

1977

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The Pleasure of Architecture

A graduate of the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Bernard Tschumi (b 1944, Lausanne) taught at the Architectural Association from 1970 to 1975, moving to New York in 1976 where he was Visiting Lecturer at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies and later at Princeton University. Tschumi's work draws heavily on critical and literary theory, from Barthes and Derrida to Foucault, and, in this text, he hints at the 'pulsions' motivating and unleashed by architecture.

The architecture of pleasure lies where concept and experience of space abruptly coincide, where architectural fragments collide and merge in delight, where the culture of architecture is endlessly deconstructed and rules are transgressed. No metaphorical paradise here, but discomfort and the unbalancing of expectations. Such architecture questions academic (and popular) assumptions, disturbs acquired tastes and fond architectural memories. Typologies, morphologies, spatial compressions, logical constructions – all dissolve. Such architecture is perverse because its real significance lies outside utility or purpose and ultimately is not even necessarily aimed at giving pleasure.

The architecture of pleasure depends on a particular feat, which is to keep architecture obsessed with itself in such an ambiguous fashion that it never surrenders to good conscience or parody, to debility or delirious neurosis . . .

[Architecture] can only act as a recipient in which your desires, my desires, can be reflected. Thus a piece of architecture is not architectural because it seduces, or because it fulfils some utilitarian function, but because it sets in motion the operations of seduction and the unconscious.

A word of warning. *Architecture* may very well activate such motions, but it is not a dream (a stage where society's or the individual's unconscious desires can be fulfilled). It cannot satisfy your wildest fantasies, but it may *exceed* the limits set by them. (pp214-218)

Extracts. Source: *Architectural Design*, vol 47; no 3, Academy Group Ltd (London), 1977.
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