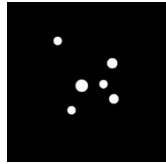


Architecture in the Modern Era

Summer Semester 2016 (Friday 1-2:30pm)
Wesley W. Posvar Hall (Room 1501)
Instructor: Matthew Schlueb



Lecture 5 (2016.08.05): An introduction to Matthew Schlueb, his education, practice and Villa Vuoto

Leitmotifs:

“Creativity Against the World” (354): curiosity and playfulness defines human condition and advantage, channeling youthful energy and sense of wonder, unexpected juxtapositions of existing subject matter in new context (Event-Structure).

Phenomenological Seeing (398): space as it is experienced in its felt immediacy through body or visualized in the mind’s eye, distinguishing perceptual envelopes and thresholds, defining lines and surfaces, inhabitant and form proxemics relationships.

Primary home is our being (411): daily life is filled with feelings, intuition, premonitions, internal things (often too personal to share) defining our being, an internal space (not some external physical structure) where we live our lives, our true home.

Palimpsest (473): remnants of ancestral preferences still resonating within subsequent generations, establishing a symbiotic relationship, a continuum through time, creating a sense of grounding, familiar feeling, place of belonging, preferential space.

Circular Form (394): indigenous morphology (in contrast to modern era, standardized, massed produced, rectilinear form) in isolated evolutionary refinements has inherent logic in relation to site specific materials, methods and the human condition.

Creativity Flow (322): directional as roots of a tree, gathering from many sources and channeled through trunk, dispersed again into multiple fruits of influence, forest of trees mixing carbon from air with water from earth, old in new context.

Childhood Perceptions (588): immediate, direct, immersed contact, responding to emotional gestures an object expresses (happy, sad, funny,...), in contrast to inanimate visual features (edge, surface, scale,...) adults typically perceive.

Numbing Sensitivities (510): stars only visible at night, easing of precision by a distancing from tactile existence, habituation to intensity increases in stimulation (modern age), separation at a safe distance (increasing proximity) from unknowns.

Prägnanz (281): we are trees in a forest, individual being as something other than sum of parts (gestalt), fullness of being by preference for more meaningful whole, seeking harmony and balance with ancestral roots, continuation.

Partis pris:

Visceral Kineticism: phenomenological study of form and space, internal movements in response to external environment, perceptual thresholds and envelopes, proxemic relationships influencing human behavior, line and surface refinements.

Subjektiv Space: external world perceived differently by each individual, defined by the inhabitant’s individual perceptions, filtered, shaped, distorted by their internal being to make it their own personal space, intimate within the space of a home.

Storytelling: oral tradition (predating written documentation in architectural or paper form) of continuation, consonance of ancestral and modern practice, emotive tool for illustrating truths establishing connection and restoring meaningfulness.

magnum opuses:

1993 – **gestured form and activated space** (visceral kinetic study)
Pratt Institute, New York

2004 – **Villa Vuoto** (subjektiv house) Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

2013 – **Luek Residence** (mother-in-law addition) Gibsonia, Pennsylvania



bibliography:

Villa Vuoto – An Architect’s Manifesto on the Origin of Creativity, Matthew Schlueb (Stella Cadente, Pittsburgh, 2008)

gestured form and activated space, Matthew Schlueb (Pratt Institute, New York, 1994)

Mi Casa, Su Casa, Matthew Schlueb (Villa Vuoto, Pittsburgh, forthcoming)

creativity against the world, Matthew Schlueb (Villa Vuoto, Pittsburgh, 2002)

Moral Trail, Father (Muted Box, Seattle, forthcoming)

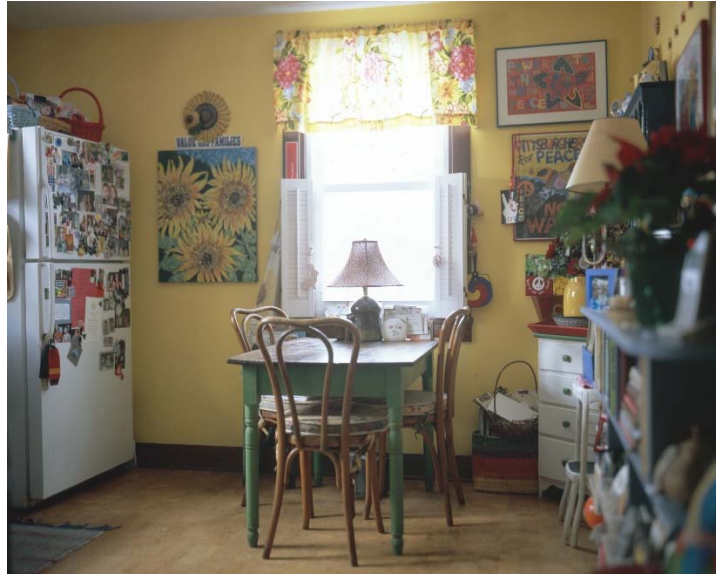
senza armatura, Matthew Schlueb (Villa Vuoto, Pittsburgh, 2015)

sleeve shakings, Matthew Schlueb (Villa Vuoto, Pittsburgh, 2015)

Märchen, Matthew Schlueb (Villa Vuoto, Pittsburgh, forthcoming)

The Book of Tea, Kakuzo Okakura (Fox Duffield, New York, 1906)

**How can one design a space for someone they have never met?
This is why we have become numb – we inhabit disconnected spaces.
Our spaces need to become meaningful again.**



Cherry Blossoms

Not long ago, I was invited into the home of a Quaker woman. We sat in her kitchen filled with colorful memories, as a winters afternoon sunlight filtered in across a well worn table. She had tutored a young Iraqi woman in English, who had immigrated with her husband. They had a daughter and a second on the way. The woman's heart had grown close to this family, and the two bedroom house, one more than needed, had planted a seed in her mind.

As we sat at this painted wood table, its surface a witness to a lifetime of home making, she explained to me how she wanted to add on a mother-in-law suite to her home, one she could move into so that this Iraqi family could have her existing house. As she said, "My happiest times are when I have people sitting around the fire circle, talking, laughing, singing into a night sky. Why not create a home to have more experiences like that?"

So, we met a few more times at this table, reviewing drawings, discussing plans to build such an addition. The table's four legs defined a space we shared in those meetings, just as four tall trees stood sentry outdoors at the corners of her home, defining a space for this new suite to be placed. The original house was a gabled box, painted blue siding, with an entry in an oddly placed side door. We decided to create a new entry, a connector between her new suite, modeled in character but scaled slightly smaller, and the original house now paired.

In the spring construction began, as her excitement spilled over into endless smiles each time I saw her. Walls were painted, wood floors laid, cabinetry placed. It wasn't long before her new family moved in, their first night on Thanksgiving Day. I imagine the fire that night was memorable for all of them, a new family made from two homes of distant cultures, now close in proximity of space and hearts.

I returned the following year, after some time settled in. The kitchen table was still there, in the same spot snuggled against that window facing a setting sun. However, now the top was masked by a printed cloth trimmed with embroidery. Much of her original furnishings remained, handed down along with the house, for another lifetime of use. But the space had changed, a new layer was added to the stories these things told, rendering something different, something special.

In such instances we see the full significance of the flower sacrifice. Perhaps the flowers appreciate the full significance of it. They are not cowards, like men. Some flowers glory in death - certainly the Japanese cherry blossoms do, as they freely surrender themselves to the winds. Anyone who has stood before the fragrant avalanche at Yoshino must realize this. For a moment they hover like bejeweled clouds and dance; then, as they sail away on laughing waters, they seem to say: Farewell, O Spring! We are on to Eternity.

If an architect is lucky, just such a flower blossom drifts by, offering a rare gift into the true measure of a home. It is not the timbers felled, squared and plumbed to support a roof overhead. It is not the room they define, decorated with finger paintings, tablecloths, and flowerpots. Nor is it the people living inside, sheltered, warmed, sharing their time together. It is the mixture of all these things, a blending that makes a home.

An aged painted table, edges eased by endless caresses, hands in conversation, communal meals, moments shared. An aged tree canopy, limbs lowered sheltering shade, protective of this woman reading stories to a granddaughter, making a happy place.

Note: Excerpt from the Book of Tea in italics.

<http://www.northhillsmoonthly.com/2016/03/31/106613/cherry-blossoms>