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Title:
Instability and incompleteness in architecture

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Abstract:

Architecture, digital and analogue, has dramatically transformed under the influence of technological advancements in design and construction. In particular, these developments have motivated a re-thinking and re-conceptualizing of contemporary architectural theory. This paper suggests that a conspicuous instability exists between multiple fields that are interwoven with architecture. Furthermore, it hypothesizes the existence of an unstable state of integration between complex life processes and dynamic perception, under the technological advancements of the digital age and the post-biological age. Recognition of this integration stimulates a re-questioning of the origins of form in architecture which were first probed by Eliel Saarinen [1], and a re-definition of the contemporary dynamic processes of formation and behaviour of architectural forms, a discussion initiated first by Rudolf Arnheim [2].

The general narrative of this paper is based on the interrelation between the fields of biology, perception and technology, and their influences on architecture. However, the main focus is the idea of transient temporal and spatial states which penetrates these fields, architecture in particular. Many architects, architectural philosophers and theorists, such as Catherine Ingraham [3] and Sanford Kwinter [4] have unfolded questions about life and the concept of absolute time in architecture. Additionally, architecture has been discussed cognitively as an extension of a perceptual experience by Rudolf Arnheim [2] and Christian Norberg-Schulz [5] carried this notion further when he tackled similar cognitive and perceptual experiences from a phenomenological perspective.

A cybernetic, phenomenological model is adopted, which emphasizes two main systems overlapping each other. The first system defines the territorial instability between the suggested fields, and the second system initiates dialogues between the form, its environment/context, the architect/observer/user and the "spaces in between". Three integrated stages of cognition are involved in the overlapping of the two systems. The first stage deals with the conceptualization of the

materiality/immateriality of form. The second stage embodies the interactions between the architect/observer/user and the form in a specific context. Finally, in the third stage, the architect/theorist steps outside the system to observe the form as it becomes increasingly interactive, changeable and dynamic.

The integration of the two main systems, the active instability of the fields and the collective dynamic "spaces in between", generates continuous states of transformation and furthermore, confirms architecture as part of a transient ecology that is incomplete.

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