

TITLE

**Approaching 間 [Ma]:**  
Marking, Zig-zagging and Rotating.

NAME

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KEYWORDS

Architecture; exhibition; re-enactment; Ma; Space-Time

ABSTRACT

In 1978 the exhibition '間 [Ma]. *Space-Time in Japan*'<sup>1</sup> opened its doors in *Musee des Arts Decoratifs* in Paris. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki designed and curated this exhibition to introduce the concept 間 [Ma] to the Euro-American context. The exhibition consists of nine spatial installations in which 間 [Ma] shows up in different modalities of thought and action: logical, visual and performative. In its architectural context 間 [Ma] shows a moment at which time and space have not been disentangled as distinct and abstract notions: a single sensible spatiotemporal reality. In architecture 間 [Ma] is experienced in Japanese craftsmanship as a unique spatial arrangement, characterized as 'movement space'<sup>2</sup>, and a unique approach to design (pedagogy), characterized as co-becoming<sup>3</sup>.

Through re-enactment of (parts of) the exhibition I study the potentials of 間 [Ma] to develop discursive and non-discursive design tools to approach this *single sensible spatiotemporal reality* in contemporary architecture practice. In the past years I have analyzed the exhibition by means of archival research and an interview with Isozaki. I also have re-enacted and presented (parts of) the exhibition in my own (pedagogical) practice and in collaboration with students.

In this presentation I will use the diverse documentation of my research material to introduce 'biotopological craftsmanship' as an architectural technique to approach 間 [Ma]. 'Marking', 'Zig-zagging' and 'Rotating' will be introduced as three specific examples. Biotopological craftsmanship can be understood as an architectural technique in which the architect carefully *coordinates with* social-environmental moving bodies through minor interventions. These interventions are directed towards the emergence of an autonomous socio-environmental and spatiotemporal interaction. 'Marking', 'zig-zagging' and 'rotating' are all means to activate this process of *coordinating and interfering within* contemporary architectural landscape that is characterized by a shift 'from object to experience'<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Isozaki, A. 'Ma espace –temps du Japon', exhibition in Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, 1978

<sup>2</sup> Inoue, Mitsuo. *Space in Japanese Architecture*. New York, Tokyo, Weatherhill, 1985

<sup>3</sup> Isozaki, A. *Japan-ness in architecture*. Trans. S. Kohso, Cambridge: MIT Press books. 2006/2011. pp.47-58

<sup>4</sup> Mallgrave, H.F. *From Object to Experience: The New Culture of Architectural Design*, Bloomsbury Visual Arts, London, 2018