THE WALLS OF LITTLE DEATH

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HONORABLE MENTION

The interpretationof the subject

In order to question the idea of architecture in transformation, we chose to focus on the body status in architecture, on the physical and sensitive envelope of men and women, which became an obstacle to the growth of society defined by the space crisis for the benefit of time. Society submits itself to technologic innovations that force the immutable transformation of paces of life. As Hartmut Rosa explains in "Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality[1]", time standards (deadlines, travel speed, etc.) matter most in a contemporary society in constant acceleration. The body movements, its slowness (relative to extremely fast technologic innovations), become crucial subjects in space thinking and space invention. Since constructed areas may be defined by the violence that forces bodies to feel, to position, to move in ways defined by the builder, architecture organizes scalable spaces defined by a concept structuring their transformations. We consider that body has a right of reply to the space that he surveys, to postures architecture submits him to. This project is the story of the reciprocal influence between men (and women) and spaces. Since the body transforms itself, grows older, architecture transforms itself as well. In order to debate on this postulate,

we focused on two of the programs the competition suggested: the cemetery and the love hotel. Indeed, both define radically different body relation to architecture; form the complete inertia of corpse, to the speed of the love hotel visitors. Therefore, both welcome individuals outside the standardized society, which considers death and sex as ultimate taboos. Here, the dialogue established between these two programs illustrates the paradox of our contemporary society described by Gunther Anders in "l'obsolescence de l'homme[2]": in a society ruled by speed production, efficiency and yield, the body becomes its own consumption object.

In the manner of a spatialized story, both programs develop a three-act relation (indifference, confrontation, and finally reciprocity). Through their story, they influence one another regarding their uses, and transform spaces that welcome them. The first picture represents an isolated cemetery, at the edge of the speed city; the wall surrounding the cemetery is hermetic to bodies in movement, alive and alienated. Love hotels are grafted along roads, in-between spaces becomming crucial in this fast society, where destination, and purpose don't really exist anymore and constituting simple steps in the daily race, -where sex is one of many acts of rapid consumption.

1   HARTMUT Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality*, NSU Press, 2010, 111p.

2   ANDERS Günther, *L'obsolescence de l'homme : sur l'âme à l'époque de la deuxième révolution industrielle*, Encyclopédie des nuisances, 2002, 360p, col Editions Ivrea

The Process

Paule studied for her diploma the notion of body comfort facing violence in architecture, in a contemporary and extremely normative society. She graduated in June 2016. Lina currently works on her diploma, which is planed for June 2017, about spatial outfalls she imagines as a palliative architecture in the accelerated society. We worked together several times before on similar subjects (challenging architecture or the obsolescence of architecture), and we decided to reaffirm this experience, through an autonomous method, without being monitored by a professor. Therefore, this work has been realized in only two intense weeks with tight scheduled at a turning point for both our studying paths. The subject as well as the theme proposed by the UIA CUP seemed an extremely stimulated challenge for us, in order to deepen our past work, and to valorize it at the same time.

Conception phase can be described in a three parts: the definition of our thesis, our point of view, then the choice of programs and the story we wanted to tell, and finally the explicit shaping of our narrative. The purpose of this project is to emphasize some societal contradictions maintained by contemporary architecture that parks bodies into cellular spaces we would like to question. The cemetery has been our first choice of program. Indeed, the ageing of bodies, their ineffective slowness due to their ages, and finally the inertia of their corpses seemed specifically taboo in our western society. Usually outside of towns, cemeteries illustrate this situation through their urban scheme and their enclosure that works as an hermetic limit with the rest of the active city. The active city, efficient and in some way, lonely, it is paradoxically represented in our work through the love hotel. This succession of anonymous, perfectly identical rooms presents similitudes with the typology of cemetery, but this time, by being grafted along roads which structure our daily travels. Indeed, these two programs are the body envelope, and are both formed by cellular minimal livings (from hotel room to coffin).

We have imagined the story of both spatial organizations in three parts, each with completely different relationship between body and architecture. We decided to tell this project like a romantic relationship between two programmatic entities radically different. The aim of this work is to confront them and observe how they may tend to transform each other, transforming the bodies that inhabit them, generating an urban system soothing temporary differences that can be observed today. The dimensions of the plot were a measuring tool and reflection on which we played. The 30x60 meters rectangle first draws the limits of an isolated graveyard of a city in motion. We didn't stop questioning this limit throughout the process. Thus, the story begins with indifference between programs, then confrontation, and to conclude, reciprocity. The stage of ignorance corresponding to the current state, then the misleading and violent confrontation of their spatial properties, finally we open the possibility of an appeased relationship between body and space. These three relations between programs and moving bodies are declined in three different pictures. In a first place, we describe an urban imaginary scheme, and then we deform it in order to consider time as the referential of the second map, and finally, we only represent moving bodies, as a time lapse.

We have began by drawing on tracing paper the three urban schemes, relative to the three steps of the story. At the same time we confirmed the importance of representation, and specifically of the thickness of black lines. The limits that the enclosure of the cemetery, but also that the border of roads (which welcomes love hotel in the thickness of line, becoming walls) draw, suggest the opacity of these infrastructures and emphasize the mutual ignorance between programs, but also between individuals. The second step of drawing constitutes the shaping of time maps by deforming the three first drawings. In the manner of anamorphic map that deform itself according to a referential different from space, we use time as the new data for representing the use of this specific space. The purpose was to represent travelling speeds relating to each program, by calculating time that each individual spend in each area. We used a grid, considering that one unit of space corresponds to a multiple of one unit of time. The slow crossing of the cemetery suggest that while six units represent the cemetery on the first step of drawing, on the second step, the same cemetery is represented with 10 time units. In order to draw an accurate representation of time (even if it is also a subjective one), we timed ourselves during the crossing of different spaces with different speeds. Thus, we deducted ratios between travelled distance and travelled speed, and then we transferred it on the grid. The drawings of time map represent architectural forms completely deformed, stretched, are even narrow. Finally, the last three drawing represent exclusively bodies, in movement, or inert, they are fixed like a time lapse. We constructed these drawings by imagining behaviors of each represented bodies every 5 second of one hour.

Thus, these nine pictures have been defined by moving back and forth

from representation choices and
the imagination of the behaviors
of the inhabitant of this unique
architecture. In that matter, we
focused on the relationship between
two programs, telling the story of a
contemporary architecture, spreading
in a society involved in an accelerated
transformation. We hope in this way
to question the pitfalls of a society
submitted to the authority of time on
the body through a rigorous method
of representation. It is important
to adapt our drawing tools to living
architectural concepts, reflective of a
changing society. These new modes
of representation, however, have no
independent value. Their invention is
possible only through the confrontation
of a common tradition, which predates.
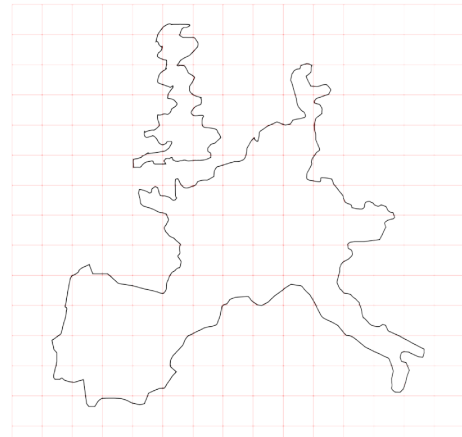
Exemple of an anamorphic map of Europe, relative to
travel period, by the new train network in 2015
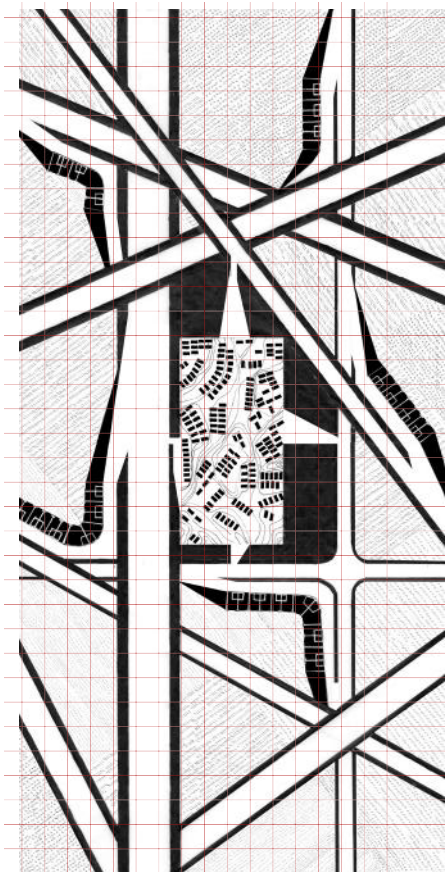
Adaptation of this technic on our work, from urban scheme
to time map.
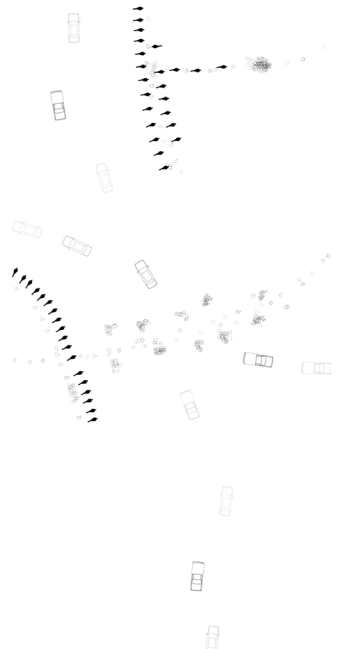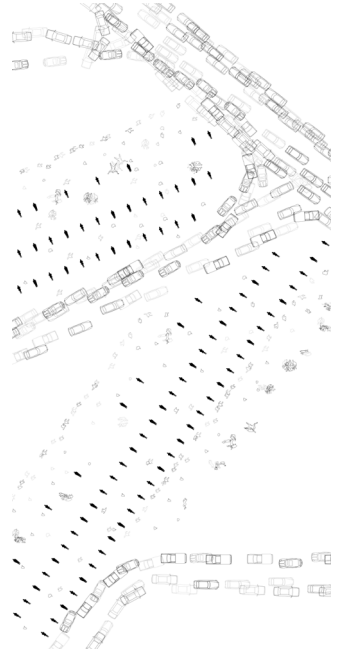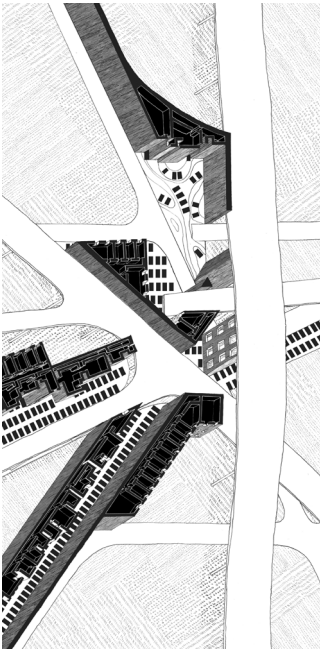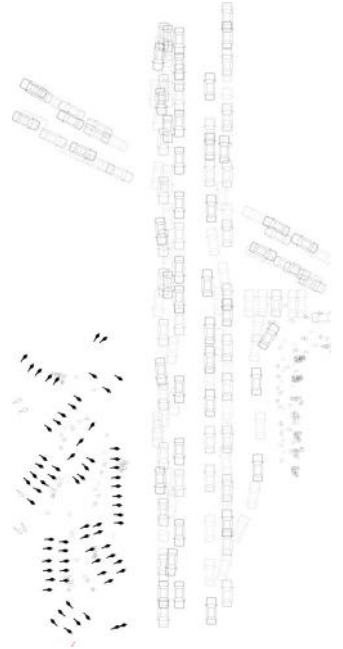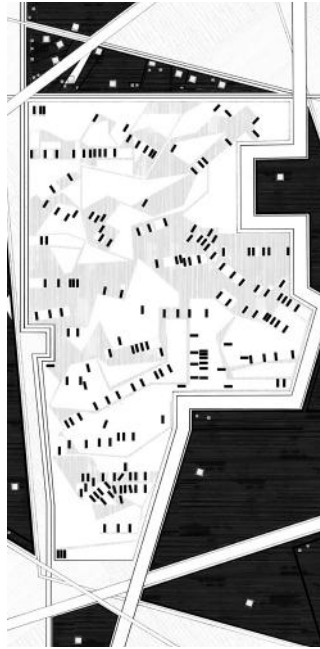
A.1 - Indifference between programs and spaces

Eating, drinking, playing, having sex, define activities that are bought with work… Theses daily actions are linked together through countless flows used by travellers who have no awareness of what surrounding themselves. Love stops spread along lonely roads, offering the pleasure of physical, fleeting and inconsequential embraces to travellers on the way back home. Walls frame these road landscapes and turn others invisible, dead or alive. Caught in the daily race for consumption they deny the inevitable aging of bodies that intend obsolescence as inevitable as the objects they have still not yet purchased. Death is breakdown of the capitalist cycle, as the city ensures the radically separate from others in order to ensure the consumer efficiency, for now…

A.2 - Indifference between programs and time

In response to the capitalist cities' spatial and temporal authority, the thuck walls separating the daily lives of citizens are drilled, remodeled… Instead of being seen as a separation they become the set of a shockingly, clumsy sometimes violent encounter between programs who ignored each other until now. The love hostels leave the roadside and now occupy the walls that surrounded the cemetery. Users become aware of a foreign presence, feel the look of a disturbing viewer on them. However this spatial and moral discomfort tends to make the citizen aware of the illusion in which he was and makes him seek for an alternative model.

A.3 - Indifference between different flows

The previous programmatic confrontation fueled alternative models establishing reciprocity between programs in the contradictory appearance of the cemetery and the love hostel. The different flows are now wedged at the same speed. Roads once denying the roughness of the territory integrate today its peculiarities. The road flow is no longer punctuated by the consumption momentum but reconciles with the slope. New situations are scattered in the landscape, resulting in new programmatic interactions.

B.1 - Confrontation between programs and spaces

It is difficult to illustrate these antagonists temporal relationships satisfying ourselves with a spatial reference. The challenge is to map the spatial occupation of each velocity. The meter unit becomes temporal unit. Considerable distortions are observed: the highway becomes a line, the cemetery monopolizes the map, the love hostels that once grafted the roads, spread everywhere. The time draws unexpected geometries.

B.2 - Confrontation between programs and time

The violence of the designed spaces results in flows crossing each other with radically different speeds. Highways cross slow spaces, tending to amend their respective timeframes.

B.3 - Confrontation between different flows

The total overlapping of different programs leads to a mutual understanding of time, mapping an eulogy of slowness.

C.1 - Reciprocity between programs and spaces

In the manner of the time-lapse photography, these maps attempt to capture the flow of bodies in the city, to the measure of the man and his movements. Considering the car as a body envelope, it fully integrates the representation of movement, despite the inertia of the body that inhabits it. Here flows do not mix, the pauses suggested by the love hostel are juste diversions of traffic flows.

C.2 - Reciprocity between programs and time

The clumsy imbrication of the program leads to a dangerous mix of flows.

C.3 - Reciprocity between different flows

Mutual understanding of flows, mapping an eulogy of slowness.

The Project

Finally we would like to express our
happiness about the UIA CUP process.
It was really stimulating for us to work
on our own on our first architectural
competion, and to be able to focus
on subjects that participated in the
construction of our architectural
preferences that we constructed all
our studies long. The distinction of
an honorable mention in this context
is something that motivates us even
more for the entry in the professional
world. We thank you deeply for the
opportunity.

Lina Jaïdi and Paule Perron