

MOVEMENTS OF DESIGN MEDIATION

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ABSTRACT: Mediators create movement. And as Deleuze showed, mediations are new forms of coexistence and creation. To examine what constitutes spatial mediations of design, this paper initiates a study of the future V&A East Collection and Research Centre in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London. The centre will display V&A storage and archives, thus making the design objects and the immaterial archival knowledge and work processes a subject for sensuous and embodied experience through spatial design, material presence and temporal events. The designers are Diller Scofidio + Renfro; an architecture studio known for cross-disciplinary projects that investigate the visual, spatial and bodily across media such as installation, video, sculpture, theatre, performance, exhibitions, text, building and urban design. Their work demonstrates a disciplinary openness, an experimental approach to architectural time and space, and an interest in the virtual. Such qualities are also present in Cedric Price's influential but never built Fun Palace project developed during the 1960s and designed for a site at Mill Meads - close to the future V&A East. The composition of the Collection and Research Centre's function, the V&A as institution, the site near Mill Meads, and the choice and legacy of architecture suggests an entanglement of potential design cultural mediations, values and flows of meaning to be experienced and perceived as part of the realization. The contribution of this paper is to tentatively explore these relations as virtual and processual aspects of the project.

Keywords: architecture, relations, William James, V&A East, Brian Massumi

Relations as making

In the essay "The Thing and its Relations" from *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, William James makes an influential argumentation for acknowledging the reality of immediate experience and the immediately experienced conjunctive relations that make it full of both oneness and manyness (James 2008, 43). James describes immediate experience as a 'that', not yet a definite 'what'. A that, which is "ready to be all sorts of whats; full both of oneness and of manyness, but in respects that don't appear; changing throughout, yet so confusedly that its phases interpenetrate and no points, either of distinc-

tion or of identity can be caught. Pure experience in this state is but another name for feeling or sensation." (43). Things are conjunct in the states and flows of immediate experience whereas separation comes with emphases, fixed identities, and abstraction when we start to verbalize, describe, categorize and, thus, intellectualize.¹ Reflecting upon this as a pragmatist and a radical empiricist, James is of the opinion that "those [intellectual products] are most true which most successfully dip back into some particular wave or wavelet. [...] Only in so far as they lead us, successfully or unsuccessfully back into sensible experience again, are our abstracts and universals true or false at all." (James 2008, 46). The pragmatic significance of making a practical difference is regarded as being significant to the pragmatic method and is, according to James, "a simple test" (James 1981, 27). In the lectures on *Pragmatism*, he explains: "There can *be* no difference anywhere that doesn't *make* a difference elsewhere – no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in conduct consequent upon that fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somewhen. The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one." (James 27).

¹ In the beginning of the essay "The Thing and its Relations" William James writes:

Experience in its immediacy seems perfectly fluent. The active sense of living which we all enjoy, before reflection shatters our instinctive world for us, is self-luminous and suggests no paradoxes. Its difficulties are disappointments and uncertainties. They are not intellectual contradictions.

When the reflective intellect gets at work, however, it discovers incomprehensibilities in the flowing process. Distinguishing its elements and parts, it gives them separate names, and what it thus disjoins it can not easily put together.

[...]

But the flux of it no sooner comes than it tends to fill itself with emphases, and these salient parts become identified and fixed and abstracted; so that experience now flows as if shot through with adjectives and nouns and preposition and conjunctions. Its purity is only a relative term, meaning the proportional amount of un-verbalized sensation which it still embodies.

(James 2008, 43-44).

Throughout the book *Semblance and Event. Activist Philosophy and the Occurant Arts*, philosopher and affect-theorist Brian Massumi relates to James' thinking. Massumi emphasizes the importance of understanding James' approach to pragmatism through his radical empiricism in order to fully appreciate the force of James' work and to avoid a purely utilitarian understanding of what making a difference could mean. Massumi writes:

Classically, objects and their associated operations are in the world while percepts registering them are in the subject. What James is saying, by contrast, is that *both are in the transition*. Things and their experience are together in transition. There is no oscillation in the theory between extremes of objectivism and subjectivism because the object and subject fall on the same side of a shared movement. The question is what distinction *their movement makes*, according to which they fall on the same side." (Massumi 2011, 30).

The example Massumi refers to, inspired by James, is a simple act of describing a building to a friend. The description may be received with skepticism by the friend and there is nothing else to do than "[...] walk together to the building and you point out convergences between what you had said and what you both are now experiencing. According to Massumi, for James [...] the demonstrative pointing-out is less an external referencing of an object by a subject than an indexing of two subjects to the same phase in the 'ambulatory' movement." (30). Thus, the example illustrates a movement of sharing rather than the pointing towards an object. The performative of a sharing in the pointing-out is an event, which Massumi describes as a "unity" – or one-ness and "a rolling together of subjective and objective elements into a mutual participation co-defining the same dynamic." (30). As long as this event of sharing and of pointing-out lasts there is oneness; then the unity "resolves back into differentials, and the movement continues" (30). Such movements of sharing and relating are considered by Massumi as being continuously "de-defining". Whatever the object may be, it can be taken up again, actualized through a new situation and context and through

this event and oneness, unfold differentials. It will, thus, de-define "[...] but in a new capacity, as an object no longer of skepticism but of dispute. Whether the object is strictly the 'same' as taken up differentially by the movement the second time as it was the first is not a question of concern to pragmatism. What is of interest is that unfolding differentials phase in and out of integrating events in which they figure as dynamically interlinked poles – that there is a punctuated oneness in a many-ness ongoing." (Massumi 2011, 31).

To further develop how things and their experience can be understood as being together in transition, Massumi takes the example of giving a gift. The relation that develops (in) this process runs through the giver, the recipient and the gift together as an experienced *that*. It is triggered coming together of different sorts of things such as tendencies, desires, obligations, sensual qualities, fragrances, and sparkles. Massumi writes:

What holds the holdings together is a oneness-in-manyness of a moving on. It is what runs through the parts and their holdings, without itself being held; what is unmissably experienced without being seen. *That* - the relation - is not in the giver. Nor is it in the gift. Nor the recipient. It is what runs through them all, holding them together in the same dynamic. It is integrally many things: 'concatenated and continuous.' It is whatever tendency impels or compels the giving. It is the desire to please another, or to bind another or oneself. It is an obligation, which obliges in return. For a giving is never solitary. It calls for more. It is serial, ongoing. It is in the conventions that define the timing and sequence, what gift is desirable or appropriate, and when. It is also in the sensual qualities of the gift (unromantically, its 'sense data'). It is the fragrance or the sparkle. It is all of these things, folded into and around each other to form an experiential envelope, a field, 'full of oneness and manyness in respects that don't appear' - incorporeal medium holding the gift up for the giving and holding the successive holdings to the same event. Holding-up/holding-together, integral unseen medium of suspension: *that* does it. (Massumi 2011, 35)

The distinction that the shared movements and relational processes of objects and subjects make is virtual-actual. (Massumi, 33). In the event, they are only virtual-

ly object and subject, because, as we can understand from Massumi's example of giving, there is oneness and manyness, but the different parts are not separable. The understanding of *what* each part are is an effect of the event. "The truth is in the making." (35).

A relational site

The aim of this paper is to tentatively explore relations that can be perceived and experienced as part of an architectural project, which is currently in the process of making. The project is the Victoria & Albert Museum's future Research and Collection Centre in East London, which will be one of the institution's public facilities in V&A East, together with a new museum at Stratford Waterfront. While at this point, I am writing about a place that is not yet finished and available for us to visit and in which case we are not able to experience the result as such, the processual state of the project does not prevent us from having perceptions and experiences of it. Visualizations and texts that describe the project in its initial phases have been published online, e.g. on websites belonging to the Victoria and Albert museum and the architects; and newspaper articles and architectural magazines are some of the other places through which we can form an impression of the project. My background for writing about the project in these initial stages is further supported by observations and field-notes I made during a visit to the site and to the V&A in August 2019. In the following, I will provide a more detailed description of the plans for the Research and Collection Centre as well as a presentation of the architects behind. However, first it is important to offer some background information regarding the relevance of exploring the relations of an ongoing project, and how it can be considered part of contemporary tendencies in connection with architecture today.

The realization of new buildings and of transformations in our built environment are processes with a considerable duration and a long-term impact. Whereas the aim and the expected result, i.e. the completed

building or space, has often been the center of attention for builders, architects, users, and critics, a new tendency indicates a significant change. Recent years' development has shown that attention is increasingly directed towards exploring the potentials of the realization processes themselves through initiatives such as temporary constructions of information centres, guided tours in the area, exhibitions of scale models and samples of materials. If we follow such processes (e.g. Yaneva; Lash & Lury), research can tell us about different ways of affecting and engaging, about ways of creating contextual and cultural relations, of adapting to transformations, and about how habits and perceptions are challenged and changed. The development of process activities, structures, and initiatives is connected to a broader tendency expressed in efforts to activate areas in transformation through temporary use and instant urbanism. Researchers, architects and urban practitioners have addressed the temporary as a rich possibility and a positive force for exploring city life through short term projects (Bishop & Williams 2012; Bishop 2015; Marling & Kiib 2011); as a strategic tool for urban transformations and as events that can bring about new developments (e.g. Oswalt, Overmeyer & Misselwitz 2013; Haydn & Temel 2006).

While important work, as previously shown, is done to connect pragmatism and radical empiricism to contemporary developments within arts, politics and philosophy by Massumi, an architectural approach to relations is developed by professor of architectural theory Albena Yaneva, while also taking inspiration from James' work (Yaneva 2012; Yaneva & Latour 2008). Yaneva explores and maps architectural agency as the connections that architecture is part of and she investigates the political through describing the practical differences that the architectural makes through its different actors and networks. (Yaneva, 2017; 2012). Focusing on the process rather than, for example, the building as an end result and as an object, her work contributes to an understanding of architecture as taking place through pragmatic processes and networks (Yaneva, 2017; 2012; 2009a;

2009b). According to Yaneva, architecture should be analyzed through connections that “[...] flow out of these streams of experience of designers, constructors, users and citizens related to the building.” (Yaneva 2012, 106). Her work, furthermore, encourages us to “[...] foreground the practicalities, materialities and events of buildings.” (Yaneva 2017, 7).

In 2019, the design and curatorial planning of the V&A East Collection and Research Centre is still being developed. The Collection and Research Centre is expected to open in 2023 in a location and interior space designed by the American architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro with Austin-Smith: Lord as the local, executive architects. The Centre will display V&A storage and archives, thus making the design objects and the immaterial archival knowledge and work processes a subject for sensuous and embodied experience. This will be possible through spatial and curatorial decisions that enhance flexibility and dynamics in the different ways visitors will be able to encounter and study particular design from the archives and in the physical and sensual ways the archival material will be stored and presented. According to recently published material in the internationally acclaimed Japanese journal *Architecture + Urbanism* (a+u 2019), the Centre is considered to become a “purpose-built home for 250.000 objects and an additional 917 archives from the V&A’s collection of fashion, textiles, furniture, theater and performance, metalwork, ceramics, glass, sculpture, architecture, paintings and product design.” (a+u, 2019). Objects on different scales will be on public display spanning from smaller objects to actual parts of architecture, which can be experienced as 1:1 interior and architectural elements. These elements are planned to be integrated parts of the spaces and of the interior movement patterns, designed by the architects to lead visitors through the space. The 1:1 archival objects include an office designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for American businessman Edgar J. Kaufmann Jr. in the 1930’s, a ceiling from the Altamira Palace in Spain (a+u, 2019) and a section of the Robin Hood Gardens in London. The Robin Hood Gardens social housing project was

designed by Alison and Peter Smithson in the 1960’s and recently demolished. On the occasion of the demolition, the Victoria & Albert Museum chose to acquire a three-story section of the complex as an historic example of British Brutalist architecture.² In the Collection and Research Centre, archival objects, which can be accessible to researchers and other interested are kept in different forms of storage, conceptualized by the architects as: “hacked open shelving”, “two way pull-out racks”, “ganged rolling high density storage”, and “hacked rolling storage” (a+u 2019).

The V&A East Collection and Research Centre will be based in the already existing building *Here East*, which was previously a press and broadcast centre during the London Summer Olympics in 2012. The Here East building is now a home to several privately-owned companies, workshops, and studios. With a post-olympic profile as a creative and innovative hub, Here East is branded as a ‘home for the makers’, according to the information on its website (<https://hereeast.com/> 2019). Current tenants in the Here East complex include among many others: Studio Wayne MacGregor working with dance and technology, a fabrication, robotics, and prototyping facility of UCL’s Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment and Faculty of Engineering Sciences, and MatchesFashion.com – a retailer of luxury fashion brands such as Stella McCartney, Gucci, Alexander McQueen to name a few. (<https://hereeast.com/whoshere/matchesfashioncom/>). As a business complex adjacent to the Lea River, Here East connects to the local area through public and commercial programmes such as bars and cafés, and through public maker activities that are mainly targeted towards children. On this level of relationality the V&A places it self in a carefully selected context with a creative and innovative profile. Reflecting upon this contextuality from the perspective of being an outside observer, it is obvious that it creates multiple potentials for connecting aspects of the practic-

² Accessed October 6, 2019 at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/robin-hood-gardens>

es, spaces, and archives of Collection and Research Centre to a variety of aspects connected to the creative businesses and artforms. We can imagine relations forming, for example, between dance, choreography and V&A exhibitions; between fashion and V&A archives, or between prototyping for the future and design history. The virtual field of the 'whats' this relationality may actualize is manifold but at the same time toned by the decisions that have been made regarding placing a part of the V&A in this context. During the next years, the V&A Collection and Research Centre will, consequently, be an active part of forming multifaceted context-relations and a complexity of design relations at V&A East. Parts of these relations concern the collaborations with local people. Some thoughts regarding collaborative initiatives are expressed by the chief curator Catherine Ince:

To ensure V&A East is rooted in its neighborhood by the time it opens in 2023, we will continue to build relationships across the Olympic boroughs, and test ideas through conversation and collaborative creative projects. With local people helping shape its vision and programmes, V&A East will be a place for everyone representative of the cultures, communities and creativity of east London and beyond.³

Architectural movements of virtual-actual

Diller Scofidio + Renfro is an architecture studio known for several artistic, urban, architectural, and cross-disciplinary projects that investigate the visual, spatial and bodily across media such as installation, video, sculpture, theatre, performance, exhibitions, text, building and urban design. The original founders Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio have worked together since the 1970's on projects that include, among many others: *Traffic* (1981), a 24-hour installation at Columbus Circle using orange traffic cones; *The Rotary Notary and his Hot Plate* (1987), a multimedia theater work in collaboration

with Susan Mosakowski and Creation Production Co. for the occasion of the Duchamp Centennial and inspired by Duchamp's artwork "The Large Glass"; and *Jet Lag* (1999), a multimedia theater work based on true stories of people detached from usual time-space conventions. Recent projects include the *Blur Building* (2002) which is an architecture of atmosphere, fog and water, responding to shifting weather conditions; *The High Line* (2003-2019), with James Corner Field Operations and Piet Oudolf, a public park built on an abandoned elevated railroad in Manhattan; and *The Shed* (2019), a cultural institution in New York with galleries, theater and rehearsal spaces, creative lab and space for large-scale performances, installations, and events.⁴

In a recently published interview, Diller and Scofidio both reflect on their cross-disciplinary oeuvre and admit to having not initially wanted to become architects but instead artists working more liberated from the constraints that follow with the traditions and the heroes and masters of the discipline:

Previously, I was interested in photography and timebased media, but I started to think in three dimensions. So I decided to get an architecture degree, but not with the intent of joining the profession. My only intent was to make a career in plastic arts and work with sculpture and media in a spatial way. I became keenly interested in working in space and time.

(Elizabeth Diller, a+u, 2019, 7).

Architecture was very enclosing for me at that time. The profession was practiced in a very prescribed way. I came out of the school of the master architects – the heroic, solo figure – so it was rather oppressive to be in architecture when I first started. In fact, I never wanted to be an architect either. I wanted to be a musician. I was very musically inclined. I had played both classical and jazz, and when I decided that I wouldn't be able to earn a living in music, I went to Cooper Union to study art. So I had never really contemplated architecture."

(Ricardo Scofidio, a+u, 2019, 7).

Diller and Scofidio consider a dominant constraint in architecture today to be the temporality of processes,

³ Accessed October 6, 2019 at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/va-east-project>

⁴ Accessed October 6, 2019 at <https://dsrny.com/>

which is far from the outset of their artistic and architectural practice. Buildings take a long time to design, detail and construct – and they usually remain in place for centuries. In the project *The Shed*, inaugurated in 2019, Diller Scofidio + Renfro have managed to incorporate temporal, performative and movable elements in the design of the building's shell, which will be able to transform the spaces temporarily. Thus, this flexibility will directly affect the spectrum of potential usage and, furthermore, create a desired possibility to respond the needs and wishes of the users. The ability to respond to temporary needs in architecture can be considered to work against the materiality, solidity and durability often regarded as key to architecture. But according to Elisabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, questions of temporality and ephemerality are central to developing the agency of architecture:

When Ric and I started, we were working during a time of institutional critique that questioned what could be defined as a space for art. Is it in the museum? Is it in the street? We did a lot of our early independent work on found, borrowed sites. Sometimes we squatted as a form of guerilla architecture. It was often ephemeral – at times only in existence for 24 hours.

(Elisabeth Diller, a+u 2019, 8)

We live in a time where architecture just feels too slow. From the time you have an idea, to the time you design it, to the time that it's constructed and occupied, it's rarely less than five years and oftentimes much longer. Architecture is geo-fixed, it's heavy, it's cumbersome and in place for good. And it's expensive. Reflecting specifically on the challenge for the Shed, architecture is everything that's contrary to contemporary art, which by definition is constantly in flux. The challenge is, how do you build a permanent building for a discipline that is constantly evolving? The Shed is a response to that question.

(Elisabeth Diller, a+u 2019, 16)

In their design of *The Shed* the architects have taken inspiration from the Fun Palace designed by the influential British architect Cedric Price together with the theater director Joan Littlewood. Just as Price envisioned would be the case in his project, the Shed integrates

variability in use, scale, modes of movement, use of technology and is dependent on the needs of artists and other users of the building's facilities.

(<https://dsrny.com/project/the-shed>)

During the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014, elements of Cedric Price's visions for the Fun Palace were transformed into an exhibition form at the Swiss Pavilion, where drawings and models of Price's work were exhibited together with work by the Swiss sociologist Lucius Burckhardt. The exhibition *A stroll through a fun palace* was a performative archive. In the main room of the exhibition, trolleys with models and drawings from architecture projects would be drawn out and presented to the interested visitors – who also became participants – by the guides working in the pavilion. As part of the public programme in connection with the exhibition, Elisabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio participated in a conversation with curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist and presented their work on *The Shed* as indicative of Price's influence on contemporary architecture.⁵ During the recording of the talk and the conversation, Diller and Scofidio continuously reflect upon the inspiration they have taken from Price's work on the Fun Palace and Scofidio mentions that the wonderful thing about the fact that the Fun Palace was never built is that it is possible to continually reinvent it and in that respect, it continually changes and stays fresh.⁶ We can understand this as an appreciation and awareness of the virtuality of the project; its continued potential for actualizing and showing what it can be in the hands of these architects, working on this specific architectural programme, with these flexible functions, on this building site, etc. It's making is in this sense relational and event-full.

The ideas of creating movable archives at the V&A Research and Collection Centre can, from the perspective of this paper, be connected to the profound interest we see in the architectural practice of Diller Scofidio + Renfro to work with temporalities, to work with tech-

⁵ The Shed was inaugurated in 2019.

⁶ Accessed October 6, 2019 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVqKETR7FXU>

nologies, performativity and with different modes of expression and experience. In this regard, what can potentially become a living archive through bringing ideas of ephemerality, change and movement into the experience of V&A has an important predecessor and a source of inspiration in the Fun Palace. The project envisioned an architecture that includes time and events as central to experience and it has been inspirational in the developments of architectural projects since the 1960's. Although the Fun Palace was never realized, its ideas of creating a place for leisure, fun and education within an architecture that would adapt to events and needs from the users, without static functional programmes or fixed activities has proven meaningful. In the Fun Palace, the architect decided that it should have no specific form and no fixed floor plan. In an interview with the Price scholar Stanley Mathews, Price refers to the Fun Palace as an 'anti-building' and, according to Mathews, he even regarded himself as an 'anti-architect':

The varied and ever-changing activities will determine the form of the site. To enclose these activities the anti-building must have equal flexibility. Thus the prime motivation of the area is caused by the people and their activities and the resultant form is continually dependent on them. The fact that such enjoyment does take place within the pathetic areas in London's slums gives a clue to the immense potential for enjoyment in an area which encourages random movement and variable activities.

(Mathews 2007, 73)

The ideas of variation, flexibility and an architectural form, which is based on people's activities and their wishes, desires and tendencies will also be traceable in the V&A Collection and Research through the different types and modes of storage through which visitors will experience the design objects. Dependent on whether a visitor comes in a professional capacity as a researcher or designer to the Centre and wishes to study a particular design object from the archive or he or she simply wishes to experience the public exhibition of a particular objects from the archive the person will experience a space affected by the objects in question. Experiences

with and perceptions of design and architectural projects and transformations are affected in this living or performative archive where things are changing and moving. The processuality and the relationality of making will be expressed in the bringing together of dissimilar elements – regarding factors such as scale, form, use, origin, technology and materiality. Thus, a connection between the architectural visions and practices of Cedric Price and those of Diller Scofidio + Renfro can be traced in the different forms of storage indicated in the design for the V&A Collection and Research Centre. Another and more exterior connection between the Fun Palace and the Here East as a whole is the location in East London near the Lea River where the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Parc is located.⁷ Efforts were made back in 1964 to develop the Fun Palace in the context of a larger scale Lea Valley Development Plan. (Mathews 2007, 100-141). This may explain the visions indicated by Cedric Price in the quote above when he refers to bringing enjoyment to the poorer areas of East London.

Mediation as exchange and becoming

As suggested previously, building and transformation processes form a complex relationality, which is both creative, communicative, and experiential. In the following, mediation will be introduced as a conceptual approach for exploring and analyzing this complex relationality. In this case, mediation does not indicate a connection to particular technologies or the representation of contents in media but is more broadly understood as creative relations of mutual resonance and exchange (Deleuze, 1995). In *Mediators*, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze thinks about mediation as relations of mutual resonance and exchange (Deleuze 199, 121-134). Thus, mediation occurs when someone or something (the mediator) enters an existing movement and does it in the mediator's own way. This means that mediation

⁷ Accessed October 6, 2019 at https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/-/media/park-map_2019_a4.ashx?la=en

should be looked upon as creation, as a movement of continuous becoming and not a simple transmission or representation of something. Deleuze considers everything as happening through exchange and becoming which makes mediators essential as creative parts of relations: "Mediators are fundamental. Creation's all about mediators. Without them, nothing happens. They can be people - artists or scientists for a philosopher; philosophers or artists for a scientist - but things as well, even plants or animals, as in Castaneda. Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you must form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own." (Deleuze 1995, 125). Deleuze's understanding of mediation as creative, relational and exchange is in a way a very basic and may even be quite broad. It is, however, very profound and powerful in reminding us that creation and exchange are parts of what characterizes and forms relations.

In the book *Global Culture Industry – The mediation of things* (Lash & Lury 2007), Celia Lury and Scott Lash's method is to follow the mediation and development of things through writing biographies of cultural objects and brands. They take inspiration from understandings of virtuality as intensity (Lash & Lury 2007, 14-15); a thinking that concerns, for example, brands which is something we cannot experience in itself but rather needs to be actualized in different products for us to experience, sense and feel. Also, architectural and urban space have virtuality and intensities that are actualized in different events; i.e. that become perceptible through objects, materiality etc., so that we can experience them with our senses. The biographical in Lash' and Lury's work draws on the concept of duration developed by Henri Bergson and later Gilles Deleuze, in which differentiation is an expression of the temporality of continuous becoming. This differentiation is experienced from within. Thus, it is not a biography written only through a

sequential narration with an external temporality in which we can consider time as measurement, but most of all a biography of differentiation, of intensities that are actualized and made perceptible in different ways, forms, and events. Compare this to the way Scofidio looks at the Fun Palace when he mentions that it keeps coming back but always changed and always in a different way. In the case of the Shed, in other materials, informed by technology of today, in a completely different setting; or as suggested here, in the archives of the V&A where encounters between design objects, design history and people are rethought. Or think of Massumi's explorations of James' philosophy where the truth is in the making and in the movement of virtual-actual. It is the making itself that unfolds a potential of differentiation and becoming.

What forms relations?

What this paper has explored is how relations and movements of virtual-actual can be considered to characterize the experience of the project in making. We can speculate about, for example, how certain potentials of the context-relations will be actualized or how particular initiatives will bring the V&A as institution in creative contact with the local citizens in East London. In order to reflect upon how such process based on initiatives that involve different users and actors work, it will be relevant to consider the attunement that occurs between people. When referring to the concept *differential attunement*, Massumi looks at what happens when we are immersed in an event together (Manning et.al. 2012). We can be part of the same event together, but we are in the event differently depending on what our tendencies, habits and different potentials are, which Massumi expresses here:

That's what I mean by differential attunement: a collective in-bracing in the immediacy of an affective event, but differently in each case. 'Attunement' refers to the direct capture of attention and energies by the event. That something captures our attention. 'Differential' refers

to the fact that we are each taken into the event from a different angle and move out of it following our own singular trajectories, riding our waves in our own inimitable ways. It's the idea of an event snapping us to attention together, and correlating our diversity to the affective charge that brings and that energizes the whole situation. And it's the idea that this happens at a level where direct bodily reaction and our ability to think are so directly bound up with each other that they can't be separated out yet from each other, or from the energizing of the event.

(Manning et.al. 2012)

Concluding remarks

The V&A East Collection and Research Centre will be a mediator of and through design. Consequently, it is relevant to investigate how spaces, bodies, practices, temporalities, materials, senses and affects are involved. This paper is a starting point where experiences and relations implied in making have been introduced. Architecture and design have agency on different scales: it affects at an intimate scale through the senses and the body, while it, simultaneously, has spatial and political agency in the processes of forming the contexts of lives. However, understandings of immediate experience and relations of oneness and manyness are useful in order to think across such analytical and categorical scales and rather dive into an exploration of the processes embedded in the movements of virtual-actual. Thus, the aim of the paper has been to explore some relations of a project in making perceived across visualizations, photographic material, text, background knowledge, past experiences and plans for the future. It has been to explore how relations are formed and built, and how they suggest potentials for future developments. As such, the relational and processual is a site where we can investigate architectural modalities of mediation. The V&A East Collection and Research Centre points towards an entanglement of potential design cultural mediations, values and flows of meaning to be experi-

enced and perceived as part of the realization. The contribution of this paper is to tentatively explore these relations as virtual and processual aspects of the project and to discuss them as they seem to be: real.

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