

PETER WIARDA

Abandonment, Demolition, Reconstruction, Use

Architecture fundamentally exists to provide functional space for human activity. As the needs of its occupants change over time, so must the area be adapted to fit that purpose. While undergoing remodeling or new construction, a working room is rendered useless until its conversion is complete. This project addresses the transition from non-usable space to human-usable space through documentary photography.

The photographs are presented as diptychs, pairing a partially dismantled room with one of completeness and current use. The images are directly related; one represents an interior during its state of transition, the other shows what that area has become. The photographs come from a variety of buildings on Utah State University's main campus, some of which have been demolished to make way for new development.

The photographs of deconstructed areas were made during very brief periods in which the building or room was being prepared for demolition or remodeling. Irreversible damage to the structure or extensive removal of functional elements had already occurred at the time of photographic recording. After the room had been replaced or restored, a second documentation was made with intent to link the past area to its present manifestation. In the case of the remodeled interior, the camera returns to the same location in an attempt to match the composition of the first photograph. For that which had been replaced with new construction, a room of similar function and aesthetic was selected to represent its current form.

In comparing the non-usable space with its corresponding human-usable space, the viewer not only sees the passage of time or the visualization of progress, but is also offered the opportunity to critically consider how space and technology are utilized in a rapidly changing world. Well-designed architecture can foster creativity and enhance productivity. While it is hard to imagine our newest and most technologically advanced buildings outliving their usefulness and subjecting to abandonment and demolition, it is an undeniable certainty that the needs of the future will require imaginative solutions in order to maximize functionality. Furthermore, with the increasing demand for new construction and its toll on the environment, the re-purposing of existing space should be encouraged. My goal in this long-term project is to inspire creators and designers to find innovative ways to improve the future by comparing it with the past.