

Prophetic Monument

Our project creates what we call the 'Prophetic Monument'.

Part one of the research study serves to break apart existing monuments and the innate characteristics in order to discover how their constituent architectural elements are responsible for producing cultural, religious, scientific, social, political, and subconscious connections. This narrative of memory is the narrative of the monument.

Part two of the research focuses on the breaking apart of monuments into fragments to form a dictionary of sorts. Once broken apart, the individual elements now divorced from their original contexts, can be redeployed to create new narrative connections. The analytical approach of parts-to-whole study in the Dictionary and Representative Samples allows us to assign meaning to the pieces, and enables individual parts to be symbolically redeployed into the making of new monuments with new meanings. The formal aesthetics of these new monuments could provoke new events, and new understandings of current or even future conditions.

Unlike formal explorations that foreground shape-making and background cultural meaning, the Prophetic Monument can be first defined as what it is not. It is not an icon, not autonomous, not symbolic, not just exterior, not just formal, not platonic, not about specific events, not about nations, not about history, not about place, not about power.

But a Prophetic Monument is Spatial, is Interior and Exterior, is Experiential, is Ubiquitous, is Atmospheric, is fundamentally Narrative, subverts meaning, is Multivalent, allows for a multiplicity of readings, Demands interrogation, is Collective and so on.

Part three of the research and speculation takes on the territory of the Prophetic monument as being spatial. New fictions of spatiality are introduced within the fragments to create unexpected architectural fantasies that move away from monuments having uniform geometric resolution towards episodic, experiential and localized order.

Part four introduces the testing grounds of the prophetic monument. It usurps old narratives to create new narratives by deploying old fictions of Archigram's Instant City, Hilberseimer's Vertical city, Tower of Babel, El Lissitzky's Horizontal Skyscraper and Corbusier's Plan Viosin to create new architectural fictions.

The Instant City narrative is usurped to reclaim the territory of the ground and the city as a palimpsest of monuments. The blimp, the main protagonist, now 3D prints new prophetic monuments based on desires and exigencies of the city and the cranes destroy the old new prophetic monuments in a constant cycle of building, destroying and rebuilding.

In the Vertical City critiqued as "city with no qualities", the prophetic monument is introduced as a catalyst to change the quality or atmosphere of the city. It also claims to proliferate similar to the vertical city, by not destroying but amplifying the quality of the ubiquitous.

The narrative of the Tower of Babel is reclaimed to produce a tower of prophetic monuments. The aggregate discordant fragments are now unified by their internal spatial conditions, so much so that one can travel from the grounds to reach to the skies.

El Lissitzky's Horizontal Skyscrapers just do not relieve congestion, but in fact are 'time capsules'. These 'Time-Capsules' critique the nature of the retro-active monument, to now directly releasing prophetic monuments to mark the spontaneous events as they are happening. The time capsule also has within its collection many prophetic monuments waiting to be deployed by matching content to arising events within the cities like the Plan Viosin, Rem's Dubai, Paolo Soleri's Arcology or Bucky's Tetrahedron City.

The prophetic monument also mines the tendency of a visitor to record the monument as a photograph. It now produces itself as a pocket monument allowing the visitor to carry the prophetic monument to match the context to create new narratives depending upon scenarios they are placed in.

The monument by nature is integral to the condition it provokes (the context). In our re-deployments, the monument tries to bridge the past, present, and future and prove that its inherent characteristics lie not only in the physical manifestations (objectivity) but also in its narrative and relation with people and time to produce new cultural fictions.