

Point and Line into Landscape: Herbert Bayer and the Dilemma of Architectural Historiography

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Any reconsideration of the institutionalization and subsequent eclipse of Modernism in American architecture must include a consideration of historiography in twentieth-century American architecture. The widespread removal of political and poetic content from European precedents by American architects and critics has to be recognized as integral to a framework of aestheticization and instrumentalization necessary to an ethos of production — an ethical horizon within which all conceptual contradictions are reconciled among a diverse cast of monuments. History, for American architects, has been a selective process of sanitizing precedents for a discretely bound profession free of the nuance and difficulty that accompany poetic and political practices.

Key to the instrumentalization of architectural history has been the reduction of historical accounts to simple lineages stressing influence and descent. This reduction has left us with a select cast of stars whose brilliance is measured by the extent to which they can be seen to be reflected in their successors. And even those architects not neglected in this process subsequently find difficult or ideologically inconsistent works from their oeuvres left aside from historical accounts. Modernism's promotion and criticism has left us with a received history whose linear structure asks only to be filled-in with details. Those episodes that don't fit this model tend to be left aside in a growing pile of other modernisms demanding other histories.'

This paper attempts just such an account. It was prompted by a desire to reconcile Herbert Bayer's seminal environmental sculpture, *Grass Mound*,² with later earthworks by Robert Smithson and others. Though evidence suggests that Bayer's work is at least loosely linked to later land art, any connection between the two is refuted from both sides. Yet identifying such a coupling is not what's important for this paper. Bayer's environmental works raise two significant issues for us in evaluating the status of modern architecture as an incomplete project. First, his work offers an example of architecture's role not as a destination, but as a middle term in the translation of artistic concerns between various scales. And secondly, the historical judgment of Bayer's work reveals the constrained position of history as a component of instrumentalized theory in American architecture. These two conditions are closely related. Like any translation, Bayer's environmental sculpture is a complex and nuanced work that does not lend itself to the reductive processes privileged by American historiography's emphasis on replicability and practicability.

SYNTHESES

The question of translation between scales — a frequent theme in modern art and architecture — reveals conceptual affinities between numerous artists and movements rarely discussed together. An established art-historical lineage holds that American land art of the

1960's and '70s is the child of Minimalism, Constructivism and Constantin Brancusi. This paper, while not countering that filiation, offers another — parallel — history of earthworks, one that finds a powerful catalyst in the experiments of Surrealism and traces a wide migration of sculptural concerns to the landscape, beginning as early as the 1930's. The importance of this historical construct to architecture is that the translation (the word is offered here in its broadest sense) between sculpture and landscape would have been impossible without architecture as a middle term.

The key role in this drama is played by Herbert Bayer. Bayer — the former Bauhaus master widely known for his innovations in typography and exhibition design — built *Grass Mound* at the Aspen Institute for the Humanities in 1955. *Grass Mound*, which like its accompanying work *Marble Garden* is nearly absent from histories of land art, was exhibited by Robert Smithson at the seminal exhibition, *Earthworks*, in 1968. The historical dilemma posed by Bayer's inclusion in this show stems from a difference in motivation: Bayer's landscape works are consistent with a personal belief system that integrated design practices across various scales and media, a legacy of his training and teaching at the Bauhaus; Smithson (like Michael Heizer, Walter DeMaria and Robert Morris) came to the landscape as a critique of the gallery economy's commodification of studio art.

This history is further problematized by formal similarities between Bayer's earthworks and those of Isamu Noguchi, who is also marginalized in conventional histories of land art. Certain projects by Bayer reveal an affinity to earlier proposals by Isamu Noguchi. What is at stake here is not an exercise in connecting the dots of formal resemblance, but rather an understanding of the manner in which a number of this century's artists (and this group must include Le Corbusier) explored concerns at numerous scales outside the strictures of inherited categories, creating new categories of artistic endeavor, as Rosalind Krauss framed in her 1978 essay, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." My interest here is in amending Krauss's study to understand the role that surrealist experiments and Bauhaus theories may have played in this transformation. Specifically, both Surrealism and the Bauhaus achieved syntheses through the simultaneous exploration of concerns at numerous scales and in numerous media. Both the uncanny interiors of Surrealist paintings and the Sachlich efficiency of Bauhaus architecture show the role of architecture in the translation of various concerns between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic.

After leaving the Bauhaus in 1928, Bayer exhibited surrealist interests in a suite of paintings of the 1930's which utilized a vocabulary close to Noguchi's. In this regard, both Bayer and Noguchi were extending the landscape concerns implied in the small sculptures of Giacometti — double and triple *entendres* that pried open the psychological redoubt of their beholder with confluences of

the quotidian and the oneiric, the anthropological and topographical, Giacometti's *Head/Landscape* (1930-1) is typical of a range of works that associated the scale of the body to that of the landscape. This growing interest, among artists like Bayer, in the landscape as a new, yet not wholly unfamiliar medium can be recognized as a latent tendency in Giacometti's work, generated by surrealist interests which included a confrontation of scales within a single work.

Again, my interest is not to establish a new lineage for land art. Rather, I want to cut twentieth-century architectural historiography (which is inseparable from nineteenth-century art historical method) against the grain, investing its subjects with appropriate complexity and irreducibility. Architectural histories may thus offer a framework of self-critical productions (productions of knowledge, of space and of ideologies) that can overcome history's principle constraints, a reductive aestheticization and production-oriented instrumentality.

Art, integrated from the very inception of the urban plan, is of fundamental importance. This suggests that artistic work will expand from the picture frame to the large outdoor spaces where it will eventually assume terrestrial, even cosmic dimension. It will again assume meaning for the majority.'

AVANT-GARDE SCHOOLS, AVANT-GARDE MUSEUMS: THE BAUHAUS AND ALEXANDER DORNER

Bayer's landscape works are tied to his design practices in various scales and media by the aesthetic of integration⁴ on which the Bauhaus was founded. The aesthetic value of integration grew first from 19th-century arts and crafts reform, found an important expression in Peter Behrens's work for the AEG and was codified by the Deutscher Werkbund. We can see this aesthetic of integration operating throughout the work of Bayer: first, in his exhibition designs of the 1930's, later in his work as house artist and architect for the Container Corporation of America (a relationship of artist and industrialist similar in many respects to that between Behrens and Rathenau), and finally in the design of a total environment at Aspen that would include his landscape sculpture.' Bayer's language frequently includes the term unity, and often conserves the rhetorical stance of Gropius. The Bauhaus program of integration forms a base for a project such as Bayer's, which carries a set of ideals through graduating scales and media: typography, photography, advertisements, interiors, exhibitions, buildings and landscapes.

It is worthwhile to note the relationship of Bayer to his Bauhaus instructor and long-time friend, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy. Moholy was an adroit artist in numerous media, among them sculpture, photography, film, typography and painting. He joined the Bauhaus after the departure of Johannes Itten, and was form master in the metals workshop after the school's move to Dessau. His most significant contribution to this study, though, is in his advancement of typography and graphic design — a project Bayer eagerly adopted and continued.

Moholy-Nagy initiated the reform of typography at the Bauhaus. Reform of typography and lettering became part of the comprehensive reform of visual culture, integrating publicity and architecture (as seen in Bayer's kiosks).⁶ Moholy and Bayer were responsible for the lion's share of the Bauhaus's extraordinary publications, such as the *Bauhausbücher*.⁷

The aesthetic of integration Bayer developed at the Bauhaus found sympathetic theoretical expression in the art historian Alexander Dornier. Along with Erwin Panofsky, Dornier had been an art history seminar student of Adolf Goldschmidt, and was enormously influenced by Alois Riegl's "dialectical concept of history, i.e. of a concept which harnesses the evolution of art to the traditional eternal polarity of body and spirit."⁸ He was also deeply influenced by the American Pragmatists James and Dewey, a connection which would



Fig. 1. *Grass Mound.*

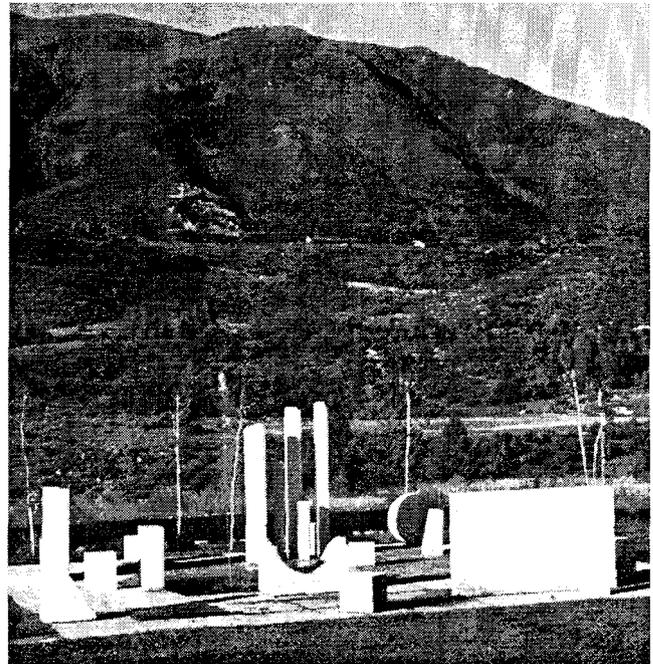


Fig. 2. *Marble Garden.*



Fig. 3. Robert Smithson *Spiral Jetty*



Fig. 4 Alberto Giacometti *Head/Landscape*.

later become important to Bayer's work for Walter Paepcke.' Dorner saw himself working and writing during a time of epochal change. His mission was to explain this change, which amounted to no less than "the decline of the species of visual communication called 'art' and the origin of a new species of visual communication." "Art" as a category of thought had to be stripped of its immutable connotations and rendered in terms of constant flux, "This semantic problem is part of a universal problem: the transition from thinking in terms of eternal basic conditions to thinking in terms of a self-changing basis.""

Not even "the intellectual notion of a *space*, which unites all human activity into a static harmony" could form a stable base of reference or some essential unity for understanding art's historical and continuing development. He prefaced the impossibility of such a reconciliation with the question, "how could the magical and the modern worlds be reduced to one and the same basis?" One paragraph later his rhetorical call is answered, "to base the development of visual creation on any eternally identical human ideas or categories is therefore no longer possible." He continues, drawing on Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen*, "the changing force of life is of such a depth and intensity that it explodes any such static unification.""

Bayer was, for Dorner, the manifestation of the "contemporary" artist and the consummate creator of modern works. Dorner's evolutionary historiography charted the passage of Western art from the static spatial depth typified by Renaissance painting to the "supra-spatial self-changeability" of modern artists, like those he promoted as Director of the Landesmuseum in Hanover. Bayer's work as both graphic artist (he is best known for his advertising and publicity work) and fine artist was not a liability for Dorner; in fact, Bayer's engagement of real-world space through popular media satisfied a key tenet of Dorner's beliefs, that art transform (or at least educate) society through direct action.

Bayer was, however, an uncooperative standard-bearer. The attention lavished on him by Dorner left Bayer uncomfortable, and statements by the artist contradict Dorner's non-humanist position.

It remains to be seen whether these criteria alone without the concord of an underlying concept or ideal can produce great artistic statements. Vitality is a quality, but only an ideal with vitality can lead to the expressions for which we long."

Dorner's significance to this study of the migration of artistic concerns to the landscape resides in his involvement in a seminal "environmental" work, the *Abstract Cabinet* by El Lissitzky¹³. The *Abstract Cabinet's* celebrated construction featured closely-spaced, vertical metal fins which were painted black on one side, gray on the other, and white on the edges.¹⁴ Dorner's description of the work also points out how a mirror placed behind the Archipenko sculpture reflected the sides of the fins not seen by the spectator, offering a specular other which was not a simple double. These constantly changing phenomena of color and reflection destabilized the conventional notion of room and forced an extended reckoning, on the part of the participant, with both the *Cabinet* and the work exhibited

within

This composition thus established a supraspatial milieu for the frameless compositions... This room contained many more sensory images than could have been accommodated by a rigid room. Mobility exploded the room, as it were, and the result was a spiritual intensification, proportionate to the evolutionary content of the display cases, which tried to demonstrate the growth of modern design in its urgent transforming power.¹⁵

The *Abstract Cabinet* was important for Bayer, as were Lissitzky's other installations – the Russian Pavilion at the Pressa Ausstellung in Cologne, 1926, and Hygiene Ausstellung in Dresden. Bayer also cited the importance of Frederick Kiesler's work at the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris.¹⁶

Bayer contributed numerous designs for exhibitions which, like the examples by Lissitzky and Kiesler, eroded the formal boundaries of architecture, painting, sculpture, and in Bayer's case, advertising. His designs for kiosks, executed while at the Bauhaus, have become minor icons of modern design. But perhaps his most significant innovation was the "enlarged field of vision" – a notion Dorner praised strongly – which Bayer first used at the exhibition of the Deutscher Werkbund in Paris, 1930. By employing photo panels suspended with wires at varying angles, "the traditional three-dimensional room is dissolved by detaching display from the static wall surface and creating new relations through divisions, angles and directions.""

Dorner's further experiences with environmental works in Hanover included Schwitters's *Merzbau*, which the artist constructed in his own house, and a room that Dorner commissioned from Moholy. The dissolution of categories – painting, sculpture, architecture – paralleled the disintegration of physical boundaries in these works. This loss of habituated relationships was accompanied by an experiential synthesis inspired by Pragmatism. Perception, thought, feeling and action are linked in a loop of reciprocity in Pragmatist philosophy, whose interest in experience (theory is always linked to praxis) found expression in Dorner's ambient environment rooms and Bayer's exhibition design. In Dorner's case, this philosophical influence was conscious; in Bayer it was less so."

Dorner also understood the potential for new media and reproduction technologies to inflect art practices. "The self-changing character of Abstract art pushed it in the direction of the Motion Picture." By "motion picture" he meant, "a movie in which forms and colors transform their identity by mutual interpenetration." The new medium of film, whether or not it was used by specific artists, represented a transformed vision recognizable in the art that Dorner so presciently praised. Simultaneous experimentation in multiple media was an occurrence whose pedigree within European avant-gardes was perhaps only a decade old when Dorner took up its cause. Meanwhile, such experimentation was becoming normalized within the Bauhaus pedagogy.

The intrinsic changeability of Abstract composition brought about an explosion of Subject Matter... Abstract art is now no longer "art" in the traditional sense because it has integrated, for the first time, the old polarities of pure form and energetic change in the pure vision of autonomous mobility. Abstract art is really the first step toward a new and much more intense interaction between art and life. The composition has ceased to be a symbol of an absolute, self-sufficient world that exists separated from us, an unperturbed Being."

One of the enduring ironies of Bayer's relationship to both Alexander Dorner and Walter Paepcke is the utter incompatibility of these two intellectual positions which Bayer was asked to symbolize. Dorner had been responsible for preserving the cultural monuments of northern Germany, a rear-guard occupation against which he later reacted. "The humanistic eternity cult was indeed about to

become an obsolete clog on life instead of a directional force. We are summoned to outgrow that traditional fear of life's transforming energies, that distrust of the creative power of time."?"The modern project, for Dorner, had a moral dimension, one which could not be diluted by nostalgic enterprises like preserving aging monuments at the expense of contemporary needs.

Yet while Dorner was writing such passages in *The Way Beyond "Art,"* Bayer was in Aspen, helping plan the inaugural event of the Aspen Institute for the Humanities — a Festschrift honoring the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The humanistic eternity cult that Dorner criticized had found a patron in Walter Paepcke, and so had Bayer.

GREAT BOOKS AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

Walter Paepcke was the charismatic chairman of Container Corporation of America (CCA), and a long-time friend of the University of Chicago's dynamic president, Robert Hutchins. Paepcke gained from Hutchins a profound respect for the revived humanism of Mortimer Adler and others. Paepcke was deeply involved in enriching Chicago's cultural scene, and was responsible (as a board member of the Association of Arts and Industries) for bringing Moholy to Chicago to found a design institute along the lines of the Bauhaus.²² Paepcke continued to support the school after the Association withdrew assistance.

After Moholy's death in 1946, Hutchins approached Paepcke with several propositions aimed at cultural reform on a national scale. Among these ideas was the kernel of what would become the Aspen Institute for the Humanities, a more elaborate version of the popular "Great Books" seminars held for executives at the University of Chicago. Paepcke's genius, perhaps, was his belief in the integration of humanistic studies and environment. America's business, academic and artistic elite would meet in the pristine seclusion of the Rockies; the results would catalyze broad cultural and educational reforms (in theoretical terms, a difficult collage of Dewey, Adler and Ortega y Gasset). But to make this venture work, Paepcke needed an artist who shared his commitment to integration across disciplinary frontiers. That artist was Herbert Bayer.

Bayer had left Germany in 1938.²³ After passing the war years in New York,²⁴ Bayer accepted Paepcke's invitation to come to Aspen, Colorado, in 1945. The following year he moved to the former mining town, where he would spend forty years actively engaged as an architect and artist.

Aspen was a sleepy town of retired miners living on pensions which had seen fifty years of decline when Paepcke took an interest in developing a humanist's retreat there. He envisioned a resort where business leaders could discuss the "Great Books" in the fecund surrounds of the Rocky Mountains. As much a real estate venture as a modern *Accademia Olimpica*, Aspen represented an opportunity to remake a remote town, and Paepcke involved Bayer from the beginning in the planning of this venture.

Bayer had worked for CCA for several years, first in the design of the "Modern Art in Advertising" exhibition for the company, then in a series of advertising campaigns. Soon after the Aspen Institute opened, Paepcke initiated an advertising campaign (which was to continue for years) featuring quotes from major figures of Western civilization, illustrated by contemporary artists. The *Great Ideas of Western Man* series, to which Bayer contributed a number of times, blurred the distinction between Paepcke's cultural and commercial passions. Bayer served both by becoming a full-time consultant to CCA (which included work at the Aspen Institute) where he developed a complete corporate image package that ranged in scale from stationery to architecture. In his capacity as company architect, Bayer integrated his artistic program and Paepcke's cultural program with the CCA's physical plant. His offices and industrial facilities embodied Dewey's cultural didacticism.

In Aspen, Bayer was responsible for a number of structures, including the Seminar Building (1953), guest chalets and central

building (1954), and the Health Center (1955). The Seminar Building was the core of the Aspen Institute; Bayer captioned it as, "large and small seminar rooms for discussions around central table. this layout is felt to induce freeexchange of thought instead of traditional speaker-audience concept of lecture room."²⁵ Adler (often the star attraction in the seminar rooms) offered an exegesis of their forms, arguing that hexagonal buildings built around round tables were expressive of discourse.

All of the Institute buildings were constructed with relatively simple materials and means, given the difficulty of building in a remote town. The guest chalets, for instance, are distinguished by balcony dividers painted in primary colors.²⁶ Many structures, like the central building with its offices and restaurant, employed precast concrete roof or wall members. For the most part, the buildings are quietly prosaic, consistent with Bayer's broad refusal of poetic or metaphysical references in his environmental works. Yet some of the work at Aspen demands an analysis counter to their author's claims.

At the Health Center, a spiral steel staircase, suspended from a star-burst of steel beams radiating from a center post, leads up to the solarium. Built two years after the publication of Le Corbusier's *Le poème de l'angle droit* and contemporary with the construction of Chandigarh (whose presence can be divined in the supergraphic mural of the Center's entry) the spiral stair is a curiously rich heliotropic reference in an otherwise dry testament of a building.

But how dry are they really? Seen today, the Institute's buildings may seem unremarkably similar to much of America's stock of 1950's buildings. Yet the corrugations and folded plate structures of the various Aspen buildings remind us that they were executed for a cardboard box baron. The Bauhaus preliminary course (especially as it was developed by Albers) used folding exercises to impart bearing capacity to diaphanous elements. Bayer's CCA advertisement poster of 1941, *Weakness Into Strength*, shows how the structural form of cardboard boxes overcomes the material instability of paper, represented by a house of cards.²⁷ The various buildings that comprise the Aspen campus reveal architecture's capacity as a middle term in the translation of artistic and social concerns at numerous scales.

If areligious, man-to-nature relationship was lost in the wake of progress, then we must capture and develop a balanced attitude between our outlook on the man-made and on the natural.

In respecting nature, it will continue to be magical and poetic, beautiful if many times cruel: the artist will not imitate nature but create a spiritual world of itself, side-by-side with nature. Picasso has said, "art is what nature is not." The structures which man erects will not compete with nature nor set themselves up against it. Both natural environment and man-made environment can exist with each other if their boundaries are understood.²⁸

In 1955 Bayer constructed the two outdoor works for the Aspen Institute that precipitated this study: *Marble Garden* and *Grass Mound*. The first was assembled of marble pieces found in a local, abandoned quarry, which had once supplied marble for the Lincoln Memorial. The found stones, rejects from previous quarrying activity, were left unpolished and showed the marks of their being cut from the earth. On the one hand a potential reference to Aspen's mining history, the *Garden* is an agoraic microcosm of fountain and verdure, and has the quality of a stage set surrounded by the Institute campus.

The critic Jan van der Marck has written of *Marble Garden's* surrealist "anti-monument" quality, and related the work to Giorgio de Chirico.²⁹ He also relates the precision of *Marble Garden's* geometry to Bayer's typographic work, further strengthening the argument of a fluency across scales and media. Bayer would test this fluency with other projects executed for the Institute over the next

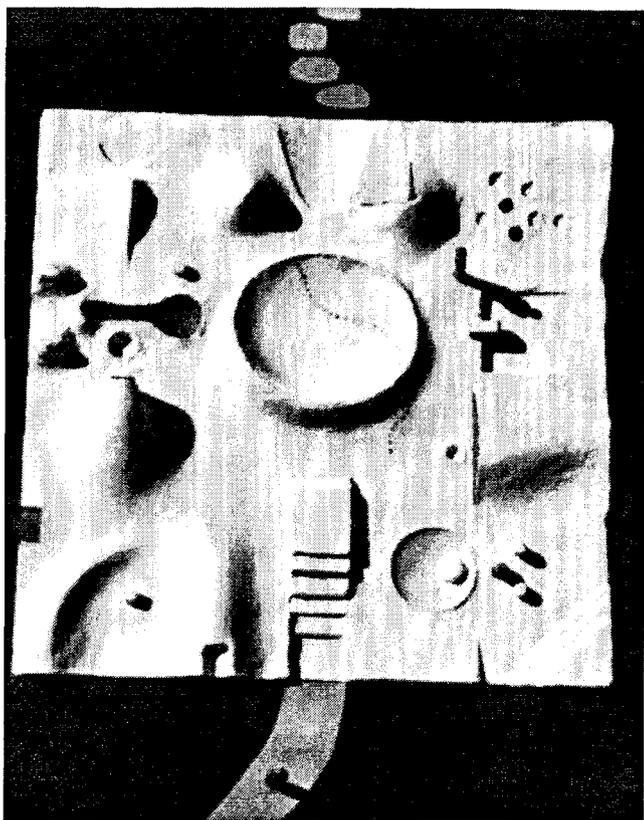


Fig. 5 *Project for a Sculptured Garden*.

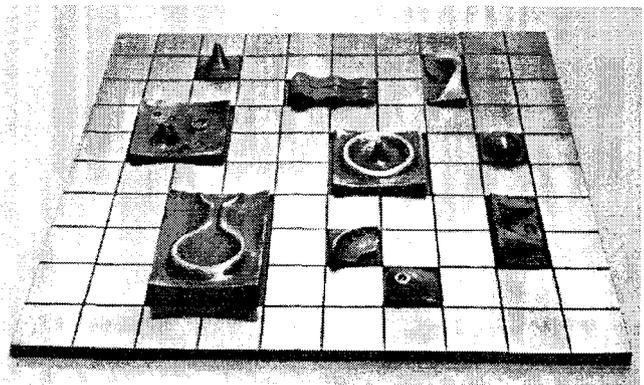


Fig. 6 *Primary Landscape (Fountain in Ten Parts)*.

two decades. His largest work in Aspen is *Anderson Park* (1973), built to honor Paepcke's successor as Bayer's patron. *Anderson Park* is an important precedent to Bayer's best-known earthwork, *Mill Creek Canyon* in Kent, Washington (1982). Along with other pieces, such as *Kaleidoscreen* and Paepcke's own memorial in Aspen Grove Cemetery, these are significant works in Bayer's oeuvre, yet they fall outside the parameters of this study.

SJITHSON, NOGUCHI, GIACOILIETTI

Rather, let us return to *Glass Mound*. A circular rampart of earth and grass, cleft gently on one side, surrounding an upright stone, a small mound, and an indentation, the *Grass Mound* measures just forty feet in breadth. A footpath of stones enters the enclosure through the cleft, indicating by the participant's movement a distant view of three peaks, mirrored in microcosm by the earthwork. After

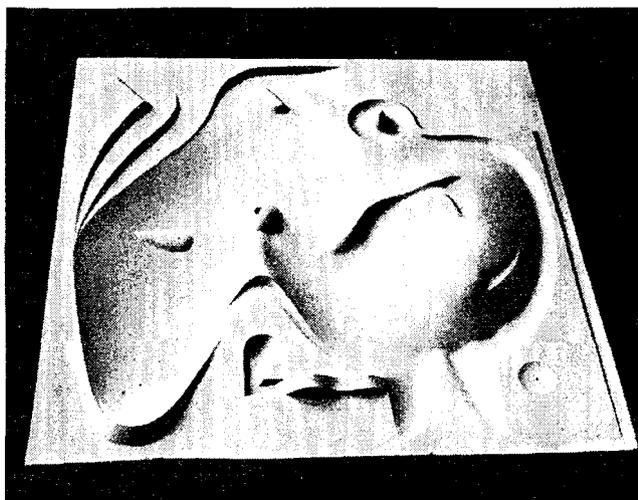


Fig. 7 Isamu Noguchi *Contoured Playground*.



Fig. 8 *Grass Mound (detail)*.

thirteen years, the *Mound* could be considered a "historical" precedent in the Dwan Gallery show, but was it an appropriate one? What do we make of the inclusion of such a piece, especially given its author's denial of any influence on the generation of artists principally represented at the Dwan show? And what do we make of the exclusion of Bayer's *Marble Garden*, executed in Aspen several weeks before the *Mound*?³⁰

It is clear to the viewer of the photograph – taken before the work was partially surrounded by buildings – as it is clear to the participant who experiences the work today and employs some imagination, that *Grass Mound* has a mimetic relationship to the three peaks opposite the "opening" in the encircling mound. Like Bayer's drawings and paintings that attempt to embody the slow migrations and transformations of mountain ranges, this earth work is an attempt to understand the colossal life processes of the Earth in terms of human endeavor. It brings into high relief the conceptual significance of Bayer's fluency in various media and at various scales. His environmental works are not simply scale enlargements of what are essentially small-scale concerns." In this regard, he was not alone.

At this point, it is necessary to compare works by Bayer and Noguchi. Specifically, three projects by Bayer — *Aspen Valley Redesign for Technical Purposes* (1947), *Project for a Sculptured Garden* (1962), and *Primary Landscape (Fountain in Ten Parts)* (1967) — need to be considered alongside similar proposals by Noguchi. Noguchi, whose artistic formation included an apprenticeship with Brancusi, began to conceive projects at the scale of land art

in the 1930's. *Play Mountain* (1933) was the first such work, and was offered to Robert Moses as a proposal for a public space in New York.¹ It was followed by the sensuous profiles of *Contoured Playground* (1939-41). For Noguchi, too, Surrealism offered a departure point for examining the analogical correspondences of the quotidian, the oneiric and the traumatic as points of contact and coincidence between the subject and the world.

It is folly to suggest a hereditary link between Giacommetti and Smithson. Perhaps the strange correspondences between Bayer and the other artists in this study reveals that artists throughout this century have shared and developed visual languages without necessarily sharing motives or meanings. The alacrity with which artists like Le Corbusier, et al. have moved between media and scales is a remarkable quality of modernism. That these concerns have often played themselves out in the landscape — a category outside of architecture, sculpture and painting — speaks of the synthetic values common to Surrealism and the Bauhaus, values that raise serious questions about the linear and empirical practices of conventional architectural history.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps we can use these questions to write art history differently, beginning not with a groundplan whose linear structure is fixed and which needs only to be filled-in with details, but rather a history that recognizes links without demanding that they be causes. In considering a single work by Herbert Bayer we can see the necessary complexity and irreducibility of the historical enterprise. On the one hand, our understanding of his work is incomplete without an understanding of his relationship to the Bauhaus, Dörner and the humanist circle around Paepcke. On the other hand, such associations alone do not adequately explain his work. The hermeneutic circle cannot remain closed. Like the figure of the spiral it must expand and contract simultaneously.

The spiral returns us again to Smithson, for whom Bayer held some remarkable power. We can only speculate on this relationship; Smithson, a prolific critic, never wrote about Bayer specifically. We are left with only the photo on the wall of the Dwan Gallery and Bayer's denials of influence. As we've seen, Bayer's motivation to work in the landscape was very different from those of the land artists of the 1960's. The work of these artists, including Smithson, Morris and Michael Heizer, would seem to bear a physical relationship to Bayer's *Earth Mound*, yet their motivation for executing work in remote landscapes was very different. And while this difference may explain Bayer's near absence from histories of land art, it does not explain his neglect by architectural historians.

The value of Bayer's work in Aspen is its example of architecture's role as middle ground for the migration of artistic concerns between scales. Yet the silence of Bayer's reception in architecture histories reveals the difficulty of assimilating such complex work. Historical judgment of architecture is tied to the ease with which a project can be assimilated into future practice or be seen to influence later work. Sometimes it is the tricky bits (such as the Marseilles Unité's over-under section) that do not survive the translation. Often, entire projects (such as Loos's Tribune Tower entry) are relegated to historical side bars.

There are exceptional historians, of course, whose works are invested with the very complexity necessary to discuss political and poetic dimensions of architectural practice with some justice. Yet somehow history remains, on the whole, a practice situated somewhere between genealogy and husbandry. Bayer's synthetic artistic practice challenges this model.

NOTES

¹ It must be noted that a large number of historians — including many in attendance at this conference — are writing the very kind

of histories that I am trying to advocate.

² This work is also called *Earth Mound*, though Bayer preferred *Grass Mound*. The latter will be used throughout this essay, except in direct quotations.

from Bayer's unpublished article "future lecture 'on environment,'" 1972, p. 4, quoted by Chanzyt, *Herbert Bayer and Modernist Design in America*, p. 151

⁴ At the Bauhaus, this aesthetic of integration — of fine arts and the crafts, of all the arts (under/through the agency of architecture). of crafts, technology and mass production, of an artistic program and a social program (especially under Meyer) — was literally encoded in the school's program (see Gropius's statements of 1919 and 1921 in Hans Maria Wingler *Bauhaus*).

⁵ Bayer's client for his work at CCA and Aspen was Walter Paepcke. The relationship of Bayer and Paepcke, and their adventures through the CCA and Aspen Institute are chronicled in James Sloan Allen *The Romance of Commerce and Culture*.

⁶ Lazlo Moholy-Nagy "Modern Typography. Aims, Practice, Criticism" (1924, published 1926). Reprinted in Wingler, pp. 80-81.

⁷ Bayer designed several remarkable typefaces, as well, which had to do partly with reforming the anachronistic letters of the Germanic character set. Another legacy of their typographic concerns is that Moholy and Bayer insisted on eliminating uppercase letters, arguing that this favored clarity and economy. Bayer continued this practice throughout his life.

⁸ Alexander Dörner *The Way Beyond "Art" — the Work of Herbert Bayer*, pp. 15-16. The first edition of Dörner's book (1947) included an extensive section dealing with Bayer's work as exemplary of Dörner's theories. The second edition (1958), published posthumously, deleted much of this material, though some is condensed into comprehensive sidebars illustrated by Bayer's work; the book's subtitle was dropped, as well. Quotes and citations given here are from the second edition (for convenience, not as an indication of historical importance).

⁹ Bayer adopted some of Dewey's idioms — distinguishing, for example, between the noble enterprise of "commerce" and the vulgar obsessions of "commercialism." Herbert Bayer, *Herbert Bayer — painter designer architect*, p. 142. Paepcke, meanwhile, would be more influenced by Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins, who, along with Dewey, all taught at the University of Chicago.

¹⁰ Dörner, p. 16.

¹¹ Dörner, p. 16.

¹² Bayer, *Herbert Bayer — painter, designer, architect*, p. 142.

¹³ Dörner, p. 114. Dörner dates the Abstract Cabinet, which he calls Room of Abstract Art in the Hanover Art Museum, in 1925; it was built two years later.

¹⁴ Dörner, pp. 114-115.

¹⁵ Dörner, p. 115.

¹⁶ Bayer, preface to Erberto Carboni *Exhibitions and Displays*, p. 9. Written in 1955. Bayer opens his preface (to Carboni's monograph) with the historical origins of exhibition design, not, as one might expect, with a museological precedent like the Louvre or the English drawing room, but with the 1851 international exhibition in Hyde Park, p. 5.

¹⁷ Bayer, *Herbert Bayer — painter, designer, architect*, p. 30. The Deutscher Werkbund pavilion was directed by Gropius, with the assistance of Bayer, Breuer and Moholy-Nagy.

¹⁸ Another inflection of Pragmatism in Dörner's thought involved the educational mission of the museum. Dewey's philosophical framework for progressive education resonated sympathetically with Dörner's active didactic strain of museology.

¹⁹ Dörner, p. 116.

²⁰ Dörner, p. 116.

²¹ Dörner, pp. 17-18.

²² This school was founded in 1937 as the New Bauhaus. It functioned for nine years, during which it was renamed twice: School of Design and Institute of Design.

- ²³ Between 1933 and 1938, Bayer did numerous design jobs in Berlin, among them were propagandapieces for the Nazi government. See Joan Ockman "The Road Not Taken" *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*.
- ²⁴ Bayer was friends with Sert and Giedion during those years. He was responsible for the dust jackets to Sert's *Can Our Cities Survive?* and Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture*.
- ²⁵ Bayer, *Herbert Bnyer – painter, designer, architect*, p. 114.
- ²⁶ Bayer, *Herbert Bayer – painter, designer, architect*, pp. 115-116.
- ²⁷ Bayer, *Herbert Bayer – painter, designer, architect*, p. 88.
- ²⁸ Bayer, *Herbert Bayer – painter, designer, architect*, p. 150
- ²⁹ Jan van der Marck *Herbert Bayer: From Type to Landscape*, pp. 38-39.
- ³⁰ Grace Glueck "Art Notes: Moving Mother Earth," *The New York Times*, (October 6, 1968). Quoted in Gilles Tiberghien *Land Art*, p. 45. Glueck's review of the Earthworks exhibition is mostly dismissive. She refers to "the 68-year old Bayer" as "a versatile ex-Bauhaus man" and takes pains to point out that Virginia Dwan is an heiress to the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing fortune.
- ³¹ It should be noted that Carl Andre's participation in the Earthworks show included three photographs of temporary works he executed in Aspen in 1968. Robert Morris is also known to have seen Bayer's Aspen pieces personally.
- ³² Richard Serra makes this critical distinction – between works conceived and executed at full scale, and those enlarged from maquettes – in describing the difference between his work and that of Calder. See Richard Serra *Writings/Interviews*.
- ³³ Moses flatly rejected the project, and would work to prevent

other Noguchi proposals through the 1960's, including a park for the United Nations and a playground designed in collaboration with Louis Kahn.

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Bauhaus Dream-House: Imagining the (Un)gendered and (Un)disciplined Social Body

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... the awakening of the whole man through trauma, lack, terror, hard life experiences or love lead to authentic artistic expression. Dearest ladies, I do not underestimate the human achievement of those who remained at home during the war. but I believe that the lived experience of death to be all-powerful.¹

— Walter Gropius First Lecture to the Bauhaus, 1919

PROLOGUE AND ABSTRACT

The paper argues that the body, consciousness and unconscious of the student are the subject matter through which architectural education reproduces the discipline and the profession. This occurs through historically specific forms of institutionalized fantasy which emerge during major societal crises such as war and destabilize traditional masculine identity. The fear and repression of instability of patriarchal masculinity is at such times replaced by institutionalized "dreaming" — fantasies drawing on instability as a pleasure — a traditionally "feminine" position.¹

Bauhaus reminiscences suggest Bauhaus education relied on a creative re-enactment of war trauma and, for a short time, instability and decenteredness were institutionalized as pleasure. Identity at the Bauhaus was "feminized." However, Gropius as an ex-soldier insisted that war and its associated release of creativity were exclusively masculine experiences. This contradiction caused internal and external political frictions and was resolved only by a new and permanent "neuter" model of identity still associated with the modernist designer today.

This rereading of the Bauhaus shows that the construction of a new disciplinary identity through institutional fantasy rather than its economically limited innovation in mass production may form the real legacy of the Bauhaus for the twentieth century.

FROM WITHIN: PLEASURES OF DISINTEGRATION

There stands a man, a man
As firm as any oak tree, oak tree,
Maybe he has lived through many a tempest, tempest, tempest,
Maybe by tomorrow he will be a corpse,
Like so many brothers before him, him, him.'

— Song sung by Bauhaus members
for Lyonel Feininger's feast day

Throughout Europe the carnage and losses of the First World War had a major impact on the population. Winners and losers across the continent united in their experience of war trauma and rejection of the past. Germany was the greatest loser of the War, with enormous casualties, reduced territory, and economic and social problems far

worse than those of the victors. Its cultural crisis was therefore extreme.

The crisis extended symbolically from collective identity to architecture. Architectural forms associated with the old social order were rejected. Bruno Taut wrote⁴:

It was not possible to make use of any pre-war traditions, for that period was perforce regarded as the cause of the misfortunes of the past, and because every achievement of those days seemed more or less to hang together with the origins of the war.

Wounded in the war, Gropius acknowledged its breakdown of identity. He wrote⁵:

Today's artist lives in an era of dissolution, without guidance. He stands alone. The old forms are in ruins, the benumbed world is shaken up, the old human spirit is invalidated and in flux toward a new form. We float in space and cannot yet perceive the new order.

The solution was the creation of new kind of human being. Gropius continued⁶:

First man must be constructed; only then can the artist make him fine new clothing. The contemporary being must begin anew, to rejuvenate himself, to achieve a new humanity, a universal life-form of the people.

Bauhaus students had been through the war. Magdalena Droste writes⁷ that many "arrived direct from active service, hoping for the chance to make a fresh start and give meaning to their lives". T. Lux Feininger observed⁸ in 1919: "Almost all have been in the army, it is a new type, a new generation ... these young people are not babies". The fresh start began with re-enacting wartime experience. For example, Herbert Bayer's enthusiasm⁹ for the (partly fictional) Bauhaus "entrance examinations" seems based on its resemblance to the experience of the battlefield:

When I saw the first Bauhaus proclamation, ornamented with Feininger's woodcut, I made inquiries as to what the Bauhaus really was. I was told that "during the entrance examinations every applicant is locked up in a dark room. Thunder and lightning are let loose upon him to get him in a state of agitation. His being admitted depends on how well he describes his reactions." This report, although it exaggerated the actual facts, fired my enthusiasm.

Other evocations of military experience abounded. Tut Schlemmer wrote¹⁰: "a Bauhaus garment was designed, the Bauhaus whistle and the Bauhaus salute were invented."