

DISCARDED ARCHITECTURE

After looking at certain examples of dilapidating architecture, certain imagery has caught my attention in their significance in the idea of human interaction and subsequent vacation. The idea of architectures that have fallen into disrepair due to human abandonment intrigues me in their suggestions of activities that have occurred in the past and what their purpose serves today. Their extant nature serves to highlight that they are still part of our reality, and even though serve no real purpose, exist as monuments to human activity and, and human's subsequent decadence in surplus, destruction, or greed.

The question is what do these architectures serve us in our current climate, if anything, and how they can be adapted (without total destruction) into more representative items of architecture. Can they exist purely as follies and monuments that cause intrigue and wonder against the backdrop of our meticulously organised routines, or do they need to be modified, juxtaposed or rethought to give them a new sense of belonging or worth?

These structures bring to the forefront the idea of human activity encapsulated into a snapshot piece; buildings and even whole towns vacated in one swift motion leave a scenario frozen in time on the landscape of the architecture. Visible evidence manifests itself as haunting reminders of things that were once useful, now rendered obsolete. These markers and scenes set up wonderful opportunities for the observer to create their own imagination of a world gone by, of past activities, joyful or sinister.

*'Half ruined buildings once again take on
The look of buildings waiting to be finished
Generously planned: their fine proportions
Can already be guessed at: but they still
Need our understanding. At the same time
They have already served, indeed have already been overcome. All this
Delights me.'*
Bertolt Brecht, 'Of All the Works of Man'



Chernobyl - Nuclear Reactor Disaster

2pm April 27th 1986

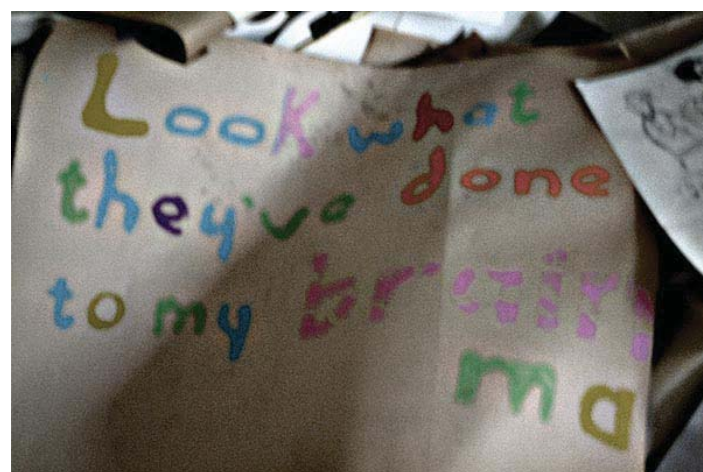
Residents evacuated from Chernobyl. With the knowledge that the evacuation would last only 3 days, many belongings were left behind by the residents. These belongings are still found in the town to this day.



Cane Hill Asylum, Croydon

Ceased operation February 2008

This derelict mental asylum holds many clues to its past life housing mentally unstable patients. The architecture, although rather simple in their Victorian nature, are rendered into a sinister landscape of memories and events, making it a generally undesirable place to visit. Exists as a monument to the mentally unstable, documenting the environment and lifestyle they had to be segregated to.



Oil Rocks - Baku, Azerbaijan

The first offshore drilling platform in the world was created by a joint Soviet and Azeri effort. What was originally intended as a drilling platform only soon became a fully functional city with housing, a palace, library cinema; the list goes on. The entire infrastructure was built upon quite makeshift substructures; dirt, landfill and old ship carcasses were used as foundations for the platforms.

As a testament to the Soviet regime, this scheme now sits almost abandoned, however, oil is still pumped and is still functional. In the sense of vision and ambition however, it could be seen that this offshore 'city' was part of the Soviet Union's ambition to show strength and power as a global force, yet in today's reality demonstrates a sense of superfluousness and excess, another failure of the regime's attempt to flex their technological and ideological muscle.



Russian Theme Park, Niigata, Japan

Opened 2002, closed after six months

An attempt by a Russian businessman to open a Russian-themed park in an obscure part of Japan. It existed as a microcosm of Russia imported and deposited unceremoniously amongst a forest in a small Japanese town. Oddities and garishness are abundant in this now abandoned theme park, yet its current state provides more interest than what it was when functional.

The images of destruction and dilapidation almost confirms the feeling that this place deserves this treatment; its garishness must be juxtaposed with destruction in order to justify its existence and show that the original scheme was in terms of taste, unacceptable.

This particular scheme highlights quite an interesting theme that runs throughout the idea of dilapidated architecture; failure of architecture to provide and to outlive its functional life. The question is can these structures be amended to alter the reality that they provide now?



Lebbeus Woods

Woods' drawings and models often talk about pushing the limits of the possible, and test the ideologies and preconceptions of the viewer. One particular project of his discusses an intervention in war-torn Sarajevo, creating structures and architectures that impose themselves on the destruction that existed during the conflicts in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

In this manner, Woods' drawings are used to present a new imagined world as an idea to how to alter the current reality that existed in Sarajevo. His drawings were used as a reference point for discussion and debate, as a tool not for architectural *production* but for *evolution*.

