Bernard Tschumi's work in the late 1970s can be linked to the visual and literary practices of Dada and Surrealism, and it can be read following critiques of avant-garde tactics.

# Bloody fingerprints: Tschumi and the avant-garde

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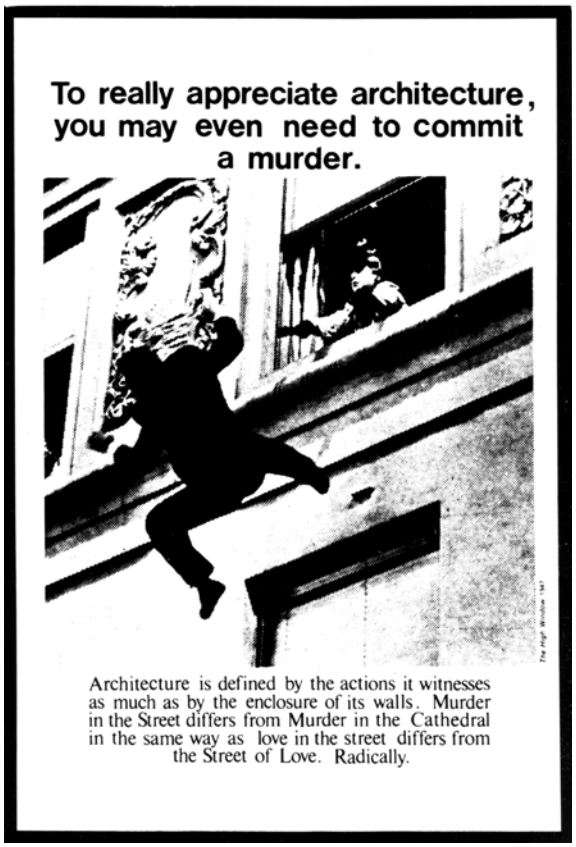
> *Only one mediocre book has been written about celebrated escapes. What you must know is that beneath all the windows that you may take a notion to jump out of, amiable imps hold out the sad sheet of love by the four cardinal points. My inspection had lasted only a few seconds before I knew what I wanted to know. The walls of Paris, what is more, had been covered with posters showing a man masked with a black domino, holding in his left hand the key of the fields: this man was myself.*[1]

The closing passage of André Breton's 1924 text 'Soluble Fish' concludes with an ambiguous passage interweaving windows, posters, Paris and escape. While an iconic text of Surrealist automation, the passage is reminiscent of the poster (and advertisement) series that Bernard Tschumi undertook in the 1970s, which was aimed at disrupting the orthodoxy of architectural criticism and re-aligning architectural practice with a more destructive and revolutionary current. Among the most well known of these posters shows the photograph of a man jumping (or being pushed) from an open window which carries the caption: 'to really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder' *[1]*. Beneath the 'window' in Tschumi's poster is a fragment of text that, in a number of ways, indicates the broader themes that preoccupied Tschumi in this period. It reads:

> *Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral in the same way as love in the street differs from the Street of Love. Radically.*[2]

Breton had expressed similar sentiments fifty years earlier when, in the 'Second Manifesto of Surrealism', he revealed that 'the simplest surrealist act consists of dashing down the street, pistol in hand and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd.'[3] Both of these acts privilege violent human experience, for which architecture becomes simultaneously the witness and context. Both Dada and Surrealism used posters to disseminate ideas to a broader urban audience and Tschumi was aware of the precedent set by these guerrilla media tactics. That Tschumi was engaged with the ideas of Dada and Surrealism in this period is evident from the essay that he contributed to the 1978 edition of *Architectural Design* on the subject of *Surrealism and Architecture*, edited by Dalibor Vesely.[4] Tschumi's essay had argued for a contemporaneous reinvigoration of Dada and Surrealist concepts and had, presciently, singled out the marginalised and discursive practices that lay beneath Dada and Surrealism as the archaeological foundation through which this project might find inspiration. Tschumi's 'Architecture and its Double' was completed in the same year as the poster and served as a backdrop to his *Manhattan Transcripts* project (ranging from 1976 to 1980).[5] In all of these separate projects, Tschumi interwove processes native to Dada and Surrealism in order to question the representational traditions of architecture and the systems of power that they supported.




1 Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture: Murder* (1978)

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This paper investigates the extent to which Tschumi's work from the late 1970s, corresponding with the publication in German of *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, adopts and appropriates certain techniques of the historical avant-garde, as well as the graphic and intellectual style of Dada and Surrealism. Tschumi's experiments with montage and collage in both the *Advertisements for Architecture* and *Manhattan Transcripts*, demonstrate historical traces of the avant-garde as well as interweaving threads that link to the arguments of Walter Benjamin and Peter Bürger. The paper traces the political context for Tschumi's work in the 1970s, its relationship to the literary and visual strategies of the avant-garde and the emergence of a new hybridised strategy for architectural representation. The role of medium in Tschumi's work is critical to this methodological approach, which witnesses the fragmentation of architecture into an increasingly dispersed array of media and audiences and with clear political and spatial objectives. The relationship between Breton's literary method, violently marrying text and image, and Tschumi's disassembly of architectural fragments (both visual and written) shows an important and unrecognised decentring of the autonomous architectural object in the 1970s that has important resonances with theories of the avant-garde in art theory and literature. Focusing on these representational strategies, rather than the later built work of Tschumi, the paper sets out to reconstruct the 'fingerprints' of the avant-garde in Tschumi's work, and opens broader questions with regard to the much-hyped failure of the avant-garde as a social and political phenomenon in the 1970s and beyond.

## Tschumi and politics

In Anthony Vidler's 1992 work *The Architectural Uncanny,*[6] he reads Tschumi's Parc de la Villette as a stylistic restructuring of the received language of 1920s Constructivism, whereby the architect 'selects a language of elemental forms, already stated in this avant-garde project and submits them to an almost contemptuous disassembling and reassembling'.[7] This method reinforced the functionless nature of the folly while preserving the play between the English term and the French *folie* (meaning madness)[8] resulting in 'a mad shot in the dark that at once cherishes avant-gardism but comprehends its madness'.[9] Vidler's argument, which opens on to broader questions with regard to the relationship between contemporary architecture and the historical avant-garde, sees a formal and spatial relationship with earlier radical precedents, but a shifting of the critique that is implied. Tschumi's 'assembling and disassembling' of avant-garde forms through the folly has, in the last decade, unravelled through quite different pathways. Global hamburger chains *[2]*, for instance, have come to occupy and appropriate these indeterminate spatial types while, at the same time, panels of red peel poetically away from the architectural object in a cycle re-enacting Tschumi's own reverence for the ruined Villa Savoye as a student in the 1960s *[3]*. Neither process detracts from the spatial and formal significance of the park, but rather illuminates the complex social and political forces in which architecture is continually enmeshed.

This relationship echoes in a number of important ways the broader investigations into the neo-avant-garde that took place in art theory in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which were centred on Peter Bürger's influential and provocative text, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. In this text, Bürger develops an argument that the neo-avant-garde art of the 1960s reproduced the methods and tactics of the historical avant-garde, but in a depoliticised context so that the critique mounted by the avant-garde against the 'institution of art' was no longer present. Where the historical avant-garde had effectively sublated the spheres of art and life, neo-avant-garde art had not sustained this and, as a result, was effectively assimilated by the bourgeois institutional structures of art that the historical avant-garde had set out to displace. This argument, in part, was suggested a generation earlier in the work of Walter Benjamin, who was critical of the avant-garde in the 1920s for failing to develop an appropriate artistic language that could transcend the academic and theoretical discourses of the avant-garde and carry this message to a broader and more diverse audience. In the work of both authors, the failure to develop such a language was inseparable from the failure of the avant-garde: a well-intentioned and intellectually radical impetus that had become ineffective in achieving social or political reform as a lived reality.

Tschumi, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, consistently advocated a radical approach to architectural theory and production, and one that would effectively undermine the existing structures and expectations of the period. It was, coincidentally, to the readers of *Artforum* that Tschumi most concisely directed this critique, in itself a recognition of its intellectual aspirations.[10] Tschumi's conclusion was that, far from being ambivalent with regard to politics, architecture was central to politics and, moreover, the most mainstream practices of architecture merely reinforced conservative models of social organisation. For Tschumi, architectural form was primarily neutral (in a political context at least) and it was the use of space and its programming which enabled architects to engage with broader social and revolutionary forces. Tschumi's introduction to *Architecture and Disjunction* stresses the roots of his architectural practice in the aftermath of the Paris riots,[11] drawing specific attention to his early attempts to instigate a guerrilla architecture through research into the lessons of Belfast and Derry.[12] In the same text, Tschumi describes his ambition for 'an architecture that might change society'[13] and argues that 'the urban condition itself could be a means to accelerate social change'.[14] Of equal significance in this regard was Tschumi's proposition that urbanity, in its nature, could resist conservatism. He was teaching courses at the time such as 'Urban Politics' and 'the Politics of Space'[15] as well as researching the topic of 'urban insurgency' with the view to publishing a book on the subject.[16]


2 Bernard Tschumi, Parc de la Villette (2012), author

3 Bernard Tschumi, Parc de la Villette (2007), author

It was in the same period that Tschumi also argued for the importance of the ideas of Dada and Surrealism in initiating a project for the radical reinvention of architectural experience. Written in 1978, and corresponding with a number of Tschumi's formative creative projects, Tschumi's essay 'Architecture and its Double'[17] draws into question the nature of Dada and Surrealism's engagement with architecture and its ongoing relevance to contemporary practice. Tschumi's position is clear; the avenues through which Dada and Surrealism have been tied to architecture have been limited by a fascination for the visual and an obsession with objects. Tschumi laments the emphasis on the 'Chiricoesque landscapes or buildings in the shape of breasts',[18] preferring an emphasis on the methods and texts of Dada and Surrealism and, most importantly, the experience of architecture rather than its superficial representation. Tschumi argues that the evolution of technology that had distracted architecture in the 1920s had been resolved by the 1970s, prompting a renewed investigation of the major themes of Dada and Surrealism and from a novel and skewed perspective.[19] Tschumi aligns this investigation with the work of four radicals – Marcel Duchamp, Antonin Artaud, Georges Bataille and Frederick John Kiesler – who each attacked Surrealism for, in his words, 'not going far enough'.[20] These figures refused the 'cult of the object' and drew issues of architecture into sharp focus. In their own way, each redirected Surrealism away from visual symbolism and towards a practice of radical experience.[21]

Tschumi's argument in 'Architecture and its

Double' is that the Surrealists, and Breton in particular, privileged the architectural object at the expense of the architectural experience or, to a lesser extent, the urban event. In this sense, architecture is documented through alternative modes of representation – the novel, the photograph, the film – but rarely, if at all, in its own medium. This degrading of the medium of architecture is also a denial of its validity. Tschumi laments that 'surrealist architecture is no more than an offshoot – a poor child – of surrealist poetry, painting or even sculpture'.[22] While Tschumi's argument goes on to insist that an advanced spatiality can be found in the works of Duchamp, Bataille, Artaud and Kiesler, it is worth lingering on his critique of Breton and the impact this has for his own architectural practice and theory of urbanism.

While acknowledging the critique that Tschumi mounts against Breton's narrow visual reading of architecture, there are a number of important and under-recognised connections that can be drawn between Tschumi's projects from this period and the broader tactics of Breton. This, like his own investigation of Surrealism, demands a focus on the method rather than the product as the primary intellectual legacy of these explorations. While Vidler rightly calls into question the 'literal' resonances with Constructivism that appear in the follies at Parc de la Villette (and the lack of a 'revolutionary aesthetic'),[23] there is a certain methodological confluence between Tschumi's earlier projects and the literary tactics of Surrealism generally and Breton specifically. While Tschumi criticised the literalism of Breton, his tactics for architecture in the same period – and specifically in the *Advertisements for Architecture* and *Manhattan Transcripts* – showed clear affiliations with Breton's approach to the literary text and the fracturing of signifiers that underpinned his own deconstructed process. Tschumi criticises the conservatism of Breton's Surrealism in its appropriation of architecture while at the same time deploying its methods in a rejuvenated form. Equally, where Tschumi's critique highlighted the failure of Surrealism to engage with the specific medium of architecture, his own strategies for representation in the period were trained on the dissolution of this very medium, inventing architecture from the fragments of advertising, film, text and image. It is within this dissolution, that the avant-garde credentials of Tschumi's work are at their most pronounced.

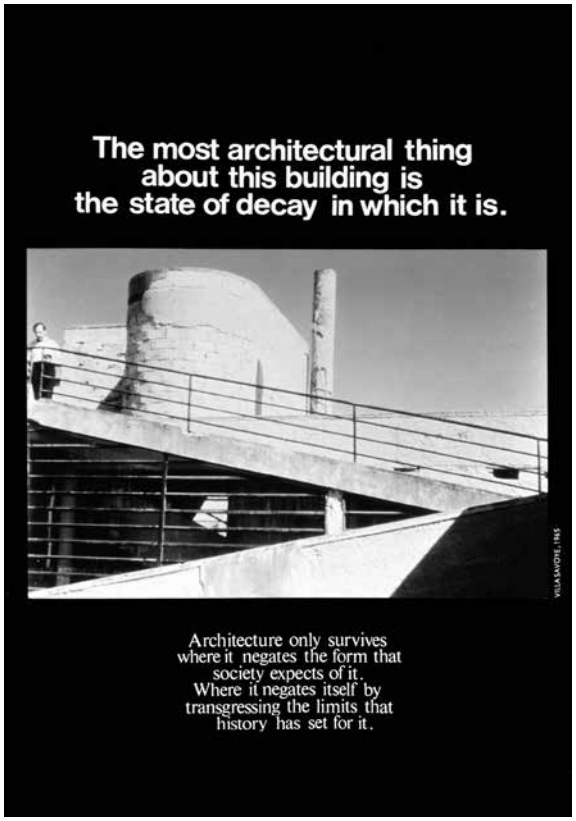
## Montage

For both Benjamin and Bürger, the role of montage was central to the legacy of the avant-garde as it effectively required the viewer to piece together the fragments of everyday life in a way that transcended representation and privileged action and response. The failure to link or synthesise the various fragments of a work into a consistent whole triggered the experience of shock within the viewer and this immediate and personal reaction connected the individual to the immediate experience of life. There is no doubt that Tschumi had a detailed understanding of the avant-garde concept of montage and, in a number of instances, drew inspiration from it.[24] Tschumi drew heavily from film theory in his formative writings[25] and the process established in Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts* is essentially a form of architectural montage where the independent fields of *space*, *event* and *movement* become interchangeable and infinitely variable. This is, as Tschumi acknowledges, Surrealist in nature.[26] For Tschumi, his use of the device of montage is related to 'an art of rupture, whereby invention resides in contrast—even in contradiction'.[27] This can be compared with Adorno's definition of montage: '[when] the negation of synthesis becomes a principle of form'.[28]

Bürger's theorisation of collage and montage in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, rests primarily on the work of John Heartfield, which embodies a unique structure between images and words that has, subsequently, come to be considered as paradigmatic. The structure for these images, as Bürger argues, is fixed: there is an image and two texts. In Bürger's terms, they are compiled from 'an (often coded) title (*inscription*) and a lengthier explanation (*subscription)*'.[29] The primary example that Bürger cites[30] is *Adolf – the Superman – Who Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk [4]* that is illustrative of Bürger's key points. The image contains a manipulated X-ray of Adolf Hitler, where the oesophagus and stomach are a continuous trail of coins. The political message, divulged between the twin titles and split either side of the stark but iconic graphic, is characteristic of the structure of Dada montage and, for Bürger, is 'anti-aesthetic' in nature.[31]

Benjamin's writing on Heartfield's work in 'Author as Producer', nearly four decades earlier, is less restrained. While it acknowledges the revolutionary potential embodied in the development of these techniques, it also illustrates the ineffective means through which they are eventually mass-produced. For Benjamin, the Dada montage was one of the last 'authentic' media and was evidence of *life* itself, rather than its reinvention or reproduction through representation. In a passage where, once again, montage and murder coincide, Benjamin writes, 'the tiniest authentic fragment of daily life says more than painting [...] just as the bloody fingerprint of a murderer on the page of a book says more than the text'.[32]

Consider this murderous fragment from Benjamin's work in the context of Tschumi's *Advertisements*, which deliberately recreate the structure of Dada montage but privilege architecture, the event and an alteration of its reception. Tschumi's decision to create *Advertisements for Architecture* is an obvious affront to the status of the work of architecture, as well as an acceptance of the role of the culture industry in framing the expanding context through which architecture is reproduced. In this sense, Tschumi's *Advertisements*, like the tactics of Heartfield, operate in a context that transforms the traditional audience of architecture




4 John Heartfield, *Adolf – the Superman – Who Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk* (1932)

5 Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture: Decay* (1977)

and attempts to offer resistance to the institutions that have contained it. The theme that runs through all nine of Tschumi's advertisements[33] is that a different mode of reception is obligatory in order for architecture to fulfil its cultural and social task. Whether it be recognition of the sensual aspects of architecture or the invitation to violate the conventional rules, each is a coded instruction which necessitates action in the real world.

The advertisements were, like Heartfield's collages, deliberately formulaic, drawing together real space (the space of the poster), representational space (the photograph) and fragmentary text *[5]*. While embedded with allusions to a vast range of secondary media, this structure ran through all nine advertisements, across the nine years that Tschumi was engaged in producing them.[34] While Tschumi's posters conform stylistically to the spatial structure of Heartfield's photomontages, the message and its integration with the image is specifically skewed towards an architectural schema of reception and aimed aggressively at acts *against* the built environment. The use of imagery in Heartfield's work is relatively straightforward, concealing the 'cuts' in order to preserve the interplay between image and text and constructing a language of political praxis. In Tschumi's *Advertisements*, the concept of fragmentation has become profoundly blurred. The origins of meaning are no longer acknowledged or even referenced but instead reconfigured.[35] The fragmentary *inscription/subscription* structure is retained but, in Tschumi's case, without authorship, assuming its own ephemeral and decontextualised status.

The 'murder' advertisement is a primary example. The cropped photo depicts a figure who has been pushed from a window by a masked assailant capturing the body in full flight, and preserving the emotional reactions of both danger and escape. The image evokes the famous Yves Klein photograph where the artist is captured airborne as he jumps fearlessly from a two-storey building.[36] In setting up the image, Klein had positioned a team of judo students to hover just outside the camera's view and break the artist's fall with a tarpaulin before he hit the ground. In both images, the 'freezing' of the moving body and the static architectural backdrop are paired dialectically, implicating architecture in a broader history of the body and the forces of escape. If the implication in Klein's image is one of freedom, in Tschumi's it is clearly one of danger. As the protagonist in Tschumi's advertisement is captured in mid-flight, fleeing the window, architecture is represented as the 'witness'. As Kari Jormakka has illustrated, the image used in Tschumi's poster is not an original image but taken from the 1947 film *The Brasher Dubloon*, or *The High Window*[37] where the photograph is used to blackmail the (masked) protagonist. More specifically, the borrowed image is a photographic image, used in a film that is, once again, torn from its revised context and becomes the backdrop to Tschumi's own architectural sloganeering. Instead of replicating the techniques of film, Tschumi's murder poster is a literal 'montage' from film. As Jormakka has also illustrated, the capitalisation of 'Murder in the Cathedral' is a concealed reference to T. S. Eliot's poem of that name.

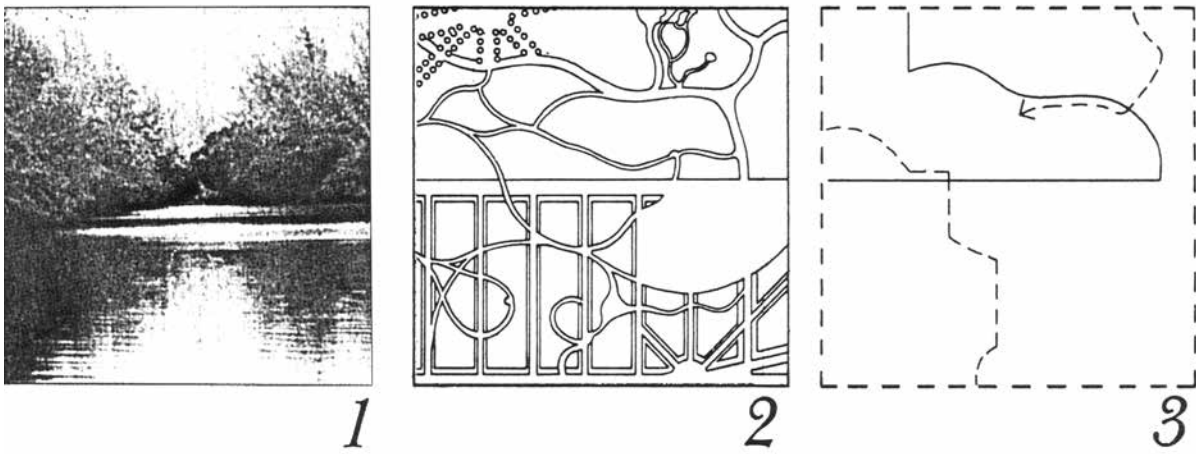
**Transcripts**

While Tschumi's poster series can be read as a literal reworking of Dada practice both visually and structurally, it was extended in his *Manhattan Transcripts* project, undertaken in the same period. In the transcripts, while the motivations of montage remained central, they evolved beyond the two-dimensional formula of Dadaist photomontage and developed a new medium of representation where architecture was an active rather than passive agent in shaping human experience. In distinction to the textual/visual dyad that operates in the advertisements, the *Manhattan Transcripts* are structured by an architectural/visual relationship that expands the boundaries of montage considerably. This is particularly evident in the deliberate flattening of the picture plane that was a major preoccupation in the historical avant-garde and Dada and Surrealism specifically.

*Manhattan Transcripts* was an episodic project that Tschumi undertook from 1976 through until 1981 which transcribed architectural events into an innovative form of coded architectural representation, originally intended for a gallery and ultimately reproduced in the form of a book.[38] The first 'episode' depicts the stalking, the act, the pursuit, the investigation and ultimately, the capture of a murderer *[6]*. Set in Central Park in New York, this transcript casts architecture as the 'witness' to events, which is a theme that is reproduced in the remaining transcripts. The second transcript is a study of the street and, more specifically, 42nd Street in New York. Rather than reproducing the street literally, Tschumi's transcript attempts to articulate its edges and the collisions where contradictory programmes meet. The narrative is a simple one in this instance: '[h]e gets out of jail; they make love; she kills him; she is free'.[39] The third 'episode' depicts a 'fall' where the protagonist flees and ultimately falls from a Manhattan tower to the ground. Again, architecture becomes the 'witness' to the event, conflating the various incompatible programmes of a high-rise on top of one another as the accelerated vertical journey cuts through the distinctions of architectural form, as well as the programmatic similarities that connect project types.[40] In this case the protagonist may be falling from their 'home, office, prison, hotel, asylum'[41] and Tschumi is questioning the inherent disjunction between form and programme. In the final (and most extreme) transcript, conventions are deliberately challenged by the intrusion of oppositional events and programmes – 'acrobat, ice skaters, soldiers and football players'.[42] Tschumi is primarily concerned with the motion of bodies through space and the inherent incompatibility this has on architectural form (and urbanism). He deliberately stratifies programme (function), movement and form (space) to demonstrate the mechanisms of interchangeability that the transcripts are designed to preserve.

The ongoing theme of pursuit and escape that structures Tschumi's transcripts is tied closely to the structure of Surrealist narrative and, specifically, Breton's *Nadja* (1928) and *L'Amour Fou* (1934). Across the four transcripts Tschumi develops a narrative where the city becomes a 'frame' or context for the events, shaping as well as anchoring them in urban space. This has strong correlations with the Surrealist obsession with the city as a source of the unconscious, framing events at the same time as it structures them.[43] Where these activities began with the male pursuit of a woman, they were equally concerned with the search for objects which, when read against the psychoanalytical impulses of Freud, were seen as avenues through which repressed desire was directed. The Surrealist search for fetish objects is most completely described in the 'flea market' of *L'Amour Fou*, and the iconic photographs taken by Man Ray to support it.[44]

In *Nadja*, the archetypal novel of the Surrealist movement, Breton's text weaves the themes of Surrealism seamlessly into a fictional, autobiographical sojourn through Paris where the city frames the poet's pursuit of the mentally unstable Nadja, documenting (from an exclusively male perspective) the psychological transition from initial 'curiosity', 'anxiety' and 'discomfort' towards 'lust', 'love' and ultimately 'boredom' and 'indifference'. Photographs (commissioned from Jacques-André Boiffard) of the spaces where the primary activity takes place[45] interpenetrate the text,




6 Bernard Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts MT1: The Park* (1978)

disrupting its flow and expanding its visual range. There is an eerie stillness to Boiffard's photographs which, drawing stylistically from the influence of Eugène Atget, are constructed as windows, where objects and experience coalesce.[46] Neither the image, the site, the event, or the word can escape the peculiar 'binding' that has located them.[47]

Like the *Manhattan Transcripts*, *Nadja* contains the three primary modes of Tschumi's analysis, separated into distinct categories of representation: movement, space and event. The 'movement' is narrated not by a moving camera but by Breton's own literary wandering through the city in pursuit of Nadja. Breton interweaves descriptions of the architecture with his own emotional journey and, when read closely, provides a geographic mapping of the city through his own emotional and psychological responses to its form.[48] The novel is a *by-product* of Breton's investigations, rather than their *source*. The mode of 'space' is captured in Breton's novels through the series of images which, distinct from Breton's direct experience, are interleaved in the text. The other aspect that is documented in *Nadja* is the 'event' itself, embodied in the textual 'caption' that describes the photo and links it (through a page number) to the point in the text where the image and narrative collide. Through the use of these captions, *Nadja* contains a symbiosis between text, image and event where the independent media of novel and photograph are collided through montage.

Boiffard's documentary works chosen to illustrate *Nadja* manage to preserve the 'crime scene' mood that Walter Benjamin first diagnosed in relationship to the work of Atget and this forensic model of image-making.[49] There is a strong relationship to this mode of visual production and the *Manhattan Transcripts,* which draw architectural evidence out of the still images. The mood of the images in, for instance, the first transcript is directly equivalent to the 'crime scene' investigations of Surrealism but the representational logic is torn apart, no longer contained within the technical medium of photography but effectively and deliberately supplanted by architectural representation and the vectors of spatial diagrams.

These strategies of fragmentation and shock were central to the legacy of Surrealism. In a passage from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin describes the importance of captions in Surrealist literature which, for Benjamin, act as 'signposts'[50] leading the viewer to information and inbuilt interpretations. While this technique is exploited to great effect in *Nadja*, it was not new to the Surrealists and had been drawn from nineteenth-century novels. Benjamin had written about the confluence of text, photograph and caption in his essay on Surrealism, where he frequently refers to *Nadja*.[51] Drawing attention to Breton's passage on the Princess Café, Benjamin observes that:

> *Photography intervenes in a very strange way. It makes the streets, gates, squares of the city into illustrations of a trashy novel, draws off the banal obviousness of this ancient architecture to inject it with the most pristine intensity toward the events described, to which, as in old chambermaids' books, word-to-word quotations with page numbers refer. And all the parts of Paris that appear here are places where what is between these people turns like a revolving door.*[52]

This passage draws together the significance of the 'intervening' photographs in Breton's work which, as well as creating a fragmented visual record for the novel, are equally engaged in the mapping of places through the events of the narrative. Benjamin sees the role of the caption as transformative, transplanting the reproductive mechanisms of the photograph in order to reframe its meaning and consequence. In the example of photography, Benjamin writes '[w]hat we require of the photographer is the ability to give [their] picture the caption that wrenches it from modish commerce and gives it a revolutionary and useful value'.[53] This was a value skewed towards the transformation of life, rather than the mobilisation of capital.

Breton's *Nadja* provides a direct comparison with the techniques of *Manhattan Transcripts*, suggesting that, as well as embodying a number of techniques of the historical avant-garde, it takes this fragmentation a step further. If the 'libidinal' pursuit framed in *Nadja* is a journey across the city motivated by lust, infatuation, love and desire, then in *Manhattan Transcripts* it has become a violent and murderous one. Tschumi sets up an alternative index in his work where the modes of representation are drawn out and the connections between them exaggerated. In this instance the photographs become the 'reality fragments' that bind Tschumi's abstractions with the real world.

Still bound by a 'construction principle', Tschumi's transcripts are instrumental in developing an architecture for the sequencing of fragments, preserving the non-organic nature of the work of art but at the same time creating a visual language through which narrative can be communicated. In this sense, the transcripts can be seen as an evolution of the techniques of automatic writing, developing a system that can embody the fragmentation of medium as well as the infinite interchangeability that Bürger alludes to as a primary strategy of the non-organic work of art. While *Nadja* uses text to structure the relationship between images and events, Tschumi develops an architecture that preserves the 'reality fragments' which *Nadja* is compiled from. This architecture displaces the origins and destinations of these fragments, tearing them from any organic system of meaning and truncating language in a way that disrupts narrative and the structural principles that are inherent to literature. This allows the characteristics that are specific to the medium of architecture – organisation, space, structure – to supplement those of the text, reconfiguring the tactics of the 1920s in an entirely disfigured contextual environment. There is no 'tradition' that the transcripts are constructed from but, rather, objectives and contexts that they operate against.

What is common among all of these works is the desire to repossess the city and reinvent it through radical acts. While frequently read as linguistic works, the advertisements of Tschumi, the novels of Breton and the *Manhattan Transcripts* are all thoroughly urbanised works in that they not only engage the public realm with their message, but promote acts which transform the city and its inhabitation through transgression. Blurring the reproductive potential of advertising with the uneasy hegemony of capitalism, Tschumi's advertisements displace architecture from its capitalist roots and attempt to reclaim the city through alternative experiences and activities. When Walter Benjamin's writes of the 'bloody fingerprints' that provide traces of the authentic and transcend the effects of representation, he evokes the critical relationship between a work and its lived context: between architecture and its political ancestry.

**Conclusion**

Returning to the passage of Breton that this paper began with, it is worth reflecting on the melancholic conclusion of the heroine as they flee the enclosing forces of homogeneity. Echoing the murdering assailant of Tschumi's advertisement, the passage invites freedom through a violation of the conventional: a thinning, rather than removal of 'the sad sheet of love'. If the appropriation of tactics from Dada photomontage and Surrealist automation in architectural representation represents an 'escape' from the enclosing frames of architectural production then it is, like the historical avant-garde itself, confined to an intellectual rather than radical re-configuring of experience. As both Benjamin and Bürger had argued, the radical tactics of both Dada and Surrealism had been easily re-appropriated, even in the 1930s, by the forces of reproduction and the hegemonies of capitalism, and the critique of the institution of art was replaced by the bourgeois acceptance of, and ultimately fetishisation of, these exact critiques. Their emergence in architecture in the 1970s is not evidence of an avant-garde in architecture but, more likely, of its influence.

Tschumi, like many avant-gardists before him, operates in a fundamentally intellectual maelstrom that explores the boundaries of capitalist production through a manipulation of its edges rather than, as in the case of Bürger and Benjamin, its centres. The decades since the production of *Manhattan Transcripts* and the *Advertisements for Architecture* have seen the proliferation of a vast array of strategies in the radical production and distribution of architecture that interrogate agency and hegemony in a way that these works never intended. Equally, the hegemonies of scholarship have shifted to provide frameworks through which such tactics can be both promoted and recognised and this, in its own way, is a legacy of the avant-garde, despite an important decentring of its geographic and institutional biases. As the notion of an avant-garde slowly dissipates, so does the need for an avant-garde, or at least a centralised one, in a contemporary situation that is as dramatically fragmented as the collaging tactics of the 1920s ever were.

This notwithstanding, the legacy of Tschumi's work lies in the dissolution of the specific medium of architecture as an autonomous form and its immersion in a broader field of cultural production that includes film, advertising and numerous other strategies of popular media to which architecture is subjected. Despite its intellectual accents, this dismantling of the boundaries of the architectural object, and invitation to negotiate new ones, places the individual at the centre of a vast network of disparate fragments where architecture is only one of a number of competing systems. As technological innovations are increasingly driving architectural production towards infinite systems of reproduction and rationalisation, the strategies of Tschumi in the 1970s prepare architecture for a radically passive role in the future where the event replaces the object in the cultural life of cities. The proliferation of both objects and events in the decades since suggests that this relationship remains as uneasy now as it was then.

**Notes**

1. André Breton, 'Soluble Fish', in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1972), p. 109.
2. The poster is reproduced in: Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 100.
3. André Breton, 'Second Manifesto of Surrealism', in Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 125.
4. Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and its Double' in Dalibor Vesely (ed.), *Architectural Design Profile: Surrealism and Architecture*, 11:2–3 (1978), pp. 111–16.
5. See: Bernard Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts* (London: Academy Editions, 1981).
6. Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).
7. See: Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p. 110. In an essay from the previous year, Tschumi had argued, in relationship to the follies, that: '[t]he aim is to free the built *folie* from its historical connotations and place it on a broader and more abstract plane, as an autonomous object that, in the future, will be able to receive new meanings' (p. 149). See: Bernard Tschumi, 'Madness and the Combinative', *Precis* (Fall, 1984), pp. 149–57. The essay is also published in: Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 174–89.
8. See: Jacques Derrida, 'Point de folie – Maintenant l'architecture', trans. Kate Linker in Tschumi, *La Case Vide*, pp. 4–20; republished in *AA Files*, 12 (Summer, 1986), pp. 65–75.
9. The full passage reads: '[w]ith no revolutionary aesthetic or social aim, and no historicist nostalgia, the allusion to constructivism becomes a mad shot in the dark [...]'. See: Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p. 110. Vidler's quote draws on the play between folly/*folie* tying the English garden folly with the French term for 'madness'. Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p. 110.
10. Important in this regard were the series of essays that Tschumi published in *Artforum* in the early 1980s. See: Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and Limits (1)', *Artforum*, 19:4 (December, 1980), pp. 36–44; Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and Limits (2)', *Artforum*, 19:7 (March, 1981), pp. 45–58; Bernard Tschumi, 'Architecture and Limits (3)', *Artforum*, 20:1 (September, 1981), pp. 40–52; all three essays are republished in: Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, pp. 101–20.
11. This has been widely acknowledged by Tschumi and other writers such as Arie Graafland. See: Arie Graafland, 'Of Rhizomes, Trees, and the IJ-Oevers, Amsterdam', *Assemblage*, 38 (April, 1999), p. 40 (note 2). Tschumi is more measured in his contemporaneous text 'Urban Pleasures and the Moral Good' where he writes that 'there is no need to style oneself as a "cultural revolutionary" or as a radical, red scarves notwithstanding'. See: Bernard Tschumi, 'Urban Pleasures and the Moral Good', *Assemblage*, 25 (December, 1994), p. 11; See also: Louis Martin, 'Transpositions: On the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory', *Assemblage*, 11 (April, 1990), pp. 22–24.
12. Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 7.
13. Ibid., p. 5. In the same passage, Tschumi stresses the need to develop architecture 'as a catalyst for change' (p. 7).
14. Ibid., p. 7.
15. Ibid., p. 6.
16. This was for a proposed issue of *Architectural Design* which was 'finally aborted when publishers acted upon a rumour that bomb threats had disrupted a symposium on the subject at the AA'. See ibid., p. 7.
17. Tschumi, 'Architecture and its Double', pp. 111–16.
18. Ibid., p. 111. In this respect, he is no doubt thinking of the application of the Surrealist imagery of de Chirico to the analysis of Le Corbusier in Gorlin's work as opposed to his own analysis of the Villa Savoye covered in urine and excrement, with the pretext '[s]ensuality has been known to overcome even the most rational of buildings'. See: Alexander Gorlin, 'The Ghost in the Machine: Surrealism in the Work of Le Corbusier', *Perspecta*, 18 (1982), pp. 50–65; republished in Thomas Mical (ed), *Surrealism and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 103–18; see: Tschumi, 'Architecture and Transgression', pp. 55–57.
19. Tschumi, 'Architecture and its Double', p. 111.
20. These words appear in Tschumi's text in inverted commas without a reference so, as with a lot of Tschumi's fragmentary texts, the exact attribution is unclear. See: Tschumi, 'Architecture and its Double', p. 111. For more on Benjamin's concept of the 'quotation without quotation marks' in Tschumi's work, see: Martin, 'Transpositions', p. 29; see: Kari Jormakka, 'The Most Architectural Thing' in Mical (ed.), *Surrealism and Architecture*, p. 308.
21. The emphasis on form and the object coincided with contemporaneous debates in architecture around the autonomy of the architectural object. In this regard, Mary McLeod saw in the deconstruction of Tschumi and Eisenman a focus on process and a dematerialisation of the object, radically challenging its autonomous status. This was in contrast to the formalist practices of Coop Himmelb(l)au, Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind. See: Mary McLeod, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstruction', *Assemblage* 8 (February, 1988), p. 45.
22. Tschumi, 'Architecture and its Double', p. 112.
23. Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p. 110.
24. The best evidence of this is: Bernard Tschumi, 'Abstract Mediation and Strategy', in Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, pp. 190–205; see also Bernard Tschumi, 'Sequences', *The Princeton Journal: Thematic Studies in Architecture* 1 (1983), pp. 29–37.
25. Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, pp. 17–18.
26. Tschumi's process, and its relationship to montage is a theme in a recent work by Gevork Hartoonian, that argues that this layering of fragments is connected to an intellectual dematerialisation of the autonomous architectural object, paradoxically related to its simultaneous celebration. See the chapter: 'Bernard Tschumi: Return of the Object', in: Gevork Hartoonian, *Crisis of the Object: the Architecture of Theatricality* (Abingdon: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2006), pp. 72–103.
27. Bernard Tschumi, 'Abstract Mediation and Strategy', p. 197.
28. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 203. On Adorno's concept of montage in architecture, see: Gevork Hartoonian, *Ontology of Construction: On Nihilism of Technology and Theories of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 57.
29. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 74–75.
30. Bürger cites two examples, both reproduced, which are typical of the genre of political posters, but also representative of the development of photomontage. The examples Bürger uses are: John Heartfield, *Adolf – the Superman – Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk* (1932) and *Germany is Still Not*

*Lost!* (1932); for the reproductions see: Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 76–77. Biro argues that Heartfield, unlike Hannah Höch and other Dadaists, adopted a 'strongly didactic form' which limited the shock value of his work in this period. See: Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in the Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p. 202.

31. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 75. See also: Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 100.
32. Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 229.
33. For a catalogue of all nine advertisements, see: Jormakka, 'The Most Architectural Thing', pp. 291–92.
34. Tschumi also describes, in the same period, the distribution of his lecture notes and seminars on 'leaflets printed on coloured paper, to alleviate their serious tone'. This was also a tactic of the early Dadaists. Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 7.
35. As Louis Martin has illustrated, Tschumi cited (without quotation marks) Thomas Kuhn's, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* deliberately switching 'science' with 'architecture' in his own appropriation of the passage. When republished in 1994, the essay is premised with: '[t]o paraphrase Thomas Kuhn [...]'. See: Martin, 'Transpositions', p. 29; Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, p. 77. A similar appropriation occurs in Tschumi's 'Questions of Space' where he appropriates the words of Philippe Sollers in order, in Martin's words, 'to transpose into architecture the effects of Bataille in literature'.
36. See: Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (London: Phaidon, 1998), p. 69.
37. As Jormakka points out: 'The image is taken from the 1947 movie *The Brasher Doubloon* or *The High Window*, as it was distributed in Europe; the censors did not approve of the name "Brasher" because they thought it would be confused with the word "brassiere" so the movie used the title of the book it was based on, Raymond Chandler's hard-boiled novel of 1942.' See: Jormakka, 'The Most Architectural Thing', p. 309.
38. Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts,* p. 6; a 'fifth' transcript is reproduced in: Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture in/of Motion* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 1997).
39. Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts,* p. 8.
40. There is a strong resonance between this project and Koolhaas's theorisation of Manhattan in *Delirious New York* which, as well as analysing the vertical layering of programme, posited a dialectical splintering of Surrealism and Modernism, embodied in the contradictory personalities of Le Corbusier and Salvador Dali; both visitors to New York in the mid 1930s. This section of *Delirious New York* was published in Vesely's anthology alongside Tschumi's essay, providing further evidence for this connection. See: Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994), pp. 235–81 [first published 1978]; Rem Koolhaas, 'Dali and Le Corbusier: The Paranoid Critical Method', in Vesely (ed.), *Surrealism and Architecture*, pp. 153–63.
41. Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts,* p. 8.
42. Tschumi, *Manhattan Transcripts,* p. 8.
43. On this, see: Roger Cardinal, 'Soluble City: The Surrealist Perception of Paris' in Vesely (ed.), *Surrealism and Architecture*, pp. 143–49; Gray Read, 'Aragon's armoire' in: Mical, *Surrealism and Architecture*, pp. 31–40.
44. The first section of *L'Amour Fou* describes a visit to a flea market that Breton and Giacometti undertook. Both men were struggling with loneliness and ventured into the market in search of objects to displace their libidinal desires. Giacometti found a mask that later 'finished' his. The helmet that Man Ray photographed was a product of the same visit and is described in the text. The 'Cinderella' slipper-spoon, photographed by Man Ray, was the culmination of a dream by Breton from the same period and was also a by-product of this sojourn. See: André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. 25–30.
45. In *L'Amour Fou*, the images were commissioned from Boiffard who, upon being given the requirements for the photos, revealed that he already had a number of them in his collection and had no need to go out and take new ones. The image in particular, that correlates very closely to Breton's text, is Boiffard's photo of the Tour Saint Jacques. For more on this see: Rosalind Krauss, 'Nightwalkers', *Art Journal*, 41:1 (Spring, 1981), p. 36.
46. Annette Michelson referred to the mood as an 'ecstatic' emptiness, which permeated Surrealist incursions in the city generally. For more on this see: Therese Lichtenstein, 'The City in Twilight' in *Twilight Visions: Surrealism and Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 1–70.
47. See: Owens, 'Photography "En Abyme"', *October*, 5 (1978), pp. 73–88; Krauss, 'The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism', *October*, 19 (1981), pp. 3–34; Krauss adopts this Bretonian structure to the captions of images in: Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).
48. On this, see: Tom McDonough, *'Delirious Paris: Mapping* as a Paranoiac-Critical Activity', *Grey Room*, 19 (Spring, 2005), pp. 6–21.
49. See: Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), p. 226; this section is quoted in the previous chapter on 'Photography'.
50. Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', p. 226.
51. Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', in Benjamin, *Reflections*, p. 183.
52. Benjamin, 'Surrealism', p. 183.
53. Benjamin, 'Author as Producer', p. 230.

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