Cells are a part of the human body; they are at the origin of its being, its feelings, its emotions, and its sufferings. Thus, they speak the language of the body. There are also cells of habitation. The relationship between people and their habitat is formed in this metaphorical cell. Living and being become a single and unique life experience. 

Potential Architecture explores artists Lucy + Jorge Orta’s recent architectural endeavors that derive from their fascination with cell biology and the process of differentiation. Through drawings and sculpture, the artists conceptualize the communication process the human cell undertakes from its embryonic state, and the infinite transformations that lead to defined structural organisms. This new body of work draws from Lucy + Jorge Orta’s artistic practice, grounded in the universal concerns of community, shelter, migration, and sustainable development. Potential Architecture is a powerful rejoinder to the arbitrary boundaries that define art, architecture, and design.
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Cells are a part of the human body; they are at the origin of its being, its feelings, its emotions, and its sufferings. Thus, they speak the language of the body. There are also cells of habitation. The relationship between people and their habitat is formed in this metaphorical cell. Living and being become a single and unique life experience. These two concepts belong intimately to the reality of our humanity, of our bodies made of limbs and of flesh and blood. The term cell is also used to indicate political and social groups; groups of people cemented together by the same ideals, convictions, and striking power. They represent a social context struggling for change. The historical, social, and geographical context, that is to say the reality, in which the artist intervenes takes on a certain importance when it is the subject of vision; it is a cell, and in so being, is a part of the body.

Cristina Morozzi
To the architect, the word cell means a small apartment, a room, a seclusion space for hermits, nuns or monks, a closet, a punitive incarceration area. In the age of al-Qaeda and surveillance surfeit, the cell is a seedbed of threat and hidey-hole for subversives (or, if you are on the side that wins, the think tank of the resistance). Poets use it as shorthand for graves, “their little cells within the burial-place.” Robert Herrick, in his poem “A Thanksgiving for God, for His House” (1648), describes his wee cottage, his humble “cell wherein to dwell.” For artists Lucy + Jorge Orta, the human cell is the portal through which they reach and reveal meaning for a body of work they call Totipotent Architecture to realize an array of mobile and permanent sculpture: “cells.”

A Sciart Award received by Lucy Orta from the Wellcome Trust in 2004 prompted the artists to reflect on the question, how can our textile architectural studies become more organic and responsive to public space? Framework rhetoric follows, whereby the stem cell becomes Orta’s metaphor for a defined program of differentiation, for a set of new architectural units, within which the parameters are infinitely mutable. Through ensuing collaborative research with cell biologists Orta uses drawing to compare the role of stem cells with an imaginary communication theory. Predicated on advances in stem cell research enabled initially by the 1997 cloning of Dolly the sheep, stem cell lines can be purposely differentiated (i.e. specialized) from one cell type to another. This “energy transformation”—whereby one cell becomes something completely different—references the approach Orta employ for their communication objectives of the recombinant, organic modular cells.

In 2004 Associazione Arte Continua commissioned a multi-installation, site-specific work Totipotent Architecture for the 9th edition of Arte Architettura Paesaggio. Six contemporary artists were selected to create work for six Tuscan villages. Orta were allocated Buonconvento, a thirteenth-century fortified town near Siena, and chose Museo d’Arte Sacra della Val d’Arbia (Museum of Sacred Art) and Porta Senese as the locations for Totipotent Architecture, In Vitro, The Tower of Dreams, and Cinta Muraria. Those familiar with Orta’s body of work will instantly recognize the outstretched arms of the upper body section of multiple Refuge Wear hooded suits, hung in parallel lines down either side of the castellated town gate. Those unfamiliar might recognize the gesture’s reference to religious iconography—the arms welcome but simultaneously echo Christ’s suffering on the cross.

Orta’s three installations in the Museum of Sacred Art possess a new authorial stamp visually unlike their previous iconic work. Colorless lead crystal—its structure suspended, like all glass, between a liquid and a solid—is shaped by the glassmaker’s breath into loose, organic shapes with reference to...
human cells. Reminiscent of the abstract shapes in Joan Fontcuberta’s blood landscape Hemongròs (1998), Orta’s In Vitro glass cells sleep inside an antique iron ribcage crib and create a contemporary contrapposto with the tempera on panel painting, The Annunciation by Girolamo di Benvenuto (1470-1524), which hangs on the wall behind. The contrast is both physical and iconographic. A two-dimensional painting with a comprehensive tempera palette displayed next to a three-dimensional work of colorless crystal and black ironwork might, at first glance, seem incongruous. Yet their joint iconographies hinge on faith. The seemingly dormant cells rest in their crib and possess totipotency—the ability to become more than they appear. The Annunciation is the biblical event when the Archangel Gabriel informs the Virgin Mary she will bear the Son of God. This faith-based act—a virgin birth—further comments on the seemingly unlimited potential of stem cells in human creation. The nature of faith in all its religious and scientific manifestations—questioning and unquestioning—is the subtle dialogue created by Orta’s and Girolamo’s works.

Orta’s choice of materials, setting, colors, and juxtaposition are not accidental. Research into the role of stem cells in human biology, particularly the exponential rise of knowledge in the last decade, means the artists have acquired new areas of insight into how humanity is shaped by the forces of biology. The artists’ new authorial direction takes a similar path to cell creativity. Stem cells have always had the capability to diversify and acquire functionality quite apart from their point of origin. Similarly Orta’s practice conflates expected outcomes. Just as science continues to unlock the mechanisms of stem cell potential, Orta apply the structure of stem cell creativity to their synthesis of organic structures and architecture.

The fundament of our knowledge of how human life is created is unshakeable. The limits of architectural form and functionality are finite. Or are they? Conception occurs when sperm fertilizes an oocyte and creates a single totipotent cell. A cell with unlimited capability. A superior cell, capable of creating another life. But our faith is shaken. What was once an immutable textbook definition of human life is no longer 100% accurate. Science is redrafting the “map” by which we understand how cells seek to fulfill their biological potential. Just as the Peters projection (1974) exposed the Mercator map’s (1569) proportional (and political) inequalities between continents, our remap of cell potentiality reveals, rather than creates, new opportunities. Scientists have created egg cells from stem cells with the developmental potential of becoming embryos without the need for sperm. Taking these totipotent cells as a theme and the seemingly unlimited capability of stem cells as inspiration, it now becomes apparent why Orta’s glass cells are colorless. It also becomes apparent how they comment on the micro architecture of the social body, and why our beliefs—religious, scientific, secular, or a combination of points within this trinity—must be constantly re-examined, tested, and expanded.

With a substantial body of work exhibited internationally over the last fifteen years, Orta’s most recognizable installations create architectures of people, materials, forms, and shapes that respond to crises of global, but particularly urban, existence. In 2004 Berlin-based architects LIn won an international competition to design the Cité du Design in Saint-Etienne, France, as an institution for communication, diffusion, research, and education in the field of design. Orta was commissioned to create membranes of mobility for the Platine, the 200-meter-long, “free-floating” mono-space that houses communication activities, retail, incubator spaces, and lecture theaters. Conceived by the architects as a three-dimensional surface with a variable skin that adapts as necessary, the Platine is the perfect “shell” for modular units utilizing Orta’s enabled “social skins.” The “onion layers” Orta referenced in previous work—self, skin, shirt, jacket, sleeping bag, tent, container, etc.—can be adapted for architectural cellular mobility and enhanced with elements from stem cell technology. Placing cells within the Platine “organism”—a whole with interdependent parts—also references their past work with cellular textiles (e.g. open-cell polycarbonate used in Connector Mobile Village I & II).

Writers who survey Orta’s practice have dug deep and ranged wide to find comparisons of style, composition, and meaning for their work. Artists vary from a peer generation engaged with social issues (Atelier Van Lieshout, Tobias Rehberger, Andrea Zittel, Jorge Pardo) to those in previous generations (Lygia Clark, Nam June Paik, Fluxus, Joseph Beuys, Nouveaux Réalistes). Perhaps because Orta’s work defies easy classification, not all these companions satisfy. Some appear labored, and a few possess such strong formal differences as to invite the suggestion they have been shoe horned into the argument. Despite his acute observations on the occupation of bodily space, the philosophico-political views of Martin Heidegger seem antithetical to Orta’s practice, in particular their opposition to loss of cultural identity and the growing numbers disenfranchised from society. If we wish to compare Orta’s devotional awareness to the causes of social exclusion, isolation, dislocation, and deprivation, then we must expand beyond contemporary artists and philosophers and look to the work of activists, particularly those who work with space. Although Orta insist their work is not political, the objectives of their practice place them in the company of historian Arno Peters (1916–2002), who (like Orta) created a political climate through his work without labeling himself an activist. Sixty years ago he realized written histories empha-
sized Europe and North America at the expense of Africa, Asia, and South America. Outraged by the injustice and aware that histories determine contemporary social and political outcomes, he published Synchronoptic World History, which weighted each country, and each country’s history, on equitable scales. He went on to redraw the world map as a visualization of this text. Called the Peters projection map, it was endorsed by the
(left & right)

Totipotent Architecture - Gazebo, 2007
Pencil, pigment ink, water colour on Fabriano paper
92.5 x 4 x 72.5cm (box framed)
Totipotent Architecture - Gazebo, 2007
Pencil, pigment ink, water colour on Fabriano paper
92.5 x 4 x 72.5cm (box framed)
For Arte all’Arte, a project in the Tuscan town of Buonconvento, Lucy+Jorge Orta installed a series of specially made sculptures in crystal and steel in the Sacred Art Museum. The works were made in collaboration with local artisans and celebrate Colle di Val d’Elsa’s crystal-blowing tradition. *In Vitro* is a modified antique cradle containing organic crystal-blown forms, whose placement juxtaposes a Renaissance painting of the Annunciation by Girolamo di Benvenuto. Orta have also created a series titled *Totipotent Architecture*, presented on metal and glass tables installed along the length of the gallery. These curious constructions consist of cut metal architectural silhouettes and armatures with organic blown-crystal extensions. They include an interactive work where local visitors can write down their secret wishes for the future and insert them in glass test tubes, which they deposit at the base of the sculpture. This is an extraordinary structure, with ladder-like elements and tiers upon which strange, imaginary textile “infants” in hand-crafted bivouacs rest on bunk beds. Like chrysalises hibernating in cells, they relate directly to Orta’s *Connector Body Architecture* artwork, suspended from Buonconvento’s gateway.

This new series was inspired by Orta’s recent research into the microstructure of human cells in their earliest stages—the transformation of the embryonic cell into defined, “architectural” structures, which the artists refer to as “cells of habitation.” In the context of Buonconvento, and in juxtaposition to Girolamo’s Annunciation painting, these imaginary architectural models express a “vision” or a birth of new architectural forms as organic extensions of the historic Tuscan buildings. Like the *Connector Body Architecture* works climbing the city gates, they symbolize the human biological chain, ever evolving into infinite forms. Both elements of Lucy+Jorge Orta’s project become one, reconnecting private thoughts and aspirations with public institutional space that relates to both the community structure and a futuristic vision for the architecture of Buonconvento.

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Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany, 2004
Installation in the Center for Contemporary Visual Arts, Brighton
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004-08
(right) Totipotent Architecture - Tuscany (study), 2004
Totipotent Architecture - Tower of Dreams, 2004
Many of Lucy + Jorge Orta’s greatest achievements derive from the smallest of seeds. Their powerful series Totipotent Architecture, which explores habitation and identity, was conceived from life’s miniscule building blocks: the human stem cell. Orta’s work draws frequently from mutable materials and ephemeral structures, such as repurposed textiles, endangered florae, clouds, and light. Their practice, however, remains consistently and insistently concerned with humankind’s enduring relationship to its environment and the attainment of a sustainable future.

Since they began collaborating in 1992, Lucy + Jorge Orta have been working toward their most ambitious endeavor yet: a monumental, permanent center dedicated to environmental preservation, artistic experimentation, and scholarly research. Called Studio Orta – Les Moulins, the not-for-profit association encompasses three former industrial complexes spanning eight kilometers nestled in the Grand Morin valley outside Paris. Its three sites, Laiterie Saint Simeon, Moulin de Boissy, and Moulin Sainte-Marie, comprise a former dairy and two paper mills. For over a decade the artists have been in the process of rehabilitating these derelict buildings into what they term a cultural village: a nerve center of artistic inquiry and intellectual exploration.

The property is so vast that Les Moulins’ activities are currently centered around Moulin Sainte-Marie, a former paper mill conglomerate dating as far back as the twelfth century. Today the complex houses artwork production, workshops, conferences, and artist residencies, but this is only the beginning. The artists have plans to build a research laboratory focused on art and the environment, a bookshop, and a café.

More recently, this site has become the departure point for Orta’s continuing Totipotent Architecture artworks. Steel maquettes carefully reproduce the contours of the former Rives d’Arche paper mill, the electricity turbine hall, the sewage plant reservoirs, and the machinery hangers. These provide the framework for delicate glass shapes that encrust the ambits and fill the volumes of the Moulin Sainte-Marie sculptures. Building structures function as metaphorical stem cells, out of which translucent black spheroids, red fingered orbs, and perfect crystal spheres are born.

The artists’ vision for the surrounding land, however, remains firmly planted on soil. Les Moulins’ sprawling grounds are refuge to extraordinary biodiversity. In 2009 the region was declared a Natural Regional Park, bringing nature conservation to the fore of Orta’s project. The river, gardens, and woods of the nineteen-hectare association are in the process of becoming home to a vast sculpture park dedicated to the preservation of in-situ works of art.

Les Moulins follows in the footsteps of artist-founded institutions like Donald Judd’s Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, and Robert Wilson’s Water Mill Center for performance on Long Island, New York, but it is unique in its sensitivity to the site’s cultural heritage and its commitment to rethinking social and ecological agendas for the future. Les Moulins may have originated from thoughts on cell biology, but its development more closely echoes that of the human spirit, endlessly yearning, unfolding, renewing.
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Tuscan Cage, 2009-13

(right) Totipotent Architecture - Tuscan Cage with Crystal, 2009-13
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Temple, 2009-13
(right) Totipotent Architecture - Minarets, 2009-13
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Temple with Tower, 2009-13

(right) Totipotent Architecture - Water Tower in Black, 2009-13
(left)
Totipotent Architecture - Mecca, 2009-13

(right)
Totipotent Architecture - Water Tower in Black, 2009-13
The former RAF station and later Cold War US airbase at Greenham Common has long been a contested place. The landscape here resonates with contradictions and with conflict: the Common, with its implication of openness and collegiality, versus the fenced and divided territories of militarized space; the order and monumental architecture within the fence, versus the free will of those beyond it, marking their space with temporary and transient structures, conducting alternative rituals and free-form artistic expression. The Peace Women who occupied space beyond the fence attempted to subvert the authority and order of those within—painting fence posts and marking the fences with woven webs and patterns. They lived their lives in camps, named after colors and each with distinctive social characteristics. Caroline Blackwood described the camp at Yellow or Main Gate as having a “special urban desolation that made it grimmer than the rest,” while Green Gate (est. 1983), which she called the Camp of Intellectuals, possessed of a “cosmic” atmosphere. There was also a camp at Musicians’ Gate and one at Blue Gate, which developed a reputation as comprising “tough, rowdy youngsters.” The Peace Women who occupied the camps consider these locations “sacred,” while others consider them “scarred” by either the presence of militarism or the Peace Camps, or both. Either way it is a diverse landscape richly woven with complex (hi)stories.

Greenham’s history runs deeper, however, than just the Second World War and Cold War periods. Stone Age artifacts were found here, and military encampments are recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But it is surviving remains of the late twentieth century that are remarkable. Within the fence is the former technical site of the airbase, now a business park. The former airfield has returned to common land, but a section of runway has been retained as a bizarre memorial to this recent history. The control tower also survives, as does, spectacularly, GAMA (Ground-launched cruise missile Alert and Maintenance Area), six massive concrete shelters, and various bits of associated infrastructure, all now protected as a Scheduled Monument. Beyond the fence are subtler traces of the camps: the painted fence posts, artifacts scattered in the woods, and the earthwork traces of habitation areas, including leveled areas for tents (benders) and hearths. Finally, there is the fence itself, a key and characteristic monument of the Cold War, uniquely representative of a central conflict within Cold War geopolitics, not between East and West but among those in the West who disagreed over nuclear (dis)armament.

Archaeology of the Contemporary Past

Greenham also has a place in the development of an increasingly significant and popular branch of archaeology: archaeology of the contempo-
sary past. This archaeological approach takes no account of time depth; it recognizes that conventional archaeological methods as well as conceptual and theoretical frameworks can be applied to periods of living memory, just as they can to the deeper past. The methods archaeologists use can reveal and record traces of a Stone Age campsites on the Commons and a camp site abandoned twenty years ago, or even yesterday. It can be done. Some skeptics might argue, what is the point? This was a question raised following a presentation, made locally, to raise funds for the contemporary archaeological project at Greenham. I paraphrase, “Why would you want to record the locations of crisps bags and old bottle tops?” “For two reasons,” I replied (not convincingly—we did not get funding). “One, what we consider the familiar past is not so familiar when we start to examine it in closer detail. Examples abound of archaeological projects that seek to study things we think we know all about, only to be surprised by the results. Two, some tell us, was to soften the fence; to subvert it, make it look less male, less military, and more ridiculous. This was achieved through acts of transgression and by translating context—putting private things on public view, or creating something exquisite from the rubbish.

Mapping Turquoise Gate

In a project directed by Yvonne Marshall and supported by the University of Southampton and the CBA Challenge Fund grant, work was undertaken at Turquoise Gate, a camp established in December 1983 by women from Blue Gate seeking a separate vegan zone. It was among the shortest lived of the Greenham camps, and was occupied intermittently by small numbers of women. The work was in three stages.

First, we mapped topography, vegetation, and all visible cultural features and artifacts. We identified a concentration of protest-related artifacts, which as a second stage we subjected to more detailed, intensive survey, recording and collecting by square meter all objects exposed on the ground surface. We identified two clear features at this second stage: the base of a scrap wood structure, and a large fire pit. Some 150 objects were recovered including car parts, bricks, concrete, tiles, wood, wire, plastic sheeting, plastic bags, clothing, wrappers, cans, bottles, kitchen utensils, toys, and pharmaceuticals. The personal, domestic nature of many of these items ties them strongly to the occupants of the camp, and one—a discarded Smiths crisps wrapper bearing promotional information about the James Bond film Octopussy, released in 1983—is definitively placed during the camp’s occupation phase. We also recovered a doll’s torso, identical to that found in a photograph published around 1985 showing doll body parts attached to the fence. The aim of protestors, some tell us, was to soften the fence; to subvert it, make it look less male, less military, and more ridiculous. This was achieved through acts of transgression and by translating context—putting private things on public view, or creating something exquisite from the rubbish.

As the project developed we came to realize the sensitivity of the camps to the women who had occupied them, and the methodology for our third stage changed as a result. Notably, objects were no longer collected, but recorded in situ and left as found. Three-dimensional point locations were captured for every artifact allowing spatial analyses to be conducted within a Geographical Information System, a project undertaken by Kayt Armstrong.

Not collecting surface artifacts allowed us to cover larger areas and a wider, more extensive survey revealed further hearths, stashed building materials, milk bottles, face cream jars, and the remains of shelters beyond the area originally studied. Some 475 artifacts were recorded in this way, mostly occurring in two clusters that displayed subtle differences in the types of evidence contained—raising the possibility that camp activities could be reconstructed, much as archaeologists describe activity zones at ephemeral occupation sites from early prehistory.

The nature of the objects and their spatial distribution challenged the identity of Turquoise Gate in literary and oral history. It was supposed to have been a camp of vegans, separated from Blue Gate. Yet the boundary between the two sites is not distinct, suggesting some spatial continuity. There were also a significant number of milk bottles on site. Were the women really all vegan, or were they reusing the bottles? Were there children on site who needed milk? Perhaps the identity of the camp was blurred, yet clearer and more distinct in the way women remember it?

Among the many visitors who helped during fieldwork were two former Peace Women, Lorna Richardson and Lynette Edwell. They took us to the small, previously unrecorded camp at Emerald Gate, which they had occupied on various occasions to monitor GAMA. The camp at Emerald
of her photographs accompany this essay. Some of the artists were part of the fieldwork, contributing to documentation of the site and the process of studying it, and responding to the project as it evolved. Kristin Posehn, then undertaking doctoral research at Winchester School of Art, photographed and filmed the fieldwork process, capturing key moments and significant discoveries. Lucy Orta also described how cells are part of the human body: “[Cells] are at the origin of its being, its feelings, its emotions and its sufferings. Thus, they speak the language of the body. There are also cells of habitation. The relationship between people and their habitat is formed in this metaphorical cell. Living and being become a single and unique life experience. . . The term cell is also used to indicate political and social groups; groups of people cemented together by the same ideals, convictions and striking power. They represent a social context struggling for change.”

The historical, social, and geographical context, that is to say the reality, in which the artist intervenes, takes on a certain importance when it is the subject of vision; it is a “cell,” and in so being, is a part of the body.

Greenham has become a cause célèbre in contemporary archaeology: a key project in defining and scoping archaeologies of the contemporary past, demonstrating that it can be done. In time it may also exemplify the benefits of exploring the collaborative partnership of artists with archaeologists/historians, not so much for creating a documentation of the past but for analyzing it, deconstructing and critiquing it, and challenging people to engage with history in new and unforeseen ways. Perhaps totipotency is a model for achieving this (a Cellular Archaeology, if you will), for analyzing and thinking of places, things, and relationships as “infinitely mutable.” Lucy + Jorge Orta’s work was central to our collaborative project, a collaboration that ultimately reflected the spirit of Greenham: partnership, collegiality, and creative energy.

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Totipotent Architecture, 2004-07
Sketchbook drawings
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Control Tower Observatory, 2008
Sketchbook drawing

(right) Totipotent Architecture - Greenham Common Observatory, 2008
(left)
Totipotent Architecture - Control Tower Visitor Center, 2008
Sketchbook drawing

(right)
Totipotent Architecture - Greenham Common Visitor Center, 2008
Re-encountering the queer spaces and relationality of Greenham Common

“You’d get this sort of freedom to let your mind wander outside its normal confines, which you can’t do if you’re confined by a building, and your thoughts are shaped by that building. If you sit around a fire, it’s dark, and after a while you could be living in any century, and any country, and your whole being is totally free from those restrictions. Women felt outside normal behavior.”
Carmel Cadden, Peace Camper, on living at the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp

Back in the early 1980s, Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister, Ronald Reagan was in the White House, and the Cold War had been reignited. NATO was stationing a new generation of cruise and Pershing intercontinental nuclear missiles across Western Europe and the Soviet Union was doing the same in the east.

In this context, Her Majesty’s Government produced a booklet, Protect and Survive, which was to be delivered to every household in Britain should the threat of nuclear war escalate significantly and was also available for sale to those of a survivalist mentality who wished to prepare themselves in advance.

Protect and Survive instructed the man of the nuclear family, through clear line drawings, how to create a “fall out room” that would (supposedly) be shielded from radioactive fallout, and how to build a refuge within the fallout room—by removing doors from their hinges and creating a lean-to shelter, weighed down with bags of earth. Food should be gathered, ready for the moment when the family would enter the shelter to face their future, crammed together as the bombs rained down outside.

In 1981 a group of women organized a walk from South Wales to the United States air force base at Greenham Common to protest plans to install cruise missiles there. When the government and media failed to heed their calls for a public debate between the women protesters and the British Minister of Defence, they chained themselves to the gates of the base, echoing the tactics of the suffragettes, and the Women’s Peace Camp began. Greenham became the focus for a new wave of feminist antinuclear activism and an inspiration for the peace movement across Europe and beyond, mobilizing over the years many tens of thousands of women, who went to the camp for a few hours, a few days, or made their home there for months and sometimes years.
There is much to be said about the cultural significance and impact of Greenham, but to bring the memory of Greenham into dialogue with Lucy + Jorge Orta’s work, I will focus on the queer architectures of Greenham’s opposition to nuclear weapons and to the militarized power relations that divide the peoples of the world. Orta’s work might be read as speaking directly to, and against, such systems of social organization.

Women from all over Britain and beyond, aged from their mid-teens to their 70s and 80s, left their homes, and sometimes their families, to go to Greenham. They were from all class backgrounds, and many different occupations. They had previously been politically active as socialists, anarchists, communists, environmentalists, animal liberationists, liberals, Quakers, trade unionists, students, and feminists of every hue—and some were political novices. They arrived as unquestioning heterosexuals, occasional bisexuals, and confirmed lesbians. Together they built a community of protest in which domestic life was lived outdoors, in which homes were turned inside out, and conventions turned upside down.

Sleeping shelters, or “benders,” were built from plastic sheeting, canvas, and string; meals were cooked on open fires, which burnt wood gathered from the Common that had to be chopped and stored. Greenham women had to develop new skills and capacities: the practical, outdoor survival skills that had, during the past hundred years or so, become increasingly gendered masculine; the political skills and courage to speak in public and explain their work at the hundreds of meetings and rallies to which they were invited; the personal confidence to talk to the media, to represent themselves and claim their voices as actors on the global stage.

In so doing they questioned and transformed themselves, redesigning the relations of gender and sexuality by which they had lived as they began to think and feel differently about what it might mean to be a woman in a male-dominated, unequal world.

At Greenham, personal life was radically de-privatized—and eating, sleeping, and even toileting were politicized. Food was collectively provisioned, and the politics and ethics of what was eaten were fiercely debated. Conventional family life, and the heterosexuality and monogamy on which it is built, were named and critiqued as women found themselves developing close, sometimes sexual, relationships of love and friendship with the other women with whom they were living and protesting. Bodies that sat together around the fire often lay down to sleep together in large communal benders, or just under the stars. Daily ablutions were carried out outside, showers fabricated and strung up in trees, water heated on the fire. Shit-pits were dug and moved around, so as to live lightly on the land.

The liminal space of this women’s community, which was right up against the fences of patriarchal militarism, constituted a prefigurative, utopian world apart, where radically counternormative ways of being and living were forged. And the state objected.

Over and over again the camp was evicted—ininitially from the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Transport land occupied by the Main Gate camp, and later, after a change in the law, from the common land on which the other camps were based.

For several years evictions took place up to three times a day, seven days a week—a cat and mouse game between the specially appointed team of bailiffs and the women. But Greenham fundamentally queered the norms of political protest. It tested the tolerance of a liberal democratic state that allows dissent as long as, at the end of the day, protesters pack up their banners and...
Greenham was a home that rested on a belief in the commons and in shared custodianship of the earth. It resisted claims to ownership of the land that it occupied, and the well-intentioned offers of wealthy supporters to buy adjacent land to make the camp permanent. It was a home in which debate, disagreement, difference, diversity, and sheer, obstinate individuality were valued, while also emphasizing communality, collective decision-making, equality, and participation. It was a home that sought constantly to decenter itself—to resist the centripetal forces of the movements that looked toward it to provide continuity and leadership, looking instead outward to anti-imperialist, antinuclear, and feminist struggles across the world in Nicaragua, Namibia, South Africa, indigenous communities in Australia and the Pacific Islands, as well as in mining communities, women’s aid and rape crisis centers nearer to home. And Greenham was a home that ultimately dissipated as its inhabitants moved on to other things, leaving only the traces of its history on the Common.

The making of homes in public, the political act of “occupation” as a form of resistance, has recently been revived on a global scale with the wave of Occupy protests in Western cities, the persistent encampments of the “indignados” in austerity-riven southern Europe, and the protests of the Arab Spring. The tents and outdoor sleeping of today’s protesters echo the repertoire of action inaugurated by Greenham, and their fluid, non-hierarchical, networked forms of organization resonate with the architectures of resistance that Greenham, over three decades earlier, referred to as “weaving the web.” Creating connections among people that operate laterally rather than vertically, that might seem fragile but are actually highly tensile and resilient, there is a powerful synergy between these new modes of political relationality and the social bonds of, and through which, the Orta’s work speaks.
(left)
Totipotent Architecture - Greenham Common Observatory, 2008

(right)
Totipotent Architecture - Greenham Common Observatory Variant, 2009-13
(left) Totipotent Architecture - Observatory in Red, 2009-13
(right) Totipotent Architecture - Greenham Common Visitors Center, 2008
Potential Architecture
Greenham Common Control Tower

In June 2012 Professor Lucy Orta became a Design Fellow of the Arts University Bournemouth. The values embodied in the work of Lucy + Jorge Orta echo those of the University, which strives for an interdisciplinary context to develop multiple forms of creative practice in art, design, media, and performance. The Arts University Bournemouth is founded on creative studio practices enhancing individual specialisms alongside complementary disciplines. Students are encouraged to be both skilled and critical in their own field, and to be able to contribute to and draw from interdisciplinary working.

In keeping with the spirit of our mission, and with that of Lucy + Jorge Orta, Lucy Orta proposed to conduct a project with first year students in the Masters of Architecture program. The brief absorbed the students (Nicole Dobbie, Ali Jafari, Melanie Kaviani, and Andrei Keltos), who were asked to find creative responses to Orta’s Totipotent Architecture – Greenham Common Control Tower artworks developed from the artists’ considerable on-site research over a four-year period (2004–2008). Totipotent Architecture consists of a series of small, architecture-like sculptures (maquettes) employing the technique of blown glass (organic shapes) and steel (contours of the building), as well as drawings showing cell-like structures emerging (or perhaps exploding), in this case from the Greenham Common Control Tower that overlooks the former RAF station and later Cold War US air base. In this collaboration, the students saw themselves as both interpreters and co-creators. In discussion with Lucy Orta, Sasha Roseneil, Professor of Sociology and Social Theory at Birkbeck College, and Ed Frith, architect and Arts University Bournemouth Masters Course Leader, the students explored ways of transforming the Control Tower and interpreting the Totipotent Architecture project into architectural propositions. The aim was to return the building to “usefulness” as a community asset, while establishing a memorial to both the converging histories of the airfield and the Peace Camps.

The resulting student proposals are an attempt to balance the role of the building as memorial, museum, and municipal venue, addressing the transformation from military to civic. The boundaries between landscape and building are merged to create a variety of inhabitable places for organized or ad hoc events: public and intimate, large or small. The former brick structure has been clad in metal frames, mesh, and glass, and reflected in pools of water. The suggestions are by no means definitive, but move the proposal into the materials and processes of construction, integrating the practical and utilitarian into a combination of old and new structures. These proposals test totipotent cellular differentiation as generative ideas in concept and material and extend Orta’s temporary interventions into a more permanent architectural presence.

In Autumn 2013 TheGallery at Arts University Bournemouth exhibited a selection of Orta’s Totipotent Architecture works. As part of this exhibition, further groups of students from different specialisms, including architecture, textile, model making, and fine art, respond once again to the work on view through collaborative making. Lucy + Jorge Orta provide a vital precedent for contemporary practice that demands and deserves our attention.

— Simon Beeson, Course Leader, BA (Hons) Architecture
Professor Stephanie James, Head of the School of Visual Arts
Potential Architecture

A large, inhabitable sculpture with a cellular organic form rises from the grass of the Corso Tazzoli public park facing the Fiat Mirafiori car manufacturing plant in Turin.

This is a meeting place, the realization of a wish made by a group of “patrons,” in this case students from two neighborhood schools. An “atoll,” a “kind of free port,” in their words. Lucy + Jorge Orta propose Totipotent Architecture: beginning with a stem cell—the unit of unlimited potential that presides over the construction of an entire organism—the artists have created a metaphor of a space for social interaction that changes according to how it is used. This potential is illustrated by the imprints of the students’ bodies: casts made in aluminum and then sunk into the sculpture’s three cement steps. Hands, shoes, backs, and buttocks all make up a series of ghost figures on the surface, inviting whomever climbs onto the sculpture to take a position that encourages nearness and contact.

By the time it was inaugurated in spring 2007, the work had already become a household name in Turin. Some called it the “armadillo,” while to others it was known as the “iron mask,” or the “spaceship.” Each name derives from how the sculpture looks from a given point of view, a particular way of contemplating and imagining it. I like to perceive it as the result of an act of familiarity, of tension in identifying the places that take space away from apathy and make it part of a mental geography as a premise to the various forms of inhabiting.

Patronage for this work began in 2003 with a debate involving the student patrons and cultural mediators on how public space relates to young people; on the various forms of accessibility, belonging, and exclusion; and on the issues of visibility and safety. The patrons’ answer was to create something different from what the neighborhood already had in terms of places for young people to meet. First and foremost this difference consisted of the idea of a “transversal” area that, instead of the functions of recreation, play, sport, and creativity, would offer potential to a community or to a tribe of users, a group of people who, by their actions time after time, could contribute to redefining its sense. Projected onto the scene of urban
life, marked as it is by far-reaching change and its transformation by the media into a constant state of alarm, was a call for a place of interrelating, far from any nostalgia for a lost community and aware of the risks of producing something closed and exclusive.

Entrusted with the project in 2004, Orta developed these issues with the patrons by listening and exchanging views—an approach that marks the procedural and participatory nature of all their projects, leading up to a sculpture that combines being a sculpture with being a device. A “monument” against the idea of standardization, rubber-massified stamping, or the formatting of behavior patterns in precodified ways, times, and places, but still an example of fluid architecture, which by its sinuosity of line can adapt to the many ways of social exchange and take shape with them as a catalyst for community practices. It is the never-ending process of communication and exchange that presides over how our body cells develop, their progressive specialization as individual vital functions. This provides the artists with the metaphorical scenario of a social organism that stems from the coming together of different entities, their creative energy, and cooperation among them. It is the first example of a public work in the Totipotent Architecture series, a cycle of works for which research into social architecture developed from the Refuge Wear series (1992–1998)—mobile, temporary architectures that envelop and protect the body—and Nexus Architecture (from 1993)—connective systems ranging from the individual to the broader context of the socio-urban context.

The house is the body
Refuge Wear, Body Architecture, Modular Architecture, Nexus Architecture, Totipotent Architecture.

In the progressive augmentation of scale, from apparel to architecture to urban planning, from singularity to plurality, the body is the constant, indispensable yardstick for redefining the relationship between the individual and his or her surroundings from the standpoint of measuring artistic practice against the most burning social, humanitarian, and environmental issues that afflict the global reality of this late-modern age.

Heidegger’s assumption “man is insofar as he dwells” can be interpreted as a natural right that needs a place to manifest itself, not merely the occupation of a territory. Orta returns our attention to this fundamental right of the subject that is both biological and political, beginning with the plight of the homeless, the refugees, the outcasts—those who have lost the link to a territory and the sense of belonging to it. The home shrinks, it clings to the body like a second skin. A costume-refuge that reclaims space, opening up to be a tent, shifting the boundaries between inside and outside, public and private, and—in the multiple or modular declination of single living units—placing the individual in coexistence with the collective—the personal and the shared (Body Architecture, Modular Architecture). The high-tech fabrics and the visually strong design in this and the later series work as a screen and interface to protect the body from the environment; they provide a refuge, they are home and indicators of a presence. Intertwined with symbols, images, and phrases, and conceived in cooperation with their intended beneficiaries, they enhance the communicative power, providing the frame within which the individual narratives can manifest. “Me, I’ve got a lot to say,” said one of the participants during one of the first workshops run by the artists. This has become the paradigmatic opening line of a speech that blends philosophical, scientific, and political thought with common language and, through being visible, takes on a new assertive force. A visibility that Lucy Orta extend to the whole social body by means of the connective systems of Nexus Architecture.

Beginning with the repetition of every acquired custom and idea brought on by states of crisis or emergency—a sign of today’s reality and a resounding manifestation of the common conditions of town living, such as isolation, the feeling of social distance, and rootlessness—the artists supply an essential interpretation of the concept of home, no longer a defined place in space but the existential condition of being in space, now only mediated by the body and by how it relates to other human beings. From the suit of clothes to the tent, to the temporary village, the shift happens in the passage from the isolated individual to his binding himself to other pivotal individuals. The accessories to this link function as “doors and bridges” that enable people to unite and separate, making them simultaneously independent and interdependent. Bodies congregate in living units (Body Architecture) or stretch through space, all linked together (Nexus Architecture). As Paul Virilio wrote on Lucy Orta’s practice, “as a time when we are told that men are free, emancipated, totally autonomous, she tells us that, on the contrary, there is a threat and that man is regrouping... the warmth of one gives warmth to the other. The physical link weaves a social link.”

The constituent meaning of this relation can be traced back to the concept of “being a plural singularity,” a concept formulated by Jean-Luc Nancy as a principle of co-essence that “has its very essence in the stroke, in the hyphen stroke which is also separator stroke, a stroke that divides.” According to Nancy, from Rousseau to Nietzsche, from Marx to Heidegger, “the investigation into being arrives at ‘we are’ as a way of expressing the being that
Atoll use, the
Despite being a roomy organism and sensitive to
live in the council houses at the edge of the park.
hood, especially the young who attend school or
frame and a stage for the people of the neighbor-
identity is played out on various levels and in a
assemblies the singulars only insofar as it spaces
each and every person can tell his or her story and
see each other beyond the stereotypes by which
gets old, clothes change with fashions and as the
demands of self-representation change. The mold
allows identity to emerge like a territory open and
undergoing transformation, beginning with its
unshakeable unity. The imprint, however, is also
a void, a shape to be filled by gestures—those of
children who use them to play-cook stews of grass,
leaves, and nuts that have fallen from the trees,
and those who are prompted in play by the posi-
tions and lower themselves into the intimacy of
someone else’s body.

Totipotent Architecture – Atoll responds to a
request for visibility and quality aesthetics. It
"marks" the surroundings and helps to redesign
them by the language of art. It works like a "pres-
eence marker" in a neighborhood that typifies urban
periphery, a frame for the new narratives by which
each and every person can tell his or her story and
see each other beyond the stereotypes by which
they are talked about and looked at. In the Atoll/
identity is played out on various levels and in a
variety of forms. As we have said, the sculpture is a
frame and a stage for the people of the neighbor-
hood, especially the young who attend school or
live in the council houses at the edge of the park.
Despite being a roomy organism and sensitive to
use, the Atoll does not set out to be virgin terri-
tory. Its surface is “historianized” by traces: forms
of seated or reclining bodies, alone or set along-
side one another, nearby or brushing each other,
turned to face the houses, the sky, or the flow of
cars beyond the curtain of trees. The imprint of the
bodies gives an indicative sign, a clue; Lucy + Jorge
Orta responded to the patrons’ wish to leave their
signature, record a role, a commitment, and a feel-
ing of pride in its outcome. The artists’ proposal
is the result of the quest for an alternative to the
name as a means of expressing identity. Entrusted
to the body imprint, the “signature” becomes sensi-
tive to its changes over time—the body grows and
gets old, clothes change with fashions and as the
demands of self-representation change. The mold
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undergoing transformation, beginning with its
unshakeable unity. The imprint, however, is also
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leaves, and nuts that have fallen from the trees,
and those who are prompted in play by the posi-
tions and lower themselves into the intimacy of
someone else’s body.

The empty clothes installed in the exhibition
spaces, the unpopulated tents and villages, and
the uninhabited atoll are all metaphors for an
ideal community, a timeless, placeless dream, both
poetic and melancholic. However by treating the
object work as prototypes and the sculptures as
architecture, the artists open a functional, acces-
sible presence ready for use around them. Lucy
Orta speaks of “Functional Utopia,” a theoreti-
cal operative declination of the return to utopias
with which Jorge Orta drafted his Manifesto for
the Third Millennium in 1994. A possibility of
being which they “set up” through urban initiatives
and performances, and even beforehand in the
spirit of cooperation and coauthoring that they
adopt in all their projects with workshops, discus-
sion forums, and with the contemporary contribu-
tion of a variety of social and professional actors
(from local government to schoolchildren, the
world of academia, and scientific and technologi-
cal research, to shelters for the homeless, émigré
families, and the inhabitants of an entire village).
The live presence of bodies that move united with
each other (Nexus) or adjacent when not envel-
oped in a single structure lined up in formations
(Connector) ooze a “constituent” power or, in
the words of activism, given as visualizations of
empowerment make an ideal space real. Rather
than offering answers to the problems of our soci-
ety, Orta’s work raises issues and opens debate
extending it to the greatest number of people.
Instead of an instruction booklet the artists leave
clues like the imprints in the Atoll, archaeological
remains pointing to the future, both an inner place
for the self and a way of inhabiting the world.

Totipotent Architecture – Atoll was realized within
the New Patrons program of the Fondation de
France, promoted in Italy by the Adriano Olivetti
Foundation. The project was curated by the collec-
tive a.titolo (project managers: Giorgina Bertolino
and Francesca Comisso) and took place in the
Mirafiori Nord neighborhood in Turin as part of the
"Urban 2" urban regeneration program promoted
and funded by the European Commission.

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mittenti. Arte contemporanea, società e spazio pubblico / New
Patrons. Contemporary Art, Society and Public Space, eds. Gior-

1. Martin Heidegger, “Costruire, abitare, pensare (1954),” in
L’urbanisme. Utopies et réalités, ed. Francoise Choay (Paris:
2. Echoing George Simmel’s thoughts on human beings Andrew
Patrizio brings his concept of “door and bridge” to recorded rep-
resentation in Lucy Orta’s work. See Andrew Patrizio, "Bridges
and doors: some thoughts on Lucy Orta’s connector project," in
Liquid Architecture / Moving Architecture: Lucy Orta, eds. Lucy
Orta and Courtney Smith (Munich: Verlag Silke Schreiber, 2003)
and Lucy Orta Body Architecture (Munich: Verlag Silke Schreiber,
2003).
3. Paul Virilio, Lucy Orta: Refuge Wear (Paris: Editions Jean-
Michel Place, 1996).
6. Jorge Orta, “The Return of the Utopias: The Aesthetics of
Ethics, a Draft Manifesto for the Third Millennium (November
1994),” in Light Messenger: XLVI Venice Biennale (Paris: Edi-
tions Jean Michel Place, 1995).
Fabrication process of aluminium body casts and concrete base
Totipotent Architecture – Atoll, 2004-07
Detail of concrete base with aluminium body casts
Potential Architecture
Nexus Bridge, Lee Bank Middleway, Birmingham
Potential Architecture
Cellular Units, Cité du Design, Saint-Etienne
BIOGRAPHY

Lucy + Jorge Orta
www.studio-orta.com

Lucy + Jorge Orta’s collaborative practice draws upon ecological and social sustainability issues to create artworks employing a diversity of mediums, including drawing, sculpture, couture, painting, silkscreen, photography, video, and light, as well as staged ephemeral interventions and performances. Their work has been the focus of major solo exhibitions at the Venice Biennale (1995); Weiner Secession, Vienna (1999); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2005); Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (2005), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2006); Galleria Continua, Beijing, San Gimignano, and Le Moulin (2007–8); Gallery, London (2005); Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (2005), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2006); Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy; Le Moulin, Boissy le Châtel, France. Their work has been the focus of major programs that stimulates socially driven and sustainable design, which she co-founded at the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2002. She is currently Professor of Art and the Environment at the University of the Arts London.

Jorge Orta was born in 1953 in Rosario, Argentina. He studied simultaneously at the faculty of fine arts (1972–79) and the faculty of architecture (1973–80) of the Universidad Nacional de Rosario. Jorge was a lecturer in the faculty of fine arts of the Universidad Nacional de Rosario and a member of CONICET, the Argentinian national council for scientific research, until 1984, when he received a scholarship from the French Ministry of Foreign and European affairs to pursue a D.E.A. (Diplôme d’études approfondies) at the Sorbonne University in Paris.


Lucy Orta was born in 1966 in Sutton Coldfield, United Kingdom. After graduating with an honors degree in fashion-knitwear design from Nottingham Trent University in 1989, Lucy began practicing as a visual artist in Paris in 1991. Lucy was the head of Man and Humanity, a pioneering master’s program that stimulates socially driven and sustainable design, which she co-founded at the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2002. She is currently Professor of Art and the Environment at the University of the Arts London.

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EXHIBITIONS SELECTION

Solo

2013
Food Water Life. Zilka Gallery. Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, United States
Meteores | Clouds. Terrace Wines, Barkley Shed, St Panzaras International Station, London, United Kingdom
70 x 7 The Meal, act XXIV. Philadelphia, PA, United States of America

2012
Lime Avenue | Fantastic Creature. Lille 3000, Lille Town Hall, France
Maxxi Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Rome, Italy
Food, Water, Life. Tufts University Art Gallery, Addams Hall and the Center for the Advancement of the Arts, Medford, Massachusetts, United States
70 x 7 The Meal, act XXIII. Smithsonian, Barry St. Edwards, Suffolk, United Kingdom

2011
Clouds | Nuages. La Maréchalerie. Marseille-Provence, France
Maxxi Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Rome, Italy

2010
Amazonia. Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom
The Gift. Adelaide International 2010: Apart, we are together; Jam Factory, Adelaide, Australia
Lucy Orta: CCANW: Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World. Exeter, United Kingdom
Antarctica. Eté des Arts en Antarctique. Montbard, France

2009
OrtaWater: Motive Gallery. London, United Kingdom
OrtaWater: DSM, Heerlen and Sittard, Holland
70 x 7 The Meal, act XXX. Sherwell Church Hall, North Hill, Plymouth, United Kingdom
Lucy Orta: Plymouth Arts Centre / Plymouth College of Art and Design, United Kingdom
Light Works – Brazilia. United Kingdom
70 x 7 The Meal, act XXVIII. Smiths Row, Jury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, United Kingdom

2008
Antarctica. Galleria Continua: Le Moulin, Boissy le Châtel, France
Antarctica. Hangar Bicocca spazio d’arte, Milan, Italy
Antarctic Village – No Borders. 11th Prague Quadrennial. Prague, Czech Republic
Antarctic Village – No Borders. 11th Prague Quadrennial. International Exhibition of Scenography and Theatre Architecture, Czech Republic

2007
Antarctic Village – No Borders. Galleria Continua: San Gimignano, Italy
Antarctic Village – No Borders. Galleria Continua: San Gimignano, Italy
Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctica

2006
OrtaWater: Galleria Continua: Beijing, China
70 x 7 The Meal, act XXVII. Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Cap Ferrat, Monaco
Antarctic Village – No Borders. Galleria Continua: San Gimignano, Italy
Antarctic Village – No Borders. Galleria Continua: San Gimignano, Italy
Dwelling X. Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom
Collective Dwelling. In: Institute for Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Australia
Collective Dwelling, act VIII: Cooignon High School, Fredrikstad, Norway
Light Works—OPERA tion Life Nexus, act IX. 14th World Transplant Games, Place Stanislas, Nancy, France
2002
70 x 7 The Meal, act XIX. Design Academy Eindhoven, Holland
70 x 7 The Meal, act XVII. (Enactments of the Self). Steinherst Herbst, Graz, Austria
70 x 7 The Meal, act XVII. Rio Garonne, Toulouse, France
70 x 7 The Meal, act XVI. Art Centre Kunst Museum Gallery, Waltherplatz, Bologna, Italy
Connector Body Architecture sector. UK: Musée d’art et d’histoire de Château, France
Connector Mobile Village. Florida Atlantic University Galleries, Boca Raton, Florida, United States
Nexus Architecture act II/110. Miami Design District / Art Basel
Miami Beach, Miami, Florida, United States
Fluid Architecture I workshops. The Dairy, St Siméon, France / Centre Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris, France
Fluid Architecture I workshops. Drill Hall, Melbourne, Australia
Light Works—OPERA tion Life Nexus. Rabat, Morocco
The Gift: Life Nexus. TeoTen Gallery, Komische Oper Berlin, Germany / Compagnie Blanca Li: Ceiltiul Maison des Arts, France
2000
70 x 7 The Meal, act IV. Dinze, France
70 x 7 The Meal, act III (The Invisible Touch). Kunstnarum Innsbruck, Austria
Connector Mobile Village sector VII. Talliost Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Connector MacroWear sector VI. Kapellga Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Connector Mobile Village 83. Austin Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia
Connector Mobile Village II. La Cambre E.N.S.A.V, Brussels, Belgium
Connector Mobile Village I. Pitti Immagine, Florence, Italy
Light Works—OPERA tion Life Nexus, act IV. Le Grenier du Siècle / Lieu Unique, Nantes, France
OPERA tion Life Nexus, act III. Chapitre Lune Foraine, Paris, France
Light Works—OPERA tion Life Nexus, act II. Hôtel Robert Giffard, Québec, Canada
Light Works—OPERA tion Life Nexus, act I. Festival Internacional de Arte, Medellin, Colombia
The Gift: Life Nexus. Athens Sculpture Biennale, Greece
The Gift: Life Nexus. Mediterranean seabed, France
70 x 7 The Meal, act X. Old Market Square, Nottingham, United Kingdom
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Collective 2013
MII | Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, Kansas, United States
Amazona | Internautism. NW Parco d’Arte Vivente, Turin, Italy
Horti/Recycling | Artists Plans for Sustainability. Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick, United Kingdom
Amazona | Glassstress: White Light / White Heat. 55th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
Nexus Architecture | Hongzhou Triennial of Fiber Art: Hangzhou, China
2012
Amazona | Spicimens: Collections. Engagement: Domaine de Chamarande, France
Antarctica World Passport Bureau
Antarctic Village-No Borders. MAXXI, Rome, Italy
A New Stance For Tomorrow: Part 3. Sketch, London, United Kingdom
Climate Capsules: Means of Surviving Disaster. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany
Unfold: Universität für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria
Weiss (IceWhite) Kunstinstitut, Untergröningen, Germany
2009
GSK Contemporary, Earth: Art of a changing world. Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom
Green Platform: Art Ecology Sustainability. Palazzo Strazii, Florence, Italy
Dress Code. ISELP, Brussels, Belgium
Pat Luck: Food and Art. The New Art Gallery, Walsall, United Kingdom
Intempore: Fenomenos Esteticos da Mudancena Climatica. Centro Cultural Oi Futuro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Sur Polar: Arte en Antartida. MULTEC, Mexico City, Mexico
Return to Function. Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, Wisconsin, United States
Frozen Time: Art from the Antarctic. Stadttalerin Kiel, Germany
Antarctica World Passport
HEAVEN, 2nd Athens Biennale, P. Falirio Beach, Greece
Retreat: KunstForth Asperen, Acapulco, Holland
Off the Beaten Path: Violence. Women and Art. The Stenersen Museum, Oslo, Norway
(U)Inhabitable? Art of Extreme Environments. Festival Art Outdoors 2009, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
A Way Beyond Fashion. Apexart, New York, United States
Antarctic Village—Night Blanche. FRAC Lorraine, Metz, France
Esthétique des pôles: Le testament des glaces. FRAC Lorraine, Metz, France
Sphères. Galleria Continua: Le Moulin, Boissy le Châtel, France
ArtAsiaArt. Haagenvestfold Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg, Norway
The Spectacle of the Everyday—TAMA project. 18 Biennale de Lyon, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France

2008

Life Size Utopia. Motive Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland
1½ Water and our future. 233, Hasselt, Belgium
Shelter X Survival: Alternative Homes for Fantastic Lives. Huffington City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan
Totipotent Architecture—Skin Deep. City Hall, San Francisco, Renaissance
MMKA, Arnhem, Holland.
Argentina

2009

Contemporary Liqueidos. Franco Soffiantino Gallery, Turin, Italy
5 Rings: Ornaments of Suffering. Fort of Exilles, Piedmont, Italy
Fear Gear: Roebbling Hall, New York, United States
Pattern Language: Clothing as Communicator. Tufts University Art Gallery, Aidikman Arts Center, Medford, Massachusetts, United States
Fête Maison. La Briqueerie in Bourgogne, Le Creusot, France
Est-Ouest/Nord-Sud: faire habiter l’homme, là encore, autrement: arc-en-reve centre d’architecture, Bordeaux, France
ArtRobe: Women Artists in a Nexus of Art and Fashion. UNESCO, Paris, France
On Conceptual Clothing. Kirishima Open Air Museum, Kagoshima, Japan

2004

On Conceptual Clothing. Musashino Art University, Tokyo, Japan
A Grain of Dust A Drop of Water. Guangzhou Biennale 2004, South Korea
Totipotent Architecture (Artre all’Arte: Arte Architettonic Paesaggistica). Associazione Arte Continua, Buonconvento, Italy
The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere. MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, United States
Flexible 4: Identities. Kunsthaln Brands Klaedefabrik, Odense, Denmark
The Space Between. John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia

2003

Design et Habitats. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Flexible. Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Creaus/Cuadors/Crossed. CCB, Barcelona, Spain
Armour: The Fortification of Man. KunstFort Asperen, Arquy, Holland
Life Nexus Village Fete (Home). Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
Mutations/Modes 1960-2000. Musée Galliera, Paris, France

2000

Dynamic City. La Fondation pour l’Architecture, Brussels, Belgium
Air en Forme. Musée des Arts Décoratifs / Vitra Design Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland
Ici On Peut Toucher Décoratifs. Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Fée Maison. La Briqueterie en Massonas, United States
The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere. M.I.U. Mobile Intervention Units (Arte all’Arte: Arte Architettonic Paesaggistica). South Korea

2001

Mobile Village: Plag In. Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Munster, Germany
Unitagbar Museum für Angewandte Kunst Köln, Cologne, Germany
To the Trade. Diverse Works Art Space, Houston, Texas, United States
Global Tools. Künstlerhaus Wien, Austria
M.U. (Transforms). Gil Environnement Summi, Trieste, Italy

2000

Dynamic City. La Fondation pour l’Architecture, Brussels, Belgium
Air en Forme. Musée des Arts Décoratifs / Vitra Design Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland
Ici On Peut Toucher. Galerie TBN, Rennes, France
Life Nexus Village Fête (Home). Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
Mutations/Modes 1960-2000. Musée Galliera, Paris, France

PUBLICATIONS SELECTION

Lucy + Jorge Orta  Potential Architecture Time Line

Refuge Wear - Habitant 1992
Refuge Wear Mobile Survival Sac 1994
Refuge Wear Mobile Survival Sac (Gift) 1996-98
Body Architecture Collective Wear Soweto 1997
Body Architecture Foyer D 2002
Dome Dwelling Africa 2009

Refuge Wear Interventions 1992-98
Refuge Wear Interventions 1992-98
Refuge Wear Interventions 1992-98
Modular Architecture The Unit x 10 1996
Modular Architecture The Dome 1996
Life Nexus Village Fete 1999

Body Architecture Collective Wear 4 persons 1994
Refuge Wear OrtaWater 1995
Refuge Wear Anticipation Accessory 2003
Body Architecture Study murale 2008
Fabulae Romanae Dome Dwelling Campidoglio 2012
Fabulae Romanae Dome Dwelling Viminale 2012
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Totipotent Architecture
Installation Sacred Art Museum
Buonconvento, Tuscany, 2004
Steel, hand blown crystal, laser cut steel, crystal mirror
Diptyque 1240 x 40 x 80cm each
Photo: E.Bialkowska

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Totipotent Architecture
In Vitro, 2004
Antique steel cradle, hand blown crystal, historic oil painting
Annunciation
150 x 90cm, height variable
Photo: E.Bialkowska

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Totipotent Architecture
Tuscany (study), 2004
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
36 x 30 x 50cm
Photo: J.J.Crance

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Totipotent Architecture
Tuscany (study), 2004–08
Laser cut steel, hand blown glass
62 x 27 x 50cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Totipotent Architecture
Tower of Dreams, 2004
Laser cut steel, 20 hand blown crystal, 4 Body Architectures, mirror, test tubes
110 x 210 x 120cm
Photo: J.J.Crance

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Tuscany (study), 2004
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
40 x 40 x 85cm
Photo: J.J.Crance

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Tuscany (study), 2004
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
40 x 40 x 85cm
Photo: J.J.Crance

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Tuscany (study), 2004-08
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
25 x 25 x 50cm
Photo: J.J.Crance

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Tuscany (study), 2004-08
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
25 x 25 x 50cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Tuscany (study), 2004-08
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
25 x 25 x 50cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Tuscany (study), 2004-08
Steel, hand blown crystal glass
25 x 25 x 50cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Totipotent Architecture
Les Moulins Paper Mill Silo, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
65 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Mouins Reservoirs III, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
20 x 20 x 20 & 20 x 20 x 35cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Reservoirs, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Reservoirs, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 28 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 24 x 50cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Paper Mill Silo, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
65 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Mouins Reservoirs III, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
20 x 20 x 20 & 20 x 20 x 35cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Mouins Reservoirs, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall II, 2009-13
Steel, hand blown glass
50 x 40 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

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Les Moulins Electricity Turbine Hall I, 2008
Steel, hand blown glass
55 x 55 x 45cm
Photo: B.Huet

Page 83
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Steel, hand blown glass
82 x 30 x 40cm
Photo: B.Huet