

Fulcrum

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chemistry and urbanism.

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Pastels and collage.

Technology is the name for machines invented after you were born. It is an open question whether the saddest form of political senility is the one derived from the adolescent's obsession with media technologies just disappeared. That sadness manifests in a continual updating of the organic whole, from which our contemporary condition has lapsed, now fragmented and superficial. That reactionary pastoral once was a mill by the river, and today it is a Bolex.

An Actually Interesting Thing.

The Tesla factory employs many Kuka robots who, lined up all in a row, could, in principle, be programmed to assemble any thing, one after another: a car, and then a refrigerator, and then a bicycle, and then a firing mechanism, and then a street lamp. Are such assembly lines to hardware what Turing machines are to software? How will they define the limit of computable enumerated physical modules temporarily assembled into things?

The Impossibility of Withdrawal.

Among the portfolio of blindspots that dog Object Oriented Ontology (OOO)*, the actual physical transformation over time (history if you like) of objects is already irrelevant to the redundant incantation about "the" object's withdrawal. It is as if modern physics and chemistry never happened. We actually know things about *how* and *when* molecules (object units) are and are not discrete to themselves. Lucretius lives in supply chains.

Commodity globalisation is a massive resorting and recombination of the molecules of the earth's upper crust. Look at what you have with you right now and ponder the chemical origins of each thing.

At hand are all continents at once. It is not that there is no global; in fact there is no local that is not already

global as far as the molecules are concerned. Consider — really consider — what dust is made of. Sand, plastic, hair, motes from your physical person and specs of something pulled out of the ground in Africa a few months ago; that is the material of materialism.

Impure Set Theory.

Any architecture that is absolute is absolutised in relation to other things. It is purified. Its direct operations of scale and opacity, delivering hard governance, are not symbolic of actions taken elsewhere. But if 100 architectures are absolutised in the same way, then they are not only purified from what they are not, they are also implicated with one another as accomplices. Such are cities, which are not nearly generic enough. The monotony of their weaves — sometimes megaslum and sometimes frosted glass drum-and-bass-for-some-reason airport lounge — makes possible weird new proto-sovereignties. These work all day long but don't need to name themselves in order to function outside liberal and neoliberal logics. Another absolutisation of the city is that of The city, not This city, based on their mutual intra- and inter-replication of spatial form and temporal content. Plus: that version of the absolutised city is a layer within a larger hardware and software stack. Its layer happens to be made of cement, concrete, steel, glass, limestone, marble, aluminium, terameters of wires and antennae, and gigatons of primate biomass.

Heterotopias are Utopias in Disguise.

The archaic state was founded on the promise of regular provision of food. The world's prisons will become the capital buildings of a new pharmacological modernity, and their foundation is the promise and provision to their great outside of other narcotics. Chemistry always wins.

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*For more on OOO, please see Fulcrum's Commonplace #2 on SR.

the question of methodology.

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The concept of methodology is one of reflection: a self-distancing from the act of doing, in order to think about the very fact that it is being done. What would it mean then to consider an architectural methodology? Typically, methodological thinking asks *how*? But the question of how architecture is done is not very straightforward. Innovation has become commonplace in building-technology and image-making, but in spite of the names of places where it is produced, this new type of knowledge tends to either displace, defer or downright overlook architecture itself: it presumes a circular causality, where if a is related to b, then any change to b must also change a. In other words, *how* architecture is manifested is not architecture, but representation. Similarly, what architecture manifests is not architecture, but meaning.

The methodological question for architecture finds no response when asking *how* it does what it does, but doing so allows us to outline what it is that it does.

Architecture is neither a product nor material, but instead a tool for production.

So perhaps the cacophony we hear when asking *how* is in fact responding in its own terms, evincing architecture's tool-being as a raw instrument of potentiality.

By transforming the question of *how* into the question of *what*, this abyss of potential can be turned into a horizon. But what if we architects do not follow the methodological question? It does not mean that the question is not asked, but that we forbid ourselves from being the ones who answer what is addressed to us, that which ultimately sets the terms of subjection. Thus, when we ask what architecture produces, we render a subjective form of political agency with the subsequent potential for becoming its political agent. While still confronted with contingency that

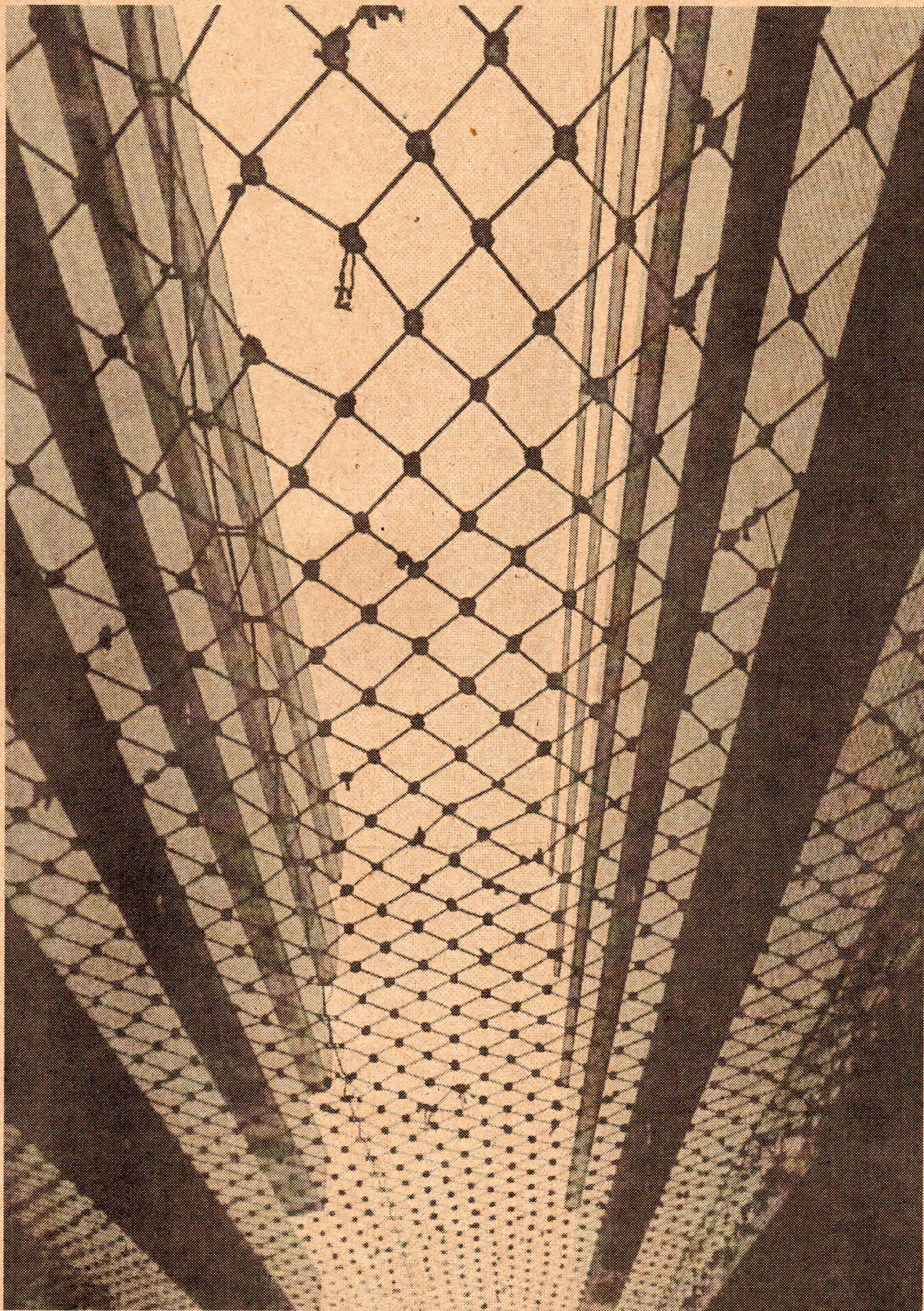
can neither be answered by asking how architecture produces political agency, nor simply what its form is, we do reveal the causal force pre-conditioning the embodiment of any political agency in the question of *why*. Any kind of production as such is contingent on the embodiment of its subjective form of political agency.

Before going any further, perhaps we should ask what is at stake when we ask the methodological question. It is an act of production in and of itself that establishes a political lens, through which our actions can be situated within a wider realm of potentiality, facilitating the reactivation and reorientation of desire.

Taken to its limit, the methodological question as *why* is purely performative; an empty gesture that in its very vacuity allows one to observe what there is on the outside as it rushes in to fill the space like a gas fills a vacuum. Similarly, seen as a tool, we find architecture to also be empty, yet its very subjection to thought reveals the speculative forces that instrumentalise it towards an end beyond its own finitude. Despite its inevitably fragmentary manifestation, the causal realm from whence architecture comes is one of a logic that speaks solely in absolute terms. We could therefore conjecture, albeit abstractly, that architecture produces a diagrammatic vision of civilization from which the city can unfold in an existential relation to society.

This positing of an end may be similarly empty in its radical contingency, but it is not without effect. The methodological question as *why* ultimately refers to the situation of a universal declaration of humanity as the basic conditions of subjectivation for the production of society and the city. Architecture is merely a representation in the present of the future as potential, yet architecture does not and cannot produce the future itself. To produce architecture is therefore not only the projection of a world but also the design of its production. How do we beget a future then? One way we can start is by rendering the subject through its terms and conditions of embodiment. We can design the contract for tomorrow.

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The suicide nets at Foxconn dormitory units.