

Review Article

## Trump's Aesthetic, Spatial and Architectural Dramalities

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Two months after Donald Trump announced his bid for the presidency on 8 August 2015, the journalist Jonathan Capehart in a conversation with Trump employee Omarosa Manigault, drew a link between *The Apprentice* (NBC, 2004–2014) and the candidate's political debates: Manigault compared the audience of twenty million watching Trump on TV arguing about politics to the eighteen million viewers of the first few seasons of *The Apprentice*.<sup>1</sup> She argued that the reality show was not just entertainment, it was reality, and that Americans were as fascinated with Trump during the debates as they had been with *The Apprentice*. In her eyes, people believe in Trump because he looks 'authentic' and because he seems to herald a 'new reality'. [Fig.1]

I would argue that this new reality, 'emerging ready-armed from Trump's brain, is the result of a carefully calculated strategy that he put in practice in the light of his long experience with the media'.<sup>2</sup> If television, and specifically reality shows reality shows did much to create Trump's image, the corollary has been that his communication strategy owes much to how this functions in terms of media and scenography. His imperial descent in the main escalator to the lobby of Trump Tower typify the construction of a theatrical effect. There he spatialises and dramatises his presence in a setting that he believes best radiates power. Whether to the sound of blaring music when greeting candidates in *The Apprentice* before announcing their next mission, or to applause and yelps, as was the case on 16 June 2015, when he announced his candidacy for the 2016 presidency, these slow entrances

are stage-managed – a form of spectacularisation engineered specially for the media and for the audience he wants to win over and impress.<sup>3</sup> The Trump Tower lift activates the space of Trump's dramality.<sup>4</sup> It is an object of dramatic tension through which his performance is stage-managed.

Trump has a long history of working with mass media. Already in the late 1970s, while the Trump Tower was still on the drawing-board, his ambition was to erect, in his words, 'the first super-luxury high-rise property in New York to include high-end retail shops, office space and residential condominiums'.<sup>5</sup> Pitching his future real estate project to the press and on TV, he expatiated on the glamour the tower would give the city, as well as on the economic benefits that would accrue – though the latter were soon put in doubt by architecture critics and journalists.<sup>6</sup> As Trump was announcing his determination to erect the tallest skyscraper in New York to match the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center lower down on the same skyline, an article by *Chicago Tribune* critic Paul Gapp voiced misgivings as to the relevance of such a project – besides, that is, massaging its client's ego. An outraged Trump promptly sued the journalist, claiming that such slander might have a negative economic impact on sales in the future building. In October 1984, after the skyscraper had been delivered, an article by *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger pointed out that such proceedings were absurd, since no architecture critic in the world could single-handedly talk down the real estate market by criticising a building.<sup>7</sup> Goldberger went on to argue

that Trump's suit was simply a ruse to get tongues wagging about him and his tower. The critic seemed well aware of how Trump was already toying with the media to his advantage.

A few years down the line, the media had become the single most important platform for Trump's self-presentation. Since his election campaign, many media outlets have presented the former US President as a populist figure – that is, as someone who understands the interests of working people and challenges the structures of government. If dramality remains a constant in Trump's communications agenda, it became particularly apparent in the architecture policy he conducted during his mandate. At least two strategies put into action on the architecture front have roots in dramality: 1) the visibilisation of Trump's agenda in the form of one of the most ambitious ever construction projects in the United States on its border with Mexico; 2) the transgression of long-held (historical, legal, aesthetic, and so on) precepts and the institutional enshrining of new rules in architecture design and representation. Succeeding in making Trump popular with a certain demographic and publicising his ideology, it can be shown that his architectural policy ultimately stems from his populist stance.

### **Making visible: the Wall as ideology**

Trump built his first presidential campaign on the reiteration and consolidation of the values of the United States in keeping with his rallying-cry, 'America first', and on the revalorisation of its economy and global reach with 'Make America great again'. His aim was to recover American wealth relocated abroad and put globalisation into reverse. To preserve the American way of life and keep its riches within its borders, he criticised recent capitalism as being undermined by a neoliberal elite that promotes relocation and outsourcing. Thus, a key point in Trump's programme was to strengthen the border with Mexico so as to protect blue-collar jobs and lower the crime rate.<sup>8</sup> Against the odds, Trump's wall proved highly popular during and after

the campaign. The organisation 'We Built the Wall' attracted far more supporters than expected and they were ready to pour money into the project. Polls showed that a majority of Americans wanted the wall completed to slow immigration and bolster American values. Trump's Border Wall was born out of this promise. Its popularity might almost hide the fact that the wall belongs to a type of nationalist architecture intended to preserve, maintain and impose law and order. By regularly highlighting the progress of the Wall's construction in the media and talking up its legitimacy on social networks, Trump turned a radical idea into a popular symbol.

Following his election, Trump would often refer to himself as the 'builder president'. Transforming the wall into a landmark construction therefore presented him with an opportunity to showcase not only his leadership, but also the skills he had acquired in construction and architecture, and thus legitimise his architectural policy. In a speech during the presidential campaign in Iowa on 25 August 2015, he declared that, for an experienced contractor like himself, such a venture would be 'easy': 'Very easy. I am a builder. It's easy. I have built buildings that exist. Can I tell you what is more complicated? The most complicated thing is to build a 95-floor building. OK?'<sup>9</sup> Since 2014, Trump has frequently posted propaganda slogans about the wall on his Twitter account, such as '*Secure the border! Build a wall!*'<sup>10</sup> During his tenure, however, Trump's supposedly unifying symbol was soon seen as synonymous with anti-democracy. The wall was certainly instrumental in foregrounding his political agenda and ideology. Although Trump addresses the world with an approachable vocabulary, and with uncomplicated ideas that make him popular, this apparent simplicity is a populist media strategy.

The plan for a vast border fence physically separating Mexico from the United States was the brainchild of George H. W. Bush in 1990. It was taken up by Bill Clinton in 1993, who had fourteen miles (22.5 km) of wall erected, thereby reducing the number of people detained by the border patrol.



Fig. 1: "You're Fired" banner on the New York Trump Tower. Photo: BBC News, 12 July 2017.

In 2006, after Congress had approved the Secure Fence Act, Bush set up an additional seven hundred kilometres. Construction of its various sections continued until 2011 during the mandate of Barack Obama. In all, more than a thousand kilometres of hard border were built, running from California to the gates of Texas. Undertaken by several administrations, its form is far from unified: fencing in some places, in others concrete blocks, logs of wood, barbed wire, and so on. If the crossing of cars has been partially halted, individuals can still get through without too much difficulty, in particular across the Texas border beyond the Rio Grande.

The Trump administration applied for the extravagant sum of \$5.3 billion to reinforce those portions of the existing wall or barrier too fragile or dilapidated to fulfil their function properly. The ultimate goal was to build a wall about three thousand kilometres long running the entire length of the border currently open. Like many other projects involving the construction of walls, this type of architecture curtails liberties and serves as a social partition between Mexico and the United States. If the wall – a fundamental construction element, together with the structure, roof, foundations and openings (windows and doors) – seems a banal architectural object, according to the architect and philosopher Richard Scoffier, it also cordons off functions as ‘an instinctive marking of space’ and forms part of an architectural interpretation of spatial limits, acting as a beacon of political and ideological tension.<sup>11</sup> This is precisely what makes Trump’s Border Wall the visible manifestation of the former president’s populist strategy.

According to Jan-Werner Müller, political populism fosters a way of thinking that rejects a plurality of political positions and curbs democratic debate.<sup>12</sup> The wall exemplifies an authority that has no truck with discussing other, more imaginative solutions for regulating immigration, while its physical and symbolic monumentality suppresses the democratic border.<sup>13</sup> The project will not bring US companies that have relocated to Mexico or China for economic

reasons back to America, just as it will not prevent foreigners from entering and working there. Coupled with the ICE Border Police, Trump’s Border Wall is now seen as a racist statement designed to curtail individual freedoms.<sup>14</sup> *Washington Post* journalist Henry Olsen reminds us that populist politics means taking working people into account in political decisions in an effort not to penalise them with respect to the wealthiest: ‘the people vs. the powerful’.<sup>15</sup> But populism can hardly be said to be an open policy free of political and ideological posturing that could heal class and gender divisions. While Trump’s wall clearly articulates a discriminatory, racist and nationalistic policy, the question remains which ‘American people’ the system benefits. Müller reminds us that if populist leaders seek to represent the ‘real’ people, the question of who those people might be is left begging: if they seem certainly not to correspond to the elites, neither are they the (silent) majority. Norberto Bobbio’s *Dictionary of Politics* defines populism as ‘a political doctrine whose chief source of inspiration is the people, considered as a homogeneous social aggregate and as the exclusive repository of positive, unambiguous and unchanging values’.<sup>16</sup> In politics, however, dealing in populist discourse does not systematically lead to the application of a policy in favour of ‘the people’ in all their diversity.

Maxime Boydi argues that ‘what we mean by “populism” as applied to knowledge and ideas possesses negative connotations because of how the notion is dealt with in the mainstream political and media practices’, so that ‘such uses denigrate discourses and strategies seen as looking for the levers of their success in the baser instincts of the people’.<sup>17</sup> This definition is close to that offered by Ernesto Laclau, who views populism as a communicative strategy, a ‘cultural hegemony’.<sup>18</sup> All the propaganda around the wall, fuelled by Trump himself on social networks, does indicate a populist strategy made visible by one of the most liberticidal examples of architecture in US history. Populism also carries with it a demagogic stance catering

for a predominantly White Anglo-Saxon Protestant population, which feeds into a noxious nationalism and fosters mistrust of government: the wall sanctions this rabble-rousing at once physically and symbolically. It is, however, not the only evidence that Trump's architectural policies serve a populist strategy.

### **Institutionalisation: transgression as an architectural policy**

What does Trump actually know about architecture? First, he lacks all consideration for the artistic and historical value of the buildings of the past, showing no hesitation to demolish them if he wants the site they occupy. While clearing the ground for the construction of Trump Tower on 5th Avenue in 1980, he ordered the demolition of the Bonwit Teller Building (1827–1980), an Art Deco jewel on the site.<sup>19</sup> The facades of the historic edifice were clad in splendid bas-reliefs by René Chambellan and presented an entrance grille designed by Otto J. Teegan. In 1979, at the request of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose experts had stressed their historical importance, Trump promised that these valuable features would be preserved.<sup>20</sup> In the end though, both the reliefs and the entrance grille fell foul of the wrecking-ball.<sup>21</sup> Set on redrawing the face of New York with his tower, Trump simply refused to extend the construction deadline to make time to recover elements that he believed devoid of artistic and historical value.<sup>22</sup>

During his period in office, Trump was finally able to officially proclaim the ethical stance of his architectural policy. On 18 December 2020, while still President and alleging that 'modern architecture has been, overall, a failure', Trump signed an executive order entitled 'Make Federal Buildings Beautiful Again', which stipulates that, henceforth, federal buildings are to be neoclassical in style. In some respects, this diktat amounted to an attempt to turn the tide of history.<sup>23</sup> Harking back to buildings designed by the founding fathers of the United States, such as the Capitol (1793–1812) and the

White House (1792–1800), its text illustrates the function of architecture as Trump sees it. According to an article in the periodical *Architectural Record* – which first made the proposed executive order public by posting it online on 4 February 2020 – and was originally spearheaded by the National Civic Art Society (NCAS), Trump had been pondering the text for a year before signing it.<sup>24</sup> Its objective was to reform and amend a previous executive order entitled 'Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture' penned by Daniel Patrick Moynihan and issued by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1962. The earlier edict had declared that the design of Federal buildings ought to take into account contemporary stylistic developments and not seek to enshrine an official national style.

Trump's new decree, on the contrary, was intended to urge future architects entering competitions and designing buildings to draw their inspiration almost exclusively from the classical idiom.<sup>25</sup> The aim of this instrumental use of history was to impose the idea that the most 'beautiful' buildings in the United States are in the neoclassical style and the 'ugliest' (including the Seagram Building, the J. Edgar Hoover Building for the FBI, the Hubert H. Humphrey Building) in a modernist or contemporary idiom. The text thus addresses head-on the aesthetic issue of the beautiful and the ugly in architecture – an ambivalent question that no architectural theory has ever been able to resolve.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, it was based on a public survey conducted by the American Institute of Architects in 2007, which ranked Americans' 150 favourite buildings.<sup>27</sup> The poll was, however, rather too good to be true since it either simply omitted contemporary buildings or gave them a low score.

The text ratifying the order, issued on 21 December and entitled 'Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture' (it remained on the White House website until it was rescinded by the new president, Joe Biden) refers to the architectural preferences of earlier presidents. For federal monuments such as the Capitol,

the pioneering eighteenth and nineteenth-century leaders commissioned architects to design buildings whose forms took their cue from the classical architecture of Greek, Roman antiquity. This idiom was informed by the spirit of the Enlightenment, which, heir to the intellectual ferment of the Renaissance and Humanism, saw the architecture of Antiquity as the summit of formal beauty and harmony. It is hard to see how such a style could be promoted today, however. Judging by his own projects, Trump sees architecture simply as a concrete manifestation of the power of the United States – or of his own power in the public arena (the notion of the landmark).<sup>28</sup> It can therefore hardly come as a surprise that the authoritarian language of his decree condemns recourse to any other style. By diverting attention to a question of aesthetics, the order runs roughshod over history and transgresses the rules of democracy by threatening to diminish freedom of expression in civic architecture nationwide, as well as ignoring centuries of oppression of certain peoples in the process. Though the classicism of official US government buildings in the nineteenth century paid tribute to the inaugural genius of ancient architecture, the vision championed by Trump and the NCAS through this executive order is a reminder of the exclusionary nature of his populist politics.

Although Trump's executive order is now defunct, efforts made to institutionalise its ideology did leave traces. On 5 March 2020, the White House tennis pavilion project, already underway at the time, was unveiled by the then First Lady, Melania Trump, via her Twitter account.<sup>29</sup> Accompanied by a number of photos, the announcement declares that she is working with the National Park Service to replace an old maintenance building located near the tennis courts. An official document from the National Capital Planning Commission dated 6 June 2019 posted online shortly after revealed the plans and elevations for a pavilion of classical proportions and style.<sup>30</sup> The text proclaims that the building, clad in limestone and roofed in

copper, will boast colonnades, panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows and fanlights. Directly echoing the aesthetics of the White House, the declared intention of the park service was that the future building fit seamlessly into the surroundings. Inaugurated a few days before the president signed his executive order, the tennis pavilion's architecture is decidedly neoclassical given its proximity to the most emblematic federal building in the United States. Once completed, the project can be seen as a blatant example of the premature if effective implementation of the executive order. In this way, the pavilion institutionalised Trump's architectural policy, ensuring that it would remain visible even if the order is rescinded – as indeed it was.

This was not, however, the first time since his election that the former president had flouted the rules of decorum and subverted symbolic or democratic spaces. With the show of weaponry, tanks, fighter jets and Air Force One held at the Lincoln Memorial above National Mall Park in Washington DC on 4 July 2019, Trump scripted and spatialised the clash between the narrative of freedom and new images of propaganda (might and power). [Fig. 2] The parade seemed designed to resemble the Bastille Day march-past in France. In the United States, however, the Fourth of July is not a military pageant, the signing on that day in 1776 of the United States Declaration of Independence from Britain generally being commemorated in a peaceable manner with speeches, concerts, and cultural and community events. Trump was promptly accused by members of Congress, the press, and several media personalities of hijacking the national Fourth of July celebrations.<sup>31</sup> Breaking with tradition, the parade was widely seen as a strategy for showcasing the power of his administration and US military might. By choosing to make his speech at the bottom of the Lincoln Memorial steps, Trump was not selflessly celebrating the history associated with the monument or defending individual freedoms, as Martin Luther King Jr. had done in 1963 in his 'I Have a Dream' speech; he was indulging in an



Fig. 2: Donald Trump announcing his candidacy for U.S. President in the New York Trump Tower. Photo: NBC News, 16 June 2015.

act of symbolic violence incompatible with the myth of American democracy. More recently (autumn of 2020), Trump's staging of the Republican National Convention in the Rose Garden before a crowd of a thousand or so people infringed the Hatch Act, which forbids the organising of official or mediatised party political events on this symbolically neutral site (the White House is 'the People's house').

Like many statesmen before him (Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and so on), Trump deploys the tools of storytelling, a technique with a long tradition in the United States. Exploiting the story of political events and their mediatisation, he thus joins the ongoing narrative of the history of men and women who make politics.<sup>32</sup> Trump – in an endless stream of crowd-pleasing high-jinks, spoofs and stagey tricks – combines this practice with a process of mystification that engenders pure illusion. Trump's exploitation of the media spawns a 'new reality' – that of his own fiction.<sup>33</sup> Damien Le Guay describes reality TV shows in the same terms: 'reality TV does not seek to perceive the world – it represents it in its own way'.<sup>34</sup> It makes no attempt to address the real; it oversimplifies it, stoking social violence, an atmosphere of conflict and cruelty that makes people doubt that they can ever live peacefully side by side.<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, Christian Salmon declares that, if reality TV was once just entertainment, 'Trump has used it as a tool for the conquest of power'.<sup>36</sup> Trump has thus transferred the dramality of the TV screen to the political sphere, creating new conditions of public communication. Persuasion is no longer the sole aim; it is now accompanied by principles of subversion and transgression that should be understood as new media phenomena, for which the old rules of probity no longer apply, while Trump's bid to institutionalise his ideology has instrumentalised both space and architecture on numerous occasions.

### Exit

As a populist, Trump presents himself as a moral authority who represents the People. His

architecture policy advocated sealing the US border with a wall, drafted an executive order for a one-size-fits-all architecture that nostalgically re-enacts the imperial colonialism of an era in which the founding fathers sought to legitimise slavery by a classicism financed by slavery and built by slaves, and promoted the construction of exorbitantly priced buildings.<sup>37</sup> On the face of it, the exterior of Trump Tower conforms to the architectural modernity of New York, displaying lines similar to those of the Seagram Building (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1958) or the World Trade Center (Minoru Yamasaki, 1973). The interior, though, is garishly ostentatious: marble and gilt, custom-made furniture, rare fabrics, and so on.<sup>38</sup> Until relatively recently, the doors were opened by doormen dressed as footmen. The overall atmosphere hovers somewhere between faux Italian Renaissance and a set for an early episode of the American soap opera *Dynasty* (1981–89).<sup>39</sup> One thing is sure: it is a style in blatant contradiction with the anti-elitist stance Trump advocated during and after his presidential campaign.

Essentially, Trump's dramality embraces two populist architectural strategies: the visibilisation of borders and the institutionalisation of ideology through building. His 'wall of shame' and his executive order herald the return of spatial nationalism in US history: their ideology does not seem to represent American society and Americans generally, but solely that sector of the population that perceives Trump's character only through the prism of his media impact.

As we have seen, Trump's career was largely an offshoot of the reality-TV culture that emerged from the early 1990s media environment, at a time when he was regaining his business footing and flirting with politics. And it was this same visual culture, this same media-based power embodied by television, the press and later by social networks that made him an entertainment figure. The form and look of his buildings, the way his homes and workplaces are decorated, how he occupies space, how his every appearance is scripted, together with his



scandalous architectural reforms all bespeak an approach to events designed to maximise visibility, all the while demonstrating his instrumentalisation of architecture for propaganda and business purposes. Trump has acquired his immense popularity today, not only by dint of television, his vast wealth, and his real estate ventures, but above all through elaborate strategies of dramatisation. Trump has indeed succeeded in his transition from television spectacle to politics.<sup>40</sup>

His actions and speeches are typical of the 'mytholeptic' – of one who never tires of scripting his performance, stage-managing the world in order to take advantage of a society in crisis.<sup>41</sup> But what then is the ethics behind Trump's appropriation of history, space and architecture? In the words of Chris Younès and Thierry Paquot, 'ethics partakes of our relationships to others and to the world'.<sup>42</sup> With a perceptual framework that involves erecting elitist skyscrapers, defending colonial architecture, using historical monuments for his own devices, and transforming a border fence into an architectural event by reconstructing it as a hermetically sealed wall, Trump has indelibly rendered his populist vision. He seeks to embody a power both monolithic and total, as was all too evident when he goaded his supporters to storm and ransack the Capitol to prevent the ratification of Joe Biden's election victory and sow distrust of the new administration.<sup>43</sup> To succeed progressive icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court, Trump chose conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett, whom he inducted in the White House on 26 September 2020. Since the beginning of his term, Trump has used the White House to serve his own interests, repeatedly violating the Hatch Act. His relationship to architecture resembles his relationship to the world at large – a type of excessive instrumentalisation that aims to represent the American space as a much-feared and powerful nation-state over which he would rule unchallenged.

The United States and the wider world perceive him through dramalities he promotes like a producer

of fictions. Perhaps even more disturbing is the institutionalisation of a vision of architecture that has pushed America into overt spatial nationalism – a common enough phenomenon in history, usually the work of notorious dictators. What will be the effect of the events discussed here on the future of architecture in the United States? Will Trump's dramality, with its tub-thumping speeches and populist spaces and events, continue to make headway as a new modality of political expression?

This article is not intended to justify the existence of a link between politicians and television, as this has already been made visible by different events, such as the Kitchen Debate (Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev) in 1959 during the American Exposition in Moscow, by Bill Clinton playing the saxophone at the Arsenio Hall Show in 1992, Ronald Reagan as a film and television actor, or during the different appearances of politicians during their presidential campaigns. Rather, it is about revealing a relationship between an unprecedented architectural staging and Trump in his political mode, where architecture is at the same time a material, structural and metaphorical component. While Trump is obviously not the first leader to turn politics into showbiz and to instrumentalise architecture for ideological purposes, he appears as the president of the United States who has most profoundly muddled the distinction between fiction and reality in the political sphere, immersing his audience in a performance where space and architecture play a subordinate role in his shadow.

## Notes

1. Having appeared in several episodes of *The Apprentice*, Manigault was employed by Trump during his 2015 campaign and later appointed assistant to the president. Made redundant in 2018, she published *Unhinged*, an exposé of the problems in the White House under Trump.
2. Jonathan Capehart, 'One year ago, Trump descended that escalator and took political discourse down with him', *The Washington Post*, 15 June 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/06/15/one-year-ago-trump-descended-that-escalator-and-took-political-discourse-down-with-him/>. Even as president, Trump continued to work as co-producer of *The Celebrity Apprentice*.
3. Some audience members had been paid to clap. Fabrizio Calvi, *Un parrain à la maison blanche* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2020).
4. We have here a perfect illustration of what Mark Burnett (president of MGM Television, creator and co-producer of *The Apprentice*) defines as 'dramality'. A neologism coined by Burnett to describe his reality shows, 'dramality' is a portmanteau word made up of 'drama' and 'reality', the two elements that constitute the new paradigm of TV reality that has become current since the 1990s. Television dramality relies on the dramatisation of 'authentic' facts and emotions as closely as possible to reality. Mark Burnett, *Survivor: The Ultimate Game*, (London: TV Books, 2000); Mark Burnett and Martin Dugard, *Survivor II: The Field Guide*, (London: TV Books, 2001), 9.
5. <https://www.trumptowerny.com/trump-tower-new-york>. Delivered in 1983 by American architect Der Scutt. See also Sy Rubin, *Trump Tower* (Fort Lee: Lyle Stuart, 1984).
6. Marilyn Bender, 'The Empire and Ego of Donald Trump', *The New York Times*, 7 August 1983.
7. Paul Goldberger, 'Architecture view: can a critic really control the marketplace?' *The New York Times*, 14 October 1984.
8. Michael Magcamit, 'Explaining the Three-Way Linkage between Populism, Securitization, and Realist Foreign Policies', *World Affairs* no. 3 (autumn 2017): 6–35.
9. 'Donald Trump Rally Dubuque Iowa', *Live CNN*, 25 August 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ6UojhAbdw>.
10. Donald Trump (@realdonaldtrump), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/496756082489171968?>. Trump's Twitter account has been suspended, and therefore the link does not work at the moment.
11. Richard Scoffier, *Le Mur, cours 1, Où commence l'architecture?*, lecture on 12 May 2011, Université Populaire du Pavillon de l'Arsenal, Paris : <https://www.pavillon-arsenal.com/fr/arsenal-tv/conferences/universite-populaire/9036-le-mur.html>; Wendy Brown, *Murs: Les murs de séparations et le déclin de la souveraineté étatique* (Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2009).
12. Jan-Werner Müller, *Qu'est-ce que le populisme ? Définir enfin la menace* (Paris: Premier parallèle, 2016).
13. Moreover, the construction of a wall along the entire border could damage protected sites – not that this would bother the Trump administration, since a 2005 law allows the president to use his authority to circumvent a number of environmental regulations. Simon Romero, 'Tribal Nation Condemns "Desecration" to Build Border Wall', *The New York Times*, 26 February 2020, [www.nytimes.com/2020/02/26/us/border-wall-cactuses-arizona.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/26/us/border-wall-cactuses-arizona.html).
14. T. C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995). ICE stands for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal agency policing the US border.
15. Henry Olsen, 'Trump is living up to his populist promise', *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/06/25/trump-is-living-up-his-populist-promise/>.
16. Norberto Bobbio, Nicola Matteucci and Gianfranco Pasquino, *Dizionario di Politica*, (Bologna: TEA, 1990), 735–40.
17. Maxime Boidy, *Les études visuelles* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2017), 58.
18. Ernesto Laclau, *La raison populiste* (Paris: Seuil, 2000) [2005].

19. For this building, as well as for many others, Trump collaborated with New York architect Costas Kondylis, with whom he shares an interest in skyscrapers.
20. Christopher Gray, 'The store that slipped though the cracks', *The New York Times*, 3 October 2014.
21. Harry Hurt III, *Lost Tycoon: The Many Lives of Donald Trump* (Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books, 1993).
22. In his article Callum Borchers reports how, in the course of a telephone conversation with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Trump allegedly impersonated an expert named John Baron who argued for the destruction of these architectural features during demolition on the grounds that they were ultimately not sufficiently valuable to save. Callum Borchers, 'Donald Trump hasn't changed one bit since his first media feud in 1980', *The Washington Post*, 18 March 2016.
23. Cathleen McGuigan, 'Will the White House order new federal architecture to be classical?' *Architectural Record*, 4 February 2020, [www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical](http://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical).
24. Cathleen McGuigan, 'Will the White House order new federal architecture to be classical?', *Architectural Record*, 4 February 2020, [www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical](http://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical).
25. The draft decree also appears to allow for the use of neo-Mediterranean, Spanish neocolonial, neo-Gothic and neo-Romanesque styles, while modernism, deconstructivism, brutalism and contemporary architecture are excluded.
26. Mickaël Labbé, *Textes clés de philosophie de l'architecture* (Paris: Vrin, 2017).
27. 'AIA Reveals Public's Choice America's Best Architecture', *AIArchitect: The News of America's Community of Architects*, vol. 14, 9 February 2007, [https://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek07/0209/0209n\\_150bldgs.htm](https://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek07/0209/0209n_150bldgs.htm).
28. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge MA: Harvard/MIT, 1960).
29. White House Grounds, Tennis Pavilion. [It would make more sense to link here to the Melania tweet].
30. National Capital Planning Commission, Executive Director's Recommendation, 'White House Grounds, Tennis Pavilion', 30 May 2019, [https://www.npc.gov/docs/actions/2019June/8077\\_White\\_House\\_Complex,\\_Tennis\\_Pavilion\\_Staff\\_Report\\_Jun2019.pdf](https://www.npc.gov/docs/actions/2019June/8077_White_House_Complex,_Tennis_Pavilion_Staff_Report_Jun2019.pdf).
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32. Christian Salmon, *Storytelling: La machine à fabriquer des histoires et à formater les esprits* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007).
33. Christian Salmon, *L'Ère du clash* (Paris: Fayard, 2019).
34. Damien Le Guay, *L'Empire de la télé-réalité*, (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2005), ## [insert page number].
35. Ibid., 140.
36. Salmon, *L'Ère du clash*, 321.
37. Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis and Mabel O. Wilson, eds., *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020).
38. Ada Louise Huxtable, 'Donald Trump's Tower', *New York Times*, 6 May 1984.
39. In spite of a jumble of materials, murals and classical furniture that overloads the space and clouds the vision, the Trumps like to compare their apartment to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Ivana, who oversaw the furnishings and decorations of the Trump family's 1000 m<sup>2</sup> triplex at the top of the tower, remarked that 'this is how Louis XVI would have lived if he had had money'. Ivana Trump, *Raising Trump* (New York: Gallery Publishing Group, 2017), 108.
40. Dork Zabunyan, *Fictions de Trump: Puissances des images et exercices du pouvoir* (Paris: Point Jour, 2020).
41. 'Mytholeptique', a neologism coined by Christian Salmon in *L'Ère du clash*, 333.

42. Chris Younès and Thierry Paquot, *Éthique, architecture, urbain* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000).
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### **Biography**

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