

The Spaces Between

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For some time now a need has been felt to set up another platform for architecture in this strangely dislocated part of the world where an architectural culture can be said scarcely to exist. Important developments in thinking about architecture have been ignored or actively resisted here. It is our premise that architecture only happens in an environment of critical discussion and debate. We hope to offer a forum for the discussion and development of issues and ideas important to architecture without the restrictions of immediate commercial appeal which has hitherto been a 'justification' for the lack of a thoughtful treatment of architecture which elsewhere is taken for granted. 'Justification' because ultimately important assumptions which for many must not be broken open and examined underlie this resistance to architecture and to theory.

The intention of this journal is not to reaffirm existing normative standards and canons, nor to rest comfortably in the supposed self-sufficiency of the building object, regional identity, composition, nature, function – or other modes of legitimating work here – but to explore the interstices, the gaps and fractures within an institution that appears solid, secure and fixed. It is the spaces between idea and thing where perfect correspondence is never quite found, demanding a realm of endless negotiation and interpretation that we see as productive. This is the sort of mismatch that Damisch observes relative to Viollet-le-Duc where he says 'the "truth" of a building is not to be found in bricks and mortar any more than in the outer form. No, it lies in the space between them, that which makes them complementary, in that space where style is born, in that gap between things which is intimated in the absence of a logical link . . . '.

This is not a 'project' for an all-embracing account of things but a sounding of the cavities within the walls which sustain architecture. What interests us is the recognition that no formal schema posed in terms of composition, structure, or function can any longer adequately cover either the production or the account of the design in hand, where with the invasion of language into every area of problematics in architecture, in the resulting absence of centre and origin, everything becomes susceptible to the play of discourse. Similarly questions of place, identity, regionalism, biculturalism, relations between the modern and the

non-modern, thrown into prominence by the recent call for the design of a national museum, in this light can only be posed in terms of the conjunctural, constituted by negotiation, splicing, juxtaposition, collage. Cultural factors are seen to be mixed, relational, inventive, mobile, with uncertain boundaries, not constituted by stable essences or polar opposites.

It is also becoming clear that, while architecture must measure up to the quality of critical thinking demonstrated in other disciplines, there are gaps through the walls, institutionally defined disciplinary boundaries are being increasingly threatened and crossed. A productive tension is found sliding through the intervals, a labyrinthine exploration of the interstices, to risk 'speaking into the void'.

Our intention is to publish original writing generated from the Under Construction Seminar Series hosted now for the last three years at the Department of Architecture, University of Auckland, whose aim initially to produce an increased consciousness in architectural circles of developments in theory in all disciplines, unexpectedly became a platform which did not seem to exist in the wider university. We aim to provide illustration and discussion of current architecture from New Zealand, the Pacific rim, and those from further afield which we see as being of interest and relevance to local practice, student work from the schools of architecture, translation of significant writing on architecture, and extended book reviews. Letters will be treated with serious consideration, our interest is in fostering and continuing discussion not in sustaining a monolithic position.