

THE PROCESS OF PLACE FOR ARCHITECTURE

by

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of

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Nicholaus Michael Diggins

April 2010

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ABSTRACT

Too often architecture is perceived as only a building and its site. To utilize the power of architecture one must harness and develop the true nature of place in its totality. Development must be rooted in the human need to connect to their world and surroundings, allowing one to fully understand their own identity. Every site has its own unique spirit, or *genius loci*. Finding this is a process and, when tapped into correctly, the *genius loci* can create a connection between the human body and the spirit of their surroundings. Ultimately the human existence thrives on the need to belong. The separation of place and architecture leads to confusion and the division of body and spirit.

Architecture needs to be the medium that enhances a place's identity and can connect one to the world around them. Place must be developed through an understanding of how it came to be, what it is now and how it will be shaped and strengthened as a union between architecture and place. Knowing how to deconstruct the social and built environments to origins for our understanding is the basis of questioning. A full body experience has the power to enrich our life by connecting spirit and identity into an environment. Architecture is art and science of design; it develops identities related to site, further strengthening them. It is a product of man alone, who has an inner ability to leave his mark respectively within a landscape by using human design, creating harmony between body and nature through the art of architecture.

The solution is to create an Architecture that allows one to be awakened to the world around them, through a process of raising awareness to an environment and its specifics.



Context



“Our world is not the same as Othello’s world. You can’t make flivvers without steel-and you can’t make tragedies without social instability. The world’s stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can’t get.” - Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Ch. 16

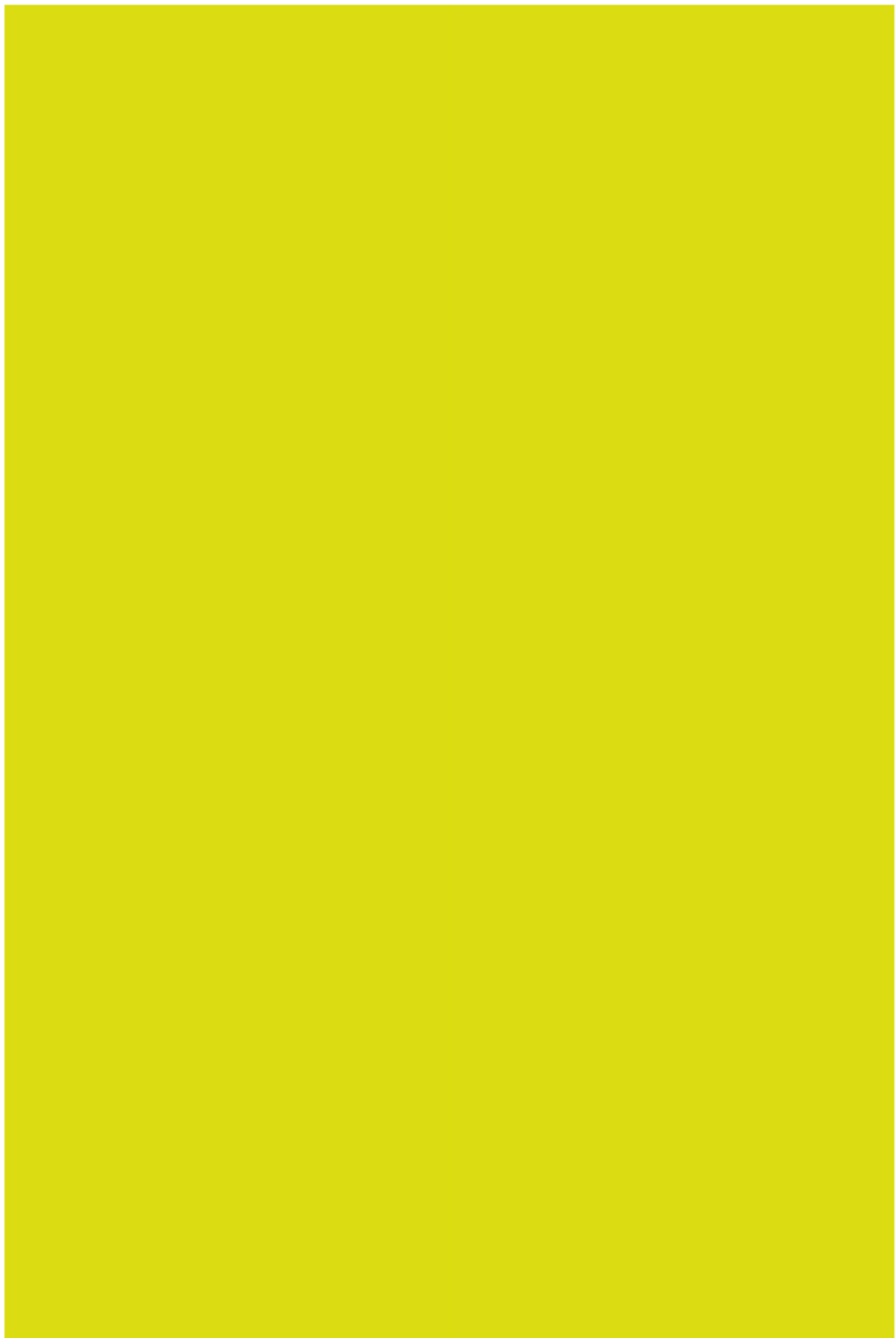
One can analyze and compare the novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley to today’s mundane architecture. These “empty shells” don’t respond to place or environment, in turn not allowing people to connect and respond to their surroundings. De-constructivists urge a constant questioning of our surroundings. Stability as described in the quote can be called complacency when compared to the current trend in Architecture. Accepting more of the same is sometimes confused with happiness. If one never questions, they don’t know what they don’t have. Is that happiness? The shortcomings due to a complacent society are the lack of evolving and awareness of surroundings. A true connection of body and mind is impossible and the downfall of the built environment, that just carries on as business-as-usual, is inevitable. It cannot adapt to the many needs of a changing society.

The act of reading allows one’s mind for a moment to think and drift on a level of thought not commonly present during the daily hustle and bustle of life. I treasure fiction novels of the not-so-distant future because they paint a picture of the built environment that one can still relate to. Allowing imagination to be active at the same time as integrating thoughts into present areas of life.

J.G. Ballard’s “The Ultimate City” is an excellent example. It describes forms of abandoned cities and the possible

technologies that may be developed in just a few years. All that he writes about resembles a future that could very likely be possible in just a short time. His characters are always searching for something and questioning their surroundings to understand more about the world and themselves, which leads them to good or often bad discoveries of truth about the built environment. I've begun to realize most of these stories are just a few critical acts away from actually happening. It's this idea that one powerful act can change the course of the future, the possibility of this is fascinating, and can be applied to all areas of life. Most applicable is the future of the practice of architecture. An informed act of where the practice may go gives a real possibility for the incoming thinkers to the field. It's not all about shiny facades and buildings laid out over slick magazine spreads. Knowing that architecture is connected with place and thereby connected to humans is crucial. This act of change has the ability to shift former drab strategies that have been applied over and over. These strategies have been more about one's dream of the future rather than a strategy that can build human connection to their world and perceptions around them, by creating an awareness of the body in space, new or familiar. Current forms are being built on a misunderstanding of influences and ideas from routines formally built on rules that are ignoring the greatest need of society. A need to understand self, place, and the connections between these so one can begin to deconstruct values to their origins and evaluate decisions for new fully informed outcomes based on oneself and their environment. What if I was able to spark a way to activate thoughts in the environment that begins the process of questioning? In all actuality, will it work on myself, can I develop a mode of thinking and creating that will create this outcome of deconstructing and reconstructing the layers around me in the urban setting which provide strategies for the built environment?

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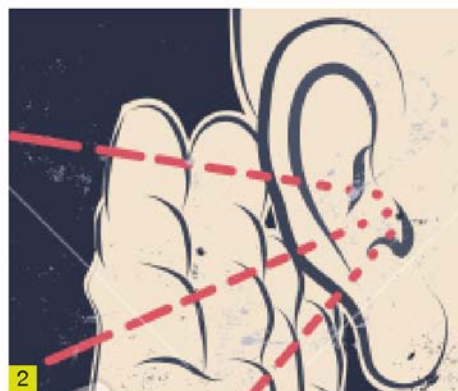


The piercing noise from the alarm clock seemed like it would never stop, no matter how many times Michael hit the snooze button, just five more minutes was worth the pain of not having to get up and face another weekday. Rolling out of bed to the floor and slowly sitting up he turned the television on to start the news of the day. Some lady was rambling on about the war in Iraq as Michael peered into the mirror; his eyes were blurry with sleep. He proceeded to mindlessly get dressed and prepared his meal and quickly left the apartment to start his walk to work, eyes still filled with sleep.

It was cold, the night air still lingering from the nearby ocean. Michael was thinking he should have put that coat on before he left but it didn't matter, he'd be at work soon enough. He was walking, asleep but moving. A stranger asked him a question about the weather and he just continued on murmuring something from the side of his mouth. Stupid tourist get out of my city, you don't even have the faintest idea of what it's like to live here.

The elevator chimed and Michael stepped into his dreaded world of boringness. He still didn't get why he had chosen this job, he didn't like anyone there, and he didn't even have a view from his office. Why did he stay? One day he'd get that view he thought and then it would be all worth the suffering. Jerry walked into his office, "Hey Mike, how bout those Niners?" Uh, how he hated small talk, it was so useless and a waste of time. "I know. Great game, wasn't it?" He lied; the fakeness made his own stomach feel sour and a pungent taste was entering his mouth as he spoke.

The elevator chimed and the bodies seemed to pour out of its doors. Michael followed along, as did everyone. The day was





done for work, it was time to relax, get home, eat and slowly drift to sleep. Crack! “Damn sidewalks, when is the city going to fix these...” Michael suddenly realized something was different, he could sense it, time seemed to be frozen, for the people and cars in front of him weren’t moving. He shuffled his feet clenching his brief case tightly in his left hand as he approached the scene. Had someone been hurt? Everything was so quiet

He had crossed this place for the last eight years and never once noticed it, shining with the brilliance of the sunset green and golden hues surrounded by pink hints of light. The sidewalk was even covered with this soft wrinkled fabric. Everyone just stopped and realized they were being awoken to something. Senses of their surroundings had been forgotten and all at once they were coming back. Michael was standing still, motionless; others began to move again, the traffic was coming back to life as people were sounding horns from the distance. He reached out with his right hand and slowly touched the fabric that was wrapping this bridge. He smiled uncontrollably as it filled between his fingers the soft plastic sensation, he could feel the warm concrete underneath. Looking to his right he saw his apartment building in the distance and further still the ocean hazily making a horizon. The woman in his view smiled back at him, he noticed she was touching the fabric too.

As he continued his walk back home the entire city started to fade into view; its sounds and textures. The people moving and the lights that were starting to flicker on, it was shifting for Michael, the identity of this place that he had lived in for the past eight years was becoming alive, and he was realizing that he was a part of its soul. We all are what makes this ‘giant’ work.

That bridge had shown him a new way of seeing. Somehow it brought the entire city into focus.

* * * *

The warm sun piercing through the blinds stirred Michael. He slid his naked body out from under the soft sheets and rose to stretch his arms to the sky, tip toeing while keeping this pose across the cool floor. Moving to the cracked window he cranked it three times to swing it out to the city, allowing all the sounds and smells into his small apartment. He stood there leaning on the small horizontal aperture admiring the simple movement three stories below him. The people rushing by were just like him a few days ago, moving to reach a destination, passing by the rest of the world around them. Intrigued, he began his morning routine of getting ready to venture out among this new city, this giant with a soul. He was preparing to become apart of it in a new way, awareness had been raised and with this newfound experience of the city Michael didn't want to miss the chance of testing this new connection with his peripheral surroundings. As he was walking to work he took the same route as before to see what was happening in the area of the bridge. There were people looking confused and excited, flooding on and around it confused. Some were yelling at others about the right or wrong doing of this act. Michael couldn't resist and gently spoke to the two arguing men, "Isn't the fact that you two having this conversation together, here, now, show you the power of this act? Giving us the ability to notice our environment has changed. Prior you would have simply passed on by, but because of this shift in the norm you have connected, good or bad, doesn't matter, but the effect was strong enough to allow for conversations to start and maybe more." The two men startled by another stranger also having an opinion stood in silence gazing at Michael as he continued on his route.

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Michael turned at the top of the street to look back at the present gift that had awakened his senses to the many forms and

edges of the city. It glowed with a presence that seemed to connect with a void inside of him. A beginning of reconnecting as a young child does to the environment allows for the possibility of understanding former surroundings with new tools to process in new ways, leading to outcomes of greater connection with self and character. A deconstruction of physical and mental situations was possible; to see and develop fully informed decisions or thoughts is a new awareness of oneself in space.

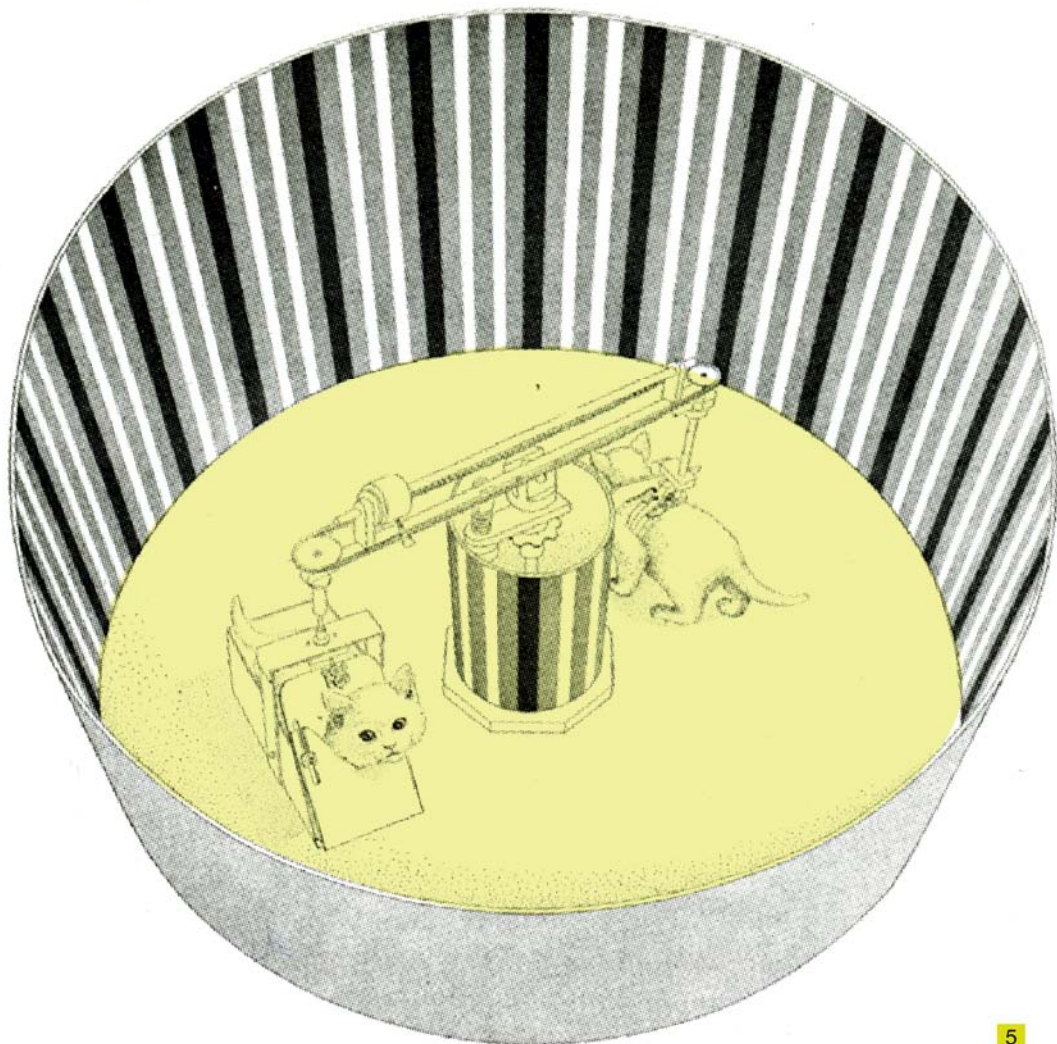
Just before the end of the walk Michael noticed a new cluster of trendy apartments emerging. They caught his eye but there seemed to be a dislocation to the surroundings. Place had been forgotten, his thoughts running wild as his pace slowed to a pause, he wondered if there was any benefit to these besides just new shelter and does his own apartment provide a type of connection to the place it inhabits? He gazed past them to the other side of the street where there were a few rundown lots but on their surfaces were green collections of weeds sprouting, pink little flowers, swaying in the breeze of the ocean air. The yellow sun pulled the bright greens from the stalks and contrasted them so beautifully against the brick façade behind them, cool in shade the sturdy wall juxtaposed against the soft bodies of the weeds flowing next to it. A marker of an environment, this lot was showing Michael something he had never pondered before, the dynamics of space. He realized he rather lay in this soft field any day before he'd lay in one of those disconnected apartments and there are hundreds of these empty lots throughout the city. He pivoted around and continued on his way taking a slow conscience breath and exhaling out a tension that had been stuck in his chest since he moved into the city.

These narratives are based off of precedent studies of events that change perceptions of place passively, particularly the ‘wrapping’ done by Christo. It begins to lead into the idea of questioning our surroundings and the importance of this. Questioning allows a non-stagnant society, an evolving way to connect with the changing environments around us by giving one the choice to fully connect with ideas and the city’s landscapes of emotion and energy. It raises awareness of orientation in different scales of the world in relation to the body.

“But I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.” Real life, with experiences and personal perceptions requires an exposure to all things, good or evil.

A quote from the savage character in “Brave New World” by Huxley. This is the idea that to have a world that is real then it can not be without traits of humans.

Theory



“In 1963 Richard Held and Alan Hein conducted a classic and rather merciless neurological experiment in which two kittens were raised in a carousel under closely controlled conditions... One kitten was able to move freely around a circular track, while the other was strapped in a suspended gondola. As the free cat moved, it pulled the other one round with it... After a number of weeks, the kittens were released from the carousel. The active cat moved and behaved normally, while the passive cat stumbled and bumped into objects... The free cat was able to link the act of walking to its own perceptions, while for the other, action and vision were severed. It could not coordinate its movements with what it saw because in its experience, action and perception had never existed in the same continuum. Perception relies on action, and action is possible only through perception.”¹

Architecture has the ability to change perceptions. It allows for a link between the body and place, while challenging passive acceptance of ones surroundings. For a passerby, a design has only a moment to make an impact or challenge their perceptions. How can this be done? First we need to realize we have become non-sensual beings drifting through space from destination to destination, phasing out the experience of in-between. This is not a natural condition. During childhood everything is tested and tried with all senses of the body. Children learn to understand and relate to their surroundings utilizing a full body experience.² At what point does one lose this experimental nature and begin to accept our environment as the assumptions assigned to it? Once one realizes this disconnect with surroundings, an opportunity to interject a new program that challenges one's perception of space and environment is possible. Now the passerby has the ability to be impacted in that moment by a design.



Why is it important to challenge perceptions? As with the Held Hein experiment, the suspended kitten never needed to question its perception of space and movement. It simply accepted its circumstances. When it was finally freed from its accepted reality, the kitten was forced to question its perception. One could say that the suspended kitten was handicapped by its own complacency. Many people today could be categorized as “suspended” in their own assumed realities. Complacency is commonly confused for happiness. However, complacency is equivalent to numbness. This is a choice based on convenience in our society. It is easier to be numb, than to react and interpret a constantly changing environment. A process needs to be started that encourages one to question and connect to themselves and their environment. This is an uncomfortable process, as Merlau-Ponty or any phenomenologist would agree, of diving into the truths of our surroundings constantly reiterating our world and how we belong in the constant changing future. Becoming comfortable is a loss of interaction with life, thus the purpose of revaluating one’s world.

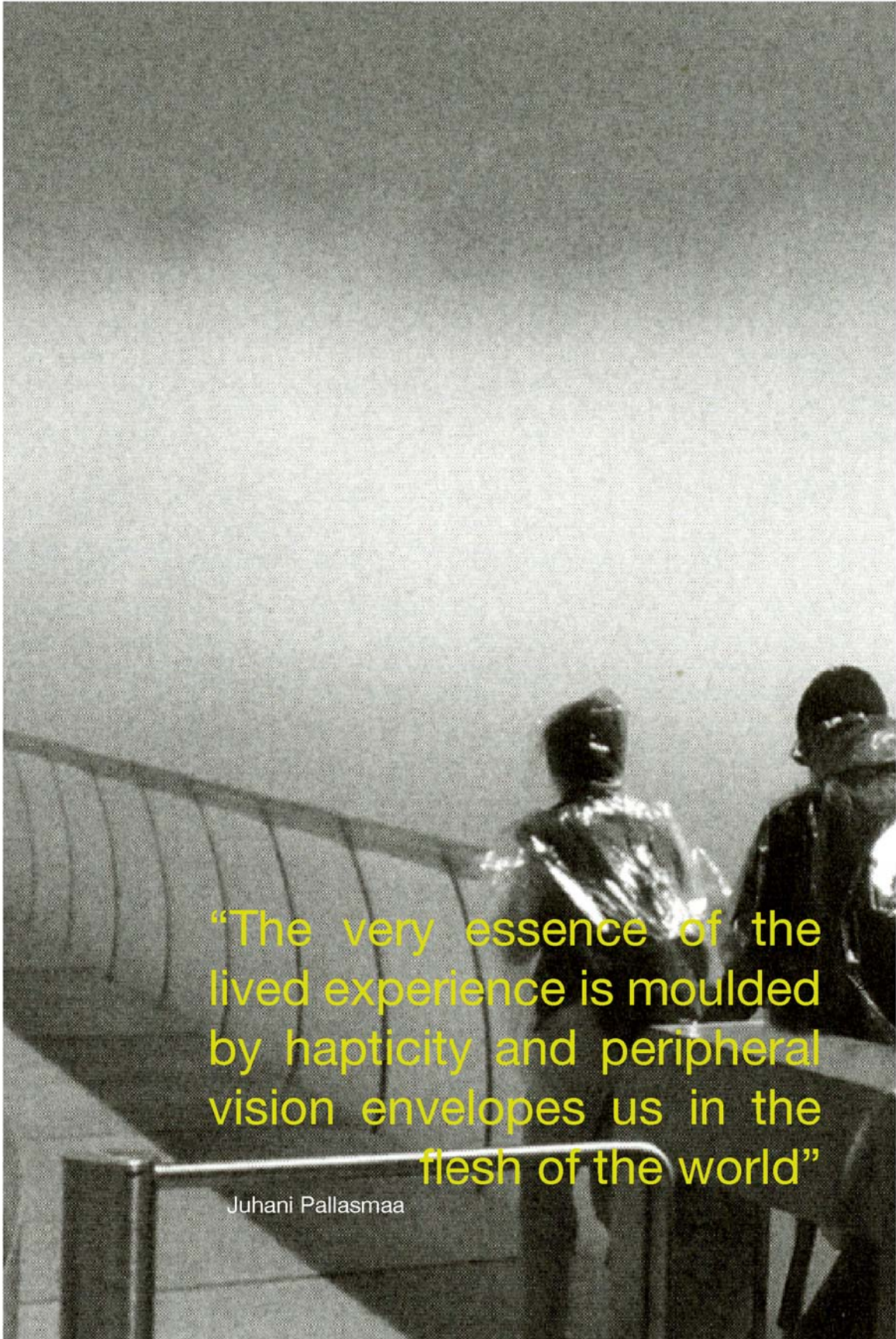




Architecture has also taken on a numbness of senses. Visual aspects of our built environment have begun to overshadow their experiential potential. In other words they are attractive empty shells. Architecture has the power to represent and influence society. The responsibility to design for connection in new ways has been neglected by too many. Not just by Architecture but also by the most important attribute of the city, the people. It is because of the people that the built environment exists and has life. Unfortunately, due to complacency most are just moving through it, all the while ignoring what is happening in the cracks and folds around them. They do not feel the need to challenge, to inquire, to interpret the forgotten. An awakening of our senses and a reduction of the hyper visual experiences that we have become used to begins to connect the entire body to a more haptic experience. "The very essence of the lived experience is moulded by hapticity and peripheral vision envelopes us in the flesh of the world."³ A removal of the norm (lack of questioning) is an opportunity to inlay new abilities to understand our environment. Pure science or absolutism can't give all the answers to life. More specifically, why do we feel love, anger, fear, joy? If we can begin to connect to these emotions and how our environment influences them, our environment can be developed to help create the emotions we desire. Creating moments that allow people to retune their perceptions of their surroundings will promote self-awareness. "Their phenomenological program was specifically intended to shatter the illusion and dream of a falsely comfortable world and to face up to the difficult and persisting task of choosing who we are in a revalued world...Phenomenology was the methodological foundation for an unavoidable perennially uncomfortable life of existential thought, decision, and responsibility."⁴ There has to be an ability for critical thought to develop personal understandings of ourselves that have been challenged or confronted by exterior or internal situations, reasons that are not based from historical or nostalgic logic but new personal understandings that strengthen who we are and the place one chooses to connect with.



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“The very essence of the
lived experience is moulded
by hapticity and peripheral
vision envelopes us in the
flesh of the world”

Juhani Pallasmaa

The importance of questioning is two-fold: deconstructing and reconstructing. Deconstructive theory enables a separation of common personal values between the environment and the views or identity applied to its form and organization. It strips away perception and allows one to discover fundamental elements. One can begin to decipher the true identity and associate new understandings of truth by digging down to these foundational elements. "Derrida contends that we need to face up to the dangers of living a sham; we need to confront the unintelligibility and non-decidable nature of the world. The false comfort of the illusion of what appears to be established and unmanageable should give way to scrupulous honesty about the situation. In short we need to be liberated. We would become free if we see that we are within difference."⁵ By erasing the standard point of reference, one can thereby develop a true starting point for identity. Deconstructing an environment is a process of undoing former identities, which does not unveil a simplistic organized connection. Realizing nothing stands alone; its identity is composed of layers of difference, which are connected not only to one form, but to all forms. Deconstructing is the catalyst for questioning, not just on a scientific level but more importantly on a physical and mental level, allowing us to fully become aware of our environment. "But to claim that displacement and the desire of many to discover or recover a new place for themselves is a serious and genuine problem is not to exaggerate it. The world is not all terrible. Not everyone is in distress, especially comfortable Americans who command an amazingly disproportionate amount of the world's resources and have wonderful power and freedom to move about socially, educationally, economically, and physically. To point out that this privileged life comes at the expense or displacement of others or that it involves its own forms of dislocation may be true, but to say so already again expands or emphasizes the theme rather than limits it."⁶ Mugeraruer explains that questioning is important even for those that claim they are comfortable in their own realities. They are the suspended kitten, along for the ride and not connecting to their environment. At some point in their life they will be liberated, then what?

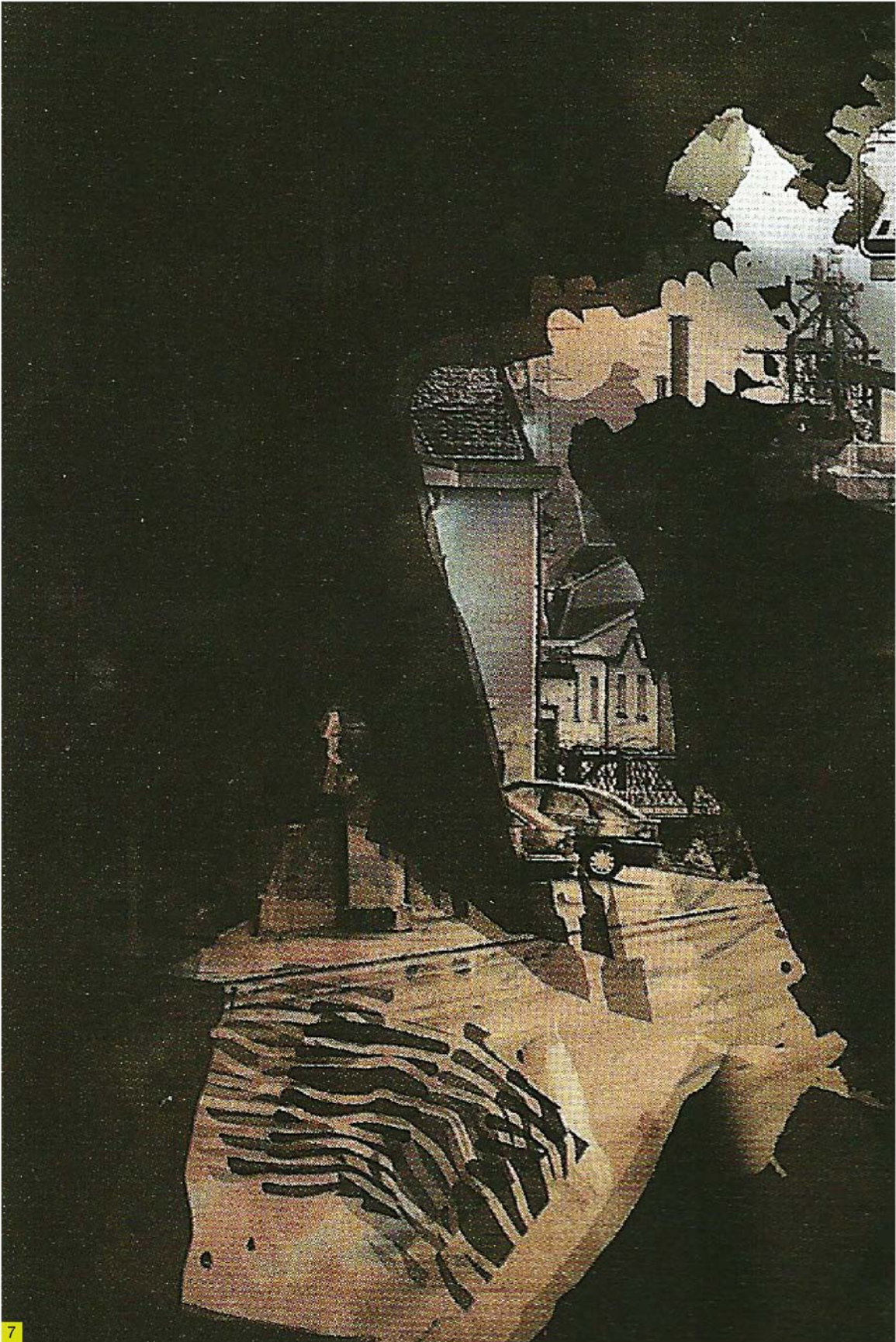


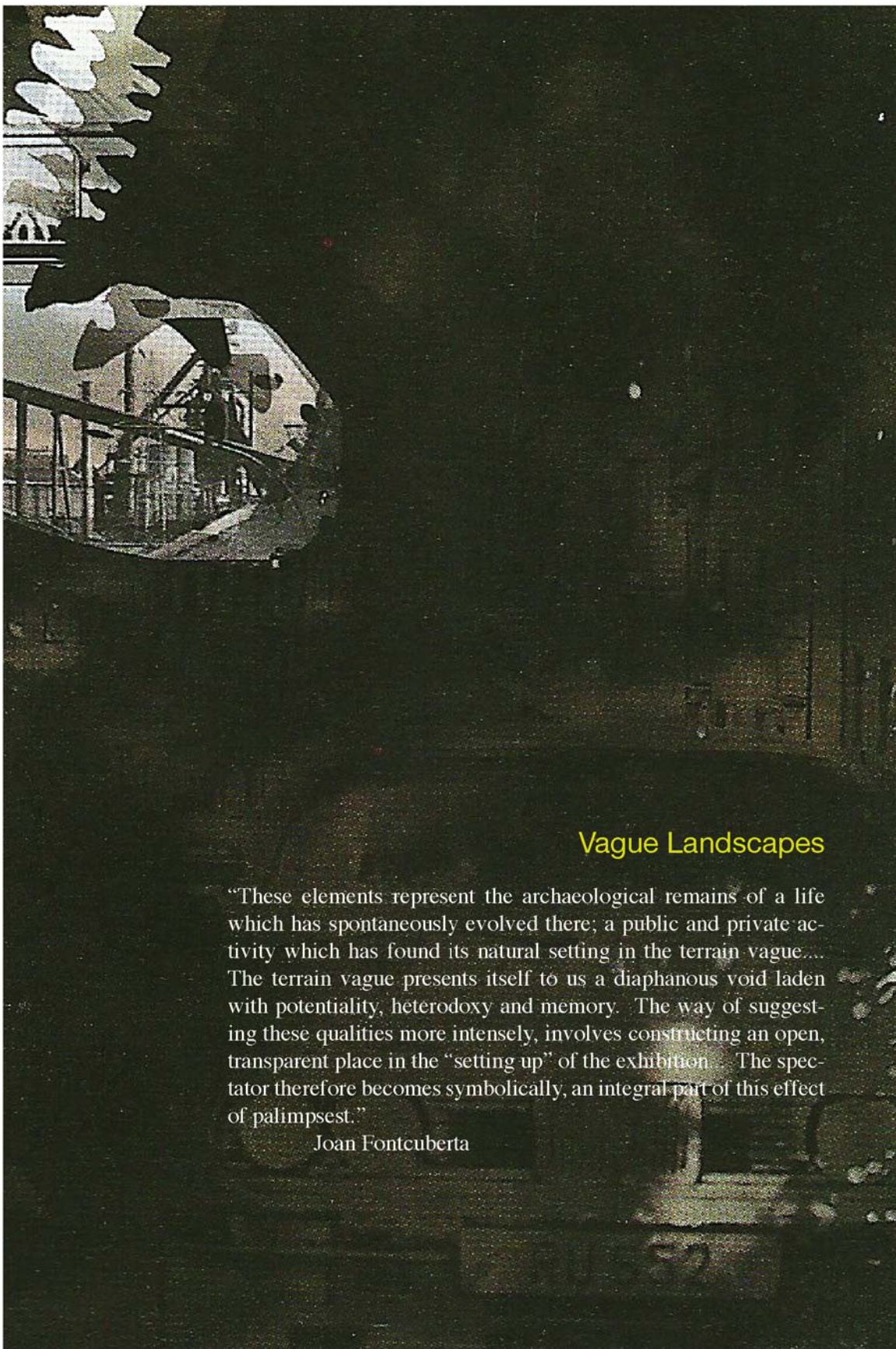
Deconstructing allows for an informed reconstruction. Each individual will connect uniquely to what they discover during the deconstructive process, thus reconstructing a reality that best forms to their own self-awareness. The active participation in de- and re- constructing is the basis of forming a questioning routine that incorporates their relations to their surroundings. "Thus the bridge does not first come to a location to stand in it; rather, a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge." ⁷ Making this questioning a habit allows for new understandings of space and identities of our surroundings; it is the ability to understand oneself within the divinities, sky, earth and life (mortals), the fourfold as one. ⁸ This is why we should build not just to evoke questioning but also to remind us of the importance of questioning. Built environments are no longer just places of work, entertainment or shelter; they are developed to always remind us of the oneness of the four, to question. The injected program begins to allow an evaluation of self in connection to the surroundings; therefore the built environment isn't the only machine to develop questioning. The prior device transfers knowledge to the body for contrasted analyzing that can constantly upgrade without form, because it is internalized.

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Arriving at an early success may be a detriment when interjecting new program elements into one's routine. The newness and excitement related to a unique environment will have an initial effect, maybe even life altering. However, just like the smell of a new car, this effect wears off. Over time our senses once again categorize these effects as normal, however shocking to the system they may have been in the beginning. Their impor-

tance begins to diminish. In 2003 the United States invaded Iraq. The images and effect of startling incidents wore off in time to the general public, even though the fight still continues six years later. Fading to normality, the new becomes replaced and the effect is lost. Understanding this human condition can enlighten one to a strategy for evading this outcome. Our senses need to be reminded often to retain a routine of questioning. First, if the program is constantly changing in new ways, than it becomes harder to ignore it and a period of rediscovery is possible. Or the use of temporality is a subtle but more powerful thought for an urban environment. The removal of the project after a set time enhances the former space that it occupied with the power of memory. Now when one see's that space, they will always remember what was once there. Even if time goes by that memory shifts and changes, its effect will still remain; this new knowledge is carried with us. If it is a common form or typology of space the effect is even more powerful, because if that space is duplicated throughout the city, when ever they come in contact with a similar space that memory is re-evoked, possibly even in a new way. For example, if the space used for the project is an empty parking lot, whenever the individual encounters another empty parking lot elsewhere, in their mind they may build the project again in this space. However, it allows for more questioning as this parking lot is ultimately not an exact replica of the last and the mind may need to make alterations to the image it sees, further stimulating questioning of and relating to the environment. The scale of the project just increased without building or using any more resources.



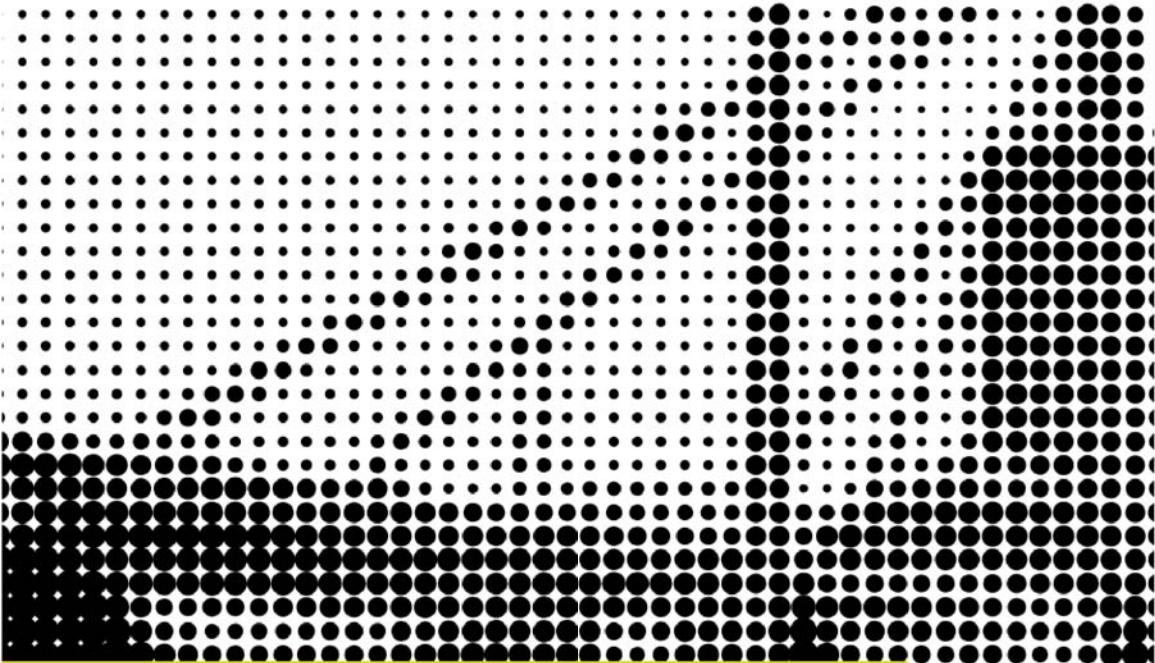


Vague Landscapes

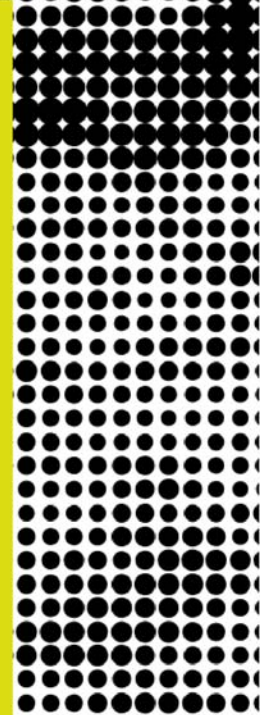
"These elements represent the archaeological remains of a life which has spontaneously evolved there; a public and private activity which has found its natural setting in the terrain vague.... The terrain vague presents itself to us a diaphanous void laden with potentiality, heterodoxy and memory. The way of suggesting these qualities more intensely, involves constructing an open, transparent place in the "setting up" of the exhibition. The spectator therefore becomes symbolically, an integral part of this effect of palimpsest."

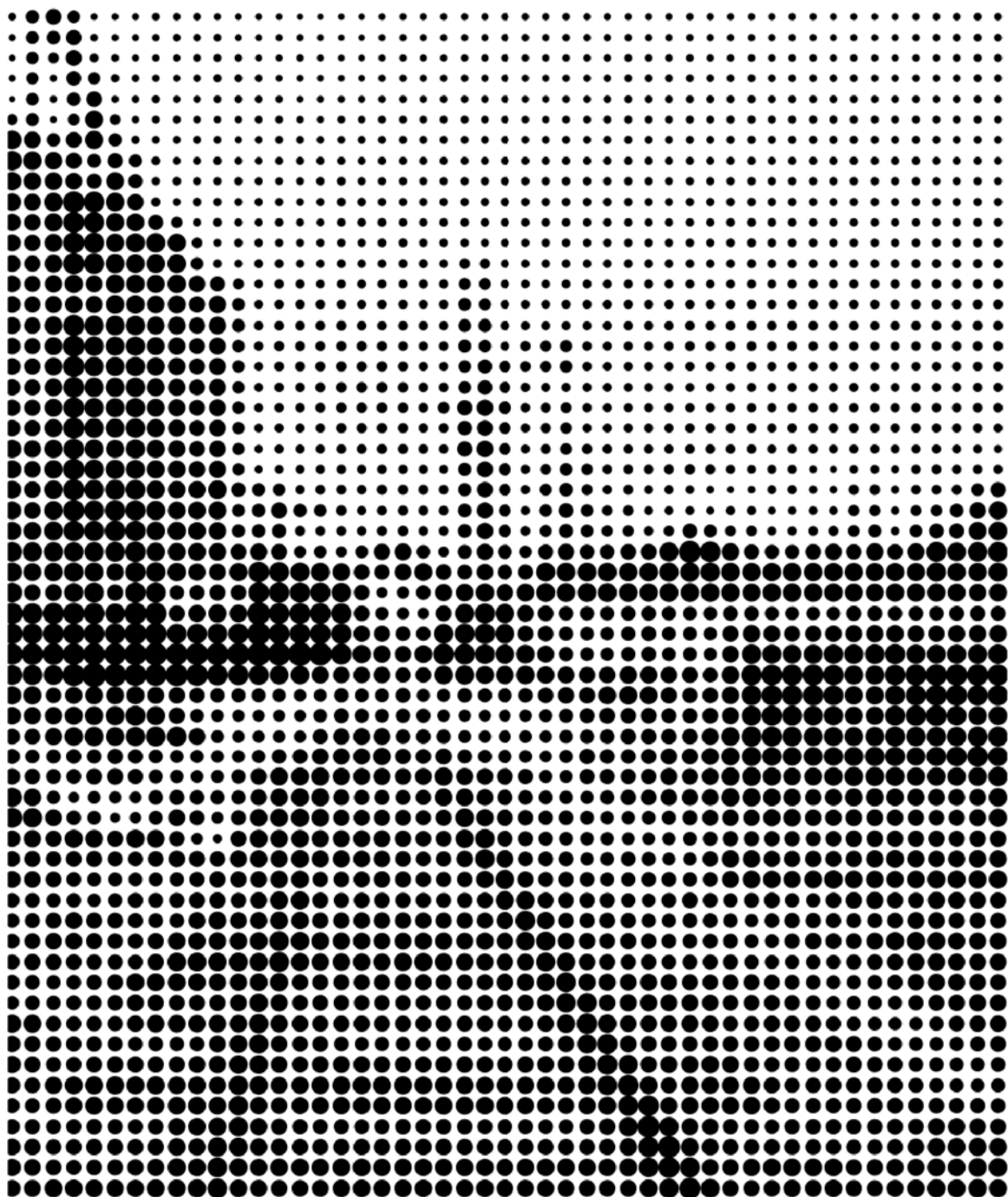
Joan Fontcuberta

The vague landscapes ⁹ woven in between built areas of the city's cracks and folds are forgotten parts of the city that stitch the many pieces together and are present in all urban environments, even in rural areas these landscapes traits exist. Framing this type of space, such as in a gallery, also redraws upon this memory. However, with this type of trapped and isolated critical thought we lose the ability to adapt this way of thinking to outside circumstances. We are socialized to believe that new and unique ideas are commonly housed in galleries and museums. By building structure to contain the element of question there is a danger that the abilities that I'm trying to develop become trapped to a certain typological space and the mode of thinking is no longer universal and crossing into multiple types of questioning. It becomes restrictive and less adaptable, easily to be forgotten. Creating moments in the daily lives of the city allow for the individual to take the experience of exploration "out of the box," learning to apply this questioning nature to all life situations, big and small. Building on this idea of temporality and the ability to change, it may be a system that is both. I believe using phenomenology as a basis to adapt a strategy of program that begins the process and continually intrigues people to question is best utilized in conjunction with not only the physically changing form but by allowing time, and natural environmental influences to change. The project accepts the cycles of the environment and is created to express certain times or moments through time with passive strategies to effect previous inhabitants or intrigue new ones for multiple rediscoveries of reflection of self. The device fades in and out just as allowed by the natural adaptability of humans to forget. However, it is able to move through time and different lives because of this. If the type of site it relates to increases its scale, the hope that its process will be internalized and that the body it has affected can now process the ability to question without the device's presence. The memory of it, because of its hapticity, empowers the individual to be reawakened at multiple sites around the world.



The process of challenging perceptions has been developed. Whether it's whole structures or just moments within or between buildings, there's now a personal understanding of why there's an urgent need for implementing programs that encourage questioning into all strategies of architecture. Architecture is about people; it should enhance lives, allowing people to connect for themselves with their surroundings because they now have the ability to decipher present overlays and retrieve the connections lying underneath. We have seen the importance of perception and linking it to action, the ability to deconstruct and question our surroundings so one can reconstruct and develop what is truly needed. We can then begin to understand the repetitive need for questioning as the routine. Right now most individuals are numb to their surroundings. A loss of care and pride to our environment suffers because of it. The body is dislocated from environment. The need to be self-aware and understand our emotions and integration into our constantly changing future requires an ability to be able to break down hidden truths that can only be understood by the entire body. A full body questioning and reconstruction of ourselves and our relation to our environment as place will cue in the new routine of non complacency and full sensory integration to becoming aware of who and where we belong in this confusing and guile world of the modern city.









“The false comfort of the illusion of what appears to be established and unmanageable should give way to scrupulous honesty about the situation.”

Derrida





Site/Process



Within Belgrade, a small town with big beginnings exist. Most of this history is ignored or thought as different for a growing suburban town. But these differences are markers of a towns true identity. It's life that shouldn't be hiding. This avenue of industry taking place through Belgrade is what I hope to activate with this understanding that place needs to be understood for architecture to be a part of. The end and beginning of the site is a new landscape that is specific to this place. The importance isn't just the thresholds into town but the site's real identity, the presence that it holds as it runs through Belgrade. It fades in and out of changing shadows through the day, exposed to it's surroundings and moments of closer interaction between spaces. Natural materials of the area smooth and rough stroll along it's length. This is a place that links more than just one demographic or one piece of the jumbled city. It stretches through diversity and allows for the integration of difference. It simply needs to take its surroundings and reconstruct these to be shared and experienced by the cities occupants truthfully. Creating an internal destination that builds further internal experiences. A landscape that begins to blur the hard edges and connects us to more than just the immediate edge.

The vagueness of a city is what shows the history and the context of itself. It is a clue into what the problems of the city are. Hidden in plain sight for all to ignore. Immersing into this I find interesting histories and experiences not revealed to the inhabitants of the city. Over the years I've noticed many things about Belgrade and her visitors. There's no true destination in the city, it has become a point of departure. The present situation is most leave to Bozeman or elsewhere to participate in activities and Belgrade is left as the station to leave from, not to arrive to. The

'The Elevator'



This is probably the youngest of the site. Formerly part of an industrial park and located through the site, it is a tall, slender structure that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space.

P-2005

'The Landscape'



This is probably the youngest of the site. Formerly part of an industrial park and located through the site, it is a tall, slender structure that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space.

P-2003

'The Mill'



The old mill in Baginville is over 100 years old. It is a large, multi-story building that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space. The structure is a tall, slender tower that has been converted into a public space.

P-2007

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45th



65th



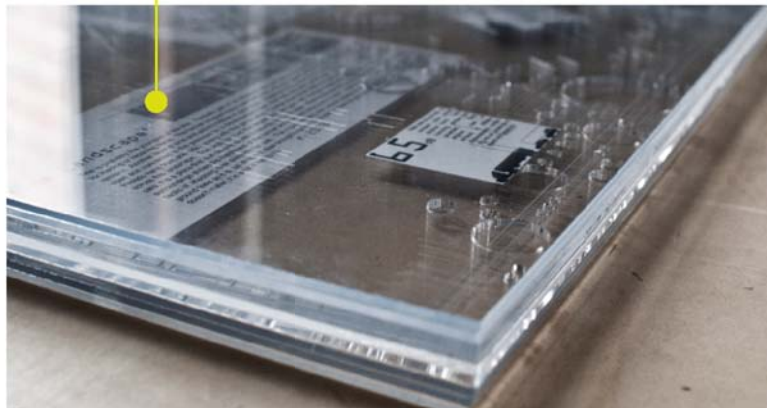
dislocated downtown and lack of pedestrian avenues separates people from place. The speed and scale of technology separates these matters even more.

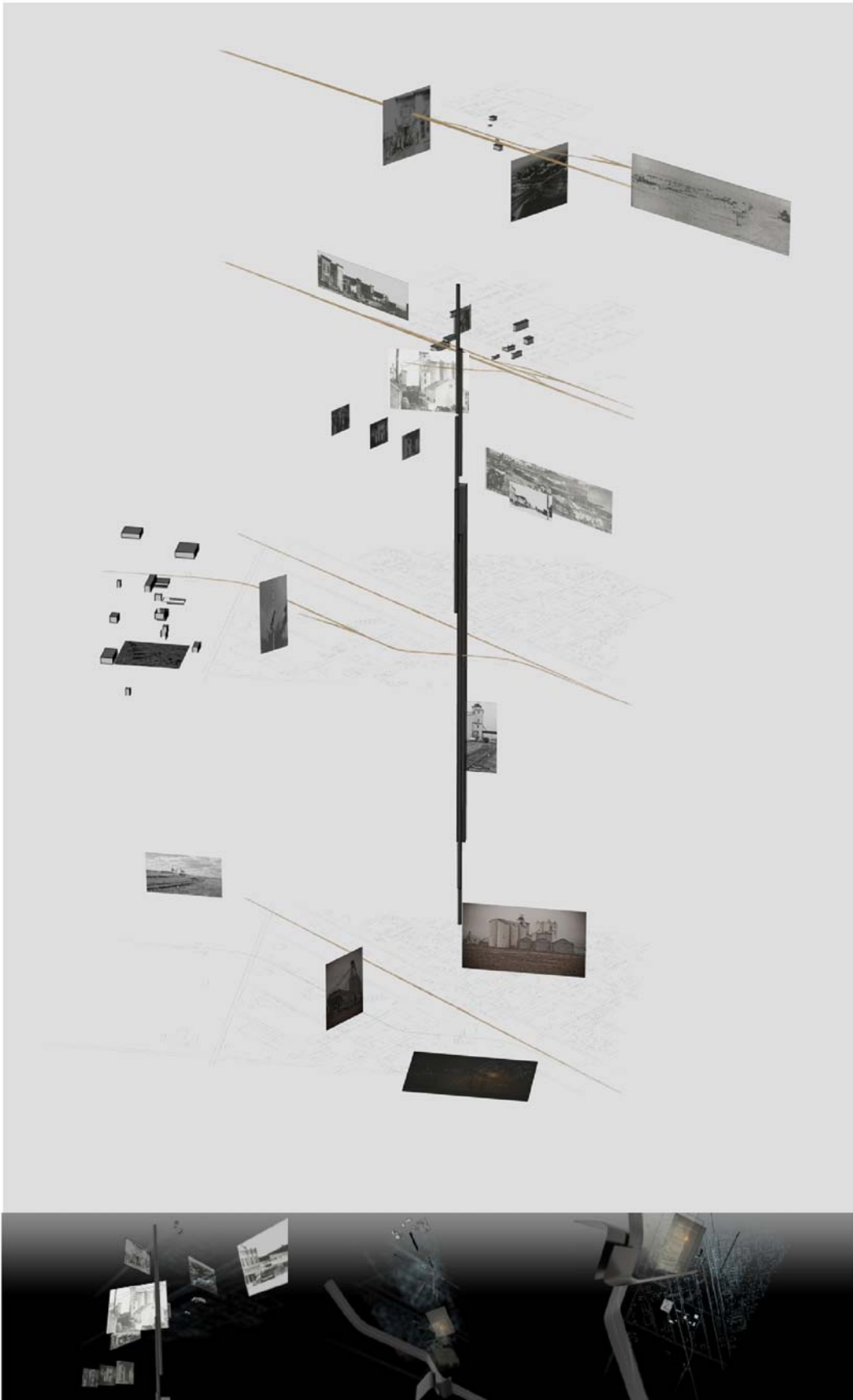
Imbedded in Belgrade's history is the capturing of the overflow and brief visitors. Always dominated by Bozeman's development and presence. Even Belgrade's airport is referred to as the Bozeman airport. We are forgotten, just an overflow of Bozeman's super saturated housing market or commerce support. But there's a character of Belgrade that has always waited to be revealed. The ability to enjoy this place as a whole instead of parts at different intervals makes it a single and real destination, like her past.

How does one begin to develop the idea of expansion with purpose? By strengthening with stitching the folds and vagueness of the history and the future to the present. The avenue that runs along the main axis of Belgrade has shown me that not only is it an alley of forgotten past but it is a marker of how to connect back to downtown. Bring identity of the place into view and be able to share with people the experience of this place and her people.

Getting people out of their cars and allowing their bodies to move through this place and to converse with others face to face as a social connections would build a less transient natured place that Belgrade has become. This city will begin to have its own poise in the landscapes of Montana.

Picking apart this site from many angles and contexts will help to fully understand its true ability to passively begin the shift of empowering our city of Belgrade to a place of destination and connection that raises awareness within us all to our place within the world.





There was a need to learn how Belgrade was formed through the years. The thesis of designing architecture that is place specific would rely on an indepth understanding of what made this place and to personally learn a process of discovering place. To start this process a look into Belgrade's history I felt would lead into possible avenues of exploration based on what was there in the past and present. Strictly mapping history from historic sanborn maps found in Montana State Universities Historic holdings. Retrieving these was the beginning, of piecing together the past and hopefully understand what created Belgrade's identity and identifying why it has receded into a vague landscape that hides its past. Overlaying word of mouth histories of this place and more rigid information such as pictures and maps I soon realized that Belgrade has a strong identity to the industry around it, railroad and wheat are the industries that spurred much of these small towns across the landscape, but there was a time when Belgrade was actually the hub of the Gallatin Valley's industrial connection to the outlying areas. The creation of the Rail Depot and flour mill was the start for attracting farmers and their families to visit Belgrade and it's unique and rugged downtown.

I realized that Belgrade had strong ties back to the railroad all through it's past. Interesting enough was the realization that the farther the train integrated into Belgrade's borders the stronger Belgrade's identity was. The town accepted what it's roots were and it showed through it's strength of commerce and connection to it's inhabitants. Lacking though was a intimate connection to the inhabitants and the industry, the importance was so set on production and work that the end result of the present is a withdraw of industry and railroad and a disconnect for the people that live there now and a connection to this place. A detachment of care and identity of one's surroundings fading into an overflow for the nearby Bozeman, saturated housing market.

This had to be tested and seen by more than just me and my recent findings through history books and papers. I began to question what this town really needed and what might bring us back to a tie to the town's past of prosper and intrigue. I had a suspicion that there already was an understanding that Belgrade was an industrial town and embedded in its roots the people that



Would you walk more within the city if it was accessible such as a developed pathway through town? Do you find the idea of new social interactions good or bad?

Need sidewalks - need good repaired sidewalks - need drainage

Are there enough public destinations in Belgrade?

No

Based on what you've seen and your personal experiences, what are your impressions of The Open Yard?

Something needs to be done on there. Used to be a park.

The Grain Elevator? Love it. It is part of Belgrade history.

The old Flour Mill? Think it belongs.

What is your thoughts on Belgrade reintroducing itself as a destination through the development of a passenger train stop?

Great idea



Would you walk more within the city if it was accessible such as a developed pathway through town? Do you find the idea of new social interactions good or bad?

Absolutely. From experience: the definitely precipitates, creates

Are there enough public destinations in Belgrade?

No

Based on what you've seen and your personal experiences, what are your impressions of The Open Yard?

Money hungry company cleared it w/ little or no positive investment in community.

The Grain Elevator?

Great, on tapped opportunity

The old Flour Mill? Same

What is your thoughts on Belgrade reintroducing itself as a destination through the development of a passenger train stop?

Way overdue. Why isn't there a N/S train to Yellowstone? Total good for tourist dollars.

Name:
Age: 56

Occupation: Clerk
for 60 years
made 8 yrs
10 yrs



you describe Belgrade's identity?

clear, with ideas populates community

thoughts on Belgrade as a city?

active, no street lights, sidewalks, confusing layout, not a shopping destination, destination but Belgrade isn't a destination but rather a point of departure?

by point of view of human - don't move up to business

give Belgrade a stronger identity?

ideas, street lights

on what does Belgrade have that no other place has?

on does Belgrade's downtown feel connected to its history (The

No - 100 year station to extend towards, looks running through town

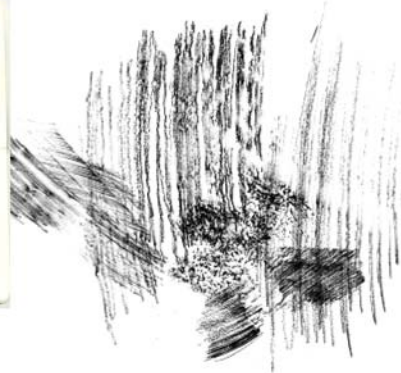
has main street turns its back on the industrial buildings? Do you

not?

street doesn't feel like "center" of town -

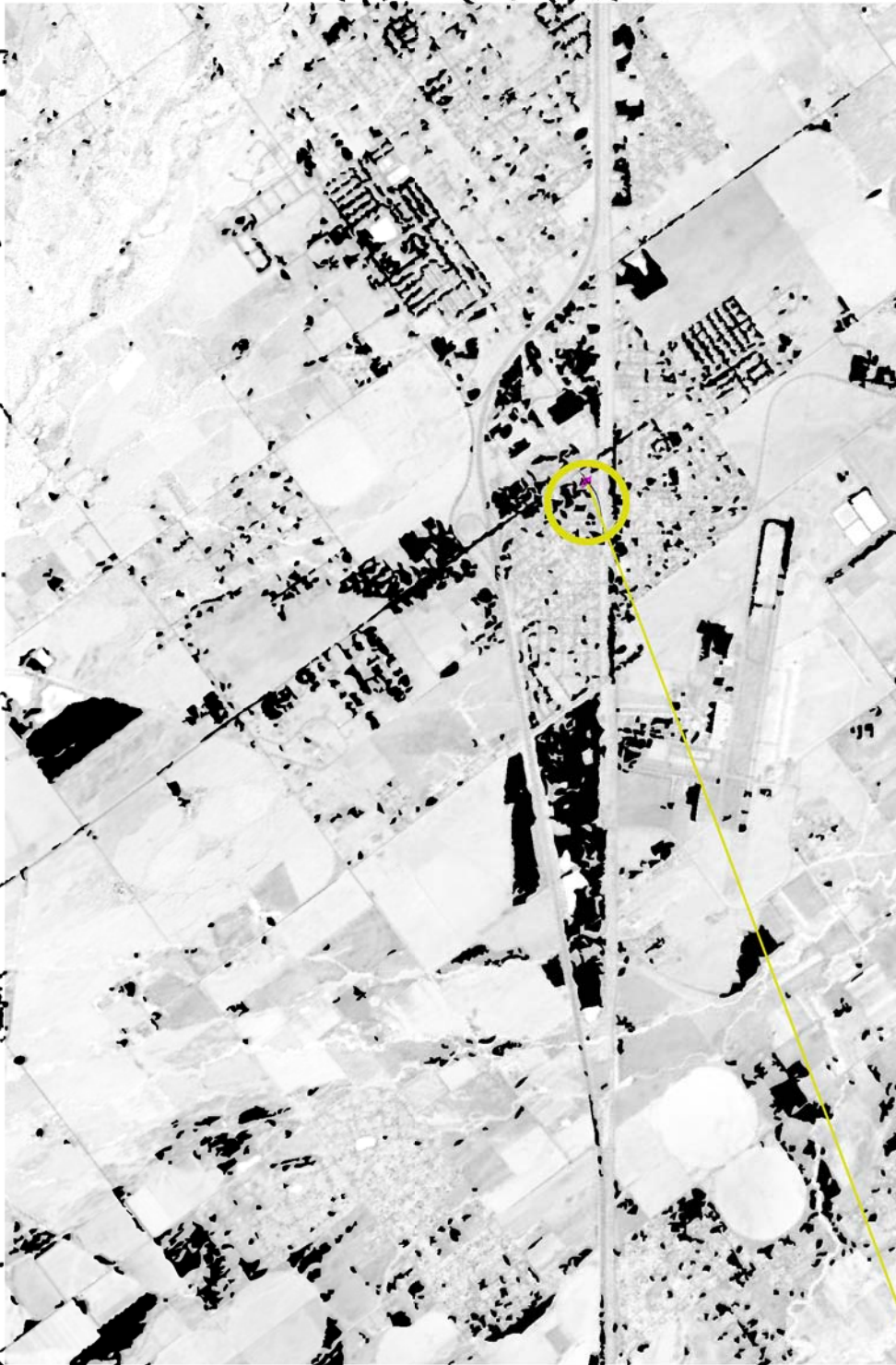
shopping + IGA shopping center system

"downtown"



lived there knew this and were drawn to this areas specific nature, and the present strategy of hiding it was a unwanted tactic. Be truthful and stop try to make Belgrade into something it's not, let it breath and function as it was created to be. A hub for surrounding areas for industry and allow this to be expressed to its visitors. In tune with this notion was also the number one worry of all that I interviewed, Belgrade has no pedestrian walkways that allow for a social and personal connection with it. A reduction of the speed of the automobile I saw a critical factor in strengthening this place and connecting people with it. Instead of staying at the scale of just a building to design within Belgrade I stretched out into the larger scale of a master plan of a dedicated pedestrian pathway. An experience that would only be allowed and understood at the speed of the physical movement of the body.

Where though would this route travel? I had increasingly been drifting through the town to find this route with the overlaid new knowledge and incite of others and found the ghost of Belgrade. Three main sites that move along new and old tracks, but more importantly was that they would move the body through specific vertical and heavy massed objects that were unique to the place. First was the main site choice the oldest mill in Belgrade dating back to its original creation in 1907. It's presence of a vertical marker and adjacency made it the perfect site to develop the new rail depot, more importantly though the central knot of the pathway that would tie the two ends (east and west) of Belgrade together. Possibly all the way to Bozeman as well. I refer to these sites as the ghost of Belgrade because they have the textures and traits of it's true identity and have survived quietly through the years. I collected rubbings from these historic textures revealing to me a certain grit and the act of touching was powerful in itself. For the past five years I was guilty of driving past these landmarks and because of this they almost became invisible. Touching and moving around these massive buildings give a understanding of their nature and the place around you. An appreciation for their survival and a respect for them was growing.



The Ghost within **Belgrade, MT**

1882-Present



'The Landscape'



This is probably the youngest of all the sites. Formally part of an industrial park and lumber storage this was a docking point again for loading or receiving items. The former programs have been removed, only their past foundations and this eire steel structure remains. Another layer of time and activity hidden in plain sight. Passing by this corner the structure floats on the site out in the open and connected to the previous by a disconnected track, that has now been paved over. Yet this still remains. Orange threads hang from one side moving with the gentle wind. Coarse wood chips under my feet crunch yet give to my movements across this landscape. This probably had the largest program prior with multiple warehouses and ability to load numerous box cars, it is a place that can accommodate it naturally and with ease. Abandoned and left to rot, this structure refuses, its stained surroundings shows the harshness of the former activities and long hours of work. Even in this small simple structure there is a tactic of attaching new elements for use. The ropes hanging and welded pulleys to sides of tubes, the circulation above the ground feels as it is just straps of steel brought together for a brief moment of use and then left there, because its shape or look doesn't mater, it is what it has to be.





Tucked away and some what protected between the two other exposures, the grain elevator is tall but it easily drifts to the hidden background. Hidden in plain sight it is completely exposed in the direction of downtown but main street has turned its back on it. Historic downtown even turns its back to its own creator, the tracks. The track's sound and speed demands one's attention briefly as the locomotive speeds past. The sound reawakens and stirs emotions, without the need for sight. The form of the elevator is stringy and the long steel tentacles slide and stretch across its mediums of steel rails, trains, bins and connecting back to the main tower. It spills itself into the site formally and literally. It doesn't control edges like downtown or main street, it has no hard edges defining it. The spaces between create moments that work to hold its sites boundaries where it needs to.

THE Elevator

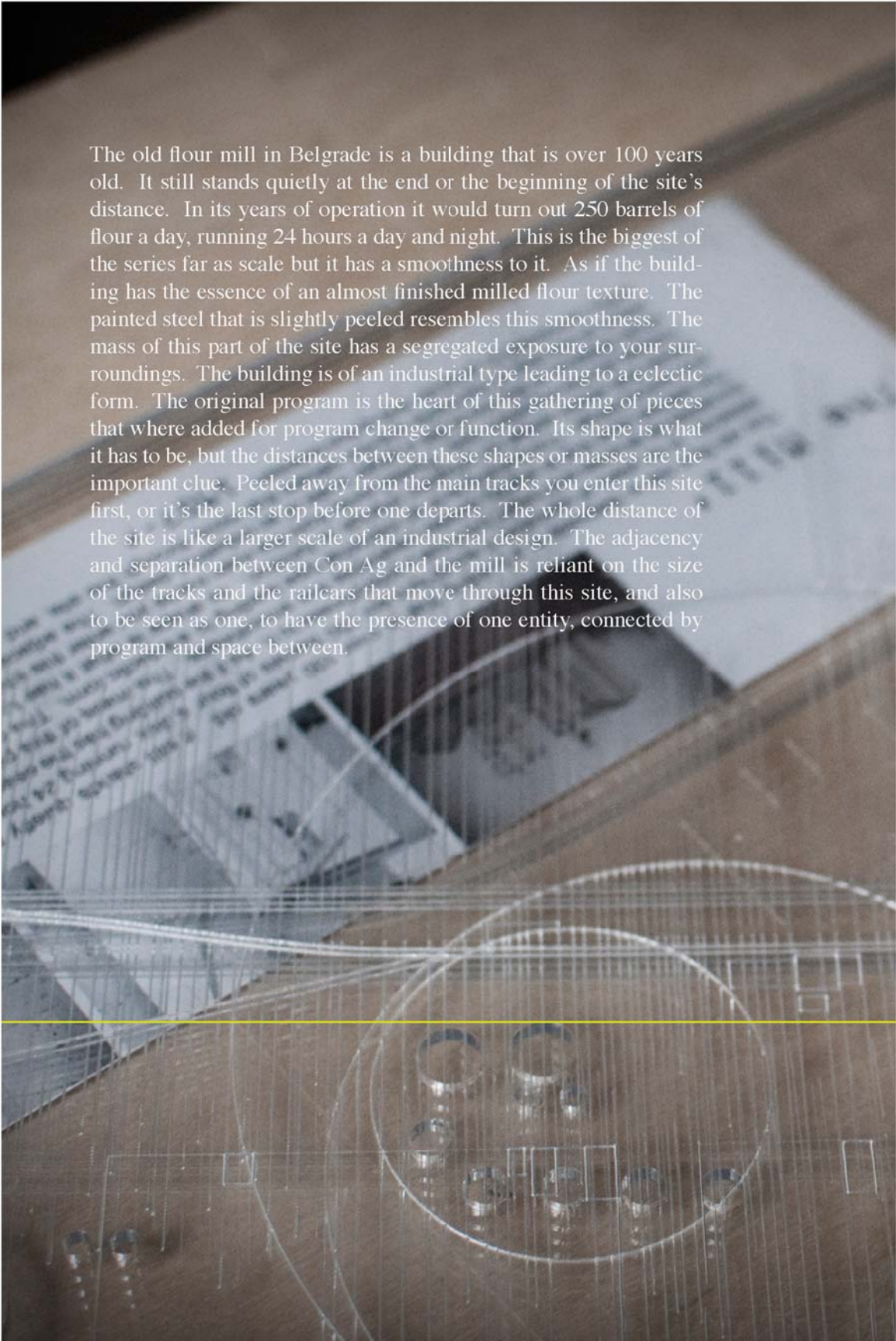
Tucked away and some
ground. Hidden
downtown



'The Elevator'



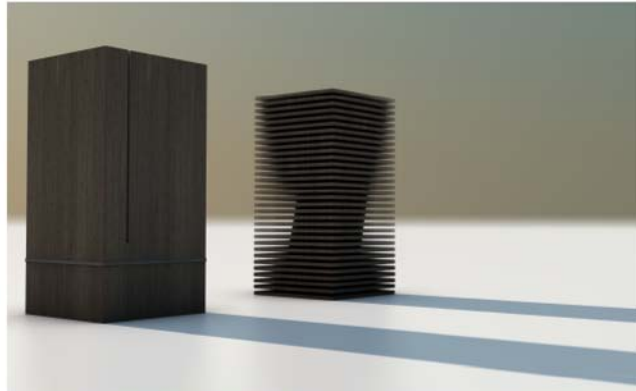
The old flour mill in Belgrade is a building that is over 100 years old. It still stands quietly at the end or the beginning of the site's distance. In its years of operation it would turn out 250 barrels of flour a day, running 24 hours a day and night. This is the biggest of the series far as scale but it has a smoothness to it. As if the building has the essence of an almost finished milled flour texture. The painted steel that is slightly peeled resembles this smoothness. The mass of this part of the site has a segregated exposure to your surroundings. The building is of an industrial type leading to a eclectic form. The original program is the heart of this gathering of pieces that where added for program change or function. Its shape is what it has to be, but the distances between these shapes or masses are the important clue. Peeled away from the main tracks you enter this site first, or it's the last stop before one departs. The whole distance of the site is like a larger scale of an industrial design. The adjacency and separation between Con Ag and the mill is reliant on the size of the tracks and the railcars that move through this site, and also to be seen as one, to have the presence of one entity, connected by program and space between.





'The Mill'

(Main Site)

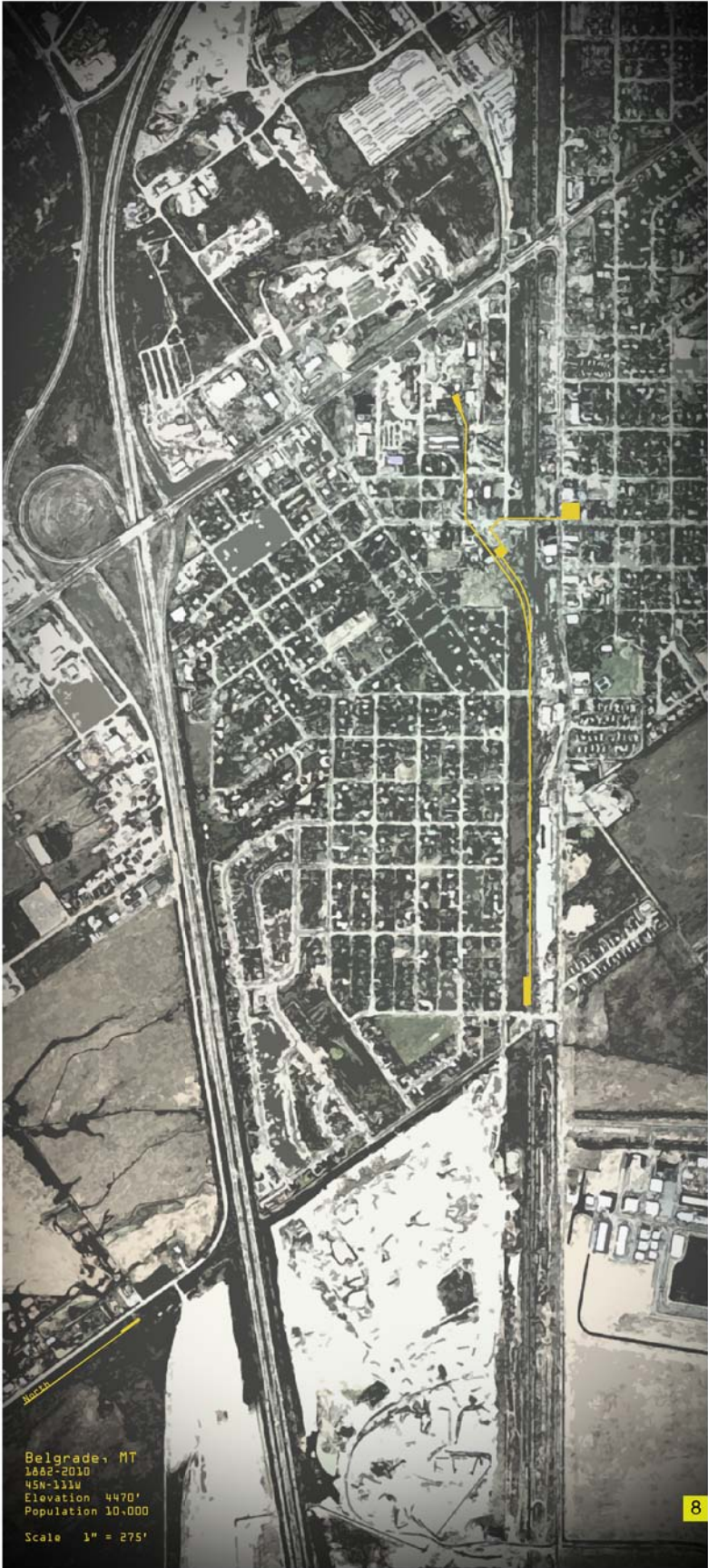


The discovery of place through movement was proving important as influencing the program and design. I needed to test this with a new type of model and a way for people to interact and acknowledge themselves the power of this idea for using the body as a mechanism for reading place specifics. It was a model or exercise, to test this former study, creating a mass that only revealed itself through the observer moving around it and from multiple distance scales or levels of light. It proved itself successful. It wasn't made to just pick up and look from one view, the true understanding was only available if one moved around it. Similar to my discoveries of the sites and place of the project. An important design shaping strategy for developing the program of the place and architecture.

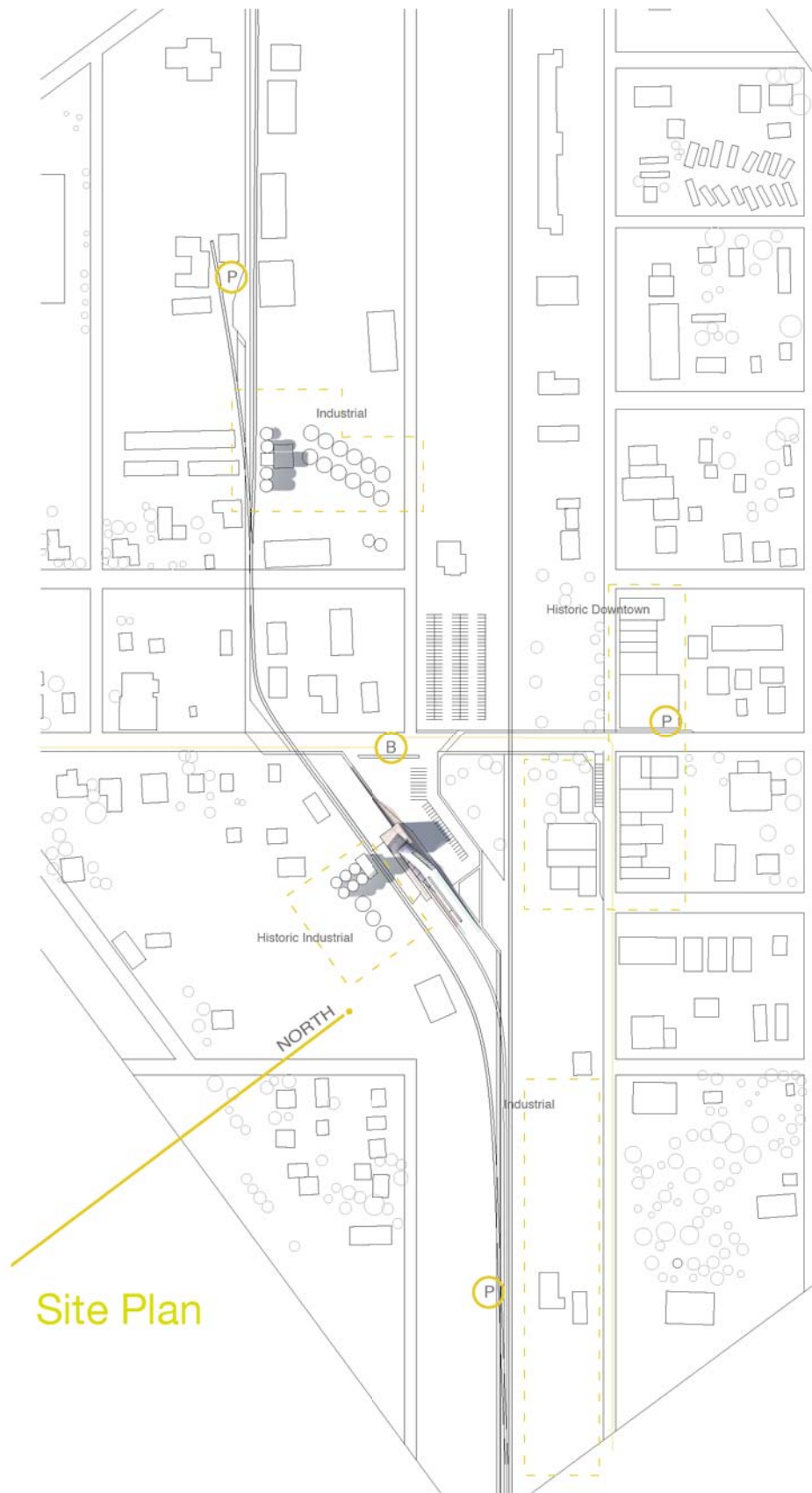
Program

When developing the program there is a need for choreographing the speeds that are arriving together to minimize the effect to the fragile flow of the city. The present speed of the automobile is a dominant form of movement presently. Having the train arrive downtown will further the needed connection to the historic area to the former industrial. This is why the selection of the site of the old Mill, starts to play favorably in controlling these flows.

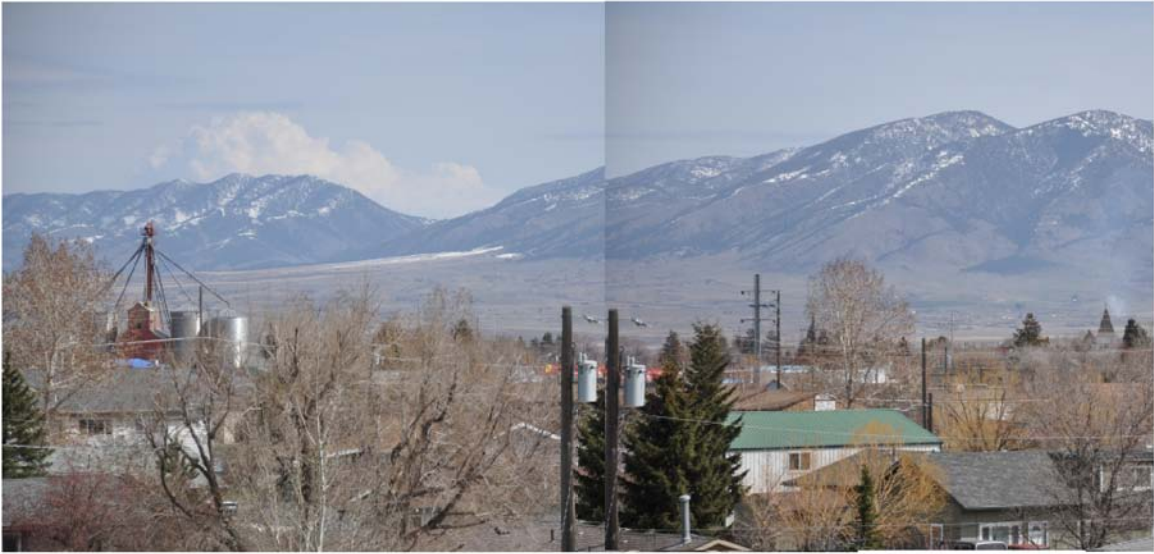
58 Another important reason for developing the massive reinforced concrete grain elevator is the intriguing interest of developing an architecture out of an exiting one. Literally use what is there and mould with it to enhance it's former identity. Reactivating a former ghost. The pedestrian pathway would then also lead from historic downtown past the industrial areas and into this site. A proper extension of downtown that isn't just filled with more shopping density. Public gathering and movement can enjoy new and old Belgrade at the same time. No front or back, just a avenue of discovery filled with pause and movement.



The program will consist of a train station but it is more focused on its abilities to inform the visitor to begin questioning and observing their environment and self instead of just transportation. The station has two main platforms for moving vertically within the building, the 2nd level also incorporating a long horizontal ramp out to the city's pathways. Along these are spaces for rest and views out and back into the site. This pathway will be a continuation of the language used within the main site. A dedicated built path lined with lighting that starts to change elevations to incorporate the surroundings not just the direct path for the pedestrian walking, but also the one looking far and close. For this user there will be spaces provided for pausing and people's different speeds and inquiries into their surroundings. Enhanced material details hold these moments. The chance to watch others is important to the life of a program with such movement. This is why the platforms also have elevation changes to give the pausing ones new perches to look and be seen to inhabit temporarily the forms of the site and the city, but also providing hidden pockets for rest from vision. Exposing the in between shows what has been hiding in plain sight, and can now connect back to the city and the inhabitants, as in the past.



Site Plan



The unique specifics of the site that have survived over time silently are embedded in the identity of Belgrade's history. The curse of hiding has allowed for a powerful reemerging into view and experience. The development of a program that is a transit station that is more than just a building to house waiting passengers, rather it is a means for strengthening the city's own connection to its personal inhabitants. A path that has a power to instill questioning to the passerby or the one that visits daily, all cycles of experiencing are affected, and its presence is much farther reaching than locally, helping with this are the moving of passengers to and from the site that have experienced it and can share with others aboard the train and the ones at their destinations.

62 The developed spaces will move the body through different experiences to activate the haptic memory of understanding ones surroundings. Using sound, texture, light, and all place specifics to enhance the architecture's relationship with the site and people. Changing of light and exposure and moving through these materials show new views into the site, aligning to key influences of scale and industry inviting the visitor to realize Belgrade's grit and the realness beneath those layers. Letting the site of Belgrade be what it is and the program enhance this identity for all to experience.



Entry/Tickets	4000 square feet
Platforms/Circulation	4500 square feet
Restrooms (2) at 250 square feet	500 square feet



USE AND OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION (303.1)

The International Building Code 2009 states in section 303.1 Assembly Group A occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for the gathering of persons for purposes such as civic, social or religious functions; recreation, food or drink consumption or awaiting transportation. There by placing the program of Train station under the occupancy of A-3. This type of occupancy stated by table 1004.1.1 that the occupancy load is 15 square feet gross per person.

CONSTRUCTION TYPE

As stated by table 503 the occupancy classification of A-3 with a proposed floor area of 9500 square feet can be of non combustibile materials and is classified as IIB construction. Section 602.2 states that Types I and II construction are those types of construction in which the building elements listed in Table 601 are of noncombustible materials.

BUILDING HEIGHTS AND AREA

Referencing Table 503 section 503.1, type IIB construction is limited to a maximum square footage of 9500 per floor with a maximum of two stories totaling in 55 feet of height for un-sprinklered construction.

FIRE RESISTANCE-RATED CONSTRUCTION(Table 601)

Structural Frame:	Type IIB (Steel) = 0
Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior):	Type IIB = 0
Non-Bearing Walls (Interior/Exterior):	Type IIB = 0
Floor Construction:	Type IIB = 0
Roof Construction:	Type IIB = 0

64 MEANS OF EGRESS

There are a requirement of two exits and a separation distance between exits must be 1/2 of the distance diagonal distance of space(1015.2.1)

Exit travel distance not to exceed 200 feet(Table 1016.1)

Stairs are to be a maximum riser height of 7 inches and a maximum tread depth of 11 inches.(Sec1009.4.2)

The means of Egress shall be illuminated at all times the

building is served by the means of egress(1006.1)
Ramps as stated in section 1010.2 Slope. Ramps used as part of a means of egress shall have a running slope not steeper than one unit vertical in 12 units horizontal (8-percent slope). The slope of other pedestrian ramps shall not be steeper than one unit vertical in eight units horizontal (12.5-percent slope). Vertical rise shall not be greater than 30 inches and the minimum width shall not be less than that required for corridors.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible Route: Within the site, one accessible route will connect all accessible elements.(1104.2)

Accessible Wheelchair spaces: 1 space per 25(106.1)

Width:Minimum width for door openings is 32 inches and minimum width for corridors is 44 inches (1008.1-1009.1)

Headroom:Ceiling height of not less than 7feet and 6 inches(1003.2)

Protruding Objects:A free standing object mounted on a post or pylon shall not overhang more than 12 inches where the lowest point of the leading edge is more than 27 inches and less than 80 inches above the walking surface.(1003.3.2)

INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

Natural ventilation of an occupied space shall be through windows, doors, louvers or other openings to the outdoors. 1203.4)

1205.1 Every space intended for human occupancy shall be provided with natural light by means of exterior glazed openings in accordance with Section 1205.2 The minimum net glazed area shall not be less than 8 percent of the floor area of the room served.

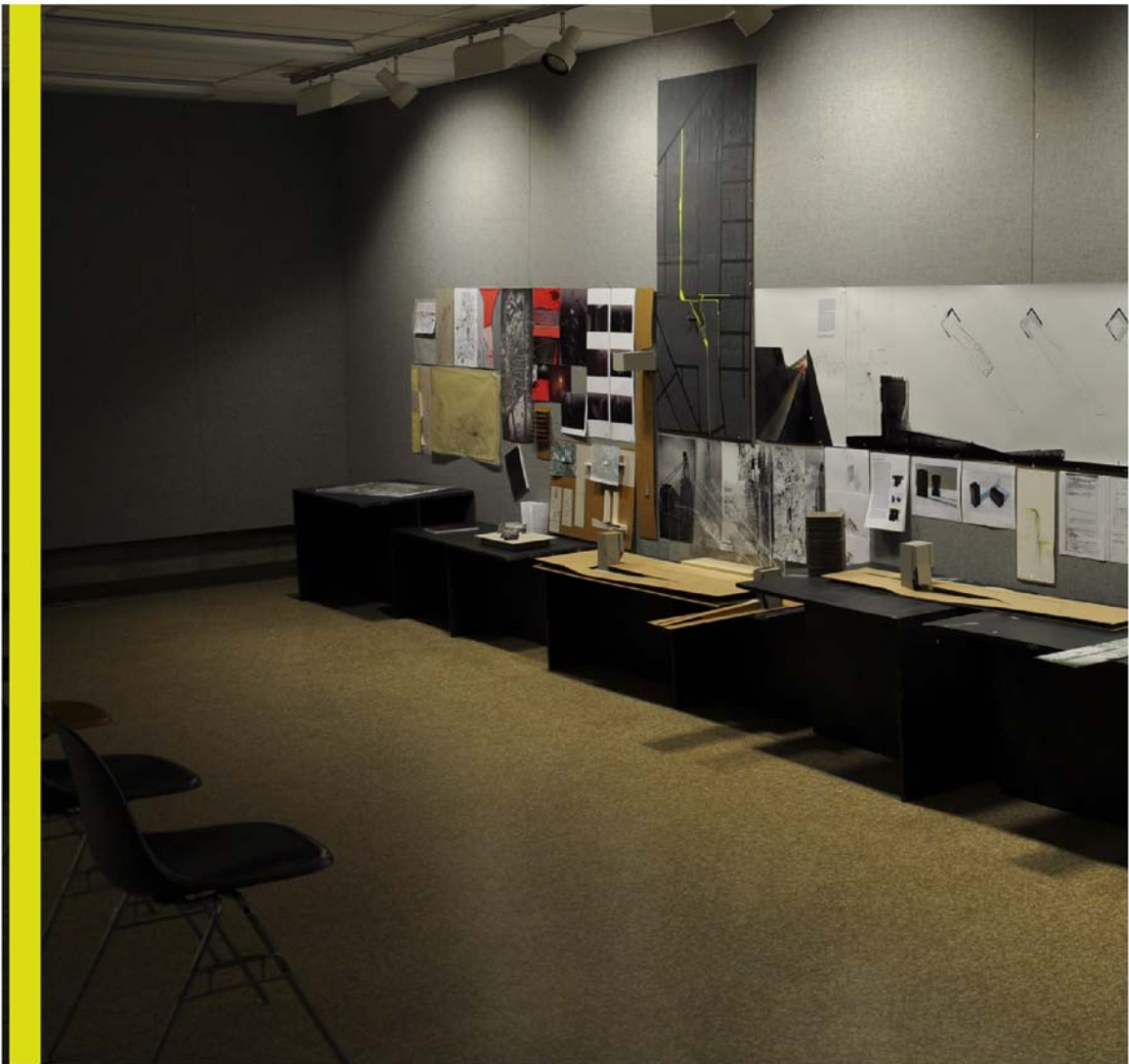
PLUMBING SYSTEMS

According to table 2902.1 an occupancy group of A-3 for passenger terminals one water closet is needed for every 500 men and one for every 500 women.

65

Code Analysis

“International Building Code_2009”





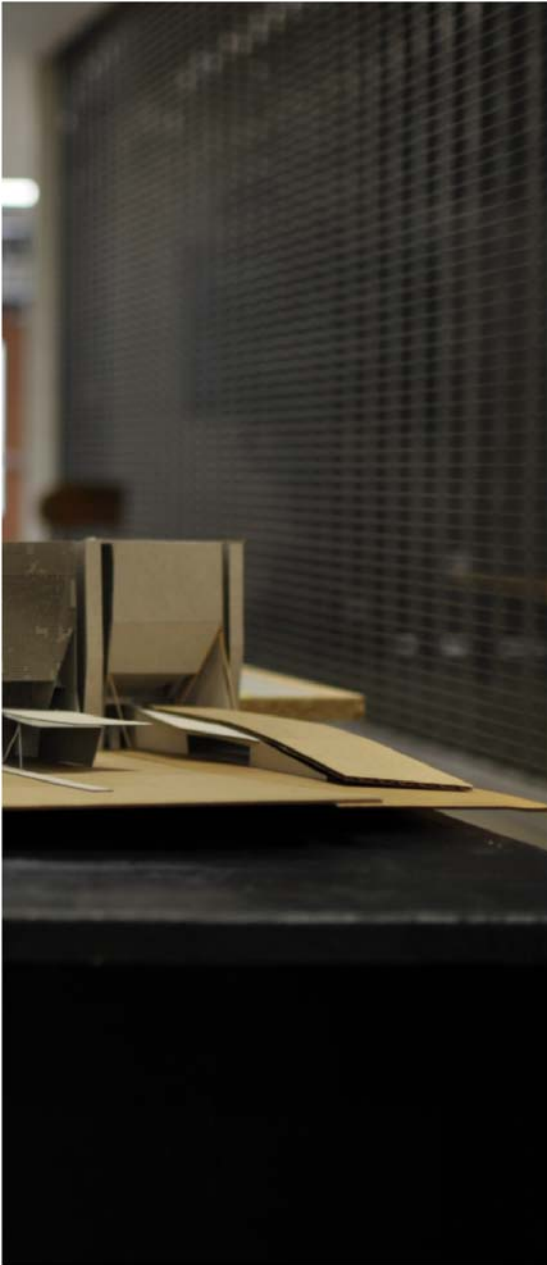


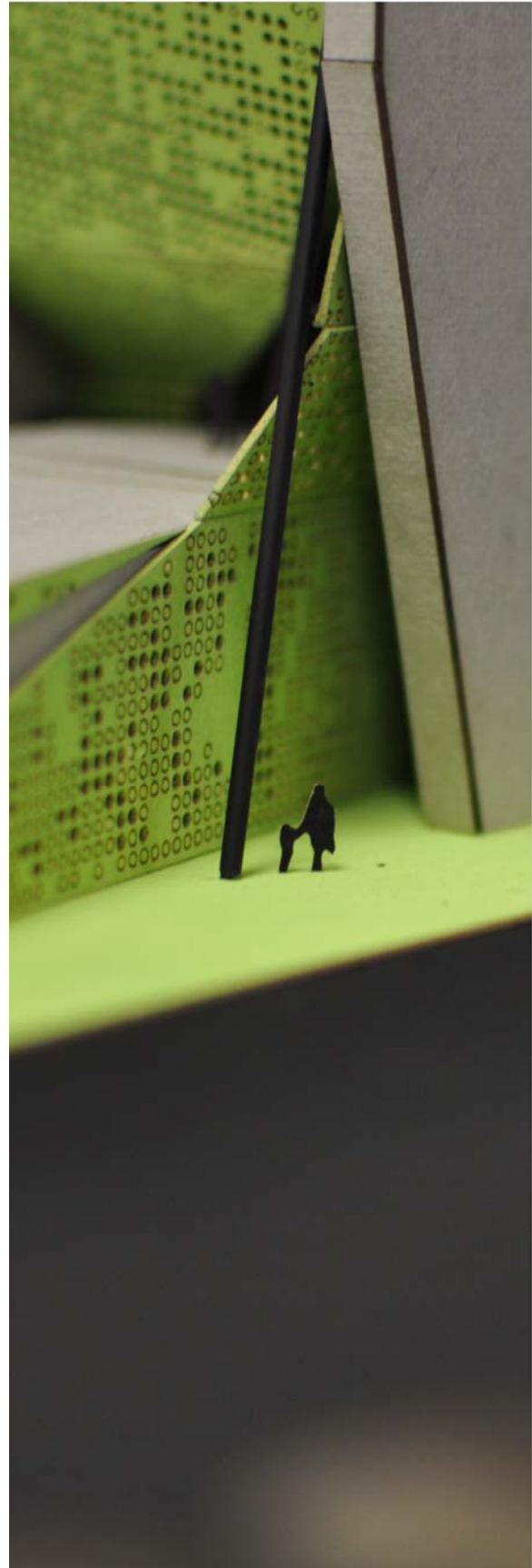
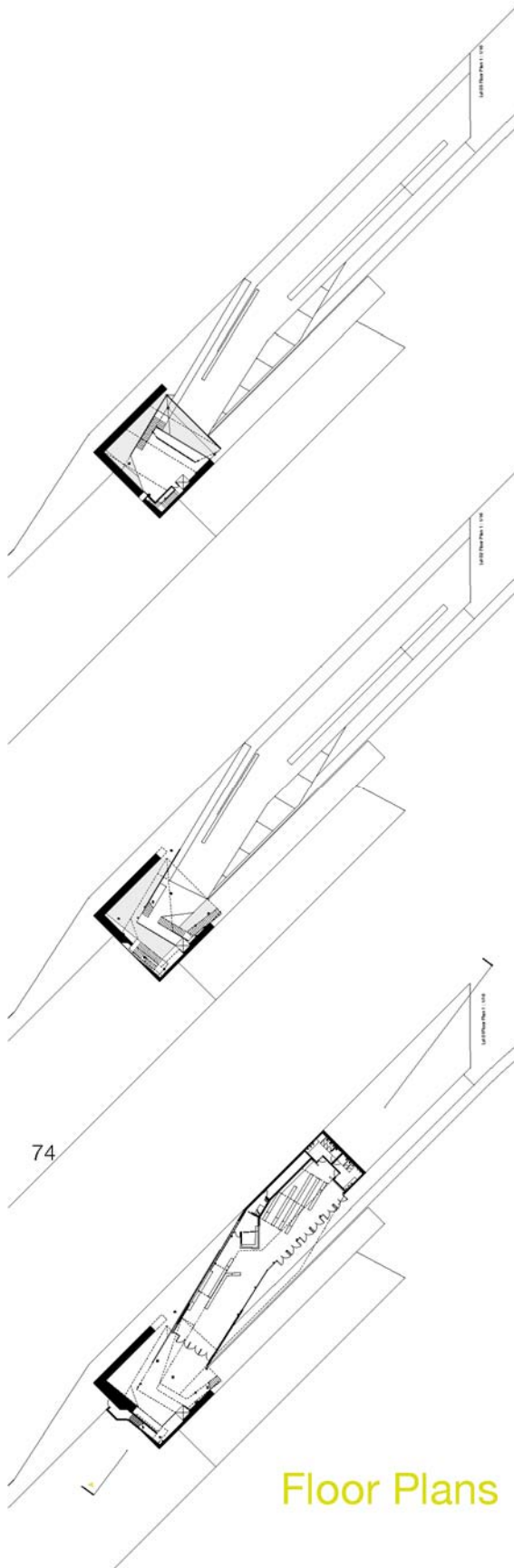


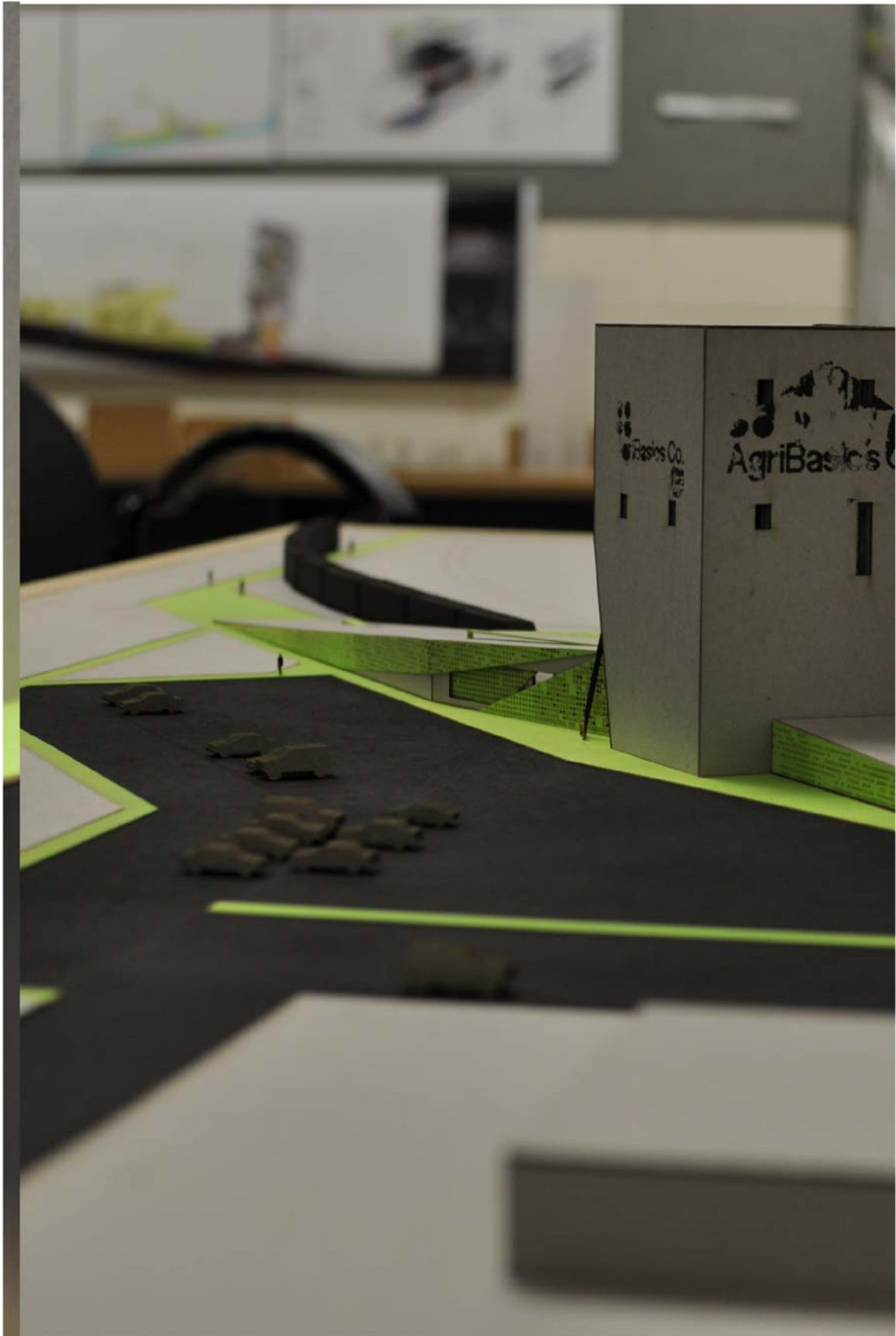


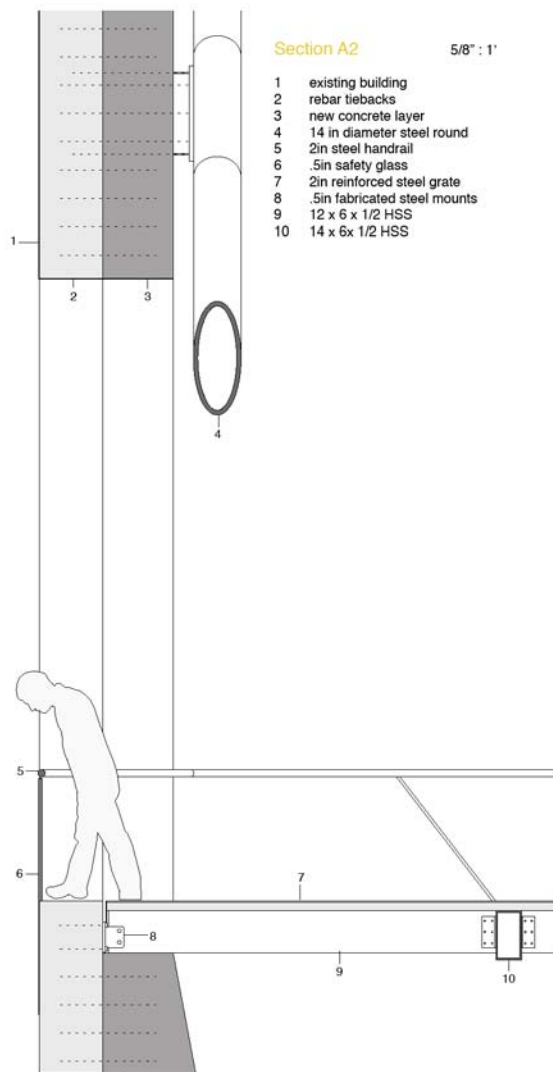






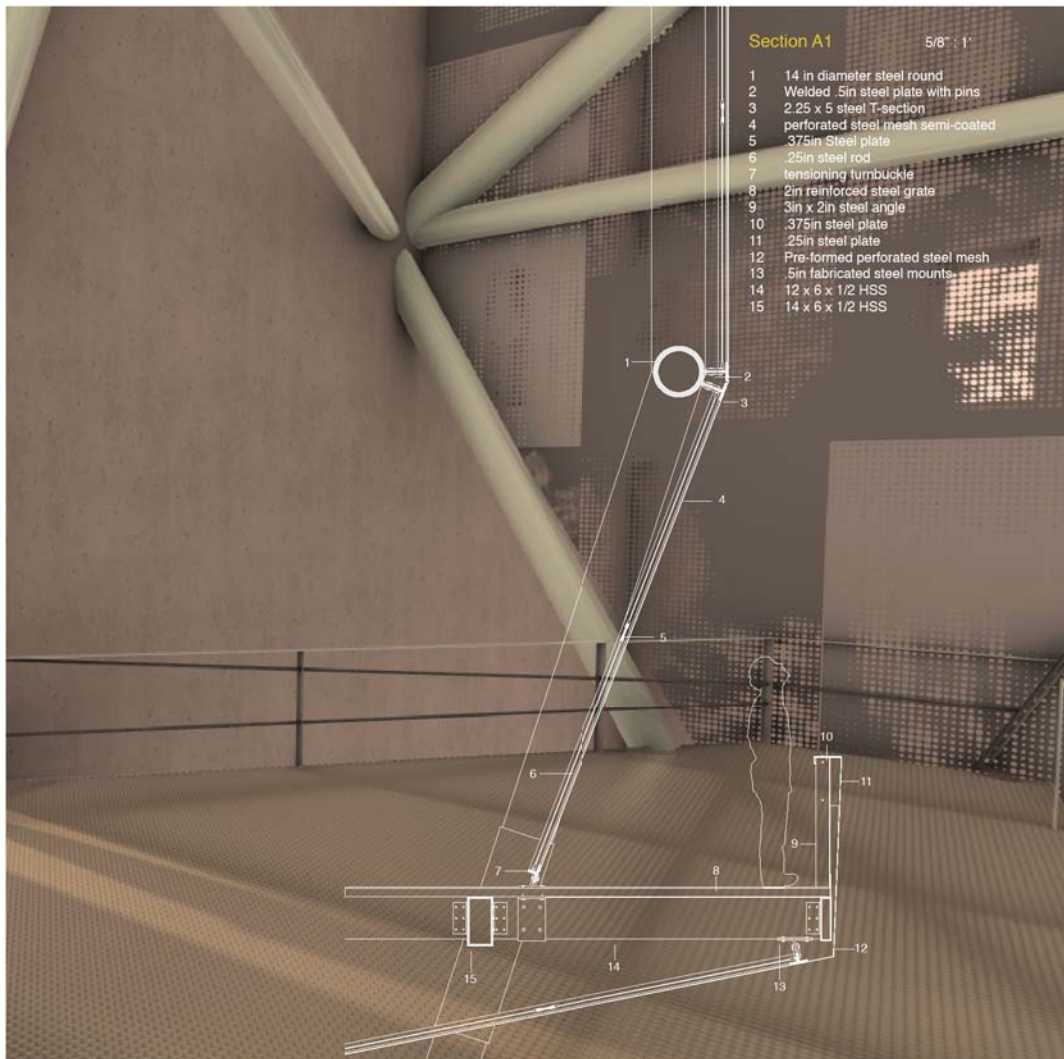


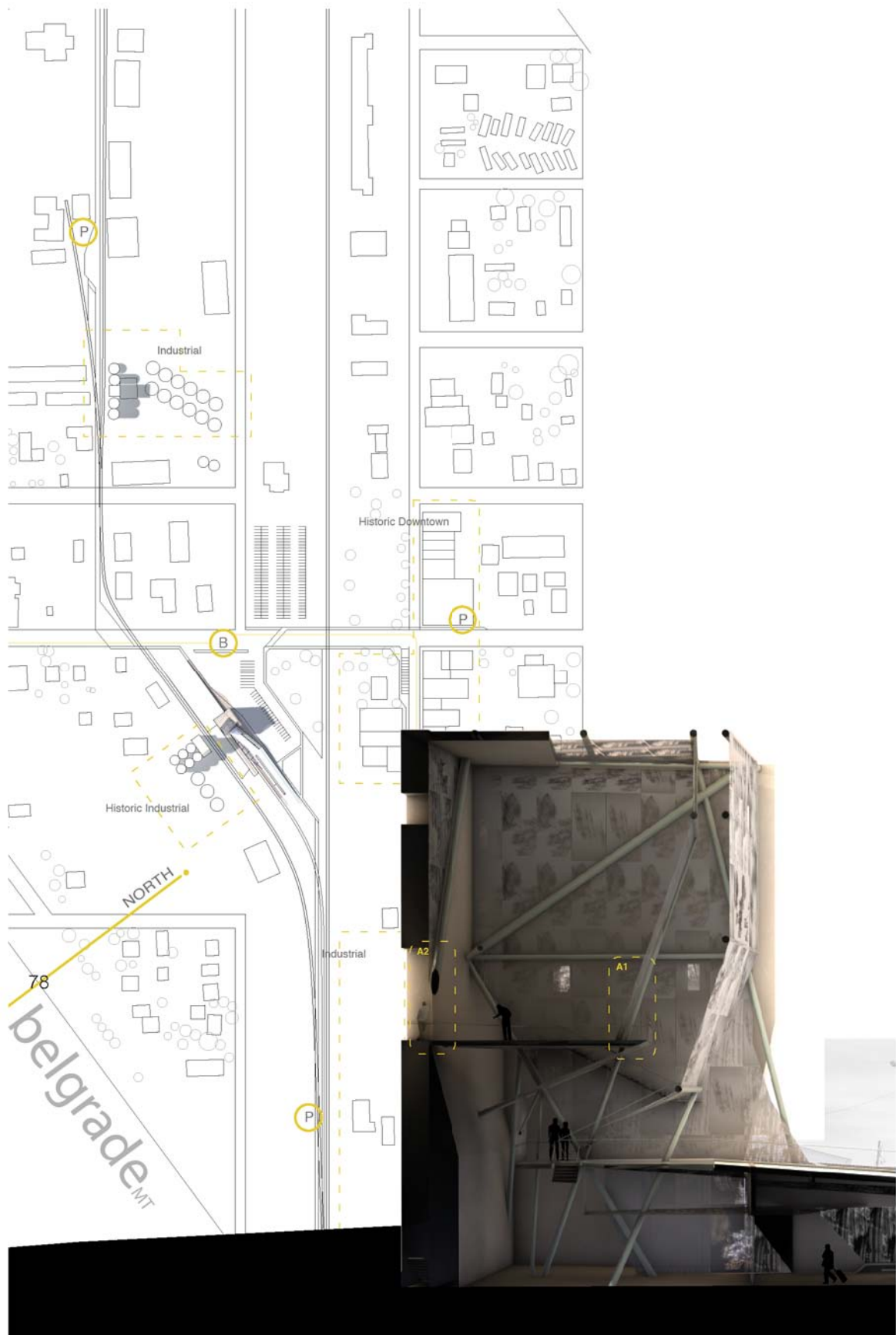




Connecting Details

Existing and new structure to create specific space.

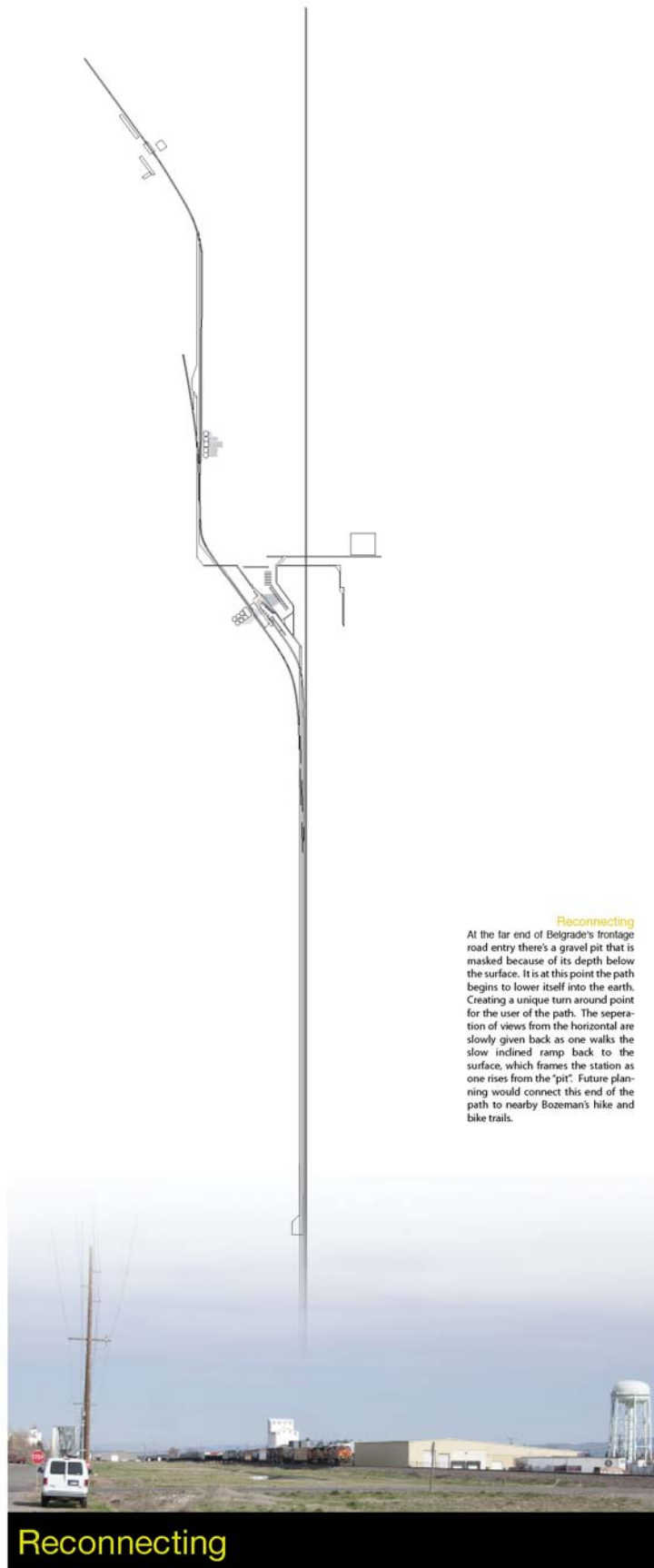






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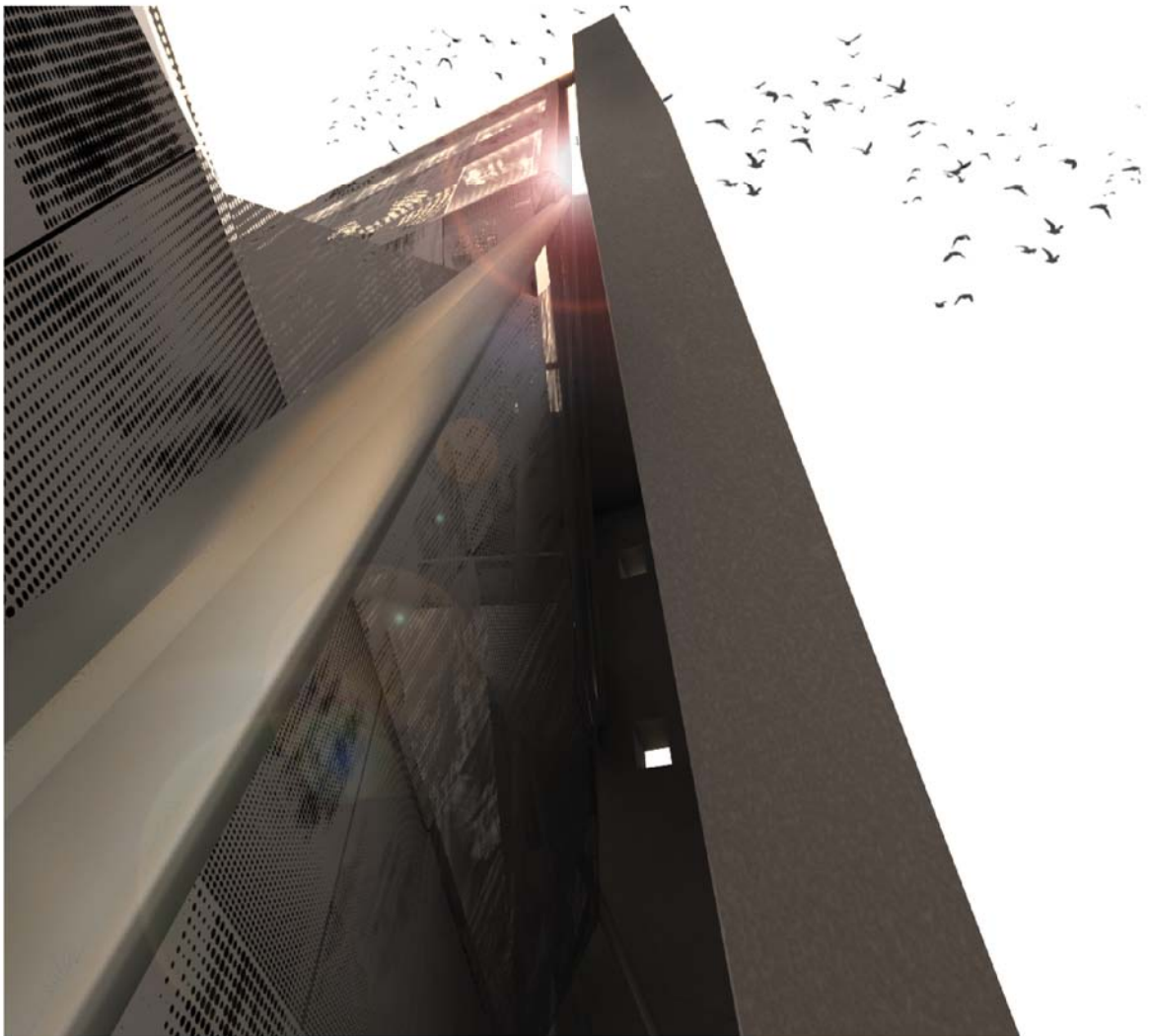




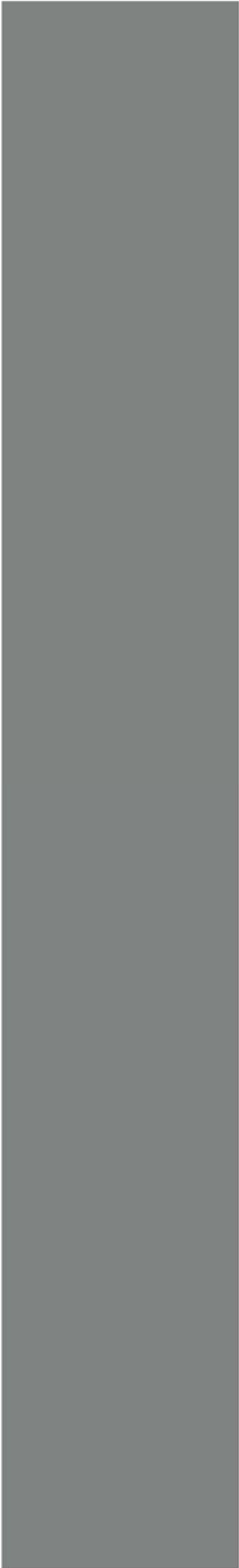
Conclusion

Architecture needs to be the medium that enhances a place's identity and can connect one to the world around them. Place must be developed through an understanding of how it came to be, what it is now and how it will be shaped and strengthened as a union between architecture and place. Knowing how to deconstruct the social and built environments to origins for our understanding is the basis of questioning. A full body experience has the power to enrich our life by connecting spirit and identity into an environment. Architecture is art and science of design; it develops identities related to site, further strengthening them. It is a product of man alone, who has an inner ability to leave his mark respectively within a landscape by using human design, creating harmony between body and nature through the art of architecture.

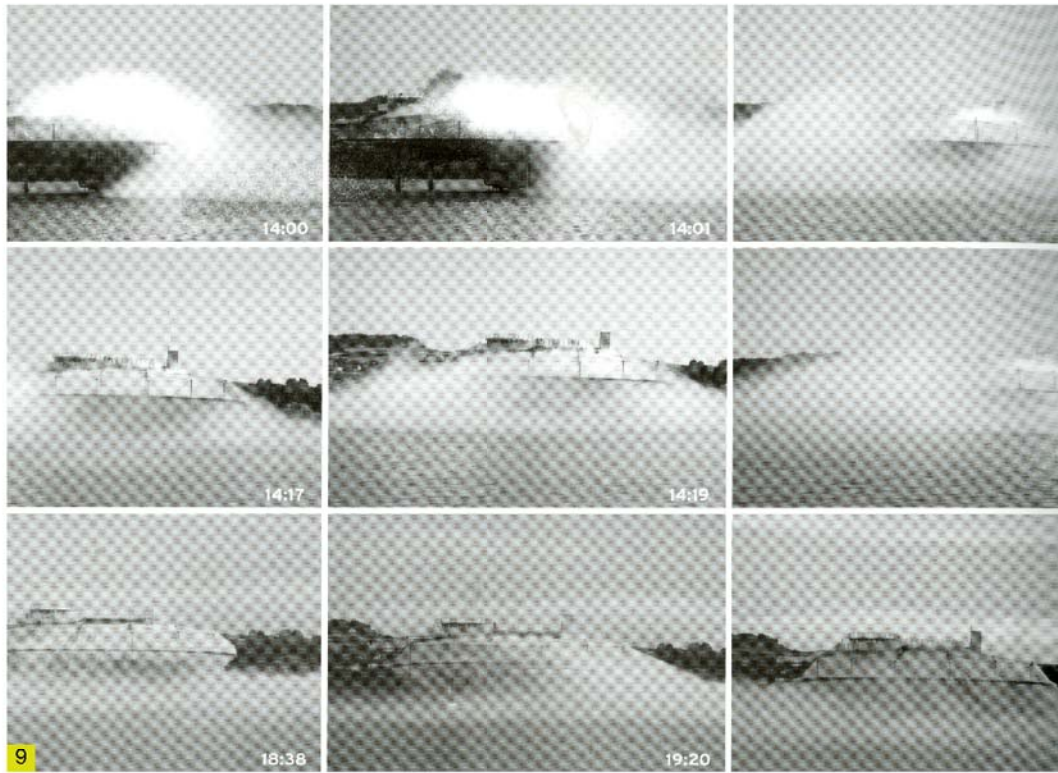
The solution was an Architecture that allows one to be awakened to the world around them, through a process of raising awareness to an environment and its specifics.



Precedents

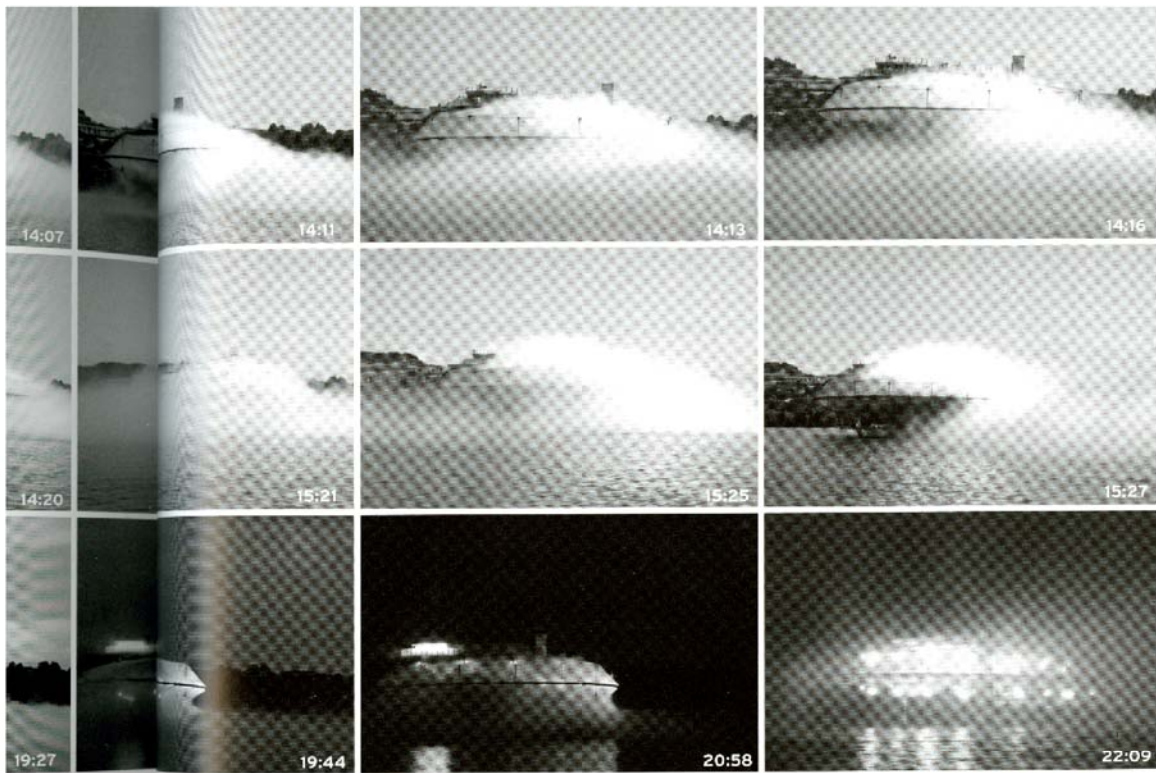


This collection of projects is of personal interest to me. They all involve the reprogramming of certain attributes that challenge perceptions of the norm. Pulling from more than just art and architecture, I have also included some personal experiences and excerpts from literature that has influenced my thoughts and helped activate a diversity of thought. I acknowledge that I am drawn to the idea of challenging perceptions and raising awareness within the individual, giving them the power to understand self, earth, sky and the cosmos; together as one. The body as the site.



Blur

“The making of Nothing”



Blurring a separation of the normal senses, developing new landscapes.

“Blur the making of nothing” is a project developed by Diller and Scofidio + Renfro, that had an effect of connecting people with their surroundings by capturing the mystery of it. “Blur developed as an independent media pavilion, something between a building and a landscape, a special effect, and most of all, an atmosphere...The project interferes with vision, threatening the way we negotiate space and social situations, so we’re left without the aid of this sense that we depend on completely. In the meantime, there is a kind of rebalancing of the senses.”¹⁰ Because of this rebalancing of the senses when people emerge from the fog they have the chance to apply this new gift of ‘seeing’ their surroundings in a new way. To acknowledge the over stimulated sense of vision and the shortcomings of sight when one tries to connect without the rest of the senses, to the world around them.

Sound

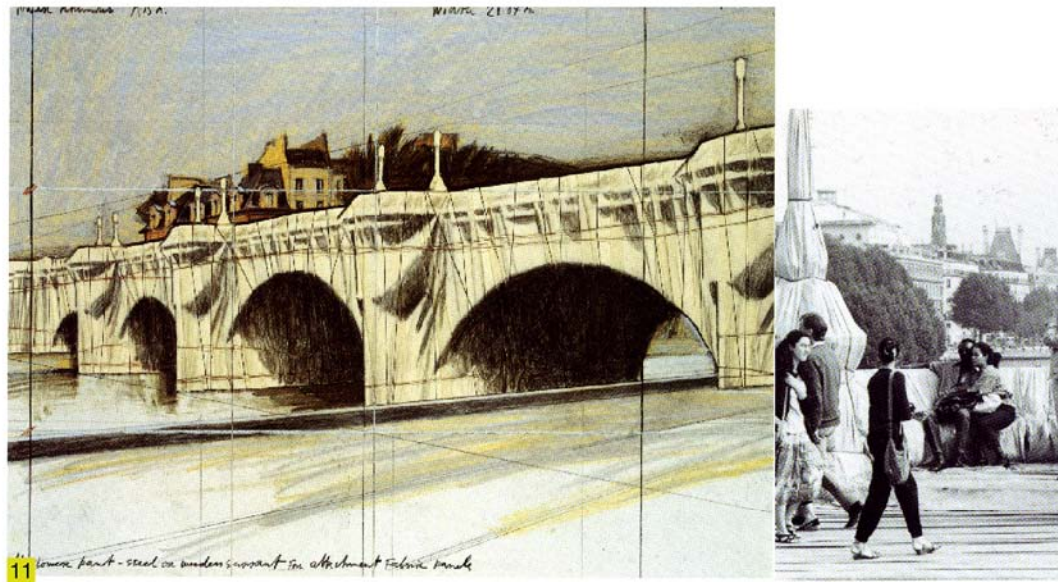
“Temporary Moments_Light and Sound”



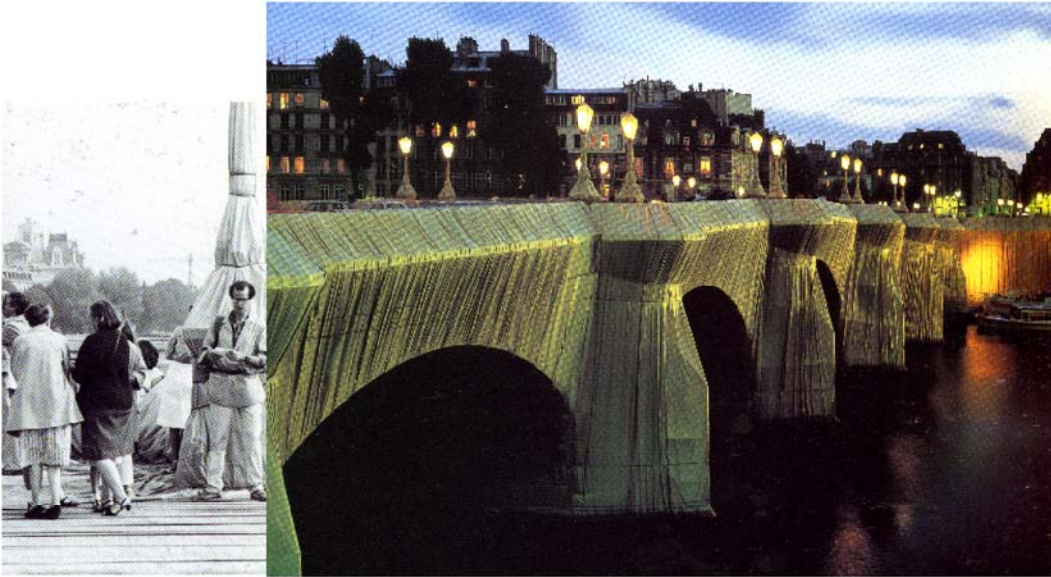


Underground music in contrast to just a nightclub.

In the way DS+R makes new landscapes with water, city culture makes new landscapes with music. Using old abandoned structures deep within the city and adapting them with different types of music for one night only. For the one experiencing this place it is as if it's another world. Thousands of people unknown to each other coming together to enjoy a place for one night and will leave with not only new understandings of people and music but of the city's darker life of the night. There was a time when I was part of a crew of break-dancers and the battles between crews would develop in the scenes of raves. A connection through dance and music and the grunginess of the warehouses I can still feel on my skin, years later. It was a strange environment that required certain attributes to be successful. First it had to be a new place every time, and it had to be secret, repeating in former areas always led to disappointments of expected outcomes. Second it had to be at night, there's an energy that is created by the absence of natural light and the adaptation of artificial light infused with music. Above all though was the constant soundscape that was ever changing like the moods of the people and the play on these moods by the DJ throughout the night, the connection of the music to the public had to be right for the emotions to match.



92 “His projects challenge our habitual perception with all the fleeting charm of an unrepeatable occurrence. Familiar landscapes, buildings we pass everyday without seeing, suddenly become the focus of awareness; wherever Christo turns he succeeds in interrupting the predictability and pragmatism of the world.”¹¹ This interruption is exactly what I’m so interested in. Increasing people’s awareness to the life around them, allowing them to connect with true meanings and the energy from their surroundings. Involving the public in their built environment.



Christo

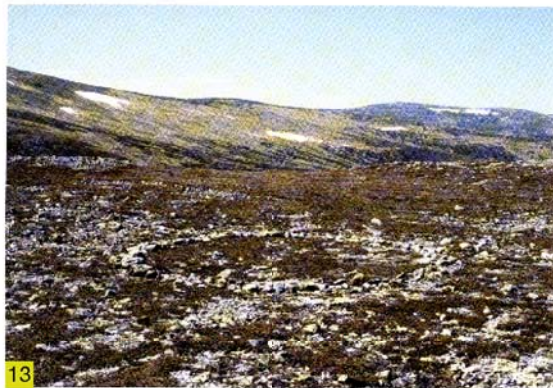
"Wrapping The Pont-Neuf"

This short story reveals to us that the nature of the city's life is given by its occupants, and there's a certain fascination with the chaos of the city, the sounds, the filth, all of it together completes it. The main character leaves the perfect utopian island of 'Garden City' to the remains of the abandoned mega city in search of connecting with the reasons of the past. In doing so he finds others that at first are only interested with memorializing the past but Halloway wants to bring a portion of the city back to life. Amazingly bring it back to life results in the recreation of death and destruction, which comes with a fossil fuel society, but also a realization of how we choose our surroundings and in a way we decide on the outcomes of our setting. There were plenty of opportunities to turn things around but there was a hunger to be as real as the past, to be true to the functioning of the city as possible. "Ballard is interested in urbanism and spatial dynamics as a way to understand the city as narrative. The psychological dimension of urban life plays an important part, 'reading' and 'writing' the city on a sensory level." ¹²

J G Ballard

“The Ultimate City”





96

Circle

“Richard Long Circle in Scotland”

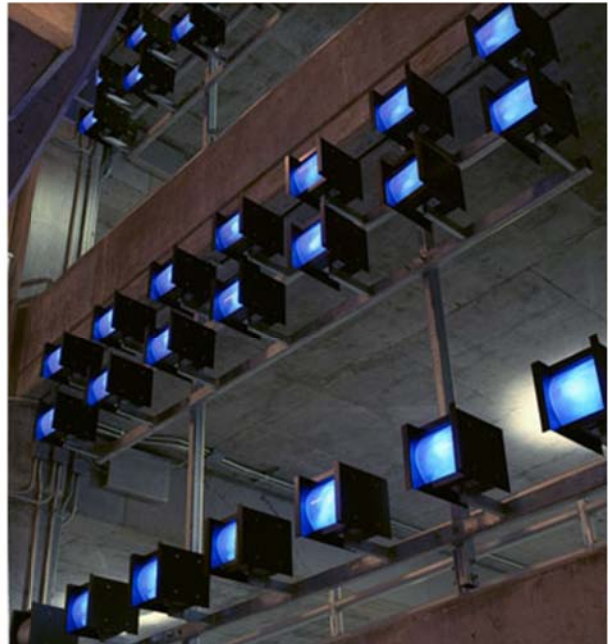
The projects from Richard Long show how the marks of the human, even as simple shapes are dominant within nature's free landscape. We can pick them out and notice that it is a mark of a person on the landscape, But Richard Long has a way of doing it that allows it to fade into the background, letting you see it softly. Showing a human connection with their environment, because it is lightly done it's an act when seen may stop one to sit and think of their surroundings and possibly be more aware of their own impact on the environment. Land art that becomes place specific.



Niel Denari's 'Fluoroscope': Thinking of light as a Mass.

"Artificial light, now more than ever considered to be a building material on par with concrete and steel, is our environment's most malleable medium, capable of being projected, deflected, colorized, and animated, just to name a few ways in which light may be manipulated in a constructed environment. Due to its economy and long life, the exposed fluorescent strip light (FSL), an element used in every supermarket, school cafeteria, and office space across the global landscape, is the most ubiquitous element in this environmental discourse. In this project, we have found new graphic, organizational, and structural possibilities for the fluorescent tube. The 'Fluoroscope©' installation attempts to merge these new possibilities for the FSL into a structure that further elaborates on the atmospheric effects created by a unique arrangement and density of these 4ft white glowing lines."¹³

Light as a material, not just a light fixture hung in a gallery supplying a backdrop for works of art, instead it is the piece in the gallery. This idea changes perceptions of light as a mass and as a dominate material to design with, not just an accent piece in the background. Lighting is a key element that brings the city to life at night and controls edges and lines through the city. Changing the norm of lighting such as the Fluoscape could awaken people to new perceptions during moments of intent to shift thoughts and attraction to certain fields and edges within the city.



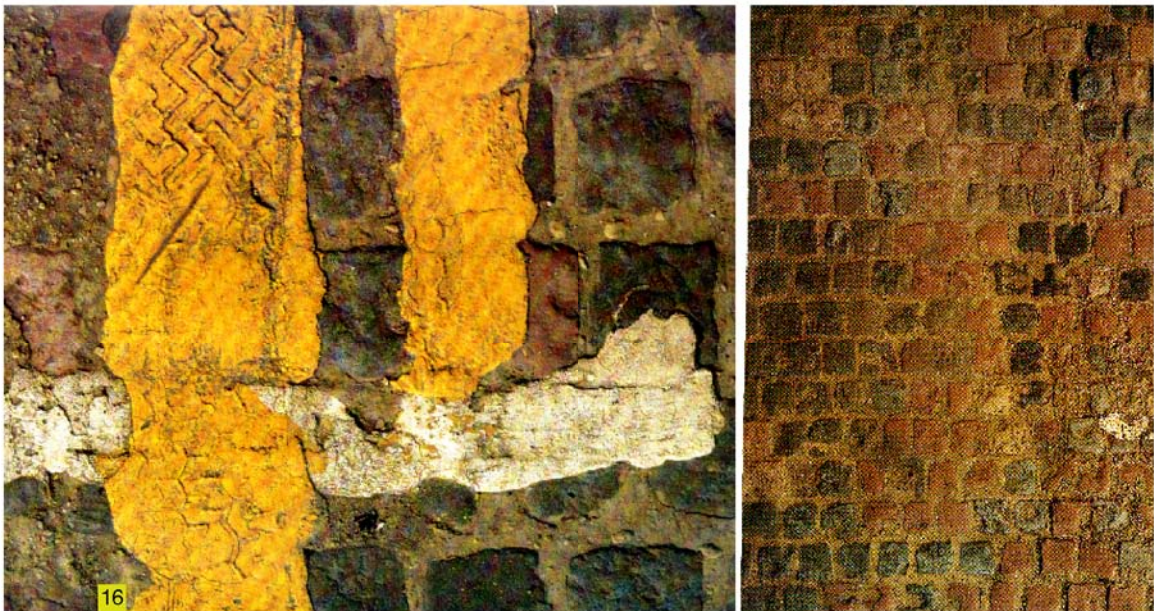
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Pulse

“Eldorado Architects”

El Dorado's 'Pulse': Energy

Here within a parking garage stairwell is a project aimed at showing the visitor with light and sound the energy of the city. 'The systems active mode is triggered as a person approaches and a greeting of intensified light and sound.'¹⁴ This is very interesting because the scale of this greeting is able to pass into the adjacent blocks. One could experience this once and be reminded of it's presence farther away or from different transportation medium. Car, plane, etc, the experience is transferred over many forms and a bodily memory can be experienced and interpreted even away from the proximity of the project.



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Beyond Image

“Journey to the Surface of the Earth”



Beyond Image: The Boyle Family 'Journey to the surface of the earth'

"The programme, the journey, the quasi-scientific accumulation of evidence, are like so many metaphors for what is really at stake, what is really being explored and questioned and tested. Not the boundless of the physical world, but the limits of man's capacity to see it, the nature of human experience as observable through the senses."¹⁵

An in depth study of a detail of a site. Nothing is left for interpretation it is what it is from all around the world. The idea of multiple archiving of different sites and details is intriguing because it allows for a layering of evidence and the viewer has the ability to figure out relations and how to see deeper into their own relationships of themselves and their personal places of what is right in front of them.



Film

"Children of Men"

A still from the movie 'Children of Men' showing a dystopian city. In the foreground, a white car is parked on a street. In the background, a large, dark, industrial building with a tall chimney is visible. The sky is overcast and grey.

'Children of Men' directed by Alfonso Cuarón

This is a film that plays off of this idea of the not so distant future. The city is recognizable allowing the viewer to better immerse into the director's vision. It allows a cross over of future ideas into the present because of this and by doing so creates stronger connections to the view and their own lives. The change in the characters over their journey starts to raise questions of our own complacency. What if? Is a common question I ask myself every time I watch this film, and the human capacity for survival isn't just about life but also sacrifice. The movie experience of Hollywood allows one to forgo their beliefs for a temporary world of fantasy and questioning. The entire experience is choreographed and this idea of a movie affecting our emotions isn't unlike architecture having the ability to affect the body and emotions. Designing with an attitude and a desire to help people realize themselves in space gives them an opportunity to connect with their surroundings in new ways.

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⁵ P. 32.

⁶ P. 151.

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⁸ (Heidegger, pg 5)

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¹⁰ Reeser, Amanda, and Ashley Schafer. *Praxis, Journal of Writing and Building, Issue 4 Landscape*. Chichester: Praxis, Inc., 2002. P. 94

¹¹ Christo. Christo prints and objects, 1963-1987 a catalogue raisonné. Munich: Edition Schellmann, Abbeville, 1988. P. 11

¹² Sellars, Simon. "Stereoscopic Urbanisim." *Architectural Design* 79.5 (2009).Pg86

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¹³ www.nmda-inc.com/index.php?/exhibitions/fluoroscope

¹⁴ www.edoradoarchitects.com/projects

¹⁵ Beyond image Boyle Family, Hayward Gallery, London, 1 November 1986-25 January 1987. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986.

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