

**Augusto Fabio Cerqua: As early as the late '80s, when every architect was much more interested in promoting their identity rather than their works, you decided not to appear, or better to disappear, by erasing your own portrait, by constantly changing your agency's name, by using S/He, a pc-generated androgynous avatar to de-personalize your identity. This allowed you to generate a multitude of personalities, to be unpredictable and not become a brand. Furthermore, this strategy of disappearance is also evident in your architectural works. I wanted to ask you if you could show me how to disappear completely.**

François Roche: Today... I got a "sinthome"... let me do a "sinthome" interview... nonlinear and stuttering //... I was born in a coma, like in Douglas Coupland's book, without a primal scream... so never alive, or never dead... in a Schrodinger paradox, resurrected prior to being alive... Pathologies and Symptoms are consubstantial to the New-Territories paranoiac means and meaning... and architecture has to be considered, in our psycho-case, as the medium we found... to manipulate antagonism through the disruption of logic, sadness... and technologies like pataphysics or alchemy.

Everything we did or were supposed to do is erasable, in the pursuit of the third-little-pig weakness, waiting for the wolf to blow his house down... I leave eternity to others... Why would we seek to be righteous when there are so many people carrying the banner of morality? They are legion, as dangerous and common as criminals, from parametric positivist libertarians to socio-carnival semiologists and activists. There is enough "talent" in those symmetric chapels to perform the petrification of worlds, like those who play with clownery and cynicism, Sodom and Gomorrah individualism...

In BKK, the M4 Lab integrates robots and processes of fabrication includes real time sensor interface, sensor perturbation, where the trajectory of the nozzle is reacting to the robot's own noises (machine clicks, inverse kinematics, pneumatic piston...) or other agents such as any analogue signal. Even pathologies and diseases can be transcribed as input, to corrupt the pre-programmed, predictable work, and modify the course of the fabrication in real time, like a stuttering feedback coming from the intrinsic protocol of doing, increasing the intricate meanders of the tool in an everlasting inaccuracy of positioning, introducing non-linear processes... as a way of territorializing technologies, but on the condition that they be defined as indeterministic and looped... In this case we are in the pursuit of erasing design' signature, becoming a process, a protocol to discover artifacts, undesirable collateral effect of the experiment itself, for an architecture that lost and dismissed its author.

To be an architect, in my operative fiction, is mainly to confront the hypocrisies of discourse, of power, of the situation... to re-question the business model of academia and knowledge (like AA or the new Bartlett Style, among others), producing, actually, an army of monkey-swarm teachers... arrogant and complacent in their ghetto of self-satisfaction... ignorant of the drama of the word, of the risk of being alive (or dead)... of the fragility of each situation... In Asia, schools are invaded by this kind of brainless epigone.

Our weakness work is developed, on the contrary, in an erasable sandbox /... I asked the Frac to destroy the models in their collection... eternity is the main egotism of architects and the main condition of their servitude... "S/he" loves the... wind... the rain... the whispering... like at the end of *Blade Runner* when the "replicant," naturally more human than post-human, faces its battery limit without ubermenschen vainglory...

De-egotism, de-enlightenment, has to be considered a process of fabrication... to re-question, in a kind of Situationism, the global spectacle... turning design into a virus, like Guy Debord's book with

its two covers made of abrasive material to damage the others between which it is slipped.... In developing a workerist (*Operaismo*) strategy, we should reconsider disobedience, post-digital disobedience...

Meanwhile, the avatar, *S/he*, committed suicide several time, and abandoned her-his position... as the Stanislaw Lem character in *Solaris*, condemned to survive his-her nonexistence...

I'm just the personal secretary.

**AFC: I'm really interested in the issue of authorship in architecture. In your *L'Ombre du Caméléon*, you wrote "faire avec pour en faire moins." Is this a strategy of self-erasure, too?**

FR: ...Ah... you found that book from 1993... from the XIX Century... the first element of the Fictions starship... "as a process to knot and unknot reality and its perception," to quote Michel Foucault / Far away from Fantasy addiction, using fiction in an hygienic, inoffensive soap opera for kids...

To bring you up to date, I could use the preamble of the "s/he would rather do fiction Maker" (instagram.com/s\_hefictionmaker), which was the "s/he" event four months ago at the Frac Orleans: "Experimental architecture has shifted toward a new corpus of instrumentations - tools, computation, mechanization, but also and simultaneously fictions and lines of subjectivity synchronous with our symptoms, our fears and great escapes in the 'here and now.' The purpose of this 1993-2050 flashback is to explore attitudes that show a correlation, a co-dependency, with the forms they underpin, through their conflicts and reciprocities. It is to discover a post-digital, post-human, post-activist, post-democratic, post-feminist world... a queer, androgynous, carnal, disturbing, disenchanted, pornographic, transient, transactional world... where scenarios, mechanisms, misunderstandings and psychological and physiological fragments are what make up walls and ceilings, cellars and attics... schizoid and paranoid, between the lines of operative and critical fictions... The androgynous folds and recesses behind which... he(s) / she(s)... hide(s), trigger confusion and gut reactions, suspicious hostilities, fantasized idealization, and even premeditated oblivion. We must use paradoxical postures and aesthetic mechanisms to highlight bio-political challenges, the potentials and disorders of contemporary technologies,

from their early stages to their merchandizing, and suspect them of not being so harmless, beyond conventional discourses and self-conscious aesthetics..."

What else could we do than oppose this system's obscenity, the obscenity of our pathologies... generated by this very system, affected by the impossibility of the world, facing these multiple disorders... to say, to make-say and make-known... that we, as well, are pathogenic elements... of this very disorder, but in a critical mode, activist, solitary... to produce with this repulsion... this rejection... in a metabolized loop... constitutive of the obscene chain... of these little tales.

Yes, we have nothing left but obscenity in order to say, to make, to make-say and make-known. This is what we offer here... our pathologies as paranoid criticism... the obscenity is not so much the subject as the voyeuristic apparatus that forces us to look at it, frontally...

In the face of the miserabilism of cretinous niches with their hypocritical formulas, we have to reevaluate what we used to call "Design" as a process of synesthesia, of knowledge... crossing the multiple conflicts and embarrassing wasteland of ideology, criminal positivism, voluntary ignorance, performative cynicism... To secrete, from its ambiguity, ambivalence... even nonsense... absurdity...

I have a vague recollection of the bad blood that was said to exist between Victor Hugo and Baudelaire. To sum it up, Hugo was accused of using the hardships of the people as a stage for his own act, and that's what's happening right now! Prime time TV news is a corral full of snippets rounded up by cynical and clever little Hugoites! Baudelaire, on the other hand, was a pre-Parnassian poet nursing his own downfall, the ultimate commitment, a pathological antidote to idiocy. There's something obscene about it, obscenity as the antivenin to idealism... Something... and pornographic, too...

**s/he also says if we can include somewhere their event in May at e-flux:**

12:53 ✓✓

May 26 2017 7pm  
**"#postdigitalBetrayALL"**  
e-flux  
311 E Broadway  
New York, NY 10002  
and live : [ustream.tv/channel/e-flux](http://ustream.tv/channel/e-flux)  
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Where some words are definitely suspect when applied to daily routines / Expertise, Accuracy, Performance, Optimization, Communication, Futuristic, Future, Innovation, Speculation, Improvement, Absolute, Truth, Parametric, Post-Human, Positivism... as the Holy Grail of masturbation, and, conversely, other words are vehicles for some kind of legitimacy... innocently injected into the daily routine / dirty, filthy, X-rated, explicit, lewd, rude, vulgar, coarse, crude, offensive, immoral, improper, impure, off-color, degenerate, depraved, debauched, lubricious, indecent, smutty, salacious, carnal, lascivious, licentious, bawdy, and Nostalgia, Melancholia, Metaphor, but also scatological, profane, porn, skin, vile, foul, atrocious, outrageous, heinous, odious, abhorrent, abominable, disgusting, hideous, offensive, objectionable, repulsive, revolting, repellent, loathsome, nauseating, sickening, awful, dreadful, terrible, frightful and repugnant...

Getting down into the dirt with Ruskin and the aura of Walter

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**DUE**

Benjamin, using the same tools designed to eliminate their traces. Getting a rush, technological, computational spleen.

Could we take the risk to talk about what we should not be, as a Parrhesia, and let ourselves be in the crack, in the negative territory: ...being not so digital-romantic, not so computation addict, not so eco-masturbator, not socio-moralist, but just architects, snaking in the rift of abuse, idolatry, idiocracy, propaganda, self-complaisance, bio-hoax, social network lure... Could we find a zone between techno-fetishism (post-Palo Alto symptom of childish parametric post-capitalism for libertarian-neo-liberalism propaganda and tooling-idiocracy-mysticism), and at the opposite, the semiological-propaganda as the Social Kreisel toy for noisy moralism, visible as a parade, a disgusting spectacle of the "common ground" hoax... to mask with a politically correct flag the hypocrisies of the discourses and facts (from consciousness' alibi to neo-colonialism). It's so comfortable to choose one of these chapels... many benefices to falsify the apparatuses of knowledge. But both sides are just the two faces of the same coin ... a Janus-like reciprocity of personal interest...!

**AFC: You have often spoken about the PoMo Beaux-Arts syndrome. Could you expand on that?**

FR: Beaux art is the organization of a knowledge validated on the condition of its self-replication. This is what we have been battling in France... it is part of the DNA of B-Arts that intellectual debates or disputes are a diversion to validate COPism, plagiarism, Homage, Name-Dropping... We defined a line of escape through what we called scenarios, procedures, processes... but the digital age has entered an extremely regressive period... a manifestation of our times... facing the fear of the "future anterior"... ideologically determined by notions of Expertise, Accuracy, Performance...

As we witness electoral mutinies (Brexit and the election of Trump) against progressivist, individualist neoliberalism, which links ambiguous social movements (queers, feminism, antiracism) to the cutting edge economy... where the individualist/liberal idea of progress has replaced emancipatory ideals... As Pankaj Mishra suggested, we can no long deny the "age of Anger"... which, for him, connects Brexit to ISIS as the same rage for revenge... against this neo-liberal caterpillar... where design, overdesign,

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IMG: New-Territories / FR / Dysphoria

is used as propaganda for “Living better means being better,” the dubious “ideology of happiness.”

Architects are consubstantially the vector of this world economy, in the middle of the global village, swimming in the globalization masquerade.... How can we deny that we are, actually, deeply associated with a top-down commitment to the political regime or the situation we deliberately ignore... in “Design as a Crime,” or, more, design as the jiggering mask of the crime... a diversion.

All this time, we architects are comfortably sitting in our gold bubble ghetto... walking cheerfully and untroubled from “fuck the context” to ¥€\$... carrying in our luggage the universalist propaganda of individualist merchandising and emancipation-through-consumerism, applicable anywhere, vehicling ideas of innovation as progress, of eco-deco-propaganda, of saving willy, instrumentalizing the label of post-humanism... for the exclusive use of the few who capitalize and concentrate wealth and power, like, for example, the CCTV tower in China, the LACMA in Los Angeles, the Serpentine Pavilion in London, or Grima’ Biennial of Chicago... In a strategy... as Bourdieu said, of exclusion by “taste and social class” of those definitively located in the “age of Anger”....

Architecture exclusively focused on design expertise, with no critical tools and intentions... done mainly by wealthy post-students, mainly because bank loans have become unavailable for the middle class... is architecture betrayed. Asian cash (as much as 90% of some master classes in the U.S. are drawn from this profile) deeply modified the mode of access and the academic content and agenda... producing a mute, deaf and blind education... in the service of the market economy. At the last lottery I took part in at Columbia, GSAPP, I wore a monkey mask as a protest against the current idiotocracy running planning and preservation at this U.S. university... the visible part of the plutocracy iceberg... and I quit. Sure you could find a picture on the Net....

Computational, robotic technologies are not inoffensive, not innocent... they are vectors of this system’s profits, using design to create a diversion, like the 3D print “has-been” exhibition at the Pompidou Center, similar to the Non-Standard and Le Corbusier events in the same building, obsessively seeking to de-politicize architecture, to eviscerate the field of any intention of

social and politic transformation... ashamed.

The wake-up is violent... Brexit in the UK, and in France 30% of people voting for Le Pen (and perhaps more), the current occupant of the Oval Office in the U.S.... Does architecture bear some responsibility?... Of course not... will claim Migayrou and the main architecture school deans... Who benefits from crime by ignoring voluntary the situation (*see Wozniak, Hawking and others sounding the alert about the increasing disjunct between cutting edge technology and politics*)?

**AFC: I read in an interview that when you finished your studies in Paris, you got in touch with Claude Parent and Yona Friedman. However, in the U.S. there was another architect of that generation whose ideas on self-organization, micromation, chemical and hydronic architecture lead me, somehow, to you. Was there ever a dialogue between you and William Katavolos? One of the things that strikes me is that while he promotes security as the next aesthetic in architecture, on the contrary many of your projects epitomize the aesthetics of danger.**

FR: It was the same as the period of today... as a cycle... semiological postmodernism burned and buried the 1970s and more... I was interested, after my diploma, in interviewing the grandfathers, the incestuous bad boys of the sixties... so I could feel the reasons for their excommunication....

As for the second part.... Paranoia, Nostalgia and Escape are the daily routine and agenda of the New-Territories studio... the identity of “S/he” rubbed off on us, triggering simultaneously a desire for technologies and their antidotes, for schizoid scenarios.

**AFC: When I first stumbled across your work I remember trying to draw a weird parallel between you and Genghis Khan as eco-warriors. But neither you nor Genghis are really green. Today the green attitude has become a trend, a moralistic alibi, a demagogic strategy. Instead, a lot of your projects seem to give rise to post-genocide scenarios where nature shows its resistance to domestication and takes over violently and without notice. Your architectures are machines produced by a permanent tension between antagonistic forces, ecological devices capable of recycling waste and environmental diseases, turning negative information into positive. Could you tell me about your interest in pathologies and toxicity?**

I want to make visible the antagonistic forces, the contradiction within the notion of ecosophy... never minimizing the risk and the temptation of cross-escaping from... again... to use Fiction... “knot and unknot” to bring architecture back into the debate... conflict, controversy, not the latest corporate production by ..., and ... and mainly ... (to be filled by readers).

Today’s the main architects are Assange and Snowden... (not the LVMH head quarter designer in Shanghai!!). Computer activists, hackers, are making the situation visible, directly from and within the architecture of our environment, creating access, corridor in the labyrinth of the princes’ castle, leaking the world system of survey, of hypocrisies of Post\_financial capitalism, developing leaking and barricades on the main avenues to stop the progression of the “Versaillais” (la Commune de Paris)...One is still in London...you should interview him instead of me... ♥