Eisenman uses the example of a fold within architecture, and highlights its concept through the description of the mobius strip. The apparent seamless connection between the interior and exterior, like that of a mobius strip, produces a confusion within architecture with respect to the electronic paradigm. This dislocation of vision is accomplished through the electronic paradigm, and now encourages architecture to look back at the individual, creating a sense of confusion architecture has never before encompassed. Architecture is a place for the mind's eye, it is our interpretation of sight into what we know as a vision, and it is perhaps this idea which gives architecture a certain hierarchy. This hierarchy may distinguish between interior and exterior which than leads us to denote certain regions as being more comfortable than others. According to Eisenman, vision can be defined as essentially a way of organizing space and elements in space (558). "It is a way of looking at, and defines a relationship between a subject and an object" (558).

The Yokohama Port Terminal plays with this idea of vision in that the building creates certain hierarchies according to how certain spaces are used in regards to which are dedicated to public and private uses, as well as which spaces are used for certain activities such as transportation or pleasure. The terminal articulates seemingly unrelated programs into a unified whole, through Eisenman's idea of "looking back". In a sense the terminal looks back to its users and detaches them from the rationalization of the space they are situated. "It allows the subject to have a vision of space that no longer can be put together in the normalizing, classicizing or traditional construct of vision. The architects developed controlled bands of space coupled with the folding pattern of the project in order to work as a single system. The system dislocates itself from vision by channeling the flow of travelers while also producing a field of stresses in certain regions to encourage them to explore other regions of the design.

Works Cited

Peter Eisenman, "Visions Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media" in Kate Nesbitt, ed. Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, 1996, 556-561

Diana I. Agrest notes that perfection in architecture strongly relates to the relationships between man and nature through notions of natural harmony. She states that body becomes a “mediator, a form of shifter” (176). Her ideologies strongly relate to Vitruvius and his notions that symmetry relates to proportion, and feels as though without these underlying themes, there can be no principle of design. “Visions Unfolding” describes a shift from this way of thinking towards an architecture which, through the electronic paradigm, bases itself on a detachment from interpreting architecture through the affiliation between the mind and the eye. The Yokohama Port Terminal relates to this new electronic paradigm, and thus detaches itself from the more traditional mechanical paradigm in that it has defined a reality based on media and simulation.

The dichotomies that exist between exterior and interior spaces are highlighted through the port’s dual functions as both a port and a vibrant public space. This dichotomy introduces fundamental ambiguities as to how we interpret and see the intended program FOA aspired to create. This concept relates strongly to Anthony Vidler’s statement in that “the history of architecture, from Vitruvius to the present, might in one sense be described as the progressive distancing of the body from the building, a gradual extension of the anthropomorphic analogy into wider and wider domains, leading insensibly but inexorably to the final “loss” of the body as an authoritative foundation for architecture” (3).

The terminal's decks curve upwards and downwards to enclose rooms where necessary, and link its levels with ramps, making the design a multilevel structure with a continuous flow of space, a very humanized structure which does not conform to the traditional idea of human representation.

Works Cited


Anthony Vidler, “the building is Pain: The Body and Architecture in Post-Modern Culture”, in A4 Files 19, Architectural Association, ISSN 0261-6823 3-10
We perceive phenomena first, then reflect on those phenomena through instantaneous mediation which we then attribute to our unique perceptions of our own being. We interpret our surroundings through what we recognize as our own body within a given space. The body, as we know it, materializes itself within our minds. As Ponty states, “to be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily in space” (148). The body can be compared to a work of art, it becomes art through the materialization of ideas within the subjects mind. The Yokohama Port Terminal began to materialize itself when POA envisioned a transportation hub that would be an extension of the pier ground, simultaneously hosting the functions of a port terminal while providing an urban park for Yokohama residents. The park could be seen as a space which humans have given a special meaning according to the daily functions of human activity. As the description of a person is extracted from the actual appearance of his face the secondary functions of the terminal as a public space have been formulated in a similar fashion. In essence, we construct the body in our minds, the same way a string of words may have a deeper philosophical meaning which, though our definitions of what certain words mean, construe themselves into poems, or in a built sense, architecture.

Folding is the terminal's operative technique, and all the building's functions - circulation, mechanical, electrical, structural, programmatic, waterproofing, etc - are absorbed by the logic that this technique provides. Eisenman notes that his “folded projects are a primitive beginning. In them the subject understands that he or she can no longer conceptualize experience in space in the same way that he or she did in the gridded space.” The Yokohama Port Terminal's structure is actually composite and varied in nature, and the envelope is a rhetorical artifice that breaks and binds the sometimes contradictory and differentiated elements into an organic whole. As diagram 1.1 shows, the pushing and pulling of the surface condition creates an envelope which contradicts the folding nature of the interior surfaces. For example, the main hall is spanned by traditional triangulated trusses that are subsequently clad in steel plates that extend the logic of the fold over the entire system. The folding nature of the terminal presents the possibility of an alternative to the gridded space of traditional Cartesian order which architecture has become so accustomed to following.

The tectonic system of the folded surfaces maximizes the cruise terminal's flexibility, uniting programs of circulation, and structural systems while exploiting their differences to produce spatial variety.

Works Cited


Diagram 1.1

Diagram 1.2