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The Landscape of the Mind: A Conversation with Bernard Tschumi Gordana K. Fontana-Giusti

ABSTRACT Bernard Tschumi, a world-leading architect, author and theorist is in discussion with Gordana Korolija Fontana-Giusti. The conversation that took place in Tschumi's Manhattan office explores the nature and various aspects of contemporary cities in Europe and America focusing on the reasons why they are still different, despite appearances and global tendencies.

The collocutors acknowledge the role of different histories and contexts, and the effects of distinct urban and transient spaces. They highlight the roles of diverse phenomena such as the conceptual art, the writings of radical thinkers, 1960s student protests and other events. They revisit the interplay between architecture and philosophy in the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida among others, focusing on the concepts such as 'space', 'event', 'programme', 'power' and 'deconstruction'. During the course of their dialogue various landscapes of the mind emerge.

My expectations about the visit to Bernard Tschumi's office in West 17th Street were shaped by New York-related literature that I read many years ago. There was already an unconscious setting – an anticipated ambiance – molded not so much by Paul Auster's Trilogy, as by the three prodigious novellas by J. D. Salinger.¹ Warm and sticky air, and dense, vertical living dominate the space in these books. Hubert Selby's Last Exit to Brooklyn

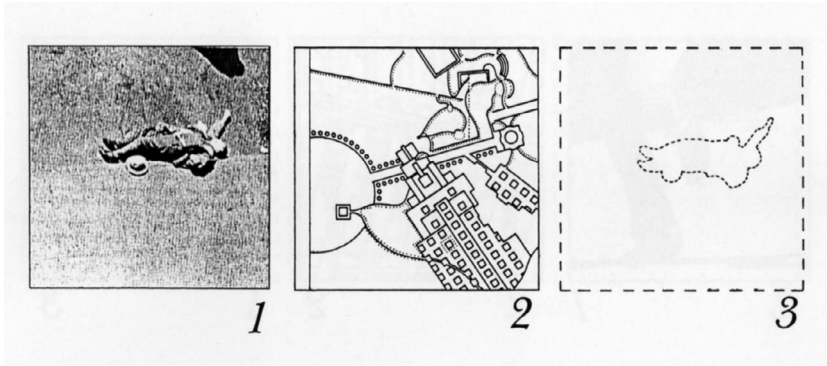


Figure 1
Bernard Tschumi, *MT1, The Manhattan Transcripts*, 1981. Courtesy BTA.

(1964) and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream* (1965) must have helped to form the anachronistic palette of sensations.²

Hardly any traces of these mid-twentieth-century memories and moodscapes were there to be experienced on the morning of my visit.³ On the contrary, and tragically, there was a murder on the path to the architect's office and my carefully planned *flânerie* had to be diverted. This gloomy experience fast-forwarded me out of my romanticized notions into a blasé state of contemporary urban melancholy.

Arrival by the elevator from the street directly into the architect's office suggested that the space had been reclaimed in one of the city's many regenerations. The office itself was not unlike those of other architectural practices worldwide, where an initially cool whiteness had been disrupted by the bricolage of tables, computers, folders, and models spread around the space that used to be a loft.

We settled into the windowed meeting room for our scheduled one-and-a-half-hour session. Tschumi's friendly disposition, and his readiness to respond generously to my questions with elegant simplicity, marked the relaxed atmosphere of this conversation, in sharp contrast to the morning's earlier events. It had been a strange start to the day, having to dodge a Fifth Avenue murder scene. Perhaps it was the unavoidable expulsion of the lines from *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981) (Figure 1).⁴ Maybe this was why Tschumi had declined my invitation to walk while talking – maybe he thought this would be too much H. D. Thoreau for the contemporary NYC setting.

But let us start the record of this talk with Tschumi, an architect, theorist, author and educator who has most significantly contributed to the formation of late twentieth-century architectural discourse by altering its disciplinary premises and boundaries. Linked to multiple urban contexts and countries, Tschumi's contribution to architecture has impacted on numerous architectural graduates in several leading schools of architecture including the Architectural Association in London and the University of Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York where Tschumi was Dean (1998–2003).

Our talk was based on a nearly 3000-word-long document divided into four sections: "Prologue," "Act One: The Office," "Act Two: The Urban Stroll," and "Epilogue," that contained thirty-two questions sent to Tschumi eleven days prior to the meeting.⁵ In response to these questions, light has been shed on aspects of Tschumi's work, such as the trajectory that grasped the complexity and multiplicity of urban contexts, revealing the mutual relationships between urban events, statements, and programs that inhabit, embody, and symbolize each other. Another thread addresses architectural knowledge understood to be in a permanent condition of assembling and demarcation that has been analyzed and compared to the condition of knowledge in general, thus aligning the discussion with wider epistemological questions.

The state of architectural knowledge was thus understood in relation to the complexities of contemporary urban experiences calling for a new kind of psycho-geography – a landscape of the mind – that is in a constant state of emergence, formation, and deterioration. This landscape of the mind is the space in which the discipline of architecture constantly examines and reinvents itself through its dialogue with the unknowns of life, contingencies of arts and philosophy, and where a precarious, emergent reconfiguration of architectural knowledge echoes the effects of urban events and their unpredictability. This interview is an urban event of a similar kind.

Mindscapes: Paris and New York

Gordana Fontana-Giusti

(GF-G): An interview with an architect is traditionally held in the architect's office, surrounded by its paraphernalia. When was your office set up, and what were the conditions at the time?

Bernard Tschumi

(BT): Setting up the office in New York was not a professional decision – it was personal. I was always fascinated with Paris and New York, both culturally and architecturally, and couldn't decide where to belong. So I went for both. Following the La Villette competition win,⁶ I opened the Paris office, although the project was designed here in New York. In 1983 I began the life of trans-Atlantic commuting. When I became the Dean at Columbia in 1988, I opened the New York office. The conditions of architecture in the USA and in Europe have always been different. In New York people come to you with work or you go through an interview process. In Paris and Switzerland, you go through competitions.

GF-G: How is the work divided between Paris and New York?

BT: It goes back to the way I organize my time: two weeks in New York, one week in Europe, throughout the year. I cross the Atlantic maybe twenty-five to thirty times a year. Competition designs are mostly done from New York. There are twenty people in New York and ten in Paris.

- GF-G:** I was thinking of the question not simply on a practical level, but also to ask what it means to have offices in Paris and New York.
- BT:** In the early days it was different to think, conceive and work in Paris as opposed to New York. Now, it does not make much of a difference. In the early days, everything was an experiment and New York meant a lack of constraints. It enabled me to think in a more abstract manner. This created a series of conditions that I began to take advantage of. The actual psycho-geography of Paris versus the psycho-geography of New York was therefore important in the beginning, but I don't think it still is.
- GF-G:** Sorry to persist, but I happen to believe that we behave, talk, move and think slightly differently in every city ...
- BT:** I understood, and agree. But in time my work has developed in such a way that the role of the place of work has become less important. It is the location of the actual project that matters. Travelling is not important as I travel all the time, many of my projects are conceived in airplanes, which is nowhere
- GF-G:** ... *(Thinking)* ... *it is not nowhere, it is in the air above the Atlantic ... it is an identifiable, analysable space, a mixture of air and water evaporations ...*
- BT:** I used to travel to Columbia by subway and in that half-an-hour ride I did an enormous amount of work. The ability to concentrate when one is travelling is greater. It has to do with a mental landscape. I also write better when I travel ...
- GF-G:** Speaking as a commuter, I agree ...
- BT:** ... the only way to survive the agony of travelling is by doing things and doing them well ...
- GF-G:** So, in the early days, New York allowed you to think abstractly while Paris was more binding. Could you expand?
- BT:** When I arrived in New York in 1976, my architectural design work was nearly non-existent. I had spent some important time teaching and writing. I had purposefully stopped designing for a while because of all the preconceptions that architectural design generally entails. To start from scratch in Europe is difficult because there are things that the mind, the emotions and the body have difficulty throwing away. The streets, urban spaces, the relationships between everyday life and the structure of the city are so closely interrelated that you cannot throw them away without denying your own existence. In America this is very different. New York, the most urban of American cities, is a mess. Its structure is the grid, its logic is – greed (Figure 2).
- This is how the city has been built. So while fascinating, it is not a structured place in the European sense. Foucault would never have written his texts on institutions in an American context.⁷ The direct correlation between institutions and buildings does not exist in the U.S. As a result, trying to think

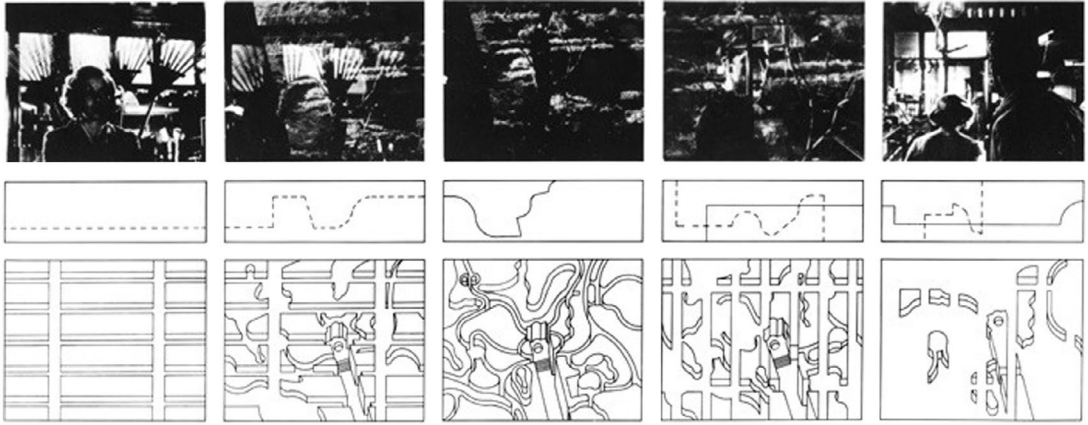


Figure 2
Bernard Tschumi: “New York City – Its structure is the grid, its logic is – greed,” Screenplays, 1976. Courtesy BTA.

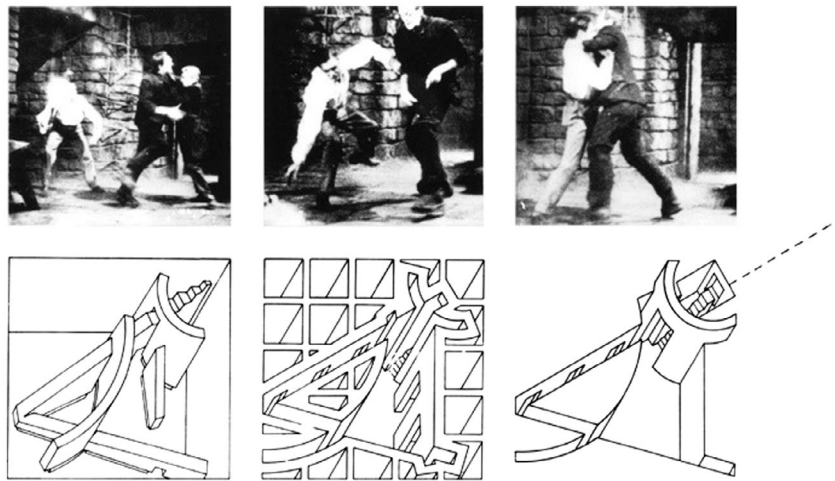


Figure 3
Bernard Tschumi: “For me, being interested in urban space also meant being interested in the art scene,” Screenplays, 1976. Courtesy BTA.

about architecture in European cities is difficult unless one takes a distance. Being in New York gave me that distance. For me, being interested in urban space also meant being interested in the art scene (Figure 3). I had started to use the word “space” rather than the word “architecture” already in London. The word “space” was deployed intentionally in order to take a distance from preconceived ideas about architecture.

As I am talking to you, I see those brown tones of façades through the windows behind you. They are obsessive. Imagine half of the city is made up of these brick walls. They are twenty-two or twenty-seven feet wide – there is a typology of which one can easily become a prisoner. I have seen my European colleagues being prisoners of those typologies. Using words such as “space” and “movement,” and developing a form of abstraction, was liberating.

GF-G: Nevertheless, this “space” is not a neutral void?

BT: From abstraction you can go into the precise set of conditions which you may encounter in the city filled with history. It is easier to go from abstraction to an existing reality, than to go from an existing reality to an abstraction. I now feel at ease in moving back and forth between the two. I even enjoy it ...

GF-G: Don't you feel that your thinking about New York and America as abstraction is predetermined by the history of European colonisation? Do you as an architect consider the fact that pre-colonial America was not a void or an abstraction?

BT: I don't think about it because for me contemporary America is the city of New York and abstraction [here] is not understood as a white box, in the sense of the modernist abstraction of dancers in white space. It is an abstraction that functions as reinvention within an existing world. I often show a piece of work by Trisha Brown doing a performance on the roofs of Manhattan.⁸ The water towers, the chimneys and the fire stairs are the protagonists of events. Her dance is abstract, but it unfolds establishing relations with the existing urban conditions. Hence you have, simultaneously, the concept of abstraction and the interplay with everyday reality (Figure 4).

GF-G: My question alludes to the tension that exists in relation to America and its history. I was referring to the work of contemporary theorist Manuel De Landa, originally Mexican, who teaches in New York and theorizes America's *longue-durée* history, including its pre-colonial past.⁹ The question is related to contextual and locational concerns. It involves broader



Figure 4
Trisha Brown's performance on New York roofs has been a revisited topos by Tschumi. "The water towers, the chimneys and the fire stairs are the protagonists of events," he remarked. Photo Babette Mangolte, 1973, photograph of Trisha Brown's *Roof Piece* performed from 53 Wooster to 381 Lafayette Street, New York City. Courtesy Babette Mangolte.

considerations that we as architects and urban designers take on board. We do consider pre-sixteenth century history of Paris, Rome or Athens, as you did so meticulously in your European projects, so why not here? For example the concept of the land, this fundamental concept has always been special and different for Native Americans, has it not?

BT: I often quote the text by Lefebvre on the politics of space where he describes the Tuscan landscape apparently looking like nature, but in reality being constructed by man.¹⁰ When I refer to this argument in Europe, everybody understands. If I make the same argument here in America nobody understands. Why? They are part of this territory, which is still relatively untouched. It is a strange and young country; the civilisation has here taken place only for two hundred years and not two, four, or six thousand years (*sic*). To project oneself to the origins is more difficult here than in Europe. Maybe it is because I am ultimately European that I never look for roots and the layers of history here in America. I like America for being an uprooted place for me.

GF-G: May I refer to Johnpaul Jones, an American architect, who attended the 2006 International Academy of Architecture conference in Sofia, Bulgaria and gave a paper on the Native American concept of land?¹¹ His presentation attracted the interest of many architects in the light of contemporary concerns for the environment. According to Jones's interpretation, the pre-colonial land was never an abstraction or a void, rather it was full of meaning. Native American communities have always cultivated an important relationship with the land and preserved it as such. They believed that land was not for exploitation, use and intensive building, but for mutual coexistence and care. For Native Americans, the earth was too important to become a commodity or an overbuilt private property.

BT: These are the things that I would be drawn to while working on [specific] projects. I tend to function through my projects. In my urban sensibility, I don't function in terms of America as a natural landscape. I am a person of the city, and have never lived anywhere else but in the city. The fact that New York had a colonial past doesn't really play a role in my thinking about its space.

GF-G: ...*(Thinking)*... *For Tschumi New York is Manhattan – an island – a heterotopia par excellence.*

Architecture as a Form of Knowledge

GF-G: It has been said that every interview is a performance and that performance is a form of conceptual art. You have been involved in thinking about conceptual art ... how do you relate to it today?

BT: For me architecture is a form of knowledge. I learn about the world through the tools that I have as an architect. This is why conceptual art was interesting (Figure 5). When conceptual artists started to question the nature of their disciplines, of representation, of the art market, the role of the museum, the role of the gallery, they were raising fundamental questions. The same applies to architecture: you have to define for yourself what architecture is. I have always been in disagreement with people who were certain what architecture was. For me architecture is in a constant state of definition, hence it is necessary to establish a dialogue with other areas of knowledge. I have often considered what certain artists, filmmakers, or scientists have explored and have used imported expressions.

GF-G: What kind of conceptual art were you involved with?

BT: It was the climate of questioning that suited me. From Joseph Kosuth to Robert Smithson and many others – they were all important for raising questions and for displaying new sensibilities. The sober mode of representation that these artists developed was interesting, and different from the works of Julian Schnabel. In architecture it was Cedric Price who had worked similarly within minimalist aesthetics.¹²

GF-G: With the *Fireworks* project in London you were involved in performance art; how did you see the relevance of “body drama” for the architecture of events?¹³ Do you think that architects, like performance artists, acquire the state of mind where, to paraphrase Marina Abramović, one part of your mind is completely in control, while the other part is open to experiences?¹⁴ Is it not the case that this awareness is beneficial for architects in conceptualizing events and creating spaces?

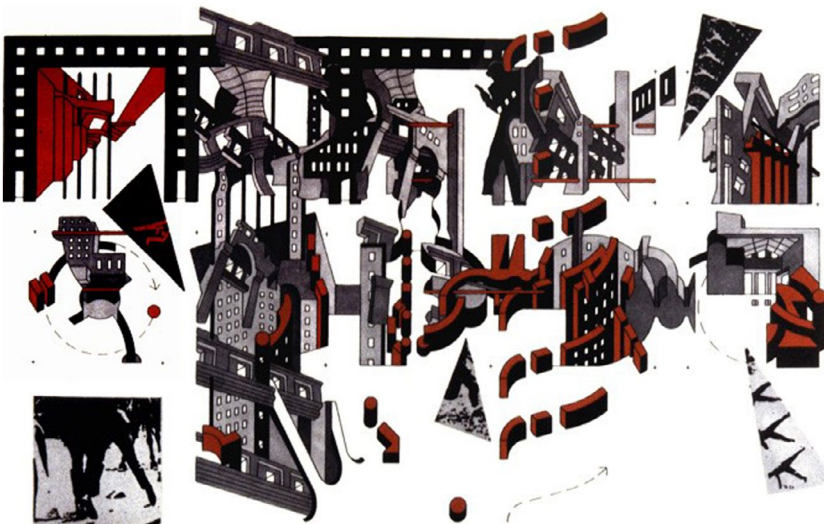


Figure 5
Bernard Tschumi: “I learn about the world through the tools that I have as an architect,” *The Manhattan Transcripts*, 1981. Courtesy BTA.

BT: Architecture is about both: concept and experience. There was this fascinating moment in twentieth-century art when performance artists were devising practices for addressing both concepts and experience; my work still deploys some of these mechanisms. There is one difference. Conceptual artists can focus on one or several phenomena, while architects always have to take in consideration the multiplicity of things such as gravity, meta-reality, legal constraints, keeping the rain out, detailed drawings, the movement of bodies in spaces, the semiotic issues of meaning, etc. The multiplicity of issues that architecture is confronted with means making complex decisions rather than simply a shape or a form. The architect rationalizes that complexity; it means that your concept is always part of a multiplicity of things.

Paris '68 and the Re-Configuration of Urban Landscape

Our discussion had by now meandered from the realm of abstract multiplicities of things and meanings as contemplated within the circles of conceptual artists in New York, towards Paris and the intensities of its events, context, histories, and discourses related to Tschumi's time spent there in the late 1960s and 1970s. We discussed how both these realms matter to Tschumi and how he cannot give up either of them. They are both part of the landscape of his mind.

GF-G: Could you explain the effects of Paris on you? How have the events (*événements*) that took place in this city in 1968 contributed to your concerns about architecture? There is an apparent proximity between, for example, the concepts of “space” and “event” in both Foucault’s work and yours. Were you inspired by his texts or is this parallel the result of similar conditions related to the atmosphere of Paris at the time?

BT: It is both. As a historian and writer, Foucault was looking at the nature of institutions in relation to space, which resonates with the mind of an architect, whose work is about that relationship. During the post-1968 period the awareness of major institutions became clear to everyone. If the early twentieth century witnessed the collapse of institutions such as the Church, family values, the credibility of the army, subsequently the 1960s became marked by a strange and conflicting fascination for the spaces of these institutions. Aldo Rossi writes about the architecture of the city emphasizing its major monuments.¹⁵ A world city like Paris had structured itself through these major institutions and their buildings, the boulevards and the nineteenth-century Haussmannian plan being equally relevant. There were precedents in Rome, but at the same time there are few cities where these institutions are so strongly embedded

in the ground as they have been in Paris. Foucault's work is as much a result of this spatial arrangement as he is the person who has been able to identify and analyze it.

GF-G: This was a time of debates concerning knowledge, desire and revolutionary change in society. In his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault gives us a sense of the context when he states that it is in the connection of desire to reality (and not its retreat into forms of representation) that we find revolutionary forces.¹⁶ Did you attend Foucault's lectures at the Collège?¹⁷

BT: No, unfortunately I did not attend his lectures. I have read Foucault and Barthes, less Blanchot, more Artaud, Bataille, the early Sollers and Roussel ... I am happy to see these writers being mentioned in the same sentence. They are part of the same landscape of the mind. It is an ambitious, critical landscape of the mind, but it is also generous in the manner in which it has attempted to encapsulate the world. Each person was able to open a new door, by being extraordinarily creative. They reinvented their respective disciplines and that was stunningly stimulating as I was asking myself, can one reinvent architecture?

GF-G: I can see that this was an important question at the time, given that the dominant desire was for grasping the world through the knowledge that comes from living courageously and creatively. This art of living a passionate and visionary life was thought to be achievable through bravely unfolding the events of life. The notion of "event" is central and irreducible in Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Did you derive your definition of "event" from Foucault, or did you define it independently?

BT: Both. I started to use the word "event" in London in 1972–73 in my teaching on space, using the expression "there is no space without something that happens in it," hence tackling the notions of "space" and "event" as inseparable.¹⁸ There is no causal relationship between the two; they constantly intersect each other. This became crucial for my definitions of "program," "function" and "use." Only later in conversations with Derrida did I realize how imprecise my language was, and how important it was to differentiate between a "program," as something repetitive and formulaic, and an "event," which is by definition unpredictable. One does not and cannot design events.

The reason why I bring the notions of "event," "program" and "space" in relation to one another is because it was somehow inevitable in the post-1968 context. The word "event" has an ambiguous meaning in English language, whereby an event could be both accidental – an incident, and planned – a spectacle. The intersection of space and events, be it on urban or architectural scale, is a necessary condition of architecture. But as you seem to suggest, Artaud brought a certain corporeal

dimension to this phenomenon while Blanchot and Barthes probably less.¹⁹

GF-G: In addressing the politics of space, you have voiced suspicions about the nature of the link between space and power by avoiding naïve interpretations of architecture's ability to alter political structures. Can you comment?

BT: This discussion dates back to the late-eighteenth century with Fourier and his Phalanstère; it had a new lease of life after the Russian revolution when space and architecture were considered a mould and a mirror of society.²⁰ Discussions were renewed in France and Italy in the post-1968 debates about architecture being able to generate a new lifestyle by using a political dimension: "*sous les pavés, la plage*" (under the oppressive rules of civilization lies freedom).²¹

The expression "there is no socialist architecture, fascist architecture, there is only architecture in a socialist regime or in a fascist regime" is both truthful and not.²² There are certain architectural circumstances that have a direct effect on spatial and social practice. The example that I often give is the invention of the corridor. Up to a certain point in time all rooms led from one to another, until society invented the corridor, thus creating a disassociation with that sequence of continuity. In doing so new social relations were created. The same applies to a city with streets, which works differently from a city without streets. This would not necessarily affect the power structure. And yet it may.

GF-G: Your explanation runs parallel to what appears in Foucault's 1982 interview on the questions of space, where he argues that there is no architecture of revolution or architecture of repression, adding that an architecture of repression can become an architecture of liberation and vice versa.²³ This explanation is different from what appears in many architectural theories including Rossi's.

BT: I like your "including Rossi." Here we have to touch upon the role of ideologies in architecture, as a number of intelligent architects have been carrying ideological baggage. Foucault and the writers that you have mentioned in your initial list of questions from Bataille, to Barthes, were fighting ideologies as a mode of thinking; I have tried to do the same in architecture. I avoid people who wish to inflict canons and rules that are pure ideologies.

GF-G: ...*(Thinking)*... *Given that societies have almost universally slipped into the present ideology of global capitalism, Tschumi makes a point worthy of emphasis.*

- GF-G: Can you comment on “exemplary actions” and “counter design” as they appear in your essay “The Environmental Trigger”?²⁴
- BT: Foucault’s work on prisons and Guattari’s critique of the asylum were major moves that questioned how society deals with its misfits.²⁵ I was interested in how the city could be a trigger of certain social and political actions, realizing that *détournement*, a creative misuse of certain circumstances, was potentially a liberating factor. But as you correctly pointed out, there is no direct cause and effect relation between a certain type of space and a certain type of event. The Panopticon style prison, which was planned as a structure for surveillance, came to be regarded as a more human environment than the solitary electronically guarded prison.
- GF-G: Given your experiences in the 1970s of Northern Ireland, or the occupation with your students of disused buildings in London’s Kentish Town, what kind of political action have you pursued in New York, whether at Columbia or elsewhere?
- BT: At Columbia I have confronted a tendency of restricting the freedom of thought by establishing separate territories, the so-called specialist fields. I was against the practice of departments having an absolute control over how something would be taught. I tried to open up the boundaries of knowledge, by introducing visitors with fresh ideas. The School of Architecture and the Planning and Preservation Department had literally built cement block walls between themselves. Where the original 1911 building had an open hallway, my immediate predecessors had introduced walls that divided the school community. As Dean I removed these walls and established an open spatial organization. Running the school was a project not much different from designing.
- GF-G: You have described a concrete action in the context of the university, but if we may go beyond the university ...
- BT: With different projects, your role changes. ... The article that you referred to was written at the time when I was going through a period of self-examination. That was a time of the Red Army Faction in Germany and Red Brigades in Italy.
- GF-G: La Villette was a *grand projet*, a political project, and you worked closely with the President of the Republic. What was your attitude?
- BT: I was sympathetic to that particular group regardless of how infuriating some of the individuals in power had been. I happened to like Mitterrand,²⁶ we got along, and there were many different dimensions to the project including the social. The project was of the left and there was a major opposition

from the right. Endless strategies had to be deployed to have the scheme built as the project was threatened many times.

GF-G: We haven't touched on La Villette's follies yet, nor on your themes such as architectural paradox, the pleasure of architecture, architecture and transgression etc.²⁷ Was the reading of Foucault's *Histoire de la Folie (Madness and Civilization)* important for the formation of your critical thinking and, if so, in what way?²⁸

BT: *Histoire de la Folie* was in the back of my mind when thinking about the *folies* of La Villette. I had two quotes, by Foucault and Blanchot. I was playing with the word "folly" in English meaning a small garden house, and the same word meaning madness in French. I began using the term *folie* while working on the project. While preparing these so-called site-specific installations, I named them the "twentieth century follies." Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* was resonating in my mind.

GF-G: Although you are usually associated with Derrida, it becomes possible to argue that your architectural thinking was perhaps more influenced by Foucault. How do you see yourself in relation to these thinkers?

BT: It is not for me to decide. I believe that the works by Foucault, Derrida, Blanchot, Barthes, Deleuze and Guattari, were part of a critical discourse that created a cultural landscape of which I was a part and a product. This goes beyond what Americans call French theory. It was a period of time, just as there was the Enlightenment in another century, when thinking crystallized around a number of thinkers and they are all important. I was irritated here in the US when people labeled me first Derridian and now Deleuzian. The frame of reference is never that clear-cut.

GF-G: Can you comment on your relationship with Jacques Derrida for historical reasons?

BT: Initially I heard Derrida speaking at the ICA, London in the mid-70s. His work was of interest because of its relation to literature, art and film. In the early 1980s, I decided to invite Eisenman and Derrida to design a garden together for Park La Villette.²⁹ Prior to that point, they had never met. Derrida visited my office in Paris for briefing, expressing surprise that architects were interested in deconstruction, as it was anti-structure, anti-hierarchy, anti-form, all that architecture is. I responded – exactly for that reason. I introduced Eisenman and Derrida to each other and they both started to work. Peter submitted the initial proposal, which was over the budget, at around that time, Derrida wrote "Point de folie – Maintenant l'architecture."³⁰

GF-G: How did the collaboration work?

BT: I developed the master plan and within it a part called the cinematic promenade. It consisted of a series of 30 meter by 30 meter frames representing a garden. One frame was

planned for Derrida and one for Eisenman. They had the site and they could propose at will. Derrida proposed a design based on a musical instrument, while Peter was interested in superimposing the layers of urban history.

GF-G: You speak of Derrida with great fondness?

BT: Yes, because Derrida was a genuinely nice person. In 1996, when I was awarded the Grand Prix of Architecture, the French Minister of Culture proposed a public conversation with Jacques Derrida. While conversing privately was easy, the idea of arguing issues in public petrified me. The talk happened; we spoke without moderators in front of a thousand people and it was a success.

GF-G: What about the Deconstructivist exhibition at MoMA in 1988?

BT: In the US it was Philip Johnson with Peter Eisenman with whom the word “deconstructivism” was linked. During the preparation of the exhibition there was a temptation to bring the word “constructivism” and “deconstruction” together. This was possible due to a constructivist impulse in Rem’s, Zaha’s, Libeskind’s and my own work; Coop Himmelblau’s work was not too distant; Peter was different, Gehry, with his ruptures and breaks, they were all included.³¹ The word deconstruction had been of interest for architects in Paris since the early ’70s. Bringing deconstruction and Constructivism together was a great journalistic and curatorial coup. The 1988 exhibition was a media success based on a few calculated misunderstandings including the term Deconstructivism. The show aimed to ridicule the tendencies that created –isms. However the habit within the arts community of having -isms remained, so we all let ourselves be the beneficiaries of this misunderstanding, while denying identifications such as “deconstructivist.”

GF-G: How do you see your relationship with Constructivism and in particular with the work of Yakov Chernikhov?

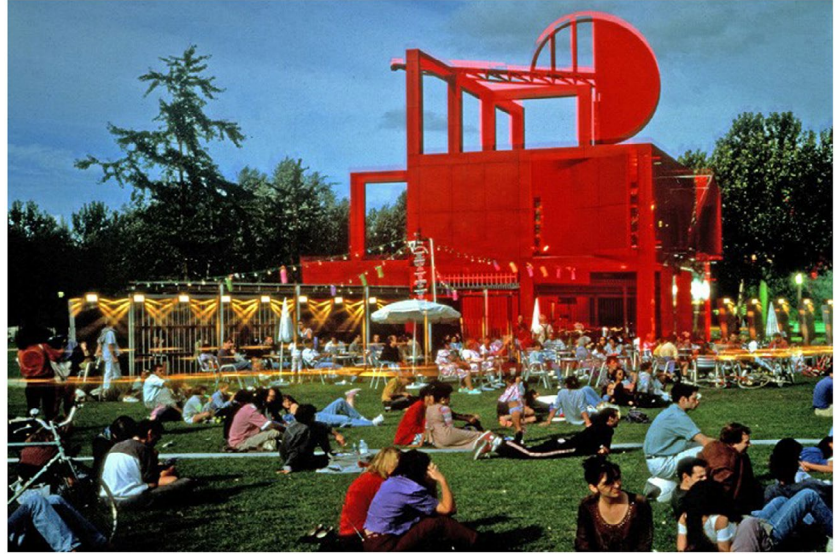
BT: My fascination is with Constructivists’ rethinking of the relationship between architecture, social space and technology. I was taken by their experiments in the 1920s particularly with film-makers Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, and was aware of the works of (Ivan) Leonidov (Konstantin) Melnikov and (Yakov) Chernikhov. What interested me in Chernikhov was the method – the role of series.³²

GF-G: Do you visit Parc de la Villette?

BT: I do. The park constantly changes according to seasons, the time of the day, the weather, the crowds. It provides a rich experience that has worked beyond expectations. The spontaneous events and the way in which the park evolves are captivating (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Bernard Tschumi: "The park constantly changes according to the seasons, the time of the day, the weather the crowds."
Courtesy BTA.



The shadows were becoming longer, their lines visibly acute. Despite five hours of talk without food or drink, Tschumi was remarkably fresh; he carried on responding meticulously, with precision, constantly navigating towards the best turn in the landscape. Perhaps we shall check the paving stones (pavés) next time.

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Notes

- 1 Auster's *New York Trilogy* was originally published as three short novels: *City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986), and *The Locked Room* (1986). The novellas by J. D. Salinger that fueled these expectations were *Franny and Zooey* (1961), *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters*, and *Seymour: An Introduction* (published together in book form in 1963).
- 2 Hubert Selby, Jr. (1928–2004) and Norman Mailer (1923–2007) are American twentieth-century writers.
- 3 The visit was in August 2012 and I am grateful to Bernard Tschumi for the time he dedicated to this talk.
- 4 Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (London: St. Martin's/ Academy Editions, 1981). The reference is to Tschumi's quotation: "To really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder"; Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

- 5 On the subject of strolling, see Gordana Korolija Fontana-Giusti, "Urban Strolling as the Measure of Quality," *Architectural Research Quarterly*, no. 11 (2007): 255–64.
- 6 This major competition Tschumi won in 1983.
- 7 The works by Michel Foucault that Tschumi alludes to are: *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* [1961, abridged French version 1964], trans. R. Howard (London: Routledge, 1989); *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* [1963], trans. A. M. Sheridan-Smith (New York: Pantheon 1973); and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [1975], trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977).
- 8 Trisha Brown (b. 1936) is a widely acclaimed choreographer who first gained public attention in the 1960s. Tschumi refers to her seminal work *Roof Piece* (1971) that has subsequently been represented by photographer Babette Mangolte (1973); Barbara Clausen, "Performing Histories: Why the Point Is Not to Make a Point ...," *Afterall*, no. 23 (2010). Available online: <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.23/performing.historieswhythe.point.is.not.to.make.a.point.barbara.clausen#share> (accessed February 28, 2016).
- 9 Manuel de Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone, 1997).
- 10 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* [1974], trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
- 11 Johnpaul Jones is a University of Oregon alumnus and an architect who in 2014 was awarded the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama. Available online: <http://www.jonesandjones.com/>. IAA is the International Academy of Architecture – a non-governmental organization with special status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), whose members are leading architectural academicians from all over the world.
- 12 Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), a contemporary American conceptual artist who lives in New York and London; Robert Smithson (1938–73), an American artist known for his use of photography, sculpture, and land art; Julian Schnabel (b. 1951), a contemporary American painter and filmmaker; Cedric Price (1934–2003), an unorthodox British architect; original and creative, Price was ahead of his time in promoting new thinking in architectural planning, regeneration and design.
- 13 *Fireworks* was a project by Tschumi that took place at the Architectural Association, London, in 1974; *A Space: A Thousand Words* (London: Royal College of Art, 1975).
- 14 Marina Abramović (b. 1946) is a Yugoslav-born, New York-based contemporary pioneer performance artist who performs and exhibits worldwide, most recently in London's Serpentine Gallery (2014) and MoMA, New York (2010).
- 15 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* [1966], trans. Diane Girardo and Joan Ockman (Cambridge, MA: Oppositions/MIT Press 1984).
- 16 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972], preface by Michel Foucault, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
- 17 Foucault was appointed to the Collège de France, Paris, in 1970; he gave public lectures there until his death in 1984.
- 18 For more on this, see the Introduction to Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 2–25.
- 19 Tschumi here responds to the original questions from the preliminary document sent to him by Fontana-Giusti. Related more detailed discussion had to be omitted in the editing of this article.
- 20 Charles Fourier (1772–1837) was a French socialist utopian thinker who devised a *phalanstère* (or Phalanstery) – a type of building for a utopian community; Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2005): 137. Tschumi also refers to the Soviet architects who highly valued the role of architecture in a society; Mosei Ginzburg, *Style and Epoch* [1924], trans. Anatole Senkevitch (Cambridge, MA: Oppositions/MIT Press).
- 21 Tschumi recalls the spring 1968 slogan. The phrase remains a symbol of the events in Paris in the early days of the protests, when the first barricades were erected. The students noticed that the cobblestones were placed on a bed of sand. More than an incentive to build

- barricades and throw cobblestones at riot police, the slogan sums up the aspirations of May '68: the desire for freedom. "Under the cobblestones, the beach!" was chanted and written on the walls. Available online: <http://inventin.lautre.net/graffiti.html> (accessed on February 28, 2016).
- 22 Tschumi here paraphrases the idea that is found in Michel Foucault's essay "Space, Knowledge and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984): 239–56; also Gordana Fontana-Giusti, *Foucault for Architects* (London: Routledge, 2013): 132–64.
 - 23 Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, Power."
 - 24 Bernard Tschumi, "The Environmental Trigger," in *A Continuing Experiment: Learning and Teaching at the AA*, ed. James Gowan (London: Architectural Press, 1975).
 - 25 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*; Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.
 - 26 François Mitterrand (1916–96) was a French statesman who served as President of France (1981–95) when Parc de la Villette was commissioned and built.
 - 27 At Parc de la Villette, Paris (1982–98), a "system of dispersed "points" – the red enameled steel *folies* that support different cultural and leisure activities – is superimposed on a system of lines that emphasizes movement through the park"; Bernard Tschumi Architects.
- Available online: www.tschumi.com/projects/3/# (accessed March 2015); Bernard Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," *Studio International* (September/October 1975), revd in *idem*, *Architecture and Disjunction*; *idem*, "The Pleasure of Architecture," *Architectural Design*, 3 (March 1977); *idem*, "Architecture and Transgression," *Oppositions*, 7 (Winter 1976).
- 28 Foucault, *ibid*.
 - 29 Peter Eisenman (b. 1932) is an American architect considered one of the New York Five. In addition to his modernist and often-called deconstructive designs, he is known for his writing on architecture.
 - 30 Jacques Derrida, "Point de folie – Maintenant l'architecture," *AA Folios* (London: Architectural Association, 1985).
 - 31 Tschumi refers to his contemporaries Rem Koolhaas, the late Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Coop Himmelblau, Peter Eisenman, and Frank Gehry. Tschumi knew Koolhaas and Hadid through their involvement with the Architectural Association, London.
 - 32 Tschumi mentions Russian avant-garde film-makers: Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), Dziga Vertov (1896–1954), and Constructivist architects: Ivan Leonidov (1902–59), Konstantin Melnikov (1890–1974), and Yakov Chernikhov (1889–1951).

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