



and within the discipline, is achieved: "The art of Satanic Warmaster is so dramatic and personal that it actually works as an esoteric trick on behalf of Satanic Tyrant Werewolf [Penttilä] in reducing his ego and becoming a medium for both audience and Black Metal in general. It will seem like a bag of clichés, or a masterwork, or actually both."<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Steven Lee Beeber, *The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGBs: A Secret History of Jewish Punk* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2006).
- 2 "I knocked 'em dead in Dallas / They didn't know we were Jews." Andrew Sherman, *The Next Big Thing* (New York, Epic, 1975).
- 3 Beeber.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "True metal people wanna rock not pose / Wearing jeans and leather, not cracker-jack clothes." Joey DeMaio, *Kings of Metal* (New York: Atlantic Records, 1988).
- 6 "True Metal is a name for bands of different metal styles, which, apart from musical aspects, are distinguished by their ideological attitude towards the metal and by particular textual features. The term was coined by the band Manowar and is mainly used by fans and musicians to categorize their music. Musically, the bands are usually assigned to Heavy Metal or Power Metal... *False Metal* is the betrayal of the philosophy of Heavy Metal for commercial reasons. Certain directions of the metal, such as Glam Metal, Nu Metal and Crossover, are regarded as adulterations of pure heavy metal, though bands who can not be classified as traditional Heavy Metal or Power Metal can be accepted as true by true metal fans." "True Metal." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/True\_Metal (accessed September 22, 2017).
- 7 Manowar's fans are known as Metal Warriors, Manowarriors, Immortals, and Brothers of Metal.
- 8 Adrien Begrand, "The Dichotomy of Manowar," *PopMatters*, March 25, 2007.
- 9 "They can't stop us / Let 'em try / For Heavy Metal / We will die!" Joey DeMaio, *Die for Metal* (Aurbum: Metal Circle Music, 2007).
- 10 "I'm prepared to die for metal. Are you? Are you prepared to die for metal? Have you ever thought about that? Are you prepared to die for metal? ... I'm ready! I'm ready to die! ... Do you want me to prove it?" DeMaio, *Joey Interview* by Götz Kühnemund, *Hard Rock*, April, 2006.
- 11 "You say you wanna rock / And make it to the top / You gotta look good / And you gotta act tough / You don't know what to do / I'm givin' you a clue / So you can be the next / Supreme Rock Dude" Andy Sherman, *Supreme Rock Dude* (New York: MCA Records, 1990).
- 12 Friedman, Ross. Interview by Louise Brown. *Iron Fist*, September, 2013.
- 13 Lauri Penttilä, Twitter post, August 26, 2017.
- 14 Lauri Penttilä, Interviewed by Sami Kettunen. *Luputon Gehennan liekki*, 2014.
- 15 Leon Krier, *Architecture: Choice or Fate*, (Windsor: Papadakis Publisher, 1998), 34.
- 16 Ibid., 17.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 "Satanic Warmaster." The Metal Archives. www.metal-archives.com/bands/Satanic\_Warmaster (Accessed September 23, 2017).
- 19 "Armour." The Metal Archives. www.metal-archives.com/bands/Armour. (Accessed September 23, 2017).
- 20 Nuclear War Now!, Death Threat / No Heaven, 2013.
- 21 Krier, 22.
- 22 "My dream of your empire / Fills me with joy / For it is also my fate / To end this life of strife in tragedy / or supremacy." Lauri Penttilä, *My Dreams of 8* (Muglen: No Colours Records, 2005).
- 23 In response to Krier's assertions of the superiority of the classical language of architecture, Eisenman responded as follows: "As a Jew and an 'outsider,' I have never felt part of that 'classical world.' I feel that modernism was the product of an alienated culture with no roots suddenly being brought into a bourgeois situation. In other words, modernists were suddenly out of the ghettos and in the cities. The philosophy that would abolish modernism proposes that if we return the world to the way it was before alienated individuals took over, everything would be worked out. I am not convinced." Cynthia Davidson, *Eisenman/Krier: Two Ideologies* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2004), 36.
- 24 Krier, 72.
- 25 "The Semite creation in ashes / The remains blown away to the past / Of the new Hyper-Order order." Lauri Penttilä, *Der Schwarze Orden* (Lahri: Northern Heritage, 2001).
- 26 Emmanuel Petit, *Irony or, The Self-Critical Opacity of Postmodern Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 79.
- 27 Emmanuel Petit, *Ceci n'est pas un reveil: The Architecture of Stanley Tigerman* (Yale School of Architecture, 2011).
- 28 Stanley Tigerman, *Versus: An American Architect's Alternatives* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 115.
- 29 Ibid., 109.
- 30 Beeber, 99.
- 31 Brett Stevens, "Satanic Warmaster show in Glasgow draws racism complaints," *Death Metal Underground*, April 9, 2015.

## "TOTALLY POST-IRONY!" A Conversation with Michael Meredith

**Michael Meredith is a co-principal of MOS Architects with Hilary Sample and is Assistant Professor at the Princeton University School of Architecture. The issue editors emailed Michael for a contribution on September 10, 2017, to which he replied: "We're totally post-irony! Would love to contribute. Best, Michael."**

**PI** Post-ironic tendencies seem to result from a constant cycling between sincerity and irony until these positions become confused and conflated. Has your attitude towards practice shifted through the different stages in your design career, or has post-irony been a constant in your work?

**MM** Answering this question might require a little more personal context than usual. When I graduated with my master's degree in 2000, I had a residency at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. At the time I was writing *Metal and Crossover*, and regarded as adulterations of pure heavy metal, though bands who can not be classified as traditional Heavy Metal or Power Metal can be accepted as true by true metal fans.<sup>1</sup> "True Metal." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/True\_Metal (accessed September 22, 2017).



I was beginning to think about what to do after school. Hilary [Sample, cofounder of MOS] was at OMA, running Prada San Francisco, and we communicated constantly. David Foster Wallace (DFW) was in Marfa too. I got to know him; we went hiking, ate and sang together, made studio visits, and corresponded for years afterward via postcard. He wanted to buy an architectural drawing, which I ended up giving to him. Other fantastic writers—Jake Silverstein, Daphne Beal and Sean Wilsey from *McSweeney's*—were there. All of them, together, opened up another world to me. And for me, the post-ironic attitude you are talking about is very much related to that literary moment. DFW had a large influence at the time, and still does. Some people characterize his work as overly ironic and overly formalist, others think it as sincere and human. It oscillates between various readings.

**PI** In your *Log 39* article, you place architectural practices within two categories: those that solve problems and those that exhibit "calculated indifference" and a tendency towards "nondesign." You hesitate to include MOS entirely within the latter category, as your work appears to exhibit tendencies of both categories. How does MOS negotiate between these two competing models of architecture within your practice?

**MM** The dialectic from my piece in *Log 39*, titled "Indifference, Again," is between a sort of "technical expressionism" and "calculated indifference." (The latter term being borrowed from Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction*.) The opposition was overly simplified, to more clearly make a point. MOS is both against and within a sort of technical expressionism. We write software and we are interested in the technical aspects of architecture—in sustainability, maintenance, digital techniques, etcetera—but we have no interest in expressing a kind of technical virtuosity. If anything, we are for inclusionary models of architecture that do not choose sides, that are more ambiguous, more contradictory, more primitive, more amateur... less heroic, less slick, less corporate, less singular, less about directly expressing a solution to a problem... The indifference I was talking about in the article is aesthetic; it means weird colors, crude shapes, fragments, cute images, the handmade, the post-material, awkward craftsmanship, kitsch and object stuff as opposed to photo-realistic renderings, performative diagrams, singular-synthetic swoopy forms, data-driven decision making, and so on... A lot of people have a very knee-jerk reaction against the word *indifference*. To them it is pejorative. And I am not suggesting or promoting apathy; Hilary and I care about the world at large, and we try to do our part. All I am saying is that the architects listed (and we as well) are not expressing this as the main value in the work. I've been told by friends that I should have used Roland Barthes's book *Le degré zéro de l'écriture* (*Writing Degree Zero*), which is basically similar to what I was describing, instead of Moira Roth's "The Aesthetic of Indifference." ... So perhaps what we are seeing at the moment is a degree-zero aesthetics—by which I mean designs trying to maintain a non-ideological methodology—where work whose context is an overly-saturated media and search engine environment is constructing and reworking and constructing again various forms of blankness or non-design in numerous ways.

**PI** While you indicate that indifference operates through "non-design," our reading of post-irony sees it as a paradigm for the practices of "non-design" to be applied towards a kind of "problem solving" through a tradition of visionary architecture. What

is your reading of the post-ironic and the possibility of pursuing the practices of "non-design" towards optimistic visions of the architectural future?

**MM** At some basic level, Hilary and I don't think the Utopia project of architecture is perfectly functioning, glimmering, green cities of the future. We're not sure it would be so great. Rather, architecture's Utopia project is the much less grandiose social-cultural project of questioning, discussion, and an instantiation of values that lead us toward a better society—one that is both equitable and inclusive by taking pleasure in difference. Indifference and non-design have an important role in this idea of an impossible Utopian project: they are about destabilizing the institutions of architecture and culture to allow for difference. Our approach, for better and worse, is a culturally relativist and reactionary project of architecture. It is not about absolutes and it is not about singular methodologies, although it requires us to construct some idea of our context to react against, even if it is a fiction. *Non-design* is a term that relates to anti-expressionism in the arts. And this anti-expressionist drive has a long, long history as a constant engine of the arts. It is not about not-designing, but about the non-expression of the act of design, or of a heroic and institutionalized act of authorship. It is essentially reactionary, against quote-unquote "design," and the institutionalization and stabilization of the arts. Non-design is about questioning and reworking our cultural value systems. Recently, I've been working through Ben Lerner's book *The Hatred of Poetry*, simply replacing the word *poetry* with *architecture*. And perhaps it too relates somehow to the post-ironic, but I'm still working on it.

## "THE TOPIC IS A REAL STUMPER" A Conversation with T+E+A+M

**T+E+A+M is an architecture practice led by Thom Moran, Ellie Abrons, Adam Fure, and Meredith Miller who are all Assistant Professors at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture. Their work centers on architecture's physicality as an agent of cultural, environmental and urban production. On September 22, 2017, the issue editors spoke with Thom Moran and Meredith Miller via Google Hangouts. The following is an abridged transcript of the conversation.**



Interior view of Ghostbox, T+E+A+M, Chicago Biennial 2017

**TM** The topic is a real stumper, post-irony. Something we've been struggling with in the last two projects, especially the last two models for Detroit Reassembly Plant and Ghostbox,<sup>1</sup> is that you have to be very explicit that you mean it as a real proposal for architecture and not just as a rhetorical or critical project that you don't actually mean. It's the default interpretation that proposals are a piece of rhetoric and not an earnest building proposal.

**MM** You can be earnest, and I think we try to be through our choices in representation. For both of those models we chose to be literal—to represent building and construction as literally as you can in a scale model that of course doesn't have all the same issues as a building. But somehow it doesn't always convey that we mean it to be understood as a real building. I think that's partially because the audience is prepped for a more distanced or "cool" relationship between the author and some idea. The aesthetics in these models are also challenging. There's this sense of, "this can't possibly be a real proposal because it's too weird or derelict." People think we can't possibly mean it as positive—but we do. I think walking that line is important; it's hard to articulate, but I think there

are reasons for trying to push those sensibilities and those aesthetics, to take them seriously and confront them as reality.

**PI** Our use of this term [the post-ironic] is a reaction to the recent discourse in *Log* between Michael Meredith and Mark Foster Gage. We see post-ironic practice as taking some of the methods of indifference—scrolling, collecting, the appropriation of found objects to name a few—and actually going beyond just representational projects: what Mark Foster Gage calls speculative projects, and applying them towards sincere, real architecture proposals.<sup>2</sup>

**MM** Both of those essays were written for a very particular audience, and one of the things we hope for our work is that it moves past that audience and that it can be more broadly appreciated and understood.

**TM** We can say—at least for Meredith [Miller] and myself—we reject being grouped under either of those formulations in terms of our T+E+A+M's work. It's a false binary that's used as a form of rhetoric. We're interested in how we can be impactful outside of the discipline; we're not so interested in making rhetorical work to be used as fodder in insider arguments. I think that my anxiety about [the post-ironic] is that I hope architecture can engage those ideas in the realm of public discourse and not just bring them in and talk about them in private. The challenge of an architecture biennial versus [that of] an art one is the issue of representation. Art is art. Sure there are mediated practices, but you can take it as it is. If it's a video of a photo of a printout of a computer desktop that's halfway around the world, it's still that thing. Whereas if you interject the idea that you're representing a building somehow it gets very weird very fast. It's hard to know where representation begins and ends. Just to bring it back to Living Picture<sup>3</sup>, the Ragdale Ring project, we thought we could do it only because it's actually a thing.

**PI** Making the image physical in [Living Picture] is really interesting. It's the opposite of your process for the drawings in the Detroit Reassembly Plant, because all those drawings were collaged from real material swatches that you made and then put into digital space.

**MM** That process was something that we developed as we went. We had a desire for how those drawings would look and how they would correlate to the model as the model was being produced... We tried a lot of things, and it ended up giving us the verisimilitude that we wanted by photographing or 3D scanning little piles or chunks of material, but what was interesting was that a lot of the piles or materials that show up in the drawings are not true to the original pile. Oftentimes there's a separation between the mesh surface and the image map that gets projected on it. Oftentimes we would separate those and apply a new texture or image to the same map, and then render that out or even



Interior view of Ghostbox, T+E+A+M, Chicago Biennial 2017

So, there's a dramatic difference between being on the outside of the model where you have a sense of an intact big box, [and] going inside where the reality switches. That was the hope for people's experience entering the gallery: walking around and seeing the familiar status of the box start to break down and become more fragmented, and this new nature take over with the sky, mountain range, and park.

**TM** I do want to make one small point that critically as the only mode of political engagement is something that we are working against. I don't like the word speculative. What we're doing is design. Rather than speculation or representation, it's design. It's designing for a new reality without shrinking away from that reality. We're just trying to see it as a new possibility. Like for Post Rock,<sup>4</sup> we acknowledge that there's a lot of plastic in the world. It's inevitable, so why don't we just engage with it, find its possibilities, and see it as a resource rather than see it as a liability? So, with Ghostbox, we're trying to look at emptying-out, ex-urban, first- and second-wave suburban areas. They're just producing these types [vacant retail buildings] of situations. There's no way around it. It's just what's happening, so why not try to engage it rather than just point out its excess or its problems, or try to rehabilitate it and make it conform to already existing ideas of what good urbanism is. Let's just take it for what it is, and see it as a pile of material with untapped possibilities.

**MM** Part of the work in doing that, similar to Post-Rock, is working on the perception of that material via its aesthetics. A lot of people react to Post-Rock because they think, "Plastic is cheap, ugly and trashy." And for us, it's like, "Exactly, plastic is everywhere!" The project is a confrontation with those things that often get excluded. Similarly, Ghostbox is working on the perceptions and sensibilities around the material reality of a big box store. We've got CMU and cheap brick panel: this is the material palette, and this is its sensibility. How do we then incrementally work on it to push it into a different perceptual register? I think one of my favorite responses that we got from friends and people at the [Chicago] Biennial was someone who pointed out that our project was one of the few that didn't deal with just history. He said that our project staged an encounter with a contemporary condition that is important to think about and for architects to be working on. I appreciate that someone saw that, that there are other dimensions to the project than disciplinary history.

**TM** Unless you're building, it's hard to escape the representational trap—it gets hard to know where the representation begins and ends. Our ambition is obviously to build, and it's important to our practice. This work isn't finished as representation—it doesn't have the same impact in the world that we want it to as a kind of critique. Rather than the conventional mode where critical architecture is not being built—for our work to function as critical—it has to be built.

- 1 T+E+A+M exhibited the Detroit Reassembly Plant at the U.S. Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale and recently exhibited Ghostbox at the 2017 Chicago Architecture Biennial.
- 2 Mark Foster Gage, "Speculation vs. Indifference," *Log 40*, Spring/Summer 2017.
- 3 Living Picture is T+E+A+M's winning proposal for the 2017 Ragdale Ring. The project proposed a series of lightweight volumes onto which photographs from the original Ragdale Ring in 1912 are projected.
- 4 Research project by Meredith Miller and Thom Moran: "Post Rock architecture stages intimate encounters between people and the global condition of excess plastic. The following designs for Post Rock architecture all target an important social impact: reframing post-consumer plastic changes its perceived value as a waste product to a viable and aesthetic building resource." ACSA Faculty Design Honorable Mention 2016-2017, <http://www.acsa-arch.org/docs/default-source/2017-award-materials/fd-hm-millermoran.pdf?sfvrsn=2/>

our sense of wonder at the quotidian, they also provoked a healthy dose of doubt. If we've just been taken in by placards, explanatory models and footnoted museum text—in other words, taken in by some of our most trusted signals of institutional authority—then how is one not to be doubtful of "all other forms of culturally sacrosanct knowledge"?

But what, exactly, is the nature of the doubt induced by parafiction? For Lambert-Beatty, this form of illusionistic play is not your typical postmodern relativizing of the categories of truth and fiction. Instead, she argues, the parafictional work evinces a counterintuitive respect for the means by which knowledge is produced. Indeed, in its painstaking mimicry of the objects and practices whereby facts are created—in its museum placards, its archival photographs, its adherence to citation conventions—the parafictional amounts to an almost anthropological investigation into the conditions of knowledge creation.<sup>5</sup> And so, in Lambert-Beatty's view, the parafictional's deceptions emerge as instructional, perhaps even well-meaning: in carefully tracing a fact's production, the parafictional puts its viewers on the lookout for the ways in which that process can be co-opted and feigned—a useful preparedness in our age of internet ubiquity and outright political lies.<sup>6</sup>

While I agree with Lambert-Beatty's analysis—the parafictional object is, without question, a deception that aims to instill a productive sense of doubt in its viewers—I wonder if there might be something else to this mischievous form, something a bit more mysterious, a bit mystical even, behind the parafictional impulse. For in the best examples of this kind of work, something more nebulous is achieved than a well-meaning art-theoretical game; something else occurs, something like the collapsing of self that results from the method actor's total immersion in her role, or something like what happens when an author becomes so invested in her characters that she begins to treat them as real. In other words, parafictions are also incantatory works, trying, through their desperate simulations, to bring some being—or some belief—into the world.

Consider the author Fernando Pessoa. Described in a recent *New Yorker* article as being consumed by "a metaphysical nihilism,"<sup>7</sup> Pessoa produced little during his lifetime: a single collection of poetry and some editorial remarks in a number of literary journals. Though his particular constitution prevented him from writing publicly, upon his death over 25,000 pages of manuscripts were discovered squirreled away in a trunk in his apartment. Notably, little of this literary output was written under his own name. Instead, the texts were attributed to distinct characters (at least 18 in total) that Pessoa called his "heteronyms." Not mere pseudonyms, Pessoa's heteronyms were fully realized fictional personages, complete with their own biographies, physiques, personalities, political views, religious attitudes and literary pursuits<sup>8</sup> (viii). It was only through the creation of these fictions that Pessoa was able to overcome the self-doubt necessary to engage in literary production.

Or consider *Verzeleni's Act of Faith*, a collection of glassware arrayed in a museum display case with an accompanying label. Giacomo Verzeleni, the text narrates, was a 16<sup>th</sup> century nobleman who made a pilgrimage throughout Europe to view paintings of Christ. Upon his return, he produced the glassware in question, each piece of which is a replica of the goblets, bowls and cups Christ held in the paintings. As you can guess by now, this entire display



Eye of the needle artwork by Hagop Sandaldjian, exhibited at the Museum of Jurassic Technology <http://www.mjt.org/exhibits/hagopstagg1.html>

The Museum of Jurassic Technology is a mode of fiction-making that the art historian Carrie Lambert-Beatty has labelled the "parafictional." Unlike traditional modes of storytelling, which are content to "perform [their] procedures in the hygienic clinics of literature," the parafictional, Lambert-Beatty writes, "has one foot in the field of the real."<sup>9</sup> Like The Museum of Jurassic Technology, these works typically deploy the trappings of cultural authority—museum exhibits, product release announcements, architectural renderings—to tell their tales, and, notably, they insert these fictions into the actual world, without in any way demarcating where reality ends and the fiction begins.

As outlined above, such works tend to produce an acute sense of estrangement. Having had the elements of our world reconfigured into an oftentimes fantastical narrative tends to skew our perspective of the everyday. Fred Wilson, the proprietor of the Museum of Jurassic Technology, tells of one visitor who, after a lengthy stay with the exhibits, spent a nearly equal amount of time investigating the personnel-sharpeners on the museum's front desk. That being said, parafictions don't exclusively enlarge

our sense of wonder at the quotidian, they also provoked a healthy dose of doubt. If we've just been taken in by placards, explanatory models and footnoted museum text—in other words, taken in by some of our most trusted signals of institutional authority—then how is one not to be doubtful of "all other forms of culturally sacrosanct knowledge"?

allowing ourselves to enter a fictional world where we can cast off our despair, where we can hijack the beliefs of a perfectly imagined fictional being and, finally, finally, truly act.<sup>8</sup> That we had to construct and elaborate fiction to do so, may, in the end, not really matter.

- 1 Lambert-Beatty, Carrie. "Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility." *October*, Summer 2009: 51-94.
- 2 Weschler, Lawrence. *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- 3 Lambert-Beatty's explication of the parafictional borrows from Bruno Latour's accounts of his investigations into the construction of facts: "The question was never to get away from facts but closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism." Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern." *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2004: 225-248. Print.
- 4 Lambert-Beatty's text was written in the immediate wake of the Bush presidency, and it is disheartening to see how innocent that political climate's plays with "truthiness" look in comparison to the current administration's barrage of bold-faced lies.
- 5 Kirsch, Adam. "Fernando Pessoa's Disappearing Act." *The New Yorker*, September 2017.
- 6 Zenith, Richard. Introduction. *The Book of Disquiet*, by Fernando Pessoa. Penguin Books, 2003, pp. vii-xxvi
- 7 Earnest, Jarrett. "In Conversation: Josiah McElhenry with Jarrett Earnest." *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2015: 33-35.
- 8 "Faith is the instinct of action." Pessoa, Fernando. *The Book of Disquiet*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

## FICTION WITH CONVICTION A Conversation with Mark Foster Gage

**Mark Foster Gage is the principal of Mark Foster Gage Architects and the Assistant Dean at YSoA. On September 21, 2017, the issue editors spoke with Mark on the 7th floor terrace at Rudolph Hall. The following is an abridged transcript of the conversation.**

**PI** We were interested in the binary set up in your *Log 40* article, "Speculation vs Indifference," in response to Michael Meredith's essay on indifference and the practices of non-design, which is not about authorship but what he calls "[play]ing," collect[ing], scroll[ing], reappropriat[ing], ..." We think that the idea of post-irony, which is simultaneously sincere and ironic, opens the possibility for architects who practice "indifference" to also align themselves with speculation: imagining transformative futures or architectural utopias.

**MFG** You've identified this term "post-irony," which it seems can simultaneously mean being sincere and being ironic. That actually is a really good example of what Charles Jencks called "double coding," the notion that the building would mean one thing to architects and another thing to observers without architectural knowledge. If a building has a Chipendale pediment, on, for example Philip Johnson's AT&T Building, to architects this says: "I'm a funny architect, to this specific furniture thing in the past," but to non-architects says, "I'm a pitched roof with a hole in it." So in that sense, you could have a post-irony, where something is both ironic and ambiguous depending on the set of information you bring to your building. I'm, however, in my writings, pretty against that idea of "official meaning" and therefore "double coding" because if I'm impregnating hierarchically determined meanings into buildings, that's automatically creating two classes of people. If philosopher Jacques Rancière says there is no path to inequality to equality—only from equality to equality—then an architecture which, as its starting point, produces inequality via two classes of viewers is not exactly thinking along the lines of contemporary social engagement. So for instance, in my office, we did this thought experiment through architecture—via our rather outlandish design for our Helsinki Guggenheim a couple years ago, we explored this idea of using these forms, many found objects that we found online, but the collection of so many [objects] have so much meaning that it would be meaningless. The fact that you can read anything you want in the building meant that it was impossible to have a meaning that was correct. No hierarchical establishment of meaning, but also no need to abstract architecture to merely functional boxes.

**PI** I think that [post-irony] encourages the ambiguity that you identify in the multitude of meanings contained within the Helsinki project. Was ambiguity something you actively sought to cultivate?

**MFG** Yeah, absolutely. But not as a way to straddle irony. If something is ambiguous, irony is one of many things you can pull from it. So I don't necessarily think that irony is opposed to ambiguity. I think irony is one of many readings of something that is ambiguous. But because we [as architects] are a discipline, and have a history, and take that history very seriously, any time any forms we use get something close to something from history,