

The Scarifying Edges

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Abstract

Bangkok metropolis has reached the ripened state of chaos and complexity. It is engendered by the change of governments and by experimental solvability of heavy traffic flow and prolonged by a period of up-and-down economic crisis. This disarrayed state of affairs arising from the construction of new traffic network, which is set up to control the dense urban circulation, seems to be perceived as adding more confusion to the city. On the other hand, there is more magnetism in terms of new urban contexts as defined by the new charismatic mode (between the old and the new fabric of Bangkok). Thus there is parallaxic peculiarity occurring while observing Bangkok. This might possibly lead to a new typology of architecture; one that consists of experimental space, memories (in sequence), and new psychological space.

Keywords: *Transitory space, destruction, construction and reformation, autonomous zone.*

Introduction

The urban complexity identifies the traces of such operations in ocular forms - *destruction, construction and reformation*. These forms are perhaps one of the most evident operations that react upon Bangkok urban grounds. And these forms are visually and tangibly perceived by the process of making expressways that are expected to resolve enormous traffic problems facing Bangkok metropolis.

Temperamental Destruction & Construction

Investigating Bangkok traffic lines with a view to setting up proposals to resolve each problem is the first process in reducing or softening the chaos and complexity of this metropolis. The next step is to draw a new schematic network to give new inspiration to the site. At this point, the form of *destruction* may take place to prepare an aspiration for the new architectonic structures. Such a form demolishes the existing ground and a new one is inserted by inter-penetrating desired

structures. This is followed by the process of *construction* which is to bring out schematic proposal and construct it on the ground. This newly-built structure then replaces the scar (destruction trace) and occupies the proposed space. Besides, these two forms (of *destruction* and *construction*) reveal the experience of *presence - absence*. *Presence* is considered as the appearance of object (structure) that one perceives as the state of 'being' while *absence* is the space that has been generated from such structure, for example, space underneath the expressway, space between the expressway and its surroundings, etc. The continuing process of *destruction* and *construction* also reshapes the city's contexts and one perceives this as the state of *reformation*.

These new (traffic) structures are defined by construction of the expressway, the elevated skyway train, and the subway. In a way, these structures have been appended into the existing layers that consist of different levels, namely street, curb, railway, canal and pedestrian bridge, etc. The event of inter-mingled structures onto an urban ground

reflects not only the merging sequence of each different individual structure, but also the deliberating the idea of complexity, the superimposition of the new network (such as the expressway) over the old ones.

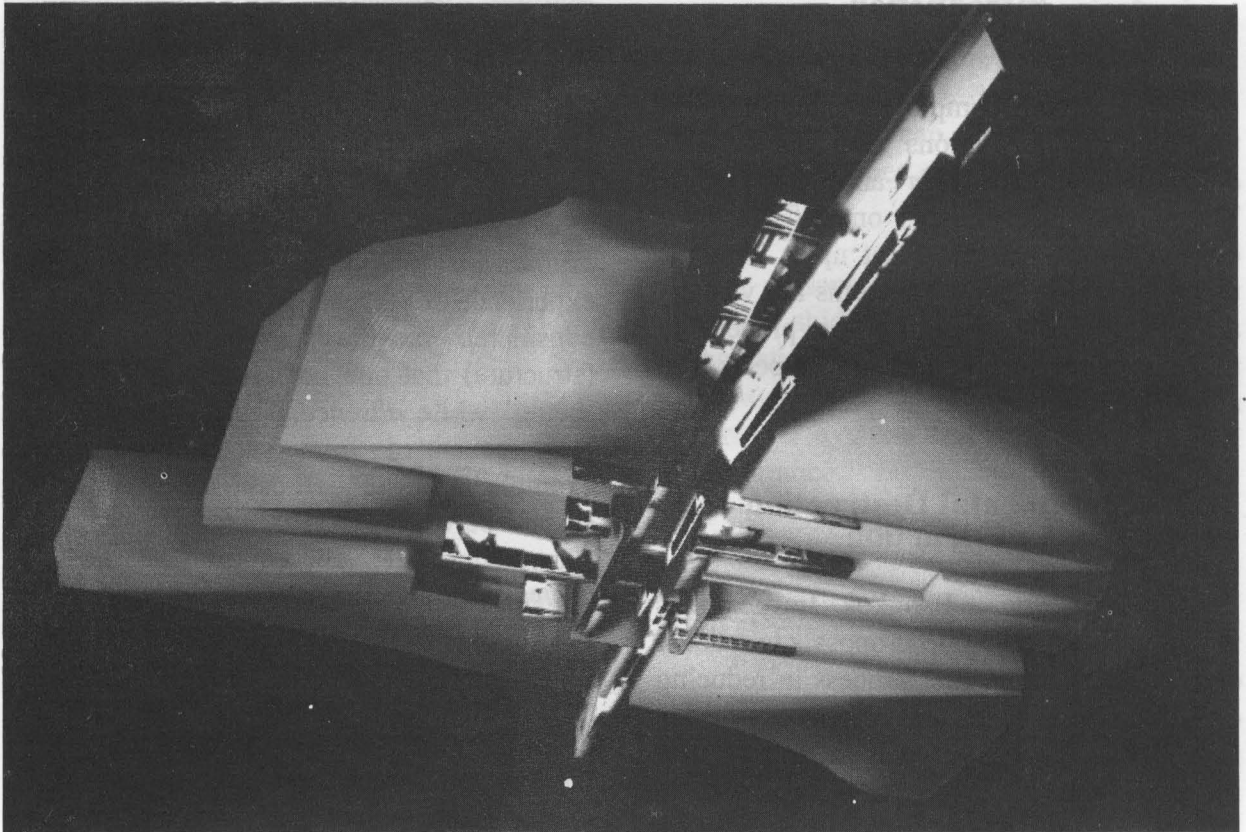
The introduction of expressway to the metropolis of Bangkok represents the most perceivably developed passageway. Various programs have been developed since the establishment of the expressway; some previously uninhabitable spaces have now been activated while restricted areas have simultaneously been incorporated.

The Linkage

The development of the expressway is to satisfy the versatile demands incorporating old and new conventions. It has become the new layer (structure) of the Bangkok Metropolitan, connecting each urban segment to a newly sanctioned terrain. Eventually,

this new functional and physical linkage engages the growth of the city, collaborating the regions into an unparalleled territory.

The progression of the expressway introduces a diversity in the regional characteristics, and many new ongoing events of the city (e.g. theme park, exhibition space, recreational area, kiosk, news-stand, etc.) are correspondingly generated. The new-edge condition of the expressway then obscurely identifies boundaries, both inner and outer, of the expressway's structure. The inner boundary is discerned as 'freeway', reflecting the high-speed traffic. It refers to intense kinetic movement of automobiles' velocity. The outer boundary is defined by the freeway's adjacent space (the state of absence) - the boundary that is dissected by the expressway's structure. The space is manifested along the expressway at ground and above-ground level. Within these



The metaphorical model obscurely reveals the double-edge system of the expressway. Along the expressway structure, the linkage occurs by the use of new given programs and, in parallel, the programs pull towards and push away from each other, reforming an organized space through their separate purposes. It is the transitory space. The field contained multiple forces (vectored) from such different programmatic activities in between the double-edge structure.

there are embodied memories of the edge that embellish destruction traces, reflecting the evolution of the edges and apprehending new threshold to the city. Responding to these events within the city's context, it challenges dwellers and observers to inhabit this continuum space.

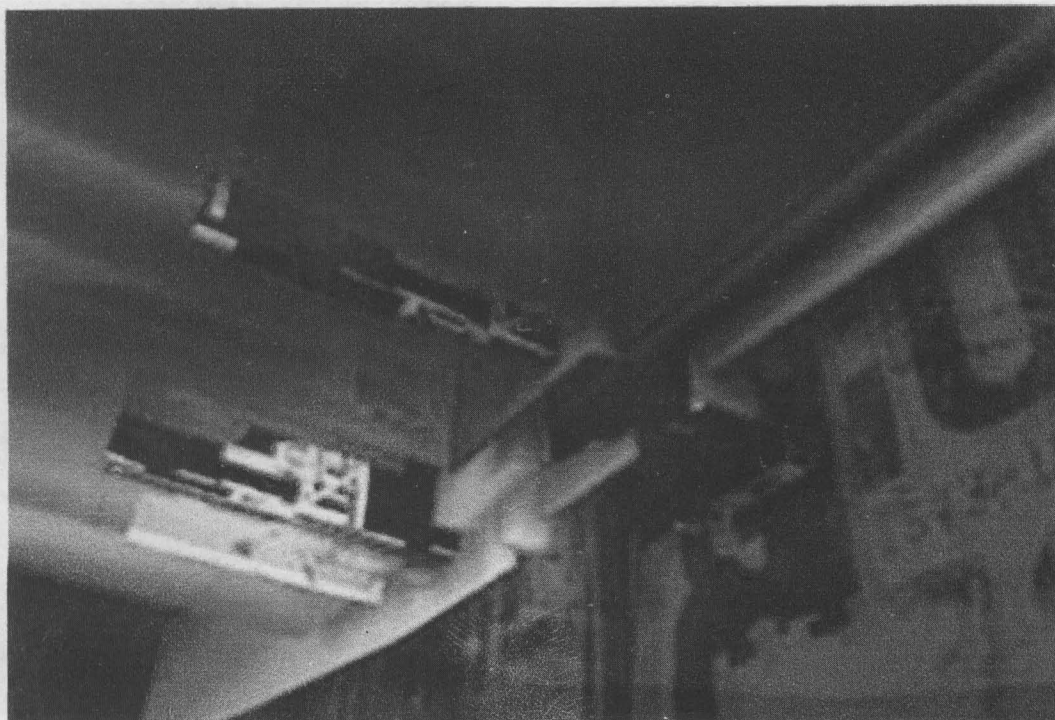
The Edges

Development along these edges and their path must be pursued to create a new pattern of urban order and new layered programs of the city. As these edges have generated ambiguous space, the space is constructed into diversified programs. The spaces along the edges of the expressway are occupied by noodle shops, parking spaces, amusement areas, government storage, shopping plazas, expressway offices, etc., which exist as *reformation* spaces. Each program has been shaped differently according to duration of occupancy. Programs such as government storage and expressway offices are proposed as permanent structure whereas parking spaces

and amusement plazas are indeterminate programs (for instance, the plaza and shopping area underneath the expressway near Phloen Chit exit, the amusement park underneath the expressway between Sathu Pradit and Rama III area, etc.). They may be called '*transitory spaces*'.

The Transitory Space

The *transitory space* might be conceived as '*autonomous zone*', the zone or space that retains events of cross programming - the overlapping and the reaction between each program in the same area. Though the programs are constructed along the edges, the boundaries of the programs are blurred. When the double-edge system stretches to each urban region, the *transitory spaces* do not perform just as fixed programs and do not just occupy only the spaces along the edge. Besides, they operate and react perpendicularly (and/or obliquely) from one edge to another due to the activities that outstretch to juxtaposed areas. In other words, double-edge system along the



The scenery of transitory space reflecting multiple activities, departing from adjacent structure.

structure is bridged by the use of new given programs and in parallel. Such programs are pulled toward and pushed away from each other, reforming an organized space through their separate purposes. The *transitory space* is like the field containing multiple forces (vectored) from such different programmatic activities between the double-edge structure.

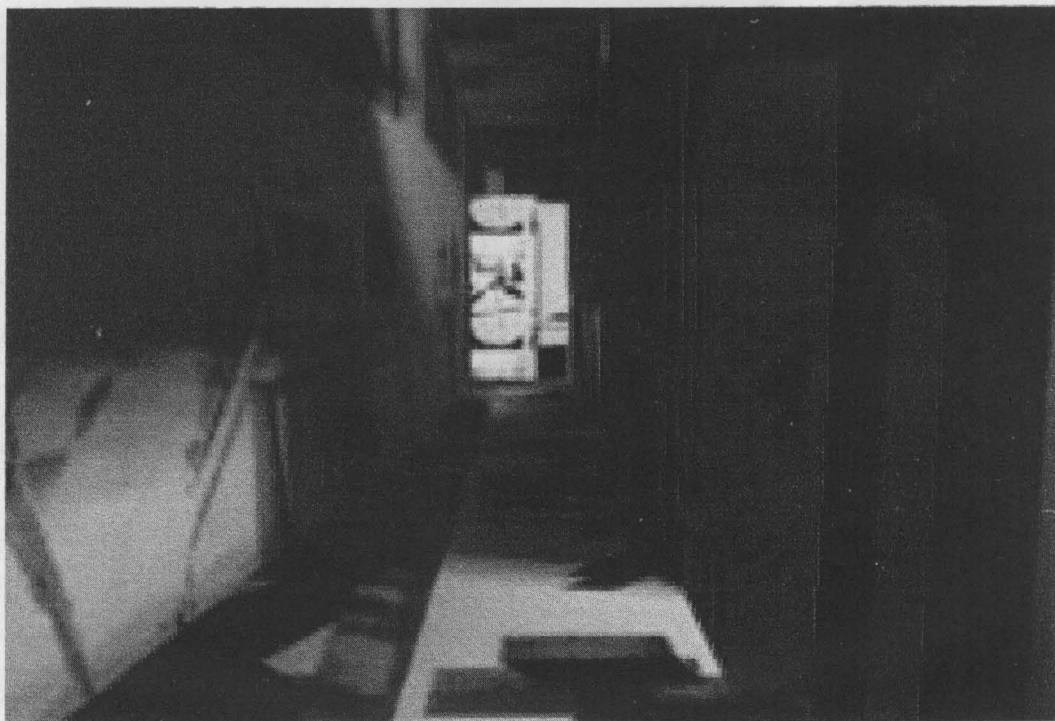
Conclusions

To the authors' observation, these events may not be new for the inhabitants of Bangkok. From architectural standpoint, however, these events might possibly lead to a new phenomenon - a new typology of architecture. In the past, Bangkok (once called Rattanakosin) was known mostly as a community occupying spaces along the river and extending into neighboring regions. Later, as the city continued to evolve, the Bangkok society had always searched for available space to occupy and inhabit to carry out multi-purpose functions and activities. What might be the type of architecture that interferes with the new edge condition of

such new urban layer, i.e. the expressway? The architecture reacts upon the new city contexts by exploiting the ideas of interpenetrating, bridging (linkage), parasitizing, etc., on the existing structures, introducing a new landscape and a new terrain with another city image, thus creating a new icon of architecture. Any ocular forms once screened into our perceptions bring out temperaments to create edge, and the extension of such program imaginations into reality produces an innovative artifact - a new architecture. Eventually, these observations lead to the possibility of experiencing, or even experimenting with a new space, the one which will give birth to a new architecture.

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The interior of transitory space responding to the urban extension: traces of destruction, construction and reformation of the expressway.