

OF

AND

THE NECESSITY  
TO SHINE

THE

SWISS  
PREMISE

MAURRICE NIO



HEAVY, MURKY, AND OILY

I want to design on the basis of a code with an internal coherence, a coherence that is not directly visible. And that process of designing is whimsical, intuitive, impulsive, and implicit.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ANIMATION

Both animating and designing have nothing to do with the linear and academic process going from function towards form nor of the rational process from concept towards icon. You - with your soul - are solely there to initiate interlinking, to spur on the evolution of things. You, designer, you are developer of a soul stirring; and development is completely dependent on your limitations, your handicaps, your capriciousness, your deep rooted irrationality, in short your original imperfection. That is the principle of animation.

THE SUSPENSE OF ARCHITECTURE  
THE NECESSITY TO SHINE  
Maurice Nio

1001



ISBN 978-90-713465-5-2

THE SUSPENSE OF ARCHITECTURE 1001



THE NECESSITY  
TO SHINE

OF

AR  
CHI

TEC  
TURE

THE

SUS  
PENS

MAURICE NIO

SE

THE SUSPENSE OF ARCHITECTURE

*THE NECESSITY TO SHINE*

Maurice Nio

Uitgeverij Duizend & Een |

Thousand & One Publishers

1001

# CONTENTS

|     |  |     |                                |
|-----|--|-----|--------------------------------|
| 4   | THE PRINCIPLE<br>OF ANIMATION                | 236 | THE DOMAIN OF<br>METAMORPHOSIS |
| 31  | CITY FOR ANGELS                              | 247 | DEATH HOUR                     |
| 44  | THE BOILING<br>POINT OF THE<br>PUBLIC DOMAIN | 251 | VISUAL ESSAY                   |
| 73  | HEAVY, MURKY,<br>AND OILY                    | 281 | THE SUSPENSE OF<br>THEORY      |
| 94  | SOVEREIGN AND<br>SINGULAR                    | 403 | THE SUBLIME<br>LANDSCAPE       |
| 118 | THE DETERMINA-<br>TION OF AN<br>ARCHITECT    | 416 | AT NIGHT HE<br>DOES NOT DREAM  |
| 227 | THE INGENIOUS<br>INFECTION                   | 421 | EDITOR'S NOTE                  |
|     |  | 429 | COLOPHON                       |

FOR EVER  
SUBLIME  
FOR EVER





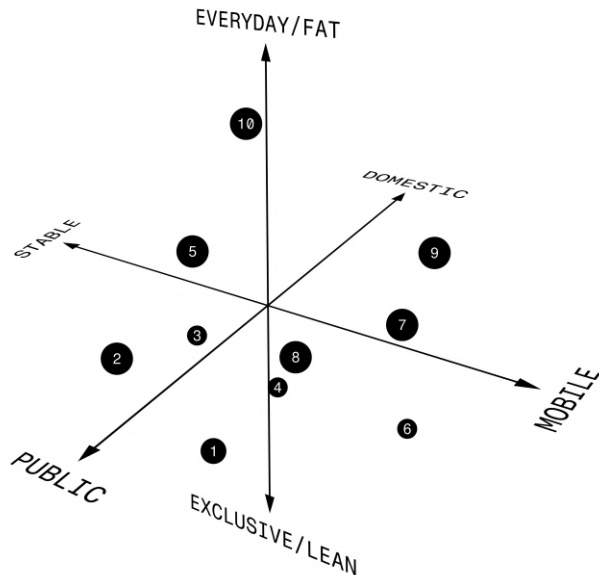
cherished and absorbing secrets.’ (Louise Schouwenberg, *For the Love of Things*)

APRIL 6 1998, 19:35 HRS A fax to the client. ‘In response to your request, we have selected five alternatives to the facade cladding of the acoustic barrier dwellings. Each of these cladding materials has its own character and cost aspects. Enamelled hardened glass from Sainte Roche, Armalith panels from Leikon, Ornimat panels from SVK, Eterntile panels from Eternit and Glasal panels from Eternit. Please phone me tomorrow.’

№2 Family Natte & Harms. They too have decided to stay in their semi-temporary, idyllically-situated holiday home. It’s beginning to look like a trend: you either go for a high-tech home practically without any garden, or for a high-tech garden with a sprinkler system and a fountain but practically no house. The house is in this case secondary and is not even big enough to accommodate their grand concert piano. The instrument is now up for sale.

APRIL 8 1998, 11:44 HRS A fax from the client. ‘We feel you have failed to understand what we were trying to convey in

Food has an innate and mysterious attraction that can sometimes be visualised. This quality can also be deliberately nourished and increased. It may be interesting to interrelate the characteristics of the outdoor market, supermarket and restaurant: the public nature of the outdoor market with the efficiency of the supermarket with the domesticity of the restaurant. The *por kilo* restaurants in Brazil are a good example, they have absorbed these three characteristics and form a genuine public domain, despite the fact that they are sometimes located on the first floor of an office block.



The line between public and domestic forms an axis (the y axis). Another line is located between mobile and stable characteristics of food suppliers (the x axis). The third line (the z axis) divides the extremes of food supply: every day and exclusive, unsophisticated and chic, cheap and expensive, fat and lean, fast and slow. These extremes in food supply are necessary to surprise the public: unpredictability benefits the vitality of public domain.

All kinds of new food formulas can be invented within this co-ordinate system that exploit and mash up the characteristics of the current outdoor market, supermarket and restaurant.

For example these 10 food formulas:

1. The Improved Outdoor Market
2. The New Market
3. The Sub-Market
4. The Station Market
5. The Super-Restaurant
6. The Mobile Kitchen
7. The Restoration
8. The Guerrilla Restaurant
9. The Neighborhood Restaurant
10. The Home Restaurant





Whether a designer, and the architect in particular, chooses for the literal virtuality of a model that is made by a computer or for the metaphorical virtuality of a conventional model, is of no sense since it is the very borderline between both design processes that is interesting.

The trick is to stay somewhere between real and virtual, dogmatic and ambiguous, organisation and self-organisation, stable and unstable, straightforward and curved, hard and soft, and crystalline and liminal. That is my dream.

'The spoon and the city' is the famous phrase of Walter Gropius that became the motto of Bauhaus. He intended an architect to be the ordering force and demiurge of all *physical* space. I think, as an architect, it is also important to get a grip on the *virtual* or, let's say, *mythological* space, which cannot be determined in traditional architectonic terms. An architect always has to consider a non-human space, an angelic space, and make room for this extra dimension, where a human being can get in contact with something inhuman – the 90% dark matter of our universe. We understand only a very small part of our universe and therefore, we need to reserve in each project a large part for that other dimension, for dark matter, for angels ...

A large object produces its own laws – laws of a unique thing. You can obey them or not. Every director, conductor, or architect has trouble submitting the blind laws of such objects. The idea of autonomy has always been a ballast for designers. Only after giving in, one can speak of the sovereignty of subject.

At the start of a design process there is always either a phrase, a photo, a film scene, a sudden impulse or, something trivial in the location, a trigger, something coming from outside of architecture bringing life to the whole – that is the breath. Then the choice of material follows, texture and touch – that is the body. Next, colours, sounds, scents, sometimes flavours, light, and details (sharp, angular, flowing, or flat) – that is the character. Only later, when the program of requirements and the available budget are fed into making process, the forms and spaces are created – that is the dimension. This four-step process can succeed in one try, but it may have to be repeated a hundred times. Form is what it ends up being. Messing with that has not much use. Form is adornment. It seduces or it does not.



THE SUSPENSE OF THEORY

Never trust what you see. Do not trust analysis, and trust interpretation even less. Do not trust the free space between thought and things. Rely only on what comes to mind, thought from elsewhere. (...) Confront sense, play inversely and eccentrically; simply, follow the rule of the game and the ellipsis of theory.

THE SUSPENSE OF THEORY

As philosophy is about contemplating, theory is about envisioning. Theory does not aim to contemplate an essence, whether veiled or revealed; instead, it aims for the absolute envisioning of an appearance – a superficial appearance behind which the abyss looms. For example, a misconception or a prediction, an anecdote devoid of a moral or the gestures of a stripper, a screenshot or an animal's eye, a distorted image in a funhouse mirror or an event taken out of context.

THE DOMAIN OF METAMORPHOSIS

Metamorphosis as a bet against the pretentious omnipotence of thought, of philosophy, of systems of thought. Let us tear down those systems, these models and sacrifice them to the faceless god of metamorphosis.

THE DETERMINATION OF AN ARCHITECT

One thing is for sure: architecture is haute couture. It is always personal, made to measure, unrepeatably and, of course, more precious than a standard product.

I want to design on the basis of a code with an internal coherence, a coherence that is not directly visible. And that process of designing is whimsical, intuitive, impulsive, and implicit.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ANIMATION

Both animating and designing have nothing to do with the linear and academic process going from function towards form nor of the rational process from concept towards icon. You - with your soul - are solely there to initiate interlinking, to spur on the evolution of things. You, designer, you are developer of a soul stirring; and development is completely dependent on your limitations, your handicaps, your capriciousness, your deep rooted irrationality, in short your original imperfection. That is the principle of animation.

THE SUSPENSE OF ARCHITECTURE

*THE NECESSITY TO SHINE*

Maurice Nio

