The contemporary significance for alternative forms of architectural praxis is explored by revisiting the protests of young Romanian architects resisting repression under the Ceausescu regime.

Form-Trans-Inform: the 'poetic' resistance in architecture

Helen Stratford in conversation with Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou

In Nicolae Ceausescu's 'Systematisation' programme, implemented across Romania throughout the 1980s, power was played out in acts of building. The city of Bucharest provided a visible symbol of the centralisation of authority, manifest in the construction of the Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism and the House of the People. Beginning from this historical context, this paper revisits the work of one group of student architects in Romania, Form-Trans-Inform, who used spatial practices to question orthodoxies in architecture around them as protests against repressions under the monolithic Ceausescu regime.

For Form-Trans-Inform, a diverse programme of events served to accentuate, critique and resist the specific confines and symbolic topographies overlaid on particular sites by the actions of the Ceausescu regime. Yet, while they provided an alternative to the 'communist intellectual uniformity', these performative spatial practices also allowed these young architects to invent a form of contemporary architectural sensibility that was specific to their particular political condition. The work of this group, the political context and the wider milieu of resistance in which it operated in Romania at this time has been recorded elsewhere by the author.[1] However, in the light of a 'defined need to develop new models of architectural praxis' and with new digital technologies allowing a greater extent of the work to be reviewed, this paper revisits selected practices of this group to explore how they begin to develop a theoretical argument about alternative practice.[2]

Context

Bucharest: the Ceausescu regime

Until its collapse in December 1989, the Romanian Communist system permeated all levels of societal relations embracing politics, everyday life and architectural expression. A multitude of interpersonal and spatial rules combined to produce very real corporeal effects and subjectifications. In *Romania in Turmoil,* Martyn Rady explains how the 'pervasive influence' of the security apparatus and the rotation in office of rivals for power prevented any opposition in government.[3] At the same time, everyday Romanians experienced a 'profound sense of resignation', largely attributed to 'the constant dissipation of intellectual and physical energy in the mundane task of obtaining sufficient food, warmth and medicines to go on living'.[4] Meanwhile, for the middle classes, Government patronage was traditionally regarded as the 'key to material prosperity' and for intellectuals the only way to be published and achieve notoriety was by acknowledging support for Ceausescu.[5] Even more than other Eastern European political regimes, Ceausescu's regime understood the effectiveness of Foucauldian 'micro-powers' as pervasive agents of control expressed throughout all societal levels.[6] Moreover, the potential for acts of architecture to extol admiration, embody authority and maintain 'obstinate force' was a power Nicolae Ceausescu manipulated to its extreme.[7]

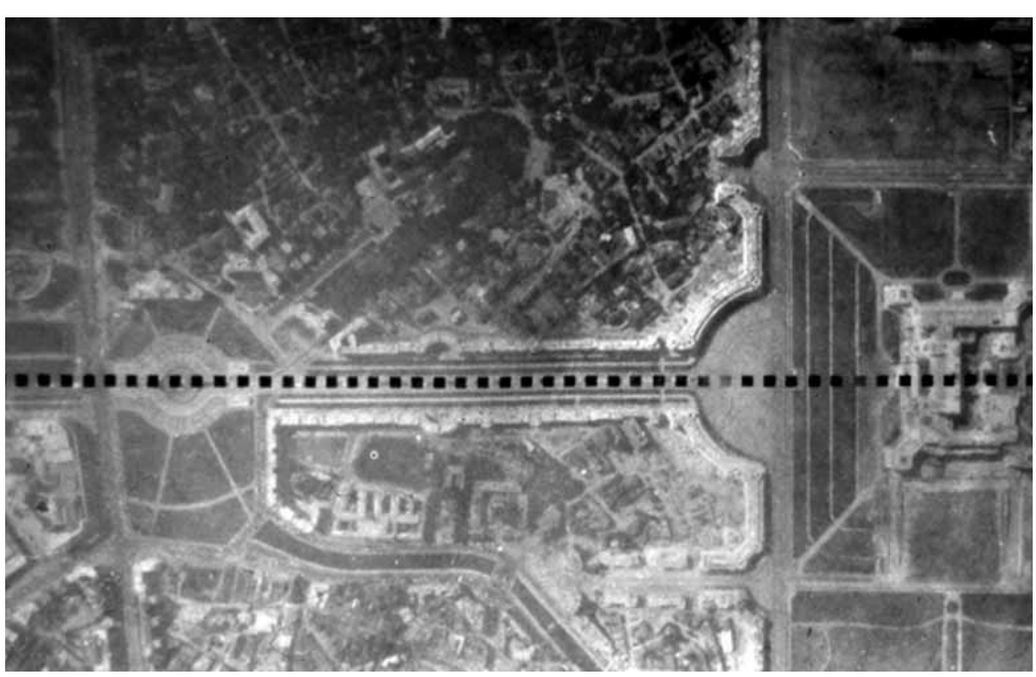
Ceausescu's role as self-appointed head architect was produced by and supportive of the performative potential of urban planning, making it clear that with one sweep of his hand he could destroy or relocate entire districts. The construction of the House of the People and its ostentatious Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism generated enormous operations of demolition and for those who lived in its shadow represented 'a massive effort to ensure total visual domination of the city' *[1–3]*.[8] Moreover, throughout the 1980s Ceausescu implemented his Systemisation programme involving the destruction of numerous historic buildings in Romania's towns, and the razing of vast numbers of villages to be replaced by standardised apartment blocks promising better living standards. In fact, this Systemisation was more akin to a social engineering exercise with the ultimate ideological target being 'the homogenization of the Romanian socialist society [...] and the accomplishment of a single society of the working people'.[9] In this deeply prescribed context, where power was played out in performative acts of building, architecture seemed to lose all alternate meaning than that expressed through its exclusive use as an instrument of power. However, a handful of individuals and young architects strove to reclaim such an alternate meaning through spatial practices that protested against the restrictions of the regime.

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1 Ceausescu's role as self-appointed head architect made it clear that with one sweep of his hand he could destroy or relocate entire districts





2, 3 For those who lived in its shadow, the construction of the House of the People and the Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism represented 'a massive effort to ensure total visual domination of the city'

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Form-Trans-Inform

Buildings are inexorably allied to those with the means and power to fund and implement them. In Romania, Ceausescu dominated all structures of power, with which many architects were complicit. To resist these structures almost inevitably meant not building anything at all. Nevertheless, at various fissures in the landscape of architectural entities, which existed in Romania during its context of repressive dictatorship, work was created, by individuals and small groups of young architects, of which the very presence challenged the restrictions of the regime. Such work was found within the architectural schools of Bucharest and Timisoara, among students and educators, within a few firms of young architects and outside both these traditional institutions of the profession altogether, in the work of small independent groups including the interdisciplinary group Form-Trans-Inform.

Form-Trans-Inform began in 1980. Its eight core members came from the School of Architecture and the Ion Grigorescu Institute of Arts in Bucharest. The architectural students from the Bucharest School of Architecture were Constantin Petcou, Constantin Gorcea, Alexandru Chitul, Neagoe Florin, Sorin Vatamaniuc, Deacu Doru and Doina Petrescu. Lavinia Mirsu studied at the Ion Grigorescu Institute of Arts and was a scenography student. In the general context of a privation of rights and lack of material effects – food, fuel, access to technology and information – Form-Trans-Inform devised a diverse programme of research and experimentation including meetings, seminars, papers, projects, exhibitions, performances and events. These were all recorded by a variety of methods including photographs and 8mm film. Recent DVD transference of these archive films, made within the specific material conditions of the 1980s in Romania, has enabled the extent of these activities and specific sensibilities in relation to their social and political context to be re-viewed. At the time they were made it was strictly forbidden to own a camera, all existing cameras and typewriters were tracked by State security, and the unavailability of tapes and processing materials made processing impossible. Under such repressive circumstances the practices of Form-Trans-Inform aimed 'to resist [...] the communist intellectual uniformity, to keep ourselves in touch with the contemporary sensibility [in architecture], and maybe to invent a specific form of that sensibility through our specific condition inside the Romanian dictatorial regime'.[10]

Contemporary architectural practice

Architecture as a medium for cultural expression necessarily reflects prevailing cultural and social conditions. In 'Scratching the Surface', Sarah Wigglesworth describes how the architectural profession in its historical and conventional context operates at many levels to control what knowledge is legitimate and what is irrelevant within its production. This knowledge determines concepts of creativity and the importance (or not) to architecture of related disciplines. At the same time, whether at the level of individual buildings or urban design, building projects invariably prevail as expensive commodities that promote social and spatial segregation in their bid to perpetuate wealth. In this way a multitude of assemblages – social, economic, environmental, cultural, linguistic as well as legal – demand of the architect 'particular kinds of personal behaviour and social relations'.[11] For Wigglesworth, a critical practice must acknowledge and find ways of addressing the means through which architecture is produced and explore their implications, 'ultimately its aims must be to propose alternative identities for the architect, which broaden the relevance of architecture and produce more liberating ways of working'.[12]

While parallels in the work of Form-Trans-Inform can be drawn to arts movements located within transforming political structures from the 1960s to the 1980s, the specific conditions of the Ceausescu regime cannot be directly compared to those of other political contexts.[13] However, this paper argues that the critical positions of the practices of Form-Trans-Inform combined with an awareness of the importance of architecture as a social space – taking it out of the narrow disciplinary confines to which the profession conventionally adheres and situating it in an extended context of spatial practices and processes – is a transferable aspect from which a theoretical argument about alternative practice can begin to be developed.[14] Ultimately, through revisiting this work, this paper argues that notions of practised, performed and interdisciplinary spaces, involving dynamic models of place, are relevant and necessary for re-thinking conventional architectural assumptions, finding alternative ways of engaging with the built environment and proposing alternative forms of architectural education within contemporary conditions of architectural production.

The institution – 'a school within the school'

The pervasiveness of the Ceausescu regime extended throughout entire societal structures, manifest in everyday operations including education. Any resistance to such an omnipresent regime proved extremely difficult, dangerous and fragmented, constituting a 'plurality of resistances'.[15] Groups of dissident intellectuals and artists, who made up the disparate avant-garde or pockets of resistance in Bucharest, were largely isolated within their separate fields, in itself a symptom of the exercise of power through the regulation of disciplinary boundaries. In the early '80s the Bucharest School of Architecture (Institutal de Arhitectura Ion Mincu (IAIM)) served as an enclave for work created at this micro-level.[16] Form-Trans-Inform worked with other students and teachers to organise a 'school within a school' by promoting a parallel teaching programme that was diametrically opposed to those teaching methods and values held by the official 'abstract and functionalist' school. In place of the core studies, dictated by Ceausescu, which included economic, political theory and socialist idealism,[17] this parallel teaching programme attempted to access a different model of knowledge that was at once 'experimental,

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analytic and holistic'. By embracing exhibitions, events, actions and happenings; supported by readings, thematic discussions of prohibited texts and screenings of scientific, art and documentary films borrowed from the Western Embassy libraries, Form-Trans-Inform initiated a critique of the institution in which they were enrolled.[18]

Within the School of Architecture, Form-Trans-Inform took part in two exhibitions organised by young avant-garde artist Wanda Mihuleac. The first exhibition, *Spatiu-Obiet* (or *Space-Object*), took place in autumn 1982. Around twenty people took part including artists, architects, and students. All were invited by Mihuleac to exhibit both architectural and art installations. A review of the show – granted publication in the Union of Romanian Artists' journal *Arta* because its narrow circulation rendered it politically harmless – commented that it had 'attempted to organize space through different qualifications in the same way as Joseph Beuys had proposed to create an integral system by amalgamating social sciences and art'.[19] However, the head of the school refused to grant official permission for the opening of the section displaying the architecture students' work. Therefore, this part of the *Space-Object* exhibition was never officially opened to the public. The participating students and architects had to open it themselves, and then, it was 'tolerated' *[4]*.[20]

The second exhibition, *Spatiu-Oglinda* (or *Space-Mirror*), was planned as a continuation of the first. The scale of this second event, arranged again by Mihuleac and programmed for 1986, was much more ambitious incorporating around seventy people, including many important intellectuals and artists. However, in a clear demonstration of the restrictive evolution within the political regime, this second exhibition only managed to open for a few days before it was censored and subsequently terminated, receiving no publicity whatsoever. The official reasoning behind the closure of the exhibition was, 'It didn't reflect the social reality'.[21]

While invariably the subject of authoritarian censorship and exclusion, such actions were symbolically important for students and teachers in the school at that time, as they made visible alternatives to the 'communist intellectual uniformity'.[22] In addition, identified as a group of resistance, Form-Trans-Inform were invited to participate in different collaborative and collective actions by dissident individuals and groups. These collaborative actions challenged the isolation of these disparate pockets of micro-resistance – adding to them through solidarity, mutual recognition and support.



4 The Form-Trans-Inform, *Space-Object* exhibition at the Bucharest School of Architecture, autumn 1982, was never officially permitted. Students and architects had to open it themselves



5 Actions in the city of Bucharest discovered and invested with poetic value architectural elements which were going to disappear, responding to the imminent demolition of the city fabric. Form-Trans-Inform, *Traces*, Bucharest, February 1981

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Actions: the city

Once a month between January 1981 and March 1982, Form-Trans-Inform held a series of meetings entitled 'actions', with additional participation from contributors outside the group. These 'actions' took place in disregarded and dilapidated areas of Bucharest and in forests and countryside outside the city. The importance of such practices and their relevance as a form of resistance becomes evident when one comprehends that their locations were a direct response to the strict political surveillance present in Bucharest.

The actions organised within the ruins of Bucharest concentrated on disintegration and disappearance over time, working within and reacting to extreme environments where surrounding buildings gradually vanished. One such action was entitled *Traces*. Located within the historic *Opereta* district, it was programmed during February 1981 in a house intended for demolition during the five year process which razed this entire district for the construction of Ceausescu's House of the People. Each person in the action took one room and inaugurated some kind of intervention which responded to the house, such as a performance or an installation. Through re-inhabiting the house these interventions discovered and invested with poetic value architectural elements which were going to disappear *[5]*.

In her paper 'Living Virtually in a Cluttered House', Eleanor Kaufman describes how the perception of the space around us is premised on a set of assumptions – conventions and rules that have 'real bearing on the ways lives are lived'.[23] Likewise, for feminist theorist Moira Gatens these conventions, that are dependent on language, time, place and audience, do not merely describe or represent, but intervene in the world, functioning to organise its 'social character'. They instigate a 'framework of intelligibility' which maintains explicit propositions about bodies and places, deciding what types of utterances may be 'legitimately' extracted from them.[24] In *Traces,* a house that had become 'legitimately' abstracted as an obstacle to totalitarian city planning was reinvested with memory and narrative through an assemblage of bodies, practices and place. In this way, the performances focused on actions and gestures in processes of inhabitation to produce a physically registered yet anecdotal topography or set of haunted sequences rather than a functional urban landscape or city.

The house eventually fell to the demolition squads. In this context the intervention was seen by Form-Trans-Inform as 'a last and useless gesture of future architects'. However, they also saw it as 'a first gesture of resistance of future architects'.[25] In redefining this place identified for destruction, the gestures of Form-Trans-Inform formed a critique of the brutality of the orthodox Romanian architectural ideology of that time; confronting the social, spatial and temporal logic of the regime. At the same time they allowed a momentary reversal and recontextualisation of this place, complicating the perceptions of this particular house and releasing it, if momentarily, from its specific script.

Actions: the (collective) body

In *Traces*, site specific actions interacted with existing buildings. Conversely, during March 1982, *Structura* (or *The Structure*) was an action staged within the Baneasa forest that concentrated on building new collaborative structures in response to the surrounding environment. Various installations and a 'happening' contemplated the question of constructing a structure within the forest which bridged subjectivity and nature. Works created in response to this theme were entitled *The Life Structure*, *Temporary Structures* (marking ways to get out of the forest) and *The Sexual Structure* (supporting Man and Woman in the forest).

The aims of Form-Trans-Inform in relation to *The Structure* were directed towards 'learning architecture in/from the forest', making performative and collaborative architecture that was at once 'fragile and vulnerable'.[26] Installations and performances were used to appropriate sites through a combination of built constructions and social actions. Still photographs of *The Structure* go some way to communicate the intersections of bodies and place made through these collaborative constructions. Yet, the films make clear the extent to which the performative living aspect of the processes involved in all the actions was the key aspect of the work *[6, 7]*.

In 'On the Production of Subjectivity', the first chapter of *Chaosmosis*, Félix Guattari describes how 'machines of subjectification' combine to produce subjectivities.[27] For Guattari, these machines are not delimited to 'internal faculties of the soul, interpersonal relations and intra-familial complexes' but are found in 'non-human machines such as social, cultural, environmental or technological assemblages'.[28] With notable significance for the Ceausescu regime these include 'the large scale social machines of language and the mass media'.[29] For Form-Trans-Inform, active and physical actions became the ultimate site of resistance against the direct and symbolic violence to which their bodies and subjectivities were submitted under the totalitarian regime.[30] Yet, for Guattari the notion of 'complexes of subjectification' also contains the potential for resingularising practices. These complexes, including 'relations with architectural space', 'actually offer people diverse possibilities for recomposing their existential corporeality, to get out of their repetitive impasses and [...] to resingularise themselves'.[31] In addition to resistance then, Guattari's 'complexes of subjectification' also offer the possibility of creating new modalities of subjectivity; new places to speak and act from.

In the face of alienation and humiliation, the performances and practices of Form-Trans-Inform confirmed the central role of the body, so resisting the machines of subjectification that produced specific models of acting and thinking. However, these physical practices also re-choreographed the hidden and liminal spaces to which they were restricted. Collaborative actions, involving climbing, jumping and balancing, enabled access to these overlooked and disregarded places but also

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6 Active and physical actions became the ultimate site of resistance against direct and symbolic violence to which bodies and subjectivities were submitted under the totalitarian regime. Form-Trans-Inform, *The Structure*, Banasea forest, March 1982

7 Collaborative and performative constructions were used to appropriate sites through a combination of built constructions and social actions. Form-Trans-Inform, *The Structure*, Banasea forest, March 1982

8 Political protest was expressed 'less ideologically, and more poetically'. Form-Trans-Inform – Radical Design Studio, Mast to Itaca, Japanese Ideas Competition, 1986

translated them into a series of personal and collective territories. This change of focus allowed these spaces, in the countryside, in the forest and in dilapidated buildings, to alter. Further, in appropriating and redefining these spaces through social actions, which confirmed the body's relationship to the world and other bodies, the actions of Form-Trans-Inform undermined the ideological control of architecture as a physical space for the representation of power. Instead, building here was performed as an unfolding series of processes and practices that held the possibility to create and enact another reality than that performed by the actions of the regime.[32]

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Conclusion

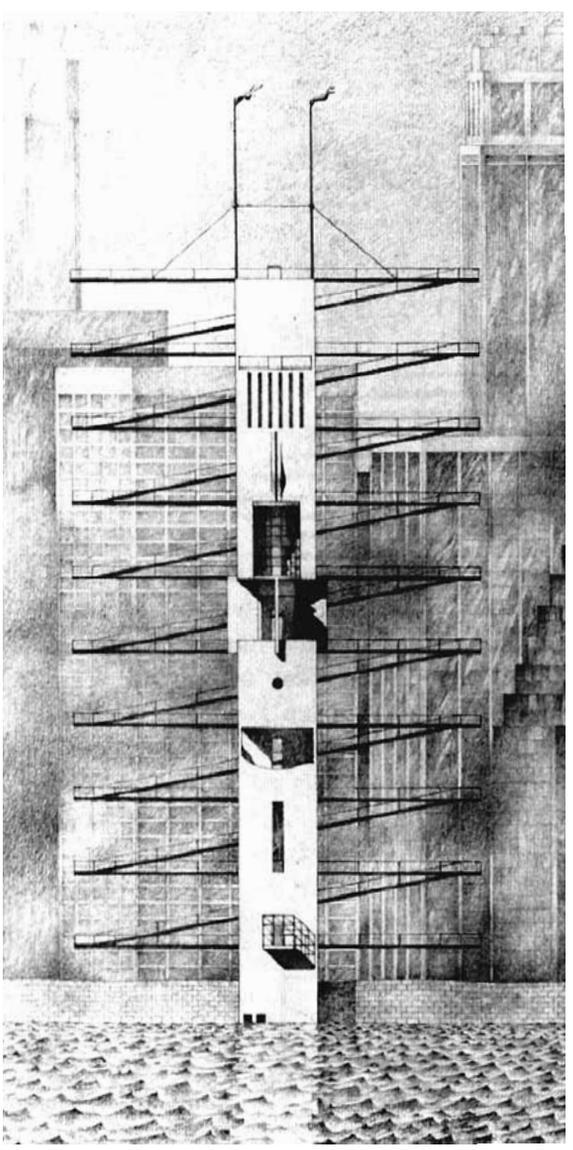
Poetic resistance

Under the regime places and subjectivities played a key role in preserving hegemonic relations of power. In this context, the 'actions' of Form-Trans-Inform provided a site for resistance. Rather than direct acts of political protest that would have elicited immediate repression, the group's practices of resistance were composed of subtle slippages and subversions. Against the particular forms of subjectification experienced under the regime, they operated through incremental moves at the micro-level to resist the local impositions of dominating power. As a former member of Form-Trans-Inform describes:

> *'We were not engaged in a direct political critique – as protest or political demonstrations* [...] *but indirect, embedded in internal codes and hidden meanings shared by those that were able to read them. It was a resistance through alternative discourse, through alternative ways of thinking and doing, alternative life style.'*[33]

Rather than oppose one ideology to another, the alternative actions of Form-Trans-Inform expressed their political protest 'less ideologically and more poetically'. Indeed, the poetic was their way of resisting the subjective violence of the Ceausescu dictatorship. For the group the political and the poetic were not separated, 'to the power that infiltrated our life with ideology, control and restriction we replied with a poetic form of life, which kept alive our sensorial, intellectual and affective capacity'.[34]

Manifestations of resistance are always context specific. This context must provide the pretext for understanding the work and extent of resistance. In their aim to invent a practice that could not be readily categorised under abstract or functionalist modes of architectural expression, Form-Trans-Inform implemented a form of resistance that moved the political into new discursive areas. Less ideologically charged than affirmative and creative, this poetic resistance enabled a different kind of dialogue. While direct political influences will always be difficult to discern, through operating with the power of the micro-political, as a precise form of resistance, the poetic resistance of Form-Trans-Inform provided 'intellectual and moral survival' that in time created conditions for macro-political change *[8]*.[35]



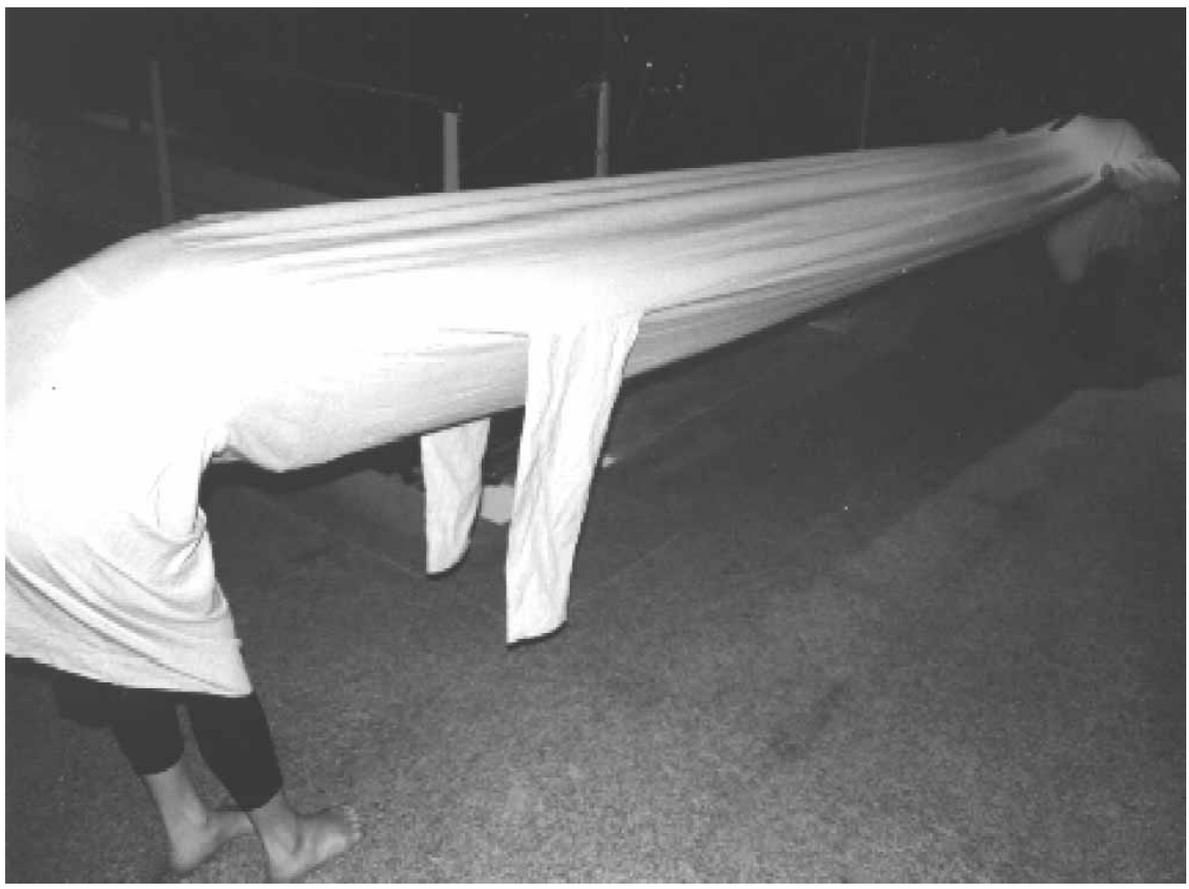
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Critical practice

For Form-Trans-Inform, the institution was the starting point for a parallel programme that attempted to access different forms of knowledge, teaching and learning approaches than those of the official 'abstract and functionalist school'. The presence of the group at alternate exhibitions was symbolically important in demonstrating that alternatives to the 'communist intellectual uniformity' existed, even if these events were rapidly censored and terminated with little or no publicity. In addition, this presence created connections with other disciplines and disparate pockets of micro-resistance; challenging disciplinary boundaries while offering support and solidarity. In the city, in the place of the relentless programme of demolition, 'actions' re-inhabited with memory and narrative an existing building that had become abstracted as an obstacle to totalitarian city planning; forming a critique of the Romanian architectural ideology. In the forest, the collaborative and performative construction of new structures affirmed the importance of the body; resisting the direct and symbolic violence to which bodies and subjectivities were submitted. Yet, at the same time, these social actions also worked to shift the symbolic topographies that had become overlaid on sites of architecture under the totalitarian regime.

Under Ceausescu the societal practices of the regime constructed certain kinds of body with particular kinds of subservient power and capacity. This marking in turn created specific spatial conditions in which these bodies lived and recreated themselves. Rather than accept these conditions, Form-Trans-Inform focused on the production of place through societal practices in order to propose alternate practices that produced place differently. In the face of passive isolation, alienation and

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9 'We were neither marginal, nor heroes, but tried very hard to remain "normal".' Through a diverse programme of events Form-Trans-Inform aimed to resist the 'communist intellectual conformity'. Form-Trans-Inform – Radical Design Studio, *Medium-Media*, September 1989

humiliation, the group explored the inextricable relationship between social actions and physical space in order to shift existing conceptions regarding specific subjectivities and alter the places through which they were produced. By reclaiming architecture as an affirmative and collaborative practice, rather than an instrument of power, the practices of Form-Trans-Inform worked to take it out of a long established and exclusively damaging context. Instead, through spatial practices located in the school, the city and the forest, architecture became the site of a collective challenge; reclaimed, opened up and turned in the direction of expanding political processes – creating new subject positions from which the group could speak and act.

By working at the different levels of teaching, of buildings, of the body and subjectivity, Form-Trans-Inform developed a critique of the conditions by which the processes involved in the production of architecture operated within the particular confines of the dictatorial regime. Largely devoid of material sources and restricted to hidden and liminal spaces, the practices of the group explored building as an unfolding series of processes and practices; at once pedagogic, political, social and material. This form of institutional critique, that places architecture in a broader context of spatial practices and social action, is an approach that is extremely relevant for finding ways of addressing the means through which architecture is produced and exploring their implications in the contemporary context. Rather than imposed or abstract representations of identities and places, this approach to building attempts to rethink places as situations or 'assemblages' and find ways of working that evolve instead from exploring the processes and practices which constitute a place and which it constitutes.[36]

Ultimately, the work of Form-Trans-Inform embodies an approach by which a collective critical practice might also be creative. It points towards a poetic practice that can envision and express the possibility of things being otherwise without becoming so enamoured of power that it omits to question its own socio-political interventions.[37] Poetic here then also embodies the sense of the Greek poïesis – making, and in the case of Form-Trans-Inform: 'making another world in which it will be possible to live, to breathe, to dream', that 'started with the school – with the poetical invention of another school, and way of teaching in which we restored, first of all, the dignity of ourselves' *[9]*.[38]

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Notes

1. For a more extended discussion of these practices see Helen Stratford, 'Enclaves of Expression', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 54.4 (May 2001), 218–228.
2. Alternative Architectural Practice, research project, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, 30 May 2007, <http://altpraxis.wordpress.com> [accessed 19 March 2008].
3. Martyn Rady, *Romania in Turmoil* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1992), p. 57.
4. In Ceausescu's determined attempt to pay off the national debt, imports were minimised and almost everything that could be sold abroad was exported. Food became scarce and fuel was severely rationed, households were allotted only one 40-watt bulb per room, cooking was often limited to the middle of the night, and sometimes even the traffic lights stopped working. R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 385.
5. Rady, *Romania in Turmoil*, p. 59.
6. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977,* ed. by Colin Gordon (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 98.
7. Doina Petrescu, 'The People's House, or the Voluptuous Violence of an Architectural Paradox', in *Architecture and Revolution*, ed. by Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 188-195 (p. 192).
8. Constantin Petcou, 'Totalitarian City: Bucharest 1980–9, Semio-clinical Files', in *Architecture and Revolution*, pp. 177–187 (p. 182).
9. Dinu C. Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past* (Bath: The Bath Press, 1990), p. 42. Giurescu describes how this ideological target aimed to instigate 'a reduction of the main differences between village and town and the accomplishment of a single society of the working people'.
10. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, email correspondence with the author, Paris-Cambridge, 7 January 1998.
11. Sarah Wigglesworth, 'Scratching the Surface: The Case for a Material Architecture', in *Transmission: Speaking & Listening*, vol. 2, ed. by Sharon Kivland and Lesley Sanderson (Sheffield Hallam University/Site Gallery, 2003), pp. 105–113 (p. 107).
12. *Ibid*.
13. These manifestations of resistance by Romanian architects, during the years of the Ceausescu regime, form part of a larger study by the author. The scope of that study stretches wide geographically and politically. It covers work situated both within a number of transforming political structures, including South Africa, Russia and East Germany, and spanning across them. See Helen Stratford, 'Micro-movements of Resistance: The Questioning of Orthodoxies by Young Architects in the East and West in the 1980s and Early 90s' (unpublished dissertation for Diploma in Architecture, University of Cambridge, 1998).
14. In *Critical Architecture* Jane Rendell underlines the importance of a critical practice that places architecture in an 'interdisciplinary field of activity'. Jane Rendell, 'Critical Architecture: Between Criticism and Design', introduction to *Critical Architecture*, ed. by Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser and Mark Dorrian (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1–8 (p. 5).
15. Michel Foucault quoted in Michael Walzer, 'The Politics of Michel Foucault' in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. by David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 51–68 (p. 55).
16. In relation to other academic institutions in Romania, IAIM was the most permissive. The demonstration of such tolerance can be seen in two examples of events which took place within the School. The first: the existence of the 'Club A', where underground artists, musicians, writers and film makers were invited to show their work and speak. Political puns and jokes were heard there until 1984/1985. The second: the organisation by the School of two International Seminars of Architecture, in 1982 and 1984, to which some of the most prominent international architects of the time were invited. It was evidence of the two-way effect of these boundaries that very few actually accepted the invitation. Ideological support for this activity came from the Communist Party Secretary of the School who used his 'socialist friendship' connection with Nicu Ceausescu, the son of Nicolae Ceausescu, as a way of attaining some level of freedom for the School and its students. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, email correspondence with the author, Paris-Cambridge, 21 October 1997.
17. The core studies, dictated by Ceausescu, included economic and political theory, and 'socialist' idealism, forced into all the lecture programmes and teaching practices. Louise Rodgers, 'Testing Times', *The Architects' Journal* (23 May 1990), p. 26. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, 'Form-Trans-Inform: The "Poetic" Resistance in Architecture', paper presented at Alternate Currents Symposium, Sheffield University Department of Architecture, 26/27 November 2007.
18. The first venture in which Form-Trans-Inform participated was an exhibition entitled *Om-Oras-Natura* or *Man-City-Nature* in 1980. The exhibition formed part of a larger event and seminar involving around eighty people comprising philosophers, artists, scientists and architects. The event was organised by Constantin Petcou in collaboration with Wanda Mihuleac and Mihai Driscu and was held in the Botanical Garden of Isai at the Moldavian edge of Romania. A review of the exhibition describes how it showed a 'restrained but relevant slice of research and dreams concerning new correlations of the terms of place, dwelling place and urban place concentrating on the tension between "nature" and the urban fortress of the city'. Theodor Redlow, 'A Question Always Open. Men-City-Nature', *Arta,* 1 (1982), 10–12.
19. Mihai Driscu,'Spatiu-Obiet', *Arta,* 4 (1983), 10–13. Although the article itself was well illustrated, it made no allusions to the underlying motives of the show. Mihai Driscu suffered harassment due to his role in resistance activities. He was killed under mysterious circumstances in a car accident in 1985.
20. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, email correspondence with the author, Paris-Cambridge, 14 December 1997.
21. *Ibid*.
22. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, email correspondence with the author, Paris-Cambridge, 7 January 1998.
23. Eleanor Kaufman, 'Living Virtually in a Cluttered House', *Angelaki*, 7.3 (December 2002), 159–169 (p. 161).
24. Moira Gatens, 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power', in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader,* ed. by Paul Patton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996), pp. 162–187 (p. 178).
25. Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, email correspondence with the author, Paris-Cambridge, 19 December 1997.
26. *Ibid*.
27. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. by Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 9.

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28. Phillip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 15.
29. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p. 9. In the time preceding and leading up to the revolution in 1989, relentless restrictions were enforced against the media. During the 1980s, television viewing was reduced to two hours a day, half of which was devoted to presidential activities.
30. 'Everybody was supposed to follow the same model, to look and to think the same. We didn't have many other means to make architecture at that time where everything was controlled, where the architecture we liked was demolished, and a horrible architecture was constructed in its place.' Petrescu and Petcou, 'Form-Trans-Inform'.
31. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p. 7.
32. 'We have developed body techniques (as some activists might do today) to prove the central role of the body (the body of the architect maybe), but also of life I could say, and its relationships with the world. This might also resemble some body practices today – parkour, skate, etc. We were practising yoga, and body training to manage to climb on things, to get inside inaccessible places, etc. Resubjectivation, group resubjectivation – sharing our differences, helping each other to keep our mind. Through performance we created and enacted another reality even if only for a while.' Petrescu and Petcou, 'Form-Trans-Inform'.
33. *Ibid*.
34. *Ibid*.
35. *Ibid*.
36. Gilles Deleuze describes how 'one never desires something [...] but rather always desires an aggregate'. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, with Claire Parnet, trans. by Charles J. Stivale (Wayne State University, Roman Languages and Literatures 1989), <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/C.Stivale/D_G/ABC2.html> [Accessed 19 March 2008].
37. For a greater discussion of performance as a critical practice see Vikki Bell, *Culture and Performance: The Challenge of Ethics, Politics and Feminist Theory* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).
38. Petrescu and Petcou, 'Form-Trans-Inform'.

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