LIMINALITIES

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LIMINALITIES

Responses to UOU Questionnaires

Letter from the director

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Ws Alicante / Tabarca Island.

This article completes the trilogy of writings that began with "A New Learning Model for UOU," published in Letter from the Director UOUsj#05 (June 2023). In that article, the methodologies incorporated by the UOU network into our international architectural learning project were explained.

Following that, "3 Questionnaires for UOU" was published in Letter from the Director UOUsj#06 (December 2023). It was then the moment to assess our levels of excellence by proposing a series of three questionnaires aimed at gathering information on:

1. The knowledge and skills acquired by the participating students.

2. The attitudes developed by these students in comparison to those who do not participate in this project.

3. The attitudes developed by the teaching staff will also be evaluated.

RESULTS OBTAINED

Before analysing the responses, we must first consider the following:

- The questionnaire was voluntarily completed by two distinct groups:

a. Among students with international teaching exposure, 15 respondents, all from UA. However, only one is a local student; the rest are ERASMUS students, thus responding to the UOU methodology rather than the UA one.

b. Among students without international teaching exposure, 36 volunteers from the University of Federico II of Naples, organized through the Student Association. A Post-doc stay was conducted at Federico II in collaboration with Paola Scala to facilitate this.

- The questionnaires show overall student satisfaction with their universities, scoring 7/10 at Federico II and 8/10 at UOU. Therefore, one of the objectives of this work is to determine how to raise the satisfaction level by minimizing the detected deficiencies, which, in the context of inter-cultural teaching, are primarily focused on:

- On ACQUIRED ATTITUDES:

a. Personal growth.
b. Cultural awareness.
c. Diversity and inclusion.
d. Ethical considerations.
e. Community engagement.
f. Global perspective.

- On KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS ACQUISITION:

a. Knowledge acquisition.
b. Development of practical skills.
c. Critical thinking and problem-solving.
d. Preparation for a future career.

The analysis of the responses indicates a significant difference not only in their content but also in the more reflective attitude of students with international education. Some examples are as follows:

ON ACQUIRED ATTITUDES:

***INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

***WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

a. **Personal Growth** In what ways do you feel your time at UNIVERSITY of Universities has contributed to your personal growth and development? Can you provide an example?

- Social skills and communication in group work.
- My growth as a global citizen through contact with people of different nationalities and customs, improving my communication skills and understanding of different realities.
- I have become more patient, improved my language skills, and learned about new areas of architecture.
- I am now better at seeing the big picture and more open to alternative sources and formats.
- I was able to observe different understandings of architecture, customs, and approaches to group work.

- Working in groups.
- No specific example.
- Living alone in another foreign country.

b. **Cultural Awareness** How has UOU fostered cultural awareness and understanding among students? b. Have you had opportunities for cross-cultural interactions?

- Because we were always in contact with people from other cultures, both physically here and remotely, it broadens our cultural horizons and sometimes makes us empathize with their perspectives.
- I felt this most when I had the opportunity to interact with a student from Ankara, who has a culture different from mine, implying a different way of working and understanding things, which enriched my experience in this subject.
- The exchange of ideas with students requires cultural exchange, in which everyone can grow, which is positive.
- Seeing, listening to, and talking with people from different cultures has helped.
- Yes, now I know what I can do and have more understanding for other people and situations.

- No.
- I had some cultural awareness during Erasmus parties, but they did not influence my attitudes.

c. **Diversity and Inclusion** To what extent UOU promotes diversity and inclusion in the classroom?

- On a very important and positive level.
- The possibility of coming into contact with different cultures and working in groups.
- To a great extent, we were all able to generate ideas and link them together.

- Unfortunately, not really.
- No.

d. **Ethical Considerations** How has UOU influenced your understanding of ethical considerations in your academic and personal life? Can you share an experience that challenged your ethical thinking and decision-making?

- With the diversity of opinions, views, and working styles in each group I participated in, there were situations that taught me how to handle them in the future.
- A lot, shown me more aspects and perspectives to consider ethics + inclusion.
- Actually, I don't think there were situations that made me think about ethical issues, but coming into contact with cultures very different from mine, like Ankara, gave me a different perspective on things.
- In the workshop in Poland, I worked with disabilities and it became clear to me how many aspects of space are exclusionary.

- I really don't know.

e. **Community Engagement** How has UOU encouraged students to engage with the local community or participate in social responsibility initiatives? Have such experiences influenced your attitudes towards community engagement?

- All our workshops ended with a picnic and a community activity.
- In a workshop, we had the opportunity to interview local residents to find out what they thought about the initiative of planting a tree at the intersection.
- Through the projects we were working on in the streets, we were able to go out and interact with the inhabitants. Additionally, working in groups with local students.
- In every workshop, it was not only encouraged but also inspired and made me feel more comfortable with it.

- I don't know.

f. **Global Perspective** To what extent do you think your UOU experience has given you a global perspective on issues and challenges? Has your participation broadened your global awareness?

- To a truly significant degree, as we were in contact with many different countries and people all the time.
- Communicating with people I don't know in a language that is not my native one has helped me communicate better.
- Each country has its own problems and challenges that we must consider in our overall thinking.
- I think to a considerable extent.
- Improved by 8/10.

- Traveling.
- A little.

REGARDING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION:

***INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

***WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

a. **Acquisition of Knowledge** To what extent do you feel this intercultural experience has contributed to your knowledge in design? Can you provide an example?

- Not only did it contribute to my design skills, but also to my social skills, as we had to interact with people from all over the world.
- It was very inspiring to have a cultural exchange of ideas and completely different perspectives.
- Seeing other possible ways of viewing and practicing architecture.
- I believe my knowledge expanded significantly by observing and listening to the things presented to us. I encountered many opinions that enriched my understanding.

- I am eager to participate in every experience of this kind; I believe that having different viewpoints on the project can lead to a much better understanding of architecture, but mainly it can help us, as students, to find our way of interpreting architecture.
- I think an intercultural experience could enhance our knowledge in design, art, and other things.

Can you provide an example of a workshop that has significantly improved your understanding of architecture?

- A trip to Barcelona during a lab course.
- I don't know.
- I participated in the Porto Academy summer school workshop in 2023, which took place at the Mendrisio Academy.
- Studying abroad for a year in an Erasmus program.
- Villa Pennisi workshop in Musica.
- None.
- Nothing for now.
- Digital Naples with Tu Delft, but there are very few in which students can participate.

b. **Development of Practical Skills** How has UOU supported the development of practical skills relevant to your interests in architecture? Have you had opportunities for hands-on experiences, internships, or co-op programs?

- The new skills I developed were mainly through the AI workshop.
- Working in teams, making physical models (WS1/WS3b), and contacting local residents to get their opinion on a project (WS2b).
- I learned how free our work can be.
- In some workshops, we were working with models, so we were practicing our relationship with materiality. And we were also using AI and software that are really relevant to my interests in architecture.
- UOU is an opportunity to delve deeper and learn more about personal interests and architecture.

- Not at all.
- I have improved my skills personally; there should be courses on programs in the first year.
- I had very practical courses, mainly based on models.
- Through visits to museums and the city of Naples, because with guided tours, the student trains to recognize what he learns during the classes.
- 1/10.
- Not at all, except for a single guided tour that, due to time constraints, could not be deepened.

c. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving** Do you believe your time at UOU has improved your critical thinking skills? Can you recall a challenging problem or project that helped you develop problem-solving abilities?

- Yes, because you have to think outside the box for the workshops.
- Absolutely, just the fact that we have to be in touch with professors from all over the world immediately made us think more critically.
- Yes, it improved to reflect my own ideas and those of others, rethink group ideas, and be open to finding new solutions.
- It has created more questions for me to answer through my designs.
- Yes, it made me think about what kind of architecture really attracts me and what I want to produce and what kind of architect I want to be.
- Yes, thanks to discussions with professors at the university, but also professors from abroad.
- Yes, I think what I value most about improving my critical thinking is being able to have different cultural perspectives, which perhaps I didn't have before.
- Yes, especially taking action in public space.

- Lack of clear examples.

d. **Preparation for a Future Career** Do you feel that the education and experiences at UNIVERSITY of Universities have adequately prepared you for your future career? Are there specific aspects of your UOU experience that you believe will be particularly valuable in your professional life?

- Confident about teamwork and how to communicate better.
- I think it helped me gain diverse opinions, experiences, and skills on my path to my professional future.
- Yes, I believe intercultural exchange is important for the future.
- Considering that the profession is changing and evolving, especially after Covid, this project model resembles reality more, working with people from all over.
- Yes, communication and cooperation with different types of people.
- Yes, teamwork, communication and dealing with people from different nationalities and backgrounds.

- Negative.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

In the current academic year, 2023-24, which is about to conclude, the proposed adjustments outlined in "A New Learning Model for UOU" have already been implemented. We have worked with a specific focus on incorporating the experiential nature of face-to-face interactions into online possibilities.

At the end of each workshop, we enjoyed a week of public engagement during which students presented the outcomes of the recently completed workshop. This "week of public engagement" has successfully disseminated the work of our students. Presentations took place both at the Santa Creu Hotel and the beach in Tabarca Island, the square by and the Auditorium of the Alicante Architects' Association, the Roof of the representative building of Alicante University in the city of Alicante, the Drying House of the Las Cigarreras Cultural Centre, and even at a tram stop between our campus and the city.

Furthermore, continuing with the possibilities of having UOU colleagues present in Alicante as ERASMUS professors, during that additional week, we welcomed the visit of Franka Jagielak (Krakow) and Ferran Grau (Reus), as well as those participating in the BIP Erasmus program "Rural Areas Facing Climate Change".

This end of the year represents a hybrid balance between the best of the online international model and experiential face-to-face learning. Moreover, it confirms that the responses to the questionnaires reflect a necessary advancement in architectural education: In the ever-changing field of architecture, UNIVERSITY of Universities is committed to fostering an environment that not only meets the needs of today's global architects

but also anticipates the challenges of tomorrow. This is truly the response to the contemporary university's great challenge: To find the true place where knowledge is generated.

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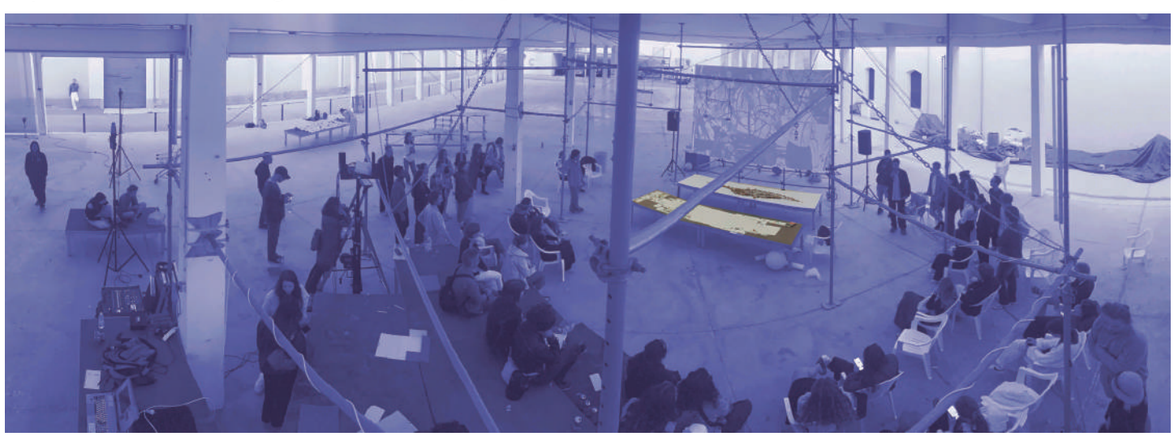

Ws BIP / Drying House of the Las Cigarreras Cultural Center, Alicante.

Ws Cracow / With Franka Jagielak at one Tram stop in Alicante.

Ws La Reunion / Alicante Architects' Association.

EDITORIAL

LIMINALITIES

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Invited Editorial

This edition of the journal has been deployed as an explorative tool active in the process of enquiry. We set out with the aim not to share present understanding, but to build understanding through the process; to enact the methodology implicit in the concern, of thinking through doing (process/doing). Within this editorial we will share where this has led us, beginning to attempt to draw together the conclusions, which have been composing themselves through this time. We have been fortunate to share this journey with a cohort of fascinating architect-researchers-theorists who have uncovered byways and detours which will be shared in this edition.

Our starting point was the ambition to begin to discuss how an understanding of a fluid and transitional engagement with the world might reflect into our designerly practice; reframing our understanding of space and the process of designing. We began with Clarke and Chalmers question “Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?” (Clark, Chalmers, 1998, 8). They discuss “a coupling of biological organism and external resource” proposing that, “once the hegemony of skin and skull is usurped, we may be able to see ourselves more truly as creatures of the world” (Clarke and Chalmers, 1998, 7-18). Malafouris extended this discussion of entanglement of mind and matter, speaking of how “we think ‘with’ and ‘through’ things, not simply ‘about’ things.” (Malafouris, 2020, 3) which in themselves “‘gather’ space and time” (Malafouris, 2014, 142). He wrote of “thinging” as opposed to “thinking”, extending the realm of cognitive processes not just into the body and the senses but equally into our tools (Malafouris, 2014, 143).

This conjured a world of dynamic interwoven processes of understanding and acting where our cognition expands out within a space, which in turn acts upon us. A place where the fluidity of our boundaries extends into the tools

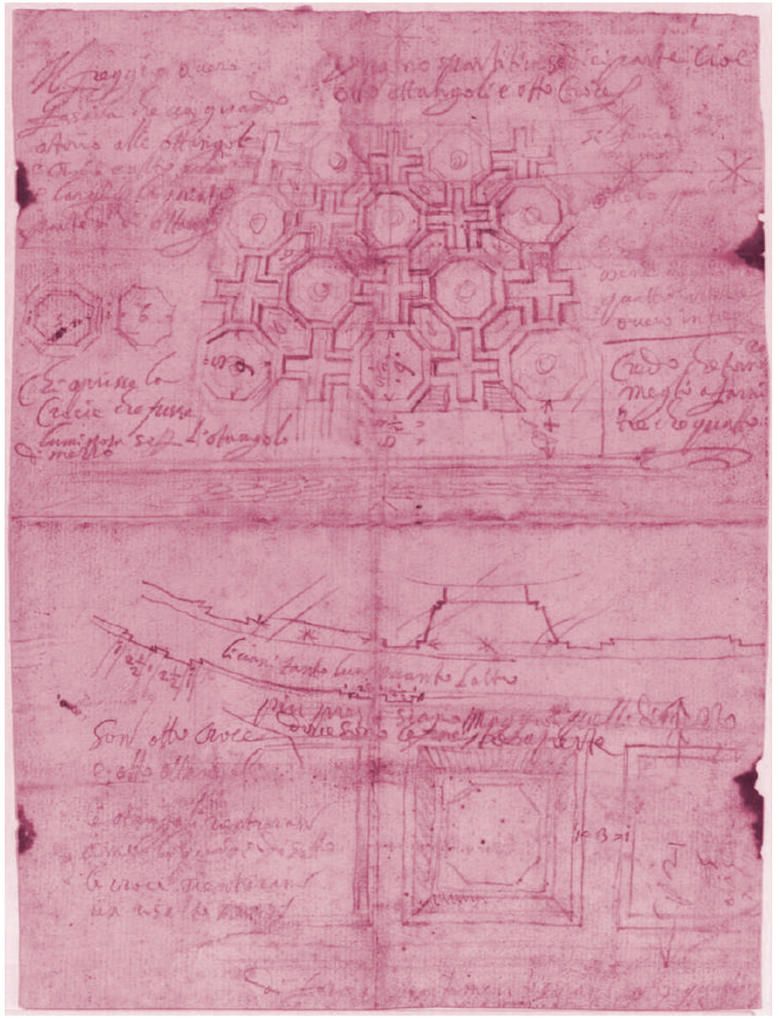

Fig.1 - Rom, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Studies for cupola cassettes and windows (1639-1640), Francesco Borromini, Collection of the Albertina Museum (AZRom224), Vienna.

we use as we begin to perceive through them. Where we inhabit notebooks, drawings, diaries, phones. When we understand our mind as co-opting our surroundings, the spaces we inhabit emerge as frameworks to support our understanding of ourselves. Our spaces are cognitive and mnemonic support systems, hooks on which to hang the memories that reinforce identity. Space itself emerges as an extension of ourselves; an inhabited desk - an element in a supportive cognitive ecosystem.

Within architecture we are constantly thinking through tools such as drawings and models to support us in our working-through of ideas (Fig.1). Malafouris uses the term “cognitive protheses” which offers a neat understanding of this relationship (Malafouris, 2014, 143). Tim Ingold spoke of a reciprocal process of making, writing. “These materials think in us, as we think through them” (Ingold, 2013, 6-7); suggesting design as a collaboration with the materials with which we work. Jonathan Hill’s work furthers this discussion, he wrote of how “A dialogue can exist between what is designed and how it is designed, between design intention and working medium, between thought, action and object” (Hill, 2005,17). This begins to ask if a shift in understanding of drawing and making as immersive design practices might uncover new routes

towards evolving spatial ecologies that interweave and entwine rather than divide or simulate, and that bring situations into being. Our drawings have always extended us into fictions of spaces yet to be, when so aligned with an embrace of our geographical nature, might we gain traction on enhancing and extending spatial experience through a new route to an immersive architecture?

This understanding begins to realign how we might consider our inhabitation and construction of architectures, indeed challenges the boundaries of what the word architecture might mean or encompass. From this emerging perspective our spatial experience appears comprised of a complex entwining replete with multiple readings and potentials. It suggests a field of ambiguities of becoming redolent of Gilles Deleuze's virtual, which speaks of potential, real yet not concrete. For Marcel Proust the virtual is "real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" (Deleuze, 1994, 208). Although now determinedly inhabited by digital definitions, the virtual has long haunted our spatial experience. Might a reclaiming of this term assist new routes forward?

The virtual sits within the Baroque's *Las Meninas* staring out at us from the 17th century. Michel Foucault writes of Diego Velázquez' Baroque painting *Las Meninas* (Fig.2) as a complex interweaving of spatial, visual and cognitive relationships. Here time and place are folded into each other, like a photograph bringing the past into the present, resulting in ever expanding possibilities of relations. Open threads inhabit the painting; a mirror with uncertain reflections, an open doorway with the ambiguity of past or future action, each element has multiple readings, meaning potentialities abound. The thresholds are dissipated, with boundaries blurred as the observer becomes actively involved within an interweaving of the time of the painting, and of the painting shown within the composition, the front side of which we will never see. We as viewer are implicated in the making of the experience (Foucault, 2006, 3-9). This virtuality inhabiting *Las Meninas* makes it appear at the same time both historic and eerily familiar.

The baroque is often read as a period but might also be understood as a means of operating. As a spatial technique, the baroque offers us concepts of open narratives, the hidden and layers of multiple possible interpretations folded into a single situation. Might we already be inhabiting a contemporary baroque supercharged by the virtual, an interweaving of physical and digital, of place, time and memory? A space of liminalities of which we are an active participant in a constant becoming.

This dynamic embodied interaction challenges cartesian mind-body dualism strongly echoing phenomenology's concerns for embodiment. As a long argued philosophical position it now has resonance within evolving research in the cognitive science of neurophenomenology. This field understands "the mind (...) [as] an embodied dynamic system in the world" (Pérez-Gómez, 2016, 142). We are not other to the world. Our conversation with Alberto Pérez-Gómez, which is shared within this edition, furthered this understanding from a theoretical perspective. The discussion opened up the architectural implications for both our architectural spaces and the design process. The importance of the relationships between language, gesture and habit he discusses inform our understanding of lived space, and how it includes us within a non-linear experience of time, movement and communication.

Our conversation with Jane Rendell, also shared in the coming pages, begins to draw connections from embodied cognition to a situated practice. This recognition of the relational positioning of the individual and the ethical implications that come with this, added a vital component to the conversation. She discusses the importance of positionality, the multiple perspectives of reading and writing, and the crucial condition of the in-between that has evolved through her writing practice

Multiple perspectives emerged through the journey of editing this journal expanding our understanding of interrelations between thinking, writing, drawing and making. Our authors open up new pathways to chase the implications of extended cognition and our entanglement within our world to evolve the practice of architecture. We are happy to share their work in the following pages.

We invited Frederik Petersen to share his tactile and material practices that engage with the design process as a conversation, encouraging unpredictable outcomes, while the dialogue between maker and material draws the work into being. For us this brings an understanding of relations where notions of gesture are an embodied and situated engagement within the design process. *Dreaming with the Pantheon in Rome* by Sebastian Andersson explores potential readings of the Pantheon when it's construction and longevity are considered through the lens of material engagement theory. Bahar and Ipek Avanoğlu further this exploration of material practices by inviting us to join a feast where speaking, eating and drawing entwine physical and digital space to engender a critical drawing practice. Their artistic work *A Dinner Story* presents work that blurs the boundaries of media, allowing for in-between readings and multiple layers informing and interfering with each other.

Another area of concern focuses on spatial experience uncovering multiple layers within a site and its spatial inhabitations. Samantha Jane Lynch shares an experimental architectural design studio practice. She discusses in her article *Interloper* the possible and the probable within dynamic contexts. The work engages site in a multi-layered manner to tease out openness and complexity. Duygu Doğan Taupitz and Aslıhan Şenel take us into the world of exhibition design, merging the viewer and viewed within situated spatial engagement. Their work *In-between Frame and Gallery* explores the concepts of framing and installing as methods for uncovering a new form of architectural practice. This engages the spatial relations between artwork, the space of the artwork and the space of the spectator. The potential of the entanglement of physical and digital realms is explored by Martina D'Alessandro and Georgio Dall'Osso in their article *Community, Public Space and Digital Data*. They share speculative design research that draws on the digital traces we leave within our urban realm to enhance engagement and build communities.

The memories and narratives we weave within space add layers for multiple possible interpretations. Yue Xin looks to the novel as a repository for historic lived experience within an entwining of character, place and temporality in her article *Phenomenological Narratives*. Here the potential of active engagement to build forms of knowing and making is unpicked. Ayse Hilal Menlioğlu and Aslıhan Şenel explore filmic space in their article *Relocating Subjectivities* as a means of enquiring into nomadic subjectivity, questioning the evolving character's identity in the narrative through her own subjective reading. Mert Zafer Kara, Bihter Almaç and Metem Aksoy contribute an exploration of architectural essay films in their article *Performative Autotopography as Creative Recording*, and exemplify mnemonic structures within "performative autotopographical practices" through their own engagements with remembering.

The edition concludes with the Atlas, a celebration of student exploration of liminalities. It shares a reflection on the rich collaborations with our UOU student cohort within the short UOU workshops which posed these questions, alongside individual responses to these questions from MA students at the Bergen School of Architecture, and the University of Brighton.

Fig.2 - Las Meninas (1656), Diego Velázquez, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

This editorship has acted as a tool for thinking, provoking a deeper understanding, a "knowing from the inside" to use Tim Ingold's term; a form of knowledge that only can be gained through an embracing of the liminalities of entwinement. We would like to thank everyone who has joined us on this journey.

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On Liminalities

A conversation between the Editorial Committee members

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Invited Editorial

SS + CE - We deployed the opportunity of this editorialship as a tool to uncover the design implications of fully inhabiting an understanding of ourselves as entwined within the world. The call discusses how our cognition expands out within a dynamically interwoven process of understanding and acting, whilst the world constantly acts upon us. We expand into our tools and begin to perceive through them. Andy Clarke and David Chalmers asked “Where does the mind stop and the world begin?”, and Malafouris discussed how “We think ‘with’ and ‘through’ things, not simply ‘about’ things. Don Ihde has spoken of how human evolution is entangled with our engagement with tools. We did not invent new tools as we had evolved, we evolved as we had new tools. Within this perspective the drawings and models with which we work emerge as tools through which we think. When we begin to understand our relationship with the world in this way the spaces we inhabit reveal themselves as extensions of ourselves. They are frameworks to support our understanding of ourselves; hooks on which to hang the memories on which our identities are built. This issue of the journal, Liminalities, set out to explore this fluid and transitional character of our engagement with the world, and how this reflects into our designerly practice, our understanding of space and the process of designing.

JAB - Understanding the process of design through architectural tools, I totally agree, digital tools isolate processes from their fixed contexts, allowing us to find real meanings on architectural designs. Those tools redefine the elements, to later de-escalate the process and return to talk about the entire set as a single entity.

A digital process of pure knowledge would be one in which any decision would be valid just because it is a decision. In this case we would not have an unspeakable structure, but rather a total absence of structure. A total undecidability and then, a decision-making agent would make the decision in conditions of total omnipotence.

A digital system is based on decisions. Since the decision is always made within a context, what is decidable is not entirely free. What is considered a valid decision will have the limits of a structure that, in fact, is only particularly unstructured. Undecidability is therefore always a deconstructed structure and, therefore, the madness of the decision is, like all regulated madness, not fixed.

The singularity of the decision, through digital tools, will tend to the universality of the rule, and vice versa, because there will be a plurality of contents equally capable of assuming that function of universal representation. In an opposite sense, contexts in fact limit structural undecidability, and also the spectrum of contents that can, at a given moment, play the role of universal representation.

The action that is developed is based on pure decision without worrying about the effects of our actions on others. It is a decision to propose action by and for the subject and is built on the accident as context.

In this digital system there is an instantaneous expansion of worldly experience, with the consequent loss of identity and memory.

This reaction and production on the instantaneous, on the accident, has an example of its artistic expression in the poems of Apollinaire. “The poet places himself in the middle of life and records the lyricism of things and voices.” Apollinaire fragments the subject and his experience of space and time, achieving an aesthetic form that is put to the test in “Zone”. There is now a day a change of era in the history of artistic perception. The aesthetics of simultaneity appear, a vision of reality that the reader must interpret and reformulate. The kaleidoscopic and changing vision of the city is the place to produce and modify this reality and transform it into an “intelligent” reality.

SS + CE - Tim Ingold discusses our entanglement within making in terms of a two-way dialogue with material, writing “These materials think in us, as we think through them.” He explains that within this perspective all making is necessarily experimental, and moves forward in direct dialogue with the constant becoming of the material, it’s context, and ourselves. We share in the editorial that Jonathan Hill spoke of how: “A dialogue can exist between what is designed and how it is designed, between design intention and working medium, and between thought, action and object – building the drawing rather than drawing the building. [...] In building the drawing, any instrument is a potential drawing tool that can question the techniques of familiar building construction and the assumed linearity of design, so thatbuilding and drawing may occur in conjunction rather than sequence.” (Hill, 2005, 17).

Our drawings and making also extend us into the fictions of spaces yet to be. In the call we asked if we begin to see our models not as something beyond ourselves, but instead employ immersive design practices, might this open up routes to an immersive architecture? Might a knowing implementation offer further potential?

MLN - Looking at Architecture as an “Art of inquiry” we look back and re-think at the debate on the separation between disciplines and how in many countries Architecture was considered to be a Technical field of studies losing the essence of what Art makes us reflect upon, inquiry, experimentation, making through the hands, using tools, questioning, speculating. Looking at the discipline of Architecture and how it is thought in many of the Schools of Architecture nowadays in Europe and beyond we can find words like sustainability, problem solving, answer, profession... I strongly believe in the value, in the practice as well in the education of future architects of questioning, rather than solving. Investigating the spatial practice through fiction and situations.

MLA - Architecture as, at least, one definition per architect. Schools of Architecture have tried to bind common assumptions on what architecture is in order to offer a collections of pieces (Frankenstein's style) to compose a meaningful whole. Questioning via understanding that we deal all the time with fictions (ours is a fictional-based duty) might be a way forward... it's been done before.

MD - This point about architects being people who question, and by extension who question what tools they need, comes at an opportune time. In the UK, architectural education is about to fundamentally change (ARB, 2023). No longer will it be necessary to have an accredited undergraduate degree in architecture. https://arb.org.uk/arb-approves-new-competencies-and-regulatory-framework-for-educating-future-architects/ The interface of 'architecture' and 'the 'rest of the world' will change. This, then, opens the discipline up to a range of new 'thinkers' - people who engage with the world differently to 'traditional' architects. The possibility of architecture moving from being inter-disciplinary (at best) to trans-disciplinary is, at long last, a real one. I foresee new spatial experiences, new tools to embrace and experience them; but it requires a new mindset, one in which architecture shares its knowledge base, becomes less protective of itself and learns from and acts with others beyond its known world.

SS + CE - We challenged ourselves and our authors to realize ourselves as participants; part of spatial, design and/or environmental ecologies, bringing situations into being. We asked in the call whether through an embrace of our geographical natures we might begin to uncover routes towards analogue and/or digital spatial engagement that interweave and entwine rather than divide or simulate; enhancing and extending spatial experience. We wished to speculate on whether an embrace of our entwined nature might begin to unveil opportunities for new architectures, and start to realign how we consider our inhabitation and construction of architectures, or indeed what that word might mean or encompass.

MLN - Tools are important as well as the method and themes to be explored. Architecture is one of the Art, the only one that can act across scales and territories, in this way there is a potential in the intersection between methods, tools and themes that the focus on the tools itself would not substitute. Thinking about the discipline and how this has been evolving throughout history, and how pedagogy has been discussed in relation to it (just think about the different programmes: Studio based education, Bologna reform, transition from Art Academy to Technical Sciences...), we must acknowledge that there is still an unexplored field that sits in the intersection between art and architecture where we are looking for a place for experimentation and this journal and this Issue gives us an opportunity to reflect on it.What can be next?

MD - I agree that, for me, 'architecture' is an 'art', even if I'm not so sure it is the 'only' one which such can act spatially so widely as Maria Luna suggests. But it is not so for all my colleagues. They think differently. Like Wittgenstein's 'Beetle in a Box' (1953) we each have a different definition of 'architecture'. We all think we have a shared experience of something, but in fact we might all be talking about very different 'somethings', whether they be real or virtual 'somethings'. Architecture is something different for everyone. Whatever it is, it is complex and it needs a common understanding of the space in which it operates, of the values we bring to it, and expect of it, if it is to be 'understood'. Maybe architecture has become too complex for an architect to cope with? The architect is not a 'God', the 'Creator' the 'Controller' of all space and time - whatever tools s/he might use to attempt such - the question now, for architecture, is whether or not the tools (as Joaquín Alvado hints) have become so sophisticated they take over the design role. Perhaps the changes to architectural education in the UK are therefore a good thing. By recognizing that there's no such thing as one definition of an 'architect' they address Wittgenstein and at the same time, by bringing new ideas and people they allow for human rather than artificial control over the discipline and profession (and its future).

MLA - Not having a clear perspective on whether architecture is an art or not might also be an opportunity. Are we social agents debating on the present-future of the world by acknowledging architectural tools and a quite specific (or generic) mindset? Is it useful?

JAB - Talking about design role, the condition of the future places us in front of new meanings to which the architect must respond directly:

- Virtual place: hyperlink of processes and situations capable of absorbing the future. Vector within the virtual map that establishes new synergies with other objects, regardless of the physical relationship of proximity.

- Virtual matter: physical medium where actions are fixed and others are reproduced. Urban void as an object of thought.

- Virtual structure: ability of the object to sustain itself and adapt to the imagined city. Digitalization applied to the environment.

- Virtual construction: Material measurement processes on the action and its transformation.

The map of the real city and the map of the physical city complement each other in their double measurement, real and virtual. The physical and the digitalization processes overlap and identify the culture of the project on the “body” of the city. The architect not only acts on the phenomena of the city, but measures and projects it into the future. The veracity of the process is carried out on the investigation and the series of hypotheses throw the scope of that issue.

We must do our best to Listen...

Sarah Stevens and Charlotte Erckrath interview Alberto Pérez-Gómez

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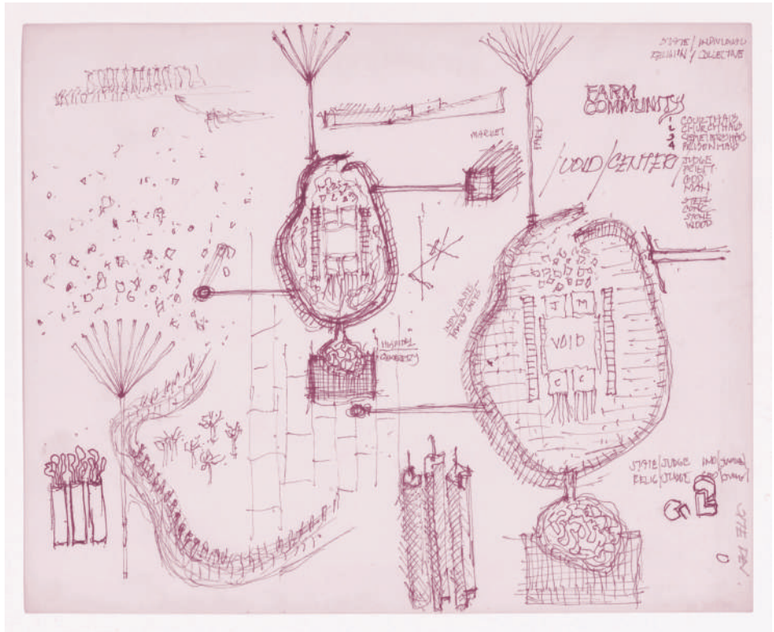
Invited Editorial

One wonderful opportunity of deploying this editorship as an explorative tool was the opportunity to speak with people who have been emersed in researching these concerns throughout their careers. We were privileged to have the opportunity to speak with Alberto Pérez-Gómez whose work has been inspirational for both us and countless others. Alberto is an architectural historian and theorist, and Saidye R. Bronfman Professor Emeritus in Architecture at McGill University School of Architecture, Montreal. What follows is a transcript of that conversation.



John Hejduk, *Site development* (1980-1982), Courtesy of John Hejduk fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, © Estate of John Hejduk

Our sincere thanks to Alberto for his time and enthusiasm (19th March 2024).

Sarah Stevens (SS): *We have been exploring the designerly implications of an acceptance of our entangled relationship with the world through the editorial process for this issue of the journal. Ideas of embodiment are obviously fundamental to this, so could we begin with discussing why addressing architecture through this lens is so important?*

Alberto Pérez-Gómez (APG): My first contact with a critique of Cartesianism and the resultant issues of embodied consciousness came through the work of José Ortega y Gasset, a Spanish philosopher from the last century who worked with Edmund Husserl. He was a contemporary of Martin Heidegger, but contrary to the German philosopher, he wrote in very clear and simple Spanish prose. That is how I started thinking about this. I came to the realization that crucial issues in architectural meaning would profit enormously from a careful consideration of these critiques in modern philosophy.

When I went to England I met Dalibor Vesely and Joseph Rykwert at the University of Essex where I studied and stayed to complete my PhD, working in the end mostly with Dalibor. He introduced me to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, crucial for the development of all my later work in architectural theory, and a philosopher that after suffering the critiques of deconstruction, now has been recovered in philosophy and many other disciplines, both in Europe and North America. In my case, that lead to hermeneutics and the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. This is why I have an affinity with this way of working with words. Language is something that architects have tended to misunderstand and have put aside for a couple of hundred years. My other preferred tools, for example hand drawing and model skills, are also to do with Merleau-Ponty's discovery of pre-reflective, embodied consciousness and language.

In this regard, the period of the European 18th century is very interesting, and is an area that usually architecture training doesn't cover well. At that time there was already an early reaction to Cartesianism, and architects trying to understand problems of expression as analogous to linguistic expression. That period ends in the wonderful work of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and Étienne-Louis Boullée, but such concerns were generally disregarded after the rise of functionalism. Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand's work on functionalism was then exported all over the world. Now, critically, the principles of Durand's instrumental theory remain implicit in the way that architecture is thought mostly everywhere.

I think the issue for me is if I can recover something of that, of what I think was there as a possibility already in the European 18th century. While classical architecture placed and emphasis on symbolic geometries reflecting cosmological orders, language was always important, and Vitruvius incorporates it into design practices so that outcomes could be appropriate, responsible and ethical. Today, lacking a universal cosmological referent, hermeneutics must become central, important as history, but also as a capacity to

engage ethical and poetic intentions through language, since language tends to be incredibly good at representing quality. Quality is what we are seeking in identifying places with meaning and to propose atmospheres that might be appropriate for human situations, which is what we normally call the 'architectural program', the promise the architects make to others for the common good. The program of architecture. That's more or less what I have instigated in my teaching, and there's a lot of work to be done. There are colleagues working on this in various places in Europe and North America, many former students and kindred colleagues.

SS: *You discuss John Hejduk's work in your book Attunement and how he used language. Could you say something about this?*

APG: Hejduk's work is the most helpful and I certainly recommend looking at this. He was part of a group of architects with deep roots in European modernism back in the 70s and early 80s that also included Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves and Richard Meier. They all eventually became very different and they each went their own way. Hejduk discovered the rich potential of poetic program and he is most interesting in the way that he brings language to bear on his design practices, producing poignant drawings, poems and masques. It is very fascinating also what he managed to accomplish pedagogically at the Cooper Union.

Charlotte Erckrath (CE): *Could you speak about the link between language and embodiment?*

APG: This is a huge philosophical topic that touches upon the very nature of consciousness, so indeed a big problem. I can only provide a simplified sketch of how I see this. Many scholars and philosophers interested in phenomenology are interested in language and hermeneutics and continue to debate the issue.

Merleau-Ponty wrote a little essay, I think it is called *The Phenomenology of Language* and his position, simply stated, is that language emerges from gesture, it is not something separate from embodiment. So therefore, it is connected to habit. Habit is a very important concept for Merleau-Ponty, and also for contemporary enactive cognitive scientists because habit stands for skillful knowing, for motor skills. Merleau-Ponty and other philosophers have tried to tackle this problem in particular with a marriage of sociology and phenomenology, a kind of sociological phenomenology. They think of language as something that emerges from gesture. Alva Noë speaks about this through relating it to how primates groom each other to establish some form of communication. So, language begins without noises. Then originally polysemic, poetic speech becomes denotative and acquires specific meanings that we try to contain in order to be able to speak like we're doing right now, so that there is as little slippage as possible between what I'm saying and what you're understanding. We constrain the language but, in its origin, it is like gesture and it is therefore poetic and is fundamentally polysemic rather than denotative and univocal. Many philosophers have talked about this and how language is contextual and situational, but that's the way that I understand it. Language is really part of gesture and it has to be understood as emerging from the bottom up, rather than something that is independent or codified, arbitrary or imposed and kind of operating top down.

Therefore, poetic language allows me to express something to others that might bring us together rather than pull us apart. The obsession of linguists has generally been to constrain language so much that we speak some kind of universal Esperanto. Their hope is that such language could bring us together, yet history seems to suggest that such tendencies, perhaps best exemplified by the 'languages' that enable technology, are rather pulling in a completely opposite direction. Despite obvious difficulties, it is rather our quotidian polysemic languages that enable real communication, not to say poetic speech, and this has enormous ramifications.

Someone that writes very eloquently about this problem is George Steiner. You may know his books, such as *After Babel*. He doesn't call himself a phenomenological linguist but he deals with the problem of language very much from that perspective. It's very different from the conventional understanding of language. The argument is that languages have diversified with our human species, which is in itself quite wonderful and mysterious. We are unique precisely because of the plurality of our languages. If you think for example that birds of a certain species may be able to have limited communication. How as one animal species we have so many languages is very unique. According to George Steiner, in the nineteenth century there were probably around 5,000 different languages spoken on our planet. Of course, they seem to be dwindling, but that's also a mystery because some linguists in this line of thinking would argue that languages don't die, they just transform. So, in a way regardless of what language we speak around the world, somehow, paradoxically, we may also be speaking the same language.

Thus, I understand that language is deeply connected with our human embodiment, and just as in embodiment we are very diverse, language becomes diverse. But there is also the hope that if we communicate poetically, we can talk to each other. This of course is the hope of architecture, that it might bring people together, even in our world of terrible, perpetual conflict.

SS: *We have been thinking about embodiment and atmospheres in relation to situatedness. When it comes to architecture and designing space how might we think about this in terms of the body and space? Might we be inhabiting event and constructing our environment through this?*

APG: I do talk about situatedness, but perhaps in a different sense than other disciplines. Instead, I use situated as in the making of situations, architecture being fundamentally an event to be lived by human beings – more than a question of touristic visits or aesthetic judgement. I think you could say the physicality of architecture contributes to the possibility of the event. So, the architect who designs the building that becomes an environment for an event has to be mindful of these things.

You're absolutely right that the event is actually made by us who inhabit it, particularly by our capacity to communicate and be together in relation, whichever kind of programmatic situation we may find ourselves in. It is a little bit like the problem of encountering a poetic work that you actually make when you read or say it out loud. It doesn't exist without that condition. So, I think that is one of the biggest challenges in this approach that I think we share. The difficulty is that whatever we do in the world, however good we are at conjuring up the possibilities of events that may bring people into communication, which is really what makes us human, is that we still have to design in a world that is fundamentally reticent. People who live in their screens and their phones construct space where this public dimension tends to be put aside as if it's not important. So, whatever we do in the world, however good we are at conjuring up the possibilities of events, we face this challenge. I think communication is crucial to being human, we are only complete by communicating with others, and I mean of course embodied communication, which is more than information conveyance, and is perhaps the only possibility to find some purpose in our life.

This is a very important issue to discuss for creation and performance. Even if we are very aware of the situation and we are very talented, we can do things that are fantastic and yet people really don't live in space properly. This is because we construct a place as geometric space, and basically don't see any difference between being behind a computer and sitting around a table with somebody, or having a nice meal and a glass of wine. It is a real problem that we have to face, because you need the reader to make the poetry alive. Take the example of Hejduk who we discussed earlier. He never was interested in building anything. His designs were sometimes built by others and he was OK with it. But he was never very invested in such operations, for being keenly aware of the fact that if you construct a theoretical or critical project as a real building in the hedonistic world of technology, it will likely lose its value. He thought that paradoxically architecture could not 'exist' in the consumer world that we have created. I choose not to be so pessimistic. I'd never talk to students like that for example, there is good architecture happening in the world, but it is difficult.

I think that is the real issue when one thinks about events. That the experience of the event often happens in situations that are not part of the artist's or the architect's palette. There is a nice book titled *All Things Shining* by a couple of phenomenological philosophers, Hubert Dreyfus und Sean Dorrance Kelly, about how literature can bring us together through this kind of spark that unites. They talk very nicely about how sports events bring people together, through experience which parallels ritual from religion when it was powerful and brought people together. This is the kind of togetherness that one talks about as an event that makes you whole, where you tend to perceive that the meaning of your life is connected with a public act of participation. It's not something that happens privately in your house, it blooms when you participate in the public event. That's hard to find in architecture programmes, and it is not often that one has the opportunity as an architect to engage with this. The nature of the event is that it's ephemeral and architecture provides a setting for it.

CE: *In an MA Course we ran in Bergen we were exploring how we might design if we considered as a starting point the body in movement through space. One of the things we were concerned with was the potential of this temporal perspective of architectural experience for evolving multiple readings. Might you share your thoughts on temporality in design?*

APG: I write about temporality, which I take from Husserl and now also from neurophenomenology. Philosophers and scientists have been looking at the question of how we actually perceive time through both, phenomenological, first-person accounts and by studying how our neural networks fire. It is very important because a lot of architects have understood, I think even from the 18th century, that physical movement is an issue in design. Particularly through the 19th century and even in the 20th century, architects like early Corbusier for example, tended to conceptualize this question as a kind of linear, almost cinematographic montage, where the temporal experience is made up of discrete instances that themselves are nothing. What we now understand better is that when we talk about motion and kinestesia together with cross sensory perception, we are actually dealing with a mode of temporality that is not linear. A metaphor for the present moment often used is that it is like a ship with a prow and a bow, and so there is a kind of thickness to the present, effectively making presence possible. So, it is a hugely important issue.

My students in the 80s or 90s always confronted me because Derrida, whose work was fashionable in architecture at the time through deconstruction, was critical of the question of presence. They pointed to his essays on art and Van Gogh, or even when he tried to tackle Merleau-Ponty, which he couldn't really as Merleau-Ponty was one of the few people that could not really be deconstructed so easily. This perspective is really critical in terms of an understanding of temporality that missconstructs time as a point in the present, a point that doesn't exist. A lot of the philosophy and human sciences have taken from deconstruction

and in fact, sometimes even take it on critically as a position these days, and hence really misconstrue things because of this fundamental misunderstanding of temporality.

When Heidegger speaks about the peasant's life in Van Gogh's shoes, Derrida makes fun of it. Heidegger's essay is called *La verité en peinture*, which means truth in painting or truth through painting. Art, poetry and painting for Heidegger, become the places where you can have access to human truths. Derrida makes fun of it and calls his essay *La verité en pointure*, in French pointure is the size of the shoe. It is very clever: *La Verité en Pointure* to *La Verité en Peinture*. Because he's trying to say that the only thing that you know for sure of the shoe is when you measure it, that there's no truth in a way that Heidegger describes truth appearing through Van Gogh's work. Only when one understands properly how temporality works can one grasp and grant that the arts open up to truths in presence.

So, to go back to your question and understand movement properly, it is necessary to have the right understanding of temporality. Rather than a linear route through a building, such as Corbusier's ramp through Villa Savoy, which is fine, but when you actually live in architecture, motility or mobility is something else. It's not just this kind of track that you take through the building, and to understand this requires the right understanding of temporality.

CE: *... we were looking to the English Landscape Garden.*

APG: ... that's very much the beginning of that.

CE: *Might you say something about phenomenology and the subjective?*

APG: There's a wonderful Danish philosopher who writes very well against object-oriented ontologists who are very critical of phenomenology. They basically argue that for them ontological is objective and phenomenology, according to their reading, is subjective. Merleau-Ponty insists that the position of phenomenology is really cosmocentric, it's ambivalent, because it inevitably involves embodied consciousness (originally pre-reflective), but the ambivalence really can be understood much better. That is why I sometimes quote some philosophy of mind from Hindu or Buddhist sources to argue for co-emergence. In our experience of the world, ultimately if you push things to the limit, you cannot give priority to the subjective, to the objective or to the action that connects the subject to the object. Everything ultimately emerges together. It is not the case that the truth of the world is either subjective, from Descartes where it's all thoughts that I think, or it's objective and it's all in the stuff of the world. It doesn't do justice to reality and ultimately you cannot decide. In fact, it emerges together, and we're always confronted with this enigma which is human consciousness.

The Gate of the Kiss by Brancusi in Targa Jiu, Romania, part of a "trilogy" of sculptures that marks the city, including one of his infinite columns.

Phenomenology talks about human consciousness but never assumes it to be the ego of Descartes, because of the question of embodiment, which is also in the world. If consciousness is also in the world, it cannot be purely subjective, that's the argument in cartoon sketch form, that could be made against the object-oriented ontology. They would basically argue that you have a concept in your head, you design with it, you bring it to fruition and then it acquires meaning by the virtue of being out there. This is really the license to Zaha Hadid and so many disciples to make funny buildings that happen anywhere in the world, regardless of place qualities. Ultimately that's why there is a kind of allegiance between this philosophical position and these very extreme formalists I am skeptical about. It's not untrue that anything that exists in the world has a meaning. Merleau-Ponty says that perception is already meaningful, but this doesn't mean that the architect has a license to do whatever without being responsible for the potential meanings that are already there. That's what phenomenology emphasizes, that there are potential meanings embedded in habit, in the language of others, in the stories that others tell, and that's what we must be careful about. We must do our best to listen, to be humble to understand, to engage in dialogue to situate basically, in order to be able to make work that is more meaningful and appropriate to whatever the task is.

SS: *You mentioned how there are potential meanings that reside in our ways of inhabiting the world. As architects we work with drawing tools founded within a Cartesian understanding of the world. Do you think that this is problematic?*

APG: That's one of the big issues, that we're handed tools and we hand our students tools that are not innocent. Therefore, it takes a lot of effort to establish a critical position vis à vis those tools, particularly the digital tools. But also, the conventional drawing tools are not innocent either. It depends what questions you ask and how you use them. This is a big issue, because the software is inherently reductive and it's very easy to think, once it has enabled formal complexity for its own sake, that these shapes are 'neat' or interesting and there is no problem to build them.

I think to uncover those potential meanings there are many attitudes that one could take. There are a few architects that are very radical and say no computers, deciding to draw by hand. It's true that developing the motor skills of hand drawing and sketching, effectively changes one's perception of the world. It is clearly different if you instead go around the world with a mobile phone photographing things. We know that if we depend on GPS the world suddenly becomes less interesting and you see less features of the world. That's one aspect, that the more skills we have, the better our capacity to understand the qualities of things.

When I was a director of a school of architecture I invested in a wonderful workshop. People don't prioritize that anymore. Today everybody works in computers, few work with their hands to develop artisanal habilities. That is one aspect that is very simple. I still believe in it. Some architects in Spain, Flores i Pratts, work only with hand drawing and they teach their students only hand drawing. You really need guts to do that as paradoxically the question arises 'what kind of preparation is that for the students?' That would be one attitude.

The other possibility is to develop your intellectual skills to understand critically the tools and what is actually happening when you are designing with rhino or other software. Michael Young has written a book on using digital tools very critically, and something like that I respect very much. I think the important thing is that in school we have very few years to teach people to be critical about these things, and we should use every minute rather than pretend to simulate practice. That for me is a pedagogical issue because you can develop this criticality either through working by hand or by doing interesting theoretical projects. But you have to do it in school so that people go out into practice truly well prepared, rather than simply having the skills to use software to produce nonsense.

CE: *You have written about how the drawing is often understood as an abstraction of a thing that then starts to exist in the world. Jonathan Hill wrote of how the drawing itself could be much more the place where architecture emerges. We have been thinking about this in terms of dwelling in the drawing as a way of inhabiting drawing. Might you reflect on this?*

APG: That is also a very interesting possibility and it's really the question we were raising with Hejduk earlier. I became very fascinated with where all this comes from and the earliest instance that I could find of an architect that deliberately believes that the drawing is the architecture, that you can dwell in the drawing, is Piranesi. He has opportunities to build buildings but he doesn't take them, he prefers to work as an architect through etchings. Particularly in the Carceri series, and the way that the first stage becomes the second stage, I think there is the beginning of this possibility of the drawing becoming the work of architecture itself. And this is instead of the drawings acting as a study for something other, which is precisely due to the problems that are emerging historically at this time in the 18th century, which became our own problems later. I think this is still a very interesting question, that as a result of these transformations it brings us to this point where we have these reductive tools, but that we also have the possibility of understanding the drawing as the work itself.

In school, when I was director for a few years, I always emphasized this possibility of the work of architectural design, particularly to the final year students. We had a very nice five-year programme where we could use a whole year to do something very interesting at the end, and the projects became very speculative. A lot of the work was like that, to be dwelled in the drawing with many modalities. I remember someone started working with a classical Chinese garden and developed a scroll and explored perception of depth. I think the students learn a lot from that. It becomes a way to develop this criticality about the tool that then serves them very well when they practice. I'm seeing this as not an end in itself but rather somehow a step that the production of architecture shouldn't bypass. That would be a good point to make. It's something that you have to convince the practitioners.

The practicing architects that actually deal this way with the design process like Peter Zumthor or to some extent Stephen Holl are taking that very seriously as a point of the departure for the work. For Holl, it's always imperative to design through watercolour in the beginning of a project.

Responding to what the World needs Now

Sarah Stevens and Charlotte Erckrath interview Jane Rendell

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Invited Editorial

Our exploration of Liminalities increasingly drew us towards Jane Rendell’s amazing work. Jane is a researcher and writer with a transdisciplinary practice that crosses architecture, art, feminism, history and psychoanalysis and is based at the Bartlett School of Architecture, London, in the position of Professor of Critical Practice. Her evolution of *Site-Writing* has been such an inspiration for us as it has been for so many others. It was therefore a real privilege to have the opportunity to speak with Jane about her work. The transcript of our conversation is shared below.

Our grateful thanks to Jane for all her time and care for this project (8th May 2024).

Sarah Stevens (SS): *Within this issue of the Journal we are exploring the implications of an embracing of our entangled nature on our designerly practices. The notion of situatedness strongly links into this discussion. Could you say something about your practice and the roots of site-writing?*

Jane Rendell (JR): Thank you very much for inviting me, and for setting up this liminalities theme in such an exploratory way, in the form of a conversation between us. Taking an approach which asks questions and seeks to ‘find out’ immediately gets us into the heart of why and how we do things.

For me, site writing has roots in research but also, probably even more strongly, in pedagogy. In the mid 1990s I was invited to teach a masters course at Chelsea College of Art and Design, which I later ended up leading, called The Theory and Practice of Public Art and Design. It was quite a small course, two years part-time, with 12 students per year from very different disciplinary backgrounds; from public policy, to landscape, to fine art, to design, to ceramics, to glassmaking, so often coming out of a training that was very materials-based. Psychoanalyst and artist Faye Carey had originally set up the course, and Malcolm Miles, a public art theorist, had joined and invited me in, and there were other amazing colleagues – architect Julia Dwyer, public artist Sue Ridge, and Katherine Clarke from muf architecture art – teaching on it. We were thinking about public art less as defined by materials, which is how it had traditionally been taught, and more akin to a conceptual site-specific approach. Through our shared teaching we began to redefine the practice of public art, and I started thinking about interdisciplinary practice and the relationship between different kinds of spatial practice and spatial theory.

I became really interested in the interdisciplinary possibilities of practices that intervene into specific sites in order to not just critique them, but to try and transform them. I came to call this ‘critical spatial practice.’ With my colleague Rex Henry, who was interested in spatial dialectics, we co-edited the second issue of the *Public Art Journal*, and our aim was to work across spatial theory and practice. We commissioned theoretical writings from geographers like Steve Pile, and sociologists like Paul Sweetman who was researching tattoos at the time, as well as a whole range of practitioners, for example, muf wrote a piece around their practice. The editorial and design approach we took was really interdisciplinary, and from there I started thinking about writing a book on the topic. This became *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* and was published in 2006 with I. B. Tauris. The book’s aim was to think through what ‘critical spatial practice’ might be by exploring lots of different examples.

I took the idea of ‘criticality’ from Frankfurt School ‘critical theory,’ an approach to theoretical thinking that embraces both self-reflectivity and also the desire for social transformation and emancipation. I wanted to move that idea of criticality from theory into practice. As I started to write about the artworks and designs that became the case studies in *Art and Architecture.*

I started to realise that the act of criticism or of critically and theoretically reflecting on an artwork or work of architecture was itself a form of critical spatial practice. Writing was a way of intervening into situations, to respond to them, and then to perform that interpretive response to another audience. I started to think about criticism as a form of situated practice, and that's what really inspired me to come up with the idea of ‘site-writing’ as a kind of situated writing or criticism.

Site-Writing was published by I. B. Tauris in 2010, and was, in a way, a sequel to *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. The book was commissioned within the publisher’s art list which is why the subtitle of *Site-Writing* is *The Architecture of Art Criticism*. The book focused on the spatialization or the situatedness of art criticism, and took concepts from criticism, like critical distance, and rethought them from a material rather than an abstract spatial perspective. *Site-Writing* aimed to not just to think about criticality as analytic, interpretive and intellectual, but also to consider criticality as a spatially and materially positioned practice, engaging with emotion and affect. Howard Caygill’s work on speculative criticism, for example, was really important for developing the idea that criticism emerges from the very process of criticizing; and I wanted to emphasise how criticism happens through a spatialised practice of engagement with an art work. Another key influence was the work of Isobel Armstrong, a literary critic, whose book *The Radical Aesthetic* looks at the difference between analytic and affective criticism. Her approach really helped me think about how different modes of criticism might depend upon positionality.

You can see how site-writing began within my pedagogic practice, and became developed through my research as a distinct methodology for critical writing. It fed into my pedagogy again, but differently, when I moved back into teaching architecture at Nottingham and then at the Bartlett. At the start, I brought the 'site-writing' way of teaching into professional practice courses where I was working with architecture students who were often brilliant makers, but sometimes didn't really want to write or felt under confident in their writing. So I began to teach my theory seminars more as a mode of practice, asking people to bring in objects and write in response to those objects. I was doing some creative writing workshops myself at the time, so I tried to develop those techniques to bridge architectural theory and practice, whilst also aiming to bring the students' amazing making skills into the space of the seminar and to use such skills, like drawing and film-making, alongside writing.

The module I taught had many different names. I think the first time I taught it, the module was called 'Site-Specific Writing,' then 'Travel Stories,' and then 'The Reading Room.' 'The Reading Room' was all about imagining and making books as spatial artefacts, and thinking about how the reader, and where and how they might read. For 'Site-Specific Writing' I asked students to make a piece of writing that would intervene into a space, and to think about the particularity of the book as artefact and how it might be responded to spatially. I remember how Chee Kit Lai, now an amazing colleague, made this brilliant book which was designed to be read on a journey, a return flight, I think it was to New York and back. The book would take exactly the length of that flight, out and back, to read and was designed to fit into a particular pocket of the airline seat and so on.

I then redeveloped the module for the MA Architectural History as 'Theorizing Practices: Practicing Theory.' Here the pedagogical focus was much more on the different genres of writing that architectural historians who wanted to be more experimental in their writing practice might want to create. The module now sits within a new masters called Situated Practice that I co-wrote with James O'Leary. I think that the MA Situated Practice is a really nice place for this module to be, because it sits alongside modules in filmmaking and in participatory practice, so it really embraces situated writing as practice. Some of the students find their poetic voice, other students who are perhaps less confident in English, but who are often very talented makers, create these incredible book artefacts. One recent example is this amazing book that uses what's called 'dragon binding,' which looks like the scales of a dragon. It is really very beautiful (see Fig.1). We now have this treasure trove of artefacts – showcasing all these really inventive ways of book-making.

It's important to say that, although to start with this was very much my module, one that I invented and set up based on my own research and practice, over the last say 10 years I've taught it with Polly Gould, David Roberts, and also Sarah Butler. Polly is an artist and curator and she's really pushed the curatorial aspect of site-writing pedagogy, including a recent exhibition, that we co-curated, called *Site-Writing: Arranging the Archive* at the Building Centre in London (2024) (see Fig.2). David Roberts is an urbanist and participatory practitioner who focuses on participatory writing, and Sarah Butler is a fiction author and also the curator of *Urban Words* where she has curated prose and fiction for public spaces. So over time the Site-Writing module has become much more diverse in terms of the interests that the different tutors have.

What it means to teach site-writing in an architecture school is something that has also evolved over time. When I first started teaching it, some students in architectural history were really nervous, because developing creative writing methods wasn't seen as properly academic, but that anxiety has now gone. I think a lot of things have changed, the coming of age of practice-led research in the UK in particular has changed academia, and there is now a whole amazing body of work from practitioners and PhD students that is understood as creative practice or practice-led research. I think this has opened a more confident phase of experimentation for academic writing, where people are much more confident about exploring writing as a creative practice in the space of academia. So that's changed the mood of the pedagogy and people are now quite hungry to try things out.

Charlotte Erckrath (CE): *The engagement with place and production of the text has such an entangled relationship in the process of site-writing. Could you reflect on this?*

JR: That's a really nice question. My interest in site-writing was partially inspired by the art critic David Carrier's idea of 'art writing.' In his 1987 book *Art Writing and in Writing about Visual Art* (2003) he makes the argument that in the literature of art it's impossible to absolutely separate, or entirely distinguish, the arguments of an art writer from the literary structures used to present the arguments. I was really interested in developing that point from a spatial and architectural perspective. I wanted to explore how such a position could apply to the literature of architecture and to the literary structures used to present architectural arguments, and also to look at how the structures of writing used to present argumentation are spatial and architectural – at the architectonics of writing, or what Mary Ann Caws has called 'architexture.'

Spatiality is present in writing in many different ways, some concern the spatiality of language and grammar, and others the spatial and material possibilities of textuality. Some of my inspiration comes from traditions like Oulipo: Workshop for Potential Literature, that included people like Italo Calvino, Georges Perec and Raymond Queneau. Much of their work constructs spatial texts using different kinds of constraints, and moves away from linear structures in argument and in writing. Maybe due to my architectural training I have always been really interested in how one might construct an argument spatially, not just in a sequence of chapters and also in how one can borrow from a site or space in order to structure an argument. This could mean spatially structuring an argument, but also spatially composing and designing

Fig.1 - Wuyue Huang, Herb Archives (2023), *Site-Writing: Arranging the Archive*, co-curated by Polly Gould and Jane Rendell, The Building Centre, London (25 March-25 April 2024). Photograph: Olga Kott.

Fig.2 - *Site-Writing: Arranging the Archive*, co-curated by Polly Gould and Jane Rendell, The Building Centre, London (25 March-25 April 2024). Photograph: Jane Rendell.

an essay or book, from considering how the words are spatially arranged on a page, to how those pages are collected together and bound, to how a book is opened or a piece of writing read. The spatial possibilities of writing can also be extended into an expanded field of installation, film and sound. Artists like Janet Cardiff, Caroline Bergvall and Ronnie Horn are really key inspirations as their writing crosses verbal and visual registers. There is also this possibility, which I think can sometimes be the hardest one to grasp, but that also holds most experimental potential for site-writing, which is – how can you remake a site in writing?

In art criticism there is the tradition of ekphrasis, which responds to an artwork in writing. This is a similar kind of process, but here the focus is on responding to the spatial composition of a site in writing. Whatever one person decides to recognise as an important spatial aspect of a site will be different from what another person will focus on. For example, even here, in our zoom room, we've got the possibilities to do this. Behind you is that beautiful vertical wooden panelling, or behind me this arrangement of images and books; to make a site-writing in response, you could take that spatial quality and use that to construct a writing. But I'm not talking here just about a formal analogy, my argument is that whatever you choose to focus on, that is your interpretive response to a site, and so it has a critical reasoning behind it. If we were all doing a site-writing workshop in the same room, each one of us would pick something different to focus on spatially, and so this takes interpretation as a hermeneutic strategy and spatialises it: what spatial aspect of a site is picked out in an interpretation and how does that become important in making a site-writing. So in a way site-writing is about making a translation from physical space to written space, and performing this translation for another audience, for a reader. It's that transformation from site to text and all the processes – interpretive and performative – that one goes through that I call 'site-writing.'

There is another aspect to site-writing worth drawing out in terms of place and production of text that concerns notions of situatedness and positionality, which perhaps when I first started working on this weren't as prevalent as concepts for critical writing as they are now. Donna Haraway had written her feminist piece around situated knowledge in the late 80s – 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' (1988) – but it wasn't fully picked up by other disciplines until the mid to late 1990s, with people like Gillian Rose working within postmodern feminism and geography exploring the relationship between space and subjectivity. So those ideas of situated knowledge and positioned objectivity that Haraway writes about became even more important to feminist postmodernism in the 1990s. And by now, in the 2020s, other disciplines such as ethnography and social geography have highly developed discourses around positionality. In the 'site-writing' class we read the work of ethnographer D. Soyini Madison that has a lot of resonance with site-writing. For Madison, critical ethnography is about taking seriously the positionality of the writer, in terms of their ethical relation to site, and their accountability to audience, and to other research participants. So I'd say that situatedness and positionality have become, through feminism and other critical discourses, core academic intellectual concepts, that are really important to mobilize through the practice of site-writing, whether it's through my own work, or when I'm supporting the work of bachelor, masters or PhD students. Each person's individual position relates always to another's. I think relationality is very important to consider from a spatial perspective – so I like to underscore the importance of thinking about spatial relations.

CE: *Could you say something about these concerns in terms of feminist architectural writing?*

JR: That's a really fascinating question for me and thinking about this brings to mind my deeper history. When I studied architecture for my degree at Sheffield in the late 1980s, from 1985 to 1988, I did my dissertation on feminist architectural space. At the time in architecture there were only two published books, at least that I could find, Susana Torre's *Women in American Architecture* (1977), and Doris Cole's *From Tipi to Skyscraper* (1973). So I started looking across at other disciplines to see what was out there and came across feminist anthropologists like Shirley Ardener and her book *Women and Space* (1981). There was other work in the field that seemed to advocate an essentialist feminist position, that I didn't really agree with – that women might design labyrinthine spaces while men might design pyramidal structures – and that's what I took issue with in my dissertation. I became interested in Aldo Van Eyck's work, particularly his Moederhuis, Mother's House, which I'd visited on a field trip to Amsterdam, and his idea of in-between realms. More recently, I have realised that interest in-between realms runs through into pretty much all of my work from the place between in *Art and Architecture*, to the hyphen in *Site-Writing*, where the hyphen as a potential space mediates the relation between site and writing. And then in *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis: Spaces of Transition* I look at the spaces of relation between subjects and objects. I think for me it's that relational and spatial aspect to feminist theory that I'm really fascinated by and how this can inform the design of space.

In the early 1990s I worked at Matrix as a feminist architectural designer, and during that period I realised I wanted to learn more about feminist history and theory. So I went back to college and did a Masters in Architectural History. It was through developing an understanding of historiography as a critical methodology that I started thinking about how feminism could offer a critique of the often heterosexist and patriarchal methodologies of architectural history. I became interested in how feminism could allow people to think critically about their objects of study: how we choose what we study, how we place value on some objects and not others, and how we value our interpretive methods and writing modes in different ways.

For my PhD I used the work of the French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, and her essay from the late 1970s, translated into English as, 'Women on the Market,' to produce a gendered critique of spaces of consumption in 1820s London. This then became *The Pursuit of Pleasure* which was my first authored book. At the time I started to think much more about 'feminine' styles of writing, not in terms of the positioning of all women's writing as 'feminine,' but rather in asking what was a feminist voice or feminine voice in architecture. I had lots of conversations with feminist colleagues about this, such as Doina Petrescu; and Barbara Penner, Iain Borden and I co-edited *Gender Space Architecture* together in 2000 to bring together a set of core texts published across disciplines that investigated the relation of feminism and architecture, gender and space. At the same time I was also thinking about critical spatial practice and situated practice through my teaching at Chelsea, and wondering whether one could write academic essays in a different way, and what would happen if one used the 'I.' To suggest such a thing seems far less dramatic now, 30 years on, although in some cultures and places it's still considered quite transgressive to use 'I' in an academic essay. I was really inspired by bell hooks and Jennifer Bloomer's work – both use autobiography to great effect in their writing. And so I wrote this piece called *(Un)doing It Yourself* for a book that the late Jonathan Hill was editing called *Occupying Architecture*. That was where I first brought autobiography into my own writing, and used the 'I', my 'I', along with other voices. It broke the spell of the mantra: 'this essay will…', and allowed me to say instead, 'I will …' to give myself permission to write for myself. I think feminism has been really important for bringing subjectivity into play in writing, academic and other kinds of writing, allowing people to be self-reflective, to expose their ways of working, and of thinking. Writing from the place of the 'I' or from the position of several 'I's, can expose of the mess of the academic essay in process, showing that not everything has been sorted out in advance. And it is through sharing this process of finding out what you think that the really important part of working out what an argument might be can take place.

So feminism has been key to my own work in terms of presenting to me the possibilities of feminist autobiography in the 1990s, and especially the writing of women of colour, like Gloria Anzaldua, and now, in this amazing period, what is known as 'autotheory,' which has for many people almost replaced autobiography, taking its potential for self-making even further. Autotheory is not just life writing or writing from the position of 'I,' even though such positions can be multiple, it's also about the way in which writing life's experience can also generate theory. Sara Ahmed has this beautiful idea of the 'sweaty concept' which she writes about in *Living a Feminist Life*. Here writing about a challenging experience allows her to generate concepts.

For me this is really exciting, this possibility of the coming together of autobiography and autotheory to generate abstract concepts out of concrete singular experiences. So feminist autotheory is not about disappearing into a purely subjective experiential space. Of course work of that sort has amazing value, often cathartic value and transformational value for the development of a writer as a subject. But I think autotheoretical writing can also make a huge contribution to philosophy and to theory-building in architecture.

SS: *Fragments play a key role in some of the work, could you reflect on this?*

JR: I think this question picks up on the idea of multiple voices and the possibility that in autobiography, a feminist acknowledgement of the subject position isn't necessarily singular but can be multiple. I've been interested for some time in the idea of the 'confessional construction,' which is something I came up with in an early invited piece in 2002 for artist Bridget McLeer and the project she was curating called *llaw*, where she asked a number of writers and artists to produce a text to go on a wall in Hoxton, London outside the Bookartbookshop (see Fig.3).

Fig.3 - Jane Rendell, *Confessional Construction* (2002), *LLAW*, curated by Brigid McLeer, BookArtBookShop, London (2002). Photograph: Jane Rendell.

This invitation got me thinking about the movement from the private space of writing, to what happens when that writing is visibly made public as a kind of poster manifestation on a street, and how different this position is from a writing set on a page inside a book. It was in that piece that I started thinking about the confession as a making public of an autobiography, and that the act of revealing something of oneself might also be a construction of oneself or a performance. At the time I was really interested in Tracey Emin's work where she uses the act of the personal confessional as a kind of shock tactic, and also Sophie Calle's work where in her art practice she appears to be telling you stories that are very intimate, but in so doing she's also inventing an intricate set of persona – possibly real, possibly fictional.

Through the writing of the 'Confessional Construction' (2002), I became fascinated by the possibilities of intertwining multiple stories, imaginative and remembered. Much of my work has included the weaving of multiple voices. In one text, I might have three or four different voices on the go at the same time. Some voices might be theoretical, some might be gathered from found texts, some might be voices of other people, some will be my own. I think the idea of how a text can be woven is certainly what *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* explores. The book has an autobiographical strand, a theoretical and psychoanalytic strand, and an architectural history strand, each one is quite strong throughout the book. Each strand has a different timeframe, so each story is told at a different tempo, and the book produces quite a complex temporality. Other shorter pieces, are composed of smaller phrases of writing that almost become fragments.

I've been interested in the process of arranging and rearranging fragments for some time so there has always been a curatorial aspect to my site-writing practice. When I wrote the BA Architecture dissertation that I mentioned earlier it was before computers. The text was handwritten and then cut up and reassembled on the floor of my room, stapled and sellotaped, that's how I put it together. I think that process has probably stayed with me. I don't know if you would share this experience, but I do think architectural training makes us into spatial thinkers and writers. As architects we are less linear thinkers, and more spatial in our approach. So as someone trained as an architect, who then became a historian, a discipline which is often understood to be a sequential mode of argumentation, in which reflections on the past are remade in the present, I've been always really interested in how to relate spatiality and chronology. I think the fragment allows a creative possibility for the interrelating space and time.

I'm a real fan of Roland Barthes' work, particularly the way that he composes his writing out of fragments, like his *A Lovers Discourse* and his *The Preparation for a Novel*, as well as the other lectures he gave at the College de France. Barthes writes a lot about how working with fragments allows for a kind of non-linear approach, that he considers quite aleatory. In 2005, the artist Tacita Dean curated this amazing show called *An Aside*, where the curatorial concept was 'free association.' This exhibition has been another inspiration for me, as I'm interested in the process of free association in psychoanalytic practice, and how things that are next to each other, might not have a causal relationship. So for me theories and practices of montage and collage are really relevant, how things might sit alongside each other in one configuration, and if you move one thing and put it somewhere else the overall meaning will change. This practice of arranging and rearranging configurations allows multiple possibilities of interpretation to occur. I've loved working with the fragment for that reason, as an incomplete part that does not contain a whole and full meaning on its own, and that wants to be part of an arrangement, and whose interpretation remains open.

There's perhaps a melancholy about the fragment that really appeals to me. This is obviously not the same for everyone, but I find melancholy and also nostalgia offer strong creative possibilities. I lost my Dad several years ago and it took a very long time to get anywhere near recovering from losing him. He'd left behind books he was reading on a bookcase with the bookmarks he used left in them, and I took fragments from the pages he'd marked to construct a text. I found writing that piece, 'After he had gone,' a really healing process. So for me there's something about the melancholy of the fragment, the piece that's torn apart from being a whole thing, that has a creative and poetic potential that I just find generative. Maybe there is something there about the need to balance death with life.

SS: *When the work enters other spaces, through readings or quiet readings, are there further entanglements, do the texts have future lives? The vocal act of reading would seem important, could you say something about this?*

JR: I like the idea that a text is never finished. We all face deadlines and particular moments where we have to bring things to a close, or maybe a pause, but I always like revisiting and reworking something that I thought was finished, only to discover it has more to offer. Again I think there's something about the architectural training here that is relevant. As a student I used to find the idea of the greenfield site, the tabula rasa, absolutely terrifying; whereas the site that was already full of things, was, and still is, I find, much more exciting to work with, as it brings in the possibility of fitting in, or not fitting in, with something that is already there. When I'm writing I like to quite quickly bring things together, so that I'm then in the process of curating and arranging materials, rather than starting with a completely blank sheet. I tend to start writing by gathering companions for the journey. Sometimes it's things that I've already written, or quotes by others that I find important. There's a process of writing that Donna Haraway has described as 'feminist figuration, a kind of storytelling, of situating of self that I find helpful. I came to it through Rosi Braidotti's work on the nomadic subject, but actually Braidotti picks it up from Haraway and they take it in very different directions. Yet for both there is the importance of the micro narrative and storytelling for feminist theory.

The last part of *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* deals with different theories of figuration. Figuration is for me a kind of arrangement, but not just material arrangement, also psychic arrangement at the same time; a figuring, responding and then refiguring (see Fig.4). At the time of writing I described *Site-Writing* as a series of 'configurations' but strangely didn't theorize this as a writing practice in the book. To arrange the book as a set of configurations seemed quite an intuitive way of putting the book together, and it was only then in my next book, *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis*, that I started thinking about how to conceptualize site-writing as a practice of configuring and what that might mean. Figuration or configuration is quite an embodied practice because of its dealing in material fragments and the awareness of what it means to select and arrange them over time. The changing materiality of lived experience is a very important part of contemporary materialist feminist theory, and I would say this process of arranging the world and the self in response, happens through the practice of writing.

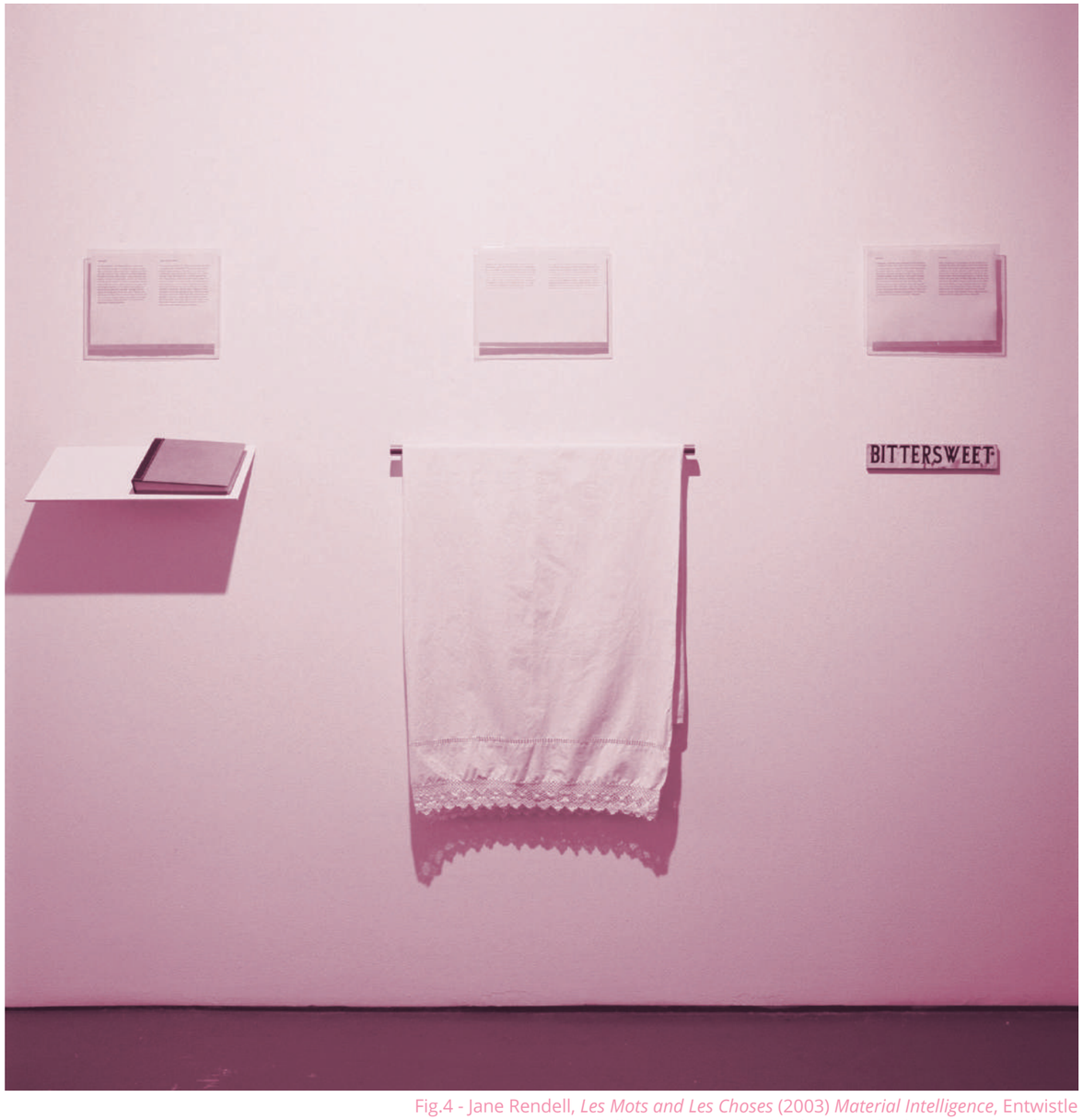

Fig.4 - Jane Rendell, *Les Mots and Les Choses* (2003) *Material Intelligence*, Entwistle Gallery, London (2003). Photograph: the Entwistle Gallery..

SS: *How would you see the relationship to the concerns embodiment and situated concerns of phenomenology?*

JR: I'd like to connect this question about embodiment back to your question on reading as I see the two as interconnected. Site-writing could be thought of as a way of reading site. Quite often that reading of site happens through a mapping, one that is not necessarily disengaged but through an embodied mapping that takes place by walking through sites. Walking is, I think, such a brilliant way of engaging with site because it allows one to be present in the here and now, but also through movement, and sometimes through walking with others, to draw on different associations, to allow different things to come to mind. Walking allows a mixture of past, present and future to emerge, made up of what's very much in front of you, and things that pop up unexpectedly in response to what you see, hear or smell, like memories or dreams. I think that reading site through an embodied process like walking is what makes it possible to understand what might come to matter.

I do think reading can be a practice that cares about sites and subjects. During Covid-19 I set up a website called *Site-Reading Writing Quarterly*. I had become quite tired of the culture of academic peer review. I noticed more than usual how when people didn't have to reveal themselves, they could become quite mean, knowing they would not be called to account or to explain themselves. I started to think how this process was a very unproductive way of responding to another's work. it was also a time, immediately after my Dad died, that I wasn't able to write, that I just wanted to read, and I could only read fiction. I would just choose an author that I loved and read everything they'd ever written. I've always loved reading, especially fiction as a child, then for a long period during the 1990s when I first became an academic, I found myself only reading theory. So I thought let's do something where people can really read each other's work, and properly engaging with the process of what it means to read each other. *Site-Reading Writing Quarterly* pairs people up who have just published a book, and invites them to read and respond to each other's work. So there's something in it for both people, both writers expose a vulnerability by sharing a book that another will read and respond to. And as both writers will become each other's reader – they know from the initial invitation, that they are going to swap reviews later, it gives the process of re-viewing a relational ethic and responsibility. I also asked contributors to write their biographies from the position of a reader as well as a writer. So the review became about not just what the writer had written but what the writer had read or what kind of reader each writer was. For me, there is aresponsibility, as well as an inspiring opportunity, to read other people's work and to keep abreast of what's being produced creatively in our field and in others.

I think there's also another aspect to reading which is important, and that is the idea, or the reality if you like, of reading aloud, and the difference between reading to oneself and reading out loud to others. There are lots of amazing artists who've worked with reading practices, like Sharon Kivland, or Laura Gonzalez, a brilliant performance artist, and many others too, who've explored the vocality of reading as a practice. We have brought different ways of reading into the site-writing class. Polly and I are both interested in how we train our students to read aloud and what happens to breath and posture when reading. There are so many things to think about when one reads aloud to others, and I think some of that gets taken for granted when we're writing, and when we are reading others, because as practices both can become quite disembodied. Reading aloud brings the body back to things and to matter, because if you can't breathe you can't read. There's something about the importance of taking a breath, taking a breather, which might also be a call to slow down. At different times in the site-writing class, we really question what it means to read a text aloud together, this is something David Roberts has worked on through his manifesto-writing workshops. We also wonder if should we all read the text aloud together, or take it in turns. Should we take the text to different sites and it read aloud? This is something we've done before and has produced some fascinating results and insights. So I find the site-reading-writing relation very productive with lots to explore.

Phenomenology is an area of philosophy that I did not find of interest when I first encountered it, which is surprising because phenomenology concerns lived experience, something which fascinates me. Today with the development of feminist phenomenology and through reading writers like Sara Ahmed and Rosalyn Diprose, and many others, I feel much more drawn to it, and find a strong relationship with site-writing practices. When I was doing my Masters in Architectural History in the early 1990s I positioned myself as a Marxist feminist and was much more interested in historical materialism. At that time I found Merleau-Ponty's writing and other works of phenomenology quite alienating as they seemed to bracket the world off in a way that I found de-politicizing, so I turned away from it. It's only more recently, because of postmodern feminism and the work of feminist and queer phenomenologists, that I've come back to phenomenology and found it really productive for my own writing. Someone like Sara Ahmed is able to bring a political historical material consciousness to thinking through, and responding to, lived and felt experience that is really helpful for developing approaches to site-writing.

CE: *Alberto Pérez-Gómez spoke with us about his concern for the importance of poetic language to the design process. He also discussed this in terms of the gesture and embodiment. Are these concerns that you would feel an affinity with?*

JR: Again that's a really interesting question. I was drawn to Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* as a student.

And I still find it an amazing book, especially his idea that different spatial and architectural features, like the attic and the cellar, can produce a poetics. I really want to do a long essay or book based on *The Poetics of Space*. I would love to consider the poetic elements of archetypal architectures – tables, doors, windows – from the perspective of feminist autotheory, as my interest in poetics comes from the idea of poethics and the concept of ethopoiesis as an ethical process of self-making.

When I first encountered some of the key literature around poetics in architecture it was as a student, and I found them quite depoliticised, Nor was I drawn to the literatures around poetics and technology because I'm not a very technical person. I am, however, really interested in materials, and so it was Foucault's work on self-making, on the subject as a material, and his approach to the practice of ethics which drew me into poetics through the idea of ethopoiesis. In particular I became fascinated by Foucault's ideas of ethics as a practice, a form of relating to self and to world, and the process of making and re-making of self in relation to others through writing, whether it's kind of chronicling through diaries as texts written to the self, or writings that are intended for another, or to be public. There has also been a wonderful strand of writing on ethics coming out of poetry, such as Joan Retallack's idea of a poethics, a poetics that is also an ethics. Then more recently someone like Denise Ferreira da Silva has developed what she calls a 'black feminist poethics.' So for me there is a really interesting way in which poetics and ethics are coming together around the processes of how one remakes oneself in relation to others in the world – as a set of real lived and historical experiences that are gendered, classed and raced.

CE: *How would you say your practice, with its exploration of post-dualist modes of thinking, has impacted on your approach to design and designing? Do you see consequences for design and a designerly way of knowing?*

JR: I like this idea of post-dualist modes of thinking and designing, as a way of bringing the two together. As someone based in an architecture school in a time of ecocide and genocide, the impact of ways of thinking on making, and the reverse is actually vital. In *Art and Architecture* I was concerned with the theory practice relationship, and keen to challenge the idea that theory comes first and practice afterwards, that practice is an example of theory. I don't think I ever really believed this was the case, for me practice is what generates theory. I do think it has been quite hard to see in architectural academia how the relation could be reversed, because for decades the publishing world has set up a dichotomy, which draws a strong distinction between books on architectural theory on the one hand, and monograph glosses on buildings that have already been produced on the other. There is still a strong tradition of separating theory and practice, both in architectural education and in publishing, but I think that practice-led research has created a space between, a place of liminality, that allows for entanglements and crossovers that reveal not only how practice generates theory but also how theory is a form of practice.

As someone who worked a great deal with feminist deconstruction, I've been interested in critiquing binaries, particularly because binaries don't allow for fertile crossovers, they tend to denigrate one side and prioritize the other. So trying to think of ways of working that don't fit binary models I find really intriguing, but also an ethical requirement. I think that's why practice led research is so important, because it challenges different types of knowledge production and says they're not separated, they are together. You don't have research over here and practice over there, it's actually a process that is inter-related. I suppose I think of site-writing as a process of that sort. Although site-writing might be categorised as a so-called seminar module, it is actually taught through workshops more like one might teach studio. For me, that's really important because it means that people come to write through doing, that they learn to trust the process of intuition, of trying stuff out, experimenting and not being quite sure what's going on. Trusting not-yet-knowing. That's why we use workshop techniques, such as very short writing exercises, and participatory methods, like working in pairs, and trying out forms of call and response which can be so helpful.

There's an amazing book, *Devising Theatre and Performance* by Leslie Hill and Helen Paris, who are performance practitioners. The book is full of site-specific theatre exercises. I've used some of them with students this year for the first time and they're just so brilliant because in doing a short exercise you can try stuff out and end up somewhere that you didn't expect to go. Finding ways to improvise in teaching and in writing is important. Part of this method involves sharing work with others through a process a bit like the surrealist game of the Exquisite Corpse, where you don't quite know what will happen next, you put something out there, and see what might come back, and you find yourself constantly surprised in the process. This means allowing yourself to be changed by someone else or by a situation. I think it's this kind of psychic condition of being open to change that we need to be in to respond to the climate crisis. To be able to change, we can't cling on to old capitalist and racist extractivist habits. These habits are killing us and our planet, and architecture as a profession has to be willing to really change itself. What I hope from my site-writing practice and pedagogical experiments, is that writing practice is understood, not as a kind of separate strand of thinking that is not relevant or doesn't inform the design studio, but rather as a way of allowing us to "trust in what is difficult", to quote the poet Rilke, and to transform. Hopefully this can build a different type of subjectivity, being open to others, to experiment with different ways of responding to what the world needs now in this time of intersecting crises.

MATERIAL PRACTICES

Balancing Control and Indeterminacy in Deformation Casting

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Invited Artistic Work

Deformation casting uses the inherent structural intelligence in elastic formwork to create complex organic forms and geometries. When casting in an elastic material,[1] the weight and viscosity of the casting compound are essential elements in the pliable formwork expanding to its projected shape. Similar to how gravity acting on a hanging chain produces a catenary curve, the expansion of an elastic membrane loaded with a casting compound converts the liquid pressure within the volume into surface expansion, resisted through tensile forces (Popovic, 2023, 89-90).[2] This creates an interaction of forces **where load, expansion, and the resulting surface tensile forces are in balance, while the membrane in its expansion maintains a minimal surface to volume ratio.**

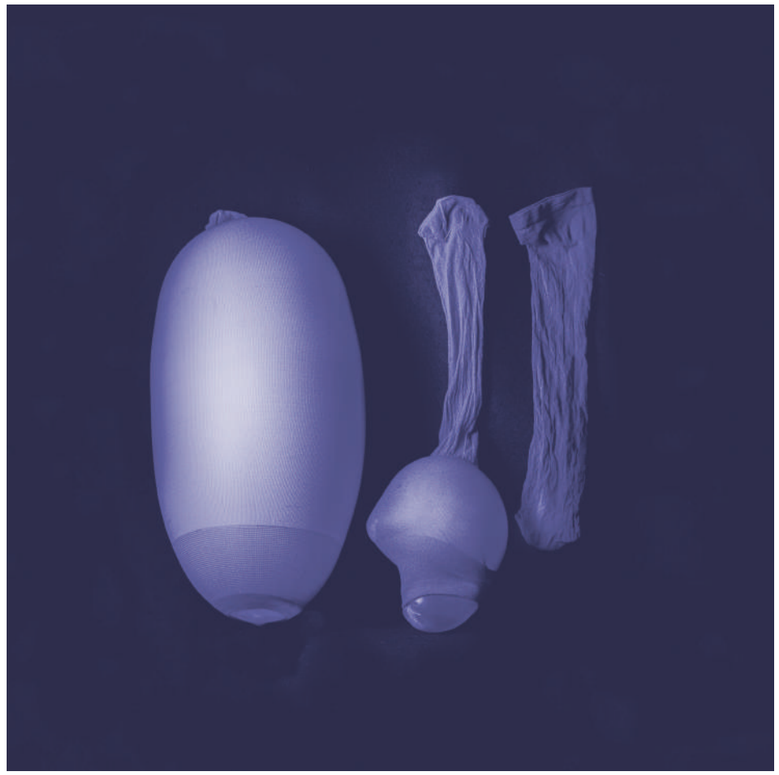

Fig.1 - Inflation test.

When an elastic volume is loaded with liquid casting compound, it expands towards a spherical or drop-like shape in accordance with the laws of energy conservation. During the pour, the loaded formwork can be seen as a system that self-solves the forces acting upon it through the minimal surface deformation necessary for the formwork to reach an equilibrium between internal liquid pressure and external tensile counterforces. The process is similar to how air pressure inflates and gives shape to a balloon with resulting shapes that have much in common with the minimal surfaces produced by soap bubbles. External constrictors and carefully designed formwork patterns are used to upset the elastic volume’s natural expansion

Fig.2 - Inflation test.

Fig.3 - Formwork, before pour.

Fig.4 - Cast no. 79, hollow volume.

toward spherical shapes and reveals a formal and plastic plurality that appears organic and evolved in nature.

Where traditional approaches to casting seek to control liquid pressure within the formwork by encasing the casting compound in rigid materials that deny deformation, membrane casting actively embraces and relies on the deformation of the formwork. In this process the practice and purpose of casting is relieved from its association with predictability, tight tolerances, and repeatable outcomes. Instead, deformation casting implicates the practitioner in an intuitive process of tuning the liquid pressure inside the formwork to the resulting tensile forces afforded by the surrounding elastic formwork. Each cast element arrests the pressures and constrictions at play during its creation - and takes a portion of its meaning from the now of its creation.

Casting in flexible formwork made from textile or fabric can be traced back to around 1900 (Veenendal in West, 2016,18) with several independent rediscoveries and reinventions into current day. Relevant to this essay is work by structural thin-shell engineers of the 1950s and onwards, such as Heinz Isler, with their focus on pneumatic formwork (Chilton, 2000, 34-35), as well as a renaissance in the 2000s propelled by the architect Mark West's focus on fabric formwork's capacity to produce building components that combine analogue form finding and organic sculptural form in concrete structural elements.

The work presented here deviates from its predecessors in its use of formwork that is highly elastic. The change from flexible to elastic membranes is not only a change in material properties. The expansion of form-finding capability in elastic membrane casting is accompanied by a surrender of control and diminished predictability of outcome. This positions the practice in a precarious territory, where the work process embraces risk taking and open ended experimentation in pursuit of outcomes that balance between a vague predictability, surprise, and failure in search of discoveries that would not be reached through conscious or analytical approaches (Chard, 2005, 10).

The precision and repeatability traditionally associated with cast elements are replaced by a practice where tolerances vary across the volume and precision remains localised in areas determined in advance of the pour. The elastic membrane simultaneously forms and is formed by the liquid pressure exerted on it, in a process that allows the practitioner to arrest and fix in place the mixture's natural liquid, organic form.[3] The process engages the practitioner in a balancing act between control and indeterminacy. The outcome and integrity of the cast elements are a consequence of the method's algorithmic capacity to self-resolve in a surprisingly constructive way (West, 2020, 40),[4]

Fig.5 - Cast no. 103, reverse engineering of fundamental torus geometry.

Fig.6 - Cast no. 48

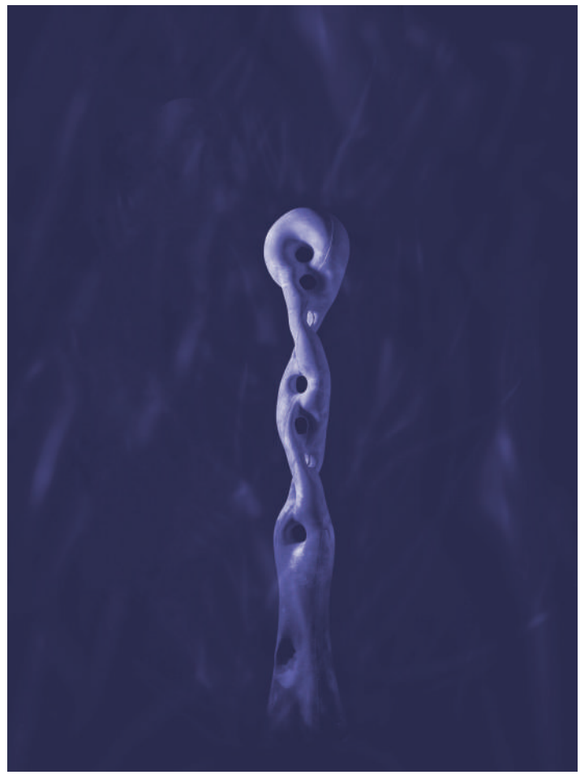

Fig.7 - Cast no. 75.

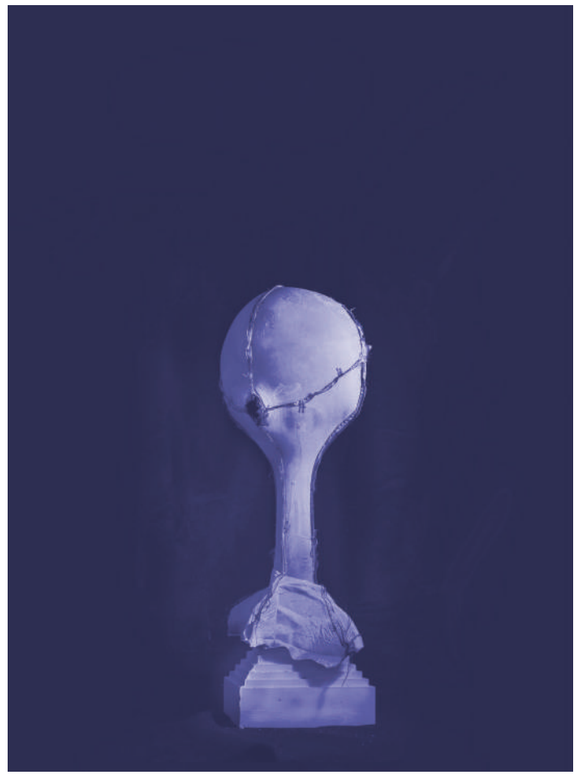

Fig.8 - Cast no. 56, hollow volume.

as well as sculptural and structural considerations motivated by ideas of seeing the elements as anthropomorphic bodies evolved under a novel selective pressure. The technique's capacity to subvert formal expectations are not limited to the sculptural casts: photographs of the formwork in various stages of construction are just as important outcomes of the work as the tangible elements are.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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NOTES

1. The use of formwork made from permeable materials means that the formwork acts as a skin like membrane that gradually secretes water until an optimal water to dry mix ratio is reached. This allows the casting compound to be mixed with a higher water ratio leading to a lower viscosity mixture that flows and deposits easier into crevices of intricate formwork.

2. Popovic writes of engineer Heinz Isler use of wet, draped fabric to define minimal surfaces that are structurally optimised in the same way that a hanging chain defines a funicular curve.

3. "In a flexible mould, concrete is rediscovered as wet, sensual, and responsive material", West 2016, 4.

4. West describes this as inherent structural intelligence.

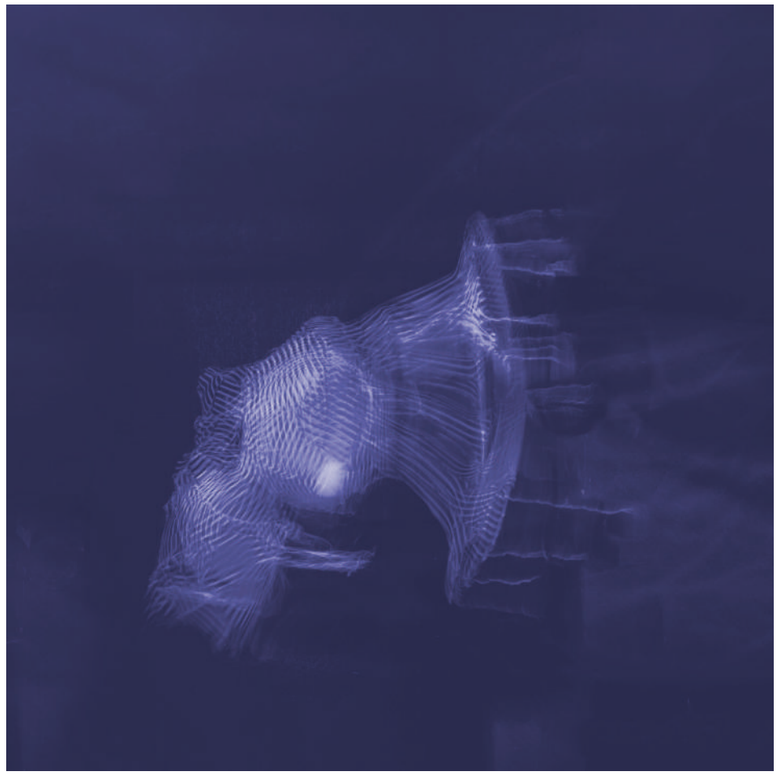

Fig.9 - Hollow volume formwork no. 83, before pour.

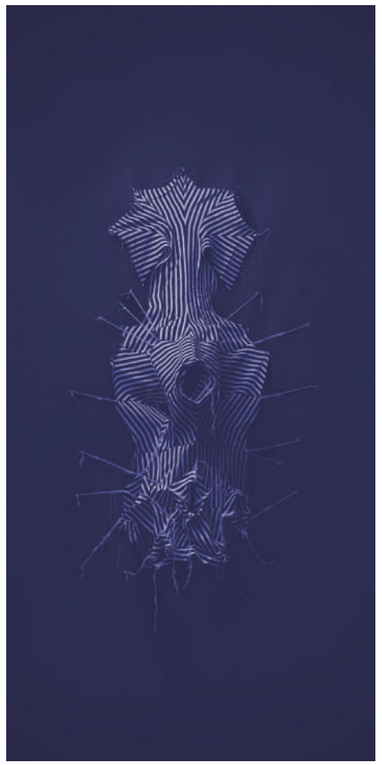

Fig.10 - Hollow volume formwork no. 83, partially assembled.

Fig.11 - Hollow volume formwork no. 86, partially assembled.

Fig.12 - Hollow volume formwork no. 79, before pour.

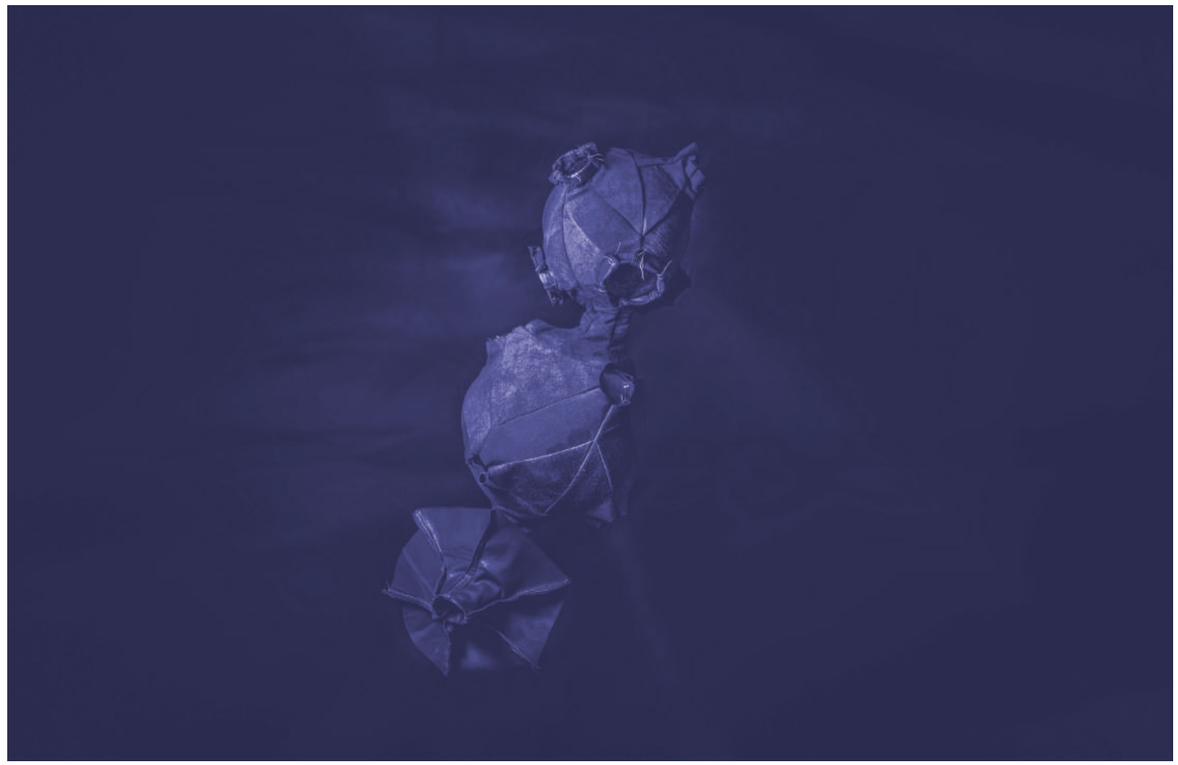

Fig.13 - Hollow volume formwork no. 86, before pour.

Dreaming with The Pantheon in Rome

spekulativ arkitektur
arkitektur och fantasi
arkitekturteori
materialitet och (icke mänsklig) agens
speculative architecture
architecture and imagination
material engagement theory
agency and responsivity in matter

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Att drömma med Pantheon i Rom, är en spekulativ essä om byggnadskonsten i det antika Rom med utgångspunkt i frågor som rör agens hos materia och respons, eller svarande, i det vi kallar material. I denna undersökning utgår vi ifrån vetenskapliga upptäckter inom en rad fält som undersöker dessa frågor på olika sätt.

Utmärkande för byggnadskonsten i antikens Rom var att den i hög grad baserades på en direkt materialkännedom, vilket i sin tur var ett resultat av ett till synes oändligt antal experiment. Om vi föreställer oss alla byggplatser i det Romerska riket under tiden då Pantheon byggdes ser vi kanske tusentals människor som på olika sätt arbetar med och samtidigt undersöker material på olika sätt för att dessa skall komma till användning inom arkitekturen.

Den massiva kollektiva insatsen och mängden experiment och undersökande tror vi är en av anledningarna till att just Romersk arkitektur var så framstående. I den här essän undersöker vi arkitektur och byggnadskonst genom att studera och fantisera om relationerna mellan människa och material.

Dreaming with The Pantheon in Rome **is a process-based speculative essay engaging the question of agency and responsivity in matter which depart from current research into the durability of ancient Roman concrete. This is mixed (pun intended) with material engagement theory, quantum field theory and the theory of formative causation to explore the possibilities of consciousness in matter and entanglement between matter and mind in architectural practices.**

In the history of human architecture, The Pantheon in Rome is probably the best-preserved work of ancient Roman engineering. Significant for Roman engineering was its empirical base for knowledge production. When The Pantheon was built, there would have been thousands of people working in different locations across the empire, producing, and engaging in experiments with the material world for the purpose of architecture and construction.

The immensity of the collective effort together with the massive amount of material engagement and relational inquiries into the material world is one reason that Roman engineering was so eminent. In this essay we explore ancient Roman architecture and engineering by studying the materiality of buildings, the acts of material engagement of workers and responsivity and agency of matter.

~~METHOD~~

Since the word *method* implies working in a scientific tradition, we would like to begin by substituting this term for the word *way*.

For the same reason we cross out the word ~~conclusion~~. We would like to state that we recognize multiple ways of seeing. Our ways are tentative. Best described, perhaps, as a temporary stitching together of disparate parts. Our ways are described and performed as text. The most appropriate analogy for this work is the dream, or daydream.

THE ROMAN PANTHEON

The Pantheon appears in the urban fabric of contemporary Rome as a kind of paradox, both clearing and colossus. Occupying the southern part of Piazza della Rotonda, the former temple, now a church and tourist attraction sits on the muddy grounds of the former marshlands. But the building we encounter today is not the same as was originally conceived of and erected at the site.

The first Roman Pantheon was built between 27-25 BC. It was a temple building of an unusual circular-shaped, open-air structure, connected to a pedimented portico by a transitional block. It was commissioned by Marcus Agrippa, consul at the time and son-in-law to the emperor Augustus. The Pantheon was devoted to the worship of all Roman gods, including the deified Julius Caesar, Augustus' adoptive father. The first building was severely damaged in a fire in 80 AD. and destroyed almost entirely in another fire caused by a lightning strike in 110 AD. Research today suggests that a total reconstruction of the building could have been initiated already at some time around 114 AD. (Marder and others, 2015, 87-91).

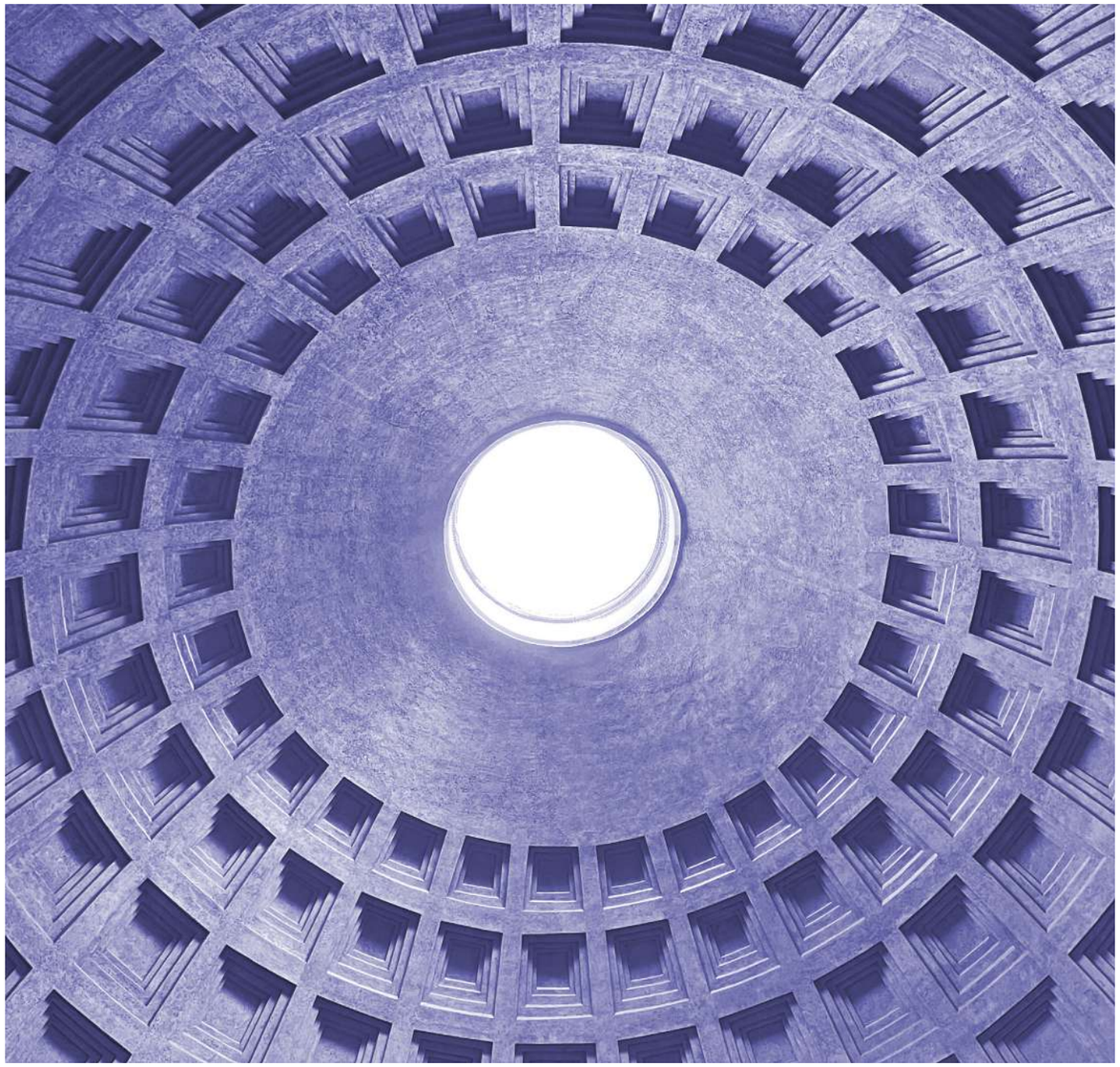

Fig.1 - Dome interior detail, The Pantheon, Rome (2023).

The second Roman Pantheon was built in the times of emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Who the architect was is not possible to say with any level of certainty. Some scholars suggest that it is likely the work of Apollodorus of Damaskus because of his involvement in other high profile contemporary building projects in Rome such as the baths of Trajan (Marder and others, 2015, 96). When building the new structure, the architects and/or engineers of the second Pantheon reused the ground plan of the former temple. Apart from that the building was completely new. The main differences between the old and new building were the dimensions, the domed interior space, and the rotunda. The fact that the building is standing after almost two thousand years makes it a good example of Roman construction at its prime.

One factor that should also be considered when discussing the well-preserved Roman Pantheon is that it was consecrated and made into a church in the 7th century AD by the pope Boniface IV (Marder and others, 2015, 233). Because of this the building has been cared for and protected over the years.

The engineering behind ancient Roman architecture was highly empirical. It was rational, methodological, and technical. Thanks to the works of Vitruvius Pollio and his "Ten Books on Architecture", that was written around the time when the first Pantheon was built, we know a great deal about the theory, practice, and knowledge production in and through architecture in ancient Rome. At the time, it was believed that everything which exists in the natural world was made up from combinations of the four basic elements fire, water, earth, and air.

Vitruvius wrote:

"Therefore, because all things seem to come together and to be born from the conjunction of these bodies, and are distributed into infinite types of natural objects, I thought that I should expound on their varieties and the criteria for their use, as well as what qualities they have in building, so that when this information is known, those who are planning to build will avoid mistakes and assemble supplies suitable for buildings." (Rowland, Noble Howe, 1999, 35).

The architects and engineers of ancient Rome had deep knowledge about the materials they were using. For example, the cementitious compound in ancient Roman concrete, which was a key component in brick-faced construction that was standard practice at the time when The Pantheon was built, was extremely durable. A quality that has been one of the mysteries of human engineering since. This could be considered rather peculiar since Vitruvius wrote extensively on the matter.

Reading Vitruvius two things are notable that could be of importance regarding the prospect of solving this mystery. When writing about the preparation of mortar and the use of limestone in concrete masonry Vitruvius talks only about the uses of slaked lime. The technique is not elaborated further. But recent studies of ancient Roman mortar made at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology suggest that non-slaked lime was also used in the mix. If we were to listen to Vitruvius, which we have been doing for the better part of the past two thousand years, the pozzolanic material would still be considered the main reason for the extreme toughness and durability Roman concrete (Rowland, Noble Howe, 1999, 37).

So, we have reason to believe that the builders in ancient Rome had a profound understanding about the material world that go well beyond any textbook and formal technique.

MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT THEORY

One of the things that is often said to separate human beings from other species is our sense of self, our supposed free will, and our cognitive functions. These qualities, when combined and performed, seem to define us as both *thinkers* and *makers*. Our thinking, whatever this is, and acting in the world by making has in time turned into production of descriptive categories and highly technical knowledge production like physics, mathematics, and history. This Western notion of making sense of things can be traced to practices in oral cultures like storytelling, and poetry.

Sense-making or looking at things trying to understand them by defining and describing them from the outside has turned out to be a slippery slope. Where instead of perceiving the world, or worlds, as complex systems of activities where everything is connected Western culture, specifically by means of the natural sciences, have constructed an idea that both ourselves and other things are defined as being separate. There is, however, research being done today even in the more strictly scientific disciplines like theoretical physics and biology that are challenging this notion of being and becoming.

Lambros Malafouris, researcher in the field of Cognitive and Anthropological Archaeology, is studying sense-making in design practices and the *becoming with* things. Something he himself describes as: *"the hylonoetic field of human becoming"*. Hylo from the Greek word *hyle* (matter) and noetic from the word *nous* (mind). Malafouris describes sense-making by material engagement:

"Humans are organisms of a creative sort. We make new things that scaffold the ecology of our minds, shape the boundaries of our thinking and form new ways to engage and make sense of the world." (Malafouris, 2014, 141).

In the article *Creative thinging: The feeling of and for clay* he discusses human being and becoming with things. Malafouris adopts the term thinging from the philosopher Martin Heidegger who says in *"Das Ding"* (The Thing):

"To understand the 'thingness' of things one needs to reflect on the phenomenal power of things to 'gather' space and time." (Malafouris, 2014, 142).

This poetic concept of things gathering space and time should be considered in relation to all aspects of our knowledge and relation to the material world. When Roman workers extracted marble in the quarries of Carrara or collected low density volcanic ash stone material from the regions around Baiae in Naples, they would have been acutely aware of the specific properties each material had and their possible uses for building.

After acknowledging the brilliance of the Heideggerian notion that things *gather* space and time, Malafouris takes a turn from the phenomenological path of Heidegger and starts to lean towards the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. He does so, we believe, to level the playing field between 'maker' and 'thing' and to allow for the *"thinking (and feeling) with, through and about material things"* (Malafouris, 2014, 142). This should be seen as an act made to bridge the perceived phenomenological gap between human (mind) and thing (matter) to establish a kind of continuity between the two on an ontological level. In his words:

"The notion of 'thinging' signifies the ontological synechism (from the Greek synēches, meaning continuous) between mind and matter. I use the term 'things' to denote energetic compounds of form and matter and the term 'thinging' to signify flow. I do seek a more enactive and ecological approach to the study of the creative process. Specifically, I am interested in one aspect of 'thingness' that is typically cast in the shadows: the vitality, affect and agency of 'things' in human thinking, or else, the cognitive life of things" (Malafouris, 2014, 142).

In material engagement theory

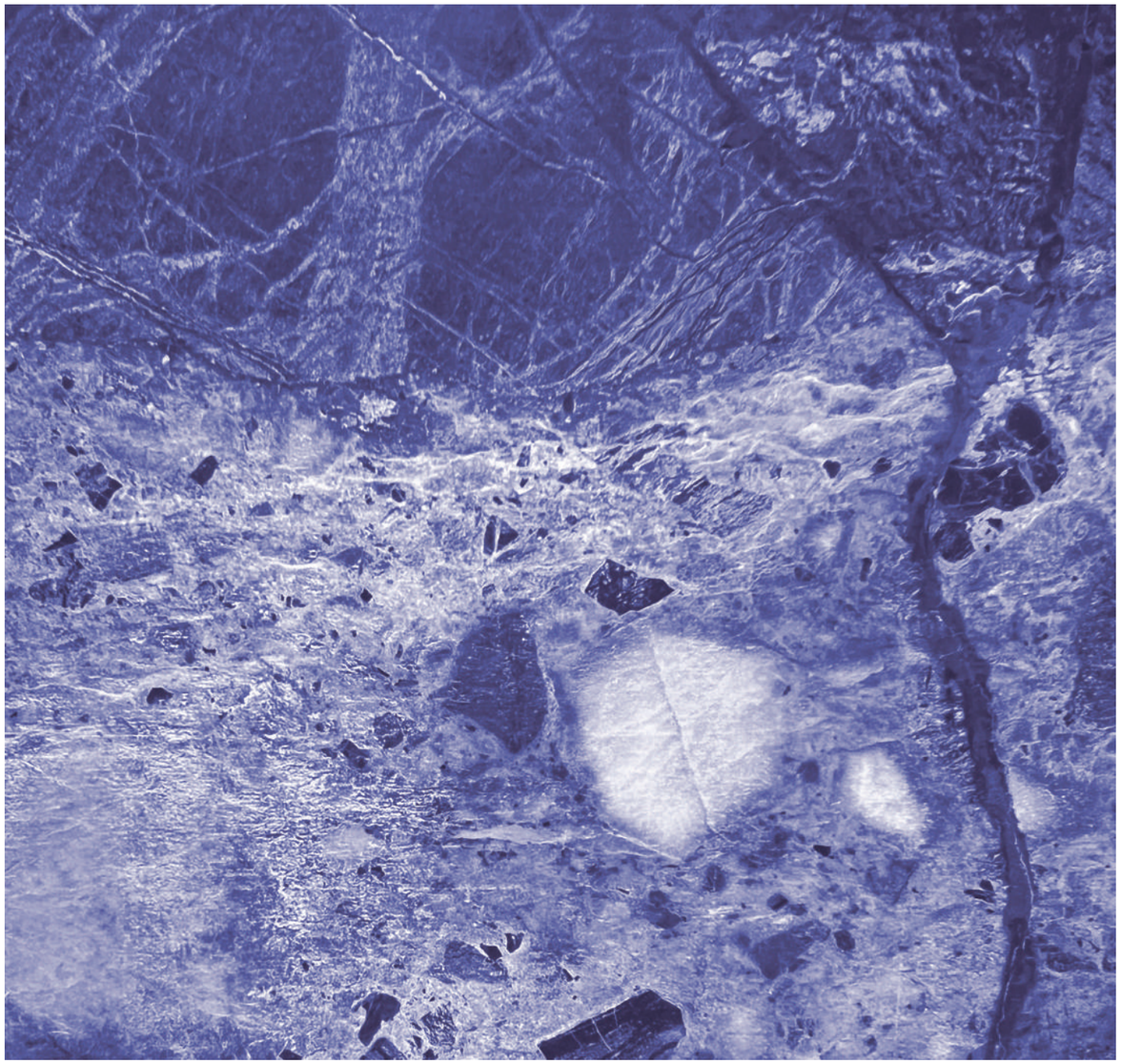

Fig.2 - Marble detail (wall) The Pantheon, Rome (2023).

there is said to be a constitutive intertwining of mind and matter at work in an ontological sense. However, this idea seems to rely solely on the human mind and cognitive functions of the more human being. In which case the vitality, affect and agency of things is considered real only in how they relate to a human being doing the thinking. Iterating once more the linear hierarchical power structure between human (mind) and matter. But what if we flip the script. What if there is a thinking of things that does not rely on human presence. A mind like quality of another kind.

THE THING WITH ROMAN CONCRETE

In the article *Hot mixing: Mechanistic insight into the durability of ancient Roman concrete* a team of researchers from MIT claim to have solved the old mystery of durability in ancient Roman concrete. Up until the publication of the article the main explanations for the immensely durational qualities of ancient Roman concrete were thought to rely solely on the mix of compounds and the use of volcanic pozzolan material. Vitruvius wrote about the pozzolana: *"There is also a type of powder that brings about marvellous things naturally. It occurs in the region of Baiae and in the countryside that belongs to the towns around Mount Vesuvius. Mixed with lime and rubble it lends strength to all the other sorts of construction, but in addition, when moles [implying this powder] are built into the sea, they solidify under water."* (Rowland, Noble Howe, 37).

Engaging the material with a highly technical proxy the research team from MIT used a multiscale correlative elemental and chemical mapping approach to perform rather intimate studies of relict lime clasts from the archaeological site of Privernum southeast of Rome. They found evidence which suggests that the mortar used in ancient Roman masonry was mixed using not only slaked lime but also quicklime, or non-slaked lime, in a method called *hot mixing* (Seymor and others, 2023).

The tests indicate that non-slaked lime was used in the mortar together with sand, clay, volcanic ash, and stone material. Perhaps in combination with slaked lime. This process allowed for the non-slaked limestone to transform into sources of reactive calcium integrated in the cementitious compound. These deposits of various size and capacities were found to provide the mortar with long-term pore and crack-filling abilities referred to as self-healing properties (Seymor and others, 2023).

These properties are described as responses to physical events. When the concrete cracks open it exposes it's inside to the elements. In periods of heavy rain, water will flow into the cracks and when the water comes in to contact with the lime deposits created by the non-slaked lime a chemical reaction occurs that makes the concrete able to close smaller cracks. The research show that there is responsivity and reactivity in the material composition of ancient Roman mortar. As we can read in the title of the article researchers from MIT calls these properties mechanistic. That means that the observed events are thought to be mechanically determined. But what if there is something more, or other, at play here. Something systemic and relational on a particle level.

THE AGENCY OF MATTER

In the article *TransMaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings* published in GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies the American scholar of feminist theory and theoretical physicist Karen Barad explores the notion of agency and responsivity in matter through research processes in experimental biology and quantum field theory.

Engaging concepts such as origins and agency, responsivity, desire, yearning, touching and monstrosity, Barad carefully guides us through a variety of phenomena such as lightning, regeneration, the void (or vacuum) asking questions about the agency of matter, activity, and performativity as possibilities in all parts of the material world.

"Matter is promiscuous and inventive in its agential wanderings: one might even dare say, imaginative." (Barad, 2015, 395).

In the article Barad discusses the notion of origins and being referencing the dreams, desires, and practices of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's fictional doctor Victor Frankenstein. And, perhaps more importantly Frankenstein's monster. The role of electricity is introduced as a factor in the human history of the ontology of matter. It establishes the electromagnetic field as one of many fields that make up a kind of playground for material wandering(s). Digging where they stand, Barad looks to quantum field theory to explore the notion of material agency. They write:

"From the viewpoint of classical physics, the vacuum is complete emptiness: it has no matter and no energy. But the quantum principle of ontological indeterminacy calls the existence of such a zero-energy, zero-matter state into question or, rather, makes it into a question with no decidable answer. Not a settled matter or, rather, no matter. And if the energy of the vacuum is not determinately zero, it is not determinately empty. In fact, this indeterminacy not only is responsible for the void not being nothing (while not being something) but may in fact be the source of all that is, a womb that births existence." (Barad, 2015, 395).

Discussing the agential qualities of matter further, Barad uses quantum field theory to invoke a spatial category to the pointiness of classical physics. The category is structured like a field, and a field is constituted by waves. Fields are spaces for activity and play. For relations.

The field is exemplified in Barad's text by the electromagnetic field which we all know and can sense by the build-up of electromagnetic tension in the atmosphere during the onset of a storm. We feel the atmosphere change in our bodies.

"The electric field is a desiring field born of charged yearnings. When it comes to mutual attraction, the rule is opposites (i.e., opposite charges) attract. The notion of a field is a way to express the desires of each entity for the other." (Barad, 2015, 399).

In quantum field theory physical observables are made discrete by applying quantum physics and special relativity. However, all quantum phenomena are characterized by an ontological indeterminacy due to the "energy-time indeterminacy principle". In their research Barad considers the indeterminacy principle to have a closer look at the number of particles associated with the void, or vacuum, making it not (determinately) empty, and not (determinately) not empty (Barad, 2015). The indeterminacy principle when applied to the vacuum invokes, or gives birth to, strange and wonderful virtual particles that lies at the heart of all matter – including this paper.

Virtual particles are not present (and not absent), but they are material (Barad, 2015, 395).

Remaining within quantum field theory Barad tells us a story about an electron. The electron is "a point particle", a particle without structure. But because of the indeterminacy principle the electron does not exist solely as an isolated point in time but is associated with the vibrant activities in- and of the vacuum. Imagining the material explorations of this performative particle Barad writes:

The electron will emit a virtual photon and then reabsorb it. This possibility is understood as the electron electromagnetically intra-acting with itself. Part of what an electron is, is self-energy intra-action [...]. In addition to the electron exchanging a virtual photon (that is, touching itself), it is possible for that virtual photon to enjoy other intra-actions with 'itself': for example, the virtual photon can metamorphose/transition – change its very identity (Barad, 2015, 399).

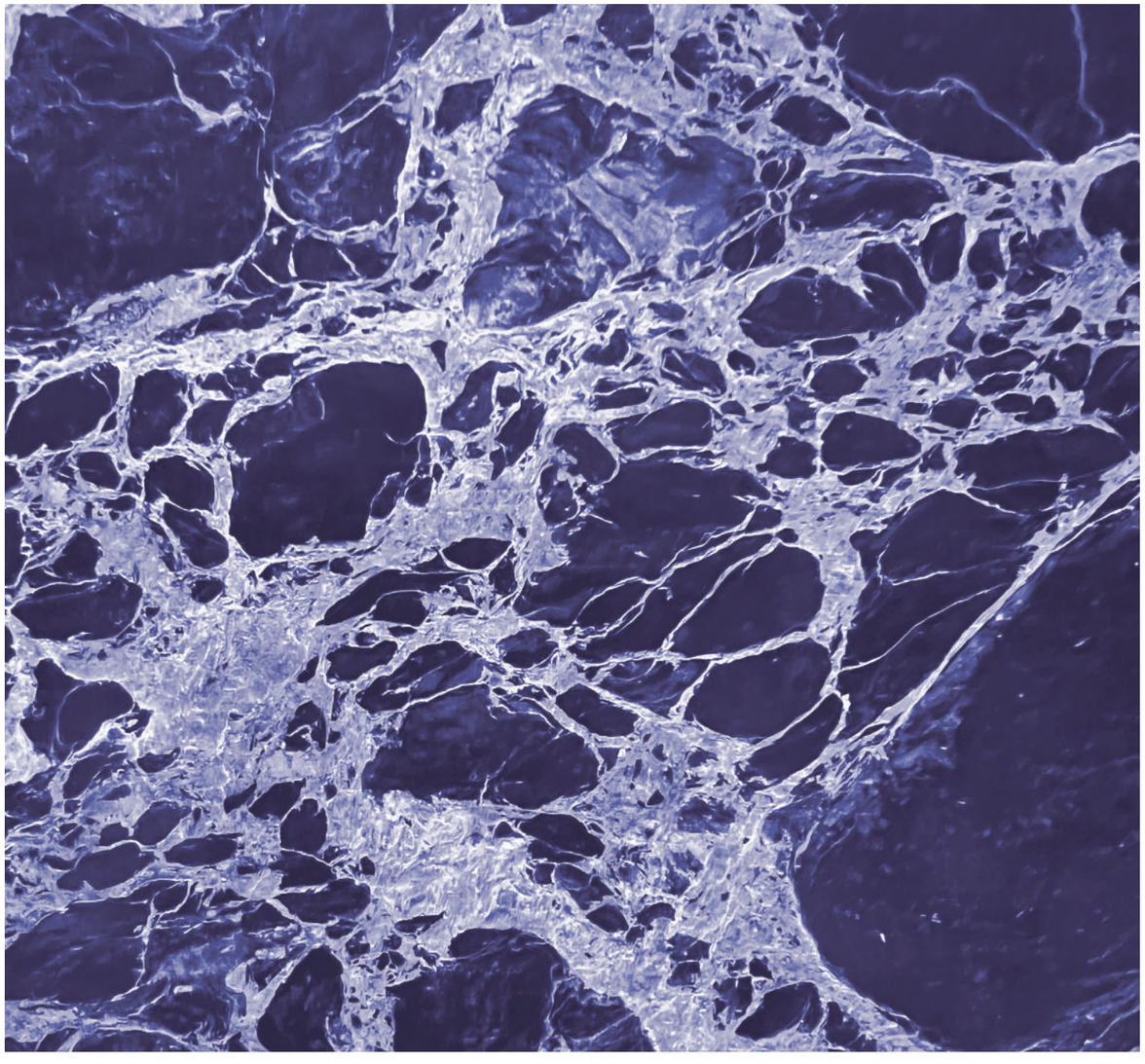

Fig.3 - Marble detail (wall) The Pantheon, Rome (2023).

So, with this in mind, let us dare say that matter can be imaginative. That seemingly inert stuff like sand, clay and stone made for instance to build The Pantheon in Rome, on a particle level can have a mind like quality, or some degree of consciousness.

THE INTER-CONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN ORGANISMS

In a revised and expanded edition of "A New Science of Life" with the new title "Morphic Resonance: A Theory of Formative Causation" the author Rupert Sheldrake, biologist, biochemist, and essayist continues work on his elaborate theory of formative causation and morphic resonance first published in 1981. The theory of formative causation could be described as a way of trying to understand the interconnectedness of organisms and explain developmental aspects and memory within species (Sheldrake, 2009, 105-106).

According to Sheldrake's theory all organisms are interconnected through a morphogenetic field. The morphogenetic field acts as a kind of medium. It is an organizing field for developmental functions and memory between organisms. Together with a phenomenon called morphic resonance the morphogenetic field enables organisms of the same species or by closest structural semblance to develop in a parallel way without regard to time and space. It enables storing and communication of collective memories across all dimensions (Sheldrake, 2009, 105).

Sheldrake, as well as Malafouris, draws on Alfred North Whitehead and his organismic process philosophy. The morphogenetic field and the possibility of morphic resonance suggests that everything that exist are involved in complex systems of relations. All these fields make up endless spaces of play for interaction, or intra-action, between matter and mind that are not restricted by time and space.

CONCLUSION

Imagine the construction site around the time of the building of the second Roman Pantheon. At any given moment there would be hundreds of people on site performing tasks and engaging with materials of various sorts (Marder and others, 2015, 160). Deposits of fired brick would be laying around and preparations of bricks for construction (cutting et cetera) would create noises sounding across the site. Extractions of sand and clay materials for the concrete masonry would have been done either on site or in smaller quarries around the urban centre. For a project of this scale there would have been an area for the burning of limestone on site. The pozzolana would be shipped from Naples to Rome. In quarries in other parts of the empire more people would be engaged in extracting stone material (pillars and blocks of marble et cetera) for this specific construction and others. More would be engaged in the freight of the various materials back to Rome. Ships navigating the Mediterranean Sea would carry pillars and blocks of marble weighing up to around 50 tons each (or more).

Thinging with Lambros Malafouris this fantasy tells us a story about human beings gathering things which themselves (by virtue of being things) have been gathering both space and time. Collecting material, working with stone, becoming with them, as it were, on every level in a constitutive intertwining that should be extended to the more than human. There is little surprise that the amount of material engagement in ancient Rome resulted in such a deep understanding of the materials used.

The responsivity and agency of the Roman mortar would have been understood both formally through technical knowledge production like noting and writing, and bodily through material engagement. The latter being a more aesthetic kind of learning and knowledge, but nevertheless real. Since we have come to know the performative qualities of the electron, we cannot ignore the thought that everything that exist, whether we can differentiate/sense it or not, has agential qualities. Events which are thought of as mechanistic responses in the natural sciences can at the same time be understood as expressions of will, desire, and yearning stemming from various degrees of consciousness in matter.

Much like things, in fact exactly like things, human beings also gather space and time. Or as British biologist Merlin Sheldrake puts it in conversation with fermentation expert, chef, and writer David Zilber at Wanås konst: *"Humans are fields of stability through which matter passes"* (Wanås konst, 2023). With this way of seeing, we can allow ourselves to imagine other perspectives on both buildings and being(s).

Remember: The rules, like streets, can only take you to known places. Underneath the grid is a field – it was always there – where to be lost is never wrong, but simply more. As a rule, be more (Vuong, 2019, 192).

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A Dinner Story

A feast on tableness and visceral hands

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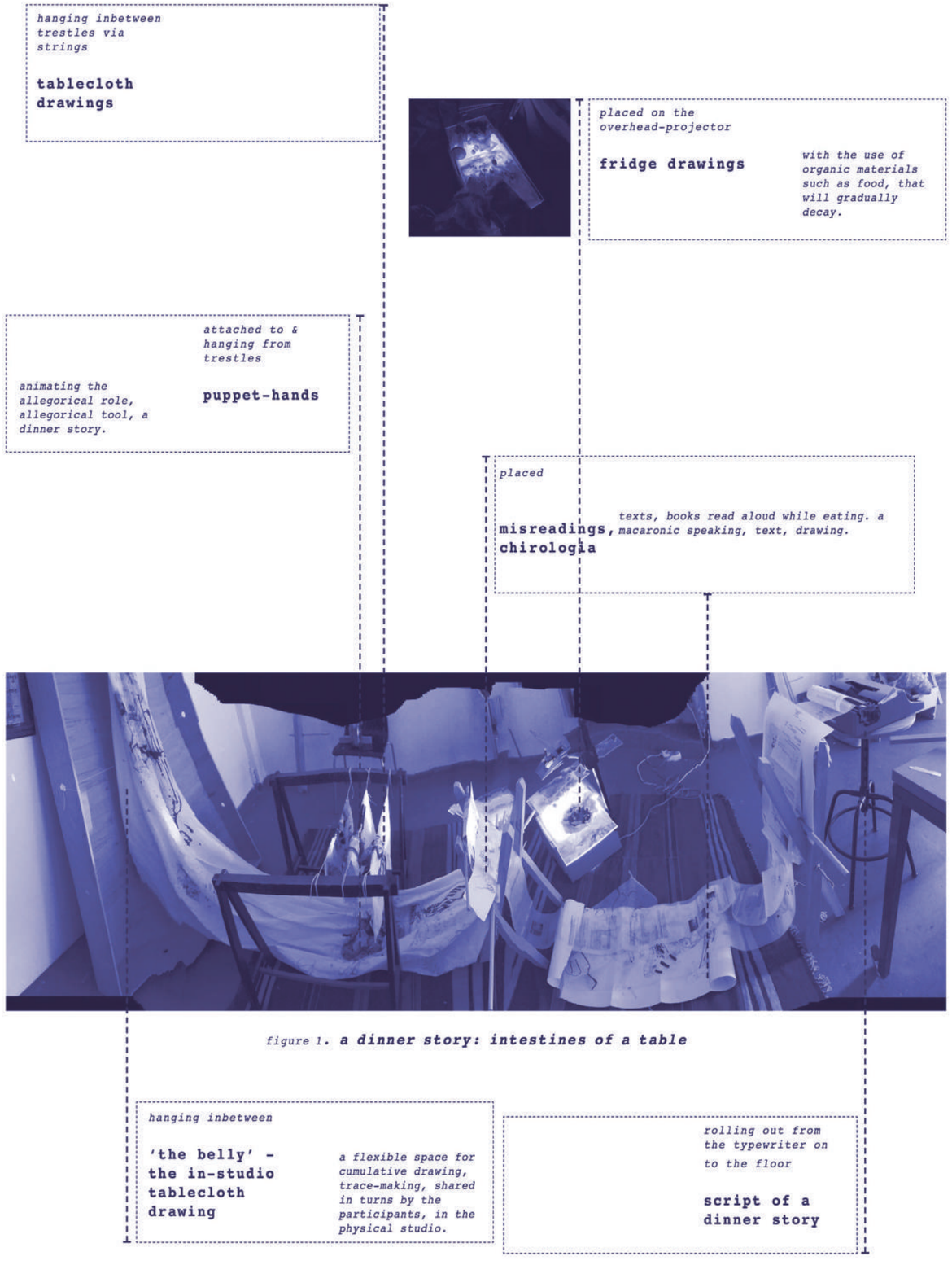

figure 1. **a dinner story: intestines of a table**

Fig.1 - The non-table Table (2021). Collective work by Amr Khabbaz, Arın Aydın, Ayşegül Oruçoğlu, Bahar Avanoğlu, Beshr Jemieh, Damla Dinçer, Ezgi Kaya, Gülşah Pelin Arı, İpek Avanoğlu, Mohammad Alsharabi, Naz Nar, Pelin Takımcılar, Rana Güzeldir, Sıla Avar, Sundus Al-Nakhif, Yasmin Alhalees.

Bu hikaye, Covid-19 tedbirleri nedeniyle çevrimiçi ve yüz yüze olmak üzere, hibrit olarak, 16-27 Ağustos 2021 tarihleri arasında, on dört katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilen *Masa olmak ve İçsel Eller üzerine bir Ziyafet* başlıklı atölye çalışmasının bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıktı.

Atölye, katılımcıları, yemek yeme, konuşma ve çizim arasındaki muğlak ilişkiler üzerine çeşitli deneyler aracılığıyla 'mekansal içselliği' keşfetmeye ve ardı ardına yapılan 'ziyafet' ve 'masa-sofra'lara dair rüyalara dalmaya davet eder. Yiyeceklerin bedensel alanı ile 'sözcük'ün entelektüel alanı arasındaki geleneksel karşıtlığı yansıtan yemek yeme ve konuşma arasındaki ikilemi sorgulayarak başlayan atölye, eleştirel olarak makaronik konuşmanın özgürleştirici yönlerini keşfetmeyi önerir: yemek yerken konuşmak, metinleri kusurlu okumak ve ağzın içsel sesini yazıya dökmek.

Manuela Antoniu'nun (2017) belirttiği gibi,"makaronik yaratıcılık", bir dilin sabit biçimiyle oynar ve onu, metnin anlaşılmasında çeşitli gecikmeleri teşvik eden oyunbaz, sınırsız bir anlatıya dönüştürür. Bu 'geciktirme' eylemi aynı anda yazarın sınırlarını kırar ve çeşitli kusurlu okuma ve kusurlu yazma eylemlerine olanak sağlar.

'Ziyafet'lerimiz, makaronik eylemleri mimari çizim alanına sızdırır; çizimlerin, ellerin, sofraların ve sohbetlerin içselliği üzerine spekülasyonlar yapar ve maddi ile maddi olmayan arasında eğlenceli bir alışveriş başlatır. Bu niyetlerle yemekleri, ağızları, yazıları, çizimleri, masa örtülerini, buzdolaplarını, elleri, karınları birbirine harmanlar.

Bir akşam yemeği öyküsünü "anlatının olasılığından kaçan" (Cixous, 2013) büyülü bir kusurlu kurgu olarak ele alan 'ziyafet'ler, masa dışı olasılıklara ve eleştirel bir çizim pratiğine alan açıyor.

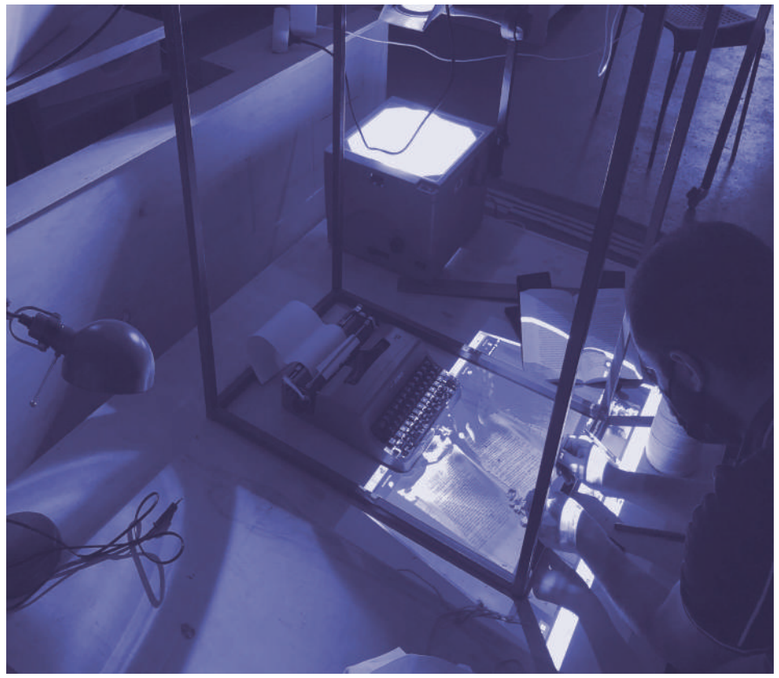

Fig.2 - Exploring the possibilities of macaronic inventiveness also through the projective audio-visual, haptic juxtapositions of online and face-to-face participation, the set transformed into a spatiotemporal act that welcomed a polyphony with no systematic order: moving cameras, moving projectors, delayed network connections critically challenge the boundaries of drawing, hand, body and table. Beshr Jemieh interacting on the collective table (2021).

Fig.3 - Extending the macaronic actions into the realm of architectural drawing, we opened a playful exchange between the material and the immaterial through hands-on speculations on the viscerality of drawings, hands, tables and table talks. With these intentions, foods, mouths, texts, drawings, tablecloths, fridges, hands and bellies were blended together. Sıla Avar's drawings of the Non-Table Table (2021).

This is a dinner story that has emerged as an outcome of a hybrid workshop[1] titled *A Feast on Tableness and Visceral Hands*. The workshop invited the participants to venture into a dream of consecutive feasts and its tables, exploring 'a spatial viscerality' through variegated experiments on obscure relations between eating, speaking and drawing. Commencing with challenging the dilemma between eating and speaking, which reflects the traditional opposition between the bodily realm of food and the intellectual realm of the 'word', the workshop critically suggested exploring the liberating modes of macaronic speaking: speaking while eating, misreading texts and transcribing the visceral sound of the mouth.

Manuela Antoniu draws our attention to the fact that although macaronic languages, specifically macaronic Latin, is closely related with kitchen Latin, *ars macaronica* could also be interpreted as another quest for a "non-Latin Latin" (Antoniu, 2017, 38). She writes, "exploiting the etymological proximity between Latin and Italian, macaronic Latin poured the former into the mold of the latter while also using words common to both languages, yet perverting them semantically, to comic effect" (Antoniu, 2017, 39). Thus, this "macaronic inventiveness", plays with the fixed-form of a language and transforms it into a playful, unconfined narrative that encourages several delays in understanding the text. This 'delayful' act dissolves simultaneously authorial boundaries and opens a variety of interpretive acts of mis-reading and mis-writing.

The feasts as gatherings became the spatiotemporal set for these inventive acts. As Michel Jeanneret points out, "The symposiac ideal reconciles the angel and the beast in the human, and it renews the interdependence between the mouth that eats and the mouth that speaks" (Jeanneret, 1991, 2). Extending the macaronic actions into the realm of architectural drawing, we opened a playful exchange between the material and the immaterial through hands-on speculations on the viscerality of drawings, hands, tables and table talks. With these intentions, foods, mouths, texts, drawings, tablecloths, fridges, hands and bellies were blended together.

Thus, as we proceeded with each feast, all these aforementioned ingredients appear in the hybrid workshop-studio, sometimes as sites, sometimes as tools and sometimes as materials to bear visceral explorations of the macaronic speaking with regard to architectural drawing.

The consecutive feasts asked participants to develop allegorical roles with the intention to question our modes of making and drawing in architectural design practice. Acquiring a simultaneity of multiple meanings (Haralambidou, 2007, 225) and playing with the construction of text (Bloomer, 1993, 21), allegory calls for an indecisive multiplication, a re-narration and mis-construction in its critical nature. Following personal explorations in macaronic experience, the participants looked for a multiplication of possible authors, readers and texts of a drawing by re-narrating their macaronic personas embodying the mis-constructed double of their hands through a macaronically-skilled tool.

The workshop was conducted both online and face-to-face in a physical environment as a response to the Covid-19 precautions. Rather than splitting the group into two distinct groups, we aimed to create a hybrid collaboration between the two seemingly separate realms through several projective montage techniques, with the hope to set a critical drawing practice in architecture.

Exploring the possibilities of macaronic inventiveness also through the projective audio-visual, haptic juxtapositions of online and face-to-face participation, the set transformed into a spatiotemporal act that welcomed a polyphony with no systematic order: moving cameras, moving projectors, delayed network connections critically challenge the boundaries of drawing, hand, body and table. Thereby the feasts become a venture for a 'non-Table Table' that breaks the fixed-form of architectural drawing into a playful, delayful dinner story.

Entailing a dinner story as a magical mis-construction that "escapes the possibility of narration" (Cixous, 2013, 185), the feasts open space for possibilities of a non-Table and call for a critical drawing practice.

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NOTES

1. This workshop was organized by Bahar Avanoğlu and İpek Avanoğlu as a part of Arts Letters Numbers' exhibition in the CITYX Venice Italian Virtual Pavillion of the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale in August 2021 with 14 participants. The participants of the workshop: Amr Khabbaz, Arın Aydın, Ayşegül Oruçoğlu, Beshr Jemieh, Damla Dinçer, Ezgi Kaya, Gülşah Pelin Arı, Mohammad Alsharabi, Naz Nar, Pelin Takımcılar, Rana Güzeldir, Sıla Avar, Sundus Al-Nakhif, Yasmin Alhalees. The following link displays 10 consecutive feast performances recorded formerly during the workshop: https://artslettersandnumbers.org/10-feasts-on-tableness-and-visceral-hands/

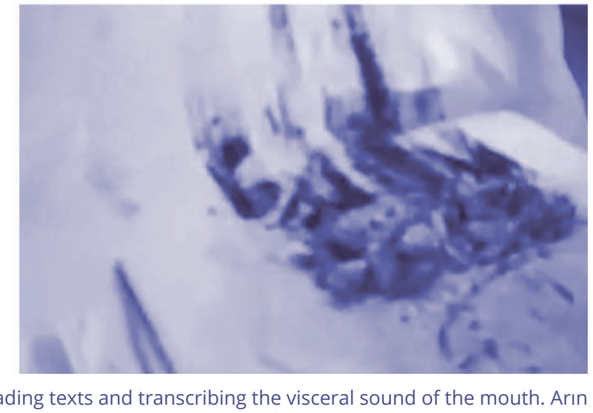

Fig.4 - Speaking while eating, misreading texts and transcribing the visceral sound of the mouth. Arın Aydın, Ezgi Kaya and Naz Nar's macaronic mis-readings and mis-constructions (2021).

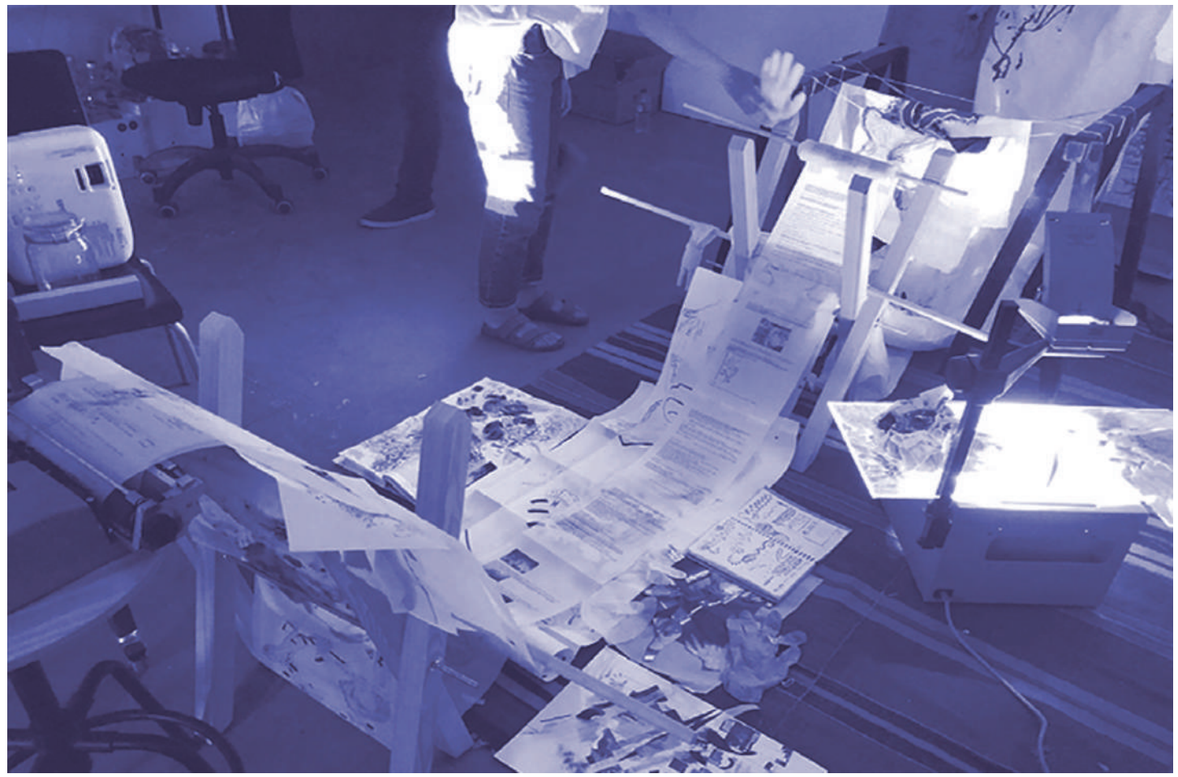

Fig.5 - The 'non-Table Table', a playful, delayful dinner story. Collective work (2021).

Fig.6 - The feasts become a venture for a 'non-Table Table' that breaks the fixed-form of architectural drawing set into a playful, delayful dinner story. Gülşah Pelin Arı engaging through the typewriter with the collective work (2021).

SPATIAL EXPERIENCES

Interloper: Activating the Possible

multiple temporalities
architecture
drawing
mapping
education

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This article seeks to open a dialogue on encouraging creative possibility in architectural education, with particular focus on the architecture studio. Although discussed through the practice of design, I present experimental methods that are adaptable across creative and speculative disciplines. Rooted in the conceptual difference between *possible* and *probable* thinking as identified by philosophers Didier Debaise and Isabelle Stengers, this article positions the role of the architect as being interstitially located in multiple temporalities (as well as occupying the liminal space between the real and the imagined) in such a way that this difference between possible and probable is seen to be potentially critical to the future of the built environment. Focusing on *non-linear time* (investigated through temporal mapping), situating the imagined architecture in the *dynamic conditions of site* (site studies/ development of architecture), and through the *introduction of an interloper* (chance/ event), this article acts as a framework for examining potential methods for nurturing and sustaining possibility in the space of the architecture studio.

INTRODUCTION

"What we need to activate today is a thinking that commits to a possible, by means of resisting the probable..." (Debaise, Stengers, 2017,18).

I keep a list, roughly shorthanded to the title of magic. It is a rambling document, with multiple versions, that has collected little rifts in my experience of reality, from childhood through to the present.[1]These 'rifts' are moments that disturb expectation and evoke possibilities, indelibly co-existing in my understanding of being alive. The list does not attempt explanation, as but a few words act to connect me (vividly and immediately) to the experience of each. Though it has been over a year since I have added to it, the list acts as a protest to narratives (whether they be grand or tentative, social or personal) that do not allow room for the possibility of the unexpected. In today's algorithm-based social landscape this possibility, with no predictable form (the surprise of something completely unforeseen...), is increasingly eclipsed by the pressing and intensified narratives of the probable.[2] I begin here with the position that architectural education has not escaped this qualitative shift – that mistake and error, imbalance, embracing the unknown in the design process (all essential elements of creative practice) – are at risk of being compromised in light of a more to-hand, solution-based thinking.[3] Notions of responsibility (what is actually at stake here?) appear increasingly unquestioned, taken for granted as part and parcel of specific agendas (an example being the loose application of the term sustainability, where thoughtfulness may be construed as implicit). As new architectures emerge, how the future is imagined and discussed within education plays a role of critical concern. In writing this article I seek to bring attention to the notions of 'possible' and 'probable' – as described by Debaise and Stengers – with regard to the practice of the architecture studio.[4] The operational differences between these ways of projecting the future appear subtle in the early stages of imagining, yet may have far-reaching implications for the built environment. Though discussed through the particular lens of architecture, this article intends to have potential resonance with other speculative disciplines. In the attempt to open this dialogue, I share some of the research and experimental methods for encouraging possibles in the studio.

Fig.1 – Brighton Marina Seawall with glitch, photograph by author, 2023.

In the architecture design studio this year (run vertically and at masters level), the brief is entitled *Interloper*.[5] This is a direct and bold invitation for the students to welcome the unpredictable, be thrown off balance, and to be challenged through the design process in surprising ways. It is the dynamic capacity that such a condition may bring to the studio work that is of particular interest, alongside the invitation for a varied and indeterminate theoretical groundwork. The studio begins with this question: How can the possible (rather than the probable) be reinvigorated in design practice? Each student's practice, both collective and individual, is encouraged by the brief to explore experimental methods, testing out ideas that allow room for error and surprise. Though engagement is with fluctuating and at times unstable conditions, the student investigations are firmly rooted in site, which this year is the Brighton Marina, UK (Fig.1).

In order to counteract the dominant narratives of the probable, the brief is set up to require a multiplicitous approach to the design work, where dynamic qualities of site are rigorously explored. Their situation is intensified through an implicit embodiment of multiple temporalities within the work. Methods for approaching this intention are discovered through temporal mapping (drawing), the interjection of the interloper (an unexpected narrative/material dynamic) and the siting of an architecture. The site in this case is not simply spatial (the marina) but accrues through the layers of studies over time.[6] Allowing room for the possible to develop, the material conjuring of temporal multiplicity forms the foundation for the architectural investigations and studio development.

TEMPORAL PROJECTIONS: MULTIPLE TEMPORALITIES AND TIME MAPPING

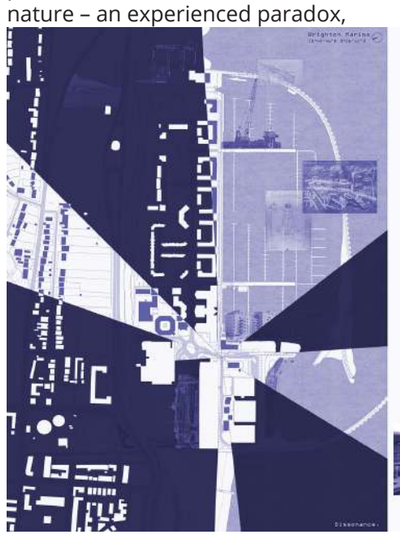
"There would, without the future, be no more history, and there would be no more future, no event to come, without the very possibility of an absolute surprise... (Derrida, 2005, xiii)

The process of designing architecture is fundamentally creative, acting to enfold possible futures into the place of now. This happens when architects imagine a future building, whether conceptualised through the digital space of their screens, at the drawing board, or modelled into a bit of folded card. The practice of the architect inhabits a critical junction that lies between imagination and manifestation: an oscillating (dynamic) realm where the linearity of time dissolves and new possibilities emerge. Creative spans of time are where the seeds of the built form originate. The built form itself does not come to be in this time, but comes instead in the future. The architect makes plans. This is part of the essential nature of the architectural process and is responsible for the range and complexity of temporal strands that form the architectural process. Through this play of process and form, architecture as a practice not only reflects societal investment in moral and ethical priorities, logistics, invention and desire, but it also holds a significant influence upon it. Architecture can be a tool of control, of communication, and of reification. It can also challenge and extend the limits of the known and offer up the wondrous; it is where we have the spark of a daydream, and where we comprehend what is possible. As the process of design entwines method with material thinking, making, and drawing, new possibilities can take form. As touched on earlier, in today's media-thick environment of speculation we find the vital nature of this crystallisation increasingly overshadowed by the weight of the probable—the 'rearrangement' of what is and was that follows a logic of conformity.[7]

The earliest intuitive engagements with the Brighton Marina in studio experimented with capturing the dynamism of the site through the process of creating *Time Maps* (Figs. 2, 3, 6 and 7). Findings from my own research practice, aspiring to permeate the temporal field of the architectural drawing with a new gravity, root the initial territory of the studio in a drawing-based language.

The *Time Maps* (each student made multiple maps) act as carefully drawn studies of changeable site conditions, identified by the student's experience and drawn observations of the marina. Making multiple maps sets the stage for understanding a range of temporalities with a spatial, potentially topological, language. Through the intensification and conflation of multiplicities of time, one is able to absorb that a *simultaneity* of *differing* times is possible.[8] The oscillations that can arise through drawing allow time to take on a presence that is non-linear and unquantifiable. Beginning a drawing becomes not only a gesture towards an unknown target but is *already the target*: the process itself an oscillation that registers and marks the unified condition between.

The qualitative understandings of site temporalities in the *Time Maps* are then intensified through the *Hybrid Maps* (Figs. 4 and 5), where ideas from multiple maps are explored together, without need of quantifiable resolution. In understanding the conceptualisation of multiple temporalities, historian Helge Jordheim uses the lenses of "nonsynchronicities", "layers of time", and natural and historical times. These differing approaches take physical consequence through "practices of synchronisation", which Jordheim sees as giving rise to the homogeneous, linear, and teleological time of modernity (Jordheim, 2014, 498). The Hybrid Maps do not seek to synchronise differing temporalities but to counteract this notion of like-for-like by drawing attention to the shared realm where differentiations occur, whether narrative, sublime, intuitive, or operational. The resistance of differing temporalities to merge coincides with the presence of their simultaneous nature – an experienced paradox, intensified through the practice of the mapping, that encourages the arousal of the possible (the probable being short-circuited by both the slippery, multiplicitous nature of the dynamic subject matter and the fragmentation/ reinvention of overarching narratives).



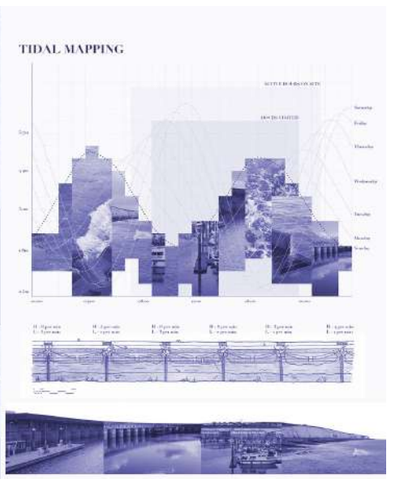


Fig.2 and 3 - Examples of Temporal Mapping. Ege Oztaysi's map of 'warp points' at marina entrance, in response to particularities of site threshold (Year 1, left) and Charlotte Ledger's mapping of tidal splashes and rhythms (Year 1, right), 2023.

Sustaining the state of possibility is a key focus of the studio brief. Akin to Derrida's 'absolute surprise', the creative act is at times experienced as a suddenness–a moment of realization which gains its power through the ability to *reflect and project anew*. Though this is a desired condition, it is only a partial aspect of how possibility arises. The non-linear, pulsating presence of temporal disturbance, as the architect inhabits future/ past/present at once, is the unified condition where, as long as cause-and-effect is operationally suspended, one can *sustain* the possibility of these eruptions.

In the architecture studio, these eruptions both arrive and express themselves *materially*. Architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter describes temporal phenomena as being "disturbances and irregularities" that remain "untrackable" because mathematical equations lack the capacity to be sensitive to changes in material conditions (Kwinter, 2002, 22). To converse with this dynamic realm takes another kind

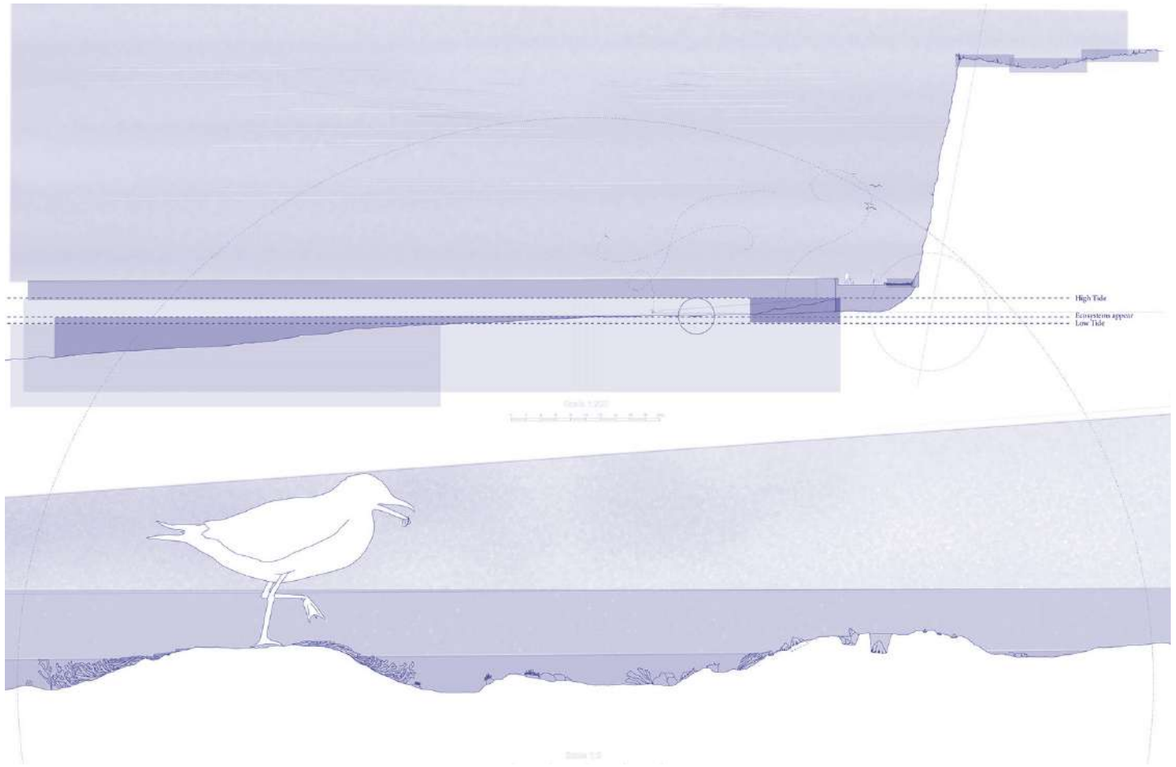


Fig.4 - Example of Hybrid Mapping. Kim Lau's Micro/macro map of tide pools and erosion of chalk cliffs at the marina (Year 1) 2023.

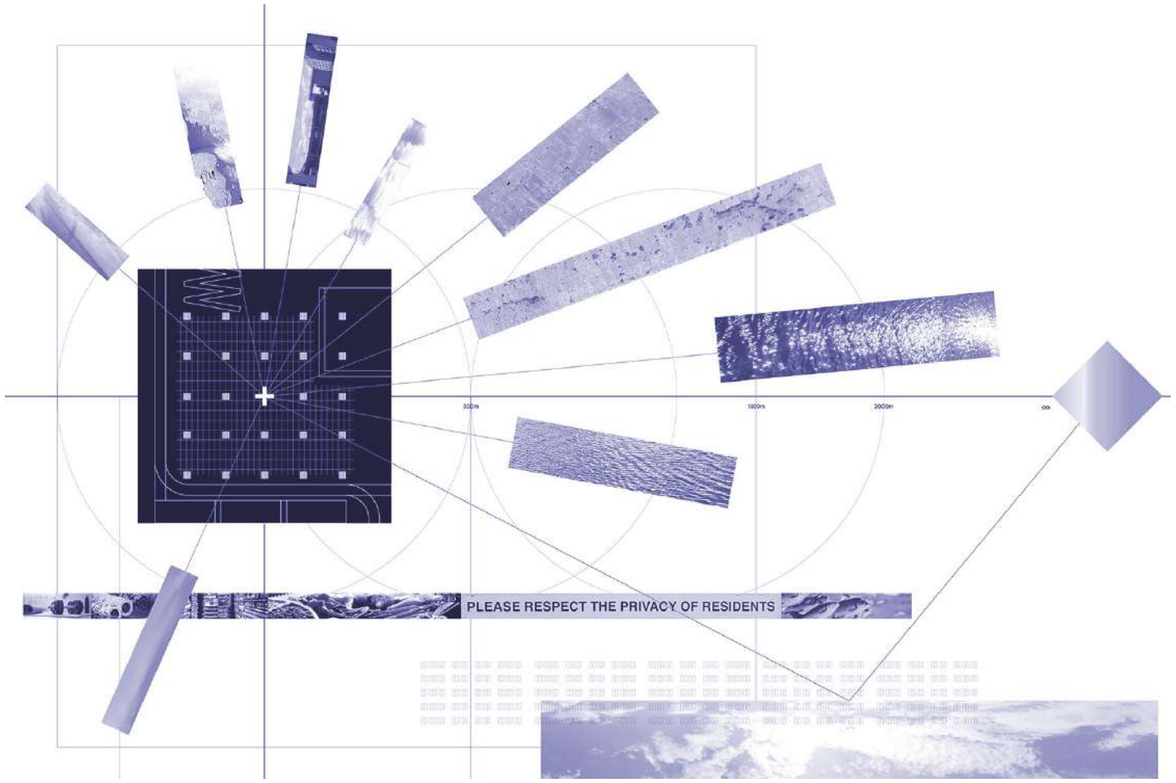


Fig.5 - Example of Hybrid Mapping. Wilson Ng's mapping of site-specific poetic and physical reflections (Year 2), 2023.

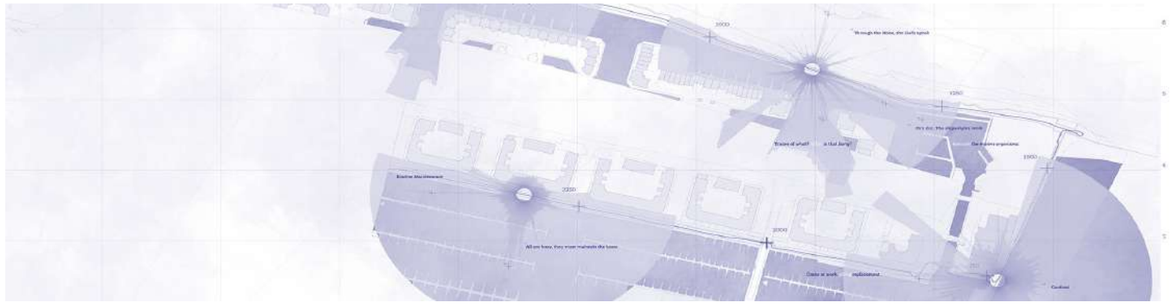


Fig.6 - Detail of Carl Delacruz's marina sound mapping (Year 1), 2023.

of approach than the measured. What arises from the temporal mappings by nature welcomes a poetic and spatial dialogue with what cannot be tracked, and harbours exactly the sensitivity necessary to investigate and proposition this material realm (a critical component of architectural possibility). Donna Haraway's 'tentacular thinking,' based on the Latin tentacular (meaning as 'to feel' and 'to try'), acts as an appropriate lens for approaching the complex oscillations between the imagined and manifest, as the students navigate the changeable site conditions and their spatial possibilities (Haraway, 2016, 31). Haraway's tentacular thinking also offers a way of being able to sit with the complexity of our environment, a set of relationships that cannot be broken into parts or understood in a linear way. Inhabiting the thickness of this complexity helps to relax the narrative trajectories of the probable and encourages new perspectives (Schatzki, 2002, 123).[9]

GROUNDING THE POSSIBLE: SITING THE INTERLOPER

"The trouble with many theories of causality is that they edit out a quintessential element of mystery... A theory of cause and effect shows you how the magic trick is done. But what if something crucial about causality resided at the level of the magic trick itself?" (Morton, 2013, 17).

As elucidated earlier, the studio brief constructs dynamic relationships of site through a two-part temporal/hybrid mapping, and then garners disturbance through the introduction of an interloper. The Interloper is introduced in a few guises, the first being through development of narratives using chance, the second through an event (installation and exhibition), where students' design decisions thus far site them in neighbouring conditions at a 1:1 scale. For Stengers and Debaise, conferring to the possible the power of "rooting out imposture, condemning that which is not a legitimate pointer to what lies ahead", undermines the necessary intensification that situates the possible and allows its importance (Debaise, Stengers, 2017, 18). The studio takes this forward, encouraging the entwining of 'imposture' as an opening to the possible. The interloper acts as an aggravant; a destabilant that inhabits each project. Its nature is temporally mutliplicitous, ambiguous, glitchy, entropic. This allows the studio to perform as a critical site of experimentation, opening the opportunity to reflect on how the destablising dynamic may inform new material, and ultimately architectural, relationships. The site is an integral part of this.

Brighton Marina inhabits an interstitial space between land and sea, acting as a gateway from the city to the rambling rural landscape of eroding cliff. As a territory it defies description, occupying a perimeter condition that is in flux in a range of ways. Historically rich and biologically diverse, the marina's interstitial nature offers multiple opportunity for approaching the studio agenda. It is a dynamic and changeable site; a neighbourhood inhabited by complex histories, diverse ecosystems and conflicting cultural aspirations. Physically, it splits the churning sea with its harbour wall, blinding visitors from the vistas of horizon and passing craft. It crams its partially-realised building projects against the beauty of prehistoric and crumbling chalk,

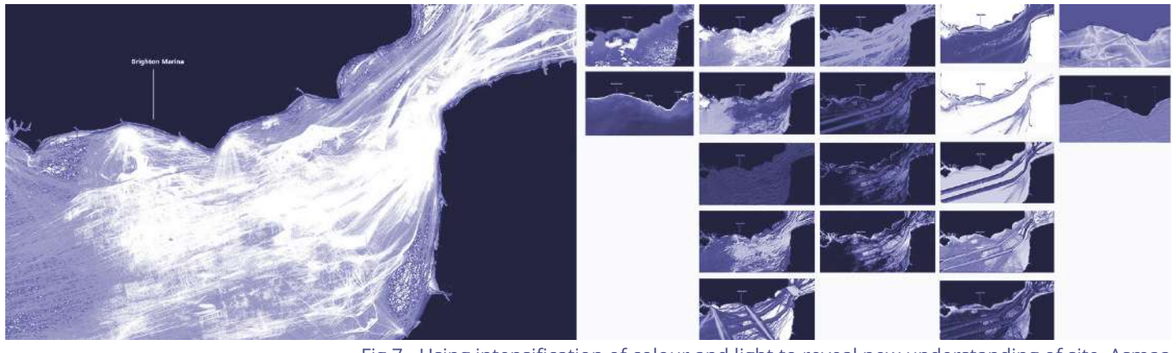


Fig.7 - Using intensification of colour and light to reveal new understanding of site, Asmaa Saadi El Hassani's attunement of traffic through the English Channel (Year 2).

and erects a labyrinth of concrete between its commercial spaces and the easy air of the nearby tidepools. The centre of action, the great gap of parking lot, spreads itself from the base of another five-story car park. Pedestrians risk the underbelly of dark passages and convoluted descents to enter or exit. Yet there is a thriving tide of people in good weather, and a daily core of residents, restaurants, commercial fishing boats and dogwalkers.

The daily life of the marina – enmeshed by its deep-time slipping cliffs and harboured from the knife-edge of approaching seasons, forms the rhythms, nourishment and detritus of site and plants the 'untrackable' seeds of the Time Maps. In *The Anthropology of the Future*, authors Rebecca Bryant and Daniel M. Knight argue that the limit of knowledge, as defined by the future, is what forms our "perception of the familiarity of everyday life," which they equate with our temporal orientations (Bryant, Knight, 2019, 19). The marina, as interstitial, as obfuscation, as *incomplete*, offers a disorienting and curious future orientation. On projecting the future, Bryant and Knight write:

Speculation, we suggest, by taking us into the realm of the gap, takes us into the realm of the unknown, the withdrawn, the immanent. The gap or interval is the point at which the weirdness of the world, our inability to penetrate and pin it down, leads to conjecture, fantasy, and imaginations of the Other… (Bryant, Knight, 2019, 82).

According to the philosopher Bruno Latour, our present orientations have been destabilised; where in the ancient past we inhabited the 'Land,' and in the modern era we inhabited the 'Globe,' we now find ourselves on an 'Earth' that corresponds with neither – having not the limitless resources promised (Latour, 2016, 354). This fretful state, rife with the probable (that for Debaise and Stengers links, through the application of being 'right' [in the sense of correct], to desertification and capitalist appropriation), influences the speculative landscape (Debaise, Stengers, 2017,19).

Sociologist Zigmunt Bauman reflects on this: "These days we tend to fear the future, having lost trust in our collective ability to mitigate its excesses, to render it less frightful and repellent… More often than not, it evokes the fear of an impending catastrophe instead of the joy of more comfort…" (Bauman, 2017, 58). Designing into this realm of the gap – not as the future of linear time but as the space of possibility, allows for narratives to slip beyond the assemblages of the past, and material relationships to reflect and attune to the present.

CONCLUSION

"The possible, however, makes important the possible eruption of other way [sic] of feeling, thinking, acting, which can only be envisaged in the form of an insistence, undermining the authority of the present as regards the definition of the future." (Debaise, Stengers, 2017,18).

Architecture is fundamentally a creative discipline, where each designer's particular way of seeing the world holds immense value in informing the built environment and establishing new modes of practice. Architects attune with a myriad of aspirations, from those of the client(s) to the larger organism of the city (and beyond). Through the process of design, they imagine the immediate simultaneously alongside futures that are yet to unfold. The practice of the architect thus negotiates an interstitial, dynamic and unpredictable territory, of which they are a part.

The distinct ways designers interpret and navigate such complexity is informed by their own unique experiences and imaginings in the world; their own projected possibility. With the growing fear of social and ecological collapse in a postcarbon future, how can architectural education face the challenge of protecting the conditions which allow for possibility to arise? If the critical narratives need to break from the conformity of the 'probable,' the constraints of the past, what methods can nurture this in the space of the architecture studio? The power of the possible to loosen the constraints of contemporary future narratives is critical to the studio brief this year, and is encouraged through a multiplicitous enfolding of temporalities into the very site of the imagined architecture. The invitation of the interloper becomes a dynamic condition that challenges the attunement of each project to the site itself.

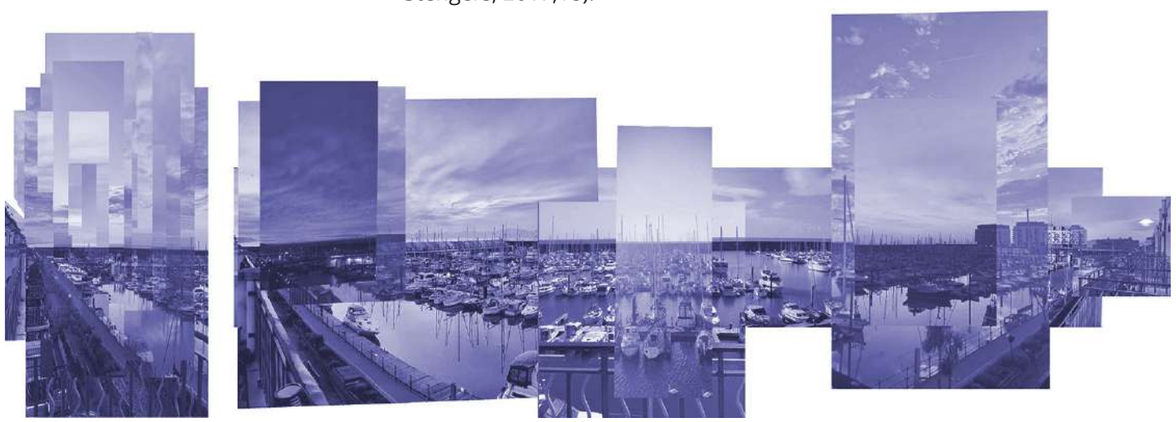


Fig.8 - Situated times of day (sourced from photos if site from Instagram), Asmaa Saadi El Hassani (Year 2), 2023.

Reaching beyond the geographic context of the Brighton Marina, the site of the proposed architecture is framed by the studio brief as a complex entwining of ecologies, histories, artefacts, and systems of daily life. Each students' practice grows out of a non-linear hybrid of temporal conditions. The potential interstitial relationships of these studied temporalities, whether rhythmic, unpredictable, measurable or elusive, are tested out and challenged by unforeseen events and conditions. Through the introduction of an 'interloper,' each student applies a critical positioning, informed by individual research, to the design of an architecture sensitive to dynamic future possibilities. The experimental nature of the studio process is fundamental. Although unsettling at times, not knowing what may arise is a condition that encourages a materialisation of possibilities.

Design work and research are inseparable, reciprocally informing each other and driven by a shared intention. Drawing and making lead to new knowledge, naturally embodied by the intentions/ imaginings of the projects. Through the breakdown of temporal linearity, the studio inquiry opens a site where convolutions and occlusions can coalesce, where the potential of the unknown target can reside at the crux of the design work. New narratives can emerge from the engagement of being intermittently lost within, and this can apply across disciplines, as Rebecca Solnit suggests in her discussion on narrative:

"It seems to be an art of recognizing the role of the unforeseen, of keeping your balance amid surprises, of collaborating with chance, of recognizing that there are some essential mysteries in the world and thereby a limit to calculation…" (Solnit, 2006, 5).

By their very nature, probabilities are calculated, and mystery eludes this. Leaving room for the unexpected to arrive, Morton's 'quintessential element' of mystery attests to a non-linear approach to time, unhinged from the causal relationships that underpin probable future speculations. My own list (*magic*) acts to remind me of this and helps to affirm the possibility of new methods toward knowledge creation, in the architecture studio and beyond.

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NOTES

1. The burning rock, the red bag in the trees, the stone gate map, the golden rod shadow, riding in the bow of the boat, the snake/breast dream painting, GO, temperature fading black, the bear in the berries/vortex, Moosejaw, luna moth/ cecropia, Italian trees, Minerva, the clouds when I drank the red tea… examples from the list.

2. On the 'probable,' Debaise and Stengers write: "We can never be too prudent when faced with the risk of confusion between the sense of the possible and the reference to the probable, which must be distinguished as different in nature. By definition the probable has to do with a transposition or a rearrangement of what has already taken place or what is ongoing, as shown by the calculation of probabilities. The probable belongs to a logic of conformity: that which was important in the past, making it possible to characterise it, will preserve this importance in the future" (Debaise, Stengers, 2017, 19-18).

3. In "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde," Jean-François Lyotard writes well on this state of not knowing, the "and what now?" experience that he describes as both the 'misery' of the artist when faced with waiting (or the blank canvas), and the pleasure that comes with welcoming the unknown (Lyotard, 2010, 29).

4. The studio is a common format in architectural education. It is both a physical space, for working on designs, and a tutor-led framework for a cohort of students, investigating chosen concepts, practices and/or contemporary issues.

5. The studio brief is based on a site-specific installation (Interloper) made as part of my own research practice, created for the Black Horses Association for Speculative Architecture (Triftstraße 19A Gallery) in Halle, Germany, 2017. Relationships between drawings, mirror worlds, planes and corners of the space dynamically occupied the exhibition, intensifying the presence of site and unhinging orientation, encouraging a multiple awareness of the space. This multiplicity was also inherent in the process of designing the exhibition, in the content of the research and artifacts, and in the material and spatial consequences. This multiplicitous approach acts as the foundation for the architecture studio's working methods towards this year's brief.

6. There is another component to this layering not discussed in this article, which is the superposition of site into the space of a gallery as a group event/exhibition (the Marina is reconstructed poetically).

7. See footnote 2.

8. In my PhD what I describe as the slippery character of time activates a condition of possibility; a territory in which I am able to sustain differing temporalities simultaneously through drawing. The research questions how the act of drawing might allow one to reflect on things that haven't happened yet (Lynch, 2017).

9. Philosopher Theodore Schatzki describes this complexity and dynamic essence of site in a way that resonates with the studio brief: "Social life transpires through human activity and is caught up in the orders of people, artifacts, organisms, and things. As such, it is not just immersed in a mesh of practices and orders, but also exists only as so entangled. The mesh of practices and orders is the site where social life takes place" (Schatzki, 2002,123).

In-between Frame and Gallery

Framing and installing as architectural practice

sergi mekanı
çerçeve
yerleştirme
mesafe
yakınlık

exhibition space
frame
installation
distance
proximity

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Bu makale, bir mimarın sergi ve müze projelerine katılımı üzerine teorik bir inceleme sunmakta, sergi yapımını alternatif bir mimari uygulama olarak anlamak için bir temel oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çerçeveleme ve yerleştirmeyi birer araç olarak tarifleyerek mimarın sergi alanına katılımının kolektif üretim süreçlerine nasıl katkı sağladığını incelemektedir.

Sergi yapımının fiziksel ve entelektüel alanlarında mimarın incelikli konumu, bireylerle, kurumlarla, malzemelerle ve mekanlarla ilişkilerdeki sürekli dönüşümler yoluyla ortaya çıkar. Makale, sergileme pratiğindeki farklı katılım biçimleriyle ilişkili olarak bir mimarın kendisini sanatsal ve mimari üretim arasındaki eşikte nasıl konumlandırabileceğini araştırmaktadır.

Aynı müzede eşzamanlı olarak düzenlenen iki sergiye odaklanan metin, birinde mimar aktif olarak geri çekildiği, diğerinde mimari tasarımda proaktif bir rol üstlendiği birbirine zıt iki yaklaşımı ön plana çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.Çalışma, mimarlık ve sanat sınırında faaliyet gösteren sergilerin üretiminde çerçeveyi birincil araç olarak, çerçeveleme ve yerleştirmeyi ise birincil eylemler olarak odağına almaktadır.

This article presents a theoretical investigation into the participation of an architect in exhibition and museum projects. The study seeks to establish a foundation for understanding exhibition making as an alternative architectural practice. It examines how the architect's involvement in the field of exhibition making contributes to the collective production processes with a focus on the tools of framing and installing.

Within the physical and intellectual realms of exhibition making, the architect's nuanced position emerges through constant transformations in relationships with individuals, institutions, materials, and spaces. The paper investigates how an architect can position herself on the threshold between artistic and architectural production, in relation to different modes of involvement in the practice of exhibition making.

Focusing on two simultaneous exhibitions held within the same museum, the text showcases contrasting approaches. In one the architect actively withdraws, and in the other she takes on a proactive role in architectural design. The study introduces *frame* as a primary tool, and *framing* and *installing* as primary acts in the production of exhibitions operating on the boundary of architecture and art.

INTRODUCTION: FROM THE SITE

This study began with a paragraph written by one of its authors, Duygu Doğan, which began to reveal the relations of an exhibition architect with various institutions, models, materials and spaces. It stated:

In my architectural practice; I have been involved in exhibition and museum projects in various institutions. At some stages of the production of the exhibited works and at many stages of their exhibition; I have worked closely with various actors such as artists, curators, technicians (sound, light, AV...), craftsmen (carpenters, blacksmiths, painters...), institutions such as museums, sponsors, biennials, independent art initiatives and collectives, foundations, municipalities, workshops such as the artist's studio, iron workshop, conservation workshop, carpentry workshop, print workshop, places such as museum galleries, artwork storage facilities, inn rooms, warehouse buildings, school buildings, parks, parking lots, and vacant lots, materials such as plasterboard, fabric, cardboard, paper, paint, iron, stone, wood, and tulle. I was part of the physical and intellectual processes of creating various exhibitions. My relationship and positioning as an architect with the people, institutions, materials, places and objects above, which came together with changing constructs and weights each time, were similarly re-established in different forms and weights each time. I took various roles in different exhibitions, including spatial design, planning, production coordination in some, and research in almost all, installation in all of them. Therefore, this work inevitably stems primarily from the foundation laid by practical knowledge and intuition in the field; it continues as a process where experiential knowledge acquired through physical space interaction, confronts and resonates with ideas and concepts.

The initial motivation for the work is to open a discussion on the field of exhibitions as an alternative architectural practice and a collective production space. Through this it aims to explore the architect's position in the exhibition making processes and how architectural knowledge and thinking practices contribute to artistic production. It seeks to investigate how the convergence of art pieces within a conceptual framework can bring about the constant renewal of a relational space, and how the viewer's experience can lead to the transformation of architectural modes of action and thought with the introduction of new concepts and tools.

There comes a pivotal moment in every exhibition's production process when it begins to be conceived within a spatial context. At this juncture, the ideas, artworks, and texts intended for the exhibition start to be envisioned within a physical setting. The artists, architects, curators, and other actors gather at the exhibition venue usually with a gallery floor plan, perhaps a preliminary list of works accompanied by measurements and photographs, and occasionally a few paragraphs outlining the exhibition's conceptual framework. Concepts, texts, paintings, and visuals then begin to coalesce into an exhibition through the establishment of physical relationships within the space, and numerous curatorial and architectural decisions aimed at moulding the space into an exhibition. The exhibition architect plays a dual role in this meeting: she possesses an intimate understanding of the existing architectural space, its spatial requirements, and the technical details necessary for its transformation, while also contributing creatively to the production of the new exhibition space. Simultaneously tending to the architectural framework housing the exhibition and activating it to delineate the temporary exhibition space within, she navigates the interface between the building and the artwork; the artistic domain and the architectural realm.

As an architectural practice focused on designing spaces for the experience of art, exhibition architecture interacts with various scales and forms of art production, blending art-related spaces, materials, and forms. Additionally, it leverages architectural knowledge pertaining to fabrication, construction, and materials within the context of tectonic relationships (Fig.1).

In this article, we explore the evolving role of the architect in exhibition production processes, which is illuminated by a diverse range of participants and variables. Our focus is on two exhibitions; *Endless* by artist Sarkis, and *Passage* by artist Nuri Kuzucan simultaneously presented at ARTER, an art gallery in Istanbul, in Turkey. Each exhibition exemplifies distinct aspects of the architect's involvement; *Endless* showcases the architect's contribution characterized by an “active withdrawal”[1] gesture in which she designs the convergence details and coordinates the process. In *Passage* the architect actively contributes to the exhibition's narrative with an architectural design. Through these examples, we will analyze how an architect can position themselves at varying distances within the processes of exhibition making process.

Fig.1 - Gallery Space, First Day of The Installation of “Passage” ©A. D. İpek.

VARIABLES IN EXHIBITION PLANNING

Exhibition architecture isn't always about creating an architectural design. At times, it involves spatial strategies to accommodate artworks with a nuanced approach requiring an active retreat, while other times it focuses on defining essential elements for the exhibition experience, such as wall color, lighting, hanging height, and circulation routes. The architect navigates her role and proximity in different exhibitions, continually assessing thresholds to shape her practice. This approach is influenced by various factors, including the exhibition type, gallery space characteristics, and the requirements of the artworks and exhibition itself, all of which shape the exhibition production processes differently. Below we share Duygu Doğan’s approach to exhibition design that will be brought to the two exhibitions we will study later in this paper.

Art exhibitions can be organized with a variety of approaches based on the selection of the works to be exhibited and the artists to participate or to be represented. Exhibition types may depend on variables such as whether the artist is living or not, how many artists will take part in the exhibition and whether the works are original work or will be reproduced.

Retrospective exhibitions discuss the artist's work from a historical perspective. Such exhibitions include in-depth research on issues such as the times, places, conditions of the production of the work and the intentions of the artist. If the artist is deceased, exhibition organizers are expected to treat the artist's legacy with respect. Solo exhibitions focus on the current work of a single artist. Unlike retrospective exhibitions, solo exhibitions generally focus on the artist's current work or pieces produced around a specific concept. Exhibitions of new work often require close collaboration with the artist. Such exhibitions include a detailed research process within the production stages; the materials used, the choice of venue and the content of the works. Group exhibitions bring together artworks produced by different artists in different contexts and times. These exhibitions involve combining different techniques and mediums, and must be carefully planned to present the works in a new context. Exhibition makers manage complex collaborations by carefully orchestrating the choice of venue and the interaction between pieces.

The architect's field of operation in the exhibition making processes consists of various scales including the construction closest to the artwork, such as the frame, the gallery in which the work is shown, the building or city or piece of land, where the exhibition is located, and the various possible spatial relationships around these scales. The architect organizes the inter-scale relations in the intellectual and production aspects of architecture and art, enabling the exhibition to emerge as a space within all these relations. The article stems from twenty years of experience in the field of exhibition making and aims to reveal these relations through discussing the role of the architect in the collaborative production processes.

In this context, the architect makes a series of decisions, starting from the arrangements within the gallery, to the general architectural structure of the building or area where the gallery is located, in order to display the work of art in the most appropriate way. This organizes various structural elements that frame, highlight or interact with works of art. It also informs how visitors will experience the exhibition, the relationships between works, lighting and other spatial details.

There are a number of important steps and responsibilities in the process of exhibition making to produce spaces suitable for the conceptual framework of the exhibition. One of the first steps is the selection of the exhibition venue that best suits the conceptual structure and goals of the exhibition. Then, the necessary legal and institutional processes must be arranged, the exhibition must be planned and organized in accordance with the legal regulations.

Technical preparation processes include the production or conservation of the works to be included in the exhibition before they are brought to the venue. At this stage, the technical and architectural infrastructure required for the exhibition is prepared. The placement of the works in the space and how the visitor will encounter the works are planned in line with the artistic demands of the exhibition, display units to be used are designed and produced. Finally, during the installation process when the works, exhibition units, technicians, craftsmen, artists, curators and other team members are all present in the space, the exhibition emerges as a form.

During the design and production processes, a suitable space for the aesthetic and technical requirements of the exhibition is created under the coordination of the architect in collaboration with others such as the artist, curator, museum or gallery director, technical team and craftsmen who contribute to the production (carpenter, blacksmith, painter...). In addition, necessary permissions are obtained by contacting institutions such as museums, municipalities or the state and the necessary procedures are followed.

In its most simplified definition, an exhibition organizes the encounters and associations of works, viewers and spaces. Each exhibition is a sum of its decisions to come together and bring together the relationships it proposes and produces. It takes its form through the organization of a multitude of things that it includes or excludes, enables or disallows, provokes or rebukes, brings closer or further away, protects or highlights.

The exhibition itself is a form of unity that aims to produce other associations. Even though their institutional or conceptual

approaches may be different, it would not be wrong to say that each exhibition will realize its potential to the extent that it can diversify and multiply the relationships between its components. Both the established structures such as museums, and fragmented structures, such as biennials, aim to establish new relationships and multiply these relationships through the exhibition format. In terms of its objectives, capabilities, and limitations, an exhibition can serve as a subject of both aesthetic and political inquiry. Exhibitions, serving as platforms where spatial manifestations of established connections can be explored, also intersect with the domain of architecture and provide new ways of thinking and operating for the practice of architecture.

Philosopher, psychoanalyst and artist Bracha Ettinger coins the term *copoiesis* to explain the communication taking place in the *psychic sphere* between "individual psychic boundaries" happening as a "transgressive encounter", and she discusses about "co-poietic transformational potentiality" that produces particular knowledge through resonance and influence (Ettinger, date, page number). Ettinger's complex description of *matrixial borderspace*, through which fields continually inspire one another, is the theoretical inspiration of the idea of exhibition as a relational performative space.

The matrixial borderspace, as proposed by Ettinger, represents a fluid, interconnected space where subjectivities merge and boundaries blur (Ettinger, 2005, 703-704). In the context of exhibition architecture, this could suggest creating an environment that fosters a sense of interconnectedness and relationality between the viewer and the exhibited works.

The architect performs two modes of action to organize the conditions of the encounter and coexistence of the works, people, objects and spaces in the exhibition: installing and framing which are performative tools of art and architecture.

INSTALLING

Installing is a mode of action in architectural production that differs from *constructing* in many ways. Installing creates temporary structures and activates existing spaces and pieces, whilst constructing produces buildings that are more static and often intended to exist for long periods of time. Installing is an alternative way of practicing architecture which uses knowledge of construction and produces new knowledge for the field of architecture.

Installation within exhibition design is a form of artistic production in which the work of art consists of various parts, demands space in the space, transforms with the movement of the viewer, and is re-performed in each place, time and in the context of each exhibition. Exhibitions that bring together works of art in a physical gallery space can also be considered as site-specific installations. Exhibitions are performative structures that are reconstructed each time by the artist, curator and architect. They hold all the characteristics of the gallery space and the variables mentioned above, and constantly transform with the participation of the audience.

The process of exhibition making at the venue (site) is often called installing an exhibition. The works in the exhibition are installations in themselves; whether a new work is produced or the pieces of an existing work kept in the warehouse are brought together. *Installing* is a delicate balance; all the pieces are there for a reason, nothing is fixed. There are support mechanisms; failure of one of the pieces does not stop the functioning of the whole.

The installation has a life (duration) and life-sustaining care relationships, with its own sensitivities and priorities. It emphasizes the needs of temporary unions such as balance and distance rather than permanence and solidity. Without the complex burden of construction processes that might take years, and come with high costs, installations can be followed by the participants in each step. Here the architect can coordinate the entire construction process from the beginning and take part in all stages. Installing, as an architectural act, differs from construction in terms of the relationships established with time, materiality and construction methods, and allows us to rethink our ways of making through proximities, distances and sensitivities.

In art history, the first experiments in which the work moved away from the wall and the exhibition experience was determined by the movement of the viewer were carried out by avant-garde artists and architects. In the installation titled *Proun Room*, El Lissitzky incorporated the space into the work by distributing the two-dimensional pieces throughout the gallery, including different walls and ceiling. Lissitzky, describes the space as follows: "Space: that which is not looked at through a key hole, not through an open door. Space does not exist for the eye only: it is not a picture; one wants to live in it" (Lissitzky, 1923). In his manifesto for the *Proun Room* installation at the Great Berlin Art Exhibition of 1923, Lissitzky related his function as an exhibition designer to his artistic practice, and to his desire in the *Proun Room* to establish an "interchange station between painting and architecture... to treat canvas and wooden board as a building site" (Greenberg, 1996, 218).

Innovative exhibition design such as this was a popular field in the period between the 1920s and the 1960s in Europe and America (Staniszewski, 1998, 3). Images and techniques from fields such as mass media, video and avant-garde theatre were used extensively by avant-garde artists, designers and architects in the design of exhibitions. Architects and designers such as Friedrich Kiesler, El Lissitky, Moholy Nagy, Lilian Reich, and Herbert Bayer were experimenting with exhibition structures in order to create new compositions for the viewer and to activate viewers participation (Staniszewski, 1998, 4).

Herbert Bayer, one of the important installation designers of this period, explains how this new approach contributed to the field of design in his article titled *Aspects of Design of Exhibitions and Museums* dated 1961:

Exhibition design has evolved as a new discipline, as an apex of all media and powers of communication and of collective efforts and effects. The combined means of visual communication constitutes a remarkable complexity: language is visible printing or as sound, pictures as symbols, paintings and photographs, sculptural media, materials and surfaces, color light movement (display as well as the visitor), films, diagrams, charts. Total application of all plastic and physiological means (more than anything else) makes exhibition design an intensified new language (Staniszewski, 1998, 3).

While the avant garde artists and architects were dealing with exhibition design as a new tool, on the other hand, the norms of the 'white cube', the new "ritual space" (Von Hantelmann, 2019, 56) of modern man, was being established under the leadership of MoMA, the first modern art museum in America in 1929. The pure white background, neutralized interior, evenly distributed artificial lighting evolved a generic fiction that this provides neutral environment for the artworks. For a long time to come the white cube norms became the defining rules of exhibition practice. The way of holding exhibitions seemed to be frozen. It would not be wrong to say that even today, museums are mostly designed as structures containing white cube areas. The white cube concept not only determines the form of exhibition, but also becomes the material of the work of art (Klonk, 2009, 137).

From the 1940s, there were, however, gradual shifts away from this approach. There was an increase in the understanding of the space demanded by the work of art in the space where it is exhibited, and a melting of the physical boundaries between the work of art and the architectural space. A convergence in architectural and artistic production styles also caused significant changes. By the 1970s, the institutional walls of the gallery were the subject of the works of artists like Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Richard Serra who challenged the definitions of the sculpture, architecture and landscape (Krauss, 1979, 41). The physical boundaries, material and medium of the work of art has now evolved beyond producing objects, to engage in performance and happenings (Kwon, 2002, 1-9).

As the boundaries between space and art work transform, the architect becomes an active participant in an increasingly complex production process, with both the practical knowledge on tectonics and the knowledge of the space. In parallel discussions in the field of art and architecture expand from frame - wall - space relations, to situations where the gallery space itself turns into a frame. This then goes on to include works of art that leave the gallery space, and are produced and exhibited in public space, evolving theoretical discussions on space - place - site - non-site - multiple sites (Rendell, 2007, 15-19).

FRAMING

The frame (and its derivatives, showcase and pedestal) is a conceptual and practical tool for both art and architecture that enables the architect, artist and curator to perform the act of associating between works, spaces and viewers in the exhibition space. The transitional space between the work of art and the space where it is exhibited can be investigated through the function of the frame with the concepts of interior/exterior, territory/boundary, wall/frame. Proximities, distances, groupings and area determination in the exhibition space can be called framing. In this context, the exhibition itself and all kinds of relationships in the exhibition can be considered as a frame.

The history of the exhibition space is fundamentally the story of the painting with its frame, sculpture with its base, the frame's relation with the wall and the artwork. Until the early 20th century in Europe, artworks were presented in thick frames not only to define their boundaries but also to provide the artwork its own existential space within their academic creation rules. That is how, in early exhibitions, many frames could be presented from floor to ceiling, next to each other and still considered to have their own representational area. The emancipation of the artwork from the frame to the wall and to the void is a spiry history, which tells a lot about the experience of artwork in the physical material space, and of course a lot about the ways we imagine the world, even today (O'Doherty, 2010, 15-33).

Interestingly, cave painting are unframed. These paintings belong to a time when there was no distinction between art and life, in a sense, culture and nature, as we understand today. Therefore, there was no need to create a boundary between the work itself and the space.

Known for his alternative art history studies that enable interdisciplinary research, Meyer Schapiro reveals that the frame in art history appears at a later time than we may think; in the late second millennium BC. Until this date, a closed frame that "surrounds an image homogeneously and continuously, like the city walls surrounding a city" has not been encountered. However, he notes there are various horizontal lines that connect the figures or form the ground (Schapiro, 1972, 9-19).

In addition to its material meanings as a border to be crossed or a limit to be exceeded, the frame has conceptual meanings that enable the act of inclusion and exclusion. In this respect, the framework has become one of the subjects of the field of philosophy (Derrida, 1987, 31-35). For both paintings made directly on the wall or onto a canvas, this concern for inclusion or exclusion forms the basis of discussions about whether the frame is a part of the

artwork or an external element that determines the boundaries between the work of art and the exhibition space.

There appear to be a number of aspects at play within the notion of framing. The distance between two works of art is measurable spatial data, but what determines this distance is various spatial, material and artistic proximity-distance relations. In this context, distance refers to a measure that takes into consideration and cares for the priorities, sensitivities, fragility, boundaries, dimensions and materials of the artworks. The works may be located in the gallery space; according to eye level, whether they are loud or quiet, hard or soft, sensitive or durable. It is possible to think of distance as relations of being on top of each other and side by side, with spatial data such as the color of the wall, its material, its height or the thickness of frames.

The initial question can be multiplied to consider encounters between spaces, works, and viewers: What is the distance between the transparent surface of a video work projected onto the wall and the wall? How can each of these surfaces, one above the other, continue to be their own surface? What are the new boundaries produced by being on top of each other? How does the fragility of a work affect the distance to approach it? How does the glass in front of a frame change the conditions of approaching the work? Or what is the distance between a work and its frame? What relationships does the framework regulate?

The frame, as a space definition tool and a way of establishing proximity, determines both the location of the work and the viewer's position and movement in the gallery space. The frame can be turned into a showcase by changing the direction and conditions of proximity. What determines the area of a work on the ground is the plinth, which is another form of the frame.

The presence and absence of the frame is itself a form of proximity. The frame is a tool that creates both the encounters of individual entities, and the conditions for their coexistence in the exhibition space. The frame is one of the tools to protect the artwork. A delicate work needs a sturdy frame, or a fragile work needs a carefully designed base. One of the roles and responsibilities of the architect who works with works of art in the exhibition making process is to ensure that the works are placed in the exhibition space taking into account their fragility, and to make the necessary support constructions for this purpose without compromising the artistic decisions and integrity of the work.

In the exhibition, which is a space of relations, the frame makes it possible for works, objects and different spaces to exist singularly. While exhibitions, as a place of encounter and gathering, bring singular or collective bodies together, the frame creates the singular spaces of the encountering bodies (works, viewers, spaces), and the framing creates the conditions of being together.

CASE STUDY EXHIBITIONS

The role and responsibilities of the architect emerge during the design process of each exhibition, as the type of exhibition, venue, selection of works, and texts such as conceptual framework, are redefined each time. The context created by the conceptual framework, the physical properties of the gallery space, spatial constraints, legal restrictions, sensitivities and conservation conditions of the works, open new positions for the architect at various thresholds such as care - display, fragility - support, severality - shareability, intimacy - proximity, orientation - appropriation, reattunement - transformation. A new understanding of tectonics appears in the *restless*[2] area at the in-between space of art and architecture that does not only depend on physical and international standards of measures but reproduces case specific measures each time. The role of the architect is redefined by different actors and variables within each new exhibition. We will explore modes of framing through two exhibitions which show polar positions for the architect's involvement.

Two exhibitions Duygu Doğan worked on will now be explored through the concepts of installing and framing in relationship to the role of the architect within the exhibition design process.

SARKIS, *ENDLESS*

Sarkis' exhibition titled *Endless*, was opened at Arter on May 4, 2023. The works were placed in the gallery space without any structural intervention.[3] In this exhibition there are no walls, partitions or structural additions dividing the existing space inside the gallery or in the foyer where the exhibition continues. The gallery space is arranged as it is, free from additions. The process involved working on location with Sarkis. This meant finely arranging the contingence details established with the architectural space, the points of contingence of the works with the space, and the tectonic relationships of the materials and structures that approach or touch each other. The architect participated in the process of re-execution of the works with her material-technical-tectonic knowledge. Her role was to design the adaptations of the works to the gallery space and their contingence points with the physical space (Fig.2).

FRAMING

Endless assembles five works by Sarkis from the Arter Collection within Arter's gallery space. Each piece, functioning as an installation, contributes to the overall site-specific arrangement, blurring boundaries between individual artworks and the exhibition as a whole (Fig.3).

The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Respiro*, which is positioned in a central area characterized by long, high walls. Illuminated by shifting neon lights and natural

Fig.2 - Endless Exhibition Space, *Endless* ©S. Taştekne.

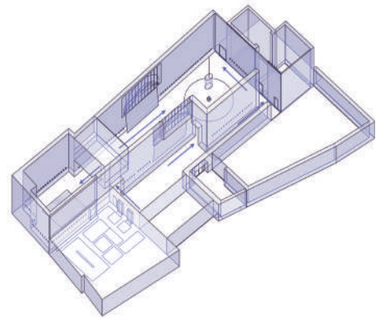

Fig.3 - Drawing for *Endless*.

Fig.4 - *Respiro* in *Endless* ©S. Taştekne

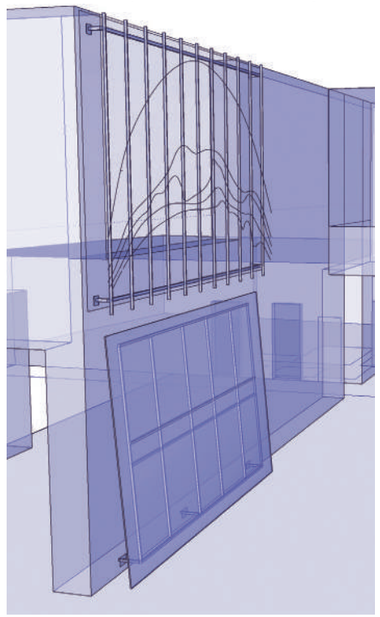

Fig.5 - Detail for *Respiro* in *Endless*.

light reflections, the artwork infuses the exhibition with dynamic color and light, with Sarkis eschewing additional lighting sources. The work was originally conceived for the Venice Biennale, but underwent a transformation for this exhibition at Arter. Its components were rearranged to establish new spatial relationships, supported by a custom-built carrier without imposing a rigid frame (Fig.4, Fig.5).

Sarkis's approach challenges conventional framing practices, emphasizing the frame as a spatial element that delineates the artwork's relationship with its surroundings. *Icons* are the only framed works in the exhibition, reflecting Sarkis's avoidance of traditional museum display tools such as frames, showcases, and pedestals. Instead, he views these displays as enclosing artifacts, arresting artworks in specific moments. For Sarkis, the frame itself becomes a spatial element, delineating the work from its surrounding environment (Fig.6).

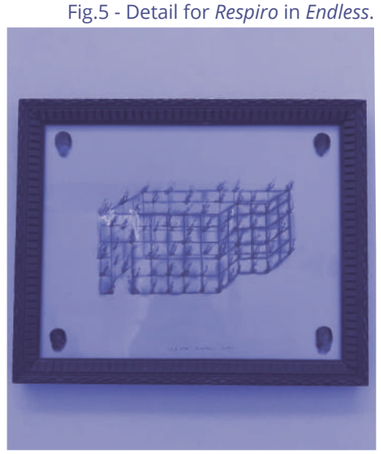

Fig.6 - From *Icons* in *Endless* ©Flufoto.

Icons surrounds all the walls of the gallery space at equal intervals activating a gesture that Sarkis calls “drawing the space” (Sarkis, 2024, n.p.) (Fig.7). Ninty icons, all produced in Istanbul, reinterpret the boundaries of the gallery by following the inclined walls with a determined rhythm. Even when they are interrupted by other works (mirrors) on the wall they determinedly pass them at the same distance. These icons are arranged sequentially according to their serial numbers as their dates of birth. None of them are separated, stand out or are grouped. It is only the length of the walls that determines the intervals. Hanging heights are above the standard viewing height that is usually 155 cm (Fig.8). This boundary line is also relatively high in the gallery space, and the height of other works in the exhibition are located in relation to this. Through this Sarkis reinterprets the height of the space by lifting the entire space slightly above human eye level. At both ends of the gallery there are two further works that complete the exhibition. While *Respiro* creates the height of the space in the middle, the exhibition sits on the ground at both ends.

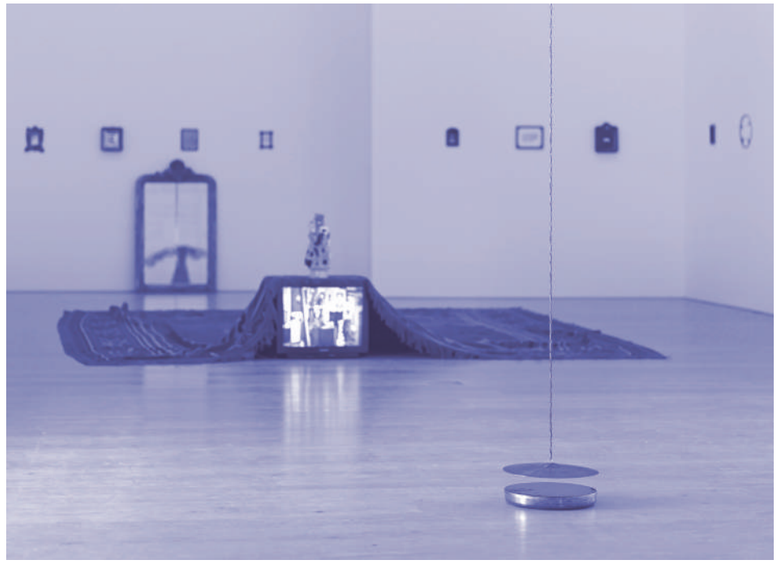

Fig.7 - *Icons* on the walls with other works ©Flufoto.

INSTALLING

Sarkis opts to maintain the architectural integrity of the exhibition space, refraining from additional structural alterations. In *Endless*, the architect's role is to refine the details of the works' interaction with the space, adapting load-bearing structures to fit the architectural context and harmonizing tectonic relationships between materials (Fig.8, Fig.9).

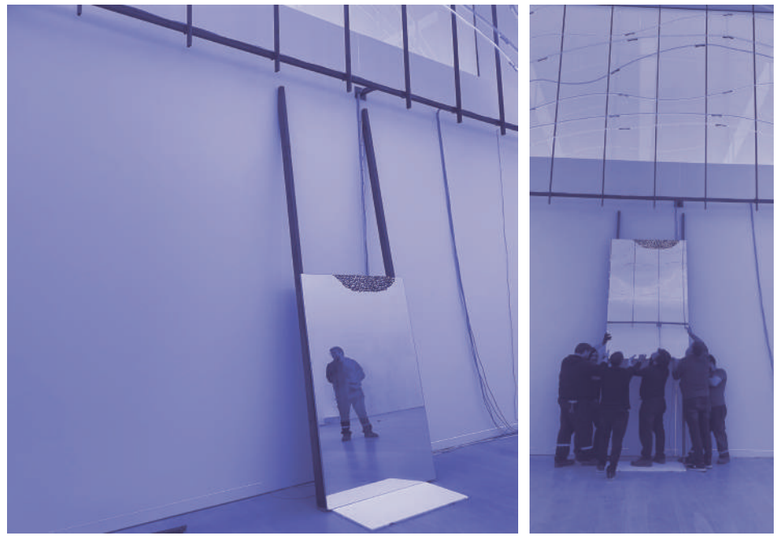

Fig.8 - Construction of *Respiro* in *Endless*.

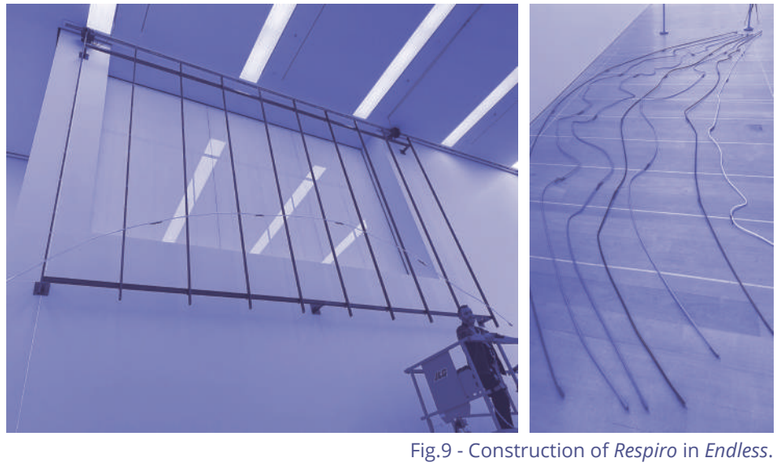

Fig.9 - Construction of *Respiro* in *Endless*.

During installation meticulous attention is paid to ensuring the seamless integration of the works with the gallery space. To these ends there are discussions involving the artist, curator, and technical team to refine wall contact points and construction details. Each element retains its individuality, yet collectively contributes to a unified, ephemeral whole. The conceptual framework of this exhibition revolves around contingency, with a focus on exploring the architect's role through considerations of touch, approach, and material integration.

NURI KUZUCAN, *PASSAGE*

For Nuri Kuzucan's exhibition titled *Passage*, which was opened at Arter on June 1, 2023, the gallery space was transformed with a specially designed architectural structure. The architectural structure and most of the works were produced simultaneously. The architectural structure comes together with the works and co-exists in the exhibition space to create the spatial experience. The artworks and the architectural work emerge from each other and sustain each other, and can be described as a painting-space, or a space-painting experiment. While the surfaces of the architectural structure form frames for the works in the exhibition, the viewer moving inside the structure experiences the works in countless different ways. The architectural structure creates new relationships of perspective, closeness, distance, fullness, emptiness, light and shadow on the painting surface that adds to the physical experience of the works and creates spatial intervals and crevices, multiplying the perspective qualities of artworks (Fig.10).

Fig.10 - *Passage*, Exhibition Space.

Fig.10 - *Passage*, Exhibition Space.

FRAMING

All the artworks in the exhibition were paintings, most of them canvases without frames attached to the canvas (Fig.11). Nuri Kuzucan produces surfaces that create their own frame by continuing the painting surface in the thickness of the canvas. The series in the exhibition was an experiment in which the artist thought of the frame as a space and explored the possibilities of this frame space. There is a noticeable gap between the glass surface in front of the thick frame and the wall, with the effect of broken light on the glass being sharply reflected behind the framed surface. The deep frame of the work becomes a space performed through the movement of light and shadow (Fig.12).

Fig.12 - Frame from Passage ©Flufoto.

The artworks in the exhibition were produced simultaneously with the architectural structure. The architectural structure consisted of the two-entrance, walk-through gallery space, the opening of the preparation stages of the exhibition that resembles a passage, then the white walls of the building serve as a frame for the works, and the movement of the viewer and the frames connected to the space create different compositions (Fig.13).

INSTALLING

The gallery space in which the exhibition was located was a single volume. The architectural design of the exhibition was an adaptation of the passage idea within the architectural space of the gallery. The aim was to diversify the routes of movement between the two doors of the gallery with new passages throughout the gallery to enable the viewer to wander around the spaces in the works. The aim was to create an architectural structure that interpreted "the experience of walking in the side streets of a metropolis" (Fig.14).

The work called *Diptych Painting* was already finished when the preparations for the exhibition began, and these paintings became another starting point for the architectural design. We set out to search for the architectural equivalents of surfaces created with paint, transitions between surfaces, spaces and intermediate spaces in physical space (Fig.15). One of the fundamental decisions was to make the surfaces legible on orthogonal axes, echoing the paintings. All horizontal and vertical components of the architectural structure can be read as surfaces with their own thickness, that relate to each other as an assemblage.

The relationship between the walls of the exhibition space and the gallery space was planned in such a way that none of the new walls touch the walls of the gallery. The walls of the gallery continue without interruption within the entire exhibition space and maintain their existence with their own heights

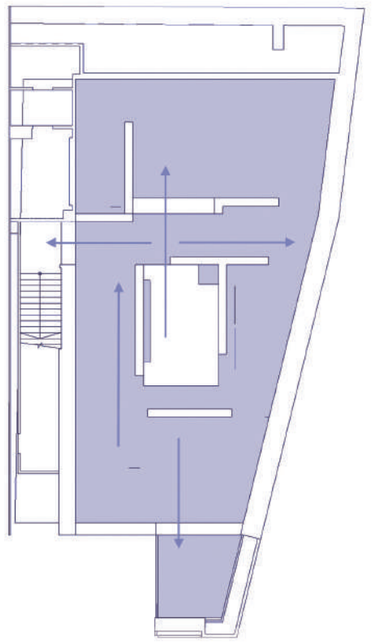

Fig.13 - Floor Plan of *Passage*.

Fig.14 - *Passage*, Exhibition View.

Fig.15 - *Dyptich Painting* from *Passage*.

Fig.16 - Exhibition View from *Passage*.

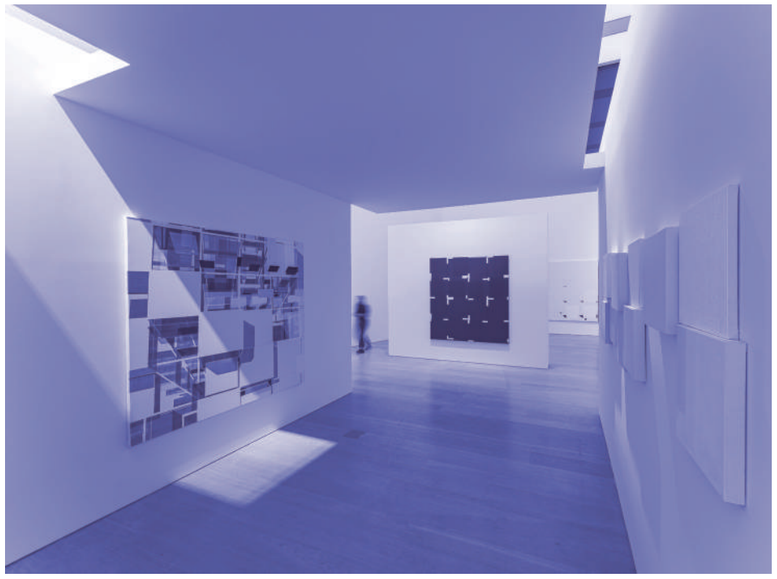

Fig.17 - Exhibition View from *Passage* ©Flufoto.

and dimensions. These walls also provide large wall surfaces required for various tasks (Fig.16).

The space's own circulation axes are used to transform the idea of a passage into an architectural structure. The aim is to create new transitions and new routes with new spaces, surfaces, areas and volumes where these transitions still remain legible. It was planned that various surfaces could be passed through, stepped under, stood in front of, and come together as a fiction. The aim of the paintings is to make the depth provided by perspective physically active, thus increasing the experience. While walking through the gallery spacethe viewer passes through corridors that sometimes approach each other, sometimes offer a defined square space, with all experiences of intermediate areas and gaps in the established architectural space created by the coming together and dispersing of various surfaces (Fig.17, Fig.18).

Fig.18 - Exhibition View from *Passage*.

Movement is the conceptual tool of this exhibition. The crucial role of the architect as a designer was in establishing a performative exhibition experience in which works and architectural structures produce compositions that change with the movement of the viewer.

CONCLUSION

The role of the architect in exhibition production emphasizes the architect's dynamic engagement with diverse actors and variables at both polar ends of engagement. By introducing “framing” and “installing” as modes of action in the exhibition making processes the text examines the architect's operational field on the threshold. This navigates a transitional space between art and architecture in the delicate balance between permanence and temporality, solidity and fragility, singularity and shareability.

As the architect orchestrates the exhibition's spatial dynamics, they inherently engage in a discourse contributing to the transformative potentiality of the exhibition space. In a world undergoing rapid change the architect's position becomes a crucial lens through which to reflect on the evolving nature of architecture within the context of dynamic and performative exhibition environments. The study concludes by proposing that understanding and embracing the in-between within architectural practices can enrich the discipline's capacity to respond to contemporary challenges, and contribute meaningfully to the broader cultural and spatial discourse.

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NOTES

1. The term “active withdrawal” is borrowed from the title of the book “Active Withdrawals, Life and Death of Institutional Critique” which refers to the seminar organized in Guangdong Museum. There the term is used to describe how active withdrawal becomes a meaningful gesture directed against often celebrated mass production and the symbolic process of progress (Ciric, Yingqian Cai, 2016,12).

2. “Restless” is a term bused both by Bernard Tschumi (while discussing real and ideal space in architecture) and Hans Haacke (while criticizing the institution as a frame) (Kaye, 2000, 46).

3. Excerpt from exhibition’s press release text: Conceived to coexist with a space, to embrace spatial references and associations, or to forge a different space altogether, the works of Sarkis are reinterpreted and transformed by the artist on every occasion they are exhibited. The exhibition titled ENDLESS, presented on Arter’s 2nd floor, brings together a selection of the artist’s works from the Arter Collection in the same gallery space for the very first time, endowing them with a new life and new experiences. SARKIS: Endless [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.arter.org.tr/EN/exhibitions/sarkis-endless/1233 [accessed 22 May 2024].

Community, Public Space and Digital Data

Bologna interactive urban furniture lab

arredo urbano
spazio pubblico
spazio interattivo
interazioni sociali
Bologna

urban furniture
public spaces
interactive space
social interactions
Bologna

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Attraverso la manifestazione di tracce digitali, la ricerca mostra come sia possibile dare valore a comportamenti e azioni presenti nello spazio in un certo momento, rievocandole come echi in successive temporalità nello spazio. Il contributo si inserisce nell'ambito problematico della città contemporanea - il contesto applicativo sono il Quadrilatero Malvasia e il quartiere Barca di Bologna -, nei cui spazi si stratificano giorno dopo giorno i dai dati digitali prodotti dallo spazio e dalle persone che vi transitano. Le espressioni progettuali legate al product design che approfondiscono, nella dimensione urbana, la relazione dato digitale/spazio/comportamento utente, mostrano una limitata varietà di metodologie e di effettivi casi studio. La sperimentazione effettuata dal gruppo di lavoro si inserisce in questo ambito e fornisce alcune originali direzioni progettuali ai designer che si spingano ad immaginare nuovi oggetti urbani.

Through the manifestation of digital traces, the research demonstrates how it is possible to value behaviors and actions present in space at a certain moment, recalling them as echoes in subsequent temporalities within space. The contribution fits into the problematic of the contemporary city, the applied context being the Quadrilatero Malvasia and the Barca neighborhood in Bologna, where spaces are layered day after day with digital data produced by the space itself and the people who pass through it. Product design that delves into the urban dimension, exploring the relationship between digital data, space, and user behavior, are explored to reveal a variety of methodologies. Experimentation carried out by students working groups, in cooperation with the course in Advanced Design of University of Bologna and the local cultural association Fondazione e Innovazione Urbana, provides some original design directions for designers who venture to imagine new urban objects.

INTRODUCTION

A threshold is a suspended space that lies between two different conditions, capable of uniting and separating at the same time. In a design context, threshold therefore defines a boundary condition and represents a fertile ground for exploration of the imagination and creation of unusual connections, leading to boundary experiences and experimentation. Applied to reflection on the public spaces of the contemporary city, the concept of threshold opens new research scenarios that bring together material and immaterial elements in the definition of new urban paradigms in which the community can build and recognize its own identity.

The city is built by people. It is composed of both a tangible and material structure in space that shapes the urban configuration, and a free space in which events follow one after the other housed in buildings or in their shadows. In this context, the city can be read as a synthesis of volumes and voids sequential and continuously transforming. The way we comprehend the world undergoes inherent processing as we intersect with it, particularly through the traversing of 'empty' space, as elucidated by Bruce Chatwin (Chatwin, 1988). In this context, emptiness signifies a realm of potentiality, accommodating the existence of various elements, the mobility of individuals, and the manifestation of individual behaviour, as articulated by Francesco Careri (Careri, 2006). According to Fernando Espuelas (Espuelas, 2004), unoccupied space is the domain of penetrability where life unfolds, and contingent time materializes; it is the backdrop that envelops actions, thereby enriching their significance. As stated by Oswald Mathias Ungers:

"The arrangement of architectural elements in space can be interpreted as the staging of a spectacle. The organization of objects in space is the scenography of a stage for various human activities, for the roles of actors, for the life that takes place there. Therefore, each area, each place transforms into an architectural stage that hosts the representation of the individual if the stage is private, or of the community if it is a public stage, i.e., the city" (Ungers, 1998, 20).

This paper assigns the void as an experimental field with a double meaning. On the one hand emptiness has an ontological significance in relation to how humans inhabit space. The void becomes a place of potential transformation revealing a new perspective for perceiving and understanding the constructed reality. On the other hand, the void configures itself as a container of invisible information and data. The urban spaces that people pass through and inhabit everyday are increasingly influenced by the digital data they produce and that remains referenced to them. This data contributes to shaping what we could define as the 'Digital overground' (Zannoni, 2018, 38), molding the identity and memory of places themselves (Formia, Zannoni, 2018, 120). The relationship between urban space and digital data is bidirectional, playing a key role in defining new directions in the way the city is inhabited. Digital data, while not the sole element for understanding urban voids, represents a crucial system of relationships and behaviours for the innovative development of urban, social, cultural, and environmental strategies, inspired by the concepts of response-ability and ongoingness. The spaces of the contemporary city become the context in which digital data, produced both by the space itself and by the people who inhabit or traverse it, transform, shaping the space and enriching its meaning.

It is from these considerations that the first part of this paper offers an overview of research that in recent decades has addressed the theme of urban space and digital data. The physical structure of architecture here represented a fixed, permanent, and immutable factor capable of accommodating mutable activities, uses, experiences, and data, generating layered spatiality. What we aim to investigate in this paper is how the space of the contemporary city assimilates design alterations that intervene in the fixity of existing space, overlaying digital characteristics, selecting privileged perspectives, creating connections or barriers, repositioning objects, and manifesting data. Starting from these considerations, the paper asks what role can the synergy between urban space and digital data play in the city of tomorrow?

This contribution presents some outcomes of experimental research on the city of Bologna[1] that addresses the theme of requalifying public space by investigating new relationships between space, time, and community. The presentation of the examined design examples, which operate in the field of product design in relation to the city, revolves around five themes that refer to different ways of interpreting the theme, depending on the different contexts and scales with which the projects engage. The design research was completed as part of the Urban Data Sensification course at Advanced Design, Department of Architecture, University of Bologna. The didactic project experience was complemented by research carried out in close collaboration with the Fondazione Innovazione Urbana (FIU). The contribution of the FIU association strengthened the research's connection to the city's inhabitants, monitoring urban transformation processes in depth and in a capillary way.

URBAN FURNITURE AND ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES

The urban environment encompasses various design initiatives that introduce objects into collective spaces to support the behaviours and needs of people who traverse and linger within it. The forms of urban furniture are influenced by both functional and industrial logics akin to the realm of furniture; however, their placement is governed by criteria linked to observed or anticipated uses within the space. This is why the ability of the designer to interpret the space and its inherent dynamics is central to the design of urban furniture. This is how an open area, through the incorporation and orientation of benches (Alexander and others, 1977, 1121), becomes a resting space where the user can either observe what is happening or actively engage with people nearby. Similarly, typical wayfinding elements transform places into routes and regulate the behaviours of spaces (Gibson, 2009, 56; Pilozzi, 2013).

Considering the complex field that describes how urban space encompasses not only the tangible dimension of the city but also the intangible digital one, urban furniture emerges as an appropriate means of transmitting and transducing data in the community's urban spaces. It is through this combination that scientific and design research suggests a pathway that leverages the digital component as an innovative trigger to enhance the social dimension within the voids of the urban fabric (Stokes and others, 2021). The domain of the project that combines urban furniture with enabling technologies is not yet widely pervasive in cities, but there are already numerous examples that can guide in categorizing some ways through which these fusions exhibit element of originality.

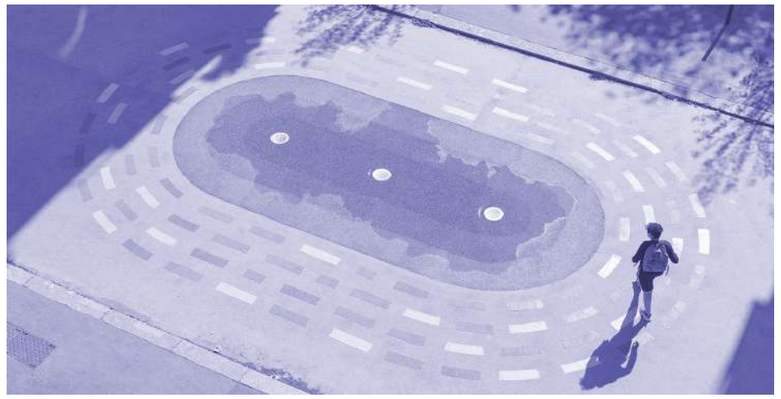

Fig.1 – Aéro-Seine #2 project, 2020 © Studio Idaë.

The first level through which digital data effectively enters urban furniture is the quantitative reading of space. Through a reading of space via dedicated sensors, it is possible to conduct extensive and precise data collection campaigns that allow designers to gather objective perspectives for intervention. An example is the *Aéro-Seine #2 project*[2] (2020), where designers from the Studio Idaë collected data related to localized excessive temperatures in certain parts of the city (Fig.1). The survey enabled the design of a site-specific system where non-potable water is used to cool the specific areas of Paris.

A different approach is taken by projects like *#mimmi*[3] (2013) by the Invivia studio (Fig.2) and *Whithervanes*[4] (2017) by the Rootoftwo studio, where urban furniture elements are designed with the ability to change their chromatic and luminous behaviour based on data collected through social networks or news blogs. In these cases, textual information is scanned and analysed through semantic analysis, clustering words and phrases into groups of emotions. Each cluster corresponds to the behaviour of the object in space. The dynamic characteristics of the object enter the realm of human perception and become a narrative tool for the underlying themes of the interventions.

Fig.2 – #mimmi Project © Invivia studio.

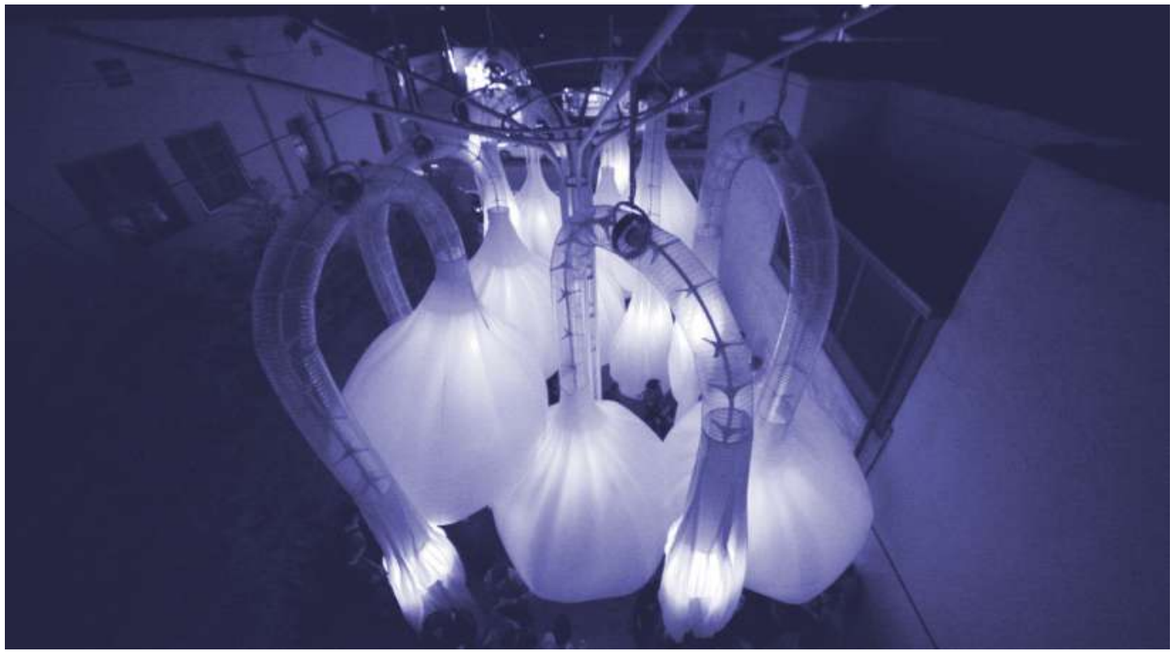

Fig.3 – Bubbles project © Foxlin Architects.

Similarly, the *Bubbles project*[5] (2006) by Foxlin Architects uses data to transform the object (Fig.3). The difference from the previous project is that while in that case the data is processed before leading to a response, here the reading of digital information occurs in real-time and has an immediate consequence on the behaviour of the objects. Large air-bags expand or contract based on the number of people crossing space.

These are just a few examples of a growing body of projects that combine the realm of product design with the design of open urban spaces where themes of placemaking and placekeeping come to the forefront.

Placemaking (Granata, 2021, 3; Stokes and others, 2021) refers to design actions aimed at strengthening and renewing the identity of community spaces, while placekeeping (Dempsey, Smith, Burton, 2014, 173; Mattijssen and others, 2017, 71) refers to actions aimed at encouraging citizenship to care for common places. In relation to these goals, enabling technologies have significant potential to revitalize objects already present in cities. Examples include placemaking projects carried out by the Calvium studio in the UK[6]. Through a thorough analysis of citizens' needs, the studio developed digital applications for managing everyday spaces; furthermore, digitally implemented objects were identified, designed, and realized to enhance the functionalities related to the memory of places and the connection between actors who inhabit the common spaces of the city.

RESEARCH METHOD

These different approaches can be seen as design guidelines or methodologies developed synergistically. In this paper, a methodology for approaching the design of urban furniture arises from a qualitative and quantitative reading of space. This evolves a conscious design action, ready to respond in a heterogeneous manner. This project approach leads to the creation of interactive spaces (Dall'Osso, D'Alessandro, Melappioni, 2022, n.p.), meaning places and objects capable of transforming to meet the needs of the people they accommodate, guiding or perceptually suggesting multiple functions. By transformation, we mean the possibility that changes in certain characteristics of objects lead to an effective modification of the real or perceived space. Through these changes, the digital component of urban furniture projects can lead to breaking physical or perceptual boundaries of space with people or spaces nearby or distant in time and space. In the urban context, enabling and emerging technologies offer stimulating potential aimed at breaking ancient boundaries and balances, proposing design nuances within the boundaries that contemporary cities present. Experimentation within the course has obvious differences and abstractions from live projects but can be taken here as the starting point for a methodological paradigm for application outside of the academic context. To guarantee a concrete adherence to the contemporary cities' problems in research premises and design outcomes, the research engages in consultation with the local community. The starting point of the investigation is the study of the project's urban space and the involvement of local communities to uncover the issues or needs for the project to resolve. In this investigation of possible innovative trajectories of urban transformation, local participation and collaboration were important tools to investigate the multiple features of neighbourhoods. In synergy with FIU in Bologna, the work enables data to be collected for the interpretation of the urban spaces as layered space of traces, that are invisible yet powerful. FIU is a multidisciplinary centre for research, development, co-production and communication of urban transformations at the service of the construction of the city's imaginary future. FIU is the relations' promoter between public administration, enterprises, third sector and citizens. It plays a role in driving, accompanying, facilitating, and experimenting the city's transformation processes, both in terms of policy planning and civic governance and design. The FIU designs, manages, facilitates and communicates urban transformation processes; enhances knowledge, methodologies, and people; develops shared paths of construction of urban spaces and services; activates places and moments of public debate, co-production and dialogue between citizens, institutions, associations, movements and representatives of economic, social and cultural world.

The understanding of the urban space is developed through a site survey to build a qualitative and quantitative knowledge of spaces and relations. Fundamental steps to the project development are historical analysis, comparison between georeferenced data and open data collected by the municipality, direct field investigations and interviews. Driven by this gathered knowledge of spatial characteristics, in terms of both the material urban space and the invisible space of digital data, the project is developed through an interpretation built around specific thematic clusters, as activation of connections among individuals sharing a common environment; interaction with urban fauna and flora; engagement with the cultural facets of the city; fostering a sense of well-being within inhabited spaces; interplay between the individual and communal spheres. The project outcomes represent an experimentation on individual themes, tracing innovative ways of triggering urban integrated transformations with the community. The conclusion of the research takes place with the sharing of these experimental experiences with the community that participated in the research, tracing a virtuous cultural, communicative and participatory circularity.

BOLOGNA AS DESIGN LAB

The nexus between the terms city, community and public space expresses the very essence of urban civilization, from its birth with the community transformation from a mere aggregation of individuals, through to the erosion and decay of public spaces and might conclude –if we do not counter it– with the gradual death of the city. Richness, significance and problems of urban civilization cannot be understood without considering the triad 'urbs-civitas-polis' (city-community-public spaces): city as physical reality, city as society and city as government. It can be said that cities were born with public spaces when people needed to organize themselves (as urbs, as civitas and as polis) around certain functions and places that could serve the community as a whole. This is the basic reason public spaces have always been important in the city of European tradition: places in which to be together, to trade, to celebrate religious rites, to perform common activities and use common services.

In this context, the contemporary city becomes an experimental ground of considerable interest to understand if and how the incorporation of digital data into the city-community-public spaces triad can be a trajectory to stimulate a possible and progressive cohesion between urban space and people who inhabit and pass through it. The city is not only physical reality, society and government, but also data. In this sense, the city becomes a framework for people and events that produce data georeferenced to space. That is, intangible traces of habits, invisible signs of criticalities, whispered adjectives describing the intangible qualitative and quantitative characteristics of places. The potential of the digital dimension of urban space, combined with the city's physical and material context, can generate dynamic relationships between spaces, times, places and people. The use of digital technologies in public space can activate processes of connection and involvement between community and space. Our research developed by applying data-space-personal investigation to specific urban places.

Two Bologna districts, different in terms of historical reference period, size and spatial configuration, were chosen in order to represent the paradigm of the current crisis of collective urban space, so evident especially in the peripheral parts of our cities. Public spaces, which radiate into these neighbourhoods through streets, squares, parks and gardens, are often characterized by a state of urban and social decay. The lack of clear and accessible connections between neighbourhoods, the rest of the city and the historic centre, combined with the lack of services and the ineffectiveness of land management policies, are some of the factors that have contributed to the current condition of these suburbs. Such urban portions are in fact subject to rapid degradation, not only architectural and urban, but also environmental, social and cultural. Today, after recent crises, the redevelopment of these parts of the city is even more urgent, starting with the meaning and the role that public space can assume in this process, in synergy with digital data and community. Bologna, becomes a city of experimentation in which to apply the research hypotheses. Specifically, the Malvasia Quadrilateral and Barca district are considered as an experimentation field for the public space-city-community data's intertwining, outlining a new narrative of the contemporary city, through the relationship of elements´ intertextuality (Ricoeur, 2013, n.p.).

Fig.4 – Quadrilateral Malvasia, Bologna, 2022 © Martina D'Alessandro.

Fig.5 – Quadrilateral Malvasia, Bologna, 2022 © Martina D'Alessandro.

Fig.6 – Neighborhood Barca, Bologna, 2023 © Google Maps.

Fig.7 – Neighborhood Barca, Bologna, 2023 © Google Maps.

Malvasia is a residential district known as Quadrilatero because it is defined by four streets, Via Malvasia, Via Casarini, Via dello Scalo and Via De Crescenzi (Fig.4). In the early 1930s, Bologna was experiencing a moment of great urban development as the number of inhabitants had doubled over three decades. The policies of redevelopment of the city centre and the construction of a few expansion villages never fully resolved the housing emergency.

So, in 1934 a competition was announced for the design of three council housing projects (via Vezza, via Scipione del Ferro and via De Crescenzi). These three public housing projects, built from 1934 to 1937, represent a unique example of urban design up to that time. Projects intercept all modern urban principles: the German inspiration for minimal housing and settlements with long, blocks and large windows to receive more sun and ventilation to improve hygiene and health standards. These interventions reflected public opinion of the time. In the April 1935, May 1937 and 1939 issues of the Magazine Bologna (the city's monthly magazine) published articles dedicated to the Case Popolarissime and their construction. From the literature of the time, it is clear that the building of the Case Popolarissime had not only the aim of guaranteeing disadvantaged people healthy and humane housing, but also of defining a green spatial context through which to develop urban and social regeneration policies. Inhabitants of the settlement, mainly workers in urban industries, had the opportunity to cultivate the green space between buildings, transforming the soil into an additional means of family sustenance (Della Rovere, 1937, 13).

This urban policy corresponds to a social strategy. The main goals of the project can be read in the Case Popolarissime article:

"It is not enough to produce a healthy house with a small plot of land, but it is necessary to ensure that the land itself is actually cultivated by the citizens so that they can derive the greatest material and moral benefit from it. Institutes' action must not stop at the simple handing over of the housing and land but must continue with all those forms of moral assistance that will be necessary for the integral achievement of the set economic, social and political goals." (Della Rovere, 1937).

Case Popolarissime and specifically Quadrilatero Malvasia follow a settlement layout of closed and self-sufficient wards, with various shared services such as kindergarten, laundry, ward group and social control through a concierge. The formal and typological layout is developed through the succession of residential slats, alternating with empty spaces characterized by the presence of greenery. The residential volumes are open, develop in height and are positioned according to access to sunlight and fresh air and orientation criteria without so much attention to public space. In fact, the blocks are equidistant from each other and determine small open spaces between volumes that do not have a precise urban role (Fig.5).

In the mid-1950s Bologna experienced a second major urban expansion, following which the suburban landscape developed. The migratory flow towards the city is distributed in all areas of Bologna, but mostly in the areas of recent urbanization characterized by extensive building development, in favour of the new suburbs. In these years the bigger Ina-Casa neighbourhoods on the extreme eastern and western outskirts of the city were completed and the Plan for Popular Economic Housing (Piano per l'Edilizia Economica Popolare - PEEP) was adopted. During the Ina-Casa development some residential projects were realized in Bologna, including Quartiere Cavedone (1957-60, under the coordination of Leonardo Benevolo), Quartiere Barca (1957-62, under the direction of Giuseppe Vaccaro) and Quartiere Pilastro (PEEP, 1960-80, coordinated by Francesco Santini).

The Barca district is part of Bologna's western expansion plan, with an autonomous residential settlement for 40,000 people served by a series of infrastructures, including public buildings and a large riverside park along Reno (Fig.6). The articulation of district's public space has a precise composition. Inside the district, green areas serving the residential blocks are few and small, while on the fringes of the neighbourhood there is a very substantial network of open spaces, including the river park in the western area along the Reno. There are therefore two types of open spaces: those directly serving the residents and those of a larger size, located on the fringes and usable by all the citizens of Bologna.

The district has a strongly unified and recognizable urban layout. Its composition rotates around a road axis which serves as the spine of the project and symbolizes the physical limit to the expansion of the city. The spine is characterized by the presence of a long residential volume, which follows the shape of the street and is called The Train. This is a building with a portico on the ground floor and two floors dedicated to housing. The presence of the portico testifies to the intention of linking the public space' architecture of the neighbourhood, and specifically the street, to the spatiality of the historical city of Bologna. The public space, barycentric to the district, develops on the opposite side of The Train, as a counterbalance to the large urban element but it is configured as a succession of squares connected to each other and defined by a series of collective buildings. The neighbourhood services consist of a civic centre, offices, cinema, church and market. In this way the urban space is also defined through The Train, which constitutes the fixed setting of the public spaces. The rest of the residential fabric of the neighbourhood is developed through a typological mix with high and low buildings (Fig.7).

These two Bolognese neighbourhoods, different in terms of historical period of their construction and dimension, urban and spatial characteristics, are both exemplary for investigating the crisis of public space in the contemporary city. Indeed, there are many points of tangency that can be discovered in these two very different realities. Both are peripheral residential housing with little connection to the historical city centre from an urban, social and cultural point of view. Both neighbourhoods are inhabited by a multicultural population that faces challenges in respect to integration.

Both neighbourhoods have been, and unfortunately still are, the scene of criminal activities that have increasingly led the municipality to monitor the local social dynamics. In both neighbourhoods, the FIU has carried out social and cultural integration activities, ensuring that these parts of the city would offer fertile ground for trialing possible innovative urban transformations, transferable to other parts of the city and other urban contexts, both national and international.

URBAN FURNITURE DESIGN LAB

The research was carried out during two project courses held in two different academic years. The working methodology was the same in both years while the place of analysis changed, the first year the Malvasia quadrilateral was investigated, while in the second year the Barca district was analysed. In the two years, a total of approximately one hundred students were involved, who developed 29 projects.

Collective didactic work has highlighted how urban furniture already present in urban spaces can be reimagined by enabling technologies. The common aim of these works has been to respond in an original way to specific questions about the destination location. Design students were guided by lecturers in the conceptual development and design process. In detail, the projects respond to five specific thematic clusters: activation of relationships between people in the same space; relationship with urban fauna and flora; accessibility to the cultural dimensions of the city; support for a dimension of inhabited well-being; relationship between individual and community.

ACTIVATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN THE SAME SPACE

Within this thematic cluster projects aim to generate situations that activate relationships among people in the public space. In the intervention sites, an evident disconnect in social connections between people of different groups in terms of age, social class, and cultural background was detected. The young designers imagined urban furniture that indicate, suggest or implicitly constrain specific multi-user behaviour. The Smatch project (Fig.8), by Raffaele Montemurro, Demetrio Paccamonti, Federico Piattellini, Francesco Scalise, and Francesco Vespasiano, is an example of this group of projects.

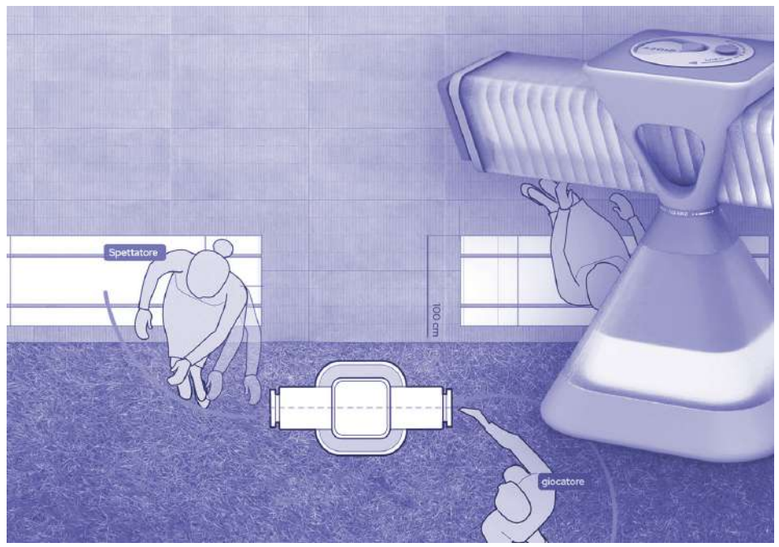

Fig.8 – Smatch project © R. Montemurro, D. Paccamonti, F. Piattellini, F. Scalise and F. Vespasiano.

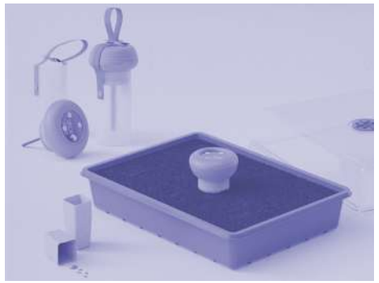

Fig.9 – Porcino project © C. Adinolfi, S. Bajramovic, M. Pilla and E. Zamagna.

In detail, it is a scoring device designed for multiple team games as football or basketball. Its primary function is therefore to indicate the score of the matches that take place in the adjacent areas of the Malvasia Quadrilatero. Points are scored through simple interaction and are visible from a distance thanks to luminous feedback. To encourage extra-generational relationships, the scorekeeper is placed near the benches oriented toward the playing field. While young players use the field for playful activities, older spectators can interact by scoring points in the game they are watching. This simple action is a trigger to activate a relationship between the two target groups who experience the space at the same times but do not share common activities.

RELATIONSHIP WITH URBAN FAUNA AND FLORA

Projects devoted to the relationship between people and other living species that inhabit the city belong to this thematic cluster. These species are often invisible and need design accents to be noticed. In addition, research has highlighted how design actions have the potential to educate citizens about the needs of other living beings.

One example is the Porcino project (Fig.9), by Carlo Adinolfi, Sonia Bajramovic, Martina Pilla, and Elia Zamagna. In this case, the designers developed an object that intervenes within the educational activities of the Barca neighbourhood elementary school. Porcino is a device that aims to introduce children to the care of the vegetable garden through monitoring and collecting data about the growing conditions of plants. The devices collect data from the soil that has previously been prepared by the students; the digital information is then annotated and observed over time and helps the teacher transmit knowledge about plant care.

The educational journey concludes with the transplanting of plants in the urban gardens within walking distance of the school. The Porcino device is a device capable of guiding both knowledge transmission activities and the relationship with plants in one's neighbourhood.

ACCESSIBILITY TO THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CITY

This cluster of projects aims to make the city's cultural offerings accessible to all its constituent communities. In contemporary cities, cultural experiences are not always supported by extensive communication between the various segments of the population. In addition, the city of Bologna offers several cultural routes through the Malvasia district. These paths are tours that connect several places in the city united by a common cultural topic. Within the district, however, these paths are not visible. To overcome these issues, designers Marco Binotto, Thomas Franzoni, Antonia Miraglia, Davide Nardi, and Lorenzo Pompeo designed an innovative type of digital Periscope

Fig.10 – Periscopio project © M. Binotto, T. Franzoni, A. Miraglia, D. Nardi and L. Pompeo.

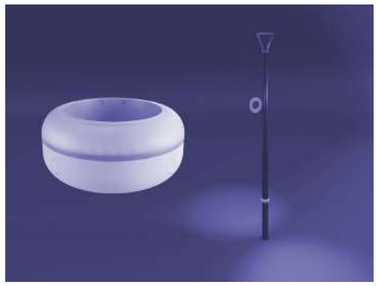

Fig.11 – AWAY Ring © L. Bettoni, M. Dall'Olio, C. Facondo, G. Iacovino and M. Salamina.

(Fig.10). The object is placed within the Malvasia Quadrilateral, tangent to the historic centre and node of multiple cultural routes. Its nine-meter height makes it stand out as a landmark (Lynch, 1960, 48) for people crossing space. Once the periscope is grasped by the side handles, it is possible to exert a rotational motion around the vertical axis of the object. Looking inside the periscope provides access to cultural information and real-time views of other points in the city connected by the cultural path.

SUPPORT FOR A DIMENSION OF INHABITED WELL-BEING

A central theme in contemporary cities is the dimension of well-being that citizens can experience through common spaces. The multiple air quality data collection stations in the city of Bologna show how outdoor activity is often characterized by the presence of natural and man-made dust. These dusts and particulate matter can preclude the use of space by individuals suffering from respiratory problems.

With these premises, AWAY Ring (Fig.11), the project of designers Luca Bettoni, Marco Dall'Olio, Christian Facondo, Giuseppe Iacovino and Mattia Salamina, was born. AWAY Ring is a wayfinding system that provides users with macro indications about the areas where pollen is found to which they are sensitive. The signage consists of hardware anchored to the existing network of street-lights and takes advantage of their electrical system. When users bring their phones close to the hardware, it will recognize the user's data and return directions to locations where there is a greater chance of breathing clean air. Based on the air quality, read in real time, the signs will attract citizens to parks within the Malvasia quadrangle or to neighbouring districts.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY

This last cluster of projects is dedicated to active community citizenship actions. Urban furniture devices can be active agents in supporting positive gestures by individual users; moreover, they can be vehicles for ecumenically representing the many distinct aspects of the community. Within this cluster, the Kindbox project was developed by designers Sara Battistini, Nicolò Castagnini, Giulia De Camillis, and Lavinia Marinelli (Fig.12). They propose a hub locker that allows the donation of multi-category objects to other residents of the Barca neighbourhood. The hub is located in a recess of a large apartment building which is little used despite being a possible junction point for local connections. The design of the hub includes a diffuse system of containers that make the area highly visible to the inhabitants. A play of warm lights and night lighting respond proportionally to the amount of kind donations that occur thanks to the service.

Fig.12 – Kindbox project © S. Battistini, N. Castagnini, G. De Camillis and L. Marinelli.

URBAN FURNITURE AS A THRESHOLD-BREAKING AGENT

The projects carried out during the two years of experimentation within the university laboratory showed how urban furniture, through the implementation of enabling technologies, can effectively act on the material and immaterial boundaries that the contemporary city often presents. In particular the scenarios explored by the designs revealed the ability to break three clusters of thresholds: that between relational boundaries, that between spatial boundaries, and that between informational boundaries.

From the relational perspective, the projects highlight some methodologies for connecting people who do not know each other, sometimes neighbours, with different ages or cultures. From the projects it emerges how the breaking of the relational threshold is often achieved through objects placed on blurred boundaries, spaces in which each person can pause and play different roles. The objects, implemented by the digital component, give the possibility of representing the other within a common space by giving them attention and dignity.

Projects also break the spatial threshold of a place, act in the shared spaces of the community and connect them with other places, proximal or distant, in time or space. The connections can be real, as with portals and walkways, or digital by crossing the connection of sounds and images in real time. The digital implementation of the proposed public space products gives perceptible features in the periphery of human attention in accordance with research on calm technologies (Case, 2016, 35) and 'ubiquitus computing'. These features allow people to be gently directed while leaving them autonomous in their movement in space. In these cases, objects are placed within specific perimeters and act to attract people to frequent the area.

Finally, many of the presented projects act on breaking the information threshold. These projects explore the ways through which to make some specific elements stand out over others in the spatial hierarchy of perception. Wayfinding and communicative tools capable of narrating the non-human forms of life present in space were investigated. Further projects have developed a narrative of data about distinct cultures of communities living in and traversing public space.

For multiple reasons many portions of the community are not visible in space and thus become difficult to recognize as part of the community. Some project actions were dedicated to communicating neighbourhood information in places outside the neighbourhood. Designers have designed objects that intercept people's curiosity along city paths.

Some projects aim to effectively communicate certain norms of behaviour. These norms are communicated across the multiple categories of users who experience the same space.

The alluvial diagram below (Fig.13) succinctly shows the plurality of designs that emerged from the experimentation. The intervention categories provided during the analysis phase as design channels were translated into a wide variability of urban furniture objects.

Through digital implementation, the three threshold clusters were explored with an equivalent number of projects. Each cluster corresponds to specific characteristics that define which threshold has been surpassed. From the graph it emerges how the lines of thought that guided the analysis phase have led to often different design paths.

Digital implementation has pushed the design to not necessarily follow a linear path and to propose objects that expand their responses beyond the traditional functionalities of urban furniture.

CONCLUSION

The results of the two-year experiment highlight how it is possible to imagine new scenarios from the redesign of classic street furniture through advanced digital implementation.

The presented projects demonstrate how this makes it possible to make traces of the actions, behaviours and dynamics that characterize the urban spaces visible.

The trace of digital data in the design product represents the object's rooting in the data-user-space relationship.

This enables new features to be added to objects that could be developed through a methodology focused on quantitative and qualitative reading of the pre-existing space. The scenarios that open from this design support the breaking of tangible and intangible boundaries inherent in the city.

The projects specifically address the need to act on relational, spatial and informational thresholds. Breaking thresholds through the placing of such urban furniture objects in empty urban spaces opens multiple research and design fronts for contemporary cities and the communities that inhabit them. Urban furniture for urban interactive spaces is thus a project area with broad prospects for growth.

However, there is a marked complexity in the design of these objects, in their maintenance over the long term, and in their financing.

The difficulties that follow from this complexity sometimes limit the design process; however, the design scenario phase that emerged through experimentation in the workshop shows clear fronts for innovation to support sociality, inclusion and participation in community life in community spaces.

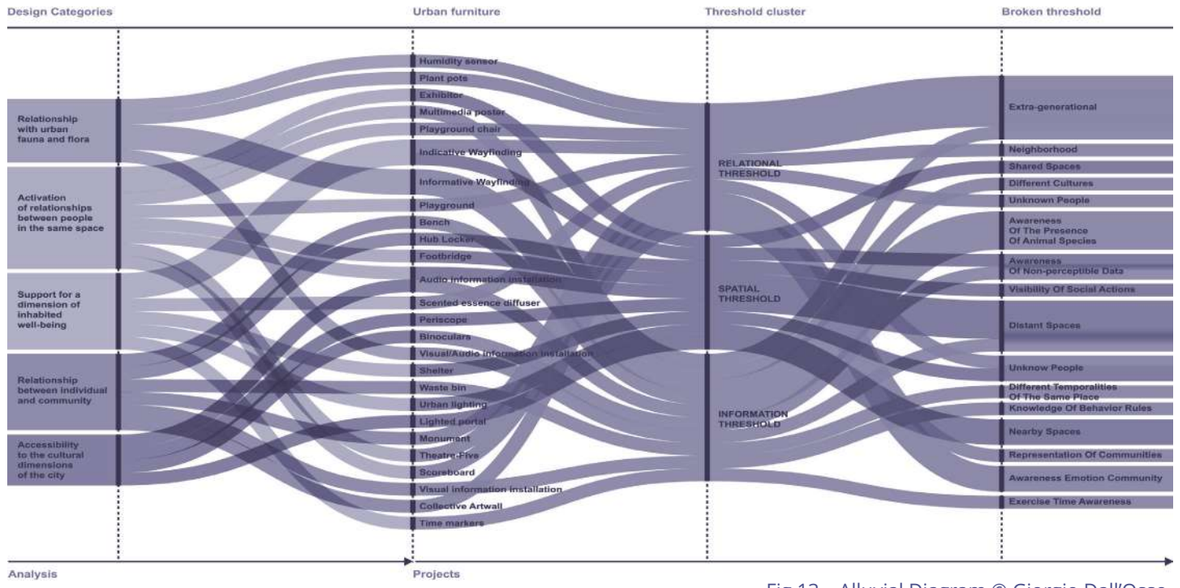

Fig.13 – Alluvial Diagram © Giorgio Dall'Osso.

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NOTES

1. The research, started in 2021, is dedicated to studying the urban phenomenon as a dynamic reality shaped by the mutual relationship and contamination between space, community, and digital data. The complexity of the subject has necessitated a transdisciplinary research structure, involving contributions from various design disciplines.

2. https://www.studioidae.com/en/projets/aero-seine-2/

3. https://invivia.com/work/designing-city-for-emotions

4. https://rootoftwo.com/project/whithervanes/

5. https://foxlin.com/portfolio_item/bubbles/

6. https://calvium.com/resources/digital-placemaking/

MEMORIES AND NARRATIVES

Phenomenological Narratives

Exploring Space and Identity in Fiction

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现象学
虚构叙事
身份
空间
phenomenology
fictional narratives
identity
space

虚构作品使我们能够表达与受限城市空间相遇时的纹理，捕捉这些遭遇激发的情感、记忆和感官印象的融合。它们提供了一种超越事实描述或客观分析的方式，来深刻表达我们与世界的互动。特别是城市小说，提供了一个独特的视角来考察思想与空间的相互作用。通过构建超出现实限制的世界，小说探索了那些通常无法接触的心灵和空间领域，探讨感知、身份和存在的边界。

解读城市空间涉及在有形与无形、客观观察与主观体验之间的互动。本研究采用跨学科方法，结合城市和文学分析，利用虚构叙事作为进入城市生活体验维度的窗口。研究假设通过探索城市小说中的角色和叙事，可以更深入地了解塑造人类心理和身份的城市空间的无形本质。在这种复杂的互动中，故事成为了捕捉和表达城市生活本质及其现象学深度的强大媒介——这是单靠观察方法无法完全捕捉到的情感景观。

本研究通过对埃德加·爱伦·坡的《人群中的人》和弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫的《街头漫游：伦敦冒险》及《达洛维夫人》的研究，考察了感知的前客观领域和身体互动。这些文本作为通往城市生活难以捉摸的维度的门户，揭示了城市环境如何影响身份形成和情感状态。通过整合像雅各布斯、怀特和林奇等城市理论家的见解，研究将直接观察与文学中发现的情感共鸣联系起来。它强调了个人叙事和情感联系在深化我们对城市空间理解中的作用，将它们从单纯的物理位置转化为复杂的生活体验。最终，研究通过现象学和文学叙事阐明了城市环境的丰富纹理和深度，强调了小说在丰富我们对城市作为一个动态且有意义的生活体验的看法中的变革力量。

Fiction articulates the texture of our encounters with urban spaces, capturing the amalgamation of emotions, memories, and sensory impressions these encounters evoke. Urban fiction, in particular, presents a unique lens for examining the interplay between thought and space, exploring realms of mind and space that surpass factual descriptions or objective analyses. By constructing worlds beyond reality, fiction probes the liminalities of perception, identity, and existence.

This study employs an interdisciplinary approach, blending urban and literary analysis to use fictional narratives as windows into the experiential dimensions of city living. It examines the hypothesis that exploring characters and narratives within urban fiction provides richer insights into the intangible essence of urban spaces that shape human psyches and identities. Through this complex interplay, stories emerge as a powerful medium for grasping the lived essence and phenomenological depths of the city.

Focusing on Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Man of the Crowd* and Virginia Woolf’s *Street Haunting: A London Adventure* and *Mrs Dalloway*, the research delves into how urban environments impact identity formation and emotional states. Integrating insights from urban theorists like Jane Jacobs, William H. Whyte, and Kevin Lynch, the study links direct observation with the emotional resonance found in literature. It highlights the role of personal narratives and emotional connections in deepening our understanding of urban spaces, transforming them from mere physical locations to complex lived experiences. Ultimately, the research underscores fiction’s transformative power in enriching our perception of the city as a dynamic and meaningful lived experience.

INTRODUCTION

Architecture and urban studies increasingly incorporate literary analysis to unravel the complex dynamics of architecture, human activity, and transient experiences within urban environments. While scholars such as Klaske Havik and Katherine Shonfield had begun exploring connections between phenomenological approaches, lived experiences, and literary narratives, this investigation brings a fresh lens by adopting an interdisciplinary approach that systematically analyses fictional narratives to access the experiential dimensions of urban spaces. While the aforementioned scholars' works have provided a wealth of insights into the interactions between architecture, the urban environment, and literature, this study places emphasis on the phenomenological aspects of urban life as portrayed in fictional narratives. This research aims to delve further into the personal and subjective experiences, exploring how characters perceive and emotionally navigate urban spaces within the context of literature. It aims to uncover new dimensions of urban dynamics inspired by Jacobs' vivid depictions of "street ballet" (Jacobs, 1962, 163), Whyte's meticulous use of photography and Lynch's focus on subjective experiences. This foundation facilitates exploration into the nuanced complexities of urban spaces.

This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that blends urban and literary analysis to investigate how urban environments and their inhabitants are perceived and experienced. It positions fictional narratives and characters as key tools for accessing and expressing the often-intangible aspects of urban life, such as sensory experiences and emotional landscapes. This approach aids in exploring the role of personal narratives and emotional connections in shaping urban experience, individual identities and mediating social interactions. It aims to offer insights into the dynamics and emotional landscapes of intricate interactions of individuals within the urban setting.

BRIDGING ARCHITECTURE, NARRATIVE, AND EXPERIENCE

Urban studies have traditionally emphasised the observable physical aspects of urban life. However, emerging conversations among scholars such as Kevin Lynch, Klaske Havik, Jane Jacobs, and William H. Whyte have also begun to highlight empirical and psychological dimensions to complement this perspective. Lynch's exploration of city imageability integrates perceptual and cognitive elements, portraying urban environments as landscapes rich with memory and imagination. Havik introduces narrative methods to architectural and urban analysis, suggesting that literary techniques can uncover nuanced experiences of city dwellers often overlooked by conventional methods. Jacobs advocates for an observant approach to urban planning that values everyday interactions and the vibrant street life that characterises urban spaces, while Whyte's innovative use of direct observation and film has detailed the dynamic interactions between people and their built environments.

In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1962), Jane Jacobs emphasised the need to "look closely... at the most common scenes and events" (Jacobs, 1962, 23) to understand the complexities of urban life and the behaviours of its people, suggesting that even the smallest details can reveal significant insights. She likened the movement and changes within city streets to an improvisational ballet, using vivid, "visual and anthropological" (Jacobs, 1962, 163) descriptions to depict how each community segment functions and interacts. She vividly illustrates an ordinary morning in her Hudson neighbourhood, described as "each day the scene of an intricate sidewalk ballet" (Jacobs, 1962, 61). The ballet begins just after 8 a.m.: Jacobs steps outside to collect the garbage as students head off to school. Nearby, the owners of the local hardware store and a barber open their stores, setting the stage for the day's activities. Commuters emerge from their apartments, quickly dispersing in various directions to catch buses and subways. As they leave, the morning sun casts long shadows that soon dissolve into daylight, continuing the rhythm of the neighbourhood ballet. Jacobs discussed the limitations of her perspective noting "The heart-of-the-day ballet I seldom see, because part of the nature of it is that working people who live there, like me, are most gone, filling the roles of strangers on other sidewalks" (Jacobs, 1962, 62).

William Whyte's book and documentary, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), observes in detail the use or abandonment of urban parks, squares and streets. In the film he used voice-over to explain what he was observing and speculated with imagination some possibilities beyond his sight. However, some behaviours were never decoded (Whyte, 1980, 22), underscoring the inherent complexity and depth of urban life that elude even the most observant lenses.

The methodologies of Jacobs and Whyte capture tangible fragments, and begin to highlight the importance of the area that was inaccessible to them, people's inner perceptions, experiences and emotion in terms of space-related interaction and perception.

The field of environmental perception began to take shape around 1960 (Lynch, 1995, 239), with Kevin Lynch integrating the subjective experience of the observer. His book *The Image of the City* (1960) not only considers the physical attributes of urban environments, but also emphasises the personal perceptions, experiences, and emotional connections that individuals have with these spaces. He positions the observer as central to the analysis of urban space, discussing the 'imageability' of a city (Lynch, 1960, 83-84). In particular, Lynch uses literary narratives to illustrate the profound impact of a city's physical form on the perceptions and emotional states of its inhabitants, emphasising that the understanding and experience of space are highly subjective and influenced by personal history and emotional state. For example, he utilizes Marcel Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann* (1913) to exemplify the connections individuals forge with their urban surroundings (Lynch, 1960, 128). Taking Proust's musings on the Combray church spire, Lynch explores how distinct urban characteristics become deeply ingrained in personal experiences and memories, thus becoming integral to the fabric of everyday life narratives.

Although Lynch's work is mainly focused on group images, his research findings on common perceptions and experiences are analysed and summarised by studying multiple individuals. Importantly, Lynch acknowledges the importance of emotional significance in urban perception (Lynch, 1960, 154). He notes that people's feelings and emotional experiences concerning these elements are crucial to understanding urban spaces. Familiarity with an element often suggests a memory or an emotional connection to the observer (Lynch, 1960, 125). Perception arises from the interplay between the observable world and the individual observer (Lynch, 1960, 128). This perceptual experience, whether singular or shared among many, manifests itself in the relationship between people and their spatial surroundings. Furthermore, the personal emotional bonds formed with the physical environment amplify the perception and experience of the urban landscape. This emotional connection also adds to the city's story, making it more vivid and meaningful.

Intriguingly, the observations, analyses, and descriptions of these urban scholars are, in a sense, related to urban stories. Jacobs uses the narrative skills of a novelist, tells the stories of "street ballet" (Goldbard, 2010, 57), and tries to get the whole scenario to unfold. Whyte uses the camera to precisely frame the dynamics and details of the city and seeks the context of the story, trying to decipher motivations for actions. Lynch posits and interprets the image of the city through the observations and experiences of trained observers and relates the emotions of individuals to the environment from the perspective of the observer's narrative. It begins to illustrate how interpreting urban spaces involves navigating the interplay between the tangible and the intangible, blending objective observations with subjective experiences. Bridges the divide between the objective and the subjective, the concrete and the ethereal, the known and the unknown. Within this complex interplay, stories emerge as a powerful medium for grasping and articulating the essence of the city.

Although direct observation provides valuable insights into the immediate states of observable relationships between individuals and urban environments, it often fails to capture the intricacy, complexity, and variety of possibilities of urban life. This is especially true for the intangible or less visible aspects, such as the subjective experience of space. Here, the phenomenological approach becomes indispensable, emphasising lived experiences and personal perceptions of space. This method extends our understanding of urban spaces beyond the physical and observable to include layers of experiences, feelings, and meanings that define urban existence. This work explores how literary works like Edgar Allen Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (1840) and Virginia Woolf's "Street Haunting: A London Adventure" (1927) and *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) depict characters navigating and perceiving urban spaces.

Sensory involvement plays a crucial role in how inhabitants understand and experience urban life, as "we build perception out of the perceived" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 27). Merleau-Ponty emphasises that perception is not simply a passive reception of external stimuli but an active, embodied contact with the world in which perception and the perceived world are intricately intertwined (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 33-34). His phenomenological approach delves into the subjective realms of perception, emotion, and thought that characterise our experience of urban spaces. Phenomenology emphasises exploring human experience to articulate the myriad possibilities inherent in these dimensions.

Merleau-Ponty's "pre-objective" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 12) refers to the field of experience that precedes the classification and analysis typical of objective scientific observations. At this level of experience, things are not yet separated into discrete, analysable objects, but are part of an interconnected, living world. This pre-objective experience is fraught with ambiguity and is influenced by the context and relationships within which perception occurs (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 11-12). He linked the concept to direct observation, arguing that direct observation, may fail to capture the full depth of our perceived experience because it tends to artificially separate and categorise phenomena that are inherently fluid and ambiguous. To truly understand perception and experience, one must delve into this pre-objective realm and acknowledge the role of ambiguity, context, and relational understanding (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 12).

The pre-objective perspective, while not a term commonly used in classical phenomenology, can be understood as an approach that seeks to bridge the gap between subjective experience and the objective world. It aims to acknowledge and incorporate the complexity and richness of direct lived experience into our understanding of objective reality. This view posits that our engagement with the world, including urban environments, is not merely passive or observational but deeply interactive, shaping the reality we experience.

According to Merleau-Ponty,

we encounter the world at the pre-objective level, which forms the fundamental layer of human perception and experience (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 251-252). This dense, rich layer, where corporeality, sociality, and the pre-existence of the world converge, provides the essential groundwork for understanding the complexities of our existence and perceptions. It offers a starting point for explanations and addresses the problems of transcendence — how we move beyond our immediate experiences to broader understandings (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 457). Therefore, this layer has both thickness and depth, underscoring its foundational nature.

Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier elaborate on Merleau-Ponty's concept, arguing that depth is not merely a third dimension, like height or width, but a fundamentally immersive experience that transcends ordinary spatial dimensions (Pérez-Gómez, Pelletier, 1997, 334-335). Challenging the traditional Cartesian concept of space as merely a measurable dimension, Merleau-Ponty presents depth as a multifaceted experiential phenomenon. He emphasises, "It's not just a matter of unmysterious spacing, as seen from an airplane, between these nearby trees and those that are farther away" (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, 274). Instead, depth involves intricate interrelations among objects, defining it not as a secondary attribute of space but as the fundamental dimension that underpins our perceptual understanding of reality (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, 275).

Merleau-Ponty argues that understanding urban life requires acknowledging the ambiguity and complexity inherent in the subjective realm of urban experiences. To enter "the thickness of the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 211) through the perception of experience is to explore the depth with an individual's living, emotional contact with the world.

METHOD

In contemporary urban studies, the integration of literary analysis with architecture and urbanism has significantly enriched our understanding of urban dynamics. Katherine Shonfield, Matthew Taunton, and Klaske Havik have explored the complex interactions between urban space, architecture, and literature from diverse perspectives. François Penz (2003) and Zhang Yingjin (1996) explored connections between literary representations and Lynch's theories of urban legibility and imageability, however their focus was not specifically on emotional narratives.

Katherine Shonfield's *Walls Have Feelings* (2000) delves into the interplay between architecture and fiction to unveil the socio-cultural dynamics shaping urban spaces. Her approach integrates elements of Marxism and cultural studies, using novels and films to analyse how urbanism and architecture can reflect and perpetuate socio-economic forces and cultural taboos. She highlights the concept of "pollution taboos" (Shonfield, 2000, 1130), which dictate urban space usage and often lead to marginalisation. By examining how cities are portrayed in literature and cinema, she shows how fiction challenges dominant narratives, offering alternative perspectives that critique conventional architectural practices. Her work emphasises the need to consider the psychological and emotional dimensions of spaces, advocating for a holistic view of architecture that incorporates the diverse narrative forms influencing urban life and planning.

Matthew Taunton's *Fictions of the City: Class, Culture and Mass Housing in London and Paris* (2009) employs a multidisciplinary approach blending cultural history with literary criticism to explore urban development, mass housing, and class dynamics in literature and film. His work focusses on London and Paris using their distinct urban narratives to analyse how historical and cultural contexts shape representations of class and residential life. By juxtaposing fictional depictions with urbanism and housing policy developments, Taunton reveals the critical role of narrative in highlighting social inequalities and the complex realities of urban life.

In her book *Urban literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (2014), Klaske Havik employs a phenomenological approach that integrates architectural insights with literary narratives. Havik's work looks at how literature can offer profound insights into the ways people experience, utilise, and conceive spaces. She combines literary analysis with architectural inquiry, to focus on how spaces are depicted in fiction and poetry to expose their rich sensory, social, and imaginative dimensions. By exploring the interactions between characters, readers, and spatial settings, Havik provides multifaceted insights into the architectural experience. From her perspective literature not only enriches our understanding of architecture but also illuminates its social aspects and the evolving uses of the built environment.

These theorists work provides distinct lenses through which the relationship between architecture, literature, and urban life can be examined. Their approaches encompass socio-cultural dimensions, historical contexts, phenomenological experiences, and analyses of how literary works, films, architectural spaces, building constructions, and class dynamics within housing are depicted.

My work aims to build on these foundations to delve into the sensory and emotional experiences within urban space. It seeks to uncover the nuanced dynamics and subjective realities that shape urban identity and spatial experiences. By taking a phenomenological approach, influenced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, it aims to uncover insights into the pre-objective experience of space. It employs an interdisciplinary approach that systematically analyses fictional narratives as windows into the experiential, liminal dimensions of city living. By examining how literature depicts the ways

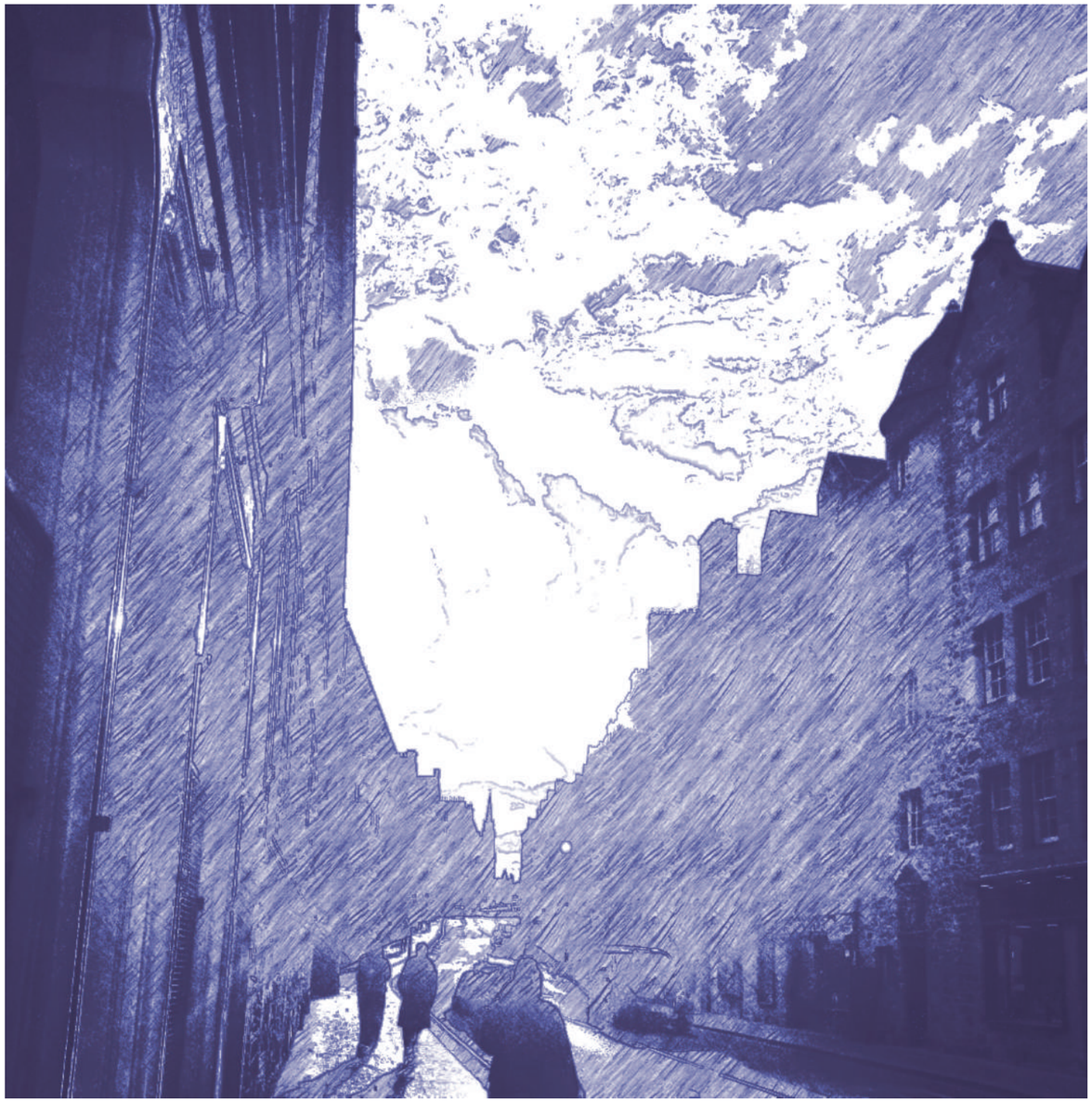

Fig.1 - Author: Yue Xin.

characters emotionally perceive and traverse boundaries between diverse urban environments, it hypothesises that richer insights can be gleaned into the intangible essence of urban spaces that shape human psyches and identities. Interpreting urban spaces involves navigating the interplay between the tangible and the intangible, objective observations and subjective experiences. Within this complex interplay, stories emerge as a powerful medium for grasping and articulating the lived essence and phenomenological depths of the city; the emotive landscapes that observational methods alone cannot fully capture. Amin and Thrift suggest that "each urban moment can spark performative improvisations that are unforeseen and unforeseeable" (Amin and Thrift, 2002, 4), This exploration involves blending material structures with lived experiences and intertwining daily activities with emotions, providing a deeper interpretation of urban life.

The work emphasis narrative and plot as focus for analysis. Jason Finch discusses how "literary plots are often structured around notions of what might be or could have been" (Finch, 2021, 8), allowing fictional narratives about urban life to venture beyond the confines of physical or tangible realities. They tap into the intangible interplay between mind and space, revealing how characters forge physical and mental connections to space. Fictional narratives thus serve as a gateway to realms that extend beyond the boundaries of physical

space, illuminating the complex communication and interaction between mind and space. These narratives demonstrate how fictional characters establish meaningful connections to these transitional spaces, offering profound insights into the fluidity and unpredictability of daily urban life.

According to Paul Ricoeur, narratives transform intricate stories into meaningful, known ones that contribute to personal identity formation, thereby becoming a means of understanding human life—an intrinsic aspect of our nature (Ricoeur, 1984, 74-75). Engaging with a narrative, as Ricoeur states, is an active process where "following a story is to actualize it by reading it" (Ricoeur, 1984, 76), emphasising the "followability" (Ricoeur, 1984, 67) of stories that progress through events and twists to meet expectations at the narrative's end.

Narratives are not merely accounts of experiences; they weave together individual perceptions, events, and encounters into a coherent whole, bridging the gaps left by direct observation, which often isolates phenomena from their lived contexts. This integration provides a continuous and integrated understanding of urban existence. Characters within these narratives often embody the intricate identities and experiences that define urban life, offering crucial insights into its personal dimensions. They serve multiple roles within the city: as witnesses to urban events, intermediaries navigating different urban elements, and observers reflecting on the nuances of urban life.

The movement of characters in fiction often symbolises their inner conflicts, desires, and evolving identities, illuminating the complex interplay between individuals and the broader urban context. These narratives enrich our understanding of the city, transforming it from a mere physical space to a lived experience where personal narratives and emotional connections profoundly shape our understanding of the urban landscape. Narrative and character development across the length the work of fiction is therefore an important aspect of the analytic approach.

ANALYSIS

Literary works offer a distinctive perspective to explore the intricacies of urban spaces. The work of fiction selected for this research were chosen for their vivid depictions of urban life across different cultures and eras, to provide a rich tapestry of experiences. The work will begin with an overview touching on the writing of Dickens, Conrad, and then focus in more detail on Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* and Woolf's "Street Haunting", then contrasting these shorter works of fiction with an exploration of Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*.

Literary critic and historian Ian Watt states that "the novel is surely distinguished from other genres and previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it habitually accords to the individualisation of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment" (Watt, 1957, 18). Thus, in the novel, the characters become a vessel for human experience, with their etched traits and urban space journeys offering a window into the diverse spectrum of the human condition. The novel has maintained a unique connection with urban life since the early 18th century (Hawthorn, 2005, 28-29). The urban landscape and the structure of the novel share significant similarities. Both encompass a diverse array of characters and city dwellers, each interwoven into a network of mutual influence and dependence. Despite this interconnectedness, every individual, much like each character in a novel, harbours a unique set of personal ambitions and private reflections, highlighting the intricate balance between collective existence and individual identity both in the city and in narrative form (Baumgarten, 1999, 95-96). Such parallels between novels and urban life underscore the varied nature of urban experiences; just as every character in a novel has a different story, the interaction of every person with the city is unique, shaped by their personal history, aspirations, and the complex web of relationships that define urban living.

The narrative structure of novels enables a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of urban life, capturing both its grandiose aspirations and grim realities. This capability stems from the inherent flexibility and depth of the novel form, which allows for a nuanced portrayal of the complexities faced by city dwellers. The Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad described London in "Authors' Notes" in his novel *The Secret Agent* (1920): "There was room enough to place any story, depth enough for any passions, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of lives" (Conrad, 2012, 275). This can also be adapted to describe the inclusion and tension of the novel narrative. In this way, the city becomes a canvas for countless narratives, each revealing different aspects of urban life. If the city is as a container loaded with countless novels, then it will present thousands of faces of the city, gathered into innumerable fictional stories, embedded in the nooks and crannies of the city.

This multifaceted nature of urban narrative, in which stories unfold in layers and dimensions, echoes the literary craftsmanship of Charles Dickens, as Raymond Williams pointed out. Dickens' originality, in Williams' view, lies in his ability to dramatise social systems and consequences that are not readily visible, bringing them to life with the vividness of real entities (Raymond, 1975, 156). "He takes them and presents them as if they were people or natural phenomena, sometimes as a black cloud or as the fog through which people are groping and looking for each other" (Raymond, 1975, 156). In this metaphorical black cloud and fog, the characters navigate the city, encountering myriad connections and layers, a metaphor for the complex web of character relationships and events that novels bring to life, effectively mirroring the depth and complexity of urban life. This vivid portrayal in novels underscores their unique ability to capture the pulsating heart of the city, offering readers not just stories but lived experiences that reflect the everchanging tapestry of urban life. It also demonstrates how the dilemma, contradictory situation, and unknown state of the city are compellingly presented in the novel.

The central character conflict in these narratives is the conflict between the characters and the external world, which constitutes the essence of the story of the novel (Lukács György, 1971, 112). This conflict often manifests itself as a struggle between individual characters and the urban environment, underscoring the challenges, adaptations, and transformations they undergo. The urban setting thus becomes a crucible for character development, a place where personal aspirations, social pressures, and the raw energies of urban life intersect and collide.

Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* narrative probes the psychological impacts of the urban crowd on individual identity. It masterfully captures the essence of the urban landscape as a backdrop for exploring themes of anonymity, isolation, and identity formation. It captures the fluid dynamics of the urban landscape through the interactions between an unnamed narrator and an enigmatic elderly man. The narrative commences with the narrator observing the diverse crowd from the detached confines of a London coffee shop. The narrator's role transitions from passive spectator to active participant as he becomes intrigued by the old man's mysterious demeanour, prompting him to leave his observational post and follow the figure through the bustling streets.

The relationship between characters and urban spaces is articulated through their movements across various city locales, mirroring the shifting dynamics of their engagement with the urban fabric. The old man, as both a figure in motion and an object of observation, becomes intertwined with specific urban sites, embodying the transient essence of these places across different times and scenarios. Their journey, spanning bustling downtown cafes, secluded alleys, and desolate backstreets, culminates in a return to the vibrant downtown, symbolising not only the city's diurnal rhythm but also its perpetual flow of urban life (Parsons, 2000, 223).

The incessant pursuit of the old man in Poe's narrative, set against the backdrop ranging from bustling crowds to grimy, desolate outskirts, symbolises an unattainable quest for understanding the city's elusive dynamism. His movements trace a narrative of vibrancy and desolation, fog and rain, revealing not just the physicality of London but also the solitude, mystery, and internal turmoil inherent in urban existence. This exploration of character and space, where the physical journey through the city parallels the inner development of the characters, offers a dynamic perspective on the interplay between individuals and the urban environment, shaped by the passage of time and their evolving interactions with the city. This incessant pursuit, set against a backdrop ranging from crowded centres to grimy outskirts, fog and rain, symbolises an unattainable quest for understanding the city's elusive dynamism. The old man's movements, through vibrancy and desolation, reveal not just the physicality of London but also the inherent solitude, mystery, and internal turmoil of urban existence.

Characters in the novel act as conduits between the objective, physical reality of the city and its subjective, experiential dimensions. They link the tangible aspects of urban landscapes, buildings, streets, bridges, with the intangible emotions, memories, and social constructs that define identity and alienation. Through their experiences, characters illuminate not only the emotional and psychological impacts of urban life but also uncover the formation and articulation of personal connections to urban spaces. Their journeys embody the tension and potential inherent in myriad urban experiences, highlighting the importance of personal narratives in enriching our understanding of the urban landscape.

Woolf's "Street Haunting" offers a meditative reflection on the sensory and emotional experiences encountered in the cityscape. It is a seminal narrative chosen for its distinct approach to urban exploration. The novel offers a compelling examination of urban spatial experience cleverly initiated by the simple act of purchasing a pencil. This seemingly trivial pursuit sets the stage for a profound exploration, as Woolf transitions fluidly between her private self and the public persona she assumes in the urban landscape. She begins her exploration with a sense of detachment, stepping out into the vast, anonymous crowd of the city, noting, "As we step out of the house on a fine evening between four and six, we shed the self our friends know us by and become part of that vast republican army of anonymous trampers" (Woolf, 2017, 7). This observation underscores the transformation that occurs when one enters the city streets. By shedding her private identity, Woolf engages with the city not as an individual, but as part of a larger, indistinct mass. This shift highlights the dual nature of urban environments, where personal identities are both obscured and recreated through interactions within public spaces. Woolf's narrative thus uses the act of walking through the city to explore how urban spaces serve as both arenas of anonymity and sites of profound personal transformation.

As Woolf navigates the streets of London, her narrative captures the rhythm of urban life through detailed sensory descriptions. She observes, "How beautiful a street is in winter! It is at once revealed and obscured" (Woolf, 2017, 8). This comment reflects the dual nature of urban spaces, both transparent and mysterious, offering a

simultaneous sense of revelation and concealment. Woolf traverses narratives of the various faces encountered in shops, theatres, and street corners, moving through spaces saturated with commerce and entertainment. She contrasts these vibrant scenes with the stark poverty just outside these venues, noting, “Not a stone's throw from the theatre” (Woolf, 2017, 12), where prosperity meets hunger and cold around the corner, the sound of a busker's organ faintly touches the “sequined cloaks and bright legs of diners and dancers” (Woolf, 2017, 12). Outside the glowing store windows, elderly and disabled people gaze upon luxurious sofas, abundant fruit, and fine cutlery. These less fortunate souls reside in “the top rooms of narrow old houses between Holborn and Soho” (Woolf, 2017, 11), lodged within the “crevices and crannies” of the city. Laura Marcus highlights that Woolf's portrayal effectively illustrates the coexistence of contrasting elements within the urban landscape, where extreme wealth a dire poverty, beauty and decay are positioned side by side (Marcus, 2004, 65). These contrasts reveal the complex identity of the city, highlighting imbalances and deficiencies seen and unseen.

Merleau-Ponty’s conceptualization of perception emphasises it as an embodied engagement with the world, where the body plays a central role in experiencing and constituting reality (Muldoon, 2006, 119-120). This perception is related to the interactive processes through which people sense and interpret their surroundings. Merleau-Ponty posits that “the subject of sensation is a power that is born together with a certain existential milieu or that is synchronized with it” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 219), suggesting the central role of the body in shaping our perception. This view indicates that the body is not an object in the world, but a fundamental part of perceiving reality, thus becoming the subject of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 212). Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty asserts that “How the body inhabits space (and time, for that matter) can be seen more clearly by considering the body in motion” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 133). This assertion invites a deeper exploration of the interaction with its surroundings, highlighting movement as a fundamental aspect of experiencing reality. The way in which we occupy and experience space (and time) becomes more apparent when we consider movement, revealing the dynamic interplay between the body, its surroundings, and temporal flow. In exploring the nature of perception and the inherent limitations of human understanding when interacting with objects, Ponty uses a metaphorical house to illustrate the complex levels of perceptual experience. He states, “The house has its water pipes, its foundation, and perhaps its cracks growing secretly in the thickness of the ceilings. We never see them, but it has them, together with its windows or chimneys that are visible for us” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 211). This example underscores his broader philosophical point that our perceptions are always incomplete. We can never grasp the full reality of an object because our views are limited to certain perspectives. People need to have an infinite number of perspectives at once, akin to looking at an object through a thousand stares at once. Narrative is employed by both Poe and Woolf to express the observation and gaze of the city, the visible and invisible dynamics hidden from sight. Within Poe’s novel different perspectives brought by tracking the old man enable him to experience countless complex spaces in London, the contrast between the city centre and the edge, the different atmospheres between spaces, and the faces he has never seen before. Woolf, as she wanders, compiles stories of what the eye sees and does not see, stories that are

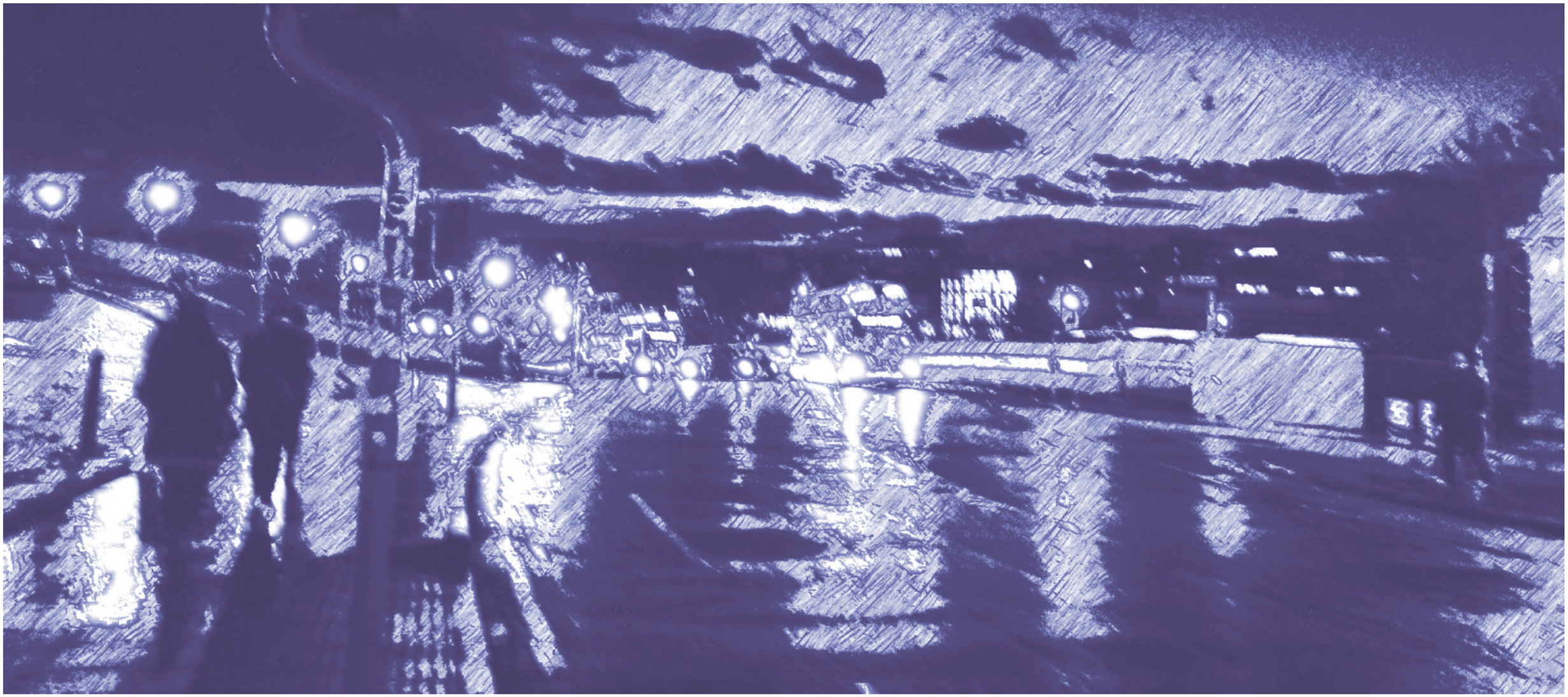

Fig.2 -Author: Yue Xin.

parallel, that echo, that converge, that diverge, like the streets of a city that separate and meet. She needs to walk in the streets of London, she needs to write stories for various strange faces and different lives on the streets in the crowd, and connect the gaps between space and space with her gaze, exploring the details of the junction between brilliance and darkness. Because there are stripes between them, there are variegations (Marcus, 2004, 65), a spectrum of contrasts and nuances that form the intricate, ever-changing landscape of urban life. This dynamic interplay of light and shadow, wealth and poverty, beauty and decay can only be fully understood through the multifaceted lens of personal experience and narrative exploration. The narratives of the novels reveal the profound depths, textures, and complexities that shape the urban environment and the lives of those who inhabit it.

Virginia Woolf's fourth novel *Mrs Dalloway* is set in 1923 amidst a period of significant cultural and political shifts. It foregrounds themes of identity, memory, and the passage of time. Woolf intertwines the lives and activities of her characters over a single day in post-World War I London, offering a detailed snapshot of city life and the diverse experiences of its inhabitants. Through the length of the novel Woolf delves into the intricacies of identity, and societal complexities through documenting a day in a life of a woman of high society, Clarissa Dalloway, and the preparations for her evening party. The work rotates around her reflections on the past and present within the urban setting. Concurrently, the narrative portrays Septimus Warren Smith, a former soldier grappling with psychological scars of war. Set against the city's bustling and lively backdrop, this highlights his profound sense of isolation amidst urban connectivity. The inner lives of other significant characters are played out within the city fabric. The text joins Peter Walsh, Clarissa's former lover, upon his recent return to London and his nostalgic and introspective journey through the city streets, as he wrestles unresolved feelings and what-ifs. Clarissa's husband, Richard Dalloway, engagement with the city in contrast underscores his adherence to social roles and the emotional restraints they entail. Meanwhile, her daughter Elizabeth's exploratory venture into the city reveals her uncertainty.

Woolf captures the city's varied landscapes through the experiences of these characters perceived through their individual inner lives from intimate living rooms to wide streets, from private spaces to public spaces. The text showcases the characters' urban experiences as seen through their inner lives.

Through embodying the distinct experiences and emotional journeys of its populace the novel reflects broader societal shifts of the era. Woolf's narrative intertwines characters with their environments, revealing deep insights into their experiences, emotions, and identities through their interactions with specific locales. Clarissa's reflections, interwoven with her movements through the city, offer a rich exploration of her inner world and her interactions with the urban landscape. This narrative allows Woolf to delve into the themes of survival, memory, and the search for meaning in the everyday, set against the backdrop of a city that is both familiar and constantly changing.

The unique expansion of the character development of the novel, interwoven with a complex plot, distinguishes it from other genres and emphasises its genre's ability to explore subtle aspects of the human experience as discussed by Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1990, 8-9). This distinct aspect of the novel facilitates an in-depth examination of the fluid relationship between characters and their surroundings. Character movement through space often mirrors the evolving dynamics of their engagement with the urban environment. When engaging with diverse urban spaces, the essence lies in movement, offering a perspective that merges with shifting landscapes and unfolding events.

CONCLUSION

Physical experience in urban environments significantly shapes spatial narratives, illustrating how interactions with the city contribute to personal and collective stories. Merleau-Ponty's insights into embodied perception suggest that navigating urban spaces is a deeply personal and active experience. This engagement allows for a unique interpretation and experience of urban spaces, where streets, buildings, and public squares become part of a larger narrative of life.

These works of fiction illuminate the dynamic interplay between characters and their urban environments through diverse narrative techniques and representations. The movement of characters through space not only reflects the changing dynamics of their relationships with the urban fabric but also highlights the importance of sensory engagement and embodied experiences in shaping our understanding of urban life. Within these narratives characters act as conduits between the objective, physical reality of the city and its subjective, experiential dimensions. They weave together the tangible aspects of urban landscapes, building, street, bridge, spatial features, with the intangible, emotions, memories, and social constructs defining identity and alienation. Through their experiences, characters not only illuminate the emotional and psychological impacts of urban life, but also uncover the formation and articulation of personal connections to urban spaces. Their journeys underscore the importance of personal narratives and emotional bonds in enriching our understanding of the urban landscape.

This exploration through literary narratives points to the profound capacity to uncover the complexities of urban existence through an interdisciplinary approach looking to literary analysis. It offers a deeper appreciation of the role of movement, perception, and sensory engagement in defining urban experiences. These narratives enrich our comprehension of the city, transforming it from a mere physical space to a lived experience where personal narratives and emotional connections profoundly enhance our understanding of the urban landscape. This methodological to urban analysis appears to hold the potential to open other realms of understanding. Framed by the confluence of direct observation, phenomenological insight, and narrative depth, it seems to offer the potential to transcend traditional urban analysis by offering a richly textured understanding that bridges the tangible and the intangible. This article emphasis the crucial role of narrative and character within this approach. Fictional narratives provide a unique perspective on the complexities of urban life, illuminating their dynamic nature.

This exploration highlights the depth and thickness of urban space, which is rich with complexity and layered with meaning. These spaces, explored and interpreted through fictional narration, allow us to delve into their dense, layered essence, enhancing our understanding of the city as a lived experience. By merging phenomenological perspectives with empirical observation and literary analysis, we advocate a deeper engagement with the subjective dimensions of urban life. The narratives we weave about cities, embodied most expressively within novels, play a crucial role in shaping our collective and individual perceptions of urban environments. This nuanced approach not only broadens the academic discourse on urban environments but also enhances our appreciation for the complex layers of meaning that define our cities and our place within them.

The paper calls for ongoing exploration into how urban spaces are perceived, experienced, and represented, fostering a dialogue between urban studies, phenomenology, and literary criticism, and contributing to a nuanced and empathetic understanding of urban life.

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Relocating Subjectivities

An Inquiry into the Filmic Space of *Moving On* (2019)

film mekanı
bedenli öznellik
göçebe öznellik
sanal mekan
filmic space
embodied subjectivity
nomadic subjectivity
virtual space

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Bu makale, 2019 yapımı Güney Kore filmi *Moving On* ile film mekanı, bedensel öznelikler ve taşınma kavramlarının kesişimini keşfeder. Kavramsal çizimler ve post-yapısalcı feminist bakış açısıyla incelenerek karakterlerin, yönetmenin ve seyircinin zihinsel ve fiziksel mekanlarıyla nasıl iç içe geçtiğini inceler. Yaratıcı analiz, hem seyirci hem de araştırmacı bakış açısını benimseyerek mekansal özneliklerin karmaşıklıklarını açığa çıkarmayı amaçlar. Elizabeth Grosz ve Rosi Braidotti gibi feminist düşünürlerden öğrenerek, araştırma sanallık kavramını teknolojiden bağımsız, hayal gücü ve yaratıcı faaliyetlerin bir özelliği olarak ele alır. Braidotti'nin göçebe öznelik kavramı, akışkanlık, yaratıcılık ve sabitleşmeye karşı dirençle karakterize edilen dinamik mekansal deneyimleri anlamak ve yeniden üretmek için bir kavramsal çerçeve olarak önerilir. Çalışma, öznelliklerin ürettiği sanal bir yapı olarak film mekanını ele alarak, mekansal deneyimin doğası ve kimlik ile algı arasındaki ilişkiye dair yeni sorular ortaya koyar. Feminist film kuramı ve mimari araştırmadan beslenen disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşımla, bu makale, yer değiştirme bağlamında fiziksel ve zihinsel mekanlar arasındaki etkileşimin bir keşfini sunar. *Moving On* den seçilmiş sahnelerin mekansal yeniden üretimiyle sonuçlanarak, film anlatılarına içkin olan öznel mekansal kurguları açığa çıkarır.

This article explores intersection of filmic space, embodied subjectivities, and relocation within the context of the 2019 South Korean film *Moving On*. Through conceptual drawings and a post-structuralist feminist lens, the study examines how the cinematic experience intertwines with the mental and physical spaces of its characters, director, and audience. Drawing and writing processes seek to unravel the complexities of spatial subjectivities by embracing both the viewpoint of the observer and that of the researcher.

Learning from feminist thinkers like Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti, the research explores virtuality not solely as a technological concept but as a realm of imaginative and creative activity. Braidotti's notion of nomadic subjectivity, characterized by fluidity, creativity, and resistance to fixation, serves as a guiding framework for understanding the dynamic spatial experiences perceived through the film. The article suggests a reframing to some architectural norms through the lens of nomadic subjectivity. By considering filmic space as a virtual construct influenced by the subjective perceptions of individuals, the study aims to provoke new questions about the nature of spatial experience and its relationship to identity and perception. Through an interdisciplinary approach that draws on feminist film theory and architectural research, this article offers a nuanced exploration of the interplay between physical and mental spaces within the context of relocation. It concludes with a spatial reconstruction of selected sequences from *Moving On*, illuminating the peculiar ways in which filmic narratives shape and reflect subjective understandings of space.

QUESTION AND SCOPE OF EXPLORATION

This article is part of a larger research project focused on relocations and spatial subjectivities, and is an attempt to explore the embodied subjectivities in filmic space. The 2019 South Korean independent film *Moving On* directed by the young filmmaker Yoon Dan-bi, presents a rich opportunity to examine how members of a family navigate their relationships with space, and their bodies across different stages of mobility in their lives. Examining both its cinematic technique and thematic content, the film is studied as a locus that intertwines the mental and physical spaces of its characters, director, and spectators.

To explore camera angles, frames, and bodies' movements within the frame of selected sequences, we make use of freehand sketches together with free text and diagrams. Doing so, the audience subject correlates with their senses, sensations and thoughts and their own experience of watching the sequence. Together with the text, which is more about her past experiences and connotations, the specific sequence carries its situated meaning connected to interrelated subjective space-body constructions within the movie. Later, the diagrams transport all the present layers of subjectivity back together to the architectural space of representation. The ambition behind the creative process of analysis is to unfold embodied spatial subjectivities through drawing and writing practices via the subjectivities of spectator and architectural researcher.

Within the framework of this research, the spatial complexity of filmic space is understood as an entity of mental and physical spaces. Film, being a virtual medium of space making, is produced, and perceived in physical spaces. We will propose to consider virtuality as a significant quality which might generate creative, critical, and subjective space making. For instance, philosopher Elizabeth Grosz defines virtuality as a production of mental activities before its digital connotations. Therefore, she argues that reading, writing, imagining, and remembering are all actions which produce a kind of virtuality (Grosz, 2001, 77). In parallel to her approach, feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti also writes on virtuality as creative modes of remembrance; the activization of the frozen possibilities of imagination and therefore "virtual possibilities" (Braidotti, 2014, 173). She has had her own continuous practice of writing a diary since she was a child, and describes it as a virtual reality production into more than 150 booklets. For her, those virtual spaces are "spaces of movement and of deterritorialization", because in her conceptualization virtual spaces are generated when the fixated norms are being moved in a creative-critical way. She discusses this process of remembering as "a remembering in a nomadic mode" (Braidotti, 2014, 173). When in a nomadic mode, remembering gets liberated from the linear flow of time and fixated subjectivities (Braidotti, 2014, 173). Perhaps, this is where remembering explicitly starts to overlap with imagining.

Braidotti's proposal of nomadic subjectivity weaves the pathway between nomadism/motion/movement to imagination/creative criticism/virtual space. Braidotti is not the only feminist post-structuralist philosopher with a focused enquiry on the liberation of female and feminine subjectivity, yet her thinking is very much spatial and has a potential to inform architectural theory. Her project *nomadic subjects* is a challenge to normative assumptions which are thought to be the fundamentals of western architectural theory, starting with the very idea of dwelling. She proposes "to position ourselves as feminist intellectuals -as travelers through hostile landscapes, armed with maps of our own making, following paths that are often evident only to our own eyes, but which we can narrate, account for and exchange" (Braidotti, 1994, 171). Of course, nomadic behavior is determined by its approach to possession: "The nomad has a sharpened sense of territory but no possessiveness about it." (Braidotti, 1994, 36). Drawing inspiration from Braidotti, we suggest that architecture, and its correlation to dwelling can be critically reframed through the nomadic subjectivity project. As well as architecture, the virtuality within filmic space is reconsidered through nomadic subjectivities. Here, the present subjectivities of director, character, spectator, and researcher will be intervening, manipulating, and reconfiguring the filmic space. The issue of virtuality is inherent to the study, as the focus is a movie where the physical spaces are only perceived through screens. All subjective, and therefore intangible, past, future, emotional, mental constructions are engaged, to raise new questions on virtuality of spatial experience as nomadic subjects.

The following section is dedicated to our reading of relocation as a creative spatial construction, and of nomadism as a critical subjective construction. This paper then continues with a reading of feminist film theory on embodied cinema, an extension of subjectivity theories in architectural research together with a brief introduction on *Moving On* (2019), and then concludes with a detailed spatial reconstruction of a selection of sequences.

FEMINIST FILMIC SPACE IN RELATION TO SUBJECTIVITY

Exploring a movie from the point of view of spatial subjectivity requires reading from various disciplines, especially from film and architecture. As subjectivity and situated identities are ongoing discussions in feminist theory in general, reflections can be found in both disciplines. Yet, various theoreticians from film studies have offered more conceptualizations than found in architectural theory. Corporeal cinema, cinema of senses, intercultural cinema, haptic visuality, topoanalysis, voyageuse, emotional geography and resisting spectatorship are some of the subjectivity-oriented terminologies of cinema. All of them imply an inquiry on multiplicity of subjectivities, directors', characters' and spectators' virtual and/or embodied relation to filmic spaces.

Studying this specific movie *Moving On* within the framework of feminist theory, doesn't assume the director's own statement. We are situating ourselves in a place from which it is possible to produce feminist knowledge. We rely on Mulvey and Beugnet's discussion on the topic. Recognized film theorist Laura Mulvey discusses the question of corporeality in cinema with Martine Beugnet, another critical figure in film theory, within an interview in her book *Feminisms*. Mulvey states that most of the referred women directors wouldn't necessarily have any explicit emphasis on gender or feminism. So even though critics may find common approaches and conceptualizations to study their works, it should be highlighted that some of them wouldn't categorise themselves as feminists, or wouldn't frame the problematic of their works from a gender perspective. After that, Mulvey asks Beugnet if she can provide examples of "the states of confusion between the body and its limits" in filmic space (Beugnet, Mulvey, 2015, 189). Beugnet starts responding by mentioning the avant-garde filmmakers Stan Brakhage and Bruce Elder who explored cinema's potential to merge interior and exterior worlds, while also disturbing some emotions in the audience. Later she discusses the qualities of "cinema of transgression / a corporeal cinema / cinema of the senses" and writes that they mostly adopt alienization techniques as "playing on duration, de-framing and de-centering shots with the frontality and hapticity of close-up and extreme close-up shots" (Beugnet, Mulvey, 2015, 191). Reading their discussion, we think that female directors' subjectivities are more transparently included in the processes of filmmaking, which allows the activation of the ones of critic or of spectators.

Following Mulvey's note, even though there is no record of director Dan-bi mentioning any feminist theorist nor positioning herself as a feminist, we find it revealing to read her work through a feminist perspective. Her first feature movie intensely transmits issues of corporeality and cinema of senses in both the layers of content and context, in other words, both story and technicality. The director's subjectivity is the first one to consider within the framework of this research on subjectivities in filmic space. As a product of an early stage of Dan-bi's career, we believe this movie makes a good example of nomadic subjectivity where her movie making practice is not yet fixated nor settled. Not only the director but also the protagonist is a young woman, and we will superimpose our audience and early-stage-researcher subjectivities on theirs.

Drawing on Deleuze, Laura Marks, has introduced the term intercultural cinema along with the haptic visuality in her book *The Skin of the Film*. She explained that she had been considering using terms such as third world, marginal, antiracist, hybrid, and imperfect cinema. Yet according to her, this specific term of intercultural indicates a context that cannot be confined to a single culture. It also suggests movement between one culture and another, thus implying diachrony and the possibility of transformation. Intercultural means that a work is not the property of any single culture but mediates in at least two directions." (Marks, 2000, 6). Therefore, she studies feminine cinema as a site of interchange, transformation, and movement, which happens between at least two cultures/disciplines/territories. Exploring the question of how cinema can transfer the 'negative space' of cinematic senses that is not audiovisual, she coins the term interconnectedness of senses. From there she develops the idea of an embodied spectatorship with reference to Vivian Sobchack. Remembering Jacques Lacan's mirror theory, where one confronts the idea of being seen, she defines the viewer as an "embodied self-in-becoming" and the cinema as "its embodied intercessor". She further explains: "The theory of haptic visuality I advance should allow us to reconsider how the relationship between self and other may be yielding-knowing, more than (but as well as) shattering." (Marks, 2000, 151). Her approach is showing the importance of the diffusion of senses through cinema, and an awareness of the embodied action of watching/seeing that translate into a constructive relationship between all present subjectivities. As our concern is with the question of interconnectedness, we study *Moving On* with a focus on particularly relatable sequences where subjectivities are put in touch mentally, such as characters, audience, actresses, directors. Dan-bi's movie is about the reunion of a family and how their relationships evolve over the course of a summer at their old family house. Despite *Moving On*'s emotionally heavy content, its cinematography, including color, dialogues and filmic narration offer a generous sense of positivism and comfort. Dan-bi admits that she has been mainly inspired by the well-known Japanese director Ozu's cinema.[1] The movie received a large amount of interest at festivals in Europe, Latin America as well as South-East Asia. It won awards in some including Festival de San Sebastian, Rotterdam Film Festival and Busan Festival.[2] After having won the Bright Future Competition in 2020 at International Film Festival of Rotterdam, Dan-bi explained how she had approached creating her first movie (following some shorts) from her autobiographic stories.[3] She highlights that although she didn't exactly live through similar events, she relates deeply to the protagonist on an emotional level. Her own emotional connection to the protagonist might trigger audience subjectivities to explore their own related emotional geographies. Guiliana Bruno's book *Atlas of Emotion* stands as an exploration of the interrelations between cinema, space, and travel with references to Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity theory. Bruno studies the psychological space

of movies focusing on the idea of motion. In her approach nomadic subjectivity becomes a tool to grasp the knowledge of space and movie in motion. She perceives the city as "the place where dwelling exists in motion" (Bruno, 2002, 61). Dwelling, which has been thought of as one of the main purposes of all architectural activity, is an act of settling down in both space and time. The idea of dwelling is very much related to stillness and territory, yet we read Bruno as an invitation to reimagine dwelling as a practice of motion.

Bruno also discusses cinema through conceptualization of emotion and motion. She goes back to the Greek etymology of the word "kinema" and interprets the movie as a vehicle which can transport emotion, joy, and attraction (Bruno, 2002, 21). In her view a film's connection to motion is not limited to the movement of frames, camera, and shots. Through her reading, filmic space is understood "to move through inner space" (Bruno, 2002, 21). She also pays attention to its capacity to move the audience. She states how she proposes an inquiry into the movies in her book:

"Making a cultural voyage back to the future, we see movies before cinema as we explore the protofilmic construction of visual space in the moving topographies of Western culture, especially those written off as sentimental or feminized, and hence marginalized. We go in search of a language of affects, beyond its psychoanalytic manifestation, and follow its course as an unstable map of "transports."" (Bruno, 2002, 21).

Learning from Bruno, defining film as a medium of interior travelling informs this research about the intermediary role of feminine cinema. It is not only the story or techniques that need to be cared for, but also the sensations, emotions, and feelings which are transported between subjectivities of filmic space.

In the movie *Moving On*, a family faces various and intergenerational challenges such as divorces, relocations, health issues, and eventually loss. The nuclear family consists of the father and his two children who start living together with the grandfather and the aunt. The movie and the summer holidays begin simultaneously as the family leave their apartment in the city. They move in with the grandfather at the old-single family house in the suburbs. Later, one night the aunt comes in after having left her husband. As they slowly get settled, every member of the family deals with their challenges of adaptation, but apparently the young girl Ok-Ju is the most affected. The movie becomes an intense site of knowing, learning, negotiating between subjectivities and spaces, mentally and bodily.

In the film even though the protagonist Ok-Ju struggles with more personal issues like a complicated relationship and body image, it shows how each day she gets more connected to the grandfather and the house. As happens in many families, across geographies and cultures, when the grandfather's health worsens, the father and the aunt start discussing if they'd better sell the family house and find a nursing home for their dad. This is when the protagonist stands up for the old man's right to decide for himself. Here the interrelatedness of subjectivities is exemplified, for example, the character gets in touch with the space, the actress embodies her needs and emotions, and the audience gets to know the character through her relationships with the spaces and other bodies.

Post structuralist and feminist architectural writers also work to expand the limits of feminine subjectivity, exploring how alternative subjectivities can contribute to the architectural knowledge. To emphasize the multiple ways of making, writing, stating, building, and designing as feminine subjectivities, Hélène Frichot builds her theory as an instruction guide in her book *Feminist Design Power Tool.* The book is an instruction guide to assemble concept-tools, which are defined as devices for thought. Referring to theorists who study feminist subjectivities such as Donna Haraway, bell hooks, Rosi Braidotti, and Elizabeth Grosz, she invents ways to "construct a conceptual persona and an aesthetic figure" (Frichot, 2016, 59), which leads to creative feminine subjectivities. She asks how one can "become a slippery subjectivity in process acting within the discipline and practice of architecture" (Frichot, 2016, 59). Her suggestion is to "mobilize the situation and point of view" which helps to perceive and produce the surroundings in a novel way (Frichot, 2016, 68). We read her book also as an archive of feminist design research which provides a basis for her attempt to imagine a multiplicity of slippery subjectivities.

The concepts of traveler, transformation, movement are also reflected upon in feminist architectural theoretician Jane Rendell's work. Rendell, referring to Haraway's situated knowledge theory, defines herself as a critical feminist architectural academician. She feels it is crucial to work interdisciplinary while creating from this exact position, writing that new knowledge of architecture could only be created thanks to "travelling between disciplines", (Rendell, 2011, 18).

She gives examples of architectural feminist theory where research texts were almost written like "design prescriptions". She instead suggests finding positions from which one can reproduce creatively at each attempt (Rendell, 2011, 18). She also feels that it is important to explicitly refer to feminist theory, referring to Braidotti, "who exemplifies this beautifully, for her the figure of 'nomadic subject' describes not only a spatial state of movement, but also an epistemological condition, a kind of knowingness (unknowingness) that refuses fixity." For Rendell, nomadic subjectivity is a place to "unfix the subject" therefore the whole epistemology of subjectivity is being challenged (Rendell, 2011, 29).

To speculate over the multiplicity of subjectivity in architectural discourse, architectural researcher Simone Brott starts thinking in and around the concept of "the lived experience" in her book, which inquiries into a free subjectivity in architecture. In her view, "(...) architecture works by entering anonymous process of subjectivity -the production of effects that speaks of multidimensionality. Lived experience is altered as a result, and the nature of cognizing architecture, and its milieu shifts to a non-discursive, phenomenal 'space-time' that is vivid, corporeal, cinematic." (Brott, 2011, 3). She pays attention to the moments of encounters with architecture, so eventually brings the subject of the experienced space into the discussion.

To study the lived experience she also employs the concepts of nomadism and movement, focusing on the architectural effects that are generated by architectural tectonics: "Architectural effects are "mobile", displaced as a "nomadic distribution" within an indeterminate pool of possible experiences." (Brott, 2011, 43).

Having a perspective over architectural effects as a mobile distribution can significantly help to pave the way along subjectivity and nomadism. These brief yet diverse readings on both cinema and architecture in relation to subjectivity and movement offer a conceptual passage to a reinterpretation of the movie *Moving On*. It shapes the way to read and reinterpret the movie. "To unfix the subject" (Rendell, 2011, 29) of architecture we will slowly and carefully work with three sequences from the film. The selected sequences showcase the moments where subjectivities are revealed in embodiment. All of the sequences interestingly transfer a daily mundane activity through multiple layers of relationships between bodies and spaces. The reinterpretation will also consist of layers. Firstly, a freehand sketch recreates the effects from the filmic space, secondly a freeform text in superimposed, and lastly diagrammatic architectural drawings reproduce the space with respect to the present embodied subjectivities.

THE MOVIE AS A SITE OF NOMADIC SPACE MAKING

The movie *Moving On* has a single-family house in the suburbs as the main setting, and Dan-bi states that she carefully searched for a suitable place. Eventually she finds the perfect one which had been home to a couple for 50 years.[4] Together with the team the director decides to keep the house as it is with the original furniture, decoration, and objects. It is a two-story house which is divided into spaces mainly by sliding doors. Each room can be adapted to the actual activities and needs. As shown in the movie, all interior spaces are directly related to the outside. In addition, the balcony and the garden also contribute to the narration. The director employs the rich interior-exterior relations of the house, and thanks to this dynamic interior-exterior relationship even sequences where the camera is still do not seem repetitive. Instead, being able to see the same room from different points of view at different times of the day helps with the spatial continuity and the orientation of the audience.

The protagonist's subjectivity is described in deep connection to the old house; she is careful picking her room in which to sleep, she doesn't allow the brother into the upper floor when she wants to sew by herself in the hall or she does the laundry with her aunt on the terrace. She is defining her space, and her activities are also clearly being defined and characterized by the space. This inevitable mutual relationship is displayed throughout the movie from various perspectives. Simultaneously, her connections to the men in her life, father, brother, grandfather, and boyfriend, illustrate various facets of her subjectivity. She becomes the rebellious daughter, the aggressive but caring older sister, the cooperative grandchild, and the pleasing girlfriend over the course of the story. Various facets of her dynamic subjectivity can be studied in relation to various short sequences within different rooms of the house.

The selected sequences show daily brief moments that are experienced slowly, which means they feel like they take longer than they would in real life. These moments are enlarged by the director to give the spectator the chance to contemplate characters, bodies, spaces, and their relationality. It is these very brief sequences that we have explored through a set of diagrammatic study sketches in order to uncover theoretical and experiential connections. The first set of sketches is thought of as a conversation with the moving image. This phase serves to imagine what qualities filmic spaces could gain in relation to the visible movement of bodies. Lines and shapes explore bodies' tactile and non-tactile interactions with the spatial elements, and slowly new embodied formations emerge. The subjective and punctual essence of this interpretive process is discussed and further explored through incorporating relevant terminology from existing literature.

A second set of drawings is used as a study to reflect on the space's new forms, qualities, and meanings in a diagrammatic drawing. Finally, a set of plan and section diagrams are evolved. The sections are generated in relation to the camera plane of each frame. It is important to note that these drawings may not explicitly depict the physical bodies or their movements. Instead, they aim to primarily showcase how the space has been altered or influenced by the various subjectivities involved, such as the director, actor, character, spectator, and researcher.

Sequence 1: Leaving Home / space of passage: entrance

The very first sequence of the movie opens with the protagonist standing alone at the entrance/ hall/kitchen of a flat. The camera height is adjusted to two thirds of her height and is directed towards her, the counter and a relatively

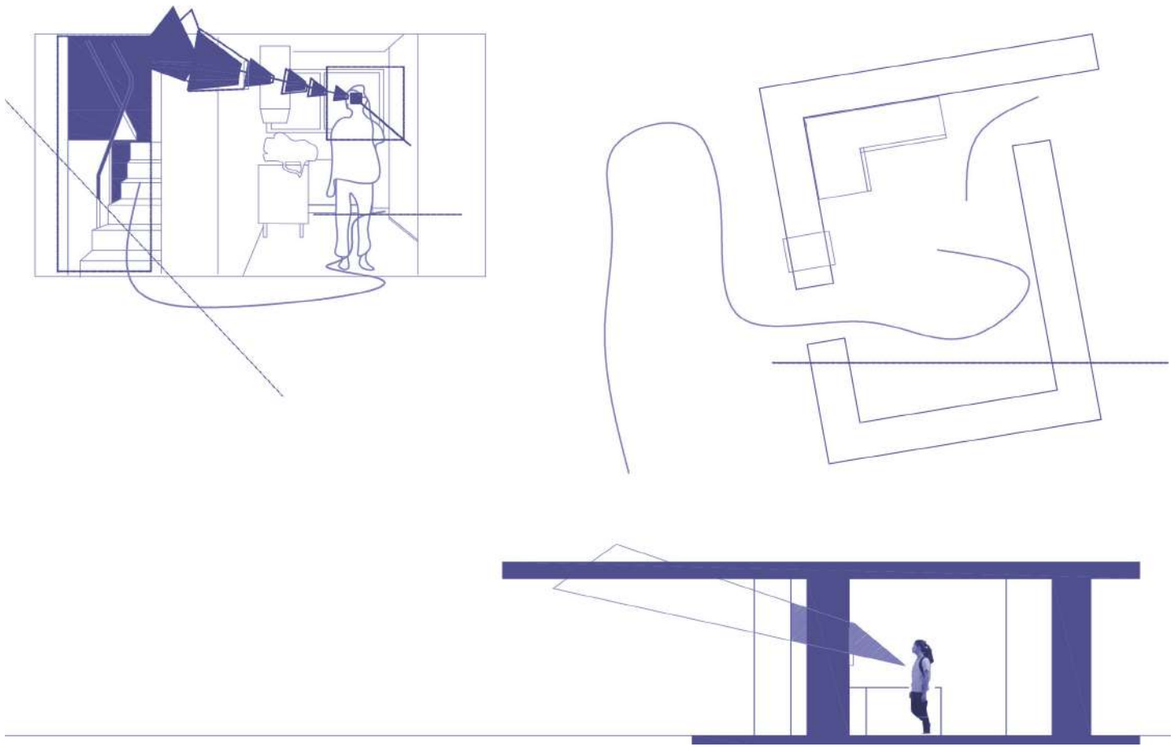

Fig.1 - Seq. 01: Leaving Home, a study of the motion generated by the picture frame on the wall. Diagrammatic outline, plan, and section: space as passage, by H. Menlioğlu.

big window sealed with translucent and colorful paper. On the left-hand side, at the edge of the screen, there is the main door. The space is empty, and she is apparently getting ready to leave. She is all packed with a big backpack and a sports bag is on the counter in the background. She is wearing a simple outfit which consists of a white t-shirt, black trousers, and white sneakers. A wide-angle fixed camera makes the space seem deeper, therefore it is hard to tell if the counter is a kitchenette or a storage unit.

At the beginning of the two minutes-long sequence, the girl takes time to look around the empty room, and for a moment she looks into the camera. She then stares into a small picture frame on the wall on the left-hand side. On the same side of the screen the door opens, and her father interrupts her moment by asking her to hurry. She doesn't really respond. Her father runs back upstairs, as seen through the left open door, revealing that the flat is at the basement level. She takes a few more moments to stare at the picture frames and takes her bag, and turns the light off, all very slowly. She is moving in a very gentle way, and her body expresses that she is taking her time not to leave. Even though the fixed camera does not show what the image is in the frame, the director gives enough time for this to capture the audience's curiosity and imagination. This home is only shown in this sequence, and it gives a chance to develop an intimate relationship with the protagonist's subjectivity. It is critical that her moment of farewell is situated just before the period of relocation.

Now interestingly, one may ask, is the unseen framed image an old family portrait, or a drawing which was done by a family member, or maybe a postcard, a random landscape or nature-morte print? Probably what is more important than the picture itself is the significance of it for the character. Jean Baudrillard's book, based on his doctorate thesis, entitled *The System of Objects* explored the importance of the objects on personal and collective levels. He suggests that there is a specific kind of a bind between objects and people that might allow the objects a certain character, which he calls "a presence". According to him, this extra value which is attributed to the objects turn them into "boundary makers of the symbolic configuration known as home" (Baudrillard, 1996, 16). This sequence works as a showcase of the picture frame's extra value, yet it is not informative about this extra value's qualities. This object, the unseen picture, might have personal connotations, but also some contextual ones. It is the only decorative element in the room, and it is being left behind in this space of transition, which is the entrance. So, the spectator doesn't know if it is valuable to the protagonist, or if she develops a connection just because it is being left behind.

Architectural professor Chris L. Smith writes on the symbolic value of the objects and from there he contemplates over the architectural notion of passage:

"We don't want the flowers or the rail, we desire the air. That which we touch is often a vector pointing toward that which we can't hold. These flowers and handrails are objects of desire. (...) Architecture may be like this too. A relative holding or harbouring that nonetheless operates as a 'tenuous umbilical'. A tentative holding in place that fosters an abstract passage. A wavering song that points toward a desire. In this way architecture is like pencils, photographs and postcards, rosary beads and icons, stilettos, and pieces of blue velvet. It is an object of passage." (Smith, 2017, 124).

Smith's take on 'passage' might serve as a good tool to dismantle the sequence of leaving home. The picture frame becomes an "object of passage" (Smith 2017, 124) for the three subjectivities who are the protagonist, the director, and the researcher/spectator. The protagonist sees the content of the frame. The director acknowledges the value of passage by relating it to the space and time of leaving home. The spectator adds to the meaning of the picture frame through intuitive drawing and writing.

With reference to the way her body moves and the interactions with space, my hand starts a conversation in the form of a sketch. The original drawing itself is an imaginary interaction of space and body as a tactile experience. In brief, in relation to the character's movements and the moving image's quality, the actual space is re-imagined within the superposition of virtual characteristics. In our conversations with the sequence, space is understood as a double passageway that connects the house to the outer world physically, and to the past imaginatively. The connection to the past is allowed through the unseen image that is present in the scene within the small picture frame. These characteristics of passage are reimagined in the form of diagrammatic perspective, plan and section drawings (Fig.1). While perspective drawing shows this space, bodies, and events in a more translated way, the plan is a complete abstraction where various elements are drawn as bodies. Superposition, tactility, and imagery are the relevant spatial concepts.

Boundaries between past and future, interior and exterior are being eroded, transformed, and manipulated at this space of entrance through text and drawing. The entrance is not only becoming the space of leaving in this sequence, but also it is being redefined by the interaction between bodies, subjectivities and the "object of passage" (Smith, 2017, p.124). The object of passage, which is the small picture frame, alters the entrance to become a passage itself.

Sequence 2: Setting the mosquito net up / bedroom

The second sequence is from their first night at the grandfather's house, when they need to organize the rooms before going to sleep. The house is quite an example of the Korean lifestyle, where the rooms are generally left empty at the center. This empty space can therefore be transformed into whatever is needed at that moment. As they are going to sleep, they take out sheets and pillows, then they make their bed on the floor. The father goes to sleep next to the grandfather. And the daughter starts setting up the mosquito net in one of the rooms at the upper floor. As she is getting prepared her brother comes and asks if he could sleep there with her. Earlier, he is seen uncomfortably trying to squeeze in with the fathers. Even though the room is spacious enough, she doesn't welcome him, and they continue discussing this while setting the net up together. Since there is no bed frame to carry the net, she starts putting the net up directly in the corners of the room, as if the whole room was a constructive element for the net. Or from another perspective, it can be proposed that now the room gains an interior skin which is semi-transparent and semi-permeable. In the end she doesn't change her mind and asks him to leave. The fact that he has been carrying his big fluffy toy, his sleeping friend, around the house while seeking a place to sleep is a cute detail that helps the construction of familiarity with the characters. He gets upset when he realizes that his sister had also taken the only electric fan for her room. So, as he leaves he takes the fan with him. Later we are going to watch him try to sleep in another room, full of stored belongings.

The sketch starts to reconstruct the two bodies as structural beings in motion in relation to the existing physical space. The room and the void proposed by the borders of the room are redefined with the bodily movements and invisible grids. These are somehow becoming visible through the forms and shapes that the net is adopting. Corner by corner, the siblings hang the big translucent textile and at each moment the whole spatial quality changes. This fluid architectural body, together with other bodies in the room, creates a "mobile effect" (Brott, 2011, 38) reminiscent of Brott's writing; "Architectural effects are 'mobile,' displaced as a 'nomadic distribution' within an indeterminate pool of possible experiences" (Brott, 2011, 43). This sequence is a showcase of almost endless configurations that could be created while setting the mosquito net.

This specific mosquito net is more than an object and more than a space divider. Also, it is not really changing the spatial division in terms of form, size, or use. This sequence and especially the use of the net is reminiscent of Petra Blaisse's *Spatial Fabric Re-Set* that was exhibited at La Biennale di Venezia 2021. Researcher Lucy Marlor discusses Blaisse's project in relation to its atmospheric qualities: "This textile acts as a malleable, flexible, dynamic interior envelope shadowing the user's needs, capable of reprogramming space within the fixed architectural container" (Marlor, 2021, 96). In addition, the mosquito net is being held for a duration by human bodies in space. The process of setting the net up is re-imagined within the drawings both as a field of negotiation and a field of tension, in the most literal sense of the word. These metaphorical and literal connotations are very much

relatable to each other, meaning the conversation between the sequence and me continues around the topics of forces and tension that translate into structure, bodily movements, inner and outer skins, and skeletons (Fig.2).

The visibility, the borders, and the permeability are challenged through this sequence that is simultaneously happening in the conversation between siblings. They are taking their positions and roles in relation to each other and space. The re-imagined space offers a room that proposes various elements and volumes to reach a definitive quality of space. This is an imagining of responsive structure, which would allow various configurations of fluid elements, just like the mosquito net. In other words, tension and negotiation embodied by the motion of the bodies and the mosquito net are being translated into an imagined space.

Sequence 3: Caring for the aunt / staircase

The caring for the aunt sequence takes place in the hall on the upper floor. The camera is again fixed and placed at eye level directed towards the staircase. The previous sequence shows the girl waking up late at night as she receives a call from the aunt. She is calling for her niece to come and open the door as she had forgotten her keys. So when this sequence starts we are already waiting for them to climb to the upper floor. We start hearing them before we see them, and realize that the aunt has been drinking outside. When they arrive at the landing of the staircase she offers her niece a sip of beer, and they enjoy that moment in secret. The tipsy aunt needs help to climb the rest of the stairs and in the meantime, she whispers that she really enjoyed this experience of sneaking in as if they were on a school trip. Then they go to their room and the spectator, the camera, us, are still there after they disappear. So, our presence is continuous before and after their appearance.

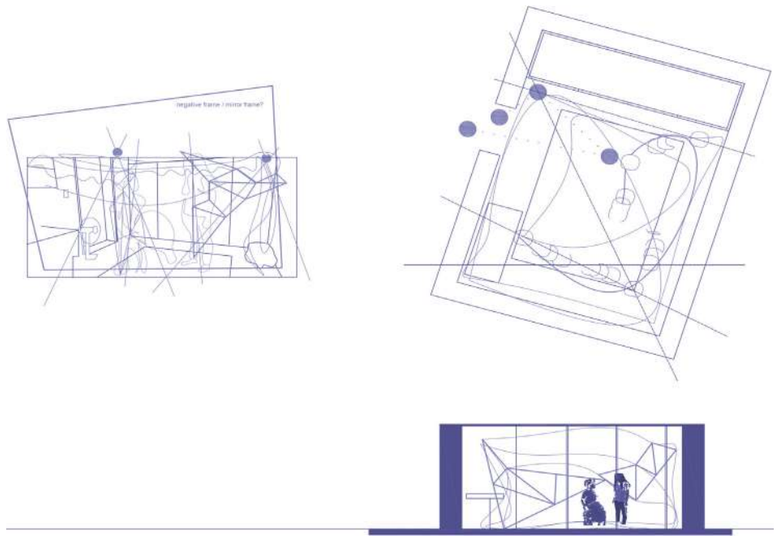

Fig.2. - Seq. 02: Setting up the Mosquito Net, a study of the motion between the siblings and the mosquito net. Diagrammatic outline, plan and section: space as tension, by H. Menlioğlu.

The drawn conversation with this sequence is triggered by realizing the continuity of the camera, the spectator and therefore the gaze. The intermediary space is a large hall which connects the staircase to the rooms. The camera is located almost at the border, probably behind the window. A speculation starts with a new superimposed entity of space+camera+spectator, where space gains a characteristic of spectator and/or camera. Through the visual conversation the space is being imagined performing as a camera+spectator. In other words, the filmic space is reimagined as an embodiment of spectatorship which is an accumulation of camera and spectator presences. This exploration of how spectatorship can be embodied within a room and/or a frame calls attention to Marks' conceptualization of "embodied spectatorship" (Marks, 2000, 151) which argues for an affective relationship with space.

The drawn conversation with the sequence has been developed through a merged unity of the fixed camera, the physical space, and the spectator (Fig.3). Observing characters covertly as they sneak in, the focus shifts to the gaze as a central concern. The spectator, camera, and director collectively contribute to reshaping the space into a tool for observation. The actions of seeing, hosting, and witnessing, watching begin to overlap during the depiction. The imaginative journey persists as a reconstruction of both physical structures and perspectives.

These imagined spatial attributions perform as the amplifiers of the spectator and director subjectivities in the role of watching. The space of vision is reimagined through the axes that are given by the camera angle and physical movement. The diagram performs as a generator of various indirect relationships of vision. This investigation through drawing and writing opens questions, such as how our bodily capacities and spatial constructions coincide with the issues of gaze? How is the space being reshaped, and transformed through the boundaries of gaze? How porous may an enclosed space become through vision?

DISCUSSION

This project focused on the context of *Moving On* (2019) from a perspective of curiosity about the performative and creative interrelations between space and nomadic subjectivity. Much like the architectural analysis of a project site, practices such as sketching, drawing, and writing naturally arise to unravel the spatial constructions that evolve from the interplay between space, body, and camera relationships. Concurrently theoretical readings enrich the research with new terminology, concepts, and approaches.

Through text, sketches and diagrams, the roles and meanings of embodied spatial subjectivities gain depth, often triggered by objects, arguments, or intangible spatial qualities. Reimagining and reinterpretation not only incorporate the present bodily subjectivities within the filmic space, but also acknowledges the external influences of the director and the audience/researcher subjectivities. This process enables one to look beyond the primary activity or performance, recognizing each as just one of numerous potential interpretations, thus revealing a simultaneity of spatial qualities.

Following post-structuralist feminist thought we focus on the complexity and multiplicity of subjectivities, and propose an embodied, spatial, and subjective approach to reproduce filmic space. This set of visual and verbal exercises allows us to see, imagine and project what filmic spaces may become when disturbed by relocations and multiple subjectivities. Relocations provide an interesting space-time where brief, yet complex events enable subjectivities to become more nomadic, multiple, and various. Through verbal and visual conversations with the subjectivities of *Moving On* that embrace their fluid, transient characteristics, we delve into the possibility of space itself adopting similarly unfixed, creative and critical characteristics.

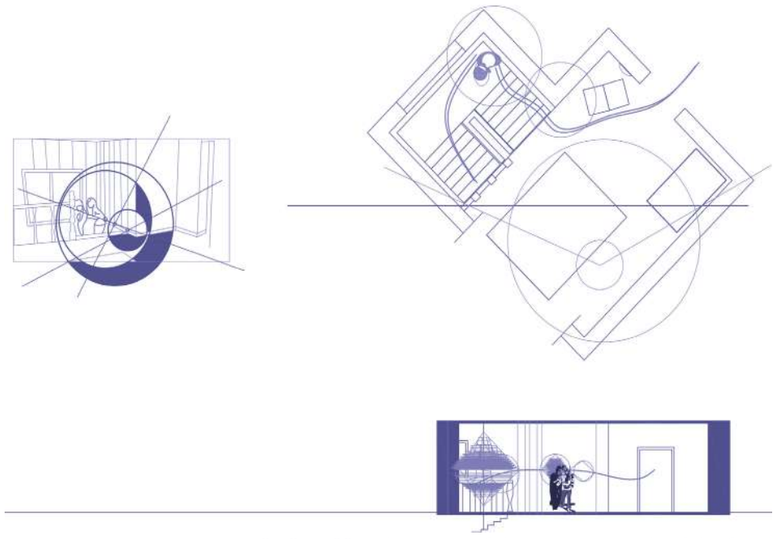

Fig.3 - Seq. 03: Taking care of the auntie, a study of the fixed gaze regarding the characters' motion. Diagrammatic outline, plan, and section: space as gaze, by H. Menlioğlu.

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Performative Autotopography as Creative Recording

Architectural Essay Films on the Imaginaries of the Uncanny Home

performativite
ototopografya
mimari deneme filmi
tekinsizlik
ev

performativity
autotopography
architectural essay film
uncanny
home

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Bu araştırma, benliğin ötekiyle etkileşimi boyunca ortaya çıkan ara bir alan olarak ototopografya kavramına ve ototopografik üretimin performatifliğine odaklanır. Mekansal hayallerin görsel ve işitsel formlara büründüğü performatif üretimleri benliğin ve mekanın birbiri içine geçtiği ve birbirini dönüştürdüğü yaratıcı süreçler üzerinden tartışır. Evsel mekana odaklanan çalışma, ardışık üç mimari deneme filmini yapım süreçleri bağlamında tartışır. Filmleri, hem bireysel hem de kolektif olarak çizimler, çekimler ve maket yapımı aracılığıyla evin tekinsiz anlatılarını kurmayı deneyen performatif ototopografik pratikler olarak ele alır. Mimari deneme filmlerinin performatif üretiminin, mekansal anlatının inşasında kaydın çoklu biçimlerini ve öznel karşılaşmaların muhtelif durumlarını birbirine entegre eden bir karaktere sahip olduğunu iddia eder. Bu anlamda ortaya koyduğumuz ara mekansallıklar, mimarilere dönüşen monologların, diyalogların ve polilogların yaratıcı ve hayali çevirilerinin izini sürerek evin tanımlı ve yerleşik sınırlarını bulanıklaştırır.

This research explores the concept of autotopography as an intermediate space emerging through the interplay of the self with the other and the performativity of autotopographical production. It discusses performative productions in which spatial imaginaries take on visual and auditory forms through creative processes in which self and space intertwine and transform each other. Focusing on the homely spaces, it discusses three subsequential architectural essay films within their context of making. These films are performative autotopographical practices that attempt rather uncanny narratives of the home through drawing, filming, and model-making both as collective and individual. We claim that the performative making of architectural essay films interweaves multiple forms of recording and many states of subjective encounter to build a spatial narrative. And, the in-between spatialities that we magnify trace the multitudes of creative and imaginative translations of monologues, dialogues, and polylogues that shapeshift into architectures, blurring the definite and established threshold of the home.

INTRODUCTION

Architectural essay film offers a performative approach to architectural research, providing unique forms of recording and reimagining place to create spatial narratives. Penelope Haralambidou discusses how the architectural essay film juxtaposes filmmaking within architectural design theory, extending architecture practice beyond traditional building acts to challenge spatial concepts (Haralambidou, 2015, 235-237). Lilian Chee notes that this hybrid form merges design, history, biography, gender, and politics, providing an alternative perspective on spatial making (Chee, 2019, 127). In this research, we follow three architectural essay films: *(Un)Homely Dreams* (Kara, 2024), *Placeholder* (Kara, 2022), and *Peeling Off* (Kara, Balaban, Almaç, 2024). These films take on the mode of an essayistic, fluid form of representation and operate on the interstices of homely memory, unhomely feeling, spatial triggers, and collective encounters to individual registers.

Our work proposes that this in-between form of production reframes the unmaking of home as a performative autotopography. *Autotopography* is a term first discussed by Jennifer González, suggesting that the collection of autobiographical objects delineates a “material memory landscape” that reciprocally shapes the memory of the space and the self (González, 1995, 133). In our discussion, performative autotopography describes a rather ambiguous state that enables individual and collective memory landscapes to form through interactions with others and the creative acts of production. They define the synchronous emergence of the self and place as part of their performance; thus, the self registers itself through a place and among others. Our case studies, focus in particular on delineating spatial, tactile autotopographies formed by several acts of storing, collecting, displacing, or exposing the autotopographical forms of home.

The relationship between the uncanny and the home reflects our everchanging connection with domestic spaces. Rapid economic, social, and technological changes have blurred the boundaries between familiarity and strangeness within the home. Remote work conditions have further challenged the distinction between home and work life. At the same time, the visibility of the domestic experiences of marginalised groups disrupts the so-called notion of a safe, familiar, and comfortable home. The uncanny offers a lens to understand these shifts, providing pathways to revisit and speculate the notion of home. Performative autotopographies represent such an attempt, offering fragmented and uncanny narratives within familiar spatiality. Through their voided and fragmented nature, these autotopographical performances unveil unfamiliar perspectives on the home.

The paper first delves into the term autotopography and defines performative autotopography with its probable interconnections to the uncanny and subjective registers. Here, González's discussions are expanded upon drawing on the Lacanian approach to the formation of self through others and memory (Lacan, 2006, [1966], 96), as well as Donald W. Winnicott's concept of transitional objects (Winnicott, 1991, [1971], 8-22). Autotopography depicts an ambiguous state and delineates a realm of constant transitions between the interconnected memories of subjects, objects and spatial fragments. This is a rather uncanny state as autotopographies reconfigure familiar memories within unexpected settings. Then, the paper follows Sigmund Freud’s definition of the Uncanny (Freud, 2003, [1919], 151) and Anthony Vidler’s take on domestic space within architectural theory (Vidler, 1994, 12) to understand how it might be related to the construction of autotopographies. Then, we address several artworks and architectural research by their approach to the uncanny of home through performative autotopography. The paper further focuses on the research methodology and discusses architectural essay film and the creative potentials of the essayistic form. Following these approaches, we discuss our films by focusing on their subjective and collective reflections, ways of creative recording and translating the space through their mediums and the thresholds where memory resides in tactile or visual forms.

PERFORMATIVE AUTOTOPOGRAPHY

The term "autotopography" originates from the Greek roots *auto* (self), *topos* (place, space), and *graphein* (to write, to draw) (Heddon, 2007, 40). It denotes dynamic spatialities that intertwine action and spatiality, continuously rewritable spatial narratives entwined with the self. González first discussed the term autotopography, suggesting that it emerges from the combination of the factual history embedded in the material reality of objects and the fictional memory of the self; thus, they are associated with both the individual and the social, positioned between the past and the present. In her discussion, she explores autobiographical objects as extensions of memory which also extend back into memory; this mutual interaction shapes autotopography (González, 1995, 133-135). The configurations of the objects and their accumulation on autotopography define fragments that serve as cues for memory, influencing what is recalled or forgotten (González, 1995, 135-142). Therefore, personal archives represent a curated selection of memories, where ageing objects signify temporal distance and can alter or obscure past events.

Autotopography is an incessant oscillation that can be discussed by psychoanalytic theory. Lacanian theory introduces subjective register through the "mirror stage", where the ego emerges and where relational dynamics between the self, the other, and consciousness are established (Lacan, 2006, [1966], 1-5). Jacques Lacan illustrates this phase with the example of an infant encountering the absence of their mother, initiating the search for identification to compensate for her absence (Lacan, 2006, [1966], 1-5). In this phase, infants begin to position themselves among others; this signifies the emergence of fundamental conceptual structures like the subject, object, self, and other (Grosz, 1990, 35). Winnicott explores Lacan's notion of lack through "transitional phenomena" or "transitional space," a concept within *Object Relations Theory*. His theory, focusing on interpersonal and environmental relationships, defines transitional space as an intermediary realm between internal and shared reality. In this in-between area, predominantly shaped by interactions with the maternal figure or other "transitional objects," individuals differentiate between belongings that are "self" and those that are "non-self". This process involves navigating between an organised inner world of needs and a collectively experienced outer world. Transitional space thus serves as an intermediary field that encompasses and transcends both self and other (Winnicott, 1991, [1971], 8-22). According to Winnicott, this area, initiated during childhood through activities like play, persists into creative work and cultural experiences in adulthood. It arises from interactions with others or creative acts of production, fostering a mutually constructed relationship between self and other (Winnicott, 1991, [1971], 36-42). We claim that this intermediate realm of experience resembles performative autotopographical practice in that it aligns with a tertiary domain crafted through the interplay between self and other, emerging from creative encounters.

Autotopography, within the performative context of the self, is frequently explored in site-specific performances. Deirdre Heddon suggests that by adding "auto" to "topography," the self becomes the author of the place. Thus, she regards autotopographical practice as a form of site-specific performance, defining the place it delineates through constant interactions as autotopography. In a collective work, *One Square Foot* (2003), each performance artist reproduces a square foot through their recollections. Heddon incorporates the materiality of a chosen tree and the stories associated with the area. She intertwines them with her narrative and links them to the other “one square foot” sites through textual elements. The place transcends the confines of a square foot, encompassing both temporal and spatial dimensions imbued with subjective meanings, evoking texts, bodily engagements, and narratives. Heddon characterises this creative process as "an act of creative positioning," wherein the space she selects becomes an autotopography, serving as both the "co-author" and "co-subject" of her performance (Heddon, 2007, 40-50). Similarly, Annette Arlander describes her performances as "autotopographical exercises" in which she walks every week for a year to a rural settlement from her childhood. She defines her video recordings as parts of an autotopographical collection, such as *Sitting on a Birch - My Fiftieth Year* (2006), *Secret Garden 1-2* (2006), and *Year of the Dog in Kalvola - Calendar* (2007). These records are about actions like sitting on a tree, walking along a sloped path, and hanging from a tree branch. Simultaneously, she reiterates her autobiographical memory of these places (Arlander, 2012, 251-258). While Arlander's performances enable a re-encounter with a familiar space, Heddon's performance allows the self to locate in an unfamiliar place. Throughout these performances, which highlight the performative exploration of place through the interaction of movement, process, and location, the artists make the place visible by revealing its temporal changes and transformations.

Performative autotopographies elucidate the interdependent emergence of the self and place within their performance, whereby the self registers its presence within space. In this context, the autotopographical performance of marginalised individuals allows them to claim their presence in places where they have been rendered invisible (Heddon, 2006, 24-26). Heddon interprets graffiti in urban spaces as autotopographies and discusses the presence of queer graffiti examples in contrast to homophobic wall inscriptions. Through these opposing discourses, she speaks of the danger of perpetuating "acceptable" identities while at the same time suggesting that these clashings can also be a resistance to "normativity" (Heddon, 2002, 11-17). As seen in Heddon's discussion, the performance of identity in space can make visible the experiences of marginalised identities. In this sense, various performative works that provide the visibility of identity through interaction with space can be interpreted as part of autotopographical practices.

An example is the text *Closets, Clothes, disClosure* by Henry Urbach. Drawing from personal experiences, Urbach delves into the intricate relationship between storage and display, secrecy and disclosure. He highlights how the materiality of clothing closets symbolises the concealment of homosexual identity, a concept commonly referred to as "being in the closet." The closet is where "excesses" are stored, ensuring the room remains "clean and orderly." Similarly, the exclusion of homosexual identity in society enables the heterosexual identity to maintain its normative order (Urbach, 1996, 63-69). Urbach describes the space in front of the closet, where he tried on his mother's clothes and learned about his representational range in the closet mirror during childhood memories, as a space that disrupts the duality of identity's transformation and performance. He defines this area as an "ante-closet" (Urbach, 1996, 70-72). We interpret "ante-closet" as an autotopographical place where Urbach performs his identity.

Another example is *Color(ed) Theory* (2015), a work by Amanda Williams, about the homes of displaced Black people due to racist ideologies on the South Side of Chicago, where she grew up. In this work, Williams paints the facades of

vacant homes slated for demolition with a single colour and then photographs them. Each painted house is coloured in the hue of a product marketed to Black people and reflected in the community's memory, taking on the name of that product. The colours of the houses are also associated with the colours of housing maps that systematically discriminate against Black and minority communities by evaluating the "investment risk" of a neighbourhood based on its racial composition, thus devaluing the areas inhabited by these communities.

The spatial performance of identity can potentially transform the binary spaces of dominant ideologies. Heddon's graffiti and Urbach's ante-closet challenge the heteronormativity of space, while Williams' work challenges the erasure of a community's spaces and memory. The critical stance in each of the works relates to the position and identity of the maker and takes form through performative processes. Interpreted as performative autotopography, the identity affected by the space reciprocally responds with means of expression and reproduces the space.

THE UNCANNY HOME

Within this context, the characteristics inherent in autotopographical practice can also provide insights into establishing a homely place. For González, autotopographies initialise feelings with a revisit to the homely that might be contained within family photos, family relics, and their materiality and continue to the display of these objects, defining a homely-scape (González, 1995, 133-135). In this sense, autotopographical place contains multitudes of scales and times where the interior of a home equally resides with a small trinket from a childhood memory and expands to the outer realm of the home through creative imaginations, dreams for the future, and expectancies. Thus, it creates a boundless memory-home that does not rely on the constraints of the house as a place. This approach can situate homely places, which form strong bonds with the reflections of subjective memory and identity, as spaces of material memories that can articulate the collective memory of the home. It demands a dispute on the notion of home and homely memories. Revisiting home through an autotopographical perspective can be a way to consider it beyond its given meanings and to articulate its uncanny character between familiarity and strangeness.

In *Das Unheimliche*, Freud re-conceptualises the term “uncanny”. The concept, expressed in German as *unheimlich*, is formed by negating the expression *heim/heimlich*, which encompasses meanings of familiar, safe, close, home. Freud interprets the concept as the tension felt through situations such as the familiar becoming unfamiliar and taking unexpected forms, the return of the repressed, the loss of meaning through repetition of the familiar, or encountering the familiar within the unfamiliar. For Freud, the uncanny resides in those encounters that trigger unintentional responses to our drives of compulsory repetition. In his theory, the strange resides inside us in the discarded, repressed thoughts associated with our undesirable encounters. As he noted, the uncanny starts with the idea of a constant return to home (Freud, 2003 [1919], 151). For Vidler, the uncanny emerges with the transformation from familiar to foreign, corresponding to modern nostalgia and forced nomadism. He argues that this concept indicates a shift between the homely and the unhomely, thereby enabling us to look through different lenses such as self, otherness, body, fragmentation, alienation, absence, identity, and various aspects of social life, especially in the context of post-modernism. (Vidler, 1994, 3-14).

The relationship between the concept of the uncanny and the home in the postmodern era is still evident in our contemporary relationships with the home. The notion of the home oscillates between familiarity and strangeness within rapidly changing economic, social, technological, and societal factors. The distinct boundary between home and work life, eminent during modernisation, was blurred by remote working conditions. Unbounding the workplace from a fixed location has increased the mobility of workers and eliminated the obligation to be tied to a fixed home. Another consequence of these changes is that they contribute to shifting the home from a space that is owned or desired to be owned to one with a temporary character. Similarly, the search for alternative ownership models in homes due to economic constraints, such as various sharing options regulated by social networks, disrupts the perception of the home as a space that is owned. Meanwhile, as the domestic experiences of minor or marginalised social groups become visible, the so-called safe, familiar, and comfortable structure of the home is disintegrating; it becomes increasingly clear that social and political issues extend to the assumed safe inner space of the home.

The uncanny, which allows us to interpret the relationship between the home and changing social conditions, enables uncanny pathways for revisiting the homely and the notion of home. The fragmented, voided, and uncanny nature of autotopographical practices can enable unfamiliar narratives within familiar spatiality. In this sense, Mieke Bal's discussion of the performative production of autotopography through the interaction with an artwork can be mentioned. Bal states that autotopography in artworks is a spatial, local, and situated inscription of the self. She discusses this through the works of Louise Bourgeois, *Spider* (1995), and *Cells* (1989-1993) while defining them as architectural and domestic. She describes split subjects as being reflected in autotopographical places instead of holistic subjects. Bal views autotopographical practice as a spatial narrative where memory fragments of the split subject reside in the artwork's materiality, engaging viewers to reproduce the work in the present moment continuously. This interaction creates an uncanny experience by juxtaposing familiar references within a foreign environment (Bal, 2002, 180-202).

Following Bal's reading on autotopography, we interpret several works within the art field and architecture research that relate to the uncanny of home as autotopographies. Below are several that we find essential to discuss along with our research.

Rachel Whiteread's works, namely *Pink Torso* (1995), *Ghost* (1990), and *House* (1993), triggered by homely memory, they expand from object scale to architectural scale, highlighting the negative spaces of the home (Barlas, 2020, 13-27). In her castings, the voids materialise, and as they become visible, they obstruct familiar relationships established with the home. By the now non-functional void, the objectified dwelling with familiar images closes off the routine homely experience. Here, the act of display questions the attributed privacy of the domestic space by bringing the inside out. The alienated images of artworks refer to lost, past, or forgotten homes. Each work is positioned between inside and outside, presence and absence, memory and forgetting, the figurative and the non-figurative (Harrison, 2022, 321-346).

Similarly, Doris Salcedo combines the furniture of domestic spaces, such as chairs, doors, beds, cabinets, and tables, with materials like concrete, fabric, rope, nails, hair, and bone in her installation series titled *La Casa Vidua* (1992-1995). Her works are grounded in the states of homely when it is perpetually threatened by the intrusion of the unhomely, emphasising the constant threat faced by the military violence in Colombia during the periods of war (Lauzon, 2015, 118-121). The viewers witness the subjectivities of these uncanny homes through the impossibility of their familiar bodily experience with these pieces of furniture yet become estranged from their familiar domestic experience alongside traces of decay and destruction within the work, alienated from the home's safe space from the outside world.

A similar estrangement can be seen in Mona Hatoum's installation *Homebound* (2000). Hatoum's work reveals the traces of displacement and exile related to her life story. At first glance, *Homebound* (2000) presents a domestic environment with furniture such as beds, tables, chairs, various kitchen utensils, and everyday household equipment. This static domestic setting, inaccessible behind a barrier of steel wires, can only be viewed from a limited vantage point. The electric cables wrapped around the metal furniture and the sound of electricity emanating from the loudspeakers throughout the installation transform the domestic environment into a threatening space, questioning its safety. This installation, suggesting an inaccessible and uninhabitable homeliness, positions the viewer and the homely space in exile (Said, 2000, 39).

Mirak Jamal's installation *Untitled* (2017), exhibited in the 15th Istanbul Biennial, *A Good Neighbour*, is a passage made of plaster panels, where the artist displays his reimagined childhood drawings on the different homes in various countries that he has lived in after he had to leave Iran with his family (Jamal, 2017, 223). The room created in the exhibition space after the artist’s childhood room resembles the construction and destruction of a house with its voided, fragmented, and undulating surfaces. The drawings, where autobiographical images of figurative and abstract lines, associate the continuously changing character of the home with a position between escape and adaptation, remembering and forgetting.

Bihter Almaç discusses the transformation of her relationship with her home during the COVID-19 pandemic through her *Rangers* drawings. She critically examines the unsettling states of being at home exacerbated by exaggerated quarantine restrictions in Istanbul (Almaç, 2021, 50-59). Unlike the previous examples, the familiar domestic space becomes uncanny not through absence or distance but through the excessive presence that necessitates unceasing and out-of-home activities within its confines. The familiar home and its inhabitants interact as extensions of each other; this state of the relationship with the home is reflected in the forms of drawings that we could describe as autotopographical.

These works disrupt familiar domestic fragments and images in the collective memory while producing narratives about the subjectivities of the homely space. In the disruption, the method, material, and image created in performative autotopography actively participate; each corresponds to a layer that constructs the discourse. The mentioned performative autotopographies encompass various forms of creative making, ranging from spatial installations to collages and drawings. Therefore, the distinctive aspect of autotopography lies in its ability to delineate interpretable and explicit narratives through the interaction between the self's situated and reflexive reflections with space. Within the scope of our research, creative production is defined through creative records, and we examine the performative autotopographies of the home through the framework of architectural essay films. This form, embodying the subjective reflections of filmmaking, is positioned in our research as a creative form of recording that enables gathering the fragments of home and reassembling them in the fluid field of film space.

CREATIVE RECORDING

Timothy Corrigan approaches the essay film as a continuation of the literary essay. He states that understanding the structure of essay films entails situating them within the characteristics of the "essayistic" as a performative

presentation of a self-discussion in a public experience in which narrative or experimental structures engage in reflection (Corrigan, 2011, 4-6). From the literary genre of the essay to essay films, the essayistic form has existed for four hundred years as an ambiguous tool for recording and evaluating reality; it has resisted classification by maintaining its indefinable nature (Rascaroli, 2008, 25). Essays are subjective interpretations of reality, existing in the realm between "fact" and "fiction." (Alter, 2007, 45-52). They offer a flexible platform for producing speculative ideas. Theodor W. Adorno, conversely, focuses on the essay's critical aspect, disrupting intellectual formations and concepts; he asserts that its most intrinsic formal law is its “heresy” (Adorno, 1984, 171). For both Georg Lukács and Adorno, the essay does not seek absolute truths; instead, it establishes its integrity by navigating between fragmented ideas (Adorno, 1984, 159; Lukács, 1978, 11-15). As a form, the essay rejects generalizations, preconceptions, and closed-ended definitions, embracing a fragmented, relational, critical, and process-oriented perspective.

The essay film, drawing from its literary form, encompasses visual and auditory productions that hybridize the characteristics of documentary and fiction genres (Alter, 2007, 52). Positioned beyond disciplinary boundaries, in line with its interdisciplinary conceptual and formal nature, it occupies a space outside the dual categories of representation. Thus, it is a non-genre. This formal structure allows for a creative approach beyond the familiar attitudes of recording and archiving.

In architectural practice, the essay film is conceptualised under the name "architectural essay film" by Haralambidou; it is positioned as a hybrid form between filmmaking and architectural design theories and practices. Architectural essay films describe a mode of making that goes beyond the building act in architecture, complicating the idea of space and offering an alternative to spatial production (Haralambidou, 2015, 235-237). Chee uses the essay film for feminist political expression and discusses it as a performative and representational mode of architectural research. In *Flats* (2014), she suggests that the essay film is a creative research tool for readdressing overlooked subjects encoded with biased and dominant approaches, enabling the merging of issues such as design, history, biography, gender, and politics (Chee, 2019, 127). In this aspect, many essay films can be regarded as architectural essay films, as they offer unique forms of recording place, creating spatial narratives, and reimagining place. Several resonate with performative autotopographies, recording the space interwoven with its subjective reflections and constructing spatialities formed through memory. Thus, they might offer a framework for crafting autotopographies through essayistic filmmaking.

For example, Alain Resnais engages with notions of forming architectural place throught collected memories in the film *Toute La Mémoire du Monde* (1956), where *Paris National Library* clads on a rather uncanny persona that collects and reconfigures all the memories of the world. Working on another Resnais film *L'année Dernière à Marienbad* (1961), Haralambidou makes a fragmental filmic space installation entitled *Déjà vu* (2009) that constantly recreates its subjects, their memories and their remembered place. In Chris Marker's film *Sans Soleil* (1983), a travelogue of remembrance and memory edited as letters written to a woman, the audience hears her reading the letters and imagining the sequences with her.

In *Les Statues Meurent Aussi* (1953) by Ghislain Cloquet, Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, the colonial act of appropriating cultures is contemplated through the memories of African Masks and relics. As in autotopography, the depiction of space in these films parallels the narrative exploration of memory. Likewise, many essay films centre on micro-narratives involving various spatial subjects. Beka and Lemoine’s Barbicania (2014) rebuilds *Barbican* by the narratives of its people (inhabitants, users, performers). Their film *Butohouse* (2020) is a manifest of the maker architect, Keisuke Okada, who is also a Butoh dancer; we see him enacting the home he builds through a Butoh performance towards the film's end. In Wim Wender's *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014), we follow architectures that make subjective narratives of both the place and its inhabitants.

As in these examples, architectural essay films, incorporating features of time images and the essayistic form such as reflexivity and openness, enable exceptional, subjective and collective spatial exploration. The recording of place in these kinds of films enables the inclusion of temporality of sequences and subjectivity, allowing for both distancing from the familiar through framing and approaching the unfamiliar through recording.

Embracing these forms of creating spatial narratives, our research, formed in parallel with the following films, situates itself at a juncture that amplifies the researcher's position and facilitates dialogue among different actors, spatialities, and memories involved in the research.

The research process is constructed through monologues, dialogues, and polylogues extending from filmmaking to the screening and beyond, producing relational, fragmented, situated, and critical knowledge about architectural places.

THE HOME OF THE RECORDS

In this chapter, we present and reflect three autotopographical essay films that engage with homely memories as practical experiments within the theoretical background of our research: *(Un)Homely Dreams*[1] (Kara, 2024), *Placeholder*[2] (Kara, 2022) and *Peeling Off*[3] (Kara, Balaban, Almaç, 2024). Each of the films engages with homely memory in unique ways, differing in their methods of reproducing the home, how homely fragments assemble, and how the subjects involved in the production interact. Rather than following a predefined route, the films produce autotopographies by establishing their own compositional and narrative characters through performative processes. They imagine multiple versions of uncanny, hollow, unfinished homeliness in line with filmmaking tactics.

Each of the films in this section, positioned in sequential order, progresses through a diversity of actors remembering and forgetting the home in search of forms of creative recording that range from the individual to the collective. The sequencing of the films resonates with states of engagement in performative processes: a monologue that begins with images of homely memory, continues with a dialogue with domestic objects, and finally, with a polylogue shaped by the collective production of an uncanny home.

A Monologue Within the Unconscious of the Home: (Un) Homely Dreams

The first film, *(Un)Homely Dreams* (2024), depicts a monologue within the images from homely memory through dream records captured in writing and drawing. The film draws an analogy between creative recording practices and "dreamwork", a term coined by Freud to describe the process by which unconscious images transform into a dream that the conscious mind can remember. For Freud's dreamwork, our thoughts and desires pass through the "condensation, displacement, secondary revision and considerations of representation" stages and transform into forms and events differentiated from their initial forms in our dreams. Familiar images exist in dreams within other images from memory but in their alienated forms, forming "uncanny" spatialities (Freud, 2014 [1900], 309-367). This process finds its counterpart in the autotopographical drawing of the film, where (un)homely dream narratives transform into drawings, photographic images, and moving images (Fig.1). The digital drawing established throughout the film bears parallels with the automatic drawing method of surrealist artists inspired by the dream phenomenon in their production processes, in which the conscious mind is suppressed and the spontaneous, erroneous, and accidental lines reflecting the unconscious formed during the free movement of the hand on the paper shape the drawing process (Brotchie, 1995, 49). According to the Surrealists, the unconscious experience is "outside the experience of the self"; the dream produces its universe and its own rules as the self oscillates between creating and experiencing the dream scene (Brotchie, 1995, 10-15). The described form of production delineates a state of creation arising from the fusion of

Fig.1 – *(Un)Homely Dreams*, 2024, Film still.

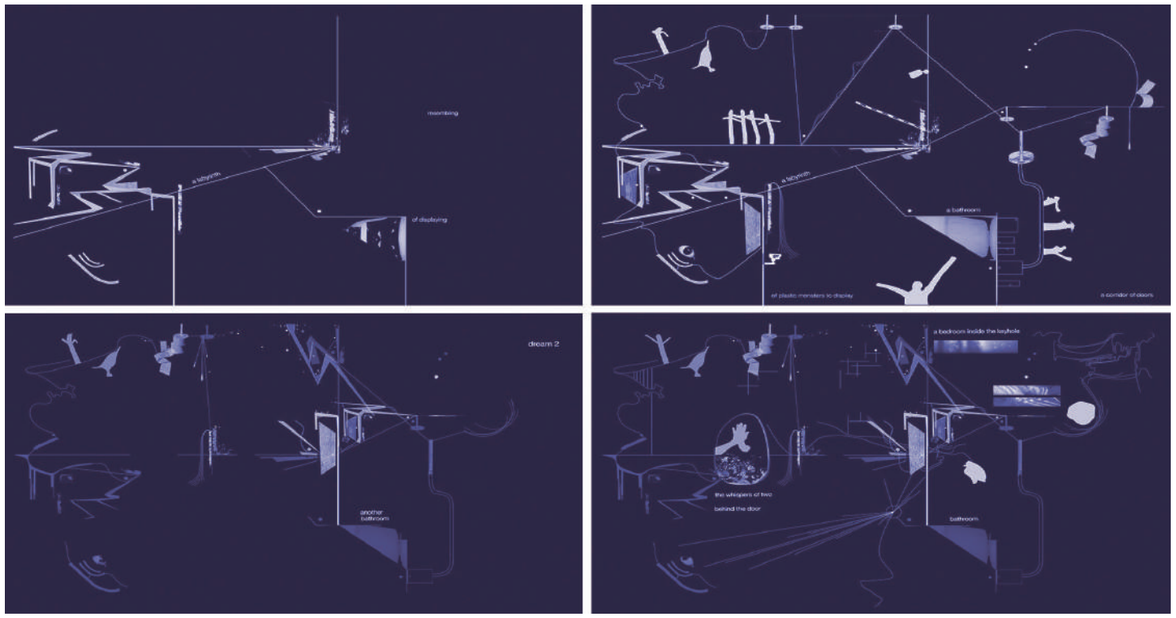

Fig.2 – *(Un)Homely Dreams*, 2024, Film stills.

the producer's associations and the incidentalities of the process. This approach contrasts a production state that accentuates the subject, who premeditates in the mind and deliberately produces.

The film begins with the distortion of a photographic image on a black background as sentences describing the first dream appear on the screen. Subsequently, static and moving drawings come together on the screen. When a dream concludes, the screen goes dark; as the narrative of the second dream begins, fragments from the previous drawing appear on the screen, positioned in different arrangements. The "remembered" images from the first dream, much like in the dream itself, establish connections with homely images in the other dream in a modified form from their original state. Since each dream needs to establish a connection with the images from the previous dreams, the film's drawing process eventually starts to define its own rules. The film continues to flow where each dream constructs a textual and visual narrative; the (un)homely autotopography developed throughout the film constantly deteriorates and reconstructs the

Fig.3 – *Placeholder*, 2022, Film still.

images through drawing, erasing, merging, accumulating, and deforming (Fig.2). The drawings, interlocking with each other, establish relationships in a manner that can be repeated endlessly. Through this structure, the film aims to continue being constructed through the viewer's associations. Each dream incorporated into the film corresponds to an uncanny visuality of home, creating a dream house and "a stage for viewer's dreams", as Bal expressed (Bal, 2002, 185).

A Dialogue Tracing the Voids of the Home: Placeholder

Placeholder (2022) approaches the home in terms of its absence as a spatiality that corresponds to different places in different times, which no longer physically exists but is inaccessible or has been forgotten and lost. It positions home in the void of the black and undefined background of the film plane. The film fills this void fully by recording familiar objects, memories, and daily rituals that replace the home, tracing it within the dialogues established with the stored, preserved, and accumulated objects. It involves various recording tactics, such as storing, collecting, photographing, numbering, and performing the objects, linking them with remembering and forgetting the home (Fig.3). While some objects are reminders of the home with the familiar routines and memories they bring, others replace forgotten multiplicities of homeliness. The film, constructed in line with these archival tactics, is produced alongside an inventory booklet (Fig.4). The objects positioned statically in the inventory in the booklet constitute the primary sequences of the film, together with the texts of homely memories and video recordings of performative acts made with objects.

The film contains objects such as plants, childhood toys, keepsakes, souvenirs, family heirlooms, and actions such as boxing, unboxing, rooting, repotting, vacuuming, and tying knots (Fig.5). The different

Fig.4 – *Placeholder*, 2022, The inventory booklet.

Fig.5 – *Placeholder*, 2022, Film stills.

temporalities of the homes in the film come together with the temporalities of homely actions, such as storing, accumulating, and moving, and the temporalities of everyday objects, such as growth, decay, dissolution, and obsolescence. The sequences form a narrative on the ambivalent position between identification with and dissociation from objects through keeping and discarding. Recording and performing the objects position the home at a crossroads between familiarity and strangeness. While the "undefined" environment of the film and the inventory situate familiar domestic objects in an estranged place, the recording process enables revisiting objects through their connotative meanings. Instead of serving a predefined narrative, the film's narrative forms through the encounters that emerge from the process. It comprises fragments in which sequences can be interchanged, new sequences can be added, or existing ones can be removed and seem not to have a fixed beginning and end. Their assembly is not based on visual relationships but rather on their ties to the memories they narrate. The evocative relationships between spaces, everyday objects, and actions in the film aim to engage the viewer in their homely memories. Objects construct an autotopography throughout the film, functioning as devices for remembering and forgetting their material presence and positioning themselves as co-subjects of the work. This performative and self-reflexive recording provides a creative way of constructing the autotopographical home on the film plane.

Fig.6 – *Peeling Off*, 2024, Film still.

Fig.7 – Recorded fragments of *Casa Botter*.

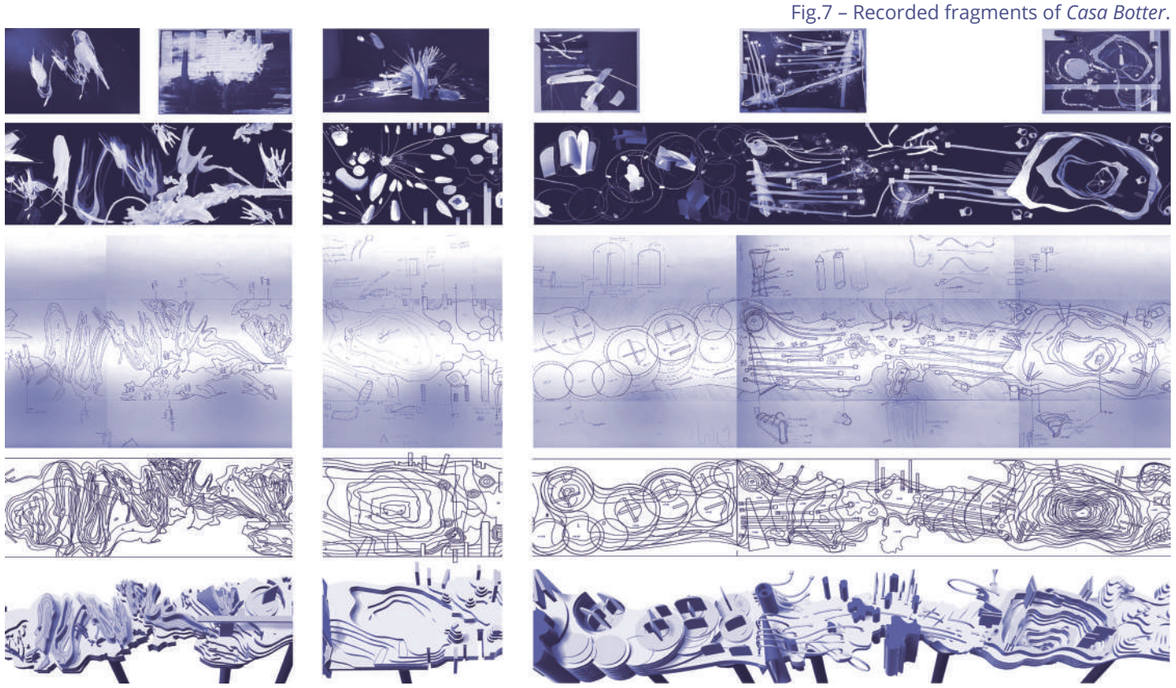

Fig.8 – Translation process of spatial fragments between different representational media.

A Polylogue Established through the Associations of Home: Peeling Off

Peeling Off (2024) unfolds through a process in which three researchers, whose memories of home do not correspond to a singular space, return to their homely memories while recording an unfamiliar place under restoration and resurface their memories through texts, drawings, collages, and models (Fig.6). The performative process of autotopographical production proceeding through the transmission of homely memories between different representational media, overlaps on the film plane with the recording of an autotopographical model. The film nestles the ambiguous form of autotopography that simultaneously corresponds to performativity and spatiality.

The filming begins with the researchers recording in *Casa Botter*, an old art nouveau apartment house in Istanbul. *Casa Botter*, an unfamiliar building with no place in researchers' homely memories, bears traces of its layered temporality with its stripped walls, rusted surfaces, and dislocated structural elements and positions as one of the film's co-authors through the recordings of its fragmented, dispersed, uncanny spatiality (Fig.7). The filming of the building establishes an analogy between the processes of remembering - forgetting and the acts of deconstruction, selection, elimination, preservation, and maintenance during the restoration process. This relationship parallels Walter Benjamin's analogy between recollection and archaeological excavation, in which he describes memory as "the medium of what is experienced rather than a means of discovering the past" (Benjamin, 2005 [1932], 576). The recording process is a performative experience in which the layers of homely memory are peeled off.

Resurfacing of memories proceeds

Fig.9 – Materialisation of spatial fragments constructing the collective autotopography.

with paper models produced following a series of evocative texts written to remember the home with the *Casa Botter* recordings. The researchers reflect their homely elements, such as traces of surfaces, moulds, light switches, windows, dust, chairs, doors, and gardens, by visualising them through drawing, folding, sticking, cutting, or scratching them on black paper. The fragments of the paper models come together first in a collage and then in a drawing, while their forms undergo translation and start to be estranged (Fig.8).

During the translation process, subjective memories create collective imaginations on a topographical model. The images on the two-dimensional picture plane find their forms in line with the possibilities and obstacles of the materials as they move to the third dimension (Fig.9). Surfaces, objects, spatial fragments, and actions associated with homely memories materialise in the topographical model as plaster hollows and mounds, as filament-printed strips, plexiglass treads, silicon surfaces, or wax masses. Actions, spaces, and subjects in memories merge and transform, recorded and embedded in the forms and material presence of the topography (Fig.10).

The co-planar convergence of actions and spaces repeats in the film's editing. In line with the autotopographical approach, corresponding to both an action and a spatiality, the film contains production outputs such as drawings, collages, and models on the one hand and the processes of making the topographical model on the other. In other words, the film plane simultaneously corresponds to the space on which the autotopographical home is constructed and the phases of making.

The film takes on an essayistic form through its visually and materially inscribed memories on the film plane with a self-reflexive and performative process. The transmissive relations between the different recording devices are also related to the translatable structure of the form, as a creative character of essayistic productions enabling the layering of meaning, as discussed by Alter (Alter, 2007, 54-55).

Peeling Off depicts an uncanny sense of reproducing home in which the familiarity of home is sought in an unfamiliar place. This autotopographical film juxtaposes the unearthed memories of home with an abstract model and the acts of making it. Meanwhile, the materiality of space triggering the production and the memories of varied homes are positioned in

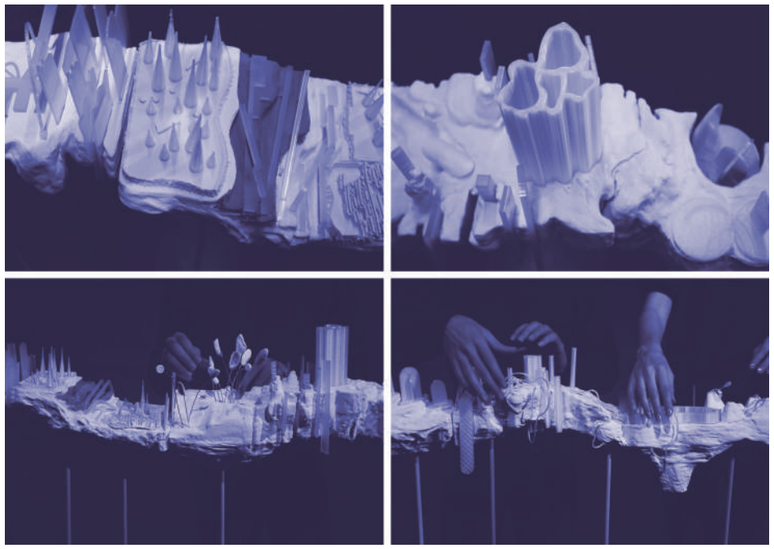

Fig.10 – Fragments of the collective topographical model.

the film as co-subjects setting up autotopography. In this sense, the film corresponds to a performative and site-specific approach to autotopography.

At this point, the essay form enables the situated production of spatial knowledge by providing the necessary condition for self-reflexive spatial research. It stretches the boundaries of architectural representation while allowing the transfer between means of representation.

It gives a field for an alternative spatial production of subjective and collective registers and a creative way of recording the home.

CONCLUSION

Autotopography is defined by fragments that serve as cues for memory, influencing what is recalled or forgotten. So to say, our archives are curated selections of memories constantly obscured by new encounters and configurations of events. Thus, we claim that the constant oscillation that delineates autotopography can be a transitional presence, whereas creative recordings such as essayistic filmmaking experiment with the notion of home.

The interconnectedness between the self and other and their mutual construction fosters a creative state akin to the performativity of autotopography. Autotopographical practice is a form of site-specific performance that defines the place it delineates through constant interactions.

The expression of identity through spatial performance has the potential to reshape conventional binary spaces dictated by dominant ideologies. In performative autotopography, the interaction between identity and space leads to a reciprocal exchange, where identity responds through expression and, in turn, shapes and delineates the spatialities it engages.

Within this context, the characteristics inherent in autotopographical practice can also provide insights into establishing a homely place. Autotopography encompasses various scales and times, blurring the boundaries between the interior and exterior realms of the home. This approach unbounds the notion of home from the confines of physical space, transforming it into a boundless repository of memories and identities. By revisiting home through an autotopographical lens, we can redefine its meaning and explore its uncanny nature, oscillating between familiarity and strangeness.

The distinctive aspect of autotopography lies in its ability to generate interpretable and explicit narratives through the interaction between the self's situated and reflexive reflections with space. Within the scope of our research, creative production was defined through creative records, and we examined the performative autotopographies of the home through the framework of architectural essay films.

In our study, creative making was characterized by creative recording, focusing on the performative autotopographies of homes explored within the context of architectural essay films. This form, embodying essayistic making, is positioned in our research as a creative form of recording that enables the collecting of fragments of home and reassembling them in the fluid field of film space. Thus, we claim that the performative making of architecture essay films forms an in-between space, interweaving multiple recording forms and many states of subjective encounter to build a spatial narrative.

Throughout the paper, we discussed three of our works. Each film explores homely memory through different methods to capture the essence of home, assemble its fragments, and depict collective imaginations among those involved.

Rather than following a predefined route, these films create distinct autotopographies, each with its own composition and creative recording, employing performative techniques to evoke uncanny, partial representations of home.

Presented sequentially, the films progress from individual recollections to collective imaginations, reflecting various stages of engagement in the creative recording. And, the interstices that we wanted to magnify trace the multitudes of creative and imaginative translations of monologues, dialogues, and polylogues that shapeshift into architectures, blurring the definite and established threshold of the home to portray an uncanny home.

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NOTES

1. (Un)Homely Dreams (2024) is produced by Mert Zafer Kara for the Master's Thesis entitled An Autotopographical Look at Home: The Filmic Reproduction of Home Through Creative Recordings (Kara, 2024), supervised by Meltem Aksoy and Bihter Almaç in ITU Architectural Design Master Programme. The film can be viewed on the following website: https://vimeo.com/mertzaferkara

2. Placeholder (2022) is produced by Mert Zafer Kara as part of the graduate course Architecture in Context, focusing on essayistic filmmaking as a design research method and representation tool in architectural theory and practice, led by Bihter Almaç in ITU Architectural Design Master's Programme. The film can be viewed on the following website of the course: https://architecturalessayfilm.wordpress.com/2022/06/08/placeholder/

3. Peeling Off (2024) evolved from discussions and projects in the Architecture in Context course at ITU, led by Bihter Almaç. It stemmed from initial conversations sparked by Placeholder (Kara, 2022) and Nothing Happens (Balaban, 2022). These works, along with collaborative discussions led by Kara, Almaç and Balaban, shaped Peeling Off. The discussions of this collective production can be examined in the article entitled Tracing the Familiar: Spatial Research Through Essayistic Filmmaking (Kara, Balaban, Almaç, 2024) and the film can be viewed on the following website: https://vimeo.com/mertzaferkara

ATLAS

Liminalities Atlas

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The Liminalities Atlas shares the work of the wonderful students who have collaborated with us on an exploration of liminalities over the past few years. We have had the pleasure of working with our University of Universities (UoU) community through a sequence of short workshops focusing on process; thinking through making. The UoU workshops offer the space to step outside of familiar contexts and evolve ideas through collaboration. These short workshops continue to offer far richer experiences than the short timespans might suggest. The results are not final pieces but ways thinking and of understanding.

The paragraphs that follow share the questions asked and the speculative processes explored.

DRAWING SPATIAL MOVEMENT

We came together to run the Drawing Spatial Movement workshop in 2021/22 to begin to ask how we might evolve drawing methods that respond to an understanding of space as continual performance. This began an engagement with a view of our world as a folded mercurial space of constant flux and event. We began to see ourselves as embodied companions, all moving through time within unfurling narratives.

The workshop aimed to challenge traditions within architectural representation that tend towards a promotion of permanence and of static space. We began a critical engagement with our movement and experience as we walk. This formed the foundation for explorations which questioned the nature of dynamic spatial experience.

The work began to unearth embodied spatial experience, such as perceptual border zones of spatial vagueness. Individual drawing tools evolved from these findings to tease out a design process embedded in an engagement with movement and embodiment.The process we followed is shared below within Karolina’s exploration.

Fig.1-5 Author: Karolina Małota.

EMBODIED DIGITAL LANDSCAPES

In 2021/22 and 22/23 Sarah collaborated with Marcus Winter, a human computer interaction specialist at UoB, and our UoU cohort, to speculate on our evolving relationship with the digital landscapes we inhabit. We entered a world where stories can construct and reconstruct themselves at will, time can be reversed, and mirror worlds echo Borges fiction. We challenged notions that an increasing engagement with the digital must deny physical embodiment with all the dystopian and problematic environmental consequences that might bring. We explored the potential of emerging technologies to extend our limited anthropocentric perspective, asking if we might create architectures that blur the boundary of the physical and digital to enhance our embodiment. The workshop was two pronged and also focused on the design process in the context of emergent generative AI. The emphasis sometimes placed on a final glossy image can lead to

Fig.1 - Karolina Małota: Record of the initial walk, collecting reflections and experiences.

Fig.2 - Selected frame for experimentation.

Fig.3 - Exploration and identification of a method. Exploration of the experience of moving past a reflective shop window.

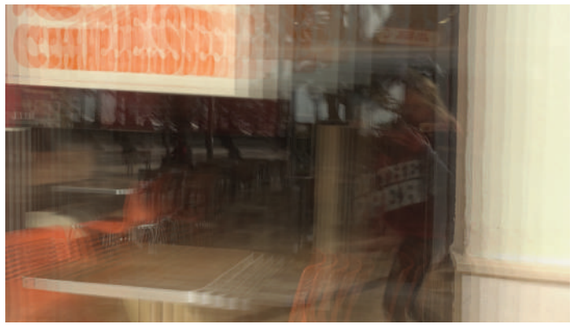


Fig.4 - Exploration of the experience.

Fig.5 - Exploration of the experience.

misunderstandings that this is what design is, the output of image generators can therefore be equally misread. Rushing to a final generated image is to abdicate the huge responsibility we have for the design of spaces that inform and enrich our lived experience. Marcus gave a talk demystifying machine learning and AI, and I offered a perspective on the nature of design as process through the lens of the critical position. We then pitted AI tools against our usual design process. International groups evolved speculative proposals through a considered design process drawing on a clear critical position.

The original ambitions for the project were then typed into an AI image generator. The results quite starkly revealed how the roughest of sketches were immensely more valuable than a glossy AI render. The process work held layers of thought and a depth of richness from the exploration of site, embodiment and critical position that the AI tools had nothing to offer to.

The process work of one of our teams is shared below.

Fig.6-10 Authors: Sergio Cabanyes de Benito, Clara Mata Garcia, Francesco De Pretto, Mattis Castro Prado, Jaei Jung, Hyunju Woo, Julie Huertas, Tekle Gujabidze, Anna Borkowska.

Fig.6 - Initial exploration of ideas and concerns.

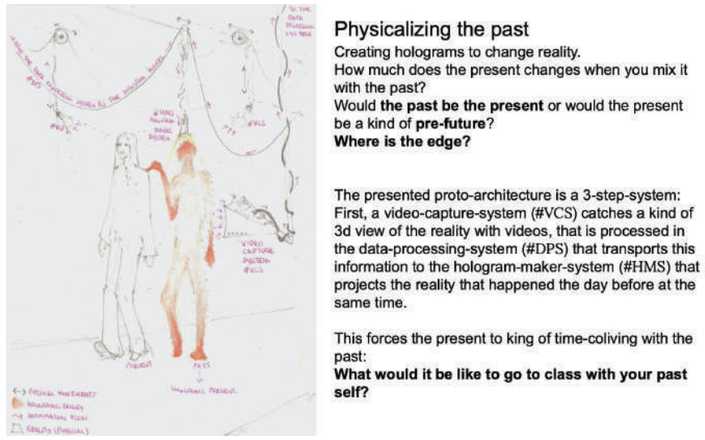


Fig.7 - Explorative sketches for thinking through ideas.

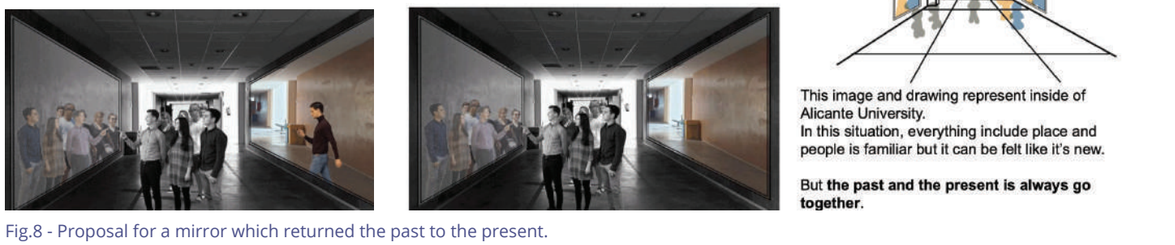


Fig.8 - Proposal for a mirror which returned the past to the present.

Fig.9 - Filmic exploration of the inhabitation of place by the shadows of past times.

Fig.10 - AI image generation produced by typing in the initial ideas at the end of the design process which hold nothing of the richness of the proposals..

MEDIATING SITES: THINKING THROUGH DRAWING

In 2022/23 we furthered our joint exploration to explore how we might think through our drawings. The workshop explored drawing as a means of extended cognition, looking at how this might be applied as a tool for furthering site exploration. Embracing an understanding that we extend beyond the perceived boundaries of our bodies to occupy the tools we use, we explored how the action of drawing might act as tool for evolving understanding as opposed to merely representing.

Challenging ourselves to extend into our drawings we began to think through them to more fully understand spatial conditions. We experimented with the potential of site drawings to act as tools to explore situated project concerns, evolving potential methodologies. These became tool kits for the application of drawing as an extension of site investigation and the design thought process. We used Rhino as a shared tool for this exploration, uncovering how we might otherwise deploy its capabilities within a process that offered space and time to evolving and uncovering thought.

We share below this process as explored by Julia.

Fig.11-16 Author: Julia Schritt: Collaging, layering, montaging a site from photographic recordings. Drawing construction sequence within Rhino 3D software.

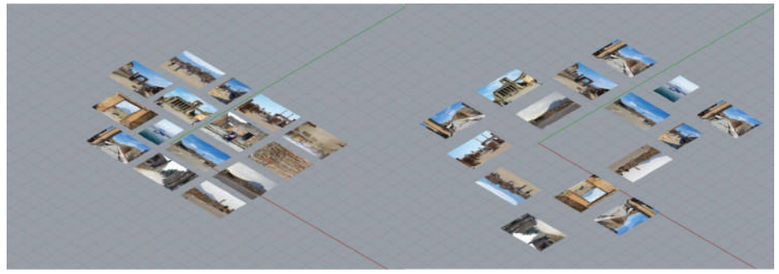


Fig.11 - Initial exploration of ideas and concerns.

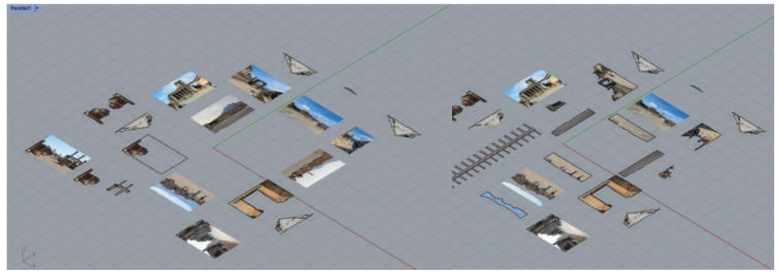


Fig.12 - Step one and two: photographs imported into Rhino.

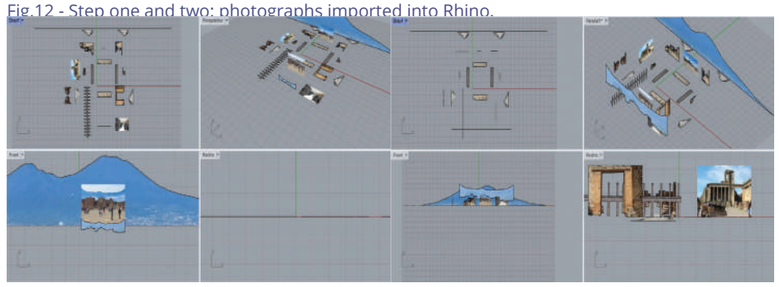
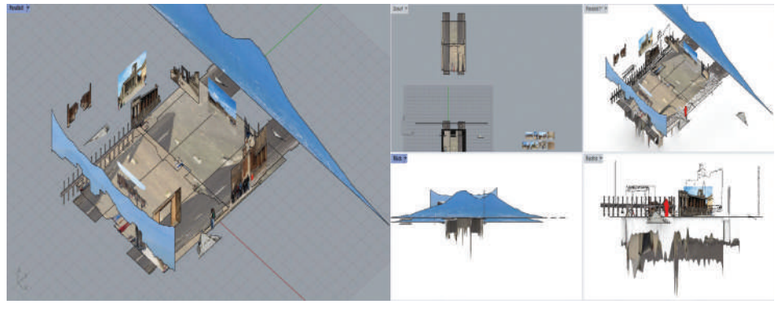


Fig.13 - Step three and four.



14 - Step five and six.

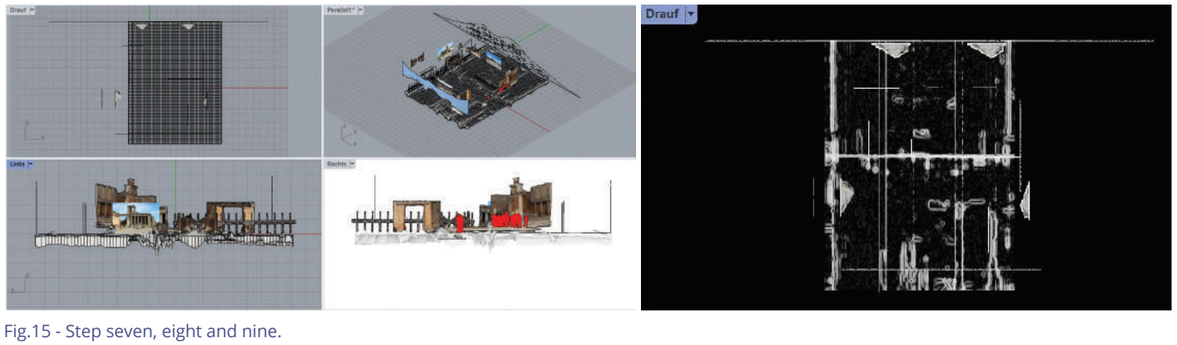


Fig.15 - Step seven, eight and nine.

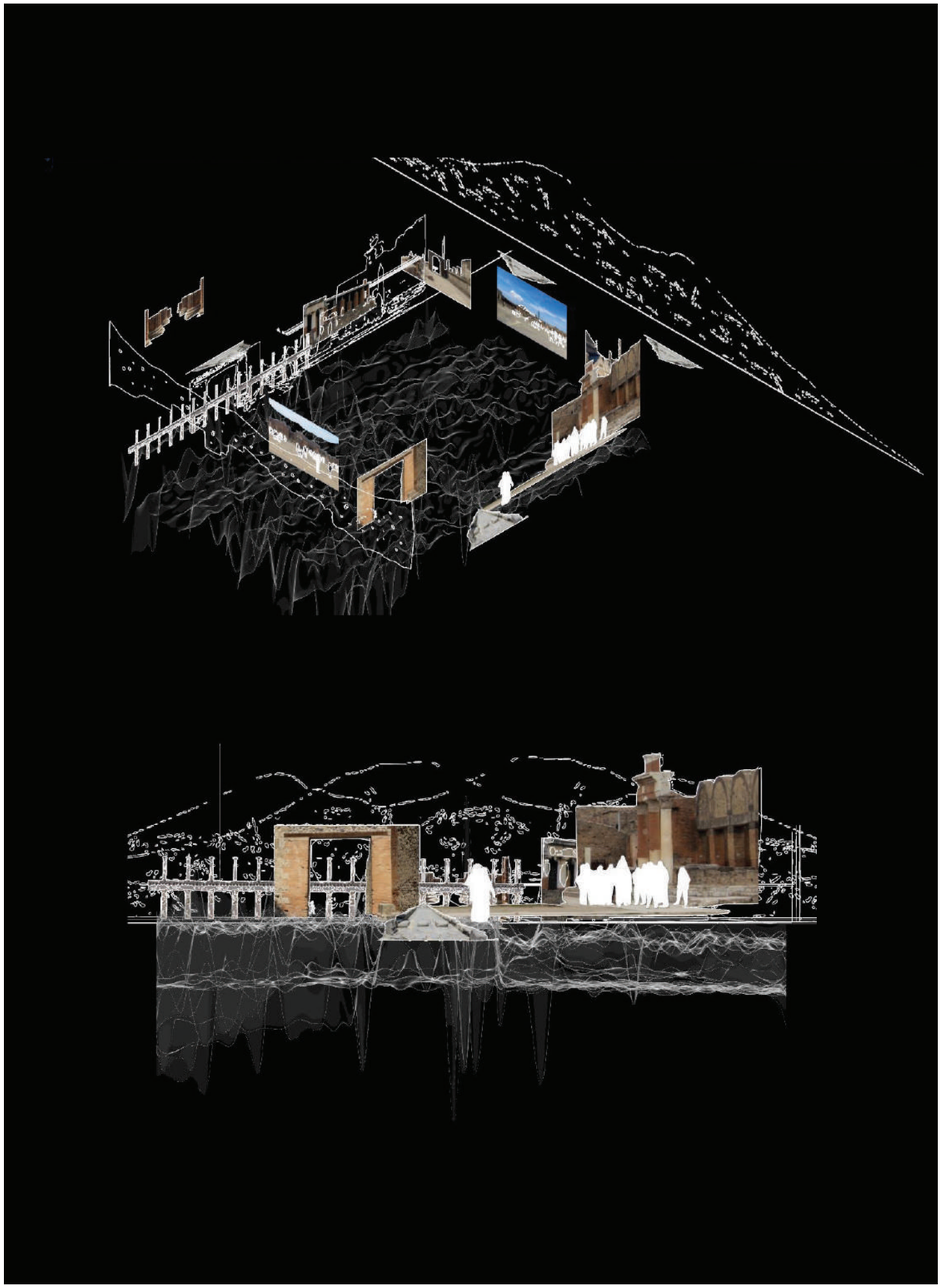


Fig.16 - Step ten.

INTERWEAVINGS

Sarah continued an exploration of embodiment within digital landscapes in 2024 collaborating with Edward Crump of Kingston University, Karina Rodriguez a specialist in digital representation and Marcus Winter a human computer interaction specialist from UoB, and our UoU cohort in the Interweavings Workshop. We speculated on how we might harness a thicker, interwoven understanding of digital and physical space to extend embodiment. David Attenborough said "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced." We therefore explored speculative proposals interweaving augmented reality into our urban spaces to entwine our experiences with those of our non-human companions, drawing them to our attention in order to enhance all our futures. We furthered our exploration of the design process in the context of the continued evolution of AI tools. We discussed the role of the critical position in evolving meaningful design, Marcus updated us on advances in AI, illustrating possibilities and limitations, and Karina introduced us to the world of augmented reality. Technologies are neutral, it is the ideas with which we weald them with that determine outcomes. So with our approach and ambitions clear we then released AI tools to really learn through doing. These tools are undeniably here and undeniably powerful. We either critically engage them within teaching, or they are encountered anyway without full understanding and potentially derail the design process. Within the workshop frustrations with the limitations of AI tools when working within a meaningful design process quickly turned people back to working with methods that had the power to capture, and crucially evolve ideas, such as collages, sketches and animations. Below we share the work of three teams exploring these tools within the evolution of an AR project. At first glance they appear to be effective at illustrating ideas, but although fast and visually impactful their use acts to shortcut a potentially rich design process which had more to offer. See our exhibition web site here: https://uouinterweavings.wordpress.com

Fig.16 - Klein, Huseein, Tsamis: Development.

MA STUDENT WORKS

We are indebted to our students who have creatively and innovatively explored the concerns of liminalities at both the University of Brighton and the Bergen School of Architecture. This engagement was initiated with the Moving Through Course we ran together in 2019/20 at Bergen. Students since have evolved these concerns within both schools and a small handful of their work is shared below.

Fig.17 - Yasemin Sanal, Arthur Connolly, Tiffany Marianne: AR app disclosing the squirrels role in planting trees and regenerating forests.

Fig.18 - Yakin Adel Ben Aghil, Barry Leigh, Kamali Srinivasan, Leon Garamow, and Elisabeth Nesporova: Proposals to both identify and bring to attention insect life offering habitat within the city.

Embodied Affect

Moeini, Ashkan[1]

[1] MA, Architectural and Urban Design, University of Brighton, UK

In the quiet embrace of Madeira Terrace, where the whispers of history meet the roar of the sea, a vision was born—a dance of light and shadow, of art and advocacy. This hallowed ground, with its weathered stones and cast iron grace, was chosen for its solitude and its story, a perfect canvas for an immersive symphony of human rights and the homeless.

The journey began with dreams of transformation, where video mapping turned stone and steel into living murals. This magic, known as projection mapping, brought forth a metamorphosis, as surfaces breathed and moved, telling tales of justice and dignity. Light and color wove together, crafting illusions that played with reality, making the mundane sublime. Holographic wonders joined the dance, their three-dimensional forms hovering in the air, ethereal and profound. No special lens was needed to see these phantoms of light, only the open eyes of wonder. This seamless blend of physical space and spectral image whispered secrets to the night, deepening the enchantment of Madeira's shores.

Inspiration flowed from the hands of masters—Bill Viola's serene sanctuaries of sight and sound, where viewers could lose themselves in meditation and reflection. The bold innovations of Refik Anadol, weaving artificial intelligence with data, showed how technology could birth new realms of immersive beauty. And the boundless vistas of Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience revealed how 360° art could envelop and transport, turning spectators into participants in a living gallery. Artificial intelligence became the brush in this digital renaissance. Tools like DALL-E read the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and spun them into visuals—symbolic, interpretive, and profound. This dance of human intent

Fig.1 - Experimentation with projection mapping using Resolume software.

Fig.2 - Visualisation of projection mapping proposals / 1. Video available at this link: https://telegra.ph/Echoes-of-Dignity-05-27

Fig.3 - Visualisation of projection mapping proposals / 2.

and machine creation was one of trial and iteration, refining and redefining until the visions matched the dream. Runway's alchemy then breathed motion into these still images, turning them into brief, breathtaking videos. Each frame a step in a story, each second a brushstroke on the canvas of time. Resolume software acted as the maestro, conducting the symphony of visuals and music, synchronizing them into a harmonious whole. This tool, in the hands of the artist, transformed modest spaces into portals to another realm, testing and perfecting the art before it met the grand stage. And then, under the watchful eyes of the stars and the sea, the final performance took form. Projections danced across Madeira Terrace, holograms flickered to life, and the music swelled in perfect harmony. It was a tableau of light and sound, a call to empathy, a beacon of awareness shining bright against the dark canvas of night. Madeira Terrace, once a silent sentinel, now spoke with a voice of light and sound, telling stories of human rights, of those unseen and unheard.

This project, a union of past and present, of technology and heart, showed how art could transform, enlighten, and inspire. It stood as a testament to the power of creative vision, to the magic that happens when history, art, and advocacy collide. In this luminous display, Madeira Terrace was not merely a site but a symbol, a place where the past whispered to the present, and together they painted a future filled with justice and compassion.

Merging Particle Spaces: Particle realities

Hidalgo, Leon; Linker, Gittit[1]

[1] The Future Soft House Master Course, Bergen School of Architecture, Norway

Particle realities is a project that was developed in The Future Soft House Master Course along two lines of inquiry. On the one hand it explored the physical and spatial property of particles and their space-forming abilities and on the other hand it investigated the representation of reality through different media and the potential of new realities formed by point clouds as a result of 3d-scanning.

In order to uncover the flow of fragments, the project sets out on a series of strategies such as observing a ray of light or revealing the dust floating through our rooms. These triggered an impulse to look at the interrelationship between light, particles and movement. Each experiment revealed the existence of additional agencies such as wind patterns, revealed by the falling snow, revealed by the street lights or as an experiment shows: fog particles and their turbulences revealed by a laser beam (Fig.1).

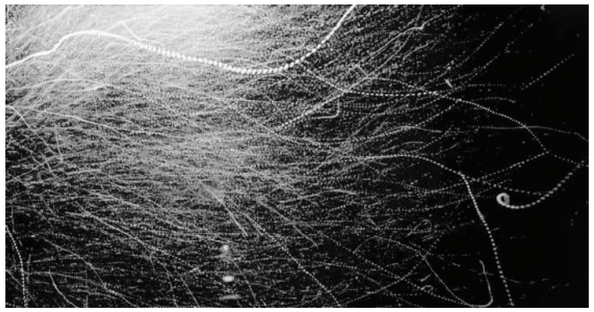


Fig.1 - Tracking particle movements with video editing software.

By exploring the behaviour and potential of particles as spatial com¬posers, the project started to form spaces using tools that guided, accelerated and bounced of the particles. By asking when can time-fragments be stopped and spaces revealed, the experiments suggested that movement was crucial to suspend particles and to bring them into their seemingly antigravitational state. It became the motor for controlling particles as spatial agents in two performances that created ephemeral particle spaces through e.g. a rotating plate catapulting sawdust in a rotational manner to form a temporary particle curtain (Fig.2). They are inspired by sprinkler systems, where water hits a metal plate to form an umbrella of rain or in water parks where mushroom shaped fountains create a round curtain of water (Fig.3).

Fig.2 - Particle Curtain.

The inconsistency between the spatial experience of these moments and their representation in video and photography opened up for a search into other potential media to explore this topic. Working with representation and analysis tools as perspectives, different spaces were revealed and concealed. Using photogrammetry on a suitcase showed a spatial image

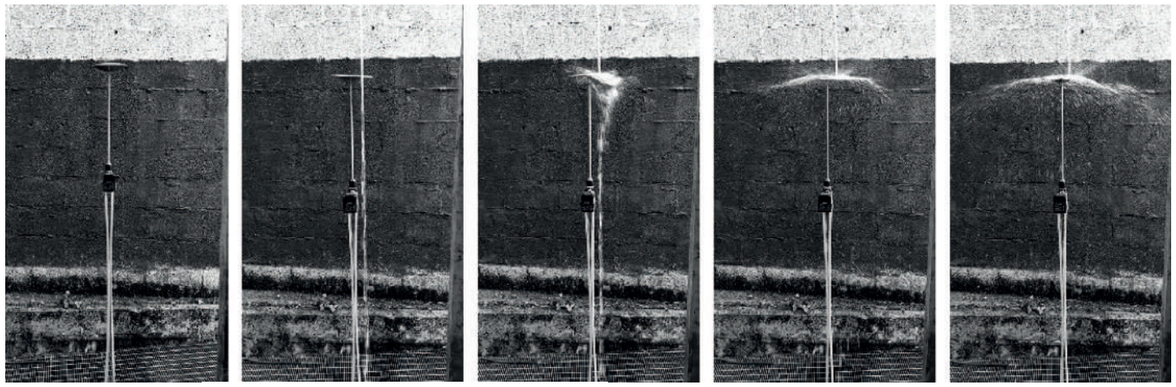


Fig.3 - Sprinkler Drawing

Fig.4 - Revealing the suitcase through point cloud representation.

Fig.5 - Point cloud from 3d scan of a historic site in Bryggen, Bergen (Norway).

Fig.6 - Point cloud landscape with bulging of Window Spaces.

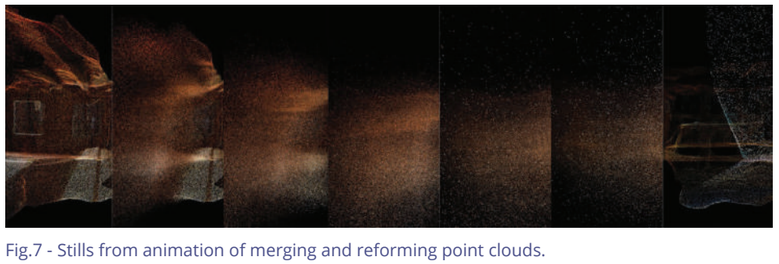


Fig.7 - Stills from animation of merging and reforming point clouds.

of the object, not only did the tool show different aspects of an object, but the space was used to reveal the tool of photogrammetry (Fig.4).

Using this abstraction as a case study of a unique world heritage building in Bryggen, Bergen (Norway) led to dissolving it into a landscape of particle boundaries pleasantly misrepresenting reality, asking the question how to diffuse physical boundaries How can speculation and accidents create new realities? (Fig.5). One of the pleasantly misrepresenting aspects of the 3d-scanning was the bulging window spaces in the point cloud scans, that fail to perceive glass as matter. These bulges were imagined as new spaces, where the window and the view merges into one space (Fig.6).

The idea of the mechanical creation of particle spaces and the digital point cloud realities were combined in an animation showing different scans merging into each other, dissolving and reforming in a sandstorm of particle matter. For this we designed the EP-SC (Electro Magnetic Particle Spacemaker), a speculative device, that is able to shape space by directing particle flows through a magnetic field (Fig.7).

NOTES

The Future Soft House Master Course was held in Spring 2022 at Bergen School of Architecture (BAS). Main tutors: Charlotte Erckrath (Associate Professor BAS) and Phil Watson (EEL_ extraordinary. experimental. Laboratory.)

Tissue cloud. Fog landscapes

Markova, Sofya[1]

[1] The Future Soft House Master Course, Bergen School of Architecture, Norway

If we could activate building environment to become organism, could we imagine new applications, new practices?

Fog awaited me above a mountain lake. The cloud was constantly changing in response to the environment and filled with wind currents. Up to this point, I imagined the fog as something calm and constant, but after visiting inside, I had to realize that I was very mistaken.

The project “Tissue cloud. Fog landscapes” starts from the first question of The Future Soft House Master Course “What can be a split-site?” and delves into the exploration of the natural forces, feelings and spaces created by fog environments. The project is a series of questions, experiments, photographs, installations, drawings and reflections through which the author tries to observe, capture, recreate, or catch this ever-changing environment of fog and reflects on what kind of space it could be.

When I think about a split-site, I started thinking about an environment which is in-between, conditions close to evaporation, condensation, clouds formation – fog. Which touches the ground but still not grounded. I find it fascinating how these natural phenomena create its own enveloping space. I’m interested in the feeling of fluidity and the feeling of time slowing down when you get inside.

In the project, Fog is a natural phenomenon of condensation and a place at the same time. Also, it mixes natural forces, creating its own enveloping space - strong, intense, powerful, fluid and dissolving.

Fog has no boundaries - why do all human constructed places have boundaries? No dimensions, just a coincidence of conditions, flows, particles. Intense currents inside which build the shape - wind, gravity, humidity, atmospheric - what are these relations?

Being inside fog provokes a strong feeling that environment and time work differently in this fluid substance and questions arise: Is the fog taking away complexity? Is the fog the landscape? And the following question is, does fog transform landscapes?

Fig.1 - Documentation of the fog.

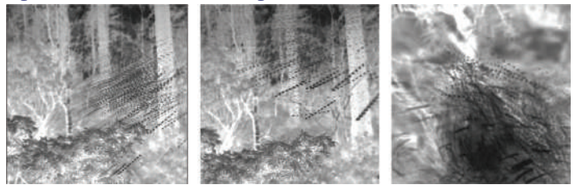


Fig.2 - Fog investigation. Inversion of the flows and speeds inside.

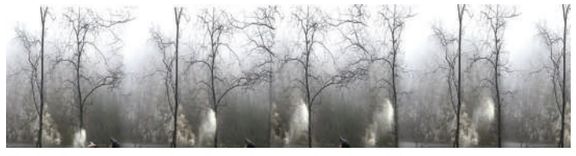


Fig.3 - Fog investigation. Experiment with visualising cloud particles.

Fig.4 - Who lives in the fog?

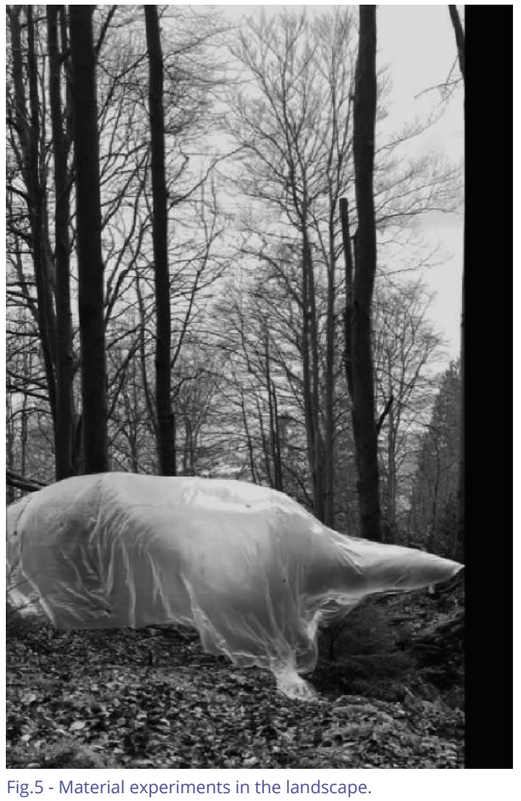


Fig.5 - Material experiments in the landscape.

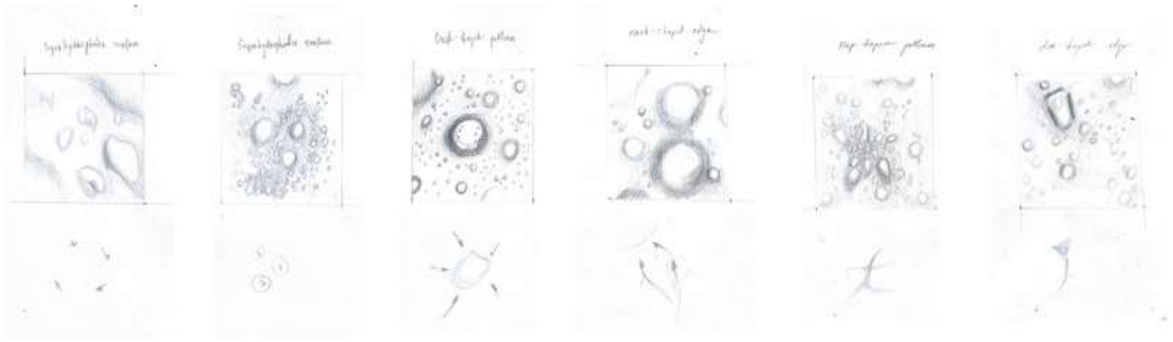


Fig.6 - Identification of condensation patterns

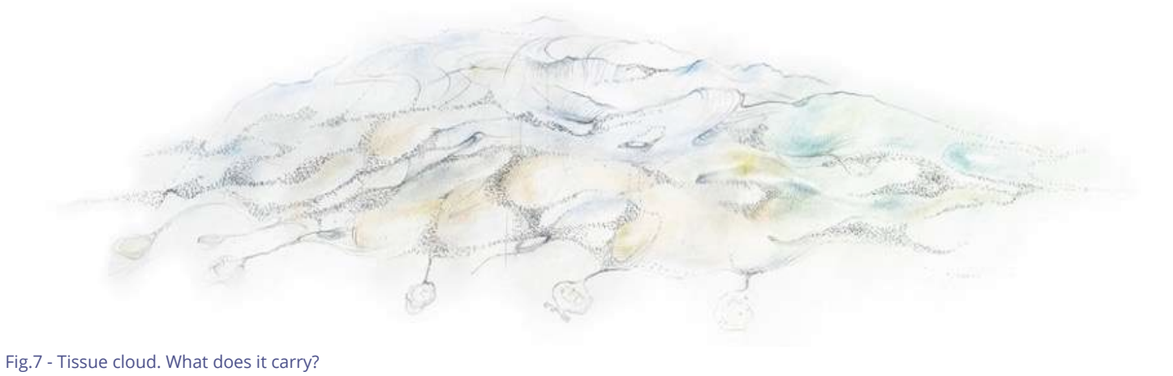


Fig.7 - Tissue cloud. What does it carry?

Fig.8 - Evolution cycle of droplet tissue cloud. Collecting flows - condense memory and emotions - connects with the landscape, erupting and forming the space.

Fig.9 - Taking parts - converting landscape.

Fog constructs its own narrative of showing objects. Invisible things clean up. You cannot predict this sequence and your path through it. Landscape and human stories combine in the space. Space of memory and moments in time. The natural flows are getting slower and reverse inside, leaving you alone with yourself, which begins to be a start point of the reflection.

How does a person get involved in these relationships? Let's imagine that fog condenses and brings down not only water cycles, but also emotions? Is fog able to cut out spaces from time or saved prints? What kind of space could this be?

I envision the fog like a variable density tissue structure which collects flows and condensates emotional memory.

My discovery is ongoing and continues to evolve.

NOTES

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Fig.10 - Travel story of the cloud. Installation in the landscape.

Adventures in Time and Space

Reed, Matt[1]

[1] MA, Architectural and Urban Design, University of Brighton, UK

I will share below two projects. The first was the culmination of my MA in Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Brighton, from which I graduated in August 2023. The second is a recently opened public art project funded by Arts Council England and The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which grew out of my MA work. My work evolved concerns through the MA for memory, temporality, and an exploration of how emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) can transform our relationship with urban environments, evoking a sense of personal and collective embodiment.

RELATIVE CONSTRUCTS

"Time is just something we invented to make motion seem simple" Albert Einstein

Humans are programmed to march to the rhythm of a particular drum and live according to a standardised method of measuring time; however, it is well accepted that time itself is relative. Dr. Kevin Healy, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Galway, has observed that the capacity of different animals to perceive time varies significantly (Healy et al, 2013, 685-96).

Humans typically have a temporal resolution of approximately 60 frames per second, whereas the fire beetle can see rates of up to 400 frames per second, indicating that they would find our experience to be extremely sluggish. Yet at the opposite end of the spectrum, the starfish has a temporal perception rate of approximately one frame per second.

Among humans, temporal perception can also vary; for example, studies suggest that football goalkeepers perceive changes at a quicker rate, and pilots and surfers can react to their environments more quickly than the average person. Our sense of time can also depend on our environment and situation, and psychologists have discovered that as humans age, their subjective perception of the passage of time tends to quicken. I wonder what we might notice if we were to modify our own temporal resolution. Could enhancing our senses to see beyond the boundaries of our current perspective reveal new types of beauty? By manipulating and displacing time in urban spaces, might new ways of experiencing the human body in space be revealed?

Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Henri Bergson offered insights into the relationship between time and consciousness. Their ideas discuss our understanding of temporal experiences, the intentional structure of consciousness, and the embodied nature of perception. Post-phenomenology expands on this to include the influence of technology on human experience and is particularly pertinent to my area of research.

I am interested in the role of technology in shaping temporal experiences, especially as new technologies such as spatial computing systems redefine our interactions with time and space.

At Project Female's dance space in Brighton, I captured the dancers' performances using a Kinect sensor camera, standard 2D video and photogrammetry. With this material, I conducted a series of experiments in the aim to reveal the inert sense of beauty of how the body inhabits space, expanding the sense of perception by altering how we perceive motion over time. I have attempted to comprehend how performing these tests and viewing the results in various spaces made me feel. By recognising and understanding my own emotions, I hope to be able to create spaces that evoke emotions for others.

Through my experiments I have been able to simulate the idea of different temporal resolutions, and experience their interaction in different locations. I wanted to try to understand how manipulating time and altering my own temporal resolution might allow me to see beyond the limits of my current perspective, but it was only really the beginning of a much longer investigation.

The subject of time is truly complex. Nobody fully understands the true nature of time, but these experiences have yielded intriguing results and, in turn, revealed aspects of an elusive beauty unseen. To read the full text go to: M.A. Master Work | Matt Reed Artist.

Fig.1 - The first experiment used physical photographic slides. The fragility of the material makes me think back to the idea of how our brains process memories and how those memories can fade over time.

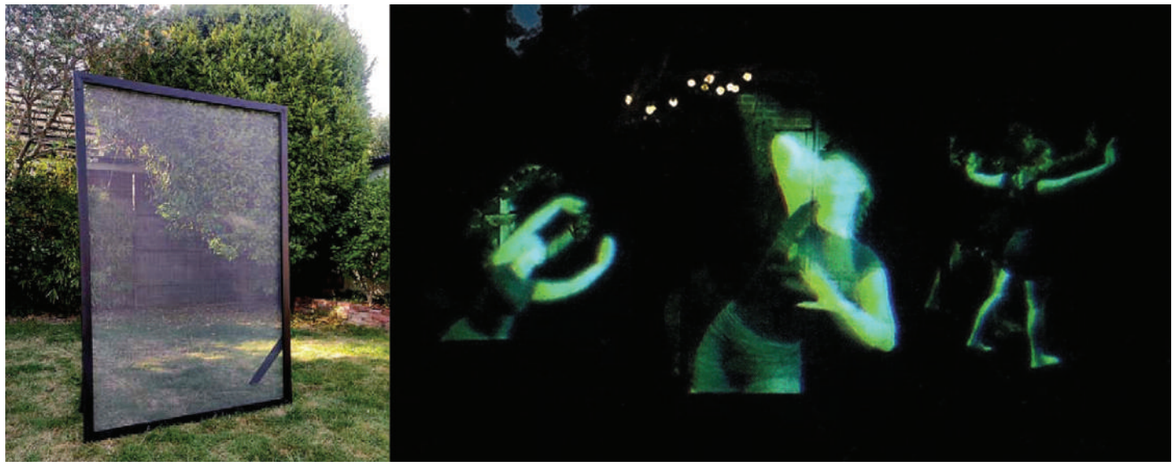

Fig.2 - The image is first held on the screen but then passes through it, with the light being transmitted onto the background, creating a secondary afterimage. The full body image on the right-hand side allows a suspension of disbelief, as if the subject feels like a hologram floating in space, and the closer cropped images on the left and the central screens draw you back to the image. A video of the three projections on screens at night: https://youtu.be/69X-YEXkmrs

Fig.3 - A montage of the dancer placed into different locations using augmented reality with temporal disruptions. Note the passers-by, oblivious to the digital avatar in the same space. Video: https://youtu.be/w35kGdlx7KY

TIME TRAVEL IN POST-PHENOMENOLOGIAL SPACE

This work grew out of questions into whether we might be able to extend our own experience of time and memory and reconnect with the past through an engagement with the digital. I set out to adopt a post-phenomenological standpoint, a philosophical approach which focuses on how technologies mediate our interactions with the world and our own experiences with technology acting as an extension of ourselves.

'The Bognor Regis Time Portal' is a site-specific cultural heritage experience located on the south coast of England that opened to the public on March 29, 2024. It is free to use and will be in place for 18 months.

Using their smartphones, users can literally step back in time to experience aspects of life on the beach in the 19th century. In augmented space they will encounter digital twins of the wooden bathing machines that once lined the beaches, which allowed Victorian bathers to protect their modesty. Viewers also come face-to-face with a three-dimensional video avatar of a remarkable woman from that period. Mary Wheatland was a bathing machine proprietor, swimming teacher, and lifesaver who is credited with saving over thirty people from drowning in the sea during the sixty years she worked on the beach. The project was launched to coincide with the centenary of her death in 1924.

To initiate the immersive journey, users simply scan a QR code with their smartphone. This is the point where the magic of the experience takes place, with our time travellers ceremonially crossing the threshold of the portal structure to enter a hybrid world with digital representations of the past merged with the physicality of the present. This all takes place in the space that exists between the physical and digital realms, and somewhere between the temporal boundaries of the past and the present.

The time portal has the potential to reclaim history from museums and textbooks, reinstating it precisely at the location on Earth where those events originally took place, creating unparalleled historical context for the viewer.

At the time of writing, the portal has been open for just over a month and has already attracted around 7,000 visitors, far exceeding expectations. Bognor Regis, like many UK seaside towns, has suffered years of underfunding and my hope is that this work will act as a catalyst to challenge perceptions and assist in enhancing civic pride. More details can be found at: www.BRTimePortal.com.

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Healy,K., McNally, L., Ruxton, G., Cooper, N., Jackson, A. Metabolic Rate and Body Size Are Linked with Perception of Temporal Information. In: Animal Behaviour, 86, January 2013, pp 685-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2013.06.018.

Fig.1 - Avatar of Mary Wheatland.

Fig.2 - AR recreation of a bathing machine.

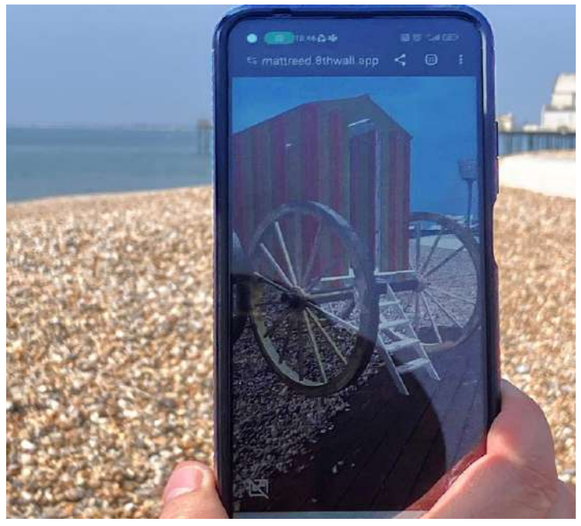

Fig.3 - Pointing for xray website.

Fig.4 - The Bognor Regis Time Portal.

Fig.5 - Opening day of the experience.

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Issue #08/ RADICAL FUTURES
December 2024

Guest Editor
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23 May 2024
Call opers.

15 September 2024
Full paper submission.

01 October 2024
Outcome of double-blind peer review process.

01 November 2024
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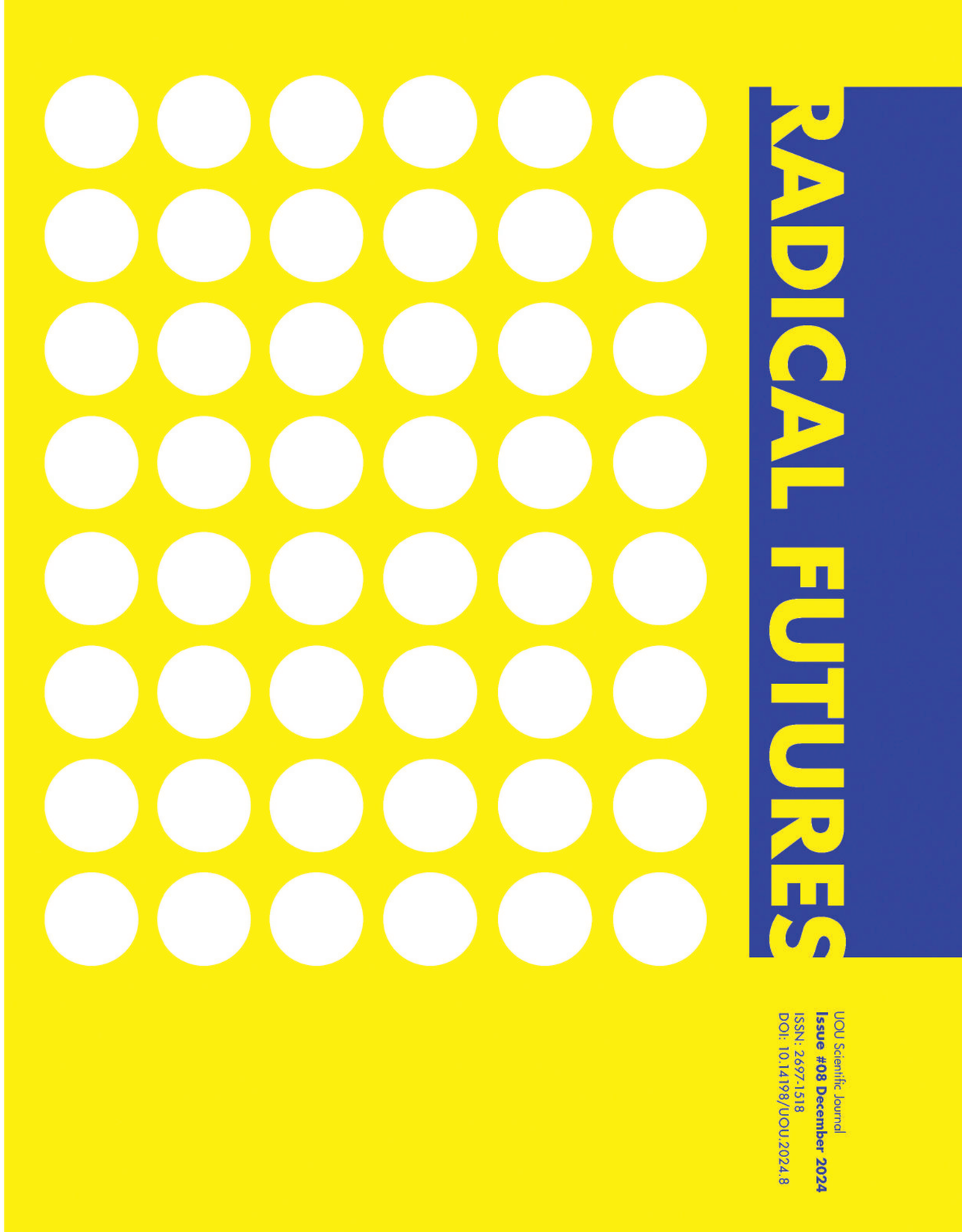

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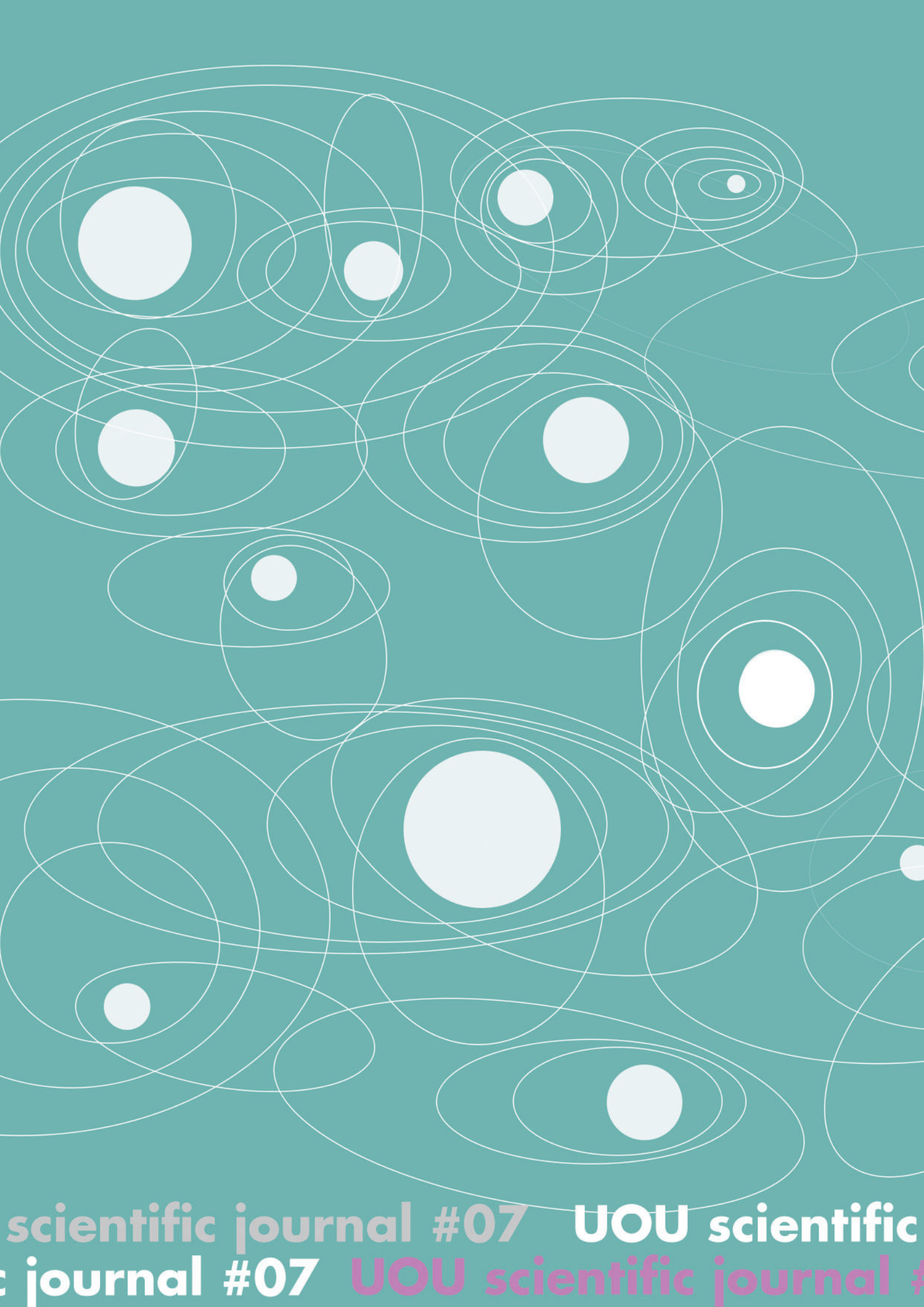
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