Space Oddity: Exercises in Art and Philosophy

edited by
Giulia Gelmi, Anastasia Kozachenko-Stravinsky,
Andrea Nalesso

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Abstract

The volume includes papers presented at the 4th Postgraduate International Conference of the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Venice, 5-7 October 2022). Our understanding of reality is filtered through myriad media, and we have the ability – and power – to gather, ignore, tweak, and explore the information needed to define what we mean by 'reality'. The concept of 'space' – in its broadest sense – plays an essential role in an individual's explanation of reality, and we must deal with a plurality of models and concepts of it. As elaborated in the text *Space and Time in Art*, the Russian theologian, philosopher, and art theorist Pavel Florensky states: "all culture can be interpreted as the activity of organising space". Starting from this culturological reading, Florensky identifies three spatial "dimensions" and three corresponding genres of activity: (1) The space of our strong relations and the activity of 'Technique'; (2) The mental space and its organisation and the activities of 'Science' or 'Philosophy'; (3) The space between the previous two, and the activity of 'Art'. Ultimately, all have the same aim: to change reality to reconstruct space. According to leading scholars and critics, the late 1980s saw a "spatial turn" take place in literary, social, and cultural studies. In 1991 Fredric Jameson theorised a shift from the paradigm of time to the paradigm of space, from modernism to postmodernism. The pandemic era has refocused investigation on the present paradigm, where Florensky's spaces have been concentrated through cyberspace almost overnight. Through the notion of the 'semiosphere' – as elaborated by Juri Lotman 100 years ago – we collectively pondered the question: "should we reconsider the concept of space as a cultural category altogether?".

Keywords   Art history. Philosophy. Space. Displaying. Architecture. Historiography. Visual studies.

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Inflatable vs Tectonic. A Seven Days Diary to Disrupt a Miesian Space in Berlin

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Abstract   The *Hypercomfort* summer school hosted by the Berlin UdK, inside the L.M. van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie, has represented an operative moment of a 'space oddity', highlighting proper characteristics of ephemeral architectures. The construction of colourful craftmade and handmade inflatables, similar to nomadic settlement systems, has defined an offensive and paradoxical component, absolutely contrary to 'Miesian' architecture. The paper aims to analyse the scientific construction of inflatables, to highlight the temporal suspension and the cancellation of the spatial surroundings as effects of the ephemeral architectures.

Keywords   Architectural design. Mies van der Rohe. Ephemeral architecture. Inflatables. Hypercomfort.

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1   Introduction

> Meanwhile, like a form of architectural prayer, civic plans have been set in motion to rebuild the Campanile *dov'era*, *com'era*, as if the dilapidations of time and entropy could be reversed.
>
> (Thomas Pynchon, *Against the Day*, 2006)

> Il legame tra tempo e calore è dunque profondo: ogni volta che si manifesta una differenza tra passato e futuro, c'è di mezzo il calore. [...] L'entropia di Clausius è una quantità [...] che cresce o resta uguale, ma non diminuisce mai, in un processo isolato.
>
> (Carlo Rovelli, *L'ordine del tempo*, 2017)

From 5 to 10 September 2022, three huge inflatables invaded and occupied the space of the Neue Nationalgalerie by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The temporary pneumatic architectures were created as part of the summer school titled *Hypercomfort* sponsored by the University of the Arts Berlin (Universität der Künste, from now on as UdK) and coordinated by Stéphanie Bru (BRUTHER) in collaboration with Eveline Jürgens (UdK) and the French-German architect Hans-Walter Müller (guest lecturer of the workshop).[1]

The workshop, starting from some imposed conditions such as the concentrated realisation of the inflatables (five days), the very short duration of the set-up (four hours), the precariousness of the tarpaulins and construction materials, the ugliness of the inflatables, the absence of predetermined use of the space built, tried to investigate with an operational way, the conditions of the temporary architectures within the museum space, exploring the drifts of the 'comfort zone' or 'hypercomfort'.

The research stems from the idea that the comfort zone is the obligatory passage in the appropriation of a space, which is domesticated with conditions of climate and hygiene to be inhabited by humans; air, in its primitive meaning is an element that can be shaped to define favourable conditions for habitation; on the other hand, it is a rel-

1 *With Mies van der Rohe into a New World* is the public exhibition of the *Hypercomfort* summer school by the University of the Arts (UdK, Berlin), Neue Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Freunde der Nationalgalerie e.V, Euroboden GmbH, from 5-10 September 2022. With the workshop team leaders prof. Stéphanie Bru with prof. Eveline Jürgens, the students Felix Anatol Findeiß, Dörte Meyer, Sarah Scherzer, Paul Brückner, Gustav Ingold, A. Axel Thorisson with Clara Ancel, Nicolás Bobran, Vassilissa Brahmi, Benjamin Brenner, Paul Brückner, Anneke Frank, Sunghoon Go, Marius Grubert, Richard Hees, Leon Hidalgo, Gustav Ingold, Johannes Jakobi, Ana Kolenc, Konstantinos Lekkas, Jan Lessmann, Tevi Allan-Ston Mensah, Laura Mucciolo, Kalle Niemann, Tan Oktik, Nuttamon Pramsumran, Helena Schenavsky, Felix Schuschan, Zoya Solovieva, Kei Urayama, Flavia Vilkama, Nick Zinthäfner.

Figure 1   The three inflated architectures realised during the one-week workshop
With Mies van der Rohe into a New World inside the Hypercomfort Summer School.
UdK, prof. Stéphanie Bru with prof. Eveline Jürgens. © Verena Brüning

atively recent idea that air can be used as the structural fullness that allows a space to exist. These are the premises of the challenge proposed by the pneumatic architectures of Hans-Walter Müller, guest architect of the summer school and designer of the inflatables created during the week-long workshop.

The three architectures (two cylinders and a pavilion of composite form) **[fig. 1]** were made from paper models of the various parts of the project exploded and printed on a 1:1 scale, subsequently reproduced in the necessary number of tracings, on recycled plastic sheets in white, black, transparent, blue, and yellow; then, under an economy-production regime, double-sided tape welded the various parts together. The use of materials such as packaging membranes, mainly used in agricultural production, defined a textural contrast within the museum space and ensured an airtight skin much more durable than the use of recycled material. The construction of the cavity was possible through the input, within the plastic drapery, of a certain quantitative relationship between air and pressure: the drapery thus became a pneumatic definition of a space, whose final form was outlined as a whole, only at the end of the filling operations.

The works, at the end of the public exhibition, as night came on, returned to being drapery deflated with air: the mechanically dissolved architectures, albeit for a few hours, reconstructed – within the Neue Nationalgalerie – a temporary and paradoxical alternative to the (apparent) statuesque reality imposed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The colourful and imperfect, 'craftmade' and 'handmade' inflatables, properly and strictly ephemeral (i.e., of one-day duration), allowed certain design actions to attack the museum: reversibility, short durability, precariousness. These areas, foreign to architectural design that relates to the 'long life', to the stability of a work, to its extended life in time, introduce into the rigidity of the 'Miesian' space a way of escape, the suspension of time imposed with a sudden, noisy, unbalanced ensemble of machines circus.

This paper, using the narrative form of the diary, will examine the workshop experience by associating each day with an operational consideration given by the experience, and then drown the praxis in a broader theoretical framework that highlights the meaning and spatial consequences that these ephemeral pneumatic constructions unveiled.

2 Day 1. The Arrival at the Neue Nationalgalerie by Mies van de Rohe

The Neue Nationalgalerie, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, is a space arising from a square layout, governed by rules of symmetry, within the district known as the Kulturforum (not far from the ABB Roland Ernst Area and the Philharmonie by Hans Scharoun). The space of the Neue Nationalgalerie, divided in two levels, one above ground and one semi-basement, is substantially delineated by the iconic black matte steel coffered roof.

The semi-basement level is defined from the outside as a basement volume that organises on the various sides of the volume different access conditions (ramps, monumental stairs, utility stairs, service accesses).

The access space on the above-ground level is made with the crossing of the glazed boundary. Inside the strongly symmetrical space is confirmed by two blocks of vertical connections (stairs and automated platforms); by following the alignment with the leading edge of the stairs, two hollow bodies clad in green Tinos marble, are used as cages for the plant conditions.

The basement spaces, only partially lit by a patio, house the art collections, defining spatial hierarchies in chained boxes that follow one another in a 'climatic' spatial hierarchy (in the specific from the largest space to the smallest).

The total symmetry that governs architecture has been subverted, through the construction of reversible pneumatic architectures.

3   Day 2. The Reversible Pneumatic Construction

The experience of building electrically air-powered inflatables makes it possible to identify some considerations, both on the 'reversible' process of ephemeral architectural space and on its own 'pneumatic' condition of existence. The reversibility of the inflatable is the construction, on closer inspection, of a dream. The inflatable has undergone two, perhaps three, state transitions: disassembled into disunited pieces, joined in the form of deflated plastic drapery, space filled with air. The construction trajectory followed the normal progression, as with an architectural building in the strict sense, only unlike a building that is designed to 'last', this space was deflated, triggering a process of reversibility and thus of loss.

Spatial reversibility, which perceptually carries with it a salvific theme, namely the idea that the process of reversibility is transitive and therefore replicable, clashes with the factual reality, which highlights the loss of architectural space, highlighted in the opening by Pynchon's words 'it was, as it was'. As highlighted by Barthes:

> I do not know the voice of being loved except when it is dead, recalled to memory, remembered in my head, far beyond my ear; voice tenuous and yet monumental, since it is one of those objects that do not exist except when it is gone. (Barthes 2014, 91-2)[2]

While even the prospect of return can appear salvific and safe, it is the loss of space, its total disappearance, its erasure, that confers proof of existence.[3] The power of space erasure is a repeated event in the architectural design field, which has repeatedly manifested itself as a praxis to heal certain deficiencies (from Plan Voisin to Pruitt Igoe); in this case, the erasure, like a dreamed spell, is linked to the pneumatic existence of the inflatable.

The powering (or existence) of the inflatable **[fig. 2]** was through motors activated by electricity that fed air and pressure into the three bodies, calibrating their relationship. The erasure of architecture coincides with the absence of air, understood in this case as the structural element of space. Air, albeit through an experiment that did not include habitability, is the element that ensures the mechanical survival of the architecture. Inflatables, therefore, function in contrast to

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2   The quotes given in English have been translated from Italian by the Author. Instead, where grammatical period construction was more complex, the Author preferred to transcribe the quote in the original language.

3   As recalled by Agamben (2019, 19): "This is why it could be said that not paradise, but its loss constitutes the original mythologema of Western culture, a kind of original traumatism that has deeply marked Christian and modern culture, condemning to failure any search for happiness on earth".

Figure 2 The powering (or existence) of the inflatable was through motors activated by electricity that fed air and pressure into the three bodies, calibrating their relationship. © Verena Brüning

built architecture, where if we tried (with great difficulty) to subtract air, we would verify that the structure would not be compromised.

> Structure does not give happiness; but every structure is habitable, and this is perhaps its best definition. I can very well inhabit that which does not make me happy; I can complain and at the same time continue to remain where I am; I can reject the sense of the structure I endure and accept without too much suffering its everyday waste (habits, minute pleasures, small securities, bearable things, passing tensions); and of this continuity of the system (which makes it properly habitable), I can have the perverse taste: David Stylites lived very well on his column: he had managed to make it (despite the obvious difficulty) a structure. (Barthes 2014, 189)

The term 'structure', which unites both the reversibility and the pneuma of the inflatable's architecture, is what is most appropriate to define the space of inflated domes, and, as Barthes confirms, it is something reversible and mechanically originated, but above all habitable – the secret of habitability lies in the continuity of structure.

4   Day 3. A Five Days Realisation, a Four Hour Building-Life Time

The proportionally inverse relationship that exists between the construction of a space and its durability is what undermines the previously investigated continuity of a system, thus its habitability.

The inflatables, made through a copy tailoring technique, took five days of collective work (with twenty-five people) **[fig. 3]** to become a single drapery; the attention was placed on the joints between the parts, since any gaps not covered by the drapery would have undermined the inflatable system, allowing air to escape, generating unintended dissipation **[fig. 4]**.[4] The only time the inflatable took shape was during the morning of the fifth day: prior to that time, the drapery was just a huge quilt of plastic; so any shape, possible symmetry, any flaws or encumbrances, were only remotely intuitable.

In contrast, however, the public demonstration of the inflatables was a short-lived event (about four hours) that saw about three times as many people involved in the construction in the same space, curious to see the inflatables from the outside or to enter them (where possible).[5] The entry of people into the inhabitable inflatable structure occurs through calibrated openings but brings with it spaces for dissipation, in this case, controlled but allowed.

The inflatable revealed two faces, the private and the public. The former, during the five-day construction with twenty-five people, the latter during the exhibition of seventy-five people. During the private construction, air dissipation was opposed, understood as a factory defect of the space; in contrast, with the public, air dissipation was allowed precisely to let them discover the space, otherwise only intuitable from the outside. Air dissipation linked public and private in an existence relationship that involved duration, thus the entropic condition of space, whereby:

> Ten years before he understood that time is slowed by masses, Einstein had understood that time is slowed by speed. (Rovelli 2017, 39)

The duration of bubble construction occurred in a time perceived as very rapid, the creeping drapery (a deflated mass), made by a few people who did not really sense the shape of the object they were making, who did not perceive it as a mass **[fig. 5]**. However, the group who worked according to the deflated drapery took on the connotations

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4   About dissipation see Lynch 1992, 77-8.

5   The public display of the inflatables took place on 10 September 2022, from 4 to 8 p.m., at the Glass Hall of the Neue Nationalgalerie.

Figure 3   The inflatables, made through a copy tailoring technique, took five days of collective work (with twenty-five people). Hans-Walter Müller with Stèphanie Bru (BRUTHER) during the workshop.
© Verena Brüning

Figure 4   The inflatables, made through a copy tailoring technique, took five days of collective work (with twenty-five people) to become a single drapery. The attention was placed on the joints between the parts, any gaps not covered by the drapery would have undermined the inflatable system, allowing air to escape, generating unintended dissipation.
© Verena Brüning

Figure 5   The creeping drapery (a deflated mass), made by a few people who did not really sense the shape of the object they were making, who did not perceive it as a mass.
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Figure 6   Plastic tarpaulins used in agriculture for fourth-range greenhouse cultivation, packaging materials such as double-sided tape and bubble wrap, scissors and paper patterns: the materials used to make the inflatables, despite being created to protect and resist any weather, border on absolute precariousness of strength and framework: soft, brittle, malleable materials, the implementation of which depends on the quality of application.
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of the slow mass, which has "the shape of a convoy, united by the remoteness of the destination" (Canetti 1982, 47).

This first slowdown, amortised over five days, was not perceived given the tendency of the mass to centralise attention and divert time (add mass and power).

During the public event, on the other hand, the presence of the inflated mass, thus its true first appearance, the speed of public exposure, and the presence of additional interactive masses (people) worked, as Rovelli argues, as time-slowers. The short durability of the event (only four hours) expanded into a time perceived as very long (many of the participants perceived the event as all night lasting).

The regulation of air dissipation is, on closer inspection, the mechanism that regulated both the construction of the structures and their existence. The transition between past (construction phase) and future (public display phase) are linked by the energy expenditure of heat that occurred, made possible by the presence of the architectures and bodies, understood as masses.

5   Day 4. The Precariousness of Building Materials

Plastic tarpaulins used in agriculture for fourth-range greenhouse cultivation, packaging materials such as double-sided tape and bubble wrap, scissors and paper patterns: the materials used to make the inflatables, despite being created to protect and resist any weather, border on absolute precariousness of strength and framework: soft, brittle, malleable materials, the implementation of which depends on the quality of application [fig. 6].

Despite their precarious nature, i.e., not guaranteed but obtained 'almost' by a miracle (again, the drapery of the inflatables is 'questioned' as if it were alive), the inflatable endured by going on stage. Through the imposition – by curators Hans-Walter Müller, Stéphanie Bru, Eveline Jürgens – of a 'sustainable' line on materials, a criterion of endurance to durability was verified. The inflatable habitable structures by arranging a convenience of realisation:

> Se consideriamo i costi allargati di qualcosa, è talora vero che un oggetto più costoso ma più duraturo diminuirà nel tempo il suo costo, mentre ci darà anche i piaceri di una cosa familiare e ben usata. Ma altri oggetti saranno più convenienti se effimeri, anche perché porranno meno vincoli al nostro futuro. [...] La vita ottimale di una cosa dipende dai costi relativi di produzione e manutenzione a cui bisogna aggiungere il costo di eliminazione. La nostra affezione per oggetti quasi permanenti può essere controbilanciata dalla noia che ci danno, o dal modo in cui limitano il nostro futuro. Ci sono occasioni in cui diciamo: una bella liberazione! (Lynch 1992, 254)

The argument about the convenience of implementation well applies to architectures as well, and not only to things. Trying paradoxically to substitute for Lynch's 'things' and 'objects', domestic architectures or properly the word 'house', forcing the argument, this would not change its meaning. The house, precious architecture and space of affection, carries with it the limited spatial flexibility of a design defined to last (in theory) a lifetime; the presence of the house fixed element works as a limiter of the future with respect to the inhabitant and the spaces (he or she) might wish to inhabit. The inflatable, pneumatic inhabitable structure as a domestic prototype in its own right, although primitive and *in nuce*, without any hygienic or energetic services, in its construction, it contains reasoning about energy and the expenditure of production, maintenance, and above all elimination.

For the first time and in a declared way, the house as a space for living can disappear, be erased, or eliminated because it is obsolete, without this bringing with it an economic loss of investment, without the erasure becoming a counterproductive move. Inhabiting the air, using its structural fullness as domestic space carries with it the idea that domestic architecture should be generated, summarily regulated by a boundary and not dominated (by walls, hierarchies, rooms, spaces, meticulous interiors, engineered air conditioning systems or electrical survival). The inflatable bubble becomes a device to inhabit where hierarchies of control undergo updating:

> To control/Definitions
>
> To check something to make sure the required conditions are fulfilled
> To check the accuracy of something
> To subject to meticulous examination
> To supervise a person
> To exercise moral, material or political domination over a region or a country
> To manage one's body, feelings or instincts voluntarily
> A controlled environment, or critical environment, is an area that must have certain parameters controlled, specifically, pressure, temperature, and segregation. Many laboratories are considered controlled environments, as they have controlled temperature and pressure and are separated from other operations, such as manufacturing or shipping. (Bruther 2020, 58)

Following the trajectories proposed by Bru and Theriot, the space of the inflatable, habitable structure is a space of control by temperature, pressure, and transit capacity, i.e., the possibility of exit from it; that same inhabited inflatable hypothesised by Banham in 1965 (Banham 1965, 70-9).

6 Day 5. The Inflatable Ugliness

The inflatables, once filled with air, involved certain senses of perception: hearing (the noise emitted by the air motors), touch (haptics), smell, and especially sight. The inflatable structures manifested themselves in all their ugliness. Touch collaborated in this perceptual construction: through the interaction between hands and inflatable structures, the aura of distance that enveloped the unfamiliar and – apparently – frightening objects made it possible to establish a relationship of proximity with the architectures, making them accessible, dominating them by touching or entering them.

In addition, due to a casual choice of materials used, the originally smooth and continuous smoothed sheets were cut into parts and joined through glue joints, passing each time from hand to hand among the participants, touching the ground, getting dirty with dust, and accidents. The air bubbles possessed all the characteristics of the anti-beautiful, the anti-positive, and the anti-avoidant. Upon the intake of air, the inflatable structures revealed deformations and irregularities, formal conditions that lump these objects together with macabre apparitions within a space, that of the Neue Nationalgalerie, easily understood as an architectural expression of Western beauty.

The absolute and polished compositional and formal clarity of the Neue Nationalgalerie contrasts with the overflowing and pushing structure of the air cylinders and the ungainly hypothesis of the central inflatable. With immediacy, the formal difference between museum space and plastic structures is noted, highlighting their profound difference: the former for which criteria of harmony, magnificence, and symmetry define an architecture of appreciation; the latter, for which ideas of repulsion are presented through the obscene, the unclean, the indecent. Technically, inflatables would fit the perspective of formal ugliness, intended:

> Come squilibrio nella relazione organica tra le parti di un tutto. (Eco 2007, 19)

These dirty, dissimilar architectures slip into that history of the ugly outlined by Eco, establishing a dissonance, a tension with the host architecture; a hierarchy is established, between the Mies van der Rohe museum and the deformed, dirty, objects of repulsion [fig. 7]. This tension brings the container into the background, almost making it disappear, indeed highlighting the presence only of the inflatables. The ugly, which is not universal but refers to times context and society, emerges overbearingly generating a spatial suspension of the existing, ignoring the surroundings, and using the ugly as a fetish.

Famous examples of this design strategy were Saint Phalle and Tinguely's *She-a-Cathedral* at the Moderna Museum in Stockholm

(1966); although it was not a pure inflatable, but rather a steel structure covered in fabric, the operations before and after the exhibition paralleled the inflatables in the Neue: the object built in forty days by eight people, exhibited for two months, was a large interior in the shape of a female body to 'enter'.[6] The museum that housed the fetish became an immense anonymous white box, the destruction of the fetish (save the head) determined the end of the exhibition. Or Paul McCarthy's *Tree* of 2014, a 24-meter-tall 'Christmas tree-like' structure in Place-Vendôme that was destroyed in the night (by turning off the mechanical fans and cutting the tie-rods that stabilised it), erased, if only for a few hours, the urban void of Place-Vendôme.

The ugly as fetish temporarily erases the surrounding for the duration of its presence, so much so that only one presence is allowed – as with McCarthy's tree – either the architecture or the fetish. Picking up the meaning of Barthes' words, which emphasise:

> Il tatto è il più demistificatore dei nostri sensi, al contrario della vista che è il più magico. (Barthes 1994, 147-8)

These ephemeral architectures, whether urban apparitions or not, act as fetish-objects capable of deceiving and bewildering the viewer, erasing the existing context wherever possible (as with the Neue Nationalgalerie's inflatables or Saint Phalle's Cathedral), or declaring absolute incompatibility with the context, such that either one or the other may survive (as with McCarthy). Visual perception brings with it the power of transformation, of imagination, on the architectural body, narrowing the field, giving rise to other and more hallucinatory visions, which sometimes exclude 'reality' **[fig. 8]**; touch on the contrary, as demonstrated by the irruption on McCarthy's inflatable, opposes sight, seeking to dominate, conquer, declassify the object by operating de-mystifying actions, that is, of cleaning, of de-secreting, of unveiling the mysteries that sight has produced.

7 Day 6. From Dawn to Dusk of a Day

The construction of the inflatable bubbles was a bodily, physical, collective endeavour whose final direction was the exhibition to the 'public' of the habitable structures: the exhibition had, from the beginning, an imposed duration of four hours, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on 10 September 2022; the architectures would have a deadline.

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[6] See "Remembering She-a-Cathedral": `https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/remembering–she–a–cathedral/`.

Figure 7 These dirty, dissimilar architectures slip into that history of the ugly outlined by Eco, establishing a dissonance, a tension with the host architecture; a hierarchy is established, between the Mies van der Rohe museum and the deformed, dirty, objects of repulsion.
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Nella definizione comune il termine effimero, 'che dura solo un giorno', ha origine nel lessico medico, indicando febbri di breve durata esaurite le quali era esaurita la malattia. Per estensione il termine stabilisce quindi una relazione specifica tra durata e progetto, descrivendo gli apparati architettonici che si consumano nel tempo determinato della festa. (Fava 2017, 19)

Durability and design, when mutually related, trigger the initiation of a festive time, as in the case of the inflatables, that of public display. For this, I can fall within the realm of the ephemeral, but also for the experiential condition of expectation that festivity brings. However, the relationship between durability, architectures, and celebration is not direct, as much as what happens by involving architectures within the festive action, that is, in the relationship between 'flaunting'

Figure 8   Visual perception brings with it the power of transformation, of imagination, on the architectural body, narrowing the field, giving rise to other and more hallucinatory visions, which sometimes exclude 'reality'; touch on the contrary, as demonstrated by the irruption on McCarhty's inflatable, opposes sight, seeking to dominate, conquer, declassify the object by operating de-mystifying actions, that is, of cleaning, of de-secreting, of unveiling the mysteries that sight has produced.
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(space) and 'wasting' (time).[7] 'Flaunting' and 'wasting' refer to two differentiated realms, the former belonging to the sphere of space, the latter to time; festive architecture thus oscillates between time and space, dilating the relationship of duration (as already seen, only before the festival, the duration of the event was known; during the festival, a sense of time was 'lost'), and contracting the spatial perception of the inflatables.

In uno spazio limitato c'è moltissimo, e i molti che si muovono entro quell'area possono tutti parteciparvi. Il rendimento di qualsiasi coltura o allevamento viene offerto alla vista in grandi mucchi. [...] C'è più di quanto tutti insieme potrebbero consumare, e

---

7   "Festivo è il comportarsi in modo da ostentare ingenuamente o sprecare vistosamente, indipendentemente dalla collocazione nel tempo, o magari contro il tempo, di questo agire" (Jesi 2013, 93).

Figure 9   The verification of the festive action attracts the presence of festive masses, corresponding to ephemeral, day-long architectures that from dawn to dusk disrupted the space of the Neue Nationalgalerie. © Verena Brüning

allo scopo di consumare affluiscono sempre più persone [il tempo]. [...] La festa è la meta, ed essa è stata raggiunta. La concentrazione è molto alta, ma l'uguaglianza è per buona parte uguaglianza di arbitrio e piacere. Ci si spinge davanti caoticamente e non parallelamente. Le cose che stanno là accatastate, cui si partecipa, costituiscono una parte essenziale della concentrazione, il suo nucleo. (Canetti 1982, 73-4)

As Canetti confirms, in the space of the Neue Nationalgalerie that has become extremely limited during the festival, the many flockers move in correspondence to the objects-fetishes, which appear as piles, heaps, pushing objects. The presence of these architectures cancels the container and dilates time, which is more than could be consumed. The participants in the festival use the architectures as obstacles, moving chaotically and not in parallel (as in the days of realisation). The verification of the festive action attracts the presence of festive masses, corresponding to ephemeral, day-long architectures that from dawn to dusk disrupted the space of the Neue Nationalgalerie **[fig. 9]**.
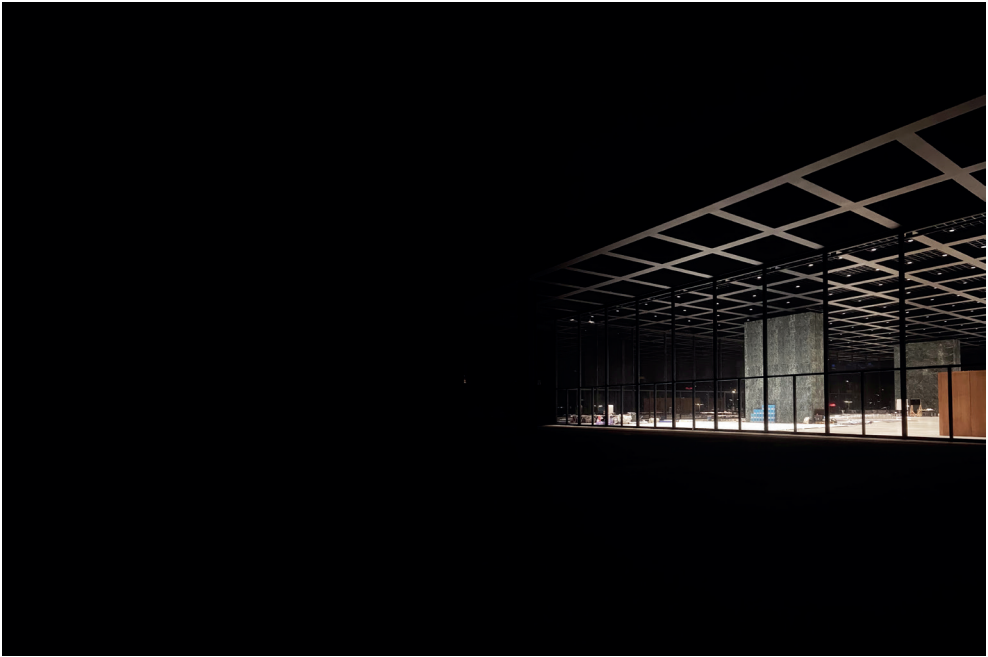
8   Day 7. Farewell to the Neue Nationalgalerie / The Epilogue

Vorrei che non si spegnesse anche il ricordo del mondo d'ombra che abbiamo lasciato alle spalle; mi piacerebbe abbassare le gronde, offuscare i colori delle pareti, ricacciare nel buio gli oggetti troppo vistosi, spogliare di ogni ornamento superfluo quel palazzo che chiamano Letteratura [Architettura]. Per cominciare, spegniamo le luci. Poi, si vedrà. (Tanizaki 1965, 67)

The day after the public performance of the event began long before the new dawn rose. From midnight between 10 and 11 September 2022, in the complete Berlin darkness, the engines powering the inflatables were turned off. The habitable structures disappeared as architecture-fetish and returned to drapery, making the museum reappear, missing for a day **[fig. 10]**.

The exhibition at the Neue Nationalgalerie operationally corroborates the theory that the construction of temporary architectures

densely extends the event over time (the temporary architectures seem to last longer than expected) and cancel out additional surrounding spatial presences (other architectures seem to disappear) (Gausa 2009, 198). The dilation of the subject and the disappearance of the surroundings are, indeed, spatial 'oddities' that deform the experience and memory of a space, confirming the echo of the temporary: architectures that seem, and are not.

The inflatables, staged one night only, were deflated and stored, remaining at the disposal of the University of the Arts in Berlin, which will re-purpose the temporary architectures in other places and times, as large habitable structures with no specific use.

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