

Jonah Rowen
Kai Gutschow, Faculty Advisor
29 August 2006

Independent Study Course:
Background, Philosophy and Theory of Peter Eisenman

In the essay "Classicism Lost," Franco Purini writes that "Critical writing on Peter Eisenman is too 'Eisenmanian.'" All of the early house projects were comprised solely of their own internal systems of logic, and a formal machine pervades even those projects that do accept exterior systems. Similarly, the assertion made by Purini is that writing by and on Eisenman is so deeply ingrained with his particular perspective that to gain an understanding of the implications of the theory, references and nuances must be researched. As in the Kantian model of the relationship of the sublime to the grotesque (that of the one contained, or latent, within the other), a critical discourse concerning Eisenman must emerge from, but operate outside of, his theoretical system.

My goals for this course are numerous. As an architecture student, I would like not only to gain a better intellectual grasp of Eisenman's ideas, but also to begin a general educational enquiry into the areas of study of contemporary architectural theory and philosophy, which will inform my own projects and thought. As a writer I hope to develop my abilities of analysis, synthesis, and clear thought on paper. Lastly, as a student with a strong interest in Eisenman's work, my goal is to enter into an existing discourse as an informed thinker, using Eisenman as a resource for both questions and as an editor.

The first goal will be achieved through the weekly readings outlined below. The second goal will be accomplished through a series of two- to three-page written synthetic critiques in response to each week's readings, which I will write in the eventual support of an informed article that will explore theories and ideas discussed in the reading course. The article will be the final product of the course, which will be used as an attempt to accomplish the third goal outlined above.

Tentative Course Dates

Week 1	5 September	
Week 2	12 September	
Week 3	19 September	
Week 4	26 September	
Week 5	3 October	<i>First Draft of Outline Due</i>
Week 6	10 October	
Week 7	17 October	
Week 8	24 October	
Week 9	31 October	<i>Second Draft of Outline Due</i>
Week 10	7 November	
Week 11	14 November	
Week 12	21 November	
Week 13	28 November	<i>First Draft of Paper Due</i>
Week 14	5 December	<i>Second Draft of Paper Due</i>
Week 15	12 December	<i>Final Draft of Paper Due</i>

My Advisor (Kai Gutschow) Has Approved this Course of Study,

Jonah Rowen

Kai Gutschow

Weekly Syllabus

Week 1 Critiques of Modernism

Eisenman's work is easily framed by a modernist sensibility, given the fact that he was trained by Colin Rowe and close with Manfredo Tafuri, the two arch-theorists of late modernism. However for Eisenman, like the Derridean model of "Solicitation," contained within modernism are contradictions of itself, necessitating an other critical discourse.

Eisenman, Peter, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 24-33

Eisenman, Peter, "Post-Functionalism," in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 80-85

Eisenman, Peter, Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003.

Eisenman, Peter, The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture. Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2006.

Hays, K. Michael, "Whose M Emory?" in M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995, Pp.64-67.

Rossi, Aldo, The Architecture of the City. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984.

Rowe, Colin, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," in The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982.

Rowe, Colin and Robert Slutzky, "Transparency" in The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982.

Rowe, Colin and Fred Koetter, Collage City. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984.

Tafuri, Manfredo, Architecture and Utopia. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979.

Venturi, Robert, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002.

Vidler, Anthony, "Counter-Monuments in Practice," in The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, The Ohio State University. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989, Pp. 32-37

Week 2 Syntax and Deep Structure

Noam Chomsky's theories of syntax were influential on the early House projects, using specific combinations of pieces of the language of architecture as tools of decomposition and transformation, each step based on the one before it. While syntax as architectural operation would later be replaced by more complex ideas, the threads of language and succession are integral to all of the architecture and writing.

Beckett, Samuel and Eisenman, Peter, "Transformations, Decompositions and Critiques: House X" in A+U 112, January 1980, Pp. 14-151.

Chomsky, Noam, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1969.

Eisenman, Peter, "Cardboard Architecture," in Five Architects, ed. Philip Johnson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Eisenman, Peter, Houses of Cards. New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Interiority," in Diagram Diaries. New York: Universe Publishing, 1999, Pp. 46-93.

Eisenman, Peter, on La Casa del Fascio in Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques.

New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003.

Week 3 Structuralism

While it is difficult to label any specific architectural projects as “Structuralist,” the theories of simplification of language into binary oppositions accords well with the simplification of architecture into so-called modernist abstraction. Included here as well is the Charles Saunders Peirce essay in which he differentiates between the different types of sign: symbol, icon, and index, all of which would prove to be pervasive in the work, the index being especially pertinent.

Broadbent, Geoffrey, “A Plain Man’s Guide to the Theory of Signs in Architecture,” in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 124-140.

Derrida, Jacques, “Force and Signification,” in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, Pp. 3-30.

Eisenman, Peter, “Text as Zero,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 41-43.

Graafland, Arie, “Architecture in Absentia,” in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 95-124.

Krauss, Rosalind, “Death of a Hermeneutic Phantom: Materialization of the Sign in the Work of Peter Eisenman” in A+U 112, January 1980.

Levi-Strauss, Claude, Structural Anthropology. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

de Saussure, Ferdinand, A Course in General Linguistics. Columbus, Ohio: McGraw Hill Humanities, 1965.

Peirce, Charles Saunders, “What is a Sign?” in The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, 1893-1913, ed. Nathan Houser, etc. Bloomington, Indiana: The University of Indiana Press, 1998.

Week 4 Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction

Most of Eisenman’s work can be most closely associated with the Post-Structuralist theories of the French thinkers of the 1960’s and afterward. While the concepts in this category are notoriously difficult, there can be no doubt that the architecture underwent a severe change after Eisenman began to read the English translations of Derrida in the 1980s, producing projects like the Wexner Center.

Benjamin, Andrew, “Opening the Interstitial: Eisenman’s Space of Difference,” in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp.

306-311.

Derrida, Jacques, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Derrida, Jacques and Eva Meyer, “Architecture Where the Desire Can Live,” in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 144-149.

Eisenman, Peter, “Presentness and the Being Only Once of Architecture,” in Deconstruction is/in America, ed. Anselm Haverkamp. New York: New York Press, 1995, Pp. 134-148.

Eisenman, Peter, “Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure” in Re:Working Eisenman.

London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 54-57

Jameson, Fredric, “Aronoff and Ideology,” in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 60-69.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, “Twisting the Separatrix,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leeser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 137-160.

Moneo, Rafael, “Unexpected Coincidences,” in The Wexner Center for te Visual Arts, The Ohio State University. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989, Pp. 40-45.

Taylor, Mark C., “Refusing Architecture,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp.

79-89.

Wigley, Mark, The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995.

Week 5 Chora L Works

The project that was done with Jacques Derrida for the Parc de la Villette was important as a split between the conceptions of deconstruction in language and deconstruction in architecture. Prior to this point, architecture was accepted to be the locus of the metaphysics of presence, that is, where signs had to represent themselves, because of their inherent necessary nature. However, resulting from the collaboration, a questioning of the metaphysics of presence in architecture began, leading to an attempt at erasure of previously accepted sign systems.

Derrida, Jacques, "Chora," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 15-32.

Derrida, Jacques, "Why Peter Eisenman Writes Such Good Books," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 95-101.

Derrida, Jacques, "A Letter to Peter Eisenman," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 161-165.

Derrida, Jacques, Peter Eisenman, et. al., Chora L Works Transcripts One to Seven, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 7-13, 33-36, 46-49, 69-73, 77-80, 90-94, 104-112.

Eisenman, Peter, "Separate Tricks," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 132-136.

Eisenman, Peter, "Post/El Cards: A Reply to Jacques Derrida," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 187-189.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Twisting the Separatrix," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 137-160.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, and Jacques Derrida, Afterword to Chora L Works, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 145-149.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "The Law of ana-. On Choral Works," in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 145-159.

Nietzsche, Friedrich, "Ecce Homo" in On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo. London: Vintage, 1989.

Plato, "Timaeus," in Timaeus and Critias, trans. Desmond Lee. New York: Penguin Classics, 1972.

Tschumi, Bernard, Introduction to Chora L Works, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, P.125.

Week 6 Diagram Diaries and Generative Diagrams

The diagram is seen to be an important critical and generative tool in all of Eisenman's work, from his PhD thesis to the most recent projects. The use of the diagram, however, began as iconic, but soon moved to be indexical, that is, the diagram as transcendental signifier to the building's form. Most recently, the diagram has shifted to the figural, a paradigm discussed in Week 12.

Barry, Donna, "The Dimensions of a Wireframe," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 48-59.

Cassara, Silvio, Peter Eisenman: Feints. Milan: Skira Editore, 2006.

Aureli, Pier Vittorio and Gabriele Mastrigli, "Beyond the Diagram"

Eisenman, Peter, "Feints: The Diagram"

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Re-Originating Diagrams"

Vidler, Anthony, "What is a Diagram, Anyway?"

Davidson, Cynthia, "A Game of Eisenman Seeks," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 176-179.

Deleuze, Gilles, on diagrams in The Logic of Sensation, trans. Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 2005.

Eisenman, Peter, Diagram Diaries. New York: Universe Publishing, 1999.

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagram: An Original Scene of Writing," Pp. 26-35

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Anteriority," Pp. 36-43

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Interiority," Pp. 46-93

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Exteriority," Pp. 164-209

Eisenman, Peter, "The Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign," Pp. 210-215

Somol, Robert E., "Dummy Text, or the Diagrammatic Basis of Contemporary Architecture," Pp. 6-25

Eisenman, Peter, "Blurred Zones," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 6-9.

Kwinter, Sanford, "The Genius of Matter," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 91-97.

Zaera-Polo, Alejandro, "The Making of the Machine: Powerless Control as a Critical Strategy," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996,

Pp.

28-37.

Week 7 Conditions of Excess

In the essay entitled "Strong Form, Weak Form," Eisenman says, "Weak form is arbitrary, undecidable, excessive, and has no ontology or teleology of value, that is, no strong relationship to narrative space or time."¹ It is precisely the excess of architecture that makes it possible and gives it the possibility to be critical. While still not a positivist argument, in the vein of Tafuri, Eisenman makes an argument for architecture. Included also here are discussions of alterity, image, and ornamentation, related by schema of architecture as more than building.

Blanchot, Maurice, The Gaze of Orpheus: And Other Literary Essays, esp. "Two Versions of the Imaginary." Station Hill Press, 1981.

Bois, Yve-Alain, and Rosalind Krauss, Formless: A User's Guide. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Zone Books, 1997.

Cobb, Henry, "A Note on the Criminology of Ornament," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 95-97.

Eisenman, Peter, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," in Re:Working

Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 24-33.

Eisenman, Peter, "Architecture and the Crisis of Reality," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 37-39.

Eisenman, Peter, "Strong Form, Weak Form," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993,

Pp. 51-53.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Forms of Irrationality," in Folding in Architecture, ed. Greg Lynn. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Form's Second Coming," in The State of Architecture at the Beginning of the 21st Century, ed. Bernard Tschumi and Irene Cheng. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 58-59.

Lynn, Greg, "Ineffective DESCRIPTIONS: SUPPLEMENTAL LINES," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 99-105.

Vidler, Anthony, "From Tattoo to Trinket," Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 107-113.

Week 8 The Fold

Eisenman's work on the fold was spurred by the same by Gilles Deleuze, but lead to projects like the Frankfurt Rebstockpark, in which space began to be a part of a three-dimensional matrix of

becoming. The repercussions of this project were many, leading to discussions of topology in the work of Greg Lynn and Ben van Berkel, but also to a new formalism.

Deleuze, Gilles, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque, trans. Tom Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Eisenman, Peter, "Unfolding Events: Frankfurt Rebstockpark and the Possibility of a New Urbanism," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 59-61.

Eisenman, Peter, "Folding in Time: The Singularity of Rebstockpark," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 130-133.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, Discourse on Metaphysics and Monadology, trans. George R. Montgomery. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005.

Lynn, Greg, ed. Folding in Architecture. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.

Rajchman, John, "Perplications: On the Space and Time of Rebstockpark," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 150-160.

Somol, Robert E., "Accidents Will Happen," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 73-77.

Week 9 Texts, Indices, and Codes

The architectural text is an important facet of the work, most lucidly explained in an explication of Mies van der Rohe's early-to-middle projects, in which signs can only be read in relation to each other, not as independently representative. The index, as mentioned above, began to address architectural objects with history. However, exemplified in Diagram Diaries, the index had to point to a sign. The code as a scrambler of a time-based indexical reading was employed, but still referred to a sign, a problem addressed in Week 12.

Benjamin, Andrew and Peter Eisenman, Interview in in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 133-137.

Eisenman, Peter, "miMISes READING: it does not mean A THING," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 11-17.

Eisenman, Peter, "Architecture as a Second Language," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 19-23.

Eisenman, Peter, "M Emory Games," in M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995, Pp. 58-59.

Eisenman, Peter, CodeX. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2005.

Eisenman, Peter, "Coded Rewritings: The Processes of Santiago," Pp. 27-35.

Fernández-Galiano, Luis, "Code X in Three Movements," Pp. 11-17

Forster, Kurt W., "*La Froza del Destino*: The New from the Shell of the Old," Pp. 19-25

Eisenman, Peter, "Digital Scrambler: From Index to Codex," in Perspecta 35, ed. Elijah Hume. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004.

Krauss, Rosalind, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America," October 3 & 4, Spring & Fall 1977.

Levrat, Fredric, "Intentions Matter," M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995,

Pp. 62-64.

Lynn, Greg, Animate Form. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.

Week 10 Phenomenology and the Body

Phenomenology, or what Eisenman calls a "pre-critical experience," is impossible, as Jacques Derrida argues in his essay concerning Husserl's Ideas. However the resulting experience of architecture is Eisenman's "affect," which includes the pre-critical but necessarily must also contain the critical as a reading.

- Davidson, Cynthia, Introduction to Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 12-17.
- Derrida, Jacques, “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology,” in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, Pp. 154-168**
- Eisenman, Peter, “‘Visions’ Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media,” in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 556-561.**
- Eisenman, Peter, Essay on the Berlin Memorial in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, P. 314.
- Hegel, G. W. F., The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.**
- Heidegger, Martin, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Rowe, 1971.
- Husserl, Edmund, Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 1982.
- Fernández-Galiano, Luis, “Germania Remember: Berlin’s Memorial or Eisenman’s Danteum,” in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 332-334.
- Hays, K. Michael, “Theory After Building,” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 20-27.
- Whiting, Sarah, “Building Inside Out: Perspectives on the Conspicuously Inconspicuous,” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 98-107.
- Zaera-Polo, Alejandro, and Peter Eisenman, Interview in El Croquis 83, 1997.

Week 11 Critiques and Readings

Reading architecture is the goal of a critical discourse. The pieces here deal with readings of historical and contemporary architecture, as in the seminars that Eisenman teaches at Princeton and Yale. However also here are pieces that transcend the discussion of single project or method, and concern the interiority of the architecture from the exterior.

- Derrida, Jacques, “Parergon,” in Truth in Painting, trans. Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Eisenman, Peter, Princeton Seminars.**
- Eisenman, Peter, Critical Readings in Cassara, Silvio, Peter Eisenman: Feints. Milan: Skira Editore, 2006.
- Eisenman, Peter, “En Terror Firma: In Trails of Grotexes,” in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 19-24.**
- Frampton, Kenneth, “Eisenman Revisited: Running Interference,” in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 47-61.
- Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Judgment, trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987.
- Kipnis, Jeffrey, “P-Tr’s Progress,” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 170-181.**
- Kwinter, Sanford, “Can One Go Beyond Piranesi?” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 152-163.
- Purini, Franco, “Classicism Lost,” in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 26-31.

Week 12 The Figural

The latest incarnation of the critical generative process is that of the figural, an idea from Gilles Deleuze's work on the painter Francis Bacon. The time sequence and diagram must be the resultant of forces, not a record. Therefore the project would seem readable, but in reality never would be. The same concepts were addressed in the work of the late 1990s, as in the *Bibliothèque de L'IUHIE* and the *Church for the Year 2000*, however they dealt with an external diagram. Here should be an attempt at distinguishing between the old and new concepts of the figural.

Blanchot, Maurice, The Writing of the Disaster, trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Debord, Guy, The Society of the Spectacle, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Zone Books, 1995.

Deleuze, Gilles, The Logic of Sensation, trans. Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Diaz-Alonso, Hernan and Jeffrey Kipnis, Interview in Sessions, ed. Julianna Morais. Los Angeles: Southern California Institute of Architecture Press, 2005.

Eisenman, Peter, "The Affects of Disaster," in The State of Architecture at the Beginning of the 21st Century, ed. Bernard Tschumi and Irene Cheng. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 60-61.

Eisenman, Peter, "Processes of the Interstitial: Spacing and the Arbitrary Text," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 94-101.

Eisenman, Peter, "Zones of Undecidability I: The Interstitial Figure: The Church for the Year 2000," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 258-261.

Eisenman, Peter, "Zones of Undecidability II: The Processes of the Interstitial: Destabilizing Tropes," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 286-289.

Eisenman, Peter, "Duck Soup," in Log 7, Spring/Summer 2006, Pp. 139-143.

Kolbowski, Sylvia, "Fringe Benefits," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp.134-141.

Weeks 13-15 - Compile and Develop Article

¹ Eisenman, Peter, "Strong Form, Weak Form," in Architecture in Transition: Between Deconstruction and New Modernism, ed. Peter Noever. (Munich: Prestel, 1997), P. 43.

Jonah Rowen
27 December 2006

Notes on Readings in the Philosophy,
Background and Theory of Peter Eisenman

Week 1 Critiques of Modernism

Eisenman's work is easily framed by a modernist sensibility, given the fact that he was trained by Colin Rowe and close with Manfredo Tafuri, the two arch-theorists of late modernism. However for Eisenman, like the Derridean model of "Solicitation," contained within modernism are contradictions of itself, necessitating an other critical discourse.

Eisenman, Peter, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 24-33

Advancing Manfredo Tafuri's argument, Eisenman suggests not simply the end of architecture, but rather an end of the ends in architecture. That is, his position is not so much an eschatological elegy for architecture but a projective comment on what he might now call architectural "persistencies", dealing with the metaphysics of presence of architecture. The three "fictions" he identifies in this specific article are representation, reason, and history, which together form a "continuous mode of thought" that "can be referred to as the *classical*." The fiction of representation began in the Renaissance, with the advent of metaphor, which began to replace metonymy. In modernism, representation was simply transferred to function, so that architecture looked like its function or some idea of its function. Reason, then, is similar to representation, but reason represents truth, which signifies beauty and therefore good architecture, following the Enlightenment line of reasoning. Reason itself, at least in architecture, cannot exist. Lastly, Eisenman looks at history as a legitimation of architecture, deciding that the dialectical split between past and present is not valid in itself; time must be understood as a continuum, thus disallowing a classicism/modernism split as well as an argument for a zeitgeist. Eisenman promotes an architecture of *dissimulation* that, rather than representing objects, etc., it accepts the fictions but uses them to signify nothing besides itself, or besides its own being. This condition is one to which Eisenman refers as the Not-Classical, which does not have an a priori end in mind and is therefore more free to pursue other architectures. In the conclusion of the article, Eisenman introduces the idea of reading, which he says is signified by traces, which are records of actions. This no longer assumes a reader who understands history or reference but simply can deduce.

Eisenman, Peter, "Post-Functionalism," in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 80-85.

The main assertion that Eisenman makes in this short article is a critique of Modernism whose basic tenet is that architectural Modernism perpetuated, to a certain extent, a humanism that true Modernism would not allow, because of subservience to inhabitation, program and human scale. Similar to the Nietzschean discussion of the *Übermensch*, who transcends the "all-too-human," Modernism should be able to subvert (*entgehen*) humanism. The Modernism that Eisenman promotes in this article is one in which the object is completely independent of the subject, and there is a mutual distance between them. Therefore where perhaps the Classical mindset encouraged emulation as an attempt to "know" objects, Modernism is about abstraction or distancing as a form of acknowledgment that objects are unknowable, making mimesis irrelevant.

Eisenman, Peter, Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003.

This project, begun in the 1970's and finally finished in 2003, is fascinating if only because it is proof, either of the ability to read architecture as text or to create based on a preexisting condition. Given Eisenman's position in the "End of the Classical" article, he is obviously not using Terragni as precedent, but the element of analytical dissection and close reading is at the very least impressive. Furthermore, in a post-indexical context (this is an obviously retrospective reading), the invention of an indexical process covers up the actual process that Terragni followed,

suggesting a much more divisive idea of Terragni and Eisenman than probably would be available otherwise.

Eisenman, Peter, The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture. Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2006.

Eisenman, Peter, "Cardboard Architecture: House I," in Five Architects. New York: Wittenborn & Company, 1972, Pp. 15-17.

Eisenman writes that the conception of House I was "potentially independent of its function and its meaning." While he prefaces this with a good deal of discussion of the program of a museum, which House I actually is, program is important here specifically for its lack of importance, in other words, because it must be overlooked in order for architecture to assert its autonomy. Structure must be treated similarly, and so when the question is reflexively asked, why the non-load-bearing columns are not cut off before they reach the ceiling, the answer is just about not calling attention to them, or rather that the strength of the non-structural column is in the open possibility of the column's being structural. The architecture is called "cardboard" in order to once again not to divert attention from the form of the project, and therefore to encourage reading of the architecture. The last point that Eisenman makes is about the "deep structure" of an architectural form, again an attempt to bring form to the forefront, rather than letting it recede to subservience, as it did in Modernism. In Eisenman's words, "Form must be... considered to be potentially separable from its existing perception and conception... it must be considered as capable of changing or raising the level of consciousness by proposing a critique of the existing situation in architecture."

Eisenman, Peter, "Cardboard Architecture: House II," in Five Architects. New York: Wittenborn & Company, 1972, Pp. 25-27.

Several of the same themes are articulated in this article as in the one concerning House I, but here there is a much stronger tendency toward a theory of dialecticism, including a real/not-real opposition. The project does this through material use and white-painted surfaces, as in House I, in order to express a certain neutrality in the site-building relationship that is not so much a comment on the program or site but on architecture. However it goes further through implications of non-structural systems blatantly expressed as such through redundancy, as in Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai, in which columns are inscribed in a load-bearing masonry wall. While most of the article is a simple description of the formal processes and diagrammatic actions that are taken to yield the final form of the house, the point Eisenman seems to be making is similar to the one in the Terragni book, that is, that analytical processes can be generative. This is the founding principle of Eisenman's career, and not just in terms of formal generation, which is certainly true, but also in terms of critical theory: the analytical processes that are used in Post-Structuralist theory, at least according to Eisenman, must be generative.

Frampton, Kenneth, "Criticism," in Five Architects. New York: Wittenborn & Company, 1972, Pp. 9-13.

Hays, K. Michael, "Whose M Emory?" in M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995, Pp.64-67.

Rossi, Aldo, The Architecture of the City. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984.

Rowe, Colin, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," in The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982.

Most interesting for its influence on Eisenman in terms of its points concerning deep structure and generative processes that come from analysis, this essay still lucidly reinforces Eisenman's point that so-called Modern architecture was part of a continuum in the history of Classical architecture, that is, there was no fundamental shift in world-view, as there was in Modernism in other arts and sciences. The points concerning the article's superficial influence are perhaps less important than its repercussions: Le Corbusier's plans were Palladian, at least to a certain extent, which meant

that in all of architecture's supposed truths that persisted from the 15th to the 20th Centuries, nothing had truly been questioned. In conjunction with Manfredo Tafuri, Colin Rowe thus (perhaps inadvertently) encouraged the end of the style of Modernism. In an alternate reading, Rowe's use of formal typologies pointed to a Nietzschean eternal recurrence, and was therefore anti-zeitgeist, resulting in Eisenman's response using similar diagrams but explained formally by Noam Chomsky's idea of deep structure (see Jeffrey Kipnis' "P-Tr's Progress").

Rowe, Colin and Robert Slutzky, "Transparency" in The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982.

Opacity has been an issue for Eisenman, as well as Derrida, since at least the 1980s (see Eisenman's "Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure" and Derrida's Of Grammatology). In this article, Colin Rowe cites László Moholy-Nagy commenting on the linguistic transparency of James Joyce's puns, bringing to mind Derrida's challenge of the same type of wordplay, which exposes layers of meaning or significance behind others. There are, of course, obvious connections between Eisenman's "artificial excavation" projects in the 1980s that deal with superposition, and the reduction of figure/ground, alluding to transparency in objects. This reading, however, is much more about means to the end of transparency of meaning, or further, loss of meaning, than phenomenal transparency would allow, making the projects literally transparent, at least retrospectively. Perhaps it is more interesting now, or in Eisenman's work in general, to discuss a temporal transparency; that is to say, the generative, systematic component of Eisenman's process has always been important. Instead of a spatial, phenomenal, visual (*not* optical – see Eisenman's "Duck Soup"), I am suggesting a procedure of reading that is based on the indexical qualities of a project. Judgment is a different issue, but especially in recent projects that contain false indices that are open to interpretation, the ability to read an object's history is more significant than projection, be it literal or phenomenal. Furthermore, as Jeffrey Kipnis writes (see "P-Tr's Progress") the names of the two types of transparency are backwards, in that "literal transparency" is entirely optical and therefore phenomenal, and "phenomenal transparency" must be read and is therefore literal.

Rowe, Colin and Fred Koetter, Collage City. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984.

Rowe, Colin, Introduction to Five Architects. New York: Wittenborn & Company, Pp. 3-7.

Tafuri, Manfredo, Architecture and Utopia. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979.

Although a difficult book, Tafuri makes extremely cogent points, without which contemporary architecture would be very different. Through the frame of the Modernist utopian ideology, Tafuri slowly breaks down, point by point, the idea that architecture can *mean* anything outside of itself. He does this by exposing the inherent capitalism in all of architecture's several phases of socialism. Therefore the utility in Eisenman's theory is obvious; Tafuri's anti-ideological architecture both promotes the autonomy of architecture and encourages the formalism that accompanies Eisenman's autonomous architecture.

Venturi, Robert, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002.

(See in Addition: "Post-Functionalism"; "The End of the Classical," "Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure, etc.)

Vidler, Anthony, "Counter-Monuments in Practice," in The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, The Ohio State University. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989, Pp. 32-37

Week 2 Syntax and Deep Structure

Noam Chomsky's theories of syntax were influential on the early House projects, using specific combinations of pieces of the language of architecture as tools of decomposition and transformation, each step based on the one before it. While syntax as architectural operation

would later be replaced by more complex ideas, the threads of language and succession are integral to all of the architecture and writing.

Beckett, Samuel and Eisenman, Peter, "Transformations, Decompositions and Critiques: House X" in A+U 112, January 1980, Pp. 14-151.

Chomsky, Noam, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1969.

Among the first in a larger group of exterior texts that Eisenman incorporated into his architectural theory whose relationship to architecture is slightly tenuous, Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory is at the very least an obviously formal way of breaking down part-to-whole relationships. The connection, therefore, between Chomsky and Eisenman's early houses is easy, almost one-to-one: as a sentence, architecture consists of a vocabulary that is much more about arrangement of parts than the whole, according with Structural linguistics. Chomsky seems to rely on a distinction that he makes early in his book, between deep structure and surface structure, analogically related to semantics and phonetics, respectively, suggesting that both are determined by the syntactical logic of the sentence (p. 16). Interpreted as a thoroughly formal theory, this would mean that form, or relationships between parts, actually precedes any kind of generative analysis. (See Jeffrey Kipnis' article "P-Tr's Progress," and the account therein of Eisenman's interest in deep structure used contrapuntally to Colin Rowe's historically typological formal structures.)

Eisenman, Peter, "Cardboard Architecture," in Five Architects, ed. Philip Johnson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
(See Week 1)

Eisenman, Peter, Houses of Cards. New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

Eisenman, Peter

Krauss, Rosalind, "Death of a Hermeneutic Phantom: Materialization of the sign in the Work of Peter Eisenman"

Tafuri, Manfredo

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Interiority," in Diagram Diaries. New York: Universe Publishing, 1999, Pp. 46-93.

Eisenman, Peter, on La Casa del Fascio in Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003.

Week 3 Structuralism

While it is difficult to label any specific architectural projects as "Structuralist," the theories of simplification of language into binary oppositions accords well with the simplification of architecture into so-called modernist abstraction. Included here as well is the Charles Saunders Peirce essay in which he differentiates between the different types of sign: symbol, icon, and index, all of which would prove to be pervasive in the work, the index being especially pertinent.

Broadbent, Geoffrey, "A Plain Man's Guide to the Theory of Signs in Architecture," in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 124-140.

Derrida, Jacques, "Force and Signification," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, Pp. 3-30.

Eisenman, Peter, "Text as Zero," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 41-43. The theme of simulation and representation is obviously an important one in Eisenman's work. In this critique of Postmodern architecture, Eisenman calls it "meta-theatre, the art of the giant stage set," replacing the capacity in architecture to be critical of itself and of culture. Without knowing the work of Lars Lerup it is difficult to comment on Eisenman's comments, but it would seem that Eisenman sees Lerup's projective architecture as entirely fallacious in that it "attempts to recapture a 'former' architecture that, because it never was, can never be." Through their pretense of reality, Eisenman's reading of the "text houses" is that they seem not to go far enough in their ability to be critical of architecture. The point of the article seems to be more to articulate Eisenman's own interest in displacing the anthropocentrism and logocentrism as architecture, identified in Lerup's projects in "chimneys as vertebrate symmetries, floor plans as horizontal ground datums" and "correctness." Therefore it would seem that Eisenman's project begins to emerge as a critique and through criticality.

Graafland, Arie, "Architecture in Absentia," in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 95-124.

Krauss, Rosalind, "Death of a Hermeneutic Phantom: Materialization of the Sign in the Work of Peter Eisenman" in A+U 112, January 1980.

Levi-Strauss, Claude, Structural Anthropology. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

de Saussure, Ferdinand, A Course in General Linguistics. Columbus, Ohio: McGraw Hill Humanities, 1965.

It seems that de Saussure is more important for reactions against him and his theory than for his theory itself. Like Kant's awakening from his "dogmatic slumber" by David Hume, an understanding of de Saussure is indispensable to any attempt at reading deconstruction. In many cases, it is difficult to understand the difference between de Saussure's relativism and Derrida's dissemination, except that in de Saussure the signifier is arbitrary and the signified is determinate, making relationships between them important, rather than the signifiers or signifieds themselves. This may be contrasted to deconstruction, in which the signifier is completely devoid of meaning in itself, and the signified is hardly signified by the signifier. Furthermore, de Saussure defines the strong privileged opposition of speech/writing, in such passages as, "From the very outset we must put both feet on the ground of language and use language as the norm of all other manifestations of speech" (p. 9). This is the dialectic to which Derrida objects most, but a theory of contradiction in opposition is what allows Eisenman to later create such projects as the Wexner Center, in their attempted "solicitation" of meaning of form (e.g., in the scaffolding, the grid, and the tower).

Peirce, Charles Saunders, "What is a Sign?" in The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, 1893-1913, ed. Nathan Houser, etc. Bloomington, Indiana: The University of Indiana Press, 1998.

Peirce's work in semiology, along with Rosalind Krauss's two articles on the index, are fundamental to an understanding of an indexical process, but Peirce is interesting in the context of Structuralism for his other categories of signs, the symbol and the icon (the concept of the index is brought up again in Week 9). The semiotic idea of the icon, which has a physical likeness to its signified, counters de Saussure's arbitrary signifier, but Peirce argues that language is actually composed of symbols, whose meanings are accorded through time, which very much agrees with de Saussure's conjecture. The etymology of the word *symbol*, in fact, means something close to "thrown-together," which alludes to the dissociated concepts contained within a word or letter, for instance. All three of Peirce's types of signs have fallen out of favor on their own in architecture for the most part (despite Jencks' recent lauding the "iconic building" and his old theories of Postmodernism based almost completely around symbol; even Eisenman has begun to discuss "post-indexical processes"), so we are left with the question, is Peirce still at all relevant to architecture if his signs are not? Or is architecture now thoroughly done with semiotics? Or, in a

more conciliatory line of inquiry, is architecture now creating a new category of sign that represents the unrepresentable or not-yet-representable?

Week 4 Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction

Most of Eisenman's work can be most closely associated with the Post-Structuralist theories of the French thinkers of the 1960's and afterward. While the concepts in this category are notoriously difficult, there can be no doubt that the architecture underwent a severe change after Eisenman began to read the English translations of Derrida in the 1980s, producing projects like the Wexner Center.

Benjamin, Andrew, "Opening the Interstitial: Eisenman's Space of Difference," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 306-311.

Benjamin begins his article with a reading of Bataille's example of the Bastille in the French Revolution as an architectural symbol, whose different dimensions allow it to be both symbolic of the cause of the uprising and to function as a prison. These two concepts are detached from each other, but the latter is already inherently architectural, leaving the symbolic function to be dissected. This, Benjamin says, is related to process (or becoming) in that it is not specifically activity, and therefore represents what Benjamin calls an "ontological divide" presumably between the progressive and final state of an object. Bataille's *l'informe* is thus in progress, analogically related to Eisenman's destabilization or dislocation because "it works to undo a particular given formal determination that leads not to simple formlessness but to another formal possibility." The importance of the idea of the interstitial is understood here as expressed in Eisenman's DAAP project, similarly to a description issued in the essay "En Terror Firma." It is precisely the definition of the "blurring" that Eisenman discusses where dialectical oppositions yield both poles to a third condition, simultaneously including and precluding the poles (and therefore not acting as a simple between). Benjamin's concept of becoming in this article is of particular interest, because it is much more about the "yet-to-be" than an imagined process, which is described by the phrase "present futurity."

Derrida, Jacques, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

In probably the single most important work of literary deconstruction, Jacques Derrida attacks the speech/writing dialectic, or what he calls logocentrism, a persistency of western cultures and especially philosophy. While the writing is difficult, especially when translated into English, it is through the "dissemination" and "solicitation" of wordplay that Derrida makes his points of not only the arbitrariness of signifiers, but of the necessity of "unmotivated" signs, or those that can be identified as ontologically divorced, phonetically or otherwise, from their meanings. The idea of the trace seems important, but Eisenman's adaptation of it into architecture seems too simple; it becomes just a signifier for the index. Traces in architecture seem to have the potential for a post-indexical condition, which is no longer about reading, but rather about an originary condition of architecture that pertains much less to its noun form (architecture) than to its adjectival form (*architectural*), thereby creating a system of hierarchy in architecture. That is to say, architecture can no longer simply be about building, but must be pertain much more to a proto-architectural notion of building, as in creation itself, rather than the primitive hut, etc. This cannot be about "truth," because that is precisely what deconstruction exposes as illusory, but about what can be solicited ("shaken-off," as in Writing and Difference) before what Eisenman calls the "anteriority" (essential qualities that do not necessarily constitute essence) of, in this case language, is entirely defeated.

Derrida, Jacques and Eva Meyer, "Architecture Where the Desire Can Live," in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 144-149.

Eisenman, Peter, "Presentness and the Being Only Once of Architecture," in Deconstruction is/in America, ed. Anselm Haverkamp. New York: New York Press, 1995, Pp. 134-148.

Eisenman, Peter, "Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure" in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 54-57

Eisenman begins this significant article with a definition of an important term in his lexicon, the so-called "metaphysics of presence" of architecture, comprised of the accepted bases of architecture listed parenthetically: "shelter, aesthetics, structure, and meaning." It is in fact over the points made in this essay that the fundamental misunderstanding and eventual debate of the Chora L Works project results, in that Eisenman's position is the possible dislocation of architecture, where Derrida's is about the stasis of architecture as the locus of the metaphysics of presence. Because of this assumed condition, that the relationship between an architectural sign and its signified is one-to-one, Eisenman suggests that architecture must reduce its "opacity," or present an absence within presence. However this does not lead to semiotic representation, which is an allusion of presence, but to the idea of the rhetorical figure, which "contains its absence, that is, it contains its open-endedness." In Eisenman's early architecture and to some extent still, the site is viewed as a palimpsest because of this idea, that a proto-architectural condition exists that bypasses traditional aesthetic contextualism in favor of rhetorical impressions left on the site. Within the newly problematized relationships of site and building, there are implications of independence of interior, exterior, time, form and figure. This independence does not necessarily mean that the relationships are erased, per se, but that they do not necessarily need to represent each other, but still mutually allude to each other thereby creating an absence within presence, or a rhetorical figure.

Jameson, Fredric, "Aronoff and Ideology," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 60-69.

In an almost prophetic tone, Jameson critically describes several facets of Eisenman's Aronoff Center at the University of Cincinnati, through the lens of Eisenman's theory as well as theories from Modernism, all framed by the challenge issued by the building to the interior/exterior dialectic. The first important point that Jameson makes concerns experience, defined by an imagined "squeezing" that marks a temporality without beginning or end, because of the literal subjugation of the entry and exit. The phenomenological effect, however, is described in a surprisingly similar fashion to the way Eisenman talks about "looking-back" as an affective device (see the article "Visions' Unfolding"). That is, through the sculpted, carved-out interior space, there is a voyeuristic quality of a restrictive and restricted "gaze," which Cynthia Davidson discusses in her Introduction to Eleven Authors in Search of a Building. This may be a conflation of points, however Jameson seems to drop the theme of temporality to momentarily discuss building in general and architecture as a microcosm of urbanism, as in Alberti's house as a small city, and vice versa. He touches on a significant point about ambition of buildings and social class structure that is about ideology, but most important seems to be the issue of vision. In the DAAP building, vision is inextricable from the newly-posed questions of computer-aided process, which leads to a provocative assertion: If Eisenman is in control during the whole process, then he is pushing the limits of perception through apprehensible means. As Jameson writes: "Descriptions of the Aronoff's production process seem to stage all this in a manner reminiscent of Descartes's invention of the differential equation: keep your straight lines, if that is all you can comprehend with your human limits and imperfections, but multiply them to infinity; and let that very multiplication come close to registering sheer movement and sheer nonlinear velocity in your human, all-too-human equations."

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Twisting the Separatrix," in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 137-160.

In probably one of the most articulate, well-thought-out, multi-dimensional articles in all of contemporary architectural theory, Kipnis gives a first-hand account of the collaboration of Eisenman and Derrida on the Chora L Works project. Kipnis gives an initial recapitulation of techniques of deconstruction, starting with the comment of "A general positioning of its motifs

concerning architectural design: Do not destroy; maintain, renew, and reinscribe.” None of this, of course, is authorized by Derrida, but it is consistent with Eisenman’s position so far. However Kipnis goes on to write, “Thus, in his analyses of Terragni, Palladio, Mies, and others, Eisenman seeks to demonstrate an other order of architectural meaning at work, if repressed,” almost marginalizing Eisenman’s critical analyses as part of a search for an other metaphysics than the present one in architecture, rather than the eradication of metaphysics as a whole. Again, this could be read as consistent with the above – it does not destroy, but it maintains an aspect of architecture that cannot be supported by other aspects of deconstruction, as Kipnis says in his comment that “The ‘should do something new and different’ tone of Eisenman’s writings is antithetical to the position of deconstruction and supports Derrida’s criticism, which is not only directed at the closure of scaling, but at scaling as the flagship of this revolutionary aspect of the entire Eisenman enterprise.” This same theme recurs in Derrida’s refusal to “sign” (as Kipnis writes) Eisenman’s scaling procedure, based on its implied internal completeness; though it does retain, it does not deform. This self-referral, or closure, is also at the heart of the musical analogy, as in the “choral work,” Derrida’s sketch of the lyre, and his comments on Nietzsche’s “Why I Write Such Good Books” about “the seduction of music, the musical instrument, the sea or the abyss, and the labyrinth.” These three themes are essential to the project: music as the “choral;” Plato’s *Chora* as an abyss or emptiness (Derrida’s contrapuntal “invagination” to “dissemination”) and the labyrinth in Kipnis’ golden sections at the end of the essay. Furthermore, the three reinforce each other and are intertwined within one another: the whole project is structured as a never-ending referential coda, including Kipnis’ quotation of Derrida saying, during the third meeting, “‘Repeat it once more, I’m not sure I got it,’ to which Eisenman responds, ‘Look, you are pushing me to invent this as I go along.’” In another moment of unrestrained referentiality and in a coded temporal coda, Kipnis writes, “It is a scene with both the hilarity of Abbott and Costello’s ‘Who’s on First’ and the sadness engendered by all of the hitches, contretemps, and misunderstandings of ‘Romeo and Juliet,’” surely with Eisenman’s Romeo and Juliet project thoroughly in mind. The question becomes, within all of the wordplay, reference and allusion, whether Kipnis is guilty of the same tautological errors for which Eisenman is implicated by both Derrida and Kipnis himself. For instance, is *Chora* too easily conflated with the separatrix? Femininity is common to both (the suffix *-trix* is undoubtedly feminine except in its geometrical uses), and so is emptiness, namely the receptacle function, but do they represent a Janus-like split unity? Furthermore, do the analogical functions of Derrida-as-Socrates with Eisenman, Renato Rizzi, and Kipnis as Timaeus, Critias and Hermocrates get the reader anywhere, and do they even hold up? Perhaps the most impressive part of the essay is Kipnis’ skilled transition from music to gold to God to architect to Eisenman and back (“And if we trust our ear...golden opportunity...aural...oral...*chora l...*God...‘G-d’...grid...gold... architect/demiurge”) but does this simply encourage the megalomaniacal egomaniacal architect, or is he facetiously denying the power of the architect? Le Corbusier, who becomes a significant part of the end of the article, said that the architect’s job is chiefly to organize and not create in a god-like way. The Le Corbusier reference brings back gold, in the golden section used for the Modulor, which Eisenman used in the House projects. However the golden section is also fascinating for Kipnis’ addition of people: Tschumi is to Eisenman as Eisenman is to Tschumi plus Eisenman, Plato is to Derrida as Derrida is to Plato plus Derrida. Again, the question of a self-enclosed tautology arises, but perhaps the incomprehensibility of the significance of these “equations” (or maybe just insignificance) is their strength; precisely therein lies deferral.

Moneo, Rafael, “Unexpected Coincidences,” in The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, The Ohio State University. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989, Pp. 40-45.

Taylor, Mark C., “Refusing Architecture,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 79-89.

Wigley, Mark, The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995.

Week 5 Chora L Works

The project that was done with Jacques Derrida for the Parc de la Villette was important as a split between the conceptions of deconstruction in language and deconstruction in architecture. Prior to this point, architecture was accepted to be the locus of the metaphysics of presence, that is, where signs had to represent themselves, because of their inherent necessary nature. However, resulting from the collaboration, a questioning of the metaphysics of presence in architecture began, leading to an attempt at erasure of previously accepted sign systems.

Derrida, Jacques, “Chora,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 15-32.

Derrida, Jacques, “Why Peter Eisenman Writes Such Good Books,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 95-101.

Derrida, Jacques, “A Letter to Peter Eisenman,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 161-165.

The most interesting, and probably most important, of Derrida’s letter to Peter Eisenman (whose format is thoroughly dissected in Jeffrey Kipnis’ “Twisting the Separatrix,” with respect to the letter coming as draft, audiotape, and letter as emphasis as absence or otherwise) is the criticism that Eisenman believes too much in absence. That is probably to say that to Derrida, Eisenman’s insistence on absence sounds too simple and dialectically charged, and it takes on, to Derrida, a certain transparent allusion to God. Through an inquiry concerning glass (that Derrida calls economic and metonymic) in its many dimensions (listed as technical and material, economic, urban, social, transparent, immediate, public and private, etc.) he crafts an argument that poses questions of desire and opacity, as well as social questions of poverty and humanism that are relevant, if not to architecture then to deconstruction, and vice versa. The questions issued herein to Eisenman are difficult, and in their specificity feel insignificantly significant, as if there is something missing that makes the questions much harder to answer than they seem. For instance, “If you were to construct a place of worship, Buddhist, for example, or a cathedral, a mosque, or a synagogue (hypotheses you are not obliged to accept), what would be your primary concern today?” Obviously there are implications contained in such a leading question, but they are difficult to figure out. (See below, Eisenman’s “Post/El Cards”)

Derrida, Jacques, Peter Eisenman, et. al., Chora L Works Transcripts One to Seven, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 7-13, 33-36, 46-49, 69-73, 77-80, 90-94, 104-112.

Eisenman, Peter, “Separate Tricks,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 132-136.

Eisenman, Peter, “Post/El Cards: A Reply to Jacques Derrida,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leiser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 187-189.

Eisenman’s response to Jacques Derrida concentrates for the most part on the issue of the presence/absence dialectic, but speaks further to the difference between literary deconstruction and Eisenman’s architecture, deconstructionist or otherwise. It is fascinating to see the beginning of an important acknowledgment: that perhaps deconstruction as such is not possible in architecture, but this line of inquiry is nonetheless important within the frame of architectural history and its theoretical discourse. It is a formidable response, but as Eisenman writes, “How, for example, does one respond to such questions as ‘Do you believe in God?’ or ‘What do you think of a culture of glass?’ or ‘What about the homeless?’ without sounding either evasive or irrelevant?” How does one assert that certain urgent problems such as homelessness or poverty are no more questions of architecture than they are of poetry or philosophy without sounding callous?” The ghost of Manfredo Tafuri is certainly present in this “answer.” Eisenman goes on to

discuss absence and presence, but then also a term that he calls “presentness,” or an excess that has neither ontological presence nor referential absence. This is made possible because architecture’s default condition is one of presence, as opposed to that of language, which is of absence. Therefore for architecture to deal with deconstruction is not for it to “illustrate” it, but rather to uncover a not-quite-Benjaminian aura that is more about presence of absence than simple presence, which Eisenman asserts is dependent on his problematizing the critical relationship of one piece of architecture to its entire historical context. The detachment of presence and presentness is the link that Eisenman sees in his architecture to deconstruction, saying, “my architecture cannot be what it should be [“an architecture that illustrates deconstruction”?], but only what it can be.”

Kipnis, Jeffrey, “Twisting the Separatrix,” in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leaser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 137-160.

(See Week 4)

Kipnis, Jeffrey, and Jacques Derrida, Afterword to Chora L Works, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leaser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, Pp. 145-149.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, “The Law of ana-. On Choral Works,” in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 145-159.

Nietzsche, Friedrich, “Ecce Homo” in On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo. London: Vintage, 1989.

It is obvious what both Derrida and Eisenman find attractive in Nietzsche: first of all, “truth” as such is not only denied as a goal for philosophy (or any other discipline for that matter), but is declared irrelevant even if it does exist. This accords with Derrida’s theory of the transcendental signifier, namely that it does not exist, which makes his entire philosophical and critical system possible. As a writer too, his wordplay and esoteric semiotic manipulation is interestingly similar to Derrida’s, despite the difference that Nietzsche is significantly more readable than Derrida. However the significance is deeper than that: perhaps Derrida sees some of Nietzsche’s almost-ridiculous self-aggrandizement in Eisenman, and the theme of process, or becoming, is certainly essential to the discourse of both Nietzsche and Eisenman. Furthermore, as Jeffrey Kipnis points out in “Twisting the Separatrix,” Derrida writes in Of Grammatology, “It [the book] is the encyclopedic protection of theology...against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy...” The fondness for Nietzsche, and especially for Nietzsche’s way of writing, is clear in this quote. The totality (or worse, tautology) of a completed book contradicts deconstruction, so by inference we must conclude that a completed building does just as much, which perhaps explains the so-called “scaffolding” outside the Wexner Center. Lastly, Nietzsche’s conception of the Overman is dictated by the German verb *untergehen* but is also about the rising-above of man to something more (see Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1954.) The language that deconstruction uses, and Eisenman uses, to describe the critical processes followed to advance their respective disciplines is similarly ambiguous, often as subversion.

Plato, “Timaeus,” in Timaeus and Critias, trans. Desmond Lee. New York: Penguin Classics, 1972.

Tschumi, Bernard, Introduction to Chora L Works, in Chora L Works, ed. Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leaser. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997, P.125.

Week 6 Diagram Diaries and Generative Diagrams

The diagram is seen to be an important critical and generative tool in all of Eisenman’s work, from his PhD thesis to the most recent projects. The use of the diagram, however, began as iconic, but soon moved to be indexical, that is, the diagram as transcendental signifier to the

building's form. Most recently, the diagram has shifted to the figural, a paradigm discussed in Week 12.

Barry, Donna, "The Dimensions of a Wireframe," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 48-59.

Cassara, Silvio, Peter Eisenman: Feints. Milan: Skira Editore, 2006.
Aureli, Pier Vittorio and Gabriele Mastrigli, "Beyond the Diagram"

Eisenman, Peter, "Feints: The Diagram"

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "Re-Originating Diagrams"

Vidler, Anthony, "What is a Diagram, Anyway?"

Davidson, Cynthia, "A Game of Eisenman Seeks," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 176-179.

Written as a parabolic summary, this essay locates Eisenman's Nunotani Headquarters Building analogically within the novel The Box Man by Kobo Abé. The story is about a man who appropriates a large cardboard box as his means of shelter, as clothing and home. This manipulation of a box structure allows Davidson to write about appropriation, and what she sees as Eisenman's "first three-dimensional expression of his theoretical work on 'weak form,'" which becomes one of his first truly indexical projects. This is so because it refers to its diagram in a detached way, i.e., it is not representational. What allows the project to work for Davidson is that it is not a one-liner because of the ability to read it in terms of plate tectonics, or an argument against phallogocentrism, or through its diagram. Perhaps the most cogent point that Davidson makes concerning the Nunotani project, which then applies to almost all of Eisenman's work from the late-80s to the end of the 90s is that the form has a "diagrammatic basis," which is not governed completely by what Eisenman will call interiority, but deals also with the exteriority of architecture.

Deleuze, Gilles, "The Diagram," in The Logic of Sensation, trans. Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
(See Week 12)

Eisenman, Peter, Diagram Diaries. New York: Universe Publishing, 1999.

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagram: An Original Scene of Writing," Pp. 26-35

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Anteriority," Pp. 36-43

At the beginning of this essay, Eisenman makes a number of claims that are necessary for the explication of his argument but should probably be examined. The first is that architecture is usually concerned with external phenomena. It seems pertinent to define what is internal and external to architecture, and if, as Wright, and Hans Hollein after him, said, "Everything is architecture," then Eisenman's dictum loses its grounding. However from Tafuri we know Eisenman's position; architecture is nothing but itself. But architecture as part of a cultural system must respond to parametric fluctuations in culture, and Eisenman writes that "architecture in order to act critically must transgress that very same spirit." However Eisenman seems then to reverse positions and argue for architecture as an agent of cultural change through the diagram: architecture can deal with its exteriority using its interiority, which in turn refers to its interior history, or anteriority. The anteriority of architecture is what allows it to be critical, which is a similar argument to the one made in Eisenman's letter to Derrida, "Post/El Cards." Further, there is an element of essence in anteriority in what Eisenman calls singularity, or the repetition of difference that involves all of the history of architecture in any one act of architecture. This history, Eisenman writes, was invented by Alberti in De Re Aedificatoria, which was a critique of Vitruvius' Ten Books that made commodity, firmness and delight into inherent qualities that also

had to be represented aesthetically. This gave architecture an anteriority that became unified with its interiority, a relation that did not change until modernism tried to erase architecture's anteriority altogether, focusing completely on interiority and exteriority. Eisenman's argument therefore concerns diagrammatic architecture that is critical through a conscious extrication of anteriority from interiority, etc.

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Interiority," Pp. 46-93

Eisenman, Peter, "Diagrams of Exteriority," Pp. 164-209

Eisenman, Peter, "The Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign," Pp. 210-215

Somol, Robert E., "Dummy Text, or the Diagrammatic Basis of Contemporary Architecture," Pp. 6-25

Eisenman, Peter, "Blurred Zones," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 6-9.

This article systematically justifies the idea of blurring within Eisenman's theory in terms of its ability to accomplish certain goals previously set forth, especially in terms of architectural affect and the dislocation of the metaphysics of presence. It is never literal, but it is somatic and therefore to some extent experiential, but it is still about reading, because it is about a becoming-unmotivated. This is an idea that directly refers back to de Saussure and the idea of a motivated sign, or one that is associated with a signified (See above, "The Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign"). In an interesting passage of this essay Eisenman writes, "A blurring action begins to displace categories such as the visible and the articulate by detaching form from a one-to-one relationship with function and meaning." While this is a similar mantra to several before it, the context of blurring reframes it: the notion of blurring seems to unify as it separates, so that a formal evolution takes place without the occurrence of a singular moment of change. Therefore while Eisenman quite rightly discusses a separation of function and meaning, blurring seems also to imply a fluctuation in perception of the difference between the two. As a generative construct, Eisenman writes that blurring introduces another phase into process, including in the first phase site and program, the second including anteriority and interiority of architecture, and in the third, i.e., additional phase, another text is introduced that is "arbitrary," that is, not motivated by site, function, anteriority or interiority, but "appear[s] to be 'out of focus,'" which is what creates the indexical diagram used in all of the projects from the late-80s through much of the recent work, excepting only the most recent.

Kwinter, Sanford, "The Genius of Matter," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 91-97.

Through a rigorous analysis of the processes of the Cincinnati DAAP building, Sanford Kwinter arrives at some projective conclusions that are retrospectively not only interesting but also surprisingly accurate, in terms of architecture's trajectory over the past ten to fifteen years. He begins by describing the role of oscillation, or a form's "associated space" in Eisenman's design process. In addition, Kwinter gives Eisenman credit for appreciating the between of two poles, which finally began to emerge as the significant part of an oppositional dichotomy with the DAAP project. While the building seems at first to simply illustrate a Structuralist opposition, what saves it from this for Kwinter is the parametric nature of the two systems, or their effects upon each other. Similar to Eisenman's modified procedure in "Blurred Zones" for blurring; Kwinter argues that the use of what he calls a "*material* model" is what allows Eisenman to approach the excess that allows an unmotivated sign system. This occurs in the DAAP project because of "preliminary site-priming operations," in conjunction with all of the deformative, harmonic, geometric, and geological manipulators that the process is made up of, all of which Kwinter describes temporally. This is not to say that it is a comprehensible explanation (sample sentence: "Both the existing building system and the fibre-wave addition are complex homeostatic systems which manage to express stability from one perspective and instability from another."), but it does make a

convincing case for the mutual deformation of all systems, so that there is a certain relativism in the geometric process, so that “Oscillation [is] no longer the static operation of sublating two terms across a patch of space” but the transmutation of forms.

Zaera-Polo, Alejandro, “The Making of the Machine: Powerless Control as a Critical Strategy,” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 28-37.

Week 7 Conditions of Excess

In the essay entitled “Strong Form, Weak Form,” Eisenman says, “Weak form is arbitrary, undecidable, excessive, and has no ontology or teleology of value, that is, no strong relationship to narrative space or time.”¹ It is precisely the excess of architecture that makes it possible and gives it the possibility to be critical. While still not a positivist argument, in the vein of Tafuri, Eisenman makes an argument for architecture. Included also here are discussions of alterity, image, and ornamentation, related by schema of architecture as more than building.

Blanchot, Maurice, The Gaze of Orpheus: And Other Literary Essays, esp. “Two Versions of the Imaginary.” Station Hill Press, 1981.

Bois, Yve-Alain, and Rosalind Krauss, Formless: A User’s Guide. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Zone Books, 1997.

Cobb, Henry, “A Note on the Criminology of Ornament,” in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 95-97.

Eisenman, Peter, “The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 24-33.
(See Week 1)

Eisenman, Peter, “Architecture and the Crisis of Reality,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 37-39.

In this essay Eisenman draws a distinction between authenticity and reality. According to the definitions here, reality relies on presence, whereas authenticity is characterized by an authorial presence, which is not necessarily about presence. Through an allusion to a conference in Brakel, Germany in which designers gathered together for the media, an audience that Eisenman saw as inauthentic for a design conference. However it seems that Eisenman does not privilege authenticity over reality, nor vice versa, nor does he privilege authenticity over inauthenticity or reality over unreality, or vice versa. Eisenman presents the idea of the banal, which is neither authentic nor inauthentic, but seemed to have been taking over architecture as an aesthetic, in that it is not about authorship but it does have a certain nostalgia that tries to be authentic, although it never can be. What Eisenman proposes then is an “authenticity in difference,” which presumably would allow dislocation in that it is not nostalgic, and operates on different terms of judgment from a traditional authenticity, i.e., where traditionally an authentic architecture would attempt to design correctly, but this pursuit would attempt to dislocate the conventional architectural ideas of scale, value, aesthetics, etc.

Eisenman, Peter, “Strong Form, Weak Form,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 51-53.

There is an easy reading of this essay that seems to yield positivist statement, but given the frame of Eisenman’s discourse, that is obviously not the intention. Eisenman straightforwardly discusses the merits of what he calls weak form over strong form in architecture, where strong form would have a one-to-one relationship between its signifier and its signified, and weak form would have a signifier that is open to interpretation, in whose manifold meanings there is no one “correct” one. This essay dates itself, as in Eisenman’s “Post/El Cards” (See above), in Eisenman’s break with a

completely Derridean take on deconstruction; he begins to distinguish between language and architecture, in that the sign system in language is metaphorical whereas the default in architecture is opaque. Through several examples such as the idea of the instant replay in sports broadcasting and scratching and mixing in nightclubs, Eisenman discusses the mediated realities in other situations that point to a weak form condition. However the most lucid part of the essay is his description of the necessity of displacing the status quo of architectural discourse, in terms of challenging ourselves as architects and society around us – this is the misconception of positivism. Although Eisenman says “The only way to advance in a discipline is to displace knowledge,” the question of *why* one would be interested in advancing the discipline of architecture is purposely ignored. One can only assume that part of a weak form discipline is precisely its lack of purpose, in a Kantian/Derridean manner (as in Derrida’s idea of *invagination*), just as excess signals purposiveness: “Weak form is arbitrary...and has no ontology or teleology of value....”

Kipnis, Jeffrey, “Forms of Irrationality,” in Folding in Architecture, ed. Greg Lynn. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.

Kipnis, Jeffrey, “Form’s Second Coming,” in The State of Architecture at the Beginning of the 21st Century, ed. Bernard Tschumi and Irene Cheng. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 58-59.

In this short manifesto, Kipnis calls for a new theory that is based as much on difference as on what he memorably calls “sameness,” or a theory of the same. Presumably motivated as much by Gilles Deleuze’s work on Leibniz as Greg Lynn’s derivative work in topology, Kipnis posits an idea that distinguishes between Eisenman’s process and the younger generation of architect’s morphogenesis. While the theme may at this point seem tiresome, the notion of “morphological families (or species)” has, I would argue, not yet fulfilled its promise. We may look at the several possibilities for a certain form, but there is no immanence of its family members in it, so it is only topologically motivated by its representation of topology. While it is a primitive example, Greg Lynn’s Korean Presbyterian Church is both a representation and is itself topological, but no one has attempted an architecture that does more than illustrate multiplicity through literal multiplicity, which is impossible in the singular condition of a single building. Perhaps Kipnis’ idea is too simple, or it is too broad, but it would seem that at this point in contemporary architectural discourse, what is needed is a reconciling theory that does not take a side between the same and the different, but somehow assembles the same within the different or vice versa.

Lynn, Greg, “Ineffective DESCRIPTIONS: SUPPLEMENTAL LINES,” in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 99-105.

Drawing heavily on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus, (perhaps more than Eisenman might agree with, based on the fact that Lynn was a design architect on the DAAP project) this essay discusses the implications of the University of Cincinnati Aronoff Center differently from other accounts. There are similarities, such as the acknowledgment of a new strain in Eisenman’s projects based on what Kwinter calls “priming the site” (see “The Genius of Matter,” above) or Lynn calls “mapping,” and also the difference in geometry, from “rigid” to “supple.” Therefore the account of the process in the body of the essay, cohesive and explicatory though it may be, is perhaps less interesting to us than the last few paragraphs, which begin to discuss the meaning of the project or rather the dispersal of meaning. Eisenman’s project that he describes to Derrida in the “Post/El Card” letter is, according to Lynn, beginning to be pursued through the challenges that the building offers for reading; it cannot be comprehensively read, if at all. Counter to Jeffrey Kipnis’ undecidability or “governed multiplicity,” which would signify multiple readings and not privilege one, Lynn describes the DAAP project resisting any meaning at all. Therein lies the strength of the project, which is precisely where Lynn’s invocation of Bataille’s idea of *informe* begins to serve his criticism; the initial forms are not derived from any single source, and therefore meaning is proliferated and becomes meaningless. (See Andrew Benjamin’s essay “Opening the Interstitial”)

Vidler, Anthony, “From Tattoo to Trinket,” Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993,

Week 8 The Fold

Eisenman's work on the fold was spurred by the same by Gilles Deleuze, but lead to projects like the Frankfurt Rebstockpark, in which space began to be a part of a three-dimensional matrix of becoming. The repercussions of this project were many, leading to discussions of topology in the work of Greg Lynn and Ben van Berkel, but also to a new formalism.

Deleuze, Gilles, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque, trans. Tom Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

The fold, an idea taken all too literally at the beginning of its subsumption into architectural discourse, is still showing repercussions and reverberations more than fifteen years after arguably the first "fold" project, the Frankfurt Rebstockpark. Dealing much more with topology than origami, Deleuze's fold is based on Leibniz's monad in that the smallest element of matter is not matter itself, but the fold which is infinitely enfolded allowing infinite unfolding but never any resolution. Therefore dealing with fractal geometry in terms of infinite scalability as well as what Greg Lynn will call "supple" geometries (See Lynn's Folds, Bodies and Blobs), Deleuze crafts a mind/body or rather mind-body unification in which the two are inextricably (inexplicably) folded into each other. This is based on an allegorical drawing done by Deleuze of what he calls the "Baroque house," explained by Anthony Vidler (See Vidler's "Skin and Bones," in Warped Space. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000. The essay does not mention Eisenman; it is quite correct about Greg Lynn, but his use of the fold is doubtful as well. Eisenman's and Lynn's student Hernan Diaz Alonso may be closest to an architectural manifestation of Deleuze's work.) as the bottom floor whose windows and door represent the five senses, connected to the upper floors by a "scrolled motif" and openings and curtain-like membrane/sensors whose folds transmit sensation to the open roof. The theme of the Baroque is used somewhat allegorically as well, if the analogy of Descartes to the Renaissance and therefore Leibniz and the Baroque is accepted. The inverse of Descartes' proposition of straight segments for differential equations is Leibniz's of integral equations, the one working backward from the other. Deleuze's preference for Leibniz is clear, especially in his refusal of "the Cartesian line as a site of its points" in an "analytical punctual equation." The implications and complications of this book have not yet been investigated in architecture, although it would seem that Eisenman's invocations of it were only, as he writes in "Visions' Unfolding," "a primitive beginning."

Eisenman, Peter, "Unfolding Events: Frankfurt Rebstockpark and the Possibility of a New Urbanism," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 59-61.

Eisenman begins this essay with the familiar themes of mediated reality and the shift to an electronic paradigm, but associates media here with the idea of the event, which for architecture is about affect. Therefore the object, or the architecture itself, is folded and through affect and close-reading one begins to unfold the object. In terms of urbanism, the folded object can act as a reconciling factor allowing non-representational and non-iconic reference to context, creating a relationship that is not dialectic, between new and old, but a definite relationship nonetheless. The idea of the fold is obviously extracted from Deleuze, but in the Rebstockpark project Eisenman also talks about the mathematical models of René Thom, the butterfly net (catastrophe) being the one (out of seven) used.

Eisenman, Peter, "Folding in Time: The Singularity of Rebstockpark," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 130-133. (This article is simply a revision of "Unfolding Events," in Re:Working Eisenman. See above.)

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, Discourse on Metaphysics and Monadology, trans. George R. Montgomery. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005.

Lynn, Greg, ed. Folding in Architecture. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004.

Rajchman, John, "Perplications: On the Space and Time of Rebstockpark," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 150-160.

The argument Rajchman makes in this article proposes a quite convincing case for Eisenman's use of Deleuze's fold, based on what Deleuze calls "intensive reading," which does not necessarily apply specificities but complicities, so that Deleuze's fold is understandably different from Eisenman's. Therefore Rajchman seems to be saying that what relates the Rebstockpark to the fold are not so much its formal qualities as the ideas that it implies, especially in terms of a parametric idea of architecture that deals with three-dimensional location in a deforming matrix of effects, such that not only are buildings within the Rebstockpark site implicated, but outside they could be as well. Although this may be too literal a reading of Rajchman's use of Deleuze's idea of the "virtual," the "perplications" of Rajchman's text are explained as "those 'cross- foldings' that introduce the creative distantiation into the midst of things." They suggest the ability to enfold, to relate, and to "unearth 'within' a space the complications that take the space 'outside' itself, or its frame, and fold it again." Therefore Rajchman proposes Eisenman's excess as the territory of the virtual, exposing containment so that one is forced to imagine what might be outside of the constrained space he or she is allowed to read. The article also begins to suggest a certain topology that agrees with Deleuze's formulation of difference *and* repetition, such that "each unit becomes singular or disparate, even though it 'coimplies' the others along the line." The containment of the project, as addressed above, is integral in Rajchman's consonant reading: the acceptance in the project of a technological basis refers to an invisible or imperceptible complex order much like Deleuze's infinitely small, but all-encompassing, folding and unfolding. In the last part of the essay Rajchman examines Leibniz's principle of Sufficient Reason as subverted by Nietzsche in that it is no longer up to a creator to select the best world, but rather to create the type of matrix that Eisenman uses. A similar process can be found in Eisenman's projects for the Bibliotheque de L'IHUEI or the Church for the Year 2000, in which a field is created and the building responds to that field topologically.

Somol, Robert E., "Accidents Will Happen," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 73-77.

Picking up where John Rajchman leaves off, Somol posits a reading of the Rebstockpark project in terms of Barthes' theory of gaming, or "controlled accident." Somol's succinct description of Eisenman's process is interesting for its plenitude: the "traditional integers of strong form design: typology, morphology, and archaeology" are counterposed but forced to interact and then blur each other's frames. The fold is subject to the "accident" to which the title of the essay refers, which is the catastrophe, which Somol interestingly applies to Eisenman's trademark bowtie. Furthermore, the catastrophe is read as something that is already present on the site, like in Rajchman's text, quoting Paul Virilio in writing "Before, you had to leave in order to arrive. Now things arrive before anyone's leaving." This allows Somol to posit a weak form of time itself that Eisenman's project implies, using Deleuze as well: the chronological sequence of the fold doesn't matter. The underlying point of this article, and perhaps of all the criticism pertaining to the Rebstockpark, is the project's flagrant three-dimensionality, conceptualized by the fold. Where Somol writes of the Guardiola House and Koizumi Sangyo Building that they "tended to substitute section for plan...Frankfurt is not a sectional scheme because it does not privilege any cut," thereby breaking down the horizontal/vertical dialectic. The idea of chance, in gaming (gambling) and photography is brought up once more near the end of the essay in a discussion of intentionality and will ("weak intentionality"), i.e. whether there is enough freedom of decision to constitute art or actual decision-making. There is again a Nietzschean allusion to the love of chance, but it seems to be conditioned by Leibnizian Sufficient Reason. However taken as a response to Derrida's questions as to the ideas of deconstruction in architecture (See Derrida's "A Letter to Peter Eisenman," above), Somol suggests another, though possibly coincident reading that begins to discuss the issues of falling down, as well as those of the traces left by architecture.

Week 9 Texts, Indices, and Codes

The architectural text is an important facet of the work, most lucidly explained in an explication of Mies van der Rohe's early-to-middle projects, in which signs can only be read in relation to each other, not as independently representative. The index, as mentioned above, began to address architectural objects with history. However, exemplified in Diagram Diaries, the index had to point to a sign. The code as a scrambler of a time-based indexical reading was employed, but still referred to a sign, a problem addressed in Week 12.

Benjamin, Andrew and Peter Eisenman, Interview in in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 133-137.

What Eisenman discusses with Benjamin in this interview is a somewhat convoluted, indirect conception of the index with respect to aura and then to excess. The argument that Eisenman makes for the index in terms of an object's aura is that an aura can only exist when there is a "between" condition, or an indexicality that references some prior or anterior state of an object's being. That is, the index becomes ontological in itself, thus inventing a history for an object. Regarding excess, the index again acts as the mediator between an object and its history, but excess is now also a mediator from which emerges Eisenman's idea of "presentness," or an immanence resulting from the inadequacy of a conjunction of form and function to create architecture.

Eisenman, Peter, "miMISES READING: it does not mean A THING," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp.11-17.

This essay is probably the most important of any in terms of explaining the idea of architecture that can be read as a text with respect to architectural signification. The idea of textual relationships may be read on just those terms – through relationships between each other. Eisenman's analogy to language is one that he will use often later to describe the differences in the theoretical problems surrounding the becoming-unmotivated of their respective signs, but what he calls an architectural text is when architectural signs begin to take on certain relations wherein their signifieds can be divorced from their signifiers, thus simulating conditions that occur in language because of the metaphorical nature of words and their ability to signify arbitrarily (read: their inability to be entirely specific). Eisenman uses this projective theory as a way of reading five of Mies van der Rohe's house designs in three phases: the Brick and Concrete Country Houses in the first, the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House in the second, and the Hubbe House and the Ulrich Lange House in the third. Beginning with the walls, Eisenman executes a textual reading because of the lack of enclosed space, not only making intensifying the figure/ground, but relinquishing the need for space. The walls, therefore, are becoming unmotivated in their ontology, which contradicts the usual function of the wall, that of defining space. In the Barcelona Pavilion similar nuances are read as textual, like the columns' reflectivity which allow them to disappear and the glass walls, which are more reflective than transparent. Again in the Tugendhat House material juxtaposition and asymmetry are understood as dislocations of expected relationships. The Hubbe House suggests the idea of superposition, which Eisenman sees as a possibility for textuality if both sides of a dialectic structure are kept in balance with regard to each other. Illustrating this, the row of columns marks an axis of symmetry in plan simultaneously marking asymmetry across both sides of the house, thereby breaking down the symmetry/asymmetry opposition, and therefore the Classical/Modern one as well. True to Eisenman's own compositional inclinations, he finds the single odd column in the Hubbe House, inferring its role as sign that of an index that points to other absences. Through a series of decisions that Eisenman reads as displacements of traditional architectural expectancies or anthropocentrism, he reads the houses' compositions as entirely made up of signs that do not signify anything, or rather do not signify their respective traditional meanings and can therefore be detached from them. It is precisely the capacity for this displacement, he argues, that maintains architecture and allows it remain interesting and push its own limits.

Eisenman, Peter, "Architecture as a Second Language: The Texts of Between," in Re:Working Eisenman. London: Academy Editions, 1993, Pp. 19-23.

Using the idea of an architectural text as superposition following from the “miMISes READING” essay, Eisenman assembles a theory of simultaneity of conflicting times, places and formal logic as a means of discussing some of his own projects. Sometimes referred to as the “archaeological” projects for their convoluted histories that become textual in themselves (i.e., in removing contextual history from an objects’ form it becomes unmotivated by that history not, as Eisenman writes allowing “a single signified”), Eisenman looks at them through their superpositions and the sustained inconsistencies that break the relationships between signifier and signified. The idea of a second language, although for the most part suppressed in Eisenman’s current thought, is related to becoming-unmotivated but deals with a decontextualization of pieces of an accepted architectural language. The example that Eisenman still uses is that of Alberti’s façade for San Andrea in Mantua. While it is a misreading (or at least a retrospective reading) and he acknowledges it as such, he talks about the building’s façade as a superposition of the Arch of Titus (or, as in this essay, the Arch of Septimius Severus) and the Greek temple front, symbolizing the power of man and the power of religion. Similarly, when Palladio began to build villas he didn’t know what a villa should be, so the façade was grafted as a Greek temple front as a house for man instead of a house for gods. These two examples include what could be called a “remotivation,” where Eisenman’s project calls for a displacing text wherein accepted architectural language is eschewed in favor of signs that do not necessarily belong to any existing system. He uses the Romeo and Juliet project as an example of this, for all of the superposition and textual reasons explained above, but also for its representation: where traditionally a piece of architecture could be read as a sign in itself, this project does not allow a single reading because all of the documents that represent it are slightly different. While this is simply an illustrative gimmick, it does demonstrate the idea of a text quite literally and well. The idea of the “texts of between” is explained by the project for the Frankfurt Biocentrum, where the geometries are neither accepted as architectural nor biological, but are between and are therefore not yet completely motivated.

Eisenman, Peter, “M Emory Games,” in M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995, Pp. 58-59.

Eisenman, Peter, CodeX. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2005.

Eisenman, Peter, “Coded Rewritings: The Processes of Santiago,” Pp. 27-35.

Fernández-Galiano, Luis, “Code X in Three Movements,” Pp. 11-17

Forster, Kurt W., “*La Froza del Destino*: The New from the Shell of the Old,” Pp. 19-25

Eisenman, Peter, “Digital Scrambler: From Index to Codex,” in Perspecta 35, ed. Elijah Hume. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004.

In this article Eisenman discusses, as he does to some extent in his piece in CodeX, the transition in his work from a driving idea of the index to one of the code as an attempted escape from indexical processes. He has since also refuted the idea of the code, acknowledging it, too, as indexical, but it remains an important phase in his work as the beginning of a new type of architecture that cannot be understood through reading alone. Beginning with Krauss’ conception of the index, Eisenman describes it as “an attempt to explain away one of the major problematics of the poststructuralist era: the metaphysics of presence.” Through the index, he claims, not only was the metaphysics of presence problematized, but so was the notion of the meaning of a signifier in relation to its signified, and therefore the idea of a transcendental signifier as well. As his familiar argument goes, architectural signs are icons, but here he says they are also indices because they can be detached from their meaning. However Eisenman argues that the index should itself be displaced because technology and especially media have made the idea of “pointing” to something irrelevant: as in a signature on a painting that verifies the authenticity of a painting, signs can be manipulated to have different meaning, entirely displacing the notion of indexical meaning altogether. Eisenman brings up codes then as not only conventions, but as a different way of ordering geometric or formal systems. In this way, the index is “scrambled,”

adding a level of difficulty to reading that makes a project more interesting for its subtle subversiveness. As an example he compares the corners of Palazzo Ducale at Urbino with Bramante's Santa Maria della Pace, in which the interior corners of the former awkwardly meet with Ionic scrolls, whereas in the latter the corners are the compressed superposition of capitals, referring only inwardly. Therefore for Urbino one needs to know the classical vocabulary of architectural capitals, whereas in reading Bramante's solution one only needs to understand the formal code followed in that environment. The textual dimension of this kind of coding is read into Palladio's Palazzo Chiericati as well as Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin, in which order can be read but then is contradicted through simultaneous different readings. Transposed into the process of the City of Culture project, the code takes on a similar but different role: that of the three-dimensional matrix into which an indexical plan is fed, creating a very different way of dealing with a plan of superposed geometries than classic planimetric extrusion. However, although Eisenman writes that computer-modeled deformed forms act "as a *codex* that requires a reverse reading to a nonexistent origin," one is prompted to ask where exactly the index ends and the code begins. That is, what makes the coded process any different from the former indexical one, except that the code is just one further step in the indexical reading? And if the code truly does create a condition that cannot be read, then what is the value of the steps before it?

Krauss, Rosalind, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America," October 3 & 4, Spring & Fall 1977.

Krauss' two essays that define the idea of the index have had an extreme impact on Eisenman's architecture: looking through the book Diagram Diaries one begins to understand how heavily pervasive the index has been, seeming as if it frames the entire idea of the architectural diagram for Eisenman as well. Krauss' articles too are sewn together by the unifying idea of the index, first in Vito Acconci and Marcel Duchamp and then in the works of certain artists at P.S. 1, including Gordon Matta-Clark, Michelle Stuart and Lucio Pozzi. She begins the second part of the article with an interesting example, however, that is used as an example of the trace, an anterior condition that deals with pure presence (which in turn refers to pure absence: if everything references something, and the referent is then neglected, absence is necessarily present). The dancer Deborah Hay held a performance in which she explained through "a quiet but insistent monologue...that she was there, presenting herself to them, but not through the routines of movement because these were routines for which she could no longer find any particular justification." While Eisenman has never gone so far as to build a project that denies the preconditions of architecture to the extent that Hay does, it would seem that the intentions are similar if not exactly the same. The trace therefore leads to the idea of the index, in that in the index much of the referent can be erased, but it still must point to the original. This is probably most interesting (to Eisenman as well) when looking at Matta-Clark's subtractions from the constructed object of the P.S. 1: the absences of floorboards are specifically and obviously tied to the presence of the building and space around them. Into the traditional *poché* of floor in section absence is inserted as a double-absence reinforced in its textuality by the remaining floor beams. The Acconci piece that Krauss talks about is a video in which he talks to himself in a mirror referring to himself as both "I" and "you," exposing the instability of the linguistic pronoun. These examples are both indices and texts in that they point to an existing condition but are not signs of anything in particular. Somehow the idea of the indexical process, when adapted to architecture, was forced determinately into a temporal film-like progression of steps, in a procedural type of architecture with which architects are still struggling in order to find legitimate formal processes that are not driven by this specific type of process.

Levrat, Fredric, "Intentions Matter," M Emory Games. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1995, Pp. 62-64.

Lynn, Greg, Animate Form. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.

Week 10 Phenomenology and the Body

Phenomenology, or what Eisenman calls a “pre-critical experience,” is impossible, as Jacques Derrida argues in his essay concerning Husserl’s Ideas. However the resulting experience of architecture is Eisenman’s “affect,” which includes the pre-critical but necessarily must also contain the critical as a reading.

Davidson, Cynthia, Introduction to Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 12-17.

Derrida, Jacques, “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology,” in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, Pp. 154-168

Eisenman, Peter, “Visions’ Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media,” in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, Pp. 556-561.

In this seminal essay, Eisenman discusses the repercussions of the dominance of an electronic paradigm over a mechanical one, or simply evolutions in technology. While it may be the most lucid of the several critiques that Eisenman has issued concerning the inabilities of perspective and traditional architectural representation to accurately describe the new paradigm, the essay is most interesting for its connection to themes that are not necessarily Eisenman’s recurrent ones, such as architecture’s sustained reliance on anthropocentrism for the past five hundred years. That is, the discussion is partially focused around the idea of “looking-back” in architecture that is not quite anthropomorphosis, but a more defined concept of autonomy of the architectural object, which “constitutes a move from *effective* to *affective* space” through Gilles Deleuze’s idea of the fold. Simply put, Eisenman is declaring a theory of the potentials of technology to open a realm of discourse that is determinate while being indeterminate, in that it deals with three-dimensional space, so that it allows phenomenological affect, as well as objective close reading.

Eisenman, Peter, Essay on the Berlin Memorial in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, P. 314.

Probably the most phenomenologically relevant of all of Eisenman’s projects, the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe must be much more about its power as a place to be than a formal object or building to be read. Therefore the derivative systems are much less important than their results, at the very least in Eisenman’s commentary on the project. This has not been the case in his architecture before, which leads to a fascinating piece on the role of memory, specifically memory of the holocaust, in our cultural atmosphere today. While Eisenman writes that the “This divergence [between the topographies of the tops and bottoms of the stelae] denotes a difference in time, between what Henri Bergson called chronological, narrative time and time as duration,” it seems as though he is confusing time with space, and therefore only representing the shift in temporal perception. However it is precisely the unknowable that seems powerful about this project. The subject never gets to view it as a whole, making it subversively phenomenological; viewing the pillars as wholes is never even allowed because of the small spaces between them. Therefore like the Kantian sublime in which one cannot stand too close to the pyramid nor too far away, perception is deferred, much like the unthinkable atrocities of the holocaust itself.

Hegel, G. W. F., The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Heidegger, Martin, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Rowe, 1971.

Husserl, Edmund, Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 1982.

Fernández-Galiano, Luis, "Germania Remember: Berlin's Memorial or Eisenman's Danteum," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 332-334.

The view that Fernández-Galiano proposes of the memorial in this article is that through its very simplicity and exactitude, the project would only be viewed (in a somewhat "meta-critical" criticism) as Eisenman's project if it is not built. The style of writing of this essay is almost unbearably passionate (to the extent that the essay seems facetious at points), in such passages as "under a peaceful, ordered, reassuring landscape, a hundred narrow paths descend to a familiar hell," but several interesting points about the figurative allusions of the project are made. The "field," for instance, acts simultaneously as peaceful, or as a battlefield, or as a cemetery. However in the phenomenological reading outlined above (See Eisenman's essay) the proximity of the pillars to each other is imposed on the subject, meaning the capacity for "reading" in the same way that others of Eisenman's projects not only encourage but necessitate is totally irrelevant. This is not to say that the project's processes are illegitimate, nor are they unnecessary for the power of the project, but rather that critical response is gratuitous. Regardless, however, of the merit of the project, Fernández-Galiano is right that Eisenman has been deprived of his Danteum, with all of its conflicts and similarities (among them a relation to fascism and the field of 100 columns), but Eisenman's work has never been about allegory anyway.

Hays, K. Michael, "Theory After Building," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 20-27.

Whiting, Sarah, "Building Inside Out: Perspectives on the Conspicuously Inconspicuous," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 98-107.

Zaera-Polo, Alejandro, and Peter Eisenman, Interview in El Croquis 83, 1997.

This interview may be the only time Peter Eisenman has ever said that he cares about the experience of the spaces in his buildings. In his discussion with Zaera-Polo, there is obviously a push-and-pull relationship between his machinic process and actually experiencing the results of the processes, but this is interesting for its simultaneity, as well as Eisenman's reasoning that the body has become almost irrelevant in the current mediated world because it is only used for sex. Therefore Eisenman's only nostalgic project is to restore the sensual experience. Zaera-Polo's coincidental argument is that the "arbitrary texts" that Eisenman uses, such as the liquid crystal or brain wave diagrams should not actually be arbitrary. The problem of arbitrariness extends only so far as the fact that the texts are only arbitrary insofar as they are exterior to architecture, so Eisenman's argument turns to that of presentness, which describes the durability of architecture to be absorbed or normalized into the mainstream of architectural discourse. Eisenman explains the necessity of not knowing the outcome of formal or machinic processes in terms of the ability for architecture to be critical, because generative criticality must be projective. Criticality as a resistance to power, especially as Eisenman's presentness, is questioned by Zaera-Polo, to which Eisenman responds that he is interested in control, not power; similarly, he says that he believes his project is based around what he calls a "moral" urge to inquire into the limits of architecture. Finally, when Zaera-Polo asks about methodology as opposed to affect, Eisenman gives an interesting answer in which he says that he is more interested in affect than methodology, and not necessarily in amorphous forms but rather forms that emerge from several places or no place, and therefore force people to pay attention to architecture.

Week 11 Critiques and Readings

Reading architecture is the goal of a critical discourse. The pieces here deal with readings of historical and contemporary architecture, as in the seminars that Eisenman teaches at Princeton and Yale. However also here are pieces that transcend the discussion of single project or method, and concern the interiority of the architecture from the exterior.

Derrida, Jacques, "Parergon," in Truth in Painting, trans. Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Eisenman, Peter, Princeton Seminars.

Eisenman, Peter, Critical Readings in Cassara, Silvio, Peter Eisenman: Feints. Milan: Skira Editore, 2006.

Eisenman, Peter, "En Terror Firma: In Trails of Grotexes," in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 19-24.

Eisenman begins this important essay with a story about the Carnegie Mellon Research Institute, in which Richard Cyert challenged him to do a project that was not about the overcoming of nature, as architecture has traditionally symbolized, but deals with the overcoming of knowledge. The idea is not that nature has been conquered (obvious in the fact that structural engineering is still important; that buildings have to stand up against gravity), but that technology and therefore knowledge is more at the forefront of academia than natural phenomena. The displacement of nature is, to Eisenman, the aspiration towards the beautiful, which began to take on certain moral overtones as well (see §59 of the Critique of Judgment). Where the beautiful, however, was uncritical the sublime is critical and is contingently related to the beautiful, analogous to the idea of critique as knowledge within knowledge. In addition, Kant links beauty with sensation and sublimity with reason, thus allowing the sublime as an other condition to the beautiful to take hold of the overcoming of knowledge. Eisenman's ways of provoking the sublime are his familiar ones: blurring, the trace, what he here calls "betweenness." However more interesting than his particular methods is the invocation of a goal that does not deal with a beautiful building but the resultant project from the invocation of other texts, and his justification for it. This deals with the idea of the trace (presumably different from Derrida's usage of the term), which to Eisenman implies the index because the trace points to its origin, which in turn points to its origin, etc., thereby requiring "at least *two* texts....Again, this between is not a between dialectically, but a between *within*," precisely because of the emergence of the trace from the second text, etc.

Frampton, Kenneth, "Eisenman Revisited: Running Interference," in Peter Eisenman: Recente Projecten = Recent Projects, ed. Arie Graafland. Amsterdam: SUN, 1989, Pp. 47-61.

Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Although it is usually Kant's Third Critique that is discussed in architecture, the First Critique is integral to an understanding of Kant's system of perception and apperception, especially in the division of sense and intellect and the different facets therein, time and space being the subsidiaries of sensation, and the Table of Categories derived from the Table of Judgments comprising the intellect. However in terms of the architecture of Peter Eisenman the First Critique is especially interesting for the argument aimed at David Hume's Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding that deals with cause and effect. Eisenman's rule-based process is entirely founded on a system of repercussions in architecture, so that effects occur parametrically. This is not just the idea of an index (although it is certainly big part of it), it also speaks to the idea that Eisenman attributes to the French philosopher Henri Bergson of a difference and possible disagreement between experiential time and the time of an object, also instrumental in the conception of many of the projects. (See Alexander Zaera-Polo's interview with Eisenman in El Croquis 83.) The notion of causality is apparent from the filmic progression of the diagrams of House I through the coded process, comprised of actions and results, for the City of Culture.

Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Judgment, trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987.

Beauty is described in the Third Critique as purposiveness detached from purpose, where purpose is the teleological function of an object and purposiveness is formal logic without reference to function. Although beauty may no longer be a criterion for the success of architecture, the idea of purposiveness has nonetheless been simultaneously a critique of Modernism and an accusation

made of Modernism. That is, in the latter criticism Modernism completely disregarded functionalism based on a consistent aesthetic (as in Mies van der Rohe's IIT campus, in which almost all of the buildings look the same), and in the former Modernism's aesthetic disregarded both purpose *and* purposiveness in many cases, or that it conflated the two. However beauty is obviously not Eisenman's interest in architecture, and in many ways one could say it is not necessarily Kant's interest in art (i.e., beauty as such is ascribed to scenes in nature rather than human creation). The second part of the Critique concerns the sublime, and it is this that Eisenman seems to suggest as a replacement for an urge to create beauty in architecture in the essay "En Terror Firma" (see above). Neither beauty nor the sublime have seemed to fully make it into Eisenman's theoretical discourse as much as they have taken over that of some other, younger architects much more concerned with aesthetics (cf., for instance, Hernan Diaz Alonso or Mark Gage). Regardless, Eisenman's displacement of the metaphysics of presence in architecture would include such presumptions as that the good building should be beautiful and symbolize its function. Kant's theory does not necessarily take a position on the detachment of an object from its appearance, but it necessitates that reading can and must occur that way. Eisenman's analytical readings are based on exactly the capacity in architects and critics to read formally, and so when the analytical is transformed into the generative, the ability to create on almost exclusively formal terms becomes central to the Kantian model. (Eisenman refuses to be labeled a Neo-Kantian, despite the heavily pervasive influence on his process and work.)

Kipnis, Jeffrey, "P-Tr's Progress," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 170-181.

In a meta-critical discussion of formalism in architecture over the 30 years or so before Kipnis wrote this article, he questions not only the critical project of formalism but the entire idea of form in architecture at all. He does this not in a skeptical way, but in an inquisitive way. In his footnotes, he gives an important background of the history of Eisenman's intellectual interaction with Colin Rowe, indispensable to an understanding of certain positions taken: for instance, in response to Rowe's diagrams for Palladio and Le Corbusier Eisenman began looking at deep structure, using similar diagrams but manipulating them as generative devices. The outside texts that Eisenman uses are pointed out as always almost-architectural, as in the liquid crystal diagrams for the Church for the Year 2000 which can be used as an organizational grid, therefore implementing the very idea of de Saussure's arbitrariness of the sign into the entire process of all of the projects. However the manipulation of the malleability of the signs into Eisenman's process allows him to create beyond the expressionism that the projects could easily be made from, and it is this condition that Kipnis finds so arresting in the Cincinnati Aronoff Center. According to Frank Gehry (talking about the Aronoff Center), "The best thing about Peter's buildings is the insane spaces he ends up with. All that other stuff, the philosophy and all, is just bullshit as far as I'm concerned." (Quoted in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building.) Kipnis' analysis and projective interpretation of Eisenman's investment in affect and aesthetics is contrapuntally illuminating to the conventional view of him as simply a theoretical machine intent on creating form for the sake of intellectualism. This essay not only implicates Eisenman with a soft spot for human inhabitation, but it thoroughly places him in the canon of important architects, if not *the* important architect, of the latter half of the 20th Century.

Kwinter, Sanford, "Can One Go Beyond Piranesi?" in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp. 152-163.

Purini, Franco, "Classicism Lost," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 26-31.

Franco Purini's insights in this article are almost all derivative, and it is easily discernible where his material comes from, or at least where it has been said before: much of it is obviously Kantian, as in the idea that "Eisenman's works stop on the threshold of the empirical and comforting immediate scale," or that "architecture identifies itself directly with art, since art has no apparent utilitarian ends." Purini also references more than once "many recent American movies," that combine "different temporalities in a game of interlocking alternatives," indirectly stating that he

has read Eisenman's "Architecture as a Second Language" essay. Within all of these familiar topics, therefore, it is difficult to figure out exactly which points Purini makes that are his own, and which of them are interesting. The first, perhaps, is his assertion that the positions of creator and critic in architecture have been conflated, contrasting with the resultant divergence beginning with the Romantic period. However following from this Purini indicts Eisenman as the locus of theory in contemporary architecture, but also as the force behind a self-enclosing theoretical body of work. He later goes on to discuss the phenomenological aspects of the work, in what would seem a self-defeating point, i.e., that the work can and must stand on its own from theoretical readings. Furthermore, it is precisely Eisenman's stance that architecture must gain autonomy to act as cultural commentary, meaning there is a paradox that does not need to be reconciled. Purini's readings, in several places, seem as if paradoxes are simply contradictions, as in the infinite/immediate juxtaposition (mentioned above with respect to Kant). The two are not mutually exclusive, and it may be exactly this type of sustained contradiction that gives Eisenman's work the power that it has.

Week 12 The Figural

The latest incarnation of the critical generative process is that of the figural, an idea from Gilles Deleuze's work on the painter Francis Bacon. The time sequence and diagram must be the resultant of forces, not a record. Therefore the project would seem readable, but in reality never would be. The same concepts were addressed in the work of the late 1990s, as in the *Bibliothèque de L'IUHIE* and the *Church for the Year 2000*, however they dealt with an external diagram. Here should be an attempt at distinguishing between the old and new concepts of the figural.

Blanchot, Maurice, The Writing of the Disaster, trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

In this small, difficult book, Maurice Blanchot discusses the somatic pains of writing about the inexpressible. Through a series of often disconnected aphorisms in the style of Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* or *Beyond Good and Evil*, Blanchot questions the human ability to write about subjects that he feels must be written about, not to say that attempts are futile but rather to challenge, and to create. Eisenman may see the act of architecture after 11 September 2001 as similar in terms of the intensely ambivalent urge to do it, conditioned by difficulty in doing it. However Eisenman also sees the metaphysics of presence itself, or rather its overcoming (or *untergehen*?) as representative of the disaster for architecture, so that Blanchot's comments on writing with the disaster in mind can be used in an architecture that incorporates and subverts the very same. Eisenman brings up a new facet of the metaphysics of presence with respect to the disaster: the narcissism of the subject, using a term that Blanchot uses as well. Therefore within the architectural sign that is becoming-unmotivated is the client's desire to embody himself in an architectural icon, a critique of contemporary architecture that Eisenman has insisted upon from Calatrava to Gehry to Piano. Another invocation of the disaster for Eisenman is Blanchot's discussion of passivity, in conjunction with Walter Benjamin's maxim that architecture is viewed in a state of distraction. Since Eisenman recognizes the contemporary subject as post-reading, the architecture must not be about close reading, but it cannot slip into pure phenomenology either, leading to a state of what Blanchot calls "non-passive passivity."

Debord, Guy, The Society of the Spectacle, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Zone Books, 1995.

Deleuze, Gilles, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, especially "The Diagram," trans. Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

In this exposition of Deleuze's understanding of the American artist Francis Bacon's creative process, there is a certain immanence of the work in the canvas; but the work itself emerges as a sort of Derridean invagination or Eisenmanian excess, to the process. That is, Deleuze uses the term *après-coup* (a Freudian term derived from the German *Nachträglichkeit* meaning "additional" or "afterward"), parenthetically noting hysteresis, suggesting a circular, or at

the very least non-linear process. This marks an extremely important divergence from Eisenman's thinking over the past fifteen to twenty years, if not his whole career. Where the idea of the index has been a constant conceptual idea in his work, his reading of this text could change the work entirely. The idea of close-reading, in that case, would no longer pervade the work as an assumed desire or even capability of the viewing subject, but would be subjugated in favor of impossible reading. This is not to say that reading would be complicated necessarily because the form of the building would be complicated, but that it would be problematized by a form whose process is non-linear and therefore whose objective time does not read as such. (For Eisenman's references to Henri Bergson, see Eisenman's 4th Summer Seminar at his office, given on 3 August 2006: Unpublished.) The implication seems to be that if architecture is to sustain itself as a critical practice then it must also become critical of the way it is read. Again, this is not to say that it will become opaque and shut out subjects, but to make them aware of their inability to read and in a certain sense therefore keep interest in an infinitely decodable system that cannot actually be decoded. Deleuze's discussion follows the abstract and figurative strains in recent art history, ending with Bacon who cannot be classified in either category but leads to a condition that Deleuze calls the figural, designated by a diagram. This is a much looser, more personal inclination of the artist than what architects consider to be a diagram, usually a static set of lines or shapes. Deleuze's diagram is made up of the actions themselves rather than their effects, allowing Eisenman to make the analogy of a resultant of forces instead of an index, as in Deleuze's examples of Van Gogh's diagram: "It is the set of straight and curved cross-hatchings that raises and lowers the ground, twists the trees, makes the sky palpitate...." There are forces in the diagram, but there are also forces before the diagram, and it is related, and as disturbing, as the art historian Wilhelm Worringer's so-called "Gothic line," which suggests a non-organic life that is alien to the viewer. Presumably Eisenman relates to this idea to Luigi Moretti's conception of the architectural contour, as well as the architectural object as a manipulable body (cf. Sanford Kwinter's essay "The Genius of Matter," above). Deleuze's overarching argument in his book deals with the construction of the primacy of sensation in art, and it will be fascinating to see Eisenman's reaction and possible transposition of this type of theoretical discourse into his own; for someone who has historically worked cerebrally, will sensation actually matter at all?

Diaz Alonso, Hernan and Jeffrey Kipnis, Interview in Sessions, ed. Julianna Morais. Los Angeles: Southern California Institute of Architecture Press, 2005.

The most pertinent part of this interview, indeed in all of Hernan Diaz Alonso's work as a critical project, is the progress of the index and its relationship to the projects themselves. It is obvious that Diaz Alonso is, in the terms that Alejandro Zaera-Polo used in discussion with Eisenman, much more interested in affect than methodology. However his use of computer animation techniques has allowed him to completely erase the index, as he explains to Jeffrey Kipnis in this interview. That is, he understands the index as false no matter what the actual evolution of a certain project may be, so like a magician he makes the actual process disappear in favor of the simulated process that determines form. Diaz Alonso's projects can then take on certain relations of the figural that Eisenman has not yet been able to, because of their honesty in temporal grounding. It would seem that from Eisenman's descriptions of the architectural figural, he is referring to Diaz Alonso's projects (as he does directly in his "Duck Soup" article) because of the idea that forces are not indexed but resultant, as well as the forms' contrast in figuration but response to exterior conditions such as site. Therefore Deleuze's opening words to his essay on the diagram are especially applicable to Diaz Alonso: that there is immanence in the site, but it must be imposed on it, as in Kant's formalism, where the a priori does not mean latency but rather capacity.

Eisenman, Peter, "The Affects of Disaster," in The State of Architecture at the Beginning of the 21st Century, ed. Bernard Tschumi and Irene Cheng. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 60-61.

The idea of mediated reality and its effect on architecture has been central to Eisenman's theory for more than fifteen years (see "Architecture and the Crisis of Reality," "Strong Form, Weak Form," etc.). What Eisenman describes as the disaster is the impossibility of media to convey its

subject, thereby wrongly conflating fact and fiction, and therefore pushing the two further apart from the viewpoint of someone who present during the event in question. This definition of the disaster directly references Maurice Blanchot's The Writing of the Disaster, in which the disaster is the inability to convey an event with language. Eisenman's subtle manifesto herein states that architecture should look to produce affect from within itself that can be both subjective and objective based on creation that emerges from outside the metaphysics of presence of architecture.

Eisenman, Peter, "Processes of the Interstitial: Spacing and the Arbitrary Text," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 94-101.

It becomes obvious from reading this essay and the others in the Blurred Zones book that Eisenman's initial reading of Deleuze's "Diagram" essay was quite literal: the diagram would have to come from outside architecture, thereby throwing a kink in an entirely rational process and offsetting or problematizing the architectural discourse of the index. However the difference in readings between then and now seems to be the diagram as action, rather than as lines, proscribing specific forces that the architectural object itself does not represent as such, but rather using and reacts to. This is clear in Eisenman's comment that the figural mandates the incorporation of "an outside agent, another diagram, that acts like a deus ex machina." This alludes to a time sequence that is allowed to also be arbitrary, but the arbitrariness does not extend that far in this essay. For instance, when Eisenman attempts to distinguish between the figural and the formal, he writes, "the figural is marked by its processes of becoming." The problem again seems to be his literality, this time of the term becoming. While the statement in the above quote may be valid, the figural would not necessarily represent its processes of becoming, because in that case it would fall within the "fictions" of architectural discourse (see above, Eisenman's "End of the Classical"). Furthermore, in the essay "Becoming-Animal," Deleuze's "becoming" is never an actual metamorphosis, but more of an almost condition: this points to a state that is never actually stable but transitive, and therefore cannot be conclusive. This seems to make "processes of becoming" unrepresentable, because they would be constantly occurring. The figural architectural object would therefore have to appeal to sensation to point to its own becoming which would always be current, rather than being "marked," signaling a condition of being.

Eisenman, Peter, "Zones of Undecidability I: The Interstitial Figure: The Church for the Year 2000," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 258-261.

The idea of the figural in Deleuze is interesting in this essay, in that Eisenman seems to be using the term in a similar way to that of the dislocating index, as opposed to the way he uses it now as an escape from the index, although its invocation is still specifically dislocation. That is, where the figural then emerged from figuration as direct contrast and in some cases contradiction, now the figural is understood as emerging from figuration based on a priori forces that do not indexically shape a given geometry, but manipulate, subvert, and change geometries that are then changed further as "not an index of the forces, but as it were a resultant of the forces." (See Eisenman's 6th Summer Seminar at his office, given on 17 August 2006: Unpublished.) While the idea of the figural as separated from the figurative was attempted in the project for the Church for the Year 2000, a reading of the project not only refers to the index of the process, involving the liquid crystal diagram superposed on the site, but also to the figurative condition of the church typology based on a nave and aisles. The Church for the Year 2000 is aisles with an absent nave, but it remains referential either to a coexistent typology or to its temporal conception, and is therefore not internally (un)motivated.

Eisenman, Peter, "Zones of Undecidability II: The Processes of the Interstitial: Destabilizing Tropes," in Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, Pp. 286-289.

Eisenman, Peter, "Duck Soup," in Log 7, Spring/Summer 2006, Pp. 139-143.

Kolbowski, Sylvia, "Fringe Benefits," in Eleven Authors in Search of a Building, ed. Cynthia Davidson. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996, Pp.134-141.

¹ Eisenman, Peter, "Strong Form, Weak Form," in Architecture in Transition: Between Deconstruction and New Modernism, ed. Peter Noever. (Munich: Prestel, 1997), P. 43.