



REGARDING THINGS: THREE MEDIATORS PROJECT 01- Hand out I

Image reproduced from "Flesh Space" by Stahl Stenslie in "The Virtual Dimension"

"Though separated from his product, man is more and more, and even more powerfully the producer of every detail of his world. The closer his life comes to being his own creation, the more drastically he is cut off from that life".

Guy Debord: "The Society of Spectacle"

PREMISE:

We need things. Things mediate our relationship to the world. This is a particular human condition. In a sense, our relationship to the world at large is always a mediated one: our experiences of being-in-the world are mediated by things which we invent and fabricate. The making of things however is also motivated by previous encounters with the world which could embed itself in the objects we make.

Some things act as natural extensions to our-selves and others do little to connect with our existence (and therefore our existence with the world). While what things are truly necessary can be debated endlessly, the necessity of things is in itself irrefutable. Simply categorized, things can be seen as those that intervene directly in one's interaction and experience of the world and those that are more indirect and need several other things in a chain, in order to eventually affect us and the world. These categories could be termed as "primary" and "secondary" or, "first order" and "second order"- things. Architecture is also a thing among things. At its worst state architecture can be reduced to a commodity, a mere instrument of use, with no potential for self identification and, at a more exalted if not idealized state, it can act as the very nexus between us and the world: a medium that articulates our very existence.

Following this line of thought one could say that the range of potentials possessed by "things" ranges from one of powerful mediation between us and the world to, at the other extreme, engendering severe disconnection.

THEMATIC PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

This project aims to focus your attention on things and thing-ness. What qualifies as a thing? How do things and objects mediate our experiences and to what degree should the object-hood or thing-ness be either visible or become transparent in experiences? The objective of this project is to learn to distill conceptual content through interpretation and translate this into tectonic and spatial expression: create translations and representations that both clarify our experiences as well as act as things-in-themselves that might re-connect us to the world. An architectural vocabulary of material-form is expected to manifest through this process that keeps intact (and enhances) the visceral and intuitive faculties while employing these instinctive skills in a selective and conceptually guided manner.

THE PROJECT TASK:

For this project you must first select three things:

- A text
- A work of art
- A tool

The text should have literary value and would be preferably one that you have read before and been impacted by it. The selected art can be either two dimensional or three dimensional. Again, previous encounter/ interest will be beneficial. The tool could be mechanical or optical and should strongly represent an aspect of technology. The tool should behold some degree of marvel and fascination for you. The three things need not be interrelated in any pre-given manner. With these said criteria you are expected to propose a selection for each and articulate the rationale for your choices.

These three objects of your choice, together, should be regarded to comprise the "programmatic" motivation for this project. Your goal should be to accommodate the three elements in your project

Your charge is to construct a "container" for the three things: a physical construct that mediates and inter-relates the three things. A container here has to be understood not in a passive sense as a purely utilitarian box/object with only measurable properties (can there be something 'purely, absolutely utilitarian?'). Instead it should be thought of as an object that **embodies content**: content that derives from your interpretation of the three things and relationships among the three.

The three things are containers themselves of experiences and meanings. What you construe/construct must be an extension in the same vein. The problem here can be seen as one of trying to create a nesting of meanings. The goal is to produce a physical construct that has tectonic, material, sculptural interest. It will require you to creatively employ your visual as well as material sensibilities as well as your skills to fabricate.

What you construct can not be in any way a mimesis of the text/art/tool. Therefore it operates as **a representation or a translation** of interpreted relationships across media. Yet in another sense, what you will make is not a representation as commonly understood within traditional architectural process: namely it is not scaled down pre-copies that await realization through later construction but instead they are full scale constructs. Your final construct could be static or require active physical interaction.

This involves studying, probing the three things for their particular contents and patterns. The second step aims not at unifying the three (for it would be wrong to pre-assume that they will indeed unify) but to seek what sorts of relationships could exist among these things.

FINAL PRODUCTS:

A full scale construct and drawings. The drawings are not to be subservient "copies" of the construct. They should be indispensable along with the physical construct in revealing the nature of your proposal . Both drawings and the physical construct must work reciprocally to reveal each other as well reveal your conceptual thinking. Final drawings must be hand drawn.

The construct should have a sense of being composed as well as fabricated. Concealed, glued tricks to make appearances should be completely avoided. Found materials and pieces can be used but with care that the final project does not become a mere assemblage of ready made parts. Again, a clear sense of construction is necessary.

SCHEDULE:

This is a three week project. Final submissions are due on September 10 at 5.00 pm. Final Jury will be on Monday September 13.