

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
March 1994

THRESHOLDS/BERNARD TSCHUMI: ARCHITECTURE AND EVENT

April 21 - July 5, 1994

An exhibition of the work of the architect Bernard Tschumi, on view at The Museum of Modern Art from April 21 to July 5, 1994, is the second in the Museum's **THRESHOLDS** series devoted to thematic explorations of contemporary issues in architecture and design. Organized by Terence Riley, chief curator, and Anne Dixon, study center supervisor, Department of Architecture and Design, **THRESHOLDS/BERNARD TSCHUMI: ARCHITECTURE AND EVENT** explores the tension between the rational systems by which buildings are necessarily designed and the constant transformation of these buildings by the changing events within them.

As an introduction to five major architectural projects, the exhibition begins with Tschumi's theoretical project, The Manhattan Transcripts (first exhibited in New York in 1978), which serves as a reference for much of his later work. Represented in the exhibition through models and drawings are Parc de la Villette, Paris (1982-); Bridge-City, Lausanne (1988-), an urban project consisting of four inhabited bridges; Kansai International Airport, Osaka (1988); Edge City, Chartres (1991-), an office and leisure development; and Le Fresnoy National Studio of Contemporary Arts, Tourcoing, France (1991-).

The installation, designed with the architect, reinforces the uneasy relationship between the precision of architecture and the instability of day-to-day life. Models are suspended from cables, while video images of human

- more -

activity underscore the importance of events in defining architectural space.

In the 125-acre Parc de la Villette, for example, Tschumi disrupts the public's expectations of stable architectural space by distorting the geometry of both the plan and the structures, and by proposing an unusual combination of urban activities. Tschumi's design manipulates the ideal forms of circles, squares, and triangles; when dissected and recombined, these pure geometric forms become examples of imperfection and disorder.

By incorporating an existing building of a disparate type into a new design, as in Le Fresnoy National Studio of Contemporary Art, the architect creates multiple historic layers within one structure. The original buildings, an indoor entertainment complex built in the 1920s, are to be completely covered by a glass-and-steel structure. Tschumi defines the irregular space between the new and old roofs with unexpected pathways, platforms, and foot-bridges. In some projects, including Le Fresnoy, video or film projections are integrated into the structures to further the sense of dislocation. "Tschumi's work presents logical and compelling alternatives to the machine as the twentieth century's source of visual and ethical inspiration," says Mr. Riley.

Bernard Tschumi, who was born in 1944 in Lausanne, Switzerland, studied at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich, where he received his degree in architecture in 1969. He has taught at the Architectural Association, London (1970-80); at the Princeton University School of Architecture (1976, 1980-81); and at The Cooper Union School of Architecture (1980-83); in 1983 he won the international competition for the construction of Parc de la Villette. In 1988 he was named dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University. Mr. Tschumi

is the author of *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1981), *La Case Vide* (1986), *Cinégramme Folie* (1987), and *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994). *Event-Cities* (1994) is being published by MIT Press to coincide with the opening of the exhibition, as is a new edition of *The Manhattan Transcripts*, published by Academy Editions.

THRESHOLDS/BERNARD TSCHUMI: ARCHITECTURE AND EVENT is made possible by grants from Obayashi Corporation; YKK; Pro Helvetia Arts Council of Switzerland; the Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland; Etablissement Public du Parc de la Villette; Escofet; and the Nestlé Foundation for Art. The next exhibition in the series is **THRESHOLDS/O.M.A. AT MoMA: REM KOOLHAAS AND THE PLACE OF PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE** (November 3, 1994 - February 21, 1995).

* * *