
Andrea Gleiniger

Reinterpreting the Undetermined Toward the Determined:

On the Presence of Clouds as Metaphor and Material

Abstract

The cloud's attributes of being unpredictable and undetermined as well as being complex and changeable made it a welcome metaphor for concepts of the imagination, for "concepts of phantasy." Being visible and immaterial, they are projection screen and visionary space at the same time. This is also true for architecture: in the twentieth century cloud-architectures refer to the desire for immateriality, as they symbolize – in contrast to the precise contours of a rationally built and technically constructed world – the space of boundless possibilities. Being a model in complexity science, the cloud has become the foundation of new simulation techniques; in information technology, it has become a metaphor to make the undetermined determinable. In the time of the Internet, the euphemistic use of the cloud metaphor obscures the hardly foreseeable consequences of using ubiquitously available data clouds.

Keywords

Clouds, cloud-architectures, fog, metaphor, Pepsi Pavilion, space of imagination.