

## THE MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURAL TASTE

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Operating as a cultural enterprise in consumer society the institution of architecture is becoming more and more conspicuous. It is threatened by superfluity and fights back by sacrificing its principles to be consumable. The image of buildings becomes events and the spectators used to attain a position of necessity building themselves must now be architect's own advertisement. That which cedes to desire is that which will be consumed. Is the carrying of access into the institution of architecture becoming the consumption of its image?

Competition in architecture produces fluidly changing images of buildings and immediacy of consumption. A report, magazine, stamp, postcard, or Google image can replace the thing itself. Can't? The current state of consumerism enables and reinforces immediacy of accumulation. Must architecture operate according to these same principles to avoid obsolescence, producing a proliferation of easy-to-accumulate consumable buildings? Is architecture forced to be the same inconspicuous as the idea of desire? If this will be the case then architects must also design for the consumer, what the desire is. Thus the rules in consumerism. The consumer is programmed to consume fluidly and continually. Consumption must simply be provisioned in the mechanism of desire to be consumed and accumulated (ingested) or understood with immediacy. What will become of architecture if it must cater to the designer, viewer, and client's rather than society's cultural evolution and accumulation? Is it dangerous the role of architect to drift from the betterment of the human condition to the production of consumable?

In an unusual setting of overabundance the natural mechanism of consumption becomes a vicious device. Overconsumption enables overconsumption. Infinite availability of consumables paired with the natural condition of continuous, insatiable consumption produces a rate of consumption that associates more immediacy from the commodity. If one will consume unconsciously and if that rate of consumption is directly related to the availability of consumables, then with such a proliferation of consumables that one will increase. Consumption must happen more immediately to keep up the pace.

Satisfaction in the mechanism of desire is not attainable but it is fundamentally a momentary condition that must be consistently re-achieved. The satisfaction lies in the act or instant of consuming or acquiring, not in the object itself. The object provides the vehicle through which the act is performed. Architecture is frequently forced to utilize desire with the irresistible image of a glossy facade or colorful form. The commodity operates as a particular object that promises to satisfy a particular need but also the promise of something after the real object and the fantasy or void. The commodity threatens authenticity by its immediately offering the fantasy without the substance. Architecture is now able to complete a commodity in this way. Architecture is threatened by the increasing immediacy of the experience of acquisition of becoming the real object (desire ends to reveal its fantasy void).

Over-consumption of food seems to be the only form of consumption that causes any anxiety in American consumer society. Only at its most excess, life-sustaining form, has overconsumption become dangerous. However, food commodity becomes reduced to a more immediate consumable from something authentic. Quick, microwaveable packaged foods and meal replacement bars are a portion of a real thing that they replace. Advertising markets their products as a convenience but their persistence is a result of the current condition of immediacy in consumption. Even "America's favorite candy bars" are now available in small, easy to consume bits. These bite-sized "quarters" are the essence of the real through any non-destructive form of multiplicity. The small pieces can be eaten handfuls at a time unlike the candy bar itself which has a definite form and quantity. Although the "ProteinBites" are meant to mimic their predecessor candy bars they become something new and formless, consumable for their quantity and ready rather than authenticity or quality.

The threat to architecture follows from its position as a cultural enterprise. Architecture exists outside of the realm of absolute necessity and is responsible for cultural evolution and meaningful production with aims of bettering the human condition. Capitalism goes a step as it reinforces and encourages the consumer practice of accumulating objects. As the experience of consumption becomes the commodity itself, the object operates as a mere vehicle and is rendered unnecessary. Increasing immediacy of the availability of goods has forced us to experience consumption more quickly. Exchange value has replaced the practice of bettering the human condition as the currency of achievement in architecture. Because it is unable of absolute necessity, architecture is forced to cater to consumption by offering a consumable. Comparisons of the ways of objects increases immediacy of consumption and reduces the experience. Rapid accumulation necessitates that objects be categorized, reducing their understanding to the understanding of their category. Objects become more indistinguishable. Work of meaning loses its meaning. The reality separates from the void. Architecture's reality lies in its function, service and aesthetic.

The Museum of Architectural Taste is a collection of edible images of buildings. The collection offers a multiplicity of images conveniently packaged together to allow quick and easy accumulation and consumption. The need to observe, investigate or understand architecture is eliminated. Because the images are edible, one is free to accumulate the image in one's mind and simply "tastefully" consume it. The collector purchases architecture in the state of the used consumable, unable allowing it to be neatly desired and consumed.





ASSORTED BUILDINGS

ARCHITECTURAL TASTE



