What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them. The weirdness of this situation resembles a spiritualistic seance where a number of people gathered around a table might suddenly, through some magic trick, see the table vanish from their midst, so that two persons sitting opposite each other were no longer separated but also would be entirely unrelated to each other by anything tangible.

Hannah Arendt “The Human Condition”
Arendt wrote about the seance table in 1957. Since then there’s been a change of scrap. “Paste it Notes” gave way to hyper-speed digital buckshot. But it’s still debris, still messy. And that mess is why Ardent matters, and more than a lot of architects and urban designers. Ardent understood debris. She understood the need to step over and out of it into a space of appearance. The German philosopher known for the phrase “the banality of evil” wrote about housekeeping. She wrote about the two spheres, the public and the private realms. About how once upon a time there was a one time wall. But then it tumbled. Arendt agonized about that fall, about the quickening domestic ooze, about the hearth spilling into the street. She knew that housekeeping is tie that binds, that a domestic crave holds the players together. But it’s one meager myth in a cluttered turf. The challenge now is to sit down at a table and assign something other than housekeeping chores.

Arendt’s table tale opened an earlier article. It was “Tunnel Vision: An Architecture of Reflexivity.” “Tunnel” started like this. “I had an agenda. I wanted the table back.” A few pages and drawings later “Tunnel Vision” ended this way. “Maybe the table didn’t vanish. Nothing disappears any more. In today’s digital playing field things don’t go away. They sit there. They pile up on top of one another. What’s left is a heap. The communal circle may be busted, but Arendt’s séance table is still there. It’s just covered with debris, so we can’t see it or who’s around it.”

“Tunnel Vision: An Architecture of Reflexivity” was published in the architectural monograph “Displaced: The Work of Fabian Llonch and Gisela Vidalle.” The essay and accompanying graphics detail the design development of a new media prototype. The prototypes were for a chain of light rail stops. A selection follows:

The prototype was based upon a study of the transit experience. This design provides a scalable, flexible system that can be adapted to various MetroLink station environments in a modular fashion both in the MetroLink expansion environments and along the existing MetroLink line. The prototype is designed to act as an accessory, and an insertion, into the already advanced and evolved Cross County Metrolink Expansion station design. Its use is not limited to platforms/enclosures, though it can be installed there; it can also be applied to the surrounding environments. Through its skeletal triangular design, this prototype is able to incorporate the extraordinary visual variety and character of the neighborhoods and communities served by the Metro system. It is equally responsive and sensitive to the media art/media artist and the requirements of MetroLink. Media art content of a variety of types and sources can be programmed on the installation’s screens/panels.

This fractured ramp is best read as a mining, a boring tool. The tunnel is a horizontal and vertical FORCE. It slips alongside the ground and runs up and down into a data place.
Industrial lofts were a brief to build-live by. They slipped and slid between the private and the public.

They were standouts in a congealed public-private blur. Planted on the fuzzy line, it’s what Hannah Arendt moaned. But the blur generated buzz. A shared housekeeping appetite was a magnet. It brought in crowds; Pushed them through the loft gates. And why all the press.

The loft projects worked as a pilot, an early recipe platform, a staging ground, a biopsy tool. Lofts took advantage of a housekeeping glow. Gear was pulled off and out of a domestic-scape. Crew auditioned, rehearsed, kit reformatted for the street. The left over bits, bits for reuse were used to assemble a space “to show up.” Some bits follow.

...we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping.

...the “idea of Social Economy or collective housekeeping (Volkswirtschaft)” is one of the “three main foci” around which “the political speculation which has permeated economics from the very beginning is found to be crystallized.”

...With the rise of society, that is, the rise of the “household” (oikia) or of economic activities to the public realm, housekeeping and all matters pertaining formerly to the private sphere of the family have become a “collective” concern. In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself.

The emergence of society—the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices—from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere, has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen.

Since the rise of society, since the admission of household and housekeeping activities to the public realm, an irresistible tendency to grow, to devour the older realms of the political and private as well as the more recently established sphere of intimacy, has been one of the outstanding characteristics of the new realm.

What concerns us...is the extraordinary difficulty with which we...understand the decisive division between the public and private realms... the dividing line is entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping.
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something other than housekeeping chores