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We must remember that "Architecture is an end product".

["Design is a process" We don't say that's a design - we say that's a well designed kettle, water bottle, car etc. Design is the process which leads to buildings.]

Why are we asking this question?

Is it because the pluralism of today's architecture (manifest in its styles) is questionable? or is it that pluralism is difficult to deal with at an architectural level? Or is it simply that we are risking losing faith in architecture because it appears to be reduced to a media image, and the experience of architecture is difficult to find nowadays? Certainly, the discovery of an architectural experience of which we have not already received some visual awareness or propaganda is a rarity. In effect, are we not just checking our pre-empted prejudices when we visit a "known" building rather than seeking the essence of why it is architecture?

It is clear that as students you should be confused. It is also clear that the clarity which may be being sought through this lecture series should have nothing to do with style but with the essence of which architecture as we understand it is made. It is here that the roots of authenticity can be found.

Let me remind you that architecture, as a profession, is new. It did not exist before the industrial revolution, and neither did engineering, quantity surveying, planning or many of the other professions which we accept as part of our everyday context.

The "professionalism" of architecture was born out of what?

Was it a need to master the explosive shift in our cultural base; to master the nature of change, of the discovery of new materials and techniques? Certainly, the mechanised means of production changed society, as the information/communication revolution is also, if it hasn't already, changing our society today.

Was it as a result of new materials, new techniques, new production and assembly methods that the traditional craftsman's approach became too slow in its natural evolution to cope with the change in speed of change brought about by these inventions.

We saw in the opening slides, juxtaposed images of past time and our time - the architectures were recognisably the same, the difference lay in the materials and, I would suggest, the speed of the society as projected by the new techniques. Both architectures were built with the technical knowledge of their own times. Suddenly in the 19th Century, speed equalled progress, and we know that modern architecture's primary faith lay in progress, and its belief that the fruits of this progress could be shared out and enjoyed by all.

Early signs of this progress created enormous optimism, motivation and hence, more and more inventiveness. However, the objectives argued for were social improvements. This aspect of social usefulness has not been heard of in architectural debate for some time. cf Community architecture.

If we look at any architectural magazine today, or for that matter in the last decade or so, all we see are images to suit the ad agencies, the pursuit of creating architectural heroes, or architectural styles.

All of which the admen believe will improve the magazine's circulation numbers, and hence this or that magazine's ability to influence their preferred version of today's stylistic trend in architecture.

All this simply reflects our society, of course, with its focus on the individual. Even Japan, the country which promotes the social idea or the group, the homogenous people, now projects its heroes. We have all heard of Ando, Isozaki, Maki and others; and of Yamamoto in fashion. But who amongst us can name a Japanese architect before Kenso Tange? Kenso Tange's first permanent buildings were only realised in 1954, when he was already 41.

So today we are confronted with a vulgar competition to create the "in style" and the "in hero", and hence where the "heroes" then find themselves locked in verbal and visual combat, each able to call on their small armies of "lesser heroes" and critics. In the end is this unexpected, or is it the natural outcome of having established a "profession" in the 19th Century, hence the professional - the individual - the leader - the creator. How do we redress this, or do we want to? I argue continuously for the breaking down of barriers between professions - and we try to work that way.

But what has this to do with architecture? If Bannister Fletcher's book "A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method" is anything to go by, then a lot. This masterly book is put forward primarily as a chronology of styles, with some reference of course to construction technique.

What do I believe is architecture?

It is the art and science of construction for a human purpose and enjoyment. It can be independent of any preceding or current style in architecture itself. Only if we make the effort to understand what the origins of style are per se, do we have any chance of defining authentic architectures, rather than just the images of it.

I suggest that I am in exactly the same position as you are with respect to today's apparent confusion. Let's quickly look at three fairly recent style phenomena: I'll use the categories with which for better or worse we are all familiar:

High Tech	Circa 1968 - ongoing
Post Modern	Circa 1975 - dying
Deconstruction	Circa 1980 - ongoing

What it is important to recognise here is that there is only one generation between them all, and that they all exist here, in Europe, in America and the Far East at the same time.

In reality this is not at all surprising, and is quite consistent with historical precedence; and I don't mean just international modernism.

(As a footnote, Tange became enamoured with Corbusier's Mediterranean architecture because his climatic environment was the equivalent in Japan - the Inland Sea).

We find Hellenistic architecture throughout the known world of its time.

The only difference between seeing it appear elsewhere than in Greece revolved around the speed of the horse, rather than the speed of light which we use today. At some point it existed all over the place at the same time - with local vernacular interpretations.

Now, here is the subtlety: The historical styles were relatively unique, evolving slowly over time from one to another, responding to innovation and technique. There was not historically, to my knowledge, a knee-jerk reaction to say, technology, such as with Post-Modernism. This is why prior to the industrial revolution, when craftsmanship was predominant, architects as we know them now did not exist.

[The Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the Century, and even today, is totally consistent with a faith in the art of craftsmanship and its own natural pace of change, with a very measured acceptance of certain more recent technical developments since the Industrial Revolution.]

What Post-Modernism represented, put very simply, was an apparent rejection of faith in technology as begun in the mid 19th Century, and continuing even faster today. But its problem was what to put in its place, as a faith. It seems to me that it took the architecturally familiar of a certain style, not a true familiarity but elitist forms of it, whilst not actually rejecting technology - it enjoyed the advanced methods of fabrication, assembly and construction just as much as high-tech. It merely subjugated the visibility of it. Hence, it is dying because it does not have a powerful philosophy or faith behind it.

Put another way, it was based on the notion of humanising modern architecture, by changing its face with a familiar architectural piece here and there. Where modern architecture experimented with the great 20th Century concept of abstraction, Post-Modernism rejected this too.

So, where modern architecture had a social objective - sharing the fruits of technology, an interpretive art form based on the concept of abstraction (and exploited the potential of natural and artificial light) Post-Modernism simply threw up a stage set embracing so-called familiarity, decoration, to hide us all from the actualities of the late 20th Century.

So, is there any authenticity in Post-Modernism? No, but as a stage set, or smoke screen it stopped us, temporarily, moving forward without thinking deeply enough about what we are doing:

By "doing" I would suggest that as architects today we are very often confronted with a client who is not a user nor necessarily the occupant of the spaces he or she is asking us to create. Often in this apparent vacuum we seek the user information, possibly directly by seeking user participation ourselves; for example community participation, possibly indirectly through researchers or research data from other disciplines, e.g.: social scientists. Inevitably we are confronted with uncertainty, whether it is in designing social housing or office accommodation. Information is often conflicting, or incomplete, and, as we head towards our own judgement on these issues, partially on a range of information sources, partially on our own experience, partially on our own moral and ethical views we begin to rely on architectural models for comfort, with which we can try to camouflage these uncertainties. Post Modernism, High Tech, Neo Classic-tech, are today's examples of architectural image models, with which the vast majority of building designers ("architects") choose to slide away from the essential issues to which we should be addressing ourselves.

What of High-Tech?

This, too, suffers like any form of architecture today from the power of the media and their hype. I'm reminded of Marshall McLuhan's classic phrase "the medium is the message", which in the early '60's created quite a controversy.

Today we don't mention it because it is actually here and all around us as part of our accepted environment. But, if we think a little, are the houses we see designed now not really a garage or a double garage with en suite lounge and kitchen? And are not business parks bushy car parks with en suite fax, phone and shared toilets? McLuhan was also responsible for those classic phrases "we march backwards into the future", and "the only certainty in modern life is change".

So, today we have individual transport with an individual global telecommunications kit in the front seat.

Does High-Tech address this society, does it have a social message? On the surface I have my doubts. It remains a predilection for certain materials and the inevitable expression of the joint as the leitmotif of the author's architecture. These materials can have a greater precision and predictability through their method of production and assembly. In this sense High-Tech appears to ape the manufacture of, for example, cars, boats, hi-fi equipment, computers etc., and allows the strong collaboration of engineering and industry. However, and fortunately, it does not produce itself at the same rate as car production - although some joint assemblies do proliferate (e.g. RFR glass fixing). So, when does High-Tech become architecture, if at all?

High-Tech, I believe, originated in the late '60's from two parallel concepts. One, based on recognising that our society and our environment was in constant change; two, the means of advanced technical production has its own aesthetic - the dry mechanical assembly of manufactured products. The predominant reaction to the first was in a way to step onto the conveyor belt of change by suggesting that buildings should be capable of change in themselves - so fitting the second notion where elements of the building could be unclipped, unzipped, undone and redressed - a sort of couturier architecture. However, when this architectural interpretation of change went inside the building, it, i.e. the notion of adaptable space, the only spatial answer that came forward was open plan, large central space. These spaces could be made to appear visually seductive but did they consider the user, or was the user in effect being asked to adapt to this sort of space by changing himself? The other architectural model, possibly even more perceptive, but probably less conventional in architectural language was that of using manufactured buildings as total elements of change in themselves. This is the Portacabin approach, elegantly expressed in oil rig platform accommodation modules, or Cedric Price's Interaction offices. Both of these approaches, embracing and promoting change, also encouraged and reflected the emerging consumer society - the short-life expendable product. This architectural approach is in one sense positive, in that it takes a definite position with respect to change and that sense reflects our society, but does it really serve it or our habitat well?

One could say that in abdicating permanent spatial design, whether internal or external or both, it is actually permitting the user to do it instead; but how many contemporary architects really will let their client or the users change their buildings without feeling aggrieved and complaining that their building is no longer what it really was. Are High-Tech architects in this context (once the building has appeared in the magazines) being really honest with themselves; do they really show themselves to be capable of accepting the fundamental concepts I mentioned earlier?

Too often there exists a preciousness in their attitudes - as if protecting personal jewellery. I believe that the first of these concepts (change) has been virtually abandoned, overlooked, forgotten in many cases. I would even suggest that many architects today are not even aware of it.

Essential High-Tech architecture is then a clear rejection of the notion of security and of permanence in a changing world, the antithesis of architectural precedence.

As a contrast, Neo-Classic-Tech, e.g. the work of Robert Adam and Ricardo Bofill attempts to redress this situation by alluding to the importance of the fact that classical architecture has survived, i.e.: has a notion of permanence in an architectural sea of change. Of course, this is not necessarily the argument forwarded by them.

Deconstructivism in its essence is decentralisation, not of power but of man and energy from the product. It alludes to the insignificance of man in relation to the planet/cosmos and chaos. It also suggests nature's entropy and notions of instability. The latter is worth elaborating a little.

Chaos theory, as you are probably aware, emerged in the late '70's, and is based on the discovery of order in apparent disorder. There are many rich examples used to describe it. For example, water in a saucepan, once you've filled it, is still. You apply heat, at a certain moment annular rings appear, if you look closely, and then the water breaks out into disorder as it boils. If you let it boil on and on it is discovered elsewhere, probably as condensation on your windows. Another example is from Conrad Lorenz's experiments with a pendulum. The pattern traced is not a simple to and fro along a straight line, but a figure more like an infinity sign. The pretty picture produced is always geometrically similar but the minutest environmental change changes the actual image. This gave rise to the notion of "the butterfly effect: - that, in theory, one flap of a butterfly's wings in the Indian Ocean could create a thunderstorm or hurricane over the East coast of the States. [This theory is also linked to big number theory]. Or, think of an oak tree, we all recognise one - they are genetically all from the same base yet each is different when fully grown; or ourselves!

What this has to do with deconstructivism is that they have selected part of the story, the literal notion of chaos, and visualised it, not the hidden order of it, so beautifully illustrated in fractal geometry. The deconstructivists have chosen to move man from the centre of their architecture, implying less importance to man and thus by implication removing the social function. Ironically, and perhaps unintentionally, they have made themselves as individuals highly visible at the centre of their architecture!

In the case of the Galleries at La Villette (not the folies) they expressed this decentralisation in the physical decentring of the natural lines of force by purposely misaligning the axial flow of energy into the structural joints. I found this whacky, because here we are dealing with solid state materials, not fluids or growing organisms; we have these to look forward to. The folies on the other hand are not focussed toward you, the visitor or user, but towards themselves.

Where constructivism embraced the process, the material and technology of its age, most notably steel, the deconstructivists have yet to define clearly the materials which represent best their decentralisation of man. In the sense of architecture as I previously stated it to be, this deconstructivist expression has a human purpose, though not a conventional one, such as "meeting an everyday need". The difficulties this architecture has created for itself are to avoid simply disorientating man and to allow man's natural activities to coexist with it.

So far, we have seen only fragments of deconstructivism - which are at the level of sculptures, or sculptures with limited natural use, e.g.: a covered walkway, a roof. The logical next projects will be those to house art in deconstructed architecture - though the dialogue between the two may be fraught.

Time will tell whether this architectural expression will ever serve social housing.

It is also ambivalent in that it denies man to a great extent, while beneath it lays the fact that man is so instrumental in making change even to our planet. This ambivalence and its simplistic visual interpretation of chaos, will, I suspect render it another stylistic image based excursion, and in the end I suspect it will be simply plagiarised for its image potential and diluted versions will appear all over the place before it has in itself had the chance to develop. It will be a measure of the skill of the protagonists to keep thinking and developing in much the same way as say the High-Tech architects have done, as all around stick-on-technology buildings proliferate. Post-Modern protagonists I suspect are in the process of fading away fast under the deluge of Stick-on-Pomo buildings. Architectural image today is fashion, and highly marketable. Deconstructivism may be on the top of the wave too soon for its own good, I suspect.

Image is the root of imitate. If we think carefully about imitate we can quickly see that it does not mean to copy slavishly like a fax or copier machine. Imagination is not copying and is not fashion. If we look at the meaning of architecture it is, in large part, the art and science of construction.

What is the art bit? Art is a human skill, as opposed to nature. This skill is the ability to imitate, and to imitate, at its most fundamental, nature. This is why a painter imitates a tree on canvas, or a composer like Messiaen imitates bird song in his music. It is neither a tree nor a bird song but the essence of them which the artist captures. And as a skill it needs to be practised and practised.

So, if we return to the Hellenistic era and try to find the essence of the art in their architecture we find an interesting situation. The classical architecture in stone with which we are familiar, is based on a previous architecture in timber. The imitation of the stone classicists is that of another architecture, whose own art one assumes was derived from the essence they drew from nature, most notably the tree.

From this we could conclude that there are two sources for us today to develop the art of architecture:-

1. from nature itself - with all the discoveries we are still making; (and maybe with a lot of help from artists)
2. from previous architecture.

If it is art that makes a building become architecture, then given that we seek architecture and not just buildings we must understand what man seeks from art. Put another way, if the purpose of architecture is to provide something for man, then art is also functional.

Man seeks beauty, thus beauty is a function.

Man seeks change, thus change is a function.

[Man's nature is insatiable - he needs change but at a given speed.]

- Art can provide beauty

- Art can be subversive, and hence an instigator of change.

[Beaubourg was, and still remains, subversive. It took away the entrance steps to high culture.]

Remaining with the idea of art creating beauty and beauty being the functional appearance of art - so, if we consider again Hellenistic architecture, we see an identifiable aspect which evolved or emerged from the previous architecture.

In imitation there is art. The imitation of timber construction in a new material, stone - but why did the Greeks turn to stone?! Did they seek permanence, a philosophy of eternity for their gods?

Can architecture just be the art of construction?

Does architecture exist just for itself or to be a beautiful object? I think not. If we consider deconstructivism again, these works attempt to be subversive (art) in the sense of changing our opinions as to our centrality in things - e.g. the logic of always having a flat floor for man to walk comfortably upon - compared to nature's own topography. Deconstructivism as I mentioned earlier also needs to address other functions that man basically seeks, otherwise for me it remains sculpture, or if on paper - painting.

Man seeks shelter, thus shelter is a function;

Man seeks support, thus support is a function;

Man seeks security, thus security is a function, whether it is physical or spiritual security.

Man has today much architecture, which because of time is accumulating all the time. But a great deal of it remains devoid of these functions. Man is certainly, at present, very preoccupied with preserving such buildings (Acropolis, Pyramids, Stonehenge, cathedrals etc.) In our country English Heritage protects such beauty (and a lot of history only besides) whilst accepting that the price of such preservation means finding alternative functions.

If beauty (art) is a prerequisite of architecture, can art in architecture also raise a function to the level of beauty. I believe so.

What sort of function could be beautified to give us architecture from functional buildings?

Let's look at shelter. Shelter can be walls (from the wind), can be a roof on walls (from wind, rain, sun), can be a roof on columns (from rain and sun).

I think there are many examples of this beautifying of function that we could all recognise.

So we can conclude that fundamentally art needs to be expressed, in its essence, as manifest beauty (i.e. a perceptive imitation of nature or architectural predecessor), or as subversive interpretation (an instigator of change) and as a means to beautify function. To do so requires imagination, not image making, and like art this is also a human skill.

I have used several key words so far, which have been in themselves the subject of endless essays. (Art, Beauty, Imagination, Imitation, Invention, Function, Familiar etc.).

In architecture they are all relevant, but how do we know which are essential to authentic architecture (and can we recognise them when they're there?).

Can authenticity be stripped to its essentials in helping to define "authentic architecture"?

Authentic comes from the word *authentēs* - "one who does a thing himself".

That is of undisputed origin. It is genuine. It involves creativity, inventiveness and imagination.

Well, genuine also suggest no imitation, but we know that the Greek architecture of the Acropolis is genuine yet it imitates the timber construction of other earlier temples and secular buildings. Is it the art of imitating which gives rise to authentic architecture? Is it where the imitation changes the materials and thus avoids being a copy and by implication appears to be inventive that it becomes authentic? In other words, it is not stylistically copying but intellectually (art and science) extracting and inventing an architecture which is based on a familiar model. In this case, Greek timber construction. But what about its origins in nature - the tree? Can we return to this familiar model bypassing Greek architecture and all the others as well as we return into the past, which is in fact still our present. I believe we can, and can be more authentic to our own time. Any observer can understand the beauty of a tree. Our ability in imitating it, if we choose it as a familiar model, by extracting essential elements of it, be they visual or technical, will enable us to create/invent a form from a scientific understanding, thus allowing it to function, say, as a support. We then search for a visual representation of the support which raises the support function to that of beauty. But this artistic expression is both informed by our perception of the tree as well as the material we choose and the scientific understanding we have of that material. Let's assume we choose glass. Why glass, you may ask? Well, it's unexpected. Glass is very strong in compression, it is also perceived as fragile, and in our current world the tree has become symbolic of our fragile co-existence with the planet. Thus we begin to extract an artistic essence from the contemporary view of the tree - in this case symbolic.

But glass can also be very strong in tension - in the form of woven glass fibres. Here fragility is less apparent and we need to seek another essence of the tree to present in our glass support. We could look at Bamboos. Enormously flexible and with a high tensile performance - dynamically stable in strong winds. But is a bamboo a support? Well, we've seen bamboo scaffolding - does this suggest an assembly of bamboo supports to make an allusion to the tree? Or do we extract the essence of the fibrous arrangement in a bamboo stem. And what about the nodes, whereby these fibres are held by regularly spaced fibrous discs. How far do we go in replicating the visual appearance of bamboo? Now this way of thinking is the essence of the art of architecture in our model.

So let's say we've created a glass support, I don't mind if it's a tensile version or one in compression. Both would demonstrate a contemporary scientific understanding of glass as a material, and both could easily be developed in a form which would demonstrate the technology of glass production in our age.

This raises the simple question - why bother? Stone is good in compression, so is concrete or bricks; why go to the apparent extreme of using glass?

It also raises the question of the era in which we live and whether we should search for a new architectural support. I believe we should bother and we should search. This is man's natural instinct - for change - for the new. But it must be relevant.

Architecture is often quoted as being a reflection of the society we have. But some architecture, like some art, can and should be subversive. This can take a purely political position and expression or can reflect society by providing a symbolic mirror-image of itself, or, as in the case of Beaubourg it changed our perception of High Cultural Architecture as well as attempting to embrace the concept of a society in constant change. Very often the source of the symbolism, and even philosophy, is nature itself.

Let's return to our glass support. Imagine we believe in allowing the planet to have a voice, and we wish to show it through our architecture, and that we believe that the information age, like all others before, has a limited lifespan. So, on the one hand we have a desire for the planet's permanence and on the other the ephemeral, fragile nature of the information age as we know it: [the next one's going to be the Age of Intelligence, in both senses, cybernetic and human, I hope.]

Now the difficult bit: today, we are asked to design an office building for an information age company. It will house people and their two-dimensional imitating machines, faxes, computers and photocopiers - great paper consumers. Do we do it, or do we run away screaming that the consumer society is all wrong, we don't like commercial clients etc. etc? No, we do it, but we seek an art component and a scientific component in the construction.

Our pre-concept, i.e. not the idea of a building, but the idea of what we wish to express (art), is a dialogue between permanence and fragility. You might say that the Earth is the fragile bit, but I would suggest that this is only the superficial idea in our minds today. What I am really suggesting is that the Earth is permanent and that's the way it will always be (with or without us).

I would put forward the preconcept: -

Earth - permanent

Information Age - fragile/ephemeral, which is also ambiguous in that we are also probably suggesting that it is we humans who are ephemeral.

What do we do with this pre-concept when it comes to the request to design this office building? Well, we could perceive it literally. A solid base support and a fragile, crumbling or about-to-crumble office building - maybe some of you may think of a deconstructivist essay. No, it's not, for me, perceptive enough, it's not controversial in that it stops us and makes us rethink. I would reverse it, and give the support fragility and the office solidity. This conveys two things: the foundations below the column are in the earth, the office is built on fragility.

The concept of placing them on opaque solid floors (to give them their internal sense of security - companies centre on themselves) and for good measure solid walls with little windows because they're not particularly interested in the external environment (since they communicate using invisible channels, not semaphore - and natural light levels are never quite right, so they have the same company controlled artificial light everywhere). Now we introduce our glass supports, and beautify them - we allude to the tree trunk in our artistic way, and also the fragility, even ephemeral nature, of what we are supporting. What have we got? Mass, solidity, security, held up by "fragility". Is this authentic?

It follows an example (tree trunk) which is familiar:

it is of undisputed origin;

it is genuine;

it is truthful;

and if it is beautiful it will be architecture. It is not a style, it is the art and science of construction for human use.

## IN CONCLUSION

As architects you will be creating the future, not the present. You will be aware that the present is changing fast, and the information upon which you are helping to determine this future comes from the past.

Therefore, an essential ingredient of an authentic architecture today is recognising this and coming to conclusions on how to respond to it. If you sit on the fence you will produce boring buildings, if you duck it altogether you may or may not produce powerful consumer imagery, and if you decide to address this issue I would suggest you first consider and assess the following before you even begin to dream up the inklings of your next architectural concept:

1. your own moral values;
2. Your position with regard to society and its social values;
3. Your ability to perceive the essence in nature;
4. Your critical skills in appreciating architectural precedence.

From this, you may be able to go some way towards being honest with yourself - which in turn gives you the opportunity to be yourself. This will give you an essential base - an authentic foundation from which the architecture you help produce has a chance to be an authentic whole.

Finally, for your architecture to be authentic, I would suggest that you don't refer to any architectural magazine for at least another year or two. This may hurt you, but there is an immense wealth of knowledge and opportunity to develop your skills lying within your own intelligence, imagination and senses. Allow them to be nurtured naturally.

Here are some examples of our, dare I say, authentic architecture:

Eagle Rock  
Pearl of Dubai  
Museum of the Boat  
Natural History Museum  
Lintas  
La Villette Serre  
Stockley  
Pharmacy  
Madrid

**END**