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RESOLUTION ROOM *International call for ideas*

STATEMENT

Making Room. The term implies providing space, addressing a necessity. The expression “making room” is used to facilitate something not necessarily related to space, but uses words related to space. To clear a space is part of the process of carving out a place for something to happen, to make room. Before building, a site is cleared so a foundation may be laid. In human relations, emptiness is necessary to rebuild trust. In both cases, the first act in making something happen is to make a space for it. The discipline that takes care both of the physical and symbolic elements in the construction of space is architecture.

Can architecture solve what words cannot? Language is thought. But language includes a bias. Thought precedes speech. An element of thought is caution, to answer “no.” Language maintains a safe distance between people, and at the same time, prevents them from coming together. In architecture, the distance between body and space is eliminated. The body is in the discourse. In logic, while there is complexity in the rules of the analysis, there is not complexity in the conclusion. Logic is a binary system of judgment (true or false) but not one of invention. Architecture is invention.

Architecture is a mediator in human relations. It is a form of pure negotiation between individuals. One gives the other something the other didn't know he needed or wanted. Negotiation takes so much effort and creativity that it will only lead to resolution when the parties are committed to staying in the discourse. In many conflicts, the first impulse is to ask for a neutral, third party space. Why not make this space physical, to build the space for resolution?

CALL FOR IDEAS

RESOLUTION ROOM is an international call for ideas to create a place for resolving conflicts in the context where the conflicts happen. In everyday life, the act of conflict resolution has no specific place. Does this mean that conflicts can be solved in many locations? Or does it deny the existence of importance of the resolution room? Will the place, merely by its existence aid the act of conflict resolution? How? To what extent will being in this place affect the process of reaching a resolution? What tools for conflict resolution will the place offer that logic or verbal language cannot? How will the space effectively communicate the conflict and the resolution to those not closely related to the space and/or to the conflict?

CONTEXT

The resolution room is effective when both parties wish to remain, like a couple. The strength of a group is also its fragility; like a bubble, firstly it can break anytime and secondly the bubble can turn into a fortress and what was chosen isolation can turn into confinement. The resolution room fits into the context of institutions that pursue agreements for what “things are in and of themselves” and not for what they may imply, that deal with complex relationships among individuals, like a school. The word “school” means both a place for learning and a path of thought. Ideally, a school is an intellectual path-maker. It creates other unique paths committed to pushing the discipline that is taught beyond its limits.

The site of a conflict has a location, but is not merely local; it appears in different scenarios, countries and at different levels. Conflict is universal. RESOLUTION ROOM should be equally applicable to any situation or institution dealing with the conflicts in a group.

STUDY CASE

This call for ideas, though generic, should not remain on a theoretical level. One way to envision this resolution room as a “real” room is to ground it in as a “study-case”. The study case offers the specific and the universal. The study case is a geographic and symbolic mark: Cooper Union at Cooper Square in New York located at the intersection of Third and Fourth Avenues at 7th Street. It marks the division from the West and the East Village. It also marks the separation between the North and the South. The scale of its importance is larger than its size. It is an emblem of thought and progress.

What are the force that makes the small big and the local universal? Is it complexity? Is it that conflict generates progress? How does complexity remain when conflict arises? How does an institution prevent itself from following standard models that weaken its progressive force? How can a group be loosely defined and still be a unit? How can individual voices remain when the individuals belong to categories and have hierarchical relationships? The entrants will define specific conflicts by their submissions.

AIM

This call for ideas offers the framework to think about conflict and space with architecture as a mediator. For those involved in conflict it offers an arena for each individual voice to be heard regardless of position, offering an equal playing field, and in the distance dialog through the discipline of architecture. The entries by those in conflict will reveal the subtlety and complexity of each individual experience and will provide a universal resource.

Every conflict needs to redefine not only the nature of the conflict, but also “what is conflict” and “what is solution.” How does an individual become part of a conflict? What are the repercussions of the conflict? It happens that one is part of some and not part of others. Does one choose to be part of the conflict or does the conflict choose its participants? .

ENTRIES

DEADLINE: May 21st 2005

STUDY CASE: Cooper Union -Cooper Square in New York.

GOING INTO PUBLIC: All entries will be published in a web page,

A forum and exhibition will take place in December 2005 in New York.

WHO CAN SUBMIT: All

PROGRAM: RESOLUTION ROOM. It should offer an intimate place symbolically loaded, and a public place for others to witness. It should be large enough to be used by 3 people and provide a concept that can be applied to different scales (2-400 people). The meaning of “Room” is open to interpretation, entrants should redefine what a room is.

FORMAT: Each entry will consist of a one 8.5”x11” or A4 page with images and/or text. Sent a hard copy and a CD with the digital format (PDF: resolution 300 and JPG: resolution 72 dimensions: 200K). Each page has a 5 digits number also print in the mailing envelope.

SUBMISSIONS: Deadline for entries due at SITUATION by 5:00 pm, May 21st 2005. (Date for entries to be in the office not postmarked). Mail to the following address: SITUATION Jana Leo, 323 W. 39th St. Suite 711 New York, NY 10018. (Hand delivering: May 21st from 3-5 pm)

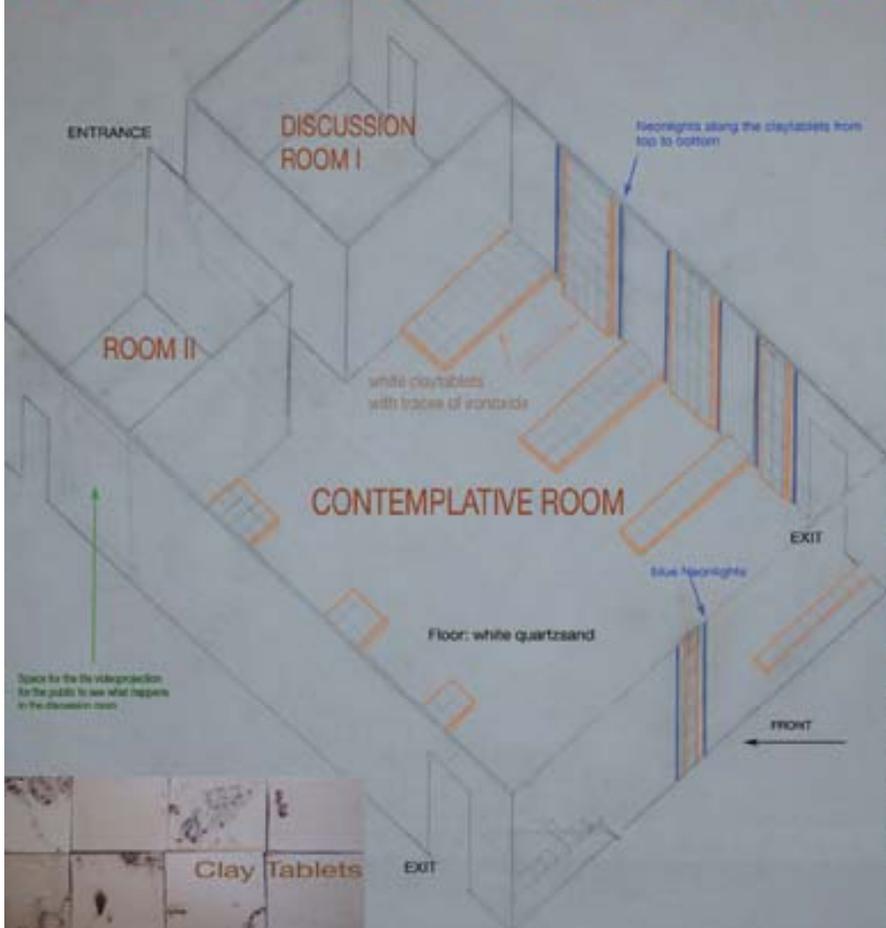
BACKGROUND

The desire to “make room” and the belief that architecture has an important task as a mediator are my chief reasons for working in architecture. In 2000, I made a place for new relationships by inventing a program with the project: *Communication Lair*, a building for egalitarian, undefined, anonymous and unexpected encounters among strangers. In 2004 *Communication Lair* was placed in small scale in a room in Times Square, as the foundation of SITUATION. Since then, Gabriel Park has unofficially collaborated on this room and continues the participation with this call. In SITUATION, the space as well as the interaction is constructed within the framework of “Public Intimacy.” The aim is to create another world on a small scale. A new world is nothing else but a new way to relate to people.

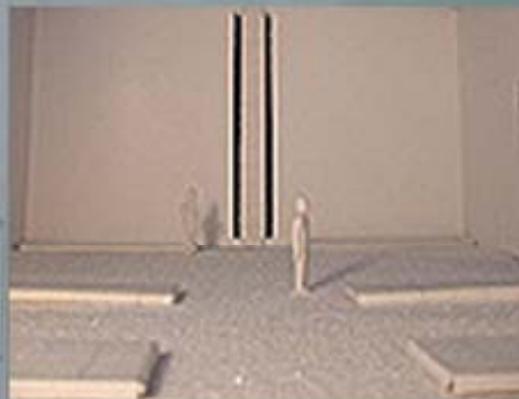


RESOLUTION ROOM

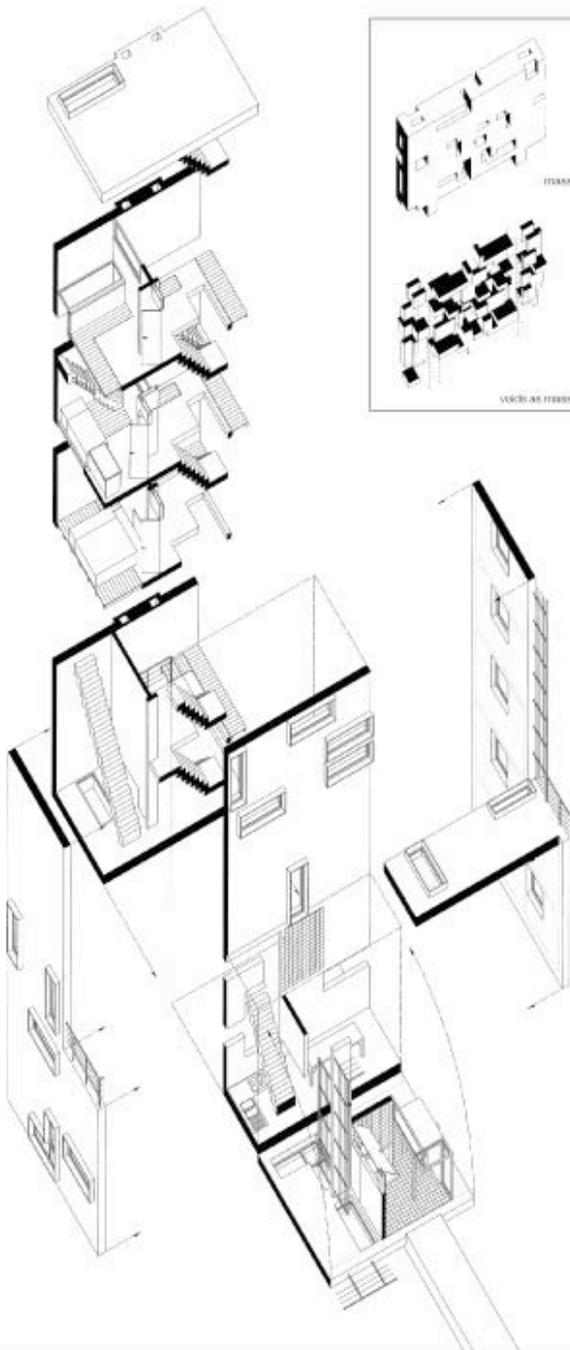
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© Roxane Legenstein



A mobile box in variable sizes for indoor or outdoor installations consisting of 3 units: Two discussion rooms and one contemplative room. The discussion rooms are equipped with surveillance cameras. What happens inside can be transmitted on the outside wall of the box for the public to watch.



The Contemplative Room serves as a refuge for the senses and the mind. It is a place for the inner dialogue. People in conflict visit the contemplative room before having discussions and during breaks. There they encounter themselves in total privacy. No verbal communication is permitted. It is a silent room with no noise except the steps in the quartzsand. What happens inside stays inside and can only be guessed by the public by watching the change of behaviour after the visit in the contemplative room.



CALYPSO

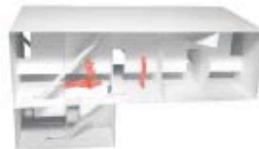
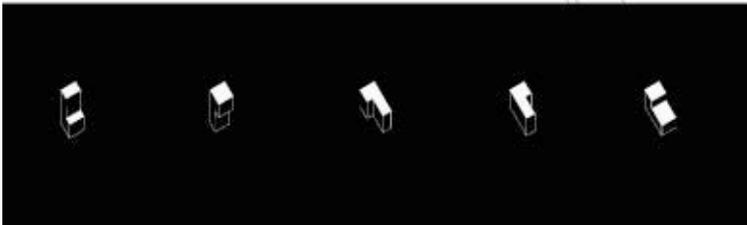
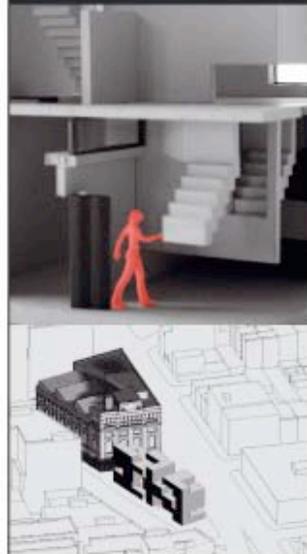
The L-shaped unit can assume one of six orientations, so that a wall can easily transform into a floor or a ceiling. – Stairs also, may gain other functions such as a bookshelf e.g. Thereby, this space gives things the ability to change, to show themselves *from another side*.

Each different orientation reveals a unique dwelling in which the five alternative interpretations remain present. Given one interpretation, other valid logics are potential.

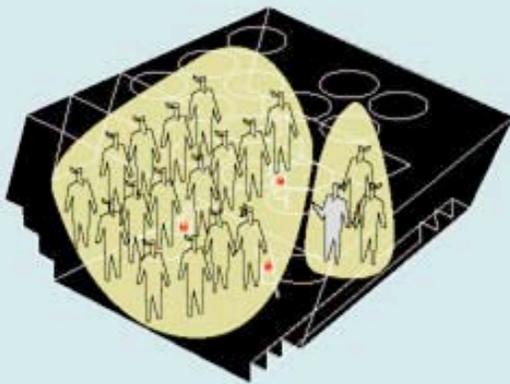
This space presents itself as a possibility of possibilities (*trans-possibility*). *Trans-possibilities* have their architectural expression in the integration of different logics in one unit.

Thus, this space does not offer solutions for conflicts, but rather underlines their existence. On its own, a space cannot offer solutions, but can *give space* to various options, prompting new thoughts and ideas.

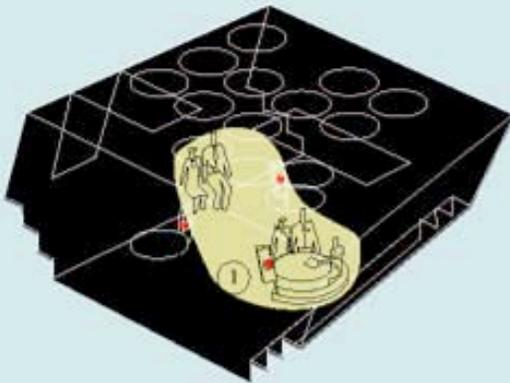
It is possible to cluster this unit in any way desired. In turn, the clusters may be rotated in any direction, resulting in unexpected public spaces, shared spaces and voids, reflecting in new levels of *trans-possibilities*.



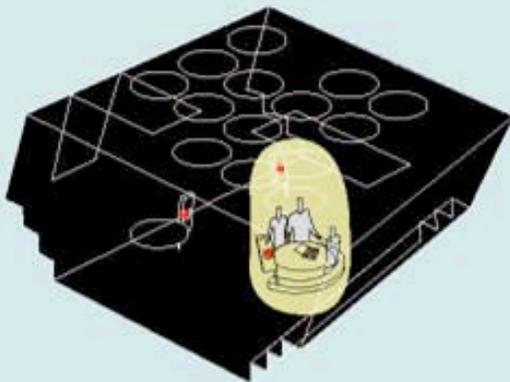
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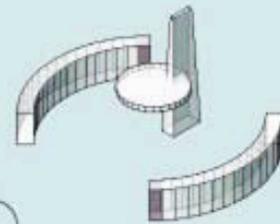
Contesting an unprecedented fourth reelection of tribal leaders, members of the Indian community need a place to work through their differences. They come into The Resolver for a space to safely debate this political choice likely to affect their quality of life. The outraged cries of the leading dissident activates the skin with such activity that the entire neighborhood comes to watch.



School administrators, a newspaper journalist, students and their parents gather in The Resolver. Students were quoted in the newspaper as saying that they would be drinking after the prom. They've been banned by administration from participating. Should we be punished on the speculation of behavior? The group debates this question and the possibility of modifying the punishment. Outraged by being banned from the prom for speculating that they would be drinking, students have called school administrators to the Resolver. With parents waiting on the surrounding seating, the students gain a voice.

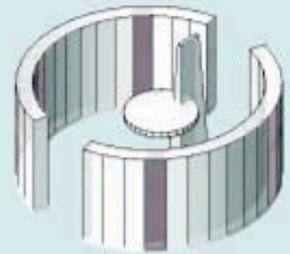


Within a focused pool of light, a pizza shop owner and the two young men caught in the act of burglarizing the cash register have been working through a restitution plan that avoids adding two more non-violent criminals to the overburdened legal system. In agreement, the "Resolver" is triggered! It records and translates the agreement into a printed contract.



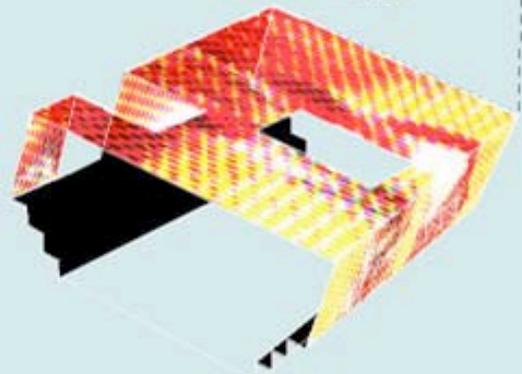
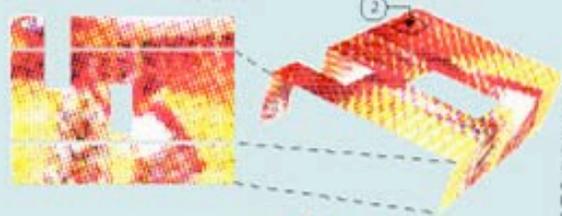
1

Flexible partitions rise from the floor to create seating walls or to full height to create privacy screens.



2

led "pixel" creates abstract low-res images in the skin based on voice-stress and movement sensors within the resolver.



the RESOLVER

A public arena for multi-scale conflict resolution. The Resolver supports and enhances the desire to solve a dispute

X Y

PUBLIC PISSOIR
COOPER SQUARE,
BTW THIRD AND FOURTH AVE

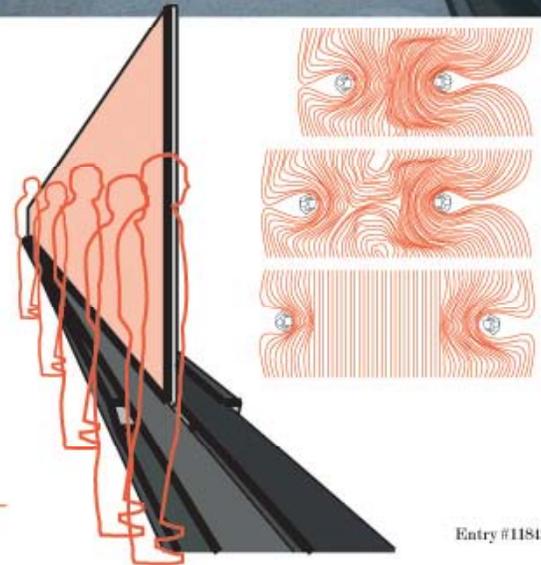
We come upon this detail in Jean Genet's text. This text will occasion for us a scene in excess of category of conflict and that of resolution; it will allow us to occupy a moment of radical alterity, fleeting and tacit and perhaps impossibly brief. But also illuminating and sublime.

It was near the harbor and the barracks, and its sheet iron had been corroded by the hot urine of thousands of soldiers. When its ultimate death was certified, the Carolines not all, but a formally chosen delegation—in shawls, mantillas, silk dresses and fitted jackets, went to the site to place a bunch of red roses tied together with a crape veil. The procession started from the Paralela, crossed the Calle Sao Paulo and went down the Ramblas de Las Flores until it reached the statue of Columbus. The faggots were perhaps thirty in number, in sight A.M., at sunrise. (...) When they reached the harbor, they turned right, toward the barracks, and upon the rusty, stinking sheet iron of the pissoir that lay battered on the heap of dead scrap iron they placed the flowers. (The Thief's Journal)

The pissoir bears the traces of "thousands of soldiers," and, in bearing witness, reminds us of the incredible complexities of intimacy—the inexorable connections of bodies and rituals, of affects and rituals—is irreducible to merely a resting site. For us, this is the essential point: at the site of intersection of affect and corporeality, of joy and mourning, of the abject and the sublime, a dense and irreducible humanity appears, a network of connections that refuses to be subsumed under one category or another.

This is what bothers us when we hear talk of "conflict," talk of "resolution." We cannot help thinking that conflicts and resolutions are both implicated in the same reductive system of containment and categorization, that they are two different names of the same thing. Whenever we hear of conflicts and resolutions, then, we invariably hear the doors shutting on cells of disciplinary confinement; we hear categories being activated, formulas applied. We hear, for instance, that, as indicated by the juridical phrase, conflicts involve "interested parties." We hear, in geopolitical debates, that conflicts may come to be "armed" confrontations. We hear that, for the psycho-medical establishment, conflicts are a kind of pathology, necessary, but ultimately correctable. What all this suggests to us is that conflict is precisely an institutional, disciplinary category, and not, as it is tempting to conclude, a natural, essential, or universal condition. Let us try to say it differently: if conflict is necessary, it is also necessarily contingent. It is our goal to think conflict not in the juridical, political, medical, or humanist terms—or rather not to think it only on those terms—but in excess of those terms. We mean to suggest that while conflict describes one possible modality or plane of relations, it is nevertheless always just one of many planes and modalities coexisting contemporaneously. When entity X (whether a party in a legal dispute, an armed force, a pathology or a sovereign subject) is said to be in relation of "conflict" with entity Y, we are altogether unconvinced that entity X and entity Y stand exactly and exclusively in that relation. We suspect that the space between X and Y is inhabited by myriad other networks of kinship, proximity and intimacy; criss-crossed by planes **other than and in excess of** that of "conflict." We like thinking of that space as a generative and productive one, an unstable space where relations never congeal into a category.

We are on the side of the Carolines, who, by virtue of being banished from the domestic stability of jurisprudence, politics and language, must (and do) invent an entirely other modalities of relations and intimacies; we are on their side because, like them, we comprehend the poverty of a system where conflict and resolution are the only available potentialities. We side with the Carolines also for another reason: outside of conflict and resolution, they are at the pissoir, where they love, fight, mourn, meet, hate, fuck, live, invent. And maybe even piss. ■



Entry #11842

You know...

You know we're not going to solve this!
Why continue, why hold out?

You know we have more in
common than you think...

You know I'll never
admit to that...

You know, this is bigger than us; it's more pressing than any of our differences...

You know we have to cooperate. It's the only way out...
Each of us will die from exposure, we have to join forces...

Help me, I need you, I need your help!
Each of these rafts will not keep us dry;
But together, together they are watertight.

I know we are going to make it, I know that any issue between
us can be resolved; we have lived through so much...

You know that our beliefs and our methods are complementary.
I can feel it...

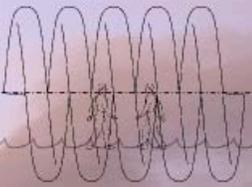
I know we are One, I can feel it.

I know, I know...

You know I hate this,
almost as much as I
despise you...

You know this mad device
has been thrust upon us,
it's not our fault.

You know it is our fault!



You know we're stuck here!
You know we will not survive...

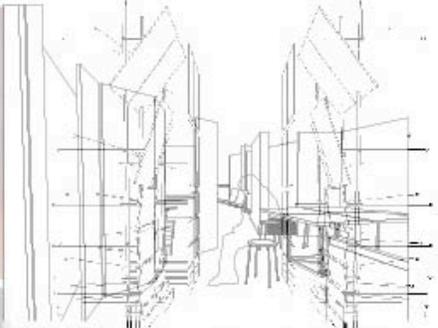


Resolving conflicts in the context of a shared apartment

The conflict in a shared apartment is evoked by the question of how to manage private and public needs in one space. The conflict starts if one individual takes over the others private space. It often ends in a collapse of the rules the individuals once set up for this space.

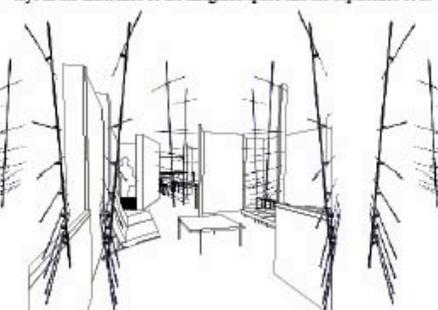
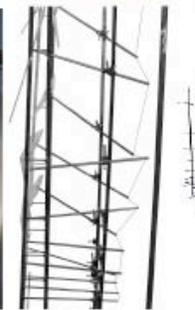
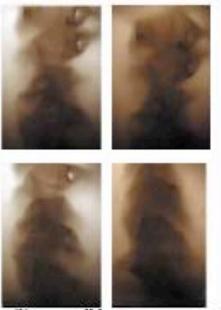
The repercussion of this conflict is a reform of the shared space and a recreation of the complex relationship among the individuals living in this space.

Instead of solid walls I choose the walls to be a tool for the individuals to redefine their needs in the shared space. Instead of a fixed condition it offers a durational special change of the situation evoked by the individuals. The wall connects and disconnects and partly keeps the private anonym space of the occupants but also seduces the occupants to change the relations. The wall is a tool for the conflict resolution. It has a private and a public function. It does not define rigid boundaries but resolving boundaries. The observer can observe the play of the shadows on the silicone layer and the deformation of the space. The wall acts as a mediator between two or more individuals. It can be implied to any apartment and replaces the former walls.



Wall - structure
A steel framework holds the two sides together. A silicone layer is attached to synapses (rubber spheres at the end of a steel tube). Panels are attached on the other side.

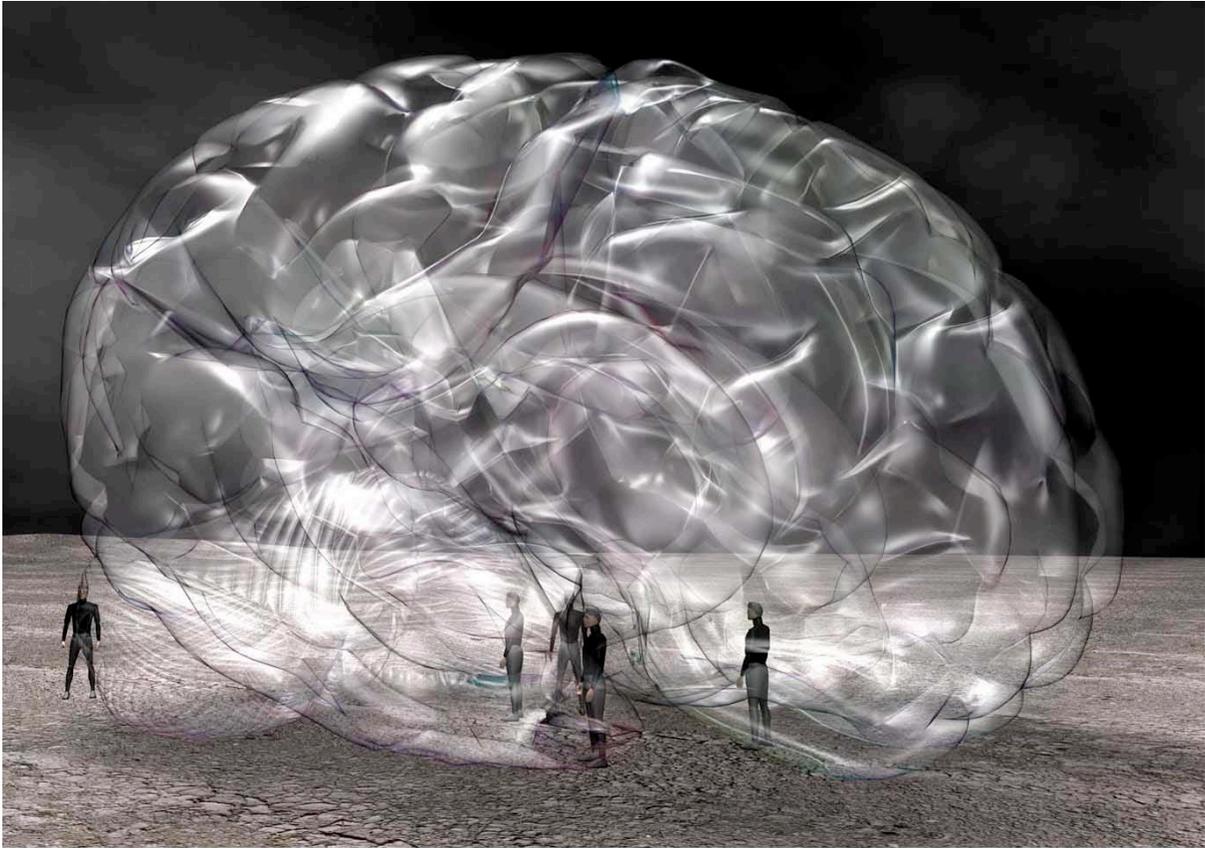
The room is constructed by the use, the imagination, the memory and the seduction of the occupants. Real is the continuous change of the territories, the boundaries and the objects. The real collapse often lays in the difference of the imagined space and the experience of it.



The different appearances of the silicone wall layer



shadows and projections of the body the objects and light on the silicone wall layer - produced by the wall movement -



OPTIONAL

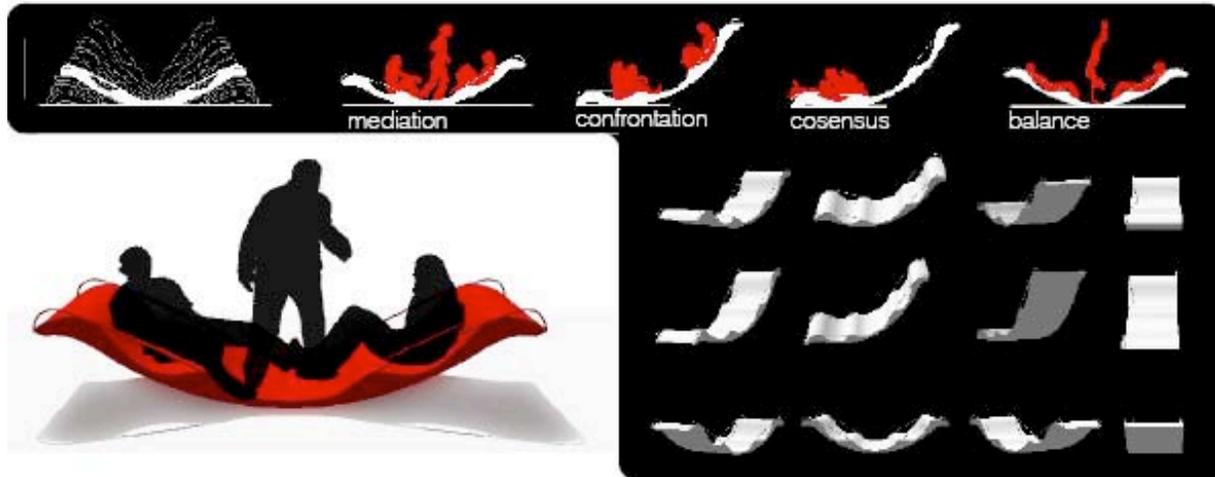
OPTIONAL ATTENTION IT COULD INFLATE

For man in the third millennium the use of the brain is a **OPTIONAL**, this is why we discover a collective attention situation: always deflated (not in use) it easily inflates (in use). A person recognizes themselves to transparent until it inflates like a hot air balloon; an automatic labour, limp on the ground when it is deflated. The opening of transparent tubes which form the hemispheres of the brain suddenly, in a slow reaction, begin to swell and return to being a huge dome. An acoustic signal warns of the imminent breakdown and a firm voice asks the public to leave. Deflated, the dome is like a transparent tent. A large signal and the dome begins to inflate again; the brain returning to its function, its physical autonomy of public consciousness.

It is temporary easily removed, transferable, movable and can be located to a different site. Always deflated (not in use) easily inflated (in use). Categories of transparent tubes which form the hemispheres of the brain. It needs automatically flaps to a large which regulate the sensor of compressed air. A powerful acoustic signal warns of danger and a firm pre-recorded voice asks the public to leave. A sensor ensures that the dome is empty, signals the deflation valves to open and the atmosphere inflates.

EQUILIBRIUM

The state of being balanced. It's a physical and mental condition when opposing forces become equal. Its unsteady in its essence, it emerges from the chaos and disproportions, and it can be destroyed by the flick of an eye, but the sensation of achieving it is the eternal pursuit of individuals and societies. Equilibrium is an ultimate category, it has its mathematical and mechanical expressions, it defines the golden section of our aesthetics. In terms of feelings it can be described as happiness and satisfaction, as atmosphere it creates harmony and understanding. A political reference is the democracy. Equilibrium is not possible without confrontation. It is born in the conflict, it solves it and leads to resolution. Conflict is the result of differences. Our collective life advances the conflict as a standard recognition of our individuality and unlikeness. To erase conflict is utopia and inhuman, to keep it restrained and balanced, to make it inspiring that's the social mission of schools.



In the installation EQUILIBRIUM I create a model of the mechanism and the process of confronting and controlling opposing forces. A spatial duel ideological disagreements are visualized by physical misbalance and compete with the basic forces of gravity and multiplicity. The instability, the sensitive kinetic ground interferes with the style of communication and behaviour, providing conditions of pluralism and right to express yourself by literally taking a side. The 'cradle' works as a human scale. It gives the confronting parties a way to measure their opinion directly. It estimates the weight of ideas and personalities, the vibrations of the collective mind. EQUILIBRIUM spatially defines positions, teams, roles... of being an opponent of being a mediator or being a loser or a winner. The middle position stands for neutrality, or mediation and arbitration. The sides belong to those on contrary positions. The swinging demonstrates the negotiation. The ultimate situation is that of the agreement of the visual balancing of the scale -the equilibrium. Another possible outcome is a total agreement when all involved are gathered on one side, the movement stops and the cradle is 'landed' and transformed into an area of peace and relaxation. In the context of Copper Union the cradle can work as a 'playground' and a tribune at the same time. From a piece of furniture for 3 people, the same principle can be applied into a swinging landscape for 400 people, all providing room for resolution. EQUILIBRIUM can be used as both indoor and outdoor installation. Both the small and the extended model are designed to provide comfort and ergonomic, visibility and favorable conditions for communication. They are in vivid, dynamic relation with the surrounding. The chosen color is red, the color of revolt and temperament. The idea for materialization is a steel structure, covered with a wave of memorable foam. The installation for 400 people provides a soft smooth landscape with a theatrical effect of arrangement. The huge construction (16/30m) will be assembled of 4 parts that can be separately used as exposition panels, and provide another level of resolution in the creative scene of Copper Union.

