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Title: *Machine Aesthetics in Architecture Adaptive Reuse of Buffalo’s Grain Elevators*

Abstract: Buffalo, New York has the largest extant collection of grain elevators in the world. Their aesthetics have had a great influence on modern architects such as Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier. But following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, Buffalo ended its role as a grain port. Many grain elevators have been abandoned.

My thesis sought the way to preserve and utilize these abandoned industrial buildings. As a way to understand the significance to develop an adaptive reuse design, I have focused on the aesthetic meaning of the grain elevator seeing it as a machine. Buffalo’s grain elevators have three different phases of aesthetic meanings: Paleo-tech, High-tech and Dec-tech (Decayed, Decreased, Decadent). I tried to preserve the look and feeling of Dec-tech even though it is not an intentional aesthetic. But the aesthetics of High-tech, which inspired European avant-garde architects, also were not created intentionally. The engineers who designed Buffalo’s grain elevators did not intend to impress Walter Gropius or Le Corbusier. This unintentionality is the driving force of machine aesthetics; therefore Dec-tech is also the intrinsic aesthetic phase of a machine. Furthermore, only Dec-tech can tell both positive and negative sides of the industrial society. By looking at the aesthetics and the background together, aesthetics create aesthetic meanings. The important thing is to convey these meanings to people and future generations as well as to maintain the materiality.

In the thesis work, I propose a plan to convert the complex of five grain elevators into a Music Center including concert hall, performance theater, music academy, music instrumental museum and recording studio. Visitors take Moving Walks to get to the buildings. Moving walks follow the remaining train tracks. Inside the building, visitors are transferred by escalators and elevators, which also follows the movement of grain so that people can experience how the grain elevator worked. New installed structures are separated from the original buildings so that people can recognize new from the original.