I, Gael E. L. Perichon, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

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In the Pursuit of a Time-Image

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In the Pursuit of a Time-image

by

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Abstract

In pursuing a time-image, a series of thoughts were considered that together comprise the journey documented here. On the outset it was stated that conventional architectural representation is essentially “… A logical reduction of architectural thought to what can be shown, at the exclusion of other concerns.” Bernard Tschumi. Time is a concern that is almost always excluded from architectural drawings, which in effect excludes it from architectural thought.

Gilles Deleuze’s concept of the time-image, however, is essentially an image infused with time; meaning it is not just of the present but linked to a dream or memory. According to Deleuze we deal with time-images all the time. An example of this would be when one happens upon a cup, the mind automatically relates it memories of other cups to help define if it is a cup or not. The concept of cup is a time-image, but further still our realities are in part based on our own time-images that we have created.

A discipline that effectively externalizes time-imagery is film. Film is essentially all time-images since, according to Sergei Eisenstein claimed film wouldn’t exist without montage and a montage, according to Deleuze, is a time-image. Montage, however, predates film and it is Eisenstein who claimed that the first instance of montage was the procession at the Acropolis at Athens. Thus, a time-image has a strong relationship to perception and its manipulation through illusion.

Devices such as a Thaumatrope, Stereoscope, or other optical illusion devices that have their origins in the 19th century, are great examples of toys, which stimulate time-imagery. Unlike a section or a plan, one cannot appreciate the effect generated by one of these devices from a still; time plays an inseparable role in the experience. Furthermore, these devices are simulations of reality as are time-images they aid in our interpretation of reality but they aren’t definably real.

This Jean Baudrillard calls the simulacrum, a model of reality that can be more real than reality itself. In documenting a territory, for example, one does not replicate it, but rather simulate it. The documentation in and of itself becomes a territory that has bearing on the territory it is derived from but is very much its own thing. It is through this process that one creates a new territory that can become more real than the reality of the territory.

This thesis set out to document a territory in Cincinnati, in effect creating one that has bearing of the reality it was drawn from. Then conducting a journey through the simulacrum territory with a series of exercises, which in turn created externalized time-images that presented various concerns of the territory. Finally the installation, that presented all these time-image representations of a created territory, were consumed by the viewer, who successively associated the external time-images with one another as well as with their own internal time-images. All this taken together evokes a time-scape, which sculpts space within it.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-19</td>
<td>Pursuing a Time-image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-23</td>
<td>The Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>The Entity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Illustrations
All figures created by author

Figure 1 – Transcripts
Figure 2 – Perception of Time
Figure 3 – Film; a Collage
Figure 4 – Difference
Figure 5 – Blue Velvet poster
Figure 6 – Fargo poster
Figure 7 – Brazil poster
Figure 8 – Deer in Motion
Figure 9.1 – Persistence of Vision; Elevation
Figure 9.2 – Persistence of Vision; Section
Figure 10 – Stereoscopic Image
Figure 11.1 – Myriorama Arranged
Figure 11.2 – Myriorama Re-arranged
Figure 12 – Mapping the Territory
Figure 13 – Three Sites
Figure 14 – C&O Railroad Bridge
Figure 15 – Carew Tower
Figure 16 – Union Terminal

Figure 17 – Metropolitan Master Plan

Figure 18 – 1937 80ft. Flood Stage
Dialogue

Bernard Tschumi stated we, “… need to question the modes of representation generally used by architects: plans, sections, axonometrics, perspectives. However precise and generative they have been, each implies a logical reduction of architectural thought to what can be shown, at the exclusion of other concerns. They are caught in a sort of prison-house of architectural language, where ‘the limits of my language are the limits of my world’.”¹ It is by working at the limit of our discipline that we can learn more about the nature of our discipline. Film is a discipline that overlaps architectural thinking in the way it crafts space. Its spatial considerations place it at the limit of our discipline, but it is the difference between the two that architects can learn from. Film represents its ideas two-dimensionally while preserving the spatial nature of the idea. Architectural representations, on the other hand, are often as Tschumi has said, “… A logical reduction of architectural thought to what can be shown, at the exclusion of other concerns.”²

Film manages to retain the complexity of architectural thought by enhancing certain considerations versus reducing them. Every concern manifests itself on camera, but it is by enhancing certain ones in relationship to others that a meaning can be derived. These combinations of imagery generate relationships that are fundamental to the generation of concepts. A series of images such as architectural drawings can become intelligible, without the need for notation, by presenting them in sequence. Tschumi’s Manhattan Transcripts operates as a sequence that presents space, movement, and events as independent of one another. The Transcripts themselves are a work in progress and the outcomes are not what is presented, but rather how it is presented. The forms of notation used to convey the

² Bernard Tschumi, 9-10.
project of Tschumi’s exploration are photography, movement notation, and sequence notation. These languages along with the writings that support the endeavor are what become intriguing.

Figure 1

It is the desire of this thesis to explore another language to speak with, a productive unknowing of architecture to the advantage of learning other methods of representation that are more intuitive and productive in respect of architectural thought and the complexity of its considerations. Gilles Deleuze spoke of the creative act in reference to the notion of ideas. He stated that, “One can not have an idea ‘in general’ to have an idea is to have already concentrated it into a discipline. Meaning an idea in architecture is different than having an idea in film.” In order to think of an idea beyond the limits of architecture, it is not enough to work beyond the limits, but more importantly it becomes necessary to think

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3 Bernard Tschumi, 9-10.
4 Will Holder, For the Blind Man in the Dark Room Looking for the Black Cat that Isn’t There (St. Louis: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2009).
5 Gilles Deleuze, “Qu’est-ce que l’acte de Creation?” (conférence donnée dans le cadre des “Mardis de la Fondation”, March 17, 1987).
beyond the limits. Once you have the idea in cinema, provided it is a potent idea, you should through its relationship to film be able to have that idea in architecture. Thus it becomes clear that architecture cannot benefit from limiting itself to just our discipline. How then can we as a discipline begin to look at how the idea of time in cinema manifests itself and how that can inform the manifestation of the idea of time in architecture?

Another concept that Deleuze spoke at great length about is that of time in the context of film. His conception of time comes almost directly from Henri Bergson whose critique of time was that it wasn’t equally segmented, as a clock face would suggest. Instead, time passed more or less slowly depending on our perception of it. If an individual is bored, time will pass more slowly for them versus when they’re engaged in something. For Bergson, the present is a dynamic interpretation of the past and future. The present being what is the actual and the past/future being our memories and aspirations are the virtual images we use as reference. It is by relating the past/future to the present that one comprehends the present. So, instead of a ‘string of pearls’ where each block of time is equally arranged on the x-axis, the past, present, and future are distributed along the x-axis and the more we require the past/future to interpret the present the more we require our virtual images, which move our consciousness along the y-axis.6

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For Deleuze whether it is the actual or the virtual these are all images and that conceptually, the apparatus of the camera enacts this process externally to the mind. When we relate our memories and aspirations to the present image we do so at three basic levels: recognition, recollection, and dream; dream being as far away from the x-axis as possible. Bergson maintains that beyond dream, completely removed from the actual, is death. Deleuze defines recognition, recollection, and dream as time-images. It is the time-image that allows for creation to happen, the actual in comparison is essentially dead, and it can only be what it is. The time-image on the other hand allows us to alter the present in relation to itself and the world around it. Briefly, the time-image can be understood as the relationship of repetition/actual and difference/virtual. In film, repetition is usually established so that difference can be put on display.\(^7\)

In film we often see recognition, recollection, and dream depicted through flashbacks or other film techniques. The aim is to present concepts that are beyond what is present in the actuality of the film. Since the invention of cinema, techniques such as montage have been used to intellectualize film. Instead of being contented with just recording the actual, film employees various techniques to convey time-images. It is the time-image in film as is the case in reality that allows for difference. Often it is difference that we live for and want to watch, because once difference becomes repetition it is essentially dead and over. It is in fostering this difference that the necessity for film becomes clear. Without the potential for creation the necessity of most creative endeavors would essentially cease, and without necessity there is nothing at all.

Sergei Eisenstein wrote extensively about montage, being the first to define it and use it deliberately in film. His observation was that the basic idea of montage has been expressed since ancient Greece, citing the sequence of approach at the Acropolis as the first use of montage and arguably the first film. Eisenstein explains that montage is one of the essential elements of film. At its most basic montage in film refers to editing the film. It is seldom that film is shot in a way that allows it to be shown unedited. It is by editing film that a clear narrative is established; cutting between shots or generating any sort of time-image is impossible without editing. Eisenstein clearly defines five distinct types of montage: metric, rhythmic, tonal, overtontal, and intellectual. Further, it could be said that the scale from metric to intellectual corresponds with the scale from recognition to dream, meaning metric montage enacts recognition and intellectual montage enacts dream.

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10 Sergei Eisenstein, 110-131.
Metric montage is defined as the cutting of frames at a consistent interval regardless of the action present in the frame. Metric is thus more related to the face of a clock portraying the passing of time at a regular interval, rendering clarity to our perception of the actual and keeping us close to the x-axis that is past – present – future.11 Intellectual montage, on the other hand, is defined as the cutting of frames to couple disparate imagery, which when observed by the mind generates an intellectual response. Intellectual is thus more related to the act of dream; often pairing imagery that is present in the film with imagery that isn’t in order to generate concepts. It is this coupling of imagery actual to the film and imagery virtual to the film that causes intellectual montage to expand our film consciousness along the z-axis, and thus simulate dream in the film.12 It is the fact that film can present dream that allows it to retain its spatiality. Ideas are not static things, and concepts are more complex than architectural representations have the ability to display.

Figure 3

12 Gilles Deleuze, 49-55.
but no one ever said that film as a medium was disallowed to the discipline of Architecture. We can use this tool’s ability to present time, and other spatial considerations, to our advantage.

A montage, Deleuze explains, is a time-image, but while the time-image is fundamental to cinema it is not strictly an idea in cinema. Just like montage, the time-image predates film all together and thus is more fundamentally an idea in perception. In discussing movies that effectively use the concepts of time-imagery, Deleuze describes how visually time-images are spatial. Time-images are not geared towards movement or action of individuals, like action-images are. Instead they focus on presenting thought provoking time-scapes, which sculpt within it space itself.\(^\text{13}\) It is through these observations that we come to realize that the time-image is essentially how we make sense of the world and it is fundamental in film, but not absolutely necessary. Thus time-images are enacted in film and can be identified and isolated from the film itself. Eisenstein would isolate time-images using sequence notation, which separates the constituent parts of the sequence, and allowed him to analyze in effect how a montage was assembled so that it would effectively render a time-image.\(^\text{14}\)

Additionally a time-image is ephemeral and as such exists as an additional layer of information. It isn’t entirely real yet has bearing on reality, thus it could additionally be defined as a simulation. According to Jean Baudrillard, a reproduction of anything is not a duplicate but rather an entity all it’s own. A map of a territory is not the territory itself, it could never be, but rather a simulation of that territory. Whatever happens to the territory is not necessarily reflected on the map or vice versa. The same can be said about a photograph

\(^\text{13}\) Gilles Deleuze, 264-269.
or a film. An image takes on its own essence. It is referential at its conception, but immediately becomes a separate thing. A time-image is a simulation for the very same reasons a film is, it is the image itself that promotes this distinction. Thus the time-images created in the course of this thesis will never be fully tangible. These incomplete parts presented together will develop into a greater whole within the mind of the viewer through association, which will manifest the simulation of a territory.

Figure 4

Pursuing a Time-image

Initially it was the reading of certain movies like texts that solidified the concept of the time-image into the filmic practice of the time-image. Some major authors could be found amongst Deleuze’s *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Notable films are Akira Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*, Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Stalker*, and Wim Wenders’ *Paris, Texas*.

Deleuze’s interest in Kurosawa is his consistent use of characters that in the midst of immediate and tangible conflict are constantly perplexed by a problem greater than the knowledge in the movie, extending the time-space of the film far passed the bounds of its action. This leads to a purely optical world where the viewer has no choice but to watch on with the characters.¹⁶ In *Rashomon* what was striking was the duality between the reality of Rashomon and the various stories the characters tell trying their best to recount a crime that had taken place prior to the exposition of the story. Each story is wildly different from one to the next, showing how unreliable memory can be, yet they’re all shot on a pleasant sunny day in the forest. This compared to the reality that is the torrential downpour Rashomon (some ruin in the middle of a flooding field).¹⁷

Deleuze’s interest in Tarkovsky is his general opposition to montage being an advocate of the long shot. These scenes are beautiful and often overwhelming although not as intense as a well-paced montage. The shot as Tarkovsky puts it has the added ‘pressure of time’. While Deleuze dismisses Tarkovsky’s position by saying that he appears to opt strongly for the shot, but that is a superficial appearance because the ‘pressure of time’ goes

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beyond the shot, to where montage lives, in time.\textsuperscript{18} In \textit{Stalker} there is an enormous scene where the camera pans over a flooded area that is peppered with debris and the floor of a ruin, while a biblical passage is read by the narrator, which helps to define the world of the movie (that of a ruined world torn apart by who knows what).\textsuperscript{19}

Deleuze’s interest in Wenders is his consistent use of an oppressive, useless, and unsummonable time in the characters past, which haunts them.\textsuperscript{20} This is true of \textit{Paris, Texas}, where the main character is found after being missing for four years. He has no recollection of his reasons for leaving or the people he left, but it slowly comes back to him after being thrown back into his life. A question that’s never fully settled is if the life he’s gained is really the one he left behind; at the end of the film he leaves once again.\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{Figure 5}

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Figure 5 is a poster representative of the plot of the David Lynch movie *Blue Velvet*. *Blue Velvet* is a movie about the seedy and dangerous underbelly of a quiet American suburb. Admittedly inspired by the opening scene of the movie, the poster is stratified (white picket fence and flowers on top, a frenzy of bugs just under the surface. The arrow represents the characters journey into the muck and back out again. This film runs the spectrum of recognition – recollection – dream with extremely surreal moments that drive the movie.\textsuperscript{22}

Figure 6

Figure 6 is a poster representative of the plot of the Coen brother’s movie *Fargo*. *Fargo* is a movie that follows a staged kidnapping gone horribly wrong. This scene specifically follows the criminals (namely the unstable criminal’s string of homicides). A classic Coen brother’s film it verges on the surreal without ever taking the plunge. At best the movie gets to be ridiculous causing it to exist between recognition – recollection on the spectrum.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{23} Joel and Ethan Coen, *Fargo*, PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, 1996.
Figure 7 is a poster representative of the plot of the Terry Gilliam movie *Brazil*. *Brazil* is a movie that presents an absurd dystopia run by an unruly and invasive bureaucracy. The main character wakes from his greatest flights of fantasy, as Icarus soaring through the sky, to his greatest nightmare, which is his reality, life within a sole crippling bureaucracy. The composition expresses the tension that exists within the possibility of escaping the inescapable. This film is constantly in a state of dream, or nightmare.\(^{24}\)

Figures 5-7 were an exercise in trying to make a time-image of some kind. *Blue Velvet*, *Fargo*, and *Brazil* are beautiful movies but they’re equally more approachable and known in comparison to *Rashomon*, *Stalker*, and *Paris, Texas*. With these three movies the goal became to make time-image posters of the movies, which in effect would tell the whole story in a single composition. The overlay in white attempts to diagram the spatial relationships envisioned within the composition. These three posters were also some of the first successful attempts in creating and effective time-image that did not require the apparatus of the film camera to produce.

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Montage existed before film did; according to Eisenstein the Acropolis is a montage.²⁵ Prior to the invention of film, there was the discovery of many other optical concepts that were put to use in a myriad of optical devices in the 19th century. Most of these devices were seen as novelties or toys and were used for entertainment. Some however such as Eadweard Muybridge, however, studied the movement of humans and animals using an array of cameras and an optical device called a zoopraxiscope, which would allow one to view the stills in motion and observe the movement that was recorded.²⁶ The most simplistic and yet the most potent example of persistence of vision, which is how moving pictures blend to show movement and the passing of time, is the Thaumatrope.

The most classic example of the principle is that of the coin. The anecdote goes, one individual asked another individual if they could show them both sides of a coin.
simultaneously, the one asked didn’t bother to try and the one who asked took the coin and
spun it on a table. When the coin is spinning fast enough both images become visible at
once, this is due to the persistence of our vision, our eyes will literally just fill the void with
more of the same content. The same principle can be made to work with the two figures
above. Printed with a ridged piece of card stock, one can embed a dowel of some kind
within the thickness of the card along the vertical centerline of the building. This will
provide the individual with an axis around which the card can be spun. If it is spinning fast
enough (and the dowel is along the vertical centerline of the building) the images will
become visible at once allowing the viewer to see the elevation in direct relationship with the
section. This presents a time-image because time is needed to stimulate the illusion.

Another optical device that presents a time-image is the stereoscope. The average
human being sees with two functional eyes, known as binocular vision, this allows us to
determine depth. A stereoscopic image is an image that simulates depth. Anaglyph 3D is a
method of stimulating stereopsis by means of encoding the left and right image using
chromatically opposite colors, often red and cyan. When viewed through an anaglyph lens
the integrated images reach their intended eyes. These visually separate images are then put
together by the brain’s visual cortex to simulate depth. The simulation of stereopsis allows a
two-dimensional image to impart three-dimensional information. It is through the
presentation of such complexity that clarity can be reached.

To fully appreciate the next figure please put on your red-cyan 3D glasses

The last 19th century optical toy that is on the table is the Myriorama. A myriorama is a set of illustrated cards that depict a landscape. Each card maintains the same horizon
line, tone of ground and tone of sky. These similarities allow for one to arrange and re-
arrange the cards in any combination to create a myriad of imaginary landscapes. It is this
aspect that renders the myriorama an extremely generative exercise. One could not only
arrange and re-arrange, but one could also line up as many cards as one wished.
Furthermore they could illustrate their own cards and insert them anywhere they pleased.
With the addition of other illustrators, inserting their own cards anywhere they wish, it
becomes infinitely clear that the possibilities are endless.²⁸

Persistence of vision, stereopsis, and Myriorama cards are all highly generative
exercises, which produce clarity through the presentation of complexity and require time to
stimulate their effects. That is in part why the figures presented come off so dead in
comparison with the description of the exercises they perform. These considerations are
present within the final product, even if they’re not obvious.

The final piece of the exercise, which is not inspired from the philosophical, filmic,
or optical device background of the research but instead is a tactic inspired out of watching
Peter Greenaway’s A Walk Through H: The Reincarnation of an Ornithologist. In the film Peter
Greenaway narrates his journey through H, which is a territory depicted by a series of 92
paintings. These paintings are used by the narrator as a series of maps that aid in his
journey. Many of the maps, however, are only arguably maps, some so slimly that they are
more arguably pictures, often of birds. The narrative seems to be of a soul making its final
journey, following the migratory paths of birds.²⁹ This exercise of mapping along with its
narration develops a territory. It is a territory that is in essence fictitious. Its fictitious
nature, however, does not prevent it from being real. It can be seen as real because it has

²⁸ Ralph Hyde, “Myrioramas, Endless Landscapes The Story of a Craze,” Print Quarterly 21,
bearing on reality. This allows us to structure it as a place/space.

Figure 12

Figure 12

\footnote{Jean Baudrillard, \textit{Simulacra and Simulation}, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Michigan).}
The Territory

Figure 13

All of the information gathered to this point has been applied to the site, or sites. The sites in question are the C&O Bridge, Carew Tower, and Union Terminal. These three sites, together, comprise the major points of interest that will be the focus of the journey. Along with these three sites being at three extremes, in relation to the downtown area, (underneath the C&O Bridge = lowest point, Carew Tower’s observation deck = highest point, Union Terminal’s facade = furthest point) these three sites also share a lot of commonalities. Firstly, they were all built within a five-year period of one another (1929, 1931, 1933 respectively). Secondly, since they were built within a half a decade of one another they are all styled in the fashion of the time (Art Deco). Lastly, they all exist within the urban fabric of the city of Cincinnati, all together for the past 80 plus years.
C&O Bridge

Originally built in 1889, the C&O Railroad Bridge was the first railroad bridge to connect Cincinnati, Ohio to Covington, Kentucky. Rebuilt in 1929, on extended piers next to itself, the original was destroyed in 1974. Thus the existing bridge is not the first to cross at this point, but it has the same name and performs the same function. However, crossing the bridge is immaterial as it is being below the bridge that is the important quality of this site. Along with the highway overpasses, I am reminded of a passage from Lawrence Halprin’s love letter to the highway Freeways. “In cities the great overhead concrete structures above the local streets stand like enormous sculptures marching through the architectonic caverns.”\(^{31}\)

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Carew Tower

Completed in 1931, the Carew Tower was the tallest tower in Cincinnati until the completion of the Great American Tower in 2010. The 574-feet tall Carew Tower is, however, still the highest elevation a person can reach in downtown Cincinnati. This is in part due to the fact that the Carew Tower is at a higher elevation, relative to sea level, than the Great American. Further, the Great American is actually only 495-feet to the roof and it is its additional “crown” that causes it to be 665-feet tall. On a clear day you can see several miles in every direction. This was a major factor in the selection of the Carew Tower’s observation deck as one of the sites of interest, not to mention its significance in the city.
Union Terminal

Completed in 1933, Union Terminal is the largest half-dome in the western hemisphere. Named for its union of seven railways that had previously operated out of five separate stations this station would unify them near the end of Cincinnati’s importance in the rail network. Passenger rail in general in the United States was declining, but the trend did not prevent the construction of this iconic building. Union Terminal is a large structure, and even though it is on the periphery of downtown Cincinnati, it has a commanding presence in the city’s urban landscape. Acting as a gate to many points unknown, it is the facade's role as a threshold in the city that renders this site one of interest.
The Entity

The final product of this thesis is an apparatus that is colloquially referred to as the entity. It is intended to stand-alone and conveys an experience to its audience without any verbal presentation. This installation will in and of itself be a space, which will try and evoke within the viewer the simulacrum of a territory. This will be achieved through the presentation of various unstable time-imagery, which the viewer will be compelled to complete through the association of its various parts. Along with the completion of the parts to render a whole, the time that is spent will further allow one to start and combining the externalized time-imagery with their own internal time-imagery. In this way they will include their own memories and experiences to their journey through the territory so that a genuine time-scape is generated between the entity and it’s audience. It is this relationship that is essential for the success of the installation.

The installation itself will feature an 8’ in diameter, decagon in shape, map of the territory. The exercise of mapping as well as navigating the map will be incorporated into a film, which will also include footage from the sites and footage from the exercises with the Myriorama cards, etc. This fill will be rear projected onto six separate screens that will be equally of equal distance from the map. These videos in relationship to the physical model will generate a relationship of association. Further the precedential exercises being folded into the films themselves will make for an uncluttered presentation that can equally consider the various complexities of generating such a simulation.

Lastly the entity will present consideration beyond the space and time of the points of interest and territory in between, but will further present sight forces of titanic proportion. The first being the highway, which has consumed and confused most of the
territory in question and the second being the river and its potency for flooding historically, which has also devastated the territory and permanently reshaped it.

Figure 17

The master plan and its guidance have in a large part shaped the territory I'm mapping. It is practically all located within the brown portion of the figure above. The major brown patch used to be a vibrant neighborhood, but it was deemed blighted, which is why they city consolidated it’s industry within that sector. Further it was the intent of the plan to insulate them from one another, which was very clearly done with the highway which demarcates the boundary between newly thriving residential areas and newly thriving industrial with no mixing what so ever. This kind of planning sounds gentile on paper, but this was Cincinnati’s urban renewal plan, which in 2016 is a set of dirty words. 32 The effects of this plan are still felt today, as the West end is essentially a rambling and incoherent area, although all things told it was fun to navigate.

10 years after the worst flood in Ohio River history, the city of Cincinnati was greatly concerned with redeveloping the riverfront to serve as a protective barrier as well as a well-considered amenity the city could be proud of. 70 years after this recommendation our riverfront is about there (if you like that sort of thing). However, 70 years ago the decision was made that everything west of Central Ave. had no need for any protection as it was largely devoted to train traffic. While that is true the area is largely neglected when it comes to any form of development.

In conclusion all I can say is that I’ve had a lot of fun with this project. I feel I’ve grown a lot and am surprised that it is over. Further more I should point out how it is a shame that the majority of you who are reading this will have missed the entity in action. To that I say, “You had to be there.” With that this modest document draws to the end.

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Bibliography


