



Adaptive re-use of digital content

Description

I'm in a cottage in the countryside. There's an attic, a shed, a greenhouse, old gardening tools and furniture. Such legacy paraphernalia and economic necessity invite strategies of repair and re-use — practices that spill into the intellectual sphere.

I'm re-using earlier blog posts. These posts were published between March and May 2012, beginning with reflections on architectural authenticity, drawing from Louis Kahn, Heidegger, and Angelus Silesius to question whether buildings might exhibit the kind of agency that translates into — desires?• (what buildings want) and whether our professional and intellectual tendency towards — thick thinking?• can allow for simply *letting things be*.

This line of inquiry in the compilation broadens into explorations of mystery traditions, hermeneutics, and the philosophical underpinnings of interpretation, contrasting open-ended and conservative approaches to meaning-making.

Other posts examine the architectural unconscious, the politics of urban activism, and the role of protest tactics and linguistic framing in shaping public space. I also explored relativism and its critiques, with arguments for moving beyond absolute — relative dichotomies towards interpretative clarity and openness.

ChatGPT helped me summarise this compendium and how it fits within the trajectory of developments in digital cultures. From April to May 2012, the posts shift between built form and broader cultural artefacts: the detritus of virtual worlds and the analogy with physical waste; the legacy of the Bauhaus in both modernist design and digital culture; the role of exaggeration in art, neuroscience, and architecture; and the enduring popularity of anthropomorphic animals in cartoons, examined through anthropological, psychological, and semiotic lenses.

The sequence closes with a consideration of empathy in political and economic life, linking Adam Smith's moral philosophy to contemporary neuroscience via the concept of mirror neurons. I later incorporated some of this work into my book [Mood and Mobility: Navigating the Emotional Spaces of Digital Social Networks](#) and a project that experimented with [EEG and landscapes](#).

The AI explained that in the years since these posts appeared, many of their reference points have evolved. Urban activism has been reshaped by social media platforms, networked protest movements, and algorithmic visibility, while debates over heritage, authenticity, and the architectural canon have intensified in the context of climate change, adaptive reuse, and decolonisation.

Virtual environments have shifted from Second Life to immersive VR, gaming platforms, and AI-generated spaces, raising new questions about digital decay and persistence. The Bauhaus legacy continues to be reinterpreted in light of design minimalism in tech products, even as post-digital aesthetics have embraced ornament, imperfection, and hybridity.

Neuroscientific approaches to aesthetics and empathy have expanded, with research on bias, embodiment, and affective computing intersecting with design practice.

Meanwhile, philosophical discussions of interpretation, relativism, and meaning-making remain central in an era of information saturation and polarised public discourse, where architecture, media, and cultural narratives are continually reframed through new technological and political conditions.

The text of these posts is read tirelessly by the *Tanner* voice in Speechify. I marked the start and end of each post, though there are no pauses!

List of posts included

[What buildings want](#) (81)
[Mystery philosopher fakes own death](#) (82)
[Architectural unconscious](#) (83)
[Conservative hermeneutics](#) (84)
[Urban occupy](#) (85)
[The eye of the beholder](#) (86)
[Data waste](#) (87)
[Bauhaus geek](#) (88)
[Exaggeration](#) (89)
[Why cartoons have animals](#) (90)
[Posh boys and mirror neurons](#) (91)

Note

- Featured image is by ChatGPT: Please generate an interior image of a shed full of old, defunct gardening tools, bathed in a shaft of light through a broken roof.

Category

1. Architecture
2. Podcast

Tags

1. blogging

- 2. compilation
- 3. relativism

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