Research Article

Simon Weir*

# Domestic Hybrids: Vitruvius' Xenia, the Surrealist's *Minotaure*, and Shrigley's Octopus

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**Abstract:** The domestic spaces of the built environment are traditionally associated with residential architecture. But the domestic spaces can also extend out, metaphorically, into familiar public spaces in which one may feel at home, and also extend inwards into self-perception, insofar as you may say that you dwell within yourself. This article begins by recalling Vitruvius' fundamental notion of architectural *utilitas* concerns accommodating not a building's owners but foreigners and strange outsiders. Vitruvius' view on utility heavily favoured architecture's socio-political function, and the guests he believed that architecture ought to accommodate were not merely a home's owners or their visiting friends, but those people who are more distant from a home's owners: those who are stranger and less well understood, known as xenos and who ought to be respected under the Ancient Greek religious and ethical principle of xenia. It is on these grounds that Vitruvius makes an ethical critique of residential architecture in favour of the virtue of public architecture. Next the reach of xenia is proposed to extend towards those who are different not merely because of ethnic differences but cognitive and sensory differences. Such accommodations are today accounted for as part of accessibility design and salutogenic design. Similar conceptions are noted in Nietzsche's notion of an "architecture for the perceptive" and the surrealist's interpretation of the minotaur as a hybrid not only of animal and human but a hybrid of civilised citizen and barbarian outsider. Together these sketch out an expanded sense of the domestic that includes public spaces designed to accommodate strange outsiders and the hybrid forms used to signify them.

**Keywords:** xenia, Vitruvius, minotaur, disability, inclusion

## 1 Prelude

Glance for a moment at the line drawing by David Shrigley (Figure 1), so we may use this as a guiding poetic visual metaphor for domestic hybrids. The octopus holds a pen in each of its arms, and the text below reads: "he made a very interesting drawing and then he went back in the sea."[1] Of the many possible ways to interpret Shrigley's captioned drawing, this essay will sketch out a scene of the image as an artist self-presenting as an almost alien being who lives in reclusive solitude, and how we might begin to conceptualise a public space where this figure of the outsider might feel more accommodated. This essay, through a series of examples and interpretations, suggests that the operative question here concerns xenophilic architecture designed for domestic hybrids.

1 Shrigley, https://davidshrigley.com/b-w-drawings/untitled-he-made-a-very-interesting-drawing.

* **Corresponding author: Simon Weir,** Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, e-mail: simon.weir@sydney.edu.au

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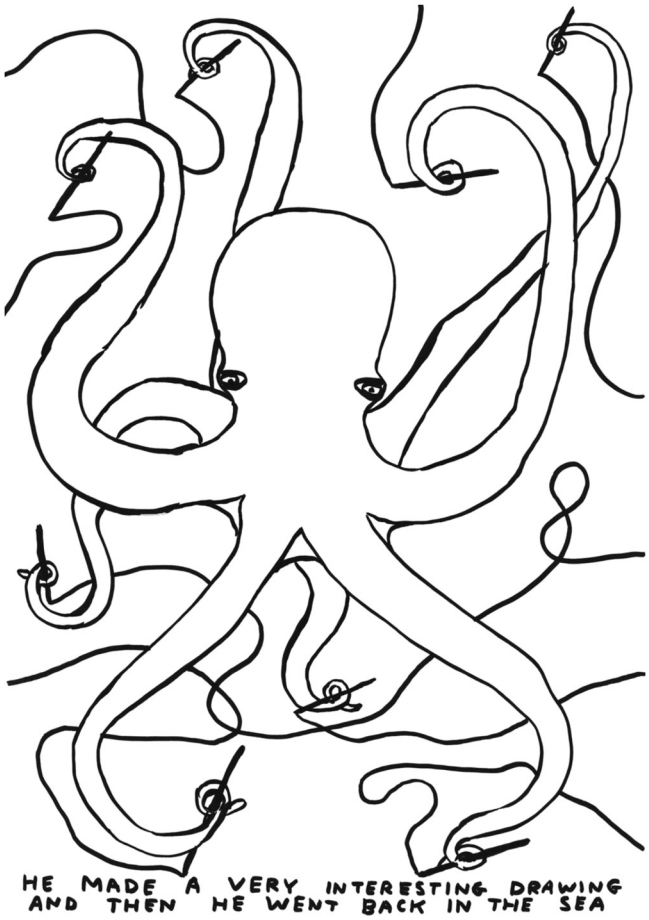


**Figure 1:** David Shrigley, 2023, *Untitled (he made a very interesting drawing*).

## 2 Architectural Utility and the Outsider

Scholarly writing about architecture frequently begins with Vitruvius, the Roman architect whose *Ten Books on Architecture,* written near the end of the first century BCE, is without doubt the most influential piece of architectural theory in the Western tradition, certainly the oldest. Vitruvius' theorisation that the core principles of architecture are *firmitas, utilitas, venustas*, generally translated as firmness, utility, and beauty, has remained a cornerstone of architectural thought since the book's rediscovery in the fifteenth century. Yet writing on the ethics of domestic architecture, and its influence on the contemporary, has made little reference to Vitruvius' strong view that accommodating outsiders, the Greek term that Vitruvius knew was xenos (ξένος), is one of architecture's core functions. It is based on this infrequently made observation that I will make the case for a hybrid domesticity being necessary in the contemporary city.

Paul Guyer's *A Philosopher Looks at Architecture* traces Vitruvius' enduring influence at the intersection of architecture and philosophy – it was Vitruvius who left us the earliest recommendation for architects to study some philosophy – yet no mention here is made of animals or foreigners. For Guyer, function, a common translation of Vitruvius' *utilitas*, "must be understood broadly as the facilitation of the adaptation of human beings to nature and to each other for the successful execution of such activities and tasks as sleeping, bathing, reading, trading, and worshiping, which are part although not the whole of human flourishing."[2] Though this

**2** Guyer, *A Philosopher Looks at Architecture*, 20.

is an accurate portrayal, what is absent in Guyer's argument is the acknowledgement of accommodating guests – human and non-human. Here, as often happens, architecture's function is truncated.

Similarly, when Tom Spector enjoined Vitruvius to pursue a philosophical basis for the ethical architect, his discussion of Vitruvius' *utilitas* engages almost exclusively with the nineteenth-century ethical philosophy of utilitarianism.[3] Here the meaning of "utility" leaps from the building's occupants to the entire community effected by a building's presence. Spector makes a strong and engaging argument about architectural utilitarianism, but the median point of the visitor and the foreigner is absent, and animals are mentioned only as benefiting from building's demolition when an architectural site is returned to nature.

Throughout the last two centuries, architectural function has undergone continuous scrutiny and revision, but the current condition remains unsatisfactory for handling Vitruvius' intentions. Aldo Rossi's influential 1982 book, *The Architecture of the City*, includes a memorable section on this topic, "Critique of Naive Functionalism" where he argues for architecture's separation from basic conceptions of function. Here Rossi explained that "one thesis of this study, in its effort to affirm the value of architecture in the analysis of the city, is the denial of the explanation of urban artifacts in terms of function."[4] To analyse architecture in terms of function, Rossi writes that it is "regressive because it impedes us from studying forms and knowing the world of architecture according to its true laws."[5] Rossi's injunction here is an easy critique of function, and he uses the oft repeated notion that buildings and their constituent spaces often change function over time, and that some appear to have no function. But the definition of function here is construed both too narrowly, and too broadly, to be properly aligned with Vitruvius. Rossi's definition of naive functionalism is too broad for the purposes of this essay because it disregards the constitutive elements of a building. A gutter along the edge of a roof line, for example, whether made from cut stone or folded aluminium, has a clear function, and a building without a gutter will function differently in the rain. Parts of buildings have functions; this is not to say that the function of "capital A" Architecture is to direct rain water, but that all buildings are composed of functional elements, and if all of these functional elements are removed there will be no building, no architecture.

At the other end of the scale, Rossi's sketch of function is too narrow because it skips over the most fundamental aspect of architectural function, which we can approximate with words such as shelter and accommodation. An object that is physically stable and beautiful is not architecture unless it affords accommodation; hence architecture must, at a minimum, accommodate bodies. Rossi's argument against function on the grounds that some buildings have no "specific function" disregards the function of accommodation itself. In one climate, shelter from rain is necessary, so a glass roof is a good solution; in some drier, hotter climates, shelter from rain is not required but shade from the sun is required, so a glass roof is inappropriate and a thin thatch roof, which offers little protection against rain but cooling shade from the sun, is appropriate. Architecture's function varies across many dimensions, but there remains some architectural function: architecture is habitable. A building that is inherently uninhabitable fails as architecture; even if its appearance brings architecture to mind, it is not architecture, perhaps instead a sculpture that invokes architecture, but not architecture. Rossi's argument is against a too strong conception of function, one that undervalues beauty and the aesthetic autonomy of architecture. While an important notion, this is beyond the scope of the present essay. Instead I want to focus on a specific function that architecture may and may not possess – accommodating strangers – and the philosophical and theoretical history of these particular functions.

Returning to Vitruvius' *utilitas* and its alignment with utilitarianism, we note an absence of an intermediary step between a building's occupants and the entire population. This absence, I contend, is largely the result of Vitruvius' coyness about explicitly stating his ethical distinction between public architecture and private domicile. A reader needs to interpret the inferences in Vitruvius' details, that is, to understand the context, to grasp Vitruvius' intent. The case I wish to make here is that for Vitruvius, an architect's work concerns only the public good: architecture thereby meant public architecture. The objection may readily be made to this point by noting

**3** Spector, *Ethical Architect*, 65–88.

**4** Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 46.

**5** Ibid.

that one of Vitruvius' ten books is on residential architecture, but there is clear evidence that it was the exception rather than the rule. Vitruvius deployed clear caveats before discussing the topic.

To assemble Vitruvius' position, it is first necessary to note that his preferred sources of truth in architectural matters were the Ancient Greeks that preceded him. Vitruvius presumes the reader is familiar with Ancient Greek. Many Ancient Greek words are untranslated in the Latin text. Most people in Vitruvius' day spoke both Latin and Greek.[6] And Caesar Augustus, to whom the book is dedicated, is known to have been able to read Greek and enjoy Greek drama.[7] Next, it seems likely that Vitruvius presumed his reader knew that all the earliest uses of the word architecture in Ancient Greek pertain exclusively to public projects. Although innumerable original sources have been lost, the earliest extant records of the word architect (ἀρχιτέκτων) occur in fragments of lost dramatic works. Lisa Landrum identified the earliest plausible sources in Aeschylus' *Dike Play,* Aristophanes' *Peace,* and Euripides' *Cyclops,* all from the fifth century BCE, and none of these refer to architects producing buildings, but instead organising human labour towards a common good.[8] The origin of the now commonly accepted definition of architect comes from Herodotus, whose *Histories* describes architects building temples, bridges, pipes and breakwaters, closer to architecture, all domesticating the landscape, but again, no residences.[9]

Moving forward to the fourth century BCE, brief comments by Plato and Xenophon reveal that architecture was practiced as a business, but it is unclear, and doubtful, if these comments refer to residential architecture.[10] In *Economics*, Aristotle describes the construction and maintenance of homes as the duty of the homeowners.[11] In his book on residential architecture, Book 6, Vitruvius, mirroring Aristotle, begins praising householders who built their homes without architects.[12] And, when Vitruvius noted the emergence of *beautiful* homes in ancient Greece, possibly implying homes designed by architects, such opulence was only considered acceptable when the home was also used to conduct public business.[13] Vitruvius's book was, in part, written to make himself available for architectural commissions, and if a potential commission arose for residential architecture he did not want his ethical qualms to erase this opportunity. Yet there are unambiguous signs that he was cautious about engaging in residential architecture on ethical grounds.

With more weight to his argument, though obscured by indirectness, Vitruvius' introduction to Book 6, his book on residential architecture, begins with a curious anecdote about a shipwreck. A Greek philosopher, Aristippus, follower of Socrates, was shipwrecked near Rhodes. Swimming to shore with his companions, they approached Rhodes' gymnasium, discussed philosophy, and received sufficient gifts from the Rhodians to enable their homeward journey. Next Aristippus' companions "wished to return to their country," but Aristippus was intent on staying in Rhodes, so they "asked him what message he wished them to carry home," and he replied "that children ought to be provided with property and resources of a kind that could swim with them even out of a shipwreck."[14] Quoting Theophrastus, Vitruvius clarified the meaning of this remark at the end of Book 6's introduction, that a person of learning: "is the only person in the world who is neither a stranger when in a foreign land, nor friendless when he has lost his intimates and relatives."[15] Education and wisdom could be seen most clearly in one's use of personal wealth, "all the gifts which fortune bestows she can easily take away; but education, when combined with intelligence, never fails, but abides

**6** MacMullen, "Provincial Languages in the Roman Empire," 1.

**7** Suetonius, "Augustus," 89.

**8** Landrum, *Architectural Acts*, 19, 134; Landrum cites: Aristophanes "Peace," 305; Euripides, "Cyclops," 477–8; Aeschylus, *The Dike Play*, 16. These are Landrum's translations. The case of Aeschylus is the least certain, Landrum here translates a fragment located by Page: Page, "P.Oxy. 2331 and Others," 192. English editions of Aeschylus' work do not acknowledge the interpolation. Recent editions merely note the lacunae, for example, Sommerstein, *Aeschylus Fragments - Loeb Classical Library*, 280–1.

**9** Holst, "The Fall of the Tektōn and the Rise of the Architect," 5; Herodotus, 3.60.

**10** Plato, "Lovers" 135c; Plato, "Gorgias," 455b; Xenophon, "Memorabilia," 4.2.10. An earlier, 5th Century BCE stile records an architect paid for services, see: Svenson-Evers, *Die Griechischen Architekten Archaischer und Klassischer Zeit*, 237.

**11** Aristotle, "Economics," 1.1345a.

**12** Vitruvius, 6. Introduction 6; Aristotle, "Economics," 2.1349b.

**13** Vitruvius, 6.5.2.

**14** Vitruvius, 6. Introduction.1.

**15** Vitruvius, 6. Introduction.2.

steadily on to the very end of life."[16] Note here that houses are completely absent from the story, and the only architecture mentioned – and mentioned without any description of its qualities – was a public gymnasium. Why would Vitruvius include this anecdote in an introduction to his book on residential architecture? The message is clear: public architecture was essential for a good society, and a good education would teach us exactly that. Residential architecture was ethically less virtuous than architecture dedicated towards the public good.

In making this argument, Vitruvius was reflecting a well-known point of the ethics of Ancient Greek architecture, most clearly seen in the writings of Demosthenes, from the fourth century BC. Ancient Athens, known as the birthplace of democracy, is also known for its splendid public architecture. The obverse of their focus on the public was a corresponding distaste for domestic architecture. Great houses were considered a sign of democratic decay. Decrying the selfishness that he saw around him, as the Athenian democracy fell towards aristocracy, Demosthenes explained that back in the sixth century BCE when the democracy flourished:

> the State was wealthy and splendid, but in private life no man held his head higher than the multitude. Here is the proof: if any of you know the sort of house that Themistocles or Miltiades or any of those distinguished men of old lived in, you may observe that it is no grander than the common run of houses. On the other hand, both the structure and the equipment of their Public buildings were on such a scale and of such quality that no opportunity of surpassing them was left to coming generations. Witness those gate-houses, docks, porticoes, the great harbor, and all the edifices with which you see our city adorned. But today every man who takes part in public life enjoys such superfluity of wealth that some of them have built private dwelling-houses more magnificent than many public buildings... as for the public buildings that you put up and whitewash, I am ashamed to say how mean and shabby they are.[17]

The transition of Ancient Greek culture from the heroic Homeric age to the wealthy domesticity of the Hellenistic age – the "decline" in civic society – is evident, both in archaeological findings and literary records, in the growth of private residences and decay of public architecture.[18] Vitruvius' introduction to his book on residential architecture – a shipwreck story – pivots around a stranger visiting a public building, not visiting the home of a wealthy resident, and finding relief there: good civic architecture equates to a wise, well educated, and benign community.

Ernst Gardner's definitive essay on this subject, "The Greek House," explains clearly why residential architecture was viewed as relatively unimportant to the Athenians. Life for the Athenian, Gardner wrote,

> was always out-of-doors in free Greece, in the agora or the law courts or the palaestra; he practically only came home to sleep, or to dine and entertain his friends... It was not until degenerate times that he sought in the luxury of private life a compensation for the loss of political freedom, and found it necessary to add to his house a separate court and suite of apartments for himself and his guests.[19]

Here in Gardner's account, what is clear is that the city itself was the Athenian's domus. Compared to the latter Greeks, and Vitruvius' contemporary Romans, domestic life was more integrated into public architecture, and it is towards this expanded sense of domus that I shall explore next. Though that is necessary, first is to consider the ways peaceful outsiders, however that term is construed, can be accommodated in public spaces and public architectures.

## 3 Xenia

The good quality education that Vitruvius emphasised in the shipwreck anecdote, and accounted for the political freedom Gardner identified, was explicitly oriented around an ethical principle that was central to architecture, and to much of Ancient Greek culture: the principle of xenia (ξείνία).

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**16** Vitruvius, 6. Introduction.3.

**17** Demosthenes, "On The Crown," 23.206–8.

**18** Walter-Karydi, *The Greek House*, 1; Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*, 38, 162.

**19** Gardner, "The Greek House," 305.

The meaning of xenia, in a general sense, is not unfamiliar, as it can be loosely translated as hospitality. Yet hospitality has a Latin root: hospes, from which were derived benign words such as host, hostel, hospice, and hospital, but also more negative terms such as hostile. Whereas the principle of hospitality makes a clear distinction between host and guest, xenia equalises them, and there is no variant bearing a negative effect, no hostility. Acting *against* xenia's principles was a well-known trope for earning hostility. The events of Homer's epic, the *Iliad,* orbit around a transgression against xenia: Trojan prince Paris visited Menelaus in Sparta and left with his wife, Helen.[20] Though often today interpreted as a romantic narrative and sexual possessiveness, Homer and Euripides both present Menelaus as specifically invoking the principle of xenia as warranting war against Troy, not his broken heart.[21]

When a guest in a foreign land, both sides were obliged to act respectfully towards each other. Everyone who travels will likely find themselves relying on the principle of xenia. The archetypal example of a person coming to rely on xenia, as Vitruvius well knew, was the shipwreck. When washed ashore without any possessions at hand, one relies on others acting according to the principle of xenia for restoration and a safe return home. Plato referred extensively to this principle in *Laws* and described conduct towards *xenos* (those individuals relying on xenia) as especially sacred.[22] In *Laws,* Plato nominated three xenos needing accommodation. Diplomats who ought to be hosted by city officials, seasonal travellers who arrive by boat seeking to trade and who ought to be hosted in markets, harbours, and public buildings outside the city, and those who arrived for festivals who ought to be hosted in temples, including the sanctuaries of the theatres.[23] Indeed all the references to architects in the aforementioned Greek plays invoke the principal of xenia as their motivation, or refer to xenoi as part of their teams.[24] As Landrum explained, those mentioned in these plays are noted as architects not because they were making buildings, but because they were "acting as an exemplary proponent of justice, peace and social order."[25] Note also here that the buildings mentioned earlier by Demosthenes, "gate-houses, docks, porticoes, the great harbor" closely overlap with the buildings Plato mentions for hosting xenos: markets, harbours, and temples.

As Demosthenes explained, as the century passed there were less splendid public buildings, those public buildings that were present fell into disrepair not from disuse but from neglect, and there were instead more luxurious private residences. When Vitruvius mentioned xenia, he noted implicitly – through a shipwreck story – what xenia used to mean, then explicitly stated that the meaning of the word xenia had changed. Now, in Vitruvius' own time, xenia referred to artwork that wealthy homeowners had painted on the walls of their guests' apartments.[26] By the time of the writing of the Biblical New Testament, xenia referred to the guest room in one's home, and the cognate term "xeniis" referred to the gifts that ambassadors gave to wealthy homeowners who conducted public business in their private homes.[27] The generosity to strangers central to xenia's original meaning had all but disappeared. Within a few centuries, even the Latin form of xenia fell into disuse, and xenia as an ethical notion disappeared (Figure 2).

Something Vitruvius did not mention, but likely knew, was why the Ancient Greek architects sculpted animal legs into front row theatre seats. The meaning of these forms is unknown, but we know who they were for. Eric Csapo located eleven Athenian inscriptions detailing how theatres would elect architects and instruct them to make theatre seats especially for their proxenos.[28] Proxenos were foreign people recognised as especially generous to the community. Gabriel Herman has located thousands of inscriptions between the seventh century BC to the second century AD awarding an individual the position of proxenos, a xenos of the community.[29] These marble sculpted, front row theatre seats, the prohedria, have sculpted animal legs.

**20** Herodotus wrote that Paris stole other goods from Menelaus also: Herodotus, 2.114.3–2.120.5
**21** Homer, "Iliad," 3.350–4, 13.622–5; Euripides, "Trojan Women," 864–5.
**22** Plato, "Laws," 1.632d.
**23** Ibid., 12.952d–953d.
**24** Weir, "On the Origin of the Architect," 9–15.
**25** Landrum, "Ensemble Performances," 254.
**26** Vitruvius, 6.7.4. See: Weir, "Xenia in Vitruvius' Greek House," 868–83.
**27** Pliny, *Epistles*, 5.13.8.
**28** Csapo, "The Men who Built the Theatres," 110.
**29** Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 130.

Typically with a feathered femur and a lion's paw, they appear to be griffin legs. This hybrid of animal and chair signifying proxenia is the first sign of hybridity being creatively associated with otherness. The chair is both stone and animal, and the leg is both bird and lion. Familiar parts were hybridised into an unfamiliar arrangement.

## 4 Expanding Xenia Towards Neurodiversity

The provisions offered to xenos and proxenos were limited to wealthy and generous men. The contraction of xenia's reach from public architecture to private residences that Vitruvius noted did not alter this fundamental distribution. The principal could however be expanded, and we can think about architecture as being either xenophilic or xenophobic. The latter term, though familiar, however may be inaccurate as public architecture that does not accommodate visitors and strangers is not necessarily phobic; it may be merely ignorant or negligent as well as aggressive. The active question for this essay is *who* should be considered xenos worthy of accommodation.

In the case of xenophilia and xenophobia, the xenos of these words' prefix is foreigners, meaning those from other countries and thereby differing cultures. However, in a heterogenous metropolis, many residents are also foreigners, and diversity of national origin no longer functions as a key indicator of otherness. Instead here I propose we also look towards people with other differences. The utilitarian philosophy of the nineteenth century advocated for maximising the greatest good for the greatest number of people and successfully acted as leverage to include the needs of women and slaves in those whose interest ought to be accounted for. This agenda is being advanced in contemporary culture with many advocating for the needs of physically and neurologically divergent individuals to have their needs accommodated in public space and public buildings. This, as we will see, has many parallels with the aims of accommodating those with more conspicuous disabilities. In the examples provided, we may recognise how wealthy and inclusive metropolises are working to produce hybrid forms of the public domus.

In the 1970s, Aaron Antonovsky, a medical sociology researcher, developed the salutogenic theory which, since 2000, has received increasing attention in health care design.[30] Contrary to the mainstream of late-twentieth-century architectural theory, with its obsession with Freudian and Lacanian psychodynamics which focusses on pathogenesis, salutogenic research seeks to identify the origins not of illness but the causes of health. Towards this end, salutogenic design aims at improving the *meaningfulness, manageability,* and *comprehensibility* of the built environment.[31]

Comprehensibility of the built environment is routinely improved with signage and predictable street patterns.[32] Comprehension of an architectural space is also improved with relatively simple architectural volumes, and details that assist the comprehension of the form of the space, for example a rectilinear volume with a grid of beams on the ceiling, clearly delineated floor–wall intersections, and a regularly tiled floor make for easier comprehension than a complex volume like the inside of a cave. Comprehensibility is also improved by familiarity, so if one is accustomed to seeing chair legs shaped like griffin legs, such objects will be immediately comprehensible, but anyone for whom this is a novelty will find this less immediately comprehensible and thereby more cognitively demanding. It is important to note here that many people – those without sensory and/or perceptual difficulties – may prefer more complex forms for the same reason that those without fast spatial cognition find such spaces cognitively tiring.

There are innumerable dimensions for comprehensibility once we consider the many kinds of neurological and perceptual variation in the population. For example, the visually impaired benefit from braille signs and other tactile and auditory cues placed at pedestrian crossings throughout the built environment. Such

**30** Sagy et al., *The Handbook of Salutogenesis*.

**31** Dilani, "Psychosocially Supportive Design," 55–65.

**32** Golembiewski, "Start Making Sense," 104–5.

**Figure 2:** Griffin legs on a proxenos' prohedria at the Lycurgan Theatre at the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, carved probably in first century BCE. Photo by, Runner1928, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=58348938.

increased comprehensibility facilitates increased manageability. Manageability is the part of salutogenic design commonly addressed by accessibility standards, such as regulations about elevators, ramps, and stairs, large lever handles on doors rather than round twist handles, and many instances where the comprehensibility of a changing environment is a prerequisite for managing it safely. Meaningfulness is in many ways intertwined with the other two dimensions.[33] For a blind person, the meaning of a braille sign is both its superficial and literal meaning, and the existence of the sign itself is meaningful as a signifier of the social acceptance of the person's condition.

This latter form of social acceptance can be extended towards a large range of sensory and neurological differences. In Australia, a chain of supermarkets and New South Wales Government "Service Centres" have both implemented a weekly "quiet hour" where they dim the lights, turn off the beeping noises of their registers, turn off the ambient music, and pause all the unnecessary announcements.[34] By thus reducing the sensory stimulus of their interior environments, people with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can find it much less stressful and exhausting to perform their necessary domestic and administrative duties. These accommodations are relatively rare examples, as research on accommodating autistic people has so far largely extended to private homes.[35]

Recently, Angela Mazzi has argued that salutogenic design needs to add a range of social dimensions: most notably the need to relate.[36] Relationship difficulties are core problems experienced by neurodiverse individuals, not only their difficulty relating to others, but the fact that many neurotypicals have too little understanding of neurodiversity to accommodate it, a phenomenon referred to as epistemic injustice.[37] In this way, public communication of events such as "quiet hour," braille signs, and acoustic markers at pedestrian crossings communicate an acceptance of human difference to those who might otherwise not encounter such individuals in their quotidian existence. These steps towards accommodating the needs of individuals profoundly different from the majority of the population, and in many cases with designs that are incomprehensible to, or are unnoticed by, the majority, gives the built environment a distinctly hybrid character. Both the

**33** Sagy and Mana, "The Relevance of Salutogenesis to Social Issues Besides Health," 79.

**34** Woolworths Group, *Latest News.* https://www.woolworthsgroup.com.au/au/en/media/news-archive/2019/woolworths-rolls-out-quiet-hour-to-select-stores-across-australia.html#:~:text=Autism%20Spectrum%20Australia%20estimates%20more,%3A30am%20and%2011%3A30am.

**35** Kinnaer et al., "Autism-Friendly Architecture from the Outside in and the Inside Out," 179–95. And, Steele, *At Home with Autism.*

**36** Mazzi, "Toward a Unified Language (and Application) of Salutogenic Design," 1–13.

**37** Chapman and Carel, "Neurodiversity, Epistemic Injustice, and the Good Human Life," 614–31.

blind and sighted are presented with a world they are told they can only partially perceive, knowing that there are imperceptible messages within the built environment.

Although generally described as assistive technologies, many of these hybrids are distinctly useful to more than their initial target audience. Once a pedestrian becomes accustomed to acoustic signals at pedestrian crossings, it is easy to lose the habit of *watching* for the light to change, so that when in a new location and the pedestrian light silently turns green instead you continue reading your phone or talking to your friend, and miss the crossing interval all altogether. At these moments of minor inconvenience, one may realise that the multi-sensory qualities of the crossing signal benefits everyone, and its absence brings to mind the value that accommodating the visually impaired brings everyone. This phenomenon is sometimes knows as the curb cut effect, named after the small steep ramps cut into pedestrian sidewalks that were added to accommodate wheelchair access, but since they are now routinely used by cyclists and pedestrians they are no longer recognised as specifically for that purpose.[38] Such interventions should not be misunderstood as modern phenomenon, however, as similar accessible approach paths are known to exist in ancient and medieval architecture.[39]

A similar advantage has arisen from the increased use of subtitles in films; once merely present for those who are hearing impaired or wishing to watch a foreign language film, their pervasiveness facilitates multi-language films. Thematically, multi-language films can more accurately represent the real experience of people living in metropolises who hear many languages each day, some understood, some not. This adjacency of known and known, sensed and nonsense, can also be experienced when we hybridise our sense with animals. Dogs' sense of smell can be added to our own sensory apparatus, hybridising a dog's nose onto our cognition. Here again hybridisation can be illustrated as diverse, pre-existing sensory capacities and corresponding physical characteristics metaphorically hybridised into the form of single hybrid animal. With these diverse examples in mind, one may now recognise that animal hybrids can have vastly different meanings and consequences depending on our relationship with the animals. The proxenos hybridised with a predatory bird sends a very different message than a person hybridised with a bull or an octopus.

## 5 Perceptive Outsiders and Hybrid Monsters

In the last years of the century that birthed utilitarianism, writing within a society where Christian morality dominated cultural discourse, Friedrich Nietzsche began to advocate for the needs of outsiders whose difference was psychological.[40] In *Joyful Wisdom,* Nietzsche included a section entitled "Architecture of the Perceptive" which sketches out a way that perceptive outsiders can begin to feel at home in cities:

> what is specially lacking in our great cities namely, quiet, spacious, and widely extended places for reflection, places with long, lofty colonnades for bad weather, or for too sunny days, where no noise of wagons or of shouters would penetrate, and where a more refined propriety would prohibit loud praying even to the priest: buildings and situations which as a whole would express the sublimity of self-communion and seclusion from the world… We want to have ourselves translated into stone and plant, we want to go for a walk in ourselves when we wander in these halls and gardens.[41]

The perceptive outsiders that Nietzsche sought accommodations for in public architectures included outsider philosophers like himself. As Aristotle famously noted in the beginning of *Politics*, "man is by nature a political animal, and he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god."[42] Responding, Nietzsche wrote, "to live alone one must be a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the third case: one must be both – a philosopher."[43] Those perceptive ones seeking

**38** Blackwell, "The Curb Cut Effect." Also: Gissen, *The Architecture of Disability*, 60–1.
**39** Gissen, *The Architecture of Disability*, 4–9.
**40** Weir and Hill, "Making Space for Degenerate Thinking," 125–32.
**41** Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom*, IV, 280.
**42** Aristotle, "Politics," 1.1253a.
**43** Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Maxims" 3.

"seclusion" in public architecture are clearly such philosophers, and similarly artists and others who are marginalised through the differences of their perceptions. Their unique position, their unique ethos, affords them a critical eye on unexamined customs, but this position comes at the cost of marginalisation, whether as outcasts or as those humans who self-diagnose as god–beast hybrids.

This provision of spaces for reflection was, for Nietzsche, explicitly tied to public buildings, not to the inner courtyards of vast residences. Nietzsche's view of cultural progress hinged on society's weaker individuals. In *Human, All Too Human,* he argued that, "Wherever progress is to ensue, deviating natures are of greatest importance. Every progress of the whole must be preceded by a partial weakening. The strongest natures retain the type, the weaker ones help to advance it. Something similar also happens in the individual."[44] And from his note books, "the first shoots of fecundity, insofar as they are a sign of health and promote vigour and resistance, initially have the character of sickness."[45] With this we can glean much of Nietzsche's intentions when beginning *Twilight of the Idols* with an aphorism Nietzsche writes is his "personal motto" "The spirits increase, vigour grows through a wound."[46] Hence we ought to recognise how god–beast hybridisation is both a productive and meaningful modification and also an ongoing impairment, a decades long weakening. Hence, Nietzsche wrote that god–beast hybridisation:

> is for the very few… And whoever attempts it… is probably not only strong, but also daring to the point of recklessness. He enters into a labyrinth, he multiplies a thousandfold the dangers which life brings with it in any case, not the least of which is that no one can see how and where he loses his way, becomes lonely, and is torn piecemeal by some minotaur of conscience. Supposing one like that comes to grief, this happens so far from the comprehension of men that they neither feel it nor sympathize.[47]

To connect Vitruvius' notion of utility, which was deeply informed by the ethic of xenia, to Shrigley's octopus (Figure 1) – via Nietzsche's concept of the perceptive outsider – we merely need to briefly pass through surrealism. The surrealists had a long fascination with art of outsiders, and of the mentally ill. As Effie Rentzou wrote, "the Surrealists attempted to provide a non-anthropocentric view of the human by breaking the chains of humanist tradition, by inviting the 'barbarian' outsider inside."[48] The surrealists did this explicitly through the publication of a review magazine called *Minotaure* named after the hybrid bull-headed human of Greek mythology. Viewed with Nietzsche's expression in mind – the stronger nature advanced by the weaker – the figure of the Minotaur hybridises these aspects into a single figure of the minotaurian artist–philosopher whose strong bull head is advanced by the weaker human's walking legs.

As Rentzou explained, the surrealists approached the minotaur,

> not as the 'other' or the opposite of the human, but as a continuation of the human… *Minotaure* chooses to blur the line between human and non-human, human and animal, thus asking us to reconsider the notion of the human altogether, and with it the notion of humanism… a new conception of the universal in which the animal is in the human and the human in the animal.[49]

Rather than enlightened rationality conquering the beastly unconscious, in the case of the emblematic Minotaure, rationality and instinct are bound together into an indivisible hybrid unity.

This surrealist outlook on the animal and human hybrid offers an alternative foundation for interpreting Shrigley's octopus (Figure 1). The first, and immediate, interpretation of the image reminds of the prospect of animals as artists, whether bower birds' nests, pufferfish's "crop circles," or whatever other phenomena attracts our attention.[50] The alternate interpretation then is to consider the octopus as a metaphorical person, a hybrid whose animal part is the octopus and whose human part is pen and paper. The creature is a strange

**44** Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, 224.
**45** Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 4.
**46** Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Preface."
**47** Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 29.
**48** Rentzou, "The Minotaur's Revolution," 71.
**49** Ibid., 63–5.
**50** See: Meijer, *When Animals Speak*.

outsider, the kind of artist who does not spend their hours live streaming on Instagram or courting the attention of galleries, but works in solitude, rarely completes anything, and occasionally, rarely, emerges to share one articulated crystallised visual idea, which, however thoughtful and well prepared is rather incomprehensible to the denizens of the outside world. And, rather than speculate on the very interesting drawing, what is noticed is the phenomena of the octopus itself, the strange person who briefly emerged into public awareness, and then returns to their pelagic solitude. The design questions that emerge here coincide with the philosophical questions: how does one decide the appropriate xenophilic architecture?

In each case presented here, the griffin legs on proxenos' prohedria, the sensory inaccessibility of some accessibility and salutogenic design, the minotaur, and the artistic octopus, hybridisation has been used to signify an otherness that is not wholly alien, but merely an unfamiliar arrangement of known elements. These hybrids may have a slightly monstrous aspect but they are ultimately domestic hybrids. Accommodated and accepted if not yet understood.

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