

**Becoming Monuments and Embodying Utopias:  
The Processes of Inflatable Architecture in the Work  
of Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz**

Danielle Lewis

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Magisteriate in Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2010

© Danielle Lewis, 2010



Library and Archives  
Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-70971-9  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
ISBN: 978-0-494-70971-9

**NOTICE:**

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

**AVIS:**

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

  
**Canada**

## ABSTRACT

### **Becoming Monuments and Embodying Utopias: The Processes of Inflatable Architecture in the Work of Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz**

Danielle Lewis

This thesis explores two artworks that inhabit the interstices between sculpture, design, performance and architecture through the production and occupation of portable, inflatable structures: Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* (1998, ongoing) and Ana Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* (2003-2005). Chapter One, "On Becoming Through Monuments," tactically considers Rakowitz's *paraSITE* as an autonomous artwork, in excess of its instrumental function as homeless shelter, to unearth the pneumatic work's particular process of creative and political instigation. Chapter Two, "Prototypes for Embodied Utopias," draws on the relationship between Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* and visionary inflatable architecture of the 1960s to analyze the work's implications for the possibilities of embodiment in utopian architectural design. Drawing on these two art works and the writing of Elizabeth Grosz, the thesis pulls forward the potential inflatable design that can have for providing prototypes and platforms for resistant and alternative creativity in the everyday life of the city. This thesis proposes that inflatable architecture provides a place from which to experiment (in thought, design and action) with alternative relationships between bodies and buildings that allows for their mutual becoming.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank both Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz for the opportunity to engage with their work. It has been a great pleasure and a privilege. Thanks to Michael for his long-standing friendship, and to Ana for our ongoing dialogue this year.

Thanks always to my family for their encouragement and interest despite the long distances, and to my community in Montreal for their unique creativity as well as their patience in helping me to stay sane and happy. I'm forever grateful to Virgil for his understanding, consideration, and receptiveness; for diligently reading aloud; for getting me to think about magic, ghosts and detective work.

I want to thank the peers and professors I have encountered in the Department of Art History. It has been a wonderful experience, and I am privileged to have worked in such a supportive and open environment. Thank you to Jean Bélisle and Annmarie Adams, for broadening and enriching my thinking on architecture. Many thanks especially to Kristina Huneault for so much throughout the past year: close editing and challenging critiques, guidance with difficult ideas, and sharing her passion for both art and theory.

Finally, I cannot seem to find enough words to express my immense gratitude to Cynthia Hammond, for being such an inspiring professor and an amazing mentor and friend. You have consistently and generously supported me in finding my own voice, helping me to produce work that I am proud of. Thank you for, well, everything.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	vi
<b>Introduction</b>	
Inflatable Architecture: Creative Process and the Mutual Becoming of Bodies/Buildings .....	1
<b>Chapter One</b>	
On Becoming Through Monuments: An Encounter with Michael Rakowitz's <i>paraSITE</i> .....	15
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
Prototypes for Embodied Utopias: Ana Rewakowicz's <i>SleepingBagDress Prototype</i> .....	42
<b>Conclusion</b>	
A Process of Writing with Inflatables: Architectural Failure and Building Community.....	71
<b>Figures</b> .....	82
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	99

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S.'s *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic, polyethylene tubing, hooks, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 2. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 3. Michael Rakowitz, detail of *paraSITE*'s attachment by hooks and drawstring to an HVAC duct. Image from Sarah Rich, "paraSITE: A Decade of Urban Intervention," *Worldchanging*, 6 April 2007. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/006428.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 4. Michael Rakowitz, *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, tape, signage and objects added by user, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 5. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S., Freddie F., and George L. with Freddie's *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, tape, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 6. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. using his *paraSITE* shelter on 26th Street and 9th Avenue in New York, 2000. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 7. Michael Rakowitz, images from instructions on how to build *paraSITE*, 2008. Image courtesy of the artist, sent in an e-mail message to the author, 17 December 2008.

Figure 8. Michael Rakowitz, Joe H.'s *paraSITE*, Manhattan, 2000. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, 107 by 91.5 by 335 cm. Collection of MoMA PS1. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 9. Michael Rakowitz, "Customized Parasite Shelter for P.T.," Baltimore, 2004. Acrylic, ink, pencil on paper, 18.4 cm by 28.6 cm. Whitebox Collection. Image from White Box, [http://www.whiteboxny.org/collections/images/largeweb/Rakowitz\\_Parasite.jpg](http://www.whiteboxny.org/collections/images/largeweb/Rakowitz_Parasite.jpg) (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 10. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. with his *paraSITE* folded in its carrying case, New York, 2000. Image from Sarah Rich, "paraSITE: A Decade of Urban Intervention,"

*Worldchanging*, 6 April 2007. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/006428.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 11. Michael Rakowitz, George L.'s *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Trash and ZipLoc bags, clear waterproof packing tape, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 12. Michael Rakowitz, installation view of Bill S.'s *paraSITE* in the exhibit *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art*, Lewis and Clark's Hoffman Gallery, Portland, OR, 2008. Image from *PORT: Portland Art + News + Reviews*, <http://www.portlandart.net/archives/Parasite.jpg> (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 13. Michael Rakowitz, *paraSITE* design sketch for Myra and Artie, New York, April 2000. Graphite on paper. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 14. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. using his *paraSITE* shelter on 26th Street and 9th Avenue in New York, 2000. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 15. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S. and George L. in front of Bill's *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 16. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 17. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Toulouse, 28 April 2004; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm (length).

Figure 18. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 19. Ana Rewakowicz, *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, mannequin, 152 cm (length). Image from *EgoDesign.ca*, [http://www.egodesign.ca/fr/article\\_print.php?article\\_id=148](http://www.egodesign.ca/fr/article_print.php?article_id=148) (accessed 17 August 2010).

Figure 20. Ana Rewakowicz, *A Modern-day Nomad Who Moves as She Pleases*, video installation, 2005; vinyl, nylon, mattress, fan, speakers, 152 cm (diameter) by 457 cm

(length). Installation view, Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke. Image from Ana Rewakowicz, *The Bookman: Stirring the Pot of Art*, <http://rewana.com/images/thumana2.jpg> (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 21. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

Figure 22. Ana Rewakowicz, detail of *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, 2004. Polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, mannequin, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length). Image from MOR Creative Ltd., <http://c-lab.co.uk/default.aspx?id=8&eventid=103> (accessed 12 July 2010).

Figure 23. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 24. Michael Webb, *Cushicle*, 1966. Images from [http://www.archigram.net/projects\\_pages/cuishicle.html](http://www.archigram.net/projects_pages/cuishicle.html) (accessed 22 August 2010).

Figure 25. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

Figure 26. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

Figure 27. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 28. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 29. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 30. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Tallinn, 16 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 31. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

Figure 32. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

Figure 33. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Tallinn, 16 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

Figure 34. Artnoose in collaboration with Danielle Lewis and Safe Southwest, "Scaffolding," May 2010. Letterpress on cardstock, photocopies and pen on recycled envelopes, 10.2 cm by 8.8 cm. Photographs by Danielle Lewis.

Figure 35. Danielle Lewis, documentation of inflatable architecture in process, Spring 2010. Toy boats, duct tape, vinyl shower curtains, plastic tarp and emergency blankets, dimensions vary.

Figure 36. Danielle Lewis, documentation of inflatable architecture in process, Spring 2010. Toy boats, emergency blankets and duct tape.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Inflatable Architecture:**

#### **Creative Process and the Mutual Becoming of Bodies/Buildings**

---

This thesis explores two artworks that inhabit the interstices between sculpture, design, performance and architecture: Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* (1998, ongoing; fig. 1) and Ana Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* (2003-2005; fig. 2). Both projects involve the production and occupation of portable, inflatable structures, although their approach, design and use differ in certain ways. *paraSITE* consists of collaborative design efforts between Rakowitz and numerous homeless individuals to create particularized, functional shelters from cheap, easily acquired materials such as duct tape and trash bags. These forms attach parasitically to buildings' vents in order to inflate, and can be folded into small carrying cases for easy transport by their homeless occupants. Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* similarly consists of a nomadic plastic shelter, but instead of being carried in a bag it is worn by the artist as a dress. The dress has a built in sleeping pad and a solar panel that is used to power a fan, which in turn inflates the transformable object into a cylindrical tent that the artist and, occasionally, other visitors occupy in various public places.

## Creativity in the City

This thesis engages with practices that tactically blur the boundaries of architecture in order to theorize open models of negotiating the complex materiality of urban living.<sup>1</sup> I choose to focus on the work of two trained, professional artists although I understand the imaginative and endless process of spatial and material negotiation to be inherently common to and no less meaningful in everyday life. I am passionate about cities: their density, the differences between people, the constant contestations of space, the conflict and community, the production that takes place secretly in the interstitial spaces.<sup>2</sup> I become absorbed in the details that emerge when I look closer at everyday urban life and can briefly witness the moments in which people (re)consider how they occupy the built environment and make material changes. In my mind, these moments of creativity constitute architecture as much as the built environment itself. There is an architectural process involved in any number of common activities; making dinner, placing pictures on the wall, growing herbs in jars on the porch, organizing objects on

---

<sup>1</sup> Writings on the topic of creative production, power dynamics and resistance to appropriation often draw on Michel de Certeau's analysis of the difference between strategies, which are used institutionally, long-term and with a totalizing perspective, and tactics, which are of the everyday, the short-term and the margins. See Michel de Certeau, "Making Do': Uses and Tactics," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29-42.

<sup>2</sup> While not directly referenced throughout this thesis, Elizabeth Wilson's writing is influential for its focus on the city's interstitial spaces and the ways in which they are effaced by the construction of the city as a consumer object for the tourist gaze, by the dominant view of architecture within the "necessary" parts of a city. Her analysis of utopian and visionary forces of the city are also significant for this project. In looking for a language adequate to the mysteries of a city's interstices, I appreciate particularly Wilson's emphasis that the search be ongoing and "ever-unfulfilled." Elizabeth Wilson, "Against Utopia: The Romance of Indeterminate Spaces," in *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*, ed. Amy Bingaman et al. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 256, 262, 258.

shelves, having community meetings or neighborhood street parties, and even the simple process of walking through the city can be considered forms of architecture. The everyday negotiation of one's home, neighborhood and city is, like architecture, a practical endeavor, but is also always aesthetic, working in excess of function not just to create beauty but to effect change. While some may read such tasks as a form of "modifying" the existing built environment, I understand the practice of architecture to include this active composition and manipulation of even the slightest materials and smallest spaces in the city. In framing architecture as such, the goal is to emphasize that it is not a set of objects, but a process enacted over time.

While architecture is conventionally defined as the professional practice of designing and constructing buildings, this thesis starts with an understanding of architecture as inherently plural, indefinite and ever changing. There have been many dichotomies erected throughout the history of architectural discourse: Architecture capitalized and architecture with a lower-case *a*, major and minor, professional and non-professional, high and low, academic and vernacular, elite and popular, mainstream and outsider or marginal, architecture and the everyday.<sup>3</sup> These binaries are of course not only lived and felt realities but can also be useful for a clarity of discussion, and are at times tactically utilized in the following thesis to reflect on the professional domain of architectural practice and the ways in which it can learn from other forms, processes and notions of architecture. But this divisive split within architectural theory also serves to maintain and legitimize the discipline's practice of exclusion and appropriation, pushing forward the value of considering "architecture" as expansively inclusive of all forms of

---

<sup>3</sup> Dell Upton, "Architecture in Everyday Life," *New Literary History* 33, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 707-723.

material and spatial negotiation. The title of this thesis indicates its focus on the processes of inflatable *architecture*, as opposed to *artwork*, precisely for this reason. Artwork that delves into the architectural offers the possibility of revealing the ambiguity of architecture's borders, critically pointing to the gaps in discourse and practice as well as the discipline's imbrication in a broader socio-economic system of power.

Against the pervasive background of an increasingly rapid appropriation of "creativity" for corporate profit, a process in which the profession of architecture consistently participates, I want to join in the crowded exchange of ideas on how creative production and negotiation in the city can be positioned differently than its instrumental use for a capitalist, neoliberal system.<sup>4</sup> The marketplace desires, seeks out and contains a form of creativity that, through its alignment with the logic of capital, is consistently and instrumentally framed as the production of the "new" by a class of artists and architects. The exclusive framing of creativity as a form of artistic novelty or innovation has a long tradition of emphasizing the production of unique objects as saleable products. This conventional form of product consumption has widened to include the production of unique places as marketable in their own right, such as through tourism, gentrification,

---

<sup>4</sup> There is a vast literature on contested concepts of the "creative city" and the "creative class." While these ideas are most closely affiliated with the work of Charles Landry and Richard Florida, texts that are critical of these authors' ideas have particularly informed my understanding of this topic: Rustom Bharucha, "The Limits of the Beyond: Contemporary Art Practice, Intervention and Collaboration in Public Spaces," in *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (July 2007): 397-416; Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold, ed., *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (New York: Berg, 2007); Tim Edensor et al., ed., *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Alan Blum, "The Imaginary of Self-Satisfaction: Reflections on the Platitude of the 'Creative City,'" in *Circulation and the City*, ed. Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 64-98.

urban renewal, and redevelopment or "revitalization."<sup>5</sup> As this cycle of appropriation and consumption saturates the public sphere and extends further into the city's interstices, it becomes more and more tied to the process of place-making.<sup>6</sup> In this context, the urgency to recover a radical understanding of spatial and material experimentation that resists working in service of a hegemonic, market-driven mainstream fuels my questions: to what extent can artistic practices of spatial contestation such as *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* refuse to be co-opted?

There remains a possibility that the neoliberal model of creativity will never be capable of fully making room for the vital significance of process, continuation, and instigation in both spatial and political engagements with specific local places and people.<sup>7</sup> It is in this omission or gap that creative occupation can occur, where both

---

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the city of Montreal's 2007-2017 "action plan" for being a "cultural metropolis" prioritizes creative output that is specifically framed by innovation. The city website situates Montreal as a creative city through its public art, heritage and design, as well as "the number, quality and originality of its creators, artists, arts groups, and cultural festivals and businesses." Ville de Montreal, "PA 07-17: Action Plan 2007-2011, Montreal Cultural Metropolis." [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=5297,22081563&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5297,22081563&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (accessed 13 July 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Edensor et al., 2.

<sup>7</sup> The question of the neoliberal model of creativity and its relationship to artistic production, while beyond the scope of the present project, begs the question of how much or how little the capitalist system has changed, despite its shift from commodity production to the service and information industries, and what this implies for the art world. Many writers, such as Nicolas Bourriard and Andrea Fraser, have recently pointed to the ways in which contemporary art reflects the market's shift in emphasis from commodity to service, affect and information, and it is not the goal of this thesis to idealistically propose that work, even when dealing primarily with the specificities of and relationships within the local, can somehow be separate from the capitalist basis of the art world. I focus instead on the processes of resistant artwork in order to root out possible models for temporary collaboration between artists and the everyday.

artistic and everyday practices that resist appropriation can take place.<sup>8</sup> In a model counter to the market's love of the "new," the process of creative cultural experimentation enacted from within this gap entails, as social anthropologists Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold suggest, "a complex and ongoing alignment of observation of the model with action in the world."<sup>9</sup> While *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* circulate primarily in the art world, they are both very much tied to specific, local and everyday urban situations, adapting to and expanding from existing conditions. Because neither of the following chapters focus explicitly on these local engagements, it is important to convey that much of my thinking on these projects is grounded in, and hopes to be useful for, the growing body of writing on so-called vernacular or marginal creative spatial practices. In making the choice to focus specifically on spatial production that circulates as art, I have come to locate the gnawing and perhaps impossible questions underlying my longstanding interests in urban creativity, political action, and architectural intervention: what is it that art can actively and uniquely provide for these arenas? In what ways is art capable of providing prototypes and platforms for resistant and alternative creativity in the everyday life of the city?

In an attempt to locate other possibilities for a creative and resistant "logic of invention," this thesis examines the ways in which *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress* are inseparable from their ongoing processes of spatial negotiation. Elizabeth Grosz proposes that this logic be characterized by ingenuity, experimentation and novelty, but

---

<sup>8</sup> As Dell Upton writes, "everyday practices operate in the interstices that power's strategies, no matter how all-encompassing they aim to be, cannot master." Upton, 714.

<sup>9</sup> Hallam and Ingold, 2, 5.

in terms of producing *differently*, "to risk creating otherwise."<sup>10</sup> Artworks created in this vein would not seek to be "certain," closed off as buildings or objects with discrete boundaries, but "rather to incite, to induce, to proliferate."<sup>11</sup> I see potential in grouping together *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* as variations within similar media, in their allied relationships to territory, the body and history, but especially as processes of experimentation that align observation and action in the built environment. While I did not originally intend to exclusively examine two projects so apparently analogous, the relationship between these works provides an opportunity to counteract the tenacious conception of creative production as the totally "new" or unique and thus marketable by suggesting instead the ongoing nature of invention within existing frameworks and contexts. Though I devote the subsequent chapters to exploring each project separately, tactically focusing on their singularity as artworks, the meeting of *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* in this thesis can give rise to further thought about the connections between their forms, affects and even their potential mutual influence in the broader creative and political life of cities.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture From the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 64.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> The idea here is that the grouping of these works create the possibility for new and different extensions beyond this thesis, perhaps to other practices, texts or artworks. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari write, "from one writer to another, great creative affects can link up or diverge, within compounds of sensations that transform themselves, vibrate, couple, or split apart: it is these beings of sensation that account for the artist's relationship with a public, for the relation between different works by the same artist, or even for a possible affinity between artists." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Percept, Affect, and Concept," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux (New York: Routledge, 2000), 471.



## Buildings and Bodies

Why inflatables, specifically? Though I did not set out to focus on inflatable architecture, it seems I cannot escape it: it attracts me like static electricity. There is something elusive about inflatable work, about the ways that it shifts both in form and circulation, which gives it an air of mystery, fascination and tense ambiguity. Inflatable design occupies a unique (and ever growing) place in the history of visionary and "outsider" architecture, while also maintaining a relationship with divergent realms such as the military and emergency shelter. Some of the most common connections that are made to pneumatics include, as Rakowitz points out, "country fairs and the Moonbounce" and, as Rewakowicz mentions, "inflatable furniture, gigantic parade floats and sex toys—objects of ultimate consumerism that have little to do with improving social conditions."<sup>13</sup> Inflatables have been put to work in colonization, war, protest, parties, spectacle, play, and everywhere in between; they have been ideologically, technically and formally fluid. While pneumatic technologies continue to advance rapidly in the worlds of sustainable and corporate architecture, they still preserve a down-to-earth accessibility, a sense of the "well, I could do that" which so characterized their value in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>14</sup> I find myself writing about inflatable design because it has such great potential

---

<sup>13</sup> Michael Rakowitz, quoted in Nick Stillman, "Conversations...with Michael Rakowitz," New York Foundation for the Arts, <http://www.nyfa.org/level3.asp?id=432&fid=4&sid=8> (accessed 12 July 2010); Ana Rewakowicz, quoted in Craig Buckley, "Between Object and Process: An Interview with Ana Rewakowicz," in *Dressware and Other Inflatables*, ed. Gaëtane Verna (Sherbrooke: Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, 2007), 74.

<sup>14</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, counter-cultural architects and drop-outs produced an array of small press publications and DIY 'zines related to pneumatic design, such as Ant Farm's manual for creating large scale inflatables *Inflatocookbook* (1971). In a contemporary

to be unexpected, surprising, even out-of-this-world, but also to fail in one way or another. At the very least, inflatables time and time again resist becoming practical, permanent solutions to architectural concerns. But despite this fact, or perhaps as its consequence, inflatables present a temporary and occasionally fantastical field from which to work through political issues of spatiality, design and occupation.

I am also pulled into pneumatics for the purposes of this thesis because, most plainly, it is difficult to imagine the inflatable without the body. Even in allowing myself to daydream about inflatables for just a few moments, a series of images comes to mind that speaks to the intimate relationship between bodies and pneumatic forms: bodies kept afloat; shoeless bodies bouncing unpredictably, laughing; bodies cradled in the basket of a hot air balloon, watching as the landscape slips away; inflatables shaped grotesquely like female bodies; tall, featureless balloon-bodies waving in the wind off the highway, advertising for sales at car dealerships; furniture filled with air, designed around the contours and comfort of bodies; bodies filling the streets and plowing forward, costumed, mingling with pneumatic parades and protestations; bodies made mobile by inflated tires; balloons tied by a string, held tightly in someone's hand (and even the balloon's release, its growing distance as it floats away, is measured as the space between it and the body). Inflatable forms are acutely, if somewhat unpredictably, responsive to the movements and pressure of bodies; they lean with and wrap around bodies, they bounce us back or

---

context, Michael Rakowitz published instructions with step-by-step photographic illustrations detailing how to create *paraSITE*, in *L'itinéraire* 16, no. 2 (15 January 2009): 2-3. Similarly, Rakowitz also produced a *paraSITE kit* (2005) that includes the materials required for its construction. Stephanie Smith, *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art* (New York: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2005), 120. In addition, the current accessible nature of inflatables can be illustrated through a simple online search for "inflatable DIY," which pulls up a considerable number of discussions on how to undertake pneumatic design.

enfold us in their surfaces. They can be filled directly with the air from our own lungs, our sighs, and can then be deflated and carried along with us when we move on.<sup>15</sup>

The foundation of this thesis lies in the potential of the inflatable, as a form of architecture that has a uniquely responsive relationship to bodies, to serve as an affective tool for rethinking the more wide-ranging and fundamental relationships between bodies and buildings. While a good deal of mainstream architectural discourse is devoted to the question of the body, much of this writing discusses the body/building dynamic through either a causal or representational model. As Elizabeth Grosz explains in her essay "Bodies-Cities," both frameworks are problematic. The first approach (causal) posits a one-way relationship in which buildings/cities are the external product or effect of bodies. The second (representational) model suggests that bodies and buildings/cities are parallel entities that reflect or mirror one another.<sup>16</sup> Grosz calls for a different model of relations that is based on the productive agency of both bodies and cities, impacting one another through their interrelations. As she writes,

What I am suggesting is a model of the relations between bodies and cities

---

<sup>15</sup> I am particularly moved by a moment in Steven Shainberg's film *Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus* in which the artist, grieving over the death of a lover marked by lung disease, slowly releases and inhales breath from the valve of a raft he had inflated before going out into the ocean to die. *Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*, DVD, directed by Steven Shainberg (2006; New York; Picturehouse Entertainment, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Grosz elaborates on the political function of the representational model of bodies-cities by way of historical conceptions of the "body politic," which "serves to provide a justification for various forms of 'ideal' government and social organization through a process of 'naturalization.'" Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 105-6.

that sees them, not as megalithic total entities, but as assemblages or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings... Their interrelations involve a fundamentally disunified series of systems, a series of disparate flows, energies, events, or entities, bringing together or drawing apart their more or less temporary alignments.<sup>17</sup>

This thesis proposes that inflatable architecture provides an actual if temporary and nomadic place from which to experiment (in thought, design and action) with this alternative model of bodies/buildings. In their intimate and often codependent relationship with bodies, pneumatics are capable of providing situations in which buildings do not just represent bodies or serve as staid containers or shells, the instrumental product of and for bodies. This thesis explores the ways in which the inflatable work of Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz provides something in excess of these conceptual frameworks: a mutually affective dynamic that creates the possibility for change between both sides of the body/building binary.

### **Writing – Becoming**

*This ability of the balloon to shift its shape, to change, was very pleasing, especially to people whose lives were rather rigidly patterned,*

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 108.

*persons to whom change, although desired, was not available.*<sup>18</sup>

In Chapter One, "On Becoming Through Monuments," I consider the role of Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* as an autonomous work of art, beyond its typical reception in terms of collaboration and activism regarding the issue of homelessness. Encountering the project by way of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, though drawing primarily from Elizabeth Grosz, this chapter works to understand what *paraSITE* expresses in excess of its instrumental function as homeless shelter. To do so, I explore the work's composition and process, its fluctuating relationship to territory and, in perhaps the most difficult move of this chapter, its dependence on the homeless body as a crucial material agent. The crux of the chapter reflects on the ways in which the joint composition of homeless body and nomadic building *become* art or a monument of sensation, as Deleuze and Guattari write, and how this mutual becoming interrogates the broader system of architecture within the city. The goal of this chapter is not to situate *paraSITE* as divorced from the agency of individuals involved or the specific spatial, historical and socio-economic contexts from which it emerges, but to tactically consider the project as an artwork that stands in singularity in order to unearth its particular mode of political and creative production.

In Chapter Two, "Prototypes for Embodied Utopias," I analyze the relationship of Ana Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* to time and the visionary inflatable production of the 1960s in order to question the potential for alternative creativity that

---

<sup>18</sup> Donald Barthelme, "The Balloon," in *Sixty Stories* (New York: Penguin Group, 1981), 50. Originally published in *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968).

can come from imagining utopia through architectural form. Moving away from traditional utopias and their obsession with ideal architectural spaces, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* is discussed as a prototype that does not lead to a perfect final product but instead exhibits a form of experimentation and endless process. Through these qualities, I discuss the potential that the tactical and temporary use of utopian dreaming can provide for architecture, based on the work's provision not of a perfected future but of the notion of time and, through it, space as becoming. In exploring the performative embodiment of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* by the artist and her varied guests, I question the work as a prototype for embodied utopias through its emphasis on the materiality of difference, plurality and change in architecture, as opposed to the construction of idealized, universal spaces.

The methodological approach undertaken in this thesis is very much activated and driven by the writing of Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz's work has been inspiring for its fluid and rigorous investigation of the fundamental ways in which people inhabit, occupy and embody space, in particular as a perspective "outside" the traditional boundaries of the architectural discipline. Her writing is vital to this analysis of *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* because of its consistent demand for and enactment of experiments that could "render space and building more mobile, dynamic, and active, more as force, than they have previously been understood."<sup>19</sup> Drawing primarily from *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* and *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, the conceptual framework of this thesis stems directly from Grosz's readings of and elaborations on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's

---

<sup>19</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, xviii.

collaborative work, as well as Henri Bergson's notion of time. This thesis adapts and applies Grosz's emphasis on the idea of *becoming*, supporting her refusal "to conceptualize space as a medium, as a container, a passive receptacle whose form is given by its content, and instead to see it as a moment of becoming, of opening up and proliferation...a space of change, which changes over time."<sup>20</sup> In utilizing this focus on becoming, I am similarly enticed by Grosz's understanding of affect for its intimate connection to the body, the ways in which the body enters into relationships with outside entities and forces, and the ensuing potential for transformation.<sup>21</sup> Allying with the goals underlying much of Grosz's writing, the following thesis approaches both art and architecture as spatial processes that are necessarily ceaseless and enacted through time, laden with the politics of possibility.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>21</sup> Grosz, following Deleuze and Guattari, differentiates the term affect from experience, with a particular emphasis on its power for change. Affect links the "lived or phenomenological body" with the forces of the outside and that which cannot be directly experienced: "Affects and intensities attest to the body's immersion and participation in nature, chaos, materiality." This difference makes the idea of affect useful for the interests of the first chapter, in its tactical move away from the specificities of individual and reception in *paraSITE*, as well as the second, in its attempt to show the impact of *SleepingBagDress Prototype's* relationship to bodies from a distance. Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3.

## CHAPTER ONE

### On Becoming Through Monuments:

#### An Encounter with Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE*

---

*Such forced exteriorization of their estranged bodies transforms the homeless into permanently displayed outdoor "structures," symbolic architectural forms, new types of city monuments: the homeless.*<sup>22</sup>

Most writings on Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* (1998, ongoing; fig.1) offer some slight variation of the following description: *paraSITE* consists of over 30 portable structures that have been custom built for use by homeless people in Cambridge, Baltimore, New York and other locations.<sup>23</sup> The dwellings are made of plastic, often trash bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks and tape, and generally cost less than ten dollars to make. The shelters attach to the outtake ducts of buildings' HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) systems through adaptable intake tubes that can expand or tighten depending on the size of the vent (fig. 3). Through this tubing, the "waste" air coming

---

<sup>22</sup> Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles: Writings, Projects, Interviews* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 55.

<sup>23</sup> Glancing through texts on *paraSITE* or even an online search for "Michael Rakowitz" and "parasite" produces multiple, similar terse descriptions of the project, on gallery sites, weblogs regarding activist and/or sustainable art and architecture, as well as in exhibition announcements, reviews and catalogues.



from the vent inflates the double membrane structure, which is thereby heated in the winter. *paraSITE* can be used as temporary shelter but also collapsed and easily transported.

As can be the case in encountering other activist artworks in the public sphere, researching Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE* becomes a process of wading through a sea of opinions. The project at its most basic consists of portable shelters for the homeless and is often discussed in terms of its connections to humanitarian design and emergency aid. When I look into the vast network of references to *paraSITE*, in the worlds of art and architecture but also the public sphere, I see the work being understood and re-generated as a sign linked directly to the concept of homelessness, and often left at that.<sup>24</sup> Though the importance of *paraSITE* as a symbolic point of a departure for dialogue about urban homelessness is undeniable, I find the discursive circulation of the work limiting, for it passes over discussion of how *paraSITE*, as an artwork, operates differently than other forms of architecture, political dialogue and action.<sup>25</sup> The work needs to be considered specifically as art in order to question how artistic processes such as that enacted through

---

<sup>24</sup> The ways in which *paraSITE* is repeatedly slotted into particular, related themes is apparent even from the titles of many of the shows in which it was exhibited: Concerted Compassionism at White Columns, New York (2000); Utopia Now! at CCAC Wattis Institute, Oakland (2002); Comfort Zone: Portable Living Spaces at The Fabric Workshop Museum, Philadelphia (2002); Architecture of Emergency at FRI-ART, Switzerland (2002); The Interventionists at MassMOCA, North Adams, MA (2004); Living In Motion at Vitra Design Museum/Z33, Belgium (2004); SAFE: Design Takes On Risk at MoMA, New York (2005); LESS: Alternative Living Strategies at PAC, Italy (2006); Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art initially at Smart Museum of Art, Chicago (2005) and a number of other institutions; among others.

<sup>25</sup> One interesting exception to these observations is an article by Alison Pearlman called "Interactive Art for a Challenged Democracy," *X-TRA: Contemporary Art Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 4-15. In this text, Pearlman presents a uniquely thorough analysis of *paraSITE*'s strategies, evaluating the ways in which the work functions and affects (specifically as interactive, public art).

*paraSITE* could potentially work alongside and enhance other methods of effecting change in the city.

This chapter discusses the particular power of *paraSITE* as art, the ways it produces critical forces that exist in excess of representation and, most interestingly for this project, survival.<sup>26</sup> I encounter *paraSITE* by way of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's articulation of art becoming monument from their essay "Percept, Affect, and Concept."<sup>27</sup> In order to clarify and expand upon my use of this source, I draw primarily from Elizabeth Grosz's feminist analysis of this essay in *Chaos, Territory, Art*, as well as the writing of Rosalyn Deutsche on homelessness and public space, and Krzysztof Wodiczko, whose artwork similarly mobilizes homeless design collaborations to a critical and affective end.<sup>28</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on art are of particular interest for the goals of chapter because, as Grosz explains, they situate artwork as an autonomous monument of sensations, affects and intensities, not as material creations that produce concepts or opinions.<sup>29</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on this form of artistic autonomy is a crucial aspect of their approach that is not often considered in regards to artwork that circulates primarily as a form of activism, especially when the work takes place in the public realm.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 74.

<sup>27</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Percept, Affect, and Concept," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux (New York: Routledge, 2000), 465-487.

<sup>28</sup> Wodiczko is also relevant to this study for his guidance and influence on *paraSITE*, which was developed under his advisement during Rakowitz's studies at MIT. *paraSITE* is often paired with Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle* (1988) in references.

<sup>29</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Zagala's essay, "Aesthetics: A Place I've Never Seen," in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20-43, is one exception that I can easily (and enthusiastically) point to. Zagala

As art, *paraSITE* is monumental most simply because it can be thought of as standing alone. Though the aim of this chapter is not to disregard the importance of the broader social, political and economic context surrounding the work, the power of *paraSITE* as art can be understood through Deleuze, Guattari and Grosz as taking place in excess of lived experience or a personal and historical moment, because art stems from but is independent of its materials as well as the perceptions and affections they produce.<sup>31</sup> These theorists provide a reading of *paraSITE* with the opportunity to tactically position the work as autonomous from its material condition, its producer/artist, reception, specific location and circulation.<sup>32</sup> While this may not immediately seem like a desirable framework for considering the engagement of art with politics and architecture, the limitations of current discussions on *paraSITE* leave gaps from which to further question this dynamic. I am primarily interested in the ways in which *paraSITE* becomes autonomous or monumental because it offers a possibility for thinking beyond both subjectivity and objectivity that other modes of political communication and action do not. What can a consideration of *paraSITE*'s becoming-monument reveal about its interrogation of the broader system of monumental architecture that produces

---

discusses, in his words, "the transformative political power of art's autonomy, as it is elaborated in Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual assemblage of percepts and affects, by considering an installation project by the Australian artist and gay activist Mathew Jones." Zagala, 26. While not specifically analyzing activist art production, Robert Porter's chapter on architecture in *Deleuze and Guattari: Aesthetics and Politics* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2009) also makes important connections between urban space and the politics of Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of art as producing monuments of sensation.

<sup>31</sup> Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 94.

<sup>32</sup> Deleuze and Guattari write, "we attain to the percept and affect," differentiated from perception and affection, "only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them." Deleuze and Guattari, 467.

homelessness? It is not the goal of this chapter to provide concrete answers regarding the meeting of politics and art in *paraSITE*, but to suggest new modes of encountering the work that open up its relationship to resistance to a greater degree. Through my own encounter with *paraSITE*, I question the ways in which it offers new spaces for dissent and for a radical modality of becoming through a relationship to territory and architectural forms.

### **The Question of Material Expression**

Texts on *paraSITE* often focus on the work's collaborative nature and its visual effects, discussing the project's inception in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1998 through fifteen shelters built with homeless men such as Bill Stone, George Livingston and Freddie Flynn, and its development in New York in 1999, where Rakowitz worked with Joe Heywood and Michael McGee, among others.<sup>33</sup> As documented dialogues between the artist and collaborators illustrate, *paraSITE*'s design differs from piece to piece because it is highly determined by the users' particular needs, interests and perspective on the project as a whole; each piece could be understood, in this way, as site-specific.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Rakowitz often tells a story about the beginnings of the project: "When I invited that group of homeless men... they came to the studio and listened to me talking to them, and after I'd been talking one of them said, 'So you're an architect,' in a very suspicious way, and I said, 'Oh, no, no, I'm an artist.' They just laughed and said, 'This is fine; you're not so far from being like us'... So they felt some kinship and also a sense that as art, this wouldn't have to fall within the confines of being legitimate and profitable." Michael Rakowitz, quoted in Stephanie Smith, *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art* (New York: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2005), 122.

<sup>34</sup> One of the most commonly cited examples of the role of the homeless in designing *paraSITE* is the legal "loophole" that Michael McGee found in the NYC "anti-tent laws," which deemed illegal any structure standing 3.5 feet high and capable of housing

Rakowitz designs and reworks each structure based on detailed input on elements like the shape, materials, and placement of pockets used for storage as well as the display of messages (fig. 4). Generally the artist references his own strategies and understanding of the work while also discussing (without attempting to fully represent) the meaning of the project for the homeless individuals working as designers and users, quoting them often. Rakowitz relates that "it was clear that the project would become more alive and interesting the less I was visible in it...the homeless come up with the shapes for their shelters. They give form to this symbolic method of communicating what life is like on the streets to those who don't know."<sup>35</sup> Because most writings on *paraSITE* do concentrate on Rakowitz as the central producer and voice of the project, especially in the interview process, the dialogical nature of the work is often brought forward through illustration of the individuality of homeless collaborators as expressed visually through their particular *paraSITE*. Rakowitz, for instance, frequently illustrates the unique character of each structure through a description of his experience with Freddie Flynn, a science fiction fan who requested a version of *paraSITE* that took the unusual form of Jabba the Hutt from *Star Wars* (fig. 5).

There is a strong political significance in the ways in which analyses of *paraSITE*'s collaboration point to both the local specificity of homelessness and the individuality of the homeless persons involved. In an interview with Rakowitz for the exhibit *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art*, curator Stephanie Smith discusses the project's "personalized, collaborative design process" with particular emphasis on

---

someone. As Rakowitz explains, "McGee raised the question of what would happen if his shelter were shorter than the 3.5 foot maximum, thereby challenging the defensive efforts of the city and circumventing the law" (fig. 6). Smith, 122-123.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 122.

*paraSITE*'s "function as portraits (or self-portraits) of their owners."<sup>36</sup> Rakowitz supports this reading by situating *paraSITE* as an extension of portraiture or even an inversion of its traditional economic and social role: he points out that while, historically, portraiture has been "afforded only by the aristocracy," this project reveals the homeless individual's "identity" as a critical factor of design and appearance.<sup>37</sup> In response to Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's question on the significance of the shelters being custom made and individualized, Rakowitz speaks to his interest in making visible the distinct circumstances that are often invisibilized by urban planning and design, such as through their reliance on statistics.<sup>38</sup> By pulling forward this aspect of the work, texts that focus on *paraSITE*'s engagement with particular individuals in specific local contexts simultaneously highlight the fact that the vast issue of homelessness could never be "solved" by a single architectural proposal, pointing to potential shortcomings of current shelter systems, housing initiatives and social programs. Rakowitz's direct design collaboration with homeless individuals indicates, for example, a process from which these larger institutions could benefit. He writes that, for someone who has no direct experience of homelessness, it is impossible "to design in any meaningful way without the individual input of their voices. Here, therefore, 'the homeless' are no longer a nameless, faceless entity that recedes to the periphery of our vision."<sup>39</sup>

Through discussion of the project's collaboration, the role of visibility takes a discernable place of importance in the circulation of information on and analysis of *paraSITE*. Both in texts and public talks, Rakowitz often relates the story of how, during

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Rakowitz, *Circumventions* (New York: Onestar Press, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

the first meeting with the homeless participants in Cambridge, "they started to question me: 'Black trash bags: why?' I was thinking they'd want privacy. That was my first mistake."<sup>40</sup> Instead, many of the homeless occupants of *paraSITE* choose to have either a high number of windows or large spaces of transparent plastic in order maximize visibility (figs. 1 and 8). As Bill Stone, Rakowitz's first collaborator explains, "homeless people don't have privacy issues, but they do have security issues. We want to see potential attackers, we want to be visible to the public."<sup>41</sup> The initial significant impact of the issue of visibility on the project's design approach seems to have become a common basis for reading the work. This can be seen in many of the brief descriptions available, such as the text provided by slowLab, a design organization based in New York, which collages together phrases and fragments from Rakowitz's artist statement for the work:

While these shelters were being used, they functioned not only as a temporary place of retreat, but also as a station of dissent and empowerment. The shelters communicated a refusal to surrender, and made more visible the unacceptable circumstances of homeless life within the city. For the pedestrian, *paraSITE* functioned as an agitational device. The visibly parasitic relationship of these

---

<sup>40</sup> Michael Rakowitz, quoted in Nick Stillman, "Conversations...with Michael Rakowitz," New York Foundation for the Arts, <http://www.nyfa.org/level3.asp?id=432&fid=4&sid=8> (accessed 12 July 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Rakowitz, *Circumventions*.

devices to the buildings, appropriating a readily available situation with readily available materials, elicited immediate speculation as to the future of the city.<sup>42</sup>

This summary, which is essentially representative of what is most often provided for *paraSITE*, places a particular emphasis on the power ingrained in the visibility of both the structure and, one assumes, the homeless individual's occupation of the work. Both individuals and *paraSITE* itself are presented as combating the common ignorance, blindness and policing of homelessness through visibility, which is said to counteract the enframing of the homeless, as John Hill writes on his weblog, as "out-of-sight, out-of-mind."<sup>43</sup> In this interpretation, *paraSITE*'s public presence visually resists the processes through which the homeless are taken out of the public eye, often through the enforcement of public shelters or, in extreme cases, eviction from the entire city by the provision of one-way tickets out of town.<sup>44</sup>

While *paraSITE*'s visibility is certainly fundamental to the project in this way, this focus can also be located as a site of omission in its analysis. The repeated emphasis on the work's high level of visibility as the conceptual and radical basis of the work, or as

---

<sup>42</sup> slowLab, "slowLab > projects > paraSITE," New York Foundation for the Arts, <http://www.slowlab.net/paraSITE.html> (accessed 12 July 2010). This text was adapted from Rakowitz's initial statement on the work, first published as "paraSITE" in *Non Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation, and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler (Boston: The Architectural Press, 2000), 232-5.

<sup>43</sup> John Hill, comment on *paraSITE*, A Daily Dose of Architecture weblog, posted 9 October 2005, <http://archidose.blogspot.com/2005/10/parasite.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the best-known example of this type of eviction is the scheme quietly initiated by New York's mayor Mike Bloomberg in 2007, which relocated over 550 homeless families through bus and plane tickets or gas vouchers. Julie Bosman, "City Aids Homeless with One-Way Tickets Home," *New York Times*, 28 July 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/29/nyregion/29oneway.html> (accessed 14 July 2010).



indication that the work serves as both activism and "art," leaves something to be desired. It is not the aim of this chapter to dispute the existing reading of *paraSITE*'s visibility, but point to its gaps and the limitations it sets up for *paraSITE* in order to learn more from the dynamic process of the work. For instance, Rosalyn Deutsche concedes to the possibility that an increased recognition of the presence of the homeless can provide for improved rights to public space, but she additionally indicates how the visibility of homeless people is also used to legitimize their rejection from the city.<sup>45</sup> Deutsche writes that the visibility of the homeless does not necessarily guarantee their social recognition and that, in fact, "it is just as likely to strengthen the image of an essentially harmonious public space" that serves to exclude the homeless.<sup>46</sup> As she describes, the vision of the homeless figure is often constructed as the disruption or obstruction of an otherwise organic public realm, forcing the homeless to become a sort of monument to "the fantasy of a unified urban space that can—must—be retrieved."<sup>47</sup> This framing of the homeless is consistently used to avoid broader truths regarding the unevenness and inequity of the city, and its very nature as the product of necessarily ongoing conflict.<sup>48</sup> The point here is that the consistent focus on the *paraSITE*'s visual power not only omits the complexity of the broader dynamic between homelessness and public visibility, but also excludes the artistic process through which the work further resists the illusion of an organic public sphere. The current discussion of visibility, in other words, leaves room for further

---

<sup>45</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art an Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 366.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

understanding of the role *paraSITE* plays as art, necessitating analysis of the process that takes place behind the immediate visual experience.

There is something taking place through *paraSITE* that makes the work materially and compositionally interesting, a quality that is expressive in excess of the ties made between visibility and the particularities of individual, artist, location, reception and circulation. *paraSITE* provides what are in many ways simple structures, which perhaps makes it easier to describe the work without leaning into its expressive qualities.<sup>49</sup> The inflatables are made from a few lines of cut plastic, a few lines of tape (fig. 7), and (as all art should possess, according to Deleuze and Guattari) "pockets of air and emptiness," but each composition embodies a complex play with inside and outside, with surface, color and void.<sup>50</sup> The structures themselves appear light and weightless, particularly against a background of brick or concrete walls (fig. 8). *paraSITE*'s strange formations resemble something organic, living things that bring to mind biological parasites, seed pods, and bread in the process of rising (fig. 9). Like the air that inflates the shelters, they give the impression of flowing out from the interior of buildings. But their appearance in the urban setting is also so strange as to appear otherworldly or futuristic, an unexpected

---

<sup>49</sup> Though I am not focusing on the natural world as Grosz does, my use of the term "expression" stems from her pairing of Deleuze and Guattari's aesthetic philosophy with Darwin's understanding of natural selection. I am drawing from Grosz's discussion of art's expression as being in excess of mere survival, which she articulates through its relationship to the "forms of sexual selection...[which] affirm the excessiveness of the body and the natural order, their capacity to bring out in each other what surprises, what is of no use but nevertheless attracts and appeals. Each affirms an overabundance of resources beyond the need for mere survival, which is to say, to the capacity of both matter and life to exchange with each other, to enter into becomings that transform each." Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 7. While there is not space enough in this thesis to bring in the role of sexuality and desire in relationship to excess and expression, the following section of this chapter discusses *paraSITE*'s expressive qualities at greater length in regards to territory and process.

<sup>50</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 466.

alien architecture suddenly inserted into an ordinary city scene. Through *paraSITE*, trash bags are transformed into something ethereal, skin-like and ghostly, but are also stubbornly tied to the abject side of the everyday, its material excess of consumption (fig. 5). In some of the pieces, especially the ones that use black plastic, the materials speak out as repurposed trash bags, their common usage clearly discernable. In others, the stark whiteness and/or transparency of the materials provide a compelling and momentary erasure of a part of the city, pulling the surrounding colors and textures into contrast. *paraSITE* maintains a complex relationship with the adjacent city landscape, one that involves a literal linkage to a building but also a disjunction in materials and shape.

It seems ingrained in *paraSITE*'s complexity that it holds up as an artwork that somehow moves beyond its current conceptual borders, beyond its symbolism or function. Peter Eleey offers an interesting observation that Rakowitz himself "disputes the idea that he is providing a service and at times seems uncomfortable with the artistic function of the things he creates," going on to say that perhaps the weight of Rakowitz's work "lies in the messy poetics of [its] transactions rather than in [its] seemingly overt politics or ethics."<sup>51</sup> The project needs to be further understood as an expressive artwork in its own regard, without immediately being linked to the framework of design collaboration and homeless visibility. But in taking on the task of discussing *paraSITE* as an autonomous artwork, it does at first seem unusual to ask how the project "stands up alone," in Deleuze and Guattari's words.<sup>52</sup> To approach *paraSITE* through an encounter with Deleuze and Guattari means to search for the autonomous potential that the work

---

<sup>51</sup> Peter Eleey, "Michael Rakowitz," *Frieze* 99 (May 2006), [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/michael\\_rakowitz](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/michael_rakowitz) (accessed 12 July 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 465.

creates. This potential comes into being through the expression of its material and expands beyond, or is in unpredictable excess of these materials, their function, design, and reception.<sup>53</sup> But it is unclear whether the "materials" of the work can be limited to trash bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks and tape, or whether the composition needs to be considered in its extension to surrounding buildings, occupants, and passerbys. The work in a literal sense cannot stand alone; it requires another building, specifically an excess of air that has circulated throughout that building, as well as a homeless person, a user, to operate. Following Deleuze and Guattari, the question of *paraSITE*'s expression and, in turn, autonomy requires a consideration of the work's extended material process and the relationship created between territory and bodies.

### **Shelter/Sculpture, in Excess of Survival**

*paraSITE* continuously shifts between or cycles through two different modes: deflated and inflated. In their deflated state, the shelters are compressed and packaged into cases of the same material, usually transparent plastic or vinyl, and are carried by either handles or shoulder straps (fig. 10). In this mode, *paraSITE* consists of a homeless person and a bag, a virtual house, joined together and moving across the urban terrain. To reach its other mode, *paraSITE* enacts a setting-up of architecture that is temporary but also a product of its occupant's choices, habits and routine. The homeless dweller chooses a location, a sidewalk, grassy area or alleyway beside the exterior wall of a building and near a HVAC vent (fig. 11). Sinking its hooks into the vent, *paraSITE*

---

<sup>53</sup> Colebrook, 95.

inflates by means of this building's ventilation system, its discharged air, and grows to take up a space, a territory, and become a sort of house. After residing in this place for a time, *paraSITE* releases itself from the building, becoming deflated and nomadic once again. While *paraSITE* follows this cyclical behavior in regard to territory, it is not necessarily a steady or predictable pattern; it fluctuates depending on a multitude of forces ranging from weather to specific encounters between bodies and buildings.

*paraSITE*'s process continuously enacts what Deleuze and Guattari understand to be the driving process underlying art: its extension of architecture's imperative to organize territory. For Deleuze and Guattari, architecture is the first of the arts, and all art begins with the house or, more specifically, the frame.<sup>54</sup> Architecture is most simply the creation of a set of interlocking frames, such as walls, windows, floor and roof, that demarcate spaces and territories through boundaries or borders. The frame is the basic form of expression for architecture because its delineation is also the primary site of selection, design and composition, and it is in this way that architecture and the setting-up of a frame can be understood as the core of the artistic process as well.<sup>55</sup> As Grosz describes, "with no frame or boundary there can be no territory, and without territory there may be objects or things but not qualities that can become expressive."<sup>56</sup> Architecture frames and thereby creates a territory, but its process of separation and division is necessarily related to what is outside, excluded, in excess of the interior. In other words, the borders of architecture are always porous, but it is the aesthetic composition of this porousness and relationship to the outside that allows for an

---

<sup>54</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 478.

<sup>55</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 13.

<sup>56</sup> Grosz goes on to explain that this expression "can intensify and transform living bodies," which is discussed further in the following section of the chapter. *Ibid*, 11.

autonomous expression to take place. For Deleuze and Guattari, this awareness of the frame is the moment of art, and its aesthetic composition is the process by which an autonomous monument of sensation is created. The "autonomy" of an artwork, in this sense, comes from the architectural creation of a territory, a space that is marked by an inside and outside.<sup>57</sup>

*paraSITE* is architectural, but it is also a composed artwork that performs the porousness of architecture, the ways in which it is always open to the outside. *paraSITE* immediately appears to be less clearly defined or closed-off than what is commonly understood as architecture, in an everyday sense: it diverges from the architecture of solid, opaque and immobile houses.<sup>58</sup> The walls of *paraSITE* can never thoroughly divide inside from outside, particularly in the shelters in which windows and walls become indistinguishable, and walls become transparent. There is rarely a door to *paraSITE* that can be opened and closed; instead, either a zipper is used or one plane of the structure is omitted, leaving the house literally more open to the outside (fig. 12).

---

<sup>57</sup> This section attempts to summarize Deleuze and Guattari's position on the relationship between architecture and art, and how, through this relationship, art becomes an autonomous monument or composite sensation. In doing so, the complexity of language, terminology and broader cosmology presented in Deleuze and Guattari's writing on the subject is necessarily omitted. The following text can be located as a primary source for this summary: "The composite sensation, made up of percepts and affects, deterritorializes the system of opinion that brought together dominant perceptions and affections within a natural, historical, and social milieu. But the composite sensation is reterritorialized on the plane of composition, because it erects houses there, because it appears there within interlocked frames or joined sections that surround its components; landscapes that have become pure percepts, and characters that become pure affects. At the same time the plane of composition involves sensation in a higher deterritorialization, making it pass through a sort of deframing which opens it up and breaks it open onto an infinite cosmos... Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turn, through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations." Deleuze and Guattari, 483.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 476.

Likewise, the floor of *paraSITE* is not unyielding, and is never entirely separate from the earth, grass or concrete that jut through. Within *paraSITE* as well there is often no clear demarcation between floor, wall, window and roof. As is the tendency with inflatable structures, the corners where planes of plastic meet, joined with tape, are irregularly rounded and unsteady, always shifting (fig. 5). Each *paraSITE* shelter melds the separate elements of a house (its floor, walls, windows and roof) into an irregular mass in a different way, through the very nature of its materials and their erection. This massing extends in *paraSITE*'s simultaneous performance as the furniture within the house: while it serves as a shelter, *paraSITE* also more intimately functions as a bed, a chair, a couch, a cabinet, table or desk. *paraSITE*'s function as both house and furniture becomes clearest in its particular manifestation for a homeless couple, Artie and Myra, who negotiated a design with two separate rooms connected by a section that could serve as a passageway, table, desk, footrest, couch, or as Artie insists, a bed (fig. 13). As such, *paraSITE* is much like a house inside-out, pushing the furniture usually considered private into public space, combining it with exterior architecture.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> The connections between the use and design of *paraSITE* as a form of furniture further the work's fluctuation between inside and outside, while also pointing to both the role of the body (as discussed below). Furniture within a home undergoes the same vital flux between territory and the forces of the outside as the house itself; it provides a way for the architectural frame to reenact itself, as "an architecture on the inside of architecture." Deleuze and Guattari, 477; Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 15. Furniture is the architecture that is most directly designed for and closely linked with the body; it touches the body directly and becomes a part of its activities. Bernard Cache, who Deleuze and Guattari draw upon for their reading of art and architecture, explains that "for us, urban animals, furniture is thus our primary territory. Architecture, object, geography – furniture is that image where forms are fused together." Bernard Cache, *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 30, quoted in Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 15.

Through its fluctuating relationship to territory and openness to the outside, *paraSITE* points more broadly to the unsteady character of architecture, the essentially erratic materiality of occupation. As with any home, *paraSITE* demarcates a territory, its walls constituting an inside and outside, framing the space of inhabitation by filtering out the chaos of the outside world.<sup>60</sup> *paraSITE*, though, is more obviously open to and impacted by the outside than other forms of architecture, as seen in its basic reliance on the connection to other buildings, other territories, and the spaces that exist outside the work and are traversed when the structure is deflated. This is not to say that "traditional" homes do not enact a similar blurring of boundaries, through a number of features ranging from the structural, such as thresholds like windows and doors or even pipelines and electrical networks, to the more ambiguous behavioral patterns of their occupants, through consumption and the disposal of waste. The difference is that the transgression of spatial borders is more visible with and integral to both the process and structure of *paraSITE*. Through its constant movement from deflated to inflated, *paraSITE* becomes a house, but a house that can never provide the illusion of privacy or safety attempted through other forms of domestic architecture. *paraSITE* approaches and composes the frames and borders of architectural design in a different, perhaps more dramatic way than conventional domestic architecture, performing the fluidity of the inside/outside and private/public binaries that are so crucial to architecture. In its structure and process, *paraSITE* draws from, composes and makes quite visible the dynamic that prevents a house from ever being fully sealed off from the outside.

---

<sup>60</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 14.



The affect of *paraSITE* as art derives from its process and the relationship struck up with territory, which creates a sculptural and performative production that is in excess of the shelter's practical use, its basic function as architecture. Through its spatial process, its collapse of the separate planes of a house, and of the house itself into furniture, *paraSITE* enacts the integral moment of art, when its useful, architectural qualities can be seen to become simultaneously useless and expressive. The crux of what art can provide in its relationship to architectural production is to be found in this excess of function, for it reveals broader illusions of architecture as organic, whole, and capable of fully separating inside from outside. The excess that *paraSITE* reveals is what, Grosz insists, all architecture must seek:

... its allegiances with forces, affects, energies, experiments, rather than with ordinances, rules, function, or form. We must ask, following this understanding of the place of the excessive as transgression, how to engender... a radically antifunctional architecture, an architecture that is anti-authoritarian and antibureaucratic. An architecture that refuses to function in and be part of, as Deleuze names them, "societies of control."<sup>61</sup>

In these ways, *paraSITE* is architecture that seeks its own excess (and, of course, the excess of existing urban architecture). While the project is consistently understood for its capacity to be useful, as an artwork *paraSITE* emphasizes the excessive and useless production involved in architecture, the aspects of creating territory that embody its

---

<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 155.

"elaborate, if apparently useless, activity of construction, attention grabbing, and display."<sup>62</sup> What *paraSITE* displays speaks back to the system of architecture, intensifying a situation; for Deleuze and Guattari, art's constitution of territory provides a space of sensation that functions for the "sake of intensity alone."<sup>63</sup> Though the architecture of *paraSITE* participates as equipment for survival, the dynamic relationship to territory affects beyond or in excess of this survival. The intensity of this excess is what moves architecture towards action and change, towards the potential for its relationship with bodies to be otherwise.<sup>64</sup>

### **Homeless Monuments**

*paraSITE* hinges on the homeless dweller as the crux of the project, not just as a designer but also as an element of the work itself. *paraSITE* cannot exist, much less affect, without the homeless user. Most discussion of *paraSITE* focuses on the intensity of its visual and material presence because these structures stand out, unavoidably calling attention to their unusual architecture as well as to the body of the occupant (fig. 14). As such, *paraSITE* frames both a territory and the bodies of its homeless occupants within this territory. It would be difficult for any audience to disassociate the form of the work from its inhabitant, because of the widespread tethering of the project to the concept of homelessness, the individualized forms of the shelters, and more immediately because of the formal qualities of pneumatic architecture and its relationship to bodies. If *paraSITE*

---

<sup>62</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 9, 12.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 12, 80.

itself appears weightless, it is the homeless body that lends it gravity, which seems to keep the structure tethered to the ground or the work's territory. As discussed earlier, *paraSITE* does not provide solid, unmoving structural elements (walls, roof, floor) but an architecture that shifts, billows, folds around and responds to a body. The small scale of the works accentuates this enfolding quality. Because there is not much room for a body to move around inside *paraSITE*, bodies cannot avoid touching and pushing against the surfaces of the structure (fig. 14). Just as *paraSITE* becomes part of its inhabitant's everyday life, framing his/her experiences of and within the city, the homeless body becomes folded into the structure itself. As both shelter and sculpture, *paraSITE* maintains an intimate and even co-dependent connection with the body of its inhabitant: together they move across space, together forming a territory, together connecting to another building.

*paraSITE*'s composition relies specifically on the body without a home to erect a house, to enact the ongoing territorial process, to embody the volatile nature of architectural inhabitation: through these actions, body and building temporarily become a single entity. For Deleuze and Guattari, the body is understood as a part of art, not as a subject or individual with situated experiences, but in the body's inhabitation of the house-territory system through which it becomes a type of monument, by means of a joint relationship to territory and composition.<sup>65</sup> This aspect of *paraSITE*—in which the homeless become part of the building, the work, and the monument—is evaded in discussions of the project. Perhaps this is because it provokes the question of whether an interrogation of the autonomy of the artwork as monument, with a homeless body as part

---

<sup>65</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 474.

of the material composition, puts the political autonomy of the individuals involved at risk (fig. 15). As opposed to a stripping away of individuality or humanity, Deleuze and Guattari consider the nonhuman becoming of bodies to be the very affect of art. Becoming art does not necessitate a loss of subjecthood for, as they write, "sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other (while continuing to be what they are)."<sup>66</sup> The basis of art is this becoming: becoming part of the work, becoming through the work, becoming nonhuman. This dynamic process resists objectification through its own particular form of agency, in its call for a radical rethinking of the subject/object, body/building, and perhaps self/other binaries. Thinking about *paraSITE* as a monument of sensation allows it to be a "zone of indiscernibility" that comes between subjectivity and objectivity, body and building.<sup>67</sup> *paraSITE* forms a space that can provide for both a dynamic interchange and the possibility of creating a different relationship between these dualities in the future.<sup>68</sup>

I want to argue that this possibility for change is key to the politics of *paraSITE*: in its dependence on the homeless to become a monument of sensation (a work of art), the project simultaneously calls attention to and interrogates the reality that the homeless are already socially constructed as urban monuments. Just as *paraSITE* performs its endless process of setting up a house and taking it down on a micro level, the broader institutionalized system of architecture "demolishes, relocates, rebuilds, renovates, rezones, gentrifies, and develops itself continuously."<sup>69</sup> The homeless are produced by networks of top-down governmental, corporate, urban planning and real estate decisions

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 473.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 475.

<sup>68</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 76.

<sup>69</sup> Wodiczko, 56.

that enable this territorial process to take place: they are evicted from architecture, forcibly displaced outside and to the city's margins. As a result, the displacement of the homeless from the territory of architecture pushes them into a situation of becoming a sort of nomadic monument. The homeless occupy public space as symbols, projected as structures with a specific, if highly generalized, sort of character.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the homeless are produced as both the excess of architecture and as a symbolic architectural form. In becoming this form of monument, the homeless are enveloped in a social myth that works to simultaneously make invisible and legitimize the broader systematic violence of cities.<sup>71</sup> Wodiczko explains:

Adorned with the "refuse" of city "architecture" and with the physical fragments of the cycles of change, the homeless become the nomadic "buildings," the mobile "monuments" of the city. However, fixed in the absolute lowest economic and social positions and bound to their physical environment, *the homeless* achieve a symbolic stability... Unable to live without the dramatic presence of *the homeless* (since their contrast helps produce "value"—social, economic, cultural) and denying the homeless as its own social consequence, "architecture" must

---

<sup>70</sup> Perhaps a visual example of the ways in which homeless bodies become monuments can be found in their clichéd portrayal in "gritty" urban photographs, their bodies symbolically interwoven with the dirty cityscapes, graffitied walls, buildings and monuments they are pictured against.

<sup>71</sup> This argument draws heavily from Rosalyn Deutsche's position in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. As mentioned earlier, Deutsche articulates the role of the homeless in the mainstream construction of "public" space as unified, without conflict and essentially privatized. She writes that "the homeless person, represented as an intruder in public space, supports the houses resident's fantasy that the city, and social space in general, is essentially an organic whole. The person without a home is constructed as an ideological figure, a negative image created to restore positivity and order to social life." Deutsche, 277.

continuously repress the monumental condition of the homeless deeper into its (political) unconscious.<sup>72</sup>

Through this symbolic homeless-monument of the city, the economic and political system of architecture represses both the lived experience of the homeless and the vast network of power that causes their evictions. *paraSITE*, on the other hand, offers an autonomous homeless-monument that resists the resulting spatial dynamics of these evictions, and the relationships that they produce between bodies and buildings. At its most basic level, *paraSITE* assists in the assertion of the autonomy of the homeless in deciding where they live and under what conditions, offering an imperfect and temporary alternative to shelters and group homes. While not disconnected from its broader social and spatial context, the homeless-monument of *paraSITE* creates a scenario in which body and building share in an intimate and powerful mutual becoming, as opposed to the broader city's process of repulsion and repression.

It is possible that most references to *paraSITE* avoid directly addressing the homeless body's role as the core material of the work in order to steer clear of the complexity of the social system surrounding the creation of symbolic homeless monuments. But this omission seems particularly strange because of the repetitive circulation of *paraSITE* as, in Rakowitz's words, "a symbolic strategy of survival for homeless existence within the city."<sup>73</sup> By ignoring *paraSITE*'s composition of the homeless body, existing writings also overlook the ways in which the systematic and symbolic becoming-monument of the homeless is interrogated by a divergent form of

---

<sup>72</sup> Wodiczko, 55-6.

<sup>73</sup> Rakowitz, *Circumventions*.

becoming-monument, a process that takes place in excess of *paraSITE*'s function and "symbolic strategy." The difference between these two types of homeless monuments can be further understood by coming back to the question of visibility. Paralleling the argument of this chapter, Deutsche describes the different modes of visibility for homeless people and their possible effects:

The demand for visibility, understood as the declaration of the right of homeless people to live and work in public spaces, differs from a specular model of visibility, in which homeless people are constructed as objects for a viewing subject. The first demand challenges established legitimacy, questioning the legality of state power in evicting people from public spaces... As power becomes visible and drops its veil of anonymity, the homeless person also emerges from her consignment to an ideological image into a new kind of visibility.<sup>74</sup>

The difference between the symbolic homeless-monument and the homeless body's becoming monument with *paraSITE* and, in turn, becoming with the architecture to which *paraSITE* attaches is an active resistance to the systematic expulsion of bodies from the city's interiors and a demand for the right to space. The nonhuman mutual becoming between the homeless and *paraSITE* works in excess of the symbolic "character" of individual homeless people, and in excess of their intersubjective design collaborations with Rakowitz. In providing a platform from which the homeless become monuments that are autonomous, *paraSITE* directly challenges and intensifies the

---

<sup>74</sup> Deutsche, 366.

socially repressed "monumental condition" of homelessness. If *paraSITE* creates an ambiguous and difficult space for subjects and objects, it does so to demand a broader interrogation of the relationships between bodies and buildings, of the politics of public space and the ways in which it is and should be occupied.

### **The Politics of Becoming Through Art**

*Art is where life most readily transforms itself, the zone of indetermination through which all becomings must pass. In this sense art is not the antithesis of politics, but politics continued by other means.*<sup>75</sup>

In approaching *paraSITE* differently, this chapter has sought to add to its existing discursive framework and reception as an activist work engaged with change. The project continues to circulate and affect widely, which is politically valuable no matter how the work is read or analyzed. Arguing for the autonomous nature of *paraSITE* does not imply that it is self-contained or closed down from its milieu, from the socioeconomic forces and system of architecture that create the condition of homelessness. Just as *paraSITE* does not provide a *home* in the conventional sense, it also does not offer solutions to the problem of homelessness and cannot take the place of other necessary forms of analysis and action, including social, political, economic and conceptual. But *paraSITE* also cannot be understood simply, to borrow from Grosz, as "a window onto

---

<sup>75</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 76.



these worlds, nor a mode of their representation or exploration."<sup>76</sup> Its portrayal as a symbol of the issue of homelessness does not go far enough, nor can it provide enough ground for increased understanding of the work's significant process and for future work in the same vein.

The monument of *paraSITE* creates a situation in which homeless bodies and their nomadic homes actively alter and mutually become with the surrounding urban landscape. In becoming *paraSITE*, an artwork and a monument, the homeless exist in excess of the becoming-building of their imposed condition in the city. Through this excess, *paraSITE* opens up the potential for new relationships between bodies and buildings, for shifts in the bureaucratic operations of the architectural profession, and new forms of resistance by those who are evicted from the ideal image of an organic architecture or public space. As the slowLab text on the work indicates, the dissent that is embodied and performed through *paraSITE*'s relationship to surrounding buildings and the urban terrain continues to elicit "speculation as to the future of the city." In a striking moment in "Percept, Affect, and Concept," Deleuze and Guattari make a direct connection between art as monument and the art of revolution, a correlation that gestures to the political significance of *paraSITE*'s affect and the new relationships it can create:

A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle... The success of a revolution

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 78.

resides only in itself, precisely in the vibrations, clinches, and openings it gave to men and women at the moment of its making and that composes in itself a monument that is always in the process of becoming, like those tumuli to which each new traveler adds a stone.<sup>77</sup>

The monument of *paraSITE* necessarily remains in a state of becoming, its process embodying protestation against a system that creates homelessness and asking for further change in the city through its resonations with those who experience the work. *paraSITE* provides a space in which subjectivity and the material conditions of objects, buildings and the built environment can be pulled into an "ongoing dynamic of experimentation."<sup>78</sup> This is the political space of art, where "intensities proliferate, where forces are expressed for their own sake, where sensation lives and experiments, where the future is affectively and perceptually anticipated."<sup>79</sup> *paraSITE* anticipates and pulls us into its anticipation of a future in which the project is not needed.

---

<sup>77</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 472.

<sup>78</sup> Zagala, 26.

<sup>79</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 472.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Prototypes for Embodied Utopias:

#### *Ana Rewakowicz's SleepingBagDress Prototype*

---

*As a single balloon must stand for a lifetime of thinking about balloons, so each citizen expressed, in the attitude [they] chose, a complex of attitudes... It was suggested that what was admired about the balloon was finally this: that it was not limited, or defined... More and more people will turn, in bewildered inadequacy, to solutions for which the balloon may stand as a prototype, or "rough draft."<sup>80</sup>*

I watch in her video as she walks through cities in the rain, through public squares and parking lots, in between high rise office towers, along old stone pathways set above the shoreline (figs. 16 and 17). Her strange plastic dress repels the falling water as I follow her. The eyes of many strangers follow her. She stops at the edge: of a stage, a storefront, a sidewalk, and the shore. Taking her dress off and awkwardly untangling it, the clothing suddenly becomes more like a contraption, a mess of plastic which she turns inside out, steps into and lays out on the ground. A fan starts up. Some people look away or from the corner of their eyes, but most are right there, in front with cameras

---

<sup>80</sup> Donald Barthelme, "The Balloon," in *Sixty Stories* (New York: Penguin Group, 1981), 48, 51. Originally published in *Unspeakeable Practices, Unnatural Acts* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968).

ready (fig. 18). Moving around inside it, her arms and hands spread the dress to its corners and seams, over and over, holding it together and helping it inflate. It is a process, it becomes a shelter. She lays down as the video slows with her breath, the breath of plastic. The surfaces that were exposed to the city throughout her walks become the walls of a home for awhile, set up along the line of a city or sky. Sometimes it does not quite work. There is applause, and she smiles, sort of shrugging. The video jumps ahead, and she is seen moving along the stairs in her dress, slowly, facing forward and away.

Ana Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype* (2003-2005) is a series of transformable, inflatable and portable objects which each serve as a wearable dress and a temporary shelter, made primarily of transparent plastic. In its dress form, the object is worn by the artist in kimono fashion, zippered up over her clothes like a raincoat. The first prototype, subtitled *Self-Contain(ed)er*, comes with a fan that connects to a lead battery that the artist holds, while the second prototype is equipped with a solar panel in the front to power NiMH batteries, which in turn operate a smaller computer fan (fig. 19). For both prototypes, the fan serves to inflate the plastic dress into a cylindrical tent that the artist occupies and sometimes shares. The later version of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* is also marked by an orange bustle in the back of the dress that, once unfolded, becomes a sleeping pad. *SleepingBagDress Prototype* was used in a series of performances, most notably in Mexico City (2-14 November 2003), Toulouse (28 April 2004), Brussels (11-12 August 2004) and Tallinn, Estonia (16 August 2004).<sup>81</sup> The performances are varied and unique, but all involve the project's basic process of walking

---

<sup>81</sup> These performances were featured as part of the International Symposium of Electronic Art (ISEA) in 2004.

through the city, disrobing, inflating, occupying, and deflating. In Mexico City, Rewakowicz interviewed other people as they occupied *SleepingBagDress Prototype* in significant places of their choosing. These public interventions and encounters were documented and pulled together in a 24-minute video titled *Dressware I* (2003-5), which has been installed in various galleries as *A Modern-day Nomad Who Moves as She Pleases*.<sup>82</sup> In this incarnation, a much larger, stationary version of the prototype was erected and used as a screen for video projection. Visitors watch from both inside and outside the inflated structure, remotely selecting different sections or chapters of the video to peruse (fig. 20).

I want to write about *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, its embodiment, performative use and documentation in *Dressware I*, in a manner that conveys the complicated poetics and politics of the work without attempting to deflate it or pin it down. I want to let it breathe, as pneumatics should. In 1968, perhaps the pinnacle of inflatable production, architectural historian Reyner Banham wrote about the curious lack of critical attention to and, more importantly, passion for experiencing inflatable structures: "most of what one can find to read is dry, abstract and curiously *external*; it doesn't give the impression that

---

<sup>82</sup> The project was shown as *A Modern-day Nomad Who Moves as She Pleases* at Galerie Plein Sud in Longueuil, Quebec (February 2005), curated by Helene Poirier. It was also exhibited in her solo exhibition *Dressware and Other Inflatables* at the Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University (November 2005 to January 2006), curated by Gaëtane Verna. *SleepingBagDress Prototype* was additionally exhibited as part of the larger exhibition *Appearances* at the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montreal (May to September 2005), curated by Gilles Godmer. More recently, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* was featured in the *Vur sur Quebec* exhibition as part of the Liverpool Biennial, UK (2008); in *Festival Outsiders* in Paris (September 2009); in the *Bare House* exhibition at Pori Art Museum, Finland (May to June 2010); and in an upcoming show at CSW Laznia in Gdansk, Poland (September 2010).

the authors ever stood inside an inflated structure and said 'Um yes?' let alone 'Zowie!'"<sup>83</sup>

I want to write in a situated manner, as a woman who has not had immediate physical experience with the work but who has been affected, who has said to herself, "zowie!" In the following chapter, I move through an analysis of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* by way of fragmentary narrative responses to its video documentation in *Dressware I*, pulling forward the moments that most affect me and guide my thinking on the work and the structure of this analysis.<sup>84</sup>

Drawing primarily from Elizabeth Grosz's *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, this chapter proposes that *SleepingBagDress Prototype* be understood as a critical and temporary harnessing of the utopic potential that has permeated pneumatic forms over time. I point to the ways in which *SleepingBagDress Prototype* and its documentation frame time as a condition for the emergence of space, and the ways in which this offers a new understanding for the meeting of architecture and utopia. From here this chapter discusses Rewakowicz's work in relation to its context in an architectural history that includes the visionary design of the 1960s, the critical reception of work from this period as failed utopias, and the renewed contemporary interest in utopia, pneumatics and their intersections. I argue that *SleepingBagDress Prototype* activates the complex trajectory of the inflatable utopia as, to borrow from Grosz, "an admixture of the latency of the past and the indeterminacy of the future, the

---

<sup>83</sup> Reyner Banham, "Monumental Wind-bags," 1968, in *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, ed. Marc Dessauce (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 31-33.

<sup>84</sup> The motivating idea behind this methodological approach comes from Mieke Bal's understanding of narrative as a "mediating term that glues experimental sculpture with contested architecture," two realms which *SleepingBagDress Prototype* straddles. Mieke Bal, "Narrative Inside Out: Louise Bourgeois's Spider as Theoretical Object," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (1999): 103.

mode of linkage between an inert past, conceived as potential, and a future not yet in existence."<sup>85</sup> The work tactically and temporarily mines its relationship to utopian architectural dreaming, but does so with a unique and particular emphasis on time, process and embodiment. As such, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* enacts the necessary work of architecture by opening up a space through which people can imagine, question and temporarily embody the endlessly different ideal interactions between bodies, social structures and the built environment.<sup>86</sup>

### **The Time of Inflatable Utopias**

I watch as the form inflates over and over again, and in each place it does so differently, standing apart from its surroundings. With this object she is at once ghostly, a visitor from the future, and yet tangible, very present. She sits on the steps of a monumental building, in a modernist plaza, in an archaeological site, framed within her bubble. People crouch down, peering inside, photographing the moment that becomes an event (fig. 21). In my eyes, it becomes a blurry vision of the past looking forward, materializing outmoded conceptions of the future. But it is ambiguous, a simultaneous collapsing and projection of time, inflated. Some cannot seem to reconcile what is happening with their everyday experience. They move past, quickly, on their way home or to work. Some are in awe, and some may be inspired. She stands up, curling the

---

<sup>85</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 138.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 150.

silver material around her like a bulky, unwieldy cape, provisionally empty of air, and waits in the crowd at the crosswalk.

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* is not architecture in the conventional sense, but an architectural object to be used performatively, an experimental and fluctuating sculpture that becomes part of a bodily, spatial process that necessarily unfolds over time. As Rewakowicz repeatedly dresses, undresses, inflates and occupies the form in different locations, she deals not only with matter and space but also with time and, more specifically, duration. The manner in which spaces are produced through the performances of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* is, in fact, inseparable from an understanding of the unpredictable passage of time. The project functions through an ongoing and dynamic process across territory, a cycle that moves through time from inflation and temporary stasis to deflation and nomadic movement. But this territorial cycle is unsteady and erratic, always in flux and always dependent on an unforeseeable multiplicity of factors and encounters. In its later version, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* literally could not occupy or create a space, could not inflate, without the time Rewakowicz spends walking through the city; the battery-powered fan only functions through the solar power collected from the panel on the front of the dress (fig. 22). Because of this basic technological need, the *time* taken walking is given precedence over both the distance travelled and the production of space. In this way, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* approaches space in a manner that diverges drastically from the supposedly solid and staid domain of architecture. The spaces of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* are temporary and fleeting, requiring continuous activity and motion to come into being. The work approaches both time and space, in Grosz's words, as "emergence and eruption,



oriented not to the ordered, the controlled, the static, but to the event, to movement or action."<sup>87</sup>

The video documentation of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* in *Dressware I* both articulates and enhances these time-based elements of the project. The video illustrates the fluctuating relationship to territory that Rewakowicz enacts through *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, documenting her movements across cities, the inflation and deflation of the shelter. But it does not document this process in a straightforward manner, through a linear progression that grants space primacy over time. Conversely, the most immediate characteristic of the video is its unusual use of pace and timing. The video never shows one full "cycle" of the performance—the dressing, walking, undressing, inflating, deflating—but instead skips through different actions, jumbling them together.<sup>88</sup> At times the depiction of the shelter's inflation is sped up drastically, with the effect of disorienting the viewer and, while taking less time than the actual process, paradoxically emphasizing the duration of the procedure. This quality of the video is pulled forward through contrast with moments that are drawn out and slowed down, both in the performance itself and in the editing of its documentation. One minute Rewakowicz is shown in double-time, her hands moving rapidly within the structure, helping it inflate as others speed past the spectacle (fig. 23). In the next moment, she is shown laying down in a fully erected shelter, breathing slowly as minor details come into the foreground: the slow movements of both her chest and the plastic structure, the small

---

<sup>87</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 116.

<sup>88</sup> Mieke Bal's analysis of the ways in which Louise Bourgeois's simultaneously sculptural and architectural work enforces "a narrative awareness of the hiccupping temporality of viewing" and thereby simultaneously "destroys its own narrativity" resonates with this feature of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, and perhaps sheds light on how the work maintains its elusive character. Bal, 110.

gestures of her fingers, the shadows of the tilting grass, the impact of the object's fan and the wind outside. Then, once again, she is up, walking at a pace that shifts continuously. The documentation in *Dressware I* illustrates, to draw from Henri Bergson, the ways in which the work avoids using space as "a ground on which real motion is posited; rather it is real motion that deposits space beneath itself."<sup>89</sup> The complex movements of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* are not projected as simply rooted in the spatial, nor are they imagined as "only a variation of distance."<sup>90</sup> Conversely, inflation and the storage of energy it requires happens over time. The time of movement comes to the viewer first, and is shown to be the requirement for the emergence of the spaces produced through the process of the performance.

Another fundamental way in which *SleepingBagDress Prototype* draws upon and emphasizes time as the condition for space can be found in its productive harnessing of the history of pneumatic design. *SleepingBagDress Prototype* specifically draws on the often outlandish inflatables of the 1960s, produced both on paper and as structures by such design firms as Archigram, Utopie, Jersey Devil, Ant Farm and Haus-Rucker-Co, among others. In response to Craig Buckley's questioning of the role that a "sense of the historical difference between the late sixties and today" plays in her work, Rewakowicz discusses her "claim to the legacy of Archigram" and other groups, emphasizing the ways in which she is inspired by "their ideas of alternative approaches to living."<sup>91</sup> The mutable form of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* most clearly references projects by

---

<sup>89</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 206, quoted in Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 115.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Rewakowicz, quoted in Craig Buckley, "Between Object and Process: An Interview with Ana Rewakowicz," in *Dressware and Other Inflatables*, ed. Gaëtane Verna (Sherbrooke: Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, 2007), 74.

Michael Webb of Archigram, such as *Cushicle* (1966, fig. 24) and *Suitaloon* (1967), which he called "clothing for living in." These works similarly consist of portable, wearable objects that are designed to become inflated, self-sustained shelters, imaginatively complete with support systems (providing food and water) and even an entertainment system (including a radio and television).

In recalling inflatable designs of the past, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* also draws on what has become the inflatable's inseparable symbolism: its utopian imagining of the future. Marc Dessauce discusses the persistent history of associations between utopia and/or revolution and pneumatic objects, pointing to the "metonymy of a sail" in Thomas More's *Utopia* and even the ballooning in *The Wizard of Oz*.<sup>92</sup> Pneumatic design has become a part of the collective imaginary through numerous paths, but it is highly concentrated in the visionary architectural work of the 1960s. Though the design groups of this era of course differ in technique, approach and politics, the decade was marked by a fantasy of other architectural forms that were either new or newly considered in terms of the potential they offered for flexible, adaptive ways of living outside of institutional control and monotony. Inflatables, along with a number of other forms that offered cheap and easy to do-it-yourself design solutions, became imbued with these desires in an era of immense political upheaval. In a sliding of the spatial and the social that is characteristic of both the earlier modernist architects and the counter-cultural designers of the 1960s, Antoine Stinco of *Utopie* writes:

---

<sup>92</sup> Dessauce, 15.

Did we with our inflatable structures create a sort of architectural utopia? I do not think so. I believe, rather, that our projects seemed utopian because they sought to inscribe themselves within an analysis, a critique that desired radically to change certain social relations... We desired to show what was truly possible because it was technically feasible.<sup>93</sup>

This melding of design, technology and politics is directly linked to what rapidly became understood as the "failure" of utopian architecture of the 1960s. Pneumatic technologies have always been intimately linked with utopian dreaming, but have also circulated broadly across geopolitical, disciplinary and ideological borders in ways that present conflicting political goals.<sup>94</sup> Like Buckminster Fuller's dome, inflatables combine "mobility with the very image of technical ingenuity," and were adapted by more marginal design collectives from their previous mainstream application in global expos and militant colonization.<sup>95</sup> If 1960s groups attempted to subvert pneumatic technology as a radical architectural alternative, critiques of these attempts set in at a rapid turnover by the end of the decade. As architectural form and political content became increasingly aligned, the underlying tension between these two elements reached a fever pitch. Commenting on this period of time and revealing the friction amongst pneumatic architects, Jean-Paul Jungmann of Utopie writes that for Archigram, "there was no ideological limit to their talent. Politics and design remained two different realms

---

<sup>93</sup> Antoine Stinco, "Boredom, School, Utopie," in *The Inflatable Moment*, 71.

<sup>94</sup> Felicity Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 157.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

for them. But not for us."<sup>96</sup> While many would disagree, the point is that inflatables and radical politics became understood as tensely unstable bedfellows.<sup>97</sup> In *Architecture or Techno-Utopia*, Felicity Scott argues that the forms of experimental architecture drew away from the politics that initiated their use because they became so powerfully iconic, misplacing their potential as an "outside" alternative to both architectural and social mainstreams.<sup>98</sup> Iconic architectural forms such as the dome and the inflatable were emptied of their political content in part because of the common misconception that form can embody ideology, though evidence to the contrary could be found in their flexible use and nomadic application from the start.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Jean-Paul Jungmann, quoted in *The Inflatable Moment*, 67.

<sup>97</sup> Hans Hollein presents an opposing view of Archigram that further indicates the tension between form and content: "For a while it seemed that their work was lacking in social (and political) conscience, disregarding the single individual in favour of a technological supremacy. I trust this proves incorrect, looking at their work in a long span... Their ideas are always for *people*, for a better *life* for people. There may be a lot of exclusions. But then there are so many who continue and expand their work." Peter Blake similarly opposes the division between politics and design in Archigram, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the poetic power of their inflatable designs. Hollein and Blake, quoted in *Archigram*, ed. Peter Cook et al. (London: Studio Vista, 1972), 6, 7.

<sup>98</sup> DIY publications and 'zines of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as Ant Farm's manual for creating large scale inflatables *Inflatocookbook* (1971), illustrate this increasing focus on form, function and technology. Social groups that incorporated experimental architecture into their everyday lives, such as self-proclaimed drop-outs, became weighed down by technical problems involved in inhabiting alternative architecture, issues which took precedent over political content. For the writers of *The Last Whole Earth Catalog* in 1971, the flawed form of inflatables seems to have overpowered their intoxicating whimsy and utopian appeal: "Inflatables are trippy, cheap, light, imaginative space, not architecture at all. They're terrible to work in. Environmentally, what an inflatable is best at is protecting you from a gentle rain. Wind wants to take the structure with it across the country, so you get into heavy anchoring operations." *The Inflatable Moment*, 111-112; Scott, 167-171.

<sup>99</sup> Scott goes on to discuss the ways in which the reception of alternative architectural forms gradually disconnected from larger socioeconomic contexts, encouraging the framing of iconic building models as "autonomous object[s] of design that no longer functioned as protest against the capitalist system." She also gives the example of Buckminster Fuller's "revolution by design," pointing to the ways in which it promoted

The meeting of architecture and utopia has been consistently riddled with similar paradoxes, impossibilities and "failures," in part because of the limitations of understanding utopia as a spatial possibility instead of a relationship to time.<sup>100</sup> Utopias take place nowhere, in a no-place, but are also somehow always pictured as site-specific. They are the spatial image of perfection, and as such are often imagined as "the end of time, the end of history, the moment of resolution of past problems."<sup>101</sup> While occupying an ambiguous future based on models of the problematic past and present, utopias are nevertheless imagined in a space outside of time because there would be no need for change after perfection is attained. One of the persistent histories of utopian design that has blown through avant-garde art and architecture is the striving for their complete and tangible merging into social life, in attempts to create possibilities through space for increased autonomy, freedom, playfulness, and change in the social system.<sup>102</sup> But what often takes root through utopian architecture, or most likely would in those that remain

---

the idea of an inherent connection between spatial and social transformation that did not require "ongoing political or aesthetic struggle." Scott, 170.

<sup>100</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 136.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>102</sup> The work of Ex-Situationist International member Constant Nieuwenhuys for his project *New Babylon* exemplifies the paradoxes of avant-garde utopian architecture that searched for alternatives to modern functionalist urbanism. From the mid-1950s through the 1970s, Constant developed a vast set of ambiguous designs, maps, models and plans for the ideal urban environment, a modular megastructure that suspended above existing cities and spread rhizomatically across the globe. *New Babylon* was to exhibit the peak of technology and pre-fabrication in service of being entirely open to the determination of its users, entirely flexible and mobile. But, as Hilde Heynen points out, Constant's imposition of a public space that required the "continual rejection of convention and of any form of permanence" meant that its inhabitants would have no past, no memory, no habits, homes or potential for return. *New Babylon* called for a society of transparent, nomadic relationships in which private space was available only to those unable to participate communally—creating an "ideal" urban architecture that subsumed identity, particularities and details to the universal whole. Hilde Heynen, "New Babylon: The Antinomies of Utopia," *Assemblage* 29 (April 1996): 34, 28.

unbuilt, is a “rigidly authoritarian, hierarchical, and restrictive” social order.<sup>103</sup> Drawing on Reyner Banham's "melancholy epilogue" to *Megastructures: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* from 1976, Scott writes that while experimental design of the 1960s

embraced the period's libertarian sentiments and the "belief in the permissive and the open-ended, in a future with 'alternative scenarios,'" it had soon become apparent... that the work harboured a paradoxical call to order, an atavistic alliance with modernist dreams of a totalizing environmental control.<sup>104</sup>

Utopia has been repeatedly framed as an abstract possibility that could be actualized through architecture, evocative of Utopie's idea of what "was truly possible because it was technically feasible." But when one person or group imagines utopia as a place of perfection, they must also imagine the regulation and training of those that occupy this territory, suffocating the diversity of bodies, movements and their particular dreams of the ideal.

The creation and performance of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* coincides with a time of renewed consideration of the traditions of utopian, pneumatic and portable design. The late 1990s showed an immense leap in architectural design, artistic work and, in particular, critical attention in the field of pneumatics and utopia, creating a wave of interest that has yet to die down.<sup>105</sup> *SleepingBagDress* emerges in context of an influx

---

<sup>103</sup> Grosz, 134.

<sup>104</sup> Scott, 1.

<sup>105</sup> In the world of architecture, Kengo Kuma's *Tea House* (2005) and mmw's *Connector* (2004) and *Kiss The Frog!* (2005) are some of the best known contemporary inflatables. Similarly, a number of books on pneumatic design erupted around the same period as

of both critical and hopeful production that harkens back to what could be understood as the "lost" period of the 1960s.<sup>106</sup> This rejuvenation of 1960s experimental architecture was and continues to be driven in part by global mass-media attention to the environmental concerns that were central to many outsider-architects of the time. These concerns have grown more widespread, granting sustainability and sustainable architecture the ideological weight that they possess today. But despite technological advancements in the material use and design of pneumatic architecture, inflatable design has always been an unusual and imperfect solution to sustainability issues, sort of a dreamy outsider amongst outsiders. It is possible, then, that this revival of visionary pneumatics is also driven by a self-conscious and collective desire for what is perceived as a lost utopian vision. While memories of 1960s architectural and social experimentation are evoked through *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, they are seen through the perceptual lens of this contemporary context.

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* is inseparable from the event or the "now" of the work itself; it recognizes and incorporates the past as a force for momentum in the present. In a unique doubling movement, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* actualizes both the history of inflatables as imagined utopias, forms that carried anticipated potentialities for the future, and the subsequent framing of these utopias as failures. Drawing on Henri

---

*SleepingBagDress Prototype*, including *The Inflatable Moment* (1999); Sean Topham's *Blow-Up: Inflatable Art, Architecture and Design* (2002); *Thin Skin: The Fickle Nature of Bubbles, Spheres, and Inflatable Structures* (2002) edited by Barbara Clausen and Carin Kuoni; and *Realms of Impossibility: Air* (2002) edited by C.J. Lim and Ed Liu, among many others.

<sup>106</sup> Felicity Scott's *Architecture or Techno-Utopia* is a useful example of both criticality and hope, as she points to the pitfalls in utopian design but also attempts to recuperate the "potential of revolutionary transformation" from alternative architecture's resistance to and disengagement from existing social, economic and urban structures. Scott, 171.



Bergson, Grosz writes about the relationship between the present and the past, and considers the potential it can provide for future action:

Whereas the past in itself is powerless, if it can link up to a present perception, it has a chance to be mobilized in the course of another perception's impulse to action. In this sense, the present is not purely self-contained; it straddles both past and present, requiring the past as its precondition, oriented as it is toward the immediate future.<sup>107</sup>

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* selectively mobilizes the history of utopian inflatables as an impetus and possibility of the present, bringing the past into an active and affective state, providing possibilities for future action that is not unaware of its complicated and conflicted political histories. If imagining utopia has often slid into architectural fantasies of control, its orientation towards the future and its active imagining of alternatives still hold potential for recuperation, for thinking through the interactions between bodies and the built environment.<sup>108</sup> The temporal orientation of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* allows it to draw from the utopic as a transformative way of conceiving and interacting with time, specifically embracing the future as an unforeseeable and unknowable motivator.

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* appropriates the imaginative underbelly of utopia to recuperate the temporal as an opening up towards change and difference, rather than the perfection of spatial design, and in doing so diverges from the architecture utopias

---

<sup>107</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 121.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 139, 135.

ingrained in its history.<sup>109</sup> The work does not present itself as a universally ideal or utopic space, but a prototype, an imperfect temporary space in flux, in and from which to consider and potentially change how we create and relate to places. If *SleepingBagDress Prototype* takes something away from utopian dreams, temporarily opening them up to the inevitability of difference, in does so in part by literally opening up the space's occupation to others, not just as viewers or spectators but also as active place-makers, theorists, and storytellers. This takes place most clearly in the performance of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* in Mexico City, specifically through its reliance on a series of encounters between Rewakowicz and visitors who choose a significant location in which to set up and inhabit the shelter. Through intimate interviews that took place within *SleepingBagDress Prototype* in the language of their choice, participants discussed a variety of issues related to ideas of home and belonging, telling stories that spoke to their unique relationships to processes of place-making and travel. Rewakowicz elaborates:

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* provided an open space in which people felt comfortable enough to express themselves in ways that they would have not probably done under different circumstances. It was open enough that they could bring their own stories, reflections and yet it was specific enough that it wasn't just about anything... This affect is different for different people and this is the beauty of it.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>110</sup> Ana Rewakowicz, in an e-mail message to the author, 16 May 2010.

While the meeting of utopia and architecture has worked towards uniformity of space and the social, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* works to make difference, dialogue, specificity and a belief in future change central to its spatial negotiation.<sup>111</sup> Grosz writes that the failure of utopia consistently stems from its inability "to take account of the diversity not only of subjects but also of their utopic visions, that is, to the way in which visions of the ideal are themselves reflections of the specific positions occupied in the present."<sup>112</sup> Though architectural utopia is impossible as a universally ideal space, tactical interventions in utopian dreaming can start to relate this untold difference and create space for future change.

Rewakowicz expresses how part of the change that immediately develops from *SleepingBagDress Prototype* takes place through these interactions with the work and its visitors. Change is made directly manifest in her process, in new ways of thinking about place-making and, though she doesn't directly speak for the participants, the same could be true for changes in their ideas and spatial relationships as well.<sup>113</sup> The artist explains that working with pneumatics is always necessarily an intuitive process. No matter how "perfect" an original design or blueprint is, a structure must be closed off or sealed before it can be inflated and tested. This means that in the initial stages of building, Rewakowicz has no way of being entirely sure where the project will go: it is left open and vulnerable to failure and change. The direction of the performances with the object and the ensuing social interactions are similarly left open. Visitors provide Rewakowicz with new conceptual frameworks and questions that help to change the work, directing

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 143.

<sup>113</sup> Ana Rewakowicz, in conversation with the author, 9 July 2010.

the literal, territorial movements of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* as well as the artist's further thinking on projects to follow.<sup>114</sup> Rewakowicz gives the example of her conversation with Ricardo Velasco, a participant who chose to set up and occupy the work in the middle of Zocalo Square (fig. 25). She was particularly struck by Velasco's mention of Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopia in relation to his experience of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*'s placement in a larger public space.<sup>115</sup> Rewakowicz's interaction with Velasco and her consideration of his ideas has directly affected the artist's (and my own) understanding of the project. Rewakowicz writes:

[Velasco] talked about being removed from the surroundings and being suspended (in a sense) in a place of "heterotopia" (placelessness) – a term used by Michel Foucault in describing the social relation between real and ideal spaces; heterotopia creates a neutral zone, a suspension space... This is how I see what the *SleepingBagDress Prototype* offers: heterotopia.<sup>116</sup>

Both building and occupying *SleepingBagDress Prototype* required Rewakowicz to remain open to learning from the process and from the different perspectives of others. While the utopic cannot be planned or built, its energy can be redirected towards architectural efforts that embrace a dynamic mode of change that cannot be predicted.<sup>117</sup> *SleepingBagDress Prototype* is an experiment that reveals the ways in which tactical,

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Rewakowicz, in an e-mail message to the author, 16 May 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 136.

architectural interventions into utopian dreaming can offer an understanding of time and, through it, space as becoming, as always unevenly different.<sup>118</sup>

### **Prototypes and Moving On**

The video cuts to the moments in-between walking and occupation, moments that illustrate the possibility that the work has not fully inflated. I watch as she emerges from the deflating nest to a confrontation with security guards, who try to block my view (fig. 26). Sitting on the floor of the mall in a mass of plastic, she ties her shoes. In an open space outside, only partially enclosed in the wrinkled tent, she talks to someone who bends down from under an umbrella. On the sidewalk, people walk past faster than imaginable, and I become aware of the time it is taking for the shelter to solidify, to fill. It wavers and seems to lose air again, and her head pulls through the hole in the side. Her hands always moving, finding gaps, spaces through which air seeps outside. I wonder about the fan on these cloudy, stormy days, about the batteries and their reliance on the sun. I wonder if the rain is leaking through. Someone says "spectacular invention." Her feet hit the old bricks with an admirer who had been lingering, the dress trailing through puddles as they walk together. Emerging to applause on the small stage after being cloaked in loose plastic for so long, she says, laughing, "it took a while." She tells them, "well, it's a prototype."

Both the creation of objects and the performance of these objects in *SleepingBagDress Prototype* are imperfect experiments, forays into the material

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 137.

intersections of time, movement, bodies, technologies and cities, among other things. As with any experiment, things come apart, break down, refuse to operate seamlessly. Rewakowicz readily discusses the presence of idiosyncrasies in the use of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*.<sup>119</sup> She points out the immense fragility of the object, its visible wear and tear, the need for constant maintenance and repair and the impact this has on her performance. For instance, the wiring between the solar panel, NiMH battery and fan in the later prototype require continuous refiguring and adjustment, which often causes accidental disconnections and occasionally a drained battery.<sup>120</sup> These technical malfunctions add to the durational qualities of the project, impacting the time Rewakowicz spends with the work and displaying it on the surface of the object itself.

In addition, practical issues restrict the artist's freedom of movement with and occupation of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* to a considerable degree. With the first prototype, Rewakowicz is burdened by the weight of the bulky lead battery, and its need for charging every eight hours dictates her location in the city. Also, the design of the dress in this version requires the artist to keep her hands in the air while walking, or her feet catch clumsily on the material.<sup>121</sup> While these design issues are resolved for the second prototype, its placement of a solar panel on the front of the dress introduces new complications, particularly that the position of the sun alters and controls Rewakowicz's routes through the city. If she is determined to walk away from the sun, she actually has to twist her body or walk backwards in order to continue storing energy for inflation.<sup>122</sup>

Perhaps the most striking technical concern of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* is the limited

---

<sup>119</sup> Rewakowicz, in conversation with the author, 9 July 2010.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Rewakowicz, in an e-mail message to the author, 26 July 2010.

<sup>122</sup> Rewakowicz, in conversation with the author, 9 July 2010.

air supply in the shelter once it is inflated. Rewakowicz relates that the longest she has stayed inside a prototype is two to three hours, because any longer or even overnight would prove extremely dangerous, even suicidal.<sup>123</sup> These examples recount that there is not necessarily a smooth transition from dress to shelter and back again, and that the process is forever shifting. As Cynthia Hammond writes, while *SleepingBagDress Prototype* "is a self-sufficient, portable shelter, [it] is also an improbable mockup," a prototype that straddles "a difficult line between practical possibilities and utopian dreams."<sup>124</sup>

Rewakowicz embraces the experimental qualities of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, its glitches and irregularities, and loosens the conventional understanding of prototypical design to include the possibility of being incomplete. Though the term "prototype" usually indicates an original that leads to a finished and final object, perhaps *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, through its straddling of the possible and the utopian, can be understood with a different emphasis. Immediately this difference is notable in the fact that there is no complete or perfected version of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*. Rewakowicz writes that "the format of the prototype allows me to work with process. A prototype is not about finished product but about ways to develop ideas, about ways of problem solving without the need to arrive to a practical conclusion."<sup>125</sup> In conversation, Rewakowicz talks about all the ways in which she could continue this project forever. For instance, she could advance the technology involved, improving the wiring or including an oxygen sensor with a signal to wake up the occupant when levels get

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Cynthia Hammond, "An Architecture of Affect," in *Dressware and Other Inflatables*, 43, 46.

<sup>125</sup> Rewakowicz, in an e-mail message to the author, 16 May 2010.

dangerously low.<sup>126</sup> With some hyperbole, she exclaims that she could "take those walks forever!"<sup>127</sup> I would add as well that she could invite and interview visitors and always find new results, different stories told from different places. In their active use as models for creative production, prototypes are capable of pushing forward a search for new and different forms. But prototypes themselves, unlike the final product that they are typically intended to build up to, will never be perfect. Rewakowicz's work consists *only* of prototypes because, while its tactical utopian leanings situate them forward towards the future, it avoids providing a fantasy of this future as perfected.

In working through a process of experimentation that changes over time and occasionally fails, Rewakowicz does not give up on the meeting of architecture and utopia but performs a relinquishing of control, allowing and creating the opportunity for each unique situation to be imperfectly different. Rewakowicz seems to perform failure, the failures of the architectural tradition of attempted control in the name of utopia, through her struggles with *SleepingBagDress Prototype's* technology and its need for repairs and improvements. There is a lovely, if slightly morbid, parallel in the structure's eventual lack of oxygen with the tendency of historical architectural utopias to "suffocate" difference. Similarly, the strange limitations to the artist's movement provided by the structure's reliance on either a lead battery or a solar panel become a metaphor for the shortsightedness of the architectural avant-garde's utopian designs. In structuring her journeys or posture around a technical constraint, Rewakowicz performs the failure that inevitably results from architectural attempts to provide a universal freedom of movement. Even keeping the structure erected, sealed and inflated is a visible

---

<sup>126</sup> Rewakowicz, in conversation with the author, 11 July 2010.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



manifestation of the impossibility of the artist's complete control. Viewers of the video documentation repeatedly watch as her hands move rapidly, and maybe a little frantically at times, across the seams and edges, searching to close gaps, attempting to keep the air inside. As air unavoidably leaks out, Rewakowicz accepts it, smiles, and moves on.

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* approaches architecture as a form of open-ended spatial negotiation that diverges from the objective determinism so often found in the professional discipline of architecture, both in its production of the built environment and in its utopian imagination.<sup>128</sup> Mary McLeod writes that although the pairing of utopian dreaming and architectural production often results in delimitation, it can also be an essential part of rethinking space and the social: "only by proposing alternative possibilities, conducting endless experiments, and constructing new futures could individuals and groups actively initiate the process of social transformation."<sup>129</sup>

*SleepingBagDress Prototype* investigates alternative and creative modes of everyday life of the city, and in doing so continues a line of inquiry that will always be necessary. The project is not endless per se, as Rewakowicz communicates, though thinking of it as such helps to understand its potential for change. Because the work is not aiming for perfection, she wants it to be bound loosely by a specific time and place, and by the people she encounters in this context. While others affect what comes next in her body of work, each of her projects has its own momentum, and there is a point at which she has to let go a little.<sup>130</sup> As such, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* serves as a model for the

---

<sup>128</sup> Mary McLeod, "Henri Lefebvre's Critique of Everyday Life: An Introduction," in *Architecture of the Everyday*, ed. Steven Harris and Deborah Berke (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 16.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Rewakowicz, in conversation with the author, 11 July 2010.

tactical and temporary reappropriation of the utopian imaginary: it projects not a futureless, rigidly controlled and perfected space, but offers a glimpse of how to think through utopia(s), each in our own time and through our own processes.

### **Embodying Utopias and Endless Questions**

*A part of [the] strangeness of dress is that it links the biological body to the social being, and public to private. This makes it uneasy territory, since it forces us to recognize that the human body is more than a biological entity. It is an organism in culture, a cultural artefact even, and its own boundaries are unclear.<sup>131</sup>*

I watch a woman moving clockwise around her body in a large open room, a brightly-lit work space with arched windows and thin concrete columns. This other woman is tying the dress close around her, taming it, lacing a folded bustle in the back on which, later, she'll lay down. She holds her arms out; she is getting ready to go out into the city (fig. 27). It is an intricate process, but time passes quickly, in less than a minute. The video skips, and she is holding the home up in the wind now, in front of a massive molecular model (fig. 28).<sup>132</sup> Quite unlike just a moment before, the dress billows out, unruly, a living cylindrical shell. It is headstrong, as if it is pulling her along. Maybe she is playing with it, like a kite or balloon, and her arms are the strings. She follows, always holding on, until her body and the object are dancing together. She moves inside it, it has

---

<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, quoted in Lynn Beavis, *Dress: la mode dans tous ses états / The dress show* (Montreal: Concordia University, 2003), 3.

<sup>132</sup> This structure is the Atomium in Brussels, designed by André Waterkeyn and built for the 1958 world's fair.

wrapped itself around her and is being secured, held to the ground by her body. The wind blows hard and she pulls the air inside, drawing spirals in the condensation of her breath (fig. 29). She lays down, calm, an arm across her face, a hand pushing gently against the plastic edge and into the grass.

There is a shifting relationship between Rewakowicz's body and *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, a relationship that is performed over time, in and through different spaces, amongst and with other bodies. The work consists of her body, in an elaborate, transparent dress and in a small, transparent shelter, her body always in-between. Like the side of the cylindrical shelter used as a projection screen in *A Modern-day Nomad Who Moves as She Pleases*, Rewakowicz performs her body, usually cloaked in all white, in a way that could be open to projection (fig. 30). In this performative relationship with the object, her body is always specific (specifically her own) but also simultaneously becomes ambiguous. Often her bodily gestures seem characteristic of a particular individual: a smile, a certain gait, the way she ties her shoes or holds herself while interacting with strangers (fig. 31). At other times, her body seems to become more intertwined with the work itself: as a wearer of the dress and an inhabitant of the shelter, could others replace her body? With the shifting object of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, how do the meanings of her body shift? What meanings do other people, seeing through and with the object, project onto her body? How do the others who occupy the structure understand their own bodies in relation to the space? These questions are capable of opening up into an unknowable multiplicity, into indescribable difference, but always come back to the embodiment of place. Her body is always capable of subtly changing roles and meanings, always evocative of a multitude of ways

in which bodies can inhabit and think about cities, and the ways in which cities can become places for bodies. Her body is always (t)here, very present, and at every step the work could not exist or function without being embodied.

If, as this chapter argues, *SleepingBagDress Prototype* tactically reappropriates the time of the utopic, what is left is to question is how this work could serve as a prototype for embodied utopias, a material opening up of what the potentially paradoxical idea of "embodied utopias" could bring to spatial design and critical thought. As Grosz writes, the architecture of utopia has been based in "the projection of idealized futures; embodiment, though, is that which has never had its place within utopias."<sup>133</sup> But there remains the possibility that the uneasy relations between "embodiment" and "utopia," and its ensuing implications for the meeting of sculpture, architecture, space and time, can offer "motivation for rethinking categories, terms, and assumptions, and for adding complications to perhaps oversimplified frameworks within which those terms were thought."<sup>134</sup> *SleepingBagDress Prototype* pushes for a consideration of embodied utopias through the constant bodily performance of Rewakowicz as well as viewers and participants who, to borrow from Mieke Bal, "caught up between narrativity and sculpturality, 'build[]' a home for old stories in the *now*."<sup>135</sup> Her individual embodiment of the work allows for the imaginative projections of others, offering an entranceway into the work that extends beyond its literal visitations. These brief moments when her body blends together with the whole of the project, when she takes a step into the background, can allow others to imagine themselves stepping forward and inside. I catch myself

---

<sup>133</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 131.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Bal, 118.

projecting into the work, folding into it, and it is not necessarily an ideal embodiment: I would love to be there, to experience the work firsthand, but then I also consider the lack of oxygen, the heat of the sun on the plastic, the constant gaze of those passing by. I imagine myself embodying the work, but once again Rewakowicz will laugh or move in a certain way that is inarguably *her*, and in doing so prevents the utopic qualities of *SleepingBagDress Prototype* from prescribing a universal subjecthood. In inviting others in, both literally and through the circulation of the work's documentation, and asking us to consider the complexities of self and place in such a personal manner, Rewakowicz utilizes the project to encourage and incite a diversity of utopian dreaming from specific locations, identities and bodies in the present (fig. 32).

In working materially towards embodied utopias, the project makes use of the tension ingrained in the idea itself, providing prototypes from which to work towards future physical production and critical thought without striving for perfection. Rewakowicz's variable performance of her body creates a departure from traditional utopic visions of controlled, predictable and homogenous bodies in unified, static and unchanging space. The work insists on her own and others' complex and particular subjectivities, and, through this presence, it insists as well on the changing impact and intensities provided through intersections with subjectively significant places and socio-cultural contexts. By performing the simultaneous roles of designer (or even "inventor"), user and gracious host in such a way, Rewakowicz first and foremost insists on the agency of subjects to inhabit and negotiate space uniquely and always differently. The problems posed by *SleepingBagDress Prototype* as a prototype for embodied utopias

remain unanswered and, as such, invite the "endless questioning" of others.<sup>136</sup> The project is left open to continuation, change and unquantifiable difference, as required for any conception of embodied utopia.

I take a step back, and realize that I cannot fully see the landscapes surrounding the work from the perspective offered in the video; I imagine that I also could not if I physically occupied the dress. I could not completely understand these places through the stories that are told to her, by those who come into the inflatable, even if I were there. The architecture of *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, along with its performative embodiment and documentation, resists a totalizing vision through the meeting of material embodiment and personal narrative. Visitors sit there together and alone, speaking to her, to home and movement, and the stories are very much their own. They tell stories that speak to the variable ties between the act of remembering and material place-making, about the ways in which these relationships change over time. I wonder where I would have taken her, what stories I would have told and why. I step back from the work, from writing, and start to actively make my own inflatable structures, in similar but different ways, and consider inviting my neighbors in to speak through their experiences of place. I consider pneumatic openings, the ways in which they can call the outside in, and remember watching as one of Rewakowicz's visitors fantasized about undoing architecture: "there was nothing there, no walls, no doors, only an open space."<sup>137</sup> *SleepingBagDress Prototype* offers these quiet moments when both the artist

---

<sup>136</sup> Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 150.

<sup>137</sup> Hector Ponce de Leon, interview with Ana Rewakowicz in Mexico City, *Dressware I* (2003-5), video, 24 minutes.

and the architecture slips away a little, as others come into view. The work becomes fleetingly clear as a prototype of something else entirely, something that can never fully materialize. It is a prototype for imagining and enacting difference in and through architecture, each in our own way and sometimes as we sit together. Then the work deflates, and she moves along the stairs in her dress, slowly, facing forward and away (fig. 33).

## CONCLUSION

### **A Process of Writing with Inflatables: Architectural Failure and Building Community**

---

*It is not enough for art writers to simply be the representatives of a politic that they find elsewhere, in artworks or in political science. It is necessary for art writers to create their own aesthetic multiplicities and their own micro-politics... To write "about" art would be actually to pass into an aesthetic territory such that subject and object positions do not precede the habitat, but are extracted from it. In fact, it is no longer a matter of writing about art, but of writing with art.<sup>138</sup>*

I was recently struck, quite suddenly, with the memory of creating my first inflatable. The project was in response to an assignment on pneumatic structures, given to groups of students in the pre-college program at the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida. The execution of such a work by an assembly of teenagers involved a degree, to say the least, of blasé attitude. Though we were instructed to design and build a specific and recognizable form, we just dove in haphazardly, taping layers of material together and eventually to a fan. The project was, on many levels, a failure in

---

<sup>138</sup> Stephen Zagala, "Aesthetics: A Place I've Never Seen," in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20-43.



design, which is perhaps why it had crept into the poorly lit corners of my memory years ago. But when it came to mind so unexpectedly the other day, what I remembered was not a sense of failure but a momentary sense of community. I can vividly picture a group of us crawling through a hole in the structure, sealing it behind us, and there being some sort of magical transformation. This change was not just a product of the strangeness of the space itself, though the refraction of the late afternoon light through the unusual plastic surfaces did provide a beautiful, hazy intensity. In the process of occupying the inflatable, *we* also changed somehow: gradually dropping the pretense of fashionable detachment, we made the space our own, together. The inflatable created a temporary communal space that, unlike the broader city streets, the school, dormitories or studio, did not present a recognizable script for our behavior or relation to one another.

Since engulfing myself in the analysis of the inflatable architecture produced by Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz, I have been drawn to thinking critically about my own relationship with pneumatic forms and what this dynamic implies for my understanding of space, the city, my political network and personal community. In the past few months, these elements have come together in a particular experience of my home and neighborhood in the southwest of Montreal this past Spring. It started after word spread amongst friends and neighbors of a sexual assault by the train tracks a few blocks from my house in Saint Henri. People swiftly began to recount stories of local violence, mapping them onto different sectors of our streets. In response, we pulled together in both virtual and lived spaces to form a rhizomatic collective called Safe Southwest. The group's immediate purpose is to maintain a network for communication

and support, but it is also marked by the broader intention of working to better understand and change our various relationships to the public space around us.

In addition to the significantly increased dialogue on the subjects of space, safety, violence and community, several key "products" have already come out of the initial formation of Safe Southwest. These include a new set of uses for the existing Saint Henri e-mail list serve, a phone-tree to organize and share information, a series of fundraisers and self-defense workshops in local DIY venues, a "buddy" system to ensure that people do not need to walk alone at night, a set of lined letterpress cards for keeping important contact information close at hand (fig. 34),<sup>139</sup> a map of "safe" houses that people can access if they need to get off the street, and an all women and transgender "take back the night" demonstration that moved from Sir George Etienne Cartier Park, in the middle of the neighborhood, to an area by the train tracks that has been marked by the highest number of assaults. But while direct action came about almost immediately, there remains a number of problems posed for fluent and fair communication between those

---

<sup>139</sup> The design of these cards was a collaborative effort between myself (as part of Safe Southwest) and the artist/writer Artnoose from the Cyberpunk Apocalypse writer's cooperative in Pittsburgh. One side is lined for the insertion of contact information, and the other side simply reads "scaffolding." The description included with the cards explains: "Scaffolding is a tangible support network that is always in the process of change or flux; a material set of connections erected by a group of people in order to build something broader. It indicates holding up, carrying the weight of, supporting, sustaining. These cards are intended to remind us of our support networks, encourage us to extend and sustain them. They are a material indication of the people who are here for us." Part of the goal of this project, on a personal level, was to think about and actively explore the relationship between architecture and community building as necessarily ongoing, material processes. Artnoose made the cards in her letterpress studio and generously donated them to the neighborhood by way of the Saint Henri Walking Distance 'Zine Distro, a collective closely affiliated with Safe Southwest that supports creative, local production and distributes packages (for free) throughout the neighborhood.

involved or interested in "safe southwest." Like the collective itself, these difficulties are inseparable from the spaces through which they take place.

In response to both the challenge of communication and the broader interests of Safe Southwest in spatial negotiation, I decided to make a structure that could be an imaginative and alternative meeting ground for this network of people. In addition to taking part in the collective's other efforts, I started construction from a personal, situated place—the private space of my home—with the goal of moving out into the contested public spaces. I wanted to allow myself to be moved to action by the inflatable work featured in this thesis because it has become such a significant part of my everyday life. To open my work up to the community, I have been trying to build something that would materially relate with, potentially enhance and change what we had already begun to build. I have started work on a inflatable shelter with the idea that it could serve as a temporary space where our considerable differences would not be erased, but given a more ambiguous platform from which to be expressed (fig. 35). How could our discussions on praxis develop if they took place not in someone's home, as the meetings have so far, but in a different type of structure, set up outside in the very places we mean to address? In asking this question, I am again drawn to those posed by Elizabeth Grosz:

Can the effects of depth, of interiority, of domesticity and privacy be generated by the billowing convolutions and contortions of an outside, a skin? What does the

notion of outside, exterior, or surface do that displaces the privilege of interiority, architecturally, philosophically, and subjectively?<sup>140</sup>

I cannot help but project onto these questions the potential that inflatables possess for resisting the conventional and often violent binary of private and public. Can inflatables facilitate a communal challenge to spatial exclusion and threat?

The intent behind the design of the meeting space is to align the process of inflatable architecture with that of community building through an emphasis on the necessity of an ongoing, bodily process. The design adapts the existing double-membrane and ring-like form of a series of small, inflatable (and hot pink) toy boats (fig. 36). These objects are strung together to create a row of windows for visibility and safety. The row of repurposed boats also provides a set of exterior nozzles through which a group of nine people could (partially) inflate the structure at any given time. Inherent to this design is the idea that community members would have to take turns breathing into the structure as it slowly but inevitably deflated over the length of the meeting. Throughout the process of building the inflatable, this mental image became the light at the end of the tunnel, the goal I was working towards: architecture that required unending and collective physical attention. The discussion taking place inside the temporary private space could only continue unhindered by way of the consistent work taking place on the exterior of the structure. The force of our breath would sustain the architecture just as dialogue sustains community building.

---

<sup>140</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 65.

I put together the first "prototype" of the pneumatic meeting space, inflated it partially and with difficulty in my living room, and immediately felt the pangs of failure. Of course inflation through a set of toy nozzles proved entirely impractical, even when assisted by a fan and a bike pump. The structure, about two and a half metres deep, two metres wide and tall, ended up being almost comically enormous and unwieldy, nearly impossible to erect without an intense source of air pressure. Its size is a product of the desire to fit a large number of people inside, and also to test and study different materials, to learn from their qualities and responses to construction, inflation, occupation and movement. In addition to the toy boats, these materials so far include duct tape, vinyl shower curtains, thin transparent tarp and emergency blankets. After a series of attempts I managed to get the structure about halfway inflated, though it buckled noticeably in the middle where the boats provide windows. No matter how I tried to concentrate the air pressure or assist its flow through the inflatable, the plastic stubbornly sagged and bulged, folding in around me and shifting ominously like a large, quiet animal. At first these unexpected results hit like a ton of bricks, and I sat gloomily inside the space for a long time.

I began to see the project more positively as an experiment with the patient support and excitement of close friends and neighbors, who helped me to remember that failure was not only to be expected but also to be understood as possibility or potential. This prototype is only one stage in an ongoing process of both thought and action; failure, if "highly underrated" and not always an immediately enjoyable experience, is therefore

simply the name of the game.<sup>141</sup> Without this failure, I would not know from experience how to better use the materials in future construction. I realized which types of plastic were too thin and difficult to work with, and which were too heavy and weighed down the upper sections of the structure. Though I had concentrated the design both structurally and metaphorically on the ring of boats at the structure's center, I witnessed firsthand the pitfalls it presented for the design. A friend who also builds inflatables pointed out that my focus on the flow of air horizontally through this ring blinded me to the necessity of basic vertical support, which can be solved in the months to come with the addition of "air columns."<sup>142</sup> Without this prototype's failure to fully inflate, I also would not have had such an intimate experience of the relationship between the body and pneumatic architecture, which has significantly guided my writing throughout this thesis.<sup>143</sup> In order to undertake the next stages of work on the inflatable, I need to relinquish slightly that mental image of the perfect completed project while still allowing the idealistic goals of the inflatable to propel the work forward. Even if the breath of my community alone cannot inflate the structure, the continuation of the process requires a renewed effort that relies on the help of those around me.

Without my own failure, I also would not have come to understand and appreciate how the work of Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz embraces the inevitability and the possibilities to be gleaned from failure in the meeting of architecture, the social and

---

<sup>141</sup> Michael Rakowitz, quoted in Stephanie Smith, *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art* (New York: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2005), 123.

<sup>142</sup> This extremely helpful reminder came from Keg de Souza. Keg, along with Christie Petsinis, worked on an inflatable, nomadic venue that has been called both "the Schmigloo" or "Esky" for the Next Wave Festival in Melbourne (15-31 May 2008).

<sup>143</sup> I am grateful to Cynthia Hammond for her observations on this dynamic in the documentation of the inflatable in progress.

the future. *SleepingBagDress Prototype* embodies Rewakowicz's acceptance of "failure as a part of the process," and Rakowitz similarly discusses *paraSITE* as a failure in architectural design.<sup>144</sup> Neither of these works provide solutions to existing architectural concerns and their place in broader social complexities, but, as Rakowitz points out, this is perhaps where the productive difference between art processes and the practice of architectural design can be located:

Artists need to reclaim the right to fail... If I were a designer my responsibility would be to devise a solution. Maybe this is a problem with design practice. Maybe we should pick problems and throw more problems at them in order to create an enraged but highly valuable public dialogue about the problem.<sup>145</sup>

The "failures" of both *SleepingBagDress Prototype* and *paraSITE* put further onus on others, including artists, architects and urban planners, to provide new proposals for social change.<sup>146</sup> In the introduction to this thesis, I question what art could uniquely provide for the meeting of architecture and political action, and how creative practices of spatial contestation could refuse to be appropriated or co-opted. Perhaps the answer lies not only in artworks' temporary, local engagements with the everyday, but in the failure

---

<sup>144</sup> Ana Rewakowicz, in an e-mail message to the author, 16 May 2010. Both *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype* are often exhibited after being occupied over time, and are noticeably marked by the wear and tear of their use. These objects could not, in other words, strike viewers as pristine or perfect, disconnected from their context in lived experience. This quality points immediately to the strangeness and even the failure of their exhibition in a gallery or museum setting, specifically for the ways in which it omits the processes that are so integral to the projects.

<sup>145</sup> Rakowitz, quoted in Smith, 123.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

of this work to be *enough*. These artworks present models for creative, political and material processes in space, providing platforms that others can occupy in the moment and be influenced by in the future, but they also demand further work and dialogue outside of the artistic process. In allowing the work to fall short, artists dealing in the architectural simultaneously point to the pitfalls of mainstream architecture and its collaboration with larger social and economic forces. As such, works like *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress* call attention to the possibilities of architecture when it is framed not as a set of objects but as an ongoing process that is open to, rather than continually repressing and invisibilizing, its own failures.

The ways in which I have explored the works of Michael Rakowitz and Ana Rewakowicz in this thesis are extremely personal. *paraSITE* in particular has held a private significance and motivation for me over the past seven years. It was in part thanks to this work, as well as an ongoing personal interaction with Rakowitz, that I gradually came to identify and focus my interest in the politics of architecture and the city in relation to art production. Rakowitz was my professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and acted a primary source of guidance for my creative production both in and out of the General Sculptural Studies program. It was actually his support and encouragement that prompted my move to Montreal and my decision to shift gears to the study of art history. I mention all of this to emphasize that, while I approach *paraSITE* from a different angle, I celebrate the existing complexity, circulation and widespread discussion of his project, and recognize that there are necessarily significant omissions from my analysis. The same can be said for my reading of Rewakowicz's *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, particularly in the context of her larger body of work and



its relationship to both contemporary art and architecture. Though I have been familiar with this project for a shorter period of time, I have had the privilege of interviewing and dialoguing with the artist about the themes of her work. This opportunity has facilitated an enhanced understanding of Rewakowicz's artistic process as well as its impact on my own work with inflatables in writing and design. I appreciate the opportunity to allow for moments when the voices of both of these artists can enter into the text.

I chose to focus on these projects in a way that would allow me to intimately engage with the themes and forces of the works themselves, in hope of pulling forward an understanding of the models that they provide for future action, the ways in which they offer prototypes for creativity in the everyday life of the city. I have included a discussion of my own recent and unfinished foray into inflatable architecture to allude to one form that this future potential could take. My work on this thesis and on inflatable design is a manifestation of the effect these works can have, even at a distance. In addition to further proposals for design and construction, though, more analysis remains to be done on both *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress Prototype*, specifically regarding their tactics of interactivity and collaboration, their use of materials and technologies, their dynamic approaches to subjectivity, creativity and urban space, and their engagement with mobility and access, the temporary and time. *SleepingBagDress Prototype* and *paraSITE* require the presence of a complex diversity of individuals who live, communicate, and negotiate space in specific local places, and further writing should be done on these crucial aspects of the work and its broader importance for art, architecture and the everyday. I have discussed the context of my inflatable meeting space to draw attention to the significant omission in this thesis of the specific

engagements with the local that take place through *paraSITE* and *SleepingBagDress*

*Prototype*: it is much easier to write about the local when it is your home, and when one's experience is direct.

In writing this thesis, I have repeatedly come back to a description provided in a set of instructions on building pneumatic structures for political protests: "A space, empty of desire or creativity, is suddenly filled with these and more. The space is just as suddenly emptied, leaving a (more) conspicuous absence, a kind of newness, a sense of possibility."<sup>147</sup> I appreciate how, in this imagining of the process of inflatable structures, it is not the object or "product" itself that is new or that creates a sense of possibility, but its absence. My hope is that, as with inflatables themselves, the absences in this thesis could encourage and assist in a continued process. As this work comes to a conclusion and as I step back from writing for a moment, different possibilities open up. I go back to my pneumatic experiments with a broadened understanding of their potential role in community building, and I start again. I take a breath, and walk into the city.

---

<sup>147</sup> CrimethInc., *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook* (Salem, OR: CrimethInc. Ex-Worker's Collective, 2006), 322.

## FIGURES



Figure 1. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S.'s *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic, polyethylene tubing, hooks, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 2. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 3. Michael Rakowitz, detail of *paraSITE*'s attachment by hooks and drawstring to an HVAC duct. Image from Sarah Rich, "paraSITE: A Decade of Urban Intervention," *Worldchanging*, 6 April 2007. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/006428.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).

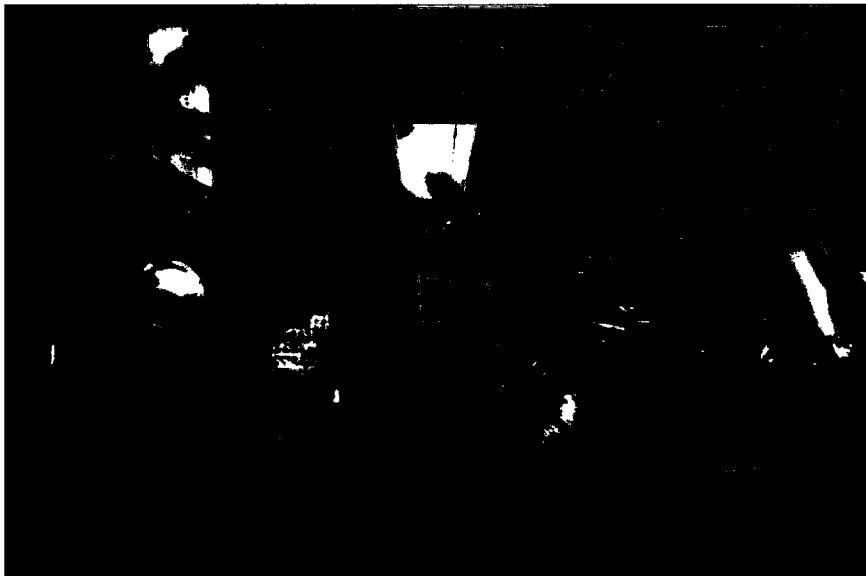


Figure 4. Michael Rakowitz, *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, tape, signage and objects added by user, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 5. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S., Freddie F., and George L. with Freddie's *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, tape, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 6. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. using his *paraSITE* shelter on 26th Street and 9th Avenue in New York, 2000. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

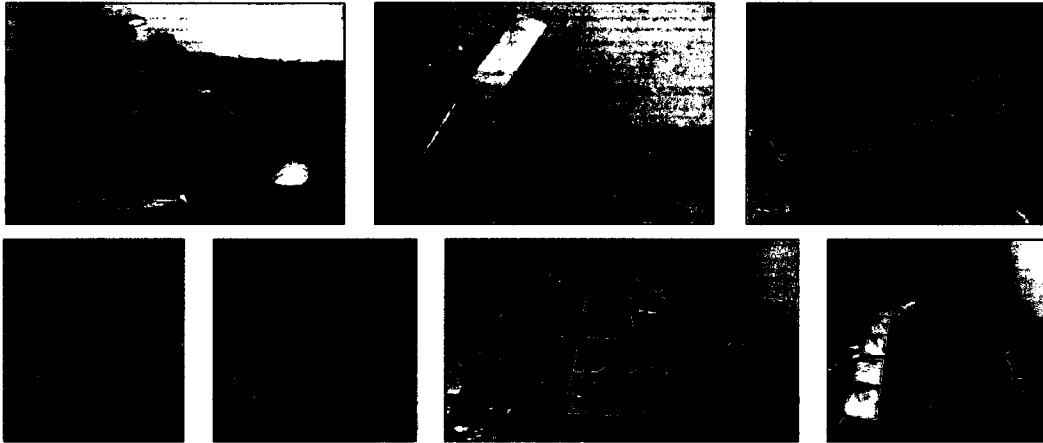


Figure 7. Michael Rakowitz, images from instructions on how to build *paraSITE*, 2008. Image courtesy of the artist, sent in an e-mail message to the author, 17 December 2008.



Figure 8. Michael Rakowitz, Joe H.'s *paraSITE*, Manhattan, 2000. Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, 107 by 91.5 by 335 cm. Collection of MoMA PS1. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

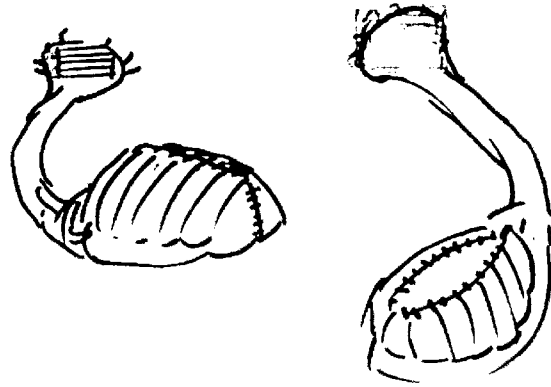


Figure 9. Michael Rakowitz, "Customized Parasite Shelter for P.T.," Baltimore, 2004. Acrylic, ink, pencil on paper, 18.4 cm by 28.6 cm. Whitebox Collection. Image from White Box, [http://www.whiteboxny.org/collections/images/largeweb/Rakowitz\\_Parasite.jpg](http://www.whiteboxny.org/collections/images/largeweb/Rakowitz_Parasite.jpg) (accessed 12 July 2010).



Figure 10. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. with his *paraSITE* folded in its carrying case, New York, 2000. Image from Sarah Rich, "paraSITE: A Decade of Urban Intervention," *Worldchanging*, 6 April 2007. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/006428.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).



Figure 11. Michael Rakowitz, George L.'s *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Trash and ZipLoc bags, clear waterproof packing tape, dimensions vary. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 12. Michael Rakowitz, installation view of Bill S.'s *paraSITE* in the exhibit *Beyond Green: Toward a Sustainable Art*, Lewis and Clark's Hoffman Gallery, Portland, OR, 2008. Image from *PORT: Portland Art + News + Reviews*, <http://www.portlandart.net/archives/Parasite.jpg> (accessed 12 July 2010).



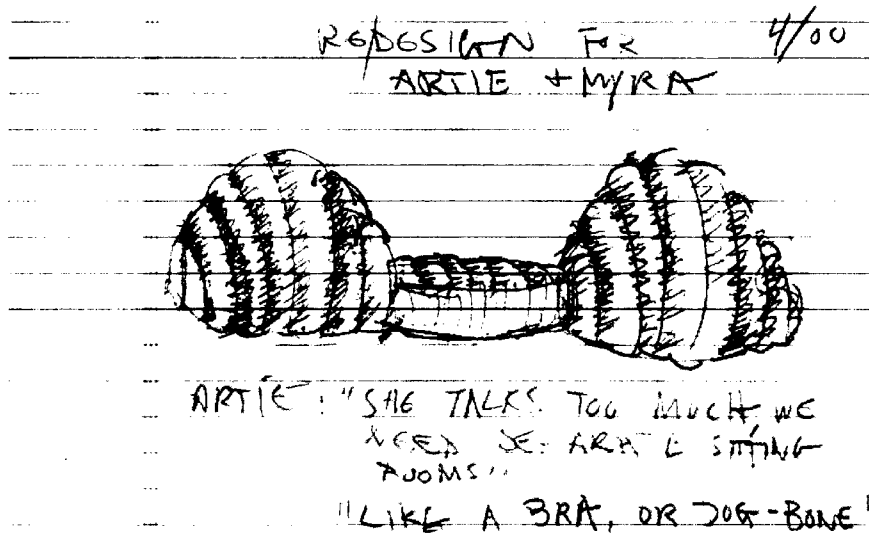


Figure 13. Michael Rakowitz, *paraSITE* design sketch for Myra and Artie, New York, April 2000. Graphite on paper. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 14. Michael Rakowitz, Michael M. using his *paraSITE* shelter on 26th Street and 9th Avenue in New York, 2000. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 15. Michael Rakowitz, Bill S. and George L. in front of Bill's *paraSITE*, Cambridge, 1998. Image from Michael Rakowitz, <http://michaelrakowitz.com/projects/parasite> (accessed 17 August 2010).

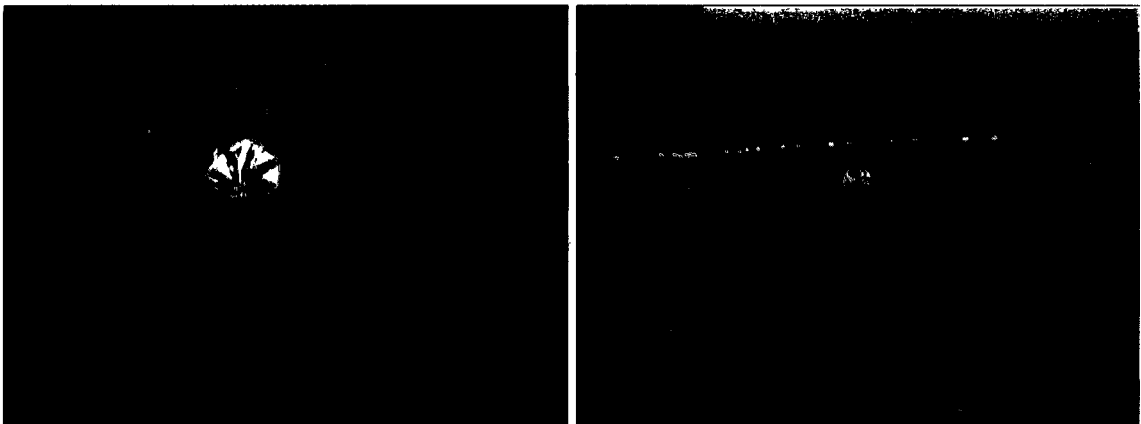


Figure 16. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 17. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Toulouse, 28 April 2004; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).



Figure 18. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 19. Ana Rewakowicz, *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, mannequin, 152 cm (length). Image from *EgoDesign.ca*, [http://www.egodesign.ca/fr/article\\_print.php?article\\_id=148](http://www.egodesign.ca/fr/article_print.php?article_id=148) (accessed 17 August 2010).



Figure 20. Ana Rewakowicz, *A Modern-day Nomad Who Moves as She Pleases*, video installation, 2005; vinyl, nylon, mattress, fan, speakers, 152 cm (diameter) by 457 cm (length). Installation view, Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke. Image from Ana Rewakowicz, *The Bookman: Stirring the Pot of Art*, <http://rewana.com/images/thumana2.jpg> (accessed 12 July 2010).



Figure 21. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).



Figure 22. Ana Rewakowicz, detail of *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, 2004. Polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, mannequin, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length). Image from MOR Creative Ltd., <http://c-lab.co.uk/default.aspx?id=8&eventid=103> (accessed 12 July 2010).

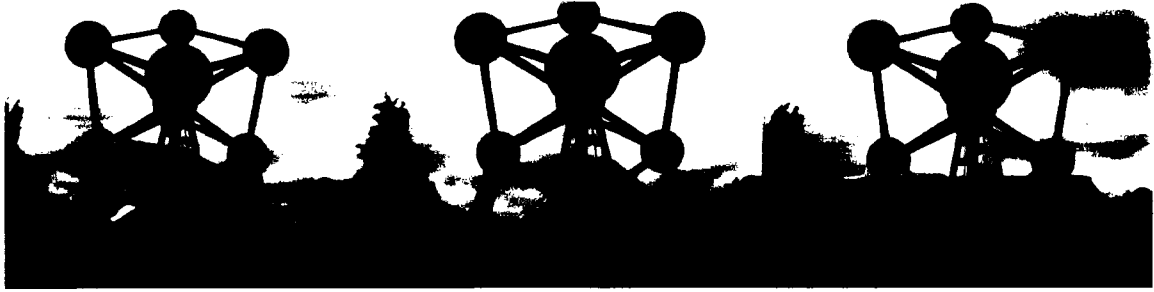


Figure 23. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

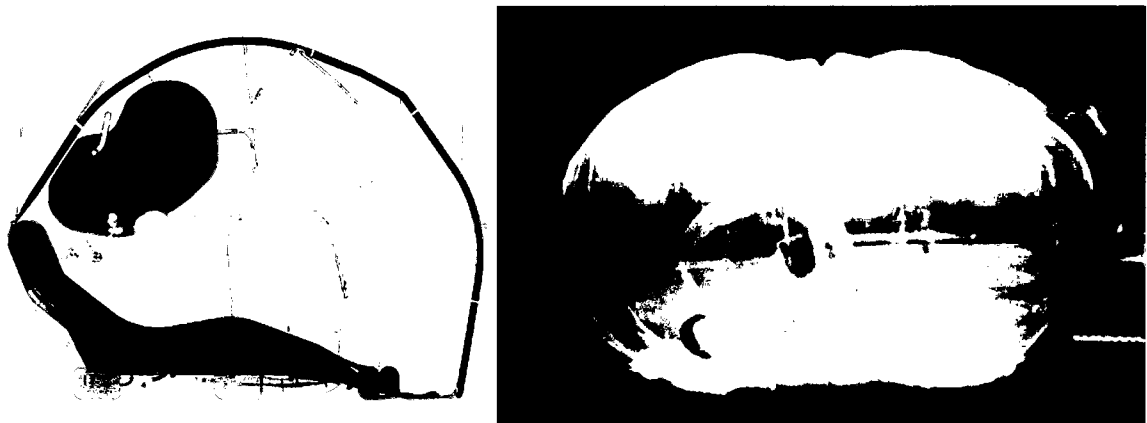


Figure 24. Michael Webb, *Cushicle*, 1966. Images from [http://www.archigram.net/projects\\_pages/cuishicle.html](http://www.archigram.net/projects_pages/cuishicle.html) (accessed 22 August 2010).



Figure 25. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

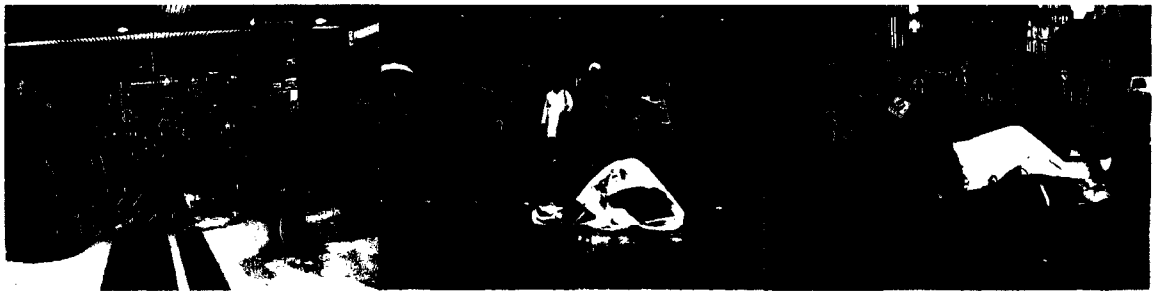


Figure 26. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).



Figure 27. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 28. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).

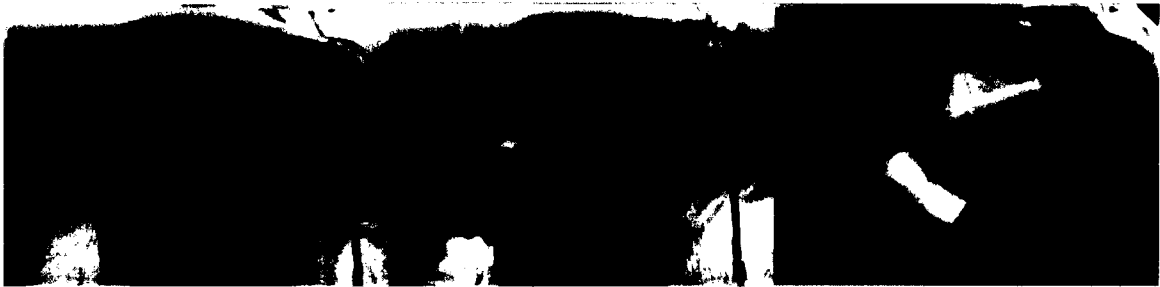


Figure 29. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Brussels, 11-12 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 30. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Tallinn, 16 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



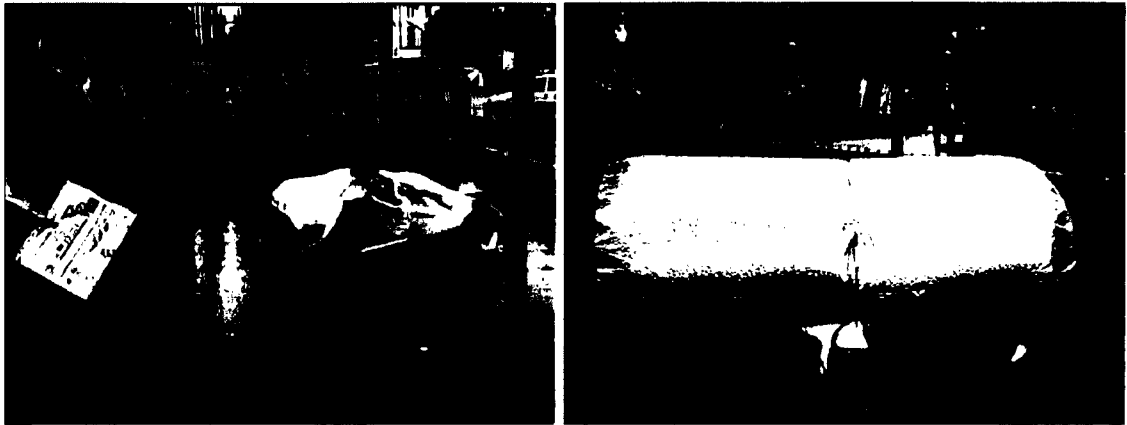


Figure 31. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).



Figure 32. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 1 (Self-Contain(ed)er)*, performance, Mexico City, 2-14 November 2003; polyethylene, metallic foil, fan, lead battery, zippers, 90 cm (diameter) by 180 cm. (length).

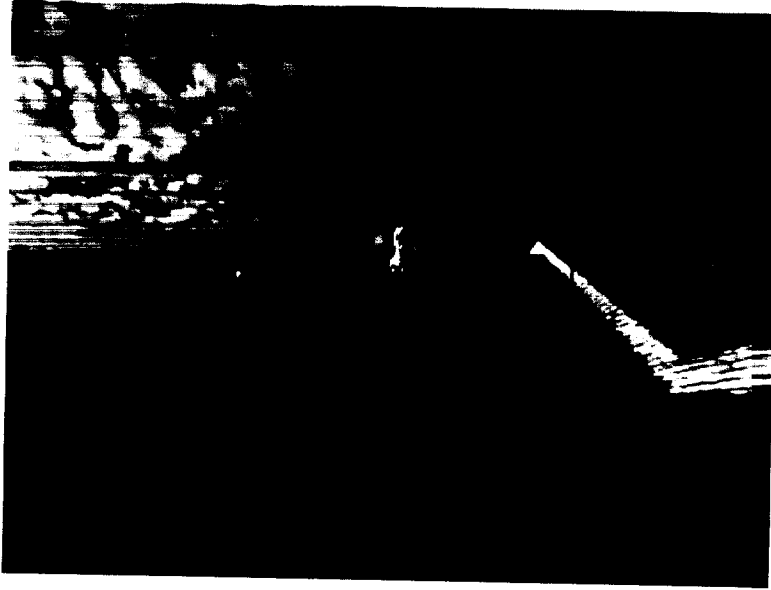


Figure 33. Ana Rewakowicz, stills from *Dressware I*, 2003-2005, video, 24 minutes. *SleepingBagDress Prototype 2*, performance, Tallinn, 16 August 2004; polyurethane, reversible foil, solar panel, NiMH batteries, fan, synthetic foam, zippers, 61 cm (diameter) by 152 cm (length).



Figure 34. Artnoose in collaboration with Danielle Lewis and Safe Southwest, "Scaffolding," May 2010. Letterpress on cardstock, photocopies and pen on recycled envelopes, 10.2 cm by 8.8 cm. Photographs by Danielle Lewis.



Figure 35. Danielle Lewis, documentation of inflatable architecture in process, Spring 2010. Toy boats, duct tape, vinyl shower curtains, plastic tarp and emergency blankets, dimensions vary.

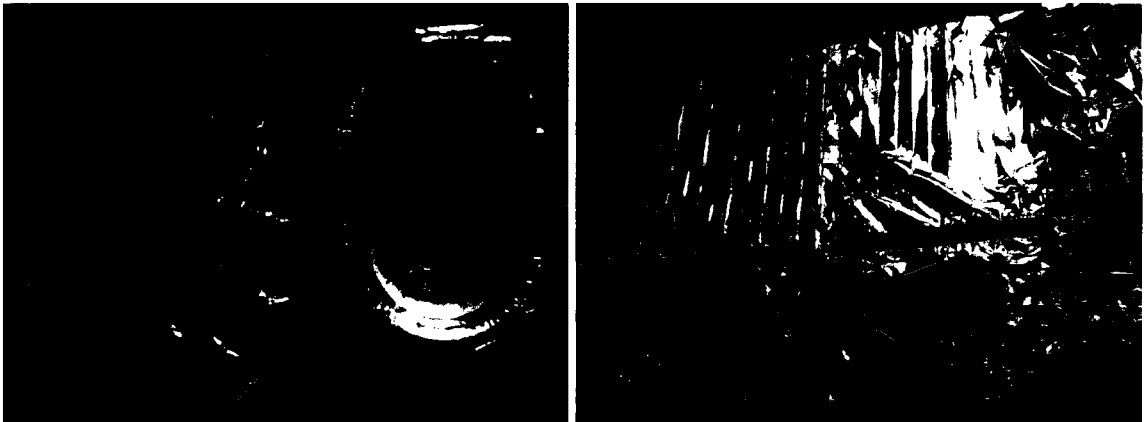


Figure 36. Danielle Lewis, documentation of inflatable architecture in process, Spring 2010. Toy boats, emergency blankets and duct tape.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ant Farm. *Inflatocookbook*. San Francisco: Ant Corps, 1973.
- Bal, Mieke. "Narrative Inside Out: Louise Bourgeois' Spider as Theoretical Object." *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (1999): 103-126.
- Banham, Reyner. "Monumental Wind-bags." In *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, edited by Marc Dessauce, 31-33. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999. Text originally published in 1968.
- Barthelme, Donald. "The Balloon." In *Sixty Stories*, 46-51. New York: Penguin Group, 1981. Originally published in *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts*. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.
- Beavis, Lynn. *Dress: la mode dans tous ses états / The dress show*. Montreal: Concordia University, 2003. Exhibition catalogue.
- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1988.
- Bharucha, Rustom. "The Limits of the Beyond: Contemporary Art Practice, Intervention and Collaboration in Public Spaces." *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (July 2007): 397-416.
- Bingaman, Amy et al., eds. *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Blackwell, Adrian. "Not Architecture Not Performance: Reworking the Expanded Field." In *Unboxed: Engagements in Social Space*, edited by Jen Budney and Adrian Blackwell, 17-29. Ottawa: Gallery 101, 2005.
- Blum, Alan. "The Imaginary of Self-Satisfaction: Reflections on the Platitude of the 'Creative City.'" In *Circulation and the City*, edited by Alexandra Boutros and Will Straw, 64-98. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010.
- Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Bosman, Julie. "City Aids Homeless with One-Way Tickets Home." *New York Times*, 28 July 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/29/nyregion/29oneway.html> (accessed 14 July 2010).
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2002.

- . *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Buckley, Craig. "Between Object and Process: An Interview with Ana Rewakowicz." In *Dressware and Other Inflatables*, edited by Gaëtane Verna, 68-75. Sherbrooke: Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, 2007. Exhibition Catalogue.
- Cache, Bernard. *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.
- Chen, Cecilia. "Ana Rewakowicz: Dressware: SleepingBagDress, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal." *C Magazine* 18 (Fall 2005): 43.
- Clausen, Barbara and Carin Kuoni, eds. *Thin Skin: The Fickle Nature of Bubbles, Spheres, and Inflatable Structures*. New York: Independent Curators International, 2002.
- Colebrook, Claire. *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Continuum, 2006.
- Coleman, Nathaniel. *Utopias and Architecture*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Cook, Peter et al., eds. *Archigram*. London: Studio Vista, 1972.
- CrimethInc. *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook*. Salem, OR: CrimethInc. Ex-Worker's Collective, 2006.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. "Percept, Affect, and Concept." In *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, edited by Clive Cazeaux, 465-487. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- . *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987.
- Dessauce, Marc. "On Pneumatic Apparitions." In *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, edited by Marc Dessauce, 13-26. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn. *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.
- Dodds, George and Robert Tavernor, eds. *Body and Building: Essays on the Changing Relation of Body and Architecture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

- Edensor, Tim, Deborah Leslie, Steve Millington and Norma M. Rantisi, eds. *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Eleey, Peter. "Michael Rakowitz." *Frieze* 99 (May 2006). [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/michael\\_rakowitz](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/michael_rakowitz) (accessed 12 July 2010).
- Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*. DVD. Directed by Steven Shainberg, 2006. New York: Picturehouse Entertainment, 2007.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001.
- . "Body Politic and Political Bodies." In *Philosophy and the City: Classic to Contemporary Writings*, edited by Sharon Meagher, 184-188. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.
- . *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- . *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Hallam, Elizabeth and Tim Ingold, eds. *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*. New York: Berg, 2007.
- Hammond, Cynthia. "An Architecture of Affect." In *Dressware and Other Inflatables*, edited by Gaëtane Verna, 42-49. Sherbrooke: Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, 2007. Exhibition Catalogue.
- Hill, Jonathan. *Immaterial Architecture*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Hill, John. A Daily Dose of Architecture weblog. <http://archidose.blogspot.com> (accessed 12 July 2010).
- Hollier, Denis. "While the City Sleeps: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." *October* 64 (Spring 1993): 3-15.
- Heynen, Hilde. "New Babylon: The Antinomies of Utopia." *Assemblage* 29 (April 1996): 24-39.
- Lamoreux, Johanne. *Doublures: vêtements de l'art contemporain*. Québec: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2003. Exhibition Catalogue.
- Brand, Stewart, et al. *The Last Whole Earth Catalogue*. New York: Random House, 1971.

- Lim, C.J. and Ed Liu, eds. *Realms of Impossibility: Air*. London: Wiley-Academy, 2002.
- Mathieu, Marie-Christiane. "The Aitre (Being + Area): Developing an Understanding of Places." *Parachute* 119 (Summer 2005): 130-154.
- McLeod, Mary. "Henri Lefebvre's Critique of Everyday Life: An Introduction." In *Architecture of the Everyday*, edited by Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, 9-29. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.
- Pearlman, Alison. "Interactive Art for a Challenged Democracy." *X-TRA: Contemporary Art Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 4-15.
- Porter, Robert. *Deleuze and Guattari: Aesthetics and Politics*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 2009.
- Rakowitz, Michael. *Circumventions*. New York: Onestar Press, 2003.
- . "paraSITE." *L'itinéraire* 16, no. 2 (15 January 2009): 2-3.
- . "paraSITE." In *Non Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation, and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism*, edited by Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler, 232-5. Boston: The Architectural Press, 2000.
- Rendell, Jane. "Architecture-writing." *Journal of Architecture* 10, no. 3 (2005): 255-264.
- . *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Rich, Sarah. "paraSITE: A Decade of Urban Intervention." *Worldchanging*, 6 April 2007. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/006428.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).
- Riley, Terence, ed. *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002.
- Scott, Felicity. *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.
- Sholette, Greg and Nato Thompson. *The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.
- slowLab. "slowLab > projects > paraSITE." New York Foundation for the Arts. <http://www.slowlab.net/paraSITE.html> (accessed 12 July 2010).

- Smith, Stephanie. *Beyond Green: Towards a Sustainable Art*. New York: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2005.
- Stillman, Nick. "Conversations... with Michael Rakowitz." New York Foundation for the Arts. <http://www.nyfa.org/level3.asp?id=432&fid=4&sid=8> (accessed 12 July 2010).
- Strickland, Tom. "Dressware and Other Inflatables." *Para-Para* 022 (Summer 2006). [http://www.parachute.ca/para\\_para/22/para22\\_Strickland.html](http://www.parachute.ca/para_para/22/para22_Strickland.html) (accessed 8 May 2010).
- Topham, Sean. *Blow-Up: Inflatable Art, Architecture and Design*. London: Prestel, 2002.
- Upton, Dell. "Architecture in Everyday Life." *New Literary History* 33, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 707-723.
- Verna, Gaëtane, ed. *Ana Rewakowicz: Dressware and Other Inflatables*. Sherbrooke, Quebec: Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop's University, 2007.
- Ville de Montreal. "PA 07-17: Action Plan 2007-2017, Montreal Cultural Metropolis." [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=5297,22081563&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5297,22081563&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (accessed 13 July 2010).
- Wilson, Elizabeth. "Against Utopia: The Romance of Indeterminate Spaces." In *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*, edited by Amy Bingaman et al., 256-262. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Wodiczko, Krzysztof. *Critical Vehicles: Writings, Projects, Interviews*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.
- Young, James. "The Counter-Monument: Memory Against Itself in Germany Today." *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 267-296.
- Zagala, Stephen. "Aesthetics: A Place I've Never Seen." In *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, edited by Brian Massumi, 20-43. New York: Routledge, 2002.