

### *Archiving Flux/Stasis*

A number of recurring and concomitant themes have significantly marked Erjeta Attali's visual research. In recent years, she has explored the dialectic negotiations between τέχνη (techne) and φύσις (physis), challenging the viewer to detect patterns of interpenetration between architecture and nature. These vast constellations of domestic sanctuaries ensconced in mostly impervious settings, not only recalibrate the boundaries of geomorphological liminalities (and, in turn, the relation between periphery and center), but also reassess our notion of the sublime as an aesthetic category. Such a corpus of images is the result of her incessant peregrinations to the most remote areas of the world. While mapping these environments in extremis, she increasingly became attracted to structures that either integrated themselves with uncompromising surroundings; struggled desperately to retain a modicum of formal identity; emerged triumphantly from nature's viscera; or were overwhelmed by the elements. Attali identified, archived, and taxonomized the disparate reactions triggered by these interactions. Whether situated in the Atacama Desert or on the Aurlandsfjord, these buildings share a common aesthetic tenet: they incarnate a rigor and a sobriety, which immediately brings to mind monastic architecture in Italy and France.

Attali extracted hermitages and sacred precincts from contemporary structures that have disrupted their respective settings. In some cases, these "pauperistic" dwellings function as refuges from the landscape's austerity: final markers of human intervention before crossing the point of no return. In other instances, they remind us of pilgrims' stations during strenuous wayfaring. Attali carefully remapped both their geography and retraced the itinerary of this contemporary pilgrimage. However, unlike the linear trajectory of El Camino towards Santiago de Compostela (or towards Finisterrae), many of the sites that delineate this journey seem to be propelled by centrifugal forces, moving outwards, away from a center, and scattered to the ends of the Earth.

Attali reflected upon the distances that separate peripheries from their focal points. In many ways, this constitutes her νόστος (nostos): a homeward journey towards a personal and cultural center. The pathway paved with quarry detritus and ancient spolia, assembled by Dimitris Pikionis in the 1950s—aside from evoking the religious experience of the Panatheniac procession—reestablishes our omphalic connection with the primacy of Classical legacy and makes reference to Attali's early work as a photographer of archaeological sites. She further monumentalized this personal and cultural debt by fashioning Bernard Tschumi's New Acropolis Museum into a basilica nave. The Periclean citadel—just like a church altar—is galvanized through a perspectival fuga, punctuated by the sculpture from the west pediment on the right and by parallel shadows etched on the pavement. Effectively, this becomes a space of mediation between the urgency of contemporaneity and the memory of tradition.

A number of images taken from within the cellae, or inner chambers, of these contemporary sanctuaries call attention to Attali's interest in rediscovering the intimacy of domesticity and its relation to the exterior. By addressing architecture into or within a landscape (and not a landscape into architecture), her focus shifted towards the protean properties of light. Casa Equis (Cañete, Peru); Castelcrag House (Sydney, Australia); Springwater House (Seaforth, Australia); Water|Glass House (Atami, Japan); and Garden Terrace (Miyazaki, Japan) are cases in point. The open glass walls which envelope and transfix these structures become the canvases onto which reflections, glares, deflections, and transparencies were carefully indexed. She invited the surrounding environment to permeate the interior and to redesign it according to the time of the day or the season of the year. As such, Attali enriches these domestic settings by proposing viewpoints that frustrate the conventional assumptions that regulate the conflict between architecture and landscape.