

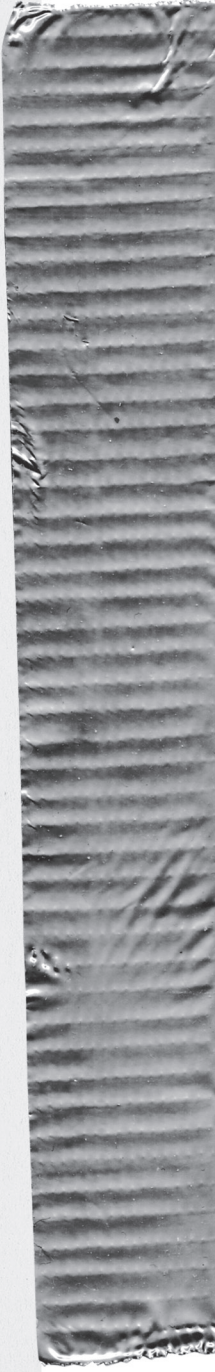
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The value of a mistake

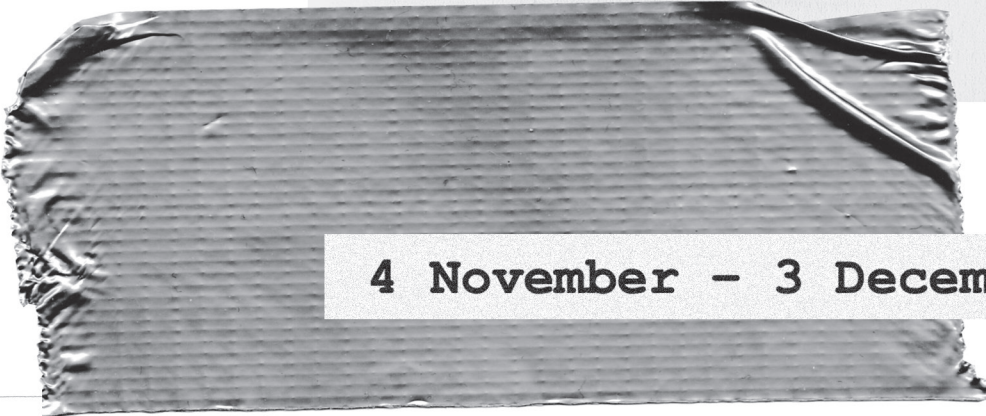
Architecture, to develop, must make mistakes. As new materials develop they may outpace the architect's grasp of their limitations and for a while ugly structures will certainly be produced. But one generation's excremental object may be another generation's gold, as is somewhat the case with the Eiffel Tower these days: at least, so far as the visitors are concerned, who rather admire it.

The offensive object, however, may be unconsciously welcomed – even as it is consciously vilified – because it raises an interesting psycho-spiritual question. Is this self of ours, which is deposited upon this earth, nothing more than shit? As our bodies decay, as we see early signs of our wasting away, knowing that one day we shall be wormed to a kind of stinking waste, will anything come of this excretion? Will we ever truly be resurrected? How could anything be made out of our waste?

The same question is raised when architects create shit. Surely, the people wonder, how can this excrement ever come to anything? What form of intervention in the minds of the generations to come could possibly transform this dross to gold? Disguised in this offended frame of mind may well be a deeply hidden wish that, quite possibly, some day this building will be loved by those who surround it. Perhaps waste will be transformed into live matter. Perhaps the rejected will be the resurrected. But if so, this will happen in the minds of man. The eyesore, then, awaits a future frame of mind, perhaps one more sophisticated than our own, perhaps one that will function in the world of futuristic medicine, perhaps even in a world where, through DNA replication of our blood samples, we can be resurrected after all. Perhaps then, these piles of waste are strange prayers to the future, very different from those admired monuments discussed earlier.



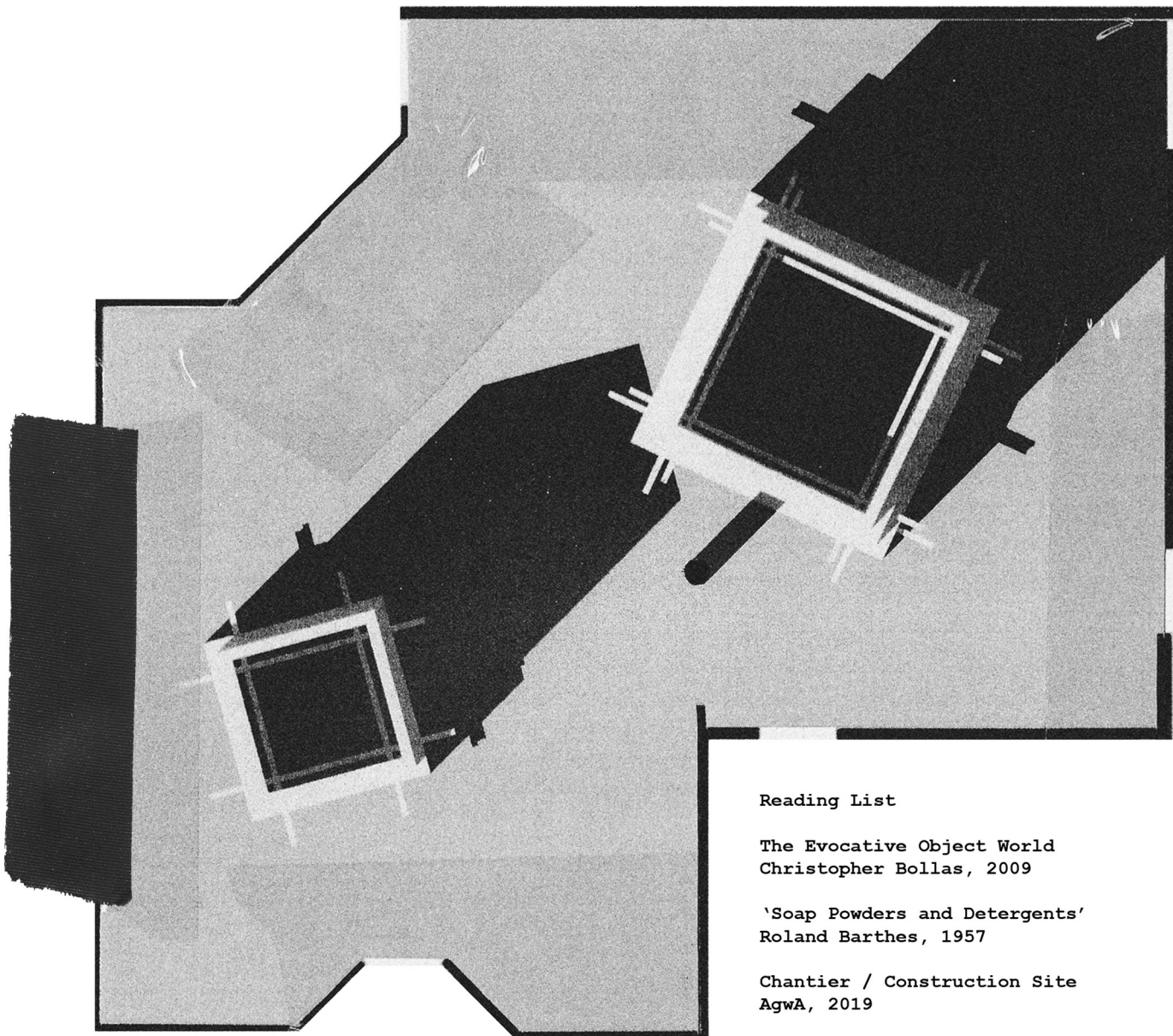
Obelisk



4 November – 3 December

San Mei Gallery is an independent space for contemporary art in South London, committed to research-led, educational and collaborative exchanges. Operating with an artist-led approach, we support artists and curators to experiment with new ideas.

F.O.A.M.



Reading List

The Evocative Object World
Christopher Bollas, 2009

'Soap Powders and Detergents'
Roland Barthes, 1957

Chantier / Construction Site
AgwA, 2019

'Labour, Architecture and the
Politics of Construction'
Symposium, 2020

Events

Artists Tour

Saturday 13 November, 2pm

Architectural collective F.O.A.M. lead a guided tour of their site-specific installation and exhibition *Obelisk*, expanding on its themes of waste, construction and contemporary urbanism.

Sunbath

Wednesday 17 November, 6pm

A post-work sunbath will provide visitors to *Obelisk* with a much-needed mid-summer escape from the dreary November grind by soaking the gallery and its occupants in a warm, midsummer glow for the duration of the evening.

San Mei Gallery

39a Loughborough Rd, London, SW9 7TB

Open Weds-Sat, 12-6pm

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