

Trapping, Dismembering and Crucifying Angels: Tracing the Social Sacred in Hejduk's Bovisa

John Hejduk's imaginary proposal, submitted to the XVII Milan Triennale "Imagined Cities" for the Bovisa area of Milan depicts buildings, scenes, apparatuses and public displays for trapping, dismembering and crucifying angels. The ambiguity of the angel figure and its seeming heterogeneous nature as both supernatural and corporeal, complicates any straightforward interpretation of their meaning within the work. The other drawings in the proposal further mystify readers with a presentation of unfamiliar building types and unconventional naming habits that challenge our assumptions about the role of the architect as a designer and social visionary.

This paper presents a careful reading of Hejduk's angel narratives through George Bataille's theory of religion to reveal a multifaceted approach for envisioning a new social sacred together with an alternative practice of architecture. The angel narratives attempted to eliminate the positivistic discourse of the discipline during its "postmodern turn" by drawing fictitious events outside of the conventions of late twentieth century practice. The fallen angels are thus a manifestation of a renewed thirst for meaning in a modern world otherwise dominated by profane and secular values. Reading Hejduk through Bataille's principles of transgression and sacrifice reveal his intentions for a renewed sense of the social sacred defined by unproductive forces, symbolic architectural manifestations and the participatory public rituals that erect them.

A final comparison of two of Hejduk's built works in other cities with imaginary drawings in Bovisa synthesizes the multiple facets of the angels' prophetic purpose as a productive and non-productive element in Hejduk's work to reveal new roles of death and monuments in the contemporary built environment.

Theme: Theory

Keywords: Angels, John Hejduk, Georges Bataille, Transgression, Sacred Architecture, Bovisa Milan

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Education

- 2016-present PhD in Architecture, Carleton University
- 2014-2016 Master of Architecture, McGill University
- 2009-2013 Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Carleton University

Research

- 2019-present Instituto Superior Técnico Lisboa, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal
Nossa Senhora da Piedade de Caparica Historic Building Information Model (HBIM)
- 2016-2020 Carleton Immersive Media Studio, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON
Ottawa Crown Attorney Murder Trial Visualization
Centre Block and Library of Parliament HBIM
- 2014-2016 Facility for Architectural Research in Media and Mediation, McGill University, Montreal, QC
SINTER (Situating Interactive Interface) infrastructure design-research project
HBIM for St. Joseph Church (Le Salon 1861)
- 2012-2014 Carleton Immersive Media Studio, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON
Cultural Diversity and Material Imagination in Canadian Architecture (SSHRC)
- 2011 Department of National Defence, Engineering Department, Kingston, ON
Troop Shelter Building Information Model (BIM)

Teaching

- 2016-present Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism, Carleton University
Teaching Assistant: 1st year introduction to architecture (2016-2019)
Studio Instructor: 1st year undergraduate studio (2017-2020)
Teaching / Research Assistant “I Swear I Have Been Educated” Master’s Seminar (Present)

Publications

- Upcoming Sgarbi, C. & Rafeiro, J. 2021. The Fabbrica and the Mise en a-BIM. Where and What are We Trying to Hide? In *The Routledge Companion to Architectural Drawings and Models: From Translating to Archiving, Collecting and Displaying*. Eds. Goffi, F. & Johnson, M. V.
- Upcoming Rafeiro, J., Tomé, A. & Fontes, J. L. 2021. Giving Depth to the Traces of Nossa Senhora da Piedade da Caparica. *PROHITECH 2020. 4th International Conference on Protection of Historical Constructions*. 5-7 July 2021, Athens, Greece.
- 2020 Rafeiro, J., Tomé A., & Fontes, J. L. 2020. From Text to Model: Translating the Estatutos da Província de Santa Maria da Arrábida. *Florence Heri-Tech 2020*. Dates TBD. Florence, Italy.
- 2020 Rafeiro, J. & Tomé, A. Adapting the Tool: A Historic Building Information Model (HBIM) of Nossa Senhora da Piedade da Caparica. *PTBIM 2020: 3º Congresso Português de Building Information Modelling*. 26-27 November 2020, Porto, Portugal.
- 2019 Chow, L., Graham, K., Grunt, T., Gallant, M., Rafeiro, J., Fai, S. The Evolution of Modelling Practices on Canada’s Parliament Hill: an Analysis of Three Significant Heritage Building Information Models (HBIM). *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences, Volume XLII-2/W11* (pp. 419-426).
- 2018 Rafeiro, J. De-Anthropocentrizing Architecture: Rewriting Filarete’s Golden Book. *The Ethical Imperative*, 106th Annual Meeting, Project Proceedings, Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (pp. 163-164).
- 2017 Rafeiro, J. New & Strange Monsters. *Building 22*, edition 2017 (pp. 58-59).
- 2014 Rafeiro, J & Fai, S. Establishing an Appropriate Level of detail (LOD) for a Building Information Model (BIM) – West Block, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada. *ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences, Volume II-5* (pp. 123-130).

Conference Presentations

- 2018 Jesse Rafeiro. Wandering Through the Humanist Ideals of Filarete's Labyrinth Garden. *Art, Materiality and Representation*. The Royal Anthropological Institute, London, UK. June 1-3, 2018.
- 2017 Jesse Rafeiro. Beauty, Fragility and the Perpetually Unfulfilled in Poliphilo's Dream. At *Atmosphere 9 Symposium: Beauty, Memory, Entropy*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. February 2-4, 2017.
- 2014 Jesse Rafeiro. Establishing an Appropriate Level of detail (LOD) for a Building Information Model (BIM) – West Block, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada. *ISPRS Technical Commission V Symposium*, Riva del Garda, Italy, June 23 – 25 2014.

Awards

- 2020 Frascari Prize in Architecture. Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism, Carleton University.
- 2018 CanBIM Innovation Spotlight Awards: Academic Award and Best in Innovation Award (with CIMS)
- 2017-present Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- 2016 Azrieli Foundation PhD Entrance Scholarship
- 2015-2016 Brian Brush, Jesse Rafeiro & Katie Lee. *SENSARC*. Sensory Garden art installation
- 2014 Best paper award: ISPRS Technical Commission V Symposium, Riva del Garda, Italy

Research Events

- 2019 *Upcoming Conference and workshop*: Jornadas de Estudo do Convento dos Capuchos, Caparica, Portugal
- 2015 PARE Residency, Topological Media Lab, Concordia University. April 20 – May 10, 2015.