

SUPERPOWERS OF TEN

Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation

INTRODUCTION

IN 1977, RAY AND CHARLES EAMES produced *Powers of Ten: A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effects of Adding Another Zero*. An exploration of daily life at different scales—from within a molecule of skin to beyond the edges of the Milky Way—the Eames' film was beautifully designed and produced for decades has been used as an educational tool in schools across Europe and the United States. Yet the selective framing and narrative of *Powers of Ten*, which centers on a couple having a picnic on Chicago's lakefront, presents a linear progression of scenes and images in which abrupt jumps in scale and the interaction between genes, bodies, societies, and technologies appear frictionless and apolitical.

Developed by architect Andrés Jaque and the Office for Political Innovation, *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* is an operatic, large-scale performance that offers a reinterpretation of the Eames' *Powers of Ten*. In the performance Jaque and the Office for Political Innovation reenact the film, revealing alternative narratives, political conflicts, and forgotten historical events. New characters such as Kodak's "Shirley Card," polio, and the transgender pioneer Flawless Sabrina are invited to star together with the picnickers, clusters of galaxies, and human DNA that are featured in the Eames' original film. *SUPERPOWERS*

OFFICE FOR POLITICAL INNOVATION is a Madrid/New York-based architectural firm that explores the role of architecture in the making of societies. Among its projects are *COSMO*, *PLASENCIA CLERGY HOUSE*, *House in Never Never Land*, *IKEA Disobedients*, *TUPPER HOME*, *PHANTOM*, *Mies as Rendered Society*, and *ESCARAVOX*. In 2014 the Office for Political Innovation received the award for Best Research Project at the 14th Venice Biennale.

ANDRÉS JAQUE is an architect and the founder of the Office for Political Innovation. He is Professor of Advanced Architectural Design at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, and visiting professor at Princeton University's School of Architecture. Jaque's research work explores the potential of the traditions of science and technology studies and cosmopolitics for architectural practices.

OF TEN critically denies the possibility of framing daily life as contained by a universe automatically accountable through science, to reclaim the beauty of multiverses constructed out of politics.

SUPERPOWERS OF TEN

AN ALTERNATIVE version of *Powers of Ten: A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effects of Adding Another Zero*, made by the Office of Charles and Ray Eames for IBM in 1977.

ACT 1 — SCENE 1

FEMALE VOICE. In 1977, the L.A. office of Ray and Charles Eames made the movie *Powers of Ten: A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effects of Adding Another Zero* available to the public. This movie was the second cinematographic version that the Eames made of the book *Cosmic View: The Universe in 40 Jumps*, a work that had been made public in 1957 by the Dutch architect, pedagogue, and reformer Kees Boeke.

Kees Boeke promoted his work through the implantation of sociocracy, a form of collective government which establishes itself as an alternative to democracy. Democracy is based on granting representation to differences and producing the commonplace through dispute.

By contrast, sociocracy places good government on how the agencies that compose society vow not to object to the path set forth by GENERAL CONSENSUS. Many say that the sociocratic methods generate proficiency and keep societies CENTERED.

Both the Boeke book and the Eames' movies were beautifully designed, produced, and broadcasted as projects that were simultaneously architectural, political, and pedagogical. For decades they were used as education aids in schools all over Europe and the United States and contributed to focusing the collective gaze, as a linearity in which the jumps in scale and the interaction between genes, bodies, societies, and technologies were seen as automatic, nonproblematical, and apolitical. We are fans of the *Powers of Ten*, just as we are fans of *The Smiths*, and that is precisely why we inhabit its conflicts.

Just like a song in karaoke or a costume at a party, every past discourse is available to respond to current challenges, and we can use it as the means for positioning ourselves vis-à-vis present-day conflicts. Welcome to our version of POWERS OF TEN.

ACT 2 — SCENE 1

SAMPLED MALE VOICE. The picnic near the lake-side in Chicago was the start of a lazy afternoon early one October.

We begin with a scene one meter wide, which we view from just one meter away.

Now every ten seconds we will look from ten times further away and our field of view will be ten times wider.

This square is ten meters wide and in ten seconds the next square will be ten times as wide.

Our picture will center on the picnickers, even after they have been lost to sight.

One hundred meters wide, the distance a man can run in ten seconds.

Cars crowd the highway, powerboats lie at their docks, the colorful bleachers are Soldier Field.

This square is a kilometer wide, one thousand meters, the distance a racing car can travel in ten seconds. We see the great city on the lake's shore.

Ten to the fourth meters, ten kilometers, the distance a supersonic airplane can travel in ten seconds.



1 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. SUPERPOWERS OF TEN. 2013–15. Architectural performance.

We are able to see the whole earth now, just over a minute into the journey.

The earth diminishes into the distance, but those background stars are so much farther away that it half-crosses the tilted orbit of the moon.

Now we mark a small part of the path in which the earth moves around the Sun.

Ten to the fourteenth, as the solar system shrinks to one bright point in the distance; our Sun is plainly only one sun among many.

Giant steps carry us into the outskirts of the galaxy and as we pull away, we begin to see the great flat spiral facing us.

The time and path we chose to leave Chicago has brought us out of the galaxy along a course nearly perpendicular to its disk.

Ten to the twenty-second power, a million light-years. We pass the big Virgo Cluster of galaxies, among many others.

One hundred million light-years out, as we approach the limit of our vision, we pause to start back home.

This lonely scene, the galaxies like dust, is what most of space looks like.

This emptiness is normal; the richness of our own neighborhoods is the exception.

The trip back to the picnic, on the lakefront, will be a speeded-up version, reducing the distance to the earth's surface by one power of ten every two seconds.

Every two seconds we will appear to cover ninety percent of the remaining distance back to earth.

Notice the alternation between great activity and relative inactivity, a rhythm that will continue all the way to our next goal, a proton in the nucleus of a carbon atom, beneath the skin on the hand of the sleeping man at the picnic.

Ten to the ninth meters, ten to the eighth, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, we are back at our starting point. We slow down at one meter, ten to the zero power.

Now we reduce the distance to our final

destination by ninety percent every ten seconds, each step much smaller than the one before.

At ten to the minus two, one one-hundredth of a meter, one centimeter, we approach the surface of the hand.

In a few seconds we will be entering the skin, crossing layer after layer from the outermost dead cells to a tiny blood vessel within.

We enter the white cell among its vital organelles, the porous wall of the cell nucleus appears, the nucleus within holds the heredity of the man in the coiled coils of DNA.

At the atomic scale, the interplay of form and motion becomes more visible. We focus on one commonplace group of three hydrogen atoms, bonded by electrical forces to a carbon atom.

Four electrons make up the outer shell of the carbon itself; they appear in quantum motion as a swarm of shimmering points.

At ten to the minus ten meters, one angstrom, we find ourselves right among those outer electrons.

Now we come upon the two inner electrons, held in a tighter swarm. As we draw towards the atom's attracting center, we enter into a vast inner space.

At last, the carbon nucleus, so massive and so small.

This carbon nucleus is made up of six protons and six neutrons. We are in the domain of universal modules; there are protons and neutrons in every nucleus, electrons in every atom, atoms bonded to every molecule out to the furthest galaxy.

As a single proton fills our scene, we reach the edge of present understanding. Are these some quarks in intense interaction?

Our journey has taken us through forty powers of ten; if now the field is one unit, then when we saw many clusters of galaxies together it was ten to the fortieth, or one and forty zeros.



2 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* (Act 3, Scene 1). 2013–15. Architectural performance.

ACT 3 — SCENE 1

FEMALE VOICE. The scientist Philip Morrison was sixty-two years old when he agreed to be the narrator of *Powers of Ten*.

It is his voice that tells the story.

The voice that tells us of the picnic, of the atom, of how “empty” outer space is and, also, the one that tells us of the richness of “our” neighborhoods.

He contracted polio when he was four years old and the effects of the disease caused him mobility problems for the rest of his life.

He never really believed that outer space was as empty as his voice made it sound in the movie, or that the wealth of our neighborhood was an exception within the galaxy.

Morrison became famous by defending the idea that sooner or later humans would find a way to communicate with extraterrestrial beings.

In 1942, Morrison resigned from the Communist Party and in 1943 began working on the Manhattan Project.

He at first worked in the Metallurgical Laboratory of the University of Chicago, less than 20 km away from the setting of the fictitious picnic that he would narrate 35 years later in *Powers of Ten*.

He joined a work team comprising of scientists

from various fields that oversaw the design and construction of the reactors at the Hanford Site, Washington state, the world’s first full-scale plutonium production facility, which supplied the uranium and plutonium for the bombs that were dropped on Trinity and Nagasaki.

On July 16, when *FAT MAN*, a new model plutonium implosion device, was first tested near Socorro, New Mexico, Morrison described the explosion as “a sight never seen before.”

Twenty-four days later, Morrison personally loaded the plutonium bomb *Little Boy* into the plane that took off for Hiroshima.

This is what he said later, when he visited Hiroshima as a member of the commission of scientists analyzing the effects of the bomb on the terrain:

“The public must realize that the atomic bomb opened a door to fear, expense, and danger rather than just end the war” (Sartori 6).

From that moment onward until he died Morrison became one of the most outspoken activists against the development and use of nuclear weapons. He was one of the founders of the Association of Los Alamos Scientists, which defended the importance of publishing and making available all of the clandestine knowledge regarding the weapons.

The problem was not only the atomic bomb but the way in which the bomb, both as a scientific and everyday reality, had stayed out of the discussion.

In front of 380 scientists, some of the members of the association declared in a joint lecture: Any conversation on the ‘secret’ of the atomic bomb eludes the fact that there really is no such secret. Other nations, Russia included, know its basic principles. The compulsion for atomic secrecy will wind up undermining the structure of the democratic government.

At 11:17 on the night of August 17, 1977, the same year in which his voice narrating the cosmos began to resonate in American suburbs, the Ohio State University Radio Observatory, known as “Big Ear,”

with its large radio telescope Morrison's ideas on interstellar communication helped to develop, picked up the signal 6EQUJ5 (aka the Wow! signal), which appeared to have come from the northwest of the Sagittarius constellation.

It was the first extraterrestrial message detected in the history of humankind.

The Big Ear's radio telescope was pointed at outer space, but, paradoxically, in 2015 it looks like the tennis courts that one finds in clubs and resorts in residential areas.

Who has not imagined how great it would be to have extraterrestrial friends? Morrison also thought of extraterrestrials as colleagues, scientist colleagues. This is why he believed the best frequency to contact aliens would be 1420 MHz, the frequency that resonates in hydrogen, the most common element in the universe.

What earthling or extraterrestrial scientist would mistake this gesture?

The Wow! signal is the name given to the strong



3 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* (Act 3, Scene 2). 2013–15. Architectural performance.

radio signal detected by Jerry R. Ehman while working on a SETI program at the Big Ear Ohio State University Radio Observatory, who circled it on the computer printout and wrote "Wow!" in the margin. Thus the name does not refer to the signal's content, but is the reaction of the scientist who heard/saw it for the first time.

After the initial euphoria, it was discovered that the Wow! signal was not a reply sent by extraterrestrials, but merely the reflection of signals sent from earth bouncing off space junk.

ACT 3 — SCENE 2

FEMALE VOICE. It is estimated that at this moment there are about 6,000 tons of space junk in orbit around the earth.

International television, global surveillance, militarism, the social construction of geography, or even meteorology are all possible thanks to satellites which will become space junk in the near future.

The – to us on earth – invisible circle of 6,000 tons, more than 500,000 pieces, orbiting a population of TV viewers, netizens, and victims of cyberespionage is also a product of the global village and of the globalism that confronts it.

Less than 1,000 km above geostationary orbit, begins the graveyard orbit, where most of the satellites that lose their functionality go to die.

More than 5,500 abandoned satellites are evidence of the already long history of our presence in the frontiers between land and space.

The Japanese space agency JAXA has proposed removing the debris by means of a kilometer-wide web of carbon nanotubes. Others have proposed destroying debris with laser beams, which would reduce its speed and send it tumbling down over the earth.

The earth's urbanisms do not disappear as we move upwards. Space is just another suburb consisting of trash, television, international conflicts, and surveillance.



4 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation.
 SUPERPOWERS OF TEN. (Act 3, Scene 3). 2013–15.
 Architectural performance.

A cortex gazing inwards, where Beyoncé video clips mingle with drone control, which will eventually be atomized and fall like soft rain, bouncing off our neighborhoods like Wow! did on Big Ear.

ACT 3 — SCENE 3

FEMALE VOICE. Sausages are made by grinding various animal tissues so that, mixed with blood and fat, they have a maximum exposure to salt, which delays their decomposition.

Atomization, together with the blending and salting, diffuses the flavors and textures of each component into a homogeneous mass that erases heterogeneity.

In 1900 the Chicago River was permanently reversed to prevent, amongst other pollutants, that decomposing blood from the massive meat production center in Union Stock Yards reached the city and contaminated the waters of Lake Michigan, which were the inhabitants' water supply.

Separating the places in which food was consumed from those where it was produced was a priority of modern and reformist urbanism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Thanks to the development of the national

railway network (sound of trains), up to 82% of the meat consumed in the United States was processed in the industrial complex of Union Stock Yards. Mass production systems that anticipated Taylorism and the scientific organization of labor were developed there.

The production and distribution of meat was the predecessor to assembly-line automobile production and of the automobile culture that has rebuilt the surface of the land.

The term veganism was coined in 1944 and referred to a movement of people who, for ethical reasons, abstain from products of animal origin. Currently, 4% of the population in Europe is vegan, and in countries such as India it is around 40%.

Veganism provides an alternative to the centrality of speciesism and anthropocentrism making way for a cosmopolitical sentiocentrism, that recognizes the rights of all sentient beings (Recarte Vicente-Arche).

ACT 3 — SCENE 4

FEMALE VOICE. It would be hard to narrate the history of color photography without talking about Charles and Ray Eames. They contributed to the spread of Kodak film and were given the task of publicizing the alternatives proposed by Polaroid.

Since the popularization of color photography during the 1940s and 1950s, labs all over the world have used the so-called "Shirley Cards" in color calibration processes.

It is thought that "Shirley" was the name of the first Kodak employee who agreed to be photographed as a global chromatic reference.

A Caucasian woman, a redhead with blue eyes, was eventually replaced by new Shirleys, all white and Caucasian, whose photographs hung from the walls of photography studios all over the world, like a mixture of pinups for chemical normativity and Caucasian Madonnas.

In everyday life, it is commonly believed that

photography objectively and equitably frames the reality it represents.

For Kodak, the color film market was the *Caucasian population of the world*.

In the 1970s the exclusion triggered by the films became evident.

The growing diversity of people from different ethnic backgrounds in colleges and universities in the United States turned graduation group photos into frames of exclusion.

Photographs became landscapes of black blurs surrounded by smiling men and women with pinkish skin and blue eyes.

In 1970 Caroline Hunter and Ken Williams formed the Polaroid Workers Revolutionary Movement^[1] and accused the company of collaborating with the apartheid politics of the South African government.

The Polaroid 1D-2, developed for the South African market, included a button that increased the flash intensity by 42%.

A device that, curiously, allowed cameras to compensate the chemical imbalance that blurred the faces of people with dark skin.

The name of the camera, 1D, stood for the initials of Identification Camera.

The South African Pass Laws Act forced black people to carry identification papers with their photograph at all times.

The flash adjustment had the object of including the dark skinned population in a new control frame.

It wasn't until the 1980s when Kodak commercialized the Vericolor 111 and Gold Max films, which, in the words of Richard Wien – Kodak's director – could "photograph the details of a dark horse in low light" (Roth 121–22).

According to Jim Rice, a former Kodak technical sales representative and marketing manager, the new films were not developed in order to include black users in the frame, but because of the complaints

from publicists in the chocolate industry and the growing interior decoration magazine market, who every day faced problems because of the impossibility of *photographing chocolate bars and dark furniture* (Roth 119).

The digital sphere has turned into an arena where the Shirley Card is discussed and challenged.

Adobe produced an excluding frame in their



- 5 Andrés Jaquè / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* (Act 3, Scene 4). 2013–15. Architectural performance.



- 6 Andrés Jaquè / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* (Act 3, Scene 5). 2013–15. Architectural performance.

[1] Information about this movement has been collected from the African Activist Archive Project. <http://africanactivist.msu.edu>.

adjustment cards with a fake Latin Carmen Miranda, but with a skin as pink as Shirley's.

Nowadays the production of multiracial Shirley Cards in which a multitude of people with different skin tones are arranged in multiple compositions has become a graphic genre produced and discussed by the Internet community.

ACT 3 — SCENE 5

FEMALE VOICE. Picnics aren't always the beginning of "lazy afternoons."

On September 5, 1882, 1,270 km away from Lake Michigan, twelve small unions mobilized more than 10,000 workers in celebration of Worker's Day. After a long march accompanied by slogans such as "less work, more pay" and "work built this republic, work should rule it," certain spaces in the city of New York were occupied in a monumental collective picnic.

In 2012, Futurefarmers presented the project *A Variation of Powers of Ten*, a discussion format in which scientists like Morrison and his longed for extraterrestrial colleagues are called upon to collectively build arguments regarding the universe and its scales.

The objective of this format is to highlight the way in which knowledge has changed in the course of the thirty-plus years that have gone by since the original Eames' movies were produced.

On June 20, 1989, Otto von Habsburg visited the University of Debrecen. In his address he asked a question: What would a Europe without borders be like?

Two representatives of the Hungarian Democratic Forum proposed answering the question by organizing a picnic at the Austro-Hungarian border.

It was decided it would be held in Sopronpuszta in Hungary.

On August 20, hundreds of people came to the picnic and literally tore down the old wooden gate that separated them from Austria.

On the night of November 9, the Berlin Wall came down.



7 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN*. (Act 3, Scene 6). 2013–15. Architectural performance.

At the time of writing, many EU member states are now demanding or reintroducing border controls to constrain the free movement of people as laid out in the Schengen Agreement of the EU.

The expression "lazy" has become a handy weapon that terrorizes, splits asunder, creates new borders, generates revenue streams, concentrates wealth, and fabricates inequality.

ACT 3 — SCENE 6

FEMALE VOICE. Picnics would not be possible if it were not for something that we seldom pay attention to: grass.

Grass is also an arena for differences and the frame in which other types of centrality have been promoted.

It is estimated that there are more than 160,000 km² of lawn in the United States.

This is three times more than the total area of corn crops, and is thus the U.S.'s single most irrigated crop. Grass surfaces have expanded all over the world parallel to the boom in suburban life. Natural grass is actually a mixture of several kinds of herbaceous vegetation, mostly Gramineae and Cyperaceae.

In a wild prairie, in a space 40×40 cm, more than 80 different kinds of vegetation can be found.

Prairies are also rich in insects and microorganisms, which fulfill vital processes for carbon fixation and are the nourishment for about a third of all the world's bird species.

For the first time ever the Plant Patent Act of 1930 allowed the patenting of plant species that reproduce asexually.

86 Monocrops of grass like the one patented as Brilliant have been massively planted on golf courses, in parks, and private gardens all over the world.

Because they are a monoculture with little growth, maintenance costs are reduced.

However, their extensive use leads to the reduction of biodiversity in a large and an important part of the world's surface, the privatization of vegetation, and an incentive to concentrate investments in genetic manipulation.

Brilliant does not have any flowers or dry grass, nor does it contain herbs sensitive to water shortage or high grasses.

In 1968, the year in which the Eames presented the first prairie picnic in their study for *Powers of Ten*, the chemical industry titan Monsanto, entered into a collaboration with the largest producer and distributor of lawn products in the world: the Scotts Seed Company, now Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, in Marysville, Ohio.

That same year they patented glyphosate, a herbicide that since 1973 trades under the name Roundup.

David Barboza wrote in the *New York Times* that the reduction in maintenance time dedicated to trimming and looking after this new lawn was "a suburbanite's dream come true."

When Charles Berger, executive president of Scotts, was asked about the way in which they employed biotechnology as means for biological exclusion he answered: We limit ourselves to make the world more beautiful. I don't think we can call it biotechnology, for us they are nothing but superior plant species.

ACT 3 — SCENE 7

FEMALE VOICE. This is what the narrator, embodied in Morrison, says: "Our picture will center on the picnickers," our description will be centered on the two people having the picnic.

But when the zoom approaches, it is the hand of the sleeping man that occupies the exact center, and it is the account of his tissues, his cells, his genes, and his molecules that are woven into the universe.

The way in which the couple, the male and female couple, negotiate the part that gender plays in the distribution of roles within that relationship. The insistence to impose a fixed gender on the basis of genetics is doubtless one of the arenas where our cultures impose themselves, and argue and subvert each other, now more than ever.

"There won't be a revolution unless it is a feminist revolution." "There won't be a revolution unless it is a queer revolution." "There won't be a revolution unless it is a transgender revolution."

These were some of the more polemic chants coined by the participants in the 15-M protests in Madrid.

1968 is the year of "May of '68," of Pasolini's "the police are sons of the poor," of the protests in London against the war in Vietnam, of the demonstrations in Columbia and Berkeley, of the first version of *Powers of Ten*.

September 7, 1968, was the day on which two simultaneous demonstrations protested against the way in which the Miss America pageant and its television broadcast promoted the hegemony of the female model of the "misses."

400 activists placed a garbage drum in front of the gates of the congress hall in Atlantic City where the pageant was being held, a drum they named FREEDOM TRASH CAN.

In the drum, they dumped bras, eyelashes, pans, mops, and issues of *Playboy* and of *Lady's Home Journal*.

Inside the hall, in front of the television cameras, there was a placard that said: WOMEN'S LIBERATION.

At that same moment, in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Atlantic City, a group of activists was crowning Sandra Williams as the first Miss Black America.

J. Morris Anderson, promoter of the protest-pag-eant, stated: "We're not protesting against beauty. We're protesting because the beauty of the black woman has been ignored. We'll herald her beauty and applaud it" (Duffett).

In 2012, the artist Julia Sherman filmed Jack Doroshow – founder of the Miss Drag America pag-eant – as he was crowned as Flawless Sabrina in the reenactment of the award he did not receive, nor could have received because of his trans condition in 1968.

Flawless Sabrina acknowledged the reenactment and her recognition as Miss America with the same words that Debra Dene Barnes, the real winner, used in front of the television cameras in 1968.

The artist Julia Sherman depicted the celebration within the conflict of a double frame in which Debby Barnes finally shared her television stardom with Flawless Sabrina.

TV CONDUCTOR. This is what the narrator, embodied in Morrison, says: "Our picture will center on the picnickers", our description will be centered on the two people having the picnic.

FEMALE VOICE. And now, ladies and gentlemen, you know at this moment, a year ago tonight, Debby Dene Barnes sat on this stage, right where these girls are, nervously awaiting what was gonna happen to her: the announcement that she was gonna be Miss America of 1968.

And during her year's reign as queen, she was one of the finest and loveliest queens we have ever had, with charm and with dignity. Now, let us give a final salute to Debby Dene Barnes, Miss America of 1968. With our all special... (Music and applause).

FEMALE VOICE. Thank you.

FLAWLESS SABRINA. A year ago my somewhere

road was miraculously extended to include all the highways and airways of America.

DEBBY DENE BARNES. And my love of America and its people has deepened with every mile.

FLAWLESS SABRINA. And my love of America and its people has deepened with every mile.

DEBBY DENE BARNES. With the help of the U.S.O. my somewhere road has led to Japan and Korea...

FLAWLESS SABRINA. With the help of the U.S.O. my somewhere road has led to Japan and Korea where thousands of servicemen...

DEBBY DENE. ...gave me the satisfaction to know that I was doing just something to alleviate their loneliness.

FLAWLESS SABRINA. ...gave me the satisfaction to know that I was doing just something to alleviate their loneliness.

DEBBY DENE BARNES. As with any worthwhile experience, my road hasn't always been easy.

FLAWLESS SABRINA. As with any worthwhile experience, my road hasn't always been easy.

DEBBY DENE BARNES. But the rough places taught me a lesson I will never forget.

TRANSGENDER VOICE. But the rough places taught me a lesson I will never forget. As I walk this last time off this special place, this special road, I will make way for Miss America 1969 to search for her special road for her special self.

But even though I will be very sad to leave all of my special friends that I made here in Atlantic City my heart will, I am one percent saying this, but 99 percent, gratitude.



8 Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN* (Act 3, Scene 7). 2013–15. Architectural performance.

ACT 4 — SCENE 1

FEMALE VOICE. The universe has no center. Yet it surely does not revolve around the hand of one man.

Automatism is only possible once the disputes, the differences, and the protests have been made invisible.

A defined us is not possible without the counteraction of an “out there.”

We are configured by otherness.

Professional practices participate in the everyday performatism of political agencies.

Designs such as the Brilliant lawn do not generate superior species but simplified ecosystems.

The ensemble of people, groups, arguments, activisms, cyber activisms, projects, and polemics opposing Miss Universe or socio-technologies like the Shirley Cards are urbanisms which are more exciting and desirable than those of the hegemonies they confront.

Effectiveness, consensus, austerity, and happiness are frames that concentrate societies’ actions, but only at the expense of marginalizing everything that evinces difference, that destabilizes granted knowledge, and that burdens with representation the making of decisions.

Architectural practices are a part of this process. We can work on consolidating frames of exclusion. We can work on contributing to making the controversial and diverse appear consensual and homogeneous. But we can also contribute to multiplying frames dedicated to what is relevant, like the problematic, the marginalized, the discredited, and the disputed.

Please gaze through the complexities of our societies.

These are the *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN*.

Let us herald and applaud their beauty!

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Credits

SUPERPOWERS OF TEN

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