



Tomás Saraceno "Cloud-City" NY, 2012



Technische  
Universität  
Braunschweig

Institut für Architektur-  
bezogene Kunst –

Prof. Tomás Saraceno

**Dr. Alan Prohm Ph.D. - Berlin**  
[alanprohm.wordpress.com](http://alanprohm.wordpress.com)

## **An ARCHITECTURAL BODY for the POST-ANTHROPOCENE**

**Dec 12 -Institut für architekturbezogene Kunst, TU  
Braunschweig**



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**Dec 5:** Dr. Alan Prohm artist/  
theorist/concept designer  
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**Alan Prohm**



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## Alan Prohm

- embodiment theory / spatiality
- intermedial arts (lit/art/arch)
- speculative aesthetic practices



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- speculative aesthetic practices

### **Dissertation on Visual/Spatial Poetics**

PhD Stanford Comp Lit 20<sup>th</sup>C. experimental art, lit & design

### **MA teaching & curriculum in Architectural Poetics**

University of Art and Design Helsinki (now Aalto U.)

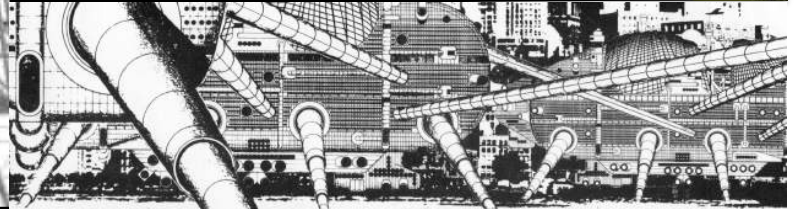
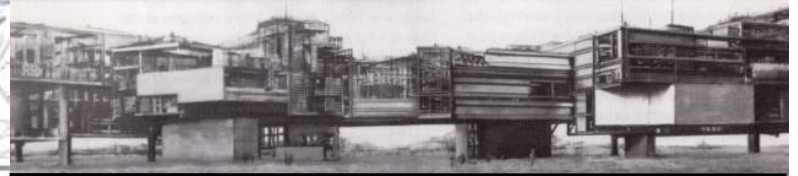
**Berlin - independent research/writing** on embodiment, architecture, avant-garde - **freelance concept design** for digital interactive media



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## an **architectural body** for the post-anthropocene



an **architectural body for the post-anthropocene**

1 - Visionary Engineering – your place in a tradition

...





an **architectural body for the post-anthropocene**

1 - Visionary Engineering – your place in a tradition

2 - How Architecture has its Power – what efficacies are we banking on?

...



an **architectural body for the post-anthropocene**

1 - Visionary Engineering – your place in a tradition

2 - How Architecture has its Power – what efficacies are we banking on?

3 - What the Anthropocene Needs – our urgency

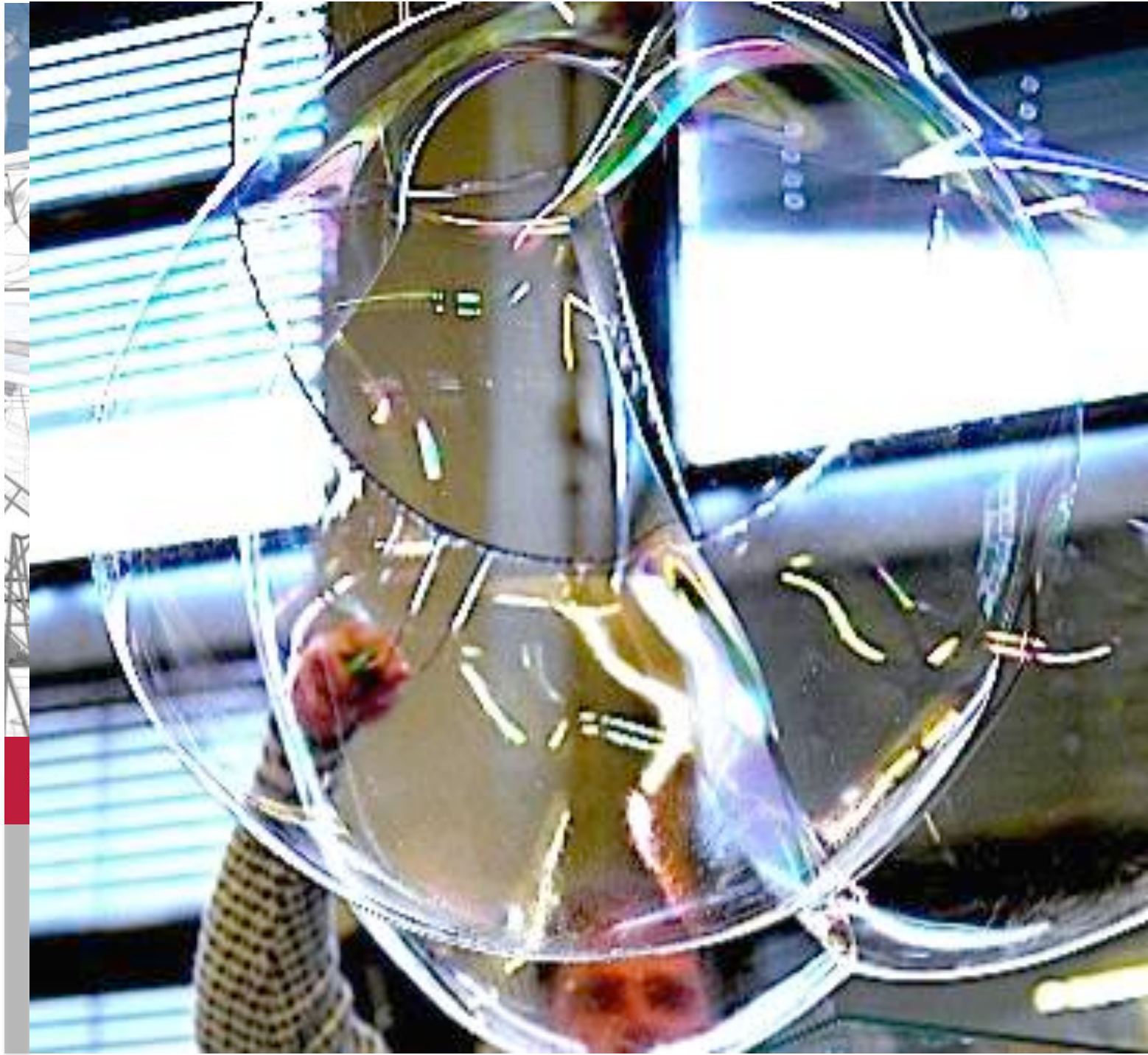
4 - ...

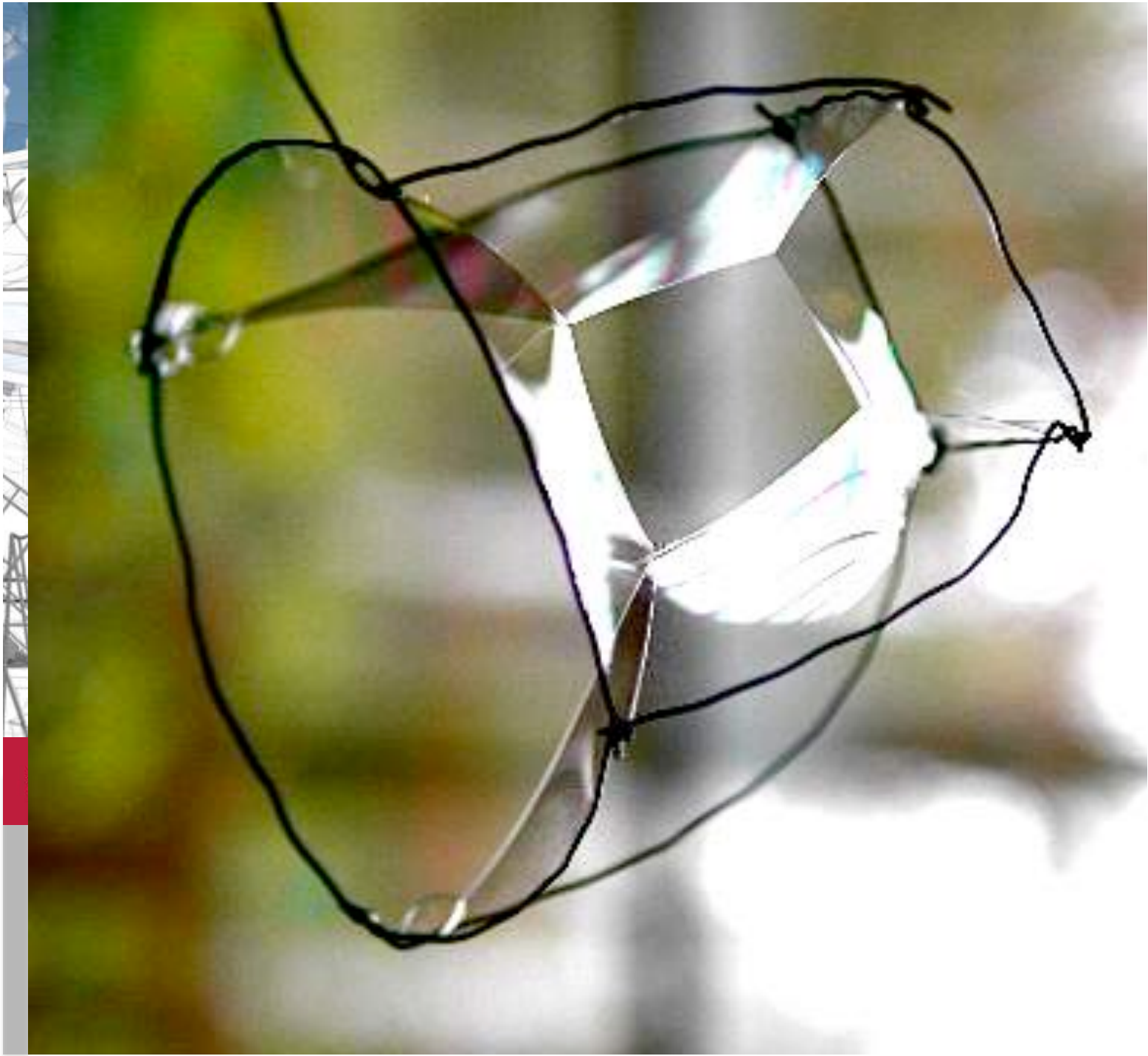


an **architectural body for the post-anthropocene**

- 1 - Visionary Engineering – your place in a tradition
- 2 - How Architecture has its Power – what efficacies are we banking on?
- 3 - What the Anthropocene Needs – our urgency
- 4 - The Architectural Body – build a vision





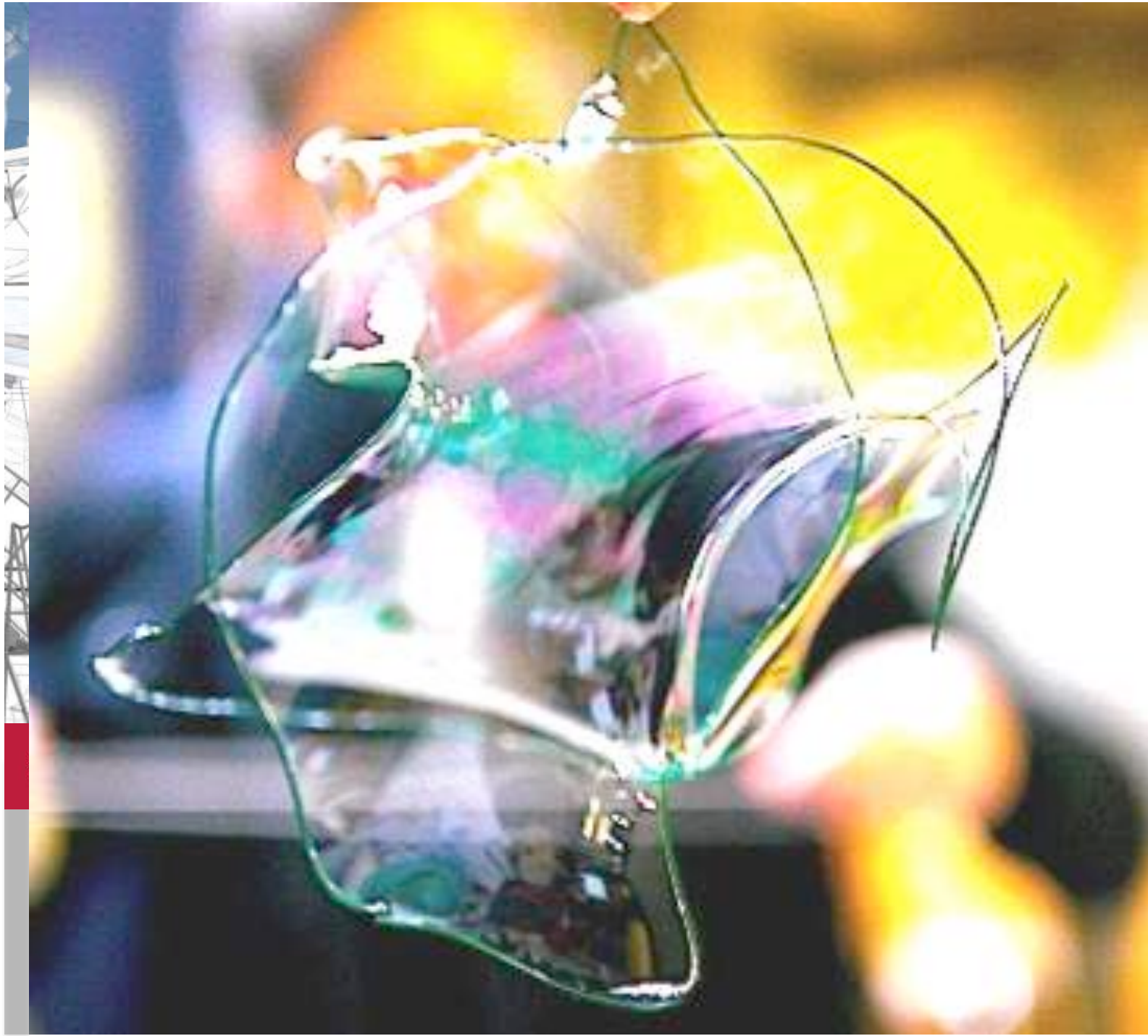


















1

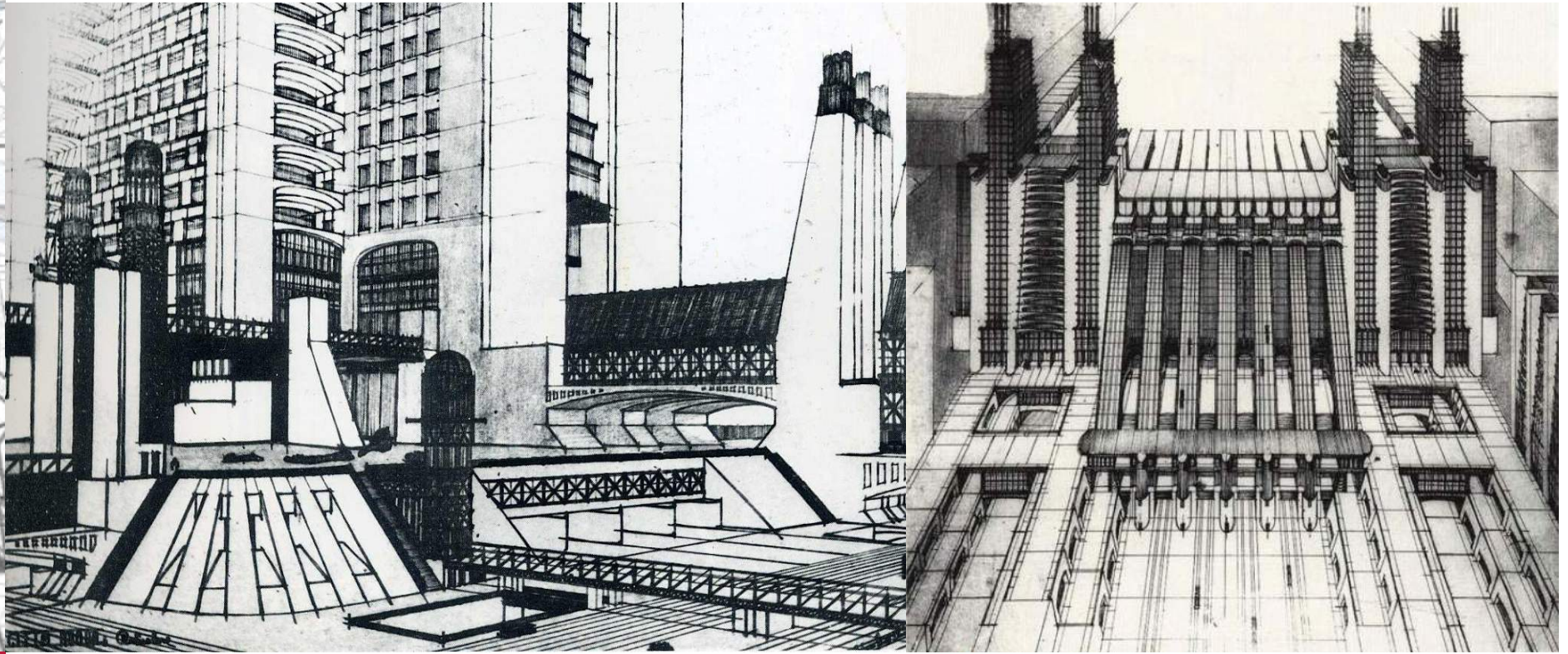


# an **architectural body** for the post-anthropocene

## 1 - Visionary Engineering – your place in a tradition



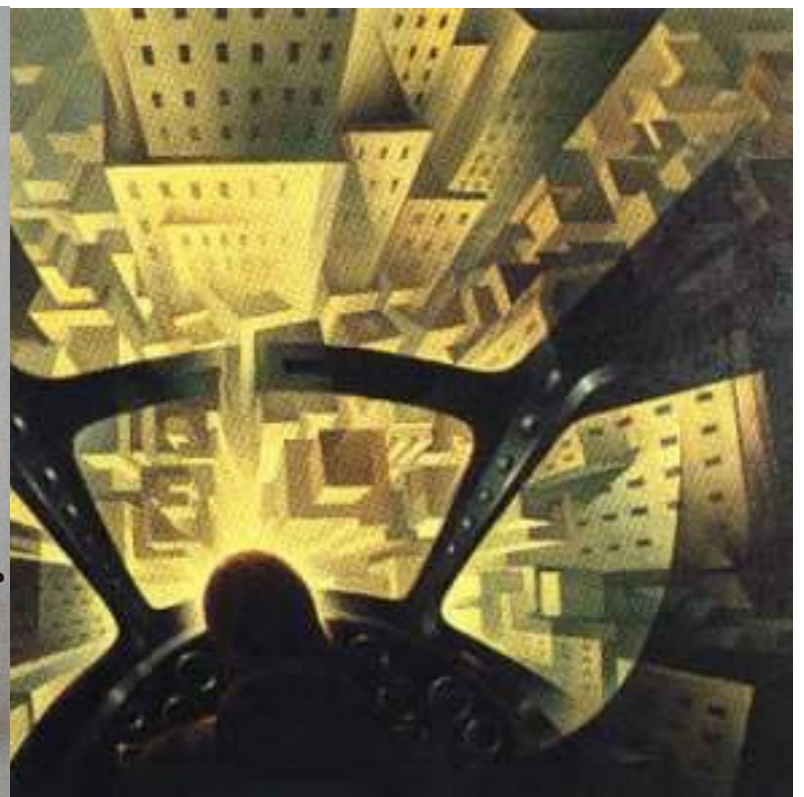
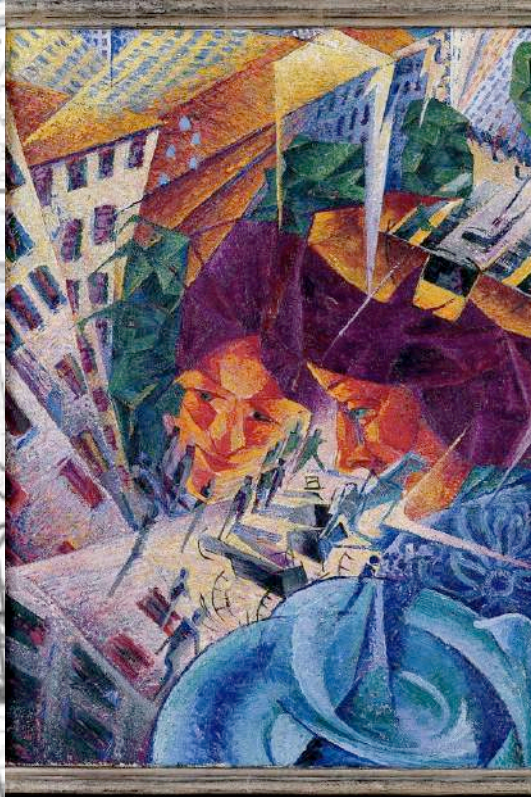
# Visionary engineering - Modernism



**Italian futurism** - Antonio St. Elia, 1914

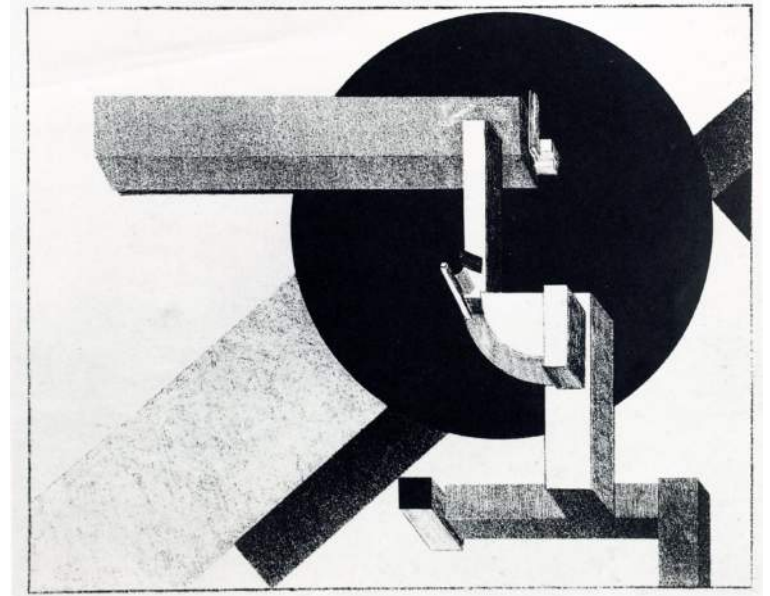
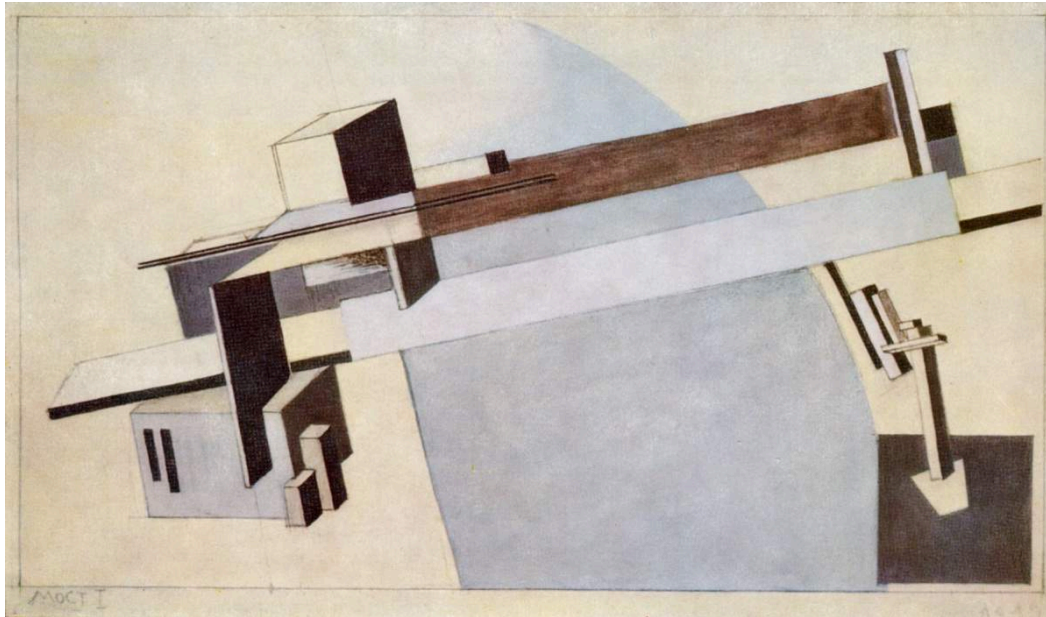


## Visionary engineering - Modernism



**Italian futurism** - Boccioni,

# Visionary engineering - Modernism



**Russian futurism/suprematism** - El Lissitzky, 1910s

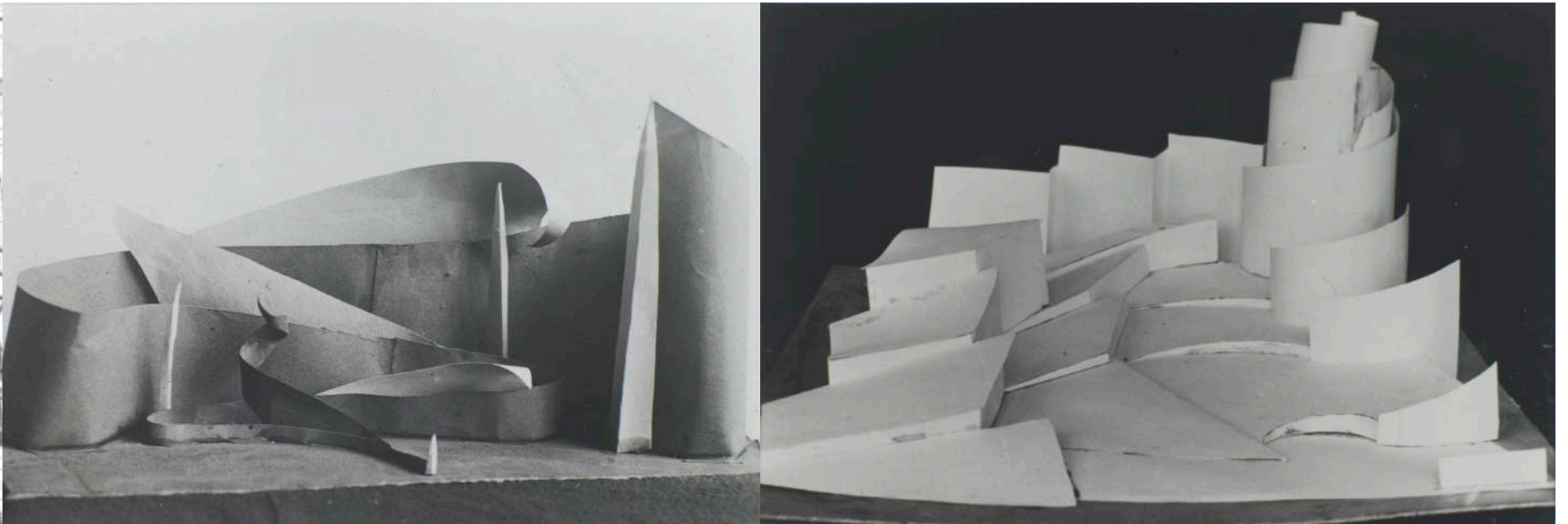


# Visionary engineering - Modernism



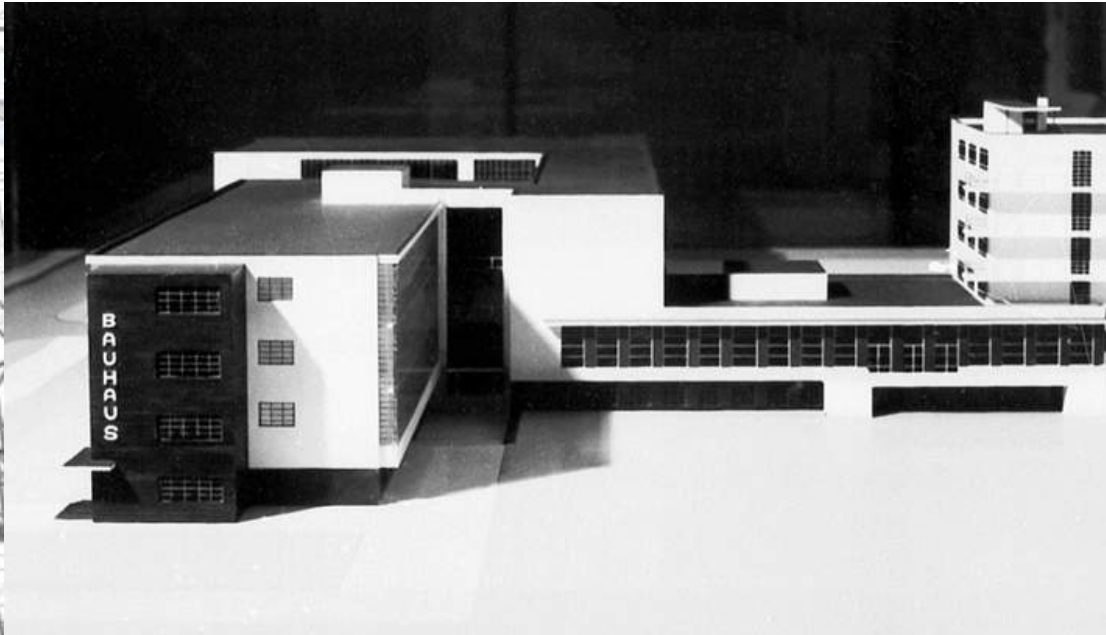
**Russian constructivism/suprematism** - Tatlin, El Lissitzky,  
1910's

## Visionary engineering - Modernism



**Russian constructivism-suprematism** - Vkhutemas, 1920s

# Visionary engineering - Modernism



**German constructivism - rationalism - functionalism -**  
Bauhaus, 1920s

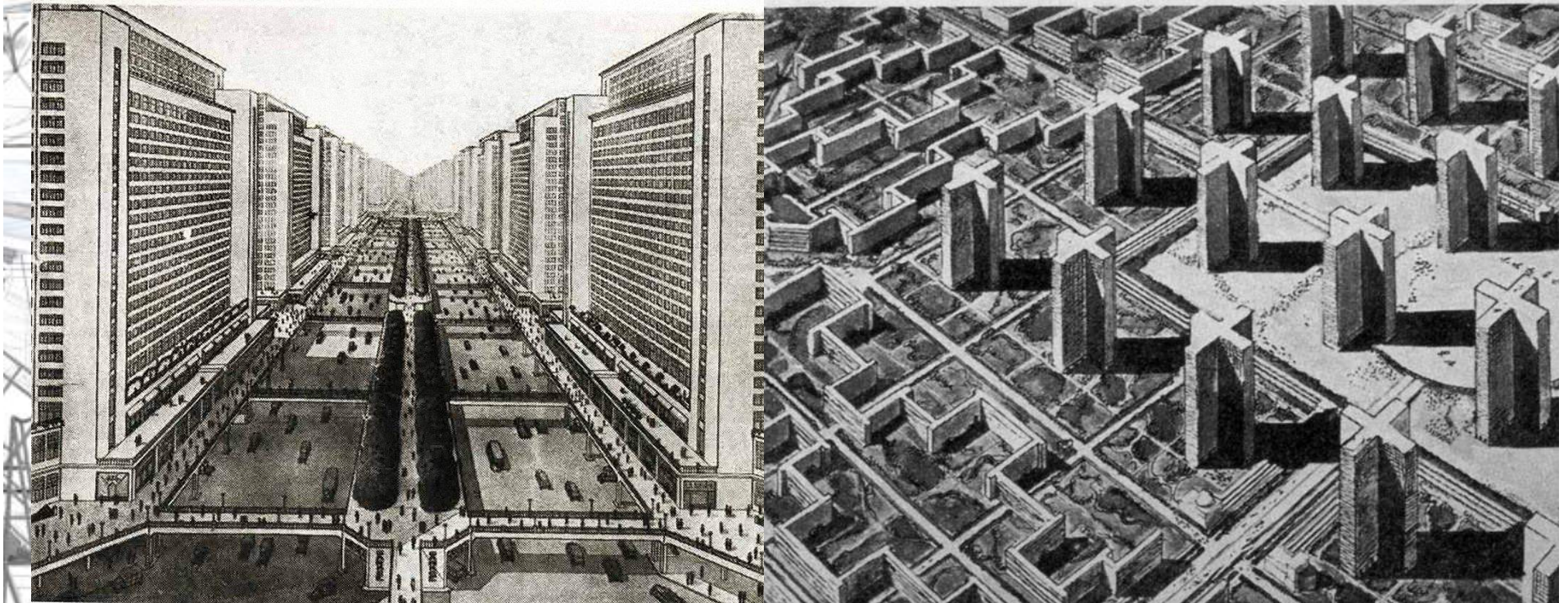




Bauhaus, 1920s - Form-Finding, w/ Joseph Albers



# Visionary engineering - Modernism



## European functionalism - International Style

LeCorbusier 1910s - 1950s



## Visionary engineering - Modernism



### **American business modernism - International Style**

The cycle LeCorbusier, Mies van der Rohe, OSM - 1910s-50s

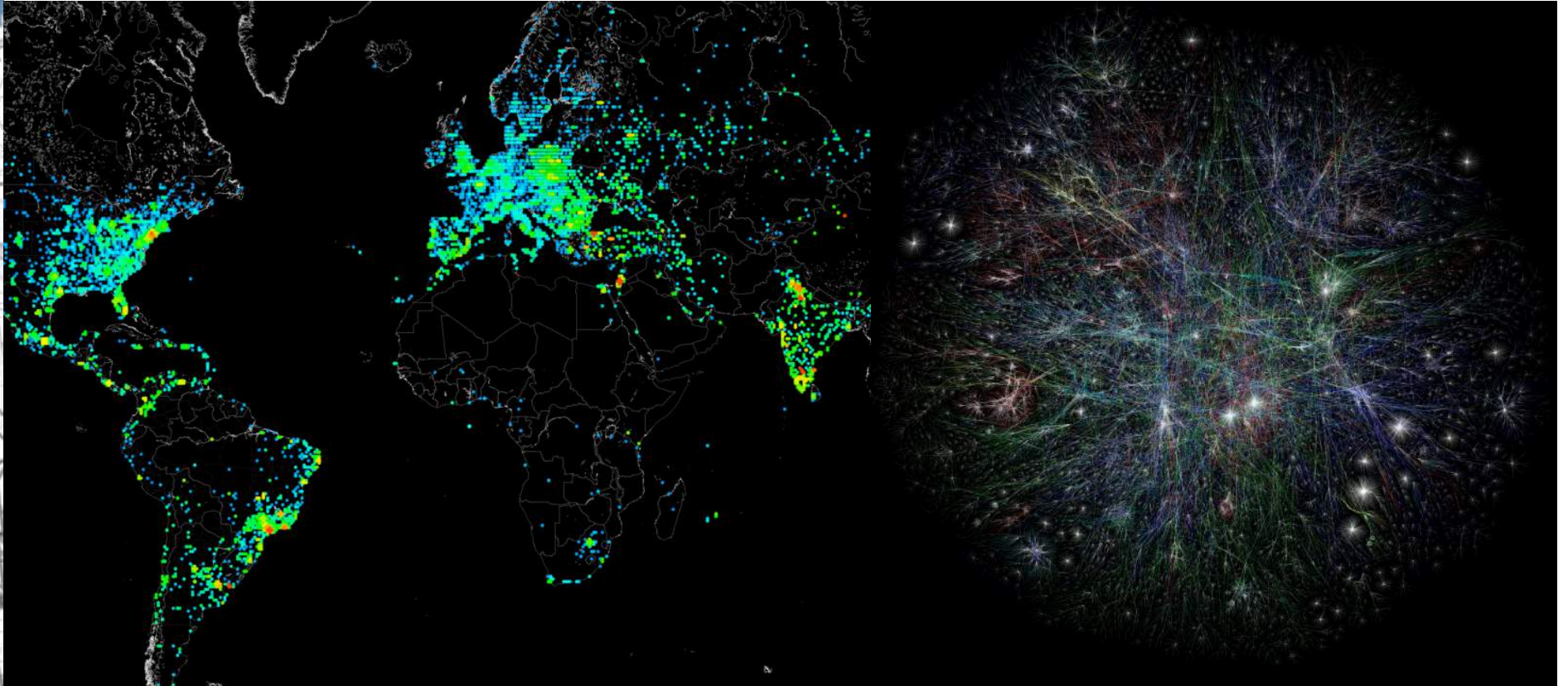


# Visionary engineering - Hyper-Modernism



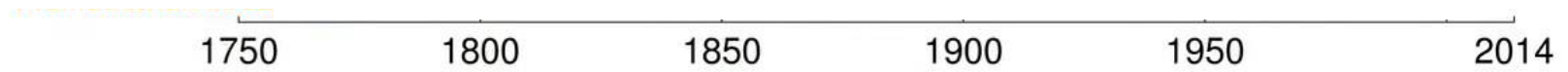
**Global business post-modernism - Transnational Style**

## **Visionary engineering - Hyper-Modernism**



**Global network infrastructure - The Internet**

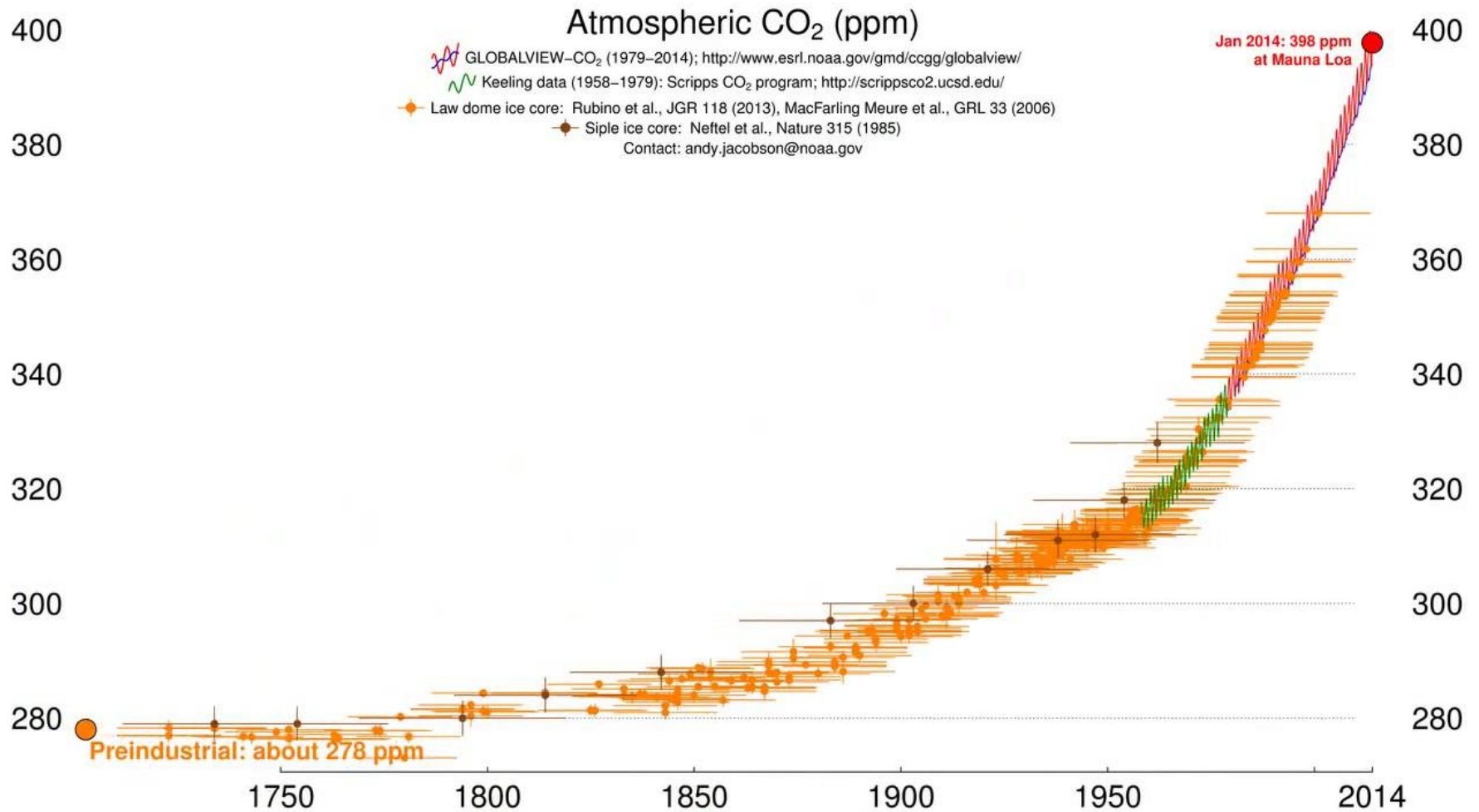
# Visionary engineering - in hindsight



**Modernism =**



# Visionary engineering - in hindsight



**Modernism => the Anthropocene**



# **Visionary engineering - Beyond Modernism**

**. . . alternatives?**





# 2

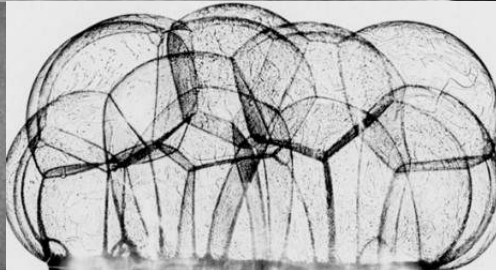
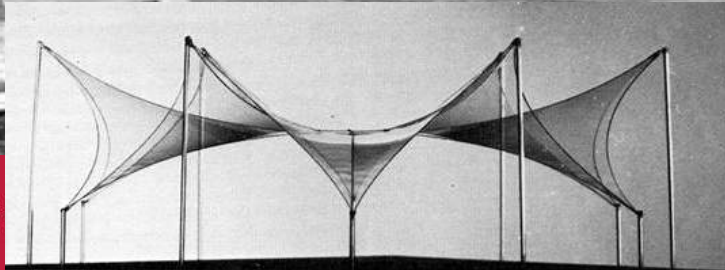
## Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Frei Otto** - Leichtbau/Lightweight structures, 1950s-60s



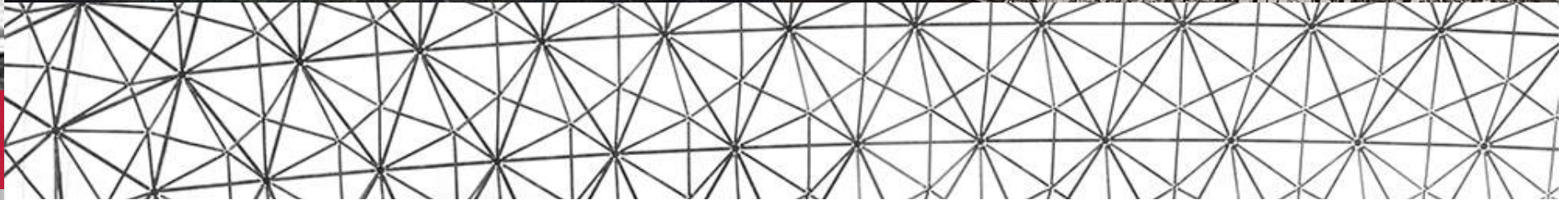
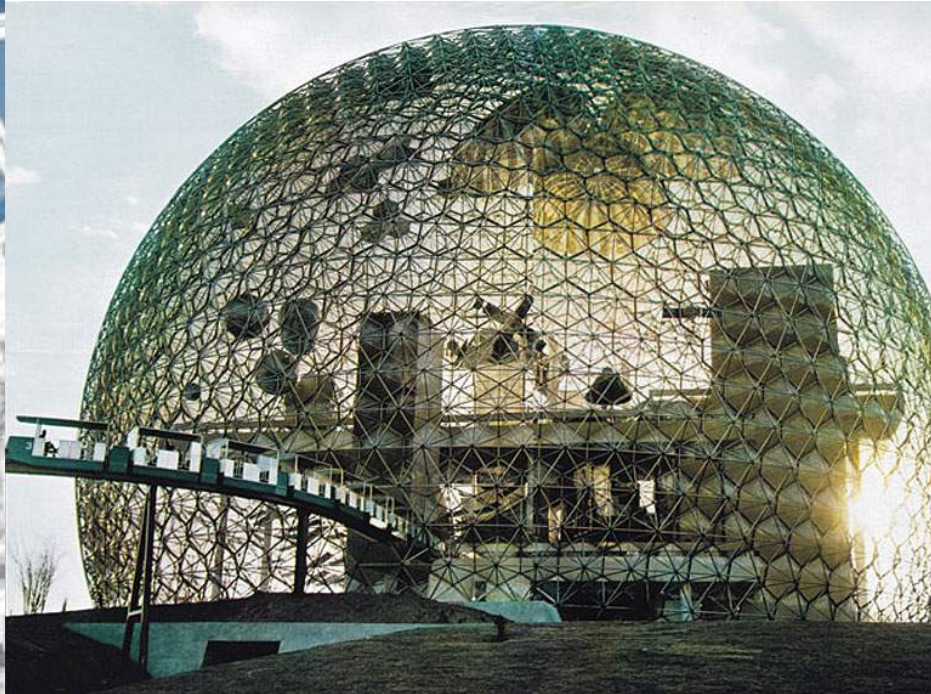
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**Frei Otto** - Leichtbau/Lightweight structures, 1950s-60s



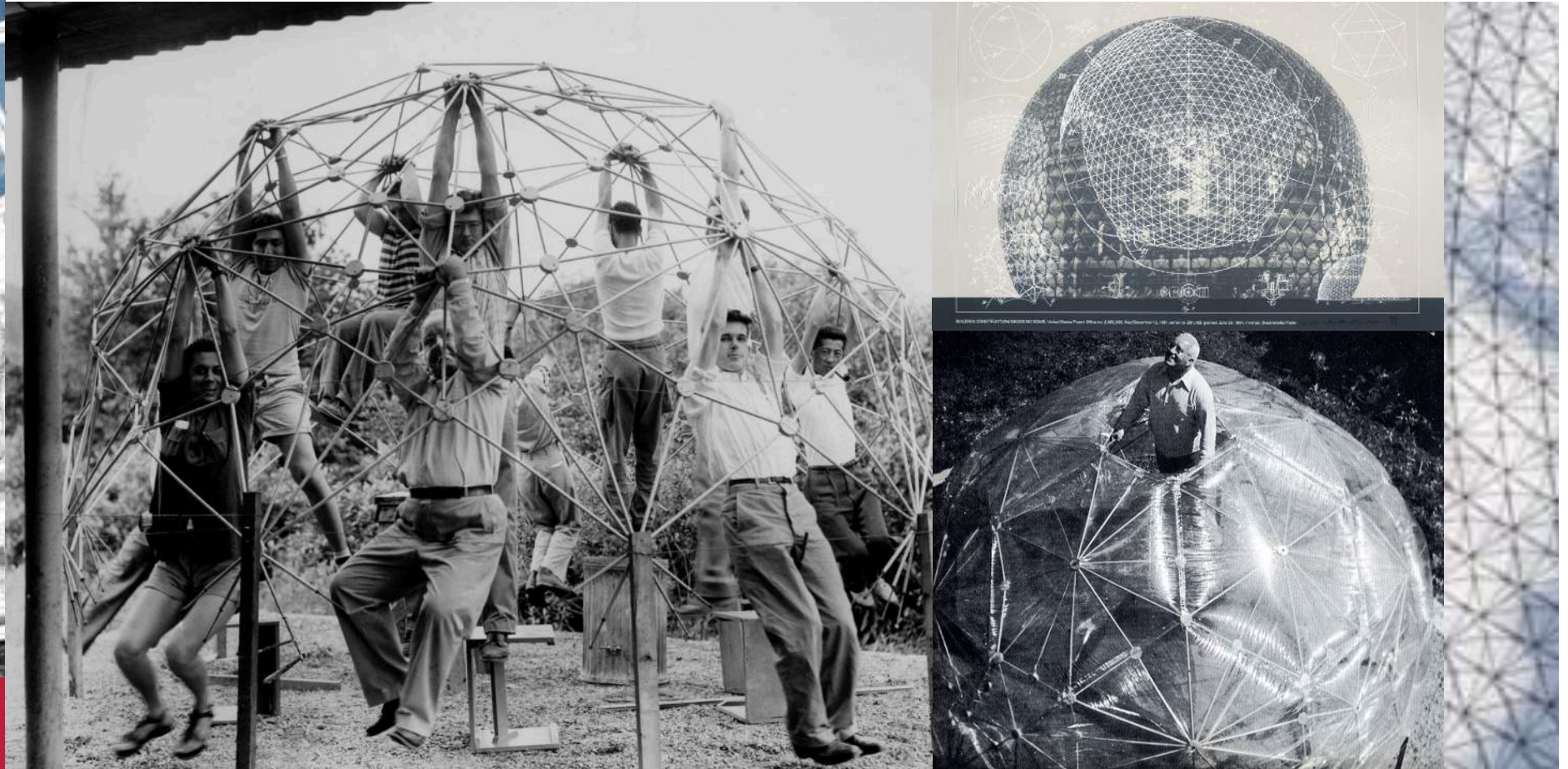
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Buckminster Fuller** - The geodesic dome



# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Buckminster Fuller** - and students at Black Mountain College



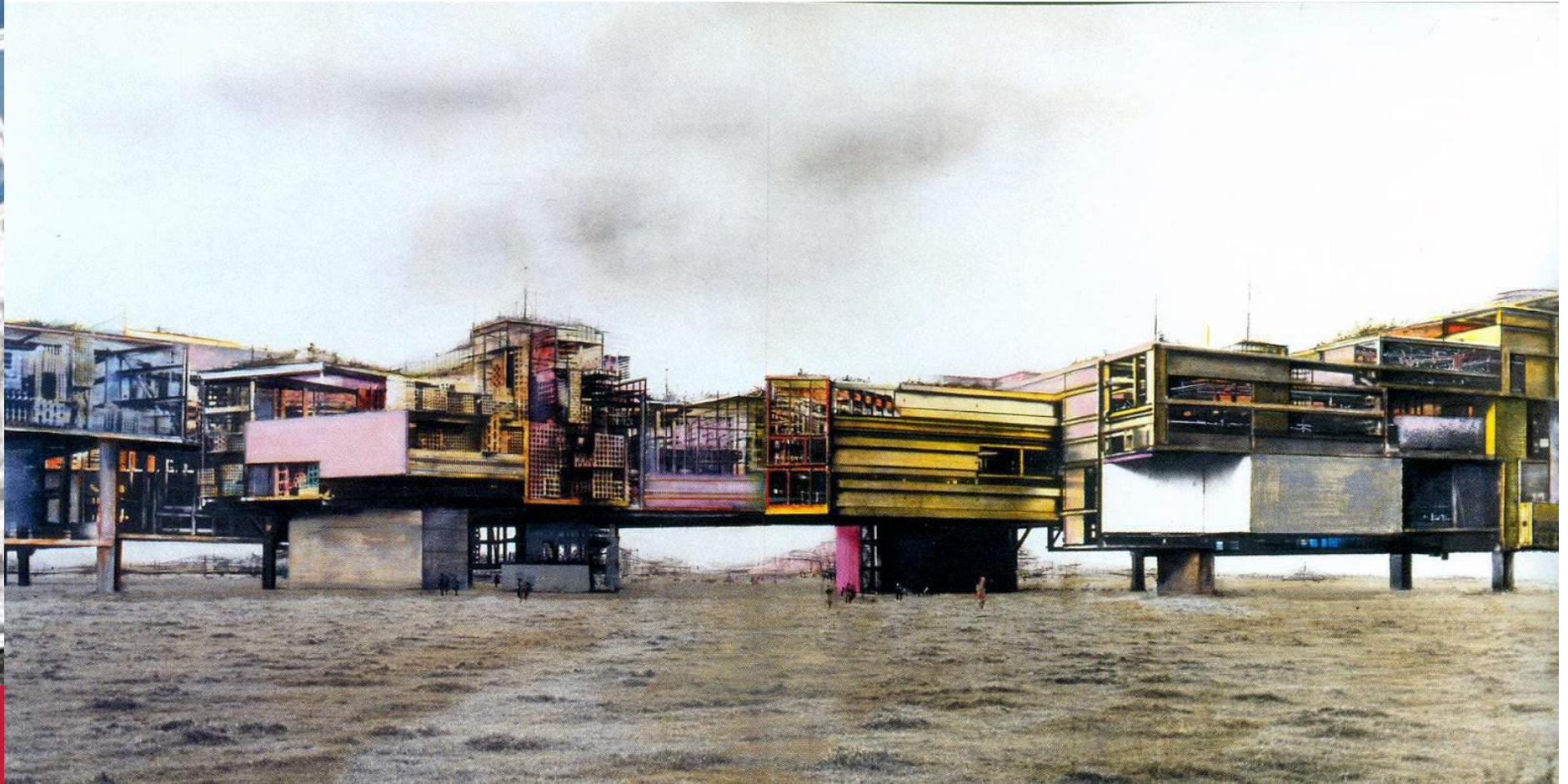
## Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



based on **Buckminster Fuller** - The Eden Project, Cornwall,  
Anthony Hunt Associates, 1998-2001



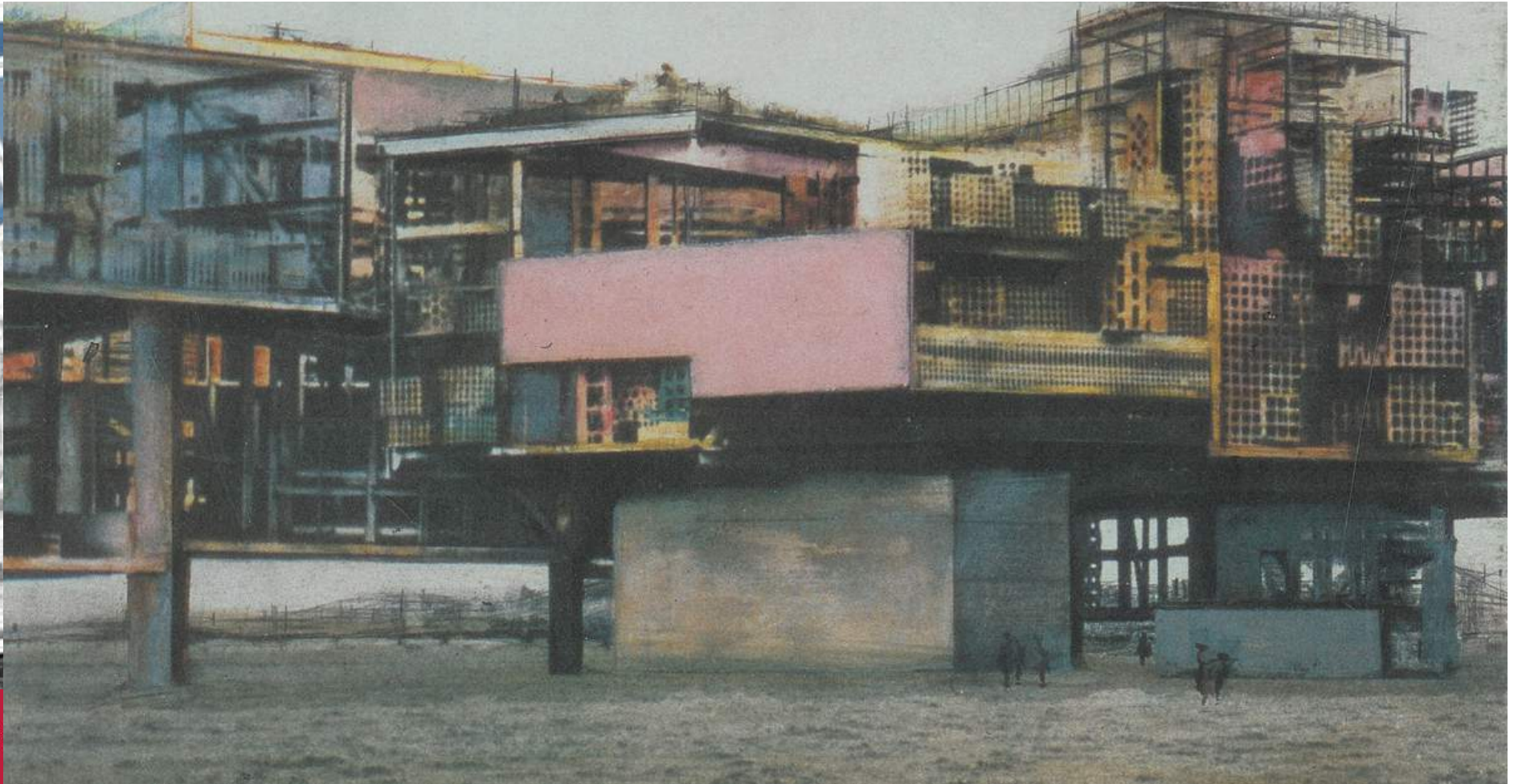
## Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Constant (Constant Nieuwenhuys) - New Babylon, 1950s**



## Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Constant** - New Babylon, 1950s

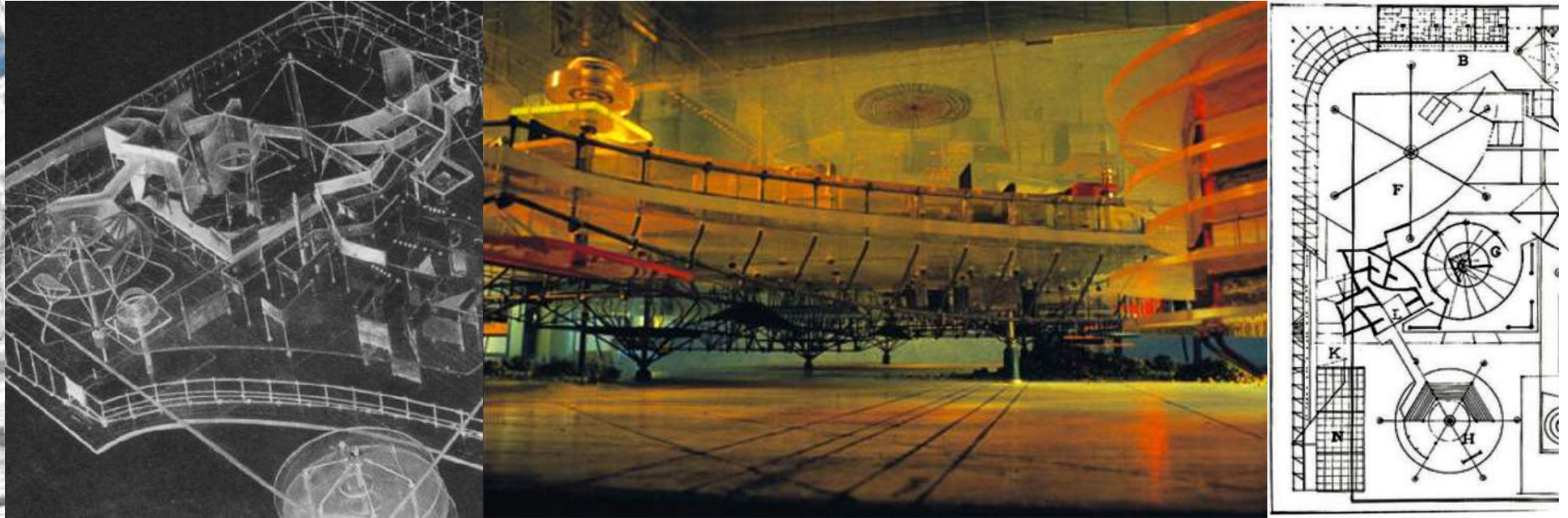


# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Constant** - ladder mazes / Leiter-Labyrinth

# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Constant** - New Babylon, an architecture of situations  
The Yellow Sector

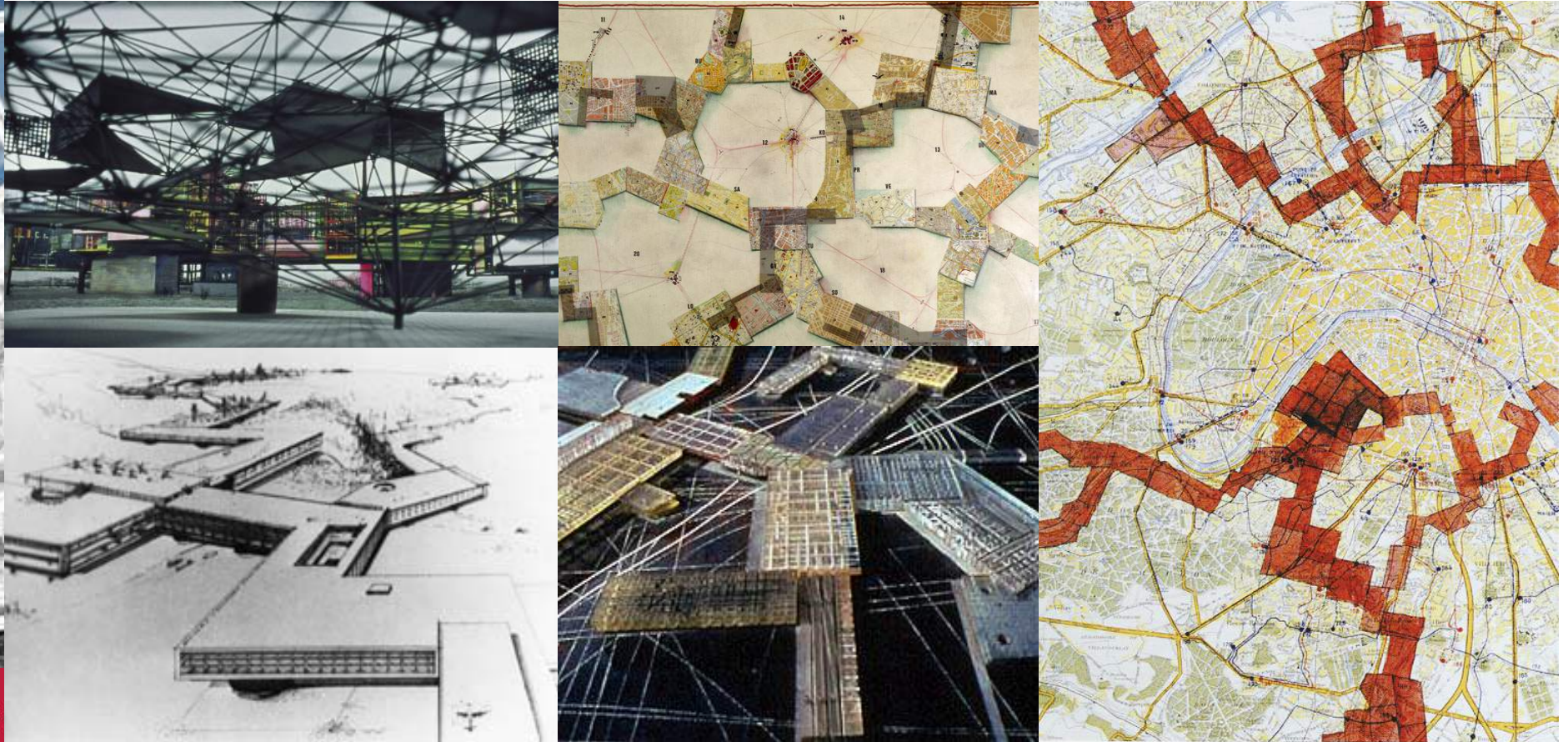




**Constant** - New Babylon



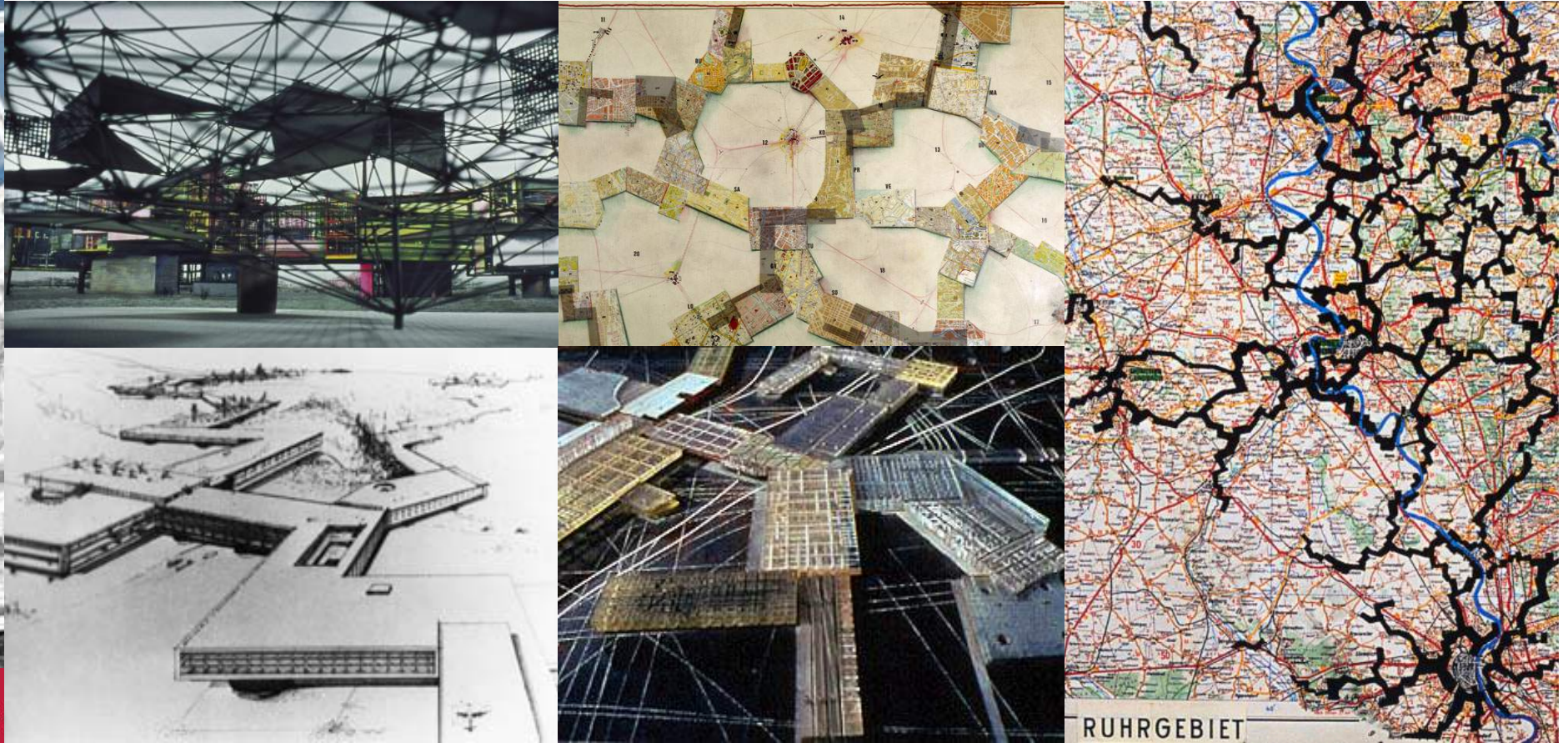
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Constant** - New Babylon, a Situationist city, 1950s



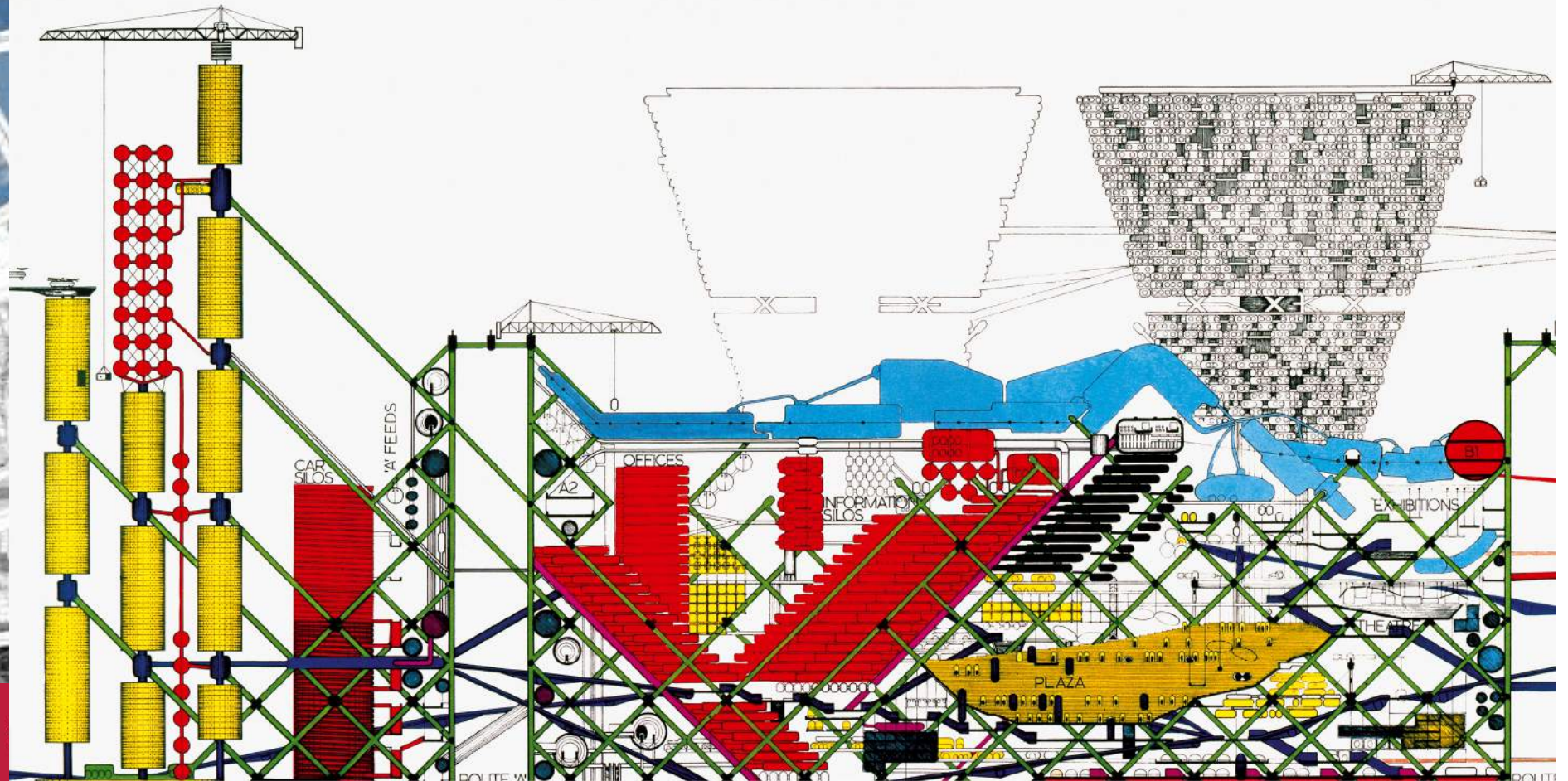
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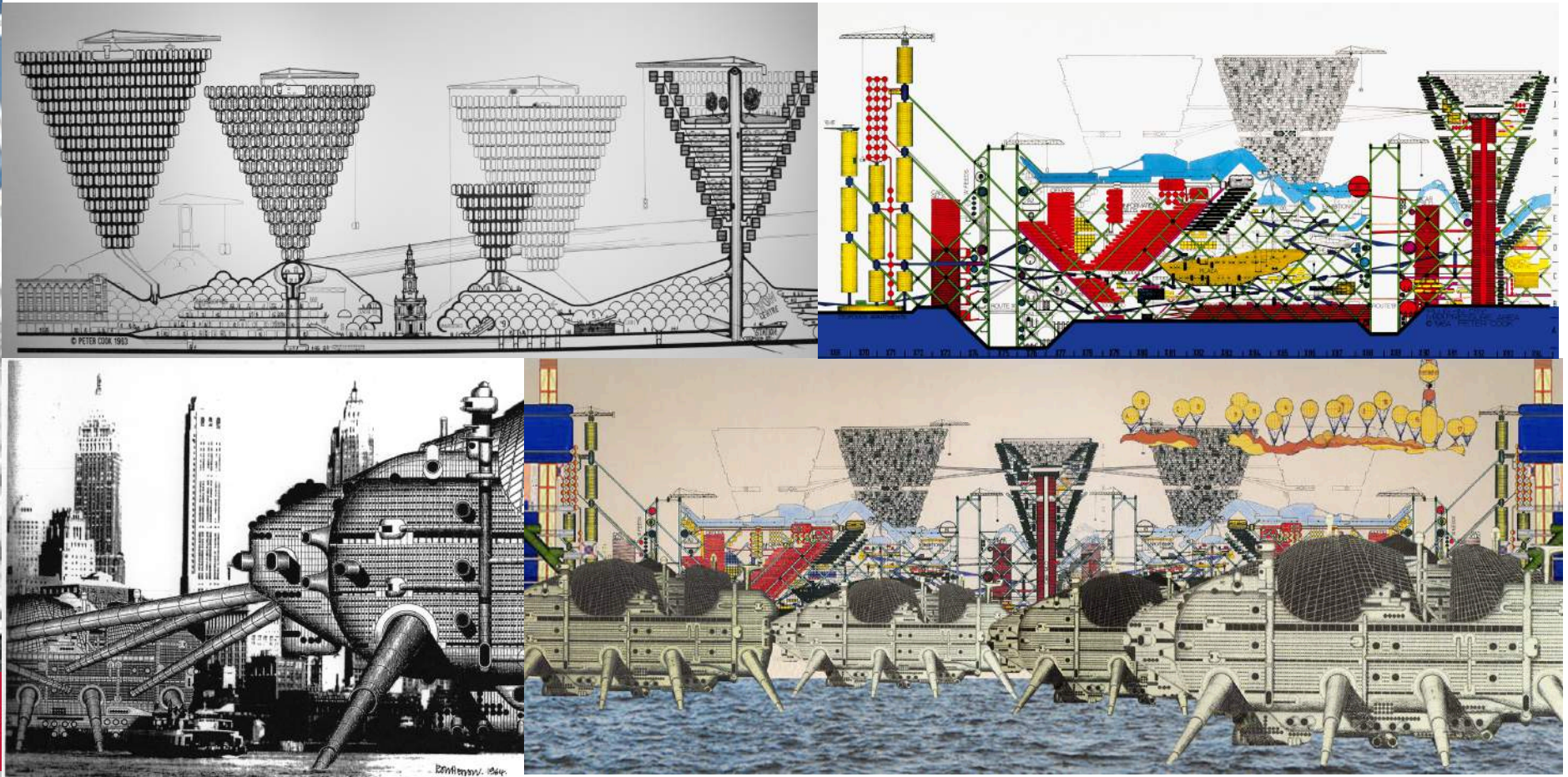
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Archigram** - Plug-In City, 1960s



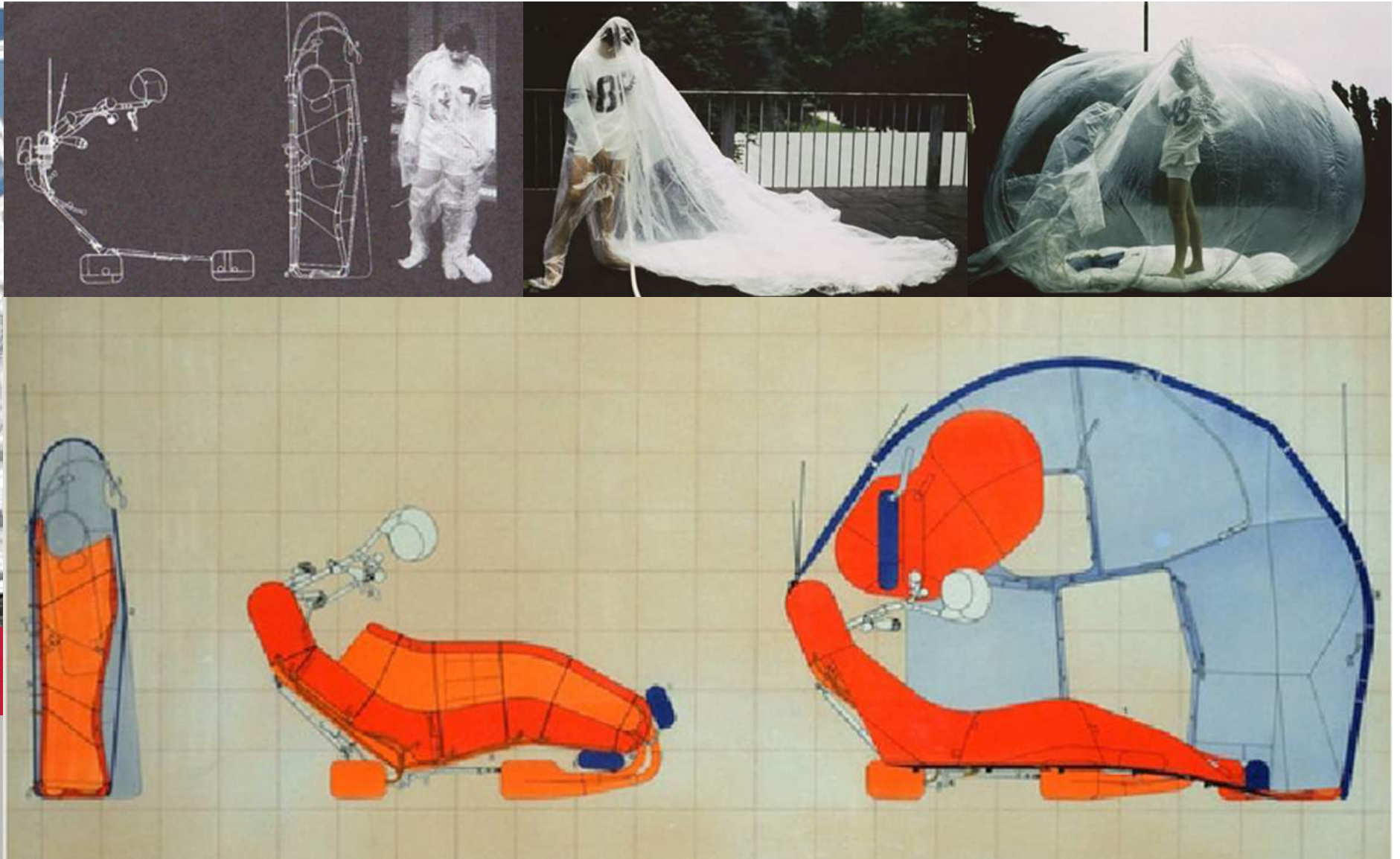
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Archigram** - Plug-In City, Walking City, 1960s



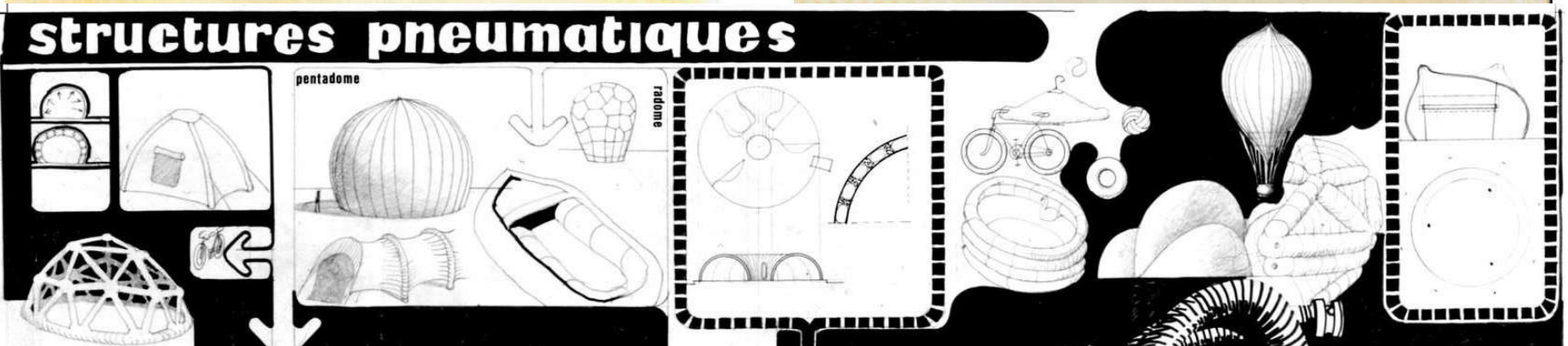
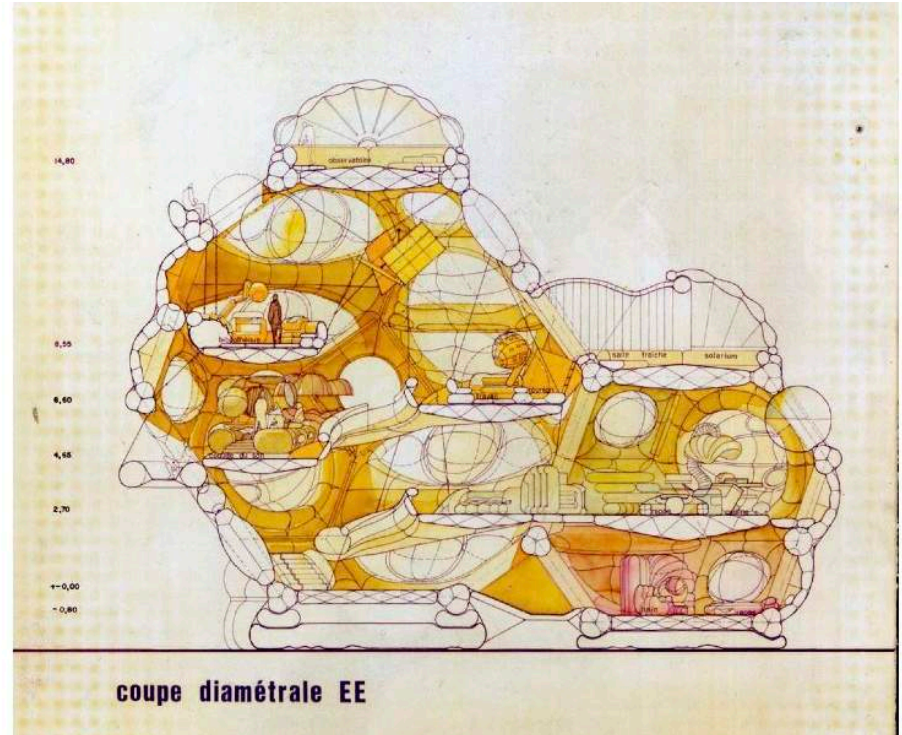
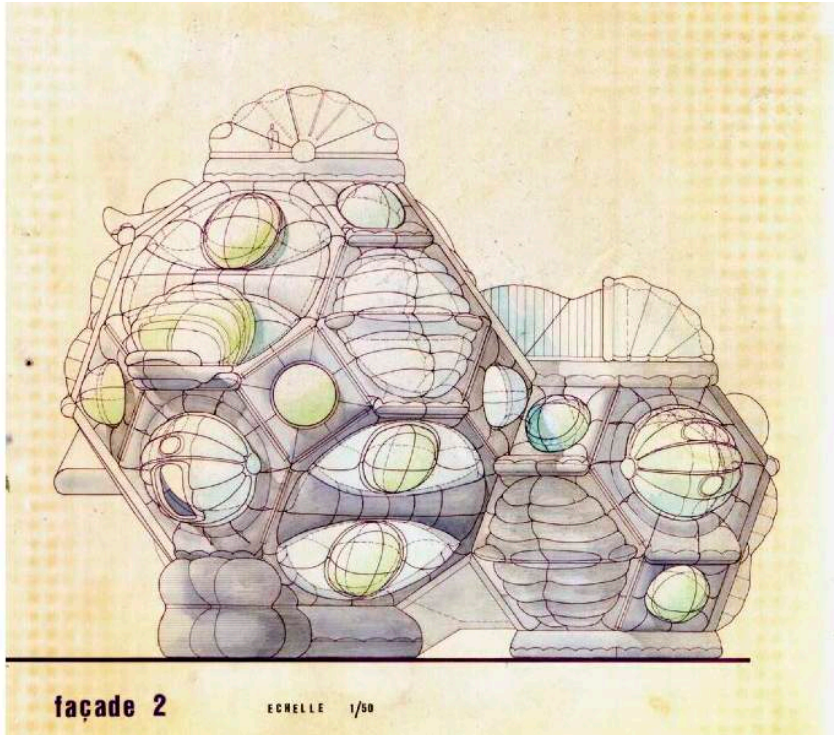
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



**Archigram** - Inflatable, mobile architecture



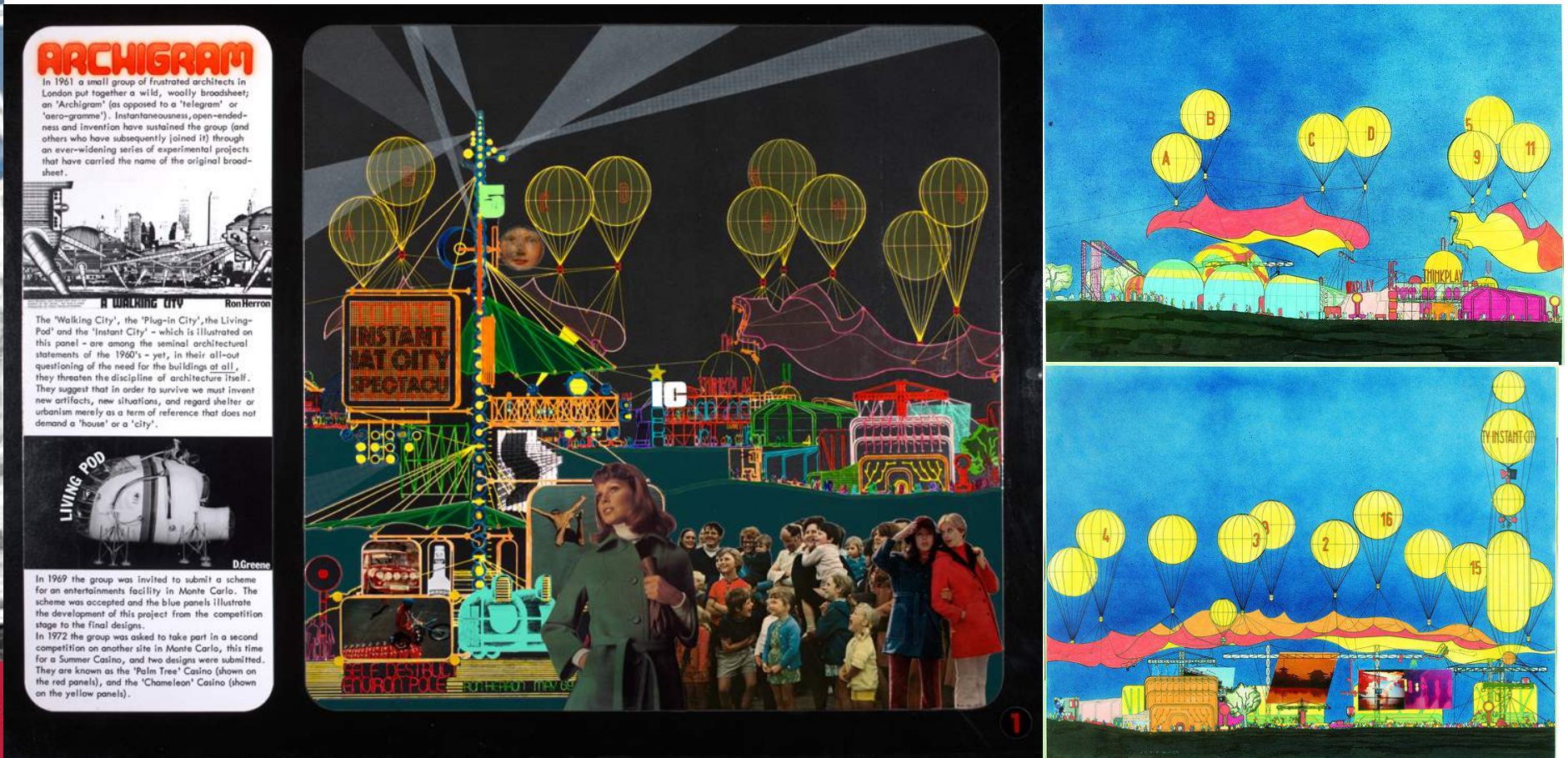
# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



Archigram - pneumatic structures



# Alternative Visions - Counter Modernisms



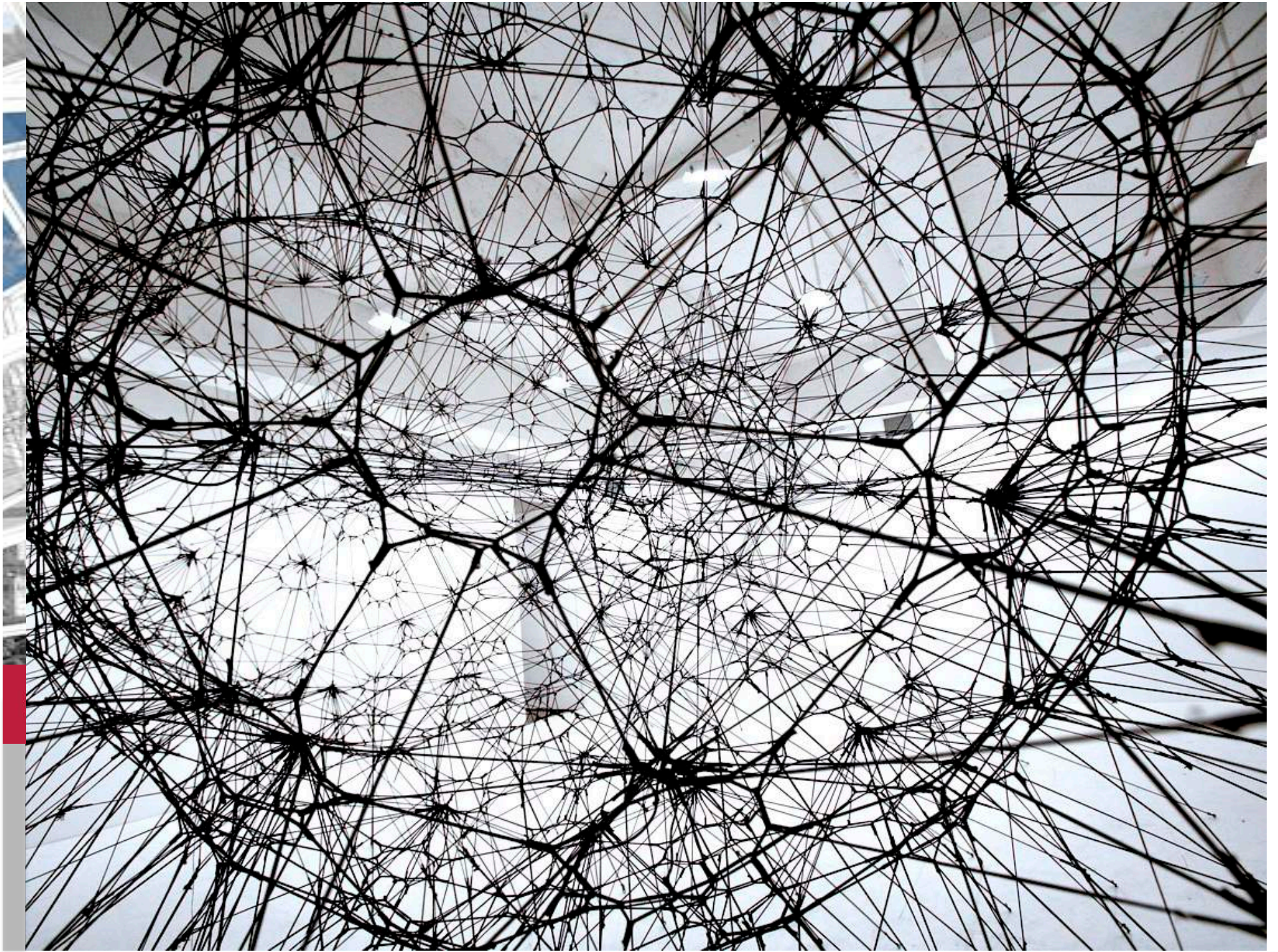
Archigram - Instant City, 1960s





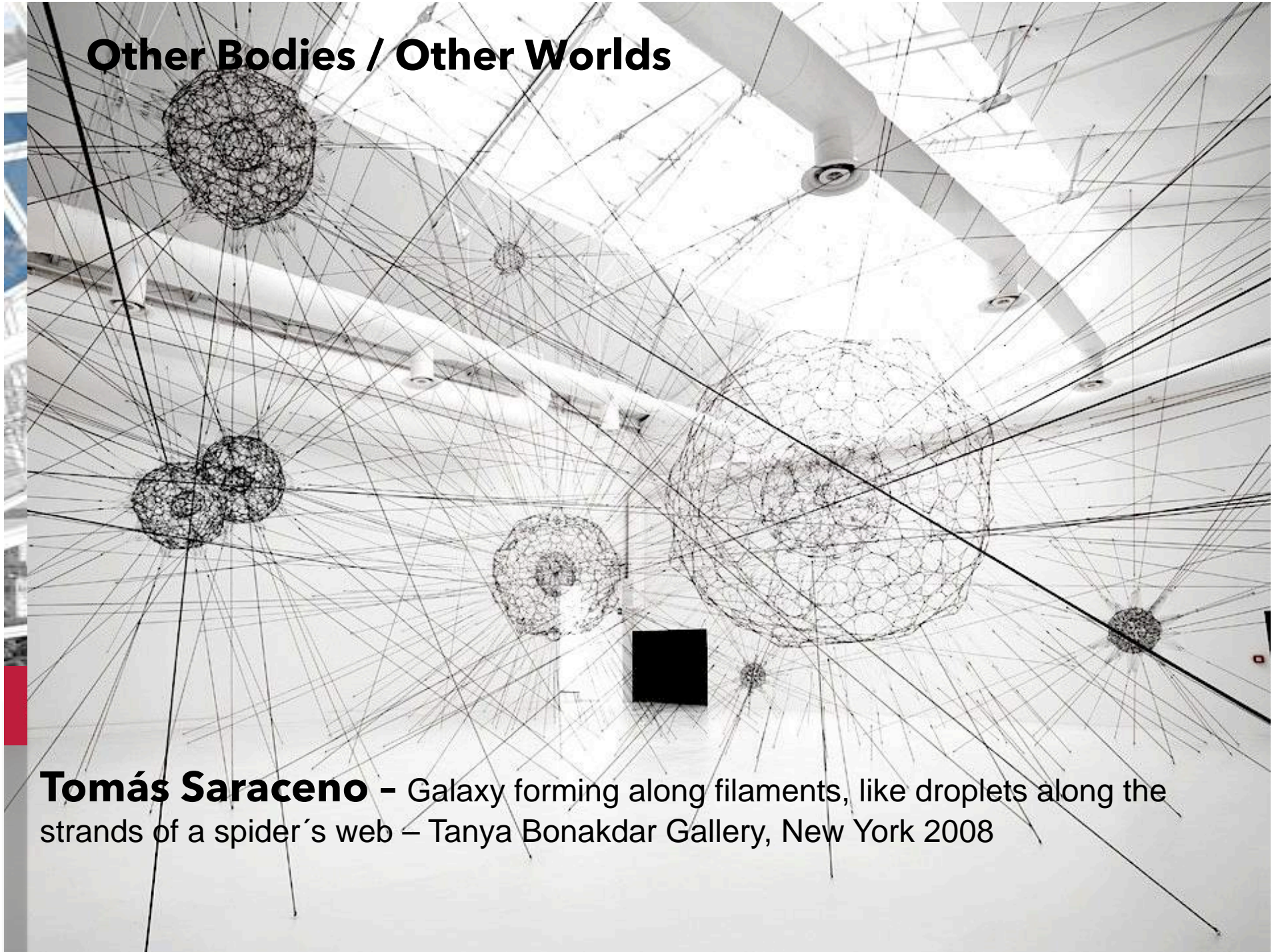
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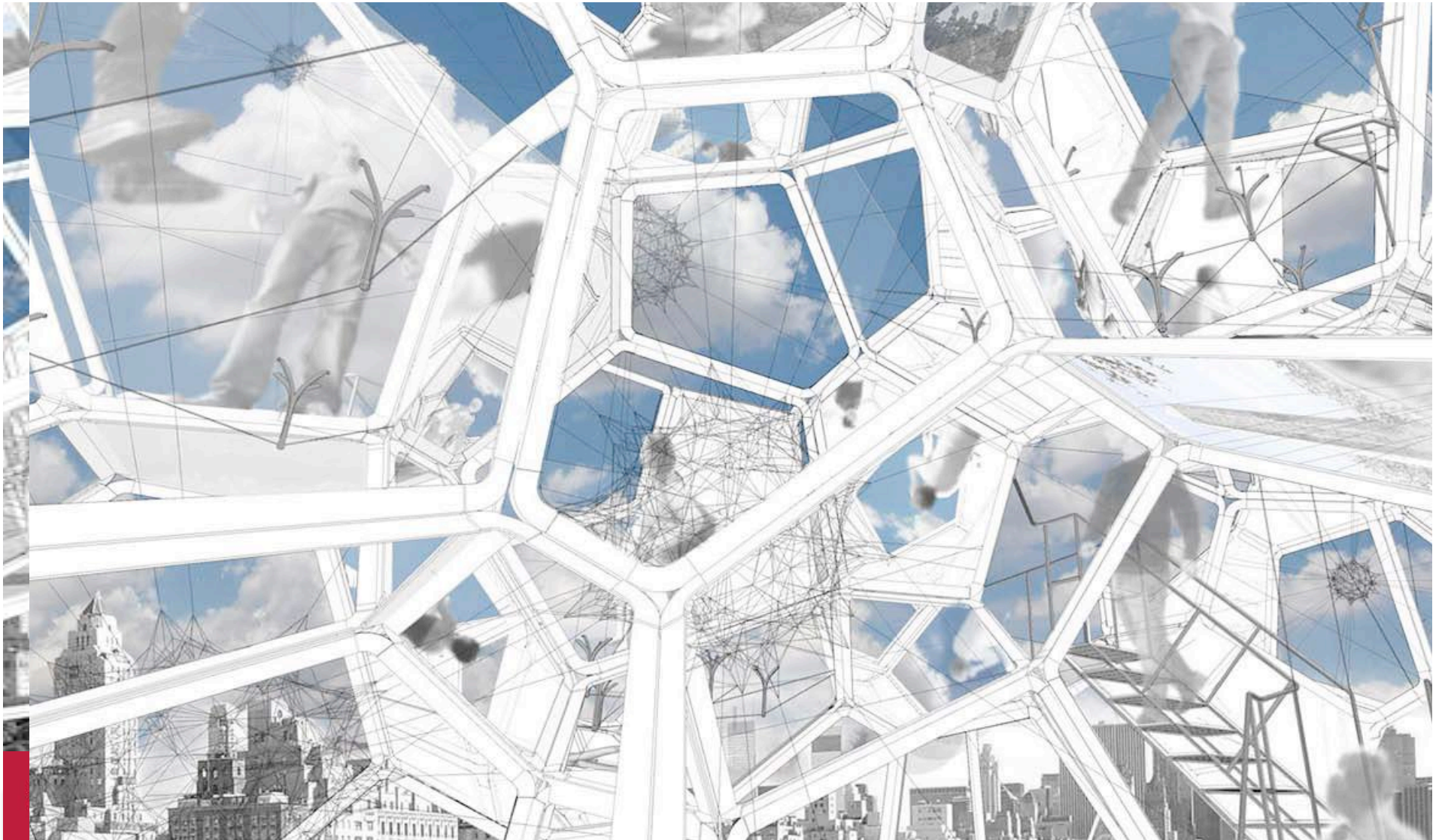


## Other Bodies / Other Worlds



**Tomás Saraceno** - Galaxy forming along filaments, like droplets along the strands of a spider's web – Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York 2008





**Tomás Saraceno** - On the Roof – Cloud City. MOMA New York, 2012



## Other Bodies / Other Worlds



**Tomás Saraceno** - In Orbit, K21 Ständehaus Düsseldorf, 2013-14

## Other Bodies / Other Worlds



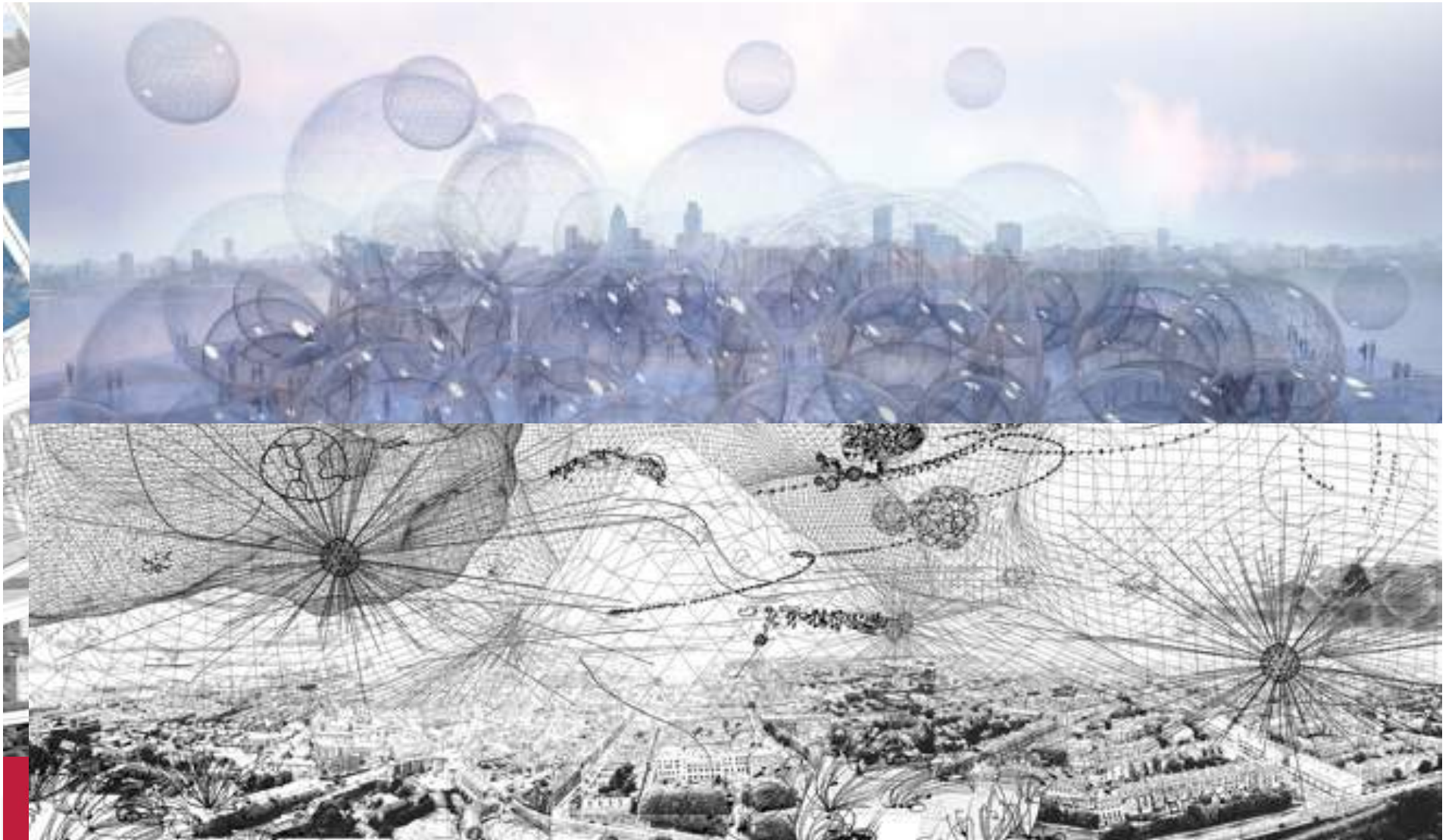
**Tomás Saraceno** - In Orbit, K21 Ständehaus Düsseldorf, 2013-14





**Tomás Saraceno** - In Orbit, K21 Ständehaus Düsseldorf, 2013-14





**Tomás Saraceno** - The dream of cloud cities, 2000s-2010's



# Other Bodies / Other Worlds



**Tomás Saraceno** - Solar sculptures, 2010's



**Institut für Architekturbezogene Kunst** – TU Braunschweig  
Prof. Tomás Saraceno – Fall Semester 2014

**Dec 5:** Dr. Alan Prohm artist/theorist/concept designer  
alanprohm.wordpress.com

\*Basic idea of this day's activations is to a) get them into their architectural bodies b) help them contextualize their situation in this course/project with reference to key examples from a tradition of visionary engineering since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, c) with the help of this reference set, and in light of ecological perspectives on the Anthropocene, rethink their perspective on their profession/vocation/task in the weeks ahead - Remake life. Start now. There will be a big party. You have till next week to make preparations. (see assignment below)

\*\*Structure would be to greet the students – conduct a short exercise standing in place – lecture – conduct follow-up exercise – give "assignment" for next week

recommended reading: Gins and Arakawa from *Architectural Body* 2002, ch.1. Organism that Persons, ch.2. Landing Sites, and (main emphasis:) ch. 6 Notes for an Architectural Body (total: 32 pages)

lecture: **an Architectural Body for the Post-Anthropocene**

### Introduction:

Contextualize their (the students') work/course/career-situation by reference to these art-/architectural history landmarks:

- Futurism/Constructivism
- Bauhaus & Int'l Modernism
- Surrealism
- New Babylon
- '60s technoutopianism (Bucky/(Frei Otto)/Whole Earth Cat./Archigram, etc.)
- / late S.I critique of arch/urbanism
- Studio Saraceno
- Arakawa and Gins' concepts of the architectural body and procedurality

*All cases of architecture becoming art by virtue of taking its own calling too seriously. To change life, build for it. Start Now.*



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lecture: **an Architectural Body for the Post-Anthropocene**

#### Exercises

warm-up: **Ein-spüren/fühlen/leben** - sense in from your skin surface and then again out from it into the immediate surroundings / feel out to the walls and floors / fill the intervening space as more of you / land and settle t/here as permanent-/fullhearted-/body-widely as possible with the time and materials available.

follow-up: **Unbox to Spherassemble:** Besinnen – Den Rahmen des Raums/Den Raum als Rahmen mit-einspüren – Den Rahmen nicht leicht wegschaffen können im inneren Gebilde – Sinngewichtskern des inneren Gebilde innen finden, innehalten – Rahmen aus dem Sinnesgestalt damit leicht rauslassen können – Rahmbefreit sich weiter beziehen - ...





## lecture: **an Architectural Body for the Post-Anthropocene**

... Alles Architektur, die zu Kunst wird, indem sie ihre eigene Berufung zu ernst nimmt. Um das Leben zu ändern, bau darauf hin. Los starten.

### **Premise 1:** Architecture bases life.

Examples:

Constructivism invites the artist to build the base.

Rational modernism thinks it has the best solution.

Surrealism understands the subconscious is architecturally determined.

New Babylon fully-matured appropriation of modern building technology for liberatory/libidinal ends.

Buckminster Fuller too, more or less. (plus Frei Otto techniques)

But the Situationist International's late critique refutes all architectural practice until capital is overthrown.

/

Tomas Saraceno floats the base. On hydrothermal power.

Arakawa and Gins add in the architectural body, basis of all basing.

### **Premise 2:** The body bases/under-/innerlies architecture.

New concepts/somatoconceptual modes:

Landing site theory as the basis for a body-based aesthetics of space and architectural creation.

The architectural body as epiphany. Progressive extasis through procedural architecture.

Body-wideness as evolutionary advance/recovery in accord with A&G's counter-reductionist theory of Bioscleave.

### **Premise 3:** Perception of a new body trigger-initiates the worlding of a new world. Start now.

Mirror-neuron theory: seeing is re-acting out. Imagining is prefiguring. Models are blueprints being built. Seeing is doing is becoming in body.

Procedural architecture as proactive bodybuilding. The body of light (as in not heavy.) Will not die. Or at least not now.

What body-perception does Saraceno's *In Orbit* (or other works) Trigger? - and what new world do/could these body-perceptions contribute to initiating?

**Restating the question:** What are you doing here?

Why are you architects, and what are you building in here? What to do now, with the time and resources available, and how we have already started.



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exercises cont'd - **Unbox to Spherassemble:**

... Flux und Flow von Wahrnehmung und den entgegengescheinenden Ereignisse mit-spüren - das Sphärische daran/drin finden - wie vom ballon zu ballon die Tragkraftleitfäden einer denkbaren Wolkenstadt - den Körper als ausserstehende Sphere oder Wolke spüren, als es sich leicht von dem Rahmen des Raumkleids herabstastet und schweben bleibt irgendwo zwischen dem ich-sein und den Raum um mich herum

assignment for next week:

**Party Preparations:** Consider next Friday as the kick-off party for our future. Bring what you have and supply what we need. This, like everything else, will be your only chance.







# 3 Abstatzzusatz

# FUNCTIONALIST

## Functionalist Platform:

- 1) decongest city centers
- 2) augment urban densities
- 3) increase means of transport
- 4) Increase parks & open spaces

LeCorbusier, "Functionalist Platform",  
4<sup>th</sup> CIAM Athens 1933

IDEA OF LIFE



# FUNCTIONALIST

**Architecture serves life by building for 4 main functions:**

**Living**

**Work**

**Recreation**

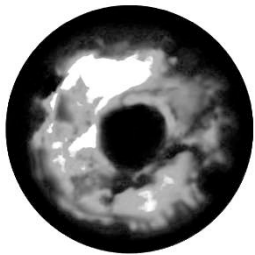
**Transport**

**CIAM Program Athens 1933 (CHECK)**

**IDEA OF LIFE**

**f. functions**

**f. pleasing the eye/mind**



**f. comfort**

**f. machinic efficiency**

**f. social stability**

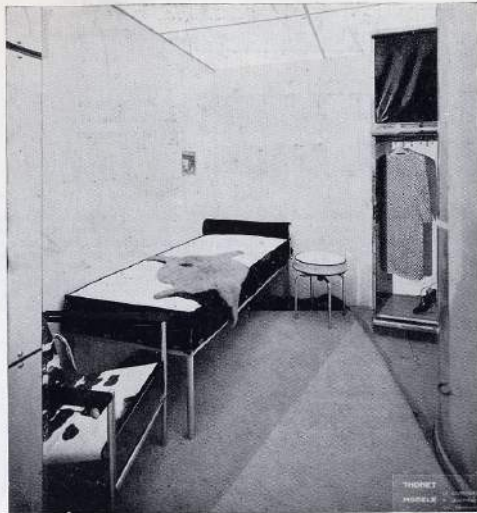


**UTOPIA**



# The biological unit: the cell

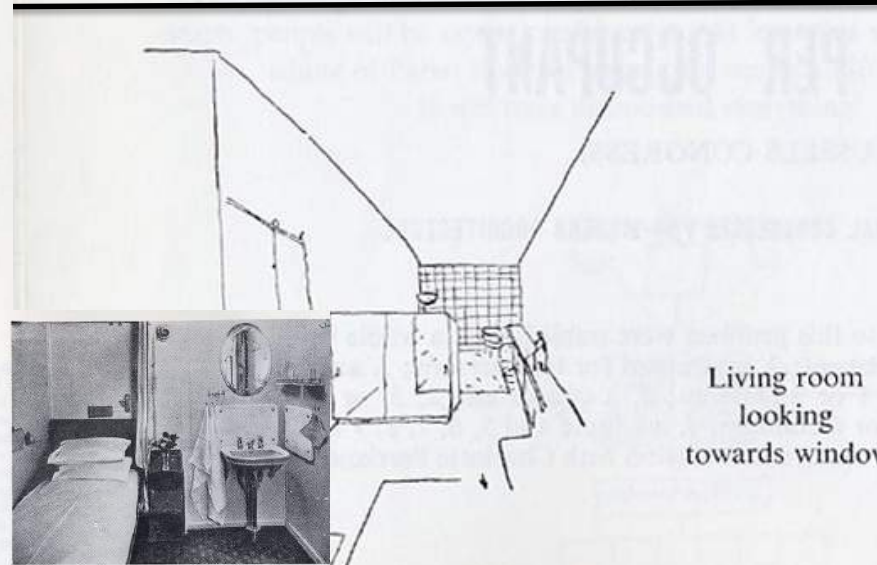
14m<sup>2</sup> per Occupant



THE BIOLOGICAL UNIT:  
THE CELL  
OF 14 M<sup>2</sup> PER OCCUPANT

(1930 - BRUSSELS CONGRESS)

DEDICATED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES FOR MODERN ARCHITECTURE



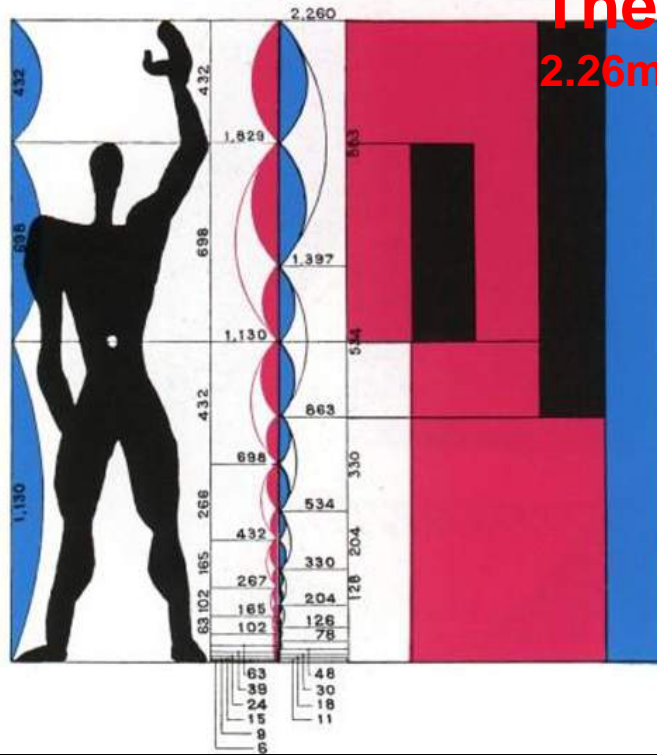
Living room  
looking  
towards window

Second-class cabins. These pictures are not intended  
But they show the results of strict

# UTOPIA

# The measure: Modulor

2.26m ceiling minimum



Living room  
looking  
towards window



# UTOPIA





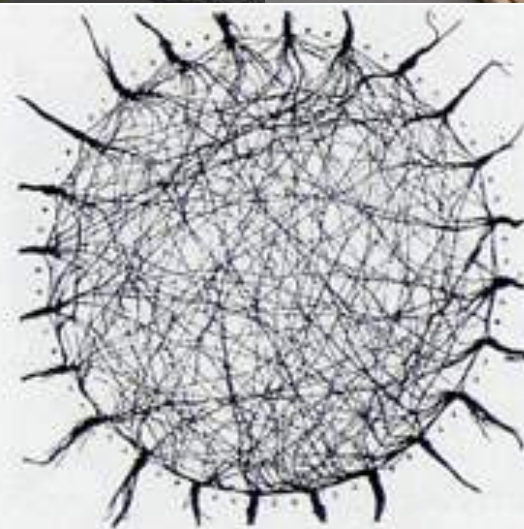
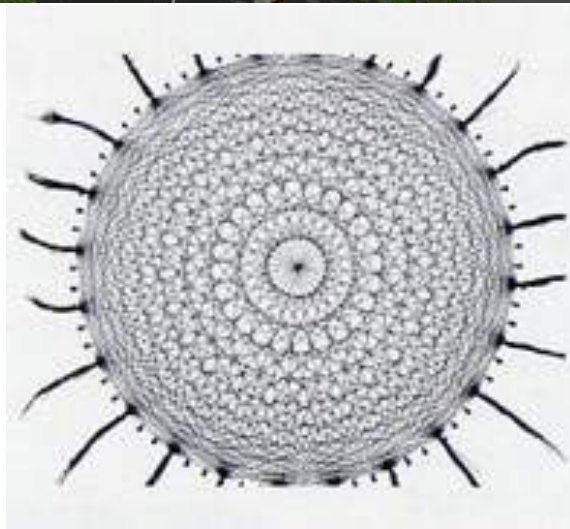
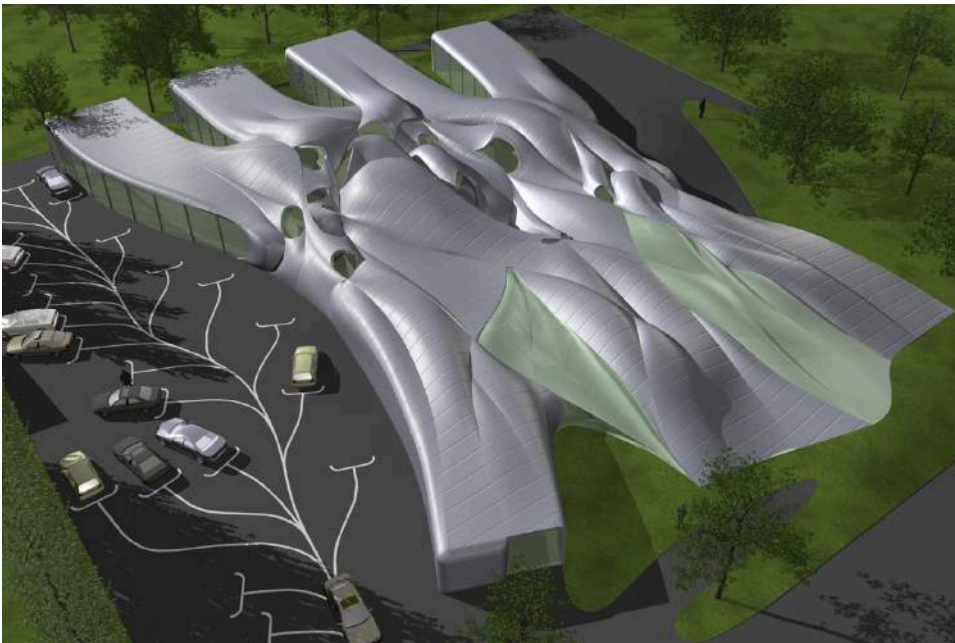
# 4

# Growing the Architectural Body



**Lars Spuybroek (Nox)** - Soft Office, 2000s

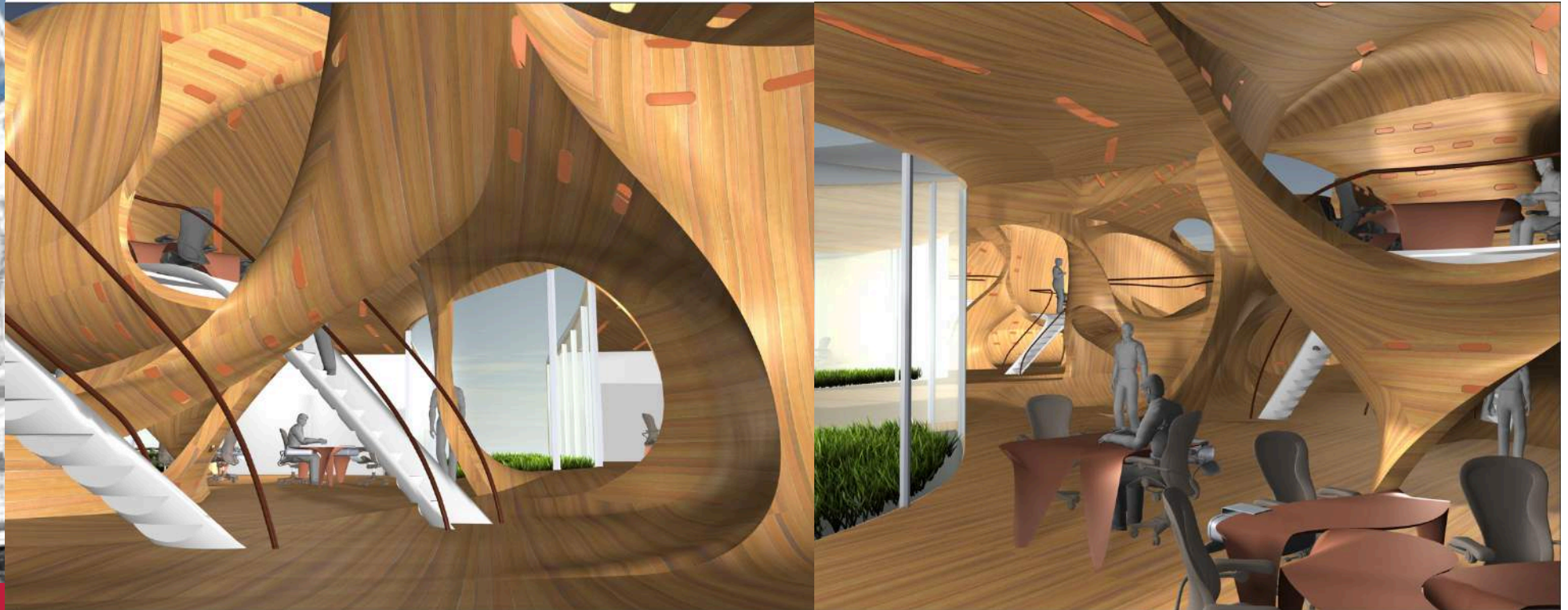




**Lars Spuybroek (Nox) - Soft Office, 2000s**

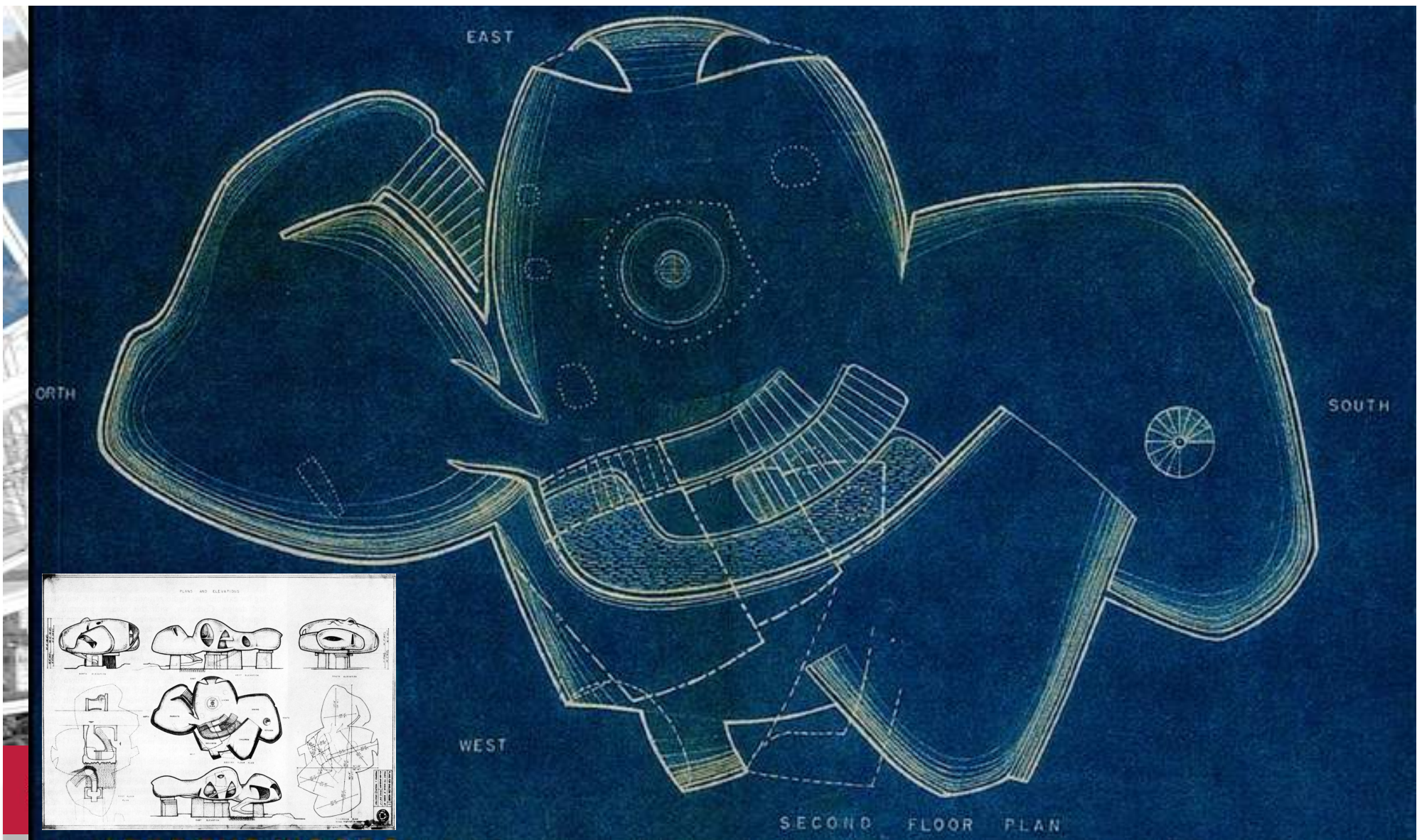


# Growing the Architectural Body



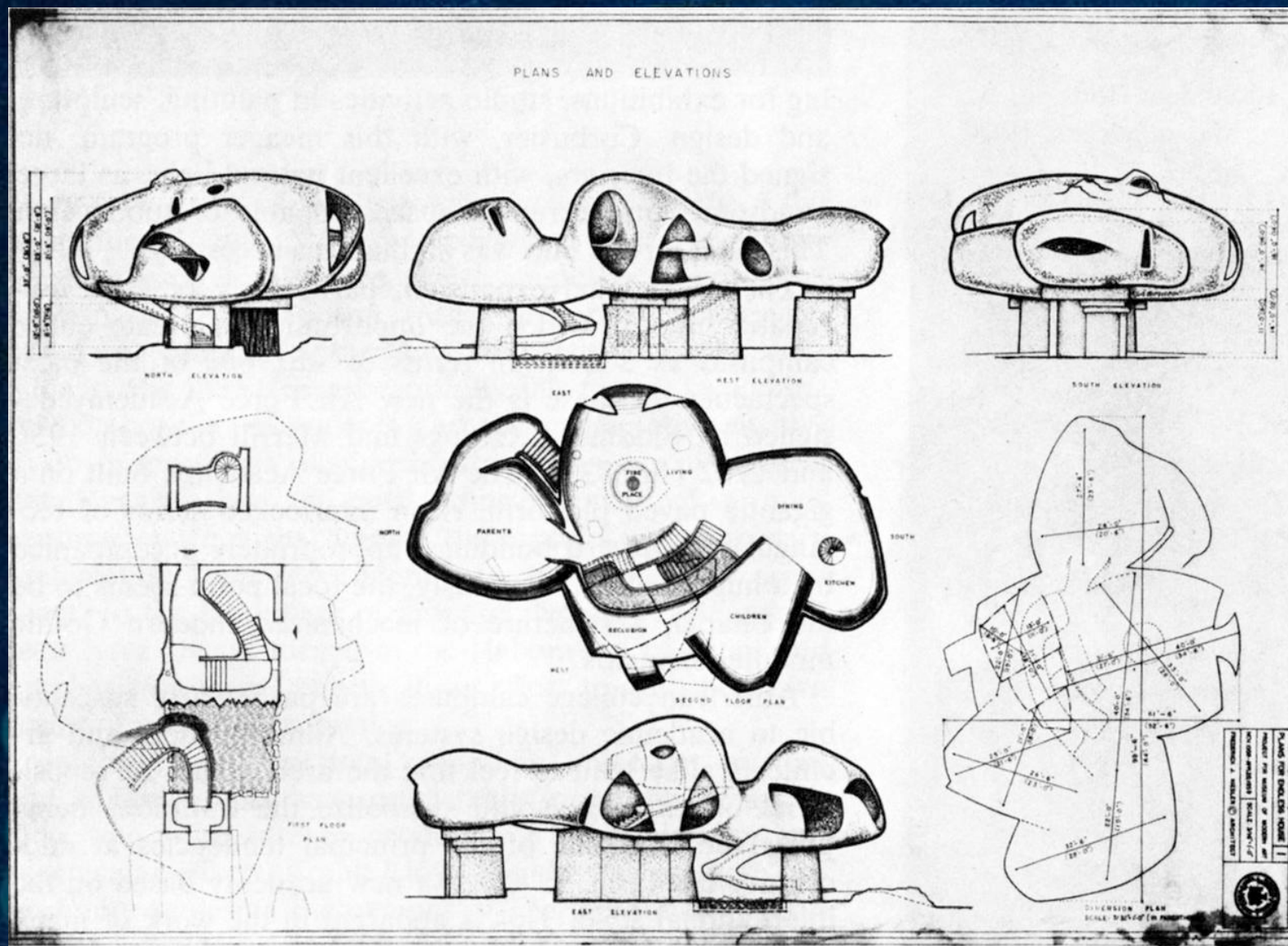
**Lars Spuybroek (Nox) - Soft Office, 2000s - interior**





**Friedrich Kiesler** - Endless House, 1950s





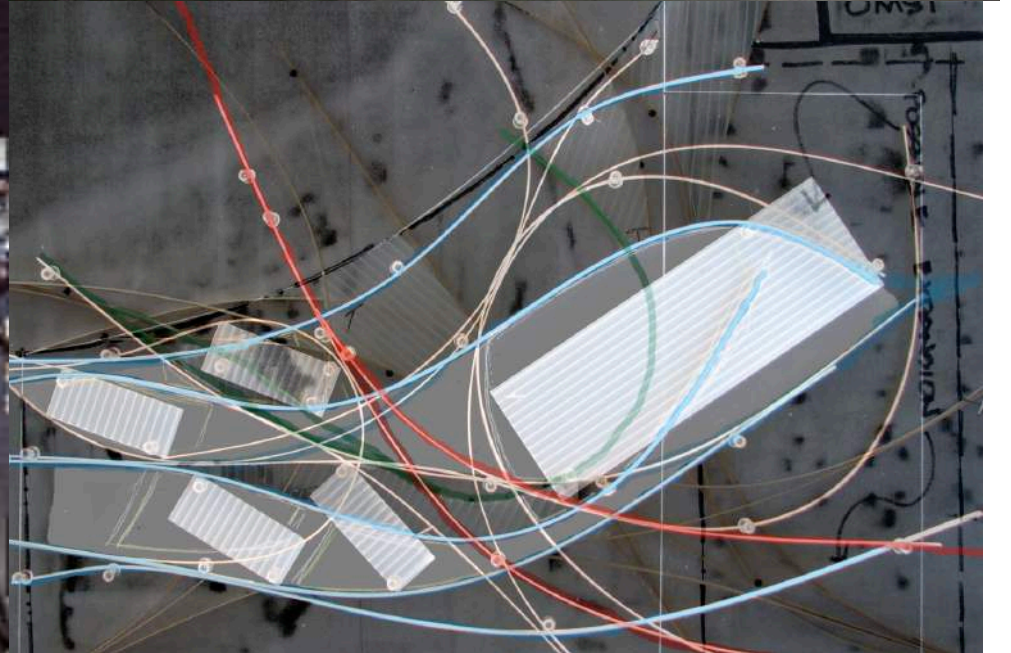
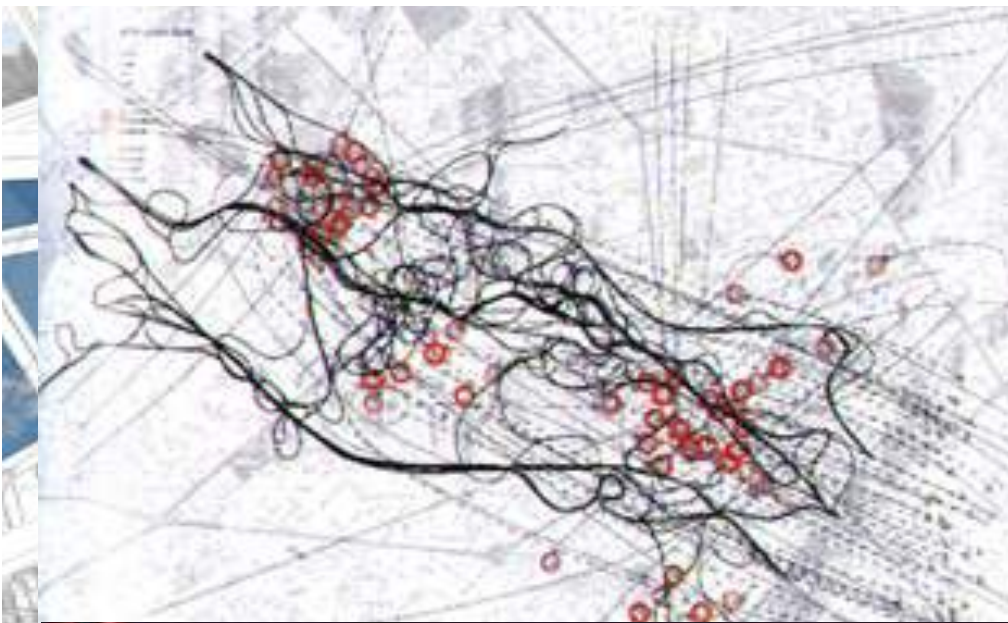
**Friedrich Kiesler** - Endless House, 1950s





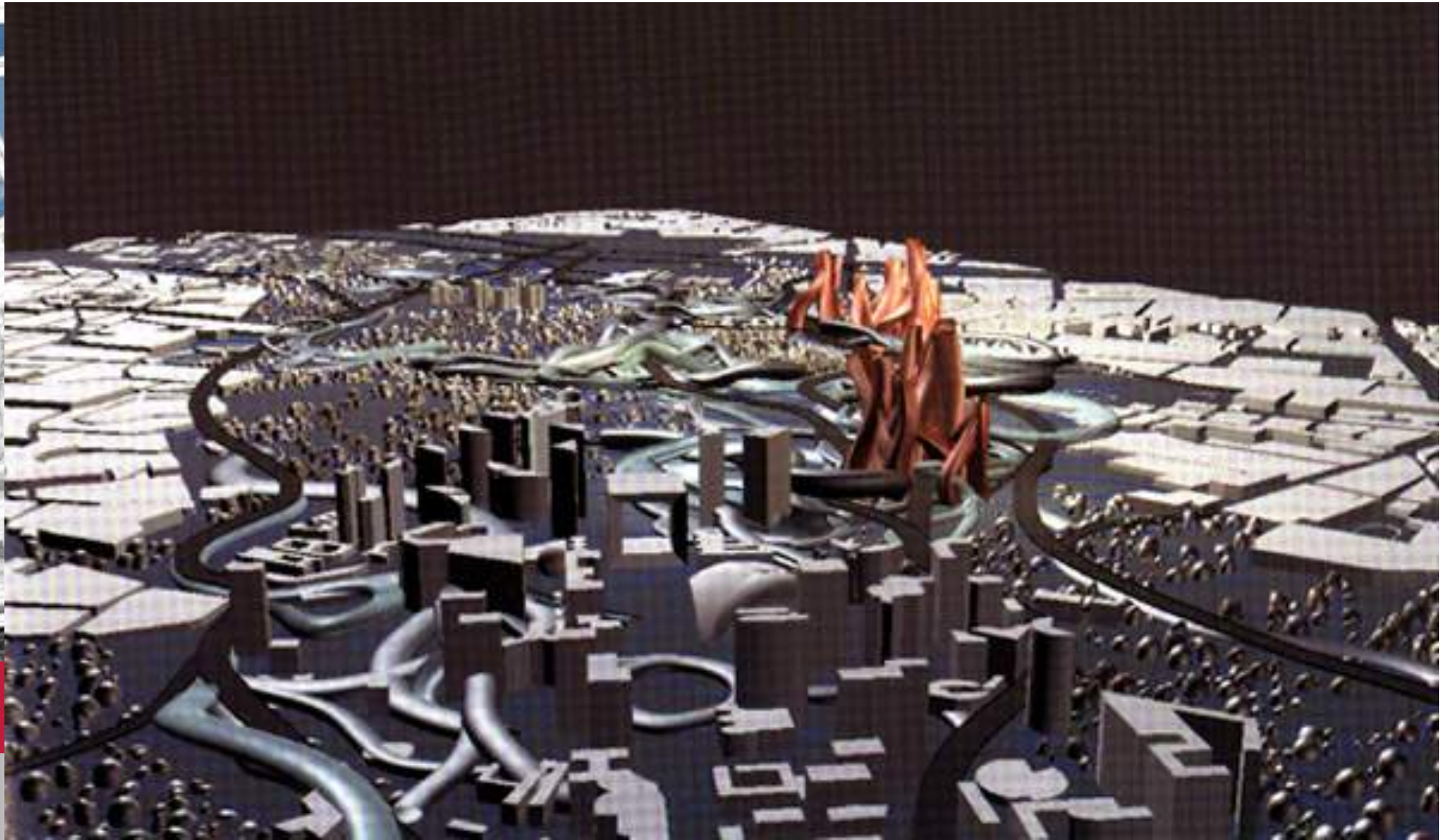
**Friedrich Kiesler** - Endless House, 1950s





**Lars Spuybroek (Nox) - Paris Brain, other models 2000s**





**Lars Spuybroek (Nox) - Paris Brain, 2000s**





**Arakawa and Gins** - Procedural Architecture, 1990s-2010s



# FORMS OF FUNCTION

FOR HUMAN (SUPER)COMFORT



LeCorbusier, Villa Savoye 1931

FOR THE SAKE OF A UNIVERSAL SPACETIME



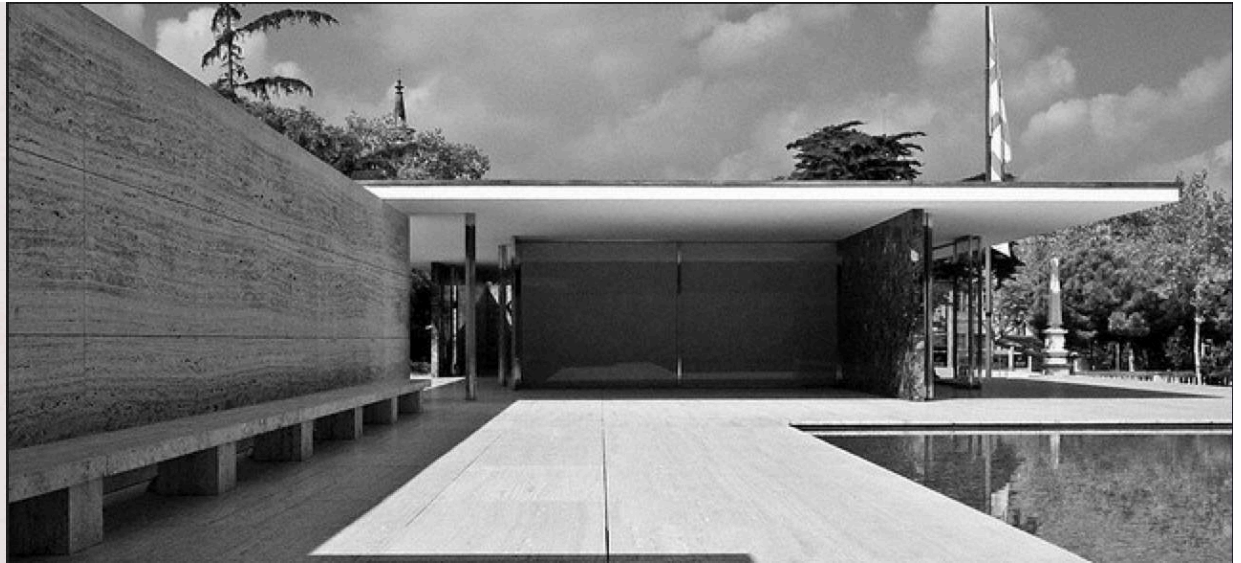
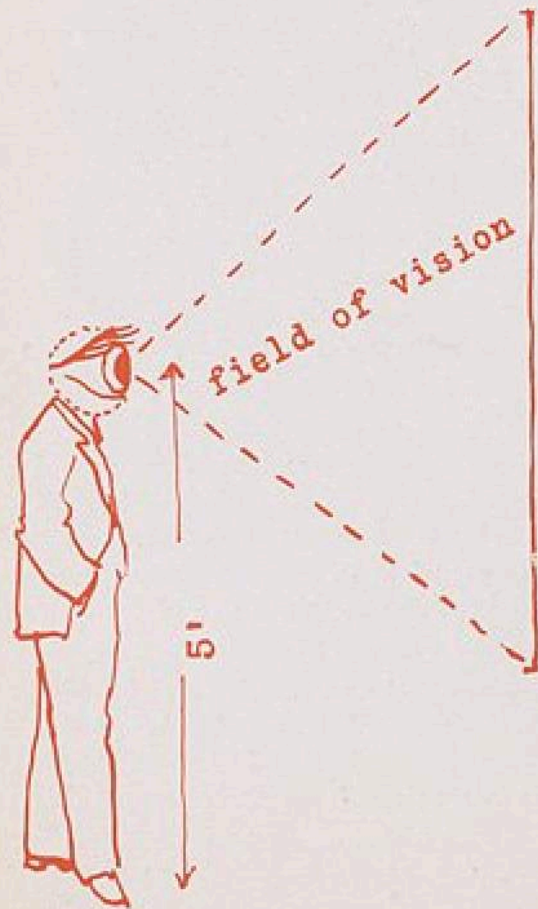
Mies, Farnsworth House, 1951

FOR THE SAKE OF DETERMINING THE EXTENT  
OF THE SITE OF A PERSON



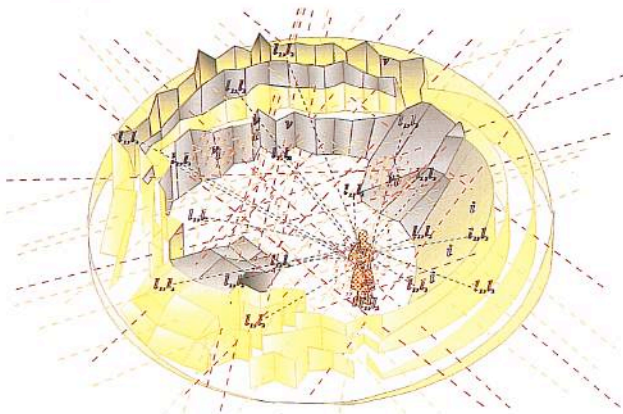
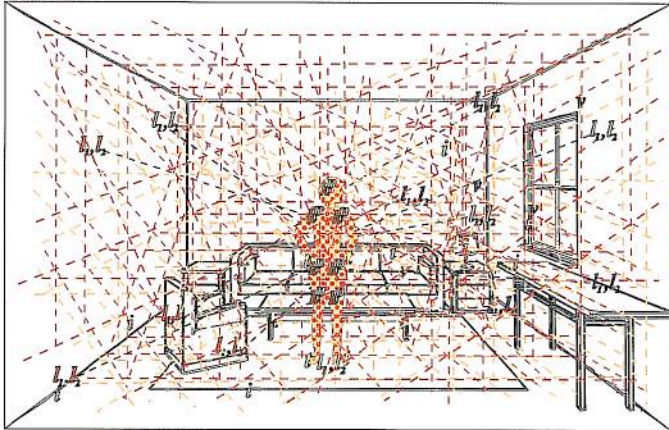
Arakawa and Madeline Gins, Critical Resemblances House, 1995

*Arakawa and Gins, Reversible Destiny: We Have Decided Not to Die, 1997.*

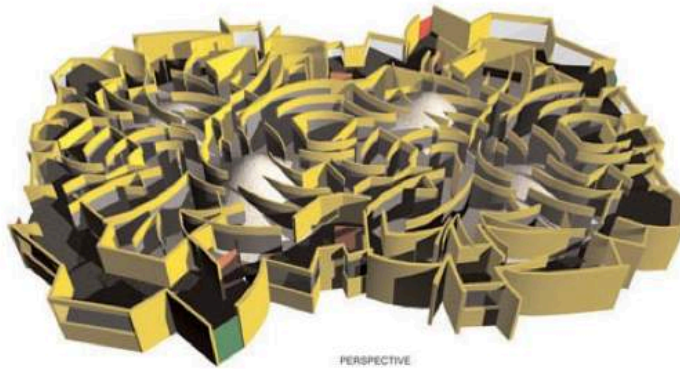


**Hegemony of Vision** - Herbert Bayer, Mies van der Rohe





## Body-Wide Perception - Arakawa and Gins



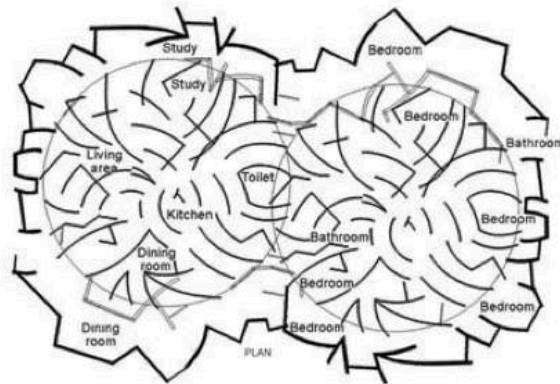
PERSPECTIVE



SECTION



SECTION



PLAN



TERRAIN

No simple resolving of human skills can happen within this house. Focal areas of attention (landing sites) can be rallied to an unusual degree. Perceptual landing sites. Imaging landing sites. Architectural landing sites.

## Arakawa and Gins - Tactically posed surrounds for the Architectural Body

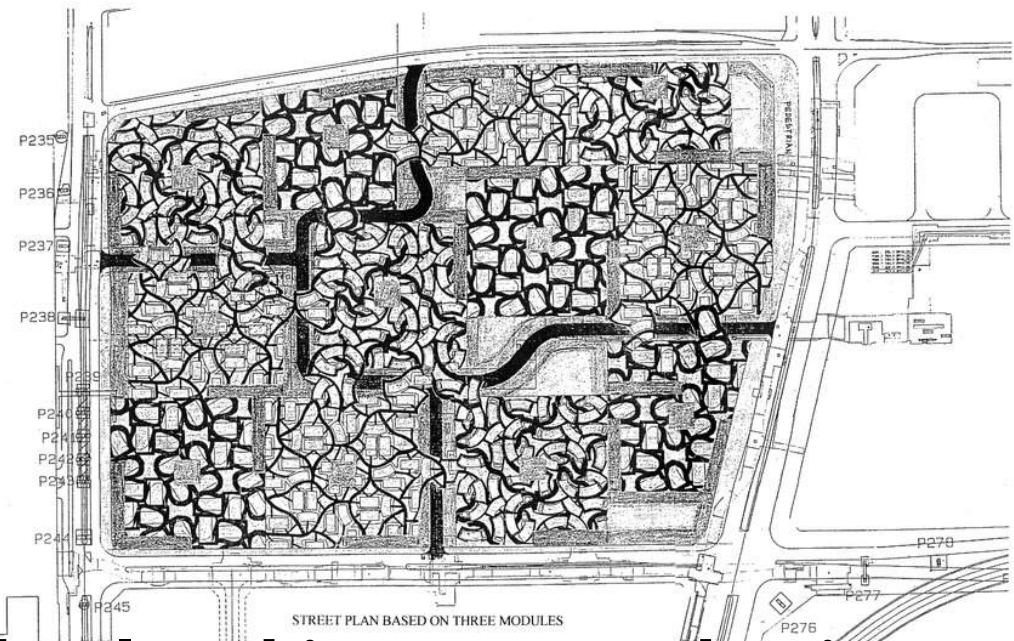




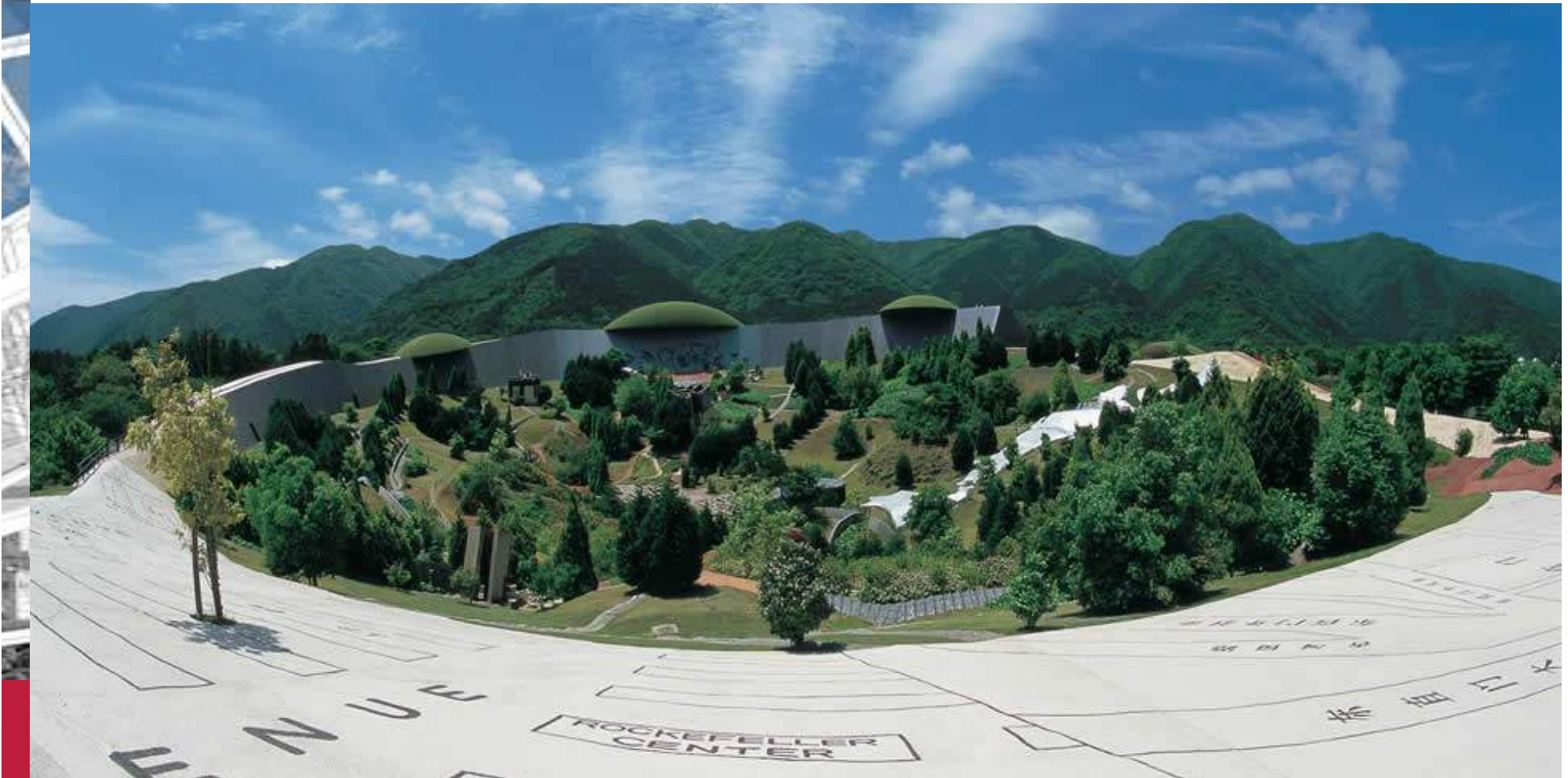








## Arakawa and Gins - Procedural Architecture x Urbanism

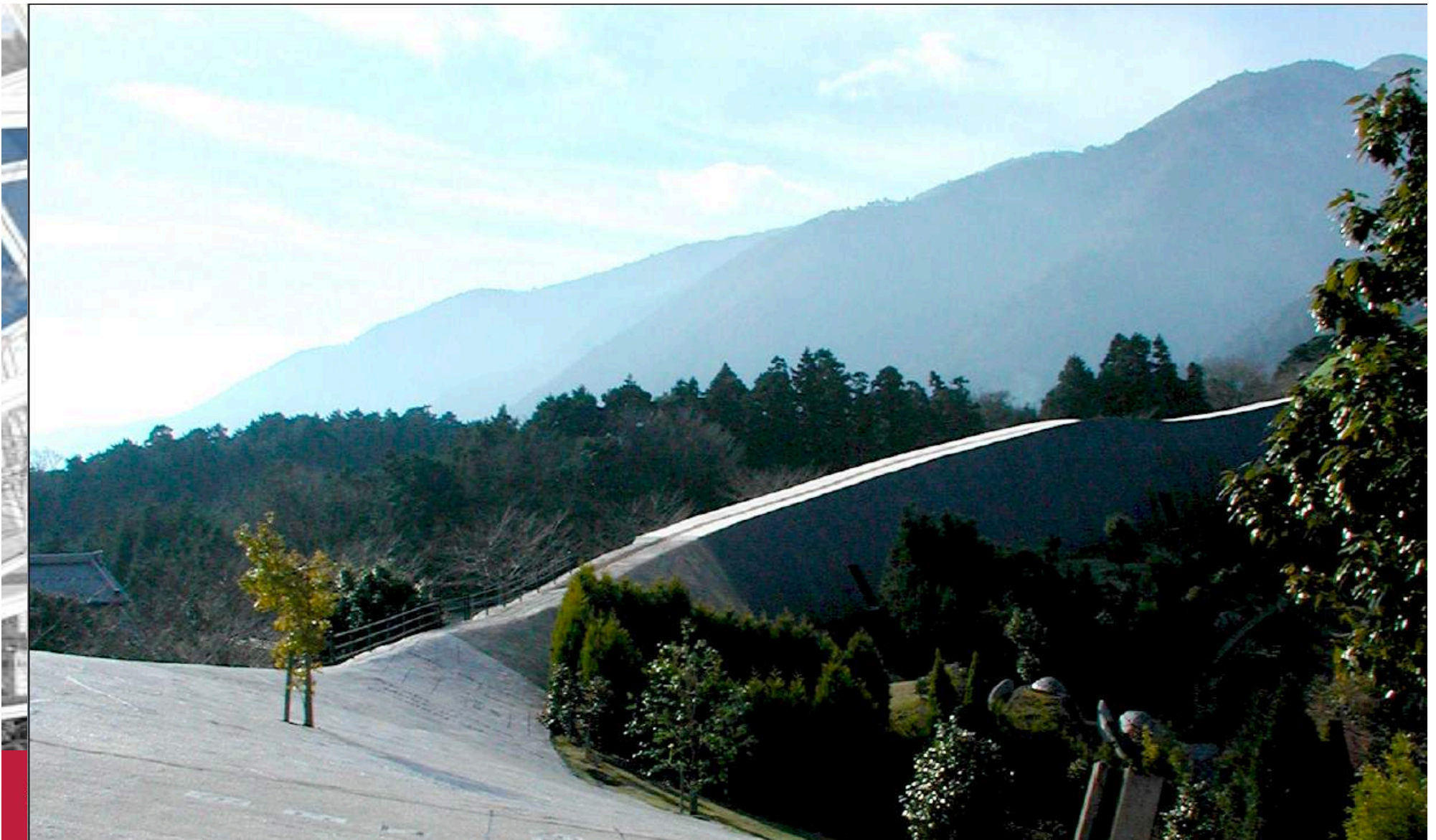


**Arakawa and Gins** - Site of Reversible Destiny, Japan, 1990s



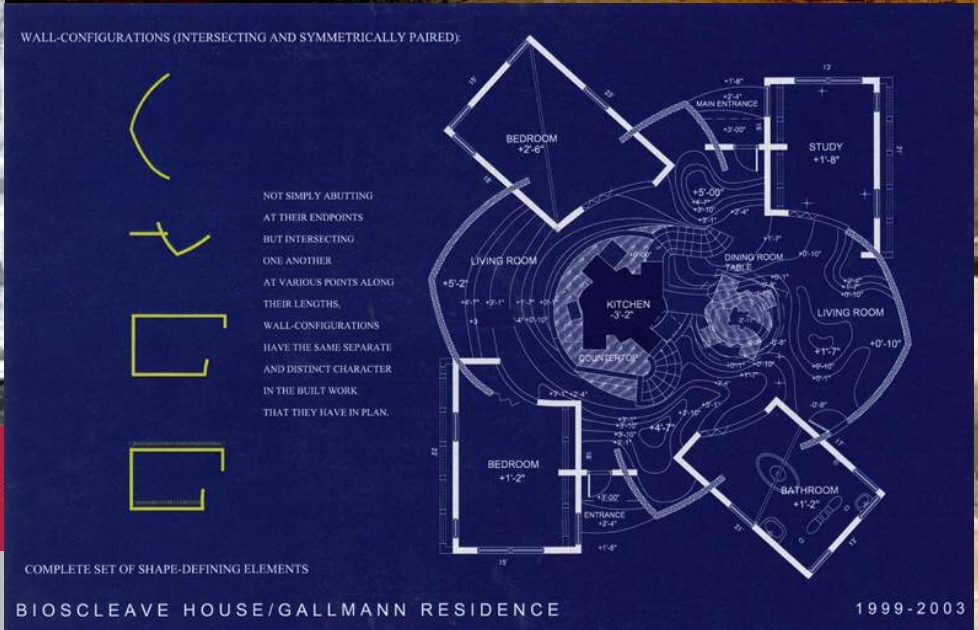






**Arakawa and Gins** - Site of Reversible Destiny, Japan, 1990s





**Arakawa and Gins** - Bioscleave House, Life-Extending Villa East Hampton, New York, 2000s



MUSEUM APARTMENTS  
WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND YEARLY RENTALS

HEALING TEAM STATION

MUSEUM OF LIVING BODIES WILL BE A LABORATORY, A PROVING GROUND,  
A FIELD STATION, AND A SUPER-DUPER NURSERY.

THE SYMBOLIZING CREATURE'S  
LIFESPAN-INCREASING PRACTICE AREA

ZOETIC  
REGENERATRIX

SUITE OF MEDICAL OFFICES

THE PANASONIC-MATSUSHITA "INTELLIGENT ROOM"  
This futuristic, technological wonderwork has structured into  
it the ability to give physical check-ups, note physiological  
anomalies, and diagnose bodily ills.

UNIVERSITY OF INCISIVE LAUGHTER AND  
VITAL COORDINATING SKILLS  
ARCHITECTURE/INVENTION SCHOOL

FOCUSING/IMAGING  
PARTNERSHIP

A rooftop garden, open to  
residents and visitors alike,  
sits atop the fully enclosed  
main arcade (for presentation  
purposes only, a portion of  
this is shown as a cut-away).

Incised into the  
courtyard's hilly  
terrain: A LABYRINTH

**BASIC-GENERATIVE UNIT**  
As a result of a succession of  
90° rotations (in a clockwise  
direction), the basic-generative  
unit winds up standing at a  
distinctly different orientation  
in each of its placements.

The endpoints of  
the labyrinth give rise to  
an arcade that in its turn  
generates the building's  
main arcade to which  
the rotations of  
the basic-generative  
units attach.

No matter its orientation, no matter  
how it has come to land, the basic-  
generative unit continues, but of  
course, to offer up the same set of  
shapes and proportions. Even so,  
because it never appears in the  
same orientation twice, it  
"generates" variously angled  
interiors, each with its  
own subjective feel.

**LABORATORY LUNCHEONETTE**  
Customers will receive  
print-outs detailing  
chemical composition  
and nutritional benefits  
of menu items.

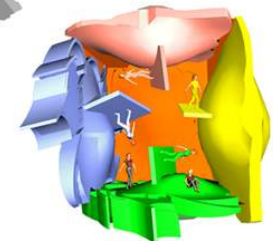
Stretching out in a series  
of three successive  
expansions, the basic-  
generative unit ends up,  
in its fullest expansion,  
measuring twice its  
original length.

GIFT SHOP

BY PLAYING OFF OF  
AND JOINING FORCES WITH  
A SEQUENCE OF CALIBRATED  
ARCHITECTURAL VOLUMES,  
LIVING BODIES WILL COME TO KNOW  
ALL THAT THEY CAN BE.

REVERSIBLE DESTINY HOTEL

THINK-TANK RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
(WISDOM CIRCLE OF ELDERS)



BASIC-GENERATIVE UNIT/2003

ARAKAWA + GINS

## MUSEUM OF LIVING BODIES

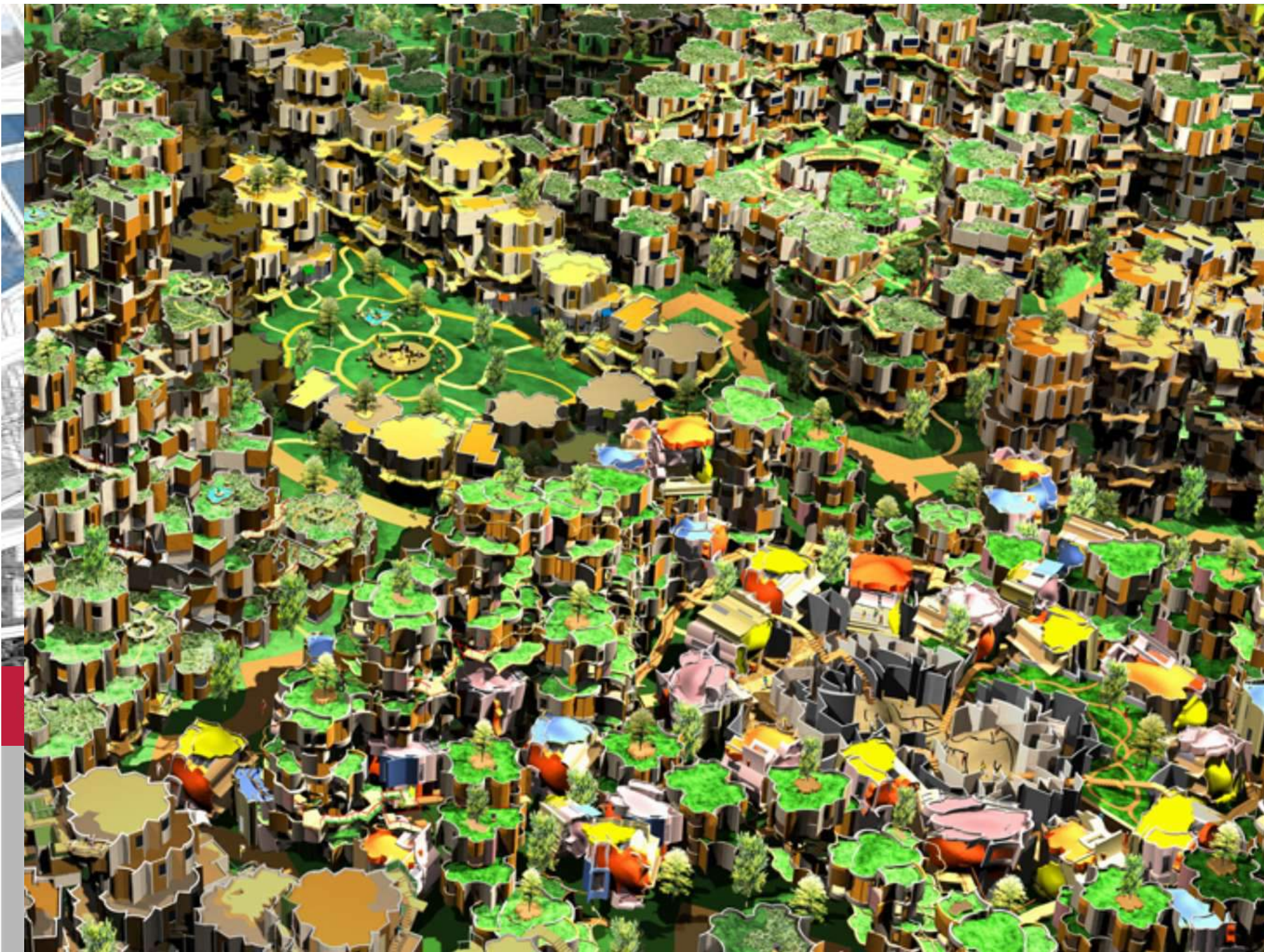
# Arakawa and Gins - Museum of Living Bodies, proposal 2000s



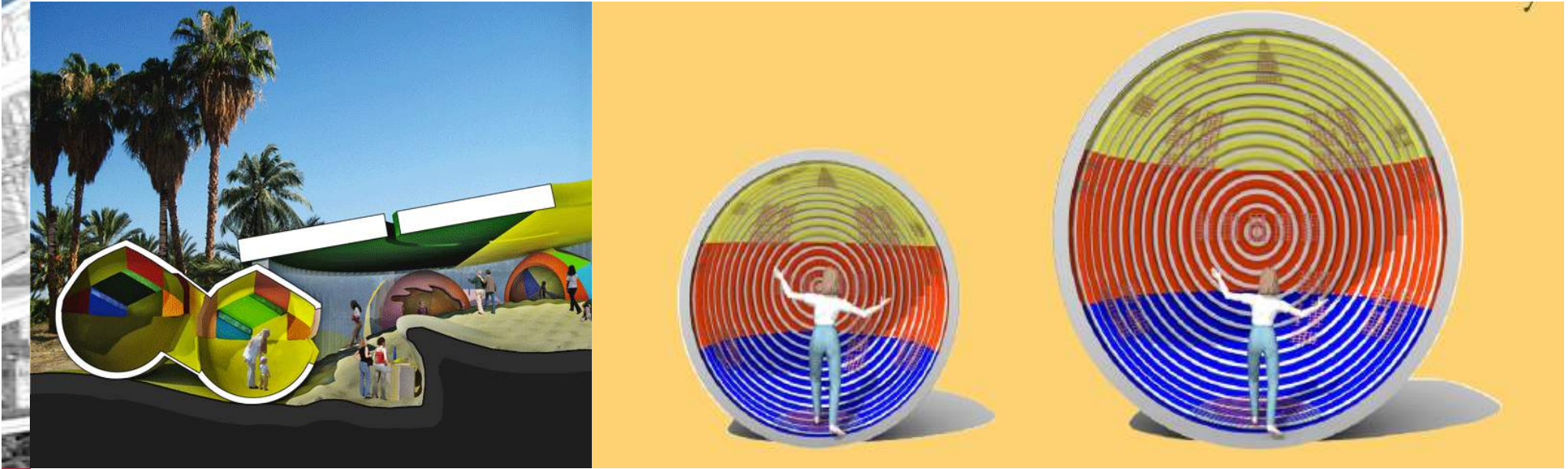


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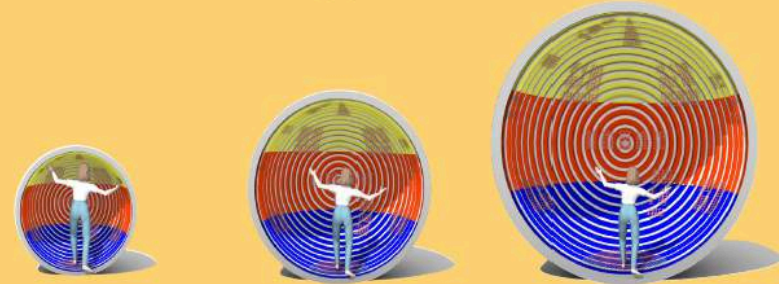


**Arakawa and Gins** - Reversible Destiny Healing Funhouse -  
concept for Palm Springs, California, 2000-2010's

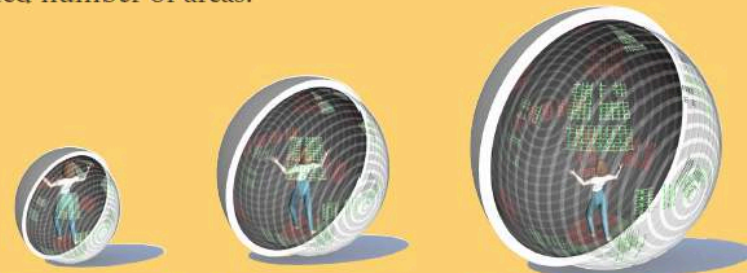
# BODY PROPER + ARCHITECTURAL SURROUND = ARCHITECTURAL BODY



Size of architectural surround determines extent of architectural body.



Initially, a person reads a sphere through the discerning of only a limited number of areas.

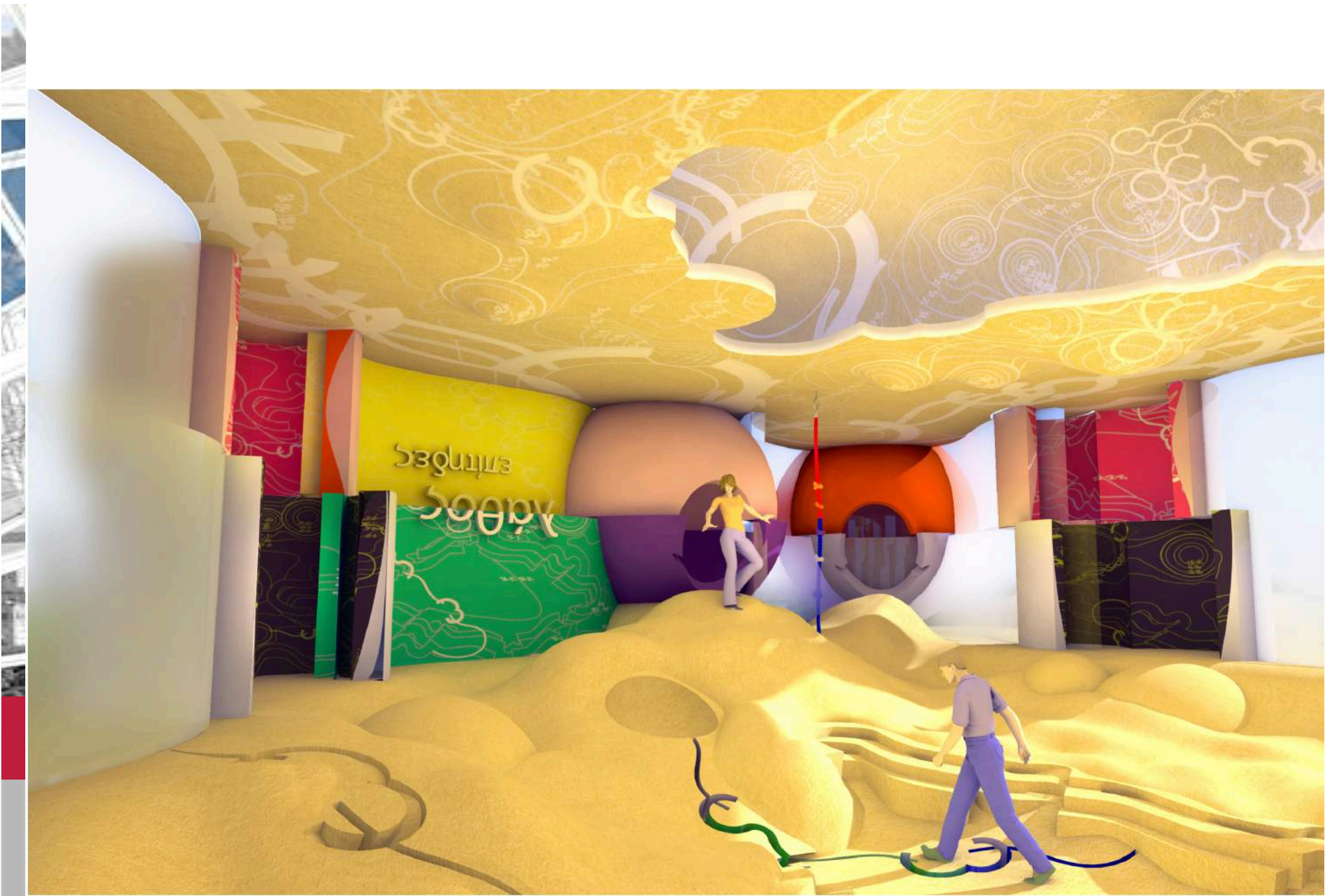


Within a symmetrical surround, a person feels secure in imaging or copying onto the area behind her what she has in front of her.















**THANK YOU**

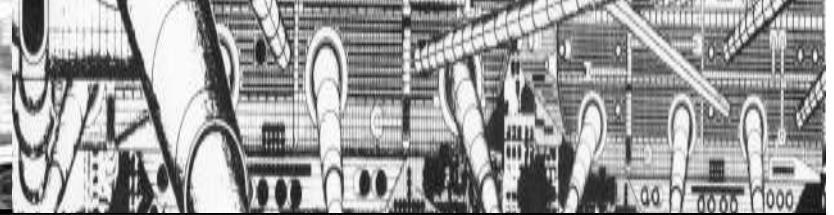
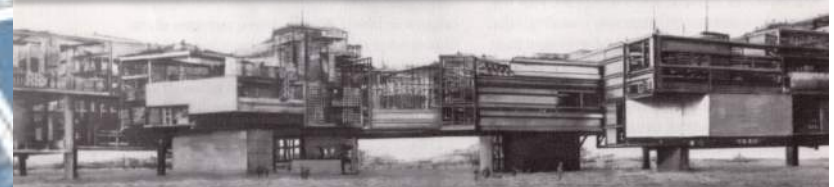


**Technische  
Universität  
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**Institut für Architektur-  
bezogene Kunst –**  
Prof. Tomás Saraceno

**Dec 5:** Dr. Alan Prohm artist/  
theorist/concept designer  
[alanprohm.wordpress.com](http://alanprohm.wordpress.com)





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## An ARCHITECTURAL BODY for the POST-ANTHROPOCENE

**Dr. Alan Prohm Ph.D. - Berlin**

[alanprohm.wordpress.com](http://alanprohm.wordpress.com)