

To:

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Monday 13th December 2021

Dear Jane,

Thank you for inviting me to review Alex Arteaga (ed.) and Lidia Gasperoni's book *Architectures of Embodiment* for the Site-Writing Quarterly Exchange. I'm really excited about this. When I received my review copy of their book through the post, I sent you the following email:

<Alex and Lidia's book arrived in the post today – there are no pictures>

You replied to me:

<Hi Simon, glad it has arrived..... so maybe your response might be to make the pictures!!!!
J>

I decided to take your suggestion quite literally. Reading the book made me think of three particular references:

- a. The film *Exhibition* by Joanna Hogg (BBC Films, 2013), starring Viv Albertine and Liam Gillick where a couple who have decided to sell their modernist home (designed in 1969 by the architect James Melvin). They've lived in this house for two decades and the narrative revolves around the difficult process of saying goodbye to their beautiful home. In Hogg's film, the building is the third character and the narrative unfolds around the interplay of the house and its inhabitants. The spiral staircase at the centre of the house functions as a spine and the partitions and blinds operate like theatre curtains.
- b. The book *Delirious New York* by Rem Koolhaas (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994) where the symbiotic relationship between metropolitan culture and the urban architecture of Manhattan are put under the microscope. This book include multiple illustrations and maps of the city and argues that the architecture generated the culture.
- c. The book, *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance* by Daniel Spoerri, (London: Atlas Press, 1995). There are several different editions of this book but I particularly like this one by the Atlas Press: No. 4 – Documents of the Avant-Garde. At the back of the book is a pull-out architectural drawing of the objects found upon Daniel Spoerri's desk which are all numbered. The book contains 100 illustrations by Topor of the objects that were located on his 'messy' desk – but who are we to judge? As the painter Francis Bacon said: "Chaos breeds images." The rest of Spoerri's text revolves around the numbered objects on his desk, determining how they initially arrived there and what further poetic connections and imaginings these objects might generate for him. Spoerri's commentary is then repeatedly footnoted with additional comments from his

friends Robert Filliou, Emmett Williams and Dieter Roth. The colliding commentary reminded me of the dialoguing going on in *Architectures of Embodiment* where the verso page contains the text and the recto page contains multiple comments on that text by the other authors in the publication so that no text remains fixed or complete, but constantly interrupted and amplified by other thoughts, opinions and questions. The continuous intervention in other authors' writing inspires me to make my own intervention of images into their book.

But most of all it was Joanna Hogg's amazing film that resonated the strongest for me. When making work, I have a tendency to get over enthusiastic and then to over-complicate things and my psychoanalyst always said: "there are too many words Simon...always too many words"...so rather than just reading the book that had been sent to me and writing a traditional review, I determined a convoluted process, involving other people and several artistic technologies, including: photography; drawing; and screenprinting. But, at least for once, I was proposing something with pictures rather than words. There are, after all, already plenty of words in *Architectures of Embodiment*.

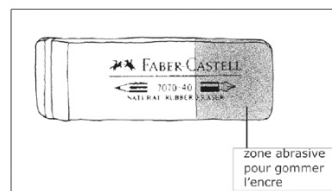
I re-watched Joanna Hogg's film and photographed key moments. I commissioned the French artist Jérémie Bennequin to turn these images into a suite of drawings as I particularly like his style of drawing – image attached of Bennequin's drawing of himself from his manual, *Ommage* on how to erase things properly – use a dust mask to avoid the inhalation of rubber particles!

Word of caution and warnings

Erasing a book with a rubber can be risky for the person erasing and the work to be erased. Carefully read these instructions before erasing a printed text for the first time. It provides valuable instructions relative to the scriptoclast rubbing activity. You will thereby avoid wasting your time in a risky outrageous deterioration of some pages.

Ink rubber

- The rubbing of an abrasive eraser against the paper produces a fine greyish blue powder whose daily inhalation could damage your health.



Self-protection

- It is highly recommended to protect yourself during each session with an ordinary breathing "duck beak" shaped protection mask.



To avoid falling into a pathological obsession, do not erase more than one page a day.

Plus, I always enjoy collaborating with Jérémie – as much as anything, it’s an excuse for me to communicate and spend time with my friend. When he returns the drawings in the new year (2022), I’m turning them into screenprints which I will then print on to and throughout my actual copy of their book as well as adding my own handwritten notations. I will then re-photograph the adjusted book and send the images back to you. Our collaborative submission won't be ready until the end of January 2022 as there are quite a few artistic methods involved in this overly-invasive response to their work.

You know, perhaps Alex and Lidia didn’t want images in their book. It can’t have been a mistake that they didn’t include any. It’s a beautifully designed book in a beautiful blue and turquoise with a really determined placement of type (the type butts up against the edge of the page – crashing through the margins), commentary, underlinings and even the page numbers are unusual – as they’re sunk into the gutter of the book.

Anyway, that’s what they’re getting – images – and this response is made with love and as a means of getting on to the cover and inside of their book.

With fond regards as always,



Simon

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Pronouns he / him