

ANDREA BRANZI *the theory*

“andrea branzi is a person who deals with theoretical physics, and **sees architecture** not as the art of building but as a **much more articulated form of thought.**”

Andrea Branzi



ANDREA BRANZI *the background*

“We are seeking a broader kind of rationality, one that also takes in the irrational and the dream, which make up so large a part of the world.”

whereas **modernism sought to reduce complexity** through rationalization, **Branzi's radical approach states we must turn the high degree of complexity into an advantage**

Western approach: yielding to the machine-like processes that drive the **Consumer Force**. He believes that these processes lead to a cold and blind destruction of the physical world ... and not the liberating kind.

Humanistic Foundation

Branzi searches for a “**strong foundation**” on which to reconstruct a cultural strategy for each product. He **values the “soul” of objects**, through designing objects with poetic, affective, symbolic, and psychological properties in mind.

ANDREA BRANZI *the background*

The Artificial Universe

Design of consumer products has “domesticated” industrial technologies and machines, but has “cruelly” forced the **cold and impersonal machines onto the frontlines of human experience**

Nature of Mankind

Interested first and foremost in the physical and spiritual salvation of the man, through design.

Interesting: He is only interested in saving nature through it's capacity to support this salvation. This is not to say he doesn't care about nature or ecological concerns, but would rather approach nature as “the bearer of mystery, of unease, of great unsolved enigmas” rather than as a simple “vegetable kingdom” to be saved.

ANDREA BRANZI *Now*

**In 1995 worked on the
'Solid Side' Compilation with
Domus Academy, Philips, and a
number of important figures in
the Italian design landscape.**



ANDREA BRANZI *Now*

This book presents the results of a research project aimed at exploring the role of design during the present difficult period of transition. The authors worked autonomously and on a voluntary basis.

- liner note

THE SOLID SIDE BRIEF

a study by Domus Academy, Philips, et. al.

Purpose

to look at the complexities of contemporary life, and explore ways of harnessing them to create a more sustainable approach to living.

Result

a series of projects exploring consumer products, and spaces, as well as a set of essays on the theory that arose from the study.

Key Players

J.E. Baars

N. Bewick

G. Bistagnino

J. de Bont

A. Branzi

A. Bucci

F. Carmagnola

A. Castelli Ferrieri

C. Trini Castelli

G. Ceppi

A. Cibic

M. de Lucchi

D. Donegani

F. Doveil

K. Feiz

T. Fritze

L. Gafforio

C. Lanzavecchia

E. Manzini

S. Marzano

F. Morace

A. Petrillo

C. Raimondo

E. Sharp

M. Susani

M. Trimarchi

J.P. .d. Voet

T.C. Yang

THE SOLID SIDE

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Reading the Present

“We have to create a vision of the world and our place in it, accepting this complexity as our new mode of existence and locating some fixed points to steer by.”

We know for sure that the future will differ from the past, primarily due to three factors.

1. Limits of the planet

Resources aren't infinite.

2. Power of information technology

These typically increase.

3. Search for identity in an intercommunicating world

This typically gets harder.

Guidelines

Towards Sustainability

The direction of the future depends on what has been done, and what we are doing today and will do tomorrow.

To date, the goal of western society has been to increase rates of production - believing that would increase the quality of life.

Shockingly, we've discovered that it doesn't work out that way.

So, there needs to be a **reduction in the amount of material consumed.**

The search for identity needs to be sustainable as well, so **social ties need rebuilt and communities need to be explored.**

THE SOLID SIDE Guidelines

*Like everyone of my generation,
I grew up in a social context
which included a belief in progress
so total that no-one ever
bothered to talk about it ... **The
key word [was] “more”, more
of everything, with the emphasis
on the “thing” in “everything”.***

George Nelson

THE SOLID SIDE

a study by Domus Academy, Philips, et. al.

The Material Dimension

Matter is finally at a point where it can be shaped and reshaped with almost no limits.

Information technology is expanding even the limits of time and space.

With these malleable dimensions of reality, the possibilities become “potentially infinite”.

We need new means of navigating these, and preventing the semiotic waste created by “words and images ... wearing out”.

“the fluid world of information ... is all a huge entropic system which absorbs resources and creates decay.” It needs order.

Guidelines

Solid Side in a Changing World

“attention should be concentrated on [the] intermediate world, which today is squashed between the ‘non-existent matter’ of fiction and the ‘dead matter’ of waste.”

This world is in a state of flux and change, but requires permanent features as well.

Solidity used to be based on “the permanence of objects” - but this definition needs to change.

We need to understand the ‘solid side’ as the result of design - **“in the fluid world the permanent features we need are no longer there as a matter of course, but are the result of our desire.”**

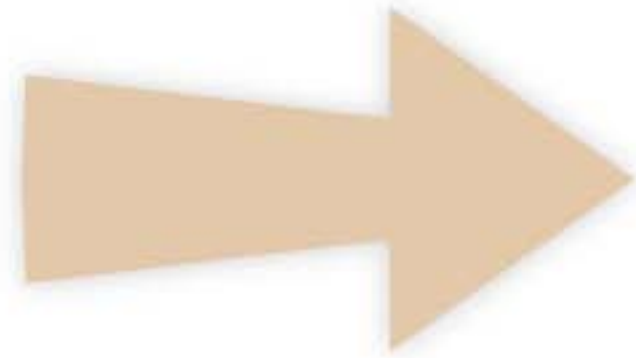
THE SOLID SIDE Guidelines

a study by Domus Academy, Philips, et. al.

“For the information society to be able to provide a genuine solution to the problem of the sustainable society, we need to imagine information of a different level.”

Andrea Branzi

HOW IT IS



WHAT IS THE SEMIOSPHERE?

The semiosphere is a contained unit - like a biosphere - of perceived reality, comprised of sounds, odours, movements, colours, electric fields, waves of any kind, chemical signals, touch etc.



COMPLEX and CONGESTED

There is too much information to keep track of without a designed system of order.

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HOW WE'RE GETTING THERE

SEPERATION OF FORM FROM TECHNOLOGY

Miniaturization and portability; technologies are getting smaller and smaller, and so the form of the objects that use them is no longer determined by it.
i.e. buildings made for certain use are now no longer being occupied for those tendencies - instead, we see outwards growth towards ...

FORMATION OF A SUSTAINABLE AESTHETIC

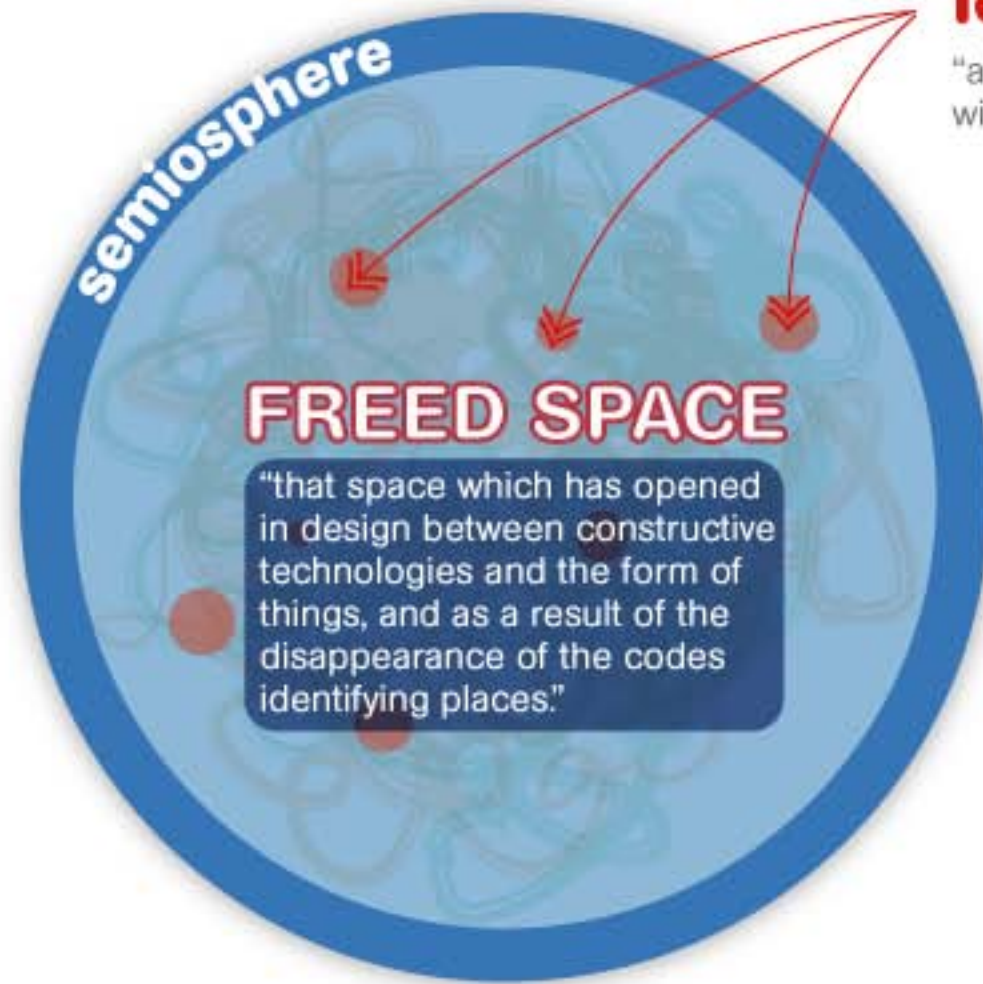
"Of the great civilizations of the past the only thing left is the mark of their formal quality, and their politics was but a transitory tool to achieve it." We need an aesthetic that stands above politics, religion, and form - to create a world where "identity and functions melt."

DISTANCING OURSELVES FROM THE VAGUE NOTIONS OF "QUALITY"

"What is good for the majority is not obviously so for the minority, and every individual feels like the authorised bearer of a specific vision"



HOW IT COULD BE...



Temporary order

"allow complexity the right degree of freedom without becoming a part of it."

NEOCLASSICAL REDUCTION

"a neoclassical reduction ... [following] the complexity of things in an, **[chooses] forms that** do not impose order on things, but instead **place themselves above things, creating an order that is purely symbolic, formal, temporary.**"



