

INBETWEENNESS: A CONVERSATION WITH SHANE REINER-ROTH

Shane Reiner-Roth is the curator of the Instagram account @everythingthing, featuring images that express humor and an 'economy of expression'.

-ish Issue Editors (-ish) Since our issue looks into these -ish conditions, we were interested in these weird, accidental or even purposely made moments.

Shane Reiner-Roth (SRR) I was flattered to be a part of this because @everythingthing is the project I've been working on for the longest time, yet I have never had the opportunity to speak about it at length.

(-ish) Can you tell us a little more about your process of selecting images and where you find them?

(SRR) For the first couple of years, I was just finding images that made me laugh or exposed this idea I call the 'economy of expression.'

developers, or others intend to produce something very expressive, grand, or palatial, while at the same time trying to do so very economically.

I was trying to find photos that were 'worth a thousand words,' allowing me to put as little text as possible underneath them.

To answer how I find the images exactly, I find them either by scrolling through social media or typing in specific things I'm thinking about.

(-ish) It's interesting that people who follow your account start to send you images, because that creates a dialogue.

(SRR) I wouldn't have thought that Instagram would be my ideal profile because I'm a writer day-to-day. However, Instagram allows me to do something that I don't get to do in my profession.

(-ish) Going back to the aesthetic condition of your images, can you elaborate on where your interest in this tension between expressive and economic modes of design came from?

(SRR) I started @everythingthing at the end of my undergraduate career, when I was supposed to enter the workforce.

INTENTIONALLY PAST-ish

Mari Kroin

It is hard not to think of the carefully tailored online ads I get, showing boots on a '90s-ish backdrop that have soft-ish edges and a brown-ish tint.

In the new media age, human sentimentality is rendered down to superficial elements: the baby pink of Glossier packaging reminiscent of my preteen collection of plastic Barbie accessories.

The tendency to, and more recently the tactic of, perpetually reverting to reliable satisfactions lives in Derrida's concept of "hauntology."

In their recent 2021 menswear show "Possible Feelings", Prada describes the theme as a "personal wish for contact [and] our urge to exchange and relate.

less about a building in the ground—it became my reaction against the field of architecture.

My attempt to find a sense of humor in architecture was a reaction against the self-seriousness of the field along with its desire for perfection and detail-orientatedness.

I have no interest in insulting the people who produce 'cheap designs' or make mistakes—I think these should be a part of everyday life.

(-ish) It's interesting to see how these images become a momentary escape, a collection of these little moments that break the rules.

(SRR) I like that it's an escape, it's a relief. They kind of break the rules but they work precisely for that reason.

I'm glad we're talking about it under these terms of escapism, because most of the designs I find are perfectly possible and exist in most cases.

(-ish) With this curatorial and celebration of momentary "in-betweenness", that brings us to our next question of what you're trying to achieve from this project.

(SRR) With the writing I publish, I have to have a reason for writing it, along with an argument, evidence, and a conclusion.

licity stills. Ironically, viewers miss out on the material tactility of these spaces, perhaps that was never actually important.

With the coat and its retro-visions in mind, there is tremendous potential to conceive a world profoundly distinct from outdated yet familiar conjectures of the future.

1 Mark Fisher, "What Is Hauntology?," Film Quarterly 1 September 2012; 66 (1): 14–24.

A GUIDE TO ARCHITECTS' FILLER WORDS

Katie Colford

"Basically": This person does not believe a word she is saying. She thought she did a few months ago—she thought she did when she started this sentence—but no longer.

"So to speak": This person believes every word she is saying, she's just tossing this one out to make herself seem more relatable.

"Maybe": No one cares about you more than this person. She values your opinion. She genuinely wants to know what you think.

"Kind of": This indicates nothing but contempt. This person actively wishes that your internet will cut out right before your Zoom crit.

"Sort of": Similar to "kind of," but uttered at double the speed with double the aggression.

"-ish": This person selected a bold adjective and promptly lost her nerve. She finds herself falling down a rabbit hole of word vomit where everything has a suffix and words have lost all meaning.

"I suppose": This person knows the difference between type

and typography without telling you she knows the difference. Keep nodding like you didn't notice her hint of a fake British accent on "sup-po-se" or she may start frantically referencing Quatremère de Quincy.

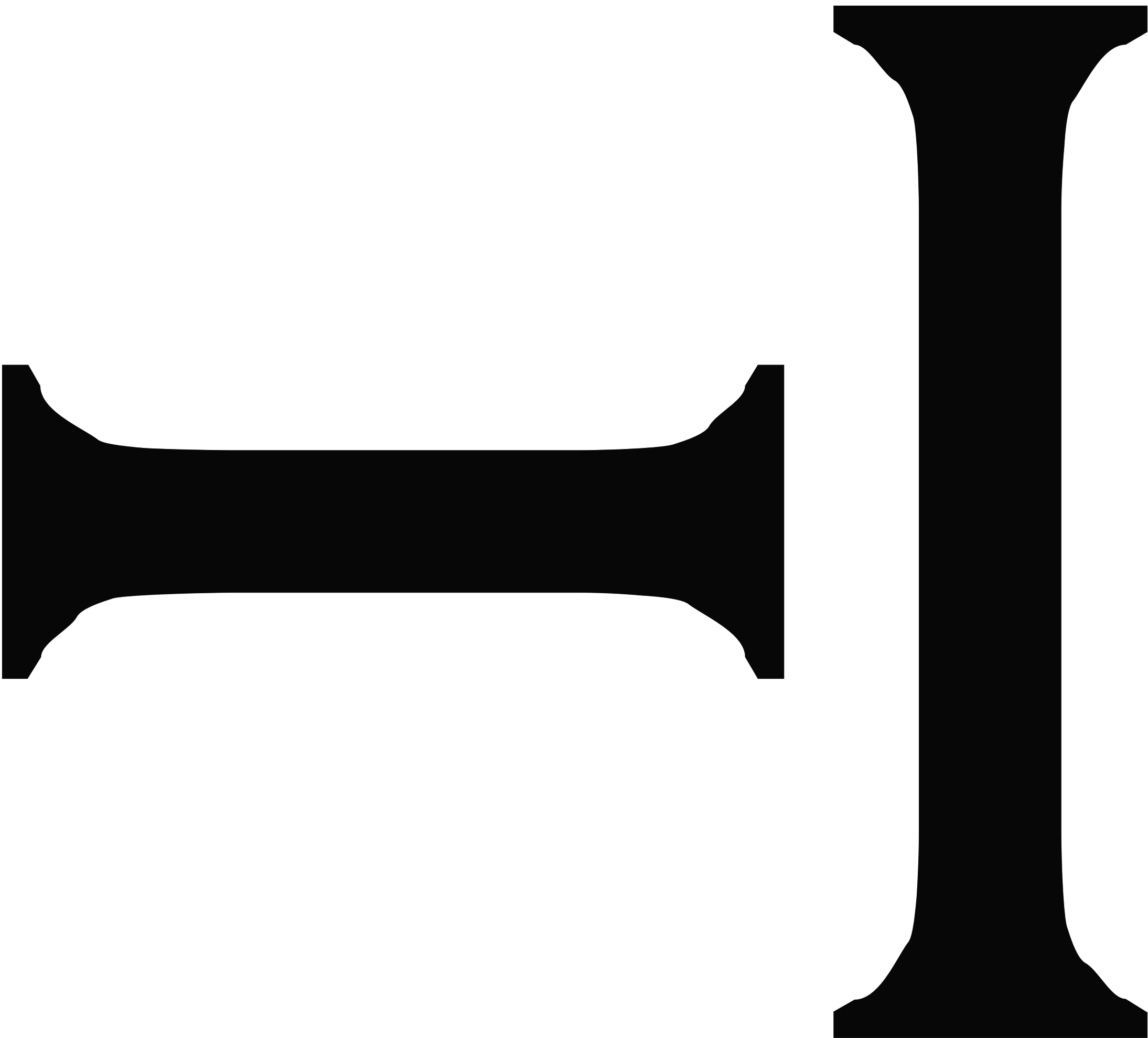
"Quote unquote": Are air quotes an invisibility cloak we can't see jargon through? No, no they are not.

"Actually": Everything this person said up to this point was false.

"Right?": This implies that the speaker has mastered the art of hypnosis and has everyone nodding at every word she says.

"Or something": This person arrived at the end of her intelligent, clear, poetic sentence and then acted upon a sudden flare-up of the Freudian death-drive.

"If that makes sense": It does not.



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EDITOR'S STATEMENT

The indeterminate. The unresolved. The ambiguous. -ish is almost something, nearly something, kind of something. -ish cannot be easily classified nor labeled.

This plethora of ambiguous realities lead us to question: Is it possible for -ish to offer an alternative framework of subversion towards the categorization of life, space and objects?

This issue is a loose collection of articles that reobserve, reexperience, and reevaluate our architectural and cultural landscape through the framework of -ish: from architectural forms, design methodologies, animation, cultural forces, psychic phenomena, language, sound, identity, to in-betweenness.

Only by acknowledging and embracing the -ish can we truly partake in the complexities of the spaces we inhabit. -ish is not an ambition, -ish already exists, -ish is an intrinsic condition of our contemporary life.

-ish LIST – SO DIFFERENT FROM A WISH LIST

PH northern lights
7 foghorns
6 rooster tails on crashing waves
5 the 'whispering gallery' in Grand Central
4 spotlights on clouds
3 fun house mirrors
2 melted ice cream
1 Elvis Presley hologram
B Amazon Prime
SB artificial borders

PAPER HOUSE – THE ROOMS OF DÉJÀ VU
Carlos Blanco

There are countless scientific theories as to why more than two-thirds of humans experience this déjà vu , and while there is no definitive answer, the effects of this sensation leave the mind unresolved yet intrigued. Déjà vu is French for “seen before” and has become a universal phrase for a puzzling phenomena that inherently is individualized and forces us to introspect into our mind and memories. During these moments of déjà vu, we find ourselves in a state of limbo between two worlds, one detailing a premonition of the event that’s unfolding, and the other consciously recognizing the snapshots of the moments as familiar. Inherently, déjà vu places us as the audience in a cerebral theater, in which we observe a puppet on the stage that resembles ourselves acting out the actions, words, and emotions as the story unfolds. Through the eyes of the puppet, within its fabricated theatrical paper house, we witness its encounter with such moments of déjà vu and begin to piece together the reasons for this sensation. Through the progression within the paper house, we ask ourselves, have we experienced that same room or that same feeling before—and perhaps unconsciously, we have.

There is the possibility that as we dream, our animated self-identified puppet wanders and has its own encounter with the universe, entering into parallel realms. As the dreams are quickly forgotten upon awakening in the current physical state, they are simply filed away into the temporal lobe of our brains. Although repressed, hidden, and seeming-

GRIDDED OOZE
Julie Kress

In the iconic episode “The Pink Think”,¹ Pink Panther disagrees with the decorator on what color the house should be. Almost caught sabotaging the decorators’ work, Pink Panther leaps into a pink wall and disappears as if he’s completely camouflaged. Pink Panther is not rendered with tones of light, shadow, or fur. Such details would have revealed his 3d form contrasted against the slick surface of the freshly painted wall. Instead, between two frames, Pink Panther’s form is simply outlined, and then it is not. Our natural desire to register objects allows us to quickly adjust to the impossible transformation of a solid wall into occupiable “pink-space.”

Mark Rakatansky celebrates that “animation allows for elastic play when given *limits of physical identity* already established that is *temporarily* elongated, extended, in comparison to that limit.”² He goes on to deconstruct how Bugs Bunny can run and stretch into a dynamic range of poses, but still maintains his Bugs Bunny-ness by sticking to some rules of zoological anatomy and his defining characteristics baked into the original looney tunes model sheet.³

1. His arm is the thickest at the wrist.
2. Neck should always be short.
3. Ruff on his cheeks should be high.
4. Etc.

This brings to mind the skeuomorphic⁴ icons of our digital interfaces that extend our sense of physical objects within a digital space. It feels perfectly natural to click and drag a pdf into a folder or to jot a note down on a digital Post-It, knowing full well that the interface bears no true likeness to the physical objects they depict. A desktop folder is a

folder, as much as Bugs Bunny is a rabbit, and Pink Panther’s wall is solid (sometimes). While our current technology makes realism ever easier to achieve, delving into the territory of *realis-is-ish* invites a re-evaluation of how artists have historically dealt with ambiguous objects within imagery.

The 18th-century artist, Johann Nilson, presents us with an even more subtle play of physical identities. At first, a heavily ornamented coffee house sits within a graphically illustrated frame.⁵ A second glance and you notice something strange. The pictorial frame bleeds into the scene to form a strange facade for the coffee house. It re-frames windows and doors similarly but not quite like overgrown vines. The flag atop



6 Coffee House with Bickering Couple, by Johann Nilson

THE SUBVERSIVE POWER OF QUEER-ish IDENTITY
Lee Helms

Late September in East Rock. A friend and I sat in the grass, waiting for our Uber after our descent left us on the opposite side of the park. As I reclined, absorbing the late afternoon sun, my friend looked up from the grass and asked “Can I tell you something?” Naturally, I responded, “Of course, you can tell me anything.”

“I think I’m bi” she gently announced. She previously identified as straight and has been in a long-term relationship with a male partner.

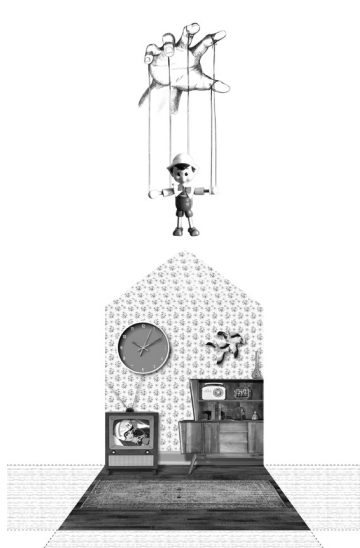
Since this proclamation, my friend has maintained her existing relationship while gradually exploring her identity.

Similarly, I have incrementally realized that I do not entirely identify as male, and I often reconcile with my outward presentation; I often present myself to be more masculine than I feel internally. Yet despite my androgynous modulations, I identify largely as a cis-gender, gay male-two discernable identities.

Through my friend’s exploration of her sexuality while operating within a heterosexual relationship and my gender variation while predominantly identifying in a cis-gender manner, we fall under the category of ‘queer-ish.’

In a recent cultural and linguistical turn, “queer” serves as a grandiose umbrella for anyone who identifies as not-cis and/or not-straight. But, what does it mean for society to be accepting enough of alternative identities where individuals can identify or operate in a way that is queer-ish? Here, I define queer-ish as individuals who can, may, or do operate within the existing cis/heteronormative infrastructure and societal architecture while embracing a loose and transient connection to the queer community or tenets of being queer.

The subversive nature of queer-ish identity renders it a powerful tool to transform our



A Puppet's Encounter with Déjà Vu Moments

ly forgotten, those out of body dreams experienced through the puppet could be one reason we encounter those moments of déjà vu in our physical world. Perhaps, as one senses this, we are recalling those forgotten dreams. Is the sensation of déjà vu merely the consciousness’ attempt of recognizing a discarded memory as familiar? If so, then our own habits, interactions, and thoughts are manifested through our dreams, influ-

encing the building disregards its pictorial boundaries entirely, and proudly juts out beyond the frame. It is unclear which edges articulate ground, foliage, or architecture, and which lines are just graphic ornamentations that frame the view on the page. The print is in fact proto-digital in how we experience text, image, and “3-dimensional” space, compressed within multiple windows on a single “2-dimensional” plane. I do not intend to romanticize the illusionary effects made possible by ink, but would like to consider how any media used to depict an object can stretch or augment its characteristics. For instance, what would be the Bugs Bunny instruction model sheet equivalent of a frame depicted in ink?

1. The frame must form a continuous edge (as a line or hatch), so that the eye can distinguish between pictorial space and paper space.
2. When objects pass behind the frame, mask them when they reach the other side.
3. Sometimes break the frame line, but only if you can still register rules 1 and 2.

The realistic-ish frame is familiar to us, yet adopts novel behaviors within the reality of an image. Consider how this historical drawing might inform a new reading of contemporary mediums like a Frame Animation, a Skeuomorphic user interface, or even a Hyper-Real Fluid Simulation.

Ooziness can be achieved with computational proce-

dures intended to simulate the hyper-real movement of fluids. Not an uninteresting way to generate a 3D surface, but the technical process of replicating real-world behaviors is not of critical interest here. It’s when ooze behaves in unexpected ways that it invites a second glance. First, some limits need to be established.

1. Ooze congeals when it’s thick and separates into droplets when thin.
2. Translucent Ooze is different from glass, it should have a distorting effect on its context when looked through, and a slick sheen for added realism.
3. *Gridded Ooze*⁶ does not need a visible container to hold its shape.
4. *Gridded Ooze* has a surface like any other 3D model and can hold a texture map.

When the animation begins, *Gridded Ooze* appears to gush against surfaces that aren’t there. In fact, the ooze could be shaping itself to the cropping of the camera view, a moment where the composition of the image has as much influence over the form as laws of fluid dynamics. A perfectly checkered grid paints the liquid-y surface, which could be believable when you view a frozen still image. However, once the ooze is in motion, the checkered grid does not distort and mix

existing architecture, both social and spatial. Similar to José Muñoz’s notion of ‘disidentification’ where queer individuals engage in subversive tactics and transform existing infrastructure and frameworks rather than aligning with or rejecting these exclusionary institutions, queer-ish identity operates under the skin of our existing institutions, yet manifests in a more nuanced expression than disidentification.¹ While disidentification is an explicit, active strategy of survival employed by marginalized and minority individuals, queer-ish identity permeates through its inconspicuous nature, only bubbling when the individual employs it or another individual has the acumen to perceive it. Where the practice of disidentification may work, for example, within the stereotypes of butch-lesbianism to create a flourishing community, queer-ish identity may emerge as a lesbian woman flirting with a male gender presentation; a trans man choosing to adopt feminine mannerisms; a newly bisexual woman gradually realizing her identity while in a heterosexual relation, with no current intention to act on her bisexuality.

Yet with the subversions of stereotypes, societal infrastructure, and gender/sexual expectations, queer-ish identity may not produce, on the surface, any identifiable alteration of cultural infrastructure. However, through the pervasive proliferation of queer-ish identity in contemporary culture, slight ripples, slight creases in the social fabric aggregate into an incessant quivering slightly below the framework: like walking into a room you know well, except all of the furniture has been turned 15 degrees clockwise. Over time, the ripples facilitated by queer-ish identity capture a sub-community in itself. What once served as a margin of a marginal community becomes a vital underground network churning just below the surface.

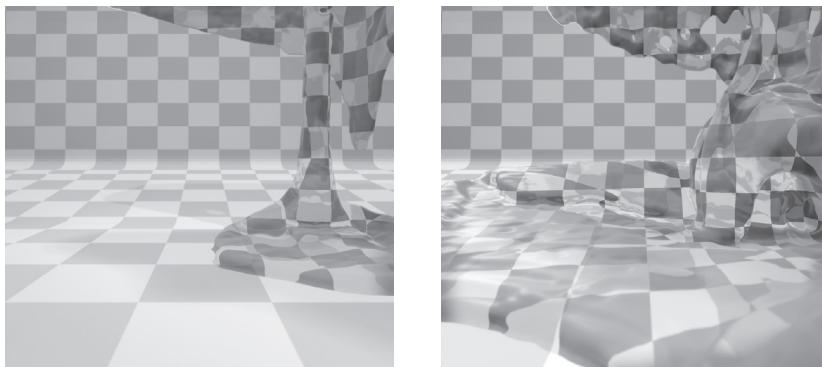
Queer-ish possesses potent subversion, leaving us grappling with how the sedition of our societal architecture transforms our cis/heteronormatively predicated physical spaces. Ultimately, queer-ish will gradually transform our spaces into mimetic arenas of fluidity.

As a whole, cities are queer-ish. The transience, fluidity, rapidity of cities all bubble below the surface, constantly re-inventing, rejecting, obscuring one full identity. But

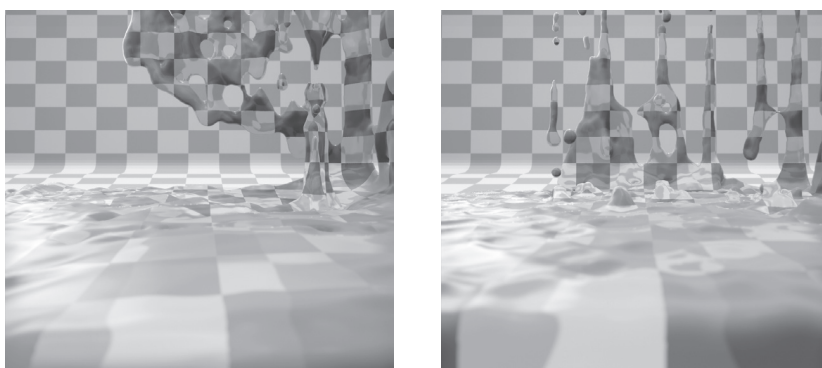
the puppet wanders through its paper house, it is forced to ask, “Am I dreaming? Why does all of this feel so familiar?”

The journey of the puppet is one of discovery through its interactions within the paper house, and one of self-awareness through its conscious recognition of memories, dreams and autonomy. The puppet questions its reality, debating the difference between destiny and programming. There must be a reason as to why the puppet continues to encounter déjà vu. Perhaps there is no closure, just as no memory we have is perfect, neither would there be any possible answers.

We could interpret the sensation of déjà vu within the paper house as the conscious mind making links between rooms, stored memories and individual items we hold in certain discreet places. In the same fashion we hold treasures in boxes under our beds, so could the unconscious mind operate with memories we categorize as familiar and foreign. No memory is too far gone, and déjà vu could represent an instance of re-play from past moments or past lives’ energy manifested into the present life of the puppet. Could the puppets’ conscious mind have lived a million lives in its journey, living simultaneously in each room in the paper house through its embodied memories in homes’ walls and items? The familiarity of déjà vu shouldn’t feel so distanced and quickly discarded. Embrace the sensation as a close connection to our inhabited spaces and experiences. Piecing together the sensations, one discovers that the only way to describe what déjà vu truly means to us is to experience it, over and over again.



8 Still frames from the Animation, Gridded Ooze, by Julie Kress. See at <https://vimeo.com/38557286>



8 Still frames from the Animation, Gridded Ooze, by Julie Kress. See at <https://vimeo.com/38557286>

into a homogenous brown color as expected, it’s fixed in place, like a pixelated glitch on the screen. Similar to Nilsen’s frame, that is both a graphical ornament and architectural element, the checkered grid is both painted onto the fluid, and a distinct layer (in the Photoshop sense) that does not truly acknowledge the presence of the fluid. Fluid can do almost anything, it does not resist transformation, but for this very reason, it requires

close attention, to make meaningful interventions that negotiate between its physical identity, and its digital reality.

To be nimble in our encounters with digital objects, we do not reject realism, instead, we open up to unexpected hybridities between our physical and digital existence. A preference for realistic-ish means to interrogate objects as they exist relative to digital imagery and to reflect our need to have some sense of physical identity to register differences. It delights in unexpected collisions of possible and impossible through a play of rendered surfaces, colors, and lines. Walls transforming into “pink-space”, frames simultaneously being what they frame, and fluids mixed with grids. Each example differs in time, discipline, and medium, but they present alternative frameworks for a more ambiguous, less easily categorized vision of reality.

- 1 Pink Panther, season 1, episode 1, “The Pink Think”, directed by Friz Freleng; Healey Pratt, aired December 18th, 1964, on NBC. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t8QcAK20I8&feature=emb_logo&list=channel-Official
- 1 Pink Panther.
- 2 Mark Rakatansky, Tectonic Acts of Design and Doubt (London, UK: Architectural Association Publications, 2012), 184.
- 3 Bob McKimson, Bugs Bunny Model Sheet. 1943. Warner Bros. Cartoons Inc. Accessed Feb 15, 2021. <https://www.3dsimg.co/looney-tunes-50-original-model-sheets/>.
- 4 A skeuomorph is a graphic representation of a physical object, like the recycling bin icon.
- 5 Initially referenced by Marzica, “The Broken Frame”, 87. Image: Johann Eastisz Nilson, 1784.
- 6 Johann Eastisz Nilson, Kaffeehaus mit bickender paar (Coffee House with Bickering Couple), between 1781 and 1788, Engraving Print on paper. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Eastisz_Nilson_Kaffeehaus_mit_bickender_paar.jpg.
- 6 Hesus_Caffehaus_(Title,_Op. Object), Social_Vermaak_(Artist Title), RP-P-1964-2874.jpg
- 7 Kress, Julie. Gridded Ooze. 2019. <https://vimeo.com/38557286> Also see Gridded Ooze Top View. <https://vimeo.com/38557281>
- 8 Still frames from the animation, Gridded Ooze.

I argue that cities acquired this identity from queer-ish individuals: a city of static, homogenous individuals would contain no nuance, nothing to recreate.

This identity recently permeated into the design of restrooms that have evolved from static, to queer, to queer-ish. Works by queer activists transformed public restrooms into spaces mirroring personal identity, but recent works shattered the rigid reflection of identity and created fluid spaces of expression. Similar to the transience of cities, *Stalled!* by Joel Sanders, Susan Stryker, and Terry Kogan subverts the private nature of public restrooms and creates an agronic space of varying degrees of privacy.⁸

Where disidentification may create a flourishing community—a mystic locale or a cruising spot—within the existing restroom architecture, queer-ish identity gradually transforms the space into a fluid realm while preserving the infrastructure.

Amalgamating the queer-ish identities of cities with the case-study of *Stalled!*, we have a telescopic framework for exploring queer-ish. The nuanced manifestations of queer-ish identity—the vari-

THE VALUE OF INEFFICIENCY
Shelby Wright

Efficiency exists as an appeasement to systems of capital. If the only goal of living is to make money, then “wasting” money, time and resources is the ultimate sin. The architect situated within capitalism functions to maximize usable square footage while minimizing costs for the owner. This leaves little room for design and ultimately leads to the continuous reproduction of generic space. Not only have we learned to live in generic space, but we have also learned to love its ease of use. We know that our Ikea sofa will fit in our standard-sized living room, that milk is at the back of the supermarket and produce at the front, and if you order the “number one” at McDonald’s, you’ll get a Big Mac. Somewhere along the way we forgot that humans weren’t emotionless machines “cough” LeCorbusier “cough”. Our modern systems were designed to beat out any wasteful excess. We have been taught to utilize every minute of every day to increase our productivity. We never stopped to ask why this was better. We never stopped to ask if the cult of efficiency was doing more harm than good.

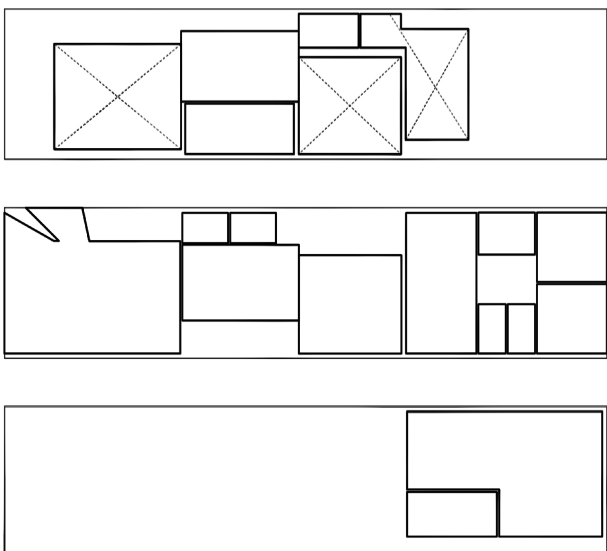
“Inefficiency” is a bad word in our society. It implies there was some degree of failure in the system resulting in the production of something deemed unnecessary. But it is inefficiency which gives us the unique, interesting, and odd. When things don’t function exactly the way they should, they take on character, they are no longer inert objects. It’s the qualities of imperfection, even awkwardness which draw us to older buildings and buildings not mass produced. You have to jiggle the doorknob a certain way to get the door to open, the light switch is placed at an awkward distance from the entry, and the bedroom is in a distorted shape. Inhabitants of such buildings are forced to react to them, the building is no longer an inert stage set, but rather an entity to be bargained with.

Paradoxically, efficiency is not the means to having less, but rather exists in service to creating more for the sake of more. Why have one expensive car when you can have three cheap ones? Why patch up old clothes when you can just buy new ones? Throw away the outdated iPhone because this one can turn your face into an animal. Things are made cheaper so you can buy more. Isn’t the same true of contemporary architecture?

Architecture has aesthetically moved past efficiency, but we are still ensnared in its economics. It has been over fifty years since mainstream architecture began to shun streamlined modernism. It is in the Vanna Venturi House, the pivotal moment into Postmodernism, where we can find an embrace of functional uselessness. Not only did Venturi bring back the idea of decoration on a façade, he also built a stair to nowhere from the second floor to the nonexistent third floor. The stair ties behind an unassuming door as if to hide it, but an internal window is placed directly next to this door. These elements are all playing a game with one another and demonstrate Venturi’s notion of contradictory architecture. This stair stakes a claim against pure functionality, it flies in the face of everything Modernism stood for. It suggests that things do not need a purpose, they can simply just exist. Their uselessness makes them strange to us and forces us to develop an emotional response to them that we likely wouldn’t for a well-functioning utilitarian object. Useless things, strange spaces, peculiar details all help create a sense of place. They are what distinguish *Here* from *There* and provide some degree of wayfinding in the world. Abnormal features often become landmarks or they demarcate a

BOX-ish
Joshua Tan

In Arch20’s “9 Magic Tricks to Transform a Boring Box into an Architectural Masterpiece!”, the aspiring or practicing architect is provided with a list of operations with which to spice up their boxy projects:¹



1. Tilt!
2. Add a Subtract!
3. Add Emphasis!
4. Make Extrusions!
5. Eat Away from It!
6. Cluster a Bunch!
7. Stack Up!
8. Extend the Edges!
9. Break the Box!

rentable area, while the proliferation of construction standards ensures a viable product. The box is everywhere, but always in the background. We see it on streets, in movies and renderings and we imagine it in books and maps. It is almost never in the foreground.

But if the box bores, the anti-box is no more interesting. The anti-box has been heralded as the champion of idiosyncrasy by countless treatises, manifestos, and draw-

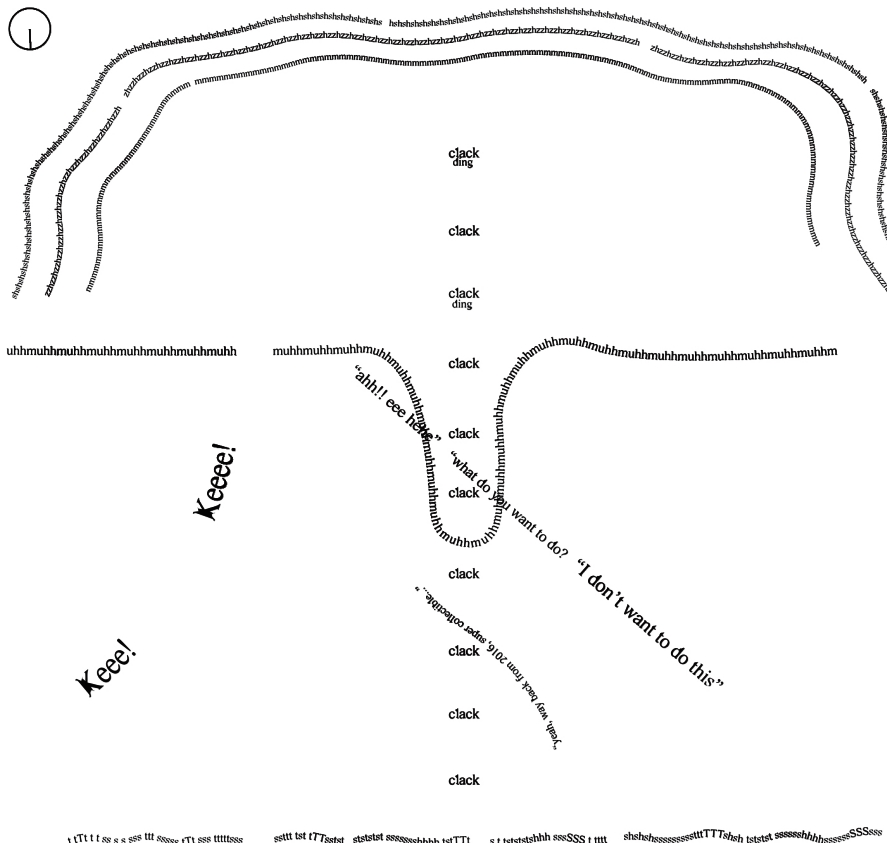
The Box-ish cannot be understood without first knowing its two predecessors, the box and the anti-box. The box is made of six surfaces that form an enclosure. It precludes the possibility of originality with its own rationality.² It is the formal expression of neoliberal development driven by the goals of efficiency and flexibility.³ The box’s organization of space is dictated by the chief concern of

ous unsettling—combined with its scales of implementation render it a disruptive tool in reclaiming and transforming spaces. Whether altering an urbanism, a restroom, or (one day) the cis/heteronormativity of suburbia, the proliferation and subsequent reverberations of queer-ish identity will subvert our existing perceptions and productions of architecture.

- 1 Muñoz José Esteban, Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics 1 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
- 2 Joel Sanders, Susan Stryker, and Terry Kogan, Stalled! Accessed February 9, 2021. <https://www.stalled.online/>.

A PARKING LOT AT 255 CROWN ST.,
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, FACING SOUTH: 01/30/21 13:00 EST
Brian Orser

Architects work hard to visualize everything, from ecologies to airflows. We are all aware of the dominance of vision in our globalized culture, which has pushed architecture deeper and deeper into visual space, and, more recently, into the increasingly ambiguous, autonomous space of the image. Yet the image, seen as a confluence of information, representation, and generative computation,¹ offers a surprising alternative to visuality, in the space of sound, or “acoustic space,” which is the space constructed in our minds from patterned vibrations in the atmosphere. Sound images have been studied, created and theorized for decades, and are a fundamental idea in music, as well as sound design.² You experience carefully composed sound images every time you



watch Netflix. Just like the patterned light we capture with our eyes, the patterned air we call sound is encoded with spatial and material information. Emmeshed within visual space there is acoustic space. Sound will not replace vision in architecture. But engaging architecture with multiple senses inevitably brings us closer to an abstract conception of space, untying a pervasive metaphysical identification of *what is seen* with *what is*. Sound is not space, but acoustic space is co-extensive with spacetime. *This sonic space, like visual space, is space-ish.*

Sound is inseparable from our idea and memory of place and urban space. The typographic composition below is a piece of a larger iterative experiment with documenting and representing sound and space. This sound-text-image documents a 30-minute close-listening exercise in a parking lot at the heart of New Haven’s commercial district.

ings. It offers the possibility of creating something completely new with endless developmental potential. So complex is its form that its production has been almost completely outsourced to algorithms and software. This idiosyncrasy turns out to be superficial and rapid. The architect can churn out a hundred and one iterations, geometries, and compositions with just a single click of a button and yet be lost on how to proceed with the design. “Define your parameters!” some might say, and generic terms like “community,” “autonomy,” and “experience” are instinctively mumbled back. For-

in shape, maximizing usable space. The Box-ish admits context, but only just. The section of the Vault House is specific to the natural site, lifted slightly to avoid flooding in the coastal area. The plan perimeter, however, remains generic and avoids deviating from the rectangular boundary of the cadastral lot. The Box-ish mediates the exuberance of the architect with the reality of building and the demands of the client. Balance is of the utmost importance. It is simultaneously a realistic approach and an aesthetic aspiration. It is perhaps through the Box-ish that architects have final-

ly one-upped the modernist master, Mies van der Rohe. Simplicity “* loses to Simple-ish!”³ Is the Box-ish the last stand of the architect where invention compromises with risk and efficiency? Or is it the holy grail where countless more unique designs can be built? It seems like architects have finally found the way to endlessly invent and build, but perhaps by doing so, they have also created an abyss of perpetual work, overworked for their passion.

- 1 “9 Magic Tricks to Transform a Boring Box into an Architectural Masterpiece! Arch20. <https://www.arch20.com/transform-box/>
- 2 Reiser de Graf, “The Inevitable Box.” Four Walls and a Roof: The Complex Nature of a Simple Profession. (Cambridge: London: Harvard University Press, 2017)
- 3 Manuel Castells, “The Network Enterprise.” The rise of the network society. (Oxford: Blackwell) Publishers, 2000, 154-159.
- 4 Beauty by means of utility.
- 5 Reiser de Graf, “The Inevitable Box.” Four Walls and a Roof: The Complex Nature of a Simple Profession. (Cambridge: London: Harvard University Press, 2017)

Johnston Marklee’s Vault House is a good example of this. The project itself is a box of vaults that changes the experience and formal reading of the building while maintaining the efficiency of the floor plan. The layering of the vaults creates different frames to view the beach depending on one’s location within the building. The semi-circular geometry is used for skylights, windows, and foundations, giving the simple box an articulated form. Despite this complex composition, regularity is always maintained on plan. With the exception of the balcony, every room is rectangular