I, kelly_seim, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
A Place to Rest (Dwelling, Shelter, Homelessness and Meaning)

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A PLACE TO REST (DWELLING, SHELTER, HOMELESSNESS AND MEANING)

a thesis submitted to the graduate school of the university of cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of architecture
in the school of architecture of the college of design, art, architecture and planning

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that phenomenology has been a subject of theoretical discourse for over 200 years, at times the architectural discussion (education, projection | representation and theory) does not concern itself with the embodied experience of architecture, but rather (voyeuristic) image (drawn, rendered or photographic), self-producing (and consuming) commodity and "objective" theory. Simultaneously, as contemporary technological and cultural junkies, our need to know the already-objectified image of something, in this case, architecture, gives us an inaccurate, privileged sense that we "know" the work itself (we know its image).

There is a significant difference, however, between the embodied experience and the projection or image of a building. As articulated in the work of Peter Zumthor, Kenneth Frampton and Juhani Pallasmaa, built work must be experienced (bodily, experientially), or it is not known.

Given our contemporary technological, socio-political context, what does architecture mean to us today? There is an urgency to reconsider the values and ethics of (a) building, and, in doing so, to assess where and how we experience meaning. What constitutes a meaningful order for architecture in our everyday life?

As means of inquiry, this thesis engages a phenomenological approach in the understanding of building(s) and dwelling in the design of a homeless shelter. Herein, the research is twofold: first, to further an understanding of the meaning of dwelling as it has been written about in theoretical and architectural writing(s); and, second, to investigate shelter as the most essential function(ing) of architecture.

The work then focuses on homelessness in Cincinnati, Ohio, and, more specifically, that portion of the homeless population who will not go to traditional homeless shelters. A design intervention will be proposed which is located on a largely abandoned edge of Over the Rhine, a neighborhood in Cincinnati. The design seeks to respond to this human condition while affirming the poetic nature of building and dwelling in the everyday.
“With an eye made quiet by the power of harmony, and the deep power of joy, we see into the life of things.”

- William Wordsworth

“Our need is nothing less than the formulation of a new understanding of the task of the architect, a redefinition of theory and practice, of the relationship between thinking and making within a technological world. The future of an architecture that can reconcile its age-old dimensions as poetic vision and political reality, that can therefore exist in our cities beyond tyranny and anarchy.”

- Alberto Perez-Gomez, introduction to Ordonnance for the Five Kinds of Columns After the Method of the Ancients (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1993), 38.
my sincere gratitude to all who have supported me in this process.

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my friends, Emma, Alyson and Nancy B.: for your conversation, support, encouragement and friendship.

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finally, to my mentor, Nancy W.: for your constant support, invaluable in sight and wisdom. your impact in my life is profound and my gratitude is beyond words.
A perpetual student and incessant reader, I spend time studying and learning (about). This time it’s architecture. But what do I know? Do I know architecture’s fullness? Its lifeblood and embodied meaning?

We take the DB from Düsseldorf to the Satzvey stop. We pass an old castle, now a country club. We walk along roads, and pull away when cars drive past.

“Soon there will be a forest. And beyond it, Bruder Klaus.”

There it is: quiet, beautiful, in the middle of fields, and framed by the density of trees. I’ve looked at this building many times but I’ve never seen it. Being here is different.

To know something and not know it; what is the nature through which we know? I thought I knew and this is the problem. Without an experience of something, the sensual, lived truth eludes.
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25% of homeless people in Cincinnati are children. Simple diagram by author.

31% of the homeless population are families. Simple diagram by author.


87% of cities reported the length of time people are homeless has increased. Simple diagram by author.

cave: Under the bridge. Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo by author.

Forest: In between buildings. Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo by author.

cave: Appropriation of wall. Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo by author.

Homeless man. [Link](http://danieldurick.theworldrace.org/?filename=top-10-things-i-3-about-cincinnati)

Homeless man. [Link](http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2003/08/10/editorial_wwed1a10.html)

Sight panorama. Cave. By author.

Map: Re-fuse wall. Cave. By author.

Sight panorama. In between. By author.

Sight panorama. Wall. By author.


Site (Inspiration). Photo by author.

Model. Site force(s). By author.

Figure ground. Streets. By author.

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Drawing. By author.

Model. By author.
If I recognize architecture has implicit meaning then what a built work is is not separate from what I think or say it is. Architecture is not some thing that images translate subsequently. Instead, its presence embodies the means and end of (the) experience itself.

Given our cultural context(s), what does architecture mean to me, to us, today? Traditionally, architecture has been a symbol and instrument of power, and, in many cases, a means of claiming or displaying hegemony. This can be traced through history—as the transition of architectural theory into an instrument of technological domination that excluded metaphysics began in the 17th century. Prior, architecture embodied values stemming from a perception of the world as a purposeful work of god. All science affirmed and confirmed this; intellectually, it grounded humankind in a meaningful world.

Following the work of Galileo, intellectuals began to regard scientific phenomena not simply as what could be perceived, but that which could be conceived with rational, mathematical clarity. Things became numbers, and the world was divided into (the) relative and subjective. At the same time, Descartes, in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, proposed that existence was in thinking. Combined, both formed the postulations of a scientific split between perceptual and conceptual modes of knowledge. (Later, this would provide foundation for Western science and thought—privileging the scientific version of truth over the real, perceived or experienced.)

As is well known, this affected architectural history—with the work of Claude Perrault. In *Ordonnance for the Five Kinds of Columns after the Method of the Ancients*, Perrault redefined truth as separate from illusion; scientific thought was disassociated from the mythical or metaphysical. Perrault was among the first in architecture to believe this process would lead necessarily to universal truth. And, this intellectual shift, in turn, became identified with the history of science.

Implicit was a philosophy in constant evolution, moving toward absolute rationality. The lived world was diminished in importance in order to embrace the world of scientific abstraction.

We find ourselves in this cultural (and intellectual) paradigm today; technology is paramount. As (new) technological obsessives, oftentimes the fullness of things is flattened or replaced to flashing image (on television, in the computer). The sensual, embodied nature of wisdom is a fragment of itself (pixel; myopic byte of information; data devoid of contextual meaning).

Yet, according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, object-based thinking “is unaware of the subject of perception. This is because it presents itself with the world ready-made, as the setting of every possible event, and treats perception as one of these events.” Herein lies the contradiction and the rift: the hermeneutic, perceptual nature of experience (of things) is diminished or denied, in favor of the privileged, rational, scientific “knowledge” of (things as) objects; the latter structure and structuring necessarily relies on that which it denies. In other words: these form(al) based structures fail to acknowledge the role of perception, experience and meaning (it is denied or diminished as mere subjectivity) and propose ultimate abilities (traditionally: mathematical; later: scientific; currently: technological).

But are there existential structures without meaning? No. According to Martin Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, (our) experience and perception belong to the body as a whole, not merely to the mind (in our thinking of something).

In deed, phenomenology strives to go beyond positivistic prejudice(s), and, in architecture, re-claims metaphysical justification in our everyday human world; it reveals the limitations of mathematical, scientific and technological based structures (without in any way denying their significance). Its
immediate lens is the sphere of perception and experience itself (which ultimately is the origin of existential meaning).

This points to value(s), ethic(s) and meaning. In architecture today, it is imperative to reconsider the value(s) and ethic(s) of (a) building, and, in doing so, to assess how we posit and experience meaning (as well as the meaning of value). What constitutes a meaningful order in our contemporary life?

Can architecture re-present (and become) more than a male dominated, egocentric expression of will? Can it embody value(s) of an|other order instead -- and affirm the poetic nature of life through its quiet, symbolic presencing (in a built work)? Might it embody value(s) other than formal experiments and seductive, superficial flashiness which typically characterize contemporary architectural representation and practice today?

These questions are ideologically radical in nature. With these in mind, this thesis will begin to explore the poetic nature of architecture and buildings – using the keywords dwelling and shelter to structure the research. The work is an investigation into the implicit and explicit (existential) meanings of each; each is essential to an understanding of what (a) building means. The work will focus first on dwelling and then shelter.

In exploring the importance of dwelling in | to the act and experience of architecture, the first section will investigate the nature of dwelling (as philosophers, architectural theorists, historians and practitioners alike have written about it). This is with aim to developing a wider depth and breadth of how we think, write, know and experience dwelling (itself). Following, are terms to be discussed: building; poetry; signification; meaning; detail; tectonics; place; art; resistance. In realizing the meaning of dwelling and its implicit relationship to building, this section aspires to expand architectural design processes (i.e., speaking, thinking, perceiving and making).

This leads to the next section: shelter. In understanding the essential nature of shelter, i will focus on the definition, or linguistic meaning of shelter. The most fundamental expectation of architecture is to provide a place of protection from weather, and yet the meaning of shelter reveals its cultural and socio-politically divisive nature: shelter serves as a barrier, and, in some cases, re_presents hegemony.

Subsequently, i will look to archetype (in this case primal dwellers and dwelling). Behind and beyond the plurality of the many forms throughout history is a simple set of archetypes (and archetypal wisdom) which constitute the grammar of architecture (these are wall, roof and floor). That is: archetypes point to the most essential function of shelter -- that of boundary; of protection from natural elements; of mediating inside and out (whatever this sense of boundary is or means).

Thereafter, i will inquire into the paradigm of building in the architectural form(ula) of the primitive hut. For what purpose? The primitive hut has served as a standard through time by which buildings are judged; it is also the (historical) consciousness from whence they spring.4

i will then investigate two architectural works by Peter Zumthor. Each functions essentially as shelter while, at the same time, reveals the phenomenological or experiential potency and meaning of building explored herein (building as essence; building as shelter). In this regard, each work was experienced first-hand: each will be understood linguistically through the lens of research, immediate experience and memory; each was explored through the (experiential) process of model making in attempt to access architectural potency and their initial making.

Underlying this discussion (in | forming it), an argument is presented: this thesis questions the hegemonic nature of architecture; this is rooted in an experiential sense that architecture is and has always been more. More? More than what? The work claims that architecture was, is and
will always be of, by and for people. A seemingly obvious statement, yet this is no ordinary claim. Or is it?

Traditionally, architecture has had a divisive sort of function or functioning — manifest in one group, the creative class, producing for a specific elite or ruling class. (Here the presence of the building, while expressing itself, also expresses the economic and socio-political forces implicit in its making and being). And yet without necessarily rejecting or in any way denying the cultural value (these) buildings embody, this thesis challenges the divisive, socio-political paradigm that architecture is of and for one group only and not an other. In design (in argument), its focus is the homeless population; in process, it challenges, addresses and reclaims the poetic, phenomenological and experiential potency of building and dwelling.

Which brings us to the next section. Here, I will focus on homeless people in Cincinnati, Ohio who will not go to shelters. My initial aim is to understand the experience of this population so that this will, in turn, inform the act, thinking, and real architectural process of designing a shelter for them. In this regard, the history of homelessness in the United States and the real, socio-political realities of today’s homeless will be discussed.

This final point: my thesis asserts, and defends, the homeless’ implicit (human) liberty to dwell without hegemonic imposition, coercion or imperative. While we are in a society which criminalizes their (behavior and) being, this thesis reaffirms their (human) right to dwell. It realizes this argument through language, the language of things and, most, the language of building itself.
Architecture as practice and academic pursuit is concerned with the formal in architecture as architecture — with little interest or inquiry into how architecture is perceptually and bodily experienced. Without an experience of something, however, existential fullness collapses, becoming mere image, concept, and thought — lacking the experiential depth of being.

I look back. Plato’s Timaeus marks the origin of this philosophical and scientific tradition. Plato had a predilection for ideas over the things themselves (as we experience them; things were mere shadows of the ideal). He “championed the cause of truth as correspondence,” that is, of the presumed identity of truth and Being that marked the two thousand years of philosophy and science after him and which led to... perspectival objectification, i.e., to the increased concealment of Being until its present occultation.

I then jump in history. As mentioned, following the work of Galileo, an intellectual shift occurred wherein scientific phenomena was that which could be conceived with rational, mathematical clarity. Simultaneously, Descartes, in Meditations on First Philosophy, declared cogito ergo sum (“I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind”).

This affected the work of Claude Perrault. In Ordonnance, he used the arithmetic mean as the most rational guarantee of perfection in establishing ordering of the columns. Herein, architectural theory lost for the first time the transcendental link between microcosm and macrocosm. At the same time, his work also transformed architecture and architectural thinking itself into an instrument of scientific domination that excluded metaphysics. The poetic (and poetic meaning) no longer mattered. In denying poetic making or poesis, both turned toward methodology and applied science.

Thus began a kind of thinking, being, and being, thinking (experienced at present): divisive in nature, rooted in Platonic idealism and Aristotelian dualism, professing ultimate knowledge. The here-and-now fullness of life has become secondary, diminished to a mere thing (thing as object or objectified thing, not Heidegger’s sense of the thing). Wholeness has been reduced to (a series of) parts. Above all, this kind of thinking has enabled us to abstract, commodify and control “that” which we seek to know. And, in the process of detaching from an experience of a built work, we’ve lost ourselves to the idea of the thing, i.e., the idea of (the) form, the idea of (the) building and the idea of (the) architecture.

What does this mean? Built architectural works have become objects separate from our experience, fixed in space_time; and, in losing ourselves to their placement as object(s), we have lost full attention and perceptual experience of the work.

The lived reality of being (amidst the presence of things) has become different than (the) ideological projection. And the thinking mind, intent in reducing the wholeness of things to fractured, objectified parts misses the already implicit whole and its inherent meaning.

Meaning? Why am I concerned with meaning in architecture? Arguably, contemporary architecture does not concern itself with meaning (how we live with built works) or the nature in which humans dwell.

Rather, today architecture and the architect become spectacle. Like the painterly tradition of the Baroque, architecture in its most intrinsic beingness focuses on surface (as) phenomenon — manifest in the starchitect and starchitecture; the image is paramount.

Meaning? The starchitect, or star architect, is a neologism to describe an architect whose celebrity has transformed them into a cultural “idol”. That is, buildings are developed, constructed and promoted as icons marketed as such by cities seeking to profit from the spectacle of form. This form, however, typically overshadows the function or purpose of the building itself. Architecture becomes a device — a production
of the image of the architect. And the image and imagery, in turn, is used as tool or commodity for architectural and cultural promotion.

While the neologism purports to be new, this is the nature of architecture through time: the architectural “body” of knowledge (design in its manifestations, built works and discourse) concerns itself with specific types of architectural projection, historical and contemporary precedent and “objective” theory. This over-emphasis on intellectual and conceptual dimensions, however, contributes to a disappearance of our embodied sense of architecture.

Architecture as built presence is reduced to a construct(ion) communicating style, ideas, will and ego. It is developed and constructed as a cultural, marketing tool where people are thought of as consumers and buildings are viewed and structured in terms of pre-defined programs or types. Or, architecture is taught, practiced and conceptualized programmatically as (a) science: life is “program”; people’s lives are “units”; these “units” are placed within diagrammatic architectural projections of a built form.  

Rather than an interest in the built work, architecture has become an art of the (printed) image fixed by the eye of the camera and the one viewing who shares this fixed view). The fullness of our gaze as experienced in a moment is caught in an image; vitality is lost. Rather than experiencing the moment and presence of a work we (necessarily) view it from (the) outside (a process of separation: the work becomes spectacle; we become spectators; the work in its entirety is flattened to a spectacular image of its former being). And yet. Why am I even talking about this? Isn’t the logic dead? Perhaps. But it continues to inform our perceptions of the (life) world and architectural practice. So I continue.

Is meaning lost? Is it to be dismissed or scorned, merely a ridiculous pursuit (in the minds of critical intellectuals)? No.

How, then, do architects and architecture reclaim artistic and poetic meaning? Can we resist or counteract the waste of forms (implicit to the separative process)? How do we understand (the nature of) meaning?
“Today the significatur of architecture can no longer be a discursive logos, with its emphasis on clarity and ‘truth as correspondence’: it cannot be a cosmology, a formal aesthetic, or a functional or technological logic. The signified is that of a poetic discourse, the gap between the two terms of a metaphor. In significant work of the last two centuries, the architect has indeed become a narrator of events, disclosing ‘fictional’ modes of dwelling by deconstructing and twisting the language of technology, both in his constructions (questioning reductive tools of representation) and through his words (questioning functional programming).”

Begin with meaning. What is the meaning? The meaning of meaning?

meaning, 12 noun
1. what is meant by a word, text, concept, or action; implied or explicit significance; [mass noun] important or worthwhile quality; purpose

→ adjective
1. [attrib.] intended to communicate something that is not directly expressed

ORIGIN late Middle English: verbal noun from mean

mean, 13 verb (past and past participle meant) [with obj.]
1. intend to convey or refer to (a particular thing); signify; have (something) as its signification in the same language or its equivalent in another language; genuinely intend to express
2. intend (something) to occur or be the case; be supposed to do something; design or destine for a particular purpose; have something as a motive or explanation in saying or doing; be generally considered to be
3. have as a consequence or result

ORIGIN Old English mænan, of West Germanic origin; related to Dutch menen and German meinen, from an Indo-European root shared by mind

mind, 14 noun
1. the element of a person that enables them to be aware of the world and their experiences, to think, and to feel; the faculty of consciousness and thought
2. a person’s ability to think and reason; the intellect; a person’s memory; a particular way of thinking, influenced by a person’s profession or environment; a person identified with their intellectual faculties
3. a person’s attention; a person’s will or determination to achieve something

This gives me a sense of the significance and the signification of meaning. That is, the meaning of something is in its importance or significance; this can be its worthwhile quality or purpose which is either implicit or explicit to what is meant (through speaking, writing, thinking or acting). The signification of meaning is to have something that signifies itself in the same language (to itself) or its equivalent in another. And these are rooted in consciousness which by nature is historically and perceptually located in experience.

In architectural theory, however, the construal of meaning is typically a conceptual matter of image and imagery, a function of the eye and the intellect. The body, if it figures in is merely a conglomeration of needs “grounded” in a practice that (scientifically) programs the body as if it were simple, and simply, data (behavioral, ergonomic, etc.). That is, our embodied experience is not part of the discovery or realization of (architectural) meaning. How, then, do I experience meaning in architecture — if architecture, as practiced or professed by professional and academic bodies, does not concern itself with the way I (bodily) experience meaning (in the way I live, dwell and build)?

Using dwelling as keyword, I will investigate some of the architectural implications and meanings as philosophers, architectural theorists, historians and practitioners have written about it. My aim is to develop a wider depth and breadth of the way in which we think, write, understand and experience dwelling (itself).
Turn to dwelling and meaning (and to what (a) building means). Look to the nature of language and its inherent relationship to the meaning and nature of dwelling. Begin with the work of Martin Heidegger in “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”: “who gives us a standard at all by which we can take measure of the nature of dwelling and building? It is language that tells us about the nature of a thing, provided that we respect language’s own nature.”

build, “verb (past and past participle built) [with obj.]
1. construct (something) by putting parts or material together
2. commission, finance, and oversee the building of (something)
3. (build something in/into) incorporate something and make it a permanent part of a structure, system, or situation
4. make or become stronger or more intense: [with obj.]
5. [no obj.] (build on) use as a basis for further development

ORIGIN Old English byldan, from bld, bol ‘dwelling’, of Germanic origin; related to bower

bower, “noun
1. a pleasant shady place under trees or climbing plants in a garden or wood
2. (literary) a summer house or country cottage
3. (literary) a woman’s private room or bedroom
verb [with obj.], [literary] shade or enclose (a place or person): [as adj.] (bowered)

ORIGIN Old English ‘dwelling, inner room’, of Germanic origin; related to German Bauer ‘birdcage’
dwell, vi verb (past and past participle dwelt or dwelled) [no obj.]
1. (with adverbial of place) (formal) live in or at a specified place
2. (dwell on/upon) think, speak, or write at length about (a particular subject, especially one that is a source of unhappiness, anxiety, or dissatisfaction)
3. (dwell on/upon) (of one’s eyes or attention) linger on (a particular object or place)

Language tells us: building is construction; building is building into, or making part of another thing or structure; a process that occurs over time; a sense of lingering; building is dwelling; dwelling is living -- and living in a specified place. While our (English) language reveals layers of meaning, it is too restrictive and does not reveal enough.

Heidegger tells us the Old English and High German word for building, bauen, is to dwell, i.e., to remain or stay in (a) place. This is what dwelling signifies as we think of dwelling (through the filter of language): we think of dwelling as an activity that we perform alongside other activities; “we work here and dwell there.” Bauen points to the German word, bin, to be: ich bin, I am; du bist, you are; wir sind, we are. At the same time, bauen also means “to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for.” Yet dwelling is not experienced as our most basic nature; it is conceived, and spoken about, as the place we call home.

Heidegger asserts that we build because we dwell wherein “we do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell...because we are dwellers.” He argues the fundamental character of dwelling and being is to be with and “preserve” our environment (in our relationship to it); our nature is being or dwelling on the earth with it. Heidegger articulates a primal, unified relationship of existence which he identifies as the fourfold: this is between our selves as mortals (embodied conscious beings), the divinities (non embodied conscious beings), earth (all things, which in their thing ness, are being on this earth) and sky (all things which are “not” being on this earth but are “outside” or “beyond” earth). And the relationship is one wherein “dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things.”

Hence, our existence is in and among things and the making of things is building. This relationship is primary and fundamental as is our relationship to all-that-is. And the nature of building is letting dwell. “Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.” Yet how do we build if we do not understand dwelling? So i inquire into its nature. In doing so, how do i arrive at its essence?
Heidegger claims in “Poetically Man Dwells” that the nature of dwelling is poetic or the poetic where the poetic is a quality intrinsic to dwelling (causing it to essence to be). He asks: “how is ‘man’ (sic) - and this means every man (sic) and all the time – supposed to dwell poetically? Does not all dwelling remain incompatible with the poetic?” So we turn to poetic to explore its meaning:

poetic, adj. and n. 1530
1. having the style or character proper to poetry as a fine art; elevated or sublime in expression
2. fond of poetry, able to appreciate poetry
3. celebrated in poetry; affording (a fit) subject for poetry
4. making, creative, formative; relating to artistic creation or composition. Cf. POESIS n., POIESIS n. Obs. Rare.
5. linguistic. having a poetic style. chiefly in poetic function
6. the aspect of literary criticism that deals with poetry; the branch of knowledge that deals with the techniques of poetry. also: a treatise on poetic art, spec. that written by Aristotle
7. the creative principles informing any literary, social or cultural construction, or the theoretical study of these; a theory of form

Language reveals that poetic is related to poetry; it also means to be elevated or sublime in expression and is rooted in Aristotle’s Poetics. Aristotle understood poetics as the way an object is imitated. For him, humans naturally imitate; it is only later, with maturity that the imitation aspires in nature. That is, the initial thing through our understanding, interpretation and imitation of it becomes or expresses a different thing — more noble, or elevated, in form. Poetic form seeks a more universal, profound and fundamental character expression of the basic nature of the being of the thing in its full existence; the poetic is both basic to human nature (fundamental, intrinsic, like dwelling) and also elevated (to art form, as things).

Heidegger explains that the poetic is not ornamental to dwelling (as bonus or addition). Rather, it is intrinsic to dwelling and causes dwelling to be dwelling. In this, poetry is what opens up or enables (human) dwelling. Thus, i am to think of being in and through dwelling; also: to think of our experiential existence as letting dwell: this is the distinctive kind of building. Humans are capable of dwelling only if we have built poetically, or are poetically building. And it is poetry that brings me to both, grounding me to my (earthly) existence.

In light of Aristotle’s Poetics, a building as an initial thing can, in our understanding, interpretation and articulation of it, become or express a more elevated, artful and expressive nature of its (prior) ontology. Like the poem, its presence embodies the means and the end(s) of the experience. For (a) building ultimately seeks a more profound or fundamental character expression of its implicit nature; this is revealed in the poetic articulation of (a) building’s being.

Heidegger goes on to introduce the concept of measuring and claims poetry itself is a distinctive kind of measuring. Which is to say: i judge myself against the heavens (i am self-conscious). This gauges the in-between, i.e., the space between heaven and earth, vertical and horizontal; it measures our mortal existence between the two and is what is poetic in dwelling. “The authentic gauging of the dimension of dwelling, [it] is the primal form of building...Poetry is the original admission of dwelling.”

In this, building, dwelling and poetry belong together. That is, they are essential, or basic, to human nature. The architectural implications are clear: we locate ourselves within the language of the poetic and begin, through interpretation and creative use, to realize the poetic nature of building (as expressed in the language of (a) building, being). Yet how do i to understand and engage the expressive language and being of building and realize its implicit potential?
In “Rappel a l’Ordre, The Case for the Tectonic” Kenneth Frampton calls for a return to tectonics and “the structural unit as the irreducible essence of architectural form.” Here, tectonic is understood as:

**tectonic,** adjective. Etymology: late Latin tectonicus, from Greek tektonikos of a builder, from tekton builder

1. of or relating to tectonics
tectonic. — Gr. tektonikós, f. téktn, -ton-carpenter
1. pert. to building or construction

This definition reveals that tectonics relates to the builder, the building and construction itself. Frampton states that in returning to the basic unit of a building or tectonic architects can express the ontological relationships of the building. Herein, re_posit value and meaning in | to the act, experience and subsequent interpretation of (a) building. At the same time, he is not alluding to the mechanical revelation of construction but rather “a potentially poetic manifestation of structure in the original Greek sense of poësis as an act of making and revealing.”

According to Frampton, Modern and Post-Modern architecture has been bound with the scenographic in its evolution. Buildings, however, are tectonic in character rather than scenographic; they are acts of construction, rather than discourse predicated on various forms of architectural projection. In this, building is an ontological (and ontic) act (rather than a representational one); its built form stands for presence, being – not absence (lack of being). Frampton argues that architects need to re_posit themselves, given our tendency to reduce architecture to commodity. At the same time, he asserts that the tectonic cannot be separated from the technological and identifies three distinct conditions of, or for, objects:

1) the technological object that arises directly out of meeting an instrumental need
2) the scenographic object that may be used equally to allude to an absent or hidden element, and
3) the tectonic object that appears in two modes (these modes are ontological and representational).

Tectonics allows me to engage with and understand meaning — expressed in and of the building (as the building communicates through the language it embodies). And the use of the forms potentially reminds me of the thing (ness) or being of the building itself: “through this analogy to our own corpus, the body of a building may be perceived as though it were literally a physique.”

Hence, there is spiritual and ontological value in the joint: the thing ness of the thing as it is is communicated ontologically. The joint ceases to be merely a point of construction and connection: it is the basic point of signification in the language and meaning of (a) building.

What does this mean for (the) embodied experience? Tectonics expresses the poetic nature of building, being. Here, as acts of construction, buildings are ontological rather than representational acts. Intrinsically linked to the technological, tectonics allows us to posit, identify, engage and understand meaning as it is expressed in and of the building. And as the most basic point of signification and significance in the language and being of building, the joint metaphorically, experientially and metaphysically re-claims and communicates meaning or value(s) in and of itself.
"Details are much more than subordinate elements; they can be regarded as the minimal units of signification in the architectural production of meanings. These units have been singled out in spatial cells or in elements of composition, in modules or in measure, in the alternating of void and solid, or in the relationship between inside and outside. The suggestion that the detail is the minimal unit of production is more fruitful because of the double-faced role of technology, which unifies the tangible and the intangible of architecture."

In "The Tell-the-Tale-Detail", Marco Frascari argues that details provide a possibility for architects to explore the betweenness of (these) binaries, and, in doing so, to express our own existential state of being in between. As the most basic unit in the language of building, details communicate meaning in an essential and poetic way. Like words composing a poem or sentence, details give character to a building just as the selection of words gives character to a poem or sentence. The creative use of detail is similar to the creative use of language: in representing a detail and varying it through use, like letters or words, it can become a creative impetus and is then a point at which to investigate and posit the meaning of (a) building.

In understanding the role of the detail as joint, as a minimal unit in the process of signification, architecture can be viewed as both art and as profession:

"Architecture is an art because it is interested not only in the original need of shelter but also in putting together spaces and materials in a meaningful manner. This occurs through... actual joints...[and] is the place where both the construction and the construing of architecture take place."

Herein, as the most essential unit of building (and in the most essential way), details represent our existential nature. And as the most basic point of signification in the language of (a) building, I am able to re_claim what has been lost: the place of art, poetry and meaning in architecture.
Peter Zumthor explores the phenomenological nature of buildings and their quiet presence in "Thinking Architecture." He discusses architecture as being or presence and advocates a return to thing ness (in a thing as a thing). In this, the presence of a building is ontological: its presence does not represent anything other than the thing that it is.

Presence is realized through articulating the building as a whole and as a multiple of details. Zumthor explains that details express the basic idea of a design at relevant points in the thing itself, i.e., tension, lightness, friction, fragility, belonging or separation. Details are not mere decoration but instead lead to an understanding of the larger whole (of which they are an inherent part). He claims this is a creative act wherein architects must engage with the issues of our time. And this must be done in a way that reflects spirit while giving answer to the questions posed: “architecture is not a vehicle or a symbol for things that do not belong to its essence. In a society that celebrates the inessential, architecture can put up a resistance, counteract the waste of forms and meanings, and speak its own language.”

This is the language of the real, of things and being ness. Architecture’s presence is to receive us, to invite us to be with, experience and live with the world as we build it into being (sometimes through architecture). This, in turn, promotes a relationship of mutual existence between the built world (of architecture) and us. Through our relationship with the being ness of (the) building, we realize the presencing and atmosphere, or character of dwelling (with). Presence, or reality, is for Zumthor:

“Not the reality of theories detached from things, it is the reality of the concrete building assignment relating to the act or state of dwelling...It is the reality of building materials, stone, cloth, steel, leather...and the reality of the structure I use to construct the building whose properties I wish to penetrate with my imagining, bringing meaning and sensuousness to bear so that...a building can serve as a home for man (sic).”

This assignment must always situate itself in connection with the place in which it rests. That is, place is and must be a part of (a) building’s essence.
I am in this (alive) place. This place or sense of place goes beyond mere location or abstracted locality. It is both Cartesian space (with its objectness) and hermeneutic, perceptual space (with its time beingness). The being of place is visceral, tonal, palpable, sensory, felt, known, remembered, temporal (and, as such, changing), rich, sensual and encompassing. It is rooted in things and thingness, experience, spirit, embodiment and being (ness).

As (a) building rests in the place, it (then) changes the place-ness of (the) place. Existentially, it is brought forward, clarified, made conscious, articulated as being, in the being of (the) building.

Categorically, place can be understood as phenomenon, structure and spirit. Here, the phenomenon of place is in the thingness of the things that are in the place: the textures of the building and of all of the things in the environment around the building (material substance; shape). The structure of place denotes that place has an existential dimension, with latent meaning(s) present (these are purported or imported and complexly layered). In this, human activity does not take place in a homogenous, isotropic space, but in a space distinguished by qualitative differences. Finally, the spirit of place points to the spiritual dimension and pertains to how we dwell, live and are within the place.

For Norberg-Schulz, thingness or beingness is placed in and through character. That is, character gives a thing or a place its beingness; it is akin to tone or quality. To say that a thing has a certain character is to speak about the qualities it has. Character can be something that is given to a thing to develop a certain quality in | to the thing. It can also be something that is added to the thing through the process of use and time (being). Further, it can denote a quality or atmosphere.

The existential purpose of (a) building is to uncover the meanings potentially present in the given environment. “It is of great existential importance to come to terms with the genius of the locality where his (sic) life takes place. In the past survival depended on a ‘good’ relationship to the place in a physical as well as a psychic sense.” Here, dwelling presupposes identification with the environment. This creates a sort of rupture, wherein lacking identification (with), human and environmental disorientation and (or) dislocation occurs: “we...recognize the fact that man (sic) is an integral part of the environment, and that it can only lead to human alienation and environmental disruption if he (sic) forgets that.” Thus, the categories of phenomenon, structure and spirit aid us as designers in acknowledging and experiencing the wholeness of place. At the same time, its existential purpose reveals latent and potential meanings. Without an experiential relationship and identification with, i experience its lack (and resultant rupture). This reveals the dwelling plight. Yet i still do not have a sense of its socio-political implication(s) and the way this relates to and impacts architecture.
In “Dwelling”, Ivan Illich describes dwelling as an art wherein “the human is the only animal who is an artist, and the art of dwelling is part of the art of living.” Illich claims dwelling is typically described colloquially – as in “where do you live” – in part because this is how we think about and use the term; this is an equation of dwelling and living which points to a place in time when the world was still habitable and we were in-habitants.

He comments on the societal shift the world has experienced through industrialization and modernism: the way that we dwell or exist has fundamentally changed. Dwelling is no longer pursued as an art form (practiced as living with); rather, dwelling has been reduced to a flattened version, practiced as living to survive. This shift in being subsequently created the shift in (our) fundamental being with all things: we are in crisis.

Illich critiques modernism and architecture as a whole in positing that architects are not concerned with dwelling as an activity, and claims’ dwelling as an activity is outside of the reach of architects:

“Not only because it is a popular art; not only because it goes on and on in waves that escape his (sic) control; not only because it is of a tender complexity outside of the horizon of mere biologists and system analysts; but above all because no two communities dwell alike.”

Architecture is described as an elitist venture, wherein architecture as (a) discipline can never claim to do what it claims (educate someone on the art of building). Rather, Illich claims architecture is too complex to be taught: (a) part of the art of living, it must be picked up in and through living and experience.

He goes on in his criticism claiming industrial society is the only one that makes a citizen into a unit to be sheltered and is absolved from the existential and social activity of dwelling. Here, “those who insist now on their liberty to dwell on their own are either very well off or treated as deviants.” That is, dwelling is no longer about dwelling or living with; it is about ownership, control and commodity. Those who do not comply with these implicit rules and power structures are then branded as deviants. According to this order (as assertion; as form) they will be labeled - intruder, squatter, anarchist and nuisance - depending on the way in which they assert their liberty to dwell. As a threat, they would then be removed “not so much because of the damage they do to the owner of the site, or because they threaten the health or peace of their neighbors, but because of the challenge to the social axiom that defines a citizen as a unit.”

Implicit in this paradigm is a conflict between the right of someone to be or dwell and those who believe that dwelling is theirs to control as (privatized) commodity. Dwelling space and territory are not the same kinds of spaces. So how do I understand and reconcile the two?

Illich claims our sciences do not properly grasp the complexity and variety of these spaces; consequently, “the differences that count disappear.” Yet if we do not have a way of articulating these differences through our language(s) and study, the articulation of an | other space of co_existence cannot be known. Implicit, the dwelling plight will never be addressed as an issue of being. For Illich, the experience and act of dwelling will split and, in doing so, become binaried and political. On one side will be those (architects and developers) who (continue to) view people’s lives as units; focus will remain on living, building and dwelling as commodity (housing packages or units which provide shelter at the expense of living and dwelling). The packaging of people (specifically the poor in developing nations) will be rooted in the intention or perspective of “growth industry” and “profit.” On the “other” side will be those whose concern is with the art of living (with), dwelling, building and building community.
How are we to conclude? In exploring dwelling do we further understand what dwelling means? We do.

i began in articulating what building is and what it means. In the process, i inquired into the meaning of meaning as we understand it through the construct and filter of language. Herein, i discovered the complexly layered nature of meaning, and how meaning relates to that which is both imported and purported through language while, at the same time, is existential or embodied wisdom.

i then looked to the meaning of the word dwelling; here again, language revealed some of what has been lost in the way we think about, understand and experience dwelling. We found dwelling is being (and being with that is fundamentally always already connected with all things). Furthermore, we saw that the nature of dwelling is building: in essence, building preserves the nature of all things being and dwelling; it is how i bring forth the nature of our connection to all things.

From here, i inquired into the nature in which humans dwell and looked to poetry as that which grounds us to our earthly existence. Most, poetry connects us to the earth and to dwelling: both are our essence.

This led me to explore the nature of the tectonic, where tectonics expresses the poetic, ontological nature of (a) building. In doing so, we were able to see that tectonics expresses the language of (a) building and allows us to understand meaning in buildings.

i then looked to details, regarding them as the basic unit of signification in the language of (a) building. Herein, we learned that details can be a point at which we can reposit meaning in (to) the act and art of building.

Next, i looked at the way that the architect Peter Zumthor thinks about and works with dwelling in his theoretical and built work. i found Zumthor intent on returning to things in order to experience and appreciate (the thingly ness of) things, and the sense of meaning to be found in their presence. Implicit to his discussion of building is the idea that the building assignment must always situate itself in connection with the place in which it rests, where place is part of (a) building’s essence.

Which led me to explore the categorical and existential sense of place. We found the purpose of a building is to connect to the place in which it is. This ultimately directed us to look to our own identification with place — and the awareness that lack of identification with is indicative of an existential sense of alienation and crisis.

From here, i turned to the plight of dwelling and looked at the way modern and post-modern builders have been viewing dwelling as commodity and a source of power or control. This illuminates the inherent tension and hegemony: if building and dwelling are viewed from the perspective of commodity, where people’s lives are viewed as units, i am no longer concerned with the nature of being (implicit: being with). The crisis (of meaning) is revealed: it involves politics, control (of), power (over) and (life packaged as) commodity. In this, the meaning of dwelling, building and being has been usurped, undermined and lost.

Yet is it not our task to move beyond the commodification and politicization of building if we are to understand (a) building and what (a) building means? For building is as it has always been: shelter.
BUILDING: ESSENCE; BUILDING: SHELTER

Turn to shelter; understand its meaning:

shelter, n noun
1. a place giving protection from bad weather or danger
2. a place providing food and accommodation for the homeless
3. a shielded condition; protection
   verb
   1. provide with shelter; find refuge or take cover
   2. [often as adj, sheltered] prevent from having to do or face something difficult
   ORIGIN C16: perh. an alt. of obs. shield, an old spelling of shield, + -ure.

shield, n noun
1. a person or thing providing protection
   verb
   1. [with obj.] protect from a danger, risk, or unpleasant experience
   2. prevent from being seen
   ORIGIN Old English scild (noun), scildan (verb), of Germanic origin; related to Dutch schild and German Schild, from a base meaning 'divide, separate'

divide, v verb
1. separate or be separated into parts; [with obj.]
2. disagree or cause to disagree
   noun
   1. a difference or disagreement between two groups, typically producing tension
   2. a boundary between two things
   ORIGIN Middle English (as a verb): from Latin dividere ‘force apart, remove’. The noun dates from the mid 17th cent.

Here, language reveals, in part, the significance and the signification of shelter. Shelter is both to provide protection -- whether this is from weather, danger or difficulty; it is also a place that accommodates the homeless. This, in turn, points to “shield” signifying both a person or thing providing protection as well as its act(ion) of protecting (from an unpleasant experience). This illuminates its essential functioning: the need for protection from -- whether this is natural forces or danger. This, in turn, directs us to the linguistic meaning in divide: the process of separation and division; a disagreement or difference between two groups; or a boundary between two things (inside and out for example).

Clearly, buildings serve as shelter; the most fundamental expectation of architecture is to provide a place of protection from weather. At the same time, however, the meaning of shelter reveals the dwelling plight: shelter serves as a barrier or shield and is symptomatic of hegemony in building(s). That is, shelter is both an object and an act; it “serves” in asserting the rights of someone over another (assertion of property, ownership, separation, have from have not). It is both (a) division and (a) divider. While this addresses the historical and socio-political, there is also the archetypal functioning wherein the building of a building provides shelter between one locality and another (in from out, up from down).

Do I understand shelter in and as essence? I do and I do not. So I focus on the role of archetype in architecture and the way in which these comprise the grammar of architecture. I will then investigate the tradition and western archetype of the primitive hut. Thirdly, I will study two contemporary built works which serve as archetypal shelters; both are by Peter Zumthor and rich in phenomenological significance. These precedents aid in developing an understanding of shelter through precedent; at the same time, they foster (a) design process and methodology. Consequently, I will return to our initial question and, through language and the language of architecture, address the issue of homelessness and the dwelling plight.
"The formulation of the archetypes is described as an empirically derived concept, like that of the atom; it is a concept based not only on medical evidence but on observations of mythical, religious and literary phenomena. These archetypes are considered to be primordial images, spontaneous products of the psyche which do not reflect any physical process, but are reflected in them...Archetypal images are described as preexistent, available and active from the moment of birth as possibilities...which are subsequently elaborated by the individual."

Behind the plurality of forms throughout history is a set of archetypes which constitute the grammar of architecture (these are wall, roof and floor). This does not mean spatial volume is disregarded. Rather, the intention is to study (a) building and its specific aspects as phenomenon, and, furthermore, the construction of the elements themselves. For archetypes point to the essential: boundary, protection from natural elements, and mediation between (inside and out or whatever this sense of boundary is or means). They also point to primal being (in this case, form). How does language reveal the way archetype as image or sense has been embedded in our collective unconscious (since the beginning of human consciousness and time)?

**archetype**, 54 noun
1. a very typical example of a certain person or thing. an original which has been imitated; a prototype.
2. (Psychoanalysis) (in Jungian theory) a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious.
3. a recurrent symbol or motif in literature, art, or mythology.

**model**, 55 noun
1. a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original.
2. a thing used as an example to follow or imitate. a person or thing regarded as an excellent example of a specified quality. an actual person or place on which a specified fictional character or location is based.

**ARCHETYPE, ARCHITECTURAL GRAMMAR**

In architectural terms, Paul Zucker, first used the term in *Town and Square* in 1959. Throughout history, however, architects have engaged with archetype. According to Etienne-Louis Boullée, the most essential functioning of (a) building is that the experience they offer our senses should "arouse sentiments analogous to the use which these buildings are dedicated."56 This is the main task for many architects who seek to design space as a work of art: through the means and ends of architecture (and the design of space itself), we aim to present, foster or excite a mood for those who enter (in).

Yet how are archetypes employed? Do not roofs, walls and floors do different things (where roof spans above, wall encloses around, and floor separates from ground)? Yes and no. Their architectural commonality is in the way each separates, or divides, one thing from another (in from out; up from down; building from ground); each balances forces in nature. Without them, we cannot exist on the earth. It is herein that buildings poeticize experience:

> “These delimiting elements embody a fundamental meaning and thereby a fundamental expressive potential, in that we evaluate them in relation to their principal role of protecting an interior space from an exterior space. This expressive potential lies in how the roof, walls, and floor relate to the surroundings. In other words, the expression of the delimitation is visualized in the span between opening and closure. Each work of architecture must find its place somewhere between complete closure and complete openness.”57
“The return to origins is a constant of human development and in this matter architecture conforms to all other human activities. The primitive hut – the home of the first man (sic) – is therefore no incidental concern of theorists, no casual ingredient of myth or ritual. The return to origins always implies a rethinking of what you do customarily, an attempt to renew the validity of your everyday actions, or simply a recall of the natural (or even divine) sanction of your repeating them for a season. In the present rethinking of why we build and what we build for, the primitive hut will, I suggest, retain its validity as a reminder of the original and therefore essential meaning of all building for people: that is, of architecture. It remains the underlying statement, the irrefutable, intentional core...through the tensions between various historical forces.”


“It is the same in architecture as in all other arts: Its principles are founded on simple nature, and nature’s process clearly indicates its rules. Let us look at man (sic) in his primitive state without any aid or guidance other than his natural instincts. He is in need of a place to rest. On the banks of a quietly flowing brook he notices a stretch of grass; its fresh greenness is pleasing to his eyes, its tender down invites him; he is drawn there and, stretched out on leisure on this sparkling carpet, he thinks of nothing else but enjoying the gift of nature; he lacks nothing, he does not wish for anything. But soon the scorching heat of the sun forces him to look for shelter. A nearby forest draws him to its cooling shade; he runs to find a refuge in its depth, and there he is content. But suddenly mists are rising, swirling round and growing denser, until thick clouds cover the skies; soon, torrential rain pours down on this delightful forest. The savage, in his leafy shelter, does not know how to protect himself from the uncomfortable damp that penetrates everywhere; he creeps into a nearby cave and, finding it dry, praises himself for his discovery. But soon the darkness and foul air surrounding him make his stay unbearable again. He leaves and is resolved to make good by his ingenuity the careless neglect of nature. He wants to make himself a dwelling that protects but does not bury him. Some fallen branches in the forest are the right material for his purpose; he chooses four of the strongest, raises them upright and arranges them in a square; across their top he lays four other branches; on these he hoists from two sides yet another row of branches which, in clinging towards each other, meet at their highest point. He then covers this kind of roof with leaves so closely packed that neither sun nor rain can penetrate. Thus, man is housed. Admittedly, the cold and heat will make him feel uncomfortable in this house which is open on all sides but soon he will fill in the space between two posts and feel secure.

Such is the course of simple nature; by imitating the natural process, art was born. All the splendors of architecture even conceived have been modeled on the little rustic hut I have just described...The parts that are essential are the cause of beauty, the parts introduced by necessity cause every license, the parts added by caprice cause every fault...” (emphasis mine)

i look to our beginning(s) as primal dwellers. Three archetypes related to principal human pursuits: hunters in caves, shepherds in tents, and farmers in huts. Long ago Chinese and Scythians adapted the tent. For those in cold climates, however, its architecture was deemed too light and finicky to encourage imitation or furthered use. The cave’s beginnings were in Egypt. For the western tradition, however, this architecture was “too heavy and too undifferentiated for approval.”59 The timber frame, or primitive hut, was adopted by the Greeks and became for western architecture most “worthy of imitation.”60

The primitive hut was conceived at a (significant) point in time when a profound shift in architectural thinking occurred. Simultaneously, it asserts an architectural model, beginning, or archetype by which buildings are judged. It continues to be the (historical) consciousness from whence buildings spring (in one manifestation or another).

In An Essay on Architecture, Laugier proposed the primitive hut as a way of saving architecture “disclosing its fixed and unchangeable laws.”61 Though symbolic in nature, it was meant to serve as the first model in prescribing building; following its prescription enabled the architect to return to simplicity and ensured an avoidance of error.

This thesis is interested in the primitive hut as a paradigm of building (in ritual, myth, or architectural theory):

“Primitive man (sic) used his body as the dimensioning and proportioning system of his constructions. The builders of traditional societies shaped their buildings with their own bodies in the same way that a bird molds its nest by its body. The essence of a tradition is the wisdom of the body stored in the haptic memory. "The essential knowledge of the ancient hunter, fisherman and farmer, as well as of the mason and stone cutter, was an imitation of an embodied tradition of the trade, stored in the muscular and tactile senses.”62

For primitive humans, the experience and perception of building belonged to the body as a whole (not the mind, in thinking). And its essence, carried through tradition, was stored in embodied memory and consciousness, and our haptic sense. This is the (phenomenological) sphere of perception and is the origin of (existential) meaning.
[primitive] cliff dweller
[contemporary homeless condition]
appropriation of [the] wall

[primitive] cave dweller
[contemporary homeless condition]
under the bridge

[primitive] forest dweller
[contemporary homeless condition]
in between [buildings]; in the alley

bruder klus chapel. [the] sacred [tectonic] poesis. building: essence; building: shelter. architect: peter zumthor. life: [experience], meaning, myth, and metaphor. a sense of place. mechernich, germany. door; inner form work: the steeple marks its highest pont. 24 layers, comprising a day’s work. floor plan: primitive nature [womb].

“Artistic meaning rests upon an intricate interplay of showing and concealing. The work of architecture is no mere bearer of meaning, as if the meaning could be transferred to another bearer. Instead, the meaning of the works lies in the fact that it is there. Above all, emphasized Gadamer, this creation is not something that we can imagine being made deliberately by someone. It is, first and foremost, of the world, and our experience of it overwhelms us. Rather than simply meaning “something,” art and architecture allow meaning to present itself. We recognize the meaning as new and yet we cannot name it; we are invited to silence and yet must proclaim the utterly familiar. Thus art and architecture, as cultural forms of presentation, present something that can exist only in specific embodiments. They signify an increase in being, disclosing the “lighting” that makes the world of things into objects, the event of becoming-into-being. This representative power— which has nothing to do with replacement, substitution or copy— distinguishes the work of art and architecture from other technological achievements. Its order...resists pure conceptualization. It is not linked to an ultimate meaning that could be recuperated intellectually. The work of architecture, properly speaking, preserves its meaning within itself. It is not an allegory in the sense that it says one thing and gives us to understand something else. What the work has to say can be found only within itself, grounded in language, and yet beyond it. Experience and participating in a work of architecture has a fundamental temporal dimension. Acknowledging the ambivalent reality of its space constitutes a re-cognition that is, also, a creation of ourselves. Architecture being a meaning-for-embodied-consciousness demands an erotic projection from the maker and the participant, an abandonment of our selves for the other, an act whose final objective is our realization as embodied, imagining selves.”

A building’s meaning is posited through language in the building (in its building), that that is, or becomes, posited by us, and that that is beyond language in the building (in and of itself). Meaning is ontologically rooted in the past (in and through intention). At the same time, its being ness is both linguistically imported (claimed, understood and articulated through our filtering language), a combination of a | the past (being) purported to the present (for a building is first the architect’s architectural projection of the future which they envision will be) and ascribed by us (in our individual hermeneutic of a building, we identify, label and interpret meaning). And yet meaning is also beyond language — and is in the body of the building (which we always experience bodily).

In Bruder Klaus, meaning was first purported and imported in (to) the building through language (as intention), in the relationship between the “makers,” Herman-Josef, his wife, Trudel, and Zumthor. Ten years ago Herman-Josef and Trudel decided that they should build a chapel in gratitude for “a good and happy life.” Upon seeing that the Zumthor was going to be in nearby Cologne after winning the competition for the Diocesan Museum, they wrote him a letter:

“It happened that the saint was also the favorite of Mr. Zumthor’s mother. He came to visit us and we got on very well...We went to look at a lot of his buildings and his chapels and we understood that he was the best person for us. And so it began.”

Thereafter, the meaning (in and of the building) took on another layer of meaning, significance (this being ness being experienced as, and labeled as, significant). “Initially we wanted a small, traditional chapel, explains Hermann-Josef, ‘but it soon became something more special...We hadn’t imagined how special.’"
Once you start a phenomenological pursuit of beauty, of moments, you look at your personal life: “When do I experience beauty? When do I have these moments or sensation of beauty? When do I feel this beauty?”

One of our last days in Germany, we take the DB from Düsseldorf to the Satzvey stop in Mechernich. The train drops us off in the late morning and we’re a little surprised; it’s not what we expected: there are no restaurants, shops or cafes. Only the old, cobblestone train stop, some small roads and wide fields. We find our bearings within the landscape and begin our walk. It’s a little over 5k.

We walk narrow roads lined with flowers amid gentle, open fields. We pass a castle on our left, now a country club. Then a town on our right (a steeple marks its highest point). It’s beginning to sprinkle. We don’t have the city to distract us with its pace; we notice the stretch of the sky, the softness of the countryside, the stacked bales of hay, the simple, beautiful forms of forms and the colors of things.

Up ahead is a large grove of trees. We’ve been walking for a while; it has to be after this. The trees open up and there it is: quiet and beautiful, framed by rich, reddish fields of earth and the density of the surrounding woods.

One does not simply arrive at Bruder Klaus. Even if one drives by car, one must journey here. A narrow, gravel-lined path leads the way; cars are to be left in the small lot at the side of the road. This is part of the experience of the building: We must first get to the place. In walking to the building with the building in full sight, we begin to articulate the building as it relates to the place of which it is (a) part and in which it rests.

Aside from being pelted by the rain, the walk is quiet and meditative. From the road, the building is more like the neatly stacked bales of hay which dot the landscape than any of the buildings we see.
“Man articulates the world through his body. Man is not a dualistic being in whom spirit and the flesh are essentially distinct, but a living corporeal being active in the world. The “here and now” in which this distinct body is placed is what is first taken as granted, and subsequently a “there” appears. Through a perception of that distance, or rather the living of that distance, the surrounding space becomes manifest as a thing endowed with various meanings and values...The world that appears to man’s senses and the state of man’s body become in this way interdependent. The world articulated by the body is a vivid, lived-in space.

The body articulates the world. At the same time, the body is articulated by the world. When “I” perceive the concrete to be something cold and hard, “I” recognize the body as something warm and soft. In this way the body in its dynamic relationship with the world becomes the shintai (a sentient being that realizes itself through lived-in space). It is only the shintai in this sense that builds or understands architecture. The shintai is a sentient being that responds to the world.”

BEING IN THE WORLD + EMBODIMENT

memory: stratified; layered.
projected (past) moments: wanting; desire; image;
understanding.
presence: here; now; being;
this clean heavy smell of earth;
my feet walking on these stones;
the pelting wind on my face.

being-in-the-world: breath, in; breathe out.

being in the world: this experience, mine;
this experience, consciously, sensually embodied.

Embodiment: our experience is (as) embodied being.
Embodiment: (vertical, divine) consciousness meets
(horizontal, earth) thing ness becoming alive, animate body.
Embodiment: always experienced through this lens of
perception. Embodiment: the thing ness and being ness of
the world is always known or experienced by us as embodied
beings -- through the filter of our filtering bodies (as skin; as
layered) and filtering minds (as hermeneutic(s) in some form
of consciousness while we are). Embodiment: our perception
is embedded (we are in our bodies) and our experience of this
relationship between embedded ness and the being ness of
the world is (of and through the) sensual.

we continue to walk. the wind is getting harsh; the rain
comes at us from every direction. we hold the umbrella
trying to shield ourselves from the wind and laugh. i tell my
travel partner, “i’ve seen this building so many times! i’ve
studied it for hours! but i’ve never seen it.”

we don’t talk much; from time to time we’ll comment on
what we are seeing: the nature of the stones underneath; the
quality of the light; the feel of the rain; the shifting quality of
the clouds; how the building is a part of the landscape; the
wetness of the ground; this winding path; the color of the
sky. we huddle under the umbrella and we walk.

there’s a family up ahead: their dog is barking; their baby is
crying. the father is taking pictures in the rain; the mother is
trying to shelter the baby carriage, as she talks to the baby.

a large, metal, triangular-shaped door is on the “backsides”
of the chapel. one does not simply walk up to the door of the
chapel; one circles around the chapel and discovers the door.
"The search for ‘atmosphere’ and for the ‘sacred’ in architecture is a strong motivator for architects...Whatever sacred may be, it should be made apparent through design: through dimension and number, i.e. proportion; through extreme purity or extreme coarseness of a particular material, so that it is beyond all use and for its own sake; through something incredibly weightless or something tremendously massive, where the force behind it is not apparent to the eye; through translucent rather than transparent surfaces, in which light can simply be light and not have to illuminate this or that object."68

Hermann-Josef and Trudel constructed the chapel, with the help of friends and acquaintances. The interior of the chapel was formed out of 112 tree trunks, cut from local forests and configured like a tent.

The six 12 meter high walls, made of local rammed earth, form an irregular pentagon and are serious and circumspect. Each 50 centimeter layer of concrete (made of local sand and gravel), was pressed one layer per month for two years, making up 24 layers total. Each layer represents an hour of the day, encompassing the idea of a day’s work.

The exterior walls are earthen, heavy and rough; the metal door is smooth, sleek and polished. a man stands outside smoking a cigar. i lean back to look at the building and the sky. i want to touch the concrete and understand the nature of the form and construction.

i open the door but am unprepared: the interior is so stunning i simply lose my breath. i didn’t expect this; the building is sublime: simple; quiet; moving. the interior is dark: light penetrates the space from above, there is no roof; the sky is visible.

Trees were arranged in a teardrop form, slowly burnt away over the course of 7 days, then carefully removed. The color, however, wasn’t black enough for Zumthor:

“We had to cover up every hole in the building and set another fire for seven days...Three-hundred-and-fifty small holes, around five centimetres in diameter and punctured by a neighbour’s beer pipe, penetrate right through the building. Every one of these holes, where the smoke escaped during the burning process, has now been filled with a small, shining glass ball."69

The effect is of a constellation - an inward and otherworldly place.

light washes down the sides of the chapel. the chapel itself is small, just a few paces from side to side. there are six of us inside and it is enough. the elderly people are reading a book, writing and praying.
we listen to the rain falling, to the sounds of the dog and the baby. the mother begins to sing to him, trying to calm him, but he doesn't want to be consoled.

i am simultaneously in thought and outside of it; on a precipice of feeling and wanting simply to hold the feeling. i feel quiet in here.

a small bronze relief figure of Bruder Klaus is by the sculptor Hans Josephsohn. it sits near a simple tray wherein one can light and place a candle. next to the tray one can sit and rest on a wooden bench (which, in section, could be described as bean-like); its form is solid, its square, steelp legs seem to reach far into the earth on which it rests.

there are no lights in the chapel. it is simultaneously shelter and not shelter: it shelters us from wind, but not temperature; only if we lean into its walls do we find shelter from the rain.

and yet here we are. leaning into this building, with moment to pause; bruder klaus gives us shelter to be inside (just) enough – to reflect on the elements and the nature of being. it gives us (a) place to look within, to pray and quietly contemplate the existence of things.

un conceal your latent beauty, the space on which you rest. show me the nature of things:

winding path, open sky, surrounding forest, reddish earth, stacked bales of hay.

intertwine: meaning.

pour: light waves from all directions.

clear: an opening to this moment in being and time.
"Every touching experience of architecture is multi-sensory; qualities of matter, space and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle. Architecture involves seven realms of sensory experience which interact and infuse with each other.

In the words of Merleau-Ponty, "We see the depth, speed, softness and hardness of objects – Cezanne says we see even their odor. If a painter wishes to express the world, his (sic) system of color must generate this indivisible complex of impressions, otherwise his (sic) painting only hints at possibilities without producing the unity, presence and unsurpassable diversity that governs the experience and which is the definition of reality for us."


through (this) touch, meaning:
 i touch you, and you touch back.
 i want to feel inside of you.
 i want to penetrate the layers that separate us
 find the place where you and i meet
 where these boundaries melt away.
 i touch to know your body; i touch to feel your inside(s).
 reveal your inner meaning(s).
 i see you (fully) with soft eyes; i feel you;
 in this moment, your body is cool and heavy;
 your skin is wet.
MAKING + POESIS

diagramming, digital models, drawings, none of these made sense. i tried but it didn’t work. if i was going to understand the work as a work, and do so through architectural projection, then it had to be a model. doing so would inspire a process of making. of being with the work, in all of the layered ways i understood it.

phenomenologically, i was interested in exploring the tectonics of construction. poesis through the process of making.

i decided to model the inner formwork of the chapel (the 112 tree trunks configured like a tent). the process proved to be rich. i began to re-experience the building. the crystal clear sense of metaphor and the precise, poetic, tectonic moves. the floor plan alludes to our most primal dwelling place, the womb. and the trees line up in such a way that they lean in, like an archetypal tent. at the same time, they stand in pairs, and rise, rise in sculptural unison; their points direct our eyes up (the steeple marks the highest point). the repetition is clear, simple, quiet, direct, unadorned, potent, poetic. and the archetype is implicit and profound.

after working on the formwork, some colleagues asked if i was going to pour the building. no. that wasn’t the point. i didn’t want to re_create the work through a model. for the work already exists. they should go see it to experience it. instead, i was interested in showing what was no longer there, the form work, and understanding the simple truth(s) that it told. i was interested in experiencing the building in another way.
“An architectural experience silences all external noise; it focuses attention on one’s very existence. Architecture, as all art, makes us aware of our fundamental solitude. At the same time, architecture detaches us from the present and allows us to experience the slow, firm flow of time and tradition. Buildings and cities are instruments and museums of time. They enable us to see and understand the passing of history.”

“The timeless task of architecture is to create embodied existential metaphors that concretize and structure man’s (sic) being in the world. Images of architecture reflect and externalize ideas and images of life; architecture materializes our images of ideal life. Buildings and towns enable us to structure, understand and remember the shapeless flow of reality and, ultimately, to recognize and remember who we are. Architecture enables us to place ourselves in the continuum of culture.

All experience implies the acts of recollecting, remembering and comparing. An embodied memory has an essential role as the basis of remembering a space or a place. Our home and domicile are integrated with our self-identity; they become part of our own body and being.

In memorable experiences of architecture, space matter and time fuse into one single dimension, into the basic substance of being, that penetrates the consciousness. We identify ourselves with this space, this place, this moment and these dimensions as they become ingredients of our very existence. Architecture is the art of mediation and reconciliation.”


The way we envision, design and build the future today defines the meaning the past embodied and embodies. This is as it’s always been and will be and “entails that we understand history not simply because we make it but also because it has made us; we belong to it in the sense that we inherit its experience, project a future on the basis of the situation the past has created for us and act in light of our understanding of this past whether such understanding is explicit or not.”

Kolumba Museum, in Cologne, Germany, locates itself within the simultaneity and sublimity of time as (a) continuum. The St. Kolumba church had a two-fold history; both are integral to Zumthor’s building. In an area of the city otherwise devastated by the Second World War, the survival of the late-Gothic figure of Mary on a choir pier was considered miraculous. Consequently, the parish church commissioned a chapel for it by Gottfried Böhm; his octagonal volume sits within the church’s footprint (the “Madonna of the Ruins” chapel dates to 1950, a sacrament chapel to 1957). Secondly, an important archaeological site was discovered beneath the old church containing Roman and Gothic as well as Medieval ruins in 1973.

As (a) building and as place, Kolumba re_presents the experiential nature of time and being-in-the-world and the connected nature between us and all-that-is. It stitches these relationships together anew yet each is a distinct unto itself: both are profoundly communicated. Few places in the world illuminate this relationship; few bring forward the sense and presence of time and being viscerally — as (a) building and as place.
“The full tectonic potential of any building stems from its capacity to articulate both the poetic and the cognitive aspects of its substance...The tectonic stands in opposition to the current tendency to deprecate detailing in favor of the overall image. As a value it finds itself in opposition to the gratuitously figurative, since to the degree that our works are conceived as having a long duration “we must produce things that look as if they were always there.”

In the last analysis, everything turns as much on exactly how something is realized as on an overt manifestation of its form...the presence of a work is inseparable from the manner of its foundation in the ground and the ascendancy of its structure through the interplay of support, span, seam, and joint - the rhythm of its revetment and the modulation of its fenestration. Situated at the interface of culture and nature, building is as much about the ground as it is about built form...its task is to modify the earth’s surface in such a way as to take care of it...Hence the notion of “building the site”...is of greater import than the creation of freestanding objects, and in this regard building is as much about the topos as it is about technique...At the same time, it is as much about place-making and the passage of time as it is about space and form. Light, water, wind and weathering, these are the agents by which it is consummated. Inasmuch as its continuity transcends mortality, building provides the basis for life and culture. In this sense, it is neither high art nor high technology. To the extent that it defies time, it is anachronistic by definition. Duration and durability are its ultimate values. In the last analysis it has nothing to do with immediacy and everything to do with the unsayable.”


In construction, the building reconciles existing fragments into a (newly perceived) whole while infusing a contemporary layer amidst the archaeological site, Bohm’s chapel and the Gothic ruins. Metaphorically and literally, the contemporary stratum develops from and builds upon what already exists -- whilst respecting it in every detail.

In working with the remnants and plans (with all of their complexity and layers of time), the museum becomes part of the architectural continuum. The design follows the direction of the Gothic church walls on the ground floor level, and incorporates both their remains as well as an exterior wall of Bohm’s chapel. Over the ruins, tower the 30 meters high perforated walls. Zumthor spent a great amount of time searching for the right material expression: the grey bricks were specifically handcrafted by Petersen Tegl of Denmark, and were fired with charcoal to imbue a warm hue.

At the same time, the building invites me to immerse myself in the quiet presence of the building, architectural memory and history, and our own memories -- while providing an experience in a sensual, material rich atmosphere. Kolumba is intended to be a living museum that:

“Enquires about the freedom of the individual in an exchange between history and the present day, at the intersection of belief and knowledge, and defends existential values by challenging them through art...[It] maintains a collection of religious art that extends from a 1st-century portrait of the daughter-in-law of Emperor Tiberius to the present...The museum encompasses 2,000 years of architecture for 2,000 years of art.”

The juxtapositions of old and new art, in an environment that equivocally amalgamates both, stimulate our experience and examination of the way different periods of history address meaning and the sacred. Kolumba is intended to be a place of reflection; one way this is realized is through the language of (the) building, being, the language of construction.
In effort to preserve access to the ancient ruins, Zumthor carefully positioned amongst the ruins tall, slender steel columns sheathed in concrete; these lift the main area of the museum about 30 feet high. Open brickwork was used for the new walls in which a structural grid of columns was embedded; these were placed along the remnants of the Gothic church’s walls. Rather than a monolithic brick “surface”, the bricks are “perforated” which allows sufficient air and light (in maintaining the outdoor climate necessary in conserving the archaeological ruins). Böhm’s octagonal chapel is located in the high room into which meanders a dark red wooden walkway.

Archetypally, the central exhibition hall works (in Heidegger’s sense of the way a work of art works) in representing a sojourn through the forest. The tall, slender columns become trees; the walkway is our path; the archaeological excavation represents the ground over which I walk; the dappled light streaming in through the perforated brick represents light rays through the trees.

A narrow staircase leads up from the main room into the exhibition rooms. “At its foot the wall changes from stone to loam plastering while the jurassic lime of the ground floor is replaced by terrazzo. Above this level there are no more grooves either between the bricks, in the floor, in the plasterwork or the concrete ceiling.”

The beauty of each material and its meaningful expression comes through: the plastering which looks like fine concrete seems alive with the presence of light; the wooden handrail on the stair seems to have been just molded by hands; the light and shadow in the museum rooms is quiet and profound.
I couldn’t figure it out. How to represent the complexities of Kolumba? I decided to do a generative model and would make a “looking box” to explore what I experienced in the building.

The sense of time and timelessness and how we are always already embedded in time. The sense of being in the place. The quiet presence of the building itself and the ruins. The mystery. The implicit mystery (something you can’t get from an image). The meaning of the work. The sense of meaning that can be experienced but not necessarily named. The representative power of the work. How archetypally the building reminds us of being in a forest, of being in nature, in the presence of time and the beingness of things themselves.
Do I better understand of shelter (in and as essence)? Yes.

I began in exploring the meaning of shelter, first in its etymology. Here, I found shelter serves as barrier or shield and re_presents hegemony in building(s). For shelter is both an object and an act; it "serves" in asserting the rights of someone over an | other (assertion of property, ownership, separation, have from have not). It is both (a) division and (a) divider.

I then looked to archetype and found that archetypes point to the essential: boundary, protection from natural elements, mediation between (inside and out or whatever this sense of boundary is or means) and primal being (in this case, form). At the same time, as delimiting elements, they embody fundamental meaning: I evaluate buildings in relation to their principal role of protecting an interior space from an exterior space; their expressive potential is in how this relationship (to the surroundings) occurs.

Next, in understanding a building's meaning, I inquired into the paradigm of the primitive hut and found three archetypes relate to principal human pursuits: hunters in caves, shepherds in tents, and farmers in huts. At the same time, primitive people used their body as a dimensioning and proportioning system of construction. That is, the essence of building tradition is in the body and its wisdom — stored as haptic memory.

Thereafter, I investigated two architectural works by Peter Zumthor. I found that both reveal the phenomenological or experiential potency and meaning of building (building as essence; building as shelter).

I re_turn to my task: to move beyond the commodification and politicization of building and understanding (a) building and what (a) building means. In this, I re_turn to my initial question, the dwelling plight; through language and the language of architecture, I will focus on the issue of homelessness.
“And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,  
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.”

- William Wordsworth

“Why would cities risk undermining their distinctiveness and desirability over so vulnerable a group as the homeless? After all, homeless people lack almost any indicia of societal power, posing no viable political or military threat to the dominant culture... The threat... is more one of perception than reality, more of a societal preemptive strike against an as-yet-unborn threat – a threat that often originates within the dominant culture itself but finds concrete expression in some abject, powerless element of society. As literature... indicates, depictions of 'deviant subcultures' are likely to feed into stereotypes of danger, disorder, disease, and criminality, perhaps even requiring punitive measures. That all of this arises more from perception than fact becomes eminently clear, suggesting that it is, after all, a short journey from diversity to deviance, from deification to demonization, and from sanctification to stigmatization.”


“The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell. What if man’s (sic) homelessness consisted in this, that man (sic) still does not even think of the real plight of dwelling as the plight? Yet as soon as man (sic) gives thought to his (sic) homelessness, it is a misery no longer.”

Heidegger wrote these words in response to the large number of people who were homeless in Germany and, to a larger extent, in Europe following World War II. Yet what is the dwelling plight? Is the inquiry a prompt for me to look within and examine the shared human experience of living together in our world? What comprises the human experience of being at home? Or is this about the real experience of homelessness? While this section certainly addresses each, focus will be on the experience of people who are homeless.

I begin with a brief exploration into the history of homelessness, locating myself initially in the not-so-distant legal beginnings in England, proceeding through this history in the United States, and, finally, ending with recent laws passed by President Barack Obama in 2009. I will then discuss dwelling plight patterns today: gentrification and issues of abandonment, and the way these patterns (and patternings) directly affect the homeless population. Thirdly, I will explore factors that contribute to this sense of plight, as described by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (hereafter referred to as HUD).

At the same time, this study seeks to facilitate an understanding of the historical and socio-political issues as each affects the human and architectural act of designing a homeless shelter for those who, for whatever reason, will not go to homeless shelters. This is a population living on the edge of society — others who have a long history of being othered, wanderers living outside of the realm of established, accepted social and cultural norms.

My research has been varied (and some of it has been quite intense). Aside from “typical research”, i.e., history, the social-political governing bodies and the complexity of agencies and forces involved, I spent a great deal of time watching documentaries, reading blogs about homelessness in Cincinnati and throughout the United States (and sometimes the world) and watching videos documenting homeless people. My intention was simple: in order to design a shelter, I needed to understand their condition (as a way of understanding their experience).

I also spoke with several individuals with the Coalition for the Homeless in Cincinnati. They were instrumental in helping me understand the complexity of the local problem — particularly where homeless people are living on the street and why. (For example, many homeless are afraid to live in some areas of Over the Rhine: they have been victims of assault and abuse and do not feel safe.)

Another part of my research involved going where the homeless are (or were) in Cincinnati, Ohio — to seek an understanding of the context or fabric of the place where they choose to be. I drove around for days and talked with homeless people. Some were quite helpful and were open to sharing their experience; some viewed my presence as a threat, and were hostile. (They felt I was coming in to study their home, and take it away.) Several felt I was “using them” i.e., in studying the issue, and potentially designing a shelter for them, I was “standing on their back to push myself up.”

In addition, the Coalition was instrumental in connecting me with a minister who drives to Cincinnati from Indiana late at night. Essentially, his wife makes a large pot of food which he then brings to feed the homeless. He is involved in caring for and connecting with these people in an immediate, intimate way — and offered profound, invaluable insight. My conversations with him steered me to address those who choose to live on the street — and also to attempt to understand in a real (and architectural) way the need for the kind of shelter that I propose.

These individuals live on the streets and have everywhere to go and nowhere to stay. How do I represent their experience in the language and being of (a) building? How do I call forward the complexity, layers of time, meaning and histories? The repeated political, social and human failures? The stratification of (the) issues at hand?
This thesis asserts homeless people (and their appropriation of space) are contemporary primal dwellers. For they appropriate walls and office buildings (cliff dwellers); live under bridges (cave dwellers); or live in and from shopping carts, always on the move, inhabiting voids at inner edges in cities, or in between buildings (tent dwellers).

In this regard, my intention was to design three interventions at three sites in Cincinnati which explored the archetype, or lived world of these contemporary primal dwellers. In the process of mapping, I quickly realized traditional architectural methods were not satisfying -- nor did they reveal the nature of the site, the things, or the people who had been there. Consequently, three re_fuse walls were constructed. These explore mapping on a variety of levels. First, they attempt to explore the nature of site through things (and what these reveal about us, as we surround ourselves with, and are surrounded by things). Secondly, they attempt to understand the homeless people themselves who have lived in the sites, their refusal of walls, and their lives in the refuse, or garbage, left behind. They also seek to contemplate the nature of stratification itself; that is: the archaeological tell, and the way we understand and map civilization through things, and the stratification(s) of things through time. Finally, they seek to explore the contradictions and meanings of walls as things -- in and of themselves.

This section’s imperative is to understand the socio-political, cultural and historical issues at hand for homeless people. Underlying these are questions. How can this understanding in_form and in_fuse the design methodology (and architectural order)? Can it foster or enable me to re_consider the value(s) and ethic(s) of a building, and, in the process, re_assess meaning? What constitutes a meaningful architectural order? What is the fold? While the re_search conducted thus far informs the methodology for the design work, something was missing. The solution came to me as I was walking down the street, and looked at a cardboard box. Homeless people who live on the street appropriate dwelling spaces through the act of folding (cardboard, fabric). At the same time, as act and ontology, the fold provides a potent metaphor to explore the in_between space of the other -- the shifting, transient space -- in the language of the building, being.
English Law: Freedom vs Punishment

I begin our brief look into the history of homelessness in England. Here, laws were established in 1388 which required persons moving between places first obtain letters from town officials authorizing travel (these "persons" included the destitute, poor, laborers in search of work, members of religious orders and university scholars). An absence of papers was punished by imprisonment or involuntary return to one’s birthplace.

In the centuries following, many legislative attempts imposed increasingly severe penalties on "vagrants" defined as able-bodied, unemployed wanderers. In 1530, for example, a law licensed the "deserving" poor, disabled, and aged to beg; at the same time, it prescribed various types of punishment: "those considered the deserving poor were provided with lodging at the expense of the town. All others were subject to 'whipping' and 'ear lopping.' Anyone found guilty of giving money or shelter to an unlicensed beggar were fined or imprisoned." Shortly thereafter, in 1547, Edward VI ordered all persons "loitering, wandering, and not seeking work be taken before a justice of the peace, branded with a 'V,' and placed with a master to work." "Masters" could take one-time escapees back; however, if the master refused the individual, they were then to be returned to their birthplace -- to become a slave of the town. Escape was punishable by death: those who escaped twice were executed. Other unwanted vagrants were shipped to Ireland, Scotland, Wales or the new world.

Despite this, the problem did not disappear. In 1601, the Poor Law Act overturned the laws of Edward VI; this stipulated that all homeless persons should be returned to their place of birth. Work was provided for those able to do so; those who refused were imprisoned.

Thereafter, in 1619, a more rational, humane legislating body was found in Charles II, who devised a policy to ameliorate the problem of population uprooted by war. Legislation was enacted to facilitate reintegration of approximately 50,000 soldiers into civil society -- allowing them to work without apprenticeships.

Old World: Unworthiness; New World: Homeless

The first wave of immigration to the United States occurred in the mid-1600s and included many deemed socially "unworthy", i.e., poor, criminals, unwed mothers and vagrants sent by the English government to work as indentured servants. Likely, it was from this pool of individuals that the first homeless emerged in this country. Typically, they arrived ill equipped and were unable (financially or socially) to cope with the harsh realities of colonial life.

At the same time, English colonists settling in the new world transported an early English attitude toward the "vagrants"; these individuals were just as outcast in the United States as they were in England.

"The Elizabethan Poor Law Act of 1601...formalized the practice of placing the support of dependent persons in the hands of the local community. However, many communities avoided supporting the poor by making it difficult for beggars, vagabonds, and other nonworking persons to settle within their boundaries. The financial status of strangers was closely checked before they were allowed to settle in a community. A term of "quiet and undisturbed" residence in a locality, lasting from three to twelve months, was required before the status of legal resident was conferred, which carried with it the town’s obligation to provide support in the event of need." Communities were reluctant to welcome the poor – manifest in the way poor individuals were "warned out" of the town's borders. If a person dared return, s/he was typically whipped before being driven out a second time.

In addition, those deemed “dependent” or mentally
unstable were often taken out of town in the middle of the night and placed near a neighboring town in hope that the other community would assume responsibility for care. Consequently, a cadre of homeless wanderers emerged among the destitute and disabled in the American colonies.

_The Rise of Institutions + Homelessness_

In the eighteenth century, institutions for the homeless began to appear in the United States. Between 1725 and 1750, houses of correction, workhouses and almshouses sprang up in the larger towns. The Poorhouse, Workhouse and House of Correction of New York City was one of the first, established in 1736.

Because paupers and petty offenders were treated similarly, the workhouse typically served as a combination poorhouse and jail. In this, the mentally ill worked alongside paupers and criminals.

_The Early to Mid-Nineteenth Century_

Insofar as institutionalization of the care of mentally ill and “dependent” persons became more widespread during the nineteenth century, the problem of the homeless continued to grow. The first soup kitchen in New York was set up in 1802 and the first shelter, the Sailors Snug Harbor, was established in 1814.

However, as the century progressed, services and programs for the homeless were in short supply; this forced many people to be housed in police stations. In general, lodging-crisis housing aimed at sheltering homeless was crowded and dirty. As a result, cities were urged to terminate this and create more permanent lodging houses for the “worthy poor” (those willing to work and not charged with vagrancy).

In the nineteenth century, almshouses became centers of indoor “poor relief.” By 1835, most counties in New York State had almshouses, and by mid-century the inmate population in almshouses was nearly 10,000. Of the people in the almshouses, one-fourth were children; many were mentally ill or challenged, physically disabled (deaf, loss of a limb, or blind), or had an illness of some sort. Crowded, unsanitary living environments were common.

_Post-Civil War, Depression + Skid Row_

The Civil War left many men unemployed and vulnerable to homelessness. Many people were displaced and, as a result of the traumas of war, rendered destitute. Homelessness did not become a significant national problem until after the Civil War. In addition, surges of immigrants with little cash reserve were coming to the United States following the Civil War; many quickly slipped into homelessness. Legislation began to be enacted in attempt to address the mounting homeless population:

“While care was provided to the destitute, disabled, and unemployable, harsh measures were instituted to control the vagrant population, including those who drank to excess and were involved in crime. At an 1877 conference of the New York Board of Public Charities, it was advocated that national legislation be established to make it a criminal offense to beg, wander aimlessly, and solicit alms. This would have allowed authorities to jail vagrants and put them to work at hard labor.”

The Rhode Island Tramps Act of 1880 established an office with the role of aiding in arresting and securing the conviction of tramps and beggars who would then be sent to workhouses.

“An Act Concerning Tramps” defined a tramp as “one living without labor or visible means of support and roving from place to place, begging.”

In addition, the post-Civil War era witnessed the development of “skid rows.” These were named for Seattle’s Skid Road, a street along which horses skidded logs to a sawmill.
The Depression of 1873 resulted in unemployment rates of between 30 and 40%. Consequently, skid rows sprang up throughout many American cities. Thousands of men who had lost their jobs during the depression were moving between cities in search of work as loggers, miners, farmhands or construction workers. Most were without their families; ultimately, their work and community was located in skid row.

While there was not a national policy in place addressing the homeless problem, voluntary organizations like the Salvation Army and the Young Men’s Christian Association formed to provide relief. More institutions were built: “the Young Men’s Christian Association established a facility in New York’s Bowery, and...the Salvation Army built four hotels in that location.”

At the height of the Panic of 1893, on Industrial Black Friday (May 5, 1893), the number of unemployed was estimated between 900,000 and three million. The homeless problem persisted and continued to be a topic of public controversy.

Twentieth Century: Deinstitutionalization + Putting Mentally Ill on the Streets

With the approach of the twentieth century, reports on the homeless problem changed and became more descriptive. Alice Solenberger carried out one of the first twentieth-century studies of the homeless. 1,000 male subjects who applied to the Chicago Bureau of Charities for assistance during the years 1900 to 1903 were studied. It was found that two-thirds had a major health concern: “more than one-quarter suffered from a serious physical disability such as blindness, deafness, or crippling...11% suffered from insanity, feeblemindedness, epilepsy, or another type of nervous disorder.”

The Depression of 1913 caused the number of homeless to rise yet again. During the first half of 1915, New York City’s Municipal Lodging Houses provided 253,406 lodgings (1,400 per night) and the population of the Bowery -- New York City’s skid row population -- was estimated to be between 26,000 and 75,000.

In a classic study, Anderson documented skid row in Chicago during the twenties:

“Calling it ‘hobohemia,’ he described its function as a labor exchange for migratory workers and a place where low-cost housing could chafe in the community-at-large. A multiplicity of factors have contributed to this development, including...a belief that care in large, understaffed, and overcrowded institutions had negative effects on a person’s social identity and level of adjustment. Moreover, the rising dollar costs of providing institutional care motivated exploration of outpatient and community-based methods of management that promised to be less expensive.”

This lead to policy changes and deinstitutionalization of mental hospitals in the 1960s; this became the most important public mental health policy in most states. Here, the goal was to change the primary location of care of mentally ill from an institution to a community-based treatment. Deinstitutionalization was implemented in discharging long-term patients from mental hospitals and controlling admission of new patients; this resulted in a 70% drop in enrollment (559,000 in 1955 to 150,000 in 1980).

Yet the deinstitutionalization movement was poorly planned...many patients were released from hospitals that did not adequately prepare appropriate post-discharge living arrangements and outpatient psychiatric care.” Consequently, many surveys of the homeless population established that significant amounts of homeless living on the streets were suffering from mental illness.

Just as the roots of homelessness continued to be socially and politically debated, so the problem continued to increase in the United States. The National Coalition for the Homeless
estimated there were 2.5 million homeless in 1983 -- an increase of 500,000 over the preceding year.

There was also a compelling increase in the number of public shelters. In New York City, for example, 25 new public shelters were built between 1980 and 1982.

In addition, more than 60 small shelters sponsored by churches and synagogues provided hundreds of lodgings per night. Other major cities markedly increased their shelter capacity to accommodate the growing numbers of people seeking shelter.

The 21st Century

In 2002, research showed children and families have become the largest growing segment of the homeless in America. This presents new challenges -- especially in services to shelters.

In 2008, the United States Congress appropriated $25 million in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants to show the effectiveness of Rapid Re-housing programs in reducing family homelessness.

In February 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; in part, it addresses homelessness prevention, allocating $1.5 billion for a Homeless Prevention Fund. The funding was called the “Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program” (HPRP) and was distributed using the formula for the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program.

On May 20, 2009, President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, reauthorizing HUD’s Homeless Assistance programs. It was part of the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009. The HEARTH act allows for the prevention of homelessness, rapid re-housing, consolidation of housing programs and new homeless categories. In the eighteen months after the bill’s signing, HUD must make regulations implementing this new McKinney program.
“In both homelessness and housing a threshold has been crossed. The existence of a new housing ‘crisis’ is widely acknowledged. During the Depression, homeless families ultimately expected to get some type of permanent housing for themselves when times got better. Today, the housing market offers no such hope; even when times get better, the cost of housing rises and its availability to the poor declines.”

This situation resulted from a conjunction of socio-economic and political forces (in part, deindustrialization, post-Fordism and the current recession). Unemployment is on the rise, and for those employed, real wages are shrinking. Consequently, as the number of the unemployed and the marginally employed grows so will the number of expected homeless.

The major link connecting homelessness to these socio-economic changes can be called the gentrification | abandonment pattern:

“During the Great Depression, real incomes plummeted... The expectation was...they would rise again and that unemployment would not be permanent...Although apartments and homes were vacated because their former residents could no longer afford them, those apartments or homes were not abandoned. They were retained by owners in the expectation that one day they would again return a profit.”

Then, most residents doubled up with family or friends. Where thousands ended up homeless at the same time, living on the streets or in temporary shelters, no one questioned why they were homeless; there was no isolation, concealment, mystery or blame.

This no longer applies. While things appear to be good or better for some, they are far worse for others:

“Abandonment in the late 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s displaced more people than gentrification...Shelterlessness was not the immediate consequence of abandonment, however; many people, homeless in the true sense, continued to be sheltered in buildings without heat, hot water, often without windows, with no security, and no protection...The homeless lived in abandoned buildings mostly far away from the central business district and out of sight of the affluent.”

Homelessness became more of a focus, however, as gentrification brought to light the presence of homeless to a new demographic. This was the result of a specific economic restructuring of cities that has taken place over the last 40 years, often with government support.

Philosophically, our perception of the homeless also changed. During the Depression, the homeless were misunderstood and not accepted. Between the 1960’s and 1980’s, they were hidden out of the way. Today, where gentrification rules, the homeless (in their being, or locality in space), are viewed as being in the way of progress:

“They are visible in the wrong place. Poor people living at the margin of subsistence in the past used to live in flophouses, in single room occupancy hotels, in the cheapest of cheap apartments, and, during periods of abandonment, in abandoned buildings. But many such accommodations are now in the path of urban “progress.” Skid row after skid row is demolished as downtowns expand.”

There are countless examples of this shift. Yerba Buena and South of Market in San Francisco, Presidential Towers in Chicago, the redevelopment of downtown Cincinnati and Over the Rhine, and the 42nd Street redevelopment project in New York City directly replace housing for the poor with housing for the rich.

Single room occupancy hotels are converted to hotels, condominiums and mixed-use; in New York City alone, 109,000 SRO units have been lost since 1971 to “redevelopment” and “upgrade.” This oftentimes means lowest priced rentals are abandoned, demolished or converted and then gentrified.
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CURRENT DWELLING PLIGHT

Foreclosure
The National Coalition for the Homeless released a report discussing the relationship between foreclosure and homelessness. It was found that there was a 32% jump in the number of foreclosures between April 2008 and April 2009. Since the start of the recession, six million jobs have been lost. In May 2009, the official unemployment rate was 9.4%. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that 40% of families facing eviction due to foreclosure are renters and 7 million households living on very low incomes (31 – 50% of Area Median Income) are at risk of foreclosure.

Poverty
Poor people are frequently unable to pay for housing, food, childcare, health care and education. Choices must be made when limited resources cover only some of these necessities; often it is housing that must be dropped.

In 2007, 12.5% of the U.S. population, or 37,300,000 people, lived in poverty. The official poverty rate in 2007 was not statistically different than 2006 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007). Children are overrepresented, composing 35.7% of people in poverty while only being 24.8% of the total population.

Two factors account for increasing poverty: eroding employment opportunities for large segments of the workforce and the declining value and availability of public assistance.

Eroding Work Opportunities
Low-wage workers have been left behind as the disparity between rich and poor has increased. Factors contributing to wage declines include: a drop in the bargaining power of unionized workers; erosion in the value of the minimum wage; a decline in manufacturing jobs and the corresponding expansion of lower-paying service-sector employment; globalization; and increased nonstandard work, such as temporary and part-time employment.

Declining wages, in turn, have put housing out of reach for many: in every state, more than the minimum wage is required to afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent. Unfortunately, for 12 million Americans, more than 50% of their salaries go towards renting or housing costs.

The connection between impoverished workers and homelessness can be seen in homeless shelters: many house a number of full-time workers. In 2007, a survey found 17.4% of homeless adults in families were employed while 13% of homeless single adults or unaccompanied youth were employed. In the 2008 report, eleven out of nineteen cities reported an increased in employed homeless people.

Housing
According to HUD, the shortage of affordable housing is most severe for units affordable to renters with extremely low incomes. Federal funding for low-income housing has fallen 49% from 1980 to 2003 (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2005). In addition, approximately 200,000 rental-housing units are destroyed annually. The lack of affordable housing has resulted in high rent burdens (rents which absorb a high proportion of income), overcrowding and substandard housing.

The demand for assisted housing exceeds the supply: approximately one-third of poor renter households receive a housing subsidy from federal, state or a local government. This means most poor families and individuals seeking housing assistance are placed on long waiting lists: the average wait for Section 8 vouchers is 35 months.

In turn, this means people must remain in shelters or inadequate housing arrangements longer. In a survey of 24 cities, homeless people remain without a home for an average of seven months, and 87% of cities reported that the length of time people are homeless has increased in recent years. This then affects other homeless, who must find shelter elsewhere, or live on the streets.

And yet in the midst of current discussions, many argue too much money is spent helping the poor get poorer, without helping the rich. In 2003 alone, the federal government spent almost twice as much in housing-related tax expenditures and direct housing assistance for households in the top income quintile than on housing subsidies for the lowest-income households. Clearly, federal housing policy has not responded to the needs of low-income households; instead, it has disproportionately benefited the wealthiest Americans.
While there has been an increase in the kinds of shelters available,95 these fail to address a portion of the homeless population. These individuals would rather live on the streets than a shelter, and take refuge under bridges, in church doorways, in subway tunnels, appropriate walls, or locate themselves and their temporary home on the heating grates of office buildings.

What are some of the reasons? Many studies have been conducted surveying the attitudes towards shelters of the homeless. Both frequent and infrequent shelter users view shelters as dangerous places; at the same time, the homeless who spent the most time on the streets had more negative attitudes toward shelters.

Some of this is due to the rules and regulations in shelters (these are viewed by homeless as “legislating” or controlling behavior). That is, there are typically rules in place regarding drugs, alcohol and conduct. Consequently, some are unable to stay in shelters because they have addictions, and are not allowed (or they simply do not like the sense of structure these shelters provide). Furthermore, some shelters require notice to use their services, or have a specified check-in time. Then, once registered, guests must remain in the shelter without leaving and re-entering for the evening. Finally, some guests are simply refused admission due to a prior rule violation. Approximately 84% of shelters evict or refuse to re-admit persons who possess alcohol or drugs while in the shelter. (Those run by volunteers or church groups, however, typically do not ask questions of those seeking admission; guests can return as often as needed without having to explain themselves.)

In addition, conditions in shelters, particularly in urban areas, are often described as overcrowded, oppressive, dangerous and unhealthy. Some accounts of everyday life report that the use of crack is pervasive and there is fighting and theft. However, accommodations vary considerably:

“Temporary shelters hastily created from armories, church basements, and school gymnasiums often lack privacy because sleeping areas are open and communal. Tens or hundreds may sleep in a single large area, requiring both light and security throughout the nighttime hours. Lavatory facilities are usually inadequate to handle large crowds, and often shelter guests must leave the premises for meals. More permanent shelters, such as those converted from defunct hospitals or other institutions, generally have more adequate sleeping, lavatory, and cooking facilities.”96
The categories of shelter less and homeless in shelters, taken together are what Watchman and Robson call “visible homelessness.” Two categories taken together are frequently referred to as “hidden homelessness”:

1. “Housed but imminently shelter less: those only temporarily lodged, living under makeshift and temporary arrangements that provide current accommodation of a transitional nature only. This includes doubling up with friends or relatives, illegally squatting, in grossly sub-standard housing, or facing eviction without alternative accommodations. The route to loss of shelter may be through the intermediate step of temporary accommodations, then none at all. This category adds a temporal dimension to the definition of homeless: those who are currently housed but are in danger of being shelter less in the foreseeable future fall under the category...insecure accommodation.

2. Housed but not in homes: Those living only in grossly inadequate accommodations. This category refers to those living under circumstances which may be temporarily stable but which are below acceptable standards of housing, as doubled up, in physically substandard accommodations, in an abandoned or beleaguered neighborhood, or in a housing unit not meeting other socially established norms for minimally decent housing. The route to loss of shelter may be through the intermediate step of grossly inadequate accommodations, then none at all. This category adds to the definition of homeless those whose shelter falls below minimally acceptable standards of quality...[or] intolerable housing conditions.”

1. personal security, quiet and privacy, especially for sleeping
2. safekeeping of bedding, clothing and possessions, which may have to be carried at all times
3. hygiene and sanitary facilities
4. cleaning and drying of clothes
5. obtaining, preparing and storing food in quantities
6. keeping contacts, without a permanent location or mailing address
7. hostility and legal powers against urban vagrancy
8. reduced access to health care and dental services
9. limited access to education
10. increased risk of suffering from violence and abuse
11. general rejection or discrimination from other people
12. loss of usual relationships with the mainstream
13. not being seen as suitable for employment
14. reduced access to banking services
15. reduced access to communications technology
According to HUD, there were 664,414 sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons nationwide on a single night in early 2008. This suggests 1 in every 190 persons in the United States used the shelter system at some point in that period. Design solutions that meet the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing are far more complex than one would initially anticipate.

A new composite portrait of a homeless person is evolving from the single older male of the 1970s to someone who is younger, better educated and often accompanied by family. Programming for diverse demographics is difficult. In many cases, the most difficult aspect of programming is understanding the homeless person’s lived experience.

The homeless shelter resident is in crisis as a result of a change in lifestyle and a loss of home and familiar setting(s). Their worldview has been fundamentally affected; their priorities need to be considered differently. People who live on the street are living in places not meant for human habitation – in cars, parks, sidewalks or abandoned buildings (or they are sleeping in night shelters). Most live in a state of fear, depression and worry; as discussed, many suffer from mental illness, or have an addiction to drugs and/or alcohol.

Discussion, news coverage and research that focus on the characteristics of the homeless oftentimes make the assumption that the problem lies in the victim (not in that which victimizes). Legally, homelessness is criminalized. Here, there is an element to these laws aimed at rebellion (a certain kind of rebellion based in socio-economic perception and power). The underlying intent forces everyone to participate in the culture of consumption – or be faced with imprisonment, humiliation and banishment. This has been the case through history, and continues to be.

Socially and architecturally, the response is typically one of distance, or ignorance. Yet this kind of thinking furthers the problem, “others” the issue, isolates the homeless, and, in effect, maintains the social and architectural status quo.
MAPPING LAYERS:
RE_FUSE WALLS:
RE_ARTICULATING SITE + EXPERIENCE IN THINGS

site mapping: the act of reconstrcuting site.
we surround ourselves in and with things.
cave (dweller).
relationship or condition: underneath.
urban condition: bridge dweller.
material expression: earth.
structure: protected “back”; view out.

but.
field + forest (dweller).
relationship or condition: in between.
urban condition: alley dweller.
material expression: wood. or in/visible (glass)

cliff (dweller).
relationship or condition: adjacent to.
urban condition: appropriation of wall

subterranean (dweller).
relationship or condition: hidden underneath. subway dwellers.

i’m tired of making the same drawings.
they tell me little if anything of what i am looking at, seeing,
feeling, experiencing, researching, knowing.

enough.

who are we in the things we surround ourselves with?
the things we leave behind?
mapping remnant, refuse, garbage, imprint, left behind.
exploring the tell and the way we understand people, time,
culture and history

the walls give a promise and it is to tell another kind of story,
the stories in and of the site.
trace, residue, refuse.
the kinds of things one keeps, or doesn’t wish to keep.

look into the moment that was; peer into the inner life.

i can talk about this only so much.
sometimes the language has to change to the language of

building.
what will these walls tell me?
what will these things in them reveal?
this wall won’t provide shelter.
won’t claim to, nor try.

moving out of mapping on paper, in auto cad, in google.
exploring an other kind of context.

once lived space.
creating a clearing.
layers of life, for how long, accumulating?
mixed with earth, the mounds of civilization layer and pile up.

what is in the things themselves.
they are what they are, throughout the process.

the process its own sort of telling.

the density of caves.
the density of concrete.
the spatial complexity of shelter in between trees, under a bridge, on the side of a cliff, nestled in, perched out. Emma stood on the outside, I went in. Initially I didn’t want to, there was a no trespassing sign, but that wasn’t it. I was trespassing into their space.

Once inside, I felt the quiet of the place. The sun filtered through the dense low trees, the light began to play and dance and the shadows began to sharpen, fade the warm brown earth and a sound.

A sound of fallen leaves rustling
A sound of leaves drying in anticipation of winter
A sound of cars moving past on the interstate
Cab drivers chatting

I was trying to be discrete.
The cab drivers across the street at the greyhound station were watching disinterestedly.
A police car drove by from time to time but they never stopped.
I took a few pictures.
We weren’t there long, maybe 40 minutes, moving quickly.
I’m still thinking about the other site.
Before I can move onto the hut, I need to explore the spatial complexity of being there.
The density is one part.
The trees woven together.
The remnants of bags and fabric hanging in the trees.
site inventory | refuse | content(s):

1. crumpled black shirt embedded in the dirt
2. blue sock
3. black fabric remnants coming unraveled, pressed between leaves, stamped into the ground
4. plastic grocery bag hanging in the trees
5. flip flops
6. empty beer can, cut open
7. empty orange soda bottle
8. empty, crushed case of tobacco leaves
9. empty beer bottles
10. crushed orange traffic cone i couldn’t bring as it is now home to a bunch of carpenter ants, it was moved and is laying on the ground now; it was sitting on the concrete ledge before

things i left:

1. a red sweatshirt
2. a blue pair of socks
3. crushed cigarette butts
4. flattened cardboard boxes arranged along the edges
5. almost everything there
6. an empty cardboard box (case of beer)
7. empty beer cans
8. a can of coke
9. light blue plastic grocery bags
10. a sheet of plastic rolled up
11. fabric remnants

most of these things were on the other side of the fence. maybe it’s better they stayed there.
deterioration
slippage
cracks
the stench and stain of human feces.

"you scared me"
"i'm sorry. i didn't mean to."
"it's alright. you cleanin' up?"
"yeah."
"that's nice. i do that sometimes too. can't stand the sight of it or the smell of it. i don't live 'round here. i live 30 miles away.

where they know how to live."

things I left:

1. a portion of a building resting on the ground
2. large pile of clothing wet from a recent rain piled between concrete walls
3. used condoms
4. piles of wood
5. human feces
6. concrete barrier
7. hard and jagged edges
8. rocks and rocks and rocks

3cdc has signs everywhere
there are buildings being torn down
piles of rubble
people standing by watching
laborious intensity
the laying and layering of lives,
the layering of time,
the layering of civilizations
we pile upon ourselves,
a piling of time, memory, breath, circumstance and meaning
we go through trying to understand
11.10.2010

site condition: adjacent to; in between; edge
archetype: cliff dweller
current dwelling: next to a wall
materiality: concrete (dense mix); earth + found things in the place

the density of the wall is behind the density of the trees
all around, all kinds of walls
corrugated metal, rusting, twisting, bent, glittering
fences, permeable, impermeable
stacks and stacks of brick
forced perspective as I look down the alley (way)
the place ness of the place is perfect
i’m not sure (a) building here will do
an architecture
revealing the reality of the place, the reality of the structure,
the reality of being here
being here, here and now

flurry of leaves and
the wind
gold orange the coming storm
i watch excitedly
behind the glass
while he huddles close
(in the shelter of the doorway step)

living on the streets.
they say they lose their sense of personhood.

building walls out of residue.
but.
they have so many places to go but nowhere to stay.

not some formal gesture
not a matter of doing what i’m told
but instead revealing
the structure of a building.
r_e_seeing,
the presence of the building, being.
stacked unit
vuln, desay
sharp, jagged, hard
wet, odorous
heightened sense of danger but no one around.
“It is an interiority of space, and not yet of motion; also, an internalization of the outside, an invagination of the outside that could not occur all alone if no true interiorities did not exist elsewhere. It remains the case that the organic body thus confers an interior on matter, by which the principle of individuation is applied to it: whence the figure of the leaves of a tree, two never being exactly alike because of their veins or folds.

Folding-unfolding no longer simply means tension-release, contraction-dilation, but enveloping-developing, involution-evolution...the simplest way of stating the point is by saying that to unfold is to increase, to grow; whereas to fold is to diminish, to reduce, to ‘withdraw into the recesses of a world’.”

fold, verb
1. bend (something) over on itself so that one part of it covers another. [often as adj. folding] be able to be folded into a flatter shape.
2. (Geology) cause (rock strata) to undergo bending or curvature.
3. (Biochemistry) (of a polypeptide or polynucleotide chain) adopt a specific three-dimensional structure.
4. cover or wrap something in (a soft or flexible material). affectionately clasp in one’s arms.
5. (fold something in/into) mix an ingredient gently with (another ingredient).

noun
1. a form produced by the gentle draping of a garment or piece of cloth. an area of skin that sags or hangs loosely.
2. a line or crease produced by folding.
3. (chiefly Brit.) a slight hill or hollow.
4. (Geology) a bend or curvature of strata.

cross one’s arms bring one’s arms together and cross them over one’s chest.

DERIVATIVES foldable adj.
ORIGIN OE falden, fealden, of Gmc origin.
"Fold, in geology, undulation or waves in the stratified rocks of the Earth's crust. Stratified rocks were originally formed from sediments that were deposited in flat, horizontal sheets, but in a number of places the strata are no longer horizontal but have been warped. Sometimes the warping is so gentle that the inclination of the strata is barely perceptible, or the warping may be so pronounced that the strata of the two flanks may be essentially parallel or lie nearly flat (as in the case of a recumbent fold). Folds vary widely in size; some are several kilometres or even hundreds of kilometres across, and others measure just a few centimetres or less. The tops of large folds are commonly eroded away on the Earth's surface, exposing the cross sections of the inclined strata."
136. figure ground: streets.
137. figure ground: buildings(s).
fold
en_fold
un_fold
re_fold
collapse
embrace
protect
move
release
frame
un_frame
de-frame
cover
mix and maintain difference
retain difference
twist
grow into
a new line created from the pleat of an | other
a hill, an indentation, a hollow
a shift, a shifting ontology
bend
drape
cover one part with an | other
layering, strata, stratification
i conclude. i began with a brief exploration into the history of homelessness. Doing so gave me a better sense of the way homelessness has been defined, legislated and punished in the United States (with the legal beginnings reaching to English roots).

i then looked at dwelling plight patterns, in gentrification and issues of abandonment, and the way these patterning(s) affect the homeless. Here, i found a shift in perception. The homeless are no longer “simply” misunderstood or not accepted; today, where gentrification rules, they are in the way of progress.

Thereafter, i explored the hidden nature of homelessness, the difficulties the homeless experience, and the need to consider the lived experience of these people. For this knowledge can potentially shift my perception, inform a more humane architectural response, and challenge the (architectural) status quo.

This affected my design process on two levels. For one, traditional architectural modes of mapping no longer worked; consequently, place was explored through things. Here, three re_fuse walls were constructed. These explored the shifting nature of site, the homeless people who lived in the sites, and the way we can understand ourselves through the things we are always surrounded with, and leave behind. Secondly, the fold was explored and employed to supplement the design methodologies researched in the sections on dwelling and shelter. Why? It opened up the process, and revealed the act and ontology of how homeless people appropriate space; tectonically, it was a potent metaphor to explore the in_between space of an |other, and in this shifting, transient space, re_claim an |other layer of meaning.

i conclude (for now, this point). i conclude; i re_state: this thesis defends the homeless’ implicit liberty to dwell without hegemonic imposition, coercion or imperative. Ours is a society which criminalizes their (behavior and) being. In exploring dwelling, building as art, and building as resistance, this thesis re_affirms their (human) right to dwell (through language, the language of things and the language of building). And, through design, it simply gives them a place to rest.

At the same time, it is important to note Laugier believed (similar to Perrault) that architecture should have sound principles like science. He declared in his preface the importance for architects of learning to think and argued that all art should have an objective, with unchanging principles.


endnote (2) 


i.e., architectural 

devise - origin: Middle English: from Old French devis, based on Latin devis- 'divided,' from the verb dividere. the original sense was 'desire or intention,' found now only in leave a person to his or her own devices (which has become associated with sense). (from: The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English. Oxford University Press. University of Cincinnati. Accessed September 11, 2010.)

rooted in past histories, which are researched, justified and (then) projected by architects to a future which they purport will, and must, he


23 Ibid, 151.
24 Ibid, 151.
32 Ibid 519.
33 Ibid, 521.
34 Ibid, 522.
36 Ibid, 511.
38 Ibid, 37.
39 places are designated as nouns
40 spaces are denoted by prepositions
42 character is designated by adjectives
43 Ibid, 18.
44 Ibid, 21.
46 Ibid, 56.
48 Ibid, 59.
49 Ibid, 63.
Meaning is something that is projected from the past, through language, to the future; when experienced through language, it then jumps back into the past, while, at the same time, always already being.


This-Evensen, Thomas, Archetypes in Architecture (Oxford: Oxford University, 1987), 15.


Calling out the sexist language at every turn in this citation would turn it into a sort of obstruction. For this reason alone, i chose not to.

Peter Zumthor from: http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article

Peter Zumthor from: http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article

Ibid.


Peter Zumthor from: http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article.


http://www.kolumba.de/?language=eng&cat_select=1&category=14&artikle=315&prev=70

http://www.signandsight.com/features/1550.html

http://www.signandsight.com/features/1550.html

Meaning, as we name and understand it through the filter of our language, is, or necessarily becomes, our constructed past (in our identification, labeling and beholding (of) it as such). Yet in labeling (the meaning as) meaning, the thing itself, now of meaning, is being behind us and no longer (being fully) in front of us.

Peter Zumthor from: http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article

Peter Zumthor from: http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


http://www.kolumba.de/?language=eng&cat_select=1&category=14&artikle=315&prev=70

http://www.signandsight.com/features/1550.html

http://www.signandsight.com/features/1550.html
Recent patterns of assault against the homeless are by teenagers.

Development ensued shortly following my visit. Washington Park was closed and sectioned off. Each time I am near this area, I wonder what happened to the people I talked with in the course of my research who used to live in the park.

This will be explored in later chapters, particularly as it relates to site and site mapping.

While time was, and is, of the essence, I narrowed my design focus to the wall condition.


Ibid, 4.

Ibid, 4.

Ibid, 7.

Ibid, 7.

Ibid, 7.

Ibid, 7.

Ibid, 8.

Ibid, 9.


Ibid, 151.


In Cincinnati, 25.7% of the population live below poverty. (http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Cincinnati-Ohio.html)

Appendix 3.

Ibid., 115.


http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/211999/fold
1. ARCHITECTURE AS REPRESENTATION


2. BAUKUNST (THE ART OF BUILDING; BUILDING ART)


Weschler, Lawrence. Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

3. BEING


4. DWELLING


Dark Days. Director: Mark Singer. 2000. DVD.


Faraway, So Close! Director: Wim Wenders. 1993. DVD.


Seresine. Director: Martin Provost. 2008. DVD.


05_(THE) HERMENEUTIC (AS)


06_THE LIFE WORLD


--- Olafur Eliasson: Your Colour Memory (Glenlsdie, PA: Arcadia University Art Gallery, 2006).


08_SHELTER


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09_ETC


**APPENDIX A, EDIT + DIALOGUE WITH EMMA**

emma: at what level are we to measure meaning? is it possible to measure meaning? is it our place, as architects to change people's value of meaning and what they find to be meaningful?

kelly: meaning is existential in nature, not quantifiable as such. therefore it can not be measured per se. it is experienced; it is known; it is understood. i can say someone or some thing has great meaning. but how great? it's experiential in nature. and, no, i don't believe it's intrinsically my "place" to change people's value of meaning. at the same time, however, it's important to question the meaning of meaning, the meaning of value, and restore both to an alive discussion of architecture (as we experience it through time, and practice today).

emma: living in mind spirit body. living without dwelling. couldn't dwelling then be associated with anything? not necessarily shelter? the place i call home is a feeling.

kelly: yes. dwelling can be associated with any thing. or even no thing (as in being at home with someone). i am interested in exploring the aspect which has seemingly fallen into the cracks, i.e., dwelling is being, and always being with.

emma: and then by building a shelter for those who won't go to a shelter, isn't that changing the "placelessness of the place"? and then isn't it inherently changing the way homeless people dwell? and isn't it, in its very nature, political to build a shelter for the homeless?

kelly: in some ways, particularly as illich describes it, dwelling is being, and always being with.

emma: duration and durability—should a homeless shelter/ rest stop possess these characteristics? to me it seems they should not. then why would the homeless leave? homeless people by nature are nomadic constantly finding shelter in different areas. couldn't time and continuum represent something that is constantly changing, evolving through time?

kelly: the shelter will be more permanent in nature than, say, a tent. it will allow people to come go as need be. in a way, well... think of a restaurant. you go in, you're there for a bit, you do your thing, then you leave. except restaurants are administered by staff. in this case, the architecture itself must administer (it's a place to rest but not a home, so comfortable that it is a place to rest but not to stay).

emma: by positioning your site not where they feel safe are you uprooting them or imposing power on them?

kelly: + it could be argued that there is an intrinsic assertion of power in designing a shelter. but, really? it's up to the homeless to go in or not. up to them whether they slip in or not. they will make that decision for themselves. my interest is to design a shelter that can both re-frame the context of site, while also being a place for them to rest. very simple. this has been informing my design decisions along the way. based on recent criticism, i'm trying to mark site as public in some way. but the mark is a different signifier depending on the "reader" (not homeless: it's art, it's revealing something about us or place or both; homeless: it's beautiful, it's art, and it's a place to inhabit for a moment, a place to get out of the weather, rest, and a place to sleep). but there is more to your question, that demands far more than this email (and deadlines) permit. it is not my intention to impose power on them. instead, i am questioning and challenging the typology of the shelter itself as necessarily administering the homeless' behavior.

emma: random side note: if you have shelter are you then not homeless? isn't this a literal take on homeless? i do not feel at home in Cincinnati even though i have shelter and a home?

kelly: i think you are homeless even if you are sheltered. for you do not technically have a home. i'm not trying to change the definition of homelessness within my thesis. rather that we re-think dwelling architecturally (it's thought of as a place we call home; i argue it's about being + this can be expressed architecturally in specific ways), that we re-think shelter (being aware that it is a thing and an act; being aware of the hegemonic nature that is often involved in architecture...+ how this has framed our profession + what it means). + also that we re-think a seeming lack of architectural involvement with homelessness (for there is a strong sentiment that it's not an architectural type + or issue). my sense of architecture + buildings is they are, for the most part, a constant companion, a part of our lives and lived experience. in this, i don't separate architecture from literature, philosophy, art, or, in this case, homelessness. is it possible we can look at homelessness in a literal + more symbolic way? can we address the issue (whatever this means), while, at the same time, consider what this condition + word means to us (in all of its layered meanings)?
“The urban nomad inflatable shelter is conceived as both a social and humanitarian act. As a social act, the intention is to distribute thousands of these brightly colored structures in order to foster a dialogue about the invisibility and marginalization of the homeless.

As a humanitarian act, the shelter provides a highly portable and inexpensive shelter to protect from cold, rain, and hard sidewalks, and is aesthetically pleasing to both occupants and passersby.

As a social provocation the shelter is designed to provoke a dialogue about the invisibility and marginalization of the homeless. We employ current design culture aesthetics to contribute to the rebranding of the homeless by confounding expectations regarding the ability of the homeless to appreciate and be served by consumer design culture.”
APPENDIX D_SHELTER + TYPE

Most also impose a limit on length of stay; the average accommodation can only accommodate different types of people. and bath accommodations, and do not have adequate staff to accommodate women only, or women and children only, or single adult men ad admission to certain types of homeless people (single adult

In addition, the majority (75%) of crisis shelters restrict variation from one locale to another. For example, New York City municipal shelters do not impose any limit on length of stay by order of a class action lawsuit brought against the City on behalf of the homeless. This decree requires that shelter be provided to whoever requests it – for as long as needed. However, in Miami, Florida, there is a maximum stay of seven nights yearly to accommodate as many men as possible in the shelter.

Furthermore, three out of five shelters allow guests to remain in the shelter all day; in other cases, guests are required to leave the premises for an 8 to 10 hour period. As a result, many homeless go to transportation depots, parks, abandoned buildings or the street during the day – until they are able to return to the shelters. Daytime programs for homeless people are not common.

Most crisis shelters offer food, showers or baths, laundry facilities, clothing, a television. Psychiatric counseling or referral is available in more than three-fourths of all shelters nationwide. Counseling is required in more than one-half of shelters – particularly those in the Northeast.

Finally, more than two out of three shelters require guests to fulfill chores as part of being able to stay in the shelter. In some cases guests serve as cooks, janitors, or maintenance workers. Some shelters have employment training services, and two-thirds of all shelters make referrals for housing and jobs.

In some instances, the government will pay for people to reside in hotels or apartments through the mechanism of temporary vouchers, an alternative to crisis shelters. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other federal, state, and local agencies employing block grant funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, provides lodging through vouchers to a substantial number of persons. Due to their more pressing needs for privacy and access to lavatory and cooking facilities, families are usually provided shelter this way.

In many cases, however, housing is too costly. Many families are then referred to run-down welfare hotels, where they live in deplorable circumstances. Merely increasing public entitlements or creating new housing for the poor cannot solve housing problems of the mentally ill.

Many have chronic mental disorders and need housing that includes supervision and support. The large, multi-bed, proprietary adult home, a clear-cut business enterprise requiring substantial capital investment and concern for costs and profits is the most rapidly growing type. However, untrained persons without therapeutic orientation staff many of these facilities; reports of inadequate care and supervision, and exploitation of patients are common.

Foster Families

This is one of the oldest forms of community care. In foster family care, a patient lives in a family residence, typically with no kin ties — in a manner similar to family membership. The household head serves as a "sponsor" for one or more patients, who occupy a bedroom that is an integral part of the family dwelling. Privacy for the patient can be found in the bedroom, but the individual shares meals and common spaces with the family. Frequently, the individual is asked to participate in social and leisure activities with the family and in some cases, does domestic chores and gets a job to supplement direct payments to sponsors from public or private agencies.
**Halfway Houses**

Halfway houses were founded as private, nonprofit corporations; today, sponsorship by public agencies is common. In most cases, residents’ fees make up only part of the funding of halfway houses. American halfway houses have their roots in British hostels of the nineteenth century and are a post-World War II event. Prior to 1954, three halfway houses existed in the United States; each was in a rural setting and was guided by the philosophy of returning to a simpler life. The first halfway house was Rutland Corner House in Boston, and grew out of a shelter for women set up in the 1870s.

The first halfway houses were freestanding. Most had no ties to mental hospitals. However, since their establishment, halfway houses for the mentally ill have expanded nationwide:

“Patients in halfway houses have widely varying clinical and social characteristics. However, halfway houses, more than other types of community residential programs, serve a younger, less chronically disturbed population.”

**Care Homes**

This type is distinguished by their large size (50 beds or more, with some running into the hundreds), entrepreneurial auspice and non-affiliation with a mental health facility. Here, a shared room, three meals a day, housekeeping services and supervision of medications by a physician under contract to the operator is provided, with a typical fee of $20 daily.

Board and care homes have taken over the function of the state hospital. In California, 90% of long-term patients with a psychotic diagnosis and under age 65 live in these shelters or settings.

Similar to halfway houses, the mentally ill live with other challenged groups – like mentally disabled or elderly.

Operators often play a parental or supervisory role.

(Endnotes)

1 http://electroland.net/

2 95% of crisis shelters offer food, 96% offer showers or baths, 86% offer laundry facilities, 83% offer clothing and 86% offer a television.

3 Ibid, 122.