

Fig. 1—In the scope of this handout, [Hilla and Bernd Becher](#)'s well-known photography of built structures is both a resource and a symptom. A resource, in the sense that it offers a sense of photography-in-montage that prompts the discussion of the *bimodal novel-essay* (image-text compound). A symptom of environmental (non-cartographic) *détourage*.

The boosting of academic genres with artistic forms is established in some areas, and less in others. For instance, the [performance lecture](#) is rather well established: it has a convertible range among larger audiences. However, if extended to the genre of the essay—as the standard university article—the range is currently quite restricted. If we *need* the article to expand to a *bimodal novel-essay* with cartographic affordances, it is in order to *cover more ground* than what the article/essay normally affords. However, it is not enough to *establish* cartographic affordances.

Because [cartographic affordances](#) already exist in the performance lecture. The *bimodal novel essay* needs to be established on its own account: adding the affordances of story to *run* the errands of academic research. If the errand is *at once empirical and theoretical*, this is clearly needed. The monograph is a genre that holds this affordance, only to an extent. But in the transition from the monograph to shorter works, there is yet a bar. In [HAU](#), a journal of ethnographic theory—in which I am presently publishing a piece—is taking such risks as a novel opportunity.

Because the framework of a journal for ethnography and theory combined raises this sort of question, this challenge is now a public matter (*res publica*). A different explanation is that the topic of the symposium—Schneider's (2021) [Expanded vision: the new anthropology of the moving image](#)—is explicitly concerned with bimodal records in ethnographic fieldwork, and the bimodal *replay* of art-works as his point of departure: the moving image. In this context, a topic that appears a bit “advanced”, and in this sense *narrow*, however is the bread and marmalade of our work at KHiO.

Because the image-writing compound defines the pieces that the students at the MA level submit in partial completion of their final theory course, is fundamental. And also because the essays cover the full range from the poetic prose/literary narrative to essay that are tangential to plain scientific research. Are we ready to move **a**) the idea that we have to solve the challenge of teaching theory-development at an art school, to **b**) establish in descriptive, analytic and synthetic terms how/when the *bimodal novel-essay* arguably/demonstrably might meet *research-needs* (which for starters is to enable readers to manage *complexity* beyond the research article)?

Applying the framework of general education, crossing the threshold from the article to the essay already features potential objections: such as the common understanding that literary *talent* and *image intelligence* lies beyond the scope of general education. As part of the *scientific staff* working at an art-school, however, a minimum of literary and imagineering practice, is required to work at *involving* writing in artistic practice through teaching, as the students are working on developing their abilities as *reflective practitioners* working with materials-based projects (in a digital context).



A general competence of this kind could be seen to evolve from generative processes linked to a *bimodal practice*: developing *records* in which bimodal practices evolve by acquiring some editing skills—that vary between students—targeting readability at some later time (*replay*). The record (writing/imagineering) and replay (reading/annotating) defining the bimodal

Fig. 2—variation *between*: based on similarity and difference. The montage is here understood as a photography of variation (variation between). Photos and montage: Hilla and Bernd Becher. © Estate Bernd & Hilla Becher, represented by Max Becher.

workflow, *editing* is the focal element here: it is around this core that the needed literary ability and the imagineering intelligence are hatched and develop. They are emergent in the *bimodal* work-form and *resource*. At this interstice, there is a new *material* (with a *content* and *expression*). It is a material emerging from the configurable human body and environmental designs.

It comes from the mutually constraining—limiting or corrective—impact that *writing* and *images* have on each other: **a)** writing readily shift images from an immersive/indulgent to a reflective/critical mode; **b)** images move writing from an infinite/transcendental mode to a mundane/active mode. So, the images is *not just* immersive and the text is *not just* infinite. And from the *editorial work* that defines a third/autonomous zone (*between record and replay*) will hatch *emergent* literary repertoire and visual skills of the kinds that are needed to produce and read “bimodally”.

In other words, developing a practice and awareness of editorial work as a [temporary autonomous zone](#) (TAZ) from which one may expect that a mainstreaming of literary- and imagineering skills will emerge, occur and mature. In this sense, there needs be *no* expectation that the bimodal repertoire will require special talents or skills (beyond normal intelligence). And that it will constitute, in the near or the remote future, a mainstream cultural repertoire. Hence the question of what we can do—in artistic- and scientific research—to follow suit, and meet the obstacles.

To address editorial work in *spatial* terms—e.g. the TAZ—is decisive in way of developing the [proxemics](#) of this space. That is, articulating what in broad terms is understood as *distance*. Distance, in itself, is of no avail. *Articulating* distance in relative/relational terms means that we address proxemics. Which is clearly not the same thing. For instance, determining the adequate distance in function of the amount of attention that is needed for the matters at hand to communicate, has to do with proportionality, fairness, resources, adequacy and surely design.

This thinking is, of course, not unrelated to organisation, management, resources and economics, in the sense that editorial operations—widely conceived—have to do with the architecture of structures that we hold and that hold us. Or, editorial work can be conceived as a subclass of such processes, but particularly important since it is instrumental to *proportionality*: exertions that articulate in that they are for a *clearly formulated purpose* and to *an extent not greater than required*. But they originate with the *self* and result in the *ego*: exposed being, imposed being—citizenship.

The *ego* originates from what is held, what is private and upstage. The *self* is the origin of what holds, which is public and downstage. Between: the *body* that is held and holds... immersed in interaction, involved in discussion, committed to exchange and—of course—formed by editing. They connect through a system of *trap-doors*, of which the concept is architectural: the *same*, the *similar* and the *different* (which is played out within and between structures, displayed in cartography and its *other*). Architecture comes from a geometry that should include *all things human*.

Architecture emerges from a sense of *problem*, and design from making the problem *specific*: which means that *neither* architecture *nor* design solves the problem of living. They create the problem (architecture) and shape it (design). It constitutes a defining step from *trouble* (in the sense of *chaos* or *complication*). Architecture proposes *complexity* as an alternative. But it is limiting, because it tends to define itself by moving forth from difference between (defined by

similarity and difference) to difference within (defined by sameness and similarity), and back. But then [urbanism](#) can move beyond this.

Architecture today has but meagre narratives to speak for it. Its power is also limited before the *environmental* challenge. Urbanism, on the other hand, *has* a narrative to speak for it (and is constitutively environmental). A narrative *in the making*: **a)** narratives that speak *from making*; **b)** narratives *made from* the bimodal affordance novel-essay explored here. In this sense, the cartographic sense of design can hold *sameness*, *similarity* and *difference* because it also holds *otherness*. The cartographic concept of the bimodal novel-essay, rests on the premise of *urbanism*: that is, the city in awareness of its evolving nature and cultural history.

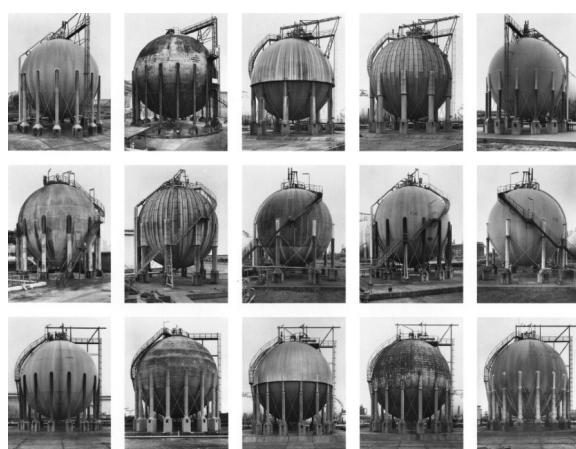


Fig. 3—variation within: based on sameness and similarity. Sameness in the sense that it is within the range of a count (counting gas tanks). © Estate Bernd & Hilla Becher, represented by Max Becher.