

In contradistinction, Hejduk's Diamond House re-envisioning an orderly grid within a lozenge. Rather than an overflow of space from one room to the next, each room is clearly demarcated; each serves only one specific function, e.g., a piano room, a dining room, a spiral staircase. There are three variants of this spatial theme. Diamond House A inscribes four complete squares in the middle of a diamond. The lines of its grid intersect at one point in the center. In the opposite direction, they stretch to the edges of the diamond, which truncates the rest of its incomplete squares. In a reiteration, Diamond House B shifts this internal orthogonal grid by half a square, resulting in a cross shape consisting of five squares in the middle of the diamond. Therefore the center is a square instead of a point (like in version A). In Diamond Museum C, walls dissolve. A grid of columns hint at the same grid, within which fragments of vertical dividers are deployed. Incorporating this exact grid framework, all three variants of A B and C show a lucid spatial organization, as opposed to Aida's kaleidoscopic interior complex.

Besides their contrasting approaches to organizing interior space, their use of colors accentuates the distinction between chaos and orderliness. Aida paints all the beams, columns, baseboards, and floors in metallic silver to make the grid apparent but neutral in character. He then applies red, blue and yellow, in Mondrianesque fashion, to certain sections of the walls, ceilings, screens, cabinet and furniture, with the majority in white. Consequently, these dispersed color patches throughout the interior cause further disorientation. By contrast, for example, in Diamond House A, Hejduk paints the structure-construction in gray, and the walls as well as all the interior elements' vertical surfaces (furniture included) in white. He then orders colors in space in the extreme by dividing up the house vertically into four zones: 0 to 18", 18" to 36", 36" to 54", and above. All horizontal planes within the first band are painted blue; the

second, red; the third, yellow; and white above. Accordingly, the colors slice the space like knives, creating a vertical datum and optimizing the house's spatial logic.

The strongest disparity between Mondrian Pattern and Diamond House happens at their peripheral treatments. Hejduk encloses Diamond House A with vertical operable panels, which pivot up to 45 degrees. When open, the panels run parallel to the house's orthogonal grid; closed, they intersect the interior walls at a 45 or 135 degree angle. This strategy poses a challenge to the Cubists' interest in strong centralization of figures upon a canvas, with decreasing activity towards the periphery of the field, to which Hejduk alludes in his "Introduction to Diamond Catalogue."¹⁷³ The tension heightens at Diamond House's perimeter, as its relationship between the inside and the edges vacillates, causing constant shifts. Its 45 degree tilt intensifies that instability. Hejduk argues, "A square, when tipped at an angle of 45 degrees, loses its previous static orientation. The four corners immediately become charged and filled with maximum tension"¹⁷⁴—in contrast to the non-directional field of a squared square, biased toward equilibrium. By extension, the rotation of a cubic volume at 45 degrees also causes a break in the equilibrium. Therefore deprived of frontality, Diamond House confronts the observer with a convergent (vertical) edge (at the corner of the house and center of its front facade). One can never rest one's gaze, and is constantly propelled to move aside and about the house.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ John Hejduk, "Out of Time and Into Space," *Mask of Medusa*, 71.

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The geometrical motif of *munamochibashira* to support a massive triangular block, which characterizes the facade of Mondrian Pattern, inaugurates Aida's toy play in Toy Block House I-X. (This house series recalls Eisenman's House I-X, but they are fundamentally different in conception.¹⁷⁶) With reference to TBH, Aida describes "form follows fiction" as: "fabricating a vividly contrasting image against the actual surround" [虚構は実体よりも鮮明 にそれを投射する場所もある].¹⁷⁷ This "fiction" begins with Toy Block House I (1978), whose image of a toy house in simple geometries forms a stark contrast with the surrounding real houses. TBH I comprises large solids laid out with near symmetry. Imitations of *munamochibashira* appear in both the front and the back facades. Inside, the toy vocabulary continues. An inner court faces a large square block (wall) punctured by four equidistant squares (windows) and flanked by two fat cylinders (columns). A perfect disk (skylight) cuts through the roof above. The floor surfaces carry the same circular and square themes. Then the *munamochibashira* motif recurs; the living room looks into a dining room framed by a top-heavy triangular prism over thick solid walls below. Overall, TBH I appears to be sharply outlined and outright simple—as if consisting of only stacked geometric solids and merely a toy replica. Form therefore follows fiction—in playing with building bricks. From columns, beams, walls, ceilings, floors, to stairs, one rule (i.e., stacking) determines all.

¹⁷⁶ Eisenman's House sequence is created as an abstract notational system. See chapter 00.

¹⁷⁷ *The Architectural Anthology of Takefumi Aida: Excursive Thoughts*, 104.

In Toy Block House II (1979), *fiction* takes on a new meaning: *fake*. TBH II is a mixed-use building in a commercial area, with a coffee house on the first floor and a two-story apartment above. Compared to I, II appears less massive and in fact, it is—except for a variant *munamochibashira* motif in the house’s front. In TBH II, the toy-block expression only applies to the surfaces, as opposed to TBH I, which uses the same expression inside and outside. “The objective [is] to see if the feeling of toy blocks could be expressed merely through surface treatment,” says Aida.¹⁷⁹ As a mere veneer over the building, the treatment feigns toy-vocabulary on the exterior envelope. The blocks are fake (in keeping with the Japanese definition of fiction as a lie).

In Toy Block House III, VI (1981) and VII (1982), in order to strengthen the fiction of play, the actions of stacking and the element of chance (a defining component in toy block play) are introduced and emphasized formally. In particular, TBH III breaks down into smaller solids of two basic modules: 600 millimeters (applied on the interior) and 1,200 millimeters (applied on the exterior). A randomly numbered chart is used to determine the color of the solids, giving the 600 mm pieces primary colors, with the rest in white or gray. The haphazard use of colors reflects chance and randomness, whereas the multiplication of blocks implies the predictability of stacking and piling. In addition, the jaggedness of the house gives the impression of incompleteness, as though the stacking of toy blocks was abruptly halted and the play was over.

¹⁷⁹ Aida, “On Playfulness and Toy Blocks,” 43.

Next, a reversed play happens—wherein the trauma of war in Aida seems to come to the fore. In TBH VIII (1983) and X (1984), destruction displaces construction. In speaking of play, Aida concurrently manifests pessimistic thoughts of annihilation: “Architects, after all, are mortal—and neither they nor their works are permanent; most works of architecture will disappear...”¹⁸⁰ Now, instead of stacking and



Figure 120: Toy Block House X, 1984.

adding, in TBH VIII, pieces are removed from a pre-stacked pile to make space and a form. Some blocks are even literally destroyed; the broken pieces then become pavement in a cracked pattern. Again in TBH X, a similar reversal process takes place, coming to an abrupt stop at an unspecified moment. Symbolically, Aida places a solid sphere in red to replace the last block removed from the pile, which suggests equilibrium between the forces of construction and destruction, as well as marking the end of the creative process.

But Aida’s Toy Block House program ends not with the serene placement of the red sphere. In a rather dramatic, violent act, Aida openly detonates and explodes Aida Block (aka TBH Zero), from which this toy play germinates and by which it ends.

¹⁸⁰ Aida, “Works of Takefumi Aida—Lecture in the United States by Takefumi Aida,” 37.

After Aida's play and mask cease, catastrophic thinking grows conspicuous. Following TBH, Aida commits himself to the exploration of layered repetitions of walls to effect disjointed and dynamic space, predicated upon the logic of oriental ink painting, which expresses the depth of a scene by the layering of planes in different tones and densities. Aida argues, "This approach overlaps with my understanding of contemporary society: In today's society there are many things happening—many changes, many problems—but civilization so far has been able to absorb, to adjust, to handle most of what comes along in an orderly manner. Yet it could be said that, so far, society has depended to some extent on hope and good luck—but we are more and more unable to ignore the possibility of catastrophe." A sense of anxiety and fear of war lurks in his words. Coincidentally, Aida's architectural exploration of wall repetitions culminates in "Tokyo War Dead Memorial Park," 1988 in honor of the 160,000 Japanese from Tokyo who died during the war.

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Stored away amongst the archival drawings in Aida's office is an epilogue to Aida's play. Once again Aida revisits the subject of drama in his unrealized "Romeo and Juliet" (1985), which is an architectural representation of Shakespeare's tragedy, projected for the Third International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. Directed by Aldo Rossi, this third edition has the theme of "Progetto Venezia" (Venice Lagoon). Rossi asked for redesign of several sites in the lagoon town.¹⁸¹ The site Aida chose contains the castles of Bella Guardia and

¹⁸¹ An international jury was appointed to select the best projects for each site. The competition drew approximately 1,500 entries from all over the world. Final winners included many well-known architects, including Peter Eisenman (who dealt with Castelli di Romeo and Juliet at Montecchio Maggiore), Daniel

della Villa—the castles of Romeo and Juliet—perched atop the first foothills of the Lessinian mountains in Montecchio Maggiore, facing each other with some distance apart.

To give it dramatic structure, Aida divides the original story into twelve scenes, one scene per month, and assigned a theme to each:

Once Upon a Time – January
Rosaline – February
The Great Ball – March
Moonlight – April
Silent Wedding – May
The Duel – June
The Banishment – July
The Oath of Love – August
Agony – September
Grief – October
Death – November
And After – December

The twelve scenes are framed in twelve *kakejiku* [hanging scroll], which form a set of Japanese lunar calendars to be hung from the ceiling. Originally created to illustrate paintings and calligraphies in ancient Japan, *kakejiku* allow for easy rolling and easy transportation, which made overseas shipping from Japan to Italy easier.

In his architectural adaptation, Aida creates “imaginary shadows” of the castles of Romeo and Juliet to represent the amorous protagonists. Each month a pair is plotted onto the site, yet not in compliance with the physical reality; rather, they are cast in the opposite direction toward the center between Romeo and Juliet. These shadows are made of rubble gathered from the razed walls of the castles. Recovering the ruins, this construct embodies the history of the buildings. The imaginary shadows are shadows of the past, so to speak. Over time, they expand

Liebeskind (who treated Piazza di Palmanova), Robert Venturi (who redesigned the Academia Bridge on the Grand Canal), among others.

in size and morph closer toward each other like amoebas extending their fingerlike projections of protoplasm, while the castles stay immobile.

In “Romeo and Juliet,” Aida abandons his humor and playfulness, opting instead for emotional flatness. This flatness coincides with his architectural representations: a set of twelve hardline drawings in ink showing the progression of the drama in the change of the shadows, plus a sketch with all their profiles superimposed upon each other to highlight the change at a glance. Additionally, there is the set of twelve *kakejiku* on Japanese paper that forms the lunar calendar. In short, everything is flat, in plan, since all the acts take place tangential to the ground.

To convey the intense emotions of the tragic characters, the imaginary shadows tilt from left to the right; they elongate as if longing to reach each other, finally meeting (at Death) but shrinking again (in And After), afterwards diverging backward and sideways from each other. In the *kakejiku* set, however, Aida tones down the shadows with impressionist-style prints in pastel colored pixels.¹⁸² Poetic patterns from nature, such as pedals and leaves, cover the dark shadows, concealing the dark emotions they represent. These patterns actually come from the Japanese playing cards, *hanafuda* (flower cards). In principle, the figures of the *hanafuda* express the seasonal variation in weather: flowers, birds, winds, and moon. They provide seasonal



Figure 125: Moonlight.

¹⁸² See Takefumi Aida, 現代建築 | 空間と方法 [Contemporary Architecture: Space and Method] (Tokyo: 株式会社同朋舎出版 [Dohosha], 1986), 14-22.

information—for example, Aida covered the imaginary shadows of July in a pattern of lush greenery and October with maple leaves. A sense of quietness necessarily emanates from the picturesque sequence. But this calm yet lively aura sent forth by flowers and trees belies the passionate melancholia of the tragic drama. In July, on the theme of Banishment, when Juliet is suffering anguish and sorrow due to the indeterminable separation from her lover, the imaginary shadow shows lush leafy trees blooming in health and splendor. The same pattern occurs in Romeo's shadow of April on the contradictory romantic theme of Moonlight. Consequently, the floral motif washes away their tragic sentiments. As if to comply with the Japanese decorum of emotionlessness, the impressionist veils enshroud Romeo and Juliet's harrowing love. Aida's play ends in yet another mask to conceal emotions.

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Takamitsu Azuma

Although Azuma did not participate in the publication of *ArchiteXt 2* on the specific theme of “my home,” his *ArchiteXt 0* and *00* are indicative of his housing designs, especially where his body profile stretches to its maximum capacity across the magazine strip, his right hand pointing to the sky above. The architect's own house (in *ArchiteXt 00*), Tower House (1967), especially reflects this vertical invention.

In fact, verticality contradicts the fundamental conception of Japanese architecture, where continuity extends horizontally from texture to pattern, pattern to space, and space to time. In *Katsura*, referring to this Japanese extension, Kenzo Tange argues, “Whereas the creators of Gothic architecture invented methods which enable them to overcome gravity and usurp new

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