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GRADIENTS OF MEANING

SPATIAL MEDIATION WITHIN LIMINAL CONDITIONS AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

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GRADIENTS OF MEANING AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER SPATIAL MEDIATION WITHIN LIMINAL CONDITIONS

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Scared by violence and marked by heroism, the hallowed ground on which the World Trade Center twin towers once stood has been transformed through twelve grueling years of fighting, planning, and building. The outcome attempts to pay homage to both the violence and heroism of September 11th while simultaneously allowing the commercial armature of the city to reclaim part of its land. Spanning from the highest point on the island to the depths of the Manhattan bedrock, the complex spatial puzzle of the World Trade Center site allows programs of remembrance and mourning to rest neatly next to retail and transportation infrastructure. While these adjacencies work in plan, they lack meaningful experiential connections.

Through an analysis of planned circulation, this thesis addresses the disjunctions between practical, utilitarian spaces and the intense emotional experiences which are traversed by visitors on the site. From this study, liminal insertions will be made between the greatest disconnections of program and emotion. Meaningful connections will be established through an introduction of the mechanism of memorialization specific to the context of each intervention. Projected onto the architecture, the memorial technique will address the emotional shifts between both ends of the mediating space.
The interventions now under construction at the World Trade Center site in New York City encompass a variety of programmatic requirements which evoke a wide range of emotional responses from occupants. The programs housed on the site range from infrastructural necessities to the emotionally intense memorial and museum. On a site that expects 250,000 people to either visit or work at the complex each day, the paths and connections that are planned between programs will play a major role in how people experience and respond to the environment. While each program on the site has been carefully structured to control and direct circulation within its borders, the lack of curation and choreography between different programs has the potential to create a disjointed experience of the site.
Further study and intervention is necessary to mediate the transitions between differing portions of the site, specifically between the emotionally engaging memorial and museum and the utilitarian pathways of the transit hub. The transformations made at these connections, in terms of program and intensity of experience, prompt the consideration of these spaces as liminal passages. These ambiguous, in-between zones exist between the thresholds of two varying programs and are a stage for cultural reflection and transformation.
The most emotionally affective portions of the site are the memorial plaza, consisting of the grove of trees and the granite pools sunken in the footprints of the towers, and the memorial museum, including both the entry pavilion and the large subterranean void wrapping around and beneath the pools. Although both the memorial and museum are inherently tied to the emotions surrounding the September 11 terrorist attacks, each has a different role in the remembrance of the day. These specialized roles are expressed experientially differently.
The memorial plaza, in particular the pools, is meant as a "place to mourn and remember the dead."\(^1\) Visitors experience the magnitude of loss by visually reconstructing the towers over the memorial pools left in their place. The personal losses from the terrorist attacks are read through both visual and haptic means on the bronze plaques surrounding the pools from which the names of all the victims are cut. No mention is made of the events of that day or their place in world history. While no direct representation is made, the visitor is prompted to mentally reconstruct both the towers and the individual lives lost. This engagement of the audience with the memorial is predominately intangible, and is experienced internally by each visitor in a different, personally poignant way. This introspective experience is, by virtue of circulation and programming, completely controlled by each audience member. While circulation to the site is relatively unified in terms of travel from mass transit outlets to the plaza edges, pedestrian movement within the plaza is loosely defined by the series of tree-lined avenues that run parallel to each other in the east-west direction. Visitors are free to move across the plaza at whatever speed and in whichever direction they choose. The memorial and the museum are also not ordered experientially, so the visitor is free to experience each in the order of their choosing. This open and undefined interaction lets the visitor control his or her own emotional experience. Approach to the most meaningful elements of the site, the pools, is defined by the pace of the visitor. Thus mourning and remembering are acts of internal reconstruction, which are experienced privately and at a pace defined by the mourner.

MASS TRANSIT CIRCULATION

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

MASS TRANSIT CIRCULATION

THE EXPERIENCE OF REMEMBRANCE

Gradients of Meaning

Subterranean Circulation

Fig 13

Fig 14

Ground Level Circulation
While the memorial plaza is a space for mourning, the museum is about understanding and finding meaning within that understanding. The linear narrative of the terrorist attacks and the subsequent response is told partially through the display of personal artifacts. The charred uniforms of first responders, melted plastic identification badges, and battered wallets are all displayed alongside quotes describing personal experiences of September 11th. These fragments of everyday humanity, immediately recognizable and relatable, begin to reconstruct the identities of the people in the towers, the rescue and recovery workers, and those on the planes. While the names cut into the bronze plaques on the plaza level rely solely on the visitor to reconstruct the identity of the victim and make them real, the personal artifacts in the museum begin that reconstruction for the audience. Because of the linear narrative that the museum focuses on, the emotionally charged experience of these objects is restricted in terms of pace and circulation. Movement within the museum is defined by a single ramp housing the displays. There is a single path of circulation, restricting all the audience to the same narrative. As opposed to the open flow

2 Ibid.
of traffic on the plaza level, the visitor to the museum has much less control over his or her movement and experience. The exhibits are experienced as part of, and at the speed determined by, a crowd. This mode of experience, as part of a group, can heighten the effect of the exhibits due to one’s close proximity to others who are interacting with the same emotionally trying displays. While both the memorial plaza and the museum have integral roles to the remembrance of September 11th, one focuses on mourning through intangible devices experienced individually on a non-structured path through an open environment, while the other seeks understanding through tangible artifacts choreographed along a defined route.

The experiences of both the memorial plaza and the museum are carefully scripted to create atmospheres of mourning and understanding, respectively. The processions to the entrances of both spaces, however, give very little attention to the emotional experience to come.

The majority of both tourists and residents arriving via mass transit will pass through the newly constructed transit hub by Santiago Calatrava with PATH service to New Jersey and connections to eleven subway lines. Visitors arriving by train will pass through the soaring white concrete arches of the transit hub’s concourse level. The expansive space, lined by upscale retail, is defined by the light-filled glass and concrete vault meant to symbolize the progress and inherent resiliency of New York. Rising to street level via escalators, visitors exit the transit hub surrounded by the glass clad skyscrapers surrounding the memorial. Sitting across Greenwich Street from the plaza, visitors must cross the restricted access street to enter the plaza and museum pavilion. While vehicular traffic on the street will be limited, the security boundaries and sally ports controlling access will be visible reminders of the continued threat of terrorism and the lasting effects of the attacks of September 11th.
The faceted metal and glass pavilion off of Greenwich Street is the only portion of the memorial museum visible from above ground. Covering the slice into the earth where visitors begin their journey down a ramp reaching 70 feet below plaza level, the lightness of the pavilion belies the cavernous, subterranean void where visitors are surrounded by emotionally charged artifacts.
The descent to bedrock begins with images from the attacks made familiar, and thus easier to process, by exposure in the media. Following the emotional retelling of the story of the attacks is a more informative exhibit on the history of Al Qaeda. This pattern of intense emotion offset with cerebral information continues throughout the space. Along the ramp, informative displays on the recovery and response at the site and the beginning of the war in Afghanistan are interspersed with exhibits about the construction of the towers, the posters of the missing, and tribute art. At the bottom of the ramp, visitors confront the monumental artifacts that have been installed at bedrock level. Structural beams contorted by the impact of Flight 11, the burned out hub of a fire truck, the iconic crossbeam that served as the backdrop for daily mass at the site, and a 36 foot-tall column from the south tower covered in mementos, photos, and messages from rescue workers are installed in the cavernous space. In the background is a 60 foot-high section of the massive slurry wall constructed in the 1960s to hold the Hudson River at bay. The vivid, tactile experience of the slurry wall caps the emotionally harrowing journey through the museum.
Procession from the entry to the pavilion down the interior ramp to bedrock level

Fig 21

View from entry pavilion to top of ramp

Fig 22

Artifact exhibit at bedrock level

Fig 23

View of the slurry wall from the bedrock level of the museum. The ramp is seen in the background.

Fig 24

The Survivor Stair sits at the bottom of the ramp.

Fig 25

Memorial at bedrock level with photos and biographies of each victim

Fig 26
While most visitors to the World Trade Center (WTC) site will arrive via the transit hub, a portion will also commute by way of the ferry from various points in New Jersey. This mode of transportation will be utilized mainly by residents of New Jersey and by passengers of tour buses.
Due to the extreme difficulty of parking at the site, tour buses will be parked in New Jersey where the passengers will take the ferry to the World Financial Center (WFC) stop. This procession to the site is similar to the entry through the transit hub, as the visitor is presented first with symbols of New York as a financial center followed by entry to the memorial plaza. In this instance, the visitor approaches the site via ferry with a breathtaking view of the skyline of the city. After passing through the floating terminal the visitor is located along the waterfront to the west of the World Financial Center. Movement onto the site, from this point on, lacks a definite path. The four towers on the WTC site are visible from the waterfront, but the memorial is not. Visitors can either pass through the WFC at the winter garden and attempt to cross the west side highway at grade level or the visitors can circle the WFC to the north and cross the highway by pedestrian bridge. However visitors arrive at the site, they transition abruptly from the financial and retail oriented WFC to the somber, reflective space of the memorial plaza after subverting the strong boundary line of the congested west side highway.

Points of disconnect, such as the instances outlined above, identify locations where meaningful connections are needed to spatially mediate shifts in emotional intensity and program. The insertion of these intermediary spaces into the fabric of the site will provide transitional spaces where visitors’ experiences will prepare them for the upcoming emotionally intense space. Based on the previous accounts of movement onto the site, the greatest disjunctions are located along two movement paths: between the transit hub and the museum entrance and between the ferry terminal/WFC and the memorial plaza.
An analysis of the emotional disconnects found at the WTC site and how they relate to concepts of liminality will inform the transitional interventions outlined in this thesis. By better understanding the concepts of the between, connections can be made to the built world. The traditional concept of liminality is established by Victor Turner through his study of the rituals of tribal societies. Turner outlines the position of the liminal space within the ritual process. Ritual transitions are composed of three states starting with the separation from the beginning social structure and ending with the aggregation in accordance with the ending, stable state. The marginal space between the separation and aggregation constitutes an ambiguous, liminal stage which is characterized by neither the social structure of the previous state nor the structure of the ending state. Instead it is described as being simultaneously both and neither. A liminal condition has evolved away from

the first state, but has not yet achieved all the requisites of the second. This simultaneity of both and neither applies to the human occupant of the transition as well. The transitional being, or subject of the ritual process, by virtue of being between identifiable states, is considered structurally invisible. 4

During this state of invisibility, the liminal subject exists outside of cultural norms. According to Turner, transitional beings “have nothing: no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows.” 5 Because of this lack of differentiation between liminal subjects, the liminal passage is experienced as a non-hierarchical state. This withdrawal from structural positions encourages the contemplation of the surrounding society and culture. Ideas and norms that were accepted by default within the structure of the beginning state are isolated in the liminal stage and made into objects of reflection and evaluation. 6 The study of cultural ideals and objects is represented through changing symbols. In a liminal condition, cultural symbolism gives “an outward and visible form to an inward and conceptual process.” 7 Traditionally, the visible form of the state of cultural reflection consists of simplifying a cultural idea into its separate components. These basic elements are subsequently recombined into first a monstrous pattern or shape, and then re-appropriated into a new form which makes sense within the context of the ending structural state. 8

4 Ibid., 95.
5 Ibid., 98.
6 Ibid., 105.
7 Ibid., 96.
8 Ibid., 96.
A more contemporary view of the concept of liminality examines the background ideas of Turner in relation to current, non-tribal societies. Present interest in liminality traces the cultural changes which are eroding the boundaries between dualistic concepts such as high and low culture, real and virtual worlds, and human and mechanical makeup. The postmodern interest in liminality arises from the appeal of its characteristics of ambiguity and questioning of stable cultural states. Liminality is interpreted as a questioning of stable identities, hierarchies, and dualities that have been dominant in human reasoning. An infinite process of constant oscillation between cultural, social, and textual positions performed by crossing back and forth between porous, evasive borders is also characteristic of a liminal space. This questioning of linear movement is indicative of a postmodern conception of space. A linear process can indicate a duality, so in keeping with the contemporary erosion of borders between dualistic concepts, a postmodern definition of liminality designates it as reversible and repeatable in terms of linear time and space. This contemporary interest in liminal space and personas can be examined in contemporary texts on narrative. Multiple narrative perspectives, and the reader’s oscillation between them, can be read in terms of an ambiguous liminal space. Complex and disorderly transgressions across the borders separating these multiple narratives enhance the ambiguity inherent in a liminal narrative.

10 Ibid., 3.
11 Ibid., 9.
12 Ibid., 9.
Identifying specific locations within the WTC complex for insertions of intermediary spaces was based on an analysis of the planned programming. Finding anomalies within the plan allowed the program to be shifted and space allocated for two interventions. Based on previous accounts of movement onto the site, the greatest disjunctions are located along two movement paths: between the transit hub and the museum entrance and between the ferry terminal/WFC and the memorial plaza.

Underground vehicular access, used mainly for loading docks, NYPD parking, and a small portion of tour bus parking, has been a contentious issue for most of the planning process. According to the NYPD’s analysis and plan for access at the site, the sequence for tourist drop off begins with a vehicle queue along Church Street where credentials of the bus driver are checked. After passing through a vehicle barrier, the buses will stop along Liberty Street to drop passengers along the
The buses then turn in to the south side of the plaza. The buses then turn in to the vehicle security center, located under Liberty Park which is raised above street level to allow entrance. A thorough search of both the bus driver and the vehicle occurs inside the vehicle security center before the bus can proceed to one of the underground parking garages. Not only is entry past a fortification of bollards and vehicle checkpoints not an appropriate preparation for the experience of quiet contemplation and mourning at the memorial, but the inclusion of underground parking is considered a threat to security on the site. By moving all tour bus parking to the previously indicated site in New Jersey, all tour bus passengers will arrive via ferry and enter the site through the World Financial Center. This relocation is beneficial for both of the movement paths where the interventions will be located.

The underground parking garage space that is now vacant is located in close proximity to both the transit hub and the museum entrance. Appropriating this space will allow for a shifting of the circulation paths between the transit hub and the museum. The modified procession will move people through the concourse of the transit hub, down a pedestrian connection and through the repurposed parking garage space. After leaving the transitional space, museum visitors will enter the lobby via a pathway and staircase.
The re-routing of all tour bus traffic also unifies the experience for all tour bus passengers along the second movement path. The circulation connecting the ferry terminal/WFC to the memorial plaza will be revised to route visitors through the World Financial Center via the entrance at the winter garden. Movement through the WFC will take visitors past a retail area where the memorial plaza is not visible. The liminal intervention along this path of movement is a pedestrian bridge crossing the west side highway to Liberty Park and a secondary pedestrian bridge reaching the plaza level from Liberty Park.
Both of the interventions must mediate certain programmatic, cultural, and temporal shifts between the beginning stage of transportation infrastructure and the ending stage of remembrance. Each of the interventions, between transit hub and museum, transit hub and memorial plaza, and ferry terminal and memorial plaza, must shift the mindset of the visitor from the surrounding utilitarian program of corporate offices and up-scale retail to a space of remembrance. Without the proposed liminal connectors, the disjunctions between atmospheres do nothing to prepare the visitor for the emotional experience of either the museum or memorial. The proposed interventions must also mediate cultural and temporal differences along the procession. During the entry sequences the cultural perception of the occupant shifts temporally from the surrounding contemporary culture of a stable economical and societal position in the world to a cultural perspective of New York on September 11th, 2001, thus preparing the visitor for the experience of the memorial or museum. This temporal shift in the mindset of visitors is necessary for the mental reconstruction of the towers and the victim’s identities as part of the experiences of both the memorial and the museum. Additionally, both of the proposed transitions must act as the preface for the specific experience which follows it. This preparatory space must act to assimilate the participant to the experience of remembrance distinct to either the museum or memorial plaza. The proposed interventions prepare the visitors for either the culture of understanding or of mourning, by virtue of the differences in the experiential qualities of the destination spaces.
Postmodernity’s interpretation of liminality is also identified in architectural theory and in the built world. In its most basic sense, the concept of liminal space is seen as lacking a definite goal, possessing a labyrinthine organization, and as bounded by overlapping borders.13 Within this reevaluation of the conditions of liminality, Peter Eisenman’s methodologies work to further develop the concepts of the interstitial. Eisenman’s development of the process of “spacing” led to an articulation of voids as having the density of a formal presence without the material being of that form.14 Spacing is an attempt to create an architecture that is broken from its previous terms of embodiment and the form/matter dialectic. In other words, architecture is divorced from the conception that it embodies meaning and is given legitimacy through its functional purpose. Architecture that was traditionally understood as a system of binary opposites, for example, figure/ground and solid/void.

13 Sándor Klapcsik, 3.
void was questioned during this time. The process of spacing denies the legitimation of the work through its function and meaning, but doesn’t strip the work of its purpose and significance. The process of extracting a condition from an original object and the application of an outside agent upon that object creates a blurring of the original duality associated with the object.15 The interpretation of the overlapping of diagrams questions and provides the means to reinterpret the form/function and meaning/aesthetic relationships of traditional architecture.16 Eisenman clarifies this process by writing, “Blurring in architecture is not to suggest a movement from a symbolic environment to one in which there is no meaning. Rather it is to suggest a condition where architecture is neither dependent on its former narratives nor devoid of meaning but resides between the two, where other forms of meaning, and meaningful situations, can occur.”17 In other words, through an overlaying of diagrams, the original formal aspects, and any associated functions, are blurred. The resulting diagram allows for the free discovery of new meanings and uses based on the new form.

15 Ibid., 94.
16 Ibid., 94.
This blurring of meaning which interests Eisenman is similar, in a very abstract way, to the reinterpretation of cultural symbols which characterizes the liminality of tribal societies. Through a breakdown and realignment of existing diagrams, Eisenman hopes to provide a new legitimation of architecture. This search for meaning through disassembly and re-appropriation is similar to the search for meaning through the breaking down and reassembly of cultural symbols which was identified as a characteristic of a liminal transition by Victor Turner. The methodology that Eisenman champions here in terms of the introduction of an arbitrary diagram is inherently suppressive of considerations of use and aesthetics. As he notes in Blurred Zones, the authorial expression is suppressed in order to uncover new systems of legitimation through the spacing process. 18 The relinquishment of design control opens up the potential for losing sight of the human, experiential elements in architecture. Eisenman’s exploration of new forms of legitimation of architecture through a blurring of boundaries is an inquiry that could be influential in terms of liminal connections, but the resultant dehumanization of the space would be counterintuitive to the importance of emotional responses in the space. A blurring of limits and an exploration of new forms of meaning in architecture could be a potentially powerful

characteristic of liminal spaces. A space that is meant to facilitate a transformation between cultural or structural states would inherently be a space ripe for exploring new meanings and legitimations.

Eisenman's project submission for the design of the area of the Kochstrasse and Friedrichstrasse in the South Friedrichstadt district of Berlin, entitled The City of Artificial Excavation, attempts to expose the history of the site while simultaneously acknowledging the present circumstances of the site. Key to this project is the belief that "the act of memory obscures the reality of the present." To this end, Eisenman develops a system of memorializing the past upon the subterranean landscape of the site while projecting the present conditions at grade level. Eisenman's strategy, referred to as "artificial excavation," creates both presences and absences through the projection of a second diagram. Contrary to his writing in Blurred Zones, however, in this case the second diagram is drawn from an interpretation of Berlin's contemporary placelessness. A "composite datum of memory" is spatially mapped onto the site through an evaluation of historic

20 Ibid.
A physically absent wall from the 18th century occupies the lowest strata of the site as a mere shadow. A rationalization of the 19th century street grid is drawn from the foundations of existing buildings, and is extruded upward to meet the existing street level. This grid is left incomplete as it pulls away from the Berlin wall at the Northern corner of the site, thus assigning the wall as a symbol of erosion of the unified city and world. This accumulation of grids is the construction of memory that Eisenman will obscure with a second diagram. In this case, the second diagram is the Mercator grid which represents the surrounding world of which present-day Berlin is now a part. The imposition of the grid begins to erase the historical walls, similar to how contemporary concerns affect the image and memories of the past.

Eisenman’s study of artificial excavations and the construction of memory is an acknowledgement that present time and circumstances affect the way we as a society see the past. Although the methodology fails to produce a fully buildable project, as is evidenced by the completion of only one of Eisenman’s proposed buildings, the goal behind the process is especially significant when considered in terms of the World.
Trade Center site. Like Friedrichstadt, the World Trade Center has had a tumultuous history closely tied to the cultural, social, and political attitudes of the surrounding city. The historical transitions of the meaning of the site are especially apropos for the liminal space connecting the transit hub and the memorial museum. As identified previously in the section titled ‘Liminality within the Ritual Procession,’ the liminal connection must spatially mediate and articulate the temporal differences between the present day concerns of the transit hub and the atmosphere of remembrance present in the museum. The World Trade Center site means something different today than it did either on or before September 11th. The overlaying of historical information and the interpretation of previous meanings in three-dimensional space is a strategy of mediation with great potential for this liminal condition.
While Eisenman’s methodologies produce projects that achieve some of the more objective qualities that are characteristic of liminal spaces, the variations between emotional intensities are not considered, partially because of the suppression of the authorial voice. Many attempts have been made to understand the relationship between objective properties of spaces and the subjective responses that they engender. One way to analyze this relationship is by looking at the creation of structures of feelings or emotions rather than considering individual subjective responses. Ioanna Spanou and John Peponis examine how atmosphere works as a metaphorical exemplification of structures of feeling. They define three levels of understanding symbolic form in the built world. The first level consists of almost automatic readings of the environment stemming from a correspondence with basic environmental needs. The second level of understanding is made up of fundamental metaphors that are widely shared within a population. The third, and most complex level, consists of the conscious interpretation of intentional designs as a consequence of embodied experience. At this level atmosphere is understood automatically through the symbolic form of the environment.


25 Ibid.
The hypothesis that Spanou and Peponis establish is that atmosphere is most affective when it is experienced at multiple levels of understanding, specifically “in terms of both fundamental affordances and fundamental metaphorical schemas.”26 In their work, the levels of understanding are analyzed as they are found and interpreted at Igualada Cemetery. Meaning is established by setting up a tension between the known function of the space and the design language used in the space. The excavation associated with the language of earthworks is inherently contrasting to the function of the cemetery as a place of burial. Tension is also identified between the lightness and visibility of the language used to indicate circulatory spaces and the massive, heavy language used for walls and enclosure. These tensions operate at the level of fundamental metaphors, but require minimal interpretation of the design.27 Meaning is hypothesized based on a reading of the generative components of the design, but this level of understanding lacks the embodied experience which evokes an emotional response. The embodied experience, and subsequent emotional response, that Spanou and Peponis identify is a result of atmosphere. They elaborate, “Atmosphere arises as the sense created by the construction of language and the sense created by the organization of space address the subject both at the level of the sign and at the level of the symbol.”28 In this

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
way atmosphere is influenced by the interface between perception and cognition and between perception and feeling. In other words, atmosphere, and therefore the structure of feelings, is embedded with multiple levels of symbolic form. The form must be understood as a consequence of intentional design in addition to its reading as a fundamental metaphor.

Identified previously as a space for cultural reflection, the liminal passage is characterized by complex symbols that mirror the transition between stable states. As defined by Spanou and Pepinis, liminal symbols must transmit meanings at multiple strata of understanding in order to evoke an emotional reaction in response to atmosphere. The consideration of the liminal spaces, specifically at the World Trade Center site, as connections between two states with emotionally varied charges prompts the further analysis of symbols in terms of sequence. Spanou and Pepinis analyze the paths of movement within the organization of Igualada Cemetery to understand how different atmospheres affect and play off of each other. They come to the conclusion that the sequence in which a visitor experiences the cemetery does not affect the interpretation of the fundamental metaphors as part of the secondary level of understanding.29 Metaphors that require the interpretation of an intentional design, on the other hand, are not influenced by the sequence.

29 Ibid.
hand, can lead to vastly different experiences depending on sequence of movement. The impact of differing atmospheres as they are experienced sequentially is explained in terms of a “memory of atmosphere rather than a memory of precisely articulated form.”30 The concept is explained as it relates to a variety of departure paths. In the first exit option, the visitor would ascend up out of an enclave and away from the massive walls containing the cineraria. This sequence moves from a space of great emotional intensity to a space of lesser emotion, and can be interpreted narratively as the sequence of movement that would traditionally follow a ritual offering.31 The alternate departure moves the visitor along the axial path through the chapel and away from the cineraria, and thus from a space of lesser emotion to greater emotional intensity.

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
The design considerations of the liminal insertions into the World Trade Center site will focus on the creation of meaningful connections. These connections are necessary where there are disjunctions between the emotional charges of adjacent programs. Of particular interest here are the pedestrian connections between the transit hub and the more emotionally intense spaces of the memorial and the museum. The pedestrian movements between these spaces are characterized by shifts in cultural perceptions. During this movement, the surrounding contemporary culture of a stable economical and societal position in the world transitions to a cultural perspective of New York on September 11th, 2001. This shift in focus from the present to the past sponsors an atmosphere of reflection which parallels the emotive context of the museum. Overlapping this temporal shift is the transition from the surrounding utilitarian atmosphere of small-scale retail and daily commuting in the transit hub to a culture of remembrance and understanding in the museum and memorial.
Both interventions address the temporal and cultural shifts in ways specific to each site and memorialization. By focusing on the mechanism of memorialization, specifically the personal artifacts housed within the museum, the subterranean space connecting the path from the transit hub to the museum can address the temporal change. The museum presents the personal artifacts to the public as they were recovered in the aftermath of September 11th. Melted and distorted from the intense heat and caked in dirt and debris from the falling towers, the objects speak powerfully to the violent loss of a single moment in time. To mediate between this representation of violence and the symbolism of progress and normalcy experienced in the transit hub, the transitional space addresses the everyday normalcy of the objects and the humanity they represent. By focusing on the everyday experience of the objects before they became artifacts, the transitional space prepares the occupant for the brutality of the museum while remaining linked with the mundane everydayness of the transit hub as a commuting center.
GRADIENTS OF MEANING

METHOD

WALKWAYS

EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVE

DIVISION

UNIFICATION

Fig 59

Fig 60
GRADIENTS OF MEANING

METHOD

ISOLATION

DIVISION

COHESION

UNITY

RELATION TO THE BODY AS A TECHNIQUE OF MEMORIALIZATION

EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVE

PAGE 72

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Fig 61

72
On the memorial plaza, the representations of loss are conveyed through absence and its suggestion of form in the sunken pools and voids of victim’s names. Any explanation for the need and purpose for a memorial is reserved for the underground museum. Thus, for occupants touring the memorial prior to visiting the museum, they see and experience the site only as the sacred ground memorializing a loss of life. The identity of the site, and its changing meanings throughout the course of its history, must be understood by the occupant before his or her visit. Similar to the underground intervention, the pedestrian bridge references the method of memorialization, specifically absence or voiding, used on the plaza. The bridge uses voiding to study the identity of the towers throughout time, particularly in the context of the city. The pedestrian bridge is the camera obscura through which the meanings and identities of the creation, destruction, and memorialization of the WTC site are interpreted by its occupants.
METHOD

Fig 66

Fig 67

CLADDING

STRUCTURAL

WALKWAYS

EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVE

VOIDING

DISTORTING

ESTABLISHING ORIGINAL MEANINGS AND IDENTITIES

SHIFTING AND LAYERING OF IDENTITY

DESTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL MEANINGS AND IDENTITIES

LAYERING
RELATION TO THE CITY AS A TECHNIQUE OF MEMORIALIZATION


