Two-Way Mirror Power

Selected Writings
by Dan Graham
on His Art

*edited by Alexander Alberro*

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England

*Published in association with the Marian Goodman Gallery, New York*
Introduction: Partially Reflective Mirror Writing

Jeff Wall

Dan Graham is or has been a sculptor and a photographer, an essayist and a performer, an architect, a curator, a gallerist, a teacher, and an archivist. In the early 1980s, he came into the visual arts from an interest in writing, and, as is by now well known, fell in with a group of young artists who were also involved in making some new alliances between word and image, word and thing: Sol LeWitt, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Smithson, among others. He began writing and taking photographs and, in the spirit of conceptual art, proposed that at least some of the writing be considered works of art. He has never gone so far as to claim that his photographs are works of art.

The idea that a written essay or commentary could be validly considered as an art object the way a painting or a sculpture had been is now part of the lore of the sixties. This idea has been ignored, dismissed, studied, and researched, and has become a kind of falsehood that will not disappear. The claim thus constitutes a moment of unknowability, in which the logic of art appears to reinsert itself. We think we know, without really having to prove it, that a written essay cannot, as Art & Language termed it, "come up for the count" as a work of art, even a work of art like a readymade. Essays are about art objects, therefore, they cannot be art objects. But an art object can be "about" its own status as an art object, so why can we not accept the fact that the written text as art object just makes all that perfectly explicit?

And so the argument goes on. The experimental claim made in conceptual art can neither be proved nor disproved. Rather, it has the status of a vanishing point in the logic of aesthetics, a vanishing point that may have, in fact, vanished, since it is hardly taken seriously anymore, but nevertheless informs the whole spectrum of contemporary practices in which virtually anything—anything, gesture, event, or action—can be and is considered to be an art object (for example, Vanessa Beecroft’s performances or Damien Hirst’s shark in a tank of formaldehyde).

There is a relationship between the conceptual "degree zero" of the essay-about-its-own-status-as-an-art-object-as-art-object and the juggernaut of total artistic liberty that has characterized the past thirty years. Duchamp invented this liberty, of course, but, because he did not care to explain himself,
were so committed. The look of non-art was the new version of modernist
difficulty.

A difficult work cannot be experienced as a work without some insight into
the historical conditions to which it responds and which, in that sense, have
brought it into being. The new look-of-non-art succeeded in forcing new
patterns of perception, but these were not spontaneously available. Explica-
tion was required. Such works, not being familiar, demanded a new social role
for commentary, primarily written commentary.

The legitimation of an art requiring, and therefore including, a moment or
process of explication was one of the achievements of the sixties and seven-
ties. It might be a dubious achievement. The idea that a work of art required
some kind of explanation—as part of the experience of the work—was and
is hotly contested, since it appears to violate one of the canonical aesthetic
rules: that a work of art is self-sufficient and need be experienced but not
necessarily understood. The fact that it can be experienced successfully without
really being understood has always been considered a mark of its self-
sufficiency, its distinctness from other kinds of practice, like science or
philosophy. The new art, deriving as it did from an intellectual apprehension
of the historical, logical, and structural problems of the notion of art—the
Duchampian strain—was driven to challenge this criterion.

The new argument, imbedded with aspects of structuralist and post-
structuralist theory, claimed that all works exist in a constant atmosphere of
commentary and evaluation, and indeed would have no meaning outside that.
The meanings we appreciate in art appear to us in the necessary form of com-
mentary. Necessity becomes a virtue, no apology is made for the commentary
required to legitimate the new forms. Instead, the new idea of commentary is
woven into a fabric of the socially necessary process of experiencing art;
commentaries that were always outside the experience of the work of art,
since Davidson, recognized as an interior, even an anterior, condition of experi-
ence and perception. The idea that an unfamiliar experience came equipped
with the explanation it would in any case provoke a viewer to call for emerges
from the same dynamic in which an essay could itself be seen as an art object.

Over the past twenty or twenty-five years, Graham, of all his generation,
has been perhaps the most consistently involved with this problematic of
the commentary. Only Victor Burgin, who in 1973 published a book titled Work
and Commentary, can be said to have taken the problem as seriously. Although
during the sixties and early seventies Graham made a number of significant
purely conceptual works in language form, his writing soon moved in a differ-
ent, even opposite direction, into the genre of the commentary.

Graham's transition from linguistic conceptual work to commentary was
rather gradual, emerging from both pragmatic production conditions, and
philosophical questions about the autonomy of the work of art and the ways
in which its content could be experienced in the absence of a commitment to
representation or expression. Graham's commentaries were written during
and then after the establishment of the legitimacy of the essay-as-a-work-of-
art, and they continually respond to that problematic legitimacy. Once a writ-
ten text could be accepted, or rendered acceptable, in these terms, a new
question emerged, one, again, that probably could not be answered: under
what conditions, now, could an essay not be considered an art object?

This question seems absurd, since almost no essays achieved such sta-
tus; but the absurdity doesn't really affect the fact that for an artist like Gra-
ham, there had to be a means to either establish definitively the identity of
every text as a work that is a work of art, or to withdraw a text, a group of
texts, or even a class of texts, from that condition without necessarily re-
turning them to the status or the identity they held previously—that is, as writ-
ings simply outside the work of art. Since most of the world never accepted,
or even took seriously, the text as an art object, there was no social or institu-
tional problem in continuing with an external relationship. But, for those
whose artistic direction had been, at least to a degree, defined by experiments
of this kind, a return to the social or cultural status quo was not an acceptable
option. For Graham, as for the others, there was never any question of being
a writer. What artists wrote was not literature, not even art criticism; somehow
it was art, or at least it had an internal and maybe a historically new rela-
tion to art.

Graham and his fellow conceptual artists understood that a text could be
an art object only under certain very specific conditions, conditions he helped
to define with early pieces like Schema (March 1966). The first condition was
that the text refer exclusively to its own status as both text and as proposal for
an art object. Only if this condition were met was it possible for the work as
text to take its place in a historical development that originated with the ready-
made, and included the other classic formulations of art's boundaries—the
monochrome and the unrealized work that may not aim to be realized, like
Tach's tower. Joseph Kosuth and the authors in Art & Language wrote this
kind of text, published it, and attempted to formulate ways the ideas pre-
sented in their texts-as-art-objects could be developed in other texts, and
whether the subsequent texts would also be art objects, or have to be art ob-
jects. A new situation emerged, in which it was conceivable that texts could
be written that could not be withdrawn from the condition of being art objects.
To follow the argument, if an essay that met the conditions under which an essay could be legitimated as an art object should actually achieve such status, to the extent not only of being presented as such but actually accepted as such, by being exhibited by reputable institutions and acquired in art collections, then could another essay on the same topic, even if written from a somewhat different point of view, be excluded from such status? Several possibilities appeared, each comparable to other accepted artistic practices. For example, could the same artist write essentially the same text, with maybe a few minor textual variations, and present it as another work of art, related to but distinct from the first essay?

At the same moment, On Kawara was making paintings bearing only the date on which they were painted, producing a series of very similar paintings of sequential dates. Each of these paintings was accepted as a discrete work, related to but independent of each other regardless of the repetition involved. In this context, how could a slightly different essay be ruled out as an art object if a previous one was accepted? There are obviously other possibilities, each as dizzying as the previous, all of them resemble the model of the extremist, experimental art object or gesture which, once established as an expression of the boundaries of art, can and even must be repeated in order for the seriousness of the reflection on the logical problem of art to be conveyed. Daniel Buren's stripes, Kawara's, Roman Opalka's, and Alan Charlton's canvases, or Niele Toroni's brush marks, gain rather than lose aesthetic luster by their having been repeated over what are now long periods of time. Nothing like this has ever happened, explicitly at least, in art before now. I say “explicitly” because repetition has always been present in art, but not as a mark of art's legitimacy. The repetition of stereotypical formulae by mediocre artists is just as consistent and relentless as Buren's repetition of his motif, but Buren has taken on that negative energy in art and worked dialectically with it, turning it into something else. In the post-Buren, post-Kawara, post-Ryman, post-Toroni, post-Art & Language period, repetition tends toward the inescapable, and most artists have included it in their practice in one way or another.

The critical literature on Graham has established that his work is ambivalent about these strategies of repetition in an exemplary way. As time passes and we witness the continuation of projects like Buren's or Toroni's, we understand that, regardless of the apparently unbreakable legitimacy they have achieved, they are nonetheless limited. After some decades it is now the consistent, even resigned theater of repetition that we accept in these works. The fact that they have abjured, apparently for good, any involvement with the world outside the methodological possibilities established thirty years ago, is

both a mark of achievement and a reason for now looking elsewhere for seriousness in art. Graham articulated this kind of discontent at the very beginning of the process, in the sixties and seventies. Yet, unlike most critics and opponents of conceptual art, he did so from a position almost indistinguishable from those from which he was seemingly taking his leave.

Graham's aim was to remain involved with the wider world as a subject and occasion for art, but to structure that involvement in the rigorously self-reflexive terms made mandatory by the intellectual achievements of conceptual art. Schema (March 1968) was made at the same time he was writing articles for art magazines on his own and other artists' work, as well as what was used in the magazine world to be called “think pieces”—discursive essays on phenomena or epiphenomena of culture, pieces like “Eisenhower and the Hippies” (1968), “Dean Martin/Entertainment as Theater” (1969), and “Homes for America” (1966–1967). The think pieces were actual essays on actual topics and at the same time glosses on the art works or photographs Graham was then making or preparing to make. He has consistently referred to these writings as “journalism.” And they are journalism, except they are also not quite journalism, in the sense that, with them, the category “journalism” is rearticulated and relegitimated in terms established by the self-reflexivity of the category essay-as-a-work-of-art. This implies that a work of art is to be made through the principle of “the look of non-art” in the sphere of the written. Just as Dan Flavin made sculptures by repositioning common lighting equipment, Graham moved toward making textual art works or “magazine pieces,” as he calls them, by writing about various subjects as if he were writing the essay about its possible status as a work of art. This process of mimesis, of constructing journalism in the “as if” mode, was a way of testing the new category of the essay-as-a-work-of-art. It is clear, maybe only in hindsight, that the outcome of the test was known in advance. To reiterate, the essay-as-a-work-of-art can only be an essay about the proposal of that essay as a work of art; it can't be about any other subject. Graham seems to have wondered, if an artist could write an essay about another subject, but write it “as if” it were an essay about the proposal of itself as a work of art, would the resulting essay then be able to be experienced as a work of art the way the accepted essay-as-a-work-of-art is experienced? The answer seems clearly to be no, but it is a complex “no,” especially if we imagine the resonance of that “no” around 1969 or 1970.

Let us follow this unlikely argument further. Graham might have thought, Okay, the essay-as-a-work-of-art is definitely limited to the one subject. He might then have thought about the possibility of writing a second such essay.
with a few minor textual changes, and he would have concluded that that essay, too, would obviously be an essay-as-work-of-art, for the reasons we have already outlined. A certain perspective and logic necessarily appear to the mind at this point. It would be clear that what has been created is a unique and transformed version of the methodology of artists like Buren or Toroni, but in written form, that is, in a form that will always remain liminal and problematic as visual art or as an art object.

Graham might have thought that this liminal space was both absolutely determined in terms we have established, but that, at the same time, by being a liminal and problematic category, it contained unknown possibilities. The most immediate way to experiment with those possibilities was to breach the apparently fundamental rule by introducing another subject matter, while still attempting to write, or make, a “magazine piece” rather than a magazine article, strictly speaking. It’s clear that this was a failure, and that the essays have become magazine articles or critical essays, and, generally speaking, this has been the case with Graham’s writings. Previous collections, like Articles (Van Abbe Museum, 1978), Video-Architecture-Television (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1979), and Rock My Religion (1993), have treated them that way. We make no argument against this categorization except one.

Graham, like a few other artists of his generation, has appeared to accept the idea that he could do more than one thing, and that he could be an artist and an essayist, journalist, or critic. The world has also accepted this in him, as it has done with Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, and, more recently, Peter Halley. Nevertheless, we understand that none of these essays would have been written, no critiques composed, unless somehow the content of the essay was connected to the inner aspects of the artist’s work. This is what distinguishes these artists from others who have had far more public and distinguished careers as critics, like Patrick Ireland, Peter Fiegens, Thomas Lawson, or, among the younger generation, Collier Schorr. Their critical writing must have some relation to their artistic work, but it has been occasioned by the institution of criticism and essayism in a way that Graham’s has never been. With Graham, as with Smithson and one or two others, there has always been a resistance against writing on any occasion except one provided by the evolution of the artistic work as a whole. Although we can determine that Graham’s essays emerge from various specific contexts, we can see that they are not created in response to a summons from the institution of criticism. They may function as criticism, even cultural criticism, but this function can be compared to the function of an intervention by Buren as criticism. That intervention might be critical of something—for example, the institution in which it is

exhibited—but that criticism is not made directly, as actual criticism, that is, as writing within the institution of criticism. It is made incidentally, in the process of making a certain kind of work of art, and that art is made within the institution of art. This work of art might be called “functionalist,” or post-autonomous, as it has been. What that means is that it achieves its functional purposes by means of being a work of art and taking on the form of a work of art, albeit an experimental form. Post-autonomous art achieves its functional aims through the process of being created within the very framework of autonomous art, that is, it responds to no external functional or practical command, it is freely chosen and made by the artist. The artist chooses to make his or her work useful in some way, or even just to pretend it might be useful, to act “as if” it could be useful. This pretense invents possible functions, and presents them to the public, which might not have otherwise ever thought of them. In this light, post-autonomous art is only a liminal type of autonomous art. In saying this, I mean no negative criticism of that art. The borderland of these categories generates experiments that might lead somewhere authentically new.

Graham’s essays occupy this borderland. They achieve their discursive and critical aims not through the artist’s acceptance of his identity or role as critical writer, but rather through his avoidance of it, his stance as a “writer,” in quotes, an artist impersonating a writer in order both to write, freely, and to work as an artist in the expanded way “artistic practice” became defined in the sixties and seventies. The critical essays and commentaries on his own work are in a permanent state of “category shift,” in that they are simultaneously about their various subjects and are yet formulations that emerge from contemporaneous aspects of Graham’s practice, whether in his photography, architectural-pavilion work, performance, or video. Graham’s writing is not writing about art, of even “art-writing”; rather, Graham’s art is an art with writing in it, or, maybe more precisely, an art with the writing it contains glinting in the form of texts.
III. Video/Television/Architecture

Two Consciousness Projection(s)

The woman focuses consciousness only on a television-monitor-image of herself and must immediately verbalize (as accurately as possible) the content of her consciousness. The man focuses consciousness only outside himself on the woman, observing her objectively through the camera connected to the monitor. He also verbalizes his perceptions. The man’s and the woman’s self-contained conscious, unconscious, or fantasized intention—consciousness—is projected. The audience sees on the video screen what the man and woman “objectively” are seeing. At the same time that they hear the two performers’ interior views. Because of each of the performer’s time-process of perception, verbalization and perception-response to the other’s verbalization, there is an overlap of consciousness (of the projections of each upon the other). Each’s verbal impression, in turn, affects the other’s perception: the man’s projection of consciousness on the periphery of the woman’s affects her consciousness or behavior. A field is created in which audience and performers place reciprocal controls on each other. The audience’s reactions to the man’s responses (his projection of the woman) may function for him as a “superego,” inhibiting or subtly influencing the course of his behavior or consciousness of the situation. Likewise, the man’s responses on the periphery of the woman’s consciousness interfere with her self-consciousness so that her behavioral responses, including those of self-perception, may be “subconsciously” affected. Each of the three elements functions mutually as a feedback-device governing behavior—a “superego” or “subconscious” to the consciousness and response of the others.

An abstractly presupposed psychological (or social) model is physically observable in the audience. The specific results of the piece vary according to the context in which it is performed, with changing historical circumstances, locale, or use of different social classes of audience or actors.

Notes
1. While an audience might initially assume that the woman is being “made into an object,” it becomes apparent that her position is more powerful than the man’s, as her subject and object are not separated (separable). The more the man (in himself) strives to be objective, the more he appears unconsciously subjective to any observer from the outside the audience.
2. The Freudian axiom that one person is always projecting himself into his observation of a second person.
3. Imposed behavioral (“psychological”) differentiations between man and woman.


Present Continuous Past(s)

The mirrors reflect present time. The video camera tapes what is immediately in front of it and the entire reflection on the opposite mirrored wall. The image seen by the camera (reflecting everything in the room) appears eight seconds later on the video monitor (via a tape delay placed between the video recorder which is recording and a second video recorder which is playing the recording back).

If a viewer’s body does not directly obscure the lens’s view of the facing mirror, the camera tapes the reflection of the room and the reflected image of the monitor (which shows the time recorded eight seconds previously). A person viewing the monitor sees both the image of himself eight seconds ago, and what was reflected on the mirror from the monitor eight seconds ago of himself, which is sixteen seconds in the past (because the camera view of eight seconds prior was playing back on the monitor eight seconds ago, and this was reflected on the mirror along with the then present reflection of the viewer). An infinite regress of time continues within time continuums (always separated by eight second intervals) within time continuums is created.

The mirror at right angles to the other mirror-wall and to the monitor wall gives a present-time view of the installation as if observed from an “objective” vantage exterior to the viewer’s subjective experience and to the mechanism
that produces the piece's perceptual effect. It simply reflects (statically) present time.

The length of the mirrors and their distance from the cameras are such that each of the opposing mirrors reflects the opposite side (half) of the enclosing room (and also the reflection of an observer within the area, who is viewing the monitor/mirror image).

Each of the videotaped camera views is continuously displayed five seconds later, appearing on the monitor of the opposite area. Mirror A reflects the present surroundings and the delayed image projected on Monitor A. Monitor A shows Mirror B five seconds ago, the opposite side's view of Area A. Similarly, Mirror A contains the opposite side's view of Area B.

A spectator in Area A (or Area B), looking in the direction of the mirror, sees: 1) a continuous present-time reflection of his surrounding space; 2) himself as observer; 3) on the reflected monitor image, five seconds in the past, his area as seen by the mirror of the opposite area.

A spectator in Area A turned to face Monitor A, will see both the reflection of Area A as it appeared in Mirror B five seconds earlier and, on a reduced scale, Area A reflected in Mirror B now.
Yesterday/Today

A video monitor in a public space displays a present-time view of the visual activities of a second, nearby room. In this space, the inhabitants' daily activities follow a defined routine with rhythmic periodicity related to a specific time of day, where people discuss ongoing activities (informing an ongoing chronicle), and which imposes a definite modification in role, or of consciousness, upon someone entering it.

The visual scene on the monitor is accompanied by an audio play-back of sounds, tape-recorded from the second room one day before, but at exactly the same time of the day. Two time continua having presumably the same rate of forward flow, one aural and the other visual, can be observed separately or conjointly. The visual activities and the sounds may more or less phase rhythmically, overlap, or actually coincide. As the room is nearby, the spectator may directly enter its actual space if he desires. The installation may be repeated daily indefinitely.

Note

Notes on Yesterday/Today

Whereas video by artists tends to emphasize the purely visual aspects of the medium, broadcast television subordinates the visual image to the narration imposed upon the image (expressed in vocal commentary and in the ordering of the visual sequences). In broadcast TV any dissociated or contradictory reading of the relation between the narrative and visual is suppressed, narrative interpretation being always dominant. An example of this is in news stories about Communist China using visual footage supplied by the Chinese, which, when shown, is "put in perspective" by the spoken words of the news commentator. Unlike film, where both sound and visual tracks are of necessity in the past and constructed from discontinuous segments, edited and recorded according to conventional rules of syntax, video (both visual and audio tracks) is assumed to correspond/ be congruent to the real, present time-space continuum, or the identical continuum from an earlier time, shared by both the producers and receivers of the video. In video, unlike film, the sound and visual tracks are presumed to be different perceptual aspects of this space's physical presence.

In Yesterday/Today, as the visual image and the audio recording take place 24 hours apart, the formal distinction between the aural and visual representations of a nearby space becomes evident. Similarly, the distinction between the real space and the representation of that space is made evident. As similar types of activities happen in the depicted space on a daily basis, the aural and the visual representations may nearly coincide; thus, there are two ways to read their close, but not total identity: as due to the one-day time delay in the sound or due to the difference between sound and video tracks as representation. Since the video image, the audio, the spectators, and the real space—documented one day delayed and live—all share the same continuously forward flowing space/time, there is always a historical (real) relation between the present time-space depicted on the monitor and the one-day delayed audio, just as there is a relation between the real space and the monitor image's depiction of it, and between the audio documentation of yesterday's spoken text and events observable in that space today.

Yesterday/Today is representational and narrative. It is better read, not as immediate image, but over an extended time period. It is contextually related to the real (historical, unpredictable) events of the particular space, to the viewer's relation to that space (and to the institution it encloses), and to the real world environment. All these factors have a bearing on the work's "reading." The observer must compare the narrative contained in the work with the actual event/place of the art (the gallery). Being grounded in real space and time, the verbal "soap opera" structure of Yesterday/Today contradicts the
usually stressed visual, instantaneous and silent comprehension of the visual artwork.

In Yesterday/Today the video/audio system institutionalizes the spatio-temporal structure of the art object. This is contrary to the neutral “timeless” quality implied by most art shows. Historical reality depends upon the medium through which it is documented and represented. Video and audio can add a historical and sociological perspective to define the specific function of a space for those who use it. The spectator can follow yesterday's story of a designated space by viewing the video monitor from the outside, listen to yesterday's story, and then enter the real space, listening to participating in the present-moment dialogue (with a mental reference to yesterday's dialogue).

The pattern of the chosen quasi-public/quasi-private space is one which is basically invariant from day to day, although suggesting slight “development” or variation.

A specific architectural space tends to be institutional; it structures the needs, roles and responses of the people who use it (that is, their roles tend to be influenced by the conventions, history and present function of the space). Likewise, the space serves a function in the larger social order. Yesterday/Today is best read by those who make up the institution, those who use the space it relates to, those who are the art dealer, the art reviewers, the artists, the critics and the various people who service its needs.

In the John Gibson Gallery installation in New York the public exhibition area displayed the monitor and audio recording coming from the immediately adjacent semi-private/semi-public gallery director's office. This outer office, whose door is usually kept open and accessible to the curious gallery visitor, is where real art takes place, as opposed to the purely public exhibition space where the monthly art exhibition is displayed. John and Susan Gibson, the proprietors working in this space (often visited by other people), negotiate with prospective customers, design future exhibitions, talk with artists and critics, view young artists’ slides of work, etc. . . . The office space is reacted to somewhat differently by the “regulars” (“people in the business”) than by the more easily intimidated members of the general public. What is revealed in this space of the gallery, in distinction to what is hidden in the public gallery space, are the functional, social, and economic relations of the art gallery.

For the Samangallery installation in Genoa, the small single room of the gallery space, serving as both showroom and office, was used to display the monitor and audio recording of activity in a bar directly across a small alley way from the gallery entrance. This bar, like most bars in Italy, had a front entrance to the street and back entrance oriented to the grouping of businesses and residences to its rear (these are usually in a courtyard, but in this instance were dispersed along the small alley way). Such a bar has the dual purpose of serving both people from the neighboring streets and the businesses to its rear. The bar takes messages for those businesses when they are not open, serves them refreshments and snacks, and becomes a convenient place to meet people during business hours, outside the constricted business interior.

The installation at Galleria Sanco in Brescia, recording the immediately adjacent office of Galleria Nuovi Strumenti, connected to ideologically dissimilar galleries. A single wall separated the spaces of the two art galleries. The galleries had wished to conceal their proximity (although members of each gallery were constantly visiting one another through the rear courtyard entrance) and interrelated business dealings. The installation made clear these hidden relationships of each one to the other.

The Art Gallery of Winnipeg installation recorded the activities of a cafe on the top floor. The cafe’s clientele were a general cross-section of the users of the museum: museum staff (discussing personal, bureaucratic, political and practical problems usually revolving around the preparation of exhibitions), local businessmen on a coffee or lunch break (discussing business, civic and personal problems), local art lovers (discussing recent music, dance and art events, as well as financial support for cultural institutions) . . . in other words, documenting what is normally not expressed (because of the conventional meditative silence) in front of the art on display in the art museum.

Note
Video Piece for Two Glass Office Buildings

The video situation is for two opposite and parallel rooms located in facing glass office buildings. Each room has a large window looking into a similar window in the other building.

The sun illuminates the space between the two buildings and, as its position shifts through the day, it alters the relative transparency/reflectiveness on the inside or outside of either window. Each room contains a mirrored wall opposite and parallel to the window which reflects the contents of the room and the view seen through the window. This view through the window includes the reflections on the inside of the window, the outside facade of the other building, any reflection on the window opposite, and also what is observable inside the opposite room.

Each room has a large video monitor placed in front of its window so that the screen faces the mirror, which reflects the screen's image as well as that of the observer. A camera placed on top of each of the monitors faces the mirror to record its entire view.

The view from the camera in the left building is transmitted live to the monitor in the right building, but the view from the camera in the right building is transmitted eight seconds delayed to the monitor in the left building.

A spectator can either look at the mirror's view or look out through his window into the opposite room. In looking into the opposite room, it is possible to see that room's monitor image reflected on the wall's mirror, which shows a view of his room's mirror's reflected image.

Note
Video/Television/Architecture

A “good” shop window, like a “good” advertisement, organizes its selection of goods so that they appear to meet the [psychologically] unique needs of the person who gazes upon them. A spectator standing in front of a shop window (like an art viewer standing in front of a painting) feels his perception disturbed if other people are trying to occupy his particular position, or if he becomes too aware of other showcase displays and the people responding to them.

In Video Piece for Showcase Windows in a Shopping Arcade, the placement of the mirror parallel to the front glass plane and enlarged to fill the back side of the case, makes fully visible the spectator’s look and his body’s position in the corridor’s real space in relation to the opposite showcase. The video provides views of and from inside the opposite showcase (and also from inside the spectator’s own showcase, via the view’s reflected image from the opposite showcase’s mirror); it provides interior front and back perspectives, and front and back views of spectators looking at both showcase displays, and of spectators in the “real-world” space in the corridor between the two cases. A spectator can see both sides of his “picture” as well as both sides of the opposite case’s picture, and himself and spectators looking at the opposite case from front and back angles simultaneously. The spectator’s body is seen in its entirety in relation to the goods; the goods are seen from both sides and in relation to the opposite shop window’s display of its goods; the spectator, the showcase, and the goods displayed are seen through the real corridor space in relation to the real world which surrounds (frames) them.

Production/Reception (Place for Two Cable TV Channels)

The piece utilizes two cable channels in a local environment in addition to a normal commercial broadcast. Two cable programs are to be broadcast live and at the same time as a commercial program, originating on a local station. Any locally produced commercial program can be used, for instance a local evening news broadcast.
Cable channel A broadcasts a live view originating from a single camera placed inside the control room of the studio producing the local commercial program. A wide-angle lens is used, and the camera, aimed through the glass panel at the stage, shows the entire stage-set, surrounding cameras, cameramen, director, assistants, and the technicians and technical operations necessary to produce the program. Microphones placed in many locations within the stage-set, behind the stage, and in the control booth are mixed together and accompany the visual image. They give a complete sense of all relationships occurring within the enclosed space of the commercial TV studio.

Cable channel B broadcasts a live view from a single camera within a typical family house in the community. It shows viewers present observing the local commercial broadcast on their TV set (the view shows both the television image as well as the viewers present). The camera-view is fixed. Occupants of the household may or may not be present in the room watching the TV set at a given time. Sounds from all the rooms of the house, documenting all the activities taking place there for the duration of the broadcast, are mixed together and accompany the camera-view.

Anyone in the local community who has cable television in addition to the commercial channels may, by switching from channel to channel, see channel A's view framing the local program in the context of its process of production, or channel B's view showing the program's reception within the frame of a typical family's household; or viewers can turn to the commercial channel and themselves receive the particular local program in their house.¹

Notes
1. *Projection/Reception* was a response to my personal knowledge of an earlier work by my friend Michael Asher, using broadcast television: *The Occurrence of Rolling the Television Program, the Tenth of January, 1976*. Both works involve a sense of the architectural properties of television. One might compare the differences and the similarities of the two works.

Essay on Video, Architecture, and Television

Film and Video: Video as Present-Time

Video is a present-time medium. Its image can be simultaneous with its perception by/of its audience (it can be the image of its audience perceiving). The space-time it presents is continuous, unbroken, and congruent with that of the real time which is the shared time of its perceivers and their individual and collective real environments. This is unlike film, which is, necessarily, an edited re-presentation of the past of another reality/another’s reality for separate contemplation by disconnected individuals. Film is discontinuous, its language constructed, in fact, from syntactical and temporal disjunctions (for example, montage). Film is a reflection of a reality external to the spectator’s body; the spectator’s body is out of the frame. In a live-video-situation, the spectator may be included within the frame at one moment, or be out of the frame at another moment. Film constructs a “reality” separate and incongruent with the viewing situation; video feeds back indigenous data in the immediate, present-time environment or connects parallel time/space continua. Film is contemplative and “distanced”; it detaches the viewer from present reality and makes him a spectator.

Centralization/Decentralization of Information

The distribution of both films and broadcast television represents an asymmetrical imposition of information by capital. Film is a consumption product, as is broadcast television, which, in the interest of advertisers of products, installs a terminal in the home and controls access to information. The concentration of power through capital is also facilitated through the mythology contained in the storylines of programs and advertisements, and through withholding or controlling the availability of information. The centralized production facilities of film or broadcast TV exploit the saleable (profitable) aspects of culture at the expense of the existential. A cable system, by contrast, presents the possibility of becoming two-way and decentralized. Individuals, families and the local, extant cultural system could be given potential self-determination and control. Local cable television could feed back the immediate environment.

Addendum:

TV gains much of its effect from the fact that it appears to depict a world which is immediately and fully present. The viewer assumes that the TV image is both immediate and contiguous (as to time) with the shared social time and parallel “real world” of its perceivers—even when this may not be the case. This physical immediacy produces in the viewer a sense of psychological intimacy, where people on TV and events appear to directly address him or her.

The Architectural Code/The Video Code

An architectural code both reflects and directs the social order. In the not too distant future one can envisage that this code will be modified and in part supplanted by a new code: that of television. As cable television images displayed on wall-size monitors connect and mediate between rooms, families, social classes, “public”/“private” domains, connecting architecturally (end socially) bounded regions, they take on an architectural (and social) function. Video in architecture will function semiotically speaking as a window and as mirror simultaneously, but will subvert the effects and functions of both. Windows in architecture mediate separated spatial units and frame a conventional perspective of one unit’s relation to the other; mirrors in architecture define, self-referentially, spatial enclosure and ego enclosure.

Architecture defines certain cultural and psychological boundaries; video may intercede to replace or rearrange some of these boundaries. Cable television, being reciprocally two-way, can interpenetrate social orders not previously linked; its initial use may tend to deconstruct and redefine existing social hierarchies.

“Public”/“Private” Codes

Public versus private can be dependent upon architectural conventions. By social convention, a window mediates between private (inside) and public (outside) space. The interior seen defines or is defined by the publicly accepted notion of privacy. An architectural division, the “house,” separates the “private” person from the “public” person and sanctions certain kinds of behavior for each. The meaning of privacy, beyond its mere distinguishability from publicness, is more complexly connected to other social rules. For example: a private home limits access to members of one family; a bathroom within that house is private as it allows usage by only one person at a time (whereas a toilet in a public space is public as it allows multiple access, but is gender restricted); the individual bedroom of a child or adult member of the family may be considered to be private at certain times. Moral sanctions are attached to violation of these codes. There are areas which reflect transitional social change. The taping of private conversations for public law enforcement is one area of unresolved claims between private (including interpretation of the term “private”) rights and public rights to justice or knowledge. The widespread use
of video surveillance cameras involves similar "moral"/legal issues. The use of video would have social-psychological implications for the family structure: for instance, children being continuously observed through the use of a video camera by their parents "lose" their "right" to be different in private, that is, to have separate "public" and "private" identities.

Conventions of the Glass Window
The glass window, like the Renaissance painting, creates a picture plane that places the world at a measured distance for the viewer on either side. The world, held at a distance, frames a conventional view which is defined by the specific size, shape, and direction of orientation of the opening of the window frame. A view from one space into the other space, by what is allowed to be seen, defines one space's socially (pre-conceived "view") of the other. What some one on one side of the window can see of the other space, and what can be seen of them as part of their space by a viewer on the other side (and, vice versa, for someone occupying that other side), is conventionalized by the social/architectural code. A view from one side, as opposed to a view from the other side, may be symmetrical, appear symmetrical but not be, or be clearly asymmetrical. The "picture-window" appears to be symmetrical in the length of time allowed a person on either side to stare, but actually is not. An employer's view of his employees' work space through one-way glass, as opposed to the employees' view of their employer's office, is asymmetrical, expressing inequalities of power.

The Mirror Image/The Video Image
A mirror's image optically responds to a human observer's movements, varying as a function of his position. As the observer approaches, the mirror opens up a wider and deeper view of the room-environment and magnifies the image of the perceiver. By contrast, a video image on a monitor does not shift in perspective with a viewer's shift in position. The mirror's image connects subjectivity with the perceiver's time-space axis. Optically, mirrors are designed to be seen frontally. A video monitor's projected image of a spectator observing it depends on that spectator's relation to the position of the camera, but not on his relation to the monitor. A view of the perceiver can be transmitted from the camera instantaneously or time-delayed over a distance to a monitor which may be near or far from the perceiver's viewing position in space or time. Unlike the flat visibility of Renaissance painting, in the video image geometrical surfaces are lost to ambiguously modeled contours and to a translucent depth. Mirrors in enclosures exteriorize all objects within the interior space, so that they appear on the mirror as frontal surface planes. In rectilinear enclosures, mirrors create illusory perspective boxes. The symmetry of mirrors tends to conceal or cancel the passage of time, so that the overall architectural form appears to transcend time, while the interior area of the architecture, inhabited by human movements, process and gradual change, is emptied of significance. As the image in the mirror is perceived as a static instant, place (time and space) becomes illusory eternal. The world seen on video, by contrast, is in temporal flux and connected subjectively (because it can be identified with) to experienced duration.

Addendum:
The child sees itself formed as an image in the same way as an Other, beside which it identifies. The child's "ego" is formed by an identification with its likeness: that other human being who is in the mirror and the reflection of its body, which is dissimilar to its subjective experience, but is identified with it. In the mirror-image, its "ego" seems to be located in two places simultaneously, outside itself (in the world of other objects and looking back at the child), and within itself (looking out at the image of itself). The child falsely imagines his body image to be a unified and complete entity, identified with the image of Otherness.

Mirrors and "Self"
Mirrors are metaphors for the Western concept of the "self." In his theory of the "mirror phase," Jacques Lacan has postulated that a developing child first discovers his "self" by a mirror-like identification with the image of an Other. When the mother holds the child up to the mirror, the child views his body-image reflected in the mirror as an objectified and complete form, at a time when it is subjectively experienced as incomplete and uncoordinated. The child identifies itself with an image of an Other, an image which is outside its body sensations, but, in terms of social reality, must be taken to be its identity.

Video Feedback
The video feedback of "self"-image, by adding temporality to self-perception, connects "self"-perception to physiological brain processes. This removes self-perception from the viewing of a detached, static image. Video feedback contradicts the mirror model of the perceiving "self." Through the use of videotape feedback, the performer and the audience, the perceiver and his process of perception, are linked, or co-identified. Psychological premises of "privacy" (as against publicness) which would derive from the mirror-model, depend on an assumed split between observed behavior and supposedly un-
observable, interior intention. However, if a perceiver views his behavior on a five to eight second delay via videotape (so that his responses are part of and influence his perception), "private" mental intention and external behavior are experienced as one. The difference between intention and actual behavior is fed back on the monitor and immediately influences the observer's future intentions and behavior. By linking perception of exterior behavior and its interior, mental perception, an observer's "self," like a topological Möbius strip, can be apparently without "inside" or "outside." Video feedback time is the immediate present, without relation to past and hypothetical future states—a continuous topological or feedback loop forward or backward between just-past or immediate future. Instead of self-perception being a series of fixed "perspectives" for a detached ego, observing past actions with the intention of locating "objective truth" about its essence, video feedback encloses the perceiver in what appears to be (only) what is subjectively present. While the mirror alienates the "self," video encloses the "self" within its perception of its own functioning, giving a person the feeling of a perceptible control over his responses through the feedback mechanism.

The Glass Divider, Light and Social Division

Window glass alienates "subject" from "object." From behind glass, the spectator's view is "objective," while the observed's subjectivity is concealed. The observer on the outside of the glass cannot be part of an interior group's "intersubjective" framework. Being mirror-reflective, glass reflects the mirror-image of an observer, as well as the particular inside or outside world behind him, into the image of the space into which he is looking.

Abstractly, this reflectiveness of glass allows it to be a sign signifying, at the same time, the nature of the opposition between the two spaces and their common mediation. The glass in the window through its reflectiveness unites, and by its physical impenetrability separates inside and outside. Due to its reflective qualities, illumination within or without the space that the glass divides, produces either complex reflections, non-reflective transparency, or opacity. Light signifies various distinct spatial or temporal locations. Artificial light is often placed in contrast to natural illumination (defining indoors and outdoors). The pattern of illumination phases with, and marks off, natural and cultural diurnal rhythms of human activities taking place on either side of the glass partition. Illumination is a controller of social behavior. Both glass and light (separately or conjointly) enforce social divisions.

Glass Used in Shop Windows/Commodities in Shop Windows

The glass used for the showcase displaying products, isolates the consumer from the product at the same time as it superimposes the mirror-reflection of his own image onto the goods displayed. This alienation, paradoxically, helps arouse the desire to possess the commodity. The goods are often displayed as part of a human mannequin—an idealized image of the consumer. Glass isolates (draws attention to) the product's surface appeal, "glamour," or superficial appearance alone attributes of "workmanship" that link craftsmen to a specific product being lost, while denying access to what is tangible or immediately useful. It idealizes the product. Historically, this change in the appearance of the product corresponds to the worker's alienation from the products he produces; to be utilized, the product must be bought on the market in exchange for wages at a market value, with the conditions of its production obscured. Glass is helpful in socially alienating buyer from producer, thereby concealing the product's connection to another's real labor and allowing it to acquire exchange value over and above its use value.

In a sort of way, it is the same with Man as with commodities... man sees himself reflected in other men. Peter only establishes his own identity as a man by first comparing himself with Paul as being of the same kind, and thereby Paul, "in hide and hair," Paul in his Pauline corporeality, becomes entirely to Peter the phenomenal form of the genus of Man.

Capitalistic society makes all personal relations between men take the form of objective relations between things... Social relations are transformed into "qualities of . . . things themselves" (commodities).

Under capitalism, just as the ego is confused with the body image in the mirror, so that ego is confused with the commodity. The individual is made to identify himself (in his feeling for "himself") with the image of the commodity. The commodity object is a substitute (enflesh) for his lack—the lack his desires expresses. The glass and mirrors of the shop window beckon the potential customer by arousing doubts and desires about his self-image/self-identity. It is as if in looking at the product behind the glass showcase, the consumer is looking at an ideal image of himself (in the mirror). Or he sees in the reflections that he deviates from the ideal (represented by the mannequin), but is given the possibility of acquiring attributes of this ideal if he buys the merchandise. The commodity reflects his desire for a more complete "better self," identified with the alter ego.

Inseparable from the goods the consumer desires is the illusion that buying them will "complete" that which is "incomplete" in himself. This desire is
never satisfied (as the market system must continue to function), but because the consumer identifies himself with his projection onto the commodity, he infuses the commodity with a psychological value which now becomes part of its market value.

In the showcase display the prospective customer's point of view, his sense of "self," is equated not only with the object centered in his view, but with the system (which created the device). The showcase window as a framing or optical device replicates the form of the Renaissance painting's illusionary, three-dimensional "space." Like a painting's perspective, it frames a determined view (determines a view), creating a point of focus—meaning-organized around a central vanishing point. The customer's gaze is focused upon the centered object's external form; focus creates value. The spectator's "self," unaltered, projected into the space, is identified with the thing(s) represented. The spectator's gaze, his "self-projection," organizes meaning around the centered object, meeting its centered look.

The material components of the showcase affect the viewer slightly differently from the painting. First, glass becomes an illusion upon which a partial mirror-image of the observer himself (accentuated by the use of mirrors in the back of the case facing the front panel) is imposed. By means of strong overhead lighting, The faint reflection of the spectator, as well as that of the outside, real world, is superimposed on the glass in front of the visually highlighted objects seen within. The glass of the showcase is optically halfway between the invisibility (which hides the spectator's and the original painter's self-image) of the Renaissance painting and the reflectivity of the mirror (which shows the spectator himself looking, plus that part of the real space which is normally invisible behind him). Often a rear mirror or smaller fragments of a mirror are positioned behind objects displayed in showcases, to fracture the ideal image of the spectator, partially glimpsed on the glass surface and rear mirror. By these means a viewer's initially desired ideal "self" image is focused and imposed upon—identified with—the inaccessible, but visually desired, commodity for sale; the object seems imaginarily complete, while the "self" is de-territorialized, incomplete, lost, not graspable, except through its visual projection upon the object. The shop window thus captures, focuses, and efficiently employs the latent desires of the casual passerby, to confer a subjective, overdetermined meaning upon the goods it "objectively" places on view.

Video/Television/Architecture

Glass Buildings: Corporate "Showcases"

At the same time that glass reveals, it conceals. If one looks into a glass showcase, one can have the illusion that the container is neutral, without apparent interest in the content of what it displays; or, conversely, the appearance of what is contained can be seen as a function of the qualities of the container itself. In the ideology of modern functionalist architecture, an architectural form appropriates and merges both of these readings. First, because symbolic form, ornamentation, is eliminated from the building (form and content being merged), there is no distinction between the form and its material structure; that is, the form represents nothing more or less than the material. Second, a form or structure is seen to represent only its contained function, the building's structural and functional efficiency being equated with its real utility for those who use it. Aesthetically, this idea is expressed in the formula: efficient form is beautiful and beautiful form is efficient. This has a "moral" dimension; "efficient" connotes a melioristic, "scientific" approach seemingly uncontaminated by "ideology," which, pragmatically, has (capitalist) use value. ("Efficiency" is how well a building contributes to the operations of the company housed within it. The look of a building, its cleanliness and structural transparency, thus joins the myth of scientific progress to that of social utility of efficient business practice.) These glass and steel buildings usually house corporations or government agencies. The building's transparent functionalism conceals its less apparent ideological function: justifying the use of technology or bureaucracy by large corporations or government agencies to impart their particular version of order on society. The spectator's view is diverted away from social context by focusing only on the surface material or structural qualities. Glass and steel are used as "pure" materials, for the sake of their materiality. The use of glass gives another illusion: that what is seen is seen exactly as it is. Through the glass one sees the technical workings of the company and the technical engineering of the building's structure. The glass's literal transparency not only falsely objectifies reality, but is a paradoxical camouflage; for while the actual function of a corporation may be to concentrate its self-contained power and control by secreting information, its architectural facade gives the illusion of absolute openness. The transparency is visual only; glass separates the visual from the verbal, insulating outsiders from the content of the decision-making processes, and from the invisible, but real, interrelationships linking company operations to society.

The glass building, in attempting to eliminate the disparity between its outside facade (which conventionally mediates its relation to the outside environment where it is sited) and its private, institutional function, pretends to
eliminate the distinction between its outer form and its inner content. The self-contained, transparent glass building denies that it has an outside and that it participates as an element in the language of the surrounding buildings with other social functions which make up the surrounding environmental context. Where other buildings are usually decorated with conventional signs of their function for the public to see, the facade of the glass building is virtually eliminated. The aesthetic purity of the glass building, standing apart from the common environment, becomes transformed by its owner into a social object for the institution it houses. The building’s transparent “openness” to the environment (it incorporates the natural environment) on the one hand, and its claim to aesthetic hegemony over the surrounding environment (its formal self-containment) on the other, efficiently legitimate the corporate institution’s claim to autonomy (“The World of General Motors”). A building with glass on four sides gives the illusion of self-containment. While it appears open to visual inspection, in fact, in looking through glass on all sides, one realizes the particular, focused-upon detail, the “interior,” is lost (one looks through and not at) to the architectural generality, to the apparent materialization of the outward form, or to “Nature” (light, sun, sky or the landscape glimpsed through the building on the other side).

Notes
1. One explanation for the form that broadcast television has taken—a centrally originated transmission sent to the passive home viewer on a privately owned TV set—is that television came into being first as a commodity item, mass-produced for the consumer market. When it appeared, the TV set belonged to a new type of inexhaustibly produced small machines (other examples are automobiles, record players, electrical appliances, radio) designed to be portable or provide means to private transportation. The consumer’s demand for these goods was a response to the changed work and life conditions of the industrial worker; he was uprooted from his traditional house for a mobile and urbanized pattern. With the aid of these products, the newly re-settled worker could plug in quickly to whatever urban social environment he found himself in. At the same time, because of the pressures of a more technically organized work life, the private areas of family and house became retreats for the worker in his “time off.” Television programming allowed the person in his private space to feel connected to a larger, public world, but remain free of its demands, sheltered in his private home life.
2. The mirror inverts the position of the spectator seeing a Renaissance painting. There the spectator faces the painting and looks forward into its projected space; in doing this, he reconstructs the exterior and also the “interior” view of the painter at the point in time and space when he made the painting.
3. Five to eight seconds is the limit of “short-term” memory, or memory which part of and influences a person’s present perception.
4. Seen by a second observer on the other side of the glass, the first observer appears as an outsider.
5. There is a physical and a dialectical relation between mirrors and glass, each reflecting, accentuating qualities of the other.

VI. Pavilion Sculptures

Notes on Public Space/Two Audiences

Public Space/Two Audiences was one of a number of individual room-environments enclosed within a large building housing “Ambiente,” a thematic exhibition presented by the Italian government as part of the 1976 Venice Biennale. The Biennale functions as a showcase for recent developments in art. It is organized as a series of separate exhibits housed in separate buildings by each of the participating countries, plus a number of thematic exhibitions, such as “Ambiente,” organized by the Biennale itself. Each national display is a “showcase” for the culture of that country; likewise, individual artists are often shown in room subdivisions of the national pavilion’s space—this space then becomes a showcase for characteristic examples of that artist’s work. Collectively, the ensemble of “spaces” is to represent a socially relevant, topical, and unifying viewpoint or framework on the theme of that particular Biennale. The theme of the 1976 Biennale was the environment, with reference to architecture.

Public Space/Two Audiences was constructed to work in a specific container of “Ambiente.” I wanted it to function doubly as art and as simply an exhibition pavilion for itself, following the examples of Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion or Lissitzky’s two exhibition rooms. The artwork “placed on display by my environment” was the architectural container, as its own material structure; at the same time it was designed to be a display container for the viewers inside (observing themselves), the container’s structure, and what effects the specific materials employed in its construction had on their perceptions. A first effect for the spectators might be to see the structure and materials in purely aesthetic terms; after a time in the space, and only if other people were present in the space as well, the psychological and social aspects of the materials and structure would become evident. Within the art context it is often only the aesthetic effects of glass and mirror which are noticed; whereas, outside the exhibition frame, these same materials are employed to control a person or a group’s social reality. Glass partitions in the customs area

Notes
1. Hatton is referring to Two-Way Mirror and Hedge Labyrinth (1969–1971), described by Hatton in part VI of this volume.

of many international airports are acoustically sealed, insulating legal residents of the country from those passengers arrived but not “cleared.” Another example is the use of hermetically sealed glass in the maternity ward of some hospitals, designed to separate the observing father from his newly born child. In this instance, the institution, having separated the child from the mother, medically, in the interests of public health, claims rights to its body from the “natural” father. Both the public institution and the father are given a visual perspective; the child is conditioned to allow the institution and his parents the permissible rights to total visual, clinical observation.

Unlike examples of “Minimal” art environments, “West-Coast, USA” perceptual environments using physiological effects of natural light, or post-Bauhaus architectural use of pure materials or the material elements of its construction, Public Space/Two Audiences is not entirely abstract or materialistic. “Minimal” art as well as environmental/perceptual art (of the kind built by such artists as Robert Irwin or Maria Nordman) would reduce the individual spectator’s perception of the materials, structure or sense-data to a purely phenomenological presence. Ultimately, this work depends upon the construction of a privileged position for the single viewer’s perception. The difference between the two forms is that in “Minimal” art the art object is objectified and factually material, while environmental architecture constructs the spectator as transcendentally subjective. Both forms depend upon perceptual immediacy: a phenomenological consciousness which connects the perceiving subject to what is perceived. “Perception has no time-span,” says Robert Irwin. Both “Minimal” art and environmental art deny connotative, social meanings; the art experience is pure; there is no acknowledgement of social or historical mediation or temporality (especially in the case of environmental art). This is a restatement of Kantian idealism, which separates the experience of the purely aesthetic from the socially utilitarian. In this new form of Kantian idealism the isolated spectator’s “subjective” consciousness in itself replaces the art object to be perceived-for-itself; higher perception is the product of the art. Thus, instead of eliminating the physically present art object, environmental art’s meditative approach creates a secondary, veiled object; the viewer’s consciousness as a subject. All this is aligned to the psychological cult of the self-realization of the individual.

Psychologically, in Public Space/Two Audiences, for one audience, the glass divider is a window showing, objectifying the other audience’s behavior (the observed, second audience, becomes, by analogy, a “mirror” of the outward behavior of the audience observing); simultaneously, the mirror at the end of one space allows the observing audience to view themselves as a unified body (engaged in looking at the other audience or at themselves looking at the other audience). A parallel, but reverse, situation exists for the second audience. In looking at the other audience, both audiences seek objective confirmation of their respective subjectively experienced social situations. The spectators of one audience tend to see the other objectively, while their own subjectivity seems insulated from the subjective experience of the opposite audience. Normally, neither observed nor observer on opposite sides of glass can be part of the other group’s intersubjective framework. This effects a double reversal, for while the glass partition places a distance between opposing spectators and individuals in both audiences, the co-presence in the mirror of themselves looking and the others looking makes for a visual, intersubjective “closeness.”

The complexity of this relation of the spectators to their image, and to the image of the other, reciprocal spectators, is echoed in a second reflection (in addition to that of the mirror). Because glass is itself partially reflective, observers in the room distant from the mirror, looking in the direction of the mir-
Dan Graham

Pavilion Sculptures

The complete front facade of a conventional, suburban "ranch-style" house has been removed; it is replaced by a sheet of transparent glass. Inside the house, a sheer sheet of mirror hides the private bedrooms and bathrooms in the back from the visible kitchen, hall, pantry, and living room in the front. There are doors which lead through the mirrored pane to the back rooms. The mirror, as it faces the glass facade and the street, reflects not only the house's interior, but the street and the environment outside the house. The reflected images of the facades of the two houses across the street appear, surrounded by the outside suburban lawn and street environment behind the glass in the mirror. In a sense, seen particularly from a moving car on the street, the view through the window is a metaphoric billboard, but one depicting a non-

Alteration to a Suburban House

The complete front facade of a conventional, suburban "ranch-style" house has been removed; it is replaced by a sheet of transparent glass. Inside the house, a sheer sheet of mirror hides the private bedrooms and bathrooms in the back from the visible kitchen, hall, pantry, and living room in the front. There are doors which lead through the mirrored pane to the back rooms. The mirror, as it faces the glass facade and the street, reflects not only the house's interior, but the street and the environment outside the house. The reflected images of the facades of the two houses across the street appear, surrounded by the outside suburban lawn and street environment behind the glass in the mirror. In a sense, seen particularly from a moving car on the street, the view through the window is a metaphoric billboard, but one depicting a non-
Dan Graham

60

Alteration to a Suburban House, 1978

Illusionistic view. The view is of a typically desirable, conventional house surrounded by greenery. To a pedestrian the glass facade reveals the interior living quarters and displays them like a shop window. But the mirror, situated behind the glass pane, reveals this external observer within his conventionalized suburban environment—an image perhaps more powerful than the visibility of half of the private interior because it invades the public space in front of the property lines.

In many houses, the limited view of the interior provided by the “picture window” simply gives outsiders a picture of accepted conventional normality. Other conventional ornaments placed in front of the house also express the homeowner’s individual identity.

*Alteration to a Suburban House,* by substituting the actual place of the conventional sign, strips the house of its community-defined “personal” identity. The project might be read as architecture, by architects as well as by the general public. It might also be read as the owner’s “do-it-yourself” home modification. It is different in one aspect from its architectural references (Robert Venturi, early houses of Michael Graves or Frank Gehry) in that my house modification radically disturbs, through its visible intrusions into private space and from private space into the street, codes and property lines that socially containerize private from public space. While some radical architects deconstruct an extent, vernacular house, the cuts, while providing unconventional views of the outside environment, never allow those outside a similar view of the inside. The glass houses of Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, which are transparent on all four sides, are set in isolated, aristocratic nature preserves, and are therefore never visible to the exterior public (except via photographs).

*Alteration* projects back to the artificial suburban Main Street environment its own meaning. Writing about Mies’ 1930s houses, Tafuri and Dal Co note:

Nature was made part of the furnishing, a spectacle to be enjoyed only on condition that it be kept im palpably remote. . . . Nature could be replaced by a photomontage. . . . The glass walls of Mies become the glass over the picture.

Pavilion Sculptures

In Mies’ 1940s Farnsworth house, the vertical glass curtain wall skyscraper pioneered by Mies in urban Chicago becomes a horizontal glass belvedere, a patriarch’s retreat. The glass walls relate to daylight and nighttime differently, as Jeff Wall observes:

*These huge window-walls create a play of reflection and transmission of light according to the daylight’s character. Shifts in its direction, quality and intensity create moments when the gaze’s play with itself becomes apparent. . . . From the outside, the tremendous reflectivity of the glass wall can screen the interior from view behind a mirror image of the surrounding landscape. . . . This gives the interior a stage-set character. From within, in daytime, the landscape is intensely introjected while remaining immersed behind glass, which may reflect the occupant somewhat.*

Theoretically, *visibility is the primary condition produced by the symbolism of the glass wall.* In the glass house, this condition is superimposed upon a controlled image of nature. . . . Within the house, the occupant engages in a complex game with nature and with day itself. . . . The house, then, effects control of nature and the natural flow of time and light. As long as the house’s control remains uninterrupted, euphoric absorption can occur, and the anxiety inherent in theoretical invisibility can remain suppressed.

At night, . . . the landscape disappears in blackness. . . . The interior artificial lighting necessary at night transforms the interior surface of the glass walls into gigantic mirrors. . . . In its nocturnal play with the nothingness of nature’s withdrawal, the house invokes a state of terror. . . . In the hours of darkness . . . the Romantics . . . fantasy . . . of vampirism must constitute the regulation of the house’s game with itself. . . . In the night . . . the power of absorptive gazing, of inspection, is transferred to the invisible eye of nature. Nature abruptly takes on vampiric powers. . . . Nature, which is at night actually invisible, is . . . endowed with an inverted vampiric intelligence. . . . The glass house is a crypt.

Wall believes that my *Alteration to a Suburban House* is “centered in the exposure and enlargement of the walled vampiric discourse which suffuses . . . the glass houses. . . . [and] the glass towers.” He notes that one variant of the vampire myth is an account of an assault on the castle-crypt by the terrified peasants. In this they embody “inspired revolutionary daring” as well as a “frenzied, compulsive violence” in which the villagers become like vampires as they fight them. Wall notes that my *Alteration*
Dan Graham

makes an ordinary tract house function as a partial glass house...to impose the vampiric discourse of exhibitionism and alienation upon the site which has been constructed as an illusory haven from vampirism. 3

Unlike Mies of Johnson's house, which keeps the outside at bay through a play of compositional wit,

In..."Alteration" the regime of wit is interrupted...by the overbearing presence of a mute and relentless reflective mechanism...The perspective established by the mirror, in overriding the reflectivity of the glass, indicates that the occupant is now on an equal footing with the passersby, who...have become more important. The villagers of the vampiric symbology approach the mirrored crypt...They mirror, the new facade of a new interior, clasps within its optics occupant and passersby, and explicitly identifies them with each other, just as it identifies itself with the other houses which it also reflects.

Notes
3. ibid.
4. ibid.


Pavilion Sculptures

35
Dan Graham

Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne

Argonne National Laboratory, an emergency research facility twenty-eight miles southwest of Chicago and jointly directed by the University of Chicago and the U.S. government, commissioned this work, a structure measuring 7/8 feet high x 15 feet wide x 15 feet deep. Each 15 foot side is subdivided into 7/8 foot square frames. These frames have either mirrors on both sides, or transparent glass, or remain open. A sheet of transparent glass diagonally divides the form into two equal triangular units. A spectator is able to enter through one of the open frames, finding himself, because of the diagonal divider, in either one audience area or the other.

Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne is literally reflective of its environment. Reflections on its mirror and glass and the shadows from the framework are subject to continual variation from overhead sun and passing clouds. At the same time, the form is also architectonic, with inside and outside space, and open to use.
Because of its double function as architectural pavilion and as sculptural form, a comparison could be made to Rietveld’s sculpture pavilion in the sculpture park of the Kröller-Müller Museum, which is both a sculptural and a utilitarian form. Pierced cinderblocks, a high interior window and one completely open side admit air and light and provide unobstructed views of the outdoor works in the surrounding park. There is an ambiguity as to whether the art it displays is in an exhibition space or is outside and still part of “Nature.” A shelter for both the sculpture it displays and for people observing the sculpture, it makes spectators looking at the art within its space into a cohesive group and, at the same time, it imposes an order on the works it groups for display. Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne creates its own social order, one which is based on two sets of social divisions. The first is between two audiences within the pavilion on opposite sides of the diagonal division. The second is between those inside the work and those outside.

The pavilion/sculpture will be situated in a wooded area at the front and to one side of a new administration building designed by Helmut Jahn. This building makes use of a solar energy-efficient design which also symbolizes the sun as energy source. It is a semi-circular, glass-sheathed form, flat in the front, with the rest of the implied circle completed by a reflecting pond. Angled frames on the front facade are designed to accommodate solar collectors, should this become economically feasible; they would also prismatically reflect the sun. In this setting Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne is analogous to a small, rustic or rococo pavilion in relation to the larger building’s technological Versailles symbolism. The sculpture/pavilion is aligned with the point where the building’s front facade ends and its left side begins to curve. It is also aligned with the curve of the access road on its other side. It can either be seen from a car (where it is larger in scale than the administration building behind it) or approached on foot. Its orientation is such that the two interior mirrors catch the sun’s reflection during the morning, creating prismatic reflection in relation to the angled, sun-reflecting elements of the building. The diagonal element of Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne, if extended toward the building, would perpendicularly bisect the floor of the building.

Pavilion Sculptures

Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and Video Salon: Rooftop Park for Dia Center for the Arts

This project took as its program the reconfiguration of the function of the museum space of the Dia Center for the Arts in New York City as a social and artistic showing space, while at the same time it functioned as an autonomous artwork within the existing Dia program of elite artists realizing perfect works under ideal conditions.

This piece is both an optical device and an architectural modification of a previously unused rooftop, giving the Dia exhibition complex a variety of new functions. The interior spaces of the Dia building had previously been used as meditative and “ideal” exhibition spaces for “great” artworks or installations. The art was meant to be viewed by individual spectators, under prime showing conditions. My work necessitates a large public audience aware of each other’s, as well as their own, gazes at the artworks under continually altering outdoor solar and sky conditions.

The total work is an open-air, rooftop performance space, observatory/camera obscura/optical device/video and coffee bar/lounge, with other multi-use possibilities.

Note
In the center of the roof is a raised boardwalk-like wooden platform containing a two-way mirrored cylinder with a door, allowing spectators to enter its interior. The interior view shows spectators a concave, enlarged anamorphic view of themselves against the sky and urban landscape. The exterior view shows spectators a convex anamorphic view of themselves.

At the margin of the raised platform is a two-way mirror cube. The cube represents the urban grid of New York's midtown street plan. The cylinder directly relates to the overhead water tower and has the same circumference. It reflects the 360-degree horizon line.

There is a dialectic between the perception of oneself and other bodies perceiving themselves, making the spectator conscious of him or herself as a body, as a perceiving subject, in isolation from an audience. This reverses the usual loss of "self" that occurs when a spectator looks at a conventional work of art, where the "self" is mentally projected onto and thereby identified with the subject of the art. My sculpture/pavilions call attention to the look of the spectator, who becomes the subject of the work. A two-way mirror and steel structure is an analog of the surrounding city. The two-way mirror has "cinematic" special effects.

My sculpture/pavilions allude to modern life. The 1980s corporate office building's two-way mirror glass facades are one-way reflective on the outside (reflecting the sky and other building facades) and do not allow visual penetration by the spectator of the interior, but give the interior viewer a transparent view of the exterior. My pavilions subject this one-way relation to serious transformation, being equally transparent and reflective both inside and outside. The changes in overhead sunlight affected by altering cloud cover continuously alter the relation between reflectivity and transparency of each other.

The Dia roof plan alludes to the solarized atria extending 1980s corporate office building lobbies with a video/conferece lounge developed from an existing roof storage space. The central area is raised to give a better view of the Hudson River and the surrounding city skyline above the obtrusive existing skylight domed top.

My work requires a large, socially self-aware public audience, in contradistinction to Dia's 1970s and 1980s meditative interior, with its artificially well-lighted, perfect viewing conditions.

Programmatically, I also intended my "installation" to modify Dia's function, in order to initiate its transition into a 90s merging of 70s alternative space—like its geographically adjacent neighbor, The Kitchen, which features work by a large variety of artists working in video, performance, and music—

with 80s corporate atrium "museum" spaces like the IBM Atrium or the Wintergarden in the New Fiinancial Center in Battery Park City, which also incorporate park-like settings and coffee and pastry bar concessions. To facilitate the historical links to video, music and performance works featured in spaces such as The Kitchen, I organized a program at Dia which purchases and screens an archive of videos selected by guest curators, focusing on music, performance, animation and architecture.

My original plans for the design (for the lounge) of indoor inflatable two-way mirror furniture, giving a soft, intersubjective body feeling which complements the "hard" effects of the two-way mirror glass surfaces, has proved temporarily unrealizable, but is still being researched.

Note: This text was written in 1991. It is previously unpublished.

A Guide to The Children's Pavilion, a Collaborative Project by Jeff Wall and Dan Graham

The Children's Pavilion (1989) is a public building located at the periphery of a playground. It is built into, and enclosed by, a landscaped hill. The structural shell of the hill-form is engineered in concrete. It includes a network of stairways, leading to a walkway around the summit. Large areas of the exterior surface are planted with lawn. The structure is entered through a portal in the form of a three-quarter circle. The interior floor, made of concrete, is composed of three descending concentric rings with a system of steps leading from level to level. The central circle is a water basin.

The interior walls form a drum, which supports a low dome, at the apex of which is an oculus. In the oculus is installed a one-quarter sphere of two-way mirror glass, its convex surface facing the interior.

Visitors inside the pavilion can look out through the oculus, and those on the walkway at the summit can look into the building seeing the sky continu-
ously altering, as it alters the relations between their reflected image of themselves and the sky and the transparent view through the lens of people inside looking up, and the wall-mounted circular photos of children against various photographic skies. The diameter of the water basin is the same as that of the portraits. The diameter of the quarter-sphere in the oculus is twice that of the portraits.

Architectural Typology

Playgrounds are the special domain of children, but the children who inhabit them are usually attended and observed by adults—parents or guardians. Playgrounds are therefore also for adults who, given the opportunity to witness their children's experience of childhood, in this setting, however, the children behave less as members of individuated nuclear families than as part of a horde of youngsters who mingle there in communion.

The playground commonly features one or more symbolic mountain or hill forms. These are archetypes of complex experiences because they permit penetration underground through various openings, a primal exploration of the earth, and, at the same time, an occasion for ascent and conquest, for the attainment of a privileged overview as "king of the mountain." In this process, one child becomes a big shot by gaining the special place at the summit. At the same time, others are burrowing below, lurking in dark hiding places, and springing back into the light. These might then go up to the top, while the one on top tumbles or races back down, girls and boys chasing each other, round and round.

The inside of the hill is, of course, like a cave or a grotto. Grottoes are usually watery, and are associated with lunar goddesses, nymphs, prophecy, birth, and a passage through subterranean realms to rebirth. They suggest also the invisible, but often audible, flowing of water inside the earth, and the sudden, surprising appearance of springs.

Both grottoes and the damp, but less watery caves are sites of primeval image-making. Prehistoric adults took shelter in caves from animals, and there created icons and pictures celebrating both their fear of these animals and their triumph over them in the organized hunt. The totemic image is a power-

ful element in tribal self-identification as well as a symbol of the maturation of the hunter. The skill in depicting the animal is a mark of maturity and mastery, and parallels the skill in hunting it: these skills are those of the provider, the magician, the leader.

Another typological element for the Children's Pavilion is the Pantheon, which is a public temple and mausoleum, dedicated to the memory of the gods and heroes, to patriots and to the state. The Great Pantheon in Rome features an open oculus which permits a focused beam of direct sunlight to move around the interior in the course of the day. Depending on seasonal conditions, the light from the oculus sweeps across an arc which may coincide with particular features of the interior, such as the tomb of Raphael, giving it a natural spotlight. The Pantheon has had an immense influence on the forms of modern state temples, notably Les Invalides in Paris and the U.S. Capitol building in Washington.

Follies and pavilions in landscaped gardens have a direct relationship with the Children's Pavilion, as the name indicates. These structures often replicate, on a reduced scale, ancient monuments with literary or mythological references, such as the tombs of Abelard and Heloise, which are found in English gardens in France. Patriotic and heroic memorials, as well as shelters for retreat and meditation, are also included in this type. These pavilions are places which combine the provision of temporary shelter with an inducement to participate in specific acts of memory, contemplation, and philosophical speculation. They are related to the process of creating literary and philosophical works, which may take as their subjects the nature of the environment in which the pavilion is itself sited. They often suggest utopian alternatives to present civilization. Another aspect of this typology is provided by the observatory and the planetarium. Both derive from older things, structures like Stonehenge, for example, which was apparently used by the Druids for sighting positions of the planets. But they establish their genetic identity in the modern, scientific epoch, the period of rationalism and world navigation. The planetarium belongs specifically to the era of democratically inspired dissemination and production of knowledge, in which the study of the heavens was made available to all citizens, not just an esoteric caste, like the Egyptian priests who controlled the ancient calendars.

The observatory is a structure devoted to optical study of the sky. It has no interest in studying the earth, and never looks at it. It is most curious about the farthest reaches of the visible universe. It treats the earth only as an Archimedean point from which it can calculate how far it can see. It does this by means of curvatures of glass or other materials which focus energy,
whether in the form of light, radio signals or other things. It is a photographic or cinematographic apparatus, a solar eye. It scans the universe for signs of other life forms and for data necessary for developing cosmological theories.

The planetarium is, on the other hand, a cinema. It reproduces, stages, and projects cosmological narratives as entertainment and education. The darkened dome of the planetarium evokes the primitive world when early man first contemplated the stars and attributed totemic power to constellations, for example the Great Bear. The modern totemism of the planetarium is, however, attached to telescopic power and cinematographic projection itself.

The spherical form of the planetarium is reiterated elsewhere. In recent world's fairs, for example, spherical structures present the cosmos and our earth as one world. These are emblems of a promised future, to be achieved through scientific progress, which would unite us into one global community, one "family of man." The mirror-clad "La Géode" in Parc de La Villette in Paris is the most recent and striking example.

The final element to be noted is something which is not, strictly speaking, architectural. This is the space capsule or flying saucer, which is round, cylindrical, disc-like, spherical or hemispherical. These are mostly seen in films, often films aimed at children, but are also featured as rides at amusement parks and science museums (which often resemble each other). The spaceship promises an adventure, a journey to other worlds, a voyage into a hypothetical future. It is often a toy played with in the process of constructing adventure narratives of this kind, adventures in which past and future are mingled, in which archaic forms appear futuristic and futuristic forms can be ruins.

Photographs of Children

The group of nine "rondels" or "tondi" includes portraits of children of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The organization of the portrait group is related to the concept of the nation-state and of its gathering of all its children into systems of universal public education, health, recreation, culture, and citizenship. The concept of the nation includes in its substance the outcome of the great immigration patterns of modernity in which a variety of peoples with different customs have confronted each other within the terms of a common body of law. The group of children can signify the nation, and specifically the nation's future, in a Pantheon-like assembly.

At the same time, the group's multicultural composition implies the plurality of nations and, therefore, forms an image of world culture. One classic manifestation of this idea is the photographic exhibition and book, The Family of Man, organized by Edward Steichen in 1955. In his essay "The Traffic in Photographic" (1981), Allan Sekula wrote, The Family of Man "moves from the celebration of patriarchal authority—which finds its highest embodiment in the United Nations—to the final construction of an imaginary utopia that resembles nothing so much as a protracted state of infantile, pre-Oedipal bliss."

The universal/national children of the portraits appear in circular frames. The tondo form is associated with ceremonial and decorative portraits and figurine groups often featuring women, children, and angels; but it is also related to coins, on which the heads of rulers are minted. The circular form also relates to the sphere, and therefore to the symbol of the cosmos, but also to a rubber ball flying through the air above a playground. Balls, bubbles, lollipops and other shiny, happy forms are part of the world of toys—roller skates, frisbees and the like—which are vehicles in adventure fantasies.

Each of the children is viewed against a background of the sky. Each sky is unique, representing different times of day, different weather conditions, different seasons. The individuation of the children is expressed in the unique relation to the cosmos signified by the association of one specific child with one moment in time. Each child has a unique place, a special trajectory into the future, signified in part by the mood of the sky. The celestial void is the home of angels or "putti," infant beings without family, who emanate directly from God in infinite numbers at every second of endless time. They exist briefly, before vanishing again.

Oculus and Spectator

The oculus, as its name suggests, functions as the eye of the pavilion. The whole interior is gathered and reflected on the convex surface of the quarter-sphere of mirror glass. At the same time the transparent character of the glass allows the spectators inside the building to see the actual sky outside, and to see as well anyone looking in. Furthermore, anamorphic distorted reflections of people looking down through the oculus from the outside, created by the concave form, give the children a giant view of themselves looking down on the gazes of adults and other children, as well as the images of the Cibachrome transparencies inside. The entire play of gazes and reflections generated by the architecture and the photographs is condensed onto the outer and inner surface of the glass. The optical dynamics are connected with the pavilion's relationship to observatories and planetaria, forms dedicated to intensive searching, gazing, and observation. Science and fatherhood are implied here, and this implication is augmented by the structure's references to national temples. At the same time, the oculus is set into the form of a hill or mountain, which suggests a more maternal enclosure, a cave or grotto, but