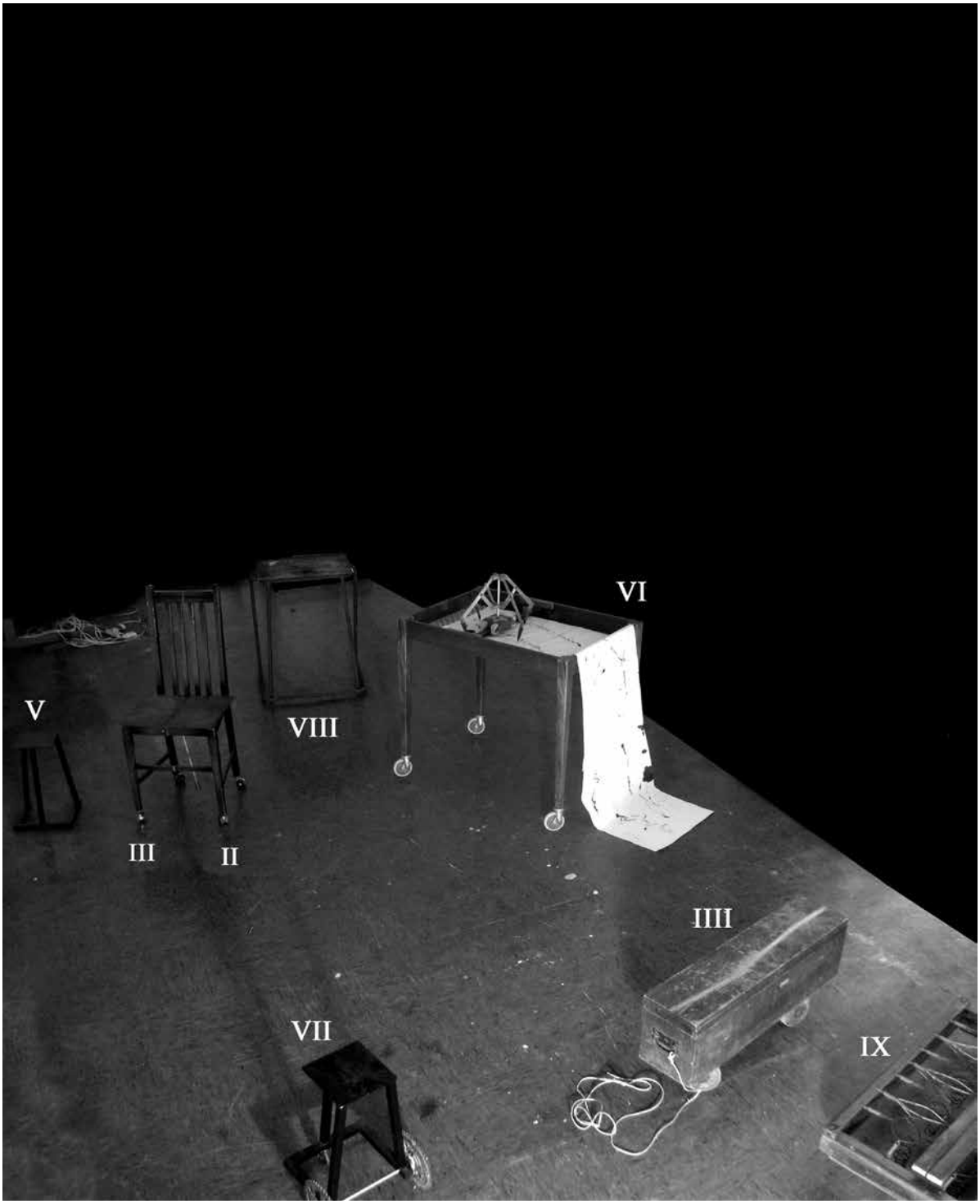


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1 STASUS, 'Animate Landscapes', digitally altered photograph, Edinburgh, 2008.

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arq (2015), **19.3**, 212–223. © Cambridge University Press 2016

A series of projects develop a concern with the often-neglected frame of architectural representation, learning to look at – rather than through – the drawing plane and expand the space of encounter.

Looking; looking back

James A. Craig and Matthew Ozga-Lawn (STASUS)

Architectural representation – concerned as it is with things at multiple levels of abstraction, scales of 'bigness', and multilayered contexts – often presupposes the seemingly straightforward processes of engaging with it. Acts of looking at (or into) architectural imagery, objects, and other phenomena are principally concerned with the spaces held within, rather than asking us to reflect on interactions with the representational device itself. In this way, architectural imagery often masks its own presence. By always gesturing to the thing that is distant or unbuilt, it asks us, perversely, to pretend that it isn't there, that we are in fact engaging directly with the spaces and structures depicted rather than their likenesses.

Great expectations

It is this 'expectation of the built' that the readers of imagery bring to architectural representation which allows them to engage with a variety of representational modes and an even greater range of depicted spaces, fluidly and without dislocation. Thus, all architectural representation is (at least) doubly-coded. The first coding is necessary for the translation of design ideas to built reality, signified by measurements, scale, and abstraction. The second coding makes us look past what we are looking at, not simply through it as through a frame, as if the representational framing itself isn't there.[1] We expect to see a space, in some form, and by anticipating this space we forget what we're looking at, the space we're looking from, and our bodily relationship to the media and objects we expect so much from. The space in which architectural representation is housed is, oddly, one space that architects tend not to consider.

Our own practice and teaching concerns itself with this relationship between the observer and the architectural project, and the complex set of coded meanings involved in this encounter. We are particularly interested in the affecting nature of the space in which design processes are undertaken. In this article, we reflect on the experience of encountering architectural projects through their representation, both in a state of completion – an ambiguous territory given that completion is generally an implied future in architectural representation – and in process. In doing so we hope to describe the 'generative act'[2] of viewing the architectural project as fundamental and transformative, illustrating projects contingent on the subjective meanings layered through their viewing. As we look at architectural images, and allow them a presence as objects in their own right, they look back at us, entangling and co-mingling meanings into a newly cohesive understanding of architectural design as immediate and unfolding. In our presentation of our projects here, we set out to reframe an idea of architectural design as the performance of a dialogue between recognisable, image-able things, held and staged by objects and media that do not meet or exceed expectations, but defy them, by demanding to be noticed.

The text has two parts. The first conceptualises the relationship between observer and architectural design that reimagines architecture as a performative act, and draws attention to the spaces of interaction surrounding representational modes and media, and the role and relationship of digital imagery to these spaces. In the second, we illustrate this through a number of projects we have led or tutored, focusing on the role that objects have played in these and the agency of observation in these contexts. We discuss performance and narrative in our work and, in conclusion, characterise our practice within a 'third-space' around and between architectural objects and ourselves, a space that holds us and our work but more than any other space within the discipline often escapes our attentive gaze.

Part 1: performing architecture with the observer

Surface of affect

It is now commonly accepted[3] that there is value in the drawing or model as the end point to an architectural line of enquiry, rather than the physical presence of built forms as previously presupposed. The complex relationship we have with architectural representation has already been the

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subject of much discussion.[4] In his critique of architectural criticism, 'In Front of Lines that Leave Nothing Behind', Robin Evans tells us that spaces are 'thought into' architectural representation by the observer; that the observation of the architectural image is a performance that generates entities or events that can be considered spatial. The construction of this imagined architecture is necessarily different from its traditional understanding, either as a means to the end of built form, or as otherwise encoding useful meaning. Evans shows us that, while art and architecture criticism generally focus on revealing meaning, on getting 'behind, beneath or within the subjects of criticism',[5] the architectural drawing is instead capable of generating a space in front of itself by establishing a direct connection to the imagination of the observer. Rather than discovering the meaning of an image, its embodied potential is opened-up. In discussing Daniel Libeskind's *Chamber Works* drawings, Evans asserts that they '[...] can be fantasised into three dimensions, given sufficient volition in the observer, for the space is thought into them by him, not projected out of them by the draftsman'.[6] The observer's relationship to the architectural drawing here becomes a dialogue between observer and subject in which architecture is performed, its meanings glimpsed, and its immanence revealed. Although Evans positions the observer as a 'frontal subject', the observer occupies the same 'surface' as the architectural space held within the representational device, and cannot be considered as entirely distinct from it and the meanings carried therein.

This conceptualisation of an 'immanent plane' recalls Jonathan Crary's description of Goethe's study of afterimages in the *camera obscura* as images that 'belong to the eye':

> *For Goethe* [...] *vision is always an irreducible complex of elements belonging to the observer's body and of external data. Thus the kind of separation between interior representation and exterior reality implicit in the camera obscura becomes in Goethe's work a single surface of affect on which interior and exterior have few of their former meanings and positions.*[7]

The dissolution of the interiority of the subject and its separation from the object, supported and developed by the ideas of Henri Bergson, Jean-Paul Sartre and others, expands the notion of the image into the 'space' of its observation. As James Elkins concludes in *The Object Stares Back*, seeing is a form of metamorphosis, it 'alters the thing that is seen and transforms the seer'.[8] The haunting end-point of such phenomenological thought becomes not a strengthened, embodied understanding of self and place gained through a sensory reading of the world, but rather a diminishing of the observer into a foreign universe created of the unknowable subjectivities of objects. Roger Caillois described this as 'psychasthenia':

> *The individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever of space. He feels himself becoming space* [...]. *He is similar, not similar to something, just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is 'the convulsive possession'*.[9]

This observation suggests to us a striking insurgence into the seemingly dormant nature of architectural representations as things that are looked past that possess little agency. Instead, we might read representations as loosening – even erasing – the subjectivity of the observer, absorbing the observer so fully that they cease to have a meaningful position from which to observe. In this configuration, agencies on the surface of affect are tilted towards representational devices. They dominate and assert their spaces and meanings into the performative reading of architecture, and our origin point (including the space in which we observe the work) is lost or dissociated or, to borrow Jean-Francois Lyotard's account of landscape in 'Scapeland', 'a vanishing of a standpoint'.[10]

Without a coherent point of origin, we can't meaningfully explore or perform the observation of architectural design. In her essay 'Lived Spatiality', Elizabeth Grosz has claimed that representational space is framed as an accessory, or complement, to its observation, and spatiality itself is framed as pervasive and encompassing:

> *the representation of space is* [...] *a correlate of one's ability to locate oneself as the point of origin or reference of space. Space as it is represented is a complement of the kind of subject who occupies it. The barrier between the inside and the outside* [...] *is ever permeable, suffused not only by objects and apparatuses but by spatiality itself.*[11]

The struggle with architectural representation, then, is arguably with the dislocation of the point of origin of the observer, the spatial reference that frames its engagement, from meaningful consideration. Architectural representations dominate our means of reading space: they assert their codes and phenomena onto us. If we are not conscious of the framing of architectural imagery, it is perhaps because of this unrecognised struggle for a point of view that we can 'safely' occupy. Architectural representation in this way seems to recall attempts at miniaturising landscapes for their observation:[12] in their reframing as images, the relationship of landscape to the body is at least partly lost as we shift from moving through the landscape to containing it. Architectural representation rarely has the equivalent of the artist's gallery in which the arrangement of observer to representation can be framed. And without this positioning, a space from which to observe architectural representation and to be consciously immersed within, is not easily made visible.

The studio as site

In the absence of the gallery, there is a space in which representation 'gathers'[13] in architectural design that is little discussed or studied, but which may offer insights into the relationship between observer and architectural imagery may be made tangible. This space, the studio, is usually the site where representational spaces meet and are mediated by their observation and manipulation. It is the space where design comes about and decisions are made: a space which houses Deleuze's 'practical assemblage,

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2 STASUS, 'Animate Landscapes', installation photographed in Edinburgh, May 2009.

a mechanism of statements and visibilities.'[14] In the studio, the observer moves from an outside position to a necessarily integral part of the dialogue that constitutes design. Visual relationships, often accidental, are created between elements of projects, and between separate projects, that may hold little in common but which are united by their presence in this space and by the observer's engagement with them. Something arguably unique to architectural representation is an intensification of the need to read between disparate representations; the way that plan and the section can be read together to generate a space with the engaged imagination, for example.[15] This is frequently the basis for reading architectural representation, from the 'crit' in architectural education to the presentation of design proposals to clients, but it is also the continuous relationship established between designer and the representational modes of the studio; a reciprocal navigation and negotiation of the space(s) between representations, both contrived and accidental. In our practice and pedagogy, we attempt to draw attention to the nature of this space, holding it as the 'site' of architectural design rather than the hidden mechanism behind it.

The space that contains this relationship, the surface of affect on which architecture is continuously performed in its reading, can be considered a 'third space', after Edward Soja,[16] a meta-spatiality where the space(s) of representation mingle with the space(s) of its observation. We aim to enter into a dialogue with architectural representation that complicates our relationship to it, drawing attention to the capacity to interpret and critique architectural imagery without considering its representational framing the processes by which it came about. The third space where design processes are undertaken, and ultimately presented, is an awkward space – an interference with the 'slow blossoming of the designed structure in the mind',[17] a site of multiple blossomings – an explosive arrangement that teeters on the brink of chaos. Making the space of engagement between observer and architectural representation (the studio, the 'crit' presentation, etc.) the focus of study and attention, as opposed to the individual elements that constitute it (representational modalities and their isolated/self-contained spaces, architectural desire and the imagination of the observer, built forms as anchors of meaning and boundaries) helps regain agency when engaging with design work. The studio remains the surface through which architectural design manifests itself:

> [...] *a key site of architectural production, yet* [one that] *is not often thematised or reflected upon in any rigorous way.* [Architectural representations] *are always apart from the sites for which they are destined* [...] *The studio thus appears as a kind of space of transmission, a space through which something has to be sent, which would suggest that to admit it into the architectural project, and to welcome its effects, would be something akin to welcoming interference on a telephone line.*[18]

To allow this interference is to become aware not only of relationships between the constituent elements of an architectural project, and design processes, but the seemingly hidden structure and agency of these relationships. It is necessary to confront these agencies; to position oneself as one of them and simultaneously an observer of them. Thus can we move to a more considered negotiation of meanings, a critical and performative, generative

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dialogue that allows us a position on a shifting, assembled *surface of affect* and make decisions about what is being communicated, and what we want to 'make' of it.

'Hyper contexts' and the digital

The studio – as a cohesive space where the designer operates in a specific bodily relationship with the representational media within – has recently shifted into a space in which representation exists at a flexible range of scales and states, often only drawn together when viewed directly at one point in time.[19] The space of the drawing board has shifted to the space of the digital representation. The resulting fragmentation of the studio in space, arguably long informed by the plurality of architectural representation, has become a fragmentation in time, material and meaning so that now the designer operates in a complex discontinuous space where architectural projects manifest themselves in isolated elements, separate from each other and our embodied understanding. It is arguably harder, for instance, to move between the animate image and the static image than it is between the section and the plan. As William Mitchell put it, 'computed perspectives [...] insert our disembodied viewing presences into modelled, fictional worlds [...] our perceiving faculties are prised apart from our corporeal existence and sent to places where our bodies cannot follow.'[20] Rather than taking an approach that entirely distrusts the digital – often seen in the writings of prominent phenomenological architectural thinkers[21] – it seems we need to find new ways of engaging with the digital's capacity for both extreme precision and extreme fluidity, and how these are manifest in the discontinuous space of the studio. If the principles of Cartesian space on which digital tools are built are allowed to remain dominant in the dialogue between architectural elements, it has an effect on the studio space as perceived by the observer:

> CAD [computer-aided design] *applies this Cartesian approach to scale in architectural drawings by forgoing the senses to assume scale is solely in the mind. Data is recorded at 1:1 or full scale, but the size of the screen image indefinitely varies as the operator zooms in or out to consider various aspects, creating the inability to put them into a perceivable relation to the operator's body.*[22]

As Paul Emmons suggests, in moving from handmade drawings to CAD, '"man the measure" is replaced with "man the measurer"'.[23] The role of the imagination of the designer in this relationship is transformed. As decisions are made *through* CAD, the studio space becomes more responsive to the agency of the computer program than the agency of the observer and, as such, the design process as a cohesive whole re-orientates to follow Cartesian understanding as opposed to a human one. In this understanding, it is the combinative effect of multiple CAD-derived image logics in the architectural project that negate the role of tangible, experiential space in engaging with design work. The dominance of the language of the digital in our dialogue with it is nowhere more obvious than in the prominence and ideological determination of architecture's recent dalliance with parametrics; of form *because*.[24]

In the fascinating work of Diploma Unit 15 at the Architectural Association in London, Francesca Hughes asked students to assemble what she termed hyper-contexts for the projects: the political, cultural, spatial, informational situations that students tend to generate for themselves when they produce work. This so-called hyper-context was presented in the studio as a series of large format technical and analytical drawings and it *was* the student's project. The students were asked to explore and represent the bits that don't fit, exploring the incapacity of a representation such as this to create a coherent and consistent 'whole'. Hughes is interested in how we acknowledge and define error, the gap between our embodied imagination and the digital, Cartesian, scale-less world. The digital eschews error, and projects its precision outwards so that the hand-drawn, crafted, collaged and otherwise constructed elements of a project are forced to adhere to its language. But the glitches that occur within and between architectural representations here become a central part of the studio space, and the difficulties in achieving a direct dialogue between disparate elements becomes a rich resource for architectural projects and their 'hyper-contexts'. One response to the digital, rather than surrendering to its codes and phenomena, might be to give greater potency to the spatiality of the studio itself, to the configuration of its parts and our relationship with them, to balance Cartesian spatiality with more embodied constituents of a work, embracing the qualities of both. If they are positioned to communicate with each other, we can position ourselves in the space between them, and observe them equally.

In this way, we aim to shift our focus away from the individual representations, contexts, ideologies, and built forms that normally preoccupy architects and to concern ourselves instead with the structure of design projects themselves: a wholeness embedded within and without our bodies, uniting interior imagination, external spaces and objects, disparate modes of production, phenomenal and Cartesian space, intermediate meanings and ulterior agencies onto a single surface of affect: the *site* of architectural design.

Part 2: objects and the agency of observation

The animate object

As part of a field trip to Warsaw in 2007, we took an unplanned route through the commercial district of Wola searching for a site for a project. Between two pharmaceutical production units, we encountered a seemingly abandoned post-industrial zone. The space appeared to us like Andrei Tarkovsky's epic film *Stalker*, dotted with vacant processing plants, gas silos, and abandoned train carriages – blackened bodies, husks in the November fog. The vacancy and stillness of the landscape seemed at odds with the rapid over-development that was taking place

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nearby; the outlines of near-completed office blocks and the banks of pre-financial crash Poland were visible on Wola's periphery and provoked in us an overwhelming sensation that the serenity of this place was under threat. In order to capture the complex qualities of the place, somewhere between tranquillity and vulnerability, it seemed necessary to search for an appropriate representational mode for the landscape that encouraged a layering of meanings and reflected the way in which we had engaged with the landscape in our first encounter. It became apparent to us that the best way to capture these qualities would be to work with a found object – a physical fragment that resonated with the landscape in some way, while at the same time encouraging the projection and emergence of new meanings layered onto it through its observation and manipulation.

In the pursuit of a suitable object, we happened upon an Edwardian metronome in one of the many antique shops in Edinburgh, the city where our studio was based at that time. Its obelisk-like form reminded us of the geometric shapes of industrial apparatuses that occupied the site but it was the automotive oscillation of the object's swinging arm that had the greatest resonance with a landscape where time seemed to propose a dilemma: the landscape being both frozen in time, and yet under a seemingly existential threat from the development on its periphery. Time was running out. In an effort to examine the mechanism, we stripped the object of its chassis and held the bared brass instrument, seeing it more clearly as a miniature of something greater in scale and significance. The metronome had transformed through our association of it with the landscape of Wola into an object of nostalgic longing; souvenir-like, representing our desire to evoke the impermanence of the landscape through a miniaturised version of its qualities.

> *We might say that this capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is, in fact, exemplified by the souvenir. The souvenir distinguishes experiences. We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative.*[25]

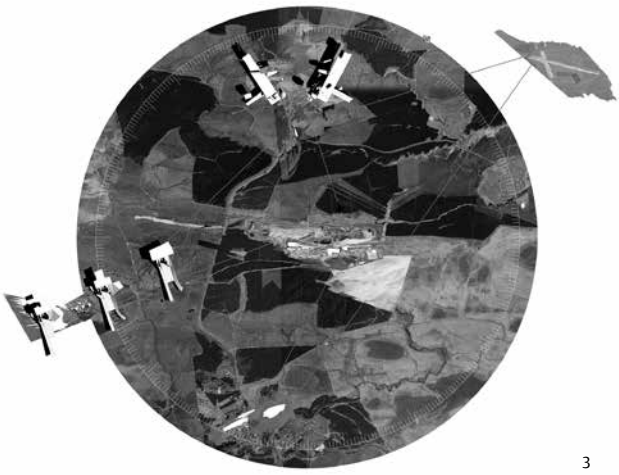
The metronome-as-souvenir became a vessel for storing the transient experience of exploring the landscape and a catalyst for dialogue. Our engagement with it became generative, mixing our lived experiences of the site with the physical attributes of the metronome.

Meanings established between us, as engaged observers, and the metronome, as souvenir, converged to create a framing device: a narrative, a story of our desire to preserve the qualities of the landscape through the monumentalisation of time and stillness. In this narrative's development, the object transcended itself to become somehow commensurate with Wola. The metronome represented the first in a series of objects that we introduced to represent the landscape there. In the collection of these objects, and the subsequent layering of meanings on them as they were curated and coerced into dialogue with us and each other, our studio began to fill with a new type of territory: a landscape of constituent parts in which meanings and associations were glimpsed and ephemeral. It is in the transformation from a souvenir to a collection that the project began to assert its reading. Whereas a souvenir is an 'object appearing out of context, an object from the past incongruously surviving in the present',[26] the collection:

> *does not displace attention to the past; rather, the past is at the service of the collection, for whereas the souvenir lends authenticity to the past, the past lends authenticity to the collection* [... In] *the collection, time is not something to be restored to an origin, rather, all time is made simultaneous or synchronous within the collection's world.*[27]

As a collection in the studio, the project's constituent elements could not be read as indeterminate, between landscape and representation. Instead they form a cohesive entity, a mode of being that expresses itself as self-fulfilling, timeless, and

3 Adam Smith, *The Trial*, digital composite image, 2014.



4 Adam Smith, *The Trial*, digital composite image, 2014.



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intransigent. The representational media of the project cannot be overlooked. The project collects and layers meaning onto itself. In part this is because, as a collection, the objects have a particular resonance; they are 'precisely the kind of fragile, intimate objects [...] that disappeared with the systematic erasure of domestic space in Warsaw's mid-century trauma'.[28] Their authority as a collection registers them differently in our consciousness: we must accommodate them and not look through them.

The project resulting from this encounter, titled 'Animate Landscapes', allowed the observer to drift through scales and layers of meaning as they negotiated a space between the site of the studio and the ostensible site of the project in Wola, projected through representational fragments attached to the collection of recognisable objects – the metronome, a chair, a bedframe *[1]*. The act of looking, in this project, is complicated by our expectations of looking beyond what we're seeing into the spaces beyond the immediate, the proposals carried within the representations presented to us. But we're not able to look through them and reveal space or uncover meaning: the *thingness* of what we're trying to look beyond is interruptive. The materiality of the objects, their status as a collection, and the physical space in which they are arranged ensures they cannot be ignored, and a struggle ensues between the space the viewer is expecting to see – the architectural project, in representation – and the space they are seeing – a room, its surfaces, its objects *[2]*. Something unusual happens here. Instead of looking through the space, we are embedded in it and the space itself is infused with the meanings and potentialities of architectural representation held by it. We can no longer assume the space is a neutral one through which the work is passed – it is charged by our understanding of it as contingent to the architectural work, and it becomes part of it. It becomes apparent that representational space can exist everywhere, imbued in our surroundings. The meaning and codes we attach to a chair meet and mingle with the meanings and codes we're looking for in representations of structures; urban topographies mix with scratches and dust on the surface of the floor.

Since these early studies into a series of found objects in 'Animate Landscapes', explored further in our *Pamphlet Architecture* volume of the same name, the relationship between observer and object has been of core significance to the development of our design methodology. The potential of the object to transform, structure, and take ownership of space beyond its physical form has been central to our work.

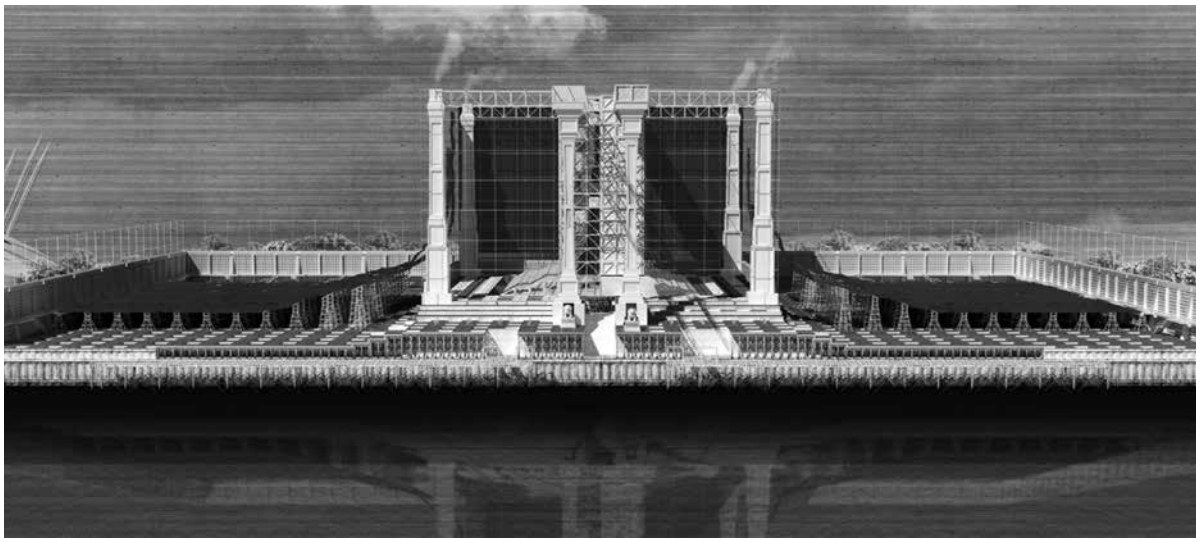
The transformative gaze

As objects assert a certain power over the surface of affect being navigated by their observers, so too does the manner of our looking. Our projects and teaching have concerned themselves with modes of looking at architectural representation, and we have found it helpful to explore this in relation to military agencies, adopting militarised viewpoints to reveal embedded agencies within the act of observation. When a soldier sights a rifle, it has a special significance. As Paul Virilio puts it, 'the soldier's obscene gaze, in his surroundings and on the world, his art of hiding from sight in order to see, is not just an ominous voyeurism but from the first imposes a long-term patterning on the chaos of vision, one which prefigures the synaptic machinations of architecture and the cinema screen'.[29] The battlefield soldier of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in sighting and subsequently framing a view and focusing upon it is a precursor to the viewing that we now take for granted, Virilio argues: the vision of the camera supplanting our own vision. For him, this served to increase 'the depth of visual field while reducing its compass.'[30] The view framed by the soldier detaches the observed and the observer from its surroundings. The gun thus becomes an early precedent for, and contemporary of, the camera: the chronophotographic gun of Éttiene-Jules Marey revolved film, exposing it to light, for as long as the trigger was held. Marey used the camera to capture the movements of birds, allowing us not only to see things that we couldn't see before due to their invisibility to human perception (Marey famously proved that horses raise all four legs at certain points in their gallop through this technique) but allowed us to see 'sight' itself, by removing it as an object of study in itself. This militarised view, Virilio shows, is precedent for all technological modes of seeing. The distance that the soldier's gaze encompasses is not simply physical space but technological space: a time-line tracing how the disruptions of the military advancements of the twentieth century impacted upon visual practice and philosophy.

In a design studio we ran at Newcastle University, UK, titled Parallel Military Landscapes, students were asked to recognise and adopt this viewpoint in the representation of their chosen sites. Adam Smith presented the British RAF base Spadeadam through fragments of online imagery taken of it *[3]*. In this way, the technological 'vision' of Google Earth[31] was turned back on its military precedents. The resulting landscape is a fragmented, dissociated whole, filled with gaps and impossibilities where images, pixilations and distortions collide.[32] Smith used this reading to represent his project as it developed in Moscow, reformatting and presenting that city as a 'parallel landscape' of militarised views. This site operated between the technological vision of the military and the 'real' Moscow. The city thus becomes reconstituted and a programme is violently inserted into the gaps and glitches within and between viewpoints *[4]*. Rather than 'fitting' his proposal into the site Moscow offers, he instead recalibrates his architecture, and the urban context of Moscow, into the representational framing of his project. The proposed architecture is forced to exist within the space of representation, and in particular the gaps and glitches where these spaces don't add up into a consistent whole.

Furthermore, the programmed areas of these spaces become secretive and Kafka-esque. They

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contain the hidden mechanisms of state control common in contemporary discourse on Moscow. The structures demonstrate through their attempted realisation the impossible spaces of militarised sight, and so question the notional accuracy of spatial representation. Through an examination of the spaces and references his project draws in, it becomes apparent that what we are looking at is not so much a coherent and continuous series of spaces projected onto Moscow, but instead a form of visualised 'hyper context' that draws things together into a (glitch-ridden) whole and asks us to engage with it. By drawing attention to both the agency of observation and the seemingly familiar nature of urban representation (through Google Earth, etc.), the nature of both is questioned.

Another brief for a project titled 'Infinite States'[33] at the University of Greenwich, UK, asked students to interrogate the collection of the National Maritime Museum located there. Within the museum in Greenwich there is a special collection titled 'Nelson, Navy, Nation' which celebrates the supposedly heroic life of the British naval officer and military strategist Lord Horatio Nelson. For the viewer, this historical exhibition represents a powerfully cohesive whole – a completeness, which avoids speculation and interpretation. For the purposes of the design brief, students were asked to select, and notionally 'remove', a particular object from the museum collection through its representation. The intention of this request was to allow new meanings to be projected onto these dislocated objects through their close consideration and reworking. One of the students, Alex Fotherby, selected the bullet-strewn 'undress coat' worn by Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805 in which he was famously shot and killed. On freeing the jacket from the context of the museum collection, the observer is able to see beyond the formal constraints of the garment. Instead, the jacket became viewed as something that had lost its form and context, thus opened-up to the observer's projections. As the formlessness of the jacket is revealed, the hole left by the fatal bullet engulfs the viewer as the principal point of focus, moving the ceremonial appendages adorning the



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5 Alex Fotherby, *The New Greenwich Naval College*, digital composite image, 2015.

6 STASUS, *Mallory*, digital composite image, 2014.

jacket to the periphery. Upon viewing the void of the bullet hole, the observer steps into the space once occupied by Nelson's killer, and in taking up this positionality, the viewer begins to occupy the space of the soldier: a space of ominous voyeurism.

For the student, this occupation enabled a way of viewing, or sighting, the project that consisted of a series of drawings exploring interval perspectives towards the void of the hole from the point-of-view of the bullet. These perspectives were then collapsed into the moment of impact to generate a new hybrid form representing the visual trajectory between viewer and object. This form is the result of both unpacking the bullet's trajectory and the formlessness of the bullet hole. Within this cone of vision, both projections meld to represent the moment of Nelson's death as a complex topological field. The inhabitation of such a space is possible on a number of levels: first, by looking at the bullet hole, we notionally inhabit the moment of death and;

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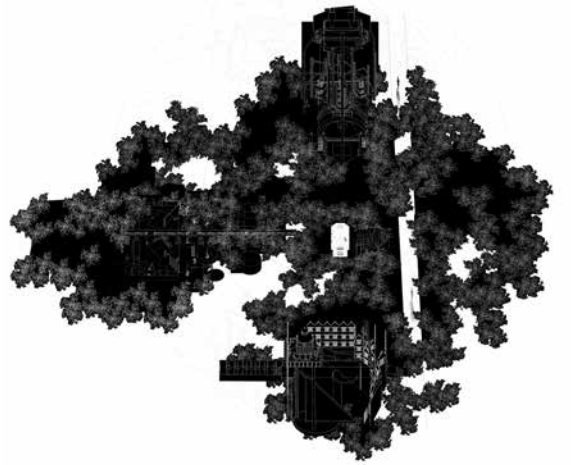
second, by mapping and charting these moments, we begin to construct a spatially complex environment drawn from it. This cartography of death set up spatial parameters, creating a vessel in which the architectural immanence of the project is revealed. The vessel is sited in a zone between the location of the jacket in the museum collection and the passage that Nelson's body took during his Thames funeral procession near Greenwich. This new vessel for Greenwich – a reworked monument to Nelson *[5]* – consists of the instances that have been mapped between the viewer and the object.

Vision and its relationship to design processes and decisions is rarely given a role as a constituent part of the formal composition of spaces within a work. However, as demonstrated here, visual agency can be a key component for critical engagement with design. We should distrust modes and media that take our vision for granted like the ubiquitous vision of Google Earth or the internalised logic of the computer-generated perspective. The projects above attempt to accommodate vision in its most violent form, the obscene gaze of militarised thought. As the gaze becomes spatialised, the means by which we observe the work is brought into focus. We become complicit in observation, tainted by association, and the projects reconfigure themselves around this new and unfamiliar mode of looking.

Performing architecture

In our work and our pedagogy, we often adopt a version of a well-worn trope in the architectural project: the use of allegory or metaphor, and a resultant narrative focus that helps frame a related idea or enquiry. Whereas these allegorical narratives are frequently contained as stories within the constituent elements of the project, we often aim to immerse the observer in a form of storytelling that asks the viewer to participate in the performance, not as a witness to the narrative but as an element of it.

The International Necronautical Society's (INS) manifesto, published as an advert in London's *The Times* newspaper on 14 December 1999, reads among its aims: 'Death is a type of space, which we intend to map, enter, colonise and, eventually, inhabit.'[34] In our project 'Everest Death Zone', we attempted to realise this ambition through the mapping and inhabitation of the space of death in relation to some of those endeavourers who lost their lives ascending Mount Everest. We started by producing a representation of George Mallory's ill-fated attempt to scale Everest's summit in 1924. Mallory and his climbing companion Andrew Irvine were the first recorded deaths among over 200 in the Everest Death Zone. In this permanently frozen terrain, 8,000m above sea level, exists a kind of purgatory for those who were unable to ascend, literally or perhaps figuratively. Our images have attempted to capture this merging of body and landscape through an analysis of the events leading to Mallory's death, and the ambiguity surrounding the possibility of his summit attempt – did he reach the top or not? The image *[6]*, appearing as a black cavernous vessel, represents the position of Mallory's body when it was



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discovered in 1999. It also depicts the view he would have had towards the summit from his location alongside the last recorded photographs of him in relation to it.

The bodies that occupy the Everest Death Zone, frozen in the moment of dying, are party to a form of transcendence. In this whiteness, the landscape is a void and the frozen, human forms are all that remains of specific moments in time and space. Their specificity is born from their preservation and the bodies take on new roles as landmarks in this emptiness, as navigational aids for the living. Individually, they tell us a story of their death. Collectively, they map a landscape of a unique mode of dying; horrific, desperate, and lonely for some and perhaps euphoric for others. Charting Mallory's endeavour, a map was created which conflated key

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7 Alicea Berkin, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, digital composite image, 2015.

8 Alicea Berkin, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, installation photographed in Newcastle, June 2015.

9 Alicea Berkin, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, screenshot from film produced in Clouds Hill, Dorset, August 2015.

events of the ascent with the geometry of the mountain. The result was the creation of a space that recognised death not as a static event, but instead a field of specific moments that exist around death. Such a representation is not possible in itself, but becomes possible through a performative interpretation of the image. By positioning the observer in the role of Mallory, we are able to act out his death and understand the landscape and his relationship to it in a new way. Everest itself plays a role in this understanding. The mountain, heavily visualised and embedded in the cultural imaginary, is inescapable – for these unfortunate climbers but also in the wider sense that it appears so determinate as a thing in itself. The silhouette of the mountain, for example, is immediately recognisable, and the cultural associations with 'climbing Everest' are well understood: the insurmountable task, the near-impossible challenge of a 'personal Everest'. By conflating Mallory's failed attempt with the surface of this symbolic landscape, we are forced to attempt a deeper reading of Everest and its implications. The body, depicted in the drawing as a black smear on the landscape, is suspended in the abyss of the unknowable and heavily abstracted mountain. The transformed body itself, through its formlessness, feels like an attack on the corporeality of the observer – 'the panic comes from the fact that the narcissistic imago of the perceiver has been attacked'[35] – while there is a similar 'attack' on our understanding of Everest itself. The familiar form of the mountain is gone when we expect it to be there. In fact, it is miniaturised within the photographs in the representation; dwarfed by the body-form. We are invited to inhabit the space surrounding the death and to meld, even transcend, into the landscape like Mallory and the other endeavourers who perished in the Death Zone. In this way, we too become part of the event and the landscape, becoming inhabitants of the space of death. We are performing a reading of the spaces of this representation through our understanding of its associations: Everest, endeavour, mortality, etc. We are caught in a moment of understanding that constitutes a different kind of landscape, to return to Lyotard's 'Scapeland', where it is understood as 'an erasure of a support'.[36] We are not attempting a description of this landscape, but a form of 'the writing … of the impossible description; DESCRIPTURE'.[37] This allows us to take a position and – if only fleetingly – glimpse, or even inhabit (as the INS propose), the space of death.

A studio developed from this project at Newcastle University, UK, titled 'Landscapes of Human Endeavour', asked students to identify an endeavourer and an associated landscape, then explore new ways of interpreting both through architectural representation. The projects ranged from a study of Donald Campbell's doomed water speed record attempt on Lake Coniston, to Michael Collins' solitude orbiting the far side of the Moon in the Apollo 11 missions; a project that developed into a printed data-landscape held at a Lagrangian point in deep space.

Most striking, perhaps, was Alicea Berkin's 'architectural biography' of T. E. Lawrence who gained notoriety as Lawrence of Arabia. By reconfiguring Lawrence's experiences in the desert, and key moments from his life as described in his autobiography *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Berkin generated a series of seven forms that surrounded Lawrence's retirement cottage in Clouds Hill, Dorset *[7]*. The forms become a manifestation of Lawrence's psyche, existing in an ambiguous territory between

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real and mirage afforded by architectural representation's 'unfixed' nature. It is not certain whether Berkin's representations of seven architectures are proposals for the project's ostensible site around Clouds Hill or whether they are fantasies projected from the windows of the cottage onto the landscape around it by Lawrence. In our expectation of seeing space, we realise the space being presented is a form of anticipated landscape: a landscape of memory constructs and desert imagery, a haunting reminder of events and spaces reconstructed in tangible form. Our expectations become overlaid with Lawrence's and our reading of the landscape, and of Lawrence, is connected and overlaid. We are placed in the role of reader *[8]* with the project a biography and we are both witness to, and embroiled in, an understanding of the individual. The project was ultimately installed in a 1:1 construction at Clouds Hill that recreated the cottage in abstraction, relocated the observer *[9]*. In doing so, it asked the observer directly to take the role of Lawrence, to see his life through his eyes. But the forms as described also permitted an interpretation, though never quite clear, questioning his values and experiences, and the cultural memory attributed to him. It is this spatialisation of the project that allows us to engage with its subject. We become immersed in Lawrence's world, performing his experiences as opposed to simply observing them. We cannot do this impartially, and the project prompts us to reflect on Lawrence's understanding and self-characterisation as well as the events we associate him with.

Conclusion

Our work is constituted in such zones of betweenness – this third space – that holds us and the objects and spaces that we are observing. It is a surface of affect in which images, objects, and their observation are bound together in a continuous, performative dialogue that mediates their understanding and their role in the design process and its varied outputs. Even now, each one of the objects and images that constitute our studio work is looking back at us when we glance around our studio, filling the space with echoes of seeing that influence our ongoing design practices. Thus the space of our practice does not really exist in the material make-up of the walls, the floor, or surfaces of the studio, nor exclusively in the spaces of the images and scale models, digital representations and collages that our students and we have produced. The space of our practice exists between all these things and ourselves, and is visible only in fleeting, performed moments of understanding. Each understanding is, even if subtly, different. And from a continued process of observing, rereading, and communicating our work (and the work of our students), a studio practice emerges which is constantly transforming within the third space of our studio, a hyper-context of infinite potential in which we are always engaged with our projects. We are part of them and they are part of us.

In recent history, architectural representation has, by necessity, been required to move beyond its traditionally static and self-assured forms. In doing so, it has opened up all sorts of questions on the nature not only of architectural representation but architecture more generally. How do we represent spaces that we know aren't permanent? How do we make use of the digital's capacity for precision, while remaining aware that reality is not precisely defined? What is the relationship between the designer and the work, given that both are separated by a range of media and practices that each have their own embedded agencies? The discipline of architecture has always been greater than its professional face. But while the profession has tended to marginalise itself, through an overzealous protection of the title 'architect' in the UK for example, and an impossible balancing of contemporary requirements, the media we use and how we relate to them largely go unquestioned. However, more and more architectural thinkers seem awake to the capacity for representation to craft a dialogue between seemingly disparate but connected things. This is striking and more theorists and practitioners are helping to redefine the role of architecture in relation to the imageability of thought, to the tangibility of ideas that architectural representation carries within itself, to the spatiality of meaning. Techniques for this redefinition are numerous and multiple but it is still rare to find architectural processes that take account of observation and embed the observer – as designer or otherwise – within this field, this third space, this surface of affect. Unless more architects learn to do so, we believe, our discipline is missing an opportunity to reflect our positionality in relation to representation, critically, politically – and, pertinently for any architectural consideration – spatially.

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Notes

1. For further discussion of the coding and 'non-neutrality' of architectural representation and our visual relationship to it, se:e Alberto Perez-Gomez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2000).
2. Robin Evans, 'In Front of Lines That Leave Nothing Behind', in *Architectural Theory Since 1968*, ed. by K. Michael Hays, new edn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 480–9.
3. See for example: the work of Robin Evans, Stan Allen, Peter Eisenman, and many others who have discussed the merits of 'architecture without building'.
4. Perez-Gomez and Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*.
5. Evans in *Architectural Theory Since 1968*, p. 482.
6. Ibid., p. 486.
7. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992), p. 71
8. James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (New York: Harvest, 1999), pp. 11–12.
9. Roger Caillios, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia', in *October*, 31, Winter (1984), pp. 16–32 (p. 30). The article was originally published in 1935 in the surrealist journal *Minotaure*.
10. This is a play on Kant's discussion of *vesania* as 'a displacement of the vanishing point' from the essay 'Scapeland'. The text offers an incredible reconfiguration of landscape as 'an erasure of support'. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 187.
11. Elizabeth Grosz, 'Lived Spatiality', in *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001), p. 38.
12. As with the use of the Claude Glass (or Landscape Glass), a Victorian device used to assist with painting landscapes scenes.
13. This refers to Heidegger's concept of *Gestell*: an elevation of a framing device such as a picture frame into a more performative and confrontational 'gathering together'. See: Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper, 1977), p. 20.
14. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. by Séan Hand (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 44.
15. Penelope Haralambidou describes the 'combination of information from several different drawings – for instance the plan in combination to the section' as 'a suspension of pleasure that produces desire [...] leading to a slow blossoming of the design structure in the mind'. Penelope Haralambidou, *Marcel Duchamp and the Architecture of Desire* (London: Ashgate, 2013), p. 12.
16. Edward Soja's conceptualisation of 'thirdspace' is described as the space in which everything comes together: 'subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history'. Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Malden MA: Blackwell, 1996), p. 57.
17. Haralambidou, *Architecture of Desire*, p. 12.
18. STASUS (firm) James Craig and Matt Ozga-Lawn, *Pamphlet Architecture 32: Resilience* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012), p. 15.
19. Paul Emmons, 'Size Matters: Virtual Scale and Bodily Imagination in Architectural Drawing', in *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, 9:3–4 (2005), pp. 227–35 for a discussion of the change in the relationship of the designer to the work in the shift from drawing board to CAD, as physical constraints are replaced by a need in the designer to always be 'measuring' and defining the scale of the operations he is engaged with.
20. William Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 133.
21. See for example: the writing of Junahi Pallasmaa, Stephen Holl, and others.
22. Emmons, *Size Matters,* p. 232.
23. Ibid.
24. Parametricism's ubiquity in digital architectural design is starting to fade but remains nonetheless most powerfully espoused in the works of Patrik Schumacker, in particular his *Autopoiesis of Architecture* and at the DRL at London's Architectural Association.
25. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1984), p. 135.
26. Ibid., p. 151.
27. Ibid.
28. STASUS, *Pamphlet Architecture 32*, p. 7
29. Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 49.
30. Ibid.
31. For a further exploration of this mode of seeing, see: Mark Dorrian, 'On Google Earth', in *Seeing From Above: The Aerial View in Visual Culture*, ed. by Mark Dorrian and Frédéric Pousin (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 292–307.
32. Smith was particularly inspired by Eyal Weizman's work in this area, particularly a public lecture given at Newcastle University: 'FORENSIS: The Architecture of Public Truth', 16 January 2016. See: Weizman's website 'Forensic Architecture', available online: <www.forensic-architecture.org> (accessed 12 May 2015].
33. This project was co-led by Max Dewdney of Max Dewdney Architects/University of Greenwich, available online: <http:// maxdewdney.com/> (accessed 12 May 2015).
34. Tom McCarthy, Simon Critchley, et al. (eds.), *The Mattering of Matter: Documents from the Archive of the International Necronautical Society* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), p. 53.
35. Yve Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 169.
36. Lyotard, 'Scapeland', in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, p. 189.
37. Ibid., p. 188.

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Authors' biographies

James A. Craig is Lecturer in Architecture at Newcastle University and has previously taught architectural design at a range of institutions including Greenwich University and the Architectural Association. James is a registered architect and has practiced extensively in London and elsewhere. He runs the design research platform STASUS with Matt Ozga-Lawn, which they co-founded in 2007.

Matthew Ozga-Lawn is also Lecturer in Architecture at Newcastle University School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape. He is studying towards a PhD by Creative Practice there, on the relationship of the observer to the design process, and researches visual theory, design methodologies, and the representation of landscape.

Authors' addresses

James A. Craig
james.craig@ncl.ac.uk

Matthew Ozga-Lawn
matthew.ozga-lawn@ncl.ac.uk

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