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The Tools of the Architect

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The Undetermined Hand: Architectural Technicities

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A *stilus* is any writing utensil, any small-sized tool used to either mark or shape, any of the digital pens used nowadays to assist software navigation and design. A *stilus* however is not only a technical object: it is part of what Simondon calls *reticular technicity*, a relational mode between humans and their environment. It shouldn't come as a surprise then, that the very root of the word style, a familiar term for architects, comes directly from *stilus*. To belong to the same style refers directly to the tools shared and not just to the intentions. Therefore, one comes across style when one examines how an assemblage operates, both internally and also in relation to other assemblages, both in its consistency and in the moments it stutters, producing and following architectural novelty. In that sense, an architectural style belongs to no one but the assemblage itself. Put differently, the hand, when approached as a problem itself, can withstand an analysis of the differential relations that continuously determine it. One of the most important relations that determine the architect's hand, is that between a synchronous *generalisation* of its own development, and the *concretization* of the tools that it has at its disposal: the differential that produces the affects of any architectural technicity.

The question, then, is why one should stop at the determination of the architectural hand. If we can understand the *individuation* of the hand in terms of the differential relations that produce it, then why shouldn't we approach all that a hand can do in a similar manner. Influenced by the thought of Leibniz, Deleuze, Leroi-Gourhan and Simondon, I will examine the reticular technicities that a set of fingers and a *stilus* produce, the architectural styles that should not be only approached in terms of classifications and typologies, but also on the potentials of the differential relations that condition them. Accordingly, the problematic field of the hand and the *stilus*, should be examined on the differentials that constitute it as an assemblage and on the singular and ordinary points it produces. Put succinctly, between each finger and each pencil, each hand, mouse and click, each hammer and drill held, lies a difference which produces the singularities of any technology, the ones that determine it via its technicities while, reticularly, determines us back. If, therefore, architecture wishes to expand its technicities –at least to correspond to the high concretization of the technical objects it has at its disposal and to the equally concretized sets of objects it wishes to intervene to- perhaps focus should be given on the affective amplification of its sensorial and sense-making apparatus, then one which makes new spaces and subjects emerge.