

Interview with Will Wiles

Will Wiles is the author of two novels: Care of Wooden Floors, in which a man is driven mad by a minimalist apartment, and The Way Inn, a horror story set in an anonymous chain hotel. He is also a contributing editor at Icon magazine and a freelance design journalist. He has a very nice British accent and sounds disarmingly intelligent.

P1 *How did you get interested in architecture and how did you switch over from not only writing about architecture to also writing fiction that is set in architecture?*

W: At university I shared rooms with an architecture student and gave serious thought to switching my degree. I've had a lifelong interest in architecture but always wanted to write. Once I left university I realized that I could combine the two and write about architecture for a living.

While I had written fiction as a hobby, I did not think of it as having anything to do with architecture. It was only later in the process of finishing my first novel, *Care of Wooden Floors*, when I realized that the book was all about architecture—my interests and my day job had completely pervaded my imaginative work as it were. My second novel, *The Way Inn*, on the other hand, was very consciously an architecture novel.

P1 *What would you characterize as an architecture novel? When does a book switch over from just taking place in an architectural environment to being about that environment?*

W: Architecture has a much closer relationship with literature than people would imagine. For fields of activity that have so little obviously in common in terms of their making or the shape of their output, they have a very close allyship. I think that connects back to the very beginnings of the Modern novel itself—the Gothic. The fundamental formula of the Gothic novel is a victim, and victimizer, and an evocative setting. The setting is a vital part of the formula. One only has to look at the connection between Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill—the act of defining one's environment around oneself in a particular to create particular emotions and of simultaneously composing narratives that promote those same emotional responses. From *The Castle of Otranto* onwards, it is the setting that generates the atmosphere of oppression and threat—directly is as important as anything that happens in the Gothic novel. Though we have never precisely confronted *The Castle of Otranto* in the Book Club—we were worried that no one would come if they had to read a farley long and difficult Early Gothic novel—we did take on William Beckford's *Vathek*. That's just a fabulously architectural story, filled with limitless palaces, horrible towers, and mad, opioid visions of excess and debauchery.

P1 *As you know, we work primarily in drawings and renderings over here. What do you think a literary description of a space allows you to communicate that a drawing or a plan does not?*

W: I've written a lot of studies and reviews of buildings over the course of my career, and have certainly edited a lot of them. It seems like there could always be new things written about architecture from a critic's point of view. But what can be written about architecture that cannot be revealed through a drawing or a plan? An effective description of a building allows you to inhabit it, which is something that requires not three dimensions but four—a place set within time, within a living time that can be animated around it. It is that sense of inhabitation that drawings do not automatically possess and plans certainly do not. But I'm interested in the role of plans in novels. Sometimes they are included, often to the detriment of stories. It can be a bit of a distraction at times if you can overly set a place within a plan—always skipping back to the llyleaf to set the situate yourself within a map. It's almost better to keep place conjured and perhaps inconsistent in the mind.

Quite deliberately, there is a subtle inconsistency in the layout of the apartment within *Care of Wooden Floors*. If you went back and tried to construct a floorplan from the descriptions, you would encounter a stumbling point—two things intersect. While I wanted to thwart planning all together—I didn't want floorplans to exist—I did have a sketch plan that I referred to. But when I realized that the plan diverted from what I had described, I discovered the potential for introducing an inconsistency. The layout of the building wouldn't quite work in the way that I had described. That is also just the way that I think, and perhaps the way that a lot of writers think. As I write I am constantly surrounded by doodles of layouts of rooms—where people are sitting around a table and things like that—which are handy for memory and continuity purposes. It's not necessary for the reader to know these details, but the author should understand them.

P1 *You've written about how Postmodern designs were used in film in the 80s and 90s to signal a character's out-of-touchness. Do you see any current design trends being encoded in fiction now?*

Ritual Vessels and Their Myths —Olisa Agulue



Fig 1

from their form and material qualities to arrive at theories as to how they may have been inserted into Zande's ritualistic narratives.

The first vessel (Figure. 1) is a relatively recent artifact, dating back only two centuries. Due to its dark patina, Arthur has theorized that the vessel was constructed with volcanic minerals. However, another theory attributes the vessel's dark color to the material Acrisol (acidic soil). During the firing process, the chemical composition of the acidic soil would have been changed, resulting in the formation of a dark outer layer. Due to the scarcity of volcanic sediments within the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Acrisol theory seems more plausible. That being said, the drinking vessel was likely symbolically very important, so the use of a rare material such as volcanic mineral is well within reason.

The vessel has a single spout, but its body is separated into eight chambers. It has been theorized that this curious form took on symbolic importance during intertribal solidarity ceremonies. According to this theory, at these gatherings each tribal leader

W: Just as Modernist architecture was used for the supervillain's lair and corporate psychopath, there is now an extensive filmography of New Urbanism providing sinister utopias—from *The Truman Show* to *The Walking Dead*, which has a kind of chocolate-box heritage neighborhood that turns out to be a haven for the absolutely ghastly. I've recently been watching *The Good Place*. One of the characters, played by Ted Danson, is the architect of a portion of heaven. He has designed a neighborhood within the afterlife, as its described, from the ground up. It's this kind of New Urbanist development, something like Portmeirion. Do you know Portmeirion in Wales? It's this fantastic kind of village by an architect called Bertram Clough Williams-Elis. Did you ever see *The Prisoner*? That was set in Portmeirion. Well, anyway, the neighborhood in *The Good Place* is a twice little township. It is an interesting choice for heaven and becomes steadily more interesting as the show goes on. I don't want to spoil it for the readers, but it turns out that this town is not designed in the way that one immediately expects. If you ever end up in a bit of film or TV New Urbanism, you should run like hell.

But there is another trend that may be just around the corner. There have been quite a lot of flashy buildings inhabited by gossies in recent films—I'm thinking particularly of the various Marvel superhero films. Tony Stark's skyscraper in Manhattan, which becomes the Avengers' headquarters, has this kind of Neil Denari, Zaha Hadid, Bjarke Ingels aesthetic. Given the changing nature of Robert Downey Jr.'s character in that franchise, it's only a matter of time before this style ends up being used exclusively by villains.

P1 *That's definitely on the horizon. In your work, especially in The Way Inn, there is this connection between banal spaces, or non-spaces—conference rooms, motels, hotels—and horror. Why do you find that those spaces create feelings of unease?*

W: I think it's the sheer flexibility and versatility of these spaces. They are very comfortable spaces, but they are utterly purged of identification or humanizing influence because they are intended to be used by any number of people. The chain hotels of the mid-twentieth century demonstrate a kind of balance: they have the comforts of a home but lack the accumulated spirit or clan of a home. They are never going to be your home and you don't necessarily want to spend your time in someone else's home. While these environments are purged—they are a kind of zombie environment—they are fascinating and often very comfortable.

The Way Inn derives very heavily from Rem Koolhaas's *Junkspace*. When I first read it it seemed to have the cadence and tone of something by Edgar Allan Poe or HP Lovecraft. There is hardly a full-stop in it and it has these endless run on sentences—no paragraph breaks or anything. It reads like a breathless report from someone who has glimpsed a cosmic, interdimensional horror and has only just survived with shreds of their sanity. It felt to me like Weird Fiction, so I wrote the novelized version. The sense of that kind of banal environment being boundaryless, sprawling, endlessly multiplying, and essentially unstoppable came from *Junkspace*.

I've rambled a bit. But there are a lot of microaggressions within these environments that give them a certain sense of hostility—static shocks, the keycard that doesn't work, the menu system on the welcome TV screen, the sound of the air conditioning... That's what I wanted to convey. Truly I wanted to write a Gothic novel that had none of the tropes of the Gothic novel. There are no creaking floorboards, cold drafts, or cobwebs. Instead the setting is created through 21st-century building services.

M: *That's great. It reminds me. In both your works there is a tension between what we want from a space and what it can actually give us. Do you think that always characterizes our relationship to spaces?*

W: We have an unhealthy attachment to authenticity. There is a sense that you can only have a really meaningful good time in a 200-year old barn—you have to have roses around the door for an experience to mean something. J.G. Ballard said of the Hilton hotel at Heathrow terminal 4—which is a really interesting, hyper-modernist building with a gigantic Portman-esque atrium—that its atrium lobby—which was his favorite space in london—was a space that no one could ever fall in love in. I thought he was dead wrong, so one of the things that I wanted to do in *The Way Inn* was have someone fall in love in a space like that, which is what the protagonist does. A mysterious woman. An unrequited love.

M: *If you could come up with a book list, recommendations for people studying architecture...*

W: I would recommend that they read Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, as well as Ballard's *High Rise*. There is also a Ballard short story "Report on an Unidentified Space Station"—the characters are looking around a space station and constantly have to revise upwards their sense of how big it is. There's a lot of science fiction that addresses architecture. There is a novel by Greg Bear called *Eon* which is about a spacecraft appearing in orbit around Earth. The station is an asteroid with seven hollowed out chambers within and appears to be a space habitat that was built by humans and has come back to us from the future, but there is no one on board. The seventh chamber of the craft has an extraordinary mystery within it. I don't know if you want to include the spoiler or not, but the mystery is that the seventh chamber goes on forever—it extends out of the back of the asteroid and goes on to a infinite distance. What else... Oh god, there are hundreds of architecture novels. Let me look behind me at my bookshelf...

Dim Sum —Gwyneth Bacon-Shone

Alex cocked his head up and slowly scanned the room. The dim, 237th floor lab was silent but for the rhythmic titter lattening of keypads. He was surrounded by a sea of shiny jet black hair, which, in the shadowy room, reflected the bright lights of LED computer screens. The sharp shoulder caps of their on-trend grey blazers formed lines down both sides of him, emphasising the steadiness of the men's torsos as their fingers typed away seemingly independent to the rest of their bodies. Despite all the global wars and technological advancements, it was still deemed most efficient to array workers in uniform rows in large, low ceiling rooms. Now that jobs were dictated by height, workplaces needed only be sealed to their respective worker height.

Suddenly the room began to pulse pink, then the lights came on completely and the long boxy room shone a neon fuschia haze. Lunch time.

Leon turned to Alex and gave him a fiendish grin. "Mmm, excellent." Standing up, Leon wiggled his brushstroke eyebrows at his colleague, and began to stride out of the quickly emptying room. Awoken from his daze, Alex hurriedly grabbed his raincape. He cringed as he clipped it on. Compared to the frosted, translucent caps of the other company men, his was not nearly as stylish. He had arrived to Seoul-jo just a few days ago and his Amrazian outfits were weeks out of style compared to the high fashion of the Chinese city.

The two men joined the packed group of chatty lunch goers in the circular glass lobby. "What were you thinking?" Aiken shouted over the crowd, motioning to Leon. "Something old school." Leon grinned, refusing to raise his voice. "Huh?" Aiken struggled to look back at the two men as the crowd pushed relentlessly towards the edge of the lobby. Floop, floop, floop. One by one, they all hopped into the hover tubes and disappeared down the suction rabbit holes that dotted the lobby periphery. They emerged unscathed at the ground floor.

"God I don't know how you guys manage at Wall Street," Leon huffed, glancing at Alex as they walked outside. "That you have to press a button to get to a floor is sooo early 2000s." "That's how those people spread that SARs virus those days," Aiken chimed in. "I don't know," Alex replied, tightening his lips to a smile "they just—"

Suddenly the road ahead of them widened as a surveillance car whizzed past. The old stationary roads at Armazilia were also behind the times. Emergency vehicles were always howling away as they sought to push through traffic. Here, the roads simply expanded to let them pass.

"Dim sum?" Leon offered as the men gathered onto the uphill escalator. "Yeah, Alex hasn't seen the real deal." Aiken winked and gave Alex a friendly nudge.

They crossed the narrow streets between escalators, the leftover infrastructure that made up Old Town. The men teetered around the uneven asphalt streets. "They kept use for antique charm," Aiken explained. "People used to coat the roads with this stuff," he snorted. Alex winced.

After a maze of dark alleys and crooked streets, they turned onto an opening. Across the road men of all heights were packed together, raised arms waving frantically in hopes of flagging down some service. After a bit of pushing and shoving, the three men squeezed to the front of the crowd. Beyond the rapid fire of exchange happening at the counter, there sat a hushed kitchen. The three-walled room was wrapped in large beige tiles, the caulking between them soiled with age. Flip-flops clapped on the floor as the three attendants hastily filled orders. The back wall was lined with rows of Aqua Air Drums, rotating like rotisserie chickens on a spit. The drums were filled with the Aeroponic Anti-Gravity Mist that allowed fresh seafood to swim about without needing those giant fish tanks restaurants had in the 2020s. Along the left wall, a series of machines were printing pancakes, bobbing flaming woks and dicing food into Dim Sum's characteristic bite-sized portions. The technology was dated: three attendants were still needed to facilitate and link the machines.

"Three duck rice balls and three hot milks!" Leon called out. He turned back at Alex as an attendant rushed to scribble down the order. "See? Old school here!" "You guys drink milk?" Alex looked at his friends, a little bewildered. "Oh yeah! Doctors have decided that's good for you now. Ideally full fat."

of an individual within the clan was determined by his or her ability to consume a bitter liquid derived from cassava plant leaves. The inability to consume the liquid in its entirety resulted in excommunication or death.

These attempts at pinning down the meaning and use of these objects cause us to reflect on how the form of an object both allows for a specific function, and also acquires symbolic meaning. In rituals, the meanings of actions are transferred to the objects in use. The objects must communicate the importance of the action. Any vessel will not do. A vessel used in a ritual has to have been crafted with great care. Attention must have been paid to its material qualities and aesthetic properties. Through this artistry, the ceremonial object is elevated above an everyday object, allowing it to carry symbolic meaning. However, just a beautiful object will not suffice. It must also be capable of enabling the specific act that is required: The vessel will not infer from its presence at the excavation site that the vessel was used by the Zande tribe. Again, clues as to how, exactly, the Zande used this vessel can be found in the cup's peculiar form: it is 3½ inches by 6½ inches and, contrary to most drinking implements, the vessel's handle is located on its underside. Because of the placement of the handle, once liquid has been poured into the vessel, it is impossible to put the cup down without first ingesting all its contents. Scholars have thus speculated that the vessel was used in medicinal healing or strengthening rituals in which swift, uninterrupted consumption carried symbolic import. According to this same logic, the vessel was also likely used during Zande blood rites, in which the strength or maturity



Fig 2

Down The Rabbit Hole —Michael Glassman

The ribbon cutting went just as planned. "One more," the photographer called out, motioning for us to hold our pose, but we had all taken one step toward the hole and peered down, transfixed by the red satin ribbon that fell and fell and fell. Fourteen heads and twenty-eight eyes against the early morning sky, looking into the strangeness that was to come. Leaning over the edge my pen slipped out of my shirt pocket and followed suit. I liked that pen.

Back in the office we tried to keep construction on schedule. It was easier said than done given the nature of the project. There are no building codes for semi-real spaces. Finding a contractor was nearly impossible. One of our surveyors was lost for weeks down there. He was fine in the end; the drawings he sent us were just a mess of circles and arrows though. In truth, we had done very few drawings ourselves. Mostly the project manifested itself through writing. And then, almost suddenly, a giant hole in the ground.

Rabbit holes had only been found in nature up to that point, so there really was no blueprint for building one. They called the project biomimicry, but that really wasn't true. Build a rabbit hole emulating nature and you end up with a dirt-filled dead end. They could have called it metaphorical architecture, but even that belies its true nature. In the rabbit hole, the physical world reabsorbs our architectural metaphors. The built environment realigns with the imaginary.

I sat down in front of my monitor and zoomed into the blackness. Then some more, until paper space gave way to infinite space. I didn't tell anyone that I had drawn a few extra entrances into the project. I didn't put them into the schedule either. I did put one under my couch though. I knew that no one would find it; some days I couldn't even find it myself. In the vast black waters somehow held in that single layer of light given off by the screen, one is robbed of nearly all sensory information,

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Architecture students make fictional buildings.

Architects make real buildings. Sometimes they make fictional buildings too.

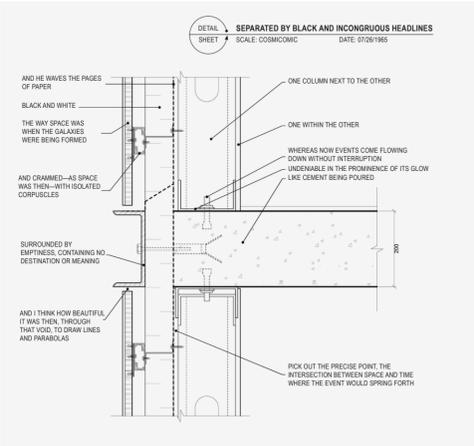
Writers of fiction put real buildings in their stories.

Other times they invent fictional buildings for their stories.

The more we thought about architecture and fiction, the more confused we got.

So we issued an open call to the school asking for works of fiction. Or works about fiction.

This is the fiction issue.



1 "Arts Of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas," Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, 1999 <https://www.metmuseum.org/press/general-information/2005/arts-of-africa-oceania-and-the-americas>

2 Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, "When Art Works: African Utilitarian Objects from the Faxon Collection", Palmer Printing Co., Wayne State University, 2012. ISBN 978-0-616-71786-9

3 Arthur, John W. "Brewing Beer: Status, Wealth and Ceramic Use Alteration among the Gamo of South-Western Ethiopia." *World Archaeology* 34, no. 3 (2003): 516-28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3560201>.

"All at One Point." *Cosmocomics*, by Italo Calvino and William Weaver. Harcourt Brace & Co., 2000, pp. 46-47.

leaving only the contact between finger and mouse. I looked around to ensure that my corner of the office was empty and flew through the black. The hole was still there. I logged off and went home to lie down.

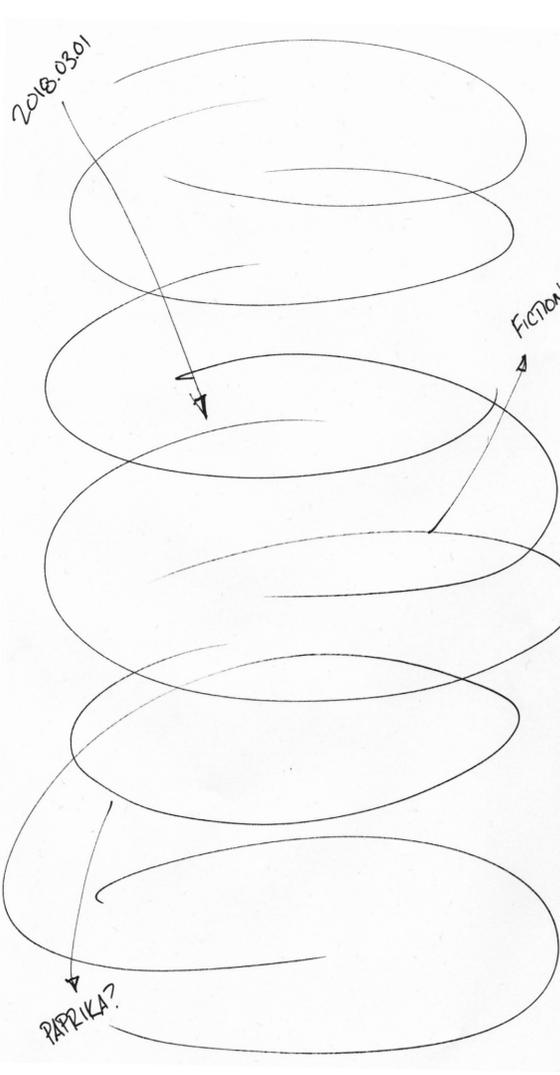
Through the window of the freshly constructed library all you could see were shelves running in to infinity: books and books and books. The building a book, read and re-read. Each book a building, structural and volumetric. Each and every page a rabbit hole. The confluence was almost too much to bear.

My coworker had asked me why the project needed a library, so I asked her why the world needed another hole in the ground. She laughed and we didn't talk about it again.

In reality the library was the crux of the project, the place where word and deed collided. Rabbit holes could only be written, so we did our best to write a building. I was convinced from the start that in order to succeed we would have to be as rigorous in our metaphors as the engineers in their calculations. It turned out, however, that the misalignments were the project's saving grace. It was through one such crack, a small gap in the millwork, that I slipped in from the tunnel that originated in my living room. I wandered through the stacks back toward the lobby until I found a door, the sign read "BATHROOM." I knew that doors rarely lead where they seemed to in the project, but there was little gain in deceiving people about where to find a toilet. The mirrors, however, held no such attachment to veracity. Mirrors in the rabbit hole were not boundaries, throwing the world back at itself, they were permeable. More than that, they pulled the world in. I began to lose myself in the glass, so I yanked back. I evaded the grip of the mirror, but in the push and pull I lost my balance and down the faucet I went.

When I came out the other side of the rough plumbing, my ears dramed started to itch. My ears always start to itch when I've strayed too far from home. I looked down at my feet; the hole went on and on. I look up toward the top; the hole went on and on. I halted my downward climb and had a seat against the side of the shaft. I reached into my bag to pull out the sandwich I'd packed when something sanguine and satin draped itself around my shoulders. I had no idea how it got there, but I knew exactly where it lead. I gave it a tug and began to follow it back to the surface.

Outside the light was dim. The buildings on the other side of the park appeared stoic and well-proportioned through the fog. I looked back into the hole and thought of my pen; I never did find it. I let the ribbon slip from my hands and watched it drift back into the strangeness that we had built.



BRÜCKENSTADT —Wenzel Hablik & Atsuko Chiba

Whereas once the body belonged to a lord and the soul belonged to a god, today the body and the soul belong to the nation state. The hold of its ideology on our belief systems and the claim of its forces on our territories is without precedent. The nation's advantages—rule of law and relative peace—are many. But the Faustian bargain it imposes upon its participants—its demand that every person accept from birth a constructed identity that will govern their life, temper their opportunities, and sometimes compel their death—leaves ever more people stuck. Denied opportunities, bonded by birth to broken or dysfunctional nations, souls and bodies are in ever increasing numbers giving up their nation, a decision that the system by its nature can only greet with walls and document checks.

No such monopoly can long endure without alternatives. And, as is the nature of most hegemonies, we should find alternatives at the very crux of the system. Of course there are still holdovers where the sway of the nation state is weak: stretches of Congolese and Colombian jungles, valleys in the Hindu Kush and Sarawat Mountains, certain ranches in the American southwest. These groups, whether by violence or reticence, stay outside of humanity's governing mechanisms. Sometimes noble, but more often tainted by the most base motivations—indeed plagued by those ails for which the nation state arose to remedy—they do not interest us. These groups are a relic of what was, they are not a premonition of what will be. The issue, after all, is mobility. The alternative, then, will occur not where people are least mobile, but rather where they are most.

Such has always been the case. In feudal times, tithing was often least extant in settlements located at points of transit. Cities such as Amsterdam and Venice welcomed intellectuals, heretics, wanderers, and the persecuted—in short, refugees. Secure in their walls but still fastened to the world by roads and rivers, these groups forged a new society, experimented with new social configurations, broke taboos, and built systems that would eventually eclipse those from which they had fled. To find, then, what follows nationalism we need to look at our contemporary point of transit: the international airport. There, beyond the security check—the contemporary walled compound—grows a society where every passport can mix and move, a society of travelers

already accompanied by burgeoning markets and housed in ever more magnificent halls.

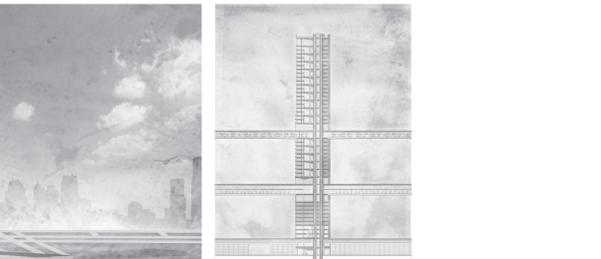
Therefore when the airport at Wayne County outside of Detroit recently expanded to accommodate 30,000 residents, it was not entirely without precedent. With 103 gates serving 34 million travelers a year, it is one of the most trafficked airports in the world. A recovering Detroit wanted new immigrants and refugees—the world's tired, hungry, and huddled—but could not get them through customs. So they asked, what if it was possible to live and be part of Detroit, without ever crossing customs?

Thus they established the first BRÜCKENSTADT, or Bridge City. A succession of bridges metaphorical and real rose above the linear halls of airports. In their industry developed, on them residents could enjoy public space and services, and on legal grounds. The innovation provided residents living space without ever having to step foot on national ground.

Detroit designed its BRÜCKENSTADT as a simple play between the domestic and the street. The street is already there: at 1.6 km long, Concourse A of the McNamara Terminal already has shops, space, light, and its own town. To build the BRÜCKENSTADT, engineers simply repositioned the mechanical and ventilation centers that already punctuate the concourse every 160 meters to be the cores of the new towers. The bridges, which provide space for parks, athletics, industry and interior vertical farming, link the towers.

The domestic was not. Given the need for solidarity in a population of so many sundered from family or traditional domestic units, housing consists of collectives of 24 to 72 bedrooms, with enough space for temporary guests in bunk rooms. Altogether, the collectives are able to house an initial population of 23,800 to 30,800. Each of the 350 collectives operate according to their own rules, and representatives of the collectives meet to decide matters regarding the administration of the city as a whole.

In the transnational world of BRÜCKENSTADT DTW and its peer settlements, the class of the hyper-mobile and hyper-connected expanded to include not just those at the pinnacle of the nation state, but those rejected by nations altogether. Together, they began to forge something entirely new.



Book Club

To construct their elaborate imaginings of future worlds, authors of science fiction must design every aspect of their visionary societies: economies, languages, races, kinship structures, and, crucially, architectures. Such fantastical structures are predominantly bound to the written word with one major exception: the cover image of a novel. From the 60s styling of Dean Ellis, to the painterly impressions of James Gurney, on up to the digital realism of Stephan Mariniere, these visual interpretations exist as valid architectural projects in their own right. That being said, there is a caveat. If much smaller, history of science fiction cover illustration that is of particular concern to us as architects: the rare occasions where the dust jacket is graced with a plan, rendering or photograph of an actual architectural project. We have gathered here a small collection of texts whose cover images appropriate the work of architects—some of which are built, some of which are not—were deemed fantastical enough to be drawn into the realm of science fiction we leave for Paprikal's readers to determine.



On The Ground

02/20 (Thursday)
5:13 a.m. 43 students were counted on the 8th floor. Deirdre Plaus celebrates her birthday with an allnighter.

02/21 (Friday)
Bob Stern proclaims the death of post-modernism and encourages students to apply to the Harvard GSD.

02/22 (Saturday)
Serious Office (Miguel M-Arch '19) and Dave M-Arch '19) has been nominated for this year's Pulitzer prize, results announced later in March.

Canadian students shrank into their seats as Pierre Belanger exposed the

Richard DeFlumeri releases caffeine into the air ducts in an effort to #KeepYsowoke

3rd year dual degree M.Arch I's beat the puck out of the 1st year SOM students at the Yale Whale.

"Did she take you to see...?" No? It's taking my chair back." Bob Stern on Elizabeth Moule's (Robert A.M. Stern Visiting Professor) traveling schedule in Rome.

M-E-R-E-L-O-G-O-Y. I don't know how to pronounce it, but it's so hot." Peter Eisenman

country's bloody history and role in creating apartheid models. American students meanwhile looked confused when Belanger revealed, "I haven't had much success in the US with this talk. See, usually imperialists can't see that they are part of an imperialist system..."

This week's Olympics were 6 on 7 themed. Rhea Schmidt was a former Olympian, holding the fastest time for the marathon run in the Swiss Alps. Devin and Varoon fly to Phoenix for the weekend to catch the final curling event.

Students scramble to finish their work samples for the Career Fair. Rumors are OMA are opening an office in New Haven. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown are looking for one lucky student to work on one final house, more details to come.

Paul Wu accidentally dressed up as Catwoman to Black Panther. Wrong hero buddy.

02/23 (Sunday)
Intramural architecture held an informal debate on Jeju Island Restaurant Refurbishment and 168 Upper Street buildings. Andrew (Kim and Miller) quarreled endlessly, punches were thrown, mutual insults hurled.

Daryl Weiner heroically stood up and proclaimed himself a devout Mark Foster Gage cultist.

02/24 (Monday)
The William Henry Bishop Visiting Professor, Julie Eisenberg delivers the lecture "Urban Hallucinations" followed by a reception on the second floor. Gallery director Andrew Berner conceals the "Melbourne Mule," named after the donkey he owned in Australia for 18 years.

02/25 (Tuesday)
Matthew Liu, Katie Lau and Deo Desjarne dominate the structures venerated by exceeding 240 lb. of bricks.

YSDA Career Services holds the panel discussion "Perspective on Practice" featuring recent alumni, Daisy Ames, Brandt Knapp and Emmet Zeitman.

Walgreens Story —Matthew Wagstaffe

Nothing could be more remarkable than seeing someone who thinks himself unobserved engaged in some quite simple everyday activity. Let's imagine a theatre, the curtain goes up & we see someone alone in his room walking up and down, lighting a cigarette seating himself etc. so that suddenly we are observing a human being from outside in a way that ordinarily we can never observe ourselves; as if we were watching a chapter from a biography of our own eyes,—surely this would be at once uncanny and wonderful. More wonderful than anything a playwright could cause to be acted or spoken on the stage. We should be seeing life itself.—But then we do see this every day & it makes not the slightest impression on us!

—Wittgenstein, *Culture And Value*

It is 2009, and Gordon Adamson is presenting his work for critique. Rather than exhibit a sculpture in a white space, he instead gathers his peers on a balcony and directs their attention to a distantly visible section of Chapel Street. He pulls out a small video camera and begins recording. A minute or two passes in which nothing much occurs but the quotidian activities of any city street: a car dropping off a passenger, a bicyclist journeying home, pedestrians walking by. Suddenly, he announces that he's "got it" and that the discussion of his work can begin.

For the first thirty minutes of every review, the artist in question is not allowed to speak. This silence is doing Adamson no favors. In the absence of an explanation, his gnomic performance has left his classmates in a state of agitation. Some are intrigued, but most are downright resentful. They see the work as a prank at the expense of himself and a clerk at Walgreens. He's used the conventions of the critique format to trick them into waiting for an artwork that never arrives. Worse, they accuse him of being a phony urban poet trying to elevate the nothingness of a Tuesday in New Haven at 6pm to the heights of some zen bullshitt. Charlatan. Faux-mystic. The critique is not going well.

Finally, Adamson's enforced silence ends and he explains himself. Earlier that day, he'd asked to borrow a fellow sculptor's shoes for an artwork. He'd then conscripted a friend from outside the department to wear the shoes, and walk down

that particular section of Chapel Street during at that particular time. The swapping of the shoes, he continues, was to judge her stroll ever so slightly into the realm of the theatrical: she walked not as herself, but as she imagined the owner of the shoes would have walked. It was a performance of such minor fictionality that no one noticed, not his professors, not his peers, not the other pedestrians on Chapel Street, maybe even Adamson himself wouldn't have noticed, had he not organized the entire thing.

His critics are not appeased, though some are clearly affected by the story. "Jezz," the original owner of the footwear says, "I thought you wanted my shoes to make, like, a sculpture or something..."

Later that semester Adamson becomes obsessed with a clerk at Walgreens, or, rather, becomes obsessed with the gap between himself and a clerk at Walgreens. The clerk in question performs her job with an insouciant calm that suggests that the world of low-wage retail is in no way new or remarkable to her. It is this particular quality that has spurred Adamson's obsession, the difference between his background world and hers, the fact that what to him is completely alien, she doesn't even notice at all.

He begins going to Walgreens far too often, purchasing things he does not need: out-of-season Easter candy, chewable vitamins, a locker mirror, a third, fourth, fifth stick of deodorant. He doesn't talk to her

outside of the obligatory "thanks" and "no I don't need a bag." He tries not to leer, but cannot help admiring how she goes about her work. In particular, he finds that the way she bags customers' products—quickly but with no urgency, and completely lacking in any curiosity about what is being purchased—rivals, in economy and grace, the movements of all but the greatest of dancers.

His work stumbles into strange territory. He orders plastic retail bags and a bag holder stand from ULINE, and builds a rudimentary approximation of a Walgreens checkout counter. For hours he practices taking a bag off the stand, putting items in it and handing them to an imagined customer, hoping that, through muscle memory, he will be able to achieve some approximation of her uncaring elegance.

He asks the manager at Walgreens if they would ever consider lending him footage from the store's security camera, "for an artwork." The manager, suspicious, declines, but Adamson is able to pry useful information from him: the type of camera they use, how frequently they re-record over the tapes. The manager, suspicious, declines, but Adamson is able to pry useful information from him: the type of camera they use, how frequently they re-record over the tapes. The manager, suspicious, declines, but Adamson is able to pry useful information from him: the type of camera they use, how frequently they re-record over the tapes.

He needs greater accuracy. He lingers around the store for hours, trying to take note of the general rhythms of her day: how many customers go through her stall per hour, what time of day are her moments of idleness, the frequency of her bathroom breaks. He tries to understand the psychology of the space, he wants to know what it would be like to spend all your hours under its fluorescent lights and stained acoustic ceiling tiles. He is like a painter trying to capture the light of a brilliant sunset, the glimmer of dew on the morning grass.

For his thesis he presents, on grainy monitors without sound, eight hours of video footage of himself bagging items or sitting around listlessly or going offscreen, presumably on a lunch or bathroom break. His review does not go well. He is accused of misogy, class colonialism, pretentiousness. Adamson is unfazed. Upon graduating he moves to Hamden and begins working the evening shift at the local Walgreens. The counter is different than the one he had designed, it is slightly higher and its proportions are off, but soon he gets used to it.

Drive to the Walgreens in Hamden. You will see him there. His hair is grown out, and he wears lipstuck, eyeshadow, and layers of blush, thickly caked on. If you don't know it's him, he looks just like any other Walgreens employee. He bags items beautifully.

He begins going to Walgreens far too often, purchasing things he does not need: out-of-season Easter candy, chewable vitamins, a locker mirror, a third, fourth, fifth stick of deodorant. He doesn't talk to her

Advanced Design Studio On Island

Course: 1198
Design and Visualization
Spring 2018

Coordinating Faculty:
Harris Steven with
Michael Robinson Cohen

Theme
The island is a recurring concept in both architectural theory and history. Oswald Mathias Ungers and his student Rem Koolhaas famously invoked the island figure in their 1977 analysis of Berlin. The City in the City - Berlin: A Green Archipelago. The archipelago as a collection of islands is further evoked in the polycentric city advanced in the writing and design work of Elia Zenghelis. Recently, In The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture, Pier Vittorio Auerli also turns to the archipelago as a cipher to unveil the political nature of form in the historical projects of Palladio, Piranesi, and Boullée. Additionally, the journal Sam Rocco dedicated an entire issue to "Islands," emphasizing the "intimately alternative" quality of architectural islands. Despite the recurrence of this theme, the island largely remains an abstract concept, unrealized in built form. Architects lose sight of the island, as they engage in self-referential rhetoric and fetishize architectural autonomy.

This studio, however, will focus on the one island that Architects have successfully produced in built form: THE KITCHEN ISLAND. As an essential element of any residential project, especially in luxury real estate, the Kitchen Island is now an established archetype in the repertoire of architectural production. Further, architects have garnered an extensive disciplinary knowledge about the materiality, form, and functional details of the Kitchen Island. Undoubtedly, Frank Lloyd Wright would recognize the Kitchen Island as the "heart" of contemporary domestic space.

Research
In the initial weeks of the studio, students will conduct exhaustive precedent research with the intention of establishing a typological index of Kitchen Islands. From the waterfall edge to the under counter wine refrigerator, the studio will collectively catalog the formal and material lexicon that establishes a fundamental conception of the Kitchen Island in the public imaginary. *Architectural Digest* will be placed on reserve in the library for reference. Research will be updated on Pinterest on a weekly basis and presented during the midterm.

Travel
During the travel week students will literally go "on island" to the Hamptons—to research.

Page 1 of 3

Myst —Cameron Nelson

The first time I played *Myst*, I stayed in my room all day, from the opening scene until it was solved. Created in 1993 by brothers Rand and Robyn Miller, *Myst* quickly became the best-selling computer game of all time, a title it held as late as 2002. The novel video game combined a graphic adventure puzzle with a first-person journey through an interactive world. While *Myst* was widely lauded for its immersive realism, there was more at stake than pushing the limits of the then nascent CD-ROM. The game the Miller brothers created reminds us that fiction is story.

There was a narrative to the game, and archetypal elements of its story, to be sure. There was the trope of the long-lost civilization in the form of the D'ni, whose unique alphabet is even included in the online language encyclopedia Omniglot. You, the player, gradually developed a vague sense of a mission and, upon encountering the characters Sirrus and Achenar, you had to make a torturous choice: Both are sons of Atrus. Both are imprisoned. Each swears he is good and the other is wicked, and beseeches you to free him. Whom will you choose? But the resemblance to most stories ceases here. The 3D rendered world slowly reveals that Sirrus and Achenar aren't really there; their prisons are books.

Despite the presence of these texts, I see why *Myst* took the form of a point-and-click puzzle game and not a novel. How could the Miller brothers ever have been satisfied

P. So it's usually you and the screenwriter talking it over? Or the director, or ...?

T. Well in the best situations, yeah. But most of the time, to be honest, I'll work with the production designer. You know, that has its reward too, though. They're pretty good people. Impressive lot. I've always been in awe of their work. It's like they'll take this character who only exists on the page—here's this guy, a down-and-out criminal, trying to do one last job before he retires—and they'll find his apartment, and oh man, they'll find a room that gets the details just right, right down to the stains on the ceiling and the upholstery on his couch. Location scouts, though, they don't know jack about how a building works [laughs]. Seriously, it's like their brain short-circuits. They're great at feel, but practically, no so much. But they'll listen to me. They realize that sometimes making it more realistic makes it play better. One time I was working on this picture *Lockdown*, a sorta *Die Hard* rip-off, and it called for the hero to sneak up on a guy in the boiler room. The scout wanted this tiny, grimy little room for this massive office tower. No way, I said, a building this class would have all new fixtures, it would be dark, there'd be fluorescent lights that all the maintenance guys hate. How about that, a scene where it's hard to hide in a dark corner? Now that's interesting.

P. What's been your best experience working on a movie?

T. Working with De Palma. Hands down. I was a consultant on the first *Mission: Impossible*, and oh man, planning the break-in scene, the one at Langley, that was really something. Now De Palma, he gets it right. He knew to get everyone on board at the same time; when they were re-working the script, he got me, the production designer and the stunt coordinator all together and we just rapped for a bit, trying to figure out how this thing would really go down. Now I'd done the renovation of the FBI building on Wilshire Boulevard, so I knew a bit of the security stuff, but De Palma and the stunt guy, they grilled me: would this duct work, how big is the air intake fan gonna be, are there really lasers, all that stuff. They wanted to get everything right. He's very thorough. I'll swear by the end of the whole process De Palma coulda come and worked out firm, he asked me so many questions. [laughs] But you know what, he got it right. You believe that scene.

P. And your worst experience?

T. Oh gosh, well in the beginning I'd take whatever job came my way, just for the novelty of it. And cause I only got the Republic titles in the beginning ... oof. I remember once consulting on this teen comedy, a guy trying to peep on the girl's locker room gets stuck in the air duct ... that was probably a low moment. But now, I only will take a gig I believe in, and ideally, like the *Mission: Impossible*, one where I get to look at the plans and really consult, like I'd do on my actual job, and talk to the stunt guy and the whole deal. Cause life's too short, you know.

P. How does it compare, your actual work as a mechanical consultant versus your work consulting for a film?

T. The movie stuff, it's not too different from working on a building actually. Except all the priorities are reversed. When you're doing a building, all the MEP stuff, it's like a chore, or something they want to stick in the background, it has to be invisible. How big is the air handling unit? And do we need a direct exhaust to the outside? Where can we put that? Let's hide it away, put it in the basement, by the fire stair, in the drop ceiling, wherever, just so long as it doesn't get in the way of the architecture. But when you're working on a heist movie, that stuff is all front and center. A guy's trying to break into a place, he'll know exactly that a 12 inch duct is gonna have a 12 inch elbow with a few inches and change till the vane, which means he's looking at a 24 inch drop ceiling minimum, and he'll know if it's a strong enough for him to crawl through, where he'll hit a structural wall, if there'll ever be a wet wall wide enough for him to shimmy up in, all that stuff.

I mean that stuff's always there, you look around any building, you start to notice it. I work with those things every day. But it's only in these movies—the heists, the prison breaks—that the rest of the world pays attention. Cause who spends time in mechanical rooms? Engineers, maintenance guys. And action heroes. People stealing from banks or trying to catch Hans Gruber. That's pretty much it. Me and John McClane, we're in the same business is what I'm trying to say I guess [laughs]. It ain't too bad a business to be in.

islands. Traveling out east by antique Porsche, each student will weekend in the beach home of a Harris Steven client. This visit will be used to observe and document the rituals around the Kitchen Island within the single-family residence. Students will confound the island of the everyday routine and lifestyle a Kitchen Island defines. Students will confront the island at the scale of territory and domestic structure, as a True Life signifier. Documentation will be done through Instagram and the quantity of likes received will factor into each student's final evaluation. Throughout the semester additional trips will be made to vacation islands along the northeast seaboard. Acquaintance with such destinations—Shelter Island, Fishers Island, Block Island, Fire Island and Martha's Vineyard—is vital to professional practice and students will potentially be introduced to future clientele, although all work conducted in the studio will remain the property of Yale University.

Fabrication
For the final review, each student will develop a complete set of construction documents and will fabricate a full-scale prototype of their Kitchen Island. Due to generous corporate sponsorships by Wolf, Dornbracht and Subzero students will have the opportunity to incorporate real appliances into their mock-up. Notable figures from across the spectrum of New York high-end residential practices will participate in the final review and will potentially award summer internships.

Practice
Due to the professional focus of this studio, NCARB has agreed to reward students AXP hours for their work throughout the semester. Additional hours will be rewarded if students design a contextually appropriate and tasteful bathroom.

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According to *Myst* lore, the D'ni, an ancient, semi-mythical civilization, mastered the art of writing "linking books" that could connect their readers to "endless ages." In the world of *Myst*, the term "ages" is synonymous with "other worlds." Reading one of these "linking books" transports you to a different age. Ages become the fundamental building block of the game's reality. The books are typically worn hardbacks with evocative spines, but no more than their first page is ever revealed. This first page invariably contains a picture of the book's destination, usually a one point perspective in the style of an architectural rendering (minus the shadowy scale figures). The game never depicts the act of reading; instead, after a whooshing sound, a mysterious maraca shake, and the brief interlude of a loading screen, you've suddenly arrived. We are left to wonder at the mechanism the D'ni discovered. Was it some incantation or other alchemy that enabled the construction of these portals? A glowing ring or wormhole? No, these were emphatically linking books, and we should assume they were written. Were the descriptive powers of the D'ni so fine-tuned that they could conjure a world in its corporeal entirety just by writing about it? Maybe, as per the fantastical Sapir-Whorf thesis popularized in the film *Arrival*, the grammatical structure of the language transports a reader into another reality? Or is the link achieved outside of language, and only tangentially accessed thereby?

with publishing a book when the story they are telling is one of a civilization whose primary resource is a written art that transcends all books? It would almost be a farce. Too many authors have tortured themselves over the inadequate reality of the worlds they create with language. Even in the most elaborate of world-building novels, there is always incorporeality; there is always some curation.

The Miller brothers, it must be admitted, couldn't achieve an infinitely detailed world either. Instead, they deployed a surreal, mysterious atmosphere to suggest a complete reality. Their signature environments are depopulated islands floating elusively in an apparently endless sea of fog (or poché). Though you see no one, there is a constant suggestion that others may have been there before you. It's easy to accept the island's isolated observatories, towers, libraries and citadels as having a history. Undoubtedly some of this mysterious sparseness is due to a negotiation between style and technological limits. It was 1993 after all. *Myst*'s evocative island is really a vessel for the much more powerful idea that a world can be written down. A beautiful vessel indeed, but so are many stories. Fiction has the power to suggest it is more powerful than it is; maybe this is the secret weapon of the untrue.

Despite the presence of these texts, I see why *Myst* took the form of a point-and-click puzzle game and not a novel. How could the Miller brothers ever have been satisfied

Four Cautionary Tales of Prison Architecture —Gus Steyer

First Prison Second Life Facility

The prison is a simple box full of ergonomic chairs that carry inmates in hospital gowns. There is enough space in this box for each inmate to be moved around in an exercise routine and for the staff to circulate safely. The staff install the residents into their chairs, refill their feeding tubes, and ensure that each chair is working properly. The purpose of the building is merely to keep the residents alive, for they will not spend another waking moment in the real world. After their conviction, each of the residents was deemed permanently unfit for society and sentenced to "identity



upload." Each resident's identity was uploaded to a digital world rated by the American Justice Department as equivalent in every way to the world that we inhabit. Human rights advocates failed to establish any measurable shortcomings of this digital alternative reality. In this new realm, the residents are able to live out their lives in the manner they choose while "lawDabiding" citizens in the real world carry on safely through their sentences, and opt for a "Behavioral Modification Installation."

Second Prison Family Facility



Upon conviction, individuals can forego a prison sentence and opt for a "Behavioral Modification Installation." In this facility, the judge must first determine what infractions each criminal is predisposed to commit. The criminal is then implanted with a chip. The implant lies dormant until it recognizes the neural pattern associated with the actions it was programmed to prevent; in this case, it will send a neural block that prevents the criminally associated synapses from firing. The individual will find him or herself unable to commit the crime. Over time, as that neural circuit goes unused, the pathway will weaken and the individual will become naturally uninterested in his or her predisposed illegal actions.

Though the prison staff only intervene in severe physical altercations, they meticulously document the residents' performance in each of these roles. Through documentation, the staff decide when and if a resident may advance to his role, or if they must be demoted due to poor performance. The architecture of the facility reflects this social structure. Each family has its own tower in which the sleeping chambers are collected around a spiral staircase. At the base of each tower, the family has a small social area. These towers are collected around large dining halls, each of which serve between 15 and 20 families.

This prison does not rely on a facility. Spatial variables only come into play when the inmate's vices consist of some form of trespassing. In this case, the implant may begin to restrict his or her comings and goings on private land and thereby define a new, restricted world.

Third Prison You Choose Facility

The facility is a vast, stepped pyramid funneling into the ground. The total built area of the facility is calculated to accommodate the maximum potential criminal population.



The roof of each layer is fitted with a digitally rendered sky, so as to imitate the world above. Criminals are sorted into each layer based on their own preferences. Upon conviction, individuals are administered the Societal Acceptability Test. The test asks each future resident what he or she considers "acceptable" in society as well as how they would discourage "unacceptable" behavior. Economic results, they are transferred to a layer within the facility where all the inhabitants share their determinations of what is "acceptable." Each group forms an autonomous society with its own laws and set of moral codes. Each layer must somehow generate economic output, but they may do so however they wish, as long as it fits the agreed-upon rules of their society. If a resident later shows that he or she is not suited to his or her new society—the staff monitors the goings on in the prison with a variety of technological equipment—the resident undergoes the test a second time and is reclassified according to his or her new results.

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Fourth Prison Chip Facility

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