Tim Gough

The Voids of Eisenman's ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S***

Conventional architectural terminology in the English language uses the term «void». It refers to any location in a building where there is an opening to a space below, typically where a double- (or triple-, etc.) height space exists at one of its upper floor levels. In the everyday typology of public and commercial buildings from the late 20th and early 21st centuries such a space is often called an «atrium», may be a regular or irregular shape, is often roofed over (with a glazed roof bringing light in), and has glazed windows or openings with balustrades (or both) looking across and down into the atrium. In the precise notation of a conventional architectural plan (where every line has – or should have – a distinct and precise logic) a void like this is often shown with a cross drawn from two adjacent corners of the void to the other two. Like the arrows which are drawn on staircases to show which direction the stair is running (the arrow should always point *upwards*) the lines of this cross do not correspond to a physical feature of the building. Unlike the arrows on stairs, which are needed because otherwise the lines corresponding to physical features would leave an ambiguity in the reading of the plan, this cross is not needed in order to show that the space is a void; the fact that there are no doors or openings into this space means that it appears unambiguously, anyhow, as void on the plan.

Imagine that there *were* in fact doors or openings into this void at an upper level. Then one has the potential for the cartoon or slap-stick situation where the agonist (chased by the counter-agonist) runs though the opening only to find that the floor has disappeared from beneath their feet. Suspended momentarily over the void, the *Witz* occurs during the time it takes the consciousness of the character to catch up with the physical reality of no support: it is only momentarily after the void is understood as such in the mind that the character begins to fall. The comedy derives it force from taking overly seriously the disjunction between the physical and the mental. This disjunction is surely a philosophical, although persistent, myth; the sarcastic seriousness with which comedy acknowledges it shows how stupid the Real finds this myth. But the situation of the void within the building is also revealed here. By situation I mean (taking up briefly a hermeneutic or phenomenological architectural terminology) the interplay of people and place, that is, what happens in the event of the architecture, as lived reality. The void within architecture usually maintains a sense – however slight, sometimes emphasised – of the uncanny, of the loss of ground, of a visceral sense of vertigo. It is an architectural *affect*, the precise nature of which will depend on the habits and psychology of the architectural participant: at one extreme some people suffer vertigo to the extent that any upper-level balcony or window presents an insufferable occasion for fear.

«*Atrium*» was the name of the central *impluvium* of the Roman house, the courtyard around which the house was organised, and referred by extension to any courtyard arrangement through the centre of a building such as a block of flats - *insula* - in the Roman city. The purpose of the atrium was to bring light and air into the centre of the building. This function of the void on the plan continued through to the late 18th and 19th century, when technology enabled both the spanning of these often large spaces with glazed roofs and the provision of ventilation by other mechanical means.

Peter Eisenman, in his 1984 article *The Futility of Objects*[1], carries out an analysis of a series of

[1] Peter Eisenman, «The Futility of Objects: Decomposition and the Processes of Difference», in: *Harvard Architectural Review*, Cambridge 1984, vol. 3, pp. 65–82.

renaissance buildings (an analysis which he claims is a *deconstruction*[2]), including a proposed palace in Bergamo by Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548-1616) the *Fabrica del Sig. Bortolomeo Fino* dating from 1611 (Fig. 1), in which the character of these atria spaces becomes a question. The timing of this article is pertinent to the topic of this paper, namely Eisenman's unbuilt (and unbuildable) architectural project ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3), which was created in the summer of 1983, completed in August of that year (i.e. «Fin août» in French), exhibited in the *Architectural Follies* exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery New York in October/November of that year, and subsequently re-exhibited in February/March 1985 at the Architectural Association in London. The Architectural Association published, in Folio V, an exquisite box (formatted like an LP boxed set) to accompany the latter exhibition, comprised of a small booklet with essays by Nina Hofer and Jeffrey Kipnis, and sets of 14 colour prints and 14 embossings onto card.[3] Eisenman's article was therefore written at the same time as the creation and dissemination of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S***. As we shall see, the void is an explicit part of that project, so it is not without interest that the buildings he is analysing contain voids or atria. These can be seen on the Scamozzi plan as the large courtyard (the largest space on the plan) bounded with a row of columns to its bottom edge (marking a *loggia* looking down into the «void» at first floor or *piano noble* level), and a smaller courtyard to the right, separated from the first by a large hall (the largest internal space in the building) and bounded similarly by a row of columns but this time on the shorter side and to the upper side of the plan.

Now for architects and others who appreciate the abstract beauty of a plan and what it implies in terms of the architectural *situation* (as defined above) this one is exemplary. The contrapuntal interplay of the variety of scale and shape of space and the way in which the central main hall is caught between the two courtyards and lit from both sides (the dramatic long gallery to the right is similarly lit) shows Scamozzi to be a master of the plan. Notice that the drawing conventions are slightly different to that described above in relation to modern voids. Each space has a series of thin lines within it: in the internal rooms, these lines represent the line of the groin of the vaults *above* the spaces. (In modern plan drawing, these lines would be drawn as dashed lines, to indicate they notate something occurring above the level of the cut of the plan.) In the two courtyards they represent instead the line of the groin of the paving *below*, which in such courtyards was usually set up like an inverted roof with a central lower surface that collected water from the courtyard and the surrounding roofs.

This convention of how the plans of late Renaissance palaces are drawn is, you will note, something difficult to appreciate if you are not aware of the architectural situation (again to use the hermeneutic or phenomenological terminology), that is, the actual character of these spaces. Eisenman, in his article, in fact entirely misinterprets these conventions. He states: «[…] both major spaces have an antechamber, a row of columns, and a lozenge-shaped ceiling vault with a peripheral strip not seen in any of the other spaces.» From the point of view of an architect or architectural historian versed both in the reading of the plans of historic buildings and the buildings themselves, this is a schoolboy error: Eisenman misreads the lines on the plan as a ceiling vault (whereas they are in fact lines on the floor of the courtyard); he misreads the courtyard spaces as being roofed (whereas they are open to the sky and it would have been virtually impossible to roof the larger space in the manner implied in Scamozzi's time – the technology was not available); and misreads the columned spaces as being antechambers (whereas they are in fact *loggia*). All Eisenman would need to have done to correct himself on these matters is to read Scamozzi's description of the

[2] Ibid., p. 67.
[3] Peter Eisenman, ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S**,* London 1985.

building on the adjacent page to his plan and elevation, where the courtyard arrangement is outlined in some detail.[4]

What Eisenman fails to notice, therefore, is precisely the void. Scamozzi's plan, as do all pre-18th century plans of large buildings, relies on a complex understanding of how the void be deployed in order to articulate the spaces in a manner at once practical (light, air), poetic and formal. Plans of this type are generally shown at first floor (*piano nobile*) level since that is where the principal spaces are, and voids (as defined above) therefore regularly feature, bounded often by loggia spaces with balconies (or windows) giving views across and down into the courtyard voids.

For Eisenman's purposes it matters not one bit that this misreading has occurred. The reason for this is that his analysis of Scamozzi's building is entirely formal. That is, it is concerned solely with the form (as evidenced mainly in the plan) of the building, and not with other matters such as the use, incoming daylight, structure or whether a particular space is roofed or not. Nor with the matter of affect. Eisenman had been doing this kind of formal analysis for a long time. His PhD at Cambridge University dating from August 1963 is entitled *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture*, and he there makes clear that architecture is to be considered an essentially formal discipline: «The contention will be that architecture is in essence the giving of form… to intent, function, structure and technics. Thus form is raised to a position of primacy in the hierarchy of elements. To claim supremecy [sic.] for form in this way is to adopt an original standpoint despite the fact that all academic and rationalist thinking well into this century would have placed formal considerations above all others.»[5]

This «original standpoint» is presented as the revelation of a *conceptual void*. Eisenman states in the introduction that his work «cannot fill the void noticeable in contemporary architectural thinking, but it will at least serve to denote the existence of this void, and thus make some contribution to the development of a theory of architectural form.» But how to define architectural form, as opposed to any other sort of form – for instance, a «visual» or «pictorial» concept of form?[6] Whilst Eisenman is writing in the context of the formalism of Clement Greenberg's *Art and Culture* of 1961[7] and Noam Chomsky's formalist *Syntactic Structures* of 1957[8], he is concerned here, and throughout his career, to specify the *specificity* of architecture: what makes architecture pure, what distinguishes it from other disciplines, what brings us to the *essence* of architecture *itself*? For that purpose, he is heavily influenced by the formal analyses carried out by Geoffroy Scott in his 1914 book *The Architecture of Humanism*, cited numerous times in his thesis, as well as the theories of his contemporary at Cambridge Colin Rowe, whose seminal *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* from 1947, although uncited in Eisenman's thesis, takes a similar interest (also influenced by Scott) in an abstract analysis of architectural form, particularly the form of the plan.[9]

He was also counter-influenced by the early work of Christopher Alexander, whose PhD (later to become the book *Notes of the Synthesis of Form*[10]) he had read. Eisenman states: «…the text so

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[4] Vincenzo Scamozzi, *The Idea of a Universal Architecture. Villas and Country Estates*, trans. P.B. Garvin, M.J. Obbink and H.J Scheepmaker, Amsterdam 2003, p. 120.
[5] Peter Eisenman, *The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture* (facsimile reprint), Baden, Switzerland 2006, p. 33.
[6] Ibid., p. 57.
[7] Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, Boston 1961.
[8] Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague/Paris 1957.
[9] Colin Rowe, «Mathematics of the Ideal Villa – Palladio and Le Corbusier compared», in: *Architectural Review*, 1947, p. 101–104.
[10] Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Cambridge, 1964.

infuriated me, that I was moved to do a Ph.D. thesis myself.»[11] The reason for this is evident when we see Alexander's approach to how a particular architectural form comes about:

> The following argument is based on the assumption that physical clarity cannot be achieved in a form until there is first some programmatic clarity in the designer's mind and actions; and that for this to be possible, in turn, the designer must first trace his design problem to its earliest functional origins and be able to find some sort of pattern in them. I shall try to outline a general way of stating design problems which draws attention to these functional origins […][12]

Alexander here assumes that *function* is the key to and reason for particular architectural form, and this is precisely what Eisenman cannot abide. Later in his career Alexander reverses and takes instead the view that *feeling* is at the origin of form.[13] Eisenman, by contrast, wishes to posit a concept of architectural form that is autonomous from such external concerns, be they function or feeling or indeed any other putative origin such as history or myth. For Eisenman, the essence of architecture is a specifically architectural form, unconnected and unsubordinated to any other criteria separate from that essence; only by reaching such a concept of form can we hope to have a «rational»[14], logically consistent[15] and «universally valid»[16] criteria for architecture, as he repeatedly and consistently states.

We meet here one of the reasons why Eisenman is, and should be, regarded as a truly seminal thinker in architectural theory. The idea that architecture is, or has the potential to properly be, an *autonomous* discipline has driven a complete sub-set of architectural theory over the last half a century.[17] Even where this concept of architecture is not acceded to, or is strongly opposed, there is no doubt that it has frequently framed the debate up to the present day and the publication of Pier Vittorio Aureli's *Project of Autonomy*[18] and *Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*.[19]

Eisenman posits as follows this autonomy of architectural form (and the concept will not change for him over the following decades):

> To understand the conceptual basis of architectural form, it is necessary to isolate those properties which relate to generic form in its architectural context. These would be volume, mass, surface and movement: movement being considered as a property of generic form, essential to the experience of any architectural situation. These properties will provide the basic vocabulary for a formal language […][20]

Note the use of the word «situation» here: what Eisenman means by situation is *not* the same thing as the phenomenological or hermeneutic use of the term earlier in this paper. For such a reading the movement of which he speaks would be the movement of the participant within the architecture. This is not the type of movement Eisenman is referring to: rather - and this is essential to his

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[11] «Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture», debate between Peter Eisenman and Christopher Alexander, in: *Lotus International,* 1983*,* nr. 40 , p. 60.
[12] Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Cambridge 1964, p. 15.
[13] Eisenman/Alexander 1983 (as note 11), p. 61.
[14] Eisenman 2006 (as note 5), p. 27.
[15] Ibid., p. 15.
[16] Ibid. p. 19.
[17] See for instance Robert E. Somol, *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avante-Garde in America*, New York 1997; or *Perspecta. Mining Autonomy*, June 2002, Vol. *33*.
[18] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy. Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*, Princeton 2008.
[19] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibiliy of an Absolute Architecture*, Cambridge 2011.
[20] Eisenman 2006 (as note 5), p. 57.

understanding of architectural form, architecture in general and the possibilities of architectural creation – he is referring to a movement of *volume itself*. For Eisenman, architectural volume, *as form*, moves, and this is what distinguishes it *as essentially architectural*:

> It is necessary to the development of this thesis to consider architecture in terms of volume rather than space… The essential difference between the terms is that volume can be thought of in a dynamic sense: it is particularized, defined and contained space. It can be thought of as both exerting a pressure and capable of resisting pressures exerted upon it… Volume is the dynamic condition of space […][21]

Eisenman is not speaking metaphorically here; he is positing a strange, bastard idea that volume, in and of itself, implies or creates or acts as impetus to movement. Architectural volume, itself, moves. This pathetic fallacy of architectural form is not new in Eisenman; he cites Scott's words from 1914: «[…] these masses are capable like ourselves of pressure and resistance», and this way of writing goes back at least as far as Heinrich Wölfflin. Eisenman, however, is the first to make this idea so explicit within architectural theory, and this explicitness makes clear that what is at stake is not simply the use of words, but the ontology of architecture.

As Robin Evans states, «the hallucination of a transcendental yet entirely corporeal world is involved» here «when we think of buildings as *animated*»[22], and by «transcendental» Evans means not the Kantian *a priori* conditions of experience, but a synonym for supernatural or spiritual. There is, in other words, and belying this theory's avowed rationality, a deep mysticism and distance from the Real which is, in the end, the mysticism of all formalisms. Now it is precisely in his review of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** that Evans makes these comments, for, as Stan Allen notes, what happens with Eisenman's analysis of architectural form is that «the means of *interpreting* things are recycled as a model for *making* things,»[23] and this movement from *tools for analysis* to *tools for creation* is already implied in the historical movement outlined above from Wölfflin's late 19th century formalist art/architecture historical theories, through Scott's 1914 *Architecture of Humanism*, Rowe's *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa*, Rudolf Wittkower's 1949 *Architectural Principals in the Age of Humanism*[24] (also cited in Eisenman's PhD, and which had been influenced by Rowe's article of a few years earlier) and finally Eisenman himself, where the preceding analyses finally get inverted into creative activity. We can perceive a general law here within this juxtaposition of inversion and mysticism. Tools of analysis necessarily involve an abstraction from reality. When those tools are inverted into tools of creation a mysticism results both from the distance between what the abstraction is claiming to *do* and breadth of what actually happens in creation, and from the tendency to impute a pathetic fallacy to the tools as if it were they which somehow achieve or direct the creative act.

Now we find it is the mystical-formal (a-)logic of moving volumes that tells the story or process of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S***'s creation**;** together with a second mystical principal – that volumes can mark and leave traces on each other; and a third – that these formal systems have «their own self-generated laws».[25] This process is outlined thoroughly, and without ambiguity, in the essay by Nina Hofer accompanying both exhibitions of the work; it gives a complete description of the process by which it is possible to «construct» ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** – in her words, «a score of its process» (just as a piece

[21] Ebd., p. 59.
[22] Robin Evans, «Not to be used for wrapping purposes», in: *AA Files,* 1985, vol. 10, p. 72.
[23] Stan Allen, «Trace Elements», in: *Tracing Eisenman*, ed. by Cynthia Davidson, London 2006. Allen also uses the above quote from Robin Evans, for the same reasons as I do.
[24] Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principals in the Age of Humanism*, London 1949.
[25] Eisenman 2006 (as note 5), p. .89.

of music has a score).[26] According to the PhD thesis one must start (in making as in analysis) with basic forms.[27] This means, at the time of the PhD, the square or the cube (both the PhD and the Folio of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** are published in square format for this reason). Twenty years later the starting point is now more complex and this complexity relates to the peculiar position which the project holds within Eisenman's whole *oeuvre*. It sits at a turning point. On the one hand it is the culmination of twenty years of architectural projects since his PhD thesis, running through the projects *House I* through to *House XI*, terminating that series and representing perhaps the apogee of the rationalism evident in the PhD. From then on a dramatic change is evident; one only has to compare ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** with the much more complex and apparently poetic work for the 1985 Venice Biennale (also presented in an Architectural Association box) *Moving Arrows, Eros and other Errors*.[28] On the other hand it represents a turn *away* from the rationality announced in the PhD, and the incorporation into Eisenman's thought of the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. This is made clear by Jeffrey Kipnis in the accompanying essay:

> Eisenman's original goal echoed that of the whole of semiological enterprise, a product of structuralism, which seemed finally to have provided *the* methodological basis for a 'science of man'. Not surprisingly, his initial transformations were efforts to analogies the transformational-generative grammar of Noam Chomsky… In the midst of this elusive goal Eisenman began to read the works of Jacques Derrida whose readings, termed 'deconstructions', of the discourse of semiology raised profound questions about the metaphysical assumptions underlying the entire project of semiology […][29]

I return here, supposedly, to Eisenman's article *The Futility of Objects*, written during the creation of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** and quoted from in Nina Hofer's article, where in more succinct terms he makes the same point: «Both composition and transformation contain the idea of original perfection [Eisenman here making reference to the position in his PhD thesis]. The significance of the final form resides in its capacity to reveal its own origins. Decomposition [which Eisenman, influenced by deconstruction, is positing in opposition to transformation and composition] presumes that origins, ends and the process itself are elusive and complex rather than stable, simple and pure.» I say «supposedly», because although these words are presented by Hofer as being quoted from Eisenman, in fact only the last sentence is present in the published version of *The Futility of Objects*; furthermore, as Kipnis points out, «Mr Eisenman perpetrates an intentional subterfuge by listing his editorial assistant, Nina Hofer, as 'author' of these texts…»[30] Under the influence of Derrida's well-known questioning of the idea of origin (from his 1962 *Introduction to Husserl's Origin of Geometry* on), Eisenman is here confusing the relation of author to text by mis-representing the author and mis-quoting his own writing about «origins». The pure and rational account from his PhD meets here its deconstruction. This concern has to be translated into the architecture of ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** itself, since *that* decomposition process must necessarily start somewhere – it, too, must have a (questioned) origin.

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[26] Nina Hofer, «**F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S**» , in: ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S***, London 1985, p. 3.
[27] Ibid., p. 87.
[28] Peter Eisenman, *Moving Arrows, Eros and other Errors* (Architectural Association Box 3), London 1986.
[29] Jeffrey Kipnis, «Architecture Unbound – Consequences of the recent work of Peter Eisenman», in: ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S***, London 1985, p. 14–15. The extent to which Eisenman's turn at this point reflects or stimulates a broader turn within the putative avant-garde of western architecture, and a nexus of events and connections around the mid-1980s – such as the interconnection between Leo Castelli's *follies* exhibition, Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette follies and the sudden irruption of Derrida into architectural theory, is outside the scope of this article.
[30] Kipnis 1985 (as note 29), p. 20.

Eisenman invokes the concept of the void in order to attempt to achieve this. The built model and the drawings have to be interpreted through Niner Hofer's/Eisenman's essay/score in order to be able to be understood because part of what we see as a «physical thing» in the model or see as part of the drawings is given the designation «void». Without the «score» the project as such does not exist, so that it only exists in the interplay between the score, the drawings, the model and the interpretant – the person interpreting it. Referring to figure 3, which shows the first and second stages of the four «decompositional» stages of the project, we see that this supposed non-object «originates» in a large «El» shape (a cube with the corner cut out) which is a present solid, and a smaller inverted El which is a «present void». In turn, these are set within a ground which has the trace (ie an apparent hole) of a void El (twice the size of the large present solid El) cut out of it.

The project proceeds as a process through four stages of decomposition similar to the first two. During each stage, the present, absent, solid or void elements overlap, and according to whether the one or the other is deemed «passive» or «active», a combinatory table determines what type the next stage will be; for instance, a presence over a presence gives an absence and an active void over a passive solid creates a solid, whereas *vice versa* it creates a void. Previous stages leave what Eisenman calls «notations» or «traces» on subsequent ones, including in the form of grids dividing the elements into quarters which have the appearance, in the «final» model (although Eisenman notes that the process could continue), of windows or a curtain wall. There is also a notation of colour, whereby the larger El is red and the smaller green, the intensity of these colours being inversely related to the size, so that in the coloured prints the large El is initially pale and becomes deep red as it shrinks, whereas the small El is initial deep green and becomes pale as it expands.

All of this is outlined in exhaustive detail in the Eisenman/Hofer essay/score. The exhaustive quality derives in part from what happens whenever a physical process is described step-by-step in words: the recalcitrance of the physical results in extremely extended descriptions which are difficult to understand, however straightforward was the «reality» to which they relate. The apparent rigour and complexity of the description masks the aforementioned inherent mysticism of presences and voids that move (of their own volition or according to their own logic), have an effect on each other (outside human agency) and generate as they proceed their own laws.

Perhaps the hidden mysticism or animism of this work is one with its extraordinary influence. As Stan Allen notes, ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** is an exemplary instance of what is known in architectural theory and the practice and studio teaching of the putative architectural avant-garde of the last thirty years as «process work». This term covers a method of architectural design whereby the process of design is used both to justify *and mark* the end result. This is what ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** undoubtedly achieves: the final model and drawings are marked by (as well as justified by) the process through which the Els went. We meet here another of the reasons why Eisenman is, and should be, regarded as a truly seminal thinker in architectural theory. As Allen states, «any time we see work that justifies itself by reference to the history of the design process… we are in the territory first mapped out by Eisenman […]»[31]

What I would like to argue, however, is that it is precisely something like *a fear of the void* which leads to this hegemony of process. This fear is like the fear I described at the outset, a visceral sense of vertigo that has a bodily or sensual aspect and affect and of which the reaction to a void or atrium within a building is only one example. It is indeed related to Derrida's deconstruction of origins; it is the fear with which we face the void of the blank sheet of paper, the empty computer screen and any moment during which we must *create something new*. As Slavoj Žižek notes, «traditional notions of the Void always confront the problem of how and why the Void is disturbed so that particular

[31] Allen 2006 (as note 23), p. 62–63.

entities emerge out of it (and their answer is mostly the evocation of some inexplicable loss of balance)»[32]. The problem of the creation of something new – in architecture as in all else – is the problem of how to engender this loss of balance over the void and then how to prolong this loss of balance in order to continue to create. What process work in architecture substitutes for this loss of balance is the deliberately engendered fiction of a process that both *gives* and *justifies* the end result of the design. It does this by means of something which has an ostensible logic, relying upon a mysticism or animism of form – the idea that form or volume or a presence or absence or void can have in themselves a dynamism, an effect and a set of laws.

In this sense, ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** and its integral texts represent at once the depreciation of the affective void (as we saw with Scamozzi's *Fabrica Fino*) - that is, a depreciation of the void as the sign and reality of architecture as a people-work or as an event involving that which we all are - and also the depreciation of the void of the creation of the new. To depreciate the one is to depreciate the other, since they are intimately related. It depreciates the void of creation in the name of process, and in thus foregrounding the process of making the work it depreciates its affective after-effects. But ***F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S*** at the same time tells us that it works with the void, it thematises the void to an extent perhaps unparalleled in the history of architecture, and it is to the poignancy of this disjunction that we should, finally, impute the importance of this project.

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[32] Slavoj Žižek, *Incontinence of the Void – Economico-Philosophical Spandrels*, Cambridge 2017, p. 20.

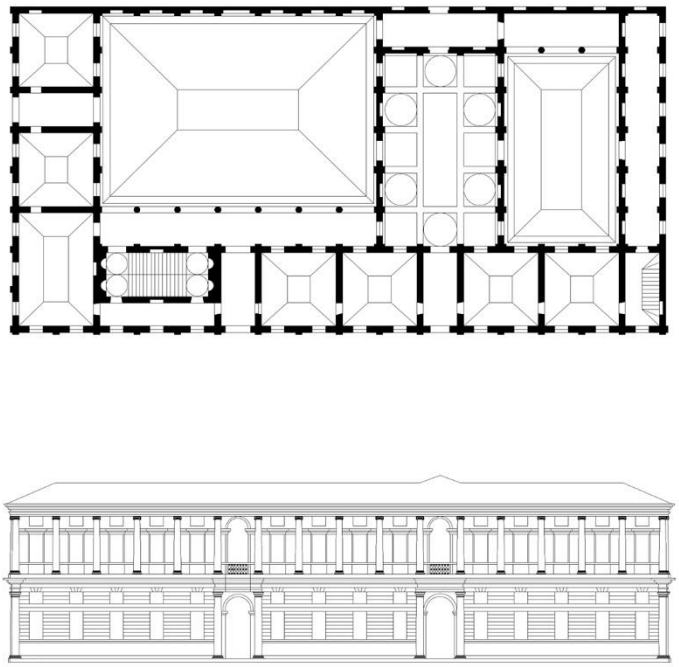
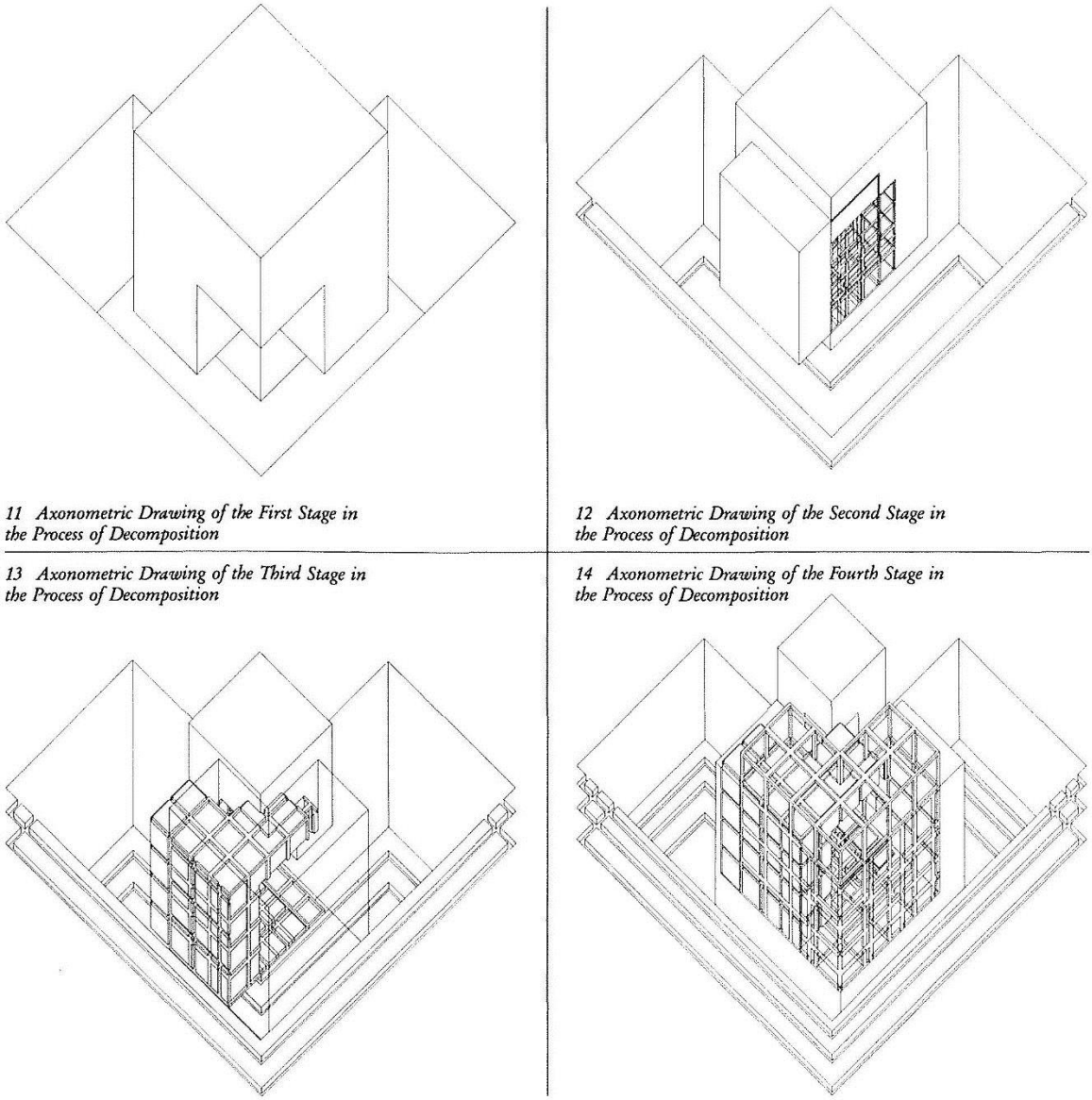


Figure 1: Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548-1616), plan and elevation of the Fabrica del Sig. Bortolomeo Fino, Bergamo, 1611.

[figure copyright Scala/MOMA and not for publication other than in original journal]

Figure 2: Peter Eisenman, **F**in D'**O**u **T H**ou **S**, 1983, model, DIGITAL IMAGE © 1983, The Museum of Modern Art/Scala, Florence.



11 Axonometric Drawing of the First Stage in the Process of Decomposition

12 Axonometric Drawing of the Second Stage in the Process of Decomposition

13 Axonometric Drawing of the Third Stage in the Process of Decomposition

14 Axonometric Drawing of the Fourth Stage in the Process of Decomposition

Figure 3: Peter Eisenman, **F**in D'**O**u **T** **H**ou **S**, image from Folio V, London: Architectural Association, 1985.

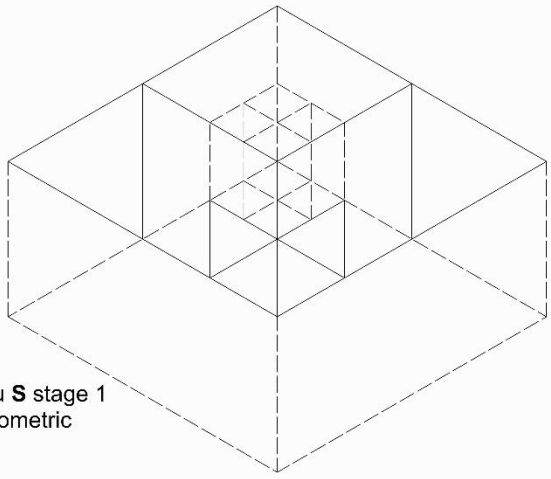
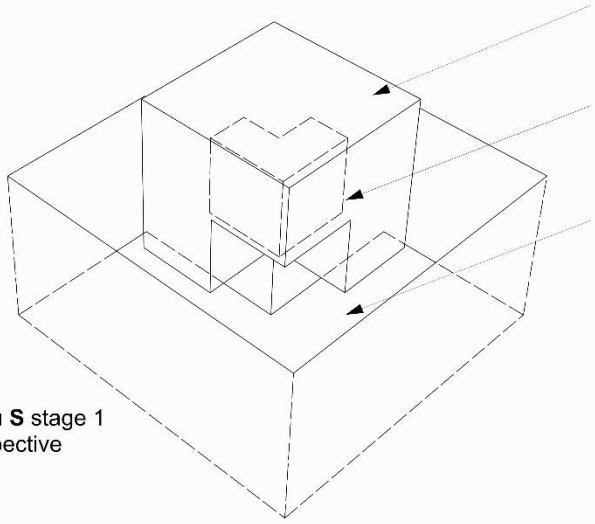


Figure 3a
Fin D'**O**u **T** **H**ou **S** stage 1
Shown in axonometric

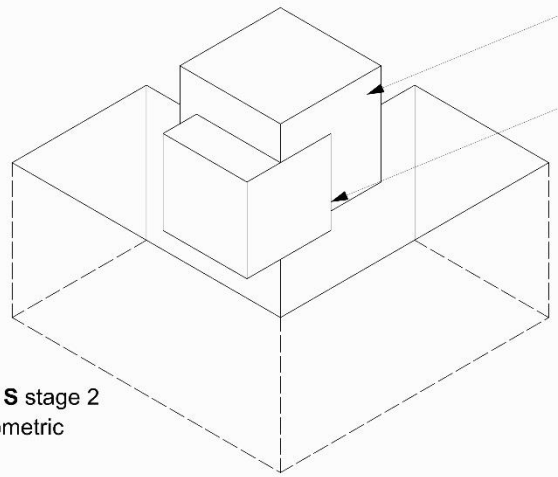


large "EI": a present solid. An "EI" is a cube with a cube half the size removed from one corner. By "half the size" I mean that the sides are half the length (which means 1/8th ($1/2^3$) of the volume)

small "EI": a present void. This is half the size of the large EI, is upside down and touches the large EI at their centre points

this hole in the ground is called "the trace of a void EI", ie it is formed by cutting away the ground using a void EI which is twice the size of the large EI. (The trace of upper part of this even larger EI is not visible - it is only the lower half which affects something by cutting a hole in the ground.)

Figure 3b
Fin D'**O**u **T** **H**ou **S** stage 1
Shown in perspective



large "EI" now reduced in size after stage 2 of the "decomposition"

small "EI" now increased in size and shifted in one direction (one spatial coordinate) by a distance of one half its size, after stage 2 of the "decomposition"

Figure 3b
Fin D'**O**u **T** **H**ou **S** stage 2
Shown in axonometric

Figure 4: Peter Eisenman (redrawn by the author), **F**in D'**O**u **T** **H**ou **S**, 1983, drawings of stages one and two.