

durability, here an ambient interior is conjured. Like a spell, it needs only a kiss to undo it.

Rudolph complained about architecture that was “too subject to fashion, whims, and the media, and too concerned with substituting peripheral fields . . . for the real study of architecture and its limitation.”<sup>16</sup> But when he abandoned “real” architecture to focus on the interior, he discovered the pleasures and possibilities of the kiss: kissing takes two. It is only when and if the interior is understood as *not*-architecture that it can stand in relation to architecture as if a kiss. The interior is quasi-autonomous—it relies on and is even often isomorphic with architecture but remains distinct from architecture’s identification with building. As a result, the interior is uniquely free to seek out provisionality, changefulness, and to provide architecture with a site of experimentation. The interior coordinates surfaces that are in sufficient proximity to one another to amplify each other’s effects. In its relation to architecture, the interior establishes not what Rosalind Krauss called an expanded field but rather a dense vortex of visually reverberating vertical surfaces. Rudolph’s apartments demonstrate the capacity of the interior to serve, like film, as an intimate but detached medium: they are painterly atmospheres that cannot be contained by the conventional focus of architectural drawing on fixed forms rather than on the always varied and incomparable moments of perception. Instead, they are at their

best in photographs, where the difference between architectural and interior elements disappears into their reciprocity. By generating veritable flashes in the pan, Rudolph turned the interior on, making it a place of significant, if ephemeral, architectural performance captured poorly by his extraordinarily detailed but deliberately obdurate drawings but well by *lights, camera, action!*<sup>17</sup> When contact between surfaces is deployed to conjure an interior ambience that is not architecture, but just millimeters shy of architecture proper, the psychologically intimate and physiologically momentary nature of the interior surprises a stolid and solid architecture as if with a kiss.

## Current Kisses

From the perspective, or rather the feeling state, of contemporary architectural discourse, there is something thrilling about taking a walk on the wild side of video and lingering over obscure historical examples of quirky design. On the one hand, they provide an opportunity to commit disciplinary and historical tourism and to experience the momentary pleasures of dalliance without duration. But at the same time that such flirtation could be described as simply a means of giving architecture a breath of fresh air from outside the field, the fact that it feels fresh is symptomatic both of the nature and of the need for revitalizing the relation-

ships between mediums in general. The effect of talking about video sculpture or store windows as though they were architecture is exactly, in discursive terms, the effect sought by the theory of kissing in material terms. Both rely on two things that seem to be the same—two surfaces, two spaces, two forms, two mouths—but that turn out to be different and to generate a difference that can only be experienced in the moment of their contact.

Writing about kissing might not be the best way to seduce architecture into a contemporary performance, but it is a good way to teach it to count to two. The most direct way for architecture to go beyond itself is to work with and through other mediums. Herzog and de Meuron and Jean Nouvel have been particularly adept at this kind of addition (fig. 24). A second way of counting is simply to call something that is not architecture by a new name, like *superarchitecture*, and then to try to put it back together with architecture as a proper name. The potential effects on architecture—whereby building ends up with more than it started with—made by the analysis of Rist's and Aitken's work belongs to this category. A third technique for counting past one is to radicalize the terms by which we understand—and generally limit and control—architecture itself. The moment that architecture is no longer required to perform as an organic unity, it can develop the combination of empirical distinctiveness and perceptual singu-



larity that characterizes the kiss as event. If the interior ceases to be understood as simply the natural consequence of an envelope or if the exterior is no longer understood to be the passive result of a building mass, interiors and exteriors can assume enough identity of their own that their reimplantation in building constitutes the electric move from one to two.

Some contemporary architectural practices are exploring this third alternative. They have begun to rediscover the interest in investing the interior with particularity rather than merely relegating the interior to the status of an inevitable by-product of construction: simply a building's inside. The exchange between artists

24. Ateliers Jean Nouvel, DR Concert Hall, 2009. Copenhagen

and architects and the various values they have attached to the interior (or the exterior and the differences between them) may begin to explain this development. For example, the issues of gender and domesticity that now preoccupy Rist were of primary importance to certain architects during the 1990s, although her libertine excesses with respect to interior furnishings seem ahead of today's architectural pace. The result of these two entwined perspectives is an interior understood independently from how it is used and yet dependent on the material that shapes use. Such an interior is conceived as semiautonomous: in the singular moment of perception it is inseparable from its architectural surroundings but is also empirically and descriptively distinct. This is the state of complex coincidence, which has been dubbed a *confound*, that generates the bedazzling states of difference and identity embedded in a kiss.<sup>18</sup>

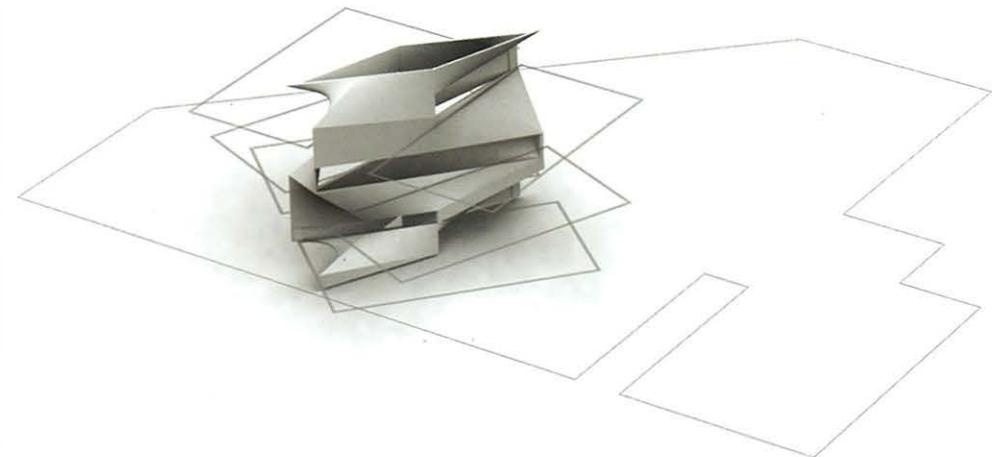
Recognizing the productive charge of the confound can push architecture to overcome its disciplinary disappointment at not being able to be totally self-sustaining and to relinquish its fantasy of absolute autonomy and coherence. When the interior is conceived of independently, it divides the architectural medium into parts, into at least a twosome. So the first effect of shaping the interior as distinct from architecture is the interruption of the discipline's pursuit of utopia, which it has primarily sought through the era-

sure of boundaries between interiors and exteriors in favor of continuous, undifferentiated spatial extension. But contemporary architectural practices have also discovered that an interior cannot exist independently; it always fuses with architecture in the moment of actual reception, a moment that is not repeatable. The second effect of giving the interior distinction, then, is that the differentiated interior demands design consideration and intensity, both as such and in its intercourse with building. The interior cannot be an architectural leftover or vaguely understood as abstract space but rather is an element that, like a projected image, can both obscure architecture (and hence mitigate its attachment to its own protocols) and, at the same time, rely on architecture (and hence reinforce its irreducible qualities). And in this doubled relation, in this moving to more than one and sometimes two, architecture and the interior enfold around one another to produce the ever surprising and never still experience of the perceptually new and experientially singular.

Preston Scott Cohen's addition to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, currently under construction, exemplifies the explosive potential of the contemporary interior when conceived as semiautonomous. Because kissing is a logic and theory of part to whole and because Cohen is a supreme geometer, it should come as no surprise that his building also has a kissable exterior in the sense that the skin has many faces in convivial rapport,

even if the building as a whole lacks faciality. But my interest lies in what I consider to be the building's "interior," not the galleries or the space inside the envelope but rather the "Lightfall," a core that cuts through the full section and brings light from top to bottom. "Lightfall" is geographically in the center of the building, deep inside the museum. But that is not why it is an interior. Nor does "Lightfall" provide interior space—it is an unoccupiable void that visitors look through and a semisolid figure that visitors look at and meander around. "Lightfall" is an intruder in the museum that causes a conceptually constituted interior to emerge. The core captures, moves, and shapes light while its exotic contours hold together and intensify these luminous and always changing effects. Its swirling form and agitated grisaille resonate throughout the building and cause, only in the moment of perception, an unstable interior to come into being. The core is both anomaly and *raison d'être*—the interior's guarantor of continuous perceptual novelty and affective vividness. Without "Lightfall" the building would have a perfectly serviceable, indeed a really great inside, but it would lack an interior.

A drawing and an anecdote best reveal the ontologically rupturous implications of this assertion. One of the first and most widely circulated images of this addition was a three-dimensional model of the light core sitting atop a two dimensional plan (fig. 25). The "com-



25. Preston Scott Cohen, *Tel Aviv Museum of Art*, 2004-2010. Computer diagram

bine" was no doubt made to explain the geometry by showing how simple lines can lead to complex shapes. But the effect of the combine resides in the inexplicably erotic allure of the central and protruding model. Its white surfaces seem nude without their building around them, asking to be looked at and loved by J. J. Winckelmann himself, the greatest admirer of complex white bodies known to the history of art. And like all good centerfolds, Cohen's "Lightfall" became an instant best seller (fig. 26). Images of the core frolicked in the international press, giving the architect the beginnings of wide fame and celebrity. And yet this total identification of the building with the core turns out to have led to fantasies of escape and separation. For no good reason, for none of the reasons typically associated with significant design changes late in the game, such as the demands of value engineering, Cohen toyed with the idea of excising "Lightfall" from the scheme. It is possible that the very success of the media campaign that featured "Lightfall" in isolation led to this seemingly perverse desire to eliminate it. Yet the fact that the plan and the figure were represented from the beginning in two different mediums indicates that they were always detachable and susceptible to distinct empirical description. Cohen chose to keep "Lightfall" in, but the very fact that it was possible for him to consider removing it underscores that his design was not conceived in the manner of Alberti, who defined good design as one in



26. Preston Scott Cohen, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2004-2010. Model photograph. As shown in the exhibition "Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, November 19, 2006–March 5, 2007

which no part can be added or taken away without destroying the “beautiful music.”<sup>19</sup> The Tel Aviv Museum of Art makes its effect precisely by being made of different elements—in this case most notably inside and interior—that only make music in the friction of their imperfect coincidence. By developing a kind of multiple personality order, the building is able to receive a kiss from its own interior.

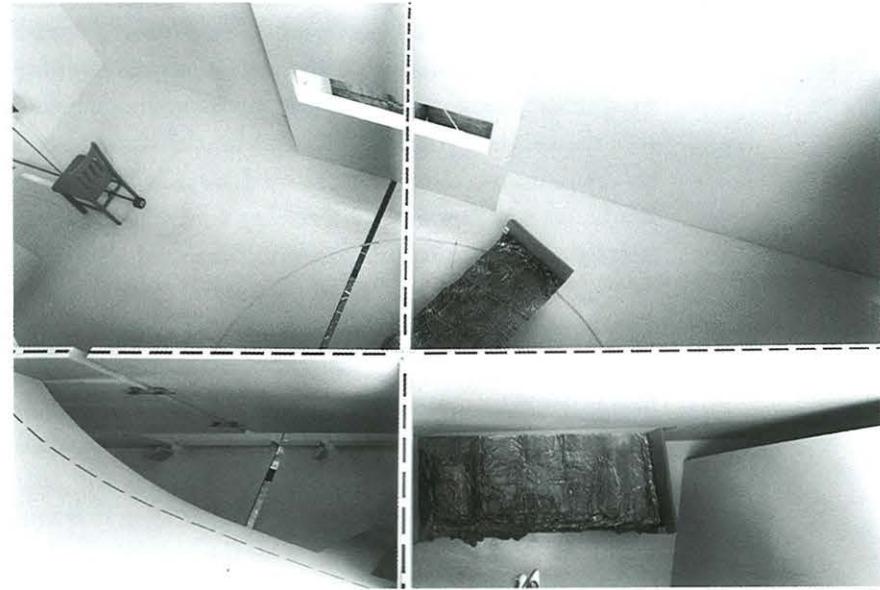
Architects who are commissioned to work only on a building’s interior generally express disdain and disappointment: disdain because interiors are associated with decorators rather than discipline, and disappointment in being forced to contend with an existing building. The conviction that doing it all is always preferable to doing a part is not just narcissistic; it also comes from the commitment to an idea of architecture as a seamless unity. Yet as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art suggests, there is freedom to be gained in giving up the whole building and the building as a whole. The doubleness of superarchitecture can only emerge in the presence of at least two not perfectly coincident elements, a twoness that I diagrammed through the interplay of architecture and video because that is where the development is easiest to see. But superarchitecture can also emerge from within architecture itself, as long as architecture is not conceived as a totality. One can almost hear “Lightfall” saying to its building, “The basic concept was not to try to destroy or be provocative

to the architecture, but to melt in. As if I would kiss . . .” It seems a fair exchange: autonomy and unity for contact and conviviality.

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, perhaps more than any other architects working today, have long been interested in the relation of architecture to other mediums and in how this relation plays a uniquely central role in constructing architecture’s understanding of itself. In that sense, their firm’s work has always been more than architecture, a kind of superarchitecture that adds to the field by picking up ideas found by digressing outside architecture’s conventional parameters. In the early phases of its research, however, the extra value ironically came from cutting architecture down and up and crossways, using critical detachment and dismemberment as analytic tools and analysis as a form of creative production. In the context of the Reagan era, architecture for sure needed to get cut down to size and helped, even if against its will, to understand its limitations. Diller + Scofidio offered up some serious tough love. It divided architecture into so many pieces that any effort to put them together always produced something more and less than a whole, like a body that, after an autopsy, is missing organs, fluids, and tissue samples but has gained a scar. Necrophiliacs aside, the coroner’s office for most people induces discomfort rather than lust, and suturing things together in the dead is mostly done for reasons of cosmetic expe-

dience rather than erotic consilience. Coroners are more interested the signs of a bite than a kiss, and the early work of D+S worked hard and well to take Greenberg's avant-gardism farther from the meaty appetites than he could have ever imagined.

A powerful example of what happened to architecture when conceived of as a *corps morcelé* rather than object of potential affectation is *The withDrawing Room*, a 1987 installation in what had been the space of the Capp Street Project in San Francisco, the first residency program in the United States devoted to installation art (fig. 27). Recalling Matta-Clark's "Splitting," D+S dissected the building and its furnishings and moved parts around. Unlike Matta-Clark, however, D+S put the parts back together. Sort of. Contained in a single building, "Splitting" had parts that could and were shown entirely independently in different spaces at different times, a chunk of the building here, a photomontage there. *The withDrawing Room* was a single installation, a genre that like an establishing shot in film functions to provide for the viewer an embracing armature. But with chairs hanging from the ceiling like ghostly suicides, Murphy beds scarring the floor, and walls sliced up and left exposed, the installation's valiant efforts to suture everything back together were destined—indeed, designed—to fail and left the cracks and fissures painfully evident. The installation, after all, was set in a room for withdrawing (not a boudoir or



bordello or other rooms associated with drawing out), which makes it clear that the performance of criticality effects and oppositional detachment intentionally precluded getting it on. The project's tragic power lay precisely in the inability of its parts to make contact with one another, a perfect because sobering antidote to the excessive attachments of the 1980s.<sup>20</sup>

More recently, for Diller + Scofidio, however, the tragedy of isolation in and for architecture has given way to the dynamics of attraction. The point of tough love is not to be tough forever but to impose self-

27. Diller + Scofidio,  
*The withDrawing  
Room: Versions and  
Subversions*, 1987.  
Capp Street Project  
Archive, San Francisco

awareness as a means to eventual new forms of tenderness. In our current era, the carrot is going to be more productive than a stick, and it is symptomatic of Diller + Scofidio's intellectual agility and sensitivity to historical vicissitudes that it has shifted tactics. Long after World War II was over, Greenberg was still rejecting mass culture as a means to combat fascism, revealing as he did so how quickly commitment can turn into intellectual recalcitrance in the wrong context. D+S could be described as changing sides from Greenberg's to Reyner Banham's, who once quipped that the only way to show that you have a mind is to change it once in a while.

In fact, the suppleness of the firm's intellectual and historical acuteness made it the ideal candidate for Lincoln Center, where, Diller Scofidio + Renfro (renamed when Charles Renfro was made a partner in 2004) were hired to both update and yet preserve the complex by making it more accessible, more urbanistically integrated, and to bring the buildings up to contemporary acoustic and other technical standards. The architects were asked, in other words, to remaster the plan. But the design and construction process has been a comedy of millions rather than of a single master, with each entity of Lincoln Center from the Opera to the Philharmonic internally divided as well as competing with the others for dominance. Rather than treat this dividedness as merely a burden of the exigencies of profes-

sional practice or as peculiar to a particular project, DS+R understood this hydralike situation as symptomatic of a new architectural moment when two heads are better than one, especially for kissing. At Lincoln Center, the signage on the stair risers over here, a folded-up ground plane making room for a restaurant over there, and explanatory descriptions of the project to historic preservationists on one day and new music fans on another were unleashed as free-floating episodes awash in a data stream with no superego to hold them together. And it was precisely in the quasi-autonomy of parts held together by attraction rather than rules of coherence that, in the midst of one of these episodes, the scar of an autopsy turned into the blush of a kiss.

Alice Tully Hall, one of the first elements in the DS+R scheme to be completed and opened to the public, literally blushes. In an extraordinary response to the excitement of an impending performance, in an unparalleled demonstration of architecture shyly discovering its affective capacity, the walls exude a pinky glow as the house lights go down. Early modernist architectural theorists were widely concerned with the notion of empathy, by which they understood the process whereby a form was introjected by the human subject to produce feelings in him or her.<sup>21</sup> The reason that certain inanimate objects were thought to generate feelings in human beings was that some forms paralleled the shape of the human body and hence solicited iden-



28. Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *Alice Tully Hall*, 2009. New York

tification. Thus, form psychologists in the late nineteenth century believed that an organically shaped building, for example, would fill the spectator with *élan vital* through empathic projection. In Alice Tully Hall, however, the wall is simultaneously sensation producer and receiver, topologically turning back on itself to generate—on its own—what empathy theorists understood as requiring two. The wall has doubled capacities, that of sensory apparatus and sensation itself. The wall is architecture—it has an outside, shapes space, delimits an environment—and the wall is the surface of an interior that seeks to concentrate the electric atmosphere of live performance. These walls are isomorphic and intimate in their almost total contact, and yet they are not one.

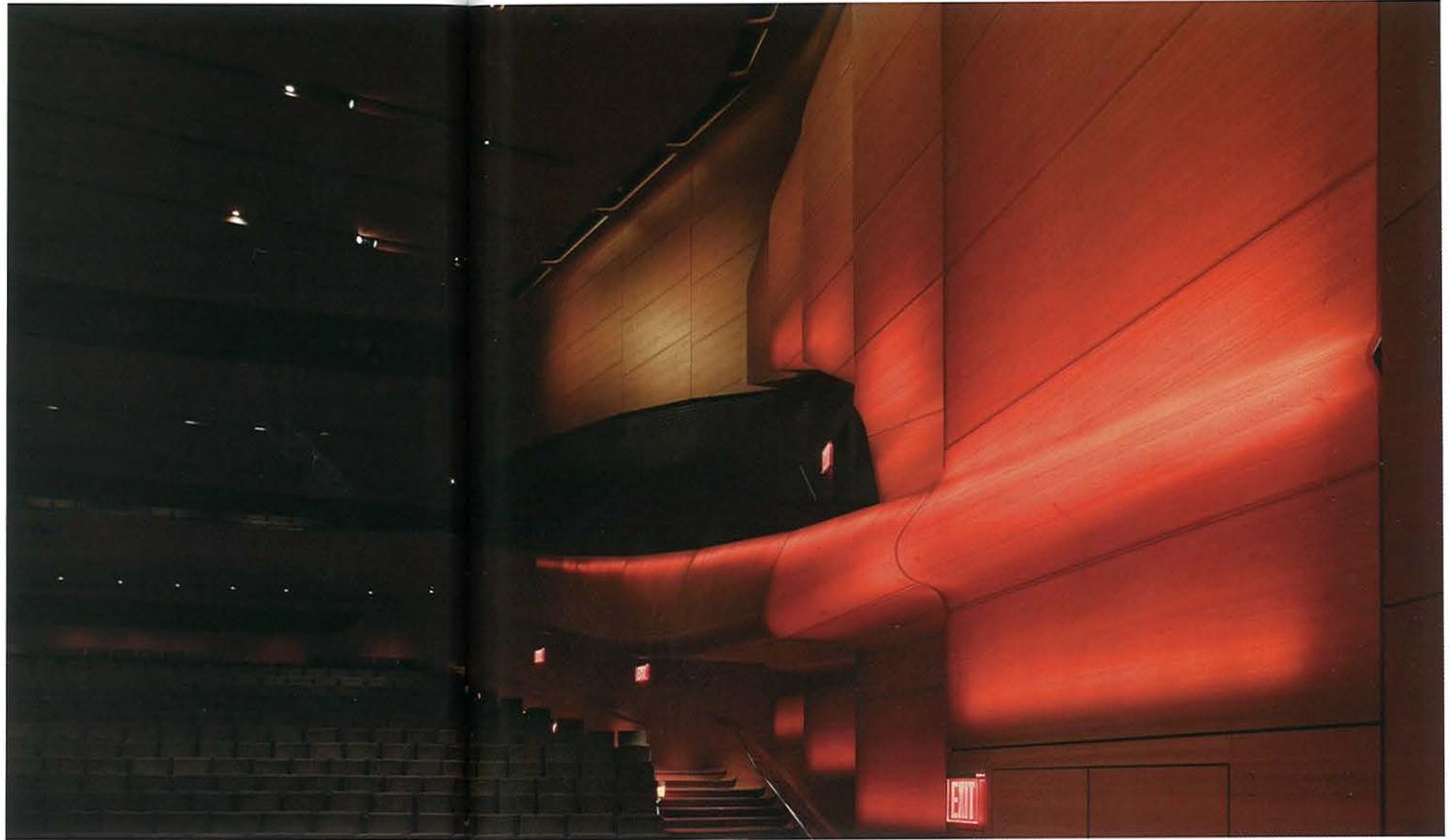
Shaping Alice Tully Hall with a conceptually doubled surface became conceivable through the constraints that limited the architects to working on the hall's interior in isolation from the rest of the building (fig. 28). The architects were not allowed to touch the architecture of the architecture: the structure, massing, spatial organization, and circulation all had to remain as originally built. Moreover, in order to reduce the noise and vibration of the subway that passes underneath, the interior of the hall had to be physically separated from the rest of the building. Now the hall does not touch the building but rests on a cushion of air. The need to isolate the interior while leaving more or less everything

else intact meant that DS+R's "site" was the eighteen-inch gap surrounding the outer surface of the interior: the outside of the inside.<sup>22</sup> The architects chose to work with a plasticized wooden veneer, as thin as is rarely allowed in building, thin enough to allow the gentle luminescence of embedded LEDs to glow through. The activation of these surfaces then gave license to the rest of the hall's more properly speaking architectural surfaces—stage floor, acoustical baffles, side wings—to move around and dance with an agility that Merce Cunningham would have envied. The hall is free, literally a free interior: free to flex and bulge, rotate, swell, and rest without constraint. And to blush when the mood strikes (fig. 29).

The affective qualities of Alice Tully Hall would not have been possible within a regime of total design and unitary building, nor according to the logic of the critically distant and unaffected viewer, or in a visual field that operates through representation alone. Instead, the force of the hall could only emerge when the interior was able to acquire independence from the disciplinary constraints of architecture, when the semiautonomous interior provided the impetus to think about the performance of the surface in a new way, when this surface could brush up in exquisite proximity to the architectural surface, when the two concepts of the surface—the architectural surface that frames, structures, supports and the interior surface that glows, darkens, and

has mood swings—could be joined and yet be constantly on the verge of delaminating. The interior's embrace turned a void into the vivid.

An exterior does other work, even though its semi-independence is often produced by the same logistical and economic factors that conceptually—and in the case of Alice Tully Hall, literally—detach interiors from their buildings as a whole. Exteriors get reclad, refurbished, and given face lifts without interior changes as a matter of course, the distinctions between inside and outside being perfectly self-evident to everyone but architects. Indeed, being asked to work exclusively on a building's exterior is even more disdained by architects than being asked to work only on the inside, as the commonly used epithet *skin job* suggests. Even Philip Johnson, who referred to architects as "high-class whores," most likely did not solicit such demeaning work. But most prostitutes don't like to kiss either, all of which suggests that closer scrutiny of these various distinctions between too much and too little intimacy may yield new opportunities for exteriors just as it does for interiors. Perhaps it may yield even more opportunities, because while the interior as such (not the plan, or privacy, or domesticity) has little historical traction to work against, the independent exterior, from Palladio's applied temple front to every International Style curtain wall, has a central role in the history of modern architecture.



29. Diller Scofidio +  
Renfro, *Alice Tully Hall*,  
2009. New York

The apparent autonomy of the facade has been a consistent focus of architecture throughout modernity and postmodernity alike. Le Corbusier's free facade, for example, was free from conventional rules of architectural composition governing facade design. With walls no longer the primary means of support, and corners no longer requiring reinforcement, windows could stretch out and deviate from structural grids just as the outer skin—now mere insulation—could hang, free, like a curtain. It has always struck me as ironic that modernist exteriors were called *curtain walls*, as curtains generally belong to the purview of the interior (which every decent modernist tried to make people believe really wanted to be an exterior, a place of uninterrupted and democratic movement, a utopia in short) and to interior decorators in particular (which every decent modernist wanted not to be). But the irony of the term *curtain wall*, like any good cliché, has something self-evident to hide, which in this case is that the free facade is not free at all but rather is tethered to the interior; Le Corbusier's free facade functioned primarily to represent the interior's open plan and to render that plan universal by bringing it to the outside. The facade was not, in this sense, a liberated surface but an outermost layer, a veil that paradoxically served only to reveal the inside.

Postmodern facades lacked the utopian ambition of the modernist ones and were certainly more forthcom-

ing about their ironic constraints, but they too trafficked in falsely free fronts. Defined in the most extreme terms by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown as decoration, billboards, and signifiers, postmodern facades were even more detached from the box of the building than Le Corbusier's curtain: sometimes Venturian facades had no physical contact with their partner buildings at all. In the famous example of Las Vegas casinos, exteriors were out on the street while interiors were half a mile away across the parking lot. But this radical severance still did not give the exterior freedom to pursue its own interests rather than serve as a facade. The Venturian exterior works like a ventriloquist's dummy: it speaks for the building while trying to appear that it has a mind of its own. One look at the back of any such facade reveals that it has in fact a back, like a stage set, a place of virtual nondesign instead of a second surface. The facade remains married to the building no matter how distant (Vegas is full of wedding chapels, after all).

Today, however, the exterior is no longer an outermost, virtually transparent limit of an interior, nor is it a detached and critically distant mouthpiece. Instead, the exterior is a semiautonomous surface, dependent on the technical and material support of architecture but not reducible to it. This surface is not obligated to express or manage architecture's insides and is therefore able to refocus its energies and effects centripetally

to project, emanate, and exude qualities that alchemically mix with the outside. This outside, in turn, is not necessarily a more natural or more public place but rather a system for creating effects, the most important of which is that of urbanity itself. While urbanism may traffic in sets of buildings and physical planning, urbanity and the social elixirs it produces belong to the realm of affect. Exteriors today no longer belong to buildings but rather are the catalyst that, like the Big Bang, produces out of inchoate urban elements recognizable atmospheres and sensible experiences. Exteriors confront the architect with a different set of challenges than does the interior because it is impossible to control the adjacencies and proximities of other surfaces through which intensifying feedback can be produced. Architects must use the exterior to exploit dissipation and entropy.

The saturated interior of the late 1960s is a useful historical example through which to model architecture's first kiss—in Rudolph's case, architecture nestled up to not only the projected image but also to droopy Mylar, theatrical lights, shag carpet, plastic furniture, and Edie Sedgwick in a kind of superarchitectural orgy. If Rudolph perfectly exemplifies the "indoor kiss," Frederick Kiesler's reflections on the storefront, on the other hand, offer a model for thinking about exterior and even environmental kisses.<sup>23</sup> Kiesler was one of many twentieth-century Austrian architects to

end up in the United States but perhaps the only one who can be considered a classic avant-gardist. He worked in a wide range of mediums—he constitutes a kind of proleptic intermedia artist—and is best known today for his late work that exists somewhere between sculpture and architecture, the Endless House of 1947–61. While standard accounts of Kiesler's work emphasize his oddball nature, he was, in fact, a particularly astute observer of prosaic design opportunities and, like Warhol, began his professional career by designing store windows.

Kiesler considered the shop window to be more than a device for offering a view to the interior from the street. It was instead an almost independent, quasi-three-dimensional event, an interactive conjunction of outside, inside, spectacle, desire, and the movement of passersby. His understanding of the effects of a storefront is analogous to how weather fronts are understood today as the plane of negotiation between different atmospheric densities and principal cause of meteorological phenomena. The storefront, in other words, was for Kiesler an opportunity to produce new kinds of urban happenings that might begin or be catalyzed by the plane itself but that have their consequence elsewhere, out there. He described a new kind of window—glass pressing outward, flush with the space of the street rather than embedded in a frame or tied by window treatments to the interior—as a just-evolving



30. Frederick Kiesler,  
Saks Fifth Avenue  
store window, 1929.  
© 2011 Austrian  
Frederick and Lillian  
Kiesler Private  
Foundation, Vienna

method of contact between building and the outside (fig. 30). This plane was capable of absorbing what were usually architectural elements and turning them into the instruments of other mediums. For example, he was particularly interested in the window frame and

how its reconstitution could interrupt the conventional use of a window as a picture plane into the depth of the store. (Alberti called painting a window onto nature; the equivalent here would be a window onto shopping.)<sup>24</sup> Thus, when windows were no longer framed by building materials that projected out from the facade, as would be the case with a brick frame or steel mullion, but rather were surrounded by halos of light embedded in the surface of the building envelope, the window itself—its form rather than its content—moved over into the medium of advertising. In other words, when frames ceased being understood as belonging to the building, it became possible to put them to new kinds of use and effect.

The exterior surface was, in Kiesler's view, especially susceptible to new light-emitting technologies capable of transforming architecture. Electrical devices could project images that spilled off walls and onto ceilings or floors, creating continuities between territories that architecture otherwise worked hard to keep separate. Televisions in windows, with not only their moving images, but serial and episodic schedules, could bring architecture up to a new and contemporary visual pace. The storefront was an exterior surface saturated with and mediating between different rates of speeds, materials, and ambiances, all combining to perform as though the front were what he called a “silent loudspeaker,” broadcasting out beyond its visible limits.

This emanating surface was not the facade of an interior or the expressive face of an inner coherence: store interiors, according to Kiesler, were divided into discontinuous bits and pieces, from display to storage, that descended so far into depth and so far away from the building envelope as to be irrelevant to the design of the outside.

The exterior was instead an event-producing front that captured distracted urban passersby in their turbulence. More than one such surface would transform cities from collections of buildings into dynamic atmospheres embracing urban inhabitants with their noisy glow. In this apparently minor change to the detail of the exterior, the surface makes a huge conceptual leap from the logic of architectural representation and commercial meaning to the force of affect and empathy. And in this outward bound, in this relinquishing of the surface's sense of obligation only to architecture and its internal needs, in this shift from one to two, the exterior gains social agency and the capacity to shape with gentle force the collective experience of the contemporary city.

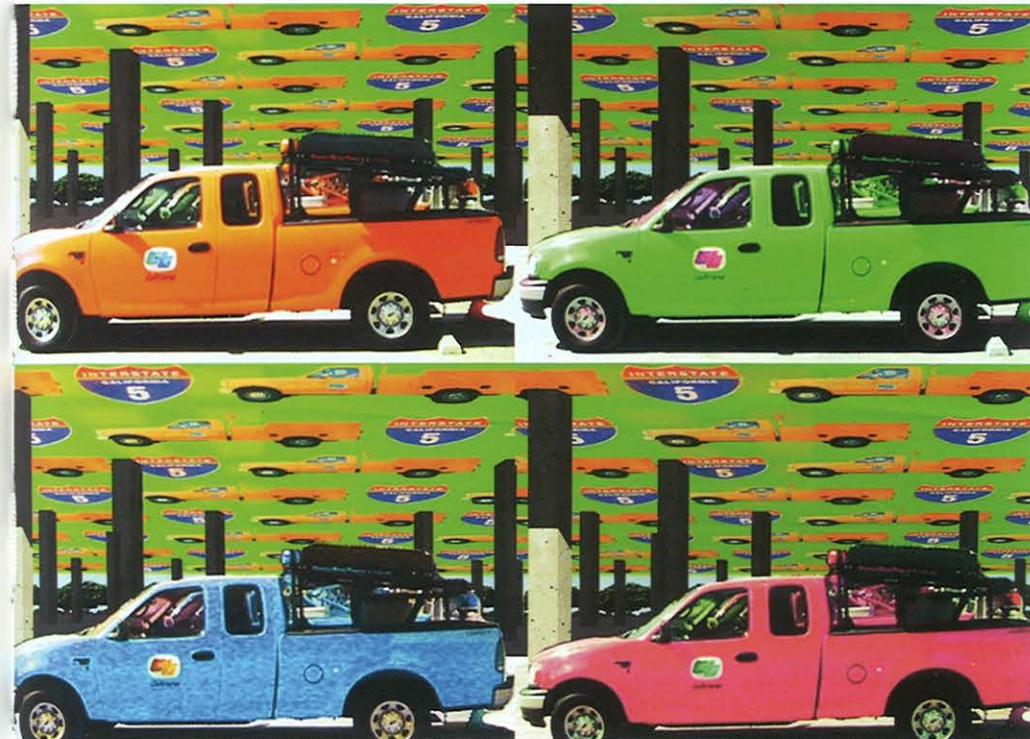
The kissing exterior surface permits architecture to become socially enveloping, a means of producing collectively embracing atmospheres rather than imposing diagrams of social order. One little-known contemporary example of such social enveloping is the puckering pixilation of Los Angeles in Rem Koolhaas and John

Baldessari's urban fantasy done for the Caltrans Headquarters competition. Their scheme, strictly speaking, had many features characteristic of Koolhaas' interest in collapsing program diagrams and architectural form into the same shape: the use of a generic box as point of departure, stacking floor plates and programs, and the shifting of one plate as an urban accommodation. This strategy is at work in a range of his projects, including most notably the Seattle Central Library. In most examples of this type, the exterior is fixed somewhere between Le Corbusier's and Venturi's definition of the free facade: a pragmatic wrapping of the floor plates with a necessary weather barrier, sort of describing the inside of the project to the outside and sort of leaving the inside out in the rain.

One of the unique requirements of the Caltrans competition, however, was that each architect worked collaboratively with an artist from the outset. Despite this mandate, some of the entries still relegated the art to the status of bystander, but Baldessari and Koolhaas concocted something irreducibly coproduced and novel, something that would have been novel again and again. Ceilings were papered with photographs of freeway interchanges, and floors were carpeted with Magritte clouds. And while this aspect of the proposal took up the by now somewhat conventional fantasy of making the outside and inside of buildings continuous—no architect today loves Mies, the original “inside is out

side guy" more than Koolhaas—Baldessari turned the convention upside down. A later installation of the Magritte as carpet at Los Angeles County Museum of Art demonstrated how disconcerting it would have been to see freeways overhead and clouds underfoot. But more extraordinary was their proposal to paint every truck in the Caltrans fleet a different color. Every morning as the trucks left the parking structure they would have become animated points, part Seurat—part Space Invaders, moving across the city, covering Los Angeles with color by day and then retreating each evening to their color-coded parking spots. Each day, then, the city would leech the building of its hue, briefly expanding its effects across an entire region (fig. 31).

The Caltrans building was generated through the collaboration of an architect and an artist, working with the tools of their trades and according to relatively conventional divisions of labor. The urban diaspora it produced—the transformation of a single building into an urban atmosphere—depended on the physical transportation and circulation of truck-size molecules of color across the urban field. No other buildings, or at least an inadequate number of other buildings, are likely to have access to this kind of mass transit operation, but the scheme can still offer a model for the diffusion of effects as a means of exploding architecture into urbanity. Most contemporary projects of this type have used the surface of the exterior itself rather than



31. Rem Koolhaas and John Baldessari, plate from an unpublished booklet produced for a competition held for the Los Angeles headquarters of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in 2001

trucks as a means of propelling particulates and color pixels out into the city. While the devices of emanation that produce the doubled effects of superarchitecture are many, they all rely on the conjoined distinction of exterior and building. UNStudio's Galleria Department Store in Seoul (2004), for example, treats the entire envelope as a broadcasting system announcing its luminous presence with a more distant reach and capacity for temporal transformation than Kiesler could ever have imagined (fig. 32). While UNStudio redid both the interior and the exterior, it did not design the architecture as a whole, which permitted thinking of the exterior exclusively in terms of its outward effect rather than in relation to an integrated total design. The exterior appears as a monolithic surface made of slightly overlapping pearlescent disks, like a Paco Rabanne dress. With LED lights embedded in the disks, at night the surface is awash with changing hues that combine color and brightness in their own constantly shifting particularity. There is no facade to be read or interior to be revealed but instead a massive yet silent loudspeaker producing a noisy glow that transforms the building's environs into a *mise-en-scène* in which a viewer is immersed.

Some of the most compelling contemporary building envelopes, from FOA's John Lewis Department Store and Cineplex in Leicester to Herzog & de Meuron's Laban Dance Centre in London, exploit the exte-

32. UNStudio, Seoul  
Galleria, 2003–2004.  
South Korea



3. Foreign Office Architects, John Lewis Department Store and Cinéplex, 2000–2008. Leicester, United Kingdom



rior surface's capacity to become product, textile, canvas, and screen and thus to adhere to other than architectural rules and to densify architecture with the virtual material of other mediums (figs. 33 and 34). The perception of this conceptually laminated surface is emphasized by its relative flatness: effects are gener-



ated by color, reflection, pattern, and texture that operate within a more or less two-dimensional terrain. In this sense they take up the considerations begun in the 1970s regarding large floor plate buildings, from Norman Foster's Willis Faber and Dumas Headquarters in Ipswich to Cesar Pelli's Pacific Design Center in Los

34. Herzog & de Meuron Architekten, Laban Dance Centre, 2003. London

Angeles. In such historic examples, the visible surface of the envelope remains relatively inured to the demands of interior expression—neither floor slabs, structural frames, nor corporate logos are legible on the outside—even though the shape of the surface is a direct result of the building mass.<sup>25</sup>

But relatively flat is not actually flat. In the case of the Lewis department store complex, the envelope is in fact made of two surfaces, each imprinted with reflective patterns that are variations on textile design. The space between the glass allows the patterns to be slightly desynchronized depending on the angle of view; at times they align, allowing more light through the surface, and at times they misalign to create greater opacity and added visual spectacle. Similarly, the Laban Centre's curvature affects the surface's luminosity such that perceptual disturbances make it difficult to understand precisely where the surface lies. In these examples, minor fluctuations in the depth of field produce major deflections in the act of perception, permitting the buildings to interact with and indeed to emerge as visible phenomena in relation to the atmospheric context of viewing. They are simultaneously architecture and mirage, as much dependent on the presence of the viewer and the sensitivities of his or her sensory apparatus as they are offering something to see.

Releasing the exterior from the obligations of facadism and embracing qualities more generally asso-

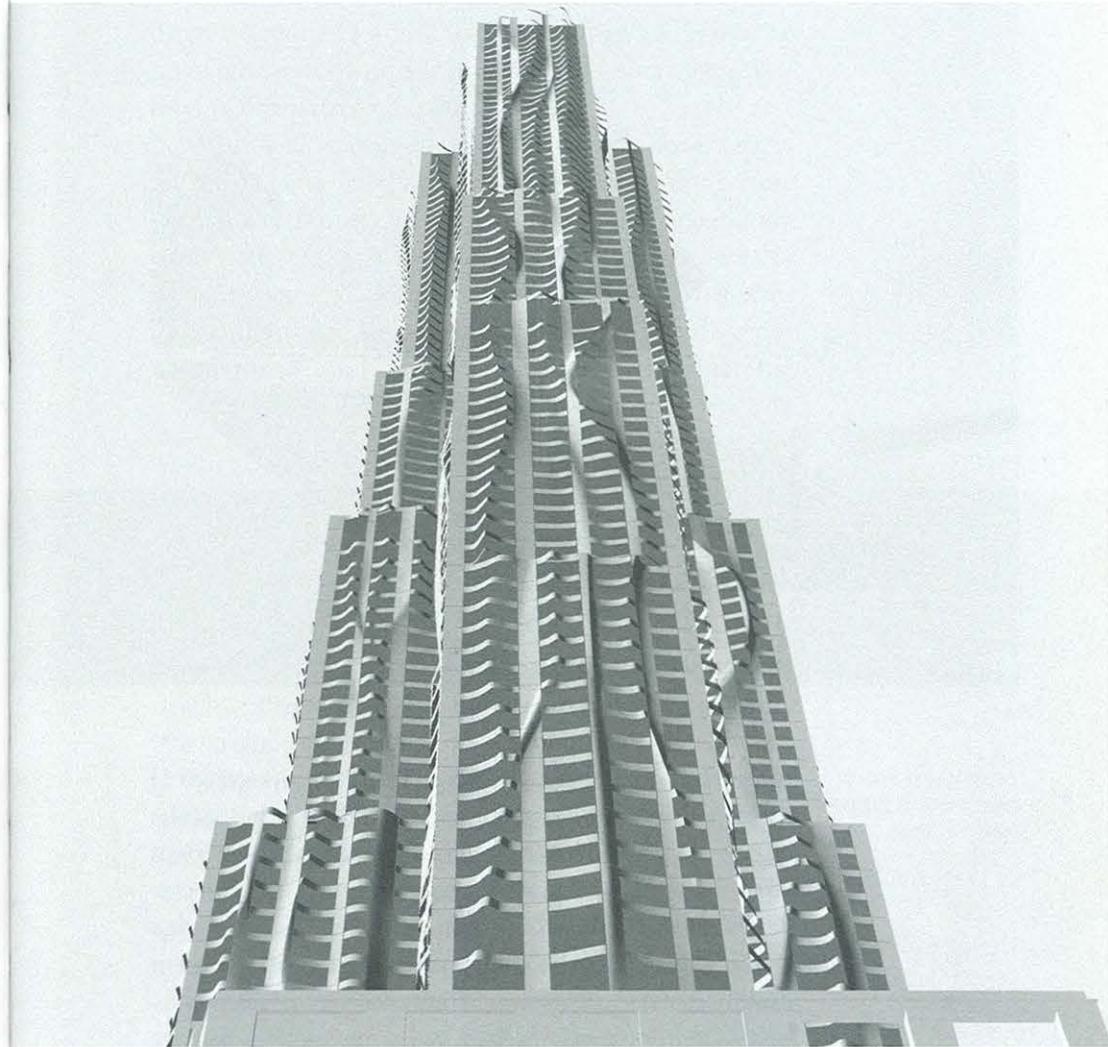
ciated with other mediums, from luminescence to colorfulness and from slow opacity to quick and animated pattern, makes it possible to transform the exterior from a plane of representation into an affective surface. Rather than being concerned only with meaning and images that demand close analytic attention, these surfaces work to provoke strong synaesthetic responses in the viewer and therefore to make architecture participate in a culture of interactive receptivity instead of imposed signification. In utter contradistinction to Michel Foucault's view of how architecture determines the subject and his perceptual capacities whether or not he is seeing or actually being seen—the irrelevance of perception is central to his theory of the Panopticon—this is architecture that does not exist until the moment it is perceived.

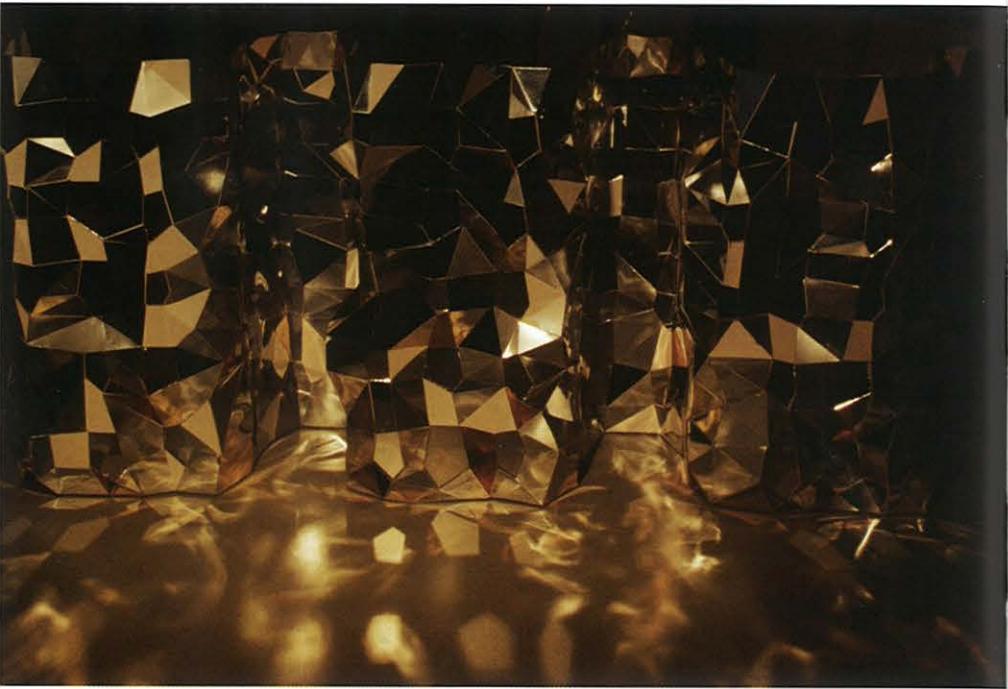
The number of different methods that architects have developed to shift architecture away from solidity and toward surprising provisionality and instantaneousness attests to the robustness of the change. For example, Alejandro Zaera-Polo has written extensively and importantly on the contemporary envelope and has identified at least four typologies differentiated in part by the degree of looseness of fit between the exterior surface and the building, properly speaking.<sup>26</sup> Frank Gehry has long explored such looseness as a means of breaking some of the hierarchical logics implicit in conventional facade design. The exterior of his Beekman

Tower in New York, for example, bulges and puckers in three-dimensions in ways that are completely unrelated to spatial planning considerations and that destroy privileges associated with the corners and view systems of typical high-rises (fig. 35). The tower's exterior, while fulfilling the technical needs of the inside for access to light and air, visually performs for the urban audience with relative abandon. The tower is a visual stimulant for all those not only who can see it but for those who can only sense its sparkly shadow as well. The almost total distinction between interior and exterior regimes has been a matter of concern to Gehry at least since his design for the Bilbao Museum; he has always used this separation to give the exterior the qualities of nonarchitectural things, from sails to sculptures, to entrap the surface in the desiring folds of a kiss rather than leave it as a conventionally signifying facade.

Just as the autonomy of the interior is an element common to otherwise quite diverse architects, many different kinds of practices are seizing on the independence of the exterior to make of one unified architecture at least two surfaces and systems that interact to produce categorically novel architectural effects. Greg Lynn's housing block designed for Sociópolis, a new model neighborhood in Valencia, Spain, and Jason Payne's Raspberry Fields, a house renovation in an isolated part of Utah, are two strikingly different examples. For Sociópolis, Lynn designed a faceted, reflective skin

35. Frank Gehry,  
Beekman Tower, 2010.  
Facade perspective.  
New York





36. Greg Lynn FORM,  
*Sociópolis*, 2002–2010.  
Valencia, Spain

that appears to break and refract light into a range of sparkly grays, like a disco ball under a pulsating strobe (fig. 36). On the one hand, this surface reaches out to a wide range of contemporary experiments with reflectivity that stretches far beyond architecture, from Koons' various steel sculptures of puppies to the bedazzling of just about everything with Swarovski crystals. But disco balls do not merely reflect light; by now they have

become the source of a peculiarly collective special effect. Indeed, disco balls have catalyzed an entirely new notion of the social sphere, creating a flux of heterogeneous people, shaping them into tightly knit and mobile masses that dissipate and reemerge with quixotic regularity. Disco balls describe neither a public nor a mob but a provisional social ecology. Rather than leave these material and political effects to the chance passing of light—a disco ball that cannot spin seen during the day is a forlorn sight—Lynn's *Sociópolis* exterior is clad in six different anodized aluminum panel finishes, each of a slightly different color and degree of brilliance, and each set at a different crystalline angle. One of the most provocative representations of the scheme is a model of the exterior, detached and free-standing in a black surround, as if in a darkened theater, or nightclub: the surface is the ball in action. This disco is always open, and instead of requiring a light source, it casts a socially enveloping brilliance around the urban spectator.

There is perhaps no place lonelier, apparently no place less social than an abandoned one-room schoolhouse in rural northern Utah. Rather than the sociality of a disco ball, the thorny setting of Raspberry Fields evokes the radical self-sufficiency of the Unabomber, and the house prickles with paranoid alertness, at least on one side (figs. 37 and 38). Radical differences in weather patterns created different patterns of weather-



ing on the original building, which Payne decided to exaggerate in order to allow the house to further interrupt conventional notions of architectural coherence, frontality, and symmetry. As in Lynn's Valencia housing, which deliberately engineered what are generally understood to be accidental effects, Payne did not leave weathering up to weather. In Raspberry Fields, the effects on wood of wind, water, and temperature are



artificially amplified to such a degree that they leave the milieu of natural architecture. Sedate and contextually appropriate shingles on one side of the house—the house toward town, the apparently social face of the house, the facade restrained by design codes—turn, on the other—the wild side of the house, surrounded by the ghosts of cattle and the barbs of raspberry brambles—into elongated lashes, curling waves of restless

37, 38. Hirsuta,  
*Raspberry Fields*,  
2008. Kearl Residence,  
Round Valley, Utah

lines, millions of mini-surfaces that over time will curve up and out to show their surprisingly iridescent undersides, casting a purple haze ever farther into the landscape, making the whole vibrate with agitating lines and luminous color. The old little schoolhouse is still visible inside its strange fur coat, but it is no longer cold and alone, a stalwart piece of architecture against the world, standing in defiant self-sufficiency, in need of no one and nothing. And it has been neither fetishized, nor castigated: instead, it has received a warm embrace in which it does not blush, as does Alice Tully Hall, but rather blooms.

Bruno Latour has argued that the once absolute difference between inside and outside has been drained of significance.<sup>27</sup> Cultural phenomena—from pollution to instruments in even the most remote locations on earth—have denaturalized the outside just as air conditioning and off-gassing have transformed the inside into an ecological system. As a result, the inside can no longer be understood as a theoretical place of experiment and science, just as the outside can no longer be understood as the political place of experience and technology. But claiming that everything is now an inside is, for Latour, primarily a means of insisting that science and nature both belong to the realm of politics. The efficacy of this political argument, however, does not rely on the end of exteriority as fact: the argument is rather staged in such a way to take advantage of the

cultural association of being outside with direct experience. No outside = no natural truth, only mediated and predetermined feeling. And, in fact, Latour's description of the world as now characterized by a multiplicity of spheres delicately defined by various means of climate control has been a useful if potentially metaphorical architectural ally.

But the political valence of this argument shifts when the inside and the outside are understood not as related by a Foucauldian diagram of power, but by the very material forces Foucault needed to render transparent in order for his diagram to work. Perhaps the most far-reaching aspect of Foucault's effects on architectural thinking was his contention that the Panopticon was not a building but only a regime. And while it might be cheap to point out, however entangled in invisible regimes of power we all are, I would still rather be on the outside than the inside of the big house. And given that many other types of power, from empire and colonialism to the cult of the global, are predicated on the fantasy of infinite expansion without limit, setting up some roadblocks, like walls, buildings, and what have been called enclaves, seems like a well-tempered political strategy.<sup>28</sup> So while there may not always be a good reason to establish a clear conceptual division between outside and inside, limits can make good politics—and often better mediums. For architecture today, it is a good idea to develop more and multiple ways of

understanding how buildings exert pressure on and affect our constantly changing weather. Exterior and interior surfaces mediate perception differently; they shape diverse kinds of breathing space and seed various types of atmosphere.<sup>29</sup> Exploiting these differences avoids the fantasy that architecture can recreate the natural experience of a mythic past and encourages buildings to seek the means to produce forms of experience in which new feelings and new politics can unfold.

If Latour's principal argument is about the need to reject all traces of a cultural divide that separates science from technology, ideas from politics, and what he calls matters of fact from matters of concern, architecture today needs to insist that division is necessary in order to foster good entanglement. "To be one with" may make a nice romantic fantasy, but "to be two with" makes more profound politics. And possibly more gratifying as well. When kissing and enmeshed, architecture is surprised into responding, made aware of the added value of *another's* mouth that seeks neither nourishment nor reproduction. Kissing requires not only that architecture receive the kiss but that it participate in return: that it kiss back. As Marshall McLuhan said about the telephone: "Why does a phone ringing . . . create instant tension? . . . The answer . . . is simply that the phone is a participant form that demands a partner, with all the intensity of electric polarity."<sup>30</sup> Superarchitecture, architecture entangled with culture and tech-

nology, performing with the increased resonance of typically borrowed qualities, such as movement, color, narrative, and sound, is becoming not merely visible, as McLuhan understood happened to old mediums when framed by the development of new mediums, but eidetic. Architecture today need not be just that which you bump up against when you try to look at something else nor a monument culturally framed and rendered visible by its own importance. Architecture's new confounds are not just making buildings visible but are encouraging them to find ways to make perception enter the realm of experience rather than vision, to make images that produce material impressions, to make experience that is *vivid*.

Every effort to move from one to two is an effort to conceptualize the social order and the role of the individual subject within it. Architecture has historically preferred the number one and has worked hard, for example, to make the interior and exterior into one. While a kiss might confound the very difference between inside and outside, there is value to recognizing the limit to the topological inversion that is desirable. Jameson described postmodernism as a play of surfaces, but his surfaces were all the same and all equally and entirely immaterial. Central to his thesis about the flow of capital was that it had succeeded in converting all objects—even matter itself—into exchangeable and insubstantial images. When describ-

ing the difference between Van Gogh's *Shoes* of 1888 and Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* of the 1980s, Jameson recounts as a matter of concern the disappearance of the paint and canvas, the loss of the surface as a means to finding matters of deep and shared consequence, and the emergence instead of the generic flatness of the silkscreen, without character other than the content of its image, which could be rendered just as well in a photograph, a reflection, or a text. Today, however, we need no longer be limited to the options set by modernity and postmodernity but can develop a contemporary understanding of the play of surfaces. According to this new logic of contemporaneity, the particularities of each surface—its color and weight, density and meaning, if it's inside or outside, the myriad elements that produce its uniqueness—substantially changes the game.<sup>31</sup>

Contemporary productive play is an experience rather than a language problem and is generated by the often erotic consilience of at least two surfaces that are entangled but do not conflate. Even though matter rather than meaning is the medium of this intercourse, the language of criticism is an essential partner in the embrace. It is often the merest of words that splits things apart and reveals their twoness, which in turn makes it possible for them to find pleasure in a mutual caress. Little flashes of words like "Pipilotti Rist is a superarchitect," or "that building's interior is outside in

the forest," can sometimes be just forceful enough to convert a single fact into a lacy web of fictions. These conversions occur through criticism's embrace of its object and outwit both the differences between fact and concern as well as those between matters of perception and political matters. Our visual practices shape our perception, which in turn shapes our experience, which in turn allows us to participate in emergent social forms or not. Finally, our choice of words can add to the enticements of these entanglements and insist on their social allure. Two makes better politics than one.

Architecture, more directly than criticism and more directly than most other cultural practices, has had the unique privilege and responsibility of housing the one and representing the many. It has long since been the instrument for creating private breathing space and public environments, for representing capital and materializing social forces. Today, architecture is also ready and able to contribute to the reinvention of experience, not personal or sentimental or idealized, but affective and political. By recalibrating how it extends itself, how its one gently shifts the limits of the other to create provisional if profound pressure between two rather than a utopian collapse into unity, architecture is redesigning the way it exercises power and diagrams politics. As a result, kissing architecture is not a private matter, but an urgent call to ethical action.