

**Abstract**

Simmel identifies a conflict between life and forms, in which cultural constructions, in pursuit of permanence and stability, attempt to impose order on the ever-changing nature of life, ultimately leading to the ceaseless deformation and erosion of cultural forms. From this perspective, a transformative ability is attributed to avant-garde art, that does not only abolish established aesthetic rules but also denounces art as an institution. The oppositional stance of avant-garde artists paved the way for the disruption of architectural norms, that function as the creator and guardian of cultural forms. The investigation into the potential of Surrealism to act as a catalyst for deformation stems from this standpoint. Rejecting rationalism that they associated with the prevailing world order and the suppression of individual desires, Surrealists favoured emotions harboured within the unconscious of the individual, hence they criticized Modern Architecture for its totalitarianism and technological orientation. While denouncing abstract spaces of Modernism, Surrealists demonstrate a profound fascination with Art Nouveau buildings and naïve constructions, and propose designs for domestic interiors, which they regard as havens to protect the individual's inner life from rationalism. In addition, they find fascination in the everyday life in the passages and streets, where surreal events and internal psychological experiences unfold. Within this framework, the objective of this study is to discuss whether the architectural perspectives of the Surrealists can serve as guiding forces for the deformation of the established norms in architecture or assume a critical role within the discipline. To achieve this objective, the paper delves into three key concepts: the intellectual contributions of Surrealists on discovered architectures, house and the domestic interiors, and the everyday inner experience in urban space. These concepts provide a rich and comprehensive field for exploring the architectural imagination within Surrealism and uncovering the potential of architectural deformation it promises.

**Keywords:** Surrealism and Architecture, Deformation in Architectural Form, Discovered Architecture, Surreal Domestic Interior, Everyday Life.

# Exploring the Architectural Perspectives of Surrealists as a Potential of Deformation in the Architectural Discipline

## Mimarlık Disiplininde Bir Deformasyon Potansiyeli olarak Sürrealistlerin Mimari Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

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Basvuru tarihi/Received: 18.06.2023, Revize tarihi/ Revised: 28.04.2024, Kabul tarihi/Final Acceptance: 25.11.2024

**Genişletilmiş Özet**

Simmel, hayat ve formlar arasında sürekli seyreden bir çatışma hali tanımlar; kültürel yapılar, hayatın değişken ve akışkan doğası üzerine düzen ve istikrar aşılama çabasıdır, hayat kültürel formları sürekli deformasyona ve erozyona uğratar. Mimarlık ise, Bataille tarafından tanımlandığı şekliyle kültürel formların inşası ve koruyucusu olarak işlev görür. Bataille ayrıca normatif sanatsal değerlerin 19. yüzyıl ortalarında modern sanat tarafından reddedilmesiyle birlikte formun hakimiyetinin de zayıfladığını savunur. Bu perspektiften bakıldığında avangart sanatın, yalnızca kalıplaşmış estetik değerleri reddetmekle kalmayıp aynı zamanda sanatı bir kurum olarak da yadsıyan dönüştürücü bir potansiyeli olduğuna inanılır. Avangart sanatçıların muhalif duruşu, kültürel formların yaratıcısı ve koruyucusu olarak işlev gören mimari normların da deformasyonuna yol açar. 20. yüzyılın başlarındaki avangart hareketlerden biri olan ve yerleşik sanatsal değerleri sarsmayı hedefleyen Sürrealizm, mekânsal deformasyon için uygun bir alan olduğu düşüncesi, tanımlanan bu bakış açısına dayanır ve mimari deformasyonu tartışmak için elverişli bir zemin sunar.

Sürrealistler, egemen dünya düzeniyle ilişkilendirdikleri rasyonel aklı reddedip, Modernizmin soyut mekânlarının bireysel arzuları baskılamasını eleştirirken, bireyin bilinçaltında saklanmakta olan arzu ve hayallere önem verir. Böylece, totaliter ve teknoloji takıntılı olarak değerlendirildikleri modernist soyut mekânları yadsıyan Sürrealistler, bireyin psikolojik dünyasını güçlendiren, irrasyonel ve rüya-benzeri bir mekânsal yapılanma önerir.

Bu perspektiften hareketle, Sürrealistlerin inşa edilmiş mimari üretimleri çok kısıtlı olsa da mimarlık üzerine entelektüel üretimleri sürreal mekân anlayışını irdelemek açısından geniş bir potansiyel sunar. Modern mimarlığı yadsıyan Sürrealistler Art Nouveau üslubundaki yapıları ve naïf mimarlıkları büyük bir hayranlıkla karşılamış ve bireyin iç yaşamını rasyonalizmden koruyan sığınaklar olarak gördükleri konuların için mekânları için tasarımlar önermiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, sürreal olayların ve içsel ruhsal deneyimlerin ortaya çıktığı pasajlar ve sokaklardaki gündelik yaşama büyük ilgi duyarlar.

Bu bağlamda, Sürrealistlerin mimari perspektiflerinin mimarlık alanındaki kalıplaşmış normların deformasyonu için bir potansiyel oluşturup oluşturmadığının ve disiplin içinde eleştirel bir rol üstlenip üstlenemeyeceğinin tartışılması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu tartışma, Sürrealizm dahilindeki mekânsal tasarımları keşfetmek ve mimari deformasyon alanında vaat ettiği potansiyeli ortaya çıkarmak için zengin ve kapsamlı bir alan sunan üç kavram -Sürrealistlerin "keşfedilmiş mimarlıklar" olarak Art Nouveau ve naïf mimarlığa olan hayranlıklarının dışavurumları, bireyin iç dünyasının bir sığınağı olarak gördükleri ev ve iç mekân tasarımları, ve kentsel alandaki gündelik içsel deneyimler üzerine üretimleri- çerçevesinde gerçekleştirilecektir.

Sürrealistler, Art Nouveau yapıları, endüstriyel malzeme ve teknikler kullanılarak inşa edilmelerine rağmen arzuları ifade edilebilir ve bilinçaltına ulaşabilme yeteneğini korudukları için büyüleyici bulur. Salvador Dalí için Art Nouveau yapılar; "yenilesi" güzelliğiyle ipe, işlevselliği ve rasyonalizme meydan okuyan, nevroitik bir durum içindedir. Öte yandan, Facteur Cheval in Palais Idéal 'i, sanatsal otomatizm ve tesadüfi etkileşimleri bünyesinde barındırmakla kalmayıp, işlevselliğinden yoksun olması ve mimarlık eğitimi almamış bir kişi tarafından inşa edilmesiyse mimari normları alt üst etmiştir. Böylece "keşfedilmiş mimarlıklar", Sürrealistlere, rüya-benzeri mekânları keşfetme ve Modern Mimarlık normlarını sorgulama fırsatı sunar.

Sürrealist sanatçı ve düşünürlerin odaklandığı bir diğer konu, ev ve iç mekân kavramı etrafında şekillenir. Bireyi irrasyonel etkisinden koruyarak onun iç dünyasının sığınağı haline gelen ev, ruhani ve içsel bir mekân olarak ortaya çıkar, bu haliyle bilinçaltıyla benzerlik gösterir. Özellikle Tristan Tzara, Roberto Matta ve Frederick Kiesler tarafından sunulan öneriler, evi ana rahmi gibi bir sığınak olarak görme fikrine vurgu yaparak konutun bireyin iç dünyasını koruyan ve çoğaltan bir rol üstlendiğini varsayar. Böylelikle vurgu iç mekânda, rasyonellik tarafından yönetilen dış dünyanın müdahalesinden korunmuş rüyaların yer aldığı alanda yoğunlaşır. İç mekân tasarımlarında, dik açının hegemonyasını reddederken, arkaik yerleşimlerle ilişkilendirdikleri irrasyonel ve eğrisel formları benimserler. Ayrıca, bilinçaltının ihtiyaçlarına duyarlı, dönüştürülebilir bir alan olarak ev, görme duyusunun egemenliğinin reddedildiği, dokunsal duyuların öne çıktığı bir alan olarak tanımlanır.

Sürrealistlerin, öncülleri Dadaistlere kıyasla daha normatif bir sanat anlayışına sahip olmaları göz önüne alındığında, arzularındaki mimarlıkların sistematize edilebilecek bir yapıya sahip olması şaşırtıcı değildir. Mevcut aşkın değerleri reddetseler de sonunda öncüller yerine koyup, aşkın kılacakları yeni değerler önerirler. Bu nedenle, Sürrealistlerin temel endişesi mimarlık kurumunun kendisinden ziyade, Modern Mimarlığın rasyonalitesini sorgulamaktır.

Öte yandan, Sürrealistlerin kentteki gündelik yaşama dair fikirleri, mekânsal dönüşüm için verimli bir alan sunar. Kentte özellikle sürreal olayların ve içsel deneyimin yuku bulunduğu pasaj ve sokaklara önem atfederler. Sürrealistler için kentsel deneyim, rasyonalizmi ortadan kaldırarak, sıradan mekânlarda sürreal ve tekinsiz durumları açığa çıkarır. Sokaklarda, bilinçaltının, hayal gücünün, arzusunun, tutkunun ve deneyimin açtığı alan, baskıcı formlara meydan okuyup onları dönüştüren etkili araçlara dönüşür. Sürrealistlerin, tüketim kültürünün arzularla keşiştiği alan olan pasajlara ilgisi, materyalist burjuva kültüründe için olarak yer alan dönüştürücü potansiyele dayanır. Tasarılan mekânlardaki öngörülemez kullanıcı müdahaleleri ile ortaya çıkan çatışma, mekânsal deformasyon için, yerleşik formlara meydan okuyan özgün bir zemin sunar. Sonuç olarak, sürreal deneyimler ve gündelik mekânsal pratikler hem gelenek hem de hayatı dönüştüren güçlü deformasyon araçları haline gelir.

Böylece, tanımlanan bu üç mekânsal kavrayış alanının incelenmesiyle, Sürrealist tasarım önerilerinin, kolayca kategorize edilebilecek bir bütünlük içinde, tutarlı bir düşünce sistemi olarak ortaya çıktığı görülür. Hayal edilen mekânlar, tanımlanabilir bir çerçeveye sahip mekânsal tasarımlardır. Öte yandan, "keşfedilmiş mimarlık"ların edebi ve sanatsal yollarla yüceltilmesi, rüyaların ve hayal gücünün mevcut kentsel mekânlara nüfuz ederek şehirdeki olağanüstüyü ortaya çıkarması ve pasaj ve sokaklarda gerçekleşen gündelik içsel deneyimlere atfedilen dönüştürücü potansiyel, Sürrealist düşüncenin mimarlık alanında, avangart hareketlerin temel motivasyonuna benzer biçimde, umut veren bir deformasyon alanı sunduğunu gösterir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürrealizm ve Mimarlık, Mimari Formda Deformasyon, Keşfedilmiş Mimarlıklar, Sürreal İç Mekân, Gündelik Hayat



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**Cite this article as:** Gönül H, Tanju B. Exploring the Architectural Perspectives of Surrealists as a Potential of Deformation in the Architectural Discipline. *Tasarım Kuram* 2024;20(43):297–297.

*“The fact remains, moreover, that at the end of twenty years I find myself obliged, as I did in my youth, to take a public stand against every kind of conformism and in so doing attack as well a Surrealist conformism that is all too obvious.”*

(Breton, 1942, 288)

## 1. Introduction

In “Der Konflikt Der Modernen Kultur”, Simmel (1918, 75) argues when life transitions from the biological to the mental level, a conflict arises in the cultural sphere. The dynamics of life produce artefacts that bestow a form upon it since life “can only manifest itself as a phenomenon when given form” (Simmel, 1918, 77). However, these forms, such as laws, institutions, works of art, science, technology, disciplines such as architecture, solidify and attempt to impose an order on the ever-changing and flexible flow of life. Consequently, a conflict ensues between life and each form it produces, as forms strive for permanence and eternal existence, opposing the dynamic and variable nature of life itself. Thus, while all constructions strive to make the environment permanent by stabilizing their form, the stabilized system always tends to deform and “the forces of life erode every cultural form which they have produced” (Simmel, 1918, 76). The history of civilization, indeed, is actually formed by the clustering of these moments of deformation where homogeneity is interrupted, and cultural constructions are ultimately transformed. Bataille (1929b) articulates a comparable standpoint when he asserts that life is inherently formless and societal constructs attempt to impose a structure or bestow a form upon it. He posits that for scholars to find contentment, the universe must acquire a definite shape, thus the ultimate goal of philosophy is simply to provide a formal agent for existence, which he terms as “a mathematical frock-coat” (Bataille, 1929b, 31). Building on this conceptualization, he introduces the notion of the “formless (*informe*)” in

contrast to the “architectural order” that imposes a framework on the cosmos.

In this interpretation, architecture, emerging as a potent means of organizing and framing life, not only mirrors societal constructs but also functions as the sustainer of all cultural institutions. In his concise text “Architecture,” Bataille (1929a) elucidates how architecture serves as a apparatus for achieving absolute social consensus by eliminating differences in the environment to regulate life. Indeed, the disorderly and formless facets of the world are eradicated through architectural practice, leading to the stabilization and organization of the environment.

From this particular viewpoint, in line with the perspectives of Simmel and Bataille, the notion of “form” in this study encompasses not only the physical entity of the architectural work, but also the idealistic and conceptual framework of the discipline, as well as the culture and society within which it is produced. Therefore, the concept of deformation in this context aims not only the physical construction, but also the very means, norms, rules and interpretations of the discipline.

The connection between deformation in architectural form and avant-garde artistic practices is notably emphasized in the writings of Bataille. While he defines architecture as a practice constructing and preserving form, Bataille (1929a, 35) states that architectural composition extends beyond the realm of buildings to encompass various fields such as physiognomy, music and painting, functioning, at the same time, as a tool to render cultural constructions absolute. Therefore, the rejection of established aesthetic values in art, in other words the deformation of artistic form, primarily serves as a tool to disrupt the order of life. Bataille refers to this state in art as the dissolution of the architectural skeleton. Thus, the hegemony of form was notably weakened in the mid-19th century through the rejection of academic painting, “hitherto characterised by a

sort of concealed architectural skeleton” by modern art, which transcended the constraints of architectural form (*Bataille, 1929a, 36; Hollier, 1992, 52*).

Given this perspective, a deformative capability is often attributed to modern art by scholars. The oppositional stance taken not only against established aesthetic rules but also against the art institution itself is a stroke to the homogenization of the individual and rendering of them as part of the system. Mumford (*1965, 291*) explains the “anti-art” concept, introduced by avant-garde artists, is “the rejection of order, continuity” and design, meaning “the dissolution of our entire civilization into randomness and entropy”.

Surrealism, as an avant-garde movement of early 20th century, emerged as a promising field for rejecting modern architectural values, which then, unlike the art of 20th century, had solidified itself in fixed forms rather than serving as an agent of deformation<sup>1</sup>. The fundamental discourses of Surrealism, and its precursor Dada, on the other hand, were opposed to this stabilization and instead anticipated a continued state of transformation. Roberto Matta (*Echaurren*) believed that “reality can only be represented in a state of perpetual transformation” (*Dolin, 2005, 53*). Both Dadaists and Surrealists were influenced by the Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who viewed everything as constantly in a state of flux, hence his famous quote “*Panta rhei*”<sup>2</sup>. He regarded change as an inherent state within nature, and stability as only an illusion, while believing harmony arises from opposites and conflict (*Kahn, 2001, 23*). As everything changes and deforms, the only stable thing is the change itself.

Dadaists and Surrealists, through their critical attitudes towards social order and rejection of established values without proposing new ones, disrupted architectural construction and provided a potential realm for spatial deformation. This article will explore the intersections between the intellectual framework of Surrealism and architecture, discussing

whether Surrealist ideas can serve as guiding forces for potential deformation of established norms or assume a critical role in architecture. Crucially, the notion of “established norms” employed here encompasses the entire spectrum of conventional architectural principles recognized by professionals. This understanding emanates from Simmel’s definition of “form” as a cultural construct.

## 2. Preliminary Notes on Surrealism

Prior to discussing the architectural manifestation of Surrealism, it is crucial to highlight certain inherent dynamics of the artistic movement. To accomplish this, it is imperative to emphasize some attributes of its precursor, Dada, widely acknowledged as the “father” of Surrealism, as suggested by Benjamin<sup>3</sup>.

The most crucial characteristic of the followers of Dada, which distinguishes them from other avant-garde artists who rejected the conventional aesthetic acknowledgements in art, is their lack of a new proposal to replace what they renounce, hence their admission of chaos. They did not only reject artistic conventions, but also dismissed “art as an institution” (*Bürger, 1984, 22*). While Dadaists did not adhere to any normative artistic principles, it can be argued that Surrealists advocated for a discernible system of aesthetics, particularly in comparison to Dada. Breton (*1934*) defines Surrealism as “the process of seeking after new values in order to confirm or invalidate existing ones,” implying a quest for a different kind of order distinct from reason. This is evident in Breton’s first Surrealist manifesto (*Breton, 1924*), where the desire to renounce the rational mind is palpable. Breton’s definitions of Surrealism entail a rejection of the hegemony of rationality and a motivation to emancipate oneself from the constraints of reason and rational thought (*Breton, 1924, 9-14*). The Surrealists’ genuine concern lies not in the complete rejection of reality, but rather in achieving a state of absolute harmony where dreams and reality

1. The use of the words ‘deformation’ and ‘transformation’ may cause confusion for readers, so it is important to explain the nuances of the two words and their relationship to the discussion. The term “deformation”, a word derived from “form”, implies a challenge to disciplinary norms, and architecture as an institution, akin to the challenges posed by Dada and Surrealism to artistic norms. Deformation encompasses both epistemological and practical aspects, as well as ontological dimensions, and as such, these facets cannot be easily separated. For instance, discovered architectures not only defy the physical conventions of the discipline (as will be seen in 3.1 with the example of Cheval, who was not an architect), but also introduce an ontological deformation through their very existence. Furthermore, by challenging normative thoughts on architecture, they simultaneously present an epistemological deformation. The term “transformation” has been used deliberately in certain instances to denote the meaning of “transition to another form”, in contrast to “deformation”, which does not necessarily revert to a predefined form.
2. cited from: (*Kahn, 2001, 4*); translated as: “everything flows”.
3. Benjamin (*1928, 883*) wrote: “the father of Surrealism was Dada; its mother was an arcade”.

reconcile (Vesely, 1978, 87). It is the rejection of the “rationality” of the system or order rather than the rejection of the system *per se*, that distinguishes Surrealism from other movements, especially Dada.

On the other hand, both Dadaists and Surrealists, aimed to transform life through the defiance of existing artistic values (Breton, 1934; Hopkins, 2004). Although they, like many avant-garde movements, did not succeed in changing the world, it can be argued that, ultimately, they succeeded in transforming art (Hopkins, 2004).

### 3. The Surrealist Imagination of Space

Although it is possible to study the architectural outlook of virtually every movement in art history, Surrealism, if not Dada, may pose unique challenges due to their limited spatial counterparts, at least in practice. Nevertheless, despite the lack of extensive architectural works, the writings and unrealized designs of Surrealists offer a deeper understanding of the movement’s relationship with space.

Their writings reveal Surrealists denounce Modern Architecture as a practice marked by totalitarianism, an excessive fascination with technology, and a disregard for desires, all of which culminate in the creation of abstract environments. The Modernist architects offered rational, sterile, technological environments while the Surrealists treasured the inner life of the psyche, therefore yearned for a space that expresses the desires and subconscious of the individual. They especially criticize the works of Le Corbusier, whom they find as guilty as those who are responsible for the war. In a letter to Kahnweiler in 1935, painter André Masson compares the architecture of Le Corbusier to a columbarium and confesses he hates the architect as much as he hates the inventor of death ray<sup>4</sup> (Fijalkowski, 2005, 14). Masson’s words display the Surrealists’ fundamental issue with rationalism stems from their association of reason with the prevailing world order, technology and the destruction wrought by war. Rationalism, according to the Surrealists, is cruel and

violent, imposing an external order on the individual, repressing their inner desires and hopes, and attempting to mould the human being through spatial organization.

Despite their condemnation of Modern Architecture, Surrealists show a fascination toward Art Nouveau buildings and naïve architectural constructions. Although these structures have been venerated, they were not directly produced within the movement; therefore, they are, as Vesely (1978, 92) contends, not “a surrealist architecture in the sense that for example a Max Ernst painting is a surrealist painting,” but rather “discovered architecture,” or “*objets-trouvés*”. Surrealists also propose house and domestic interior designs, which they regard as the shelter of the individual’s inner life from rationalism. Additionally, they are attracted to the passages and streets where surreal occurrences and inner psychic experiences unfold (Foster, 1997, 157-192; Sheringham, 2006, 71-77; Hopkins, 2004, 60-61).

Given these three notions, the intellectual production of Surrealists on the discovered architectures, the house and interior, and the “lived experience” in the everyday life in passages and streets, offer an extensive and comprehensive field to study the architectural imagination within Surrealism.

#### 3. 1. Architecture as objet-trouvé

Although Surrealists denounce Modern Architecture, they display a strong interest toward Art Nouveau and naïve structures, that represent themselves as “discovered architectures” through the ekphrastic writings of the Surrealists.

Salvador Dalí’s writings on architecture, specifically “De la Beauté Terrifiante et Comestible, de l’Architecture Modern’s style” from 1933, can be regarded as a poetic tribute to Art Nouveau. In his essay, Dalí extols the buildings of Antoni Gaudí and those constructed in the Art Nouveau style, although he refers to both as “Modern Style.”<sup>5</sup> Through the text, the artist refers to Art Nouveau buildings as “*l’objet du désir* (objects

4. Masson is probably unaware of the Beistegui terrace, designed by Le Corbusier between 1929-32. This eccentric design is acknowledged as a Surrealist work due to its unusual details, such as curiously high walls obscuring views of Paris while allowing only glimpses of iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the camera-obscura room with a periscope, walls controlled via electric buttons, and the placement of interior furniture and a rococo fireplace outdoors, thereby blurring the concept of interior and exterior. For more information on the project, refer to: (Mozzato, 2019).
5. When Breton (1935, 261) cites from Dalí, he uses the term “art-nouveau” in place of “modern-style.

of desire)”, emphasizing their capacity to manifest an individual’s innermost desires in physical form (Dali, 1933, *passim*). He further describes them as “*impureté (impure)*”, as they can combine elements of various architectural styles such as Gothic, Greek, Renaissance, or Oriental, much like the coexistence of disparate elements in a dream (Dali, 1933, 71). By the same token, Dalí (1933, 74) establishes a correlation between Art Nouveau and psychological pathologies, as evidenced by his description of Casa Milà, where he notes that the façade appears “*contorsionnés (contorted)*” as if suffering from a mental illness (Fig 1 and 2). Therefore, he characterizes Art Nouveau as “*délirante (delusional)*”, likening the buildings to a state of neuroses (Dali, 1933, 70). This may be regarded as a challenge to architecture itself as neurosis erodes architectural stability, since architecture ensures integrity, unity and consistency and coherence while mental illnesses are characterized by fragmentation, incompleteness and unsteadiness (La Marche, 2005, 279).

**Figure 1.** Casa Milà, Barcelona (Antoni Gaudí, 1910). Perspectives from the façade and roof. (Photo by Author 1, 2018).

**Figure 2.** Casa Milà, Barcelona (Antoni Gaudí, 1910). Details from the court and balcony railing. (Photo by Author 1, 2018).



The state of hysteria and perversion Dalí attributes to Art Nouveau primarily resides in the movement’s simultaneous embracement of both the rational, that is, objective, as well as the irrational, that is, subjective. Art Nouveau architects indeed seek to internalize the technical progress while concurrently endeavouring to address the subjective and the internal (Foster, 1997, 172, 183). Utilizing industrial techniques and materials such as steel, glass and concrete, Art Nouveau artists transform them into subjective forms, compelling them to acquire irrational shapes such as vegetal motives. In the “cultural conflict between the technical and the subjective” (Foster, 1997, 186), Art Nouveau serves as a means of reconciling art and industry, as it emancipates art which had been “besieged by technology” as Benjamin (1935, 9) asserts. Therefore, stylizing the technologically constituted forms becomes an attempt to detach them from their functional frame of references (Benjamin, n.d.-a, 558). In this regard, Dalí attains a “disruptive potential” to Art Nouveau (Foster, 1997, 186).

The ambiguity that exists between the mental and physical, as well as between the organic and inorganic, is another notable characteristic of Art Nouveau (Vidler, 1992, 153). This is evidenced by the fusion of biological and structural aspects where both realms seamlessly penetrate into each other. It is conceivable that the rationale behind Dalí’s recurrent reference of “eating” in the text may be rooted in this view since defining an architectural feature as “edible” transforms it into a biological entity, which serves as a contrast to the solid, rigid and inhumane nature of stone<sup>6</sup>.

Admiration of Gaudí’s work also emerges in “Situation Surréaliste de l’Objet” (1935, 261) where Breton alludes to Sagrada Família, albeit without explicit mention (Fig 3). In the text, another notable figure emerges, Ferdinand Cheval, a postman who had constructed an edifice named Palais Idéal (Fig 4), using stones he collected from 1879 to 1912 in Hauterives,

6. This idea may be interpreted as the main motif in Dalí’s perception of space. In a similar vein, Weir (2022, 114) examines Dalí’s architectural oeuvre in three phases, labelling the initial one as “edible architecture”. He asserts that this phase played a significant role in shaping Dalí’s subsequent works, wherein the interplay between the human body and architectural construction becomes apparent.

France. Cheval got recognition from the Surrealists for his work towards the end of his life (Flavell, 2021, 13). One year after he visited the Palace in 1931, Breton wrote a poem titled “Facteur Cheval” while Max Ernst created a collage with the same name. References to Cheval also appear in Breton’s other writings, such as the essay “Le Message Automatique” (1933).



Due to the human and animal depictions and inscriptions in the façade, Breton describes the palace as a magnificent labyrinth with statues and grottos (Bohn, 1996, 43). In “Situation Surréaliste de l’Objet”, he elucidates the inspiration should had “derived from [Cheval’s] dreams” (Breton, 1935, 261). As the structure combines elements of the real and the imaginative, it positions in a realm between “dream and reality”, thus gaining a liminal attribute (Flavell, 2021, 11).

Cheval did not have any formal education as an architect, so his lack of training classifies his edifice as an example of “naïve architecture” or “Art Brut,” a term coined by the artist Jean Dubuffet. Therefore, describing this construction as “architecture” challenges the established norms of the discipline as well as the



**Figure 3.** Sagrada Família, Barcelona (Antoni Gaudí, 1882-ongoing). The Nativity façade. (Photo by Author 1, 2018).

**Figure 4.** Palais Idéal, Hauterives (Ferdinand Cheval, 1879 to 1912). East façade. (Photo by Prieur, 2014). (CC0 1.0). (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

**Figure 5.** The unusually-shaped stone Cheval initially tripped over, incorporated into the structure of Palais Idéal, Hauterives (Ferdinand Cheval, 1879 to 1912). (Photo by Waltercolor, 2022). (CC BY-SA 4.0). (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

The Palais Idéal captivated the attention of the Surrealists due to its uncanny appearance, dream-like quality, and incorporation of chance. Cheval constructed the structure subsequent to encountering a bizarre stone (Fig 5), an event that resonated with Surrealist pursuits regarding the notion of an accidental encounter with an object that “liberates” the artistic imagination (Flavell, 2021, 2). Additionally, the cross-cultural references embedded within the structure played a significant role in its appeal, since Cheval integrated miniature models of monuments from a variety of cultures, encompassing Egyptian, Hindu, European, African, and others, transforming the façade into a cumulative representation of world architecture (Fig 6).



profession of architecture. On the other hand, Cheval’s unencumbered mind, unrestricted by the traditional conventions of formal art education, allowed him to express his subconscious fully, which is evident in the dreamlike quality of his work, that he executed with automatism,

displaying a manifestation of his subconscious mind. Another remarkable aspect for the Surrealists was the lack of a function in the edifice, which is a complete defiance to the functionalist ideals of Modern Architecture, therefore, again, challenging the established norms of the discipline.



**Figure 6.** Palais Idéal, Hauterives (Ferdinand Cheval, 1879 to 1912). North façade. (Photo by Marine69, 2007). (CC BY-SA 3.0). (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

Consequently, these edifices as *objets-trouvés* have captivated the attention of Surrealists due to their deviation from formal aesthetic regulations of Modern Architecture, therefore have served as tools for the artists and intellectuals of the movement to challenge and deform the conventions of architectural discipline.

### 3.2. The house and the domestic interior

The reflections of Surrealists on domestic space diverges completely from that of Modernist dwelling, which is evaluated as an abstract space that suppresses the desires and hopes of the individual. According to the Surrealists, modern architects rationalized the house, reduced it to a schema with “*Existenzminimum*” and transformed it into an industrial product, “a machine for living” (Talu, 2012, 73, 87). Originally symbolizing the human body, the house lost its metaphorical significance and became just another commodity, objectifying its inhabitants (Talu, 2012, 74-76, 109).

The Surrealists, in contrast, sought to restore the subjective character of the house. They emphasized the dichotomy between the interior and exterior of a house, associating the exterior with rationality and logic, while the interior represented human desires and the

subconscious. The dialectic relation assumes significant relevance in the architecture of Adolf Loos, the designer of Tzara’s house, as evidenced by his famous quote, “the building should be dumb outside and only reveal wealth inside”. Frampton (1978, 97) regards Loos as the only real Dadaist architect, who “uses the interior as a field for challenging the limits of illusion and reality”. Akin to this theory, the architect locates a door and a mirror of the same height side by side in the foyer of Tzara’s house, creating an allusion to the relation of the interior and the exterior to complicate the connection between them (Risselada, 2008, 36).

Loos also advocated for the house to act as a protective shell, shielding the inner world of emotions and thoughts from the eerie and perilous outside (Fijalkowski, 2005, 23). The Surrealists advocated this perspective, viewing the interior as a realm where the subconscious could be preserved from the dominance of logic. Hence, the interior space was considered a matter of existence; as Bachelard (1958, 218) stated that the relation between inside and outside is the relation of “being and nothingness”. Thus, Breton interprets the house as a metaphorical representation of a labyrinth, replicating the structural complexity of the unconscious mind (Bush, 2010, 8). Therefore, protecting the unsteady and fragile inner world from the impositions of the outside was crucial.

The features Benjamin attributes to the 19th century interior, protection from the outside world and the personalization and conservation of desires, are akin to architectural thoughts of the Surrealists. For Benjamin (*n.d.-b*), dwelling meant finding refuge within a protective shell, away from the industrialization and adversities of public life (Fig 7). This kind of dwelling that acts like “the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet”, belongs to the 19th century, while the 20th century characterized by its permeability, transparency, and inclination towards

bright and airy spaces, marks a departure from the conventional notion of dwelling (Benjamin, n.d.-b, 220-221). The modern house erased the boundary between the outside and the inside, shattered the shell protecting the individual, welcoming the industrial life and rational production logic to the interior of the house. The Surrealists, on the contrary, yearned for a protective shell that would safeguard against the intrusion of rationalism and logic that prevail on the outside world, as evidenced by the proposals of Tzara, Matta and Kiesler.



In his 1933 text titled “D’un Certain Automatismes du Goût”, Tzara (1933, 84) condemns Modern Architecture as “the complete negation of the image of the dwelling” since it blurs the boundaries between the interior and exterior, while the individual wants to take shelter and to be protected in a shell. He associates the desire for protection with the subconscious mind, suggesting that “*gout (taste)*” emerges unconsciously from the desires, impulses, fears, and needs rooted in the subconsciousness of human beings, describing this process as “the subconscious motivation of taste”.

Furthermore, Tzara (1933) argues the subconscious urge for refuge stems from a longing for the comfortable and irrational prenatal life experienced in the mother’s womb, devoid of awareness or responsibility. As people’s taste is influenced by their subconscious emotions, he proposes domestic constructions that evoke the prenatal forms, reminiscent of the protection and comfort of the mother’s womb and

childhood and he terms this concept as “intrauterine architecture.” Tzara (1933, 84) further argues the basic human settlements take the form of circular, canonical, spherical, hemispherical, or irregular shapes, which have been familiar to humans since ancient times, such as in caves, cradles, and graves. The return to archaic forms represents the search for the origin of dwelling, not outside oneself but within the individual’s inner world. Indeed, Bachelard (1958, 234) associated roundness with one’s inner existence, asserting that “being is round”; when an individual turns inward, detached from external factors and establishes existence within their inner world, being does not contain a right angle.

Throughout architectural history, indeed, curvilinear structures have often been associated with primitivism and nomadism while socially and economically organized settlements have constructions with predominantly right angles, symbolizing rationality and order. Driven by the reverence for rationality, Le Corbusier’s admiration for the right angle is expressed through his “Le poème de l’angle droit” (1955). Therefore, Tzara’s advocacy for curvilinearity instead of the right angle presents a clear challenge to the established norms of Modernism. However, it is crucial to distinguish this challenge from a fundamental disruption of architecture *per se*, or a direct conflict with architecture as a cultural construct, such as one being outlined by Simmel’s proposition.

Although Tzara’s association of the house with the desire to return to the mother’s womb can be explained from a Freudian perspective<sup>7</sup>, he views the woman not only as a mother figure, but also as an individual whose tastes operate automatically and impulsively. Mentioning women’s fashion and particularly hats, he emphasizes that “taste” operates more instinctively and irrationally in women (Tzara, 1933, 83). Asserting that every woman possesses the “automatism of taste”, he proposes an “order based on femininity”

Figure 7. “The Bourgeois Interior” from the collection of Walter Benjamin (photo by Sasha Stone, circa 1914). (CC Public Domain). (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

7. Freud, in his article “Das Unheimliche” (1919, 245), explains this desire for the return to the mother’s womb as a kind of homesickness.

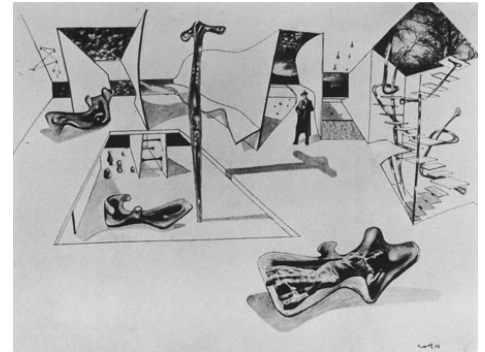
rather than one rooted in masculinity. This aligns with the traditional distinction between the inner and emotional world associated with women (*and housing*) and the more physical and external world associated with men (*and the city*). Also, for Adolf Loos, the distinction between interior and exterior is somewhat “gender-loaded” as he identifies the exterior of the house with masculinity (*Risselada, 2008, 39*). However, Tzara’s substitution of femininity for masculinity showcases that he does not intend to truly dismantle the existing gendered framework, but to simply reposition its terms.

Therefore, Tzara proposes an irrational and curvilinear introverted shell against the rational, right-angled Modernist house that erases the boundaries between the inside and outside. His imagination of the house, which is a challenge to the Modernist norms of space, aligns with Matta’s definition published five years later in the same journal.

In 1938, Roberto Matta (*Echaureen*) presented a sketch and accompanying text titled “Mathématique Sensible - Architecture du Temps” in the 11th issue of “Minotaure” (*Fig 8*). The sketch depicted the interior of a house, referred to as the “Project-model of an apartment (*Projet-maquette d’appartement*)”, which showcased “a space that evokes verticality”. The design featured “floors at various levels and a staircase without a railing to overcome the void”, and “pneumatic soft seats” (*Matta, 1938, 43*). The materials utilized, “inflated rubber, cork, various papers, concrete and plaster” are placed in a “rational architectural framework”. From this description and the sketch, it becomes evident that Matta’s work illustrated the interior organization of a modern, and possibly cubic, apartment.

From the text, it can be inferred that the interior design is intimately connected to the notion of shelter. Similar to Tzara’s perspective, Matta attributes the sense of refuge to the longing for the mother’s moist womb and the desire for prenatal life. He describes how the individual

“yearns for the obscure thrusts of his beginning, which enclosed him in humid walls”, while suggesting that architecture’s role is “to find for each person those umbilical cords that put us in communication with others” (*Matta 1938, 43*).



The convergence of the biological and architectural realms emerges as a significant point in the text, with the assertion that “a house must function like a heart, with a systole and diastole”<sup>8</sup>. Matta (*1938*) critiques the dominance of right angles, an established principle of Modernist design, and advocates for a departure from their rigid confines, emphasizing curvilinear forms and harmony with the human body. Phillips (*2005, 141*) identifies the proposed space by Matta as alloplastic, implying that it shapes and transforms the external world to reflect the subconscious. This aligns with Tzara’s vision of an architecture that responds to the needs of the subconscious, one that adjusts to “the infinite transformations of the body in motion”, so that “unconscious sensual desires could be forever satiated with flexible architectural skins moving in response to our every need” (*Phillips, 2005, 141*). With its moist walls responsive to bodily movements, this architecture challenges the visual-centric hegemony by accentuating the sense of touch and defining a tactile or haptic space against the optical one. A similar approach can be monitored in the Endless House of Kiesler.

Frederick Kiesler situates the Endless House within Correalism, emphasizing the interconnectedness of humans and

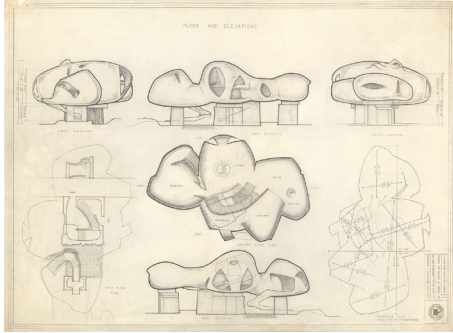
**Figure 8.** “Project-model of an apartment (*Projet-maquette d’appartement*)” sketch by Matta (*1938, 43*).

8. cited from “Bozo, D., 1985, *Matta, 267*” by (Fijalkowski, 2005, 21).

their environment, rather than Surrealism. However, the Endless House can be seen as a direct translation of Surrealist ideas, while Kiesler's spatial visions have likely been influenced by his collaboration with the Surrealists since the 1920s.

The Endless House, first modelled in 1924 and further developed until 1965, garnered attention from the Surrealists due to its evocation of protection and the womb, particularly by its egg-shaped form. Hans Arp describes the Endless House as a place where “a human being can now take shelter and live as in his mother's womb”<sup>9</sup>.

Resembling the infinity symbol, the house comprises biomorphic rooms that seamlessly flow into one another (Fig 9). It is a flexible design capable of adapting to the movements and needs of the human body. The Endless House not only serves as a shelter but also functions as a sanctuary where boundaries can be changed and expanded at will. In this sense, the house “provides no sense of boundary, but is still able to shelter” (Phillips, 2005, 152).



Kiesler also designed furniture that responds to changes in bodily movements, aiming to integrate technology with human needs. However, Kiesler's approach differs from Matta's alloplastic attitude, as he sought to adapt people to technology and viewed domestic space as a control mechanism for human well-being, encompassing the “degeneration and regeneration” of physical and mental health (Kiesler, 1939, 66). The therapeutic and rejuvenating effects of the house discharge and strengthen the human body and mind, functioning as a recreational space (Phillips,

2005, 145). Although Kiesler perceives architecture as a tool to harmonize the human body with technology for the sake of human health, he avoids imposing a strict order upon the body in contrast to the Modernist design principles. Indeed, Virilio (2001, 37-38) compares Kiesler's Endless House to a dancer, in contrast to the stable figures of the Vitruvian Man or Modulor. This perspective is also evident when Kiesler describes the geometry of the Endless House as “sensuous, more like the female body in contrast to sharp-angled male architecture”<sup>10</sup> alluding to the femininity of the space, similar to Tzara's views.

Phillips (2005, 146) aptly characterizes the Endless House as a “dream machine”, standing in stark contrast to the Modernist house, which is often considered a mere “machine for living.” In this regard, while challenging established architectural norms like the right angle and functionalism, the house ultimately retains its characterization as a “machine.” This suggests an acknowledgment of the underlying ontological principle that defines architecture, despite the subversion of specific norms. On the other hand, not only the Endless house, but also the house visions of Matta and Tzara can be identified as a criticism of the objectification of the house by modern architects driven by a desire to reclaim the archetypal image of a house that was destroyed by Modern Architecture, which, therefore can be interpreted as a form of “homesickness” (Talu, 2012, 96).

Nonetheless, the spatial theories of all three artists can easily be identified as a coherent system of architecture. Tzara, who clearly took an “anti-art” stance in the Dada Manifesto (1918, 78), stating that “all pictorial or plastic work is useless”, could perhaps had been expected to take a similar stance towards architecture. Yet, instead, he, just like his fellow artists, clearly defines the way that he believes architecture should follow. Instead of the form he denies, he proposes his own truth. While defending “anti-art”, Tzara

Figure 9. Plans for Endless House-Project for Museum of Modern Art. Pencil on transparent paper. (Frederick Kiesler, 1959, New York). © 2024 Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, Vienna.

9. cited from “Arp, J. H., 1947, *Kiesler's Egg and the Hall of Superstitions*” by (Vesely, 1978, 94).
10. cited from “Kiesler, F., 1996, *The Endless House*, in Gohr and Luyken (eds.), *Frederick J. Kiesler: Selected Writings*” by (Phillips, 2005).

stands quite far from “anti-architecture” while his opposition is only against a stance in architecture, not the discipline of architecture *per se*.

Matta’s primary concern, by the same token, is to oppose the functionalism and rationality prevalent in Modern Architecture. Against Le Corbusier’s “*mathématique raisonnable*”, Matta proposes “*mathématique sensible*”, presenting an “architecture of time” against the Modernist “architecture of space” (Vidler, 2003, 8). Mathematics, though imbued with sentimentality, remains as a fundamental element while the order of logic is replaced by the order of emotions.

While the architectural visions of Surrealists undoubtedly challenge the established norms of Modernism, they do not necessarily lead to a complete deformation of the architectural discipline *per se*. Instead of celebrating the unformed, they propose a singular, countervailing “form” *in lieu* of the existing architectural categories.

On the other hand, the revolutionary potential Surrealists ascribed to the city streets, passages and the experience lived within them, becomes noteworthy as a state of mental, and spatial deformation. Thus, it becomes imperative to examine the streets, passages and the ways in which everyday life is perceived in order to explore the juncture and conflict between rationality and irrationality, and the unfolding of spatial appropriation through unplanned, everyday experiences.

### 3.3. Passages and Streets as the Realm of Everyday Life and Lived Experience

In “Everyday Life Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present”, Sheringham (2006, *passim*) claims the concepts of “lived experience” and “everyday life”, widely discussed terms in cultural and urban studies in the second half of the 20th century, were built on the intellectual ground established by Surrealists. Aligned with its avant-garde stance, Surrealism represents an artistic and cultural rebellion against prevailing

cultural forms, “the routinization and bureaucratization of everyday life” and the commodification of various aspects of social life (Pinder, 2009, 87). The endeavors of Surrealists have also been utilized in connection with criticisms of the spaces of everyday life, and explorations of lived experiences that accentuate the themes of desire and unconscious (Pinder, 2009, 88). In fact, for the Surrealists, the potential of lived experience in everyday life surpasses that of art (Hopkins, 2004, 30). The Surrealist novels, “Nadja” by Breton and “Le Paysan de Paris” by Aragon demonstrate how ordinary daily experiences in the city unravel the marvelous to disrupt cultural forms. Kadiu (2014, 3) purports;

“Nadja’s identification with chance, her ability to transform the trivial into the marvelous, her limitless imagination and unconformity— all of these surrealist traits are important for Breton insofar as they stand for the possible disruption of bourgeois norms.”

In this regard, these two books, therefore, are regarded by scholars as “a way to re-enchant the everyday through subjectivity” and personal exploration (Marshall, 2023, 29).

The concept of “*la quotidienneté* (everydayness)” is one of the basic concepts of the corpus of Lefebvre, Certeau, Barthes and the Situationists. In “La Production de l’Espace (1974)”, Lefebvre establishes a vital connection between the configuration of space and everydayness which “harbours within itself the possibility of its own existential or ontological transformation” (Sheringham, 2006, 12). For Lefebvre (1961, 65), everyday life is actually twofold, it is simultaneously seeking to be made formalized by structures while remaining abundant with informal situations, complexity and unpredictability, as it is the place where “the unformed and the spontaneous live on”.

The Surrealists, likewise, perceive the spontaneity of everyday life as a precursor to deforming space. They believed in tapping into the unrealized possibilities

hidden within ordinary life rather than rejecting it for an alternative existence. Sheringham (2006, 67-68) writes;

“... surrealist practice operates in the everyday—the street, the café, the hairdresser’s; in speech, desire, and chance. ...., the possible is contained in the actual; what might be is always already present within what is. ...., the surrealist ‘practice of existence’ (Blanchot) addresses the concrete world of the here and now, the present. The crucial dimension of Surrealism is that of experience.”

The Surrealists’ speculative projects for the city of Paris reveal how they bring out the surreal and uncanny situations in the city with lived experiences in everyday spaces. As part of a collaborative game in 1933, Surrealist artists were prompted to generate ideas for irrationally beautifying the city, envisioning changes like preserving specific locations, altering their positioning, or modifying and transforming them. During the 1960s and 1970s, gatherings at Café la Tour St Jacques on Rue Pernelle centred around this game, where participants marked desired alterations, transformations, or reorganizations on a comprehensive map of Paris (Fenton, 2005, 210). The aim was not to produce a large-scale project, but rather to explore alternative possibilities with “a desire for a different and better future that seeks to disturb, displace assumptions” (Fenton, 2005, 210). Some of the proposed projects included nocturnal utilization of Notre Dame de Paris for communal gatherings or sleep, the demolition of all the suburbs surrounding Paris, the construction of a fortified wall with medieval towers encircling the city, the introduction of a ghost train roaming along the city wall, the transformation of large shopping centres into theatres, circuses, or communal living spaces, the construction of a bridge with baroque-style residences over the Seine, the establishment of a beach on the banks of the Seine (which was actually realized in 2001), the conversion of industrial suburbs into forests with accompanying phalansteries,

the abandonment of the Centre Pompidou to nature, the conversion of the Forum des Halles into a swampy labyrinth, the conversion of subways into roller coasters and operation of ghost trains.

The Surrealists’ proposals highlight prominent themes such as nature overtaking the city, uncanny spaces, randomness, play, and the infusion of unexpected functions into ordinary places. All the proposals, which are actually a critique of functionalism, involved a spatial and metaphorical transformation, where imagination, dream and nature deform the rigid spaces of the city within the practices of everyday life (Fenton, 2005, 218). Rather than proposing entirely new projects, the Surrealists irrationally reveal the hidden potential in existing urban spaces by actualizing the excess and extraordinary inherent in them. Thus, they endeavour to liberate reality from the bondage of rationalism and logic, which would allow its transformation (Sheringham, 2006). Lefebvre (1987, 9) asks: “Why wouldn’t the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?”

In his theory of space, Lefebvre (1978) proposes the transformation of dominated space into appropriated space by emphasizing the dimension of “lived space” that highlights the unplanned social relationships, which involves individuals using and appropriating space. Spatial appropriation becomes a means to transform the city into a space of individual and collective desires (Sheringham, 2006, 132). For the Surrealists, everyday life, with all its abrasiveness, is depicted through the urban “experience” in the street (Sheringham, 2006, 72; Pinder, 2009, 90). The city and its streets emerge then as places where surreal events and encounters unfold, dismantling rationalism (Levy, 2005, 70). In the novels “Nadja” by Breton and “Le Paysan de Paris” by Aragon, adventures and aimless wanderings transpire in the streets, cafes, and passages of Paris. Here, the streets symbolize anonymity, idleness, and purposelessness, providing a fertile

ground for arbitrary and serendipitous occurrences (Levy, 2005, 70). That's why for Benjamin (1929, 211), the surrealist potential of the city surpasses that of artistic production.

Since Benjamin (1935, 13) perceives Surrealism as a manifestation of the remnants of the 19th century bourgeois dreams which serve as the subconscious of the 20th century, he interprets the movement as the realization of the revolutionary potential inherent in the materialist culture of the bourgeois era. Therefore, passages, where the desires of the 19th century congregate and the essence of this materialist culture is most observable, assume paramount significance (Fig 10, 11 and 12). The streets act as the dwelling places of the masses, while the passages serve as collective guest rooms (Benjamin, 1928, 879). Consequently, individual desires and dreams, confined within households, converge and become shared experiences within the streets and passages. Benjamin regards passages as sites of convergence for rationalization, new modes of production, and dreams, incorporating both rational and irrational elements. He further sees this convergence as an inherent part of the era's culture by stating that, embracing both Breton and Le Corbusier "would be to draw the spirit of contemporary France" (Benjamin, n.d.-c., 459).

**Figure 10.** Galerie Vivienne (lithography by Adolphe Bouchet and Pierre Langlumé, 1825) (CCo) (source: Musée Carnavalet, Histoire de Paris)

**Figure 11.** Passage de l'Opéra, Paris. (photographer unknown, around 1909). (CC Public Domain). (Source: Wikimedia Commons).



From a similar perspective, Lefebvre (1961, 7-11) asserts that desire, particularly, intensifies the experiential condition of the street since in a society where everyday life becomes colonized by materialistic pursuits, the sole entity capable of escaping the organization of forms, is desire. While the subconscious remains

impervious to confinement by these forms, it is desire that erodes the established structures with its irrational and illogical nature. Within consumer society, individuals merely accept what is provided to them, devoid of genuine desire. Therefore, Lefebvre (1961, 11) contends that the act of 'desiring' becomes an act of defiance against the consumerist system. This standpoint solidifies the primary rationale for the fascination with passages, where consumer culture intertwines with desire. Therefore, sharing a similar perspective with Benjamin, Lefebvre (1961, 244-45), characterizes France as the birthplace of both the metric system and perfume, exemplifying the coexistence of rationality and irrationality.



However, these two domains, the rational and the irrational, cannot coexist harmoniously; instead, they engender conflict, echoing Simmel's proposition. Nonetheless, this conflict constitutes the fabric of everyday life itself and the primary moments of deformation, facilitated by the inner experiences lived within physical space, ultimately leading to the appropriation of space.

A pivotal aspect of surreal events in the streets is the synthesis of physical space and inner mental experiences (Sheringham, 2006, 71-78; Pinder, 2009, 90). In works such as "Le Paysan de Paris" and "Nadja," the focus lies on "active exploration, through

experimental practice, of lived experience in concrete space” (Sheringham, 2006, 74). When depicting these experiences in “Nadja,” Breton (1928) aims to showcase the futility of preconceived and designed constructs in relation to everyday life. The unpredictable and irrational surreal experiences render all plans mere “idle talk” (Breton, 1928, 60). Thus, concrete reality emerges through the reciprocal interplay between an individual’s inner world and external reality. In “Le Paysan de Paris”, Aragon (1926) does not merely describe a physical place, but rather recounts the experience of that place. The place assumes a novel form alongside the inner state of the individual experiencing it, thereby transmitting to the reader the synthesis of these two elements -the perception of concrete reality in the individual’s inner world and the revelation of the virtuality in reality through their perspective. This process finds its counterpart in architectural imagination as the absence of a completed and stable design, but rather the presence of one that involves the participation of the spectator as a transformative force (Pérez-Gómez, 2018, 26). Therefore, it deforms the very means of the production of space within the discipline. In a similar vein, Spiller (2018, 9, 11) designates the legacy of Surrealism on architecture not as a system or a style, but as a “mindset”, since what constitutes Surrealist thought is, in fact, vaguely constructed by its initiators.



Hence, the authentic fertile ground

for deformation in architectural form lies in unframed human interventions within designed spaces and the resulting conflict. This very conflict between life and forms is precisely what Simmel (1918) had posited, which had been explored in the introduction of this paper. Everyday life, in its dynamic and unpredictable nature, inevitably comes into conflict with the rigidity of designed spaces, causing them to bend and deform. This disruption challenges established forms while presenting the inherent practices of everyday life to the architectural order. This phenomenon, elucidated by Lefebvre’s concept of “*espace approprié* (appropriated space)”, signifies the simultaneous transformation of both space and norms as everyday practices infiltrate the architectural order, ultimately reshaping them both. Consequently, the practice of everyday life, as indicated by surreal experiences, emerges as the most potent form of deformation, eroding all prescribed forms and transforming space. Therefore, it becomes apparent that any deformation can take place through space, everyday spatial practice, and the architectural form that serves as their creator and protector.

#### 4. Conclusion

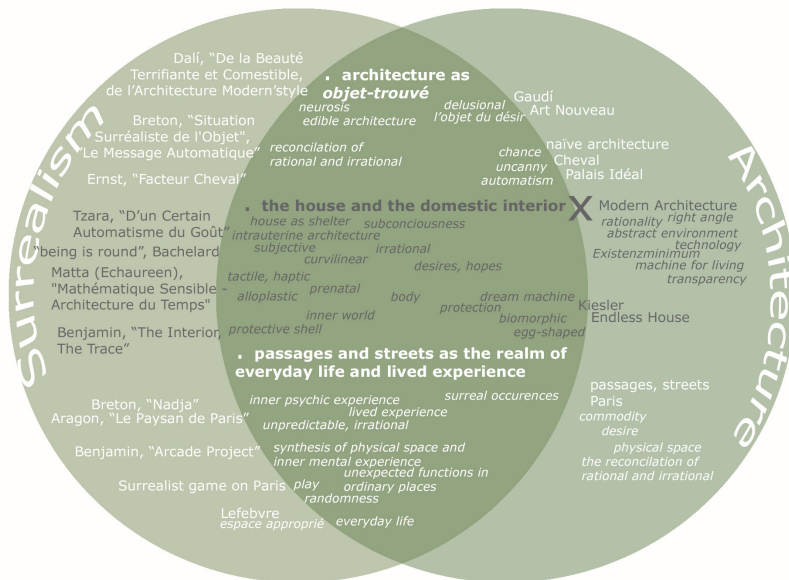
The endeavour to question whether Surrealism could act as a driving force for deformation in the spatial realm stems from the acknowledgement of the conflict between life and cultural forms, or the tension between the dynamic nature of life and the inclination of cultural constructs toward permanence and stability. The repudiation of established aesthetic values in art by avant-garde artists, particularly during the mid-19th century, disrupted architectural norms and paved the way for potential spatial transformations. Surrealists, likewise, challenged the established artistic values with the aim of changing life through artistic interventions.

The Surrealists criticized Modern Architecture for its totalitarian tendencies, preoccupation with technology, and

Figure 12. Passage des Panoramas, Paris. (photo by Власенко, 2011). (CC BY-SA 3.0). (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

disregard for desires as they juxtaposed these characteristics with their appreciation for the inner life of the psyche. Rationalism was associated with the prevailing world order and the repression of individual desires, while the Surrealists favoured an irrational and dream-like spatial configuration that enhanced the physic realm of the individual. From this perspective, the Surrealists' engagement with architecture was discussed in three fields: the fascination with Art Nouveau and naïve architecture as “objets-trouvés” or “discovered architectures”, their design proposals for houses and domestic interiors that could serve as shelters for the individual’s inner life, and their appropriation of spaces in urban passages and streets where surreal occurrences and inner psychic experiences unfolded (Fig 13).

Figure 13. Graphical summary of the framework.



to a state of neurosis. The Palais Idéal by Facteur Cheval, on the other hand, showcased artistic automatism and chance, criticizing architectural norms by lacking functionality and by being executed by a man with rudimentary education. The discovered architectures provided a platform for the Surrealists to explore the dream-like potential of space and challenge and deform the conventions of Modern Architecture.

Another significant focus of the Surrealists revolved around the concept of the house and the domestic interior. By sheltering an individual’s inner life from the influence of rationalism, the house emerged as a spiritual and intimate space in the Surrealist worldview, akin to the subconscious mind. Notably, the proposals put forth by Tzara, Matta, and Kiesler emphasized viewing the house as a shelter similar to the mother’s womb, recognizing its role as a protector and multiplier of the individual’s inner world. Thus, the emphasis is on the interior, where dreams can be protected from the intrusion of the exterior world governed by rationality. The dwelling rejected the hegemony of the right angle, embracing instead irrational and circular forms that Surrealists associated with the archaic. Furthermore, the dwelling, as a transformable area responsive to the needs of the subconscious, rejected the hegemony of vision, while other senses, particularly the tactile sense emerged as prominent.

Considering that Surrealists have a more normative understanding of art compared to Dadaists, it is no surprise that the architecture they desired can easily be systematized. While they rejected existing transcendent values, they created new ones that were ultimately rendered transcendent. Thus, the main concern of the Surrealists emerges as the condemnation of Modern Architecture, rather than architecture *per se*. It is not the architectural institution itself that is questioned, but only the rationality of domestic space. Therefore, it indicates the nascence of a new architectural

Surrealists found Art Nouveau buildings captivating due to their ability to express desires and tap into the unconscious despite being created using industrial materials and techniques. This characteristic challenged the principles of functionalism and rationalism, creating a binary opposition, that ultimately led

form rather than the deformation of the conventions of the architectural discipline. On the other hand, the Surrealists' perspective on the city and everyday life, poses a fertile ground for the deformation of the acknowledged aesthetic values. They placed special emphasis on the everyday life in passages and streets, wherein surreal occurrences and inner psychic experiences unfolded. The extensions of the subconscious, imagination, desire, passion and experience, manage to challenge suppressive forms, question their legitimacy and concurrently attempt to deform them in the streets. They believed the urban experience unveiled the extraordinary within the ordinary, envisioning surreal and uncanny situations in everyday spaces that dismantled rationalism. Surrealism was seen as the realization of the transformative potential inherent in the materialist culture of the bourgeois era, evident in the Surrealists' fascination with passages, -a space where consumer culture intersected with desire and became a locus of spatial transformation. The unframed human interventions within designed spaces and the ensuing conflict, corresponding to the conflict posited by Simmel, provided an authentic fertile ground for spatial deformation and challenged established forms. Consequently, surreal experiences and everyday spatial practices become powerful tools of deformation that transform both space and life.

By studying the three fields of spatial comprehension within Surrealism, it may be inferred that the Surrealist imaginations of dwelling emerge as a coherent system of thought, categorizable, albeit lacking a comprehensive body of theory. The proposed space, still, emerges as a discernible framed spatial vision. In this case, it may be argued that the Surrealist discourse on the house and domestic interior does not inherently give rise to a field of deformation. Despite its inherent challenge to established forms, consistent with Simmel's perspective, the

discourse instead offers new house forms as alternatives. Consequently, it does not engender deformation within the discipline *per se*, but rather within the discourse surrounding Modern Architecture. It can be concurred that they deform the principles of Modern Architecture, yet not "architecture as an institution". On the other hand, the celebration and veneration of discovered architectures through ekphrasis, as well as the penetration of dreams and imagination into the existing urban pattern to reveal the extraordinary inherent in the city, and the deformative potential Surrealists ascribe to the inner everyday experiences occurring in the passages and streets, emerge as areas where Surrealist thought presents a promising deformative domain within the field of architecture, akin to the principal motivation of avant-garde movements, which is to dissolve the "architectural skeleton", as indicated by Bataille (1929a).

### Information

This article is derived from a PhD dissertation titled "A Research on the Formlessness Concept in Architecture". Institution: Yıldız Technical University, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, History and Theory of Architecture Programme.

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