

LAMBROS MALAFOURIS - THE *THINGING* HAND: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, DIGITAL CENTRING AND THE HYLONOETIC FIELD

How does the work of a potter, his/her modes of creative material engagement relate to contemporary forms of architectonic design? I will be making the case for approaching digital architectural design as a form of craft. I begin with two persistent problems: a) the false opposition of the digital and the material; and b) the hylomorphic tendency to prioritise design from the process of making. To overcome these problems I propose the notions of the 'thinging hand' and 'digital centring'. I adopt the trope of the 'digital centring' to describe the relational dynamics of sociomaterial forces and agencies that characterize the process of making as a capacity for creative action in virtual space. As centring is the skill that allows the critical attunement of the potter's body with the clay and the wheel, so digital centring is the skill that allows the attunement of geometry and computation in a virtual interface. By thinging hand I denote the mindful creative handling of virtual or physical space. It is argued that this creative handling violates any conventional division between manual and cognitive labour. Digital materials, unlike clay, cannot be *hand-held*, but that does not mean that they cannot be *hand-led*.

Lambros Malafouris is Johnson Research Fellow in Creativity, Cognition, and Material Culture at Keble College and the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. He completed his doctorate in Archaeology at the University of Cambridge (Darwin College) in 2005 under the supervision of Colin Renfrew. After his PhD, Malafouris continued his research at Cambridge, as a Balzan Research Fellow in Cognitive Archaeology at The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, and he joined Oxford University in 2010 as a Fellow in Creativity, Cognition and Material Culture at Keble College. In 2018 Lambros has been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant, HANDMADE: Understanding Creative Gesture in Pottery Making. His research interests lie broadly in the archaeology of mind and the philosophy of material culture. His recent publications include "An Anthropological Guide to the Art and Philosophy of Mirror Gazing" (with M.D. Koukouti, 2020), "How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement" (2013), "The Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the boundaries of the mind" (with C. Renfrew, 2010).
