**Keywords** fashion, media, semiotics, authorship, and color.

**Abstract** This paper takes the cerulean monologue delivered by Miranda Priestly, a caricature of Anna Wintour and played by Meryl Streep in the 2006 film *The Devil Wears Prada*, as the starting point into an investigation of the use of cerulean blue in the Centre Pompidou project, which follows a comparable authorial lineage. The paper argues that through the use of cerulean blue the building not only reinserted itself back into a pre-existing lineage of the use of the colour within architecture, but also endowed itself with an intermediality that would allow the building to simultaneously exist as building and drawing and thereby enter other media systems. The diagrammatic function of the coloured pipes on the building's façade allowed it to be read and understood as drawing, which then further allowed for its image to be continuously appropriated and reappropriated by future authors and move facilely across mediums. Building upon a series of precedents from Oscar Nitzchke, Cedric Price, Archigram, and Kenzo Tange, the project materialized what was then an obsession to create architecture that could function as a neutral support for the various programmes it would facilitate and information it would disseminate. If Priestly was to make the speech today, she would thereby be forced to reckon with architecture and accept a building's position within a system of cultural production beyond its own discipline.

**Résumé** Cet article prend le monologue céruléen prononcé par Miranda Priestly, une caricature d'Anna Wintour interprétée par Meryl Streep dans le film *Le diable s'habille en Prada* (2006), comme point de départ d'une enquête sur l'utilisation du bleu céruléen dans le projet du Centre Pompidou, qui suit une lignée d'auteurs comparable. L'article soutient qu'en utilisant le bleu céruléen, le bâtiment ne s'est pas seulement réinséré dans une lignée préexistante d'utilisation de la couleur dans l'architecture, mais s'est également doté d'une intermédiarité qui permettrait au bâtiment d'exister simultanément en tant que bâtiment et en tant que dessin et d'entrer ainsi dans d'autres systèmes médiatiques. La fonction diagrammatique des tuyaux colorés sur la façade du bâtiment lui permet d'être lu et compris comme un dessin, ce qui permet à son image d'être continuellement appropriée et réappropriée par de futurs auteurs et de passer facilement d'un support à l'autre. S'appuyant sur une série de précédents d'Oscar Nitzchke, Cedric Price, Archigram et Kenzo Tange, le projet matérialisait ce qui était alors une obsession : créer une architecture capable de fonctionner comme un support neutre pour les divers programmes qu'elle faciliterait et les informations qu'elle diffuserait. Si Priestly devait prononcer ce discours aujourd'hui, elle serait ainsi contrainte de prendre en compte l'architecture et d'accepter la position d'un bâtiment au sein d'un système de production culturelle dépassant sa propre discipline.

Christina Moushoul

# Cerulean Pipes

## Introduction

*Stuff? Oh, okay. I see. You think this has nothing to do with you. You go to your closet, and you select, I don't know, that lumpy blue sweater because you're trying to tell the world that you take yourself too seriously to care what you put on your back. But what you don't know is that sweater is not just blue. It's not turquoise. It's not lapis. It's actually cerulean. And you're also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002 Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves Saint Laurent—wasn't it?—who showed a selection of cerulean military jackets. And then cerulean quickly showed up in collections of eight different designers. It filtered down through the department stores, and then trickled down into some tragic Casual Corner where you undoubtedly fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs. It's sort of comical how you think you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry, when, in fact, you're wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room, from 'a pile of stuff'.*

Performed by Meryl Streep, transcribed in *Log* by the architect Mark Foster Gage (2009: 108), referenced by Courtney Coffman (2014: 9–12) in her dissertation, and reproduced above, the monologue on cerulean delivered in the *Devil Wears Prada* (Frankel, 2006) **(Fig. 1)** is accumulating a provenance that mirrors the authorial lineage of the colour itself. Based on *Vogue* and its infamous editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, the *Devil Wears Prada* offers a dramatized look into the world of fashion, specifically the production of the editorial representation through which it circulates. The industry of fashion production and the editorial system that surrounds it are so inextricably linked that it becomes impossible to imagine one without the other. No longer just utilitarian constructions meant to protect and conceal our bodies, the pieces of clothing we wear have become a system of signs, a language which is as communicative as the words we speak. As Meryl Streep's character Miranda Priestly so cuttingly shows, in the semiotic language of fashion even the seemingly subjective selection of a colour is actually an incredibly deliberate one which is latent with meaning and references derived from a lineage of authors.

When in 2019 the creative director of womenswear at Louis Vuitton, Nicolas Ghesquière, created a doppelganger of the Centre Pompidou within the Cour carrée du Louvre **(Fig. 2)** and used its façade as graphic applique on the clothes themselves **(Fig. 3)**, he complicated the system as described by Priestly by introducing architecture to it. The discipline of fashion is no longer "a top-down hierarchical structure of duplication and reproduction, where the perpetual myth

**Fig. 1**
The cerulean sweater monologue in *Log 17* (2009) "Observation on the Blues", in *Addressing Architecture and Fashion: On Simulacrum, Time and Poché* by Courtney Coffman. Source: Coffman, 2014.

**Fig. 2**
Louis Vuitton Fall 2019 Ready-to-Wear. Source: *Vogue*. Photograph by Filippo Fior for Gorunway.com. ©Launchmetrics/spotlight

**Fig. 3**
Louis Vuitton Fall 2019 Ready-to-Wear. Source: *Vogue*. Photograph by Filippo Fior for Gorunway.com. ©Launchmetrics/spotlight

Figure 2: The cerulean sweater monologue in *Log* 17 "Observation on the Blues"



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of name-brand designers (or authors) and big-name editors at well-known publications inherently influence the collective mass", but a discipline that must acknowledge its absorption of other authorial lineages and systems of meaning which exist beyond the previous confines within which it imagines itself (Coffman, 2014: 10). The Louis Vuitton fashion show represents the moment in which the semiotic structures of duplication and repetition within architecture and fashion overlapped: the Pompidou's use of colours (cerulean among them) which allowed its façade to function simultaneously as a structure, a technique, and a graphic image which could then be lifted from the building and transposed onto garments or recreated as sets.

From Oscar Nitzchke to Cedric Price to Archigram to Kenzo Tange, this precise lineage leading to the Centre Pompidou assures us that the blue that was used on the façade was "not just blue…it's actually cerulean". In other words, this shade of blue, and the design of a building as a whole, were the result of a highly specific and inescapable lineage. In 1932 Nitzchke designed the unbuilt Maison de la Publicité on the Champs Elysees, whose façade was a metal grid upon which graphic advertisements could continuously be erected and dismantled (Silver, 1997: 32). From this reference, Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers took the idea that the "Plateau Beaubourg is developed as a 'Live Centre of Information' covering Paris and beyond" (Silver, 1997: 26). From Cedric Price's and Joan Littlewood's Fun Palace came the idea that the building should present ultimate flexibility and a dynamism which can respond to the needs of its inhabitants. From the work of Archigram came an aesthetic (and colour palette) which captured the revolutionary and utopic fervour of the 1960s, with drawings such as "Plug-in City" containing cerulean. To put it succinctly, this series of precedents came together to define the ambitions of the Pompidou as "a large loose-fit frame where anything could happen. An information machine. At its core was the belief… that culture should not be elitist, that culture should be like any other form of information: open to all in a friendly, classless environment" (Rice, 1998: 26).

**Tracing its Structural Lineage**

In order for the building to achieve the open steel framework that the architects desired, the engineers had to find a way to span the 44.8-meter distance without interrupting the open floor plan with additional supports. In an act of serendipity, the engineer Peter Rice, in Japan to present a paper at a conference, visited the structures of the 1970 World's Fair at Osaka. After seeing the large cast-steel nodes that Kenzo Tange and Yoshikatsu Tsuboi had used in their giant space-frame structure, he decided that cast steel would become the Pompidou's core material (Rice, 1998: 29). The engineer Lennart Grut then suggested a suspended beam propped on a short cantilever in order to span the distance and named the solution the "gerberette" after the 19th-century German bridge engineer Heinrich Gerber. Partly the result of a specific lineage of structural engineers and partly the outcome of serendipity, the gerberette became the key defining structural element of the building or what Hal Foster refers to as "the piece": "Piano is still guided by his distinctive notion of 'the piece.' 'The piece' is a repeated component of a building, often a structural element such as a joint or a truss, which Piano exposes to view in a way that offers a sense of the construction of the whole; to this extent it seems to partake of the modernist principle of tectonic transparency" (Foster, 2011: 56).

The gerberette not only helped the Pompidou to become a "Live Centre of Information" by allowing for flexible internal space but contained information to be communicated (Silver, 1997: 20). The shape of the element is a direct reflection of the forces acting on it: it is slender at the tension tie end where the load is applied, it becomes deep and strong where the load and moment reach a maximum over the column, and is finally slender again at the point of pick-up of the beam (Rice, 1998: 33). As Peter Rice puts it,

*All the information is there, and the gerberette is consistent with the nature of cast steel as well as being a shape whose form is a direct result of the forces acting on it. And yet it is quite personal, to whom exactly I am not too sure, uniquely a product of that group of people working on its development, our team. And although manufactured by industry, it is not a hard impersonal industrial product but one where human intervention is very evident.* (Rice, 1998: 33)

To some degree the information contained within the gerberette worked against itself, as the German manufacturer, Krupp, transferred to the cast steel element historical associations tying the piece back to the First World War, reminding the French and Belgians of mass destruction that occurred at the hands of Big Bertha, a long-range weapon manufactured by Krupp and used by the Germans to bombard Belgian and French forts manufactured by Krupp (Rice, 1998: 37). Displayed within the gerberette alone is the broader theme of the building—the way in which structural elements not only perform a utilitarian function but a semiotic one as well, functioning as signs which pull into the structure an informational web of associations and cultural references.

It was the gerberette, or the signature "piece" of the Pompidou, which allowed the interior spaces of the building to remain entirely open and the exterior to contain all of the structural elements, circulation paths, and mechanical equipment. The architectural writer Philip Jodidio admits that the exposure of these components means the "complexity" of Piano's buildings comes from their skin, as well as his other buildings that tend to be "more distinctive in section than in plan", thereby suggesting that the articulation of space and the development of programmes might be of secondary importance to Piano (Foster, 2011: 58). Foster suggests that this disjunction might be a result of the way that Piano resolves issues of structure versus surface:

*If this is a liability, it might be due to the very facility with which he reconciles two preoccupations that are often at odds—a concern with structure, pronounced in modern architecture, and a concern with surface, paramount in postmodern architecture. For better or worse, Piano suggests a third way: an evocation of structure on the surface of buildings, that is, in effect, an evocation of structure as skin or decoration—and sometimes, given his close attention to light effects, as atmosphere, too.* (Foster, 2011: 58)

With structural elements acting as the façade, they begin to serve dual functions—structure as structure and structure as image. As Piano has stated, "There is one theme that is very important for me… lightness", and it is when structure is acting as image that it becomes "light" (Foster, 2011: 61). Returning to the lineages traced earlier, it is unlikely that the façade of the Pompidou would have been able to function as a graphic image without the colour palette it derived from Archigram. The use of bright, bold colours is what allows the cast steel structural elements to inhabit this dialectic of simultaneous heaviness and lightness, in which they bear the burden of holding up the mass of the building while also possessing supreme lightness as an image which can be removed and applied elsewhere.

**From Image to Building and Back Again**

On the Centre Pompidou's website, the museum makes the point of distinguishing the significance of each of the four colours that code the systematic shell—cerulean blue is applied only to the pipes that carry air. It can therefore be argued that the building's use of cerulean, which allows the façade to function diagrammatically, as it elucidates the various systems that sustain it, is the intermedial element that turns architecture into image. Put simply: *architecture* uses *cerulean* to become *image*. Irina Rajewsky defines three subcategories of intermediality, one being intermedial references, within which the Centre Pompidou belongs:

***In this third category…intermediality designates a communicative-semiotic concept, but here it is by definition just one medium—the referencing medium (as opposed to the medium referred to)—that is materially present. Rather than combining different medial forms of articulation, the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means.*** (Rajewsky, 2005: 52)

Through the use of colour, architecture uses its own "media-specific means" (the painting of its surfaces as ornament) to evoke the use of colour in drawing that serves a diagrammatic and thereby communicative function. In this case the cerulean is dually communicative, by not only bridging an intermedial connection between architecture and drawing but also inserting the building into the specific lineage of drawings from which it emerges.

At the tail end of the building's construction, from 1974–77, Franco-Swiss graphic designer Jean Widmer worked on developing the museum's logo. While sitting on the terrace of the bistro facing the Centre Pompidou, Widmer sketched (in blue ink) the façade and its famous "caterpillar" escalator that climbs its way up the six floors ("40 years after…", 2020). A simplification of this design rendered in black and white would soon become the logo that would come to represent both the building and the institution housed within. Which is to say, before the construction was even completed the architecture was already making its way back not only to drawing but to a specific type of image, a logo, that is designed to circulate as widely as possible (much like a magazine).

**Fashion, Semiotics, and the 1960s**

Not only functioning as image itself, the façade of the building is designed to be an interface for the display of images as well. The original façade drawings for the competition presentation showed pictures snipped out of magazines (their prominence in the project returning in not just form but in content as well) suspended within the structural elements (Rice, 1998: 32). Just a few years prior, in 1967, the French essayist Roland Barthes published his book, *The Fashion System*. In it, Barthes puts forth his theory on the semiotics of fashion as the result of a study he undertook from 1957 to 1963 analysing women's clothing in French fashion periodicals dating from the late 1950s (Barthes, 1983: ix). As stated in the foreword, "[T]his study actually addresses neither clothing nor language but the 'translation,' so to speak, of one into the other, insofar as the former is already a system of signs" (Barthes, 1983: x). He goes on to state:

***The system of actual clothing is always the natural horizon which Fashion assumes in order to constitute its significations: without discourse there is no total Fashion, no essential Fashion. It thus seemed unreasonable to place the reality of clothing before the discourse of Fashion: true reason would in fact have us proceed from the instituting discourse to the reality which it constitutes.*** (Barthes, 1983: xi)

In this sense, Barthes is stating that fashion cannot exist without its surrounding discourse—as a sign it must have something to point to.

Barthes's text came out only a year after Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, published in 1966 (the same year as *Archigram* no. 7), and construction on the Pompidou began just a year before Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown, and Steven Izenour published their next book, *Learning from Las Vegas*, in 1972. Which is to say, semiotics had already entered architecture and buildings were beginning to be understood as signs. As stated in *Learning from Las Vegas*, "We shall emphasize image—image over process of form—in asserting that architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association" (Scott-Brown *et al.*, 1972: 87). To then return to Barthes:

***But what is remarkable about this image-system constituted with desire as its goal is that its substance is essentially intelligible…the countless objects that inhabit and comprise the image-system of our time will increasingly derive from a semantics, and, given certain developments, linguistics will become, by a second birth, the science of every imagined universe.*** (Barthes, 1983: xii)

The Pompidou was coming to fruition in a cultural moment in which architecture and fashion were both seen as inhabiting a system of semiotics and therefore their function as signs endowed them with the communicative ability to refer to things beyond themselves, from which they derived their meaning and contributed to the building of the discursive constellation they inhabited.

Following swiftly behind Barthes, in 1968, the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard published his first book, *The System of Objects*, which was based upon his doctoral dissertation written under the advisorship of Henri Lefebvre, Pierre Bourdieu, and Roland Barthes (which is interesting within the broader theme of tracing lineages) ("The System of Objects", 2020). It was in this text that Baudrillard stated that "to become an object of consumption, an object must first become a sign…consumption is the virtual totality of all objects and messages ready-constituted as a more or less coherent discourse…an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs" (Baudrillard, 2005: 218). Baudrillard also breaks down the various metrics through which goods are valued in our postmodern society, which he defines as their use value, exchange value, symbolic value, and sign value. He believed that an object's sign value was its dominant metric, suggesting that it is more about the references and associations to which an object points than the intrinsic value of the object itself in determining its value in contemporary society (Baudrillard, 1982). It is interesting to then apply this method of analysis to, say, a cerulean pipe on the façade of the Pompidou—the use value would be the mechanical function it serves within the building; the exchange value would be derived from the cost of materials, production, travel, and installation; the symbolic value as imparted by the architects and conveyed to the public might be a symbol of openness through an effort to expose the inner workings of a building that are usually kept hidden; while finally its sign value may point to a wide variety of things, such as its lineage of references, or ideas of utopia, technology, innovation, democracy, access, and information.

In perhaps what is considered his most seminal text, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of the Centre Pompidou, or, as he refers to it, Beaubourg (in reference to the project's original name as well as its historic neighbourhood). For Baudrillard, "the Beaubourg effect, the Beaubourg machine, the Beaubourg thing" was a "hyperreality of culture", absorbing, materializing, and annihilating all its contents (Baudrillard, 1994: 61, 67). As an effect, a machine, a thing, a "carcass of flux and signs, of networks and circuits", Beaubourg began to participate in "'mass production,' not in the sense of a massive production or for use by the masses, but the production of the masses" (Baudrillard, 1994: 68). Baudrillard goes on to define the masses as "the increasingly dense sphere in which the whole social comes to be imploded, and to be devoured in an uninterrupted process of simulation" (Baudrillard, 1994: 68). The idea of the production of a mass or a public through processes of simulation could be understood as a parallel to the processes Barthes outlined in *The Fashion System*. The ubiquity of brand identity and trends within fashion help to form people into masses or publics—defined groups whose clothes communicate a shared set of values or references. When Piano and Rogers were designing the Pompidou, instead of filling the site they decided to keep half of it open to create a plaza, which subsequently created a public of its own asking people to gather, to perform (whether formally or informally), and to produce a temporary collective. In the particular case of the Pompidou's plaza, one's presence there might serve to communicate something about one's interests, preferences, hobbies, and status.

**Entering Contemporary Fashion**

To Ghesquière, the plaza in front of the Pompidou provided him as a young designer with "a place to find street performers and artists and serious museumgoers; a place that had attracted designers like Jean Paul Gaultier and Yohji Yamamoto, both of whom had studios nearby when the neighborhood was still considered sketchy, a place originally regarded as a blight upon the city, now celebrated for the difference once decried" (Friedman, 2019). It was for that reason that he decided to create a copy of it within the Cour carrée du Louvre, to serve as the backdrop for the production of yet another public, that of the Louis Vuitton brand. In a certain sense, Baudrillard predicted this violent act of dislocation as the inevitable effect of the presence of a mass at the Beaubourg:

> ***Critical mass, implosive mass. Beyond thirty thousand it poses the risk of 'bending' the structure of Beaubourg. If the masses magnetized by the structure become a destructive variable of the structure itself…then Beaubourg constitutes the most audacious object and the most successful happening of the century! Make Beaubourg bend!*** (Baudrillard, 1994: 69)

It is almost as if Ghesquière provided the "critical mass" required to finally bend Beaubourg, and after so doing, was able to take the leftover bits and pieces and appropriate them for his own ends. Runway shows are, at the end of the day, about the creation of a public—a group of people who identify with the Louis Vuitton brand and therefore purchase its goods. In our contemporary era, the creation of this public is no longer limited to those who can physically be present at the event; the runway shows are now specifically crafted for the capturing and dissemination of images to millions of people online. Even the name of the design firm who produced the Louis Vuitton runway show, *La Mode en Images*, translates to "Fashion in Images".

Contemporary luxury fashion brands require the use of images in order to sustain themselves. Without photographs of celebrities wearing the clothes, full-page editorial spreads in magazines, or images of the collection taken from the runway, their method of constructing value would collapse. Returning to Baudrillard, the use value of designer goods is extremely low compared to their market value, which becomes absurdly high as a result of their sign value. The Louis Vuitton monogram, a flat, graphic overlay applied to their products, is a symbol of wealth and status, and thereby, in certain eyes, adds an immense amount of value to any object upon which it is applied. In the case of Ghesquière's Fall 2019 Ready-to-Wear collection, the façade of the Pompidou becomes part of the creation of sign value, bringing along with it its own series of associations, references, and cultural lineages **(Fig. 4)**. As these two distinct semiotic systems of meaning come together and coalesce in this act of transposition, an entirely new web of meanings is constructed. The façade of the Pompidou articulates its identity through the use of "ready-made" mechanical and structural elements, presenting a design which appears "found" more so than "authored". Via this design, it was the goal of Piano and Rogers to create an architecture which bridged "high" and "low" cultures, making the cultural institution open and accessible to all. Although Ghesquière seems


**Fig. 4** *Louis Vuitton storefront*. Source: Frenchless in France. Image by Linda Mathieu.

to replicate this design methodology by taking the Pompidou as a "ready-made" or found object to be appropriated as graphic overlay and backdrop, the semiotic value of those façade elements shifts drastically. Through the use of colour, the elements of the Pompidou were made no longer purely functional but were flattened into graphic elements as well, and in this translation into image the façade became light enough to be lifted off the building and applied to fabric as applique. What were once elements which symbolized equality, access, democracy, and inclusion, have now been misappropriated by a premier fashion house to sell goods which only a small portion of the population can afford.

***Beaubourg could have or should have disappeared the day after the inauguration, dismantled and kidnapped by the crowd, which would have been the only possible response to the absurd challenge of the transparency and democracy of the culture—each person taking away a fetishized bolt of this culture itself fetishized.*** (Baudrillard, 1994: 70)

Yet again, it seems as though Louis Vuitton has helped to bring Baudrillard's wishes to fruition, as the Pompidou has through a process of "duplication and reproduction" found itself sprinkled in bits and pieces across the city of Paris and the world more broadly (Coffman, 2014: 10).

**Conclusion**

Over the course of her monologue, Miranda Priestly outlines the trickle-down of a trend from its debut in haute couture to its lowly end in clearance bins, pointing to its degradation as it makes its way from being artisanal craft intended solely for the elite to a cheaply-manufactured product intended for mass consumption and high yields. In "The Post-Media Condition" Peter Weibel outlines this phenomenon when speaking about painting:

***As a form of production generated by the human hand and guided by artistic intuition, painting nowadays has been assigned precedence over artwork which are produced or reproduced using technical means. Whereas the original works of painting are in the service of the upper classes, the lower classes are fobbed off with photographic reproductions, prints and postcards, etc., of the famous originals.*** (Weibel, 2012)

By thinking about a painting as haute couture and its reproductions as the knock-offs, this observation is not only clearly aligned with Priestley's but also with the inevitable fate of the Pompidou. Despite the fact that the museum's outright goal is to serve the public, it ultimately reifies an elite art-world within which only art legitimized by the powers that be may circulate. Even before Ghesquière's show the Pompidou was already objectified and commodified through various souvenirs, most of which prominently feature the colour cerulean **(Fig. 5)**. In September 2019, the athletic wear manufacturer Nike released the "Nike Air Max 1 Centre Pompidou" **(Fig. 6)**. The building's intermedial capabilities, made possible by its cerulean pipes, allowed to take many different forms and thereby convince a public that they could not only visit the museum but take home a part of it. Baudrillard's conception that the Pompidou's only true destiny was its dismantlement and dissemination to a degree has come true, as each author's reappropriation of its imageability transformed the building into something that could be continually recommodified and recirculated. The intermedial capabilities the cerulean pipes endowed to the Pompidou ensured its ability to not only support the circulation of images but to become an image of circulation itself.

From the fall of 2024 until 2030 the Centre Pompidou will be closed for renovations, which had been postponed so that the building could remain an active participant in the boom in tourism and media coverage that the city is expected to receive during the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics. The colourful exterior will then lie masked for five years. According to the press release, the

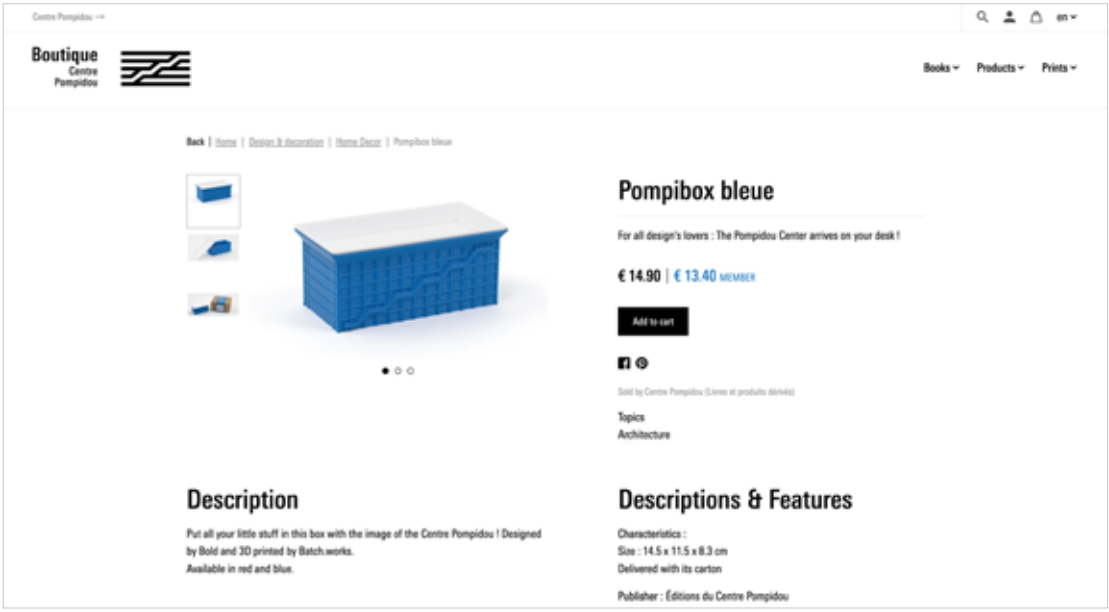


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**Fig. 5**
*Pompibox bleue.* Source: Centre Pompidou Boutique. Screenshot by Christina Moushoul.

**Fig. 6**
*Nike Air Max 1 Centre Pompidou.* Source: *ArchDaily*. © Nike via Sneaker News. Screenshot by Christina Moushoul.

goals include "renovating all façades and removing the asbestos from them, implementing enhanced fire safety measures, improving accessibility for people of reduced mobility and optimizing energy efficiency". The release goes on to state that this is an opportunity to "reinvent the utopia of its origins", reflecting their intention to use the renovation as an opportunity for institutional reform as well.

At a moment in which the Pompidou's materials, systems, and components are being scrutinized and subsequently updated in order to reckon with contemporary notions of sustainability and efficiency, it is interesting to consider what revisiting constitutive theories might also yield. As discussed previously, the Centre Pompidou came to fruition during the "linguistic turn" in architecture, a time when scholars were turning to semiotics in response to Modernism's rejection of architecture as symbolic representation and thereby its ability to represent anything outside itself. Semiotics offered a way out by providing an understanding of the contemporary conditions of signification and positions architecture as a kind of language. Architecture, much like fashion, is so much a part of everyday life that it often evades people's conscious experience of it. In response to that notion, philosopher and semiotician Umberto Eco closely linked architecture communication to mass media, maintaining that while mass media confirm and reinforce social norms and prejudices, architecture could use external codes belonging to other fields to successfully distance itself from such social expectations and conventions in order to begin to undermine them (Loeckx and Heynen, 2020: 39). When the Centre Pompidou re-emerges from under its covers in 2030, we must be prepared to correspondingly re-evaluate its theoretical position anew and thereby expect more from it. Within a mediascape that has become increasingly complex, encompassing, and inescapable, as well as a corresponding crisis of disinformation, the new Pompidou must be prepared to take its communicative capabilities more seriously in addressing the issues most critical for society today. Rather than succumbing to Priestly's narrative that its sole destiny is to wind up the clearance bin of tourist fodder, the Pompidou has the opportunity to use its intermedial capabilities to extend the communicative function far beyond itself and realize its original intentions of being "an information machine…open to all in a friendly, classless environment" (Rice, 1998: 26).

**Christina Moushoul** is the R&D Fellow at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Assistant Editor and Program Curator at *e-flux Architecture*. She obtained her Master of Architecture degree from the Princeton University School of Architecture in 2022, where she was awarded the Suzanne Kolarik Underwood Prize and the History and Theory Prize. Christina was an editor of the Princeton School of Architecture's student journal *Pidgin* and a co-founding editor of the architecture, design, and nightlife journal *Party Planner*. Christina has been published by *Media Fields Journal*, *CARTHA Magazine*, and the *New York Review of Architecture*, among others.

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