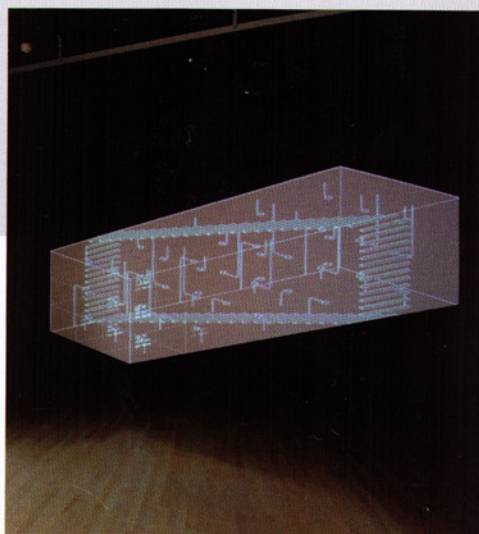


Inverting Environments:
Interior Weather
features climatic
variations that
define the use
of a room and
the behaviour of
its occupants.

Mind the Weather



Temporality, temperature, humidity – Philippe Rahm has an itch for what he calls ‘invisible elements’. Deeming climatic conditions crucial to the creation of architectural space, the Swiss architect stresses that such conditions incite new social modes. A perfect illustration of his credo – ‘form and function follow climate’ – is Interior Weather, an installation recently exhibited at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. Interior Weather consists of two galleries,

the first of which is an enclosed, brightly lit room. Constantly moving from one point to another, its light source generated modifications of other climatic parameters in the room. Built-in sensors transmitted their variations (say, humidity level 30%, temperature 28°C, light intensity 0 lux) to the adjacent room, where a virtual program exemplified Rahm’s philosophy. Departing from the sensors’ interpretations, author-cum-filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet devised possible uses and behavioural models for the first room. A design team led by Rahm provided corresponding graphic animation – naked versus clothed characters, for instance – which was acted out in a real-time software program and projected on a screen with the exact dimensions of the first gallery. The resulting virtual narrative inverts our traditional relationship to our surroundings. ‘I wanted to offer an alternative for our attempt to convulsively adjust living spaces to human needs,’ says Rahm. ‘The installation provides a model that impels us to adapt to the climatologic conditions of our environment and which opens the possibility of inventing previously unknown uses of space.’ Bet Al Gore would have loved this one.

Words Ellen Rутten

Photos courtesy of Canadian Centre for Architecture