

FUTURE AND FLEXIBILITY

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Venturi, Scott Brown, and Associates, ISI Headquarters

The central point of this paper is how the book studio of Las Vegas influence on this building design. We will investigate if this building designed that is supposedly flexible is capable of leaving to the height of standards that the architects Robert Venturi proposed in the design process. This new standard in design can be seen put at work in the renovation to become a University.

Through the process of change from this building into University, we can appreciate how the building must deal with new parameters and see if it works as planned from the beginning. But having an architect that took a humble position of creating a decorated shed goes to show how we supposed to deal with the constant that is change. The city will take control of the building and keep it alive for a longer time, time in which it will become a duck building.

We will focus on the design decisions and innovation. This project already has supported the test on time and how using lessons learned in “studying Las Vegas” have shaped the project in so a peculiar way.

We will explore how do you make a flexible building, and how this is made easier through architectural decisions made by Venturi in the building design process.

The paper will study the building from the perspective of the architect when he designed the project and from the perspective of what the building has become in time. How the building expresses the relevant points and ideas that the architect's discovered in a study in Las Vegas city.

We are trying to conclude the paper with the argument that the study of Las Vegas and the arguments created in the book can be used to create architecture that is relevant nowadays,

and that can pass the test of time not only in theory but in the project itself.

INTRODUCTION

Rover Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's work came to architecture as an earthquake to the establishment and late modernist movement in architecture. The way he changed the perception in the architecture community through his ideas on *The books complexity and contradiction in Architecture* and *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, was that they allowed the study and analysis of architecture pieces that were at the time considered of no value to design art and to the academic community.

HISTORY

In the 60s the Cultural Revolution began by a counter culture that expressed itself on the early work of pop artists that was one among other new ways of artistic thought method and expression.

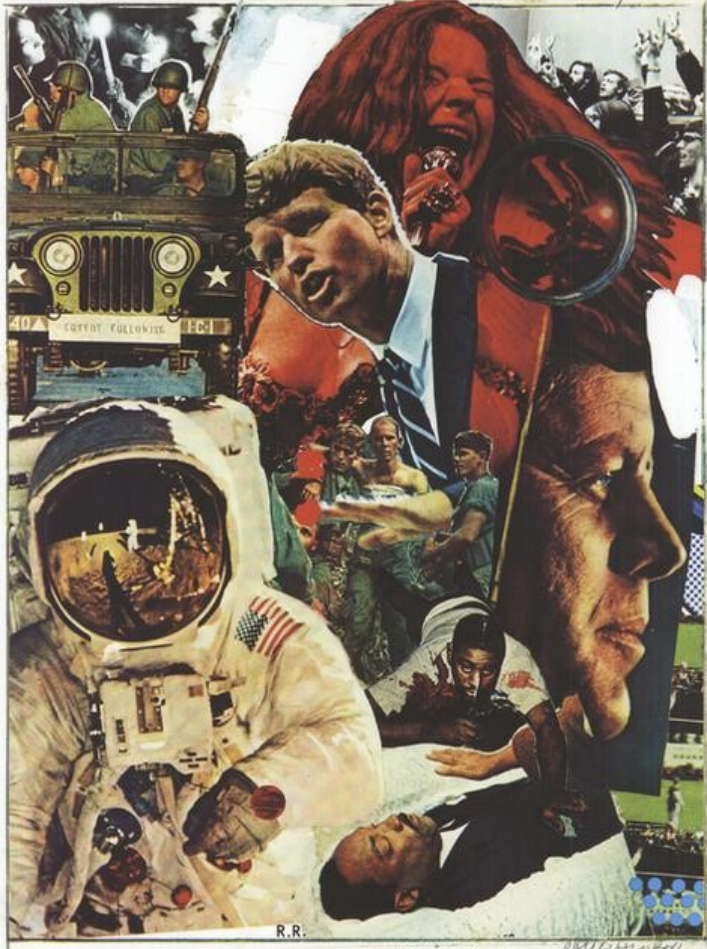


This counterculture movement started by the 1st generation capable of creating youth culture after World War II. It began questioning all of the old and classic values established by the more prominent and older generations.



Andy Warhol

Art and architecture start questioning itself, and its part on a free market an interconnected world. They start trying to match the industrial design and art in a single piece and considering the banal and the ordinary as possible references or pieces of art.



Robert Rauschenberg

The world was experiencing a fast rate change, especially America, which has just reached the moon with Apollo 11, making everything seem possible. At the same time this society start to question itself and values all these happening with the constant threat of nuclear war due to the Cold War with it USSR.

Why all of these was happening architecture at as it always do follow with a 10 years delay.

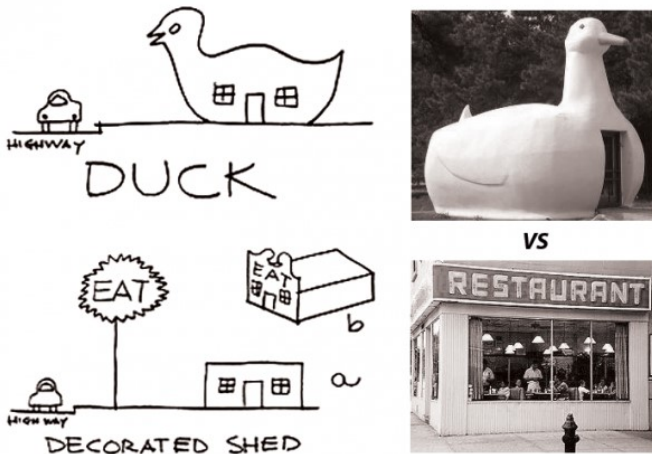


Roy Lichtenstein

STUDYING LAS VEGAS

Robert Venturi and Denise Scot Brown went to las Vegas expecting something and came back with something bigger.

In essence they discover these 2 ideas, "ducks" are buildings that explicitly represent their function through their shape and construction. This typology is defined in opposition to "decorated sheds," which are generic structures with added signs and decor that denote their purpose (think: big-box casinos, roadside hotels, or restaurants with big signs).



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The duck typology takes its name from an actual duck-shaped building: the Big Duck located on Long Island in New York. The structure was built to house a shop selling ducks and duck eggs. The form of the building itself explicitly tells passers-by what they will find inside.

- Ducks: "Where the architectural systems of space, structure, and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form."
- Decorated Sheds: "Where systems of space and structure are directly at the service of program, and ornament is applied independently."

The ducks a symbolic building, bang itself a symbol compare to the box or shelter, the essential but ornamented with signs as symbolic expressions of architecture esoteric quality. They learn from las vegas being this long steep of buildings, where you first have seen the sign telling you where the casino or the parking was, meaning a connection to the automobile scale that was very important at that time been the automobile era urbanism. By the side of the road, the building us to express what they are concluding that both are valid.

The validity that exists of the discrete shed is understood by the analogy where form follows function been like a globe. That adapts to each hand in unique ways. There is also the reality of the complexity of existence and the evolutionary quality required by buildings. IN witch many things happen at the same time. By studying the loft building and its tradition. Buying a building that can change every time and its uses can change with ease is the future.

THE UNIQUE PHENOMENA

Las Vegas that Robert Venturi found and then Scott Brown in the years 1970 is now nonexistent, as their book said of how a city changed so fast and unpredictable in the future. Las Vegas has been a clear example of this change. Vegas has now become an entire city that extends in the four axes. Instead of the city that they study years ago that used to stand in both sides of the streets as single strips of buildings.



This changing city seems to have this expand as blocks off decorated shirts



While Main Street had become an exhibition of duck style buildings, change the city.

Making the city that was observed and analyzed by Robert Venturi is now only living his book and no longer able to be seen in real life. It is becoming a thing of the past, and history. Enlarging the argument that the city is always changing, and we cannot predict where it will go.

I.S.I. HEADQUARTERS



Venturi, Scott Brown, and Associates

- Location: University City Science Center,
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Client: Institute for Scientific Information
- Construction Cost: \$5,000,000 (approximate)
- Area: 132,000 GSF
- Completion: 1979

Interview to Robert Venturi VSBA

The building is a new corporate headquarters for an international scientific information services corporation that uses advanced computer technology. Located in an inner-city research park, the site fronts on a major thoroughfare. The client desired "a building that everyone would recognize as a lively and distinctive contribution to the community and the information industry." The client's already carefully established program mandated a flat, square building; thin, strip windows; and the location of core elements along one side of the building for future expansion. Besides, the building had to meet the exterior design requirements of the research park; the project schedule for design and construction was highly



abbreviated, and the construction budget was quite constrained. Our design distinguishes the building from its surroundings by imposing on the facade a geometric pattern of colored brick and porcelain panels. The tight, rigorously coded pattern of the overall facade is relieved by the juxtaposition of sizeable abstracted flower forms marking the main entrance to the building. The freshness of the solution and its contribution to its street brought to one critic's mind the young Louis Sullivan's description of a house by Frank Furness, as "a flower by the side of the road."

DECORATED SHED

Due to the budget concerns and the ideas of the architect when designing the building, it was conceived as a decorated shed. But as always, Robert venturi put his contradict twist on it, been that cut corner in cantilever as the main access point.



FLEXIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE

The building is structured systems were flexibility include all possible uses so when the change came, and the building could adapt with ease being an interior free box or glove for whatever you use to put inside.



THE EVOLUTION

years ago, Drexel University embarked on an ambitious plan to convert one of Philadelphia's iconic postmodern landmarks by Venturi Scott Brown Associates (VSBA) into a new home for the Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design.



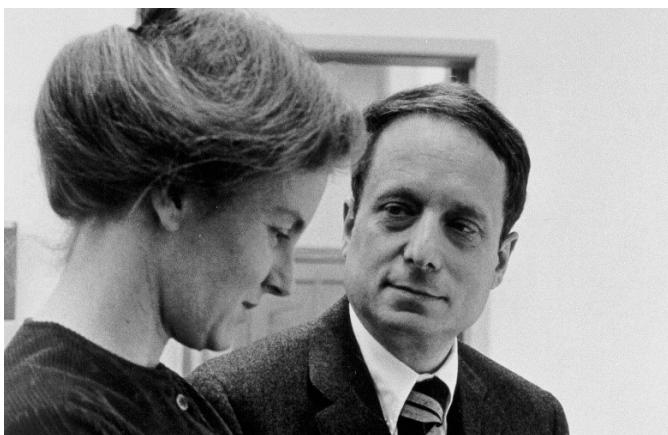
Drexel's renovation of the ISI building had already sparked media coverage and spirited debate among leading designers

and preservations due to MS&R's proposed treatment of the east elevation directly above the striking cantilevered entrance. Ultimately, the University decided that the bold idea of exposing the beam supporting the entrance contradicted Robert Venturi's animating idea of the "decorated shed."



FAME AND SURVIVAL

Then work Scotts Brown, and Robert Venturi was so influential to architecture and still is that we will never know if the building exterior was respected by the continuity of the concept. the building has interior flexibility that allow it to change, but the exterior by the fame of the artist may have been respected or not been demolished.



THE INTERIOR DOCK

The fame of the building and its architect's mix with the people's love for it allowed the building to become a duck, so much so that even the old sign of the ISI could not be touched and is now only covered by a translucent glass that has a sign of the new function of the building.



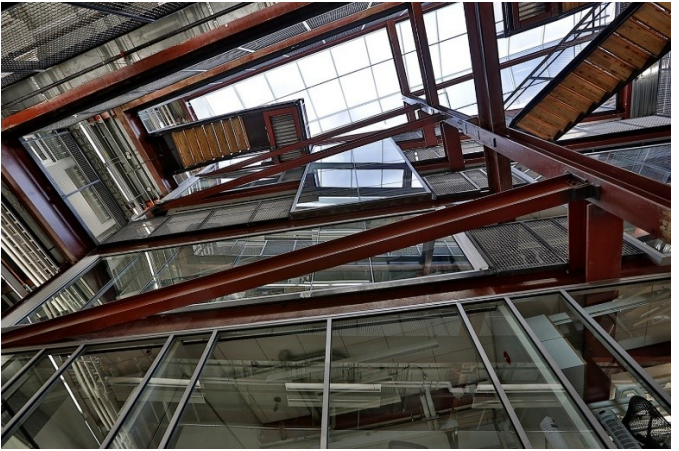
We can see this gesture of the talk in the exterior through the unnecessary and extreme respect to the old function, that know only works as a history piece for all how know its relevant roll in architecture, failing it's symbolic and original function.



The new architects that intervene the building went to all the trouble to try to respect the exterior shell so much, but they forgot to give the same treatment to the interior creating an interior duck

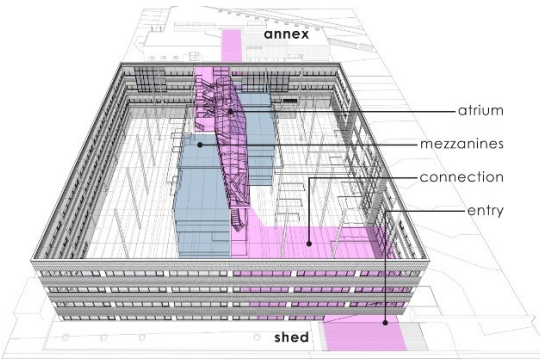
this interior duck is the central patio that allows the building to connect between different floor levels without respecting the original levels of the building, reducing the height between levels.

This new building does accommodate more functions and more space for the building, but also creating this open into space that becomes a duck with its uniqueness, and it's the incapability to change with ease.



Finally, creating a building that becomes a contradiction in itself, an irony with his history and original design process.

The contradiction for building designed to be cheap flexible and with no value so it could be turned down when something bigger or better could be built, because of fame and the original flexibility design into it Became a piece that has stood the test of time. And instead of being turned down, its relevance and fame provoke a situation when the only solution is to become a duck. A duck in the interior with the shed at the exterior becoming an architectural piece of contradiction.



CONCLUSION

Flexibility has become one of the essential parts of architecture in the city where things change quickly and unpredictably.

The idea of architecture as a symbol or a box decorated by symbols has become more relevant due to the digital age. The massive consumption of the images through the internet has raised the symbolic importance in architecture.

The ISI headquarters is a clear example of the value of flexibility and how unpredictable the future is. The importance of this building is how unimportant it has been designed and thought of, but because of fame and the love of the people, it became something new in a way that it was impossible to predict.

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