PRESENCE John Baldessari covers visual elements with colorful surfaces; in A Cast of Space under My Chair, Bruce Nauman draws attention to neglected places, like the space underneath a chair. Invisible planes and spaces suddenly appear in the foreground, receiving attention without actually being depicted in detail. These methods alone do not demonstrate an aesthetic relationship to modernism—using other means of guiding the eye to focus on concealed characteristics, as in Le Corbusier’s roof terrace for Charles de Beistegui, which is like an observation machine for the Paris skyline, or in the mirror beneath the window in Adolf Loos’ Steiner House, which confuses the eye. Due to the fact that these exhibition strategies allow spaces to be seen from a different perspective, they are architecture in terms of the techniques used to make something visible, methods for emphasizing objects and contexts. Architecture becomes invisible, in a way, and as an object, it retreats behind its performative presence. Yet, it activates the observer, who acts as participant, visitor, or user in the space. His perception and movement form the key to the space that does not function as a geometric container, but as a relation. In kinesthetic perception, body and objects combine to form a parcours, linking gaze, turning into associative memory. The viewer is more than just an audience member; here is the center. Presence, in the double sense of time and space, characterizes his relationship to the environment. Just as in Nick Relph’s video, The Strypptis Quihite Upon ane Blak Field, in which the visitor goes through his own parkour while in the process of watching: the video is a documentary on Ellsworth Kelly’s work. Relph overlaps Kelly’s images with footage of ethnographic pictures, avant-garde choreography, historical events, and Comme des Garçons fashion shows. The viewer takes part in constructing the work, for his gaze penetrates in between the layers, creating a form of spatial perception between the layers of images.

ALIENATION The readymade is created by shifting space: a banal object is moved to a non-banal context by the act of displaying it, and as a result, the newly won meaning of the object as readymade is owed to its decontextualization in the space. Yet can architecture also become a readymade, even if it cannot be moved in space? The key to this lies in the alienation of the architecture, caused by altered perception and a different kind of interaction with its surroundings and observers. The building does not change position, but the context is altered: the relationship between object and environment becomes one of alienation. Architecture as a readymade praxis can be found in the case of Andrea Palladio, who placed a two-story-high colonnade around the medieval Palazzo della Ragione in Vicenza, thus reinventing the existing building in the form of a basilica. Palladio changed the palazzo in a decisive gesture,
emptiness

With twenty-six thousand square meters of floor space, the Palace of Justice in the center of Brussels is larger than St. Peter's Cathedral. The main hall, an urban site with a dome 142 meters in height, is a key element in the cityscape, visible from any point in the capital. An international competition calling for ideas for the refunctionalization of the building was held. But why should the building be given a new function? On the contrary, due to its empty status, the enormous building could even become something like an object in a museum, on display in the city; united in a context with other empty buildings on the continent, such as Berlin’s former Tempelhof Airport and the Fiat Lingotto factory in Turin, it could become part of a kind of “modern Grand Tour.” We should start taking architecture as seriously as we do other artifacts that are divorced from their everyday function and displayed in museums, instead of doing away with it. “Museum here is not a given physical place or space, but the separate dimension to which what was once—but is no longer—felt to be true and decisive has moved. … But, more generally, anything today can become a museum, because this term simply designates the exhibition of an impossibility of using, dwelling, experiencing.” Our proposal for the Palace of Justice, developed in cooperation with OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, turns this nonfunctional architecture into a museum display, by adding two elements: a horizontal pedestal in front of the building, which acts a frame and threshold to mark the caesura to the city, and a vertical circulation element at the apex of the building, which makes it possible to access any of the rooms, including the dome. Visitors find themselves in the middle of an overwhelming experience of space; at the same time, konzeptuelle Verfahren, die sich gerade im Zustand der stadtlandschaftlichen Ungewissheit anwenden lassen. Palladio’s Intervention zeigt auch die Übergabe von versatz Typologien, die ebenso klassisch wie alltäglich erscheinen: Schwellenräume, in denen zwischen innen und außen, zwischen privatem und öffentlichen Raum, zwischen statischen Zuständen und urbaner Zirkulation vermittelt wird.

Le Corbusier and I und Pierre Jeanneret, Appartement Charles de Beistegui, Paris, 1929

Bruce Nauman, A Cast of Space under My Chair, 1965–1968
they take a journey back in time to the nineteenth century, while also experiencing the Brussels of today, which is now visible from the dome. In an allusion to El Lissitzky’s Abstraktekabinet (1927), the architecture is also an accessible sculpture that can simultaneously be on display: Lissitzky’s room is not just a perceptual machine for the visitor; it is also a display for the works shown there, a spatial shell and a work of art at the same time. In the same way, architecture can once again become an exhibition space for something else, if it is exhibited in its primary form. Turning something into a museum object is not a simple procedure, but a self-reflective process in which the architecture changes like a chameleon from an object on display to an exhibition space.

**ERLEBNIS** The task of the architecture changes: from the sculptural shell of the “Bilbao effect” to an invisible kind of architecture that creates contexts and makes situations possible. As a “curatorial designer,” using existing situations as objects trouvés in order to generate new spaces, the architect pursues a logical design that is applied to the perceptible space—an experience, from the perspective of the user and participant. The “curatorial designer” makes selections, alienates things, creates syntheses; he simultaneously opens and closes opportunities for interaction. This is the logic of an architectural form that creates crucial settings and, in the process, variable usages and experiences. Unlike the “Bilbao effect,” it is not about the hardware alone, but also about the software, much as Apple has succeeded in turning the technological computer into a user interface in which hard- and software become an inseparable, interactive form with a usable display at the center.

As architects, Alison and Peter Smithson very deliberately made the step from modernist production aesthetics to an aesthetic that integrates production and consumption, realizing this as part of the Independent Group’s exhibition of This Is Tomorrow, along with artists Eduardo Paolozzi, Nigel Henderson, Richard Hamilton, and others at London’s Whitechapel Gallery in 1956. Using found objects and images borrowed from advertising, installations and performative environments were built, culminating in the exhibition itself. At the same time the Smithsons began planning the Economist Building on St. James’s Street in London, translating this shift into architecture: they erected an elevated platform, an urban stage for the existing building, which was not simply given an addition; instead, through the constellation of the three new buildings, it was emphasized, as if it were on display on the platform. At the same time, a gap was created among the four buildings, which opened up the stage for other spaces, becoming an experiential space for visitors to the building and passersby alike. With their Theater Podium Grotekerklein in Rotterdam, wird. Die Architektur als begehbarer Kunststuck kann im Anschluss an El Lissitzkys Kabinett der Abstrakten von 1927 zugleich auch wieder Display werden: Lissitzkys Raum ist nicht nur eine Wahrnehmungsstelle für den Besucher, der diesen in Bewegung versetzt und körperlich aktiviert, sondern er ist auch ein Display für die dort ausgestellten Werke, Raumhülle und zugleich Kunstwerk. In gleicher Weise kann die Architektur wieder zum Ausstellungsraum für etwas anderes werden, wenn sie in ihrer Primärform museal-selbstausstellend verwirklicht ist. Musenalisation ist ein einfacher Prozess, sondern ein selbstreflektiver Vorgang, in dem die Architektur wie ein Chameleom zwischen Exponat und Display chanciert.


Alison und Peter Smithson vollziehen als Architekten sehr bewusst den Beschluss von der modernistischen Produktionsästhetik zu einer integrierten Produktions- und Konsumästhetik, als sie 1956 im Umfeld der Independent Group die Ausstellung This Is Tomorrow mit den Künstlern Eduardo Paolozzi, Nigel Henderson, Richard Hamilton und anderen in der Londoner Whitechapel Gallery realisieren. Mit gefundenen Objekten und aus der Werbung entlehnten »Images« werden Installationen und performative Environments gebaut, die in die Ausstellung gepfropft. Und gleichzeitig beginnen die Smithsons die Planung für das Economist Building an der Londoner St. James Street, in dem sie diese Verschiebung architektonisch übersetzen: Sie errichten mit der erhöhten
Atelier Kempe Thill shows how an urban activator can inscribe things in the contemporary city: a stage is placed along the canal, creating a spatial relationship to the statue of Erasmus and the Grote Sint Laurenskerk. At the same time, it serves as a threshold where special events and daily life can take place. As a window to the city, the architecture is also a display element at the same time, which frames the context and makes it possible to experience it in a different way. Just as artists Eileen Quinlan, Michael Riedel, and Wade Guyton use photography, text, and print techniques today to manipulate familiar surfaces and images, architecture is a site for exploration and confrontation, creating difference through its specific means and instruments.