in producing a history of how these theories came about, than he is in producing theory itself. Or, as Mark Linder observes in his review, finding a role for theory in a contemporary architectural discourse.³¹ Instead, he looks to the theories of the four architects to answer the basic questions of what architecture is and can be. The genesis of the theories produced by Tschumi and other members of the “late avant-garde” is left as a question for other scholars to answer.

Given the shorter length of both Hejduk and Martin's published articles, and the very specific aims of Hays' own questions about the purpose of architecture, it is reasonable for the authors to adhere to a narrower focus and smaller cast of characters, which leaves ample room for the scholarly analysis of the Lefebvrian themes in Tschumi's work that this thesis will provide. In comparison with the works of Hays, Hejduk, and Martin, the broader aim of this thesis is analogous to Thomas McDonough's work studying the Situationists. “Situationist Space”, an article published in a Situationist themed issue of *October* in 1998, looks specifically at *The Naked City*, a map produced by Guy Debord and the *Movement International pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste* in 1957. McDonough looks at the antecedents to *The Naked City*, such as the *Carte du Tendre*, created in 1653 by Madeleine de Scudéry, which spatially maps out a love affair, the 1948 film *The Naked City*, and texts by Debord.³² In his analysis, McDonough provides a close reading of the map, unpacks its meaning and significance and situates it historically. He explains how the map significantly challenges the traditional study of geography and instead provides a social reading of space that draws upon the ideas of “social geography” presented by Elisée Reclus, Paul Vidal and Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe to explain the origins of Debord's psychogeographie and the derive.³³ McDonough argues for a more comprehensive understanding of the influences and antecedents

²⁹ Ibid., 13.

³⁰ Ibid., 14.

³¹ Mark Linder, "Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde," *Journal of Architectural Education* 64.2 (2011), 188.

³² Thomas F. McDonough, "Situationist Space," *October*, 1994.67 (1995): 58, 61-62.

³³ Ibid., 65-68.

to Debord's work, and that "against the continued mythologizing—engaged in by both sympathetic and hostile commentators—must be posed a careful analysis of the Situationist legacy, a project of retrieval, reconstruction, and historicization."³⁴ To this end, McDonough's text looks at the historical antecedents and influences and carefully interprets Debord's writings to explain the significance of the Situationist ideas of space and movement, a combined analytical and historical approach that this thesis will follow with the goal of better understanding Bernard Tschumi's work and influences.

Historical Method

This investigation aspires to provide a critical analysis of Tschumi's early work and writings. In order to set the stage for the close textual analysis that will comprise much of this thesis, a broader historical perspective is constructed to better situate the writings and works to be discussed. A variety of sources have been consulted beginning with Tschumi's own articles, exhibitions, monographs, published interviews, biographies, and archival source material from his time at the Architectural Association. The many interviews, transcripts of symposium conversations, and debates published with Tschumi's involvement are consulted to aid in explaining the architect's motivations and influences. From here Lefebvre's most relevant texts, and the scholarship investigating these texts, are examined. Lefebvre's texts and Tschumi's articles are addressed in tandem to determine which of Lefebvre's ideas were most influential to Tschumi's earliest theories. Tschumi's later writings are briefly consulted to see how the architect's theories evolved.

A sizeable component of this investigation focuses on an exposition of the architect's earliest writings and exhibitions as they relate to the antecedent writings of Henri Lefebvre. The articles Tschumi wrote for *Architectural Design*, while at the Architectural Association in the 1970s, quote from Lefebvre's many publications on cities, indicating Tschumi's extensive familiarity with the philosopher's contemporaneous publications. Given that Lefebvre produced no fewer than 15 books, co-edited and

³⁴ Thomas F. McDonough, "Rereading Debord, Rereading the Situationists," *October*, 79.79 (1998): 5.

wrote articles for the journal *Espaces et Sociétés*, and lectured prolifically in the years bookended by 1968 and 1978, specific references in Tschumi's articles have been consulted to narrow down the field of inquiry to the texts with which Tschumi would have been the most familiar. These include *Critique de la vie quotidienne I* (Critique of Everyday Life I, 1947), *Critique de la vie quotidienne II* (Critique of Everyday Life II, 1962), *Introduction a la modernité* (Introduction to Modernity, 1962), *Le droit à la ville* (The Right to the City, 1968), *La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne* (Everyday Life in the Modern World, 1968), *L'explosion* (The Explosion, 1968), and *La révolution urbaine* (The Urban Revolution, 1970). The connection between Tschumi's architectural theory and Lefebvre's writing is clearly manifested in the comparison of *The Production of Space*, written by Lefebvre in 1974, and "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)" written by Tschumi for the September-October 1975 issue of *Studio International*. As with the earlier writings by both authors, these two texts were closely analyzed to understand the similarities and differences between each authors' ideas of how space is "lived, perceived, and conceived," and how Tschumi utilizes these elements in the construction of his own architectural theory. Finally, a selection of Tschumi's post-1975 writings, including "Architecture and Transgression" (1976), "The Pleasure of Architecture" (1977), and *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981) are addressed to determine the ways in which the influence of Lefebvre's philosophy has both persisted and evolved throughout Tschumi's career.

The English language analysis of Lefebvre's body of work has increased in recent years, and these texts by Stuart Elden, Eleonore Kofman, Elizabeth Lebas, Andy Merrifield, and others were consulted to complement the reading of the primary texts and better illustrate the differences between Lefebvre's own philosophical aims and intentions, and Tschumi's interpretations of Lefebvre's writing for an architectural context. While Tschumi's early writings frequently referenced the work of Lefebvre, other foundational influences are explored to help explain why and how Tschumi's theories diverge from Lefebvre's. The aforementioned works of K. Michael Hays, Renata Hejduk, and Louis Martin are consulted to identify the primary influences from the philosophers of the Tel Quel group. Additional influences identified by Tschumi, which are explored within this text, are the activities of the Situationists,

Tschumi's partnership with Roselee Goldberg—whose own interests include performance art and spatial theory—and the work of Archizoom and the Italian Radicals.

Generous funding from the John Morse Foundation facilitated a trip to conduct research in London, where several archives house primary source materials chronicling Tschumi's activities at the AA and within the British art scene. The archives at the Institute of Contemporary Art yielded correspondence, press clippings, and lecture handouts from a 1973 lecture given by Lefebvre, and coordinated by Tschumi. The collection at the Architectural Association contains several rare publications from Tschumi's time as an instructor, as well as events lists and articles in the student newspaper that described Tschumi's activities at the AA, including his work in collaboration with Roselee Goldberg and the Royal College of Arts. An archivist at the Royal College of Arts helped to procure a file of press clippings related to Tschumi and Goldberg's collaboration on the 1975 exhibit *A Space: A Thousand Words*. Finally, both the archives and general collection at the Royal Institute of British Architects library contained some texts and publications not available at the University of Washington. As a whole, the texts and materials procured on this trip proved invaluable for constructing a broader and more detailed narrative of Tschumi's lesser-known work during this era.

Chapter Outline

This thesis documents much of Tschumi's early work and teaching to trace Lefebvre's influence and the development of the architect's own theories during the 70s and early '80s. Chapter 2 begins with a brief introduction to Lefebvre and Tschumi, the 1968 Paris riots, and the Architectural Association, providing a background of the primary actors, events, and stage that inform the work at hand. Following the events of May 1968, Tschumi began teaching at the Architectural Association, which has a unique history of student directed study that fostered Tschumi's development and gave him wide range to explore and refine his theories in an academic setting. His arrival there corresponds with a greater political awareness among the student body, and Tschumi initially focused his research on urban uprisings and

political action. Lefebvre’s writings on cities greatly influenced Tschumi’s understanding of the political and social forces that shape the urban environment, and the young architect frequently referenced Lefebvre’s work in his own writings. From here the analysis is divided into three parts that reflect the evolution of Tschumi’s work and theory, titled Political Praxis, Art Praxis, and Spatial Praxis. While these phases are largely chronological they are by no means distinct; cross-contamination and temporal overlap does occur.

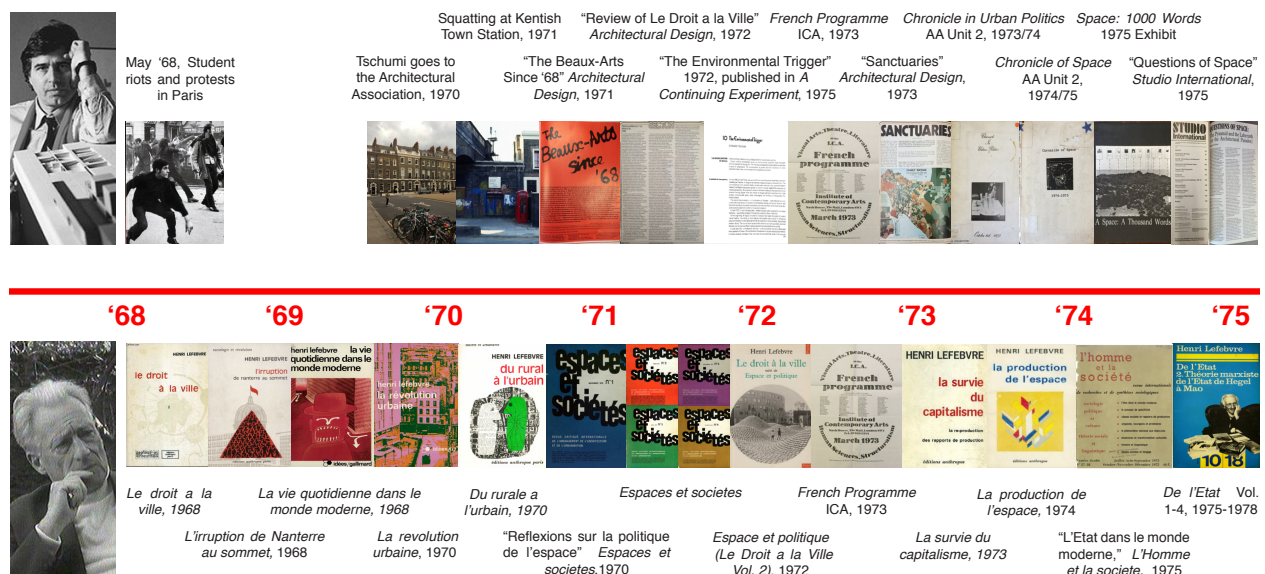


Figure 1.1: Timeline, 1968 to 1975

Chapter 2, Political Praxis, illustrates Tschumi’s indebtedness to Lefebvre’s urban theory. At this phase in his career, Tschumi is interested in using architecture as a revolutionary critique of society. When he first began teaching at the AA Tschumi wrote two articles for *Architectural Design* that quote and discuss Lefebvre’s philosophy as it pertained to public space and various urban uprisings. The first such article, “The Beaux-Arts Since ‘68,” written in collaboration with Martin Pawley in 1971, provides an account of the revolutionary events of 1968 that occurred at the École des Beaux-Arts. His second article, a review of Lefebvre’s *Le droit à la ville*, published in 1972, introduces Lefebvre to an English

speaking architectural audience. Here, Tschumi argues that Lefebvre's analysis is valuable for architects, but that his text does not offer a solution or clearly defined set of tools. As a response to this observed omission, Tschumi wrote *The Environmental Trigger* (1972, published 1975), in which he addresses Lefebvre's critiques of the architectural profession, and proposes his own operative methods for a politically motivated architectural practice. His 1971 squatting activities demonstrate the architect's proposals for "rhetorical action," in emulation of the student radicals active in Paris after May '68. Finally, it is during this time that Tschumi brings Lefebvre to speak at the Institute for Contemporary Arts, and in the process establishes a connection between his students at the AA and the political scene in France.

As an instructor at the Architectural Association, Tschumi continued to refine his theories. In chapter 3, Art Praxis, Lefebvre's influence is still present, but the influence of the Roselee Goldberg and avant-garde architects from France and Italy comes to the forefront as Tschumi engages in activities defined as art-praxis. His research on urban uprisings gives way to a study of space, which parallels Lefebvre's continued refinement of the same topic. Tschumi headed Unit 2 of the Diploma School from 1973-1975, during which time he and his students produced two small journals that are indicative of his research interests. The first, *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (1973/74), shows the continued influence of Lefebvre, and the beginnings of the transition to art-praxis. The second, *Chronicle of Space* (1974/75), illustrates the beginnings of Tschumi's own art-praxis with a frame from "Fireworks" (1974) and gives hints at the direction his work takes in "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)." This second chronicle corresponds with an exhibit at the RCA, organized by Tschumi and Goldberg, in which the participants are asked for submissions on the discourse of space. Tschumi's own submission, "Fireworks" uses the ideas of Lefebvre and Theodor Adorno to theorize that the only architecture capable of extrication from the grips of capitalism is that which is consumed unproductively, like a match that is lit purely for the pleasure of watching it burn.

Chapter 4, Spatial Praxis, explores Tschumi's evolving architectural theory of space. In 1975 Tschumi wrote "Questions of Space, The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)" seemingly shifting his focus away from the political and social capabilities of architectural action, towards developing a theory of space. Tschumi's writings in "*The Architectural Paradox*" deliberately references

Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, both in his discussion of historical theories of space, which is strikingly derivative of Lefebvre's analysis of the same topic, and in the development of his own tripartite discussion of architectural space. Tschumi's concepts of the "pyramid" and "labyrinth" share certain similarities with Lefebvre's theories of "mental" and "real" space, and while Tschumi engages "social space", Lefebvre's third construct, in his resolution of "the paradox of architecture", the third part of Tschumi's triad ultimately proposes a depoliticized and autonomous architecture. As previously mentioned, other authors have discussed the influence of other French poststructuralists upon this work. This thesis will show the extent to which Tschumi adapts Lefebvre's theories in the evolution of his own triad, which influences the "space-event-movement" triad found in *The Manhattan Transcripts*.

The influence of Lefebvre's philosophy never fully disappears from Tschumi's work. The evolutionary traces of Tschumi's earlier proposals for architecture can be found in revised and restated forms in the essays he writes after he leaves the Architecture Association to work and teach in the United States. As he gains architectural commissions, his earlier ideology is tempered, and his desire to challenge the system dissipates. Nonetheless, Tschumi's questions pertaining to the role the architect are analogous to the current climate within the profession, and both Lefebvre's and Tschumi's analysis has a renewed relevance.

The aim of this analysis of Tschumi's theory is not to prove that Tschumi borrowed or derived *all* of his ideas from Lefebvre's, but rather to illustrate both the influence that Lefebvre's work had on Tschumi's, and to address the similar themes within their contemporaneous written work. Lefebvre was an extremely prolific writer, and his texts were read by many of Tschumi's peers and contemporaries. As Umberto Eco cautions in *On Literature* we must be aware of the "network of influences and echoes" present in a given work.³⁵ For example, in a given situation Tschumi may be referencing Lefebvre, or he may be referencing the architects of UP6, who are in turn interpreting Lefebvre. Whether the initial source is direct or indirect, the projects and theories examined in this thesis indicate the extent to which Lefebvre's writings and ideas influenced the young architect.

³⁵ Umberto Eco, *On Literature*, trans. M. L. McLaughlin (Orlando: Harcourt, 2005), 123.

As will be shown in the following chapter, the events of 1968 influenced the direction of both Lefebvre's and Tschumi's work. Following the events of 1968, Lefebvre increasingly focused his writing on the analysis of cities and the revolutionary potential of urban space. As a recent graduate embarking on a career in architecture, the events of 1968 led Tschumi to question the profession and its ability to affect societal problems. Tschumi found a particular resonance in Lefebvre's ideas, and his teaching position at the Architectural Association gave him a forum for further exploring these ideas in an architectural context. Tschumi brought a revolutionary spirit to his work at the Architectural Association, and the following chapters illustrate the extent to which Lefebvre's theories influenced Tschumi's at the beginning of his career.



Very powerful forces tend to destroy the city. A particular kind of planning projects on the ideological terrain a practice whose aim is the death of the city....For the *working class*, victim of segregation and expelled from the traditional city, deprived of a present or possible urban life, there is a practical and therefore *political* problem even if it is not posed politically and even if until now the housing question has for it and its representatives concealed the problematic of the city and the *urban*.³⁶

–Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 1968

Most people concerned with architecture feel some sort of disillusion and dismay. None the early utopian ideals of the twentieth century has materialized, none of its social aims has succeeded. Burred by reality, the ideals have turned into redevelopment nightmares and the aims into bureaucratic policies. The split between social reality and utopian dream has become total, the gap between economic constraints and the illusion of all-solving technique absolute.³⁷

–Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 1994

³⁶ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 145-146.

³⁷ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 27.

02. TSCHUMI AND LEFEBVRE: A BACKGROUND

Lefebvre's and Tschumi's writings are part of a larger theoretical examination of the topic of space by the philosophers, artists, and revolutionaries of the 1960s and 1970s. Lefebvre and Tschumi were both influenced by, and participants in, the riots and protests that spread throughout Paris and France in 1968. Architecture and urban planning politics played an important role in the explosive events. The protesters, including Tschumi and Lefebvre, were reacting in part against the planning ideals of Modernism, which had led to failed policies of slum clearance and the relocation of the lower classes to suburbs as a means of social reform.³⁸ The impact of this politicized contestation of space is readily apparent in both Lefebvre's and Tschumi's writings, as well as the latter's teachings at the Architectural Association. As a young architect, Tschumi, and many others of his generation, saw architecture as being subservient to, and reinforcing, the existing power structure. The perceived incapacity of the profession to produce any real change in society, an idea which permeates Lefebvre's essays, influenced Tschumi's activities at the

³⁸ The authors cite a passage from Lefebvre's *Thèse sur La Ville*, 1968: "Our experience has shown us that it is possible to have growth without social reform—which is to say that quantitative growth can exist without qualitative improvement. Under these conditions social change tends to be more apparent than real. Belief in change (the ideology of Modernism) enables us to ignore the stagnation of essential social values." Martin Pawley and Bernard Tschumi, "The Beaux Arts Since 1968," *Architectural Design* 41, (September 1971): 540.

Architectural Association. As will be shown in the following chapter, the young architect sought an alternate role for the profession, extricated from the grip of capitalism. At the AA, he found an innovative and avant-garde institution that gave him the freedom to develop his ideas.

Henri Lefebvre

Henri Lefebvre, born June 16, 1901 in southwestern region of France, was a prolific writer, penning over 70 books, and countless essays, before his death in 1991.³⁹ From 1968 to 1974, the relatively brief period of Lefebvre's oeuvre on which this thesis is primarily focused, Lefebvre wrote nine books and contributed to *Espaces et Sociétés*, a journal he founded with Anatole Kopp in 1970.⁴⁰ *The Production of Space*, one of his best-known works published in 1974, was his 57th book. Prior to the events of 1968, and the compendium of his writings on cities and space, Lefebvre was predominately recognized for his work on Marxism, and dialectical materialism. In France, his 1948 study of Marx, *Le Marxisme*, is the best selling of all his books.⁴¹ Similarly, he was, according to Rob Shields, well known as the 'father of the dialectic' for his contribution to dialectical materialism.⁴²

Lefebvre was a member of the Parti Communist Français (PCF), and subsequently the leftist Situationist International. He joined the PCF in 1928 and left in 1958⁴³, after becoming disillusioned with

³⁹ Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, (London: Continuum, 2004), 1-4.

⁴⁰ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 99.

Merrifield writes that during Lefebvre's tenure as editor "the journal was a mouthpiece for New Left thinking on cities, space, and politics, as well as a new breed of Young Turk critical sociologists, economists, and political scientists. ... Issue number 1 (November 1970) was inaugurated with Lefebvre's pioneering "Réflexions sur la politique de l'espace," an agenda-setting manifest." Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 183.

⁴¹ Andy Merrifield has observed that *The Production of Space*, while extremely popular in much of the world, is Lefebvre's least known work in France: "[The French] generally acknowledge Lefebvre as a Marxist philosopher cum rural—urban sociologist; in this camp Lefebvre reigns as a prophet of alienation and Marxist humanism, a thinker who brought an accessible Marx to a whole generation of French scholars. (*Le Marxisme* [1948], appearing in the immensely popular "Que sais-je?" series—"What do I know?"—remains far and away his best selling book.)" Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, xxxii.

⁴² Shields observes that "focusing on dialectical materialism as a general method developed by Marx but applied by him to only a limited number of fields, Lefebvre proposed dialectical materialism as a universal method. While Althusser and 'scientific Marxists' saw economics and materialism as the legacy of Marx, Lefebvre saw dialectical materialism as the rigorous core of Marx's insight. The dialectic itself thus became the cornerstone of Lefebvre's philosophical critique of the formal logic of traditional philosophies." Rob Shields, *Lefebvre Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 109.

⁴³ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 1-3.

the realities of Stalinism, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956.⁴⁴ Additionally, Lefebvre's interpretation of Marx's writings differed from the official party line of the PCF, who preferred the economism and 'scientific Marxism' of Louis Althusser, among others, to Lefebvre's humanistic Marxism.⁴⁵ As Lefebvre wrote in *The Explosion*, the officially sanctioned Marxism of the PCF failed to address the complexity of production:

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that it is impossible to reduce Marxist thought to economism. The specialized and fragmented "discipline" of political economy also plays a *reductive* role. It dissimulates the complexity of society viewed as a whole: production in the broad sense, reproduction of relations (and not merely production and reproduction of objects, instruments and goods)—a structure therefore that contains ideologies and institutions, "values" and a limited rationality.⁴⁶

Lefebvre's broader definition of production is, of course, integral to his work on cities, space, and the state. Upon leaving the PCF, Lefebvre was an influential member of the Situationist International, until his acrimonious split from the group in the mid 1960s.⁴⁷ Guy Debord, one of the Situationists founding theoreticians, had studied under Lefebvre in the 1950s,⁴⁸ and the members of the Situationist International frequently visited Lefebvre at his home in Navarrenx.⁴⁹ The relationship was a natural one, as both Lefebvre and Debord were interested in the political nature of and social construction of space; Stuart Elden has observed that there was a "push-pull relation with Situationism, both sides taking something from the other's work."⁵⁰ Andy Merrifield credits the Situationists for influencing Lefebvre's "spatial turn":

During Lefebvre and Debord's early friendship, it was hard to know who influenced whom. Lefebvre may have lifted more from Debord and the Situationists than he cracked on. ... Debord and [Dutch architect Constant] Nieuwenhuys steadily nudged Lefebvre toward an interest in urbanism, which would soon hatch in *Introduction to Modernity*.⁵¹

Similarly, Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas credit Constant for his influence upon Lefebvre's ideas of experimental utopias.⁵² Ultimately Lefebvre and the Situationists parted ways. Debord and the

⁴⁴ Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, xxiii.

⁴⁵ Shields, *Lefebvre Love and Struggle*, 22-3.

⁴⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Explosion: Marxism and the French Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 35.

⁴⁷ Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas, and Eleonore Kofman, *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings* (London: Continuum, 2003), 164. See also Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 13.

⁴⁸ Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 11.

⁴⁹ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵¹ Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 33.

⁵² Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 12.



Figure 2.1: Cover of *Espaces et Sociétés*, November 1970; Cover of *La révolution urbaine*, 1970

Situationists became increasingly radical, engaging actively in protests and the production of agitprop, whereas Lefebvre continued to lecture and study spatial “everyday” relationships and rhythms, globalization, and the state.

Lefebvre’s interest in cities and architecture can be seen in his earliest writings, but this aspect of his career developed more fully in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time Lefebvre actively studied and critiqued architecture and urban planning as the director of the Institute de Sociologie Urbaine in Paris. His writings address many of the same issues that contemporary architects were discussing, such as housing shortages and government building programs.⁵³ Lefebvre taught courses for architecture students at the École Spéciale d’Architecture and had many ties to the architecture community. On

⁵³ Elden, Lebas, and Kofman, *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings*, 110. Bernard Tschumi, “Henri Lefebvre’s ‘Le droit à la ville,’” *Architectural Design* (September 1972): 581-2.

several occasions he even joined architectural teams for competitions.⁵⁴ Stuart Elden, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas have observed that *Le Droit à la Ville* (The Right to the City) was widely read and highly influential for architects and urban planners in France.⁵⁵ However, as Andy Merrifield notes, *The Production of Space*, may not have been met with the same reception there. Merrifield surmises that orthodox Marxists were uninterested in Lefebvre's writings on urbanism and space, and that Manuel Castells's *La question urbaine* (1972), published two years before Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace*, which criticized Lefebvre's earlier work on the 'urban question', was better received.⁵⁶ Merrifield claims that Lefebvre's work on space was relatively neglected when it was initially released, and that Anglo-American scholarship can be credited for its revival.⁵⁷

Henri Lefebvre's philosophical and sociological work has been published prolifically, and while many of his writings have been translated, an even larger selection is not yet available in English.⁵⁸ Lefebvre has steadily gained popularity in an Anglo-American context in recent years; Merrifield has observed that "from the mid-1970s onward, Lefebvre's urban and spatial ideas seeped in to an Anglophone urban and geographical scholarship, spawning by the early 1980s a Lefebvrian cottage industry of sociospatial Marxism."⁵⁹ Lefebvre's writings on cities and space are well known to architects and urban planners now, but were less well known/readily available to English speaking audiences in the early 1970s. *The Production of Space* was translated in 1991, seventeen years after it was written; *Writings on Cities*, which includes the translated *Right to the City*, was released in 1996; *The Urban Revolution* and a selection of essays grouped under the title *Key Writings* were released in 2003; and

⁵⁴ Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 23.

⁵⁵ Elden, Lebas, and Kofman, *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings*, 110.

⁵⁶ Andy Merrifield, "Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space," in *Thinking Space: Critical geographies*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 168.

⁵⁷ Merrifield observes Lefebvre's "minority status in France," and that he went on to become a "cult figure in Anglo-American intellectual circles." Further, he writes that Castells's "stinging criticism...probably helped assure the relative neglect of Lefebvre's work during the 1970s." Andy Merrifield, "Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space," in *Thinking Space: Critical Geographies*, ed. by Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 168-169.

⁵⁸ Elden, Lebas, and Kofman, *Henri Lefebvre: Key Writings*, xi.

⁵⁹ Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 102. In *Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space* Merrifield writes, "in this context I'd like to suggest that rather than Lefebvre influencing Anglo-American geography and urbanism, it is perhaps the other way around: Maybe it's been Anglo-American geography and urbanism that has resuscitated Lefebvre's flagging spatial career and prompted his more recent claim to fame. One wonders how well known his work would have become without the dedicated mediation of David Harvey, Ed Soja, Fredric Jameson, Mark Gottdiener, Derek Gregory *et al.* One wonders, too, whether we would have ever seen *The Production of Space* appear in English. God knows, seventeen years is long enough anyway." Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space*, 169.

Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment was posthumously published in 2014. In this light, Tschumi can be seen as an early transmitter of Lefebvre's ideas into English language scholarship and Anglo-American architectural circles.

Bernard Tschumi

Like Lefebvre, Bernard Tschumi was, and still is, interested in the relationship of architecture to the social policies of the city. Tschumi was an avid reader of French philosophy and, as this paper will demonstrate, themes and quotes from Lefebvre's texts frequently appear in Tschumi's early writings on urban revolutions. Tschumi was born in 1944, and educated at the Zurich Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in the 1960s. Although his father was an architect, Tschumi did not initially consider becoming one himself; a trip to Chicago, during a high-school year abroad, influenced his decision to apply to architecture programs upon his return home.⁶⁰ During his fifth year at the ETH, Tschumi traveled to Paris to intern for the firm of Candilis, Woods, and Josic.⁶¹ Two of the firm's partners, Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods, had worked together as project architects under Le Corbusier on the *Unité d'Habitation* project in Marseilles, France.⁶² While interning, Tschumi met Chilean architect Fernando Montes, with whom he later collaborated on the "Do-it-Yourself-City" project in 1969.⁶³ Even more influential than the training Tschumi received during his internship, which would be the only time he worked in any firm other than his own, were the political upheavals that occurred during his year in France. In the spring of 1968, the city erupted with demonstrations and calls for revolution; these events altered Tschumi's views of the profession and permeated his later activities as a young instructor at the Architectural Association.

⁶⁰ James Barron, Public Lives; An Architect with a Film Director's Eye, *New York Times*, October 5, 1999.

⁶¹ Gilles de Bure, Jasmine Benyamin, and Lisa Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2008), 84.

⁶² Tom Avermaete, *Another Modern: The Post-War Architecture and Urbanism of Candilis-Josic-Woods* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2005), 31.

⁶³ de Bure, Benyamin, and Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi*, 84.



Figure 2.2: Example of suburban redevelopment at Sarcelles, outside Paris

May 1968

The 1968 Paris riots influenced both Lefebvre's and Tschumi's subsequent writings and theories. The riots themselves stemmed from a variety of concerns including opposition to the Vietnam War, substandard housing and working conditions, and redevelopment at the expense of existing working class neighborhoods (figure 2.2). Tschumi summarized these concerns in "The Beaux-Arts since 1968," an article he co-wrote with Martin Pawley in 1971.⁶⁴ Here, he additionally censures architects for their failure to present solutions to these problems.⁶⁵ The student riots began as a call for the reformation of the

⁶⁴ Martin Pawley and Bernard Tschumi, "The Beaux-Arts Since '68," *Architectural Design*, 41, September 1971: 533.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 533.

French university system, which many viewed to be perpetuating these societal problems.⁶⁶ At the start of the unrest, students, described by one author as “Situationists, young communists, Trotskyists, anarchists, and Maoists,” forcefully occupied the administration building on the Nanterre campus on April 25th, causing the school to close on May 2nd.⁶⁷ The rebellion then spread to the Sorbonne, with an attempt to burn down the student union offices. Soon thereafter the workers’ unions entered the fray and the whole of France was engaged in riots and walkouts. Demonstrations, strikes, and clashes with riot police ensued throughout the months of May and June, ultimately concluding with General Charles de Gaulle’s reelection on June 30th.⁶⁸ The protested issues were far from resolved by de Gaulle’s election, and strikes and riots were reignited on several occasions in the subsequent years.⁶⁹

Lefebvre and Tschumi both participated in the events that swept through Paris that May. As a professor at the Paris University at Nanterre, Lefebvre is credited with helping to stoke the revolutionary fervor that shut down the university. As a 24 year old during the ’68 riots Tschumi had been involved in the takeover of the École des Beaux-Arts.⁷⁰ Although Tschumi was not a student at the École Des Beaux-Arts he took part in the many discussions and debates about restructuring the school:

[Tschumi] regularly attended meetings at the École des Beaux-Arts organized by the architecture school’s “occupation committee.” Among those attending were the architect and activist Roland Castro, the urban theorist Jean-Paul Dollé, the artists Gérard Fromanger and Merri Jolivet, and a young, soon-to-be-famous architect, Christian de Portzamparc. On these occasions, Tschumi actively engaged in discussions and debates.⁷¹

The young architect had started working in the Candilis Woods Josic office in September 1967, and was working there in May of 1968. When the protests began, Candilis, who Tschumi describes as being “an old Greek socialist,” encouraged his employees to go out to the streets and to report back to him in the morning.⁷² Tschumi was subsequently arrested during the course of the protests; he and his peers spent the night in a hospital that had been converted into a temporary police station.⁷³ “The Beaux-Arts Since

⁶⁶ Ibid., 555-6.

⁶⁷ Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, Pg 40.

⁶⁸ Pawley and Tschumi, “The Beaux-Arts Since ‘68,” 547.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 554.

⁷⁰ Hejduk, “Death Becomes Her,” 393.

⁷¹ de Bure, Benyamin, and Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi*, 85.

⁷² Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 481.

⁷³ de Bure, Benyamin, and Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi*, 85.

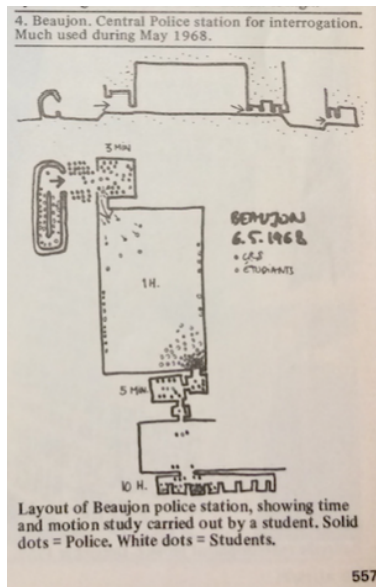


Figure 2.3: Tschumi's diagram of his arrest, Image of the Paris riots 1968

'68" includes a diagram of the arrested students being processed (figure 2.3). Tschumi later admitted that this drawing was autobiographical, but that he and his co-author, Martin Pawley, chose to credit the drawing to an anonymous student to avoid any adverse fallout back at the Architectural Association.⁷⁴

The Architectural Association

In 1970, Tschumi moved to London and began teaching architecture at the Architectural Association (AA) and Portsmouth Polytechnic. The architect had hoped to work with Cedric Price, but the commission Price was waiting on never materialized.⁷⁵ In the meantime Price introduced Tschumi to Peter Cook, a member of Archigram and the teaching staff at the Architectural Association; Cook then invited Tschumi to sit on a juried review and subsequently offered him a job at the AA, teaching a lecture series entitled

⁷⁴ Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 481.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

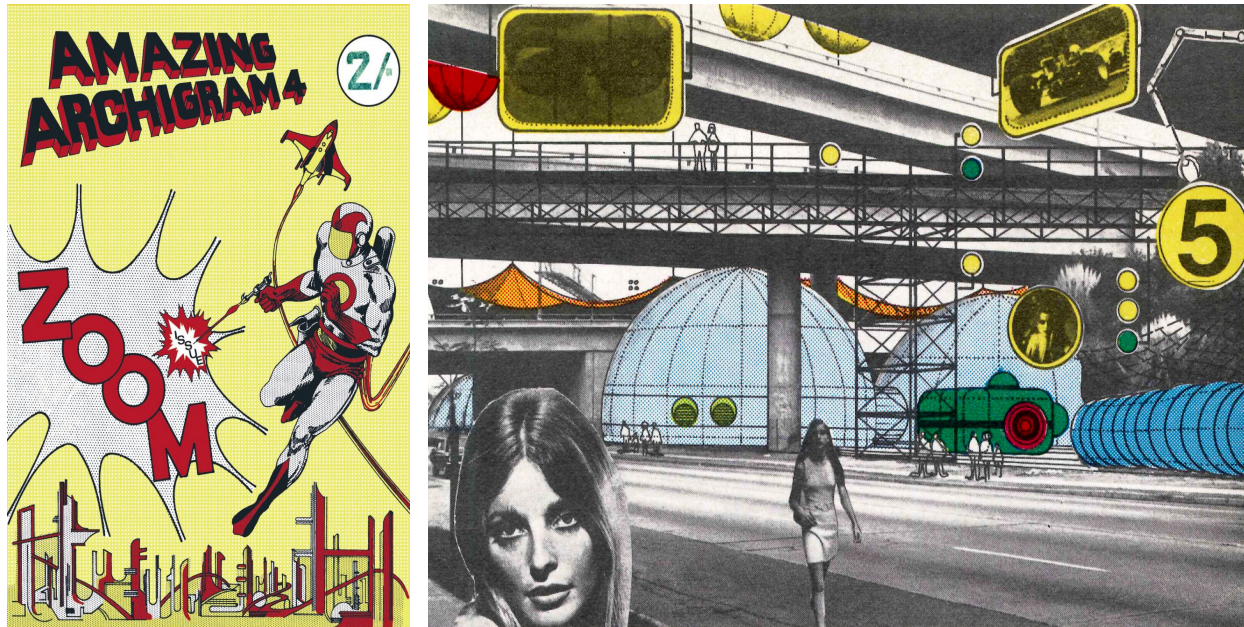


Figure 2.4: Archigram Magazine Issue No. 4, 1964; Instant City, collage, 1951

“Urban Politics”.⁷⁶ Tschumi became a unit master in 1973 and worked full time at the AA until 1975, at which time he began splitting his energies between the AA and teaching positions at Princeton University and Cooper Union in the United States.

The Architectural Association was arguably one of the most influential schools in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s.⁷⁷ The AA employed, taught, and published many of the most prominent architects of the period, and its associated magazine *Architectural Design (AD)* showcased the ideas and experiments that were conducted at the AA during this era. The school was founded in 1847 as an alternative to the apprenticeship model of training available to English architects.⁷⁸ The principals of self-determination, self-education, self-reliance, and mutual instruction are cornerstones of the school’s

⁷⁶ de Bure, Benjamin, and Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi*, 86. See also Martin, “Transpositions,” 22.

⁷⁷ John Hejduk includes the IAUS and Cooper Union in this distinctive grouping stating that “During the early heady days there were three educational places that formed an architectural triangle. The AA of London, the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies of New York, and the Cooper Union School of Architecture. The cross-Atlantic fertilization was formidable, provoking an intellectually stimulating critique.” John Hejduk, “A Sense of Spirit: Alvin Boyarsky 1928-1990,” *Aa Files*, (1990): 3-4.

⁷⁸ Edward Bottoms, “Abridged version of an introductory lecture to Archives For London & the Twentieth Century Society,” *AA School (blog)*, Architectural Association, February 2010, <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/AALIFE/LIBRARY/aaahistory.php>; see also Charles Jencks, “125 Years of Quasi Democracy,” in *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*, ed. James Gowan (London: Architectural Press, 1975): 151.

pedagogy, and as a result the ideologies and output of the school varies along with the personalities teaching at the AA at any given time.⁷⁹ While the school was known for being radically leftist as early as the 1930s, this political ideology was replaced in the 1960s by the avant-garde “pop-culture” underpinnings of Cedric Price and Archigram.⁸⁰ All six members of Archigram—Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Michael Webb, Ron Herron, and Warren Chalk—taught at the AA during this decade.⁸¹ At the beginning of the 1970s, when Tschumi joined the faculty, the AA experienced a significant amount of turmoil and uncertainty when the school nearly closed in 1971. An internal struggle and acrimonious debate ensued when the student body prevented the school from being absorbed into the Imperial College of Science and Technology in South Kensington; ultimately Alvin Boyarsky was elected Chairman in 1972 with the task of fixing the school’s finances and preserving its independence.⁸² Under Boyarsky’s direction, the teaching units became more responsive to the contemporary concerns of students, with competition developing among unit masters who were required to advertise their intended course of study to attract students.⁸³ The AA of the 1970s attracted and produced a number of prominent instructors including Tschumi (leading studios and lecturing on urban politics), Charles Jenks (lecturing on semiotics), Leon Krier, Peter Cook, Robin Middleton (directing the General Studies program), Joseph Rykwert, and Daniel Libeskind.⁸⁴ Additionally, many of the instructors were cultivated from within the school; Martin Pawley, Rem Koolhaas, and Zaha Hadid, all former students of the AA, began teaching in 1970, 1975 and 1978 respectively.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ James Gowan, writing in 1975, noted that “the AA’s incipient problem, as far as teaching is concerned, is its inability to focus its lavish and somewhat fortuitous resources in a particular direction of common good, or any other direction for that matter.” James Gowan, “Introduction,” in *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*, ed. James Gowan (London: Architectural Press, 1975): 14.

⁸⁰ Bottoms, *AA School (blog)*.

⁸¹ Archigram and Price were heavily influenced by pop art and consumer culture: Simon Sadler summarizes the group’s attitudes, writing that for Archigram “the ideal building would be as desirable as a new car, and as disposable as an old one.” Archigram was considered to be avant-garde but pursued an architecture free (supposedly) of ideology and theory, garnering critique for a perceived refusal to be political. Instead of ideology and theory, Archigram and Price presented designs Fun Palaces and Entertainment Centers with collages of women in pursuing leisure activities. Simon Sadler, *Archigram: Architecture Without Architecture*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005), 35, 44, 161.

⁸² Grahame Shane, “Obituary: Alvin Boyarsky (1928-1990),” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 45.3 (1992): 189.

⁸³ Colin Davis, “Place and Purpose: The AA as an Urban Educational Institution,” *Architectural Review* (October 1983): 25.

⁸⁴ Bottoms, *AA School (blog)*.

⁸⁵ Bottoms, *AA School (blog)*.

The events of 1968, notably the riots at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, altered the pedagogical trajectory of the AA. Initially, the atmosphere was less politically charged than one might expect despite the pervasive political happenings of 1968. A visit to the École des Beaux-Arts in 1969 showcased this apolitical attitude: Paul Oliver, an instructor on the trip, observed that the French students “were irritated by the relaxed ‘cool’ of the AA students and their apparent lack of political involvement; their visitors were surprised by the Parisian militancy.”⁸⁶ Oliver writes that after the Paris visit “the demand for lectures and seminars on political theory and action increased sharply”:

Changes in staff as the seventies began reflected this and the AA became more politically aware than it had been for a dozen years, perhaps in its entire life. Those who believed in the necessity for individual freedom to shape one’s own environment, or in the formation of cooperatives for community action in housing and settlement favoured anarchism; those that saw solutions only as a result of social revolution took a Marxist position.⁸⁷

Oliver’s description of the AA in the early seventies, under Boyarsky’s leadership, indicates a place where community action and small-scale design interventions were more common than traditional design projects.⁸⁸

The role of the architect came into question in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and this debate was augmented by the new direction of instruction within the school. Paul Oliver noted that the “healthy disrespect for professionalism, or at least the architectural profession,” that had been typical at the AA intensified during this decade:

The discussion [of the period] questions whether the architect has the right to assume the mantle of grand designer, whether the planner is equipped, can *ever* be equipped, to make the decisions which affect the lives and environments of hundreds of thousands of people.⁸⁹

For Tschumi, the professional crisis stemmed from the events he witnessed in 1968:

For a number of us, the outcome of May 1968 had meant the impossibility of believing anymore in architecture as a happy sort of problem-solving activity. Instead, it seemed more relevant to raise a critical voice and try to dismantle what you knew didn’t work with society and its projection on the ground, in other words, the city and architecture.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Simon Sadler, “An Avant-Garde Academy,” in *Architectures: Modernism and After*, ed. Andrew Ballantyne (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 186. See also, Paul Oliver, “The Houses in Between,” in *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*, ed. James Gowan (London: Architectural Press, 1975), 84.

⁸⁷ Oliver, “The Houses in Between,” 85.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

⁹⁰ Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 482.



Figure 2.5: Bernard Tschumi at a final presentation at the AA.

Nigel Coates later recalled that the initial response to the problem produced several departments working on what we might now call sustainable architecture: “In 1974, some students in other units were still designing urban farms with solar panels on the roof and windmills in the garden.”⁹¹ An even larger contingent within the AA opted for a different solution to the problems facing the profession. Architecture and theoretical explorations that were aligned with art practices began to dominate the school in the late 1970s. According to Rem Koolhaas’s accounts “the important teachers [of the period] were Leon Krier and Bernard Tschumi, who were concerned with phenomenology.”⁹²

⁹¹ Nigel Coates, “Narrative Break-up,” in *The Discourse of Events: Themes 3 Architectural Association* (London: Spin Offset Ltd, 1983): 13-14.

⁹² Rem Koolhaas, “Architecture and Globalization,” in *Reflections on Architectural Practices in the Nineties*, ed. William S. Saunders and Peter G. Rowe (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 235.

Tschumi's teaching and writings on urban issues at the Architectural Association reflect the influences of Lefebvre and the events of 1968.⁹³ In an interview with Enrique Walker, Tschumi credits Lefebvre's and Anatolle Kopp's writings as being highly influential for architecture in the period following the riots of 1968:

I was fascinated by Lefebvre's analysis of cities. He talked about the politics of space by saying the city was a projection of society on the ground—that architecture was literally the mirror image of society.⁹⁴

Lefebvre's analysis of urban space and the architecture and planning professions influenced Tschumi's work in the early years at the AA. Tschumi's own critiques of architecture led him to produce theory in lieu of a traditional design practice:

This was our predicament: Be socially responsible and leave architecture all together, or do architecture with bad faith. Yet, there were also ways to avoid being caught in the dilemma. I was looking at art practices and the practice of artists....For example, if you couldn't build real buildings, maybe you would redefine what architecture was. So you could say "books on architecture are architecture".⁹⁵

Tschumi was particularly inspired the activist and revolutionary ethos of avant-guard groups like the radical Situationist International who were actively challenging the structure of French society.⁹⁶ In *Clip Stamp Fold* Denis Crompton recalls that the members of Archigram were looking to American writers for inspiration, and while they were familiar with some of the Situationists they were not reading their writings, as they had yet to be translated into English.⁹⁷ The French, he observed, were reading Henri Lefebvre, but the members of Archigram were reading Tom Wolfe and beat poetry.⁹⁸ Tschumi is largely responsible for shifting the focus within the school, and for inviting Lefebvre, Kopp, and other French radicals to lecture at the Architectural Association and the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.⁹⁹

The school had transitioned from the exuberance of the Archigram period in the sixties, to the politically charged period of the early seventies and, towards the end of the seventies, was moving away

⁹³ de Bure, Benjamin, Palmer. *Bernard Tschumi*, 85. Louis Martin has observed that for his early writings, Tschumi "[derived] his analytical methodology from contemporary French sociopolitical theories of urbanism of structuralist and Marxist tendency, particularly those of Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord." Martin, "Transpositions," 24.

⁹⁴ Enrique Walker and Bernard Tschumi, *Tschumi on Architecture: Conversations with Enrique Walker* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2006), 15.

⁹⁵ Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 50.

⁹⁶ Martin, "Transpositions," 24.

⁹⁷ Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 315.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Walker and Tschumi, *Tschumi on Architecture*, 15; de Bure, Benjamin, Palmer. *Bernard Tschumi*, 88.

from architecture concerned with social action, towards the movement that would influence and house some of the key proponents of deconstructivism and post-modernism.¹⁰⁰ The events in Paris in 1968 profoundly affected Tschumi's views on architecture, and he frequently turned to Lefebvre's writings to better understand the political and social forces at work in cities and urban spaces. Working at the Architectural Association gave Tschumi an outlet for writings that were undoubtedly inspired by his lecture series on urban politics. As will be shown in the following chapter, these articles are illustrative of the architect's political stance at the beginning of the 1970s, the outlet of his questioning the profession itself, and the beginnings of his search to define a new role for architecture.



¹⁰⁰ George Baird has observed that *Architectural Design* adopted the “newly-historicized perspective on architecture” in the mid 70s, when its editors “started to present modernist and premodernist subjects with a similar frame of reference. Further, [AD] perused a keen new interest in urban history, which led to the presentation of extensive new typological and morphological studies of various cities in Europe.” George Baird, “1968 and its Aftermath: The Loss of Moral Confidence in Architectural Practice and Education,” in *Reflections on Architectural Practices in the Nineties*, eds. William S. Saunders and Peter G. Rowe (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996): 67.

There is a politics of space, because space is political.¹⁰¹
–Henri Lefebvre, “Réflexions sur la politique de l’espace,” 1970

Urban conflicts make the city a privileged field for revolutionary actions. Social conflicts increasingly focus on environmental problems that eventually become a pretext for insurgency. The crisis is a consequence of exploitation as well as a product of urbanization. The concentration of power and the complexity of urban networks makes cities most vulnerable to revolutionary activities.¹⁰²

–Bernard Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 1972

¹⁰¹ Henri Lefebvre, “Reflections on the Politics of Space,” in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 174.

¹⁰² Tschumi, *The Environmental Trigger*, 89.

03. POLITICAL PRAXIS

When Tschumi began teaching at the Architectural Association in 1970 his work was influenced by the events he had witnessed in Paris. The architect's first job at the AA was to teach a lecture series titled "Urban Politics."¹⁰³ The articles that he wrote between 1970 and 1973 share the same theme as his lecture series, and are focused on urban uprisings and analyses of urban space. His research for his seminars and articles included research on the activities of the IRA in Belfast, an activity that, by Tschumi's account, resulted in bomb threats against the AA.¹⁰⁴ Tschumi's biography in the 73/74 Diploma School Prospectus indicates that he was, at the time, writing a book on urban insurgency; and while this book was never published it seems likely that the texts he did publish during this period would have influenced, or been an part of, this work.¹⁰⁵ Lefebvre's influence is palpable during this phase of Tschumi's career, and at Tschumi's invitation Lefebvre participated in lectures at the Institute for Contemporary Arts and at the Architectural Association. However, as will be shown in this chapter,

¹⁰³ de Bure, Benjamin, Palmer, *Bernard Tschumi*, 86; Martin, "Transpositions," 22.

¹⁰⁴ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7 and 11.

¹⁰⁵ "AA 73 74 Diploma School," *Architectural Association School of Architecture Prospectus: 1973/74 – 1976/77*, Architectural Association Library Collections, 5.



Figure 3.1: AD covers and article pages l to r: “The Beaux-Arts Since ‘68,” “Review of Henri Lefebvre’s *Le droit à la ville*,” “Sanctuaries”

Tschumi was not content to simply analyze the architecture of revolutionary action; instead, he aspired to use architecture to bring awareness to existing societal ills and affect real change within the profession. Inspired by the example of a group of revolutionary minded architecture students known as UP6, Tschumi led his students in political acts such as the takeover of an abandoned rail station in northern London.

The articles Tschumi published between 1971 and 1973 frequently refer to and engage with Lefebvre’s writings, simultaneously showing Tschumi’s dissatisfaction with the architectural profession and his search for a tactic for architects that would accelerate the process of social change. “The Beaux-Arts since ‘68,” written for *Architectural Design* in 1971, addresses the French riots of 1968, and is

specifically “an account of militancy among architecture students in Paris”.¹⁰⁶ This article illustrates Tschumi’s inquiries into the nature of space as a reflection of society, with references to Lefebvre’s ideas of class struggle, the problems of growth without social reform, and the role of the architect as an instrument and perpetrator of bourgeois ideals.¹⁰⁷ Tschumi’s first critique of Lefebvre’s theories can be found in his review of *Le Droit à la Ville*, which he wrote in 1972. Here, Tschumi addresses Lefebvre’s relevance for architects, and while he finds Lefebvre’s analysis of cities to be highly influential, he argues that it does not provide a useful methodology for architects. A recurrent refrain within Lefebvre’s essays and books faults architects and planners for reinforcing existing power structures; Tschumi shared these concerns, but strove to find a solution. The same year that he wrote his review of Lefebvre’s text, Tschumi penned “The Environmental Trigger.” This article, which was not published until 1975, can be viewed both as being influenced by, and responding to Lefebvre’s criticisms. It is here that Tschumi proposes his own set of tools, including radical critique and counterdesign. Architects could either be complicit in perpetuating social problems and class struggles or, by using these devices, they could help to incite the revolution.

The Beaux-Arts Since ‘68 (AD, September 1971)

In January of 1971 Tschumi arranged for a contingent of Diploma Unit students to visit the recently restructured École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.¹⁰⁸ Students from the Architectural Association had visited the École des Beaux-Arts in the past, but this trip coincided with, and inspired, a marked change in the type of instruction offered at the AA. Peter Cook later credited this trip, and Tschumi and Colin Fournier in particular, with establishing connections with the “Paris radicals” who influenced the subsequent increase in political activities at the AA.¹⁰⁹ Following the trip, Tschumi and Martin Pawley co-wrote “The

¹⁰⁶ Pawley and Tschumi, “The Beaux-Arts Since ‘68,” 536-66.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 540.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 533.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Cook, “Cook’s Grand Tour: Highlights of Recent History,” *Architectural Review* (October 1983): 35.

Beaux-Arts since '68" for the September 1971 issue of *Architectural Design*.¹¹⁰ The article, Tschumi's first for AD, chronicles the 1968 protests, and more specifically, the activities of a group of students in Unité Pédagogique 6 (UP6) who were dissatisfied with, and wished to change, the course of study offered at the École des Beaux-Arts. These students critiqued the École for being an outmoded, bourgeois institution; initially they eschewed traditional assignments, such as the design of a pool for an exclusive club, and demanded more practical design problems that focused on issues such as social housing.¹¹¹ Eventually, this breakaway group argued that the structure of the degree itself was out of touch with societal issues the profession should be addressing:

The group attempted a revolution in architectural teaching by turning the very basis of their studies toward the exposure and uprooting of the social evils which our present system of environmental design and construction seems unable to ameliorate. Inadequate housing, the destruction of communities by redevelopment, the harsh treatment of building workers and immigrants, the ecological absurdities of our technological society; above all the idiocy and criminal irresponsibility of professionals who refuse to acknowledge their role in the whole process of economic growth and industrial development – and the social consequences that flow from it – these were the issues over which UP6 [Unité Pédagogique 6] acted.¹¹²

While much of the narrative focuses on specific events, the concerns of the students at the École des Beaux-Arts mirrors Tschumi's own dissatisfaction with the profession. The authors begin the article by stating "the story begins with the disintegration of a system of architectural education that once led the world and then came within fifty years to represent all that was archaic, corrupt and obscure about architecture."¹¹³ Tschumi's own path as an educator, particularly in his first years at the AA, was greatly influenced by this frustration and the corresponding activities of UP6.

A significant portion of the article provides first-hand accounts of the events that transpired in the three-year period between May 6th, 1968, through June 22nd, 1971. Tschumi and Pawley begin with an account of the policies and conditions leading up to the 1968 events, followed by a chronological listing of the strikes and riots that occurred locally and throughout France. Lefebvre's influence is felt, and stated, throughout the article, and many of the critiques of modern Paris that the authors describe are the same

¹¹⁰ For an unknown reason, both this article and Tschumi's book review of Lefebvre's *Droit à la Ville* are bylined "B. Tschumi," omitting the s in the author's last name. Pawley and Tschumi, "The Beaux-Arts Since '68," 533.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 538.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 533.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 536.

as those found in Lefebvre's texts. Once such critique is of the redevelopment of the city, at the expense of the working classes who are pushed out in the process:

Paris is now ringed with suburbs of which the infamous Sarcelles is a typical example...dispossessed occupants are for the most part shipped out to the new suburbs, whence they must travel in and out of daily, and for which they pay higher rents than formerly. The famous market at Les Halles is coming down....¹¹⁴

The authors go on to describe the current problems of decentralization and land speculation stemming from the creation of new satellite towns, a theme on which Lefebvre frequently wrote.¹¹⁵ Lefebvre's concerns regarding this quantitative growth without qualitative growth from *Thèse sur La Ville* (1968) are quoted further on:

Our experience has shown us that it is possible to have growth without social reform – which is to say that quantitative growth can exist without qualitative improvement. Under these conditions social change tends to be more apparent than real. Belief in change (the ideology of Modernism) enables us to ignore the stagnation of essential social values.¹¹⁶

Images accompanying the article show examples of these new towns, which the authors argue are neither able to support the sort of vibrant urban life found in the historic city, nor are they able to produce any real social change despite their clean and orderly appearance. Similarly, they critique the failure of government officials to understand the impacts of the destruction and redevelopment of parts of the historic city, writing “As Henri Lefebvre has pointed out, the class struggle is to be found in the very fabric of urbanization.”¹¹⁷ The continuation of the article documents UP6's role in this ongoing struggle, as an example of one group's attempts to redefine the architectural profession.

Much of the article is centered on the reforms within the *École des Beaux-Arts*, which continued to transpire many months after the workers unions ceased marching and striking. Lamenting the state of the architectural profession in 1968 the author's quote a critique offered by Lefebvre in *La Vie Quotidienne dans le Monde Moderne (Everyday Life in the Modern World, 1967)* stating “the Diploma became more of a passport to a proletarianized career of draughting for a salary.”¹¹⁸ UP6 by contrast, was described as being defined by political action over the production of draftsmen, as the students there

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 538.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 539.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 540. This quote is originally from “Thèse sur La Ville,” *SADG Bulletin*, supplement to no. 167, (Mai 1968).

¹¹⁷ Pawley and Tschumi, “The Beaux-Arts Since '68,” 539.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 538.

felt that architects had become the “guard dogs of the bourgeoisie”.¹¹⁹ In the upheaval that followed the summer of '68, the instructors of UP6 taught “cours sauvages”—lectures in streets, public offices, and even department stores.¹²⁰ They protested the working and living conditions of immigrant construction workers, overtook administration space to form a neighborhood *crèche* (daycare), and led community efforts to help residents facing eviction in redevelopment areas.¹²¹ The students were arrested on many occasions following these and other protest activities, but remained largely undeterred.¹²²

Where Lefebvre is often critical of the role of architecture, offering philosophy as a method of critique and analysis, Tschumi and Pawley use the activities of UP6 to argue that architecture too can provide a method of analysis and critique in the concluding section of the article titled “Architecture versus Politics”. They observe that the slogan “Destroy the University” was an original aim of the student movement, but that the students and instructors found an alternative that enabled them to enact social change from within the established system:

To close the school utterly and completely was to destroy any real possibility of systematic analysis and critique, there was still much that the school could do as an analytical tool for the study of the real process of construction and the built environment – not as an alibi for bourgeois involvement in it – but as an exposition of the repression and injustice at the very heart of the process which architects had hitherto been trained to manipulate. *Détournement* of this kind formed the basis of much of the action carried out by UP6.¹²³

Notably, Tschumi advocating the use of similar tactics in his essay “The Environmental Trigger.” For Tschumi and Pawley the most successful aspect of the actions taken by UP6 was the ability to bring awareness to social problems through protests and demonstrations, or *détournement*.

By creating an apparently random incident every day the students were able to guarantee media coverage as well as a certain amount of police discomfiture, furthermore the issues about which they were protesting could barely escape public notice. Above all they had succeeded in carrying their *contestation* into the public arena and out of the confines of the school.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 550, 564.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 550, 557, 559.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 564-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 560.



Figure 3.2: Images from “The École des Beaux-Arts Since ‘68”

They recognize the limitations of these actions writing that “the effectiveness of their operations in specific redevelopment areas such as Belleville was more doubtful – which is to say that the people whom they had intended to help still remained at the mercy of the rehousing programme.”¹²⁵ Instead success lay in generating awareness; by moving the discussion out of the enclosed space of academia into the public realm, the students attempted to encourage real policy change by informing and engaging the population at large. Arguing against critique that the students’ community protests were empty performances, the authors defend the validity of “symbolic intervention”: “The importance of a barricade does not lie in its

¹²⁵ Ibid., 560.

being a traffic hindrance, but in its power to reveal the violence of the regime through being a symbol and a catalyst.”¹²⁶ Referencing Richard Sennett’s 1971 book *The Uses of Disorder*, the authors propose “transcendental disorder” as a viable tactic, stating that “in the future that [this] would lead to further development of the concept of random, opportunist, guerilla tactics so that centres of fertile disorder will emerge in clear opposition to the official sanctuaries of order.”¹²⁷ Tschumi and Pawley see these actions as an important part of an architect’s role, writing “today the architectural student endeavors to engage in the dialogue of international political life – instead of passively accepting its conclusions.”¹²⁸

While the article was written at a time when the students at the AA were in the midst of a fight to keep the school open, the atmosphere at the AA prior to the ’71 Paris trip was decidedly apolitical. Perhaps hoping to incite an increased awareness at their home institution, Tschumi and Pawley argued that by comparison to the students of UP6 “we [at the AA] are not political, we don’t know what the word means.”¹²⁹ In the article, Tschumi and Pawley are critical of the contemporary work being produced at the AA, including Cedric Price’s Fun Palace:

On the AA screen appear collages of USAF Hercules transport aircraft delivering emergency housing instead of troops or defoliants; there are girls in bikinis reclining in nifty inflatables; a neighbourhood TV system called NKTV...; projects for mobile living – it is all too much like a kind of sententious foolery suddenly taken to task....’Does this not make you angry? I ask a French student. ‘We are angry, but we are also polite,’ is his reply.¹³⁰

Through the course of the article it becomes clear that UP6, which was initially influenced by Tschumi’s former employers, influenced Tschumi’s own political engagement in his academic career. The actions of UP6 are similar to those Tschumi would pursue with his own students at the AA, including occupations and political activities that raise questions regarding the architect’s role and training. At UP6 the act of building was replaced by community action: Tschumi and Pawley observed that “amongst the more militant the concept of architecture for the people seemed increasingly to lead away from the study of architecture at all.”¹³¹ The members of UP6 were more critical of Lefebvre than Tschumi was; many

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 565.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 566.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 565.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 536.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 561.



Villeneuve-la-Garenne: building and demolition.

Figure 3.3: Maison du peuple, squatting and building activities conducted by UP6

within the group felt Lefebvre's teaching to be inadequate for solving real problems stating a preference for action over analysis. One member of the group is quoted as saying "Let's get rid of this insane teaching about space, this play which has nothing to do with reality. From now on the building sites will be the core of militant work at UP6."¹³²

¹³² Ibid., 563.

The architects conclude the article, and their commentary, with a quote from Lefebvre's essay "Reflexions sur le Politique de l' espace" (Reflections on the Politics of Space, 1970):

Henri Lefebvre...maintains that: 'Space is not a scientifically measurable quantity which has been *detourné* by ideology or by politics, it has always been political and strategic in itself. If a space looks neutral, indifferent to its contents, therefore 'purely formal', abstract in a rational sense, it is because it is already occupied, organized, already the *object* of old or lost strategies. Space is *produced* from historical and natural elements, it is always political and ideological.'¹³³

This seminal point impacted Tschumi's writings and teachings on space. Recognizing that space is political, he sought to exploit this aspect as the members of UP6 had done. As Tschumi recounts in *Architecture and Disjunction*, his question at the time was "how could architecture and cities be a trigger for social and political change?"¹³⁴ Following UP6's example, Tschumi and his students illegally occupied an abandoned rail station as a means of protest. While the architect initially patterned his activities after UP6, prioritizing action over "teaching about space," he ultimately returned to study of space itself that closely follows Lefebvre's influence. Just as Lefebvre's work in this period evolved from an analysis of the forces acting on cities to a broader analysis of the forces acting on space itself, Tschumi's work followed suit and transitioned from the study of urban uprisings to a study of space that incorporated politics and phenomenology.

Kentish Town Station Takeover (November 1971)

The militant activities of UP6 influenced Tschumi's instruction at the Architectural Association. The social problems Tschumi and Pawley illuminated in their article about the demise of the École des Beaux-Arts were not endemic to Paris alone. Londoners faced similar conflicts between the preservation of existing neighborhoods for the working class, and large-scale renewal schemes. In November 1971, Tschumi and his students staged a takeover of an abandoned rail station in Northern London.¹³⁵ Tschumi's

¹³³ Ibid., 565.

¹³⁴ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 6.

¹³⁵ Tschumi's interviews and writings typically refer to this station simply as Kentish Town Station, or "a station in Kentish Town," but it seems likely that the station in question is the Kentish Town West, or possibly the South Kentish Town Station. Kentish Town Station does not appear to have been closed for any length of time, whereas both



Figure 3.4: Kentish Town West Station in the 1970s. Photo by Jeremy Ross.

students presumably wished to draw attention to the area's pending redevelopment plans and resulting evictions when they squatted in the closed rail station. In "The Environmental Trigger," Tschumi called the action a "rhetoric appropriation," wherein the architect's aim is to generate awareness:

The take-over of the closed Kentish Town Station by AA students in November 1971 and their subsequent painting and squatting activities went beyond the mere implementation of inflatable community services. The five-minute attacks and the rhetoric appropriation of space were the first steps to the free urban use.¹³⁶

Whether or not the takeover was successful is unknown.¹³⁷ Tschumi's students appear to have gone relatively unnoticed, until, as Tschumi later recounted, they called the police on themselves:

Kentish Town West and South Kentish Town Station were decommissioned at the time of Tschumi's squatting activities. The most likely location is the Kentish Town West station, which was damaged in a fire on April 18th, 1971. The South Kentish Town underground station, which was closed in 1924, appears to have been reappropriated for retail use by 1968. "Kentish Town West railway station," Wikipedia Online, accessed June 5, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kentish_Town_West_railway_station; "South Kentish Town," Abandonedstations.org, accessed June 5, 2016, http://www.abandonedstations.org.uk/South_Kentish_Town_station.html.

¹³⁶ Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," 96.

¹³⁷ Relatively few in-house publications were printed at the AA in 1971 due, according to one librarian at the AA, to the financial and administrative turmoil that occurred at this time. Thus, no contemporary documentation of the event was found. Additionally, digital searches of London newspapers yielded no records of these particular squatting

We took over an abandoned railway station in Kentish Town in London and had it to ourselves. We invaded it and inhabited it for about two weeks, waiting for the police to come and kick us out. They didn't come; they were not interested in us. Finally one of us called the police and said, "We are here," and sure enough, they came and kicked us out.¹³⁸

The experiment may not have had the intended effect, but it is representative of Tschumi's views on architectural practice at the time. Disillusioned with the act of building under the pressures of capitalism, Tschumi instead proposed architectural actions that illuminated and challenged societal problems. He hints at this direction in his 1972 review of Lefebvre's *Le droit à la ville*, and explores it at a greater depth in "The Environmental Trigger."

Henri Lefebvre's 'Le Droit à la Ville' (AD, September 1972)

Tschumi's second article for *AD* was a review of Lefebvre's *Le Droit à la Ville* (The Right to the City), in which he sets the stage for the architectural tactics he develops in "The Environmental Trigger". Lefebvre wrote *Le Droit à la Ville* in 1967, which, as he points out in the text, coincides with the centenary of Marx's *Capital*.¹³⁹ *Le Droit à la Ville* was first published in 1968 and was re-issued four years later in 1972. The second printing included an accompanying volume titled *Espace et politique* (Space and politics), which contained a series of unpublished lectures and published articles, including several articles from Lefebvre and Anatole Kopp's journal *Espaces et Sociétés*. As Elizabeth Lebas, Eleonore Kofman, and others have observed, this additional section "lays the foundation for *The Production of Space*."¹⁴⁰

Tschumi's review for the September 1972 issue of *Architectural Design* summarizes, and critiques, Lefebvre's theses for an English speaking audience.¹⁴¹ It would be another 24 years before *The*

activities at any of the Kentish Town Stations, although Kentish Town and Camden were hotbeds of squatting activities at the end of the 1970s.

¹³⁸ Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 52.

¹³⁹ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 181.

¹⁴⁰ Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, "Lost in Transposition—Time, Space and the City," in *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 23.

¹⁴¹ While Tschumi published his review in 1972, the same year Lefebvre's second volume was published, he only addresses the 1968 text in his review. It is a minor point, but worth noting if one is looking to carefully analyze Tschumi's review both for what it states, and for what it omits. Bernard Tschumi, "Henri Lefebvre's 'Le droit à la ville,'" *Architecture Design* (September 1972): 581-2.

Right to the City was released in English in 1996 as part of a collection of Lefebvre's writings titled *Writings on Cities*. Tschumi's summary, while abbreviated, is therefore one of the first translations of the text into English, albeit at a greatly reduced scale. Presumably for reasons of editorial space, his summary distills Lefebvre's sixteen chapters into eight paragraph length points. The greatly truncated translation is less adept—awkward at times, oversimplified at others, and needing further editing—than Kofman and Lebas's 1996 version. While Tschumi's other articles for *AD* show his indebtedness to Lefebvre's theories, this article is notable as an occasion where Tschumi engages with and challenges Lefebvre's arguments. While his own theories on space ultimately evolve with Lefebvre's, here Tschumi adheres to a political rather than social understanding of the city.

The influence of this text can be readily seen in Tschumi's analytical writings, as he often cites the same urban problems that Lefebvre analyzes in *Le Droit à la Ville*. Tschumi states that the value of Lefebvre's text for architects is that "it timely presents one of the first coherent reflections and critique on the urban processes and exploitation."¹⁴² He observes that Lefebvre's critique of official urban planning—notably omitting Lefebvre's parallel critique of the architecture profession—has already influenced "urban thinking" in France.¹⁴³ However, while he finds Lefebvre's critique and analysis to be useful, Tschumi critiques Lefebvre's text for failing to provide an effective set of tools or clear path forward:

No planner, no revolutionary will find [in Lefebvre's text] the long-awaited intellectual tools of objective attack, only students will – for, his methodological distinctions are above all important in the social sense: it usefully defines different levels of the consciousness of society, thus through such interpretations introduces an *ideology* that bears less connection with urban space than it first seems, for space is only seen as a *product of the social structure*.¹⁴⁴

Here, Tschumi's contention may be the result of oversimplification or vulgar understanding of production, in conjunction with a youthful belief in the revolutionary uses of space itself. Tschumi's argument against space as a product of the social structure hinges on an inversion of the tactics proposed by revolutionary architects in the 20s: their idea that space can be designed to bring forth a new form of society—new behaviors—had failed, and Tschumi uses this failure to argue that no group behavior can alter production relationships or social structures:

¹⁴² Tschumi, "Henri Lefebvre's 'Le droit à la ville,'" 582.

¹⁴³ Tschumi, "Henri Lefebvre's 'Le droit à la ville,'" 581.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Lefebvre's comment on the new civilization – the Urban Society – erupts on the notion of the finally expressed desire...on 'La Fete' [sic] that will not only subvert (like in May '68) but also change radically social and production relationships (between the private owners of the means of production and the workers). This jump from a new social behaviour to a new social structure is interestingly architectural and thus appealed to architects: the art of the revolutionary twenties wanted space to become 'the instrument of social change'. But no group behaviour can alter the production relationships, and one doesn't see how the organization of space can be the new motor of history, nor could it be the urban everyday life.¹⁴⁵

By contrast, Lefebvre is more optimistic about the potential of the proletariat in *Le Droit à la Ville*. While he is clear on *who* needs to bring forth change he is less clear, at least in this text, on *how* this process can happen. Lefebvre argues that only the proletariat, Marx's working class laborers, can reclaim the city by reprioritizing use value over exchange value:

Only the proletariat can invest its social and political activity in the realization of urban society. Equally, only it can renew the meaning of productive and creative activity by destroying the ideology of consumption. It therefore has the capacity to produce a new humanism, different from the old liberal humanism which is ending its course – of *urban man* for whom and by whom the city and his own daily life in it become *oeuvre*, *appropriation*, use value (and not exchange value), by using all the means of science, art, technology and the domination over material nature.¹⁴⁶

In subsequent writings, Lefebvre proposes *autogestion*, roughly defined as self-management, the abolition of private property, and the concomitant rejection of capitalism as the more clearly defined elements needed for a total revolution.¹⁴⁷

Tschumi, however, is unconvinced by the promise of a revolution that, unlike the Paris Commune or the events of '68, can impact a lasting and total transformation of society. At this point in the development of Tschumi's writings on space, he is more interested in the revolutionary uses of urban space. "Thus," he writes, "Lefebvre's mystical and optimistic interpretation of space seems less relevant

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 582.

¹⁴⁶ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 180.

¹⁴⁷ In "Space," a lecture given at Boston University in the early 1970s and published in *Critical Sociology: European Perspectives* in 1979 (Reprinted in *State Space World* 2009), Lefebvre concludes with a nod to Marx and Engels: "But how can we limit and suppress the ownership of space? Perhaps by remembering the writings of Marx and Engels: one day, which will indeed come, the private ownership of land, of nature and its resources, will seem as absurd, as odious, as ridiculous as the possession of one human by another." Similarly, in "The Worldwide and the Planetary" he states, "the revolutionary process implies the end of all private property, and primarily of all private (or rather, privative) ownership of the soil. A society thus transformed presupposes the collective ownership and management of space." Henri Lefebvre, "Space," in *State Space World*, ed. Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 194-5; Henri Lefebvre, "The Worldwide and the Planetary," in *State Space World*, ed. Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 206.

than his comment on the evolution of Society.”¹⁴⁸ He goes on to state that “Urban space *is* a privileged ground for struggles, like mountainous and hardly accessible areas have been a favourable ground for rural guerillas, but no more.”¹⁴⁹ Likely influenced by the actions of UP6, Tschumi sees space as a site of resistance, or as a tool for *détournement*. Space cannot alter behavior, but can possibly be used to accelerate change:

But this social comment was fundamental and although [Daniel] Cohn-Bendit’s ‘spontaneism’ was attacked and self-destructed for its incapability to *steer* real processes, Lefebvre, by mapping it upon the city, was rediscovering the insurgent urban potential. The city only is the inevitable background for all social conflicts, for the confrontation between society and the individual takes there its most violent form.¹⁵⁰

For Tschumi, the greatest value in Lefebvre’s writing is his ability to expose the fundamental and “explosive” contradictions between the State and everyday life.¹⁵¹ Tschumi views the text more as an analysis of current and historical conditions, than as a prescription or methodology for fixing the stated problems. At the time that this review was published Tschumi was working on a second article, *The Environmental Trigger*. In this article he expands upon the uses of the “insurgent urban potential” of space, offering his own set of tools for architects. Here, he both addresses Lefebvre’s critique of the architectural profession and offers his first iteration of an alternative path forward for revolutionary, avant-garde architects.

The Environmental Trigger (Written 1972, Published 1975)

Tschumi initially wrote “The Environmental Trigger” for a symposium at the Architectural Association held in 1972.¹⁵² The essay was published in 1975 as part of a 125th anniversary retrospective on the AA titled *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the Architectural Association*. Tschumi may have intended the essay, or the case studies within it, to be part of an issue about urban insurgencies in

¹⁴⁸ Tschumi, “Henri Lefebvre’s ‘Le droit à la ville,’” 582.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Anthony Vidler, “After the Event: Bernard Tschumi Retrospective at the Pompidou Centre,” *The Architectural Review*, (September 2014): <http://www.architectural-review.com/essays/after-the-event-bernard-tschumi-retrospective-at-the-pompidou-centre/8668977.article>.

Ireland, but the editors of *Architectural Design* rejected his proposal.¹⁵³ Given the topic, it seems likely that “The Environmental Trigger” would have informed the book of urban uprisings that Tschumi was writing in the early seventies. Unlike the “Beaux-Arts since ‘68” or “Sanctuaries,” which will be discussed in the following chapter, this text offers more in the way of critical theory. Tschumi’s subject matter and critiques of the architectural profession are similar to those found in Lefebvre’s contemporaneous work; however, rather than simply agreeing that architecture is fated to be a representative of the prevailing power structures, Tschumi offers “rhetorical action,” “counter design,” and “subversive analysis,” as viable methodologies for architects to accelerate social change.¹⁵⁴

Tschumi’s tone and writing style in this essay are comparable to Lefebvre’s contemporaneous works. He begins by offering a more generalized theory of the causation of urban uprisings, which is supported by concrete examples from a variety of global sources. His examples, primarily stemming from housing inequalities, include protests in Northern Ireland, Rotterdam, Liverpool, Latin America, and North American cities. Like Lefebvre, Tschumi refers to the problem as “the urban crisis,” and offers a similar analysis by way of introduction:

The urban crisis is more important and definitive than any other. It always existed, but was hidden by its secondary effects or symptoms, the housing question, the industrial zoning and so on. Far from ensuring a fair distribution and use of city resources, urban organization has indeed almost always been the expression and the reinforcement of an established order. ‘The city transforms itself’, says the French sociologist Lefebvre, ‘according to the mode of production, class and property relationships’ and planning manipulates the distribution of space in order to adapt it to the existing social structures, even if it means a city of ghettos. Urban rationality and efficiency have been a cover for political and social strategies that find more and more difficulty in containing growing discontent and contradictions.¹⁵⁵

Further on the architect addresses land speculation, another of Lefebvre’s frequent subjects, writing “an economy resting entirely on building and land speculation is heading towards collapse in the midst of the participatory indifference of the mass of self-satisfied owner-occupiers.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ In an interview in *Clip, Stamp, Fold* Tschumi stated “when at a later stage I wanted to do an issue about urban insurgency in Belfast and Derry, they [the editors of *AD*] said no.” Colomina, Buckley, and Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 56.

¹⁵⁴ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 95; see also Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 91.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 3.5: The Free Derry Movement, 1968

Tschumi's critique of architects and planners is, initially at least, nearly identical to Lefebvre's. In *The Right to the City* and *The Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre observes that even the well-intentioned architect is beholden to exchange value and the commodification of space:

Whether he wants to or not, the architect builds on the basis of financial constraints (salaries and payments) and norms and values, that is to say, class criteria that result in segregation even when the intention is to bring about integration and interaction. More generally the architect is caught in the "world of commodities" without realizing that it is in fact a world. Unconsciously, that is, in good conscience, he subordinates use to exchange and use values to exchange values.¹⁵⁷

In these text Lefebvre takes aim at the utopian proposals of several well-known architects, including Yona Friedman, Le Corbusier, and members of the Bauhaus. In *The Right to the City*, Lefebvre likens Le

¹⁵⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 90.

Corbusier to “God the Creator,” stating the architect’s wanting knowledge of real problems facing the city, along with a metaphysical interest in dwelling in nature produces “a functionalism which reduces urban society to the achievement of a few predictable and prescribed functions laid out on the ground by the architecture.”¹⁵⁸ In *The Urban Revolution*, he criticizes Yona Friedman’s portable living structures as being anti-urban, censuring Friedman’s plan for its direct opposition to Heidegger’s notion of “habiting,” the action-verb form, which Lefebvre prioritizes over the noun form, “habitat.”¹⁵⁹ Derisively Lefebvre writes that “to suggest, as Freidman does, that we can be liberated through nomadism, through the presence of a habitat in the pure state...is ridiculous.”¹⁶⁰ Lefebvre critiques earlier modernist attempts to restructure everyday life as well, calling Hannes Mayer “naive” for thinking that “building means organizing social, psychological, technical, and economic life.”¹⁶¹ Further on he critiques Gropius for similar aims:

Architecture’s demiurgic role is part of urban mythology and ideology, which are difficult to distinguish. Gropius, moreover, saw things in broad terms, suggesting that the architect serve as a coordinator who would unify problems, proceeding from “a functional study of the house to that of the street, from the street to the city, and finally to regional and national planning.” Unfortunately, the opposite took place: structural planning subjected lower degrees and levels to its own constraints.¹⁶²

Using Gropius as an example, he expresses doubt that the architect can influence social relationships:

It is not the architect who will “define a new approach to life” or enable the individual to develop himself or herself on a higher level by throwing off the weight of the everyday, as Gropius believed. It is the new approach to life that will enable the work of the architect, who will continue to serve as a “social condenser,” no longer for capitalist social relationships and the orders that “reflect” them, but for shifting and newly constituted relationships. The architect may even be able to function as a “social accelerator,” but the economic context that would make this possible must be examined carefully so we are not fooled by words or appearances.¹⁶³

For Lefebvre, it is the proletariat, not architecture that can possibly transcend existing political and economic power structures, and produce any notable change to these structures and institutions. In *Le Droit à la Ville* Lefebvre states that “only groups, social classes and class fractions capable of revolutionary initiative can take over and realize to fruition solutions to urban problems. It is from these

¹⁵⁸ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 98.

¹⁵⁹ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 98; and Neil Smith, “Forward to The Urban Revolution,” in Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xii.

¹⁶⁰ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 98.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 99.

social and political forces that the renewed city will become the *oeuvre*,” and further on, “this does not mean the working class will make urban society all on its own, but without it, nothing is possible.”¹⁶⁴

Agreeing with Lefebvre, Tschumi argues that a spatial organization might temporarily modify behavior, but it cannot alter existing socio-economic structures. Tschumi observes that “architects have tried, filled as they were with confidence on the strength of their craft, to reverse the proposition, and instead of seeing society acting upon cities, to have the city act upon society.”¹⁶⁵ Tschumi states that the reason some of these attempts by architects to alter human behaviour, ideas such as minimal cells and communal kitchens in socialist housing proposals, stems from a misunderstanding of behaviourism, which posits that space can modify individual behavior.¹⁶⁶ However, where Lefebvre is skeptical of architecture’s capacity to affect change, without the preceding conditions of a social revolution, Tschumi is optimistic that architecture can “accelerate social change,” hastening the revolution in the process.¹⁶⁷ He echoes Lefebvre’s critique of the profession, but offers the architect’s specific environmental knowledge as potential tool. He writes that “environmental knowledge (not building) can contribute to polarizing urban conflicts and inducing radical change.”¹⁶⁸ And further:

Architecture is the adaptation of space to the existing social structures. No spatial organization ever changes the socio-economic structure of a reactionary society. The only possible architectural action of a revolutionary nature is rhetorical.¹⁶⁹

While Tschumi agrees that architecture reinforces the existing societal structure, he does think that architects are in a position to not only put forth a valid critique, but to also accelerate change through demonstrative action.

Tschumi writes that there are three positions available to architects: that of “conservative, commentator or revolutionary.”¹⁷⁰ The first group, who “conserve[s] their historical role of translators of the formal structures of society,” are the very architects Lefebvre critiques. The second group, as

¹⁶⁴ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 154.

¹⁶⁵ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 93.

¹⁶⁶ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 94.

¹⁶⁷ Looking back at his essay, Tschumi argues in *Architecture and Disjunction* that “the urban condition itself could be a means to accelerate social change.” Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 93.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

Tschumi states, acts as a commentator and critic of society.¹⁷¹ The actions of this second group resemble Lefebvre's proposed "strategy of knowledge," which includes "a radical critique of what is called urbanism, its ambiguity, its contradictions, its variants, what it avows and what it hides"¹⁷² Tschumi's third group goes even further than the second and "use[s] their environmental knowledge to be part of the forces trying to accelerate the process of collapse and to turn urban conflicts into new urban structures to polarize and play the dialectic of conflict."¹⁷³ These revolutionary architects would use their knowledge of the built environment and the mechanisms acting on it to create new social structures.¹⁷⁴ Given that in the first classification architects are merely cogs in the machine, Tschumi states that "the only actions capable of creating an effect are rhetorical actions and subversive analysis."¹⁷⁵

Rhetorical actions include squatting, protests, guerrilla warfare, and other non-design approaches; subversive analysis on the other hand can include design as a means of making a political statement.¹⁷⁶ "The House of the People," the site of squatting and building activities by students from UP6 in 1970 (figure 3.3), and the takeover of the Kentish Town Station (figure 3.4) are examples of "rhetorical environmental action," which is enacted as a means of "demystification and propaganda":

it means to reveal that capitalist organization of space destroys all collective space in order to develop division and isolation and that it is possible to build fast and cheaply with building methods that are in contradiction with the economic logic of the system (it is implied that the underdevelopment of building methods is a direct result of private land property). The purpose is therefore not merely the realization of an object built for itself but also the revelation through building of realities and contradictions of society.¹⁷⁷

"The House of the People," was a symbolic event because it had been chosen to reveal the larger political crisis at hand:

The space in itself was neutral, but in order to prove that it had a political meaning, specific signs to this effect were necessary: to give it a name, or less crudely, to perform political acts involving building – in this case erecting a building for the people on private or state property. It was a rhetorical act, and the only possible one, for the main reason for such acts is in their symbolic and exemplary value.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 149.

¹⁷³ Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," 95.

¹⁷⁴ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 9.

¹⁷⁵ Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," 95.

¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Tschumi quotes extensively from "The Environmental Trigger" in his introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction*, but changes the term "rhetorical actions" to "exemplary actions". Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 10.

¹⁷⁷ Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," 96.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 94-5.

The action of building the house of the people was only temporarily successful in changing the everyday life of its users, but it was successful in drawing attention to the problems faced by immigrant labourers. Space, therefore cannot change behaviour, but, according to Tschumi, the symbolism given to a particular space can influence awareness of an issue. Similarly, in *The Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre writes that the first aspect of “political strategy” is “the introduction of the urban problematic into (French) political life by moving it into the foreground.”¹⁷⁹ It is unlikely Lefebvre would find architecture suitable for the promotion of such an agenda, however, part of Tschumi’s aim is to broaden the architect’s job description, beyond the traditional role that is beholden to state and institutional power structures.

While rhetorical actions are not necessarily architectural, and can take a variety of non-design or built forms, Tschumi writes that counterdesign is the only “specifically architectural approach,” of the three he proposes.¹⁸⁰ Tschumi uses the work of Superstudio and Archizoom as contemporary examples of a counterdesign approach.¹⁸¹ Counterdesign uses architecture’s traditional tools and products, including plans and drawings, “to denounce institutional trends by translating them in architectural terms”:

As the plan is then meant to be the end product, it acquires an additional freedom that no capital-bound built piece ever had....the architectural drawing can support specific meanings that the everyday experience of the built objective prevents. It may be used not only to demonstrate the increasingly well-known absurdity of some redevelopment proposals, or to verify where the capitalist system is going, but also to confirm the emerging doubts about the relevance of this particular mode of expression. It is thus a cultural statement as well as a political one.¹⁸²

Tschumi’s proposal, with its corresponding repudiation of capital support and an “art for art’s sake,” or plan for plan’s sake position, thus aspires to an avant-garde stance.¹⁸³ This use of architectural drawing to bring attention to systemic societal problems, Tschumi notes, is not a new tactic. He observes that “for the artists from the revolutionary twenties to the present Italian architectural scene – Superstudio and others – the destruction of the established culture – and the development of a revolutionary art form have

¹⁷⁹ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 150.

¹⁸⁰ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 96.

¹⁸¹ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 97; Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 11. In *Architecture and Disjunction* Tschumi states that Archizoom’s No-Stop City, and Superstudio’s Continuous Monument were models of the counterdesign approach.

¹⁸² Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 97.

¹⁸³ Clement Greenberg, “Avant Garde and Kitsch,” in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961) 5.

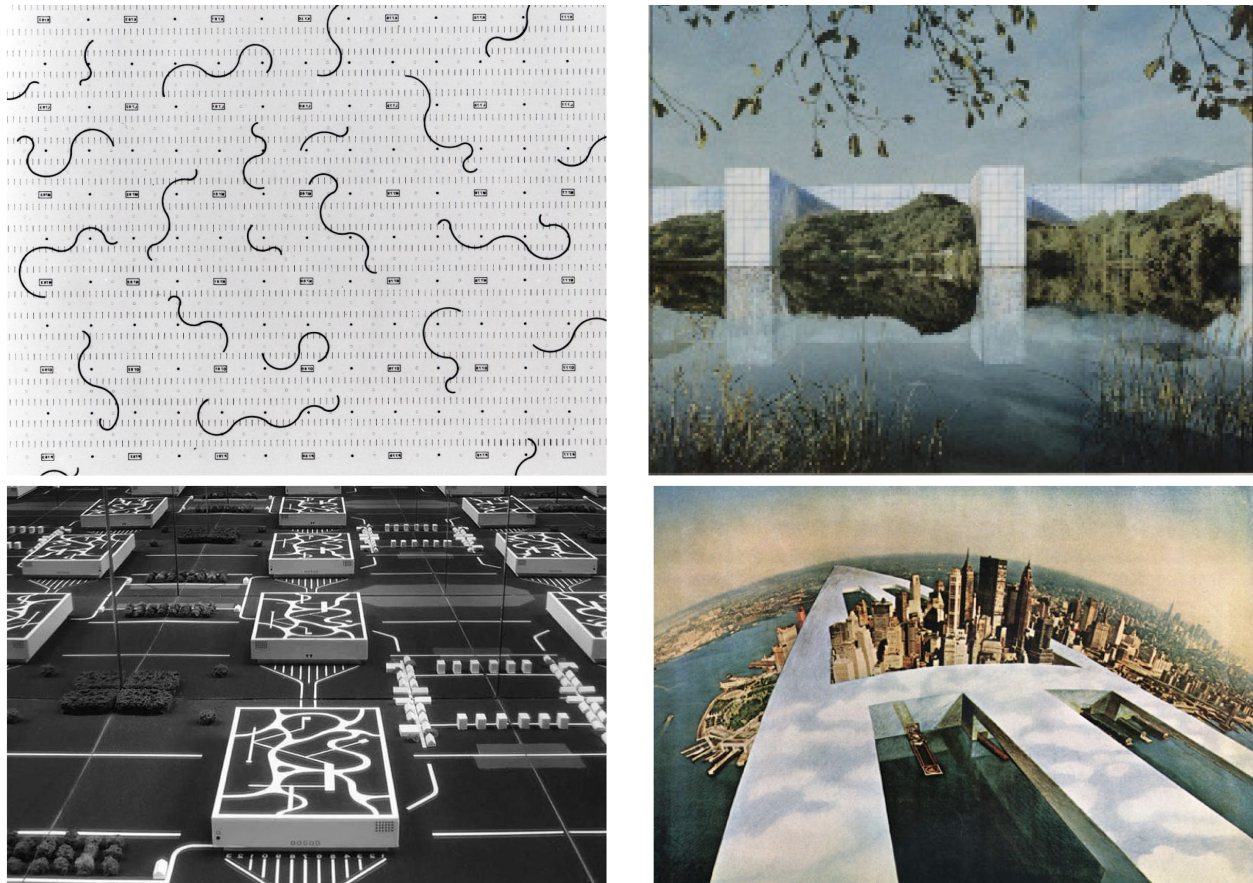


Figure 3.6: Examples of counterdesign I-r: Archizoom, No-Stop-City, 1969; Superstudio, Continuous Monument, 1969

been traditionally considered a prerequisite to social and economic change.”¹⁸⁴ Of course, counterdesign, or any avant-garde position is likely to be appropriated for mass consumption. Tschumi writes that counterdesign is especially vulnerable to this act of recuperation: “The negative statements of Duchamp’s urinal are all in museums. Revolutionary slogans on the ‘68 Paris walls gave a new life to the semantics of automobile advertisements.”¹⁸⁵ He notes that even the politically critical work of the Italian Radicals had been appropriated within schools of architecture, and that “Superstudio-like ideal cities are slowly emerging as well-intended alternative lifestyles.”¹⁸⁶ Tschumi’s position is akin to Clement Greenberg’s, who in “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” writes “when enough time has elapsed the new is looted

¹⁸⁴ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 97.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 98.

for ‘twists,’ which are then watered down and served up as kitsch.”¹⁸⁷ Given this difficulty to tell the difference between an avant-garde position and kitsch, Tschumi writes that to be effective counterdesign “must entail a political practice.”¹⁸⁸ Tschumi argues that counterdesign “can be effective only if part of a public mobilization (exhibition, meetings) of the threatened ones against schemes that negate their right to the city.”¹⁸⁹

The addition of public mobilization, a necessary component, thus attempts to address Lefebvre’s critique of the plan, or paper architecture, for being reductive and removed from everyday life. As Lefebvre states in *The Urban Revolution*, the plan is “ideologic and repressive,”:

The architect who draws and the urbanist who composes a block plan look down at their “objects,” buildings and neighborhoods, from above and afar. These designers and draftsmen move within a space of paper and ink. Only after this nearly complete *reduction* of the everyday do they return to the scale of lived experience. They are convinced they have captured it even though they carry out their plans and projects within a second-order abstraction....The technicians and specialists who “act” are unaware that their so-called objective space is in fact ideologic and repressive.¹⁹⁰

By contrast, Tschumi argues that the plan can contain a greater level of meaning than Lefebvre’s critique allows. Counterdesign is a subversive act, he writes “just as graffiti or a porn picture bears an obscenity that the real thing ignores, the architectural drawing can support specific meanings that the everyday experience of the built object prevents.”¹⁹¹ Unlike Lefebvre, Tschumi believes that architecture can be a radical act. His proposed tactics—rhetorical action, subversive analysis, and counterdesign—are “for the time being meant to wear down one’s opponent by using suitable tactics in a field where he is particularly vulnerable”:

None of these environmental tactics directly leads to a new social structure – a long period of urban insurgency is still before us – but already the means employed are social as well as rhetorical and political, for they contain the premises of an immediate autonomy.¹⁹²

Tschumi would continue to refine the ideas he presents in the Environmental Trigger, most notably using the counterdesign tactic. As will be shown in the next chapter he slowly moved away from acts aimed at political reform, and instead took an avant-garde position aimed at liberating architecture from capitalism

¹⁸⁷ Greenberg, “Avant Garde and Kitsch,” 11.

¹⁸⁸ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 98.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 182-83.

¹⁹¹ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 97.

¹⁹² Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 99.

altogether. Lefebvre's writings continued to influence Tschumi's work at the Architectural Association, and Tschumi invited the philosopher to speak at the school in the spring of 1973.

Institute for Contemporary Arts French Programme (March 1973)

Tschumi had the opportunity to bring Lefebvre to London in the months after he wrote his review of *Le Droit à la Ville* and the essay "The Environmental Trigger." In 1973 the London Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) presented the *French Programme*, a month long series of lectures, films, and visual arts exhibitions that spanned the contemporary cultural scene.¹⁹³ Jonathan Benthall, the ICA Controller and Head of the ICA European Programme, invited Tschumi to participate in the planning and selection of featured participants. Two nights within the program were devoted to the topic of Architecture and Urbanism, and it is at Tschumi's recommendation that Henri Lefebvre gave a lecture titled "The Politics of Space" the ICA and the AA.¹⁹⁴ In this lecture, as in the essays published in the second release of *Le Droit à la Ville*, Lefebvre further expands his theories on the production of space, including the concepts of perceived, conceived, and lived space that influences Tschumi's writings in "'The Architectural Paradox': The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)."

The ICA event featured some of the most prominent names in contemporary French philosophy: the list of invited participants included Roland Barthes, Marguerite Duras, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, Raymond Aron, Tzvetan Todorov, and Michael Foucault.¹⁹⁵ Lecture topics included a panel discussion led by Jean-Marie Benoist billed as an "Introduction to the work of Roland Barthes," a talk by Pierre Schneider about Les Halles, a discussion of structuralism and writing led by Derrida, a lecture entitled "l'Anti-Oedipe – Capitalism and

¹⁹³ Undated draft letter from Jonathan Benthall, Institute of Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/1.

¹⁹⁴ Tschumi earned a fee of £35 for his efforts. "Budget no. 2 for French Programme, March 1973: Prepared at 17th October 1972" Institute of Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/1; Bernard Tschumi to Jonathan Benthall, 3 October 1972, Institute of Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

¹⁹⁵ Jonathan Benthall, "ICA French programme: March 1973," *Studio International 185* (March 1973): 49. Advertisement Proof for the French Programme, March 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/2.

Schizophrenia” by Deleuze and Guattari, a discussion between Tzvetan Todorov and George Steiner entitled “The craft of criticism,” and a discussion between Raymond Aron and Ernest Gellner on “The politics of Sociology.”¹⁹⁶ The exhibit portion of the event showcased the work of Paul Armand-Gette and Bernard Lassus¹⁹⁷ As with many of the lectures, the featured artists showcased works with urban themes: Paul Armand-Gette’s photos focused on the plant life of the Seine and Thames, while Lassus’s work featured popular art and architecture found in the suburbs of Paris and other French towns.¹⁹⁸ Ultimately Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, Sartre, and de Beauvoir could not attend, while Foucault, who was scheduled to conclude the month of events, canceled at the last moment, stating “But truly I do not have the courage, or the wish/desire to speak in front of 100 people.”¹⁹⁹ It is at this conference that Tschumi initially met Derrida, who would later consult on his project for the Parc de la Villette.²⁰⁰

As coordinator of the Architecture and Urbanism lectures, Tschumi invited speakers who were writing about, and critiquing, the built environment stating in a letter to Benthall that he wished to make “the present situation,” the theme of the conference.²⁰¹ Lefebvre and his *Espaces et Societies* collaborator Anatole Kopp contributed as the Architecture and Urbanism speakers, but originally Tschumi proposed Herbert Tonka of the Utopie Group, and one-time assistant to Lefebvre, as the second speaker in the series.²⁰² In a letter sent to Benthall Tschumi included a quote from Tonka, who had stated that

¹⁹⁶ “Working Schedule for ICA French Programme – March 1973 as on 19.11.73 [sic],” Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/1.

¹⁹⁷ Benthall, “ICA French programme: March 1973,” 49.

¹⁹⁸ Benthall, “ICA French programme: March 1973,” 49.

¹⁹⁹ Author’s translation, original is as follows: “Mais vraiment je n’avais le courage, ni l’envie de parler devant cent personnes.” Barthes had a previous speaking engagement in Italy, which prevented him from participating. Roland Barthes to Jonathan Benthall, 26 September 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/4; “Working schedule for ICA French Programme, 19.11.73 [sic],” Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/1; Foucault to Jonathan Benthall, 11 April 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²⁰⁰ Bernard Tschumi, Frédéric Migayrou, and Centre Pompidou, *Bernard Tschumi Architecture: concept & notation*, ed. by Frédéric Migayrou (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2014), 218.

²⁰¹ Memorandum by Bernard Tschumi, no date, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library TGA955/12/2/5.

²⁰² Bernard Tschumi to Jonathan Benthall, 3 October 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5. Hubert Tonka was head of the Utopie review and a protégé of/teaching assistant to Lefebvre at the Institut d’Urbanisme de Paris. Marc Dessauce writes that “like the situationists, the group Utopie owed much of its thinking—and name—to Henri Lefebvre, the Marxist philosopher of the urban. Lefebvre’s themes—the need for play, spontaneity, the realization of desires and calls to rescue utopian imagination from science fiction, to invest all of technology into daily life, to bring about “daring gestures,” “structures of enchantment,” to seek “moments” of total consumption of possibilities were coming to the fore in 1968.” Marc Dessauce, “On Pneumatic Apparitions,” *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, ed. Marc Dessauce, (New York: Princeton

“The so-called urban problems are nothing but the most sophisticated expression of class antagonisms and of the class domination that has historically produced the development of civilizations.”²⁰³ Notes in the letter’s margins indicated that Manuel Castells, who had recently written *La Question Urbaine* and taught with Lefebvre at the University of Paris Nanterre, and Françoise Choay, who penned *The Modern City: Planning in the Nineteenth Century* in 1969, were alternate suggestions.²⁰⁴

Lefebvre and Kopp’s lecture series was billed as “The Politics of Space” in press releases and program supplements written by Tschumi.²⁰⁵ In this press release Tschumi describes two schools of thought that are opposed in their analysis of urban problems: one which focuses on social, economic, or ecological theories and creates policy; and the second, a politically and philosophically oriented group including Lefebvre and Kopp, which focuses on politics, social contradictions, and the “hidden ideologies of cities.”²⁰⁶ At the time of the French Programme Anatole Kopp was the Director of the École Speciale d’Architecture in Paris.²⁰⁷ According to the press release Kopp’s lecture focused on a theme that greatly interested Tschumi at the time: the ability of space and architecture, to have an effect upon society.²⁰⁸ Kopp was slated to discuss *Town and Revolution*, which recounts the attempts of early twentieth century Russian architects to create a new socialist society:

This particular architectural tradition considered space not merely as a social product but also as a social accelerator, a tool capable of speeding up social tendencies of one kind or another: “Space was to be an instrument of social transformation” explains Kopp, “a revolutionary tool, a means to transform the relationship between individual and society by means of generating a new life style, a new environment, and new private and public codes of behaviour.”²⁰⁹

This topic, and Kopp’s research, frequently appears in both Lefebvre and Tschumi’s writings, typically as an example of the failure of architecture, or planned spatial organization, to radically change social

Architectural Press, 1999), 21. Jean-Louis Violeau, “Utopie: in acts,” *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, ed. Marc Dessauce, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 49 and 55.

²⁰³ Bernard Tschumi to Jonathan Benthall, 3 October 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Press release by Bernard Tschumi, “The Politics of Space, Henri Lefebvre and Anatole Kopp at the I.C.A.” Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA 955/12/2//5, 1.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ “News from the ICA, ICA French Programme March 1973, Architecture & Urbanism 2, Release No: 173”, 9 March 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/7/8/54; Press release by Bernard Tschumi “The Politics of Space, Henri Lefebvre and Anatole Kopp at the I.C.A.,” Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA 955/12/2//5.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

structures. Kopp's and Lefebvre's lectures paired nicely, one spoke of the social production of space, and the other about architects' attempts to use space as a "social accelerator".

Although notes in the margins of a letter from Tschumi to Benthall indicate that "B. knows" Lefebvre and Tonka, it is unclear whether Lefebvre and Tschumi had met prior to Lefebvre's decision to participate.²¹⁰ Benthall made the initial contact with the philosopher. In a letter to Lefebvre Benthall explained Tschumi's role to the philosopher:

As to the precise theme of the evening, the facilitator of these discussions will be responsible for its structure. He will make a visit to Paris soon and I hope he can discuss it with you/speak with you about it.... If it is possible to confirm that Thursday, March 29, 1973 fits you as the date, I will ask Bernard Tschumi to prepare a specific program for discussion.²¹¹

Lefebvre replied that he would be happy to meet with Tschumi, but that he was leaving soon for a trip to America²¹² It appears that Lefebvre and Tschumi were able to meet in December 1972 or early January 1973; In a letter dated 15 January 1973 he writes "I was very happy to meet Bernard Tschumi and I will be pleased to continue the interview in London."²¹³

Lefebvre was scheduled to speak on two separate evenings, the evening of Saturday March 17th at the ICA, and the evening of Monday March 19th at the AA.²¹⁴ Lefebvre's lecture had one of the higher attendance counts, at 168 people, surpassed only by Aron, Duras, and Todorov's lectures.²¹⁵ Tschumi's summary of Lefebvre's work in the press release focuses on the political aspects of Lefebvre's writing:

Lefebvre's approach, which is developed in the yet untranslated "Droit a la Ville" or "La Revolution Urbaine" can be articulated around two main themes. On one hand, space is political. Space is a product of the socio-economic structure. Space is "produced" by

²¹⁰ Bernard Tschumi to Jonathan Benthall, 3 October 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²¹¹ Author's translation. The original text follows: "Quant la theme précis de la soirée, l'animateur de ces discussions, Bernard Tschumi, sera responsable de sa structure. Il va faire une visite à Paris bientôt et j'espère qu'il pourra vous y en parler....S'il vous est possible de confirmer que le jeudi 29 mars 1973 vous convient comme date, je demanderai à Bernard Tschumi de préparer un programme précis pour la discussion." Jonathan Benthall to Henri Lefebvre, dated 6 November 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²¹² Author's translation. "Je serai très heureux d'avoir un entretien auparavant avec M. Bernard Tschumi, mais je pars pour l'Amerique..." Henri Lefebvre to Jonathan Benthall, 14 November 1972, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²¹³ Author's translation. "J'ai été très heureux de rencontrer Bernard Tschumi et j'aurai plaisir à poursuivre l'entretien à Londres." Henri Lefebvre to Jonathan Benthall, dated 15 January 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

²¹⁴ Jonathan Benthall to Charlotte Delbo, 5 March 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library TGA955/12/2/5.

²¹⁵ "Attendances during the French Programme: March 1973," Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library TGA955/12/2; Charlotte Delbo to Jonathan Benthall, 19 January 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955/12/2/5.

specific groups that take over space in order to exploit it, to transform it with profit, to manage it. Such an exploitation has led to contradictions between the interests of a power structure and the everyday life of the city inhabitants. But on the other hand, and despite these contradictions, an urban specificity emerges. This specificity proceeds from the use of the city rather than from its exchange value. Such a use, or an urban praxis, could be understood as an agent of spontaneous transformation of everyday life, within a new type of civilization—the Urban Society – and within a space that has become the “reborn place of finally expressed desires.”²¹⁶

Prior to the lecture, Tschumi was sent a copy of “L’espace,” an essay that can be found in the *Espace and politique* addendum to the 1972 reprint of *Le Droit à la Ville*. According to the 1972 publication, “L’espace” informed many of Lefebvre’s lectures that year.²¹⁷ After receiving this copy of “L’espace” Tschumi translated and distilled the text into a two-page handout for lecture attendees. At the event itself, Charlotte Delbo, Lefebvre’s secretary, acted as a translator on Lefebvre’s behalf.²¹⁸ Aside from Tschumi’s summation in the lecture handout, the text has yet to be translated into English.

Whether or not Lefebvre adhered strictly to the letter of this text in his lecture we know the overarching theme of the conversation. Here, as in many of Lefebvre’s other essays at the time, Lefebvre is working on ideas that will ultimately be further developed in *The Production of Space*. In this essay, as translated by Tschumi, Lefebvre addresses “space as it relates to social practice,” and “the relationship between mental space (as perceived, represented) and social space (as built and produced, mainly urban space).”²¹⁹ Thus the beginnings of the triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space, which Lefebvre develops in *The Production of Space*, are present here. Using a Hegelian dialectic in his narrative, Lefebvre offers four hypotheses on the nature of space. The first three theses—that “space is a pure form,” that “social space is a product of society,” and space “is an intermediary, i.e. a means or an instrument”—are offered with corresponding antitheses.²²⁰ Lefebvre’s fourth hypothesis provides a

²¹⁶ Press release by Bernard Tschumi, “The Politics of Space, Henri Lefebvre and Anatole Kopp at the I.C.A.,” Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA 955/12/2//5.

²¹⁷ “L’espace” is cited as stemming from Lefebvre’s “Séminaires sur l’espace, Nanterre, Oxford, etc., 1972.” Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville suivi de Espace et politique*, (France: Éditions Anthropos, 1972).

²¹⁸ Charlotte Delbo to Jonathan Benthall, 19 January 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA 955/12/2//5.

²¹⁹ Lecture handout by Bernard Tschumi, “Lefebvre: The Politics of Space,” March 17th and 19th, 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955.

²²⁰ Ibid.

synthesis for the problem stating that “Space is essentially linked with the reproduction of the (social) relations of production.”²²¹ Further on in the essay he addresses this idea of production:

One speaks about “production of space”. This expression implies a step forward in planning and architectural thought. It means that space is not considered as an a-priori anymore but as the display of a social activity....Social space is distinguished from geometrical space, but the notion remains ambiguous.²²²

Following the example of Marx, Lefebvre wrote in the introduction to *Espaces et politique* (1972), that the study of space as a thing (geometric space) needed to be replaced by a critical analysis of the activities producing that space.²²³ Social space indicates the role that users, institutions, and the state has in the shaping of spaces over time. This idea of social space, which Lefebvre later identifies as “lived” space, will be further explored in chapter 5. Lefebvre’s text asks whether there is a logic of space and, via Tschumi’s translation, proposes the following:

Space does not have its internal and own logic, it relates to formal logic and general methodology. This space, common to diverse activities, is used by a society which attempts to become a coherent system, through the concealment of its contradictions. The resulting contradictions of space come from the social content, especially the capitalist content. Indeed this space is meant to be rational, while in practice it is fragmented. Institutionally, the bourgeoisie is seen to have a double and conflicting power on space, through its private property of space and through the globality, i.e. the knowledge, the strategy, the state action.²²⁴

When Lefebvre states that space is meant to be rational but is actually fragmented, he is specifically arguing that “the action of State bureaucracy, the planning of space according to the requirements of the (capitalist) mode of production,” ultimately yields a space that becomes fragmented when it is bought and sold.²²⁵ The bourgeoisie both owns and profits from the sale of space, and are the class that has the power, through planning and development to physically shape space to their needs.

While Tschumi billed the program with the political themes found in Lefebvre’s earlier writings, the content of “L’espace” shows that Lefebvre is transitioning to the discussion he would pursue in *The Production of Space*. As Stuart Elden has observed Lefebvre’s work on cities and analysis of rural environments led into “the more theoretical works on history and space that were written after, almost as

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Henri Lefebvre, “Introduction to Space and Politics,” in *Writings on Cities*, eds. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pg 196.

²²⁴ Bernard Tschumi, Lefebvre: The Politics of Space, Handout for lectures dated March 17th and 19th, 1973, Institute for Contemporary Arts Archives, Tate Britain Library, TGA955.

²²⁵ Lefebvre, “Introduction to Space and Politics,” 188.

culminations of, the practical analyses.”²²⁶ Similarly, up to this point Tschumi had been primarily interested in using space as a tool of subversive analysis and rhetoric action. After this point, as will be shown in the next chapter, the architect begins exploring ideas of the autonomy of architecture, influenced in part by his work at the Architectural Association and his ties to the London arts scene.

While still interested in the political aspects of space found in Lefebvre’s writings, Tschumi was already starting to shift towards a different analysis of space for an architectural context. Louis Martin has observed that in 1974, Tschumi’s writings “revealed a disillusionment with the possibility of changing the socioeconomic structure of society.”²²⁷ This notion of working within the system, rather than trying to overthrow it from without, also reflects Tschumi’s position as a professor at the AA. A few years later, Tschumi’s writings at the AA are tempered by a less radical stance with the architect noting that he “was aware of the limitations of our position as intellectuals and architects who were unlikely to find ourselves loading guns and hiding explosives in underground networks.”²²⁸ Instead, Tschumi ultimately translated the idea of *détournement* into the purely architectural relationship of space and its use. In the introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994) he recollects asking this question: Just as *détournement*, or rebellious use, of the urban physical framework had led to various types of urban upheaval, could the use and misuse of the architectural space lead to a new architecture?²²⁹ This proclaimed jump from protests and agitprop to the relationship of spaces and the events that take place within did not occur overnight. Tschumi’s understanding of the politics and institutional forces acting on cities, and architecture in particular, continued to motivate his work. His search for a re-definition of architecture influenced his arguments for architecture’s autonomy and extrication from the capitalist modes of production.



²²⁶ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 129.

²²⁷ Martin, “Transpositions,” 24.

²²⁸ Sadler, “An Avant-Garde Academy,” 47.

²²⁹ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 16.

Visual Arts, Theatre, Literature
at the
I.C.A.

French programme

A detailed calendar is available free on request.
Expected participants as we go to press include the following:

Raymond Aron	Gérard Duchêne	Gervais Jassaud	Pierre Schneider
Georges Badin	Lindy Dufferin	Anatole Kopp	Alan Sheridan Smith
Stephen Bann	Guy Dumur	Bernard Lambert	* Jean Sirinelli
Mathieu Bénézet	Marguerite Duras	Bernard Lassus	Pierre Smith
Jean-Marie Benoist	Serge Fauchereau	Henri Lefebvre	Stephen Spender
Jonathan Benthall	Michel Foucault	Jean Mazaufroid	Dan Sperber
Rosamond Bernier	André Frénaud	John Montague	John Spurling
Bonino	Ernest Gellner	Edgar Morin	George Steiner
Louis Cane	Paul-Armand Gette	Raymond Oliver	Robert Stuart Short
Jean Clay	* André Green	John O'Neill	Tzvetan Todorov
Lucien Clergue	* Félix Guattari	Roland Penrose	Bernard Tschumi
Michel Deguy	Claude Helffer	Marcelin Pleynt	Viva photographers
* Gilles Deleuze	Michael Hamburger	Martial Raysse	Patrick Waldberg
Jacques Derrida	Compagnie des Quartiers d'Ivry (Antoine Vitez)	Jean-François Revel	* André Zavriev
Marc Devade	Christian Jaccard	Anthony Rudolf	Zouc
		Nathalie Sarraute	

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March 1973

Human Sciences, Structuralism

*These will appear not at the ICA but in a parallel programme at the French Institute, Queensbury Place.

Figure 3.7: Press release for the French Programme, 1973

The city is an oeuvre, closer to a work of art than to a simple material product. If there is production of the city, and social relations in the city, it is a production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects.²³⁰

—Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 1968

Buildings have been erected without drawings, but architecture itself goes beyond the process of mere building. The complex cultural, social, and philosophical demands developed slowly over centuries have made architecture a form of knowledge in and of itself. Just as all forms of knowledge use different modes of discourse, so there are key architectural statements that, though not necessarily built, nevertheless inform us about the state of architecture—its concerns and its polemics—more precisely than the actual buildings of their time.²³¹

—Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Limits*, 1980

²³⁰ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 101

²³¹ Tschumi, "Architecture and Limits," 101.

04. ART PRAXIS

Tschumi has stated that were he not an architect he would have likely been a writer or a philosopher.²³² Working at the Architectural Association from 1970-1979, at an institution renowned for its academic experimentation, gave him a forum to engage both interests within his academic praxis. Tschumi, along with Nigel Coates, Roselee Goldberg, and others, contributed to the formation of an artistic and experimental stream within the school. Nigel Coates described the period in *The Discourse of Events*:

By the beginning of the seventies...an optimistic view of culture no longer adhered, certainly at least, not in terms of 'cities of tomorrow'. Yet it was through the work of Peter Cook and Archigram, that the AA had opened itself to a great deal of foreign, intellectual and political thought....Circumstances were exactly right to form an art/experimental stream within the school.²³³

The innovative, and often nontraditional, ethos of the AA contributed greatly to the evolution of Tschumi's architectural theory, and that evolution can be seen in the changing subject of the studios, lectures, and exhibitions he led in the early seventies.

²³² Barron, "Public Lives," online.

²³³ Coates, "Narrative Break-up," 12.

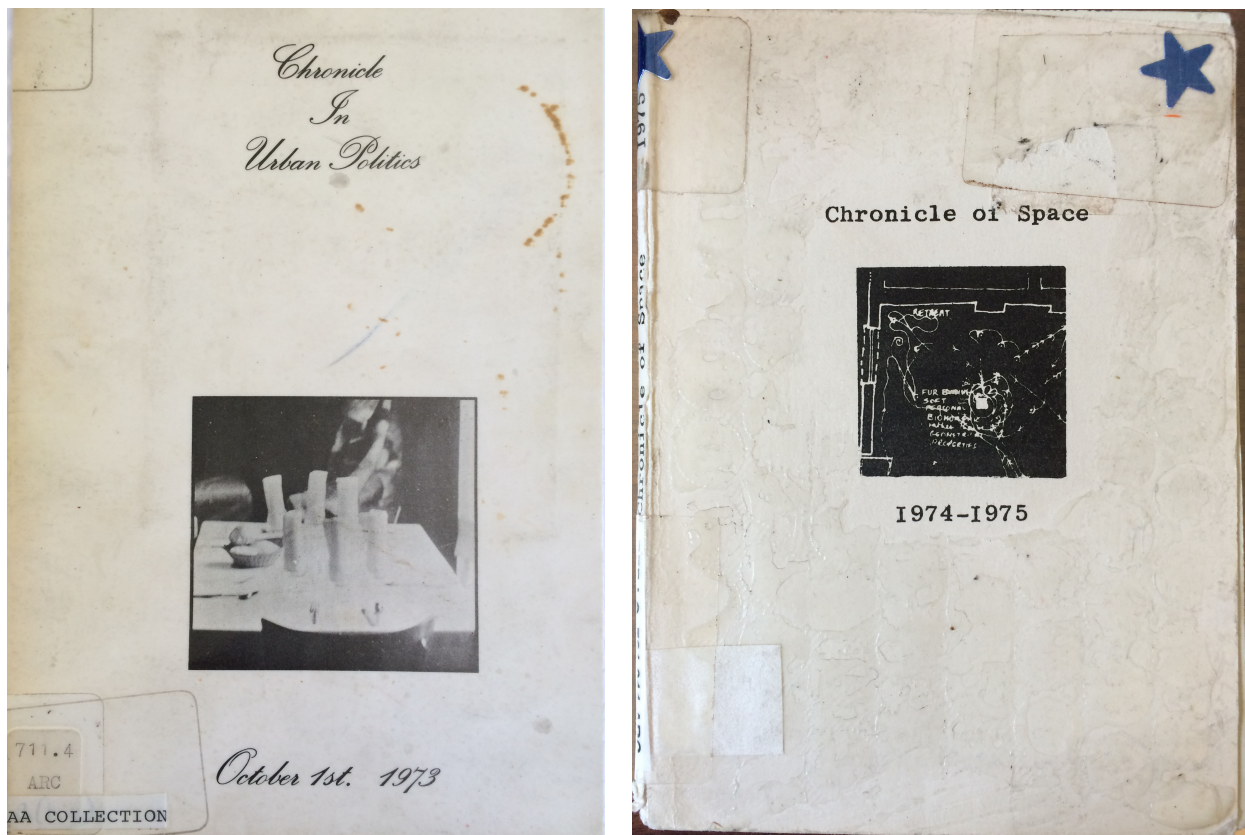


Figure 4.1: *The Chronicle of Urban Politics* and *Chronicle of Space*.

From the fall of 1973 to the Spring of 1975, Tschumi headed Unit 2 of the AA Diploma School. In its first iteration, in the 1973/74 academic year, the unit was offered under the title “Sanctuary co-op and the Urban Politics Magazine”.²³⁴ As indicated by its title, the unit’s theme was overtly politically oriented, and the work produced parallels Tschumi’s published and unpublished essays on urban politics and social uprisings examined in the previous chapter. Where the first year featured speakers from France and Italy, and offered trips abroad to more fully examine the French and Italian political and social scenes, the second year can be defined by a turn towards conceptual and performance art, which we see more fully explored in the second—1974/75—unit’s work. Over the two-year period, Unit 2 produced two

²³⁴ “AA 73 74 Diploma School,” *Architectural Association School of Architecture Prospectus: 1973/74 – 1976/77*, 4. Architectural Association Library Collections.

journals in succession titled *Chronicle of Urban Politics*, and *Chronicle of Space*. While these journals are comprised mostly of student work, Tschumi's contributions show that he is testing ideas that he would later formally publish or exhibit. Lefebvre's discourse on space continued to influence Tschumi throughout this phase, even as the architect sought out alternative means of addressing architecture's role in reinforcing existing social structures. This evolution from political analysis to art practice illuminates Tschumi's trajectory from his work on political insurgencies to his writings on space in "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)". As Tschumi moves away from a political analysis of cities, he begins to incorporate more phenomenological explorations of space into his work. Ultimately his earlier proposals for a revolutionary architecture are supplanted by a search for autonomy that is developed through his art praxis.

Chronicle of Urban Politics (1973/74)

The first Unit 2 was political from its conception, though by the end of the year themes that would define Tschumi's turn towards an art practice are present. The *School of Architecture Prospectus*, published for the 1973/74 academic year, indicates that written output would be a large part of the unit's program, with the aim of producing the *Chronicle of Urban Politics*. The issues to be critically examined included "present socio-economic trends ([in]the last five years) influencing urban organization" including "the disruption of industrial growth," "the improductive urban investments," and "the collapse of an inflated economy (private & public forms)".²³⁵ The prospectus indicates that throughout the first year of the unit, students were given the option to either work on the *Chronicle of Urban Politics*, or to produce a "comprehensive predictive design of sanctuary or co-operative with their cultural, political, transportation and building characteristics examined fully."²³⁶ However, this later design directive appears to have evolved over the course of the year, becoming an exploration of spatial practices that more closely resembles art-praxis.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid., 5.

In a retrospective exhibit produced at the AA, Tschumi and Nigel Coates, a Unit 2 student who began teaching alongside Tschumi upon his graduation in 1974, describe the unit's program, influences, and the "art sensibility" that informed the work the unit produced. In the exhibit titled *A Discourse of Events* they list the key texts that shaped the unit's lectures:

The work of situationists Debord and Vaneighem, Lefebvre's texts on everyday life and 'urban revolution,' and those of their predecessors, Benjamin, Adorno and the Frankfurt School, were intensely discussed in a course of lectures. Aimed at understanding the forces acting through and on the city, it emphasized the application of political philosophy to the urban realm.²³⁷

Likely influenced by the activities of their guest lecturers and collaborators, the collective response shifted from one of "subversive analysis," to borrow Tschumi's term, to phenomenological explorations of space. In hindsight Tschumi and Coates described the relationship between politics, theory and the "specifically art perspective" that developed:

The unit plays on an opposition between certain political, theoretical and critical concerns, and an art sensibility informed by contemporary photography, conceptual art and performance....This opposition between a critical, theoretical discourse and a specifically art perspective was to characterize the unit's approach.²³⁸

As a result the work produced and published in the *Chronicle of Urban Politics*, ranges from political and social critiques, to explorations of the experience of particular urban spaces using photography, video, and more traditional mediums.

Three separate study trips taken by the Unit 2 students exemplify the changing focus from the beginning of the year to the end. The first trip, which preceded the academic year, was part of a much larger summer term exchange coordinated with the University of Southern California.²³⁹ On that excursion some 120 students and instructors visited California, Arizona, and Nevada. Tschumi, Charles Jencks, Reyner Banham, and other instructors from the AA contributed their observations to "AD Goes West," the September 1973 issue of *Architectural Design* dedicated to the documentation of the trip. Tschumi's article, titled "Sanctuaries," is in line with his interests in urban politics and urban uprisings, and he examines the historic, economic, political and social forces that led the creation of segregated and

²³⁷ Bernard Tschumi and Nigel Coates, "1973-74: Theory, Language....," in *The Discourse of Events, Themes 3*, (London: Spin Offset Ltd, 1983), 18.

²³⁸ Ibid., 19.

²³⁹ Jenny Lowe and Nigel Coates, "Cosmorama: AA in LA," *Architectural Design* 9, (September 1973) 552.

homogenous communities throughout Los Angeles. Tschumi's introduction to the article states the following:

Fearing the disorder of central Los Angeles, the middle-class take refuge behind the gates of their suburban retreats. So the decaying remnants of the inner city are abandoned to low-income minorities who are now determined to defend and govern their territories.²⁴⁰

The studies are Lefebvrian in that Tschumi focuses on the problems stemming from the segregation of lower income worker populations and the flight of higher-income citizens who purposely seek out segregated neighborhoods. Tschumi observes that the same processes that caused segregation and blight gave rise to the movements aiming to reclaim a territory through community involvement writing, "In a typical urban inversion process, the outcome of discrimination had become the base for liberation."²⁴¹ This research on "sanctuaries" influenced the original aims of Unit 2, that each student produce his or her own design for a carefully considered sanctuary. Given the architect's critique of these types of segregated, homogenous communities, it seems likely that he aspired to produce "counterdesigns" that would illustrate problems within the present situation. However, subsequent study trips appear to have influenced the artistic and phenomenological turn seen in Tschumi's and his students' work.

In the spring term, January 1974, the Urban Politics Unit held a series of lectures and study tours led by "Italian Radicals."²⁴² In March of that same year the Urban Politics Unit welcomed a French contingency, for a similar series of lectures that preceded the unit's trip to Paris.²⁴³ Among the Italian speakers were Pietro Derossi, of the Strum group, Peppino Ortoleva of Lotta Continua, Paolo Deganello of Archizoom, and Germano Celant.²⁴⁴ Like Tschumi, these groups were actively studying urban conflicts, but, as in the case of the Turin Strum Group and Archizoom, were producing pamphlets and films in lieu of designs.²⁴⁵ In general, advertisements for the visiting lectures aspire to identify the unit's

²⁴⁰ Bernard Tschumi, "Sanctuaries," *Architectural Design* 43 (September 1973): Sanctuaries 575

²⁴¹ Tschumi, "Sanctuaries," 576.

²⁴² "Italian radicals," *Architectural Association, Events List Week 13*, 21-25 January 1974. Architectural Association Library Collection.

²⁴³ "allo Paris... ..ici Londres," *Architectural Association, Events List Week 21*, 18-22 March 1974. Architectural Association Library Collection.

²⁴⁴ "Italian radicals," 21-25 January 1974.

²⁴⁵ A January events List, described the Turn Strum group as having "consistently tried to avoid the pitfalls of formalistic feats in the attempt to get closer to the social and political roots of urban conflicts," with an emphasis on producing "pamphlets rather than designs, [and] didactic films rather than exercises de style." Ibid.

work as subversive by identifying the invitees as leftists, Marxists, and militants.²⁴⁶ In March the unit welcomed two of the “controversial protagonists” responsible for the restructuring of the École des Beaux-Arts, Antoine Grumbach, an instructor from UP6, and Christian de Portzamparc.²⁴⁷ Fernando Montes, with whom Tschumi had worked on the “Do it Yourself City” project, and René Tabouret, who offered lectures on “the road from the doomed purity of architectural heroism to the contradictions of the institutional avant-garde,” and “architectural modes of production,” respectively. Henri Lefebvre is listed as having participated, though it is not clear whether he lectured in London or during the students’ trip to Paris.²⁴⁸ Tschumi’s interest in the avant-garde positions proposed by Superstudio, Archizoom and other visiting participants is evident in “The Environmental Trigger.” Closer contact with these French and Italian architects seems to have influenced the shift in Tschumi’s work from “subversive analysis” to a position more fully defined as “counterdesign.” Whereas Tschumi’s had earliest activities at the AA, such as the occupation of the Kentish Town Station, were inspired in part by UP6, his collaboration with the Italians in particular seems to have influenced the avant-garde stance he begins to develop in the second chronicle.

A panel discussion between the visiting Italians and the student’s of Unit 2 shows Tschumi’s indebtedness to Lefebvre’s theories. Excerpts of the discussion were printed in an article in the school’s *Events List*, which was later reprinted in the “Urban Politics” magazine. Production was a key issue in the debate:

²⁴⁶ Pietro Derossi was invited to discuss “the relationship between the changing urban landscape and the interventions of the architects of the left groups and the application of the Marxist method to urban analysis.” Peppino Ortoleva, who the article described as “a militant” presented “documents produced by the Italian left group” Lotta Continua. Paolo Deganello presented a the most recent Archizoom movie, and German Celant gave a lecture on the “Italian scene.” Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Antoine Grumbach, an instructor from UP6, and Christian de Portzamparc, discussed their work in the French New Towns. Fernando Montes, with whom Tschumi had worked on the “Do it Yourself City” project, and René Tabouret, both of whom were teaching in Strasbourg, offered lectures on “the road from the doomed purity of architectural heroism to the contradictions of the institutional avant-garde,” and “architectural modes of production,” respectively. “allo Paris... ..ici Londres,” 18-22 March 1974.

²⁴⁸ The prospectus for the 1974/75 school year offers a list of people who contributed to the 73/74 unit: “Lapo Binazzi, Su Braden, Victor Burgin, Germano Celant, Nigel Coates, Paolo Geganello, Pietro Derossi, Roel v. Duyn, Roselee Goldberg, David Greene, Antoine Grumbach, Ron Hall, Henri Lefebvre, Jenny Lowe, Fernando Montes, Peppino Ortoleva, Martin Pawley, Gianni Pettena, Christian de Portzamparc, Elaine Porter, Thanos Skouras, Rene Tabouret. “AA 74 75 Diploma School,” *Architectural Association School of Architecture Prospectus: 1973/74 – 1976/77*, Architectural Association Library Collections, 4.

Derossi: Nowadays the period of community work is over...a theoretical support is necessary...every part of the urban space will be analyzed according to its role in the cycle of production...

Tschumi: ...even if the space of production is increasingly replaced by the mere production of space...?

Ortoleva: ...producing speculative buildings implies producing bulldozers..the city still stimulates production.²⁴⁹

Tschumi's question in the debate reflects a recurrent theme in both *The Right to the City*, and *The Urban Revolution*, in which Lefebvre discusses the dominance of exchange value over use value in urban space. His reference to the "mere production of space" points to Lefebvre's assertion that heterogeneous urban space, with its rich and complex neighborhood and family life, is subordinated to homogenous urban environments that are conceived by government and institutional powers with profit in mind.²⁵⁰ As mentioned in the previous chapter, Lefebvre frequently discusses the ways in which the expulsion of the working class from the city to its periphery enables the speculation of land and housing and a rise in exchange value of these spaces. His writing highlights the problems stemming from "the opposition between *use value* (city and urban life) and *exchange value* (spaces bought and sold, the consumption of products, goods, places and signs),"²⁵¹ and the ways in which the former can be reclaimed over the later. Tschumi and his students explore these issues of commodification and production in the *Chronicle of Urban Politics*.

The *Chronicle of Urban Politics* begins with a front cover dated October 1st, 1973, concludes with the back cover dated June 28th, 1974, and simply gives a date for each article and project included in place of pagination. For example, an image that would later become part of Tschumi's "Fireworks" project for the *A Space: A Thousand Words* exhibit is simply titled "1st June".²⁵² In the prospectus for the second Unit 2, Tschumi described the aims of the chronicle in terms that reference Lefebvre's antecedent writings:

Although based on a theoretical analysis of the city in terms of social and economic relationships, the Unit's work never entered politics without explicitly referring to urban immediacy. The materialistic interpretation of urban society (where the city is seen as a mere product of the mode of production) was constantly opposed to a fundamental

²⁴⁹ "The mirror of production," in *Chronicle of Urban Politics*, (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974) Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁵⁰ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 84.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁵² "1st June" in *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974). Architectural Association Library Collection.

critique of everyday life. Its politics were not concerned with well-defined alterations to institutional or ideological rules but rather with individual experiences of all sorts and a refusal of all constraints.²⁵³

The research themes the students addressed, many of which appear in *The Right to the City and The Urban Revolution*, focused on land speculation, “city fetishism,” “leisure as commodity,” “urban fragmentation,” and “play as the only remaining activity untouched by compulsive consumption.”²⁵⁴ The original aim of the unit was to “isolate three distinct aspects of urban fragmentation for research,” including “economic fragmentation,” in which “the production of goods within the urban space has become the ‘production’ of space, a commodity which can be labeled, packaged and commercialized.”²⁵⁵ Similarly, the remaining two aspects, “cultural fragmentation” and “territorial fragmentation,” focused on issues of commodification, housing, discrimination, and “the projection of society on the ground.”²⁵⁶ As the year progressed, this analysis of the forces at work in and on the city gave way to individual experience. Tschumi writes that “the critical analysis of the city and of its planning ideologies ultimately lead to subjective explorations of the mental and urban spaces and their formal expressions.”²⁵⁷ As Tschumi wrote in his later description of the unit’s aims, the projects that followed these analyses, were “subjective explorations of the mental and urban spaces.”

Tschumi’s introduction reads like a manifesto with four primary objectives for the chronicle. The first point states that the chronicle is politics, on which Tschumi writes:

The following journey is neither art, nor semiology, nor metaphysics but rather politics. Not politics in the institutional sense though (Parliament, elections, parties, local authorities...), neither politics in the ideological sense (class struggle, proletariat, party...) but politics in a sense that has not been yet defined, and which perhaps must always remain undefined...Although based on an analysis of the city in terms of social relationships and modes of production, this political journey never speaks about revolution without explicitly referring to everyday life.²⁵⁸

The unit’s focus on “social relationships and modes of production” and “everyday life” are, of course, themes common to Lefebvre’s writings, but where Lefebvre’s writings in *Right to the City* advocate

²⁵³ “AA 74 75 Diploma School,” *Architectural Association School of Architecture Prospectus*, 4.

²⁵⁴ “Urban Politics – Research Themes,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974) Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁵⁵ “Fragmented Cities,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974) Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ “AA 74 75 Diploma School,” *Architectural Association School of Architecture Prospectus*, 4.

²⁵⁸ “A chronicle of urban politics,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974) Architectural Association Library Collections.

philosophy as the “starting point” to “take up a radically critical analysis and to deepen the urban problematic,”²⁵⁹ Tschumi guides his students in a direction that might be classified as art-practice. Making the transition from analysis to “art practice”, Tschumi’s second point that “this chronicle is the trace of an itinerary...which start[s] out among the objective sign posts of urban theory and socio-economic analysis and end up in subliminal scapes that transcend the regressive rationality of the written word.”²⁶⁰ However art is a direction that Lefebvre weights equally with philosophy for its ability to understand the totality of the city and synthesize its many modes of analysis:

Philosophical concepts are not operative and yet they situate the city and the urban – and the whole of society – as a totality, over and above analytical fragmentations. What is proclaimed here of philosophy and its history could equally be asserted for art and its history.²⁶¹

Tschumi never states that the chronicle is philosophy, but here he shares Lefebvre’s goal of transcending the discourse provided by “fragmentary sciences,” which for Lefebvre includes the analytical methodologies of planning and architecture.

Tschumi’s third point regarding the *Chronicle of Urban Politics* indicates the philosophical influence of the Italian architects. Tschumi here is looking at theories not just about the production of spaces, but about the production of the individual:

It reacts against the social romanticism of productivity and its regressive revolutionary discourse. For either the urban political discourse on the mode of production is a revolutionary metaphor—but this metaphor is a limited one if it means a radical alternative. Or the alternative is not radical, and the contamination through the productivist discourse not only means a metaphoric infection but also a real impossibility to think beyond established thought patterns. Rather than to reflect the mirror image of prevalent concepts, this chronicle sets out to transcend them.²⁶²

Where the materialist analysis argues that architecture is typically the projection of prevalent power structures on the ground, it appears that several of the Italian architects with whom Tschumi worked preferred an “almost Marcusean” critique of everyday life “using the combined tools of Marxism and psychoanalysis.”²⁶³ Herbert Marcuse, a member of the Frankfurt School, wrote about the repression of the individual under capitalism in *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955) and

²⁵⁹ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 86.

²⁶⁰ “A chronicle of urban politics,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics*.

²⁶¹ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 93.

²⁶² “A chronicle of urban politics,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics*.

²⁶³ “Turin Seminar” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics* (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974) Architectural Association Library Collections.

One-Dimensional Man (1964). Arnold Farr summarizes that “work in a capitalist society extends itself beyond what is required for the satisfaction of the [worker’s needs] to what will maximize profit for the capitalist.”²⁶⁴ In order to maintain this imbalance, and work more than survival alone dictates, the worker must be convinced that his desires conform to those of “the apparatus.”²⁶⁵ Marcuse calls this phenomenon “surplus repression.”²⁶⁶ Farr writes that Marcuse “uses Freud to go beyond Marx insofar as Freud helps us understand the psychological mechanisms at work in individuals who accept surplus repression.”²⁶⁷ The result is one-dimensional thinking, which pacifies the citizen so that he identifies with his oppressors and thinks that he is freer than he really is.²⁶⁸ While this is still a Marxist position, the focus on the individual likely set the stage for Unit 2’s phenomenological turn. Tschumi’s last point, his desire to transcend the mirror image of prevalent concepts, indicates the architect’s desire to produce architectural studies removed from the forces of commodification and institutional power structures.

In an equivocal turn, Tschumi’s fourth point asks “Is the chronicle political? Certainly it is not provocative in the sense that it does not prove a case or draw a moral or advocate an ideology. The idea of the chronicle is the chronicle itself.”²⁶⁹ Where so much of the unit’s work is political and social critique, it is indicative of the changing nature of Tschumi’s outlook that a single frame of “Fireworks” is his final contribution to the magazine. Which, with the benefit of hindsight, illustrates Tschumi’s turn towards an art practice as a solution to the problems of architecture tied to production.

Chronicle of Space (1974/75)

The second year of the Urban Politics unit, from the fall of 1974 to the spring of 1975, continued the work begun by the students in the unit the year prior, with a greater emphasis on “real” space and spatial experiences over the political and social production of space. The unit began with a similar philosophical

²⁶⁴ Arnold Farr, “Herbert Marcuse,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2014 Edition): 4.2, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/marcuse/>.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ “A chronicle of urban politics,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics*.

foundation as the prior year's offering. The coursework in this unit allowed students to focus on their choice of three, intertwined tracks of study. The first two options invited students to engage with or oppose the "theories and ideologies" of "the urban work of Lefebvre, Castells, Harvey, the Situationists, Potere Operaio, the Venice and Milan "School".²⁷⁰ The third option invited students to execute "comparative studies of urban situations" relating to "social, cultural and territorial fragmentation in three Western European cities," and "urban consequences of the emergent economic crisis, based on aspects of Turin, Paris and one British city."²⁷¹ Once again, as the unit evolved so did its focus; ultimately students were given "a series four briefs that had a strong literary basis," using texts from Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, Hermann Hesse, and Italo Calvino, as the starting point for design projects.²⁷² The resulting projects used these literary texts to varying degrees, with most resembling conceptual and performance art pieces on the subjective experience of space.

The work of this second Unit 2 seems to have influenced Tschumi's writing of "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or The Architectural Paradox)," and much of the same language and themes are found in the *Chronicle of Space*. In his introduction to the *Chronicle of Space* he attempts to differentiate the two texts:

The first Chronicle (Unit 2, AA Dip. 1973-74) was an attempt to disarticulate notions that were prevalent in parts of the architectural world. It analyzed socio-economic constraints and questioned the ideology of production. It implicitly referred to practice and everyday experience. Its pages reflected the work of an AA unit, like opposed mirrors reflect both themselves and the reality between them. It distorted and magnified. This second Chronicle is more specific. Rather than analyzing the variables of architectural activity, it deliberately chooses to concentrate on the oldest constant of all, space. This logical shift was motivated by the opposition between two concepts: space as a product (of history, for example) and space as a medium for experiences (as an instrument of knowledge, for example).²⁷³

Tschumi desired to go beyond this "confusion that reigns upon the contemporary spatial discourse" calling it the "Hegel-versus-Kant dilemma,"²⁷⁴ language which makes its way into "The Architectural Paradox" nearly verbatim. It is likely that Tschumi would have read Lefebvre's most recent release, *The Production of Space*, during the course of this academic year, and the similarities between Tschumi's

²⁷⁰ "AA 74 75 Diploma School," 4.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Bernard Tschumi, "A Chronicle of Space," in *Chronicle of Space*, (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1975), 2. Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁷³ Bernard Tschumi, "A Chronicle of Space," 1.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

theories and Lefebvre's will be analyzed further in the following chapter. Tschumi's statement opposing "space as a product," and "space as a medium for experiences" indicates that he wishes to take a phenomenological approach to the study of space. While this may seem like a departure from Lefebvre's idea, the experience of space does play a role in the concept of "lived" space that Lefebvre proposes in *The Production of Space*. Further echoing Lefebvre, Tschumi goes on to illustrate the ways in which the contemporary discourse 'defin[ed]' space by either physically "making space distinct" in the case of architecture, or "stating the precise nature of space" in philosophy, math, and physics.²⁷⁵ He finds that for architects "the notion of space remained simplistic, as if space were some uniformly extended matter that could be modeled by its physical boundaries."²⁷⁶ Seeking a third path beyond architecture or philosophy he states that "It is only presently that art-theorists are introducing the notion of space as praxis, both as field and performance."²⁷⁷ As will be shown in the next chapter, the language he uses and the spatial theory Tschumi develops in "The Architectural Paradox" is greatly dependent on the theories presented in *The Production of Space*.

Tschumi never singles out Lefebvre's critiques of architects and planners in this text, but here as in earlier essays, he does appear to be responding to the discussion by proposing a new way forward for the field of architecture. In the introduction to *Chronicle of Space* he addresses the institution of architecture:

Certainly, a human activity as old as architecture is bound to become institutionalized. As an institution, it is bound to be attacked....it is suggested here that architecture, not unlike art, can only be successful if it disarticulates some of the existing codes that society possesses, in order to invent original articulations.²⁷⁸

Tschumi goes on to state that "this second Chronicle does not pretend to invent the new articulations but might simply suggest some approaches towards their discovery."²⁷⁹

The move within the unit to a literary themed program anticipates both a larger thread in Tschumi's teaching trajectory of the later seventies, and more importantly for the discussion at hand, the idea of "event" that we see in *The Manhattan Transcripts*, and the architect's writings of the late 1970s

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.

and 1980s. In *The Discourse of Events* Tschumi and Coates stated that the projects produced in Unit 2 “deliberately concentrate on one constant, space, together with some of its ‘literary’ connotations.”²⁸⁰ Of this transition the architects later wrote:

Such a logical shift was impelled by an attempt to develop a discourse specific to architecture. The concentration on space was aimed both at further exploring ideas discussed during the preceding year (i.e. space as a product of history) and at opposing them to specific philosophical concepts, such as the Kantian ‘space as instrument of knowledge’.²⁸¹

And further:

Literary connotations, on the other hand, offered a means of exploring concepts of space in other disciplines – in the arts and literature itself. However, they also unexpectedly provided a remarkable ground for research in what was to become an obsessive theme: the relation between spaces and the events that occur within them, their relative autonomy and their conflicts.²⁸²

This idea of autonomy and conflict between space and program appears in many of Tschumi’s essays, and foreshadows themes found in “Architecture and Transgression” (1976) and “Space and Events” (1983). Using narrative as program is a thread seen throughout Tschumi’s work, but this too has a parallel in Lefebvre’s philosophy. As will be shown in the following chapter, Tschumi’s idea of “event,” is analogous to Lefebvre’s notion of “moments.” And while the Lefebvrian “moment” is not the only generative behind the idea of the “event”—Roselee Goldberg’s interest in performance art surely plays its own part in the formation of the idea—there are similarities that warrant exploration. At this phase in the development of Tschumi’s theory, however, the use of literary themes is indicative of the architect’s growing interest in the phenomenological experience of space.

A Space: A Thousand Words (February 10 to March 4, 1975)

In 1974 Roselee Goldberg, the Exhibitions Organizer for the Royal College of Arts (RCA) in London and guest lecturer coordinator for year two of Unit 2, invited Tschumi to organize an architecturally themed

²⁸⁰ Bernard Tschumi and Nigel Coates “1974-75: Literary Briefs,” in *The Discourse of Events, Themes 3, Architectural Association* (London: Spin Offset Ltd, 1983) 28.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

exhibition at the RCA.²⁸³ In the exhibition catalog, Goldberg wrote that the exhibit aimed to continue a discussion that had been presented previously in exhibits in Italy and the United States, which “expressed the conflicts between design as an end in itself and conceptual preoccupations, between actual politics and the expressionistic fantasies that are part of the design process.”²⁸⁴ The artists and architects involved were loosely united by a “critical stance” pertaining to the commercialization of the product, Goldberg wrote “parallel to the critical stance that formed the background of many architects’ debates, the refutation by artists of the commodity value which art had achieved in the international auction market has been reflected in their work.”²⁸⁵ Tschumi’s initial proposal had stated “At a time when all architecture and urban planning is increasingly seen as the mere product of socio-economic constraints, a new group of architects has been trying to redefine its role...”²⁸⁶ As we will see in Tschumi’s contributions to the exhibit catalog, “Fireworks,” Tschumi’s ultimate aim is the removal of architecture from the confines of the processes of production.

The invitation to participate, which Tschumi later described as being “very much like an attempt to simultaneously provide an analysis, a critique, and a manifesto,” stated that the exhibit’s intent was to “break the tight boundaries of critical theory and its spatial representation and expand into the neglected realm of mental space.”²⁸⁷ The first letter sent to participants stated that the exhibit aimed to “reveal the existence of new attitudes towards space”:

These emerging attitudes are concerned with the fundamental link between the theory and the language of space, for they refuse any separation between the theoretical level of politics and the everyday level of space and desires, between objective analysis and unconscious spheres, between socio-economic space and mental space.²⁸⁸

²⁸³ Bernard Tschumi, “95% Cronaca di un’esposizione: Bernard Tschumi reminisces,” *Ghost Dance Times*, 21 February 1975, 2. Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁸⁴ Roselee Goldberg, “Preface,” *A Space: A Thousand Words*, eds. Roselee Goldberg and Bernard Tschumi (Italy: Dieci Libri, 1975). Architectural Association Library Collections.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Tschumi, “95% Cronaca di un’esposizione,” 2.

²⁸⁷ Tschumi, “95% Cronaca di un’esposizione,” 2.

²⁸⁸ These letters sent to participants are preserved in the catalog that accompanied the exhibit, along with the press release sent in advance of the exhibit. Bernard Tschumi and Roselee Goldberg, “letter dated 15 August 1974,” in *A Space: A Thousand Words*, eds. Roselee Goldberg and Bernard Tschumi (Italy: Dieci Libri, 1975). Architectural Association Library Collection.

And in October, the letter sent to participants states “The exhibition will be chiefly concerned with the concepts that underlie the production of space. It will emphasize this theoretical preoccupation, without cutting it off from design itself.”²⁸⁹

Tschumi documented the process, and difficulties encountered by the organizers in an article for the AA student newspaper, *The Ghost Dance Times*.²⁹⁰ As the exhibition evolved, artists were invited to join the architects previously invited to present a work; Tschumi wrote that “their work paralleled ours in that it equally expressed the conflicts between art in itself and conceptual preoccupations”.²⁹¹ According to Tschumi the students of Unit 2 participated actively in the selection of participants and the production of the event.²⁹² Several of the participants were architects with whom Tschumi frequently worked, including Antoine Grumbach, Christian de Portzamparc, Fernando Montes, Zoe and Elia Zenghelis, Leon van Schaik, Nigel Coates, and Jenny Lowe. A one-day conference was held at the Architectural Association on February 18th, in which participating architects and artists were invited to present their work.²⁹³

The exhibit formula was simple and egalitarian, and greatly influenced by the importance the coordinators gave to the design of the accompanying publication. Tschumi and Goldberg did not know the format the exhibition would take when they first began planning, but as the process evolved “some ideas were becoming clear [such as the idea that] ‘words and figurations are closely related and art and architecture have always been using their complementary possibilities’.”²⁹⁴ The desire to present both an artistic and critical stance led to the two-part format for each participant’s submission, and as a result the exhibit itself was an enlarged version of the publication. Each artist or architect was “asked to present a) a piece of work, [and] b) a written commentary, no longer than 1000 words, describing or discussing the

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ The participants were asked to provide submissions for the exhibit in November so that the catalog could be printed for the March exhibit. Tschumi wrote that “most pieces came in late, and some not at all.” Tschumi, “95% Cronaca di un’esposizione,” 2.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ “A space a thousand words,” *Architectural Association, Events List Week 6* (10-14 February 1975): 1. Architectural Association Library Collection.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

work, or acting as a theoretical backup.”²⁹⁵ Goldberg stated that the starting point, whether the illustrative or written component, was interchangeable:

This emphasis on both visual and critical, theoretical and practical, considerations determined the format of the exhibition and provided a vehicle for a series of theoretical propositions illustrated by their visual counterpart. Or it could be put the other way. That certain graphic, visual, film or other media forms are generated by precise attitudes and critiques. In the work shown, the relationship between text and image differs considerably from one work to another....Ultimately the collection of work and the format insists on the equal value of both.²⁹⁶

The format was a limitation for exploration of anything other than theory; some of the contributors even described the 3-d installations—using film, mirrors, sound and other sensory elements—that they might have produced for an exhibition with fewer constraints. Goldberg was aware of these limitations; in her preface she observes:

But the catalog as exhibition only emphasizes the inherent ambiguity of the discussion on space, since here space is presented in a two dimensional way. The viewer, rather than being subjected to real space, is given glimpses into different spatial possibilities – landscapes or mindscapes.²⁹⁷

This emphasis on mindscapes corresponds with the subjective experience of space that Tschumi was increasingly interested in, and which is more fully explored in “The Architectural Paradox.” Furthermore, the facsimile of the exhibit and the publication is of course beneficial to scholars, and it indicates the coordinators desires for the exhibit to reach a wider audience, geographically and temporally, than the physical exhibit permits. The two part submissions “provided a series of articles more closely resembling a magazine. Each work related only through general concerns, each presenting a different critique.”²⁹⁸ The catalog was meant to be the first edition of the magazine *Dieci Libri*, published by Goldberg and Tschumi, but the intended follow-up never materialized.²⁹⁹

Tschumi’s introduction to the exhibit catalog, titled “A Space is Worth a Thousand Words” begins by addressing the ways in which space has been understood in past and recent discourses. He addresses the functionalism of the 1950s without explicitly naming it as such, wherein the readability of “spatial layers” were “central to a particular school of architectural analysis”—an era where space was

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

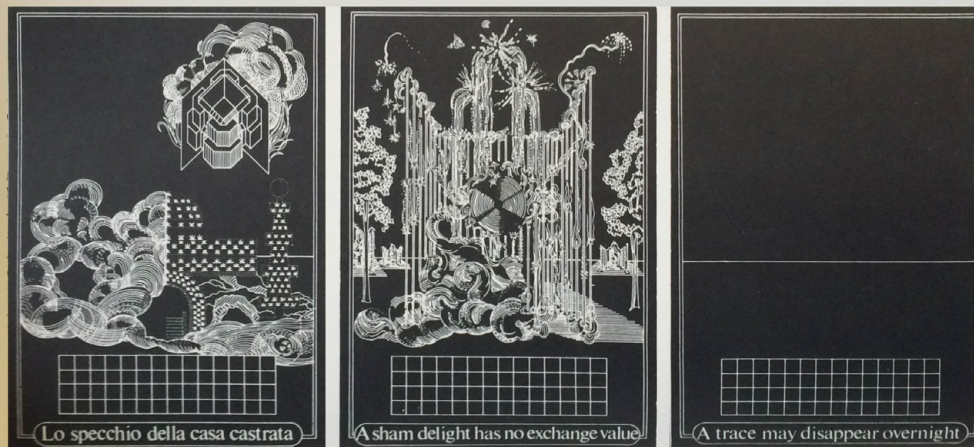
²⁹⁶ Goldberg, “Preface,” *A Space: A Thousand Words*.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Su Braden, “Su Braden previews: ‘A Space: A thousand words’,” *Time Out*, Feb 21, 1975.

Roselee Goldberg and Bernard Tschumi, “Cover page,” *A Space: A Thousand Words*, printed in Italy Dieci Libri, 1975



Striking a match for no other reason than to see it aflame, you get a good idea of the gratuitous aspect of good architecture. You must distinguish such an act from its productive aspect, though. If, with the match, you light the gas fire that will warm the coffee that you usually drink before going to work, this consumption won't be gratuitous, it will enter a movement that belongs to the flow of capital: good matches - healthy labour force - basic wages - good matches. But when you light the tiny brown head just to see it, for the hell of it, just to see the colours, to hear the tiny noise, to enjoy the death of the little piece of wood, then you love gratuitous consumption, the one that leads to nothing, the one that is a complete loss. Real pleasure can always be

recognised by its uselessness. But when architecture looks for pleasure rather than for virtuous usefulness, it never seems to consume itself. It's always like a cool mirror that would reflect each room, each cornice, each column. Each of your movements becomes both the movement and its mirror image, which of course possesses the dignity that is particular to images and forbids your consciousness to abandon itself to perverse intuitions. Even when lovers seek deeper delights or murderers better grips, it is the reflected image that counts. The pleasure of architecture turns into the architecture of pleasure, not to consume itself but to be consumed, with indifference. Pleasure becomes less important than its symmetrically documented evidence.

And architecture always seems to strike matches to light gas fires.

But when you struck that useless match a while ago, *when you did that drawing for pleasure rather than for meaning*, for figuration rather than for representation, you experienced the ultimate diversion of energy. By your movement, you produced a sham delight that couldn't be sold or bought. No more than a disguised deathwish, your delight produced nothing. Yes, just as all the erotic forces contained in your movement have been consumed for nothing, good architecture must be conceived, erected and burned in vain. The greatest architecture of all is the fireworkers': it perfectly shows the gratuitous consumption of pleasure.

Bernard Tschumi

Figure 4.2: Bernard Tschumi, "Fireworks," exhibit format, 1974.

defined by its function and “architectural relationships”.³⁰⁰ He then observes that in more recent years this method of analysis has been trumped by “the interpenetration of quite different kinds of layers,” including “Mode of Production, the Collective Unconscious, the Linguistic Pattern, the Alternative Technology, even the Historical Precedent.”³⁰¹ Tschumi indicates a preference for Lefebvre’s theories over these others, but that these analyses can be reductive or limiting as well:

In the best instance, space became «the mere product of the socioeconomic structure», architecture «the phallic projection of society on the ground», the city «the means of reproduction of the mode of production».³⁰²

He goes on to argue that space has been overwhelmed by the many layers of analysis and meaning attributed to it in recent years, stating “space seemed to be rammed by so many discourses that it ceased to offer any resistance.”³⁰³ Tschumi appears to want to set these discourses aside for the time being and offer an analysis that “attempts to reveal the presence of space.” He writes:

However necessary and beneficial such analyses were – and still are – the reduction of space to a mere reflection of other modes of thought was overlooking the fact that space *was*. With all its representations, symbols and experiences, space remained irreducible [sic].³⁰⁴

At first his analysis seems to want to strip away analyses and address the inherent qualities of space, the physical aspects that Lefebvre calls “real space”, but it becomes clear that Tschumi wishes to address “lived space”, Lefebvre’s third term wherein, to summarize the definition given by Stuart Elden, “real” or physical space cannot be separated from the uses, symbolism and meanings attributed to it over time.³⁰⁵ Tschumi writes “in its own irreducible [sic] presence, space always floats among signs and ideas. Space is, yes, but it also represents something else.”³⁰⁶

The architect uses this argument as a justification for the format of the exhibit, stating “signs and space, words and figuration are closely related and that inevitably art or architecture has always been using their complementary possibilities,” and further on “the magic of space is inseparable from its

³⁰⁰ Bernard Tschumi, “A Space is Worth a Thousand Words,” in *A Space: A Thousand Words*, eds. Roselee Goldberg and Bernard Tschumi (Italy: Dieci Libri, 1975). Architectural Association Library Collection.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

theoretical discourse.”³⁰⁷ As previously stated, Tschumi and Goldberg wished for the two parts of each artist’s submission to be viewed as equal, and in structuring the exhibit in a strictly two-dimensional format, with an emphasis on text unusually found in art exhibits but common to journals, the organizers seem to be more interested in the production of theories of space than of a spatial experience, despite Tschumi’s earlier proclamation that the field of analysis had become too crowded. Tschumi concludes his introduction with the assertion that “ultimately, the words of architecture become the work of architecture.”³⁰⁸

Tschumi’s own submission for the exhibition was “Fireworks,” the architect’s 1974 treatise on pleasure, and expenditure in architecture.³⁰⁹ In some ways, the evolution of the language in the exhibit, from letters written to entice participants, to Tschumi’s own submission for exhibition, mirrors the trajectory of Tschumi’s changing attitudes towards space, an evolution from politics to pleasure. In his submission Tschumi writes of the gratuitous aspect of “good architecture”:

Striking a match for no other reason than to see it aflame, you get a good idea of the gratuitous aspect of good architecture. You must distinguish such an act from its productive aspect though. If, with the match, you light the gas fire that will warm the coffee that you usually drink before going to work, this consumption won’t be gratuitous, it will enter a movement that belongs to the flow of capital: good matches – healthy labour force – basic wages – good matches. But when you light the tiny brown head just to see it, for the hell of it, just to see the colours, to hear the tiny noise, to enjoy the death of the little piece of wood, then you love gratuitous consumption, the one that leads to nothing, the one that is a complete loss. Real pleasure can always be recognized by its uselessness.³¹⁰

As with his writings in *The Environmental Trigger*, the architect is still looking for ways to avoid the inevitable fate of mirroring the existing power structures in built form. The art critic Sue Braden summed Tschumi’s position up as such:

Tschumi’s theory is that architecture only refers to pure space when it is at the stage of words and drawings. Once these concepts become three dimensional, they are nearly always little more than the product of politico-economic contingencies.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ While the exhibit was held in early 1975, “Fireworks” is dated 1974.

³¹⁰ Bernard Tschumi, “Fireworks,” in *A Space: A Thousand Words*, eds. Roselee Goldberg and Bernard Tschumi (Italy: Dieci Libri, 1975). Architectural Association Library Collection.

³¹¹ Braden, “Su Braden previews: ‘A Space: A thousand words’.”

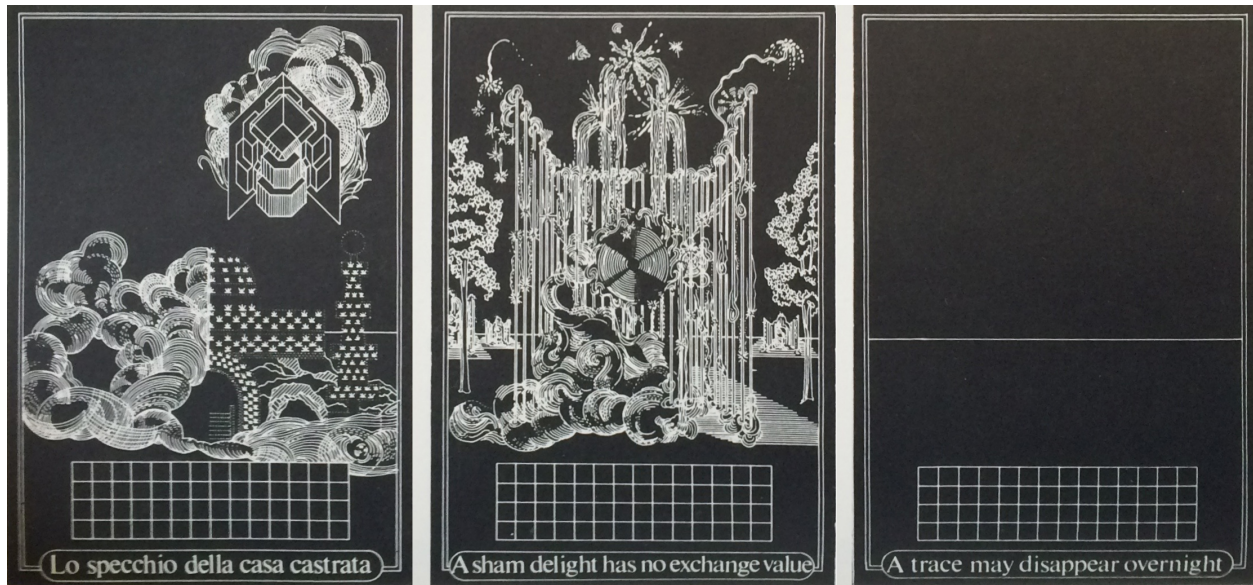


Figure 4.3: “Fireworks,” 1974

But beyond this he wishes to take architecture out of the process of production entirely, and it seems the only way to remove architecture from the influences of capitalism is through an art-praxis that serves no observable function except delight. This uselessness resembles his earlier proposals for “counterdesign,” and once again Tschumi’s “art for art’s sake” stance confers an avant-garde status to his work.

However, the revolutionary themes present in some of Tschumi’s earlier research has not been abandoned. His observation, “And architecture always seems to strike matches to light gas fires” contains allusion to the events of 1968 within the metaphor of the match.³¹² Here, Tschumi’s words contain the double meaning that architecture has become banal and dominated by “the flow of capital,” but also a reference to built environment’s ability to incite revolutionary actions: the rioters, or in some accounts the police, threw Molotov cocktails in the 1968 events. Tschumi proposes that, for architects, one way out of this trap, of architecture that is either subsumed by the forces of capitalism, or that is merely representative of a dominant power structure—thus inciting revolution—is to create for the delight of creating:

³¹² Tschumi, “Fireworks,” in *A Space: A Thousand Words*.

just as all the erotic forces contained in your movement [of drawing for pleasure] have been consumed for nothing, good architecture must be conceived, erected and burned in vain. The greatest architecture of all is the fireworks: it perfectly shows the gratuitous consumption of pleasure.³¹³

Architecture that serves no purpose, the paper architecture of the drawing board, both produces pleasure for the designer and is the only type of architecture that can escape the reach of capitalism: “By your movement [drawing], you produced a sham delight that couldn’t be sold or bought.”³¹⁴

The fireworks metaphor was borrowed, in part, from Theodor Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*, which was first published in 1970.³¹⁵ In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno quotes Ernest Schoen’s praise of fireworks for their “noblesse” as “the only art that aspires not to duration but only to glow for an instant and fade away.”³¹⁶ Further on in the text he writes that “the phenomenon of fireworks is prototypical for artworks, though because of its fleetingness and status as empty entertainment it has scarcely been acknowledged for theoretical consideration.”³¹⁷ Tschumi’s iteration goes beyond “empty entertainment” to more specifically address the impact of market forces upon architecture; Tschumi’s version of this “sham delight” escapes commodification.

While Tschumi asserts that “good architecture,” which goes beyond merely being “productive,” needs to have a “gratuitous” aspect, he has not entirely abandoned Lefebvrian theory for the excesses and transgression found in the writings of Bataille. Lefebvre frequently writes about the necessity of gratuitous events. In *Right to the City* he outlines the history of the city and of production from Asiatic to Medieval to Industrial. In a passage describing the medieval city he explains the necessity of *la Fête* for the creation of a space that prioritizes the act of living, or “inhabiting”:

The city is itself ‘*oeuvre*’, a feature which contrasts with the irreversible tendency towards money and commerce, towards exchange and *products*. Indeed, the *oeuvre* is use value and the product is exchange value. The eminent use of the city, that is, of its streets and squares, edifices and monuments, is *la Fête*, a celebration which consumes unproductively, without other advantage but pleasure and prestige and enormous riches in money and objects.³¹⁸

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Bernard Tschumi, “Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth, (or The Architectural Paradox),” in *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 47.

³¹⁶ Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 36.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 107.

³¹⁸ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 66.

Lefebvre argues that “today exchange value is so dominant over use value that it more or less suppresses it,”³¹⁹ and one of the ways to counter this is for the working class to reclaim the city through the *fête*. In *The Right to the City* he writes:

The problem is to put an end to the separations of ‘daily life – leisure’ or ‘daily life – festivity’. It is to reconstitute the *fête* by changing daily life. The city was a space occupied at one and the same time by productive labour, by *oeuvres*, and by festivities. Its should find again this function beyond functions, in a metamorphosed urban society.³²⁰

Andy Merrifield has argued that festival is a key theme in Lefebvre’s writings. Merrifield considers Lefebvre to be a “Rabelaisian Marxist,” writing that Lefebvre wished to reconcile the spirit of festival, laughter, excess, and pleasure found in the 16th century writings of Rabelais with the more austere socialism of Marx.³²¹ Indeed, for Lefebvre, one of the problems with “crude functionalism,” or interpretations of Marx that focus purely on economism, is that it only allows for the bare necessities of survival.³²² In *The Production of Space* he argues that “waste, play, struggle, art, festival – in short Eros, are themselves a necessity.”³²³ Excess, while seemingly unproductive, is actually very productive:

Living or vital energy seems *active* only if there is an excess, an available surplus, superfluity and an actual expenditure thereof. In effect, energy must be *wasted*; and the explosive waste of energy is indistinguishable from its productive use: beginning on the plane of animal life, play, struggle, war and sex are coextensive. Production, destruction and reproduction overlap and intersect.³²⁴

Festival and excess is a biological necessity that vulgar Marxism does not accommodate. So, while Bataille is often credited for the genesis of Tschumi’s theories on transgression and excess, these themes are readily found in Lefebvre’s work as well. The themes of pleasure and excess appear more frequently in Tschumi’s writings following “Fireworks” and Lefebvre’s contributions to this aspect of the architect’s theories will be analyzed further in the following chapter.

Tschumi was given the opportunity to explore this idea of “architecture that consumes itself” in its physical but ephemeral form when he was asked to design a fireworks display for the Parc de la Villette in 1992. In the interim, he continued to refine the theories of pleasure and excess first proposed in “Fireworks” in many of his subsequent essays. While his views of the underlying problems facing

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

³²¹ Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 15-19.

³²² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1991), 177.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

architecture have not radically changed since his first years at the Architectural Association, his answer to the problems facing architecture has evolved from “rhetorical action” to “art praxis.” At the same time that he produced his “Fireworks” piece, Tschumi was working on “Questions of Space, The Pyramid and The Labyrinth (or The Architectural Paradox)” for publication in *Studio International*. Here, Tschumi endeavors to resolve both the political nature of space that we saw in his earlier writings, and the more recent phenomenological turn that permeates *The Chronicle of Space*, and “Fireworks.” Using many of the same ideas Lefebvre proposes in *The Production of Space*, Tschumi attempts to establish an avant-garde stance for architecture that is autonomous.



Bodies themselves generate spaces, which are produced by and for their gestures....Many such social spaces are given rhythm by the gestures which are produced within them, and which produce them (and they are accordingly often measured in paces, cubits, feet, palms or thumbs).³²⁵

–Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1974

Space is real, for it seems to affect my senses long before my reason. The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of space. My body carries in itself spatial properties and spatial determination: up, down, right, left, symmetry, dissymmetry. It hears as much as it sees.³²⁶

–Bernard Tschumi, “Questions of Space, The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox),” 1975

³²⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 216.

³²⁶ Bernard Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 39.

05. SPATIAL PRAXIS

Lefebvre and Tschumi produced parallel theoretical explorations focused on space in the mid 1970s. As Lefebvre transitioned from writings on cities to the more theoretical realm of space itself, Tschumi's architectural theory developed along a similar trajectory. In 1975 Tschumi published a short article under the title "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)" in the September-October issue of *Studio International*.³²⁷ The text drew upon, in the architects own words, "various texts on the history of space, from Kant and Spinoza to German expressionism to contemporary writing," including Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace (The Production of Space)*, which had been published the preceding year.³²⁸ In this work Tschumi writes that he is focusing on space itself to resolve the paradox facing architecture, and the "impossibility of questioning the nature of space and at the same time experiencing a spatial praxis."³²⁹ Here, Tschumi more fully develops the

³²⁷ The title of the essay portion was changed and shortened in later publications to "The Architectural Paradox: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth" for *Questions of Space* (1990), and to "The Architectural Paradox" for publication in *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994).

³²⁸ Enrique Walker and Bernard Tschumi, *Tschumi on Architecture: Conversations with Enrique Walker* (New York, N.Y: Monacelli Press, 2006), 22.

³²⁹ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 28.

phenomenological analysis of space that he hinted at in the *Chronicle of Space*; while simultaneously continuing his earlier search for an architectural praxis distanced from economic production that can be found in *Fireworks* and *The Environmental Trigger*.

Tschumi's essay contains intertextual references to Lefebvre's text, and he often transposes Lefebvre's ideas to fit an architectural context. The triad that Tschumi develops in his essay, consisting of the pyramid, the labyrinth, and the paradox owes a debt to Lefebvre's triadic analysis of space, but the resolution of Tschumi's three terms substantially diverges from its predecessor. Where Lefebvre's text is inherently political, Tschumi's interpretations are often more literal than the original. At times this is due to an oversimplification of Lefebvre's idea of production, but at others it stems from Tschumi's prioritization of immediate experience over the accretive nature of production. Ultimately, as in his earlier avant-garde proposals, Tschumi incorporates art theory to argue that the uselessness of architecture puts it in a position to define its own role.

Tschumi's explorations of space in the later half of the seventies ultimately led him to the Space-Event-Movement triad, and the manifesto that "there is no architecture without program, without action, without event."³³⁰ While this triad might initially seem to be a departure from Lefebvre's analysis of space, there are elements, the movement of bodies and the importance of time in particular, that are variations on ideas found in *The Production of Space*. At times, as in the use of intertextual coding in "The Architectural Paradox," the relationship between Tschumi's theory and Lefebvre's is direct, while in other examples, as in the development of the idea of events, the relationship is indirect or mediated by actors who were themselves influenced by Lefebvre. The evolution of Tschumi's theory during the later half of the seventies illustrates his continuing debt to Lefebvre's philosophy as an ever-present foundational element in his own work.

³³⁰ Ibid., 3.

Intersecting Spatial Theories: Intertextual Appropriation

There are several overt similarities between Tschumi's and Lefebvre's examples, language, and arguments, that are discoverable upon reading *The Production of Space* and "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth or (The Architectural Paradox)" concurrently.³³¹ Tschumi begins his discussion of space in "The Architectural Paradox" with an etymological and historical analysis that closely mirrors a summary of historic philosophies outlined by Lefebvre in his introduction for *The Production of Space*. Both begin with Descartes and the "advent of Cartesian logic".³³² Lefebvre explains the progression as follows:

With the advent of Cartesian logic...space had entered the realm of the absolute. As Object opposed to Subject, as *res extensa* opposed to, and present to, *res cogitans*, space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies.³³³

Using nearly identical phrasing, Tschumi similarly outlines the contributions of Descartes:

Remember: with Descartes ended the Aristotelian tradition, according to which space and time were 'categories' that enabled the classification of 'sensory knowledge'. Space became absolute. Object before the subject, it dominated senses and bodies by containing them.³³⁴

Sections of Tschumi's essay follow Lefebvre's text closely, summarizing Kant's contribution to the canon of spatial theories, which establishes space as an "ideal internal structure, an *a priori* consciousness, and instrument of knowledge," and the mathematicians invention of non-Euclidean spaces.³³⁵ In the fourth section, the architect paraphrases the Greek, Roman, and modern concepts of space that Lefebvre develops in detail in his second chapter.³³⁶

³³¹ It is worth noting that *The Production of Space* was belatedly released in English in 1991, so only bilingual readers would have noticed the similarities when "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth or (The Architectural Paradox)" was first published in *Studio International* in 1975. Tschumi included 65 questions about space along the side of his article, intermixed with images and footnotes. He includes these questions as a separate chapter in *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994), giving these questions greater weight in this later publication than in the original. To avoid confusion, I will use the separate titles Tschumi gives in *Architecture and Disjunction*: "Questions of Space" refers specifically to the portion of Tschumi's article that consists, as stated in the title, of questions, and "The Architectural Paradox" refers to the essay portion of the pairing.

³³² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," 29.

³³⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 2-3; Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox", 29-30.

³³⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 126-7; Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox", 30-31.

Louis Martin explains Tschumi's blatant use of the writing of another author as an example of the Barthian notion of "intertextuality," wherein Tschumi includes a slightly altered version of the text of another writer in his own work.³³⁷ Tschumi was criticized following his article "Architecture and Transgression" for largely copying a passage from Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, an "oversight" for which he later apologized.³³⁸ Martin however, notes that Tschumi's use of the words of another author is deliberate and is a means of granting his own text "immediate depth": "Once the appropriation was discovered, Tschumi's text remained autonomous, although it could also be read as an invocation of Kuhn's authority."³³⁹ According to Martin's analysis, Barthes had argued that this process of intertextual appropriation, in which the text is utilized without quotation marks, "gives to the text a productivity that is not mere reproduction, because the intertext cannot be conceived as a voluntary imitation or a visible filiation."³⁴⁰ Barthes would seem to hold the process as being an almost unconscious one, but Tschumi's summary of Lefebvre's words in "The Architectural Paradox", without quotation, could be read as a deliberate device. In other words, the juxtaposition of Lefebvre's text confers legitimacy to Tschumi's work and establishes a reference point for educated readers. Tschumi's reliance on an intertextual reading is surprising given the more rigorous academic nature of the architect's earlier writings on Lefebvre. If this intertextual reference is indeed a deliberate device, it is, as Umberto Eco argues in *On Literature* (2004) not unlike the inference of multiple meanings found in contemporaneous post-modern architecture.³⁴¹ However, even without citations, the structural and contextual references to Lefebvre are readily apparent in Tschumi's writings.

Tschumi's oblique references to the work of Lefebvre, without naming the author or his work directly, also serves as a means of positioning his own ideas within the contemporaneous discourse on space and production:

³³⁷ Martin, "Transpositions," 29.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid. Martin's earlier analysis of Tschumi's work identifies Barthes as Tschumi's most relevant influence, including the 1972 text *The Pleasure of the Text* in particular, so his assessment of Tschumi's use of intertextual references is less critical of the practice.

³⁴⁰ Martin, "Transpositions," 29-30.

³⁴¹ In *On Literature* (2004) Umberto Eco borrows the term "double-coding" from Charles Jencks to explain the concept of intertextual irony. He argues that "unlike more general cases of double coding, intertextual irony, by bringing in to play the possibility of a double reading does not invite all readers to the same party. It selects them, and privileges the more intertextually aware readers, but it does not exclude the less aware." Eco, *On Literature*, 220.

the only successful attempts to bridge this philosophical gap [between ideal and real space] were those that introduced historical or political concepts such as 'production' in the wide sense it had in Marx's early texts. Much research in France and Italy opposed space 'as a pure form' to space 'as a social product', space 'as an intermediary' to space as a means of reproduction and a mode of production.³⁴²

It is worth noting that following this statement, Tschumi finally offers a footnote that identifies Lefebvre and *La Production de l'Espace* as a source for further reading. In defining production using "the wide sense it had in Marx's early texts" Tschumi again makes an intertextual reference to Lefebvre's own stated aims and aligns himself with Lefebvre, whose own theories of production went beyond the pure economism of vulgar Marxism. In *The Production of Space* Lefebvre states that "by retrieving something of the broad sense that [the concepts of production and act of producing] had in certain of Marx's writings, they have shed a good deal of the illusory precision with which the economists had endowed them."³⁴³ As Stuart Elden has argued, Lefebvre took umbrage with the idea that production could be reduced solely to economic relations, which are the simplest forms of relations.³⁴⁴ Unlike Althusser's Marxism, which discounted Marx's texts for being "unscientific and Hegelian,"³⁴⁵ Lefebvre embraced the whole of Marx's cannon to argue for a broader sense of production that considers the relations of ideas, institutions, and cultures beyond and in addition to economic analysis.³⁴⁶ However, Tschumi seems to misinterpret and simplify Lefebvre's analysis of space as a product. Tschumi suggests that a problem with Lefebvre's "politico-philosophical critique" is that "by giving an overall priority to the historical processes, it often reduced space to one of the numerous socioeconomic products that were perpetuating a political status quo."³⁴⁷ Tschumi still sees space as a tool of resistance, particularly for architects, much like the members of UP6 or Gruppo Strum who influenced his earlier activities. However, he fails to recognize that Lefebvre too sees space as a site of resistance, albeit for the proletariat instead of architects. His argument belies an oversimplification of the complex analysis Lefebvre provides.

In both referencing Lefebvre directly and indirectly it becomes clear that Tschumi's argument owes a substantial debt to Lefebvre's text. As will be shown in the following section the tripartite spatial

³⁴² Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," 31.

³⁴³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 15.

³⁴⁴ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 34-35.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁴⁷ Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," 31-32.

categories Tschumi proposes are indebted to the spatial categories Lefebvre develops *The Production of Space*. Ultimately, Tschumi's goal is the creation of a working theory for Architecture, which is often the source of his divergence from Lefebvre's analyses. Tschumi draws inspiration from, and engages with, Lefebvre's text, but reformulates elements to support his efforts to extricate architecture from its perceived complicity in "perpetuating a political status quo."³⁴⁸

The Production of Space and The Architectural Paradox: Tripartite Theories

A nuanced exploration of the texts, particularly the tripartite theories each author proposes, illustrates deeper similarities and divergences between these writings. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre distinguishes between mental space, real space, and social space.³⁴⁹ Mental space is conceived, real space is perceived, and social space is lived.³⁵⁰ Mental space is the space of "philosophers and mathematicians," and is the *imagined* space of the maps and plans developed by architects and urban planners.³⁵¹ Real space is physical space or "space that is generated and used" in everyday activities.³⁵² Stuart Elden summarizes the third category, social space, as follows:

The third sees space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning, the space of *connaissance* (less formal or more local forms of knowledge), space as *real-and-imagined*.³⁵³

It is this third category, the accretive construct of social space, that is the primary focus of *The Production of Space*.

The primary themes developed in "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth (or the Architectural Paradox)," are a variation on Lefebvre's ideas of mental, real, and social space. Tschumi's metaphor of the pyramid, akin to Lefebvre's idea of mental space, is architecture that is conceived; "a

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 32.

³⁴⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 27.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 40.

³⁵¹ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 190.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

production of the mind,” or “an essence that precedes existence,” that yields buildings and conceptual architecture.³⁵⁴ As Tschumi explains:

The architect conceives the *pyramid*, this ultimate model of reason. Architecture becomes a *cosa mentale* and the forms conceived by the architect ensure the domination of the idea over matter.³⁵⁵

The labyrinth, by contrast, is “sensory space,”³⁵⁶ which integrates Lefebvre’s ideas of real and lived space. Tschumi states that real space is the product of social praxis, which acknowledges the social construction of space, but conflates Lefebvre’s two terms into a single construct that is meant to be experienced. Experience and perception are simultaneous as “the metaphorical labyrinth implies that the first moment of perception carries the experience itself.”³⁵⁷ In Tschumi’s labyrinth the limits of perception are determined by the individual body, which figures prominently in *The Manhattan Transcripts*, and the limited reach of our senses:

Space is real, for it seems to affect my senses long before my reason. The materiality of my body both coincides with and struggles with the materiality of space...Unfolding against the projections of reason, against the Absolute Truth, against the Pyramid, here is the Sensory Space, the Labyrinth, the Hole.³⁵⁸

The pyramid can be known as a whole unlike the Labyrinth “where all sensations, all feelings are enhanced, but where no overview is present to provide a clue about how to get out.”³⁵⁹ Tschumi proposes the final term, the paradox, indicating the intersecting but oppositional nature of the first two terms and, more to Tschumi’s point, the difficulty reconciling the two terms in an architectural praxis:

To restate my point, the paradox...is about the impossibility of questioning the nature of space and at the same time making or experiencing a real space. Unless we search for an escape from architecture into the general organization of building processes, the paradox persists: architecture is made of two terms that are interdependent but mutually exclusive.³⁶⁰

The dilemma, as we’ve seen in *Fireworks* and *The Environmental Trigger*, relates to the opposing nature of theory and praxis (or experience) and the search for an autonomy that removes architecture from the confines of production. The solution to the paradox lies in architecture transgressing the form that

³⁵⁴ Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 38.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁵⁷ Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 43.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

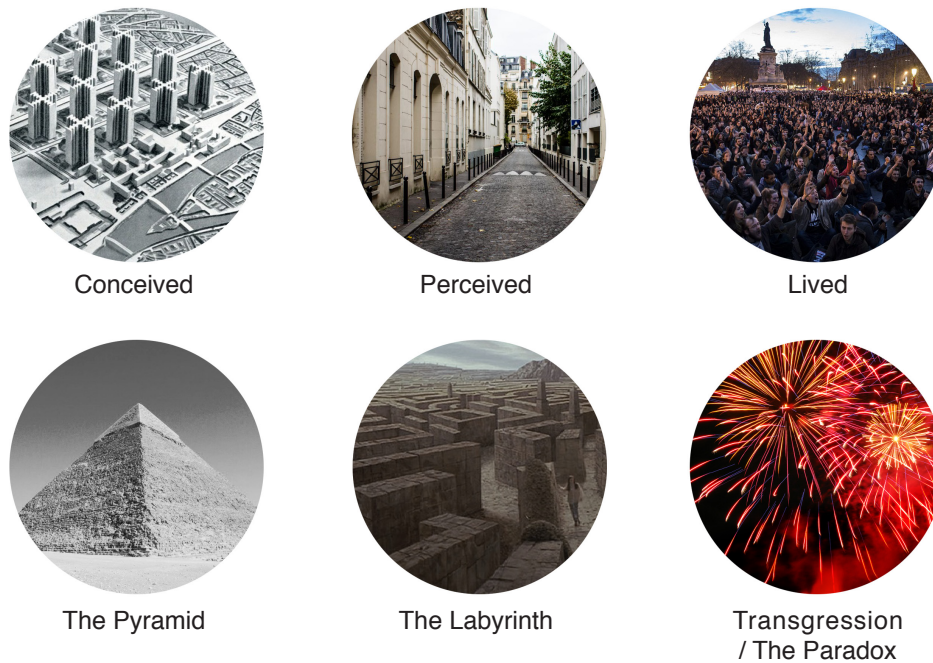


Figure 5.1: Comparison of Lefebvre's (top) and Tschumi's (bottom) triadic terms

society expects of it.³⁶¹ Returning to the concepts found in “Fireworks,” Tschumi states that “the necessity of architecture is its non-necessity, that it is useless but radically so.”³⁶²

A key difference between the two triads, is the relationship of the three parts to the whole, and the final resolution of the third term. Whereas Lefebvre's third term of “lived” or social space is the synthesis of mental and real space, Tschumi's paradox highlights the oppositional nature of the pyramid and the labyrinth, and the difficulty in reconciling these two aspects. Or, stated mathematically, for Lefebvre $a + b = c$, but for Tschumi it is either a or b (therefore) c (Figure 5.1). For Lefebvre, the construct of social space ultimately supersedes mental and real space. This third construct is related and dependent on the previous two but ultimately, as Kirsten Simonsen has observed, “socially lived space depends on material

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

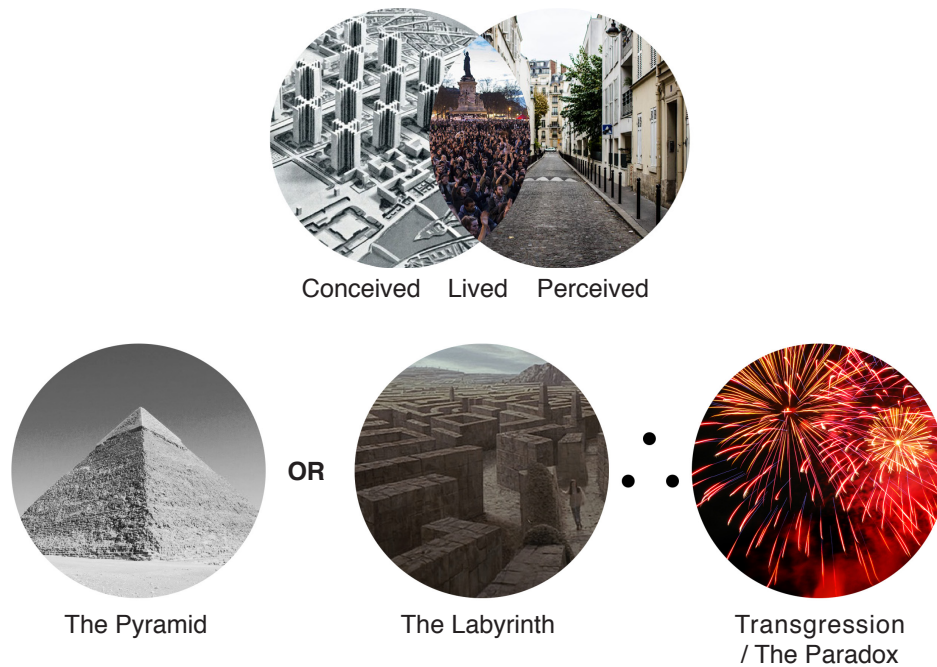


Figure 5.2: Synthesis of Lefebvre's (top) and Tschumi's (bottom) triadic terms

as well as mental constructs.³⁶³ However, social space is not purely a synthesis of mental and real space, but is instead an “advance in our thinking” beyond the dialectical nature of mental and real space.³⁶⁴ Tschumi, by contrast, proposes the third term, the paradox, as the resolution of the opposing nature pyramid and the labyrinth. To escape the cycle of terms that refer back to each other, and speak only of themselves, architecture must define its own role (figure 5.2).³⁶⁵

Renata Hejduk has observed that the gap between Tschumi's first two terms “needs to be bridged through the production of space, a concept he borrows from Henri Lefebvre.”³⁶⁶ Tschumi's desire to reconcile the “reality of experience,” and “overall vision” or “absolute truth” does seem to point to the unification of conceived and perceived space that we find in Lefebvre's third term of lived space.

³⁶³ Kirsten Simonsen, “Bodies, Sensations, Space and Time: The Contribution from Henri Lefebvre,” *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 87, no. 1, (2005): 7.

³⁶⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 129.

³⁶⁵ Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 45.

³⁶⁶ Hejduk, “Death Becomes Her,” 398.

However, Tschumi adheres to the idea that experience and absolute truth are dialectical terms that cannot be reconciled: “We cannot both experience and think that we experience....The concept of space is not in space.”³⁶⁷ Tschumi does suggest the means to escape the paradox by “shifting the actual nature of the debate, as, for example, through politics,” but he is unappeased by the solution this would indicate.³⁶⁸ The only groups that have successfully resolved architecture’s role in the production system are those that focused on a redistribution of labor, which “shift[ed] the concept of architecture toward the general organization of building processes.”³⁶⁹ Tschumi regards this as a potentially nihilistic predicament, and he is not inclined to replace the analytical and creative aspects of architecture with a merely technical role. Ultimately his aim is to radicalize architecture, to escape the influence of politics and production entirely, through the autonomous nature of architecture.

Political vs. Architectural Space

Lefebvre’s work on the study of city and urban space as a tool for understanding history, which began in his earlier texts, culminates in *The Production of Space*. In *La fin de l’histoire* (1970) Lefebvre argues that “economics, production, geopolitics, and geographical ‘factors’ [space]” are central to a material analysis of history.³⁷⁰ As Stuart Elden has observed, a primary aim underlying Lefebvre’s study of space is to provide a more nuanced means of studying history via a methodology that analyzes history from a spatial perspective in addition to and in concert with the traditional temporal one.³⁷¹ Elden writes that Lefebvre “wished to use this new critical understanding to examine the (modern) world in which he was writing. This is accomplished through an analysis of how space is produced, and how it is experienced.”³⁷² In doing so, Lefebvre broadens the vulgar Marxist concept of economic production to include the material

³⁶⁷ Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 48.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁷⁰ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 181.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 185.

and mental processes, and social and historical forces, that produce social space.³⁷³ Or, as Elden summarizes with an example, “a park is *conceived*, designed and produced through labour, technology and institutions, but the meaning of the space, and the space itself, is adapted and transformed as it is *perceived* and *lived* by social actors and groups.”³⁷⁴

As a result, Lefebvre’s theoretical writings on space, are ultimately more politically grounded than Tschumi’s subsequent writings on the same topic. Stuart Elden emphasizes the political dimensions of Lefebvre:

It is important to note that Lefebvre argues that space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle, and is therefore a crucial political issue. As [Lefebvre] aphorizes, ‘there is a politics of space because space is political’....Space is not just the place of conflict, but an object of struggle itself.³⁷⁵

For Lefebvre, space and its politics are inseparable. As he writes in “Reflections on the Politics of Space” (1970) there is no such thing as a neutral space:

Space is not a *scientific object* removed [*détourné*] from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be “purely” formal, the essence of rational abstraction, it is precisely because the space has already been occupied and planned, already the focus of past strategies, of which we cannot always find traces.³⁷⁶

Again, in declaring that space is not a autonomous scientific element, Lefebvre argues that the analysis of space goes beyond pure economism, but must take a variety of forces into account. As Lefebvre’s work evolved, this increasingly entailed a recognition of the impact of the state and its institutions. Following *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre’s writings more explicitly point to the “state mode of production” illustrating the causation between capitalistic forces and the production of space. In *State, Space, World* (2009), Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden observe that in “Reflections on the Politics of Space,” and the far more comprehensive *De l’État* (Volume 1, 1976), Lefebvre argues “that state institutions have come to play an increasingly essential role in the production of space and thus, in facilitating the survival of capitalism.”³⁷⁷ They write that “Given Lefebvre’s analyses of issues such as the state mode of

³⁷³ Ibid., 184.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 191.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 183.

³⁷⁶ Henri Lefebvre, “Reflections on the Politics of Space,” in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 170.

³⁷⁷ Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, “Introduction,” in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 28.

production, state space, and the state's role in the process of *mondialisation*, it is clear that the state represents *the* link between the survival of capitalism and the production of space."³⁷⁸

Tschumi's work, by contrast, never reaches this level of political critique. The architect recognizes that architecture as a "projection on the ground of the images of social institutions" is, and historically has been, typically unable to act as a political instrument.³⁷⁹ This weakness of architecture as a political tool leads to Tschumi's theoretical divergence from Lefebvre away from theories of politicized architecture to an autonomous architecture. Tschumi discusses Lefebvre's notion of production as it relates to Lefebvre's third term, lived space, but ultimately proposes a solution that attempts to transcend the limitations imposed by a capitalistic society, establishing architecture as an autonomous discipline. Instead he argues that Hegel's artistic supplement, which states that "architecture was whatever in a building did not point to utility,"³⁸⁰ could be a revolutionary path for architecture and a means of escaping the constricting ties to means of production:

Does architecture, in its long-established isolation, contain more revolutionary power than its numerous transfers in to the objective realities of the building industry and social housing? Does the social function of architecture lie in its very lack of function? In fact, architecture may have little other ground.³⁸¹

For Tschumi, the autonomy of architecture, and its "non-necessity", both constitutes its radicalism and removes it from the trap of commercialization: "Its radicalism constitutes its very strength in a society where profit is prevalent."³⁸² Again, reusing a statement from his previous "Fireworks" exhibit, he quotes Adorno to argue that architecture, like fireworks, "produces a delight that cannot be sold or bought, that has no exchange value and cannot be integrated into the production cycle."³⁸³ This non-necessity frees architecture and confers its ultimate autonomy: "If its role is not defined by society, architecture will have to define it alone."³⁸⁴ A few years later, in "The Pleasure of Architecture" (*Architectural Design*, March

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

³⁷⁹ Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," 44.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 32.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 46.

³⁸² Ibid., 46.

³⁸³ Just as Tschumi references but fails to cite Lefebvre in "The Architectural Paradox", the architect neglected to name Adorno in his "Fireworks" exhibit/essay (1974) for the *A Space: A Thousand Words* exhibit. Here, the footnote Tschumi provides is for the exhibit, and not a source for Adorno's quote. Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," 47.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

1977), Tschumi amended his statement, writing that the de commodification of architecture *is* a political act:

Once again, if there has lately been some reason to doubt the necessity of architecture, then *the necessity of architecture may well be its non-necessity*. Such totally gratuitous consumption of architecture is ironically *political* in that it disturbs established structures. It is also pleasurable.³⁸⁵

While the concept of pleasure has been the focus of many analyses of Tschumi's theories, the political or Lefebvrian elements remain just beneath the surface of his subsequent writings.

With the paradox, Tschumi initially seems to turn away from the theories of Lefebvre, and the idea of a politicized space, while engaging the theories of Bataille, Hollier, and Barthes, which are explored further in his writings immediately following "the Architectural Paradox". Transgression, and later eroticism, figures prominently into Tschumi's resolution of the paradox. The architect revisits, and further explains, the idea that architecture must transgress the role that society expects in "Architecture and Transgression" (first published in *Oppositions*, 1976) in which he states:

Architecture seems to survive in its erotic capacity only wherever it negates itself, where it transcends its paradoxical nature by negating the form that society expects of it. In other words, it is not a matter of destruction or avant-garde subversion but of transgression.³⁸⁶

Renata Hejduk has written about this concept of transgression, illustrating the influence of Georges Bataille and his 1957 book *Eroticism* in particular, stating that "for Tschumi, when architecture transgresses – when it goes past the form that society expects of it – it represents the convergence of the real and the ideal."³⁸⁷ While Hejduk relies on Bataille to explain Tschumi's turn to transgression we could also add another dimension to argue that transgression, by "negating the form that society expects of it" is yet another term aimed at removing architecture from the system of capitalist production.

³⁸⁵ Bernard Tschumi, "The Pleasure of Architecture," in *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 87-8.

³⁸⁶ Hejduk, "Death Becomes Her," 393.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 394

Divergences and Intersection of Spatial Theories: The Manhattan Transcripts

In 1981 Tschumi published *The Manhattan Transcripts*, returning to a visual analysis of some of the themes he had previously introduced in “*The Architectural Paradox*”. Lefebvre’s influence is still present in this work, but commonalities shift away from politicized issues of production of space, to questions of representation and the physical, bodily production of space. Both of these ideas are present in *The Production of Space*, but Tschumi’s interpretation is more literal—as bodies producing actual space—and in that sense is distanced from the political and social dimension in Lefebvre’s explanation of these same elements.

In *The Manhattan Transcripts* Tschumi depicts movement in a form of choreographic notation that constructs a solid entity from the path of the body in motion, utilizing geometric forms to depict force, speed, and directionality (Figure 5.3). The movement notation used “attempts to eliminate the preconceived meanings given to particular actions so as to concentrate on their spatial effects: the movements of bodies in space”:

Rather than merely indicating directional arrows on a neutral surface, the logic of movement notation ultimately suggests real corridors of space, as if the dancer had been ‘carving space out of a pliable substance’; or the reverse, shaping continuous volumes, as if a whole movement had been literally solidified, ‘frozen’ into a permanent and massive vector.³⁸⁸

This notion of the body creating space can be found in *The Production of Space*, albeit with a different meaning. Lefebvre argues that the body can create space, but unlike Tschumi’s understanding of this capacity, it is not merely occupation that creates space:

Can the body with its capacity for action, and its various energies, be said to create space? Assuredly, but not in the sense that occupation might be said to ‘manufacture’ spatiality; rather, there is an immediate relationship between the body and its space, between the body’s deployment in space and its occupation of space....each living body *is* space and *has* space: it produces itself in space and also produces that space.³⁸⁹

For Lefebvre, the aforementioned issue of production is key. It is not merely that the bodies carve out “physical” space, as we see in Tschumi’s drawings, but rather that bodies, through actions over time

³⁸⁸ Bernard Tschumi, “Index of Architecture: Themes from the Manhattan Transcripts,” *Questions of Space: Lectures on Architecture*, (London: AA Publications, 1990): 9.

³⁸⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 170.

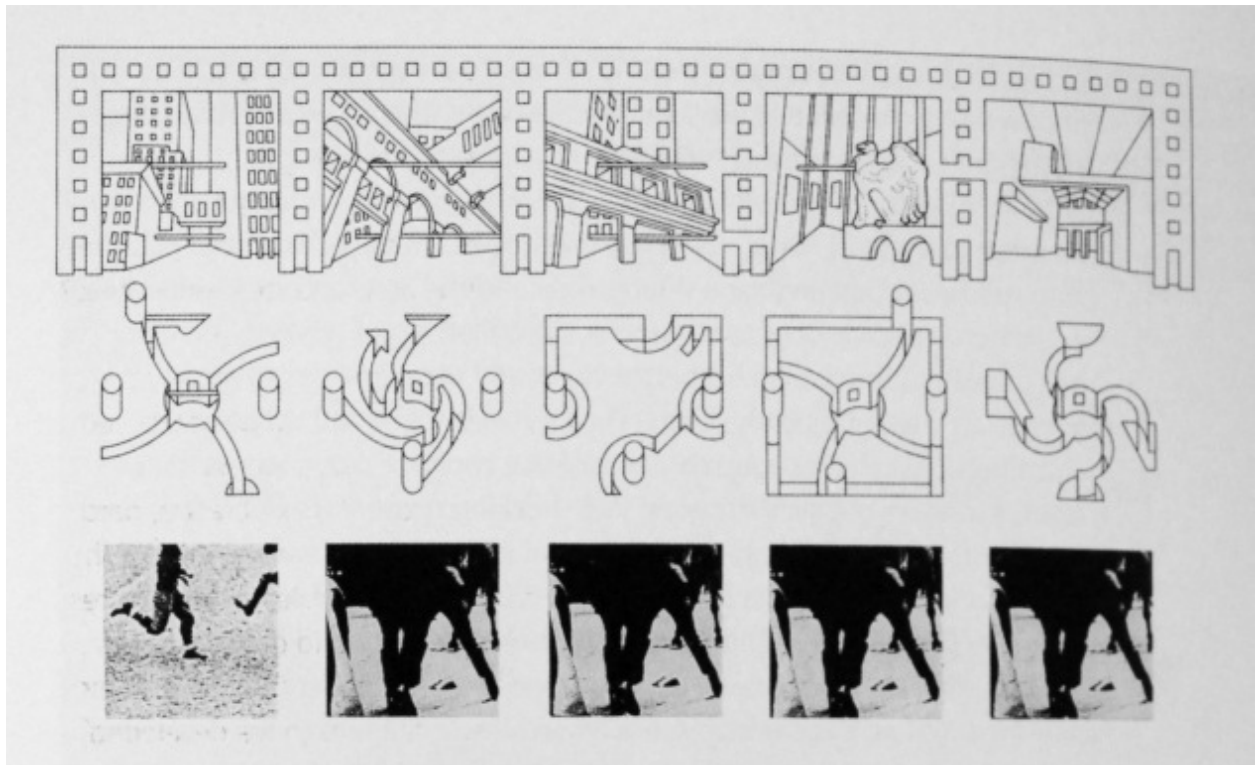


Figure 5.3: MT 4, "The Block," *The Manhattan Transcripts*

endow a space with layers of meaning, which ultimately is its 'production'. For example, Beijing's Tiananmen Square was initially constructed under the Ming dynasty, as a representation of dynastic power; though the square has always served as a meeting place, its use since 1949 for events celebrating the foundation of the Peoples Republic of China adds another layer of meaning. More recently, the 1989 pro-democracy protests conferred yet another layer by declaring the site to be one of resistance. Thus, the different ways in which people have used and occupied Tiananmen square over time has produced that space. One cannot enter the square without also thinking of the activities and bodies that have preceded them.

There is reciprocity between the body and space that is present in both Lefebvre and Tschumi's writings, again, with different understandings of what this means. Tschumi observes that bodies can act upon space, and that (physical) space acts upon bodies:

The relationship between space and movement is complex. Is the ramp at Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center the solid rendering of movement, or a solid that forces movement upon the users?³⁹⁰

He writes, "here is not a question of knowing which comes first, movement or space....They are caught in the same set of relationships; only the arrow of power changes direction."³⁹¹ Once again, Tschumi takes the analysis in a literal and concrete direction. By contrast, Lefebvre is referring to the embedded political and social ordering of a space that influences its use and readings. As Elden has observed, "Lefebvre sees [the body] as the site of resistance within the discourse of Power in space."³⁹² This is not merely the ramp at the Carpenter center but also an embedded political and social ordering of space:

Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder....Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered. It is produced with this purpose in mind; this is its *raison d'être*.³⁹³

As previously mentioned, for Lefebvre, space can be a "means of control, and hence of domination, of power."³⁹⁴ Thus gestures are not merely proscribed by physical characteristics of space, but by the historical and social meanings embedded in a space.

Although the notions of political resistance are largely absent from *The Manhattan Transcripts*, it is here that we see Tschumi utilizing the work of the Situationists in his representations of movement in space. Guy Debord, along with other artists and theorists in the MIBI—"Movement Internationale pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste"—created "The Naked City" in 1957 (figure 5.4). This map, which combines a deconstructed plan of the city with directional arrows indicating a hypothetical user's path, aims to encourage new social constructions of space.³⁹⁵ Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts*, which unite architectural drawings with diagrams indicating movement and spatial connections, appear to be indebted to the "psychogeographical map" of the "The Naked City". The "psychogeographique" map links areas of the city that share a "unity of atmosphere," or "distinct psychological climates," and implies movement that subverts the traditional structure of the official *Plan de Paris*.³⁹⁶ "The Naked City," and the mapped

³⁹⁰ Tschumi, "Index of Architecture: Themes from the Manhattan Transcripts," 101.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 189.

³⁹³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 143.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁹⁵ McDonough, "Situationist Space", 58.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60, 62.

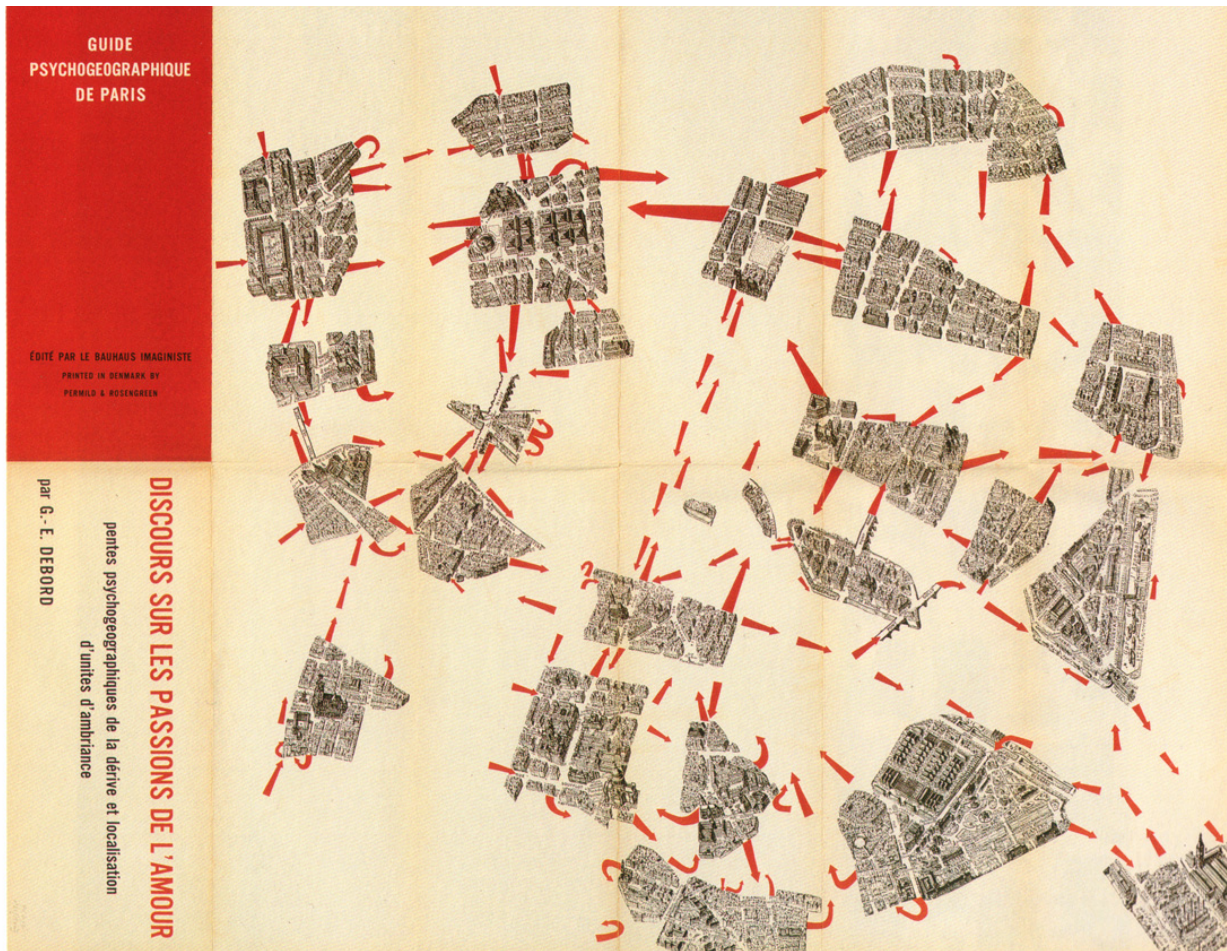


Figure 5.4: “The Naked City,” 1957

sequences in *The Manhattan Transcripts* after it, is intended to read as a narrative of events rather than fulfill the map’s traditional role as a “tool of universal knowledge.”³⁹⁷ However, Tschumi’s analysis lacks the radical critique intended by Debord in “The Naked City”. The fragmented nature of Debord’s map illustrated the segregation of the working classes that occurred in Paris as a result of post war urban planning and modernization.³⁹⁸ The map implies that these relations could be contested “through an active construction of new ‘unities of atmosphere’.”³⁹⁹ Tschumi’s architectural drawings and movement notation, by contrast, does not critique or incite the viewer toward a revolutionary reshaping of the urban

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

environment. Instead Tschumi revels in the juxtapositions, excesses, pleasures, and grit found in the city, “from the Chrysler Building, to the cheap warehouses; from Bryant Park to the derelict piers.”⁴⁰⁰

The Evolution of Space, Event, Movement

Tschumi’s work on “The Manhattan Transcripts” and concurrently written texts, such as “The Pleasure of Architecture” (*Architectural Design*, 1977), “Violence of Architecture” (*Artforum*, 1981), and the subsequently published “Sequences” (*The Princeton Journal: Thematic Studies in Architecture*, 1983), merged his previous explorations of space with his developing explorations of program, leading to the Architect’s well-known triad “Space-Event-Movement”. Tschumi explored this triad graphically via the tripartite mode of notation found in *The Manhattan Transcripts*. After addressing Lefebvre’s critiques of architecture and planning in his earlier essays, Tschumi here explores a method of architectural representation that integrates lived space with the archetypal conceived space of architecture. As stated in chapter two, Lefebvre critiques architects for myopically focusing on habitat (noun) as opposed to the act of inhabiting:

Architects seem to have established and dogmatized an ensemble of significations, as such poorly developed and variously labeled as ‘function’, ‘form’, ‘structure’, or rather, functionalism, formalism, and structuralism. They elaborate them not from the significations perceived and lived by those who inhabit, but from their interpretation of inhabiting. It is graphic and visual tending towards metalanguage.⁴⁰¹

In *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Tschumi attempts to bring two very dynamic concepts to the static realm of architectural drawing stating that *The Manhattan Transcripts* “propose to transcribe an architectural interpretation of reality:”⁴⁰²

Their explicit purpose is to transcribe things normally removed from conventional architectural representation, namely the complex relationship between spaces and their use; between the set and the script; between ‘type’ and ‘program’; between objects and events. Their implicit purpose has to do with the 20th century city.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (London: Academy Editions, 1981), 8.

⁴⁰¹ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 152.

⁴⁰² Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, 7.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

By integrating movement notation and photographs with the more typical architectural representative drawings (plan, section, and axonometric) Tschumi's tripartite notation could be read as an attempt to acknowledge the idea that space is never pure form, as conceived by architects and planners, while demonstrating the impact users have in producing a space. However, Tschumi's representation of lived space quickly becomes "experienced" space instead.

The architectural space that Tschumi illustrates in *The Manhattan Transcripts* can be viewed as adaptation of Lefebvre's "lived" space; however, whether this spatial study escapes Lefebvre's overall critique that architectural drawings tend towards metalanguage is debatable. Certainly the real life spaces depicted in *The Manhattan Transcripts* have been produced over time and endowed with multiple layers of meaning, but for Tschumi this historical element is less important than the in-the-moment experience of the depicted events. Tschumi depicts spaces that already exist—Central Park, a typical street based on 42nd street, and so on—spaces that have been conceived and are perceived, and by interjecting events and movement he adds a representation of everyday life. However, his version of everyday life is not representative the accretive nature of social space, but is instead a singular experience of a space. Additionally, by selecting murders and lovers' quarrels as the events depicted, the architect presents the untidy sort of human activities that directly oppose the typically pristine representations of architecture:

Yet we should remember that there is no social or political change without the movements and programs that transgress supposedly stable institutionality, architectural or otherwise; that there is no architecture without everyday life, movement, and action; and that it is the most dynamic aspects of their disjunctions that suggest a new definition of architecture.⁴⁰⁴

Tschumi specifically curates a view of everyday life that reinforces the literal interpretation of transgression. Tschumi's description alludes to the revolutionary aspect of Lefebvre's writings and to the desired outcome of social or political change, but his lovers and murderers enact a different sort of transgression than Lefebvre advocates. Were Lefebvre to illustrate the Manhattan transcripts, the movements and programs needed to transgress institutionality would be a festival or proletarian retaking of the urban center.

⁴⁰⁴ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 23.

One of Tschumi's stated motivations for the development of the tripartite notation system is that it graphically includes the element of time:

The original purpose of the tripartite mode of notation (events, movements, spaces) was to introduce the order of experience, the order of time – moments, intervals, sequences – for all inevitably intervene in the reading of the city.⁴⁰⁵

Here too, Tschumi's exploration follows Lefebvre's avowal "time is distinguishable but not separable from space."⁴⁰⁶ However, for Lefebvre this indicates the role of history in the production of social space, whereas for Tschumi the addition of time pertains more closely to use or program, and the architect's development of event. Lefebvre's time is past and present, whereas Tschumi's time in question is strictly in the present; time loosely justifies the idea of event, which itself translates to use, functions, and programs.⁴⁰⁷

Tschumi would later credit the Situationists for influencing the development of events and movement in his architectural theory. In the "Six Concepts," an essay derived from a 1991 lecture given at Columbia University, Tschumi credits the Situationists with the inspiration behind the derivation of the terms event and movements:

The insertion of the terms *events* and *movement* was influenced by Situationist discourse and by the '68 era. *Les événements*, as they were called, were not only events in action but also in thought. Erecting a barricade (function) in a Paris street (form) is not quite equivalent to being a *flâneur* (function) in the same street (form)...This unlikely combination of events and spaces was charged with subversive capabilities, for it challenged both the function and the space.⁴⁰⁸

This reflection on his work certainly has the advantage of hindsight, but in identifying the Situationists, Tschumi oversimplifies the matter. Lefebvre, both as an associate of the Situationists and in his own right, deserves credit as well. As Lefebvre scholars Andy Merrifield and Rob Shields have each noted, this Situationist idea is itself influenced by Lefebvre's idea of moments.⁴⁰⁹ Shields observes that Lefebvre first introduces his theory of moments in "La Pensée et l'esprit", an article the philosopher penned in 1925. Shields writes that "Lefebvre formulated his idea of 'moments' as an objection to Bergson's notion

⁴⁰⁵ Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, 9.

⁴⁰⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 175.

⁴⁰⁷ Bernard Tschumi, "Spaces and Events," in *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 146.

⁴⁰⁸ Bernard Tschumi, "Six Concepts," in *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 255-6.

⁴⁰⁹ As Merrifield has written, "During Lefebvre and Debord's early friendship, it was hard to know who influenced whom. Lefebvre may have lifted more from Debord and the Situationists than he cracked on. ... Debord and [Dutch architect Constant] Nieuwenhuys steadily nudged Lefebvre toward an interest in urbanism, which would soon hatch in *Introduction to Modernity*." Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 33.

of time.”⁴¹⁰ Lefebvre later addressed moments in *Le Somme et le reste* (The sum and the remainder, 1959) and *Critique de la vie quotidienne II (Critique of Everyday Life—Volume II, 1961)*. Giving a definition that approximates Tschumi’s idea of “events,” shields writes that for Lefebvre, “banality is broken up or divided by ‘moments’”. In effect, these ‘moments’ are what redeems everyday life for Lefebvre”⁴¹¹ Merrifield observes that Lefebvre’s moments, which are a crack in the system or “prospective subversion” in systems of commodification and domination, are a “key revolutionary motif” within Lefebvre’s theories.⁴¹² However, Guy Debord later argued that the Situationists added the spatial element to Lefebvre’s construct:

The *moment* is mainly temporal, it is part of not a pure, but a dominant, realm of temporality. The situation, narrowly articulated in a site is thoroughly spatio-temporal. Moments made into *situations* could be considered as moments of rapture, of acceleration, *revolutions in the individual daily life*.⁴¹³

In “Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space” Merrifield writes of the simultaneously revolutionary and ludic aspects of Lefebvre’s moment:

But instead of mystification Lefebvre wants cities to release repression...Lived moments somehow have to *disalienate* the everyday. They involve collective and individual rituals of resistance; they would be both serious – sometimes deadly serious – and playful; indeed, they should be luminous ‘festivals of the people’. Festivals are the veritable antithesis of bureaucratic domination and ordering.⁴¹⁴

Thus, both the violent and playful elements of Tschumi’s events can be likened to Lefebvre’s moments.⁴¹⁵ However, for Lefebvre, events or moments contain ideas of revolution, festival, transgression, and resistance to the capitalistic production of space. For Tschumi, the idea is limited by the architectural definition of program. Despite his insistence on transgression, a transgressive event is merely the opposition of an activity with a seemingly inappropriate space: such as a discotheque in a former church.

⁴¹⁰ Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 59.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴¹² Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, 26.

⁴¹³ Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle*, 104. (Originally from *Situationiste Internationale*, 4 cited in Hess, R. 1988. *Henri Lefebvre et l’aventure du siècle*. Paris: Editions A. M. Métailié, 1988: 216.)

⁴¹⁴ Merrifield, “Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space,” 179.

⁴¹⁵ Tschumi would later look to Foucault’s expansion of the term event: “For Foucault, an event is not simply a logical sequence of words or actions but rather “the moment of erosion, collapse, questioning, or problematization of the very assumptions of the setting within which a drama may take place—occasioning the chance or possibility of another, different setting.” The event here is seen as a *turning point*—not an origin or an end—as opposed to such propositions as form follows function. I would like to propose that the future of architecture lies in the construction of such events.” Tschumi, “Six Concepts,” 256.

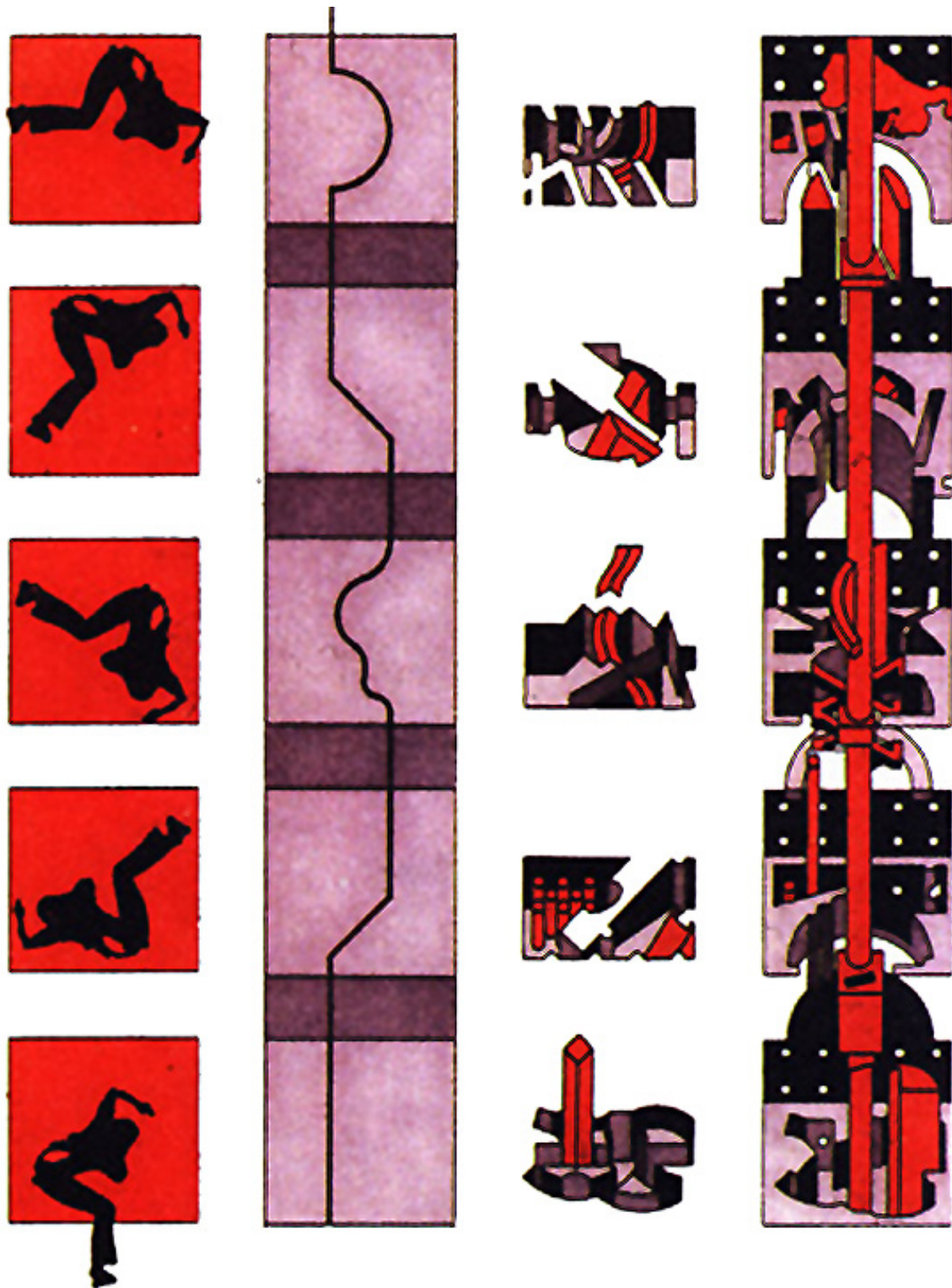


Figure 5.5: MT 3, "The Fall," *The Manhattan Transcripts*

As Tschumi's theory continued to evolve he reformulated and restated many of the ideas that were originally presented in "The Architectural Paradox" and subsequently refined in works like *The Manhattan Transcripts*. In the introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction*, a 1994 collection of Tschumi's essays to date, Tschumi sums up the evolution of his theory:

As a whole, these texts reiterate that architecture is never autonomous, never pure form, and similarly, that architecture is not a matter of style and cannot be reduced to a language. Opposing an overt notion of architectural form, they aim to reinstate the term *function* and, more particularly, to reinscribe the movement of bodies in space, together with actions and events that take place within the social and political realm of architecture.⁴¹⁶

At this stage in his career the architect adapts a more pragmatic stance, which is evidenced by the change in his position on autonomy. He appears to have come full circle, and it is evident that he seeks to reconcile his later theory of space, event, movement with his earlier studies of "the social and political realm of architecture." Given his propensity for restating, but slightly altering, his ideas from one text to the next, it is possible to trace many of his themes back to the work he produced in his earliest days at the Architectural Association. The original political motivations may be diluted over time, but they often remain as a motivational element underlying Tschumi's theory. Thus, from his work in the 1970s, through the compendium of work collected for publication in *Architecture and Disjunction*, Tschumi's writings contain varying degrees of indebtedness to his earliest analyses of the revolutionary uses of space, and by extension, to Lefebvre.



⁴¹⁶ Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 3.

Buildings have been erected without drawings, but architecture itself goes beyond the mere process of building. The complex cultural, social, and philosophical demands developed slowly over centuries have made architecture a form of knowledge in and of itself. Just as all forms of knowledge use different modes of discourse, so there are key architectural statements that, though not necessarily built, nevertheless inform us about the state of architecture—its concerns and its polemics—more precisely than the actual buildings of their time.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ Tschumi, "Architecture and Limits," 102.

06. CONCLUSION

Lefebvre's influence contributed to Tschumi's understanding of the political and social forces impacting space and architecture. Throughout the seventies Tschumi strove to extricate Architecture from its ties to capitalism and state and institutional power structures. In the first years of the decade he thought the architect could be a revolutionary, accelerating the process of revolution and social change through critique and community mobilization. Next he looked to art, using the gratuitous and useless ideal of fireworks as an example for an avant-garde architecture. These elements, combined with the autonomy conferred by the theory of Hegel's artistic supplement, served as a as a means of distancing the architect from productive forces.

In the 1980s and beyond, Tschumi's earlier politicized arguments often appear to be supplanted by notions of transgression, excess, eROTicism [Tschumi's emphasis], deconstruction and violence. However, the genesis for many of these theories appears in Tschumi's earlier writings, which were themselves influenced by Lefebvre. At the end of the Twentieth Century, Tschumi's explorations of the political nature of space gave way to a discussion of the autonomy and pleasures of architecture,

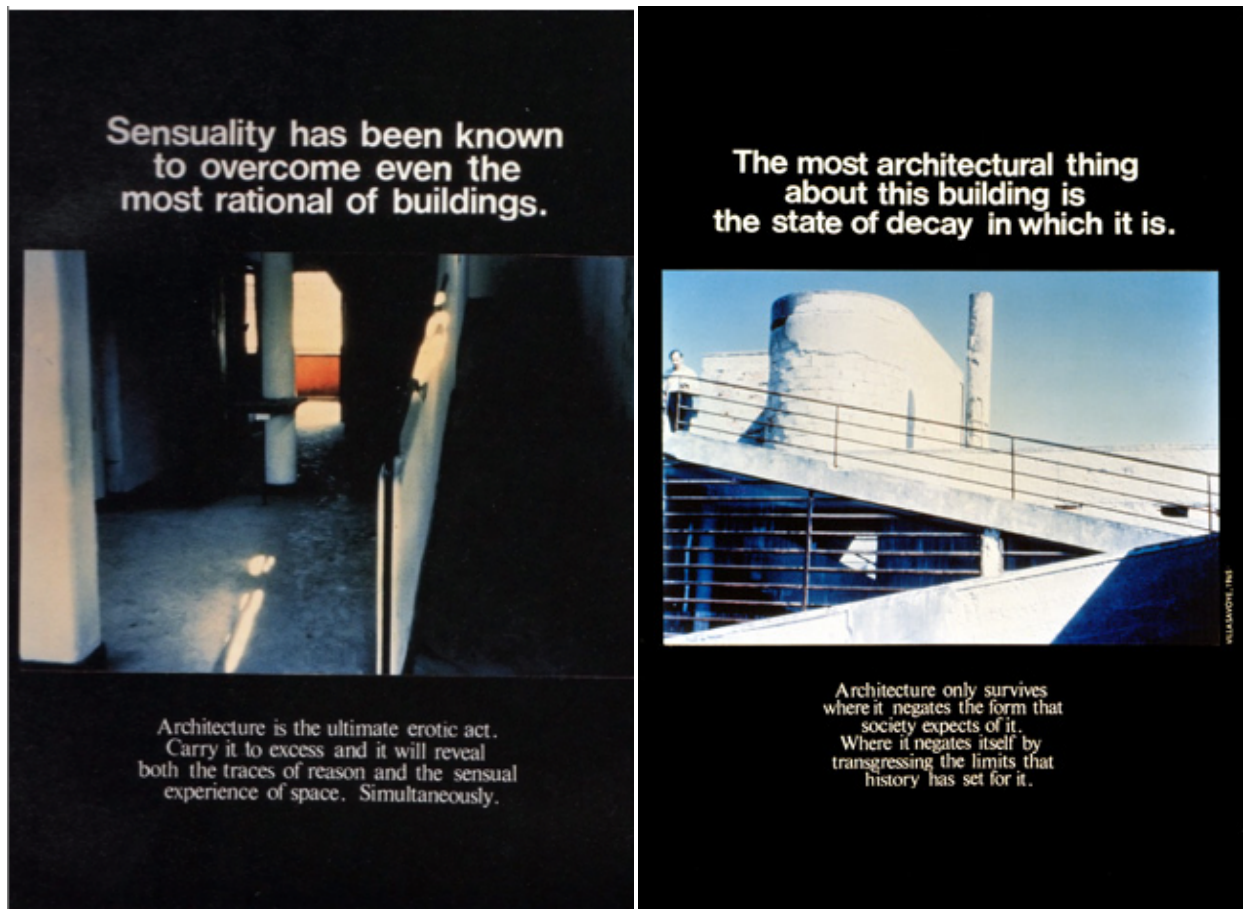


Figure 6.1: Advertisements for Architecture

whereas Lefebvre's subsequent work focused even more so on the politicized nature of production. After publishing *The Production of Space* Lefebvre's focus became a study of political theory and the modern world for *De l'État*, published between 1976 and 1978.⁴¹⁸ Stuart Elden has observed that the topic of space in this lesser known four-volume work furthers the theories found in *The Production of Space*, and "provides an extremely important analysis of the political production and use of space."⁴¹⁹ Here Lefebvre argues that the spatial elements of politics and the economy should be addressed in any discussion of 'the state'.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 211.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 238.

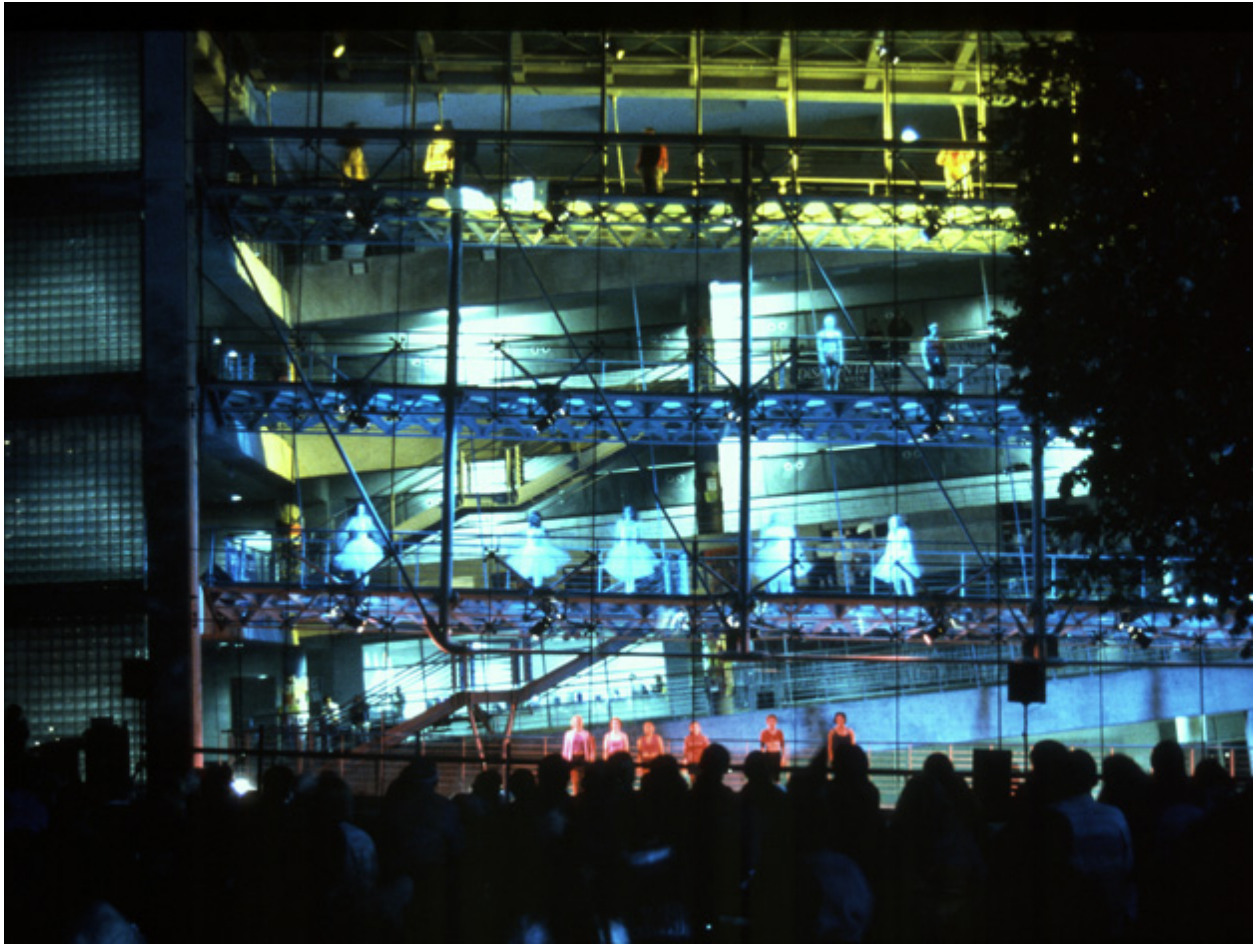


Figure 6.2: Alfred Lerner Hall

As Tschumi transitioned from paper architecture and theory to built commissions, his repudiation of architecture's complicity with the evils of capitalism waned. Like many of his generation, Tschumi's built work is far less radical than some of his earlier theories. As Simon Sadler has written, most of the post 1968 radicals returned to a traditional architecture practice: "the call to build tended to be more enduring than the call for absolute resistance to bourgeois society."⁴²¹ In Tschumi's 1994 preface to *Architecture and Disjunction*, a collection of writings that includes "Questions of Space: The Pyramid and the Labyrinth", Tschumi states that focusing on space was a means of moving beyond a political analysis of cities:

⁴²¹ Sadler, "An Avant-Garde Academy," 47.

The interplay between space and activities appeared to me as a possible route to bypass some of the obstacles that accompanied many anxieties about the social and political role of architecture.⁴²²

While this theoretical turn may have been fully realized when the architect received his first commission for the Parc de la Villette in Paris, further inquiry into the relationship between Tschumi's earlier theory and his built work is needed.

Elements of Tschumi's theories of space, as initially influenced by Lefebvre, appear in a distilled form in some of the architect's built work. For example, the ramps at Alfred Lerner Hall become a "social condenser" where bodies activate the space, but in a sociable, community-forming sense, rather than as a means of creating discourse or urban uprisings.⁴²³ As Tschumi's architectural practice evolved his theoretical output shifted accordingly; many of his recent writings include discussions of the envelope and other practical considerations.

The full weight and persistent nature of Lefebvre's influence can be felt in Tschumi's panoptic monograph *Architecture Concepts: Red is Not a Color* (2014). Here, Tschumi summarizes his quest to develop a working theory of architecture by looking at other disciplines for an alternative reading of architecture:

But it soon became clear that architecture had a very particular specificity: it simultaneously embodies a concept and its materialization, or a concept and its experience. To sum it up in more philosophical terms, architecture is at once concept, percept, and affect---"conceived, perceived, experienced." Architecture is not only about what a building looks like but also about what a building does in intellectual, perceptual, and social space.⁴²⁴

Tschumi's alteration of Lefebvre's triad in this quote is indicative of both the longevity of Lefebvre's influence and of the ways in which Tschumi translated the original political meaning of "lived" into the more easily identifiable architectural term of "experience." Fittingly, Tschumi brings his work full circle, back to the revolutionary themes that influenced his first published essays.

⁴²² Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 15-16.

⁴²³ Stickells, "Conceiving an Architecture of Movement," 49.

⁴²⁴ Bernard Tschumi, *Architectural Concepts: Red is Not a Color* (New York: Rizzoli, 2012), 7.

Who Will Lead the Revolution?

A key difference between Lefebvre and Tschumi, the implications of which will be explored in the next section, pertains to the actors identified to effect change in society. Throughout his writings, Lefebvre adhered to the idea that the proletariat must collectively strive for a social revolution, whereas Tschumi thought that the architect could ignite that very change. Of his own role, Lefebvre argued that “philosophical concepts are not operative and yet they situate the city and the urban – and the whole of society – as a totality, over and above analytical fragmentations.”⁴²⁵ The philosopher could illuminate the problem at hand, and help the working class to regain its sense of the oeuvre and a renewed right to urban life⁴²⁶—but ultimately the proletariat must come together for a total—cultural, economic, and political—revolution:

Only groups, social classes and class fractions capable of revolutionary initiative can take over and realize to fruition solutions to urban problems. It is from these social and political forces that the renewed city will become the *oeuvre*....This does not mean the working class will make urban society all on its own, but without it, nothing is possible.⁴²⁷

As previously stated, Lefebvre felt a global or total revolution was needed, and he was skeptical of the architect’s capacity to lead the charge.

By contrast, Tschumi felt the architect need not take a passive role, but use his particular environmental knowledge to affect change. Tschumi analyzed the precursor to revolutions in *The Environmental Trigger*, and proclaimed that the factors needed to incite revolutionary action are beyond those Marx proposes:

These worldwide events build up what seems to be a deep political and economic crisis, ‘the first objective conditions’ that orthodox Marxists consider as prerequisite to the revolution. ‘The motor of revolution is not the mere will of the revolutionaries but the real socio-economic conditions’, declared Marx (Meeting of the Communist League of 15th September, 1850)...While there may be evidence of socio-economic and political doom, it rarely carries enough weight to start revolutionary processes by itself. The premises of collapse and general awareness exist, as we shall see, but exploitation, misery and unemployment become the motor of the revolution only when there is also a revolutionary spirit. The analysis of all revolutions shows them as the product of an active minority that

⁴²⁵ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*, 93.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

was created by a political climate and was as much an expression as a catalyst of the general desire towards change.⁴²⁸

Tschumi argues that an active minority can encourage revolutionary action. Lefebvre states in *The Explosion* that “contestation arises out of a latent institutional crisis.”⁴²⁹ Tschumi argues that in addition to this latent crisis, specific actors are needed to make people aware of the problems at hand and to “start the revolutionary process.” For him, architects can be the needed ‘motor of revolution.’

What is the Role of the Architect?

The discussion of the role of the architect is little changed in the years since 1968, and the debate continues in architecture schools and in professional practice. Is it to oppose capitalist repression and help the proletariat reclaim the city, as the members of Gruppo Strum argued in the *Chronicle of Urban Politics?*

[demonstrations, leaflets, and street blockades] are the very actions which by opposing capitalist repression create the “conditio sine qua non” for proletarian possession of the city. The “Intermediate City” gives meaning to our roles as activists and technicians and we mean to be present with our knowledge and to help build up the Intermediate City, ready to satisfy the needs of the struggle and to make suggestions.⁴³⁰

Or, should the role of the architect be abolished all together in order to democratize the act of building? Is the architect merely a facilitator of the process of participatory design? Tschumi himself saw this as the annihilation of architecture, and, although he never uses aesthetics as a justification of his position, he was not prepared to give up on the importance of the designer just yet.⁴³¹

In “*The Environmental Trigger*” Tschumi stated that the architect could be a conservative, a commentator, or a revolutionary. As someone who was not yet a practicing architect, he discounted the idea that the act of building, in the traditional sense, could do anything more than reinforce existing social conditions. His argument changed when he was given his first commission:

⁴²⁸ Tschumi, “The Environmental Trigger,” 92.

⁴²⁹ Lefebvre, *The Explosion*, 68.

⁴³⁰ Giorgio Ceretti, Pietro De Rossi [sic], Carlo Giammarco, Riccardo Rosso, Maurizio Vogliazzo (Gruppo Strum), “Intermediate City,” in *Chronicle of Urban Politics*, (London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 1974). Architectural Association Library Collections.

⁴³¹ Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” 48.

Beginning in the mid-1970s and running through the 1980s, the mainstream power structure of architecture was all historicist; postmodernism was establishment. The first built project directed against this establishment historicism was La Villette. The first group of architects who consistently developed work that had nothing to do with the parody of historical neoclassical form included Frank Gehry, Peter Eisenman, Wolf Prix, Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, myself and a very few others.⁴³²

His emphasis was no longer on challenging political and economic power structures, but on challenging the architectural establishment instead.

But must this be the predicament? Can a socially minded practice be reconciled with the act of building? Certainly there are examples of working within the system. Michael Pyatok, an architect out of California whose primary focus is affordable housing, tells the story of a public plaza opposite a city hall that he designed to facilitate protests. To get the design approved he subversively rendered it as a space for outdoor performances.⁴³³ Undoubtedly over the years his design has served both the intended and rendered purposes.

Given the current political climate, which very much parallels that of 1968, the conversation is as relevant as ever. Redevelopment continues as gentrification, corporations continue to shape the built environment in their image, seemingly endless wars rage on, and, according to Oxfam, one percent of the world's population holds as much wealth as the other 99% combined.⁴³⁴ However, Lefebvre would be pleased to see that more and more people are demanding change. A democratic socialist is doing better than expected in his bid for the US presidency, municipalities across the country are substantially raising the minimum wage, and the Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter movements have drawn public attention to systemic economic and political issues. What role the architect will play in addressing these societal problems remains to be seen.



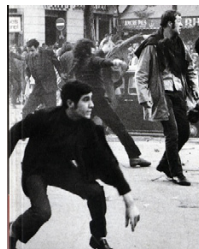
⁴³² Walker and Tschumi, *Tschumi on Architecture*, 129.

⁴³³ Lecture by Professor Michael Pyatok FAIA, University of Washington, 2009.

⁴³⁴ Faith Karamini, "Wealthiest 1% will soon own more than the rest of us combined, Oxfam says," CNN online, Updated 5:19 PM ET, Mon January 19, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/19/world/wealth-inequality/>.



May '68, Student riots and protests in Paris



Squatting at Kentish Town Station, 1971

Tschumi goes to the Architectural Association, 1970

"The Beaux-Arts Since '68," AD, 1971



'68

'69

'70

'71



Le droit à la ville, 1968

L'irruption de Nanterre au sommet, 1968



La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne, 1968



La révolution urbaine, 1970



Du rural à l'urbain, 1970

"Reflexions sur la politique de l'espace," *Espaces et sociétés, 1970*



“Review of Le Droit a la Ville,” AD, 1972 *French Programme*, ICA, 1973 *Chronicle in Urban Politics*, AA Unit 2, 1973/74 *Space: 1000 Words*, 1975 Exhibit

“The Environmental Trigger,” 1972, published in *A Continuing Experiment*, 1975 “Sanctuaries,” AD, 1973 *Chronicle of Space*, AA Unit 2, 1974/75 “Questions of Space,” *Studio International*, 1975

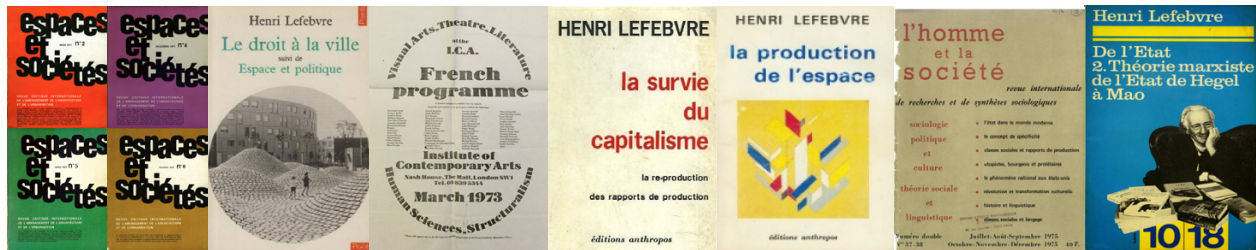


‘72

‘73

‘74

‘75



Espaces et sociétés

French Programme ICA, 1973

La production de l'espace, 1974

De l'Etat Vol. 1-4, 1975-1978

Espace et politique
(*Le Droit a la Ville* Vol. 2), 1972

La survie du capitalisme, 1973

“L’Etat dans le monde moderne,”
L’Homme et la société, 1975

Figure 6.3: Timeline, 1968-1975



Figure 6.4: Fireworks at the Parc de la Villette

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