Endless House:
Models of Thought for Dwelling

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Copyright statement

Abstract

The following thesis is a 38,400 word document of a part-time PhD by project undertaken at the painting department of The Royal College of Art between October 2002 and September 2008.

The purpose of this research has been to reflect on how an expansive interpretation of the architectural model operates as a mode of fragmentary thought for dwelling. I extend critical / theoretical approaches to the use of the model within my art practice, and its equivalent, 'the essay form,' in the written component of the thesis.

I begin by defining the use of the model within a specific work I made early in the project, and also discuss the model's ability to operate between more rigidly defined disciplines of knowledge. I use Benjamin's notion of immanent critique to reflect on the poeticised potential of the model form to unfold information, by probing the rapport between materials and motifs, groupings and spacings and the made and the found. I also show how the process of thought through the material development of the work, informed an equivalent fragmentary approach to writing.

In the four main chapters, I attend to a critical pairing four Bruegel paintings and four particular buildings to understand how both painting and building can be revealed as a thought model for dwelling. The chapters in the following order read Bruegel's *Fall of Icarus* in relation to *Casa Malaparte*, *Procession to Calvary* with Melnikov's *Cylindical House Studio*, *The Tower of Babel* with Kiesler's unbuilt notion of *The Endless House*, and finally the two dwellings initiated by Wittgenstein with *Hunters in the Snow*. I conclude by returning briefly to a recent piece of my own work to consider how the model of thought for dwelling has developed within my current practice.

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Preface

My intention for this project has been to find a theoretical underpinning for what I see as two distinct processes, namely the work undertaken in the studio and the act of writing. This, has involved questioning how a work of art operates, which is very different in nature to a thesis. Hence, I have resisted asking of my studio work, what it must not be compelled to answer. I have consciously confined discussion of this practice to the introduction and brief conclusion. However, it is clear that the sensibility and interests of the studio have informed the writing, and my research has undoubtedly left its mark on what I have made over recent years.

My research question is: How can the model and the essay form operate as modes of fragmentary thought for dwelling?

What will become apparent is the way both my studio practice and writing are informed by a theory of the fragment.[1] By this I mean the fragment's potential to refer to a notion of the whole while avoiding attempts at representation. As my research question implies, I have identified two terms that address the fragment within this project. First, 'the essay form,' which relates to the written component. I have been greatly helped by Adorno's contribution to what is an alternative means of addressing the fragmentary potential of thought. The essay's gesture is to provide both a critique and an alternative to the prescribed and supposedly scientific methods presented in more conventional and philosophical texts. Rather than progressing in a linear direction, he likens the fragmentary relations that occur in the essay to the weave of a carpet, where the fruitfulness of thoughts depends on the density of the texture.[2] This has enabled me, for instance, to talk of figures such as Melnikov in the company of Bruegel and in turn, allowed different notions of dwelling to develop from such an encounter. It also relieves me of the obligation to see my research as presenting an airtight deductive system;

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[1] Further reference to the fragment and other sources relevant to my methodology can be found in the appendix under the heading "Endless Afterwords." I have intentionally avoided excessive footnoting at this stage to make the preface accessible.

[2] Adorno, T., 2000. "The Essay as Form", in *The Adorno Reader.* Ed. Brian O'Conner, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, p. 104

rather than progressing in a linear direction, the ideas gain their precision in relation to one another.

Although in each chapter I will draw on often quite diverse sources, two thinkers in particular will continue to appear. These are Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger. It is well known that Benjamin wrote in 1930 that he wanted to establish a small reading group "to demolish Heidegger,"[3] however, rather than the issue of their relationship or an attempt to think about aesthetic debate in the 1930s, I found myself engaged with both thinkers for quite distinct ends. In regard to Heidegger, his thinking about dwelling and with Benjamin his collected writings on city spaces, and the way in turn, these texts embody a relationship to the fragment. This has of course led me to consider the different trajectories of both figures, without this being constituted within my project as an explicit outcome. In most contexts we are invariably pressed in regard to such issues. "Are we Heideggarian or not?" and so on, but this is not a purpose I feel I need to resolve because my engagement lies away from such processes. On a simple level both writers have afforded me ways of advancing my thinking that are opportune with the broader considerations of my project.

The second question I need to address in my methodology is the use of the term 'model.' This concerns my work in the studio and how I see it operating. The model moves between different modes of presentation and representation, as 'models of', (their descriptive use) 'models with', (their experimental and explanatory function) and 'models for', (their conceptual and propositional character). I spend a significant part of the introduction, contextualising my understanding of the potential poetic found within this form, and its relation to the fragmentary. In addition to this, the title of the project refers to Frederick Kiesler's life-work, which retained the provisional character of a working model and was never to be realised in any conclusive or finite way. This again leads back to the potential of the fragment, in that it's a form that is both complete and incomplete, both a whole and a part. Simon Critchley's observation of the fragmentary oeuvre of the Jena Romantics, can equally be applied here: "The success of Jena Romanticism is the development and deployment of a genre that embodies failure within itself, whose completion is incompletion, whose structure is essentially

[3] Leslie, E., 2007. *Walter Benjamin*, London, Reaktion Books, p.104

ambiguous."[4] Hence, my use of the model, as with the essay form, presents a certain resistance to the notion of a positivist or conclusive methodology. My position recognises that limits need to be drawn and respected when it comes to an art work, and "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."[5]

However, in the introduction, I have ventured to put into words some of the considerations involved in making my work, or rather, a specific work, which has some bearing on the wider project. This has been an uncomfortable process, and the discomfort is perhaps what I have found most consoling. For, although I believe the writing fulfils the required claims to knowledge of a PhD, it has not been without risk of saying too much and exceeding the limits mentioned above. The claims to knowledge are as follows: that I have shown how painting can function in cooperation with other model forms to convey fragmentary narratives through the buildings I mention below. Secondly, I have shown how the models I make retain and unfold information by probing the rapport between materials and motifs, groupings and spacings, and the made and the found. I have drawn out relationships between painting, architectural models, and the found object to reveal their different notions and theories of dwelling. Furthermore, I believe some of the readings I have undertaken of Bruegel's paintings in relation to Melnikov's Cylindrical House Studio, Wittgenstein's hut, Kiesler's notion of "Magic Architecture" and Casa Malaparte also make for an original claim.

Finally, each essay presents a painting and a building, whose momentary pairing allows for a distinctive reading. There is no link between the chapters other than for the reader to imagine a pause. This way, I would like to avoid an unnecessary sense of progression towards a conclusion. The conclusion will not attempt to sum up, or bring to a close. It is a reflection on a piece of work I made towards the end of the project, and therefore might bear either its fruit or scar.

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[4] Critchley, S., 2000. "Unworking Romaticism", in *Very Little...Almost Nothing.* London, Routledge. p.123

[5] Wittegenstein, L., 2002. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* London, Routledge Classics, p.89

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I would also like to thank Jonathan Miles whose dedication in sustaining a reading group, was matched by his personal care of all those he taught. Much of the community, the weekly discussions and debate that I enjoyed at the college, can be traced to his very often unseen investment in keeping things afloat. I always looked forward to Thursday afternoons as a result of the seminars organised and invigorated by Yves Lomax and Vanessa Jackson. I am also very grateful to John Steazaker for the rich lectures he delivered since I first started my masters as well as the thought of his nocturnal archive.

I would like to thank Professor David Rayson for helping me bring my thesis to a close and facilitating the difficult arrangements for my exam. I would like to thank Alison Jacques, Tanya Bonakdar, and Massimo De Carlo for allowing me to use their spaces for work relating to this project. I would like to thank Laura Lord and Andreas Leventis for helping me with so many details, concerning images. In particular I would like to thank Laura with Cristiana Perella, for working with me on the catalogue for the British School at Rome which forms part of the appendix. I have so many friends I would like to thank, Stephen Wilson for keeping me alert and encouraged in the studio, and for his contribution to some of the material that ends up as work. I would like to thank Andrea Butner for her friendship and insights in many aspects of my project, and also William Horner, who spent several late nights teaching me to cast, as well as his valuable comments on my writing. There are so many other friends and family who I want to mention, who have supported me in the college, in reading groups and outside the institution. I would like to thank my father, Stanley, who has supported me from the beginning in pursuing many ventures that likely caused him concern. Finally though, I want to thank Jieun, my wife, for her constant faith and care throughout some difficult periods of our life. She knows how much I love her.

I am indebted to the AHRC for funding me throughout this project and so making it possible.

Author's statement

1. During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic qualification.
2. The material in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic and or qualification other than for which it is now submitted.

Ian Kiaer
2008

Fig. 1

It can be problematic to trace the germ of a project developed over several years to a particular time or set of intentions. Yet in introducing this writing, I return to a memory that retains a certain clarity. I was working for the afternoon on one of several loosely torn fragments from a sponge mattress; attempting to make it serve as a base for a small card model of an indecipherable building. No matter how I sought to shape the sponge it remained ill fitting; either too naturalistic as a cliff edge or too plinth like. It was only after some frustration that another piece, initially discarded, offered itself as the appropriate solution. This eventually led to the object assuming the role of Casa Malaparte[6] in a work that brought it together with a detail of the windmill taken from Bruegel's *Procession to Calvary*. [7]

[6] Casa Malaparte, on the West coast of Capri, was built by Curzio Malaparte in 1939 in collaboration with Adalberto Libera. See, Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte.* New York, Princeton Architectural Press, p. 21

[7] Pieter Bruegel, 1564, *Procession to Calvary,* Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum

The reason for bringing these subjects together was not immediately clear and they might appear an unlikely pairing; yet playing with bits of sponge on the surface of a table permits an attitude where such associations seem almost reasonable. The grounds for their placement might initially come through the most rudimentary criteria; both motifs are of buildings on rocks, a light blue colouring runs through each element, both rest on precarious supports whether a garden stool or the rickety wooden structure of a windmill described in the picture. Yet to continue to seek external features that could justify this grouping would not provide a critique that went beyond making arbitrary arrangements based on formal relations.[8] Though identifying the qualities of each element might reveal how the work formally held together, it would fail to clarify how these particular thoughts and motifs are manifest as a work and only further separate narrative ideas that should remain integral.

Rather, recalling how the work came into being allows for a different approach to the information it holds, while also moving beyond an unhelpful distinction between form and content. In his essay "Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin,"[9] Walter Benjamin called for a new method of critique which sought to reveal what he called the inner form [*Gehalt*][10] of the poem. This approach understood each work to have an inherent 'poetic task' to which the process of criticism would not only release but also partly contribute.[11] Hence the poetic is both immanent to the work and its product. Neither the act of criticism nor the work would remain untouched by the encounter, but rather both work and critique would undergo an endless process of reflexive transformation. This assumes a complex temporality of experience where it was incumbent on the critique to continually adjust and respond to the works demands, finding appropriate attitudes and terms of judgement. Rather than confronting a work with predetermined external criteria

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[8] "For we should never be interested in 'problems of form' as such, as if a form ever arose out of formal problems alone or, to put it in other words, as if form ever came into existence for the sake of the stimulus it would produce." Benjamin, W., 2004. *Selected Wrtings: Volume 2, part2, 1931 –1934.* Jennings, M., ed., Harvard University Press, p. 668

[9] Benjamin, W., 2004, *Selected Writings, Volume 1,* Jennings, M., ed., Harvard University Press.

[10] Goethe's term referring to the poem's inner form. Ibid.

[11] "As a category of aesthetic investigation, the poeticised differs decisively from the form-content model by preserving within itself the fundamental aesthetic unity of form and content. Instead of separating them, it distinctively stamps in itself their immanent, necessary connection." Benjamin, W., Ibid p.19 Benjamin, W., "Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin." "*Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin.*" Ibid p.19

of the kind advanced by Kant[12], this was a reflexive alternative, "and leads to an unprecedented sensitivity to the surface folds and warps of the text." [13]

To attempt an "immanent critique" of *Bruegel project / Casa Malaparte* with the kind of intense sensitivity required by Benjamin, I suspect would inevitably end in failure, if such an endeavour was possible to measure.[14] For it is in the nature of Benjamin's theoretical writings to remain intentionally elusive, almost as a strategy to ensure the critical attitude is maintained against a stagnation of method. [15] Yet as an attitude to work which is by nature fragmentary, holding within it a constellation of ideas whose relations are not immediately forthcoming, I have found his approach to be apposite. He writes:

> *Rather what is to be demonstrated is nothing other than the intensity of the coherence of the perceptual and intellectual elements, and this, of course, first with respect to individual examples. But in this demonstration it must be evident that it is not elements but relations that are at stake, since the poeticised itself is after all, a sphere of relation between the work of art and life, whose unities are wholly ungraspable. In this way the poeticised will come to light as the precondition of the poem, as its inner form, as its artistic task.*[16]

Benjamin's concern therefore, is not for individual elements but the intensity of their relations as this is where the poeticised is to be found, "a sphere between art and life."

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[12] Kant's criteria for making aesthetic judgements based on external notions of universality, disinterest, common sense, and purposiveness, defined in, *The Critique of Judgement*. See, Kant, I., 1987. *The Critique of Judgement.* Trans. by Pluhar, W.S., Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company.
[13] Caygill, H., "*Walter Benjamin , The Colour of Experience*", London and New York, Routledge, p. 36.
[14] Max Pensky has remarked that though Benjamin continues to fascinate and compel with his image based historical sensibility, often his theory proves impractical in application—"a theoretical promissory note that would prove difficult if not impossible to redeem." ..." Pensky, M., *Method and time:Benjamin's Dialectical images*. "The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin." D.S. Ferris, ed., Cambridge University Press, p. 177.
[15] As well as Kant's external criteria for making an aesthetic judgement, Benjamin was also critical of what he saw as the historical positivism of Hegel. "Benjamin's coining of the term [Dialectics] was meant, among other things, as a critique of available modes of historical interpretation. "Dialectics" as the Hegelian mode of analysis of the historical unfolding of Spirit devolved into a historicist fantasy: what appeared as the fated progression of historical time..." Max Pensky, "Method and time:Benjamin's Dialectical images*", The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, p. 179.
[16] Benjamin, W., "Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin." "*Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin.*" Ibid p.20.

Alternative to analysing each element for the supposed information it holds, as if the sum of its parts would equal the work, an encounter of a different kind is required which calls on the spacing of material and thought to be equally weighed and considered. As the perceptual and intellectual elements of each fragment are brought to bear upon its neighbour a complexity ensues that makes a form and content appraisal inadequate.

It was the material working of the sponge that initiated a sequence of relationships and associations unlikely to occur through other forms of thought. The neglected piece, rather than the one over worked, preserved the object from becoming over determined and instead allowed the motif to be 'found'. The sponge's shape in that sense was a gift, a remnant whose thought form was latent and only revealed after a time through cutting and shaping an adjacent piece. Just how the discarded fragment declared itself as an appropriate rock shape, as neither too naturalistic nor oblique, is of less concern than the process of play that allowed thoughts and associations to suggest themselves.

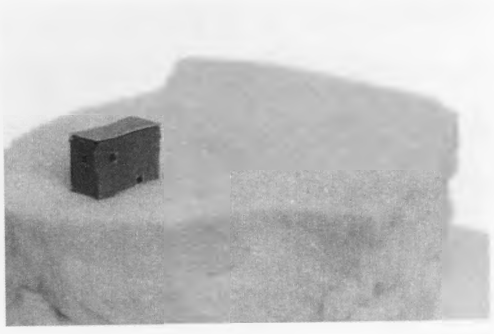

Fig. 2

Only when the cardboard building was fixed to the foam base did it become *Casa Malaparte*, and this was equivocal, even now the work needs the title and an obliging participant to invest it with the necessary significance. The conditions for assigning it so were aided by the informality of the procedure. It being sponge and cardboard, and that it was on a table to hand, allowed for a leap to be made; a leap that was reduced fractionally when it was placed on a nearby blue stool that could evoke an expanse of water. There was little handcraft involved; the stool remained untouched, the object was simply placed; only the minute cardboard model needed fashioning to make it sufficient as Malaparte's dwelling.

This pertains to the model. One might argue that what has been described can be connected to a number of practices already familiar to established disciplines. The sculptor might make use of an opportune off cut while a painter finds in his medium an accidental gesture he finds apt. There is though, something distinct about the model, both as an idea and physical manifestation; that affords particular opportunities in the formation of a work. The model remains difficult to pin down. In part this is due to its itinerant character, slipping between the more established disciplines of architecture, theatre, fashion and all things fine art. Its restlessness means it is treated with suspicion, as if its temporary position in the productive process renders it ill suited for more weighty gestures and definite statements.

Weight often sets a model apart from its prototype or original. Most likely it is made of lighter, impermanent material with less demand placed on it. It might be used to present some aspect of an appearance or demonstrate the working feature of a more elaborate mechanism. This explanatory role often renders it a different scale to its subject; generally smaller for convenience though in the case of laboratory models, used to make visible microscopic workings, the inverse is true. With these experimental types, their relation to the finished article is also variable; they are used at different stages to work through particular problems as quickly as possible with minimum expense and thereby ignore any detail or finishing that is deemed inessential to their purpose. The result is an excusable roughness in otherwise polished company.

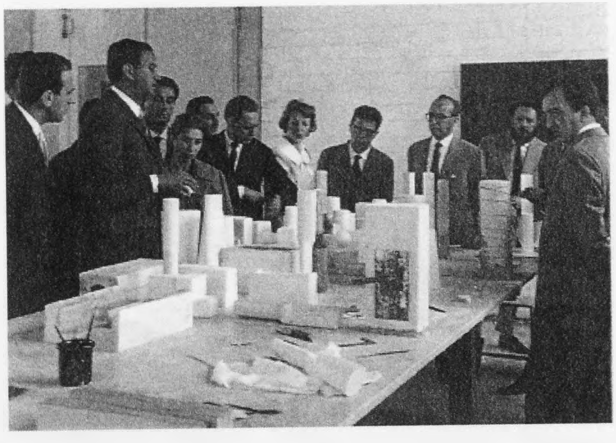

Fig.3

There are of course models whose sole function is to represent their subject in the most flattering and exaggerated terms. Architects use them to seduce clients into improbable imaginings bereft of the stains and clutter of the everyday, providing samples of arcadia and utopian clarity prior to the inevitable intrusion of unforeseen legal or technical hindrances that dampen enthusiasm. Academics might employ them as visual alleviation from potentially leaden discourse, bringing to life the inner workings of a battleship or some geological development. According to their purpose these models can operate across times and tenses, attending to past achievements or future proposals while promoting intellectual or material investment in their ideas.

In fashion, there is confusion over the terminology of 'model' and 'mannequin', their roles being somewhat interchangeable, live bodies hold poses in silence for the camera whilst shop dolls are placed to animate their glamorous coverings;[17] both share a common purpose to persuade and delight. The slippage between live body and model has its equivalent in the miniaturisation of toys designed by adults for children, acknowledging through their diminution entry into imaginative play where narrative worlds open and unfold. In the course of this reverie figurines are prone to rough treatment and fracture, leaving limbs discarded amongst broken wheels and other toy parts for possible future hybrids.

Benjamin quotes J.K. Huysmans in his *Arcades Project* with an encounter in a shop of mannequin parts.

> *In a shop on the Rue Legendre, in Batignolles, a whole series of female busts, without heads or legs, with curtain hooks in place of arms and a percaline skin of arbitrary hue—bean brown, glaring pink, hard black—are lined up like a row of onions, impaled on rods, or set out on tables.... The sight of this ebb and tide of bosoms, this Musée Curtius of breasts, puts one vaguely in mind of those vaults in the Louvre where the classical sculptures are housed, where one and the same torso, eternally*

[17] "Every fashion stands in opposition to the organic. Every fashion couples the living body to the inorganic world. To the living fashion defends the rights of the corpse." [B 9,1] Walter Benjamin, 2002. *The Arcades Project.* Trans. by Howerd Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Harvard University Press, p.79. "It is no longer art, as in earlier times, but the clothing business that furnishes the prototype of the modern man and woman.... Mannequins become the model for imitation, and the soul becomes the image of the body." Henri Pollès, "L'Art du commerce," Vendredi, <12> (February 1937). [B8,4]. Ibid p.78.

repeated, beguiles the time for those who look it over, with a yawn, on rainy days.... How superior to the dreary statues of Venus they are—these dress makers' mannequins, with their lifelike comportment; how much more provocative these padded busts, which, exposed there, bring on a train of reveries. [18]

This image of upholstered breasts could have provided for surrealist companions, yet it is their incomplete arrangements that allow room for divergent imaginings. Having been separated from a conventional body these rounded forms provoke thoughts of onions and neglected sculpture, their varied colourings suggesting multiple associations that range from vegetable to mineral, classical to the everyday. Huysmans values them over their museum counterparts, for being a step closer to life and thus more able to excite through their differing stages of undress. Again the model finds her relation to the art object, but as her more risky and disreputable sister, made of abject matter and left in shop windows.

Costume and ornament are as integral to the theatre as to the shop. Both are used to convince an audience through a form of acknowledged deceit. How things look from the front is the ultimate criteria; appearance matters over and beyond any thought of authenticity, and it is by means of exaggeration that ideas of truth are usually conveyed. Actors and props alike require over painting if they are to avoid being washed out by auditorium lamps. Hence the greasy, caked make-up of performers off stage takes on a masked guise, while props that had affected steel or rock reveal their weightless core. Props, like mannequins are models' relations, though depending on the theatrical tradition, their functions vary from naturalistic replicas to signs or even physical appendages. They are there to be used and handled, to assist the drama either directly or simply as set décor in cooperation with scenic backdrops. Cycloramas usually begin life as models of paintings, watercolours that might have been pasted to something as base as a cardboard box with one of its sides missing in deference to theatre's fourth wall. It is here that perspective, whether single-point or aerial, has continued to find employment long since its position was challenged in the history of painting. There is always opportunity for simple enjoyment as a stage effortlessly extends into two

[18] (J.-K. Huysmans, *Croquis parisiens* (Paris, 1886),pp.129,132-132 ("L'Etiage"<EbbTide>). [Z1a,1]) ibid p. 695.

dimensional distance as floor meets painted curtain; aided only with a few well directed lights.

Fig.4

The conjunction of floor to wall brings me again to *Bruegel project / Casa Malaparte*. Though the canvass element is of modest size and hung conventionally, it has a relation to both prop and theatre back drop. It is a simple water colour copy of a painting's detail—a painting of a picture, a scale model that points to its original and in so doing operates reflexively, becoming its own thought without need or concern for the authentic. Like a prop it transparently pretends, without intending to deceive, presenting an image of place, a scenario, a windmill on a rock fragment. Transparency is a quality watercolour shares with the stage curtain, relying as much on back lighting as design to work its illusions of space. The cloth or paper support is rarely obscured, allowing the material ground to project its character through liquid stain. It is this seeping aspect, whether highly controlled or loosely applied, that often distinguishes it from the more physical mark associated with oil paint. Its lack of physicality and gesture of impermanence makes it the model's natural counterpart. The medium is less stable, its pigment prone to fade, its liquidity granting license to adapt and adjust

according to need. This renders it sensitive to shifts of mood; a single wash of colour is capable of transforming a scene from fair weather to tempest, bringing it close once more to an idea of theatre.

The drama that unfolds below this particular copy of Bruegel's windmill, perched on its precarious support, has been left out. The canvass remains relatively unpainted, with only the top section recognisably described as a landscape. The horizon band of mainly sky works in conjunction with an implied view from the windmill to introduce a notion of looking onto the world from a single position or dwelling. It is a somewhat improbable building, probably an invention of the painter who composed it as a deliberate device around which to arrange the narrative. By leaving the lower part of the painting empty, the pictorial illusion is flattened, reminding one of its scenic pretence. Yet this is not intended to censor or deny narrative promise, only to refer back to its theatrical possibility. The emptiness, rather than suggesting a void, is simply incomplete, leaving a space of potential to encourage a viewer to colour in or play out personal longings while remaining open to the other elements in the configuration.

I've found watercolour to be most appropriate for conveying this sense of openness. It is something to do with the medium's relationship to its ground, which renders equal significance to unpainted passages as to those that have been marked. These moments on a painting's surface speak of being consciously left, rather than neglected, comfortable in their indeterminacy. It's as if the untouched paper, or calico in this case, represents an alternative to description, which nevertheless is equally mindful. Didi-Huberman, when writing on Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation*,[19] comments of the space between the angel and the virgin:

> *Let's look: there is nothing, because there's white. It isn't nothing, because it reaches us without our being able to grasp it, and because it envelops us without our being able, in our turn, to catch it in the snare of a definition. It is not visible in the sense of an object that is displayed or outlined; but neither is it invisible, for it strikes our eye, and does much more than that. It is material. Its stream is luminous particles in one case, a powder of chalky particles in the other. It is an*

[19] Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, c.1440-41. Fresco, Florence, Monastery of San Marco, cell 3.

essential and massive component of the work's pictorial presentation. Let's say that it is visual. [20]

Fig.5

In one respect, the San Marco fresco, in its completeness, can be understood to be at odds with a 'poetics of the informal,'[21] Its material difference is further emphasised when Didi-Huberman introduces the term '*whack* of *white*,'[22] to describe the very physical nature of this area of paint—the antithesis of the fragility associated with aquarelle. However, I would suggest that the whiteness, whether in the form of a *whack* of fresco or a moment of untouched paper in a watercolour, introduces the same space of articulated ambiguity. It is here that one encounters a work's turning away, a silence

[20] Didi-Huberman, G., 2005. *Confronting Images. Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art.* Translated, Goodman, J. The Pennsylvania State University Press, p.17.

[21] Umberto Eco, in *The Open Work*, introduces the term 'poetics of the informal' to identify a moment in contemporary painting which proposed "a wider range of interpretive possibilities, a configuration of stimuli whose substantial indeterminacy allows for a number of possible readings, a constellation of elements that lend themselves to all sorts of reciprocal relationships." Eco, U., 1989. *The Open Work*, Trans. Cancogni. A., Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, p.84.

[22] A colloquial meaning of *pan*, which can also mean a "section" (of a wall), "panel" (in tailoring), patch of blue sky—or of a painting). Didi-Huberman Ibid. p.17.

that is full; a denial of 'the snare of definition.' One might experience an anxiety or frustration with this sudden refusal for descriptive information, particularly when other parts of the painting are so fully accounted for. Yet it is in these moments of uncertainty, when a work becomes no longer legible, that one can suspend a desire to make conclusions and be most attentive to its presence; to enter the 'thingly' character of the work and thereby the work itself. This though, may not be the moment to venture further into a Heideggerian exegesis, other than to acknowledge that these unspoken passages in a painting invite a certain phenomenological regard. It would be regrettable to become caught in an elaborate unfolding of the work's origin if it meant losing sight of the openness such wordless areas afford.

When painting this windmill motif, I found the work would allow me only a certain way down the canvass, before it reached a level of saturation, both in descriptive detail and chromatic relation to the stool and blue foam rock. Or rather, in looking back, this is what became apparent for the work to have 'worked.' It rarely happens that chance and intuition combine for a desired result without first experiencing several instances of over painting. Furthermore, there are no external criteria for deciding whether a particular element has been excessively posed. One begins here, to enter the inner relations that influence the work's form, the '*Gehalt*' already identified by Benjamin.

Though a watercolour might not have the same density as a fresco, there are other ways it conveys its material aspect. Its very transparency can make one more sensitive to the varying gradations of mark, blotch and stain that occur on the painting's surface. In turn, these slight utterances can fuse with existing blemishes and grime that collect on the ground long before its preparation for painting; the two kinds of gesture working so responsively that they become almost indistinguishable, alternating between registers of colour and discolouration, applied pigment and sullied misdemeanour. The material therefore, on which these fluids are applied, is likely to hold its own history and relation to the world, beyond any contribution of the painter's hand. Again this is where a certain openness becomes manifest. Duchamp nurtured the understanding of '*infra-mince*,' to identify moments of indifferent differences between art and life. So fragile was the distinction, that he could only offer examples in place of conceptual definitions; for instance, when the tobacco smoke smells also of the mouth which exhales it, or the warmth of a seat which has just been left. Hence, making a watercolour, particularly one

whose ground bears the remnant of a former life, involves more than the application of varying hues and densities, and goes beyond questions of form and content or levels of abstraction. Each stain needs to account for what has already been and still remains, for it is this that forms in equal measure its disposition and tone.

The watercolour doesn't exist merely for itself, but for, 'the intensity of the coherence of the perceptual and intellectual elements,' which make up the work. This is its fragmentary demand, which suppresses any move towards completion that might reassert its autonomy and why, when making a copy of Bruegel's windmill, it was necessary to pause just below the tree. The question of whether it is correct to call what I've made a painting arises here. Simply, I've drawn free-hand with a pencil an outline of a detail from a reproduction of Bruegel's *Procession To Calvary* [23] then I added watercolour. In this there is a recognisable craft, and because it is painted on a type of canvass, it could be termed a painting. Yet the aspect that perhaps most interests me in this object is a certain clinging redundancy. For if one accounts for the different occasions that the death of painting has been announced, there is little to justify such an object being made.

Thierry de Duve has used the notion of *infra-mince* to explore the *in*difference between Malevich's *Black Square* and Duchamp's ready made.[24] Both imply an awareness of painting's inevitable renunciation of craft,[25] and, providing one is not drawn into fetishizing the formal and material attributes of canvass, there is little to separate them other than the name 'painting.' The implication of painting's end is difficult to ignore,

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[23] Pieter Bruegel, *Procession To Calvary*, 1564. Oil on Board, Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum.

[24] "History, after Duchamp, has judged that the ready made belongs to art; it has given it this generic name. Retrospectively, can we also say that the ready made belongs to "painting"? Without seeming absurd, can we also contend that it deserves this specific name? To answer no by arguing that it was not made by an artist, that it shows no trace of craft,..., is to decide that Black square, which shows no more craft than Duchamp's urinal, does not deserve to be called a painting, either." De Duve, T., 1991. *Pictorial Nominalism, On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*. Trans by Polan. D., Univeristy of Minnesota Press, p.157.

[25] "The ready made addressed itself to the historical conditions, principally the technological ones, of painting as dead painting. Being no longer painting, it declared negatively that a painting could survive its own death only by recognizing the cause of it. And it declared this cause positively by being an industrial object: industrialisation, which had assassinated all the crafts, had assassinated the craft of painting as well. *Black Square* addressed itself to the ideological consequences of the same assassination. It declared positively—by insisting on still being a painting—that its practice was alive because it no longer wanted to be artisanal, while it jettisoned those ideological effects that had been attached to artisanal practice. And it declared these effects negatively in being "hand made" : craft, which had succumbed to the force of industry, was evidenced by its absence." Ibid p.155.

either as a recorded historical development or more personally, as someone who has emotional investment in the practice. Part of the reason for so often including Bruegel in the following essays, other than the reverie of thoughts each picture invites, is a wider attachment to the demand of painting. Its depictions of *theatrum mundi* represent a single entry for painting as a major form, which had become unattainable long before the arrival of Suprematist monochromes.

There is however, something in the readymade character of *Black Square,* which prefigures a return, without cause to wilfully evade its challenge. Moreover, it can be found in its very dismissal of craft, where an emphasis on 'making' and not 'painting' is maintained. In its readiness to abandon those aspects that insist on the significance of the hand, it becomes its own model, opening up endless possibilities of other models. For what is a model, other than a means of return, a way of revisiting earlier developments—a revision? This return avoids uncritical nostalgia and holds within its gesture an acknowledgment that it can only ever be a partial way back. Like the 'Angelus Novus' in Benjamins history essay[26], who stares fixedly contemplating the past, wanting to stay and awaken the dead, yet being irresistibly propelled into the future by the storm that is progress, the model also works to check, if not undo, thoughts of avant-gardism.

My watercolour then, is a model that has been 'made' rather than 'painted;' ever conscious of *Black Square* yet not silenced by it; neither defensive before its challenge nor apologetic in its redundancy. It has been put together, as attentively as any other element in the work while not asking for special provision. It plays its part. As a model/copy/representation, it finds its place beside the blue stool and foam rock.

What then is the relation of these elements? There is a title of a work by Georges Vantangerloo, *Rapport des Volumes*,[27] that implies the answer might lie in its own poetic. A definition of 'rapport' is, "the communication through medium,"[28] though this does not quite convey the sense of mutual understanding, and intuitive cooperation held within the French term. It need not mean an easy or harmonious exchange, but one that

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[26] Benjamin, W., 1999. Illuminations, Trans. Zorn, H., London, Pimlico, p.249.
[27] Vontangerloo, G., *Rapport des Volumes*. 1919. Tate Modern.
[28] *Oxford Concise Dictionary,* 1982, Sykes, J.B. ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press.

leaves each part enhanced. The material quality that an object contributes becomes one aspect of this potential enrichment. For the substance of a work—its tonal make-up, effects not only its form but the varying associations such a material might carry.

Fig.6

Styrofoam is synthetic; toxic in its production and handling. This particular block was found and left unaltered but for a piece of model moss turning it into a cliff fragment. One side still retains the memory of a former industry, its serial number continues through the yellowy discolour of some adhesive remnant. A saturated blueness is carried into the hue of the painting's sky, making it a little too intense for a natural vista, and thereby unsettling its ideal. The notion of rapport allows one to keep encountering the materiality of each element—how a type of sponge differs from its more brittle foam neighbour and interplays with the flat plastic of the round stool, or in turn, the thin white legs standing rigidly upright near the wide block of fuzz. These textural affinities might appear indulgent, but they reflect a concern for the parity of sight and touch, traced back via the model to painting's thought.[29]

[29] "Vision reveals what the touch already knows. We could think of the sense of touch as the unconsciousness of vision. Our eyes stroke distant surfaces, contours and edges, and the unconscious tactile sensation determines the agreeableness or unpleasantness of the experience. The distant and the near are experienced with the same intensity, and they merge into one coherent experience". Pallasmaa, J., 2005. *The Eyes of the Skin, Architecture and the Senses*. Wiley Academy. p.42.

The spaces between the objects also speak of a rapport. The single motifs have been placed with care, yet this comes from an attitude that moves away from the type of weighty sculpture that 'takes its stand.' The model is more at ease on a stool than a plinth; the picture, though on the wall here, in other works can just as often be found leaning as hanging. The suggestion is an informally considered pose, as if the final position has yet to be given; each element being not quite ready to rest and remaining alert to alternative adjustment. Hence, the spacing should equally be subject to inquiry, and resistant to complacent neglect. I imagine them working similarly to the visual pauses in a Mallarmé poem that establish a rhythmic movement of ideas and images while leaving necessary room for the reception of thought. For here again is the value of leaving things unsaid.

I'll proceed with caution when relating this work to the following chapters. It first appeared in an exhibition entitled *Borderline Syndrome*[30] which attempted to identify some of the many interdisciplinary crossings occurring along the interface of contemporary art and notions of territory. This also marked the beginning of having to write about my practice. Yet the text opened up certain relations that has formed the root of this project and which has since grown to include Konstantine Melnikov's Cylindrical *House Studio*, Curzio Malaparte's *Casa Malaparte*, Ludwig Wittegenstein's Norwegian hut and Frederick Kiesler's notion of the *Endless House*. Each of these buildings is discussed in a separate chapter, and has been brought together with a particular Bruegel painting in order that, much in the same way as working in the studio, I might explore and present different approaches to building, dwelling and thinking.

[30] Manifesta (2000) *Borderline Syndrome,* Ljubljana, European Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Chapter 1

Icarus

Fig. 1

It could be the idea of Bruegel's own journey, made through the Alps on his way to Rome,[31] which prompts thought of this picture presenting an opening. This has less to do with the convention of landscapes, operating as kinds of windows, than it speaks of particular attitudes to dwelling. For how we dwell, reveals modes of thought and approaches to work which, in turn, mark our relation to the world; and it is here, in the difference of the ploughman's tread and Icarus' fall, an opening occurs, making one mindful of a distinction between thinking and making, that asks for our care.

The picture offers an image of expanse, stretching towards a distant horizon where the sun's yoke meets the sea, inviting one's gaze to venture further. The even glow of

[31] See, Orenstein, N. et al. 2001 *Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Drawings and Prints*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, p.102

turquoise contributes to a sense of ease. There's no suggestion of disquiet as to what might lie ahead for the embarking vessel; just enough wind fills its sails while hardly making an impression on the water's surface.

Fig. 2

Yet seas that begin quiet often develop into uncertain spaces where the most earnest navigation can appear futile against shifting currents. The detail of the boy's legs does more than lend the painting its title. Once noticed, they affect the entire picture, becoming a kind of *punctum* that colours how every remaining passage is read.[32] What, on first sight, seems to be an idyllic landscape becomes altogether darker as the significance of this detail is brought to bear. One can no longer interpret the farmer, who keeps his eye fixed on his plough or the shepherd who gazes into the evening sky, with the same sense of well being. One becomes aware that their uncomplicated diligence is the expression, if not the cause, of blindness to the boy's position. Even the fisherman, sitting close by, fails to register the event. The painter has deliberately arranged them so—in a position of not looking and not witnessing the most remarkable of happenings.[33] Auden wrote of an encounter with this painting in the Musée des Beaux Arts.

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just

[32] Barthes, R., 2000. *Camera Lucida*. London, Vintage, p43
[33] This is contrary to the pastoral account given by Ovid who both Shepherd and farmer both look up

Walking dully along:[34]

Auden draws attention to the 'position' and 'place' of suffering, beside others' mundane routine. The Old Masters understood how misfortune is compounded and left more acute by the dullness of neighbouring indifference. Hence, in the painting, it becomes an issue of composition, effecting in the viewer feelings of dismay before the boy's plight. For we know any cry of alarm on our part will go unheard, such is our relation to the work as a silent witness. The artist shows how the world is, how it occurs, and it's through our looking, that we come to understand.

The poem ends:

In Brueghel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water: and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Fig. 3

[34] Auden, W. H.,1986. *The English Auden.* Ed. Mendelson, E., London, Faber and Faber, p. 237

Everything turns away, not through suggestion of collusion, more from a mild disinterest. Values of delicacy and colour combine with leisure to provide a careless reception for the forsaken youth; the picturesque conveys a calm of absent concern. The ploughman makes his way unhurriedly to the edge of the field where earlier furrows trace the gentle contours of the slope. The sun's shadow upon each fold of earth marks regular time with the length of its curve, while the remaining kidney shape of unattended ground, indicates an intuitive approach to the turn of the land. Auden proposes the farmer may have heard the boy's cry, but he appears so consumed by his labour, that even something amazing falling from the sky, fails to lift his gaze.

Fig. 4

One may question what this condition of looking is. Formed over years of treading the same soil, ensuring the blade is locked on an even course, it speaks of a relationship to equipment that "gives to the simple world its security and assures to the earth the freedom of its steady thrust."[35] Bruegel has placed the ploughman in the foreground with a prominent red shirt, a shock of colour that holds our attention against the subtle watery green and browns of nature. This effectively draws us away from Icarus, long

[35] Heidegger, M., 2001. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Hofstadter, A., New York, Harper Collins, p.34

enough to enable his later surprise discovery, yet it also means we give time to the farmer. For it's his world we enter, by way of his work. The painter invites us to consider his weighty bulk, almost equivalent to the yoked horse that pulls the plough and opens the earth. But for the difference in climate, one might recall Heidegger's reflection on a peasant woman's, "slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever uniform furrows of the field,"

> *This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the worldless joy of having once more withstood want....This equipment belongs to the earth, and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting within-itself.*[36]

Heidegger seeks through the description of the peasant woman's used shoes, the 'equipmental character' of equipment and thereby enters her world. Through her shoes we become mindful of the clods of soil, her tenacity, "the loneliness of the field path as evening falls" and "the silent call of the earth."[37] However, this attentiveness to her condition is of a different order to that of the woman. For Heidegger is reading all this through a painting and demonstrates a heightened concern for its significance.[38] In contrast he suggests the woman's relationship to her equipment is less reflexive:

> *But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, on the other hand, simply wears them. If only this simple wearing were so simple. When she takes off her shoes late in the evening, in deep but healthy fatigue, and reaches out for them again in the still dim dawn, or passes them by on the day of rest, she knows all this without noticing or reflecting.*[39]

In Bruegel's picture, the equipment of the plough cuts into the earth and through it we also become open, to the ground of the farmer's dwelling. Moreover, we find in his

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[36] Ibid, p. 33
[37] Ibid.
[38] Heidegger's purpose through this description of equipment, which lies between the art work and the mere thing, is to "unwittingly learn something about the artwork itself. Ibid p. 34
[39] Ibid p. 33

labour a similar simplicity; a procedure content 'without noticing or reflecting.' His gaze remains fixed to the soil, and though he 'may have heard the splash, the forsaken cry, ... for him it was not an important failure.' Auden makes us aware that the gulf between the farmer and the forsaken youth is not merely one of incident. They occupy the same pictorial space, but their distance is manifest through a difference in thinking. The farmer does not consider the event of Icarus to be so important as to warrant pause from his work, calling to mind the Flemish proverb "No Plough stops because a man dies."[40] The farmer thinks of earth and work, over the 'white legs disappearing into the green water.'

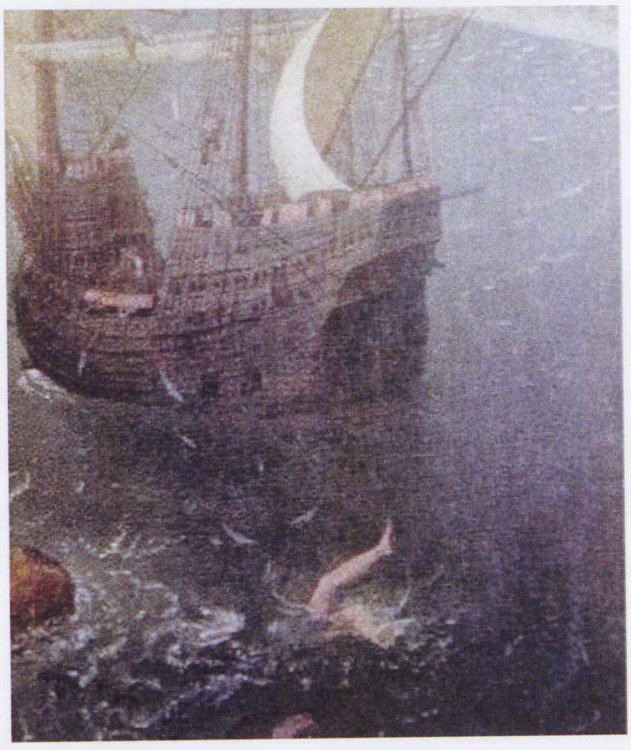

Fig. 5

The distance between the ploughman and Icarus is a difference of worlds. As the plough cleaves the earth, so the boy penetrates the green water. These different openings reveal alternative modes of being; Icarus is so alien and set apart, that he fails to register on the

[40] Roberts, K., 1998, *Bruegel*. Oxford, Phaidon Press, p.32

bucolic conscience. The painter presents the men of earth as grounded and thick-set, while the flighty youth is inverted and immersed in an indeterminate space. We are not certain where exactly those legs are, in relation to the ship and coast line. Though at first an easily overlooked detail, they become outsized when held to the delicate vessel. What appeared to be a natural, if unfortunate happening, begins to disorient our reception of how things are and should be.

Fig. 6

The water allows for this ambiguity, as the visible transitions of scale, made clear on land, seem to warp when meeting the sea. It recalls the contemporary maps and prints that viewed unknowable depths as opportunities for fantastic invention, as if voyages of discovery were occasions for evoking oceanic *aporia*. Frans Huys made several etchings after Bruegel,[41] bringing forth creatures of a kind that might welcome the boy into the emerald underworld. Yet none of these excesses unnerve like the two awkward, disembodied limbs. The boy's suffering is shown to be mute as the surface smothers any further cry. We know it will only be a moment before he is fully engulfed; leaving the slow descent of a few feathers to be the sole reminder of what is other.

These fragments of flight, conveyed through white flecks of paint above bare white legs, link us to the Icarian myth. The remnant limbs work as visual abbreviations, asking we retrace them to their place of origin, to enable a fuller recovery of the Icarian body. They call out to be grasped, before further recognition of the ancients is lost to the

[41] See, Orenstein, N. et al. 2001 *Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Drawings and Prints*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 213

watery deep. For implied in the submergence of this boy, is an entire body of thought, attesting to an alternative kind of dwelling, that may sink with him.

There is evidence the painter attends to this loss by what appears to be a deliberate diversion from Ovid's account.[42] Every character so accurately corresponds to the poet's version, that where the painting significantly differs, it suggests an intentional turn. Book VIII of *Metamorphosis* describes the witnesses of Daedalus and his son:

> *Some fisher, perhaps, plying his quivering rod, some shepherd leaning on his staff, or a peasant bent over his plough handle caught sight of them as they flew past and stood stock still in astonishment, believing that these creatures who could fly through the air must be gods.*[43]

How differently Bruegel renders his shepherd, fisher and peasant. There's no astonishment, only overlooking. Yet it is from their turning away that we come to care and question what might amount to the loss. 'She knows all this without knowledge or reflection.' The farmer's world of work is without reflection, and we become sensitive to the absence through painting. Bruegel alerts us to another way by glimpsing Icarus. For if we consider his submerged frame, and look further than the falling feathers, the original *techne* of Daedalus comes forward.[44] His mode of knowing, once held together with melted wax, is shown half-concealed beside the incurious world of the earthbound peasant. A need to cross the confinement of land and sea meant Daedalus sought aerial passage. Nostalgia moved him to challenge physical limits, and this thinking became manifest in making. Ovid intently pictures his activity:

> *With these words, he set in mind to sciences never explored before, and altered the laws of nature. He laid down a row of feathers, beginning*

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[42] Kavaler sights contemporaries of Bruegel like Hans Bol, in whose version every detail of Ovid's description is faithfully rendered, hence making Bruegel's divergence appear deliberate. See, Kavaler, E.T.,1999. *Pieter Bruegel, Parables of Order and Enterprise*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.61

[43] Ovid, *Metamorphosis.* Penguin Classics, 1995 (London) p. 185

[44] "For Greek thought the nature of knowing consists in *aletheia*, that is, in the uncovering of beings. *Techne*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it *brings forth* present beings as such *out of* concealedness and specifically *into* the unconcealednes of their appearance; *techne* never signifies the action of making." Heidegger, M., 2001. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. p. 57

with tiny ones, and gradually increasing in length, so that the edge seemed to slope upwards. In the same way, the pipe which shepherds used to play built up from reeds, each slightly longer than the last. Then he fastened the feathers together in the middle with thread, and the bottom with wax; when he had arranged them this way, he bent them round into a gentle curve, to look like real birds' wings.[45]

The poet attends the master's work; how he lays out and positions his material. Feathers, wax, reeds and thread conjoin in a graded arrangement that recall shepherds' pipes and birds' wings. There is a relation of mind to hand, inquiry is resolved through the shaping and sewing of things, science and craft merge to alter natural law. The verse brings us before a kind of dwelling that can't be assigned comfortably to workshop, studio or laboratory but is content with alternate forms of thought. However the wings, though entirely different from the plough, and speak of another kind of labour, still remain as equipment. They come from a process of action (making), brought about by will (to fly). The Greeks called this *praxis*[46] and it suggests there is yet more to be brought into the open. For although we enter the worlds of ploughman and boy by way of their separate work, these are not the only depictions of dwelling the painting provides.

Fig. 7

[45] Ibid, p. 184

[46] Giorgio Agamben defines praxis as follows: "The determining principle of praxis as well as of practical thought is, then, the will, intended in its broadest sense and therefore including, longing, desire, and volition; that man is capable of praxis means he wills his action and willing it, goes through to its limit." Agamben, G., 1999.*The Man Without Content*. Trans. Albert, G., Stanford University Press (California) P.75

Bruegel made Icarus his sole mythological subject, and from a painter who was later known for his distinctly northern scenes, this work carries an uncommonly Mediterranean tone. Considering his other subjects from the period, it is likely the distant bay records his experience of Naples, making the cone shaped mount upon the horizon, Vesuvius. Hence the picture presents a previously unfamiliar world, sought by an artist eager to widen his exposure to renascent knowledge of the ancients.[47] Yet unlike the accompanying drawings observed on his travels, this work has been more substantially put together. The farmer can no longer be merely someone he encountered in a field, just as what may have been an initial glimpse of a diving boy has since been turned into the tragic Hellenic youth. In this sustained work, the 'expensive delicate ship' conveys voyages of discovery that ask us to think beyond the local. Understood this way, the painting becomes an early *Weltbild*, not simply a landscape, but a picture with the intention to reveal the human position.[48]

The Old Masters understood the 'human position' of suffering, implying a form of insight born of observation or experience that could be given over to the visual. In turn this suggests a place where both thought and looking might occur, a space of perception for 'noticing and reflecting.' Yet until now, we have not encountered where this understanding might reside in the picture. It's of a different order to the ploughman's labour and even to the *praxis* of Daedalus. For Heidegger maintained that *techne*, "never means a kind of practical performance" but rather "a mode of knowing:"

> *To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is present, as such. For Greek thought the nature of knowing consists in aletheia, that is, in the uncovering of beings. Techne, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth present beings as such out of concealedness and specifically into the unconcealdness of their appearance; techne never signifies the action of making.*

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[47] Grossmann maintains that it was quite usual for a Northern artist to make the pilgrimage to the during this period. See, Grossmann, F., 1952. *Bruegel: The Paintings,* London, Phaidon Press, p.14

[48] "Hence world picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a picture. What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth." Heidegger, M., 1977. "The Age of World Picture" in *The Question of Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. by Lovitt, W. , New York, Harper & Row Publishers p. 129

The bird limbs fashioned by Daedalus were conceived less as an unveiling before *aletheia* than a practical means of escape. They hold a technical knowing born of wilful intention, but do not bring him into a fuller uncovering of being. The Greeks understood *praxis* to be only a part of the human condition that poetically dwells, and also drew upon the notion of *poiesis*, meaning "a production into presence."[49] This form of knowing sought to establish a space for truth and the subsequent opening of a world for man's existence.[50] There is no sense of this occurring while making the wings. It would call for a later unfolding in the poem, when Daedalus confronts the loss of his son and is brought to a space of mourning:

> *The unhappy father, a father no longer, cried out: 'Icarus!' 'Icarus,' he called. 'Where are you? Where am I to look for you? As he was still calling 'Icarus' he saw the feathers on the water, and he cursed his inventive skill.*[51]

'Where am I to look for you?' The father enters a condition where looking becomes uncertain; a very different mode of apprehension to the demand of equipment. Confidence, which tends to accompany the clarity of empirical inquiry, is replaced by an impotence of sight. He becomes urgently attentive before a vague and indefinite watery field. The limitless expanse moves him from assured resolve into a helpless self-questioning. It presents him with an intolerable *aporia* that confounds beyond the labyrinthine passages of his inventive skill. This is a moment set for *poiesis,* when activity is exchanged for reflective doubt:

> *He does not know whether he is a poet, but neither does he know what poetry is, or whether it is. It depends on him, on his search. And this dependence does not make him master of what he seeks; rather, it makes*

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[49] "Central to praxis was the idea of the will that finds its immediate expression in an act, while, by contrast, central to poiesis was the experience of pro-duction into presence, the fact that something passed from non being into being, from concealment into the full light of the work". Agamben, G., 1999.*The Man Without Content* p. 68

[50] Ibid, p. 72

[51] Ovid, 1995. *Metamorphosis.* London, Penguin Classics, p. 186

him uncertain of himself and as if nonexistent. Every work, and each moment of the work, puts everything into question all over again.[52]

Fig. 8

The boy whom he seeks has already sunk from sight. The sea separates searching from seeing. He knows death through loss but only the passive surface is visible. "The death of the Other: a double death, for Other is death already, and weighs upon me like an obsession with death."[53] The unknowable flatness conceals death's space beneath, and yet it remains an emerald surface, painted with a luminescent glow that covers a third of the canvass. We become mindful of the old master's patience when applying these oily layers, gradually bringing up an incalculable sublime that partially covers over the dying youth. Blanchot remarked on an artist's capacity for a certain cruelty in "making death frightful for us when he is content with it":

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[52] With these words Blanchot addresses Valéry's relationship to the art work. "Valéry writes in a letter:"all his life the true painter seeks painting: the true poet, Poetry, etc. For these are not determined activities. In them one must create the need, the goal, the means, and even the obstacles. Blanchot, M. 1989. "The Work and Death's Space," in, *The Space of Literature.* Trans. Smock, A., University of Nebraska Press, p.89

[53] Blanchot, M. 1995, *The Writing of the Disaster*, Trans. Smock, A., University of Nebraska Press, p. 19

> *Perhaps art demands that one play with death; perhaps it introduces a game, a bit of play in the situation that no longer allows for tactics or mastery. But what does this play mean? "Art flies around the truth, with the decided intention not to burn itself." Here it flies around death. It does not burn itself, but makes us feel the burn and becomes what burns and moves us.*[54]

There is a sense in which the painter plays. The boy suffers the indignity of inversion; his ungainly legs are made mildly ridiculous as they poke out near the delicate ship. The position of human suffering is understood and revealed through the game, the play with death, composed with controlled restraint. The work's grandeur takes its time to unfold, yet speaks of a single instant of a body's contact with water. Daedalus has not arrived, and we are left to anticipate his loss. We already feel the burn and are moved before his inevitable flight around the truth, of a death only half-concealed. The feathers are still falling and will soon rest on the water, leaving the only visible trace of 'something amazing.'

> *The disaster is related to forgetfulness—forgetfulness without memory, the motionless retreat of what has not been treated—the immemorial, perhaps. To remember forgetfully: again, the outside.*[55]

Auden observes how the ship sails calmly by, while 'everything turns away quite leisurely from disaster.' Icarus arrives with an intense suddenness from outside, torn from his native sphere. His plunge momentarily pierces the whole, disrupting its passionless calm. He remains a resolute fragment, a reminder fixed by partial submersion and soon forgotten. For his plunge will not alter things, and waits only to be fully covered; powerlessly confirming the inevitable continuum he leaves behind. For the world will remain after he passes into concealment, and asks we don't dwell too long on his detail.

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[54] Ibid, p. 92
[55] Ibid, p. 3

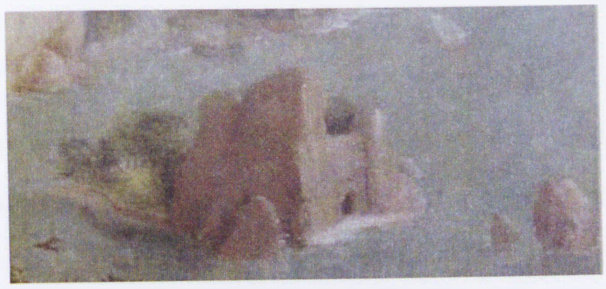

Fig. 9

However, as soon as we try to turn we are held. Forgetfulness may be possible for a time, while wondering what a distant rock could hide or whether that bay passes for Naples. Yet the painter's disruption persists, conflating withdrawn worlds, as if to see what profits a union of myth with the mundane. One effect is to begin to read remaining spaces with an equal openness to opportune worlds. The stone islet invites thought of smugglers' cave or monstrous cavity of the kind Daedalus suppressed by subterranean corridors. Its entrance onto a convenient beach and walled orchard suggest prior cultivation for some hermetic purpose. We may assume the painter has furnished his work with imaginary isles for compositional requirements, yet such outcroppings appear in other works of this period and are native to the Neapolitan coastline.[56]

Fig. 10

[56] Charles Tolnay attributed *Christ Appearing to his Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias* (Private collection) to Bruegel in 1955, but the judgement has since been questioned by Gibson in 1977 and Van Schoute in 2006. See: Sellink, M. 2007. Bruegel, *The Complete Paintings, Drawings and Prints*. Eds. Borchert, T., et al. London, Thames & Hudson, p. 269

These could be considered the artist's way of painting rocks, until one sees how they occur on the neighbouring island of Capri. A photograph of similar protuberances has been taken from the roof of *Casa Malaparte*, and resemble Bruegel's forms so closely that it is difficult to think he failed to observe them while recording a view of Naples.[57] They give themselves to the painter's inclination for pocked and rugged surfaces, blotted with dark shrubberies that allow his sensitive pencil to explore its full range of marks. One might consider how the relationship of rock to dwelling becomes very tight when every cleft opens itself as a potential resting place. Already the journeying artist had recorded many dwellings through the Alps that seemed to cling to the side of cliffs, nestling in parasitic clusters for company and protection. The rocks of Capri in contrast, appear more singular than their Alpine precedents and the painter responds by interpreting them as occasions for solitary abode.

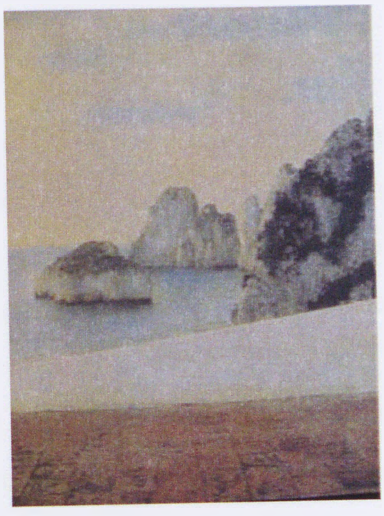

Fig. 11

Malaparte's idea for building his house came from a period of confinement on Ischia.[58] He shared the same sensitivity to the distinctive promontories that demand more from a builder than generic solutions:

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[57] See, *The Harbour at Naples*, 1558, Rome, Galleria Doria.

[58] Talamona writes: "The story of Malaparte's arrest, trial and sentencing "for offending a minister of office" (Italo Balbo) is reconstructed in G. B Guerri, *L'Arcitaliano*, 132-161. It was a personal quarrel between the two, who were once friends, and had nothing to do with any alleged antifascism of

It became clear to me from the very beginning that not only the outline of the house, its architecture, but also the building materials, had to fit with that wild and delicate landscape. No bricks, no concrete, but stone, only stone. Of the kind, from which the cliff, the mountain is made.[59]

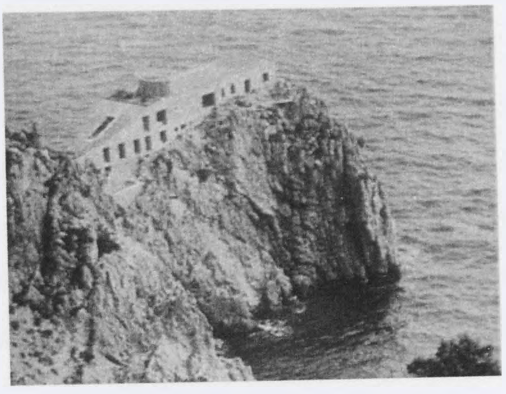

Fig. 12

These outcroppings seem to offer him a primal relationship to native ground of a kind that "sets this world back to earth again."[60] A record of the building under construction shows it almost carved from its base, bringing a geometric severity to nature's form. It crouches low against its host as if wanting to avoid exposure, or fearing some freak wave might threaten its grip. It appears to have learned from marine life how best to endure unwanted approaches by combining assimilation with a stubborn will to remain. The many dark framed openings recall gun emplacements, or the side of one of Bruegel's ancient battleships.

The quality of incompletion allows for speculation, encouraged further by a resemblance to the type of model that might have brought it into being. The grey image

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Malaparte, contrary to what the writer tried to claim in later years. " See, Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte*, Princeton, Princeton Architectural Press, p. 69

[59] He continues "I could make no concessions to the false idea some have that the architecture of one place lends itself well to each part of a place—that in Capri, the so called Capri architecture fits equally well the bay side, the side of Marina Piccola, the idyllic and Heiodic side of AnaCapri, or the Greek one of Matromania." See: Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte*, p.84

[60] Heidegger, M., 2001. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. p. 41

reduces the building almost to cardboard, as if presenting it as a photographed prototype that is then pasted to its proposed setting. Its status as an unfinished proposal means we are perhaps more attentive to the intentions of the builder, and become critically alert to its tone. For, to build so distinctly on this extreme site suggests an equivalent attitude that warrants caution. Malaparte wrote:

> *There was in Capri, in its wildest, most solitary and dramatic part, in that part completely oriented toward the south and east, where the human island becomes savage and nature expresses itself with incomparable cruel strength, a promontory of extraordinary pure lines, lunging at the sea with its rocky spur. No site in Italy has such a wide horizon, such depth of feeling. It is a place in truth, only fit for strong men, for free spirits. For it is easy to be overcome by nature, to become its slave, to be crushed by those delicate and violent jaws.*[61]

The machismo is absurd to a contemporary ear, and one might be mindful of Nietzsche's observation that, "passion" [is] a matter of nerves and wearied souls; like the delight in high mountains, deserts, storms, orgies, and horrors—in the bulky and the massive ….(--how does it happen that strong ages have an opposite need in art—a need for a realm beyond passion?)"[62] The initial 'need' for the house came from the trauma of exile on Lipari, where Malaparte recorded the oppressive power of nature:

> *Too much sea, too much sky, for such a small island, and such a restless soul. The horizon is too broad, I drown in it. I am a photograph, a painting too small for such a big frame. The fault lies in the closeness of the island, the lack of a harmonious relationship between the immense space that surrounds the island and the small machinery of the human organism.*[63]

His sense of himself as a diminutive photograph, suffering an over bearing frame, leads to an interpretation of the building as agoraphobic impulse, at once an attempt to

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[61] Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte* p.84
[62] Nietzsche, F. 1968 *The Will To Power*, Ed.Kaufmann, Trans. Kaufmann, W., New York, Vintage Books, p. 436
[63] Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte,* p. 52

confront and turn from nature. It may explain the numerous windows, repeatedly exposing and limiting doses of an untameable sublime. This way, the house operates as a type of rectangular zoetrope, offering apertures that frame and edit the immense exterior, while one moves and shelters within. A passage from Malaparte's novel *The Skin* recounts a fictional visit from Rommel who asks the author if he had built the house; he responds by:

> *Pointing with a sweeping gesture to the sheer cliff of Matromania, the three gigantic rocks of the Faraglioni, the Sorrento peninsula, the islands of the Sirens, the distant blue of the Almalfi coastline, and the remote golden glimmer of the Paestum shores, I said: 'I designed the scenery'* [64]

He not only positions himself as scenic director, he reveals how it is through the building that he controls his relation to the world. Theatre is present in its form. Still noticeable in the photograph is a rectangular opening that signals original thought of a *vomitorium*.[65] This clarifies the triangular wedge of steps as suggesting a segment of amphitheatre. Hence, with every entry and exit, one is reminded of the potential for *theatrum mundi*. In the final version, this possibility has been bricked up to leave a uniform stairway, which in turn changes the position of the stage. Rather than providing seating for an audience that looks back upon the cliff face, the steps now lead up to a platform facing the vast horizon.

Fig. 13

[64] Malaparte, C., 1952, *The Skin*. Trans. Moore, D., London, Alvin Redman Ltd, p.220
[65] See, Talamona, M., 1992. *Casa Malaparte* p. 56

Yet, it's perhaps appropriate to assign this gesture of ascension to more sacred beginnings, for the initial idea can be traced to a church of the *Annunziata* on Lipari. The narrowness of the steps widens to a visual crescendo, as one approaches the portal and prepares to enter. This movement makes us aware of the disparity with Malaparte's building. Christian interiority is replaced by an opening onto a vista of 'extraordinary pure lines,' a 'place of truth.'

> *Standing there, the building rests on rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the mystery of that rock's clumsy yet spontaneous support..... The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of day, the breadth of sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air.*[66]

This was where Fritz Lang is shown directing a filming of the Odyssey, and where Bardot plays out a ritualised sacrificial offering on the roof of the house, in Goddard's *Le Mépris*.[67] Earlier in the editing studio, Michel Piccoli as the script writer, recites lines from Dante while an image of Ulysses is shown floundering in emerald expanse: "All at once what happened, as we felt, is no more. Our joy is turned to grief, until the sea closed above us."[68]

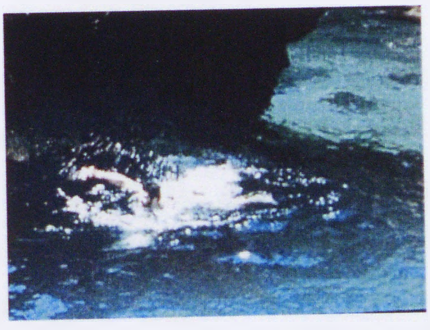

Fig. 14

[66] Heidegger, M., 2001. *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 41
[67] Phillip Lopate has commented that "Goddard responded on some, however unconscious, level to Malaparte's paradoxical vision of the residence as refuge, temple and prison. Bardot sunbathing on the roof is like a vestal virgin about to be sacrificed on the alter of a brutal god." Mcdonough, M., et al, 1999. *Malaparte, A House Like Me*. New York, Clarkson & Potter Publishers, p.169
[68] Goddard, J.L., 1963. *Le Mépris*. Momentum Pictures DVD.

Chapter 2

Circular Studios

Fig. 1

The windmill on the rock forms the central axis around which the painting's narrative turns, and this is a circular painting, a wheel-like painting from left to right, anti-clockwise (Fig 1). There is the circle of the expectant crowd, forming a ring around the sight of execution, awaiting the arrival of the condemned. There is the literal wheel of a cart atop a pole, forming an improvised gibbet on which cloth remnants of past corpses still cling. There is the implied circular movement of the windmill sails and indeed, the windmill itself; a rotating design to catch a breeze from any which way. Then there is the suggestion of the hidden wheels, encased in the hut itself; the cogged machinery to grind the harvest. Last, there's the cyclonic weather, as bright day turns towards the storm clouds gathering over Golgotha. This final intemperate turning puts one in mind of orbits too large to see completed.

All this turning takes time. The people curve around the rock toward their destination, but their progression isn't hurried. They are dispersed and unfocused, becoming distracted around the periphery by a variety of incident. Things are not organised, there seems to be little co-ordination, no one person is willing the event on, rather it occurs by default, a collective formed by habit, as if this is just what happens on Good Friday. Bruegel paints the crowd as being insensitive to any wider significance than an afternoon out. Only the group of mourners in the foreground signal the gravity of the event. Christ is placed at the very centre of the painting but his presence is intentionally dissolved and lost in the mass. By presenting the subject as easily overlooked the artist appeals to the elevation of the viewer, implying a certain distance is needed to fully appreciate what is occurring. It is this distance, this remove that the painting seems to be about: how to look at daily events and beyond them, to see in the particular the universal.

Fig 2

This idea of the privileged eye, the discerning eye, has been given an actual place of sight within the picture. The inclusion of the improbable rock, standing vertically in an otherwise flat landscape, signals an opportune vantage point for an unhindered gaze.

Our attention is drawn to this singular building, with its rounded platform that allows a viewer to walk its full circumference above a multitude apparently oblivious to its position. For it can be, when encountering so many animated bodies playing out different pursuits, that one experiences a sudden rush of anxiety. Like a person caught in a crowd, the urge is to seek relief, and look for the nearest lamppost from which to understand the situation. Such a move, born from unease, draws the individual out from the general pattern and enables an attitude of critical reflection to occur.

Fig. 3

If the mill is to present such an opportunity, where a moment's pause gives rise to a different kind of looking and thinking, then rest from production and the 'daily grind' is required. It isn't obvious if the loan figure beneath the sail is casually leaning in a state of repose, or whether he is tentatively edging his way around the rock. He is so minute that we are unsure even of the direction of his gaze though it seems likely he would look upon the narrative flow. We are left only with the knowledge that the painter has placed him there and that he occupies a space of potential not given to others. There is in the position of this figure, an alternative to the visual noise below, and with it, perhaps the recognition of a more 'authentic' dwelling.

"Poetically man dwells."[69] Heidegger doesn't use Höderlin's verse to mean there is poetry in every man's dwelling or that only poets are able to dwell poetically. Rather, dwelling in a meaningful relation to the world, requires "being more open and ready for the unforeseen."[70] Whether the man fulfils this mode of openness is of less concern than the recognition the painter gives to his potential. Here, the building's predicament helps to ensure such a condition of being is maintained. For although, according to Heidegger,

[69] Heidegger, M., 1971. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Hofstadter, A. Perennial Classics, p. 211
[70] Ibid. p. 214

a building can never "fill out the nature of dwelling," it can in its condition, contribute to a heightened sense of the poetic. The situation of the windmill is precarious as if the same wind that turns its sails could just as easily lift it off its fragile support. There is something about this provisional gesture which encourages one to consider the meaning of its making, beyond simply grinding grain. A building which is sensitive to the elements and open in its view—it becomes tempting to think it as the painter's offering to dwelling, envisaged as a modest shelter from which to witness the world.

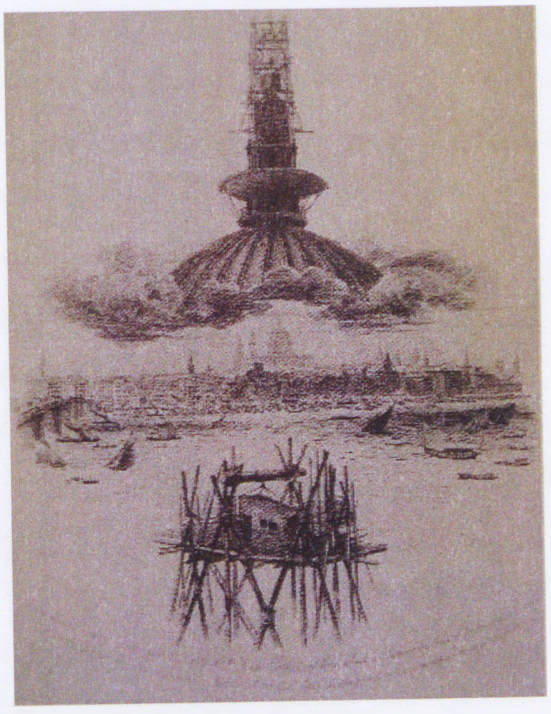

Fig. 4

There is evidence of other buildings with similarly intricate scaffolds, later constructed for the specific purpose of painting panoramas. St Paul's Cathedral provided the foundation for a small wooden structure that was erected to record a panoramic view of London. In this example, Thomas Horner often slept overnight in order to pre-empt the morning smog.[71] Three different illustrations describe the dome's scaffold, the artist's makeshift studio and a suggestion of the city that supposedly such a vantage would afford. However, the central panorama does not turn out to be a representation of what

[71] Comment, B., 1999. *The Panorama*. Reaktion Books, p.113

the artist could see, but a distant depiction of the cathedral from where he was looking. It becomes apparent through this displacement of image, that he wants us to consider his place of work more than the subject of his sight. A correspondent concern for the painter's dwelling can be identified in the Bruegel. If we follow the thought that his painting is also a conflation of both viewing tower and view within a single scene, then the windmill can be his studio dwelling, his private place of looking.

Perhaps it's natural to relate any building established at altitude with birds and flight. This is particularly so with the Horner design, where many sticklike joists cross and interweave to make his studio seemingly more avian than suited for human use. The impression is confirmed in the way the shelter nestles on its base, as if to ensure any creation developed within is lovingly incubated. Bruegel's version seems to perch rather settle comfortably, and has what looks like its own ramp, bringing it closer to a chicken coop than something fit for nobler flight. With both dwellings there is delight in the way they have been rendered miniature, with every leaf, plank and rope made to account. The small square openings of windows and doors draw one's imagination inwards, to consider how the spaces might be divided and arranged. For it is in the purpose of diminutive houses, to marvel at delicate furnishings and how paintings, reduced beyond postage stamps, offer entry into still smaller worlds. Susan Stewart identifies in the promise of the dollhouse, "an infinitely profound interiority:"

> *A house within a house, the dollhouse not only represents the houses' articulation of the tension between inner and outer spheres, of exteriority and interiority—it also represents the tension between two modes of interiority.*[72]

Fig. 5

[72] Stewart, S., 1993. *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection.* Duke University Press, p.61.

However, to enter further into Bruegel's studio would be contrary to his inclination. Nearly his entire oeuvre is preoccupied with exterior worlds, and it's in these peopled landscapes that one is likely to come closer to his thinking. The windmill looks out onto a land where every action and facial expression can be observed and weighed for signs of dissent or even mild reserve. For although there is humour and affection in scenes of children jumping puddles, dropped hats and horses bolting, it's difficult to ignore the darker turn of mob cruelty and state oppression.[73] As a panoptic tower, a surveying platform for a complete panorama, the windmill could serve as a convenient prototype for Bentham's design;[74] it's a proposition that makes surveillance potentially constant, while ensuring a reciprocal view into the building is denied. This latter restriction is perceived by Foucault to be a primary source of observational power.

> *In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that a power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes that tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so.* [75]

Fig. 6

[73] Kavaler has drawn attention to the stricter control Philip II exerted on Antwerp in the mid 1660s as the reason for the appearance of images of authoritarianism in Bruegel's painting of this time. Kavaler, E., M. 1999. *Pieter Bruegel, Parables of Order and Enterprise*. Cambridge University Press. p. 213

[74] Michel Foucault credits Jeremy Bentham with the design of the Panopticon. Foucault, M., 1975. *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Lane, A., Penguin Books, p. 200.

[75] Ibid. p.201.

Yet to interpret the mill as some penitentiary operation would be to jump too far into an era of technological control. The painting belongs to an earlier time when punishment still belonged to medieval spectacle in the pubic sphere. Foucault, when addressing the *body condemned*, quotes Benjamin Teerters to convey a transitional attitude to methods of punishment.

> *I can only hope that a time is not far away when gallows, pillory, scaffold, flogging and wheel will, in the history of punishment, be regarded as the marks of the barbarity of centuries and of countries and as proofs of the feeble influence of reason and religion over the human mind." (1787)*[76]

Fig. 7

The landscape onto which the windmill looks is filled with gallows, scaffolds, wheels and other scattered signs of death: skulls, gibbets, piles of bones on which dogs feed and the expectant flight of crows all variously signal a steady progression to life's end. There is diversity in the way the condemned men are given alternative means to reach

[76] Ibid. p.10.

their destination, one traditionally under the weight of the cross, the other two in the cart. The painter suggests it maybe more agonising for the two in the cart, having to sit passively for their punishment with only the company of a confessor for consolation. Whereas Christ can be occupied with physical exertion, these men wait as the wheels, clogged in mud, sluggishly turn.

The presence of priestly solicitude is registered in records quoted by Foucault during the tortuous death of Damien the regicide.

> *Several confessors went up to him and spoke to him at length; he willingly kissed the crucifix that was held out to him; he opened his lips and repeated: "Pardon Lord."*[77]

Fig. 8

We are given another picture of instinctive cross kissing, in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*,

> *At that very moment, when his weakness was beginning, the priest quickly with a rapid movement, silently put the cross to his lips, such a little cross, a square silver one – and kept it to his lips every minute. And every time the cross touched his lips, he opened his eyes and his legs*

[77] Ibid p. 4

> *moved on. He kissed the cross greedily, he seemed to be in a hurry to kiss it, as though, he were eager not to forget to take something with him in case of need, but I doubt if he was conscious of any religious feeling at the time.... His head, his face is as white as paper, the priest is holding up the cross, the man greedily puts out his blue lips and looks and— knows everything.*[78]

Though Bruegel's condemned only hold their crucifixes, the same paper white faces accompany the dread of approaching death. One looks directly heavenward, the other appears introspective, yet neither seem to notice the crowd who gather around their cart with morbid curiosity. Dostoyevsky, after describing the man's appearance and gestures, further comments, "and —knows everything." One can question what knowledge this might be and whether language is able to say it. The author continues to imagine the mind of the criminal.[79]

> *It is odd that people seldom faint at those last moments. On the contrary, the brain tremendously alive and active, must, I suppose, be working hard, hard, hard, like an engine going at full speed. I imagine all sorts of thoughts – all unfinished and absurd too, perhaps, quite irrelevant thoughts – must be constantly throbbing through his brain: "The man is looking at me – he has a wart on his forehead – one of his buttons on the executioner's coat is rusty....." and all the time he knows everything and remembers everything; there is one point which one can never forget, and one can't forget and everything goes round and round it, round that point.*[80]

"Everything goes round and round it, round that point." Hence to know everything is to know in part and to focus on parts of parts. For a mind working in an agitated state, "with all kinds of fragmentary thoughts, all unfinished and absurd," through their very

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[78] Dostoyevsky, F., 1869. *The Idiot*. Trans. Magarshack, D. Penguin Books. 1955. p. 87
[79] It's at a moment where the novel is said to become partly autobiographical. In 1849 The author was arrested and sentenced to death for participating in the 'Petrashevsky Circle;' he was reprieved at the last moment but sentenced to penal servitude in Siberia until 1854. Ibid p.1
[80] Ibid p. 88

incompletion, refer to an idea of the whole.[81] Yet this whole is not the same as a totality of knowledge, instead it involves an intense sensitivity to what is present, and an acute observation of normally passed over warts and buttons. It is by way of such minutiae that the condemned holds desperately to life. In one of Wittgenstein's propositions he offers,

> *Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death. If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits.*[82]

Fig 9

Eternity is understood as spatial rather than temporal, where our visual field endlessly expands into the present. Bruegel too, refrains from picturing death as an event; his inclination is to push the visual field to its limits, painting leaves on trees beyond even the circle of Golgotha. This endeavour demands time, the time of the painter working in his studio as windmill sails turn outside. Bachelard reflects,

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[81] Talking of the fragment, "It is simultaneously the whole and each part. Each fragment stands for itself and for that from which it is detached. Totality of the fragment itself in its completed individuality. It is thus identically the plural totality of fragments, which does not make up a whole (in, say a mathematical mode) but replicates the whole, the fragmentary itself, in each fragment" Nancy, J.L. and Lacoue-Barthe, B.1998. *The Literary Absolute, theory of Literature in German Romanticism,* State University of New York Press. p.44

[82] Wittgenstein, L. 1922. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* (6.4312) Trans. Pears, D.F. and McGuiness, B.F. Routledge, 2002. p.87

All small things must evolve slowly, and certainly a long period of leisure, in a quiet, was needed to miniaturize the world. Also one must love space to describe it as minutely as though there were world molecules, to enclose an entire spectacle in a molecule of drawing.[83]

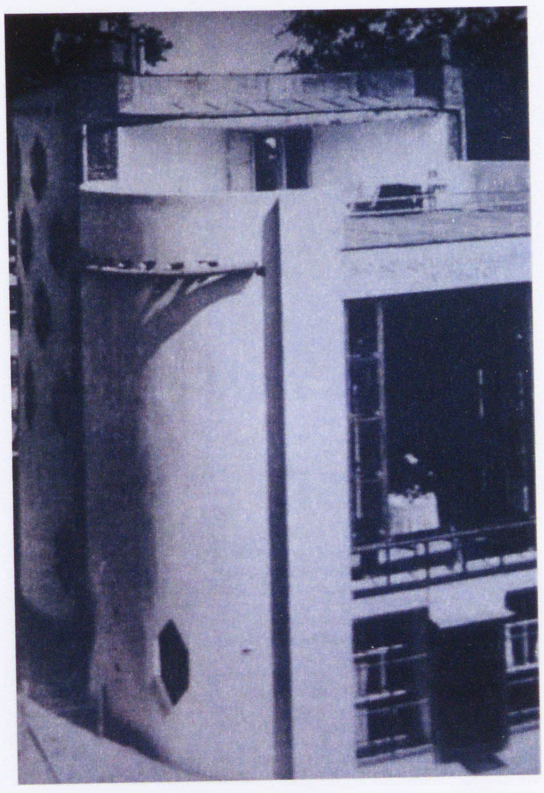

Fig 10

Another circular, insular building is Melnikov's cylindrical house studio. Like the windmill, the simplified exterior of the building promises more complex workings within. A drawing exists from the early twenties revealing the architect working out its interlocking dials. As is often the case with initial drawings, there is a restless energy, a sense of wanting quick resolution to problems envisaged. Small circles turn towards bigger wheels as intricate solutions are mapped from general principles. For a building characterised by its excessive light, these early workings give way to heavy shadow as repetitive marks and emphatic re-workings join and smudge. The drawing recalls the

[83] Bachelard, G., 1958. *Poetics of Space.* Trans. Jolas, M. Boston: Beacon press, 1994. p.159

machinic spaces of those Piranesi etchings, disorientating and feverish in execution; as if somehow the fact that things are not quite clear betray a darkness of mind. Another association, perhaps given too easily to preliminary drawings, is that the working out of things on paper betray the workings of thought itself; that such is the diagrammatic nature of those penned spaces that they easily shift and stand in for the brain, "tremendously alive and active working hard."

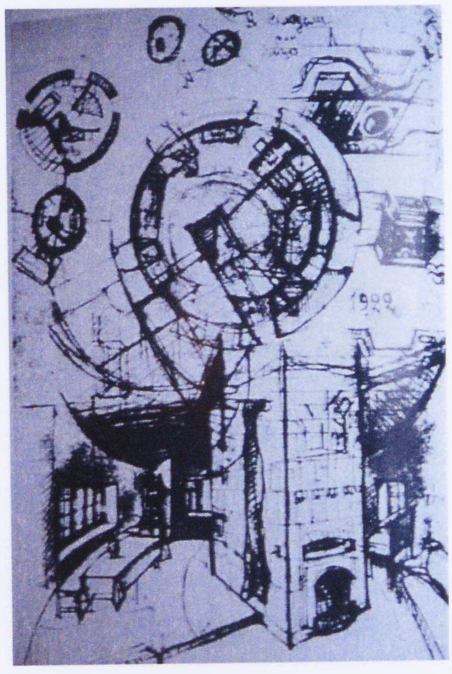

Fig. 11

The shape of the building, the two conjoined cylinders and hexagonal openings, speak of a structure beyond prosaic dwelling. The symmetric geometry, clear white surfaces, and remote, upright attitude, appear designed to provoke neighbouring rumour and invite theories of intrigue. What lies within such wilful esoteric lines? Who could be so assured and separate, with even the name and profession of its maker entitled on the façade? The platonic resolution of form and eclipsing spheres suggests an appeal to some mystical planetary alignment or the overlapping halos of orthodox saints, as if something closed and Masonic occurs within. Then, there are those windows. There can be few buildings with so many windows, over sixty in all, which remain so insistently insular. To call them windows at all may not be quite right, for these are more like holes, segments puncturing the otherwise smooth surface of the outer skin. It may even

be their very quantity that works to deny any notion of view and emphasise their alternative function as luminaries. For the existence of these openings seems to be wholly about light rather than vision. As mediators, they absorb from the outside but give no view in return. There can be no looking in. It is somehow fitting that their origin can be traced to a fortification surrounding Moscow's ancient Belgorod district as they effect to alienate and repel the world. Their honey comb shape, repeated so insistently, yet with an irregular pattern, seems to invite and then forbid interpretation, as if to know the reason for their arrangement is for the initiated only.

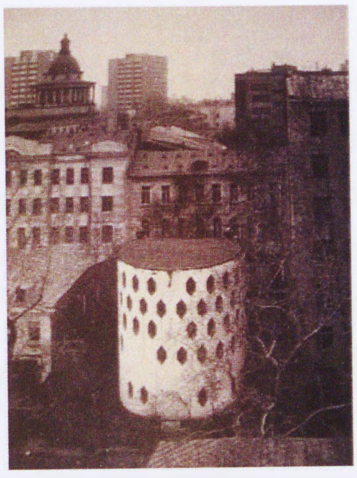

Fig. 12

It is not just the windows' shape that might convey an association with bees but also the way in which the surface curve of the exterior, if sliced open, would reveal a conjunction of interlocking work and living spaces where the incubation of thought and sleep meet. The architect wanted to integrate the relationship between living and working, dwelling and thinking throughout his building; hence living room, studio and bedroom alternate and dissect each other like a layered Venn diagram. There have been models made of this house that reveal its interior and its interiority. It is said that he designed it with the motif of the Russian hearth in mind[84], that somehow he wanted the notion of warmth encased throughout the building. This sense of a hearth creating the heart of dwelling, around which inhabitants can sit and talk or remain silent but nevertheless gather, compels. If a house burns it is often the hearth that remains, it

[84] Strigalev, A., 2000. "The Cylindrical House-Studio of 1927" in, *Konstantin Melnikov, and the Construction of Moscow*. Ed. Fosso, M. et al. Skira editore , Milan. p.90.

represents the core of the building, its most interior part. To conceive this notion of hearth/heart is to make the whole building turn inwards and be inward. To think of Melnikov's building is to think of its inside.

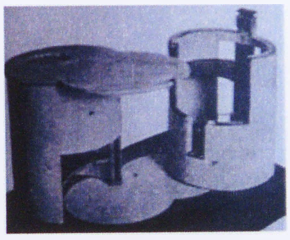

Fig 13

The bedroom was painted warm yellow. The architect's son made a painting of this room, as if it belonged to a fragment of some medieval icon elevating sleep to an almost sacred activity. The plaster coated window sills are rounded as are all edges where wall meets floor, in order to ease cleaning and ensure absence of dust. For Melnikov sleep was an area of intense study.[85] His beds were stone slabs that rise up from the floor, more like altars or plinths. He wrote about a life time of sleep,

> *twenty years of lying down without consciousness, without guidance as one journeys into the sphere of mysterious worlds to touch unexplored depths of the sources of curative sacraments, and perhaps of miracles.*[86]

Fig 14

[85] In 1929 he designed a "Laboratory of Sleep" for workers, in the "Green city." See, Starr, F. 1978 *Melinkov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, p179

[86] Ibid, p.177

From these words sleep becomes a means of journeying from one world to another, mysterious and indeterminate, a place for works reserve to be restored and nourished. Yet such spaces have a way of shifting tone, from sleep's space to death's space. For the architect, sleep's curative sacraments soon turned to restless slumber. From the 30s onwards Stalin's censure became his incubus, frustrating creative thought whether at sleep or work. Blanchot wrote,

> *And if you fail to sleep, exhaustion finally sickens you, and this sickness prevents sleeping.*[87]

In such light the warm glow darkens into night, those concrete beds become ever closer to mortuary slabs. Without course to sleep Melnikov turned to dreaming, He could no longer work or build his buildings; he could only turn inwards to past projects.

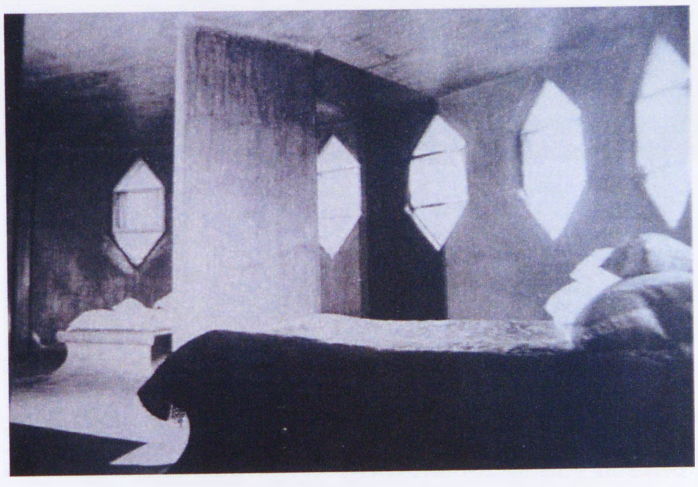

Fig 15

The beginning of those beds lay in the commission the architect received to design Lenin's sarcophagus. In this work, his first built structure, he had to provide a plinth of sleep for a corpse forever alive, a place of pilgrimage, a place of looking in, of viewing, of encasing and preserving. A tomb with a window. The cadaver became an object to contemplate, to admire, to revere, a work of art, a Bentham in his box. There is something determinedly circular in how this first work, which signals his birth, his

[87] Blanchot, M. 1955. *The Space of Literature.* Trans. Smock, A. University of Nebraska Press. 1989 P.266

beginning as a practitioner, presents itself as a death work. As if some how opportunity demanded he earn through experience what he had conceived through commission. He could not know his cylindrical house studio, designed with such optimism, as an ideal space for living and work would become instead a place for sleep, a house for a corpse.

Fig 16

One other account in Dostoevsky's novel, exposes Myshkin to another windowed tomb, Holbein's painting of the "Dead Christ" which the author himself had experienced in Basel. The corpse having come full circle from the cross lies in cold sleep with only a thin sheet to separate body from stone. He writes of it,

> *Here one cannot help being struck with the idea that if death is so horrible and if the laws of nature are so powerful, then how can they be overcome? How can they be overcome when even he did not conquer them.*[88]

[88] Dostoyevsky, F. *The Idiot*. p. 419.

Fig 17

Myshkin's response to this painting is very different to his previous image of an execution. In the previous image, the approach towards death provokes an agitated state of the mind that, as with the Bruegel painting, becomes attentive to every detail. His experience and observation of the world becomes heightened, it has the affect of thrusting the condemned back into the day. In Blanchot's words,

> *Day arises, day is done. That is what makes it indefatigable, industrious, and creative; that is what makes the incessant labour of the day.*[89]

Though the condemned in both the Bruegel and the first Myshkin image approach death, death's space is still very much of the day and in the world, where mind is tremendously alive and working hard. In contrast the prince's exposure to the Basel corpse renders him helpless, overwhelmed by a death so powerful, it affects inertia, an experience of the night. Blanchot speaks of the *other* night not belonging in relation to the day, a place of indeterminacy. He writes,

> *But in the night it is what one never joins; it is repetition that will not leave off, satiety that has nothing, the sparkle of something baseless and without depth.*[90]

"Repetition that will not leave off"; for Melnikov there was to be no looking out onto the world after his work was stopped. He was left only with his circular rooms and beds, and an experience of the night without sleep. He wrote in 1961,

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[89] Blanchot, M. 1955. *The Space of Literature*, p. 167.
[90] Ibid. p. 168.

Certain feelings have come to me several times during my life. Dwelling upon them, I would, for seconds at a time arrive at the sensation of a total emptiness of the spirit. [At such times] there existed no world at all, and there existed nothing for me to replace it with, and this nothing-ness shook my whole being. I do not know if I have had moments of feeling that the end of the universe was at hand.[91]

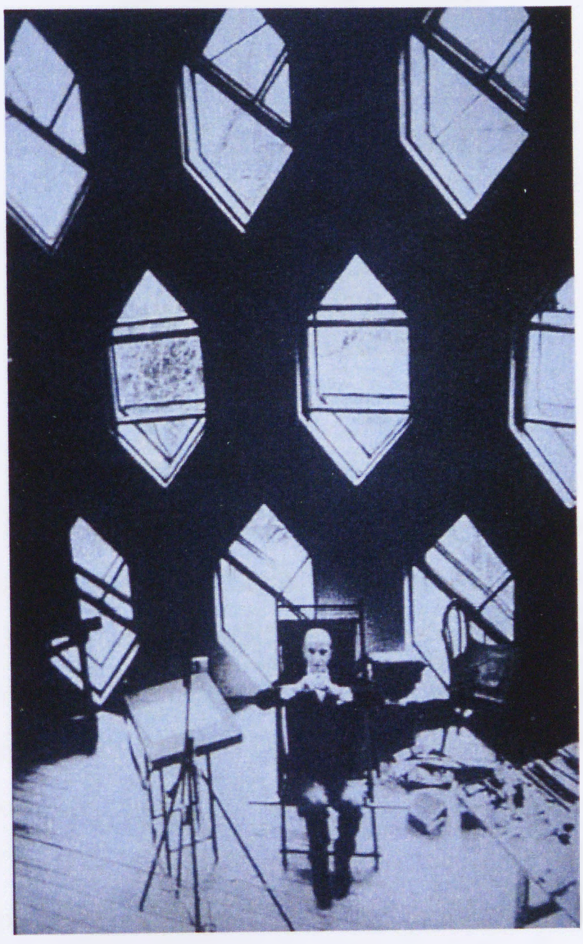

Fig 18

"I am alone, but not lonely. I am protected from the din of a great city by the inner vastness of the individual. Now I am 77 years old. I am at home and the silence attained clearly holds within its depths the memory of the distant past." K. S. Melnikov, 1967[92]

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[91] Starr, F. 1978 *Melinkov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society*, p. 244
[92] Strigalev, A., 2000. *Konstantin Melnikov, and the Construction of Moscow*, p.90

Chapter 3

Magic Architecture

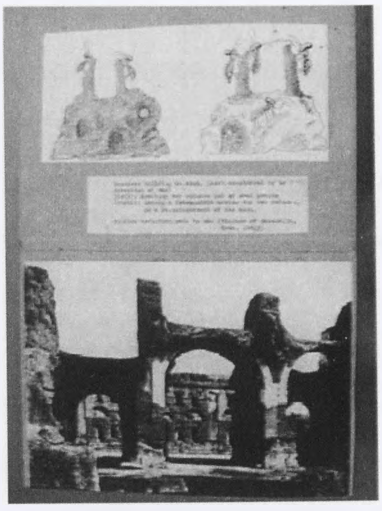

Fig. 2

A scrap book is filled with facsimiled drawings, typed and pasted quotations and captions positioned beside old photographs of architectural ruins. On the cover Kiesler has attached a label hastily written in felt tip pen on masking tape, the title is "Magic Architecture."[93] On one leaf there is a drawing describing how termites build an arch. The drawing is reminiscent of the kind found in school exercise books of an age before learning becomes more specialised and loses some of its wonder. The ants seem to be chewing a piece of earth, combining it with spittle and patiently depositing each mouthful on top of the next; inviting consideration as to the number needed to complete the project.

There is also something childlike in the presentation of the page, in its direct and simple procedure. The most basic method of montage has been employed, to match like with like; the act of cutting out, of finding and collecting pictorial affinities that when put

[93] Magic Architecture is the name of an unpublished folio Kiesler compiled in the 1940s. He earlier wrote, "Magic architecture is a generator. It can operate on any scale. Any cell of habitation is a nucleus for a power house of joyful living.... It holds the balance between the two extremes of man: a) a desire for the machine , and b) the denial of science. Its magic consists solely in the discovery of capacities in the natural ore of a being and by refining it brings forth to the latent qualities." Kiesler, F.J., 1934. *Selected Writings*. Ed. Gohr, S. and Luyken, G., Verlag Gerd Hatje 1996, p. 34

together stimulate recognition and further thought. Benjamin in his essay on collecting talked of childlike modes of acquisition, whereby existence can be renewed through numerous processes of touching, painting or naming things[94]. The scrap book lends itself most appropriately to this act of renewal and might explain why Kiesler chose such a form to frame his ideas. He plays both collector and child by the informal way he joins a diagrammatic drawing with typed text and a photograph which in turn, demands a similarly playful attitude when reflecting on their meaning.

The intention of this page is to reveal the correlation between the architecture of man and structures found in the natural world. He brings together the visually persuasive comparison of a Roman arch in a state of decay and the diagrammatic inner workings of a termite mound. The choice of a Hellenic example introduces an historical note; we become mindful of the brick's gradual corruption, its substance breaking down and turning once more into the earth from where the termites build. We are offered an entropic relationship of nature to artifice; nature building anew its provisional dirt and spittle columns, and history meeting it through a process of ruination. Seen this way, the scrap book page is not merely a presentation of like building structures but also functions allegorically in terms of progress and corruption.

Turning the page, we are presented with yet more relations; this time a picture of the Coliseum is positioned beside a schematic mountainous section of a "termitary". Again, pleasure can be found in the immediate visual recognition of their likeness, accompanied by the uncertainty as to which is intended original and which mimetic. Perhaps by offering the two for comparison, Kiesler is inviting us to consider whether the ant hill or the amphitheatre should be most appreciated for its likeness to the other. Yet it's more probable he is simply enjoying their contribution to his larger thesis on *corealisme*.[95] He repeats the system of informative labelling, "Schematic section

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[94] Walter Benjamin: "This Childlike element which in a collector mingles with the element of old age. For children can always accomplish the renewal of existence in a hundred unfailing ways. Among children, collecting is only one process of renewal; other processes are the painting of objects, the cutting out of figures, the application of decals – the whole range of childlike modes of acquisition, from touching things to giving them names.", Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 1992 Fontana Press, p. 63.

[95] Kiesler published his *Manifeste de Corealisme* in 1949 in the French architectural review *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. Through it he sought to transmit his ideas pertaining to the Endless House and develop his aspiration to bring together "a complex system of interrelationships – material and ideal, natural and cultural – into which the occupants become drawn, with all their physical, mental, and social

through a Termitary, showing tower of superimposed arches. Cell of the queen at the base." In so doing he draws attention to the complex structural organisation of the insects' chambers. There is sophistication in their arrangement, various uses and implied hierarchy; so too in the provision of drainage. In this way nature is admired for engineering that takes it close to Rome.

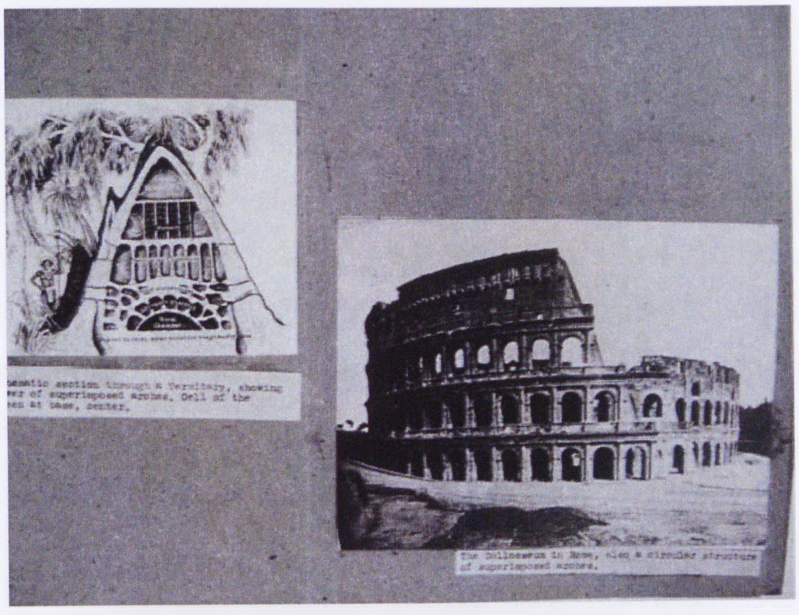


Fig. 3

However, looking at the diagram next to the photograph also influences how we read the Coliseum. Rather than the classicism or engineering achievement usually attributed to this landmark, another dynamic is involved. The quality that brings it close to insect architecture is the sense that these dark cavities have not so much been built as chewed out from within. The deterioration of the rock gives the impression of an already existing mass which has been patiently tunnelled until only its shell remains, leaving the gnawed marks of something animal. This resonance with the natural world seems appropriate to its original intention as an arena subject to laws of survival and death. In turn, the competitive violence of gladiatorial activity that enforced notions of class and imperial power, are reciprocated in the anthropocentric naming of nature. The

constraints and with all their mythical and magical conceptions." See Bogner, D. 2001. *Frederick J. Kiesler, Endless Space*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, p. 22

description of "the royal chamber" at the base of the termite mound confirms this tendency to allocate notions of hierarchy to the animal kingdom.

The difference between the two images lies in their relation to interiority. The Roman building's dense compilation of columns and arcades occur around its circumference, encircling an open stage for human and animal expenditure. The termite mound in contrast, hides its workings within a mountain of earth, needing the brutal dissection of a schematic drawing to reveal the secrets of its elaborate design. This drawing prompts the thought that if such a cutting away was to occur, what crazed and rampant activity would result. This image can be brought to a painting that is both termite mound and Coliseum. There is something animal about Bruegel's tower which though still in the process of completion, already has the demeanour of a carcass laid bare. The exterior stone is fleshy-grey in hue and is distinguished from the more livid colouring of the brickwork within; this and its skeletal frame completes a disquieting image of a hunk of meat whose flesh is being parasitically unpicked.

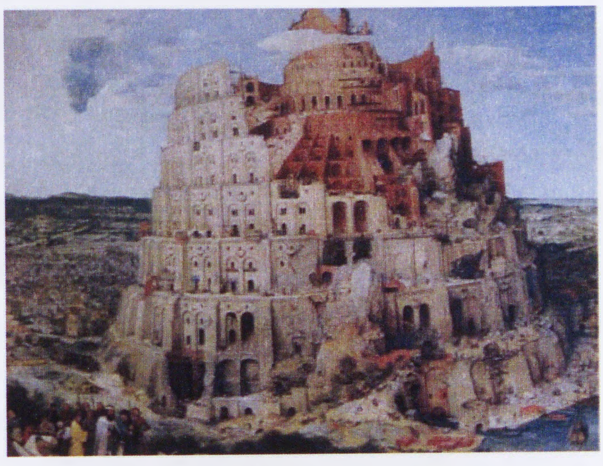


Fig. 4

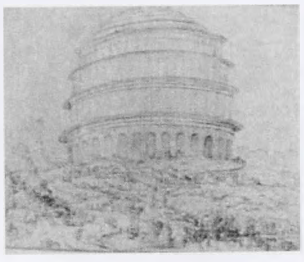
Bataille wrote in the Labyrinth,

> *In the case where many cities abdicate their central function in favour of a single city, an empire forms around a capital where sovereignty and gods are concentrated; the gravitation around a centre then degrades the existence of peripheral cities, where organs that constituted the totality of being wilt. By degrees, a more and more complex movement of group composition raises to the*

point of universality the human race, but it seems that universality, at the summit, causes all the existence to explode and decomposes it with violence. The universal god destroys rather than supports the human aggregates that raise his ghost. He himself is dead, whether a mythical delirium set him up to be adored as a cadaver covered with wounds, or whether through his very universality he becomes, more than any other, incapable of stopping the loss of being with cracked partitions of ipseity.[96]

Rather than attending to the conventional moral of Babel where pride is punished, Bruegel seems to have been more interested in painting collaboration on a grand project and the inherent frustrations involved. He has painted a super-city, an empire capital which has yet to reach fruition, but already seems to be decomposing in its very complexity. Roman arches combined with medieval buttressing and construction techniques, invite one to think across epochs, while its mountainous makeup speaks of geological time. However, before one presumes that centuries of combined building experience might point to seamless historical progress, the painter prompts a closer look at how things are actually put together. There are two contradictory methods of progression which makes completion of the structure improbable. The exterior skin of the building rises in a spiral whilst the inner levels appear to be rings of stacked vaults ascending vertically.[97] There is no suggestion how these two systems could meet; like languages with conflicting grammars, reconciliation seems unlikely. Moreover the columns are set perpendicular to the spiral slope which implies any result would be lopsided.

Fig. 5



[96] Bataille, G., 2004. *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, Trans. and Ed. by Stoekl, A. University of Minnesota Press, p. 175

[97] Royalton-Kisch sights a slightly earlier drawing of Babel, (1519-40) by Van Sorel reveals where Bruegel might have found the spiral form for his Babel. See Royalton-Kisch, M., 2001. "Pieter Bruegel as a Draftsman: The Changing Image" in *Pieter Bruegel the Elder.* Orenstein, N. ed., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, p.34

The spiral as a form is always turning, it gives the impression of continuous ascent whilst never actually increasing its altitude; as a motif then, it suggests endlessness without progress. The alternative movement taking place within, where the layers of arched circles gradually ascend in the manner of a pyramid, each level decreasing in circumference as the summit approaches; implies progression towards a finite moment of completion. If the tower is to be interpreted as an architectural signifier of history, within its construction there are contradictory theories of understanding how time unfolds. In an essay on the spiral, Kielser wrote of Bernouilli's first mathematical theorisation of the form as "logarithmic."[98]

> *"This discovery, namely that of "perpetual renaissance" delighted Bernouilli to such a degree that he requested the image of the spiral to be engraved on his tombstone. The inscription reads: Eadem mutato resurgo.*
>
> *That indeed seems to be the secret of the spiral's irresistible hypnotism: continuous rebirth on new planes without losing contact with former ones. An expansion of steps without halt. Continuous motion from within its own force. Power of birth and re-birth."*[99]

Kiesler used the spiral to denote endlessness frequently in projects,[100] but to think of its significance in relation to the Bruegel building is instructive, both in the notion of rebirth and the tomb. For Bernouilli the spiral, as a symbol of rebirth inscribed on his tomb, might have brought him some relief from morbid thoughts of death and decay. Yet when applied to the Babel tower the image is less convincing. This stone spiral façade has not managed to cover over the rotting corpse of bloodied arcades that remain exposed. Rather than a symbol of *resurgo,* its incompleteness makes this attempt at reaching heaven by reason, this built resurrection that is Babel, look enfeebled. For Bataille, the pyramid housed the Pharoah's dried out corpse maintaining "what escapes

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[98] Frederick J. Kiesler, 1996. Selected Writings", "Art and Architecture, Notes on the Spiral-theme in Recent Architecture", Siegfried Gohr and Gunda Luyken ed., Stuttgart: Verla Gerd Hatje, p.47

[99] Ibid.

[100] See: *Spiral Plan*, Paris, 1925; *Plan for the Endless Theatre,* Vienna, 1923-25; *Space Stage* "International Exhibition of New Theatre Techniques", Vienna 1924. Lisa Phillips, 1989 "Frederick Kiesler" Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, pp 36, 44, 53

from dying man,"[101] but in this painting the pyramid inside the spiral *is* the corpse and it is still blood red flesh that has yet to turn to bone. In this structure where pyramid and spiral struggle to impose their law, it is the cadaver covered with wounds that seems to break through. It is as if the worms and ants have eaten from the core outwards and penetrated the spiralled stone tomb.

Fig. 6

It is notable that Bruegel's tower, which by nature should reach for the sky, has so much to do with what is subterranean and base. Yet this is not so irregular if one considers its origin. The tendency with towers is to focus on their elevation and ignore the surrounding churches wooden houses and medieval walls, rivers and sewers. The miniaturist has described and mapped every tree, bell tower, windmill, and paddle boat of the surrounding settlement. He identifies different approaches to scaffolding, quarrying, and hoisting. In accounting for every incident, the artist implies time has already passed; he has provided makeshift wooden shelters for the labourers to cook, wash clothes and rest. The origin of these dwellings can be found in the epic drawings he made while crossing the Alps. He depicted clusters of houses nestled into mountain clefts, the contrast of scale serving to emphasise the awe experienced by a medieval traveller. However, in the Babel painting, the mountain is used differently; rather than inspiring wonder through its alienating proportion to the minute shacks, it has been

[101] Bataille, G., 1985. "The Obelisk" in *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings*, p.216

subsumed by the building itself. The mountain as a symbol of unvanquished sublime has been buried by the enormity and endlessness of the human project.

Fig. 7

Mountains stand in certain traditions for what is highest, where clean air and panoramic views encompass all.[102] They provide the ledge from where Friedrich's wanderer above a sea of fog can clear his head of soiled everyday thoughts and contemplate a Hegelian universal.[103] Bruegel's development complicates matters; the building has become a mountain, with the masons' dwellings parasitically infesting what were once unattainable peaks. A taboo is broken as the everyday enters the heavenly realm and muddies things. In place of romantic contemplation, problems of physics are solved with practical experiment, sweat and the earthiest economic endeavour. For inevitably this edifice of capital must suck everything from the match box industry below. It is the monetary demand that "degrades the existence of peripheral cities, where organs that constituted the totality of being wilt." The incompleteness of the project suggests it is in this way, through economic exhaustion, that "The universal god destroys rather than supports the human aggregates that raise his ghost."

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[102] "How expressively and powerfully does the history of mountains speak to mankind, how sublimely it presents to mankind the divine essence in direct relationship to God, in that it seems all at once to deny every transitory vanity of human earthly existence. And how clearly this history reveals itself through certain strata and mountain types, so that even the untrained viewer arrives at some sense of history. Artists are at liberty to accentuate such aspects and so doing provide, in a higher sense, a historical landscape." (Carl Gustav Carus, 1831.) Mitchel. T., F.,1993. *Art and Science in German Lanscape Painting 1770-1840.* Oxford University Press, p. 152

[103] Casper David Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* 1818, oil on canvass, Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Hegel writes in his commentary on "Art and the Sublime", "In sublimity, on the contrary, external existence, in which the substance is brought before contemplation, is degraded in comparison with the substance, since this degradation and servitude is the one and only whereby the *one* God can be illustrated in art; this is because the one God is explicitly without shape and is incapable of expression in his positive essence in anything finite and mundane." Hegel, G. W. F.,1835. *Hegel's Aesthetics, Lectures on Fine Art, Volume 1.*Trans. by Knox T. M., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, p.371

The pyramid mountain then, signifying both utopian ideal and authoritarian power has come to a halt, though not, as one would expect from the direct intervention of a heavenly realm, but from within its own weakened structure. The law, whether architectural or economic, by which pyramids climb, requires a firm, wide foundation that can take increasing weight as it ascends. Yet within this tower, the dark cavernous holes at its base betray another law at work, one that has been burrowing away, undermining any vertical aspiration. Bataille talked of Marx's "Old mole" revolution hollowing out chambers "in a decomposed soil repugnant to the delicate nose of the utopians."[104] This involved a subterranean action of economic facts that undermine the capitalist pyramid.

Fig. 8

For Benjamin, an allegorical use of nature was the chief means by which Baroque poets contemplated history's decay.[105] Often, emblems of the time depicted motifs of death such as skulls and ruins to signify inevitable death and the vanity of human achievement. One of particular note, by Florentius Schoonhovious, shows a skeleton

[104] "Old mole," Marx's resounding expression for the complete satisfaction of the revolutionary outburst of the masses, must be understood in relation to the notion of geological uprising as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto.*" Bataille, G., 1985. *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, p. 35

[105] Benjamin, 1988, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by Osborne, J. Verso.

holding a crown and sceptre and standing in front of a broken city; beside it a book is covered over with ivy on which a serpent sleeps. The Latin inscription reads:

"Rulers fall, cities perish, nothing of
What Rome once was remains.
The past is empty, nothing.
Only those things of learning and
Books that give fame and respect
Escape the funeral pyre create
By time and death."

An important characteristic of allegory and its visual manifestation in the emblem is the reflective distance it gives to the contemplation of history. This quality allowed Benjamin to reuse Baroque emblems as a means to interpret the transitory nature of capitalist culture.[106] Though it is not at all apparent that this was Kiesler's concern, there is something crudely emblematic in his scrap book page of picture/caption/picture; the difference being that the moralising inscription of the Baroque image has been replaced by a descriptive label. The economy of means whereby visual image and linguistic sign are directly combined suggests that he did not want extensive explanation to interfere with the directness of the image but rather show things simply as facts. Benjamin's method of using quotation has been suggested as "naming rather than speaking," [107] that to use quotation was his way of dealing with "thought things"; as if the essence of what needed to be said lay within the fragment and unearthing was necessary in order for meaning to be laid open. Arendt described the process, "as one obtains water by drilling for it from a source concealed in the depths of the earth."[108] Cutting up and pasting labels to images is a form of piecing together; a retrieval from an earlier dispersal, Babel's confusion in reverse.

'Concealment "in the depths of the earth," though appearing in Arendt's introduction to Benjamin, is a phrase he would be unlikely to use. It belongs to a very different tone of

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[106] Buck-Morris, S., 1997. *The Dialectics of Seeing* Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project," MIT Press 1997. p. 164

[107] See, Arendt's introduction to *Illuminations.* Benjamin, W. *Illuminations*, 1999, Pimlico Press, p 52

[108] Ibid.

thinking more resonant of her former tutor.[109] For Heigdegger, earth "shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it."[110] The two men were contrary in almost every cultural, political and aesthetic concern they touched,[111] even if Arendt finds a certain affinity in their attention and respect for language[112], their attitude to earth fundamentally differs. In Heidegger, any attempt to penetrate it is futile; recognising the need to leave it undisclosed and unexplained if *althea* is to be revealed. Benjamin, in contrast, used quotation to 'mine' the past and wanted to, "to plumb the depths of language and thought...by drilling rather than excavating"[113]. Like Heidegger, he had no desire to explain, but in quotation finds an alternative. For, whereas excavating involves a gradual unlayering of the earth's surface in order to reveal what's beneath, drilling has the effect of leaving undisturbed the earth's surface while penetrating its core. Arendt mentions Benjamin's process of,

> *tearing fragments out of their context and arranging them afresh in such a way that they illustrated one another and were able to prove their raison d'être in a free floating state, as it were. It definitely was a sort of surrealistic montage*[114]

Fig. 9

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[109] Arendt comments in her introduction, that, "Without realising it, Benjamin actually had more in common with [Heidegger] ... than he did with the dialectical subtleties of his Marxist friends'; for like the Frieburg existentialist, he "listened to the tradition that does not give itself up to the past but thinks of the present." Ibid p. 50

[110] Heidegger M., 1936. "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Basic Writings*. ed. by Farrel Krell, D., Routledge, 1978, p. 172

[111] For extended comment see note 9 of appendix entitled "Endless Afterwords"

[112] Arendt quotes Benjamin, "that each truth has its home, its ancestral palace, in language, that this palace was built with the oldest "logoi," to make one think of Heidegger's essays written in the forties and fifties. *Illuminaions*, p. 51

[113] Ibid, p. 52

[114] Ibid, p. 51

The termites on Kiesler's page appear to be engaged in a similar activity of tearing and repositioning fragments in a free floating state. Given the visual play of this montage, it could be suggesting a new anthropocentric theory that insects lay behind the building of the Roman arch. The parity of animal with human opens up further visionary possibilities that Kiesler mentions later in the same folio,

> *It was after the first world war; before the second was in progress, another European group developed a counter-action. Starting in literature, it flooded into painting and sculpture and into architecture by way of fantastic furnishings. They did not design houses. In the dualism of Vision and Fact, Surrealism resurrected Vision. Fact was only retained as an ingredient of man's subconscious. In truth, Vision should create out of itself, automatically. The new aesthetics were anti-machine. Man's house does not matter as long as his mind is sheltered by subconscious living*[115]

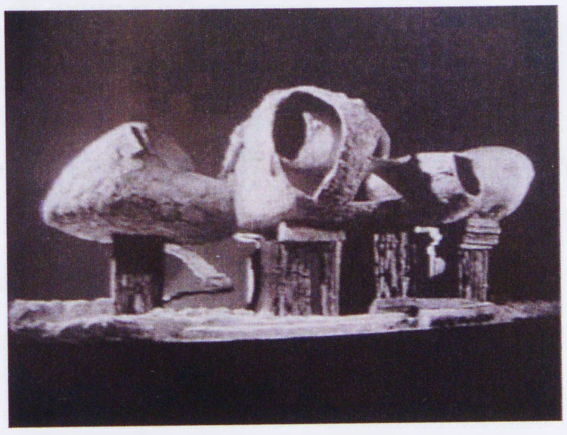

Fig. 10

"Man's house does not matter as long as his mind is sheltered by subconscious living". This is a curious statement from an architect, one that favours the inner workings of the mind to provide for authentic dwelling. It means for Kiesler, dwelling does not begin with building but in thinking. Man's house, the physical attributes of floors, walls and

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[115] Kiesler, F., "Flight into the dream world of Surealism [Art without Architecture] P.X. 9/1 Chapter nine.

doors do not matter, or alternatively, they are not the origin; this is rather to be found in subconscious living. One wonders how such a living could be presented, as both sheltered and subconscious. Perhaps this is why Kiesler turns to the termites, as they build their arcades of mud and spit, bringing forth fantastic furnishings. There is still however, a further step required before this return enables a fuller, earthbound sense of dwelling.

Kiesler identifies within surrealism, a counter movement that could effect such a necessary reversal. An example of the 'dualism of Vision and Fact,' in early surrealist literature, might be the crustaceous body of Gregor Samsa, in Kafka's *Metamorphosis.*[116] For it is the reasonableness of his thinking, when faced with his physical change, that shelters him subconsciously from the profound alienation of man and his house. We are introduced to the normality of Gregor's surroundings, his bedroom furnishings, the familiar walls and door that he has awoken to every morning The house really does not matter, of more concern is how utterly unsuited it has become to his new body. There follows descriptions of physical discomfort as the insect Gregor attempts to negotiate the home he has always known. One instance describes him attempting to open his bedroom door.

> *And then he set about using his mouth to turn the key in the lock. Unhappily it seemed that he had no proper teeth – what was he to get a grip on the key with? – but to make up for that his jaws were certainly very powerful; with their help he did in fact succeed in getting the key moving and paid no attention to the fact that he was undoubtedly doing himself damage, for brown liquid was coming out of his mouth*[117]

Gregor's intense preoccupation with the problem of opening the door and the relative composure he treats his alienated circumstance is deeply affecting. After initial surprise at his physical difference, his response to his new condition is chiefly one of irritation at the physical inconvenience rather than desperation or shock. The author focuses on the ordeal of his awkward movement around the room and his practical anxieties about his future employment rather than any emotional distress caused by his new physique.

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[116] Kafka, F., 1915. *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, Penguin Classics, 2000.
[117] Ibid, p. 86

There is no mention of pain while he bleeds and leaks bodily fluid which only brings out a deeper pathos. "Like a tooth deadened by novocaine,"[118] we are given an image of an ill-fitting mouth, threading itself on an inanimate key. The house has not changed, Gregor has. The result is his once familiar home causes him injury. The next description portrays Gregor's inner confusion as his family seek to make his room more amenable for his new body by clearing it of furniture.

> *Did he really want this warm room of his, so comfortably fitted with old family furniture, to be transformed into a cave, in which, no doubt, he would be free to crawl about unimpeded in all directions, but only at the price of rapidly and completely forgetting his human past at the same time?*[119]

Gregor, an insect in all but emotion and thought, is faced with a question of priority which involves his understanding what it means to dwell. Does he choose what would bring ease of movement and physical relief, or hold onto the precious remnants of his human past? "Man's house does not matter as long as his mind is sheltered by subconscious living". Kiesler suggests dwelling is determined by more than a physical shell, that the subconscious is the authentic shelter for human existence. Certainly this seems the case with Gregor, who since his transformation has become acutely sensitive to the memories evoked by old family furniture. Heidegger, in a seminar *Höderlin's Hymne*, "*Der Ister*", writes,

> *Homecoming into one's own implies that, for a long time and perhaps always, man [human existence] is not at home; and this, in turn, implies that man ignores, rejects, and denies – perhaps must deny –the sight of home. Homecoming for this reason is a transit through otherness*[120]

Gregor's transit through otherness makes him attentive to home. The sudden and unexpected threat of losing furniture awakens a deep longing for homecoming at the very moment his home rejects him. This rejection is signalled first when his father

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[118] Bataille, G., 1988, *Oeuvres complètes, Vol.9*, p.131
[119] Kafka, F., *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. p.103
[120] Heidegger, M. 1984. *Hoderlin's Hymne "Der Ister*," Frankfurt am Main:V. Klostermann, p. 60

assaults him with apples one of which becomes lodged in his back,[121] and also by the gradual squalor Gregor is left in.

> *The cleaning up of his room, which she now always attended to in the evenings, could not have been done more hastily. Streaks of dirt ran the length of the walls, here and there lay balls of dust and filth.*[122]

Benjamin comments in his essay on Kafka how the father figure and filth are linked.

> *The father is the one who punishes; guilt attracts him as it does the court officials ... The similarity does not redound to this world's credit; it consists of dullness, decay, and dirt. The father's uniform is stained all over; his underwear is dirty. Filth is the element of the officials.*[123]

Kafka's filth is different from the clean earth of Heidegger. Rather than it being the stuff from which things unfold, the stable element that conceals alethia, on which man makes his dwelling, it is unwanted deposit, corruption, excrement, base matter. Bataille criticised what he named materialism for its idealism and its tendency towards hierarchy.[124] Rather it was the *informe* or formless that he turned to for a certain levelling out, to bring things down in the world. The subject of Gregor, reduced from his position as family provider to an abject cockroach that leaves streaks of dirt as his body rubs against the ground, represents such a levelling and being brought down. His rejection and neglect are shown most clearly in a description just before his death.

> *The rotting apple in his back and the inflamed area round it, all covered with soft dust, hardly troubled him any longer. His thoughts went back to his family with tenderness and love*[125]

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[121] "One apple, thrown without much force, grazed Gregor's back and glanced off harmlessly. But another one that came flying immediately after it positively plunged itself into his back; Gregor attempted to drag himself on further, as if nailed to the spot, and stretched himself flat out, in utter confusion of his senses." Kafka, F., *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, p.108

[122] Ibid, p.112

[123] Walter Benjamin, 1992 *Illuminations*, ("Franz Kafka"), Fontana Press, p. 110

[124] Bataille, G., 2004. *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings*, 1927-1939, trans. and ed. by Allan Stoekl, *History of Literature, Volume 14,* University of Minnesota Press, "Materialism" p. 15

[125] Walter Benjamin, 1992 *Illuminations*, ("Franz Kafka"), Fontana Press, p. 122

Fig. 11

This image of soft dust settling on his festered wound most vividly describes his abjection, just before he turns to corpse. The decay of his body is at one with the filth of his surroundings. The apple, an alien element has become parasitically attached; there is no distinction between himself and his squalor. Twofold entropy occurs both through decay and the transference of figure into ground. An image illustrates an essay by Roger Caillois of a moth almost indistinguishable from its leafy milieu.[126] For the purpose of disguise the moth has almost dissolved into its visual field, its bodily autonomy succumbing to the lure of space. The silken texture and jagged shape of its wings mimic the fibrous mould on the shrunken surface of each leaf. It is an image that Caillois uses in relation to the experience of a schizophrenic:

> *"I know where I am, but I don't feel where I am"... The body and mind there upon become dissociated; the subject crosses the boundary of his own skin and stands outside of his senses ... He feels he is turning into space itself ... and he dreams up spaces that spasmodically possess him.*[127]

This sense of turning into space itself makes one again conscious that mind is sheltered by subconscious living. The schizophrenic's mind has become dissociated with his body, and so it is unable to provide him with the subconscious shelter he requires. "He

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[126] Caillois, R. 2003. "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia", "The Edge of Surrealism, A Roger Caillois Reader", ed. Frank, C., Durham and London, Duke University Press, p. 91
[127] Ibid, p. 100

feels he is turning into space itself." Gregor experiences a similar unease as he craves shelter beneath a sofa.

> *But the high spacious room filled him with an anxiety that he could not account for ... and with an almost involuntary movement, not without a slight feeling of shame, he scuttled under a sofa, where despite the fact that his back was a little squeezed and he could no longer raise his head, he at once felt quite cosy.*[128]

Gregor's mind can no longer provide him with the shelter he needs and his instinct takes over. He seeks out the dark cave, like spaces beneath furniture that offer respite from the overwhelming verticality of his room. It is this movement from the vertical to the horizontal, from the aspirations of his bourgeois family to an urge for putrid food and snug cavities, that articulates most clearly his home coming. His instinct for the soil and the dark, with only a remnant inclination to higher things also makes him a natural inhabitant of Bruegel's tower. Gregor's metamorphosis is the revolutionary movement of Marx's "Old Mole." If we were to enter the recesses of this tower, descending steadily beneath ground, it is difficult to imagine that the classical arcades would continue endlessly, and the symmetry of the bricked volutes would not more likely, give way to the termite tunnels and biomorphic burrows; ones that fit comfortably to the curvature of Gregor's back. Here the insect's thoughts could return to his family with tenderness and love, as he nestled and dissolved amidst the dust and filth.

Fig. 12

[128] Kafka, F., 2002, *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, Penguin Classics, p. 93

Chapter 4

Dwelling

Fig. 13

Postcards of places commonly carry gesture of informality; though words maybe chosen with care, their pictorial information is often general, intended to accommodate the varying dispositions of browsers who seek a near record of their encounter. A posted photograph is of a different order, signalling an investment in both the subject and its recipient. Wittgenstein sent Moore a photograph of his house on a Norwegian Fjord. It describes an expanse of mountainside, modulated in dark greys, where just the smallest of gradations describe enormity of scale. On the right, a white burst of water seems to stand acute, its width at the bottom turning into a point at its source. It suggests a moment of origin more pertinent than its natural incident, that out of the blackness of the chemical exposure, some mythic beginning is occurring. It is an elemental picture,

where water, rock and vegetation, distinct and exemplary in their idea, converge with horizontal and vertical plains of mountain and lake.

The lake's surface stretches the width of the picture, meeting the steep gradient with its mirrored surface, turning rock and trees back upon themselves in blurred symmetry. An impression of theatre might also be implied by this abrupt flattening, the watery stage allowing for what is solid and mineral to be interpreted as scenic cloth, painted to convince the eye of monumental pretence.

The house's place in the picture has been composed carefully; central and facing out. The two frontal windows reflect the same degree of whiteness as the waterfall, giving the impression of a fixed stare, as from some private, nocturne creature, rigid and alert to exposure. It maybe the limitation of the camera's lens—its failure to zoom, that results in the building's minute depiction, yet its effect is to point to the epic, bringing the notion of world to the fore. It looks on from a position of singularity; its isolation, the theme of the picture; the building seems to exist for that single purpose, to be self-consciously alone. To be set apart from the world, to take a position of distance, to make a distinction, to refine what is essential from that which is ill-considered.

Its situation asks us to account for the difficulty of the site, extreme and without compromise. We note the singular vision which required such means to haul materials for the construction. It recalls those feats of orthodox Greek monks[129]; so intent on remaining undisturbed as to announce their seclusion the more emphatically. Wittgenstein designed a winch to hoist supplies from the lakeside, a pragmatic solution to a self-induced problem; an exercise of mechanics in an absurdly romantic position, where he could separate sense from nonsense; of what may be said from what should be passed over in silence.

What lay behind his requirements, what image is presented by this photo postcard? This was the shelter where he worked on logic undisturbed.[130] It housed the beginnings of the thought that would later emerge as his first work.[131] It marks physically the moment

[129] The monasteries of the Meteora perched on volcanic crags in Thessaly. See Fig. 8.
[130] Monk, R., 1991. *Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Duty of Genius*, Vintage, p. 89
[131] Wittgenstein, L. 2002, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge Classics.

when building, dwelling and thinking merge, posing again the question of their relation. The house is unremarkable as an architectural structure, commissioned according to traditional building techniques in place of any intervention from its occupant. Yet it would be misplaced to interpret this reserve as indifference to dwelling. Heidegger identifies two modes of building contained in the Latin—(*colere, cultura)* and *aedificare*.[132] The former conveys a notion of care, of cherishing; its intent not so much making, as bringing to fruition from what already is, to nurture and preserve; a sensitivity sympathetic to Wittgenstein's endeavour[133]. This native habitation of wood, stone and slate, so much of the earth, is not an imposition but a gathering unto itself, respectful of what has always been. Familiar since Friedrich painted his *Hut in the Snow*,[134] it points to a self-consciousness about dwelling that goes further than mere equipment; it speaks of significance beyond shelter from inclement conditions or distraction.

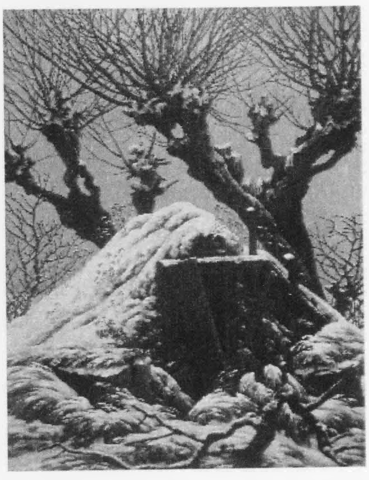

Fig. 14

There are immediate differences in Friedrich's version, its state of decay, heavy with snow and sagging. Its primitive construction seems so much *cultura* as even to question its status as building, thereby bringing one closer to the very essence of dwelling. It can offer little; its poverty ensures the simplest refuge, leaving nothing to spare and

[132] Heidegger, M., "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Basic Writings*, Farrell Krell, D. ed. Routledge, p. 349

[133] Though Wittgenstein's thought is placed within the context of the analytical tradition of Moore and Russell, his instinct for a remote dwelling in nature, alongside a concern with one's relation to the world can be said to be closer in temperament to Romantic Idealism and Fichte.

[134] *Hut in the Snow*, 1827, National Gallery, Berlin.

invoking appreciation for its humble gift. The opening discloses an interiority without light, a primal, womblike shelter that nurtures the inhabitant with the promise of warmth. For in this painting cold is conveyed through whiteness that seeks out every surface, and it is with relief that we come upon a depth that evades exposure. This inner part of the painting remains unseen, welcoming but unknowable, where cold light fails to reach into the blackness, left hidden and private. This inmost place turns the landscape from a moment of description and clarity to an interior subject of being-- dark and mute, existence manifest. For with Friedrich there is nearly always the understanding that what is described for the eye, also communicates an internal disposition for the artist or viewer.[135]

The building becomes an object of yearning, a home that answers both a need and sets out a position of thought.[136] To compose this hut, to paint it in the subjective "I" is in its intention, akin to Wittgenstein's. The thinker, like the painter, situates himself and decides the place from which to view the world. He wrote:

> *To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole—a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical* T.6.45

There is the desire then to see the whole, and the need to step back far enough to take it in *aeterni*. Here is the gesture of his house. Though not confessed, his act speaks. This is wilful solitude, a claim for separation and retreat that makes wholeness thinkable. It is a primordial position with sympathies nearer to Heidegger's Black Forest farm than cultivated academia[137]. Heidegger describes the farm with its "overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and that, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of long winter nights. It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the "tree of the dead"—for that is what they call a coffin there: the

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[135] Joseph Leo Koerner, *Casper David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape,* Reaktion Books, London 1990 pg 74 that through the hut we "enter the very fabric of the artist's gaze."

[136] Andrew Benjamin talks of Heidegger's hut as both a place and an emblem for a type of philosophical practice. Adam Sharr, *Heidegger's Hut*, prologue Andrew Benjamin, 2006, MIT, p. 18

[137] Wittgenstein's companion, Pinsent, wrote of the philosopher's intention to exile himself in Norway away from Cambridge: "His reasons for this seem very queer to me – but no doubt they are very real for him: firstly he thinks he will do infinitely more and better work in such circumstances, than Cambridge, where, he says, his constant liability to interruption and distractions (such as concerts) is an awful hindrance." Ray Monk, 1991, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Duty of Genius*, Vintage, p. 89

Totenbaum—and in this way it is designed for generations under one roof the character of their journey through time."[138]

Distinct in the account of this peasant dwelling is the way furnishings mark a pre-industrial time. Provision is made for birth and death by means of a cot/coffin. The presence of an altar corner ensures a constant handed down, where prayers are arranged around a table and devotion to the Godhead observed. The interior arrangement of objects and their use determines the quality of time that we attend. Technology is absent, there is no mention of clock work that might point to the pressing needs of the contemporary moment and distract from a world observed *sub specie aeterni*. This pursuit of authentic dwelling, so intent on not forgetting, produces imagery vulnerable to parody; as with Thomas Bernhard's Reger, sitting in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, ranting to his companion:

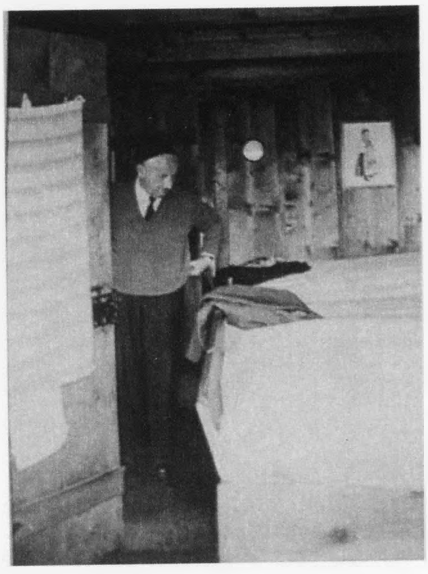

Fig. 15

> *in these photographs Heidegger is just climbing out of bed, or Heidegger is sleeping, or waking up, putting on his underpants, pulling on his socks, taking a nip of grape juice, stepping out of his log cabin and looking towards the horizon, whittling away at his stick, putting on his cap, taking off his cap,*

[138] Heidegger, M. *Building Dwelling Thinking, Basic Writings,* p.362

holding his cap in his hands, opening out his legs, raising his head, lowering his head, putting his right hand in his wife's left hand while his wife is putting her left hand into his right hand, walking in front of the house, walking at the back of the house, walking towards his house, walking away from his house, reading, eating, spooning his soup, cutting a slice of bread (baked by himself), opening a book (written by himself), closing a book (written by himself), bending down, straightening up, and so on[139]

Reger takes what was intended as an expression of care, and attention to dwelling and exaggerates it, rendering it absurd. Since Rabelais and before, parody has sought to undermine the ideal, setting the profane against what is high minded and serious.[140] Mocking the forest philosopher in his underpants might be crude, yet the humour covers a legitimate critique of this rural ideal and its dirtier side. Earlier he refers to Heidegger as "that ridiculous Nazi philistine in plus-fours."[141] Reger himself is an urbane flaneur, a music critique for *The Times*, passing time between the museum and the Ambassador Hotel, looking at paintings and drinking tea. His daily routine, in contrast to Heidegger, is precise and affectedly refined, described thus:

Until noon he finds the eighteen-degree temperature at the Kunsthistoriches Museum agreeable, in the afternoon he is happier at the warm Ambassador, which always keeps a temperature of twenty-three degrees. In the afternoon I am no longer so fond of thinking nor do I think so intensively, Reger says, so I can afford the Ambassador.[142]

The museum and hotel are two buildings integral to a city, they are buildings we pass through and represent a restlessness more closely aligned with recreation than dwelling. Yet for Reger, these two metropolitan facilities are emphatically his places of thought; thought that is governed by routine, in itself a form of intentional forgetting, than by dwelling. Earth and rock are replaced by parquet flooring and carpet, temperature is

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[139] Bernhard, T., 1992, *Old Masters, A Comedy*, trans by Ewald Osers, University Chicago Press, p.45
[140] Mikhael Bakhtin, 1984, *Rabelais and his World,* trans. by H Iswolsky, Indianna University Press, p. 71
[141] Bernhard refers directly to Heidegger's legitimating the National Socialists earlier in the dialogue, "Stifter in fact always reminds me of *Heidegger*, of that ridiculous Nazi philistine in plus-fours". Ibid, p.41
[142] Bernhard, T., 1992, *Old Masters, A Comedy*, p.10

controlled and thinking is presented as a past-time, to be fond of, rather than a state of mindfulness. Hence we are presented with dialectical positions of thought, in the form of urbanity versus the parochial, of modernity against the primordial. That this occurs in Vienna, site of Wittgenstein's other architectural venture, naturally encourages an inquiry into their relation.

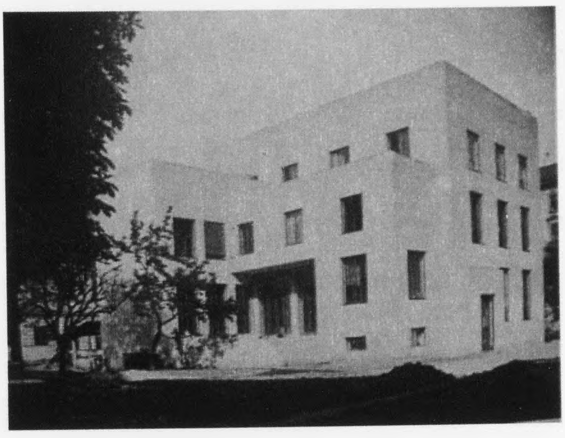

Fig. 16

Wittgenstein was both intensely invested in the Kundmanngasse's design while never intending to live there, conditions entirely different from Norway. As a commission from his sister, it was in keeping with the requirements of a Viennese villa, serving as an architectural project, an exercise in the process of decision and refinement. Its distinctive character can partly be understood in its allegiance to particular architectural conventions while refusing their manners. Hence there is the expected number of reception rooms to bedrooms; the entrance hall and approaching steps. Yet whilst these conditions are met, there appears to be no sympathy for their original purpose in providing generosity or warmth of welcome; rather as if their proportion and arrangement were more a problem of logic than a means of abode.

In another novel Bernhard describes a house so tellingly that it is difficult not to recall the Kundmanngasse;[143]

[143] Bernhard, T., *Yes*, 1992, Trans. by Ewald Osers, The University of Chicago Press. A Swiss builder of power stations stands instead of Wittgenstein and his Persian woman companion replaces Wittgenstein's sister.

When I actually saw the building itself, it still seemed to me like a power station, it ran counter to all my ideas of a residential house and its effect, as could scarcely be expected differently, was anti-human, it was therefore anything but a home for anyone about to retire, instead it looked from the outside like a concrete shell for some machine working inside, one that needs neither light nor air[144]

Much has been made of Wittgenstein's links with Adolph Loos and their shared mistrust of ornament, but in Bernhard's description, a difference is more clearly revealed. The interior / exterior tension in the way Loos' spaces develop, these shifting levels of floor and interlocking rooms that express their resolution in the buildings' outer forms, are absent in the Kundmanngasse. There is no hint that the building is determined or even makes concession to the inhabitants' desires for comfort or society. Bernhard again,

It was instantly obvious that this plan was a plan designed by a person feeling and thinking in highly idiosyncratic and totally egotistical feelings and thoughts. Not the least trace of any feminine influence[145]

Rather than conveying interior value, one is left with an emptiness, a clearing away that is more severe than can be explained by a theoretical antipathy for embellishment. One senses this house has been reduced rather than built, that originally there were more layers that have been scraped away by an intolerance for compromise; as if negative spaces were being carved from an original solid, no longer existent. This impression of a type of formal sculpture is compounded by the plinth-like base the house stands on and its lack of reference to any surrounding context. Unlike the photograph of W.'s hut which is seen from a distance, in relation to its dwelling, looking out onto the world, this villa, despite its numerous windows and grand entrance, remains closed and indifferent; like a problem that has been worked on and completed, it is rendered contained within itself. The effect is a strange autonomy, a sharpness that cuts through nature with cold, precise measurement. If Friedrich's hut sheltered its dark inside from a lifeless frost, the Kundmannegasse's inexpressive rooms of stone and steel, work to

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[144] Ibid, P.25
[145] Bernhard, T., 1992, *Yes*, Trans. by Ewald Osers, The University of Chicago Press, p.96

expose any hidden remnant with clarity of thought. This is interiority denied, that everything be brought out into the open, to be clearly and simply seen.

If his Norwegian building has an affinity with the romanticism of Friedrich, the villa is classical in its restraint and abstraction.[146] Though urban, it bears no relation to the temporality of the everyday metropolis, rather the sense of its totality-- its limited whole, refers it to the infinite. It is perhaps this quality of rigorous inexpression, more monument than abode, that works to repel an idea of dwelling most strongly. Returning to Reger in the Kunsthistoriches, we find him talking of the unease that a modern sensibility has with an idea of the whole:

> *Our greatest pleasure, surely, is in fragments, just as we derive the most pleasure from life if we regard it as a fragment, whereas the whole and the complete and perfect are basically abhorrent to us. Only when we are fortunate enough to turn something whole, something complete or indeed perfect into a fragment, when we get down to reading it, only then do we experience a high degree, at times indeed a supreme degree, of pleasure in it. Our age has long been intolerable as a whole he said, only when we perceive a fragment of it is it tolerable to us. The whole and the perfect are intolerable, he said. That is why, fundamentally, all of these paintings here in the Kunsthistorisches Museum are intolerable, if I am to be honest, they are abhorrent to me. In order to be able to bear them I search for a so-called massive mistake in and about every single one of them, a procedure which so far has always attained its objective of turning that so called perfect work of art into a fragment, he said. The perfect not only threatens us ceaselessly with our ruin, it also ruins everything that is hanging on these walls under the name of masterpiece. I proceed from the assumption that there is no such thing as the perfect or whole, and each time I have made a fragment of one of the so called perfect works of art hanging here on the walls by searching for a massive mistake in and about that work of art, for the crucial*

[146] "This presence of the classical in Wittgenstein represents one of the exceptional moments in which the development of the modern ideology re-assumed the true problematics of the classical." Cacciari, M., 1993, *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philiosophy of Modern Architecture, Loose and his contempoaries, The Oikos of Wittgenstein. Introduction by Patrizia Lombardo.* Trans. by Stephen Sartarelli, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 132

point of failure by the artist who made that a work of art, searching for it until I found it, I have got one step further.[147]

Reger appeals to an instinct repelled by attempts at completion or perfection, suspecting that within such aspirations lurk untruths which threaten us with ruin. This inclination can be traced to the handful of thinkers in Jena who built a theory around the fragment's relation to the whole; contemporaries of Friedrich who understood that to allow room for incompletion and even failure, might speak as poignantly as any notion of a masterwork.[148] Hence the fragment plays the ruin's minor sibling, recalling what is lost, and evoking the monument without the latter's oppressive unity. Once broken from the whole, it retains a memory of what has been, while insisting on its independence as a singular thought. This distinctive identity however, should not to be confused with autonomy, for fragments exist in their multiplicity, ensuring there is always an alternative to the final word.

Fig. 17

Reading Reger's short thesis leaves one reflecting on how many of the 'masterpieces' in the Kunsthistorisches Museum might give themselves readily to fragmentation. The portrait he spends most time with is Tinteretto's *White-Bearded Man*. We might try his method of finding some 'mistake' to bring about the picture's break up, or failing that,

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[147] Bernhard, T., 1992, *Old Masters*, p.19

[148] Simon Critchley notes that, "the specificity of the fragment, its uniqueness, is that it is a form that is both complete and incomplete, both a whole and a part. It is a form that embodies interruption within itself. That is to say, the fragment fails. Thus, the success of Jena Romanticism is the development and deployment of a genre that embodies failure within itself, whose completion is incompletion, whose structure is essentially ambiguous." Critchley, S. 2000. "Unworking Romaticism", in *Very Little...Almost Nothing*. Routledge, p.123

playfully single out the hand or focus on some feature of the face. Yet this would more likely deny the chosen piece its fragmentary potential. To single out one definable element only makes it into a smaller autonomous image, while leaving similar parts equally isolated and complete. We might instead look for something less recognisable—a piece of fur collar perhaps, or an indistinct area of beard, that could serve as a more plausible fragment. However, the distance between this remnant and the original picture would make it difficult to retrieve any sense of the whole.

Fig. 18

An alternative work in the collection, both convincingly whole and more readily open to thoughts of the fragmentary, is Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*.[149] Though opening onto a unified vista, it is part of a body that records different stages in a year. A particular understanding of time is hence present, one that is continual rather than linear, evoking the fading and renewal of things, implying that each has its place within an ordered

[149] 1565. Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna

cycle. There is attention to climate hitherto neglected by earlier '*Welt Bilder*,' whose concern tended to be more cosmic than descriptive.[150] However, the artist does maintain an idea of 'world' that takes it beyond an interest in the specialised landscape. Though nothing is general, and each subject has been intently observed and set down, the painting is nevertheless constructed as an idea. Everything is accounted for and positioned. The evenly spaced beeches serve as columns that hold half the painting taut, a favoured device of perspective that finds its echo in the row of houses behind. A system of frozen reservoirs provides organised spaces of play as the neighbouring river gently makes its way to the sea. Everything is made and presented according to its kinds; ocean, mountains, rivers and lakes, hills, trees, birds of the air, vegetation and animals all find their allotment on this single, unified plane.

This was the age of the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*[151], printed in the same publishing houses where painters sold their etchings. The cartographers' tendency, to embellish their products with isometric buildings or naturalistic renditions of trees for special emphasis, dissolved absolute distinction between landscape and map; and there is something distinctly map like about the plottings of Bruegel's world. It is in part due to the measured division of each surface, be it the shape of a roof, a field or path, each is connected with uniform care, often denoted by borders of leafless trees, with trunks no thicker than a single hair of the brush. Precision subdues every part of the painting, there are no ambiguous passages of paint, where things are hinted or approximate. The weather cooperates in this respect; conditions are crisp, without mist, and the even whiteness has turned variable material into abstract inter-connecting shapes. Despite the sharp mountain peaks and vertical trees, the impression of the land is one of flatness, as if the artist had arranged parts of his dramatic alpine drawings amongst the surrounding lowlands of Flanders. This virtual act, this cutting up and reassembling of mountain and plain, might serve as the *massive mistake* Reger so desperately seeks, the dichotomy and means by which a painter can view the world as a limited whole.

Another motif integral to the way we enter this work is the magpie in flight. Having just left the trees it communicates an effortless sweep across the painting's surface,

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[150] For example, Joachim Patinir's cosmic landscapes describing the order of God, man and world, rendered with a rather generalised colouring.
[151] Abraham Ortelius, (1570) See Gibson, W. 1993. *Bruegel,* Thames and Hudson, p. 25

suggesting we might make a similar survey. It signifies a continuous movement, without cut or montage, and with it, an appeal to the whole. This quality may have been why Tarkovsky used the painting in his sci film *Solaris*.[152] We encounter it through the gaze of a cosmonaut's wife.[153] It hangs, thick framed, in the space station's library beside other Bruegel pictures. Yet it is this image that draws her in, as if it somehow answers her need for an authentic experience of human dwelling. She 'enters' the work through a series of panning sequences, focussing in on chosen sections of the painting.

With each sequence, the camera begins from a moment close to the surface, where either it proceeds to move slowly back in order to take in more of the picture or to the side. In both instances a new picture is framed, one that is adequate in the information it holds to justify its own composition, but always with further reference to what lies beyond. At times the camera cuts to an altogether different section of the panel, alternatively it gradually fades one scene into another. The effect is to convey the idea of the painting as world, with the camera making do with a part of something infinite. Tarkovsky has written of his rejection of the principles of montage "because they do not allow the film to continue beyond the edges of the screen,"[154] while in this way a continuum is assured, the detail makes reference to the whole, *sub specie aeterni*.

Fig. 19

[152] Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972, *Solaris*, Mosfilm Studio.
[153] She is the memory and materialised conscience of the cosmonaut, brought into being by the object of his study—an immeasurable 'thinking' sea-like planet.
[154] "Montage cinema' presents the audience with puzzles and riddles, makes them decipher symbols, wonder at allegories, appealing all the time to their intellectual experience. Each of these riddles, however, has its own word-for-word solution; so I feel that Eisentsein prevents the audience from letting their feelings be influenced by their own reaction to what they see." Andrey Tarkovsky, 1989, *Sculpting in Time, Reflections on the cinema,* Trans. by Kitty Hunter-Blair, Faber and Faber, p. 118

It is notable that the camera never presents the painting in its entirety, and it is by way of the detail that this film can approach the work, as if like Reger, the director felt compelled to turn what is whole into a fragment in order to find it tolerable. Yet there is need of some caution when inter-changing, the term detail with fragment. For they infer different relations to the 'whole' and thereby, relations to knowledge. Didi-Huberman wrote of three operations contained in the detail.

> *First that of getting closer: one "enters into details as one penetrates the rarefied air of epistemic intimacy. But this intimacy entails some violence, perverse without any doubt; one gets close up only to cut up, to break down, to take apart. Such is the basic meaning in the French découper, its etymological tenor—a pruning or cutting—and the first definition of it in Littré: "the separation of a thing into several parts, into pieces," which opens up an entire semantic constellation on the side of profit and exchange, of detail commerce. Finally, through an extension no less perverse, the detail designates an exactly symmetrical, even opposite operation, one that consists in gathering all the pieces together, or at least accounting for them in full: "to detail" is to enumerate all the parts of a whole, as if the "cutting up" had served only to make possible a complete accounting, without remainder—a sum. So a triply paradoxical operation is in play here, one that gets closer the better to cut up, and cuts up the better to make whole. As if "whole" existed only in bits, provided these can be added up.*[155]

Hence, for Huberman, the detail suggests an approach to looking and thinking about the whole where, in coming closer, one cuts a work into parts. There is the assumption that after a close examination, enumeration is possible. A 'detail' conveys precision; something clearly defined and brought into focus. There is no ambiguity; rather we 'look in detail' for an answer to confusion. Maps for this reason are detailed, they are to be read, and understood, and work to dispel the unnerving sense of disorientation; so we may again feel secure in our position. Yet when standing before a painting, there is a moment where, in singling out a detail, the whole is no longer attainable and we are left with only a memory of the work in its entirety. This is when the detail begins to turn to

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[155] Didi-Huberman, G., 2005, *Confronting Images, Questioning the Ends of a Certain Art History*, Trans. Goodman, J., The Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 230

fragment and assumes a different relationship to knowledge; one that "posits it as an absence or enigma or lost memory."[156] It recognises that a work always retains for itself a part that is unknowable.

> *There are indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.* T.6.522

The form in which the Tractatus is laid out is short steps, concise aphorisms that proceed according to a numerical system. Yet, one feels that this is not so much to denote unhindered progress as to pin down and fix the next thought, so as not to lose it or allow it to slip. It is a way of marking one's steps, to be able to retrace if necessary along what is inherently hazardous. The result is fragmentary, though fragments of thinking rather than fragments of thoughts. For each numbered item has at least one proposition to be considered and judged, to be found true or false. It is a form of precise mapping, of territory once discovered being refined, measured and marked down. Yet perhaps it's in Wittgenstein's two meditations on dwelling we can find the most lucid distinction between the detail and the fragment. The Kundmanngasse, so intent on measurement, could be understood as an enumeration of details, a monument to clarity and to 'what can be said,' while the hut in Norway is altogether harder to place. It no longer exists but for the photograph, its image facing out across the lake. It is this that is mystical.

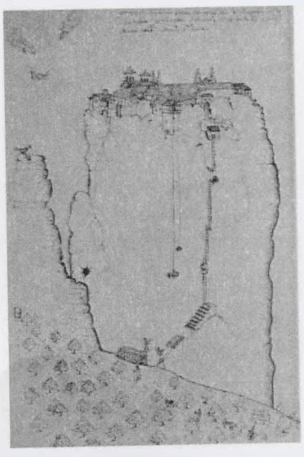


Fig. 20

[156] Ibid

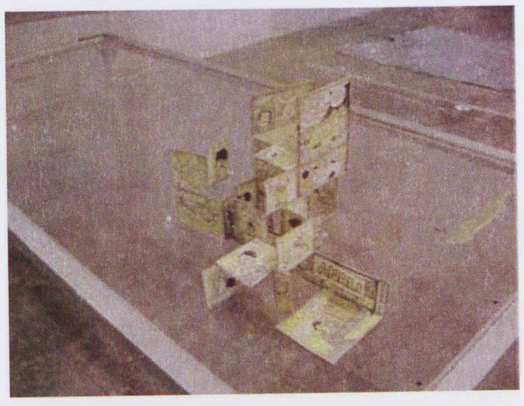
Fig. 1

Comics bought in the airport deliver local slapstick and short stories. Recognisable motifs of Istanbul streets and bars, buses and characters' misadventures progress through organised squares on a page. The scale of each square seems chosen to control the pace of the story, some hold single faces, others more complex depictions of place. When cut up and freed, new orders open to suggest architectural possibilities, horizontal and vertical planes hijacked by absurd neighbours.

Steps in Istanbul have developed their own complexity. Negotiating steep rises and awkward turns, they don't simply ascend one after the next but

break into patterns inviting alternative routes. These appear to have evolved out of respect for existing gradients, preserved beneath intricate geometries contingent to each demand of the foot. The effect of these stair ways is a desire to sit as much as to climb, to remain half way and allow others to pass.

An excursion into the satellite district of Esenyurt; a settlement that has resisted rigid modernist planning ideas in favour of more flexibility to accommodate a complicated network of social relations. Picking up and collecting things, newspapers, packaging, a plastic stool, sweet papers, material things. The cats mostly don't look well; the city dirt and ticks held in their fur discourage petting. Some bear the marks of encounters with rivals, miniature reminders of the potential for violence.[157]

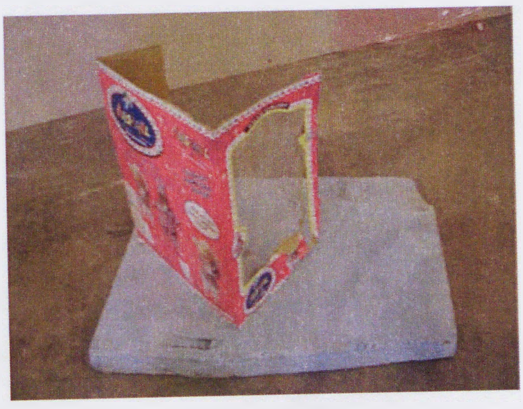


I wrote the above text to accompany catalogue documentation of a project made for the Istanbul Biennial last year.[158] Its difference to *Bruegel project: Casa Malaparte*, discussed in the introduction of this thesis, reveals a shift in my practice that helps me to clarify certain relationships to the studio and to dwelling that have arisen over the

[157] Kiaer, I., 2007. "Endless House project: Esenyurt" in, *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War, The 10th International Istanbul Biennial, 2007* Ed. Ilkay Baliç Ayvaz, Istanbul, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts, p. 338
[158] The 10th International Istanbul Biennial, 2007

course of this research. However, I will avoid talking about its making, and instead look at the circumstances and concerns that brought it about.

The title of the Biennial was, *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War*, curated by Hou Hanru. I first became aware of his work through *Cities on the Move,* which he had co-curated with Hans-Ulrich Obrist at the Hayward Gallery in 1999.[159] The Hayward show, which sought to introduce a range of contemporary practice from the emergent phenomenon of East Asian cities, challenged the white-cube ideal of late modernism by packing work into a virtual city that was designed from past exhibition furniture by Rem Koolhass. The Istanbul event, which was dispersed over several venues throughout the city, continued a strategy of presentation designed to integrate artworks into the fabric of living and working spaces. The section that included my contribution was given the title, *Entre-polis*, which was established in the dockside warehouse of Antrepo. The space received no added lighting to what the small upper windows and scarce ceiling lamps could provide. The temporary walls where left unpainted, grey plaster board, and like *Cities on the Move*, the work was asked to cooperate in almost labyrinthine conditions. One of the side walls of my work was the reverse side of Cao Fei's *RMB City*.[160]



[159] A touring exhibition from 1997-1999

[160] Her work included an animation of a Manga dream city, set on a rotating utopian island. Either side were ceiling height transparent walls with images that were enlarged from extracts of the film. For further comment on both our work, see, Teresa Gleadowe's review in *Art Monthy/October07/No 310/ UK*, p. 35

The reason for describing what may now be the recognisable signature of a Hou Hanru show, is to think of it also as a type of model, a proposition of a city made from artworks which are, for the most part, provisional reflections on the urban condition. My work in such a context turns into fragments of models within a model, implying an endlessness of a kind favoured by Kiesler.[161] It also brings me to question my relationship to the studio and 'world.' Towards the end of *Relational Aesthetics*, Nicholas Bourriaud comments:

> *If Kant admitted landscapes and all natural forms in the field of applied aesthetics, we know that Hegel reined in this domain by reducing it exclusively to that specific class of objects formed by works of mind. Romantic aesthetics, from which we may very well not have really emerged, postulates that a work of art, as a product of human subjectivity, expresses the mental world of a subject.*[162]

This comes towards the end of Bourriaud's book where he refuses the Romantic idea of the subject in favour of 'polyphony', "of that rough form of subjectivity represented by many-voiceness, [in stead] of a sterilising, reifying fragmentation." [163] Other than maybe Kiesler's project, the buildings that have been discussed in this thesis can be positioned within Romanticism; not so much for their form as for the gesture of posing the individual before society. However, I maintain that the thought spaces they built, though authorial in implication, provide an important ground for poieses, the space required to bring production into presence. I became sensitive to this when walking through the district of Esenyurt, collecting material that could contribute to one of the models. Though making them would be technically simple on any site, I still wanted a space that was distinct, an un-public position, that gave room for doubt, and if necessary, inaction. Then if what was made, eventually went on to dissolve into the polyphony of *Entre-polis*, there would still have been a moment, even for painting.

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[161] Kiesler, in writing on his project says, "The Endless House" is called "Endless" because all ends meet, and meet continuously," later he adds, "The concept is the thing, not the execution." Kiesler, J. 1996. "The Endless House": A Man-Built Cosmos" in *Frederick J. Kiesler, Selected Writings*. Ed. Gohr S. & Luyken, G., Vienna, Verlag Gerd Hatje. p. 126

[162] Bourriaud, N., 2002. *Relational* Aesthetics. Trans. Pleasance, S. & Woods, F., Dijon, Les presses du reel, p. 92

[163] Ibid. p. 93

Appendix

Endless After Words

The relationship and in turn the difference between representation and presentation.[164] This, of course, is a way of indicating the difference between what a work of art is, as opposed to what we might claim a thesis does.[165] We should never ask of a work of art what it cannot do and what it should not be compelled to answer. [166]

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[164] The distinction between presentation (Darstellung) and representation (Vorstellung) was first opened by Kant in *The Critique of Judgement,* 1987, translated by Pluhar, W, Indianapolis and Cambridge, Hackett. The root word Stellung means to place, make stand. 'Vor' means before, therefore 'Vorstellung' is to put something in front of something else, hence to represent, to mean, signify and introduce. (Inwood, M. ed. 1999. *A Heidegger Dictionary*, Wiley-Blackwell). For Kant, to represent suggests making a mental picture of an object in the world and is closely associated with the idea of the subject and is our primary mode of relating to the world. Presentation (Darstellung), in contrast has the implication of exhibiting or staging examples. Kant writes in his *Third Critique*, "Concepts of the Understanding must, as such always be demonstrable (if, as in anatomy, demonstration is understood in the sense merely of presentation). In other words, the object answering to such concepts must always be capable of being given intuition (pure or empirical); for only in this way can they become cognitions" (CJ 57, Remark 1:210). George Hartley writes, "The job of presentation, then, is the production of intuitions, which means that it is the activity of the imagination, the source of our intuitions. Imagination is the faculty of presentation and as such, is responsible for the demonstration or exhibition of concepts of the understanding or of reason; its job, then, when the goal is cognition, is the staging of examples (or empirical intuitions) that illustrate and verify the concepts of understanding—the understanding being the legislative faculty of cognition." (Hartley, G., 2003. *The Abyss of Representation.* Fish, S. & Jameson, F. ed., Duke University Press. p.26) Alison Ross describes two intellectual patterns that occur for aesthetic presentation in Kant's *Third Critique*. The first operates through a type of structural dislocation where the detachment of aesthetic judgement from practical, cognitive fields gives a special connection to ideas. Through this dislocation (for example art's dislocation from functional contexts) a path is opened for material things to be seen to have a capacity to present ideas otherwise not accessible to forms of sensual experience. The second pattern Kant distinguishes the presentation of a material content from the presentation of the relation taken to this content. "It is through the relation to a material form that ideas not otherwise cognitively or practically determinable can be established, determined and qualified." Ross, A., 2007. *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy, Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy*. California: Stanford University Press, p.15

[165] In his essay *Goethe's Elective Infinities,* Benjamin uses the term "the ideal of the problem" as that which constitutes the precise relation of the work of art to philosophy. He envisages this term as a virtual question, an ideal, which if asked of philosophy could provide a unified solution to all its problems taken together. Such a question cannot be asked as no question is able to encompass the unity of philosophy. Yet even though unattainable through enquiry, "there are nevertheless constructions which, without being questions, have the deepest affinity with the ideal of the problem. These are works of art." Benjamin, W., 2004. *Selected Writings: Volume 1, 1913 –1926.* 6th ed. Harvard University Press, p. 334

[166] It may be too early to refer to Wittegenstein's final proposition "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," (Wittegenstein, L., 2002. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* Routledge Classics, p.89), particularly as his thinking will only be lightly touched on in this thesis, yet his statement can at least be used to draw attention to the limits of what might be asked of a work of art. Benjamin, though deeply committed to the philosophical potential of the work of art, also cautions making demands that should only be appropriate for philosophy to answer and that might otherwise deteriorate into prying and seeking to unravel the work's enigma. "Let us suppose that one makes the acquaintance of a person who is handsome and attractive but impenetrable, because he carries a secret with him. It would be reprehensible to want to pry. Still, it would be surely be permissible to inquire whether he had any

Art history as a singular discipline is unsuited for containing all the different impulses at play.[167]

Frederick Keisler's life-work which retained a provisional character of the model and was never to be realised in any conclusive or finite way.[168]

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siblings and whether their nature could not perhaps explain somewhat the enigmatic character of the stranger. In just this way critique seeks to discover siblings of the work of art. And all genuine works have their siblings in the realm of philosophy. It is, after all, precisely these figures in which the ideal of philosophy's problem appears." (Benjamin, W., 2004. *Selected Writings: Volume 1, 1913 –1926.* 6th ed. Harvard University Press, p.333

[167] When using a term the 'history of art' I draw on the distinction that Georges Didi-Huberman makes between the 'genitive subjective' and the 'genitive objective.' He writes, "I specify immediately: the history *of* art in the subjective genitive sense, which is to say in the sense that art is the bearer of its own history, as opposed to the objective genitive sense (where art is understood first as the object of historical discipline)." (Didi-Huberman, G., 2005. *Confronting Images. Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art.* translated by Goodman, J. The Pennsylvania State University Press, p.39) Whereas the latter sense of the word would make it unthinkable to bring works with differing cultural, social and political contexts from different eras into relation, understanding that a work is the bearer of its own history opens out the possibility of a fruitful dialectic with the other. Didi-Huberman has questioned the iconology evident in the work of art historians such as Panofsky for the tone of certainty they bring to the art work. He identifies in this attitude a neo-Kantian adaptation which purports to a rigorous schema but in effect closes the work down through its assumption of an object truly grasped and fixed in time. Alternative to Panofsky, whose intention was to 'explain' an image beyond all expressive values, he favours the philological approach of Aby Warburg who sought, in 'understanding' an image, to liberate an expressive value, transcending, in anthropological terms, all signification. "That is why Panofsky brought his work to a close with a return to an iconography ever more attentive to the identification of motifs (isolated as entities), whereas Warburg never ceased subverting iconography through his analysis of the contamination of motifs (amalgamated into networks). There where Panofsky kneaded together the modesty of the humanist scholar and the conquest of knowledge, Warburg made the effacement of the philologist rhyme with true tragedy of knowledge: a Kantian victory of the (axiomatic) schematism versus a Nietzschean pain of (heuristic) Romanticism." (Ibid. Preface p. 23) An example of Warburg's concern for a more fluid, less iconographically rigid scholarship can be observed in his appreciation of a Ghirlandaio fresco of the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem, "However, establishing the individual archaeological details is not the main point; what is essential is that the primitive Quattrocento, which we enjoy so much for its "naïve" tranquillity, has here lapsed into an extremely baroque gestural language. And this has occurred, moreover, precisely because of the pagan art of his ancestors."(Warburg, A., 1914. "Painting of the Early Renaissance" in *Art History as Cultural History, Warburg's Projects*, Woodfield R. ed., 2001, G+B Arts International, p. 23) Mathew Rampley has commented on the affinities that exist between Warburg and Benjamin, particularly a shared interest in cultural memory and Benjamin's dialectical method in relation to Warburg's dialectical iconology. (Rampley, M. "Mimesis and allegory on Aby Warburg and Benjamin." Ibid p.121). Yet it is perhaps in pushing research forward to the point where the 'insignificant' becomes 'significant' that Benjamin and Warburg are at their closest. Benjamin in *The Rigorous Study of Art* writes, "Instead it is the inconspicuous aspect—or this and the offensive aspect (the two are not a contradiction)—which survives in true works and which constitutes the point where the content reaches the breaking point for an authentic researcher." (Benjamin, W., 2004. *Selected Wrtings: Volume 2, part2, 1931 –1934.* Jennings, M. ed., Harvard University Press. p.668) in his dissertation *The Concept of criticism in German Romanticism*, identifies one of the achievements of Romantic critique as to overcome aesthetic dogmatism. He writes, "The Romantics, unlike Enlightenment, did not conceive of form as a rule for judging the beauty of art, or the observance of this rule as a necessary precondition for the pleasing or edifying effect of the work. Form did not count for the Romantics either as a rule in itself or even as dependant on rules."(Ibid).

This in turn, touches the relation either of the model or the fragment and the possibility of completion or of a totality. In philosophical terms the relationship between the finite and the infinite became the way in which the claim of truth was posited within Romanticism. [169]

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[168] Though I directly refer to Kiesler's 'Endless House' in the chapter relating it to Bruegel's *Tower of Babel,* the term 'Endless' reflects a wider concern I have with the possibility of an 'on-going project' as a method of praxis. Friedrich Schlegel, in an Athenaeum fragment, defines the notion of the project thus: "A project is the embryo of a developing object. A perfect project should be at once completely subjective and completely objective, should be an invisible and living individual."(AF 22) By 'subjective' Schlegel is implying a product of individual freedom while the 'objective' refers to a work of sensuous form. The achievement of the 'perfect project' is yet to be realised, as it remains an embryo, in a state of developing and becoming object. This sense of constantly in the process of becoming is particularly linked to Schlegel's understanding of Romantic poetry. "Other kinds of poetry are finished and are now capable of being fully analyzed. The romantic kind of poetry is still in the process of becoming; that, in fact is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare to try and characterize its ideal. It alone is infinite, just as it alone is free; and it recognises as its first commandment that the kind of poetry is the only one that is more than a kind, that is, as it were poetry itself: for in a certain sense all poetry is or should be romantic." (AF 116) In this way Schlegel links the poem's 'continual becoming' with a sense of the infinite which has an affinity with Kiesler's understanding of 'Endlessness.' Kiesler, in writing on his project says, "The Endless House" is called "Endless" because all ends meet, and meet continuously," later he adds, "The concept is the thing, not the execution."(Kiesler, J. 1962. "The Endless House": A Man-Built Cosmos" in *Frederick J. Kiesler, Selected Writings*. Siegfried Gohr & Gunda Luyken, ed. 1996, Verlag Gerd Hatje. p. 126) The emphasis on the 'idea' of the endless house rather than its 'execution' was not for want of the architect's trying. Dieter Bogner in his introduction to the project maintains that "despite tireless efforts on his part and numerous attempts—its practical realisation has never come to pass. With a coherence bordering on the obsessive, right up to the very end of his life he cherished the idea of achieving a radically new synthesis of form and content, starting out from the model of the detached one-family house and following a long, detailed process. The material from which this "endless" dream is made is undoubtedly heterogeneous: a few models, a fair number of sketches, drawings and plans, photos of shows and exhibitions and also manifestos, impeccably laid together with theoretical dissertations and poetic texts and last but not least, jottings in his diary, all of which create a background, a kind of mosaic from which we can reconstruct complex aspects of form and content implicit in the "Endless House." (Bogner, D. 1998. *Friedrick Kiesler, Inside the Endless House*, Bóhlau Wien, p.19). Two elements of Bogner's commentary on Kiesler's legacy, its fragmentation and lack of completion, puts it firmly within the Romantic project. Simon Critchley notes that, "the specificity of the fragment, its uniqueness, is that it is a form that is both complete and incomplete, both a whole and a part. It is a form that embodies interruption within itself. That is to say, the fragment fails. Thus, the success of Jena Romanticism is the development and deployment of a genre that embodies failure within itself, whose completion is incompletion, whose structure is essentially ambiguous." (Critchley, S. 2000. "Unworking Romaticism", in *Very Little...Almost Nothing.* Routledge. p.123)

[169] Talking of the fragment, "It is simultaneously the whole and each part. Each fragment stands for itself and for that from which it is detached. Totality of the fragment itself in its completed individuality. It is thus identically the plural totality of fragments, which does not make up a whole (in, say a mathematical mode) but replicates the whole, the fragmentary itself, in each fragment" Nancy, J.L. and Lacoue-Barthe, B.1998 *The Literary Absolute, theory of Literature in German Romanticism.* State University of New York Press, p.44

"As an indicator of a process rather than a fixed state, this term is in agreement with the important Athenaum fragment 116, where the "particular essence" of romantic poetry is "that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected." And in a certain manner, fragment 116 defines the totality of "romantic poetry," that is, the totality of poetry, as fragment. What we have read thus indicates that the fragment must have the characteristic of the work, and of the work of art." Ibid.

The idea of the fragment thus serves a double function within my project, because it occurs both within my work on the level of form, but it is also an approach to thought. The essay form itself which I have employed issues out of this concern with the idea of the fragment. [170]

"What he has put into his work with manifest intention, the artist seems instinctively, as it were to have depicted therein an infinity, which no finite understanding is capable of developing to the full. To explain what we mean by a single example: the mythology of the Greeks, which undeniably contains an infinite meaning and a symbolism for all ideas, arose among a people, and in a fashion, which both make it impossible to suppose any comprehensive forethought in devising it, or in the harmony whereby everything is united into one great whole. So it is with every true work of art, in that every one of them is capable of being expounded ad infinitum, as though it contained an infinity of purposes, while yet one is never able to say whether this infinity has lain within the artist himself, or resides only in the work of art. By contrast, in the product which merely apes the character of a work of art, purpose, rule or lie on the surface, and seem so restricted and circumscribed, that the product is no more than a faithful replica of the artists conscious activity, and is in every respect an object for reflection only, not for intuition, which loves to sink itself in what it contemplates, and finds no resting place short of the infinite." *German Idealism: An Anthology and Guide,* O' Connor and Mohr, G. ed., 2006, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, p.255.

[170] I have found the essay form most appropriate for holding together and presenting the different trajectories of thought that the assembled buildings and paintings, under discussion, pose. In Adorno's words, "The essay freely associates what can be found associated in the freely chosen object." (Adorno, T., 2000, "The Essay as Form", in *The Adorno Reader,* Brian O'Conner, ed. Blackwell Publishing, p.99). Adorno, has attributed to the essay form a means of providing a critique and an alternative to the prescribed and supposedly scientific methods presented in more conventional philosophical texts. He has identified in this form an openness to experience that contrasts with what he calls the 'identity' or 'positivist' consciousness which preconceives both the form of the text and the order of experience. He explains that, "Since the time of Bacon, who was himself an essayist, empiricism – no less than rationalism – has been "method." Doubt about the unconditional priority of method was raised, in actual process of thought, almost exclusively by the essay. It does justice to the consciousness of non-identity, without needing to say so, radically un-radical in refraining from any reduction to a principle, in accentuating the fragmentary, the partial rather than the total." (Ibid p.98) Adorno sees the essay form as reflecting reality by thinking in fragments and gains its unity only by 'moving through the fissures, rather than by smoothing them over.' He defends such a fragmentary approach against what he sees as 'the givenness of totality,' which assumes that the object can be presented in an airtight deductive system. "The essay, in contrast, takes the anti-systematic impulse into its own procedure, and introduces concepts directly, "immediately," as it receives them. They gain their precision only through their relation to one another." (Ibid p.100) Rather than progressing in a linear direction, he likens these fragmentary relations to the weave of a carpet, where the fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of the texture. "If the essay struggles aesthetically against that narrow-minded method that will leave nothing out, it is obeying an epistemological motive. The romantic conception of the fragment as an artefact that is not complete in itself but openly striding into infinity by way of self-reflection, advocates this anti-idealist motive even in the midst of idealism." (Ibid p.104) What the over-arching concept merely pretends to accomplish, the essay's method recognizes as insoluble while nevertheless attempting to accomplish it.

Benjamin and Heidegger: without necessarily attempting to resolve the two figures or even explicitly finding a position. Benjamin wrote in 1930 that he wanted to establish a small reading group to 'demolish' Heidegger's thinking.[171]

The two major essays both drafted in 1935, Benjamin's and Heidegger's, do exhibit many of the same preoccupations, for instance the absorption of art into aesthetics as a major issue with modernity, the relationship of art and technology, art and time, and the relationship of the work to the author being the major points of connection.[172] Both

[171] Esther Leslie refers to Benjamin's letter to Scholem. "[Benjamin] revealed plans, currently thwarted because of Brecht's absence, to initiate a small reading group in order 'to demolish Heidegger." Leslie, E., 2007. *Walter Benjamin*, Reaktion Books. p.104 GB 3, p.522. Benjamin's critical attitude towards Heidegger is well documented in the German edition of his collected letters which have not been translated into English. In a 1935 follow up letter to Dolf Sternberger, when he had already explained he differed from Heidegger's philosophy, Benjamin went further speaking of the philosopher as the 'repulsive object' of Sternberger's study. (Hanssen, B., 2005. Benjamin or Heidegger: Aesthetics and Politics in an Age of Technology. In A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*. Continuum, p.257). It is worth noting the very different circumstances and political sympathies of the two thinkers at the time of writing. Benjamin as a Jewish Marxist refugee was restlessly wandering Parisian streets and annotating in libraries while Heidegger was rector of the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Frieburg who had already complained in a letter dating 1929 of the "Jewification of the German mind" Kisiel, T., 2002. *Heidegger's Way of Thought.* Continuum, p.2. David Farrell Krell has observed that Heidegger's relationship to National Socialism even after the war remains ambiguous, particularly in light of his complete silence over the extermination of the Jews in the death camps. "While always ready to commiserate with the German soldiers and refugees in eastern Europe, and while always prepared to bemoan the plight of a divided Postwar Germany, Heidegger consigned the horrors of the Holocaust to total silence" (Heidegger, M., 1979. Introduction to the Paperback Edition. In *Neitzche by Martin Heidegger Volumes One & Two.* Translated by David Farrell Krell, 1991. Harper One, p.12).

[172] Hannah Arendt comments in her introduction to *Illuminations,* "that without realising it... Benjamin actually had more in common with [Heidegger] than he did with the dialectical subtleties of his Marxist friends'; for like the Frieburg existentialist, he listened to the tradition that does not give itself up to the past but thinks of the present." (Benjamin, W. (1999) *Illuminations,* London, Pimlico). Beatrice Hanssen has noted that both Benjamin and Heidegger were responding to the philosophical legacy of Hegel through Nietzche concerning the art work but with very different results (Hanssen, B., 2005. Benjamin or Heidegger: Aesthetics and Politics in an Age of Technology. In A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*. Continuum, p.77).It is clear that though there are common concerns between the texts, the conclusions drawn radically differ, particularly in their attitudes to aesthetic theory and technology. In regards to aesthetics, Heiddegger sought to answer Hegel's diagnosis of 'the end of art' by interpreting Nietzche's aphorisms on art, specifically those to be found in the unfinished *Will To Power*, as a return to a rapturous being in the proximity of what appeared at a distance, namely *aletheia.* "Rapture as a state of feeling explodes the very subjectivity of the subject. By having a feeling for beauty the subject has already come out of himself; he is no longer subjective, no longer a subject. On the other side, beauty is not something at hand like an object of sheer representation. As an attuning, it thoroughly determines the state of man. Beauty breaks through the confinement of the "object" placed at a distance, standing on its own, and brings it into essential and original correlation to the "subject." Beauty is no longer objective, no longer an object. The aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective. Both basic words of Nietzche's aesthetics, rapture and beauty, designate with an identical breath the entire aesthetic state, what is opened up in it and what pervades it." (*Neitzche by Martin Heidegger Volumes One & Two.* Translated by David Farrell Krell. Harper One 1991. p. 123. Heidegger regarded the absorption of the artwork into aesthetics as regrettable as it signalled the erosion of the artwork's 'knowing' relation to truth. He writes in his essay on the artwork, "until now art presumably has had to do with the beautiful and beauty, and not with truth...In fine art the art itself is not beautiful, but is called so because it produces the beautiful. Truth, in contrast, belongs to logic. Beauty, however, is reserved for aesthetics." Heidegger, M., 1971. The Origin

figures had read similar texts but with different inclines and certainly this is in evidence in regard to the heritage of Jena Romanticism.[173]

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of the Work of Art. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter, 2001, Perenial Classics, p.35 Further, in the epilogue where he attempts to answer Hegel's judgement that, "Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself," he makes a distinction between the truth which is assigned to cognition and science and the truth of being. In the latter "Beauty does not occur alongside and apart from this truth. When the truth sets itself into the work, it appears. Appearance—as this being in the work and work—is beauty. Thus the beautiful belongs to the advent of truth, truth's taking of its place." Ibid, pp.78-79.

Benjamin also addresses Hegel's end of art thesis, though rather than seeking to undo it with a return to the in dwelling of the absolute art work, he welcomes art's absorption by the masses as the end of the auratic. Rather than keeping the work at a respectable distance for contemplation, he saw new media as an opportunity for the work operating in the body politic. In speaking of the Dadaists and their use of 'buttons' and 'train tickets' as media, he comments, "What they achieved by such means was a ruthless annihilation of the aura in every object they produced, which they branded as a reproduction through the very means of its production. Before a painting by Arp or a poem by August Stramm, it is impossible to take time for concentration and evaluation, as one before a painting by Derain or a poem by Rilke. Contemplative immersion—which, as the bourgeoisie degenerated, became a breeding ground for asocial behaviour—is here opposed by distraction [Ablenkung] as a variant of social behaviour." (Benjamin, W., 2008. The Work of Art: Second Version. In *The Work of Art in The Age of Its Technological Reproducibility And Other Writings on Media.* Jennings M.J., Doherty B., LevinY.T. eds., Trans. Jephcott E. and Others, Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, p.39) In Heidegger's essay, there is little mention of contemporary technology. References he made to Mercedes and aeroplanes are not central to the text preferring to focus on the peasant's boot or the Greek temple. His redemption of the original word *techne* as an older form of 'knowing' reveals his antipathy for inauthentic modernity. While Benjamin understands the negative ends to which technology can be used, particularly as part of the fascist political tool he also sees its potential for neutralising "a number of traditional concepts—such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery—which, used in an uncontrolled way (and controlling them is difficult today), allow factual material to be manipulated in the interests of fascism." Ibid.p.20.

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SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007 Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Bruegel project, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
2006 *Erdrindenbau*, Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan
2005 British School at Rome, Rome
Alison Jacques Gallery Art Statements, Art Basel
The Grey Cloth, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
2004 *Endless House project*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan
2003 Art Statements, Art Basel Miami Beach
Ian Kiaer: ArtNow, Tate Britain, London
Endless Theatre Project, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
Ian Kiaer/Jeff Ono, aspreyjacques, London
Interstice/Double Impact, W139, Amsterdam
2001 aspreyjacques, London

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2008 *Livre Circulacao: Arquitectors Europeus em Transito*, Fundação Serralves, Portugal
Social Diagrams. Planning Reconsidered, Kunstlerhaus, Stuttgart
*Ephemera, (*w/ Gabriel Kuri, Jonathan Monk & Simon Starling) Green on Red Gallery, Dublin
Peripheral vision and collective body, Museion - Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano
Too Early For Vacation, Limmerick, Ireland, curated by Hou Hanru
Ian Kiaer and Sara MacKillop, International Project Space, Birmingham

2007 *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War*: 10th International Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul
Winter Palace, De Ateliers, Amsterdam
Poor Thing, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel
Plankjes, tak, atelier als supermedium # 14, atelier als supermedium, The Hague
Disco Coppertone, Locus, Athens,
European Triennial of small-size sculpture, Murska Sobota, Slovenija
Various Small Fires, Royal College of Art, London
Lambretto, Art Project, Milan

2006 *Behind The Cliché,* Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam *The Impossible Landscape*, University Gallery, Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts
Satellites, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
Of Mice and Men, 4th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, KW Institute of Contemporary Art and further venues along August Straße in Mitte, Berlin

2005 *The Music of The Future,* Gasworks, London
ARTfutures, Contemporary Art Society, Bloomberg SPACE, London

Universal Experience, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago *Controlled, Contained, Configured,* Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
The Way We Work Now, Camden Arts Centre, London
New Monastery, St Paul's Church Gallery, London
Ordering the Ordinary, curated by David Thorpe, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London.
Bidibidobidiboo: Works from the Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin
The Hardest Thing to Draw is a Kiss, The Gallery at Wimbledon, School of Art.
The Hugh Lane Re-Opening Exhibition, Dublin City Gallery, Dublin
(In) Tension, Hoet Bekaert Gallery, Ghent
Material as Metaphor, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

2004 E*mpty Garden II*, Watarium Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
This is not a home this is a house, L'Observatoire, Brussels
Wild Eyed Boy From Freecloud, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea, Bologna *Wider Than the Sky*, 117 Commercial Street, London
XS, FA Projects, London

2003 *Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of The Viewer*, 50th Venice Biennale, *Delays and Revolutions* curated by Franceso Bonami and Daniel Birnbaum
Harmony, at Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art & Life, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, curated by Pier Luigi Tazzi
Invite #8, Klosterfelde Gallery, Berlin
Atto Primo, Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan
Ponce, The Ship, London
In to the Grey, Cover Up, London
The Straight or Crooked Way, Royal College of Art Galleries, London
RMIT Project Space, Melbourne
Infallible, The Gallery at APT, London

2002 *Building Structures*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York
Artists Imagine Architecture, curated by Jessica Morgan, ICA, Boston.
The Bold and the Beautiful, The Pavillions, London, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, curated by Akiko Usami and Jasper Joffe
Pictures, GreeneNaftali Inc., New York

2001 *An Empty Spot to Stay*, Watou Poetry Summer 2001 , curated by Pier Luigi Tazzi and Ann Demeester, Watou, Belgium

2000 Manifesta 3, Ljubljana, Slovienia, curated by Francesco Bonami, Ole Bouman, Mária Hlavajová and Kathrin Rhomberg
UBS Painting Prize, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Exit Art, New York
The Armchair Project, CINCH, London
Assembly, Jubilee Street, London
British Art Part I Installations, Diehl Vorderwuelbecke, Berlin
Everyday – Images – Every Day, Rogaland Kunstnersenter, Norway

PUBLICATIONS

2008 *Peripheral Vision and Collective Body,* edited by Corinne Dissens, published by Hatje Cantz Publishers, Stuttgart
Too Early For Vacation, published by ev ± a , Limerick, Ireland

2007 *Ian Kiaer,* published by the British School at Rome, Rome
Small Things, Kunsthalle Basel (exhibition catalogue), Basel
Various Small Fires (exhibition catalogue), published by the Royal College of Art, London

2006 *Street: Behind The Cliché* (exhibition catalogue), published by Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam
Of Mice and Men, 4th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Berlin (exhibition catalogue), edited by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, Ali Subotnick, published by Hatje Cantz Verlag

2005 *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye,* Edited by Kari Dahlgren, Kamilah Foreman, and Tricia Van Eck. (exhibition catalogue), Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art
The Way We Work Now: some attitudes to materials and making (exhibition catalogue), texts by Bruce Haines, published by Camden Arts Centre, London
Clarke & McDevitt Present: Matt Calderwood, Bjorn Dahlem, Sophie von Hellermann, Ian Kiaer, Cornelius Quabeck (exhibition catalogue). Texts by Barbara Dawson, Christina Kennedy, Declan Clarke and Paul McDevitt. Published by Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, Dublin, Ireland.

2004 *Now and Then: Art Now at Tate Britain*, texts by Martin Herbert, Lizzie Carey-Thomas, Mark Horlock and Katharine Stout, London: Tate Publishing

2003 *50th International Art Exhibition. Dreams and Conflicts – The Dictatorship of The Viewer (*exhibition catalogue), edited by Francesco Bonami and Maria Luisa Frisa, published by the Venice Biennale
Harmony, at Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art & Life (exhibition catalogue), edited by David Elliott and Pier Luigi Tazzi, Mori Art Museum and Tankosha Publishing, Tokyo

2002 *Artists Imagine Architecture* (exhibition catalogue), published by The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

2001 *Atlas der bewegingen* and *Watou Poëziezomer 2001*, two volumes published by Poëziezomers Watou, Belgium

2000 *UBS Art Award 2000. A tribute to the painting of tomorrow*, published on the occasion of the UBS Art Award 2000
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