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Received 1 Mar 2017 | Accepted 19 Apr 2017 | Published 17 May 2017

DOI: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.38

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The interior as architectural principle

Bart Verschaffel¹

ABSTRACT The principle of architecture is the creation of an “inside” or an interior. There are three layers of meaning involved in isolating and defining a space as an “inside”: the floor/earth, the wall/world, the ceiling/heavens. The three combined constitute and define a particular version of the archetypical “interior”: the room. Each architectural interior, though, is at the same time a closed space, on itself, and at the same time represents and relates to an “outside” or to the World. This article is published as part of a collection on interiorities.

¹ Architecture & Urban Planning, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium Correspondence: (e-mail: bart.verschaffel@ugent.be)

With “inside” and ‘outside’ the Philosopher thinks being and non-being. The most profound metaphysics is thereby rooted in an implicit geometry, in a geometry which—whether we like it or not—spatializes thought. —Gaston Bachelard¹

There would seem to be delight and mystery inherent to the ideas of a boundary or a centre.... —William R. Lethaby²

Introduction

The beginning and principle of architecture is the creation of an “interior”. To dwell or to live and to be rooted, it may be sufficient to mark a place and create a centre. Erecting a monumental stone, naming a mountain, or painting the walls of a hidden cave can suffice to appropriate and “humanize” the wilderness and turn it into a “world”.³ One can live without building.⁴ But a work of architecture does more than just mark a spot. It creates, additionally, an “interior”: it separates a circumscribed space from its environment and turns it into an “inside”. Man does not only live in a World, but also in a “home” (a “house”, a city, a country) that relates to the World as an “inside” does to an “Outdoors”. It is an essential aspect of being in the World that it in some ways implies a being *outside*. Therefore, architecture is not only a means to build a World, but also, at the same time, to create many different kinds of “inside”. And each interior is not just contained in the world and part of it, but is also its opposite as it *confronts* the world from within. Architecture *mediates*: it is essentially about establishing and defining the relationship between Inside and Outside, between the home and the World.⁵

Interiors

Before there is architecture, there is nothing but “substance étendue”—“extended substance” -, *exteriority*. When somebody looks for a place to rest during a stroll, to picnic, or to hide, he or she automatically looks for naturally enclosed and protected spots, such as corners, a hole next to a tree, a cave, an overhang. All kinds of “natural interiors”, of “*entrées noires*”⁶ are perceived as special, and most of these spots appear as attractive and threatening at the same time. Caves, volcanoes, shells, nests, bowls and jars activate the (archaic) imagination (Fig. 6).⁷ Also the mass of the earth and the sea, each a Universe in themselves, demarcating the World of Man are considered as an immense “inside”: they both exemplify in Nature the limit of an *infinite* Interior. And then there is, of course, the model of the “first interior” from where we all came into the World: the womb. To come into the world is—at least as experienced from the perspective of the new-born—to come *out*? All these forms of “natural” interiors function as basic images that fill up and illustrate archaic basic distinctions and primary spatial experiences stored in our language and culture. They resonate when we start thinking about architecture. It is therefore important here to notice *who* is speaking: the bodily experiences of men and women are indeed different, and therefore the basic experiences that fill up words as “inside” and “outside” are so different that this cannot but affect the idea of architecture. I will not thematise the gender difference in this text, but it does inevitably play along in all that can be said about the “principles” of architecture.

We do not only use and appropriate natural interiors but construct artificial ones: special objects—structures, buildings—to live in, to make a “home” there, from where we see the World through the window, and relate to the Outside and deal with it from our “headquarters”. To know where we are, to build and

indicate what counts as “in” or “out”, we have a whole range of architectural means, devices and signs at our disposal, going from barriers and barbed wire to walls, various types of gates, doors and locks, ribbons, carpets and floors, sound signals, traffic signs, etc. When is one inside a house? What is the status of the facade, the front yard, the threshold, the vestibule, the patio? How “outside” is a terrace or a balcony? Where is “downtown”? Designing and building architecture is not only constructing and decorating an interior, but first of all defining its relation to the “outside”, formulating and imposing a specific spatial relation. Our life consists, after all, of continuously going back and forth from inside to outside, from wanting and dreaming to work “out there” and transform the “exteriority” to our visions and needs. The end result, the World of Man, is some kind of domesticated wilderness, a kind of tamed outside, a kind of global “Interior”, that borders on the great mythical Outdoors of the Wilderness, Nature, the Sea, the Sky, Natural Elements that existed before there was Culture, and which we can never turn into a “World”.

Complementary to being “inside” is the awareness of an “outside”, and of being positioned towards that “outside”. An interior that does not, one way or another, open up an “outside”, an interior that is completely closed and isolated, is mad and sickeningly. It is the definition of Hell. Hence, making architecture—making an “interior”—always implies *representing* the “outside”.⁸ The elderly René Magritte, when asked in an interview about the importance and significance of the blue sky and about the characteristic white clouds in his paintings, answered that one could maybe imagine a life without ever seeing the sky and the clouds, “but it is better not to think about it”.⁹ The basic formula of Magritte's universe is therefore: a house +the sky.

Layers

The primordial architectural tools to construct an “inside” and articulate its relationship to the “outside” are threefold. First, the *floor*: the beach towel, the picnic cloth, a podium, the table and chair and bed that ensure that one doesn't need to eat, to sit, to sleep and to mate on the bare earth. People who have to eat and sleep on the bare earth, who cannot afford clean sand to cover the ground of their homes, live in stables like animals and they are to be pitied. Architecture begins with covering the ground, with separating the dwellings of man from the earth dark, deep earth and everything that is lurking there.¹⁰ In this way the abyss underneath, the Underworld, is kept at a distance by an artificial covering: a carpet, a coloured sand carpet, a decorated tile floor. Weaving certainly is one of the oldest symbols for the cosmogony, the woven carpet one of the most archaic symbols of an ordered Cosmos. The signs and symbols that cover the floors—in the tapestry of Berber culture the mother goddess in all her figurative and geometric appearances and motives for example—survive in the decorative patterns used in the ancient mosaic floors and, till today, in ceramic floors, and the design of industrial oriental rugs.¹¹ The ground of the house of man is covered and cleaned by signs that are at once symbolic and magical; they exorcise the dark forces that hide underneath, and organize the stage of human life. A floor by itself already makes a room—see the “Room for Monnikenheide” the Belgian artist Richard Venlet installed in Zoersel (Fig. 1). Of Daedalos—the mythical first engineer-architect—we know very little, but one of the inventions that made him famous is a dance floor in Crete: the sacred space where human existence, symbolically represented by ritual dance, is performed.

The second means to construct an artificial interior is the wall. A borderline, a ditch, a barbed wire, a hedge, a running fence, a



Figure 1 | Richard Venlet, *Open Room Integration*, Huize Monnikenheide, Zoersel 2006. Reproduced with permission of the artist. This figure is not covered by Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright: the artist.

threshold, glass screens. In principle, a chalk line suffices to create an “inside” and/or an “outside”—even though it may not always be evident which side is “inside” and which is “outside”: one often needs “inside information” about a social or political conflict to see how a border was drawn, or to find out if the wall is meant to exclude or to put behind bars. But a wall works, in any case, very differently from floor or ceiling, which are about the place of Man in the Cosmos. The walls are used to divide the realms of day and night, man and woman, men and animals, the living and the dead, Communism and Capitalism, Mexico and the United States. The archaic space is, furthermore, organized around “centres”, sacred places that somehow connect with the powers which reside in the “high above” and/or the “deep below”. The wall is also a means to constrain and isolate the sacred in a “centre”, and to give the rest of the world over to the secular life of ordinary people. The cemetery gate and wall is in this case quite significant and illustrative of this situation. But the walls first of all organize *horizontally* and subdivide the world of man socially and culturally; they affirm the differences in wealth and power, create distance between the bodies, assign a place to the families of the tribe, to the men and women, to the grownups and the children. And they distinguish between eating and sleeping, dirty and clean, the public and the private. The kind and materiality of a wall furthermore determine the degrees of intimacy, the conditions for what can be seen or heard publicly and how the personal life can be screened off the eyes and opinions of others.

The third architectural means for making an “interior” is the roof. The roof separates the World Below from the Sky Above. Just a roof is sufficient to create an “interior”: an umbrella or a hat, a canopy, a tent, even the crown of a tree... Seen from the outside, a roof covers an “inside”; seen from the inside a ceiling saves an interior from being exposed to the Heavens. To sleep in the open air, under the stars, certainly is an unforgettable poetic experience and an adventure, but mankind first needs a roof over its head. It is the ceiling that defines the shape and scale of the “world beneath” where man lives. One feels very well the difference between the low, flat ceiling of a living room and the monumental dome of a church painted blue with golden stars representing the firmament. A ceiling one can almost touch is very different from one with lots of empty free space above the heads. To look at a ceiling means contemplating the Heavens, just as looking through a window means seeing (or not seeing) the “distant” or the horizon. Therefore, ceilings used to be marked off the walls with mouldings, and to be covered, just as the floors, with signs and painted figures, scenes and occasionally the heavens itself. The average commercial modernist architecture easily forgets the ceiling, or treats it as the backside of the floor above, as nothing but a white flat surface. But the ceiling is the last thing one looks at the end the day and the end of life! It is what one sees in the dentist’s chair, before falling asleep or dying in the hospital. To pass away under a dome, or under a vault...

The simplest way to construct an interior that is completely defined, closed and at the same time symbolically “open” and connected to the world, so that who lives there can understand where he is, is the house made of rooms: a floor, four walls, and a roof, with an entrance and windows to look out. Floor+walls+roof=a box, the house as children draw it. The earth+the four directions+heaven=the World. It is certainly possible to build even *less*, more minimalistic. Vernacular and pre-modern architecture use even more essential pyramidal or conical volumes, consisting of only a roof and a floor, with no walls. Circular houses, nothing but a dome, living inside a sphere. All these primitive forms and buildings are architecturally very strong. The expressionist architecture of Bruno Taut, Hermann Finsterlin, the Endless House by Frederick Kiesler, the organic architecture of the fifties and Zaha Hadid, they all avoid boxes and corners while inventing continuous spaces.

Their architecture may formally and technically be very original and innovative, but at the same time reinvents a kind of “strong”, sacred architecture, and may be latently regressive. These simple, essential volumes may indeed be very appropriate for public buildings, to create strong “centres”, but do not structure an environment and are difficult to live in. An inside that is concentrated on itself and not open onto the World, a grotto-like, “organic” house that suggests a “full” or complete interior, nears the phantasm of the prenatal condition. Hence, there are good reasons to use rectangles—*quadri*—to look at the world, and to take apart floors, walls and ceilings, and mark them.¹² They each are about something else. The sky is not the distant, looking to the sky is not looking at the horizon, the distant is not an abyss. It makes sense to structure the field of vision in front, rear, left, right.

Insidess

The significance of and interaction with the built interior are thoroughly determined by what “inside” means for someone in general, and by the prototypical, primitive experiences of “inside”.¹³ The basic reference for experiencing what is up and down, front and back, left and right is, of course, the body. The body experience fills up and clarifies what these words mean. As to “inside” and “outside”, though, things are not so clear. People

do not just *build* interiors; they *are*, first of all, an “inside” to themselves and to each other. The givens we begin to think from, according to Paul Valéry, are three overlapping “realms”: first, *exteriority* or the external World; second, *interiority* or a localized but massless “subjective space” or “thinking space”; third, *the “mind”* or a “me-body” that walks around in the world and where we locate the mind.¹⁴ That body is somebody’s place in the “outside world”. Although we do not really understand how, the combination of a “thinking space” and a body makes an “I” that thinks and sleeps in a head and simultaneously lives out there in the world, where that body is. That body is one among many things in the world, but also an “outside” that contains an “inside”, a *centre*, and also a *body-feeling*.

But how can such a formless, unconfined subjective space be contained within such a compact, confined body-thing? And how will that “mind”, from the “hole” that is carved out in the midst of all that flesh, make it to the “outside”? The interiority and the exteriority, the thinking and extended substance (Descartes), the attributes of Thought and Extensiveness do not interrelate? Can we visualize and see what we are? The content of “inside” and “outside” shift all the time, and are sometimes even reversed. One can even be “out of one’s mind”... *All this suggests that architecture is maybe less modelled after the body and the body experience, but that, on the contrary, our body experience is (also) structured with architectural models.* “I am the space where I am”, writes Noël Arnaud.¹⁵ “To look is to open up.”¹⁶ The analogy drawn in all cultures between the body and the house/home—the door as the mouth, the windows as the eyes, the roof as the skull—may well point at the importance of architectural metaphors as auxiliary constructions for the constitution of the self.¹⁷ Being someone is like dwelling in a body? A body is (as) a home, *my “place”*? Architecture does, then, not picture what we are but rather what and how we would want to be.

The architectural interior represents “a state of mind” (“un état d’âme”), it can be read as a narrative or seen as a self-portrait, but it represents at the same time an “interior vastness”, it offers a representation of the *World*.¹⁸ A spacesuit or a wetsuit that fits the body comfortably is not an “interior”. An interior has to be too large for the body and to make room, maybe also to express a personality, but always to accommodate the *World*. From within the interior one needs to sense or see the *Outdoors*, and be able to *situate* the interior in the *World*. Gérard Wajcman writes: “Going to the window is a way of moving towards the word and of establishing a link.”¹⁹ The “inside” only becomes an “interior” when one meets the world via windows, objects, pictures, views and sounds, when one can make a *journey around my room*—as Xavier de Maitre would write in 1794—when there is an entrance and an exit. The geometry of the rectangle—width, height and depth, or floor, wall, ceiling—provide theretofore a basic structure that is covered with stories, told by the views through the windows, the fire place, the columns and arcades, Chinese pottery, globes, encyclopaedias, televisions, wallpaper and landscape paintings on the wall.

An interior is a miniature model of the world. See the *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, with Cosme Tura’s allegories of the months (Fig. 5). Or Pieter De Hooch’s picture from the Berlin Museum, with the woman in an alcove, guarding the most private centre of the house, looking back at a crib, and the dog looking backwards (Fig. 7). The picture invites the beholder to follow the diagonal leading from the woman to a little girl in the background, before an open door, lifting one foot to look a bit better, further. This is how the image is opened up, just as the pictured interior is: the gaze of the beholder is directed towards what he cannot see himself but what the girl is contemplating, the *Outdoors*, the *World*.²⁰

A room with a view

A view through a window is always a *pars pro toto* experience, it always is a *picture* that somehow symbolizes the *World*. Outside there is a *World*, but there is also *Light*. See, for instance, the inset windows in the glass walls of Pierre Chareau’s *Maison de Verre*. The light in an interior falls in from *elsewhere*: an architectural interior is a dark place where the light “enters”. (A glass cube can only in a limited sense be called an interior). A hole in a wall is not necessarily meant to provide a view, but can serve just to let the light in, as is the case in most religious architecture. An interior can, thereby, not symbolically relate to the *World*, but function as a metaphysical machine and connect to the Principles that Reality is made of. Outside the light reveals the world, but remains itself invisible. However, in an interior, the light that falls in, without illuminating and exposing a “view”, is detached from its source and transformed into an Element. *The light itself becomes visible*—softened, filtered, dispersed, on the walls and floors. Interiors then not only connect to the *World*, or the *Distant*, but also to an unworldly, metaphysical Beginning, an Origin, something that exists before there were things. Alberti already wrote that in religious building the windows have to be small and placed high, so that the soul is not distracted by what is going on in the world.²¹ See the light in Borromini’s St. Ivo, in Le Corbusier’s abbey or the Notre Dame of Ronchamp. It indeed makes a huge difference if the light falls in from “above” instead coming in together with a “sight” through a window. But even then, if the light comes without a view, it works. In De Hooch’s painting of the mother, does the girl look at the world, or does she stand in the light? Thence the importance of the facade in architecture. Doors, windows, and the articulation of the wall—a *rustica* basement, or the completely blind Venetian Church facades of Codusso—cast dark sharp shadows and holes and so the depth and the darkness associated with the interior is brought out and projected unto the facade. This is the opposite of what alabaster window panels do in an interior. A blind wall is in this way opened up, and the play of light and dark, full of contrast, announces at the outside the depth of the “inside”.

The architectural imagination can express itself most radically in projects and unrealized buildings. One can imagine *extreme interiors* of two types: the “full” interior, and the *infinite interior*. They are both phantasms, which means that they express a desire unhindered by a “reality principle”, and picture an interior that is impossible or mad—a desire that plays with, though, whenever we relate to “interior”. The first, most primitive architectural phantasm is an interior in which a body and a life fit precisely: a completely customized “cocoon”, with inner walls that create a second skin, an insensitive, hard, shell. Other examples are: the harness, the wetsuit, the capsule, the burqa, the tortoise shell, the helmet or the bunker. Enveloping a body certainly is one of the first functions of clothes: cloths cover and shield. People live “in” their cloths. But clothes do not organize space and they are not architecture. The pleasure of wearing “loose cloths”, and feeling layers of cloth, is not yet experiencing an interior. The basic images of completely customized spaces certainly exert a fascination on the architectural and artistic imagination, as evidenced by numerous works of art. For example, the work of the Belgian artist Thierry De Cordier (Fig. 2) is essentially about the longing for—and about the impossibility of—fully, happily falling together with oneself, of being at home fully. In his oeuvre, the two basic forms of a strong, centred interior (the sphere and the cube) peep up continually, with the ball-in-cube, or the sphere, the strongest symbol of interiority, contained inside the strongest and simplest model of a defined, constructed space, as its limit. The man-in-a-box, a woman’s body pressed into a box, are primordial (or nostalgic and regressive) images of “being somewhere fully”. Interiors without inner space, without play,

with no possibility to be inside *with* somebody or something and relate to an outside at the same time, so that every entry entails violent penetration.

The other extreme is the rampant, infinite interior. See for example the morose, stifling interiors of Henri De Braekeleer, the late baroque perspective theatrical sets of palace rooms by the Bibbiena family, and above all the *Carceri* of Giambattista Piranesi (Fig. 3). The *Carceri* picture a limitless inside, an inside without outside, where one can wander endlessly in all directions while at the same time being imprisoned or trapped. The infinite interior is the vision of the Universe as a cage, as a huge prison with a view, with a view of the distant and the blue sky that hides a Black Nothingness, like in René Magritte's *Les mémoires d'un Saint* (1960), picturing the fear that this phantasm is true, and that there may be no *elsewhere*, nothing else than this endless proliferation of the same.

A house is built first and then decorated. Architecture and interior design may relate in many ways, and divide labour in many ways. But it is essential that an interior is not built, that an interior is composed after the construction is finished, and that this cannot be taken up by the architect. A house is never built as “finished” like a car is fabricated in the factory. The means of Architecture are very strong and impactful, but not very subtle and not very varied. The interior design adds elements and objects, introduces new materials, colours and shapes, distributes light, and can create—see for example the work of Petra Blaisse—“atmosphere” and suggest meanings that the bare architecture is incapable of. Curtains divide and close more subtly than windows and shutters, folds soften the straight lines, go swiftly in and out. It is the interior design and the appointments that articulate and express both the forces that enter the interior and those who push outwards. It is the interior decoration that transforms the inside and outside into changing tides, and thereby keeps the sharp and static architectural separations elastic and flexible.

Coda. Where is someone most (with) “oneself”? One can read the sculptures of Antony Gormley as a fundamental and almost

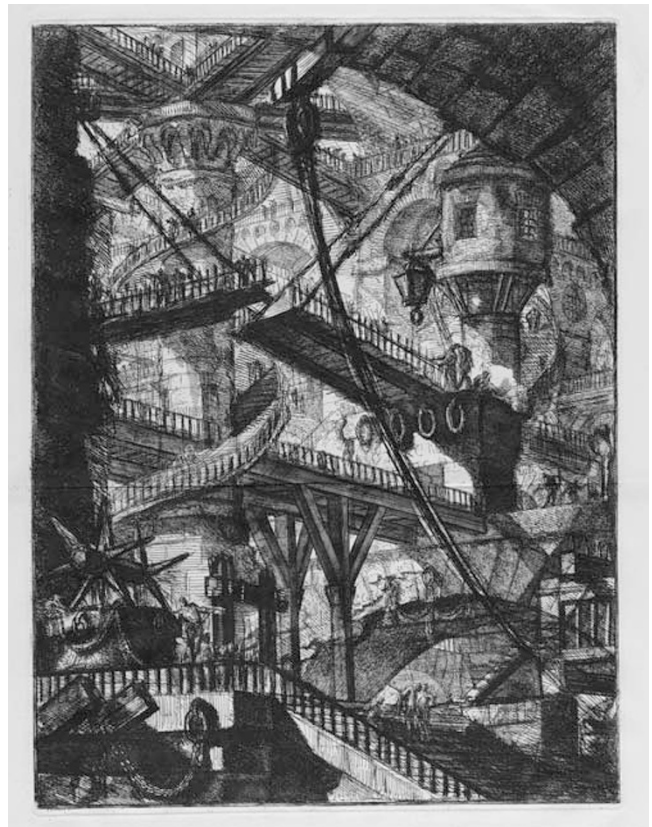


Figure 3 | Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'invenzione, VII : The Drawbridge* (1750). This figure is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Reproduced with permission of the copyright holder, Ghent University Library.



Figure 2 | Thierry De Cordier, *Gargantua*, 1996, 40 × 45 cm. Collectie Ministerie Van De Vlaamse Gemeenschap; Foto: Dirk Pauwels/SMAC. Reproduced with permission of the Gallery Hufkens Brussels. This figure is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright: the artist.



Figure 4 | Antony Gormley, *Home*, 1984. Lead, terracotta, plaster and fibreglass; 65 x 220 × 110 cm. Reproduced with permission of the Gallery Hufkens Brussels. This figure is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright: the artist.



Figure 5 | Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia, Cosimo Tura, The Month of April, ca. 1470. This figure is reproduced under the terms of fair use for academic purposes. The image is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Figure 6 | Adriaen Coorte (working 1683–1707), Still Life with four Shells, private collection. This figure is reproduced under the terms of fair use for academic purposes. The image is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Figure 7 | Pieter de Hooch, Mother Lacing Her Bodice beside a Cradle, 1659–60, Oil on canvas, 92 x 100 cm, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. This figure is reproduced under the terms of fair use for academic purposes. The image is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

philosophical inquiry into the relationship between interiority and exteriority, between subjectivity and objectivity. Gormley's sculpture (Fig. 4) of a supine body with a model house over his head is an unexpectedly direct portrayal of the innermost "spatial and physical awareness" described by Paul Valéry in his *Story of my Little House*: "I was maybe six, maybe eight years old. I went under the sheets, pulled my head and arms out of my long nightgown and, turning myself into a bag, I squeezed myself inside, like a foetus. I hugged my chest—and repeated to myself: *my little house... my little house.*"²²

Notes

- 1 Bachelard (1957) "Le philosophe, avec le dedans et le dehors pense l'être et le non-être. La métaphysique la plus profonde s'est ainsi enracinée dans une géométrie implicite, dans une géométrie qui—qu'on le veuille ou non—spatialize la pensée", p. 191.
- 2 Lethaby (1892).
- 3 Cfr. Mircea Eliade, "Le symbolique du centre", in *Images et Symboles. Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux*, Gallimard, Paris, 1952, pp. 33–72. For a first but still very readable overview of the topic, see William R. Lethaby (1892) *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, especially the chapters on "Four Square" and "At the Centre of the Earth".
- 4 I refer here to the essay by Geert Bekaert, *Mensen wonen*, in Geert Bekaert, *Verzamelde Opstellen 3. Hierlangs 1971-1980*, (V&B 73). WZW Editions: Gent (2007, pp. 167–210).
- 5 Gaston Bachelard has collected in Gaston Bachelard (1957), *Poétique de l'espace*. PUF: Paris a stimulating variety of literary fragments and references on this topic. See especially chapter IX "La dialectique du dehors et du dedans".
- 6 Bachelard (1957), pp. 127.
- 7 Cfr. Paul Valéry's writings on the shell, *L'Homme et la coquille*, in Paul Valéry (1957), *Oeuvres*, I, Gallimard: Paris and the oyster, taken up later by Bachelard (1957), chapter on "La Coquille", pp. 105–129.
- 8 To conceptualize the interior as a *relation* between inside and outside I heavily rely on an essay by Jean-Pierre Vernant: Hestia-Hermès. Sur l'expression religieuse de l'espace et du mouvement chez les Grecs, in Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1991), *La Grèce Ancienne, 2. L'espace et le temps*. Editions du Seuil: Paris, pp. 47–99. I base my argument on insights from anthropologists and historians such as Roger Callois and Mircea Eliade. See Eliade (1987), especially chap. I on "L'espace sacré et la sacralisation du monde".
- 9 René Magritte, interview with Jacques Goossens, Belgian Television, January 28th 1966. Transcription in: André Blavier (ed.) (1979), *René Magritte, Ecrits complets*. Flammarion: Paris, p. 627.
- 10 For a quick overview of what according to ancient cultures is hiding there: Crisafulli and Thompson (2005).
- 11 Cfr. Vandenbroeck (2000).
- 12 For a reflexion on "the success of the square" ('la réussite du carré') and the reasons why paintings and windows are rectangular, cfr. Wajcman (2004), Chapter 5, "Narcisse et la forme tableau".
- 13 Poulet (1961), and the review of the book by Jean Wahl in de Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 68 (3) 3, July–September 1963: 334–351.
- 14 Valéry (1973), pp. 1140–1141.
- 15 The French poet is quoted by Gaston Bachelard, *op.cit.*, pp. 131. My translation. The original reads: "Je suis l'espace où je suis."
- 16 Gérard Wajcman (2004), p. 94: 'Régarder, c'est ouvrir'. For looking at the world as looking at a painting, and looking at a painting as looking through an open window, Gérard Wajcman (2004), chapter 4 'Ouvrir'.
- 17 The literature on the body-house metaphor is ample. A classic is Pierre Bourdieu's essay on the Kabyle house (1977) *Algeria 1960, The Disenchantment of the World, The Sense of Honour, The Kabyle House or the World Reversed*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Mass. For an overview see the collection of articles by Janet Carsten, Stephen Hugh-Jones (ed.) (1995) *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- 18 Gaston Bachelard (1957), p. 77, p. 169.
- 19 Gérard Wajcman (2004), p. 12. My translation. The original reads: "Aller à la fenêtre est une façon de marcher au monde et de nouer un lien".
- 20 See for an "anthropological" reading of the domestic interiors by seventeenth-century Dutch painters Rybczynski (1987). See on De Hoogh in particular the essay by De Mare (1999) on "Domesticity in Dispute. A reconsideration of sources", in: I. Cieraad (ed.) *At Home. An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, p. 20 ff. See also: B. Verschaffel, *The Meanings of Domesticity*, in: The Journal of Architecture, 7, 2002, pp. 287–301.
- 21 Leon Battista Alberti *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, VII, chapter 12.
- 22 Valéry (1973), p. 144. My translation. The original reads: 'J'avais peut-être six, peut-être 8 ans. Je me mettais sous les draps, je me retirais la tête et les bras de ma très longue chemise de nuit, dont je me faisais comme un sac dans lequel je me resserais comme un foetus, je me tenais le torse dans les bras—et me répétais: *Ma petite maison... ma petite maison.*'

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Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this paper as no datasets were analysed or generated.

Additional information

Competing interests: The author declares that there is no competing interests.

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How to cite this article: Verschaffel B (2017) The interior as architectural principle. *Palgrave Communications*. 3:17038 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.38.

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