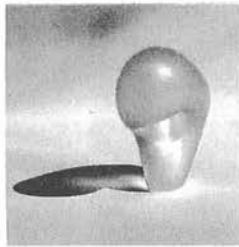


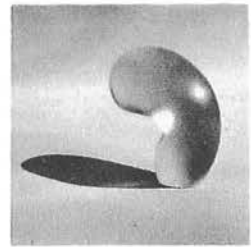
*Dans l'ombre de Ledoux  
L'espace de transgression*



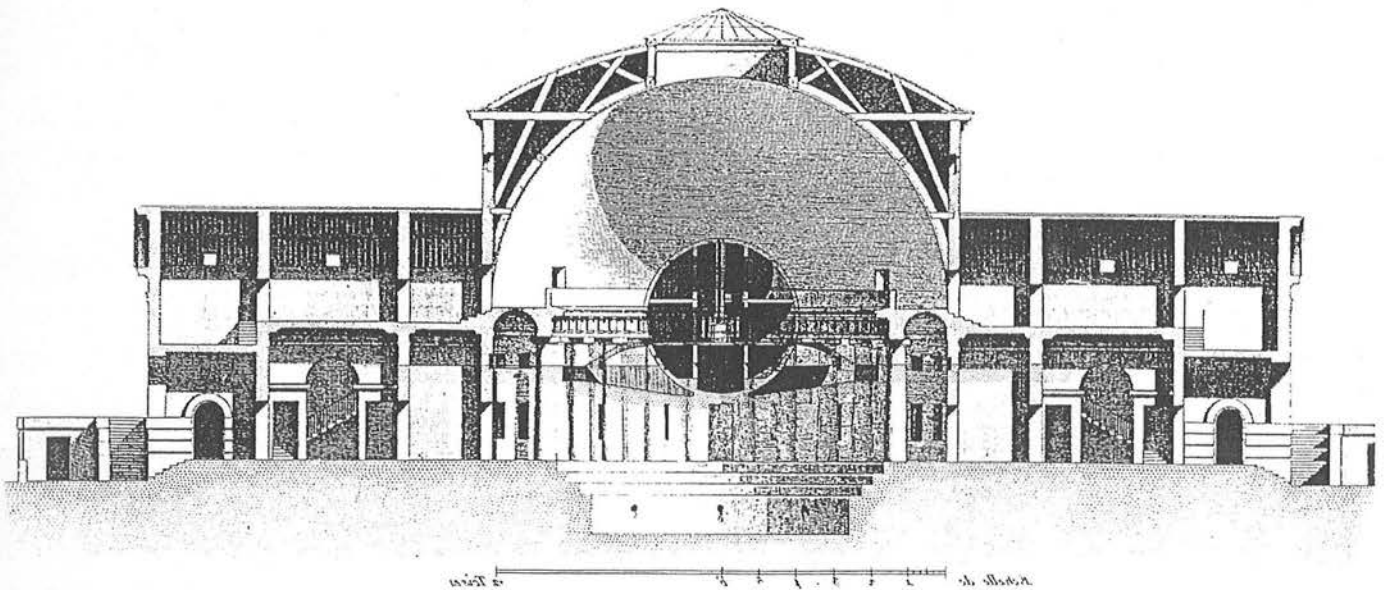
A three-dimensional Moebius strip folding back on itself



An undemarcated surface merging inside/outside, public/private



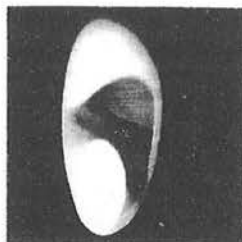
Sexually ambiguous, it dissolves discriminatory boundaries



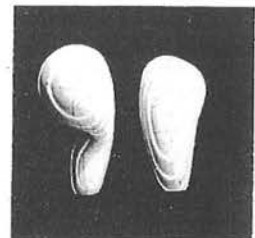
Engraved plates of **Claude Nicholas Ledoux's** *Bath House at Chaux* and the *House for the Agricultural Guards of Maupertuis* an overlapping of an ideal of *public space* with an ideal of *private space*



The form generated from Ledoux's shadows using a prophylactic



The resultant form: a product of distorted surface tensions



A series of parallel cuts permits reproduction of the form

MARK GOULTHORPE

## *In the shadow of Ledoux*

### Installation at Le Magasin, Grenoble

Material dissolution went furthest in our development of a sculptural piece for 'le Magasin' in Grenoble named '*In the Shadow of Ledoux*'. Here we literally *poured* the form in plastic, squeezing it as the resin set; the form *clarifying with time*, fading into existence. This form was generated, not in a 'positive' sense, but *negatively*, from the imagery of Ledoux in two of his utopian projects (the '*Bath House at Chaux*' and the '*House for the Forest Guards of Maupertuis*'); from the shadow, *in the shadow* - in the graphic margins of his *oeuvre*. It, hangs in the balance between past and future, in a suspension in *time* (poised in the abyss of the present), in a suspension in *space*, a suspension of space perhaps.

The exhibition 'Application and Implication' intended to raise the question of the public and private faces of architecture which we felt had changed markedly throughout history, from the strict symbolic codes of feudal or despotic orders, codifying and controlling the *socius*, containing desire to the much more diffuse and ambiguous influences of democratic, capitalistic society.

No longer limiting or restricting energy, they *release* it, opening space to the great flows of modernity; *flows of money, flows of people, flows of desire*. It is a great curving social surface across which everyone is free to circulate, led *by desire*, by all the mechanisms of capitalist attraction. Our question, though, *apropos* Ledoux (*last architect of the King, first architect of the Modern*) (Vidler) was whether we still inhabit Enlightenment space? Whether the fraternal ideals of these utopian projects - one public, the other private - still capture our imagination?

Our collage, merging Ledoux's social and aesthetic radicalism (hugely *transgressive* in its time) subverts the still clear demarcation between inside and outside. It problematizes notions of public and private by projecting one into the other. But such *violation* of Ledouxian precedent, a continuing *transgression*, is not a controlled or measured manoeuvre, for our use of a prophylactic, a condom, as a generative model has resulted in unpredictable and *non-geometric* volumes.

A product of *distorted surface tensions*, the resulting form, is a nebulous and un-demarcated social surface. Curving back on itself (as an almost three-dimensional Moebius strip) it creates an invaginated pocket for which it is impossible to define a transition point from inside to outside, from public to private. No longer an architecture which projects itself out into space through elaborate systems of signification, it is codifying space, controlling space. It is the flow of space which invades the architecture - a turning inside-out of public space; now a mute and implacable surface.

The form sets up a series of oppositional logics which reverberate across time. It is a staged dissolution of demarcated and structured space *and* the merge and fade of public and private in an indeterminate space of social milieu (Ledoux neither really present nor absent). It is a folding back of historical and social issues condensing a form mute yet resonant. It is an irresolute repetition, an alteration.

We built the piece with rings of plywood chosen for their laminated, annular intensity which gives the surface a kinetic energy, an oscillation which desubstantiates in some curious way its objectivity. An eroded monolithic form, worn smooth eccentrically, it reveals itself as sedimented, archaeological: *a memorial of the instant*.

In small steel letters, sanded flush with the surface, we embedded the names of the sponsors into the grain of each ring, creating a very real social surface - names flowing across its deterritorialized and undemarcated surface. But each one alone, trapped within their own circuit (the independence and isolation of the post-modern *self*) emerged as the antithesis of Ledoux's idealized fraternity, and this, too, is evoked by the generative model of the condom, the perfect quotidian object for problematizing all boundary conditions: public/private, inside/outside, self/non-self, the free and unrestricted body of the present unsheathed in a transparent veil.

In this sense the object is not simply a 'body without organs' (Deleuze and Guattari's slippery, unrestricted social surface) but an *organ without body*, a curiously hermaphrodite modern creature. It is both a tactile promiscuity and a *flotation of sexuality* (Barthes, Baudrillard), ambiguous couplings endlessly fracturing, endlessly reconfiguring duets: a 'poetry of the incomplete ...'