Track: Body and Mind
Room: *National Library, Main Conference Hall*

ARCHITECTURE'S RETURN TO SURREALISM
Session chairs: Wouter Van Acker, Université Libre de Bruxelles
Stefaan Vervoort, Ghent University and KU Leuven

In 1978, coinciding with the exhibition *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* in the Hayward Gallery, Dalibor Veseley edited a double issue of *Architectural Design* on surrealism and architecture. The issue mined manifold connections between modernist architecture and surrealism, and it marked a penchant for surrealism among postmodern architects. It included, among others, essays by Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi referencing the key ideas of Salvador Dali and the playwright and surrealist Antonin Artaud, respectively. In hindsight, such links seem ubiquitous in postmodern architecture. John Hejduk's *Masques* call upon a self-proclaimed 'medieval surrealism'; Aldo Rossi's images are indebted to the metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico; designs by Oswald Mathias Ungers include René Magritte's bowler man and doll-in-doll motif; and Peter Eisenman's work deals with psychoanalysis, automatism, and the links between perception and representation.

Surprisingly, this reuptake of surrealism in the architecture of the 1970s and 1980s has seen scant attention in the historiography. While most of the essays in *Surrealism and Architecture* (2005), edited by Thomas Mical, examine how surrealist thought, critiques, and techniques affected the architectural practices of the modernist avant-garde, Neil Spiller's *Architecture and Surrealism: A Blistering Romance* (2016) maps out routes of congruence between surrealist thought and the contemporary, 'surreal worlds' drawn up by advanced digital fabrication techniques and computer visualization. Still, surrealist tendencies in postmodern architecture warrant an inspection of their own, which accounts for the secondary nature of these tendencies with regard to modernist interplays of surrealism and architecture. As Michael Hays notes in *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde* (2010), many of the architects above do not simply replay modernism, but they home in on its limits through an extreme reflexivity and a deep understanding of its forms, references, and ideologies. Yet, what does such secondariness or lateness imply for the referential framework of surrealism in these works?

This session aims to explore how the reanimation of surrealism in architecture can be interpreted historically at this tangled, asynchronous juncture of the modern and the postmodern. It will investigate how surrealist strategies, both visual (e.g. collage, analogy, scalar play) and discursive (e.g. Jungian, Freudian, or Lacanian), allowed formulating a critical project for architecture in reaction to a neoliberal economy that produces its own dreams, needs, and desires.

PAPERS:
From the Fulfilment of Needs to the Mediation of Experience: The Uncanny Theater of the Urban Enclaves of Ricardo Bofill and Taller de Arquitectura
Anne Kockelkorn, ETH Zurich

Ricardo Bofill and his office Taller de Arquitectura are widely known for their neoclassicist housing schemes in the Parisian New Towns built during the 1980s. Less well known are the surrealist strategies that the office members deployed from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, which became apparent in a series of urban micro-centralities for the peripheries of Madrid, Barcelona, and Paris. The transdisciplinary team of Taller de Arquitectura conceived these multifunctional housing projects as semi-autonomous urban enclaves, which were to induce pleasure and desire among inhabitants and visitors alike. Bofill's office included sociologists, writers, and poets, and it adopted a multi-faceted,

transdisciplinary design approach, combining strategies and insights from geometric 3D-clustering, scenography, environmental psychology, and the behavioural sciences, in particular the writing of the psychiatrist R.D Laing and the neuroscientist Henri Laborit. This multi-faceted approach resonates with Catalan surrealism and a latent trope of French surrealism and poststructuralism, i.e. the Hegelian 'thought of the master'.

The surrealist and avant-garde strategies, which influenced the design of the urban enclaves designed by Taller de Arquitectura, were effective in shifting attention from the modernist quest for the fulfilment of basic human needs towards the mediation of experience. By inducing moments of shock or déjà-vu, Bofill and his office members aimed at exerting influence simultaneously on the subject's mental disposition and on the power structure of urban territories. This paper will show how these surrealist strategies were applied in projects such as the House of Abraxas (1972–1973), an urban renewal project for a nineteenth century military fort. Based on research of unpublished archival materials, an analysis of this project will reveal how it was envisaged by Bofill's office as a 'leisure time palace' for Parisian intellectuals, commodifying experiences of sexual and mental transgression.

A Surrealist Earthwork: Museum Abteiberg, Hans Hollein, and the Indiscipline of Collage
Craig Buckley, Yale University

When Kenneth Frampton described Hans Hollein's Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach (1972-1982) as a 'surrealist earthwork' in 1982, he was right in tune with the resurgence of surrealism taking place in architectural culture. The critic's invocation of 'surrealism' is most productively read not as an attribution of style, but rather as a symptom, a historical reference deployed to name something whose meaning remained unsettled. The qualities that troubled meaning at Abteiberg were bound up with the uncertain place of collage and montage within architectural culture in the twentieth century. Collage and montage, this paper will argue, are not stable mediums reactivated from the repertoire of the historic avant-gardes. Rather they are historically labile conceptual techniques that seek to make disjunctive, heterogeneous, and composite entities productive in particular ways. The history of collage and montage has been marked by a series of such productive analogies; Dada montage likened the combination of photomechanical materials to the assembly of machines, while Surrealism likened improbable visual conjunctures to visionary states.

The paper will read the problem of collage within the Museum Abteiberg at three levels. First, it asks how and why collage and montage techniques came to be so prominent in Hollein's early career, and how aspects of Surrealism and Dada figured in critiques of functionalism during the 1960s. Second, it asks how the collage techniques pursued at Abteiberg bring to light challenges particular to the 1970s, notably those of site and typology. The composite conditions Hollein constructed at Abteiberg responded to, and worked against, the disciplinary action to which collage was subjected in urban design discourse in the 1970s, particularly in the work of figures such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown or Colin Rowe. Finally, it will consider the role of the museum amid the deindustrialization of the Rhineland in the 1970s and 1980s. Hollein's Museum Abteiberg represents a distinct approach to the problem of museum as it entered what would soon be called the 'cultural logic of late capitalism'. Offering a third way, it avoided both monumental pastiche and the model of the museum as a flexible machine for culture.

Happening in Japan: Arata Isozaki's Surreal Intakes and the Gunma Museum of Modern Art
Marcela Aragüez, University College London

The art scene in post-war Japan exponentially grew after the end of the US occupation in 1952. Emergent radical practices started to shape independent voices in tune with international artistic discourses. During the 1960s, the Sōgetsu Art Centre in Tokyo became a buzzing hub where film makers, painters, and musicians realized surrealist-

inspired 'happenings', inviting figures like John Cage and David Tudor to take part. Architect Arata Isozaki was also a common guest, and a number of artistic collaborations in the form of set designs, exhibition layouts, and interactive works of art originated during these years. Among the generation of architects raised under the avuncular protection of Kenzo Tange, Isozaki took a remarkable interest in contemporary arts, to such an extent that it informed his prolific building production both morphologically and in its theoretical background.

This paper analyses the influences surrealist Japanese practices had on Isozaki in the first two decades of his architectural career. It interprets the design of the Gunma Museum of Modern Art—completed in 1974 and considered one of Isozaki's masterpieces—as a product of such influences. The study starts with a discussion of Isozaki's role alongside film director Hiroshi Teshigahara, musician Toru Takemistsu, and Neo-Dadaist Genpei Akasegawa, and then moves to an analysis of the design process of the Gunma Museum and related texts Isozaki wrote at the time. Drawing upon conversations with Isozaki in Tokyo and from his archive, the paper intends to unveil a continuity of topics derived from the artistic practices in Isozaki's changing production. This will serve to describe his work not only as 'ironic' and 'platonic' (as it is referred to in recent scholarship), but also as a unique receptacle of surrealist trends in early postmodern Japanese architecture.

From Miller to Mollino: Carlo Mollino's Interiors as Surrealist Cabinets
Gerlinde Verhaeghe, KU Leuven
Dominique Bauer, KU Leuven

Casa Miller (1936) and Casa Mollino (1960–1968) respectively mark the beginning and end period of Carlo Mollino's career, spanning from the modernist avant-garde to the emergence of postmodernism. As a contemporary, Mollino was inspired by the surrealist movement in Paris of the 1920s and 1930s, and he pursued this interest further even after the decline of the movement. Insofar that Mollino's oeuvre is characterized by a dual logic of tradition and eccentricity, he always remained an outsider to both the modernist and the surrealist movement. The paper sets out to investigate the connection between surrealism and Mollino's interiors by approaching these interiors as radicalized autobiographic spaces or, in other words, transitional spaces that mediate the personal inner world with the real world in a creative act. In Casa Miller and Casa Mollino, the roles of professional and private person collide as Mollino acts as both collector-inhabitant and interior designer. These interiors can be described as 'dreamscapes': constellations of objects form a stage for surreal acts, alienated from the real world.

The paper draws on the idea of the surreal cabinet to investigate the creative interaction between collector and collection in the interiors made by the architect-designer. The surrealists used the autobiographic collection of the cabinet as a trigger for poetic and imaginative thinking. In a similar way, Mollino arranged both found and designed objects in the private *mise-en-scène* of his interiors. The concept of the cabinet encompasses previous readings of Casa Mollino as garçonnière (or male cabinet) and final resting place (holding burial objects). Reading the late work of Casa Mollino in light of the early work of Casa Miller might offer a specific understanding of the transition of surrealist tendencies within architecture, situated at the intersection of the modern and the postmodern.

Architectures of Nothing: Aldo Rossi and Raymond Roussel
Victoria Watson, University of Westminster

The Surrealists made unconscious desire the explicit subject of their conscious practices. For them, the liberation of society into a state of unbound desire was something to work towards and to look forward to in the future. On the other hand, for the late avant-garde architects, who are the theme of this session, no such future projection was possible. For them, unbound desire had become a socio-economic principle of the reality they were living in. These architects were faced with the dilemma of how to continue producing architecture in a society that was increasingly

advocating the free flows of desire as its own proper milieu. One architect who successfully rose to this challenge was Aldo Rossi. Rossi's success depended on his ability to deploy architectural means in the production of highly desirable images of desire. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, Rossi's projects and theories were consciously articulated by means of drawing, colouring, writing, building, exhibiting and publishing.

One character from the Surrealist past whom Rossi liked to invoke as an important influence was Raymond Roussel. Roussel was not himself a surrealist, but many members of the group admired his work. In this paper I will explore the ways in which Roussel's childish devices, including his infuriatingly detailed descriptions of uninteresting objects, were adapted by Rossi and incorporated into Rossi's own strategies for the production of bedroom architecture.