UNCOVERING THE ROLE OF SILENCE IN A CONVERGENCE OF “THE SUBLIME” AND “THE BEAUTIFUL”: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MINIMALIST ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURAL ART

By

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To my mentors, friends, students and my family.
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Conversations on the ideas of the sublime usually recall themes of the supernatural, the sacred and the profane. These themes are prevalent in the aesthetics of art and architecture and they have overlapping strategies by which they evoke a sublime experience. These experiences tend to be profound and enduring in one’s memory but what are the pure components that achieve such a remarkable experience? How do these experiences exist between the disciplines of art and architecture? In isolating three sets of contemporary artist and architects, this paper investigates the role of subliminal work and its ability to transcend between the two disciplines. Grouped into pairs, this paper will identify modes of representation conveying a sublime experience that emerge in the work of Peter Zumthor and Richard Serra, Tadao Ando and Roni Horn, and SANAA and Robert Irwin. In dealings with this phenomenal experience, the artist and architects behind these curious spaces are worth studying closer. How do these spaces quietly demand attention? What is that which is intangible but present? These positions exist in silent methods. The methods allow silence to be the machine of
the sublime experience. The authors of the considered work achieve the sublime experience through mass, blur, and water.
The conversation on the sublime dates back to the Greek philosopher Cassius Longinus in the 1st Century where the sublime was discussed in regard to verbal and written language. The term continued to be explored in Edmund Burke’s distinguished book, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful*, where he presents the dyad of “sublime” and “beauty” as two wholly separate concepts. The sublime as defined by Edmund Burke, is:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling… The passion caused by the great and the sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.¹

To say it another way, the sublime can be recognized as witnessing a horrific sight while personally residing in a safe space. Another extrapolation of the sublime that builds off Burke’s original definition is an experience of simultaneously holding two opposing truths in tandem; applied to Burke’s definition, the feelings of safety and fear are occurring simultaneously. This interpretation further supports the dyad positioned in the title. In his writings, Burke distinguishes a difference between “positive pleasure” and delight, the “absence of pain”. Pleasure experienced on its own, with no reference to its potential absence, is not remarkable. Instead, remarkable pleasure is only evoked when it is in proximity to pain. Therefore, an awareness of potential pain, or previous pain,

while experiencing pleasure is the preferred formula for delight to be heightened and notable. He explicitly argues that pain has a more impactful effect on emotions and experience. He argues beauty can be disregarded because it is not moving without an edge of threat. Danger and pain cannot exist in too close a proximity for it would only be terrible; instead, the provocative quality of a sublime experience is the delicate balance between pain and delight.

To elaborate on the qualities of “the sublime”, Burke defines aspects of the sublime in proximity to terror, obscurity, power, vastness, infinity, light, suddenness and sound and loudness. He does the same exercise for beauty, aligning it with smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, grace, and elegance. Through these qualities, Burke positions “sublime” and “beautiful” in dialogue as opposites of one another. The idea is that the sublime holds discomfort and terror while the beautiful comforts and celebrates.  

Burke insisted that the sublime could only be experienced in written content and claimed that art did not contain the depth to accomplish this phenomenon. To him, images only imitate their subjects, meanwhile, words contain pluralities that are more profound. Since then, Burke’s theory has been disproven many times – from James Berry’s illustrations in John Milton’s Paradise Lost to the prolific works of Francisco De Goya, art has demonstrated its capacity to evoke the sublime through their haunting imagery. Furthermore, the test of time challenges Burke’s position that “the sublime” and “the beautiful” are independent of each other.

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Conversations on the ideas of the sublime usually recall themes of the supernatural, the sacred and the profane. These themes are prevalent in the aesthetics of art and architecture and they have overlapping strategies by which they evoke a sublime experience. In isolating three sets of contemporary artist and architects, this paper investigates the role of subliminal work and its ability to transcend between the two disciplines. Grouped into pairs, this paper will identify modes of representation conveying a sublime experience that emerge in the work of Peter Zumthor and Richard Serra, Tadao Ando and Roni Horn, and SANAA and Robert Irwin (Figure 1-1). In dealings with this phenomenal experience, the artist and architects behind these curious spaces are worth studying closer. How do these spaces quietly demand attention? What is that which is intangible but present? These positions exist in silent methods. The methods allow silence to be the machine of the sublime experience. The authors of the considered work achieve the sublime experience through mass, blur, and water.
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CHAPTER 2
MASS AS SUBLIME

Peter Zumthor _ Steilneset Memorial

The concept of discomfort is rich in Louise Bourgeois and Peter Zumthor’s
Steilneset Memorial devoted to the persecuted witches of Vardo, Norway. Located in a
remote town in the Arctic circle, the construct resides against the Barents Sea which
makes the journey a challenge as well as the destination. Zumthor wrote of their
collaboration:

I had my idea, I sent it to her, she liked it, and she came up with her idea, reacted
to my idea, then I offered to abandon my idea and to do only hers, and she said,
‘No, please stay.’ So, the result is really about two things — there is a line, which
is mine, and a dot, which is hers... Louise’s installation is more about the burning
and the aggression, and my installation is more about the life and the emotions.3

The site is essentially an unmarked ground in its current condition in which Zumthor and
Bourgeois marked their dot and line (Figure 2-1). Vardo is an abandoned fishing village
that is so extremely far north that it is recognized as the ultima thule - a far unknown
place. In these qualities, the site is vast and powerfully quiet in identity.

In such a cold environment, Bourgeois’s dot sits adjacent to the main gallery, the
line. The dot is a small dark, delaminating glass box that houses a fire (Figure 2-2). The
fire feigns a place of comfort and respite from the harsh elements of the outside, but its
true design reveals itself immediately when approached. Inside the glass box,

Bourgeois’s installation The Damned, The Possessed and The Beloved features a fire

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1 Karissa Rosenfield, "Steilneset Memorial / Peter Zumthor and Louise Bourgeois, Photographed by
Andrew Meredith," ArchDaily, March 01, 2012, , accessed February 15, 2019,
https://www.archdaily.com/213222/steilneset-memorial-peter-zumthor-and-louise-bourgeois-
photographed-by-andrew-meredith.
on a steel chair inside a concrete pit. The flame is eternal and multiplied through the reflections cast on the propped – in an accusatory and domineering stance – circular mirrors lining the pit (Figure 2-3). At night, the smoky glass joins in the event as it also reflects the glowing flame. The use of smoke glass filters the happening through a dark lens from the exterior, evoking the melancholy and darkness associated with the witchcraft trials. From the interior, the glass retains a dialogue between inside and outside but doesn’t entirely disappear as an edge. It’s obvious muting capacity of the exterior light contrasts visibly through a slight gap between the bottom edge of the glass material and the ground. Semi-transparent glass in concert with the central flame reinforce the space as inward-facing despite the visually permeable edge. The surrounding walls float from the ground and the ceiling floats above the walls. The open corners of the building serve as slippages where the heat of the fire escapes to be replaced with the cold air, resulting in only a partially-conditioned space. The seemingly solid box is actually delaminated. The space effectively holds an ambiguous feeling of open and enclosed in tandem. The space is undoubtably unsettling in its haunting evocations, the darkness of its environment, and its ambiguity of edge. Ironically, the installation is an eternal fire, a symbolic architectural program that encourages warmth and communal gathering of a positive connotation. This icon gets turned on itself as the pit brings forth a more disturbing memory in perpetuity. The memory becomes present as the haunting becomes fear.

Adjacent to Bourgeois’s dot is the line, Peter Zumthor’s “Memory Hall”. The two buildings contrast strongly in their construction techniques. One is small, square, and seemingly solid, while the other is an extensive, linear, exoskeleton. “Memory Hall” is
made of a light wooden framework – inspired by old fish drying racks found throughout the island – spanning 123 meters (Figure 2-4). Held taught at tension points, the dual-layered fabric forms the enclosure of the hall (Figure 2-5). The interior fabric receives a dark black finish, and by adopting the color of melancholia, the space absorbs light and emphasizes contemplation on the dark nature of its content (Figure 2-6). Unsettling testimonies and biographies line the interior as the information weaves visitors through the history, context and each victim’s identity. There are exactly 91 windows – representing single victims – puncturing through to the exterior. Each is paired with a hanging light bulb. The bulbs parallel Nordic custom of lighting home windows during the winter season to counteract the inadequate amount of natural light (Figure 2-7).

In Louis Bourgeois’ point, one is asked to pause, and stand in an echo of reflections. In Zumthor’s line, one is tethered in motion by the measure and its extents. The act of burning is central to the “point” and serves as the focus. Similarly, the community would congregate to public spaces to witness the central event of the burning of witches. The “line” divides its focus throughout a timeline, isolating the victims to call attention to their individual identities. The experience in the point emphasizes the importance of the historical events through pulsation while the line emphasizes the importance of the events through compression.

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5 Ibid
Richard Serra _ Torqued Ellipses

Richard Serra’s torqued ellipses are massive steel sculptures that create discomfort due to their dubious posture relative to each other. Like Eadweard Muybridge’s stop frame photos of a horse’s gait, each sculpture is a static motion captured and suspended in an eternal pause (Figure 2-8). These sets of steel plates are wound and interwoven in the middle of an exchange, a dance, held in a moment of tension. That tension is visible when studied through their planimetric and sectional relationships – torqueing in both directions. The distance between the steel sculpts a space that is filled with invisible tension between the conversing steel (Figure 2-9). Serra makes many variations of the torqued ellipses which embody various action verbs: to bend, to roll, to remove, etc. Catalogs of these operational terms have been published extensively. The operative words materialize in the relationship between the steel; this relationship can be applied to many different scales. Serra purposefully builds the sculptures at a size that allows for human occupation in the tension. The sculptures hold two opposing ideas in tandem, one of motion and one of permanency. The steel looks interrupted, as though there is a clear place it is motioning from and towards. 6 It exists in neither but is rather still in transit. The quality of static motion of the sculpture conveys a suspicious momentum within the steel which is suggestive of volatility. In this way, steel appears void of stability, as though the constructs are a house of cards, ready to collapse (Figure 2-10).

At a human occupiable scale, individuals reluctantly volunteer to stand close to these massive torqued ellipses. At a minimum of 12’ high, the sheer size is enough to elicit fear; additionally, this uneasiness is heightened through materiality. The disconcering curvilinear walls are made of steel, a heavy industrial material whose weight is twenty tons per sculpture, having the potential to cause significant damage if its balance were to be disrupted (Figure 2-11). At two inches, the thin profile of the steel further dismisses its structural integrity and enhances its sense of changeability.\(^7\) Changeability emerges in the way the sculpture touches the ground, its dimensions and its formal gesture (Figure 2-12). The way the ellipses are sculpted into ribbons, as if they are made of malleable paper, strips the steel of its familiar rigidity (Figure 2-13). The unfinished steel material displays steady indications of time as it weathers with its duration (Figure 2-14). In these ways the materiality of the sculptures is crucial to the phenomenological experience for occupants as it creates a visceral reaction that encourages awareness of proprioception, in space, in time, in balance.

Although some of Serra’s Torqued Ellipses have permanent locations, others travel between locations, suggesting they are not site-specific. The sculptures are built to incite alertness and consciousness of environment; however, the environment is not necessarily the immediate rooms within which they lie, but rather a larger field of relationships. There is a matrix of space that holds all the torqued ellipse variations in relation to one-another, but the relationships are inconsequential to the way they meet the ground plane.

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Conversation Between Artist and Architect: Serra and Zumthor

When looking at Serra’s work alongside Zumthor’s, it is understood that the crafted relationships between components plays an important role in the quality of space experienced. The material is deliberate and is executed with intention. The weight of the materials does not behave in expected ways. The textural palette is disconcerting to the extent that it becomes notable. The construction of the work does not agree with traditional understandings of the material’s potential. Through the sublime experience, the intrigue provoked from the work comes in equal parts from composition and materiality. The ways in which things are built can be ambiguous, allowing them to contain pluralities; these pluralities can incorporate changeability in occupiable space. The monumentality of each author’s work against the scale of a human also plays a large role in the anxiety induced when people position themselves against the work. Both works are overwhelming in size which prompts self-awareness and insecurity. Each project is exposed to weather – Corten steel in Serra and the vulnerability of the delaminated assembly in Zumthor – which positions occupants to the vastness of time, providing another heightening of awareness and reminder of one’s smallness. The site for each of the works is muted; Vardo is an unmarked landscape that the memorial plugs into while the torqued ellipses are independent of the space they reside in. The built works intentionally jump to the foreground in focus while their context recedes to the background. The constructs each demand a kind of silence from its visitors, out of respect and reflection. The silence in the spaces emphasizes all movements as things creak and echo. The tensions existing within the spaces also act silently in that they are not audible but rather exist in the mood of the work. Both Zumthor’s and Serra’s work hold attributes Burke identifies with “the sublime” such as
terror, power and vastness. Simultaneously, in Burke’s definition of the term, these works maintain a beauty through their smoothness, gradual variation, grace and elegance. It would be wrong to identify these projects as either one or the other, instead they illustrate a convergence of both “the sublime” and “the beautiful”.

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CHAPTER 3
BLUR AS SUBLIME

SANAA _ Grace Farms

In New Canaan Connecticut, Grace Farms Foundation requested a spiritual community space to celebrate the grand natural expanse of the site. The project greets visitors with two long linear rectangular buildings that hold the welcome center and classroom spaces. Between the two volumes, splitting them, is a generous plaza with vegetation and a paved walkway. The entry is modest, opaque, and orthogonal – a severe contrast to the main building, referred to as “the river” (Figure 3-1). 1 “The river” is curvilinear throughout and enclosed with glass (Figure 3-2). The five programmatic volumes of space enclosed in glass in the river building are the sanctuary, the library, the dining space, the foyer, and the gym. 2 Stretching the entirety of the river building, the overhead plane maintains a low and thin profile as it bends along the landscape. The ground and overhead appear to move together as one. Even when the spaces burrow into the ground to gain more height, the shift is unperceivable from the exterior. The elevational view is not only deceptive in its suggestive consistency in height, but it also appears to be shorter than it actually is. These two illusions are accomplished through the contrast between the height – ranging from 10 to 15 feet – in relation to the extensive length it reaches – 700 feet from top to bottom and 1,700 feet along the curving path. 3 The proportion of height to length exaggerates the buildings profile to

3 Ibid
suggest it is low and consistent. The emphasis of the building reading as horizontal, shallow and porous, allows the construct to disappear and recede into the landscape. The undulating glass enclosing five volumes is a specially engineered curved glass that is thin and very clear; the glass is hardly visible which opens the sightlines through the spaces causing the inside/ outside boundary to dissolve. All the details in the building behave similarly in that they are finetuned to fade – the volumes and program are second to the landscape. The space below the overhead plane reads very transparent as one sees through one side to another (Figure 3-3). This porosity makes the overhead appear to be lightly floating on thin posts. These posts mimic the thin radius of the surrounding trees and their presence is felt like markings of the trees (Figure 3-4). Akin to its title, “river”, like water, the building forms to its surroundings, its boundary is indefinite, and it contains reflective properties (Figure 3-5). When it is daytime, the occupants feel as though they are outside and when outside at night the occupants can see within the glowing spaces; during sunrise and sunset, the two conditions layer onto one another (Figure 3-6). Through these alternating roles of light, the dialogue between inside and outside remains open.

**Robert Irwin _ Excursus: Homage to the Square³**

Robert Irwin’s work, *Excursus: Homage to the Square³* at Dia:Beacon is an installation that is a derivative and re-presentation of his former project, *Prologue: x183*. This iteration is made of a symmetric 4x4 grid floor plan of adjacent equal-sized chambers lined in white scrim. Each chamber contains a fluorescent light floating in the

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middle of each of its four walls and the rooms have openings that connect them to one another near their shared corners (Figure 3-7). The title is inspired by Albers’ technique of making adjacent paint zones appear to be in a depth relationship of transparency. The installation differs from its predecessor in Dia’s Chelsea Gallery in color – the prior scrim was a shade of cool light blue – and engagement to site. The prior installation was made of a cool light blue scrim and its walls spanned from floor to ceiling. In the new iteration, the scrims have translated to all white. Its new home is noticeably taller and its walls do not reach the ceiling, allowing the installation to live independent of the space containing it. The installation feels open and transparent but as the scrim layers through multiple spaces, perception of what lies beyond is lost. One can’t quite decipher how many people, spaces, or lights – also incorporated into the installation – exist in the space past the three perceptible layers of scrim. The way light permeates through the semi-transparent scrim starts to create an openness between the layers but only until the 4th layer; the 4th layer of scrim reads as opaque (Figure 3-8). This opaqueness starts to define privacy at that depth. This quality allows Irwin to create an environment that feels both open and private. It is through the layers of light-permeable material that Irwin can achieve seemingly opposite perceptions (Figure 3-9). On a 16’ by 17 ½’ footprint, the height of the scrim walls are 13 ½’ tall and open to the Dia:Beacon ceiling above. This height is virtually imperceptible at human sightline and further obscures edges and spatial judgements. The permeability of acoustics in the gallery also begin to emphasize this dichotomy of open yet private space; one hears footsteps, but it is unclear where they originate.

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5 Ibid
This light quality that Irwin captures could be likened to weather phenomenon. Consider the glow of light when moisture is in the air. During the day, the layers of particulates decrease the depth of visibility and consequently the sun and horizon lines are masked. At night, it is as though the sun never sets fully. The air is thick. Light is diffused and its origins and edges are imperceptible. Thick fog, rain, or snowfall conditions behave in comparable ways. The density of the particulates is mimicked by the material density of woven thread. Both the weather and material depend on distributed permeability to let light trickle through the density. This lighting condition creates an illusory atmosphere (Figure 3-10).

This lighting condition is also bidirectional. It lets light in, illuminating the interior space when lit from exterior natural light. As the sun goes down and the darkness fills the exterior, this layered semitransparent wall doubles as a light vessel when lit from the interior.

**Conversation Between Artist and Architect: Irwin and SANAA**

Both Irwin and SANAA challenge the domain of spaces through material transparencies. The qualities of vertical edge play a key role in how spaces blur into one-another. The material properties of scrim and glass allow the edge between spaces to dissolve in their visual and auditory permeability. Access through spaces, as experienced through the senses, allow them to layer or collapse into one another. The use of translucent and transparent materials demonstrates different qualities of blur between spaces. Transparent material can entirely disappear or superimpose reflections on its surface depending on its surrounding light condition while translucent material can solidify or dissolve in the way it engages light. The power of the materials lies in their plurality, allowing them to undulate between conditions as though they are a
living component. Occupying these live materials can be uncanny. The sublime experience occurs when the clarity of the edge diffuses and there is a notable uncertainty about the extents of immediate surroundings. The dissolved edge requires closer study to understand; it is often most clearly understood through context clues. For instance, a dark shadow visible through a translucent surface garners intrigue and it is not until one studies its dimensions and sees it move that it can be likened to a person. The indefinite edge of spaces elicits discomfort in uncertainties; the preferred materials telegraph spectral imagery which comes with even more displeasure. The obscurity not only heightens fear but also alertness which results in a kind of silence. The silence is a result of tuning-in and listening as a means for comprehension. The blurring of edges occurs through silencing details. The minimalist approach in both works quiets the literal elements and focuses on the environment created by them. The construction assembly mutes itself to focus on the mood instead. The two constructs are both beautiful and evoke the sublime. They work in “the sublime” through their obscurity and shifting role of light and they are beautiful in their smoothness, delicacy and grace.
Figures

Figure 3-1. Grace Farms Plan, SANAA, 2015.

Figure 3-2. Grace Farms, Kristel Bataku, 2016.
Figure 3-3. Porosity, Kristel Bataku, 2016.

Figure 3-4. Columns and trees, Kristel Bataku, 2016.
Figure 3-5. Daytime reflection, Kristel Bataku, 2016.
Figure 3-6. Light play during sunset, Kristel Bataku, 2016. A) 5:00 PM B) 5:26 PM C) 6:11 PM
Figure 3-7. Excursus, Kristel Bataku, 2015.

Figure 3-8. Layers to opacity, Kristel Bataku, 2015.
Figure 3-9. Open and private, Kristel Bataku, 2015.
Figure 3-10. Spectra, Kristel Bataku, 2015.
Japan has a long-standing cultural history rooted in their use of water in architecture. Ando’s contemporary building complex makes reference to this rich history. Traditionally, Japanese Gardens are microcosms of the larger overall Japanese landscape and incorporate a water feature—usually a waterfall or pond. This design encourages an apperception of one’s relationship to nature—a very important motif in Japanese culture and design. Contextually, Japan is an island, and this is an ever-present reality in Japanese culture. In the garden, water denotes the passage of time by way of flowing between two areas of the garden; a bridge connects the two land areas above the water and the physical act of crossing the bridge emphasizes moving between one moment-in-time to another. Motifs of water exist in other areas of Temples. A fountain located at the entrance provides a place to purify before entering. The texture of water inspires the patterns raked in the sand that can be found in some gardens.

In the *Garden of Fine Arts of Kyoto* by Tadao Ando, water also plays a large role philosophically, materially, and acoustically. The project features artificial waterfalls that collect below into ponds—in this way, water acts as both a wall plane and a ground plane (Figure 4-1). Its reflectivity as a material property allows water to bleed beyond its physical location; water reflects light that seamlessly projects onto other surfaces including the ceiling, allowing water to activate overhead conditions. The volume of water differs as you meander along the itinerary of art. The massive concrete walls separate the waterfalls resulting in divisions of spatial hierarchy and a distinct acoustic
narrative associated to each piece (Figure 4-2). The largest artwork on display, The Last Judgement – a recreation on ceramic plate from the original Michelangelo Buonarroti painting - resides between two waterfalls and its adjacent walls form an irregular trapezoidal shape in plan that allows the crashing sound of water to bounce between the walls. The waterfall farthest west and most immediate to The Last Judgement, is the tallest of them all - creating the loudest sound when it breaks (Figure 4-3). The passageways alongside it approach close enough to feel the power and the mist of the water (Figure 4-4). All together, these qualities help amplify the importance of the space and this piece of art – water is the dominant motif.

Upon initial entrance, the recreation of Claude Monet’s Water Lilies Morning lies in a tranquil pool where the presence of water is subtle (Figure 4-5). A solid wall pulls occupants forward angularly and eventually opens to reveal a visual threshold that allows the performance of water to becomes acoustically dominant. This threshold demands attention and consequently most conversations dissolve as the occupant observes the architecture more consciously (Figure 4-6). The rushing sounds of water appears as distant, yet, boisterous. The angles of the walls work to isolate or amplify the water acoustics – depending on one’s orientation to them (Figure 4-7). While moving within the canyon of these massive concrete barriers, one waterfall trails behind while the next shapes its own acoustic profile (Figure 4-8). Occupants feel as though they are in the aggression of the water but without the contact or wetness. The overwhelming sound of the rush of water is powerful but once it retreats to the background, the extra sounds are drowned along with them. Occupants experience a solitariness that
cultivates awareness and discovery.¹ Simultaneous to the drama of the acoustics, the space becomes soothing in the other silence it creates.

**Roni Horn _ Well and Truly**

Roni Horn works in multiple media and her work often deals with mutability in identity which she typically tests the potential of – her water sculptures are no different. The water sculptures are made of cast glass and vary in size. They often appear as upright cylindrical pieces, but their shape has variation through iteration. These sculptures explore water as a material, and they range in color, proportion, and size. What they all have in common is their highly polished convex top face, frosted sides, and their resemblance to slices of water. The sculptures appear as solids, frozen in time. Through her many variations of these sculptures, Horn specifically challenges the lip that turns the corner from the polished top face to the translucent sides. This lip detail ranges from very narrow bevels, wide bevels, and different types of pinch conditions. She focuses greatly on the material transition and what that joint says about the qualities of the whole sculpture. Depending on the detail, the quality of the threshold between the polished water edge and the translucent sides can heighten or ease tension. Looking specifically at the exhibit Well and Truly, shown at Punta Della Dogana in 2012 as part of the exhibition In Praise of Doubt, the exhibit features ten identical sculptures made from cast glass cylinders sized 20 inches high with as 36 inches diameter.² Their only differences are their color as they range between white to blue and their location in

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relation to one another – they are scattered unevenly in the center of the gallery space (Figure 4-9). The sides of the sculptures look as though they are sanded but are a product of the casting process. This frosted finish of the sides plays well against the highly polished top face of the sculpture (Figure 4-10). The sculptures appear to mimic the liquid and solid conditions of water where the polished glass behaves like liquid and the frosted glass behaves like ice. These two conditions of water are positioned right next to each other and the transition happens in the lip that turns the corner between them. In Well and Truly, the detail of the lip is consistent between the ten sculptures and each of them seem to be frozen at the brink of the water about to spill over. The tension of the breaking point is palpable. The polished top face resembles still water and this allusion allows the static sculpture to transcend into an active experience where time is warped through the intensity of the moment captured (Figure 4-11).

The difference in color between the sculptures communicates notions of depth and weight as the range of pigment alludes to a thickness, a density contained within them. This heaviness carries acoustic dimension and when the sculptures are viewed as a collective, they seem to be performing together. The sculptures themselves are incomplete until they are situated in a space. To Horn, water is “a form of perpetual relation, not so much a substance but a thing whose identity is based on its relation to other things. Most of what you’re looking at when you look at water is light reflection.”

They absorb and reflect their surroundings and change in tonality as shaped by their surroundings (Figure 4-12).

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Conversation between Artist and Architect: Horn and Ando

Water serves a spiritual and functional role in the works of Ando and Horn. The role of water is symbolic of calm, renewal, wonder, and continuity. It is suggestive of gentility and grace but, paradoxically, it is also associated with power and destruction. It is amorphous and transitions between different states – as gas vapor, liquid water, and solid ice. With water exposure, weathering marks the persistence of time on surfaces. As a material, water acts as a transparent and reflective surface. As it ranges in speed and volume, water redefines its role in a given space. Water has a symbiotic relationship with its environment as it shapes and is shaped by it. It is mysterious. The material behavior is unpredictable and complex. Water used as a material in the works of Ando and Horn has allowed their work to be changeable. This changeability fosters a lack of certainty, evoking a sublime experience through apprehensive study. What seemingly is one way, whether it be Horn’s deceptive phase of water or Ando’s textured walls, under closer inspection reveals an unanticipated solidity or flowing water respectively. Both authors selectively position two conditions of water against each other to heighten the juxtapositions of its plurality; this confronts the occupant with water’s ambiguity in a heightened way. Both works create a silence by way of water through intrigue and control. The water in Ando’s garden is powerful and dominates the auditory space removing the ability to hold conversations. The experience becomes introverted and exchanges are limited to miming. In Horn’s work, the tension of the space elicits silence. The cusp of water on the top of the sculpture eternally suspends the breaking point to overflow. A precise stillness holds the sculpture at a defining moment. Both experiences heighten curiosity and great delight. The works are of “the
sublime” in their obscurity, vastness and sound while maintaining “the beautiful” through their gradual variation and elegance.

**Figures**

Figure 4-1. Layers of ground, Kristel Bataku, 2015.
Figure 4-2. Wall Canyon, Kristel Batak, 2017.

Figure 4-3. Largest waterfall, Kristel Batak, 2017.
Figure 4-4. Proximity to water, Kristel Bataku, 2017.

Figure 4-5. Calm entry, Kristel Bataku, 2017.
Figure 4-6. Acoustic threshold, Kristel Bataku, 2017. A) View above B) Water Detail
Figure 4-7. Interwoven walls, Kristel Bataku, 2017.
Figure 4-8. Layers of itinerary, Kristel Bataku, 2017.
Figure 4-9.  Well and Truly Exhibit A) Installation in Kunsthaus, Stefan Altenburger, 2010. B) Installation in Punta Della Dogana, Lucy Rees, 2010.
Figure 4-10. Material duality, Elisa Routa, 2018.
Figure 4-12. Sited sculpture transforming and being transformed by the space, Punta Della Dogana, 2010.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

The sublime paired with minimalism in the contemporary landscape challenges Burke’s argument for separating “the sublime” from “the beautiful”. The works of Zumthor, Bourgeois, Serra, SANAA, Irwin, Ando and Horn position the two conditions in harmony, effectively demonstrating the sublime and beautiful as one. Under Burke’s conclusions, it is seemingly faulty to recognize minimalist work as sublime for it is simple and pure, qualities Burke reserves for “the beautiful”. These minimalist authors used mass, blur, and water to create the sublime experience in the form of discomfort, mystery, and tension. As a result of the simplicity essential in characteristics of minimalism, the aesthetics of the work are muted but, in their silence, the sublime dwells. Looking to the artist who makes pure installations that study the discomfort, mystery and tension, there are traceable commonalities that bridge into architectural design strategies. The work of the artist addresses an experience that has its own reality in the construct itself. It is not referential to anything outside the immediate piece and in its autonomy, it does not seek to address external concerns. The experience accomplished in the clear and simple installations creates an adaptable diagram lending itself translatable into other formats such as a fully functional building. Similarly, architecture inspires art. The phenomena captured in well-designed spaces are resultant of calibrating many factors. Once tuned into the moving parts and their delicate balance, the relationship between things, their rhythm and the space in their absence are transferrable as composition into art. The way things are arranged in occupiable space can be viewed in plan or section, reduced into a diagram about composition that
is applicable to arts of varying formats. The ideas and the weight of the ideas transfer between the two disciplines as they live in conversation with one another.


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kristel Bataku has a Master of Architecture Degree, 2018 and a Master of Science in Architectural Studies Degree, 2019, from the University of Florida. In her Master Research Project, Bataku explored phenomenology of placemaking of Payne’s Prairie via ritual and collection as a method. Her investigations led to her intrigues on “the sublime” which she continues to encounter in her interest and her teaching. During her graduate education, Bataku taught as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for Design courses and was the Production Editor of the UF Graduate School of Architecture publication, Vorkurs: exquisite corpse. She holds a strong interest feminism, wandering, and grey-space.