



Gabrielle Schaad, Torsten Lange (Hrsg.)  
**archithese reader.**  
**Critical Positions in Search of Post-  
modernity, 1971–1976**

Buchgestaltung: Eliot Gisel und common-interest  
(Nina Paim, Mariachiara De Leo)

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Schaad, Marie Theres Stauffer, Stanislaus von Moos

#### Buchvernissagen in Zürich und Luzern

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Schaad, Marie Theres Stauffer, Stanislaus von Moos und  
Andrea Wiegelmann.

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Neuerscheinung Februar 2024

## archithese als Plattform kritischer Reflexion

→ Die Zeitschrift als Plattform, auf der verschiedene  
Haltungen und Perspektiven aufeinandertreffen – welche  
Rolle spielte die «archithese» in ihrer Zeit, welche Rolle  
spielt sie heute?

→ Ein kritischer Blick auf damals wie heute relevante  
Fragestellungen in Architektur und Städtebau

Die Publikation präsentiert eine thematisch neu gruppierte Aus-  
wahl wegweisender Beiträge, die ursprünglich in der Zeitschrift  
*archithese* erschienen, begleitet durch kritische Essays zeit-  
genössischer Autorinnen und Autoren.

Verortet in ihrem spezifischen Kontext – der heterogenen und  
bewegten Debattenlandschaft der Jahre nach 1968 –, gab die  
*archithese* nicht nur lokalen Protagonisten eine Stimme,  
sondern etablierte ebenso einen transatlantischen Dialog unter  
Architektinnen, Kritikern und Raumwissenschaftlerinnen.  
Zu ihnen gehörten prägende Figuren wie Rem Koolhaas, Aldo  
Rossi, das Architektenkollektiv Superstudio, Alan Colqhoun,  
Charles Jencks, Denise Scott Brown, Manfredo Tafuri oder  
auch Henri Lefèbvre.

Die hier versammelten Positionen stehen beispielhaft für den  
pluralistischen Ansatz, mit welchem der Kunsthistoriker  
Stanislaus von Moos die Zeitschrift in ihrer Gründungsphase  
zusammenstellte. Das thematische Spektrum reicht von Histo-  
rismus, Realismuskonzepten in der Architektur, Urbanismus,  
nutzerorientierten Ansätzen bis hin zu den politischen und  
gesellschaftlichen Ursachen und Hintergründen eines infor-  
mellen und spontanen Bauens und weist damit erstaunliche  
Parallelen zu zeitgenössischen Fragestellungen auf.



In fünf thematische Kapitel geordnet, verdeutlichen die Artikel auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise die Auseinandersetzung mit der beginnenden Postmoderne und weisen durch ihren Facettenreichtum weit über einen reinen Stilbegriff hinaus.

## Über die Herausgeberschaft

**Gabrielle Schaad** ist Kunsthistorikerin und Postdoktorandin am Lehrstuhl Theorie und Geschichte von Architektur, Kunst und Design an der TU München. Sie unterrichtet und kuratiert Ausstellungen an der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. Gabrielle Schaad ist Autorin zahlreicher Katalogbeiträge und Essays zum Kunst- und Designschaffen seit den 1960er-Jahren an der Schnittstelle zu Architektur und Urbanismus im transkulturellen Kontext. Zu ihren Forschungsinteressen zählt die Verräumlichung von Macht- und Geschlechterverhältnissen.

Sie wurde mit Forschungsstipendien des SNF, des MEXT Japan (2013–2015) und von Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, ausgezeichnet. Neben ihrer Monografie *Shizuko Yoshikawa* (2018) und weiteren wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen hat sie kürzlich *Care: gta papers 7* (2022) gemeinsam mit Torsten Lange herausgegeben.

**Torsten Lange** ist Dozent für Kultur- und Architekturgeschichte an der Hochschule Luzern, Schweiz. Er studierte Architektur sowie Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur an der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar und der Bartlett School of Architecture in London, wo er 2015 promoviert wurde. Arbeitsschwerpunkte bilden historische Forschungen zu den Produktionsbedingungen gebauter Umwelt im Spätsozialismus und zu räumlichen Praktiken queerer Subkulturen.

Neben wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen war er als Mitherausgeber am Sammelband *Re-Framing Identities: Architecture's Turn to History* (2017), der Sondernummer «Architectural Historiography and Fourth Wave Feminism» (2020) der Open-Access-Zeitschrift *Architectural Histories* sowie von *Care: gta papers 7* (2022) beteiligt.

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1971–1976

## The Reconstruction of the Kornhaus in Freiburg im Breisgau

### and Several Observations on Architecture and Historical Understanding

In Freiburg im Breisgau, on the north side of the Münsterplatz, which had been completely destroyed during the war, the last remaining gap was closed with the reconstruction of the Altes Kornhaus (Old Granary) (fig. 1) in 1970–71. The building that had stood there until its utter destruction in 1944 had been built in 1497 as a municipal dance hall and granary. Despite several conversions of the interior, most recently into a concert hall, that had also caused changes to the exterior—on the ground floor and the sides—it had preserved its late Gothic form with a stepped gable and elaborate cross windows and was one of the outstanding historical architectural landmarks of old Freiburg (fig. 2).

After its complete destruction, its reconstruction was heatedly debated for years, for reasons of architectural principle and economics. A series of new uses of diverse cultural character were discussed until finally a private group of companies took the problem of its use and funding out of the hands of the city, the building's owner.

An architectural competition was announced to design a historically faithful reconstruction of the two gabled facades. The design, which was carried out with subsidies from the preservation authorities, fulfills this task but has

nothing else in common with the historical building's technique and interior subdivision.

Behind the gabled facades stands a six-story skeleton construction whose two main floors under the gable of the facade contain three interior floors and extends to three-fourths of the roof height. The roof slope up to that height is a concrete shell above which lies a small, doubled remnant of a roof truss that has been flattened on top and contains the ducts.

The gabled facades, which were previously made of undressed stone with frames of hewn stone, were constructed from bricks, entirely independently of the structure of the skeleton. The stonemasonry is colored cast stone; the former corner ashlar was simulated with thin slabs. The form of the lower floors was slightly altered to accommodate three floors: the center arch on the ground floor was tripled in front and back. The side facades are modern in design with exposed concrete and washed-concrete infill.

The building, which receives natural light through elongated triangular openings that follow the vanishing lines from the cellars to the ceiling, is used commercially by restaurants, cafés, night bars, smaller shops and boutiques, and a few offices.

Author:  
Jürgen Paul

Source:  
*archithese*, 11 (1974):  
11–19

Translated by:  
Steven Lindberg

Jürgen Paul

## Der Wiederaufbau des Kornhauses in Freiburg i. B.

und einige Betrachtungen über Architektur  
und Geschichtsverständnis



1 fig. 1 Freiburg im Breisgau: the Altes Kornhaus (Old Granary) as reconstructed in 1970–71.

1 fig. 2 The Altes Kornhaus (1497) before its destruction in 1944.

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and Martin Steinmann

## From Idealism to Disenchantment

### Realism in and beyond *archithese*

Irina Davidovici

Two issues of *archithese* published in the mid-1970s (number 13 / 1975 and number 19 / 1976) framed the agenda of architectural realism and autonomy that would shortly accompany the arrival of postmodernism. Under the shared title "Realism in Architecture" (Realism in Architecture) each issue had its own particular handle on the theme. Issue 13, subtitled "Las Vegas etc.," literally pink-tinted realism with reflective irony, connecting it to Robert Venturi's and Denise Scott Brown's forays into middle-class American popular culture. Issue 19, coedited with guests Martin Steinmann and Bruno Reichlin, had the explicitly theoretical ambition to provide a cogent, if synthetic, definition. Presenting a mainly European perspective focused on Italian neorealism, the editors painted a pluralist overview of architectural realism as a theory whose general validity would transcend specific historical or cultural conditions. The differences between these two issues were partly explained by the make-up of the editorial boards. The first had been curated by the *archithese* editor in chief, Stanislaus von Moos, together with his two U.S. guest editors and Swiss historian Jacques Gubier. The second issue had been coedited by von Moos with Steinmann and Reichlin, both trained architects and researchers at the gta Institute of ETH Zurich, who brought an undertone of earnest theoretical density. The two issues were conceived as a diptych: the first, exploring an impressionistic understanding of realism through the lens of

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## Roxy, Noah, and Radio City Music Hall

### The New York of the 1920s and the Search for Americanism

Author:  
Rem Koolhaas  
Sources:  
*archithese*, 18 (1976):  
37–43  
Rem Koolhaas,  
*Delirious New York:  
A Retroactive  
Manifesto  
for Manhattan*  
(London: Thames  
and Hudson, 1978),  
170–71; 177–87 (EN)  
Translated by:  
Steven Lindberg

"I grow so sentimental when I see how perfect perfection can be ..."  
Top Hat  
"What are those little mice doing on the stage?"  
—"Those aren't mice. Those are horses!"  
Visitors to Radio City Music Hall

#### Dream

"I didn't conceive of the idea, I dreamed it. I believe in creative dreams. The picture of Radio City Music Hall was complete and practically perfect in my mind before architects and artists put pen on the drawing paper."  
Roxy

In the congestion of hyperbole that is Manhattan, it is relatively reasonable for Roxy, the animator of Radio City Music Hall, to claim a crypto-religious revelation as inspiration for his amazing theater. The parthenogenesis of architecture—that is, the creation of buildings without the assistance or intervention of architects—is one leitmotiv in the history of the architecture of Manhattan.

Roxy—real name Samuel Lionel Rothafel of Stillwater, Minnesota—is the most brilliant showbiz expert in the hysterical New York of the twenties. After abandoning the ideal of the new Metropolitan Opera as cultural epicenter of his complex, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., buys

Roxy away from Paramount and gives him carte blanche to create instead a "Showplace of the Nation" at the Center.

#### Five Layers

Against the background of an unwritten theory of Manhattanism, the conceptual organization of Rockefeller Center (and the secret of its success) would have to be traced back to the overlapping of five layers, each of which embodies a different architectural philosophy. Indeed, Rockefeller Center consists of five different projects that somehow coexist at the same address, provisionally held together by such infrastructure as elevators, heating and ventilation shafts, and so on.

The O level of the present Rockefeller Center, dominated by the RCA lobby and Radio City Music Hall, is a drastically reduced version of much more daring alternatives that were projected and even almost built. Although plans for the new Metropolitan Opera had been discarded, the Associated Architects continued to consider theaters. They design versions of a fantastic ground floor entirely occupied by more and more theaters: a three-block ocean

Rem Koolhaas

## ROXY, NOAH UND DIE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

"I grow so sentimental when I see how perfect perfection can be ..."  
Top Hat  
"What are those little mice doing on the stage?"  
—"Those aren't mice. Those are horses!"  
Besucher der Radio City Hall

#### Traum

Ich habe die Idee nicht konzipiert; ich habe sie geträumt. Ich glaube an schöpferische Träume. Das Bild der Radio City Music Hall war in meiner Vorstellung vollständig perfekt lange bevor Architekten und Künstler zur Feder griffen ...  
Roxy

In Anbetracht der Anhäufung linguistischer Hyperbeln, welche Manhattan darstellt, ist es beinahe logisch dass Roxy, der Animator von Radio City Music Hall, die Geburt seines erstaunlichen Theaters in Begriffen schildert, die an die jungfräuliche Empfängnis Mariens anspielen. Die «Parthenogenese» von Architektur—d. h. die Entstehung von Bauwerken ohne Mithilfe oder Dazwischenreten von Architekten—das ist ein Leitmotiv in der Baugeschichte von Manhattan.

Roxy—sein ganzer Name lautet Samuel Lionel Rothafel und sein Herkunftsort ist Stillwater, Minnesota—war der intelligenteste und glamouröseste Bonz im New Yorker Show Business der hysterischen Zwanzigerjahre. Rockefeller hatte Roxy von Paramount weggekauft und gab ihm «carte blanche», um innerhalb des Rockefeller Centers den «Showplace of the Nation» zu schaffen—nachdem der Bau einer neuen «Metropolitan Opera», welche die ursprüngliche raison d'être des Centers gewesen war, angesichts der Depression fallengelassen werden musste.

#### 5 Schichten

Vor dem Hintergrund einer noch ungeschriebenen Theorie des «Manhattanism» müsste man die konzeptuelle Organisation des Rockefeller Centers (und das Geheimnis seines Erfolges) auf die Überlagerung von 5 Schichten zurückführen, die eine je verschiedene architektonische «Philosophie» verkörpern. In der Tat besteht das Rockefeller Center aus fünf verschiedenen Projekten, die irgendwie an derselben Adresse koexistieren, notdürftig zusammengehalten durch Infrastrukturen wie Lifte, Heizungs- und Lüftungsschächte, usw.

Das O-Niveau des heutigen Rockefeller Centers ist eine drastisch verkleinerte Version von weit kühneren Alternativen, die jahrelang ausgearbeitet wurden und beinahe auch verwirklicht worden wären. Obwohl der Plan einer neuen «Metropolitan Opera» fallengelassen



— fig. 1  
Model of  
Rockefeller Center.  
View from the  
northwest;  
the RKO Building  
foreground /  
premier plan) and  
the RCA Building  
(from behind).

## Collective Housing

Theories and Experiments  
of the Utopian Socialists  
Robert Owen (1771–1858) and  
Charles Fourier (1772–1837)

Utopian designs for collective housing developments reflect the urban planning practice of their time and at the same time anticipate new social conditions. It is in keeping with the self-image of the utopians not to present their architectural ideas in an isolated space; their planning concepts are instead part of general proposals to restructure the entire society. The urbanistic reflections of the advocates of utopian socialism—Owen and Fourier—differ from those of the utopians and planners of ideal cities of antiquity and the Renaissance in their relationship to the changed conditions of production. Owenite activity and the theoretical and practical models of architecture to be described here fell in the era of the Industrial Revolution and the establishment of the industrial bourgeoisie. The concepts of Fourier and his disciples emerged against the backdrop of postrevolutionary events, the Napoleonic era, the Restoration, and the period after the July Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The proposals for reform resulted from analyzing contemporaneous sociopolitical deficiencies. In the effort to redress those ills, two possibilities stood out. On the one hand, in the urbanist sector the old cities were countered with new forms of living together;

on the other hand, there was an effort to resolve partial aspects of the problem in a kind of pseudo-redevelopment. In the process, however, they lost sight of the connections and, unlike the utopian socialists, did not come up with overall conceptions for a new urban organism. Robert Owen (1771–1858) and Charles Fourier (1772–1837) shared with the utopians of antiquity and the Renaissance an opposition to the apologists for existing conditions and the insight that in the bourgeois order, despite the liberation of the individual from feudal society, true misery is not and cannot be eradicated.<sup>2</sup> Like the former, they assumed that the society they designed could be established at any time and in any place. This overestimate of the field of influence of ideally conceived housing developments provoked the critique of the representatives of scientific socialism. For the utopian socialists, therefore, it was “necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model development.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Periods of development that are supposed to redesign what exists from the ground up [are]

Authors:  
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Source:  
*archithese*, 8 (1973):  
15–26

Translated by:  
Steven Lindberg

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Franziska Bollerey and Kristiana Hartmann

Fig. 1 Robert Owen, Lithograph after an undated sketch by J. Comerford.

Fig. 2 Portrait of Charles Fourier.



Franziska Bollerey und Kristiana Hartmann

## Kollektives Wohnen

Theorien und Experimente der utopischen  
Sozialisten Robert Owen (1771–1858)  
und Charles Fourier (1772–1837)

**Habitat collectif**  
Théories et expériences des  
socialistes utopiques Robert  
Owen (1771–1858) et  
Charles Fourier (1772–1837)

Les théories et propositions de formes d’habitat collectif développées par Owen et Fourier ne sont d’abord architecturales mais sociales et utopiques. Mais elles s’averent quand même dans les domaines concrets de l’architecture et mènent à des concepts de planification d’une actualité remarquable.

Les projets de Owen répondent aux exigences de la révolution industrielle, alors que ceux de Fourier ont pour arrière-plan l’aire napoléonienne, la restauration et l’époque qui suivit la révolution de Juillet.

Après avoir participé à la réforme d’une usine de tissage de coton en Ecosse, dont il était directeur associé, Owen projeta un établissement où devaient s’insérer production et consommation. En 1824 il émigra en Amérique, pour y créer une ville modèle, New Harmony, dans l’Indiana. Pour la première fois une ville était planifiée en tenant

compte des critères sociaux, et obtint tous les avantages techniques connus.

Fourier basa son concept de Phalanstère sur l’analyse du développement social de l’humanité, concept qu’il expose dans le *Nouveau Monde Industriel* (1829). Ses idées furent en partie réalisées à Grasse par Victor Considérant.

Malgré les réalisations partielles, les concepts d’habitat de Owen et Fourier restent en large mesure utopiques, car ils visent à la planification d’une société dont les structures seraient déjà changées.

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## Atelier 5: 1955–1975

Experiments  
in Communal Living

That form reflects contents seems self-evident to us. And that contents should result in special forms is a postulate well-known and almost venerable in architecture. It is much the same with the statement that the form of a settlement reflects a certain form of society or class of society. The proof of that is easy to offer and can also be extensively illustrated. One need think only of the villa neighborhoods and working-class housing developments of the nineteenth century or of medieval forms of buildings and cities and the associated feudal society of estates. A congruence between the nature of a settlement and its social content can thus be noted.

On closer inspection, however, deviations are revealed in specific cases. The social content of cities surely influenced their form, but the forms of the past have also continued to be used for new social contents. We must even recognize that explicit alternative proposals for a social order have adopted a traditional form of expression for their habitat. The congruence between the form and the social content is thus not always absolute. Such reflections are important today in the practical debates over housing development. They helped clarify the efforts of Atelier 5 in this area.

One of the tasks given to the architect, and in which he can develop and expand his ability as an architect, is the design of housing developments. To conceive an inhabitable structure that allows one to live well. The task he sets himself is to answer the question of “well-being.” He can do so only if he sets out from hypotheses that he must often formulate as assertions, since they are not always supported by the existing social reality. If we consider, for instance, the professional situation of the medieval carpenter or master builder and his relationship to the form of his own work, the parallel phenomenon for us today is not the so-called good architect but, say, the “National Association of Home Builders” in the United States, *Haus und Herd* (Home and Hearth) in Switzerland, and similar phenomena. That is, somebody who is in tune with their work, with widely accepted social behavior and the associated ideas of taste, form, and organization. The “medieval carpenter” today would help shape an image of the housing development centered on the individual as a mobile, interchangeable, transforming, but also isolated element. Single-family housing developments, disjointed apartment blocks, shopping

Author:  
Jakob K. Blumer

Source:  
*archithese*, 14 (1975):  
37–44

Translated by:  
Steven Lindberg

364 IV: Use and Agency

Jakob K. Blumer

Jakob K. Blumer

## Atelier 5: 1955–1975

Versuche im gemeinsamen Wohnen



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Fig. 1 Atelier 5: Thalmatt housing development in Stuckisshaus, Bern. Opening celebration in August 1974, with “newcomers” from the adjacent Halen housing development.

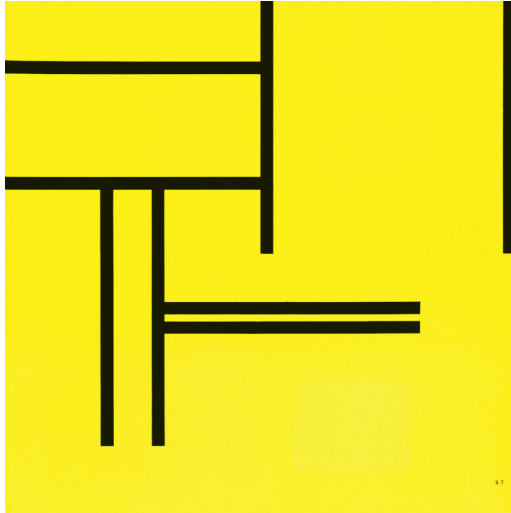


Fig. 19—spiral: Internationale Zeitschrift für Konkrete Kunst und Gestaltung 6/7 (1958); Cover design by Marcel Wyles, 35 × 35 cm.

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*Neueste Nachrichten* (Lucerne latest news, LNN) around 1961 (Figs. 11–19).<sup>25</sup> But all this certainly stood behind my fascination with those Italian magazines.

GS: But then, your friends from the FSAI didn't like your first design proposals for *archithese*.

SvM: No, no, they decided to hire a professional designer, Paul Diethelm, who translated my minimalist and deliberately "ascetic" proposals into something that had the allure of a design brochure or a product catalog. I was not too happy with the compromise, but then, while the typeface for "archi/ these" (on two lines) looked too bombastic for me, at least it was consistent with the lowercase dogma (Fig. 20).

GS: After just one year, however, *archithese* was taken over by Arthur Niggli, an internationally known publisher of architecture and art books working from Teufen, near Appenzell in remote rural Switzerland. He dropped both the graphic formula and the French-speaking coeditor (Fig. 21).

SvM: Alas, the first year had resulted in an economic fiasco. It had become clear that the formula we had agreed upon—every issue covering a somewhat arbitrary range of approaches and subjects—failed to trigger both the advertisements and the subscriptions needed to keep the magazine above water. Also, working with a print shop that was not itself involved in marketing the magazine (in our case the Imprimeries Réunies in Lausanne) and with a professional graphic designer proved too heavy a burden on the budget. What ultimately saved the project was the generosity of the members of the FSAI who agreed to cover the accumulated debts and to try a fresh model.

GS: But how did the collaboration with Arthur Niggli come about? I understand you had known him before.

SvM: I had never met him personally, but he knew of my earlier stabs in the field of publishing and magazine making.

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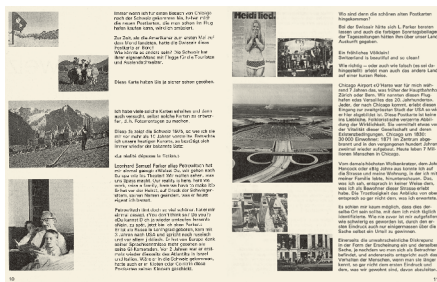


Fig. 27—Double spread from Niklaus Morgenthaler, "Amerika-Schweiz: Mutwillige Vergleiche," in "T.A.G. = switzerland," special issue, *archithese* 16 (1975), 10–11.



Fig. 26—Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Kenner, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972).

surprise (Fig. 27). As to your essay "Phase Shifts," it, too, is based on the talk you gave on this occasion.<sup>24</sup> Blatantly inspired by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), you were trying to analyze the Bürgenstock resort as well as similar locations in terms of architecture as a "language of signs."<sup>25</sup> You also took advantage of the occasion by reflecting critically architect Rolf Keller's book *Bauen als Umweltzerstörung* [Building as environmental sack] (1973) and his very striking and figurative accusations of the "monotony" and "chaos" in 1960s urban development (Figs. 28–29).<sup>26</sup>

SvM: The essay in fact reflects my perhaps rather naive curiosity for an ethnographic or socio-anthropological reading of architectural form—or rather, for everyday "architectural semiotics" (though I never used the term). I am still struck by how this approach has hardly been implemented in the European context.

TL: How do you explain this paradox? You once mentioned that, while attempting to implement Venturi/Scott Brown's tools, you found that their method's usefulness turns out to be rather limited in a European situation, particularly so in Switzerland.

SvM: I think it is because the local culture does not yield the same extremes as the U.S. The settings here seem to be both more complex and more nuanced than along the American "Strip," where Venturi's and Scott Brown's "pop-theorizing" originated and to which it is so easily applicable.

GS: And yet, as reflected in "Phase Shifts," I think your stance does reveal an interest in semiology—albeit semiology understood as a way of recovering the "meanings" architecture can embody, be they intended by the designer, attributed by the public, or arbitrarily aggregated by circumstance—including metaphor, ambiguity, rhetorical nuance, and metonymy, as they inevitably occur in the production of space, in design,

Fig. 28—Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964).



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Fig. 29—Rolf Keller, *Bauen als Umweltzerstörung: Alarmbilder einer Un-Architektur der Gegenwart* (Zürich: Verlag für Architektur Artemis, 1973).

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