(En)closures: intangible histories of the suitcase and hotel room

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ABSTRACT: Functioning as both a storehouse of memories and the literal embodiment of transience (or migration) the traditional suitcase became, in the period between the two wars, an extension of the intangible history of the twentieth century embodying the turbulence of migration and escape as well as the limitless boundaries of avant-garde experimentation. The suitcase was the perfect vessel to accompany the political and cultural upheavals of the period and became the ideal site for creative experimentation, attempting to reconnect the practice of art (and architecture) with the experience of everyday life. This was most obvious in the radical practices of Marcel Duchamp and Walter Benjamin whose biographies inhabited the suitcase as both a prosthetic accompaniment and creative diary. This paper explores the intangible heritage of the suitcase and hotel room as it is distilled through the work of Diller and Scofidio in the 1990s. Diller + Scofidio's work directly engages the projects of both Benjamin and Duchamp, reigniting the intangible histories of the avant-garde and their submerged archaeology within the suitcase and hotel room. These intertwined practices all used the suitcase as a repository of objects that document intangible histories and embody both their experience and creativity. With the acceleration and expansion of the tourism industry, the idiosyncratic histories of the suitcase are often overlooked. Discovered through history, this paper will look at the contents of the suitcases of these critical figures, establishing their historical significance and the influence and legacy that has been subsequently attached to them.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the period that separated the two wars in Europe, the values attached to the traditional suitcase were dramatically reshaped by a radicalized avant-garde culture of transit that emerged in the creative European centers of Zurich, Paris and Berlin. This collective migration was driven by the political upheavals that lead to a number of intellectuals fleeing their homes and, in the process, relocating their creative practices, identities and ideologies into suitcases that accompanied their global wanderings. Reflected paradigmatically in the art of Duchamp and the critical theory of Benjamin, these practices channeled "homelessness" into creativity where the suitcase became not only a receptacle for domestic and bodily necessities, but creative practice in general. In this context the suitcase became a kind of utopia; a critique of the contemporary political landscape at the same time as it was inevitably entwined within it. In the work of Benjamin and Duchamp the suitcase (like the utopia) defined the limits of possession, identity and, most importantly, the autonomy of creative work. As a collector of objects and experience, the suitcase was an important motif in early avant-garde strategies which were, like their progenitors, hounded from place to place by the various political regimes which presided over them at the time.

By the late twentieth century, the suitcase had taken on a different persona. Highly scrutinized and interrogated through a network of invasive security mechanisms, the suitcase had become politicized and marginalized as a site of creative and political freedom. Like utopia itself, the suitcase became increasingly regulated, governed by abstract rules, labeled, weighed and categorized as it continually passed through systems of visual surveillance and interrogation. The once intimate interior of the suitcase was constantly externalized as it moved from one secure environment to another. The traditions of travel, embodied in the creative utopias that

flourished in suitcases in the 1930s had, by the end of the twentieth century, been replaced with a network of voyeuristic security that dismantled the utopian shell and displaced its contents into the real world. Separated from the body and the intimate traditions of prosthetics, the suitcase had been transformed from the creative and utopian refuge of Duchamp and Benjamin, into a depersonalized and mechanical system of transit and recognition.

Similarly, as a symbol of the generic homogeneity of contemporary tourism, the hotel room is the spatial archetype that most embodies globalization and the placeless landscapes of the early 21st century. While the hotel lobby was a critical symbol of modernism in the 1920s, embodied in the writings of Siegfried Kracauer (1995), the hotel *room* is less widely discussed, despite framing the backdrop to an array of fictional literary sojourns and traumatic real life events since the evolution of the motel in American culture in the 1950s and the emergence of a sociological space of the hotel room: tied to infidelity and hedonism. There is also a tacit suspension of morality that takes place in the hotel room meaning that the histories that are accumulated there are outside of the governing rules of society or the cultural conventions that underpin it. This creates a complex historical scenario.

This paper will investigate the intangible histories of the suitcase and hotel room through an analysis of its pre-eminence as a strategy of the historical avant-garde. The significance of this trajectory of avant-garde practice has only recently been established as a scholarly point of interest, primarily in the writings of, amongst others, T.J Demos. This paper will examine the intangible legacies of both Benjamin and Duchamp in more detail and their resonance with the contemporary architectural projects of Diller + Scofidio. Acknowledging that travelling itself embodies the paradox of a "vacation" of the home (Diller & Scofidio, 1996), the work of Diller + Scofidio represents the home in its touristic incarnation: a negation not only the mass-produced shell of an unhomely architecture but a "vacation" of the institutional conventions for the display of art and its reception. Through a detailed analysis of the work of these intertwined practices, this paper focuses on the erasure of history that takes place in contemporary tourism and the removal of the tangible or idiosyncratic aspects of inhabitation.

2 TOURISMS: (SUIT)CASE STUDIES

In 1991 Diller + Scofidio completed an installation entitled *Tourisms: suitCase Studies* that was an amalgamation of a diverse range of media, travelling sequentially through a succession of institutional contexts across North America (Diller & Scofidio, 1991). The project looked at the homogenisation of travel by collecting stylized artifacts of intangible history (quotations, souvenirs and postcards) from each of the fifty states of the United States of America. Focusing on "Battlefields" and "Bedrooms" as stereotypical tourist sites, the installation explored ideas of authenticity and serialization and the systems of globalization that standardize them. The project was characteristic of the idiosyncratic work of Diller + Scofidio (Hays & Kogod, 2002), filling the margins between art and architecture and drawing into focus the significance of the unnoticed "traditions" of contemporary life. Diller + Scofidio's work is characterized by the advance of technological media, the emergence of spectacle and the growing specter of globalization which have, in their own ways, threatened the traditional frameworks of architecture, confusing the avenues through which it may be practiced (Scott, 2003; Betsky, 2003).

The recent mainstream success of Diller + Scofidio, built upon the widely published *Blur* project (Diller & Scofidio, 2000; Diller & Scofidio, 2002) and recent commissions for large and prestigious gallery and performance spaces (Diller & Scofidio, 2003a), has seen the nature of their practice change as the themes embedded in their early work have shifted to the margins of their productive output. This has coincided with the growth of interest in their architectural projects from the perspective of architectural theory and their increasing alignment with architecture as their predominant medium. In a number of ways, this process has seen "traditional" architecture replace their earlier concerns with experimentation and the dematerialization of architecture. One important, and overlooked aspect of this period in their work was the focus on intangible histories, and their dissemination through the machinations of global tourism.

In Anthony Vidler's summation of the practice of Diller + Scofidio (Vidler, 2003), he argues that the work of the practice is paradigmatic in shifting the concerns of architecture away from the autonomous status of the architectural object and towards a re-engagement with the func-

tional requirements of program. Vidler argues that this approach "points to the way in which critical theory, new media and the inventive reconstruction of space and time can imply programmatic invention that is neither functionally determinist nor formally autonomous" (Vidler, 2003). Deane Simpson's analysis of Diller + Scofidio's work focuses on the "disciplinary status of architecture" (Simpson, 2007), referring to the "common perception of the architects as outsiders to the discipline", describing "their indifference to disciplinary structures", their project to "create an alternate organizational model of disciplinary production" and their "declared disinterest in the disciplinary regulated boundaries of architecture." Positioning their work outside of the dominant "strains of criticality" in architecture (the *textual*, epitomized in Manfredo Tafuri and the *architectural*, embodied in Peter Eisenman) Simpson argues that Diller + Scofidio's work is "extra-disciplinary" in that, rather than engaging in the formalist exercises aimed at preserving the autonomy of architecture, they provide a "spatial" critique that "addresses aspects of the contemporary everyday". This aspect of their practice aligns strongly with the concerns of intangible history as a methodological and philosophical approach to the world.

In the *Tourisms* installation, fifty identical "samsonite" suitcases hang from thin metal rods positioned along a geometrical Cartesian grid. The suitcases hang in ten rows of five creating a regimented (and alphabetical) "archipelago" of suitcases suspended above the polished floor. Filling a gallery volume of 3 x 18 x 9 metres, this gridded network of suitcases is supported by a dropped plywood ceiling that carries an elongated map of the United States. Each of the suitcases is linked umbilically to a state of the United States and, more specifically, a tourist site within that state that has been marked by either love or war. As Diller + Scofidio explain,

> "[e]ach of fifty suitcases contains a postcard (picture on one side, message on the reverse seen in mirror image) and related materials about a specific tourist attraction in each of the fifty states. The tourist sites are either bedrooms or battlefields. Hanging from the lower half of each suitcase is a rubberoid sheet with printed statements about travel taken from a variety of literary sources. The number of tourist dollars spent in each state appears below the quotations" (Diller & Scofidio, 1991).

Hung at eye level and tilted at forty-five degrees, the top half of the suitcase contains a mirror that allows the viewer to see (or witness) the contents of the lower half. The effect is to use the "hinge" of the suitcase to effectively translate plan into section. However, in *Tourisms* the effect is repeated in the serial recurrence of the grid and its distribution through this economy of display. This structural principle in Diller + Scofidio's work is evoked through the symbolic folding of the suitcase. Evocative of the domestic rituals of packing, the moment is frozen in time to create the illusion of suspension. Confusing the distinction between open and closed, the tactic successfully translates the *act*/*event* into *image*/*spectacle*. However what is also occurring through this ritualized "hinging" of the suitcase is a revealing of the contents of this otherwise personal spatial interior. The suitcases lie open, disrespecting the privacy (and history) that is traditionally intrinsic to this intimate interior and eroding the space (both psychological and physical) between inside and outside. As well as providing an invitation to voyeurism, the suitcase, in this context, is an extremely important artifact, anchoring the project in the historical turbulence of the twentieth century and the broader cultural displacement that defined it.

The suitcases, in this instance, are not just geographic containers, but temporal ones, articulating complex and interwoven themes from the historical avant-garde and its influence. With a nod to the Freudian case studies of the early twentieth century, the installation title promises a methodical scrutiny of the deeper psychological spaces of tourism, marking the suitcase as a potential site of both memory and trauma. However the project is not only framed within a culture of psychoanalysis, but within a broader history of artistic production and, more specifically, the creative traditions of the historical avant-garde. Centering on issues of the home and authenticity, the work of Diller + Scofidio has developed the themes of travel in close reference to the work of both Marcel Duchamp and Walter Benjamin. For both of these figures, the suitcase represented an escape from the political and cultural pressures of Europe and the emerging specter of fascism. In this way the suitcase came to represent autobiographically both the boundaries of their lives (that which could be carried) and a form of spatial disruption.

That the work of Diller + Scofidio references the historic avant-garde is already well known. Milfred Friedman described their work as "surreal site-specific installations" (Friedman, 1991) and as a kind of "neo-Dadaism". Hal Foster has also drawn attention to their "Duchampian gestures of disturbed vision" (Foster, 2007) and has argued for the work of Diller + Scofidio to be

included in the broader context of a neo-avant-garde practice which, while drawing from clear historical precedents, translates them in a profoundly postmodern context. While the centrality of travel foreshadows most of Diller + Scofidio's work, there is a specific restructuring of space taking place in *Tourisms* that is worthy of more detailed investigation. The installation repositions ideas of travel and utopia demonstrating the continual streams of identical sites, commemorated with predictable, depoliticized markers and stereotypical souvenirs. It also engages the virtuality of tourist space where the moments of significance, marked by historical landmarks, replace the more relentless continuum of real time and challenge the synchronicity of tangible history.

3 BLOODY FINGERPRINTS

When Walter Benjamin committed suicide in Portbou on September 26th 1940 with a deliberate overdose of morphine, amongst the random collection of objects that he left behind in his suitcase was an x-ray of his own chest (Demos, 2007). Having had his citizenship revoked in Germany two years prior and with the imminent occupation of Paris by the Nazis, Benjamin had hurriedly left a number of unfinished documents (including his famous *Passagenwerk*) with Georges Bataille before collecting the remainder of his belongings in a battered suitcase and boarding a train to the south of France. Benjamin's capture at the Spanish border was a tragedy in every sense. Despite being in the possession of an emergency visa for the US (supplied by Max Horkheimer), Benjamin was unable to secure the required French exit visa, allowing him permission to leave France. Having spent close to three months waiting in the south of France, homeless and frustrated Benjamin opted to make the treacherous journey across the Pyrenees illegally, with a small group of refugees also desperately fleeing the Nazis (Fittko, 1991). Nursing extremely poor health and carrying all of his belongings in a single suitcase, Benjamin spent a night alone, sleeping in the mountains before successfully arriving at Portbou. A ramshackle city that was still in tatters after the Spanish civil war (a war that had only finished less that two years prior), Portbou had become one of the many gateways out of Nazi occupied territory for the thousands of Europeans who were hurrying south. Upon arrival at Portbou Benjamin was shocked to learn that the immigration laws had been very recently changed and he would not be allowed to enter Spain without the necessary exit visa. Historians have dutifully noted that if Benjamin had arrived either a day earlier or a day later he would almost certainly have been granted entry (Broderson, 1996; Leslie, 2007). Upon receiving the news that he would be sent back to France in the morning, Benjamin took his own life.

Benjamin's entire existence, for the last frenzied months of his life had been buried in a single suitcase, which he had faithfully carried across several stretches in his flight from Paris and had singlehandedly hauled across the mountains despite his ailing and worsening condition (Fittko, 1991). The contents of the suitcase were reported at the time (Broderson, 1996), and are listed by T. J. Demos: "a leather briefcase like businessmen use, a man's watch, a pipe, six photographs, an x-ray picture, a pair of glasses, various letters, magazines, a few other papers whose content is unknown, and some money"(Demos, 2007). Other accounts have also reported the possession of an American passport issued by the Marseille Consulate that would of guaranteed Benjamin's future in the United States. The money that Benjamin left behind was converted into *pesetas* to cover the cost of his funeral, which took place two days later. When Benjamin's friend Hannah Arendt travelled to Portbou a year later to pay her respects, she found no gravestone or evidence whatsoever of his tragic death there (Isenberg, 2001).

The x-ray film that Benjamin had carried with him was documenting his diminishing health as he placed his body through the physical and psychological stress of forced migration. Benjamin had spent the majority of his life in exile and the x-ray provided evidence of his medical condition, required for transit between states in the turbulent migratory era between the wars. His collected works, like the contents of his suitcase, are a series of fragments, montaging his life as a witness and agent in the radical transformation of this period. Struggling financially (Brewster, 1969) and marginalized by academia, Benjamin's written legacy exists in unfinished manuscripts, fragments, reviews and short essays. He managed, despite his prolific output, only one completed book: The *Origin of German Tragic Drama,* (Benjamin, 1998) first published in 1928 (written between May 1924 and April 1925). In the same year he published a compendium

of essays under the title *One-Way Street* (Benjamin, 1979). They are also, in Benjamin's own sense, a literary x-ray of his life's work: the blurring of art and life and the evidence of the spatial and temporal revolutions that distinctly characterized this tumultuous period. In this sense, his travelling is inseparable from his writings wandering through the architecture of Berlin, Paris, Moscow, Marseilles and Naples. As Adorno put it, "[f]or a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live" (Adorno, 2005).

4 X-RAYS

That Benjamin was carrying an x-ray on his flight from Paris is significant. It was, in a sense, the trace that connects his writing with his life and, to some extent, his death. For Benjamin, the availability of inexpensive reproduction techniques meant that art was obliged to move beyond mere representation and became aligned with documenting the forces of life literally, through the development of alternative means of expression. In relationship to Dada collage, Benjamin writes, "the tiniest authentic fragment of daily life says more than painting […] just as the bloody fingerprint of a murderer on the page of a book says more than the text" (Benjamin, 1978). The "x-ray" is somewhat of a theme in Benjamin's writing that, as well as providing the "bloody fingerprint" of an intangible history that connects his life with his work, organizes his thinking about a number of topics. Writing about Poe's "The Man of the Crowd", Benjamin had earlier described the work as "something like an X-ray of a detective story […doing] away with all the drapery that a crime represents" until only the "armature remains" (Benjamin, 2003). Even more significantly, describing a project for an impassioned history of esoteric poetry, Benjamin wrote that "the last page would have to show an x-ray picture of surrealism" (Benjamin, 1978). Benjamin's description of Jean Atget's work in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin, 1969) described how his photos resemble crime scenes, conflating the subject and context in a manner that was instrumental in inspiring the surrealist experiments with the flattening of the picture plane through technical experimentation, and resembling over time the frozen surface of an x-ray (Salzani, 2007). In "Author as Producer", Benjamin argued that the necessary political function of photography was to "renew from within […] the world as it is" (Benjamin, 1978) again channeling the important insight of x-ray technology in the formulation of Twentieth Century art (Dalrymple Henderson, 1998; Knight, 1986).

In his 1937 review of the *Large Glass*, Frederick Kiesler described the work as the first ever "X-ray of architectural space" (Kiesler, 1937). Praising the work's transparency, as well as the seamless integration of painting, sculpture and architecture, Kiesler saw the *Large Glass* as paradigmatic in defining a new conception of space where, instead of passively residing in a room, the art object would take a role in the psychological and perceptual construction of architectural space. Where Benjamin carried an x-ray of his body inside his suitcase, Diller + Scofidio provide an x-ray of the suitcase itself as a starting point in the *Tourisms* installation. The blue-black x-ray reveals the way that the suitcase incorporates the hanging mechanism, interior contents (including souvenirs) and support apparatus within the protective shell that encloses it. This invasive mode of vision, customary in the technology of travel, not only dematerializes the space of the suitcase but the nature of the object in general. That Diller + Scofidio's work is anxious to address issues of surveillance and the loss of privacy that travel necessitates is clear. Devoid of the body, the x-ray reveals the deconstructed hanging mechanism that travels with the suitcase in order to suspend it within the various temporary gallery spaces that it finds a home in. The folded telescoping fragments of the hanging mechanism are a prosthetics of display, representative of the folded and disassembled frame that, rather than supporting the work, is momentarily entombed in it. Drawing from the technology of airports, the luggage x-ray became a trope in Diller + Scofidio's work, reconfigured in a sequential array of new-media installations in the 1990s.

In their 2001 *Travelogues* project, Diller + Scofidio hung lenticular screens evenly spaced along the length of the arrival hall at John F. Kennedy International airport (Incerti, Ricchi & Simpson, 2007). In the first instance, the screens revealed an x-ray of the inside of a featureless suitcase but, rather than containing a mechanical hanging system, the x-ray now reveals the fragments of a disassembled body. Prosthetic limbs, diving goggles and breathing equipment are all clearly housed within the suitcase, exposed to view through the invasive gaze of the x-

ray. The short film that accompanies the installation unpacks the life of the anonymous owner of the suitcase, revealing her struggle with identity and emancipation as she tears off a wig and throws it from the top of the Eiffel Tower. Stills, revealing the life of the owner, are deliberately montaged with the interior of the suitcase, creating a palimpsest of object and experience which, when decoded, reveals the spatial implications of both the event and its artifacts. Given the title the "Prosthetic Traveller", the x-ray becomes the visual fragment that collects the events of the previous 24 hours and reveals them in a highly abstract form back to the viewer as they, clinging to their own suitcase, glide past on their own trajectories of travel. Another of these frozen narratives is titled "the Collector" and is exposed through the x-ray of a wooden trunk, revealing a network of inner compartments that appear to house architectural miniatures, presumably intended to be sold as souvenirs. The Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty are all revealed in x-ray and miniature, projected onto the serialised screens of JFK. If the "Prosthetic Traveller" is evocative of Bellmer, then the "Collector" is reminiscent of Man Ray's *rayographs* where random objects are collected arbitrarily and placed directly onto the photographic paper providing a residual trace of evidence that connects the object with its representation.

5 OBJECTS FOR TRAVELLING

In his 2007 work *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp*, the art theorist T. J. Demos argues that a culture of exile shaped certain creative practices in the Second World War and was central to the development of the oeuvre of Duchamp (Demos, 2007). With reference to Benjamin's writing, Demos shows how forced travel inspired Duchamp's interest in portability and installation art establishing an intangible narrative that accompanies the more celebrated analysis of his tangible works. Duchamp's *Object for Travelling* made to fill his Buenos Aires apartment in 1917 out of torn rubber swimming caps, provides evidence of this. Equally the readymade of the bicycle wheel inverted on a domestic stool was designed as a device for thinking, without aesthetic content and intended as an adornment to the particular space of Duchamp's apartment (Molesworth, 1998). More specifically spatial were Duchamp's commissions to curate the *Exposition International du Surréalism* in 1938 and the 1947 *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition in New York (Kachur, 2003). As has been demonstrated, both of these spaces functioned as the archetypal interior; existing without an exterior and premised on the spatial juxtaposition with the outside world. In each instance Duchamp privileged three-dimensional space over two-dimensional art and adopted strategies to internalise the experience of art through dislocation and intervention. Duchamp's suspension of coal sacks in the Paris event has correlations with the *Tourisms* project that suspends suitcases in a similar way although to very different effect.

However it is Duchamp's project for the *Boîte-en-Valise* (1942-1954), or portable museum (Schwarz, 1969), that most directly connects to the projects of Diller + Scofidio. Duchamp spent the majority of his life continually wandering from one spatial setting to the next across Paris, Argentina, New York and Philadelphia. Like Walter Benjamin and other exiles from the encroaching battlefields of Europe, the war had displaced notions of domesticity and "homeliness" and the suitcase became the nomadic site of nostalgia, creatively embodied in Duchamp's *Boîte-en-Valise*. Duchamp spent the years between the wars, collecting and reproducing his work and developing a portable museum that assumed the form of a suitcase, unfolding out to create a retrospective of his work to date (Janis, 1944; Bonk, 1989). Duchamp's personal need to package his creative output and condense it into a transportable form was prescient in relationship to the extraordinary popularity of travelling exhibitions in the period after the Second World War, which retrospectively institutionalised (and canonised) the museum in a transient, and heavily curated, form (Judovitz, 1998).

Clear correlations exist between the Duchamp project and the *Tourisms* installation. One critical evolution in Diller + Scofidio's work is the simultaneous repetition of the suitcase and, more importantly, its location as a spatial and geographic "site". For Duchamp, the suitcase was a symbol of the collapse of geography and, in the process, the dematerialization of the gallery space. Diller + Scofidio reinvented the suitcase as an index, collecting artifacts from a large field (all of America) and displaying them in a small one (a travelling gallery space). Still embodying the important themes of travel, the *Tourisms* project is structured around repetition;

demonstrating the homogeneity of the contemporary tourist landscape, rather than the heterogeneity of an entire oeuvre of work. As Diller + Scofidio have argued, "[r]eplication, like reenactment, allows tourism to perfect the very object after which it is modeled" (Diller & Scofidio, 1996).

The suitcases that Diller + Scofidio present are not just static shells, filled with objects, but psychological *places*, enclosed in the continual flux of global tourism and the pulsating currencies of movement and display. One of the critical images of Tourisms is not of the gallery space but of the fifty suitcases in transit, disassembled and stacked together, as though about to "board" a vessel. Describing the pressures of transit imposed upon a travelling exhibition, Diller + Scofidio describe the twin role of the suitcases which "[i]n addition to transporting the contents of the exhibition […] double as display cases for the exhibition of their contents" (Diller & Scofidio, 1991). In this sense, the suitcase, functions as a miniaturization of space, constituting what Diller + Scofidio refer to as a "micro-site" and, more specifically "the irreducible, portable unit of the home" (Diller & Scofidio, 1991).

The role of the "home" in the *Tourisms* installation is explicit, and particularly in relationship to Benjamin's concept of *aura*. For Diller + Scofidio, the historicized "bedrooms" exploited in contemporary tourism are effectively manufactured ready-mades that substitute authenticity with representation, by imbuing historical spaces with autobiographical artifacts and applied narratives in order to alter the perceptions of both home and inhabitant. In their introductory essay to the project, Diller + Scofidio argue that "[t]he home is one of tourism's most 'auratic' attractions and one which best underlines the play of authenticity and authentification" (Diller & Scofidio, 1996). Questioning the relationship between the authentic (or auratic) and the processes through which the reality of history is manufactured through tourism, Diller + Scofidio argue that the appropriation of the autobiographical home satisfies the "voyeuristic gaze" of the tourist, reinforcing the emphasis on "real life" artifacts that concretize history through tangible evidence. Echoing Bürger, they argue that it is the appropriation of life and its manifestation in the autobiographical object that renders the domestic as particularly susceptible to the fascination of tourism. For Diller + Scofidio, the dissolution of the home is the by-product of this authentification. In this sense,

> [t]he tourist, attracted by the "real-life" of the luminary—typically by his or her humble beginning and flamboyant end—leaves home only to enter the home of another. "Home" is one of tourism's most potent themes—one which is played out endlessly in a string of domesticating practices. Home stands for homeland for example. […] The actual home of the traveller, however, is the only certainty in touristic geography, a fixed point of reference—the site at which the trip itself must be authenticated (Diller & Scofidio, 1996).

The serialized array of suitcases, floating weightlessly above a polished and reflective concrete floor, is evocative of the "no place" landscapes of global travel, replicating the sterile surfaces of the modern airport, the repetitive screens of information and the rigid and geometric spatial regiments that are appended to it (Dimendberg, 2003). Engaged in the production of these ephemeral utopias, Diller maintains that while their projects in the period were always "processed through an architectural filter," they consistently "dwelled on seemingly extra-architectural themes such as tourism, globalization, conventions of domesticity, and visuality" (Phillips, 2004). This visualization is apparent, for instance, in their project entitled *Jet Lag* (1998) which, picking up on a passage from Paul Virilio's interview entitled "The Third Window" focused on the story of American grandmother Sarah Krasnoff, itself an episode in intangible history. As Diller + Scofidio reveal, "in a period of six months [Krasnoff] flew across the Atlantic 167 times with her young grandson in an attempt to allude the pursuit of the child's father and psychiatrist. They travelled New York/Amsterdam, Amsterdam/New York never leaving the plane or airport lounge except for the brief stop at the airport lounge. Krasnoff finally died of jet lag" (Diller & Scofidio, 2003b). The jet lag project splices CCTV video of the grandmother and grandson travelling endlessly along a travelator in the bland interior of a generic airport. This melancholy sequence engages the architecture of both utopia and homelessness, fraught with repetition and homogeneity and the constant passage of bodies along linear and never-ending trajectories.

6 FOUND OBJECTS

One final characteristic of the *Tourisms* and *Travelogues* projects that is worthy of exploration is their dependence on the *objet trouvé* [found object] and the relationship this has to intangible history. In the *Tourisms* installation this is manifested not just in the readymade samsonite containers but, at a deeper level, in the use of souvenirs, collected from tourist sites that are displayed as part of the exhibit. In *Travelogues*, these found objects become gateways to knowledge, linking the incompatible fragments that are revealed through x-ray into a hypothetical narrative where the objects are given life. What is significant, in the context of artistic production, is that these objects are torn from their everyday reality and recontextualized within the institution of art or, in this case, architecture.

For Diller + Scofidio, this freezing of objects in space and their subsequent packaging and redispersal to alternative institutionalized contexts (where it itself becomes a tourist spectacle for the three month duration of its display) has the effect of "implicating the museum as a complicitous agent in the tourist trade" (Diller & Scofidio, 1991). In this case, the readymade is used not in isolation, as a gallery piece, but in an enlarged critique of the institution of the museum which, while in no way as radical as the formative processes of Duchamp, warrants further investigation into the relevance of these tactics for architecture. Where Duchamp's urinal functioned as a negation of the work of art through a radical transformation of its context, Diller + Scofidio's investigations of tourism represent tourism as the nihilistic destruction of context embodying the chasm between the authentic truth of history and its spatial fictionalization through a readymade (and commoditized) architecture. In this transformation, architecture itself functioned as a readymade, stripped from its functional and pragmatic origins, and displaced in a visually saturated landscape of mass-tourism. Replicating the fetishization of the object in the modern museum, the Diller + Scofidio investigations into tourism documented the collapse of site, as the authentic architectural characteristics were replaced with artificial and consumable ones. That the displaced "site" still masquerades as authentic is a characteristic of this "false sublation." Diller + Scofidio argue that

> "[i]n the conversion of "site" into "sight," the "sight- seer" must pay for his optical pleasure. His desire for authenticity, for example, in the case of the historic site, to stand on the very spot where the general fell, to occupy the actual room in which the celebrity slept, to see the original manuscript later drafted into law, is fulfilled through a construction of site/sight representations in which historic time may be petrified, re-enacted, or completely fictionalized" (Diller + Scofidio, 1991).

There is an imposed placelessness that tourism necessitates. The continual passage from room to room and city to city is condensed by the collection of "souvenirs" and images that organize spatial experience. The camera is one of the major contributors, transplanting genuine spatial experience with a depersonalized imagery that only partially resembles the (auratic) original. This tyranny of the photographic image is described by Diller + Scofidio, who write

> "[a]s the ultimate authenticating agent, the camera collapses physical distance into the space between predescribed photo opportunities. Within that shallow space, tourism displaces the unsightly into a visual blind zone while freely transplanting attractions from "donor" sites into the reconstructed visual field. Onto this altered geography, tourism disperses the location of origin, the home. The "ubiquitous home" is reaffirmed by the enforcement of standards of comfort and familiarity. "You'll feel right at home" is the reassuring advertising slogan of Caravan Tours" (Diller & Scofidio, 1991).

The *Tourism* installation is an important extension of this mobilization of ideas of home, travel and place and especially the broader concerns of "authenticity" which structure a number of the debates around the avant-garde. Geography, in this installation, is not reproduced but repackaged, being reduced to the horizontal abstraction of a map which, rather than constituting the "ground", has become the reflected "index" for the floating sites, now tied mythically to the sky and embodied in the readymade souvenir that ties it to its origin. The map has no spatial characteristics at all, other than to decode the location of events into the rigid grid that supports the suitcases. It is, like travel itself, a geometry (and architecture) that physically dismantles space. It is also archival, linking the found tourist object with the spatially homogenous geographic location. The technique results in an erosion of the "plan" or map and the production of

a continually changing graphic kaleidoscope that reflects the nature of contemporary tourism. While each of the "bedrooms or battlefields" is tied to a *place*, it is registered, for the viewer at least, as a maze of fifty identical screens through which they must navigate a labyrinth of objects in order to progress.

If the *objet trouvé* is embodied in the souvenirs that are collected from each of the sites, or the photographs that record them, then it is equally a characteristic of the sites themselves: bedrooms and battlefields. Diller + Scofidio effectively package these spaces which, famous for historical events rather than architectural distinction, begin to critique the nature of space and of authorship. While Duchamp chose a number of ready-mades that were architectural in nature he never chose an architectural space as a deliberate readymade in the way that Diller + Scofidio propose. By choosing the bedroom and battlefield as effective ready-mades in this way, Diller + Scofidio's project links the domestic (and sexualized) space of the interior with the horizontal landscapes of battle, working with both libidinal and military battlefields. Diller + Scofidio's project dramatizes the process of exile, marrying it with the contemporary culture of tourism which turns sites of trauma into spaces of spectacle and historical commodification. One of the most extreme examples of an architectural readymade is the Alamo village, that Diller + Scofidio document in the *Tourisms* project. The site gained notoriety on two fronts, as both the site of an epic battle, and the intended site of its cinematic recreation in the machinations of popular culture. As Diller + Scofidio observe

> "[t]he exchange between replica and original is particularly resonant in Alamo Village, the family recreation centre built around a set for the 1959 movie The Alamo. The copy is just one hundred miles from the site of the heroic battle in which a hopelessly outnumbered group of Texans fighting the repression of Mexico's dictator Santa Anna were annihilated. 'Like the battle", reads the travel advertisement, 'the movie set had as much blood as any Texan could wish, particularly behind the scenes between the leading men, John Wayne, Richard Widmark and Lawrence Harvey.' In the context of America's compact history, the auratic place of bloodshed of American heroes in battle and the auratic place of bad blood between their Hollywood counterparts share the status of the commemorative" (Diller & Scofidio, 1996).

The project redirects thinking about the nature of these spaces, reinforcing the homogenising characteristics of tourism as well as the transformation of event into spectacle. There are a number of resonances with Benjamin's work and particularly the "bloody fingerprint" that is left on the *objet-trouvé*: no longer "found" but actively (and commercially) *produced*. The concept of a readymade space is extended in Diller + Scofidio's project entitled *Interclone Hotel* (1997), which is a fictional advertising campaign for a homogenous chain of hotels. The project superimposed real landscapes of generic Cartesian urbanism into the windows of six "themed" hotel rooms that are spatially identical. Starting with a generic model, the architects apply a range of stereotypical surfaces and finishes to the interior, while collaging generic landscapes of modernism that are glimpsed through the window. The project is an affront to tangible history, providing a framework through which subjectivity transcends the homogeneity of the constructed world.

The legacy of this reworking of historical avant-garde concepts is not the abandonment of architectural place but its reconfiguring in the space of the installation, which, controlled and regulated, is a comprehensive model of interiority. In this sense, the installation resembles a form of nomadic utopia, crystallizing the artifact and repackaging it for display. The witty repetition of objects and their geometric rationalization in space should be read in the *Tourisms* installation not as an extension of the ideas of contemporary art in the 1980s but as the migration of key spatial concepts from the historical avant-garde into architecture (Betsky, 2003). This is also a migration into the broader spatial environment of the museum, from where the tactics of Dada and surrealism were originally exiled. The museum, in this sense, replicates the conditions of utopia, dislocating itself from temporal and cultural contexts and objectively repackaging the homogenous landscape of the travelling exhibition. The museum becomes the platform for a utopia of the present: a literal x-raying of space and the greater geographic conditions of the world and their flattening and dematerialization into the microscopic interior of the suitcase. This process of x-raying is one of the most significant evolutions of Diller + Scofidio's practice, and central to their reception as agents of the neo-avant-garde in architecture.

The hotel room is designed, in its nature, to be devoid of memory: to erase the traces of its inhabitation each morning and replace the tangible histories with mass-produced domesticity, in the form of shampoos, remote controls and fresh towels (Diller & Scofidio, 1993). The suitcase is its opposite: intrinsically personal and frequently autobiographical it becomes a container of memories created and preserved in the owner. These two poles embodied in the work of Diller + Scofidio, Marcel Duchamp and Walter Benjamin: a desperate yearning for home and place and, in the other direction, a discomfort with the homogeneity through which experience and creativity are straitjacketed. There interwoven strategies, engage the broader questions pertaining to intangible history: embodying autobiography and its historical limitations as architectural strategies against which the tangible is aggressively opposed.

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