

THE EZRA POUND HOUSE: A one-family dwelling for a sociopathic philosopher, or the First Monadic Architecture Manifesto

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ABSTRACT

The project developed by the MLDG¹ architecture and design studio involved profound research into the ontological bases of the logic used in architectural projects. It defends the need for not only designing the architectonic aspects of buildings, but also, and simultaneously, of formulating the deep logic that rules the very language of its con-formation. This is a fundamental characteristic of the projective process that the authors have termed 'monadic architecture'. In our analysis, we have opted for a logical-spatial ontology that explicitly seeks to undermine all sharp distinctions between the exterior and interior, questioning their epistemological grounds and including the building's exterior in the projective logic of the interior, which is principally instantiated via the use of optical-visual relations.

To this end, the project enters into dialogue with the principal theoretical forms of conceiving this relation, developed over the last three decades, via the analysis of its logical functioning in the works of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas. In this context, the Ezra Pound House will be the first practical example of the 'monadic architecture' developed by MLDG. Its design embodies a spatio-visual and corporeal schema (both in its material and tectonic aspects and in the corporeal shifting of its users) which has never been explored, either under the concept of language or that of scale. The project developed by MLDG involves the infinite openness of the logic of the design of interior spaces to the exterior of a project via its introduction into the logic of absolute interiority as a historical characteristic of Mediterranean architecture.

INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGINAL CONDITIONS

The client's principal conditioning factor in the design of the *Ezra Pound House* was the absolute necessity of isolating the dwelling from the rest of society without thereby losing any of the pleasure associated with the surrounding space. This was a difficult requirement to fulfil, given the impossibility of constructing residential buildings in regions not zoned as buildable. Hence, given

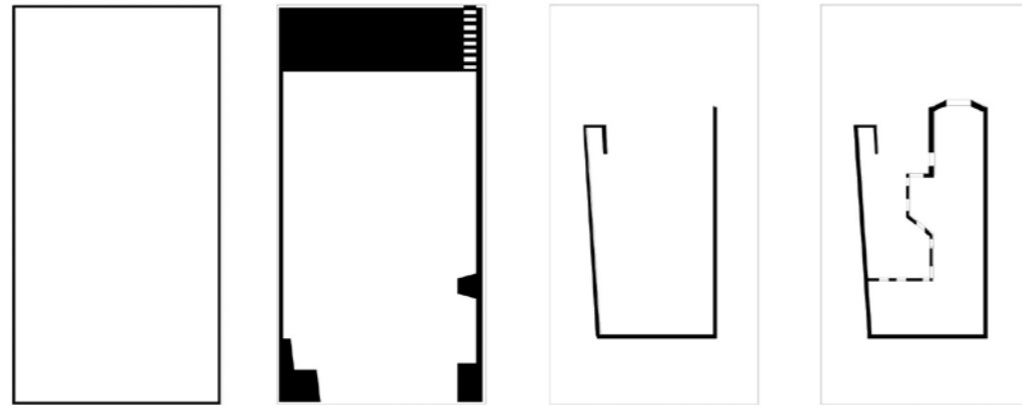


that the lot must be located in a developable zone, and given the economic limitations of the future user, we sought a town whose population density was as low as possible, with regulations that would permit the future construction of single-family homes, each on their own lots.

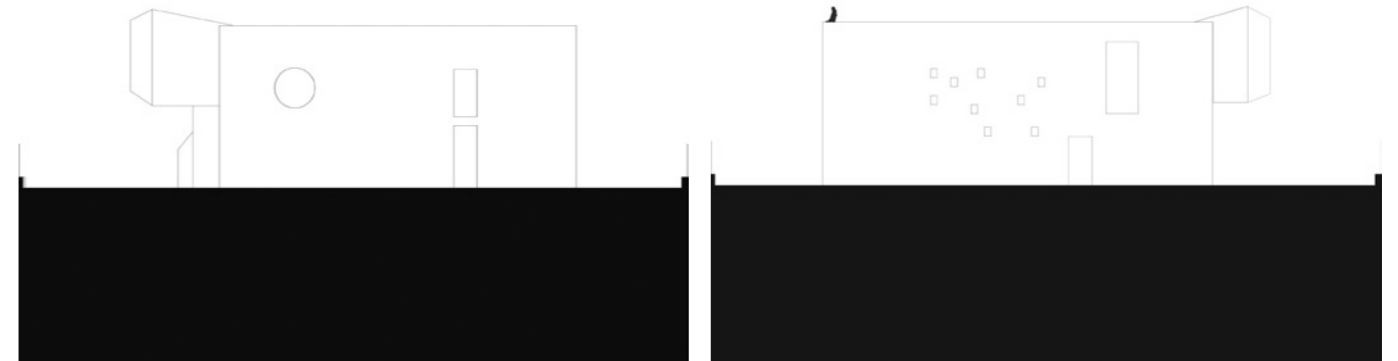
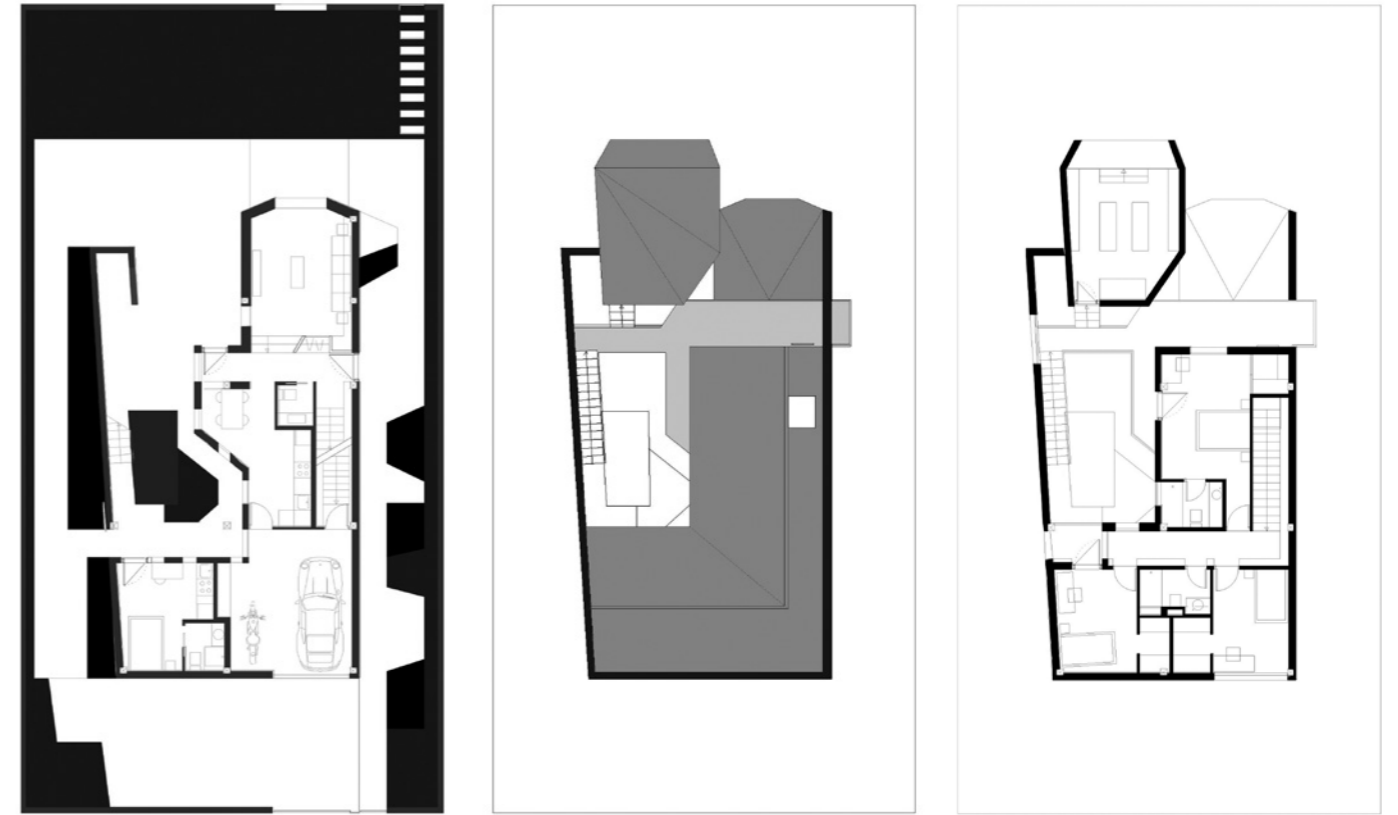
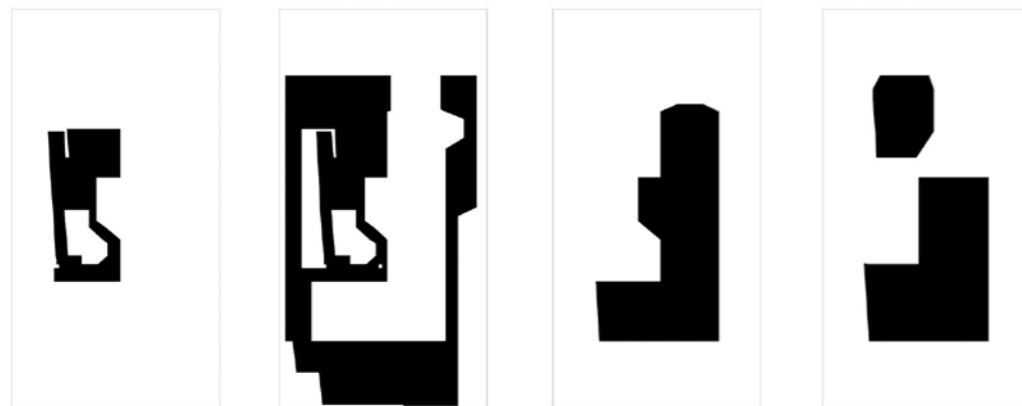
In conformity with the user's requirement for easy access to the city where he works, and the isolation from society he demanded, we located a lot zoned for residential development within the limits of a small town with fewer than 1000 inhabitants, within 20 kilometres of Pamplona city in Spain. The lot, 500m² in size, is located alongside a little-used rural road within sight of an ancient chapel called Arnotegi that crowns a small hill. Hence, no present or future building will intervene between the principal visual orientation of the house, looking to the south, and the landscape that it opens onto. This requirement is further guaranteed by the fact that the terrain between the hill and the home lot is zoned for agricultural use, and nothing in the town's urban planning foresees its conversion to a residential development.

In order to achieve isolation from the adjoining lots, our plan envisions a seven-metre-high fold wall that extends some 50 metres, closing off the east, north and western points of the compass. This wall is 2.5 metres from the eastern and western limits of the lot, and 5 metres from the northern boundary, in order to provide an initial isolation zone, both from the public access road that passes along the lot's north side as well as from the contiguous lots on the east and west. Although these measures enabled us to meet the user's requirements for isolation, we still needed to establish the primary line of relation with the external natural environment. We achieved this via the insertion of a Mediterranean patio, which was originally closed in on four sides within the space created by the fold wall, but which we ultimately opened on its south side in order to take advantage of the views towards Arnotegi. This opening to the south was thus postulated as a bridge or hinge that united the exterior space outside the folded wall and the open exterior space within the wall. From now on we will refer to these two spaces as the 'English patio' and the 'Mediterranean patio', respectively.

^{Above}
Figure 1: Landscape seen from Ezra Pound House (EPH), 2011, Navarra, Spain. Source: MLDG.



Our client, an assiduous student of Neoplatonic philosophy and a lover of Renaissance architecture, required us to incorporate into the building's design a numeric symbolism controlling the proportions of its distinct elements: the dimensions of the floors and façade, doors, windows, etc. which should be based on the golden mean as a symbol of harmony, autonomy and self-sufficiency. This Neoplatonic conception of numeric symbolism, however, entered rapidly into conflict with the idea of opening the Mediterranean patio on its south side, which provided certain benefits for the enjoyment of the landscape that the client refused to give up. This contradiction was fundamentally based on the lack of limit, of plenitude, and on the closed conception of the Mediterranean patio, which offered certain special characteristics via its openness on one side, and its lack of enclosure by internal rooms on all sides. In a continuous discussion with the future user, we decided to find a philosophically grounded design procedure that, above and beyond embodying Neoplatonic concepts and symbolic relationships, would allow us to develop an argument in the process of design that follows the logic of a self-consistent house. We found such a conception in the philosophy of Gottfried Leibniz and Gilles Deleuze's reading of him, and also in a deconstruction of the traditional relationship between the concepts of 'outside' and 'inside', detonated by the crossing of the Mediterranean and English courtyards.

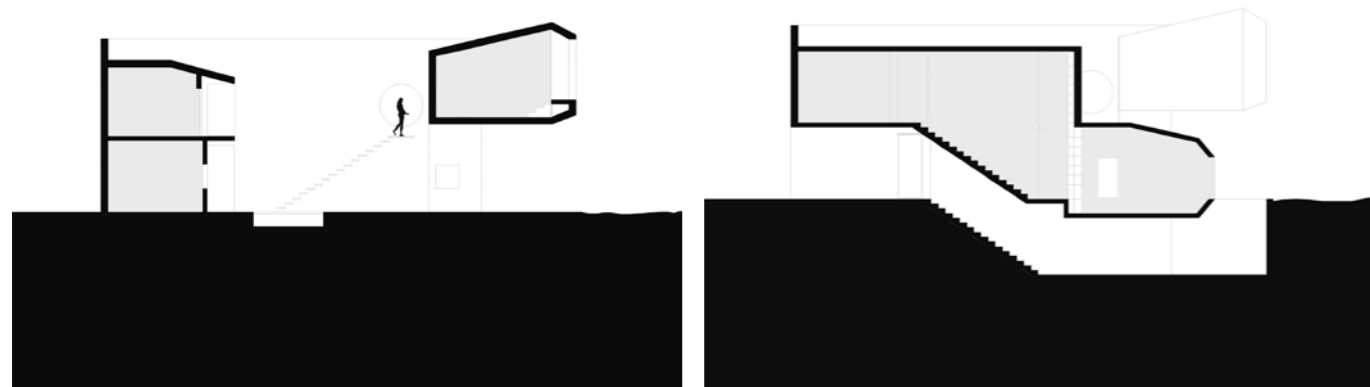


Opposite Top
Figure 2: MLDG, EPH-Monadic design process 01, 2011

Opposite Bottom
Figure 3: MLDG, EPH-Monadic design process 02, 2011

Above Top
Figure 4: MLDG, EPH-Ground Floor, 2011.
Figure 5: MLDG, EPH-First Floor, 2011.
Figure 6: MLDG, EPH-Roof Floor, 2011

Above Bottom
Figure 7: MLDG, EPH-West Elevation, 2011. Figure 8: MLDG, EPH-East Elevation, 2011



ONTOLOGICAL BASES OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

The house was named Ezra Pound because this was a mandatory condition imposed by the client. Furthermore, he was the first to suggest the 'monadic orientation' for the building's design, taking into account the 'vorticist' works of the American poet. In its monadic-architectural version, this vorticist vision aims to reproduce the dynamism of the relationships among the different parts of the monad in a completely immanent way. In order to support the general conception of the project, we used several explicitly developed concepts as a base for our decision making.²

1. The fold of the wall is a kind of apparent limit between the space beyond the wall and the internal space it creates, although this space is in reality continuous. That is, we generated an initial indecisiveness between what is in fact exterior and what is interior to the house as defined by the fold-wall. In other words, the act of internalising the external landscape within the building by means of the Mediterranean courtyard — given the indecisiveness and the indifference that exists between the Mediterranean and the English courtyards — provokes a breaking of the clear distinction between what is external and what is internal to the house. For this reason we decided to employ the concept of Leibniz's 'monad', a 'simple substance, that is, without parts,¹³ in which, therefore, neither a substance nor an accident could enter from the exterior in a monad.¹⁴ That is, the project, given its intentional ambiguity between the concepts of

interior and exterior, does not differentiate between the internal space and the external space of the house. Rather, it conceives it as an undifferentiated whole, that is, as an absolute interiority that has included its own external space within itself.

2. Therefore, in spite of the deconstruction of the concepts of interior and exterior that are present in the design of the house, we decided not to transform it into a 'limit' project along the lines of the *envelope* of Bernard Tschumi or the *In-Between* of Steven Holl. Instead we approached our project inspired more by what Koolhaas achieved in the 1990s through the notion of interiority in his theory of Bigness. We went further, however, by not thereby renouncing the exteriority of the surrounding space, instead including it inside the 'monad' itself. However, before beginning our description of the main characteristics of this monadic architecture, we first have to analyse why the approaches of Eisenman, Tschumi and Holl, deep down, are only renunciations, in one way or another, of the role of the architect as creator of spatial relationships. These relationships, termed 'bridges' by Martin Heidegger, consist mainly in the establishment of a relationship, that is, a measure, *agri-mensura*, or *arché-tecture*, with the perceived world.⁵

In 1999, Eisenman established a catalogue of the work created by his architecture studio up to that moment, dividing it into three types: 1) projects that use diagrams of interiority; 2) projects that use diagrams of anteriority; and 3) projects that use diagrams of exteriority.⁶ His concepts of interiority, anteriority and exteriority

were mainly related to architecture as a discipline and not to the ontological concepts of measure and establishment of limits. In reality, however, Eisenman, like us, also understood Absolute Interiority as the possibility of an autonomous architecture that finds exclusively within itself the grounds of its own support, its *causa sui*. In contrast, 'exteriority' would be the intrusion of all extra-disciplinary elements that have an influence on the design process which is beyond the control of the designer, while 'anteriority' is the possibility of establishing a lineal and conscious register for the process of design in accordance with the taxonomy of signifier and signified established by Ferdinand de Saussure.⁷

The deconstruction of interiority and exteriority in architecture, its 'linguistic deconstruction' in Eisenman's terms, is carried out by means of what he called 'decomposition'⁸ in its analytic version, and 'diagram' in its projective version. So, both 'decomposition' in the analysis of the process of designing a building and the 'diagram' in the same act of design presuppose the impossibility of establishing a difference between 'interiority' and 'exteriority' in the sense (in the context of the architectural discipline) of a concrete project, which thereby makes impossible its 'anteriority'. Eisenman says that 'a diagram is a representation of something, in that it is not the thing itself. In this sense, it cannot help but be embodied. It can never be free of value or meaning, even when it attempts to express relationships of formation and their process. At the same time, a diagram is neither a structure nor an abstraction of structure. While it explains relationships in an architectural object, it is not isomorphic with it.'⁹ Later, he states directly that 'a diagram in architecture can also be seen as a double system that operates as writing both from the anteriority and the interiority of architecture.'¹⁰

However, there are two main problems with the notions of 'interiority', 'anteriority' and 'exteriority' as established by Eisenman. First, they deal with the discipline of architecture in general, and not with ontological, concrete and spatial notions. Secondly, in accordance with the philosophical trend popular during the 1970s, these notions are used to conceive every entity or relationship in a linguistic-representative sense, i.e. according to the logic of the signifier and the signified.¹¹ We hold, in other words, that the whole

theoretical conception of Eisenman does not provide for allowing the architect to act in the concrete reality of a project; instead, they are applicable only in the discourse of the architectural discipline over its whole history. Deep down, and in spite of his continuous and excessively free references to the works of Jacques Derrida and Deleuze, Eisenman has only really produced a syntactic archeology of the historical discourse of the architectural discipline. So, just as in the 1970s Manfredo Tafuri had already stated that the reality of the architecture of Robert Venturi was an answer to the institutional thought of Louis Kahn,¹² we hold that the reality of the concrete, of the interiority and exteriority of its space that we proposed in the *Ezra Pound House*, is an answer to the critical and exclusive dialogue that Eisenman has with the architectural discipline.

On the other hand, if instead of analysing the general theory proposed by Eisenman we examine a concrete example of his critique, especially that which focuses on the *Hubbe House* (1935) by Mies van der Rohe, we can use his analysis to broaden the horizon of appearance of what we understand as 'monadic architecture'. For when Eisenman talks about Mies' project, in spite of again introducing a general and linguistic meta-theory which transforms architecture into a language, he also introduces the spatial and concrete aspect of a project into the discussion through the deconstruction of the interior-exterior relationship of the habitable space of a house.¹³ He begins with a response to the traditional criticism that the typologies of the country houses of Mies are an attempt to shut in or to cloister an exterior space within the interior. He first takes note of the interpretation that Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co present of these houses, where, in their view, external nature is not related to the house through a relationship of openness as realised through exterior views from within, but as a 'framing' of nature via the patina of the windows — which are objects more similar to a painting than to nature *per se*.¹⁴ Eisenman continues by reading this framing as a linguistic sign which, in this case, refers to nature as signified: 'The glass that separated man from nature is now a glass that separates man from the simulation of nature; unnatural becomes framed behind glass. Glass, rather than being seen as the outside of the inside, is not the inner-outside of the outside.'¹⁵

Opposite

Figure 9: MLDG, EPH-Longitudinal section 01, 2011.
Figure 10: MLDG, EPH-Longitudinal section 02, 2011

Eisenman continues his discourse to the point where the objectivisation of nature deconstructs the spatial distribution of the house and makes any difference between an inside and an outside of the house impossible. There is neither inside nor outside of anything, but only sign relationships between signifiers. Thus, the *Hubbe House* (1935), like Eisenman's *House I* (1967) through *House X* (1982), is reduced to a complex of signifiers in relation to another complex of signifiers where the words 'inside' or 'outside' do not yet have any meaning. If we eliminate the linguistic-representational logic from this reasoning, we will have prepared the ground for the appearance of a monadic architecture.

On the other hand, the theory of the 'envelope + vectors' of Tschumi denies any primacy or active power to the shape of a building. Instead, its design is reduced to the only point in which this could still generate active relationships with the context in which was introduced: its 'skin' or 'envelope'. According to Tschumi, that reduction of the manipulation of the building's shape exclusively to the design of the *interface* of the surface or 'envelope' of a building had to be activated by certain 'vectors' or directions, qua 'flows' generated by its program.¹⁶ In other words, once the architect has been transformed into a programmer of human corporative systems, the only formal redoubt left to design is the definition of the limit itself between the external and the internal space of his or her project. Even more than deconstructing the limit between what is internal and what is external, Tschumi ratifies it by reducing the limit that separates them to a concrete and determined bi-dimensional plane. From this point of view, his architecture is completely traditional. We hold that the Swiss architect's post-2000 projects are nothing other than 'facades',¹⁷ in three dimensions if we will, but 'facades' nonetheless. While he calls them 'interfaces' and constructs them according to a composite and anti-classical principle, they remain merely 'facades'.¹⁸

This Tschumian concept of facade is contradictory, because while on one hand it ratifies the definition and delimitation of the inside and outside of a building, on the other hand it is excessively centred on the design of the 'envelope' itself. He does not take into account the 'envelope' or the opportunity for establishing relationships, for creating a bi-directional communication between the interior and the exterior of the building; rather, a juxtaposition results from the joining of three fields which are totally independent of one another, in no way inter-related. On the one hand, there is the exterior of the project, completely apart from its logic; on the other, there is the interior, defined only by the programme and the programmatic relationships internal to it. Finally, there is the three-dimensional envelope-façade which is designed as a global ornament, in what seems to be a throwback to the use of Arabic mosaic, which seals exteriority and interiority off in closed compartments without permitting any relationship among them. In other words, Tschumi proposes a return to the 'decorated shed' of Venturi in which 'space and architecture are directly at the service of the program, and the ornament is applied with independence from them'.¹⁹

However, the main problem of pure juxtaposition is that it does not measure; it does not establish any relationship beyond a mere indifference to what is juxtaposed and a definitive enclosure in solipsism. In contrast, the interiority of the monad includes exteriority within itself, thus making possible the

establishment of relationships. Tschumi's interiority operates by exclusion, through the 'purity' of the internal itself. It is here that the *Bigness* of Koolhaas comes in, because if theoretically it repeats the conditions established by the 'envelope + vectors' of Tschumi,²⁰ practically, the projects of the 1990s by OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) like the *Kunsthal of Rotterdam* (1992), the *Agadir Hotel in Morocco* (1990), or the *University Library of Jussieu* (1993) integrate inside their 'monads' their external space. Respectively, by means of the continuous ramp-street in a spiral that crosses the Parisian Library, or by means of the artificial dunes that cross the hotel of Morocco creating a continuous section of the building at half height. It is this notion of absolute interiority that integrates its own external otherness which, taking its logic to the extreme, is what we want to develop in this project of Small scale as opposed to the Large scale project defined by OMA as exclusively its own. It is for this reason that, in opposition to the theory imposed by OMA, we openly affirm that monadic architecture, the supposed Bigness, is not properly a thematic of scale, as the OMA-AMO²¹ idea factory would like us to believe. Rather, as always in the history of architecture, it refers to a matter of conceptualisation and categorisation of the spatial ontology in which the architect performs his or her work.

We directly opposed the institutional conception of the discipline of architecture advanced by Eisenman with the concrete reality of our project, and also opposed OMA's factic empiricism that is implied by their theory of Bigness qua categorisation of architecture via scales: their exclusively empirical or pragmatic conception of the constructive-economic reality of architecture. And we contrast it now with architecture's categorical-conceptual character. We thus define a realm proper to architectonic reality in its spatial conception, which, due to its inter-mediate conception, requires 'the measure' of those relationships that are established between its distinct spatial scopes. In other words, monadic architecture is committed to a conception of architecture wherein *its reality is produced by the architect in the very act of 'projecting', via the non-disciplinary and non-institutional establishment of the ontic-spatial categories with which he or she 'projects' his creation.* That is, bringing in a linguistic hypothesis again, if reality were understood exclusively as a language (which we are not proposing), then, according to our proposal, the architect, in his/her very act of planning, has the capacity and the duty to create with each act of planning both that which he/she is going to say, as well as the rules of the language with which he/she is going to say it. On the other hand, the architectonic conception of Eisenman would be limited to deconstructing the rules of the language which the discipline of architecture has given him, while the pragmatism of Koolhaas would respond that the true language which architecture deals in is previously given by the anonymous economic-constructive reality, and that we will not be able to invent any other language which is not already given by this reality.²²

The true problem, then, of monadic architecture is that, in theory, since it contains within itself all of the existent and the possible of its world, it would not permit more than one, unique language proper to it and which only it would understand. In other words, each monad, each project, qua singular vision of the world, has a language of its own that it does not share with the

rest of the monads *qua* singular visions of the world, distinct from our own. For this reason, the only condition that monadic architecture imposes upon architects' work in their measuring of the world with each new project is that their creation of language be 'polyglot'. That is, each project brings with it a new language, a new vision of the world, a new form of measuring it without stagnating in one single created language which only dialogues with itself in every project, over and over again. Instead of the ego-worshipping solipsism of 'personal style', monadic architecture demands that creation be multi-monadic, multi-dimensional, since we hold that every assertion of a reality *per se*, every affirmation of a language of reality, as both Eisenman and Koolhaas maintain in distinct aspects, is nothing more than the monadic enclosure of the architect within his own architecture.²³

3. Finally, and as a direct consequence of this concrete monadic character of the project, its autarchic character is established, with a logic which in no way responds to the socio-political-economic determinants of any other monad that is not itself. Or, if one prefers, the anarchic character of the demand of the project's logic to respond only in its own tribunal. But it should be clearly understood that the demand resulting from the singularity of the project arises from the project itself, and not from the architect. We are not in any way defending the individual subjectivity of the 'artist' in this paper, since such a subjectivity, if it wishes to be such according to our concept of architecture, has to be principally inter-monadic, or what amounts to the same thing, being able to traverse the exteriority of the monad which is not interiorised by the monad itself in its world. That means to achieve the creation of a completely autonomous world, completely and immediately formed once and for all, and to completely go out of itself in a search for the creation of a completely distinct new world, with its own logic that structures it without subjective interferences from previously created logics.

This is why our defence of monadic architecture implies a direct opposition to any notion of 'auteur architecture' and the star-system that comes with it, since any connotation of personal style, or of one's 'own' design, involves external violence to the logic of the project, insofar as it implies a complete vision of

the world which newly deifies the modern notions of interiority and exteriority as foundations of the now-obsolete concepts of subject and object. Instead of this gnoseology, still present in Edmund Husserl, we refer to the notion of 'image' present in Henri Bergson as the proper realm from which a monadic conception of the objective and subjective can be developed.²⁴

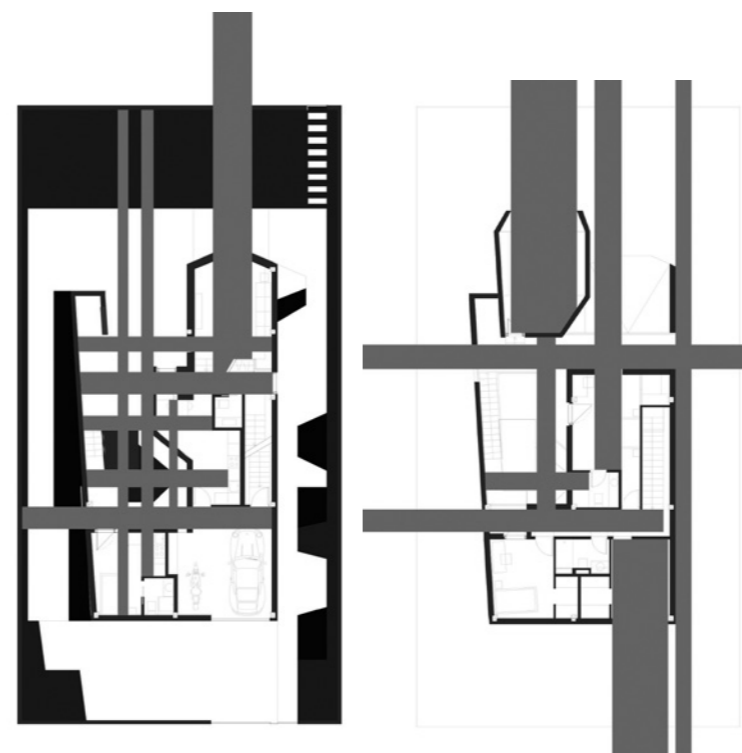
DIS-PLAY OF THE MONAD

Once we precisely defined the conceptual parameters on the basis of which we have developed the monadic design of the project, we began to establish the criss-cross of relationships between the interior of the house with its exterior-within-the-wall (the Mediterranean patio) and the undifferentiated juxtaposition with the exterior-beyond-the-wall (the English patio) in order to exponentially strengthen the two demands of the user: isolation with respect to all other monads, and a maximum enjoyment and appropriation of the exterior world from within the interior of his house. Hence, and in contrast with the notion of *envelope* developed by Tschumi, we refuse to relate the interior of the dwelling with the Mediterranean patio via a crossed envelope that would mediate between the folding of the wall/screen and the interior space of the house.

The principal rupture of the closed and autarchic character of the Mediterranean patio came, just as with the *Hubbe House* (1935), via the demand for a visual relationship with the exterior, which in our case was directionally fixed towards the Arnotegi chapel as a first inclusion of the exterior within the interior of the project's logic. On this basis we decided that the principal ambit of the inclusion of the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio within the internal-interior of the house should be visual relations, instead of choosing an excessive literality of spatial inclusion of the Mediterranean patio in the internal-interior of the dwelling via the employment of form.

Hence — and in contrast with the Renaissance visual concept of a single panoptic point of view that, in a univocal way, controls and measures a space conceived of as unique, homogenous and isotropic in the manner of the mechanical system defined

by Lewis Mumford²⁵ — the visual conception that the notion of monad requires is no longer a simple Piranesian polyperspectivism. Rather, and even further, it demands a multiplicity of visuals which are not all conformed to each other according to a perspective-structuration; that is, not all are conformed to each other according to a depth of field which perspective would require in order to be perceived as such. Thus, we established a progressive and infinitesimal gradation between those visuals that are permitted from within the interior of the dwelling towards the Mediterranean patio via a series of openings on the ground floor that extend from the view of the bi-dimensional flatness of the inner face of the fold wall (type A views with no vanishing point), via a series of micro-perspectives which reveal the depth and directionality of the Mediterranean patio (type B views with two vanishing points), to fully perspectivalised visuals aligned with the directionality of the Mediterranean patio (type C views with vanishing point).

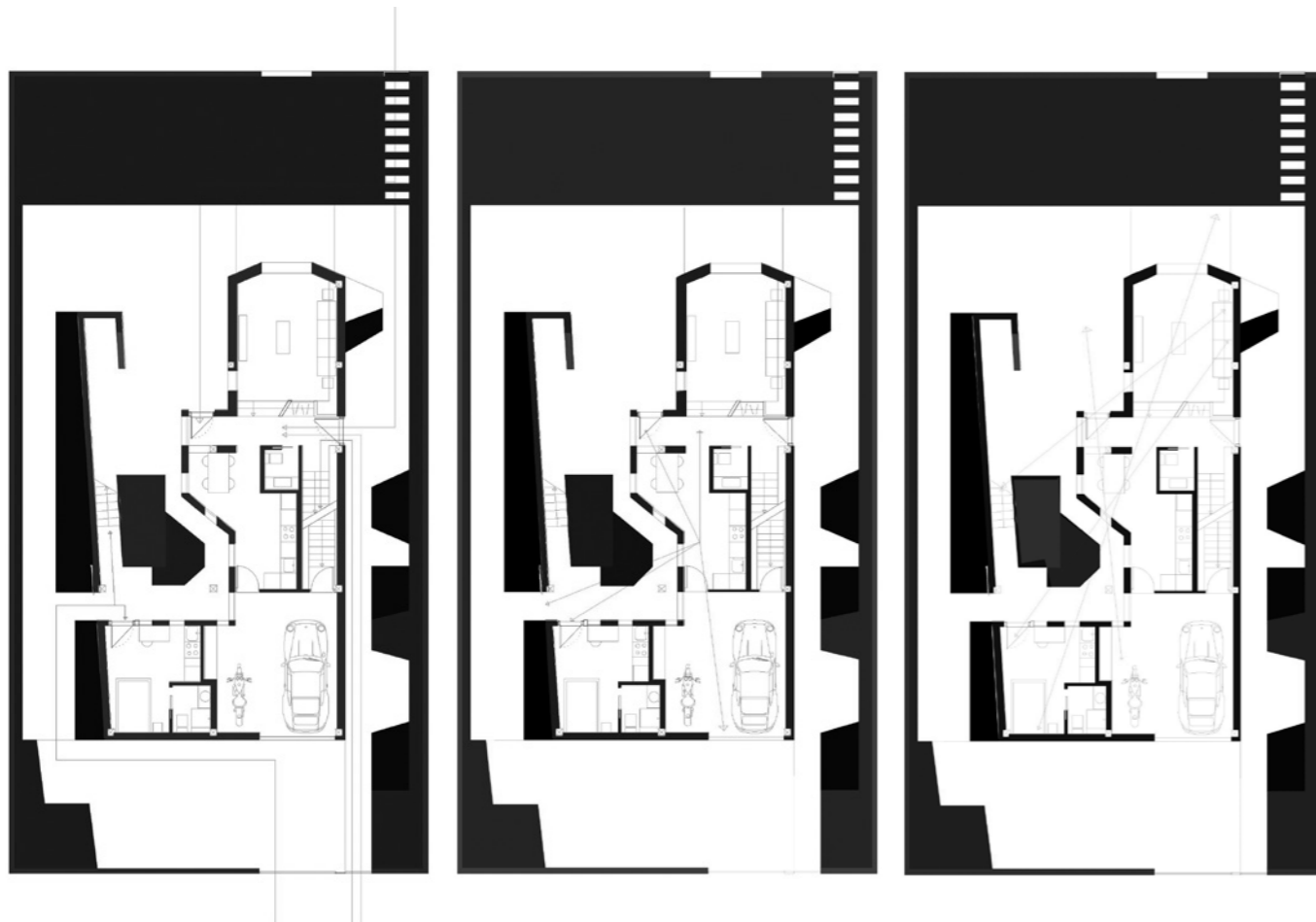


Above Left
Figure 11: MLDG, EPH-Main views ground floor, 2011

Above Right
Figure 12: MLDG, EPH-Main views first floor, 2011

Moreover, these visual relationships are not defined from an exclusively syntactic point of view, but, taking into account the linguistic anti-formalism that is attributed to the concept of reality, the visual relationships established are also established in a field that we could call 'semantic'. So, the main internal views within the monad refer to the four basic elements defined by the pre-Socratic philosophy as $\alpha\rho\chi\alpha$ (*archai*, principles or roots): Water-Fire-Wind-Earth. This original quadruple, inserted within the interior of the project by the use of the pond, the internal pyre in the extreme of the East wall, the opening to the south of the Mediterranean courtyard and the parterre of earth for an olive tree, refer, then, to the multiple origin of the monad inasmuch as it derives from the pre-eminence of multiplicity over the one, seen in relationship with the genealogy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, the criticism of Derrida of the phenomenology of Husserl in *The Voice and the Phenomenon*, or in Deleuze's concept of disjunctive syllogism in *Logic of Meaning*.²⁶ All of these perspectives, by diverse paths, argue for the impossibility of the pre-eminence of the unitary over multiplicity and defending the primacy of the multiple — and thereby of relationship — over beings themselves. Beings or 'entes', therefore end up being nothing more than a set of relations, 'bundles or collections of differing perceptions, which follow one another with inconceivable rapidity and in perpetual flow and movement.'²⁷ And this bundle, both from our point of view as well as that of Deleuze, is nothing other than 'the monad'.

In a manner which is equally formal, volumetric and programmatic, the entire design of the *Ezra Pound House* returns toward a set of non-centred relations, all of them inserted into the Mediterranean patio. Formally, the rigid and unexpressive orthogonality of the fold-wall, in its relation with the English patio, is transformed in its internal face via a continual micro-folding with a large number of variations, in order to adapt itself to the direction of the views. Volumetrically, all the slopes of spatial coverings flow into the pond situated in the interior of the wall — a postmodern *impluvium* — but without repeating the relationship with the principal views. In this case, we establish the priority of the perspective line towards Arnotegi which, in this manner, is taken from the exterior. Finally, in a programmatic sense, the distinct uses of the dwelling



are integrated as the principal landmarks for the monad, which increase its independence and autarchy to an extreme in the case of the study (which is completely independent in its volumetric aspect, separated from the ground, with its own entrance and materials and structure which are completely different from the rest of the house), passing through the entryway to the guest house (independent and only accessible from the Mediterranean patio, with no direct connection to the rest of the house), and arriving finally at the principal kitchen-living room binomial, which is a single space visually divided by a curtain and traversed on its axis of union by a straight flow line that directly connects the English patio (external-exterior) with the Mediterranean patio (internal-exterior) via the internal-interior of the non-centered nucleus of the house.

In regards to the internal-interior of the house, specifically the visual relation established between the kitchen-living room binomial, we note that this relation is maintained via a principal sight line that, running from the garage to the entrance to the kitchen, is aligned directly with the views towards Arnotegi. In this way, once the kitchen-living room binomial has been established via the project's primary view, that is, that which introduces the exterior into the interior, and defines it as 'monadic', in the living room the view towards Arnotegi is given exclusive preference in detriment to any other. This is the complete opposite of what happens in the kitchen, where favour is given to the multiplicity of visual relations with the distinct elements of the Mediterranean patio, which generates a rhythm of private views via the distinct movements and actions of the user of the kitchen.

With this we have achieved various things. In the first place, we have visually isolated the living room from anything other than Arnotegi. Therefore, we reduced the possibility of visually traversing the space, once the user is seated on the furniture of the living room. In addition, this room is sunk approximately 0.6 metres in order to achieve a complete visual occlusion from outside the monad. Secondly, the kitchen, a room that is habitually condemned to being hidden in the interior of the house, is in this case the nerve centre of the house and the control point for multiple crisscrossed views. In the kitchen there is a visual relation with all the entrances of the house, both those to its internal-interior spatiality as well as to the interior exterior, while in the case of the relationship with the internal-exterior space the visual relationship becomes so intense that it produces a formal relation: the Mediterranean patio is introduced in the northern half of the ground floor, thereby generating a fragmented portico that harkens back to the Renaissance Mediterranean patios, while in the southern half it is that part of the kitchen dedicated to a dining area which is formally introduced into the Mediterranean patio. This generates, on the ground floor, a terrace with exclusive access from the primary bedroom which connects with the walkway to the study. This walkway, in turn, is connected with the Mediterranean patio via a metallic staircase built into the principal wall. All of this has the purpose of guaranteeing a multiple relationship with an internal-exteriority that is completely autonomous and without any relation to the rest of the world, as required by the sociopathy of our client, in two completely distinct forms: the open-multiple dynamic of the kitchen, and the bunkerised-unitary statics of the living room.

Opposite Left

Figure 13: MLDG, EPH-Multiple independent accesses, 2011

Opposite Centre

Figure 14: MLDG, EPH-Rhizome-panoptic kitchen. 2011.

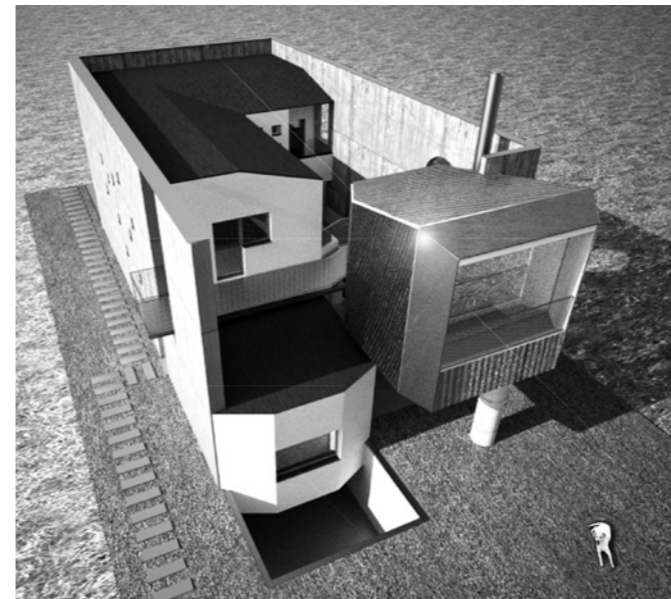
Opposite Right

Figure 15: MLDG, EPH-Rhizome-panoptic views, 2011



In regards to the visual-programmatic relations established on the first floor, we see how it is separated completely from the ground floor via an L-shaped bookcase-corridor, by means of tiny openings between the books in order to emphasize this independence. In this way we reinforce the relationship of the ground floor of the internal-interior with the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio, while the first floor of the internal-interior involves an unfolding of this space which is completely independent of it, and in reality only united to the ground floor of the internal-interior via the mediation of the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio.

Relationships which are proper to the first floor are the disposition of the children's bedrooms, which are completely opposite in their attitudes towards social relationships, in the northern part of the house. Thus, the oldest child's bedroom aims its views directly towards the external-exterior (pro-public social relationships), although its northern orientation does not provide direct light. The second child's bedroom, on the other hand, directs its views towards the Mediterranean patio (anti-public social relationships), mediated by a private terrace from which an east-west view intersects, and which permits the illumination of the corridor-library in the only 'public' point of the internal-interior of the dwelling that permits a visual relationship with the external-exterior of the fold-wall that does not centre itself on



Arnotegi. The master bedroom, for its part, provides a dual view: the principal one towards Arnotegi, and another more private one which is accessible from the bathroom, looking toward the Mediterranean patio. In addition, this bedroom allows exclusive access to the terrace that connects the house with the study, which is visually related exclusively with Arnotegi, thereby guaranteeing the greatest point of autarchy and isolation of the hermit-client.

In regards to the communicative interrelation between the parts, the guaranteed independence of the distinct habitable dimensions of the house is placed in a cross-relation via the establishment of a double snaking diagram of flows and pathways that traverse both the interior of the dwelling (the L-shaped bookshelf-corridor that unites the two floors) and the Mediterranean patio (the metallic stairs that unite the patio and the independent guest entrance on the ground floor with the study entrance and the added element, also L-shaped, that provides access to the principal bedroom on the first floor), while the English patio space is reduced to a line parallel to the wall which runs directly and without



mediation from beyond the public access road to the living room's hall. In so doing, we achieve a continual interior snaking that weaves together the internal-interior with the internal-exterior, thereby bending both the sensation of interrelation as well as that of the broadness of the spaces, while the required relation of this weaving with the internal-exterior is reduced to a minimum expression, in order to guarantee rapid and effective functionality by juxtaposition.

As an overall perspective, we have established, programmatically, an overall cross-diagram of the principal views towards the exterior, the secondary crossed views within the interior; the establishment of original landmarks and a division into independent and autonomous parts. All of this is woven together via the principal fold-wall which isolates and shapes the monad in itself, plus the double L of the flow pathways which cross and traverse via the visual relations, without going so far as to structure themselves via the travelling perspective involved with the *promenades architecturales* of *Villa Savoye* (1928) of Le Corbusier, or the *University Library of Jussieu* (1993), by Koolhaas.

Opposite
Figure 16: MLDG, EPH-Perspective 01, 2012

Above Left
Figure 17: MLDG, EPH-Perspective 02, 2012.

Above Right
Figure 18: MLDG, EPH-Perspective 03, 2012.



Finally, the material-tectonic aspect of the project also emphasises the multiplicity of the monadic logic. Specifically, the undulating outer sheet of the study and its asymmetric metallic structure are counterpoised by the fold-wall constructed via a trans-ventilated façade built of concrete block and a translucent plastic covering material with distinct tones of trans-lucidity, for a future retro-illumination with distinct grades of light intensity that embraces a completely reticulated concrete structure. This marks a duality that places the monadic character of the entire project into a primary tension to strengthen the internal-external space of the open Mediterranean space as a primary and fundamental part of the interior of the monad. Contrasting with this metallic, recycled materiality that faces towards the exterior of the monad, both the interior part of the main wall as well as the small interface-wall that separates the interior of the dwelling from the Mediterranean patio are constructed with traditional materials such as plaster and facing brick in an artisanal

bonding. For its part, the roof of the house is designed with thermal slate to strengthen the warm and natural character of the project's interiority, in opposition to the recycled-industrialism of the exterior, as a metaphor harkening back to the technological cave of Zarathustra.²⁸ This union between traditional and industrial materials is produced via a direct, prior juxtaposition via the mediation of the universal unifier (other than money), that is, silicone and EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer) rubber.

Thus, as a result of following the logic of architectural monadism that we have proposed, we finally achieved a set of multiple internal relations of distinct weights, together with isolation from the rest of the visions that have not been interiorised by the monad itself. In this way, and going beyond Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau* (1922-37), which passively and randomly includes everything on the same plane of intensity, we propose the establishment of distinct intensities between the crossed relations without thereby constituting an ordered hierarchical structure. In contrast with the full interiority of the single levelling plane of money (from *Merz-bau qua com-merz = commerce and bau = to build*), the *Ezra Pound House* newly imposes the material ethic of non-commercial constructive relations, of artistic values and of the techniques of laying-out and construction of worlds which turn a blind eye to any other logic besides that of the artistic project itself, which is a world-creating (and not demiurgic) force. This is an escape both from the metropolitan logic of money, defined by Georg Simmel as the territorial planning of urban bureaucracy,²⁹ in favour of an 'apologia' for the monadic logic of art. Zarathustra's cave is hidden in the midst of the mediocrity of the mandatory economic logic of zoning which is only open to the world through itself, in order to be able to live without vomiting. We thus present the *Ezra Pound House* for a sociopathic philosopher as the only possibility of, in the fullest Heideggerian sense, finally 'inhabiting' the world constructed by the project itself. A complete and closed-in-upon-itself song that nonetheless, in a poetic form, includes the entire world within itself. A monad-song, this time in the form of architecture: the AK-47 song of Western architectonic civilisation.³⁰

NOTES

1. MLDG is a young Architecture and Urban Planning studio founded in Spain. It is characterised by a highly flexible online organisation for facilitating collaboration amongst its team members, an interdisciplinary working methodology and a theoretical point of view regarding the design of the projects it undertakes. Up to the time of designing *The Ezra Pound House*, all its projects had been oriented towards the search for alternative fields for the development of Architecture which were directly related neither to building design nor academe, and all of them were conceptualised in explicit opposition to the "starchitecture system". In their research laboratory/studio ASRT, the team members work in concert with philosophers, sociologists, writers, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, urban design specialists, engineers, lawyers and craftsmen. They continuously search for new ways of understanding the relations among those fields. They have taught courses and seminars in different universities in Spain, as well as in Europe and Latin America. Nowadays, because of the Spanish economic crisis, they are trying to create a project for co-operation with different universities and public administrations. This project is called Dada Project on the City, and focuses on research about alternative, extremely cheap housing.

2. The main conceptual tools of the ASRT-MLDG studio make reference to Dadaism, '68 May, OMA, and the works of Gilles Deleuze, a philosopher who is deeply influenced by Leibniz, which was a point in common with the client's

Opposite

Figure 19: MLDG, EPH-Perspective 04, 2012

own requirements for the Ezra Pound house.

3. Nicholas Rescher, ed. G.W. Leibniz's *monadology: an edition for students* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 63.
4. Ibid., 65.
5. Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Basic Writings* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).
6. Peter Eisenman, *Diagram Diaries*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).
7. According to Eisenman: 'The interiority of architecture defines the discipline, what it is that makes architecture singular; anteriority is the sedimented history of architecture, which has defined architecture at any given historical moment. The texts of function, site, and programme and the texts of the interiority and anteriority of architecture together define a traditional practice.' Peter Eisenman, *Written into the Void: Selected Writings 1990-2004* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 112.
8. Peter Eisenman, *Transformations, Decompositions, Critique* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003), 273.
9. Peter Eisenman, *Diagram Diaries* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 27.
10. Ibid., 32.
11. We refer to philosophers such as Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida.
12. In the words of Tafuri: 'Robert Venturi has responded to Kahn's promise that communication is possible by giving voice to the institutions: the only institution is the real, and this is what speaks'. Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990), 493.
13. Peter Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside-Out: Selected Writings 1963-1988* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 200.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities 2* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000), 55.
17. A good example of this is found in Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities 3* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 15-205. Here, the same composite technique of 'envelope + vectors' is applied to a great number of projects, thereby producing the same building over and over again with very little formal variation.
18. Tschumi, *Event Cities 2*, 55-150.
19. Robert Venturi, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1972), 95.
20. We note that in *S, M, L, XL*, Koolhaas states that 'Delirious New York implies a latent theory of Bigness based on five theorems; that is, 1. Autonomy of the parts, 2. The elevator: issues of composition, scale, proportion, detail are now moot, 3. The façade can no longer reveal what happens inside, 4. Their impact is independent of their quality, 5. Bigness is no longer part of any urban issue: it exists, at most, it coexists. Its subtext is fuck context.' Rem Koolhaas, *S M L XL* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998), 495-516.
21. AMO is the research, branding and publication studio of the architectural practice OMA. AMO was established in 1999 and is conceived as the mirror image of OMA, operating as a think tank within and independently of the firm. It is directed by Reinier de Graaf alongside Koolhaas and aims at expanding architectural production towards broader issues around culture, identity and organisation. It also enables the practice to interrogate architectural production and research without waiting for commissions and without the need to build anything.
22. Rem Koolhaas, *Conversaciones con estudiantes* (Barcelona: Editorial GG, 2002), 85-90.
23. For a close analysis of the planning methods for the works of Eisenman, Tschumi and Koolhaas, we refer to the reader to Jorge León, "De la tipología al proceso computable: Un análisis de la metodología arquitectónica exigida por el neocapitalismo." *Urban NS 04*, September (2012): 27-42.
24. Where Husserl attempted to once again place the 'subject' (interiority) and the 'object' (exteriority) in relation via 'intentionality', Bergson begins with a completely distinct concept, which has nothing to do either with object, subject or representation. Rather, Bergson begins with the concept of image. For him, the world, including one's own body, is perceived through images. Furthermore, 'it is the brain which forms part of the material world, and not the material world that forms part of the brain.' Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 57. In this way, and with all aprioristically established differentiation between subject-brain and object-world annulled in principle, the images of living beings are differentiated from those proper to inert beings, with the former existing in a 'zone of indetermination' that corresponds to the (re)-action brought about by the images perceived by the living being. In this regard, Deleuze

- affirms that since 'a perception will be subjective when the images vary with respect to a central privileged image [that of the brain]; a perception will be objective, just as it is in things, when all the images vary, one with respect to another; upon all their faces and in all their parts.' Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I* (London-New York: Continuum, 1986), 83. The objective, then, not as a subject-object duality, but as the existence of the ultimate. That is, as the immanence both of the subject as well as that of the object in a set of images all at the same level. If, then, Bergson's proposal brings about consequences which we cannot go into deeper here, the fundamental aspect of his position is that the objective systematics created by perspective, insofar as it 'otherizes' the subject, will be substituted by a new systematics that does not position the subject in a manner external to itself. For a detailed development of this monadic conception of Deleuze's gnoseology, insofar as it refers to the perception-projection of space and time, we refer to Jorge León and Ismael Martín, "El tiempo cinematográfico. Un análisis de los fundamentos óptico-temporales de la semiótica pre-verbal en la obra de Deleuze." *X Conferencia Internacional sobre Nuevas Tendencias en Humanidades*, Mont-Royal Centre, Montreal, Canadá, 14-17 Junio 2012.
25. 'A mechanical system can be defined in which a random sample of the set can serve in place of the entire set: a gram of pure water in the laboratory is presumed to have the same properties as a hundred cubic meters of equally pure water in a cistern, and it is also presumed that what surrounds the object does not affect its behavior.' Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1967), 52.
 26. For a detailed discussion, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), Jacques Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon* (Pittsburgh: Northwestern University Press, 2011) and Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* (London: Continuum, 2004). A paradigmatic example of this is the disjunctive syllogism, which Deleuze interprets as being a portmanteau. See Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* (London: Continuum, 2004), 55. So, we see that every concept generally, and that of his 'frumious' example in particular, is not the relation formed by two original concepts but rather each concept is the relation which is established between two original relations. At base, without relation (without multiplicity and comparison) any unity that produces unity is impossible since something that would be unity in itself without any relation to anything else would be precisely unperceivable. Derrida reasons identically in his critique of the Husserlian *εποχή*.
 27. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 67.
 28. About the houses of Mies van der Rohe as a harkening back to a technological cave of Zarathustra see Iñaki Ábalos, *La buena vida: Visita guiada a las casas de la modernidad* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2008), 50-75.
 29. See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge, 2004).
 30. For further information see, <http://www.mldg.es>