Everything is Architecture

Multiple Hans Hollein and the Art of Crossing Over, by **Liane Lefaivre**

On
Design

"ALLES IST ARCHITEKTUR"—"Everything is Architecture."[1] Of all the architectural manifestos to come out of the 1960s, this is the wildest. Partly verbal, mostly pictorial, it was just under 1,000 words long and brought together over ninety images. Fast and short, the publication meant to pack a punch and send readers reeling. It did.[2] The time was April 1968. The place was the Viennese architecture magazine *Bau*.[3] The author/editor/artist/ architect/graphic designer was Hans Hollein.

"Alles" is usually read as a call for the complete dissolution of architecture.[4] Written at a time when conceptual artists were advocating what Lucy Lippard called the dematerialization of the art object in search of something more fundamental,[5] Hollein's manifesto can be seen as the equivalent for architecture. His approach combined what might be termed conceptual architecture with cyberart. In April '68, of course, the Information Age was just beginning to dawn on the architectural horizon, digital technology still belonged to a remote and mysterious world, and the only other person musing about the potential role of the new media in the field was Christopher Alexander, who had published his *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* four years earlier.[6] But Hollein's approach was closer to artists' than to Alexander's.

Hollein had been one of the earliest importers into architectural thinking of Marshall McLuhan's epoch-making 1962 *Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, the first book to herald the Information Age and attempt to predict the profound impact it would have on traditional verbal culture.[7] Hollein's manifesto is primarily an attempt to imagine what this age meant for architecture. He was fascinated with the artistic potentials of the new electronic media. One of his schemes at the time, in fact, was to replace the University of Vienna with a television set—an inkling of what today is called "distance learning" but also, more generally, of cyberspace. As opposed to Walter Benjamin, who had been adverse to the age of mechanical reproduction, Hollein was eager to embrace the age of digital reproduction. In the optimistic '60s, his manifesto was the first to oppose a novel architectural e-topian alternative to the conventional, tired mainstream architectural practices of the day, dominated by the conservative, formalist architects like Philip Johnson, Walter Gropius, Edward Durell Stone, and Minoru Yamasaki.

But the manifesto was more than a celebration of cyberspace. Hollein meant it when he declared "Everything is architecture." In an everythingizing spirit he had, two years earlier, invited such strange and radical bedfellows as Buckminster Fuller and Theodor Adorno to participate in an architectural symposium in Vienna.[8] What he was calling for in "Alles" was no less than a

complete rebooting of architectural thinking, a radical recategorization of architecture, the elimination of closure in its definition, removal of all boundaries between it and other fields, and an endless process of connectivity—Deleuzian rhyzomic multiplicity before Deleuze. His opening sentence translates as something like: "The limited categorical foundations and tradition-bound definitions of architecture and its means have on the whole lost their validity." His last paragraph translates as something like: "[A] true architecture of our time, then, is emerging, and is both redefining itself as a medium and expanding its field. Many fields beyond traditional building are taking over 'architecture,' just as architecture and 'architects' are moving into fields that were once remote. Everyone is an architect. Everything is architecture."

For all its wildness, there was nothing arbitrary about the manifesto. If it was wild, it was wild like Claude Levi-Strauss's *pensée sauvage*. Usually translated as "savage mind," *pensée sauvage* also means "wild thinking. " There is a method to this thinking: it is characterized by what Levi-Strauss called *bricolage*, which "expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire." Its effect is to increase the "scope and understanding by supplying a basis for the associations it already divined."[9] This is the kind of reasoning "Alles" used. The manifesto recategorized architecture; things not normally associated with it were suddenly and unexpectedly equated with it: "artificial climate," "transportation," "clothing," "environment in the widest sense," "the senses," "self-centered clients," "community," "cultic architecture," "control of bodily heat," "development of science," "simulated architecture," "sewn architecture," "inflatable architecture," "the haptic," "the optic," "the acoustic," "the expression of emotional needs," and even "military strategy." Hollein could have chosen to embark upon a systematic academic work and argue logically for the integration of these widely disparate elements. Instead, he opted to bring them together in a de-

liberately fragmentary way that reads as if it had been written by a combination of McLuhan, Jaap Bakema, Fuller, Timothy Leary, Gottfried Semper, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Reyner Banham.

Hollein assembled the pictures of "Alles" in the same sort of bricolage he made with the words. The approach was simple: take a series of elements not usually considered architecture and place the message "this is architecture" under each one. That's where the simplicity ended, however. The resulting recategorizations were as jarring as those in the written text. One image was of a pill. A pill=architecture? Clearly there was semantic bending going on. Another image was of a spray can. Then a fresh stick of lipstick. Then photographs of Sergei Eisenstein; of former architect, Holocaust survivor, and Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal; of fashion designer Paco Rabanne; of Che Guevara. There was a caricature of Lyndon Johnson's face as an oil refinery. French-American painter Niki de Saint Phalle walking with Swiss artist Jean Tinguely out of the vulva of her giant pop sculpture of a supine woman. The observatory of Jaipur. Tom Wesselman's *Great American Nude*. The German artist/architect Hundertwasser nude. A bra. Sunglasses. A computer printout of a digitized message transmitted from Mars by the Mariner IV spacecraft in 1965. Some astronauts in a capsule in outer space. Claes Oldenburg's *Big Screwdriver*. A Magritte painting of a giant comb lying in bed. A clenched fist. A soap bubble. A pair of scissors. Never had the definition of architecture been stretched to include these objects. And never had architecture been so pushed into the most vibrant elements of a contemporary culture—in this case sexuality, rebellion, transience, violence, futurism, uninhibitedness, hipness, unconventionality, daring, and political satire.

The wildest images were collages by Hollein himself. They belonged to a group of artworks he called "Trans-Formations." On the cover of this issue of *Bau* is his collage of a monumental

postwar modernist slab in the form of a thick slice of Emmenthal cheese gloating over the delicate, exquisitely wrought urban filigree of Vienna, festooned with Gothic and Baroque monuments. Inside, he has another collage of some rocks magnified to look like buildings in a megalopolis. One image, "High-Rise Building in a Landscape," features a giant sparkplug on a hill. Another is a '60s Pop nude stretched out on a gilded baroque sofa, head tossed back, laughing over an erotic fantasy involving the top of the Chrysler Tower, parachutes, taxis, cowboys on horses, and smiling lips floating in the sky.

Yet everythingizing has a long history in architecture. Another way of looking at this search for multiplicity is as resulting from a need for multiple intelligences, to use Howard Gardner's terms, felt as necessary for dealing with the multiple realities of the world itself.[10] Vitruvius—with his all-embracing 4th-century treatise *De Architectura*, which hybridized architecture with fields including philosophy, music, astronomy, mathematics, optics, history, and medicine—was the first advocate of such an approach to architecture.[11] Alberti was another. His *De Re Aedificatoria* and especially his *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* opened up architecture to artistic fields—literature, painting, sculpture—even more extremely, to an extent unimaginable for Vitruvius.[12] The history of architecture ever since has been punctuated with similarly ambitious attempts to recategorize architecture through crossovers into other disciplines. 19th- and 20th-century crossovers were attempted by the English Arts and Crafts movement, the Dutchman H. Th. Wijdeveld (with his magazine *Wendingen*), the *Glaeserne Kette* (an early 20th-century predecessor to the Bauhaus), the Werkbund, and the Bauhaus. The phrase "everything is architecture" was in fact first uttered by one of the wildest of architectural thinkers, Le Corbusier. Hollein claims the early 18th-century Viennese architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach as a predecessor. Von Erlach's first pub-

lished history was *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* (*Outline of a Historical Architecture*), which expanded the architectural canon to include Stonehenge, Turkish mosques, Chinese pagodas, and Siamese palaces.[13] In his everythingizing, Hollein is also an heir of the cross-disciplinary *Gesamtkunstwerk* mode adopted by the late 19th- and early 20th-century Viennese *Sezession* movement, with its explicit program of integrating the new industrial means of production with the arts and architecture.[14]

But Hollein's concept of everythingizing owes its greatest debt to the Zeitgeist of the '60s. Indeed, his everythingizing project echoes the multidisciplinarity in schools, magazines, and practice that was briefly to sweep through architectural schools toward the end of the 1960s.[15] "Alles ist Architektur" is deeply imbued with the decade's countercultural revolt against the narrow conformism of the 1950s. Whether more somber—as with Debord and the Situationists, the Groupe Utopie in France, and Herbert Marcuse in California—or more madcap and Pop—as with Archigram in England, Archizoom in Italy, and the Metabolists in Japan—the basic approach was the same. Hollein's own revolt was paralleled by similar developments in all fields of arts and sciences. At the same time Hollein was writing "Everything is Architecture," Joseph Beuys was claiming "Everything is Art," and John Cage "Everything we do is Music."[16]

The everythingizing approach of the essay/bricolage "Alles" was just one of many such efforts by Hollein. It was the result of a more general strategy carried out in *Bau*, the architectural magazine Hollein had co-founded in Vienna in 1965 and co-edited to its end in 1971. *Bau* had several publishing *coups* during its brief existence. It was the first European magazine to publish the work of an architect who was unknown not only in Europe but also more shockingly in his native Vienna: Rudolph Schindler. Hollein had discovered Schindler in residence first at the Illinois Institute of Technology, then at the University of

California at Berkeley, and had made him the main focus of his Harkness Fellowship research (1959–1960). *Bau* was the first architectural magazine that published the Wittgenstein House; Hollein and other members of its editorial board were directly responsible for establishing Wittgenstein's authorship of the house and for saving, by one day, the house from the demolition crew already on the site.[17] *Bau* was the first Viennese magazine to carry articles

about Frederik Kiesler and an unpublished house by Josef Hoffman in the United States. It was on the verge of being the first European architectural magazine to publish Constantin Melnikov, but it closed down before the issue was printed.

Bau served as a laboratory in which Hollein worked on his architectural thought experiments—in turns as a technophile, Pop artist, space-age visionary, Nietzschian Thus-Spake-Zarathustra mystic, romantic regionalist, surrealist, preservationist, and Wrightian organicist. Together, Hollein's verbal and pictorial essays early in *Bau* prefigure the mental and pictorial collage of "Alles ist Architektur." The cover of the first issue is a collection of nine unrelated images: Roy Lichtenstein's *Wham*, the Verazzano Bridge, Hollein's design for a monument in the form of a gigantic wagon train, a design by Walter Pichler for an underground city, the pyramids of Giza, and the auditorium at the TUDelft by Bakema and van der Broek. Inside one finds Ron Herron's *Walking City* next to Hollein's own collage, "Aircraft Carrier in the Landscape," and an illustration of a fictional space station out of *Life* magazine. To this combination of Pop, high tech, Russian Constructivist, de Stijl, cultic,

and Dutch Team Ten, he adds the article "The Future of Architecture," in which he calls for "space-plastic" buildings adapted to the realities of "the contemporary city and the contemporary environment," an architecture that is "the expression of all kinds of human relationships, their achievements, their emotions and passions."[18]

In the second issue, a more purely Machine-Age Hollein places the launching silos at Cape Canaveral on

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the cover with the title "Cathedrals of Another *Weltanschauung*" and argues for the machine aesthetic to be incorporated in contemporary architecture because it had, as he put it, "plastic, dynamic, expressive, formal, and emotional potentials."[19] In this issue he also assembles a visual essay bringing together photographs of the kind of Machine-Age buildings he had in mind: the Rocket Assembly Plant at Cape Kennedy, the Lowry Air Force base, a superhighway interchange at Crockett, California, the Radio Telescope in Puerto Rico, an amphitheater of the Incas near Machu Picchu, and the U.S. Enterprise aircraft carrier.

Four issues later, an organicist Hollein places a transverse section of the curved chamber of the human inner ear on the cover[20] and praises early 19th-century Viennese Thonet chairs in the name of both industrial, Machine-Age mass production and organic form.[21] Then comes a Romantic Hollein, as enamoured with the Southwest as J.B. Jackson, and a Pop Hollein, as excited about popular culture as Reyner Banham and Tom Wolfe. Both these Holleins come together in the 1965 issue "Background USA."[22] This contains a photographic essay juxtaposing a room full of hefty early computers, the Grand Canyon, a

Hopi Indian on horseback, the Unity Temple by Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center, a portrait of Louis Kahn and Frank Lloyd Wright, Kahn's Richards Medical Research Building, Burnham and Root's Monadnock Building, Marilyn Monroe in front of Niagara Falls, highway advertisements from Las Vegas, and a portrait of Mies van der Rohe. Then comes the self-consciously Everythingizing Hollein. This is the one who writes "Züruck zur Architektur" ("Back to Architecture") in 1963, arguing that architecture must be, among other usually contradictory things, "spiritual," "magic," "erotic," "collaborative," "individual," "problem-solving," "orderly," "abstract," "sexual," "sacred," "structural," "four-dimensional," "dirty," "slanted," and "plastic."[23]

But Hollein's tendency to everythingize architecture goes back even earlier than *Bau*. It begins to take shape in his Berkeley Master's thesis, *Plastic Space*, composed between fall 1959 and spring 1960, one of the most original—and unknown—instances of wild thinking of the entire postwar history.[24] While he was touring the United States, he passed through Berkeley and met William Wurster, leading figure of the multidisciplinary, Mumfordian regionalist Bay Region Style, Dean and founder of the College of Environmental Design at The University of California at Berkeley, and the person responsible for turning that College into one of the only regionalist American architectural schools—with faculty that included major regionalists like Joseph Esherik and J.B. Jackson. Wurster pressed Hollein to stay.[25] Even more multiple in its embrace than his "Alles" manifesto eight years later, the thesis, directed by Joseph Esherik, addressed "the totality of space" (no less), the "universe-world-landscape-region-city-house-room-furnishing-tools." Like Archigram, which was working on projects like the *Walking Cities* just four years later,[26] Hollein was bringing together everything from industrial design to astrophysics. Prefiguring his future

everythingizing self, Hollein even writes that "everything" can be seen as "the means of architecture" and that there are "no specific building materials, nor architectural ones."

Like his later writings, his thesis was a collage. It is partly verbal, written in a combination of free verse—now elegiac, now angry, now mythopoeic—and concrete poetry. Like "Alles," it is a pictorial essay, a collage made up of Hollein's original drawings, watercolors, and paintings in India ink, along with collages and photographs of about twenty architectural models made of fired and non-fired clay.

But unlike "Alles," *Plastic Space* was also a *built* essay, and this part of the thesis was almost as everythingizing as the written part. Erected by Hollein himself, it was called "A Space inside a Space inside a Space." It consisted of ten structures made of wood, metal mesh, welded metal, and/or plaster, some as high as sixteen feet, some that one could actually enter. The project did not end there. The final element of the design was the space surrounding, or rather created by, the structures, conceived of not as disconnected objects but as what Hollein called "space radiators"—the observer was expected to walk though about 2,000 square feet of space created by the structures. His use of the term *plastic* is consistent with the use of the German work *Plastik* to mean sculpture. Here space is being used as much as a sculptural element as the objects in it, or as he put it, as a "determined activated region in indefinite three dimensionality."[27]

The project was everythingizing not only in its "reach" but also in its compositional principle. Conceptually and formally, the structures were transformations into sculptural, then architectural, then urbanistic form of an initial set of drawings in the style of Chinese ideograms rendered in India ink. The final result is a three-dimensional ideogram. Or rather, as Hollein writes, a "four-dimensional" ideogram, because it requires the beholder to use time to move through it. The drawing of an ideogram necessarily involves the space

of the surrounding paper. As a sculptural object, an ideogram makes the surrounding space part of the composition. Architects don't usually think that way. Painters and sometimes sculptors do.

Hollein used the term *Gebilde* in his thesis to speak of paintings, sculptures, buildings, cities, and landscapes. The closest English translation is probably "whatever" (more literally, "three dimensional image"). As he says, "The reason I used the term *Gebilde* for these things is that I see no border between architecture and sculpture. . . . I didn't want to call these things . . . 'architecture' and 'sculpture.' I wanted to have a term that was more general. . . . Most architects get architectural ideas out of other architecture. I thought this was the wrong process. I mean, it should be part of your education, but . . . painters . . . don't only get ideas about art by studying older paintings. Suddenly they are confronted with some experience or fact, and something completely unprecedented takes place."[28] *Gebilde* indeed enabled a bold new way of thinking about architecture.

What is remarkable about Hollein's perpetual transformations since the '60s is how agilely and early he crossed so many big divides. His Pop collages, like *Rolls Royce Grill on Wall Street* (1963), *Aircraft Carrier in the Landscape* (1964), and the *Sparkplug in the Landscape* (1964) predate Claes Oldenburg's. In 1966 he was one of the innovators incorporating pneumatic structures into art. His Telematic University building in the form of a TV set was among the first conceptual art to use architecture as material. Hollein was even a very early practitioner of land art. His late 1950s photographs of the dirt-road-marked landscapes of the American Southwest and his 1964 photographs of Austrian landscapes bearing the marks of car tracks in the idyllic pastoral landscape, called "*Sites*,"[29] predate what are usually thought of as the earliest land art, such as Dennis Openheim's *Sitemarker 8* of 1967, Robert Smithson's *Airport Site Map* of 1967 and *New Jersey, New York* of 1967, and Richard Long's *A Line*

Made by Walking of 1967.[30]

His whole oeuvre was a collage. This explains why so many radically different groups, schools of thought, and movements have adopted him over the years. The two famous founders of the Bay Region School, William Wurster and Joseph Esherik, actively recruited him to do his Master's thesis with them at Berkeley. Jaap Bakema wanted to enlist him in the ranks of Team Ten. Reyner Banham used the phrase "visionary architects" in the Aspen Design Conference of 1968 to describe him, François Dallegret, and Peter Cook, and had already invited Hollein to the International Dialogue of Experimental Architecture at Folkestone in England organized in June 1966 by Cedric Price, to which were also invited French architect Ionel Schein (who once designed a plastic house), Arthur Quarmby (the pioneer of earth-sheltered construction in Britain), Paul Virilio, Archigram, the Hungarian-French architect Yona Friedman, Fuller, Frei Otto, and the Metabolists.[31] When postmodernism came around, Hollein's Haas Haus in Vienna became one of its chief emblems. When he completed his project for the Guggenheim in Salzburg, it was hailed by the Greens as sustainable architecture. Moreover, he is the only figure in recent memory who has succeeded in crossing from architecture to art and back again and in being recognized as an artist and as an architect by his peers on both sides of the divide. Indeed, he is the only artist to have won a Pritzker Prize and the only architect whose works are in the art collections of both the Museum of Modern Art and the Pompidou.

You have to hand it to Hans Hollein. He might have owed a debt to the multiply intelligent '60s Zeitgeist, but he has paid it back in kind.

Notes

1. *Bau* 1/2, 1968, 1–32. Every year Hollein numbered Bau's first issue 1.
2. I know because I was one of them. I was not the only one, of course. The controversy sparked by the issue is still remembered by architects in Vienna almost forty years after the fact—Anton Falkeiss, Christian Kuehn, and Wolf Prix have said this to me.
3. *Bau* was taken over and revamped by Hollein in collaboration with others. It had a circulation of about 15,000 and was the main architectural magazine in the German language at the time. It lasted seven years, from 1965 until 1972.
4. See Hilde Heynen, André Loeckx, Lieven De Cauter, and Karina Van Herck, eds., *Dat is Architectuur* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2001), 412.
5. Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972 : A Cross-Reference Book of Information on Some Esthetic Boundaries* (New York: Praeger, 1973).
6. Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).
7. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
8. The program was intended to mark the centenary of the Austrian Union of Architects in 1966. Other guests included Horst Rittel, Ernst May, and Udo Kulterman. Oskar Morgenstern, another guest, was a professor at Princeton and co-author of *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* with John von Neumann.
9. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 16–36; first published as *La Pensée Sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962).
10. Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
11. Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, trans. F. Granger (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1931), Book I, c.1. "The science of the architect depends upon many disciplines and various eruditions which are carried out in certain other arts."
12. For further reading on the multidisciplinary aspects of both *De Re Aedificatoria* and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, see my *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 113–197.
13. Vienna: 1782.
14. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna* (New York: Knopf, 1979).
15. This period in American architectural schools has received very little attention. Alexander Tzonis and I deal with it, as well as its demise in the wake of what we called the "narcissistic" movement of the mid-1970s, in "The Narcissist Phase in Architecture," *The Harvard Architectural Review*, Spring 1980, 53–63.
16. John Cage, "Everything We Do Is Music," interview by John Kosler, *Saturday Evening Post*, October 1969.
17. See *Bau* 1, 1969.
18. "Zukunft der Architektur," *Bau* 1, 1965.
19. *Bau* 2, 1965, 41.
20. *Bau* 4, 1965.
21. Ibid., 122.
22. *Bau* 5/6, 1965.
23. Delivered by Hans Hollein in 1962 at the Galerie St. Stephan in Vienna but published seven years later in *Bau* 2/3, 1969.
24. Master's thesis submitted June 1960, College of Environmental Design, University of California at Berkeley. Deposited in the University Library on July 19, 1960.
25. Hollein interview with me, July 30, 2000.
26. See Ron Herron's *Walking Cities* in *Archigram: Magazine for New Ideas in Architecture*, reproduced in *A Guide to Archigram, 1961-1974* (London: Academy Editions, 1994), 130.
27. *Plastic Space*, 27.
28. Hollein interview with me, July 30, 2000.
29. Presented at the Venice Biennale of 1972 at the Austrian Pavillion. See the catalogue *Hollein* (Vienna: Ministry of Education and Art, 1972), unpaginated.
30. The references to the land artworks are from Gilles A. Tiberghien, *Land Art* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995; first published in French, 1993).
31. See the IDEA conference program written by Reyner Banham. This document was shown to me by Hollein in February 2001.

Liane Lefaivre has written many books and articles, is on the editorial board of Architecture *magazine, researches and teaches at the Technical University of Delft, and has been appointed Chair of Architectural History and Theory at the Universität für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna.*