Debate on Form vs Function seems almost as useful as a debate on religion, serving predominantly to convince only the weak-willed. Both strategies have been adopted for the derivations of Architecture, and would forever be adapted to different ends. Debating the validity of one over the other thus becomes much like an inquiry into the validity of day over night or vice versa. Frankly to suggest that either one MUST follow the other is pointless to the level of asininity. However this debate remains as eternal as the strategies themselves, though one might suggest, as with most inquiries into epistemology, the aim of such an inquiry should be towards the understanding, tandem development, and subsequent deployment of both stratagems. With Can Lis, this debate takes an interesting turn, as the form comes about from a deliberate attempt to emphasize the existing while simultaneously not existing.

Conceptually, Can Lis strives to be formless. To exist as force rather than matter, going by D'Arcy's explanation that “force, unlike matter has no independent objective existence.” It is autographic in that sense, as its authenticity is derived from direct contact, albeit with the context and not the author. Though in the sense that the building bears none of its authenticity on the author specifically, with a strategy that can theoretically be adopted ad infinitum without any real dilution or the possibility of dilution so to speak (more on technique later on). The Language applied to formal strategies in Can Lis is entirely based on looking out and away from the building itself. Even on approach, the building gives nothing to the observer, presenting them with a blank limestone wall. Essentially there really is no “view of the exterior” so spoken about in formal context, “set among myrtle and pine trees, with an extraordinary view to the sea. Integrating with the colours in the landscape,” rarely about its formal content. This is further emphasized that the building was constructed without any actual complete working drawings, allowing for a form-finding exercise that placed views and light as priority for form determination. A form of sui generis Architecture is thus created, given the exactitude of site. In this sense the building remains as form Gestalt inseparable from all that surrounds it, essentially the abstract machine as defined by Deleuze & Guattari.

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Cited:

Though this inextricable link with regards to Can Lis stays predominantly in the realm of physicality and materiality, there remains in Can Lis a certain aspect of the Derridian attempt to subvert the "binary oppositions" of Natural and Artificial, Form and Function, though to go so far as to suggest that the building takes into consideration all that exists in its unbounded socioeconomic surrounds, might be a bit far fetched. Simultaneously, one might read the deconstructionist’s mantra "il n’y a pas de hors-texte" (there’s nothing outside context) to mean that all that should be considered for design is the context, in its immediate, tangible, form, manifested as the physical site. Form in this sense can be seen as encapsulating a specific state of existence. Indeed “the concept of form has been defined as the state of a system at a particular point in time.” One might even go as far as to say "states and forms... are exactly the same thing...” Chem adds an extra dimension to this assertion, by not only attempting to meld the firm with its surrounds, but by simultaneously creating a form that reads its surrounding, or rather presents the environment to its occupant, complete with markers. 

Certainly the suggestion that Derrida’s statement implies only the immediate surrounds would quite simply be a misinterpretation of his intent, but one might argue that the misinterpretation in the guise of misinterpretation is one of the fundamental principles of Deconstructivism.

Cited:

8. Ibid.

\[\text{The flow of energy through the system ensures [that] information from outside the system will pass to the inside.}\]
Can Lis & The Six Determinants of Architectural Form

Relational Environment
Can Lis blends into the natural environment within which it is situated. However, one might argue that the problem of the relational environment of Can Lis has been subverted by Jørn Utzon in his choice of an isolated location, away from the trouble of “render[ing] eloquent its role of the whole city scheme.”

Function
Utzon’s view of human habitation is that of a sequence of independent activities. This somewhat fragmented nature of human existence limited only by the passage of the individuals between events, becomes a driving force for Can Lis created in the form of a “sequence of pavilions linked by a wall, and arranged so as to respond to the various functions within the dwelling.”

Natural Environment
As mentioned earlier, Can Lis blends into its natural environment, with the orientation of the individual pavilions framing specific views of the Mediterranean. Simultaneously, the orientation of the pavilions, coupled with their location with reference to each other, serve to track the sun as it traverses the sky. It is in materiality, fenestration, planning, and orientation, designed to suit the Mediterranean climate.

Material
Can Lis was constructed using a hard local limestone called mares stone, obtained within 10km of the actual building site, and with the expertise of local mason’s skilled at the use of the material. The material is left unfinished both internally and externally and is further used for the creation of furnishings in the interior. Essentially the building speaks towards the use of a material to “its own potential...seek[ing] the most eloquent expression possible.”

Psychology of Space
Inside Can Lis, care is taken in each space to provide the occupant with the program appropriate comfort as well as delight, perpetuated by the warming sun, appropriate shading, and the great view to the exterior.

Zeitgeist
Inside Can Lis, care is taken in each space to provide the occupant with the program appropriate comfort as well as delight, perpetuated by the warming sun, appropriate shading, and the great view to the exterior.

Cited
10. All quotations in this section are obtained from “The Six Determinants of Architectural Form” as determined by Paul Rudolph in his 1956 Manifestos.
The Body in Architecture

The body in architecture is a subject that has taken countless of forms, and likely would take countless more. "Architectural monument as embodiment,"1 to architectural function personification. Certainly this makes sense as most architecture is conceived with the human being in mind, and considering the inseparability of the physicality of the human "bodily expression," the human body by extension thus becomes target of most architecture; be it monumental or inconsequential it remains so in relation to the human body. This subject of the body can be summarised in three-dim as suggested by Anthony Vidler:

1. “The building as body”
2. “The building epitomizing bodily states or, more importantly, states of mind based on bodily sensation”
3. “The environment as a whole endowed with bodily, or at least organic characteristics”

This section of the case study explores Can Lis through these different pedagogical approaches to architecture and the body.

Embodying Architecture

There is in architecture a particular brand that sees architecture as a physical manifestation of the the human body. Architecture in this sense reaches perfection or some “truth” when it is closest in proportions to the human body. In this sense we see the Vitruvian Man, Vitruvius’s orders and Le Corbusier’s Modulor as attempts to attain architectural perfection. Certainly, as Anthony Vidler posits “We judge every object by analogy with our own bodies,” as such it stands to reason that the closer one ties an object to the human body the more palatable it becomes. That said the human body in all its proportionality remains extremely adaptable. Indeed it takes very little for one to imagine a face, or a body for that matter, in almost anything, as the proliferation of overly reduced emoticons, and the countless tales of figures appearing in white noise would attest to. This begs the question of the validity of the mode of thinking with regards to architectural form. Does the fact that one can imagine Can Lis as countless Human forms justify it in any sense architecturally speaking? Certainly the Vitruvian man serves to show that the human body the wonderfully in a perfectly constructed square and circle, but countless instances of the human body existing in millions of different shapes goes to show the arbitrary nature of this connection. Admittedly, even Le Corbusier accepts that one can derive architecture that is "pleasing, body put together" or "survives" using the human scaled Modulor, accepting that the "Modulor does not order taken, still less genius."

Putting the Modulor aside, Can Lis can be seen, as a physical manifestation of the fragmented body, “a body which seems to be fragmented, if not contorted, deliberately torn apart and maintained almost beyond recognition; such an argument being supported by Utzon fragmentation of the traditional house plan into individual pavilions. Though considering these separations were already inherent in the “typical” house plan with programmatic divisions, one might concede that Can Lis was merely segmented, rather than fragmented, and in so doing realise the house more whole in truth, by emphasizing each individuals part.

Architectural activity

Living room

Body as a kind of house...

the body as a kind of house, the house of the human body
Architecture for Body

Architecture “epitomizing bodily states”, begins to look at architectural “projection [of the human body] in terms of attributes rather than parts, an amplification rather than a simple replication of the body’s experience.”

Such thinking is perhaps more readily apparent than the representations in Can Lis, as Utzon makes several architectural moves in plan and section that serve to create a specific environment for the body.

The building in plan is laid out in a manner to suit the individual going through their daily corporeal reality; waking, bathing, eating, lounging, dining, etc. While simultaneously striving to enhance the mood of the individual by keeping the sun ever present through these functions, hearing the fact that the “psyche cannot be separated from the body” in trying to provide for both simultaneously. Essentially Utzon creates, through programmatic arrangements, a continuous source of sunlight for the occupants as they go through their day, aiming by the long lived mantra of much of modernism that hailed sunlight as the cure for all things.

Sectionally one sees the building producing a form of spatial hierarchy based on the configuration and duration of the body within. These sectional variations are derived from the basic concept that a body in motion especially one in a linear trajectory perceives surrounding spaces as less intrusive than a sedentary body inhabiting the same space for prolonged periods of time. As such spaces are reduced for hallways and increased for lounging areas.

Can Lis house perhaps belongs to that school of modernism spoken of by Colomina to be “unproblematically understood as a kind of medical equipment, a mechanism for protecting and enhancing the body.” However Utzon averts most criticism to the sterility associated with the white walls of modernism in the materiality of the house; the warm limestone used to construct the bulk of the house (including furniture and shelving) being far from austere.

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Sensation of C7 nerve is for middle finger.
Sensation of T4 spinal nerve is approximately level with nipple line.
Sensation of T6 spinal nerve root is approximately level with the bottom of the sternum.
Sensation of T12 spinal nerve root is approximately level with the pubic bone.
Sensation of S3, S4 & S5 nerves is the perineal (genital) area.

Bone notch at the back of the neck is C7.
The spinal cord ends approximately between L1 & L2.
Sacral cord segments (S1-S5 “Cauda Equina”) are level with T12-L1 Vertebrae.
The sacral vertebrae are fused to make up the sacrum.
The coccygeal vertebrae are fused to make the coccyx or "tail bone".

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Body Architecture

When considering the endowment of buildings with bodily systems, with reference to Can Lis, two different modes of approach seem readily apparent. The first being the formal pattern of the building; the circulation spine. And the second the nurturing aspect of the building (The Womb).

The Circulation spine is classified by Alexander Purves as a linear space, with secondary spaces that draw energy away from the center, reducing it to the role of servant. “The spine is often the primary expression of the building, but it exists to facilitate circulation.”

In this sense, the spine becomes much like the actual spine or specifically the spinal cord of the human body, as the spine, with all its importance for circulation and connecting, remains backgrounded, behind the spaces which it serves.

This Backgrounding of the circulation spine is a language adopted in Can Lis by Jorn Utzon, not only by keeping the spine narrow, sectionally, but also by denying the circulation spine the ample views to the exterior afforded in other spaces.

Nurturing aspects of the building are very much as discussed earlier in this section, with the building providing continuous sunlight for its occupants, nourishing them by providing a “healthy” living environment for body and spirit.

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16 A. Vidler, p 4.
Historically the issue of form genesis has resulted in several different approaches to evoke formal variations. Looking at these formal approaches en masse (form devoid of ornament, spatial form), variations in formal strategy can be placed into three main categories; Cartesian, Deleuzian, and Derridian.

Cartesian variations are made through axial modifications, stretching and scaling in X, Y, and Z directions. These variations lend themselves to standard linear and centric spaces, with a certain level of clarity of form. One understands the linear expressly as thoroughfare, and the centric as gathering space.

Deleuzian Variations follow the concepts of repetitions, fractals, fragmentations and schizophrenia explored by Deleuze in A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. The building here is split into its parts, continuously segmented.

Derridian Variations begin to distort form and space, by altering nodes, twisting, warping, and puckering space till it is unrecognizable.

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Given that Architecture is a product of culture, it stands to reason that changes in society would effect a change in architecture and vice versa. This in mind, one might consider the move from autocracy to diplomacy (and unto self governance) as analogous to the move from the monolithic architecture to the rhizome as discussed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatari.

Can Lis exists amidst this shift being not of the simple striation that differentiated, or demarcates space, but segmented, physically separating spaces one from the other. Where Can Lis fails short of the rhizome, is in the inability (in Can Lis) for one to move from each node to any other node. Though one might see the beginnings of such seamless navigation in the linking spine of Can Lis, there remains the directionality of the circulation spine, and the inability to go between spaces without passing (or bypassing) sequential spaces.

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentality, srata and territoris; but also lines of flight, movement or deterritorialization and destratification.

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One of the techniques applied by Utzon in the creation of Can Lis is one that strives to measure the intangibles that govern the human existence. Particularly interesting in Can Lis, is Utzon’s translation of one intangible to another. The transfer of time into duration, duration into intensity, and intensity into space. All things measurable, but all things intangible constructs, that one might even consider fictional. Time in this instance is measured by the passage of the sun through the building. This time translates into duration as the period of time sunlight spends in the room, becomes the duration of the occupant. This duration measured translated to intensity becomes the guiding factor for spatiality. Basically in Can Lis, the longer one is in the room, the bigger the room becomes.

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Time and space are not things, but orders of things.
we do not dwell because we have built, but we build because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers.

The space of the in-between is that which is not a space, a space which is not a space, a space without boundaries of its own, which takes on, and receives itself, its form, from the outside which is not its outside (this would imply that it has form) but whose form is the outside of the identity, not just of an other (for that would reduce the in-between to the role of object, not of space) but of others, whose relations of positivity define by default, the space that is constituted as in-between.

Typically space is spoken about in terms that are expressly not space. In viewing space, one looks at boundaries; surrounding walls, demarcations, divisions. Occasionally one looks at the qualitative aspects of space; lighting, mood, temperature, etc. However, of space in itself little is truly said. In this sense, space is spoken about as the stuff between, the interstitial, The In-Between, spoken about by Elisabeth Grosz. One might see this as a fundamental issue of language, similar to the issues expressed by Marshall McLuhan that states that “the content of any medium is what it communicates, and the medium is the message.” In Can Lis, these boundaries of space begin to bleed into the natural environment through a variety of means discussed further in this section, as we begin to look at space as more than just, the physical manifestation.


Grosz’ essay on the reduction of “Natural Spaces” to the stuff between our pristine controlled spaces, touches on the nature of space itself as it understood traditionally to exist only interstitially, forever in need of definition, by boundary and demarcation.

Diagramming CAN Liss, two opposing modes of spatial navigation are readily apparent. The first being afforded by the circulation spine that traverses the building, being part of the internal logic of the building, but readily separated from the individual “habitation” spaces. The second being a much more open system of navigation afforded by varied openings in the spatial envelope.

The spine separates program from circulation, living space from passage, affording a continuous return to a “base” point from which one degree elsewhere. Essentially in this reading of the plan, one gains access from space to space through a “pivot,” but never with the need to traverse other space (depriving the interstitial corridor the value of space).

The alternate, promotes a more situationist approach to spatial navigation, allowing the occupant to navigate the space without regard of formal juxtapositions, following sight-lines, and lines of interest. Freed from the “useful” connection that ordinarily governs their conduct, the users could experience the sudden change of atmosphere in a street, the sharp division of a city into one of distinct psychological climates, the path of least resistance – wholly unrelated to the unevenness of the terrain – to be followed by the casual stroller; the character, attractive or repellant, of certain places.

5.
Looking at spatial negotiation in the situationist space, one begins to see the space as a negotiation between occupant and building. In Can Lis, perhaps more than in the typical building, one sees this negotiation take place between the passage of the sun and the movement of the occupant from one side of the building to the other, with “the character, attractiveness, and repulsiveness” being governed by the passage of the sun. One sees space in this sense ‘created’ at moments where the sun passage and the flow of the occupant is in alignment.

Additionally in Can Lis, one readily sees the building begin to read the information of the sun passage, displaying this information as markers on the interior space to solicit a response from the occupant. Certainly here we have discussed only in brief the penetration of external systems into the $\exists$ of information presented within the building, however one can clearly see how the integrative nature might be adopted to allow the penetration of other systems, subverting the boundaries of space by converting ‘boundary’ into information. Space then becomes Network.

Comparing the relationship between topological and metric spaces, intensive and extensive properties: the latter are divisible in a simple way, like lengths or volumes are, while the former, exemplified by properties like temperature or pressure, are continuous and relatively indivisible.