Writing/Drawing: Negotiating the Perils and Pleasures of Interiority

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ISSN 1445/5412
WRITING/DRAWING: NEGOTIATING THE PERILS AND PLEASURES OF INTERIORITY
IDEA JOURNAL 2012 - Writing/Drawing: Negotiating the Perils and Pleasures of Interiority

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PROVOCATION

Interiority is subject to specific sorts of disciplinary representation and the premise for this provocation is that images of interiority are frequently at odds with, or resistant to conventional representational systems. Interiority is attached to socially and culturally selected manifestations of power, gender, labour and materiality and these everyday conditions emerge in images of interiority drawn or written, amplifying and disquieting usual disciplinary concerns.

Three sketched examples

1. In an architectural journal is a description of a house in Bordeaux by Rem Koolhaas, as recounted by Susana Ventura on a visit to the house where she follows Guadalupe who is the housekeeper:

   "... Out goes Guadalupe with the vacuum cleaner in hand, vacuuming everything she encounters. First the kitchen; displaces the movable furniture below the kitchen bench; vacuums the drawers, the countless bottles, the ceiling, the door ... She shakes the carpet on the patio; puts it back in place. Then on to the top floor where she vacuums Marie's bathroom and bedroom; the elevator platform, every single corner she can find ...

   The architectural interior is revealed through a report of movement and a slow material engagement with surface, writing into the interior an everyday attentiveness and neglect; constructing interiority as both affect, with the stuffy persistence of unwanted patina (shredding skin and the adherence of soot), and as a form of worship, gilded with polish. The interior is constructed through writing in terms of its occupation and maintenance with language that is both personal and detached."

2. A black and white line drawing of an interior set up by a vertical section perspective of House and Atelier Bow-Wow by Atelier Bow-Wow, described by Irene Cheng as a parody of a technical drawing incorporating 'many elements normally excluded from construction documents, such as perspectival depth silhouettes of human figures engaged in prosaic activities like eating, brushing teeth; gardening; and sleeping; props like slippers, stuffed animals, house plants, and shoe racks outlines of the views seen through windows; and the obsessive rendering of textures like those of wood surfaces.'

   A drawing that shifts the nature of the technical interior, the dimensioned, constructed and abstract set of building information, into an inhabited, furnished narrative of daily life. The daily life is however artificial; the people are ghosts and the stories told by the furnishes are impossibly clean. There is no colour.

   "A black and white photograph taken in the early years of the twentieth century by Alfred James Tattersall shows the interior of a Samoan fale with two women lying supposedly asleep on mats in the middle of the empty space. Titled, 'Interior of a Samoan Fale', the image might be seen as the ubiquitous collector's assemblage with wooden headrests in view and the women contained by the borders of their mats. The photographic focus, however is sharpest as it traces the framing and the women's individuality of the fale, recording the precision of the bindings that connect structure, while the gentle breath of the women in the long exposure, very slightly blurs the image and rests their capture."

   This provocation seeks papers that address the complications and feckless of representing all forms of interiority (domestic, work spaces, institutional or public spaces) from technical, theoretical, programmatic or cultural perspectives. It seeks to attract discussions on representations of the interior constructed with writing, drawing (analogue or digital), installation, performance, photography, film or building.

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Words and pictures are ubiquitous, inhaled with morning coffee and exhaled in conversations, Skype encounters and daily life. It might be argued that navigating between the visual and the written always involves an oscillation, a turning between variedly activated modes that both depend upon and deny each other. On the relationship between words, the visual and their manoeuvres, an impressive array of scholarly analysis has been undertaken, with careful shifts, Manichean separations and precise nuances. But words and images do not occupy a general condition and instead can be understood to operate in cartels, organizations and cultures; relations between words and pictures are played out in bureaucratic structures and stricures, constrained in informational science and institutional habits particular to social and cultural groups.1

Within building and design cultures writing is often treated in an instrumental fashion (albeit subject to specific disciplinary codes), and is frequently attached to a picturing of a spatial condition, the image illustrating the import of the text. At times design writing is abbreviated caption, notation or signature, and picturing can also be as abstract as code, measurement or diagram; each mode produces conditions of design predisposed by their discipline. Unlike other disciplines, interiority is uneasily placed in relationship to its traditional representation; perspectives attached to a drawing set, the flythrough running past the client, might be described as superfluous, excessive or unnecessary. Historical anxiety around three-dimensional interior imagery, the so-called meretriciousness of 19th century perspectives, continues with contemporary accusations alleging the triteness of rendered digital images. Using outlines, silhouettes and heavily textiled rugs Cheng describes a drawing that offers a technical interior, a dimensioned, white line drawing of an interior set up by a vertical section perspective by Atelier Bow-Wow, described by Irene Cheng as a parody of a technical drawing incorporating;...many elements normally excluded from construction documents, such as perspective depth; silhouettes of human figures engaged in prosaic activities like eating, brushing teeth, gardening, and sleeping props like slippers, stuffed animals, house plants, and shag rugs; outlines of the views seen through windows; and the obsessive rendering of textures like those of wood surfaces.2

Perhaps, however, it is the references that such interior representations make to life beyond the drawing set, beyond the instructional documents, that is disturbing. Interiority is attached to socially and culturally selected manifestations of power, gender, labour and materiality and when these conditions emerge in images of interiority, drawn or written, there is the potential to amplify or undermine usual disciplinary concerns. The moment of impolity, the sore point, that seems to collect around images of interiority (written and drawn), might be, in part, because conventional and representational systems tend to fail the full circumstances of interiority, collecting instead picturesque or conventional forms and resisting the complexity of the condition.

The provocation for this edition of the IDEA Journal called for considerations of the full potential of interiority. Images of interiority, both benign and indifferently undertaken, allowing evidence of the repressed, the marginalised and the suspect to leak back into disciplines were requested to contribute to the journal. The contributors were offered an occasion to bring together writing and image as they addressed the pleasures and perils of interiority. An example was offered a description of a well-known house in Bordeaux by Rem Koolhaas, recounted by Susana Ventura on a visit to the house where she observes Guadalupe, the housekeeper;

I follow Guadalupe back and forth. She zigzags up the ramp of the patio. She says this is the best way not to be tired at the end…. Off goes Guadalupe with the vacuum cleaner in hand, vacuuming everything she encounters. First, the kitchen. She displaces the movable furniture below the kitchen bench, vacuums the drawers, the countless bottles, the ceiling, the door … She shakes the carpet on the patio, puts it back in place. Then on to the top floor, where she vacuums Marie’s bathroom and bedroom, the elevator platform, every single corner she can find.3

Here the architectural interior is disclosed through a reporting of movement and a material and technical engagement with surface, writing into the interior both attentiveness and neglect, constructing interiority as abject, with the stuffy persistence of unattended objects (shedding skin and adherence of soot), and as a form of worship, (gilded with polish). The interior is formed in writing, in terms of movement and maintenance, with language that is both personal and detached; the mobility of the elevator signals a persistent condition of all houses. The house, shaped by writings and speech, is a different creature from its more well-defined photographic form; words draw out the labour of housework that tires the body.

Whereas disciplines such as architecture, engineering and industrial design are conventionally understood to operate with well defined codes controlling access to participation in the image field, it seems that for studies of interiority the deployment of words and images are frequently activated through multifarious metaphors of strand, thread or fabric, through knots and rendings, as an interweaving between the various disciplinary codes that construct the fields of interior design and architecture. Images of mobile surfaces and active lines, binding disparate matter together; often structure theoretical writing on interiority and this is so in many of the papers in this volume.

Another example offered in the provocation was a black and white line drawing of an interior set up by a vertical section perspective by Atelier Bow-Wow, described by Irene Cheng as a parody of a technical drawing incorporating;...the top floor, where she vacuums Marie’s bathroom and bedroom, the elevator platform, every single corner she can find.4

Using outlines, silhouettes and heavily textiled rugs Cheng describes a drawing that offers a technical interior, a dimensioned, constructed and abstract set of building information, that is also an inhabited, furnished narrative of daily life. She writes occupation into the image as an indeterminate condition; people, while depicted, are partial, lacking spatial density, textures are unnaturally heightened and views from the building are ‘outlines’ suggesting that there is more of some other more substantial condition. The stories told by the furnishings are improbably clear; there is no colour. The interior is enmeshed in the linear and technical fabrication of an architecture that is spatially uncategorized and Cheng, with her writing points to prosaic details that sustain a more open interiority.

Using metaphors of materiality and fabrication writers bind and unbind interiority, productively fissuring or rendering images and words. The deployment of fabric, and its actions, in pursuit of an understanding of the relationship between text and image...
might be because of the elasticity of fabric, its associations with production or/and its potential for transformative moves. For example Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell in the introduction to Releasing the Image: From literature to New Media, discuss Derek Jarman’s film, Blue, made as he blindly approached death. Khalip and Mitchell use the following language:

By linking the indexicality of its aural register – the sense, that is, that we are listening to traces and recordings of voices and events that existed before and outside the film – to its refusal of representation in its visual register, Blue engenders a new sense of the image, one that is not intended to represent something else, but instead binds seeing and hearing together in a different way, and as such it requires the development of new forms of listening and seeing.4

The absence of representational images, the glow of luminous blueness and the snippets of words, sounds and music convey not only the loss of sight but also the fading interiorization of life. Seeing is not representational and is bound to words in speech.

Jacques Rancière addresses connections between writing and sight, the sayable and the visible and how they mutually inform each other. He proposes that images ‘are . . . operations: relations between a whole and parts; between a visibility and a power of signification and affect associated with it; between expectations and what happens to meet them.’5 Rather than being static representations he suggests that images operate between strands of signification and visuality and external expectations. Released from the logic of representation the image for Rancière has an unbound potentiality with possibilities that are both spatial and concerned with configurations of inhabitation:

What interests me is the way in which, by drawing lines, arranging words or distributing surfaces, one also designs divisions of communal space. It is the way in which, by assembling words or forms, people define not merely various forms of art, but certain configurations of what can be seen and what can be thought, certain forms of inhabiting the material world.6

This edition of the IDEA Journal is focussed on the representation of interiority as it reveals imbricated relationships between textual and visual work, with each term prone to engaging in the other’s production. Words can deploy a visibility in excess of some media even as visual elements can be organised to reveal textual and analogical patterns. The connections between words and the visual might be like Stan Allen’s account of ‘architectural representation [which] is in some basic way impure, or undassifiable,’7 or as for Rancière, for whom the ‘equivalence of the graphic and the visual creates the link between the poet’s types and the engineer’s. It visualizes the idea which haunts both of them – that of a common physical surface where signs, forms, and acts become equal.’8

The contradictions and conflicts between regimes of representation are necessary as Rancière has argued and his interest in the manner in which language and the visible recondition each other is part of the provocation. Rancière uses an active and particular metaphor of fabrication, plaiting to describe the relationship between words and forms: ‘Presence and representation are two regimes of the plaiting of words and forms. The regime of the visibility of the “immediacies” of presence is still configured through the mediation of words.’9 The papers in the volume operate with a variety of strategies in relationship to the connections between words and images.

1 The House of Ezra Pound: A one-family dwelling for a sociopathic philosopher, or the First Monadic Architecture Manifesto by Jorge León and Ismael Martín seeks to undermine all apparent distinctions between the exterior and interior. Theoretically drawing on their client’s interest in Ezra Pound’s ‘Vorticist’ works and Leibniz’s ‘monad’, a simple substance that is without parts, the house design is shaped as an intentional ambiguity that does not differentiate between the internal space and the external space of the house. The discussion that attends to the design language also draws together the process that attended the design and the strands of thinking that inform the design. The writing...
has attained a density that swathes the design in a deep temporal condition. And the design, sharp and compelling, asserts its own world, even as it traces the lines of thinking expounded in the text. In ‘Binding Interiority’, Marian Macken considers hybrid constructions, books and active drawings that refuse to be situated as only textual or visual constructions. Using Charles Riva’s important insight into the double emergence of the representation of the interior of a building and the sense of interiority, Macken pursues the ‘interior’s doubleness’, addressing the ‘sense which involves the reality of the interior’s spatiality as well as its condition as an image, one that can be imagined and dreamed, and inhabited as such.’ 10 Macken precisely traces images that dissolve architecture into gaps and repetitions, chancing the complications of interiorised external conditions and the temporal flick of a page that opens up the closure of the book form. Her words and images in combination construct the argument.

Russell Rodrigo’s paper reads between Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe discussing the roles of minimalist aesthetics and memory. Rodrigo constructs a careful argument that, unlike the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the inhabited interiority of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is primarily one of performance and play rather than reflection and understanding. Alongside the text Rodrigo’s photographs provide other readings and activate reflective attention: in one image two small girls run between the enclosing concrete blocks and sharp oblique knives of light cut between their fleeing feet (Figure 1). Lost futures of murdered children are recalled in contrast to the health and vigour of the pink-clad children. Children running away always activate a fleeting frisson of anxiety; play is indicative of serious issues.

A second photograph depicts black and white clad young people clustered at the base of tall blocks. Above the uniform group a second photograph depicts black and white clad young people clustered at the base of tall blocks. Above the uniform group a

In his essay, ‘Kissing the Sky: James Turrell’s Skyspaces’, Chris Cottrell addresses an early installation by James Turrell called Meeting. Cottrell argues that his initial phenomenological reading of Turrell’s work, based on his experience of the space event, was insufficient for the complexity of the conditions of interiority activated by the work. Utilising Sylvia Lavin’s productive notion of ‘kissing’ a nuanced and insightful account is constructed revealing a pliable and dynamic notion of spatial threshold. The essay works from the premise of the interior distinct from architecture, operating as a site of experimentation, coordinating surface and atmospheres.

In Emma Cheatie’s ‘Recording the Absent Inside the Maison de Verre’ diagrams trace new architectural narratives of the well-known house Maison de Verre by Pierre Chareau. Revealing unexpected underlying structures, weaving together and fraying apart various lines of occupation, Cheatle sensitively crafts a written and drawn account that acknowledges the gendered, class and emotional condition of architecture. The diagrams register visual and physical movement with sharp certainty even as they complicate conventional understandings of the house.

As a design research essay Spatial Fragments, Visual Distortions and Processes of Sense Making, by Gabriele Knuepfl constructs in the context of practice and therefore a utilitarian cast might initially colour its reception. The paper, despite its mode of interview and analysis, is a compelling advocate for the efficacy of writing. The language of the interviewees reveals a world in which spatial conditions are partial, blurred and unfixed. Hélène Cosoux, writing on her myopia and its removal, sketches the complications and losses between clear sightedness and the mists of partial vision. ‘Is seeing the supreme enjoyment? Or else is it: no-longer-not-seeing?’ 11 Knuepfl’s writing drawn from the fascinating interviews, acknowledges Massumi’s concept of the biogram, and produces an account of vision as dynamic, filtered by the mind and lived experience.

Karamia Muller’s essay, ‘Relational drawing as agency: negotiating the tangible and intangible of Samoan diaspora social space’, considers the representation of the space of the Samoan community in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Conventional architectural representation selects and represents conditions of space based on historical and disciplinary norms and the essay suggests that these neglect, conceal or differ from a Samoan cultural perspective. Rather than stepping away from disciplinary practice Muller instead utilises codes and techniques

7
against the grain. The close reading of space with relational documentation brings into view values of the Samoan diaspora. Muller describes the process as plaiting and her intertwining of cultural and design perspectives results in a series of drawings that are both formally innovative and socially critical.

The paper ‘Cavum/Plenum: interpretations of domestic space’ by Michela Bassanelli questions whether it still possible to consider individual houses as shelters for retreat and withdrawal. Utilising notions of cavum and plenum and drawing on Italian architect Aldo Cibic’s notion of being there, the essay argues that a shift in attention from abstract spatial conditions to the involvement of actions and people is already apparent in contemporary architectural representation. Bassanelli considers the expanded architectural images from firms such as SAANA and Atelier Bow Wow.

The photo essay ‘Rendering the [Im]material’, by James Carey cites words from Malevich: ‘I have broken the blue boundary of color limits, come out into the white, besides me comrade-pilots swim in this infinity. The passage continues, ‘I have established the semaphore of Suprematism. I have beaten the lining of the colored sky, torn it away and in the sack that formed itself, I have put color and knotted it. Swim! The free white sea lies before you.’

The sky is conceived as knotted together and containing the colours of the world. In contrast a white, infinite sea is imagined in which to swim. Carey’s photographs, beating the boundaries, dissolve, fray and transform buildings, revealing woven structures beneath smooth plaster surfaces. Even as the photo essay evokes effortless movement through water it also attests to the resistance of matter. Physical labour counted in the unit of payment – a day’s work, a seven-day project. Images of thickly material interiority investigate walls that are illuminated in their intermittent presence, on off, in out. Walls and floors register immaterial conditions of daily life as they transform into secret shrines, patterns of weather conditions and clouds of disapproval that overwhelm a small, banished child.

Each essay in this volume acknowledges, in different ways, the inclinations and liabilities of interiority. In each account, between words and images gaps appear that let the winds of the world circulate. Utilising images of threads and fabric, material is rent apart even as containment is signalled. For Georges Didi-Huberman the ‘rend functions in dreams as the very motor of something that will be between a desire and a constraint – the constraining desire to figure. To figure despite everything, thus to force, thus to rend. And in this constraining movement, the rend opens the figure, in all of this verb’s many senses.’ Acts of fabrication, the papers in this collection rend open the conventions of the material that they address and deploying words and/or pictures, they figure the wonder and complexity of interiority.

NOTES
6. Ibid., 91.
9. Ibid., 79.
THE EZRA POUND HOUSE: A one-family dwelling for a sociopathic philosopher, or the First Monadic Architecture Manifesto

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ABSTRACT

The project developed by the MLDG architecture and design studio involved profound research into the ontological bases of the logic used in architectural projects. It defends the need for not only designing the architectonic aspects of buildings, but also, and simultaneously, of formulating the deep logic that rules the very language of its con-formation. This is a fundamental characteristic of the projective process that the authors have termed ‘monadic architecture’. In our analysis, we have opted for a logical-spatial ontology that explicitly seeks to undermine all sharp distinctions between the exterior and interior, questioning their epistemological grounds and including the building’s exterior in the projective logic of the interior, which is principally instantiated via the use of optical-visual relations.

To this end, the project enters into dialogue with the principal theoretical forms of conceiving this relation, developed over the last three decades, via the analysis of its logical functioning in the works of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas. In this context, the Ezra Pound House will be the first practical example of the ‘monadic architecture’ developed by MLDG. Its design embodies a spatio-visual and corporeal schema (both in its material and tectonic aspects and in the corporeal shifting of its users) which has never been explored, either under the concept of language or that of scale. The project developed by MLDG involves the infinite openness of the logic of the design of interior spaces to the exterior of a project via its introduction into the logic of absolute interiority as a historical characteristic of Mediterranean architecture.

INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGINAL CONDITIONS

The client’s principal conditioning factor in the design of the Ezra Pound House was the absolute necessity of isolating the dwelling from the rest of society without thereby losing any of the pleasure associated with the surrounding space. This was a difficult requirement to fulfill, given the impossibility of constructing residential buildings in regions not zoned as buildable. Hence, given that the lot must be located in a developable zone, and given the economic limitations of the future user, we sought a town whose population density was as low as possible, with regulations that would permit the future construction of single-family homes, each on their own lots.

In conformity with the user’s requirement for easy access to the city where he works, and the isolation from society he demanded, we located a lot zoned for residential development within the limits of a small town with fewer than 1000 inhabitants, within 20 kilometres of Pamplona city in Spain. The lot, 500m² in size, is located alongside a little-used rural road within sight of an ancient chapel called Arnotegi that crowns a small hill. Hence, no present or future building will intervene between the principal visual orientation of the house, looking to the south, and the landscape that it opens onto. This requirement is further guaranteed by the fact that the terrain between the hill and the home lot is zoned for agricultural use, and nothing in the town’s urban planning foresees its conversion to a residential development.

In order to achieve isolation from the adjoining lots, our plan envisions a seven-metre-high fold wall that extends some 50 metres, closing off the east, north and western points of the compass. This wall is 2.5 metres from the eastern and western limits of the lot, and 5 metres from the northern boundary, in order to provide an initial isolation zone, both from the public access road that passes along the lot’s north side as well as from the contiguous lots on the east and west. Although these measures enabled us to meet the user’s requirements for isolation, we still needed to establish the primary line of relation with the external natural environment. We achieved this via the insertion of a Mediterranean patio, which was originally closed in on four sides within the space created by the fold wall, but which we ultimately opened on its south side in order to take advantage of the views towards Arnotegi. This opening to the south was thus postulated as a bridge or hinge that united the exterior space outside the folded wall and the open exterior space within the wall. From now on we will refer to these two spaces as the ‘English patio’ and the ‘Mediterranean patio’, respectively.

Figure 1: Landscape seen from Ezra Pound House (EPH), 2011, Navarra, Spain. Source: MLDG.
Our client, an assiduous student of Neoplatonic philosophy and a lover of Renaissance architecture, required us to incorporate into the building’s design a numeric symbolism controlling the proportions of its distinct elements: the dimensions of the floors and façade, doors, windows, etc., which should be based on the golden mean as a symbol of harmony, autonomy and self-sufficiency.

This Neoplatonic conception of numeric symbolism, however, entered rapidly into conflict with the idea of opening the Mediterranean patio on its south side, which provided certain benefits for the enjoyment of the landscape that the client refused to give up. This contradiction was fundamentally based on the lack of limit, of plenitude, and on the closed conception of the Mediterranean patio, which offered certain special characteristics via its openness on one side, and its lack of enclosure by internal rooms on all sides. In a continuous discussion with the future user, we decided to find a philosophically grounded design procedure that, above and beyond embodying Neoplatonic concepts and symbolic relationships, would allow us to develop an argument in the process of design that follows the logic of a self-consistent house. We found such a conception in the philosophy of Gottfried Leibniz and Gilles Deleuze’s reading of him, and also in a deconstruction of the traditional relationship between the concepts of ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, detonated by the crossing of the Mediterranean and English courtyards.
The house was named Ezra Pound because this was a mandatory condition imposed by the client. Furthermore, he was the first to suggest the ‘monadic orientation’ for the building’s design, taking into account the ‘vortical’ works of the American poet. In its monadic-architectural version, this vorticist vision aims to reproduce the dynamism of the relationships among the different parts of the monad in a completely inanimate way. In order to support the general conception of the project, we used explicitly developed concepts as a base for our decision making.1

1. The fold of the wall is a kind of apparent limit between the space beyond the wall and the internal space it creates, although this space is in reality continuous. That is, we generated an initial indecisiveness between what is in fact exterior and what this space is in reality continuous. That is, we generated an initial indecisiveness between what is in fact exterior and what is internal to the house. For this reason we decided to employ the concept of Leibniz’s ‘monad’, a ‘simple substance, that is, an absolute interiority that has included its own external space within itself.’

2. Therefore, in spite of the deconstruction of the concepts of interior and exterior that are present in the design of the house, we decided not to transform it into a ‘limit’ project along the lines of the envelope of Bernard Tschumi or the In-Between of Steven Holl. Instead we approached our project inspired more by what Koolhaas achieved in the 1990s through the notion of interiority in his theory of Bigness. We went further, however, by not thereby renouncing the exteriority of the surrounding space, instead including it inside the ‘monad’ itself. However, before beginning our description of the main characteristics of this monadic architecture, we first have to analyse why the approaches of Eisenman, Tschumi and Holl, deep down, are only renunciations, in one way or another, of the role of the architect as creator of spatial relationships. These relationships, termed ‘bridges’ by Martin Heidegger, consist mainly in the establishment of a relationship, that is, a measure, agn-mensura, or architect-ute, with the perceived world.4

In 1999, Eisenman established a catalogue of the work created by his architecture studio up to that moment, dividing it into three types: 1) projects that use diagrams of interiority; 2) projects that use diagrams of exteriority; and 3) projects that use diagrams of exteriority.5 His concepts of interiority, anteriortity and exteriority are mainly related to architecture as a discipline and not to the ontological concepts of measure and establishment of limits. In reality, however, Eisenman, like us, also understood Absolute Anteriority as the possibility of an autonomous architecture that finds exclusively within itself the grounds of its own support, its own self. In contrast, ‘exteriority’ would be the intrusion of an extra-disciplinary element that has an influence on the design process which is beyond the control of the designer, while ‘anteriority’ is the possibility of establishing a lineal and conscious register for the process of design in accordance with the taxonomy of signifier and signified established by Ferdinand de Saussure.6

The deconstruction of interiority and exteriority in architecture, its ‘linguistic deconstruction’ in Eisenman’s terms, is carried out by means of what he called ‘decomposition’4 in its analytic version, and ‘diagram’ in its projective version. So, both ‘decomposition’ in the analysis of the process of designing a building and the ‘diagram’ in the same act of design presuppose the impossibility of establishing a difference between ‘interiority’ and ‘exteriority’ in the sense (in the context of the architectural discipline) of a concrete project, which thereby makes impossible its ‘anteriority’. Eisenman says that ‘a diagram is a representation of something, in that it is not the thing itself. In this sense, it cannot help but be embodied. It can never be free of value or meaning, even when it attempts to express relationships of formation and their process. At the same time, a diagram is neither a structure nor an abstraction of structure. While it explains relationships in an architectural object, it is not isomorphic with it.’7 Later, he states directly that ‘a diagram in architecture can also be seen as a double system that operates as writing both from the anteriority and the interiority of architecture.’8

However, there are two main problems with the notions of ‘interiority’, ‘anteriorty’ and exteriority’ as established by Eisenman. First, they deal with the discipline of architecture in general, and not with ontological, concrete and spatial notions. Secondly, in accordance with the philosophical trend popular during the 1970s, these notions are used to conceive every entity or relationship in a linguistic-representative sense, i.e. according to the logic of the signifier and the signified.9 We hold in other words, that the whole theoretical conception of Eisenman does not provide for allowing the architect to act in the concrete reality of a project; instead, they are applicable only in the discourse of the architectural discipline over its whole history (Deep down, all). In spite of again introducing a general and linguistic meta-theory which transforms architecture into a language; he also introduces the spatial and concrete aspect of a project into the discussion through the deconstruction of the interior-exterior relationship of the inhabitable space of a house.10 He begins with a response to the traditional criticism that the typologies of the country houses of Mies are an attempt to shut in or to cloister an exterior space within the interior. He first takes note of the interpretation that Tatlin and Francesco Dal Co present of these houses, where, in their view, external nature is not related to the house through a relationship of openness as realized through exterior views from within, but as a ‘framing’ of nature via the panes of the windows – which are objects more similar to a painting than to nature per se.11 Eisenman continues by reading this framing as a linguistic sign which, in this case, refers to nature as signified ‘The glass that separated man from nature is now a glass that separates man from the studio out of the nature. Urban is not the inside. Glass, rather than being seen as the outside of the interior is, not the inside-outside of the outside.’12

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Eisenman continues his discourse to the point where the objectivation of nature deconstructs the spatial distribution of the house and makes any difference between an inside and an outside of the house impossible. There is neither inside nor outside of anything but only sign relationships between signifiers. Thus, the ‘house’ House (1935), like Eisenman’s House I (1967) through House X (1980), is reduced to a complex of signifiers in relation to another complex of signifiers where the words ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ do not yet have any meaning. If we eliminate the linguistic-representational logic from this reasoning, we will have prepared the ground for the appearance of a monadic architecture.

On the other hand, the theory of the ‘envelope + vectors’ of Tschumi denies any primary or active power to the shape of a building. Instead, its design is reduced to the only point in which this could still generate active relationships with the context in which it was introduced, its skin or envelope. According to Tschumi, that reduction of the manipulation of the building’s shape exclusively to the design of the interface of the surface or ‘envelope’ of a building had to be activated by certain ‘vectors’ or directions, qua ‘flows’ generated by its program.16 In other words, once the architect has been transformed into a programmer of human corporative systems, the only formal redoubt left to design is the definition of the limit itself between the external and the internal space of his or her project. Even more than deconstructing the limit between what is internal and what is external, Tschumi ratifies it by reducing the limit that separates them to a concrete and determined bi-dimensional plane. From this point of view, his architecture is completely traditional. We hold that the Swiss architect’s post-2000 projects are nothing other than ‘facades’,17 in three dimensions if we will, but ‘facades’ nonetheless. While he calls them ‘interfaces’ and constructs them according to a composite and anti-classical principle, they remain merely ‘facades’.18

This Tschumian concept of facade is contradictory, because while on one hand it ratifies the definition and delimitation of the inside and outside of a building, on the other hand it is excessively centred on the design of the ‘envelope’ itself. He does not take into account the ‘envelope’ or the opportunity for establishing relationships, for creating a bi-directional communication between the interior and the exterior of the building; rather, a juxtaposition results from the joining of three fields which are totally independent of one another; in no way inter-related. On the one hand, there is the exterior of the project, completely defined only by the programme and the programmatic relationships internal to it. Finally, there is the three-dimensional envelope-façade which is designed as a global ornament, in what seems to be a throwback to the use of Arabic mosaic, which seals exteriority and interiority off in closed compartments without permitting any relationship among them. In other words, Tschumi proposes a return to the ‘decorated shell’ of Venturi in which ‘space and architecture are directly at the service of the program, and the ornament is applied with independence from them’.19

However, the main problem of pure juxtaposition is that it does not measure; it does not establish any relationship beyond a mere indifference to what is juxtaposed and a definitive enclosure in solipsism. In contrast, the interiority of the monad includes exteriority within itself, thus making possible the establishment of relationships. Tschumi’s interiority operates by exclusion, through the ‘purity’ of the internal itself. It is here that the Bigness of Koolhaas comes in, because if theoretically it repeats the conditions established by the ‘envelope + vectors’ of Tschumi,20 practically, the projects of the 1990s by OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) like the Kunsthal of Rotterdam (1993), the Agadir Hotel in Morocco (1990), or the University Library of Jussieu (1993) integrate inside their ‘monads’ their external space. Respectively, by means of the continuous ramp-street in a spiral that crosses the Parisian Library, or by means of the artificial dunes that cross the hotel of Morocco creating a continuous section of the building at half height. It is this notion of absolute interiority that integrates its own external otherness which, taking its logic to the extreme, is what we want to develop in this project of Small scale as opposed to the Large scale project defined by OMA as exclusively its own. It is for this reason that, in opposition to the theory imposed by OMA, we openly affirm that monadic architecture, the supposed Bigness, is not properly a thematic of scale, as the OMA-AMO21 idea factory would like us to believe. Rather, as always in the history of architecture, it refers to a matter of conceptualisation and categorisation of the spatial ontology in which the architect performs his or her work.

We directly opposed the institutional conception of the discipline of architecture advanced by Eisenman with the concrete reality of our project, and also opposed OMA’s tactic empiricism that is implied by their theory of Bigness qua categorisation of architecture via scales: their exclusively empirical or pragmatic conception of the constructive-economic reality of architecture. And we contrast it now with architecture’s categorico-ontological character. We thus define a realm proper to architectonic reality in its spatial conception, which, due to its inter-mediate conception, requires the measure of those relationships that are established between its distinct spatial scopes. In other words, monadic architecture is committed to a conception of architecture wherein its reality is produced by the architect in the very act of ‘projecting’, via the non-disciplinary and non-institutional establishment of the anti-spatial categories with which he/she ‘projects’ his/her creation. That is, bringing in a linguistic hypothesis again, if reality were understood exclusively as a language (which we are not proposing), then, according to our proposal, the architect, in his/her very act of planning, has the capacity and the duty to create with each act of planning both that which he/she is going to say, as well as the rules of the language with which he/she is going to say it. On the other hand, the architectonic conception of Eisenman would be limited to deconstructing the rules of the language which the discipline of architecture has given him, while the pragmatism of Koolhaas would respond that the true language which architecture deals in is previously given by the anonymous economic-constructive reality, and that we will not be able to invent any other language which is not already given by this reality.22

The true problem, then, of monadic architecture is that, in theory, since it contains within itself all of the existent and the possible of its world, it would not permit more than one, unique language proper to it and which only it would understand. In other words, each monad, each project, qua singular vision of the world, has a language of its own that it does not share with the
rest of the monads qua singular visions of the world, distinct from our own. For this reason, the only condition that monadic architecture imposes upon architects’ work in their measuring of the world with each new project is that the creation of language be ‘polyglot’. That is, each project brings with it a new language, a new vision of the world, a new form of measuring it without stagnating in one single created language which only dialogues with itself in every project, over and over again. Instead of the ego-worshaping solipsism of ‘personal style’, monadic architecture demands that creation be multi-monadic, multi-dimensional. We hold that every assertion of a reality per se, every affirmation of a language of reality, as both Eisenman and Koolhaas maintain in distinct aspects, is nothing more than the every affirmation of a language of reality, as both Eisenman and Koolhaas maintain in distinct aspects, is nothing more than the monadic enclosure of the architect within his own architecture.23

3. Finally, and as a direct consequence of this concreteness monadic character of the project, its autarchic character is established, with a logic which in no way responds to the socio-political-economic determinants of any other monad that is not itself. Or if one prefers, the anarchic character of the demand of the project’s logic respond only in its own tribunal. But it should be clearly understood that the demand resulting from the singularity of the project arises from the project itself, and not from the architect. We are not in any way defending the individual subjectivity of the ‘artist’ in this paper, since such a subjectivity, if it wishes to be such according to our concept of architecture, has to be principally intermonadic, or what amounts to the same thing, being able to traverse the exteriority of the monad which is not interiorised by the monad itself in its world. That means to achieve the creation of a completely distinct new world, with the monad inasmuch as it derives from the pre-eminence of the world which newly deifies the modern notions of interiority and exteriority as foundations of the now-obsolete concepts of subject and object. Instead of this gnoseology, still present by the pre-Socratic philosophy as αρχα (type C views with vanishing point).

DIS-FORM OF THE MONAD

Once we precisely defined the conceptual parameters on the project for which we have developed the monadic design of the project, we began to establish the criss-cross of relationships between the interior of the house with its exterior-within-the-wall (the Mediterranean patio) and the uniformed differentiation of the house with the exterior (the outside: the outside is the outside) in order to exponentially strengthen the two demands of the user: isolation with respect to all other monads, and a maximum enjoyment and appropriation of the exterior world from within the interior of his house. Hence, and in contrast with the notion of envelope developed by Tschumi, we refuse to relate the interior of the dwelling with the Mediterranean patio via a crossed envelope that would mediate between the folding of the wall/screen and the interior-space of the house.

The principal rupture of the closed and autarchic character of the Mediterranean patio came, just as with the Hubbe House (1935), via the demand for a visual relationship with the exterior, which in our case was directionally fixed towards the Arnotegi which, in this manner, is taken from the exterior. Finally, in this case, we establish the priority of the perspective line towards multiplicity and defending the primacy of the multiple — and thereby of relationship — over being themselves. Being or ‘entes’, therefore end up being nothing more than a set of relations, bundles or collections of differing perceptions, which follow one another with inconceivable rapidity and in perpetual flow and movement.26 All of these perspectives, by diverse paths, argue for the impossibility of the pre-eminent of the unity over multiplicity and defending the primacy of the multiple — and thereby of relationship — over being themselves. Being or ‘entes’, therefore end up being nothing more than a set of relations, bundles or collections of differing perceptions, which follow one another with inconceivable rapidity and in perpetual flow and movement.26

In a manner which is equally formal, volumetric and programmatic, the entire design of the Ezra Pound House returns toward a set of non-sequentializations of the project’s logic. On this basis we decided that the principal ambit of the inclusion of the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio within the internal-interior of the house should be visual relations, instead of choosing an excessive literality of spatial inclusion of the Mediterranean patio in the internal-interior of the dwelling via the employment of form.

Hence — and in contrast with the Renaissance visual concept of a single panoramic point of view that, in a univocal way controls and measures a space conceived other as unique, homogenous and isotropic in the manner of the mechanical system defined by Lewis Mumford—25 the visual conception that the notion of monad requires is no longer a simple Piranesian polyperspectivism. Rather, and even further, it demands a multiplicity of views that are not all conformed to each other according to a perspective-structuration; that is, not all are conformed to each other according to a depth of field which perspective would require in order to be perceived as such. Thus, we established a progressive and infinitesimal gradation between those visuals that are permitted from within the interior of the dwelling towards the Mediterranean patio via a series of openings on the ground floor that extend from the view of the bi-dimensional flatness of the inner face of the fold wall (type A views with no vanishing point), via a series of micro-perspectives which reveal the depth and directionality of the Mediterranean patio (type B views with two vanishing points), to fully perspectivised visuals aligned with the directionality of the Mediterranean patio (type C views with vanishing point).

Moreover, these visual relationships are not defined from an exclusively syntactic point of view, but, taking into account the linguistic anti-formalism that is attributed to the concept of reality, the visual relationships established are also established in a field that we could call ‘semantic’. So, the main internal views within the monad refer to the four basic elements defined by the pre-Socratic philosophy as appa (archi, principles or roots); Water-Fire-Wind-Earth. This original quadruple, inserted within the interior of the project by the use of the, the internal pyre in the extreme of the East wall, the opening to the west and the placement of earth for an olive tree, refer, then, to the multiple origin of the monad inasmuch as it derives from the pre-eminence of multiplicity over the one, seen in relationship with the genealogy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, the criterion of Derida’s phenomenology of Husserl in The Voice and the Phenomenon, or in Deleuze’s concept of disjunctive syllogism in Logic of Meaning.25 All of these perspectives, by diverse paths, argue for the impossibility of the pre-eminent of the unity over multiplicity and defending the primacy of the multiple — and thereby of relationship — over being themselves. Being or ‘entes’, therefore end up being nothing more than a set of relations, bundles or collections of differing perceptions, which follow one another with inconceivable rapidity and in perpetual flow and movement.26
are integrated as the principal landmarks for the monad, which increase its independence and autarchy to an extreme in the case of the study (which is completely independent in its volumetric aspect, separated from the ground, with its own entrance and materials and structure which are completely different from the rest of the house), passing through the entryway to the guest house (independent and only accessible from the Mediterranean patio, with no direct connection to the rest of the house), and arriving finally at the principal kitchen-living room binomial, which is a single space visually divided by a curtain and traversed on its axis of union by a straight flow line that directly connects the English patio (external-exterior) with the Mediterranean patio (internal-exterior) via the internal-interior of the non-centered nucleus of the house.

In regards to the internal-interior of the house, specifically the visual relation established between the kitchen-living room binomial, we note that this relation is maintained via a principal sight line that, running from the garage to the entrance to the kitchen, is aligned directly with the views towards Arnoategi. In this way, once the kitchen-living room binomial has been established via the project’s primary view that is, that which introduces the exterior into the interior, and defines it as ‘monadic’, in the living room the view towards Arnoategi is given exclusive preference in detriment to any other. This is the complete opposite of what happens in the kitchen, where favour is given to the multiplicity of visual relations with the distinct elements of the Mediterranean patio, which generates a rhythm of private views via the distinct movements and actions of the user of the kitchen.

With this we have achieved various things. In the first place, we have visually isolated the living room from anything other than Arnoategi. Therefore, we reduced the possibility of visually traversing the space, once the user is seated on the furniture of the living room. In addition, this room is sunk approximately 0.6 metres in order to achieve a complete visual occlusion from outside the monad. Secondly, the kitchen, a room that is habitually condemned to being hidden in the interior of the house, is in this case the nerve centre of the house and the control point for multiple crisscrossed views. In the kitchen there is a visual relation with all the entrances of the house, both those to its internal-interior spatiality as well as to the exterior, while in the case of the relationship with the internal-exterior space the visual relationship becomes so intense that it produces a formal relation: the Mediterranean patio is introduced in the northern half of the ground floor, thereby generating a fragmented portico that harkens back to the Renaissance Mediterranean patios, while in the southern half it is that part of the kitchen dedicated to a dining area which is formally introduced into the Mediterranean patio. This generates, on the ground floor, a terrace with exclusive access from the primary bedroom which connects with the walkway to the study. This walkway, in turn, is connected with the Mediterranean patio via a metallic staircase built into the principal wall. All of this has the purpose of guaranteeing a multiple relationship with an internal-exteriority that is completely autonomous and without any relation to the rest of the world, as required by the sociopathy of our client, in two completely distinct forms: the open-multiple dynamic of the kitchen, and the bunkerised-unitary statics of the living room.
In regards to the visual-programmatic relations established on the first floor, we see how it is separated completely from the ground floor via an L-shaped bookcase-corridor, by means of tiny openings between the books in order to emphasize this independence. In this way, we reinforce the relationship of the ground floor of the internal-interior with the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio, while the first floor of the internal-interior involves an unfolding of this space which is completely independent of it, and in reality only united to the ground floor of the internal-interior via the mediation of the internal-exterior of the Mediterranean patio.

Relationships which are proper to the first floor are the disposition of the children’s bedrooms, which are completely opposite in their attitudes towards social relationships, in the northern part of the house. Thus, the oldest child’s bedroom aims its views directly towards the external-exterior (pro-public social relationships), although its northern orientation does not provide direct light. The second child’s bedroom, on the other hand, directs its views towards the Mediterranean patio (anti-public social relationships), mediated by a private terrace from which an east-west view intersects, and which permits the illumination of the corridor-library in the only ‘public’ point of the internal-interior of the dwelling that permits a visual relationship with the external-exterior of the fold-wall that does not centre itself on

In regards to the communicative interrelation between the parts, the guaranteed independence of the distinct habitable dimensions of the house is placed in a cross-relation via the establishment of a double snaking diagram of flows and pathways that traverse both the interior of the dwelling (the L-shaped bookshelf-corridor that unites the two floors) and the Mediterranean patio (the metallic stairs that unite the patio and the independent guest entrance on the ground floor with the study entrance and the added element, also L-shaped, that provides access to the principal bedroom on the first floor), while the English patio space is reduced to a line parallel to the wall which runs directly and without mediation from beyond the public access road to the living room’s hall. In so doing, we achieve a continual interior snaking that weaves together the internal-interior with the internal-exterior thereby bending both the sensation of interrelation as well as that of the breadth of the spaces, while the required relation of this weaving with the internal-exterior is reduced to a minimum expression, in order to guarantee rapid and effective functionality by juxtaposition.

As an overall perspective, we have established, programmatically, an overall cross-diagram of the principal views towards the exterior, the secondary crossed views within the interior, the establishment of original landmarks and a division into independent and autonomous parts. All of this is woven together via the principal fold-wall which isolates and shapes the monad in itself, plus the double L of the flow pathways which cross and traverse via the visual relations, without going so far as to structure themselves via the travelling perspective involved with the promenades architecturales of La Villa Savoye (1928) of Le Corbusier, or the University Library of Jussieu (1993), by Koolhaas.
Finally, the material-tectonic aspect of the project also emphasises the multiplicity of the monadic logic. Specifically, the undulating outer sheet of the study and its asymmetric metallic structure are counterpoised by the fold-wall constructed via a trans-ventilated façade built of concrete block and a translucent plastic covering material with distinct tones of translucidity, for a future retrofitting with distinct grades of light intensity that embraces a completely reticulated concrete and a translucent plastic covering material with distinct tones of translucidity, for a future retro-

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Thus, as a result of following the logic of architectural monadism that we have proposed, we finally achieved a set of multiple internal relations of distinct weights, together with isolation from the rest of the visions that have not been interiorised by the monad itself. In this way, and going beyond Kurt Schwitters’ Merzbau (1922-37), which passively and randomly includes everything on the same plane of intensity, we propose the establishment of distinct intensities between the crossed relations without thereby constituting an ordered hierarchical structure. In contrast with the full interiority of the single levelling plane of money (from Merz-bau qua com-merz = commerce and bau = to build), the Ezra Pound House newly imposes the material ethic of non-commercial constructive relations, of artistic values and of the techniques of laying-out and construction of worlds which turn a blind eye to any other logic besides that of the artistic project itself, which is a world-creating (and not demiurgic) force. This is an escape both from the metropolitan logic of money defined by Georg Simmel as the territorial planning of urban bureaucracy,26 in favour of an ‘apologia’ for the monadic logic of art. Zarathustra’s cave is hidden in the midst of the mediocrity of the mandatory economic logic of zoning which is only open to the world through itself, in order to be able to live without vomiting. We thus present the Ezra Pound House for a sociopathic philosopher as the only possibility of, in the fullest Heideggerian sense, finally ‘inhabiting’ the world constructed by the project itself. A complete and closed-in-upon-itself song that nonetheless, in a poetic form, includes the entire world within itself. A monad-song, this time in the form of architecture the AK-47 song of Western architectonic civilization.27

NOTES

1. MLDG is a young Architecture and Urban Planning studio founded in Spain. It is characterised by a highly flexible online organisation for facilitating collaboration amongst its team members, an interdisciplinary working methodology and a theoretical point of view regarding the design of the projects it undertakes. Up to the time of designing The Ezra Pound House, all its projects had been oriented towards the search for alternative fields for the development of Architecture which were directly related neither to building design nor academia, and all of them were conceptualised in explicit opposition to the “starchitecture system”. In their research laboratory/studio ASRT, the team members work in concert with philosophers, sociologists, writers, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, urban-design specialists, engineers, lawyers and craftsmen. They continuously search for new ways of understanding the relations among those fields. They have taught courses and seminars in different universities in Spain, as well as in Europe and Latin America. Nowadays, because of the Spanish economic crisis, they are trying to create a project for co-operation with different universities and public administrations. This project is called Delta Project on the City, and focuses on research about alternative, extremely cheap housing.

2. The main conceptual tools of the ASRT-MLDG studio make reference to Dadaism, ‘68 May, OMA, and the works of Gilles Deleuze, a philosopher who is deeply influenced by Leibniz, which was a point in common with the client’s works of Gilles Deleuze, a philosopher who is deeply influenced by Leibniz, which was a point in common with the client’s
own requirements for the Ezra Pound house. 23. For a close analysis of the planning methods for the works of Eisenman, Tschumi and Koolhaas, we refer to the Conferencias con estudiantes (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2008), 50-75. 24. Where Husserl attempted to once again place the 'subject' (interiority) and the 'object' (exteriority) in relation to a great number of projects, thereby producing

4. Ibid., 65. 25. 'A mechanical system can be defined in which a random sample of the set can serve in place of the entire set: a grain of pure water in the laboratory is presumed to have the same properties as a hundred cubic meters of equally pure water in a cistern, and it is also presumed that what surrounds the object does not affect its behaviour! Lewis Mumford, Techniques and Civilization (London Routledge, and Paul Fegen, 1967), 52. 26. For a detailed discussion, see Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), Jacques Derrida, Voice and Phenomenon (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1896), 67. 27. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1986), 67. 28. About the houses of Piers van der Rohe as a benchmark back to a technological case of Zarathustra see Íñaki Ábalos, Lo bueno está vale guido a lo loco de la modernidad (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2008), 50-75. 29. See Georg Simmel, The Philosophy of Money (London: Routledge, 2004). 30. For further information see: http://www.simmel.de
Binding Interiority

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ABSTRACT

Architectural space is usually documented in the form of orthographic projections, that is, plan, section and elevation drawings, with perspective and three-dimensional models. These render the space in a particular way and hence have limitations and specificity. The artist’s book – that is, a book made as an original work of art, with an artist or architect as author – offers a different mode of presenting documentation and reading representation. ‘Binding Interiority’ argues that the qualities and characteristics of the artist’s book, coupled with the content of architectural documentation, coalesce to form a mode of three-dimensional representation conducive to particular and different readings of drawings, representation and the interior. Through Charles Rice’s writing on interiority, and Interior’s Doubleness, this paper explores the book’s interiority. Works by the artist and others employing volumetric devices, such as pop-up and ‘peepshow’ books, demonstrate aspects of this interiority. In particular, the cut and fold (origami) architecture of Masahiro Chatani and the spatiality of the Japanese technique of okoshi-ezu, or ‘folded drawings’, are examined. These drawings which have a three-dimensionality to them, and employ a book-like (folding) structure, relate to the notion of the book as a folded model. This paper examines the way in which interiority can be present within the representation of interior architecture, that is, representation itself that has interiority, in the form of the book. As will be demonstrated, this interiority shifts the perception of space and the objecthood of the representation, and introduces a temporal reading of representation.

BINDING INTERIORITY

Architectural drawings, that is, orthographic projections such as plan, section and elevation, have interiority embedded within them due to their subject matter. The plan locates planes that form an interior. Our eyes travel over the surface of the drawing, conjuring up the interior that it represents. We infer our inhabitation of the space through two-dimensional means. The artist’s book – that is, a book made as an original work of art, with an artist or architect as author – offers a different mode of presenting interior space due to its objecthood and capacity to incorporate volume and spatiality. This then combines the documentation of an interior’s spatiality and a mode of presentation that possesses its own interiority. The binding together of these may be referred to as representation’s doubleness. In this way an alternative representation is offered to interior architecture.

Rice describes interiority as a ‘space of immersion’ in which architecture is enfolded and interiorised.7 This implies depth and volume and breadth as components of the interior. Depth – as a measurement from surface inwards, or from top down, or from front to back – when coupled with breadth relates to ‘extent’ and ‘distance’ and ‘room’. These words have an affinity with cumulation, something increasing in force or formed by successive additions. These qualities of depth and cumulation, and hence the notion of interiority as augmented due to their presence, will be examined in relationship to the book. Volume and spatiality within the book will also be examined. The doubled sense of the representation is shown then to be a combination of the strong presence of the objecthood of the representation at a 1:1 scale and the content of the work.

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF INTERIORITY

In his book, The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity (2007), Charles Rice writes of the formulation of the sense of the interior. According to Rice, it was only from the beginning of the nineteenth century that the interior came to mean the inside of a building or room, especially in reference to the artistic effect, and also, a picture or representation of the inside of a building or room.8 The interior thus emerged with significance as a physical three-dimensional space as well as an image – either a two-dimensional print or painting, or a flat backdrop in a theatrical setting.9 Rice defines this as ‘interior’s doubleness’, that is, ‘a sense which involves the reality of the interior’s spatiality as well as its condition as an image, one that can be imagined and dreamed, and inhabited as such’.10 This doubleness is manifest in a semantic development that marks the emergence of the interior.11

There is a sense of inhabitation present within architectural representation due to its depiction of the interior. Rice writes that the architect and client are future inhabitants of the drawings and model; the drawings necessitate an Imaginative inhabitation, according to Paul Emmons.12 The reading of these drawings allows the viewer to travel within the imagined space. Susan Hedges writes that, as the imagined miniature self inhabits a drawing, ‘the minuscule body of the architect is the measure, walking across the surface of the drawing’.13 As documentation of an existing space, we may use the plan as a mnemonic device, revisiting our steps through the space in order to conjure it up; the space of the plan may be seen as a surface over which we travel. Hence, the perception of space is produced by its representations and therefore interiority is assumed.

Within the representation of architecture, there is another way that interiority can be present that is, representation itself that has interiority. As will be outlined, the artist’s book possesses this quality due to its objecthood and capacity to incorporate volume and spatiality. This then combines the documentation of an interior’s spatiality and a mode of presentation that possesses its own interiority. The binding together of these may be referred to as representation’s doubleness. In this way an alternative representation is offered to interior architecture.

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THE OBJECTHOOD OF THE BOOK: DEPTH, CUMULATION AND STRUCTURE

In her essay on scale within architectural drawings, Hedges refers to Susan Stewart’s description of the book as offering metaphors of containment, of exteriority and interiority, of surface and depth, and of covering and exposure10: ‘The book sits below me closed and unread; it is an object, a set of surfaces. But opened, it seems revealed; its physical aspects give way to abstraction and a nexus of new temporalities.’

The book as object is both a volume in space and possesses the ability to be opened. The book’s interiority may be accessed by merely paging through a work: lifting the cover of a book ‘opens’ it. The book as object may be made up of discrete elements; that is, pages. The ‘inside’ of the book refers to both its internal pages and the literal space of their surface, and its content, which refers to that which is ‘outside’ the book. Each spread of pages is a separate space, so the book is made up of the accretion of these sites. This aspect of interiority relates to the characteristics of depth and cumulation. The book as object may have a further openable quality due to particular structures and techniques of making. Volume and spatiality may be included through various pop-up techniques. These qualities of the book will be examined in relation to their contribution to the doubled sense of representation.

The artist’s book Mies van der Rohe: Built Houses (2009) uses the technique of removal to draw Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s fifteen built houses, over the fifty-year span from 1906 to 1956. The plans at 1:100 are cut out of the page using a laser cutter. The first page begins with the Riehl House (1906–7); cut out on the second page, the Riehl House and the Perls House (1911) are both cut out. Each subsequent page has the cumulative cut out of the next chronological plan. At page fifteen, all the house plans are cut out of the page. From page sixteen onwards, each chronological plan is removed from the cutting process, starting with the first house, until the last page, which shows only the Morris Greenwald House (1951–6).

Through the technique of cutting out the plans, the drawings in Mies van der Rohe: Built Houses interact with the page edge. By page seven, the wall, as it extends into the landscape, runs to the edge of the page, disrupting the page as frame. The edges of the pages are finite limits: anything beyond them falls away into a void of unrepresentable space.2 During the reading of the book, the page is eaten away by the laying down of each subsequent house plan, then returns with the final pages. These lines cannot be undone. There is a delicacy to the page – parts of walls hang precariously when the page is lifted – due to the cutting technique; the boxed, loose page form of the book highlights this quality. In this work, the actual page is not merely a site upon which the ink is applied, nor are the edges only those which are held in one’s hands. The page is no longer a frame but rather is integral to the reading of the drawing. The eye traces the line of the void of inhabitation. The cut out technique, by page seven, allows the outer edge of the wall to merge with the interior of the house, in their rendering. The wall then is read as part of the interior of the house rather than a separation between two spaces.
The text component of the book mirrors the production of the drawings within each page. There is an embedding of the text within the page, through the process of blind letterpress printing, just as there is an embedding of the plan within the page. As each house plan appears on multiple pages, so too does its name and date. For example on page five, the first house has appeared five times, the second house four times, and so on. By an additive printing process, each house title has a similar range of depths of printing.

In Mies van der Rohe: Built Houses, as each plan is laid down upon the last, it is centred on the front door, or main entrance. This shifts the usual layout of plans within books from a graphic design issue to focus on their inherent interiority. Hence, the plans are positioned off-centre, and long blade walls eventually spill off the page. The layering of these same-scale plans is similar to the method of drawing trace overlays. However, this cumulative cut-out technique squashes the layers, merging projects.

This is a book built of sequence: while relying on the strength of individual plans, they are always ‘part of a sequence which welds narrative, materiality, and our reading experience into each other page. According to Olafur Eliasson, this book alerts the reader to the page’s physical relationship to the page below. When the cover cords are tied, the book stands up to form a pentahedron.

Cumulation leading to depth may be seen through a different means, in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Tree of Codes (2010). This book takes an English language edition of Bruno Schüle’s collection of short stories, The Street of Crocodiles, and carves out a new story. Using a different die-cut technique on every page, various parts of the text and page are removed. Through this technique of removal, the gaps between words resonate, alerting the reader to the page’s physical relationship to each other page. According to Olafur Eliasson, this book ‘welds narrative, materiality and our reading experience into a book that remembers that it actually has a body.’

The reading experience of Tree of Codes is one of paging through a sculptural work. The removal of parts of individual pages creates an intriguing effect but the strength of this work is the perception of depth of the object of the book, achieved through the cumulative production of pages – is then emphatically called to attention. It is the page’s ability to be one of many that makes this work have cumulative dimensionality. The page is not a flat plane but rather a three-dimensional dual surface, rather than merely serving as a visual support for illusion.14

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There is another type of interiority possible within the book, one which is made by the inclusion of volume within the structure of the book. Volume may be achieved by various techniques, such as the inclusion of moveable pieces – flaps and revolving or sliding parts – and pop-up structures, made by cutting and folding within the book. These techniques give a three-dimensional quality to the book and are a means of emphasis, interpretation and accent. When used properly, they explain, describe, or entertain, while engaging the reader in action.16

Some of these devices are concerned with plane, such as dissolving pictures, rotating pictures, split pages, cut-outs and slits. Others devices create a theatrical stage, have elements that stand up at 90 degrees, or pop-up at 180 degrees. Although these types of books employing paper engineering became popular for the entertainment of children, before the eighteenth century their use, as early as the thirteenth century, was primarily scholarly.17 While the inclusion of moveable parts does not necessarily guarantee a sense of interiority within the book, some techniques are valuable in offering a particular spatiality, relevant to the documentation of interior architecture.

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In this book, narrative is achieved through a strong use of ‘scene-setting’: the dominant locations of the story are used as the sequential structuring device. There is a definite rendering of foreground, middle-ground and background allowing for both architectural framing devices, such as fenestration and the inclusion of distant landscape. Hence, there is a dominant sense of interiority to each scene: the castle’s turrets are able to be glimpsed through the forest’s ‘impenetrable thicket of brambles.’

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Chatani’s works have an affinity with the axonometric in that there seems to be one ideal viewing position, from a 45 degree angle off-centre and slightly above the façade. Although the building protrudes, no information of the side elevations is able to be given due to the structure of cutting and folding. One is outside the building and there is no sense of the range of spatialities that the spectrum of documented buildings offers. It is up to the viewer to infer this from information that is modelled, such as wall openings and windows. Within these limitations, Chatani’s work does offer a useful method of comparison by adopting a particular technique that creates a synthesis among seemingly dissimilar buildings. By using the cut and fold technique of origami architecture, connections and similarities are able to be speculated upon that would not exist at a built scale or across pages of drawings. However, by remaining as individual valley folds, Chatani’s works offer another view. When rotated and viewed from ‘behind’, Chatani’s pop-up elevations create more possibilities. This under-the-bleachers quality begins to have a spatiality quite different from a model. This technique interacts with the positive and negative space that the concertina format offers. When read from behind, it is the mountain folds that are interrupted as opposed to the reverse side’s valley folds. These start to imply modelled sections rather than volumetric elevations.

Another technique which creates an interiority within representation is the ancient Japanese drawing process called *okoshi-ezu* or ‘folded drawing’, which emerged in the Edo period (1603–1868). Andrew Barrie outlines the historical use of these and their influence on the reading of contemporary work, particularly that of Toyo Ito. At the start of the Edo period, the ruling elite set aside the predetermined patterns of building and encouraged innovation in the form of the *sukiya* style, influenced by the teahouse. These small spaces required intense consideration and attention to detail. In order to consider and communicate these design intentions, a new type of drawing emerged - the *okoshi-ezu*. This presentation of codex-oriented spatiality which cannot be viewed all at once, but in slivers. This fracturing of space and discontinuity is advantageous as it offers the potential for a different examination of space. Rather than examining each interior in relation to how it is connected to its adjacency, instead its containment is emphasised, allowing a different narrative structure to connect the spaces as they appear as spreads within the book.

These examples demonstrate the potential interiority of the book form. Depth and cumulation are present through the pagination and sequencing of *Mies van der Rohe: Built Houses*, volume and spatiality are present in *The Sleeping Beauty*. The notion of volume and spatiality may be further explored, in relation to the model, in order to understand the importance of the objecthood of the representation at a 1:1 scale, which contributes to representation’s doubleness.

**THE BOOK AS A FOLDED MODEL**

The pop-up technique demonstrated in the work of Masahiro Chatani allows a spatiality to emerge in the documentation of buildings. While not an artists’ book, *Origami Architecture: American Houses Pre-colonial to Present* (1988) presents elevations of examples of American architecture – from the tepee and pueblo structures through to Peter Eisenman’s House V from 1975 – made from a cut and fold technique. Due to this technique, these works shift from two dimensions to three. Chatani calls these works origami architecture, and they were produced through the Japan Institute of Architecture as a way of introducing architectural aesthetics to school children. Similar examples, making such buildings as Tate Modern Gallery present the building as a form of modelled elevation, which adopts certain book-like structures and techniques. Toyo Ito also employed this technique in his charrette submission for the first phase of the expansion of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1997).
Okoshi-ezu are pop-up drawings which fold up to create a fully three-dimensional miniature. Barrie describes these as being made of pieces of washi paper cut to the shape of walls fixed onto a plan drawing. Holes were cut into the walls for windows and openings and other elements, such as raised floors and shutters, were sometimes fixed into place on the walls.24 Drawn onto both sides of the paper were notations relating to dimensions, materials and textures. These were stored flat, easily transportable and were erected by folding the walls up and fixing them into place with tabs and slots.25 As Barrie writes, the resulting representation ‘is at once a three-dimensional drawing and a collapsible model’26: in the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Tokyo, an example is titled a ‘three-dimensional plan.’ While not strictly categorised as artists’ books, this is a technique of making books with a model-like quality.

The technique of okoshi-ezu is particularly appropriate in the work $1.45¢: Houses in the Museum Garden: Biography of an Exhibition (2011). Between the late-1940s and the mid-1950s, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, built three full-scale buildings in its sculpture garden. The first was ‘House in the Museum Garden’ designed by Marcel Breuer, exhibited in 1949; the next was ‘Exhibition House’, designed by Gregory Ain, with Joseph Johnson and Alfred Day, exhibited in 1950; followed by ‘Japanese Exhibition House’, a full-scale reproduction of the Kyaku-den guest house of the Kōdō-in at Chōjū Temple by Junzō Yoshimura, open for four months in both 1954 and 1955.

The Breuer house, when dismantled at the end of the exhibition, was relocated by barge to the estate of John D. Rockefeller III at Pocantico Hills, New York, to serve as guest accommodation. The Ain house was destroyed. The blueprints of the houses by Breuer and Ain were made available and replicas of the houses were actually built. The Yoshimura house was originally erected in Nagoya, dismantled and shipped to New York for re-erection. At the close of the exhibition it was dismantled again and trucked to West Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, where it still stands as a Japanese cultural resource, open to the public, renamed Shofuso Japanese House and Garden.

$1.45¢: Houses in the Museum Garden: Biography of an Exhibition – its title a reference to the combined admission fees for the public to enter the exhibited houses – aims to document the
焚烧曲目，多个建筑物皆为时事。每个的二十个 portfolios 显示建筑物及/或遗址，以不同的阶段为内，而内侧页则显示雕塑庭园的缩放比例。当建筑物被放置于 MoMA，可以制作出纸模型，使用技术称为 okoshi-ezu。最后一个 portfolios 的垂直臂显示所有建筑物作为 okoshi-ezu，正确地置于页面内，如同同时完成的。横臂的矩阵则与每个住宅项目及其各种阶段有关：作为面板，居住在设计师的办公室，拆卸，或搬迁至新的地点。读者的参与制作内，以及对建筑物的强调，被呈现在作为外部和内部面板的形式，是为由前制作方法所制作的建筑物，建筑物在它们的生命周期中改变位置，及临时建筑物。当建立，这些纸模型不同于一个可移除屋顶的常规模型。实际‘建立’在模型中以阅读这些 portfolios，及在模型中将建筑物‘推平’以便关闭 portfolios，而创造出这个不同。将模型从二维转成三维是一个互动的行为，读者。此外，模型提供了一个可理解的视角，由于它作为一个含有的物体。它旨在提供一个总览，为一个综合的理解。Okoshi-ezu 运行不同的，由于其包含内向性。这项技术与在十七世纪中期发展的一种内向式室内图有关。一个例子是 Thomas Lightoler 的关于楼梯厅的画，发表在《现代建筑助手》。27 这个计划显示在一组四个立面中间，好像它们被折出并平铺到页面的另一侧。“Sec tion” of a stair hall by Thomas Lightoler, from The Modern Builder’s Assistant, 1757.
same place as the plan. 28 Robin Evans names this a "developed surface interior" in descriptive geometry, folding out the adjacent surfaces of a three-dimensional body, so that all its faces can be shown on a sheet of paper, called developing a surface. 29

The Japanese architect Takefumi Aida uses a similar technique in his drawings for projects, including "House Like a Die" (1974), "Nirvana House" (1972) and "Annihilation House" (1972), included in the exhibition catalogue A New Wave of Japanese Architecture. 30 In these examples, the planes of the house are drawn flat, turned to the exterior space and operate as composite plan and elevation. 31 The thickness of the walls is included in Aida’s drawings, in contrast to the exclusion of this in the example by Lightoler. In reference to Lightoler’s drawing, Evans writes, “all four walls are shown connected to the side of the plan they originate in. Five discontinuous planes are therefore represented in one plane and the illustration becomes completely hermetic: nothing outside can be shown … not even the thickness of the walls.” 32 Like the conventional section, the developed surface interior is a three-dimensional organisation reduced to two-dimensional drawing, but it is much less easy to restore apparent depth. While the section merely compresses space, the developed surface interior also fractures space and destroys its continuity. 33 There are other limitations to this type of drawing: in showing the appendages of the room, the room itself is presented as a void, with the emphasis on the walls that face it.

In okoshi-ezu, the cut-out elevations and the base to which they are glued are of the same paper. The walls of the building are made of the same material as the base upon which they sit; the materiality of the page makes the interior and hence, the walls have the same thickness as the pages of the book or portfolio. This is similar to the synthesis of approach achieved in Chatani’s work.

The okoshi-ezu technique, while showing similarities to developed surface interior drawings, allows an interiority that is different due to the physical shift from two dimensions to three. Rice writes that “the interior is produced through an infolding [of an] impressionable surface. This surface does not produce a hermetic seal against the world, but rather is activated through the inhabitant’s relation to the city.” 34 The interior of the okoshi-ezu, in contrast to the developed surface drawing, is open to the world, activated by the reader’s relation to it as an object which is made.

**REPRESENTATION’S DOUBLeNESS**

The objecthood of the book offers metaphors of containment and exteriority: it exists as a closed object. The closed book is a set of pages that, through their accumulation, offer a full-scale reading of their internal references. In the examples of The Sleeping Beauty and the okoshi-ezu technique, no element of their structure remains neutral, since the whole function only because its parts have been brought into sharp focus in relation to the way they perform. In engaging with these works, the reader’s act of turning the pages or making the volume becomes, as Johanna Drucker writes in The Century of Artists’ Books (2004), a physical, sculptural element, rather than an incidental activity: “a convention of bookness becomes subject matter … The fact that the work is bound goes beyond mere convenience of constraint and fastening and becomes a means to articulate these relations.” 35 The content of these books becomes spatialized through the structure of the book and meaning is read through the manipulation of pages. This is a demonstration of binding together the 1:1 scale object book with its to-scale referent. 36

The objecthood of the model seemingly offers a vehicle for a similar combination of the strong presence of the representation at a 1:1 scale and the content of the work, when related to interiority. Models, merely by existing in a three-dimensional state, may be seen as objects in their own right which display the interior. It is this objecthood which sets them apart from drawings. However, the model also encompasses the miniature, the diminutive, and hence a fascination with this concentrated self-enclosed world. Susan Stewart writes that “we can only stand outside, looking in, experiencing a type of tragic distance.” 37 The miniature as model begins with imitation; hence, a “second-handedness and distance” exists within the model. 38 Christian Hubert refers to the extent of the model’s objecthood: “The space of the model lies on the border between...
representation and actuality... neither pure representation nor transcendent object. It claims a certain autonomous objecthood, yet this condition is always incomplete. The model is always a model of... According to Hubert, although the model achieves some objecthood, its desire is to act as a simulacrum, and therefore the model as representation is always present. The model struggles to truly separate itself from the miniature in the way the book exists at a 1:1 scale. The model as an object rarely overrides its reading as a miniature depiction.

Alternatively, Drucker writes in her comprehensive commentary of artists’ books: ‘We enter the space of the book in the openings which position us in relation to a double spread of pages. Here the manipulated scale of page elements becomes spatialized: we are in a physical relation to the book. The scale of the opening stretches to embrace us, sometimes expanding beyond the comfortable parameters of our field of vision, or at the other extreme narrows our focus to a minute point of intimate inquiry.’ This supports the notion that the presence of the book exists more strongly as an object rather than as a scaled referent. The interiority offered by books is due to both their component parts and their overall structure. Through the cumulation of discrete pages, combined with their conceptual terrain of reference, depth through accretion is achieved. The structure of the book and its inherent possibilities for containing unfolding volumes and spatialities allow another form of interiority to be explored. Representation’s doubleness is present within books due to these characteristics.

THE TEMPORALITY OF INTERIORITY

In order to examine the outcomes of representation’s doubleness, the varying intensities of past, present and future tenses within representation need to be acknowledged. Within architectural drawing, the past is the time of drawer; the drawing has been drawn. The present is the time of the viewer, when it is being viewed — according to Michael Newman, the drawing’s particular mode of being lies between the withdrawal of the trace in the mark and the presence of the idea that it prefigures. The future is the time of the inhabitant, it is to exist in the future — the drawing as proposition. However, there is not necessarily an equality to these three. Orthographic projections are not drawn with vigour or with spontaneity and due to their precision they are less connected to the present. Their generative qualities refer strongly to a future tense. Within these tenses, it is Rice’s description of the plan’s necessity to be imagined that is dominant; David Leatherbarrow writes: ‘Architects work not in the nominative but in the subjective case; each drawing or model is an “as if.” Therefore, the architectural drawing seems to proclaim this. Books offer a different temporal condition because it is the book as object that is the dominant reading. This is achieved both through the presence of the representation and the encounter one has with it in the act of reading. This present version of the drawings is experienced through the act of reading and turning pages, both of which place the book strongly in the present tense. Reading may be private and suggests an intimacy of engagement: it is an active relationship between a representation or object and the individual. This shifts the book then from existing strongly as a 1:1 object reified in framed space, to existing in real time as a series of experiences bound together.’

An examination of the interiority of representation, in highlighting representation’s doubleness, brings the presence of that representation into focus. The alternative representation of interiority, offered by artists’ books, threads together a particular temporal notion to its archival potential. Artists’ books bring doubled interiority to the representation of space: the book brings into tension and coincidence its own interiority and the imagined or represented interiority of the drawn architecture. This is done through the book’s use of the structure of the codex as an aspect of its conception as well as calling attention to it throughout the execution. Representation possessing its own interiority is achieved by binding two scales: which is represented and the 1:1 scale or objecthood of the representation itself. Interior architecture requires a range of representations; it continually operates in the mutable zone that occurs when shifting representations. Artists’ books then are seen as a complementary three-dimensional representation, with a propositional role.

NOTES

1. Also, in reference to the theatre, a set consisting of the inside of a building or room. Charles Rice, The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 57.
11. Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Durham: Duke
University Press, 1993), 37, quoted in Hedges, “Scale as the Representation of an Idea,” 75.


15. Olafur Eliasson, in Foor, Tree of Codes, back cover.


19. Ibid., 64. These are also referred to as tateokushi-ezu and tate-ezu.

20. Ibid., 65.

21. Ibid., 64.


23. Ibid., 64. These are also referred to as tateokushi-ezu and tate-ezu.

24. Ibid., 66.

25. Ibid., 65.

26. Ibid., 64.

27. William Halfpenny, Robert Morris and Thomas Lightoler (London, 1757). This was not the earliest use of the technique. See Robin Evans, Robin Evans: Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays (London: Architectural Association Publications, 1997), 228, note 5.


29. Ibid., 66.


31. Ibid., 16.

32. Evans, Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays, 203.

33. Ibid.


36. Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne refer to a similar situation within model making, with what is being explained, is the explanandum; that, is the modeled; and the explanation, or the explanans, is the model. Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, “Models, Metaphors and the Hermeneutics of Design,” Design Issues 9, no. 1 (1992): 59.

37. Stewart, On Longing, 70.

38. Ibid., 171-2.


41. The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act, Selected from the Tate Collection by Avis Newman, Curated by Catherine de Zegher (London: Tate Publishing; New York: The Drawing Center, 2003). 93, Bryan, in referring to the difference between drawing and painting, writes that the drawn line ‘in a sense always exists in the present tense, in the time of its own unfolding, the ongoing time of a present that constantly presses forward.’ Norman Bryson, “A Walk for Wal’s Sake,” in The Stage of Drawing, 94–95.

42. Rice, The Emergence of the Interior, 69.


45. Ibid, 305.


47. Susan Hedges, “Scale as the Representation of an Idea,” 75.


Minimalist Aesthetics and the Imagined and Inhabited Interiority of Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

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ABSTRACT
Since the dedication of Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, minimalist design strategies have transformed the way in which public memorials, particularly those that deal with problematic pasts, have been conceived, constructed, managed and understood. Contemporary approaches stress the affective potential of memorial space, where physical and emotional engagement is as significant as symbolic and material form. This embodied and affective focus to memory-making is ultimately an expression of interiority, the social construction of the interior through embodied experience.

This paper examines the imagined and inhabited interiority of Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the context of the effectiveness of the communicative aspects of minimalist design strategies employed in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as described in Jeffrey Klarik Ochsner’s theory of ‘linking objects’. Intended meanings for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a place of remembrance, it is argued, are negated ultimately by the lack of signification within its design, the absence of ‘linking objects’. In contrast to the imagined interiority of the memorial, the inhabited interiority of the memorial it is argued, is predominantly one of play and performance rather than one of reflection and understanding.

INTRODUCTION: INTERIORITY AND SPACES OF MEMORY
The nascent discourse of interiority within the interior and spatial design discipline stresses its socio-spatial/temporal dimension. Interiority is conceptualised as a function of inhabitation and embodiment, an abstract condition produced through the appropriation of space rather than as simply a function of architectural parameters. Here interiority is understood as a cultural construct that is socially produced through lived experience, both a social product and a means of social control.

Spatial relations, both material and symbolic, shape everyday social practices, including those involved in the representation of memory. Whether public or private, spaces of memory are cultural representations that are socially produced; their meanings are negotiated through social action.

Memorial artefacts allow for the past to be represented and made meaningful in the present. Dominated by figurative representation until the mid-twentieth century, the memorial design typology in the West has since this time been under challenge to respond to the uncertainties and discontinuities of the contemporary. Where figurative representation is limited by its singular meaning, abstract representation has offered the potential for supporting multiple interpretations of the past and instead of limiting meaning, provides new ways of provoking responses from visitors, transmitting messages, and addressing new subjects of remembrance.1

MINIMALIST AESTHETICS, EMBODIMENT AND THE PRODUCTION OF INTERIORITY
Following the dedication of Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, minimalist design strategies have become the default aesthetic for public memorial design in the West. While not a defined artistic movement, the term ‘Minimalism’ refers to an avant-garde art aesthetic that evolved in the United States in the 1960s and is primarily associated with the works of Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin and Robert Morris.2 Predominantly found in sculpture, minimalism is marked by single or repeated geometric forms and an overt rejection of illusionism. As a reaction against the dominant contemporary aesthetic of Abstract Expressionism of the 1940s and 1950s, minimalism sought to remove all evidence of the hand of the artist, in particular any trace of emotion or spontaneity.

Minimalist sculpture of the 1960s appears ‘minimal’ in the sense that it appears to be reductive, depersonalised and anonymous and hence devoid of intention or feeling on behalf of the artist. Conventional aesthetic aims of composition, expression and artistic intent are rejected. Equally, they appear minimal in terms of their level of artistic execution. Minimal artists were focused on the ‘objectness’ of the work - its physical presence in relation to the viewer - and sought to challenge painting as the dominant plastic art, its emphasis on sight and the frontal relationship with the viewer; the containment of artistic expression within the picture frame and its referential underpinnings.

Susan Best notes that minimalism is typically interpreted as ‘anti-subjective, anti-expressive and anti-aesthetic,’ generally understood to mark the beginning of the anti-aesthetic tradition in Western art and the rejection of the subjective dimension in art. Best argues that minimalism has been positioned erroneously as the beginning of the anti-aesthetic tradition and that rather than seeing minimalism as a rejection of conventional aesthetics, it was more a ‘refiguring of aesthetic problems.’

The debate around Minimalism revolves around form and materiality as well as context, or how the works were encountered, that is, the relationship with the viewer. Even in the modernist tradition of Western sculpture there was an understanding that sculpture was a defined entity that was separate from other objects in life and experienced primarily by sight. Modernist sculpture was experienced across a space that defined the difference between the real world and the world.
of illusion of the sculpture. The transition point between these two worlds was the plinth, which physically and conceptually separated the work from everyday life in the same way as a frame of a painting does. The minimalist eradication of the plinth affected both the form of the sculpture and its perception. A new relationship between the viewer and the work was brought into existence. In contrast to modernist intentions in sculpture, minimalist works change the emphasis from formal and compositional relationships within the sculpture to a relationship with the viewer. Placement of the work within the confines of the gallery space or landscape is orchestrated by the artist so that the viewer becomes aware of their movement through space. The physical situation of the minimal work is therefore as much a part of the work as the object itself.

Minimalist sculpture is therefore more corporeal than visual, it engages the viewer on a sensual and phenomenal level rather than a literal or simply aesthetic one. The viewer becomes part of a bodily experience mediated by sculpture. Minimalist sculpture intrudes on us in such a way as to make us acutely aware of its physical presence in our space.6 As Morris argues, sculpture therefore moves from the formal aspects of the art object – scale, colour, composition – to the viewer’s response and self-awareness – “In a sense, what is most important is what the sculptural object does – in terms of response – rather than what it is.”

Susan Best, referring to an analysis of minimalism by Rosalind Krauss and Thierry de Duve, notes that minimalism represents a “shift from an aesthetics of production to an aesthetics of reception” 7:

“To calibrate the achievements of minimalism more precisely we could say that minimalism questioned the expressionist theory of art, but not expression in toto. It questioned one account of the subject, but not subjectivity in general. It questioned the focus upon the artist’s hidden thoughts and feelings, but not the whole question of intention. And these various moves have important consequences, one of which is the shift of focus away from production and on to the work and its reception.”

Minimalism therefore stresses the temporality of perception, an interest in the body and in the experience of objects. Minimalist sculptures make them aware of their physical movement, their sensory reactions and the physical context of the work and its spatial relationship with it. Minimalist sculptures, often physically large and dominant in terms of their physical context, rely on interaction with its audience in order for the work to be understood.

Because of the minimal physicality of the artwork – its visual flatness, use of reductive materials, simple geometric shapes and repetition of form – the viewer is not absorbed in its illusory qualities. Because the viewer is not drawn to the illusionary qualities of the work, focus is drawn to its physical qualities and its context, both physical and sensory. Changing qualities of light and shadow, openness and enclosure, depth and frontality, reflectivity and flatness, produce a rich embodied experience when coupled with the interaction of the boundaries of the artwork’s site and the presence of other viewers. In emphasising embodied experience, minimalist aesthetics mediate the production of interiority.

The philosophical basis of Minimalist art is grounded in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Robert Morris uses the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty to describe the experience of the minimal work as a temporal encounter between the body, the work and the space containing the work.8 Describing the experience of a viewer moving around a minimalist work, Morris makes a comparison between the experience of its physical shape and its mental image of its form. For Morris, the goal of the new sculpture is to allow this form to become visible to a spectator moving around the object.

Merleau-Ponty’s contribution to phenomenology is essentially a revised understanding of perception and perceptual consciousness and a rebuke of the prevailing subject-object relation. The classic understanding of perception, with the treatment of one’s own perceiving body as an object with various properties that creates certain impressions that consciousness deciphers, ignores the ‘subjective’ nature of human experience. Merleau-Ponty argues for perception as the fundamental human function and for the perceiving human to be acknowledged as the central reference point in Western philosophy. He suggests that the perceiving human being is the central point of reference in the posing and debating of philosophical issues, arguing that we are in a constant relationship with our environment and we only come to know ourselves in terms of what we perceive and experience – “Our body is in the world as the heart is in the organism. It keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive … and with it forms a system.”9

The Minimalist subject, unlike its Cartesian precursor, is a subject that perceives in relation to the conditions of the spatial field experienced. That is to say, the Minimalist subject perceives in an ever-changing temporal sense. For Merleau-Ponty’s subject, perception is contingent upon the conditions of the situation and the world of objects in which the subject perceives. Our body has dimensions and orientations – a top and bottom, a front and a back, a left and right side. These conditions establish what Merleau-Ponty calls a level of ‘pre-objective experience’, a datum of reference points which functions as the reference for our engagement with the world – “To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily in space; it is of it.”10

For Merleau-Ponty, perception also plays a key role in the construction of space. Space is not perceived simply as it is, it is partly perceptually constructed. For Merleau-Ponty, space is seen as ‘a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world.’11 Merleau-Ponty’s conception of space is essentially Kantian, whereby space is seen not
as an objective construct, but affected by the subjective nature of human sensory faculties. For Merleau-Ponty, however, it is the body that plays an essential role in the constitution of space – space is constituted by the body and is perceived and subjectively experienced through the embodied subject. Geometrical coordinates are therefore seen as simply a tool in understanding space. Space is defined not as a physical setting in which objects are contained but a form of external experience where the relationships of and between objects are constituted by the experience of the perceiver – ‘The body is our general medium for having a world.’

Minimalism was therefore grounded in a world perceived by the body rather than an art of the object. Minimalism also rejected traditional composition thereby often assuming repetitive, aggregative forms, pushing art towards the utilitarian and the anti-artistic. On the surface, this has compounded the misreading of minimalist art as reductive.

MINIMALIST AESTHETICS AND MEMORIAL ARCHITECTURE

As an aesthetic response, minimalism is key to the power of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Since its dedication in 1982, minimalist design strategies have transformed the way in which public memorials, particularly those that deal with problematic pasts, have been conceived, constructed, managed and understood.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial appeared in a context when public art had become an increasingly accepted form of articulating public space. The positive critical reception of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial design recognised its direct influences from the sculptural traditions of late 1970s minimalist work and the site-specific public art of the time. Criticism of Lin’s design from the non-art world however, began soon after the design was publicly revealed. The design was initially criticised as not being sufficiently heroic, a “black gash of shame.” This criticism however, dissipated quickly after its dedication when it became clear that the memorial had a profound emotional response in visitors. Sonja K. Foss attributes the success of the memorial participant:

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The inhabited interiority of Vietnam Veterans Memorial is exclusively one of contemplative reflection and ritual performances. Touching names, taking rubbings of names, leaving personal objects and participating in communal gatherings are ritual behaviours that are an essential part of the design of the memorial. Lin designed the memorial with the intent that the names themselves would be the memorial. What she did not foresee however, was the power of the specific strategies of naming that she employed to encourage visitors to leave behind mementoes of life, to give those names the keepsakes of identity, as if to restore to the dead the intimate worlds they lost.

While a symbolic object such as a memorial is one way in which a permanent link can be established with the past, the mechanism by which this may happen has had limited investigation with the exception of the work of architectural historian Jeffrey Karl Ochsner.

In his discussion on the communicative aspects of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Ochsner refers to and extends the work of psychoanalyst Yamik Volkan and his theory of ‘linking objects’ in the process of mourning. Ochsner considers the way in which the Vietnam Veterans Memorial communicates with its audience, theorising the memorial as a ‘linking object’, as conceived by Volkan. Additionally, Ochsner argues that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is able to foster active, intimate responses because it creates a ‘space of absence’ as defined by Richard Elkin, a void in which is experienced the simultaneous absence and presence of the dead. Ochsner argues that the space of absence as defined by Elkin can be considered as a type of linking object. As a linking object, the space of absence is a ‘site for projection ... we project the life we find.’

Ochsner defines the key aspect of a linking object as one that is ‘psychologically invested with aspects of the deceased and of those who mourn.’ In order for active engagement to occur as argued by Ochsner’s theory of linking objects, the visual linkage or cue must allow for projection by the memorial participant:

- For projection to occur, crucially identification must take place. For identification to take place, a space must be set apart from the everyday to allow for the act of reflection. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial creates a distinct space of contemplation through its siting and choreographing of visitor experience. Having set the stage for identification, the strategy of listing the names of the dead employed by Lin allows for individual stories to be told within the larger cultural memory of the war. The names and the way they are expressed on the memorial become the linking object, allowing for the projection of the visitor into the space of memory.
The linking object is therefore a design element of the memorial that acts as the site for the memorial participant’s projection of the deceased individual. In the case of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the linking objects are the inscribed names of the individuals. The ‘linking’ capacity is not simply through the use of the name itself but significantly through the strategy of chronological listing.

Ochsner argues that the names and the reflective surface of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial operate as the linking object in the memorial and allow the memorial participant to actively engage with and project themselves into its space. Through its reflective surface, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial allows a simultaneous awareness of both surface and space and of connection and separation: ‘The spatiality of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial – the relationship of physical space and virtual space, mediated by a surface of names – allows proximity to and identification with the dead, and an experience of the simultaneous reality of separation and connection, of living and dying.’

Ochsner argues that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial ‘is essentially incomplete without human participation; it cannot be fully understood without addressing the issues raised by human interaction.’ Interiority is therefore key to the intent and affective power of the work. In the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, experience is foregrounded because of the use of typical strategies of minimalism – abstraction and reduction of form and a muteness of expression and meaning. Rather than focus attention on visual codes of representation, the minimalist aesthetics of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial focus attention on a range of senses – sight, sound, movement, touch. Through the formal qualities of the work, the memorial participant’s direct experience of the work becomes focal, the memorial participant becoming part of the experience of the work.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial challenged the idea of memory as a knowable object and changed forever the popular conception of what a public memorial should be and how it should work. Visitors would now expect to physically and emotionally interact with a memorial and to be moved potentially to a point of catharsis. An emphasis on interiority and embodiment, through the incorporation of minimalist aesthetics continues to pervade contemporary memorial design.

**THE IMAGINED INTERIORITY OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE**

Dedicated in 2005, Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is located in the Friedrichstadt district of Berlin, around 170 metres south of the Brandenburg Gate. On three sides of the site are located foreign embassies and housing and on the fourth, facing west, is located the Tiergarten, Berlin’s largest park. The space of the memorial is therefore part of the urban fabric of Berlin, accessible twenty-four hours a day and capable of being used by visitors as well as passers-by. Beneath the memorial field is an underground ‘Place of Information’ that holds the names of all known Jewish victims of the Holocaust, obtained from the Israeli museum Yad Vashem. The Place of Information fulfills an educative and didactic role, supporting the intended role of the above-ground memorial field as a place of remembrance and contemplation.

The memorial is composed of 2,711 concrete slabs or stelae arranged in a grid pattern across a sloping site of about 19 hectares. The stelae are 2.38 metres long and 0.95 metres wide and vary in height from 0.2 metres to 4.8 metres, creating an undulating, wave-like appearance when seen en-masse. While the stelae are abstract, their individual differences in height imply the anonymity of a packed crowd. Eisenman’s intention is that the Holocaust is remembered as an active condition within the present, an abstracted placelessness that is a point of reference to events rather than representing the events themselves.

The notion of interiority is key to the design of the memorial. Eisenman conceptualises the memorial as a phenomenal enclosure: ‘I said all along that I wanted people to have a feeling of being in the present and an experience that they had never had before. And one that was different and slightly unsettling. The world is too full of information and here is a place without information.’ Interiority is embedded in the design of the memorial through
Because of its subject, the serenity and silence perceived from the street are broken by an internal claustrophobic density that gives little relief as it envelopes the visitor who enters the field. The experience of being present in being, of being without the conventional markers of experience, of being potentially lost in space, of an un-material materiality: that is the memorial’s uncertainty. When such a project can overcome its seeming diagrammatic abstraction, in its excess, in the excess of a reason gone mad, then such a work becomes a warning, a mahnmal, not to be judged on its meaning or its aesthetic but on the impossibility of its own success.25

The rows of stelae placed close together in a seemingly endless configuration is intended to evoke feelings of disorientation and claustrophobia. The tight arrangement of the stelae, each two degrees off the vertical, is designed to produce a disorienting, uncomfortable atmosphere when one moves within the field. Eisenman’s aim here is for a contemporary audience to experience emotions that parallel those of the victims of the Holocaust. The restriction of views and sound from within the field of stelae further aim to amplify feelings of disorientation and hopelessness, potentially leaving the visitor feeling claustrophobic, confused and alienated.

The stelae landscape is dissected by a grid of 0.95 metre-wide pathways, designed to allow one to walk through the field. Eisenman’s aim here is for a contemporary audience to experience a steady passage across the undulating terrain. The gradual rise in degrees off the vertical surface of stelae is in the shade. The concrete materiality of the stelae invites the sense of touch, particularly on warm days when the sun is at its peak or the center of the site, a natural soundscape is created, encouraging visitors to recline or sit on. Because the terrain falls gently towards the center of the site, a natural soundscape is created, encouraging the human voice. The concrete materiality of the stelae invites the sense of touch, particularly on warm days when the surfaces of stelae are in the shade.

In the memorial’s silence in terms of the traditional ideas of image and meaning, it becomes political. Unlike other site-specific work that has no memorial or political programme, it is the memorial’s obdurate lack of obvious symbolism that makes its public claim to creating the meaning of the Holocaust may begin to be addressed. Photographic images published in architectural journals and monographs in particular reinforce this imagined interiority - invariably the memorial is depicted as a pure, abstract, ghostly form in the landscape, usually devoid of human presence. Where people are shown, it is the imagined reflective experience of the solitary figure that is portrayed.

Eisenman’s imagined interiority as represented in his own words and in photographic representation, is a field of disquiet, a context from which the meaning of the Holocaust may begin to be addressed. Photographic images published in architectural journals and monographs in particular reinforce this imagined interiority - invariably the memorial is depicted as a pure, abstract, ghostly form in the landscape, usually devoid of human presence. Where people are shown, it is the imagined reflective experience of the solitary figure that is portrayed.

While the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is grounded in minimalist design strategies and precedents, unlike the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it appears as a field without a centre or distinct focus. While surrounded by significant civic institutions, the meaning of the memorial is not generated by its relationship to its context. Unlike the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which is embedded in its context and directly gains meaning and gives meaning to its context, particularly the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is conceived as an interior, appearing purely self-referential and inward looking.

While the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is set apart from its surroundings through a strategy of excavation, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe abruptly connects with its surroundings. While the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has a distinct beginning and end, a defined approach and a clear narrative, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe appears as a field, has no distinct boundaries or point of approach and hence no clear beginning or end point and no narrative other than visitor experience.

Conflicting extremes of visitor motivation ranging from respect and remembrance to voyeurism and tourism exist in tension at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. The memorial engenders human activity through its manipulation of the ground plane, the form and placement of the stelae and its material presence. Memorial participants become conscious of their bodily movements as a result of the focus on maintaining a steady passage across the undulating terrain. The gradual rise in the height of the stelae encourages visitors to step over the top of the memorial by jumping from one stela to another. These stelae that approximate the height of a chair or table are used by visitors to recline or sit on. Because the terrain falls gently towards the centre of the site, a natural soundscape is created, encouraging the echoing of the human voice. The concrete materiality of the stelae invites the sense of touch, particularly on warm days when the surfaces of stelae are in the shade.

THE INHABITED INTERIORITY OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is grounded

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The ‘hyper’ interaction of visitors in the space however, denies the possibility of the space operating as a space of reflection. Rather it is a space of action and distraction: Immediately after the opening on May 12, 2005, discussion over proper behaviour began, ‘Stop Disgracing Ourselves,’ the Berliner Kurier said in one headline. The Tagespiegel complained about some of the visitors’ ‘strange customs’ like kissing and sunbathing around the pillars. Some younger people used it as an amusement park, jumping from the top of one slab to another.27

Quentin Stevens explores the critical and public reception of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe including observations of visitor behaviour, noting that the memorial is ‘highly theatrical,’ allowing for multiple and varied forms of physical interaction. The pure abstraction of the memorial offers no clues to participants of appropriate codes of behaviour within the space. Unlike the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is not physically bounded as a space that signals a different mode of behaviour than normal. Rather than framing a fixed, collective audience, this complex field creates multiple, individual viewpoints and stages for individuals to act differently. People are dispersed throughout the site. The fields’ interstitial pathways are intentionally too narrow for people to walk abreast. Visitors are forced to walk in separate aisles. People move through the stelae field site along two different axes, in different directions. The regular gridded layout allows people to frequently turn corners and change aisles; it also brings strangers together, leading to close encounters, sometimes very suddenly.28

As opposed to the imagined interiority of the memorial as a place of reflection and contemplation, the inhabited interiority predominately operates as one of play and performance. The stelae appear as a field, not for remembrance but for human interaction. The repetitive form, materiality and colour of the stelae form a mute background to the colour and movement of human interaction with the space. New visitors to the space are encouraged by the actions of others. Stevens argues that the mood of the memorial space of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is a function of how people are behaving in the space at a given point in time. Days before the dedication in 2005, Eisenman acknowledged the potential for the memorial to be used in ways that may not be consistent with its commemorative purpose:

‘...When you turn a project over to clients, they do with it what they want – it’s theirs and they occupy your work. You can’t tell them what to do with it. If they want to knock the stones over tomorrow, honestly, that’s fine. People are going to picnic in the field. Children will play tag in the field. There will be fashion models modelling there and films will be shot there. I can easily imagine some spy shoot ‘em ups ending in the field. What can I say? It’s not a sacred place.’ 29

While some audience behaviour is related to remembrance and reflection related to the Holocaust and the imagined interiority of the memorial, the dominant form of behaviour however relates to physical interaction with the forms and spaces of the work. Most visitors do not appear to think, or to be receiving or producing meanings. Many visitors’ apparent obliviousness to the ‘negative’ sensations intended by the MMJE design demonstrates that its meaning is not contained in its physical form. 30

In Ochser’s terms, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is not a space that enables identification and projection as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial allows. Intended meanings for the memorial as a place of remembrance are negated ultimately by the lack of signification within its design, the absence of ‘linking objects’. The aesthetics of minimalism in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is taken to its extreme in terms of abstraction. The result is an interiority of play and performance rather than reflection and understanding.

CONCLUSION

It can be argued that the success of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial popularised what had previously been regarded as the difficult formal language of minimalist art. At the same time, its popularity initiated a surge of interest in formal memorialisation worldwide, particularly in response to problematic events. The effectiveness of Libeskind’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial lies in its ability to frame an aesthetic response in terms of the experiential, to address issues of identity construction both personal and national and to create a place of remembrance capable of holding multiple interpretations and meaningful memory making.

While grounded in similar minimalist design strategies to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, intended meanings for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a space of remembrance, it is argued, are negated ultimately by the lack of signification within its design, the absence of ‘linking objects’. In contrast to the imagined interiority of the memorial, as represented by text and photography, the inhabited interiority of the memorial is one dominated by play and performance rather than one of reflection and understanding.

Public spaces that contain memory attempt to fix and define the use of a particular site. The appearance and aesthetic qualities of these sites attempt to communicate specific symbolic meanings that will either stimulate certain actions such as reflection and contemplation or inhibit other actions. The aesthetics of abstraction and minimalism of contemporary memorialisation allows for many personal and communal readings to mutually co-exist. In the case of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe however, the pure abstraction of the design may offer no clues to participants of appropriate codes of behaviour within the space.

The dominant forms of inhabited interiority experienced in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe may be explained to some extent by differing societal constructions of interiority, public space and national remembrance. The key issue here, however, is the dramatic disjunction between the imagined interiority of Eisenman’s work and its inhabited reality. In the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the aesthetics

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Opposite

Figure 3: Peter Eisenman, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, 2005. The inhabited interiority of the Memorial is one that is dominated by play and performance, at odds with its commemorative intent. Source: Author.

Above

Figure 4: Peter Eisenman, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, 2005. The nature of containment and enclosure and lack of commemorative signification in the Memorial facilitates a very physical engagement and performative form of interiority. Source: Author.
of contemporary memorialisation results in visitors often being unaware of the significance of its memorial setting. The memorial's imagined interiority assumes that visitors are able to differentiate the memorial space from its everyday surroundings and act appropriately within it.

People, through their own initiative, actively fashion public space to suit their own needs. Physical features such as walls, ledges and slopes are often designed into public spaces in order to define spatial and behavioural boundaries but they can also serve other purposes, becoming places to sit, recline, climb, linger and play. In the case of representational spaces such as memorial sites, the unregulated and often unanticipated actions of people in these spaces results in the loosening up of the dominant meanings of these sites. For the most part, these forms of behaviour are benign, but in the case of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe they are fundamentally at odds with the traditional expectations of memorials as places where both memory and social behaviour is contained, restricted and interiorised.

NOTES


4. Ibid., 129.


7. Susan Best, “Minimalism, Subjectivity, and Aesthetics: Rethinking the Anti-Aesthetic Tradition in Late-Moder Art.” 131.

8. Ibid., 140.


11. Ibid., 171.

12. Ibid., 205.

13. Ibid., 167.


16. Ibid., 334.


19. Ibid., 163.

20. Ibid., 160.

21. Ibid., 163.

22. Ibid., 165.
Paranoiac Critical Interiorisations: Odysseus in Mies van der Rohe’s Seagram Building and Buckminster Fuller’s domes

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ABSTRACT
Salvador Dalí’s surrealist procedure, which he named the paranoiac critical method, is a method of generating irrational knowledge through the associative mechanisms of delirious phenomena. Drawing together the story of Odysseus and the Sirens in Homer’s Odyssey and K. Michael Hays’ essay on the modernist dematerialisations of Mies’ von der Rohe’s Seagram Building (1958) in New York, the paranoiac-critical method is employed in an essay of Buckminster Fuller’s giant geodesic domes as a continuation of the transformative power of Odysseus’s legendary journey of interiorisation.

PRECONSCIOUS IDIOSYNCRASIES
Salvador Dalí developed the paranoiac-critical method in the 1930s as a means of legitimising some conscious control over necessarily unconscious and automatic Surrealist practices. Earlier theoretical formulations of surrealist practice described by André Breton were explicit in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside aesthetic or moral presumptions, in order to reveal the pure process of thought.1 The illegitimacy of this surrealist purity afforded by this absence of conscious control has been articulated by Laurent Jenny and Thomas Tresise in their article, ‘From Breton to Dalí: The Adventures of Automatism’. 2 The key problem of legitimising automatism, as they assert, is external and internal unverifiability yet colloquially many creative experiences are well described by recourse to terms like ‘automatic’.

The precise boundaries that separate automatic, directed automatic and conscious control are notoriously difficult to differentiate, and the difficulty likely resides in the terms employed for the purpose. The language of Freudian analysis used by surrealists is now outdated in psychotherapy, but remains useful in the less precise arena of design theory. The Freudian terms ‘preconscious’, where things become temporarily unconscious but are capable of returning to consciousness, and ‘sublimation’, where sexual desires are suppressed and released in socially acceptable forms, are directly relevant here because of the necessary erasures implied. For example, one needs to learn to read firstly as a means of gaining the social approval that is a precondition of sexual fulfilment. Further, when learning to read one must learn to move one’s eyes in particular sequences and apply particular associative and interpretive structures to thereby understand the sentences, but once it is learned, the process of reading becomes invisible; necessarily invisible to knowledge; and the initial impetus to learn is also forgotten and reading appears as an end in itself, or as a means to an intermediate goal, rather than a means to reproduction. This epistemological foreclosure is part of what Dali meant with his frequently repeated aphorism, ‘I know what I’m eating. I don’t know what I’m doing.’3

The complex processes of our actions, including the associative mechanisms accompanying them, are sublimated, made preconscious, but they constitute the foundation upon which conscious thought and action occur. As with the example of reading, it is possible, indeed likely, to be ignorant of what one has previously made preconscious, of what presumptions one brings to a situation and consequently what guides apparently automatic actions. These presumptions, however, may be readily apparent to people with different perspectives, who possess a kind of exterior perspective to our interiorised amnesias, and it is here that automatic actions can be revelatory of the pure processes of one’s mind, just as Breton had asserted, if we accept that what is invisible to one may be visible to another, and what is preconscious is what is pure. Whether pure or not, what will be revealed is likely to be what is strange or idiosyncratic with respect to a locally common form, what is outside our intentional or unintentional personal style. So it is from here, at the limiting surface of the personal and the common, but firmly grounded in the preconscious idiosyncratic, that surrealist practice emerges and is made visible as a style of production as much as a style of perception.

For Dalí, the surrealist method was ‘a spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretive critical associations of delirious phenomena’.4 What is telling here is that Dalí defines his surrealist practice as the generation of knowledge, not the creation of surreal objects or images. This corresponds with Dalí’s repeated assertion that his personality, his lucidity, was more important than his artefacts.5 This emphasis on perception, from which new knowledge emerges, is resonant with classical ideas about the nature of artistry, as Aristotle wrote about the value of poems. The greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor; it is the one thing that cannot be learned from others, and it is also a sign of genius since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarities.6 The approximate equivalence between the creation of metaphors, the creation of knowledge and the creation of artefacts is the supple and subtle territory of this interpretation of surrealist practice.

PARANOIAC CRITICAL METHODS
Breton wrote that Dalí’s paranoiac-critical method could be successfully applied to all manner of exegesis,7 and although there have been several publications on architecture and surrealism in general, the only sustained example is Rem Koolhaas’ renowned Delirious New York (1978) and some articles in S,M,L,XL (1995).8 Other than these, the paranoiac-critical method has rarely, if ever, been explicitly applied to architectural theory.9 In 2005 Koolhaas spoke about using the method for Delirious New York, and hinted at its ongoing practical validity; [the paranoiac critical method] seemed to me to be the best way of making coherent and heroic what was not necessarily either... Dalí’s strategic formula offers procedures: making the world accept visions that it does not understand, asides in S,M,L,XL (1995).10 The focus of this paper is a hybrid of Koolhaas’ ambiguous architectural insertions and Dalí’s generation of irrational knowledge, but it inevitably also a revelation of the author’s interpretive preoccupations, the first of which is the description of the process itself, the second is the interiorisation of the world as enacted by the character of Odysseus.

In the application of the paranoiac-critical method as a means of generating metaphors, knowledge and artefacts, seemingly unrelated objects and ideas are combined and forced into the form of an obsessional object or ‘idea-object’, in this case representing or enacting interiorisation.
In both Koolhaas’ work and in this paper, idea-objects are tempered with the critical architectural concerns of structure and programme, and with a representational concern for the accuracy of perception. The soft and formless play of metaphors and relative interpretations are rendered critical by concretisation and objectification. Forcing the materialisation of ephemeral considerations deliberately or perhaps opportunistically blurs the distinction between real and imagined objects, so that real objects can be considered as metaphors, bound to their objective form with a soft and catalystic gaze. The obsessive transforming vision produces the illusion of objective autonomy in the idea-objects because of the apparent semantic elasticity inferred by the varying interpretations.

This objectification is essential because metaphors have no assessable value except via the coherent meanings given by the objects employed in their representations. Dalí’s writing on his process reveals the objective clarity he sought in the objects employed in their representations. Dalí’s writing assessable value except via the coherent meanings given by objects because of the apparent semantic elasticity inferred by the varying interpretations. This method deliberately differs from what we might call logical intuition in that it strategically injects non-logical elements. Arbitrary, partial, and unintentional interpretations, and the permutation of metaphors soften the idea-objects, loosening the connection between the object and its meaning, attenuating the sense of direct authorship and self-representation. Each objectification is critically interpreted for both pragmatics and poetics. If the resultant form is too poetic (extremely impractical or structurally impossible) or too pragmatic (lacking complexity or ambivalence) alternatives are sought. Since multiple interpretations are frequently encountered, the obsessive drive selects for confirmation of at least the premise of the obsession. Each iteration of the critical process is necessarily incomplete; critical completion occurs only at the final iteration. It is essential to allow an incompleteness, to accept errors, to begin to flow and develop a sequence of idea-objects. It may be assumed, though not enforced, that partly failing idea-objects will have their inadequate elements replaced or reformed at a later iteration, but this is itself only an associated self-confirming interpretation. The final iteration, however, may be permanently deferred, allowing the idea-objects to retain softness, and thus the process may produce an abundance of pseudo-random, proto-logical forms based around the soft assembly of critical criteria.

The subject of this paper’s example, the point of departure, comes from a desire to objectify the journey of Odysseus, known later as Ulysses, who travelled the ancient Mediterranean world as the avant-garde of Hellenic culture, taking the Hellenic ethos into the uncivilised wilderness and through military ability and exceptional intelligence made the lands he visited more hospitable for subsequent generations. The subject of the obsession is not the person nor his artefacts, but the process that he enacted and exemplified. This is therefore a fairly soft subject, and one that may be seen operating at many scales simultaneously, allowing materialisations of the myth to occur from the level of the architectural detail, to the architectural form, to the urban layout, to conceptions of a transnational polis. ODYSSEUS AND THE SIRENS

Homer sang of Odysseus sailing a passage between small islands, anticipating the appearance of the Sirens.1 Circe, a nymph, had warned Odysseus that the Sirens are the doom of all who attempt to pass, luring sailors with seductive songs and destroying them. Circe advised Odysseus how to pass safely; Odysseus obeyed precisely, and gave the crew their orders. The crew plugged their ears with wax, wrapped fabric about their ears, and tied Odysseus to the mast. As they passed, the Sirens sent their voices through the air and entreated the men to stay, to benefit from their knowledge of both past and future. When Odysseus, overwhelmed by temptation, commanded to be released from the mast, the crew responded by following his earlier instruction and tied more ropes; Odysseus was made captive by his own command.

Homer does not describe the Sirens’ appearance, though that they have an appearance is clearly implied. Most representations of the Sirens follow the bird-women appearance, known as a harpy, from an illustration on an antique vase now in the British Museum (Figure 1).

Ovid, in his early first century poem, Metamorphoses, wrote that the Sirens, Odysseus encountered were children of Acheilous, god of a river in Northern Greece, renowned for their prowess in singing. They were with Proserpina while she was picking her springtime flowers. Presumably this was when Proserpina was abducted by Pluto and taken as his bride to Hades. ‘The gods were kind,’ and turned the grieving maidens into golden-plumed birds with human faces so they could endlessly prolong the songs of their bemoanment, and gain the wisdom of extra-ordinary longevity. Their songs were so enthralling, as early Greek poet Lycophron wrote, that sailors would starve to death listening. Their tale in Classical literature concludes with a note in Apollodorus’ second century compendium of mythological episodes, the Bibliotheca, here the Sirens are recorded as being so distressed by their first and only failure to capture passing sailors that they threw themselves into the sea and drowned. From Homer; there is little cause to presume that the process of bondage to his duty allowed Odysseus to enjoy or even hear much wisdom from the Sirens. From the later depictions, it would seem that Odysseus hears only hungry cries. The spinner aspect of Sirens was a common feature of later representations like the Pompeii wall painting (Figure 2) painted around 50 years after Ovid, but this may also be read both as sadomasochistic, a moralising indictment against temptation, and as an enforced economic pragmatism justifying the punishment of unproductive desire.

But these warnings are for the oarsmen. The Pompeian Sirens are lizard-like creatures with long legs, very different to the Sirens considered by Homer. The figures of the representations introduced by the Athenians. However, the rotten bodies of the sailors lie beside the Sirens here, as described by Circe – the absence

Above

Figure 1: The Siren Vase, painted by the Siren Painter, from Athens, 480BC-470BC. © The Trustees of the British Museum.
this macabre and telling detail from the Athenian image invites a more sympathetic reading of the Sirens; but is it sympathy through omission? We cannot be sure that Circe was being honest when she warned Odysseus of the Sirens. There is enough left unsaid in Homer for varied interpretation.

THE SIRENS’ MODERNIST INTERPRETATIONS

At a 1996 colloquium, ‘Autonomy and Ideology - Positioning an Avant-Garde in America’, K. Michael Hays spoke of Mies van der Rohe’s Seagram Building (1958) in New York as a key example of avant-garde modernism. In his analysis, Hays recalled a section of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s Dialectic of the Enlightenment (1947), connecting this episode of Odysseus and the Sirens with the philosophical and socio-political transformation of the Enlightenment. Considering Odysseus’ experience tied to his mast listening to the Sirens’ songs, Hays reflected:

What is produced here for Odysseus alone is nothing less than art itself. Yet, impotent in his bonds, he can only contemplate its contours of pure sound; his experience is utterly hollowed out… While the oarsmen, like Mies, like the rest of us, whatever closeness to materials and production might be salvaged, can neither hear art’s song nor delight in its labour but can only sense that we are missing out on something… the genuine experience that can never be brought back from prehistory… in modernity, a unified and substantial center of experience can never be restored but only given as an illusion… through modernism’s abstraction.17

Although Hays wrote that Mies, like the rest of us, no longer has access to the ancient world from which deep inspiration came, it nonetheless lives on through its representation. Hays’ final statement, ‘in modernity, a unified substantial center of experience can never be restored but only given as an illusion through modernism’s abstraction’ may, for our modern purposes, be rephrased: the unified centre is the insubstantial void, which cannot be represented except by the pressures it exchanges with substance. This gesture in art, to capture empty space by an elaboration of its threshold, to invest a void with intended meaning, is a gesture linking the material and immaterial worlds.

What is produced for Odysseus is art, yet no artefact exists, it is thus immaterial art. This is likely the case for Homer too; improvised speeches are immaterial in that no material artefact is left. The process of transcription was presumably done later by others. The key difference here can be explained by two kinds of muse: the unified material muse (material muse → immaterial art) and the dispersed immaterial muse (immaterial muse → material art). In this sense, the classic modernist transcendent impulse entails the material muse of engineering for the immobilisation of the arts, whereas the pre-Odysseus world valued material muses and the immaterial arts of music, dance and oratory. The voyage of Odysseus brought the victorious immaterial muse to many locations, but only in preparation for this encounter did Odysseus request bondage.
The form of Odysseus’ boat includes an ornate arching prow. This curve defines a space across to the mast and Odysseus. This space is not over-defined; it is a man facing his property. This is, after all, a boat built by Odysseus himself – a reflective space, a small monument. Within this intimately contained space, the Sirens intrude. Yet the stillness and power relations of the image – a man tied to a boat’s mast by a deafened crew – conjure suspicion and punishment; Odysseus and his boat and crew now seem at odds with each other, as if their material presence threatens Odysseus. The Sirens offer rescue from this vulnerable position.

For the oarsmen, their deafness ensures they only perceive the Sirens as material muses without immaterial attributes, and the Siren’s liminal quality between materiality and immateriality (since they know the Sirens are singing) does not disturb the ideological distinction. For Odysseus, in effect, the ropes guarantee the Sirens retain an immateriality that their visibility would normally refuse, keeping Odysseus fixed in material artifice so that if he saw anything it was as a vision.

The temptation wrought by the Sirens is to volunteer for activity and hence dissolution and immateriality; succumbing blissfully to the natural force like prey seeking to be devoured. The ropes disempower this decision. The ropes create a virtual space where activity can occur, but the capacity to realise this condition inverts the previous reading of the scene – the structural transference of weight - buildings, like people, freed luxuriously from the labour of supporting themselves. The Siren’s inspirations is to desire to transform the city and thus be rejected and made impotent.

Unlike Koolhaas’ supposed futility of the modern avant-garde (architects as oarsmen), within the Homeric narrative, the finality of many of Odysseus’ experiences lead to the inevitable reading of the Odyssey as the end of prehistory and the beginning of the existence of artefacts - the dematerialisation of muses. In his journey, Odysseus delivers the seeds of colonisation and leaves many previously inhospitable places as part of civilised territory. The Sirens are either killed or made ineffective by him or by the gods soon after.

But for all the removal of his extraordinary experiences, Odysseus’ everyday skills, shared in some measure by all warriors of his age, express a material self-sufficiency unknown to most today. Lost on a Greek island, they could find enough food to live well and with a nympha’s provision of some simple tools, build boats and sail away.

The Siren’s provision of some simple tools, build boats and sail away, the experience of Odysseus and the oarsmen in their encounter with the Sirens and the hollowing out of experience. In all these cases, there is an implied focus, a privileged unified perception, that is presented but systematically refused, a fullness of experience that is made unavailable.

EXPANDING THE INTERIOR

This illusory erasure of weight and the abstract diminution of volume into surface, of object into image, that characterised for Hays architectural modernism’s avant-garde, reflects the experience of Odysseus and the oarsmen in their encounter with the Sirens and the hollowing out of experience. In all these cases, there is an implied focus, a privileged unified perception, that is presented but systematically refused, a fullness of experience that is made unavailable.

This interpretation of the Seagram as a kind of Odysseus, presenting itself as threshold and bearing restrained witness to the Sirens of the city, diminishes them in their mystery and strangeness; Odysseus and the Sirens are not existent from each other than Seagram is from its neighbours, Odysseus is more accurately represented as a whole city; with an eccentric hall and plaza occupying the notional centre and a complex exterior wall, militarily fortified, always being rebuilt, slowly progressing outward. The exterior; the Sirens’ calls, are not represented abstractions but the real materials of the natural world being consumed.
A materialisation of Odysseus at the scale of a fortified city was proposed by Buckminster Fuller only a few years after Seagram was constructed: a 3 kilometre wide geodesic dome to cover midtown Manhattan, the Seagram beneath. (Figure 3) With the operative principle of the material muse inspiring the creation of immaterially Fuller’s approximately hemispheric form and skeletal geodesic construction maximises the emptiness materially created. As an architectural representation of Odysseus, which should afford the possibility of luxurious weightlessness, Fuller’s dome realises this in a way that is at first unexpected: although it is massive, it is, in effect, almost weightless. The thermal uplift from the heat of the city lifts the dome into the cool air above it, keeping the dome in a state of almost-floating.  

The weight that the dome presses onto its ringed footings depends on two factors, the surrounding air temperature, and the amount of thermal activity generated beneath. The more the Manhattanites work, the more they do, the more they consume, the more people fit under the dome, the more heat they radiate into the air caught under the dome; then the more it floats, and rises away. In fact, with a dome like this, we find something totally contrary to our usual experience of construction: the bigger it is, the lighter it is. The extraordinarily dynamic relationship between the dome and its inhabitants places it within the domain of the surrealist object with an automatic origin, as defined by Dalí, since the realisation of the object’s counter-intuitive operation is ‘provoked by the realisation of unconscious acts.’

The logical extension of the grand geodesic is a dome large enough - and with attendant lightness - that it would extend to envelope the earth. Such a dome is relatively easy to imagine constructing - the slow accumulation of broken and inoperative satellites today is like a pointillist sketch of the final form - but the transformative effect is less easily anticipated.

The status of the dome as architecture or as infrastructure is ambiguous, but it clearly proceeds toward the progressive interiorisation of the world. As a transformative operation this large-scale geodesic is a step toward a larger; perhaps even total process, in the same way that Odysseus’ journey transformed the conditions of subsequent human life.

Two interpretations arising from the problematising of the interior to exterior relationship follow. First, the Earth-dome can be understood as the complete and final interiorisation of the Earth. The dome extends, the interior expands until the nominated exterior has been pushed onto locations beyond our native planet. The proposition of off-Earth mining or resource harvesting is well known to science fiction and remains a real possibility; but while it is not yet economically nor technically feasible, the possibility seems likely, and this would be an ultimate fulfilment of the Odyssey.

The second interpretation is a little more difficult to conceptualise: the exteriorisation of the interior, and the transference of the privileged interior into the depth of the dome’s skin. While the progressive increase in the dome’s size leads to the progressive interiorisation of the Earth, once the orbital dome’s interior is populated in preference to the Earth, this would constitute the exteriorisation of the Earth as interior.
The apparent groundlessness of the double inversion of the interior-exterior dichotomy is perhaps misleading: further analysis of the Manhattan dome and the structural conditions of its uplift suggest a clearer reading of the relational issues of the orbital dome. If the thermal pressure inside the Manhattan cupola becomes too great, it will lift off its supports the warm air will leak out of the lower perimeter deflating the buoyancy asymmetrically and the dome will crash sideways into the ground.

The force that makes the dome’s apparently weightless presence so marvellous must at times be forcibly resisted. The expansion of a dome floating in the Earth’s orbit would carry the potential for even greater catastrophe and thus it is even more essential that the orbital dome retain a carefully calibrated position. In this case, a similarity between the orbital dome, the Manhattan dome and Odysseus’ encounter with the Sirens is clear; they must be tied down.

ESCAPES

No matter how tempting independence and liberation may be, the umbilical bond to the commonality of the Earth can never be cut, but can be resisted, forgotten and made precocious. In Fuller’s globalising perspective, the song of the Sirens, the maximal limit of his avant-garde, is the guiding instinct of the preconscious earth. The orbital Earth dome realises this architecturally by exteriorising the Earth while remaining tied to it.

Two questions remain; firstly whether the unified substantial centre of experience that Hays claims is lost in modernity can be filled by a simultaneously interiorised and exteriorised Earth; and if so, what values do we thread through those physical and metaphysical ropes of interiorisation? The metaphoric transformation of the Sirens breeds a related question. If the Sirens are mythic embodiments of dangerous instincts, the substitution of the Earth into this position is radically different from the Sirens as immaterial abstractions. The environment of the colonialist Odysseus is a dangerous Earth, worthy of suspicion and precaution. The final interiorisation of the Earth with different from the Sirens as immaterial abstractions. The environment of the colonialist Odysseus perceives the Sirens as mythic embodiments of dangerous instincts, the substitution of the Earth into this position is radically different from the Sirens as immaterial abstractions. The environment of the colonialist Odysseus is a dangerous Earth, worthy of suspicion and precaution. The final interiorisation of the Earth with the ubiquitous dual surfaces of ground and ceiling completes the expansionist project not with conquest and unification but with absolute stratification.

Odysseus resists the Sirens yet harvests from them what he can with the tool of restraint. Resisting union with the other insist on their exteriorisation, what does Odysseus gain? Whenever the visionary exception in momentary excitement calls for union with the other, with the eternal, the duty that has been affirmed in advance, in the preconscious, must be carried out solemnly. What are they doing? Flying more ropes.

NOTES

7. Breton What is Surrealism? 82.
12. Dalí & Parinaud The Unprejudiced Confessions of Salvador Dalí, 60.
ABSTRACT

Psychoanalysts make a distinction between an actual space and the memory of a space; one’s house and the psychic construct of home. The latter, constructed from experiences of the childhood home(s), is a place that holds us, contains us, and is instrumental to functions of anchoring, identity and refueling and can be referred to as the ‘first house.’ A gap exists between the actual space and the ‘first house’ as the mind distorts the relationship between actual form and the space in one’s memory; although a childhood home may still exist, it is, at the same time, unreachable. Not only do buildings and particularly their interiors evolve over time through change in use and wear and tear, but so too does the inhabitant. While there are conventions governing the drawing of the structure of a house, the topography of these other less tangible interiors is unstable to say the least and offers an absorbing but slippery territory for any attempt at representation. This paper attempts a description of a ‘first house,’ not of an individual but of an institution, the Royal College of Physicians, London, focusing in particular on a panelled interior known as the Censors’ Room. This paneling has moved with the Physicians over the years, being installed in three consecutive buildings. The proposition is that the ‘first house’ offers a useful analogy to interiority both as an intellectual construct and in the challenges it sets up in terms of representation.

INTRODUCTION

The Royal College of Physicians describes itself as a longstanding independent professional membership organisation representing over 27,000 physicians in the UK and internationally. The Grade 1 listed building at Regent’s Park, that houses them today, was designed for the Physicians by the architect Denys Lasdun and opened in 1964 to critical acclaim. The venerable institution, of the Royal College of Physicians is housed in a modernist masterpiece that both complements yet contrasts with the Regency Nash Terraces that surround it; the architecture, like the institution embodying both tradition and innovation.

But this is just one version of the story. The Royal College of Physicians received its charter in 1518 from King Henry VIII and has moved location five times over its lifetime, Lasdun’s building being its fifth home. What attracted me to the case study was Lasdun’s description of a building designed from the inside out where ‘The most significant feature of the College design is the placing of its formal interior spaces; the Library, Staircase Hall, Dining Hall and the Censors’ Room.’ Before beginning to design, Lasdun ‘set about soaking the atmosphere of the college,’ observing the official functions, traditions and ceremonies. He did not start with how the building should look but rather with how it was used. The physicians recall that he never asked ‘What do you want?’ but always ‘What do you do?’ He then divided the spaces into two groups defined by use: those that were fixed and unchangeable and contained all the clutter of the ancestral memories and those that were susceptible to change such as offices and laboratories which he placed in structurally independent zones, so as to be altered, adapted, and extended through a century of occupation.

Drawing Out the Censors’ Room

Ro Spankie : University of Westminster, United Kingdom

Figures 1: Ro Spankie, New Fellows Day. The President and College Officers led by the College Bedell process from the Censors’ Room up the grand staircase to the Dorchester Library, 2012

Enter the Dorchester Library

The College Officers follow

The President carrying his Staff of Office; a slender silver caduceus

The College Bedell leads the procession carrying the silver-gilt College mace

Procession leaves the Censors Room

The gong sounds

17.00

16.55

16.45

Above

Figure 1: Ro Spankie, New Fellows Day. The President and College Officers led by the College Bedell process from the Censors’ Room up the grand staircase to the Dorchester Library, 2012
The clobber that Lasdun mentions is not so much actual stuff but rather the tradition and ceremonies that are integral to the identity of the Royal College, in particular a ceremonial route connecting the Censors’ Room, where candidates take their viva voce before being admitted to the college, the Staircase Hall and the Library (Figure 1).

In a lecture entitled ‘The First House’ architectural theorist Mark Cousins explained that first houses leave ineradicable traces of what spatial relations are, and what the body’s place in those spatial relations might be. They lay down an initial phantasy of what the first house is, in respect to all subsequent houses. He suggested that this phantasy affects the arrangement of all subsequent spaces and every time someone moves ‘when they arrange the new room they manage to introduce a kind of patterned repetition which defies formal analysis…’ However differently the rooms are shaped and sized, however differently they have furnished it, there remains some mysterious repetition.

In asking the Physicians what they did rather than what they wanted, Lasdun was not only exhibiting a modernist interest in function he was also attempting to separate function from form, retaining particular rituals and ceremonies while proposing a radically different architecture to house them. However the spatial relations suggested by these rituals and ceremonies are more powerful than they might appear and thus his modernist plan, despite its seemingly open and indeterminate layout, contains the trace of a more hierarchical, classical plan and the sequence of autonomous rooms that implies. This paper suggests it is this trace, rather than the image or form of the previous homes, that is analogous to the ‘mysterious repetition’ described by Cousins.

**METHODOLOGY: DRAWING OUT**

‘It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.’ Sherlock Holmes

There was one piece of ‘clobber’ in particular that the Physicians were determined to keep: the Censors’ Room. This interior has moved three times; not fantastically in the sense of the Holy House nor programmatically in the sense one may have slept in many rooms in one’s house, nor even as a financial spolia such as the Robert Adam Room (1763) found in Richard Roger’s Lloyd’s Building (1986). This room, defined by the oak panelling that lines its interior surface (see figure 2), originates from the third of the physicians’ homes and was literally picked up and moved as part of the furniture and fittings each time the Physicians moved. In doing so, on two occasions it preceded its host building, subverting the traditional relationship between an interior and its architectural shell. Lasdun articulated the Censors’ Room significance by placing it in the glazed south facade, suspended between inside and outside, ‘seen and felt to be the unchallenged focal point of the building,’ its exterior defined by its interior.
So the investigation starts with the Censors’ Room, the most tangible clue to the Physicians’ first house. The word ‘detect’ stems from the Latin de-tegare, to unroof, and the original figure of the detective was the lame devil Asmodeus, the devil of observation, who took the roofs off houses to spy on the lives inside. The Censors’ Room is, an autonomous room, a closed box that hides its identity until you enter it and I have chosen to approach this case study like Asmodeus, opening up the box to spy inside.

I started with conventional historical research. The Physicians own an excellent archive where the history of the College is well documented and accessible. Lasdun’s original drawings still exist in the Lasdun Archive, held at the RIBA Drawings Library. What is noteworthy is that, although the Censors’ Room is such an important reference, the paneling was never drawn. It is always referred to a specialist subcontractor through a system of notes and references, as if by already existing it does not need to be designed or drawn out. The name of the specialist subcontractor is not recorded, nor is there any reference to their drawings.

However Regent’s Park contains the original paneling, so the starting point was to measure up and draw out the room as it is seen today (Figure 3). I then researched and drew out the earlier reiterations of the room, believing the sum of these would suggest the arrangement of the ‘first house’ (Figures 6, 7 and 8). All the drawings are developed surface interiors, a technique that allows one to open up or unfold the box-like nature of the room. These drawings are analytical in the sense they make things visible that may not have been apparent in the narrative and text-based history/story, but they are also speculative because the lack of conclusive evidence means some things have to be estimated.

In addition to the archive, there is a less documented oral history that has grown up around the College. It should be clarified that this study is concerned as much with the story as the history. The objective is not to establish the truth as such but rather to understand why the story has grown as it has, and like the detective, consider what truths might be hidden in the fictions. In a search for an appropriate language with which to discuss interiors, the truth is not important in the sense it was to architectural modernists. Interiors have always contained secrets and gaps, veneers and concealed services, it is acceptable to lie. Likewise, the stories that have grown up around the space were constructed for a purpose and reveal as much about the Royal College of Physicians as the facts do.

While measuring the Censors’ Room, I overheard various fellows coming in with guests explaining the role of the room. Invisible until entered, and totally unexpected in its white modern shell, the guests express surprise at the room’s existence, its importance apparent in the patina and lustre of its surfaces. I overheard that the panels predate the Great Fire of London (one guest remarked that with its convector heaters, double-glazing and electric socket points, ‘it doesn’t look that old’), that they originate from the Physicians’ first house and that the great Sir Christopher Wren designed them. Although I later discovered none of this to be true, I understand these stories as important in providing authenticity through reference to notable figures and events and adding mystique to the Physicians’ ‘first house’.

WHAT IS THE CENSORS’ ROOM?

In architectural histories the interiors are often under described and a researcher will look to other sources. The following two descriptions use the conventions of the guidebook and the inventory as a reflection of this.

THE GUIDEBOOK

The word censor was the name of the Roman magistrate who was responsible for the Roman census, the Regimen Morum (the public morality), and state finances. At the Royal College of Physicians the Censor’s role was to examine prospective candidates and censure malpractice, an
important role as the fellowship is the College and the entrance exam is the gateway. The final viva voice examination held in the Censors’ Room, was ‘legendary in its difficulty and importance, and if you failed you could never reach the top of your field. If you passed, on the other hand, you were admitted to the ‘inner sanctum.’

What becomes clear is that, like the College itself, the room evolved rather than being designed, and its role is symbolic rather than functional in an architectural sense. What follows is a description of each of the reiterations of the room that over time became the Censors’ Room.

Other

THE INVENTORY OF THE FURNITURE AND EFFECTS

The Censors’ Room...has walls paneled ‘in the most elegant manner’ with fine Spanish oak, designed by Robert Hooke and carved by Thomas Young and William Shefield. The panels originate from a building on Warwick Lane in the City of London constructed in 1675. In the seventeenth century, the word seelinge was not used as it is today, but meant either the covering of the walls or ceiling of a room to make them draught-proof, or even the material used to provide such a covering, and was a luxury item. The panels should be understood as a seelinge in this sense. In an inventory of May 1900 it is described as ‘The very valuable Antique Oak Panelling with fluted Pilasters, Carved Capitals and Frieze.’

In its present form it consists of four sections of oak panels, or wainscoting, measuring 1964 x 27141 x 158 high. It is constructed in panelled bays broken by recessed fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals. In each bay hangs a portrait of a fellow/censor starting with Henry VII the founder. A pitch runs around the room at a height of 3ft, stepping forward in front of the double pilasters to form a pedestal for busts of further honorable fellows. At one end are two doors opening to separate ante chambers, one leading onto the Staircase Hall, the other to the ignominious side door. At the opposite end there are three windows looking out to the herb garden. There is also a narrow slit window at one corner. The 1900 inventory lists everything belonging to the room (72 entries) down to ‘3 glass inkpots’ and ‘a 12” ivory paper cutter’. Today the room contains only the panels and portraits, a splendid gilt chandelier, and a large table and chairs, which, when not in use, are pushed back against the wall.

HISTORY/STORY

‘The child is father of the man.’ - William Wordsworth

These descriptions portray the Censors’ Room as it can be seen today. However, they give only tantalizing clues to its role in the story of the first house. When studying a historical figure one might go back to their childhood for clues as to their character, likewise to understand the significance of the Censors’ Room, one must go back to its conception. What becomes dear is that, like the College itself, the room evolved rather than being designed, and its role is symbolic rather than functional in an architectural sense. What follows is a description of each of the reiterations of the room that over time became the Censors’ Room.

VERSION I: KNIghtRIDER STREET 1518-1614: THE CONCEPTION

The College of Physicians was founded in 1518 by Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) physician to Henry VIII and Henry VII, based on comparable foundations he had seen in Italy. The idea was to ‘rescue the medical art from the hands of illiterate monks and empirics’ and other ‘common artificers, as smiths, weavers and women.’ Originally consisting of six physicians, the College operated from a parlour council room and library in Linacre’s own house in Knightrider Street, south of St Paul’s Cathedral, within the walls of the City of London. The fellows describe their present building as their home and this tradition probably stems from the fact the first building literally was.

VERSION II: AMEN CORNER 1614-1666: INTERIOR AS A BACKDROP

In 1614 the college moved to a house at Amen Corner just northwest of St Paul’s Cathedral. Again, Amen Corner was a home very much in the sense one understands home today, a freestanding house on a site by the city wall with a gated entrance and a garden. However, it also contained more specific uses, such as a chemical laboratory and botanical library, as well as an anatomy theatre. In 1650, physician and fellow William Harvey commissioned Inigo Jones and his assistant John Webb to build an extension containing a library, a repository for samples and rarities and a great parlour for the fellows to meet, beneath.

Not much was known about this building until six of Webb’s drawings were discovered in Worcester College, Oxford, in 1970. These drawings are beautifully drawn out in ink and wash, describing in some detail the interior elevations. The fact that the interiors were so carefully designed is unusual. At the time, with an important building such as this, the architect might design the chimney piece, the door case and the window surrounds and other fixed features but ‘the concept of an architect as a person of a superior intellect and status who could co-ordinate an enterprise to produce stylistic unity was still in its infancy, and this was particularly so with regard to the interior.’ However, Inigo Jones had made his name as a masque and set designer at the court of Charles I and clearly understood the interior’s role as a backdrop to set the scene. The elevations show paneling and bookcases of fine books complemented by artifacts, portraits and statues, a display of knowledge, education and research.

A physicians practice was one of diagnosis based on knowledge. This was in contrast to the rival Company of Barber-Surgeons who welded the knife. The fact Harvey chose a library-cum-museum-cum-meeting room as an outward expression of the College as opposed to...
the anatomy theatre Jones had been asked to design for the Barber-Surgeons shows how interiors were used to embody the institution. The Museum Harveianum as it became known, was the first purpose-built building for the Physicians and once built it became the reference point for each subsequent building.

VERSION 3: WARWICK LANE 1675 – 1825: INTERIOR AS MICRO COSM OF SOCIETY

Tragically, just ten years after it was completed the Museum Harveianum and most of its contents, including the majority of the books, were destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666. The Museum Harveianum was lost but the memory or phantasy that it embodied wasn’t. However, the original architect Inigo Jones was dead (1573-1652) and his assistant John Webb, (1611-1672) was aging. In 1670 the College commissioned Robert Hooke to design a new building. A new site was secured a few streets north on Warwick Lane, near Newgate Prison from which many of its anatomical subjects came.  

Hooke was first and foremost a scientist, being both Curator of Experiments at the newly formed Royal Society and Professor of Geometry at Gresham College. Following the Great Fire, Hooke and his more renown colleague Christopher Wren had both been appointed City Surveyors and worked together on many projects including St Paul’s Cathedral (1677-1697) and The Monument (1673-77). Hooke’s role in these projects was that of surveyor and engineer and it is probably for this reason that for many years the Royal College of Physicians at Warwick Lane was accredited to ‘its great architect, Sir Christopher Wren.’

Hooke was, however, a fine draughtsman and when his illustrated book of observations through a microscope, Micrographia had first appeared, it had caused a sensation. Samuel Pepys records in his diary that it was ‘the most ingenious booke that ever I read in my life.’

‘The words platforme and platte were used in this period for plan, and the word model was used in the sense of design, which included certainly a plan and probably an elevation as well.’

There are no known drawings by Hooke of the Royal College of Physicians and the architectural drawings by him in RIBA Drawings Library are fine drawings done in brown ink and are curiously diagrammatic compared with the beautifully observed detailed drawings produced for Micrographia. To what extent Hooke, (who had a different sensibility to Inigo Jones), would have designed the interiors is uncertain as in the 17th century such tasks were often left to independent contractors who each had their own traditions and their own book of patterns.

Evidence that does exist shows Hooke’s design for Warwick Lane (now demolished) was more collegiate than the College’s previous two homes; the building wrapped around an enclosed courtyard that was entered from beneath an anatomy theatre. The main façade was onto this courtyard rather than to the street, its entrance leading directly into the hall, and through to a much diminished Library. Going up the great stair one reached the first floor dominated by the Great Hall and passing through that was the Censor’s Room. On the second floor was a garret where herbs were dried for a dispensary in the basement were the laboratory, the repository and kitchens. Accommodation for fellows formed the two side wings.

The most compelling evidence for the origin of the panels comes from a coloured print of 1808 that shows that the panelling found in the Censor’s Room today originally lined the Great Hall or grand public gallery on the first floor (Figure 5). Using the dimensions of the surviving oak panels at Regent’s Park, referring to the print and a sketch plan (c.1883) found in the archive, I drew out the developed surface interior of the Great Hall at Warwick Lane (Figure 6). Through a process of measurement, deduction and speculation one can estimate the Great Hall to have been 22ft wide x 61ft long x 15ft high.

The print is from Rudolph Ackermann’s The Microcosm of London: London in Miniature, a publication that portrayed London through the interiors of its establishments, institutions and places of entertainment. Ackermann’s proposition was that interiors could be understood as a microcosm of London and society as a whole. Key to his idea was that the illustrations would describe how the
The scene depicted in the print shows the Great Room set up to examine candidates. The accompanying text reads:

The large hall, which is finely represented in this print, is a handsome, well-proportioned room; if any fault may be found it is rather too low. The physicians are sitting at a long table, and appear to be employed in the examination of a candidate. The eager disputatious attitude of the figure which is represented as leaning forward, in the act of interrogating the candidate, is finely contrasted with the two figures on his right hand, one of which seems to have gathered up his features into a supercilious indifference as to what is passing before him, and indicates at the same time a self-acknowledged superiority of intellect. The irritable, anxious figure of the candidate is well imagined; and one of the learned physicians, on his left, who appears to be calling for an answer to the question he has put, seems, by multiplying the attack, to increase the no small embarrassment of the poor examinant.

This print connects the entrance examination to the panels, the Great Hall having the role of the Censors’ Room of today. The name is surprisingly fluid and the same name is known variously as the ‘Censorium, Ann 1676, The Great Room, Leaugh 1697, Great Hall, Hatton 1708.’ In 1808 Ackermann titles the print the ‘Long Gallery’ and from 1825 the panels line a room known as the Censors’ Room. There are strong echoes of the Museum Harveianum. The library was lost but the idea of a long gallery-style space, with busts of noted fellows, is resonant with it. As depicted, the Great Hall was arranged enfilade, with long windows with arched openings looking onto a garden and two fireplaces along one side. Whether this was a request from the physicians or Hooke’s possible personal knowledge of the Museum Harveianum is not known but what is clear is that by repeating the arrangement, the Physicians were also clarifying the role/layout of their institution.
Photographs of the room reveal that in the move from Warwick Lane, the panelling had been ruthlessly cut down and the seven bays length reduced to three. Only one of the fireplaces remained and changes to the windows, dictated by the neo-Hellenic façade, meant the openings were now square rather than arched. Reflecting changes in society the room was no longer a thoroughfare. It could be entered through one of three doors from the grand staircase, from the library or through a side door which lead to the back stairs, presumably for the discreet movement of servants and possibly for failed candidates. The height of the panelling resisted change, but the room that the panels now lined was more of a sombre and private study rather than a Great Hall or long gallery. While still the backdrop for the viva voce, on successful passing the exam, a new fellow would go through the door to the far greater double-height space of the library with all its promise of knowledge and fellowship. This was a journey that Lasdun further dramatised with a symbolic ascension up the grand staircase to the library (Figure 1).

There are no contemporary drawings for the Royal College of Physicians, Pall Mall East. The RIBA Drawing library holds drawings of other interiors by Robert Smirke. These are executed in pencil and wash and are concerned primarily with neoclassical surface decoration such as drapes, furnishings and fittings, wall coverings and plasterwork. Again, therefore, I drew a developed surface interior, based on measurements of the existing panels, photographs of the room at Pall Mall East, and plans found in a guidebook to the building in the Royal College of Physicians Archive.

CONCLUSION

This paper does not propose techniques such as the developed surface interior as a means to draw out interiority, rather as a means of presenting evidence of the fluidity inherent in it. The story of the panels is one of tradition and continuity, their value being placed on their authenticity and age in the history/stories of the physicians. But as the three developed surfaces reveal, the panelling has been altered and rearranged many times, unwittingly drawing out the shifting nature of a ‘first house’ (see figure 8). Lasdun, while emphasising tradition and continuity, made significant changes during the dismantling and reassembly process during the move to Regent’s Park: the fireplace went, the three doors were reduced to two and, in a poetic modernist twist, the corners of the room are cut away to form windows, perhaps a reference to Frank Lloyd Wright’s call for the destruction the box.

This single act destroyed the autonomous nature of the room at its point of greatest strength, transforming the panelling from a seelinge into four freestanding planar entities.

One could conclude Smirke and Lasdun cut their cloth to fit, altering the panelling to suit their purpose. But, conversely, they also cut their coat according to their cloth and the panelling dictated the size of the subsequent rooms, retaining the same scale and low ceiling of the original gallery. Looked at over a length of time one can see the interior of a ‘first house’ has a more symbiotic and powerful relationship to the architectural shell than conventional interiors are traditionally accredited.

Mark Cousins suggests that the phantasy of the first house affects the arrangement of all subsequent spaces leaving ‘ineradicable traces of what spatial relations are, and what the body’s place in those spatial relations might be.’ Looking back over the reiterations one can begin to see that the...
Denys Lasdun’s proposal that ‘the clobber of the ancestral best expressed in spatial terms, function without reference ‘first house’, where the inter-relations of key elements, while proposing such a method for representing the Physician’s approach as the ‘topographical method.’

of course, to the anatomy of the brain.’

the core repetition, intriguingly suggesting an institution has an identity, a symbolic journey must pass through to achieve that identity, a symbolic journey connecting the Censors’ Room, and the Staircase Hall to the connecting the Censors’ Room, and the Staircase Hall to the various locations. i.e.


De Motu Cordis

The Microcosm of London: Plate 20

De Motu Cordis (1628) the first description of the circulation of blood.


Robert Hoeke, Micrographs Or some Physiological Descriptions of minute Bodies made by Magnifying-glasses with Observation and Inquiries thereupon (London: Martyn and Allestry, 1665).

Authentic Décor The Domestic Interior 1620-1920


Cousins, The First House, 37.


Robert Hoeke, Micrographs Or some Physiological Descriptions of minute Bodies made by Magnifying-glasses with Observation and Inquiries thereupon (London: Martyn and Allestry, 1665).

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Kissing the Sky: James Turrell’s Skyspaces

Chris Cottrell : RMIT University, Australia

ABSTRACT

In contrast to terms which make clear distinctions regarding spatial limits, such as inside and outside, interiority can be understood as an ambiguous spatial condition. A sense of interiority, where spatial volumes intersect as a dynamic interplay of surfaces, materials, atmospheres and perceptions, is a constant theme in Turrell’s work. This interplay is foregrounded in the work of James Turrell, whose projects engage the complexity of these relationships. His projects create ambiguous and oscillating readings of inside and outside, the experience of which is more complex than the static or sublime experience of his work as typically represented. This paper will discuss an early installation by Turrell called Meeting (1986) in relation to Sylvia Lavin’s notion of ‘kissing’, an extended metaphor which uses the term in both its bodily and geometric senses, to describe a more pliable and dynamic notion of spatial threshold. Kissing will be used to think through the relationships present in the experience of Turrell’s work. I will examine how combinations of our bodies, exterior atmospheres – weather, and interior atmospheres – ambience, interact to create new, provisional ways of thinking about threshold. This complex experience of interiority distinguishes it from the discipline of architecture. Thinking of the interior as distinct from architecture allows it to operate as a site of experimentation, which can disrupt our habitual attention and invite a reconsideration of the categories we employ to make useful sense of the world.

I am sitting in a room, on a high-backed wooden bench that wraps continuously around all four walls of the white cubic space, facing inwards. The only interruption to this bench is the door through which I entered. There are no windows. My neck is tilted back as I look up towards the ceiling a subtly gradated plane of blue is crisply edged by the same white plasterboard construction of the upper walls of the space. It is late afternoon wintertime and the room is slightly cold. This view of blue framed in warm white holds my attention, even as I become aware that my neck is beginning to get sore. Time passes.

And as time passes, the sky blue ceiling plane slowly darkens. A soft orange light gently washes up the upper walls, its intensity increasing as the sky’s blue vibrancy darkens towards dusk. This balancing act between darkening sky and lightening walls creates a sense of the two held together. This dynamic, spatially and sonically, begins a cascade of questions concerning my relation to the interior, and both my own and the interior’s relation to the outside world.

The experience I have described takes place in a room on the third floor of a former school building in the New York borough of Queens, which since 1976 has been the Museum of Modern Art’s contemporary art space PS1. It is a permanent installation of a work from 1986 called Meeting by James Turrell. The room has been completely reworked and refurbished, the ceiling removed and opened to the sky. The room is open to the public every day during dusk, when the light levels are changing most rapidly.

James Turrell’s practice rose to prominence in the 1960s, along with other artists such as Robert Irwin, John McCracken and Doug Wheeler, who were all working in Los Angeles and exploring perceptual effects. Though not formally organised, their practices are frequently grouped under the umbrella term Light and Space. These practices worked in an abstract material register similar to the Minimalists on the east coast, but with a heightened emphasis on the ephemeral relations between viewer and the situations that their works posed. They worked with the immaterial characteristics of perception, transient effects, rather than the physical properties of materials. While minimalism emphasised the spatial and material relationships within and between pieces of work and a viewer, it relied very much on the creation of discrete objects. The works of Turrell and the other Light and Space artists took the perceptual act and spatial experience as the central subject of their practices and as a consequence their works tended to be more diffuse, or explicitly spatial. The artists discussed their work in relation to phenomenology and perceptual psychology, the latter a subject that Turrell had previously majored in during his undergraduate studies at Pomona College in Los Angeles. Turrell also worked from his late teens as a commercial pilot, and some of the changing light conditions, scale and optical effects he experienced while flying came to inform his arts practice.

To discuss Turrell’s work raises difficulties due to the gap between the experience of the situations he creates and how they are represented through photography and writing. Photographs of his work often present a solitary experience of spatial abstraction with connotations of the sublime, in contrast to the richness and complexity of the work as it can be directly experienced. This paper tries to go beyond these static, sublime readings to promote a more dynamic and complex understanding of the ambiguous spatial thresholds at play in Meeting.

Figure 1: James Turrell, Meeting, 1986. MoMA PS1, New York. Photo by Martin Seck, 2011.
Meeting is an early example of a series of works by Turrell which he calls ‘Skyspaces’. These works explore the possibilities of space to contain, and be filled by, the changing light of the earth’s atmosphere. In an interview conducted around the time this work was being developed for the space at MoMA PS1, Turrell describes his approach to the manipulation of light, and its relationship to the material qualities of space: ‘The physical structure is used to accept and contain light, and to define a situation. But the light can determine the space, and it can be experienced more than the structure if the surface does not call attention to itself.’ This concern with our perception of the immaterial properties of space is present throughout Turrell’s practice. Elsewhere he has said: ‘I feel my work is using the material of light to affect the medium of perception. I’m using light in its material aspect… I try to take light and materialize it in its physical aspects so you can feel it — feel the physically.’

Meeting creates a situation that asks questions about the interior and its position in relation to atmospheres, in both the sense of atmosphere and meteorology, I am directly exposed to an experience of the weather, as a combination of temperature, humidity and atmospheric pressure, but also as an optical phenomenon. The sky is bordered by a plasterboard ceiling which extends for a metre or so from the walls. The detailing of the ceiling/roof junction is such that it finishes with an extremely thin edge, creating a sense of an almost paper-thin plane enclosing the space. Its thinness, combined with the artificial lighting’s effect of balancing the colour intensity of sky and ceiling, generates the perception of the sky hovering as a plane overhead, immediately equivalent with the rest of the ceiling. The effect is one of abstraction: the sky becomes a flat material surface, rather than a spatial field of seemingly infinite depth. These operations give the sky material qualities of heavity and presence, its weight seems to press in on the room. In an unexpected spatial move, there is a sense of the sky sealing the room, an effect achieved through careful design of its interior qualities. However, at the same time I am aware of the room being open to the weather. This doubled awareness, or ambiguity, creates a tension in my understanding of the interior. The space feels contained but it is enclosed by the sky, which I know to be at a scale well beyond that of the room. My experience is one of being aware of the room being open to the weather, as a combination of temperature, humidity and atmospheric pressures, but also as an optical phenomenon. I’m using light in its material aspect… I try to take light and materialize it in its physical aspects so you can feel it — feel the physically.’

Meeting creates a situation that asks questions about the interior and its position in relation to atmospheres, in both the sense of atmosphere and meteorology, I am directly exposed to an experience of the weather, as a combination of temperature, humidity and atmospheric pressure, but also as an optical phenomenon. The sky is bordered by a plasterboard ceiling which extends for a metre or so from the walls. The detailing of the ceiling/roof junction is such that it finishes with an extremely thin edge, creating a sense of an almost paper-thin plane enclosing the space. Its thinness, combined with the artificial lighting’s effect of balancing the colour intensity of sky and ceiling, generates the perception of the sky hovering as a plane overhead, immediately equivalent with the rest of the ceiling. The effect is one of abstraction: the sky becomes a flat material surface, rather than a spatial field of seemingly infinite depth. These operations give the sky material qualities of heavity and presence, its weight seems to press in on the room. In an unexpected spatial move, there is a sense of the sky sealing the room, an effect achieved through careful design of its interior qualities. However, at the same time I am aware of the room being open to the weather. This doubled awareness, or ambiguity, creates a tension in my understanding of the interior. The space feels contained but it is enclosed by the sky, which I know to be at a scale well beyond that of the room. My experience is one of being held within an ambiguous spatial condition — or what I refer to as ‘interiority’.

This ambiguous condition leads to thinking about potential slippages between the experiential spaces of inhabitation and the representational spaces of abstraction. In Meeting, space becomes representational when it loses its depth and is viewed as a surface. There is a process of abstraction at work — by removing contextualising visual references such as the horizon, particular qualities and details of the sky are isolated and intensified. That is, the interior of Meeting co-ordinates a series of spatial and optical effects which lead me to perceive the space of the sky as a pictorial plane, rather than an inhabitable volume. As Turrell says, ‘You can inhabit a space with consciousness without physically entering it, as in a dream. You can be in it physically and see it in that manner also.’ Meeting is a real-time abstraction of a small portion of the everyday world.

So far I have described a personal phenomenological reading of Turrell’s work. This initial approach is in line with Turrell’s own thinking and writing about his practice, which tends to focus on the visual and a sense of the embodied experience of his work. However such representations do not account for the presence of everyday details from outside the work and the impact they have on an understanding of the interior. I assert that the spatial experience of Turrell’s work is richer and more complex than the way it is typically portrayed. In pursuing an alternative approach I face a difficulty: How can the relationships between the interior and its surrounds be articulated in a way that acknowledges their complexity? I will make use of Sylvia Lavin’s notion of kissing, a term which she employs in both its bodily and geometric connotations, to develop a model that can help articulate moments of spatial ambiguity, such as those encountered in Meeting. The intention is also to think more generally about interiority as a means to co-ordinate the relationships between materials, ephemeral effects and viewers, to create complex spatial relations. This opens the discussion up to qualities that are not easily represented, such as hearing, as well as the epistemological implications raised by these spatial encounters.

In her book Kissing Architecture (2011) Lavin begins by discussing kissing in its geometric sense with reference to photographic composition. This type of kissing occurs when an element in the background is aligned with one in the foreground, such that the two appear to be touching in a strange and discomforting flattening of the near and far. She then employs kissing as a bodily metaphor, before extrapolating it to ideas of architecture. She says: ‘Kissing confounds the division between two bodies, temporarily creating new definitions of threshold that operate through suction and slippage rather than delimitation and boundary.’ Turrell describes Meeting as having ‘to do with the meeting of space that you’re in with the meeting of the space of the sky.’ In this meeting there is a dynamic exchange between the various materials, atmospheres and perceptions, where the threshold between the interior and the weather atmospheres becomes fluid and ambiguous, and subject to individual perception. Utilising the new definitions of threshold that kissing creates offers a way to negotiate the moments of spatial ambiguity in this work of Turrell’s, and can then provide a reference point for other experiences of interior complexity.

For Lavin, kissing is something that happens between two bodies, or two disciplines, but always between one and an other. It is a way of thinking about the exchanges and affects of these inter-relationships. She begins with instances where the site of exchange is a material surface; as she says, ‘Architecture’s most kissable aspect is its surface. Space is hard to get a hold on. Structure has historically been inadequately plant. Geometry — well, who really wants to kiss a square?’ She discusses the work of several artists who make extensive use of video projection on and into architectural spaces in their practices, such as Pipilotti Rist and Doug Aitken. However, this is perhaps a less complex idea of kissing, a video projection onto an architectural surface is only the lightest of kisses, and while Lavin goes on to convincingly argue that it begins to disrupt ideas of disciplinarity, things get more interesting when she states, ‘surfaces are where architecture gets
close to turning into something else and therefore exactly where it becomes vulnerable and full of potential.11 In this way kissing can be used to open up possibilities for thinking about the interior in its relation to architecture.

In order to stage this kiss between the interior and architecture, it is necessary to think of the interior as distinct from architecture, as something with a degree of autonomy, rather than an equivalent to, or a byproduct of, the architecture.12 This frees the interior to ‘seek out provisionally, changefulness, and to provide architecture with a site of experimentation.’13 The questions raised in my experience of Turrell’s interior characterise it as a site of experimentation, and point to the possibilities of interior design as an autonomous discipline, which has value in its ability to begin a reconsideration of other related spatial practices such as architectural design and installation art.14 To clarify, kissing is not a collaboration between two that aims to make one unified thing; it is the intimate friction between two mediums that produces twoness — reciprocity without identity — which opens possibilities of interior design as an autonomous discipline, which has value in its ability to begin a reconsideration of other related spatial practices such as architectural design and installation art.15 To clarify, ‘kissing’ is a thin, architecturally defined edge, blurring the limits of both the interior and exterior spaces.16

Here, I will characterise both the interior volume of the installation and the exterior volume of the installation and the exterior volume of the sky as two distinct but inseparable atmospheres. This term is chosen deliberately because of its ambiguity, as it compels a careful unpicking and articulation of what is happening in these interactions. The term ‘atmospheres’ also encapsulates associations of ephemeral, immaterial, spatial and highly situated conditions; qualities that many contemporary practices, such as Turrell’s, are attentive to. In fact his practice has been explicitly described as one of creating an atmosphere.17 By using the sky as a material in the design of the space, Turrell conflates the meanings of atmospheres. It is simultaneously the sky above, the weather, the earth’s atmosphere, as well as a key element in creating the spatial ambience, or atmosphere, of the interior. Activating both the meteorological and interior senses of atmospheres creates another moment of complexity in unravelling my experience of Meeting’s interiority.

So, in my experience of this installation, how and why does the meteorological mingle with interior ambience to create this complex spatial situation? Lavin’s notion of kissing again helps to explain this moment where these different atmospheres combine. Meeting constructs a perceptual trick of collapsing volumes so they are read as co-incident surfaces, but in the background there is always an awareness of my body occupying the space, so that the representation of the sky as a surface is always delicately held in a state of anticipated disruption. The quality of these thresholds, between interior and exterior, between surface and volume, is more complex than that of simply separation. Through a slippage of the representational and experiential, a new temporally dependent sense of threshold is created, one whose vague and ambiguous qualities the term atmospheres encapsulates. These qualities are attended to in some detail by Ben Anderson who examines these issues of atmospheric thresholds with reference to the work of phenomenologist Michel Dufrenne, saying: An atmosphere exceeds clear and distinct figuration because they both exist and do not exist. On the one hand, atmospheres require completion by the subjects that ‘apprehend’ them. They belong to the perceiving subject. On the other hand, atmospheres ‘emanate’ from the ensemble of elements that make up the aesthetic object. They belong to the aesthetic object.18

But, importantly, Anderson extends this description of atmospheres beyond binary categories of subjects and objects. Atmospheres are not surfaces — not surfaces — that become significant. Turrell’s work opens up three other configurations of inter-related, possible ‘kisses’: the gentle kiss of two spatial volumes, where the room-space and the outside space touch along an extremely thin but blurry edge, the charged, vibrating kiss in the oscillation between perceiving the sky as both surface and volume, and the unsettling kiss between the sense of a distinctly located perceiving body and a perturbed perceiving body caught up in the spatial ambivalences that these previous kisses create.

To take up this first kiss, two volumes (rather than two surfaces) interact as a mixture of airs across a thin, architecturally defined edge, blurring the limits of both the interior and exterior spaces. Here, I will characterise both the interior volume of the installation and the exterior volume of the sky as two distinct but inseparable atmospheres. This term is chosen deliberately because of its ambiguity, as it compels a careful unpicking and articulation of what is happening in these interactions. The term ‘atmospheres’ also encapsulates associations of ephemeral, immaterial, spatial and highly situated conditions; qualities that many contemporary practices, such as Turrell’s, are attentive to. In fact his practice has been explicitly described as one of creating an atmosphere.17 By using the sky as a material in the design of the space, Turrell conflates the meanings of atmospheres. It is simultaneously the sky above, the weather, the earth’s atmosphere, as well as a key element in creating the spatial ambience, or atmosphere, of the interior. Activating both the meteorological and interior senses of atmospheres creates another moment of complexity in unravelling my experience of Meeting’s interiority.
the negotiation of a series of contradictory sensations, which requires an active, creative engagement with the qualities of the space. Meeting raises questions as to the material status of immaterial phenomena, such as the light, colour and depth of the sky above. The sense of ambiguity created by Turrell’s mixing of atmospheres is a productive one, which opens up new possibilities for thinking about the world around me.

The second configuration that Meeting proposes is the disruptive oscillation between perceiving the sky as a volume and as a surface, and the attendant ambiguity that this illusion provokes. By framing a discrete portion of our view above, and balancing this with artificial light, it flattens the sky. This imbues the sky with a material presence, the sky’s slowly changing colour and occasional ripples of movement and activity means it maintains its presence and liveliness. There is a complex interplay between my perception of a flat plane and the knowledge that I am viewing a segment of the atmosphere directly above me. The blueness of the sky vibrates against the warm orange-white of the walls, creating an optical effect of liveliness and a constant shifting of my sense of foreground and background.

As I become aware of the optical mechanisms that construct the work, I can, as with any illusion, choose to read it either way: rather like reading a series of marble floor tiles whose hexagonal arrangement suggests a cubic surface either projecting or receding from the ground plane. As a single planar surface, the sky is co-incident with the rest of the ceiling. Alternatively I can choose to remain aware of the fact that I am viewing an illusion, that a carefully designed combination of detailing, material finishes and lighting is causing me to view the sky, which I know from experience is spatial, as a flat plane. I can either allow myself to be drawn in to the disorienting pleasure of illusion or draw myself out and enjoy the pleasure that comes with understanding the illusion. Flicking between these possibilities, flattening the sky down, popping it back up, and then flattening it down again, I experience the ‘kiss’. An engagement with a kind of threshold that, as Lavin puts it, operates ‘through suction and slippage.’

The illusory quality of the project creates a tangible sense of experience the ‘kiss’. An engagement with a kind of threshold that, as Lavin puts it, operates ‘through suction and slippage.’

Meeting constructs a space of possibility, where my experience of the sky switches between that of everyday phenomenon and a magical material realm, just beyond my reach.

Viewing the sky through an opening in the ceiling, rather than the wall, as is the case with an ordinary window, removes any reference to the horizon. This lack of a reference point creates a sense of detachment that shifts my attention between the optical phenomenon of slowly changing light, and a heightened awareness of my body occupying a specific location in space. The last of these three configurations, which again can be examined via Lavin’s idea of kissing, is that which places my body in relation to this shifting and ambiguously defined interior space.

Ironically, for all of her bodily metaphors of surfaces that soften and deform, Lavin’s discussion focuses on the idea of kissing between various mediums and tends to downplay the role of our bodies in encountering these scenarios. So while it is productive to think of the discipline of architecture as distinct from, and engaging with, other forms of practice, such as video projection or interior design, as kissing bodies, also of significance is the serious bodily relationship to the spaces we inhabit. My experience of Turrell’s work encourages thinking about these bodily qualities, alongside issues of surfaces and atmospheres, and how the interior co-ordinates all of these elements. The slowness of visual stimul in Meeting, where, for the most part, the only thing to watch is the slowly shifting colour of the sky, brings a greater level of awareness to my other senses, in particular my sense of hearing. The awareness is one of bodily space, the space of my own presence, which is pitched out around me by my physical sensations. By removing visual references to the outside world, I begin to actively imagine it through the sounds I hear.

For what is for the most part a fairly serene and controlled visual environment, its location in New York is far from calm. I can hear the various noises from the streets around the gallery; the movements of cars, roaring as they accelerate away from traffic lights. There is the screeching of metals as trains on the elevated rail line that brought me to the gallery continue shutting back and forth across the city. Occasionally a plane rumbles overhead. These sounds form a sharp contrast to the relative stillness and stillness of my visual experience, and create a background awareness of activity and daily goings on beyond the room I am in. The transportation noises draw my thoughts to the networks that connect me to the rest of the city, and I imagine myself travelling back home, projecting my body in both time and space. But as with all these oscillations that kissing creates, this sensation pulls in two directions: By projecting myself out into the city’s networks, I am simultaneously more aware of my present location in relation to this network. Listening to the sounds beyond the gallery disrupts and reinforces my sense of being located in the world.

This sense of being ‘pitched out’ beyond my body and into the spaces beyond the gallery, while experiencing a heightened sense of my own body, follows a similar logic to the other topological shifts that kissing creates. Writing about an attentive sense of listening, Gernot Böhme describes a model in which one ‘inwardly re-enacts that which is heard... rendered convincing by the common experience that when one hears a melody one, to a certain extent, sings along with it inwardly.’ But he argues that things are not as neat as this, that there is never a simple distinction between inside and outside. Sounds must be experienced, an embodied process of listening in which we are projected outside ourselves, an expansion of bodily space where we do not simply encounter sounds, but are ‘formed, moulded, created, cut, lifted, pushed, expanded and constricted by voices, tones, sounds.’ Böhme calls this an experience of acoustic atmospheres — again an atmospheric experience, with its connotations of ephemerality and ambiguously defined spatial limits. He then goes on to argue that this experience skips over the space in-between, but I would argue that it in fact intensifies a sense of the in-between, of a dynamic threshold. Sounds from beyond the gallery space draw me into a bodily relationship with the world outside, creating a heightened sense of the space in-between as charged with activity and potential. The complexity of spatial relationships means I am forced to constantly negotiate the shifting thresholds that the work has caused me to register. I occupy a space that is highly provisional, tentative, that is purely between.

In the experience of Meeting there is a constant shifting between readings of the interior: This is further complicated by the virtual qualities that Turrell explores in his manipulation of natural and artificial light. He says: ‘I have an interest in the invisible light, the light perceptible only in the mind. A light which seems to be undimmed by the entering of the senses.’ This ‘light perceptible only in the mind’ suggests perception as a process by which we make internal representations of our experiences in order to interpret the world around us, but these representations are constantly shifting in response to outside influences. The dislocative experience that Turrell’s work offers is only ever own perspective.

Above

Figure 2: James Turrell, Meeting. / Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. 2008.
temporary, and can be undone by the irruptions of everyday sounds and activities. For Turrell particularly but also as a general case, this dynamic calls attention to the value of the interior as a site of spatial experimentation. By interfacing between architectural spaces and the everyday, the interior occupies an important space where we can experience the kiss of the in-between, an experience that heightens an awareness of the relations that delicately bind the lived world together.

Over the hour that I’ve spent in this room (or has it been two? — Lavin reminds us that kissing distorts our sense of time) 25 this experience of an intensified sense of presence has caused my thoughts to jump across a spectrum ranging from a heightened awareness of my location in space, relative to the gallery, the city, the earth and beyond, through the very specific qualities of the framed section of sky that I have been viewing. The notion of kissing offers a way of negotiating the complex relationship between bodies, atmospheres and interiors, even if it is only ever a temporary understanding, subject to shifting influences from any and all directions. Using the more dynamic and provisional model of threshold that kissing offers, provides a sense of tentativeness which keeps us on our toes, alert to the subtle dynamics of spatial encounter. Kissing begins to articulate how atmospheres are perceived and experienced through a designed interior, an interior that by remaining distinct from architecture allows it to open up more complex possibilities for understanding spatial relations.

I continue to gaze upwards. A plane flies past, heading east towards JFK airport, a contrail slowly dissipating behind. The sky continues to slowly darken as the day comes towards an end.

NOTES

1. The origin of this term is not entirely clear. Many of the artists involved were not showing work publicly, and this grouping was made retrospectively as a convenient shorthand; Jan Butterfield gives an excellent overview of the context in which these artists were working in the introduction to her book The Art of Light + Space (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993).


7. kissing in this geometrical sense refers to the just-touching, tangential relationship of two figures.


11. Ibid.
Recording the Absent Inside the Maison de Verre

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ABSTRACT

The Maison de Verre (Pierre Chareau) was completed in Paris in 1932 for Dr Jean Dalsace, his wife Annie and their two young children. The front façade, a skin of glass, conceals a family home and a gynaecology clinic. Information on the building’s 1930s inhabitation is missing leaving an archival gap.

Proposition: In 1933 there were two visitors: He attended the weekly Salon gathering. She secretly visited the clinic. They were lovers, the artist Marcel Duchamp and bookbinder Mary Reynolds. Duchamp’s artwork, the Large Glass (1915–23), suggests a glass premonition to their interactions.

The writing or drawing out of a story of possible inhabitation is, in the end, the potential of architecture. In this account, I reconstruct the Maison de Verre’s interior as a history through modes of text and drawing that combine spatial analysis with imagined occupation. New plan drawings with theoretical and fictional text combine images, routes, passages. In the first part, ‘The Glass Look’, the building seems to survey the salon visitor (Marcel), as instances caught in glass. ‘Regarding’ positions Annie Dalsace’s mediating presence, traced into her ambiguous circulations around the upper floors. In the third part, ‘Dust’, I speculate on Mary’s visit. Searching the building as if its housekeeper, I find little to suggest she was there, just the uncertainty of dust particles. ‘Horizontal Passages’ follow Mary’s imagined route through the ground floor clinic and trace her body through its remainders, dust particles and smears.

THE GLASS LOOK

The Maison de Verre was built as a modern glass container — its gynaecology clinic on the ground floor and family home on the two floors above. Following architectural modernism’s desire for clarity and light, both functions were housed in a free-plan, thinly surrounded by a single skin of Nevada’s glass lenses. The social context was contradictory — the outward perception of Paris as a hedonistic, free society was challenged by 1920 and 1923 anti-abortion and contraception legislation aimed at raising population numbers and curtailing female sexual freedom. Dr Dalsace’s reputation and interests suggest his clinic was involved in birth control practices.

The function, design and materiality of the building, then, both indicate and challenge the social and architectural contexts.
The façades of the Maison de Verre are composed almost entirely of glass, with transparent planes below the gridded skin of translucent lenses. In the early twentieth century, glass epitomised openness and clarity. Sighed Giedion, writing in 1928, expounds transparent glass as an invisible plane opening the interior to light and air – revolutionary for the domestic setting. In Paris, its modern potential was most apparent in public spaces as the large shop window, encouraging a culture of window-shopping and increasing consumption through the desire of looking. Large panes of transparent glass reflect the observer as well as revealing the interior display. The shopper watches her image reflected on the outside, transposed onto her desire for the beguiling goods inside. Marcel Duchamp recalls seeing a chocolate grinder in a shop window in Rouen. Recasting it in the mirror, the self is identified for the first time as a unified and exteriorised image/object.

Duchamp was fascinated by ‘the shop-window quality of things.’ In an early note for the Large Glass on ‘The question of the shop window’, he suggests the aim was to ‘put the whole bride under a glass case or into a transparent cage; a show case with sliding glass panes – place some fragile objects inside.’ The resulting artwork is a large glass construction displaying floating images of Bride and Bachelors as strange mechanisms, as if behind a double-paned shop window. The observer sees her reflection incorporated into the glass as she tries to decode its strange historical narrative. Duchamp claimed the Large Glass was a ‘delay in glass’ rather than a painting. Reading it as a kind of history, this delay suggests the plane of glass both plays out and delays the Bachelors’ desire and possession of the Bride hovering out of reach above. It depicts Duchamp’s own bachelor desire, resistant to the ‘trappings’ of marriage. The ‘preening’ Bride, displayed in the glass by her friends, epitomises early twentieth century French society’s wish to lure the Bachelor into a marriage of financial and social convenience, resulting in pronouncement rather than conjugal pleasure.

A 1933 visitor to the Salon at the Maison de Verre (Figure 1, blue) might have been Marcel Duchamp. He enters the courtyard at 31 rue Saint-Guillaume, and approaches the floating lensed façade. On the ground floor the façade is divided into two halves. The left half is a line of large, framed transparent windows – like shop windows. These are highly reflective, doubling the surrounding eighteenth century context rather than yielding any interior views. As the visitor gets closer, the repellent nature of the glass reflects his own image (Figure 2). This narcissistic image imprisons him like a momentary photograph. Fascinated, he stands in front, absorbed, separated from reality and alone with himself as image. To the right, the façade is a plane of lenses, set back, through which he notes fragments of light and ghostly shapes. Façade delays interior.

The front door, at first concealed, sits perpendicular to, and separates the inner and outer layers of the façade. The sole entrance and exit to the building, it is of transparent glass, more like a window. The visitor is arrested as he steps into an uncertain space, a kind of interior three-sided glass vestibule. The inner surfaces of the front glazing to the left and behind on the glass door catch him as reflection: a cast, wired-glass sliding door panel to the right blurs and facets his image occluding his passage into the main body of the house. Ahead, a length of corridor along the inside of the façade peers darkly at him.

He slides open the wired-glass door and moves along an interior corridor. To his left is another plane of repeating cast, wired-glass panels, blurring and poising his view. At the end he rotates to his left and, facing the front façade again, raises up the main stair to the salon. He knows that the rest of the ground floor, although visible, is out of bounds. Halfway up, suspended between two floors, he is struck by the sharp light coming from below and above (Figure 3). The only solidity is the floating floor plane. At the top, the salon is a huge hall, a hub, which collects the building’s many visitors. It is overwhelmed by the vast glass façade of 940 lenses, with no views out and no transparency or reflection. This repetitive glass vertical surface is soft in form yet thin and brittle. It oscillates between part and whole, fragmenting and blurring the visitor into each faceted translucency. The visitor, it seems, never quite enters the house, instead being delayed on or in the glass façade. He has left his narcissistic view on the transparent glass downstairs, and upstairs in this great room his body is rendered back into pre-mirror stage parts – scattered corporeal fragments pressed into the translucency of each glass glob.
REGARDING

The mistress of the house will look at your eyes and she will see all your crimes in them.17

After its completion in 1933 architect Pierre Vago remarked: ‘It is indispensable for men of the 20th century to spend their days, their hours, of leisure and rest in a glass box, among randomly placed columns, with their rivets exposed, in a laboratory open on all sides.’18 The layout of the Maison de Verre, though, when scrutinised as an interior traced by the now absent inhabitants, suggests something altogether more veiled was going on. The woman of the house, Mme Dalsace, was particularly a constellation of presences, watching the house behind the scenes (Figure 1, maroon). Mediating the spaces she observes, she is inscribed in – becomes even – the building. In the evening she appears at the top of the main stair to greet visitors.19 The strong light from behind creates her as a silhouette image, inscrutable (Figure 4). At the base of the stair the visitor is seen out by Jean Lurçat’s portrait of her on the wall opposite. She also appears inside the doctor’s consultation room as a bronze head looking sternly down from a shelf behind the patient.20 Having supervised much of the building’s design it is not surprising to find her circulations guiding the layout (Figure 5).

Mme’s influence springs from her seemingly enclosed boudoir on the first floor.21 With a curved wall identical to that of the reception office below, the room initially appears a retreat, in opposition to the circulation and overlooking described above.22 Like most spaces in the house though, it is interstitial. Its three corners reconnect with the house through strange devices suggesting the transitional meeting-place erotics of the eighteenth century boudoir. The innermost one secretes a rotating secretive passe-plat, a pivoting semi-circular shelf in the wall. Hidden from view behind a small door, it provides an internal connecting plate between the habitable kitchen storage – extending along the party wall to the dining room – and the corner of the boudoir. Refreshments, or other pleasures – for instance, ‘a glass cake box with a silver lid […] filled with delicious cinnamon biscuits’ – were discreetly passed from servant to mistress.23 The rotative offerings’ elusive appearance is playful and flirtatious, evoking the Chocolate Grinder of the Large Glass.24 Further, as the passe-plat is set slightly back in an alcove, the corner of the room retreats. It creates a pocket within a pocket. The opposite corner of the room is connected by a retractable stair, which rises against the glass façade to the master bedroom above. The stair, precarious and steep, was an internal mechanism connecting Mme Dalsace (and perhaps her visitor) upstairs with her bedroom. The Doctor has a parallel stair from his office (adjacent to Mme’s boudoir) to his clinical suite for sexual health below. Where his stair marks his relation to his profession, hers removes her from the clinical suite and reconnects her with domestic sexuality.

The third corner projects beyond its expected edges into a tiny vestibule winter-garden. It is here that Annie’s true role becomes visible. A full-height framed transparent window overlooks the double-height circulation space to the waiting room into the clinical suite on the ground floor. Mme’s influence springs from her seemingly enclosed boudoir on the first floor.21 With a curved wall identical to that of the reception office below, the room initially appears a retreat, in opposition to the circulation and overlooking described above.22 Like most spaces in the house though, it is interstitial. Its three corners reconnect with the house through strange devices suggesting the transitional meeting-place erotics of the eighteenth century boudoir. The innermost one secretes a rotating secretive passe-plat, a pivoting semi-circular shelf in the wall. Hidden from view behind a small door, it provides an internal connecting plate between the habitable kitchen storage – extending along the party wall to the dining room – and the corner of the boudoir. Refreshments, or other pleasures – for instance, ‘a glass cake box with a silver lid […] filled with delicious cinnamon biscuits’ – were discreetly passed from servant to mistress.23 The rotative offerings’ elusive appearance is playful and flirtatious, evoking the Chocolate Grinder of the Large Glass.24 Further, as the passe-plat is set slightly back in an alcove, the corner of the room retreats. It creates a pocket within a pocket. The opposite corner of the room is connected by a retractable stair, which rises against the glass façade to the master bedroom above. The stair, precarious and steep, was an internal mechanism connecting Mme Dalsace (and perhaps her visitor) upstairs with her bedroom. The Doctor has a parallel stair from his office (adjacent to Mme’s boudoir) to his clinical suite for sexual health below. Where his stair marks his relation to his profession, hers removes her from the clinical suite and reconnects her with domestic sexuality.

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can look down and askance into the entrance of the clinical room sequence. If the patient entering the consulting room were to turn around and look up, she would see a framed image of Mme looking down at her. The angle of the glass creates reflections and distortions, leaving her blurred and darkened. The glazing behind renders her figure silhouetted, a negative apparition on the glass. For the same reasons, the patient's identity would have been equally hard to distinguish, leaving her and Mme with only an impression of each other. Overseeing patients' entry into the suite of surgical rooms suggests that Annie Dalsace mediated the gynaecological examination. Her potential presence brought seemliness. Yet her appearance is curtailed: her view refracted and cut off by the glass. Imprisoned behind the same glass, like Duchamp's Bride she is apparently suspended and mute, a procreative question mark. Her role is as ambiguous as the architecture's dissolved corners and the dislocation of the view.

A further instance, though, reinforces the erotic relation between the gynaecologist's practice and the couple's own marriage. Mme's boudoir and the Dr's office share the same threshold. From here, two doors slide (Figure 6), recalling Brassaï's description of the brothel Suzy in Paris from the 1930s: ‘there could be a whole system of sliding doors, curtains, trap doors […] to protect one customer from ever meeting another’. The first door of wired glass slides in and out of a fixed cross shape in plan, made of four panels of roughcast glass. This door, by sliding through the cross shape into the doctor's office, allows access from the dining room into Mme's boudoir. When the door is open to her room, his view of the winter-garden is obscured, perhaps signalling that his wife is not present in her boudoir. When she is in the room she slides the door closed – to listen to music, or receive guests – revealing to him the projecting winter-garden through the framed transparent glass. As well as a communicative device, it is potentially a tease. Madame retreats with her guests into a room flirtatiously connected with her bedroom. She can also assess her husband's movements. By entering the corner winter-garden she can look across into his office as well as down toward his consulting room. If he is in his office, their eyes may meet across the void to the floor below. They cannot speak as the layer of transparent glass lies between them with its doubling reflections.

The second sliding door, opaque, is to the side of the Doctor's office and perpendicular to the boudoir door. When both are open a last diagonal view connects the two rooms. These doors act as interchangeable silent signs of visual communication and suggestion. Pockets, overlaps and glass reflections create double images and folded sliding space. The occupants become the erotic glass planes slipping between outer and inner, opening and closure, presence and absence, knowing and seeing.
DUST

Sigmund Freud wrote that the role of psychoanalytic research is ‘merely to uncover connections by tracing what is manifest back to what is hidden’. In the context of the illegality and increased penalties of promoting or using contraception and abortion between the wars, the instatement of a gynaecology clinic in glass was a bold one. Although, the Maison de Verre is hidden from the street, the clinic shares the same entrance with and is open in parts to the interior of the house, even overlooked by it. The materials between home and clinic are seamless. Given the social milieu, women seeking advice and assistance may have visited. Female autobiographical writing of the time suggests that a significant number sought to pursue professional and erotic lives without the weight of childbearing. The visitors to the clinic and practices carried out, though, remain unknown, as archival material was never collected. The building is empty of history, cleaned out. What if Mary Reynolds – bookbinder, and lover of Marcel Duchamp from 1923 to 1941 – visited the clinic? Duchamp was certainly opposed to what he called ‘trappings’ – ‘a wife, children, a country house, an automobile’. Did Reynolds have cause to seek advice from someone like Dr Dalasce?

In the 1930s, the Dalasces and Mary Reynolds were part of Parisian avant-garde artistic and intellectual networks. Both held regular Salon evenings at their homes. In common their gatherings included the following figures: couturiers and collectors Paul Poiret and Jacques Doucet; writers Jean Cocteau, Paul Éluard, André Breton, Louis Aragon; Walter Benjamin and Max Jacob; bookbinders Pierre Legrain and Rose Adler; art dealer Julian Levy; artists Jacques Lipschitz, Alexander Calder and Max Ernst; and collector and publisher Jeanne Bucher. It seems probable that Reynolds, as well as Duchamp, were at least acquainted with the Dalasces through these overlapping circles. Yet surveying for traces of their occupation in the Maison de Verre, one merely finds dust. Nothing concrete suggests they were there. What if the dust is the answer? After all, it is the body’s slough combined with materials dropped off buildings. Dust is history in the making, always in the past. It is the passage of time.

Fifteen years earlier, Duchamp deliberately collected dust onto the Large Glass for 4–5 months. Called Dust Breeding, he adhered it to the glass with varnish to make the Sieves. These traced desire, now signifying onanistic seminal fluid, dried up, useless. In buildings, dust was anathema to modernity, marginal, ordinarily cleaned away or hidden. Yet it remained, and remains, undeniable. Its presence, both familiar and distasteful, is always of the body.

The Maison de Verre had a dedicated servant wing: a projecting space of three floors, each approximately 6 x 4.5 metres, accommodating a vestibule on the ground floor connected by a stair to a kitchen on the first, with a laundry and live-in bedroom on the second floor. The occupant of this wing was the housekeeper. As a key figure organizing and cleaning the house, she kept herself and the dust a sign of the body’s presence, out of sight. Her domain was screened by sets of glossy black lacquered valve doors, or matt duralumin walls. Thus unseen, it seems that she had strategic visual points for overseeing the home. She monitored visitors’ entry to the house from the courtyard through a full-height framed glass panel set back in shadow beyond the outer lensed face of the servant wing on the ground floor and from a slit window on the first floor (Figure 7). Once in the house she watched from her inner dark corridor. From her second floor laundry she had a prime double view: a large interior picture window overlooks the salon; a smaller adjacent window has full view of the entrance courtyard. Here, the monitoring of inside and out occurred simultaneously, split by the thin perpendicular edge of the front glass façade. Her presence at each of these points was masked by reflections bouncing off the glass, the relative darkness of the space she looked from, and the unseen role of service. If Mme moderated the house’s activities, the housekeeper collected signs of those activities with her sweeping eye.

The interior of the Maison de Verre was literally and figuratively a dust trap: fluid, shifting and layered; of sliding doors and overlapping zones; rotational and staggered open spaces creating nooks and crevices. With bespoke furnishings and many visitors, endless corporeal particles could collect. And as Walter

IDEA JOURNAL 2012 Writing/Drawing: Negotiating the Perils and Pleasures of Interiority
Benjamin repeatedly says, the bourgeois salon of the nineteenth century – with its casings and dust covers for preserving traces, its shelves and ornaments gathering dust (the body’s remainder) – is the perfect setting for a detective story. The building, then, is an archive, the traces operating as a kind of index or markers as clues to a crime, a mystery – a history.

**HORIZONTAL PASSAGES**

Going back in time, I become the housekeeper of the building in 1933. Repelled and attracted at the same time, I get close to the dust ingrained in its surfaces – in the lensed concavities, on cracked rubber and travertine floors and under furniture. I imagine the faint stain of blood, pus and other messy corporeal materials splattered on clinical surfaces and fabrics; soap residues in baths; excreta trodden into floors. The resonance becomes both more compelling and less clear. Collecting the clues of inhabitation, I move between then and now, in turn detective, researcher and cleaner, to recount Mary’s story (Figure 1, pink).

The entrance floor was brushed down four times each day as even a light wind would blow the dirt across the courtyard into the hallway. It was trapped inside with people’s feet. Between the raised circles, the white rubber trapped every speck. We had many visitors in those days, patients during the day. Even Mme’s friend Mary came to the clinic several times. She seemed, well, not herself.

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Every morning, early, I require the maid to polish away marks to the mirror, glass and black lacquer on the ground floor.

I alone had to clean the clinic; the maid was barred from those areas. I knew there were lists and records but I heard the doctor talk of changing names or removing them as time went on. In later years, I think I alone had to clean the clinic; the maid was barred from those areas. I know there were lists and records but I heard the doctor talk of changing names or removing them as time went on. In later years, I think

I had a special mixture for the blood on the linens I collected from there. I mixed a paste of vinegar and levure chimique from the pharmacy. After soaking the cloths in cold, salted water, I applied to stubborn stains and rubbed until white again. This mixture was also used for the floor.

Mme’s friend Mary came to the clinic several times. She seemed, well, not herself.

As she lies on the table she is startled to realise where she is. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, theMadonna hands. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, the Madonna hands. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, the Madonna hands. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, the Madonna hands. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, the Madonna hands. She can see the outline of the entry bell on the glass, a silhouette of the hand, the knuckles, the Madonna hands.

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Once, I watched a man stand outside the lensed wall, staring for a long time, nose pressed against the gridded glass. Could he see a female body, lying down, receding? A bride floating across the courtyard into the hallway. It was trapped inside with people’s feet. Between the raised circles, the white rubber trapped every speck. We had many visitors in those days, patients during the day. Even Mme’s friend Mary came to the clinic several times. She seemed, well, not herself.

I imagine her explaining – as many women had done – that her menses had not come for the second month. That while he was out she boiled the cannula to start the process the sage femme had advised. She perhaps squeezed over the toilet to introduce her finger into her vagina. Finding the cervix, she pushed in the cannula. The initial pain of this did not prepare her for what followed. Attaching the other end of the cannula to the little glass syringe containing boiled water, she pressed the plunger. The pain in her abdomen was most sudden and violent. In agony she waited.

Every morning, early, I require the maid to polish away marks to the mirror, glass and black lacquer on the ground floor.

I see Mary tentatively enter the courtyard, facing the soft, dumb glass wall. Its translucency above and reflectivity below mean she cannot see in. She finds the column of bells by the lower wall of glass lenses, presses the bell labelled docteur. I hear its sound and activate the door. As she steps inside I imagine her passage through the building, a passage I have made myself as I sweep and scrub. Entry seems covert; a slippage between outside and in. She passes through layers of glass, like veils. The passageway is darker than expected, light coming from elsewhere. The rest of the house appears as slices of repeating fragments: the skinny black hanging staircase; curving, layering reflecting screens hiding the main stair; black shiny doors catching reflections. She turns toward the waiting area to be confronted by a square mirror mounted on the orange and black columns. The huge portrait of Annie is to the right, watching. As she moves towards the mirror she sees her groin area reflected, if I have set it at the right height. She floats down two steps, her face framed in the same mirror.

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I imagine her explaining – as many women had done – that her menses had not come for the second month. That while he was out she boiled the cannula to start the process the sage femme had advised. She perhaps squeezed over the toilet to introduce her finger into her vagina. Finding the cervix, she pushed in the cannula. The initial pain of this did not prepare her for what followed. Attaching the other end of the cannula to the little glass syringe containing boiled water, she pressed the plunger. The pain in her abdomen was most sudden and violent. In agony she waited.

Every morning, early, I require the maid to polish away marks to the mirror, glass and black lacquer on the ground floor.

I see Mary tentatively enter the courtyard, facing the soft, dumb glass wall. Its translucency above and reflectivity below mean she cannot see in. She finds the column of bells by the lower wall of glass lenses,
A long time later when I enter this room again, the now abandoned surgery, layers of dust shift. I am moved, unable to think. The thin, brittle glass appears a contradiction: soft and fluffy, like poly or thick sea water. You are neither inside nor out, swimming in a translucent, thick glass space yet exposed. The trick of the glass was to remove the patient from the interior, and her interior life, and allow her to imagine herself from the outside returning to the life she desired to live. I am not the first to experience this feeling and it is still the same. I want to stay in it forever and cannot wait to leave.

POSTSCRIPT

In this paper, I have re-imagined the interior of the Maison de Verre through its glass as a fragmenting or framing device, and through its female occupation. The latter recalls the firmly held nineteenth century notion that the bourgeois domestic interior operated as an extension to the female body. The image of woman as ‘angel of the household’, from whom the successful domestic realm unfolded, prevailed into the twentieth century.

My readings play with and subvert this line of thinking. Philosopher Luce Irigarary describes the female body as a multi-layered contiguous surface, endowed from exterior to interior. Architectural space is not a body – importantly they are separate things – yet an interior that folds around, pockets and slides seems to recall or play with and subvert this line of thinking.

NOTES

1. The best published descriptions of the building are Tatiana Fujikawa, ed. La Maison de Verre (Tatiana-AIDA, Edita, 1989) and Max Vellay and Kenneth Frampton, eds. Pierre Chareau Architec and Craftman 1883–1930 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985). In the latter Frampton introduces a relation with the Large Glass, which I have taken as a provocation and point of critique. Useful images and plans can be seen at (accessed June 27, 2012) www.archdaily.com/24807/10-classic-maison-de-verre-pierre-chareau-bernard-boulet/.

2. These were pressed giving a textured appearance. See Raymond McGrath and A.C. Frost, Glass in Architecture and Decoration (London: The Architectural Press, 1937), 159–160, 199.


4. Mary Lynn Stewart writes: “In 1933, Dr Jean Dalsace published contraceptive methods and, as a result, lost his laboratory position. With the complicity of the socialist mayor of a commune known for its exemplary health measures, Dalsace set up a center to teach contraception and there disbursed diaphragms and spermicidal jellies from England. See Mary Lynn Stewart, For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture for Frenchwomen, 1880–1930 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 123. D. Dalsace was subsequently Honorary President of the French Gynaecological Society, President of the French Planning Association and Director of the Sterility Clinique. From 1950–53 he co-edited the British Journal of Sex Research.


9. These were presented in 1914.


12. The Large Glass is said to be a self-portrait, see for instance Rosalind Krauss: “The Glass Man: a man in glass, a glass as man only ‘open’ to be leaked to the CE of loosening the self projected as double”. Rosalind Krauss, “Notes on the Index-Sedentary Art in America”, October, vol. 3 (1977): 74.


16. All images are measured, drawn or photographed by Emma Cheatle from her PhD thesis ‘Part-architecture: The Maison de Verre through the Large Glass’, completed early 2013.


20. It was not until the Nauwew Bill of 1967 that contraception could be legally sold for the first time since 1920. Medical abortion remained illegal until 1981.

21. The trick of the glass was to remove the patient from the interior, and her interior life, and allow her to imagine herself from the outside returning to the life she desired to live. I am not the first to experience this feeling and it is still the same. I want to stay in it forever and cannot wait to leave.

22. In this paper, I have re-imagined the interior of the Maison de Verre through its glass as a fragmenting or framing device, and through its female occupation. The latter recalls the firmly held nineteenth century notion that the bourgeois domestic interior operated as an extension to the female body. The image of woman as ‘angel of the household’, from whom the successful domestic realm unfolded, prevailed into the twentieth century.
Spatial Fragments, Visual Distortions and Processes of Sense Making

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ABSTRACT

A series of conversations between a group of blind and visually impaired participants and myself about non-visual and multi-sensory spatial encounters is used as the ground for discussion in this design research paper. Specific issues examined include the role of the visual, the auditory and the tactile in relation to the human body, movement, memory, sensory landmarks and processes of sense making. Within the participants’ stories of their experiences, spatial and temporal interiors emerge that are mostly based on non-visual encounters with architectural environments; yet may evoke visual imagery in the reader. Their accounts inspire a consideration of new ways of thinking about interior architectural practice and the tools and techniques used in the design process. Writing and drawing are positioned as important methods for exploring, presenting and designing multi-sensory interiors. The main questions investigated are how to communicate qualities of spatial environments that are encountered and remembered in non-visual ways in the context of interior architecture and how such accounts are capable of inspiring interior architects to think about their practice differently and therefore create new knowledge for the discipline.

When Ness leaves her house she knows where the gate is and touches the side of it as she walks past. She then turns into a laneway, putting her hand out on the other side, and touches the wall of the alley. With her white cane, Ness taps along the wall to confirm where things are: ‘Because I know that they’re there … I just check to make sure that they’re there.’ Although Ness uses a cane, she still likes to reach out and run her hand along surfaces beside her, like a wall, a fence or a hedge. By also clicking her fingers, Ness gets a sense of the spatial volume through acoustic reflection. Furthermore, she carries a hand-held sonic device called a mini guide. The mini guide can be set to detect solid objects and barriers in close proximity, and vibrates incrementally as one approaches obstacles.

For Bernice, her guide dog Valek will safely lead the way so that she only uses her cane in environments most familiar to her. She explains that when travelling, everything around her is important, including what is next to her, overhead and underfoot: ‘Your spatiality when you’re not seeing at all feels different. You use your body senses to recognise a lot of things… the sense of smell, the sense of hearing, the sense of touch in all directions, ’cause I even use my toes.’ Bernice also emphasises to me the significance of tactile qualities: ‘The sense of touch, regardless of what your sight is, is very important.’

Debbie recognises that there is a significant difference between indoor and outdoor environments: ‘When I’m outside it all crosses over my cane, there’s too much space, but inside I’m able to sort of judge the space around me and get an idea of where I’m going.’ She describes her navigation techniques as ‘like a bodily instinct or something… I can just sense where everything is… I sort of sense how many steps I’m going and I’m able to judge distance and my direction is really good.’

I interviewed Ness, Bernice, Debbie, Margaret and Brandon (all names are pseudonyms) during a series of focus group discussions about non-visual and multi-sensory qualities of spatial environments at the former Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB, now Vision Australia) in 2005. The project investigated, from a design perspective, how individuals who cannot rely on their visual ability are able to make sense of spatial environments and multi-sensory cues that help construct a mental and corporeal spatial map. In the interviews each of the participants described a range of techniques and devices used to project their senses and detect information about the surroundings. The above observations of Ness, Bernice and Debbie highlight key issues that I will briefly explore in this paper regarding sensory orientation, navigation, movement, vision, touch, sound, memory and the human body in relation to the spatial concepts of distance, proximity and boundaries.

My intention in this interview project was not to become a specialist designer of environments for people with visual impairments, but to develop a better understanding of spatial definitions other than visual ones through conversations with the focus group participants. I read their accounts as interiorised experiences of past encounters with the built environment and value their stories as an interior architectural designer who has been searching for new ways of thinking about and practising design. The participants’ descriptions have provided a fertile ground for discussion of current practices and priorities in the design of interior spaces. I present this design research paper as a way to critically question and challenge visually biased representational means of communication within the discipline of interior architecture.

My incentive then is to deepen awareness of multi-sensory, spatial and temporal relationships between the human body and the built environment. I believe that new kinds of interiors emerge through explorations of intrinsic interdependencies between different sense modalities beyond the traditional, and still frequently quoted, categorisation of the five human senses, as, for example, in Juhani Pallasmaa’s well-known book: The Eyes of the Skin (1996). In this publication Pallasmaa identifies a hegemony of vision in architectural design of the twentieth century and calls for an architecture that addresses ‘all the senses simultaneously.’ Although there are some obvious parallels between my argument in this paper and Pallasmaa’s writings, my approach differs. I
do not divide the different sense modalities into five primary senses and my way of thinking is less phenomenologically based. In addition, I believe that not only hand drawing and other analogical ways of working, but also digital media are valuable tools in the design process and communication of multi-sensory qualities when utilised appropriately.

Through the interview sessions I realised that conventional visual methods used in interior architecture, such as computer generated photo-realistic images, were not capable of conveying the kinds of multifaceted sensuous qualities of spatial environments. I discovered during my focus group interviews that participants with any remaining sight (often merely light-dark contrast) still seemed to use it in their navigation of unfamiliar environments. However, none of them trusted their visual imagery completely because they felt that this information was incomplete, disrupted, blurred, or distorted. In particular, Ness describes how a shadow on the ground could cause confusion and insecurity: ‘Now I’ve got the dog... I know I can go just anywhere with that dog, but I still have times where if it’s a really shaded area I will stop and think about it and I’ll say... you’ve got the dog just keep going’ but if I suddenly walk into a dark area, if I’m on my own, I freeze, ‘cause I just cannot work out what’s around me... the dog takes the changes and just goes on.’

Ness similarly agreed on this issue, recounting a scene from the film At First Sight (1999),1 which is based on a story by physician, author and neurologist Oliver Sacks. In the film, the main character who is legally blind has his eyesight partially restored through an operation and is required to learn how to see for the first time: ‘In the movie... he sees his shadow... and it’s true, you don’t realise whether the shadow is a hole or whether it’s actually something you can step on, if you’ve never seen it.’ Ness had similar experiences after eye surgery brought back about 30 per cent of her sight for just three months in 2003 before she lost it completely again.

When you actually get your sight back you don’t have depth [perception] and... when I got my sight back the carpet looked like it was around me, deep... because it’s just zooms up... because it’s got different specks in it, it doesn’t actually look flat. I seriously thought I could touch the carpet at my hip level, but... I’m not walking in carpet. And the same thing with... objects. You can’t judge how far away [they are] and you can’t judge if they’re flat or if they’re actually... a 3-D thing.11

The main protagonist of At First Sight has similar difficulties in distinguishing between an object and the picture of an object as Ness observed: ‘He couldn’t tell the difference between a real apple and a picture of an apple without touching it, because they look exact the same.’ When Ness temporarily regained some of her eyesight through surgery in similar circumstances, she noted how it caused her to see things that she was unable to identify.

It was good, but it was frustrating because I was seeing things that I didn’t know what I was seeing and then other things were good because large objects. I... began to realise again what they were and had never seen them and saw them, but in my way. But it was frustrating because people, because for me to explain what I was seeing, and they got very frustrated because they were like, well, what are you talking about? We have no idea what it is, but for me, you know, I’d see it in one way I remember seeing a giant red thing going across the road and it was a tractor it turned out to be... and grass, I’d never realised grass was that green.11

The accounts given by Ness suggest that seeing, and especially the interpretation of what is seen, are learnt processes based on lived experience and only partially natural. In Edmund Carpenter’s iconic chronicle Eskimo (1959) the anthropologist describes observations made while living with the Avilik of Southampton Island, Canada, in the early 1950s.11 Here, Carpenter suggests that the act of seeing is strongly influenced by cultural conventions. While observing the Inuit, Carpenter noted that they have no favoured point of view when producing or viewing an object or picture. Their craft and carvings have no single intended orientation or theme. Carpenter highlights the difference between the Western and the Inuit ways of seeing by recounting a situation in which he was given carved figures by the Avilik.12

When he handed a photograph they examine it as it is hidden to their: ‘I can’t see any of the street signs in Melbourne, I can’t read names of streets.12’ Similarly, Carpenter tells a story about visiting a friend’s house, which had ‘whitish floors, whitish walls and this long corridor and white pillars’. To Brandon this space was this ‘one, huge, big, white thing with no dimensions’. For the time he was staying there Brandon placed a mat in front of the steps outside the door to provide a suitable visual contrast, and also as a tactile indicator to prompt him where to take a step.12

Non-visual orientation and navigation strongly relies then on a variety of sensory cues in relation to the spatiotemporal context. Multiple sensory features of an environment can become landmarks to persons with different sense-abilities, helping them memorise and make sense of a setting. Some of the techniques used may relate to sound, touch, sight, thermal qualities, air movement, position, balance, facial pressure, smell and taste. For an individual with impaired eyesight, sensory landmarks are commonly in close proximity to the traveller’s body. The immediate space and boundaries seem to be more relevant than the broader context, as orientation and mobility techniques and devices focus mainly on objects, surfaces and sounds within the environment.
special awareness of the direct surroundings. Brandon notes that for a person who is blind or visually impaired, a smaller space is more manageable than a larger one: ‘When you’ve got very large spaces you sort of break it down to your immediate space.’ The smaller space is more manageable than a larger one: ‘When you’ve got very large spaces you sort of break it down to your immediate space.’

Sculptor Robert Amendola (1910-1996) spent much of his life developing techniques for spatial orientation with individuals who had lost their sense of sight. Amendola recognised that seeing does not have to be limited to eyesight and that other bodily senses are capable of compensating for absent ocular capacities through specific training. If, without displacing the natural use of hearing for hearing’s sake, one were to ask to hearing an extra effort – to hear also for seeing’s sake – and similarly for all other senses and sense uses, each taking over one or more of the many functions of sight, it would be like providing the visual cortex with new sensors. The result would be a visual (though non-ocular) experience of one’s environment. He called this technique videation, a term coined by Father Thomas J. Carroll, founder of the Carroll Center for the Blind.

In this method, the visual memory of spatial environments from the time when the individual still had eyesight helps to connect the pieces collected by way of the other senses. According to Kidwell and Greer (1973) everybody mentally visualises spatial relations, with the exception of persons who are congenitally blind.26

In my focus group interviews, Debbie described how, one evening, she had visited a friend who is fully blind. The lights in the house were switched off and Debbie, who can see light, shapes and some colour, got used to the house in the dark. After returning through her other bodily senses. Later in the evening the friend’s parents returned home and switched on the lights. To Debbie this meant that she had to learn where everything was in the house and how to get around all over again. Spatiality and spatial relationships therefore can be encountered and understood differently through distinct sense-connections. Debbie’s non-visual concept of the spatial environment obviously conflicted significantly with the one combined with certain visual cues. Georgina Kleege, author of several books on blindness, disability and visual art and lecturer at Berkley, similarly describes her way of seeing as a dynamic process, strongly filtered by her mind: “The dialogue that goes on between my eyes and brain seems something distinctly different from sight. It is not vision but revision, something altered, edited, changed by my mind, subject to my values, expectations, and even moods. I see what I sense is there, what I hope is there, not necessarily what actually is.”

In addition to the act of seeing being strongly influenced by cultural paradigms, it also changes depending on an individual’s intent, beliefs and feelings in a particular context and at a particular time. Kleege’s assertion that expectation plays a large role in what we perceive is equally relevant to individuals with fully functioning eyesight. Visual stimuli can be filtered in a similar way as several experiments on ‘inattentional blindness’ have shown. A revealing study by Daniel J. Simons and Christopher F. Chabris describes an experiment in which participants were asked to count the number of times a basketball was passed between team members in white shirts, while ignoring the other team in black shirts pursuing the same action simultaneously. After a while a person in a dark gorilla costume enters the scene and walks through the action. Simons and Chabris found that more than 50 per cent of participants failed to notice the gorilla because they were concentrating on the players in white clothing. The Cocktail Party Effect is an analogous auditory example of essentially the same process of filtering. The effect describes the ability to focus one’s listening attention on a single talker among a cacophony of conversations and background noise.

Both examples suggest that selective processes are at work between the mind and the sense faculties, and are dependent on what is given priority of attention at the time.

**SPATIAL MEMORY, BODILY MAPS AND THE BIOGRAM**

The focus group discussions I conducted have also pointed towards yet another issue in relation to non-visual experiences of spatiality: that is memory. All of the interview participants claimed to possess very good memory and that they are able to remember environments instantaneously after having been there only once. A contributing factor to this ability is the concentration required when encountering and learning new spaces. The focus group agreed that common sight-based references used for orientation and navigation, such as distant visual landmarks, street signs and maps are mostly useless to travellers who are blind or visually impaired. Instead, other techniques are applied, including counting the number of steps one has walked, feeling the ground condition and significant changes in it through the feet, memorising the directions and turns of the path, as well as identifying useful sensory landmarks, usually ones within reach. Kleege confirms the significance of changes in the built environment that can be felt and retraced through the moving body as points of orientation: “I may not know street names, but I retain in my memory the contours of land, of architectural features of the landscape.” In the focus group conversations, Ness explained that after encountering a site for the first time, she knows how far it was, what walls and other barriers were next to her, where there were openings, whether the footpath was straight, curved or sloping, how many crossings she passed and whether it was a small or a large road crossing. Brandon similarly described how he relied largely on his memory when going for a run before his eyesight worsened and this exercise became too dangerous for him: “When I used to run... although I could see people and stuff, but the pavement — cause I have got very poor depth perception — that was basically done by memory almost, and [I] would know every crack in the pavement, where I’m going to step up ... everything was almost by memory — so I’m feeling the contours of the ground plus looking for obstacles at the same time.”

The body detects these tactile landmarks through movement and direct contact with the
physical site. Several points of connection between feet and paving hands and walls, the cane and the ground shape a mental map of the environment. Key features then become reference points, while movement of the body maps distances and paths between them. Together these form a mental diagram of spatial relationships. Kinesthetic qualities are therefore also integral in establishing a sensory and spatial mental diagram of an environment. Kinesthetic orientation in relation to animal habitation is defined as “The behaviour of an animal that moves through familiar terrain in the absence of sensory information (e.g. in total darkness) by the repetition of actions remembered from past experience of the terrain.” In this case, the animal body once familiar with the environment performs learnt and memorised actions apparently independently of reference points in the landscape.

Notably, in this example the authors distinctively refer to the absence of visual information and do not discuss the role of other sensory qualities in kinesthetic orientation, such as sounds, acoustic reflections, smells, surfaces, and so on. However, the emphasis on the animal moving through familiar terrain and by repetition of actions remembered from past experience augments the notion of a spatial mental map to a bodily memory of a site. This includes its own proprioceptive movements in relation to the environment. Similarly, Brian Massumi’s concept of the biogram from his discussion of synesthesia refers to lived diagrams based on already lived experience, revived to orient further experience. Lived and relived.”

“lived diagrams based on already lived experience, revived to orient further experience. Lived and relived.”

“In the previous discussion I established that individuals who cannot make use of their eyesight as a primary sense need to utilise their other body senses more purposefully in order to compensate for unreliable and incomplete visual images of the physical environment. In an unfamiliar environment the white cane is a catalyst for the work of numerous sound artists. One key reference I used in my focus group interviews was the Sound Sites project by Australian composer and sound designer Lawrence Harvey (1999), which investigated the auditory relationship between spatial qualities in the urban realm and non-visual orientation. Harvey collaborated with blind and visually impaired individuals, taking spatial sound recordings of distinct auditory environments. In the piece Philip Conducts the City the sound recording demonstrates how a project participant with visual impairments uses a variety of different cane techniques on his journey: “Sonic textures roll under Philip’s cane as he navigates his way through the city. A rapid montage of clicks, scrapes and clutters.” In the focus group discussions I played this particular piece to the interview participants and asked them to identify what they were hearing. Everyone commented on sounds they recognised as Philip’s drags and taps his cane across the ground surfaces and a number of gates, walking along the street and into an indoor shopping centre. I had listened to this piece several times before and while I had been able to distinguish changes in timbre, pitch and rhythm as well as recognised people taking it was not possible for me to identify auditory characteristics and spatial relationships of the architectural environment to the same level of detail as the participants in the interview session. When I asked the group to elaborate how they knew what each of the sounds were and how they picked up on the change from an outdoor to an indoor space, Nes said: “When he’s outside ... you’ve got more space; there’s more echoing further out. When he goes inside you’ve got exact walls. You can talk that it’s a shopping centre because there’s only echo in a certain area. The sound echoes to a more boundary-set space and it’s more fake.” To this Margaret added: “I’d say the silence sounded different.”

The silence Margaret referred to describes the difference in ambient sounds and acoustic conditions between the outdoor environment of the city and an indoor shopping centre. As Nes observed, the acoustic space outdoors is larger and keynote sounds like traffic are more intense, whereas the acoustic space inside the shopping centre is more constrained by acoustic barriers. Keynote sounds in an indoor environment may include traffic, noise emanating from the street, but additional sound sources with different content, such as air conditioning, background music and voices may also be present. Commonly, many of the surface materials used in shopping centres are hard and non-absorbent, which leads to a more responsive and live-sounding environment.

REFLECTIONS

I have found the notion of a non-visual approach to interior architecture most revealing, because this poses a number of challenges to the discipline and therefore creates new potential.

Non-visual interiors defy conventional design methods of representation such as scaled drawings. Their spatial context is not defined by clear boundaries measurable by the eye; they are partial, fragmented, blurred and unfixed. In interior architectural projects key issues for the successful integration of multiple sensory qualities are how to communicate these in the design process as well as which techniques and media...
are useful. Purely visual representational means do not usually achieve this sufficiently and the most realistic looking fly-throughs that have been popular in architectural and interior architectural industry practice do not convey sensuous conditions about the spatial environments other than plain visual appearances, physical boundaries and lighting concepts. To think about site, spatiality and interior architecture as emerging through layered interrogations between multi-sensory qualities and human occupation means that interior architectural design processes, tools and techniques need to be evolved. Many of the tools and techniques conventionally used in interior architecture, such as orthographic and perspective drawings and representational models (physical and digital), are no longer adequate means of communication on their own and require an expansion. When considering the multiple interconnected layers and qualities of a spatial context in relation to human occupation, it is useful for interior architects to draw on a variety of complementary tools and techniques in the design process, each providing different aspects and insights into the physical and sensory environment. In my research I have found that a combination of analogue and digital media has enabled me to communicate diverse design ideas and sensory spatial relationships.

Writing and drawing both play an important role as experimental ways to explore and express layers and relationships of sensory, spatial and temporal qualities. Writing in particular is an effective tool in that it enables the designer to establish connections between occupants and the spatial environment at a level of specificity, depth and detail that no other tool is capable of. An artist’s attempt to achieve a coherent narrative corresponds to the efforts made by individuals with visual impairments over time, shape these personal interiors in a particular social relation to interior architecture, however, are more challenging.

When focusing on the occupants of an interior space, the spatial environment, and especially one that is repeatedly visited, will affect the individuals’ biograms. Consequently the biogram as a lived diagram forms a significant part of a design brief. The task of interior architects is to contemplate what kinds of spatial and sensory encounters and experiences they provide through their design becomes pronounced. The synthetic fusion of the senses in a body’s biogram draws direct relationships between the spatial interior of the surroundings and personal interiors of sensation, thought and memory. From an interior architectural point of view it is not possible, or even desirable, to predict precisely how the design of an environment will affect, and over time, shape these personal interiors in a particular social and cultural context, but multi-sensory designs that have been considered on a range of different levels in relation to human occupation will offer spatial encounters and experiences that address the body and the senses in a deliberate and thoughtful fashion, influencing behaviours and social interactions.

NOTES

1. Niess (pseudonym), interviews by author, focus group discussions, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, September 2005.
2. Bernice (pseudonym), interviews by author, focus group discussions, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, September 2005.
3. Ibid.
4. Debbie (pseudonym), interviews by author, focus group discussions.
6. Ibid.
8. Bernice, interviews by author.
10. Niess, interviews by author.
11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.
15. Ibid, 9.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Margaret (pseudonym), interviews by author, focus group discussions, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, September 2005.
19. Ibid.
20. Brandon (pseudonym), interviews by author, focus group discussions, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, September 2005.
21. Ibid.
32. Brandon, interviews by author.
34. Arons, in Media and Anthropology.
35. Ibid., 98.
37. Ibid., 4.
Relational drawing as agency: negotiating the tangible and intangible of Samoan diaspora social space

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ABSTRACT

Sei' motu le pa’a ‘ua iloa

‘May the pearl shell fish-hook never be lost before it has been shown to others. He who has a fine-hook should not nervously hide it, but allow others to see it and admire it; else he could not proclaim its eventual loss.’ Samoan Proverb

This paper will discuss how drawing production has enabled experimentation into and critique of conventional spatial representational systems from a Samoan cultural perspective. It considers how relational documentation can be used to advance a spatial design practice concerned with interrogating indigeneous agency. To introduce this paper the Samoan proverb ‘se’i motu le pa’a ‘ua iloa’ is used. Within Samoan culture the proverb suggests that ‘it is mean to hide one’s possessions’ so that they may not be shared. Indeed, the display of possessions informs the function of relational drawing practice, which ‘displays’ the Samoan diaspora’s attitude to their material culture. It is proposed that Samoan value systems underpin contemporary Samoan approaches to their tangible and intangible culture and that these values challenge contemporary Western conventions. This paper proposes that a paradigmatic shift, from the formal to the relational, needs to occur in order to appreciate Samoan buildings and their interiors. Relational drawing practices are employed to analyse the ancillary architecture utilised by Samoans living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Relational drawing is presented as agency for Samoan research and studio practice, enabling the display, through depiction, of Samoan diaspora’s cultural values as they are played out in daily life and manifested in domestic architecture.

WINDS OF MIGRATION

The Samoan diaspora’s place in New Zealand began with the earliest migration winds that brought - and still brings - them to New Zealand. The eastern winds carrying Samoans to New Zealand have assisted a Polynesian migration that had begun 800 years prior with Maori settlement. However it was to be the colonial system established by Palagi (European) settlers that would greatly influence the terms by which Samoans would settle over the past two centuries.

Beginning with a breeze of transient Samoan migrants intent on completing educational and theological instruction in the mid-nineteenth century, a later gust brought a larger and more influential group of Samoan migrants to settle in New Zealand. Following the Second World War, motivated by the work and educational opportunities available, Samoans took advantage of three-month visas offered by the New Zealand Government. Indeed the number of Samoans resident in New Zealand grew from 6,481 in 1961 to 11,842 in 1966. New Zealand was keen to expand its economy and suffered from a shortfall in its labour pool. Initially this led to lenient policing of immigration regulations and Samoans settled in the major New Zealand cities of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and the township of Tokoroa to undertake un-skilled and semi-skilled employment.

For a period, this arrangement suited both the Samoan diaspora and the host country. Migrants were able to contribute to their families’ livelihood in Samoa through remittances, and New Zealand strengthened its economic stability and industrial self-sufficiency through the burgeoning blue-collar labour force. The demand was satisfied by rural Samoans who were young and, as anthropologist Cluny Macpherson summarises: ‘The majority of Samoans in this wave were thoroughly committed to a Samoan worldview and lifestyle. They were assertively Samoan in a relatively short time replicated many elements of Samoan village social organization.’

Samoan migrants brought to New Zealand a continuation of their customs and practices and also a fervent commitment to the Church. Their conservatism and alienation from the host country led to these customs persisting despite resettlement. Samoan migrants in Auckland, along with other Pacific communities, established Pacific ‘satellite’ villages by settling in inner city areas. Later gentrification of these areas, however, by a new class of young, up-and-coming, middle class Palagi made living in the city unaffordable for the growing Polynesian community.

During the 1960s and 1970s the Labour Government implemented schemes that encouraged home ownership. The State Housing Corporation was assigned the task of financing schemes that encouraged home ownership. The homes were sold to families in a package in which private contractors arranged financing and the required building permits. For Samoan migrants, uncomfortable with regulatory bodies, these packages conveniently circumvented interactions

Figure 1: Karamia Muller, Drawing of a pearl shell fish-hook, 2011. ArchiCAD drawing.
with authority. For their part, contractors sensed the demand and opportunistically employed Samoan sales people to directly market potential clients.

Despite taking advantage of this niche market, the resultant dwellings failed to take into consideration the particular needs of Samoan migrants. Indeed the three to four-bedroom homes with their rigid treatment of social space did not comply with the Samoan diaspora’s social requirements. Macpherson notes that, instead, cultural needs were frequently addressed by the conversion of a kitset garage into a multi-functional space that could be periodically re-designated to accommodate a range of cultural activity.10

In addition to challenges associated with the repurposing of domestic interiors to suit cultural needs, some members of the Samoan diaspora were also subjected to hostility by the New Zealand government. From the mid-1970s, the National Government targeted Polynesians in dawn raids; intended to evict so-called ‘overstayers’; a policy that caused much grief to the affected Samoan families and inevitably damaged New Zealand’s reputation. Despite the fluctuating history of support from the New Zealand Government, Samoan migrants have continued with settlement in New Zealand. However, it is a settlement based on class and societal systems that marginalise their customs and life choices. Having to choose from ill-suited housing options in extremely pressurised circumstances, none of which were on their terms, the Samoan diaspora has nevertheless negotiated solutions for themselves, resolutely regarding New Zealand as home.

Decimal elevation maps, occurring with the construction of new ancillary structures to a number of the Samoan diaspora’s domestic dwellings,11 these ancillary structures are also utilised to extend the ‘fale’ education, home, like the ‘fale to’āvate. Case studies have highlighted key similarities.12 Defined as complementary to the domestic dwelling, such structures are not often fitted with a complete range of utilities, so they still utilise service areas of the domestic dwelling, including the kitchen and bathroom. The structures also utilise the resources and relationships of the ‘igo’ to maximise social areas.

Different spatialities are activated through the relationships of members using the ancillary spaces at any given time. For example, the masculine spatiality activated when used as a socialising space for men, disperses once the space is cleared and utilised for the formalised discussion forum or ‘fona’. Analyzed thus, it is assumed that these spaces, as conceptualised by Samoan diaspora, tend to be independent of architectural tectonics. They are framed by migration history, in an act of negotiation by Samoan diaspora, characterised by anthropologist Te Rangi Hiroa in this way: ‘The pleasure derived from the exercise of native institutions is perhaps the most important factor that has led to the persistence of Samoan customs and helped them to resist the disintegration that has taken place in other parts of Polynesia.’12

It is proposed that the prevalent use of the ‘fale to’āvate as a facilitator of relational space is an architectural marker in migration history, a point when Samoan migrant homeowners began to view their property as a fluid landscape in which they could build with construction principles used in Samoa, rather than as a fixed built environment. In her study of Tongan architecture, architecture graduate and historian Charmaine Iauku identified that one of the persistent principles in contemporary fale tings is that the building process is just as important as the building itself.13 This is also true for the Samoan ‘fale ilei’ in two respects. Firstly construction requires the engagement of a family community, where the familial network employs a design-as-you-build construction methodology necessary to produce a ‘fale that satisfies the particular requirements of family and community’.14 Secondly, an absence of working drawings does not affect the construction process, as this methodology depends on relationships between people. In lieu of building documents to consult, there is an intense level of participation by all individuals, actively engaged in the task at hand.

Anthropologists Clunny Macpherson and La’au’a Macpherson identified the same methodology in traditional building,15 as it operated historically within the village context. The ‘igo gathered appropriate local materials, and the house owners and their families prepared these for construction, then worked together to construct the house. Throughout the construction process, a series of relationships are activated that secure the labour and materials necessary to complete the project, incurring social debt which would be acknowledged and settled at a later date.16 This contrasts with the Western practice of construction where work is paid by instalments of money and only remedied by the development of sketchy documentation. In lieu of building documents to consult, there is an intense level of participation by all individuals, actively engaged in the task at hand.

Conventional architectural representation has been instrumental in developing a culturally authorised critique of non-Western architectural and interior design practices. Concomming with conventional processes to generate traditional measured drawings, site visits to the case study house included measuring major social areas of the ancillary structure, elements difficult to examine, such as hidden structural members, were captured through photographic documentation, however they still required analysis on site to understand their relationships relative to the structural whole. The drawing production process, using standard office architectural software, was based on a pre-existing computer-aided drawing (CAD) skill set that had been developed during architectural studies and in professional practice.17 The final set of relational drawings shown as: East Elevation; Plan A; Plan B; Plan C; Plan D; Plan E; Plan F (Figures 2 – 8) are the product of this documentation process and also demonstrate methodological, theoretical and technical development.
Opposite
Figure 4: Karamia Muller, Gafa Plan B, 2011.
ArchiCAD drawing.

Above
Figure 5: Karamia Muller, Gafa Plan C, 2011.
ArchiCAD drawing.
Figure 6: Karamia Muller, Gafa Plan D, 2011. ArchiCAD drawing.

Figure 7: Karamia Muller, Gafa Plan E, 2011. ArchiCAD drawing.
measured drawings from this virtual model did not convey a culturally accurate illustration of the ancillary structure, as had been described in discussions with the homeowners and building participants. The measured drawings lacked contextual richness and detail. This deficit in cultural accuracy was addressed through the development of the relational drawing process.

Relational drawing was used to critique particular drawing conventions entrenched in the Western paradigm of architecture and space and to recalibrate the cultural hierarchies present in conventional architectural drawing. Relational drawings, developed for this project, are representations that render together architectural and interior elements with household objects and other decorative items. The drawings accord each element an equivalent status, negotiating between structural data and relational information.

Unlike a building designed and constructed using standard details and materials, buildings constructed by relational processes often consist of complicated junctions with varying structural elements and materials. The documented ancillary structure became a test case study for the development of not only measuring techniques and drawing conventions but inventive building processes and details that needed to be understood in order to record the ancillary structure. The unique quality of these structures can be difficult to document and required strategies to cope with the diverse information collected.

The interior was documented with a combination of measuring, sketching and photographing. According to the current homeowner there is no building documentation for this ancillary structure as it was erected without any conventional plans, elevations or sectional drawings. To assist the modeling process industry specifications for building modules were consulted and compared to the existing built elements to gain a better understanding of the modular nature of the construction. On compiling this information the case study was modeled using ArchiCAD’s virtual environment functions to recreate the ancillary structure.
A preliminary drawing set of the ancillary structure including a plan, section elevations and an axonometric view was generated (Figures 9 - 10). Despite the level of accuracy, the generated set of initial measured drawings along with axonometric views and details appeared elementary, contrasting with the contextual richness captured in the photographic documentation. The drawing set also lacked the atmospheric, contextual and material conditions experienced within the case study ancillary structure. It became necessary to undertake research on alternative architectural representations that capture contextual richness and atmosphere. The work of Japanese architectural practice Atelier Bow-Wow was used as a precedent for developing relational drawing techniques. Of particular relevance were the drawings produced for a guidebook of small urban structures, an archetype identified by Atelier Bow-Wow as ‘pet architecture’, These drawings recorded unregulated constructions and elements of the constructions’ interiors and, in the opening text to the book *Petto akitekucha gaidobukku* = *Pet architecture guidebook*, co-founder of Atelier Bow-Wow and architect Yoshisharu Tsukamoto describes how these exceptionally small buildings in Tokyo were understood: ‘Most of those buildings are cheaply built, and therefore they are not spectacular in design and they do not use the forefront of technology. However we are attracted to them. It may be because their presence produces a relaxed atmosphere, and made us feel relaxed’.

The guidebook further categorises the various pet architecture archetypes found using a site plan and a single axonometric view of the building annotated with major dimensions. A cut-out photograph of a man and a small dog was collaged onto the layout to provide the building with a sense of occupancy and scale.

To better understand the ancillary structures as relational buildings and interiors, information was formatted using a similar method of presentation. However, the drawings still had an absence of contextual information vital to their appreciation. This data was introduced into the drawings using an attentive representational technique. For instance, the washing line hanging along the interior perimeter of the ancillary’s eastern elevation was depicted in detail with the specific geometries of the various fabric patterns included.

Drawing in the washing line marks a departure from the standard Western architectural convention employed in the documentation process. The washing line itself was chosen as it connected the opposing walls of the building, already conventionally illustrated by the domestic surface from which the laundry hung. Furthermore, its inclusion inspired the addition of other aspects of the interior such as the plastic leis decorating the rafters and the raffia plastic bag storing excess linen. Including such household effects common to Samoan diaspora required a shift in conventional measured drawings.
With the inclusion of social and textual details a more rigorous rendering technique was required and a tracing technique was utilised to assist in capturing the relational aspects of the ancillary structure and its interior. Applying this technique to the ancillary structure, information from site photographs was imported into the ArchiCAD file. Design tools scaled objects in the photographs against measured elements for example, shoes were scaled against a measured floor mat shown in the plan drawings. Once proportionally scaled, the selected objects were traced using varying drawing tools. As an extension to drawing convention, line weights were selected to convey an object’s proximity to the viewer.

RELATIONAL DRAWING: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Relational construction is a defining principal in these ancillary structures which Samoan diaspora construct to accommodate cultural and social protocols brought with the winds of migration. Moreover, like the unregistered nature of ancillary diasporic structures, relational information in architectural practice has been previously unrecorded due to Western architectural drawing privileging structure over the relational, and the tangible over the intangible. The relational drawing technique dissolves these hierarchies. Guidelines for such a drawing practice have been developed and are outlined as follows:

Relational line: Convention dictates that architectural lines are diagrammatic. Mono-toned (black) rectilinear or simple lines outline: major geographical features, such as boundary lines, describe building elements like floor plates and accurately represent dimensional information. However, the conventional diagrammatic line carries with it the symbolism of a smooth surface indicative of building completion. Furthermore, the diagrammatic line represents the splitting of an area by a physical element.

It is proposed that using the diagrammatic line to describe traditional and contemporary non-Western buildings rejects their relational value and in turn prioritises a Westernised worldview of building as form, colonising the relational values of the building. As an alternative, the relational line is multi-tonal and multi-directional. It recognises the meeting of materials as not only elements that simply touch, but as elements that intertwine their surfaces together in keeping with a Samoan understanding of relationships, tectonics and aesthetic values. The use of this line to describe elements acknowledges that while the building may be composed of Western materials, the command over those materials is in keeping with the contemporary Samoan social and construction values.

Relational view: Convention dictates that when rendering a building’s facade its surface is treated as a two-dimensional surface plane. Typically, windows and doors are shown as closed and glass elements are rendered as a flat whiteness completed by outline (in the diagrammatic line) and a symbolic key (usually an arrow) to denote opening direction. This is a result of a predetermined focus on architecture as a ‘shell’. Moreover, fenestration exists to allow in light, enable ventilation, frame views and contribute aesthetically to the facade. It is proposed that this convention does not address the Pacific view of connections in space that are located in the relational rather than distinct enclosed spaces. The relational view illustrates this perspective of space by rendering junction in a state of openness. Furthermore, the joinery glass is rendered completely transparent, and therefore shown as a material that does not split space but continues space. The relational view thereby resists the Westernised concept of enclosure defining space and instead foregrounds alternative perceptions of space.

Relational scale: Drawing protocol determines particular drawings follow an assigned scale, and in doing so it establishes a hierarchy of information. Conventionally, either the first horizontal section in a traditional ‘set’ of architectural drawings describes the building location geographically or the building’s overall form at prescribed scales. At a smaller scale details of a building are referred to separately in conventional drawing systems. Relational scale prioritises material detail using ratios that allow objects such as clothes pegs and elements of decay to be seen concurrently with formal and structural elements, such as the run of a stair. It allows one to experience the drawing as the interior of the structure is utilised. This method resists the spatial model of architectural drawing, where a building and interior are represented through areas, structural elements and surfaces.

Positional compass: Traditionally the geographic compass features on the plan to indicate environmental conditions and indicate how a building may respond to such pressures through the building’s orientation. While this is an important concern for occupants, it is proposed that this has prioritised Western modes of thinking by privileging orientation in relationship to occupation. By repositioning the value systems of Samoan diaspora the positional compass presents the other forces at work within these ancillary structures. No longer susceptible to the same environmental conditions as in the Pacific Islands, it is proposed that Samoan diaspora position themselves relative to their ‘aiga’ and social elements within the ancillary structure. The positional compass foregrounds such alternative orientations that are culturally and socially relevant to those inhabiting using or visiting versus the cardinal directions of the Western compass.

There is a less obvious but sinister agent at work in the geographical compass that has its roots in recent history. The majority of contemporary practitioners suggest that in order to design and build architecture of intelligent value one must consider the elements in its siting, planning and design. This implies that architecture made outside of this system is sub-standard by being inarticulate and negligent. Such an assumption is based on the premise that social, cultural and economic standards are the same for all those who reside in New Zealand. This is not the case. Samoa diaspora have been (and continue to be) exposed to external forces that dictate life decisions. Through constant negotiation with external circumstances, they demonstrate an admirable resolve to retain their life values in the relational context.

Relational title block: In keeping with relational construction and documentation intentions, the Samoan language was used in the title block to respectfully acknowledge Samoan cultural and social protocols as vital to the drawings’ cultural authority.

The conventional title block within the relational drawings uses the indigenous language, Samoan, concurrently with English. Furthermore, standardised information in the title block includes relational information, such as the recorder’s genealogy and their position within that genealogy. In contemporary practice, it is conventionally a platform for referring builders to specific consultants. The relational title block, by comparison, includes information important to Samoans, in particular the family of the documenting agent.

Using the Samoan oratorical convention for formally addressing another person, individuals’ chiefly titles (matai) are included. To
assit with the cultural authority of the title block; a descendant of a respected Samoan orator was consulted. In doing so attention has been paid to ground the title block in Samoan social protocol. This acknowledgement of Samoan values informs the entire title block, and the language consultant is identified through mōtū title first, and Christian name second. As a form of respect for his title and his standing in the community, his details are placed first in the block and the mōtū title written in bold font to mark status.

Documenting using relational drawing principles requires interrogating which conventions require discarding or reinvention. To draw using the relational line one must question what is recorded as opposed to following conventional systems and recording hierarchies. Moreover, it is necessary to make decisions on appropriate colour and line weight, referring to diagrams as an accurate methodology for understanding indigenous space. In terms of a relational view, the document renders relational processes through connections rather than structural elements. Using relational scale, the drawing is printed on A0 stock, its large format consistent with Samoan arts practices like decorated bark cloth (sīpo) and fine mats (e togo). The positional compass locates one not only according to Western orientations of longitude and latitude, but also according to the temporal and domestic relationships between ‘aiga, and life-based occasions. Finally, the relational title block informs the genealogy of the recorder and the recorded framing the drawings as a part of the infrastructural of the relational set, authorised finally with the re-appropriated red stamp of approval (Figure 12).

A critical value of the final drawings has been the depiction of the multifunctional interior and the ancillary structure. The building envelope does not limit the activation of space to indoor/outdoor activities, but rather contributes to various spatial configurations activated as people occupy the spaces in and around the building’s form. In Western architectural practice formalism is given precedence over other aspects of design and use, as is apparent in building documentation which privileges the shell or façade. However, in analysing these ancillary structures from a relational drawing perspective it is apparent that the building’s envelope is part of a more complex use of space, which is as reliant on soft furnishings, materiality and interiorities as it is on the structural elements. These drawings recalibrate drawing conventions by giving equal treatment to relational information, and use meaning informed by function. Drawing and technology can act as agents of negotiation that mediate between conventional drawing practice and the invention of new, culturally-responsive and responsible representation techniques. Furthermore, the homogenised and the individual in the diasporic condition are mediated in the drawing content.

The relational measured drawings fulfilled a personal quest to broker Samoan diasporic identity with personal practice. However, the production has raised broader issues appropriate for further research. Firstly, there is scope for indigenising and decentralising drawing further by examining conventions not addressed in this paper. Describing Samoan buildings through plan and elevation does not adequately reflect contemporary and past diasporic building practices. The drawings completed for this research have used these conventions, but further discussion is needed on whether relational representation needs to be completely independent of Western hierarchical conventions, or if it is a successful mediation and authorises these structures as a part of the domestic architecture of Samoan diaspora.

Relational drawing has brought into view the tangible and intangible values of the Samoan diaspora. It also invites reflexivity and development in order to record a contemporary architectural condition. A consistent theme in relational drawing is mediation. It retains aspects of convention and negotiates this with drawing inventions to describe Samoan value systems. The process is one that places and intertwines Samoan perspectives and values to present an alternative drawing practice in contemporary Pacific discourse. Moreover, in ‘relating’ conventional, hierarchical modes of representation, a contemporary indigenous voice has been found to describe Samoan value systems as they are manifested in domestic architecture.

NOTES
2. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Using personal networks a number of case studies were selected. Several methodologies were used to record these case studies and inform drawing production. See Marie Muller, “Mata’upu-fausaga ka’apepe ‘i fale ma maota o tagata me le atu nui Samoa.” (Master’s thesis, University of Auckland, 2011).
11. For other case studies see Marie Muller, “Mata’upu-fausaga ka’apepe ‘i fale ma maota o tagata me le atu nui Samoa.” (March thesis, University of Auckland 2011).
14. Ibid.
15. Although Macpherson and Macpherson observe that with the introduction of kitset houses this is less common as it offers an economic advantage in terms of labour and material costs. See Marie Muller and La’avae Macpherson, The Warm Winds of Change, 154.
17. Ibid.
20. In terms of professional practice, ArchiCAD aids the documentation process through Building Information Modelling technology which can be conceptualised as virtual building. Building information is managed through standardised construction elements represented as three-dimensional objects.
Cavum/Plenum: Interpretations of Domestic Space

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ABSTRACT

The limit between interior and exterior seems no longer to exist and the two domains increasingly influence each other to the point where they blur into one. In contemporary representations of interior spaces, in particular the private and domestic aspect is in crisis. Two modalities of interpretation of the interior space make this evident, and both originate from notions of cavum and plenum. The former refers to the idea of emptiness, an empty, hollowed out space, while the latter is rather the action of filling through critical readings of selected examples of the representation of contemporary domestic spaces; this paper considers some features of internal space and of a new interiority – from the loss of borders between exterior and interior – evidenced in projects such as Sway House (2008) by Atelier Bow-Wow, Moriyama House (2005) by Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA, to the dematerialisation of space when landscapes, with their atmospheric variables, become one with interiors – evidenced in projects such as Curtain Wall House (2008) by Aires Mateus.

SPACE AND INTERIORITY

In the history of interiors, domestic space has been considered a place of shelter and protection. The search for intimacy was not the exclusive domain of architects and since the first half of the twentieth century scholars from other disciplines have studied the theme of interior space. They have interpreted it not only as a physical area, a limited empty space, but also as interiority – the image of the shell house (Gaston Bachelard), or the primordial hut, cabin or shack (Rudolph Arnheim), or the wish to be protected as from the intérieur (Walter Benjamin). Interiority as a concept was initially associated with space, specifically domestic space. The Oxford English Dictionary defines interiority as subjectivity, the innermost part of our spirit. Everything pertaining to the internal world, such as consciousness, thought, the realm of feelings and emotions, is interior. In 1948, the Italian art historian and critic, Giulio Carlo Argan, defined interior space as ‘interiority’ or ‘interiority’. In his essay A proposito di spazio interno (Concerning interior space), he wrote: ‘When we talk about interior space, we do not refer to the space limited by the walls in relation to the space outside of them, but to a concept of space as intensity or interiority... The space that we call interior is such only in relation to human beings, who think of it as the dimension of their own existence, or the region available for achieving their own possibilities.’ The place where human actions occur becomes a conforming element of space, not meant as a spatial limit but rather as an open entity articulated in the development of human activities. The interior space is conceived as a space for human relationships.

In the history of the house it is apparent that the gradual consciousness raising of one’s own interiority – a complex process which began around the end of the Middle Ages – is indeed an essential nexus in an individual’s development and the interior furnishing evolves in parallel with that. In La poétique de l’espace, (1957) Gaston Bachelard considers the house as a place where ‘the values of intimacy of the interior space are expressed at their best.’ The images of rest and stillness represent the theme of shelter and the idea of a womb which cocoon whoever lives within. The image of the interior space as shell also fascinated Walter Benjamin, who, writing in Paris in 1927, noted that: ‘The original form of all dwelling is existence not in a house but in the shell. The shell bears the impression of its occupant. The dwelling becomes a shell.’ Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930 (1995), by Carolyn Steedman, describes domestic space as a place of interiority, and places the creation of this relationship at the end of the nineteenth century using the image of the child. The house is thus an intimate, private place, a place for reflection, where the individual is detached from the external world and guaranteed a personal interiority. Elvio Facchinelli refers to this desire to withdraw and shut oneself away as claustrophilia, highlighting the idea of a barricade against the outside world. In contemporary interior design projects, the classical concepts of intimacy and privacy acquire both a new value and a new meaning.

DISPLAYING INTERIOR SPACE

Two houses, destined to be demolished, can be said to represent two different styles of dwelling that have characterised the history of interiors. The first is a 1930s American house, while the second is a typical Victorian dwelling in London. They represent two artistic interventions that, in different ways, attempt to fix the image of domestic architecture in a new image, expressing an unusual concept: the interior becomes public and the sphere of intimacy and privacy loses its aura.

In 1974, Gordon Matta Clark, an American architect and artist, the son of Roberto Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren and a member of the movement known as ‘Anarchitecture’, divided into two halves (Splitting) a suburban house that belonged to his art dealer. The artist stated during an interview: ‘Holly and Horace Solomon gave me the Humphrey Street building in March. It’s substandard housing in bedroom suburbia near the Lackawanna railroad... The Solomon family had originally bought the house as an investment, and it’s now been scheduled for demolition.’
The artist’s intervention shows the intimate connections within the space, revealing the tensions among its elements, its weight, its balance. The split, intended as an analytical operation on an architectural object, constructs a disruption of the heart and the intimacy of home (Figure 1). The principles that regulate the so-called proper space are altered and inverted; the borders between interior and exterior are broken and interior domesticity, in particular, is contaminated by the exterior world. At the same time, the exterior becomes part of the interior atmosphere. The artist claimed: ‘I would be very interested in translating cuts like this into still usable or inhabited places. It would change your perception for a while, and it would certainly make our first differentiation between interiority and exteriority and learn to distinguish between safety and danger, pleasure and pain, desire and gratification.’ The concept of space-time alters and the interior of the house becomes a solid entity where the usual movements, noises and human exchanges take place; it is as if time had stopped at a specific moment. House can be seen as a monument to the memory of a traditional way of living, where ‘memory, childhood experiences, staging the scenes of origins and endings, [...] are fundamental themes that run through Whiteread’s work: spaces of concealment, of sexuality and death – mattresses, baths, mortuary slabs, the home as the site of memory and our formative experiences.’

Through these two forceful actions, cutting and calquing, the works of Matta Clark and Whiteread display the interior with all its facets and vulnerabilities. The former creates a cavum, an empty space which brings forth constant changes in perception.

In 1993, Rachel Whiteread created House, a cast of a typical Victorian terrace house, located in the East End of London and scheduled for demolition. The artist’s action displays those rooms that are usually destined to host the intimacy of social relationships - the kitchen, the living room, the bedroom. Through Whiteread’s actions the traditional dichotomy between fullness and emptiness is thus inverted. The interior, usually represented as an empty space held in by the walls, becomes a solid volume (Figure 2). Intimacy is monumentalised and the spaces where daily actions take place were exposed. Within this context, Jon Bird observed: ‘The home is the context for initiating social relations, a microcosm of all possible worlds and the space in which we make our first differentiation between interiority and exteriority and learn to distinguish between safety and danger, pleasure and pain, desire and gratification.’

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The bourgeois interior space of the seventeenth century represents an image of shelter as ‘oppressing as well as comforting’. Paintings of that era depict interiors as spaces of plenum: tapestry, canvas, furniture... the rooms are filled with objects which imply inhabitation. In An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration from Pompei to Art Nouveau (1964), Mario Praz describes the evolution of interior space as ‘Stimmung’, visible in the paintings of some highly renowned artists. Praz identified ‘Stimmung’ as being characteristic of interiors that have less to do with functionality than with the way the room conveys the character of its owners. In Der Passagen Werk (1972), Walter Benjamin described the interiorised intimate space that characterised the bourgeois interior of the nineteenth century with its drapes and tapestries, and the complex and varied paraphernalia of boxes, drawers and cases: ‘The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling’s interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, embedded in deep usually violet folds of velvet.’

Besides painted representations from the second half of the nineteenth century, Paris witnessed a new popular trend whereby Parisian buildings were drawn in cutaway, displaying the social life happening inside the dwelling. Such prints show a miniaturised vision of Parisian society that is distributed within the building according to a specific hierarchy. As Georges Teyssot states:

> From the ground floor - the porter’s kingdom - we can move up to the piano nobile, occupied by the bourgeois, who were always represented as bored - as expected from a lazy society – or while they were holding receptions in their staterooms; and from there, up to the next floor which houses the middle class, with family pictures portraying daddies caught up in rowdy children. The lower classes dwell at the top floor: the characters vary from the tenant who cannot pay the rent, to the woman with an open umbrella who tries to stop the water leakages from the roof, to the mother who sews in the candlelight next to her sleeping child, to the unfailing presence of the artists in their dormer windows.

Cross-sections from the nineteenth century described the interior space and its furniture and decorations typical of the dwellings of that time, and also provided a description of the various situations which animated these houses. The prints induce narratives and give life to the characters caught in the freeze frames of the paintings. Benjamin stated that in the bourgeois dwelling the interior space conceived as an empty space, and the latter a plenum. Both houses invert the traditional pair of interior and exterior; fullness and emptiness, public and private. Both petrify for one moment a space where life is lived to the full by displaying it to the world at large. In both cases, all traces of human occupation are left in the background; there are no people; they pass through the memory of the house.

**PLENUM**

The bourgeois interior space of the seventeenth century represents an image of shelter as ‘oppressing as well as comforting’. Paintings of that era depict interiors as spaces of plenum: tapestry, canvas, furniture... the rooms are filled with objects which imply inhabitation. In An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration from Pompei to Art Nouveau (1964), Mario Praz describes the evolution of interior space as ‘Stimmung’, visible in the paintings of some highly renowned artists. Praz identified ‘Stimmung’ as being characteristic of interiors that have less to do with functionality than with the way the room conveys the character of its owners. In Der Passagen Werk (1972), Walter Benjamin described the interiorised intimate space that characterised the bourgeois interior of the nineteenth century with its drapes and tapestries, and the complex and varied paraphernalia of boxes, drawers and cases: ‘The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling’s interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, embedded in deep usually violet folds of velvet.’

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interior turns into an exterior: 'The domestic interior moves outside. It is as though the bourgeois owner were so sure of his prosperity that he is careless of façade, and can reclaim My house, no matter where you choose to cut it, it is façade.'

Such representations of the interior make it possible to interpret characteristic changes in the layout of the living spaces. In the first representations of the tenements, the bourgeoisie occupied the piano nobile while the lower classes lived in the upper floors; however, with the advent of electric lighting and lifts, the former piano nobile could now be multiplied endlessly and this division became less clear-cut. In both paintings and cross-sections, the interior space of the nineteenth century is represented as a plenum, a space filled with objects and furniture which delineate other privileged spaces; fences that demarcate the interior world from the exterior.

Contemporary axonometrics or perspective cross-sections frequently present the interior, not as an empty space, but as a complex, rich in the details that contribute to the development of a narrative. In his images, Aldo Cibic, an Italian architect active in the 1980s, seeks to convey the notion of 'being there' rather than emphasizing the form of the environment (Figure 3): because it shifts attention from abstract space to actions and words that describe the peculiarities of the environment. SANAA’s representations of houses also make use of specific tools, in particular three-dimensional models, to create rooms that show the interior as interiority. A central role in the narration of the features of the house. The drawings tell a dual story with the description of the structure (e.g. floor depth, exterior wall structure) and the materials used. A central role in the narration of the features of the dwelling is played by the tenant. The architect and the future dweller develop a relationship in order to better define the spaces of the house according to necessity. Since 1998 Atelier Bow-Wow has designed many houses in Tokyo, each representing a different generation of city development. The dwellings share some common features:

- Their owners are married couples in their 30s and 40s, many don’t have any children, are employed in creative fields (as artists, writers, editors, etc.) and often work at home... The lots tend to be small (around 75 square meters) and located in crowded areas near the city center rather than a new residential area. Most of the couples' budgets have probably been spent on acquiring the lot, which severely limits the cost of construction.

In the perspective cross-section of the Swagy House (2008), the two residents, husband and wife, are represented in their working, resting and social activities. This house was built following a request for a working space for the wife, (an illustrator) and spreads out on various levels forming mezzanine floors. Each small space is conceived as a plenum, filled with objects, furniture, and words that describe the peculiarities of the environment. SANAA’s representations of houses also make use of specific tools, in particular three-dimensional models, to create rooms that show the interior as interiority. Dwellings are conceived as social environments and their architecture may be defined as architecture of relation where the prevailing issue is ‘the use people make of the space.’ The House A (2005) project is an example of this way of representing space and the actions performed inside it. In a perspective view from the top, it is possible to observe the way in which even the smallest room is equipped with objects, small plants, carpets, and furniture, indicating life within the intimate spaces. These are minimal and delicate environments, contemporary living spaces which, here too, are conceived as entirely plenas.

Moriyama House (2005) is the project that best identifies the nature of the new interiority. In order to explain this house, the designer Ryue Nishizawa makes use of the following key concepts: 'To like to explain of the architectural and spatial issues we encountered in designing Moriyama House. These can be broken down into seven main elements: dismantling; acentricity; smallness; the creation of an environment; transparency; multiple tenancy/density and the absence of borders.'

The project decomposes the space of the dwelling into many small units that, distributed on the site, create a new, fluid and continuous environment and the threshold between interior and exterior is reduced to a minimum. Such features appear in the plans and in the settings of the three-dimensional model. Spaces are conceived of in relation to the human body, it is as if these interiors were absolute spaces of refuge, shells where human beings develop all their interiority (Figure 4). All other spaces, in particular those designed for meeting other people, such as the living room, are placed on the exterior: It is as if the dwelling had lost its exterior casing, retaining only a few small shells where thresholds are also reduced to a minimum.

‘Compared to a person’s body, architecture tends to be very large. But by making it smaller, it becomes like the human body or clothing and changes our spatial experience. From spaces that are shared by several people to minuscule spaces in which only one person can enter, the relationship between space and people is different.’ The bathroom space, for instance, is conceived for one person and is so small that it shares a continuum with the garden; this is also the case for the kitchen. In this way, a space is created where the distinction between interior and exterior becomes minimal, and the dwelling becomes a space between interiority and exteriority.

In SANAA’s case, this idea has been reformulated to create spaces that are exterior and interior at the same time, such as the lattice-covered corridors of the M-House (Kazuyo Sejima, Tokyo, Japan, 1996-97) -exterior corridors that connect interior spaces, or the semi-exterior gallery of the S-House (Kazuyo Sejima, Okayama, Japan, 1997), planned as an interior perimeter corridor and, nonetheless, treated as if it were an external one.
space, with the use of a natural sand floor finish and walls that flood the house with light.24

In the representations of contemporary interiors as plenum spaces, two new aspects related to dwelling emerge: a desire to return to the private and intimate sphere of domesticity and a new way of living and conceiving of the architectural space, where the relationship with the exterior and the threshold becomes crucial.

CAVUM

Other projects move in the opposite direction with a concept of cavum (to pull out, to empty), space conceived as emptiness, a hollow space. In 1986 Aldo Rossi completed the Teatro Domestico project for the 17th Triennial Exhibition of Milan, a significant work in which the distinction between representation and real world is constantly cancelled and restored through reversals of meaning and the use of abrupt changes in scale. Space is represented through a model that has been sectioned into two halves as in Matta Clark’s Splitting. Cutaway sections in the style of Georges Perec25 recall the ‘typology of the city house, the stage of a life fully lived, a tidy place with condensed noises, smells torn away from the ruins of time, colours settled as stratifications of subsequent generations’.26 The Teatro Domestico (Domestic Theatre) is the cutaway vision of a house built with a wooden structure, where one can observe a façade with an internal staircase and three rooms on three different floors (Figure 5). Single spaces are internally covered with coloured wallpaper and some items of furniture. There are no people, no movement; everything is still. This is the theatre of domestic memory.

Today designers are still using excavation, engraving and cutting to present new perspectives and new perceptions of space. In projects by the Dutch architecture studio MVRDV (an acronym for the founding members Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs, and Nathalie de Vries) it is possible to observe the use of sections and axonometric cutaways as tools to verify the conformation of interior space. The Double House section (1997), for example, reveals the subdivision, intersection and complexity of the space that is generated by the fitting of rooms. The use of black and white in the cutaway emphasises the logic of the construction of space. The façade itself becomes the section and the threshold between interior and exterior is reduced to a minimum through a play of transparency so that the game of spaces is perfectly visible from the exterior: ‘A Schwelle ‘threshold’ is a zone. Transformation, passage, wave action are in the word Schwelle, swell, and etymology ought not to overlook these senses.’27

In the same way Shigeru Ban takes the theme of the threshold to extremes in the Cyanon Wall House (1995). Designed for a family in Itabashi, a dense residential neighbourhood in Tokyo, the project concerns the redesign and transformation of a pre-existing Japanese style residence (Figures 6-7). The dwelling is a huge cavum where the internal space is separated from the exterior by a curtain, a thin membrane which, when open, allows interiority to completely fuse with exteriority: ‘The thing that splits the world in two, into outside and inside, can be as thin as a blade.’28

Portuguese architects Aires Mateus use excavation, engraving and removal in the compact volume of their houses. Their designs are simple; plans, sections and black and white elevations define the interior space with very light lines. In the plan for the House in Leiria (2008-10) the volume is excavated at the centre in order to create an internal patio that lights the facing rooms (Figures 8-9). In the representations of the plan, the house is conceived as a sculpture on which several removal operations are performed. No furniture is provided in the designs, nor is there a human figure. The space is a large cavum.

In the Lo conquisto dell’orizzonte project (The conquest of the horizon),29 the Laboratorio Permanente30 studio engravés the buildings’ blind façades with circular or rectangular cuts in order to create threshold spaces. The project consists of reflections on the undisputed development of cities (Figure 10). The interaction of the façades of residential multi-storied buildings enables the creation of new rooms that can function as containers for collective use. This is apparent in the three-dimensional model of the project that clearly shows the excavation process on the façade and the creation of in-between spaces that open new perspectives on both the exterior and new interiorities.

CONCLUSION

The concept of ‘interior’ is undergoing significant alterations, shifting from a traditional reading linked to domestic space, to the notion of interiority extending also to the spaces of collective life, mobility and communication. Dwellings, in particular, are altering aspects of traditional domesticity such as the relationship between interior and exterior and the concept of intimacy and privacy. In contemporary society, where new technologies guarantee continuous communication with the outside, is it still possible to consider individual houses as shelters for retreat, as spaces for withdrawal?
penetrate into the house, as the exterior becomes part of the interior: a definite limit between interior and exterior no longer exists: shade, light and atmospheric agents flow through the whole space, the sky at night and the stars overhead envelop the house, as if the house became part of the person’s actions.

In the Mori house project, and in an even more extreme way, in the Curtain Wall House, a definite limit between interior and exterior no longer exists: shade, light and atmospheric agents penetrate into the house, as the exterior becomes part of the interior:

Perhaps the contemporary dweller does not feel the need to be exteriorised, to be nomadic, but rather desires to have a home which is neither simply an interior space, nor a pure exterior: Living, now, is somehow perceived as occupying the space between interior and exterior: living on the threshold.

NOTES

3. Giulia Carlo Argan (1902-92) is acknowledged to be one of the most important Italian art critics of the 20th century. The topic he dealt with vary from architecture to design, ancient and contemporary art.
10. With the word cassettiera, Elvio Faccinelli refers to the wish to retreat to withdraw in a closed space.
20. Ibid., 27.
22. Aldo Cibic (1955) is an Italian architect who works in the fields of interior design and industrial design. In the 80s he collaborated with Ettore Sottsass and one of the historical founders of the Memphis group. In 1989 he founded the Cibic & Partners studio with Antonella Spizzi. Luigi Manetti and Chuk Felton. He works both in Italy and abroad. See in particular his project Retracing Happiness presented at the Biennial Exhibition of Venice in 2010.
27. Kiyama, Tsukamoto, Nishizawa, Tokyo Metabolizing, 86.
29. Georges Perec (1936-1982) is a French writer and a member of OULIPE. He has many significant works include La Disposition (1969), Espaces d’exposition (1974), and La vie mode d’emploi (1978), a novel inspired by a drawing by the artist Saul Steinberg of a cutaway section of an apartment building.
34. Laboratorio Permanente is an Italian architecture studio based in Milan which deals with themes of contemporary space.
Flinders Chair. 2012.
Train Station.
One day.
Removal. Render.

Come out into the white beside me comrade-pilots; swim in this infinity. 2011.
Canvas.
Seven days.

rendering the [im]material

James Carey
Blundell House 2005.

Two weeks.


10 Lines: East, West Trajectory 2008.

Bus Depot.

One week.

House.
Two days.

House.
Two days.
House.
Two days.

House.
Two days.
Junction. 2012.
Pub.
One day.
Locating Removal.

Queensbury Street. 2005.
Mechanics.
One day.
Sit in the corner James, you're disturbing the class. 2010.
Primary School.
Two days.
Locating. Painting.

Floor 2012.
Pub.
One day.
Flinders Sink. 2012.
Train Station.
One day.
Removal/Render.

One day.
Locating/Drawing/Cutting/Removal.

reference [im]material:
Christine McCarthy, “Toward a Definition of Interiority.” *Space & Culture* 8, no. 2 (May 2005): 112-120.

Credits.
Clare Murrell, Campbell Drake and Raphael Kilpatrick.
Ismael Martín is a member of the MLDG studio. He is an architect and has a Degree in Philosophical Studies from the University of Navarra. He has worked in the studio of Iñaki Ábalos in Madrid since 2008, and then in Abalos+Sentkiewicz arquitectos, where he has taken part in the composition and design of many projects, such as the Estación Intermodal of Logroño, and the rehabilitation of the Fundación Tàpies in Barcelona. In 2012, he moved to Berlin, where he collaborates with many alternative studios of architecture and continues his research into sustainable architecture and parametric design.

Marian Macken is an artist, designer and educator; currently Associate Professor of Architecture at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China. Her research and teaching interests are in representation, design studio and the intersections between architecture, landscape architecture and visual art. She was awarded a PhD by thesis and creative work from the University of Sydney in 2012. This work examines the role of artists’ books as a documentation of architecture, with particular interest in the implications and possibilities for architectural drawing and exhibition as design outcome. Marian’s work has been acquired by various international public collections of artists’ books and she has undertaken visiting artist residencies in London, Tokyo and Wellington, New Zealand.

Russell Rodrigo is a Senior Lecturer in Design Studio at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Russell’s research focuses on the architecture of memory and place and its relationship with interiority at the scale of both the private and the public. He has published through international journals and conferences and his research has been recognised nationally, including the awarding of the British Council’s Design Research Award in 2009 and a Visiting Fellowship at the Humanities Research Centre, University of Canberra in 2013. Russell is the designer of a number of memorial projects including the NSW Police Memorial and Gay and Lesbian Memorial in Sydney and has recently completed a research-through-design PhD focussing on the spatialisation of memory.

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occupation, maintenance, and certain recognisable activities. Methodologies draw on specific interventions, painting and sculpture. These built works explore the concept of lived experience, through working spontaneously and utilising a range of mediums. There is a strong material and spatial practice, yet the work is also connected to the exploratory process of drawing. http://akustikstudio.tumblr.com/

Chris Cottrell teaches in the Interior Design programme at RMIT University, where he is also a PhD candidate. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Auckland and a Masters degree in fine art from the Edinburgh College of Art. His creative practice explores the relationships between bodies, spaces, materials and ephemeral effects and has been exhibited throughout New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. He has also participated in artist residency projects in Scotland, Slovenia and New Zealand. Projects and research activities are archived at make-done.

Emma Cheatle is an architect and lecturer in architectural design, history and theory. She is interested in architecture as a relationship between materiality and space, cultural and social history and inhabitation. In order to ‘reconstruct’ the past lives of buildings in the present, she practices a theoretical creative writing which employs different forms of text, drawing, book arts and audio as critical methods. She recently completed her PhD at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, entitled ‘Part-architecture: the Maison de Verre through the Large Glass’. This both reevaluates these iconic works and proposes a new form of theoretical architecture comprising cross-related writings, drawings and audio pieces.

Gabriele Knueppel completed a PhD by Project in the School of Architecture and Design at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, in 2010, which was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). She has since relocated to Berlin, Germany, to pursue her interior architectural practice and postdoctoral research activities. Gabriele’s research interests focus on responsive spatial design, social interaction, multi-sensory qualities of spatial environments, connections between the visual and the auditory and the use of digital media technologies in design and designing.

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James Carey is an Associate Lecturer in Interior Design, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University. His practice focuses on the everyday, and whilst using the built environment and its material, he constructs immersive and inhabitable milieux. He uses our notion of familiarity in order to break habits to create new readings and understandings of our immediate environments. Certain sites are addressed through a slow material engagement, and then reconstructed through
IDEA JOURNAL ACCEPTS

DESIGN RESEARCH PAPERS that demonstrate development and engagement with interior design/interior architecture history, theory, education and practice through critique and synthesis. The focus is on the documentation and critical review of both speculative research and practice-based research. Design Research Paper: 4,000 to 6,000 words plus images as appropriate and Visual Essay: 1,000 to 2,000 words plus up to 4 image pages depending upon format required by author.

REFERRED STUDIOS that represent the nature and outcomes of referred design studios which have either been previously peer reviewed in situ and/or critically discussed through text and imagery for the IDEA JOURNAL. Referred Studios: 2,000 to 3,000 words plus up to 3 image pages depending upon format required by author.

PROJECT REVIEWS that critically evaluate design-based works which seek to expand the nature of spatial and theoretical practice in interior design/interior architecture and associated disciplines. Project Reviews: 2,000 to 3,000 words plus up to 3 image pages depending upon format required by author.

VISUAL ESSAYS that demonstrate critical, pictorial responses to design conditions.

PROPOSALS FOR BOOK AND PUBLICATION REVIEWS to encourage debate into the emerging literature dedicated to the expression and expansion of the theory and practice of interior design/interior architecture. Book Reviews: 1,000 to 2,000 words.

REFEREING PROCESS

Each IDEA member university publicises the Call for Papers widely and encourages submissions from its academic staff, postgraduate students and the wider national and international multi-disciplinary academic design community. Expressions of Interest are initially called for and an abstract outlining title, a concise summary of the project or paper and a brief biography is required. Abstracts are acknowledged but not peer reviewed. Following receipt of the completed paper, the Executive Editor arranges for its anonymous assessment by at least two peer referees. Referees are selected for their acknowledged expertise and experience in scholarly and design academic research. The anonymity of author and referee is maintained at all times throughout the double-blind process. Referees submit confidential reports directly to the Executive Editor by a required date. The Editorial Advisory Committee meets to review final paper selection and accepts the submissions that receive majority support from referees and are of critical value to the journal theme in the majority of the Committee’s expert opinion. Referees’ reports are made available to applicants.

The decision of the IDEA JOURNAL Editorial Advisory Committee is final, with no correspondence entered into regarding the awarded status of the submissions. The Executive Editor received 61 Expressions of Interest, which resulted in 21 Full Paper submissions with 10 Full Papers and 1 Visual Essay subject to double blind refereeing finally accepted.

CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE OF FULL PAPER

- Does the work address and expand the IDEA JOURNAL 2012 provocation, Writing/drawing: negotiating the perils and pleasures of interiority?
- Does the work contribute to the discipline of interior design/interior architecture?
- Does the work present critical selection of precedent and provide contextual rationale?
- Is there scholarly reflection leading to the exposure of new findings and arguments?
- Does the work meet high standards of scholarship through substantiated and critically discussed content?
- Is the work professionally structured and presented well-written; free of grammatical and spelling errors; work of other authors have been cited appropriately; relevant literature is cited; references are well explained in relation to context and images appropriate to content?

IDEA JOURNAL 2012 Writing/Drawing: Negotiating the Perils and Pleasures of Interiority

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