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(SCIENCE) FICTION, ECOSOPHICAL APPARATUS AND SKIZOID MACHINES

ANIMISM, VITALISM AND MACHINISM AS A WAY TO REARTICULATE THE NEED TO CONFRONT THE UNKNOWN IN A CONTRADICTIONARY MANNER

R&Sie(n), Thing Which Necroses, Denmark and Sweden, 2009 and 2010
Limited time span/biodegradable pavilion and prototype. The panelling becomes a relief through its own 'necrosis and slow disappearing'. The research focuses on a specific bio-plastic that could die by controlling the degree of humidity in the atmosphere. It is the minimum for a temporary building: avoiding 'petrification' or its physical disassembling. The death is intrinsically its nature.

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Francois Roche Standfirst to come.

In power games, [apparatuses could
be considered] relationship strategies
supporting types of knowledge and
supported by themselves.
– Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits, tome
III*, 1994, p 299¹

We are immersed in a period that is vibrating,²
but ultimately lacking momentum. Since
the 1960s, time's arrow has lacked a definite
course. Unsure which way to go, it has
vascillated between the moral conservatism of
the baby boomers and the forward thrust of
Gucci-style consumption.

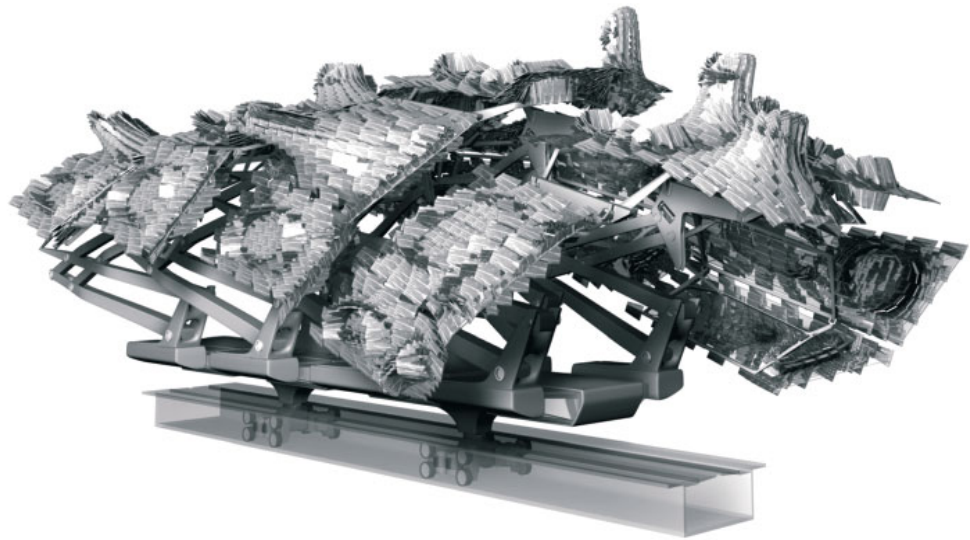
Leaving behind its Galilean scrutinising of
the future, an exploration of inaccessible worlds
that only Science (*fiction*) from the heights of
its certitude could drive, Science (*fiction*) has
slipped into the meanders of our digital society.
The false footsteps of Bibendum (the Michelin
tyre man) in the dirty dust of the moon that
day in July 1969 marked an end to our entropic
flights of fancy. The books of Neal Stephenson,
William Gibson, Bruce Sterling and others,
while marketed as speculative fiction, were in
fact live broadcasts; the funhouse mirror that
the genre tended to create, between the space
of the imagination and the space of our daily
lives, expanded throughout a universe of

plausibilities. It melted into the news, in
all its social dimensions.

Astonishingly, Science (*fiction*) has shifted
neither forward nor rearward, but into the here
and now. The unfolding scenarios it follows
to manipulate our reality are becoming true
transformation tools and paradoxically strategic
levers to grasp the wobbling of our post-digital
societies: our choked mass-media culture.

But the main interest of this sudden in
vivo 'matrix immersion' lies in the anxieties
it provokes.

Instead of Science (*fiction*) remaining
a domain for positivist and determinist
propaganda, it should nourish the seeds
of our own 'monstrosity': our own loss of
control amid indeterminism, chaos theory³
and biogenetics, as a force striking alliances
with harpies and earthly creatures, the
Faustian Dark Side and the *Sturm und Drang*.
Against the 'rationalist wigs' and the works of
Hegelian spirit, we must open up to a world
where even fears become fable, as lovely as
they are carnal.⁴ We have to negotiate with
the fold of the instant, the invagination of the
thought of the future, and live in a present
that is like an asymptotic bend in time,
between back to the future and tomorrow now,
between dream time and the day after.⁵



Under these paradoxical conditions, where the notion and perception of time are crushed on the surface of immediacy, how can we believe that architecture can only be constituted by fossilised avatars, blind *cadavers exquis* of naive and positivist values,⁶ as well as ‘quotational opportunism’ disguised as global entertainment?

To reclaim the scenarios and substances that condition architecture and reveal the contradictions and fantasies that drive our societies, we need, on the contrary, to draw on this vibrating, disquieting and voluptuous temporality.⁷ Architecture is not something to be thought or produced for later, like the standard bearer for a morality. It can only be negotiated live, in its contingency on a situation and its solubility in a set of givens.

This critical and territorialised attitude is in sharp contrast to macro-cynical flights of fancy (the market creates the form!) and their remake of ‘international architecture’⁸ (in New York, Paris, Berlin, Shanghai, Singapore and so on); it instead launches, processes and reactivates the concept of a throbbing,⁹ complex¹⁰ and unfinished¹¹ ‘localism’.

Our tools for the codification and transformation of territories do not work through an ideal projection, but through a local

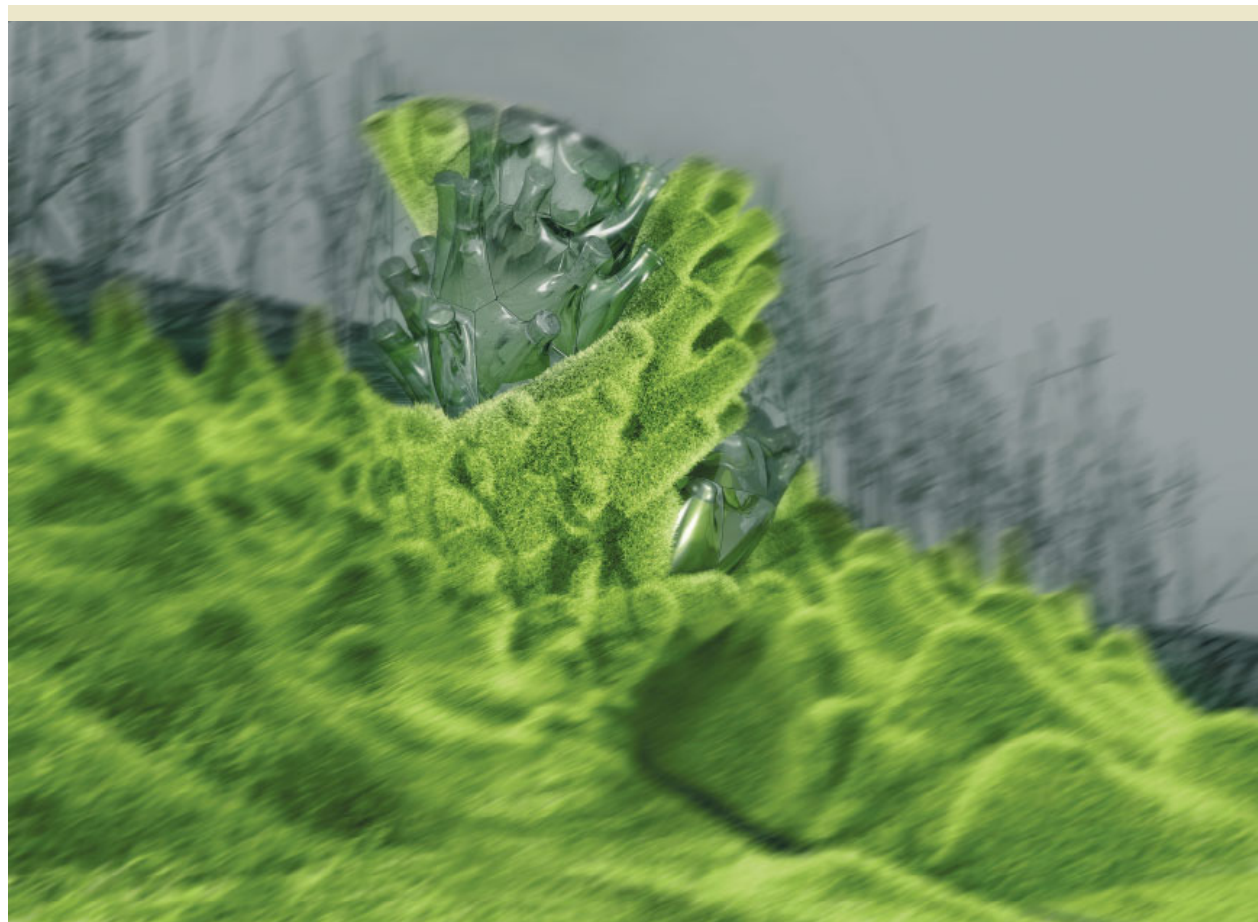
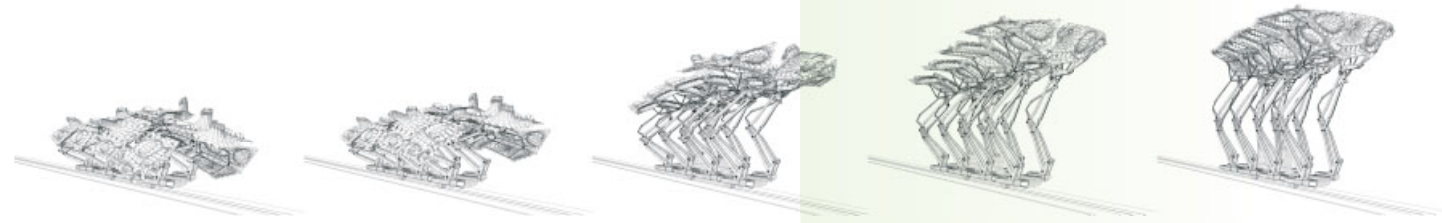
inventory: a mutant and tangible biotope, issued from the generalised bankruptcy of urban thought¹² and its deception. This ambiguity gives rise to our unstable and unique scenarios.

The folded rhizomes of Guattari and Deleuze were a point of fusion and arborescence to attain a plateau,¹³ a *terra incognita*, to break out of the grip of those who declared that they had discursive, pedagogic and linear authority. That made it possible for us to escape from Promethean dreams, millenarian apostles and cynical moralists, and walk gaily over the many and multiple dustbins of the last century, unburdened of the confusion of ‘progressivist’ mythologies, in the voluptuousness of a quotidian cataclysm.

(Science) *fictional*¹⁴ architecture is not a cultural remake of the *Altered States*¹⁵ variety for the elite. It has nothing to do with a nostalgic idealisation of the world in a ‘museum soap bubble’, nor a New Age utopia with its cautious moral presuppositions.

Recognising the new principles of reality, it is a space of confrontation, ceaselessly investing itself in new procedures for the reprogramming and re-scripting¹⁶ of existence, here and now.

By necessity, it confronts its emergence, its Gestalt, and can only be negotiated in



Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits, tome III*, Gallimard (Paris), 1994, p 299.
2. Stanley Kubrick wrote the script for *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) during the filming of the last scenes of *2001: A Space Odyssey* in order to simultaneously visit NASA's last Galilean projection and its broken-mirror opposite, a sort of morning-after following an excess of hygienist, positivist narratives. Contemporary history has proved the accuracy of his schizophrenia. Ever since that two-fold production, we have been caught in this stopped time, with no past and no future, a vibrating and unstable time, enjoying Hieronymous Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, between heaven and hell. This re-dating of the Big Bang, ‘the day the universe stood still’, to 1967, introduces Postmodernism and Deconstruction as pure residual artefacts, collateral consequences of that vibration.
3. Over the course of time all systems become progressively disordered as they approach their final state of total equilibrium (the second law of thermodynamics). In order to track our environment, physical sciences born out of the study of turbulence, vibration, disequilibria and probability have taken the place of the linear sciences where things are viewed as following a quantitative and determinist path.
4. One percent of the 3,000 polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) in Svalbard are hermaphrodites, with a vagina and a penis. The conditions for survival at the North Pole, including Soviet nuclear waste materials carried by the Arctic Stream and the carbon effluence of the Gulf Stream, have allowed us to observe the first natural mutation.
5. See Bruce Sterling, *Tomorrow Now*, Random House (New York), 2003.
6. How can we reconcile the need to save the Amazonian rainforest and at the same time our fascination with the bulldozer (a sort of caterpillar with beetle pincers)

R&Sie(n) + Stephan Henrich and Pierre Huyghe, *Star Gate Vehicle*, Broomwich project, Meudon, France, 2008
opposite: Transportation machine from sitting down to standing up – from the panoptical house of André Bloc, to the heterotopian green entropy, growing through a parasite and vampirising nature.

top: Series of movements of the machine which works as a star gate, from Comfortable Tanatos (the panoptical) to Scary Eros (the heterotopia).

R&Sie(n), *Symbiosis 'Hood*, Seoul, Korea, 2009
above: The symbiosis exchange between two clients in the middle of two plots here becomes a relational aesthetic. One is recycling the waste (hydroponic cleaning nature), the other is bringing light for the human Circadian cycle. Their social contract is not only to share a part of the property, but to negotiate substances, from hygienism to dirtiness, in an anthroposophical loop.

the visible spectrum: that is its political and operational condition. It generates processes of transformation that take the risk of critical positions and mutations,¹⁷ on the razor's edge.

There can be no pleasure in announcing the 'infocalypse'. We can only harvest its often strange fruits.

The following apparatuses have to be considered as a few paradigms to approach and touch narrative and subjective protocols.

Machines have been always pretending to do more than what they were programmed to do. It is their nature. Their behaviour alternates phantasms, frustrations and fears inspired by their own ability to break free and threaten us.¹⁸

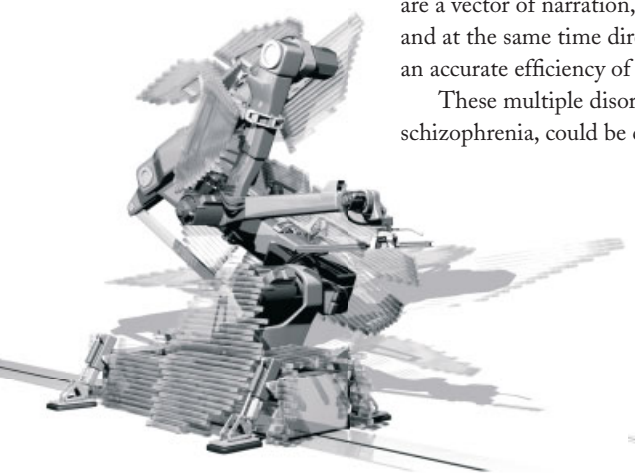
The blurriness between what they are supposed to do, as perfect alienated and domesticated creatures, and the anthropomorphic psychology we intentionally project on them, creates a spectrum of potentiality, both interpretative and productive, which is able to re-'scenarise' the operating processes of the architectural field. Machines are a vector of narration, generators of rumour, and at the same time directly operational, with an accurate efficiency of production.

These multiple disorders, this kind of schizophrenia, could be considered a tool for

reopening processes and subjectivities, for re-'protocolising' indeterminacy and uncertainties. In this way, machines become agents of blur logic, of a reactive and reprogrammable logic.

As in *Alice in Wonderland*, where Lewis Carroll used mathematics to confuse a little girl's perception, such apparatuses, including 'bachelor machines',¹⁹ stretch a line of 'subjectification' to organise 'repetitions and anomalies',²⁰ by developing paradoxes that are able to re-complexify and de-alienate the edges of the truth system; in order to reinvert the logic of meaning and turn it into a vanishing point.

It seems to make strategic sense to evaluate architecture's degree of reality on the basis of its ability to tell stories and in this way enlarge the dimension of its physicality. In a sense, we should consider the structure itself as a fragment of a scenario, as a MacGuffin: the point where and from which speeches, strategies, scientific protocols and power games articulate stories and agendas. Misunderstandings, in this sense, produce artefacts – in 'the garden which forks nowhere' – and apparatuses can be considered as generators of ambiguities and knowledge, where non-shaping emergent protocols contingently reveal the conditions

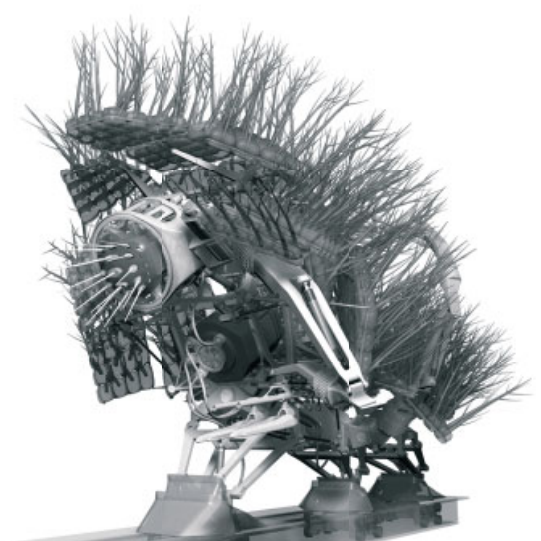


R&Sie(n) + Stephan Henrich and Pierre Huyghe, *Stochastic Machine, Olzweg project, FRAC, Orléans, France, 2006*
above left: Design for Museum for Experimental Architecture. The courtyard of the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (FRAC) is smeared and aggregated of glass stick in order to generate a graft, a smearing of the existing building as a potential of a Body Without Organ (a 'going to be done' and unachieved process of construction), and inside the thickness of the glass a labyrinth walkway and access points. A scattering, staggering script is written to develop the endlessness aggregation.

above right: Series of movements of the 12-metre high bachelor machine, smearing with sticks of recycling glass the museum, the neighbourhood, the city...

opposite top: View of the starting point of colonisation, in the courtyard of FRAC. The unachievement is a main part of the protocol – something is coming day after day, without finishing point, without touching the vanishing point.

R&Sie(n) with Stephan Henrich, *Chimeria Machine, Symbiosis 'Hood, Seoul, Korea, 2006–7*
opposite bottom: Design for a mixed public-private multipurpose space where South Korean soil touches the North part (the demilitarised and Joint Security Area zones). A military robot, running (on a specific track in the land mine zone) in the forest brings back the biomass on its back, smearing the bio-grass and bio-leaves in decomposition on all external surfaces to maintain the insulation of the building. The project recognises the specifics of the site's situation: where danger is weaved with the paranoia of danger and its own theatricalisation.



that is cutting it down? This dual attitude protects us from ecologist alibis, primitivist dreams of purity and of the *Heimat*, as well as from becoming enslaved to the mechanisms of the tabula rasa. Architecture consists of revealing these two contradictory dimensions in their constant tension.

7. 'Yet this landscape of terror is also, as in Bosh, voluptuous and nearly infinite in irony. Reminding us that hell is full of laughter, we could call this cataclysm where everything bad is foretold in dark humour, a *black utopia*.' See Mike Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales*, New Press (New York), 2002.

8. One could suspect that the 'Be global and forget local' attitude is nothing but a passport that allows countries that can afford to hire 'a Koolhaas' or 'a Nouvel' to become integrated into the World Corp. But, why not? The vulgarity lies in their duplicity. They may be in Lagos, at Prada or at a floating Pavilion, yet they want to lecture us about political consciousness.

9. Dust and pollution in Bangkok, mosquitoes and Nile River Virus in Trinidad, 'hairs in the Snake' and 'bovine heat' in Evolène, the bush scorched by sun in Soweto are the human and territorial raw materials that condition the local scene. Contrary to what Plato writes in *Parmenides*, where he doesn't trouble to hide his distaste for what he considers as 'ignoble elements' – the lowest layers of being – materials like hair and dirt are no less constitutive elements of urban economies, even if they issue from bankruptcy and city planning.

10. Complexity comes from the entropic dimension of a system, between chaos and chance. Another aspect comes from its situation between two different and even contradictory states. Complexity is not driven by autonomy, but by reactivity, and cannot take into account all that surrounds it. It is in this sense that disturbances of identity, stealth and hybridisation become modes of operation. This is reflected in our own indecisiveness, our inability to choose between options and make do with them.

11. Consider how Jules Verne completed Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838). Poe's last, enigmatic phrase leaves the reader perplexed and frustrated: 'But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, far larger in proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow.' In Jules Verne's sequel, *Le Sphinx des Glaces* (*The Sphinx of the Ice Fields*), he wrote: 'No! These were physical facts, not imaginary phenomena ... This massive shape (the shrouded figure) was nothing but a colossal magnet ... whose power produced effects as natural as they were terrible.' See Jules Verne, *Le Sphinx des Glaces*, Paris, 1897, para 15. Poe's novel was published in serial form purporting to be an authentic report from an expedition to the South Pole that never actually took place. The piece is disturbing, a source of endless questions, and prefigured Poe's own death. The fact that a half-century later Verne brought it back to life to bring the story to an end reveals the oppositeness of the two men's attitudes: the former scripts and opens the narrative in its non-finitude, while the latter plans and encloses it within the same operational modes as urban planners, full of



of emission and are revealed by them, as in a Situationist strategy.²¹

The ‘machinism’ presented here should be considered a preliminary spectrum, from a speculative self-organised urbanism (Iveheardabout)²² to a digestive physiological experiment (thegardenofearthlydelights).²³ Within these endpoints are a stochastic machine with a predictable uncompletion (Olzweg),²⁴ an industrial milling machine for ‘anthroposophic’ transactions (waterflux),²⁵ a hydroponic bacteriological Hitchcockian ‘Rear Windows’, (I’mlostinParis),²⁶ a standing up machine – a Darwinian evolution from an André Bloc house to its extension – (broomwitch)²⁷ and, last but not least, a pure

chimera hybrid bio-robot – the mechanical ghost of a wild forest, where cold war degrades nature (heshotmedown).²⁸

Their ‘schizoid –machinism’ agendas are both products and vectors of paranoia.²⁹

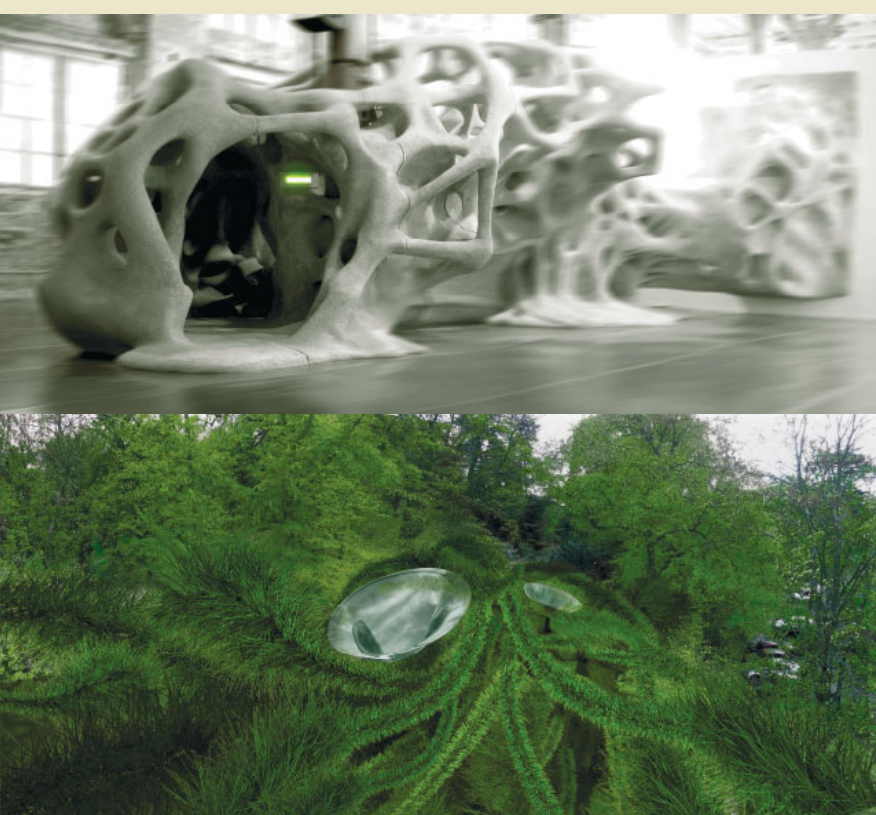
Yet, they also help us to renegotiate a relationship with the arrow of time; some of them are directly producing reality, here and now, as an industrial factual protocol; some of them are fictionalising our practice, by reformatting the protocol of production, for a tomorrow reality; and some of them are used as a speculation to magnetise a point in the future. Without certainty that our history will pass by this point, some of the machines are developing their own *necrosis*: their predictable

death, even their unreality, to bring an intrinsic process of erasing in their emerging nature.

In this way, these apparatuses appear through an architecture thatw seems to come from a transitory strategy: from an operative, fictional and speculative scenario, which rearticulates the relation of a situation with an environment and eventually its own un-reality, re-questioning the values of its identity. ◊

L’auteur est ce qui donne à l’inquiétant langage de la fiction, ses unites, ses noeuds de coherence, son insertion dans le reel

– Michel Foucault, *L’ordre du Discours*, Gallimard (Paris), 1971, p 30.



Paranoiatic and Machinism Apparatuses

Stochastic: Olzweg (www.new-territories.com/welostit.htm)
Alchemy: TheBuildingwhichneverdies (www.new-territories.com/laboratoryofflight.htm)
Chimera and Ballistic: heshotmedown (www.new-territories.com/he%20shoot%20me%20down.htm)
Testosterone: hybridmuscle (www.new-territories.com/hybrid%20realized.htm)
Darwinism and Parasiting: Broomwitch (www.new-territories.com/broomwitch.htm)
De-pollutive: Dustyrelief (www.new-territories.com/roche2002bis.htm)
De-pollutive: Aquaalta (www.new-territories.com/apiration.htm)
Bacteriological: I’mlostinParis (www.new-territories.com/lostinparis.htm)
Necrosis: Thethingwhichnecroses (www.new-territories.com/twhichnecrose.htm)
Hypnotic: Hypnosisroom (www.new-territories.com/hypnosisroom.htm)
Psychotropic: thegardenofearthlydelight (www.new-territories.com/toxics%20gardenlopud.htm)
Hydroponics: GreenGorgon (www.new-territories.com/green%20gorgon.htm)
Paranoiatic: mosquitobottleneck (www.new-territories.com/mosquitos.htm)
Anthroposophic: Waterflux (www.new-territories.com/waterflux08.htm)
Animatronics: Terraincognita (www.new-territories.com/terraincognita2.htm)
Psychotic-digestive: Mi(pi) : (www.new-territories.com/mitpibar.htm)
Psychotic-digestive: Aqualata 2.0 (www.new-territories.com/roche%202000bis.htm)
Speculative: Iveheardabout (www.new-territories.com/I’veheardabout.htm)
Speculative: an architecture ‘des humeurs’ (www.new-territories.com/blog/architecturereshumeurs.htm)
Archaic-paganism: Hybridmuscle (www.new-territories.com/hybrid%20realized.htm)
Osmotic: Symbiosishood (www.new-territories.com/symbiosishood.htm)

- Fouriérist swindles and scientism.
12. On the contrary, we have to handle contradictions like that of the island of Tuvalu in the South Pacific. Because of its low altitude and changes in the oceanic water level (due to global warming), a plan for its evacuation has been formulated as an objective given.
13. ‘This is what the people of Stateless had in common: not merely the island itself, but the first-hand knowledge that they stood on rock which the founders had crystallised out of the ocean – and which was, forever, dissolving again, only enduring through a process of constant repair. Beneficent nature had nothing to do with it; conscious human effort, and cooperation, had built Stateless ... the balance could be disturbed in a thousand ways All that elaborate machinery had to be monitored, had to be understood. ... It had one undeniable advantage over all the contrived mythology of nationhood. It was true.’ See Greg Egan, *Distress* HarperPrism (New York), 1995, pp 171–2.
14. Fiction differs from utopia in that it does not seek to be right. Why would we seek to be right when there are so many people who carry the banner of morality? They are legion, as dangerous and common as criminals.
15. A Ken Russell film where research into chemical hallucinogenics ends in a polychrome and simian apotheosis.
16. ‘What’s the scenario? A constantly mutating sequence of possibilities. Add a morsel of a difference and the result slips out of control, shift the location for action and everything is different. There is a fundamental gap between societies that base their development on scenarios and those that base their development on planning.’ See Liam Gillick, ‘Should the future help the past?’ in *Five or Six Previsions*, Lukas and Stenberg, Ltd (New York), 2001.
17. See R&Sie’s AquaAlta 1.0 and 2.0. Amid laguna pollution, technological suspicion and hybrid mutation, this project is a critique of relational mechanisms, on the tangible ground of political reality; it is not a ‘techno-nostalgic’ or ‘cocaine-digital’ immersion.
18. As the Golem did to its own creator, the Rabbi Loeb.
19. In the sense of Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia.
20. In the sense of Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, PUF (Paris), 1968.
21. See Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle*, Buchet/Chastel (Paris), 1967. See also Guy Debord’s and Constant Nieuwenhuys’s ‘Declaration d’Amsterdam’ in *Internationale Situationniste*, No 2, Amsterdam, 1958.
22. Iveheardabout, the first experiment of R&Sie(n) in 2005, focuses on self-organisation with computation, robotic and politic apparatuses.
23. Thegardenofearthlydelights: distilling-sublimating-drying-extracting devices.
24. Olzweg: a stochastic machine.
25. Waterflux: Prototyping scale 1.
26. I’m lost in Paris: an experiment of chemical hydroponic nature.
27. Broomwitch : Transport and standing up machine.
28. Heshotmedown: A chimera robot.
29. In both senses, ‘critical paranoia’ and pathological paranoia.

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R&Sie(n) with Stephan Henrich, Symbiosis ‘Hood, Seoul, Korea, 2006–7
above: The ballistic impact is a vector of perforation and porosity. The flower operated by the violence is one of the conditions of the situation. Here, nobody can deny that the war has crossed this land, ravaging people, species and nature. The singers of the *barbaria* are still turning around.

R&Sie(n) with Benoît Durandin, Hypnosis Chamber, Museum of Modern Art, Paris 2005
opposite top: Experiment with hypnosis individual session for the research and exhibition ‘I’ve heard about’: a protocol for escaping the physical slaviness of post-capitalism without psychotrope (as per the pill of Hollein).

opposite bottom: Enter into a ‘heterotopian’ cognitive room, then dive into a ‘wake-up dream’ filled by vocal information on ‘I’ve heard about’ urbanism, where your own desire affects the process of construction of the city.