we invoke the discourse of irony. Irony is just like a Christian God might be running the show, in a suit of armor against sincerity in architecture, which I think is a disempowerment of the potential cea prevent colds, another doesn't. Parafictional of architecture to be speculative

P! One reading of post-irony allows for the tools of irony with sincere ambitions to reimagine architectural futures. Somehow it's a bridge between "indifference" and speculative practice.

MFG You're right in trying to introduce post-irony as the way to bridge those two extremes I've writ- it's, currently, being used in the service of the ten about recently in Log. That's what needs to be nefarious. For instance in Birtherism," its key done. But one thing I challenge you both on is that figures, such as our President, offered no hint of the object of its derision to function; in this case, it I'm not sure the only bridge would be being ironic or not ironic, I'm more interested in your argument conviction, which became incredibly politically about ambiguity than I am about irony. Because I think ambiguity would include irony and sincerity in adjacency which is super interesting.

P! To speak about your interest in ambiguity, OOO [Object Oriented Ontology] is very much about the ambiguity between fact and fiction. The notion of parafiction produces ambiguity in performing an extreme seriousness about an absurd or satirical fictional narrative, and in that way could be seen as a post-ironic form. What is the power of parafiction within a speculative project?

MFG So there's a couple of topics there: one is counterfactuals. Which is for our purposes the same as parafictional practice: it's an idea in philosophy that can be traced back to Hume A counterfactual essentially is a philosophical argument that includes an "if, then" clause. If the Nazis won WWII, then the United States would look like "this"— which becomes the premise for the Man in the High Castle series on Amazon. It uses a parafictional argument to create an alternate reality. Similarly, the Handmaid's Tale² is essentially a counterfactual proposition. The show happens in our world. You recognize the houses, the Chevy Suburbans, you recognize what they're drinking and eating, the magazines that they're playing Scrabble, etc. But it introduces a counterfactual argument that says if this super conservative wing took over the U.S. government and had these religious ideas about women, then the following might happen. I don't know a single person that has watched that show and not been mildly terrified that it, in today's political climate, now seems so unbelievably possible. It's terrifying not because it's sci-fi or horror and lots of monsters and blood, but because it's so entirely like our recognizable reality, and shows a "speculation" on what it could soon be. The monsters are us. This is a key aspect of the sister philosophies of Speculative Realism and OOO. So the counterfactual argument can do two things: it can produce a new creative avenue, which is itself interesting, but it, more importantly, produced an awareness of your existing reality that wouldn't have been possible without showing an estranged version of that very same reality. Famed art critic Hal Foster, in a recent issue of Artforum identified basically what Handmaid's Tale is doing, when describing Damien Hirst's recent work. [He] asks us how this creative use of counterfactuals can have political agency that might be used to combat its political opposite—fake news, which is the use of counterfactuals not to be creative, but to fully obscure or cancel out the truth.

> **P!** Last year at Yale, the final review for Michael Young's studio involved a performance that increased the ambiguity of the parafiction.³ You were there—what do you think the aspect of performance adds to the parafiction, and what does that mean for

architectural pedagogy? **MFG** There's kind of two ideas about political engagement right now. One is quick, ad-hoc protests, hand-drawn signs, and one is the exquisite design of objects and architecture to work parafictionally in new context. The Handmaid's Tale scenario. Architecture as the practice of building (which isn't limited to, but that is our history) is a very slow thing, so we're incapable of working reflexively in an ad-hoc manner, not so of mise en abyme, from parallel to kaleidoscopic great at linking our practice to protest, but we're really good at taking a long time to do things and working in a certain context—and therefore should be really good at estranging those contexts. Our power lies in a statement by my friend David Ruy who says "Architecture is the first thing that tells us what reality looks like." Parafictionality doesn't work if it's not believable. It just becomes parody. Michael Young's studio took this believability of students projects much farther than is typical by having them present as if they had already been built, and from the future.

P! This state of ambiguity between fact and fiction harkens back to the problematic notion of Jencks's irony. It creates this insider dynamic of deception.

MFG If it's done well yes, but not nefariously—there aren't supposed to be two classes: it's supposed to produce in people the feeling of ambiguity whether it's real or not, and therefore make them question their own understanding of their social reality. So, in a sense it's the opposite must account for its own ontological status. of double coding: uniformly trying to produce the same feeling of ambiguity in everyone. And in that ambiguity, people can make their own decisions. [The Handmaid's Tale] wouldn't be so terrifying if it wasn't so close to our own reality.

believing it as fact?

MFG Some people will err on recognizing their own version of real, some people recognize the fiction is real. We all do this anyways. We all believe different things, and therefore have our own delightfully different version of reality. In one

another, science. One person believes echinapractices reveal this, but also speculate (thus Speculative Realism) on alternatives to it. Either way it has performed its function of challenging the idea of what's real or not. As we've seen, fake news is the most powerful force in the world at the moment. It just changed our election. Hal Foster is asking if this power can be used in the arts in the service of 'good' in the same ways powerful. Terrifyingly so. So can we use total conviction in architecture to be more socially engaged? I don't know if the answer is yes, but I'm interested in finding out.

Winter (2017): 78.

- A Hulu Original TV Show based on the novel by Margaret Atwood set in a totalitarian United States in which women are treated as property of the state
- Michael Young's Fall 2016 Advanced Design Studio at Yale School of Architecture, The Aesthetics of Accelerationism, involved the production of parafictional artefacts that were presented in character, as fact, under the guise of an international climate conference in Iceland in the year 2056 in a final studio review. Jurors and student presenters did not break character.

"I LIKE COM-**PLEXITY AND CONTRADIC-TION IN ARCHI-**TECTURE." ME TOO...I THINK. AT LEAST I USED TO, BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE ANYMORE. by John **McMorrough**

It all sounded good enough when Robert Venturi published those words in 1966 (originating from a theory seminar taught at Yale). Back then, it was all power structures and opacities, resisting an (academic) architectural culture, which at that moment was all pomp and no circumstance. Complexity and contradiction represented the overcoming of an ideology of design as facile veracity, in order to face a wider range of perhaps irreconcilable differences (historical and contemporary, elitist and populist). To navigate this unstable admixture of "both/and," it was the "ironic" tone that held the antinomies at bay. It worked, at least for a while, until other more or less overt positions took hold.

Now irony is back, with the "Post-Ironic," new, improved, so different and appealing. It is an alchemical combination that seems to surpass the constitutive limit of the old irony's cynical detachment, such that now it is possible to be simultaneously serious and unserious, dismissive and affirming. As the apotheosis of the ironic attitude, the post-ironic explodes the infinite regression perspectives, but in a fun way. All of which I also think I like, but in the provisional sense of swiping right, to soon be amended to a swipe left of "liking" or "unliking" a picture, quote or recipe online.

For architecture, post-irony, like post-modernism before it, is constructed as constitutively oxymoronic, a contradiction in terms of revealing a paradox ("post-ironic," like "oxymoron" is itself an autological term, similarly "sharp" and "foolish"). The paradox relates to the question of architectural qualification, the post-ironic sincerity wants to be architecture, but is not sure what that could mean. The greatly expanded field of architecture, extending from something to everything, from being somewhere to "all over," has created a generational crisis (linked to, but also distinct knowledge. I wonder if parafiction sets up a from, that of the 1970s) for emerging practices. As great as this expansion of possibility has been for the idea of architecture, it has had the effect of diminishing the likelihood of architecture. The absence of a center creates not only a proliferation of possible disciplinary (and extra-disciplinary) models, but also necessitates that each version

Post-ironic architecture (if it exists, and for our purposes, we will assume it does) is one of many possible qualifications. Not a description, but an affirmation, post-irony works as a covering of all the bases, making conceptual work into a checklist of accomplishments, as formulaic as any P! There's that element of plausibility. What previous version of tautological clarity in recent arhappens when a parafiction comes so close chitecture argumentation (fabrication – technology to reality that it actually tricks someone into and materialization, check; territorial geographies – cartography and fantasy, check; design justice

> - the over-presentation of an underrepresented constituency – check). It is in the post-ironic version that sincerity comes into question, most symptomatically, not as an expression of authorial intention (who cares about that?) but rather

as coverage of all targets for development, a qualification of premise. The post-ironic tone functions for architectural interests as a proxy for the versions of reality validated by the salubrious effect of the "good works" of economics, politics, and technology (which itself holds no more sway on the "real").

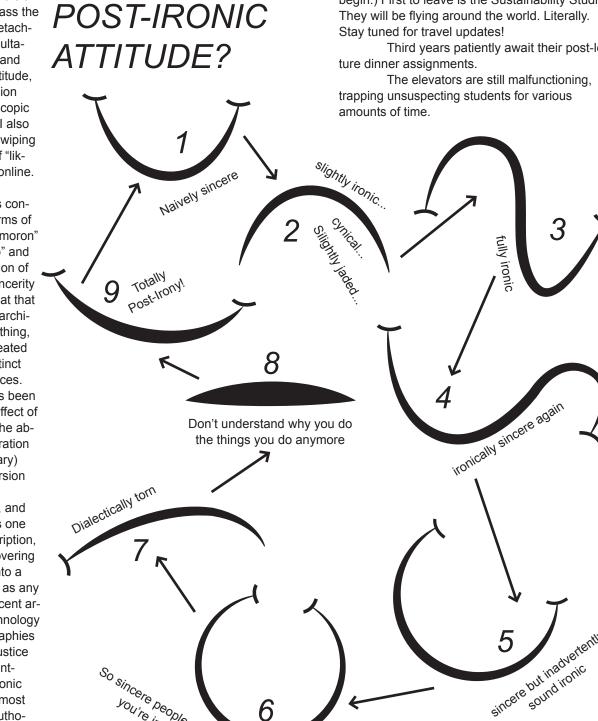
The post-ironic is not an overcoming of irony as a return to "meaning" (like post-modernism as a return to historicism), but is an intensification of meaning's absence (like post-modernism as the end of master narratives). Post-Ironic architecture, as with all ironic constructions, requires "isn't it hilarious we're doing this?" They had total is the unlikely possibility of realization in the form of a building. The paradox for architecture is that a new sincerity relies on the artifice of the display (Instagram, Biennales, and other forms of Exhibitionism). As a position, it is a mongrel argument, still drinking from the Fountain of R. Mutt. The thing it mocks is its greatest aspiration, not only Michael Meredith, "Indifference, Again," Log 39, to be seen, but also displayed and confirmed as architectural. It works, but only in the gallery as an over- and under-estimation of reality in various and 2 stools. Test one for yourself: they can be combinations of piles and references (in piles of ironic reference or reference to piles as ironic non-design). The sincerity of the post-ironic likes the factuality of both stuff (as material fact) and its stuffing (as rhetorical claim); its claim to quality is proof by dint of its existence.

In some ways, a "post-ironic" architecture seems like everything I had ever hoped for, design both serious and funny (seriously funny), able to navigate the pressures of discipline while at the same time being undisciplined (free from restriction). However, over time, from its originators, to its early adopters, now in ubiquity, my enthusiasm for this latest turn is growing increasingly qualified. Being just slightly younger than the initial penning of Venturi's initial gambit of liking complexity and contradiction, perhaps I am not the ideal audience for the post-ironic, having both "seen too much" and lacking the millenary perspective. It seems now that as a generative concept, the "post-ironic," appealing as it is in outline, is the most precarious of possible positions for architecture. While there is much to admire in a lot of this work, it is its adaptation into a formula that is off-putting. Its best examples are fantastic revelations; in lesser cases, it is disheartening, all crutch, no legs. That said, while post-irony (and with it, the post-digital) may not be the best generic option, it may be the only alternative for a of an ARTSPACE New Haven commision. are certain, theoretically ambitious set (and certainly better than the versions that are all "post" without even a hint of a wink). In architecture, the provocation of the post-ironic is not in its novel combination of irony and sincerity, but in the misapprehension that they were ever entirely separate. Symptomatically, post-irony is not an answer but is another version of a recurrent question. How is it possible to make Architecture (the capital is required) without being an asshole (pretentious)? To quote Venturi again, in the line immediately following the citation in the title above, as a formu- the 3rd floor conference room for KELLER lation that retains relevance, "I do not like incoher- EASTERLING's first open meeting on her project ence or arbitrariness of incompetent architecture for the 2018 Venice Biennale. nor the precious intricacies of picturesqueness or expressionism." 'Nuff said.

John McMorrough is a researcher of contemporary architectural practices, an associate professor at the University of Michigan, and a partner in studioAPT (Architecture Project Theory).

WHAT

IS YOUR



ON THE GROUND

9/19 This week, the school received a package addressed to "DEBORAH STERN." That's a new one

9/20 CAITLIN BAIADA (M.Arch I, '18). ALEJANDRO DURAN (M.Arch I, '19), and KATE FISHER (M.Arch I, '19) introduced this semester's teaching partnership with Conte/West Hills Magnet School through EQUALITY IN DESIGN. YSoA students will work with 7th graders for four different sessions, culminating in a final presentation during the months of October and November. Stay tuned.

9/20 Students enrolled in The Chair were given 110 minutes to construct a chair out of a 4'x8' sheet of plywood that could hold TIM NEWTON for at least five minutes. Bonus points for extra chairs and a table. The final tally? 8 chairs, 1 (questionable) rocking chair, 1 table, found scattered around the school.

9/21 Before his "Brunelleschi + Rossi" talk. KURT FORSTER introduced the initial impetus behind the new series, hosted by Formal Analysis and Modern Architecture and Society: "We thought we would build a little engine of old men that will entail a lot of speed." After a poetic and thought-provoking lecture, PETER EISEN-MAN piped, "I get nervous when you start talking about fog rolling in. I worry when you start doing this to a young audience.'

9/22 EQUALITY IN DESIGN held its first Brown Bag Lunch with ANIKA LEMAR SINGH, a Yale Law School Clinical Professor who teaches the Community and Economic Development clinic. Singh gave a historical overview of affordable housing since the early 20th century, discussed current HUD Secretary Ben Carson, and talked about the government's current role in subsidized housing.

9/22 OUTLINES co-hosted last Friday's 6/7 for an OUT On The Roof mixer with special guests from the other LGBTQ+ affinity groups on campus. The event packed the roof with students from all over the Yale community.

9/23 IAN DONALDSON (M.Arch I, '18), OLISA AGULUE (M.Arch I, '19) and DANIEL GLICK-UNTERMAN (M.Arch I, 17), winners curating 'Garden Pleasure' at the Goffe Street Armory. The interior of each "garden," one of seven occupiable installations, is designed by a different team of artists and designers. A total of 17 people are working on this project, including 11 YSoA students and alumni, and 4 School of Art students and alumni. The opening of the project will be during the Citywide Open Studios Weekend on October 14th-15th.

9/25 "Could someone get the door?" was the phrase of the night as students packed

9/25 The Rudolph Open begins! Bring your headphones, watch out for flying birdies, and if you're considering a game at 3am... you should probably just go to bed. Teams to watch out for: "Yo Pierre, You Wanna Come Out Here?," "Dukes of York," "Gus on the Bus," and "Liu Liu Lemon."

9/26 During a Pro-Prac panel discussion between Scott Mitchell Simpson, Jon Pickard, Martin Finio, and Sara Caples, bi-weekly billing was brought up as an alternative to a monthly billing schedule. PHIL BERNSTEIN had a better solution: "How about daily? Just Venmo me!"

9/27 Advanced studios are getting ready to leave for TRAVEL WEEK. (Let the hashtags begin.) First to leave is the Sustainability Studio.

Third years patiently await their post-lec-

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> "We're not joking Just joking We are joking Just joking We're not joking" – Das Racist, Hahahaha jk?

The post-ironic describes an ambiguity of intention, simultaneously ironic and sincere. The above-cited statement by hip hop group Das Racist is a cyclical mantra that alternates between Blum in 1973. "We wanted to be tough," proclamations of parody and sincere artistic expression while introducing the possibility that their work is somehow both. In our post-Poe's Law¹ culture in which internet anonymity obscures intentionality, irony and sincerity are increasingly muddled. Though the post-ironic is initially conceived as a limitation of the internet as a platform, the ambiguity produced by this uniquely contemporary condition has powerful implications for artistic production. Musical artists such as Das Racist and genre-bending films such as Jordan Peele's *Get Out* deploy ambiguity to produce multiple readings; functioning as humorous parody but also incisive political commentary and personal expression.

Authored ambiguity presents powerful possibilities for architecture. The post-ironic provides a framework for negotiating between two models of architectural practice: the visionary and the self-critical. If architectural modernism represents extreme sincerity through its rigid dogmas and idealist ambitions, the theoretical frameworks of postmodernism utilized irony as a critique against the utopian naiveté and oppressive seriousness of modernism. As an exercise in performing its own opposite extreme, the tools of irony (humor, superficiality, reappropriation, tastelessness) allow for architecture to criticize itself. The phenomenon of post-irony, in which irony and sincerity coexist, affords the possibility for architecture to move beyond self-critique towards the very ambitions that postmodernism decried.

One manifestation of post-irony emerges in the discourse surrounding parafictions: extreme or absurdist fictions performed with total seriousness. While architecture as an academic discipline deals almost exclusively with producing fictions, parafictional architecture

inserts itself into reality through the creation and performance of meticulous narratives. The notion of parafiction is decidedly post-ironic: ironic in its performance of opposites, but made plausible through sincerity.

STRONIC POST POR IRONIC POST BONIC POST

But this is just one model for post-ironic architecture. The broader promise of the post-ironic is that it legitimizes topics and practices deemed "not serious" and asks for them to be taken seriously. Ultimately, irony necessitates detachment, an advantageous position for reacting against but incapable of advocating for. While ironic design breeds cynicism through negation, post-irony opens the possibility for potentially transformative optimism.

1 Poe's Law states that without admission of sarn or ironv ·) it is impossible to tell whether an author is joking. The term arose in response to phenomenon in internet culture where attempts at parodying extremist ideas were mistaken as being serious.

HEAVY **METAL: CHOICE OR FATE** by Nicholas

Miller M.Arch I, '19

Ross "The Boss" Friedman began his career as the guitarist of seminal proto-punk band The Dictators with fellow Bronx-native Richard "Handsome Dick" bass player Andrew Shernoff later commented, so Friedman and Blum adopted the names of Funicello and Manitoba.¹ On their debut album *Go Girl Crazy*, the band blended comic-ironic shtick with the horrors of Nazism and anti-semitism on songs like "Master Race Rock," "The Next Big Thing,"² and a cover of "I Got You Babe" that was performed "without any traces of irony or camp."³ The results did not translate outside of New York, and the album bombed. As Steven Lee Beeber described in The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGBs: A Secret History of Jewish Punk, "The fine line between humor and horror, catharsis and darkness, self-mockery and self-hatred can easily be crossed. The Dictators missed out on being the first real punk band because they failed to find the delicate balance between aggressive and ironic, violent and comic, threaten ing and camp."⁴ Following the failure of Girl Go Crazy, the band dropped their shtick to adopt a purely tough image on the hard-rocking *Bloodbrothers*.

As The Dictators continued to perform intermittently, Friedman was introduced to actual Italian-American Joey DeMaio by Ronnie James Dio in 1980. Friedman, DeMaio, and Eric Adams formed the legendary Manowar: self-proclaimed Kings of Metal, record-holders of both the loudest performance and longest heavy metal concert, and collaborators with Orson Welles and Christopher Lee. Semi-clad in leather and loincloths,⁵ Manowar's image fluctuated between Frank Frazetta and Tom of Finland as they sang of the glories of war, honor, and *True Metal.*⁶ While the band

V & John Sol Smooth - 150d Smooth landish imagery and the ultimate earnestness with which they presented their vision of True Metal brotherhood.8

Friedman was forced from the band by DeMaio in 1988 and rejoined Blum and Shernoff in the band Manitoba's Wild Kingdom. As DeMaio doubled-down on his willingness to die for True Metal in both songwriting9 and combative interviews,¹⁰ Friedman and Blum returned to their critical party-rock. ... And You?, Manitoba's Wild Kingdom's 1990 debut album, showcased a heavier sound that put forth both a sardonic critique of the metal industry¹¹ and an embrace of New York's diversity behind the red, white, and black tri-color of pre-War Germany. As a "crossover" band, Manitoba's Wild Kingdom rejected the typological rigor of True Metal. Drawing from both punk and metal, they produced a distinctly New York sound that landed between the Beastie Boys' "Fight for Your Right" and Twisted Sister's "I Wanna Rock." When later asked his opinion on the dialectic of "True Metal versus False Metal" that Manowar continued to promote without him, Friedman responded with resignation. "I hate that stuff, man. To me, that was the worst thing Joey ever said and set us up for humiliation in the end."12

> "Manowar's every album is perfect. The ultimate Heavy Metal band." –Lauri Penttilä¹³

> > While Manowar rose in fame and notoriety, "Extreme Metal", an umbrella-term that covers a range of subgenres that have emerged since the early 1980s, provided an intensification of Metal's underlying aesthetic, aural, and thematic precepts. The most self-consciously extreme iteration of Manowar's ideologies of True Black Metal during the early 1990s. Through the misanthropy and oppositional orthodoxies of Black Metal, the parallels between

the polarizing dialectic of True Metal and Leon Krier's architectural and urban theories of "Nameable Objects" and "True Plurality" become clearly apparent. These subcultural and architectural iterations of a reconstructivist approach to the cataclysms of the 20th-century are revealed in stark contrast to the irony and obfuscation embodied in the critical deconstruction of The Dictators and Postmodern architecture.

Krier's architectural ideology, when taken to its explicit conclusions, manifests in the work of Lauri Penttilä, aka Werwolf

aka Satanic Tyrant Werwolf aka Graf Werwolf aka Nazgul von Armageddon aka Orklok aka Satanic Warmaster Mutilator aka Werewolf of Black Vengeance aka Sexual Hammer aka The True Werwolf aka Vince Venom aka Werwolf of the Black Order, a prolific Finnish artist with a proclaimed "will to

redefine how serious black metal can be on an ideological level."¹⁴ Penttilä's array of aliases represents a recontextualization of both Krier's dictum of the necessity of a "relationship of truth between the name and the named object"¹⁵ and his concept of a stylistically-siloed plurality with the potential to produce "villages with very different structure, organisation, architecture, and density, each with its own unity, harmony and specificity."16

Instead of mixing French-influenced, vampyric Black Metal with melodic, werewolf-Nazi-themed Black Metal to produce a subtle manifestation of Krier's False Pluralism, Penttilä has created a new band and moniker for each micro-style "without any debasing compromise."17 While the stylistic differences between Penttilä's projects may be largely indistinguishable to the untrained ear, the contrasts between his two most well-known bands—Satanic Warmaster and Armour-are vividly apparent. In Satanic Warmaster, Penttilä goes by the name of Werwolf and focuses on themes of "Satanism darkness, war, vampirism, and lycanthropy,"18 while in Armour he is known as Vince Venom and sings of "metal, alcohol, partying, sex, and rowdiness."19 These two projects exhibit Krier's typological rigor not only in their sound, but in the very way that Penttilä presents himself in promotional photos: As Satanic Warmaster, he is dressed in black with the genre's signature corpse paint and an abundance of spikes,

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chains, and bullets, while he dons a fishnet top, zebra-print leggings, a studded codpiece, and eyeliner as Armour. These parallel representations are performed with total sincerity, a notion confirmed by a press release for Armour's recent E.P. by record label Nuclear War Now that champions

the band's ability to produce "pure Heavy Metal... without any trace of irony."20 The most disturbing iteration of Krier's ideology comes early in Architecture: Choice or Fate. Under the Manowarian title of "True and False Pluralism," there is an illustration of a "European" face, an "African" face, and an "Asian"

face juxtaposed against a mock-cubist composition that blends elements of the three.²¹ Outside of an architectural context, or even within one, the drawing appears to fervently

advocate for an ideology of anti-miscegenation. While Krier would likely reject this reading, Penttilä may embrace it. Despite having disavowed the categorization of his work as NSBM, or National Socialist Black Metal, tracks like "My Dreams

of 8" speak otherwise.22 The same lines can be drawn between Krier's illustrations of the transformation of modernist architecture, described by Peter Eisenman as the products of a newly legitimized, 20th-century Jewish culture,23 into classical buildings through "creative restoration,"24 and Satanic Warmaster songs like "A New Black Order" or

"Der Schwarze Orden."25 Just as Krier, Penttilä, and DeMaio utilized an ideology of Trueness and a reconstructivist approach to address the destruction of the 20th century—Krier through traditional architecture and urbanism, Penttilä through the establishment of a New Satanic Order, and Manowar through a valiant Brotherhood of Metal-Friedman and Stanley Tigerman confronted the same chasms of the recent past through irony, humor, and inclusivism.

An ideology of inclusivism, as practiced by Tigerman and Friedman, did not demand the tolerance of divergent ideas and styles within the constraints of segregation, but promoted the simultaneous expression of conflicting styles and opinions.²⁶ To achieve this, the synthetic perfection of the Nameable Object was rejected in favor of a spirit of hyphenation that was explicitly assailed by Krier and Manowar. In addition to inclusivism, Tigerman's critical use of humor, akin to that of The Dictators and Manitoba's Wild Kingdom in the context Metal developed in the "trveness" of of hard rock, was used "as an instrument for overcoming architecture culture's deep-seated seriousness and authoritarianism."²⁷ Not only are humor and irony used to operate apart from the self-seriousness of architecture and metal, but for both Friedman and Tigerman they are

methods of response to "the acknowledgment of death" within the searching doubt of the post-Holocaust and post-Vietnam eras.28

"Unfortunately," Tigerman wrote in Versus: An American Architect's Alternatives, "wit, humor, and irony represent the illegitimate side of architecture and their use is often labeled infantile by serious architects."29 Shernoff attributed the commercial failure of Go Girl

> Crazy to the same current within heavy music: "In hindsight, I do think it was a mistake to make humor as central in the marketing of the band."30 But the humor used by Tigerman and The Dictators was no less serious—and no more of a joke-than the proclamations of ideological certitude put forward by Krier, Penttilä,

and DeMaio, who have each drawn multitudes that doubt the sincerity of their work, not because of any apparent irony, but for the lack thereof. As a recent review of a Satanic Warmaster performance confirms, questions of what is silly or earnest may be irrelevant if the desired impact of the work, both on the public



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."31

- Steven Lee Beeber, The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGBs: A Secret History of Jewish Punk (Chi cago: Chicago Review Press, 2006).
- 2 "I knocked 'em dead in Dallas / They didn't know we were Jews Andrew Shernoff, The Next Big Thing (New York, Epic, 1975).
- 3 Beebe

tic Records, 1988)

- 4 Ibid.
- "True metal people wanna rock not pose / Wearing jeans and leather, not cracker-jack clothes Joey DeMaio, Kings of Metal (New York: Atlan-
- "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
- Manowar's fans are known as Metal Warriors, Manowarriors, Immortals, and Brothers of Metal.

(accessed September 22, 2017).

- 8 Adrien Begrand, "The Dichotomy of Manowar," *PopMatters*, March 25, 2007.
- "They can't stop us / Let 'em try / For Heavy Metal / We will die!" Joey DeMaio, Die for Metal (Auburn: 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 Shernoff, Supreme Rock Dude (New York: MCA Records, 1990).
- 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. Loputon 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 Septem ber 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 (Müglen: No Colours Records,
- 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,
- 24 Krier, 72.

2004), 36.

- 25 "The Semite creation in ashes / The remains blown away to the past / Of the new Hyperborean order." Lauri Penttilä, Der Schwarze Orden (Lahti: 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 reverie: The Architecture of Stanley Tigerman (Yale School of Architecture, 2011).
- 28 Stanley Tigerman, Versus: An American Architect's Alternatives (New York: Rizzoli, 1982),
- 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."

P! 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 theme songs for people, putting up wallpaper, experimenting with materials, pouring resins... designing (then making) cushions for Donald Judd chairs, designing (then building) furniture, and designing a house in Marfa, among other things. 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 of it as sincere and human. It oscillates between various readings.

P! 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 abject 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 the work. I've been told by friends that I should have used Roland Barthes's book *Le degré zéro* als are a piece of rhetoric and not an earnest 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 I think that's partially because the audience is non-design in numerous ways.

P! 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.

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

> **P!** 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 indifferencescrolling, 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 sin-

cere, real architecture proposals.² 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 and 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 Picture³, the Ragdale Ring project, we thought we could do it only because it's actually a thing.

> **P!** 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

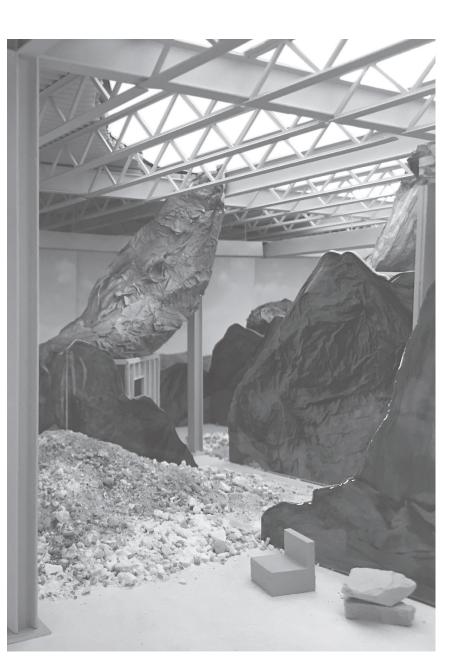
TM The topic is a real stumper, post-irony. Something we've been struggling with in the last two projects, especially the last two models for Detroit Reassembly Plant and Ghostbox,¹ is that you have to be very explicit that you mean it as a real proposal for architecture and not just as a well) are not expressing this as the main value in rhetorical or critical project that you don't actually that material mean. It's the default interpretation that proposbuilding 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. 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

Photoshop layer other textures on. There was quite a bit of authoring the sensibility of the material in the space of the digital drawing. So, it was a little bit of both: bringing the material into the drawings, and also allowing yourself to go even further and draw and add digital layers to

TM I think we were really excited about the feedback between physical material production and digital representation: that's something that evolved out of the process of Detroit Reassembly Plant, and was something that was more self-conscious in Ghostbox.

MM And I think that operation is really important-going back to what we were saying earlier-about the expectations that [Ghostbox] would just be a rhetorical project. There, we were showing dwellings underneath tarps. It might seem that we can't possibly mean that, but I think the imagery in the project is where the optimism comes back in. Because it casts everything into a kind of new reality, a new environment. From the interior of Ghostbox, when you're in the model and looking around, you see a big backdrop with a blue sky on it. It's like a new landscape, an unexpected context that takes over and starts to erase the exterior of the big box.



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 OR NOT! 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 criticality 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,⁴ 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.

- 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.
- Living Plcture is T+E+A+M's winning pro-3 posal 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.
- 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/

BELIEVE IT by Matthew Wagstaffe M.Arch I, '19

The patch of Venice Boulevard that cuts through downtown Culver City is an exercise in the nondescript. Strolling down this forgettable axis of urban sprawl you'll pass by an auto-body shop, a discount clothing outlet, a real estate agency, a Subway, each place more anonymous than the last. That is, until you walk by one storefront whose name you have not seen before: The Museum of Jurassic Technology.

Stumbling inside, the curious becomes curiouser as you find yourself in a labyrinthine maze of tight, darkly curtained and dimly lit rooms, each of which contains any number of mysterious exhibits: vitrines of models depicting odd occult rituals, a lengthy recording narrating an expedition to track down a rare bat that can fly through walls, microscopes trained on sculptures of pop-cultural figures so miniature they fit within the heads of a pins. Copious wall text abounds. Without guestion, not all of it can be real-those sculptures in the pins? Bats flying through walls?-but it is, after all, a museum. You exit the building back into the bright California sun, and suddenly those things which had once seemed banal and without interest-the strip mall parking lots and auto-body shops—are exploding with potential significance.

our sense of wonder at the quotidian, they also provoke 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"2?

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.³ 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 feinted—a useful preparedness in our age of internet ubiquity and outright political lies.4

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,"5 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"⁶ (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 Verzelini's Act of Faith, a collection of glassware arrayed in a museum display case with an accompanying label. Giacamo Verzelini, the text narrates, was a 16th 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

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 paraficfield of the real."¹ 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 begin.

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 pencil-sharpener on the museum's front desk. That being said, parafictions don't exclusively enlarge

is the work of the contemporary artist Josiah McElheny (though a religious glassblower named Verzelini does actually exist, he never made glassware from paintings of Christ). McElheny, however, did not simply take some flea market wine glasses and archly insert them tional, Lambert-Beatty writes, "has one foot in the into his fictional narrative. Instead, he crafted the glasses himself, after apprenticing with master glassblowers in Europe, where he very likely learned the same traditional methods that the actual Verzelini deployed. This same blurring of creator and fiction presents itself in McElheny's discussions of the piece: McElheny expresses serious identification with the faith of his Verzelini: "[Unlike Verzelini] I'm not a religious person, yet I have a faith, and that is in art, and in the people who are and could be involved in art." One senses that his embodiment of Verzelini is a means of expressing his own faith in art's value, a sentiment so earnest that he perhaps could not have spoken it without the aid of his fictional gymnastics.

> In the final analysis, as these peculiar writers and glassblowers show us, the parafictional is as much about encouraging a sense of doubt as it is about *overcoming* doubt, about

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.⁸ That we had to construct and elaborate fiction to do so, may, in the end, not really matter.

- Lambert-Beatty, Carrie. "Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility." October. Summer 2009:
- 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.
- 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.
- Kirsch, Adam. "Fernando Pessoa's Disappearing Act." The New Yorker. September 2017.
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- Earnest, Jarrett. "In Conversation: Josiah McElneny with Jarrett Earnest." The Brooklyn Rail. September 2015: 33-35.
- "Faith is the instinct of action." Pessoa, Fernando. The Book of Disguiet. New York: Penguin 3ooks. 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.

> P! 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 Chippendale pediment, on, for example Philip Johnson's AT&T Building, to architects this says: "I'm a funny reference 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 from 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.

> **P!** 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,

