Intelligence, Creativity and Fantasy in Bernard Tschumi’s Glass Video Gallery: In-Between Translucency, Transgression and Interaction

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Abstract
In the Glass Video Gallery, the “translucent condition” of the architectural space – both physical and metaphorical – and its capacity to activate the perception, imagination and other modes of occupancy, is at the same time effective, transgressive and displaced from the traditional notion of place. Several degrees of transparencies, illusions, dissolutions and perceptive instabilities are generated that introduce imprecise limits, activating for the visitor and/or spectator an experience between the real and the virtual realm, provided by the overlapping and varying speed of flows, images and reflections that are generated, particularly when the videos are played, and it is open to the public. Dissolved are opacities, precise visible limits, the coordinates of the body and space, and the sole temporal condition since many temporalities overlap one another: that of the city, the path, the visual and sound flows, those of thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc.

Between cognition, imagination, emotion and perplexity, the subject builds his or her perceptive field and inhabits the place multidimensionally, with the sensation that something is being transgressed. Subject and object are in opposition to one another, intercepting and interacting in the same imprecise space. The architectural space is established dynamically at every moment in-between the dissolution, dislocation and coherence of the perceptive reality, which becomes plural, imprecise and always different. Object and subject, space and event, art and architecture interact to construct the place. It is an interstitial place that, governed by a conception of a more inclusive and complex order, ultimately acquires the status of an object-place-event. A place of ambiguity, reverberation and reversibility, where the artistic and architectural are intentionally blended together, where the object/the construction and the urban dialogically interpenetrate each other, and where the mind and vision waver between cognitive visibility and invisibility of the unconsciousness, evoking the ambiguous and spectral revelation of Duchamp’s Large Glass and the optical unconscious described by Rosalind Krauss. The shape, the glass and the virtual aspects dissolve the three-dimensional illusion of the perspective and reconquer the flat surface (as done by Picasso and Cubism). Space is fragmented, reverberated or expanded, and the observer is called upon to form part of the scene. The perception now ubiquitously “withdraws” and wavers between a global experience (panoptic and “panhaptic”) and another partial or fragmented one, and the body wavers affectively between a sort of “non-figure” and “non-background”. It is an experience that reminds us of the Piranesi’s Imaginary Prisons or the sketching process of Giacometti; a sort of “poly-perspective hyper-reality” is generated, without any precise limits or shame. A “hyper-reality” that criticises the primacy of vision (of optics) and the sense of modern Western cultural tradition. Like a hypertext, the gallery manifests our current media-cultural, mechanical and electronic paradigm at the same time, characterised by the complexity, diversity, simultaneousness, multiplicity, velocity and interactivity. It is established as a figural in-between place with blurry or imprecise limits, where the subject and object, spectator and show, space and event, culture and nature, art and architecture overlap in multiple dimensions. In an evocation of intelligence, creativity and fantasy in architecture, an attempt is made to dissolve the strict and direct legibility of the perception, and a call is made to a more interactive and evocative experience of the place.

Keywords: Object-place-event, interaction, translucency, reality, virtuality