

**Erratic Architecture**  
**the work.group, [www.sisyphian.com](http://www.sisyphian.com)**

The work is erratic because living is so.

The work of architecture is a product of the milieu of the worker's life and the context of production. These two forces are inherently erratic relative to the pure will of creation. The true worker does not skirt this effect. They capitalize on it. A true worker will not refuse what enters their life, exceptional or abject; they are an active composer who will mediate the extent to which this background diverts and colors their final product. The architect who suppresses the noise of their life in their work is a coward.

Living is the work. There is not a single person whose daily life would not be improved by working harder. This is not to say that one cannot live, but that living is work. To live the work is to have an unending discourse with the context of life. The occurrences of going to a cafe, taking in a film, or driving across the country cannot be passive or isolated acts. The true worker uses their understanding of the exceptional and thoughtful as a lens to find value in the unexceptional and unconsidered. It is not enough to simply soak in the passing stimuli. They must be collated, digested, metabolized, excreted, and divested. This divestiture is an active process. The time of the occurrence passes. It cannot be recaptured. Something new must be made to take its place. The space between that discourse with context and the production of new work, new context, is seamless. It is smooth, but not pure.

Design and manifestation are disturbed and stimulated by foreground events and background noise. This can be seen in a project like the work.group's *SROman Holiday*,<sup>[1]</sup> the development of which was interrupted by a lengthy intermission; construction of the Roman flophouse started with a viewing of De Palma's *Blow Out* (1981), but the project quickly was shelved and remained so until after a viewing of Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975) ten months later. The implications of these viewings are not overt; the visitor won't, for example, see the room where 'Robertson' was murdered cheekily reconstructed in on the 13th floor of the Roman fleabag, but the viewings were fortuitous in that the project would not have advanced had the architects not been exposed to them. Without degenerating to pastiche, the work.group nevertheless unapologetically refuses to polish the rough fragments left embedded in the work by the random cultural agents.

Not only is the work confronted with the passing signals of the cultural milieu, it is subject to the unavoidable inflections wrought by the intrusion of various technological advances and representation tools. By filtering imprecisely and unevenly the transmission of the architect's intent, these variations cause departures from what they might achieve impulsively and with optimal faculties. The adoption of particular tools themselves constitute the relinquishment of continuity. For example, in the work.group's *Marquis* picaresque,<sup>[2]</sup> a computer generated rendering spliced with a few optically recognized characters

from a scanned notebook page is internally disrupted. The fabric of its content is insidiously warped, but as with the temporal disruption of *SROman Holiday*, the body of the work is still complete and seamless. These incursions generate a new history of experience and skill that can evolve to benefit new pieces of work.

Making exceptional things requires indulgence in the erratic. The true work is not a stoic conifer but an elastic hortulan mess of pseudopods and feelers. The more potent the pollen the more fecund the production.

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<sup>1</sup> the work.group, (2013-2014). <http://www.sisyphian.com/SROman-Holiday>

<sup>2</sup> the work.group, (2002-2004). <http://www.sisyphian.com/Marquis-A-Picaresque-Romp>

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