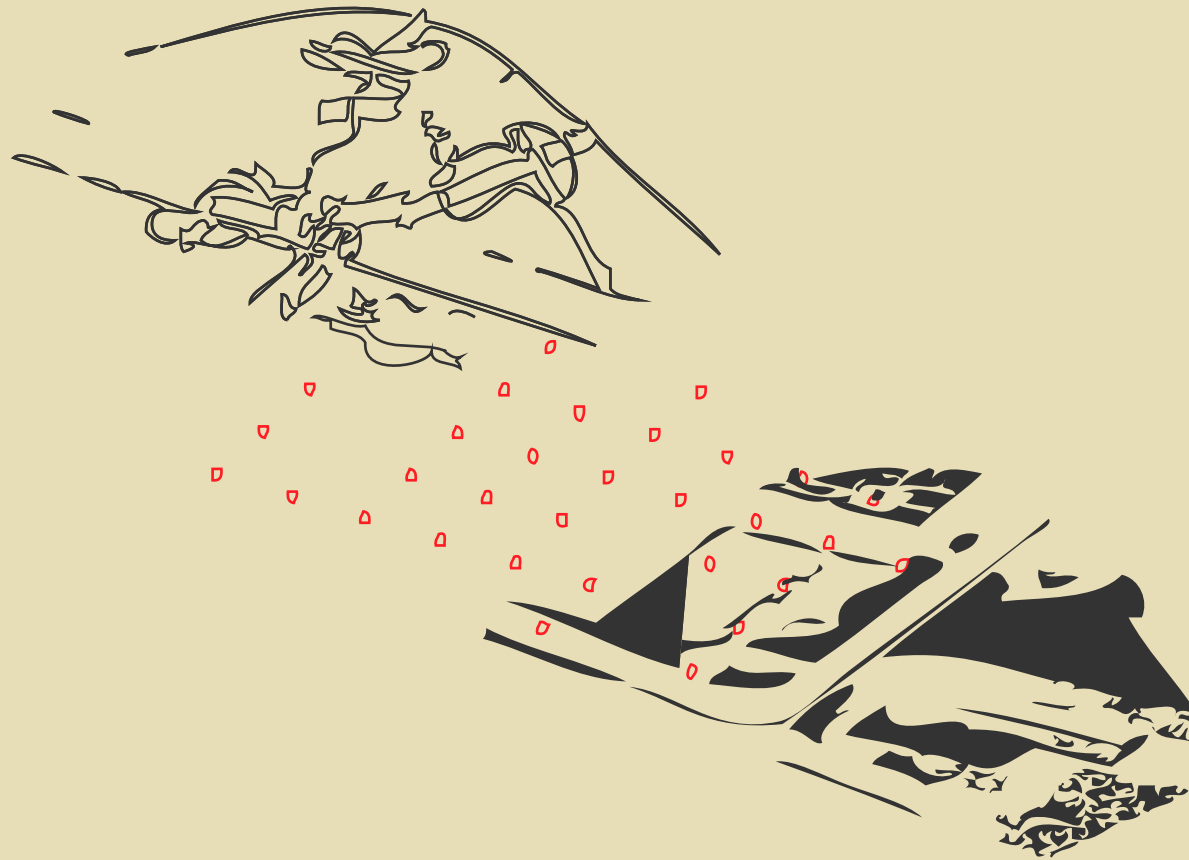


Deconstructive architect Bernard Tschumi invited Jacques Derrida to collaborate with fellow architect Peter Eisenman for the Parc de la Villette competition in Paris.

After winning the competition and completing the structure in 1992, the park has become a long urban/recreation/leisure complex that has been described as one of the largest discontinuous buildings in the world and the first built work specifically exploring the concepts of superimposition and dissociation (Rago, 2004).



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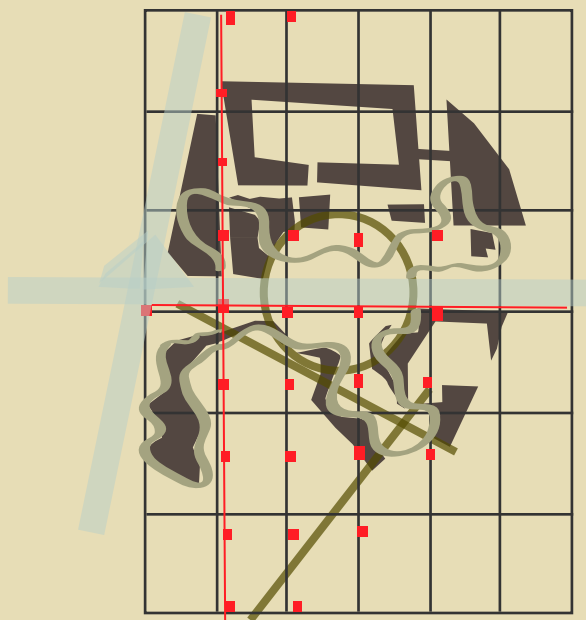
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parc de la villette-bernard tschumi



In the Parc de la Villette, Tsumi and Eisenman proposed an architecture of **disjunction** whose primary purpose was to upset the architectural assumptions regarding systems.

In other words, Tsumi attempted to demonstrate that complex architecture can be organized **without** reference to the traditional rules of composition, hierarchy, and **order** (Wigley, 1993).



The Parc is designed as a series three specific systems. Tschumi creates what he called **lines, points and surfaces** and uses these elements as

the architectural vernacular to create his deconstructive program.

However, instead of attempting to integrate these three systems together as a cohesive and unified architecture, he instead **superimposes** each one of them so that they distort and clash with one another.

This “weakening” of architecture, as Tschumi calls it, is an altered relationship between structure and image and

structure and skin (Papadakis, 1988).

design

Therefore, the final form becomes merely a pathway for new forms (bodies) to exist within them.

The park was divided using a rectangular grid consisting of lines placed at intervals of 120 meters. On top of this grid a series of points, lines and surfaces were superimposed to create the form that exists today.

Central to the design were ideas about the allocation of space and form on the site. These were based on Tschumi’s use of what he described as ‘programmatic deconstruction’ which involved the dismantling of the conventional ideas of architecture (Papadakis, 1988).

Diagram 1 shows a simple representation of the distribution of space on the site showing a proportion of ‘building’ to a proportion of ‘covered area’ to a proportion of ‘open space’.

Diagram 2 these three parts undergo a process that Tschumi calls ‘explosion’, ‘fragmentation’, and ‘deconstruction’

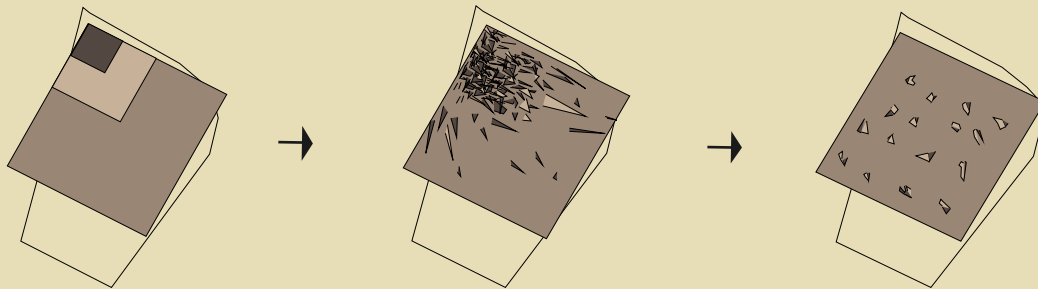


Diagram 3 is a ‘re-composition’ of the elements

The re-composition of the three elements takes place ultimately on the coordinate points of a grid in varying combinations of building, covered space and open space.

lines

The lines of the park are composed of two major perpendicular axes running parallel to the orthogonal grid. These form the major walkways throughout the park and consist mostly of steel, and iron. The lines give the park a strong linear focus.

A curved walkway threads its way through the park, intersecting the linear walks at various points.

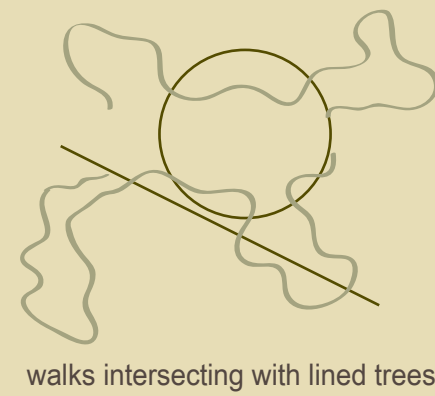
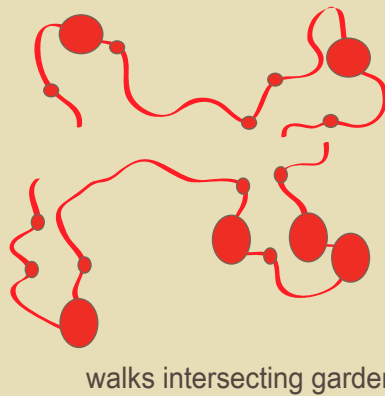
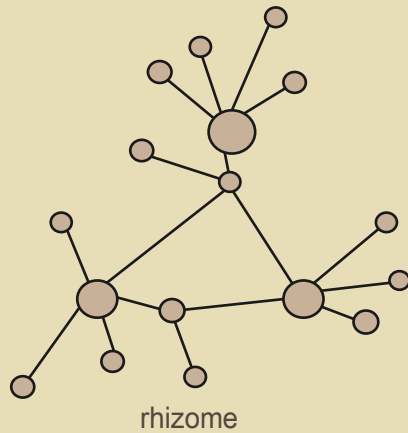
This idea of cutting and re-forming is very closely related
lines

to Guattari and Deleuze's 'rhizome' theory, where they state that the rhizome is itself a non-linear form, and its superiority lies in its ability to reconnect to any one of its new even though it may become shattered or broken.

The Villette, like
always re-connects and
never quite loses

the 'inherent logic' contained within its

a rhizome, cuts and ends abruptly, but
structural composition.



The next element of form in Tschumi's design comes by way of the points (or 26 red follies), which are based upon deconstructed cubes placed 120 meters apart from one another in a grid pattern. A folly is a decorative element used in a garden however, in the Parc de la Villette,

they act as something entirely different.

Using the rules of **transformation** (i.e. **repetition, distortion, superimposition, and fragmentation**) Tschumi has designed the follies without any functional considerations. In fact, their only role is to create a matrix that work to organise the park and act as reference points to visitors within the park (Papadakis, 1988).

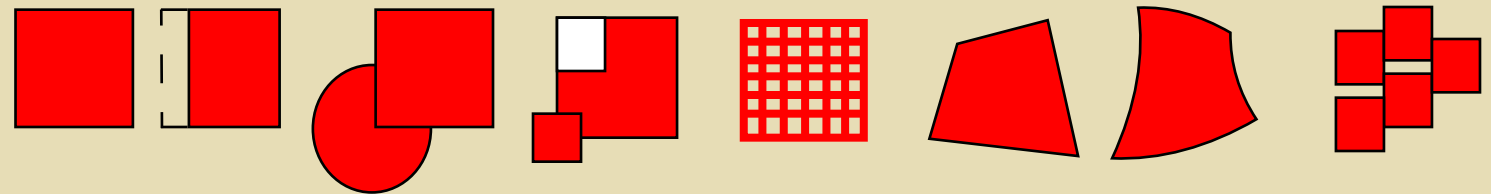
points

According to Tschumi, their actual form and color become meaningless and unimportant (Tschumi, 1993).

The follies end up creating an architectural rhythm and successfully link a series of single elements together as a unified component throughout the park.

The follies themselves are associated with the philosophy of Jacques Derrida and imply that it is impossible to define meaning in any form of communication accurately because there are always many different meanings that exist.

Thus, the follies, through their own lack of meaning, become Tschumi's way of displaying the ideas behind the theory of deconstruction since they themselves lack any real meaning.

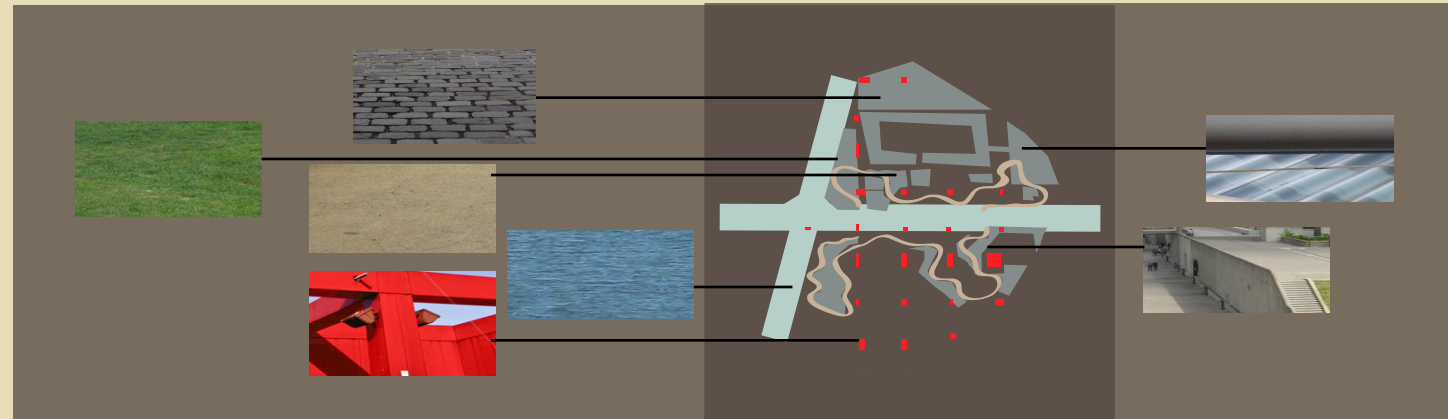


repetition, distortion, superimposition, fragmentation

Tschumi's deconstruction of folly cube

The next formal element within the park are the geometric surfaces. Some of the surfaces are constructed of compacted earth and gravel and are more free and varied in form, while others are made from metal and concrete.

surfaces



Ironically, in Tschumi's design for an outdoor park, the **landscape has been removed from the picture almost entirely.**

The landscape elements, formerly the most important aspects of any urban park, have become the infill between the built structures that organize the project spatially and functionally (Tschumi, 1993). Therefore, the conventional idea of a park has been incorporated into an architectural notion of a building (Papadakis, 1988).

This dislocation of landscape transforms the park into an **expansive neutral space.** Grass, earth, metal, concrete and gravel allow for complete programmatic freedom (Rago, 2004).

Tschumi's Parc de la Villette is a conceptual framework for a structure that allows for multiple combinations within the space

The **interchangeability** and wide allowance for many diverse interpretations allow for a future expression of the park never before seen in an architectural structure.

The Parc de la Villette creates objects and spaces of continuity and discontinuity and provides a location for all types of expression and activity.

The disassociations and complexities of layering three disparate systems together (lines, points and surfaces) create a

richness and a discontinuity that exists within **life**.

It does not create a form of idealism (as many parks tend to strive for), but rather generates an **honesty**, a **realism**, and a true **spontaneity** found within the complexity of our very own

existence.

According to Vidler in The Body In Pain, Tschumi's Parc de la Villette is so fundamentally novel in that for the first time in architecture, the form has actually been turned

reflection

inside out.

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