

Le centre du milieu'
Matta and the Exploding Dome

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Despite the artist's relatively brief period of direct involvement with the official Surrealists in Paris, Chilean-born Roberto Antonio Sebastián Matta Echaurren (1911–2002) continued to explore many of the tenets of the movement throughout his life's work, such as psychic automatism and the representation of biomorphic forms. Matta's approach toward pictorial space shared much with that of other creators of surrealist landscapes, and he invented the term "inscapes" to refer to his paintings and drawings that sought to capture the interior space of the mind. Facilitated by his own curiosity as well as by numerous personal connections with international figures, Matta's influences extended far beyond Surrealism to incorporate practical disciplines such as science and mathematics. Also widely acknowledged is Matta's debt to the field of architecture, which stemmed from his early education and training. While this aspect of Matta's life and work has been well examined in relation to his early years, the present study explores the artist's later appropriation of architectural models to facilitate his exploration of fragmented or exploding structures. A group of graphic works from 1943 and 1967-68 based on diagrams by architects Buckminster Fuller and Bernard Kirschenbaum will be considered as case studies of the artist's engagement with one of the seminal structures of twentieth-century architecture: the geodesic dome.

A large, untitled print from 1968, now in the collection of the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College (AMAM), appears at first glance to be quite dissimilar from Matta's signature style, appearing more geometric than surreal (Fig. 1). The print is listed in the catalogue raisonné of Matta's graphic works as a color etching and aquatint on Arches paper.¹ While the print was never published, a few signed artist's proofs exist, which were printed at the Georges Visat workshop in Paris, and at least one of these copies known to also feature selective hand touching. The composition of the work features a symmetrical pattern of diamonds and triangular shapes that radiate out from the center. Each of these shapes is defined in a thick black outline with the tips of their converging points removed, and

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none of the shapes adjoin directly with their neighbors. While the negative space outside of the pattern remains white, Matta has filled each of the outlined forms with his characteristic imagery: a light blue ground permeates the image, peopled by biomorphic entities in green, yellow, and punctuations of red. In contrast to these organic forms are several black, right-angled geometric planes, which are clustered around the peripheries of the diagram at the top and lower right. Thin lines in parallel formation or concentric circles are scattered throughout, suggesting trajectories and movement, which serve to unify the composition's disparate parts.

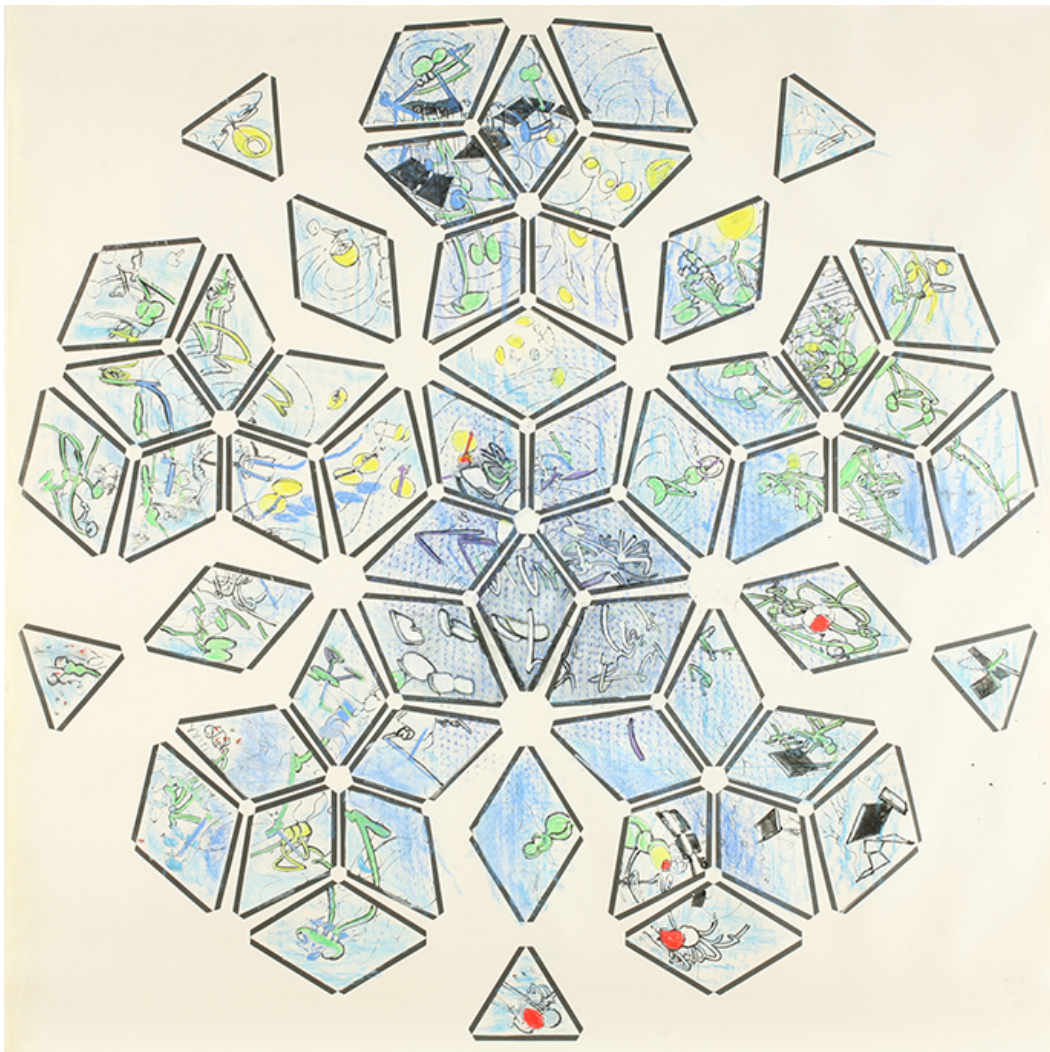


Fig. 1. Matta, *Untitled*, 1968, color etching and aquatint with hand touching, 42 1/2 x 42 1/2 inches. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Gift of Allan and Jean Frumkin, 2011.9. © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

The juxtaposition of geometric and organic forms floating in an indeterminate space is characteristic of Matta's "inscapes." While not offering indications of spatial depth or other traditional markers of a painted environment, the composition does evoke a sense of a natural biosphere: the predominant blue reads alternately as a sky, riddled with cosmic elements, or as water, populated by amoeba-like forms and plant life. The simultaneous evocation of both macroscopic and microscopic worlds is similarly a marked characteristic of Matta's works: William Rubin commented on Matta's ability to evoke "an infinitely deep space that suggests simultaneously the cosmos and the recesses of the mind,"² while Alvaro Medina noted that "although what Matta paints seems to occur in some intimate, reduced, and secret place, there is at the same time a sense of the vastness of the galaxies."³

On one level, this print is linked to Matta's lifelong interest in the sciences, as the pattern's concentric and fragmented shape suggests a crystalline structure. Similarly, the composition calls to mind a micro-environment teeming with bacterial life as seen with the aid of a microscope, an interpretation which is supported by Matta's own stated interest in "trying to use forms that were less known...to go into forms that had been revealed by the microscope."⁴ This evocation of the "primordial soup" connects to grander themes such as the origin of life and the invisible structures that unite all living things. Matta's interest in mathematics also informs this work, marked by careful attention to the rules of geometry and symmetry. The untitled print's composition shares much with what would come to be known as Penrose tilings in the 1970s, named after mathematician and physicist Roger Penrose. Such tilings are constructed from regular geometric shapes, such as pentagons and rhombi, which are then repeated non-periodically to form a self-similar pattern. While Matta's print does not satisfy all of the mathematical criteria to be considered a Penrose tiling proper, it does share formal similarities in its concentric repetition of geometric forms. A more satisfactory reading is achieved via a thorough investigation of the composition's diagram, which is revealed to be a model for a polyhedron—a geometry term for a three-dimensional form comprised of a determined number of flat faces and straight edges. If the diamonds and triangles of the print's pattern are regrouped into pentagons and hexagons (with three of the diamond shapes configured around a central point to form a hexagon, for example), our model can be identified as part of a truncated icosahedron. When completed, a truncated icosahedron is made up of twelve pentagons and twenty hexagons, like a soccer ball.⁵

While math and the sciences certainly leave their mark on the 1968 print, it is from another practical field that Matta adapted its structure: architecture. Matta's involvement with the architectural field has been well documented, stemming from his studies at the School of Architecture and Urbanism at the Catholic University of Santiago, a rigorous program inspired by the Bauhaus curriculum. He moved to Paris in 1933 to work in the studio of Le Corbusier, where he was tasked with the production of drawings, plans, and illustrations for the French architect's projects.⁶

After joining the Surrealists in 1937, Matta penned the manifesto “Sensitive Mathematics—Architecture of Time” for the 1938 issue of *Minotaure*, which asserted his belief in the power of biomorphic structures to exert a psychological effect on their human inhabitants, and stated that the purpose of architecture is to permit peace of mind and stimulate creativity.⁷ In the accompanying illustration, a design for a private home embodies these characteristics: multiple levels open onto one another, framed by both orthogonal and buckling walls. A staircase composed of rectangular planes attached to an organically-shaped support leads to an open sky, one of the residence’s many perforations which allow the dweller to contemplate his or her position within the exterior world and the cosmos.⁸

Although Matta did not pursue architecture directly during his later career, he continued to incorporate architectural dialogues in his two-dimensional works. These works relate to Matta’s experience as an architect through their exploration of the conventions of pictorial depth and dimension, which, in alignment with Matta’s architectural theories, are modified to achieve a psychological effect. In keeping with his statement that painting “has one foot in architecture, one foot in the dream,” Matta developed the term “inscape” to refer to the interior spaces of the mind that he sought to portray in lieu of the exterior landscape. An unsettling ambiguity is introduced in Matta’s compositions through the elimination of perspective, a horizon line, or other specificities of place that would serve to anchor his floating biomorphic and geometric forms. According to Claude Cernuschi, Matta visualized the human psyche in architectural terms, an approach which was informed by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Søren Kierkegaard, who similarly discussed the mind using spatial analogies.⁹ Matta’s equation of mental space with architectural space, as illustrated by his “inscapes” (which he also referred to as “emotional architecture”), provides a compelling link between the rational discipline of modern architecture and Surrealism’s dedication to the unconscious and the irrational.

The 1968 print introduces an even more direct architectural connection via a diagram for a geodesic dome, one of the most iconic architectural forms of the mid-twentieth century. While geodesic domes were attempted by several individuals throughout the early twentieth century, the term “geodesic” was not codified until the experiments of Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983) at Black Mountain College in 1948 and 1949. The geodesic dome quickly became recognized for the strength and ingenuity of its engineering, derived from the conjoining of ideal geometric shapes, and it was adopted worldwide for specialized uses and functioned as a symbol of modernity at sites such as World’s Fairs.

Matta met Fuller in New York in 1939, and became interested in his spatial theories. Yet Matta felt that his own approach to space was quite at odds with that of the architect, as reflected in his statement about Fuller’s futuristic vision of architecture:

Fuller was interested in spaces like these. But me, on the contrary, I was interested in other spaces to do with forms drawn from non-Euclidean geometry and the idea of entering these spaces. These structures do not rely on the sense of space, as we know it. It is a space without limits and which transforms itself in time—a mutant space. It is the same thing with a representation of a fly's eye, or rather the way in which a fly sees us. What it sees certainly does not resemble what we see. We are transformed in the fly's vision.¹⁰

In this statement, Matta expresses his interest in spaces that are not predetermined or confined, which could also apply to his “inscapes” or to the imagery of the 1968 print. Matta's declared intention to deviate from “non-Euclidean geometry,” however, is clearly contradicted by the print's use of the polyhedron model as an organizing structure for the ambiguous environment visible within its confines. Additionally, Matta's reference to “the fly's vision” also recalls the fragmented form of this composition, as the arrangement of similar geometric parts to form a whole is illustrative of the compound eyes of flying insects, whose convex surfaces simultaneously capture images via thousands of individual photoreceptor units.

While Matta was quite familiar with Fuller's theories and projects, the print in question is in fact directly derived from the work of another American sculptor and architect, Bernard Kirschenbaum (b. 1924). Graduating in 1952 from the Institute of Design in Chicago, where he was greatly impacted by a lecture given by Fuller, Kirschenbaum went on to open his own architecture firm called Geodesics, Inc., in Massachusetts. He received recognition for spearheading the DEW line project, a commission by the Canadian government, in which he built structures called “radomes”—an invention of Fuller's—to cover radar equipment.¹¹ Kirschenbaum later began to focus on creating sculptures and other artworks in addition to his larger architectural projects. Between 1966 and 1968 in New York City, he collaborated with the experimental Park Place Gallery group, whose Greenwich Village space was officially opened in 1965 under the direction of Paula Cooper. The Park Place artists—which included Mark di Suvero, Peter Forakis, Dean Fleming, Tamara Melcher, and others—shared an interest in spatial relationships as explored through architecture and abstract painting and sculpture, and often met to discuss such topics as science fiction, theories of perception, and the work of Fuller.¹²

Kirschenbaum's first official collaboration with the Park Place Group was an exhibition of his works alongside paintings by Tamara Melcher, which ran from December 11, 1966 to January 4, 1967. A fitting complement to Melcher's triangle paintings, Kirschenbaum's contribution to the show included several models of geodesic domes made of aluminum, Masonite, and Plexiglas.¹³ A view of the installation reveals three of these tabletop domes of varying sizes, each comprised of configurations of triangles, diamonds, and hexagons in opaque or transparent

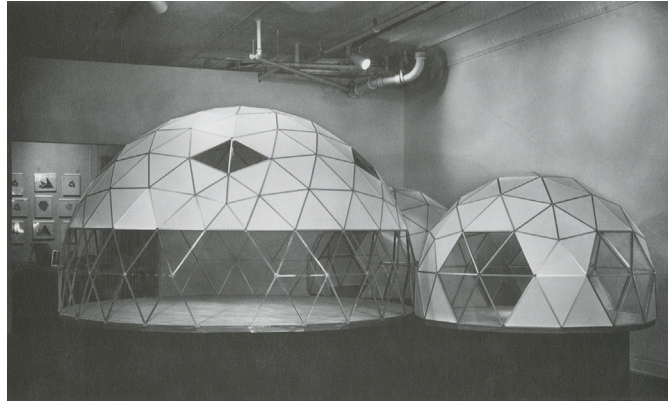


Fig. 2. Installation view of exhibition “Tamara Melcher Paintings/Bernard Kirschenbaum Domes,” Park Place Gallery, December 11–January 4, 1967, reproduced in Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Reimagining Space: the Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York*, exh. cat. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, 2008

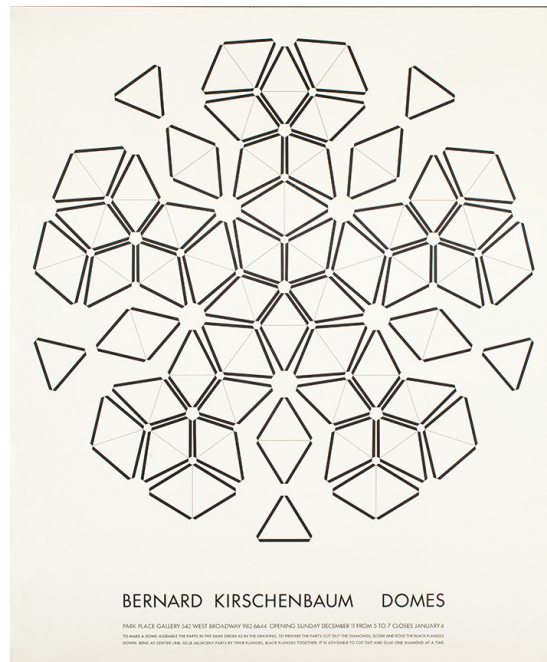


Fig. 3. Bernard Kirschenbaum, Poster for “Tamara Melcher Paintings/Bernard Kirschenbaum Domes,” Park Place Gallery, December 11–January 4, 1967. Reproduced in Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Reimagining Space: the Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York*, exh. cat. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, 2008 © Bernard Kirschenbaum

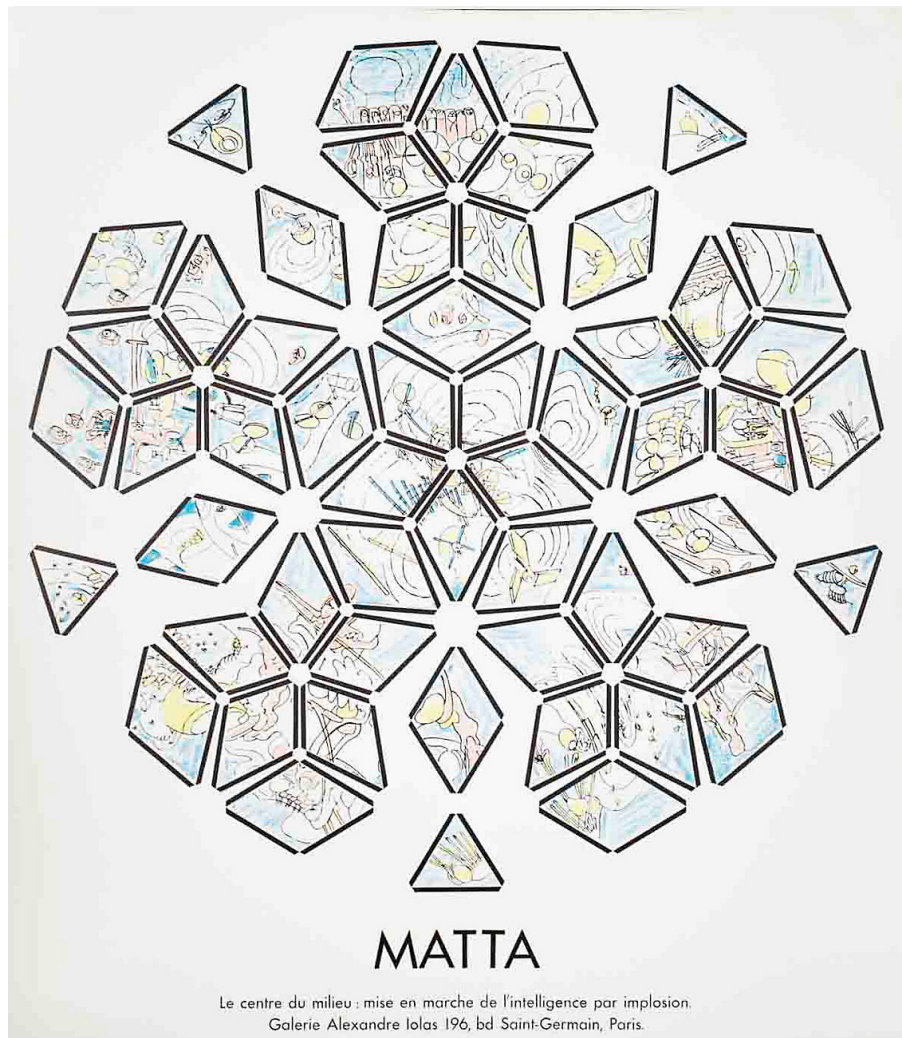


Fig. 4. Matta, poster for “Matta: Le centre du milieu,” Galerie Alexandre Iolas, Paris, 1967–68

surfaces (Fig. 2). In conjunction with the exhibition, the gallery produced a double-sided poster to advertise Melcher’s paintings on one side, and Kirschenbaum’s domes on the other (Fig. 3). Kirschenbaum’s side featured a two-dimensional model for a geodesic dome, along with instructions for assembly:

To make a dome: Assemble the parts in the same order as in the drawing.
To prepare the parts: Cut out the diamonds, score and fold the black flanges down. Bend at center line. Glue adjacent parts by their flanges, black flanges together. It is advisable to cut out and glue one diamond at a time.

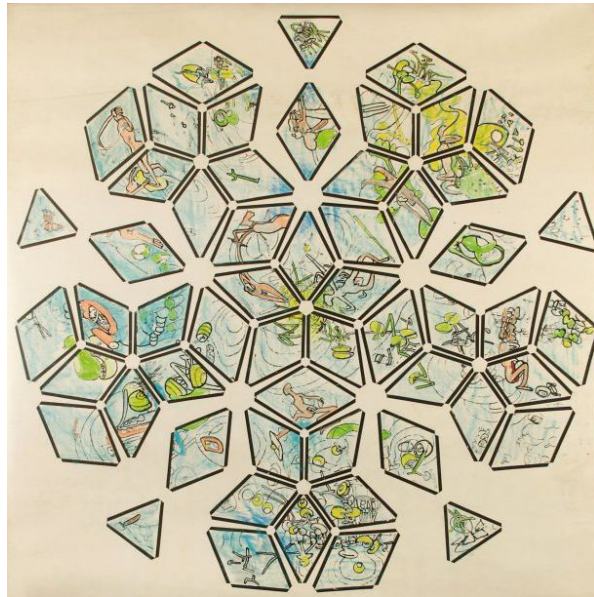


Fig. 5. Matta, *Le centre du milieu: Fulgorotique*, color pastel and black ink on black and white photographic background laid down on canvas, 1967 © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

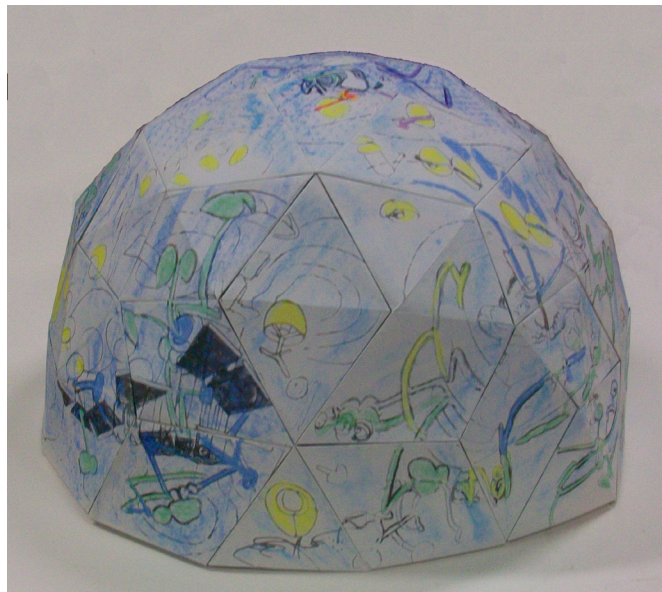


Fig. 6. Constructed model after Matta's *Untitled*, 1968, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Gift of Allan and Jean Frumkin, 2011.9. © 2013 Allen Memorial Art Museum

Kirschenbaum intended for the poster to be interactive and to encourage others to build their own domes. Several members of the Park Place Group are known to have taken advantage of this opportunity by building actual architectural structures based on Kirschenbaum's poster model during the late 1960s: Peter Forakis constructed a version of the dome with his students at Windham College, while Dean and Linda Fleming likewise based the smaller of the two domes that they built at the Libre artists community in the Colorado Rockies on Kirschenbaum's model.¹⁴

Matta also responded to the invitation, adapting Kirschenbaum's diagram as the basis for his own poster advertising his 1967–68 exhibition "Le centre du milieu" at the Galerie Alexandre Iolas in Paris (Fig. 4). Although he was working in Paris at the time, the poster would have been widely circulated and could have easily reached Matta via one of his many art world connections in New York, such as Iolas, whose gallery likewise maintained a New York location. Produced just one year after the Park Place poster, Matta's version not only reproduces Kirschenbaum's dome diagram, but also adopts the font of the writing below. The direct appropriation is countered only by the addition of Matta's colorful forms. The unpublished prints of that year, including that in the collection of the AMAM, demonstrate several variations of the resulting composition as Matta refined his poster design. Each was executed using a unique combination of a printed background and hand-applied color. In the different versions, Matta experimented with the orientation of the dome diagram as well as with the composition depicted within. A comparison of a work titled *Le centre de milieu: Fulgorotique*, exhibited in the Iolas show, with the AMAM version reveals that the composition has been rotated 180 degrees, and that the color scheme and design have been altered (Fig. 5). While both compositions feature a swirling environment of organic motifs, *Fulgorotique* introduces nude human bodies that evoke the "erotic" quality suggested by Matta's made-up title.

The identification of Kirschenbaum's geodesic dome diagram as the source for Matta's experimental prints provides a direct connection between the artist's early interest in architecture and the graphic production of his later years. To examine the possible architectural connections of this appropriation further, a team of researchers worked together to construct a three-dimensional version of the AMAM's print.¹⁵ Following the instructions found on Kirschenbaum's original poster, the individual segments of a to-scale color reproduction of the work were cut out and glued back together, working progressively outward from the center. The completed product provides a unique opportunity to consider Matta's exploration of spatial relationships (Fig. 6). The ambiguity of Matta's pictorial space is contradicted by the added third dimension of the geodesic form; the space of the mind which the artist sought to capture in his "inscapes" is given a literal physical structure in this instance. The composition's associations with a microscopic or cosmic environment are amplified and made all the more evocative by the spherical structure, which suggests an aquarium, planetarium, or other biosphere. The artist's ability to evoke

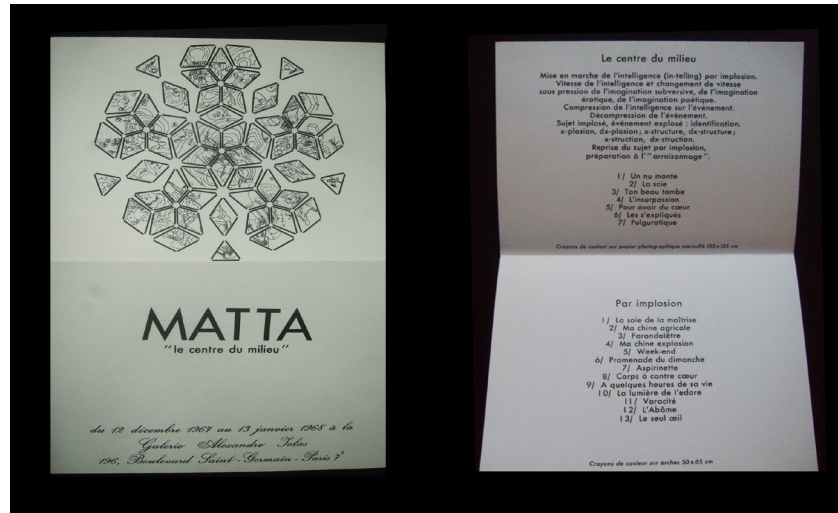


Fig. 7. Matta, invitation, "Matta: Le centre du milieu," Galerie Alexandre Iolas, Paris, 1967–68

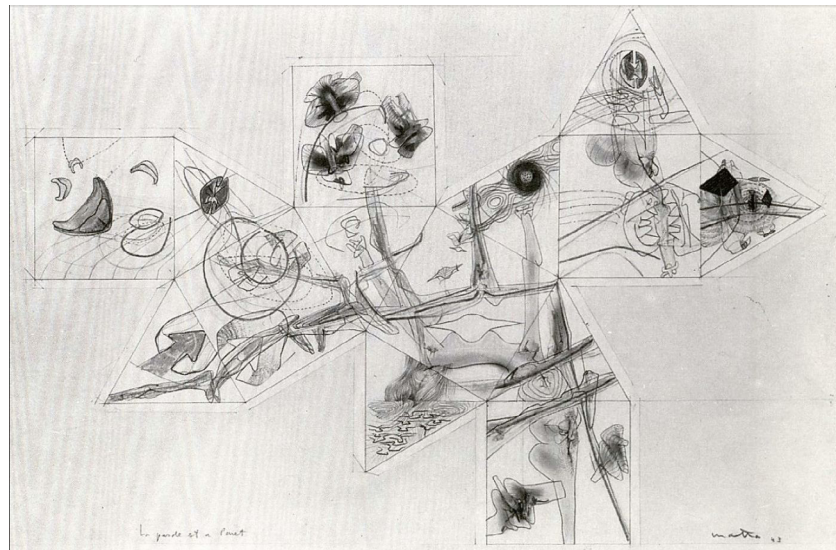


Fig. 8. Matta, *La parole est à Péret* (Peret has the Floor), 1943, reproduced in *Matta: Zeichnungen 1937–1988*, exh. cat. Museum Bochum, 1988 © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

these multiple and simultaneous associations are aptly summarized by Alvaro Medina, who noted that “Matta was inspired to see the relationship which could be established between the confined inter-uterine space, the space of an apartment or a room through which movement was possible, and limitless cosmic space.”¹⁶

Matta’s choice of the geodesic dome is interesting given the artist’s earlier stated preference for organic over rational architectural forms, a preference which is completely negated by the dome’s geometrical derivation. The defined structure is also at odds with the organic and psychological associations that Matta proposed in his “Sensitive Mathematics—Architecture of Time,” which are more typical surrealist approaches to architecture. Yet Matta was likely less interested in the built applications of the geodesic dome than in its fragmented state as an uncompleted arrangement of floating geometric forms as it appears in Kirschenbaum’s diagram. In this state, the rational form of the geodesic dome is rendered useless and irrational, its components dispersed and separated from one another. In a brief text on the announcement for the Galerie Alexandre Iolas show, likewise illustrated with the version of “Le centre du milieu” reproduced on the exhibition’s poster, Matta uses expressive language that evokes the active qualities he ascribed to this composition (Fig. 7). Recurring mentions of speed, compression, decompression, explosion, and implosion suggest that Matta viewed Kirschenbaum’s diagram not for its potential to create a stable, architectural form, but instead as a snapshot of a form in flux, violently coming together or breaking apart. This active element introduces a time dimension to the composition which is underscored by Matta’s text. The exploding dome also shares much with the fragmented geometric or architectural forms that recur throughout Matta’s own painted and drawn “inscapes,” such as separated planes of cubes that hover in space, often enclosing humanoid figures within their wall-like configuration.

Matta’s interest in designs for three-dimensional models has precedence in works that far pre-date his engagement with Kirschenbaum’s dome in 1968. In several drawings from the 1940s, such as the graphite and crayon drawing *Femme pliée* (Bent/Folded Woman) of 1947, Matta adopted various polyhedron models as the basis of his compositions. When constructed, the diagram in this drawing would form a trapezoidal prism, comprised of two irregular trapezoids and four rectangles of varying dimensions. *Femme pliée’s* composition extends beyond the confines of the model, almost as if the diagram was added as an afterthought to provide structure to the environment of humanoid figures. The reference to the “folded woman” recalls Matta’s 1932 thesis project for the “League of Religions,” in which architectural structures were derived from the female anatomy.¹⁷

The drawing *La parole est à Péret* (Peret has the Floor) of 1943 likewise incorporates the outline of a polyhedron model (Fig. 8). The title of this work refers to Matta’s French colleague Benjamin Péret (1899–1959), a poet and core member of the Surrealists, as well as a proponent of automatism. Like *Le centre du milieu* and

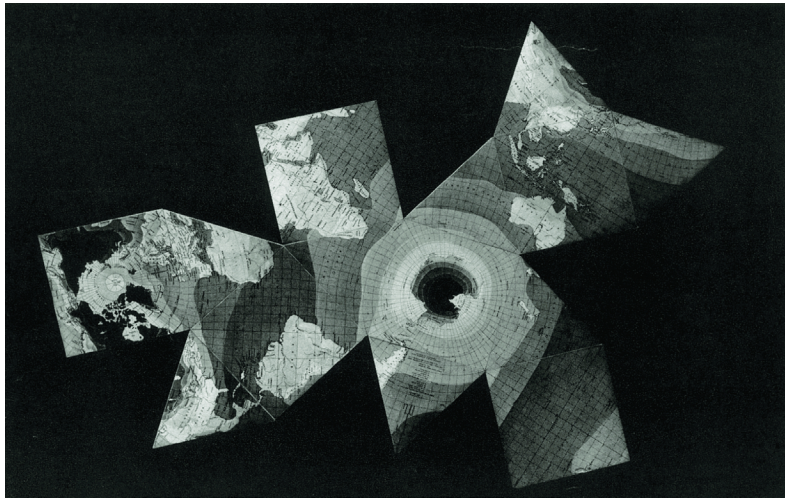


Fig. 9. Buckminster Fuller, Dymaxion Map in British Empire configuration, *LIFE*, March 1, 1943, 54, courtesy The Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller

its related compositions, *La parole est à Péret* can be traced to a specific source. The diagram was appropriated from an illustration appearing in a 1943 *LIFE* magazine article titled “R. Buckminster Fuller’s Dymaxion World.”¹⁸ The article features Fuller’s re-envisioning of the traditional map, in which he endeavors to “resolve the dilemma of cartography: how to depict as a flat surface this spherical world, with true scale, true direction and correct configuration at one and the same time.”¹⁹ He dubbed his design a “Dymaxion Map,” applying the self-coined term “dymaxion”—a combination of the words dynamic, maximum, and tension—that he used for many of his inventions. Included in the *LIFE* issue was a do-it-yourself model of the Dymaxion World that the reader could cut out and assemble according to step-by-step illustrated instructions. Just like Kirschenbaum’s later geodesic dome diagram, Fuller’s map is constructed by cutting out the elements—comprised of six squares and eight triangles depicting various geographical regions—and gluing them back together along their folded edges. When assembled, the three-dimensional model becomes a “Dymaxion Globe”: a cube with its corners cut off, or a cuboctahedron.

Conversely, Fuller intended that the square and triangle segments could be arranged in various flat configurations to illustrate different mapping perspectives: “the tiles can be arranged and rearranged...to animate the facts of geography and clarify many of its obscurities.”²⁰ The layout could be centered on a world power, for example, such as the British Empire, which was the configuration that Matta adopted for his drawing *La parole est à Péret* (Fig. 9). Both diagrams consist of eight triangles and six squares that form the shape of a cuboctahedron when constructed. As in Matta’s compositions relating to the “Le centre du milieu” exhibition, he has repurposed Fuller’s diagram as an armature for his own composition. In *La parole*,

continents are substituted for amoeba-like entities that appear to swim around the undefined space, as concentric circles of dotted lines evoke orbital paths. Arrows and other signs likewise suggest trajectories, while petrified forms resemble a landscape. When recast in three-dimensions, the drawing's composition reads as a contained universe that appears alternately cosmic and microscopic, similar to the *Le centre du milieu* works. The 1967-68 works also relate back to Fuller's Dymaxion World in the suggestion of an environment—a “center of the world”—that reads as a world in the process of breaking apart. Matta's motivations thus parallel Fuller's own in the desire to dismantle and re-envision accepted notions of portraying the universe, yet Matta's intentions lack the socially-applicable element that is at the core of Fuller's mission.

The works based on Kirschenbaum's geodesic dome and Fuller's Dymaxion map are important links in connecting Matta's architectural and pictorial practices. His engagement with these structures is reflective of his lifelong curiosity and experimentation, which inspired connections in his art to diverse aspects of the sciences and other fields. It is also suggestive of Matta's continuous dialoguing with artists and architects from various parts of the globe, which exposed him to numerous new artistic approaches and theories that likewise left their mark on his own practice.²¹ In appropriating contemporary models for rational structures by Kirschenbaum and Fuller, Matta rendered them irrational, creating compositions that evoke fragmented universes and exploding architecture.



1 Roland Sabatier, ed., *Matta: catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre grave (1943–1974)*, (Editions Sonet, Visat: Stockholm and Paris, 1975), 90. The full entry reads: “SANS TITRE (1968). Eau-forte et aquarelle sur Arches. Taille doucier Atelier Georges Visat, Paris.” Matta began to devote himself to print media during the late 1950s, and became a master of a number of complex color print-making techniques. The print in the collection of the Allen Memorial Art Museum was a gift of Allan Frumkin, who had been an early supporter of Matta in the United States. The artist's representation at the Allan Frumkin Gallery in Chicago led to the popularity of Matta's works among Midwestern collectors.

2 Cited in Claude Cernuschi, “Mindscapes and Mind Games: Visualizing Thought in the Work of Matta and his Abstract Expressionist Contemporaries,” in *Matta: Making the Invisible Visible*, exh. cat., 48–80 (Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2004), 50.

3 Alvaro Medina, “The Mobile Matter of Roberto Sebastián Matta,” *ArtNexus* 17 (1995): 68–75.

4 Elizabeth A. T. Smith and Colette Dartnall, “‘Crushed Jewels, Air, Even Laughter’: Matta in the 1940s,” in *Matta in America: Paintings and Drawings of the 1940s*, edited by Kari Dahlgren, exh. cat. (Chicago: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2002), 12.

5 When assembled, Matta's model creates a little more than half of the spherical solid of the icosahedron.

6 Over the course of his employment at Le Corbusier's studio, Matta made contact with many influential figures of international modern architecture, including founder of the Bauhaus School Walter Gropius and Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto. He also had the opportunity to work on Josep Lluís Sert's Spanish Republican Pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition of 1937. Despite these opportunities, Matta found working under Le Corbusier to be too limiting, and he soon left the workshop to pursue his own projects. Yet the mixed-bag experience left a lasting impact on Matta's later artistic production: "I went mad in Corbu's studio. There were three of us, an Austrian, a Japanese and me. The office was run by his cousin, Jeanneret, who was loaned by the Jesuit monastery. We had no work and were not paid, obviously. Since there was nothing to do, I produced the mad [architectural] propositions that are represented in my drawings of that time. What was good in the long run is that all of this early material has remained more or less hidden. If I had become fashionable or fallen into the media, I would have continued working on these drawings. Since there was a silence about my work, I have never stopped working. I have worked a great deal. You cannot imagine it. There are rolls of unfinished things all over here. Sometimes I find things, propositions about space, and I ask myself: 'Ah, what was that?'" Roberto Matta, Interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist, 2002. <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/resistor-surrealist-roberto-matta-interviewed-before-his-death>.

7 Matta Echaurren, "Mathématique sensible—Architecture du temps," *Minotaure* 11 (1938): 43. The *Minotaure* text describes Matta's architectural ideal as a womblike space: "It is a matter of discovering how to pass between the rages which displace each other in tender parallels, in soft and thick angles, or how to pass under the shaggy undulations through which terrors are well retained. Man yearns for the obscure thrusts of his beginning, which enclosed him in humid walls where the blood beats near the eye with the sound of the mother... Let us reverse all the stages of history with their styles and their elegant wafers so that the rays of dust, whose pyrotechnics must create space, will flee... We need walls like damp sheets which lose their shapes and wed our psychological fears... Very appetizing and with well-shaped profiles is furniture which rolls out from unexpected spaces, receding, folding up, filling out like a walk in the water, down to a book which, from mirror to mirror, reflects its images in an unformulizable course designing a new architecture, livable space... We need a cry against the digestions of right angles in the midst of which one allows oneself to be brutalized while contemplating numbers like prize tickets and considering things only under the aspect of one single time among so many others."

8 Gloria Beatriz McDowell, "The Space of the Species: Matta's 'Sensitive Mathematics—Architecture of Time' and Surrealism in its Third Phase," Masters Thesis, University of Oregon, 2002, 46.

9 Cernuschi, 53-54.

10 Interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist.

11 Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York*, exh. cat. (Austin, TX: Blanton Museum of Art, 2008), 28.

12 "Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York," Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas, Austin, 2009. http://blantonmuseum.org/exhibitions/details/reimagining_space_the_park_place_gallery_group_in_1960s_new_york/.

13 Dalrymple Henderson, 28.

14 Ibid.

15 I would like to extend my thanks to Allen Memorial Art Museum staff members Nicole Alonso, student curatorial assistant, and preparator Michael Reynolds for their assistance in the construction of the dome model.

16 Medina, 71.

17 Matta's "League of Religions" thesis project featured a design for a complex to be situated on

Elephant Island that would house an ecumenical congress, and include structures such as a parliament building, a conference hall, houses for delegations, and places of worship. The designs conflated architectural forms with the female body, based on nude drawings that Matta produced during a life drawing class: "I developed the floor plans projecting these nude drawings on a plan. The breasts, belly and buttocks became the living-room, library and dining-room, the feet and hands were the toilets or kitchens, the legs the staircases, and the head or the breasts the bedroom. This produced such a wide variety of plans that the teachers thought the project highly imaginative. ... With floor plans derived from the nudes, I was able to develop an immense quantity of plans for houses. This captivated the architecture professors; they thought I was a student of unlimited imagination because of these plans. Most students composed orthogonal plans, with the bedroom on the right and the kitchen on the left. In its place my plans developed very strange curves and weird exits, because they came from the elbow." McDowell, 16–19.

18 "R. Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion World," *LIFE*, March 1, 1943, 41–55.

19 *Ibid.*, 41.

20 *Ibid.*, 53.

21 During Matta's travels through Europe from 1936 to 1939, he made contact with many of the most influential cultural figures of the day, including Spaniards Salvador Dalí and Federico García Lorca, Bauhaus notables Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy, and French Surrealists Marcel Duchamp and André Breton. Matta continued to make important connections after relocating to New York in 1939, where he met several up-and-coming artists of the New York School including Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Robert Motherwell. He spent time in Taxco, Mexico with Motherwell, and was deeply interested in the art he encountered there.