“Temporality is obviously an organised structure, and these three so-called elements of time: past, present, future, must not be envisaged as a collection of 'data' to be added together… but as the structured moments of an original synthesis. Otherwise we shall immediately meet with this paradox: the past is no longer, the future is not yet, as for the instantaneous present, everyone knows that it is not at all: it is the limit of infinite division, like the dimensionless point.”
— Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness

Introduction

In 2007, I visited Montreal, Quebec for the first time. I was twenty. I experienced many things on that visit that have affected the way that I approach making art, but I will discuss two events. The first was a trip to parc Jean-Drapeau, originally the site of the 1967 Montreal World Exhibition, to the “picnique-electronique” that was on that day. Electroacoustic artist and musician Tim Hecker was filling in for an afternoon spots between DJs, which seemed strange and worth investigation.

I had never been to the park before and although my family likely had told me their stories of visiting Expo between April and October of 1967 while it was open, I do not remember having seen photos. There was more paraphernalia around in the 1990s. People still wore Expo 67 t-shirts, hats, and pins; there were postcards around, but I did not then understand much else about it. As I rode up the escalator out of the subway station, I had an experience that I later read reflected in another person’s writing–Douglas Murphy in his book *Last Futures*:

> A visitor stepping out of Jean-Drapeau metro station in Montreal, Canada, is confronted with one of the oddest sights in all of architecture. Through the branches of the trees in this island park rises a strange silvery object. It is transparent, dissolving against the sky, a fuzzy haze that hardens towards its perfectly circular profile. If the visitor walks towards this odd vision, the beautiful and delicate lattice of its construction is revealed, along with the platforms and the buildings within its spherical shell. A closer look shows that this fulgree dome is welded together from innumerable short steel bars, as plain as scaffolding poles. Surrounded by greenery in summer and encrusted with icicles in the winter, the dome seems to melt into the sky, a huge object with almost no presence. (Murphy, 7)

This structure, Buckminister Fuller’s dome and formerly the USA Pavilion for the Expo, was at that moment as nonsensical to me as the mathematics that had been required to describe and construct it. It was spontaneously reminiscent of the objects that I had become familiar with in computer graphics and video games, but seemed here completely alien. The dome’s frame still stands at the time of writing, despite being the first building of the exhibition destroyed. The rest of the park had changed. I had seen—in photographs and in person—suggestions of similar types of design and construction in buildings such as the London Egg, the Epcot dome in Florida, or in geodesic playgrounds for that matter, but none of these constructions struck me as suggestively as this building that had burned away all but its skeleton at the Expo.

Then, in 2007 with bass thumping in the background from the DJs behind me, along with half-bare, tanned, and oiled bodies writhing in the afternoon summer sun, there across the Saint Lawrence river was Habitat 67, another unlikely sight on the horizon. Murphy describes it this way:

> ...Expo 67 saw the construction of one of the most remarkable experiments in housing of the entire era, one which would influence a whole generation of designers. On a narrow spit of land to the west of the main expo islands… a most peculiar and seemingly unprecedented building was constructed. Entitled 'Habitat', it was the work of Moshe Safdie, an Israeli-Canadian architect who had only recently graduated from McGill University. It was actually based upon Safdie's own diploma project, 'A Three-Dimensional Modular Building System' (Murphy, 20)

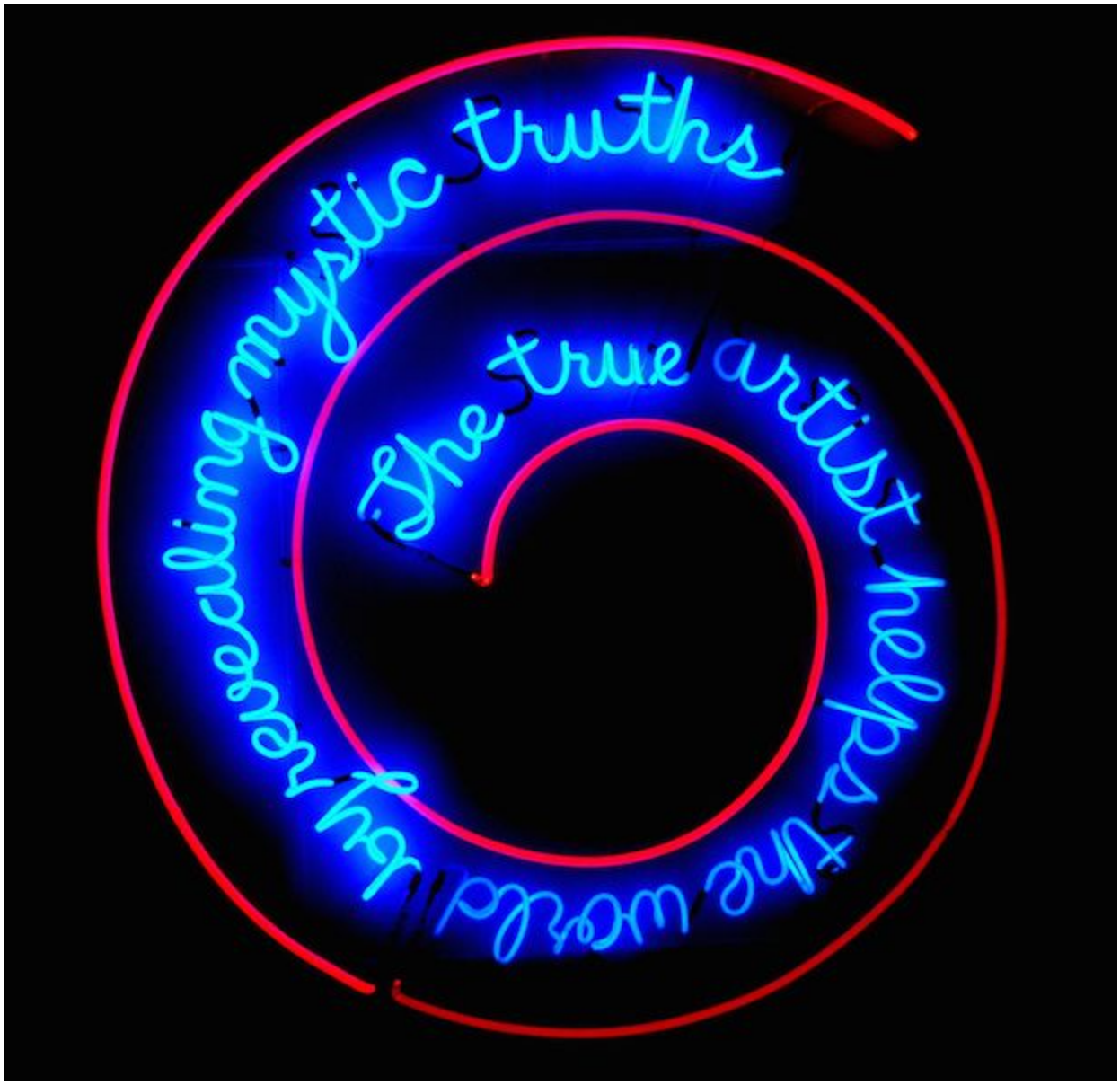
Safdie's modular buildings had launched his career and won him international fame that had renewed with each generation of architects that were taught this now-canonized complex.

Image of the Habitat 67 complex taken in April of 2006. Photo by Nora Vass.

A lego-brick-type design constructed an improbable geometry. Between Habitat and Fuller's dome, the setting did something for me that it may have done for many visitors. Even with the park in its nearly completely dismantled state—and with Habitat 67 crumbling despite the million dollar prices for units—it altered my conception of what was possible in building and form.

Indicating the reality of Quebec's economic and social hardships, much of the infrastructure and building that had been done vigorously throughout Expo 67 had since eroded, and Fuller's domes, along with megastructure architecture in general, had been dismissed from the realm of practical use.

Later, I visited the Bruce Nauman exhibit at the Musee d'art contemporain. Walking into the main entrance, I encountered his work, *The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths.* This neon work, created in 1967, was something that I could only read in a straightforward way at the time and it is the second moment of impact that I am trying to describe. I took this written message at face value. Encountering what then appeared to be the magnitude of Bruce Nauman's "genius", I thought, nearly out loud, and with no comprehension of a possible irony, "*Boy*, that is what I would like to do!"



Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, 1967. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo by Giulia van Pelt.

The exhibition was a survey of his life's work thus far. There was a video work from each decade following. By the time I reached the year that I was born, 1987, something promising and hopeful in that spiral had eroded in the work, leaving behind a new glowing truth. From the exhibition catalogue:

> *Clown Torture*, 1987, is a key work in [Nauman's] artistic career, with the tension between comedy and tragedy that it arouses in visitors. It depicts clowns wrestling with feelings of anxiety and isolation, and tackles such sensitive themes as insanity, surveillance and torture. ("Bruce Nauman.")

In the span of two decades, Nauman's response to mass media—beginning with the neon signs and followed by his video work—had seemingly soured until I began to understand the warning implicit in the neon sign. Nauman knew how to seduce me with the language of form, light, message, and time; he was demonstrating it consciously. I had never encountered this kind of generosity before. If he had the ability to convince me of something, why would he refer this ability back to itself?

The spiral then struck me, as well as a sense of simple morality in the artwork, rather than a dark cynicism, or a desire to enlighten, or protect, or intervene, if not without a dark sense of humor. In contrast, *Clown Torture* had none of this respectful distance, and I did not understand why. What had happened between 1967 and 1987? How was art and architecture in conversation with social and technological changes? And furthermore, what was it about the shift in the priorities of media that communicated so clearly a sense of possibility that closed into a corridor of surveillance and paranoia?

I left the museum contemplating these questions. I thought about the fact that *Clown Torture* had been made well before the advent of Reality TV, and that it may have had much less of a frightening impact on someone of my age than on an audience from thirty years ago. Was Nauman's art somewhat predictive then? Was I now living in a world that Nauman was contending with as I was only just born, one that came to conceptually overwrite the old, like tall ships arriving over the horizon?

Alongside these ruminations, a question about Fuller's dome and Safdie's apartments remained with me. I found the question simple but oddly difficult to answer, so it continued to fascinate me. It was this: if these structures were partly made possible by Computer Assisted Drawing (or CAD), why did the present otherwise look the way that it did? Where was the future, and why had faceless condominium complexes come to dominate the landscape rather than the extrapolations of these suggestive buildings?

These questions and the reading that resulted from them led to the production of my thesis work at the University of Oregon in May 2019, an exhibition of ten wall works and one sculpture. My work is an attempt to redirect the grandiose aspirations of those working in computing, design, and fabrication towards a more subtle and humanist understanding of its limits. I seek to promote accountability to material and labour, providing a soft challenge to the paradigm and priorities by which information technology has been employed to change the world thus-far. Each of these works can be described in tandem to a thought process, but I should emphasize at the outset that the intellectual project of investigating my interests and the associated histories resulted in a resounding disbelief that the artist is capable of revealing anything but further dilemmas. Perhaps that is, in the end, some kind of mystic truth.

- Neal Moignard, Eugene, Oregon, June 2019.

An Incendiary Proposal

Neal Moignard
Committee Chair: Ying Tan
Committee Members: Rick Silva, Sylvan Lionni
University of Oregon
Masters of Fine Art Thesis, submitted June 10, 2019.

Kickplate Damage (detail)

This aluminum wall piece is the revision of a component of a sculpture that I made for in 2012. The plate, in the original piece *Whorl*, was attached by an aluminum post to a speaker driver, and it would resonate with sine waves in order to create patterns on its surface in salt. The plate was responsive to being touched by hands or skin, and would select a frequency depending on the body capacitance of the interacting participants.

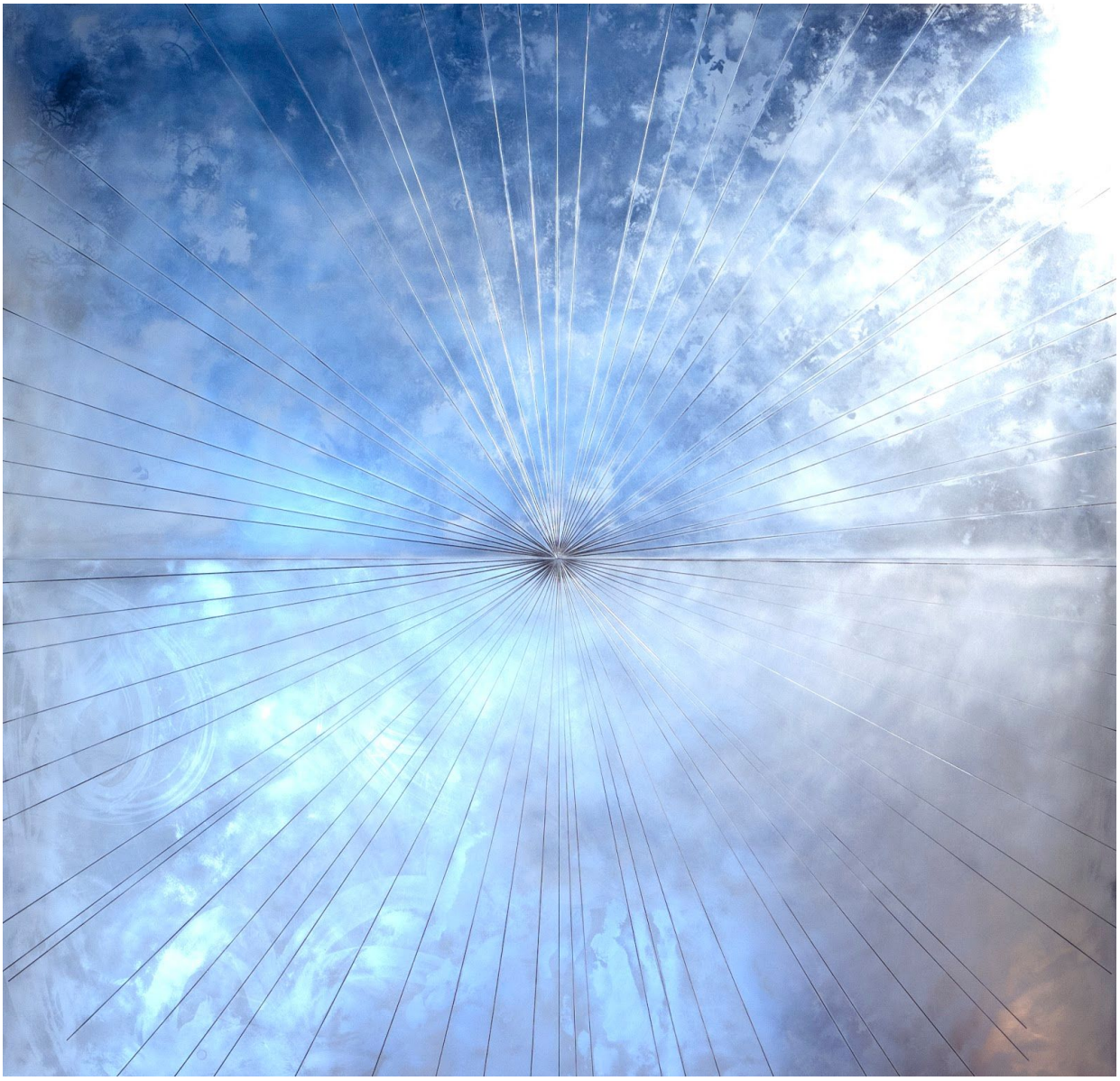
Whorl, Aluminum, Wood, Speaker Driver, Salt, 2012. 3’ x 3’x 1’.

While this piece showed, it was interacted with by roughly three-thousand participants, who left their finger and handprints all over the polished surface, leaving patina of skin oil and discoloration that I never cleaned from the piece. In my mind, this was a more significant record of the way that it had travelled, and the purpose it had played. I eventually discarded the rest of the sculpture, but kept the plate, and it remained one of the few artworks that I brought with me while moving from place to place for the past seven years.

In revising this piece, I wanted to connect with what I found significant about it in the first place; what compelled me to carry it with me. I recall the satisfaction at uncovering the etched design, and understanding that the sine wave would be travelling from the centre of the plate to the

corners. The sine waves that were resonant would scale into a raga as they followed a pattern of harmonic octaves. The patterns had a kind of flattened spherical form, when projected onto two-dimensional space. This piece provided me a lot of insight into the way that energy moved and could activate surfaces if tuned. I mean this sentence in the most broad way possible. It helped me to start to see transmission between objects, people, and their environment in a way that I had been unable to perceive before.

After carrying it around for so long, the original work started to feel disconnected from these events and began to take on its own quality. I started to imagine that it was a closeup of an polished kick plate installed in a commercial kitchen, hospital, or the like. I imagined a dent in this plate, and I imagined the custodial services attempting to buff out or repair this object, to mend its accumulated damage. I visualized becoming closer to this dent, closer to the surface being exploded outward so that every single gesture, scuff, smear, wipe, and buff would be visible. The piece is an image of a dent or ding, ultimately, and similarly to *Shipping Pallet with PVC Pipe*, I hope it generates a sense of possibility inside of something banal and familiar, to suggest an error or incidence as a legitimate point out of which significance can emanate. Meaning and significance collapsed into a single point, after Sartre.



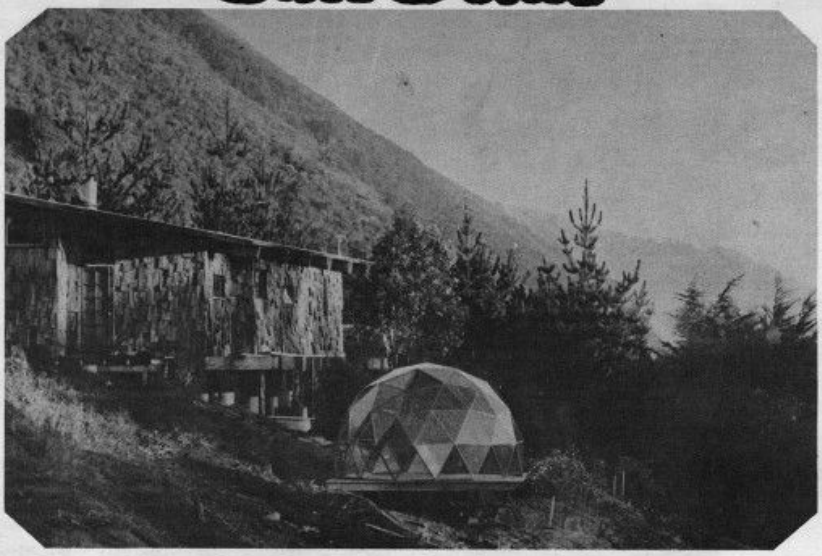
Kickplate Damage (detail), Aluminum, 2019. 8’ x 8’.

Trainers, 1-9

Trainers, 1-9, Hardboard, Plastic-Coated Fabric, 2019. 11” x 17”.

Trainers, 1-9, are paintings. They are nine and nine colours of plastic-coated fabric pulled over fiberboard that has been cut to specification on a computer controlled router. They are assembled without adhesive and the fabric binds the pieces together when it is stretched. There are ten structural fins in each piece that interlock in the method of flat-pack furniture. The footprint of each one is the same, but there are three different variants in height. The first is roughly two inches tall, the second variation is four, and the third is six. The fabric wraps closely to the frame to emphasize its structure.

Sun Dome

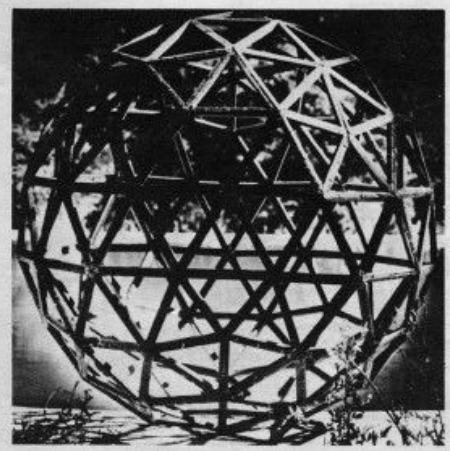


The sun dome is a logical next step after model making; it's like making a full scale model. It is cheap, lightweight and easy to build. It is a panel frame system, with triangles preassembled in the shop, then fastened together to make the structure. After building the models and small dome described below, I next built the full size dome in Big Sur, which is the same basic system, with plywood instead of plastic skin. Two years later we built the Aluminum Sun Dome (see p. 29), this time with aluminum skin.

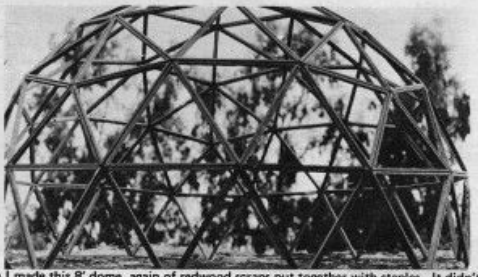
R. Buckminster Fuller's sun dome plans were originally published in the May 1966 issue of *Popular Science*. The plans were then improved and blueprinted and are available for $5 from

Popular Science Monthly
355 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

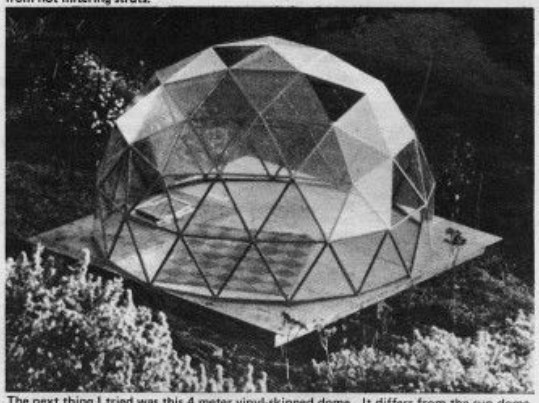
For the fee you receive clear and simple instructions for making a 3-frequency 3/8 sphere, polyethylene skin greenhouse or swimming pool cover. A simple system: two triangles make the entire dome and a hand stapler is the only fastening device used.



When I first got the plans, I made a model of D-Stix. Next, this 1-meter-diameter sphere from redwood scraps ripped on a table saw. I first put it together with staples, then removed staples and glued it together with hot melt glue.



Then I made this 8' dome, again of redwood scraps put together with staples. It didn't take too long, and I learned a great deal by being able to crawl inside it. I covered different triangles with cardboard, testing different window patterns. Note the gap between triangles from not mitering struts.



The next thing I tried was this 4 meter vinyl-skinned dome. It differs from the sun dome plans in that it had an extra course of triangles at the bottom, making it a 5/8 sphere rather than 3/8; it is bolted rather than stapled together; and the struts are ripped to avoid the gap. We used it for a greenhouse, for guests, and for watching stars on clear nights. It was built in 1967 on a hillside in Big Sur. When you climbed to the top of the ridge, about ½ mile, it looked like a soap bubble glistening in the sunlight.

14

Fuller's Sun Dome design, featured in Lloyd Kahn's Domebook 2, 1972

They are made, more-or-less, as a developed response to a question posed in the introduction: if Fuller's structures were made possible by CAD half a century ago, why did the present otherwise look the way that it did?

The first part of the answer, explaining why neither dome housing nor Safdie's modular homes took off, is the easy part. Fuller's dome was widely popular with California hippies and West Coast back-to-the-landers of all kinds, the geometry and its futuristic construction going hand-in-hand with a generalized doctrine that technology could be used to ensure the survival of humanity rather than its destruction in the prevailing climate of the Cold War.

New "space-age" materials—often a literal consequence of the Space Race—suggested entirely new ways of approaching structures and their practical purposes. Modularity suggested lightweight, transportable, adaptive structures that proposed to be readily deployable into nearly any environmental condition. Part of the conception of mastery over nature, at this moment, had to do with a technologically-enabled integration; that the ability to unveil the mysteries of nature and the organic through computer logic would allow a reintegration with nature, a kind of techno-utopian existence whereby the computer would provide a platform by which to exchange with human tendencies that had been lost in the industrial revolution.

I have been interested in architectural projects of the 1960s and 70s, trying to locate a moment where there was the broadest and most open sense of possibility as to what could be accomplished with post-war computing technology. At the time, mathematical structures that had no way of previously being rendered began to be visualized and rendered with complex, precise geometry becoming a possibility for new forms of construction.

For me, nothing sums up this vision more accurately than the American beat poet, Richard Brautigan:

> *I like to think*
> *(it has to be!)*
> *of a cybernetic ecology*
> *where we are free of our labors*
> *and joined back to nature,*
> *returned to our mammal*
> *brothers and sisters,*
> *and all watched over*
> *by machines of loving grace.*

Regardless of whether or not Brautigan or the other hippies' vision for a new world came to pass, the blind optimism of this moment informs these pieces.

When looking for how to build an icosahedron for the kinetic, interactive sculpture project *Whorl*, I first came across author and builder Lloyd Kahn's *Domebook 2,* which was a demonstration of the all-encompassing Do-It-Yourself culture of Northern California while still containing a wealth

of useful information. Dome geometry tables, construction diagrams, along with practical building tips and clear demonstration drawings were laid out along with images of young women in paisley headbands smoking joints, referring to Stuart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalogue* self-published aesthetic.

However, only a year after publishing *Domebook 2*, Kahn admitted to the impracticality of domes as a housing option, and began to discourage his readers in attempting to construct them, moving his support instead towards traditional, pre-industrial methods of construction. Kahn wrote:

> Metaphorically, our work on domes now appears to us to have been smart: mathematics, computers, new materials, plastics. [...] We now realize that there will be no wondrous new solution to housing, that our work, though perhaps smart, was by no means wise. In the past year, we have discovered that there is far more to learn from wisdom of the past: from structures shaped by imagination, not mathematics, and built of materials appearing naturally on the earth, than from any further extension of whiteman technoplastic prowess. (Kahn)

Around this time, Kahn was invited to present at a conference at MIT on Responsive Housebuilding Design where he described some of the first speculative applications of computer-assisted building techniques, such as extruding computer drawings done with a magnetic pencil into material buildings, using foam. The robotic techniques did even less than disgust Kahn: within his framework of priorities in housing, they were closer to a laughable misunderstanding of what humans appreciated or actually wanted from their homes. Kahn seemed to acknowledge what was seductive about the design and the promise of technology:

> This computer/airbuilding/plastics thing that seemed to be on so many of these architects' minds jarred me, as it seemed roughly parallel with a logical extension of some assumptions I'd made 3-4 years earlier on the idea of housebuilding technology. The assumption, encouraged for a time in my mind by Bucky Fuller, was that we will have to depend upon new technologies, new materials, new designs to solve the housing crisis on an overpopulated earth. (Kahn)

Kahn's essay, *Smart But Not Wise*, goes on to question the so-called myth of progress directly, concluding with a question:

> MIT, architecture schools, have you ever considered that in some cases, designs get about as good as they're going to get, and then don't improve for millions of years. [..] Have architects, builders ever considered that our grandparents, but more specially, the Indians, built far more sensibly than today's building industry? And that maybe looking for new structures and new materials isn't that important right now? That you can't think about building, or design unless you consider the lifestyle? And that the extravagant use of resources in the US now can't last, and is in fact maintained at the expense of subjugated, bombed, exploited third world people everywhere? (Kahn)

Shipping Pallet with PVC Pipe

Shipping Pallet with PVC Pipe, Wood, acrylic paint, porcelain, 2019.

This is a formalized sculpture of a shipping pallet with porcelain PVC pipe. I imagine this to be the leftovers of the used pipe thrown back onto the pallet at the end of a job, pieces left from the fulfillment of an order. The pallet has been emptied, and the scraps are all that is left.

I wanted to create a sense of value around the mass-manufactured materials, and to draw attention to the construction of so many of these objects and their formal reality. I chose to make it out of a prime cut beam of alder, a wood that would typically be used to buttress the ceiling of a building or used as a decorative support due to the quality and consistency of the grain. I cut up the beam with a feeling that I was damaging it, or destroying it, by turning it into pallet wood.

I attempted to make a “bespoke” pallet; an object that exudes luxury while referring to something banal. I felt that this was a way to draw attention not the reality of the artwork, but the reality of the pallet as a symbol to be referred to; an omnipresent resource provided by an endless network of commodities, so ubiquitous that it has almost dissolved in to the present moment, similarly to the shipping container.

In this regard, the PVC pipe has a complementary tendency. I chose to cast the pipe in porcelain in order to cause a further confusion with mundane PVC pipe while also emphasizing its latent formal qualities: the perfection of its surface, the consistency of its interior diameter, the predictability of its application. By giving these same qualities to a tempermental, non-plastic material, I feel that I am making a suggestion or pointing to a possibility of a different form of presence for these objects to occupy.

While taking an Architecture and Sustainability class at the University of Oregon in the fall of 2018, the term 'Embodied Energy' was used to refer to materials in buildings being considered not only for the cost of their manufacture and transport, but in terms of the sum total energy that it takes to create and move them. The idea that cost is a separate metric from energy expended is an important distinction. In an architectural sense, the question "How might a more cogent understanding of the material matter of architecture's transformation of the earth alter the very practice, design, and construction of architecture? Or, if a building knew where it came from and the impact of that history, what would it do differently?" (White, 61) is asked in Embodied Energy and Design.

Financial cost reflects a value that relates to the supply, demand, and proximity of materials, whereas embodied energy could be said to point to the value of the circumstances necessary to manifest or assemble. If this becomes troublesome to define, it is perhaps because such an encompassing definition carries ethical implications: that things possess value before human action or knowledge activates them implies an ethics that is not human-centric.

Jacques Cousteau argued in Jacques Cousteau's Amazon Journey that the value of the Amazon rainforest was not its material or resources, but that it was a place where things came into being that did not yet exist and could not be imagined. This ability to generate the unimaginable is a good example of a kind of intrinsic value that is impossible to adequately quantify, similarly to a historic or religious artifact or site. If the rainforest as an embodied potential were considered as a generator of things beyond the human imagination, its materials take on a value only in their chaotic configuration. To systematically organize, categorize, and deconstruct may reveal some illusion of constituent parts, but only at the destruction of its most valuable function.

I feel that my existence is partly an act of violence upon the process that has produced me, and that this intrinsic violence is not reducible, but part of my nature and the reason for my survival.

“Irvine: a new Silicon Valley. Electronic factories with no openings to the outside world, like integrated circuits. A desert zone, given over to ions and electrons, a supra-human place, the product of inhuman decision-making. By a terrible twist of irony, just had to be here, in the hills of Irvine, that they shot *Planet of the Apes*. But, on the lawn, American squirrels tell us all is well, and that America is kind to animals, to itself, and the rest of the world, and that in everyone’s heart there is a slumbering squirrel. The whole Walt Disney philosophy eats out of your hand with these pretty little sentimental creatures in grey fur coats. For my own part, I believe that behind these smiling eyes there lurks a cold, ferocious beast fearfully stalking us… On the same lawn with the squirrels stands a sign put there by some society or other of Jesus: ‘Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Grenada - We are a violent society in a violent world!’”

- Jean Baurdrillard, America, 1989

White Saviors

Artist’s digital rendering of a person in a habitable modular dome. 2019.

The first time I began thinking about temporary shelter was when I was seventeen and travelled to the Baja of Mexico on a mission trip with a number of other Canadian Christian teenagers and two employees of our high-school. The trip was budgeted for and planned by the school,

but each student paid their own way to Mexico in order to construct a shelter for a “family in need”.

When we reached the site we were to build at, the existing shelters—home to dozens of families—were boxes side-by-side that shared a wall, constructed out of garage doors. The reason for this method of construction had to do with the people that had constructed them: individuals from California, Oregon, Washington, and Canada that had travelled over the border since the 1970s to construct housing as a humanitarian project for the itinerants that were often in the area attempting to save enough money in order to move to the United States.

The garage doors were a prefabricated construction material that for time was able to be imported without trouble across the Tijuana border without much scrutiny, according to accounts. The difficulty was that the four-sided cubes with dirt floors–the logical outcome of a structure built of old garage doors–had no stove and were not intended to be used for shelter any time but in the summer, when it was warm at night and there wouldn’t be any need for an indoor fire. As decades passed and the number of migrants increased, they were inhabited year-round, and there was no way to mitigate the smoke that the indoor fires created to keep the thin-walled shelters warm during the winter months. Respiratory problems from the smoke troubled the children especially.

They were not built to accommodate consistent occupation. I was told by our hosts that the cost of transported drinking water and food would often comprise the whole of the labourer’s wages. Sometimes the individuals or families would save enough money to purchase a plot of land, or reserve it, but without the means to build on the property, their reservations would often lapse at the loss of a deposit.

For the magnitude of the resources used to provide a trip to Mexico for our high school group, we saw how our investment influenced the community. My personal conclusion, at that time, was that the project of building a house was more to the benefit of those visiting and doing the building. The problem of providing effective temporary or semi-permanent shelter appropriate to the population was an altogether different one.

I wanted to solve these problems. As an individual, I had been told that my actions were most valuable if they directly helped others. This was the first time I had seen a problem that was tangible and outside of myself, and for that reason it provided an opportunity to “do good” in somewhat sophomoric terms.

So this is how I see my tendency towards these structures. They are a kind of off-gassing of good intentions, or knee-jerk altruism that has pursued me as a kind of white guilt. I have wanted to contribute to the well-being of others in the direct ways that have been represented to me. I have to conclude that these changes would best come about by endorsing personal and political changes at home. Perhaps including building oneself an efficient, thoughtfully-sized and materially constructed shelter is one way. These pieces are the embodiment of a set of ideals

that could not have found a more appropriate resting place. The problems I encountered in the Baja—and the like—are not problems to be solved by technology. These tendencies are best made into decoration; they are most compelling understood as examples of, as Kahn put it, “whiteman technoplastic prowess.”

Conclusion

2/22/2019

I was sitting at a picnic table today across from Luke Fischbeck, who I would blame or credit (depending on the day) for putting me in the situation of having sought to be an artist by profession. The last time I met with this person was a decade ago. The status of computational art and its cultural context was very different then. He has the tired but happy expression of a new father, and he is fascinated with his new infant. Luke's interactive artwork, *make a baby,* which he and his partner Sarah produced in collaboration over ten years ago, was the first digital interface I had seen that appeared to redeem the deficiencies of the computer as I have experienced them. It created a layer of participation that acknowledged the human body and its intellect as integrated and pointed to what was discarded in the dominant paradigm of how computers could cooperate with humans. Rather than compromising psychological space in order to correlate one's thoughts with a machine, it was acting as a means of enhancing and lubricating human interaction to create a participatory situation. This, above all, seemed valuable because of the effect it had on the audience's ability to communicate and establish trust with one another. This question of how to communicate directly with others and establish a trustworthy dialogue, regardless of content, is what defines my necessity in art.

Much has changed since 2008 when I first met Luke and set upon adapting the code for his project into my first interactive art project—I am more doubtful than I was then that it is possible to responsibly access this trust through the means of contemporary technology.

"Ambivalence," Luke said to me. "I try to exercise ambivalence. I don't care whether or not people think I am doing something of value. I go for walks with people. That's my art practice right now. It's good for anxiety."
"It's chilling when you realize there is no consensus reality".

"Yes, it is cold out today," I answered, thinking about something else.

"No, no," he laughed, "It's chilling. To realize that there's no consensus about what reality is."

"Oh. Yeah, it sure can be." I said, shivering in the February wind.

What inspired me in Luke and Sarah's art at the outset was that it appeared to redeem the negative effects that a mediating network seemed to have upon a social situation.

When I was growing up around computers, forming bonds with my friends through the internet, music was how I finally found a way to be in direct contact with other young people that had a similar desire for adventure. The communal atmosphere of a musical performance felt like a

bizarre church, where there was an acceptability of behaviour and strangeness that appealed to a neurotic teenagers.

Our generation had the next icon of complacency and it was a person at a keyboard believing that their ideas–expressed through the soon-to-be entirely mediated and monetized internet–could affect positive change in the world. This conceit, carried forward by new "disruptive" applications of technology, continues to eat away the functioning social and political infrastructure of the western world replacing it with a new conception of order; with it has come the unfortunate reality that Nauman seemed to have been digesting in his art as early as the 80s.

In a recent magazine piece for *WIRED* magazine, technologist Paul Ford makes this statement regarding the relationship of design and power in his work:

> No one loves tech for tech's sake. All of this was about power—power over the way stories were told, the ability to say things on my own terms. The aesthetic of technology is an aesthetic of power—CPU speed, sure, but what do you think we're talking about when we talk about "design"? That's just a proxy for power; design is about control, about presenting the menu to others and saying, "These are the options you wanted."
>
> Technology is a whole world that looks nothing like the world it seeks to command. A white world, a male world, and—it breaks my heart to say it [...] a lonely world. Maybe I'm just projecting some teenage metaphysics onto a lively and dynamic system, but I can't fully back away from that sense of monolithic loneliness. We're like a carpenter who spent so long perfecting his tools that he forgot to build the church.

I was raised and trained to believe, in part because of my social position, that computers could and would provide solutions for social and economic problems and that my generation–same as any other–had the opportunity to imagine a new world. What was once surprising (and is now unsurprising) is that the growing problems turned out to be inextricably linked to those with the intent to find solutions, such as myself. Even as I turn away from these motivations, there are many more young people like me seeking to impress upon the world their vision of a proper, functional design in hopes that they might be able to make it better by continuing to develop and engage. Yet the thinking process itself, one that seeks control and stability via design, is at the root of the issue.

How to redeem this situation?

"Ambivalence," Luke said to me.

I don't know man, I don't -

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to my thesis committee Ying Tan, Sylvan Lionni, and Rick Silva, as well as Chelsea Couch, Doran Walot, Craig Fahner, Claire Anderson, Tom Coates, Stacy Jo Scott, Talon Claybrook, and Stephen Nachtigall.