

## Two on the Field: Critical Sitings

Javier/Xavier Navarro

Memory. An intricate concept when stripped of its apparent banality. Memory: remembrance, recollection, personal or collective, chronological or random, surreal or sensual? More questions than I will furnish answers to. But by possibly positing the question, there is a dim possibility that multiple meanings might be formulated.

Architecture has provided us with a somewhat tidy answer to the relationship between architecture and memory: monuments. Monuments created by architects/heroes. Although the specific implications of the concept of monument can be extended to embrace other structures/icons, such criteria can only be hinted at in this context.

My interests drift to architecture as a trigger mechanism for layers of memory that otherwise would not surface to the consciousness by appealing to perceptual and emotional experiences. This process functions along a random time line that does not respect the chronology of events. Furthermore, this trigger mechanism is a catalyst that pertains more often to an individual than a collection of individuals.

These paintings are related to each other through the presence and transformation of a recurrent/obsessive primitive house. The house/dwelling is represented with a minimum amount of iconographic elaboration. These structures are "signs rather than pictures, dwellers rather than dwellings, they perch, they slide, they recline, they fly through spaces, they have

at least one horizon line somewhere. It is easy to imagine each of (my) little buildings as a representation of (myself or) a thought, skidding around, searching for a secure position in space."<sup>1</sup> Consequently the position of the viewer and myself shifts. The notion of perspective and space is distorted — creating an obsessive study of possibilities.

The search for this/these primeval notion(s) of space is carried in the work through color transparencies, layers, a limited palette; all of these attempting to set off a layer of memory that pertains to the perception of space — space in its most basic understanding/misunderstanding — space and not its representation as an indelible perceptual knowledge, as a question mark for the viewer, as a sort of laboratory where the painter ingeniously attempts to elucidate a hierarchy/catalog of the metaphysics of space.

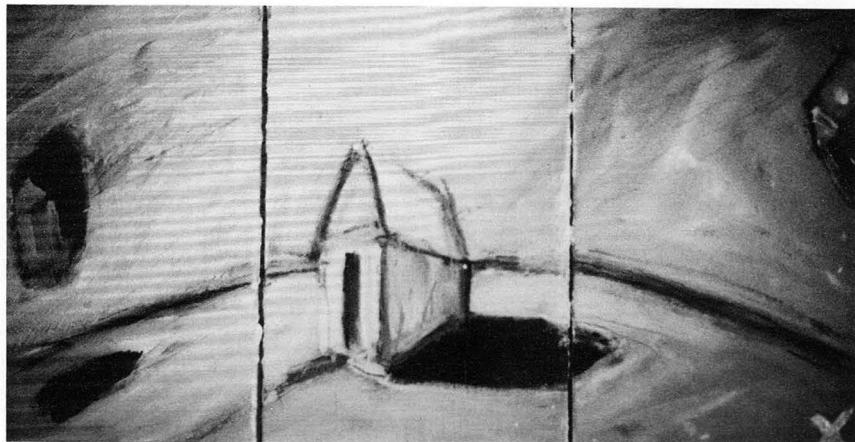
Neither Ruskin's pontifications in his rooted logocentrism, nor Rossi's "optimistic" collectivism can satisfy my personal need for an epistemological speculation about architecture. Ironically, architecture, the concept of memory, and — appropriately — the Heisenberg uncertainty principle could become instead a privileged viewing glass into a/the present/future.

### FOOTNOTES:

1. Judith Wolin, "Beach/Houses Paintings by Javier Navarro," Unpublished essay, (1989).



*On The Beach*, Mixed Media on Canvas, 56" x 80", 1989.



*Patient House*, Oil and Wax on Canvas, 3 @ 9" x 15", 1989.



*House On Deck*, Oil and Wax on Canvas, 24" x 24", 1989.



*House For A Philosopher*, Oil and Wax on Canvas, 24" x 24", 1989.



*Three Places*, Oil and Wax on Canvas, 56" x 42", 1989.