

THE
BUILDING
WITHOUT
QUALITIES

[*POCHÉ*]
PALAIS PLOT

META-ARTEFACTS AND
THE ARCHIVE BETWEEN
REALITY / FICTION

TALIA A. PERRY'S
ARCHITECTURE THESIS,
TWO-PART DISCUSSION



13:00 | 5.3.2013 | CFA214

09:30 | 5.9.2013 | CFA214

This week, a lot of questions will be asked of architecture, what it is and what role it plays, about how and how much we shape our environment, and to what extent it shapes us. Some questions will have answers, more will not. Many questions - all those beginning with 'why' and 'why not' - seek to confirm or deny authorial intent. Five years later, we're still not quite sure what to expect from our audience, and what to give them.

This project begins with the assumption that architecture is an act of communication, a condition which presupposes certain limits regarding architecture's embodiment and representation. Some semblance of balance is necessary for discourse to establish its presence. Not everything need be balanced, save for two vital forces: hope, held close by the author-architect, and speculation, the readerly operation. Discourse requires a tumbling between knowing and not knowing, epistemic ambiguity motivating the frequent switching of roles and realities.

Doubt and uncertainty provide counterpositions to the hope and speculation continuum. They are important for maintaining a critical distance from the task at hand: skepticism weighs heavy on the potentiality of communication, but also facilitates its possibility.

For the past four months, I've engaged two other authors in dialogue, through the ghost of a building: Robert Musil and Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt; one a writer, the other an architect; one a modernist, the other baroque; both Viennese and both unwittingly good conversationalists, all things considered.

THIS IS AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE DISCUSSION.

I have a number of small preclusive statements to make regarding my thesis: I'm as interested in what you make of it as I am in the making of the thing itself - if a thesis falls in the woods with no one around, does it make a sound? I should point out that my thesis is not 'a building,' but is about a building, or rather about many possible buildings. It is an active excavation into the liminal void between reality and fiction, and treats each uncovered historic fragment as an opportunity for narrative sense-making.

This semester, I have grown intimately familiar with a building that never was; the thesis is a kind of ongoing record of a memory. It is a story in two parts: The Archive documents and represents various constructed histories spanning the last three centuries, told through the eyes of the house, of Ulrich (*The Man Without Qualities*), and of me. The Meta-Artefacts reflect upon the relationships between the narrative fragments, exposing and unraveling the various levels of storytelling.

THE FINAL CHAPTER: A GREAT EVENT IS ON THE WAY BUT NOBODY HAS NOTICED IT.