

# V!RUS12

## RADICAL MODERNS

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# CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES BETWEEN ART AND ARCHITECTURE: MODERN IDEAS SEEN THROUGH DAN GRAHAM'S INVESTIGATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Amidst the criticism of Modern ideology, held since the mid-1960s, Dan Graham's career emerges as paradigmatic. Acting in the frontier between Art and Architecture, the artist mobilized overriding aesthetic principles in both fields to unveil their own limits and contradictions, questioning the very terms of artistic and architectural practice and thinking engendered by the modernist discourse – hitherto hegemonic. The way he employed the language codes of main production trends in the USA outlined some 'resemantization' strategies of their respective aesthetic prerogatives. Graham thus questions the perception of their formal and conceptual meanings. This article intends to demonstrate how the fundamental aesthetical aspects for the Minimalist 'specific objects', which are very close to the High Modernism formula 'Form follows Function' according to the artist, will be subverted to reveal the institutional context (political and ideological) focused on the object, the audience and the space they are inserted in. Such issues led the artist to think about the hermeticism of those political-aesthetic programs, as well as to develop a work that intended to deal critically with the new social insertion of culture in mass society. The analysis of Graham's main proposals and texts focusing on this issue will help to clarify the way the artist offers unique views on the aesthetic thought that guided the



cultural production of his time. He acted within its own discourses and practices, not disregarding the urgency to experiment new ways of thinking about contemporary artistic and architectural productions from the gaps left by Modernism discourses and practices.

**Keywords:** Dan Graham; High Modernism; Contemporary Art; Contemporary Architecture.

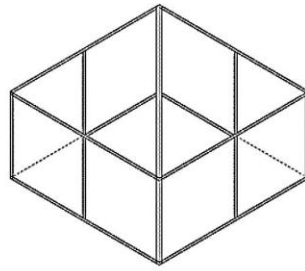
## 'RESSEMANTIZATION' AND CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

In 1978, Dan Graham conceived the first of his 'Pavilions', a kind of proposal produced until nowadays. Set amidst the park at the University of Chicago's Research Center, *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne* already indicates the main features that will guide this series of work, in terms of form and materiality, spatial insertion, and the relationship with the audience. Drawing a quadrangular based parallelogram over the landscape of the park, its steel frame arranges two glass walls with a degree of reflection on its vertical outer faces and a third one diagonally bisecting the interior. The observer who approaches this pavilion will find his own image overlapping the images of the landscape, permanently changing by play of reflection and transparency settled by his own movements. As he walks around, enters or crosses the pavilion, the relationship between inside and outside configures a 'social division' in two instances: according to the artist himself, 'the first between two audiences within the pavilion on opposite sides of the diagonal division', and the second 'between those inside the work and those outside (Graham in Alberro, 1999, p.164).

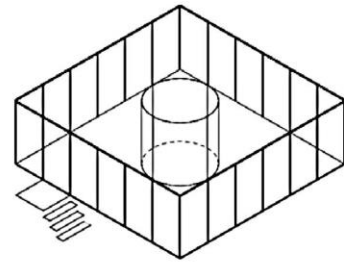
The *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne* also marks an important turning point in Dan Graham's research, especially with regard to forms and process of apprehension, appropriation and to the audience experience – materialized, in this case, in effects of strangeness and discoveries, approaching and distancing, forms of contemplative gaze or even playful relations. The instability caused in the relationship between the pavilion and its observer reflects the ambivalent nature aimed by the artist. Since his first proposals, Dan Graham intended to interfere with the audience perception and expectations inside the art galleries. Dispersed in urban open spaces, pavilions like this one for Argonne look like a hybrid object, something between Minimalist sculpture and architectural device, whose perception constantly slips from aesthetic enjoyment and functional appropriation. This estrangement causes a disruption in the observer's expectations in relation to the object he is facing, leading him to rehearse different (and unexpected) ways to relate to the piece, such as exploring the visual effects (reflection, distortions, concealments) or the more operational performance of the structure (framing, divisions, barriers) in freely and unplanned ways.

**Dan Graham's Pavilions.**

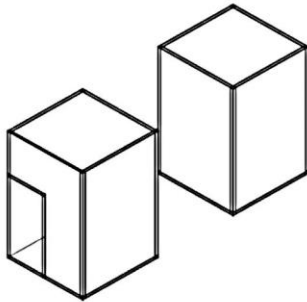
Examples produced between 1978-1996.



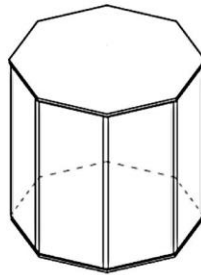
**Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne, 1978.**



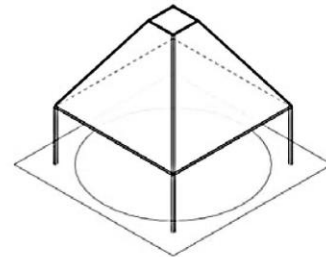
**Two-way Mirror Cylinder inside Cube and Video Salon – Rooftop Park for DIA Center, 1981-91.**



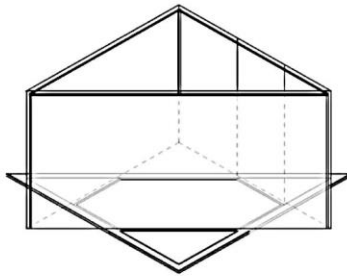
**Two Adjacent Pavilions, 1978-82.**



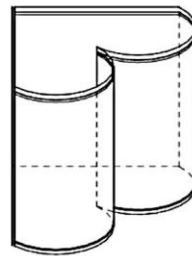
**Octagon, 1987.**



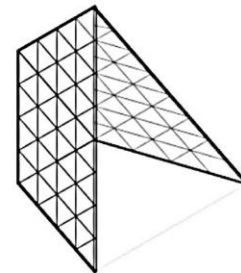
**Skateboard Pavilion, 1989.**



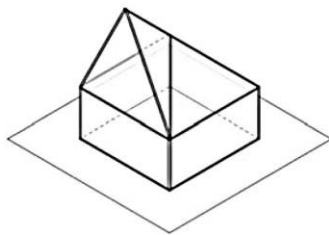
**Star of David Pavilion, 1991-96.**



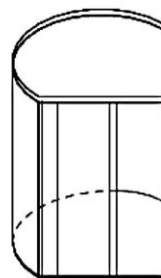
**Heart Pavilion – Version II, 1992.**



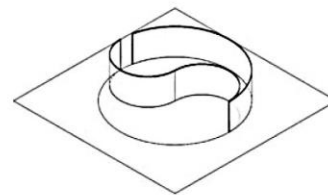
**Gate of Hope, 1992.**



**Swimming Pool, 1992.**



**Parabolic Triangular Pavilion, 1995-96.**



**Yin/Yang Pavilion, 1996.**

**Fig. 1:** Illustrations of some Dan Graham's Pavilions produced from 1978 to 1996. Source: Almeida, R. G. *Dan Graham Pavilions*. Examples produced from 1978-1996. 2016. 11 illustrations.



The optical, corporal and spatial relations set in motion by Graham's pavilions, as well as the form and language of its construction, have led many authors to recognize in this works important aspects of the Architectural High Modernism criticism. The remarkable use of steel and mirror-glass – associated with its clean structural design – refers to the landscapes of large urban centers where the 'functionalist' architectural language from architects like Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson prevails. Guided by the principle of abstract and allegedly autonomous form, the appearance and the presence of the buildings produced by these architects would not refer to anything but the functionality of its structures and spaces. Nonetheless, according to Beatriz Colomina, when replicating this functionalist architecture Graham was revealing not only its 'physical structure' but also its 'social structure' performance (Colomina cited in Colomina, et al., 2001, p.82).

As a matter of fact, observing the previous trajectory until his pavilions it is possible to see since the 1960's the artist in dialogue with leading authors and architects who were known for their scathing criticism to Modernism in art and architecture. Through several articles written between 1970's and 1990's, Graham discussed key issues in the production and thought of Ian Burn, Robert Venturi, among others architects. Some of these issues reappeared on his artistic works produced at that time, especially those ones focusing the architectural and urban spaces.

In this sense, the set of works opened by *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne* represents a powerful synthesis of this research process, and looking back at Dan Graham's career help us to better understand the criticism of his latest works. Our aim now is to identify key issues of his artistic production in order to conceive the strategies that led him to focus the perception of the artistic and architectural practices. At the end, three aspects became central to analyze the main aesthetical trends and the hegemonic modernist discourses in art and architecture at that time. His position – translated into a long and diversified research, but with a rare internal coherence – allowed him to 'ressemanticize' the terms of those discourses, redefining the limits, codes and values of an aesthetic policy identified as Modern.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE**

In 1966, Graham made his debut in the art scene by publishing the 'work/article' *Homes for America*, in which he juxtaposed suburban daily photos from New Jersey with a descriptive text about the usual commercial practice operations of mass housing production – which at that time was radically transforming the urban landscape and territory of the country.

In the visual planning of this 'article' stands out the predominance of a grid structure responsible to distribute the geometrically defined blocks of images and text paragraphs, a formal order that reappears on its own linguistic codes: the photos emphasize the serialization of the suburban houses, approaching the use of this form in Minimalism objects; the texts reproduce the journalistic neutral and objective tone – very characteristic in those years – in order to mimics the rationality and organization of this architectural enterprise.

The 'work/article' *Homes for America* 'visual material' displays two fundamental strategies: to replicate the format of an 'article' and an unusual utilization of Minimal formalism. On one side, Graham's decision to intervene in magazine pages drew attention to a complementary (but essential) field of the exhibition space that had great impact on the art system. Instead of exposing a work of art to then



disclose and value it through the print media, Graham realized a work directly on this 'virtual' space. On the other side, the relationship between images and text did echo the logic of 'real estate development and prefabricated housing' (Pelzer, 2001, p.38). By employing the objectivity and the categorical refusal of expressiveness – fundamental to Minimalism – Graham, against the grain of the Minimalist discourse, represents a social reality that behind its 'vernacular style' shared the same aesthetical codes. At the limit, this unusual bond between Minimalism and the suburbia demonstrates how the American high-end art 'was related to a real social situation that could be documented' (Graham, 1994 in: Alberro, 1999, p.185).

Both strategies align the first works of Dan Graham with the so-called Institutional Critique of art of the 1960's, when many artists questioned the mechanisms and the spaces that organized the circulation, exhibition and valuation of art objects, as well as political and ideological meanings. Both *Homes for America* 'materiality' and its 'content' represents a radical rupture with the conventions that was ruled the art object *status* and its social places, thus causing a confrontation with the aesthetic autonomous principle defended by the hegemonic artistic ideas (Clement Greenberg) and practice – which many writers refer to as 'High Modernism' (Jameson, 1996; Huyssen, 1992).

In order to clarify his position in this debate, it is important to consider that the Minimalism Graham was opposed arose paradoxically as answer and challenge to the dogma of autonomous abstract form. It is not for nothing then that in 'Specific Objects' (1965), the most influential text of Minimalism Art, Donald Judd sought to legitimate the 1960's experiments accepting the development of Modern Art under Greenbergian terms, but raising distinct objectives. In order to contradict the negative evaluation made by the art critic and historian on the emerging Minimalism, Judd stated that the most 'interesting' art produced at that moment in America was overcoming the traditional artistic genders. He signaled as examples the Duchamp *ready-mades*, the Jasper Johns' objects, the Robert Rauschenberg's *assemblages*, the John Chamberlain's scrap-metal sculptures and the Frank Stella's shaped canvases (Judd, 1965, p.101). They all shared the 'object specific' identity: rather than conforming an art movement or school, these works refused the painting and sculpture specificity limits.

Therefore, the 'specific objects' listed by Judd inaugurated a new field for artistic research insofar as they surpassed the traditional artistic genders. Neutral in relation to these genders – not painting neither sculpture – the 'specific objects' would represent an extension on artistic research. However, paradoxically the definition of this 'object' was still tributary of Greenberg concept. After all, Judd accepts the importance that Greenberg attributed to the artistic competence field specificity. Judd only asserted that, precisely because art be gotten rid of many of the conventions, its research need not be confined into the traditional artistic genders.

In certain way, Graham radicalizes this debate. He believes, however, that both High Modernism and Minimalism art were still carrying too many conventions, first the autonomy of the art object, secondly the emphasis in the 'object' *status* of the art work: physically concrete and tangible it preserves many of the traditional aesthetic prerogatives, such as the reception and perception processes privileged inside the exhibition spaces.

*Homes for America*, an 'intervention' on art magazines was a forward response to these limitations. The focusing on the mass production housing phenomenon is a flagrant example of the opening process to the 'external world', principally if we



consider that Graham did it in order to binding the Minimalism formal and material aspects to the complex (technical and marketing) system of urbanization.

In this sense, Dan Graham's gesture binding Minimalism to suburbs could be approximated to the criticism of 'cultural confinement' concept created by Robert Smithson. In a homonymous text written in 1972, Smithson argues how the internalization of the current discourses about art by the artists themselves provoked a confinement of their action inside the limits defined by art system. According to Smithson, the exhibition space exerted a powerful influence on the art production, highlighting the roles of the art critic and the neutral, abstract end isolated architectural interior. Graham, as well as Smithson, defended the resumption of the relationship between art with a social and material reality – the 'physical world', according to Smithson (1972, p.280). Graham, in *Homes for America*, also disestablished the belief in institutional context of art, relativizing the autonomous art principle when he related the external world with the codes and conventions engendered by the internal referential framing set by museums, art galleries and their complementary spaces.

No surprisingly, Smithson demonstrates profound interest in Graham's works. About *Homes for America*, he said, 'Graham can 'read' the language of buildings', highlighting how 'the 'block houses' of the post-war suburbs communicate their 'dead' land areas or 'sites' in the manner of a linguistic permutation' (Smithson cited in Kitnick, 2011, p.20). More than a superficial comparison between kept tight universes (Minimalism and suburbia), Smithson attempted to the fact that Graham turned explicit how the industrial production fabricated 'identities' and was able to convert them into huge urban landscapes. The text present in *Homes for America* demonstrates how the entrepreneurs offered to the families some 'architectural tastes' categories (American popular style houses) and 'lifestyles' (numbers of rooms, sizes of private and living spaces). Those families could choice the 'pattern' that best suited them and, thereafter, a combinatorial statistic system would decide the building site. In these terms, the 'lifestyle' of a large part of the population is the result of the combinatorial elements offered by the industry.

The critique of a mass production and mass behavior contained in *Homes for America* was converted in the following years in a long research about the reception, perception and behavior processes of the audience not only in the art system but also outside it, including the profusion of cultural products that configures the mass culture. If we juxtapose his first works with this other series of investigations, we will finally understand the questions asked by Graham in his works produced in the late 1970's focusing urban situations.

## **PERCEPTION, SUBJECTIVITY AND BEHAVIORS**

The irony distilled by proposals like *Homes for America* leaves no doubt about its target, the cultural and political dynamics behind both seemingly distant phenomena – the Minimalism extreme stance of art autonomy and the mass housing production. Dan Graham's analysis focus on the layers of political and ideological meanings, historically constituted and which defined forms of representation and perception of the cultural products. This is the not only the case of magazines contents, objects exposed in museums and art galleries and - as this article aims to demonstrate – but also the architecture and urban spaces.

This is the tonic that guided much of the artist's production since the 1970s, based on a critic of the 'mechanic' displayed in the relationship between object and its



audience. Dan Graham was interested in understanding how the audience is socially constructed.

*Public Space/Two Audiences* (1976) emerges as a paradigmatic example. Produced to the 37th Venice Biennale, for many authors (as well as for the artist) this is the last proposal of an installation series represents and represents a turning point in his career. Differently from proposals like *Present Continuous Past* (1974) and the series named as *Time Delay Room* (1974), which presented a spatio-temporal articulation between closed environments, glass walls, screen-monitors and surveillance cameras, the proposal for the Biennale represented a synthesis of these elements.

Entering the rooms, the Biennale visitors confronted themselves with only two rectangular ambient with independent access, separated by a unique mirrored-glass wall – which also functioned as an acoustic insulator. In one of the rooms, the wall located at the background, parallel to the mirrored-glass wall, was totally covered with mirror. In the other side, the glass division surface showed a slight level of reflection degree, overlaying the vision of the previous room with the images of what happens inside.

In a first analysis of *Public Space/Two Audiences* one can immediately recognizes the criticism of institutional space represented by the Biennale, the object *status* inside this art system and how it was realized seeking to interfere on the conventional relations between object and his audience. Like a trap, Graham's proposal confronts the Biennale visitors with their own imagens and behavior 'in place of the art object' (Graham cited in Salvioni, 1990, p.143).

The solutions found in this work, the intersubjective relations it provoked, have reoriented Graham investigations inasmuch as the spatializing of the audience (self)conscious allowed him to explore not only the gaze and perception codes, but also the (physical and semantic) codes of the space itself. Through *Public Space/Two Audiences* Dan Graham a deepens this research, radicalizing the previous investigations of the audience self-perception with the investigation of the space social nature. Beyond the focus on the art galleries institutional functioning - which drives reception and perception forms of the objects exposed inside them, *Public Space/Two Audiences* advances this discussion focusing the audience social construction, specially under the perspective of its self-perception.

The inversion of the dispositions between art object and its observers directs the audience subjective process experiences not only from the gaze, but especially through the intersubjective divisions that define 'interior' and 'exterior', 'public' and 'private', 'individuality' and 'collectivity'. The physical repartition of space implies a series of social divisions that are established at the exactly moment when the biennale visitors enter the rooms configured by the piece. These visitors are launched on a circuit in which the relations of reciprocity (between the social 'micro-groups' that integrate the partitioned ambient) are in permanent state of construction and deconstruction. The experience with this work brought to light the fact that its functioning depended on the conditions settled by the elements that conform the space. At one time, Graham asked himself: 'what would happen if I took out the white wall [opposed to the mirrored wall] – the work, concluded, 'would become architecture' (Graham cited in Colomina, et al., 2001 p.19).

The similarity to the issues held on proposals like *Pavilion Sculpture for Argonne* is not fortuitous. In fact, there is an idea of space realized on *Public Space/Two Audiences* that anticipates many of the questions later developed by Graham in relation to architecture and the city, especially in relation to the intersubjective



phenomenon of suspended focal points by the confrontation of the audience with the images of themselves and the others. In this case, Pelzer (1979) highlights the concept of decentralization that incises on both the observers gaze conventions and the conventional division process between their self-identity and the environment. This paradoxical relation between the centrality assumed by the audience inside his installations and the instability provoked on its subjective process could only be guaranteed through a third decentralization factor: the 'paradoxical nature' of the space conceived by Graham (Pelzer, 1979, p.41).

The term utilized by the author synthetizes the contraposition between the social performance of the installations and that produced by the functionalist spaces – what she denominated as an 'orthodox modern architecture' (Pelzer, 1979, p.42). First, it is also worth to consider that the perceptive strangeness caused by the confrontation with the self-reflection – superimposed on the images of the space and the other visitors – determines a state of permanent instability of the limits between 'me' and 'the other'. This condition contradicts the notion of a 'spatial totality'. Thus, the nature of the experience provided by Graham's installations, different from that provided by architectural functionalism, relativizes the capability of their structural codes and elements to prescribe a determined kind of behavior, appropriation or function. From the moment that each observer has his identity momentarily suspended, this is taken to constantly evaluate the relationships and movements that define his/her social performance. There is no fixed and secured point anymore.

Shaped through a 'pathos of functionalism and transparency' (Pelzer, 1979, p.42), Modern ideology kept distance from alterity conditions attempting to surpass the conflicts that emerge from any bordering and unstable nature. Pelzer reminds, for example, how the intense research for surpass the division between interior and exterior through the glass courting walls materiality of the modern buildings resulted in a 'pluralist monotony which denies difference' (Pelzer, 1979, p.42).

The use of the unitary space conception authority (which leverages notions such as function hierarchy or uses, and flows control) by the Functionalism is rejected by Dan Graham in favor of a conception opened to tensions and contradictions. Graham would be underlining the 'possibility to abolishing the conventions which fix public/private identity, even the possibility of the 'autodetermination' of information [crossing the spatial codes]' (Pelzer, 1979, p.48).

Finally, *Public Space/Two Audiences* highlights the discovery of another research field for the artist: the modes of audience behavior and perception being settled by architectural elements and devices. Much still remains to investigate how the constitutive elements of a space affects the ways which the audience will interact. Those elements carry an amount of objective properties and subjective meanings that are responsible for conditioning the experience of those present there. It is the moment when the artist shifts his proposals from the protected space inside the art system to other places, those of contemporary city.

## **THE CRITICISM OF HIGH MODERNISM IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

'*Art in relation to Architecture. Architecture in relation to Art*', published in 1979, explains the correlation that Graham sought to stablish between his artistic practices and the architectural field. In his text, the artist highlights two parallels between the main artistic trends and the hegemonic architectural production in America, as an effort to review and to synthetize the issues that have guided him to a new field in his artistic production.





The first parallel regards the equivalence between the aesthetic matrices of Minimalism art and the functionalist architecture produced within High Modernism in USA. Graham demonstrates how both trends aimed the isolation of the object from emerging social pressures through a formalism that portrayed itself as strictly objective (literal form for one; technical, functional and utilitarian form for the other). According to the artist, Minimalism and 'Post-Bauhaus' architecture – as he referred to the Modern Architecture produced in America – shared the belief in 'internal structural form auto-articulation in apparently isolation from the symbolic (and representative) meaning codes'. Both aesthetic practice and thinking denies 'the connotative and social meanings beyond the context of another art or architecture around it' (Graham, 1979 in: Ferreira, et al., 2006, p.436).

Graham established these approximations in order to criticize them. Same as the critical thinking that was gaining strength since mid-1960s, the artist recognized a rhetoric of 'false' autonomy in the 'reductive' forms of 'abstract materialism'. The non-communicative appeal – materialized, in one side, through autonomous art object and, in other, by the universalism intended through the rule that submits the architectural form to its function – occulted an ideological meaning often unconscious. Based on authors such as Ian Burn and Karl Berevidge – for whom 'reproducing an art form which denies the social and political context (...) in fact offers a cultural rationale precisely to this denial' (Burn and Berevidge, 1975 cited in Ferreira, et al., 2006, p.436) – Graham argues how that artists and architects became 'cultural engineers of International Art' having his works transformed into 'popular packages' for exportation of capitalist ideology (Graham, 1979 in: Ferreira, et al., 2006, 436). The architecture of Mies van der Rohe (or the 'International Style' architecture consecrated by historians such as Phillip Johnson), he says, 'functions ideologically as a neutral and objective rationale base to the American exportation capitalism, although wishing to be taken as an abstract (non-symbolic) form' (Graham, 1979 in: Ferreira, et al., 2006, 436).

At the heart of his discussion, therefore, we find again the criticism of the ideological function performed by the autonomy of the art object and the architecture (even under the Functionalism ideology), and the discourses to which they are bound, consciously or not. His position is that the artists, as well as the architects, must recognize this contradiction, so they could find other direction to their works, other forms of insertion abler to handle the complexity imposed by social and political factors.

This same position was developed in the second parallel presents in this same text, resuming his interest on politic-aesthetical strategies created by Pop Art from early 1960s – this time aligned with the American architecture Robert Venturi's practical and theoretical production. Criticizing the ideological 'rationale' subjacent to the aesthetic posture, which denies the surrounding environment, Graham embraces some proposals that reject the 'reductionism' and the 'utopian character' of modernist architectural doctrine, preferring those that opened itself to the social reality and the economy of the context in which they are inserted. 'The question which the American and Britain pop artists works, as well as Venturi's work, evoke', says, 'is the art and architecture's relation and socio-political effect to his *immediate* environment' (Graham, 1979 in: Ferreira, et al., 2006, p.442).

The analysis that Graham constructed at this moment conforms a defense of the ambivalent (or hybrid) form, aiming to explicit the conflictive discourses (and readings juxtaposition) present in a same object. What we intended to demonstrate here is how the strategies identified by Graham in the Pop artist works and Venture's architecture are also fundamental factors to his own works. Functioning in a complementary way, these factors concerns the relation between the object (of



art or architecture) and its social and political meanings; the criticism of the idealism inherent to the autonomous aesthetical concept; and the much-needed review of artistic and architectural social insertion.

*Alterations to a Suburban House* (1978), one of his mostly known urban intervention proposals, is very significant in this aspect. Although not executed, the model produced by Graham shows a typical American suburban neighborhood, featuring three houses with an architectural design very similar to those depicted in *Homes for America*. In one of the houses, apart from the others by a street, the masonry frontal façade was substituted by a huge glass wall, opening the living room vision like a showcase window. At the same time, a mirror recovering the rear wall of this room, parallel to the glass wall, brought into the intimacy of the home the reflected image of the neighborhood.

The framing and visualization effects explore the integration of the internal and external spaces of the suburban houses architectural form. Ultimately, these effects destabilize the notions of public and private exposure decorum, questioning the codes that guided the suburban American 'way of life'. The glass walls that enclosure the environment of *Public Space/Two Audiences* now assumes the function of a showcase window – an opening that puts in question acceptable social levels of integration between 'public' and 'private' and home/society/city/landscape.

Both *Homes for America* and *Alterations to a Suburban House* denote the conflictive coexistence of different meanings or senses, as well as the multiples readings that a same object allows. To questioning some of the conventions driving both the space construction and experience, Graham turns out to reveal some implicit meanings of some architectural components (the window, the façade, the showcase window or even the suburban house architectural typology) as mediators and symbolic elements between the limits that are not only the spatial order (inside and outside) but also social one.

For Graham, is not enough the denunciation of ideological bias behind the objects and the constructed spaces that would in order to prevent an alienating condition for both artists and architects – and even for the audience. Going further on his criticism, his proposals try to expose the constitutional process of political, ideological, cultural and/or historical meanings through the elements that conform the space.

## **CONCLUSIONS: TENSIONS ON ART AND ARCHITECTURAL DISCIPLINARY FIELDS**

If Graham explored the spatial and disposition of architectural elements in order to explicit the power relations that concretizes the suburban house and the intersubjective experience besides other ideological meanings, it would be possible to think in spatial devices able to engender different (political, social, cultural, and even intersubjective) natures of space through the same elements?

That is the question presents in his pavilion works. As seen in the beginning, Graham creates situations where 'public space is used for social performance purposes' (Graham, 2005, p.50). The artist is making a counterpoint to the usual urban space appropriation, in his words, to 'the way how the corporations modify the urban landscape (...) and the continuum suburbanization' (Graham, 1995). The way he operates the sites where he constructs his pavilions, he turns explicit the existence of alternatives, offering to the city and submitting directly to the people perception and experience the multiple possibilities opened by the same overlay,



transparency and reflection effects present in corporative buildings 'functionalist' language.

At this point, we have gathered some key aspects in Graham's work that raises new concerns about the architectural and urbanism disciplinary fields. They are: the attention on the social performance of architectural elements and devices; the particular interest in intersubjective process inherent to the constructed spaces; and finally the intense discussion about the modern architectural ideology, the Functionalism and the criticism review improved by architects such as Robert Venturi. These aspects highlight the ways that his first works related to the Institutional Critique of art (and the consequent interest in the audience reception, perception and behavior process) guided him to investigate how the space devices found in the city (from the exhibition spaces to the High Modernism corporative buildings) drive the urban experience. This turning point in Graham's career allowed him to deal with particular contents for architectural and urbanism disciplinary field, which were reflected in his writing, in his research of spatial 'medias' such as the video, the window, the showcase window, the glass façade and even the mass housing.

In matter of fact, it is possible to say that the conductor line responsible to guide the artist until his relationship with the Architectural field reinforces the idea pointed by Colomina (1978, p.88) that Graham proposals deal with the constructed space substantially as a 'media': as well as he decoded the exhibition space and its extension to the magazine pages, he could do the same in relation to the architectural spaces. Furthermore, as part of this process, Graham also took part in the review of the modern architectural production and discourses, criticizing important aspects from an original point of view developed in contemporary art.

In this aspect, it is undeniable to recognize his efforts to criticize the dominant discourse over the architectural practices and to open the perception about the ways architecture and the constructed spaces have effect on its 'audience' (or users) favoring social experience and behavior forms. Seen through Dan Graham's investigations allow us to recognize in the architectural and urban space some relations which modernism excluded from its practices and to reclaim the historical, social, political and cultural ballast of its own codes and elements.

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