

Eve's Four Faces

Interactive surface configurations

Barbara Ambach

College of Architecture and Planning, University of Colorado at Denver, USA

<http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~bambach>

Eve's Four Faces consists of a series of digitally animated and interactive surfaces. Their content and structure are derived from a collection of sources outside the conventional boundaries of architectural research, namely psychology and the broader spectrum of arts and culture.

The investigation stems from a psychological study documenting the attributes and social relationships of four distinct personality prototypes; the "Individuated", the "Traditional", the "Conflicted" and the "Assured". (York and John, 1992) For the purposes of this investigation, all four prototypes are assumed to be inherent, to certain degrees, in each individual; however, the propensity towards one of the prototypes forms the basis for each individual's "personality structure". The attributes, social implications and prospects for habitation have been translated into animations and surfaces operating within *A House for Eve's Four Faces*. The presentation illustrates the potential for constructed surfaces to be configured and transformed interactively, responding to the needs and qualities associated with each prototype. The intention is to study the effects of each configuration and how it may be therapeutic in supporting, challenging or altering one's personality as it oscillates and shifts through the four prototypical conditions.

Keywords: interactive; digital; environments; psychology; prototypes.

"It suffices for a short time to follow the trace, the repeated course of words, in order to perceive, in a sort of vision, the labyrinthine constitution of being."

Georges Bataille

Constructed Surfaces: the digital consequence

This investigation emphasizes the architectural surface as a means of communication and explores its potential as a complex medium of expression. In

contrast to the typical definition of the 'surface' as superficial and/or merely two-dimensional, this project critically redefines the conventional notions of surface and adds to the contemporary desire to express its extraordinary depth and meaning.

In a review of an exhibition entitled *Sign as Surface*, curator Peter Zellner describes the "communicative significance" of the architectural surface. *"Through the architectural surface, these exhibitions draw our attention, once again, to the function of meaning in architecture, to architecture's ability, and perhaps its responsibility, to communicate responsively*

to contemporary culture. The architectural surface is intimately connected with meaning; simply, we read surfaces, we scan them for content." (Barker, 2003)

The evolution of digital media has allowed the architectural surface to appropriate multiple sources of information and reveals its communicative power. From simple "gestural" formulations to more complex and "generative" models enhanced by the capacity of digital technologies, I refer to the *constructed* surface as the embodiment of newly developing strategies and their capacity to influence the ways we think about and experience architecture. The *constructed* surface is a visual field of information able to be experienced through their abstract and physical forms. I analyze and articulate its ability to express identity; aesthetic qualities; technological innovations, and ultimately, its impact on human experience and behavior. These newly derived conceptions of architectural surfaces elevate their significance as a reflection of cultural values and extend their use and pertinence in everyday habitation.

A House for Eve's Four Faces: animations and surface configurations

In an article entitled *The Four Faces of Eve*, Kate York and Oliver John define the process of *individuation*, "Psychic conflict over separation from parents and conventional norms form the core from which all types of individuals emerge, but their differing resolution of this problem shapes their future paths." (1992) They document the results of varying degrees of *individuation* in their study of four personality prototypes; the "Individuated", the "Traditional", the "Conflicted" and the "Assured". For the purposes of this investigation, all four prototypes are assumed to be inherent to certain degrees in each individual; however, the propensity towards one of the prototypes forms the basis for each individual's "personality structure" and hence, the content and structure of the *constructed* surface.

Individuated	Traditional	Conflicted	Assured
High Ego Resiliency	Moderate Ego Resiliency	Low Ego Resiliency	High Ego Resiliency
Creativity	Conventional	Emotional Instability	Emotional Stability
Openness	Conservative	Disagreeable	Masculine Behavior
Broadly Intellectual	Feminine Behavior	Interpersonal Conflict	Conscientiousness
Aesthetic	Protective of Others	Social Avoidance	Low Anxiety/Doubt
Introspective Interests	Feelings of Guilt	Worry	Perceived as Cold
Assertiveness	Self-Denying	Anxious	Socially Distant
High Aspirations	Giving	Insecure	Indifferent
Warmth/Respect for Others	Organized	Defensive	Capable

Table 1
Comparison of Prototype Attributes

The Architectural Surface: as behavioral mediator

The *constructed* surfaces devised for *A House for Eve's Four Faces* are influenced by information as well as embedded with information. They represent and juxtapose the overall affect of each personality prototype superimposing text and image. The surfaces are translations of information from sources outside of architecture creating habitable spaces with the capacity to influence human behavior.

Two primary modes of investigation serve as the basis for this work. In the first, I explore how the surface of the digital animation may be *constructed* in order to express the personality characteristics, desires and sensibilities of the user. The digital adaptations incorporate references from the fine arts and popular culture. They are used as a means of describing the attributes inherent in each personality prototype and its possible variations in built form. The digital environment is designed to allow for the individual to reflect upon and manipulate the dynamic conditions of the surface.

The second mode considers the engagement of the architectural surface at the scale of the building. The surfaces are integrated with innovative technologies and communicate by interacting with the surrounding environment and its inhabitants. Each mode of investigation proffers architectural surfaces, which have the capacity to communicate in multiple ways, through their graphic imagery and tectonic form. They are a means of connecting the opportunity for self-expression to the architectural expression of a habitable space.

The surfaces and spatial conditions are configured interactively as *the House* transforms, responding to the needs and qualities associated with each prototype. The intention is to study the effects of each configuration and how it may be therapeutic for its occupant. By therapeutic, "working to restore or maintain somebody's health," (Encarta Dictionary, 2006) I mean the opportunity for an individual, faced with a propensity towards a certain personal-

ity prototype, to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of its characteristics and make changes towards the improvement or enhancement of one's life. Here, the digital surface and its interactive potential are intended to connect the individual to his/her own sensibilities and consider their integration and distinctiveness in creative, private and social situations.

Four Prototypical Surface Configurations

In this section, York and John's descriptions of each prototype are given as the basis for the resultant approach to devising four prototypical surface configurations. Depending on the prototype being served, the hierarchy of surfaces changes, giving preference to the one prototype while using the others as secondary systems of support.

Individuated – tapestry as surface

"The creative (or Individuated) group consists of those who transcend the conflict (of individuation) by developing a goal-seeking orientation. They direct their inner tension to creative expression and thus manage to overcome pressures for conformity and affirm their separateness as individuals." "Overall, the personality profile represented by our first prototype portrays a woman with her own identity ..." (York & John, 1992)

The surface configuration of the *Individuated* personality preferences the garden and studio as places for creativity. These spaces have unobstructed views and are flexible in their orientation and configuration. They are supported by a sub-structure of operative, storage and communications systems. The terrain of the garden and the tableaux of the studio represent the surfaces of ultimate possibility – where creativity is encouraged and freely expressed.

Traditional – index as surface

"Individuals in the Traditional type avoid confronting this conflict (of individuation) by accepting the will of their parents and the norms of society. They

Figure 1
Individuated Animation Still.

are spared the pains of individuation by imposing limits on their own development.” “The attributes of the second prototype from a profile reminiscent of the caring, dutiful wife and mother ...” (York & John, 1992)

The surface configuration of the *Traditional* personality is comprised of a series of locks. Each lock represents the operative or elementary functions of the house, i.e.: security, sustenance and cleansing. They control access into and within the house - interlocking as one either resists or conforms to a predetermined schedule of activities. The surfaces of the locks embody the rituals and mechanisms necessary for everyday life.



Figure 2
Traditional Animation Still.

Conflicted – archive as surface

“The conflicted individuals experience inner division, being aware both of their own will and parental and societal norms, but they do not achieve a resolution and remain caught between dependency and rebellion.” “The third prototype represents a generally unfavorable personality constellation. These attributes suggest both intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict and an unrealistic view of the self.” (York & John, 1992)

The surface configuration of the *Conflicted* personality is organized with the use of storage, archiving and memory devices. They alternately fracture and stitch a multitude of spatial relationships. The devices are generated by an ever-changing set of surfaces that support the acting out of life’s unresolved scenarios. Ambiguity and resolution are allowed to alternate in a constant state of flux.



Assured – motherboard as surface

“The assured person shows an apparent lack of inner conflict or tension and a focus on the concrete, manageable aspects of life.” “This pattern of attributes is also similar to Rank’s (1945) description of the adapted person as someone who feels no conflict over conforming with social norms and conventions. The present analysis adds to this portrait assertiveness and lack of anxiety ...” (York & John, 1992)



Figure 3
Conflicted Animation Still.

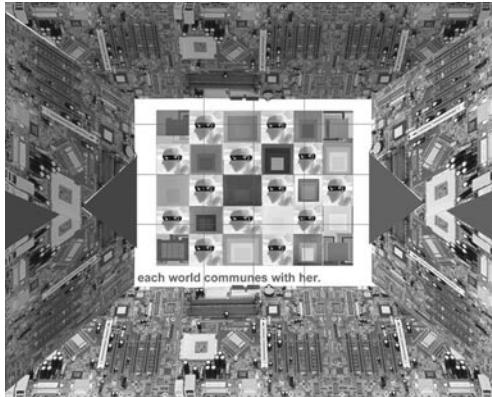


Figure 4
Assured Animation Still.

The surface configuration of the *Assured* personality implements systems of communication, both virtual and mechanical. The systems connect the functions within the house as well as to the outside world. The surfaces function as avatars and are by nature unemotional and indifferent to subject or outcome.

Summary

I am seeking to interpret the value of the constructed architectural surface as a behavioral mediator. The investigations reveal a phenomenal depth, communicated through materiality and tectonics. As well, they expose the literal or habitable depth of the surface, speculating on its functional and spatial distinctions. I have been challenged to generate architectural surfaces that reveal a technological capacity while enhancing our experience and sensitivity within a media driven society. Each exploration attempts to communicate visual, tactile and/or mutable information. This line of inquiry not only reveals but, reinvigorates the contemporary sensitivity and value for the architectural surface in both its digital and built forms.

The focus of this inquiry stems from my interest in the intuitive nature of personal expression and its transformation into the phenomenal aspects of architectural. This work is a testing ground for the transla-

tion of abstract ideas into a meaningful architectural language. I have emphasized the fundamentals of digital and graphic communication and how it influences and enhances the communicative value of the architectural surface. The results of these activities; reflect the continual development of technological innovations, affect and engage our living environments, reference the characteristics and sensibilities of the individual, and ultimately, reinforce our desire for beauty in composition, materiality and form.

This work is aligned with more current adaptations of the surface as an interactive and socially conscious device. Here, its cultural manifestations are articulated by its material and structural detailing, creating a *tectonic sensuality*. There is a quest to merge the boundaries between art and technology where the identity of the surface may be experienced through the integration or fluid exchange of information, meaning and graphic expression.

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