

# Symbiosis, Consumption, and Architecture

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**Abstract:** If the roads and tracks can extend indefinitely, there is no doubt that the city can expand indefinitely. If elevators can go up and down indefinitely, then the city's horizon can go up indefinitely. If the walls of museums had no imitation, exhibitions would never end. The city we live in is wrapped in endless space and moves forward in concert, and the city is replicated in every places. Now, there is still much discussion about participation in the field of urban planning and architecture, and interventions in space through public art are practiced in many cities, and although there is no academic consensus, the subject remains one that will have a significant impact on the future of human life. The article looks at individual spaces and the work and practice of artists to explore the links between cities and people. Cities should be diverse, flexible spaces with more possibilities.

**Keywords:** Warped Space; Anti-Architecture; Spiritual Ecology; Place Making

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## 1. Cities and Places

### 1.1 From the individual to the city

On February 18, 2015, instead of staying in China for the New Year, I arrived in Lyon, France, with two suitcases in my hand. At first, the city was roughly defined in my mind, and when I pronounced the name, just the flick of the tongue upward to the sound gave me a lot of images. For the first time, I felt clearly the size of 12 square meters, which is not a number that appears in a math textbook, but a ruler to measure all the furniture and everything in the house. It took six steps to walk straight from the main entrance to the window, and to walk to the two-meter kitchen, I had to walk past the clothes closet, and everything was arranged in a regular way, in an unscientific and logical way, into a 12-meter box. I needed to disrupt this order by moving the furniture in front of me; a desk, a stool, a nightstand, two bookshelves, a closet, a lamp, and a refrigerator were all I could see in front of me.

The Chinese architect Yonghe ZHANG wrote about his college mentor Rodney in his book "The text"<sup>[1]</sup>, describing how "Rodney had five pieces of furniture: a small table with peeling paint, two iron chairs for outdoor use, a single mattress, and a department store shelf that could be pushed around with clothes". How far is it from the United States to China? Why are our apartments so similar?

I moved from box to box, living in different cities, but my life never seemed to change. Gil Deleuze once had a comment about space, "these societies create vast enclosed spaces in which the individual transitions forever from one of these enclosed places, each with its own rules, to the other: first the family, then the school ("you are no longer at home"), then the barracks ("you are no longer at school"), then factory, from time to time hospital, and possibly prison, outstanding examples of closed places."<sup>[2]</sup>

Therefore I began to search between life, the city and its inhabitants, whether there exists a multi-layered, folded, pleated space? Such a space is not only embodied figuratively, it also appears in the spiritual realm of people. In the Preface of the book "Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture"<sup>[3]</sup> by the British architectural theorist and historian Anthony Vidler, it is mentioned that "the interplay between spatial thinking and psychoanalytic thought, or the combination of the nature of spatial containment and the identity of the subject has been an imperative in social and aesthetic discourse since the turn of the century; clearly, the pioneering movements of the 1920s and 1930s, such as Expressionism, explored this intertwining through their forms of reproduction; contemporary experiments and attempts retain both

concepts [of space and psychoanalysis] while distorting the traditional modernist space and questioning the equally traditional humanist illusion of the subject. The consequence, both on the theoretical and design level, is the birth of a kind of "warping". I call it warped space." In his book, he mentions two forms of "warped space", the first of which "was born in the modernist psychological culture from the late 19th century to the present day. It emphasizes the nature of space as a projection of the subject, and therefore as a precursor and reservoir of all anxieties and fears in that subject. " The second warp arises from the forced fusion among different media - film, photography, art, architecture - which breaks down the boundaries between different genres and artistic fields in response to the need to "depict space in a new and original way." I think these two forms respond to what I'm looking for, born in the modern, varied forms of urban space. The first type of space holds a projection of human behavior and psychology, and there is a relationship between the subject and the object, the space is not vacuum, but the result of the collision of the edges of various objects. The second type of space is an interwoven relationship, where a unique space is born in a field where different media overlap with each other, and an "art in between" is formed in the process of exploration by artists and architects.

The second kind of warped space can be understood by Gordon Matta-Clark<sup>[4]</sup>, who made a series of cuts in abandoned apartments in the Bronx called BronxFloors: Thresholds, a series project. Where he opened up a huge revelation in the wall of a New York pier. Is this a rebellion against modern architecture, in which a closed space is forced open and a regular place is redistributed? Is this a rebellion against modern architecture? Is this a rebellion against urban development under the domination of Corbusier's architectural ideas? Matta-Clark's most famous series of "cuts" began in 1971, when the city was undergoing a post-war "urban renewal program" and was burdened by the economic transition, with many old buildings being demolished and rebuilt, slums being razed, and many people being evicted. Many old buildings were being demolished and rebuilt, slums were being razed, ethnic minorities were being evicted, many people were facing homelessness, and the white middle class was unable to resist and had to move out of their homes. With the help of video, photography and text, a unique "middle space" is created.

In the relationship among people, buildings and the city, the presence of middle spaces has many possibilities of action. For example, as a link, as a tower bridge, as a communication, as a catalyst and so on. 1. The middle space, as a soft presence, can be a way of thinking or a part of the design process that the designer needs to consider. It is intended to be a more collaborative mechanism that accommodates all perspectives and possibilities. The urban place needs to be a space for human interaction and individual growth, and it needs to be able to respond to a variety of specific issues, such as urban regeneration, historic preservation, spatial quality, and contingency planning. Such a flexible presence leaves room for future development and makes the space more diverse and imaginative. 2. As a concrete presence, the Middle Space, in terms of place-making, is a multi-interface association from the online community to the offline, as well as a design signature for the real site, which the "union" is a top priority, expanding the senses and the amount of information. This creates a space as a real presence, containing emotional links and shared memories.

## 1.2 Folded Space

The first warped space is drawn out, symbolizing that the essence of space is the projection of the subject. If we talked about the composition of some orderly, regular boxes up to now, I would like to discuss a place that lacks rules but has a different kind of life.

In the 1990s, it was the largest slum in Asia, a tumor in the fast-growing Hong Kong, and a breeding ground for filth and chaos. It was a haven for criminals and the government could do nothing about it; it was a hotbed for the poor, a new world utopia; and it was a rare source of inspiration for artists all around the world. The prototypes of the city scenes in "Ghost in the Shell" and "Blade Runner" came from here.

There is no unified plan, no drawings, and constantly adding news spaces, making the interior of Kowloon Village forever changing, eventually reaching an unimaginable level of complexity and chaos like a multidimensional space. The routes within the city are composed by alleyways, staircases, rooftops, diving boards, windows, and openings that allow ordinary people to enter and exit. Many buildings are connected to each other, forming "high level passages" like the streets on the ground. However, most of these paths are unreliable, some on this floor, some on that, most passing through the rooms

of people's homes, some going down to the rooftop, some going down to the ground, and some inexplicably ending up in the living room, becoming a maze with no return .....

The unregulated Kowloon Village was expected to be completely out of control, but it turned out to be a surprise. When the fortress came under the control of the black gangs, it became a rule of thumb that the gangs lived in the eastern part of the city and the residents lived in the urban areas, without disturbing each other. Since rents were low and the government did not inspect them, the fortress attracted people from all walks of life to promote local enterprise. Secondly, the slum was not a group of people who were depressed by poverty, but a group of people who were trying to get out of poverty as quickly as possible.

"Slums are vibrant, dense expressions of urban life. The narrow streets of slums are lined with bustling markets, snack bars, bars, cafes, barber stores, dentistry, churches, schools, health clubs, small stores that trade in cell phones, metal stores, jewelry stores, clothing stores, electronics stores, and stores that sell pirated DVDs. In such places, where the most social capital is gathered, each person living in a slum is familiar with the others, whether they want to be or not. Slum dwellers are not careful about unemployment: everyone here has a job, even the children. "The man who said this was Steve Jobs' youthful idol, the ecologist and futurist Stewart Brand, who enthusiastically celebrated the enormous influence of cities in human development and embraced the slums of those cities.

Many studies on slums present counter-intuitive findings for people who have been pampered and have never experienced slum life firsthand. The very poor accommodations in slums were never the main concern of the residents there; the people who built houses in slums had a sense of pride of their houses, and they improve them continuously. Often the houses provided by the government and idealistic architects became the worst places in the slums instead. Robert Newitt, a physically active scholar, made this observation by learning the local language and then living directly in the slums for a month. He found slums that looked scary, and went in, asked the local people, found a place to stay, made friends. The rise of multinational capitalist plutocrats, the catastrophe of emerging technologies, the uncertainty of social morality, and the powerlessness and passive resistance of individuals to oppressive exploitation, despite the increasingly harsh environment, apartments like the Kowloon Village always conceal an essential optimism. Even if you throw a piece of quartz, it can take root and sprout here, as if everything is possible here.

In Vitruvius' "Ten books on architecture"<sup>[5]</sup>, there is a section on "décor" which states, "A refined architectural appearance consists of those elements that can stand the test of authority. By focusing on function, tradition, or nature, decency is achieved. "This is what the ancient people of Rhodesia knew about architecture 2000 years ago, but how do we think about decency in architecture today? I think of the "informe" mentioned by Georges Bataille<sup>[6]</sup>, which is understood as an indeterminate form, a process of "returning to the thing itself" by breaking away from the conventional ways of classification. In 1996, Rosalind Krauss and Beuys did an exhibition L'informe at the Centre Pompidou, in which the curators suggested that "informe" is not a specific concept, but more of a process, and if it had to be defined, it should be "a concept that gradually destroys concepts, it will gradually dissolve the boundaries between concepts." From the perspective of art criticism, the "informe" of architecture is not concerned with the dissolution of matter and form per se, but rather with the dissolution of the concept of form. The "informe" of architecture is not concerned with the dissolution of matter and form per se, but with the dissolution of the idea of form. One is more concerned with pluralism than singularity, with multi-layered spatial forms than with exclusion, as Gordon Matta-Clark wrote in his card, "A primary structure cannot systematize the whole wonderful and chaotic world."

In short, in terms of an 'ecological map' of places across urban areas, places need to be able to respond in an open and diverse way, with the aim of revitalising or reinventing the whole ecosystem. In the long term, the vitality of community zone is dependent on the linking of flexible spaces.

### **3. Conclusion**

Cities, as organic beings, may not require prescriptive of urban metrics, but require a set of random ways of thinking and design processes. A resilient, movement-based approach to the challenges of the future city, using the middle space as a framework for to link people to the city, to create more dynamic and creative places. From the individual to the city, from the

figurative space to the folded space, the process keeps the human scale and the 'connection' as the core of the discussion, thinking about the city, people and nature as a whole 'ecological place', and based on the joint action of each other, generating a more multifaceted view of place.

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