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## 9 Lenses of Place: Explorations of Palimpsest and Path

A thesis submitted to the University of Cincinnati, Division of Research and Advanced Studies For fulfillment for a Master of Architecture In the School of Architecture and Interior Design of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

## Ryan Ball

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2010

## June, 2012

Jeffrey Tilman, Associate Professor of Architecture Vincent Sansalone, Associate Professor of Architecture

## Abstract

Place is omnipresent, it is everywhere and it is inescapable. It provides significance and value to the spaces we occupy everyday. Without it we could not locate ourselves in space or time; our environment would be barren, empty, and devoid of meaning. Yet with the rise of globalization, place has often become indistinguishable. The functionality of progress and consumerism has birthed a McDonaldization of place that is no longer discernable as an independent location in space. Architecture as a practice has grown to see the world as its experimental playground. Works of "starchitects" are collected like pieces of fine art, projects are designed from overseas often with little regard for the context they are placed in, and mechanical systems are employed to normalize the environmental qualities of the region. Yet out of this dilution of place has born a resilient architecture of activism. Created in part due to a lack of large-scale infrastructure projects in the United States, this architecture seeks to move beyond physical construction, engaging practice as a social relationship.

Often, we look to the past as a place saturated with meaning, character, and charm. This notion stems from our memories, photographs, and accounts; yet this history is not an objective truth. In large part it is a past of subconscious creation, a selective lens through which we remember only what is advantageous. In this case, our perceptual understanding of place is inconsistent with the objective reality; a fact that is trivial given that without perception, place is reduced to a numeric location. The true realization lies in the importance of human perception on the value of place. This essay seeks to understand that value by examining place through nine lenses.

The nine lenses are knowing, perception, atmosphere, scale, materiality, geography, evolution, preservation, and inhabitation. These lenses will be further divided into three categories, which are the experiential, inherent, and organic lenses of place. The first are designed to understand the way in which we experience place. These findings will then be utilized to compare the inherent spatial qualities of the built environment and their direct effect upon our experience. We will then examine the organic nature of place to understand the effects of time, growth, and decay upon that value.

Central to this thesis discourse is an experimentation in translation between theory, design, and practice. These translations will be articulated as three distinct books that will combine to form my thesis document. The separation between design and practice will be the translation between site-specific research, analysis, and design to a physical presentation, the end product of this process. To exhibit this translation I have assigned a canvas to each of the nine outlined lenses of place. These canvases will become working drawings, which through layering and iteration will be a means to translate the theories, discoveries, and design solutions of this thesis exercise into a presented product. These iterations will be documented but continually overridden, creating a distinct palimpsest of process and thought.

Ryan Ball - Copyright 2012

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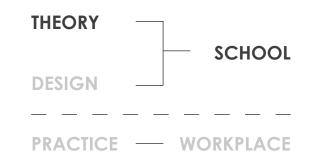
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This is a book of theory.









Place can be defined as our perception of space through time.

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Cincinnati is my Home.

## NINE LENSES

# OF PLACE

Place is omnipresent, it is everywhere and it is inescapable. It provides significance and value to the spaces we occupy everyday. Without it we could not locate ourselves in space or time; our environment would be barren, empty, and devoid of meaning. Yet with the rise of globalization, place has often become indistinguishable. The functionality of progress and consumerism has birthed a McDonaldization of place that is no longer discernable as an independent location in space. Architecture as a practice has grown to see the world as its experimental playground. Works of "starchitects" are collected like pieces of fine art, projects are designed from overseas often with little regard for the context they are placed in, and mechanical systems are employed to normalize the environmental qualities of the region. Yet out of this dilution of

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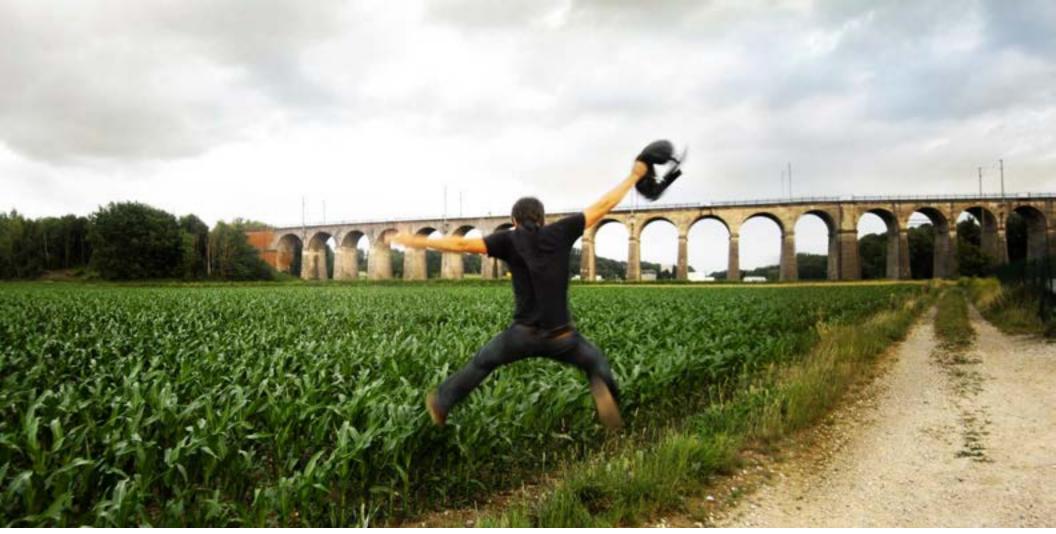
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# (EXP) (INH) (ORG)

four five six

07 08 09





what is place, why do we want it?

how does it effect who we are?

-21-



how do we understand place?

is it through memory?

-23-



figure 24.1

figure 24.2

figure 25.1

figure 25.2

through history?

through relics?



is a city defined by its buildings...

...or its people?

-27-



figure 28.1 figure 28.3 figure 28.2 figure 28.4 figure 29.1 figure 29.3 figure 29.2 figure 29.4

how can a place be unique...

...now that every place looks the same?



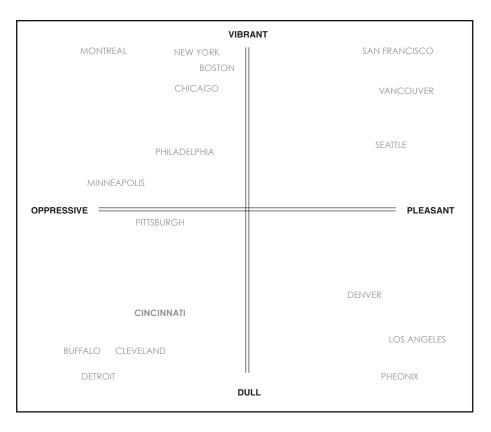
where do we want to live?

do we become connected to a place?



how would you like to get to work?

do we have a choice?





# FUCK GRAPEFRUIT.

UNITASTY

BANANAS

TOWNERS

TASTY

Lar Directors

LEMONS

ORANGES

PINEAPPLES

DIFFICULT <

PONEORANATES

GRAPEFRUIT

PEACHES

ripuls

> EASY

BUEBERRIES

GREEN

RUNS

Do we really get to choose where we live?

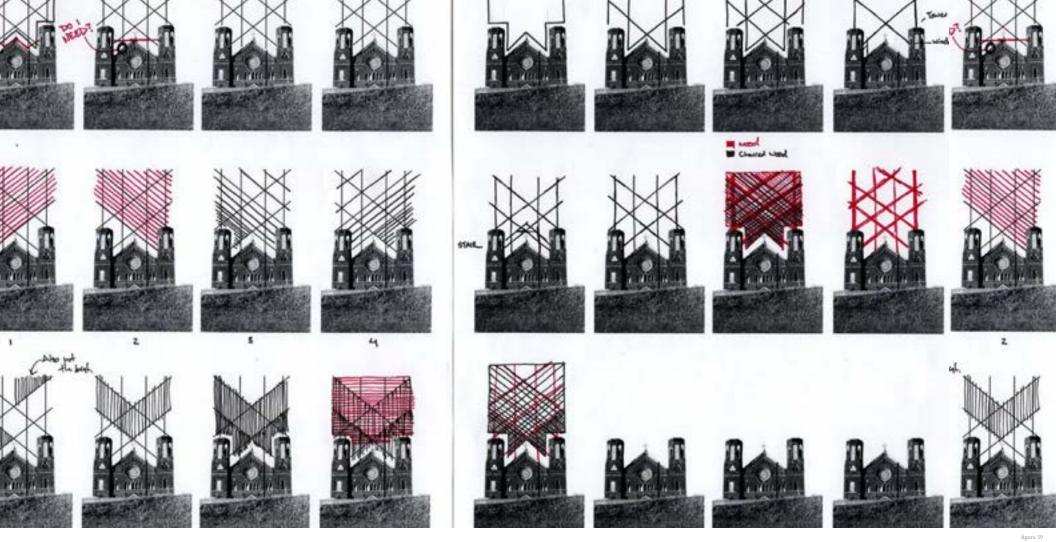
# FUCK THE MIDWEST.

what is importiant to us?



is it a strong community?

a vibrant culture?



can architecture improve our connection to place?

what would it look like?



will we stay...

...or will we move on?

-41-



figure 43

to what capacity can architecture contribute to place?

or is place created by the people who inhabit it?



can we use architecture to advocate for change?

or would we be better suited to push our designs in the developing world



does our heritage contribute to a stronger sense of place?

or does it hinder our ability to envision the future?

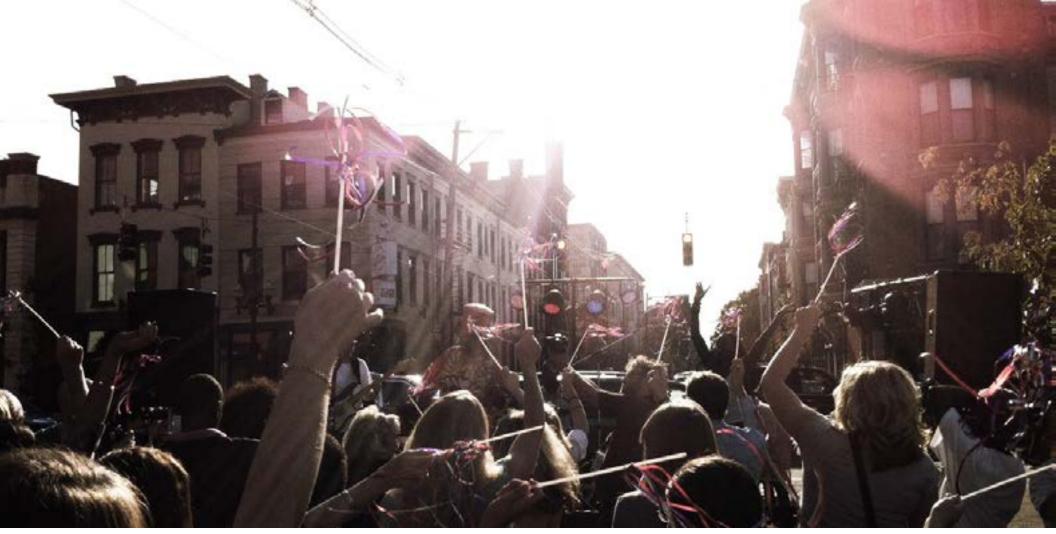
-47-



one thing though has become quite clear....

place can be seen in everything... and...

-49-



# A CITY IS NOT

# **BUILT OVER NIGHT**



# (NINE LENSES OF PLACE)



Nº 1 Nº 2 Nº 3	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b> (perception)	KNOWING PERCEPTION ATMOSPHERE
four five six	<b>INHERENT</b> (space)	SCALE MATERIALITY GEOGRAPHY
07 08 09	<b>ORGANIC</b> (time)	EVOLUTION PRESERVATION INHABITATION

# MEMORY

(a personal account that fades over time, passed down as word of mouth)

# HISTORY

(documents significant events with scientific rigor, often overlooks daily life)

# RELICS

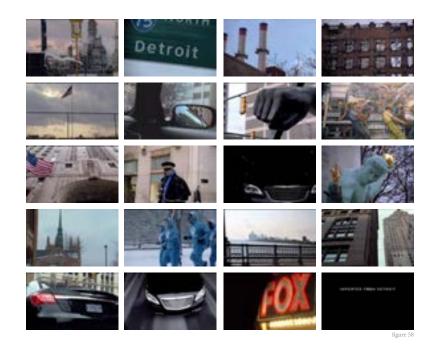
(physical remnants of the past to be interpreted by the current generation)

## KNOWING

Why do we need place? Is it for some sense of being grounded; a reassuring gesture from which we belong, are given purpose, and from which we can be understood? What sense does the past play in our perception of place, and why do we want this past? This yearning to know place is central to what makes us human. Part of this humanity is not strictly rational, but experiential. Applying scientific rationality to our own lives would yield a grim outlook, acknowledging that our purpose on this planet is relatively menial. In contrast, our ability to experience enriches and enhances our own lives. It is through this experience that we associate meaning and it is the framework through which our existence is defined. As such, place is essential to our human experience. Making place is what makes us human, and to deny ourselves the capacity to make place would result in great emotional strain.

In order to better understand place we should break it down into its most elemental form. At its most basic, place can be seen as the interconnection between its defined location in space, its existence in time, and its relevance as perceived by human beings. Space, location, and time are defined mathematically; they are an objective and constant truth. As such a place is immortal, it cannot be created or destroyed, but rather only our perception of place can be altered. This perception too cannot be set, as it is impossible to control, fix, or prescribe the human mind. Our ability to change place lies only in our capacity to influence the way in which it is perceived. We alter this perception through every action we make and our current understanding of place is the summated perception of all of our past actions. As described by







A. A. Mendilow, "we are at any moment the sum of all our moments, the product of all of our experiences."<sup>1</sup> As such, understanding past place is crucial to understanding our present place. If we look to the definition of place, place is defined as a particular position or point in space.<sup>2</sup> This is important because it enforces the fact that space is universal, where as place is particular. In response to the effects of globalization and the tendencies for place to be moving towards a less and less particular understanding, the past offers a much-needed uniqueness to place. Over enough time, uniqueness will always surface because the global economy is so complex; it is inevitable that certain regions will prosper while others struggle. These times of prosperity and struggle will shape the built environment of place and form a unique atmosphere. But because this process can take decades, even centuries to complete, it becomes much more difficult to create a unique sense of place quickly. This is why it is important to build upon the efforts of the past. Utilizing existing infrastructure and building stock will undoubtedly lead to a richer reading of place in the present.

#### IN TIME, UNIQUENESS WILL SURFACE

Because the past plays such a critical role in our perception of the present, it is important to better understand how we perceive the past. David Lowenthal writes in

1 Mendilow, Time and the novel, p. 223 2 Webster

# **№** 1

his book The Past is a Foreign Country extensively on this subject. We can apply much of his logic directly to place because of its close association with the past, which he suggests is understood through, memory, history, and relics.<sup>3</sup> Memory, as we have already discussed, is a subjective documentation of past. Our mind is self-serving, and memories are easily exaggerated and forgotten. History is of course different than memory in that it is far more rigorous. Rather than a word of mouth account of an individual, history is an established record synthesized through the scientific community. It collects and logs all available data; painting the most accurate picture it is able. Lowenthal's final component, relics, represents the physical, tangible artifacts, which have survived the past to exist in the present. These artifacts have minimal meaning in and of themselves, but through an analysis of their historic purpose, we can attempt to simulate past experience. These interconnections of memory, history, and relics will shape our present understanding of place and do so in different capacities. Memory for instance, is the most directly perceptible, as it has a direct impact upon its author. A memory fades with time, and though it can be shared, with each translation it becomes less and less accurate. As such the original memory often dies with its author. History on the other hand largely only documents significant places and events, and thus inherently overlooks most ordinary places. Those places that have the strongest sense of heritage have often been continually inhabited

<sup>3</sup> Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country, p.192

to translate memories across decades or even centuries. In the case of the American Midwest where our central cities have largely been abandoned, all we have left to interpret are relics, which exist all around us. We can see previous street grids, ghosted roof lines, and traces of old brick pavers, but these relics have no particular meaning to a viewer unless they are associated with a memory or a history. Because memories are continually forgotten, there is afforded an opportunity for reinterpretation. This reinterpretation allows each generation to know place in a new way, and while certain eras reject the past more than others, our perception of place changes over time. This is important because it helps explain the organic nature of place. It becomes clear that in order influence place, you must first alter perception.

# **№** 1



figure 63

**№** 1

"THE UNIVERSE," HE CONTINUED, "THIS UNIVERSE THAT WE HAS BEEN GETTING MORE COMPLEX FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN BIL-MORE COMPLEX THAN IT IS NOW. IN FIVE BILLION, IN TEN BIL-TOWARD...SOMETHING. IT IS MOVING TOWARD SOME KIND ATOM OF HYDROGEN MIGHT NOT GET THERE, OR A LEAF, OR MATE COMPLEXITY. BUT WE ARE ALL MOVING TOWARDS IT --THAT FINAL COMPLEXITY, THAT THING WE ARE ALL MOVING WORD, GOD, CALL IT THE ULTIMATE COMPLEXITY. WHATEVER KNOW, BEGAN IN ALMOST ABSOLUTE SIMPLICITY, AND IT LION YEARS. IN ANOTHER BILLION YEARS IT WILL BE STILL LION -- IT IS ALWAYS GETTING MORE COMPLEX. IT IS MOVING OF ULTIMATE COMPLEXITY. WE MIGHT NOT GET THERE. AN A MAN, OR A PLANET MIGHT NOT GET THERE, TO THAT ULTI-EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS MOVING TOWARDS IT. AND TO, IS WHAT I CHOOSE TO CALL GOD. IF YOU DON'T LIKE THAT YOU CALL IT, THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS MOVING TOWARD IT."

- SHANTARAM

# 2

#### PERCEPTION

Perception is the act of relaying information to our consciousness. This perception occurs in many forms, which I will simplify into the broad categories of physical perception and mental perception. Physical perception is the communication of the five senses to our brain; this occurs both consciously and subconsciously. The former is what we traditionally consider to be perceived, where the information being relayed from our senses makes it into our cognitive awareness. Subconscious perception occurs when we respond to stimuli without realizing it. This occurs similar to the way in which we breathe or other "second nature" activities. An example of this type of perception can be found in the effects of seasonal depression disorder where low level lighting conditions in northern climates negatively effects a person's well being. Mental perception operates somewhat differently in that it doesn't relay physical information from the senses but rather from information already stored away as memory. Physical perception often triggers mental perception; for example, pain is designed as a learning mechanism. If we remember that a stovetop is hot we will not need to physically feel the stove to trigger that knowledge, we will simply remember. We use this type of mental perception constantly in our daily life, but it can be detrimental to perceiving things objectively. In the case of place making, many of our urban neighborhoods are perceived as dangerous. This knowledge is generally passed along through word of mouth activities rather than being acquired through first hand experience. We form preconceptions when we rely on the experience of others to form our mental perceptions. In the case of our safety, it is understand-

### PHYSICAL PERCEPTION

#### MENTAL PERCEPTION

(memory)

(preconception)

(the five senses)

CONSCIOUS

SUBCONSCIOUS

physical reception cond nature response

(direct response)

easy to influence & change

#### *(learned response)*

difficult to influence & change

able to not risk questioning the judgment of others, but this initiates a dangerous cycle of preconceptions that might or might not actually be true. Often times it takes a new generation of people who do not have the same preconceptions to perceive a place differently because it is rare that we question what we think to be correct. As such mental perception can be exceedingly difficult to change, often times it takes an over stimuli of physical preceptors to call into question our mental preconceptions.

### DOMINANCE OF THE EYE AND THE REPRESSION OF OTHER SENSES PUSHES US TOWARD SOLITUDE.

We will start our analysis of perception with an understanding of the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Sight is the most commonly used of the senses. In fact western culture historically has viewed it as the "noblest of senses". During the Renaissance there was a hierarchy of senses that paralleled the heavens (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch in relation to fire and light, atmosphere, vapor, water, and earth).<sup>1</sup> As such its easy to understand why it is

1 Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin, p.7

# <u>№</u> 2

the primary way in which we perceive the environment that surrounds us. It conveys information about location, time, personality, mood, expression; it is possible to discern nearly every major quality from vision. It is the most used sense, and today the most exploited and over saturated. Daily we are bombarded with hundreds of advertisements trying to get our attention. As such we become over stimulated and in response we discard a lot of the visual information that passes through our brain. With our current lifestyles we withstand this subjection around the clock as we are plugged into our internet and iphones nearly every waking second. As Juhani Pallasmaa notes in his short book, The Eyes of the Skin, the dominance of the eye and the repression of other senses pushes us toward solitude.<sup>2</sup> Seemingly, the current generation has become content finding a virtual sense of place within their computers in response to the normalization of place present in our physical environment. What is dangerous about technology and our understanding of place is that it has successfully collapsed time and space, effectively making it possible to largely experience many places at once. This negatively transforms place into a commodity, reducing it to pictures and computer screens, removing us from the actuality of existence and sinking us farther into isolation.<sup>3</sup> Virtual place might be able to satisfy our needs for visual, and perhaps even audible stimuli, but as we will see, it cannot convincingly replicate perception of touch, taste, and smell, which are integral to reality.

2 Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, p.10 3 Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, p.12

To illustrate a point, close your eyes and imagine that you are in an expansive underground cavern. What do you hear, the slow dripping of water, the rustling of bats? Can you smell the staleness of the air? Can you taste it? The reason why we have an easy time remembering the smell, sounds, and tastes of a cave is because it is an environment where visual information is less useful because it is difficult to see. In the absence of a sense, our other senses become heightened because we rely more heavily on them. Though vision is generally our primary sense, specific senses from the other four induce the strongest memories. Its common for people to recall these memories every time that sense is later experienced. For example, many people associate with the song that way playing on a first date with a future wife. To understand how the senses effects place, it is important to understand the relative scale of their perception.

Pallasmaa breaks our five senses into two categories, labeling sight and sound as social senses, and smell, taste, and touch as private senses. The distinction he makes is that it is socially accepted to utilize sight and sound where as the others are, with the exception commenting on the weather or enjoying a meal, preferred to be kept to ones self. Thus utilizing the private senses evokes a very intimate experience. A romantic encounter is so powerful because it stimulates and shares all five senses between two people. Though such an encounter is likely unachievable in built form, reaching out to one or more of the private senses will yield a more personal connection with the space. Also, unlike sight and sound, smell,

### <u>№</u> 2

#### **SIGHT** (fire & light)

### SOCIAL SENSES

**SOUND** (*atmosphere*)

(easy to document)

**SMELL** (vapor)

TASTE

(water)

**TOUCH** *(earth)* 

### PRIVATE SENSES

(nearly impossible to document)

taste, and touch are not easily documented. As such, our memory of the experience is all we have. We can try to convey the experience through words but we cannot create an experience that is specific enough to replicate the original. I'm sure we can all remember an instance in which we ate a food prepared in a certain manner that we had not consumed in years. In that instant memories are triggered of our past, perhaps of our grandmother, for it was her famous apple pie after all, or else of a place or some other sensation. These private senses often affect us more on the subconscious level, but when a sensation is strong enough, it creates a lasting memory.

### UNLIKE SIGHT + SOUND, SMELL + TASTE + TOUCH CANNOT EASILY BE DOCUMENTED, EXISTING ONLY IN OUR MEMORY

This notion that our physical perceptions are stored in our brain as memory speaks to the interrelationship of our physical and mental perceptions. As part of the means for coping with the over-stimulation we receive on a daily basis, we rely heavily on our stored memories to convey to our consciousness what is important and what is not. This editing allows us to function on an extremely high



# <u>№</u> 2



+.

(framing)

+

REPETITION REPETITION REPETITION REPETITION <u>№</u> 2

level but it does mean that things can often become overlooked. In the quest to understand our perception of place, it is important to understand what messages reach the brain and which get lost along the way.

Juxtaposition, framing, and repetition are all techniques that can be used to heighten our perception of place. Juxtaposition calls attention to discrepancies through close association; it doesn't wait for our perception, rather, it forces it. In our curiosity over the discrepancy, we postulate its existence, building a connection with the piece and interacting with it on a more personal level. Framing also calls our attention to detail by removing it from its context. Often times this has the effect of creating a more dramatic or monumental experience, as the contrast is so great. Repetition works by introducing variations of the same detail in the same manner throughout a body of work. The relationship of each of these repetitions calls attention to subtleties and nuances, which can provide unexpected charm. More importantly, each of these techniques can help an object stand out in an environment of sensory overload. Another way to create a connection to place is to address the more intimate private senses of taste, smell, and touch. Touch is a sense that we are especially very hesitant to share. Connecting on such a level undoubtedly induces a strong memory for the user, creating a rich atmosphere that will have a lasting impact.

### THROUGH REPETITION

### WE PERCEIVE MORE.





#### **ATMOSPHERE**

Atmosphere is the feeling or mood we receive from place; it is a cloud that surrounds our perception and provides an instantaneous and lasting reading. A rich atmosphere is one in which engages most, if not all, of the five senses. As such, an atmosphere is successful when it can adeptly navigate our subconscious. In these instances, though rare, a strong perceptual bond is created between ourselves and the space. By its nature, atmosphere is always present. It contributes to place in the broadest sense of our perception and its inherent qualities are numerous and less tangible. Atmosphere is an architectural game of subtlety and detail. It is the difference between perceived success and failure. A full understanding of its nuances, though undoubtedly the tool of a master architect, has a profound effect on our perception of place.

Peter Zumthor writes, "we perceive atmosphere through our emotional sensibility – a form of perception that works incredibly quickly, and which we humans evidently need to help us survive."<sup>1</sup> His book *Atmospheres* addresses the way we perceive space and through nine short chapters, outlines the methods he employs to manipulate the atmosphere of space. To Zumthor, his interest in the topic of atmospheres is generated in the answer to the question "what do we mean when we speak of architectural quality."<sup>2</sup> Zumthor argues that for him, quality architecture is any architecture that

1 Zumthor, Atmospheres, p.13 2 Zumthor, Atmospheres, p.11



figure 78

"moves" him. He compares this feeling of "movement" to that of a first impression, noting that we make up our mind about a space instantaneously. He writes, "I enter a building, see a room, and – in the fraction of a second – I have this feeling about it." "Something inside of us tells us an enormous amount straight away. We are capable of immediate appreciation, of a spontaneous emotional response, of rejecting things in a flash."<sup>3</sup> This speaks to the unforgiving nature of our senses and perhaps at the same time to the superficiality of them. In making place it is paramount that a good first impression is made, if not, unless people are forced to use the space, no one will inhabit it.

### AN ATMOSPHERE IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT CAN ADEPTLY NAVIGATE OUR SUBCONSCIOUS

A certain character or unique expression is inherent to atmosphere. These types of expression create different moods, feelings, and understandings of a place. For instance, when you enter a church, you know right away that you should be reverent, quiet, and respectful. The change in scale, lighting conditions, use of symbols, spatial arrangement, as well as the behavior of others, are all cues of the atmosphere of the

3 Zumthor, Atmospheres, p.13

# <u>№</u> 3

place. Through such visual and spatial cues an infinite amount of atmospheres can be created.

Like place, creating a successful atmosphere from scratch is extremely difficult. Atmosphere often relies on the subtleties of the past to gain richness and meaning. Atmosphere is essentially the perceived qualities of a place that make it desirable for human inhabitation. This type of inhabitation is often called dwelling. The creation of atmosphere becomes a chicken and the egg type of analogy. Architects are asked to create spaces that will have an atmosphere of place before human inhabitation. This is difficult because it assumes the architect can predict how the user will occupy the space, for each user is different. Dwelling is central to our humanity and given time, humans will make place for themselves. In this sense, exceptional architecture can positively create a sense of place, but also any architecture that permits humans to dwell will lead to a strong sense of place over time. Thus, it important that unless for good reason, we create spaces that are conducive to dwelling, or human inhabitation. One of the common problems we have today is an inconsistency in scale of our architecture. The automobile in particular is sufficiently problematic because it promotes design that is fundamentally inhuman. We will see as we begin to explore the inherent qualities of place that if a space is designed at the human scale, it will inherently contribute to the making of place.

Nº 1 Nº 2 Nº 3	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b> (perception)	KNOWING PERCEPTION ATMOSPHERE
four five six	<b>INHERENT</b> (space)	SCALE MATERIALITY GEOGRAPHY
07 08 09	<b>ORGANIC</b> (ti	EVOLUTION PRESERVATION

ORGANIC PRESERVATION

#### SCALE



Now that we have looked at how humans perceive place and the critical role perception plays in the value of place, we can begin to investigate how the inherent spatial qualities of place affect that perception. Space is an infinite expanse in which all elements of the universe exist, it is the structure and framework from which everything we know originates. From atoms, and molecules to cities, and solar systems, every aspect of this structure affects our experience on this planet. Scientists and mathematicians have forever tried to explain the inherent rules and phenomena of space; its laws of time, gravity, and energy have proved constant and unforgiving. By breaking down the physical structure of our world, we will be able to understand how all of its components assemble to make place. We will begin by looking at how objects of different scales affect our experience of place, and then we will move on to examine materiality and geography.

Scale seeks to address the relative level or degree to which objects affect the perception of our environment. For example, a blade of grass offers a relatively menial contribution to our understanding of an entire lawn, which still makes up just a portion an entire park, or even the city of Chicago in which it is located. Yet say if the blades of grass were changed to an artificial field turf, it would greatly affect our perception of the picnic we were having on its lawn. This interconnection indicates that all scales of spatial structure play an important role in our understanding of place, but certain elements affect our perception more directly. To further understand the reach of scale, we will again visit the scene of a park picnic in Chicago, the very scene

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that Charles and Ray Eames visited over 40 years ago in their short film, *The Powers of Ten*.<sup>1</sup>

The film begins with a scene of a couple having a picnic in a Chicago waterfront park. The narrator indicates that we are viewing an area one square meter in size from exactly one meter above. Every ten seconds, the camera will zoom out ten times further creating a field of view that is ten times wider. First we see the picnic blanket, then the lawn, the park, the shoreline, the city, and the region. By two powers of ten, or just 100 square meters, the scene below us bears little resemblance to the city we perceive as Chicago, recognizable only through our knowledge of satellite photography and maps. Soon we see the entire country followed by the emergence of the planet earth as a whole, quickly fading away as we drift into the vast unknowns of the universe. In the short nine-minute film we travel from a sleepy picnic scene in Chicago to the far reaches of the cosmos. We watch points of light fade from single stars to entire galaxies, and then back to single atoms as we travel inwards to the elemental building blocks of matter. Most interestingly, as perceived at different scales, protons, atoms, planets, stars, and galaxies all look alike as little specs of light. It is only their scale relative to ourselves that brings any significance. Though we believe an atom to be the smallest and most basic physical object in existence, there is nothing to suggest that scale doesn't travel infinitely in both directions. In mathematics we use significant figures to represent the accuracy of numbers at different scales. With perception too, a similar rounding takes place where information past a

1 Eames, The Powers of Ten.

### four

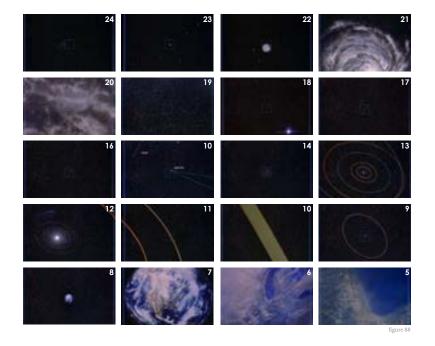
certain scale shift becomes too abstract to relate to our everyday understanding. In actuality it takes no more than a scale shift of two powers of ten to bring our vision into abstraction. It is useful to note that we are able to generally perceive larger things easier than their smaller counterparts because we are able to replicate this scale shift through distance. For instance looking down from an airplane or back to earth through a space shuttle yield the imagery of increased scale through our own eyes without microscopic enhancement. Nevertheless, it is clear that while extremely large and small scales impact our existence on a fundamental level, their presence can be assumed as a constant. Therefore in our exploration of space, we will set our scale of relevance at the human scale, or plus or minus two powers of ten from the base meter, the amount of space we comfortably occupy as a human daily.

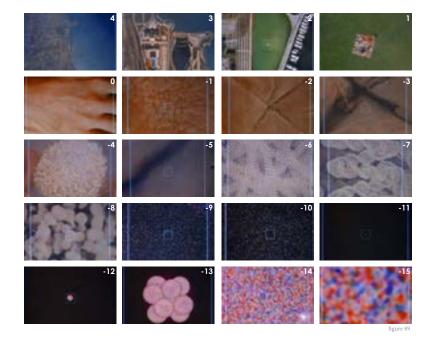
### THE ONLY TIME OUR RANGE OF PERCEPTION EXTENDS PAST THE ROOM WE ARE IN IS WHEN WE EXIT OUR SETTLEMENT AND ENTER THE LANDSCAPE

Now that we have established the bounds of the human scale, we can more precisely examine the degree to which objects effect our perception of place. Our range of perception generally extends to any object within our field of vision and hearing

### PERCEPTION BECOMES ABSTRACT

### OUTSIDE OF THE HUMAN SCALE.





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capacity. Staring with a broad scope, we will look at Christian Norberg-Schulz and his writing on the structure of place. In his book Genius Loci he suggests that this structure first be described in terms of "landscape" and "settlement". Landscape to Norberg-Schulz is a "comprehensive phenomena" that forms "an environment to others." For example a forest is made up of trees and a town is made up of buildings, a landscape exists so long as the broad phenomenon occurs. He makes the distinction between natural and man made places indicating that a "settlement", or collection of buildings, forms a "cultural landscape"<sup>2</sup>. Norberg-Schulz continues to break down the structure of place by looking at the relationship between interior and exterior environments. "The outside-inside relation which is a primary aspect of concrete space, implies that spaces possess a varying degree of extension and enclosure. Whereas landscapes are distinguished by a varied, but basically continuous extension, settlements are enclosed entities."<sup>3</sup> There becomes an established figure ground relationship between settlements and landscapes. Any enclosure of settlement becomes a figure in the extended ground of landscape. This indicates a relation between inside and outside inhabitation, suggesting that a balance of both is critical to our perception of place. It is interesting to note that in today's world we spend most of our day indoors, be it in our bed rooms and living rooms or at the office, bar, or gym. As such, the only time our range of perception extends much past the room we are in is when we go outside. Unfortunately, we often only leave the house when we are in transit from one place to another. This indicates that the quality of our interior spaces is paramount to our well being, and that windows and connections to the outside

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become vital lifelines to place. It is also interesting that transportation plays such a large role in our perception of place, as it is rarely considered in our daily routine.

#### THE SUBURBS HAVE PRIVATIZED PLACE

Since the 1950s and 60s our cities have had to respond to a conflict of interest between the freedom and comfort of the automobile in contrast to the needs of the pedestrian individual. The American highway system is among the most impressive infrastructural projects ever built. The ensuing suburban development that followed has improved the quality of our interior environments, offering more space and land to its inhabitants. Even today, most daily commutes in a mid-sized American city like Cincinnati don't exceed 30 minutes, a task that would be nearly impossible to match the same distance traveled with public transportation. Yet this desire of efficiency and comfort has had a profound impact on our understanding of place. Essentially, what the suburbs have done is privatized place. When we enter our automobile, we visually see the place that we are in, but we cannot hear, smell, taste, or touch it. This removal from our environment is detrimental to our ability to make place. What's worse, in most instances, we couldn't interact with our exterior environment even if we wanted to. The trend of development has become inhuman in scale, often offering little or no sidewalks and services are spread across great distances. There is no longer a balance between settlement and landscape;

Norberg-Schulz, Genius Loci, p. 8-13.
 Norberg-Schulz, Genius Loci, p. 12.

# (INH)

### four



figure 92

#### (recalculating)

the former has consumed the latter. This is the conflict between sense of place and suburbanization. While the suburbs have successfully improved the quality of our interior environments, they have done so at the expense of our exterior environments. It's not the privatization of place that is so problematic as the way in which it has negatively affected public space, which often serves as points of gathering, entertainment, and pride within the community. There is little doubt then that in order to create a strong sense of place, you must first create an environment scaled to the pedestrian experience. That is not to say that the automobile should be banished, as it is an integral and important component of the modern city, but ideally, it should be accommodated for in such a way that it does not overly hinder pedestrian experience. This is particularly true in our urban cores where the scale is most conducive to the pedestrian. As a pedestrian we are fully immersed in place, and unlike biking or driving, walking is simple enough that it requires nearly no concentration. We are free to experience the city, walk in shops, sit at park benches, observing the place that surrounds us. The French have a word for this type of pedestrian called the *flaneur*, which more accurately translates as "stroller", "lounger", "loafer", or "saunter". Much writing has been done on the subject of the *flaneur* including Charles Baudelaire's derived meaning of the word as a "person who walks in the city in order to experience it." It seems clear then that a stronger environment of place would be one that encouraged walking as a pedestrian. Again we find that by utilizing the scale of our existing urban infrastructure, we will yield a stronger connection to place.

#### MATERIALITY

While scale dictates our use of a place, materiality generally affects the mood or atmosphere of a place. Through different tectonic material arrangements, a building can possess qualities of heaviness or lightness, enthusiasm or repression, be monolithic or varied in nature. Architects are not creators, rather assemblers, and materials are the inherent building blocks of form. Materials have a direct responsibility to perform functionally, meaning that a roof needs to keep out water and a road needs to be able to withstand the abuse of traffic. Materials though too have an unbelievable impact on our experience of place, and thus aesthetics should factor highly in their selection process. Unfortunately in today's economy, with little exception, cost and function are valued above aesthetic sensibilities. This becomes the problem of place making, finding a material that is functional, pleasing, and appropriate.

### ARCHITECTS ARE NOT CREATORS, RATHER ASSEMBLERS

Before the industrial revolution, with little exception nearly every building material came from the surrounding landscape. Be it brick, wood, or stone, there is an inherent harmony that is created when a building is made from the material of its setting. The color palates are fitting; there is certain warmth of natural materials, everything feels as if it belongs. Natural materials also develop a fascinating grain and texture that patinas with time, which undeniably strengthens our connection to place. The



figure 94

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critical regionalist approach to architecture argues for this type of material sourcing when possible, citing sustainable building strategies and support of local economies. Unfortunately though modernization has changed the global economy. We have invented new cheaper materials, our buildings have become disposable commodities, and place making is seemingly always second to growth and profit.

### THE MIDWEST HAS ENTERED AN IDENTITY CRISIS, NOT KNOWING WHAT ITS BUILDINGS SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Such a global economy presents an extreme challenge to the architect to select an appropriate material to meet the demands of aesthetics, function, and budget. In the past material selection was relatively easy as there were few choices, now rather than having a budget limit the size of a project, it rather limits the quality. Build-ings are no longer built to the quality that they once were, limiting their lifespan significantly. This becomes problematic too given that construction methods have changed so drastically in the past 100 years. Where as before, a building might be built from brick whether it was built in the year 200, 800, 1200, or 1800. This created a harmony between most structures, however today there is a clear rift between what

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was built before and after modernism, and as such relating back to existing structures proves problematic. Now because we use a layered construction, over a monolithic construction, it no longer makes sense to use brick for its bearing capacity. In fact most brick used today, is purely decorative, and thus to build a brick wall you are essentially building an extra wall just for aesthetic reasons. It is clear why this makes little sense, yet when we use other materials, like concrete block or vinyl siding, it leaves a lot to be desired aesthetically. This then becomes the challenge of today's architect, how to engage contemporary building techniques while still expressing an aesthetically pleasing architecture. Particularly in the 1960's and 70's, often architects response to this very issue has proved to be less than desirable. This is generally because this type of construction was relatively new and its materials often untested. Today we are fortunate to have finally reached a place where a lot of high quality modern building materials are available, but especially in the conservative Midwest, where the stale taste of past failed architectural experiments still linger, it is increasingly difficult to get them approved. As such it could be said that the Midwest today suffers from an identity crisis in its architecture, knowing that the architecture of its past was more successful than the modernist urban renewal and suburban flight, yet it lacks the confidence to know what architecture it needs and what it should look like. This problem of materiality and construction quality is directly linked to our own values. Seemingly the only way to make a lasting change is to invest in our future, and to build once again cities that can stand the test of time, and contribute to a greater sense of place for generations to come.

#### GEOGRAPHY

Geography facilitates a unique physical response to place because unlike scale or materiality, it is site specific. Development largely follows the path of least resistance, interesting design solutions are born only out of constraint, and on a tabula rasa, geography creates the first constraint. Manhattan is denser than Chicago, not necessarily because it has more people, but rather because it is an island. Geography in its natural sense creates an atmosphere in and of itself. A place that embraces its landscape will inevitably evoke a strong sense of place. This is the basic argument of critical regionalism, and we will examine this theory closer by looking at the writing of Kenneth Frampton.

In his 1983 essay *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*, Frampton seeks to counter the placelessness of universal design through utilizing a buildings context.<sup>1</sup> Critical Regionalism is not a return to vernacular architecture but rather born out of an avant-gardist, modernist approach grounded in a site-specific understanding. This generally advocates for the honest expression of materials, topography, context, climate, light and tectonic form. The essay grounds its argument in a critique of modernism, noting the inherent problems in creating a universal civilization and a world culture. The tabula rasa attitude of a capitalist consumerist society in particular is targeted as problematic calling the bulldozing of a hillside "placeless" and its alternative terracing "cultivating". In fact by in large,



<sup>1</sup> Frampton, Towards a Critical Regionalism

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as recognized by geographer Jean Gottman<sup>2</sup>, with the exception of cities founded before the 20th centaury, we are no longer capable of maintaining defined urban forms. This makes the creation of place difficult given that it becomes in opposition with current economic models. Frampton cites the parallel development of the art industry, moving more and more towards entertainment and commodity, as such its expressive freedom diminishing. The same can be said to be true of architecture, and in fact most development schemes designed to return people to blighted urban cores center around entertainment. What they fail to realize though is that a viable place needs residents. As Venturi mused, "Americans do not need Piazzas, they should be at home watching television." In order to really create a sense of place it becomes critical to establish a cultural density, from which the user is opened up to a multitude of experiences. This type of "place-form" becomes the fabric of a vibrant, walkable, placeful community. We have already discussed the connection between walking and place, creating communities dense enough for walking is critical to the creation of place. Then too, the window becomes the apparatus where private meets public, and our bodies become in tune with the temporal effects of light. Attitudes of climate control become in direct opposition with place, air conditioning in particular adding one more layer to the universal nature of modern space. Air conditioning too has been known to change entire social relationships, my experience living in social housing in Singapore comes to mind, where the twelve story housing blocks had strong communities in their creation, but the widespread use of air condition-

2 Gottman, Megalopolis

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ing has retreated everyone into their homes and to privacy. With the challenges of globalization, place making has been weakened, but some places have been able to at least adopt a unique approach to globalization, one such instance can be found in the architecture of the Pacific Northwest.

### CRITICAL REGIONALISM ADVOCATES FOR THE HONEST EXPRESSION OF MATERIALS, TOPOG-RAPHY, CONTEXT, CLIMATE, LIGHT AND TECTONIC FORM

Principal of acclaimed Seattle architecture firm, Mill/Hull, David E. Miller writes about the qualities of the Pacific Northwest style of architecture in his book *Toward a New Regionalism*. His book, clearly building on the work of Frampton, outlines three characteristic strategies of northwest regional architecture. Miller sites an architecture possessing a connection to the areas unique lighting conditions, a utilization of the natural topography, views, and scenery of the area, and the use of local natural materials, namely wood<sup>3</sup>. Through the use of such basic strategy, an architecture has formed that is relatively mass-producible, yet yields a connection to site, and a

3 Miller, Toward a New Regionalism

# (INH)

relative consistency of material pallet helps provide a cohesive and grounded experience. One quality of this architecture is a characteristic detailing of wood and steel structural members, resulting in unique, often oversized, but honestly expressed joints. Aside from being blessed with an undeniably beautiful physical setting, the Pacific Northwest also has been fortunate enough to have had a relatively prosperous economy over the past half of the 20th centaury and as such has had the fortune of being able to afford higher quality materials, as well as allowing for the cohesion of entire working communities to be built of compatible architectural styles. This theory as applied by Miller isn't necessarily applicable to a lot of other places because they either lack the geographic uniqueness or the need for enough new construction to warrant the forming of a characteristic style. As we will see as we move away from the inherent qualities of place to explore its organic nature, the time in which a region is developed is as, if not more telling than its location.

#### six

(northwest regionalism)

#### **UNIQUE LIGHTING CONDITIONS**

(diffused light)

#### NATURAL TOPOGRAPHY

(capturing views, response to grade change)

#### LOCAL NATURAL MATERIALS

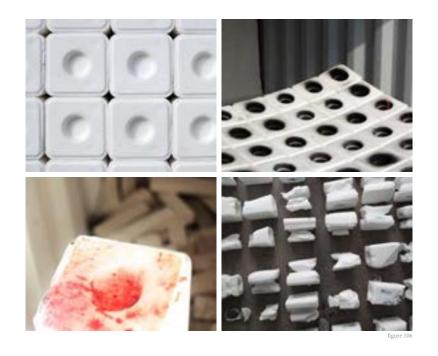
*(utilize wood)* 

07 08 09	<b>ORGANIC</b> (time)	EVOLUTION PRESERVATION INHABITATION
four five six		SCALE MATERIALITY GEOGRAPHY
Nº 1 Nº 2 Nº 3	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b> (perception)	KNOWING PERCEPTION ATMOSPHERE

#### **EVOLUTION**

We have already looked at the way in which we experience place and how the inherent qualities of place affect that perception, now we will examine the organic nature of place to understand how it evolves and is influenced. As described earlier, we know our understanding of place to be the human perception of a specific location in space and time. Now that we have a grasp on perception, and spatial relations, we will see how these elements change over time. To do this we will look at place through the lenses of evolution, preservation, and inhabitation.

The theory of evolution as outlined by Charles Darwin in his 1859 book titled *On the Origin of Species* indicates that all species of life has descended over time from a common ancestry. He claims that this branching pattern of evolution is the result of natural selection, where only the most suited specimen survive.<sup>1</sup> Darwin's theory, though controversial at the time, is now widely accepted as fact and can shed light on the patterns of human development. Buildings and organic matter, particularly plant life, are not all that different; they just operate on different scales. If you were to consider the city as an ecosystem in and of itself, you would find a complex set of relationships among the resources, habitats, and residents of the area. If a city were viewed from a distance at high speed, it would appear to be alive, its elements continually in motion, organically lighting up and extinguishing, ever growing, contracting, and repairing itself from blight and decay. Understanding these complex relationships between the built form of the city, its use, and its ability through natural selection to evolve into a city more useful for the present needs of a community is



<sup>1</sup> Darwin, On the Origin of Species.

paramount to understanding the sense of a place. To better understand this evolution, we will look at the broad patterns of development in our North American cities.

Before colonization, America was a vast largely unsettled wilderness. Every American city was essentially built from scratch, and while currently most of the cities with the most vibrant urban cores happen to also be among the oldest, only certain cities flourished while others struggled and died out. Why then do certain places succeed while others fail? The answer can largely be explained by evolutionary theory and natural selection through initial and comparative advantages. An initial advantage is one that is gained simply by being first where as a comparative advantage is one that is gained through the desirability of one quality over another.<sup>2</sup> For example, the cities of New York, Providence, and Boston were founded in 1624, 1636, and 1630 respectively. Each of these cities was among the first founded in America and thus, each had an initial advantage over every city that came later. While each of these cities' population growth was similar to start, by the year of the first recorded census in 1790, their populations were 49,401, 6,380, and 18,320 respectively. By 1850 their populations grew to 696,115, 41,513, and 136,881.<sup>3</sup> Its clear that New York pulled substantially away, and while Boston was well on its way to becoming a very influential American city, Providence would never reach the size or prominence of either ever again. This discrepancy is born from a comparative advantage. While all three cities have large ports and access to the Atlantic Ocean, New York and Boston's ports are more easily accessible and New York's port is the most centrally located. By

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### INITIAL ADVANTAGE

(gained through the embodied energy of accomplishing a task first)

### COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

(gained through providing higher quality than the competitors)

<sup>2</sup> Knox, Urbanization.

<sup>3</sup> Largest Cities and Other Urban Places: 1790 to 1990

comparative advantage New York became the largest port of our young country, and thereby the biggest city. But its port no longer runs New York's economy, the city has grown into the financial capital of the country, a transformation that occurred not because of its financial ability or location over anyone else's, but rather simply because it was the biggest city to start with. New York thus has an initial advantage over everyone else in North America, it is the largest city and thus it will continue to be important until some other place offers qualities that are so compelling it makes sense to move out. Therefore, through this process of evolution and natural selection our cities are shaped and formed. This natural selection refines our cities, sculpting more relevant and stable communities. One of the reasons the cities of Europe are so well established is because throughout their existence they have continually adapted to meet new challenges, providing a diversification of resources that makes them more equipped to address present obstacles. Like evolution, our cities move towards a greater complexity. Kevin Lynch alludes to this complexity, arguing for "a landscape whose depth no one period can equal."1 Through such an environment, an undeniably strong sense of place is created.

#### WE HAVE MADE BUILDINGS TO BE DISPOSABLE

One of the things that are problematic about the present trend of development is that they are modeled to be specifically successful for only one purpose, economic success. This is not necessarily a different approach than that of our ancestors, but

1 Lynch, What Time is this Place?



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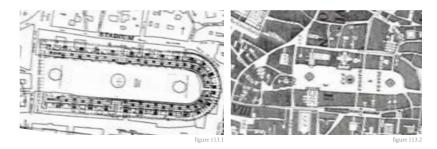
figure 111

rather its trajectory is what is problematic. We have made building cheap enough that it can be disposable, and thus it is feasible to create buildings with intended purposes and lifespan. This is detrimental to place because this specificity does not easily allow for change, creating structures that become obsolete quickly. Moreover it is cheaper to build new than it is to rehab these existing structures. No initial advantage is ever allowed to form, and each generation is responsible for rebuilding the short-sided development of the past. This leaves a barren landscape of waste behind that is not conducive to living, creating environments that are largely placeless. This is one of the problems of present American thinking where we see land as an infinite resource, a thought that is very different than in Europe where there is little undeveloped land left, and thus building is treated with more responsibility. American cities are learning the hard way that it is easy to do something first, but after work is done it becomes much harder or perhaps even impossible to undo and replace. One particularly fascinating example of the resilience of past structure to influence future development can be seen in the present day Piazza Navona in Rome. Now a celebrated and vibrant public square, the site follows the exact form of the Stadium of Domitian, build in the first century AD. Undeniably, every thing built shapes place, and its influence is often longer lasting than originally imagined.

But what happens when place is destroyed? All through time, disaster, war, and most recently, urban renewal, have erased strongly rooted places. What can be done in these instances, how can place be rebuilt and replaced? Firstly, if the place maintains

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its community, it will be rebuilt, and place will return. But when such disasters occur, the initial advantage is lost, and often rather than rebuild, people simply move to a place with a comparative advantage. This is precisely the challenge that faces most Midwestern cities today in America. Through the course of westward expansion, the cities saw their initial advantages being chipped away at by the comparative advantages of the West Coast, and in an attempt to compete they tried to remarket themselves through the cleansing hands of urban renewal. But instead of addressing the actual underlying problems, these cities destroyed their hard worked initial advantages, and were left struggling to hold on to anything. That, then, becomes the question: how do we convince people of the comparative advantage of urban living? This is not an easy answer, but one place to begin is by leveraging the initial advantage of the past through preservation and urban infill.



#### PRESERVATION

Preservation in the United States was somewhat slow to develop in comparison to its counterpart in Europe. The effort on the national level began with a series of legislations at the end of the 19th century that provided power to largely protect what would become the national park system. The Historic Sites and Buildings Act of 1935 aided interest in the preservation movement and in 1949 there was finally established a National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide leadership, education, and advocacy for preservation in America. In 1963, New York's Penn Station was tragically demolished before local organizations could step in, and in 1966 the National Historic Preservation Act was passed which established the National Register of Historic Places, a number of grant and aid programs as well advisory councils to help aid the states individual preservation needs. Today there are many different aid-programs and tax incentives that drive preservation work; this money helps offset the high costs of rehabilitation and helps preserve our past treasures for the future.<sup>1</sup>

Not everyone though believes that Historic Preservation is so advantageous, in fact, acclaimed architect Rem Koolhaas argues in his 2011 exhibit for the New Museum titled *Cronocaos*, that preservation restricts progress and actually washes clean the very heritage we're trying to preserve. He believes preservation and progress are two sides of the same coin, developing in opposition along side each other. He cites in his keynote speech, that the advent of preservation initiatives in Europe coincided with the French Revolution (the Commission des Monuments, 1790) and then the English Industrial Revolution (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 1877).



<sup>1</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation

From there he adeptly notes that preservation has more or less gained support with the progress of modernism, which is to say the trend of dislocation and capitalist development that compliments it. It is natural to protect something when it becomes in danger of being destroyed; "As nature is despoiled, you make parks; as history is profaned, you declare monuments".<sup>2</sup> Koolhaas argues that while in its beginning, only the monuments from antiquity were protected, now instead of needing to be 2,000 years old, or even 200 years, things are being preserved today that are less than 20 years old. Eventually he predicts, "It will become prospective. We will preserve things before they are even finished."<sup>3</sup> This claim is not so far fetched, given his very design for his 1998 Maison a Bordeaux house in France was declared a national monument just three years after completion. In fact, Koolhaas suggests, all be it only semi-seriously, that UNESCO create a "Convention Concerning the Demolition of World Cultural Junk" to compliment is "Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and National Heritage". Koolhaas's arguments though point out the flaws in the present system without providing any tangible ideas for their improvement. He claims that minimalist renovations of historic structures cleanse the building of much of its character and yet he argues for unimpeded forward progress. Gentrification is a real problem, one that is unfortunately often promoted with preservation, but to be anti-gentrification would also to be anti-progress. The core of Koolhaas's argument, though, is read loud and clear; it's not the act of preservation that is at fault so much as our exponential broadening of its scope. While history is important to our cultural development, if we go so far as to preserve every aspect,

3 Koolhaas, Cronocaos.

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we become hoarders of the past, and in effect, prisoners of the present. On the other extreme if we constantly erase our past, we would loose the identity, authenticity, character, and charm of our culture.

### "THE DANGER OF REVIVAL IS A LOSS OF THE PAST."

Kevin Lynch discusses this very issue at length in his book *What Time is this Place*? In this work, he indicates that the most desirable image of place is "one that celebrates and enlarges the present while making connections with the past and the future." This notion of connecting to the past, present, and future is in its essence a palimpsest of place. In order to have a full understanding of place, it is most important to have a positive sense of the present. However, it would be impossible to understand the present without an understanding of what came before. As Lynch puts it, "the danger of revival is a loss of the past." We need to understand the impact we have on place and make changes carefully. It is important to remember, too, that cities cannot be built overnight. Our affinity for the old encompasses everything before a certain date. Only the best structures survive the test of time and, in tune with our analysis of memory, our understanding of the way things used to be is little more than a romanticized idealism. In this sense it is important to preserve the great, but it can be equally important to preserve the mundane. Small towns will band together to save a church, but few people get upset when a prominent factory is torn down.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, Can Rem Koolhaas Save Architecture from Preservation?





**08** 

-118-

Ordinary buildings often can be most telling of our past, and their preservation will help, as Lynch argues, to create "a landscape whose depth no one period can equal."<sup>4</sup>

### IF WE GO SO FAR AS TO PRESERVE EVERY ASPECT, WE BECOME HOARDERS OF THE PAST.

Central to a strong reading of place too is not just a connection with the past and present, but also a prospect for the future. As we have seen in Koolhaas's argument that preservation and progress are often in opposition to each other. We see that we should be more selective in what we preserve, being open to growth and change. Lynch on the other hand argues, "Historic structures are not so much irreplaceable as rarely replaced."<sup>5</sup> This to me seems to be the true problem, especially in America, where auto centric planning has eroded our urban cores. I believe preservation is a huge step to reverse this cycle of suburbanization and disinvestment, but it is only one tool of many that we should be using. If we are to bring vitality to our cities again, we will need to learn how to replace our missing historic structures with quality buildings that will promote healthy and long-term inhabitation of our urban areas.

4 Lynch, What Time is this Place? 5 Lynch, What Time is this Place?



08



figure 122





#### (freedom)

ART GRAPHIC DESIGN FASHION DESIGN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INTERIOR DESIGN ARCHITECTURE URBAN PLANNING

### INHABITATION

Inhabiting is central to our humanity. We cannot sustain ourselves without place. Heidegger calls this dwelling, which he defines as "The way in which you are and I am, the way in which we humans are on the Earth is dwelling."<sup>1</sup> Each generation is required to inhabit the place of their ancestors, and generally speaking the only choice that is offered is the reinterpretation of the past and the planning of the future. But as Koolhaas noted, the preservation of the past and progress into the future are often in opposition to each other. The challenges now though that face many American cities, particularly those in the Midwest, is that we are now entering an era of choice.

As noted before, one of the things globalization has done is that it has effectively collapsed time and space such that the entire world can be connected in an instant. This has afforded an unbelievable amount of choice in our lives. This choice extends too to not just basic commodities like food and clothing, but to fundamental choices like where you want to live. Previously location was not so much a choice as a necessity, jobs were created based on their geographic locations and people went where the work was. People still move primarily for jobs, but jobs are choosing where they want to be based on who can offer the best lifestyle. This means that those cities that have initial advantages of being the largest or those cities that have the comparative advantages of being in the most desirable setting will win the workforce. This by and

1 Heidegger, Building, Dwelling, Thinking.

(responsibility)

large leaves the Midwest hung out to dry. But this lack of interest does create an opportunity for these cities, one of freedom of expression, available resources, and low cost of living. The theory of shrinking cities indicates that these can loose population, but through activism and public practice, re-order their cities into vibrant communities.<sup>2</sup>

### WE NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE WHERE WE WANT TO LIVE

The knee jerk reaction to these issues is to try and attract tourism and suburbanites by creating entertainment centers. This can be a good start, quickly bringing in revenue, but these types of projects are subject to failure, and don't treat the underlying illness, a failing economy. I won't pretend to know how to jumpstart a failing economy but I do know that in order to have a place you first need residents. If we want to fix our urban centers we need to get people living downtown once again, which means creating infrastructure at the pedestrian scale to allow this to happen. Unfortunately, most Midwestern cities have an excess of housing as opposed to a demand, thus beginning to reinvest in our urban neighborhoods is a mandatory first step to the reversal of disinvestment. By looking again to the scales of which our

2 Park, Shrinking Cities.





figure 128

### 09

perception is affected by objects will offer some ways to get more mileage out of the resources at hand.

As designers, our ability to influence place extends only to the tools we have at our disposal. For the most part, the making of place is discussed primarily among the architecture and urban planning communities but its reach extends in some capacity to the entire spectrum of design. This spectrum begins with the fine arts, extends to the fields of graphic, fashion, industrial, and interior design and finishes with architecture and urban planning. All design first begins with theory. Theory is a set of principles that are applied to the design process to produce a product through practice. This relationship between theory, design, and practice is important because at each phase a translation occurs and disconnects between intention and production surface. This is especially true at the large end of the design spectrum where the creation of buildings and neighborhoods requires much coordination and expertise. This type of design carries a responsibility for function, safety, and general welfare that makes its evolution somewhat sluggish and lagging in comparison to the arts and design. This less restricted side of the spectrum is largely free to experiment as it pleases, and has less disconnect between intention and production. Because these products are smaller and more manageable, they can be produced faster, which inevitably means that they are consumed more often. This means that by engaging these less restricted practices of design we have a greater capacity to quickly affect the

## (ORG)

way people interact with place. For example, placing art installations in vacant storefronts and adding banners or street signage could bring life and vibrancy to the area, dramatically changing our perception of a neglected urban business district. However these touches, these signs of inhabitation, need to be constantly up kept and refined, or else they too will contribute to a blighted atmosphere. This speeks both to the importance of social programs and community involvement, but it also speaks to a trending cycle, which we as designers need to respond to. Understanding this cycle is key to understanding where our efforts can be best used and what impact they will have.

Trending cycles are perhaps most easily understood and illustrated through fashion. Style is a distinct manner of expression, which evolves quickly to maintain its aura. On the flip side, fashions change every season, and it doesn't take long for a shirt or a pair of pants to be noticeably out of date. This pace functions at the scale of fashion, but at the scale of buildings and cities, the embodied energy of building is so large that we have to live with our choices for much longer. This means that if we are looking for a quick change in perception of a place, encouraging the arts and design will be felt faster, however their effect too will fade much sooner. Architecture and urban design have the ability to define place for much longer, and for that reason there should be much more consideration of its impact in both the present and the future. This becomes tricky when we have already acknowledged that integral to a strong sense of place is a unique ex-

### 09

pression of atmosphere or character. Ironically, David Miller writes in his book Towards a New Regionalism that "fashion is the enemy of integrity," and that we "should works towards a rational and timeless architecture."<sup>3</sup> Miller is not indicating that architecture should not be fashionable, but rather that it should be able to adapt to the needs and design sensibilities of the future. One of the ways this becomes possible is by engaging the entire spectrum of design and allowing for the change of interiors, furniture, branding, and artwork to take place within the built framework. Better engaging the entire spectrum of design will help us change the image of place more quickly and effectively.

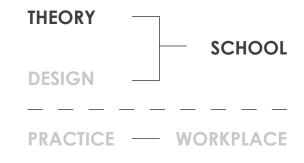
Inhabitation is the ninth and final lens, and with out a doubt the most integral to making place. In fact, necessarily, there cannot be place for humans with out inhabitation. As architects we can only influence place so much as we can put the pieces in play to be inhabited. So often we remove daily life from design, compartmentalizing it into made up factions. Specialization has brought efficiency and expertise to production, but in this division of labor a disconnect has surfaced. Every time a design changes hands, a translation occurs, and the information is interpreted differently. More problematic, perhaps, is that through specialization we focus only on the task at hand, not taking into consideration the tasks of other hands, or even the tasks being performed by nobody's

<sup>3</sup> Miller, Towards a New Regionalism.

## (ORG)

hands. This latter problem is that often today, contributing to the greater public will is not a job for anyone, and the task is left undone. This is why that aside from good design we need better public advocacy and government to aid in the making of place. Architects in particular have the knowledge and understanding of place to make a difference, and their participation in the civic realm can go a long way to improving their communities. The architecture of place is not just a building or a set of drawings. The architecture of place engages our perception of space and time. It grounds itself firmly in theory, going beyond the building scale to engage the entire spectrum of design, and is active in the practice of production, using the translations of scale not as an obstacle, but an opportunity to inform the process every step of the way. The architecture of place pulls from its environment, engaging the unique lighting, scale, topography, and materials of the area. It builds upon the past, engages the present and plans for the future. Ultimately though architectures success as a place making tool will be judged by the way its people use it, and this should be the ultimate goal.

### 09



## 65 E 125TH ST

(1977)



figure 134

# HARLEM

(1980)



(1983)



figure 136



(1988)

(1992)



figure 138



(1996)

(1999)



figure 140



(2001)

(2004)



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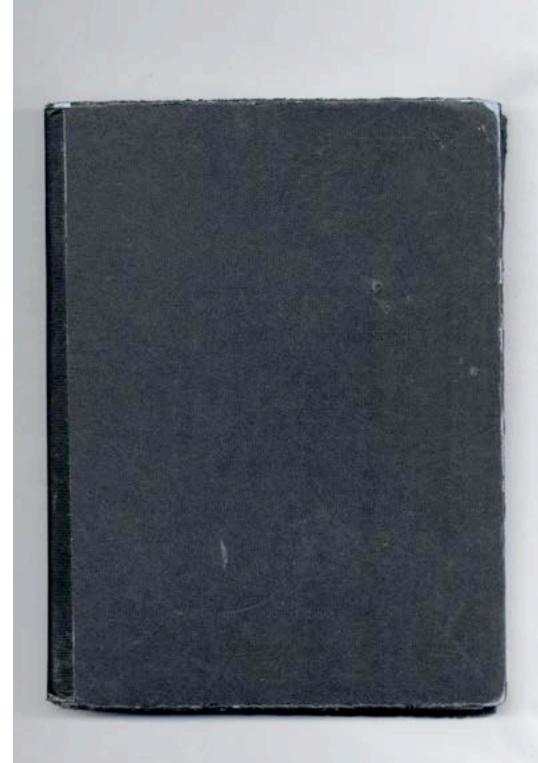
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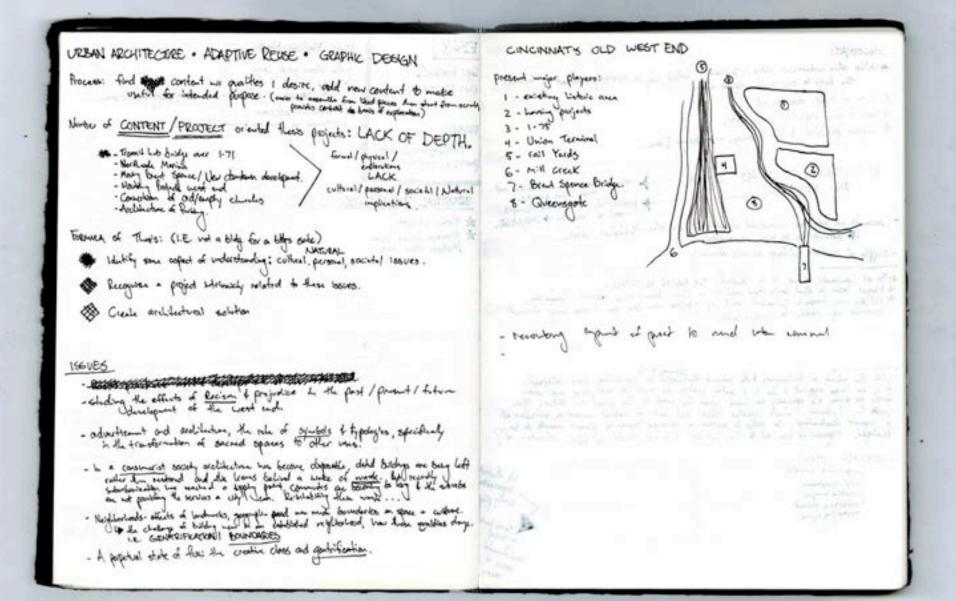
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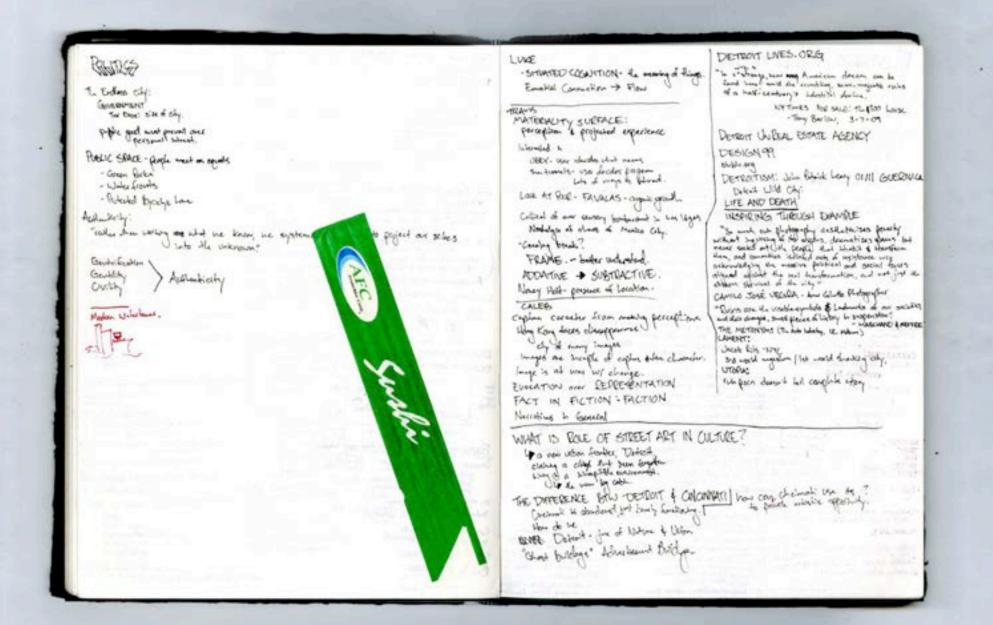
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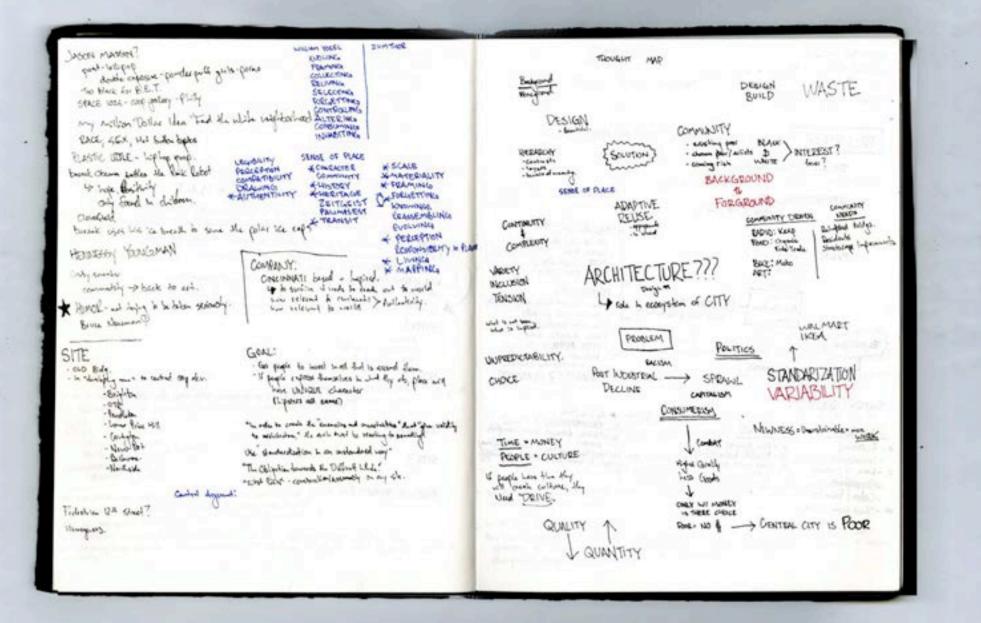
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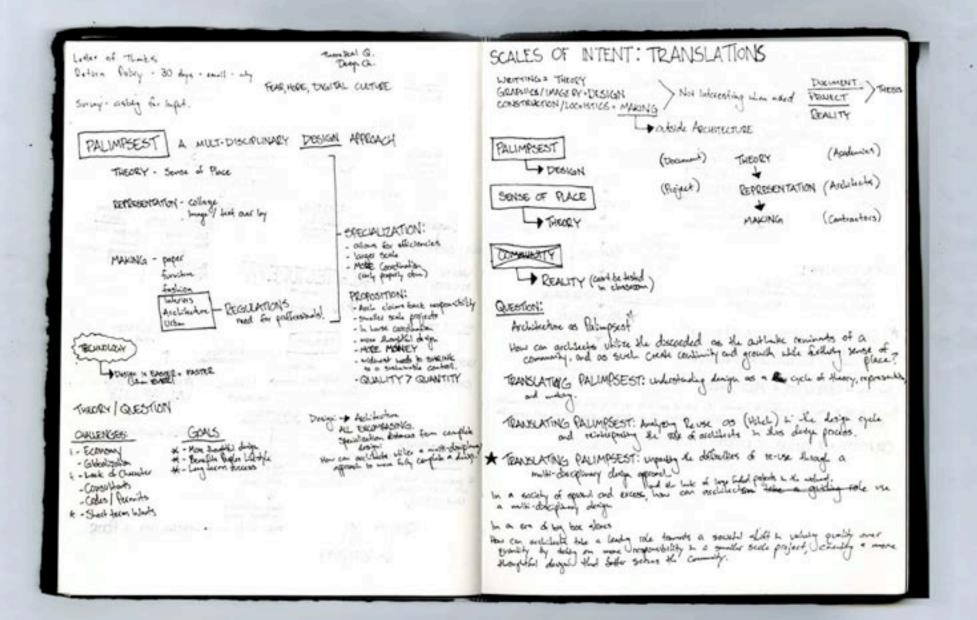
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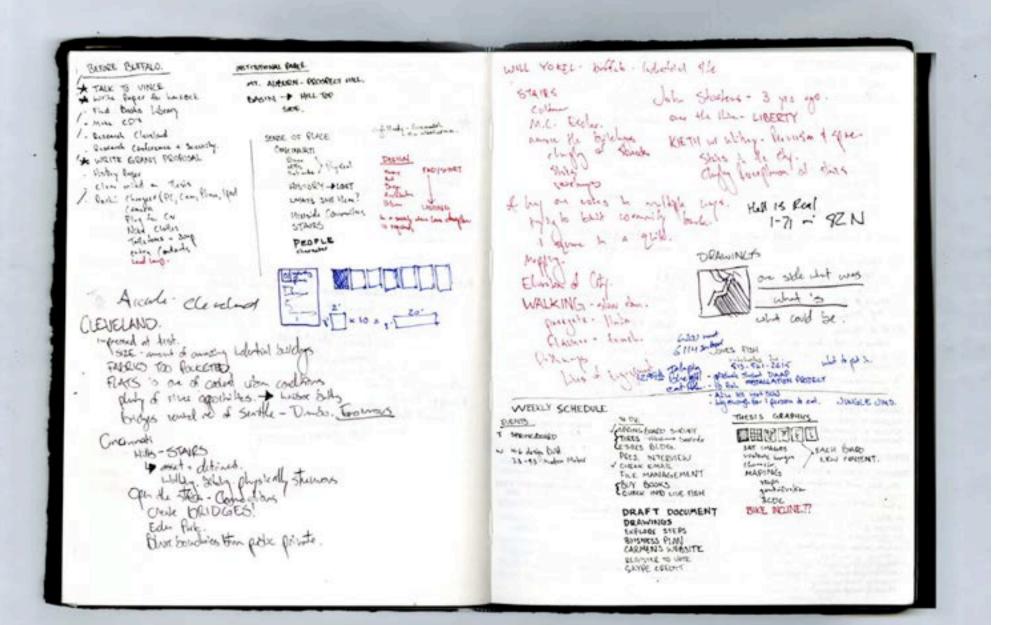
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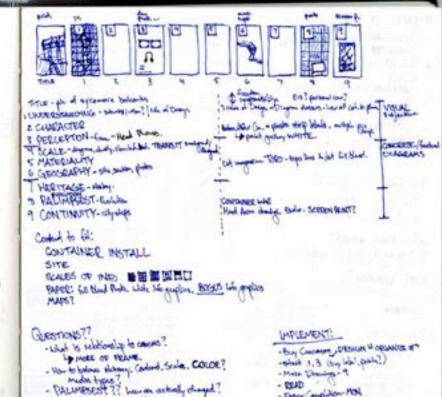
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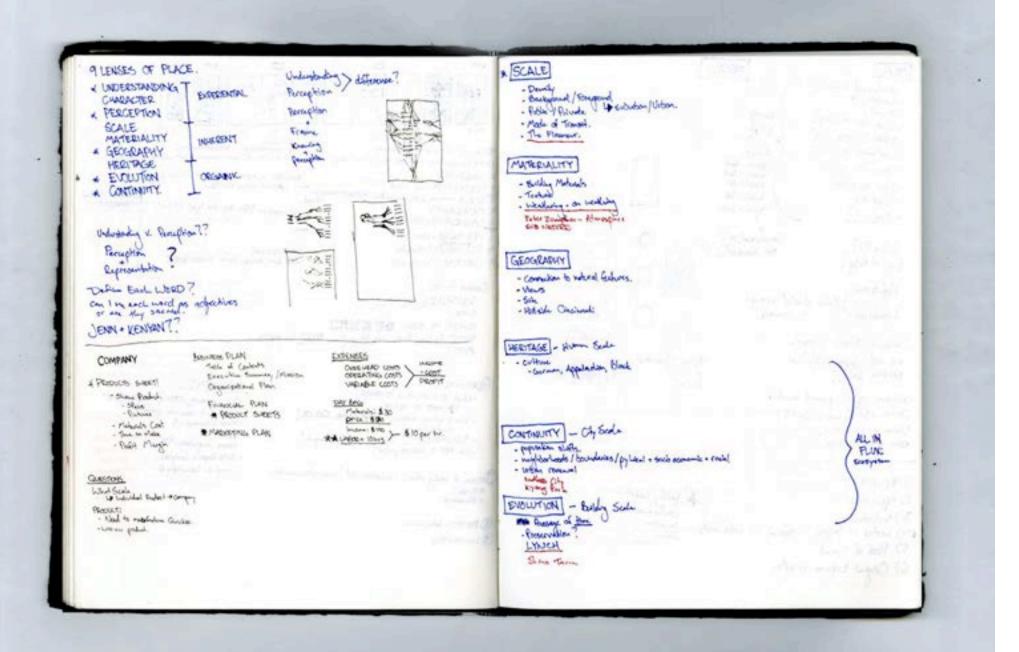
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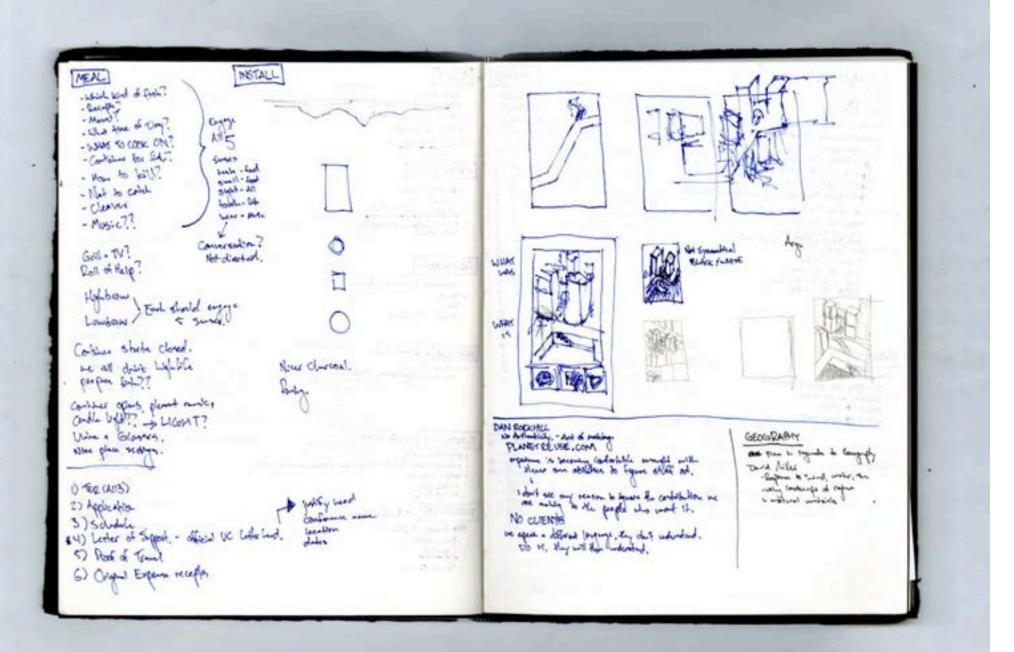
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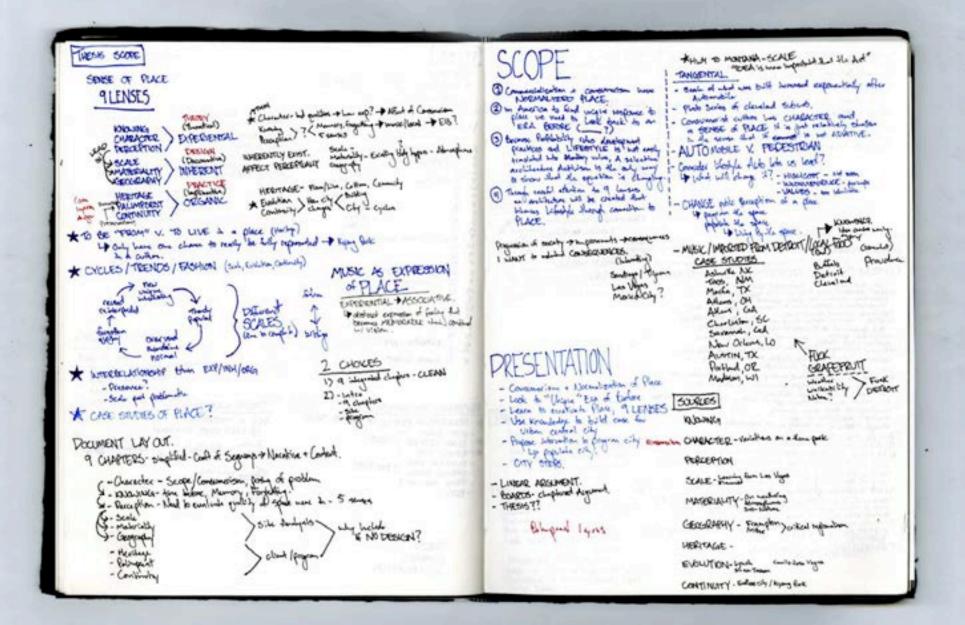
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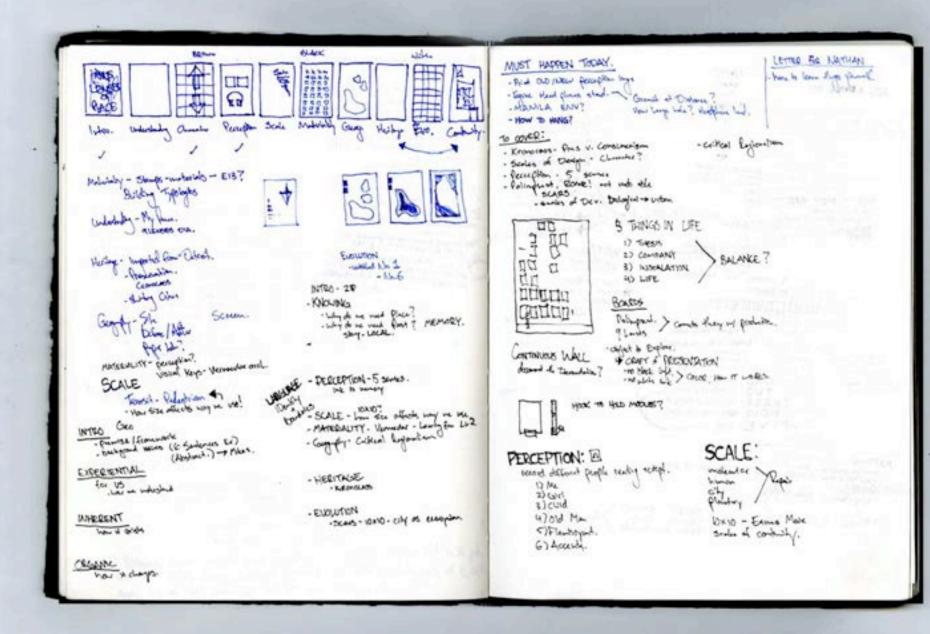
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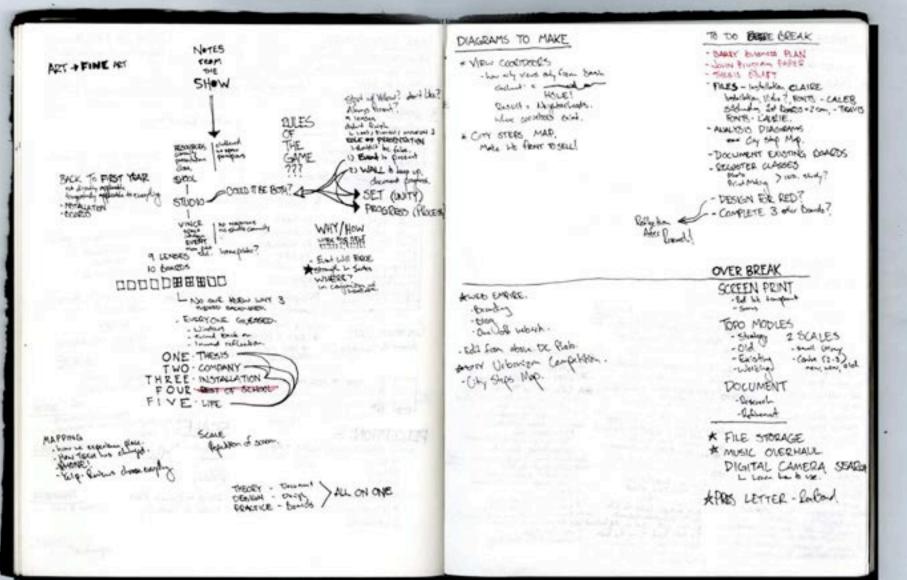
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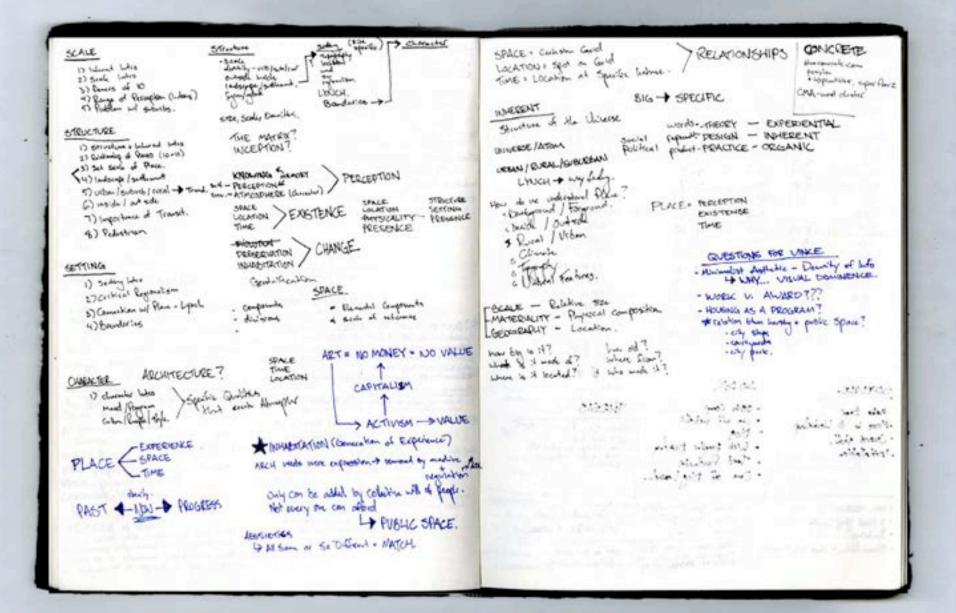
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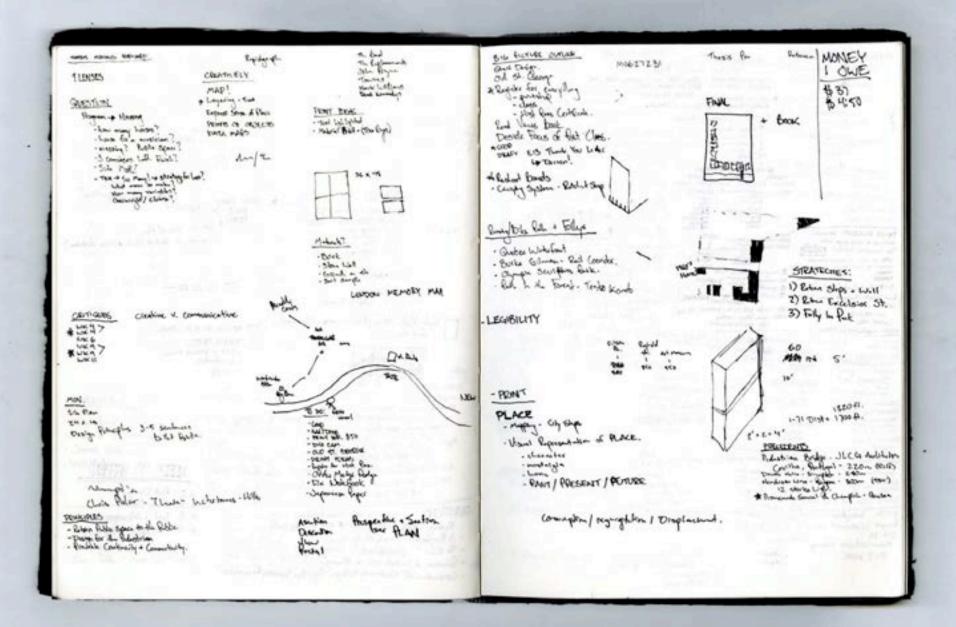
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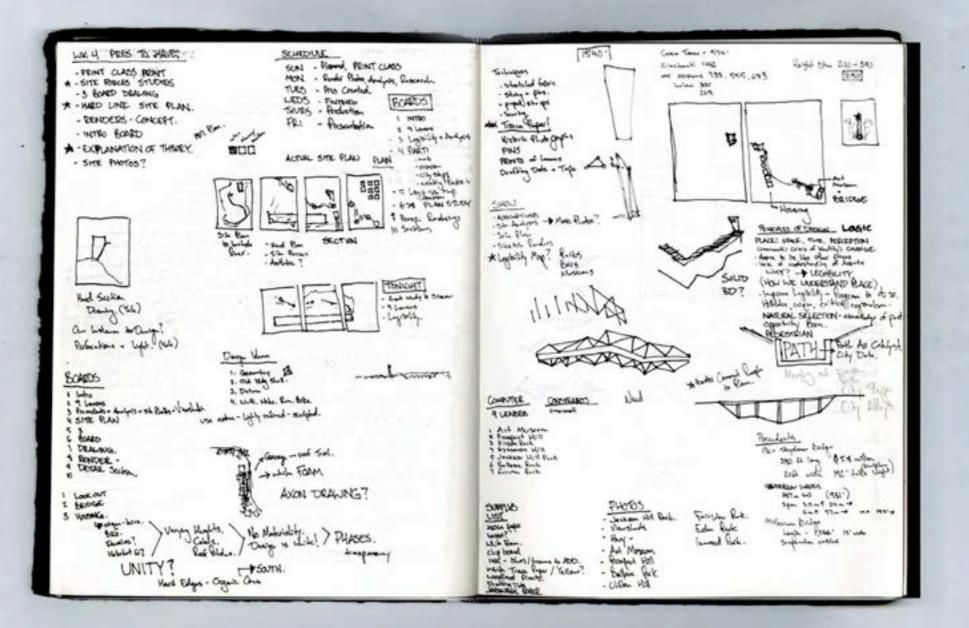
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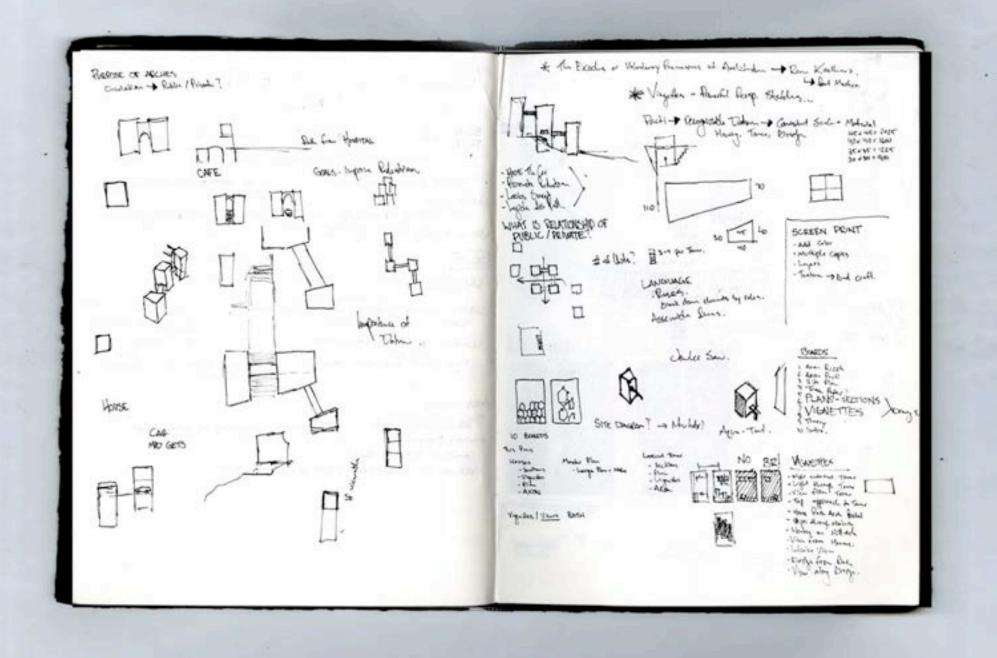


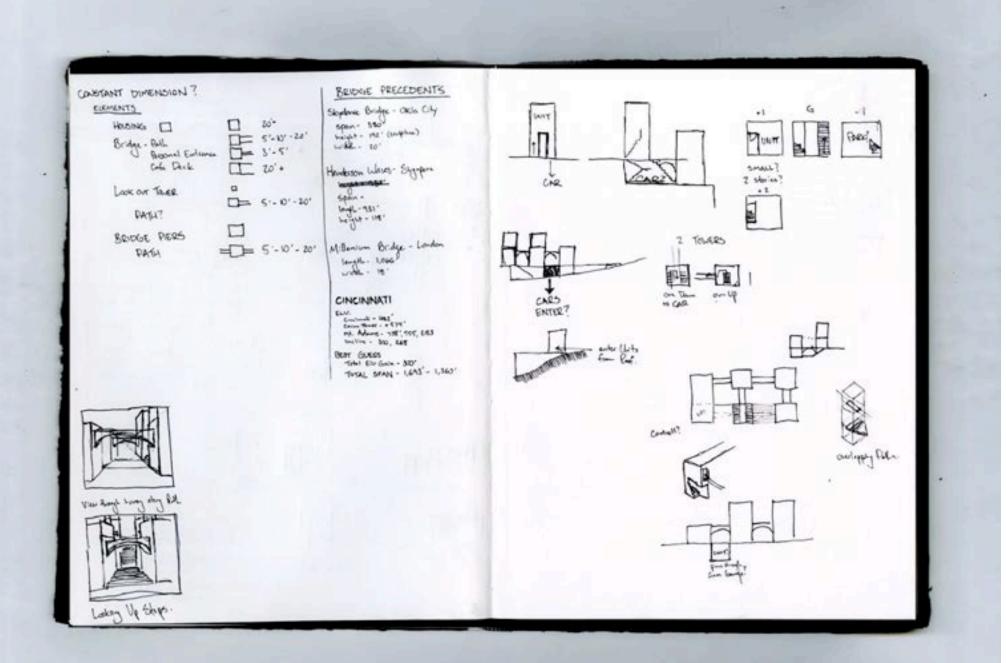


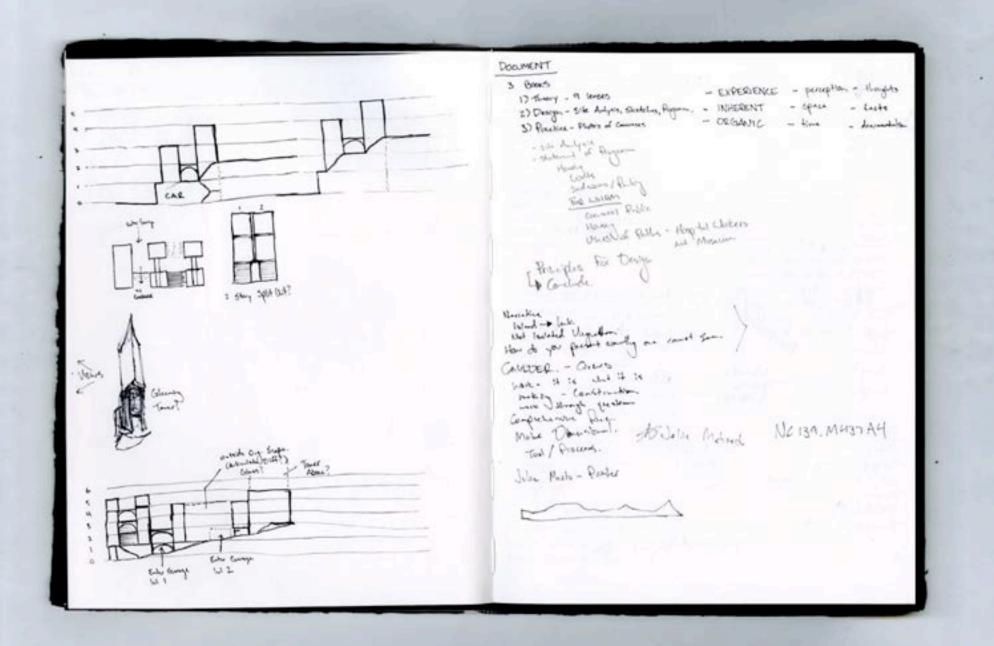
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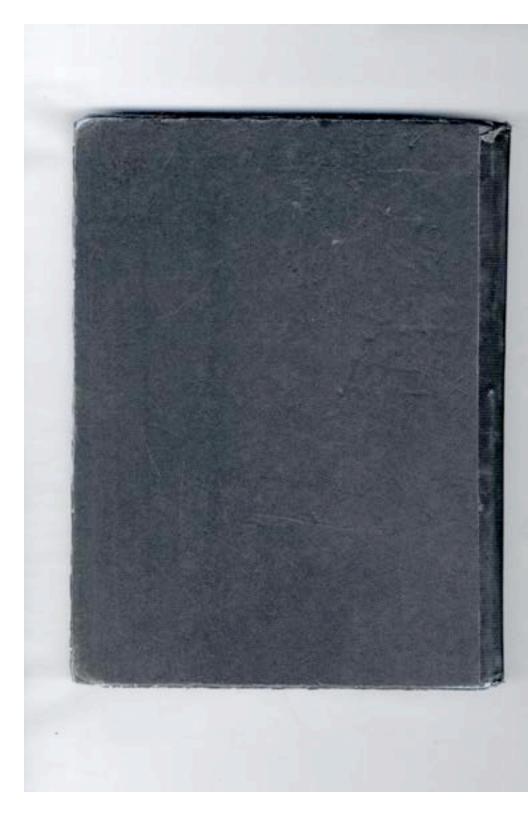


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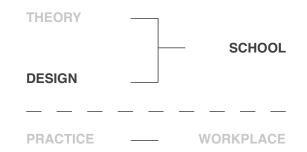
### 9 Lenses of Place

A thesis submitted to the University of Cincinnati, Division of Research and Advanced Studies For fulfillment for a Master of Architecture In the School of Architecture and Interior Design of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

#### Ryan Ball

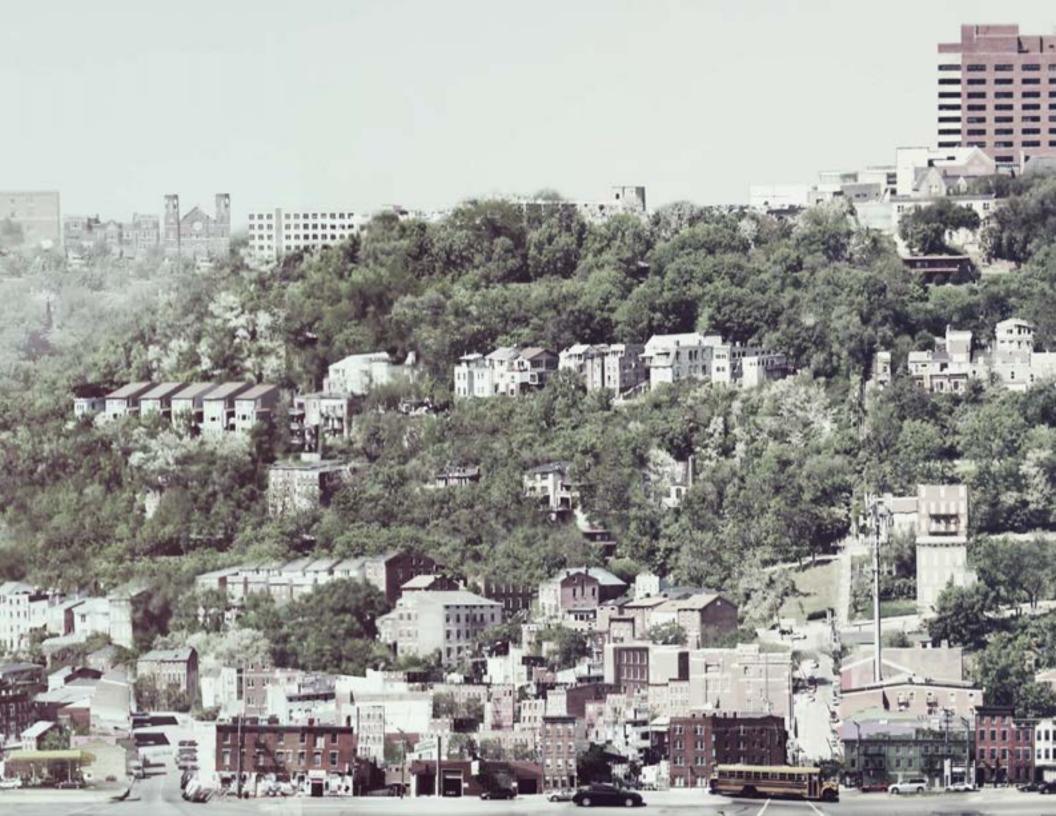
Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2010

Jeffrey Tilman, Associate Professor of Architecture Vincent Sansalone, Associate Professor of Architecture



## **A BOOK OF DESIGN**







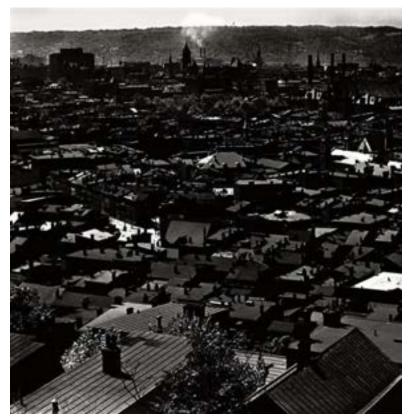
### CINCINNATI

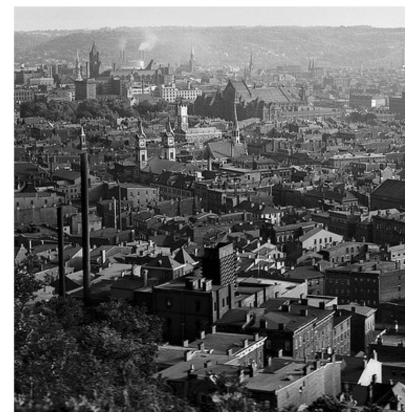
Beginning this thesis discourse I knew for certain I would choose a site in Cincinnati and that I would engage the unique conditions that define its sense of place. Cincinnati is a place I know well, having grown up here, yet I am still finding new and interesting places I never knew existed. It is a city that has a strong tradition, but is in the midst of an identity crisis, not excepting its strengths as they are and constantly trying to be seen as something its not. Cincinnati is a city that once held over 500,000 people, but now has shrunk to just under 300,000. Like other mid-western cities, Cincinnati has seen its inner city deteriorate into a bed of crime and neglect, abandoned in favor of suburbanization and our love of the automobile. Cincinnati though is not a shrinking

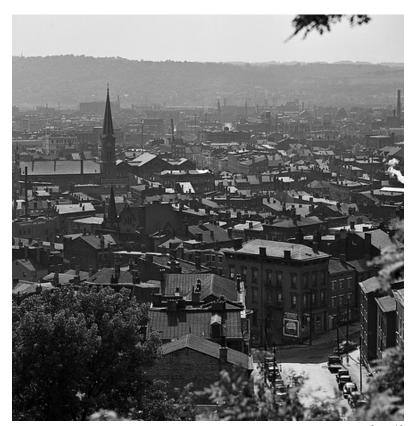
city. Unlike Cleveland and Detroit where miles of homes have been vacated and there is a real need to consolidate the cities population and resources, Cincinnati's urban core is remarkably dense, and with the very large exception of the west end, surprisingly intact. Its Over the Rhine neighborhood is the largest intact urban district on the National Register of Historic Places and its architectural significance is compared to the French Quarter in New Orleans, the historic districts of Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, and Greenwhich Village in New York City. This gives Cincinnati an obvious advantage over other Midwestern cities in that it can offer a walkable, dense, architecturally rich, and highly livable urban environment. However at present, the central basin is hardly functional. Most locals have long perceived the area as dangerous and undesirable, but in recent years this perception has begun to shift. After the riots of 2001, property values in Over the Rhine dropped significantly allowing 3CDC (a non-profit funded largely by corporate donations) and other developers to land bank large amounts of properties with the intention of much needed rehabilitation. These moves have received mixed reviews, one side arguing for progress and the other protecting the rights of the current residents, arguing for affordable housing and social programs. One thing is clear though, significant change is happening in the basin. In an economic recession Cincinnati has seen a new river front begin to take shape in the Banks project, a new tallest building in the Great American Insurance Tower, a complete redevelopment of

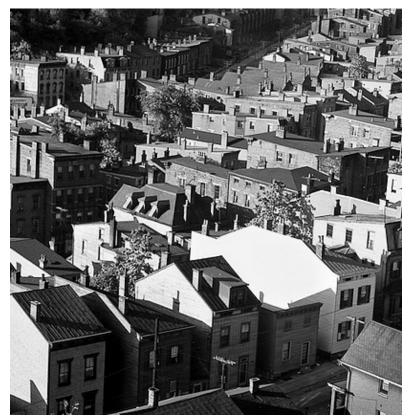
Washington Park along with rehabilitations of the renown Emery Theater and Music Hall, watched the ground breaking for a new streetcar network, and is seeing nearly \$300,000 invested in a Casino complex at the Broadway Commons site. The city is ripe for a renaissance and my interest lies at the confluence of these different intentions and opinions. How can we help shape this city in a way that considers the lives of its residents and not just its economic profitability? How can we move forward into the 21st centaury without being bound or ignorant to the accomplishments of the 19th centaury? How can we engage the unique location and history of Cincinnati in a way that makes residents proud to call the city home once again, and perhaps most relevantly, what can design do to change any of this?















## THE SEARCH FOR A SITE

Naturally I began my search for a site by establishing a clear criteria for evaluation: I was looking for a site that offered a real present need for program that would benefit the immediate community, an existing historic context that processed character unique to Cincinnati, and a site that warranted an engaging design. I explored the city with a fine-toothed comb, looking for interesting and forgotten sites that expressed potential. I began with the old West End, a dense neighborhood wiped out by urban renewal and the Eisenhower Interstate System, but determined that the project was too extensive in scope and not economically ready for large scale investment. I shifted focus, falling on industrial sites along the Licking River, new steeples for the burned and neglected Old St. George near the University of Cincinnati's campus, and a plan that engaged the severing of Over the Rhine that occurred during the widening of Liberty St. in the 1950's. Ultimately though, each proved dissatisfactory by one of the aforementioned criteria and my search continued, before ultimately landing on a site high atop Sycamore Hill. I had been looking at the hillsides as a condition unique to Cincinnati, and stumbled upon some sketches by Caroline Williams published in her book Cincinnati Scenes. I became enthralled by the romantic quality of her drawings, interested in determining why many of our hillside communities had disappeared and how these qualities might be returned. A site had been found, and I began researching the hillside communities.



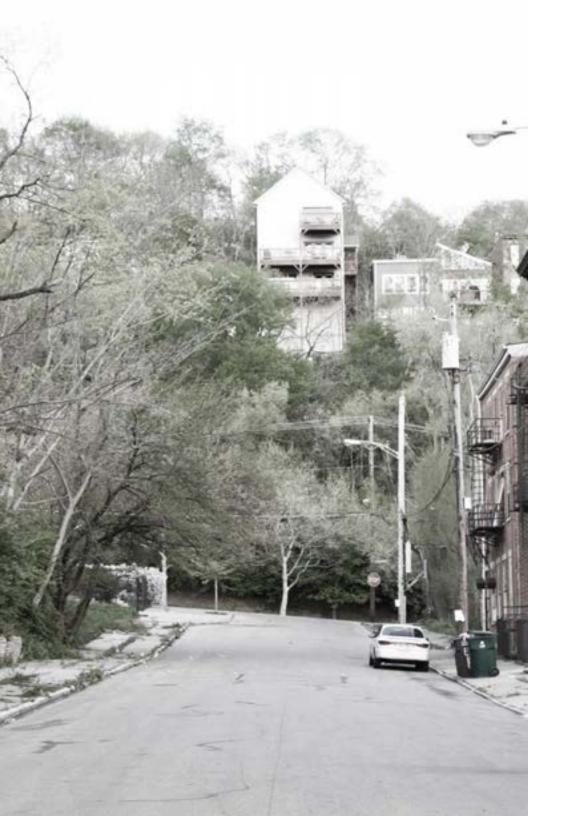












# THE HILLSIDES

The hills of Cincinnati have long defined its residents; their geography creating tight knit communities. Unlike other flat Midwestern cities where neighborhood boundaries blur together, the hills of Cincinnati create strong boundaries and allow each neighborhood to possess its own unique charm. This is an obvious strength, but it can also be problematic. Intercity rivalry pins neighborhoods against each other, creating a disjointed city and making it hard to agree on any thing in city government. Also these boundaries can be so harsh that impoverished and neglected areas can exist very close to successful and well maintained communities. Often these discrepancies seem to exist only because of the embodied energy to bridge such a boundary, and the chosen site high atop Sycamore Hill sits on the crest of just such a boundary.











































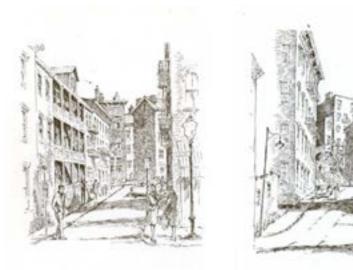










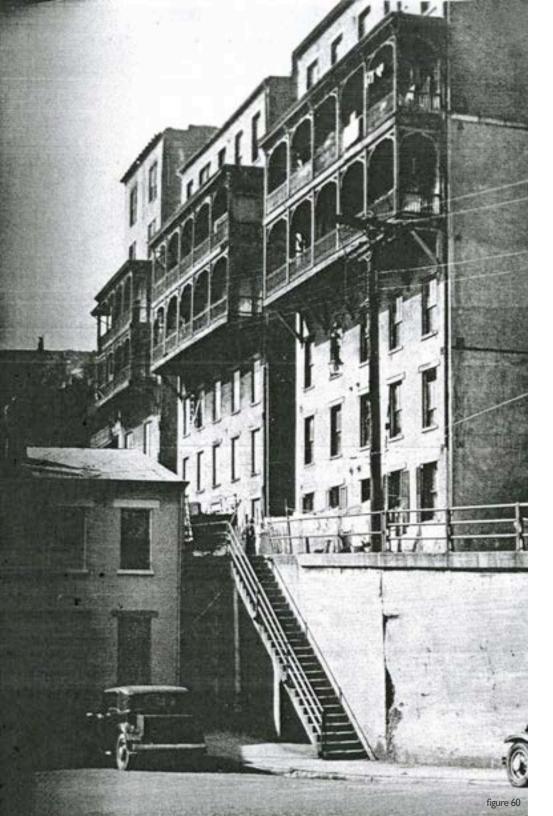












### **MOUNT AUBURN**

Mt. Auburn is surrounded by the highly desirable Prospect Hill and Mt. Adams to the East, the neglected Coryville and Walnut Hills to the North and Northeast, the highly functioning University districts to the West and Northwest, and the highly divided uber-rich and uber-poor Over the Rhine to the South. Mt. Auburn sees every type of person cross its streets and its residents are comprised of the same. The site atop Sycamore Hill offers commanding views of downtown and is ripe for the development of high-end condos or rentals to meet the oversaturated demand of Prospect Hill and Mt. Adams. The site at current lies vacant and would be perfect for someone who works at close by Christ Hospital or a young professional working downtown looking to be close to the bars on Main St.







### AN OPPORTUNITY BORN FROM NEGLECT

When one compares current and historic street maps of Mt. Auburn, it becomes clear that a number of streets no longer exist, and entire circulation patterns leave certain areas very landlocked. As is clear from Caroline Williams sketches and historic maps, Mt. Auburn was once a dense walkable neighborhood that has been eroded by neglect and absorbed by the private interests of Christ Hospital and other entities to the point that at present its community is disjointed and haphazard. Moreover, if you examine the hillside conditions more closely, it is noticed that what was once a densely inhabited hillside has returned to a forested condition. In the case of Jackson Hill Park, this area has been utilized in some capacity for the public but other areas this forest has been left to form a very strange urban condition, a neglected, overgrown, and unused backyard. I began to wonder why the general public couldn't use this area in some capacity. The city had been reclaimed by nature; why not enjoy it?



#### THE FOLLIES

When one compares current and historic street maps of Mt. Auburn, it becomes clear that a number of streets no longer exist, and entire circulation patterns leave certain areas very landlocked. As is clear from Caroline Williams sketches and historic maps, Mt. Auburn was once a dense walkable neighborhood that has been eroded by neglect and absorbed by the private interests of Christ Hospital and other entities to the point that at present its community is disjointed and haphazard. Moreover, if you examine the hillside conditions more closely, it is noticed that what was once a densely inhabited hillside has returned to a forested condition. In the case of Jackson Hill Park, this area has been utilized in some capacity for the public but other areas this forest has been left to form a very strange urban condition, a neglected, overgrown, and unused backyard. I began to wonder why the general public couldn't use this area in some capacity. The city had been reclaimed by nature; why not enjoy it?



Beginning at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the path would bridge the highways connecting Prospect Hill with Mt. Adams, granting greater access to Eden Park. From the East bank of Prospect Hill the path continues to Filson Park, before making use of the abandoned Alma St. in route to my site atop Sycamore Hill. At the Sycamore Hill site the path directly engages a housing development, crossing both the Sycamore St. steps before continuing across the Main St. steps and entering Jackson Hill Park. At Jackson Hill Park phase I of the path terminates at a look out tower, offering access to Mulberry St. below. Phase 2 picks up in Jackson Hill Park and traverses Vine St. Hill to Inwood Park, crossing Vine Street and returning South to Bellevue Park. From Bellevue Park gets slightly harder to define, needing to cross about two blocks of Clifton Heights before terminating in Fairview Park.

### THE PATH

## THE ROUTE

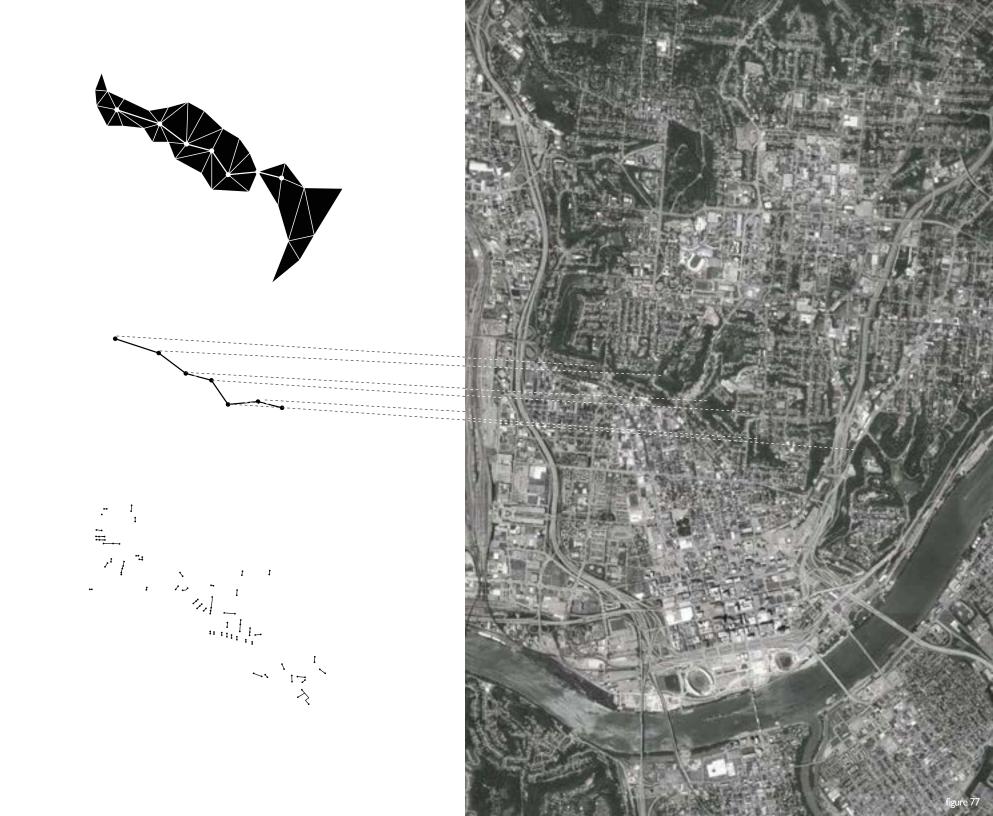


EDEN PARK PROSPECT HILL FILSON PARK MOUNT AUBURN JACKSON HILL PARK

PHASE 1

INWOOD PARK BELLEVUE PARK CUF FAIRVIEW PARK

PHASE 2



























































































































































































































































































































































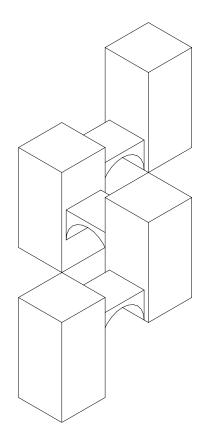






#### LEGIBILITY

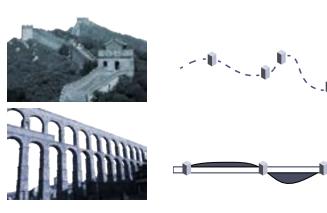
The strength of the path is in its ability to create a legible network of parkscape for the city. Legibility is key. Design only has the capacity to resolve so many issues of place making in and of itself, it is people who make place after all, but through legibility, design can make place easier for people to use. At present the city offers a large amount of amenities, ranking in the top ten in swimming pools, basketball courts, and baseball diamonds nationally. However the issue is that these resources are not legible to the general public, they are tucked away on back streets and often offer only one activity in isolation. The strength of the path is that it connects these attractions, as well as providing new opportunities for recreation such as walking, jogging, and biking while providing a viable east west non-automotive transit option for residents. The architectural follies along this path have the potential to not only bring identity to each individual hillside community, but also to increase the legibility of the network as a whole. Eden Park is consistently voted as one of the top urban parks in the country yet it is isolated from the city, with only one or two roads entering the park. This path has the potential to better open up the attractions of the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Playhouse in the Park, and the Krohn Conservatory to the general public without compromising their park like location.



### NODES WITHIN THE TOPOGRAPHY?

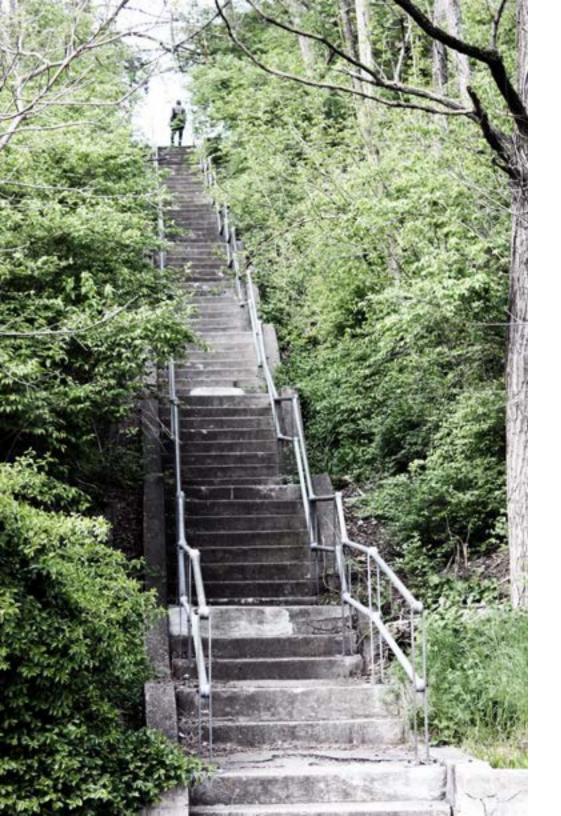
### AND/OR

FORM A MONOLITHIC GESTURE?









### A PEDESTRIAN PLACE

Cincinnati's central city has suffered because of its inability to accommodate the automobile. The effects of suburbanization on the urban city are numerous and far reaching, but this trend is changing, and Cincinnati has an advantage in that many pieces of its urban fabric are intact, the problem is that they have often been severed. An entire generation has now grown up in the suburbs and they are not impressed, they want a walkable urban environment, and they are moving to bigger cities to get it. Creating a legible pedestrian network in the city would link its current assets and provide a catalyst for urban growth. Moreover, more pedestrians in the city would mean more people engaging in the public realm of the city. When we stay in our automobiles or houses, we do not contribute to a greater community, but as a pedestrian we will help shape a stronger sense of place.









### THE PATH AS IT MEETS A LOOKOUT TOWER

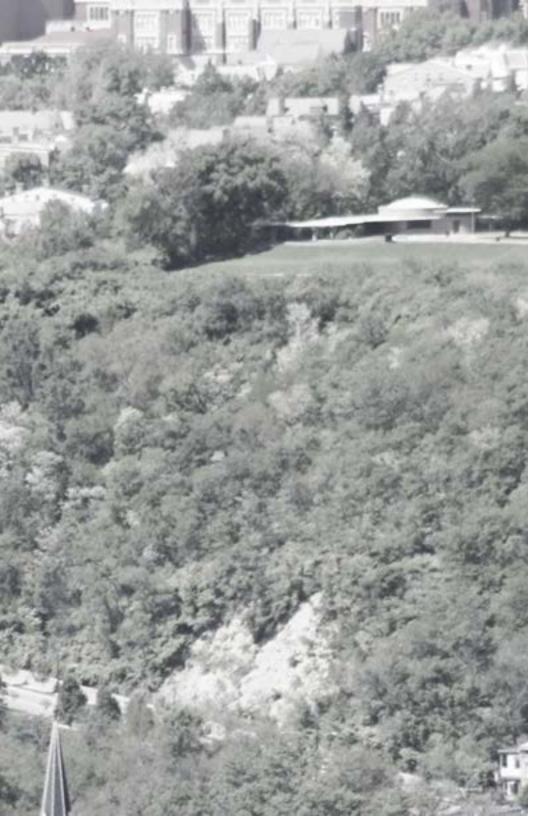
The lookout tower is an exciting program opportunity in that it is experiential by its nature. The tower will obviously address view, and will offer a commanding one from the edge of Jackson Hill Park, but it will also engage light, verticality, and sequence. As the western terminus of phase I, the lookout tower will provide finality to the path as well as offer access to Mulberry St. below. The current condition of Jackson Hill Park is a highly forested one that affords no clear views. I would like to engage this condition by revealing the view slowly as the tree dip below sightlines. The view should be seen as sacred and not revealed at once, but rather controlled to heighten its experiential nature. The climb up the tower from Mulberry St. below will engage light, layering, and verticality. It will need to be well lit naturally, and feel open, but yet not providing the full view while alerting the user to the changing perspective of ascending elevation.

### THE PATH AS IT MEETS HOUSING

The path as it meets housing is programmatically the most complex of the three conditions, which is fitting given that it occupies the site of my original departure atop Sycamore Hill. I am interested in creating an environment that promotes the pedestrian usage of its residents while acknowledging their need for the automobile. As such the site will feature a two-story underground parking garage built into the hill with access on grade. Careful care should be taken to allow access to every unit through a carefully crafted circulation network inspired by the original Caroline Williams sketch of the site. In the center of the project, the envisioned path will intersect the historic city steps, which will be restored to connect Sycamore St. to Christ Hospital. A café will be included in the complex to offer a walkable lunch option for the workers of Christ Hospital, promoting pedestrian interaction with Mt. Auburn and allowing them to regularly take in the spectacular views, better connecting them to their city. The housing units will be inspired by the Cincinnati row house vernacular and utilize a fixed module to step down the site.

### THE PATH AS IT MEETS A BRIDGE

The path as it meets a bridge is infrastructurally the most demanding, calling for a bridge to span I-71 and connect Mt. Adams with Prospect Hill. Even though the path as I am accounting for begins at the Cincinnati Art Museums front door, it is not a terminus of the path as it is meant to be a natural transition to the existing paths of Eden Park. The bridge though does provide a programmatic opportunity for the Art Museum. The receiving area for the bridge could house a sculpture garden, a tactic that has proved wildly successful in both Seattle and Minneapolis at both drawing in visitors from the city and as a way to improve the surrounding public realm. The bridge will offer commanding views of the city and should provide places for observation as well as places to stop and rest or converse.



### **ENGAGING THE NINE LENSES**

The principles of design should directly extend from the development of the nine lenses of place. It should be noted that design does not have an equal capacity to affect each of the nine lenses, but in every case there is a factor of influence. For example, the inherent lenses deal with spatial qualities and are the most directly applicable to architecture. As such, a careful manipulation of the scale, materiality, and geography will be key, as will promoting the legibility and pedestrian nature of the path, and as well, allowing for an interpretation of the sites historic context.



# (EXP)

### №1 №2 №3

### CATER TO THE PEDESTRIAN

Key to my research on perception is the observation that we experience place most fully as a pedestrian. Promoting the pedestrian lifestyle will be the first step towards promoting a stronger sense of place. The design should cater to the needs of the pedestrian, satisfying demands of ease of use, rest, observation, and interaction.

### **CREATE A LEGIBLE NETWORK**

Creating a legible network is key to attracting new users to a new pedestrian lifestyle. If this development is to maximize its capacity to promote lifestyle and recruit residents back into the city, there needs to be a clear expression of path. Most Cincinnatians are not used to walking or biking as a means of transit, they will want to know that they will be safe and won't get lost. These problems can be solved through legibility, and legibility can be solved through clarity and consistency in the integration of the inherent lenses.



# (INH)

### four five six

### SCALE

First and foremost the urban scale of this project should always cater to the pedestrian. This means tactics should be used to hide the automobile and facades, paths, doors, and windows should all be at the human scale. Secondly to increase legibility there should be established a module with the purpose of providing consistency throughout the entire project. This module will have the opportunity to be articulated differently for its different purposes as well as be manipulated in one of its dimensions. Though each piece should read as a distinct entity, there should be a formal language that links all of them into a clear and legible network.

### MATERIALITY

In order to promote legibility, like materials should be selected for the use over the entire path. These materials should respond to their individual needs as well as their historic context.

### GEOGRAPHY

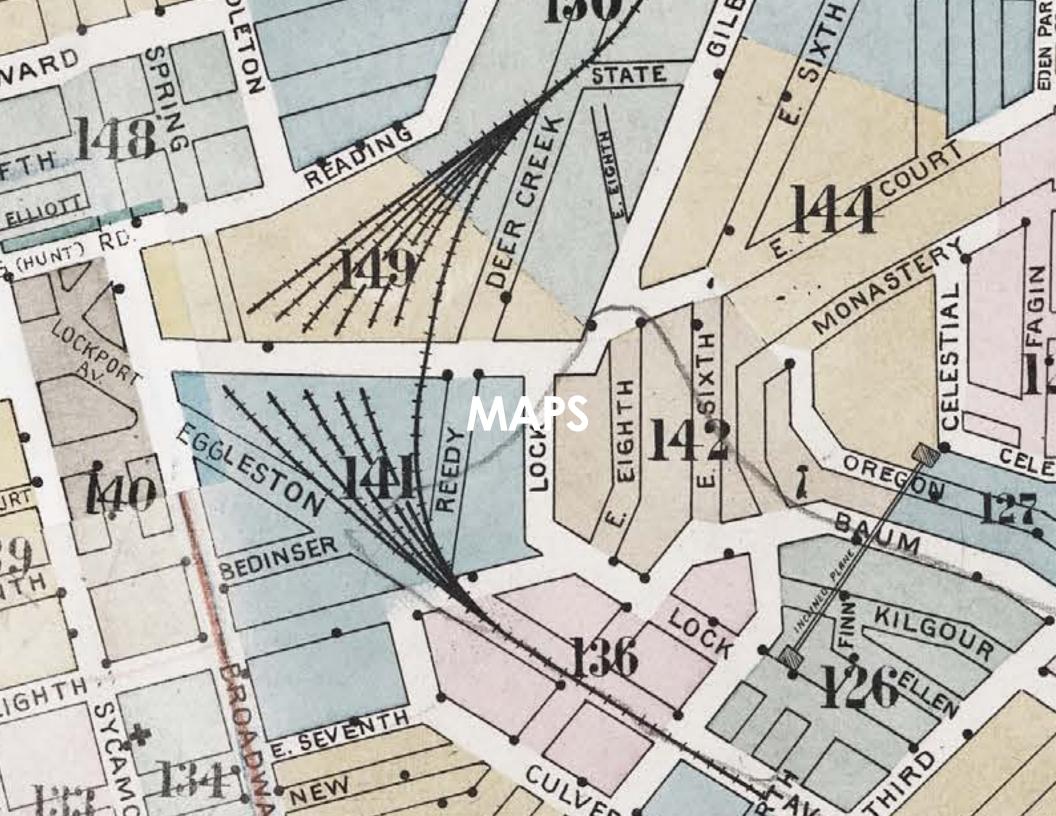
Each structure should engage the unique topography of its site. When possible, the path should take the flattest navigable route to promote ease of use. The entire site has a strong southern exposure and should take passive heating and cooling needs into consideration when possible. Also there are significant opportunities for views throughout the site; views should be maximized where possible, views should be framed at moments rather than always present to maximize impact.

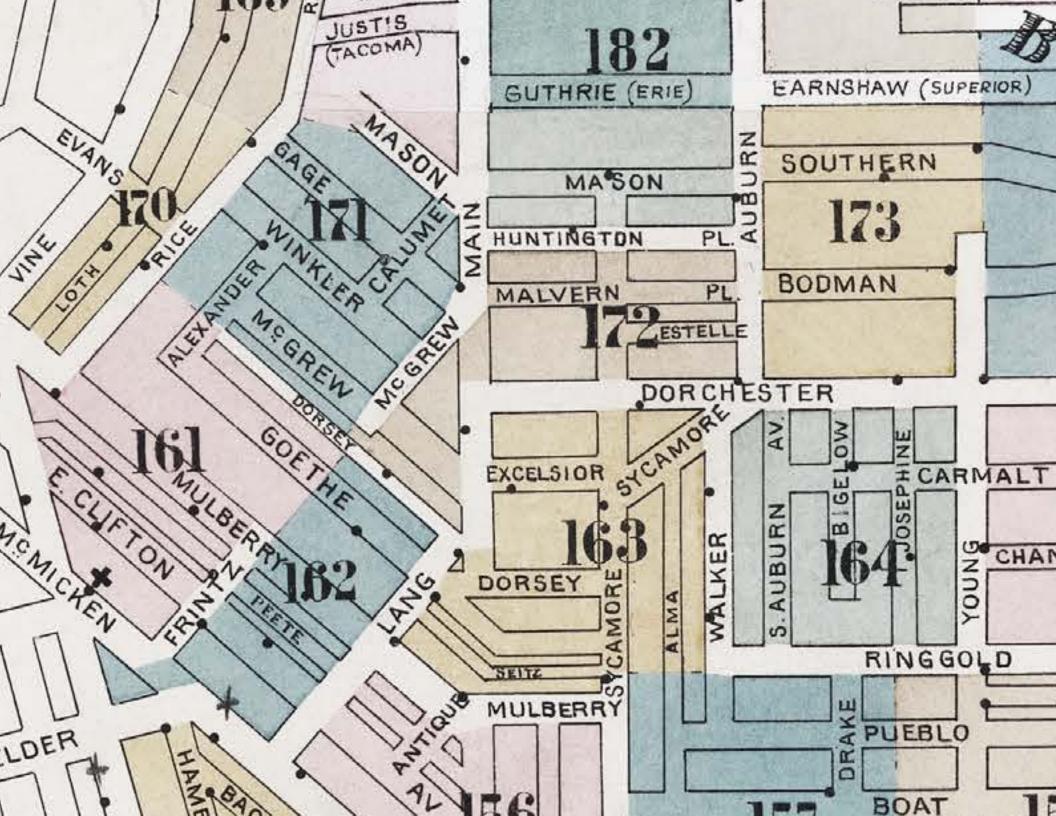


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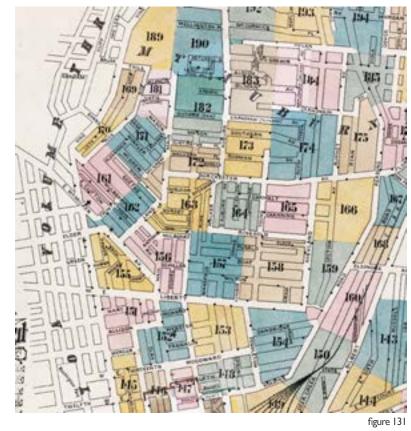
### **RESPONDING TO THE HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The opportunity for this path was born out of natural selection; nature took back the hillsides from the city. In many cases though elements of the original development remain, and should be expressed as such. Signage and historic photos from vantage points are one way to remind the general public of the historic context. Another, like in the Sycamore Hill site, would be to reconnect and reinterpret the original structures of the site. Also the project must be respectful to the surviving historic structures, careful not to be out of scale or altering to their purpose, and material selection should be compatible and respectful.



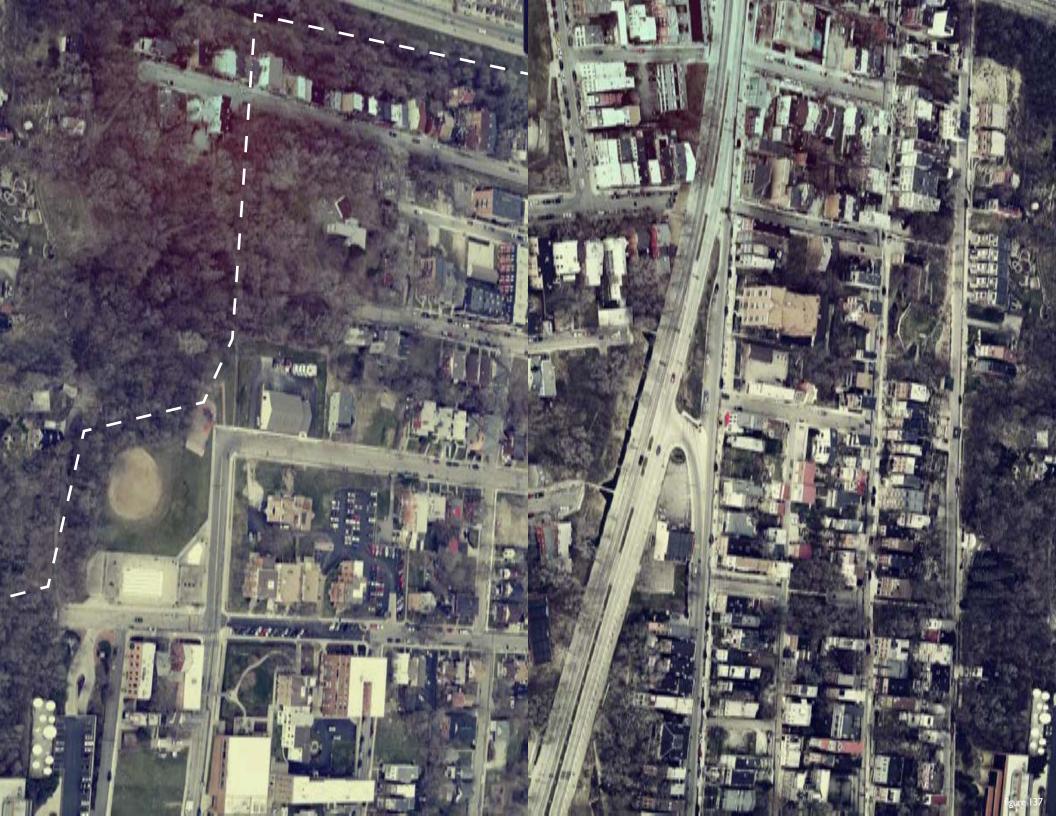


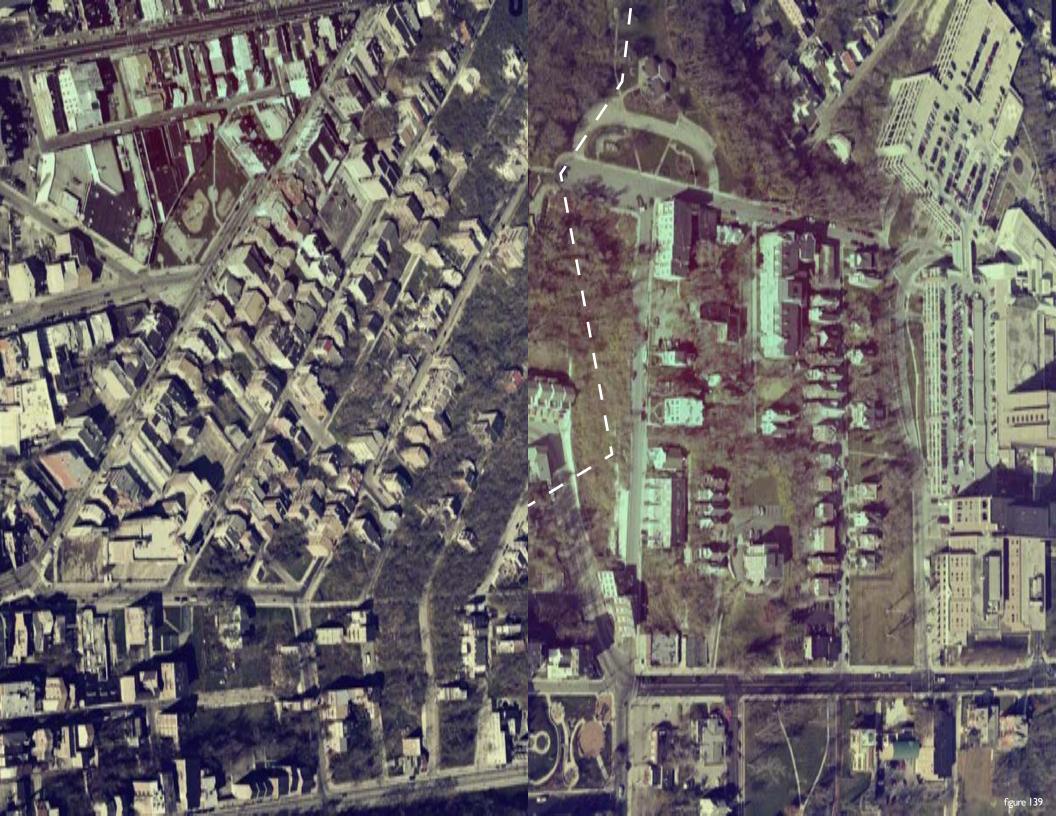




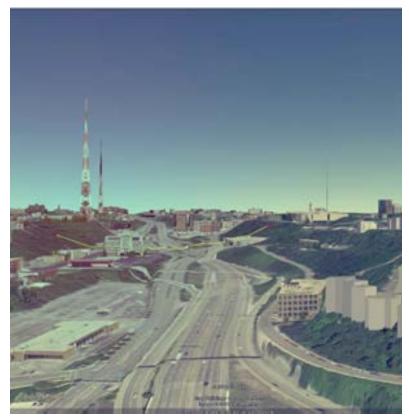




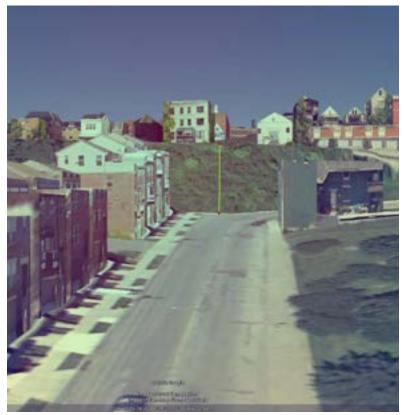








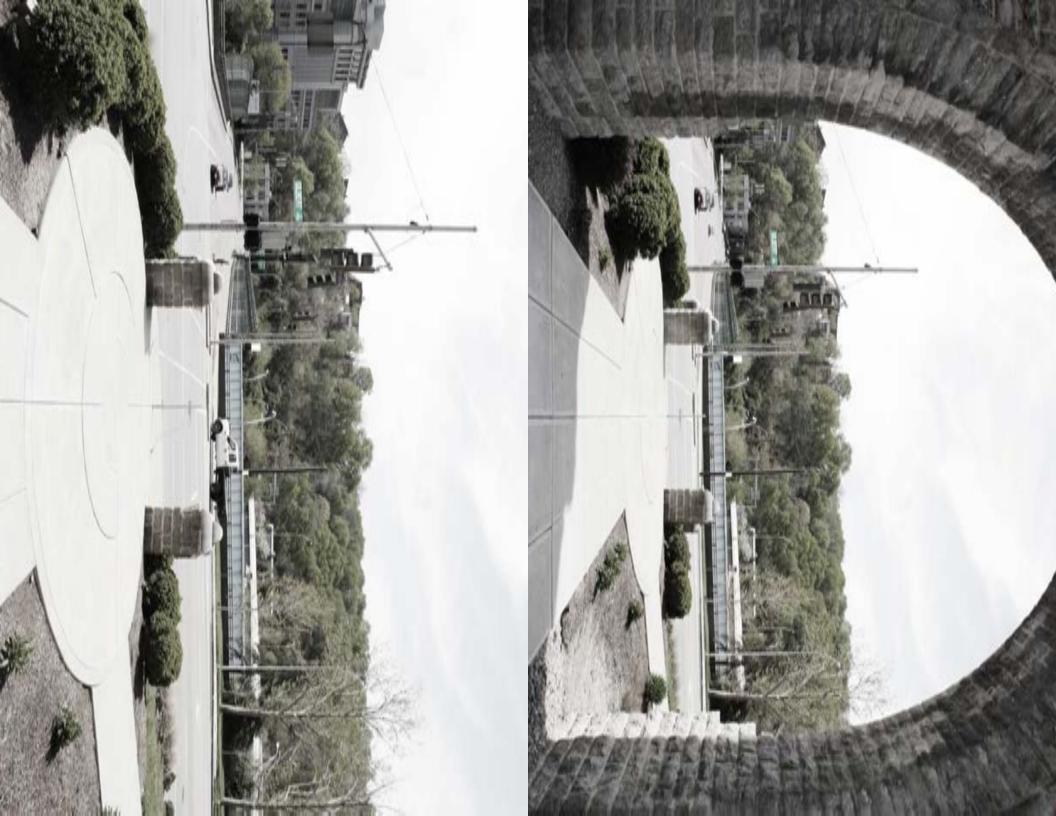












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## STEPS CLOSED





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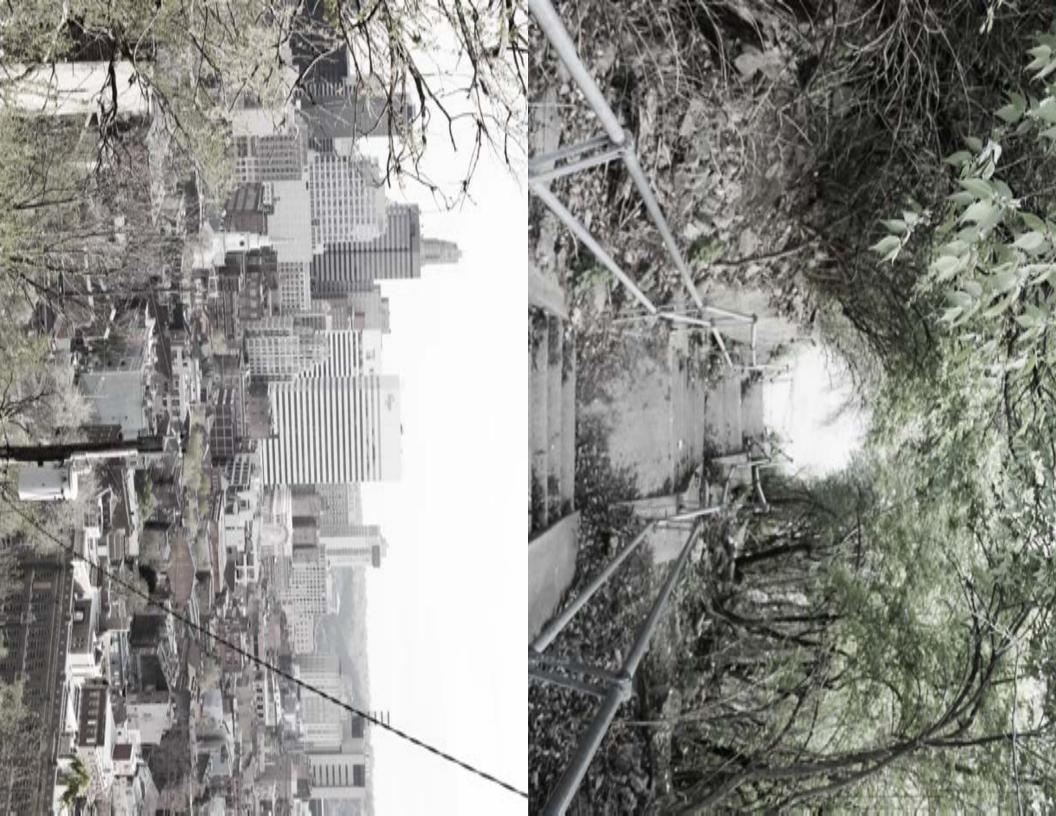


## JACKSON HILL PARK





## MAIN STREET STEPS





### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- fg. 13 Historic Hillsides, flickr
- fg. 15 Historic Hillsides, flickr
- fg. 17 Historic Hillsides, flickr
- fg. 19 Historic Hillsides, flickr
- fg. 21 Historic Hillsides, flickr
- fg. 57 Cincinnati Sketches, Caroline Williams
- fg. 58 Cincinnati Sketches, Caroline Williams
- fg. 60 Historic Sycamore Street,
- fg. 77 Google Maps
- fg. **79** Topo Data, Cagis
- fg. 125 Sanborn Maps
- fg. 127 Sanborn Maps
- fg. 129 Bing Maps
- fg. 131 Sanborn Maps
- fg. 133 Historic Cincinnati Maps, flickr
- fg. 135 Milwaukee, flickr
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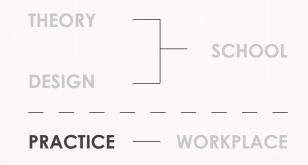
#### 9 Lenses of Place

A thesis submitted to the University of Cincinnati, Division of Research and Advanced Studies For fulfillment for a Master of Architecture In the School of Architecture and Interior Design of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

#### Ryan Ball

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2010

Jeffrey Tilman, Associate Professor of Architecture Vincent Sansalone, Associate Professor of Architecture



This is a book of practice.

#### PALIMPSEST (Noun)

1. A manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for later writing.

2. Something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form.

Now after examining the relations of theory and design we arrive at the book of practice. This book documents my physical works throughout thesis. Specifically I have chose to engage the notion of palimpsest, a concept central to both my theory and design analysis, in a tangible way. I believe it is impossible to simulate design with reclaimed materials in any way other than working with those materials directly. As such, as part of my thesis exploration I have developed two constructed exercises to engage design through palimpsest.

### **REPRESENTATION - 10 CANVASES**

During fall quarter I chose to engage my 9 Lenses of Place by creating 10 canvases that I would continually overwrite for each of my thesis presentations. There is one canvas per each of the nine lenses plus one intro board, the following documents their progression of palimpsest.



#### **INSTALLATION - FACTORY SQUARE ARTS FESTIVAL**

Over the summer I was asked by Professor Vincent Sansalone to participate in an art installation at the Factory Square Arts Festival in Northside to run from October to December of 2011. A team was assembled that included Vincent Sansalone, Caleb Kung, Travis Hope, Joseph Kinzelman, Claire Shafer, and myself. We met numerous times before the projects start to outline a format that would not only address the prompt of the festival, kinetics, but also engage each of our theses in some capacity. We created a framework that required our installation to be built and rebuilt every week. Each team member was given a week and was required to respond to the installation that preceded them. The installation was to be open for public display every Saturday and on Sunday we would meet again as a group over dinner to discuss the installation and prepare for the next week. These meals became experiential in nature and the conversations that followed became the focal point of the piece. The documentation at the end of this document displays our experiments in a spatial palimpsest.

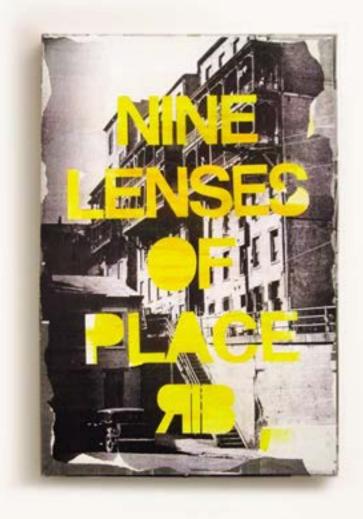
# REPRESENTATION

Ten Canvases

FM	Fall Midterm	11.18.11
FF	Fall Final	11.30.11
WI	Winter Intermediate	
WM	Winter Midterm	01.27.12
WI	Winter Intermediate	
WF	Winter Final	03.02.12
SM	Spring Midterm	04.27.12

## FALL MIDTERM

November 18th, 2011



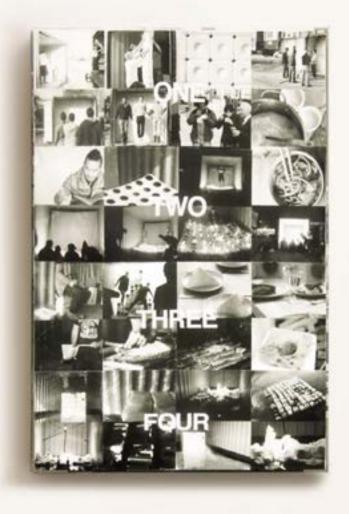


FM - 2





FM - 3





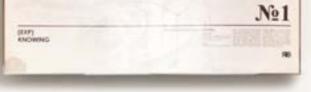
FM - 5

FM - 6

## **FALL FINAL** *November 30th, 2011*



"THE UNIVERSE," HE CONTINUED, "THIS UNIVERSE THAT WE KNOW, BEGAN IN ALMOST ABSOLUTE SIM-PLICITY, AND IT HAS BEEN GETTING MORE COM-PLEX FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN BILLION YEARS. IN ANOTH-ER BILLION YEARS IT WILL BE STILL MORE COMPLEX THAN IT IS NOW. IN FIVE BILLION, IN TEN BILLION --IT IS ALWAYS GETTING MORE COMPLEX. IT IS MOV-ING TOWARD ... SOMETHING. IT IS MOVING TOWARD SOME KIND OF ULTIMATE COMPLEXITY. WE MIGHT NOT GET THERE. AN ATOM OF HYDROIGEN MIGHT NOT GET THERE, OR A LEAF, OR A MAN. IOR A PLAN-ET MIGHT NOT GET THERE, TO THAT ULTIMATE COM-FLEXITY, BUT WE ARE ALL MOVING TOWARDS IT --EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS MOVING TOWARDS IT. AND THAT FINAL COMPLEXITY, THAT THING WE ARE ALL MOVING TO, IS WHAT I CHOOSE TO CALL GOD. IF YOU DON'T LIKE THAT WORD, GOD, CALL IT THE ULTIMATE COMPLEXITY. WHATEVER YOU CALL IT, THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS MOVING TOWARD IT."



FM - n/a **FF - 1** 

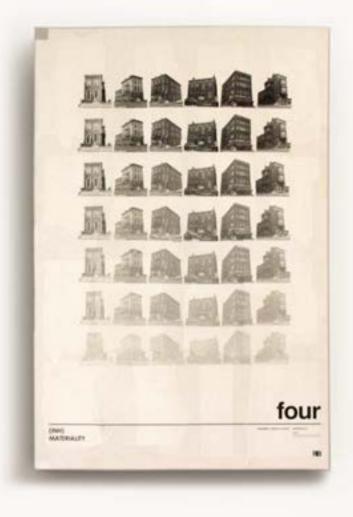
FM - 1 FF - 0





FM - n/a **FF - 3** 

FM - 2 **FF - 2** 





FM - n/a **FF - 5** 

FM - n/a **FF - 4** 





FM - n/a **FF - 6**  FM - n/a **FF - 7** 

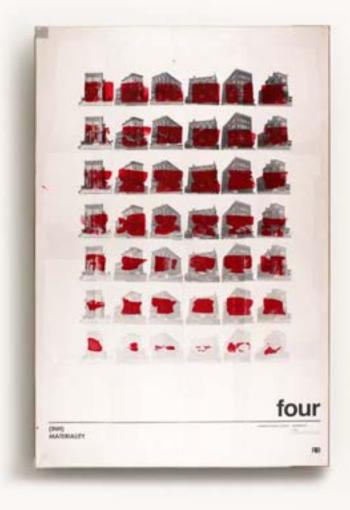




FM - 5 **FF - 8**  FM - 6 **FF - 9** 

## WINTER INTERMEDIATE

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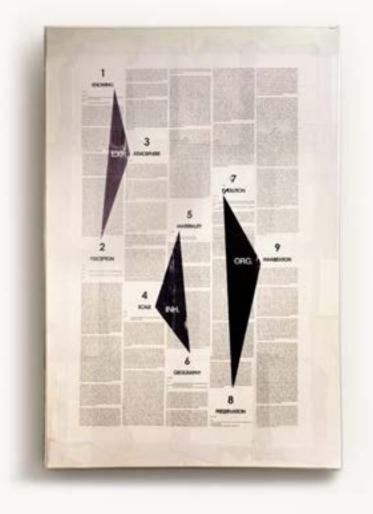
FM - n/a
FF - 6
WI - 6

FM - n/a
FF - 4
WI - 4

### WINTER MIDTERM

January 27th, 2012





FM - n/a
FF - 1
WI - n/a
WM - 1

FM - 1
FF - 0
WI - n/a
WM - 0





FM - n/a
FF - 3
WI - n/a
WM - 3

FM - 2
FF - 2
WI - n/a
WM - 2





FM - n/a
FF - 5
WI - n/a
WM - 5

FM - n/a
FF - 4
WI - 4
WM - 4





FM - n/a
FF - n/a
WI - n/a
WM - 7

FM - n/a
FF - 6
WI - 6
WM - 6





FM - 6
FF - 9
WI - n/a
WM - 9

FM - 5 FF - 8 WI - n/a **WM - 8** 

#### WINTER INTERMEDIATE

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FM - n/a
FF - 7
WI - n/a
WM - n/a
WI - 7

FM - n/a
FF - 6
WI - 6
WM - 6
WI - 6

#### **WINTER FINAL** *March 3rd*, 2012





FM - n/a
FF - 1
WI - n/a
WM - 1
WI - n/a
WF - 1

FM - 1
FF - 0
WI - n/a
WM - 0
WI - n/a
WF - 0





FM - n/a
FF - 5
WI - n/a
WM - 5
WI - n/a
WF - 3

FM - n/a
FF - 3
WI - n/a
WM - 3
WI - n/a
WF - 2





FM - 5
FF - 8
WI - n/a
WM - 8
WI - n/a
WF - 5

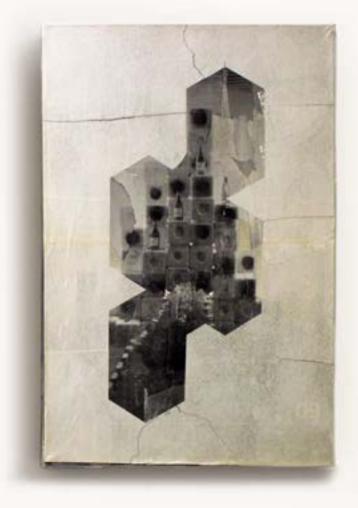
FM - n/a
FF - 4
WI - 4
WM - 4
WI - n/a
WF - 4





FM - n/a
FF - 7
WI - n/a
WM - n/a
WI - 7
WF - 7





FM - 6
FF - 9
WI - n/a
WM - 9
WI - n/a
WF - 9

FM - 2
FF - 2
WI - n/a
WM - 2
WI - n/a
WF - 8

### **SPRING MIDTERM**

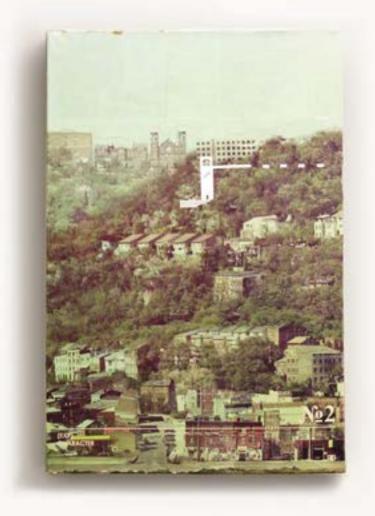
April 4th, 2012

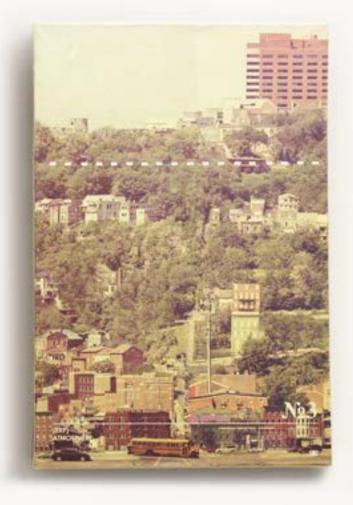




FM - 6
FF - 9
WI - n/a
WM - 9
WI - n/a
WF - 9
SM - 1

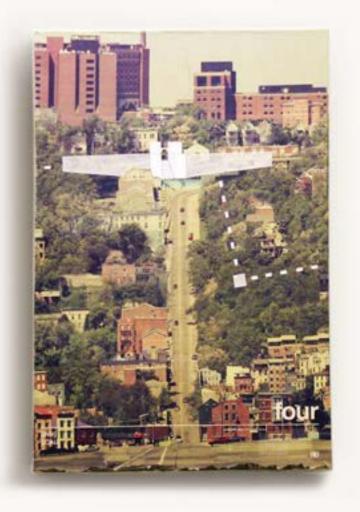
FM - n/a
FF - 1
WI - n/a
WM - 1
WI - n/a
WF - 1
SM - 0

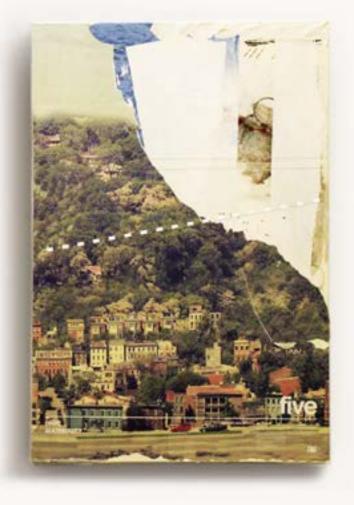




FM - n/a
FF - 4
WI - 4
WM - 4
WI - n/a
WF - 4
SM - 3

FM - 1
FF - 0
WI - n/a
WM - 0
WI - n/a
WF - 0
SM - 2





FM - n/a
FF - 6
WI - 6
WM - 6
WI - 6
WF - 6
SM - 5

FM - 5
FF - 8
WI - n/a
WM - 8
WI - n/a
WF - 8
014

SM - 4

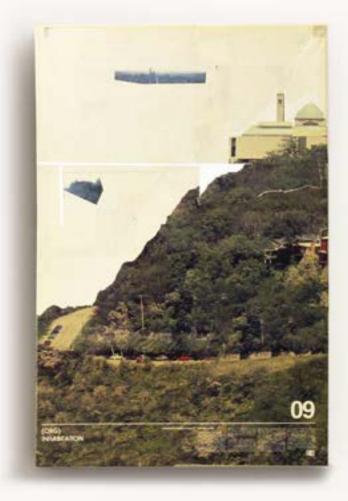




FM - n/a
FF - n/a
WI - 7
WM - n/a
WI - 7
WF - 7
SM - 7

FM - n/a
FF - 5
WI - n/a
WM - 5
WI - n/a
WF - 3
SM - 6





FM - n/a
FF - 3
WI - n/a
WM - 3
WI - n/a
WF - 2
SM - 9

FM - 2
FF - 2
WI - n/a
WM - 2
WI - n/a
WF - 8
SM - 8

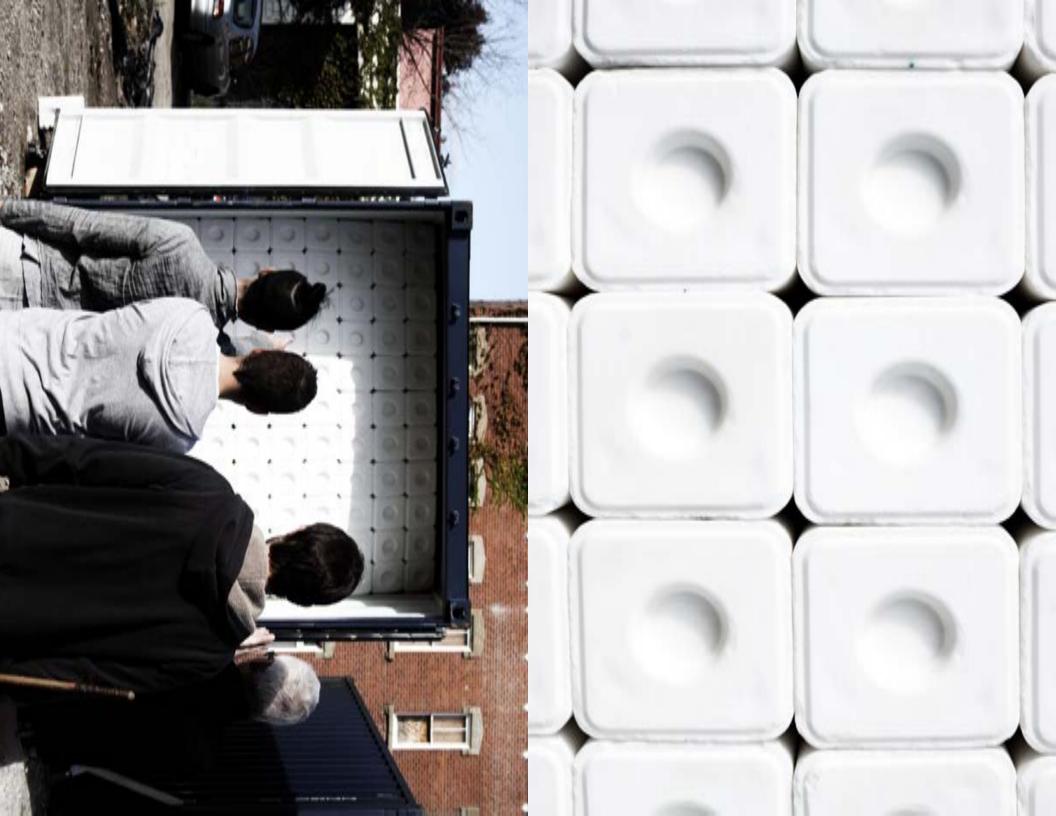
### PALIMPSEST

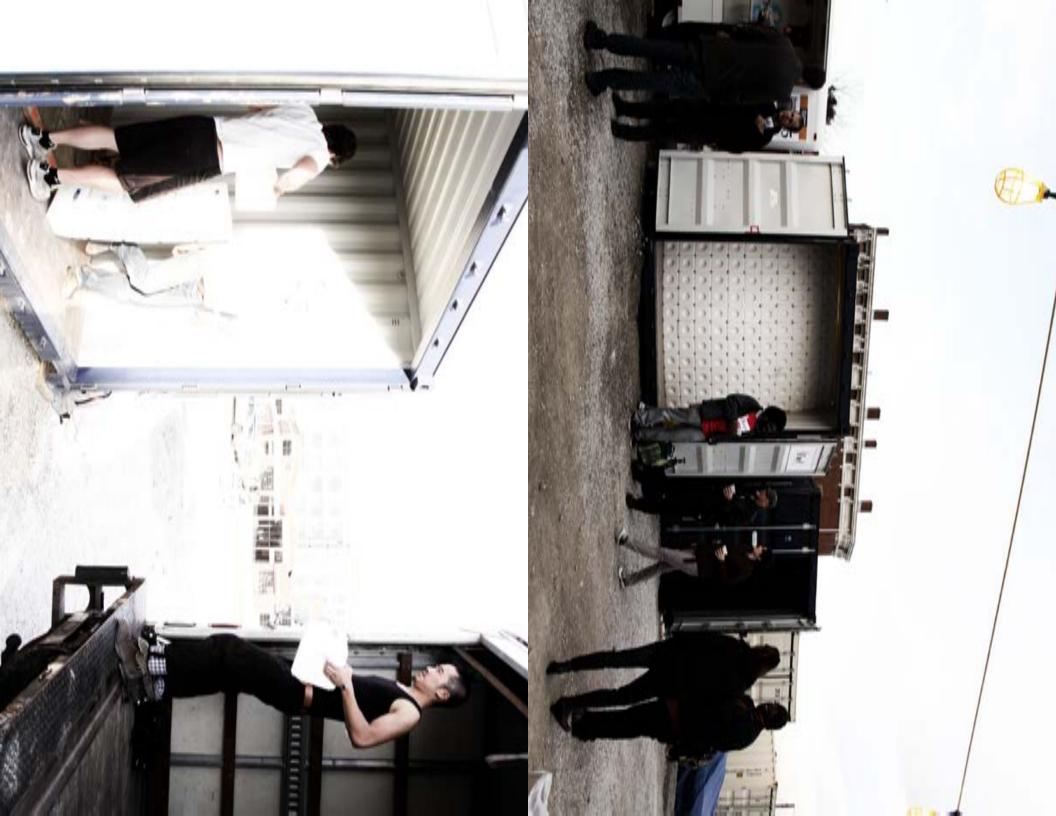
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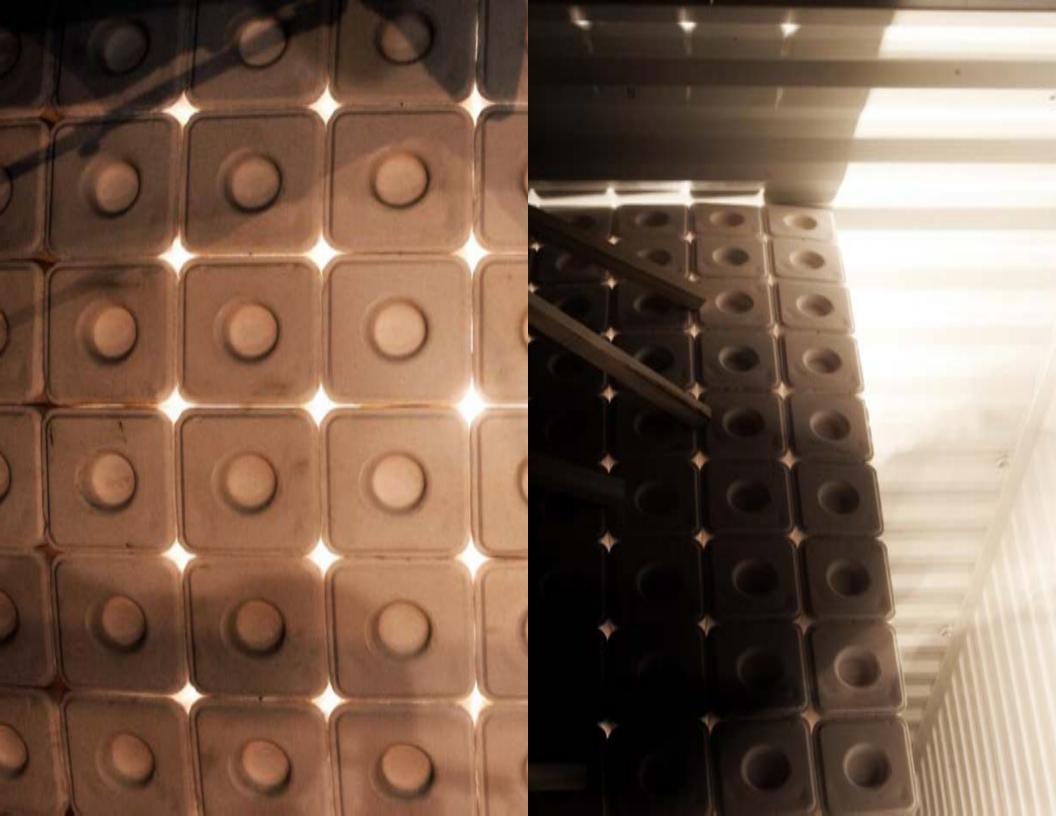


# 2

## **INSTALLATION** Factory Square Arts Festival







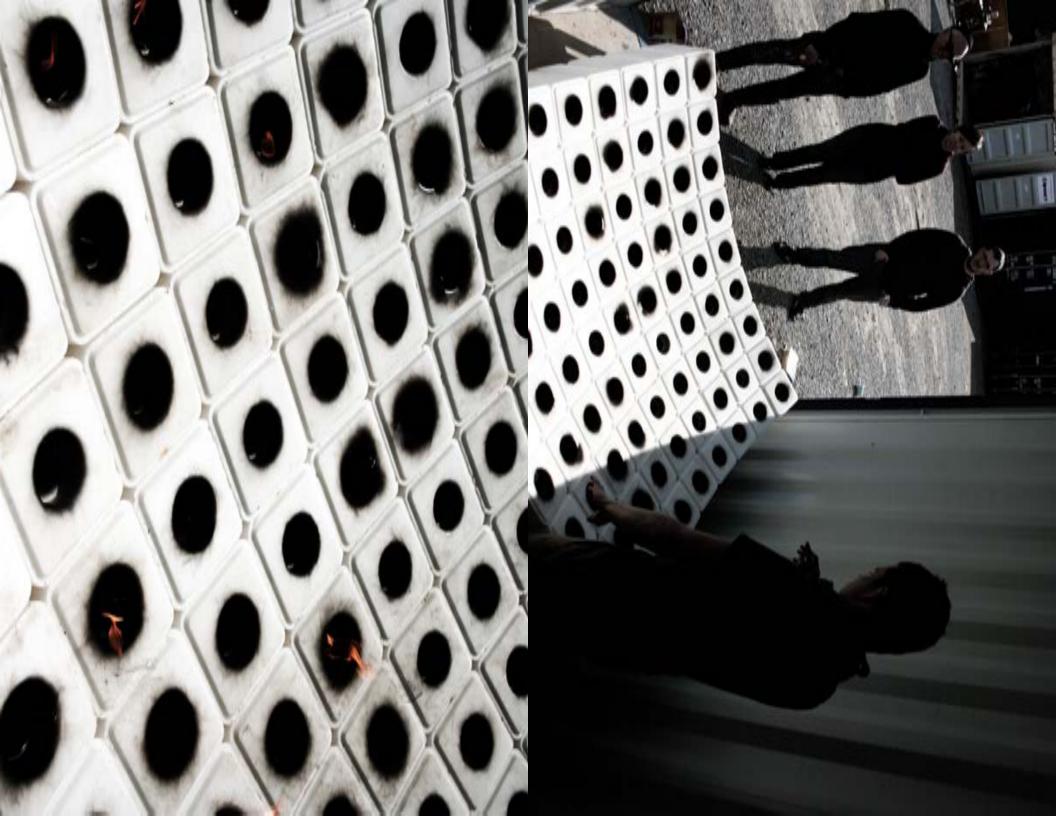








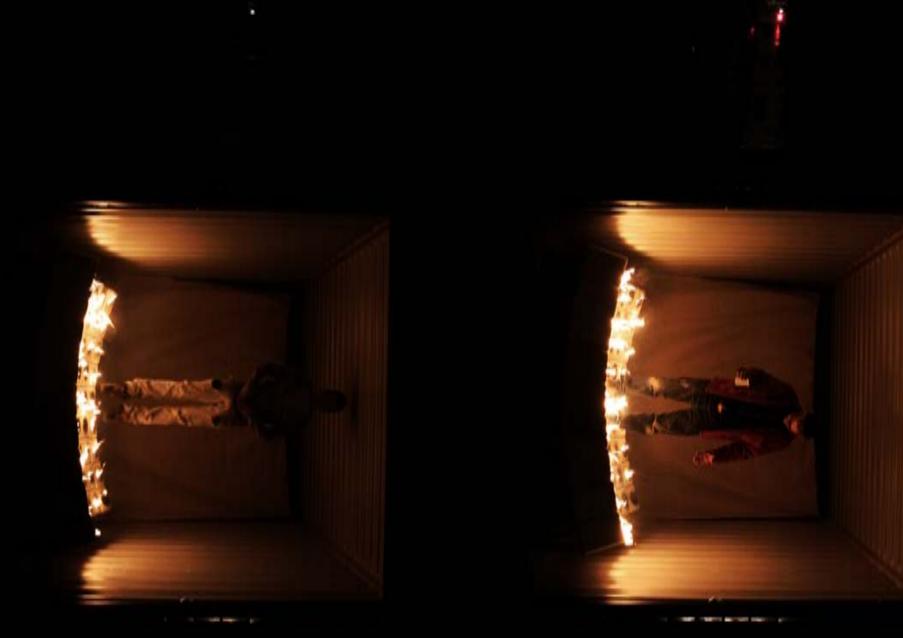












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