



This is a repository copy of *Illusory Objects and Fairground Architecture*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/84319/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Walker, S.J. (2015) Illusory Objects and Fairground Architecture. *The Journal of Architecture*, 20 (2). pp. 309-354. ISSN 1360-2365

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2015.1028425>

Reuse

Unless indicated otherwise, fulltext items are protected by copyright with all rights reserved. The copyright exception in section 29 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 allows the making of a single copy solely for the purpose of non-commercial research or private study within the limits of fair dealing. The publisher or other rights-holder may allow further reproduction and re-use of this version - refer to the White Rose Research Online record for this item. Where records identify the publisher as the copyright holder, users can verify any specific terms of use on the publisher's website.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Illusory Objects and Fairground Architecture

abstract (300)

The fairground has long been overlooked as a site of architectural interest. This has slowly begun to change in the last 50 years, when a few architects have been drawn to various aspects of the fair—its history, its visual or technical appeal, its accommodation of multiple programmes, or its nomadic, temporal, event-based nature—as a source of inspiration, and championing it as an example of ‘other’ architecture that can provide a refreshing alternative to traditional architectural production. Yet there are many aspects of the fairground that don’t fit this story: in fact, the fairground shares much with static, permanent, and hierarchical architecture. While the form and appearance of fairground rides are constantly reinvented to offer novelty, the fair itself is underwritten by strong traditions and provides visitors with a certain reassuring predictability.

These characteristics make it difficult to define precisely what the fairground is, and this difficulty haunts various attempts to pay it serious attention. This article provides a broad survey of work that has taken the travelling street fair as its object of study, directly or indirectly. Part I of the article is organized around a number of awkward—contested, missing, or unstable—objects that mean such work is rarely straightforward, compared to the writing of other architectural histories. Part II pursues the challenges of writing about the fair in more detail: borrowing the notion of ‘illusory objectification’ from anthropology, it traces what such a notion can reveal about the ways we see the fair, and how we might look at it differently in order to develop a clearer understanding or appreciation of the fair’s architectural complexity.

Keywords

Fairgrounds; travelling fairs; Illusory Objectification; history writing; English town.

Part I: The Possible Objects of the Travelling Street Fair

1 Introduction: Contested Objects

Although it is the glow of an event that catches our eye and fascinates us, Braudel [*On History*, 1980] argues that such superficialities belie greater complexities, for events emerge from an impenetrable milieu—a darkness or contingency—and this black night must be taken seriously. —Craig Lundy¹

Lundy's concern is with the writing of history, although the distinction he draws here—the warning, if you like—has a particular resonance when considered in relation to the fair. The architecture of the fairground clearly sets out to provide that eye-catching, fascinating sparkle. As punters, visitors to the fair, we willingly submit. The travelling fair brings together rides, attractions, and food stalls which are set up for a short time—typically two or three days—in towns and villages all over Europe. In the UK in particular, travelling fairs squeeze into impossibly tight urban spaces, while others take up grand boulevards, some fill market places or take over open fields. The travelling fair caters for all-comers, young and old. It is an experience nearly everyone can relate to, a common cultural currency, and the fair itself an overlooked cultural asset. Fairs remain hugely popular forms of entertainment in the UK and beyond. It is estimated that across Europe, there are over 300 million visitors to fairs and amusement parks every year, and in the UK alone, there are over one billion passenger rides per annum.² The aim of this article is not to demystify our individual or collective experience at the fair, with all the noise, smells, thrill and excitement that these events provide. Instead, it works with those theoretical and architectural audiences for whom the fair has provided various kinds of attraction, and sets out to rehearse the difficulties involved in accounting for the *greater complexities* of the fair, difficulties associated with the ways in which we might look at the fair, what we might see, and how we might write about it. These issues will be discussed in Part II of the article, which focuses on work from the 1960s onwards. In this period, there has been a marked rise in architectural and theoretical interest in fairs, albeit starting from a very low base. Before that can be done, some of the key factors that contribute to these difficulties will be surveyed. Part I of the article therefore takes a longer view of the fair: by introducing relevant aspects from the history of fairs and their long relationship with towns and cities, it will set out issues at a range of physical and temporal scales, and discuss how these contrive to present conflicting understandings of what constitutes a fair, conflicting possibilities for identifying the object or objects of the fair. Indeed, it is difficult to define where and when a fair begins and ends: its physical boundaries are mobile and shifting, and its time is caught up in a variety of differing temporal cycles, official and unofficial histories, all of which remain relevant and legible—in different and often competing ways—in fairs today. Fairs are far more than just a collection of rides and attractions: that said, Part I will also look at changes that are made to these on the basis of new

technologies and shifting cultural references. To provide focus for the article, discussion is restricted to travelling street fairs, rather than fairs on open sites or fixed-site amusement parks, and examples are limited to three key fairs from the so-called 'back end run' of the annual travelling calendar; Oxford St. Giles' Fair, Ilkeston and Loughborough Charter Fairs, which take place in September, October and November respectively.

Given its long history and continuing popularity, there have been surprisingly few attempts to explore behind the scenes at the fair, the *impenetrable milieu* that Lundy notes, and those few that have emerged since the 1960s tend to ignore the event, concentrating instead on the objects that make up the fairground environment. While attention is paid to these discrete objects for understandable reasons, the danger involved in this approach is that it displaces explanations of the fair as an event too far onto the objects of the architectural environment within which it occurs. As Tony Bennett has observed in a related context, it is the punters themselves who bring about the particular activities associated with the fair, not the environment: 'The Pleasure Beach is not a site of transgression. It is a site to be transgressed but one which, to a degree, invites—incites even—its own transgression.'³

Prior to the increase in interest that occurred during the 1960s, lone voices seemed to fall on deaf ears. Writing in *The Architectural Review* shortly before the end of World War II, Eric Brown expressed a mixture of puzzlement and frustration at the lack of attention paid by architects—and the construction industry more broadly—to the expertise that could be gleaned from the fairground. Brown wrote:

It is strange... that the valuable lessons of quick demountability and the remarkable achievements in unit construction, worked out forty or fifty years ago by the showmen, have escaped notice in a period of architecture with its eye on the problems of prefabrication.⁴

David Braithwaite's 1968 book on *Fairground Architecture* still provides the only detailed account of this topic. Braithwaite (1932–82) was an architect, trained at the Architectural Association in London, as well as a life-long fairground enthusiast. Although *Fairground Architecture* is very sympathetic to the culture and heritage of the fairground, and remains a point of reference for any study of the fair, its approach was a product of the broader culture of architecture, architectural history and education of the post-war period, providing a study based mainly on individual rides understood as technical and aesthetic objects.⁵

John Smith, another AA-educated architect, writes in the Introduction to *Fairground Architecture*, 'It is perhaps curious that the fair, unlike other traditional mobile spectacles... has not been the object of greater study. For those seeking to learn about fairs and their history, the books to which they can turn are indeed few.'⁶ Nearly fifty years on, very little additional material has become available.

What is more interesting in Smith's Introduction is his sideswipe at 'younger architects' who 'abuse' the subject:

Whilst some of our younger architects like to preach the virtues of the Plug-in City, which they see as a new concept, the fairground, a plug-in city on a small scale, has been with us for centuries. Long may it flourish.⁷

Smith's irritation is indicative of a broader tendency, surprising given the anything-goes atmosphere usually associated with the fairground. Indeed, many

fairground enthusiasts are very protective, proprietorial even, when it comes to agreeing what constitutes a 'proper' fair, and who might be permitted (intellectual) access to it. Reminiscing about Oxford St. Giles Fair of 1905, Charles Openshaw waxes about 'these good old days when fairs really were fairs and not imitation seaside amusement parks.'⁸

In the light of these various competing claims, I want to venture that the fair can be held out as a 'contested object,' approached from different directions and with different motivations by a range of interested parties. To suggest that the fair can be reduced to an object—however much it is contested—is a risky move, as it might have the effect that architectural considerations of the fairground remain within the orbit of Braithwaite's work. Instead, the notion of the 'contested object' is intended to offer something much broader, informed by recent work in anthropology. That discipline has developed a number of approaches that rely on architectural objects with artificially clear definitions, deployed in order to understand complex socio-cultural, economic, juridical, traditional and cosmological dynamics observed across a wide variety of historical and geographical settings. One of the best known instances of this deployment was developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who described the architectural object of the house having a role in '*The objectification of a relation*: the unstable relation of alliance which, as an institution, the house functions to solidify, if only in an illusory form.'⁹ I will return to 'illusory objectification' at length towards the end of this article. For the time being, I want to adopt the way in which this simplified architectural object serves anthropology by 'transfixing' and stabilizing what is a more complex, unstable union, relationship or set of alliances.¹⁰ Moreover, not only can this conceit transfix what are contingent and changing relationships, it can also actively work to misdirect or misinform an audience about the motivations of those individuals, groups or institutions involved in fixing that object in the first place.

To apply this more directly to the subject at hand, the 'contested object' of the fair can provide robust and flexible agreement that transfixes a multiplicity of interests, sites, times, things and spaces. Many different parties have to commit to the fair for it to take place. The same fair can be used simultaneously by a wide range of individuals and groups to diverse ends: not everyone visits the same or all parts of the fair, nor is a single ride used in the same way at the same time.¹¹ While leaving it intact, the 'contested object' of the fairground is set out with 'scrupulous accuracy', and set within a more complex field of interest, by cultural theorists Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in their 1986 book *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*.¹² Stallybrass and White use four categories (the body, geographical space; psychic forces; and social formation) to analyse the less-visible conditions of various so-called 'transgressive' events including markets, fairs and festivals, and to explain how and why these events sustain such contested or antagonistic responses. 'This book', they write, 'aims... [to map] domains of transgression where place, body, group identity and subjectivity interconnect. Points of antagonism, overlap and intersection between the high and the low, the classical and its 'Other', provide some of the richest and most powerful symbolic dissonances in the culture.'¹³

Throughout their work, they refuse to submit to easy, comfortable or nostalgic definitions of the fair, and gently criticize other historians and theorists — including Robert Malcolmson, E P Thomson, and Mikhail Bakhtin— for

maintaining an implicit binary in their rush to read the fair as simply transgressive. To fall into this trap may well put an end to the difficulties that are associated with the fair understood as a 'contested object,' but this comes at a high price, such that '[t]he fair is located on one side of a series of oppositions as "popular", celebratory, grotesque, and its history becomes one of a transformation from "licence" (i.e. excess) to "licensed" (i.e. authorised), with the concomitant suppression of the "unlicensed" fairs.'

¹⁴

While fully mindful of their exemplary approach, it is interesting to follow architecture's own, more restricted, engagement with the 'contested object' of the fairground. Not only does this provide some overview of the architecture of the travelling fair, it also begins to reveal certain (object and epistemological) limits beyond which architectural history's more generally applied approaches and techniques require support from elsewhere.

2 Missing Objects

The deep history of fairs is uncertain, although it is generally agreed that they are very old, and that they began in Ancient Greece, and spread across Europe during the Roman Empire. It is generally agreed that the timing of fairs frequently coincided with sacred rites and feasts: as Christianity spread, fairs were realigned to Christian high days and holy days.¹⁵ As life in Norman Britain (as across Europe) became more regulated, fairs and markets became closely controlled. Fairs that had been held for as long as anyone could remember accrued rights as 'Prescriptive Fairs.' New rights to hold fairs were granted by the Crown through the issue of Charters. Vanessa Toulmin has noted that

[b]y the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the majority of the English fairs had been granted charters and were reorganized to fall into line with their European counterparts. The granting of charters did not necessarily initiate the right to hold a fair; it was in effect a means of controlling the revenues for the Crown. The control and organization of the fair was then granted to the particular town, abbey or village where it occurred.¹⁶

It is estimated that 'no fewer than 4,860 [fairs] were chartered in the years between 1200 and 1400.'¹⁷ The rate and geographical distribution of this spread is shown in Figure 1. Fairs were economically important for local, national and pan-European trade. To this exchange of goods was added an exchange of labour: following the Black Death and the decimation of the population this wrought, the *Statute of Labourers* was introduced in 1351 as an attempt to control wages and the supply of labour. Workers effectively had to put themselves up for hire every year, and fairs—'hiring', 'Statute' or (in the Midlands) 'Mop fairs' as they became known—were key events where this took place.¹⁸

By the eighteenth century, the focus of fairs had shifted away from hiring and trading and on to pleasure. Mark Girouard describes how this shift affected towns like Bury St. Edmunds, where 'the great fair held on Angel Hill became more and more an amusement fair, until by the eighteenth century it was the chief social event of the year, attended by all classes, from dukes downwards, and accompanied by a theatrical season and a series of balls in the Assembly Rooms.'¹⁹ Normal Klein observes a complimentary movement, out of theatrical spaces and into fairs: 'After 1780, the heritage of Baroque special effects

essentially divides in half: the architecture splits from the optics... After 1780, Baroque scripted spaces evolved mostly on the cheap, at fairs, circuses. The old archi-tricks were marginalized, except perhaps at the opera house; but even there, industrial steam power took over.²⁰

Despite the paucity of extant fairground objects from this deep history, and however sketchy our knowledge of the fairs over these many centuries, William Addison has argued that this deep history concerns everyone. While few individual objects—such as rides or shows—have survived, in another sense and at a larger scale, the ‘object’ of the fair as a whole always exceeded its individual constituent parts, and has always been difficult to constitute as an object, physically and conceptually. In the introduction to his *English Fairs and Markets*, Addison notes how ‘[a]part from their inherent interest, fairs and markets concern everyone because they have conditioned—we might say controlled—the development of the English town.’²¹ Although the economic, legal, social and cultural aspects behind fairs have been mentioned, the physical impact of this ‘conditioning’ is only indirectly legible; the historical ‘object’ of the fair is missing. Frequently, rights for fairs and markets were granted in the same Charter, and frequently, they took place on the same physical site—the market place.²²

Girouard remarks on the importance of these spaces in the development of towns throughout England (and beyond): ‘The only centres of resort to rival [the market place] in age and importance are the churches; and the surviving markets are still full, while the churches are empty.’²³ While he overstates the current distinction, and overlooks the extent to which churchyards were used for fairs and carnivals, it is undeniable that the history of religious architecture is not short of architectural objects on which to base its study.

Although its historical objects are missing, the fair and market have together been written into the built fabric of these settlements as a gap, such as those illustrated in Figure 3. At Loughborough or Ilkeston, for example, the town has formed around the fair and market, manifest in the ‘missing object’ of the market places, and legible at the larger scale of their relationships with neighbouring market towns shown in Figure 4, where they take up position in a network of similar towns all roughly one day’s walk apart.²⁴ While David Grahame Shane is right to assert that not only have powerful landowners influenced city form, and that moreover ‘this is why the legal codes governing and recording landownership are one of the earliest and most constant of written urban memory-structures’,²⁵ these memory-structures have a forgotten supplement, where the ‘missing object’ of the fair is an absent or repressed other of the ‘proper’ architecture and urban fabric of these settlements.

When the fair returns to town, many of its most striking contemporary objects are clearly a world away from their historical predecessors, but the broader impact on the atmosphere, environment and operation of the town and its citizens goes some way to revealing the fuller logic of its urban memory-structures. Braithwaite enthuses about the magic wrought by this return:

When open space becomes fairground a miracle is wrought, and a *tober* created... The fabric of the *tober* is self-transcending, insubstantial, but powerful in impact... But insubstantial though it may be, the whirling frames ablaze with light, the innumerable excursions into delight, create a metamorphosis in terms of environment. The existing town pattern is

forgotten and dreary surroundings are thrown into shadow as the dream intensifies.²⁶

While he no doubt captures some of the excitement of the fair's impact, its arrival does not have to throw us out of time, nor cause us to forget the 'dreary surroundings' of the town. With some reflection, the deeply historical physical and social relationships between town and fair can be approached.

The impact of the fair is clearly far more dramatic in towns such as Ilkeston and Loughborough than at Oxford St Giles, because these involve a fuller occupation of the heart of the town, and the activities of the fair are brought much more directly into coexistence with the everyday activities of its citizens than at Oxford, where an elegant boulevard thoroughfare is occupied. The existing town patterns are forgotten, displaced and repurposed by the arrival of the fair. But the fair does not simply fill up the empty space of the Market Place, return the 'missing objects' to make the town (physically) complete. The arrival of these rides and attractions produces an overplus of effect, *powerful in impact* as Braithwaite notes, not simply back-filling the area of these central places but generating disproportionate and surprisingly large scale surroundings out of comparatively little material. To say this in a different way, the effect produced by the event of the fair exceeds the physical facts of the objects that make it up, and resonates with other memory-structures.

For various reasons, Oxford St Giles's fair is able to supplement its historical 'missing object' with much richer and deeper photographic documentation than perhaps any other fair in the country. Figure 5 shows the extant photographs of this fair, organized by decade. Records reach as far back as the 1880s, and they provide a relatively rich and consistent set of information about how this fair has changed over the course of a hundred years. Compared to photographic records of other fairs over this period, Oxford St Giles' has ten or fifteen times as much documentation, an unusually extensive coverage.

Read in conjunction with the 'empty' space of St. Giles's, (which arguably has changed only a little in many hundreds of years, compared to most other street-fair settings) and with contemporary experience of the fair, these photographic documents provide an intriguing supplement to more accepted urban memory-structures. Writing about the distinction between fact and meaning, John Berger's discussion of the 'Ambiguity of the Photograph' is interesting in this context. Berger stresses that photographs are not like memory (or remembered images, which are 'the *residue* of continuous experience'), but that they are disconnected from the continuous passage of time.

[I]n life, meaning is not instantaneous. Meaning is discovered in what connects, and cannot exist without development. Without a story, without an unfolding, there is no meaning. Facts, information, do not in themselves constitute meaning... Certainty may be instantaneous, doubt requires duration; meaning is born of the two... When we find a photograph meaningful, we are lending it a past and a future.²⁷

This process can, with some qualification, be extended to the 'missing object' of the fair as we try to trace its architecture via extant town fabric: we are required to 'lend it a past and a future' if it is to be found meaningful. Cues can come from residual documents such as photographs, combined with personal and collective memory to animate familiar surroundings. Although Berger's discussion was organized around a small number of carefully chosen examples, his

considerations were directed to photographs in general. The particular case of the 'missing object' of the fair enjoys a different temporal relationship with the unfolding of time: although the fair is a fleeting, temporary event, it renews and repeats itself in an annual cycle, and thus periodically reanimates the empty space of the Market Place for old and new citizens alike.

3 Unstable Objects

To stay with Berger's considerations of meaning, he places emphasis on the contingency of meaning, in contradistinction to the certainty of facts. It is fairly straightforward to argue that the 'missing object' of the fair inscribes a nagging doubt in our recollection or understanding of the fair's history or contemporary form and its relationship with a host town. However, when faced with the very rides and attractions that contribute the most tangible things on the fairground, doubt about their 'meaning' also creeps in from a number of directions, making these 'unstable objects.'

This instability springs from a variety of situations. Perhaps most obviously, there is a delightful uncertainty caused by the repurposing of familiar environments by the fair, which makes the experience of the familiar townscape somewhat uncanny. Other instabilities are caused by less immediately obvious juxtapositions: the rides themselves are more or less architectural in size, but they are sufficiently dissimilar to expected architectural formats to challenge presumptions regarding the host town's architectural priority. Placed in immediate proximity to the main buildings in the town, many temporary rides exceed the scale of their hosts, something of a cuckold in the familiar nest of the Market Place. Examples shown in Figure 6 demonstrate rides far taller than buildings (*Mach 1* adjacent to the Carnegie Library in Ilkeston); or with more substantial facades (*Jumbo Circus Funhouse*, or *Waveswinger*, Loughborough); or presenting substantial facades from a small footprint. At Oxford St Giles' fair, these so-called 'big-ticket' rides challenge the genteel surroundings of the tree-lined boulevard, with *Air* positioned directly in front of St. John's College. However, the site at Oxford is able to gather these all up and contain them in a fairly well defined and bounded single space. (The only locations where this clarity is slightly upset are in Magdalen Streets East and West, and a short run of stalls on Banbury Road). In contrast, perception of such a boundary is impossible at fairs such as Ilkeston and Loughborough, which can thus be considered 'unstable objects' at a larger scale.

In addition to these here-and-now instabilities, there are aspects of these 'unstable objects' that are brought about, at least in part, by similar dynamics of doubt that Berger related to the individual photographs. But just as historical photographic documentation offers to lend some meaning (subject to the exchange noted at the end of the previous section) to the 'missing object' of the fairground as a whole, it also acts to unsettle that understanding. To the instantaneity of the individual photographs showing overall views of the fairs, the assiduity of fairground enthusiasts provides duration, via photographs provided in number and over time, enough to fuel our doubt. While the selections of photographs in Figure 7 support our understanding of how this particular fairground ride—the Waltzer—has developed since its introduction around 1910, they also provide a useful reminder that the fairground constantly

reinvents itself to reflect changes in fashion, to appear to provide novelty. In this case, the images show a general decrease in the depth of fascia that most rides have undergone during the past century, principally to avoid excessive labour time (and associated costs). This sequence also shows differing architectural treatments given to these rides, which include an extravagant baroque tendency around the time of the second world war, to more fashionable art deco styles immediately after.

The changes recorded across this series of photographs can be read alongside a wider range of technological and material changes, as well as shifts in cultural reference set out as a timeline in Figure 8. Charting the broad shift in the focus of fairs from amusement and festivity in the eighteenth century, through to a late Victorian and Edwardian golden age of fairs providing shows and attractions, to emergence and domination of rides during the twentieth century, these changes are set alongside various prevailing physical and environmental shifts that influenced the development and longevity of rides (wood, steel, plastic, or the development of lighting technologies from naphtha to tungsten filaments to strobes). The cluster of new rides this Figure also records bears witness to the ways that Showmen have constantly sought to maintain the interest of the paying public by offering ever newer, faster, and more spectacular attractions. New technologies, particularly structural, hydraulic (for operation and for transportation, erection and dismount) and power supply can be closely linked to paradigm shifts in the make up of objects collected at the fair. The most recent of these shifts relates to the introduction of white-knuckle thrill rides during the 1990s.

However, technologies and fashions change at different rates: within this cluster, there are other, more rapid cycles of change that are applied to established rides to keep them up to date in terms of cultural references: changing music and applied decoration (themes and icons) acknowledge rapidly changing fashions. The speed of this cycle causes one of principal manifestations of the 'unstable object'. The run of photographs set out in Figure 9 show how one ride—Cox's Walzer W-50—has undergone a series of facelifts in the last 35 years or so, and typifies the broad treatment, or updating, that most rides and attractions receive. Echoing many of the architectural examples that Stewart Brand includes in his book *How Buildings Learn*, these Waltzer photographs remind us that 'Whereas "architecture" may strive to be permanent, a "building" is always building and rebuilding.'²⁸ Brand's intention was to give the lie to the 'complete', static or unchanging architectural object, and he demonstrated the ongoing 'refinements' (beyond simple maintenance) that are typically brought to buildings as they adapt to the changing needs or characters of their users. Following Frank Duffy's argument that 'a building properly conceived is several layers of longevity of built components,' Brand put together his well-known diagram of the 'Shearing Layers of Change', which can be applied, with certain changes in the layering and their interrelationship, to the Waltzers and other rides, as shown in Figure 10. Notwithstanding other characteristics already mentioned in this section, the most thoroughgoing instability of the 'unstable object' results from the dynamics set out in this diagram.

Re-drawn for fairground ride, the shearing rates of change are generally simpler, and have an accelerated rate of turn-over. 'Structure' here is not so different to Brand's analysis of a building's structure: in contrast, 'Skin' in particular is

changed perhaps every two or three years, rather than the twenty that Brand remarks are followed 'to keep up with fashion or technology.'²⁹ The 'Space Plan' that Brand indicates as a light-touch feature within the component layers of buildings is, in contrast, amongst the most enduring features of the fairground ride. As the two Figures (7 and 9) showing evolutionary change to the Waltzers indicate, the core physical space plan has remained virtually unchanged since the introduction of this ride in the 1910s, but the 'Skin' and the various 'Services' that are deployed to present this core experience appear in ever new ways. This produces the 'shearing,' tension or instability associated with this object, which contributes to the doubts surrounding its meaning. To reintroduce and incorporate the terminology used by John Berger into this discussion, to make the 'unstable object' of the fairground ride meaningful, we have to somehow lend it a past and future, but given the evident rate of shearing between the various components of this object, access to any 'future' or 'past' is hard to negotiate. Shearing produces doubt.

As a final aside, or below, a nod to Brand's first category 'Site' points to a more obvious instability. Whereas Brand follows Duffy to agree that "Site is eternal", for the unstable object of the fair, site is constantly shifting, and the negotiation between 'Structure' and 'Site' produces some remarkable, often hidden, temporary architectures, such as that drawn in Figure 11. In his *Memories of St Giles' Fair* of the 1930s, Viv Kirk recalls the preparations undertaken in 1932 before the rides arrived on site:

A vast amount of wooden boxes were got ready for use in packing. When building up on the Monday morning in the dark, due to the steep camber of the road (some two or three feet) the showmen always had (I should think on hire from the breweries) loads of beer crates which were stacked in St. Giles Saturday evening, ready for use as packing on Monday morning.³⁰

He picks up this theme in his account of the 1933 fair, remarking again on the ways in which Showmen had to negotiate the severe camber of the road along St. Giles. 'Here too, I think, was where the skill of the Showmen came in... I always was amazed to watch the Showmen setting the spider bottom of the Scenic and Switchbacks up on beer crates, railway sleepers and other packing, which, when finished, to my mind, was a work of art.'³¹

Whether work of art or terrifying pile of scrap timber, this negotiation between 'unstable object' and site, like the 'missing objects' and 'contested objects' discussed earlier, serves to introduce some of the characteristic difficulties encountered when trying to account for the architecture of the travelling street fair. These difficulties were not, however, the reason why architecture, why architects, did not pay attention to the fair. This can be blamed on a more thoroughgoing unwillingness to take the fair seriously, either as a subject worthy of serious study, or as an object with architectural qualities. While many would continue to subscribe to this view, since the 1960s there has been a number of architects who have looked to the fair with interest, and drawn from aspects of the fairground environment for reasons of theory or practice.

Part II will temporarily put to one side the various difficulties already introduced, in order to chart some of those connections. Of course, architects were not alone in their newly found willingness to look at popular cultural phenomena (previously deemed 'low'), or to open up to influences from other disciplines. As a reaction against the medium-specificity and 'objecthood' of high

modernism, interdisciplinary exchange and practices became increasingly commonplace in the 1960s and 70s. Some of that exchange was, admittedly, superficial, and architectural readings of the fairground were of varying depth or rigor, especially when compared to work on similar subjects produced by other disciplines, and these comparisons will be introduced in the next section. Despite these reservations, architectural considerations of the fair and other previously unconsidered examples, such as Las Vegas or Las Angeles, did lead to the development of ways of writing about phenomena that hadn't been taken seriously before, and for which there was no existing critical vocabulary.

Part II: Writing, Seeing, Looking

4 Other Objects, Other Architectures, Other Writings

It is perhaps no more than coincidence that Brand's interest in promoting change in architecture—or his interest in challenging architecture's refusal to accept change—emerged during the 1960s, with his 1968 *Whole Earth Catalog* and involvement in DIY and counter-cultural architectures in the United States. But the 1960s and 70s do mark a significant change in, or more basically a beginning of, the architectural profession's interest in the fair (profession here in an expanded sense). To say that Braithwaite's serious, historical study in *Fairground Architecture* (1968) does not typify this change is to some extent true, but this should not be taken to imply that other interests in the fair could be grouped around another, clear agenda, or that it displays a clear development since this time.

As noted, this decade witnessed the emergence of a broad appetite to challenge what Architecture (capital A) could or should be. Examples are too varied and numerous to set out here, but the titles of Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* [1964] or Banham, Barker, Hall and Price's manifesto 'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom' [1969] indicate the extent of the challenges that were being mounted.³² *Archigram* for example, those 'younger architects' that riled John Smith so much, set out polemic proposals at a wide range of scales that possessed something of the fun of the fair, as well as its de-mountable, plug-in technologies. Some of Cedric Price's work was superficially similar, with the formal adoption of some fairground elements and techniques. His well-known proposals for the *Fun Palace*, undertaken with theatre director Joan Littlewood, showed a wide range of differing activities being accommodated simultaneously, much like a fairground.³³ Tim Anstey, Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes describe this as an 'expanded architecture' beyond the formal and physical convention of architectural thinking, and situate Price in a post WWII tradition or lineage that contested the ground on which architectural action takes place, interrogating around a *field* not a *bounded object*.³⁴

But Price's proposals, with Littlewood and on his own, were both more serious (in the sense that he really was designing and developing proposals that he believed would be built or implemented) and far more socially radical than those of *Archigram*, as David Greene admitted. 'One of the differences is that we

[*Archigram*] were less serious than him... *Archigram*, in a fairly mindless way, read the consumer culture without any sense of critique of anything. Cedric's work is always more political. He was more interested and better informed in technology as well. He had a mine of information about technology. I think *Archigram* tended to turn more towards the image of technology, what it looked like.³⁵

Around the same time, in the Netherlands Constant Nieuwenhuys was developing his artistic/architectural utopian *New Babylon* project for a radical future city where 'every element would be left undetermined, mobile, and flexible',³⁶ in order to permit and encourage continuous transformations. These ambitions, the emphasis Constant placed on 'atmospheres',³⁷ as well as some of the spatial qualities represented, resonated with the *Fun Palace*. But as Stanley Matthews notes, although New Babylon 'begged comparison to the *Fun Palace*, [it] was... an aesthetic fantasy that lacked concrete detail of the effort to make it a reality.'³⁸

Related to Price's emphasis on programme over form, and with its particular take on pleasure, Bernard Tschumi's slightly later theoretical work (and his built work, later still) was significant in the emphasis he placed on architecture as event, and the stress he placed on the potential of inhabitation to re- or mis-use architectural environments. Writing in 1983, Tschumi discussed how 'sequences of events, use, activities, incidents are always superimposed on... fixed spatial sequences' in ways that could comfortably describe the fairground. He continues: 'These are the programmatic sequences that suggest secret maps and impossible fictions, rambling collections of events all strung along a collection of spaces, frame after frame, room after room, episode after episode.'³⁹

Yet these various 'other' architectures, however directly or indirectly linked to the architecture of the fairground, eventually failed to deliver their promise or were appropriated for other ends. In the context of his review of the *Non-Plan* manifesto, Simon Sadler offers a very sobering analysis that can be broadened to apply more widely to this most optimistic of architectures: '[T]he relationship between architecture and event became in turn reified. Non-planning's ambition to create 'event-spaces' and new types of living was sincere, but its legacy was very largely one of tremendous images, *representations* and *simulations* of architecture as a process.'⁴⁰

Many of these 'other' architectures had a superficial understanding of the fairground, caught up with naïve optimism about a life without rules, or an architecture that appeared to be changeable, or the heady thrill of the carnival. But the fair has never been philanthropic: whether trade, hiring or pleasure fair, it has been driven by hard-nosed, commercial, and often competing interests. Many architectural borrowings launder this (and many other) aspect of the fair from their understanding.

fair as 'other'

While this reductive reading of the architecture of the fairground to some extent inspired the above examples, around the same period of time, individual and collective behavior at the fair was taken up by a range of other disciplines and paid serious attention. Across this range, the fair can be understood to have stood for a variety of 'others', whether other ways of doing architecture, other

(excluded) groups, other (repressed) modes of behavior, other temporalities, and so on.

Emerging in particular from social anthropology, literary criticism and philosophy, concepts such as the *carnavalesque* (Bakhtin),⁴¹ *inversion* (Babcock),⁴² *heterotopia* (Foucault),⁴³ *bricolage* (Lévi-Struss),⁴⁴ the *ludic* (Huizinga),⁴⁵ *communitas* (Turner)⁴⁶ and *taboo* (Douglas)⁴⁷ migrated into wider fields of discussion and were brought to bear within a contemporary, European context from studies that were historically or geographically removed. The detail of these concepts is beyond the scope of this article; what is significant is how, each in its own way, they announced a willingness or desire to value a wide range of ‘others’ that had traditionally been sidelined or ignored by dominant culture. What was at stake can be summed up by Barbara Babcock in *The Reversible World*:

What is socially peripheral is often symbolically central, and if we ignore or minimize inversion and other forms of cultural negation, we often fail to understand the dynamics of symbolic processes generally.⁴⁸

While Babcock and the other thinkers listed here were at pains to emphasise the complex dynamics of such processes, too often a simple reversal has been undertaken when architectural interest registered these ‘other’ disciplinary interpretations. Frequently, architects accidentally followed an economy of replacement, overlooking the nuances involved in original analyses.

On occasion, the original accounts similarly laundered the dynamism from the spatial aspects of their objects. For example, Foucault’s notion of heterotopia—itsself a banana skin for the unwary—lists a number of possible examples ‘of other spaces,’ including ‘heterotopias ...[s]uch a[s] the fairgrounds, these marvelous empty emplacements at the outskirts of cities, which fill up, once or twice a year, with stands, displays, heteroclitic objects, wrestlers, snake women, fortune tellers.’⁴⁹ Although some fairgrounds are indeed situated on the physical periphery of society, Babcock’s warning should remind us that what is socially peripheral can be physically, as well as symbolically, central.

In a similar way, James Faubion has warned against easy, binary reductions of the relationships between ‘normal’ and ‘other’ modes of social organization and behavior. In an essay on heterotopia, he makes reference to Victor Turner’s distinction between *societas* (normative, structured society) and *communitas* (unstructured or rudimentary, undifferentiated society), and advises against getting carried away more broadly by over-investing the ‘other’ with total freedom. *Communitas*, he warns ‘always already contains more structure than at first sight there seemed to be.’⁵⁰ Whether taken in the context of process, society or object, Faubion’s warning is appropriate for any approach to the fair: despite appearances, or just invisible to the inexperienced eye, it is highly structured, both organizationally and as an environment. The more enduring challenge is to identify and communicate how it works in different ways for whom.

other ways of writing about ‘other’ architectures

This kind of challenge was already being taken up alongside the other ‘others’ sketched out above. Indeed, the very notion of writing, and the clear distinction between ‘author’ and ‘reader’, was under scrutiny at this time, a situation epitomized by Roland Barthes’ 1967 essay ‘The Death of the Author’.⁵¹ These

debates open onto the difficulties linking author and work in the context of the travelling street fair, where taken as an object (with all the difficulties this term involves) or an event, it is mostly impossible to connect it exclusively with any particular individual, group or history. This stands in contrast to fixed-site amusement parks, circuses, or heritage fairgrounds, as well as more conventional architectural output, which do enjoy a more identifiable 'authorship' process (notwithstanding the anonymity of many employees involved behind the scenes of this process).

Moving in tandem with these expanding interests, other ways of writing about architecture emerged during the 1960s, a partial response to the lack of purchase traditional approaches provided on places like Las Vegas or Los Angeles. In the opening pages of his 1971 *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, Reyner Banham mocks the 'old-world, academic, and precedent-laden concept' of the historical monograph, and sets out instead to find 'new bottles for [the] new wine' that is LA, with its 'instant architecture in an instant townscape'.⁵² In contrast to accepted ways of writing architectural or urban history, Banham's work ignored iconic monuments and set-piece (historical) buildings, focusing instead on far broader fields—or ecologies—of the LA region, across which his account was able to move and combine understanding from many different scales and times. Faced with a related problem, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour's 'A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas',⁵³ set out a range of new typologies and tools with which such 'new' townscapes could be understood (and learnt from).⁵⁴ A generation later, Momoyo Kaijima/Atelier Bow Wow were similarly 'forced' to find new ways of accounting for and presenting another townscape, this time of Tokyo.⁵⁵

Beyond the obvious significance of their work on its own terms and within architectural education and discourse more broadly, these other ways of writing about other architectures provide a useful guide to help understand the architecture of the travelling fair. In their own ways, these authors were undeterred by the apparent chaos of their chosen places of study: 'The image of the commercial strip is chaos. The order in this landscape is not obvious [but] [t]here is an order along the sides of the highway.'⁵⁶ Similarly, Banham notes that 'the city [of Los Angeles] has a comprehensible, even consistent, quality to its built form', and that it 'is as far from being an impenetrable mystery as it is from being an urbanistic disaster-area'.⁵⁷

The related challenge is to develop ways to get at the consistency beneath the apparent chaos of the fair that avoid the reductive situation Simon Sadler lamented, of tremendous images, *representations* and *simulations* that simply formalized what was perceived to be chaos. The relationship between the image of chaos and the particular, underlying qualities of consistency is more than the 'Architectural Paradox' that Tschumi noted (based on the oscillation between experience and reason). Tschumi's interest in the architecture of the event drew from this paradox, such that the reason (or consistency) of architecture could not be grasped while it was being experienced. Borrowing architectural metaphors from Georges Bataille, Tschumi drew out a distinction between the pyramid (or obelisk) of architectural reason and the chaotic labyrinth of architectural experience.

Now while the fair only offers a gentle, momentary labyrinth, it also offers to resist the pyramidal metaphor of reason, which epitomizes the single, consistent point of view. The tension between these two states, two views or positions—or what we might call the Architectural Paradox of the Fair—can be related back to the concept of the ‘illusory object’ I borrowed from anthropology and introduced at the start of this essay. The process of illusory objectification deploys an oversimplified architectural object to transfix and stabilize a more complex, unstable union, relationship or set of alliances. But whereas anthropologists have identified illusory objects standing in for complex dynamics in many and varied situations, it is difficult to identify a possible candidate that would hold this role in the fair, for the various reasons surrounding the ‘contested,’ ‘missing’ and ‘unstable objects’ set out in Part I.

Illusory objectifications generally operate without the stability of extensive knowledge, but act to provide a proxy for such stability. In the case of the fair, however, such a lack of stability is compounded by the possible competing objects—labyrinth or pyramid, chaotic or ordered—switching and swapping over one into the other. Indeed, we might state that the consistency, even the object, of the fair is both real and illusory.

5 Illusory Objects

That the fair might be both real and illusory is not so surprising. Unlike the delusion of other ‘good’ architectures, it has always been something of a hybrid, divided object. As Vanessa Toulmin notes, even the ancient Charters tended to split ‘interest’ in the fair between the Crown (which controlled revenue) and the host town (which was given responsibility for organisation).⁵⁸ In these early formulations, no mention was made of traders or labourers (and later, the showmen) who made the show. These splits remain legible in the complex, multiple interests and responsibilities of contemporary fairs, where stakeholder mappings, such as those for Oxford St Giles and Ilkeston Fairs shown in Figure 12, reveal complex geographical and organisational networks of input behind the consistent, chaotic ‘object’ of the fair. Over and above the symbolic Crown-town split, however, there exists within these organisational networks a mismatch between the assumed authority exercised over the fair by the showmen, and the de facto responsibility for planning and operating the fair that falls to the local Fairs and Markets Superintendent, as indicated in Figure 13. While many institutions and organisations might claim credit for the fair’s coherence, this in fact remains dependent upon complex sets of alliances to the extent that it exists at all.

Braithwaite touches on the difficulties of instigating such coherence in the street fair generally:

The rigid containment of Market Square and High Street imposes more severe planning disciplines on the ancient Charter Fairs. With traffic diverted, shopping precincts invaded and display windows blinded by the backs of *joints*, the town pattern and its commercial functioning becomes—for a day or two—quite obsolete. But the superimposed pleasure grid adds, as it were, a dimension of pique.⁵⁹

As he describes it, the coherence of the street fair involves the superimposition—or more accurately, the temporary replacement—of one form of planning on

another. In towns like Ilkeston and Loughborough, the arrival of the fair's 'superimposed pleasure grid' significantly restructures the flows through the town centre, taking people—citizens and visitors alike—to and through locations that would be rarely used in everyday situations, such as tucked-away car parks, or networks of alleyways shown in Figure 14 that become vital for successful circulation around Loughborough during fair time. However, behind the scenes, and not mentioned by Braithwaite, there are differences in the organization and rights over different fairs that remain unknown to the punter, invisible to both the town pattern and the pleasure grid, such as complex issues of land ownership that involve church, St. John's College and the Local Authority at Oxford St Giles, or the Municipality and the Freeman at the Newcastle *Hoppings*, or systems of zonal lettings at Ilkeston, and so on.⁶⁰ In short, it is an illusion to think of the travelling fair, collectively or individually, as a whole.

Even the physical arrangement of spaces and individual fairground 'objects' (rides and attractions) that make up particular fairs show marked differences between layouts. For example, the diagrams presented in Figure 15 borrow Kevin Lynch's tools for mapping *imageability* in order to set out the 'visual form' of three fairs.⁶¹ These diagrams demonstrate Oxford St Giles to be basically one wide, flat space with a simple and legible organization; Loughborough takes place in a more complex but flat site, and effectively comprises three separate, inter-connected fairs; Ilkeston is situated in a more complex hill-top site, with distinct areas of fair connected by street stalls.

The physical complexity of rides and townscape that gives each fair its character and identity is now carefully planned, but this was not always the case: until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, showmen would be in open competition for the best pitches at the fair, with little policing from any authorities. W.E. Sherwood, Master of Magdalen College School and later Mayor of Oxford, describes St. Giles Fair at the time of his childhood in the late 1850s:

In those days positions were not allotted beforehand, and the caravans could not enter the City until four o'clock in the morning, but were drawn up outside the boundary stones on all the roads. As the clock struck there was a wild rush followed by a scramble for places, which it was part of the fun of the fair to watch, although it involved very early rising.⁶²

An anonymous account from 1906 describes this event in similar terms:

the shows were allowed to come into St Giles' Street at midnight [on] Sunday, and as in those days there was no one to allot the ground, there used to be some pretty squabbles and the free fights for the best positions and it was generally daybreak when everyone had got comfortably—or uncomfortably—settled down.⁶³

Even with a more planned approach, the spectacle of the rides arriving and being assembled draws the crowds. While the organization of fairs is now extensively controlled by national and local legislation, and extensively planned by local government as well as the Showmen themselves (mainly through their national body, the *Showmen's Guild of Great Britain*), the respective contributions and influence of these parties varies significantly. The pull-on to Oxford St Giles is now carefully choreographed by the local Fairs Officer, and runs over a 30-hour period, set out in Figure 16. The scramble for places has been eliminated, although not all petty squabbles are avoided. In contrast to this approach adopted by St Giles and many other fairs, Ilkeston fair reveals some interesting

blind spots in the various plans that have been produced historically, where one of the main areas of the fair situated on the Market Place has been organised by Pat Collins, the 'King of Showmen', (and his heirs and successors) for decades, and is shown on the overall layout plan simply as a pink box. (Fig. 17)

Surprisingly given today's tendency for overarching control asserted in every facet of life, this historical characteristic has grown, and there are now nine organizational zones to Ilkeston fair, shown diagrammatically in Figure 18: while six of these are overseen by the Fairs Officer, and one falls under her direct control, the organization of two zones remains with long established Showmen's families (Pat Collins/Anthony Harris on the Market Place, and Mellors of Nottingham on Pimlico).

These various examples indicate that at the fair, what is generally experienced and enjoyed as chaos is planned by a multiplicity to be perceived and consumed as a 'whole'. Nevertheless, as the foregoing sections have all set out to argue in various ways, what constitutes this 'whole' is contingent on a wide range of frequently contradictory factors. So while Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, and Banham, provide advice and encouragement for seeing through the chaos towards a hidden order and consistency in their examples, at the fair, consistency itself may well prove to be illusionary, in the particular formulation of this term put forward by anthropologists. To take this suggestion seriously, there are two aspects of this illusory object that can be discussed, related (for convenience) to ways of seeing and ways of looking respectively.

Illusory Objectification 1: (Ways of Seeing)

The fair's capacity to appear in many guises to many people, to reflect back different images to different audiences, is a consequence of its complexity and novelty, as well as our incapacity, inability, unwillingness or simple lack of practice making sense of it. As I have suggested, writings from anthropology can offer a way of understanding why and how this 'illusory object' operates. Misquoting Victor Buchli, I would venture that 'its architectural form can serve to obscure the interests of the various agencies and groups that converge and commit to the "fair," even as its conflicted nature makes it productive and enduring.'⁶⁴ This paradox and ambiguity contribute to the fair's attraction as an event while producing, at least in part, the difficulties presented to any study. Buchli glosses Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones' description of this process 'as an "illusory objectification" of contradictory interests producing a common object from antagonistic commitments to that object (i.e. the architectural object and the relations it embodies).'⁶⁵ Although the (illusory) object of their study was the house, understood as both a physical entity and an institution, and with all the attendant complexities of kinship, social and gender hierarchies, cosmologies and so on, there is much in this formulation that helps to account for the fair.

Fairs themselves operate a constant process of 'illusory objectification', witnessed in many facets but perhaps exemplified most clearly by the formal Opening Ceremony that marks the official start of each fair. Despite the continuity, tradition and solidarity demonstrated so deliberately in these ceremonies, they bring together a number of different groups with very different interests in the fair: showmen and citizens, local dignitaries and school children,

local officials and figureheads and so on. (Fig. 19) Although the Opening Ceremony pulls a decent crowd at all fairs, the relationships it celebrates are themselves an illusion, presenting a distorted account of what actually has gone on behind the scenes. As the diagrams set out in Figure 20 show, there is a disparity between the simplicity of relationships that are rehearsed at this ceremony and the complexity of prevailing negotiations and exchanges involved in the planning and realization of the fair. These ceremonies frequently defer to the original fair Charter, where a simple, if ambiguous, contract is established between Crown and town. Sometimes, other agencies are also written in to the Charter, such as the Church (if a fair was to take place on a particular religious feast day, for example) and neighbouring towns (to ensure that there was no inconvenience caused by a new fair). The ceremonies make visible these illusory relationships, embodied in the formally dressed Mayor and Regional Officers of the Showmen's Guild in their chains of office.

It is interesting to run the dynamics of this illusory objectification against the ways of seeing that Tschumi set out as in his 'Architectural Paradox', introduced above. There, it was suggested that at the heart of this paradox was the impossibility of grasping architecture simultaneously as an idea and as an experience. However, recent anthropological work suggests that moments of illusory objectification—particularly those associated with public performance of ritual—are able to gain access to both these modalities of knowing. Don Handelman has argued that 'Th[e] mandate [of public events] is to engage in the ordering of ideas, people and things. As phenomena, they not only are cognitively graspable, but also emotionally livable. Therefore, they are devices of praxis that merge the horizons of the ideal and the real, to bring into closer conjunction ideology and practice, attitude and action.'⁶⁶

As such, the crowd at the Opening Ceremony, itself a proxy for the punters who attend the fair once it is open, are not duped into believing that the fair is as simple as it is made out to be at that ceremony, but they knowingly consent to their part in producing a common, illusory object.

Richard Schechner's studies of different kinds and occasions of performance reinforce the implications of Handelman's work. Schechner distinguishes between 'activities [that] do not posit "make believe" so much as "make belief," an important distinction... In make belief performances, there is an intentional blurring of the boundary between what is fictionalized, constructed, made to order and what might be actually real.'⁶⁷ At the Opening Ceremony and throughout the fair, this deliberate, gentle fictionalizing takes place, an 'illusory objectification' that conspires to agree—to make belief—by seeing the fair in a particular way that posits it as whole.

If this is the locus where the fair's 'consistency' is located, then the relationship or relay between order and chaos that exercised Venturi, Scott Brown and all can be opened up a little round this point, reconsidering illusory objectification as a way of looking.

Illusory Objectification 2: (Ways of Looking)

Ann Reynolds develops an interesting critique of *Learning from Las Vegas* by comparing alternate, contemporary interest in the everyday environment of the

United States as this developed in the work of artist Robert Smithson. Putting words into Smithson's mouth, he was interested in contesting the illusory objectification that he witnessed in the chaos and consistency of Main Street, and the wider, wilder landscapes of the United States. On the way to analyzing Smithson's *Enantiomorphic Chambers* (1965)—artworks he developed as devices to prevent viewers 'seeing' a single, consistent and synthesized view of their surroundings—Reynolds argues that that Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour inadvertently trumped the apparent chaos of the strip not with the revelation of some other (hidden) consistency, but with classical, perspectival space. Irrespective of content, Reynolds argues that this mode of representation returns to a subject-centered 'view' of this space, or in the terms I'm using here, that it prevents illusory objectification because the ingredients are automatically synthesised.

Reynolds is arguably too quick to link these kinds of perspectival space with the knowable: whether in Vegas or at the fairground, visitors willingly accept that it is an illusion, despite any apparent consistency that might be given in these or other views. As Norman Klein puts it, in these situations 'you feel secure enough to be a cheerful accomplice'.⁶⁸ Later, Klein describes how 'scripted spaces' (which comfortably describe the fairgrounds under examination here, as well as the Las Vegas of the 1960s or 2000s that provide one focus of his work) provide an 'impossibly deep focus, literally to terra incognita'.⁶⁹ In other words, while such views of the fair or the strip might be easily related to everyday experience, they provide an excess of information which also nags against total synthesis, and prevents the illusion of the 'illusory object' being reconciled with the everyday and thus overcome.

That being said, it is more interesting to dwell on two other aspects of Smithson's work that Reynolds herself discusses as alternatives to single-point perspectival space. These were developed by Smithson to explore ways of looking that would guard against synthesis and illusory objectification, although these are not the terms he used.

The first of these can be linked to other presentations in *Learning from Las Vegas*, where 'schedules' set out multiple points of view of the same object, collated into larger schedules of similarity or taxonomy (Wedding Chapels, Signs, Motels, Gas Stations and so on). Figure 21 adapts this approach to the smaller scale and 'superimposed pleasure grid' of the street fair, presenting one possible schedule of objects and instances from two examples, Oxford St. Giles and Ilkeson, organized according to schedules of signage, chocks and blocks, power, water, waste, control, all of which relate to a quiet infrastructure that establishes and maintains the fair as a site, in combination with schedules of town-fair interface and other boundaries, scale and movement, panoramas and spectatorship, and consumption, which relate aspects of the awkward coexistence of fair and host town. In so doing, it provides one possible organized account of the various tactics and instances of the invisible architecture of the fair, without presenting a synthesized view of the 'illusory object' so produced. Reynolds notes a similar interest in Smithson's work, which she labels 'comparative morphology' after the work of the historian Carlo Ginzburg, and celebrates because it 'sweeps against history's hierarchical and chronological grain and restore[s] apparently negligible phenomena to view', thus opening on to a type of historical knowledge that is both 'formal and informal, popular and

elite.⁷⁰ Ginzburg himself reflects how his work 'had been pursuing a method that was much more morphological than historical. I was collecting myths and beliefs from different cultural contexts based on the basis of formal affinities... I was using morphology as an instrument to probe depths beyond the reach of the usual historical methods.'⁷¹ Although Ginzburg's comparative morphological method set out to explore links between different geographical and cultural productions, its potential role in accounting for the 'illusory object' of the fair lies in its capacity to bring together, and suggest connections between, the apparently 'negligible phenomena' that remain in plain sight. Through force of example, it allows us to grasp their combined contribution to the establishment of a 'common object' while simultaneously preventing its reduction to a single thing.

It is interesting to return to John Berger's work around this point. Although Berger discusses the operation of single photographs (and his examples are almost all photographs of people, rather than the things scheduled in Figure 21), his description resonates with the comparative morphologies under discussion here. Berger writes:

The photograph cuts across time and discloses a cross-section of the event or events which were developing at that instant [of quotation]. We have seen that the instantaneous tends to make meaning ambiguous. But the cross-section, if it is wide enough, and can be studied at leisure, allows us to see the interconnectedness and related coexistence of events. Correspondences [...] then compensate for the lack of sequence.⁷²

The operational 'cross section', the interconnections and correspondences that Berger describes, warrant extension to the operative technique of comparative morphology, although the required 'width' of cross-section in these schedules comes from multiple images rather than single unified appearances that Berger holds. While these multiple images combine to reveal what is frequently overlooked, they simultaneously prevent the establishment of a single, unified understanding of the fair.

In addition to Smithson's use of comparative morphology to document his trips to New Jersey in 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey' 1967, he also developed and deployed this approach in more speculative and propositional pieces (for example, 'Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space' 1966; 'Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site' 1967; and 'Strata: A Geophotographic Fiction' 1970) that pulled together a wider range of source material, sometimes within a text, sometimes with images, or with both approaches in combination. Despite the wide-ranging subject matter, these various pieces link to the second aspect of Smithson's work that Reynolds explores in detail.

This focuses on Smithson's *Enantiomorphic Chambers*, an art piece which operates for the viewer by splitting (and holding) vision into two, conceptually and physically challenging the monocular vision and two-dimensionality written into the synthesis of binocular vision or presented by the photograph or perspective drawing at the picture plane. Smithson criticized these ways of looking that 'eliminate all extra-visual stimuli in the viewer's immediate surroundings, including the viewer's own body.'⁷³

While Smithson's *Enantiomorphic Chambers* were intended to be viewed from within the controlled space of the art gallery, Norman Klein's historical account of 'scripted spaces' draws similar conclusions about the experience of various

immersive architectural spaces. For Klein, immersive spaces operate by including multiple extra-visual stimuli into a complex, haptic experience, in contrast to the visual consumption of framed-up, clear perspectival spaces.⁷⁴ The fair provides such an immersive or enantiomorphic space, not simply within particular rides, which clearly provide a heightened bodily experience, but also within the general environment itself. The 'illusory object' of the fair offers an immersive experience, demanding of the 'viewer' that they get involved, and thereby expose themselves to unsynthesizable, unstable relations that are not far behind the illusion of agreement or control set up in events like the Opening Ceremony.

These two different aspects open onto very different dimensions of the illusory object. Comparative morphology pays attention to the past and the other, whereas *enantiomorphic* devices focus the viewer's attention on the here-and-now of bodily experience, refusing to conform or reduce seeing to a (focused) single-point perspective with all the implications this has for the 'whole' human being.

These two illusory objectifications can be run together: while anthropology's 'illusory object' is product of the conspiracy of an event—a sham agreement and harmony—the second (Smithson's) is a way of exposing or frustrating this harmony, preventing the synthesis of multiple views into a single image/object. The two effectively move in different directions along the same axis of illusion-consistency.

Conclusions

To return to Lundy, who got us underway in the epigraph, these two directions can acknowledge the difference between the 'making of sense' and 'making sense of'⁷⁵ associated with various attempts to understand the fair as an object. In addition to the showmen's own expert provision of smoke and mirrors, the various 'contested', 'missing,' 'unstable,' 'other' and 'illusory' objects touched on here indicate how many objects have been (and continue to be) 'made' or claimed from the fair. This is not so much to criticize those moves, tacitly motivated or underwritten by a ready acceptance that there *is* an object in there somewhere, more to acknowledge that behind the scenes, the fair supports these multiple movements of illusory objectification, movements as product and process.

Moreover, these movements can operate simultaneously in this environment, offering to 'make sense of' the fair in many registers for many differing audiences—punters, officials, showmen or citizens. This article has not focused on experience at the fair from any of these positions, working instead with those theoretical and architectural audiences for whom the fair has provided various kinds of attraction.

With this in mind, the article attempted two things: Part I observed the general paucity of architectural interest in the fair, which only started to emerge during the 1960s, along with a more general move away from expectations of disciplinary purity, both in architectural design and the accepted subjects of architectural history, and in and between other disciplines more broadly. While mindful of these concerns around purity or what constituted the 'proper' objects of architectural design and study, this Part also accepted that there is a disparity

between a degree of collective agreement over what a fair is, and the enduring lack of a precise definition of the fair as an object or an event. While we might all comfortably know what we mean when we refer to fairs (or think we know), our particular individual experiences and expectations of fairs will be very different. It is hard to determine where and when a fair is: its physical and historical boundaries are unstable. In order to appreciate the extent of these difficulties, Part I surveyed three possible 'objects' that contribute to the ongoing theoretical and architectural awkwardness surrounding, defining or bounding the fair, and involving uncertain relationships with history, physical site, and the obvious constituent parts themselves, the fairground shows and rides.

Notwithstanding these larger historical and spatial discussions, Part II focused on work from a variety of disciplines that chart a clear increase in interest and attention being paid to the fairground from the 1960s onwards, along with the attendant developments this brought in ways of writing about these 'other' architectures. Although this increasing attention does not bring with it any clearer definition of the travelling fair in architectural or socio-cultural terms, I have suggested that insights from cultural studies, and from anthropology in particular, can offer clearer accounts of the ways we might see this complex situation, and clearer tactics for looking at the 'illusory objects' that constitute the travelling fair, which will in turn help us to understand more about its operation on the surface and behind the scenes.

Anthropologists refer to the process of illusory objectification as a positive and sophisticated phenomenon, something that allows many differing, often competing, interests to come together in a resilient arrangement for (generally) mutual benefit. The fair is reliant on the coming together of punters young and old, of showmen who provide an environment made—in part—with their rides and shows, officials and citizens of the host town, swagmen and gaff-lads who supply and run the attractions, security attendants, health and safety inspectors and road cleaners. On closer inspection, it remains uncertain who has the authority to put on a fair, where it should take place, and how long it can last, though several different claims are made for this right. Despite these uncertainties, fairs continue to happen precisely because this range of people and organisations are able to agree on a 'common object' whose resilience lies in the strength of its superficialities, which covers over greater, even irreconcilable, complexities and contradictions. That the fair can sustain such a wide range of readings or objectifications without surrendering to one overarching definition is testimony to the complexity and richness of its make-up behind *the glow of the event that catches our eye*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the staff at the National Fairground Archive, particularly Ian Trowell and Angela Greenwood, for their input and support. Thanks too to Olwen Myhill, from Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, who generously supplied the dataset from their *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs* project. I am indebted to Vanessa Toulmin, Grahame Downie, Anthony Harris, Mike Newman, Helena Richardson for giving up their time and sharing their experiences of working with the fair, and to Nicola Wood of Erewash Museum for her help and offers of space.

This work was generously supported by the RIBA Research Trust (2012).

Endnotes

-
- ¹ Craig Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.13.
 - ² Figures from 'Assessment of Best Practices in Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks in Relation to Safety of Customers', prepared for the European Commission (Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General) by Risk and Policy Analysts Ltd (RPA), March 2005. B5-1000/03/000349); and 'Review of Fairground Safety,' (commonly known as the Roberts' Review), prepared by Sir Paul Roberts, HM Principal Inspector of Health and Safety, August 2001. According to more recent, unpublished figures from the HSE, there are now around 3.6 billion passenger rides annually on UK travelling fairs.
 - ³ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge, London, 1995), p.245.
 - ⁴ Eric Brown, 'Roundabouts: Demountable Baroque', *Architectural Review*, February 1945, np. Incidentally, Barbara Jones' illustration for the cover of that issue of AR was one of the 18 chosen as part of the recent exhibition *The Architectural Review: A Cover Story*, shown at the WORK Gallery, London, 29 May–28 June 2014.
 - ⁵ This scope of interest is typical of fairground enthusiasts, accumulating carefully documented histories of particular rides and associated transport. In addition to *Fairground Architecture*, Braithwaite produced a number of smaller publications and pamphlets, including *Travelling Fairs* (Shire Publications Ltd, Aylesbury, 1976) and *Savage of King's Lynn: Inventor of machines and merry-go-rounds* (Patrick Stephens, Cambridge 1978). He produced a significant collection of documentary photographs, and acquired a range of other fairground collections, most notably the Orton and Spooner Archive, all of which are now on deposit in the *National Fairground Archive* at the University of Sheffield.
 - ⁶ David Braithwaite, *Fairground Architecture* (Hugh Evelyn, London, 1976), p.vii.
 - ⁷ Smith, 'Introduction', *ibid*, pp.ix–x.
 - ⁸ 'Further Notes on S. Giles Fair,' *Merry-Go-Round*, Vol.1, No.6, December 1941, pp.7-8. Although the article is anonymous, it was almost certainly written by Charles Openshaw, who wrote the opening article in this edition, (on Preston Whitsun Fair, 1909), and the 'Further Notes' of the title suggests that he was picking up from his article on Oxford St. Giles that appeared two issues previously, 'Oxford S. Giles Fair, 1905' in *Merry-Go-Round*, Vol.1, No.4, October 1941, pp.7–9.
 - ⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks* (tr. Sylvia Modelski, Jonathan Cape, London, [1972] 1983), p.155. Original emphasis.

-
- 10 I am borrowing the term ‘transfixion,’ as I will borrow ‘illusory objectification,’ from Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones. They write: “‘Transfixing’ an unstable union, transcending the opposition between wife-givers and wife-takers and between descent and alliance, the house as institution is an illusory objectification of the unstable relation of alliance to which it lends solidity.’ Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995), p.8. They are making direct reference in this passage to Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropology and Myth: Lectures 1951–1982* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1987), p.155.
- 11 For a close reading of the complex users and overlapping spatial practices related to one ride, the Waltzer, see my essay ‘Centre or Periphery? The Architecture of the Travelling Street Fair,’ in Abdelmonem & Morrow (Eds) *Peripheries*, Routledge, 2012, Chapter 8, pp.54–66.
- 12 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Methuen, London, 1986). ‘Scrupulous accuracy’ is the praise they give to Barbara Babcock’s work in *The Reversible World*, 1978, but it seems entirely appropriate to praise their own undertaking in these terms: see p.20.
- 13 *ibid.*, p.25.
- 14 *ibid.*, p.34.
- 15 Good overviews of the history of fairs can be found in R W Muncey, *Our Old English Fairs* (The Sheldon Press, London, 1936); T F G Dexter, *The Pagan Origin of Fairs* (New Knowledge Press, Perranporth, 1930); and Cornelius Walford, *Fairs, Past and Present* (Elliot Stock, London, 1883). Braithwaite’s historical ‘Background’ summarizes a number of these works.
- 16 Vanessa Toulmin, *Pleasurelands* (Projection Box, Sheffield, 2003), p.5. Charter documents don’t always hold true: many fairs have juggled with their charters to change the date or duration of a fair, or charters may have been sought and given, but the rights they bestowed were never, or only temporarily, taken up. Samantha Letters (Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research) has compiled a comprehensive national survey of markets and fairs in medieval England and Wales in the form of a catalogue, the *Online Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England Wales to 1516* (<http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>)
- 17 Graham Downie, Travelling Fairs, Memoranda Submitted to the Environment Sub-Committee of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Minutes of Evidence, February 2000) HC: 284-II, TF 29.
- 18 ‘Most Mops were followed within a week or two by a second hiring—the “Runaway Mop.” If a labourer was dissatisfied with his new job he would run away to seek another employer at the second fair.’ *ibid.*, TF 29.
- 19 Mark Girouard, *The English Town* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1990), p.17.
- 20 Norman M. Klein, *The Vatican to Vegas: The History of Special Effects* (The New Press, 2004), p.144.
- 21 William Addison, *English Fairs and Markets* (Batsford, London, 1953), p.vi.

-
- 22 Braithwaite speculates that the market cross probably had its antecedent in the boundary marker. 'Hermes, a god of boundaries, became god of the market too, and his image was usually set up in Greek market places.' Braithwaite, *op.cit.*, p.15.
- 23 Girouard *op.cit.*, p.10. Things are not quite as black and white as Girouard claims: many markets look pretty sad and struggling (although he's more right about the churches). He's also a bit fast and loose with the illustrations of 'markets', or at least market places, as many of these actually show fairs.
- 24 Paul M. Hohenberg, and Lynn Hollen Lees discuss this larger scale of development, and distinguish a hierarchy between what they term 'Central Places' and 'Network Systems'. See *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995). At a smaller scale, in 'The Market Place: Form, Location and Antecedents', G. Jones discusses four typologies of English market place: the linear, the square, the triangular, and the semicircular, and the relationship between typology and the particular kinds of goods and frequency of exchanges that took place in each. This appears in Sylvia Pinches, Maggie Whalley and David Postles (Eds.), *The Market Place and the Place of the Market* (Friends of the Centre for English Local History/ Marc Fitch Research Institute, Leicester 2004).
- 25 David Grahame Shane, *Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modelling in Architecture, Urban Design and City Theory* (Wiley Hoboken, NJ, 2005), p.25.
- 26 Braithwaite, *op.cit.*, pp.21-2. *Tober* is a term to describe the overall fairground environment.
- 27 John Berger, 'Appearances: The Ambiguity of the Photograph' in *Understanding a Photograph* (Penguin Books, London, 2013), p.64.
- 28 Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens after They're Built*, [1994] (Phoenix Illustrated, London, 1997), p.2.
- 29 See Brand, *op.cit.*, Ch.2, esp. p.13. The quote from Duffy is from 'Measuring Building Performance,' in *Facilities* (May 1990), p.17, cited in Brand p.12. A few pages later, Brand does note that 'The mutability of Skin seems to be accelerating.' p.19.
- 30 Viv Kirk, on the 1932 fair, in *Memories of St Giles' Fair*, edited and introduced by Ran Hawthorne. 'Steaming' publication; no.5. (Loughton National Traction Engine Club), [originally published in *The Journal of the National Traction Engine Club*, 1972-4], 1975, p.18.
- 31 *ibid*, p.21. In his recollections from the 1935 Fair, Kirk mentions seeing 'one of the men [building up F. Wilson's Dodgems], getting the sleepers of the bottom of the machine in place... [and] setting up the machine with the aid of a spirit level.' *ibid.*, pp.32-3.
- 32 Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* [1964] (Academy Editions, London, 1972), originated as an exhibition at MOMA, New York, November 1964-February 1965; Banham, Barker, Hall and Price's manifesto 'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom' was published in *New Society*, no.338, 20 March 1969.

On the breadth and extent of theoretical challenges being mounted from 'outside' architecture during this period, particularly from the art world, see my *Gordon Matta-Clark: Art, Architecture, and the Attack on Modernism* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2009)

It is also perhaps no more than coincidence, but worth noting, that there is currently an emerging body of work on various architectures of pleasure, including: David Coke and Alan Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens: A History* (Yale University Press, 2012); Lauren Rabinovitz, *Electric Dreamland: Amusement Parks, Movies, and American Modernity* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2012); and Josie Kane, *The Architecture of Pleasure: British Amusement Parks 1900-1939* (Ashgate, London, 2013).

33 'Price and Littlewood found their greatest inspiration in England's historic architecture of 'fun': pleasure domes, follies, music halls, public gardens, and so forth.' Stanley Matthews *From Agit-Prop to Free Space: The Architecture of Cedric Price* (Black Dog, London, 2007), p.72.

34 Tim Anstey, Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes, eds. *Architecture and Authorship* (Black Dog, London, 2007), p.10. They go on to suggest that *Fun Palace* was an attempt 'to re-design an invisible topography of contractual and institutional conditions that surrounds architecture as object', *ibid.*, p.24.

35 David Greene interviewed by Stanley Matthews, 15 April 2000, cited in Matthews, *op.cit.*, p.256.

36 Constant, 'New Babylon: An Urbanism of the Future,' in *Architectural Design*, no.34, June 1964, pp.304-5.

37 For a fuller discussion, see Mark Wigley, *Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire* (Witte de With, Rotterdam, 1998), esp. 'The Politics of Atmosphere,' pp.12-16.

38 Matthews, *op.cit.*, p.96. Matthew also notes that 'Price attended Constant Nieuwenhuys' lecture at the ICA during which he announced his New Babylon project to the English audience.' *ibid.*, p.95.

39 Bernard Tschumi, 'Sequences' in *Architecture and Disjunction* (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1996), p.157. Originally published in *The Princeton Architectural Journal: Thematic Studies in Architecture*, Vol.1, 1983.

40 Simon Sadler, 'Open Ends: The Social Visions of 1960s Non-Planning', in Jonathan Hughes and Simon Sadler, *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (Architectural Press, Oxford, 2000), Ch.12, section 5, 'Simulated Anarchy', p.151.

41 Carnavalesque was a term used by Bakhtin in his work from the late 1920s through to the 1960s (see for example M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. [1965] (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1968). For an incisive, architectural examination addressing spatial identity using Bakhtin's theories, see Thomas-Bernard Kenniff, 'Identity in Peripheries: Barking and its Others,' in Ruth Morrow, and M Abdelmonem, eds. *Peripheries: Edge Conditions in Architecture* (Routledge, London, 2013), pp.40-53. Kenniff's essay offers some salient warnings about the possible (accidental) mis-use of Bakhtin.

-
- 42 Barbara Babcock, *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, Cornell University Press, 1978.
- 43 Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* (1967). References here are to the version translated by, and included in, Michiel Dehaene and Lieven de Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society* (Routledge, London 2008).
- 44 see for example Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. [1962] (University of Chicago Press; London, 1966). Fred Koetter and Colin Rowe borrowed Lévi-Strauss' concept to inform their architectural account in *Collage City*. (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1978).
- 45 Johan Huizinga's work from 1949 *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London) underwent something of a re-
invigoration or rediscovery as part of changing sensibility noted here.
- 46 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Aldine de Gruyter, New York, [1969] 1995).
- 47 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge, London, [1966] 1991).
- 48 Babcock, *op.cit.*, p.32.
- 49 Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* (1967), in Dehaene and de Cauter, *op.cit.*, p.20.
- 50 James D. Faubion 'Heterotopia: an ecology' in Dehaene and de Cauter, *op.cit.*, p.36. Despite the careful balance of Faubion's argument, he can be accused of mis-representing Turner's work (as a reductive binary). Although Turner's exposition of *communitas* is introduced via a long list of binaries (see Turner, *op.cit.*, Ch.3. 'Liminality and Communitas'), Turner's subsequent analysis sets out in detail how *communitas* quickly goes through various stages of 'institutionalisation', imposing rules on itself: in *Communitas: Model and Process*, Turner runs through three phases: existential or spontaneous *communitas*; normative *communitas*; and ideological *communitas*.
- 51 Barthes 'The Death of the Author' was first published in English in the journal *Aspen*, no. 5-6 in 1967, and a year later in French, where it appeared in *Manteia*, no. 5 (1968), reprinted in *Image-Music-Text* (1977). Foucault's 1969 essay 'What is an Author?' (Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1977), pp.124-127) is taken by many to be some sort of reply-cum-challenge to Barthes, whose own challenge has been subject to much scrutiny.
- 52 Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, [1971] (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009), p.21. See also the hour-long documentary produced by the BBC the following year *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles*.
- 53 First published in *Architectural Forum*, March 1968, then expanded and published as *Learning from Las Vegas*, (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1972), then expanded and published as *Learning from Las Vegas: The forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1977).
- 54 Fredric Jameson, as well as providing a close reading of the complex 'postmodern' spatiality of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, also undertakes something of a review of this emergence of new waves of

-
- working and writing. See his well known 'Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' *New Left Review* 1/146, July-August 1984, pp.59–92; later extended and published as *Postmodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Verso, London 1991).
- 55 see Momoyo Kaijima/Atelier Bow Wow, *Made in Tokyo* (Kajima Institute Publishing Co, Tokyo, 2001).
- 56 Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977), *op.cit.*, p.20. Original emphasis.
- 57 Banham, *op.cit.*, p.21, p.218.
- 58 see Toulmin, *op.cit.*, p.5.
- 59 Braithwaite, *op.cit.*, p.27.
- 60 For an examination of the consequences of the complex ownership and stewardship situation of Newcastle Town Moor on the Hoppings Fair, see Ella Bridgland and Stephen Walker, 'Transgression or Temperance? The Newcastle Hoppings,' in Louis Rice and David Littlefield (Eds), *Transgression* (Routledge, London, 2014), pp.113–128.
- 61 Kevin Lynch's work is widely known, so I won't rehearse it here. For his own account of these tools, see Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960), esp. Ch.1 'The Image of the Environment' and Ch.3 'The City Image and Its Elements'.
- 62 W.E. Sherwood, *Oxford Yesterday: Memoirs of Oxford Seventy Years Ago* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1927), p.70.
- 63 Anon, *The Showman*, 31 August 1906.
- 64 Victor Buchli, *An Anthropology of Architecture* (Berg Publishers/Bloomsbury, London, 2013), p.14. At this point, Buchli is making close reference to Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- 65 Buchli, *op.cit.*, p.7.
- 66 Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990), p.16. Handelman's observations are reinforced by Catherine Bell, who notes a simultaneous synthesis and separation between thought and action that occurs in ritual. (This is set in the context of her account of Clifford Geertz's explanation of 'meaning' in cultural phenomena: Geertz calls these "models for" and "models of" reality.) see Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009), pp. 25–9.
- 67 Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, (Routledge, London, 2002). See chapters 2 ('What is Performance?'), 3 ('Ritual') and 4 ('Play'). Schechner is clear that '[a]nything at all may be studied "as" performance... And beyond any and every genre of artistic performance are performances of non-artistic kinds such as sports, religious and secular rituals, political campaigns, courtroom trials, and so on.' p.x. It is interesting to note that Handelman qualifies the usefulness of performance theory (implicitly, Schechner's theories) as they 'threaten [...] to reduce logics of design or form to epiphenomena of public events.' Handelman, *op.cit.*, p.18.
- 68 Klein, *op.cit.*, p.2.
- 69 *ibid.*, p.53.

-
- 70 Ann Reynolds, *Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere* (MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2004), pp. xiii, xiv. See also, Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1989).
- 71 Carlo Ginzburg, *Myths, Emblems, Clues* (Hutchinson Radius, London, 1990), p.xii. It is interesting to note that '[t]he subtitle [not translated into the English from the full Italian *Miti emblem spie: morfologia e storia—SW*] reflects recent preoccupations dealt with explicitly in the papers of Freud and Dumzél. Today, the relationship between morphology and history seems to me to be the common thread...' p.vii.
- 72 Berger, 'Appearances', *op.cit.*, p.90.
- 73 Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p.61.
- 74 Klein, *op.cit.*. On p.59, Klein discusses a series of oppositions between multiple and fixed-point perspectival spaces, immersive and framed experiences.
- 75 Lundy, *op.cit.*, p.54.

figure captions

All drawings, diagrams and photographs by the author unless otherwise noted.

Fig. 1 The spread of fairs in England between 1200 and 1600. (Images taken from a dynamic data visualization built by Matt Southgate & Thomas Cains, with Mark Meagher and Stephen Walker, funded by the RIBA Research Trust, available at <http://fairground-visualisation.group.shef.ac.uk/> Data was provided by the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, from the *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs* project, with thanks to Olwen Myhill.)

Fig. 2 Timeline indicating broad changes to the fair over the last millennium.

Fig. 3 Empty spaces periodically occupied by the 'missing objects' of fairs and markets: Ilkeston Market Place, Loughborough Market Place, and Oxford St. Giles. Photographs and figure-ground drawings (note the figure-ground for Oxford St. Giles is slightly manipulated to exclude the open-but-private spaces of adjacent colleges).

Fig. 4 Part of the network of market towns in the East Midlands, each roughly a day's walk apart.

Fig. 5 An indicative survey of the quantity of extant historical photographs taken of Oxford St. Giles' Fair between 1880 and 1960, providing a far fuller visual record than most comparative fairs. The decades of the two world wars mark a dip in fair activity. After the 1980s, photographic records of most fairs are fairly extensive. (All photographs are from the collections of the National Fairground Archive, and are reproduced with permission of the University of Sheffield.)

Fig. 6 *Mach 1*, adjacent to the Carnegie Library in Ilkeston, 2012; *Jumbo Circus FunHouse*, and *Waveswinger*, Loughborough 2010; *Storm and Air*, Oxford St Giles fair, 2012.

Fig. 7 The 'evolutionary scale' of the Waltzer from 1910–99. (All photographs are from the collections of the National Fairground Archive, and are reproduced with permission of the University of Sheffield.)

Fig. 8 Timeline indicating broad changes to the fair over the past two centuries, including changes to technology, materials, cultural references, and the introduction of new rides.

Fig. 9 Fred Cox's Waltzer W50, reappearing in different guises between 1979 and 2012. (All photographs are from the collections of the National Fairground Archive, and are reproduced with permission of the University of Sheffield.)

Fig. 10 Stuart Brand's 'Shearing Layers of Change' diagram from *How Buildings Learn*, redrawn to account for the layers and relationships of change experienced by fairground rides.

Fig. 11 Negotiating between 'Site' and 'Structure', following Brand's terminology. Axonometric drawing by Sophia Kelleher.

Fig. 12a Stakeholder mapping, Oxford St. Giles' Fair. Many individuals and organizations are involved in the fair, drawn across a range of geographical areas.

Fig. 12b Stakeholder mapping, Ilkeston Fair.

Fig. 13 Organizational diagram showing the central role played by the local Fairs and Markets Superintendent for planning and operating the fair. Virtually all the contractual and organisational relationships are made directly through this figure.

Fig. 14 Diagrams of circulation through Loughborough, showing the contrast between the everyday routes (roughly north-south, shown in the top drawing) and the very narrow lanes that become key points of access during the days of the fair (bottom drawing).

Fig. 15 Differing complexities and characters of three fairs: Oxford St. Giles (top), Loughborough (center) and Ilkeston (bottom), photographs and *imageability* diagrams drawn using Kevin Lynch's conventions.

Fig. 16 The six phases of pull-on to Oxford St Giles fair, drawn by Stephen Walker. Stills grabbed from Oxford Internet Institute webcams. See <http://webcast.oii.ox.ac.uk/>

Fig 17 Ilkeston Fair Layout, 1960, prepared by the Fairs & Markets Superintendent. Note the large shaded area covering most of the Market Place, which was (and continues to be) organized separately by Pat Collins/ Anthony Harris. (From the collections of the National Fairground Archive, and reproduced with permission of the University of Sheffield.)

Fig.18 Ilkeston Fair, showing the nine organizational zones now delegated to different showmen by the Fairs Officer.

Fig. 19 The Opening Ceremony, Ilkeston Fair, showing the main protagonists, including the architectural setting (Ilkeston Town Hall) and the ceremonial Bells.

Fig. 20 Diagram of the agencies and relations set out in the Ilkeston Fair Charter (top) compared to those taking part in the Opening Ceremony (bottom).

Fig. 21a Schedule of fair ingredients, Oxford St. Giles, following the comparative morphological method used by Venturi and Scott Brown.

Fig. 21b Schedule of fair ingredients, Ilkeston