— WE BLAME THE BUILDING! The Architecture of Distributed Responsibility

ROBERT BEAUREGARD

Abstract

This article makes use of actor-network theory to reflect on how responsibility is distributed when efforts are made to change the built environment. More specifically, it is concerned with the way in which humans delegate responsibility to non-human things and how these non-human things then function as actors within heterogeneous settings. The overall intent is to erase the divide between culture and nature, human subjectivity and vibrant matter, and thereby change our relationship to 'the city'. The argument is embedded in and illustrated by an architectural controversy that unfolded in New York City in late 2013 and early 2014 around the demolition by the Museum of Modern Art of an award-winning and relatively new building—the American Folk Art Museum.

Introduction

Early in 2014, a small architectural tempest erupted in New York City. The triggering factor was a decision by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) to demolish the former American Folk Art Museum. Designed by well-known firm Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, the building opened in 2001. Ten years later, however, the Museum of American Folk Art corporation had encountered financial difficulties and was forced to sell it. MOMA stepped forth as the buyer for the building, adjacent to its own. Its decision to demolish was based on the recommendation of another world-famous architectural firm, Diller Scofidio & Renfro (DS&R). Many in the local architectural community were outraged. During a large and well-attended public event held in January 2014, Elizabeth Diller, a principal of DS&R, commented: 'It's a damn shame that the building is obdurate' (Jacobs, 2014: 38; Pogrebin, 2014a).

How should we understand Diller's claim? Was she delegating the firm's design responsibility to the building and deflecting attention from its recommendation to MOMA? Or was something much more profound being said about how architects share responsibility? Diller's comment was in no way unique. Let us consider two other examples. The first is a statement by the urbanist Witold Rybczynski (2010: 82) regarding an urban renewal project of the 1960s: 'Boston's new government center was an unpopular, windswept, nine-acre plaza around City Hall and resisted all efforts to introduce human activity'. Summoned forth again, obduracy—manifested in a little-used and uninviting plaza—prevented human intentions from being realized. The second concerns the demolition in the 1970s of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St Louis (MO), consisting of 33 mid-rise buildings containing 2,700 units. This event, Katherine Bristol (1991) argues, gave rise to a myth in which the housing project is portrayed as an architectural failure. Its critical flaws involved such architectural elements as skip-stop elevators, glazed internal galleries, and a high modernist site plan. In short: The design was to blame' (*ibid*.: 166) and the culprit was modern architecture. The myth thus assigns responsibility for the project's demise both to the architectural firm—Leinweber, Yamasaki & Hellmuth—and to the buildings.

The purpose of this article is to explore the notion of shared responsibility as it applies to buildings and as it affects the agency of those whose tasks are to imagine, design, build, renovate and conserve the built environment. To believe that humans are all that matters is to fall victim to the culture–nature divide that has plagued modernism from its inception (Latour, 1993). If we are to understand how buildings are produced

and cities are made to grow and develop (and to decline), we must leave behind such a human-centric, and false, view of the world.

To do so, I draw on actor-network theory and the argument that, in any assemblage, action is distributed among heterogeneous actors. Action is always hybrid and entails collective arrangements based on the delegation of actions from humans to non-humans (Latour, 1994). However, my concern is not with distributed agency as much as it is with distributed responsibility—that is, with how humans share their obligations with other humans and with buildings and their technologies. For me, what is important about the MOMA/Folk Art building controversy is what it tells us about the relationship between architects and the material world that they design and, in this instance, propose to demolish. This relationship is not one of human mastery over built (and ostensibly inert) forms but more dynamic and recursive, with non-human things behaving as actors in two senses: first, by causing humans to respond to them and, secondly, by sharing responsibility (via delegation) for collective action and its consequences.

To be clear, I am not interested in whether the decision to demolish the former Folk Art building was justified.[1] Rather, I want to use this event to reflect on what it means for architects—and, by extension, planners, civil engineers, environmentalists, and urban designers—to shift design or planning responsibility to or share it with other human actors and with the non-human material world. My objective is to engage in moral inquiry and not to pass judgment (Lake, 2014).

First, more needs to be said about the Folk Art building controversy and the three terms—obduracy, agency and responsibility—around which my argument is organized. I begin with the case itself. The controversy and Diller's comment are the impetus for the subsequent discussion. My intention is not to 'follow the actors', deploying actor-network methodology in order to map the controversy (Venturini, 2010; Yaneva, 2012: 5), but instead to use actor-network theory as a point of view from which to reflect on what it means to share responsibility among humans, technologies and built forms.

The seeming inevitability of demolition

The corporate body of the Museum of American Folk Art has been in existence since 1961. Originally known as the Museum of Early American Folk Art, it adopted its current name in 1966. The museum's collection extends back to the eighteenth century and its mission is the 'aesthetic appreciation of traditional folk art and creative experiences of contemporary self-taught artists from the United States', with folk art understood as a 'carrier of cultural heritage' that reflects 'patterns of living'.[2] To give the Folk Art Museum operations a sense of scale, in 2013 (after it had sold the building) its assets totaled US $9.5 million; it is therefore a small museum. By comparison, a few years earlier, in 2009, MOMA held total assets of approximately US $1.5 billion.

In 1979, the American Folk Art Museum purchased two townhouses on West 53rd Street adjacent to MOMA, and used them to house its collection. Twenty years later, it decided to demolish the buildings and replace them with a purpose-built space that would better display its many drawings, paintings and objects. The museum subsequently hired the architectural firm of Williams/Tsien to design the building for the 40-feet wide and 100-feet deep site (McGuire, 2002).

The building opened in December 2001 (see Figure 1). It was acclaimed by *Arch-Daily*, an online architectural network, as the 'Best New Building in the World in 2001' (Perez, 2010) and in 2003 won a National Honor Award from the American Institute

---

1   On the politics of demolition of architecturally designed buildings, see Cairns and Jacobs (2014: 193–200). Not discussed here is the place of such events in the context of capitalism's creative destruction (see again Cairns and Jacobs, 2014: 48–67).

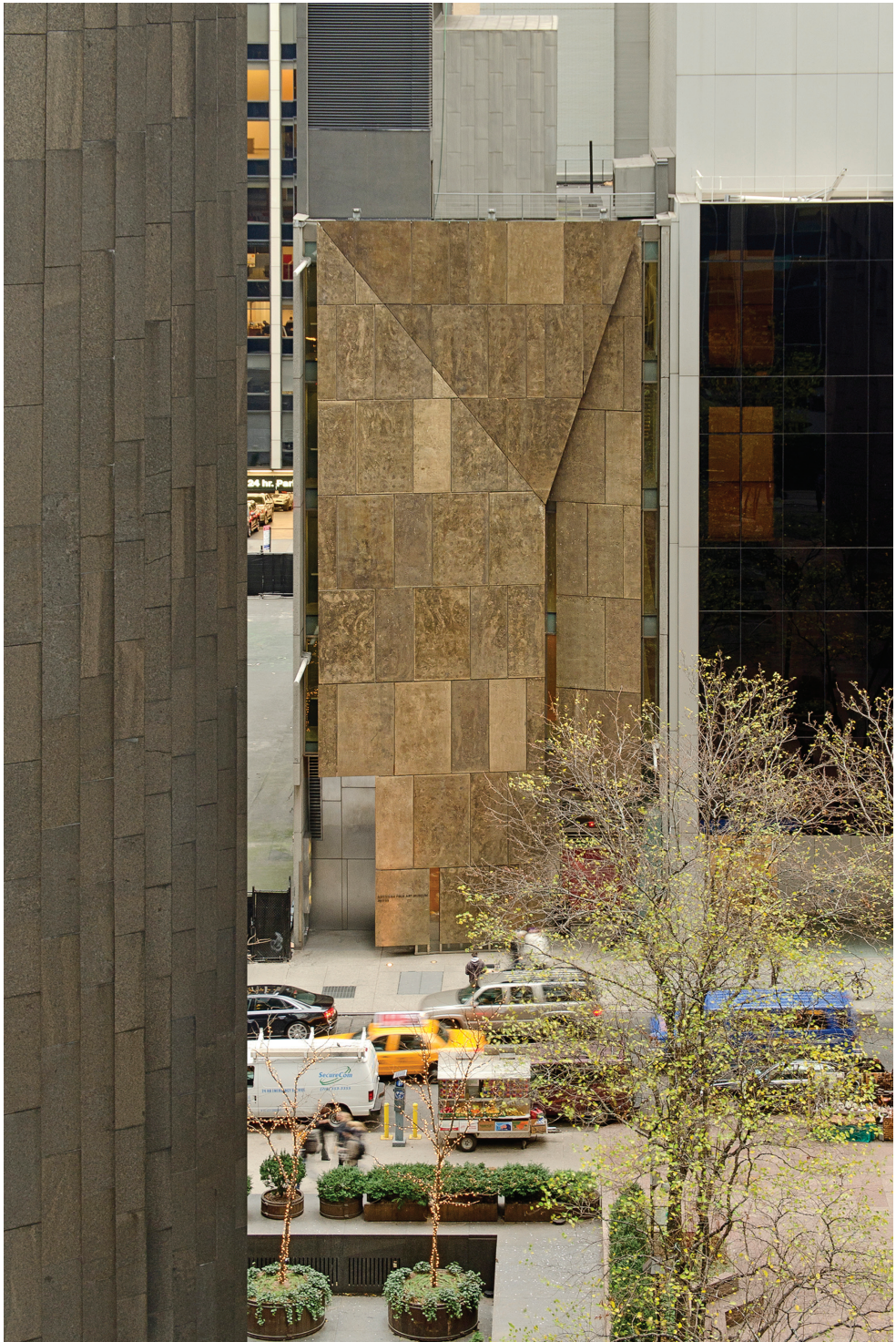2   See www.folkartmuseum.org/about/ (accessed 18 April 2014).

FIGURE 1 The American Folk Art Museum, designed by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien (photograph by Giles Ashford, © 2011, reprinted with permission)

of Architects. The interior was a series of intimate galleries reached by a winding staircase that extended from the ground level to the top floor. The building also contained a two-level atrium, a small café, an auditorium, a gift shop and offices. In their design, the architects echoed the craft tradition's engagement with materials and personal scale. Most distinctive was the hammered copper-bronze metal façade that folded into itself and which Williams/Tsien used in order to give 'power' to the townhouse-size building (Cramer, 2002: 82). The architectural critic Paul Goldberger noted that 'this is as sensual a building as New York has seen in a very long time' (Perez, 2010).

At eight stories high, with a size of 30,000 square feet, and at a cost of just over US $30 million, the Folk Art building was dwarfed by the surrounding skyscrapers and, later, MOMA's 2004 addition designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, built at a cost of US $425 million. The Taniguchi extension alone added 630,000 square feet to MOMA's space. What is interesting in light of what would later transpire is that MOMA had asked the American Folk Art Museum corporation, prior to construction, 'to move the building and trade them for another site further west or off the block altogether' (Cramer, 2002: 82). The swap was never made. Williams/Tsien wanted the new museum to be directly across the street from a public plaza that would provide a less constricted view of the façade.

In 2010, the museum corporation defaulted on its construction loan and was near bankruptcy (Smith, 2011); it was overextended financially, and selling the building seemed the only the path to fiscal solvency. MOMA stepped in to purchase it in July 2011 for US $31.2 million, and the Museum of American Folk Art moved to a smaller space near the Lincoln Center a few blocks away.

Ownership of the site would enable MOMA to expand its exhibition space so as to better manage its constantly growing collection and accommodate the interests of its curators in more integrative displays.[3] The site acquisition would also solve a problem that was bedeviling MOMA: a residential tower designed by Jean Nouvel and developed by the Hines Corporation was planned on the same block to the west and adjacent to the Taniguchi extension. It was to contain gallery space for MOMA on its second, fourth and fifth floors. The American Folk Art Museum building stood in the path of continuous-loop circulation meant to improve the viewing experience for MOMA's nearly 3 million annual visitors. Use of this site would eliminate the need for visitors to detour around the Folk Art building, thereby minimizing congestion.

Most observers assumed that the Folk Art building would be demolished, but no official announcement was made at the time of purchase. Glenn Lowry, MOMA's director, later commented: 'We entered into the process with an open mind … [but] also with the understanding that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to integrate a building that was designed for a very specific purpose and as a discrete structure' (McGuire, 2013). Lowry was referring to MOMA's large galleries with their corresponding floor-to-ceiling heights and minimalist architecture, which were at odds with the spaces and design philosophy of the Williams/Tsien building (see Figure 2). Paul Goldberger, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning architectural critic, noted that 'When MOMA bought the folk-art building two years ago, I remember thinking that getting rid of it was a possibility, but I doubted that the Museum of Modern Art would dare such a thing' (Quirk, 2013a).

MOMA made public its intention to demolish the building in mid-2013. Soon thereafter, it announced that architectural firm Diller Scofidio & Renfro had been hired to undertake a six-month review of the museum's needs and devise a master plan for the expansion. As part of its mandate, DS&R was to consider the building's fate, thus holding out the possibility that the Williams/Tsien design would be saved. Diller also

3   The MOMA expansion would be part of over US $2 billion in expansions that were underway or planned by museums in New York City (Agovino, 2014). Even the American Folk Art Museum was considering opening a 2,000 square foot gallery (with 15,000 square feet of storage space) in the Queens district of the city.

FIGURE 2   The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), designed by Yoshio Taniguchi (photograph by Timothy Hursley, © 2015, reprinted with permission)

alluded to the preliminary nature of the MOMA decision when she later said: 'When we stepped in this, we stepped into harm's way ... And we only agreed to take the commission if we were able to really work hard on this question [of the Folk Art building's fate] and figure out what was possible. MOMA gave us their (sic) word that if we had come to a decision to save the building and renovate—even if it were more expensive—they (sic) would accept our decision. That was the pact, basically, for our involvement' (Quirk, 2014a).

The demolition decision was finalized when DS&R submitted its report to MOMA in early January of 2014. The firm offered a number of reasons: the need to improve circulation, which necessitates passage through the Folk Art building, the incompatibility of the small Folk Art gallery spaces with those currently in use by MOMA, the differences in floor levels and ceiling heights, and the incompatibility of the opaque façade with the glass façades of the Taniguchi addition and the proposed Hines tower. Because so 'many serious structural issues [had] to be resolved', Diller noted, 'saving the building wasn't a logical possibility'. To do so, she continued, would mean making so many changes that it would lose its integrity—'we came to an ethical paradox' (McGuigan and Raskin, 2014).[4] Diller also repeated her reference to obduracy: 'If you design something in an idiosyncratic way, so that there's no other way to use it, you've made yourself vulnerable' (Quirk, 2014a). Barry Bergdoll, chief curator of MOMA's architecture and design department, agreed. He noted that the building 'was designed as a jewel box for folk art' and consequently could not be altered to fit the MOMA collection and purpose. Even the Folk Art building's supporters acknowledged that it had deficiencies: 'Inside, it's mostly stairwells and passageways, its galleries tricky to install. But the eccentricity helps to account for what endears it to architects' (Kimmelman, 2014). As for DS&R's design philosophy, Diller said: 'We don't imagine that we are building for history' (Quirk, 2014a).[5]

The response from the architectural community was quick and negative, with almost all who spoke publicly condemning the decision. MOMA and DS&R were criticized for being indifferent to modern architecture, despite MOMA being the first American museum to have a department devoted to it, and more concerned with real-estate development than design. Critics noted the threat to the diversity and texture of the streetscape as MOMA pursued an expansion that mimicked an 'increasing monotony of glass towers' built at corporate scale (Kimmelman, 2014). Most bothersome for the critics was that MOMA was removing a piece of outstanding architecture in a city where such architecture was in short supply. Arguments by MOMA and DS&R that structural issues prevented MOMA from preserving the building were dismissed as a failure of design and administrative imagination. MOMA seemed locked into an architectural aesthetic that ignores 'the modern of intense materiality and process made visible ... in favor of a more doctrinaire and European focused definition' (Iovine, 2013).

The architectural critic Martin Filler labeled MOMA's decision as 'cultural vandalism' (Quirk, 2013a). He went on to say that 'the idea that Williams and Tsien's structure has to go because its obdurate, nearly windowless façade does not blend in with MOMA's banal 53rd Street elevation is simply preposterous'. The Architectural League of New York penned an open letter to MOMA, signed by such architectural luminaries as Stephen Holl and Robert A.M. Stern, which called for 'a compelling justification for the cultural and environmental waste of destroying this much admired, highly distinctive twelve-year-old building' (Quirk, 2013b). The architectural critic for *The New York Times*, Michael Kimmelman (2014), wrote that it was 'just more MOMA madness'. Paul Goldberger (2014) summed up in this way: 'A city that allows such a

---

4   As regards the argument that architecture has to remain durable to retain its aesthetic integrity, see Cairns and Jacobs (2014: 10–29) and Rustow (2014).
5   On the relation between permanence and transience in the built environment, see Schwarzer (1994).

work [the Williams/Tsien building] to disappear after barely a dozen years is a city with a flawed architectural heart. A large cultural institution that cannot find a suitable use for such a building is an institution with a flawed architectural imagination'.

Edward Dimendberg (2014), professor of film and media studies and author of a book on DS&R, disagreed.[6] He wrote that the demolition of the Folk Art building was inevitable given MOMA's need to grow, and pointed out that it was not MOMA's mission to preserve architecture. Dimendberg praised DS&R for its initial design ideas that would create a more 'gracious, inviting and accessible' museum. 'I have no doubt', he commented, 'they pursued in absolute good faith every possibility for MOMA to reuse the Folk Art Museum' (*ibid*.: 17). That 'no one has come to the defense of the DS&R expansion', he concluded, was indicative of the 'envy and pettiness that dominates contemporary American architectural practice' (*ibid*.: 17), an assertion whose tone was at odds with the civility of the controversy.

The proposed demolition was so important to the architectural community that the Municipal Art Society, the Architectural League of New York and the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects invited Lowry, DS&R and a panel of experts to discuss the decision at an event on 28 January 2014 at the New York Society for Ethical Culture in Manhattan (New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2014). Approximately 650 people attended. Lowry and Diller spoke first, with Lowry repeating his argument that the 'decision was not taken lightly' and that 'it simply wasn't possible to adapt the building'. Diller presented in detail the schematic plan developed by her firm and the reasoning behind it. She emphasized the incompatibility of the floor plates, ceiling heights and gallery sizes as well as circulation issues and contrasting aesthetics. All of the solutions that DS&R explored, including saving the façade, either failed to meet MOMA's objectives or deprived the Folk Art building of its integrity.

Diller then noted that the intent of DS&R's proposed (and schematic) expansion plan was to make MOMA physically more transparent and more accessible to a non-paying public as well as to augment exhibition space and improve circulation. The lobby of the existing Taniguchi building would be opened so as to create 'bridges' to the new galleries that would be built on three floors of the Nouvel tower (McGuigan and Raskin, 2014). On the site of the razed building, a performance space would be installed above the art galleries (Kimmelman, 2014). In addition, the half-acre Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden would become public and free rather than open only to those paying MOMA's admission fee (Pogrebin, 2014b). This latter proposal generated more controversy. Critics were concerned that a relatively intimate space affording respite from the bustle of the city would become overcrowded in a way antithetical to its purpose. Moreover, as a number of architects pointed out in an indirect and ironic observation on one of the reasons for demolishing the Folk Art building, the garden's circulation was not designed for large numbers of people. Diller concluded her presentation by commenting that in the design phase 'we will try to retrieve some of the archaeology of the various histories of the site'.

These comments were followed by a panel discussion moderated by Reed Kroloff, former director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art. A number of the panelists rejected MOMA's and DS&R's claim that demolition was necessary, 'citing MOMA's long history of preserving existing buildings with every expansion' (Quirk, 2014b). Stephen Rustow, an architectural professor from The Copper Union, noted that previous additions had entailed numerous renovations and adaptation of the original 1939 building and that many European museums have accommodated 'elements and fragments of history' as they grew. He further cautioned against treating the retention of

6   The title of his book is *Diller Scofidio & Renfro: Architecture After Images*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 2013.

the façade alone—known as façadism—as inherently bad. In a follow-up critique, Rustow (2014) noted that defense of the Williams/Tsien building treated it as a particular type of work of art, much like a piece of sculpture, rather than a contributor—more entangled than isolated—to a variegated urban landscape and thus part of a larger composition. For him, too little attention in the controversy was given to 'how cities determine what parts of their history have value'.

A couple of panelists suggested eliminating the building from MOMA's circulation pattern altogether, in effect making it a 'satellite space' (Jacobs, 2014). Karen Stein, an architectural consultant and writer, noted that when the Nouvel tower was being designed, MOMA had adopted a non-continuous loop circulation plan, implying that the American Folk Art Museum space was not 'an essential part of MOMA's scheme until the bigger museum took ownership' of the smaller building (*ibid*.: 38). In general, the panelists were unconvinced that a correct decision had been made.

Just over a month after the public event, in February of 2014, MOMA announced that it would save the Folk Art building's 82-foot-high façade (Dunlap, 2014). The 63 panels of 3/8th inch copper-bronze metal would be removed from their armature, wrapped and placed in storage. According to Lowry, MOMA had no further plans for the panels; they would not be part of the new building. In fact, DS&R explicitly rejected this possibility. In one interview, Diller commented that doing so would be a 'token gesture to history'. She continued by stating: 'Facades and buildings and their organization, their logic, are tired entirely together ... You either have the integrity of a building, with all its intelligence and connected ideas, or you don't' (*ibid*.). Tod Williams concurred. He noted in an interview that the façade was designed 'as an architectural mask' and then said that 'the idea of installing a few panels somewhere doesn't interest me' (Pogrebin, 2014c). In a public statement, Williams and Tsien wrote: 'A building admired, visited and studied by so many will now be reduced to memory ... We understand the façade will be put in storage, but we worry it will never be seen again'. The American Folk Art Museum, they remarked pensively, is 'one of our most important buildings to date' (*ibid*.).

In early April 2014, MOMA filed a plan with the New York City Department of Buildings to raze the building, the demolition to be overseen by an architectural firm known as The Mufson Partnership (*Commercial Observer*, 2014). On 15 April, scaffolding was erected and by November the building had been fully removed. The empty site—4,000 square feet of the former American Folk Art Museum footprint—would allow MOMA to undertake a 40,000-square-foot expansion. Designed by DS&R, the projected completion date was set for 2019.

Obduracy

Let us return to Diller's utterance: 'It's a damn shame that the building is obdurate'. The notion that the Folk Art building resisted its own survival suggests that the architects had either lost control over the design process or that full control was never possible. If it were the former, design becomes a struggle between architects and buildings to determine which will be dominant. This seems far-fetched as an explanation and morally suspect too. It borders on technological determinism and seemingly abandons responsibility for the decision, as if obduracy 'locate[s] agency beyond the hand of the architect' (Cairns and Jacobs, 2014: 116). Diller was not 'blaming the victim' (Rustow, 2014). Rather, she was behaving as an interpreter and extracting 'meaning and speech from an object that usually does not talk, but which remains beguilely interpretable' (Yaneva, 2009: 7).

Consequently, the latter is more credible—responsibility for design is shared, and limits exist as to what architects can do on their own. But, with whom (or what) is it shared? More to the point, is it only with other humans or is it with buildings

themselves, with non-human things? The answer to this question, I believe, is that buildings, technologies and materials have agency, as do architects, their consultants and clients. As the philosopher and historian of science Bruno Latour (2008: 6) wrote, 'all designs are "collaborative" designs—even if in some cases the "collaborators" are not all visible, welcomed or willing'. The agencies of humans and non-humans, however, are different, particularly when we consider what it means to be responsible. Let us begin with the condition that led to the sharing of responsibility—to wit, the ostensible obduracy of the building.

Obduracy is the resistance that humans and non-human things pose to each other. Something is obdurate when it is difficult to change or compel to act. An example of the former might be an outdated shopping mall whose layout and location fail to attract tenants; an example of the latter could be deer that have invaded a suburb, the management of which poses issues of human safety, public health and animal rights. However, the material world does not simply resist; it is also malleable. Obduracy and malleability, moreover, are both inherent in materials (for example, a concrete as opposed to a wood-frame wall) and drawn out of their dormancy by the way in which humans and non-humans interact. As Joerges (1999: 414) wrote: 'The power of things does not lie in themselves ... It lies in their associations'. A man with a wrecking ball on a crane will find the concrete wall less obdurate than one with a chisel and hammer. Each of them has associated with a different tool and, by extension, has different capabilities. Obduracy, then, is relational. Yet, matter also has intrinsic properties independent of relationships. Jane Bennett (2007: 133) remarks that materials 'can exert forces and create effects'. She labels this 'vitality' and defines it as the 'capacity of things ... not only to impede or block the will or designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own' (Bennett, 2010: viii).

Consequently, buildings need to be understood as neither static nor passive. They are 'never at rest' (Latour and Yaneva, 2008: 85), but constantly being transformed by human use, air pollution, rain and snow, gravity, the natural deterioration of materials, changing technologies, human behavior and financial markets (Ashworth, 1996; Edensor, 2011). Whether undergoing change or simply by their presence, buildings cause other actors to react. A building exists 'because it can do a lot' and because other actors have decided 'to act according to it' (Yaneva, 2009: 200). A response is engendered when the expansion and contraction of metal frames causes glass panels to dislodge from a façade. The owners then have to hire engineers to re-design connections, contractors to erect scaffolding and workers to re-attach the panels. Yaneva (2008a), using the conservation and preservation of the seventeenth-century *Alte Aula* building in Vienna as her case, comments on a building's capacity to withstand 'the protocols of renovation' (*ibid.*: 8) and behave as a 'disobedient object' (*ibid.*: 24).[7] Heterogeneous and active, the *Alte Aula* resisted the preservationists as they attempted to adapt the building to house a science museum.

Buildings are always changing as they weather, settle structurally and experience wear and tear. These changes bring workpeople to their roofs and cause real-estate appraisers to reconsider their financial value. New technologies such as a green roof make them attractive to potential tenants, while age brings them to the attention of historic preservationists. Deterioration attracts more insects to the wood cladding, winds carry away roofing, and ledges attract pigeons that discourage users from entering through the doorways beneath. Moreover, buildings take on additional meaning and different uses as the world around them changes. This is why historic preservation and adaptive reuse are so important to cities and to their architecture. In these many

---

7   The *Alte Aula* was built in the mid-seventeenth century as a congress hall for the University of Vienna and since 1857 has served as the home of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

ways, buildings become actors (Latour and Yaneva, 2008; Edensor, 2011) rather than simply 'brute physical objects' (Jubien, 2001: 3).[8]

Obduracy, though, is more than a quality of buildings and materials; it also occurs at larger scales. Important here is the work of Annique Hommels (2008), who takes ideas from science and technology studies to explore the city as a socio-technical network and the way in which urban sites and structures resist 'unbuilding'. In doing so, she reveals how obduracy becomes manifest via human intention, as when governmental actors attempt to redevelop a downtown shopping complex, relocate a major highway or spatially renew a large suburban housing estate. Hommels (*ibid*.: 35–39) describes how dominant frames, the embeddedness of social and technical elements and the persistence of traditions impede initiatives and thwart plans.

Kirkman (2009) provides another example at the urban scale with his discussion of the 'heterogeneous sociotechnical ensemble' of gas stations, garages, off-ramps, roadways, bridges, automotive repair shops, car dealerships, traffic signals and police surveillance that became associated with the automobile in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. As many planners and urban designers can attest, this collaboration is extremely difficult to disentangle (Latour, 1999). Despite its economic costs, environmental harm and reliance on finite and carbon-dioxide-producing fossil fuels, it persists.

At the same time, obduracy for one network of actors means stabilization for another. Relationships endure, ideas are widely adopted, organizations persist and a modicum of certainty is established in people's lives because actors become entangled and the resultant assemblages are able to withstand disruption (*ibid*.). Reality is what resists, Latour (1987: 93) famously tells us, and this insight puts obduracy in a wholly different light, eroding its halo of negativity. Against the onslaught of incessant change, actors are constantly delegating and controlling, collaborating and accommodating, and offering and withdrawing their allegiances in order to stabilize networks and relationships (Law and Bijker, 1992: 299). However, their ontological security is often someone else's obduracy.

Buildings have similar qualities. They comprise glass, concrete, wood, heating systems, stairways and electrical wiring and are embedded in legal frameworks (for example, ownership rights, zoning regulations, fire codes), use patterns that connect them to surrounding buildings, road and transit networks, collective memories and the various feelings that people have for them. A building is never an object isolated from the world. And because it is entangled, it is also stabilized. Only when a building stifles the goals of humans does it become obdurate.

Like urban sites and structures, buildings can be disentangled and thereby weakened. Just as large housing estates or downtown retail-transportation centers are not monolithic, singular in their materiality, neither are buildings (Jacobs et al., 2007). Consequently, even as Diller declared the Folk Art building to be obdurate, and MOMA agreed, the façade, because of the way it had been attached, was clearly malleable. The façade was relatively easy to detach and ship elsewhere. The various parts and systems of a building differ in the ease with which they can be removed more or less undamaged. As 'assemblages of heterogeneous materialities' (Edensor, 2011: 240), each of these assemblages varies in its resistance and contributes to a building's overall stability. Obduracy is thereby manifest in different ways and that difference has to do with materials, human imagination and the technologies available for changing, for example, ceiling heights versus those for detaching metal panels or preserving a building's design 'intact'. What made the Folk Art building as a whole obdurate, from the viewpoint of DS&R, but not its components, was a specific property (and principle) of design integrity (Jubien, 2001). Set in a 'dominant frame' of architectural thought (Hommels, 2008)

8   On the subject of whether non-humans exercise agency, see Sayes (2014).

and in the grip of a logic of architectural form (Karrholm, 2013), the building resisted adaptation.

MOMA and DS&R confronted other forms of resistance as well—buildings have politics (Winner, 1980; Joerges, 1999; Sloterdijk, 2008). On the one hand, buildings, as well as artefacts more generally, can project a political position, much as statues to war heroes remind of us of battles fought for freedom or the new One World Trade Center—the tallest building in New York City—is intended to signal to terrorists that the United States cannot be intimidated. Politics, of course, also has artefacts. Local governments require city halls and the Occupy Wall Street protesters in New York City in 2011 needed Zucotti Park to make themselves and their concerns visible. These places are the things of politics and enable politics to happen.

In the case of the Folk Art Museum controversy, it is likely that MOMA and Glenn Lowry had not imagined the strength of the architectural politics to which the building was attached. The building had gathered a public that believed it to be important to that public's place in the world. The controversy surrounding its demolition was a politics of things (Latour, 2005b) and regardless of MOMA's legal rights, many in the architectural community believed that the building was not solely a private asset. By calling for its demolition, MOMA mobilized this public. The political controversy was settled with the demolition. The absent building, the empty site, made further protest inconsequential and attested to MOMA's property rights as well as to its ability to defy criticism. Once built, the new MOMA extension will make accommodation infeasible. With the disappearance of one building and the appearance of another, the politics will be substantially altered.

In addition, the controversy revealed a global politics of cultural tourism. MOMA's spatial requirements were not its own but part of the way museum holdings are presented globally. MOMA competes with museums around the world (and within New York City) to attract visitors and increase revenues through ticket sales and donations. The technology of museum display is embedded in cultural frames and narratives (Pfaffenberger, 1992) of which the dominant one is epitomized by the Museum of Modern Art and its buildings: large, brightly-lit spaces, escalators to move from floor to floor and numerous amenities.[9]

Responsibility

More than politics is involved in the controversy; responsibility is also an issue. In fact, Diller's claim implicitly related obduracy to responsibility.[10] By claiming that the building resisted, she made a statement about what was responsible for the proposed demolition. The Williams/Tsien-designed museum was brought center-stage. Declaring it an actor—it caused things to happen—she attempted to convince us that a non-human thing (this building) could share responsibility for a decision. The Folk Art building, in effect, was portrayed as 'a complex mediator skillfully redistributing agency among humans and non-humans' (Yaneva, 2008b: 6). These claims, however, rest on specific understandings of what it means to be an actor and to be responsible.

Latour (2005a; see also Hache and Latour, 2010: 312) maintains that an actor is anything that changes the relationships within a network of actors. Actors are 'entities that *do* things' (Latour, 1992: 241) and this causes others, who are dependent on them, to react to what they have done. An actor can be a highway interchange, a deed restriction, a protected species—anything that elicits a response from other entities. This radically broadens the array of actors who have to be considered in any situation to encompass non-human things—not only the buildings but the technologies in those buildings and the wind, rain and birds that compromise, or not, buildings during their lifetime.

9   Compare this to a museum characterized by small rooms with subdued lighting, no spaces devoted solely to circulation, stairways between floors, and an absence of gift shops and restaurants.
10   I do not believe that Diller's comment was cynical.

The architectural design process is thereby best viewed as composed of multiple participants that include humans (architects, structural engineers, lawyers, clients, contractors and accountants) and non-humans. It is populated by a heterogeneous array of things. The notion of responsiveness thus represents the heterogeneity of networks and all forms of collective action. We are encouraged to think in terms of collaboration, negotiation and accommodation among diverse human and non-human actors.

Additionally, Latour argues that humans delegate responses to non-human things. Architecturally, 'most of the choices made by designers take the form of decisions about what should be delegated to whom and what' (Akrich, 1992: 207). Air is filtered by a ventilation system, rain and snow are kept out by revolving doors, and maintenance staff repair flooring that has become worn. This understanding takes us beyond mere responsiveness. Responsibility now includes specification of the obligations we have toward others, a more common understanding of the term (Latour, 1992; 1994; Young, 2011). When we program our smartphone to remind us to call our parents on their wedding anniversary, more than a simple response is entailed; we are attending to a social and moral relationship. That is, delegating our responsibility to others does not sever our obligations; we are still responsible for the decision to delegate. And when we delegate to non-human things, they are brought into our moral calculus. The distribution of responsibility in architectural terms happens in both senses of the term—response and obligation. For this reason, we need to acknowledge each of them when investigating what architects do when they delegate. And because we are not discussing a 'mere' occupation, professional responsibility is also germane.

Let us consider moral responsibility: to act in this way is to fulfill one's obligations to others with whom and with which one shares the world (Young, 2011). It involves recognition of one's duties and entails acting scrupulously and with sensitivity (Hache and Latour, 2010). What is done depends on the webs of obligations in which the actor is enmeshed. For humans, moral action means holding each other responsible for motivating action and acting in ways that are morally acceptable (Lee and Brown, 1994: 773). This idea, though, has to be extended to non-humans and understood collectively. As Sayes (2014: 140) has commented, 'morality and politics should not be linked to non-humans *separated* from all other actors, but to associations'. Being responsible includes acting with sensitivity to non-human living things (animals, birds, fish) and to ecological settings (Nussbaum, 2006: 325–407). Glenn Lowry and Elizabeth Diller recognized this responsibility and felt obliged to explain and justify their decision to the New York City architectural public. They did so by attesting to their putative right to make the decision and by acknowledging the values that architects share, thereby validating architecture itself. To give reasons is to attest, quite explicitly, to the moral obligations we share with others (Tilly, 2006).

Given that such webs are always changing and people are involved in multiple webs, ranging from intimate relations to workplaces, what is responsible behavior is always shifting and problematic. MOMA's relationship to the Folk Art building, for example, was much different before than after it hired DS&R. Before, it had sole responsibility, and the justification for demolition was confined to its private property rights and expansions needs. Thereafter, its responsibility was shared and its justification stronger (despite the critics); the decision was more specific to its mission and the design requirements of an international museum. Furthermore, it now had an alliance with a world-famous architectural firm.

Professions such as architecture, moreover, claim special—professional—responsibilities that distinguish them from occupations such as carpenters and hairdressers. Their obligations are meant to extend beyond the setting in which they practice (for example, DS&R's relationship to its client) and to various publics such as the architectural profession and even visitors to New York City. DS&R acknowledged these non-client obligations by agreeing to speak at the public meeting. The firm thus

implicitly endorsed the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which states that its members 'should respect and help conserve the natural and cultural heritage' and 'respect the body of architectural accomplishment'.[11] The AIA Code connects specific architects to all other architects, living and dead, and to the importance of previous architectural work. That body of work signals the significance of the profession to the public. To quote Cairns and Jacobs (2014: 40), as regards the Folk Art building: 'In this sense, demolition could quite literally be [seen as] an attack on the discipline's archives'.

Buildings, then, are responsible in two senses. First, they cause other actors who are entangled with them to respond as they change physically and as they take on different functions and meanings when repositioned among other actors (for example, by being sold or becoming accessible by mass transit). By spurring responses, the buildings act. Secondly, buildings share moral responsibility with humans as humans unpack their responsibilities and delegate them to others. In this second sense, buildings are also actors: they become responsible, along with humans, for the consequences of human actions. In the Folk Art building controversy, a building was compelled to take moral responsibility for a design matter. DS&R's public statement about demolition transferred a reason for the building's fate to the building itself.

Distributed responsibility

Most members of the audience, upon hearing Diller make her comment about the obduracy of the Folk Art building, are likely to have assumed that she was sharing, not ceding, responsibility for the decision. Given her other comments, particularly those regarding the many design options that DS&R explored, she was only pointing to the most recalcitrant actor. The arrangement of spaces, structure, design integrity, material palette and aesthetic intent of the Williams/Tsien building made it impractical to incorporate it into MOMA's expansion plans without MOMA altering those plans. However, this assessment was not given to DS&R by the Folk Art building; the building was not intentionally designed to be averse to change. Rather, its qualities became obdurate once it was situated in a new relationship with MOMA. Consider the demolition decision, then, in light of a small array of actors, beginning with the Taniguchi extension.

Although it would have been impolitic, given MOMA as the client, Diller might have said, 'It's a damn shame that the existing MOMA buildings were obdurate'. If responsibility for design is shared, then this statement is as valid as the original. In fact, one could argue that the obduracy of the Folk Art building was derived from MOMA's spaces and corporate aesthetic. Committed to a specific architectural vocabulary by MOMA, DS&R could only conclude that the Folk Art building's floor plates and heights, circulation system and its materials and aesthetic were incompatible. Implicit, though, was that the Folk Art building would have to conform to the MOMA buildings, and not the reverse. The much larger size of the MOMA extension, the financial cost of adapting it and the commitment of the MOMA board of directors to the materials and aesthetic that Taniguchi had established, and which had their roots in the original (but now much-transformed) 1939 building, turned the Folk Art building into an impediment. That said, MOMA's existing buildings and board were also obdurate. DS&R had contracted to serve the interests of its client and did so by acknowledging that architecture lacks 'the plasticity enjoyed by minor objects' such as chairs or movable partitions (Cairns and Jacobs, 2014: 111).

The obduracy of the Folk Art and MOMA buildings was not simply relational. Their vibrant matter also has to be acknowledged. Materials (for example, concrete), structures such as steel frames, and systems such as visitor circulation or air condition-

---

11   See www.aia.org/about/ethicsandbylaws/index.htm (accessed 21 April 2014).

ing are not infinitely malleable once in place. Their materiality limits how they can be used, adapted and even demolished; changing them poses technical challenges and imposes financial costs. Of more consequence, as DS&R rightly pointed out, is that these material things are part of a designed ensemble whose architectural integrity is resistant by its very nature. Architecturally designed buildings become actors not only owing to their vibrant and obdurate materiality but also because they are 'designed' and thus take on a quality not attributable to buildings that lack an architecturally pedigree (Latour, 2008).

Responsibility for the decision was also shared by DS&R. Diller's comment was only one part of the reasoning that occurred as she and her firm explored the client's brief in relation to the facts on the ground. Clear was that DS&R had considered many design options and none were able to meet MOMA's needs and accommodate the Folk Art building. At the public event, Diller said: 'Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we were not able to find a solution here' (New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2014). This is a perfectly reasonable and even convincing statement, more so because it comes from a partner in one of the world's most inventive design firms. Nonetheless, as we know from the public commentary and the event itself, critics put forth options that they believed would preserve the Folk Art building or at least parts of it. But, as DS&R pointed out, these options did not fit MOMA's expansion parameters or its design philosophy. Partial inclusion would violate the integrity of the Folk Art building as well as MOMA's aesthetic and functional goals.

Attention should also be directed at Williams/Tsien. No one denied that the Folk Art building was a bespoke building designed specifically for this particular museum and not for the uses envisioned by MOMA. It was not an easy-to-adapt decorated box. Rather, what Williams/Tsien produced was a building meant to be functional for a specific purpose and to exist as an architectural object, which was much of what attracted many architects to its defense. This was not an ostentatious building demanding to be seen, but neither was it meant to blend into its environment such that passers-by would pay it no heed. To this extent, Williams/Tsien shares responsibility for the decision to demolish. Glenn Lowry indirectly pointed this out when he commented that the Folk Art building was a 'discrete structure'—and being discrete, it could not be incorporated into anything else. In addition, its discreteness could not be severed from the design skills and inventiveness of Williams/Tsien, which is what gave this controversy its 'personal' undertones.

Two other groups share responsibility for the decision to demolish the building: visitors to MOMA and 'the public'. Lowry indicated that MOMA had bought the building in part to improve circulation within its complex. A continuous loop would eliminate the need for visitors to backtrack through exhibits they had already seen. This would be possible only if the Folk Art building were removed. The assumption is that visitors view art sequentially. And while this is clearly questionable, it seemingly has to be accepted as useful, given the large numbers of visitors to MOMA on any single day and the vastness of MOMA's spaces. Smooth flow has to be given priority over contemplative meandering. Backtracking diminishes the ability of everyone to have an enjoyable museum experience. Through this logic, the visitors join the MOMA buildings, MOMA's board, the Folk Art building, DS&R and Williams/Tsien in being obdurate.

The last actor worth discussing is 'the public'. Most controversies involving the protection of existing buildings or the design of proposed ones make reference to an amorphous 'public'. The AIA Code is explicit about this when it notes the obligation that architects have to the work of their current and former colleagues. The public benefits from a world in which architecturally designed buildings are present. The defenders of the Folk Art building were clearly referring to such an entity when they noted how it contributed to a diverse 53rd Street and, more broadly, to the architec-

tural landscape of New York City. The 'public' would benefit from having this building remain in place. Although MOMA and DS&R directed their reasoning more toward MOMA's needs, implicit in their statements was the claim that the public would gain from a larger MOMA complex that could show more of its holdings to more people. As one of the city's important cultural institutions, its mission has to be taken seriously. MOMA, too, is a public good. Consequently, even though 'the public' exists mainly as a discursive object, this does not make it any less influential in how the various participants in the controversy behaved and the positions that they took. One specific public, a faction of the New York City architectural community, was certainly central to turning MOMA's seemingly technical decision into a political controversy and compelling a public defense.

The 'public' comes into this in another way. Throughout the controversy, many commentators mentioned MOMA's right, as owner of the Folk Art building, to demolish it. In the United States, private property rights enable owners to maintain or not, adapt or not, or preserve or not their real property. However, such statements are deceptive. Property rights are limited. An owner is neither allowed to set fire to his building or use it for an illegal purpose nor double its size or even demolish it without approval from the local government. As the representative of 'the public', the local government is responsible for the health, safety and well-being of the city and its people and this includes the design of the built environment. Once such restrictions are recognized, then it is possible to imagine the 'public' actually limiting the demolition of important buildings. Such laws are already in place in the United States for buildings that are deemed historically significant and are over fifty years old—over thirty years in New York City. This reasoning makes the local government, *in absentia*, another actor sharing responsibility for the Folk Art building's fate.

Diller's accusation that the Folk Art building was obdurate, then, was a single moment in the design process. Seemingly clear in its placement of responsibility, it was only one reason among many—and one actor among many—in the process that eventually led to the demolition of the Williams/Tsien building. In architectural design, responsibility is shared and it is shared among both humans and buildings, both existing and imagined.

Conclusion

When Diller uttered the sentence that blamed the Folk Art building for its impending demise, she was sharing design responsibility, not shirking it. Most importantly, her comment directed listeners into a world of human and non-human things in which design exists as a matter of distributed responsibility. Such heterogeneous collaborations involve more than architects, museum administrators, structural engineers, museum visitors, and newspaper and magazine critics. Also included are façades, concrete slabs, steel columns, glass panels and metal stairways—and integral buildings. MOMA had envisioned a future whose realization was blocked by the Folk Art building that stood defiantly in its path. It was DS&R's task to find a responsible way to overcome this obstacle.

This is not an instance of a large corporate actor (MOMA) dominating a weak institution (the American Folk Art Museum). Not only was the sale of the building an 'arms-length transaction', but MOMA was unable to proceed effortlessly (that is, without resistance) with its expansion plans. MOMA encountered opposition and could not ignore the effects of its decision on its place in the cultural offerings of New York City, just as DS&R had to attend to its standing in the architectural community. Consequently, both attempted to move the decision into the seemingly apolitical realm of technicalities and architectural aesthetics. That move having partially failed, they agreed to appear at the public meeting to give the reasons for their decision and hopefully disentangle the Folk Art building from its politics and its public. Hardly a hydraulic

exercise of power with one entity having a large amount and exerting it against another with little, the power to act was always diffused and existed as a potential that had to be mobilized. Nevertheless, the Folk Art building was already disengaged from the corporation that built it, from lovers of folk art and from the legal protection of private property rights (which had been transferred to MOMA). By contrast, MOMA was heavily entangled and thus better able to assert its reality. It had significant financial resources and cultural capital that connected it to numerous political and business elites, legal property rights over the building and the site, and government support of those property rights. Of course, all of this had to be actualized and negotiated. It could not simply 'be'. Moreover, things mattered to how this politics unfolded.

Architects are not alone in negotiating the material world. Planners, urban designers, developers, historic preservationists, real-estate lawyers, building-code inspectors and contractors, among many others, are confronted with networks of humans, things and technologies. Each is constantly delegating tasks across these many actors and, as a result, sharing responsibility for the buildings they produce and the cities in which they are located. As they confront the hybrid materiality of the world, they also encounter obduracy. Many times, they will overcome it. Other times, they will succumb. Often they will actively pursue it in order to stabilize their entanglements. Whatever success they have will depend on their ability to recognize how responsibilities are shared among heterogeneous actors.

Robert Beauregard, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Avery Hall, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, USA, rab48@columbia.edu

References

Agovino, T. (2014) Building boom lifts city's cultural biz. *Crain's New York Business*, 24 November.

Akrich, M. (1992) The de-scription of technical objects. In W.E. Bijker and J. Law (eds.), *Shaping technology/building society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Ashworth, A. (1996) Assessing the life expectancies of buildings and their components in life cycle costing. In *Cobra '96*, The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, London.

Bennett, J. (2007) Edible matter. *New Left Review* 45 (May/June), 133–45.

Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant matter: a political ecology of things*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Bristol, K.G. (1991) The Pruitt-Igoe myth. *Journal of Architectural Education* 44.3, 163–71.

Cairns, S. and J.M. Jacobs (2014) *Buildings must die: a perverse view of architecture*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Commercial Observer (2014) MOMA files $1.6M plan to raze Folk Art Museum. 7 April.

Cramer, N. (2002) What is a museum? A design problem. *Architecture* 91.2, 76–85.

Dimendberg, E. (2014) MOMA knows best. *The Architectural Review* 235.1405, 15–17.

Dunlap, D.W. (2014) Building may be lost, but its façade will live (in storage someplace). *The New York Times*, 13 February, A25.

Edensor, T. Ann's Church, Manchester. *Transaction of the* (2011) Entangled agencies, material networks and repair in a building assemblage: the mutable stone of St. Ann's Church, Manchester. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36.2, 238–52.

Goldberger, P. (2014) Friendly fire on the culture front? Why the Museum of Modern Art is making a fatal mistake. *Vanity Fair*, 8 January.

Hache, E. and B. Latour (2010) Morality or moralism? An exercise in sensitization. *Common Knowledge* 16.2, 311–30.

Hommels, A. (2008) *Unbuilding cities: obduracy in urban sociotechnical change*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Iovine, J.V. (2013) MOMA should rescue the Folk Art building to enrich visitor experience. *The Architect's Newspaper* 11.6, 6.

Jacobs, J.M., M.S. Cairns and I. Strebel (2007) 'A tall storey ... but, a fact just the same': the Red Road high-rise as a black box. *Urban Studies* 44.3, 609–29.

Jacobs, K. (2014) Faust on West 53rd Street. *Metropolis* 33.8, 36–40.

Joerges, B. (1999) Do politics have artefacts? *Social Studies of Science* 29.3, 411–31.

Jubien, M. (2001) Thinking about things. *Philosophical Perspectives* 15, 1–15.

Karrholm, M. (2013) Building type production and everyday life: rethinking building types through actor-network theory and object-oriented philosophy. *Environment and Planning D* 31.6, 1109–24.

Kimmelman, M. (2014) MOMA's plan to demolish Folk Art Museum lacks vision. *The New York Times*, 13 January.

Kirkman, R. (2009) At home in the seamless web: agency, obduracy, and the ethics of metropolitan growth. *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 34.2, 234–58.

Lake, R. (2014) Methods of moral inquiry. *Urban Geography* 35.5, 657–68.

Latour, B. (1987) *Science in action*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, B. (1992) Where are the missing masses: the sociology of a few mundane artefacts. In W.E. Bijker and J. Law (eds.), *Shaping technology/building society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, B. (1993) *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, B. (1994) Pragmatogonies: a mythical account of how humans and nonhumans swap properties. *American Behavioral Scientist* 37.6, 791–808.

Latour, B. (1999) *Pandora's hope: essays on the reality of science studies*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, B. (2005a) *Reassembling the social*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Latour, B. (2005b) From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or how to make things public. In B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds.), *Making things public/atmospheres of democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Latour, B. (2008) A cautious Prometheus? A few steps toward a philosophy of design (with special attention to Peter Sloterdijk). In F. Hacking, J. Glynne and V. Minto (eds.), Proceedings of the 2008 International Conference of the Design History Society (E-Book), 3-6 September, University College Falmouth, Universal Publishers.

Latour, B. and A. Yaneva (2008) 'Give me a gun and I will make all buildings move': An ANT's view of architecture. In R. Geiser (ed.), *Explorations in architecture*, Birkhäuser, Basel.

Law, J. and W.E. Bijker (1992) Postscript: technology, stability, and social theory. In W.E. Bijker and J. Law (eds.), *Shaping technology/building society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Lee, N. and S. Brown (1994) Otherness and the actor-network. *American Behavioral Scientist* 37.6, 772–90.

McGuigan, C. and L. Raskin (2014) MOMA to demolish Tod Williams Billie Tsien Folk Art building after all. *Architectural Record*, 8 January.

McGuire, P. (2002) City folk. *The Architectural Review* 211.1260, 68–73.

McGuire, V.C. (2013) The Modern makes the 'painful' decision to scrap Williams and Tsien's Folk Art building. *The Architect's Newspaper* 11.6, 6.

New York Society for Ethical Culture (2014) Conversation on the Museum of Modern Art's Plan for Expansion. Event held on 28 January, New York City [WWW document]. URL www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmQjjjsFPmQ (accessed 29 April 2014).

Nussbaum, M. (2006) *Frontiers of justice*. The Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA.

Perez, A. (2010) American Folk Art Museum/Tod Williams + Billie Tsien. *ArchDaily*, 30 May [WWW document]. URL www.archdaily.com/?p=61497> (accessed 19 February 2014).

Pfaffenberger, B. (1992) Technological dreams. *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 17.3, 282–312.

Pogrebin, R. (2014a) Architect defends plan to demolish museum. *The New York Times*, 30 January.

Pogrebin, R. (2014b) An oasis and point of contention. *The New York Times*, 5 February.

Pogrebin, R. (2014c) Architects mourn former Folk Art Museum building. *The New York Times*, 16 April.

Quirk, V. (2013a) Critics react to Folk Art Museum's imminent demolition. *ArchDaily*, 19 April [WWW document]. URL www.archdaily.com/?p=361922 (accessed 12 March 2014).

Quirk, V. (2013b) Designers react to Folk Art Museum's imminent demolition. *ArchDaily*, 23 April [WWW document]. URL www.archdaily.com/359470 (accessed 12 March 2014).

Quirk, V. (2014a) Liz Diller on MOMA expansion: we'd be against us too 'if we didn't know all the details that we know'. *ArchDaily*, 16 January [WWW document]. URL www.archdaily.com/?p=467647 (accessed 12 March 2014).

Quirk, V. (2014b) Glenn Lowry on American Folk Art Museum. *ArchDaily*, 29 January [WWW document]. URL www.archdaily.com/472021 (accessed 12 March 2014).

Rustow, S. (2014) Façadism: on the demolition of the American Folk Art Museum. *Avery Review [WWW document]*. URL www.averyreview.com/issues/2/facadism-on-the-moma-folk-art-debate (accessed 13 October 2014).

Rybczynski, W. (2010) *Makeshift metropolis: ideas about cities*. Scribner, New York, NY.

Sayes, E. (2014) Actor-network theory and methodology: just what does it mean to say that humans have agency. *Social Studies of Science* 44.1, 134–49.

Schwarzer, M. (1994) Myths of permanence and transience in the discourse on historical preservation in the United States. *Journal of Architectural Education* 48.1, 2–11.

Sloterdijk, P. (2008) Foam city. *Distinktion* 16, 47–59.

Smith, R. (2011) As Folk Art Museum teeters, a huge loss looms. *The New York Times*, 19 September.

Tilly, C. (2006) *Why*? Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Venturini, T. (2010) Diving in magna: how to explore controversies with actor-network theory. *Public Understanding of Science* 19.3, 258–73.

Winner, L. (1980) Do artefacts have politics? *Daedalus* 109.1, 121–36.

Yaneva, A. (2008a) How buildings 'surprise': the renovation of the *Alte Aula* in Vienna. *Science Studies* 21.1, 8–28.

Yaneva, A. (2008b) Guest editorial. Understanding architecture, accounting society. *Science Studies* 21.1, 3–7.

Yaneva, A. (2009) *The making of a building: a pragmatist approach to architecture*. Peter Lang, Bern.

Yaneva, A. (2012) *Mapping controversies in architecture*. Ashgate, Surrey.

Young, I.M. (2011) *Responsibility for justice*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY.