

New-Haven, Connecticut, USA  
 Yale University  
 Art + Architecture Building, Paul Rudolph Hall  
 M.E.D. (*Master of Environmental Design Degree*)  
 Credits required : 72  
 First Term (Fall)  
 714a, *Architectural Research Theories*  
 Credits: 3  
 Ljiljana Cox, B.A., B.Arch., M.A., Ph.D.

The course 714a *Method and Research* will introduce you to architectural writing and research methods, planting a background for your advanced research project (ARP). We will investigate various text genres: surveys, journalism, manifestos, scholarly essays, critical essays and narratives. A complete panorama of writing methods linked to architecture, urbanism and the environment. Today's subject: Architecture of disaster, displaying two slides. You have 3 hours left to reveal your writing skills.

*Slide*<sup>number 1</sup>

*Split screen*

On the right, Nablus, April 3rd West Bank assault, 2002, led by the overtrained troops of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).  
 On the left, *Conical Intersect*, 1975, by Gordon Matta-Clark.

*Slide*<sup>number 2</sup>

*Full screen*

*Splitting*, 1974 (photomontage), by Gordon Matta-Clark.

Appendix:

*Small reminder regarding Matta-Clark (1943-1978)* —————  
 Matta for Roberto Matta, his father (Chilean painter affiliated with the surrealist movement) and Clark for Anne Clark, his mother (artist). He studied architecture at Cornell University, then literature at the Sorbonne. It was in Paris that he became aware of the French deconstructionist philosophers and the situationists that would considerably influence his work. —————

Architecture of Disaster

First, we shall parallel the slides relocated in their original frame, then from an interrogation ensuing the ‘mise en abyme’ we shall establish the narrative structure of one of the possible fictions.

In 1975, Gordon Matta-Clark realized the piece entitled *Conical Intersect* for the Biennal de Paris, by cutting a large cone-shaped hole through two townhouses in the market district known as Les Halles which were to be knocked down in order to construct the then-controversial Centre Georges Pompidou. Beyond the formal aspect, this practice intended to free house spaces of their social and utilitarian constraints. The film, *Conical Intersect*, captured Matta-Clark’s complex spiral cutting, which dynamically frames the construction site of the new Centre Pompidou in an impressive way.<sup>1</sup>

Walls open into gaps like huge portholes sprinkled with concrete junk, genuine ‘overground tunnels’.<sup>2</sup> Matta-Clark’s endoscopic anarchitecture rejects both feature and ornament. The house is no longer a house, it is lived by space, crossed by drafts. Walls become visual, physical passings, inviting investigation, rearticulating reality.

In 2002, the Israeli army launched an attack on Palestinian resistance in Nablus by cutting large cone-shaped holes through city walls located in the West Bank which was previously annihilated by the Crusaders in 1202. Beyond the formal aspect, this practice was meant to free house spaces of their visual and utilitarian constraints. The documentary images impressively captured spiral cuttings by the army complex, framing the besieged city in a compelling way.

—Question: In what measure does the theory represent a threat more real than a technological march?

A soldier, a psywarrior (Psychological Warrior), flows theory boots of Deleuze and Guattari, Debord. If we zoom into the map, before

<sup>1</sup> <http://brahms.ircam.fr/works/work/20865/>, *Conical Intersect* 2007 by Roque Rivas (IRCAM-Centre Pompidou)

<sup>2</sup> Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, Verso, 2007

the assault, in the city outskirts, the psywarrior raises his khaki shirt sleeves until he reaches the extremities of his waistcoat bullet shield and reveals his muscles. On the arms, no tattooed tribal motives, neither a stripped pin-up nor a golden eagle perched on a navy anchor, but a Dogon egg, a fresco integrating rhizomes of ginger, galanga and Jerusalem artichoke or another Go game set. *Logos* rather than a logo. We learn recently that to conceptualize the urban war led by the Israeli army against Palestinians, the Israeli military academies systematically refer to Deleuze and Guattari, in particular to *A Thousand Plateaus*, used as ‘operational theory’—the used watchwords being ‘Formless Rival Entities,’ ‘Fractal Maneuver,’ ‘Velocity vs. Rhythms,’ ‘The Wahabi War Machine,’ ‘Postmodern Anarchists,’ ‘Nomadic Terrorists’.<sup>3</sup> The psywarrior is keen on architecture, having studied, here, in Yale, before joining a training camp. He had already made mental series of conical breakthroughs in Paul Rudolph Hall and drifted away whole days around campus confines. Later, we find him in Nablus in the rubble of a punched-in house. The psywarrior assembles blocks of flats as concepts, he smooths the space and digs up the rhizome. He decontextualizes, he was advised in his rereadings. He devoured *On War* by Clausewitz appointing him to become hardened conceptually to fundamental principles of military strategy and to consider conflict’s psychological dimension. The psywarrior is a small Prince of Prussia. He dreamed to be recruited by the Talpiot Program after Yale, he aspires to obtain the Medal of Honor.

### The Talpiot Program

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Talpiot program is an elite Israel Defense Forces training program inaugurated in 1979. The Talpiot program concerns young people who have demonstrated outstanding academic ability in sciences, physics and mathematics pursuing higher education prior to serving in the army. The program lasts nine years and selection is draconian. \_\_\_\_\_

He hijacked the format to ask himself about the question of territories dividing up in their digital era. He read Blanqui attentively—*all islands or blocks belonging to barricaded streets, must be drilled in their circumference, in a way that fighters can enter and go out by the back parallel road, outside the sight and out of the enemy reach*.<sup>4</sup>—and as a last resort intend to pass through cellars,

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<sup>3</sup> Mao, *On Practice and Contradiction*, (Introduced by Slavoj Žižek), Verso, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Auguste Blanqui, *Instructions pour une prise d’armes*, Sens & Tonka, 2000

sewers and underground, with the moles. If we have a glance at his personal library, we could believe that he is a researcher, an intellectual, a writer, an anarchist, it's one of his chameleon aspects, he made his the enemy theory. The psywarrior is a mutant soldier, he displays all basic soldier characteristics, but has integrated strong quantities of abstract toxin consistently modifying his field of vision. He infiltrates himself through walls as one crosses walls. He plots bombs, kicks away lines of strength and remodels landscapes as a perfect psychogeographer. Some of his movements could be similar to *dérive*. *One of the basic situationist practices is the dérive [literally: "drifting"], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. Dérives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll.*<sup>5</sup> He is a disaster architect. *Within architecture itself, the taste for dérivings tends to promote all sorts of new forms of labyrinths made possible by modern techniques of construction.*<sup>5bis</sup> He operates a complete review. He unrolls the enemy in the middle and extirpates his vital organs. He will not go through main streets, avenues, doors, corridors, staircases, windows. He will not be where we are waiting for him. He is too far ahead of us. He leaves wide red trails with fine pearled oxygen bubbles scattered in his passage. He brings color and leaves bodies without organs (literally without organs, nothing delezien here) to mark his route. He tramples fleshless opponents, crushes brains, dislocates articulations. He dispels thousands of didactics to the wind: 'We came in peace,' 'Stop fighting, surrender is good,' 'Save your family, give up,' relieved by black lacquered copters with dew-gleaming helixes. We provide you with the soundtrack that perfectly matches. High speakers censor the zone with implorations and local language screams, orders to surrender, children calling their mother. We stick you with the post-synchro that fits with your mental images. Actors were paid for it, we chose the best, the most credible, they were voice-casted. What does it feel like hearing your wife, your son, begging you to stop fighting?—because we receive non-stop mail and microfiber pop singers with our evening tray meal. The enemy is plunged into a bath of verbal 3D nightmare sequences in dolby surround. All this time, the psywarrior immerses his auditory canals into *Halloween* by John Carpenter in repeat all mode because it is revitalizing. He slides the topologically smoothed, visually vectorized plateau. He moves like a Go pawn. He plays with black pawns, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Internationale situationniste number 2, Théorie de la dérive*, décembre 1958

<sup>5bis</sup> Op.Cit.

enemy does not even play against him, it is not really necessary to hold him informed. He did not grasp at once the reason why his trainer came down the first day with a Go game set and said: 'Here is your battle zone' or how to cross some combinatorial abstracted game of strategy with live action ground. Afterward that makes him laugh out loud. *Go works distributing itself through the space, taking the space, keeping the possibility to appear at any point. The movement does not go from one point to another, but is perpetual, without boundaries, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival [...] It proceeds altogether differently, territorializing or deterritorializing it (make the outside a territory in space, consolidate that territory by construction of a second, adjacent territory).*<sup>6</sup> To be a pawn is not an insult any more, it's a mental projection. Upon the goban, houses are so many compartments to be kicked away on which we "strike" stone-soldiers. Two boots by compartment is the rule. The pawn is always covered in offensive toys. We created him a special wartoy perfecting his outfit, the Moleskin<sup>WEAPON™</sup>. We accessorized him, and the other go pawn rhizomatically connected. Moleskin<sup>WEAPON™</sup> is a kind of completed mini ram to kick down concrete walls. This name comes from *Condylura cristata*, a small North American mole with a tentacular snout endowed with a multitude of electromagnetic senso-sensors. The Moleskin<sup>WEAPON™</sup> is not the only psywarrior reference to the animal kingdom. *Although several thousand soldiers and Palestinian guerrillas were manoeuvring simultaneously in the city, they were so 'saturated' into the urban fabric that very few would have been visible from the air. [...] they moved horizontally through walls and vertically throughboles blasted in ceilings and floors. This form of movement, described by the military as 'infestation,' seeks to redefine inside as outside, and domestic interiors as thoroughfares.*<sup>7</sup> All concepts are good if they inspire new modes of action. Theory is psywarrior's fuel oil. He moves into his bubble, the reversible (black&white) pawn soldier armed with his so practical Moleskin<sup>WEAPON™</sup>. He drills walls, grounds, he draws his road. He gets closer, maybe he is there, behind you, still masked by the

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987

<sup>7</sup> Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, Verso, 2007

& further inspiration from:

\* Carl Schmitt, *La guerre civile mondiale*, éditions è@e, 2007—Bulletin of Yale University, School of Architecture, 2008-2009, august 2008—Jacob von Uexküll, *Mondes animaux et monde humain*, Denoël, 1965 <http://psywarrior.com> — <http://psywar.org/>.  
*Wandering Souls*, performance by Sandy Amerio & Patrick Bouvet, 2008

smooth concrete thickness. He is going to extract your core boring life as a perfect brazilophile (concrete/paint/air/couch/fabric/flesh/air/tv screen /paint /concrete) and so on and so on.

—*translated by Laure Motet & Monica Karski*

ÉMILIE NOTÉRIS was born in 1978. She's a French writer and member of a literary review called TINA (There is No Alternative—Literature). Her first book *Cosmic Trip* was published in 2008 (éditions IMHO) and she co-directed an essay with Jérôme Schmidt 'J.G. Ballard, Hautes Altitudes' (éditions è@e, 2008).