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Christophe Van Gerrewey

It has been twenty years since someone tried to list all of Dan Graham's work. From January 2001 to August 2002, the exhibition *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, curated by Marianne Brouwers and Corinne Diserens, travelled around Europe. Two thirds of the catalogue consisted of a chronology, compiled by Rhea Anastas, as 'the first attempt to document comprehensively the works and writings of Dan Graham over a thirty-five year period.'[1] In 2009, *Dan Graham: Beyond* was organized by Bennett Simpson and Chrissie Iles – a belated American counterpart to the European exhibitions from 2001 and 2002, and Graham's first major retrospective in his home country. This time completeness was no editorial goal of the accompanying publication: the book, just like the exhibition, presented works from each key phase of Graham's four-decade career, in all the different media he used – magazine pages, photographs, drawings, films and videos, performances, multimedia installations, and architectural pavilions.[2]

This final category continues to present a surprising challenge to the historiography of Dan Graham's oeuvre, and to cataloguing, but also to understanding and interpreting, what he has done.[3] While his activities have been variegated ever since he opened the John Daniels Gallery in late December 1964 in New York, starting from the end of the 1980s, Graham has concentrated, nearly monomaniacally, on producing architectural models or pavilions. Since the end of the 1990s, he has limited himself to making sketches of pavilions, elaborated into architectural plans and constructions by his architect-assistants. Exactly this repetitive, restricted and controlled working method has given rise to a production that is harder to grasp than the results of all the multimedia genre-bending of the first part of his career.

One obvious difficulty lies in the multiplicity of pavilions, as well as in their global distribution. In 2009, Josh Thorpe compiled *Dan Graham Pavilions. A Guide*, with 49 pavilions by Graham that are accessible to the public, in North America, South America, Europe and Asia. In the booklet, each pavilion is documented by means of one photograph per pavilion (if available), an address, a telephone number or a website. It concludes, on

the final page, with 'an incomplete list of other pavilions that are (a) rumoured to come, (b) in storage at the moment and not intended for permanent exhibition, or (c) in private collections not intended for public viewing,' adding another 19 works.[4] Also in 2009, Beatriz Colomina suggested how this multiplicity could become meaningful in itself. In a contribution to the catalogue of *Beyond*, Colomina wrote that 'the global army of more than fifty pavilions by Graham constitutes a single artwork, a single experiment, or a single experimental field of pavilions, an open network of instruments, each one fine-tuning a very precise set of optical issues.'[5]

The absence of an overview of all of Graham's pavilions seems to be caused by practical and archival reasons, and it is not unlikely that the work of Anastas from 2002 can be extended in the near future, resulting in a *catalogue raisonné*. A more profound but often overlooked problem has to do with the fact that hardly any of these pavilions can be considered discrete and individual in itself. Not only is it quite difficult to 'map' Graham's pavilions in their entirety, on closer examination it can be revealed that nearly each pavilion has multiplied into different versions, iterations and not entirely identical copies. Two theoretical notions from Graham's early work can help to understand the relationship between the different pavilions as well as between the different versions of one singular pavilion. Subsequently, the history of one case-study – *Children's Pavilion* from 1986 – can serve as an example.

Topology and permutation

Dan Graham has questioned the very notion of an artwork as a stable and unique object since the late sixties, in line with a general – and generational – shift from pop art and minimalism towards conceptual or process-driven art. One theoretical notion to describe this approach is that of topology. Graham used this term in his essay 'Subject Matter' from 1969 to interpret his encounter with Bruce Nauman's pliable pieces made from sheets of latex rubber.[6] As Eric De Bruyn has shown, topology became 'a *strategic* procedure within Graham's artistic practice, or, as he prefers to say, it functions as a critical *model*. … Graham's topological models would proliferate through his various activities as artist and writer after 1969.'[7]

Topology, therefore, can also be considered as a strategic model behind all of Graham's pavilions. De Bruyn uses a lemma from *The Columbia Encyclopedia* to define topology as 'concerned with those properties of geometric figures that are invariant under continuous transformations.' Two figures are said to be 'topologically equivalent if one can be deformed into the other "by bending, stretching, twisting, and the like, but not by tearing or cutting."'[8] Although this has never been ascertained as such, neither by the artist nor by critics or historians, Graham's pavilions do tally with this understanding of the 'topological' – not in a strictly literal sense, but in the sense that they are trans- and deformations of each other, without the irrefutable existence of one 'original' pavilion on which all other pavilions are based – in that case the strategic model would be *typology* rather than topology. Each new pavilion transforms previous pavilions, but at the same time all the pavilions remain partly invariant: all of them are relatively small-scale freestanding constructions without a traditional function, accessible to a handful of people at a time, defined by walls with different degrees of transparency, translucency and opacity, materialized in steel, glass, or wood, and positioned in the open air, or within the much larger interior of another building.

If all the pavilions are topologically related, then the relationship between the different manifestations of one specific pavilion requires another mathematical notion. Again, a term from an early text by Graham can be applied to comprehend the way in which one pavilion modifies whilst multiplying. In March 1966 in an issue of *Aspen*, Graham published 'Schema,' a text intended to 'produce' a number of text pages or poems in a magazine – in the subsequent three years, 'Schema' would be reproduced and republished in slightly different versions, depending on the context. Fixing a set of parameters – the number of adjectives and adverbs, for example, or the percentage of blank area between lines – results in a growing number of texts. 'Using any arbitrary schema,' Graham wrote in an explication of *Schema*, 'produces a large, finite permutation of specific, discrete variants.'[9] Again, a kind of non-traditional production of art was shown and developed, in which value, composition, creativity and authorship would be nearly absent right from the start, because the different versions of each text or poem would be almost automatically produced.

Something similar is at stake in the way Graham's pavilions reproduce: from many, if not all of his pavilions, a large, finite permutation of specific, discrete variants has come into being. The term permutation is suitable because what happens is different from what happens with the topology of different pavilions. A permutation is an arrangement or a rearrangement of the members of one set into a different sequence or linear order. The versions of one and the same pavilion by Dan Graham do not differ topologically, like the different pavilions do when they are transformed or deformed. Rather than the form, the *order* changes in between the

different versions of one pavilion: characteristics remain identical, but they are reshuffled, reordered, rematerialized and resized. Graham's prolific production of the last four decades is then a combination of a topology of pavilions on the one hand, and a permutation of each individual pavilion on the other hand.

One example is *Pergola/Conservatory* (Fig. 1), first exhibited at Marian Goodman Gallery in New York from September 9 to October 3, 1987, as a mixture of an overgrown wooden garden pergola and a class conservatory-walkway, topologically related to an earlier pavilion such as *Set for Two-Way Mirror Piece* from 1985 (that equally functioned as a wall screen to walk by) or a later work such as *Two-Way Mirror and Hedge Labyrinth* from 1992 (in which trees, steel and glass evoke both a natural and an urban setting). Combining wood and two-mirror glass, *Pergola/Conservatory* was, as Graham wrote, to be placed 'in a secluded, romantic area of a public park or, alternatively, in a suburban home-owner's private garden.'[10] This is not what happened. *Pergola/Conservatory*'s permutation resulted in at least two constructions in very different contexts. In 1997, as part of the exhibition *Dan Graham: Architecture 2* at the Architectural Association in London, *Pergola/Conservatory* was built on the AA terrace, obliquely positioned towards the entrance, with five instead of seven arches, and without the small triangular lawn of 1987 (Fig. 2).[11] Fifteen years later, in 2012, another version was constructed in front of a hospital in Kortrijk, Belgium (Fig. 3). This version consists of six arches, materialized in steel. Initially positioned close to the main entrance, almost as an obstacle, it was subsequently repositioned, further away on the square in front of the hospital.[12]

Fig. 1.   Dan Graham, *Pergola/Conservatory*, 1987, glass, wood and steel. Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

Fig. 2.   Dan Graham, *Pergola/Conservatory*, 1997, glass, wood and steel. Architectural Assocation, London. (Photo: Valerie Bennett)

Fig. 3.   Dan Graham, *Pergola/Conservatory*, 2012, glass and steel. AZ Groeninge, Kortrijk. (Photo by the author)

Graham has 'repeated' many of his pavilions, but there is one example that stands out for several reasons: *Children's Pavilion* from 1986. Firstly, this work has an incidental and by moments dramatic history: sometimes beyond the will of the artist, diverse versions were produced. Secondly, *Children's Pavilion* – a rather unknown member of Graham's 'global army' of pavilions, and not as canonical as for example *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube* from 1991, built at Dia Beacon in New York (Fig. 4) – was the first topological variation in which Graham started to experiment with sloping walls and other formal complexities, leaving behind the rectangular shapes (and the influence of Donald Judd) from the earliest pavilions, while it was also his first work built in a private garden, albeit as part of a public exhibition. And thirdly, the pavilion was the basis of a collaboration between Graham and Jeff Wall, starting in 1987, and also entitled *Children's Pavilion*.

Chambres d'Amis

Children's Pavilion was made for *Chambres d'Amis*, an exhibition organised in Ghent, Belgium, from June 21 to September 21, 1986, by the Museum for Contemporary Art, with Jan Hoet as curator. In or around private houses, fifty art works were shown, ten made by Belgian and forty by international artists.

Hoet's curatorial concept was announced as early as 1982, and it inspired a similar but smaller event in the summer of 1984, *Pour vivre heureux, vivons cachés*, when French curator Yves Aupetitallot invited nine artists to show work in nine apartments in the town of Nevers.[13] While Aupetitallot was driven by the desire to critically confront local art institutions, Hoet was at the time of *Chambres d'Amis* director of the most important contemporary art institution in Ghent. His decision to work outside of the museum

Fig. 4. Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*, glass and steel. Dia Beacon, New York. (Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, New York)

was motivated, on the one hand, by an obvious practical reason: the Museum for Contemporary Art did not (yet) have a museum building of its own – it was housed in the Museum for Fine Arts. *Chambres d'Amis* was a paradoxical way of underlining the necessity of an independent building for contemporary art, by showing that art could also be exhibited elsewhere, attracting – despite or because of these extraordinary conditions – many visitors. On the other hand, Hoet picked up on criticisms of the white cube and of the art museum in general. 'When a work of art is integrated into the banal reality of an ordinary house,' he wrote in the catalogue, 'its mysterious inwardness is disturbed, whereas it was secure in the anonymous emptiness of the museum.'[14] Hoet's main curatorial problem was that it

seemed impossible to make site-specific work within the confines of a museum. At the same time, he did not want to write off the museum as institution, which is understandable for a director who is hoping to soon build his own museum building. This tension is visible in a puzzling quote from Hoet's introduction: 'The museum is finding out slowly how it is reappearing in all the places where it propagated. As if the museum is discovering for the first time that its space – a space which usually simply *exists* – is developing all over town, in all its aspects. The museum, reflecting itself in all the spaces where it propagated, is now witnessing its structural *origin*.'[15] In other words: a private house is a much better and more 'authentic' museum than the real, public museum can ever be.

Hoet's slightly inconsequential concept was most evidently criticized by Daniel Buren's contribution to *Chambres d'Amis*, *Le décor et son double* – a replica of one of the 'guest chambers' positioned in the museum itself, making clear that an escape from the institutional space of the museum is impossible, certainly during an event organised by its director. Dan Graham was much less inclined to respond to Hoet's invitation by means of institutional critique. Compared to Buren's intervention, *Children's Pavilion* shows how he was not interested in the 'problem' of the museum, and its alleged absence (but increased dominance) at *Chambres d'Amis* was not taken into consideration. As he would summarize it more than a decade later in a conversation with Benjamin Buchloh, published in *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*: 'I think museums are great places. … I think what I did was to discover the tradition of the museum instead of pursuing the stupid idea of institutional critique.'[16]

Graham's work at *Chambres d'Amis* is the result of a happy coincidence of one of his obsessions with a key aspect of the curatorial concept: the relationship between public and private, together with its possible subversion, as exemplified by the domestic architecture of the family house. As Pier Luigi Tazzi wrote in one of the few international reviews of *Chambres d'Amis*, the result of this non-traditional group exhibition was not so much the public museum becoming more intimate, private and meaningful (as Jan Hoet would have liked it), but rather the private domain being exposed to the public gaze of the visitor and of the art world. 'All the artists [at *Chambres d'Amis*],' Tazzi wrote in *Artforum*, 'have found their own way to confront the narcissism of the private.'[17]

For Graham, this confrontation had been a theme of his activities since the early seventies, and it places *Children's Pavilion* in a topological relationship with earlier spatial proposals and models. '*Picture Window' Piece* from 1974 was the first work in which Graham addressed the privacy of the family home (Fig. 5): a television screen inside presents the family members with an image of themselves, while a television screen outside does the same for the 'outsider' looking in: 'Both interior and exterior observer's gaze (and behaviour) are given a self-consciousness.'[18] *Video Projection Outside Home* from 1978 – a television screen on the front lawn sharing with everyone what the inhabitants inside are watching (Fig. 6) – is similar, although here, the visual relationship between outside and inside has been mediated by whatever television is offering. In *Alteration to a Suburban House* (Fig. 7) from the same year, Graham, as the title of the work indicates, changed the domestic architecture more radically, by removing the entire facade of a house and replacing it with a full sheet of transparent glass: video was no longer used as a medium to reveal divisions in privacy and publicity, but these divisions were affected by altering sightlines and by maximizing gazes.

In 1986, at *Chambres d'Amis*, Graham combined his inquiries into the architecture of the house with the more phenomenological explorations of the three outdoor pavilions he had constructed since the end of the 1970s: *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne* (1978–1981), positioned in front of an energy research facility in Chicago (Fig. 8); *Two Adjacent Pavilions* at documenta 7, curated by Rudi Fuchs in 1982 (Fig. 9); and *Pavilion/Sculpture II* (1984) at Moderna Museet in Stockholm (Fig. 10), in Graham's words 'a permutation
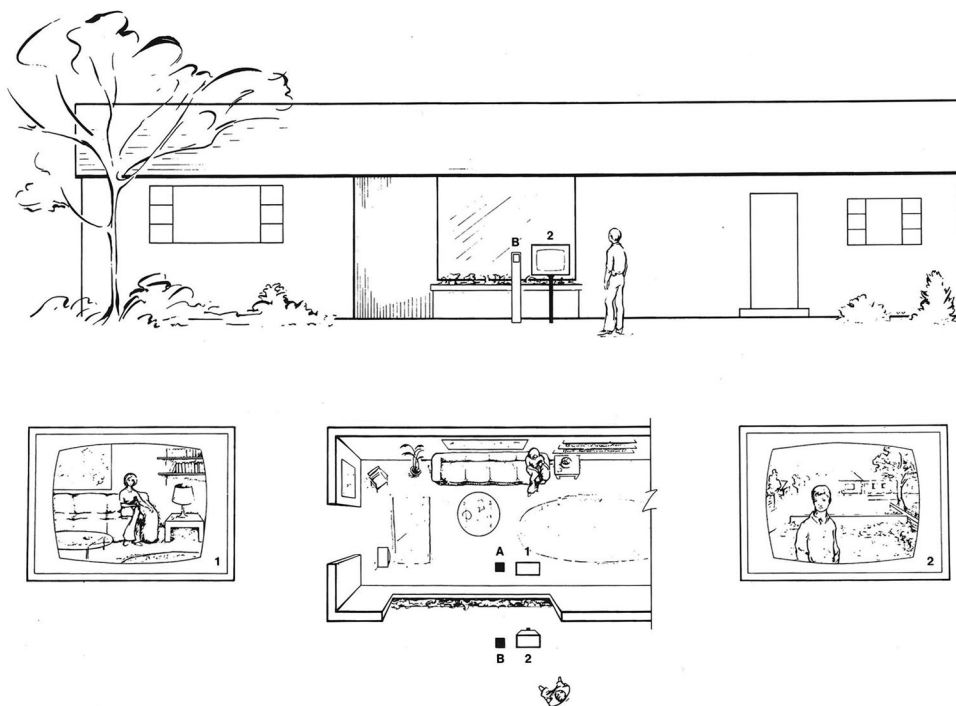
Fig. 5. Dan Graham, *'Picture Window' Piece*, 1974. Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

of *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne*.'[19] The very fact that *Chambres d'Amis* was an art exhibition taking place in the private and domestic sphere, enabled Graham to bundle several of his ongoing points of attention, and to 'perform' the critical aspects of his spatial proposals by means of a real, albeit temporary piece of architecture.

Children's Pavilion

The resident of the house for which *Children's Pavilion* was constructed, was Dirk Defraeije (1955), a Belgian architect – 'I chose an architect,' Graham said in an interview in 1994, 'because I liked the idea of doing work that was quasi-architecture for an architect.'[20] During the summer of '86, Defraeije was

building a house on the street side of an enclosed plot, while he lived with his wife and children in a smaller building in the back, destined to become his office.[21] It was his idea to respond to Jan Hoet's public call, made at the end of 1985, for citizens of Ghent to make their home available for *Chambres d'Amis*. Following a tour by bus along the selected houses, not one but two artists picked out Defraeije's house: Dan Graham but also Carla Accardi (1924–2014), an Italian painter known for her calligraphic abstractions.[22] She exhibited three paintings and a small sculpture in the smaller house at the back, while Graham opted for an outdoor pavilion in the garden.

'The house,' Graham said in an interview from May 1986, 'was still under construction,

Fig. 6.   Dan Graham, *Video Projection Outside Home*, 1978. Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

but I was able to study the plans. I found the architecture and certain details appealing. This game with the private and the public – the house and the office – was intriguing. I love that kind of border situation.'[23] Defraije had conceived the plan along an axis, from the street and the little garden in front, through the garage of the house, deflecting to the centre of the garden with a circular sandbox, and ending in front of the office. A wooden path was already laid out, to be taken by his future clients. Graham decided to position his pavilion on top of the sandbox (Fig. 11).

Initially, he told in the interview from 1986, he thought of conceiving 'a cylindrical pavilion': 'a cylinder divided in two by a glass wall mirroring on both sides. The reflection on the outer walls would have caused a baroque deformation of the surrounding architecture. But it would have cost too much production time to make the two curved glass panels.'[24] Graham's original intentions match with two sketches found in the archives of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Ghent (the current SMAK), entitled *Cube Inside Cylinder* and *Triangular Solid Inside Cylinder* (Fig. 12), two compositions that Graham would vary on, in for example *Triangular Solid with Circular Inserts* (1989) (Fig. 13) and *Cylinder Inside Cube* (1991). The first version of the pavilion for Ghent – two identical rectangular volumes in glass and steel, merged in an angle of 45 degrees – was entitled *Two Cubes/One*
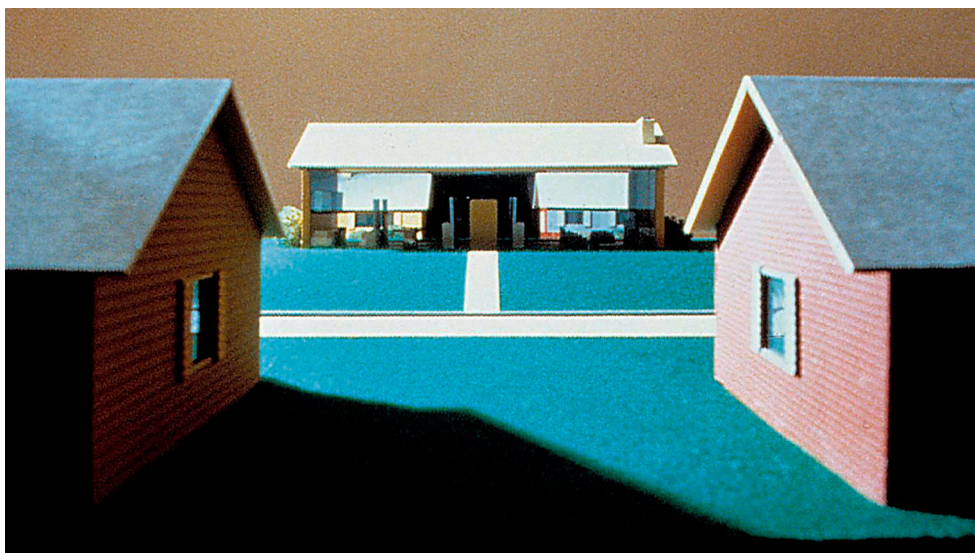
Fig. 7.   Dan Graham, *Alteration to a Suburban House*, 1978, wood, chipboard, felt, plastic, paper and crystal. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia.

Fig. 8.   Dan Graham, *Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne*, 1978-1981. Argonne National Laboratory, Illinois.

Fig. 9. Dan Graham, *Two Adjacent Pavilions*, 1982. Documenta 7, Kassel.

Rotated 45° (Fig. 14), and can be considered as a topological deformation – a fusion, almost, or a perfect collision – of the two cubes that Graham exhibited at documenta 7 in 1982 under the title *Two Adjacent Pavilions*. The second and built version, *Children's Pavilion*, was labelled by Graham as 'a compromise,' since *Two Cubes/One Rotated 45°* was too high – 2.25 m – for this specific location. 'Because I didn't want,' Graham said, 'a confrontation with the architecture of my host – at least not in that way – the object was reduced to a height of 1.64 meter'[25] (Figs 15–17).

Although the word 'compromise' might sound pejorative, the genesis of this pavilion

does illustrate Graham's method: previous works, initial ideas and compositions are altered, adjusted and deformed in order to respond to external and contextual conditions. Differently put: it is the 'environment' and the 'context' of the chosen site – including Hoet's exhibition concept, Defraeije's plan, and the plot's layout together with its division of public and private – that helps to determine the characteristics of the pavilion. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain which consideration was predominant. Although scaling down the pavilion might have been imposed by Defraeije's architecture, it can also have been inspired by the decision to make a pavilion for children (although in that case, one

Fig. 10. Dan Graham, *Pavilion/Sculpture II*, 1984. Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

could argue, the pavilion, with its height of 1.64 metres, was still a bit too large) – a decision that was, however, equally contextual. After all, the pavilion did replace an existing and functioning sandbox. As Graham wrote in 1988, in the catalogue of the first exhibition devoted to his pavilions: 'The children-scale pavilion functioned as
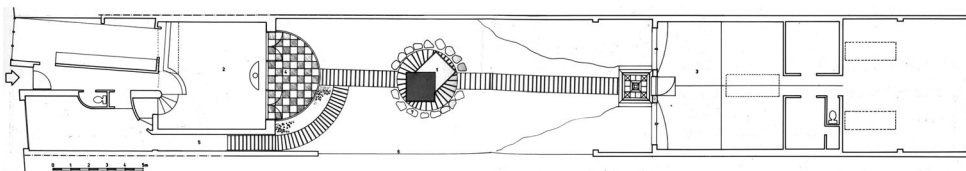

Fig. 11. Dirk Defraeije, Architect's House, Garden and Office with Pavilion, 1986, Ghent.
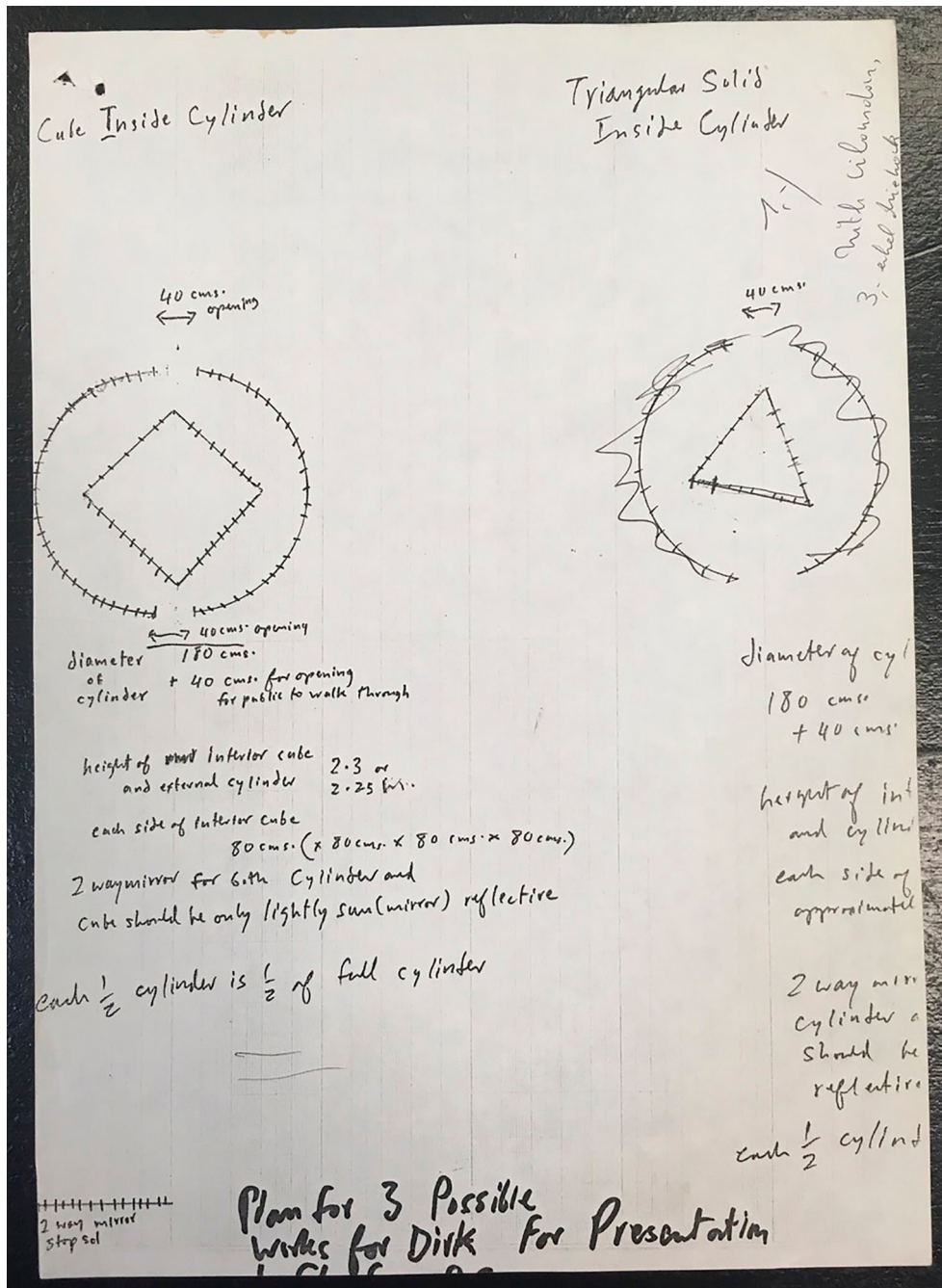
Fig. 12.   Dan Graham, *Cube Inside Cylinder and Triangular Solid Inside Cylinder*, 1986. SMAK Archives, Ghent.

Fig. 13. Dan Graham, *Triangular Solid with Circular Inserts*, 1989.

play space for the architect's children. This was important as their normal play area – formally the empty yard between the house and office – was in the process (during the show) of being landscaped and re-planted.'[26] Another reason for dedicating the pavilion
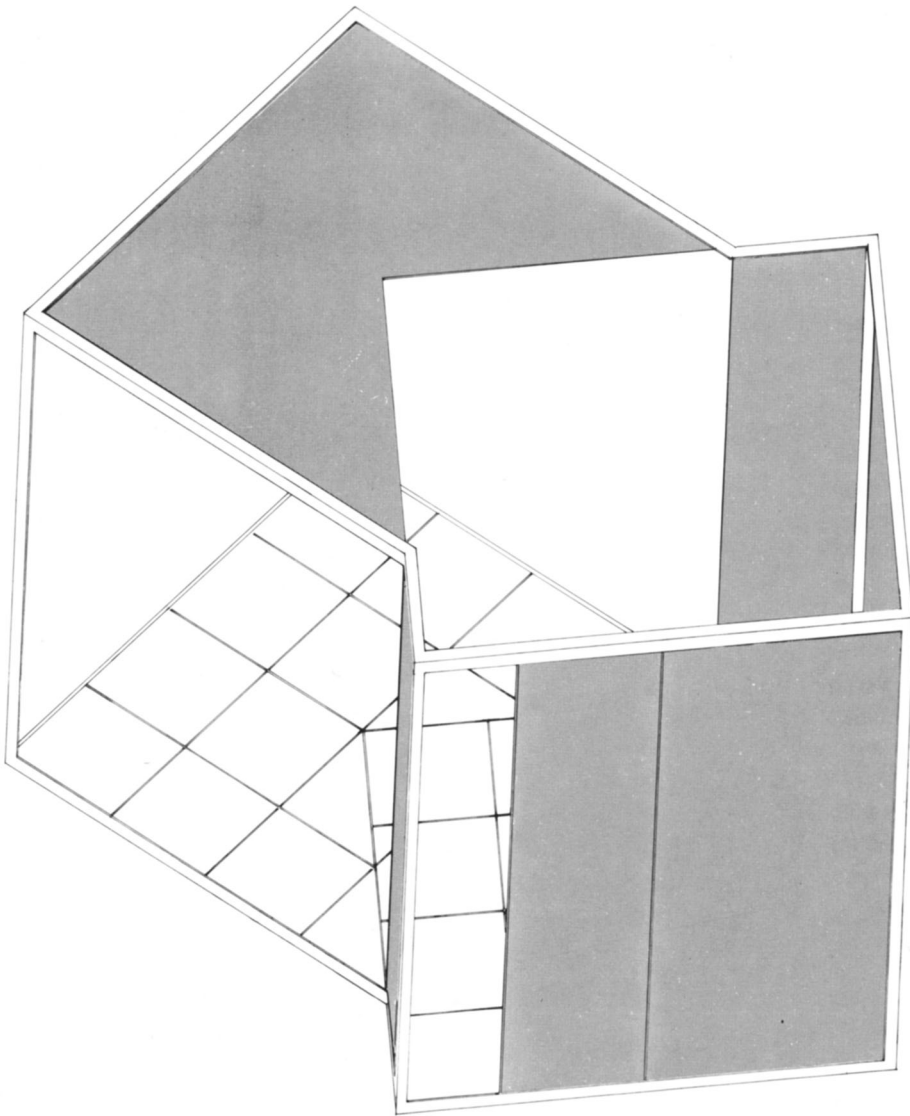
Fig. 14.   Dan Graham, *Two Cubes/One Rotated 45°*, 1986. SMAK Archives, Ghent.

to children, was found across the street of Defraije's house, where a kindergarten was located. According to Jan Hoet, this presence was decisive: 'Dan Graham,' he wrote in the catalogue, 'responds to the noise coming from a kindergarten opposite the garden where he is working. He makes a small-scale pavilion in which grown-ups cannot stand upright, he calls it 'children's pavilion,' and places it right in the middle of the path which connects the back and front part of the house.'[27]

Fig. 15.   Dan Graham, *Children's Pavilion*, 1986, with office building at the end of the garden. SMAK Archives, Ghent.

Fig. 16. Dan Graham, *Children's Pavilion*, 1986, with the architect's children. SMAK Archives, Ghent.

Fig. 17. Dan Graham, *Children's Pavilion*, 1986, with the artist. SMAK Archives, Ghent.

Following this interpretation, *Children's Pavilion* not only visually – literally – reflected the surrounding architecture, it also acoustically mirrored the presence of children in the kindergarten, displacing that presence from the street to the private domain of the garden – although, one could argue, Graham also emphasized the fact that this garden was already partly public, because of *Chambres d'Amis*, but also because of the pathway for clients leading to the architect's office. In each case, *Children's Pavilion* reveals the restrictions imposed by the architectural type of the row house – with a closed, elongated garden in the back, and with a street and a pavement in front that function as infrastructure, rather than as true public space.

This multitude of influences and considerations shows Graham's method. An initial, basic, formal decision, based on a previous pavilion, is altered and adjusted when contextual conditions are taken into consideration. The result is a relatively 'new' pavilion that raises awareness about the characteristics of a place – about borders between public and private, about social divisions, and about the controlling and regulating power of architecture. The genesis of *Children's Pavilion* also reveals that, for Graham, artists make relatively small decisions – art, for him, is not about bold and utopian gestures at all. This is also the meaning – and the disciplinary 'gain' – of Graham's rapprochement to architecture: his pavilions of the late 1970s and the 1980s, as Thierry de Duve wrote in 1983, 'erase the authority and the supposed autonomy of the *architect as artist*, in favour of the heteronomy and the as-if utility of the *artist as architect*.'[28] Moreover, the generic language of modernist architecture – and not the extravagant stylistic fireworks of the

postmodernist architecture of the 1980s – is used exactly to give, in Anne Rorimer's words, 'a generalized appearance as opposed to one of having been designed by an individual architect.'[29] The function of art as exemplified by *Children's Pavilion*, lies exactly in offering a confrontation with the complexities and contradictions of a specific spatial situation, while the inventiveness or even the genius of the artist is ironically put into perspective. *Children's Pavilion*, as well as many other works by Dan Graham, reveals both the spatial determination of the visitor as the delineated agency of the artist.

Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated

As the quotes from contemporary literature indicate, this analysis of *Children's Pavilion*, although specific and underexposed, confirms existing interpretations of Graham's work from this period. What is rarely examined is the afterlife of the pavilions. Their existence as artistic interventions doesn't stop as soon as the pavilion has been conceived and constructed, and Graham's contribution in 1986 to *Chambres d'Amis* illustrates this. Already the production of the pavilion was incidental, as if to indicate once again the artist's relative power. The inhabitant of the house for which *Children's Pavilion* was conceived, acted as executive architect: he drew the plans and contacted building contractors, although he had never before done something similar. He suggested to build the pavilion in steel, but Graham wanted to use aluminium. On June 2, 1986, three weeks before the opening of *Chambres d'Amis*, a fire broke out at the firm that was producing *Children's Pavilion*, making the aluminium structure useless. For a moment, it was considered to cancel this part of *Chambres d'Amis*, although the

catalogue, including drawings of Graham's contribution, was already sent to the printers.[30] Another producer was found, and *Children's Pavilion* was ready on the evening of June 20, twelve hours before the opening. Because of time pressure, the built version left much to be desired: the glass sliding doors faltered, and an extra pole (missing from the first drawings) needed to be inserted, supporting the internal angle of one of the two intersecting cubes.

By the time *Chambres d'Amis* ended on September 21, the sliding doors had been removed for safety reasons. Following a summer with thousands of visitors, *Children's Pavilion* was in too bad a shape to keep standing in Defraeije's garden. Moreover: his children wanted their sandbox back, hidden beneath the pavilion. A team from the Museum for Contemporary Art dismantled the artwork and moved its parts to the depot. More than a decade later, in 1999, Karel Hooft, a Belgian collector, was convinced by Jan Hoet to buy Graham's concept for *Children's Pavilion*.[31] Hoet would have liked to resurrect the pavilion in the city of Ghent, but for financial reasons, and because it was conceived, after all, for a private garden, this was less than evident. A new version was produced, based on the drawings of Defraeije, but executed in stainless steel, and including the extra pole inside. Dan Graham gave this *Children's Pavilion* a place in the garden of Hooft in Sint-Martens-Latem, an exclusive and residential municipality in the periphery of Ghent (Fig. 18). Today, its glass panels continue to reflect Hooft's villa, as well as the surrounding trees and greenery – the garden borders on the Royal Latem Golf Club. In 2014, following the death of Jan Hoet, the depot of the SMAK in Ghent was cleaned up. The

remains of the first version of *Children's Pavilion* – or actually, given the fire at the construction company, the second – were destroyed, and collector Karel Hooft now has a certificate stating that he is the sole owner of this work of Dan Graham.

One can wonder if that's true, since Dan Graham hadn't been idle in the meantime either. In the interview from 1986, he expressed the wish that *Children's Pavilion* would one day be executed in true scale (2.25 meters high).[32] In that case, the pavilion would be, of course, no longer a children's pavilion, and this new version was simply retitled as *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated*. In February 1987, as part of an eponymous exhibition of Graham in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, a scale model was shown, owned by a private collection and photographically reproduced in the catalogue (Fig. 19).[33] The full-scale *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated* was constructed for the first time (without the extra pole, and without a roof) in the Fall of 1987, for an exhibition in Rome (Fig. 20). *Non in Codice* took place from 20 October to 19 November 1987 at the Galleria Pieroni and the American Academy. It showed work from American and Canadian Artists – next to Graham, also Judith Barry, Dara Birnbaum, Barbara Ess, Rodney Graham and John Knight.[34]

In 1988, *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated* was acquired by the Fonds regional d'art contemporain (FRAC) Nord-Pas-de-Calais, from which collection it continues to be a part. Since then, it has been exhibited nine times: starting in 1988 in the exhibition *Pavillions* in München, and – most recently – in 2019 at the exhibition *Le verre en movement* in the Musée du verre in Sars-poteries (Fig. 21).[35] It has been – in space as well as in time – a long trip from *Chambres d'Amis*, and from

Fig. 18.   Dan Graham, *Children's Pavilion*, 1986/1999, Sint-Maartens-Latem. Courtesy of Karel Hooft.

the garden in Ghent in 1986. The topological and permutational changes that *Children's Pavilion* underwent, have a prize, and the critical and contextual value of the original work – the way it 'reflected' on the surrounding architecture and on contemporary art and architecture at the end of the eighties – seems to be lost. Who is aware, during a visit to *Le verre en mouvement* in France in 2019, of all the important characteristics of the pavilion – of its genesis and its many meanings? It is possible here to refer to Benjamin Buchloh's condemnation of Graham's later work of the late 1980s and 1990s, and the proliferation of pavilions in particular. 'Sculpture that was once extremely radical and critical in many ways and that had been conceived for the

discursive and institutional space of the gallery and the museum,' Buchloh argued, nota bene in a conversation with Graham, 'became, as a result of its public attention and success, once again monumental sculpture rather than remaining a critical phenomenological project.'[36] Visiting *Children's Pavilion* in 1986 most indeed have been something completely different than 'experiencing' *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated* in 2019.

At the same time, it possible to suggest that both versions of the same work do remain contextual within their historical moment. As Sylvia Lavin has suggested in 2012, this also means that, because of the pavilions' 'profound imbrication' in capitalist society, the 'difference between art and the actual world
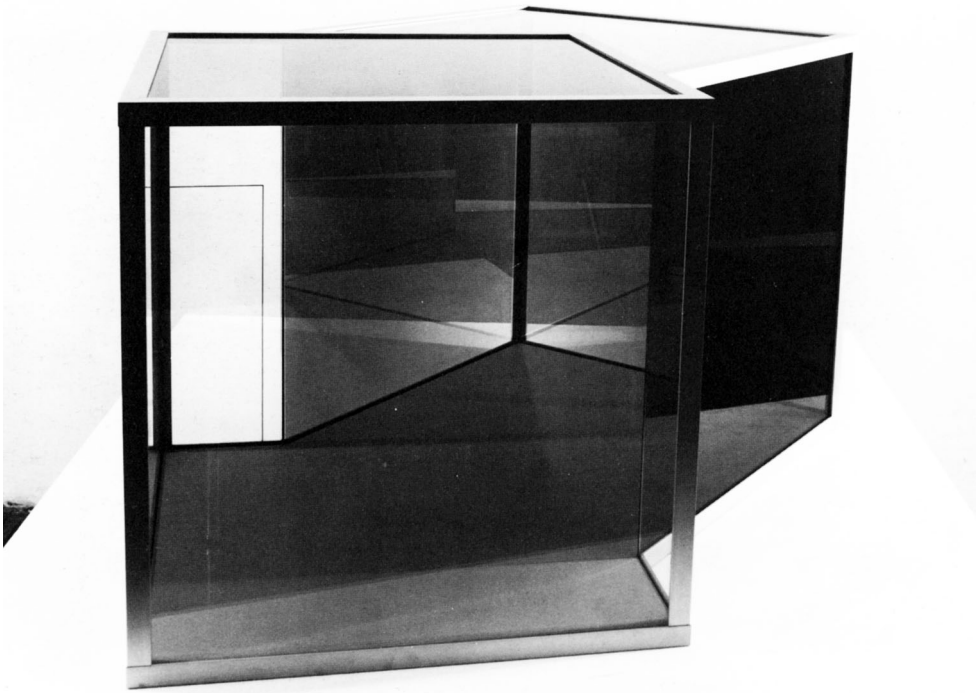
Fig. 19.   Dan Graham, *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated*, 1986. Courtesy of Liliane and Michel Durand-Dessert, Paris.

pivotal to Graham's reflections cannot obtain.'[37] While *Children's Pavilion* in 1986 utilized the possibilities of art-as-architecture by uncovering many facets of its own 'situation' – the concept of the exhibition, the spatial determination of the garden, the agency of the artist, the legacy of the International Style in architecture – more than thirty years later, *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated*, like so many other pavilions by Dan Graham, embodies the current regimes that define artistic and architectural production and consumption, defined as they are by placelessness, convertibility, the almost total relativity of context, the dilution between city, countryside and periphery, the amnesia concerning the legacy of the Modern Movement and its formal language,

and – in the end – the reduction of both art works and pieces of architecture to mere images on a screen.

Children's Pavilion (bis)

It is precisely the existence of *Children's Pavilion* as a set of images on a television screen that has engendered yet another different artwork with the same title. The opening of *Chambres d'Amis* on Saturday June 21, 1986, was shown live on Belgian national television, in a six-hour broadcast – entitled *The Longest Day* – directed by Jef Cornelis, who had been making art and architecture documentaries since the 1960s.[38] Cornelis was able to use helicopters to film the different locations, while critics, curators and artists

Fig. 20.   Dan Graham, *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated*, 1986/1987. Archives of Galleria Pieroni, Rome.

commented from the studio, in split screen mode, on what was happening elsewhere. *Children's Pavilion* was filmed first from the air (Fig. 22), and then with Dirk Defraeije's children playing inside, his son grabbing the pole (Fig. 23). Germano Celant was invited

Fig. 21.   Dan Graham, *Two Cubes, One 45° Rotated*, 1986/1987. Courtesy of Musée de verre, Sars-poteries.

Fig. 22.   Jef Cornelis, *The Longest Day / De Langste Dag*, 1986, still. Archives Jef Cornelis, Argos Brussels.

to introduce the work, live from the television studio. At one moment, a reflection of the camera is visible in one of the glass panels of the pavilion – 'The roof is also a mirror,' Celant said, 'perhaps for the helicopter.' (Fig. 24)

Fig. 23.   Jef Cornelis, *The Longest Day / De Langste Dag*, 1986, still. Archives Jef Cornelis, Argos Brussels.

This fragment of *The Longest Day* – it takes no more than three minutes – was shown in some of Graham's solo exhibitions, for example in Paris in 1987. In an interview from 1992, Graham told that Jeff Wall had seen the movie. 'When I showed this video tape to Jeff Wall, he had the idea of designing a large-scale playground piece where he would do images of children very similar to the images of children he saw in the videotape. This became *Children's Pavilion*, and it was a completely different proposal which came about not because Jeff saw the original piece, but because he saw the television replication of the work.'[39]

Of course, Wall and Graham hadn't been strangers to each other's work, and the former was the author, already in 1982, of one of the first and longest essays on the work of the latter: 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel.'[40] In this text, Wall focuses on *Alteration to a Suburban House* from 1978, that he interprets 'as the first ruin in the building of a new Conceptual art.'[41] As Sven Lütticken has argued, Wall's art historical writings have always been partly operative by justifying his own position as an artist: his consideration of conceptual art as a failure 'restored the picture to a central place in art,' and thus secured his own position in the history of (postconceptual) art.[42] It's possible to argue that the collaboration with Graham in 1988 functioned for Wall quite similarly to his essay from 1982: as a revaluation of the photographic image exactly by means of (or within) the work of Dan Graham.

Fig. 24.   Jef Cornelis, *The Longest Day / De Langste Dag*, 1986, still. Archives Jef Cornelis, Argos Brussels.

The joint project was initially conceived in 1988 as a project for Ommoord, a densely populated and multicultural neighbourhood in the north of Rotterdam, at the joint initiative of three local art foundations. The project was aborted, but it was exhibited for the first time in 1989 at the FRAC Rhône-Alpes, and the exhibition travelled to The Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum and to Marian Goodman Gallery in New York.[43] Mostly drawings, but also a partial model on scale 1:2 were shown – again only accessible to children (Fig. 25). Calling the *Children's Pavilion* from 1989 a permutation from the *Children's Pavilion* from 1986, or to discern a topological relation with earlier works of Graham, seems farfetched, because something fundamentally changed. The pavilion from 1986 was, like

all of Graham's pavilions, an 'open' construction (in a both literal and figurative sense): its scale hinted at a specific target audience, but the activities that would take place inside remained partly undefined. The *Children's Pavilion* from 1989, meanwhile, has a traditional and even conservative function: it is a monument with the spatial characteristics of a crypt. It is designed to be located at the periphery of a playground, built into an artificial hill. An oculus makes it possible to look inside from the outside, while it also enables visitors to look at the sky. The interior, with a circular set of stairs to sit on, can accommodate both children and adults (it's large enough), but it is dedicated to children, as a group of nine *rondels* or *tondi* in the upper part of the wall – compared by Stewart
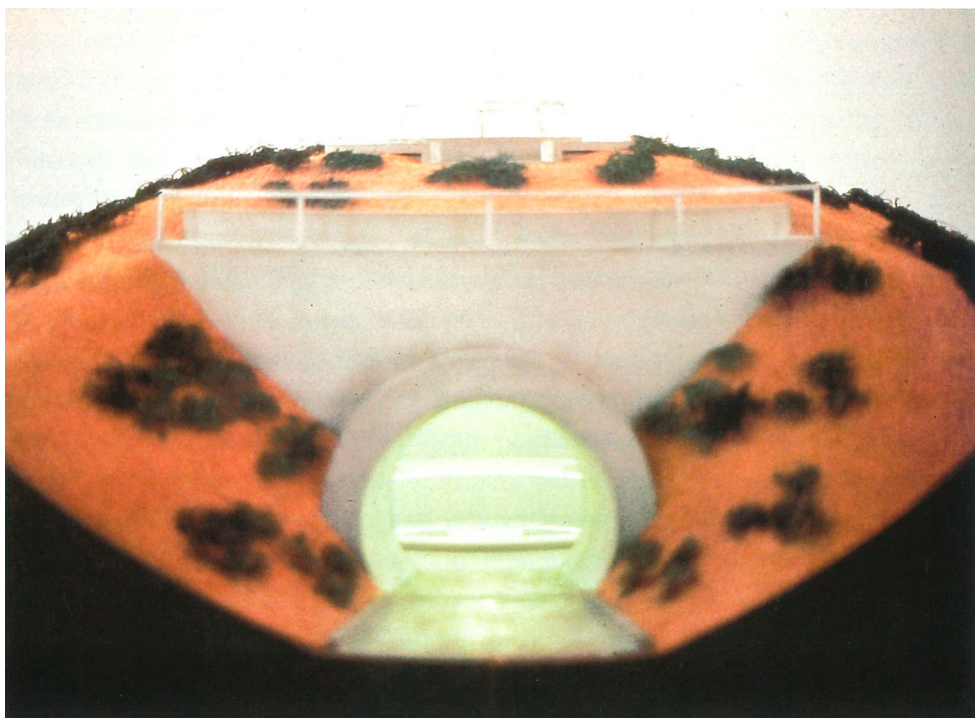
Fig. 25.   Dan Graham and Jeff Wall, *Children's Pavilion*, **1989, scale model. Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.**

Martin to 'Baroque ceiling-paintings of cherubs'[44] – comes to show.

Wall made these photographs of children, aged around six or seven, of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, gazing into the distance not unlike his *Young Workers* from 1978/1983 (Fig. 26). 'The group's multiracial composition,' as the artists stipulate in an accompanying statement, 'implies the plurality of nations and therefore forms an image of world culture. One classic manifestation of this idea is the photographic exhibition and book, *The Family of Man* organized by Edward Steichen in 1955.'[45] This reference is far from the only one in the text by Graham and Wall, and *Children's Pavilion* does indeed suffer from an extreme (art)historical consciousness, hinting at, among others, grottos,

animal caves, the Pantheon, the tomb of Raphael, the Capitol in Washington, World Fairs, the United Nations, and Boullée's cenotaph for Newton.

Wall and Graham, with this rare collaboration, might have tried to bring out the best in each other, but in the end they cancelled out what makes their individual approaches meaningful: *Children's Pavilion* doesn't have the theoretical accessibility and effortlessness of other pavilions by Graham, while the pictures of Jeff Wall aren't allowed to shine in their iconic singularity, as his other photographs do. In short, it is the clash between Graham's conceptual (and 'imageless') approach to space and architecture on the one hand, and Wall's monumentalization of the photographic image on the other hand,

Fig. 26.   Jeff Wall, Children, 1988. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

that makes the second *Children's Pavilion* a conflicting and inconsistent work.

The small project-version of *Children's Pavilion* from 1989 travelled quite a lot, and it was shown at different (thematic) exhibitions. In 2000, it was announced it would finally get built on true scale at the French city of Blois, with the Parisian office Jakob + MacFarlane as executive architects.[46] The project was, however, 'killed' by the city bureaucracy, according to Graham, following the departure of major (and former French Minister of Culture) Jack Lang.[47] It is the most recent but not necessarily the final episode in the chapter entitled 'Children's Pavilion' of Dan Graham's oeuvre, that reveals how all of his pavilions are topologically related to each other, while also existing, on their own, in different other versions or permutations. Everything within his body of work – a lifelong project to sabotage the singularity of the artistic object – seems connected, but these connections are in many cases still waiting to be revealed.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. Rhea Anastas, "Chronology", in Marianne Brouwers and Corinne Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, Düsseldorf: Richter, 2001, p. 86.

2. Bennett Simpson and Chrissie Iles (eds.), *Dan Graham: Beyond*, Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 2009.

3. For a recent theoretical interpretation of Graham's production of pavilions, see Bill Roberts, "The Proliferation of Dan Graham's Pavilions", *Art History*, Vol. 42, No. 2, April 2019, pp. 363–389.

4. Josh Thorpe, *Dan Graham. Pavilions: A Guide*, Toronto: Art Metropole, 2009, p. 65.

5. Beatriz Colomina, "Beyond Pavilions: Architecture as a Machine to See", in Simpson and Iles (eds.), *Dan Graham: Beyond*, p. 207.

6. Dan Graham, "Subject Matter", in Dan Graham (ed.), *End Moments*, New York: n.p., 1969, s.p. Republished in Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion: Writings and Art Projects, 1965–1990*, Cambridge/London, MIT Press, 1993, pp. 38–51.

7. Eric De Bruyn, "Topological Pathways of Post-Minimalism", *Grey Room*, Vol. 6, No. 25, Fall 2006, p. 35.

8. De Bruyn, 2006, p. 35.

9. Dan Graham, "Schema (March 1966)", in Dan Graham (ed.), *Rock My Religion*, p. 25.

10. Dan Graham, "Pergola/Conservatory", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, p. 224.

11. This version of *Pergola/Conservatory* was documented in Brian Hatton, "Dan Graham: Architecture 1 / Architecture 2: Camden Arts Centre, 11 April – 25 May 1997 / AA Exhibition Gallery, 22 April – 24 May, 1997" *AA Files*, vol. 16, no. 34, Autumn 1997, pp. 90–91.

12. To my knowledge, this pavilion has not been published.

13. Koen Brams and Dirk Pültau, "Gesprekken met Yves Aupetitallot over het tweeluik *Les années 1980*, Le Magasin, Grenoble, 2008-2009", *De Witte Raaf*, Vol. 25, No. 148, November 2010, p. 24.

14. Jan Hoet, "*Chambres d'Amis*: A Museum Ventures Out", in Jo Coucke, Norbert De Dauw, Frank Van de Veire and Veerle Van Durme (eds.), *Chambres d'Amis*, Ghent: Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, 1986, p. 342.

15. Jan Hoet, 1986, p. 348.

16. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Dan Graham, "Four Conversations: December 1999–May 2000", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, p. 78.

17. Pier Luigi Tazzi, "Albrecht Dürer Would Have Come Too", *Artforum*, Vol. 25, No. 1, September 1986, p. 128.

18. Dan Graham, "Picture Window' Piece", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, p. 163.

19. Dan Graham, "Pavilion/Sculpture II", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, p. 208.

20. Mike Metz, "Dan Graham", *BOMB*, Vol. 13, No. 46, Winter 1994, p. 27.

21. An interview was conducted with Dirk Defraeije, together with Melanie Deboutte, on August 12, 2019, in Ghent, Belgium. Parts of this conversation were published in Dutch: [blinded for peer review] and Melanie Deboutte, "Versies van een paviljoen van Dan Graham. Interview met architect Dirk Defraeije over *Chambres d'Amis*", *De Witte Raaf*, Vol. 43, No. 201, September 2019, pp. 23–25.

22. On Accardi's work, see: Germano Celant, *Carla Accardi*, Milano/Roma: Edizioni Charta Milano Zerynthia/Associazione per l'arte Contemporanea Roma, 1999.

23. Katrien Vandermarliere, "Dan Graham in gesprek", *Vlees & Beton*, Vol. 4, No. 8, 1987, p. 67. Author's translation.

24. Vandermarliere, 1987, pp. 66–67.

25. Vandermarliere, 1987, p. 67.

26. Dan Graham, "Pavilions, Stagesets and Exhibition Designs, 1983–1988", in Daniela Lanzer (ed.), *Dan Graham Pavilions*, München, Kunstverein München, 1988, p. 40.

27. Jan Hoet, 1986, p. 342.

28. Thierry de Duve, "Dan Graham and the Critique of Artistic Autonomy", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965–2000*, p. 65.

29. Anne Rorimer, "Dan Graham: An Introduction", in Anne Rorimer (ed.), *Buildings and Signs*, Chicago: The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago, 1981, p. 17.

30. Six pages of the catalogue of *Chambres d'Amis* are devoted to Graham's contribution: a title page, a photograph a model of *Children's Pavilion*, the drawings by Defraeije with a short explanation, as well as Graham's short essay 'Pavilion/Sculpture Works', in which he indicates two historical influences for his pavilions: Gerrit Rietveld's pavilion at the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo and the Amalienburg Pavilion of the Munich Nymphenburg Palace's French Garden.

31. Interview with Karel Hooft by the author, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium, August 22, 2019.

32. Vandermarliere, 1987, p. 67.

33. Dan Graham, Chris Dercon and Jean-Pierre Dermain (eds.), *Dan Graham*, Paris: ARC Musée de l'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1987, p. 26.

34. N.N., *Non in Codice: Judith Barry – Dara Birnbaum – Barbara Ess – Dan Graham – Rodney Graham – John Knight*, Rome: Canadian Cultural Centre/Galleria Pieroni, American Academy, 1987.

35. Exhibition history obtained from https://www.navigart.fr/fracgrandlarge/artworks, last consulted August 28, 2020.

36. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Dan Graham, "Four Conversations", p. 76.

37. Sylva Lavin, "Vanishing Point", *Artforum*, Vol. 51, No. 2, October 2012, p. 217.

38. The work of Jef Cornelis (1941-2018) was catalogued for the first time in 1991: Yves Aupetitallot (ed.), *1964 1990 Jef Cornelis*, Saint-Etienne: Maison de la culture et de la communication de Saint-Etienne, 1991. Argos, a center for audiovisual arts in Brussels, obtained Cornelis' archives and regularly publishes DVD-editions of his work. The most extensive research on his oeuvre has been conducted by Koen Brams and can be consulted at www. jefcornelis.be.

39. Mike Metz, 1994, p. 27.

40. 'Dan Graham's Kammerspiel' was published in 1985 in the exhibition catalogue *Dan Graham*, Perth: Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985, pp. 14–40. The essay was republished many times, most recently in Michael Newman (ed.), *Jeff Wall. Works and Collected Writings*, Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2007, pp. 265–298.

41. Jeff Wall, "Dan Graham's Kammerspiel", in Michael Newman (ed.), *Jeff Wall. Works and Collected Writings*, p. 298.

42. Sven Lütticken, "The Story of Art According to Jeff Wall", in *Secret Publicity. Essays on Contemporary Art*, Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2005, p. 71.

43. The most extensive analysis of the *Children's Pavilion* from 1989 was published in Dutch: Dominic van den Boogerd, "De architectuur van het kinderspel. Dan Graham & Jeff Wall: het Children's Pavilion", *Archis*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 1991, pp. 46-51. A short review was published in *Artforum*: Dena Shottenkirk, "Dan Graham and Jeff Wall. Marian Goodman Gallery", *Artforum*, Vol. 28, No. 7, March 1990, pp. 153–154.

44. Stewart Martin, "Wall's Tableau Mort", *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Jeff Wall Special Issue, 2007, p. 121.

45. Dan Graham and Jeff Wall, "Children's Pavilion", in Brouwers and Diserens (eds.), *Dan Graham Works 1965– 2000*, p. 238. A separate publication was devoted to *Children's Pavilion* in 1989: Joël Benzakin (ed.), *Dan Graham Jeff Wall Children's Pavilion*, Gillet: FRAC Rhône-Alpes, 1989.

46. Frédéric Bonnet, "Un pantheon des enfants, Blois", *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, Vol. 71, No. 328, June 2000, pp. 26–27.

47. Violaine Boutet de Monvel and Jonathan Regier, "Dan Graham: Minimalism against Minimalism", *Esse*, Vol. 23, No. 61, Autumn 2007, p. 55.

Summary

In 1986, Dan Graham participated in *Chambres d'Amis* in Ghent, Belgium, curated by Jan Hoet as an art exhibition outside of the museum, in individual houses. With the help of a local architect, Graham constructed a glass and steel pavilion in a private garden. The resulting work, *Children's Pavilion*, is largely forgotten, but it is a pivotal work within the evolution of his oeuvre. Many of Graham's concerns and topics – such as the relationship between public and private, the nature of a garden, and the possibility of site-specific art works, closer to architecture than to the fine arts, outside of the museum – were also an important part of the exhibition concept of Jan Hoet. Moreover, *Children's Pavilion* is not a 'unique' work: it is closely related to previous works (both pavilions and spatial proposals), while it has also spawned – and continues to spawn – new projects, collaborations (with Jeff Wall) and pavilions that are often seemingly identical. This double proliferation – both topological and permutational in nature – is typical for his oeuvre, but it also creates very specific problems. Everything within his body of work seems connected, and although these connections are necessary to fully understand each individual pavilion or proposal, they are in many cases still waiting to be revealed.

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