

Text for a Door

Charlotte Moth

(Inside the door the person who is standing starts to move. A few rotations should be enough to establish how the door moves. The reader continues to read whilst this action is occurring.)

On the inside a person is walking, pushing on the surface of a concave panel. The panel can turn inside the door because it is suspended from a roof that bears on four wheels, which turn around a circular steel track. The track sits on top of a cylindrical wall. The roof and concave panel, together with the ceiling, pivot around a pin on a ball bearing. This pivot point marks the centre of the cylinder. Pushing on the concave panel thus turns the wheels around the track and the door revolves.

This door in particular is a type of room, as it is not simply a door we would find in a lounge, or as the back door of a house that immediately opens to the outside. It is instead an antechamber as it creates an intermediary space, which connects and joins the spaces it is attached to. It allows for a gradual transitioning between one situation and the next.

To pass through the door is a necessity in order to be able to reach a place or space beyond. As a structure it presents us with the possibility that perhaps, in some way, we could just continue to walk around and around, achieving a sense of circular continuity, or an endless activity, a place without beginning or end.

It is a space for abstract thinking.

The speed of rotation within the door is created from the action of pushing at a surface that is, in turn, dependant on the pace of walking, on the force and movement of the person within.

The door marks and coordinates positions of opposites, of knowledge versus the unknown, of model, sculpture and architecture. In this sense, it can be thought of as a catalyst for the imagination.

I think of a series of associations: the door that Alice in Wonderland must pass through by shrinking herself to the right size, or the British television program 'Dr Who' - a science fiction series that began in the 1960's. In 'Dr Who,' the TARDIS (which is an abbreviation for Time and Relative Dimensions in Space) is in the form of an old-fashioned telephone box. The inside of the TARDIS is much bigger than the size of its exterior. It is fundamentally a vehicle that can transport its occupant to any moment in time, to any place in the universe.

Thinking about transportation, rotation, the sunflower can tilt its head to the moving position of the sun. There is a house near Verona in Italy that is called Il Girasole - 'The Sunflower.' It was built by the architect Angelo Invernizzi between 1930 and 1935. The special characteristic of this house was that it, too, like a sunflower, could rotate. The rotation of the house was virtually impossible to perceive with the eye. This 360 degrees rotating architecture brought into coexistence a sensation of static movement, framing throughout the day different vistas of the landscape, which was all enabled by a button so small it could be thought of as something closer to a light switch.

The literal translation of *camera obscura* is 'vaulted chamber.' A precursor to the camera, it was first used as an aid for drawing. The mechanism of this device is that a room or box with a hole in its wall or surface becomes a transformative space, a way of channeling light. As the external light enters through a hole in a wall or surface, it turns the image 180 degrees. When seen on a surface, it is an upside down image. In keeping with perspective, this mechanism functions like the human eye does. Although our brain corrects what we see, and makes the world around us appear the right way up.

The Black Maria was one of the first film studios made by the Eastman brothers. It is, as a studio, an adaptable architecture with inbuilt mechanisms that allow its roof shutters to open and close. It could rotate a whole 360 degrees to achieve optimal lighting conditions for filming. The art historian Aby Warburg made some of his experimental films of the Hopi Indians' snake ritual dance in the Black Maria. This was also the place where the first footage of a man sneezing was filmed. Interestingly, this studio as a context, a freestanding void, attempted to record and preserve presence. What is presence in this sense? A moment in time? An event with a beginning and end? The resultant film that was the product of a recording session, in this instance, creates another layer, build-up in the thin archeological threshold of materiality, reality.

Duchamp's gesture of what *inframince* is or can be weaves its way back: that of a transitional space connecting what is fleetingly sensed through a trace, residue, of an inside and outside. This door, as a liminal space of transition, functions as a gateway to a wealth of experiences we begin to glimpse from standing on one side of this door, anticipating the experience of the other side; only, in this moment, we do not need to eat Alice's cake to shrink to size: we can simply walk through the door.

Il Girasole, 'Sunflower', Verona, Architect Angelo Invernizzi, 1935

TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimensions in Space)

The Black Maria - Thomas Edison, 1892

Alice in Wonderland door. "Where should I go?" -Alice. "That depends on where you want to end up." - The Cheshire Cat."

Sunflower - Berlin, September 2013