

contemporary conditions, and like the anthology as a whole, was written during a period of extreme crisis for the profession. “Entrepreneurial” activities for Gutman were the practical capabilities of the architect as distinct from her form-making desires. Today, as Deamer suggests, entrepreneurial activity has taken on a new cast, reconfiguring the place of the architect within the larger constellation of building producers, as design and entrepreneurial activity merge within the conditions created by information and fabrication technology. In this environment, she states “all players can be considered designers, just with different areas of expertise” (p. 83). This new organizational matrix suggests a reconfiguration of architectural practice that Gutman did not anticipate. Where he saw the polarity of practice as between sole practitioners and comprehensive design firms, and was continually bothered by the ceding of the instruments of building to other actors, Deamer identifies the new forms of collaboration within a globalized profession as it situates itself within the knowledge economy. Keller Easterling furthers this argument in the closing dialogue where she proposes a new “entrepreneurial activism” as a way for architects to “leverage their own projects toward their own political goals” within the context of shifting global, infrastructural, and spatial networks (321–22).

If somewhat out of touch with contemporary conditions, why are Robert Gutman’s writings important to us today? Cuff cites the resurgence of interest in housing and urbanism, a decades-long commitment Gutman maintained even when these topics were unpopular within the schools and profession. More importantly, Cuff draws attention to Gutman’s desire to “infuse the discipline with issues larger than its own autonomy” (23). As is evidenced by the dialogues throughout the book and the teaching and practices of many of his former students and clients, it is through such an expansion that the “gap” Gutman explored with such a critical but

understanding eye is now just beginning to shrink.

Sharon Haar

Notes

1. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966).
2. Robert Gutman, *Sociology of Contemporary Design syllabus* (Princeton University, School of Architecture, Spring 1987).
3. Ibid.
4. Robert Gutman, *Architectural Practice: A Critical View* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), p. 2.

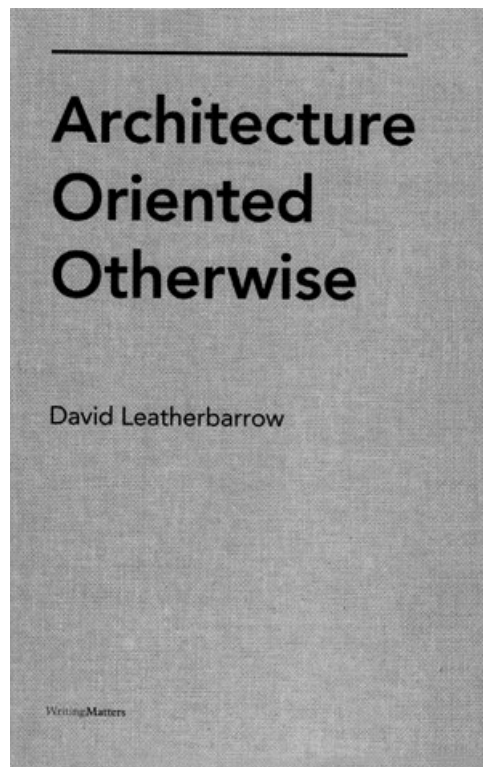
Architecture Oriented Otherwise

DAVID LEATHERBARROW

Princeton Architectural Press, 2009

304 pages, illustrated

\$39.95 (hardcover)



Leatherbarrow groupies will not necessarily need this book but will certainly add it to their collection. Six of the eleven essays contained in *Architecture Oriented Otherwise* have appeared elsewhere, whereas others are adapted from public lectures by Leatherbarrow, Chair of the Graduate Group in Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. The book is organized into three rubrics—Performances, Situations, and Topographies—but each appear and reappear in many of the essays. Most readers will recognize the topics as similar to those the author explored in other texts, specifically *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology, and Topography*. In this way, the book holds together as a cohesive whole that is related to the author’s already impressive oeuvre.

Throughout *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*, Leatherbarrow discusses an incredible range of iconic and lesser known architectural work, literally from Alberti to Zumthor. His oblique gaze into well-known projects by Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Adolf Loos reveals that there is still much to learn by looking at this work. The real strength of the book, however, is in the parts that make up the whole. For this reason, many of the essays in this collection will certainly find their way onto graduate and undergraduate reading lists for history/theory courses as well as studio. The essays that deal with singular buildings, as in the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (PSFS) building in Philadelphia (*Practically Primitive*), the Lewis Glucksman Gallery at University College in Cork (*Landings and Crossings*), or even a single wall, such as in the San Martin de Porres in Puerto Rico (*Breathing Walls*), are critical without being operative. Leatherbarrow writes as he believes an architect should act. He understands and is able to communicate the latent capacity of a work to disclose more than the work is able to do on its own. The process is not additive. It is, rather, productive.

The structure of the essays not only offers insight into built work, but also acts as a model of an exemplary work of criticism. The author’s position

is certainly developed through the lens of phenomenological hermeneutics, but he avoids any reliance upon technical jargon for an understanding of the work. Rather, philosophical ideas presented by writers such as Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer are understood through the built work. As with most of Leatherbarrow's writing, the prose is elegant, thoughtful, and precise. Through a patient weaving of architectural theory, primary source material, and meticulous observation of built work, Leatherbarrow once again demonstrates that architecture matters.

Leatherbarrow's meditations are also timely, if perhaps unfashionable. In an early essay, he states a shift in focus from what the building *is* to what the building *does*. This is particularly significant in the context of architecture's recent fascination with all things performative. Writings such as Farshid Moussavi's popular *Function of Ornament* and *Function of Form* also look to the performative nature of architecture. Both Function books tend to reduce architecture to a collection of types similar, perhaps, to pattern books of the eighteenth century. In each, buildings are separated from their context, drawn to the same scale, and organized according to affect. Leatherbarrow's approach is the polar opposite. Rather than a reductionist collection of indexed objects, the specific work of architecture is opened up through his interpretations to reveal a temporal and situated way of being in the world. Leatherbarrow's study of performance is more closely aligned with the performance of a musical instrument. Architecture, similar to a musical or theatrical event, is not understood as static but rather is situated and occurs in a specific time and place.

Throughout the essays, performance unfolds into the topographic existence of the building. This is a familiar ground for those who have read *Uncommon Ground* and *Topographical Stories*. More than context and an awareness of site, Leatherbarrow refers to the building's milieu. It is a telling word choice. "Milieu," French for

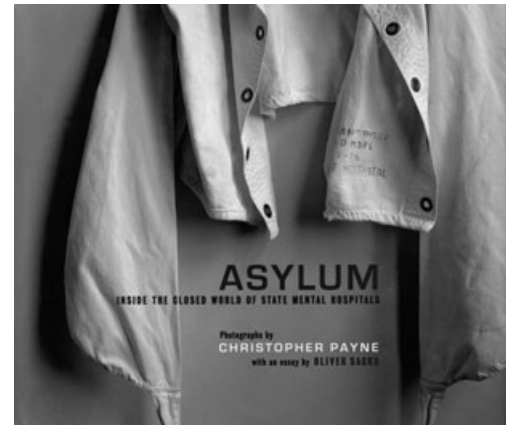
environment, refers, in English, to shared social surroundings. Such surroundings are not fixed but are variable and shifting. The potential for architecture, as Leatherbarrow demonstrates through his examination of volumetric relationships in the work of Loos, the existing social orientations at play in the PSFS building, or the landings at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery at University College Cork, is to accept and work with the existing milieu so that we begin to see the familiar in an unfamiliar way. The congeniality of building and milieu trumps the popular fascination with infographics and datascaping. While recent calls for the return to the discipline of architecture have focused upon innovation, new design intelligences, and fascinating forms of fabrication, Leatherbarrow's writing reminds us that architecture may be more than novelty, a means of production, or form. Indeed, Leatherbarrow offers work that is situated, topographic, lived in, and, even if only approximately, he offers architecture that may orient us otherwise.

Marc J. Neveu

Asylum: Inside the Closed World of State Mental Hospitals

Photographs by CHRISTOPHER PAYNE
Introduction by OLIVER SACKS
MIT Press, 2009
216 pages, illustrated
\$39.95 (cloth)

This book of few words is the product of Christopher Payne's visits to over seventy mental hospitals in thirty states throughout the United States between 2002 and 2008. Essentially a book of photographs, it has an introduction by Oliver Sacks, the renowned neurologist, and two short essays by Payne himself. One is a brief history of American mental hospitals; the second is an afterword in which Payne describes his experiences making the book.



1. Buffalo State Hospital, architect: H.H. Richardson, Buffalo, NY (Photo © Christopher Payne).



Some institutions Payne visited are still marginally functioning; others are desolate and decaying. Payne documents the destruction of one, Danvers State Hospital in Massachusetts. He was affected deeply by the process, not only