Affect and E- Motion

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Affect
Motion
Atmosphere
Mood
Hyper-Indexical

Abstract

As technology plays an ever-increasing role in creating new physical and virtual atmospheres in film, architecture, and music, the human observer is increasingly aware to the work's affect upon them. The new modes of production used to create these various works has allowed for a greater assault on the senses. A more human form of expression then comes into being; even as the means of production are moved farther away from the analogue devices. It is through provocation that allows for these new spaces to appear.   We are then moving away from a representational form that operates through signs and symbols seeped within the cultural codes of our society, to a form expressed through creative provocation set within a new radical surface.

We find ourselves at the end of indexical architecture and its formal premises, from Le Corbusier's five points in the earlier 20th century all the way to Colin Rowe's reinterpretation of the modern diagram in the 1960's, which has dominated the last 50 years of architectural discourse. At the beginning of our digital millennium the pursuits began to change in search of something new based in the potential of new representation, new construction methods, fabrication and consequently the desire for a new aesthetic. What digital technology has allowed is the ability of exacerbating the architectural indexes in the production of a new hyper-indexicality that has resulted in the possibility for a new era.

These new surfaces began with the search not only of a performative component like geometry, materiality, conductivity etc. but for an emotional encounter called AFFECT and therefore the production of atmospheres and moods; as a result we can talk about   a new aesthetic movement. The use of softwares like Rhino, and Maya allowed to look into complex geometries and their control as well as the rediscovery of "old" architectural effects like" Motion".

Motion was first discussed as part of the Baroque and later at the turn of the 20th century by movements like Art Nouveau. But when did motion abandoned architecture? One speculation is, that as the introduction of cinema developed, it satisfied this desire, and architecture became incredibly narcissistic, involved with the development of its own indexes. It wasn't until the 60's that groups like Archigram began to discuss the idea of mechanical motion once again. Within the increasing use of digital sofwares and our societies infatuation with movies, we have recapture the idea of motion as a condition to develop, motion in terms of generative geometry, effects, and robotics to mention a few.

This motion needs to be imparted through an emotional theatricality of the radical surface and has ruptured the connection between what is traditionally beautiful, to that which produces affect. This affect in culture needs to offer an argument of sensibility that implies a much more careful

understanding of mood and atmosphere. Then is it so radical to propose a new form of expression that is emotive, repetitive but different and produces the sensation of motion?

1. Affect as a "Passion"

Some would assert that affect does not involve anxiety or excitement: that it is comparatively inert and compatible with the entire absence of the sensuous element, that it is generally and usefully distinguished from passion. In order to create real change within the realm of expression, the producers of this new form must challenge the notion that affect is separated from the sensual or the erotic. "Affect" has been misunderstood to its true implications regarding an expressive form and is often hard to measure within scientific terms. The aim of this new form would be to restore a proper balance between emotion and cognition in the design of technologies for addressing human needs. The question then posed by the proponents of this new form is "how can we incorporate the sensual element into the work?"

The word "Affect" (latin *affectus*) is a concept used in philosophy by Baruch Spinoza and Gilles Deleuze. "Affects", according to Deleuze, are not simple affections, as they are independent from their subject. According to Spinoza's *Ethics III*, 3, Definition 3, an "Affect" is an empowerment, and not a simple change or modification. (1) According to Deleuze; artists create a compound of affects and percepts, "blocks of space-time", whereas science works with functions, and philosophy creates concepts. "Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of the state of who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them." (2) From Deleuze's argument we can derive that Affect as such; is an a priori condition that exist even in absence of the one that experiences it, therefore it becomes a necessary a state of discovery in order to distinguish it, to me this where "seduction" and "passion" start. The varying connotations given to the word affect can be traced to the definition of passion and desire as they were "used synonymously in various translations from Greek and Latin up until the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, when "passion" became reserved for sex and "desire" was separated from affect."(3)

Since affect is a relation to the viewer of the creator's passion, than Deleuze's assertion on the subject of passion can be applied to this new form in an effort to better understand the viewer's involvement, both consciously and unconsciously (as the senses impact). He writes, "...it is up to the imagination to reflect passion, to make it resonate and go beyond the limits of its natural partiality and presentness." (4) The passions of an individual are only "real" in relation to the immediate sensation or registering of the affection of the work on themselves. It is then up to the imagination, the faculty that "(gives) a meaning, a direction, an irreversability and exclusivity" (5) In reference to these numerous associations of ideas caused by the affect of a certain work; it suggests a type of "post critical presence" as a condition to be involved in a seductive moment of affect. So then the imaginative faculties of the peripatetic observer will be stimulated by the experience of the atmosphere and in doing so will create a new affect within them.

The power of the imagination as a necessary function for conscious associations is asserted by Teresa Brennan who quotes Montaigne's writing, "'everyone feels its impact...The imagination is clearly linked to images, and it is equally clearly a physical force.'" (6) This new work is literally the passionate creation of the designer, who emotes and achieves an affect through the provocation of the work, subsequently unleashing this "physical force" upon the viewer.

However, there is problem inherent with the "passions" is that the individuals validation of the emotions solely on their appearance leads to failed judgments and a limited scope of ideas. This problem is confirmed by Deleuze who writes: the passions have the effect of restricting the range of the mind, fixating it on the privileged ideas and object, for the basis of passion is not egotism but partiality..." (7) The separation of passion from the negation for the possibility of clarity and change is what perfectly describes our contemporary discourse.

Deleuze's argument in *Pure Immanence* relates philosopher David Hume's understanding of the

passions and their impact on the institutions and systems of rule that govern our societies. These same problems are faced by those who produce artistic works within this new mode, as he writes "the problem...is how to stretch passions and give them an extension they don't have on their own." The question he poses is "how can we create institutions (works of art, new spaces etc.) that force passions to go beyond their partialities...?"(8). Affective environments relied additionally on the ideas of the unconscious and on the notion that design effects could induce subliminal moods precisely because of the operations of the unconscious. The quest for me is to reincorporate the production of affect/passion through the use of a series of specific design tecniques that will have a significant impact on a particular project.

2. Motion

The term motion has been used in different contexts but it is important to analyze its connection to *Conatus*, (Latin: an exertion, effort; an impulse, inclination; an undertaking), is a term used in philosophy to refer to a few different theories on psychology and metaphysics. Over time, the meaning and use of the term *conatus* has evolved, having been defined by Cicero, René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza. (9) This concept has been used to describe the tendency of objects to move, and was associated with God by Descartes, then the motion of other bodies by Hobbes. Spinoza took the term to explain the motion of humans and living beings and their will to live. In all of these interpretations, *conatus* is associated with nature, and a body's inclination to follow what is natural or God's will.

Conatus is a term used in early physics describing the property of inertia which was described in Isaac Newton's "Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica" of 1687. In 1677, with the publication of his *Ethics*, Spinoza almost predicts this theory: "By striving for motion we do not understand any thought, but only that a part of matter is so placed and stirred to motion, that it really would go somewhere if it were not prevented by any cause." Motion is then essentially a violent act, as the reactive is a violent opposition to the active. Furthermore, Hobbes describes emotion as the beginning of motion and the will as the sum of all emotions. This "will" forms the *conatus* of a body and its physical manifestation is the perceived "will to survive". (10)

Baroque and Motion

The practice of bending forms was only very discretely used during the first baroque period in wall surfaces, the idea was to produce an effect, this direction changed during Maderna's time. It was then too, that all tectonic structural elements fell victims to a wild desire for movement so that for example pediments piled up and were thrust outwards." What mattered were not the individual products of an age but the fundamental temper which produce them. This in turn, cannot be contained in a particular idea or system, if it were it would not be what it is a temper or a mood. Ideas can only be explicitly stated, but moods can also be conveyed with architectural forms at any rate, every style imparts a more or less definite mood. We must only determined what kind of expressive means a style commands". (Wolflinn11)

It is no accident that the prime example of an art that is purported to move the spirit, it is also an art which seems to possess motion. In his seminal study Renaissance and Baroque Heinrich Wölfflin proposed "movement" as the principal characteristic of the Baroque architectural style. The time and motion of the person observing the building, one imagines the columns moving forward and back, the walls thrusting outward. Thus the motion lent to the building by the peripatetic observer is more than a simple psychological identification.(12) Another aspect of the Baroque described by Wölfflin was the importance of the sense of "weightlessness" that in spite of its tectonics and   materiality, architecture could produce the effect of elements levitating; defying gravity. The transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque via Mannerism produces a kind of liberation from the former architectural indexes, when Michelangelo integrates figuration into the steps of the Laurentian Library becomes a crucial moment according to Wölfflin. I would venture to say that we are in a similar moment; the transition between indexical architecture to a new condition by the exacerbation of the surface conditions to produce new

effects; something called hyper-indexical.

This moment of transformation that we found ourselves is exactly the crucial part of this investigation; to understand the conditions under which architecture changes its formal conditions and becomes a new structural entity expressed digitally and technologically from the rendered animation to construction and fabrication.

Art Nouveau and Motion
It is a phenomenon of self-consciously radical, somewhat mannered reformist chic that formed a prelude to 20th-century modernism. Once again it presents similarities that I am interested in exploring; its condition as a transitional movement predecessor to Modernism. It eschewed the eclectic revival styles of the Victorian era.

Though Art Nouveau designers selected and 'modernized' some of the more abstract elements of Rococo style, such as flame and shell textures, they also advocated the use of highly stylized organic forms as a source of inspiration, expanding the 'natural' repertoire to embrace other figurations. Its characteristics are dynamic, undulating, and flowing and the use of specific geometry like of hyperbolas and parabolas. Conventional ornament seems to spring to life and "grow" into other forms. Art Nouveau artists quickly used new materials, machined surfaces, and abstraction in the service of pure design. Art Nouveau was in many ways a response to the Industrial Revolution some artists welcomed technological progress, new lifestyles and embraced the aesthetic possibilities of new materials, welcoming the spirit world, fantasy, and myth.

The condition of motion is explored in many architects of the time, the interaction of two dimensional patterns with three dimensional ornamentation and objects like in the Tassel Hotel by Victor Horta, the undulating interiors by Henry Van de Velde, the potential of the use of new materiality like the Metro Stations by Hector Guimard. These projects all amount to those conditions of how form, pattern and ornament produce the sensation of motion.

An extremely important figure of this period is the architect, Antonio Gaudi, he is the one who developed a sensuous, figural, almost surreal sensibility which established him as the innovative leader of the Spanish Art Nouveau movement. With little regard for formal order, he juxtaposed unrelated systems and altered established visual order, a predecessor to the hyper-indexical movement, Gaudi's characteristically warped form of Gothic architecture produced not only a new surface condition but new atmospheres and moods. The undulating rhythms and the figural imagery of these interiors create the feeling that the house lives and breathes. Gaudi becomes one of the critical architects that developed the idea of a surreal architecture, and that perhaps is a perfect link to cinema.

Our Present Condition
The motion that could be imparted through the "theatricality" of the radical surface, has ruptured the connection between what is aesthetically pleasing, to that which produces affect. This affect in culture needs to offer an argument of sensibility that implies a much more careful understanding of the rejection of mood and atmosphere, as these forms could be misunderstood as representational expressions rather than emotive. Repetition affects motion, and motion then is the catalyst of progress and the building blocks of history. Gilles Deleuze pronounced repetition as being "the thought of the future" (13). Is it then so radical to propose a new form of expression that is repetitive, as it is the most necessary component of modernity?

Deleuze writes of a new theatre, one that is different from the ones put forth by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, in that, "...it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation... of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotation, whirlings, gravitation, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind." (13) This is the claim for a new operative emotion, as the theatre of repetition is the production of active and reactive in the pursuit of affect, or the *conatus.* This new condition we will refer to it as

theatricality or others call it dramaturgy, it links you directly to nature and a history with a language that speaks before words; where new relations and metaphors are possible. This is a theatre of movement, not of representation. It is then this theatricality or dramaturgy that achieves an affect within the spectator.   The role of the peripatetic spectator is now paramount in quantifying the experience of a work, as it through the sensations achieved within that promote the work's producer.

This theatricality of movement is an articulation of the figural. Deleuze sees the figural as the register of forces: the figure is distorted by psychological pressures while the paint of the canvas—scrubbed, smeared—addresses these forces in the very materiality of the painting. The figural is not expressive, nor iconic, but rather engages a logic of sensation. (14) In this sense, Deleuze proposes that the figural represents a new idea of what I would call an e-motional diagram.

In his discussion of Nietzsche's evaluation of the Wagnerian opera, Deleuze writes that, "In the theatre of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link directly with nature and history... with masks before face, with spectres and phantoms before characters – the whole apparatus of repetition as a 'terrible power.' " (15) These types of theatrical effects could be achieved by the introduction of animation digital techniques. Theatricality then is this 'terrible power' hypothesized by Deleuze, it creates a new effect which directly affects the viewer in a way never before realized. The only possibility of architecture to produce innovation and difference is to embrace itself in the production of emotional atmospheres.

When Hegel realized the progression of man through history, he remarked that this was only possible through our faculties of reason. The subject/object distinction though is held paramount to discern real progress within the realm of reason. Deleuze refuses to allow this notion prominence as he writes, "the form of repetition in the eternal return is the brutal form of the immediate, that of the universal and singular reunited, which dethrones every general law, dissolves the mediations and annihilates the particulars subjected to the law."(16)

Affect cannot be defined within the subject/object distinction, because it is theatricality as repetitiveness of motion which imbues the theatricality of a space upon the viewer, thus removing them from an awareness that gives conscious thought (which realizes time) superiority over the senses.

Cinema
It has been said that all cinema is a special effect. In this particular examination of motion in film, I attempted to analyze the effect produced by images that don't quite align with reality. What is it that cinema does? It is important to examine the history of images in motion from a digital perspective, for a digital design audience. From the viewpoint of art history, an image is discrete and still. One of the concerns of this new form would be to imbue the motion inherent within the film scene to affect the viewer in a space never before realized; this is where the possibility of affect exists. Like the repetition of the frames playing in the projector light, so must this new form seek to capitalize on the radical surface it employs to rely on these new sensations upon the viewer?

We can start by taking a look at "early cinema" focusing on the contributions cinematic pioneers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries examining film effects in works by Eisenstein for example. He attempted to edit the film "Battleship Potemkin" in such a way as to produce the greatest emotional response, so that the viewer would feel sympathy for the rebellious sailors of the Battleship Potemkin and hatred for their cruel overlords, by looking at the famous stair scene for example, we can scrutinize on how motion and technique can combine to produce affect. I also examined the sound cinema of the 1930s, Jean Renoir, and Hollywood's RKO studio, all the way to Orson Wells. Finally take a look at "post cinema," examining the postwar development of the "spatialization" of time through slow motion, freeze-frame, and steadi-cam techniques. This gave me an idea of how specific cinematic techniques could be translated into techniques for the production of architecture.

Because my interest in the emotional and the surreal, the film I looked into was Luis Buñuel's "Un Chien Andalou", filmed in1929. A surreal, violently disjunctive story of desire, gender confusion and the unconscious, it still retains its power to shock. Dalí and Buñuel wrote the film together, based on their dreams, in what Buñuel describes as perfect symbiosis. This film questions traditional formal logic and produces a new aesthetic direction. How can you find other forms of production that deviate from established analytical processes? This is where the alternative of using techniques that explored the subconscious begins.

In the period immediately following World War I, movies were a popular escape into fantasy for many people, and the film industry boomed. The rise of German Expressionism was the desire to move forward and embrace the future that swept most of Europe at the time. Expressionist movies relied heavily on symbolism and artistic imagery rather than stark realism to tell their stories. The film usually credited with sparking the popularity of expressionism is Robert Wiene's "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1920). It painted a picture on the cinema screen with wild, surreal sets built with complex geometry, images painted on the floors and walls to represent objects (and often light and shadow), and a story involving the dark hallucinations of an insane man, the film maker's ability to loose normative narrative; embracing a psychological journey. This film is particularly interesting because its connection to architecture, with a strong modern geometric sensibility, it proposes an alternative. In this movie the use cinematic techniques like motion-repetition and editing, the spectator finds himself or herself in a series of emotional atmospheric moments, becoming peripatetic as opposed to static.

Another movie I looked at was "Zerkalo" by Andrei Tarkovsky , here, we are looking at the organization of visual poetry. Normative criticism doesn't apply; there is no comparison between this and any other film. So many scenes have you holding your breath in awe; true affect. The softest movement of light is choreographed precisely. I was fascinated with the idea of   slow motion, bodies defy gravity and levitate, surfaces become objects and peel off from the atmospheres, the superposition of two dimensional and three dimensional images like a shadow across someone's face, the articulation of subject and object, produce all kind of atmospheric psychological moments. This movie operates in a surreal logic; it produces discontinuities of the narrative. At the same time it opens an architectural door to the *conatus,* theatricality of subtle motion; this type of sensibility could be applied to a project; it could become an architectural diagram so to speak.

My argument for the research is that at the turn of the 20th century architecture took a different direction; departing from the Arts and Crafts movement, abandoning the idea of ornament, complex geometry and the production of atmospheres and emotions. Architecture concentrated on the concept a machinic aesthetic and the repression of its own desires for a pursuit of the dissemination of a universal rhetoric in the hands of heroic architects with deep emotional issues. Architecture developed its own narcissism and consequently developed its formal indexes. It was at this moment that the role of cinema had to pick up where architecture had left and became an emotional vessel where; desire, passion and emotion where able to satisfy its audience, something that architecture was not interested in doing. In other words architecture and cinema had the same roots but they looked into the future searching for different satisfactions, indeed. Today in the digital world is where cinema and architecture are finally reuniting, perhaps in order to do that architecture had to be psychoanalyzed in a different light to remove those repressions of affect. This condition suggests the need for a departure from traditional formal analysis. We can say that motion as an architectural effect was first discussed as part of the Baroque and later by movements like Art Nouveau as we have already indicated. However, it wasn't until the 60's that groups like architecture groups like Archigram and others began to discuss the idea of motion once again.

New Sensibility
In the last two decades, entertainment media has undergone dramatic transformations. These changes are concerned with the blurring of boundaries, incorporating film styles, genres, and actors into their digital spaces like Guillermo Del Toro's "Pan's Labyrinth". Genres unite to produce new

hybrid forms, narratives open up and extend into new spatial and serial configurations, and special effects construct illusions that seek to collapse the frame that separates spectator from spectacle. Entertainment forms have increasingly displayed a concern for engulfing and engaging the spectator affectively.

This issue of affect can reach a point at which it begins to transform into a new ontological construct. In the instance of the contemporary entertainment industry, this "new ontology" has embraced classical narrative and placed it within new contexts, contexts that incorporate a further economization of the narrative: like digital technology, cross-media interactions, serial forms, and alternate modes of spectatorship and affect. This new order challenges our preconceptions of aesthetics with this order that can be called something like "neo-baroque".

In the book "Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment", Angela Ndalianis argues that mainstream cinema and other entertainment media are imbued with a neo-baroque techniques and aesthetics, thus my different interests in the Baroque. Points of comparison are identified between seventeenth-century baroque art and entertainment forms of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to establish continuous and contiguous links between the two eras, suggesting parallels between the two periods. (18)

Our present situation shares a baroque delight in spectacle and sensory experiences; perhaps this is the reason for the appearance of new baroque sensibilities like Sofia Coppola's film "Marie-Antoinette". These new forms of entertainments, however—which are the product of conglomerate entertainment industries, multimedia interests, and spectacle that is often reliant upon computer technology—present contemporary audiences with new "baroque" forms of expression that are aligned with late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century concerns. It combines the visual, the auditory, and affect in ways that parallel the dynamism of seventeenth-century baroque form, but that dynamism is expressed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in technologically and culturally different ways.

3. Provocation

In our pursuit to better understand the relationship between affect and the modes of creative production they impact, we will discuss the transmission of affect with regards to its meta-psychological aspects; how to make it contagious.

"Contagion is a form of simple affective transfer… that can be discerned in crowds as well as in that most mimetic state of identification in which one begins to act like the other, to do as they do…"(19) Contagion, as provocation to affective transfer, is then subjected as a negative force that clouds the mind and returns a person to a primal state where society breaks down upon the absence of its described dominating ideal: reason. The question is then asked, 'How can the mechanisms of a truly primal experience as affective transfer be utilized in the arts as an expression of a new emotion.' (20) By creating an art form and a set of techniques based on the provocation of a radical surface that is concerned with the transferal of affect, thus we are creating new set of aesthetic considerations.

Through the relating of provocation upon the viewer, we are achieving a relationship that goes beyond mere appreciation or reaction of the mind but to that of the self. In working upon the passions of the viewer through the radical surface, this form is working against the notion that "passifying passions work against the soul or form they affect is also a statement that the essence of the self is something other, something distinct from the passions."(21) Passions are reconnected, in this form, to the affect achieved. The viewer is allowed to feel outside of the constructs of our society, in a space where the real is as malleable as the digital world that could be used to create or reinforce it.

By placing the affect of design production as a necessary aspect of it, we are allowing the viewer to truly feel, through the sensations acted upon it. The viewer is then removed from history, from the progress of humanity and allowed to experience the work within their' own time. The possibility of

creating a new history within a single piece of art should be accomplished, if by chance or by the genius of the designer, but could not be set within the parameters of a technique or given the ample space to explore within until the advent of the digital age. It should be the goal of design to affect within the viewer Aristotle's treatise on emotion; an affectation effected within the viewer who "...by undergoing change...come to differ in their judgments and which are accompanied by pain and pleasure."(22)

As designers we have to analyze a series of conditions. What it seems more important is the need for explorations of new techniques about design. These techniques could replace the overly abused formal processes, which have dominated the architectural production for the last 50 years. These indexical processes permeate a kind of creative repression.

4. Repression

Repression works within a system of cultural codes, as decreasing the transmission of affect from a work of art to the viewer, since the reaction to the work is already stipulated within predetermine codes. To affirm this point, Brennan writes, "Repression, after all, is the energetic repudiation of an idea" (23). Our society at large then responds in Pre- Nietzschian terms to the transmission of affect, as it denotes the sensations of the theatricality of an atmosphere as the objects that need to be interpreted by the subject (viewer). This subject/object distinction makes it nearly impossible for the affect to truly be felt. Brennan observes that, "this thinking... is based on the notion that the objective is in some way free of affect."(24) The repression of affect is then due to the representational aspect of the mass media, in that a person is not important for whom they are, but for what they represent (in being objects that promote an ideal to be praised or damned by all). In returning to the notion of a mass affect, we are in fact validating those individuals who negate and ignore individual emotional responses.

 "The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century design in France on the "group mind" (*âme collective*) takes the transmission of affect for granted although it does not specify its mechanisms."(25) By defining what the mechanisms of an art form motivated by the effort to transmit affect, we can dispel the false notion that negates the provocative that affects the viewer. It is a paradoxical situation then, that the effort to transmit an affect is used so prominently in our everyday lives. From advertisements and ads that wish to entice us to submit to a mode of mass consumerism, to those of the high and sometimes low design that expand our knowledge and allow for new emotions to be felt.

Brennan makes an interesting point; "The challenge, in the end, will be bringing sensation together with reason in the understanding of transmission, extending consciousness into what is now unconscious. In a sense Michel Foucault was right to claim that the repressed unconscious had been invented, but the effects of repression are real." (26)

5. Hyper-Indexical

In figuring out the problem of the index, let's take a look at Colin Rowe, in his essay "Mathematics of the ideal Villa" discusses the comparison of the Palladian and the Corbusian villas. Rather than searching for historical continuity or as the genesis of a contemporary architectural logic, we can look in two specific ways based on Rowe's discussion on the argument about the geometric and mathematical preoccupations. For Palladio is the plan that exhibits mathematical excellence and beauty as opposed to Le Corbusier that argues in favor of the façade. This separation is further articulated by the conflict of the "natural relationships and the "customary demands", this disruption between what is inherent to geometric rules and what seems responsive to the unconscious claims of the beautiful could be understood as the denial of the emotional. This opposition of critical surfaces of architecture created a school that was based more in the emphasis of reading exercises, process rather that the provocation of the image. This condition now called indexicality brought a serious separation between object and subject in architecture, therefore the need for the reconstitution of the

critical surface of architecture.

As we mentioned before; this subject/object distinction makes it nearly impossible for the affect to truly be felt. When the architecture is constructed in such a way that its combined elements are easily indexed, the affect is immediately lost as the viewer is negated the sensation of the subject in favor of the search for a recognizable order.

Peter Eisenman suggests that today the subject of architecture is a subject of information and images, a subject of the spectacle, and a subject that architects seem not yet to fully understand. The object of architecture is today indisputably iconic and disseminated to the public as visual spectacle. (27) Eisenman argues that; "the process, which included the trace, codes, and other reading strategies, could be understood as part of the affective experience of the architecture. However, the mediated context that is now so totalizing of experience makes it necessary to rethink these ideas of close reading and writing". (28). Eisenman reframes himself within this new context by saying that affect even in the most critically formal architecture, his own, the possibility of affective process still exists, and architectural redemption indeed. How do we overcome this problem of index, emotion, beauty and geometry?   Mark Gage at the "Azul Rey" conference in Mexico City said that architecture today deals with the limitations of geometry overcoming mathematics and technology. (29)

This desired condition of hyper-indexicality should be concerned with a new form of analysis, using different sources, the reinvention of the diagram, an articulation of the figural, the need for motion and theatricality. A group of new architects including myself, believe that through the exploration of e-motional diagram, application of new techniques; digital and emotional, we can reactivate the index and produces an exacerbated condition of hyper indexicality with a strong possibility of connecting performative and emotional surfaces in architecture.

6. Tecniques

It is an instrumental practice; something that can be done using analog tools all the way to the use of algorithms. In this particular view technique becomes the act of execution of a project by looking at different disciplines that use procedures analog or digital, understanding those specific techniques and applying them. Under this concept I will describe the specific techniques used in some projects of my own or in studio under my criticism.

Critical Surface .

Author: Cody Davis. Critic: Gabriel Esquivel

The goal of the "critical surfaces" is to create a point of departure from "performance surfaces" to give insight into the role of digital media in architecture that goes beyond its use for presentation and to give a better understanding of the full implications that the incorporation of digital media has for architecture in the broadest sense. The purpose was to address specific ways in which experimental architects make use of digital media, what effects this has on architectural production and architectural form, and how this relates to today's rapid and complex cultural transformations, moving into the territory of the emotive.

The technique was to start with an image as a new diagram, interpret the image in different ways looking for conditions of motion, the still image selected here was the opening credits for the movie "North by Northwest by Alfred Hitchcock. After a drawing study of the image trying to interpret movement, an analog model was built in which three different material systems would interact; two hard and one soft. Through a series of photographs with different types of lighting, a series of effects were produced that were used a starting point for the production of specific affects.
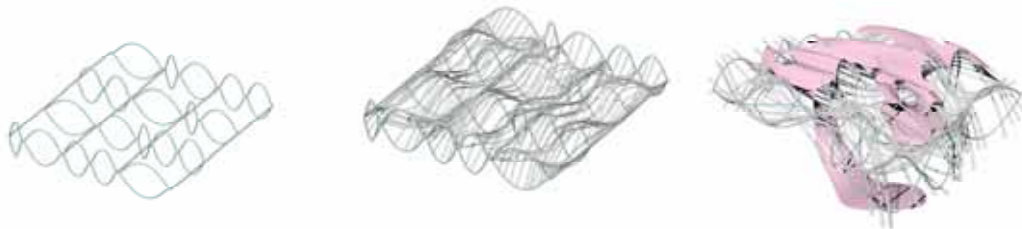
Initial image study from photo to drawing
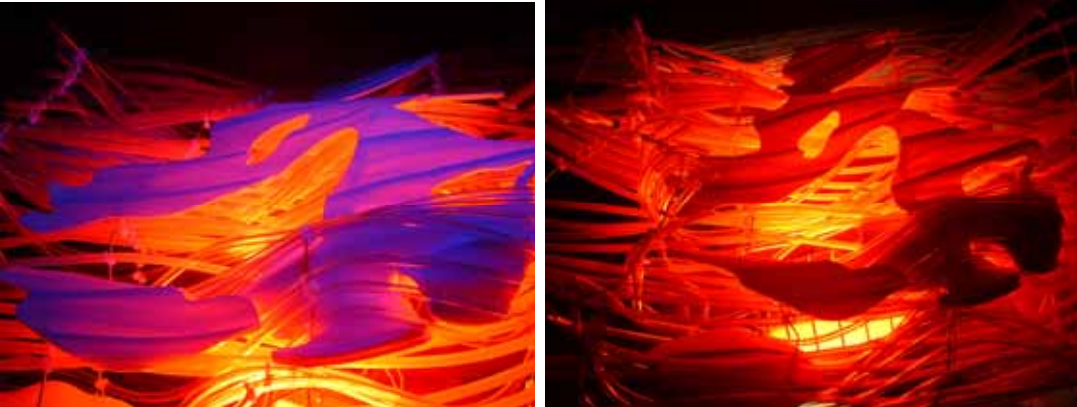
Analog Investigation of Effect and Technique
The next step was an investigation of digital techniques into an architectural precedent. Using poché as the architectural figural subject of investigation.


First Digital Technique Studies including the three systems
The decision was made to interact with an existing building, the chosen building was Hotel Crozat in the Place Vendôme in Paris, the point where the technique would be reapplied was using the poché as the irregularity or as the possibility for figuration.
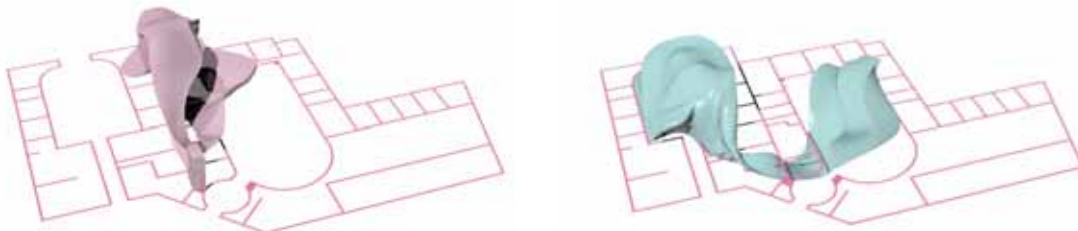
Application of Technique. The production of a series of folded surfaces from the poché was how this project was developed; a new interpretation of the hotel using a digital technique. The goal was to develop an atmosphere using the effects that were studied during the analog phase.
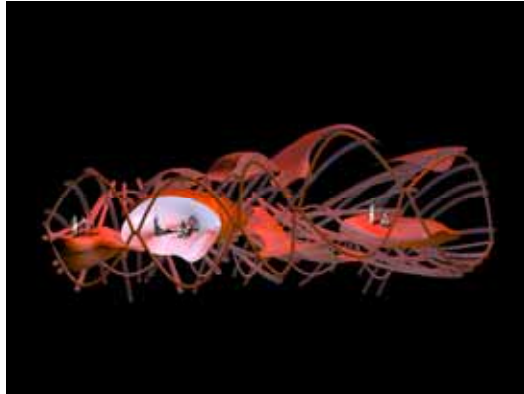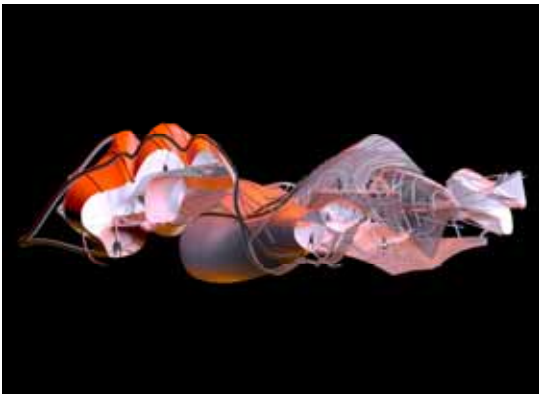
By looking at the photographic effects we began to look into an atmosphere that incorporated new possibilities for inhabitation for hotels where the surface becomes not only performative but also emotional, where the hard and soft surfaces could interact producing a specific continuity.

Apartment Tower. Polanco, Mexico City

Author: Gabriel Esquivel   Collaborator: Chiharu Sato

It is a 22 story tower located in one of the most prominent corners in Mexico City. The idea started as a study of Baroque painting and sculpture in terms of movement and effect of defying gravity. The idea was to explore form and motion as the most important focus of the project. Atmospheres were derived by looking carefully at the emotions, ornament and color within the paintings.

In the Baroque one's nature depends entirely on the forces and malleable, supple forms with which it folds, at every turn unique and unpredictable. Baroque interpretations see forms as made up of many smaller parts and being part of larger systems, always swarming as aspects rather than forms and infinitely multiple. Baroque entities exist within what Deleuze calls a pleat of matter. Leibniz emphasizes that through creating and existing within relations or pleats all form and thus all reality is purely perspectival. Neither form nor substance can be apprehended as a totality. 'Each body has its degree of firmness and fluidity; it has its fluidity or divisibility of itself, but its firmness from the motion of bodies.'(30) This means that the plagued individuals are themselves constituted differently and as their forms are more and more effected by the otherworldly forms they are further extricated from the human world. In the Baroque, transformation occurs when the affective bodies which constitute the form of the individuals are constructed through limits and firmness found in other structures – other incarnations of matter, via otherworldly versions of form and through other, non-Euclidian physics. (31)

The project provocations were these particular Ruben's paintings (Rubens the rape of the daughters of Leucippus, Elevation of the Cross). During the baroque; artists used movement of forms and figures toward the viewer, dramatic lighting effects, contrast between dark and light, ornamentation, and curved lines to express energy and strong emotions. This was the premise to understand the techniques to follow, the idea of complex surfaces with two systems interacting where one system is attached to the ground and another one seems to levitate (see Bernini sculpture).

Verita a sculpture by Bernini where two systems interact; the body and the draping fabric. Analog Technique.
Photograph by Nick Knight. The effect is achieved by blurring two systems, producing and atmospheric effect. Digital Technique.
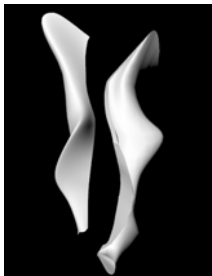

Analog modeling techniques using clay and then digitizing the forms to obtained a digital object.

The next idea was to begin to look at films and specifically look at body motion digital effects were the body contorts in unnatural ways and the clothing reaches effects of their own.

In the now classic film "The Matrix" the way Neo moves avoiding the bullets in slow motion, body looses contact with gravity and coat free flows, similar effect in "Superman Returns" where the cape slightly moves as he levitates above the earth. The conditions are similar to the provocation images of the Baroque, the condition of motion is what becomes the dictating force for the project, how do you produce the same effect in a building that stands within the city fabric.
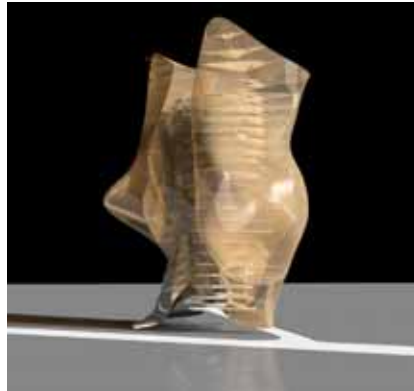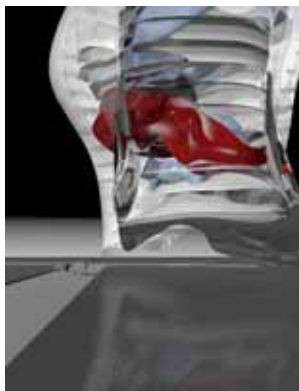
Digital images

that describe different studies in the pursuit of the motion effect.

The architecturalization process becomes the most critical moment within the process, it is when architeural materiality and tectonics began to actuliaze the diagram into a the potential of a physical reality that could be constructed. Different studies trying to produce the sensation of weightlessness, slow motion, and experimentation with color and pattern to increase the effect.

In terms of the production of affect and atmosphere I looked once again into baroque painting to determine the organizational systems that are part of the particular atmosphere of the painting.

The idea for behind looking at these paintings by Rubens was to produce an interior atmosphere where there is a sensation of motion, complex systems surface interact with each other and the dominance of affect of opulence and the dominance of the color red to obtain this particular mood. The single, immobile viewpoint of the classical spectator is transformed into a dynamic process that changes as a result of its three-dimensional capacity to actively engage the spectator in spatial terms

The architectural systems like the surface slabs begin to produce and effect of motion by thickening certain areas and the surfaces from the interior red volumes interact with the reflective surfaces from the structural curtain wall. The "red' surface develops affordances that engage other surface systems.
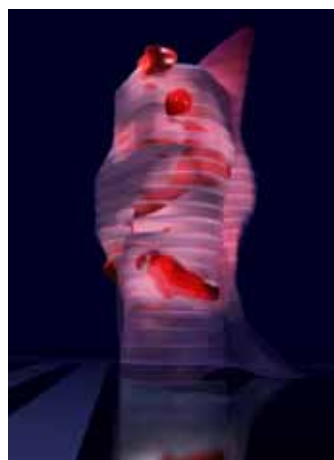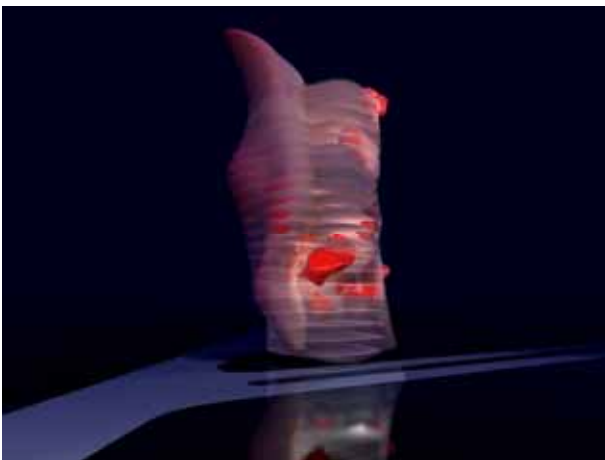
Exterior Night Views

It is important to note, that the use of current technology in the creation of this new form, is critically

bound by the fact that the interfaces used to create it are distinctly different from the previous analogue modes; in that, the representation of the human is virtual, and is produced by means that are separate from humanity. The new mode is to reconcile this factor by the introduction of affect

Footnotes:

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20. Ibid. p. 49
21. Ibid. p. 103
22. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, Book 2. p. 121
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24. Ibid. p. 19
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26. Ibid. p. 18
27. Eisenman Peter. Post Indexical Criticality. Yale School of Architecture. 2006
28. Ibid.
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