the augmented museum

--has porous walls

--is built on a public square as big or small as the entire world

--is dedicated to the exploration of fusions and frictions between the physical and the digital

--is defined as much by natively digital as it is by physical programming

--multipurposes and multichannels everything that it does

--has visitor demographics that include underrepresented audiences (the young, minorities)

--is a theater of research where the show is work in progress

--opens up its own design and planning processes to public view, participation, and critique

--creates perpetually visitable archives of its programming that complement traditional supports like catalogs, site photographs, and websites

--embraces (inter)active models of educational programming, with an emphasis on bottom-up counterparts to traditional top-down approaches

the augmented museum means both

--the reinvigoration of traditional museum genres
and new genres and concepts such as:

--bridged exhibitions (via the www and virtual worlds)

--mosaic exhibitions (fragmentation as outreach, multiplying access to place, dislocated show stations installed in multiple city locations as “teasers”)

--layered exhibitions (cutting across the genres, art to zoology and back)

--process on exhibit (what is this object? what story does it tell? Creating self-reflexive moments in everyday environments)

-- crowdsourced shows (participatory curatorship)

--microshows // one-off shows: the single object that tells a larger story

--macroshows (physically impossible exhibitions enabled by collaboration, crowdsourcing, reliance upon digital assets)

--ambidextrous curation (inside meets outside; the landscape as museum)

when and why augment?

--when the aura , intelligibility and/or the reach of otherwise unavailable physical originals can be enhanced or intensified

--to render places (which are always singular in nature) accessible from multiple positions and angles before, during and after an exhibition event

--when augmentations inside/outside the gallery generate *value added*

(augmentation is a distraction or diminution if the digital simply provides a denatured double of the physical)

--in order to bring expert knowledge out of the monasteries and think tanks and into the public domain

when and why ~~augment~~?

--when the natively physical or digital are enough (i.e. insufficient value added to justify augmentation)

some examples of practice

--Crowds / Revolutionary Tides

--Life Squared

--Le Gallerie 2008

--Speed Limits

--Le Gallerie 2009

future projects:

--completion of Le Gallerie

--archives of modern fashion

CROWDS

http://crowds.stanford.edu/

a website that extends the book and docu-ments the exhibition with an expanding archipelago of virtual galleries, learning environments, and reference tools, in-cluding a database of writings on crowds from the birth of the social sciences through the 1930s

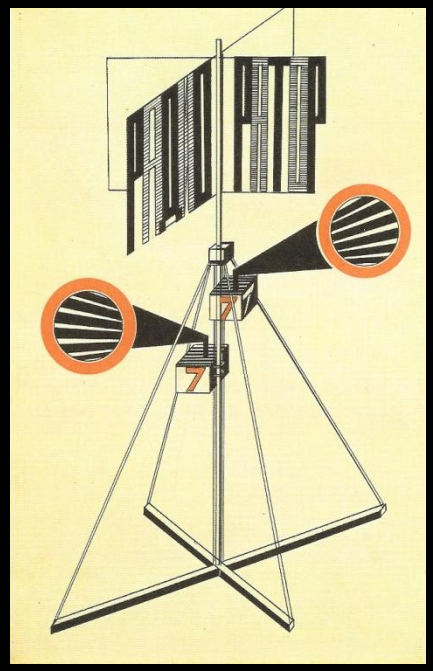
a crowded book (Stanford U Press 2006)

REVOLUTIONARY TIDES: The art of the political poster 1914-1989

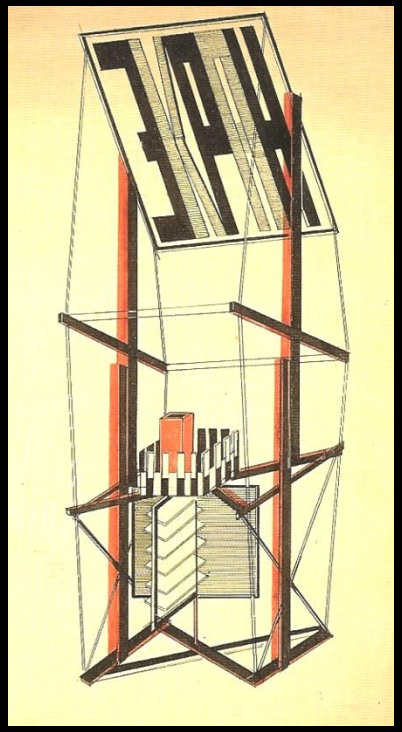
Cantor Arts Center, Stanford *(fall 2005)*
The Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami *(spring-summer 2006)*

Revolutionary Tides (one “wing” of the Crowds website)

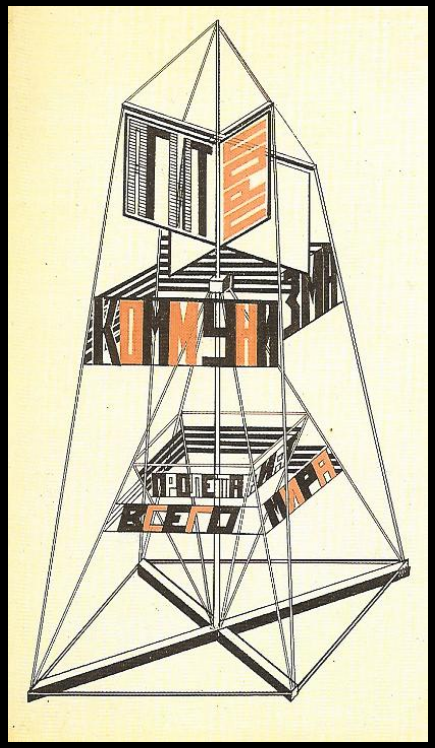
Three kiosks



Three kiosks



Three kiosks



Display devices

life^2

an “animated archive,” built in Second Life, remixing site-specific and digital works by Lynn Hershman Leeson

Le Gallerie 2008

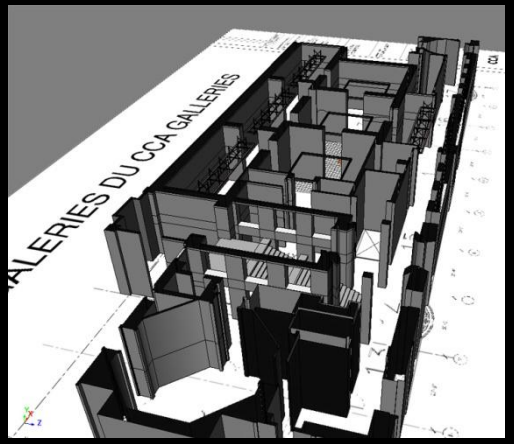
Speed Limits (the vision)

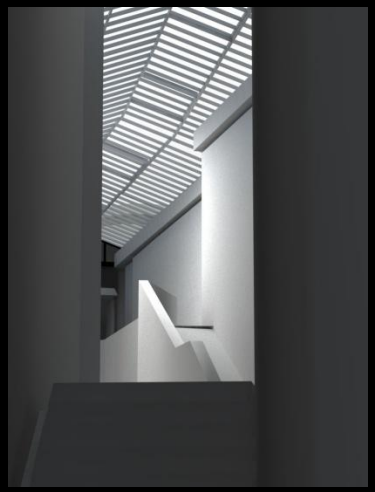
--linking together three physical exhibitions that are discontinuous in time and space via a virtual world platform (Sirikata):

La Vitesse et ses limites, Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal (May-Oct. 2009)

Jais Nielsen, Bornholms Kunstmuseum, Bornholms, Denmark (Sept. 2009 -Jan. 2010)

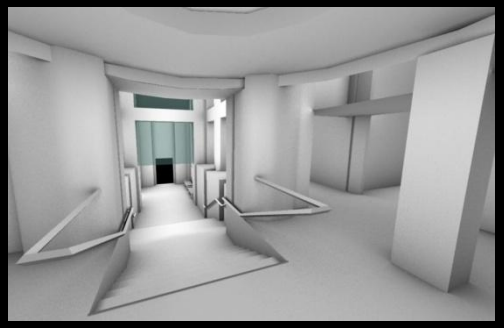
Speed Limits, The Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami Beach (Sept. 2010-Jan. 2010)

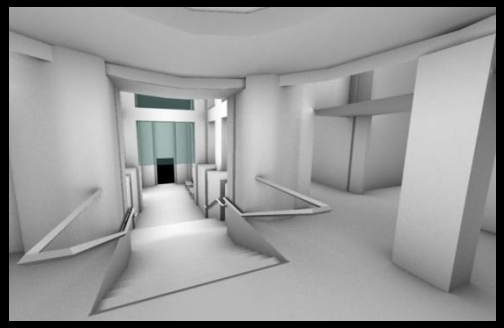




Speed Limits

----by “editioning” these exhibitions in both archival and remixable 3D versions





Archival quality replica of the physical exhibition as installed between May-Oct. 2009 at CCA. Available via CCA www site for decades to come. 2d www components folded into 3d environment for annotation, commentary, critical exchanges.

Intermediate editions of the physical exhibition with commentary and secondary apparatuses.

Fully participatory version of the physical exhibition, available for teaching, design competitions, remixes, mash-ups. Winning entries get fully built and preserved as archivable components of the reception history of the exhibition.

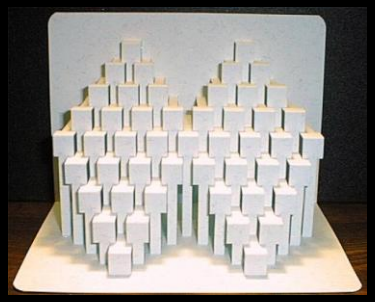
Speed Limits

------by building a natively digital set of environments around them that serve as infinitely extensible supports for the complex of exhibitions. These include:

--commissioned digital “galleries” curated by scholars and artists, as well as generated as the output of a series of international design competitions

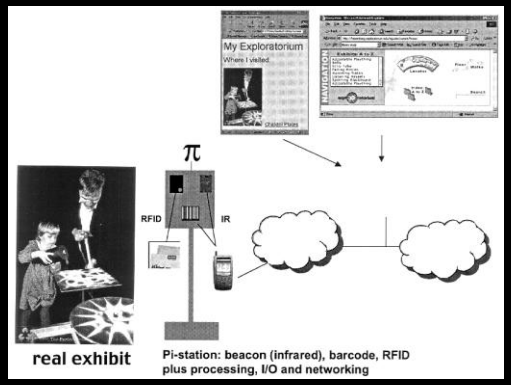
--libraries, archives, and learning environments built in Sirikata but that leverage 2D www assets

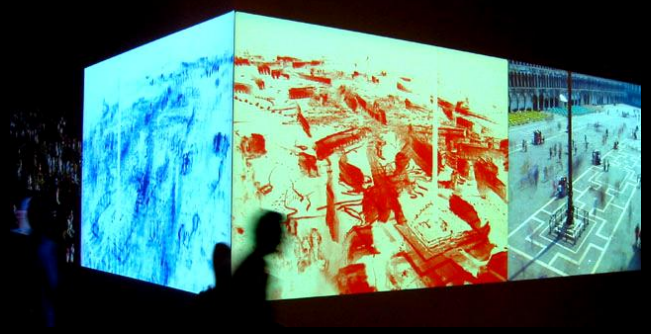
--classrooms, meeting rooms, and performance spaces which can be used as a live platform but also for the preservation and documentation of what takes place within them



Speed Limits

--by re-embedding these natively digital components back into the physical space as the shows travel



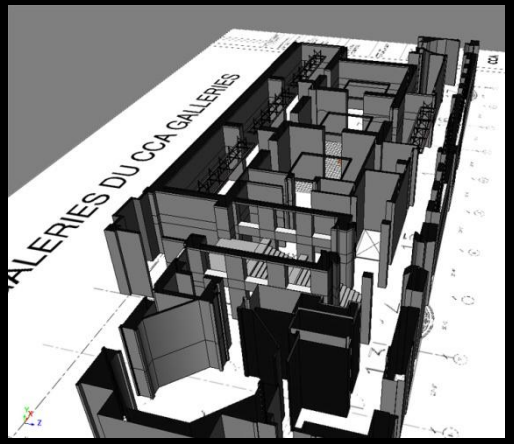


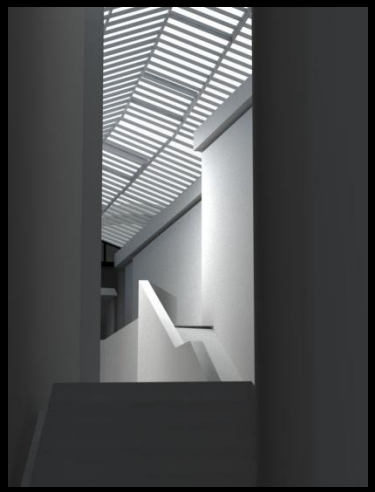
Speed Limits (the actual exhibition)

La Vitesse et ses limites, Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal (May-Oct. 2009)

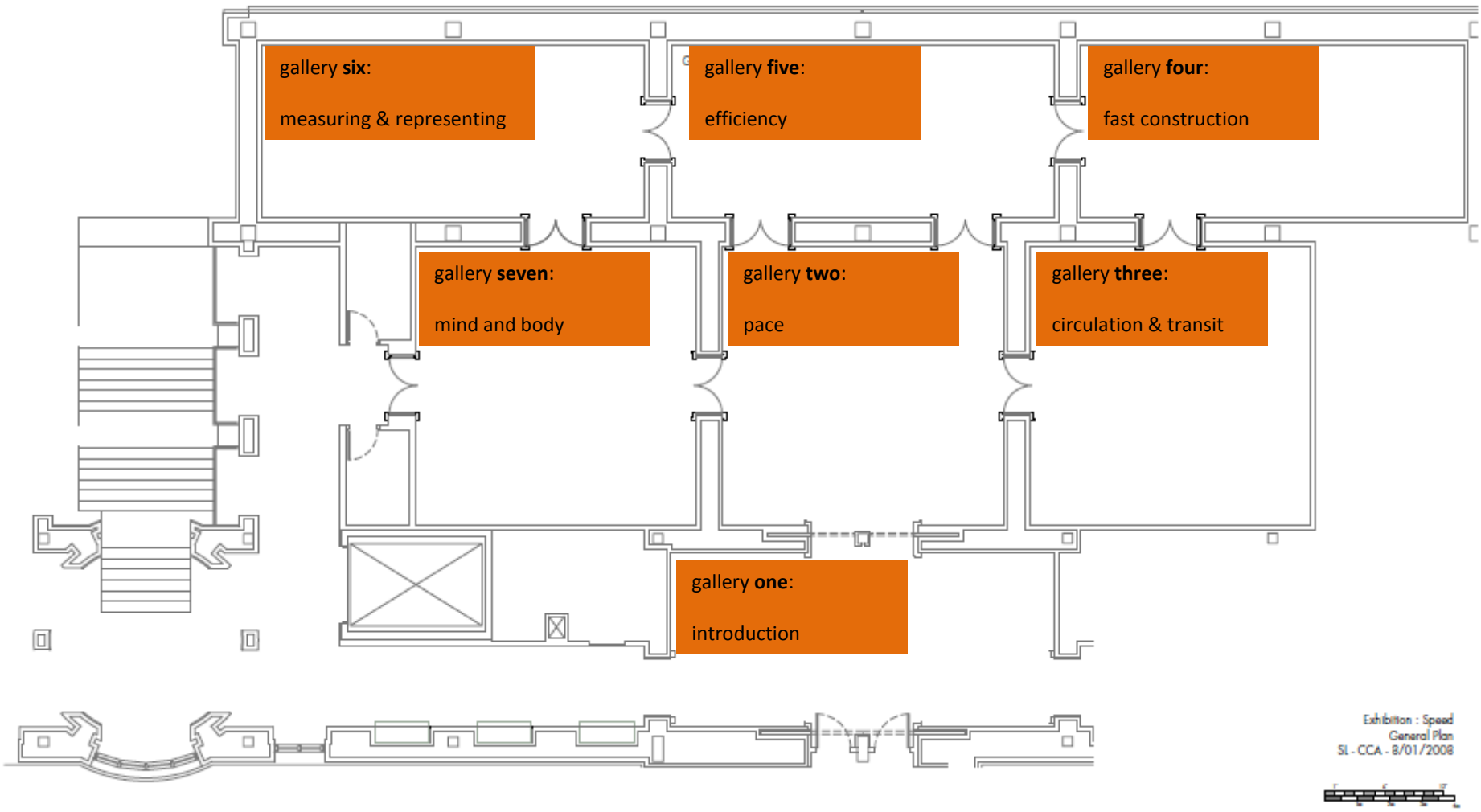
Jais Nielsen, Bornholms Kunstmuseum, Bornholms, Denmark (Sept. 2009 -Jan. 2010)

Speed Limits, The Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami Beach (Sept. 2010-Jan. 2010)





LA VITESSE ET
SES LIMITES
SPEED LIMITS



cca installation

INTRODUCTION

One hundred years ago, *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*, proclaimed that “the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed." A century later, the tempo of life continues to accelerate, propelled by the democratization of air travel and automobility, and by the ubiquity of portable media and communications devices. Speed sports are as popular as ever; the wheels of commerce and banking spin at dizzying speeds; and the tempo of entertainment forms, from the television news to interactive media, is brisker than a mere decade ago. Business books with titles like *The Need for Speed*, *Speed is Life*, *Rev it Up*, and *The Age of Speed* proliferate on bookstore shelves as never before.

Yet speed seems anything but beautiful to a growing chorus of voices that has arisen to denounce its deleterious impact upon contemporary life: whether from the standpoint of environmental devastation, stressful lifestyles, urban sprawl, out-of-control derivatives markets, or its effects upon bodies (fast food) and minds (attention deficit disorders).

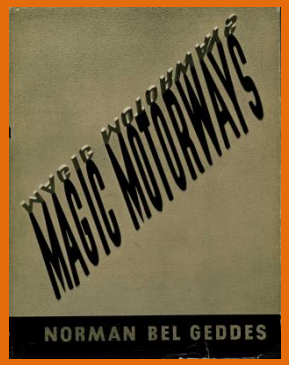
SPEED Limits probes the powers and limits of the modern era's cult of speed in five key domains: circulation and transit, construction and the built environment, efficiency, the measurement and representation of rapid motion, and the mind/body relationship. Critical rather than commemorative in spirit, it explores a single Futurist theme from the standpoint of its contemporary legacies. It is an exhibition about complex choices and complex consequences, about polarities but also about intertwinings between the fast and the slow.

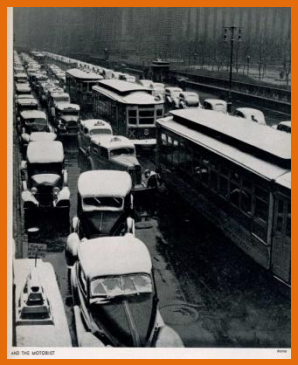
GALLERY 1

PACE

If modern times are fast times, every modification of the pace of existence breeds new expressions of rapidity and slowness. Just as modern work engenders modern forms of leisure (no less mobile and subject to measurement than work), so the still camera both stops and blurs, and the cinema divides the world up into frames that can be sped up or slowed down. What counts as slow depends upon what counts as fast in domains extending from food to sport to communications to politics.

Is an apple that falls close to the tree fast or slow food? Does the bicycle embody speed or its contrary? Is telephony a slow or fast communications medium? Is a decision that requires two days of deliberation rapid or slow? Does this paragraph move too quickly or too slowly? Does a photograph stop or convey rapid motion? The answers to such questions of relative pace are necessarily based upon a given set of conditions and norms. The very roadway that serves as a raceway may become a parking lot during the peak hours of the daily commute.





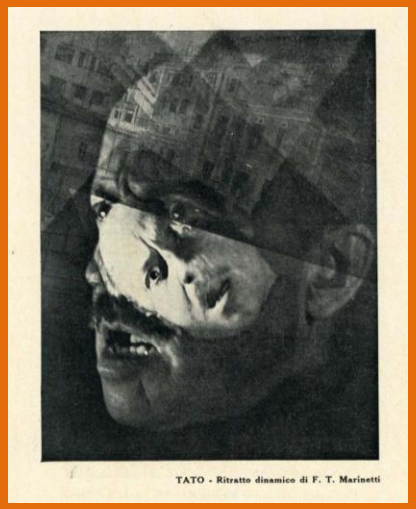
GALLERY 2

quote: "[Thanks to velocity] we live bigger; we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realize our grandeurs in act," Thomas de Quincey, *The English Mail Coach* (1841).

GALLERY 1

altar to futurism

Born on the front page of *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909, Futurism sought a wholesale acceleration of an already fast paced world. Couched in the prophetic mold of “news from the future,” its founding manifesto was authored by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and describes his transformation into a worshipper of the future thanks to an automobile dash through Milan and the resulting accident. It celebrates dynamism, the habit of energy, feverish insomnia, and the race pace in a hyperbolic language that precludes traditional modes of argumentation. During three subsequent decades, Futurism pursued its dream of speeding up all aspects of modern life, from art and poetry to fashion and cuisine to architecture.

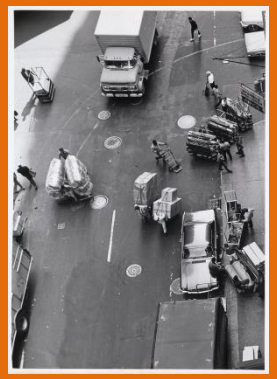

TATO - Ritratto dinamico di F. T. Marinetti

GALLERY 2

CIRCULATION AND TRANSIT

quote: "Speed renders agile, it accelerates the blood circulation of trains automobiles airplanes worldwide." (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *The New Religion Morality of Speed*, 1916)

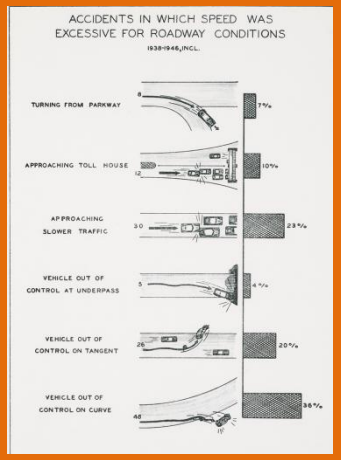
The early modern word for commerce and free trade, "traffic" is transformed by the industrial revolution into a term describing the movements of persons in vehicles and vessels along roadways, railways, canals, sea and air routes. Its extended meaning soon encompasses signals relayed via communications networks, whether telegraphic, telephonic, or involving the transmission of data. As such movements become defining features of everyday life, traffic ceases to mean mercantile adventure or unrestricted movement, and, by the 1930s, begins to signify congestion, logjams, impeded flows. The scale and complexity of the circulation of persons, goods, and information expand to such a degree that rules and regulations, standardized systems of signaling and flow control, and monitoring agencies such as government ministries, the police, and traffic courts, all become integral features of a traffic landscape governed by intersecting local, national, and global management communities. The traffic jam becomes a social realm in its own right: a place of communion where individuals circulate armor-plated within vehicular private worlds.

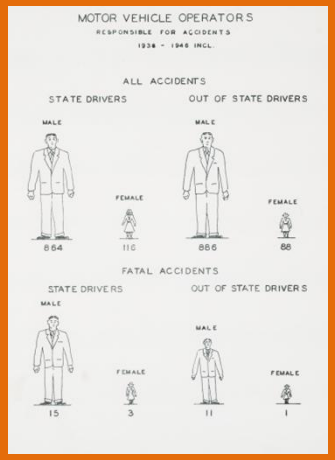


GALLERY 3

accident cluster

As the pace, complexity, and interconnectivity of systems increases, so does risk: the risks to operators, passengers, observers, and society at large. So whereas accident once was a neutral term referring to happy and unhappy collisions alike, that most characteristic of contemporary accident forms—the accident *waiting to happen*—presupposes a negative outcome. Common yet anomalous, predictable only in the wake of its occurrence, the accident's explanation lurks in the elusive interstices between operator error, systemic flaws, and circumstance. A science of accident develops to probe these zones. It seeks to reconstruct and, thereby, to contribute to improvements in operator training, in vehicle safety, and in the efficiency of transportation systems.

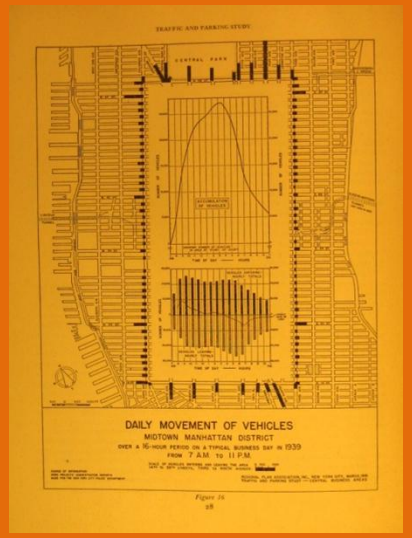




GALLERY 3

complex systems / control panel cluster

The sheer density and diversity of signs, experienced within a framework of perpetual flux, gives rise to an impasse. Where there is too much, there is nothing: only blank confusion. How to channel, filter, and organize a multilayered world? How to render it intelligible with the least degree of effort at the quickest possible pace? How to transform blank confusion into usable information? These are the tasks that modern information design confronts in its battle against cognitive overload. Vast data sets must be reduced to simple visualizations; system maps must render an entire transportation grid navigable at the blink of an eye; control panels must facilitate the rapid conversion of real-time data into somatic actions and reactions.

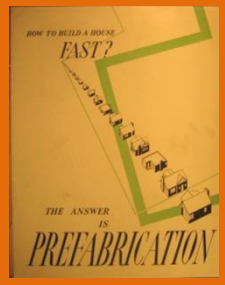


GALLERY 3

FAST CONSTRUCTION

Once the slowest art—due to the arduous nature of construction processes themselves and the enduring nature of the resulting creations—architecture revs up in the modern era. It jettisons the system of historical styles in the name of research and innovation; accelerates construction and demolition processes in order to create a dynamic sense of place and space; reinterprets the built environment as a system for moving people, information, and things. Gravity is overturned by means of new typologies, techniques, and tricks: steel-girder sky-piercing towers, suspension and airframe structures, buildings hoisted atop pilotis, cantilevered roofs that hover mysteriously in the air, transparent or reflective curtain-walls, exterior and interior lighting effects, mobile panels and walls. The tempo of construction is altered by means of a wide array of techniques, from prefabrication to standardization to modular construction.

For tens of centuries, architectural success implied the creation of works that passed the “test of time” to the point of becoming almost mineral outcroppings of the natural landscape. New tests of time arise in the era of industry, based upon factors like the pace of assembly: the 3,300 iron columns, 2,150 girders, 372 roof trusses and 205 miles of sash bars put together between 1850 and 1851 to launch the Crystal Palace; the 18,000 iron pieces joined together with two million rivets by the 300 workers who built the Eiffel Tower between July 1887 and March 1889; the 4.5 floors per week added to the Empire State Building between March and November 1930, allowing it to defeat its rival, the freshly minted Chrysler building, by exceeding the latter’s height in a mere 410 days.



GALLERY 4

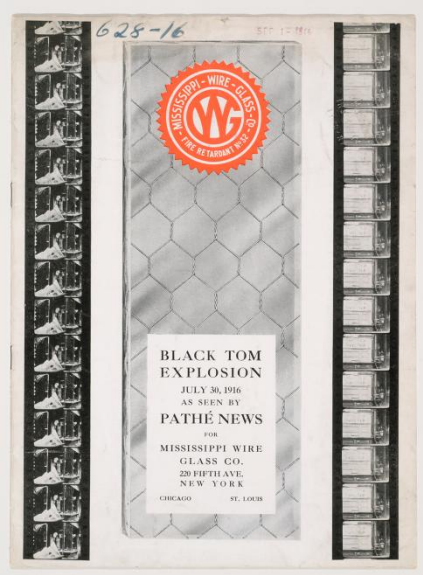
FAST CONSTRUCTION

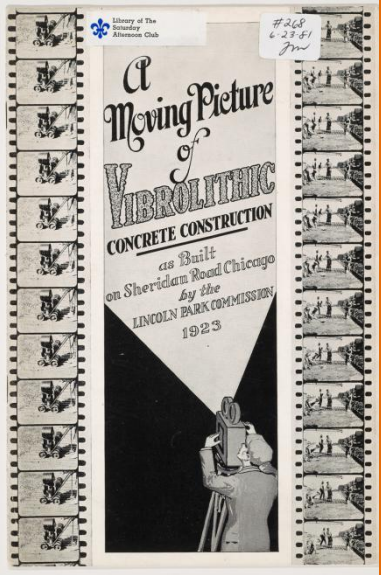
quote: "Modern man, amidst the frenzied flurry of his fast-moving life, can find equilibrium only in the tension-free horizontal. Only by moving at maximum speed will he overcome his haste." Erich Mendelsohn, *Dynamics and function* (1923).

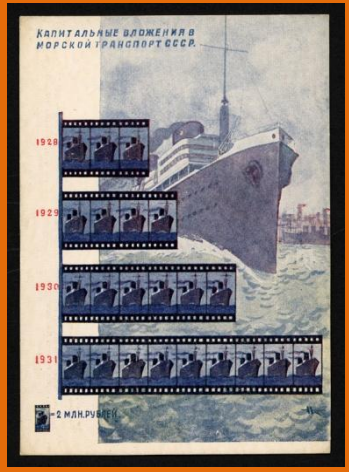
GALLERY 4

film strip as icon cluster

The fracturing of life into seconds, minutes, and hours, corresponds to its translation into moving images composed of stills. The human eye merges with the camera eye, making motion flows out of freeze frames at a rate that will soon be set at the cinematic standard of 24 frames per second. Other frame rates share the stage with the cinematic standard, from the variable projection rates of the early cinema (16-24) to the 40-50 frames prevalent in video games. But at 24 frames per second the illusion of motion with minimal flicker is assured. The filmstrip becomes a universal icon: of (replayable) memory and lived experience, of accomplishment and productivity, of history as ceaseless construction and demolition.







GALLERY 4

EFFICIENCY

quote: "It is the aim of Scientific Management to induce men to act as nearly like machines as possible, so far as doing the work in the one best way that has been discovered is concerned." Frank B. Gilbreth, *Primer of Scientific Management*, (1914).

Whereas for the Futurists speed meant excess, expenditure, and even destruction, for the Scientific Management movement, launched in the late decades of the 19th century by Fredrick Winslow Taylor, it meant efficiency: enhanced productivity, the reduction of fatigue and waste, a foreshortening of the time required for performing work-related tasks. Efficiency's first and most enduring home was the modern factory floor with its moving assembly lines and rationalized workflows. It subsequently became enshrined as one of the core values of modern architecture, furniture, and appliance design, prompting a reengineering of work spaces like offices and domestic spaces like kitchens along Taylorist lines.
The kitchen, once the place where the ancestral flame was kept burning, becomes a specialized realm of food production where minutes count, precision is the rule, and tradition is overruled by modern science. The office becomes the factory's white collar double: a production site where manuality is restricted to the arena of the desktop and labor consists in clerical tasks such as calculating, recording, and filing.

GALLERY 5

kitchen object cluster

Industry first enters the kitchen in the form of standardized appliances, cabinetry, and sinks, initially separate, but soon integrated thanks to works such as Christine Frederick, *Household Engineering; Scientific Management in the Home* (1919). The result were so-called “continuous kitchens” designed like production lines so that the sequence of fixtures, cabinets, and work surfaces would provide a seamless support for every stage in the food preparation process. If the design sensibility of these first industrial kitchens remained aligned with the architectural eclecticism of vernacular housing, their contemporary all-stainless descendants, equipped with fully integrated industrial stoves and walk-in refrigerators, fulfill the dream of a fusion of home and factory.

GALLERY 5

office object cluster

At the end of the 19th century, desks were designed to serve as islands combining the functionalities of a filing cabinet with those of a writing, reading, and calculating station. With the transition to steel furnishings, typewriting supplants handwriting and devices such as telephones become the key components of a new work station typology. Limited filing functions are retained, but paper records expand to such a degree that they are forced to migrate to vertical filing cabinets, destined to become the signature of modern office environments. Fed by mimeography and xerography, filing systems soon develop into freestanding partitions. Their demise and yet another reshaping of the desk occurs as computers displace typewriters and absorb within screen “desktops” the universe of instruments that once populated physical desktops.

GALLERY 5

MEASURING AND REPRESENTING

quote: "Today, we are slaves to the Hours, ruthless tyrants who yield to nothing and divide up people's days into a sad scrapheap of minutes and seconds. Every hour is for us distinct, personal, and characteristic, because we live every hour as an accumulation of the various things that we are in a hurry to accomplish." João do Rio, *Cinematógrapho*, (1909).

GALLERY 6

measuring cluster

The tempo of modern life is marked by the ticking of clocks. Once the exclusive concern of priests and restricted to bell towers ringing out the liturgical hours according to diurnal rhythms of an approximate nature, clocks are now as ubiquitous as they are exacting. They crowd every wrist, wall, and desk. They pulse both visibly and invisibly within the heart of electronic devices, synchronized to International Atomic Time, serving as universal gatekeepers and pacemakers in a world of ceaseless communicational and vectorial flows.

In the company of the ubiquitous timepiece appears an ever expanding family of motion and position measurement devices: accelerometers, altimeters, odometers, and speedometers. Pace and calculation are doubles.

GALLERY 6

motion capture cluster

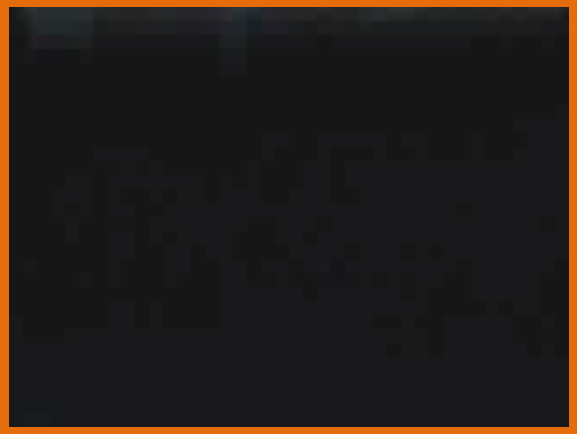
The fast tempo of life in the industrial era engenders a rich assortment of visual conventions for representing bodies in motion where once there were only symbols borrowed from nature. Streamlines dominate this galaxy of signs, denoting movement by filling the gap between an object's current and prior positions with striations whose length indicates greater or lesser velocity. First present in 19th century cartoons but soon integral to a global vernacular, streamlines are flanked by other more traditional markers of motion such as dust and smoke trails. With the advent of photography and film, the language further expands to encompass frame-by-frame timeslices, stroboscopic repetitions, blurring, and simple but suggestive geometries (the zigzag, the spiral, the s-curve).

GALLERY 6

MIND & BODY

quote: “Obediently, we race and rush and push with wild, headlong energy into everything and over everything we undertake to do or conceive a fancy for. We immediately begin to over-work, and over-eat, and over-drink, and over-chew, and over-smoke, and over-live, and at last, when too late, we discover ourselves to be *over-dead* in multitudinous trespasses,” (A. J. Davis, *Mental Disorders or Diseases of the Brain and Nerves*, [1871]).

If movement = life, it would seem to follow that *more movement = more life*. The “more” in question may be quantitative or qualitative, momentary or lasting, justified in the name of ecstasy, enhanced productivity, improved health and fitness, recreation and relaxation, or all of the above. Whatever the case may be, the equation establishes hyperactivity as the norm for human bodies and minds. But is this hyperactivity a source of pleasure or a curse? Are the productivity gains real or sustainable? Is the thrill of speed too swiftly gone or is it so enduring that the ingestion of sedatives becomes necessary? In no era before ours could the phrase “too tired to sleep” have been considered intelligible.



GALLERY 7

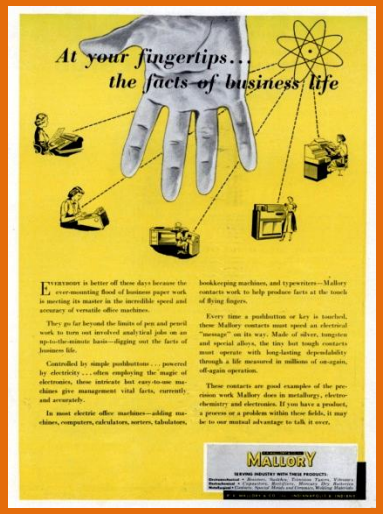
body cluster

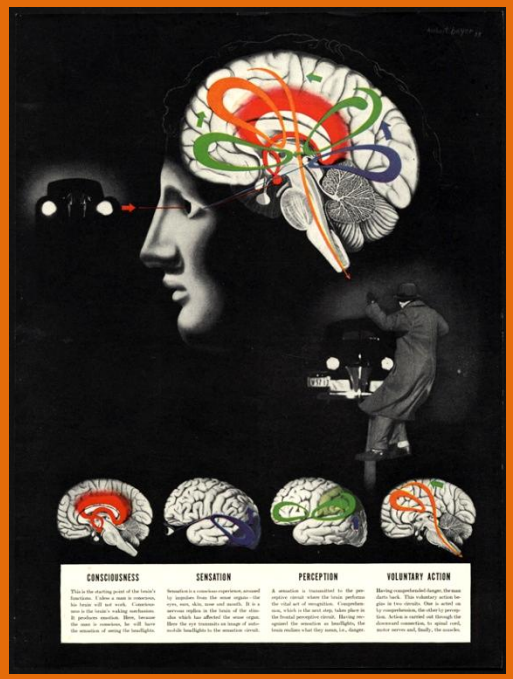
For tens of centuries humankind dreamed of a world without toil, a world whose aristocratic ideal was *otium* [indolence] (as opposed to the bustle of *negotium*). For the past century, hyperbolic exertion has been enshrined as the new standard. The worker is recast as the record-breaking athlete and sports become fundamental to education, recreation, and entertainment. Office workers routinely embrace training regimes that would once have been the exclusive province of world-class long-distance runners. Just as factories have become galleries of machines, so the gymnasium has become a machinery-filled industrial facility dedicated to the building of modern bodies, even as a plague of obesity sweeps the world.

GALLERY 7

mind cluster

Does the increasing tempo of existence, the eclipse of the contemplative attitude that was once the defining feature of mental life, lead to the demise of thinking? For critics of modernity, it does. For apologists, it promotes the emergence of a powerful mode of real-time, on-the-fly deliberation based on quick thinking, fast reflexes, intensified eye-hand coordination, and the simultaneous processing of multiple data streams. From the “multiplied man” celebrated by the Futurists to today’s multitaskers, modern humanity struggles to endow itself with the cognitive skill-set and forms of intelligence required in order to sustain the pace and navigate the complexity of a world that is perpetually on the move.





GALLERY 7

stimulants and tranquilizers cluster

From time immemorial, speed has been one of the defining attributes of higher orders of beings: charioteers like Apollo, messengers like Hermes, and angels so swift in mind and body that they are able to minister to the needs of vast flocks of mortals. Democratized, reinterpreted in a functional and recreational key during the industrial era, speed becomes the tonic that sets the biological clocks of ordinary mortals ticking at the pace now required by everyday life. Among its pharmaceutical avatars are caffeine, cocaine, amphetamines, and the active ingredients of energy drinks: unforgiving gods beyond whose promises of ecstasy lies the certainty of a crash. The logic of hyperstimulation is circular: every upper implies a downer, every downer, an upper.

GALLERY 7

Le Gallerie 2009

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