University of Cincinnati

Date: 5/10/2013

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

It is entitled:
Viewpoints: Visual Narratives in the Promenade Architecturale

Student's name: Megan Jenkins

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Michael McInturf, M.Arch.

Committee member: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.
VIEWPOINTS

Visual Narratives in the Promenade Architecturale

A Thesis submitted to the Division of Research and Advanced Studies of the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

in the School of Architecture and Interior Design at the College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning

August 2013

Megan Elizabeth Jenkins

B.A., Italian Studies, Theatre
University of California, San Diego
March 2005
Abstract

As society shifts towards an understanding of the environment through the visual mediation of images, it has become increasingly important to define the architectural relationship between movement and view. The promenade architecturale strings interrelated spaces along a series of progressive views. Because this type of observation requires movement, there follows a relationship between the performance piece that can be formed through architecture, and the site-specific theatricality of the promenade architecturale, each bringing the action of architecture into site, space, and time.

This thesis will examine the role of spatial manipulation through the progressive view in the promenade architecturale, and theatricality's ability to reorient the occupant to their surroundings. Analysis of key works, in particular Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye and Villa La Roche, among other works, demonstrate movement’s role in sequential progression, and re-introduce the idea of multiple viewpoints in performative architecture. The Barcelona Pavilion in particular suggests that the constantly shifting view is at the foundation of an experience of movement. Through these investigations, a proposed architectural design will use site-specificity in combination with progressive movement to bring the action of the site into space, time, and motion. A design for a public promenade correlated to the Santa Fe Train Depot, the trolley station, and the MCASD in downtown San Diego will make an inquiry into the possibilities of spatial sequence and the primacy of the interrelated visual experience in architecture.

This paper weighs architecture as a type of ‘site-specific theatricality’ because of its potential to combine the elements of context and view with movement and sequence.
The following work represents some of the ideas in architecture that have been of special interest to me following a background in professional costume design. As a dramatic designer, my concern has been with how figures move through space; theatricality in architecture has more to do with the spatial manipulation that is activated by the players themselves, rather than by the simple presence of the architecture. I see the cross-disciplinary conversation in design as a way of augmenting the experience of our urban (and rural) settings; as an emerging architect, designing the enclosure only furthers to enhance the environment.

I owe many thanks to the professionals and the educators from both the University of California at San Diego and the University of Cincinnati that I have collaborated with over the years. I will make particular mention of Patricia Kucker for being a constant support and guide throughout my graduate studies, and also to Victoria Petrovich for acting as a sounding board to my professional and educational ideas in theatre and design, among others without whose collaboration I would not have been able to develop as a designer.
Contents

00 Abstract
01 Preface
03 Contents
05 List of Illustrations
10 Introduction
11 Part One:
   Site Specific Theatricality
   Material Production of Immaterial
   The Architectural Interpretation of Reality
   Barcelona Pavilion: Pilgrimage to a Site Through Images
37 Part Two:
   Visual Perception in the Promenade Architectural
   The Promenade Architectural
   Narrative and Sequence Through Processional Movement
   The Interior Circuit
69 Part Three:
   Lines of Sight
   The Deceit of Perspective
   The View is the Destination
101 Part Four:
   Leading Movement Through Views
   The Viewpoints
   The Public Promenade
134 Conclusions:
   Unusual Experiences in Space
139 Bibliography

Viewpoints
List of Illustrations

f. 0.0  Cover Photo by Author
f. 0.1  Photo by Author. From “All My Sons”, UCSD, 2004.

f. 0.2  Via Roma, Turin, Italy. Photo by Author.

f. 0.3  “Dancing on the San Diego Trolley” from The World is Rauc. (http://www.theworldisraw.com/san-diego-trolley-dancing/)


f. 0.5  Production Image from Master Builder, 1994, by The Builder’s Association. (http://www.thebuildersassociation.org/imgs/prod/master/master_01.jpg)

f. 0.6  Image by Author. Related Spaces within Barcelona Pavilion. Adapted from Building Desire: On the Barcelona Pavilion, Dodds, 2005. Plate 11.


f. 0.8  Image by Author. Threshold Spaces of Barcelona Pavilion. Adapted from Building Desire: On the Barcelona Pavilion, Dodds, 2005.


f. 0.11  Stage Design by Scamozzi for Teatro Olimpico, from Andrea Palladio, Llorenç, 2002. 41.

f. 0.12  Site Map. Image by Author. Adapted from Slow House, Diller et al, 1994. 82.


f. 0.15  Suspended Construction at Castello di Rivoli. Photo by Author.

f. 0.16  Juvarra’s Landmarks of Turin, from The Triumph of the Baroque: Architecture in Europe, 1600-1750, Millon, 1999. 369.


f. 0.19  Visual Cues for Movement in the Soane House Museum. Image by Author.


f. 0.22  Unfinished construction photo from Slow House, from Flesh: Architectural Probes, Diller et al, 1994. 82.

f. 0.23  Man Walking in Front of Transept. Photo by Author.

f. 0.24  Crossing at Kettner Blvd and B St. Photo by Author.

f. 0.25  Diagram of Movement at the Site. Image by Author.

f. 0.26  Thick Drawing. Image by Author.

f. 0.27  Site Map. Image by Author. Adapted from Google Maps, Web.


f. 0.30  Signs at the Site. Photo by Author.


f. 0.35  Suspended Construction at Castello di Rivoli. Photo by Author.

f. 0.36  Juvarra’s Landmarks of Turin, from The Triumph of the Baroque: Architecture in Europe, 1600-1750, Millon, 1999. 369.


f. 0.42  Unfinished construction photo from Slow House, from Flesh: Architectural Probes, Diller et al, 1994. 82.

f. 0.43  Man Walking in Front of Transept. Photo by Author.

f. 0.44  Crossing at Kettner Blvd and B St. Photo by Author.

f. 0.45  Diagram of Movement at the Site. Image by Author.
List of Illustrations

07-08

f. 4.6-7 Thick Drawings of Site Conjectures. Images by Author.
f. 4.8 The Departure Point of Pacific Views. Image by Author.
f. 4.9 Site Drawing. Image by Author.
f. 4.10 Plans. Image by Author.
f. 4.11 Sketch Model, Showing Site Views and Context. Image by Author.
f. 4.12 Sequential Section Across Site. Image by Author.
f. 4.13-22 Vignette Views Along the Site Promenade. Images by Author.
f. 4.23 Sketch Model with Trolley. Image by Author.
f. 4.24 Sketch Model with Cafe Space. Image by Author.
The promenade architecturale developed at a time in which architectural thought eschewed the ornamentation of daily life. The architecture of daily living, in particular the domestic space, was stripped of its unnecessary elements; the intermediary spaces that had once defined the difference between dominant and residual slowly worked themselves into transitional spaces for movement. Le Corbusier questioned the idea of the perspectival view at a time when architecture functioned by perpetuating a series of transitional spaces. The plan libre and its contemporary raumplan correlate the dimension of movement to reciprocating views, meandering bodily movement developing both the sequence and the containment of architecture.

In Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion, the constant nearness of the view with the movement exposes a world created by the individual work of architecture. Whereas theatre means to simulate a fictional world, the promenade architecturale has the capacity to actuate the immaterial forces of theatre in a lived world, and yet still retain the fantastical qualities found within theatre. By virtue of not being axial, the promenade creates its own world within the greater context, while at the same time freeing the context from its prescribed forms. The Barcelona Pavilion is placed on a larger site axis as a parenthetical deviation in site-specific theatricality, not because of its form, but because it causes the visitor to break from the normal measure of space, time, and pace. Theatricality in architecture is not ornamentation, as is commonly thought the case. The promenade generates site-specific theatricality, a relationship between movement and experience in architecture. Theatre can be thought of as action beyond the proscenium wall, but theatricality in architecture is a way to bring action into space and time. In the promenade architecturale, site-specific theatricality combines site, space, and time, similar to the architectural fantasies of Filippo Juvarra, influenced by set design for opera and procession. As in the work of Mies, his visions for architecture combined the view of interior movement with the greater scale of the context — architecture at the scale of the site makes a clarification of the larger place.
The argument of socially engaging theatre trends has not only introduced the visual arts into the theatrical experience, but theatre artists themselves have also chased new relationships between the theatrical event and spatial systems. The speed of technology within current contexts has aroused a new interest in the relevance of theatre as a medium for communication through site-specific performance structures. Technology engages our world on all levels, so the new theatre becomes technologically engaged in an effort to understand how we interact with our environments.\(^1\) Within the theatrical tradition, these ideas are meant to be troubling. Just as they pick apart the conventions of theatrical realism and dramatic composition, they also disassemble the worlds created therein. The critical contribution emerging from this conversation is that it re-images how our culture might be, rather than producing a reactionary response to the current condition of contemporary culture. New perceptions of architectural space are comparable to the newly imagined culture industry that emerges from the counter culture of theatre. As the experience moves outside of the proscenium space, the visitor must be aware of the real world in which a collective action is taking place.\(^2\) Traditional theatre allows the audience to fixate on fictions in which they have no part. They do not need to be aware of themselves or their surroundings. Furthermore, they do not need to perceive what is beyond the proscenium as anything more than a part of the fiction. Twentieth century media reinforces the state of fantasy through motion pictures. The collective action, on the other hand, sees actors and figures, rather than fictional characters. The actualities of space and time fold into performative space and time.

Foregrounding performance in space and time becomes an effort in coordination between site and group. The avant garde forms of theatre in the 20th century have typically explored the social atmosphere, which affects our human interactions. Whereas the institutionalized tradition of theatre in the United States creates a product to be sold, non-traditional theatre takes it upon itself to improve the lives of the audience and society in general.\(^3\) While some theatrical experiences worked upon the feelings of personal estrangement, such as the work of Samuel Beckett, much of modern theatre explored the commitment of the group to the workings of a society. In either instance, the expectation of the theatre space as a proscenium is challenged as the visitor has the opportunity to interact with the performative space. Space for performance becomes a part of the daily life of the visitor, and likewise, the visitor becomes a part of the...
Performance as it leaves the traditional theatre space. The desire is not to empty the visitor’s mind of their worldly perceptions, but instead it calls into question the perception of the lived world as a driver of performance. Theatre as proscenium induces expectations, while theatre as a performative space yields different perceptions of time, speed, and space because of personal interaction and movement.

Performance itself is constantly looking towards the visual arts to re-imagine events that are more impactful and meaningful in our communities. The Builder’s Association’s production of The Master Builder, from 1994, made an inquiry into our perceptions of both structural and social hierarchies through the presentation and interaction with the set design. The performance took place in a full-scale section of a house placed within an illegal New York loft space used for performances. During the performance, the theatre’s master carpenter, someone not normally seen on stage, slowly dismantled the walls of the house. The carpenter began each performance with a monologue explaining the tools he would be using to dismantle the provisional stage, and in a sense, the performance. The audience was even more engaged with the environment because of personal interaction with the house—audience members could visit with the performance space in its form as an interactive art display during the day, with the ability to activate videos and sounds by moving through the space. Because each audience member had personally moved through the space before the performance, they were prepared to interact with a site-specific event, rather than assuming a theatrical event beyond the proscenium.

Theatrical events have always combined poetry, sound, and movement in an architectural frame. Ritual has been associated with physical participation; the body’s presence being a part of the expression of feelings and emotion. Alberto Perez Gomez explains that the Greek amphitheatre introduced the place for seeing, and removed active participation in the ritual.

Since Classical Greece, architectural space, the public space of ‘appearance’, has been associated with the dramatic space of the theatre and ritual action. In other words, architectural space has always had an essential temporal dimension, it has been literally a ‘space-for-a-situation.’ This is a dimension of architectural space usually disregarded after the objectification of representation in modernity and, more recently, as a result of the failures of ‘international functionalism.’

The act of observation became a means for reaching the cathartic epiphany, and the theatrical substitution of the world with its picture brought with it the loss of participation. The architectural space of the theatre has come to imply distance in the western world, rather than the space where an individual might become aware of their own physical presence.
Site Specific Theatricality

The relationship between the work of art and the space it is being inserted in arises out of site specificity; theatre artists re-imagine the city in a type of site-specific theatricality that strengthens the interest of the visitor. In architectural works, the same relationship between the work and its context applies. While theatre sets out to re-imagine the culture industry as a format of the city, works of architecture are more specific to our physicality. The specific relationship between space and architectural work strengthens the interest of the visitor by giving them a heightened sense of involvement. Experimental art and theatre use the visual, embodied, collective, durational, and spatial systems to induce an experience in the visitor. The same may be said of architectural works when they create a “stage” within the city meant for individual involvement.

Filippo Juvarra re-conceptualized the Baroque city through his sketches of individual works. On the massive scale, the representation of a city’s image might come from theatrical tableaux placed throughout the city, creating a type of temporary architecture. The literal display of theatricality was temporary, but the figurative maps that they created depicted the city as the architect wished it to be in the fantastical future. Juvarra’s training in scenic design generated a Turin virtually composed of stage sets, perspectival views extending the space of the city as far as he could touch. This mapping fulfilled a need to represent the city, as it might be seen in the future, not just depicted as architectural additions, but fantasies for the whole. Juvarra used the veduta ideata, the perspectival sketch in which fantasy became new possibility for the city. Each of these sketches depicted a specific architectural domain; the smallest scale of the city, but the theatricality of the sketch extended them across axes of the city.

Scenic design has the capacity to project what is needed onto the situation at hand. Both memory and possibilities are simultaneously projected onto the city through the theatrical sketch. Juvarra introduces a type of raumplan into the city by inserting interventions of space; arcades frame views of open spaces and building facades. The drawing is a clarification of the surroundings. Thoughts and fantasies of the architect are expressed, and the fantasies become an architectural mechanism of intervention. The internal spatial theme often characterized by the sketch becomes the suggestion of a relationship among the architectural intervention, the site, and the urban scale. The intervention reinforces the perception of space
Similarities between Juvarra’s sketches for Stupinigi Pallazina della Caccia and his scenery for a dramatic production demonstrate collapsed space between the public atrium and the private corridor.
until its physical limits fill the visual field with unlimited results. Like the drawing, the effect of the architecture is of the infinite through vistas of grand distances. For Juvarra, the roles between space and structure are not distinct, and suggest a connection between what is traditionally open and closed. In the Palace of Stupinigi, the dominant, indoor space becomes open to the main hall, and the distinction between dominant and residual space becomes ambiguous. Juvarra leaves only a vestige of the central space, which is suggested by the structural piers on the perimeter, and also by the vault overhead. In this case, the simulacrum is enough to give an indication of the dominant space, but it is also enough to blur our perceptions about what we are meant to see and where we are meant to move within the architecture.

OMA’s competition for Parc de la Villette addresses the idea of the scenic view, which is critical to Juvarra, but Rem Koolhaas moves the visitor through a series of spaces as a way to engage the perceptions more completely. The proposal for the park extends across an urban scale site, combining “architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy.” Activity would be implemented on the site in a series of horizontal bands of nature, each band methodically progressing into the next. Permeability between programs boosts the sense of continual threshold, and allows for programmatic mutations. The natural permeability of the bands constructs an illusion of depth in the landscape, but like a stage set; the strips do not have actual depth. The scenic compaction creates new panoramas of the park that come into view as the visitor passes through one strip and moves on to the next. Koolhaas places two major elements of access in the park: the ‘Boulevard’ and the ‘Promenade’. The Boulevard runs perpendicular to the bands, intersecting all of the programs at a right angle, while the Promenade demarcates plazas, or ‘sites within a site’ by running through the bands at an angle. Juvarra also finds the main axis of the site, and places the Baroque palace on this line, using transparency to create artifice with the landscape. Similarly, the perspectival tricks of scenic design allow the axis of Stupinigi to continue through the atrium of the building and out into the backdrop. The theatrical simulation of space introduces a physical space within the building by creating an ambiguity between what is dominant and what is residual.

In the site of the country estate, symmetry is required to make the rural become habitable; Parc de la Villette uses the deliberate geometry of programmatic bands, along with the axis of the Boulevard, to implement nature in a habitable setting. The axis at Stupinigi is a tectonic element; the architecture around it is diaphanous in an effort to create a dynamic threshold of many perceptions. The scenic elongation allows the architecture to have one focus at times, and be multi-directional at times. The open and ambiguous central space is occupiable, with partial views and
total views of the landscape. Parc de la Villette unfolds in programs of nature, unlike the reading of Stupinigi. These same plant elements are complementary to architectural elements, however, and set up the opposition between what is displayed and what is hidden, both in the architecture, and among the natural elements themselves. Interaction with the natural elements by way of the straight axis or the meandering path creates many sensations through stillness or movement, the oblique view, or through the central perspective.

OMA's Competition entry for Parc de la Villette combines scenic compaction with city-scale promenades. The scenery of the parc occurs in strips, but is passed through along a meandering path.
The Barcelona Pavilion uses illusion to disrupt the boundaries between what is real and what is image. The Pavilion is composed of glass and reflectivity, some planes reflecting objects and people, others allowing a view through to the other side. Here, glass acts as an optical instrument, reproducing human vision, but also projecting visions onto the visitor's understanding of the building. The inward eye manifests a building much larger than it really is. Today, optical illusion is not about the cognitive activity of assembling various marks into a new picture, but about distraction and pleasure; media has created a synthetic environment of entertainment in which knowledge is show business. The experience of architecture in this environment must serve to re-orient the individual through a series of movements and views, both of what is there and not there. The sheets of glass and onyx within the Barcelona Pavilion compose a labyrinthine promenade without an exit, the sequence prompting disorientation in the visitor before clarifying the end result. Reflectivity and transparency induce a desire to occupy a space that doesn't exist; part of the procession is the feeling of confusion experienced by the visitor.
The Pavilion as a Hiding Place

Pavilions are meant as a covering place – they are a structure meant to hide or conceal what lies within. With so much transparency in the Barcelona Pavilion, perhaps what Mies sought to hide was the final outcome; there is not one secure route through the building. Transparency and reflectivity elongate the experience at both the building scale and along the greater site axis. The building is placed on axis with the main thoroughfare of its surroundings, the asymmetrical journey through the building relating back to the symmetrical site through views of the scenery. Robin Evans contends that Mies took advantage of reflectivity as a source of confusion, a way to disorient visitors as they move through its spaces. These modern and synthetic environments question absolute orientation, and the use of the image is perhaps a commentary on deception, but, as Evans also writes, “The mirror finds what is hidden.” The Barcelona Pavilion transforms the straight and main axis of the fair into a number of possible routes on the same path. The “rooms” of the pavilion could be strung together in any number of ways, turning the main boulevard into a meandering path; the visitor to the fair has a unique experience of their surroundings, depending on the individual path that they choose. In his discussion of horizontal symmetry within the Pavilion, Evans explains that there is no distinct orientation, and this reinforces the idea that here, the idea of a pavilion removes the true end goal of the journey.
Mies found expression of a concept through the construction; his method in the Barcelona Pavilion was to block the perception of the load bearing structure, and then to construct the building through a conceptual structure. Still, the Pavilion does not define itself through construction, structure, or even through appearances. When compared to the English country house, the Barcelona Pavilion reveals itself as a small building, which increases itself in size through the organization of movement and site. The English architect Edwin Lutyens formed sequences of rooms that ran into one another as transitional spaces, while also collapsing programmatic parts of the house such as servery and dining hall. He showed that constant variation conflicted with the unifying hierarchy in architecture, and worked in a language of ambiguity between the dominant and residual space. Under this scrutiny, the Barcelona Pavilion appears to be more like a series of transitional spaces, or even like a series of rooms that have been collapsed into one another. The visitor had no choice but to move from one threshold to another. The English house also connected the visitor’s experience with the circulation through a processional route – the axis of a building gave more weight to some rooms than others, but the circulation pulled the experience beyond the limitations of the axis. The movement through rooms is often the most important part of an architectural experience, and when there is no single route to the rooms of primary significance, the experience is prolonged. Again, Lutyens redirected movement by drawing the visitor across the transverse spaces of the house, and the methods he used were primarily through views of staircases, or other subordinate architectural features that screened the spaces beyond, and through surface patterns and vaulting that led forward and out. Mies similarly took a building of small size and extended it by organizing the movement transversely across the larger site axis. In a sense, the entire Pavilion became a transitional space within the larger site context – a place to slow and rest.

When contrasted with the relationship between the English country house and its exterior garden, the Barcelona Pavilion’s relationship with the site context also helps to explain its apparent increase in size. The English garden reflected the geometries of the house, and the whole site encompassed a spatial narrative. The interior sequences of spaces extended out into exterior volumes through terracing, plantings, low walls, and other site features. Site lines extending from the interior to the exterior reflected the desire to enlarge the experience of the house into something much larger than normally expected, and also the wish to preserve the

Site Specific Theatricality
f. 1.10 Threshold Spaces of Barcelona Pavilion
33-34

A Conceptual Structure of Movement

ethos of the whole place.18 There was no distinction between house and garden, nor was it one continuous garden, but the relationship between inside and outside created a continuation of transitional spaces. Again, Lutyens often strung together a series of terraces and paths with gateways and steps, which were strongly associated with the geometries of the main house. As in Deanery Garden, a main site axis ran through the entirety of the gardens, the entry, and the main rooms of the house, but this axis did not determine the circulation of movement through the spaces on the site.19 The Barcelona Pavilion was not a complete likeness to the English country house; the building was located within a man-made environment, not within nature as controlled by man. Mies was fully aware of this context, and capitalized on the long site axis of the fair.

While the English country site created an artifice with nature, the Barcelona Pavilion also created an artifice with its surroundings by utilizing many of the same methods. There was no terracing, but the building, raised up on a plinth, was separated from its surroundings by a series of steps and through cycles of passing in and out of constricted spaces. The Pavilion was meant to create a contrast with its context and become a space that mediated the axial boulevard adjacent. Just as in the English setting, the Barcelona Pavilion depended largely on the views that stretch the experience out. As the spaces collapse together, the visual connection back to the context enlarges the building. According to some, the connection between site views and movement calls attention to the case for Barcelona Pavilion as a small landscape.20 In comparison with the English country house typology, however, the long, controlled vistas relate more towards a relationship between interior and exterior conditions. It is a series of domestic-scale spaces with corresponding outdoor spaces and views. The transitions between inside and outside, opaque and transparent, building and land, collapsed in order to choreograph views and movement through the building and back out into the site.
Endnotes


3. Shank, 3.

4. Shank, 7.

5. Jackson, 156.


8. Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, 89.


13. Evans, Translations From Drawing to Building, 235.

14. Evans, Translations From Drawing to Building, 262.

15. Evans, Translations From Drawing to Building, 262.

16. Evans, Translations From Drawing to Building, 247.

17. Lutyens, 16.

18. Lutyens, 22.

19. Lutyens, 22.

20. Evans, Translations From Drawing to Building, 249.
Visual Perception in the Promenade Architectural
The Promenade Architectural

Within the context of the promenade architecturale, the flow of human impressions reflects the true scale of the architecture, but only as the visitor moves through the architecture. Le Corbusier advanced movement into expression by emphasizing interior points of interest. The interiors were composed of what can be typified as points of command: balconies, alcoves, concrete shelves, and other places for human action. The act of rising through the spaces within the houses was not only intended for reaching a scenic view, but it was also for the appreciation of the interior view of these places. The promenade architecturale led through the spaces of the house to a final promontory, the subject of which might be internal or external. The journey to a final view affects how the visitor sees it; the impressions induced in the visitor come at every instant and from every viewpoint. Either the ramp or the stair characterizes the dramatic movement associated with places to both see and be seen. The dramatic impressions associated with the promenade architecturale have less to do with a scenic view than with the things that might be viewed, both internal and external to the architecture. Le Corbusier scaled his house to the human body, and framed its spaces for human events. While he typically conceived of the houses through a combination of plan and perspective, the notion of walking through these same plans helps to understand the true scale of the architecture. The architecture was meant to induce in the visitor an experience of thresholds in relationship to one another, so that the ending point was always referential to the beginning and all of the points in between. These ideas typically developed within the constraints of a severely limited urban setting; the limitations of a site pushed simple form towards dynamism. While many architectural scholars compare the villas of Le Corbusier to prismatic boxes, they are not just boxes; they are boxes for moving around in.

Le Corbusier’s Points of Command

f. 2.1 Examples of the Points of Command within Villa La Roche: the stair landing & the bridge
Ramps and Routes

Le Corbusier uses the ramp as a method for pulling the occupant through space continuously and in harmony with the architecture. He designed Villa Savoye (1929) as nearly square, creating a prism, or a light box, floating in the air. By creating a floating box, with little distinction among the sides, the hierarchy or value is in the whole, while the moving body keeps the house from becoming a simple object. Villa Savoye emphasizes the principles of sequence and arrival, along with the ritualistic importance of movement. A porte-cochere at grade allows a journey that wraps around the meadow and house, and then doubles back to the garage. Movement through the architecture begins with the city and the car, and continues with the body as it moves through the interior spaces. Two points at the main entry, the spiral stair and the washbasin, indicate the ritualistic commitment to move up through the house, while the ramp creates an asymmetrical flow leading upward to the common spaces. This promenade animates the house because of the changing views of the body circulating in space by either the ramp or the stair. The ramp indicates a path of circulation and presents the choice of entering one of the adjoining spaces. The human form is the scale and subject of the design, not the prismatic box. Through movement, forms on the interior become recognizable, and even sculptural, while recognizing the relationship with views to the exterior.
In Villas La Roche and Jeanneret, Le Corbusier placed conjoined houses on a north-facing plot bounded by a cul-de-sac. The adjoining houses are at a right angle, the smaller round unit containing a gallery of the owner’s art collection. This volume represents the place for viewing, and is also the volumetric piece of architecture that closes off the cul-de-sac. The interior circulation route begins with a triple height entrance in the main portion of the complex, while the round volume begins at the mezzanine level, raised off the ground on pilotis. The curved ramp of the viewing gallery continues the interior circuit as a place to view art, but also as a place where one might see and be seen. In Villa Savoye, the visitor completes their journey with the ultimate panoramic vista seen first through ribbon windows, and then through a framed opening at roof level. In Villa La Roche, the terminus of the promenade architecturale is an interior view back down to the starting point. While this is not the main means of circulation back through the house, this is the route of ascent to the library. At the end of the ramp are views back down into the entrance hall and into the art gallery – the view is at the end of the promenade architecturale. Le Corbusier works through a series of sectional changes at the same time as shifting views.

The curved ramp in the library at Villa La Roche represents the place to see and be seen. Le Corbusier’s promenade architecturale signified the shifting view as much as movement itself.

The play between blank walls and walls that contain the collector’s artwork remove the appearance of structure. All that is not structure becomes promenade, and the interior circuit becomes an important experience in movement.

As the body arrives at the top of Villa Savoye, the continual progression in scale and views reaffirms its intent as a place of bodily movement. As the visitor moves up the ramp to the terrace and the roof garden above, the ribbon windows reveal both what lies without and what is within the box. The exterior view of the suburban setting is less important than the act of arriving at the top, though. In his discussion of Villa Savoye, Kenneth Frampton maintains that Le Corbusier’s work continues to be about the promenade of bodies moving through space, regardless of the view. The earlier Villa La Roche (1925) is one of the first of Le Corbusier’s houses to be associated with the idea of the promenade architecturale; in this case, the views are overtly targeted towards the interior, and the act of moving is the most important experience of the architecture. While the interior of Villa La Roche did not include a panoramic vista of its exterior context (except while viewed from the roof terrace), the spaces of movement were also intended for viewing different types of art.
and the interiority of its views encompassed both places to see and be seen, and to take in the view. Similarly, the later work in Villa Savoye simultaneously takes in the shifting views of bodies moving through space, and the panoramic views of its setting.

In Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier is able to connect back to the site through sequence and arrival because of ritualistic movement. Villa Savoye has no distinct front, and arrival at the house emphasizes movement starting from an even greater distance than the front entry and the ramp. The four sides lack hierarchical distinction, so the sequence of arrival depends on the exterior view of the architecture experienced from all sides. Le Corbusier’s intent was for the house to be circumnavigated in the car, though time has now re-dedicated even the setting to pedestrian movement. The ramp was not the beginning of the promenade, but was a continuation of movement through the site. In Villa La Roche, Le Corbusier placed the promenade directly on the urban approach – the curvilinear volume held up on pilotis hovers above the cul-de-sac and at the same time contains the ramp that pulls the visitor through the volume. In either case, the asymmetrical ramp references back to the setting, establishing a path of circulation within the interior space of the architecture.

While Le Corbusier does not compose an overt focus on an exterior view, there is an absolute reference to the setting of the architecture by using the approach of the human subject.
Le Corbusier intends the points of command as depictions of habitable places rather than a remapping of the surroundings from the interior perspective. As Edmund Bacon explains, architecture must provide differentiated spaces for different activities; each architectural space must reinforce the emotional content of the particular act of living that takes place in it. For Le Corbusier, dynamic movement through the spaces of a house signifies the uncovering of the layers of its own creation. The continuous experience of threshold interconnects experiences just past, and what is still to come. A similar relationship between architecture and narrative exists in the processional movement between the Parthenon and the Erechtheion; the dichotomies between ritual and the profane at the Greek site found expression through movement around and through both buildings. Movement related the narratives of successive spaces to one another along the processional paths of the ancient Acropolis due to the placement of objects and spaces in relationship to one another. Le Corbusier’s ‘points of command’ show traces between the architecture as a building and the architecture as a path between separate moments along the procession.

Some scholars have advanced Villa Savoye as a modern simulacrum of the Parthenon. Le Corbusier references classical themes and classical approaches in the Villa Savoye by framing the dwelling with a circuitous route, similar to the route around the ancient temple. Only after travelling around the house does one enter. Typically, the themes of symmetry are associated with temple architecture, whereas Villa Savoye is asymmetrical, but in the case of movement and approach, the classical examples of the Parthenon and Erechtheion coincide with participation in the promenade architecturale. Sophia Psarra analyses the Parthenon as a narrative experience in which the architecture and the sculptural representation of tradition become so closely interrelated that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. The Parthenon and the Erechtheion, as analogous buildings on the Acropolis site, are linked to one another both through ritualistic paths and through the civic history of the site. The ancient ritual is represented through passing around the historic frieze of the Parthenon, while the sacred offering is made at the Erechtheion, reached only by passing around the Parthenon, and through a series of other spaces within the narrative of the site. At this place, the profane and the religious are both legitimate lines in the history and identity of the city, and the sacred traditions meet the genealogical stories passed down in the sculptural details of the architecture.
The pairings of the religious and the profane in the Acropolis reflect bilateral symmetries that are not immediately obvious. While there is no indication whether the Parthenon was strictly a religious or a secular building, the Erechtheion was the more sacred site of the Acropolis, and more closely associated with the mythical past of the city. The Parthenon is the larger of the two structures, and makes the immediate visual impact within its context. The Erechtheion, has a very different impact – the small and asymmetrical shape of the building reveals itself slowly in a series of partial views of the whole. Although the Parthenon has the greater presence in size, the route to the entry is not obvious, because of the oblique angle of the building in relationship the main axis of the site and its easterly orientation. The Erechtheion is not always visible, but the approach is always clear; as the visitor finds his way around the Parthenon, the path to the ultimate destination of ritual at the Erechtheion is inevitable. The routes of the site are meandering, in reaction to the relationship between two primary pieces of architecture and also to the need for a definite spatial experience as one follows the procession through the palimpsest of history, ritual, and creation within the setting. The relationship between the two buildings, the one a constant visual measure, and the other a slow reveal, creates a bilateral balance that helps direct the visitor along the path of asymmetry. The constant choice between two buildings reinforces the idea of the asymmetrical path. In this case,
the asymmetry offers added direction, pointing towards the path between the two buildings, the meaning found in the shrines and the many sculptures along the route. The Erechtheion comes in and out of focus with physical progression, the constraints of the site releasing into views of the final destination.

Exposure to smaller, alternating events of both the ritual and the profane expose the visitor to narratives in relationship to one another, and in relationship to the greater site. Le Corbusier developed the *promenade architecturale* as a means to move the visitor through alternating sensations. The urban site at Villa La Roche functions not only as a backdrop of limitations in which to place interventions of movement, but it is also the junction in which movement and successive views brought out the narrative of the architecture. For the Parthenon, Sophia Psarra explains the sculptural frieze as an overt reference to the dimension of time: the co-existence of separate moments along the procession is representative of the compression of linear time, and yet, the frieze also represents cyclical time. The carved history represents the larger narrative of all periods of time simultaneously, so in the procession around the Parthenon, the participant experiences the architecture in sequence, but at the same time experiences simultaneity of both time and place. Psarra writes, “Telling a myth involves a successive reading of events that unfold diachronically. Understanding it, however, involves disregarding the diachronic dimension and focusing on the vertical links among the mythic units. The structure of myth thus consists of occurrences of similar relationships embedded in each variant”. Strictly speaking, movement between one space and another becomes the relational point for narrative.

The *promenade architecturale* creates connections between space and the process embedded in the work. As expressed by Sergei Eisenstein, the bodily movement of the spectator leaves behind part of the representation of the architecture. As is apparent in Le Corbusier’s villas, the connection between time, motion, and views converges in the promenade architecturale. If the process of narrative is embedded in the work, then dynamic movement must reveal the evolving meanings for both the architecture and the occupant: “When you enter the great hall of the Villa La Roche and first look around the empty space crossed by a bridge, the first question is why? One answer is that the bridge connects what at quite a late stage of the design was indeed two houses”. 

Visual Perception in the Promenade Architectural
The Interior Circuit

The Plan Libre

Despite connections between narrative movement and approach through a site, Le Corbusier fixed his attention on the domestic space of architecture. His approach was to define the internal space according to domestic functions, and then contain them within an external form, the two combining in a manifestation of architecture.\(^\text{18}\)
Le Corbusier wrote in *Towards a New Architecture*:

“Mass and surface are elements by which architecture manifests itself.

Mass and surface are determined by the plan. The plan is the generator... The plan carries in itself the very essence of sensation.”

f. 29 Upper Roof Garden at Villa Savoye
Le Corbusier conceived of his spaces through a series of perspectival views arising from the plan. The plan is conceived in terms of human dimensions, or in terms of events; the point of the plan in conjunction with the perspectival view is to conceive of how the visitor might move around the domestic space.

The spaces are not defined by walls, but by moving up through the horizontal sections, or the plans. Sensational feelings come from registering the proportions of the plan, rather than the distance between floors.

Vertical expression comes through arrival to the floors by way of stairs and ramps; the vertical component of the promenade architecturale was movement, rather than intersections of space. There is some difficulty in associating the vertical elements of stairs and double height spaces into plan-based design – Le Corbusier expresses vertical circulation within the Domino System as holes punched in the floors.20 His designs for villas reflect continuous horizontal development with the only connectors between floors as the vertical circulation of the house.

When the design develops in plan, architecture separates itself from the perception of daily life. Le Corbusier separates the utilitarian objects of daily life from the art form of architecture, but the daily, utilitarian objects and activities of life can be the more powerful provocations of sensations. The reason for bringing architecture into a site-specific and theatrical space is precisely to question the same problems of society that Le Corbusier was seeking to address with the promenade architecturale.
Steven Holl expresses that architecture is about many things other than site. All of the components of architecture and site are what create an experience. This library design was the competition entry for an addition to the Amerika Gedenk Bibliothek in Berlin. Holl proposed an interior condition of circuit, which formed a bracket around the existing library building. The proportions of the new building formed a site that interacted with the city by creating an urban intervention of a city “gate” by defining the south edge of the new Blucherplatz.

The interior journey leads to places that are highly personal, but are concerned with the daily cycles of life. Proportions and mathematics generate the design, but the question must be whether they enhance the experience. Holl was concerned with these details, but he was more concerned with how people were to experience life in these spaces. Experience is concerned with how people live their lives on the individual basis, and the procession is what builds perceptions of space.
Villa La Roche &

The Berlin Library

Whereas Villa La Roche achieves its vertical dimension through a ramp in the elevated viewing gallery, Steven Holl brings about the vertical dimension at alternating points of distribution in the Berlin Library Competition; the interior condition of the circuit articulates the section, but also creates a dynamic interior of movement. Steven Holl describes an architecture that has an interior relationship with the site. All of the components of an architectural work and site are what create an experience. This library was the competition entry for an addition to the Amerika Gedenk Bibliothek in Berlin. Holl proposed an interior condition of the circuit, forming a bracket around the existing library building. The proportions of the new building formed a site that interacted with the city by creating a new city ‘gate’, defining the south edge of the new Blucherplatz.

In the library, the open stack organizes the interior browsing circuit. The meeting of the reader and the book is the place of the promenade. Holl’s concern is to create spaces where life is about contemplation and withdrawal. Spatial perception happens as you move through stacks of books. The stack arrangements are the varying elements meant for creating spaces about stimulation and animation, but it is the act of moving through them that provokes an experience. Like the rounded volume of Villa La Roche, the stacks become a place of viewing – not only of the books, but also the continual progression of bodies moving through interconnected spaces. Although the ramp represents the collapsing of time, motion, and views in Villa La Roche, the chain of distribution ramps in the Berlin Library reveal simultaneity of movement. The visual connection from one distribution point to the previous, and to the one coming immediately after in space, offer the visitor an individual experience with the building and with the site.

Visual Perception in the Promenade Architectural
f. 2.12 The path through Villa La Roche reorients the visitor back to the starting point

Visual Perception in the Promenade Architectural
In Villa La Roche, the interior circulation makes the visual connection back to the beginning only once the participant has reached the final viewing point. The curved ramp leading from the gallery to the library is a dynamic threshold of movement, but the views at this point are transitional – they compose an incomplete panorama of the interior spaces, and any single viewpoint is purely referential to what has been seen, and what will be seen. The circuit of movement is complete at the final viewing point when the visitor can see back down into both the entry hall, where they began, and into the gallery, where the ramp’s ascent begins. The circuit of movement in the Berlin Library differs from Villa La Roche not only in scale, but also in the correspondence of the parts with the whole. As the visitor to the library moves up through the series of ramps, the main volume of the library also becomes a type of viewing gallery where the individual sees the places where they have once moved, and will soon move. As they observe correlating spaces, the moving bodies become figures correlating to their own. This relationship of spaces recollects the intention of the building as a city gate; the interior circuit of movement has a relationship with the site. The individual doesn’t just pass through this city gate, but they move through this gate and interact with it, just as they might interact with the city. Relationships with the urban context might become more lucid through the interior sequence of the architecture. While interior movement through a series of interconnected spaces is directed by viewpoints and ramps, the circuit is not completed with a view back down to the beginning point. The Berlin Library continues its promenade architecturale with the children’s library, which hovers over the original building, and acts as a distribution point focused out towards the city. The final observation point in the tower presents the visitor with a panorama of the site and the city beyond before redirecting the visitor back down to the starting point. The sectional qualities of Villa La Roche emerge when considering its own points of distribution. In this case, distribution was the operation of movement culminating in a view.
Endnotes

2. Bacon, Design of Cities, 43.
5. Frampton and Schezen, Le Corbusier: architect of the twentieth century, 17.
8. Santamaria, 19.
10. Psarra, 22.
13. Psarra, 28.
14. Psarra, 35.
15. Psarra, 35.
In the scope of geometry, the designer distinguishes himself from the occupant, but in the inquiry of vision, the image aspires to give a different impression to each participant. Robin Evans explains projective geometry, saying that figures deform according to differing points of view, but the lines of site do not deform. The perspective view fixes objects in space without the possibility of aberration, and without the dynamicity of human movement. The laws of perspective developed during the Renaissance created laws for what was observed through the human eye, but did not actually take into account the observer situated in a three-dimensional space. The architecture of this period was mathematically inclined, but the resulting works commanded the visitor through an individual viewpoint. Positioning the viewer in space also placed them in a structured relationship with their surroundings; distances could seem much greater, or objects could appear to be smaller than they truly were. The “truth” to the rigid precedent of perspective turned to deceit as the architecture removes all ambiguity and transforms the visitor into the observer.
Le Corbusier followed the mandate of modern architecture to find simultaneity of impressions by interweaving spaces and planes into one continuous space. Movement enabled not only the experience of architecture, but also an increased understanding of vision.
The fantasy of architecture was manifested in the late work of Palladio, and especially in the Teatro Olimpico. In this work, the Renaissance interest in classical architecture as the source for architectural knowledge became evident. Palladio’s trade as a stonemason combined with his classical training compelled him towards the efficient architectural solution, his intended use of perspective in the Teatro Olimpico in line with the mathematical principles of the Renaissance perspective drawing. He conceived of the proscenium of the stage as a triumphal arch, perhaps based on the Arch of Constantine, and created a type of internal façade divided into three stories with five doorways. The façade and doorways were divided and sequenced into a system of bays with two orders of Corinthian columns, one freestanding on the ground floor, and the others engaged above, while statues of the academicians filled all of the intermediary spaces. Positioned between two other buildings, Palladio created a half-oval building on the site to simulate the Roman semi-circle. The audience seats were terraced, which initially left room for a shallow stage, but a later theatrical production required a deeper stage area. Scamozzi completed the expansion of the stage with the required perspectival backdrop – the simulacrum of the Greek city of Thebes, complete with Renaissance-esque palaces and temples. The academia needed additional property for these deep perspective scenes, which extended into passageways down the 3 principle openings and down two more openings added to the wings. It is thought that Scamozzi’s addition didn’t alter Palladio’s design, but this use of perspective for the simulacrum of space might not have been the theatrical intent of Palladio’s design. Palladio’s drawings indicated painted backdrops and changeable pieces that would not only transform according to the play, but would also be subordinate to the proscenium arch. Changeable backgrounds would have correlated to the social hierarchies of architecture, just as the architectural backgrounds in perspective painting and drawing did. Instead, Scamozzi’s set design for Teatro Olimpico created a very distinct illusion of architectural vistas disappearing into the distance. Rather than a theatrical spectacle of performance, the Teatro Olimpico came to be known as a curiosity of the perspectival view of the streets in combination with the conventions of theatrical effects.

f. 3.3 The scenic view in Teatro Olimpico
The perspectival view in Juvarra’s drawings was meant as a depiction of an architectural fragment, a reimagining of the urban whole. The re-depiction of the city’s history through the sketch generates new possibilities for the architectural expression at a smaller scale. In the instance of the Castello di Rivoli, the perspectival drawing means to actuate an architectural thought; the drawing is a provocative fantasy transferred into architectural domain. The sketch fulfills more than one objective: as the view, the theatrical depiction of the architecture, and as the architectural study. The Castello di Rivoli reflects the various stages in the history of the Savoia monarchy, the sketches of Juvarra creating an architectural language of theatrical effects. Between drawing and building there is a true manipulation of space that Juvarra expresses through the combination of spatial intervention and a technical solution. In this case, the alternation of solids and voids measured by piers and columns are further ornamented with statues, the exhibition of symmetry coupled with decoration meant to describe the surroundings. While Piranesi uses the drawing as a method for explaining and controlling the operations of architecture, Juvarra uses the conventions of set design as a departure from depicting the conditions as they are, and as a means for inventing an idea for the future of the city. Teatro Olimpico precedes the Castello di Rivoli as an example of a theatre that is meant to “objectify the hidden values that lie beyond everyday behavior and mental habits.”

The Castello di Rivoli
by Filippo Juvarra
The conventions of perspective in normative theatre have the effect of dulling the senses, rather than an effect of wonder:

Diverse tricks are commonly used. For example, an accomplice is planted in the back of the hall . . . and begins to create a disturbance with another person, also planted, or perhaps . . . they pretend to demolish some of the beams in the staircase, or with a few bars from a trumpet, drum, or other instrument, they distract the spectators’ attention from the stage, and in those few seconds, the scenery is skillfully made to vanish, so that when the audience turns back to the stage, appeased once again, they gaze with wonder and delight at the new scenic devices before their eyes.6
Filippo Juvarra imagined the city as it might be - rather than the straightforward and infinitely expandable grid, he conceived of the city as a backdrop for significant places that would relate to one another through grand vistas and paths. At the smaller scale, Juvarra inserted raumplan type spaces, which served as a backdrop to what the place memorialized, the human interaction.
Pulling the theatrical narrative out of the ‘triumphal proscenium arch’ and into the daily routine of life creates a way to be in harmony with the deception of the imagination and the reality of architectural solution. Juvarra re-maps the city into a type of ‘future history’ through imagination and invention. Imagination and invention move beyond future histories into the possibilities of movement. The spatial themes that distinguish Juvarra’s work developed in the dialogue between sketch and technical experimentation. The system of prioritized interior spaces establishes the roles of both space and structure within his architectural vision. Like the Raumplan of Adolf Loos, there is a correlation between the vertical dimensions of interrelated space with the ordering of the ground plan. The added challenge of the material dimension allows Juvarra to produce an elastic effect of volumes within the building. While the construction under Juvarra was suspended at the mid point, the intentions for the Castello di Rivoli are present in the existing wing and the traces left by the columns and piers in the unfinished central atrium. The palace contains vertical moments of movement in places of tension between space and structure, interspersed with points for viewing; the promenade at the building scale includes changes in level for grand vistas within the interior of the palace. The visual connection between spaces not only completes the physical circuit, but it assembles a mental promenade through the identity of the building.

In the larger context, the perspectival sketch becomes the organizational tool for transforming the landscape. Juvarra combines the site and the architecture with level changes for vistas of grand distances, creating perspectives across the city with monuments at each end. The visual connection between points across the city serves to direct the eye out towards the horizon, but the effect only comes by moving through the architecture, catching glimpses, and then losing them respectively.
We have attempted to renounce the illusionism of the conventional Italian stage to let the backdrop speak in its function as backdrop, and to develop dramatic movement in front of the backdrop, intentionally, in front of the backdrop that is, to approximate the laws of bas-relief, in which the principal figures are made to stand out clearly in the foreground, and there is added a background level without any effect of perspective, where only the outlines are suggested, merely to create an evocative impression.7
Layering of spaces creates episodes of vision at the human scale. The House Museum of Sir John Soane, designed as his own residence between 1792 and 1823, serves the role of domestic space and museum of artifacts, the doubling of roles accomplished through the layering of spaces. The museum space is enlarged through the reaction of the reflected view and the partial view, each optical effect transitioning the visitor from one space to the next. The partial view before initial movement constitutes the layering of several contrasting spaces within a very distinct material arrangement. The long vista multiplies the space, but also causes the intricacies of the interior to move outside the frame of the walls. The extension of space and the further dissolution of walls create one long experience of movement. Soane layers each room into the other using the transitional spaces in between – at times an actual corridor, and at times a visual connection to another space beyond.

Lines of Sight
The Soane House is not stationary, but moves, and cannot be understood from one vantage point. Any given point within the sequence of the house, there is a multiplicity of views, and this only serves to perpetuate movement. In this case, sequence is through vision and movement. The visitor experiences the house in sequence, but comprehends it as a whole without changing direction. Soane places mirrors at the heart of the sequence to both extend the spaces and to remove boundaries. This connects the museum with the greater context. The characterization of the space thus represents a greater story originating from both the owner’s intentions of sequence, and the visitor’s experience.
The view corridors in the House Museum are a strategy for leading movement, so the sequence of space is dependant on visibility from one room to another. In the Barcelona Pavilion, the vista is constantly obstructed, re-directing the visitor along its length. Soane presents a view to intervening spaces and to the landscape beyond, whereas Mies uses transparency to reveal subsequent spaces long before arrival. The Barcelona Pavilion accentuates peripheral vision with reference to the horizon line of perspectival drawing. Looking out is always something that is on the edges. As Mies strings together a series of spaces, the small building becomes larger not only through the meandering sequence of movement, but also through the absence of visible boundaries. The Pavilion becomes part of a larger landscape as the visitor looks out onto the horizon. As previously discussed, the building compared to a landscape does not account for the correlation between interior and exterior view. The house-garden relationship operates through changes in elevation; the land extends beyond the building, but it must have a volumetric reference back to its related interior space. The intention of the architecture is to create a contrast with its context while at the same time creating a unity between the inside and the outside. Mies composes perspectival views of an interior aligned with the exterior view of its surroundings – in this case of the horizon.
The theatre must not offer us the illusion of nature, but rather that of our superiority over it. It must not try to carry us from one reality to another, but rather to have us enter into the world of art by means of the symbols of our culture.

The Slow House by Diller and Scofidio

The Slow House by Diller and Scofidio characterizes the contemporary perception of the boundaries between dominant and residual space. The overt critique made through the architecture centers on the commodification of the view beyond the devices for its manipulation. Diller and Scofidio use the vacation home as the place away from the every day, but also as a means to reconnect back into the acts of daily living through architectural inquiry. The Slow House uses three ordinary and domestic devices to manipulate both views and motion: the car windshield, the television screen, and the picture window. The car windshield is at the origin of the journey, a type of screen through which both the approach and the escape are represented, while the picture window is at the other end of the journey, looking at the opposing side of infinite space. The concurrence of the picture window and the television screen speaks to the simultaneity of time and place between the screen that commodifies the view, and the view that extends out towards the horizon. The juxtaposition of each of these views presents a progressive manipulation of the landscape as the traveler moves from one position in the house to the next. Controlling the view is the architectural intervention within the extents of nature. The scenic space, or the proprietary view, isolates the image of nature with the oversized picture window, leaving behind the form of the building, but still domesticating nature with the window frame and mullions that cross over the panorama: “[The] view can, in effect, be displayed alongside other valuables hanging on the living room wall.”

Lines of Sight
analytique of Diller & Scofidio's Slow House showing the ultimate viewing point
The approach to the site is not between the surroundings and the house, but is within the windshield of the car. More precisely, the placement of the windshield in relationship with the picture window at the opposite end calls attention to the experience of the house as one continuous sequence of movements. There is no single point in which the view terminates; while the road terminates at the beginning of the house, the view through the windshield continues by way of a slot through to the ramp on the other side. The path of the car becomes a footpath to the giant door of the structure itself, a four-foot by eighteen-foot door that immediately leads to a split within the house. There is no façade, but rather, a single door that leads to the final window. Beyond the door is the ramp leading up towards the destination, an intervening space acting as the area of public interaction. The ramp is not a rift between the public spaces, but is instead a collapsing place of the necessary acts of daily living and of movement. The part, then, is a door, representing movement, and a window, representing the view.

The television screen, as the final device of escape within the Slow House, works to flatten the receding space between the car windshield and the picture window along the continuously curved wall. At the final observation point, the view itself becomes split; the TV screen creating multiple days at the same time, and multiple views within the same view. The juxtaposition of each of these instruments, the television monitor and the picture window, deconstructs the central axis typical in classical architecture. The architect explains further, the house deforms the model of classical perspective. Rather, the split passage is decisively anti-perspectival, with no direct visual axes, only constantly changing optical tangents splintering from the curve. As the axis of vision is bent, the formerly centered, unified subject in control of his world is teased off center, off balance. The house is a mechanism of arousal, eliciting an optical desire and feeding it, slowly. The only direct view is at the end of the one-hundred-foot-long wall, through the picture window, toward the horizon. The juxtaposition of the picture window and the television elevate the acts of daily living, acts of domesticity, into theatrical acts. Utilitarian objects become devices for framing the view and for manipulating the perception of movement and the horizon. Splitting the view creates new perspectives and newly perceived boundaries between and within.
Endnotes


7. Tafuri, 97.


10. Tafuri, 96.


“During the crisis of the walk, something must happen: some insight, some idea . . . the walk creates a crisis in which innovation must happen, innovation must transpire.”

1. 4.1 Crossing at Kettner Blvd and B St

The Design Project
Anne Bogart developed the theory of Viewpoints as a means to bring out the relationship between movement and dramaturgy. The Viewpoints are points of awareness in the act of creating, and they try to explain how movement occurs. Space as a viewpoint creates a formal relationship between the body and its surroundings as it moves. The body makes shapes that are broken down into combinations of lines and curves, and while the shapes are at times stationary, they are also meant to imply action through space.

Architecture is the physical environment that affects movement. The kinds of movement that we engage in have a relationship to solid mass, including walls, floors, ceilings, doors, and furniture. Whether these components are made of wood, metal, glass, or fabric, as well as the sources of light and color, affect how we move through space. Site-specific theatricality uses spatial relationships to create both movement and dramaturgy.

The Viewpoints: Topography is constituted by the movement over a landscape, how the floor patterns, architectural design, and the spatial relationships might affect movement. Architecture is the entire physical environment, features both permanent and impermanent.
f. 4.3 Thick Drawings analyze the existing and desired relationships of the site; while some of the surrounding programs are private, the movement at both the pedestrian and vehicular levels implies permeability.

Slight shifts in viewpoint are integral to movement. The promenade architecturale choreographs movement through views at the human scale, but still creates an architectural viewpoint of the surroundings. The definition of the promenade as a type of site-specific theatricality does not describe it in its entirety, but it tries to capture the essence of the individual perception within a work of architecture. As in the Barcelona Pavilion, the individuated view can make many different paths; the building does not have a singular meaning, and it does not have a singular meaning for any one person. Overlapping movement and overlapping views are essential for defining the relationship between the reality of architecture and the fantasy of the promenade.
The Site and its immediate precinct are influenced by the surrounding context: the historic train station still serves a central business district, a tourist corridor along the San Diego Harbor, and the site is also surrounded by many cultural institutions and residences.

The Design Project
Movement as Topography

The topography of the site has been defined by movement as people push into the site and cross from the train station on one side of the street to the trolley station on the other. The pedestrian, the taxi, the car that is passing and the car that is dropping off, the train, the trolley, the person waiting, and the person on a skateboard – these all create different speeds within the same precinct.

The Existing Programs

The promenade architecturale becomes a conjecture not for new development, but for the existing programs of the site. Architectural intervention will take the form of an armature for the programs that have folded into the daily life of the context, and have become an intrinsic part of the city. Movement through the site has defined its current shape; while vehicular traffic and mass transit follow rigid line of the city, the human scale has created more interesting patterns.

The topography of the site has been defined by movement as people push into the site and cross from the train station on one side of the street to the trolley station on the other. The pedestrian, the taxi, the car that is passing and the car that is dropping off, the train, the trolley, the person waiting, and the person on a skateboard – these all create different speeds within the same precinct.
Movement as Topography

Existing Programs begin at the concourse of the historic Santa Fe Train Depot, and continue with the transpmt, the taxi stand, the parking garage, and the trolley station.
Movement as Topography

The Design Project

f. 4.6-7 Thick Drawings of Site Conjectures
The Public Promenade

San Diego is often romanticized as the ideal environment - this idea transforms the site into the departure point for the journey up the Pacific Coast, with the view acting as a key element in the journey. At the scale of the site, the view offers important orientation to the context of the city.

The proposed design creates a way to cut through the site, which was once walled around. The historic train station is bisected with a transept, now the primary entrance and exit from the platforms and concourse where passengers wait for the Amtrak or the trolley. On the opposite side of Kettner Boulevard, a curving arcade covers the trolley station where passengers wait for the regional mass transit. While the vehicular traffic travels parallel to the station and the proposed site, the pedestrian experience crosses through the site, making a suggestion for the possibilities of the promenade. The design intervention creates both a direct path from point A, the train station, to point B, the exit for the trolley on the opposite side of the site, and a meandering path that continuously reorients the visitor to the context until they reach the final viewing point. Because the development of this portion of downtown San Diego has been driven primarily by developer hyperbole,
The volumetric expression of the building must be relevant to the site. The advantage to this place is that there is a robust mix of types of places within the area: there are places to live, places to work, and places of tourism all within the site precinct. By stacking the programmatic volumes of the building, the meandering promenade is able to pass through various viewing points that will reorient the visitor to their surroundings. It is not important what the volumes of the building represent, but it is important that the promenade allows the visitor to pass through them in a manner that both communicates the site narrative and allows them to have a personal experience. Narrative content within the site is ascribed to movement over this unique landscape. While the spaces are primarily composed of the transept and the arcade, the shape has become more richly defined because of the ritual and physical participation with the site. The skateboarder passes through at a very different speed than the pedestrian, and each has their own interaction with landscape design and outdoor installations of art. The taxi stand likewise becomes the ad hoc location for the ritual of prayer.
Plans show the sequence of spaces along a public promenade that stretches from the ground level up through a roof garden. At the ground level, the walls open for an extended public plaza.

The Design Project
The potential for architectural space on this site is found in the existing movement of bodies through it. Here, there is a very specific urban condition, which includes the topographies of movement, while the surrounding part of the city includes corporate businesses, condos, live and work spaces, museums, tourist attractions on the harbor, shopping malls, and the municipal and federal buildings. The volumetric intervention on the site should be appropriate for this urban condition, and yet, the programmatic intervention should combine in such a way as to highlight the unusual juxtapositions of speed specific to the site. There is a planimetric relationship of a cut through on the site, and there is also a sectional relationship that creates the spatial relationships between moving figures. The existing relationship between transept and arcade exists because the individual must move from one of these spaces to the other in order to make a transit connection or in order to cut through to another part of downtown. Proposing another vehicle of movement through architecture creates a convergence point at this site that will relate one side to the other, but also prolong the experience of crossing from point A to point B.
Unfolded Section: the sequence of threshold spaces shows the potential for new topographies as the visitor moves through the public promenade and up to the final destination of the view.
The ramp is the split through which everything becomes visible.

The vignette tells the narrative of the site through a series of views - as the visitor progresses through the path, they are constantly reoriented to the path across the street and site, the plaza, and the views of the city.
The Public Promenade
In the promenade architecturale, the journey to the final view affects how you see it. Villa Savoye culminated in a roof garden at the apex of the ramp, but the journey included the varying speeds of the car travelling across the site and of the body walking through the house. At any given point in that journey, the views were able to reference spaces that had passed, and spaces that were yet beyond. The prolonged threshold is able to intersect all of the spaces through the view, and choreograph movement in such a way that activates the site. The central space should be occupiable with both partial and total views of the landscape. In both the Palace of Stupinigi and Villa Savoye, the interaction with the landscape is through movement; the central space suggests both partial and total views of the surroundings. The ultimate point of the promenade is to create a type of hiding place – a hiding place for the true goal. We cannot find the long and controlled view where we predict. The Barcelona Pavilion is sometimes like a house and it is sometimes like a landscape, but it is above all a place of deception. The simple pavilion gives the visitor the opportunity to contemplate the path through the spaces, and how the final destination reorients them to their surroundings.
Designing the existing programs at the site in question will undoubtedly attract more activity and program to the site; creating a promenade through what is already on the site will only activate it further. As a means for mapping the larger context, the site itself becomes a connector piece to the greater city through its programs. The point of view of the city, both literal and figurative, pertain to the remixing of components, the juxtaposition of enduring parts revealing the narrative of the city, and also initiating a new narrative for the visitor. Like the Barcelona Pavilion, views beyond the site express the longing to open up, even to views of what is not there. Movement is a way to give primacy to what the site already provides, and interweaving programs redefine the site as a connector. The *promenade architecturale* brings a way to mediate between the two sides and connect the activities below with what happens above. Existing movement and existing programs create new encounters in space.

f. 4.24 Sketch model of cafe space
Endnotes


2. Dixon, 22.

3. Dixon, 22.
Bibliography


