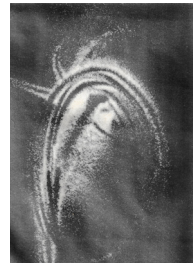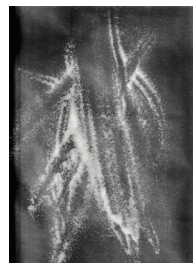# TERRITORIES IN OBSOLESCENCE

Theory paper by Dominika Kopiarová for Borders&Territories graduation studio
Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road

Exercise in Entropy —made during the Modi Operandi workshop. Medium, progressive high-resolution scans of corn flour on tracing paper.

MSc4 Borders&Territories graduation studio
Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road
Theory paper by Dominika Kopiarová

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Territories in Obsolescence revolve around the fascination with ***obsolescence*** as an inherent condition of industrial sites. What is argued is a paradigm shift from thinking in terms of active industrial or obsolete postindustrial dichotomy. In understanding the cyclical capitalist patterns of production and abandonment of space, the industrial, the postindustrial, and the ***future postindustrial*** correspond to the processes of ***becoming obsolete, obsolescence,*** and ***projected obsolescence,*** respectively. T*erritories in Obsolescence* consider concepts and spatial concerns of artists who closely work with—or against—architecture to contemplate industrial sites in their present reality. It is further argued that the notion of ***proto-ruins*** renders ***future industrial*** and ***postindustrial*** interchangeable terms; ergo, to think of the future industrial territories requires us to speculate its postindustrial state. From this stems the need for architecture to expand to the notions of ***proto-architecture*** and reconsider ***obsolescence*** and ***entropic forces*** as not in opposition to function. Lastly, as the industry in sectors mutates, so does the form of the future obsolete landscape evolves—most notably in the ***posthuman machine landscapes of digital production.***

[keywords] obsolescence, territory, landscape, post-/ industrial, entropy, nonsite, nonspace, proto-architecture, machine

Territories in Obsolescence revolve around the fascination with obsolescence as an inherent condition of industrial production sites. The cycle of obsolescence concerns the production of landscapes becoming outmoded— industrial archipelagos easily recognizable in plan within the city fabric and delineated in sections by tall fences and modifications to the soil and air.[1] Once the industrial and manufacturing processes eventually cease, the landscapes are termed *postindustrial* and relocated or replaced.

A blast furnace or a coal mine are both intrinsic artefacts of the contemporary *anthropogenic* landscape. Stemming from this notion is a disclaimer that the position formulated here is not one to criticise the *ecologies* of these production sites retroactively as such criticism is no longer productive in theorising the postindustrial landscape. Instead, what is of interest are the mechanisms underlying the cycles of production of postindustrial landscapes and the means to theorise the territories *in* obsolescence from an architectural standpoint.

The phenomenon of obsolescence is characteristic of a broader conception of production—including the production of knowledge—and is not geographically bound to its primary enclave but encompasses the infrastructure and the technologies inherent to the landscape. Here, obsolescence is deliberated as a norm rather than a temporary imbalance in spatial planning.

[1] **The medium of the air is affected, carrying traces of smoke, microscopic particles, carbon monoxide and— more often than not—by the smell of gas and fuel oil.**

I   *On the cycles of obsolescence*

The fundamental dependency of the conception of *progress* on perpetual *obsolescence* is misleadingly overt and in that this notion appears comfortable in abstract terms only. *Territories in Obsolescence* dare not dwell on the principal motivation and rationale that underlies the mechanisms of late capitalism. However, as an introduction to the cycles of territorial obsolescence, it is inevitable to import macroeconomic language that concerns the temporal.

Austrian economist and an ardent defender of capitalism, Joseph Schumpeter, defined capitalism as the *creative destruction* with imminent obsolescence at its core. A fitting term for the process of continual industrial mutation necessary to successively revolutionise the economic structure from within. "Destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one."[2] Schumpeter presented entrepreneurial innovation as the vital force behind the notion of progress and productive instability of capitalism; at once explaining the boom and bust cycles as much as the cycles of industrial construction and abandonment.

A lifetime of a commodity—whether of goods, factory, or territory—is never solely determined by its rate of physical deterioration. Obsolescence is a tool that diminishes the value in *fixed capital* [3] prematurely[4]. In economics and industrial design, planned obsolescence is a strategy to deliberately ensure rapid obsolescence of a consumer good within a known time frame. Vast amounts of goods become obsolete at an incredible speed to bolster the future demand for the ever-new replacement.[5] The notion of planned obsolescence could be projected onto the temporal dimension of the production mechanism—the sites of industrial production of those goods being rendered obsolete—with the only exception that the reduced time frame is not necessarily known but is inevitable.

Macro-economists—as David Harvey argued—tend to have a weak grasp on how to handle the production of space in their theories and models. At least beyond partitioning it into geopolitical entities and industrial zones. Harvey—a proponent of the notion that capitalism annihilates space to ensure its success[6]—considered the production, reproduction and reconfiguration of space as central to understanding the political economy of capitalism. Harvey introduced the concept of a *spatial fix* that bridges the gap from the abstract notions of capitalist progress to the core of obsolescence as inherently temporal and locally embedded.

The system of capitalism is dependent on geographical expansion as much as technological innovation and self-fulfilling expansion through economic growth. The *spatial fix* then describes the contradictory tendency of this mechanism *to fix* economic infrastructure in a specific place and *to fix* the crisis by liberating circulating capital from its local embeddedness. Resulting in an inherent tension between the demand to build an environment through which capital investments can circulate and the reflex to abandon it—along with a legacy of pollution and local economic recession—in a quest for increased profits.[7] That is ordinarily achieved by rapid relocation in search of a cheaper labour force, favourable terms of trade, new pools of resources and raw materials, or sites with weaker environmental regulations.

Postindustrial is concerned with the transition from manufacturing to service industries and the consecutive social restructuring. As a socio-economic phenomenon, it is analogous with optimism about the growth of skilled jobs in the new *knowledge economy* and misleadingly tends to be interpreted as a universal experience. Following the logic of *spatial fix*, the cycles of obsolescence are defined by the "deindustrialization here and reindustrialization there"[8] mindset. Industrialisation continues elsewhere than what is considered *early industrialised* Western nations. Communities around the globe confront new forms of uneven development of industrial booms and busts and their attendant social dislocations.[9]

Anna Lora-Wainwright—Professor of the Human Geography of China—offers a provocative lens on the uneven coexistence of industrial and postindustrial regimes. On the example of informal e-waste recycling and processing, she argues that there is "no simple evolutionary progression from industrial to postindustrial but rather an overlapping of both."[10] *Postindustrialisation* is not a global phenomenon. The conversion from waste to value intersects with the uneven political economies.

The sole distinction between the *industrial* and the *postindustrial* becomes insufficient. In understanding the patterns of production, reproduction and reconfiguration of space, the need for the projected future state of the industrial landscapes must be recognised. Ergo, the *industrial*, the *postindustrial*, and the *future postindustrial* are pertinent territorial conditions. As the repeated patterns of industrialization and abandonment are acknowledged, *Territories in Obsolescence* describe the three conditions as the process of *becoming obsolete, obsolescence,* and *projected obsolescence,* respectively. Not to suggest a hard border between the states that tend to overlap and coexist but to argue the continuity of the production and reproduction of landscapes rendered obsolete by deindustrialisation processes.

[2] Schumpeter, J.A., 1994 [1942]. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.* London: Routledge.

[3] **Fixed capital—built environment, machinery, weapons systems, cultivated biological resources, intellectual property products—refers to the value of capital assets available for production purposes at a given point in time (Eurostat glossary).**

[4] Harvey, D., 2001. 'Globalization and the "Spatial Fix" ' in *Geographische revue.* 2/2001, pp. 23–30.

[5] Lora-Wainwright, A., 2015. 'The Trouble of Connection. E-Waste in China Between State Regulation, Development Regimes, and Global Capitalism' in Vaccaro, I., Harper, K., Murray, S., (ed.) *The Anthropology of Postindustrialism: Ethnographies of Disconnection.* London: Routledge.

[6] **Statement based on his 1973 publication *Social Justice and the City.***

[7] Harvey, D., 2001. 'Globalization and the "Spatial Fix" ' in *Geographische revue.*

[8] Ibid.

[9] S Vaccaro, I., Harper, K., Murray, S., 2015. 'The Postindustrial Moment' in *The Anthropology of Postindustrialism: Ethnographies of Disconnection.*

[10] Lora-Wainwright, A., 2015. 'The Trouble of Connection. E-Waste in China Between State Regulation, Development Regimes, and Global Capitalism' in Vaccaro, I., Harper, K., Murray, S., (ed.) *The Anthropology of Postindustrialism: Ethnographies of Disconnection.*
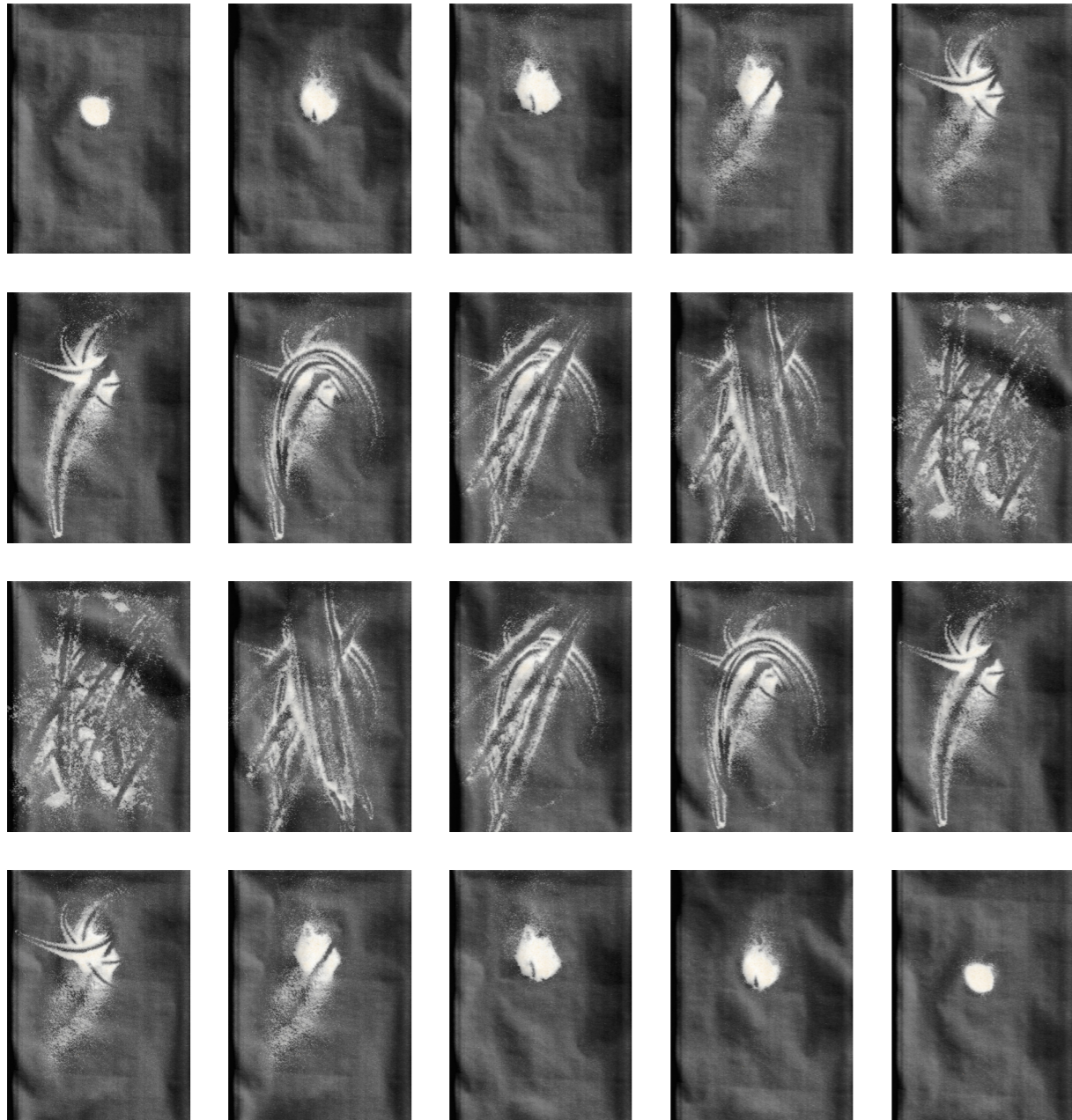
Exercise in Entropy
—made during the
Modi Operandi
workshop. Medium,
progressive
high-resolution
scans of corn flour
on tracing paper.
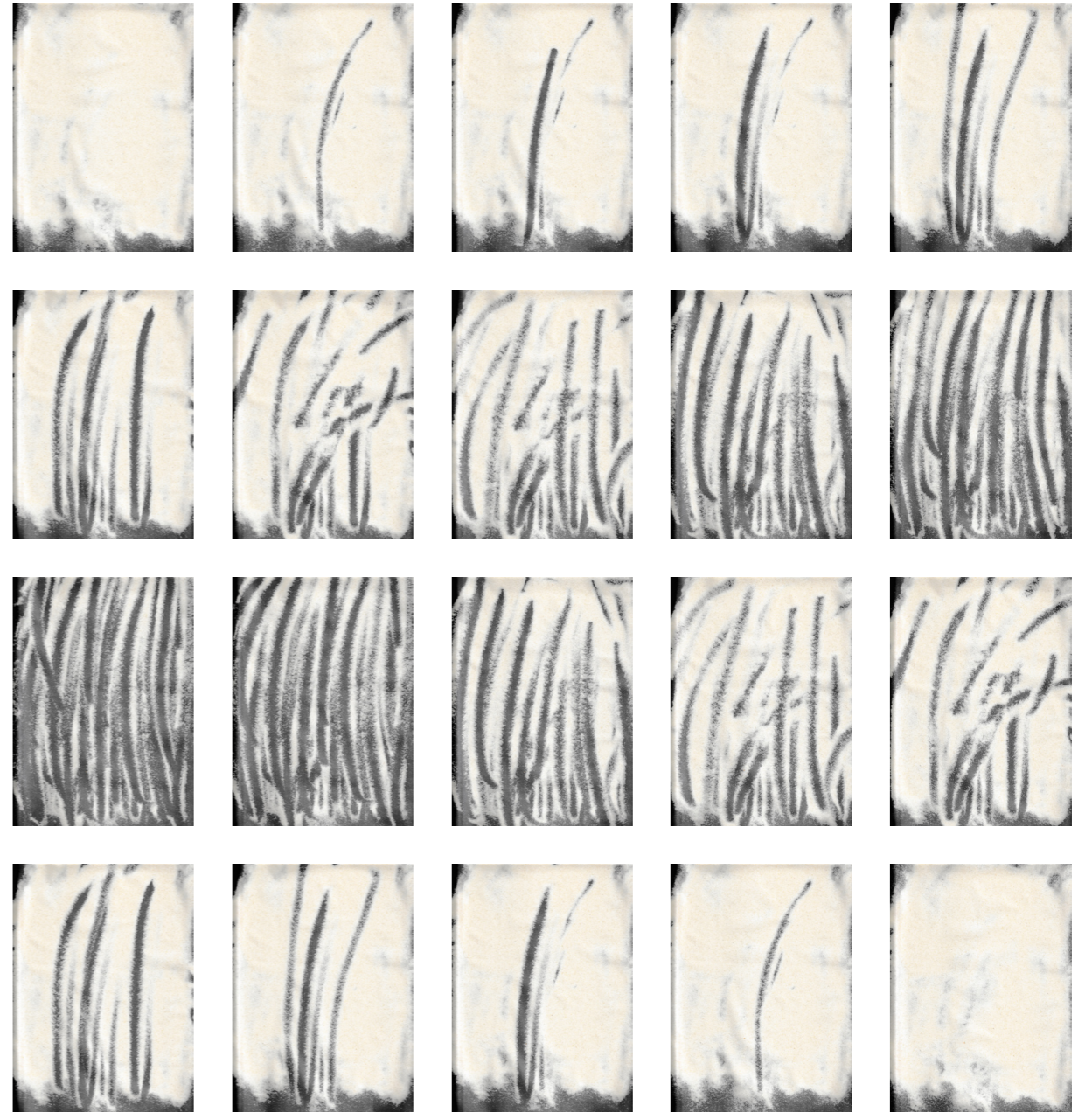
Reverse exercise
in Entropy—made
during the Modi
Operandi workshop.
Medium, progres-
sive high-resolution
scans of corn flour
on tracing paper.

11 Vaccaro, I., Harper, K., Murray, S., 2015. 'The Postindustrial Moment' in *The Anthropology of Postindustrialism: Ethnographies of Disconnection.*

12 Krivý, M., 2012. *From Factory to Culture Factory. Transformation of obsolete industrial space as a social and spatial process.* Academic Dissertation, University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research.

A Nonsite (Franklin, New Jersey). Robert Smithson, 1968. [source: Holt/ Smithson Foundation.org]

13 Dickinson, J., 1999. 'Journey into Space: Interpretationsof Landscape in Contemporary Art' in Nye, D.E. (ed.) *Technologies of landscape: from reaping to recycling.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

14 Smithson, R., 1996 [1967]. 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey' in Flam, J. (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

15 Ibid.

Idealised versions of *culture* and *nature* emerge in contemporary postindustrial landscapes. "Nature is culturalized through conservation as it becomes a symbol and a commodity. Culture is naturalised through its preservation and consumption as an ideal form in museums and other cultural heritage sites."[11] In urban planning and heritage discourse, territorial obsolescence is considered a "problem to be fixed", and *culture* becomes an instrument for brownfield redevelopment.[12] However, as deindustrialisation is associated with depopulation, local economic recession, and legacy of pollution, successful projects such as ecological renewal of Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord are not always a viable strategy given the lack of economic incentive. The relevance of recognising the territories *in* their obsolescence rests in this realisation.

In order to contemplate the sites in their present reality—obsolescence as a process that contests the very concept of their spatial identity—*Territories in Obsolescence* consider artists that closely work with—or against—architecture. The concepts and spatial concerns regarding negative entropic space of industrial production by Robert Smithson and Gordon Matta-Clark are introduced.

II   *On entropy and nonspace*

Entropy—deriving its definition from classical thermodynamics—is the fundamental process indicative of the winding down of systems. *Entropy* is the measure of uncertainty or randomness associated with disorder, disintegration, and irreversibility. Unavoidably, it serves as a tool in interpreting landscapes transforming due to partial and complete abandonment of industrial activity.

Robert Smithson—who associated entropy with economic and social systems as much the temporal—conceived of the industrial landscapes as sites that reveal the essentially entropic character of contemporary civilisation. For Smithson, strip mines, quarries, waste dumps, zones of deindustrialisation formed by shrinking towns and industrial rust belts were precisely where "the vast forces of entropy, both natural and social, silently worked to dissolve the landscape, cancel the present, render experience as memory."[13]

In *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* (1967), Smithson renders the processes of entropic disintegration acting on an industrial riverfront. He observes the esthetics of the construction sites and documents the industrial artefacts—concrete abutments, holes, extinct machines, "pumping derrick in the middle of the river"[14]—with a fascination and care that would solely be given to such foreboding scenery. "An artificial crater from which side extruded six large pipes that gushed the water of the pond into the river"[15] is equated with a monumental fountain. For an unfamiliar reader, Smithson would be bordering on satire. Smithson suggested distancing from the tendency to break away monumental artefacts from its landscape and instead contemplate the postindustrial as a whole in its essential continuity.

The focus no longer lies on the modernist-admired factory architecture and the engineered silhouettes of concrete silos, but the territory modified for production—drained, excavated, polluted—and its infrastructure.

Following Tony Smith's[16] attitudes towards a new *subaesthetic terrain* and a radical understanding of sculpture, Smithson too contemplated that a sculpture concerns itself with the absence of space, relying on the "voids that displace the solidity of space"[17] rather than objects to activate the space. The *holes* in the landscape represent *negativity* of the obsolete—its temporal dimension and the continuity of its production.[18] Smithson emphasised those open spaces that assimilate in zones of abandonment and obsolescence. It is precisely this class of sites that would be called entropic voids in the landscape. Waste areas, quarries, and excavations—where energy has been drawn out—are considered *sculptures* in the landscape.

Smithson's artistic activity did not necessarily consist of intervening in the landscape but creating a parallel landscape.[19] If sculpture concerns itself with space as void, it deals with the space's counterpart, the *nonspace. Nonspaces* are the "immediate surroundings that fail to impinge themselves on modern consciousness."[20] They point away from themselves and toward their referents, effectively becoming signs or containers for someplace else. *Nonspace* is then a subject of the *nonsite*—a three-dimensional logical picture, an abstract metaphor representing an actual site but not actually resembling it.[21]

In Smithson's oeuvre, a *nonsite* would be an indoor earthwork installation inside a gallery. However, to borrow from Smithson's terminology could be to extrapolate the interpretations of *nonsites* onto the continuous production and reproduction of obsolete landscapes. Obsolete landscapes are containers for the industrial function that is transferred onto them and remain in use for as long as they are referred to as the next industrial parallel landscapes. In the cycle of obsolescence, the future industrial are simple referents—*earthworks*—of the precedent industrial sites. *Territories in Obsolescence* can also be termed as the *nonsites* or *earthworks* now undergoing entropic forces, and postindustrial becomes a *nonterm*, always in reference to a function existing elsewhere. Smithson recognised *nonspaces* in strip mines. "What, after all, are strip mines but scalped mountains, voids testifying to the act of removing, negatives left after the positive ore has been scraped off?"[22]

Smithson criticised architects' inability to cope with entropy and insisted that entropy was a fundamental rather than repressed condition of architecture.[23] Within the territories of obsolescence, entropy acts on industrial landscapes and *functionless* architecture. And architecture is an inherently *negentropic act!* Contrary to entropy, *negentropy* is the opposite of randomness or chaos. It is an order or an exception to disorder—meaning organisation, structure, and function. If postindustrial is inherently entropic, it is inevitably moving away from architecture for as long as architecture chooses to force purpose onto obsolescence and fight entropy. Postindustrial becomes an artificial sculptural landscape not in opposition to nature but in opposition to architecture.

16 Anthony Smith was a pioneering figure in American Minimalist sculpture and—similarly to Smithson —a noted theorist on art. Hobbs (1981) cites Smith as influential on Smithson's thinking about space, form and sculpture.

17 Hobbs, R., 1981. 'Smithson's Unresolvable Dialectics' in Hobbs, R. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p.24.

18 Krivý, M., 2010. *Industrial architecture and negativity: the aesthetics of architecture in the works of Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Smithson and Bernd and Hilla Becher.* Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

19 Dickinson, J., 1999. 'Journey into Space: Interpretationsof Landscape in Contemporary Art' in Nye, D.E. (ed.) *Technologies of landscape: from reaping to recycling.*

20 Hobbs, R., 1981. 'Smithson's Unresolvable Dialectics' in Hobbs, R. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture.*

21 Smithson, R., 1968. 'A Provisional Theory of Nonsites' in *Holt/ Smithson Foundation* [online]. Available at: holtsmithsonfoundation.org (January 4 2022).

22 Hobbs, R., 1981. 'Smithson's Unresolvable Dialectics' in Hobbs, R. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture.*

23 Davidts, W., 2007. 'Operative Entropy. Robert Smithson at Hotel Palenque (1969-72)' in *Triple Bond. Essays on Art, Architecture and Museums.* Amsterdam: Valiz.

III   *On negativity and function*

24 In reference to Matta-Clark's 1974 collaborative project *Anarchitecture.*

25 Zalman, S. 2017. 'Re:Viewing Walls Paper', *In Focus: Walls Paper 1972 by Gordon Matta-Clark*. In Tate Research Publication [online]. Available at: tate.org.uk (1 January 2022).

26 Krivý, M., 2010. *Industrial architecture and negativity: the aesthetics of architecture in the works of Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Smithson and Bernd and Hilla Becher.*

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 *Lymbo* is an obsolete spelling of *limbo.*

30 Zalman, S. 2017. 'Re:Viewing Walls Paper', *In Focus: Walls Paper 1972 by Gordon Matta-Clark.*

In 1975, *anarchitect*[24] Gordon Matta-Clark carved a hole into an abandoned apartment house in Paris and consequently created a series of exemplary cuts into abandoned factories and obsolete buildings. The building cuts were experiential and not object-based in that the spectacle revolved around the absence of these fragments in the buildings themselves and not in the display of the extracted fragments.[25]

In *Splitting* (1974), *Conical Intersect* (1975), and *Days End* (1975), Matta-Clark explored the limits of the notion of function in architecture. He suggests a reading of architecture that "exposes the whole of the architectural process that otherwise remains hidden when architecture is understood as a functional object."[26] A hole—a newly introduced void into a structure that is at the very moment of losing its function but still exists—questions the justification of architecture and the architects' need for functionality.

An intervention of cutting a hole through the building is not about destruction but rather questions the forces of urban destruction driven by obsolescence. "A hole is what makes the object non-identical with itself and resists attempts for its closure. It shows those architectural qualities that persist after the building is stripped of its functionality. It exposes the entropic tendency of any architectural object and thus discloses the lack of foundation beneath the monumental project. [...] a hole is not a negation of architecture but an exposure of its negativity."[27] If *negativity* stands for what comes "before and after" what is commonly understood as architecture—a functioning period of an architectural object—then to consider negativity as intrinsic to architecture is to question the existing distribution of the architectural sensible.[28]

Obsolescence does not solely refer to the void in the production, the *lymbo*.[29] Instead, obsolescence—the loss of functionality defined by architecture—allows for a new and expanded reading of architecture. What suggests the productive agency of obsolescence in relation to Matta-Clark's interventions is perhaps the most evident. The projects were undeniably a result of—or, at the very least, solely enabled by—the obsolescence of the built environment in question, which inevitably frames the foundation of Matta-Clark's oeuvre. The buildings were only usable as sites and available because of their planned destruction.

Matta-Clark's engagement with obsolescence is readable in *Walls Paper* (1972). Photo-silkscreen images printed in pairs of colours on newsprint, abstracted from the artist's photographs of the cracking, crumbling interior walls of New York buildings that mirror Soho's—where they were displayed—at the time own deterioration as a former manufacturing neighbourhood slated for demolition. "The starting point of *Walls Paper* is the imagery of failing walls, but the end result is that of phantom rectangles arranged linearly, some interfacing with each other, some reduced to line, some acting as foreground and some as background. It is a splotchy abstraction that offers up the shadowy remains of an architectural structure in flux and becomes an eerie palimpsest of buildings that exist, or existed, elsewhere."[30]

Matta-Clark's *Conical Intersect,* 1975. [Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark]

IV   *On proto-architecture*

"When it functions as a dam it will cease being a work of art and become a utility."

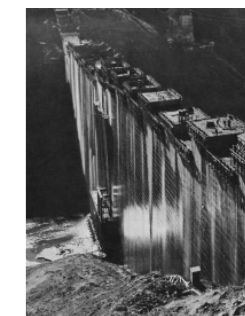**Smithson, R., 1967.** *Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site.*

A fundamental consequence of certain entropic processes lies in their irreversibility—the impossibility to violate the conservation of energy expressed in the iron laws of thermodynamics. Entropy change predicts the direction of spontaneous processes and determines whether they are irreversible or impossible—resulting in entropy being defined as a state of unidirectional disintegration—connected only with what comes *after.*

Robert Smithson expanded the entropic notion to the time that precedes—to the architecture's *proto-state. Proto-architecture* refers to the phase between the breaking ground at construction and the beginning of industrial activity—when the territory is in use. *The Monuments of Passaic* are described as "ruins in reverse" in reference to the structures that would eventually be built. Here, the ruins oppose any conception of romanticised or fetishised ruins because "they don't fall into ruins after they are built but rise into ruins before they are built."[31]

From when to consider the site as *proto-ruins* can be stretched to the very early planning phases. In *Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site* (1967), Smithson argues the importance of soil sampling and core borings, "The *boring* if seen as a discrete step in the development of the whole site has an aesthetic value. It is an *invisible hole* and could be defined by Carl Andre's motto—'A thing is a hole in a thing it is not.' "[32] Hence, the future postindustrial—meaning the site planned for industrial activity—can equally be considered to possess those entropic qualities.

In Vladimir Nabokov's statement—"The Future is but obsolete in reverse"[33]—Robert Smithson saw a confirmation of entropic forces. When Smithson contemplated the *new monuments* "not built for ages but instead built against ages,"[34] he suggested that artists become involved in "systematic reduction of time down to fractions of seconds, in that both past and future are placed into an objective present."[35] In *proto-ruins*, the projection of obsolescence materialises for landscapes of industrialisation. The notion that ruinous qualities can be seen in everything that is or will be constructed could also be projected onto conceptions of the future territories in obsolescence.

What *Territories in Obsolescence* argues is a paradigm shift from thinking in terms of industrial and postindustrial dichotomy as active versus obsolete landscape and instead recognise the patterns of production of the landscapes that warp the time into itself. "All Passaic is obsolete; it is a present already past, already used up."[36] As such, it is equally *a future already past, already used up*—all future industrial is already postindustrial.

31 Smithson, R., 1996 [1967]. 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey' in Flam, J. (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings.*

32 Smithson, R., 1996 [1967]. 'Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site' in Flam, J. (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings.*

33 Nabokov, V. in Smithson, R., 1996 [1966]. 'Entropy and The New Monuments' in Flam, J. (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings.*

34 Smithson, R., 1996 [1966]. 'Entropy and The New Monuments' in Flam, J. (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings.*

35 Ibid.

36 Hobbs, R., 1981. 'Smithson's Unresolvable Dialectics' in Hobbs, R. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture.*

Photographs of industrial landscapes in Passaic, Robert Smithson, 1967. [source: Holt/Smithson Foundation.org]

[bottom right] Negative map showing region of the *Monuments Along the Passaic River,* Robert Smithson, 1967. [source: Artforum.com]

V   *On machine landscapes*

In *Typologies* (1959-1999)[37], Bernd and Hilla Becher famously captured *anonymous sculptures*[38] in industrial settings at the precise moment when they were becoming obsolete. The industrial structures reduced to pure forms, arranged into grids according to their basic archetypes, give off a seemingly static impression—as individual artefacts and in series. However, a closer look reveals differences that emerge from the repetition enabling singularities and design evolution to stand out as a testimony that the *form of the postindustrial* is not static but rapidly evolves.

Industry in sectors mutates, and evolves and so does the form of the future postindustrial diversifies. In the continuous cycle of obsolescence, progression and differentiation occur. While the heavy industry of metal processing and quarrying is unlikely to disappear completely, new forms of the production landscapes emerge, including resource recycling and freight industry—and crucially—a typology of *machine landscapes of digital production.* "Modernism had the factory [...] now we have the data centre."[39]

"If we were to stroll through the screen and follow the fibre-optic tentacles across the planet, we would find ourselves in unfamiliar places."[40] The production of the digital space suggests certain ephemerality and omnipresence that is seemingly nonmaterial. Yet, the cloud is not floating in the *ether;* instead, it is infrastructurally tightly linked to a network of very-real ultra-high-security physical spaces. The new forms of production take place inside the telecommunication networks, server farms,[41] data centres,[42] distribution warehouses,[43] unmanned ports,[44] power plants that cover extensive territories,[45] and mines that no longer extract resources from the ground.[46] Those are the landscapes and buildings of "extraordinary meaning that sit at the core of what it means to exist today."[47]

A machine or *digital* landscape is a *natural* continuation of the *classical* idea of an industrial site with which it shares signifiers from machinic nature, ecological degradation to dislocation from the city fabric by the zone's complete inaccessibility. What distinguishes this landscape from the postindustrial is that it is already *posthuman* at the peak of its productivity. "The most significant architectural spaces in the world are now entirely empty of people."[48]

The machine that occupies the space is the dominant measure that defines the parameters of the extra-human architecture utterly oblivious to the human proportion. The form, materiality, and infrastructures are configured to anticipate the logic of machine vision and habitations. The progression also concerns the sheer scale of production sites, whereas contemplating the projection of imminent abandonment no longer involves *Territories in Obsolescence* but buildings and megastructures that take on the scale of territories.

[37] Published as an encyclopedic collection of all known Becher industrial studies, arranged by building type in 2004 by The MIT Press.

[38] The Bechers referred to the subjects of their photographs as *anonymous sculptures,* and they produced a photobook of the same title in 1970.

[39] Young, L. (ed.) 2019. *Machine Landscapes: Architectures of the Post Anthropocene.* Architectural Design. Oxford: Wiley.

[40] Ibid.

[41] LeCavalier, J., 2019. 'Human Exclusion Zones, Logistics and New Machine Landscapes' in Young, L. (ed.) *Machine Landscapes: Architectures of the Post Anthropocene.*

[42] Gerrard, J., 2019. 'Where the Internet Lives John Gerrard: Farm' in Ibid.

[43] Roberts, B., 2019. 'A Place for Everything: Amazon Unpacked' in Ibid.

[44] Manaugh, G., 2019. 'Infrastructure as Processional Space: Where Tomorrow Arrives Today' in Ibid.

[45] Burrington, I., 2019. 'A Benediction for the Amazon Wind Farm Texas, Where the Landscapes of Resource-and data-Extraction meet' in Ibid.

"An artificial crater from which side extruded six large pipes that gushed the water of the pond into the river."[14]

Photographs of industrial landscapes in Passaic, Robert Smithson, 1967. [source: Holt/Smithson Foundation.org]

[46] Hilgefort, J., 2019. 'Fringes of Technology and Spaces of Entanglement in the Pearl River Delta, Merve Bedir' in Ibid.

[47] Young, L. (ed.) 2019. *Machine Landscapes: Architectures of the Post Anthropocene.*

[48] Ibid.
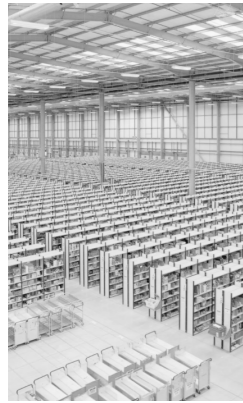
Amazon Fulfilment Centre at Rugeley, photograph by Ben Roberts.
[source: Roberts, B., 2019. 'A Place for Everything: Amazon Unpacked' in Young, L. (ed.) 2019. *Machine Landscapes: Architectures of the Post Anthropocene.*]

The economies of uneven development play a role in the coexistence of industrial and digital production—choosing socio-economic context of the least resistance—forging promises of artificial enclaves of the new machine era while its postindustrial counterparts continue elsewhere. The mode of the coexistence of the postindustrial and the posthuman landscapes can be speculated. And a projected form of obsolescence of landscapes and structures made for and by our machines should be hypothesized.

In several decades perhaps, the postindustrial sites disintegrate into artificially sculpted landscapes, but what is the *future obsolete* of the machine landscapes? Colossal autonomous factories as the cemetery for the machine and data centres as an infinite archive of our digital selves. Bechers collected an encyclopedia of the industrial artefacts at the moment of becoming obsolete to inform the postindustrial landscape. In the neo-machine age, these new forms of production landscapes in their projected obsolescence start to compile an *atlas of the post-Anthropocene.*

Considering the cycles of *creative destruction* and *planned obsolescence* projected onto territories of its production, the negative—the before and after—in contrast to the period of its industrial activity becomes more significant in theorising industrial landscapes. *Obsolescence* is understood as a norm and not a temporary state for sites where culture is not a viable strategy.

[I] In understanding the cyclical patterns of production, reproduction and reconfiguration of space, the *industrial*, the *postindustrial*, and the *future postindustrial* correspond to the processes of becoming *obsolete, obsolescence,* and *projected obsolescence,* respectively. This notion further cements obsolescence as an inherent territorial condition of production sites.

[II] Learning from the land artist's Robert Smithson's work, postindustrial landscapes can be recognised *in* obsolescence as *entropic voids, sculptures,* and *nonsites.*

[III] To consider *obsolescence* and *negativity* as intrinsic to architectural practice can allow for an expanded reading of architecture.

[IV] The cycles of obsolescence and the notion of *proto-ruins* render *future industrial* and *postindustrial interchangeable* terms. Ergo, to think of the future industrial territories requires to think of its postindustrial state. From this stems the need for architecture to expand to the notions of *proto-architecture* and reconsider entropic forces and obsolescence, not in opposition to function.

[V] As industry in sectors mutates, and evolves, so does the form of the future obsolete diversifies—most notably in the *posthuman machine landscapes of digital production.*

The theoretical framework formulated in *Territories of Obsolescence* informed the architectural position of the author. It further forms the basis for the initial design intentions developed into a graduation project. As previously stated, the phenomenon of obsolescence is characteristic of a broader conception of production—including the production of knowledge—and is not geographically bound to its primary enclave but encompasses the infrastructure and the technologies inherent to the landscape. Therefore, projecting the state of future obsolescence is equally relevant to the realm of fundamental research—a theme that will be further explored in the graduation project.

The Hanford Site, a decommissioned nuclear production complex. [source: Galison, P., & Jones, C. A., 1999. The Science of Architecture. London: The MIT Press.]

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