





# STEPHEN PERRELLA WITH DENNIS PANG

## *THE HAPTIC HORIZON*

This diagram shows how a new mixture of electronic horizons configures an 'infrastructure'; not a literal infrastructure, in the sense of transportation routes and backbones for distribution, but a diagram for new modalities of human agency, one that supersedes a now outmoded Cartesian paradigm. This is constituted of seams and interstitial folds resulting in fluxing lines of demarcation, converting separate realms into grafted ones. Once a virtual dimension appears, the provisional layers of existing fabric implode, engendering fluid inter-permutations. Our cultural 'ground' becomes a continuous zone of inflections whereby the 'real' is subject to fluxation and interfoldings into a systemic of dynamic interrelations; a systemic of transversality. The effects of this condition erupt from very specific machinations within praxis, not outside it. There is no outside or inside.

In our existing context there are horizons through which our lives are drawn. The emergence of a virtual dimension attenuates a further layer beyond two current electronic strata. Respectively they are the: 'Free Space Horizon', the 'Signification-Infrastructure Horizon' and most recently, the 'Inter-netted Horizon'. Combined, these three horizons organise layers of activity or

inhabitation but should not be considered mutually exclusive.

Increasingly, capitalism drives a world culture of consumption forcing these layers to become more dense and interwoven. The process and logic of pervasion stemming from teletechnology intermixes television within the Internet, the Internet impacts upon built infrastructure, and so forth, creating a convergent, infolded, organisation. From this condensed condition arise new and emergent phenomena. The action of this schema seems to occur from the middle out. For instance, it was originally thought that the electronic revolution would replace print media. But instead what has actually happened is that the virtual dimension has increased and saturated the media even further. From this construct, specific relationships may be understood as hypersurfaces, a term that attempts to characterise the complex way new interfaces will occur and reconfigure us.

Within this three-tiered interpretation of technologised culture, what critical dynamic brings about the virtual dimension? It seems historically that the middle layer, the electronic infrastructure, packed with programs of communications, adverts, print media, telephonic discourse, transportation, commerce and all of the

other trappings of an industrialised and post-industrialised infrastructure, is an urban society that operates as a plane of immanence.

With the advent of television in the early 1950s, another layer is generated out from the 'middle', seeming to be above the metropolis, extending beyond and creating a vast sub-urban terrain, where the logic of broadcast media effects a generalised narratological simultaneity controlled by the military industrial complex. Its effect on culture is closer to social engineering, as the spread of advertisement and entertainment stand in place of meaningful social discourse. With the advent of free-space there is no possibility for a non-mediated dialogue.

These interpenetrating layers, fuelled by consumer capitalism will reconfigure the topology of human agency. Emergent forms of representation will unfold due to the radical interweavings, creating both commensurate and incommensurate juxtapositions of varying fields. This condition may perhaps be best understood as a surrealism imbedded within the everyday. The way that it will effect the architecture/culture mix is being taken up under a thematic called Hyper-surface, and may be what results from the exigencies of the virtual dimension.



*The Haptic Horizon, 1995, was a speculative project exploring emergent superpositions (seams) between background surfaces imbricated with animated texture maps containing sequences from popular culture cinema. Using these sequences within an architectural project, its context and the 'world' containing these entities, connected each – form, context and supercontext – into an interwoven informational continuity – a haptic horizon*