

“I will tell you this, I cannot read a book on Kindle. I have to own a book and I have to write in the book. When I read I take notes. I go back over it. My books are full of notes in different pens and colors and times, because when I read a book today that I may have read ten years ago, I read it differently because I am different.

To me, drawing and (writing) are the same thing. Anytime someone draws something on the computer, I want it printed out so I can draw over it, either with tracing paper or without. You have to think about a diagram. So for me, all of my work is drawn by hand first.

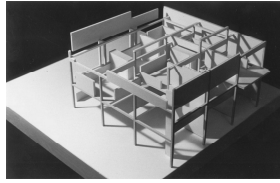
Drawing is a way of thinking. So to me, drawing is a form of writing and a form of reading what I write. I don't see any difference. To me, drawing is not making pretty things or representations. It is not representing anything – it is the incarnation of the thing. I'm trying to make it real and the only way it can be real is through my drawings.”

This is a quotation by Peter Eisenman. He believed **architecture could be read**, just as a book. That architecture as words can be manipulated to produce something other than narrative. He approached architecture through **syntax**, putting things together **grammatically**.



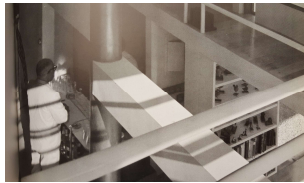
In 1969, Arthur Drexler and Colin Rowe organized a meeting at MoMA in NYC by the **Committee of Architects for the Study of the Environment** (CASE), featuring the works of five architects, Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk, and Richard Meier, referred to as the **New York Five** (or **The Whites**) and later published in a book titled Five Architects (1972).

Their work followed Corb's modernism and manipulations of Meis' 9 square in residential projects with contemporary ornament of stark, crisp, white plasterboard. Geometric maneuvers with **impressed surfaces** reading as **textual notations** of a **design process**.



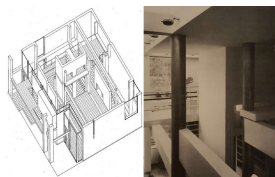
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Of the five, Eisenman lead the group as the most critically rigorous, developing what he called **Cardboard architecture**. In his view, houses are burdened by their meaning rooted in the history of architecture. By contrast, the object nature of architecture could be articulated by emphasis of **formal meanings inherent** within the house as object, independent of history, culture, man.



Therefore, his designs had **smooth surfaces with flush detailing**, insubstantiality of structure, unloading architecture of all **function** (wall means structure) and **semantic** associations (brick means warmth), replacing with associations of the cardboard model, using columns, walls, beams as they are modeled in cardboard with thin planar surfaces and layers.

Is it a building or a model? Scale is used to **dislocate anthropocentric meaning** from architecture. Without scale, architecture becomes model against reality = cardboard. By eliminating materiality, structural implications, cultural meaning, attention is placed on the **process of design, the study in model form**, not a decorated product.



For example, House I (1968) **two simultaneous structures** which overlay and interact, the first walls and the second columns and beams. The columns are not located in a grid pattern, but intentionally placed in an apparently random order. Consequently, they are in fact non-structural, **unloading their structural meaning**. They must now be **considered in a different way**, for a different purpose.

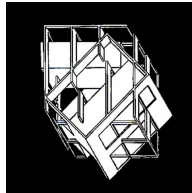
This overlay of two systems is intended to exemplify the logic inherent in a redundant formal structure, no longer structurally functional, rather providing a potential area of new meaning.



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Eisenman credits this idea to **Leon Battista Alberti**'s design for the façade on the **Palazzo Rucellai** (Florence, 1452), one of the first to proclaim the **new ideas of Renaissance architecture** based on the use of **pilasters and entablatures** in a grid-like fashion, making a statement of rational humanist clarity.

The stone veneer of the facade is rusticated in contrast to the smooth-faced pilasters, accentuating a **redundancy of two structural systems**, bearing wall overlaid with embedded non-load bearing columns.

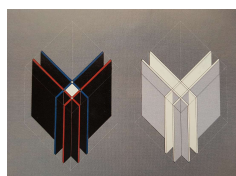


In House III (1971), this redundancy was achieved with two grids of columns and wall planes, the first grid **rotated 45 degrees** from the second.



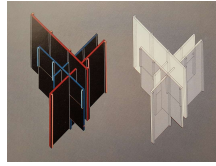
This process of rotation in design, informed the placement and size of windows, no longer a punched opening in a wall, rather a **lesion tear** resulting from the turning.

These design manipulations treating the house as an object, without any historic or cultural reference, reached a highpoint in House VI (1976), where the formal **reading became the dominant topography**, superseding the functional use.

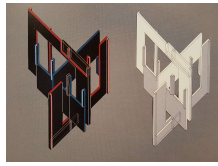


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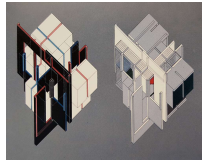
Beginning as two grids (red and blue) **offset as vertical planes**,



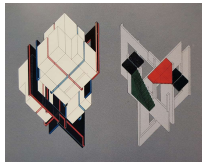
the planes **shift along x, y, and z-axis**,



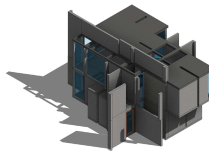
cut into each other **revealing residual columns, dividing the space**,



implying **positive space**, defined by openings in the vertical planes,



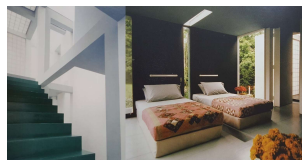
finally, **drawing diagonals** within the negative space compressed by vertical planes.



Single cell unfolding into a multi-cell organism, the development **logic can be read** in the slicing planes, displaced volumes, and column notations.

1:25

Autonomous object, generated by a design process, a set of rules providing a literary reading of **self-organizing** architectural form & space. Architecture as a language read, not created by the reader. Rather a **syntax** inherent within the **geometry of the object**.



Stairs without handrails, dining **table penetrated by a column**, **divided bed** in the master bedroom, the traditional functional requirements of a house are secondary to the **textual topology reading** of the architectural object.

“I am interested in displacing traditional reactions, displacing traditional meanings to make people more aware of their physical surroundings. I want them to feel differently, to be active rather than passive because the media world we live in, we have become passive.”



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Eisenman's eleventh case study house was incorporated into a larger project, the Cannaregio Town Square in Venice, Italy (1978), that marked his first reference to a **physical and historical context of site**.



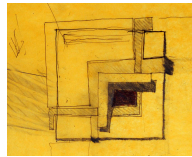
Drawing from Corb's unbuilt, design for a hospital on the same site, Eisenman extended **Corb's datum grid**,



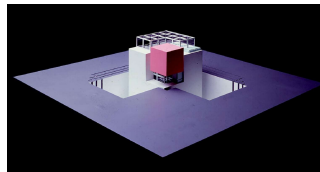
establishing voids in the ground plane, a metaphor for **man's displacement as the central instrument of measure**.



Varying the scale, each relative to the others, architecture becomes a measure of itself, inherent internal reference, **no longer anthropocentric**.



The architectural form (House XIa) is the same at all three scales, producing an **ambiguous function**.



Unclear if the object is a **house**, a **model of a house**, or a **mausoleum for a house**, with the smaller scale contained within the larger.



Contextual objects in a purely formal sense, the **architect as archeologist** uncovering forms that already exist, contain nothing, unable to be occupied, any meaning preceding man's relationship to them.

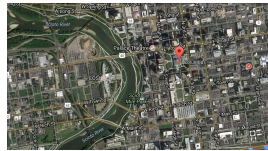


Architectural object **invents its own site and functional program**, scaling, rotating, replicating to activate off Corb's static grid.

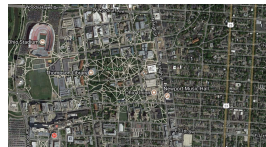


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In 1989, Eisenman was able to realize for the first time in a built structure his earlier case study houses of **autonomous form** integrated with the **contextual mining** explored in the Cannaregio project. The Wexner Center for the Visual Arts also revisited the **juxtaposition of two redundant systems** from earlier case study houses,



in this case the **Jeffersonian grid** laying out the city of Columbus, Ohio, representing man's **dominance over the wild frontier of the Northwest Territory**, the Ohio State house at corner of Broad and High streets, **orientated toward Scioto river**



juxtaposed against the Ohio State University campus grid along High street, north of downtown Columbus, a **12¼ degree rotation between the two grids**.



Anchoring the site, Eisenman **excavated the historic armory**, once located the Oval.



However, the armory's **footprint was rotated** from NE Oval arc to 15th ave. campus grid. Repositioned/deconstructed no longer historic, now a **design device/text**.



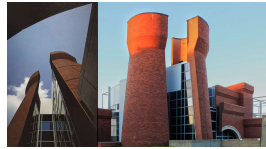
With the armory sited, a **regulating line** was drawn running east/west, aligning with the campus grid on 15th avenue to the open end of the horseshoe football stadium.



The regulating line and perpendicular line indexed by the armory in place, the overlay of **three grid scales** (12', 24', 48' squares) in plan,



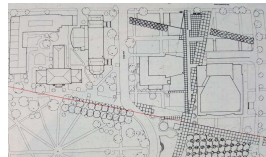
establish the **figurative manifestation of the grid** geometry, replacing the traditional building form.



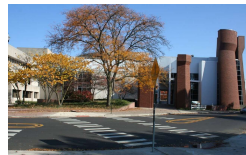
The **grid deconstructs the armory**, rotating, splitting open, cutting sections.



and **deconstructing the ground plane**.



Wexner Center as a bridge btwn. campus & city, regulating line a **line of symmetry**, where the city entry path from High street **shifts/slides** past the campus entry path from the School of Art (Hayes Hall).



A **sightline vista** maintained from Hayes Hall through Wexner Center to the entry.



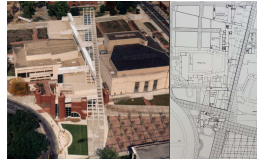
The main entry the focal on city approach, the **armory reconstructed**.



With dramatic **sightline vista as reward**, arriving outside the main entry.

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[10 minute break]



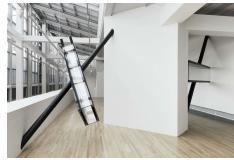
External form driven by the contextual site, with building infilling the **in-between** space of Mershon and Weigel auditoriums.



Inside, the main stairs leading from the lobby down to the galleries, are penetrated by **non-load bearing columns** from the earlier case study houses.



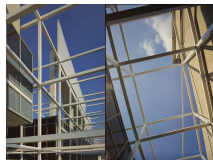
Galleries made from the **negative interior space**, grids overlay surfaces, lighting,...



Galleries criticized as **hostile to art** (Sarah Oppenheimer, S-337473, Feb.18, 2017)



Installation art engages the building (Chris Burden, The Wexner Castle, 1990-1)



Ambiguous form from Cannaregio project, **trace** of Mershon auditorium cornice.



“When a supposedly rational and ordered system grows too large and out of proportion to its intended purpose, it loses touch with human reason. It then begins to reveal the **innate disturbances and potential for chaos** in all systems of apparent order.”



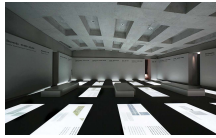
“In the monument (Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, 2005) there is no goal, no end, no working one’s way in or out. The duration of an individual’s experience of it **grants no further understanding**, since understanding the Holocaust is impossible. In this context, there is no nostalgia, no memory of the past, only the living memory of the individual experience.”



“Walking through the memorial, it has nothing to do with what happened in the camps. It is about walking into **that space and you get strange physical sensations** such as undulation, tilting, leaning, and you feel perplexity, isolation, disorientation, you never know where you are.” It is a **project of silence**, to hear the voices of the dead, not the living.



2,711 concrete stelae arranged in a grid pattern on a sloping field. Approximately 3’ in width, 8’ in length, vary in height up to 15’, with only enough space between for **individual passage**.



Underground holds the names of approximately 3 million Jewish Holocaust victims illuminated in the grid pattern on the floor, with a **reverse stelae imprint** on the ceiling.



Artist Shahak Shapira (2017) who has taken offense to visitors taking selfies at the memorial, has created a website that **superimposes** their selfies over background scenes from the Nazi deathcamps.



Eisenman commented, “People have been jumping around on those pillars forever. They’ve been sunbathing, they’ve been having lunch there and I think that’s fine. It’s like a catholic church, it’s a meeting place, children run around, they sell trinkets. **A memorial is an everyday occurrence, it is not sacred ground.**”



“Architecture is never about a meaning that is simply assigned to various parts to project a particular reading. The whole idea of my architecture is about stopping any communication and placing within architecture itself a device that causes you **to react emotionally, physically, and intellectually – without representation.** My architecture means nothing. The idea is to create a particular experience.”

2:30