

**ARCHITECTURE  
OF MANY MEDIA  
(ARCHITECTURE  
IS MANY MEDIA)**

# Multimedia and Architectural Disciplines

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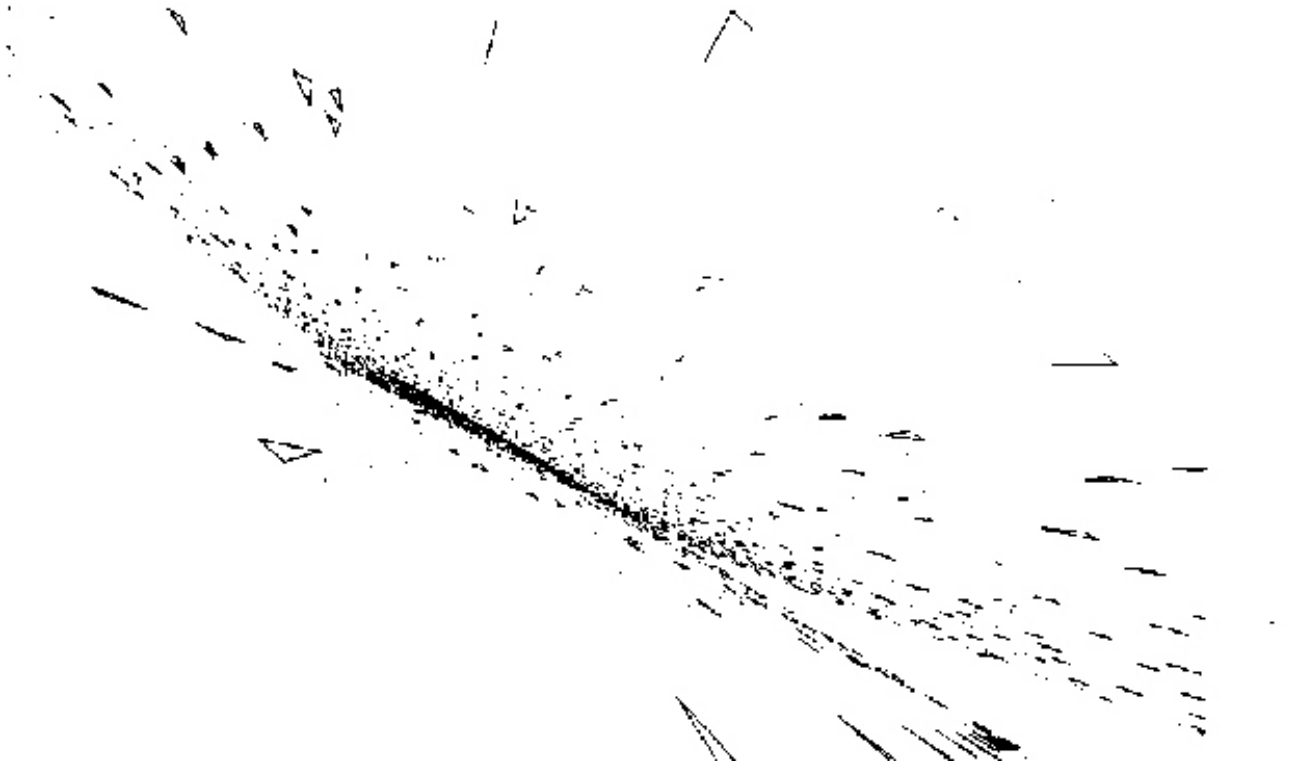


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## **Abstract**

*Basic issues concerning media need redefining, because new media should not be perceived and approached according to traditional conventions. Present understanding of a medium as a mean of linear transmission, with the primary role of sender is no more sufficient, is too simple. The possibility of mutual and multidirectional communication in the real time makes the distinction between sender and receiver not so clear. The roles are effacing, but actions, processes are not. When receiver becomes sender, the process of receiving is always distinct from sending. The importance of the process, the attention must move towards a temporal process of transmitting of the message (i.e. what happens 'after' sending, before receiving) and primary role of receiving. When the process changes, the message (even when 'only' its form) changes, receiving changes because it is an active action. This paper is the collection of ideas for discussion.*



## **Introduction**

It is very hard to be precise when touching the sphere of media. The problem is that in fact there is no single definition of what medium is, definition, which would cover all possible applications of this term. If we accept McLuhan's statement - 'the medium is the message' or 'the medium is the message' - we will automatically acknowledge a rational instability of this term. When we try to go a little beyond any conventional (passive) use of the term, we understand, that inevitably we enter the domain of interpretation. And interpretation means movement. Movement of meaning.

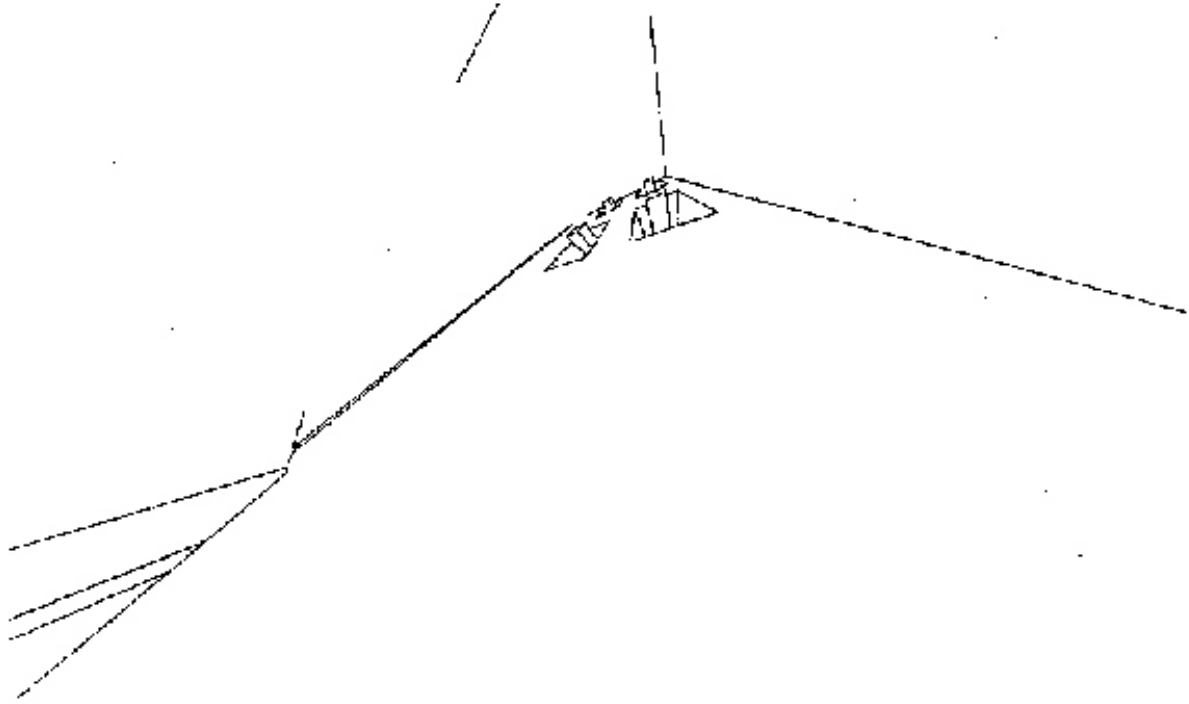
## **Movement**

Medium - the meaning of this term nowadays truly is moving and one can say that it is a chaotic movement. This complexity fascinates, mainly because it not only makes us lost, but gives an extreme interpretational freedom. This freedom of interpretation is not only for making fancy stories, but also for searching for real, essential features of media – media in architecture in our case.

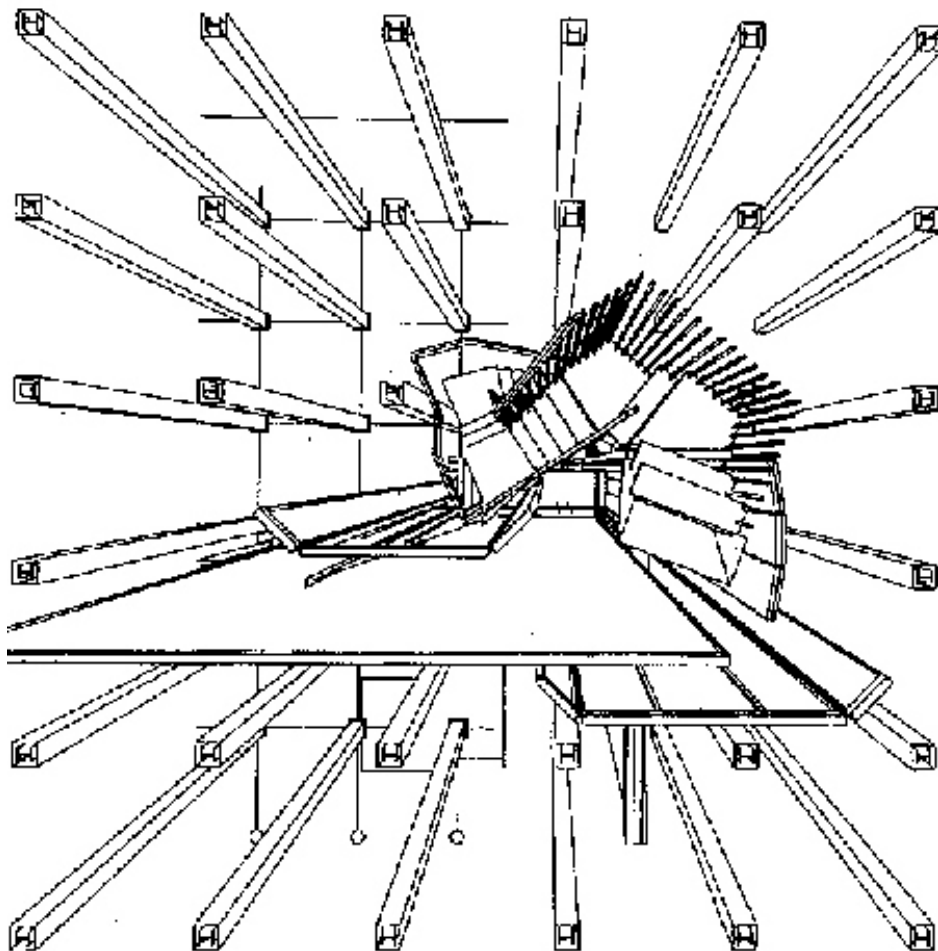
Some reversal of understanding media is proposed here:

Message - the meaning of the term depends on intentional or purposeful context we place ourselves with given problem.

In the permanent noise of complexity around, an infinite process of processes, we choose impulses which we need, or which we are touched with, we concentrate on the range of relations and things we are interested in, separating them from others.



There are of course different levels of importance of things – and it is intention or purpose what decides of it.  
The message indicates the process of transmitting and receiving, where the act of receiving is indispensable.  
The message to 'appear' needs receiving.  
Transmission is the innborn feature of every perceivable thing.  
Receiving creates the message.  
A thing or process becomes a medium, when it becomes a message or brings a message for the observer - receiver.  
So receiving creates a medium: there is neither message nor medium without receiving.



The specific of new media has moved far away from the previous convention of architectural communication and representation we were used to, from the analog, traditional, direct convention, based on making handmade signs on paper and constructing materially solid, and spatially stable architectural objects.

Linearity of communication, an internal stability of the contents of architecture is being replaced by a dynamic, multidirectional perceiving the reality of architectural communication.

This is not the field for an extreme relativity, but for defining new intellectual platforms of using and making media, where user does not only passively undergo changes caused by transformations of devices, media themselves, but interprets his 'own' media, deciding essentially of the way he uses them.

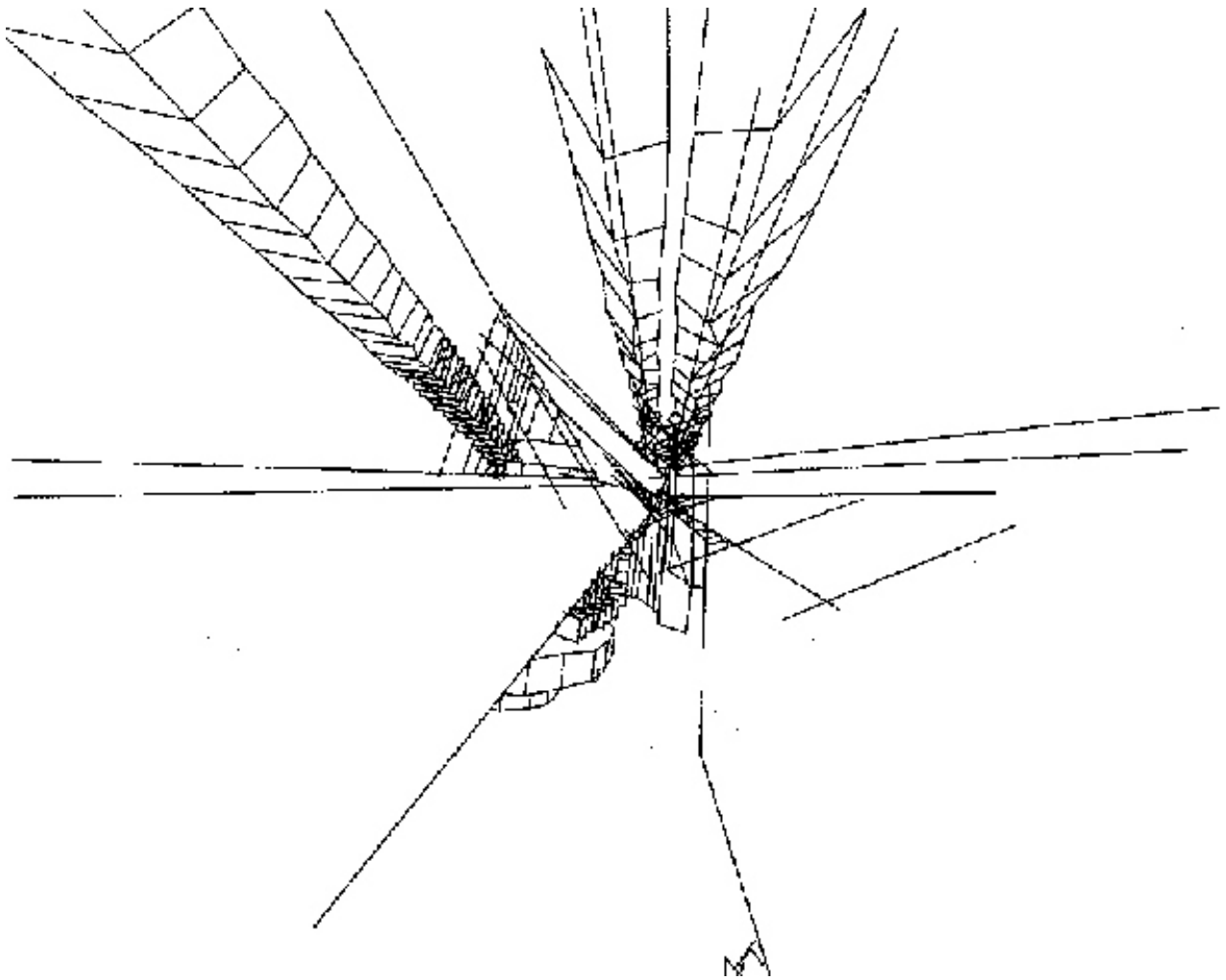
This should lead to individualisation of the message within new conventions, which would result from a conscious use of very specific features of new media.

Architecture as medium has reached this state within the traditional convention of communication.

Media of architecture are being changed i.e. new ones are being introduced. New media give new kind of message, or at least new form of message - and this inevitably change the contents.

New electronic media change architecture very dramatically, though unconsciously.

It is an unconsciousness of users, architects using computers and teachers teaching computing in schools of architecture. Unconsciousness of a new message.



Architecture is being changed by machines: electronic media - they change modes of thinking of their users.

Architecture can be changed by users by means of these machines, where individual mode of thinking uses and transforms machine's features to produce and introduce new, different values to architecture.

It seems that actually new media cause the need just for their operators but - in possibly close future new users of ideas (architectural) should cause the need for the new use of media: it is the case of architecture.

### **Multimedia**

Multimedia is many media, which include those computer based, but also many more.

Architecture is many media, it also needs many media, which make it and represent it.

Multimedia means many messages being received at the same time - but its essence lies in the awareness and

quality of perception. The idea is nothing new. The medium - as the extension of human faculties.

New is the message characteristic for new media. It is present, though covered.

Multimedia in conventional sense - as computer based device to operate simultaneously with text, picture and sound on the same screen - does not bring anything essentially new, because it operates within traditional mode of communication - on the level of transmission of descriptive information.

To make the idea of multimedia essentially valuable, it has to be concentrated on producing occurrences and processes: in our case architectural ones.

New media of architecture here is understood not rhetorically, but as the environment to construct architecture, neither to simulate nor represent it, where traditional components of architecture are replaced by clearly electronic transmissions, messages, which would shape the space in a new manner, where the only interface is electronic, but real architecture itself.

This view of multimedia is the possible, creative development of architectural media - where the aim is to develop architecture, searching for new values, new expressions: this first needs a new vision of architecture.

The relation between architecture, media and architect - user is not the linear hierarchy, but mutual interdependence, where architect - user is the critical, active link. As a receiver, he is to shape the specific of his new media. This is to learn.

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