

Double Take

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Double take, n. A delayed reaction to a situation, sight of a person, etc. ... Also, a second, often more detailed, look.¹

Art and Architecture: An on-going love affair? Are art and architecture entranced by the better version of themselves they think they see in the other? Perhaps architecture's curiosity about contemporary art is connected with the perception of art as a potentially subversive activity apparently free from economic pressures and social demands; while art's interest in architectural processes and forms may be related to its so-called purposefulness, its cultural and functional role, as well as its closer relation to power and authority. While architecture provides a subject matter and setting for art, art is an expanded field where architecture can develop its critical potential and capacity to construct concepts as well as provide solutions.

Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards: An interest in architecture, specifically its ability to produce place, critique site and imagine scenes figured as key aspects of the art of the 1960s,² with the institutional structure of the gallery often operating as a mediating threshold between private lives and public concerns. Through the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the art world's interest in architecture appeared to diminish; art's criticality pointed in a different direction, towards a sceptical questioning, sometimes an ambivalent celebration, of mass consumption, visual spectacle and commodification. But the recent resurgence of architectural themes in the art of the late 1990s and 2000s is not to be understood as a return of the same, or a repetition of the work of the 1960s and 1970s. There is still a fascination with architecture's 'dark' side, with its ability to control and order, but the complexity of geopolitics and the history of the cold war mean that history and memory, psychology and the emotions are to the fore. Juxtaposing works from the 1960s with art from a later period, an experience of *Architektonika* allows your situation in the gallery to influence your interpretation of history, different positions can be taken up such that contemporary works frame acts of looking back, while the aura of an early icon might anticipate your response to that which comes later.

1 and 2: Architektonika 1 (15 September 2011 – 12 February 2012) and *Architektonika 2* (5 April 2012 – 13 January 2013) include artworks with an architectural interest selected from the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection in the Hamburger Bahnhof and the

Nationalgalerie's collection, as well as works loaned and some made specially for the exhibition. While *Architektonika 1* focused on the sculptural and visual qualities of architectural structures, *Architektonika 2* dealt with art's relation to urban and social issues. A number of works appeared in both exhibitions, but others were removed after *Architektonika 1*, and new pieces added for *Architektonika 2*, resulting in a kind of double take: some works were seen once, and others twice, the latter encountered in the same location, but in a context altered by new additions, inviting those same works to be seen, again, differently.

Moving Forwards, Moving Backwards: If at the strategic level the decision to curate an exhibition of two parts or stages, where certain artworks appear twice, can be considered a form of double take, then at the level of experience, other aspects of double take also occur. Works produced at different historical moments, but which offer a range of perspectives on a specific architectural theme, have been carefully paired to exchange views with one another, and invite the viewer to consider how the architectural issues set out by one work can be rethought when positioned next to another. The main building of the Hamburger Bahnhof is, as its name indicates, originally a railway station and *Architektonika* is located in a renovated storage building which forms a long wing extending away from the rear of the main building and accessed via an internal bridge. A window poised on the crossing provides a view of the extension's linearity. Travelling the length of this architecture offers a spatial sense of doubling that runs alongside the historical one. The exhibition takes place in a series of five halls, the first four of which each contain smaller galleries that open into one another. The sequence of halls is ordered into two pairs, each pair comprising two halls, divided by a pause, where movement through space does not flow but rather alternates in and out of a row of four tiny chambers, each one self-contained and entered only at one point. The passage then continues towards the final scene of the exhibition, located in the fifth hall, the only one that has not been renovated, and which creates an ending, but also a beginning, a point where motion forward is reversed and you must journey back from where you have come.

(Un)Planned

In October 1966 critic David Bourdon quoted artist Carl André's account of the development of modern sculpture from form, through structure, to place, and noted André's statement on *Cuts*, his show in March 1967 at the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles, 'I now use the material as the cut in space'.³ *07515 Karlsplatz* made in 1992, and exhibited

at *Architektonika 1* and *Architektonika 2*, could be considered a continuation of André's early work – as a cut in the space of the gallery – so reversing the usual figure-ground relation of sculpture to gallery, but a more obvious representational reading can also be made in response to its formal composition, encouraging one to think of the most familiar pattern of urban settlements – the grid – and architecture's role as organizer of material through the design and layout of buildings as objects. *07515 Karlsplatz* consists of wooden rectangular beams, all the same size, laid out in a grid, with vertical elements set at the junctions between the horizontal ones. Looking closer, one sees that the splits running through the wood, which threaten to split the fibres apart, ensure the uniqueness of each log. But perhaps you are prompted to consider André's work this way, because your first view of it, this time, is framed by the loose composition of plastic grey drain-pipe, pink-painted breezeblocks and roughly-hacked tree trunk that comprise *Caracas: The Growing Houses* (2012), a work by Marjetica Potrč that demonstrates her interest in the informal almost natural processes which guide the 'putting together' and re-use of found elements, often artificial, in unplanned urban neighbourhoods, specifically the barrios of Caracas. The position of *07515 Karlsplatz* next to, and after, *Caracas: Growing Houses*, the inaugural work of *Architektonika 2*, sets up the first of the double-edged themes of this exhibition: the false distinction often set up between two different ordering structures of urban design: those that are 'planned', usually taken to be abstract and man-made, and those that are 'unplanned', most often assumed to be natural and organic (as if nature had no plan).

The Same, Again, Differently

The second doubling in *Architektonika 2* places Sol LeWitt's *Modular Cube* (1970) with Dan Graham's photo-essay *Homes for America* (1971-1972), two works whose interest in architecture as a modular system reinforce each other, the former focusing on the abstract and conceptual, the later a textwork which offers a critique of the mass-produced components and standardized construction methods being used to build the single family dwellings of suburban America.⁴ Reflections in the glass of Graham's work provide you with glimpses of the gallery beyond, revealing fragments of a ribbon of images and the flickering edges of an installation. On closer inspection Peter Fischli & David Weiss's photowork *Siedlungen, Agglomerationen* (1992/1997) shows you the same housing scheme seen over time, its repetitive quite ordinary facade altered by the shifts of light and colour that the changing seasons bring. You turn around to face Andrea Pichl's *Doublebind* (2011), a sequence of photographs of high-rise housing schemes from across the world are projected onto superimposed half-scale

reproductions of the standard designs for 4-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 1-bedroom East German apartment type 70. Paris, Dublin, Berlin, Tashkent ... the mass housing of the 1960s and 1970s built in all these cities followed certain rules and guidelines, but Pichl's selection of images show how specific choices and patterns of occupation render subtle distinctions out of potential modular monotony.

Splitting

You are drawn forward by the sound of an almost inaudible voice in the next room. You enter, and draw up a stool in front of *Office Baroque*, a 44-minute 16mm-film from 1977, and lean forward to hear Gordon Matta-Clark. He is explaining how much he wants to make a work that has to be really experienced, where one vantage point cannot offer an overall view, a piece which is not documentable. This is what he is trying to achieve in *Office Baroque*, one of his last works, where the cuts he makes on every floor of an empty office building in Antwerp, inspired by the accidental traces of a teacup placed on some sketches, interplay two overlapping semi-circular shapes, one slightly larger in diameter than the other. Matta-Clark's cuts into architecture are acts, which confront architecture's potentially despotic will towards visual control and total power. In an earlier work, *Splitting* (1974), Matta-Clark sawed two parallel slices through a wood-frame house in Englewood, New Jersey removing the material between the two cuts. The act of splitting, where a subject wishes to cut off unacceptable aspects of the self, projecting unwanted feelings onto another, is psychic as well physical. While a cut splits, a mirror doubles through reflection. Looking into the fragmenting surface of multiple mirrors in the next room, you encounter Rachel Khedoori's *Untitled (Model)* (2000), a model of the exterior of a 1970's house, large and mostly empty, in which the artist lived for a period of time, turning the rooms into sets for films. Mirror was a favoured domestic finish in the 1970s, along with lurid patterned wallpapers and carpets. In *Untitled (Pink Room #1-6)* (2001) photographs of such interiors are reflected, mirrored as it were, along a horizontal axis, doubling the space of the image, to create a disorienting experience for the viewer, where ceilings becomes floors, and floors become ceilings, and it is difficult to know where you are.

The Setting

The psychoanalytical notion of the 'setting' describes the main conditions of treatment within which the psychoanalytic encounter occurs. Following Sigmund Freud these include 'arrangements' about time and money, as well as 'certain ceremonials' governing the positions and roles of analysand (lying on a couch and speaking) and analyst (sitting

behind the analysand on a chair and listening).⁵ For André Green, the position of the consulting room between inside and outside relates to its function as a transitional space between analyst and analysand, as does its typology as a closed space different from both inner and outer worlds.⁶ *Wedding Therese* (1984) and *Ohne Titel* (1986) by Hermann Pitz are two works which use simple gestures to negotiate the relation between imagined and real space.⁷ In *Ohne Titel* (1986) to better see a tiny scene, you crouch down on the floor of the gallery, breaking the illusion offered by the work, and becoming aware of your own presence hushed by the vastness of the gallery. You note for the first time a thick electrical cable, its snaking line leads your eye up and across to the lamps lighting *Wedding Therese* (1984), drawing your attention to the space between what is now the white wall of the gallery (but you know to have been a former railway storage facility) and the brick wall in Pitz's installation, confronting the gap between what you imagine this *mise-en-scene* to conjure up, and what is 'really' there from the pigment down to the atoms. The view through the window-frame of *Wedding Therese*, itself taken from a site-specific work originally developed in 1984 for an exhibition in Berlin's Wedding district, suggests to you another scene ...

Relational Specificity

Robert Smithson's dialectic of 'site' (site of the work or non-gallery located outside) and 'non-site' (site of the documentation of the work in the gallery or inside), developed in the 1960s and early 1970s,⁸ describes a dialogue or 'back and forth rhythm' between indoors and outdoors, one site and another.⁹ Extending the relation to include multiple rather than dialectical objects, people and sites, it is worth referring to Miwon Kwon discussion of Homi Bhabha's concept of 'relational specificity',¹⁰ which highlights the double importance of relating specifics and specific relations, and is somehow akin to James Clifford's notion of site as a mobile place, located between fixed points.¹¹ Stan Douglas's *Aufgegebene Gewächshäuser des Gartenbauamtes, Am Schlaatz* (1994-1995/2003), a series of photographs of German allotment gardens from the east, shows a passion for inventing new kinds of uses for leftover spaces, a practice shared by people from both sides of the wall, making relations between sites in Berlin otherwise divided by the splitting of the city. This project is perhaps an outsider's attempt to create a healing gesture at a time when the tear in the fabric of the city was still raw. You feel the blood beat in your ears, as Carsten Nicolai's pumping techno soundtrack to the adjacent installation *Klub der Republik* (2002) takes you back to those parties just after the wall had fallen, and when the future of Berlin's split history was yet to be determined. Artists

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani documented the demolition of the *Palast der Republik*, a relic of former East Germany, and their sculptural response includes etching in gold on ply-wood panels the outlines of lost interiors, whose nostalgic silhouettes recall an era of design now considered impossibly stylish.

Pause

You continue past four cells glowing with archival material, spending time studying drawings in each one, and then emerge, slightly disorientated, moving towards daylight and what appears to be an unwieldy and overgrown set of garden-sheds in the gallery beyond. This is Dieter Roth's 40 metre-long *Gartenskulptur* that he started in 1968 and continued to work on until his death, but, which, with the collaboration of his son, Björn Roth, continues to grow and change beyond him. You look out of the window at the garden of the Hamburger Bahnhof and pause ... You imagine breathing in the outside air and notice how tiny the green tomatoes are, and imagine how red they will smell later in the summer. The plan of the gallery in your hand shows that this pause of yours has been orchestrated by the architecture. You are in a lobby between two pairs of halls, and your pause is edged by a wall into which are inserted a series of openings – Jürgen Albrecht's *Orte* (2011). Looking deep into these empty white interiors bathes your eyes in white light, a feeling that evokes the luminescence of James Turrell's work. A moment later, in a place of quiet clarity aside the busy madness of *Gartenskulptur* you discover Turrell's *Transformative Space: Flat Top* (1991). This is a model for one of Turrell's sky spaces, designed structures that offer framed views of the sky and intense experiences of light. You remember relaxing into a curved wood-backed bench at PS1, where at dusk, when a secret room that had been locked was finally opened, you watched day become night, transfixed by the space above you where the ceiling should have been.

The Wisdom of Youth

Directly beneath the sky on top of another New York building, the Dia Art Foundation in Chelsea, Dan Graham, in collaboration with architects Moji Baratloo and Clifton Balch, designed *Rooftop Urban Park Project*, (1981–91). This park included a video salon with a coffee bar showing work selected by the artist, and a site-specific pavilion, *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*, referencing the grid of the surrounding city and its water towers, but also similar to those conceived by Graham earlier in his career in relating the body to the horizon. At times you could look through the pavilion and see the space on the skyline where the twin towers used to be, at others you were confronted by your own reflection, looking back. Graham always intended the park to be a place for

performance, with timber flooring like a boardwalk and rubberized parapet walls so that children could play safely.¹² A few years later with Jeff Wall, Graham designed another safe play space for children. Set into the landscape, *The Children's Pavilion* (1989 and 1991) the design contains a dome with a round window of one-way glass, allowing those on the inside to stare out at the sky and at those others looking in, while those on the outside can see their own mirror image with reflections of the sky behind. Placed high up on the gallery wall above the model, and framed in large round discs, faces of children, lit like angels and set against a dramatic cloudscape, gaze down, but not at you. These images selected from Wall's *Little Children* (1988) produce a strangely unsettling relation with Tobias Zielony's portraits of young Sicilian men, positioned at right angles on the nearby wall. Golden-faced, photographed at night with the lights of the city behind them, these are residents of *Le Vele di Scampia*. This bold and utopian housing complex in Naples, designed in the late 1970s by architect Franz Di Salvo, was, however, quickly taken over by the Camorra, a Mafia-type organization. As part of *Vele* (2009–2010) Zielony took photographs documenting this neighbourhood in shocking detail with its run-down, badly lit corridors and squalid shared spaces. In *Gaze* (2010), a young man, bathed in light, stares past you. Maybe he is drawn to those innocent creatures of Wall's up there in the sky or perhaps he is puzzling over Graham and Wall's design to protect children behind you, which as an unrealized proposal remains untouched by time, while the architecture of his own home, barely 40 years of age, is stained and decrepit, inhabited by youths whose wisdom is to stay safe by becoming old.

Doppelgänger

You enter the final room of the exhibition, the only part of the building which is brick-walled not white, and the location of a permanent work, Bruce Nauman's, *Room with My Soul Left Out, Room That Does Not Care* (1984). This piece was inspired by a dream where, on entering a room Nauman encountered a stranger who turned out to be his double or *doppelgänger*. Two corridors are positioned horizontally at right angles to one another, and a third is placed at their crossing point (reminding you of Carl André's *07515 Karlsplatz*). Yet, positioned asymmetrically, with one arm longer than another and butting into the brickwork, this is not such a pure geometry, and the crossroads do not act as a fulcrum that turns you around, rather you are faced with a choice: enter the work and come up against four dead-ends, or walk around the work until you are stopped by a wall. Here you have no choice but to return back through *Architektonika*, viewing each one of the works, again, but this time in reverse, where what was once afterwards, now becomes something you've seen before.

¹ <http://www.oed.com/> (accessed 23 August 2012).

² In developing the concept of critical spatial practice in art, I discuss the difference between the terms space, place and site. See Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006). See also Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); and the discussion of place in Claire Doherty (ed.), *Thinking of the Outside: New Art and the City of Bristol*, (University of the West of England and Bristol Legible City in Association with Arnolfini, 2005), pp. 9–10.

³ David Bourdon, 'The Razed Sites of Carl André', reprinted from *Artforum*, October 1966, in Gregory Battcock (ed.), *Minimalism: A Critical Anthology*, (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) pp. 103–108.

⁴ See for example, Dan Graham, *Pavilions*, (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1983); Dan Graham, *Pavilions*, (München: Kunstverein München, 1988); and Martin Köttering and Roland Nachtigäller (eds), *Dan Graham: Two-Way Mirror Pavilions 1989–1996*, (Nordhorn: Städtische Galerie, 1996).

⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'On Beginning the Treatment (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis I)', (1913), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII (1911–1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, pp. 121–144, 126, 133.

⁶ 'Dialogues with André Green', in Gregorio Kohon (ed.), *The Dead Mother: The Work of André Green*, (London: Routledge, published in association with the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1999), p. 29.

⁷ In Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011) I explore how the gallery is a setting for the interaction between critic and work, which operates as a form of an analytic object.

⁸ "'Earth" (1969) symposium at White Museum', Cornell University, in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 178.

⁹ Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 55–8. See Robert Smithson, 'Towards the development of an air terminal site' (1967), in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 291.

¹⁰ See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) p. 166. Kwon is referring to Homi K. Bhabha, 'Double Visions', *Artforum*. v. 30, n. 5 (1992), pp. 85–59.

¹¹ James Clifford, 'An Ethnographer in the Field', interview by Alex Coles, in Alex Coles (ed.) *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000) pp. 52–73.

¹² See leaflet published by Dia Center for the Arts, Dan Graham, 'Rooftop Urban Park Project', long-term installation, consisting of Dan Graham 'Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube' (1981/1991) and Design Collaboration, Baratloo-Balch Architects. 'Video Salon'. See also Dan Graham, *Pavilions* (Munich: Kunstverein München, 1988).