

Paul O Robinson
Selected Studio Work

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/ bold titles denote personal work

The selected work herewith chronologically represents a brief range of studio projects, from first year through graduate design studios to practicums designed around aspects of my professional and academic research. Included are the conceptual underpinnings of the studio-work plus notes to the critics describing my thoughts on process and outcomes.

In some of the studio sections I include student writings describing their work, as I feel the student's interpretation of a particular project can serve as insightful pedagogical criticism. I also place, intermittently, a few selected pieces of my own production that have recently shaped pedagogical intentions and processes relating to both studio and practicum design.

There are several consistent threads that weave through the studio work, specifically my desire for the student to understand the causal nature of spatial programming--even though I am an architect and building contractor--outside the conventionalized definition of program proffered by the profession.

I deal directly with process and materiality, placing an emphasis on the syntactical relationship between tectonics and programmatic narrative via varieties of physical model making at a range of scales e.g., domestic, civic, public and urban. I posit that a critical design process is more illuminating than final outcomes, and I feel that it is important for the student to understand tectonics as a material language in dialog with program and context. Most studios are prefaced by an analytical exercise that relates to the conceptual nature of the forthcoming studio project.

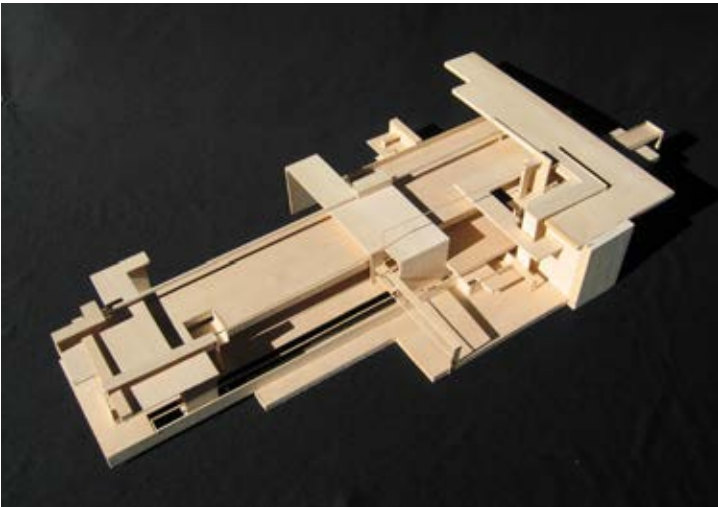
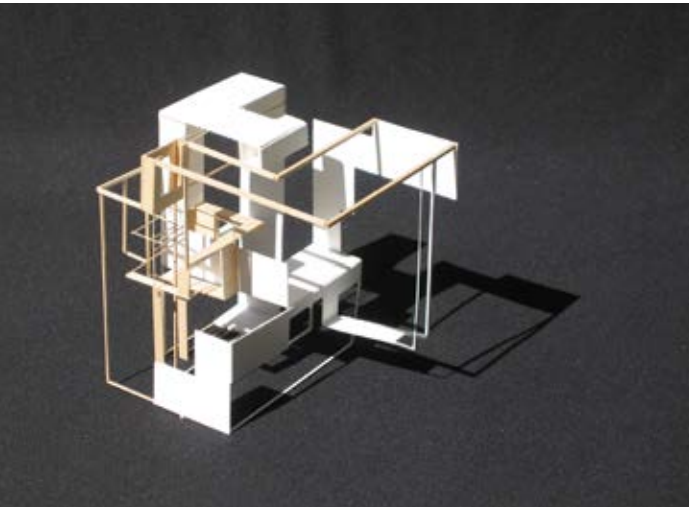
The included practicums serve as both laboratory and a means to concretely realize aspects of my research in narrative spatial structures, while embracing the necessary pedagogical constructs for the education of the architect within our institution. This can also be said for my professional work, as it is in constant correspondence with both theoretical and concrete aspects of my teaching.

Paul O Robinson
Ljubljana, November 2022

Architectural Design 1, University of Florida School of Architecture

Design One, the first in a series of eight undergraduate design courses, addresses fundamental spatial constructs requiring the student to embrace increasingly complex design problems challenging cognitive abilities while simultaneously developing strong intuitive sensibilities. Projects range from rudimentary drawing skills and model making to the analysis of morphological systems e.g., urban forms introducing the student to the conceptual and formal tenets of abstract thinking. The first project is an exercise in the programmatic manipulation of cubic form via the characterization of space, sequence and detail. A scaled Cartesian framework is constructed through tectonic programming as defined by a syntactical vocabulary. Multi-scaled—operational—

systems are nested within the framework defining spatial territories and trajectories used to expand or augment the original cubic construct. The augmented cube is developed via the introduction of itinerant programming where spatial sequencing creates a series of spatial joints—thresholds—linking adjacent territories together. The augmented - vertical - cubic construct is then manipulated through the conventions of section and plan as a means to unpack, or unfold, embedded spaces and itineraries. The unfolded construction is then interpreted as a landscape where the notion of conceptual programming is introduced. The selection of specific materials is important, as they become harbingers of particular constructional—tectonic—modalities.



Clockwise from left: Augmented single material programmed cubic construct, studio, frame plane construct, room and garden landscape.

First-Year Design 1 continued: After making analytical plans and sections of the augmented cubic construct, a Field Matrix is designed and expanded to create a horizontal quasi-landscape context: first beginning with the frame, and then employing operational terms addressing mass, void, threshold, path and material tectonics as it relates to a given program.



Above & Right: Studio Exhibitions

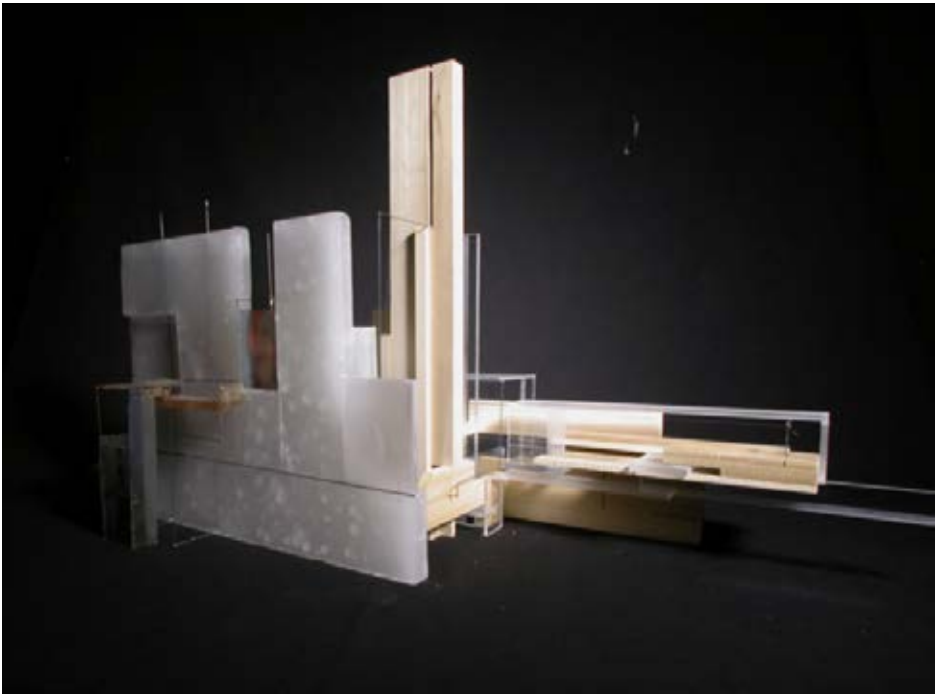
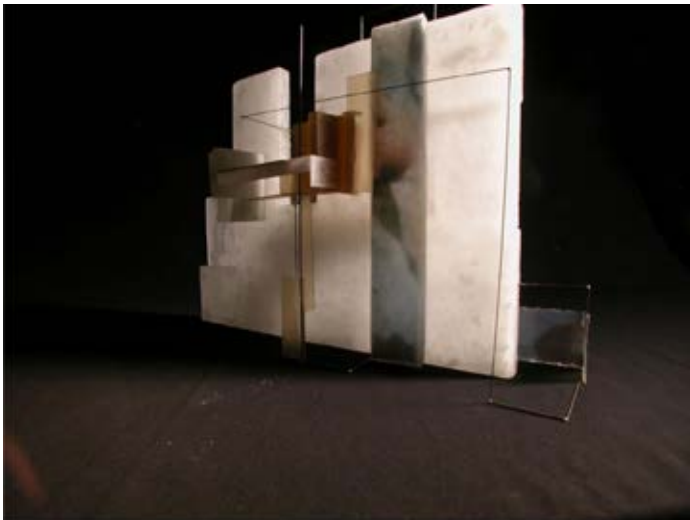
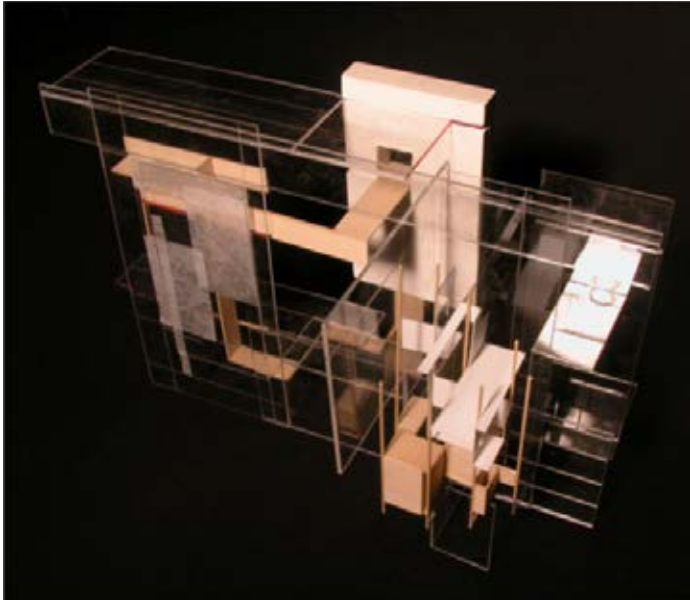


Cubic Constructs Exhibition

Architectural Design 3 & 4: Tectonic Programming

Second-Year Design 3 introduces the concept of scalar spatial sequencing by first having the student construct a context within which is inserted a narrative program that is in dialectical correspondence with the Cartesian system. The program (often a narrative) is inserted by means of architectonic terms e.g., door, window, stair, aperture, path etc. Scale and material programming are developed as an assigned tectonic language. Material and phenomenal transparency are introduced as well as creating processual

drawings that address multiple scales through mapping and layering. The projects shown use Goethe's Faust, by way of Jan Svankmajer's filmic interpretation Faustus, for generative programming suggesting relationships between material qualities i.e., spatial joints and sequencing, transparency, opacity, thick/thin, cast and additive forms etc.



Mephistopheles: in this one hour, my friend, your senses will garner in more recompenses, than in the year's monotony. What songs the delicate spirit sings you, the pleasing pictures they will bring you, they are no idle magic game. Smell will be set to rapt enjoyment, the palate to superb employment, your touch not less be set aflame. No preparation needs our art; we are forgathered, let us start.

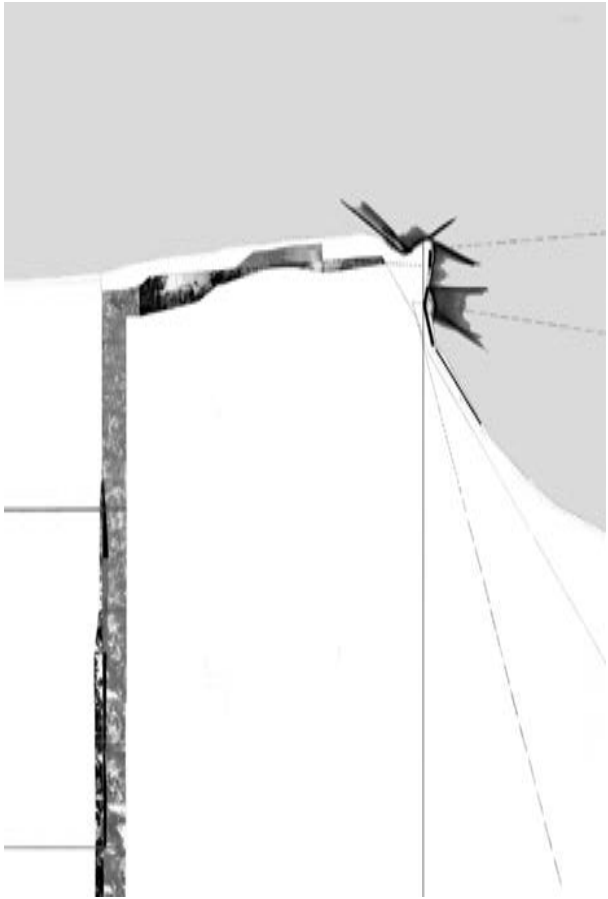
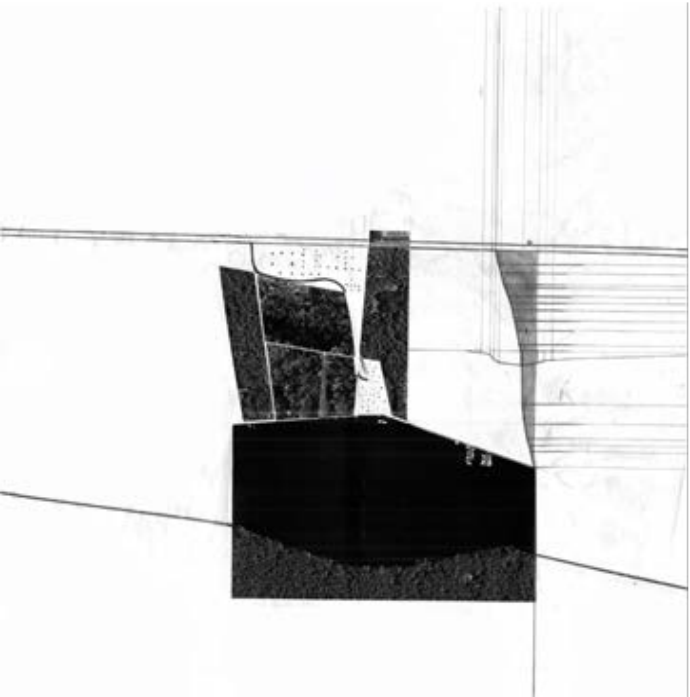




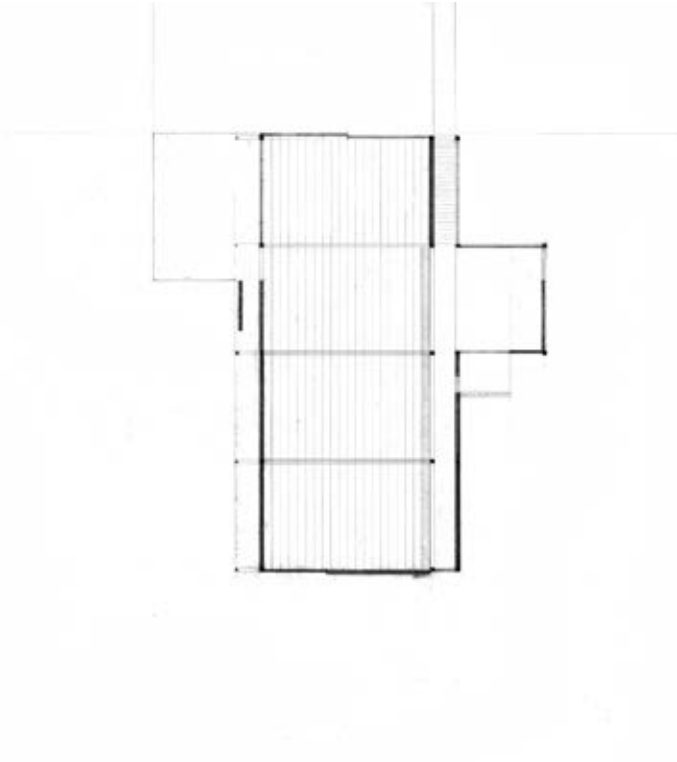
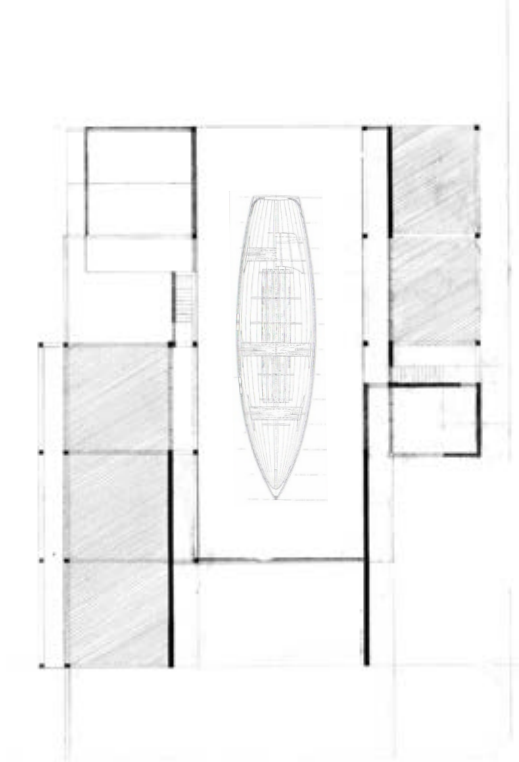
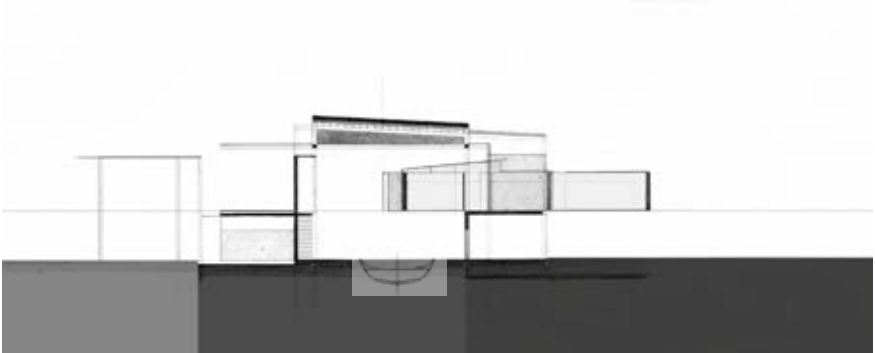
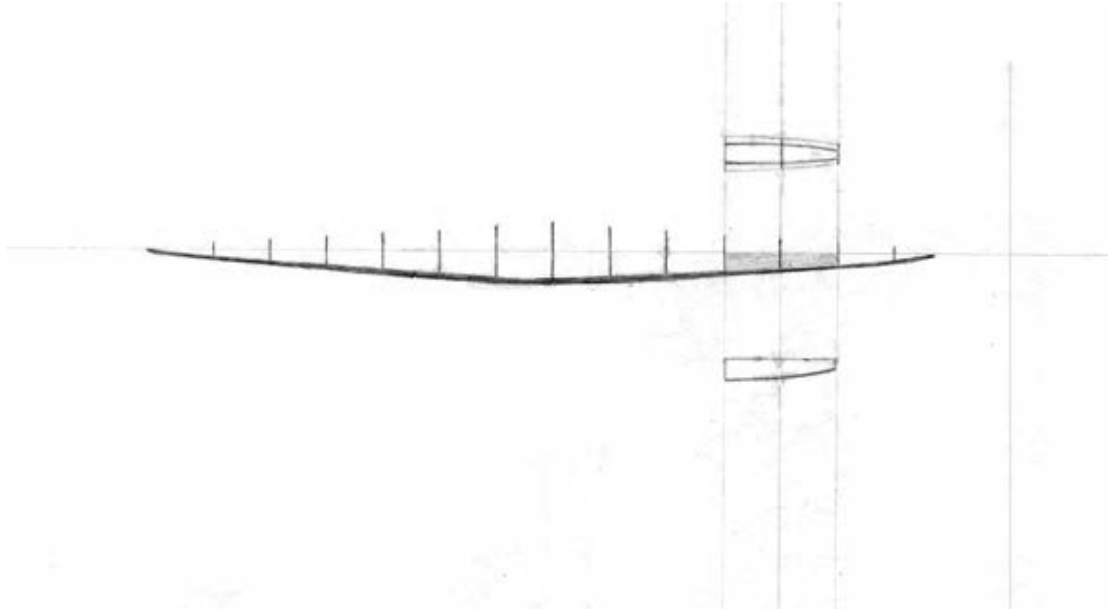
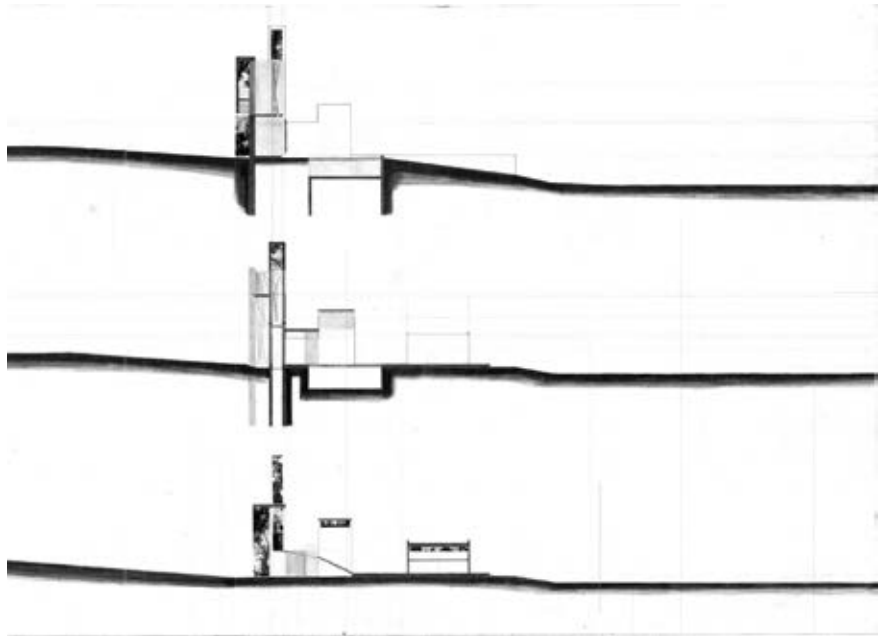
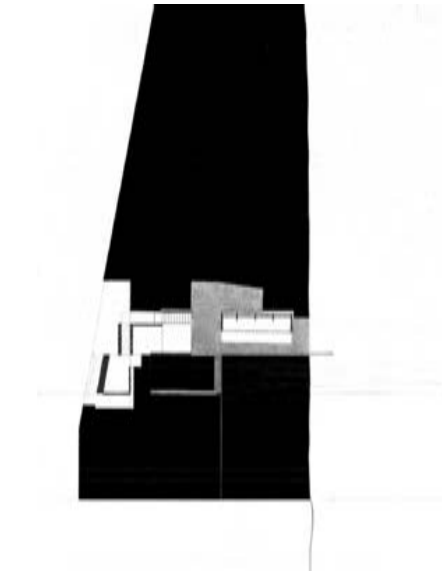
Obsessive Peripatetic Street Mapping by Amir Mikhacil
Saint Francis Street, Saint Augustine, Florida

Architectural Design 5, University of Florida School of Architecture

Architectural Design Five explores the phenomenal qualities of the landscape as a means to consider architectural interventions. The presented project is for a small boathouse located on Newnan's Lake, Gainesville, Florida. Included in the process were readings from local authors whose narratives provided both fictional and non-fictional accounts of the project landscape. The studio reinforced the importance of processual drawings and models as tools for investigating and analyzing the qualitative attributes of the site.



Student: Lisa Canoy. Clockwise from top left: site analysis, site analysis, plan study, site section studies

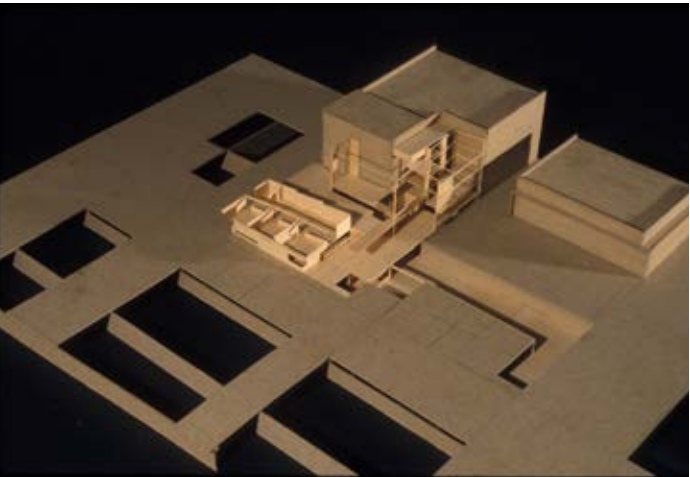
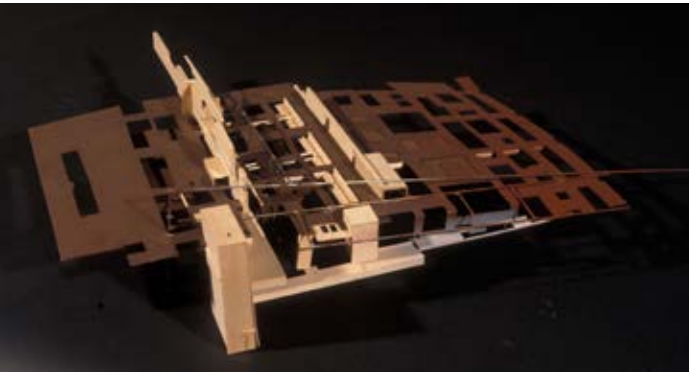


Top: marking water, Center: transverse section, Bottom left: plan, Bottom right: study for roof.

Architectural Design 6, University of Florida School of Architecture

This studio focuses on the analysis of and design in a regional historical urban setting. The theory and evolution of urban form is examined and engaged.

Students begin with an analysis of a regional urban environment. This is followed by a field trip to the city by the entire class. Extensive walking tours are conducted by the faculty, during which the previous analytical studies are confirmed, critiqued and augmented. In addition, sites are selected and evaluated for the semester-long studio project. The building design should be developed within its own rational constructive logic as well as in relation to the existing urban fabric in which it is intervening. Particular emphasis is placed on resolution of the public spaces within the building that engage the surrounding urban context.

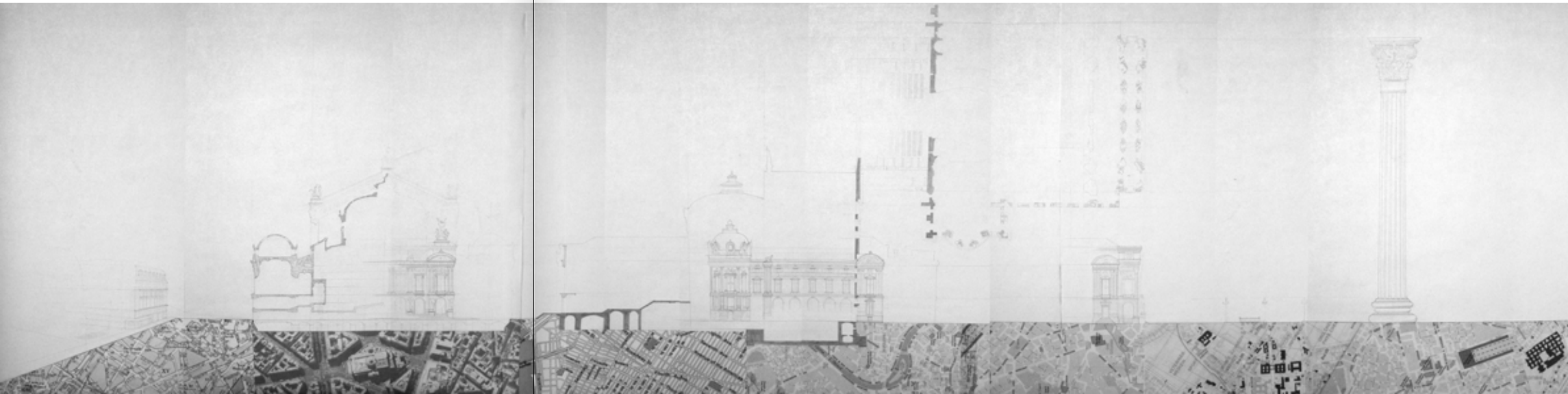


Top: Programming the context; Center: Scaled program study; Bottom: Section details

- Pedagogic Objectives:
1. To provide a foundation for the study of urban space and design, with special attention given to unique attributes of the regional context; to require students to engage methods of analysis and design developed in earlier courses, testing their effectiveness and limitations, and developing new strategies and ideas for urban design.
 2. To require both understanding and effective engagement of the issue of the *public realm* in architectural design.
 3. To critique perceived notions of program and zoning in the city, so as to be able to simultaneously engage the social, political, civic, institutional, and private issues active in the urban setting.
 4. To require the comprehensive development of the building project, including structure, definition of enclosure, materials, mechanical systems, circulation and life-safety; precision and completeness of presentation is strongly emphasized.



Interlocking context model, Market, Savannah Georgia



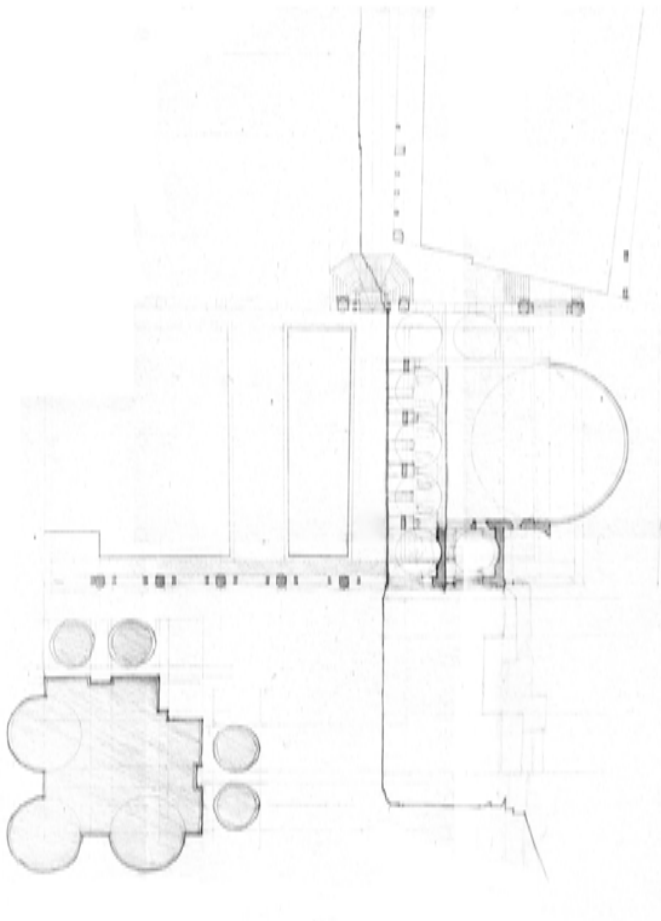
Imaginary urban peripatetic section

Architectural Design 7 & 8 and Graduate studios
at the Vicenza Institute for Architecture 2006

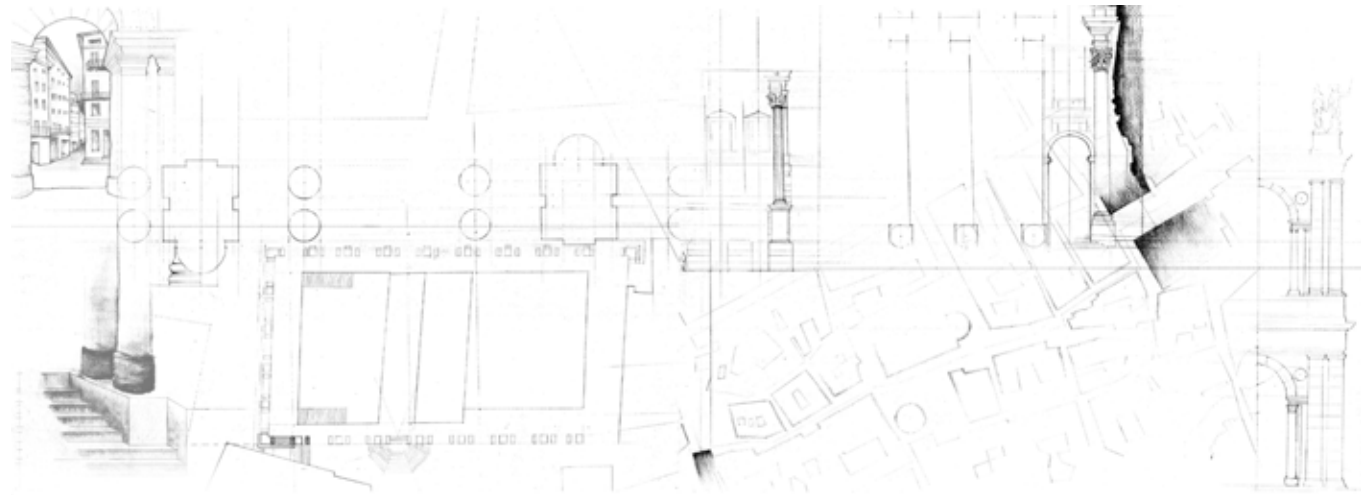
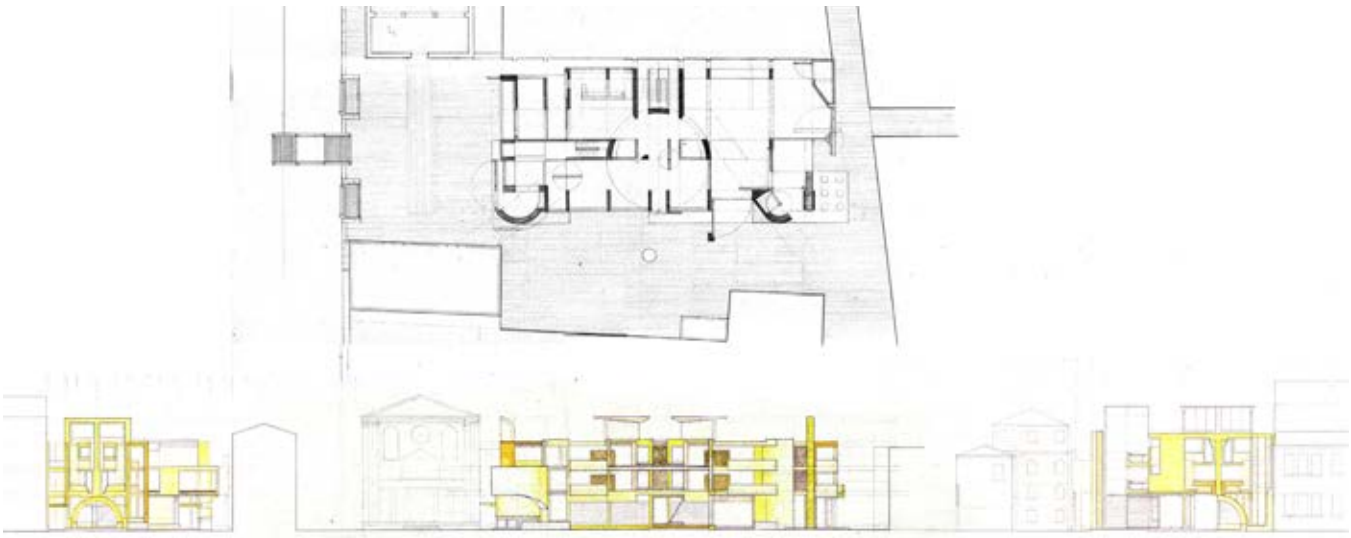
The Vicenza Institute for Architecture is the base for a University of Florida School of Architecture design studio located in Vicenza, Italy, where the student lives and works for an entire semester. Projects for the studio are typically located in regional cities that the student can easily visit; in the instance of the projects shown: Venice. The student also participates in a rigorous European travel itinerary and attends lectures in architectural history and theory given by the attending faculty.

The students also engage in itinerant analytical drawing and materials and methods of construction courses and throughout the semester visit local architecture studios, craftsmen and manufacturers.

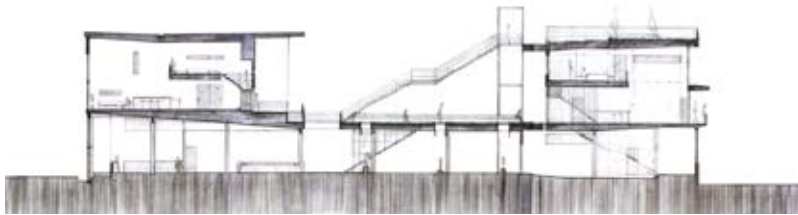
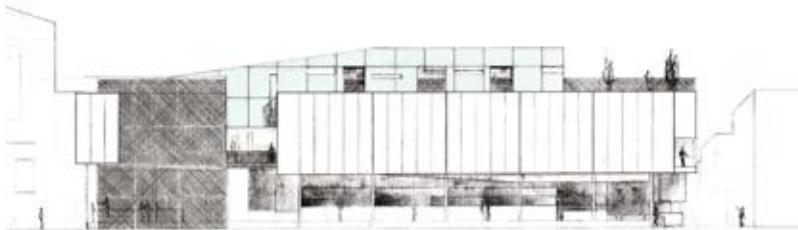
The projects shown are an intervention into an existing building adjacent to Chiesa di San Giuseppe di Castello, on campo S. Isepo, near Venice's Giardini. The building program was determined by each student and was based on a critical urban analysis of the area around campo S. Isepo.



Peripatetic sketching, Basilica Palladiana



Peripatetic Sketching, Basilica Palladiana



Section and elevation study, Luisa Mendez



Analytical site analysis

A Note About Patterns

I am a pattern-maker by trade. After a university education in music composition, it is my second venture that lead to architecture. Seving a 5-year apprenticeship qualified me as a master pattern maker/woodworker. As it is a continuous referent in my work, and structures a manner of spatial perception and attitudes regarding construction, I thought it appropriate that I give a general, non-technical, explanation of pattern-making: Industrial pattern-making is a rather quiet profession operating as a first-tier constituent in many industrial manufacturing processes. The education of the pattern-maker requires a 5-year technical and practical apprenticeship and subsequent work as a journeyman before qualifying as a pattern-maker. A pattern is not a model; it is not made as an image nor is it simply a representation of another object at a reduced scale. The pattern is a one-to-one material manifestation of an object to be manufactured; it is the direct—although made in reverse—form of the object to be cast in another material. A wood “pattern” is destined for one use: to make a master pattern that will be used again and again to form a mold for the production of a particular object. After the master pattern is made the original is stored as an “artifact” of the process of construction – the process of form. A pattern-maker must understand the dynamic structural properties of wood – both tectonically

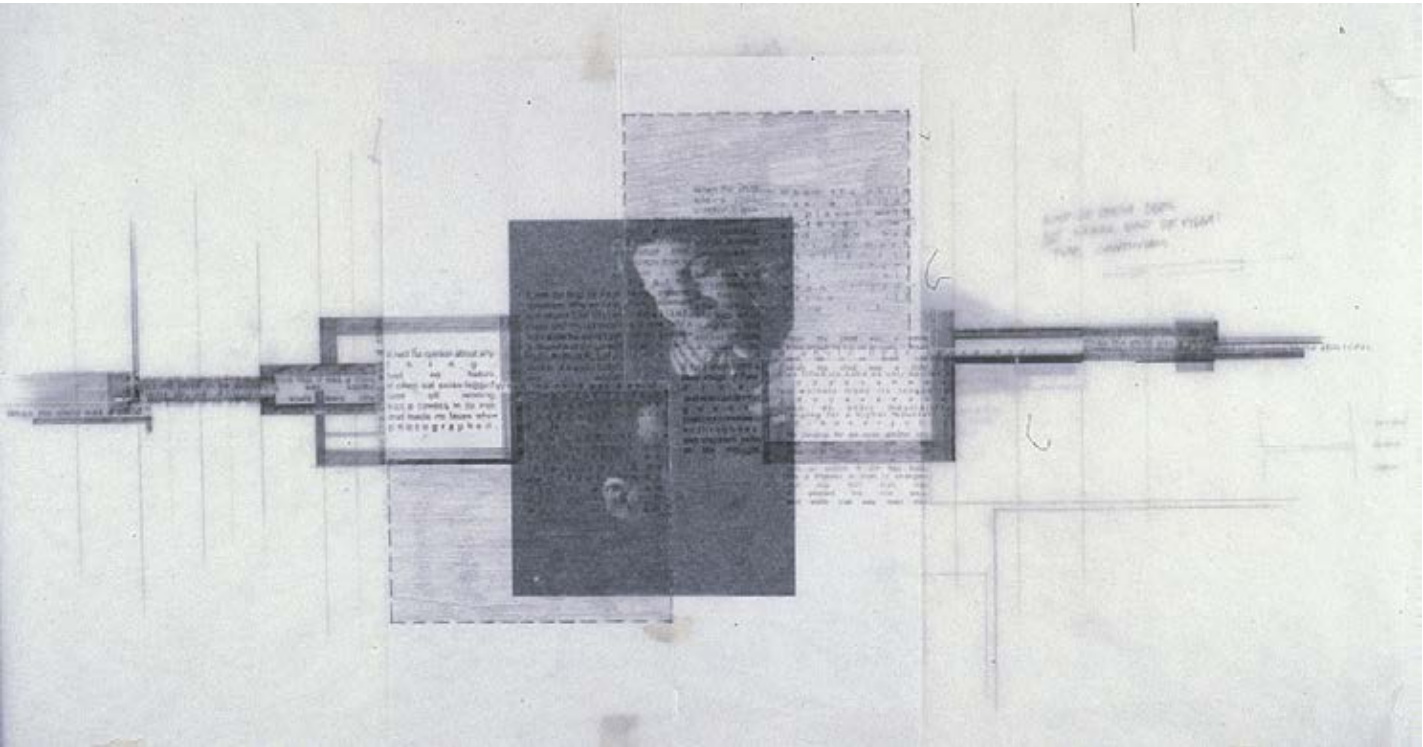
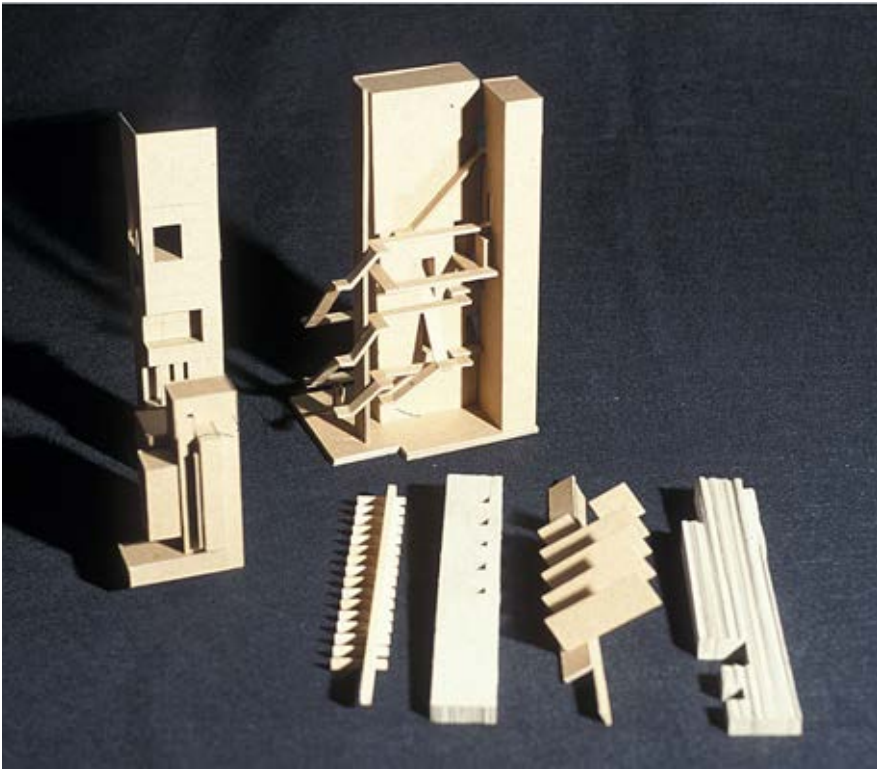
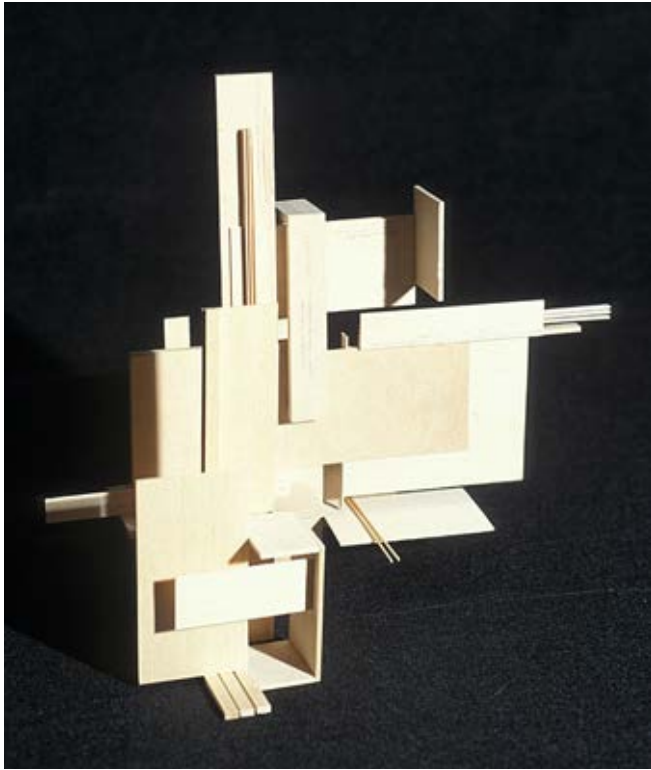
and stereotomically; it requires a general understanding of metallurgy and an acute awareness of the interstitial—liminal—relationship between mass and void: cast space. The pattern-maker dwells in a world of precision yet must be inherently aware of the morphology of the whole. The term “model-maker” or “modelista” is incorrect. For the purpose of this explanation, a model “represents”; it is a form of representation at a scale different—generally reduced—than that of a future outcome. The pattern is the direct “form” of the form to be produced and is connected to the processual outcome as the “mother” form that simultaneously embodies interior and exterior spaces. A pattern is the first in the process of becoming.

The making of a patten requires one to understand the relationship between the object, represented via technical drawings, and the mold that will form the object; the mold is the by-product of the pattern. The material that will be used to make the ultimate form fills the interstitial space within the mold and manifests as the liminal distance between inside and outside, and as such one can construe the duality of that space as a contact surface—the Janusian countenance—defining material correspondences: additive and subtractive embrace, holding the resonant presence of the void-space.

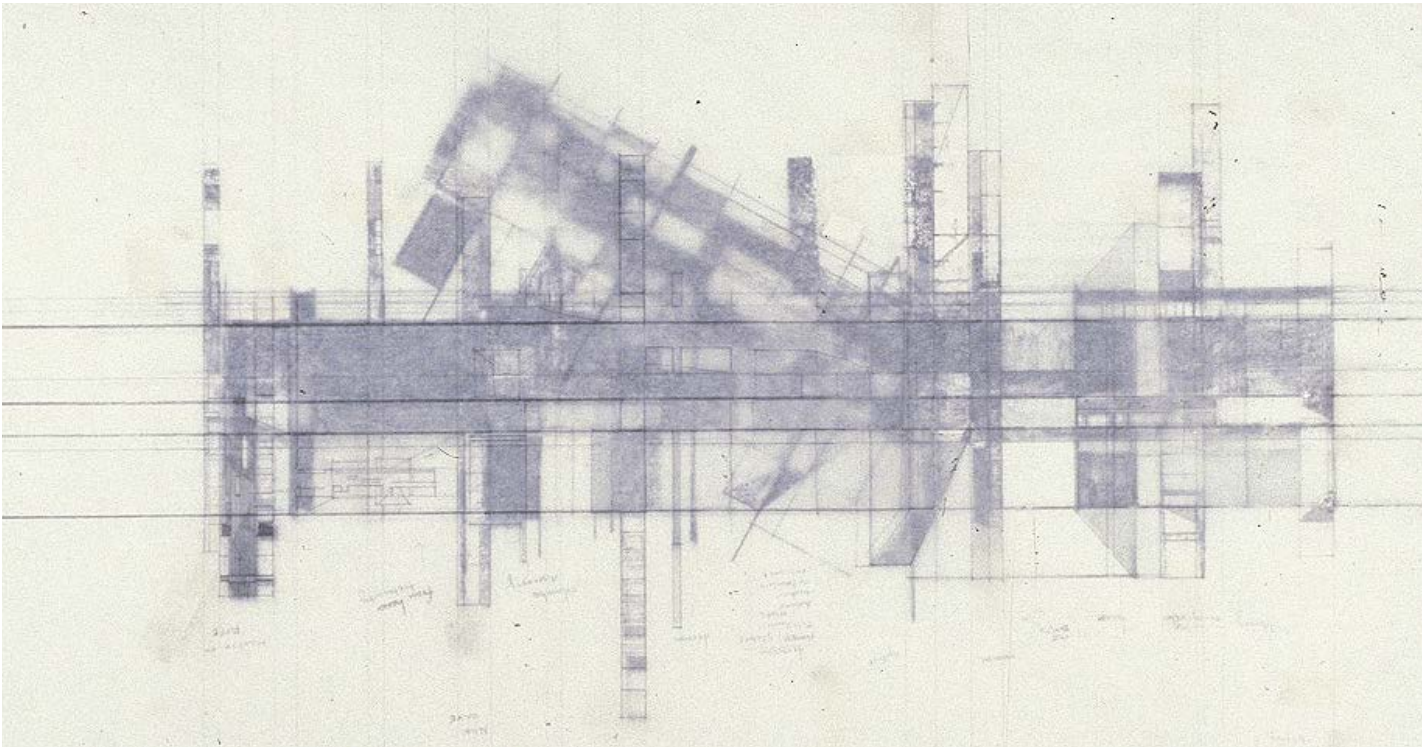


Studies in Narrative Tectonics: University of Arizona, Tucson, 4th Year Honors Studio 2008

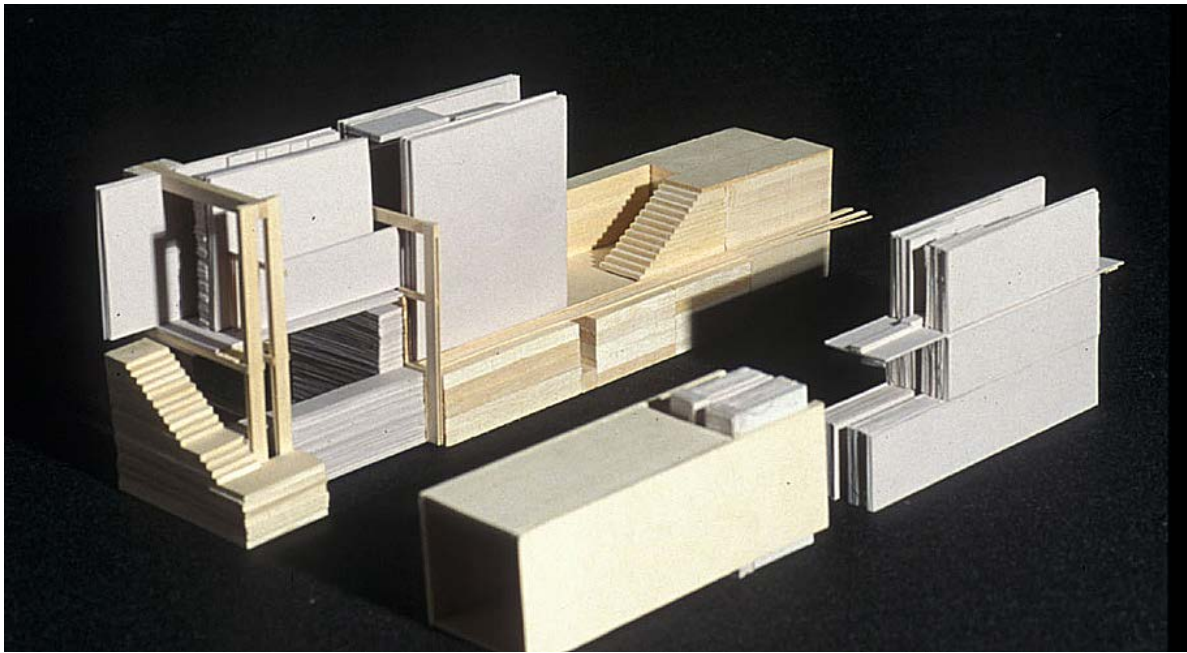
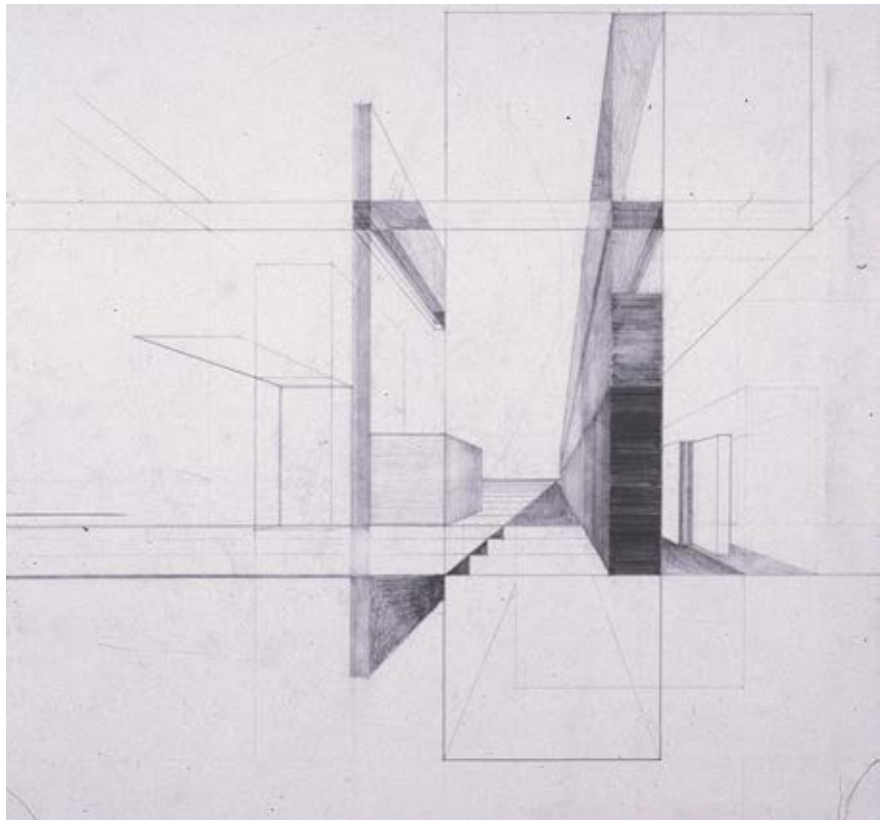
The intensive three-week studio of 9 students developed individual modes of analysis as a means for spatial investigations. Each student used filmic structures to create contextual drawings that were used as sites for the extraction of narrative tectonic details that in turn defined the materials and spaces embodying both structural and qualitative constructs garnered from the film. After the initial models were made, a specific joint was expanded and detailed in terms of material spatial correspondences. This was an exercise in process, where the model was seen as a tool rather than a final representation.



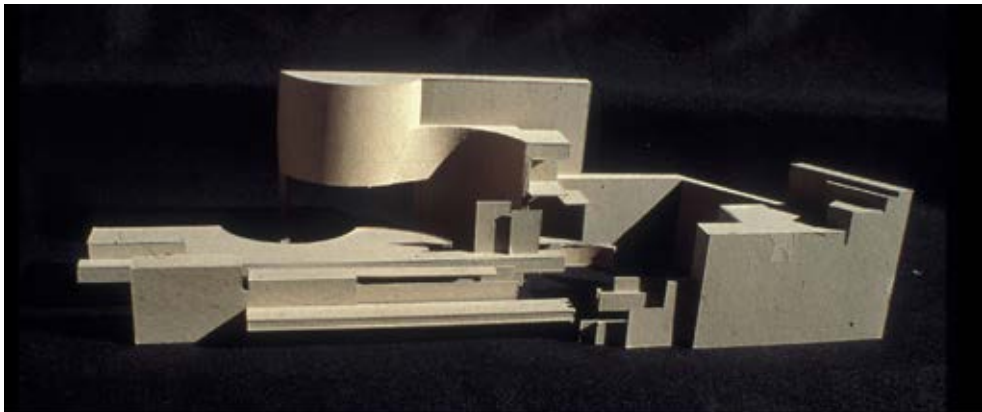
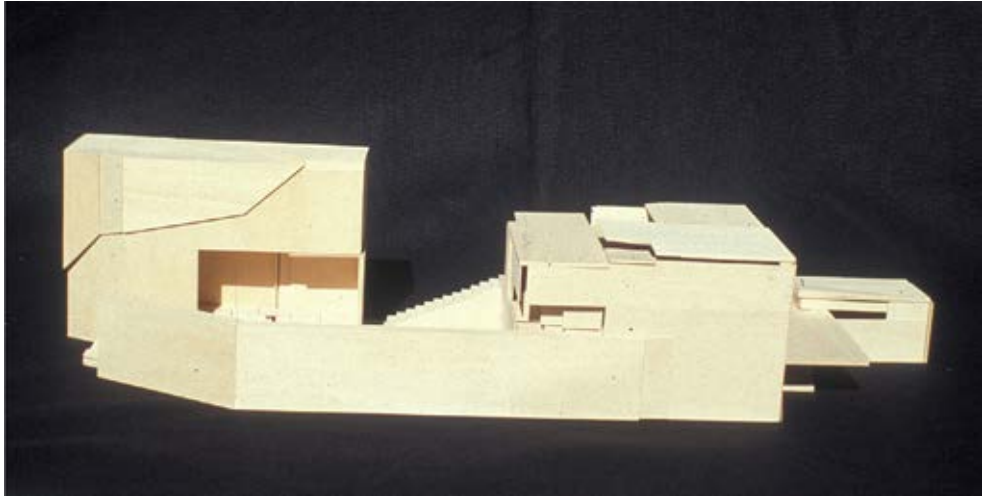
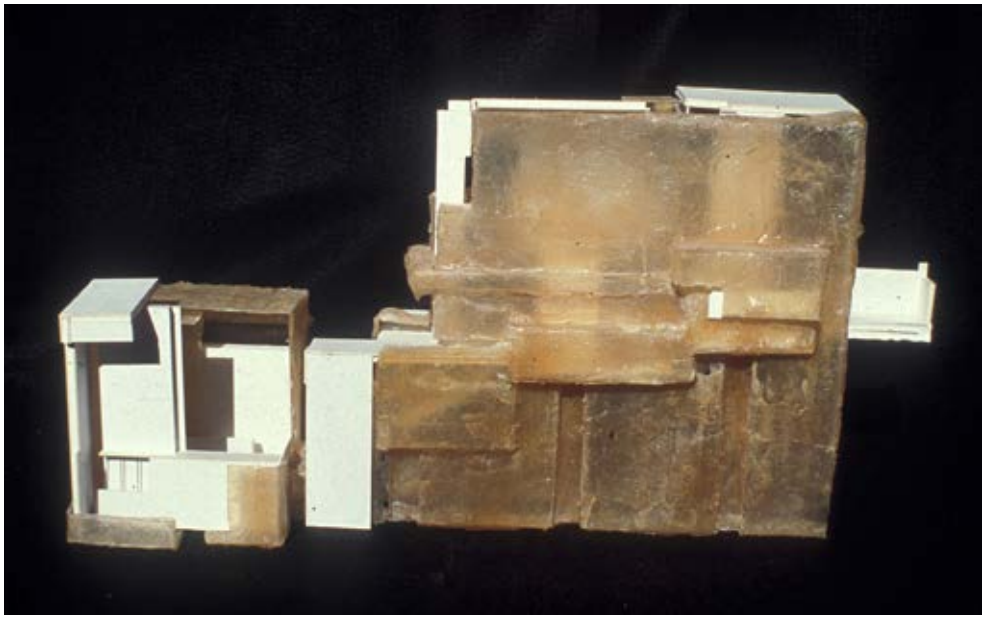
Top: 3-dimensional interpretation of diagram; Bottom: Diagrammatic sequencing Wings of Desire by Wim Wenders



Top: modeled interstitial narrative - joints; Bottom: palimpsestic mapping



Top: Perspective section through palimpsest; Bottom, modeling the section



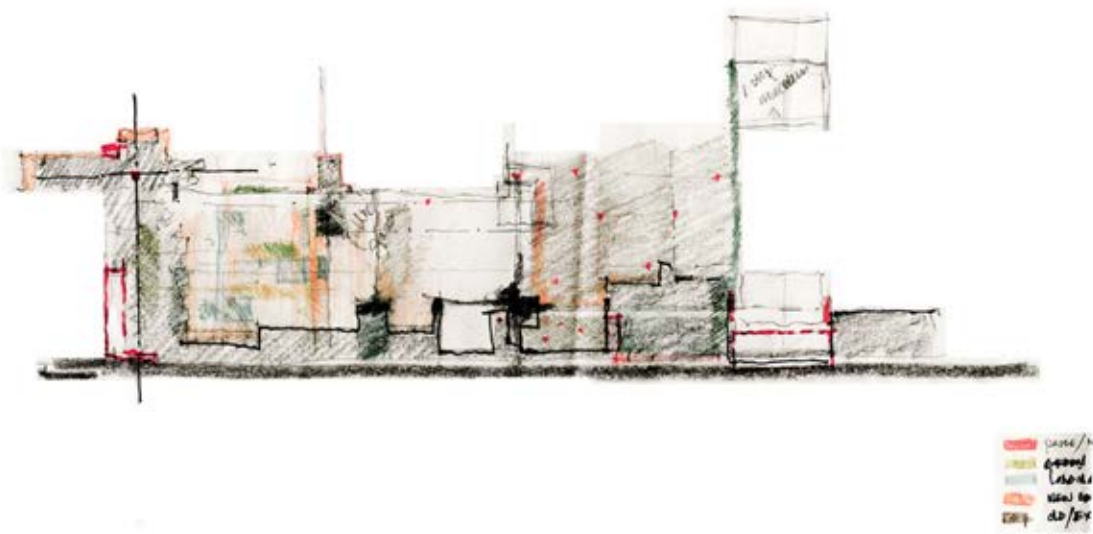
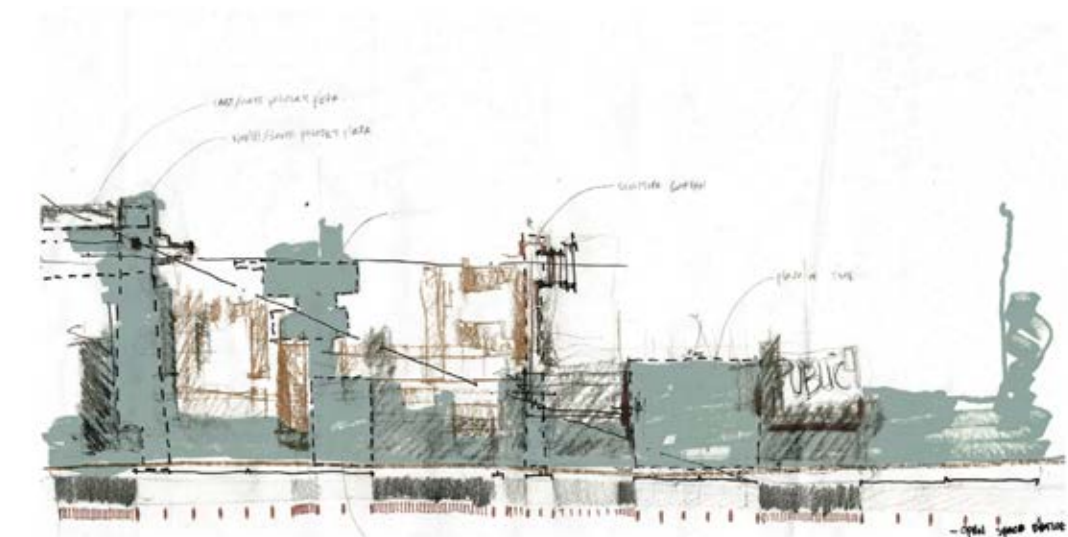
Operable narrative joints: 3 material studies

University of Florida China Summer
Travel Program 2009

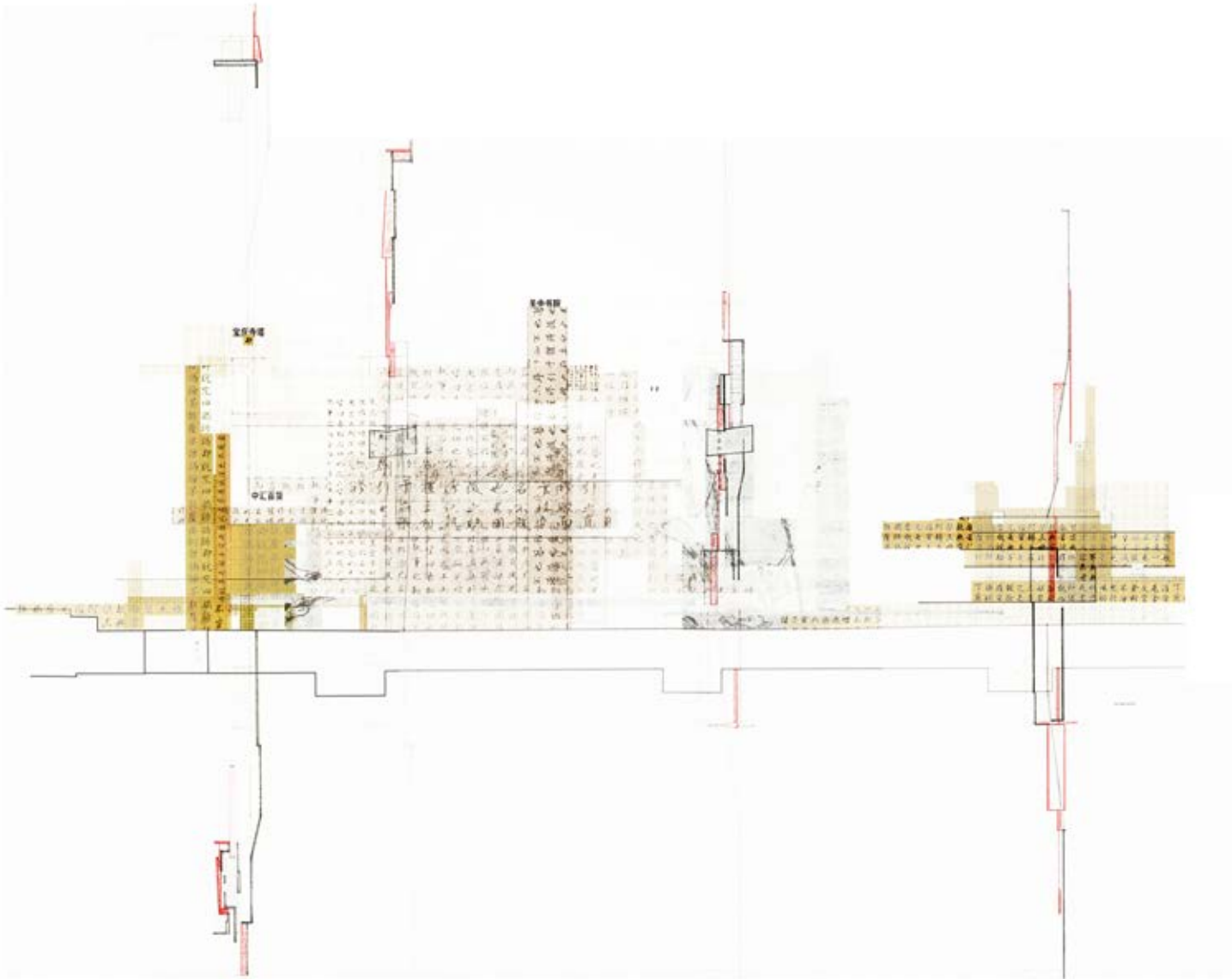
The two-month UF China Travel Program provided the opportunity for the student to travel to cities in China (Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Macau and others), and to participate in joint workshops with Chinese architectural schools. The program was based in Hong Kong. The 2007 studio included myself, prof Robert MacLeod, prof Nancy Sanders, prof Diana Hibbard Bitz and 15 students. The two-week long joint workshop was in Xian, with the University of Xi'an

School of Architecture. After the travel program the students returned to UF where during the fall semester they continued to advance the work begun in Xi'an.

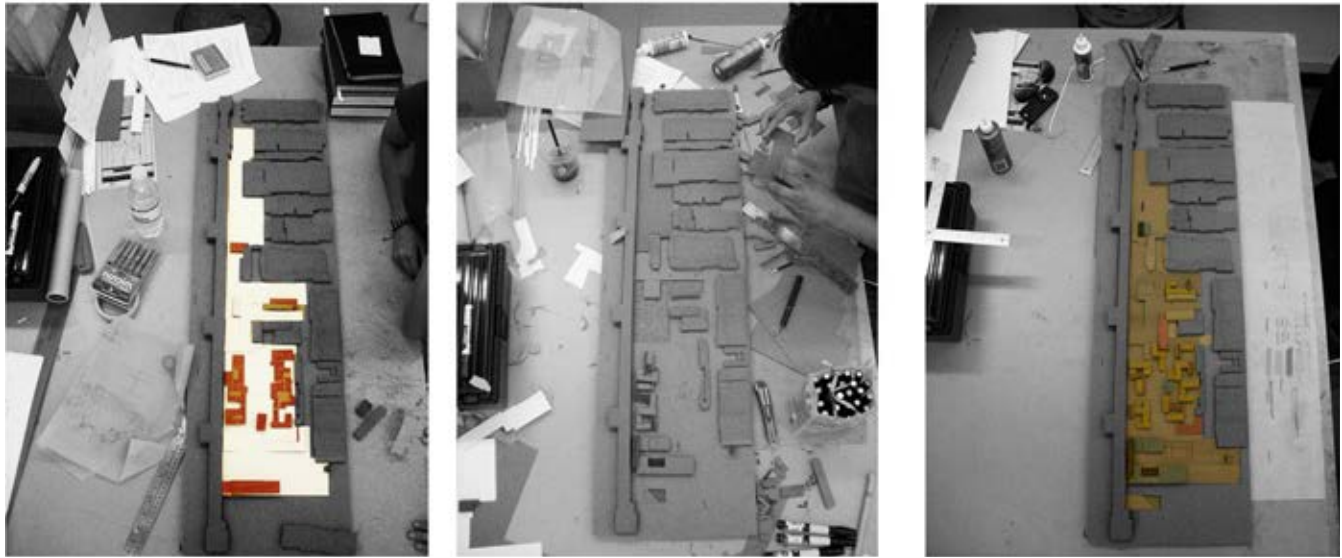
The workshop's charge was to reprogram a section and along the Northwest interior sector of the Fortified Wall surrounding the historic city center.



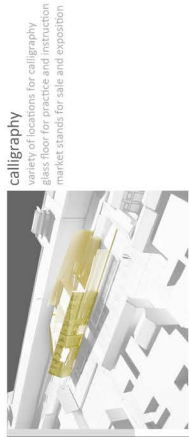
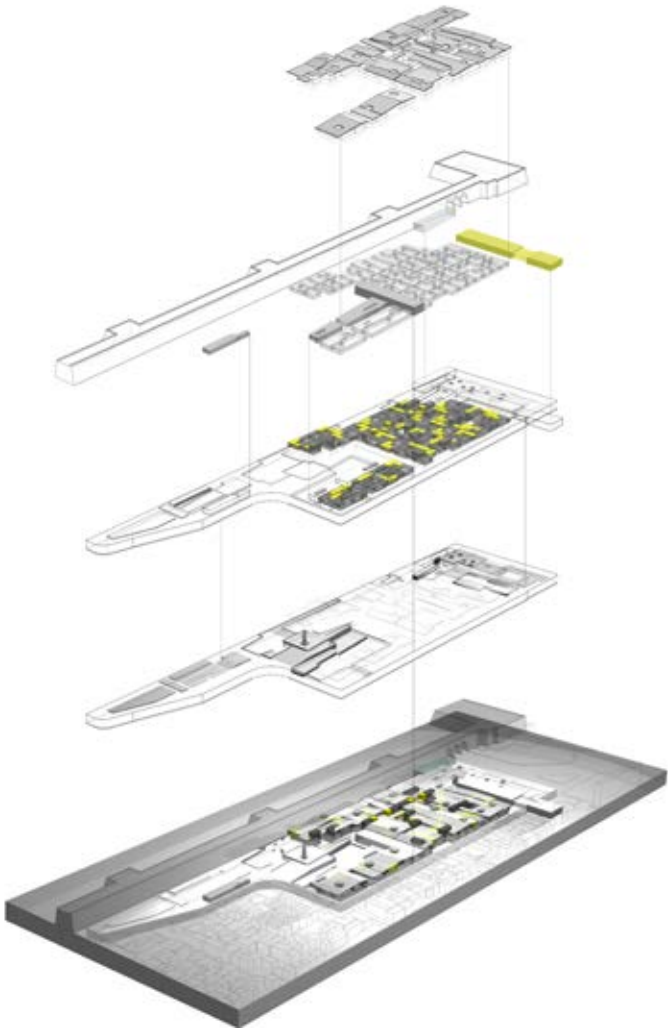
Urban morphological diagramming



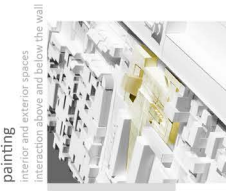
Urban morphological diagramming



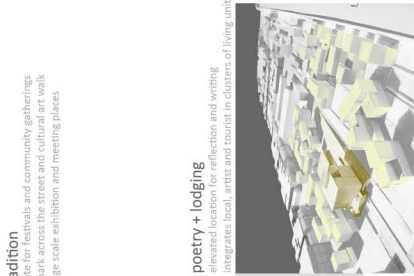
Context model construction



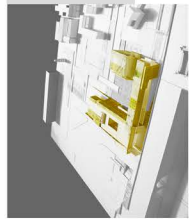
calligraphy
variety of locations for calligraphy
writing and display
market stands for sale and exposition



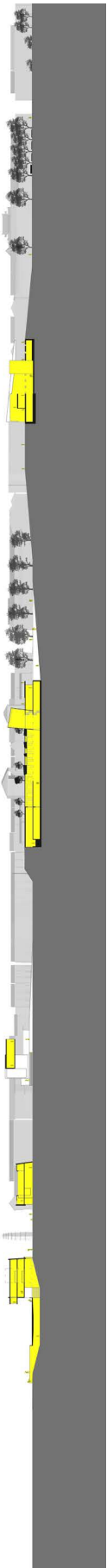
painting
interior and exterior spaces
interaction above and below the wall



poetry + lodging
elevated location for reflection and writing
integrates local, artist and tourist in clusters of living units



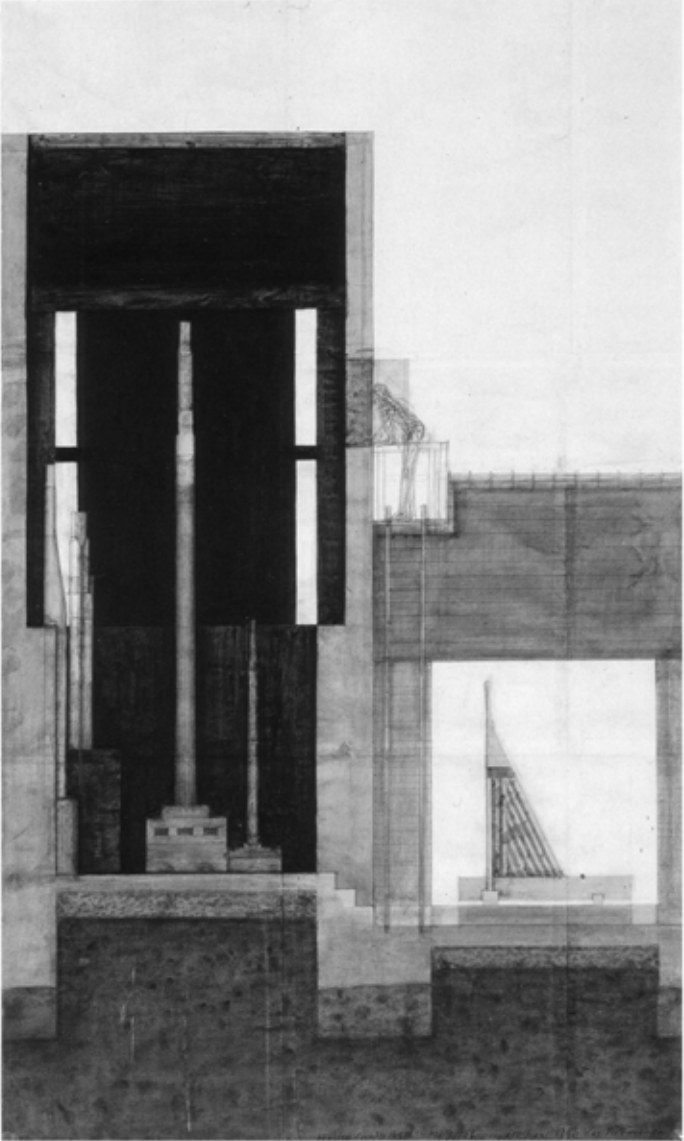
hall of tradition
variety of locations for calligraphy
writing and display
market stands for sale and exposition



Summer B Practicum 2008

The practicum considered the evidential morphologies of occupation as a means to investigate, analyze and construct architectural reliquaries used to reprogram an existing historic house so that it could be re-purposed as a museum. Various analytical modes were used, including the use of forensic X-ray technology. References included works by Gordon Matta Clark, Walter Pichler and Rachel Whiteread. After analysis the students fabricated full-scale reliquaries that linked artifactual presences to the spatial programming of the museum. I have included a text written by one of the students. Her writing in particular addresses core issues of the practicum.

Relics, Traces, and The Projective Cast: The Process of Form



SUMMER B SEMINAR

The 3 credit, 6 week seminar will investigate and use the works of Walter Pichler, Gordon Matta-Clark and Rachel Whiteread as a platform to document existing architectural structures and speculate on the space between existing and projected – between the relic and connective intervention.

Each student's research will culminate in large scale constructions (generative details) that will serve as a joint between the recorded artefactual evidence of an existing architectonic situation and programmed intervention.

Week 1: review works of Walter Pichler, Gordon Mata-Clark and Rachael Whiteread


Week 2: indexical documents, recordings and constructions

Weeks 3 – 6: the construction of generative details

Readings: The Projective Cast, Robin Evans; Weak Architecture, Ignasi de Sola-Morales
Further readings will be assigned during the seminar.

Maximum 8 students; entering fourth year and above.

For further information contact
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Top: on-site radiography; Bottom: existing interior

Window as Reliquary, View as Relic, The Smith-Griffin House, by student Stacy Johnstone

Upon the charge of the course, the Smith-Griffin house served as both a relic and a reliquary for the investigation of methods for architectural actions and interventions of the present (or *current*) to map, trace, respond, and eventually engage the history (and temporal currents) of the artifact. Exploring the dual meaning of current, history and age are defined as cyclical and continual conditions, thus the house and the objects it contains are explored through all currents of their existence, both through growth and accretion and deterioration and detrition.

The future of the Smith-Griffin house is to return to its past as a museum and a temporal condition suspended. It will serve as a marker, a memory, and a materialization of past currents. The aim of this intervention is neither to materialize a previous condition nor to invade memory with present reality; rather the intervention serves as a mediator, tracing the past and engaging the current. Thus, the role of museum can be re-considered through the understanding of history as a continuum.

Intervention Kitchen Window: A New Reliquary, A relic in flux

The window selected was positioned above the kitchen sink, overlooking the garden. It operates as a casement window, swinging into the space above the sink and allowing breeze to flow through. As the window travels through the space it acts as an object (rather than a threshold) and captures image and view through reflection.

The location of the window above the kitchen sink was critical to the investigation. The *kitchen sink window* is charged with cultural and programmatic associations and functions. View through the window can be considered a departure from the labor of the sink. The operability of the window also acknowledges location of the body

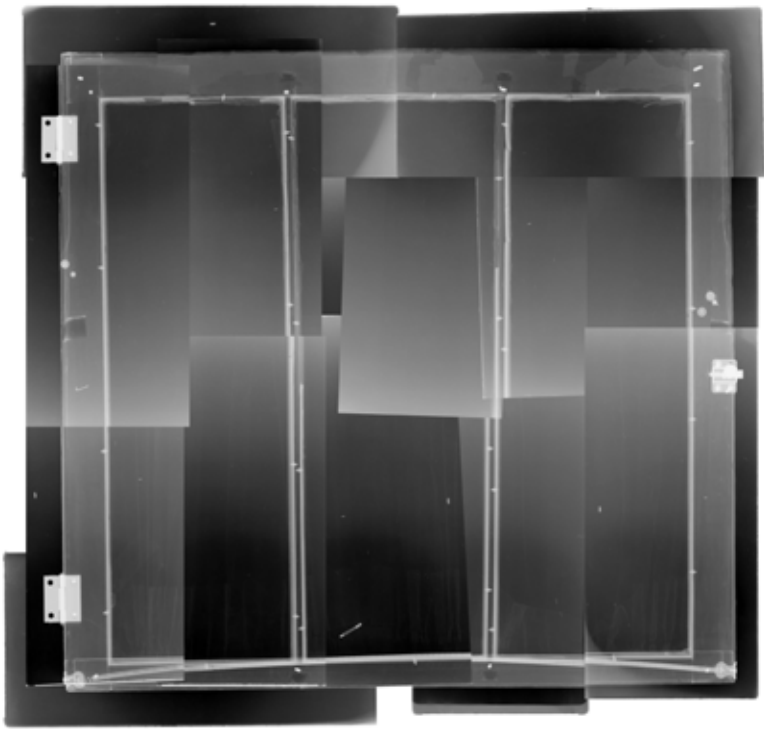
in space and mediates the environment of the house and that of the garden. As the window opens into the space, its location defines the space of the occupant and permits a connection to the environment through air and wind.

The kitchen window served as both a relic and a reliquary within the house. This intervention frames the window as a reliquary, where view and position are temporal relics that serve as connections between past and present. The process of the x-ray uncovers physical data within materials and objects. The intervention allows a mapping of the window aimed to uncover and mark fluctuating data of image and view that are materialized only through action and movement. Responding to the notion of current, this data is temporal and can only be recorded through interaction.

The arch of the intervention surrounds the space of the body in front of the sink and marks and maps the movement and fluctuation of view and image through space. As the window swings through the arch, station points mark critical locations of reflection, view, and spatial definition. The window itself is reduced to a simple sheet of glass, it is transcended through view and materialized through reflection. The structure of the original window is traced in the joints and articulations of the new frame.

When installed, the frame of the intervention sits in the existing window frame and the arch is suspended, touching the ceiling at four points and marking the location of the station points. As a temporary installation, the intervention becomes a moment in the history of the house. It marks a moment of study and investigation, and perhaps a shift in the present current of detrition. When removed from the space, the four points serve as a marker, a memory, and a trace of the process of intervention.

Stacy Johnstone

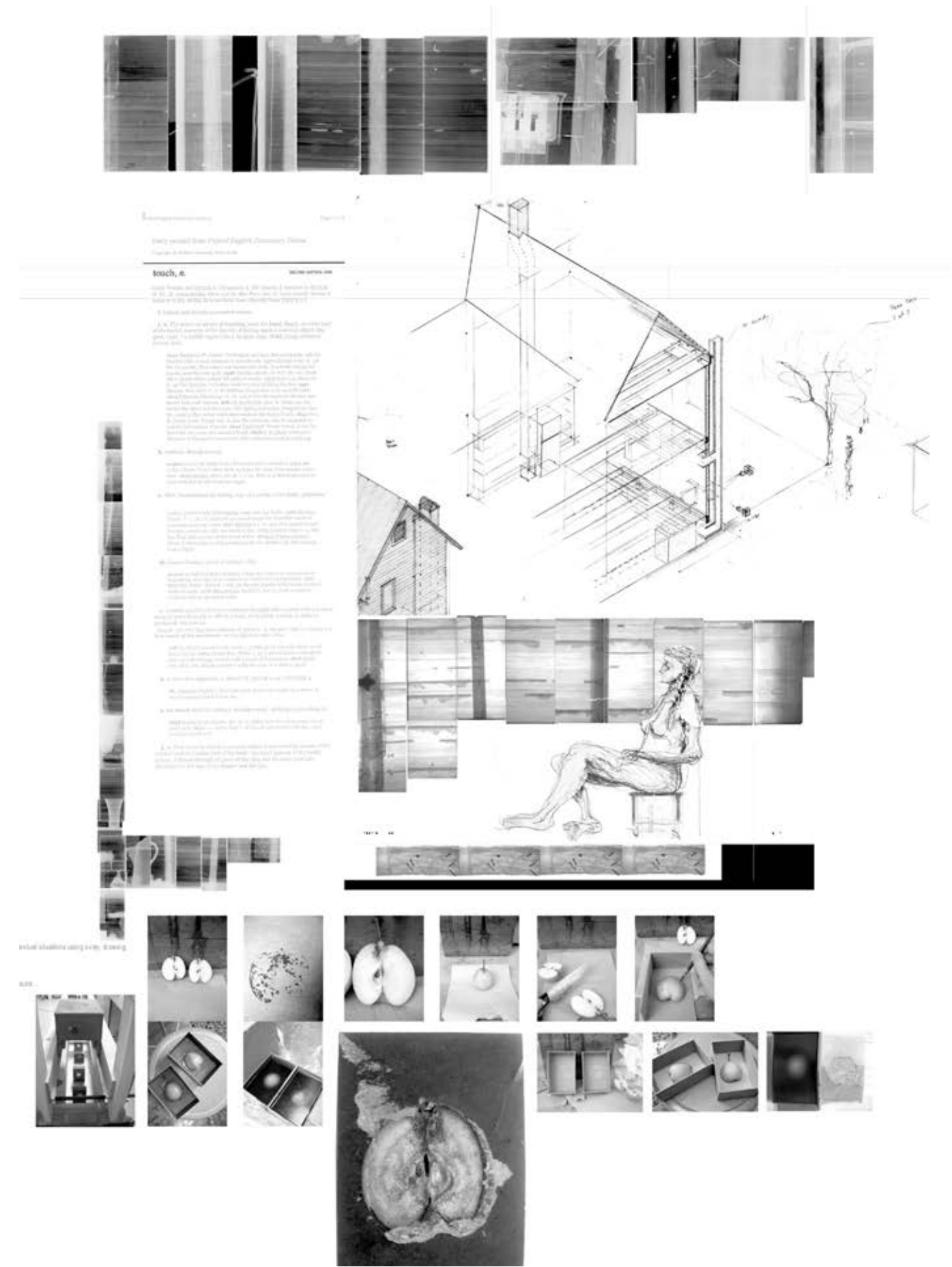


Top: window radiograph; Bottom: enfolded reliquary. Stacy Johnstone

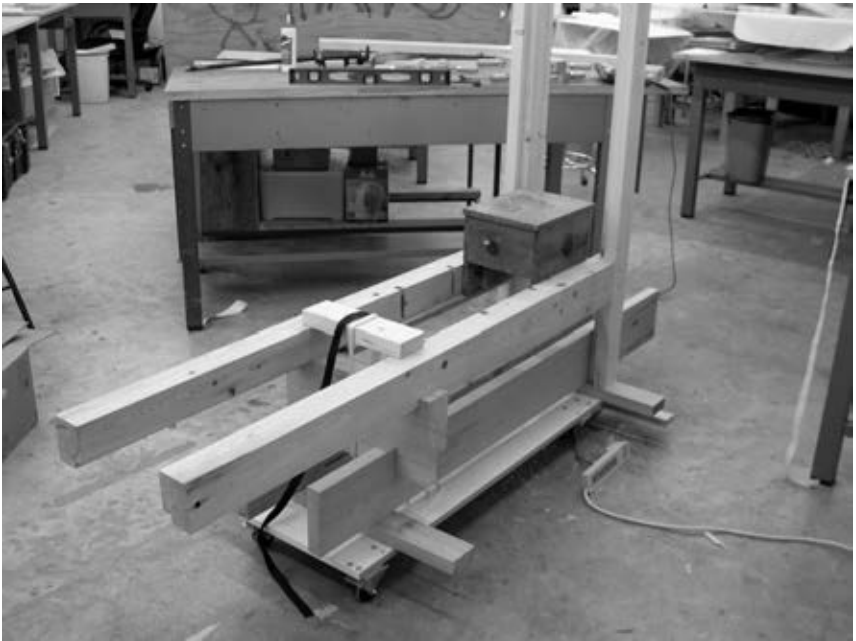


Top: enfolded reliquary; Bottom: exhibition view of wall with reliquary and process, Glen Darling

Top: found artifact; Bottom: artifactual radiograph, Glen Darling



Narrative analysis and imaging locations, Will Zajac



Enfolded reliquary, construction and exhibition views, Will Zajac

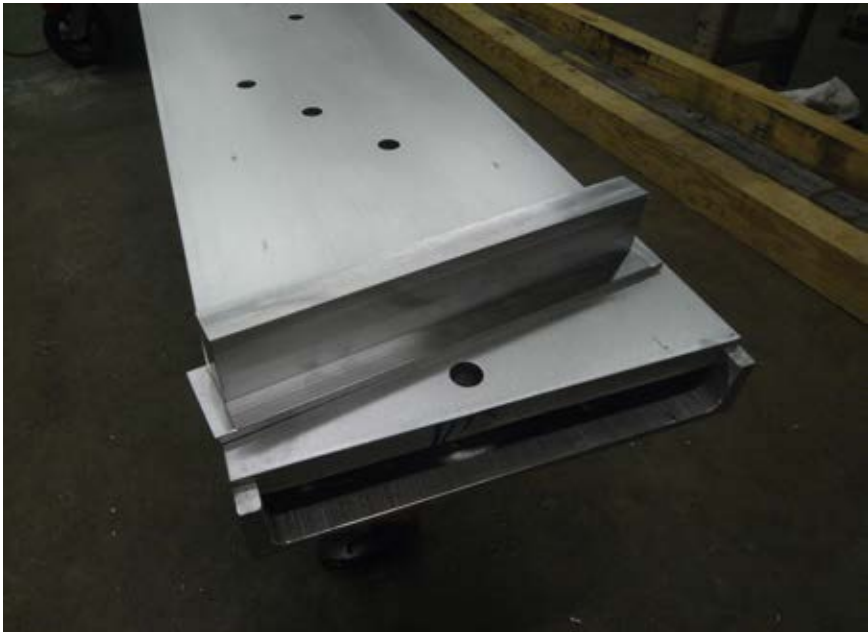
Student Apprenticeship Program (SAP),
University of Florida School of Architecture

The Student Apprenticeship Program was initiated in 2009, shortly before my Fulbright fellowship began, and can be considered a design-build studio. The program invites selected graduate students to gather experience working in the field and to contribute to the design of small, crafted, interventional projects. The student participates in client meetings, where he or she presents schematic design drawings through construction – contract documents. The student participates in all aspects of construction, including site preparation, understanding and using hand and machine tools and project-specific construction techniques. In the project shown the students constructed concrete form-work, molds and patterns, participated in the fabrication of steel and aluminum products and general and fine carpentry performed both on-site and in fabrication shops. My role as mentor included all levels of construction education. I was

continuously on-site for practical instruction dealing with scheduling, material selection, construction and budgetary concerns. I worked directly with students; however, the student performed the majority of the physical ‘work’.

The project shown is a small intervention into an existing wood house where we designed, manufactured and installed a two-story entry sequence—stairs, balconies flooring and railings. The construction process included demolition and site preparation, concrete form-work, wood mill-work, steel mill-work and all facets of installing the various pieces made for the project. The diminutive scale of the project allowed the student to participate in all construction phases. The syntactical relationship of program and materials was a primary and ongoing matter of discussion.





Form of Absence: Radiographs | Paintings | Reliquaries,
Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, Florida 2013

The process begins with radiography in-situ; spaces and artifacts are imaged using a portable x-ray device. The x-ray image, as a first-tier index, releases certain identifiable attributes and opens internal structures for the investment of reformed narratives. Oil relief paintings are made over the x-rays and then the paintings are x-rayed. The layered composite is reconstructed as a mold for casting the sculpture/enfolded reliquary¹. All images are full-scale.

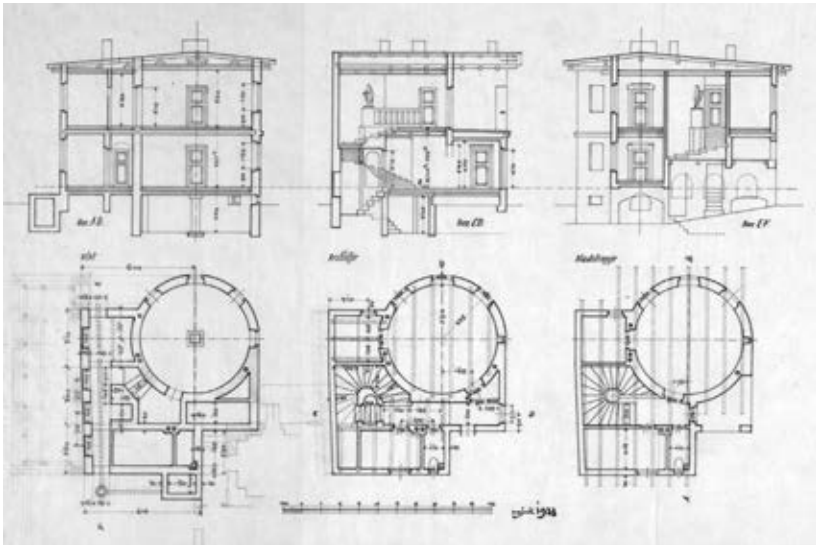
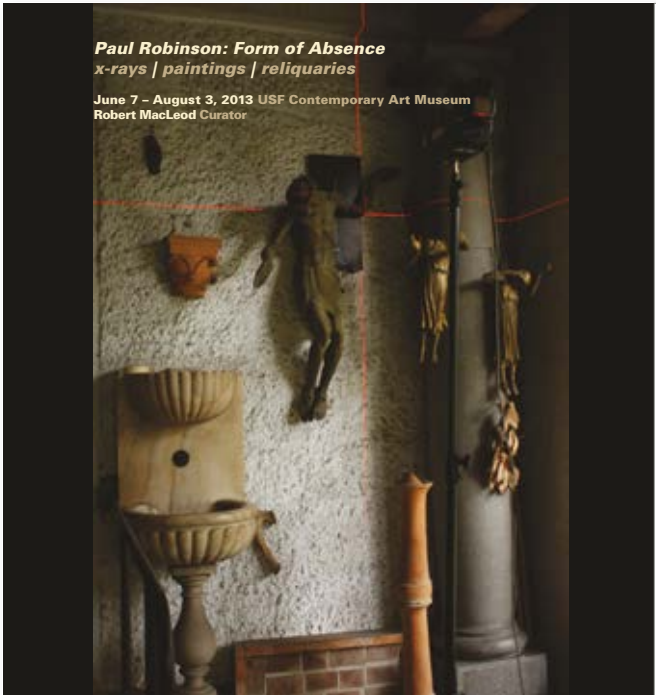
The enfolded reliquary does not house the—whole—original object nor does it necessarily have a space within in order to hold any ‘thing’, the object is enfolded into the reliquary; the reliquary becomes the object and projects analogy rather than mimesis. The reliquaries (in this sense an image is a reliquary) ultimately manifest as full-scale interventions into a newly charged context, bringing with them a collapsed then unfolded history..

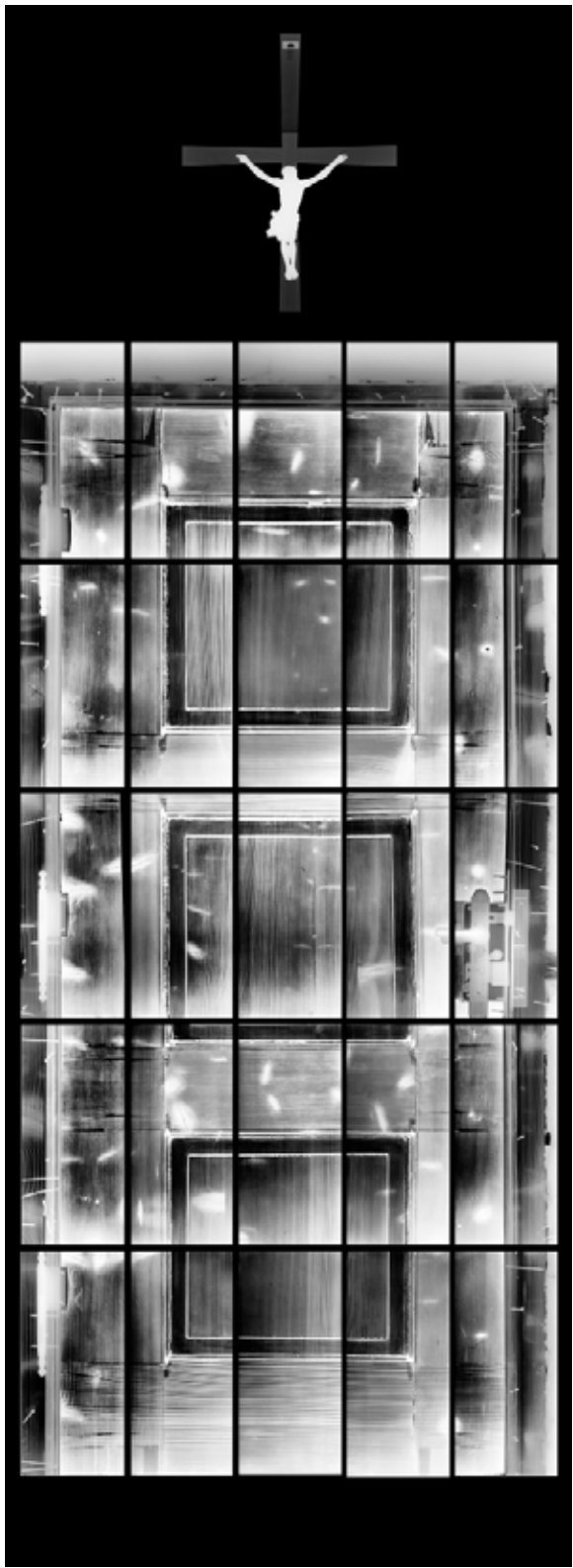
The collective ‘body’, the outcome, can be experienced as parts or as an interconnected experience. How that experience is shaped depends on the—altered—context in which the collective body is resituated – where it intervenes. The image is the primary source, a genesis of sorts. The radiograph (x-ray) creates an immediate indexical morphology, removing

representational information while revealing a certain spatial “form of absence” that can be construed—unfolded and enfolded—thus reshaping one’s perceptual position to both outcome and its history.

Form of Absence is dually “site specific”; the work is gathered from one site—the origin—and restructured relative to its new transformative site/space of installation.

1 The enfolded reliquary is a reliquary whose artifact is, via enfolding, embedded into the object rather than held within. The artifact and its container are considered synthetically. A reliquary is typically seen as a vessel or container holding a meaningful artifact – a relic. The container and its contents often have no intrinsic relationship to each other, however the relic has meaning that escapes the container and assumes a narrative form in the minds of those who find the artifact important; the reliquary creates a connection by virtue of mediation. Loosely (but perhaps not so) a building is a reliquary, as is a sculpture or a painting. Analogs. All hold within their body processes (and stories) and in accordance to how they are experienced there is a potential connective space between the object and one who is present in its space. The enfolded reliquary is more a material body whose purpose is to reveal its making and its contents by virtue of enfolding its history, and the history of its making, until both container and object are found to be one.





Door, 2013, original x-ray printed on glossy archival rag paper, 91.4 x 241 cm.



Exhibition photo: *Door and Stele*, *Form of Absence: Radiographs | Paintings | Reliquaries*, Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, Florida 2013/14.



Exhibition photo: Hat, *Form of Absence: Radiographs | Paintings | Reliquaries*, Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, Florida 2013/14.

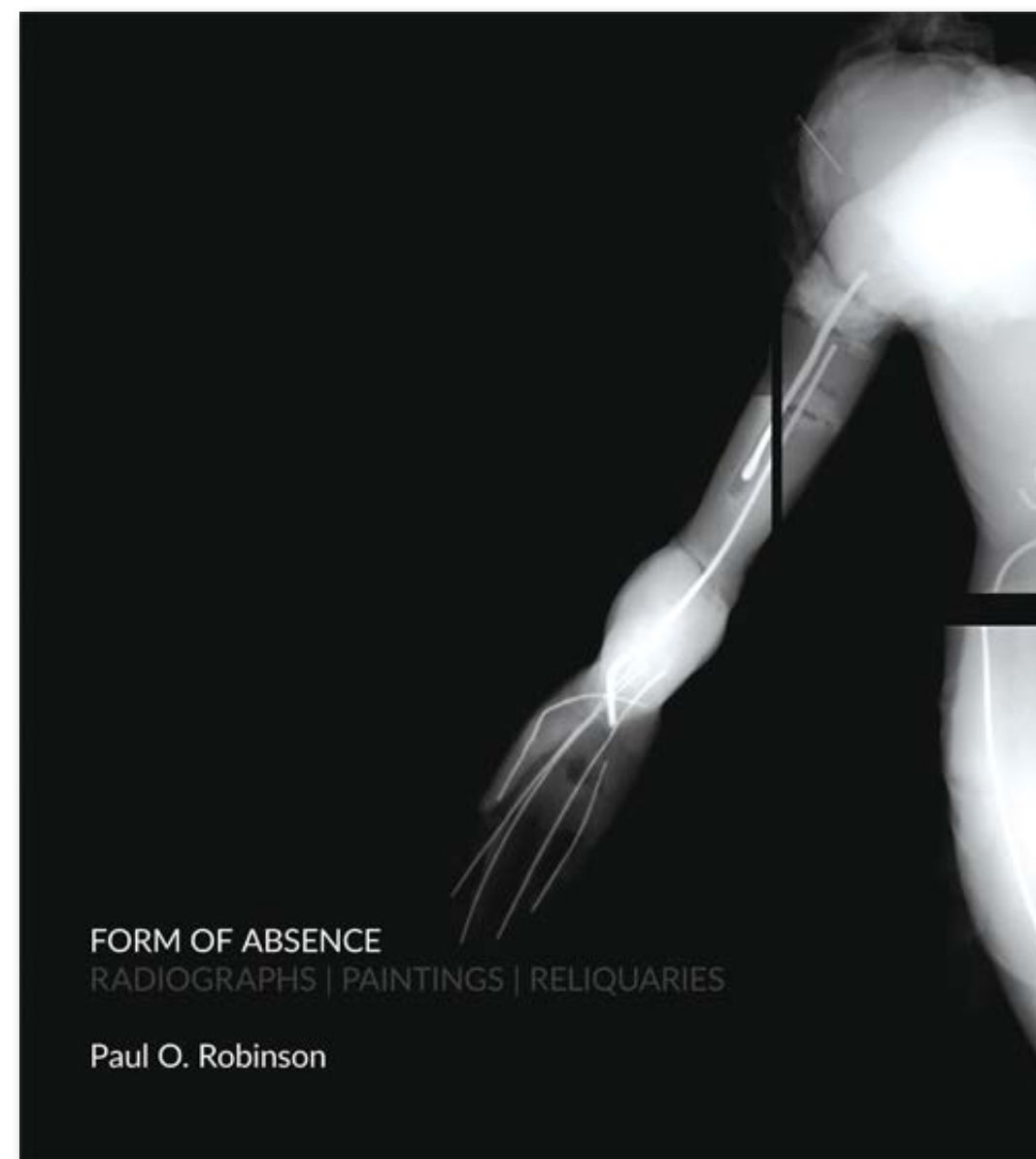


Top: Hat radiograph; Bottom: context and mold making process

Form of Absence: Radiographs | Paintings | Reliquaries

Form of Absence: Radiographs|Paintings|Reliquaries eloquently documents the artwork comprising the 2013 installation *Form of Absence*, installed in the Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, Florida and includes five unique critical texts. Wilson Baldrige, Judith Birdsong, Levent Kara, Robert Macleod and Ignacio Porzecanski write about their experience of and with the work; Michel Deguy's poems *Antepurgatorio* and *Timberline* preface the book in a correspondence with two artworks. Rather than review, the authors engage the installation as a threshold for departures; the diverse texts range from quasi-fiction to musings on the history of beauty to a voice message.

Jointly published 2015 by the USF Contemporary Art Museum/Institute for Research in Art/Graphic Studio and the USF School of Architecture. Format: Hardcover, 32 x 28cm (12 ½ x 11 in.), 104 pages, five-color offset printed on 170 gram varnished Fedrigoni Symbol Tatami Ivory paper. Printed in Ljubljana, Slovenia. ISBN 978-0-9860767-1-8.



Kronos Center for Contemporary Music
Seminar Robinson 2017/18 Assistant: Ana Klofutar

The Kronos Performing Arts Association (KPAA) is considering a European center of operations. The KPAA was founded by the Kronos Quartet. The Quartet commissions works by contemporary composers and artists from around the world and performs and records with leading orchestras, musicians, artists and maintains a rigorous practice/solo performance schedule.



Pedagogical Objectives - Programming

- You are charged with:
- organizing an architectural program using the conceptual and practical needs of the KPAA and presenting it to the seminar
 - individual conceptual development of program e.g., what makes a project for the KPAA different than other similar projects
 - addressing multi-scalar urban programming (the idea that context is an intrinsic element of the programming process)
 - developing dynamic spatial associations between volumes of differing public activities/functions
 - addressing tectonics as a programmatic element
 - developing a strong representational strategy i.e., analytical model-making and drawing as interconnected process tools
 - designing through section & plan simultaneously
 - presentation of relevant critical studies: history, typologies, materiality, performance, string-quartet etc.

Operational considerations: Mass/Void (urban), Mass/Void (internal/external), Mass/Void (tectonic), musical performance/recording as integrated with (or separated from) other program elements, contextual programming.

General Program
The list below is not necessarily a “program”; it is more a list of requirements – needs – set forth by the client. The list includes highly charged conceptual elements and also what

one might consider the banal. In order to define a spatial program one must engage each item as an integral element of the design process and as a category for research, analysis and development. It is your charge to “shape” the list into a creative and logical architectural program that defines a critical dialog between the needs of the KPAA and the City of Ljubljana.

Program
Urban Entry; Bathrooms; Ticketing & Café; Administrative offices; Large performance space: seating for approximately 500 - 800; Small performance space (also used as practice, lecture and recording space); Dormitory for 10; 4 small flats for resident artists; Gallery space; Individual practice rooms; Classrooms; Instrument storage spaces; Mechanical/ Technical Systems and Storage; Service Entry and Garbage/ Refuse

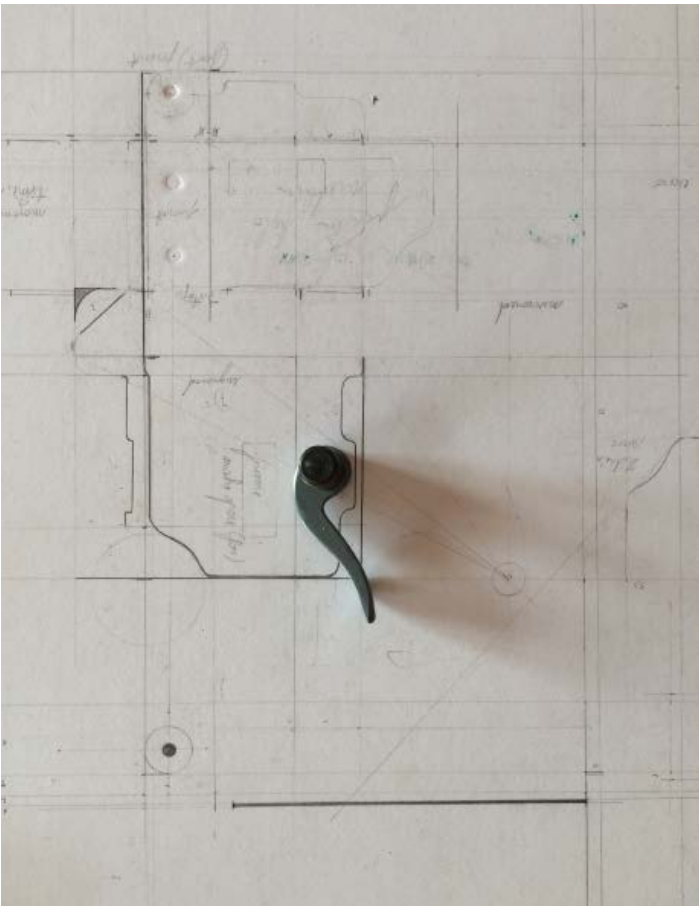
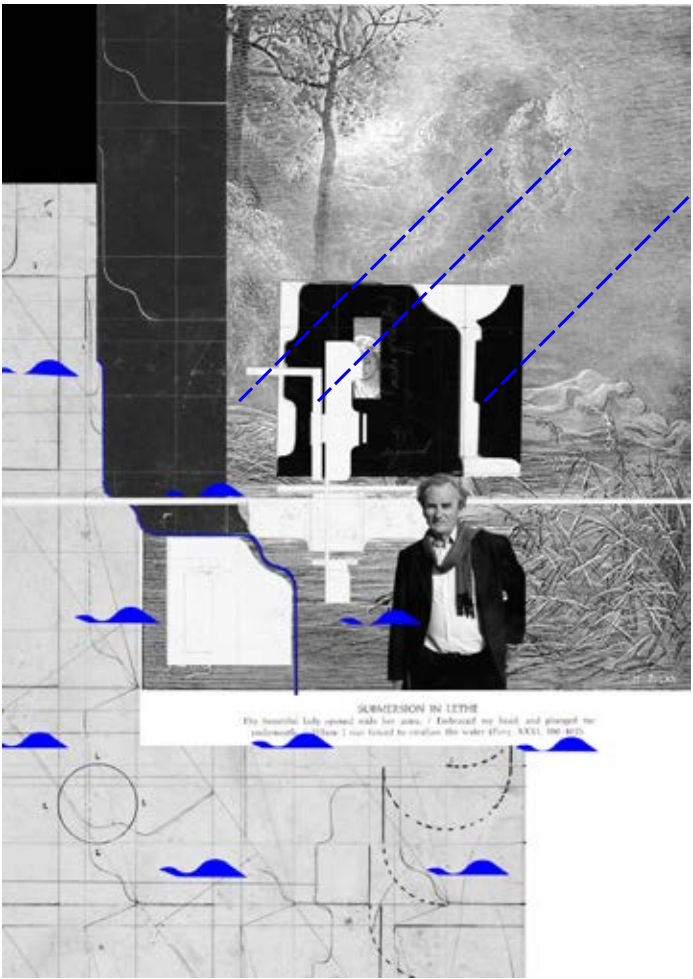
- Project Sites & Context
1. Dalmatinova ulica, Miklosiceva cesta & Mala ulica
 2. Corner of Nazorjeva ulica & Ajdovscina



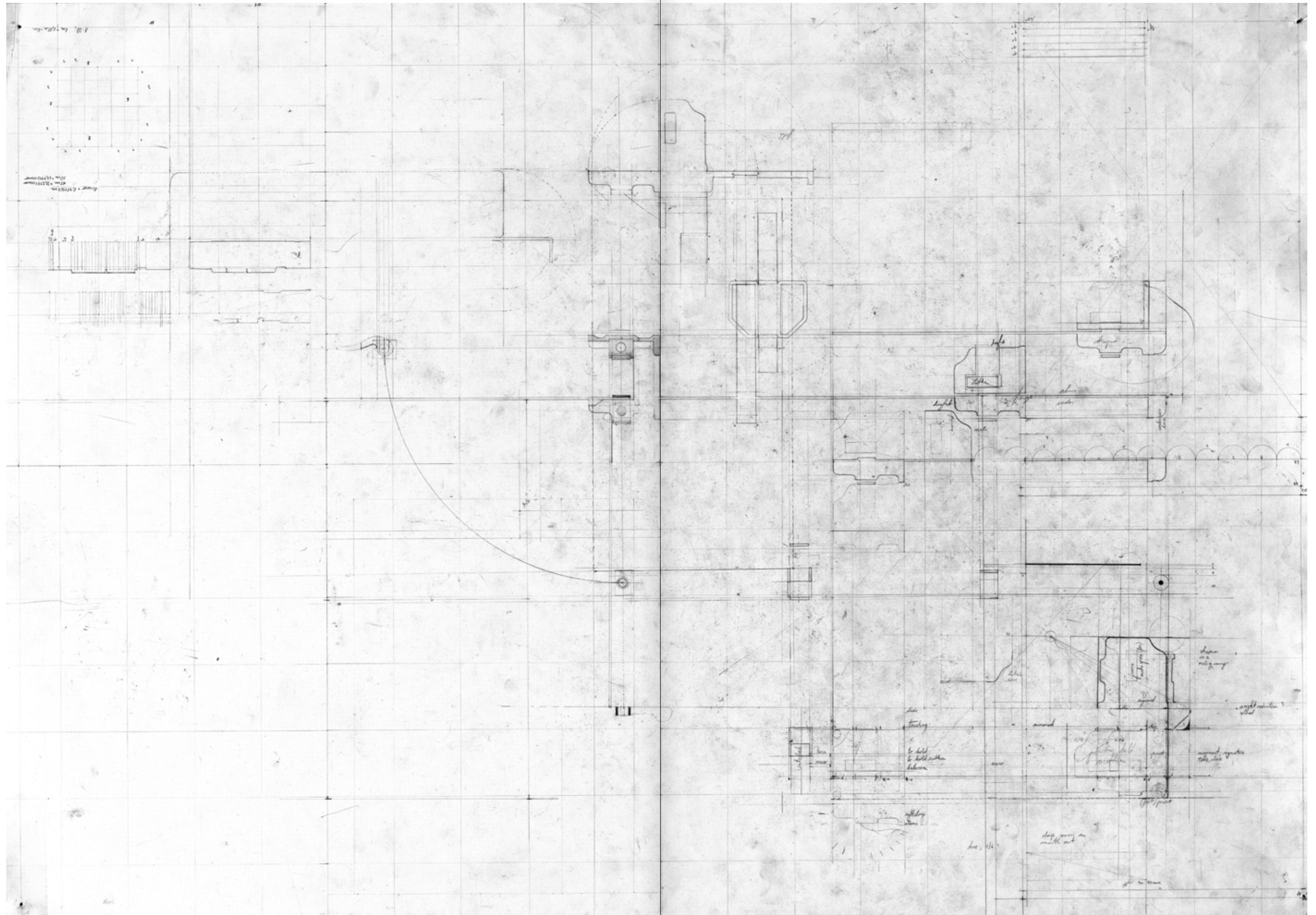
Grading Criteria
Our seminar operates as a group. Although there will be individual critiques, group discourse is the general format each seminar meeting. You are expected to participate. Before each meeting you should have all process work pinned to the walls and be ready to discuss your work with the group. It is our belief that group discussions and in-class work fosters a deeper and more diverse understanding of design and design process. We learn from others. You are encouraged to work in the seminar when at all possible. The seminar is your place – use it. Attendance is required at every class, project review and scheduled lecture. Completion of each assignment in accordance to the assignment requirements is mandatory. All legitimate absences must be pre-arranged with your professor or medically excused with a letter from a physician. Excessive absence or lateness will affect your grade and three unexcused absences may result in a significantly lower grade.

Artifactual Analytique

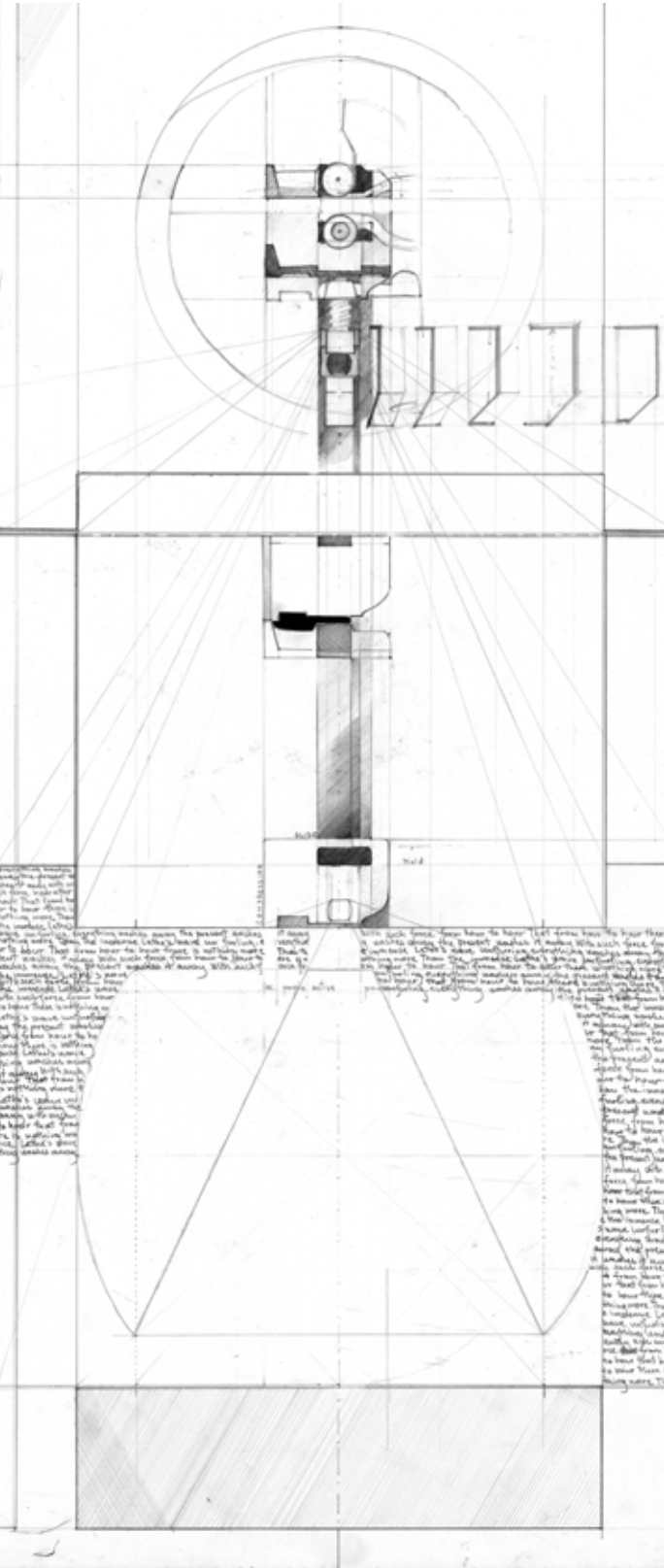
The project begins with the analysis of a "composing stick". The composing stick is used in the traditional letterpress printing process, where the typesetter assembles text within the vise of the stick in order to transfer the text to the "gallery" before being locked into the "forme" that will be placed upon the printing press. Each student chose a text by the French poet and philosopher Michel Deguy and then assembled the text within the composing stick; afterwards, the entwinement of tool and text became the generative platform for investigations leading to drawings construed as a context where spatial joints were extracted and interpreted as models. The charge of the model was to consider the syntactical, and interstitial, relationship between positive and negative space.



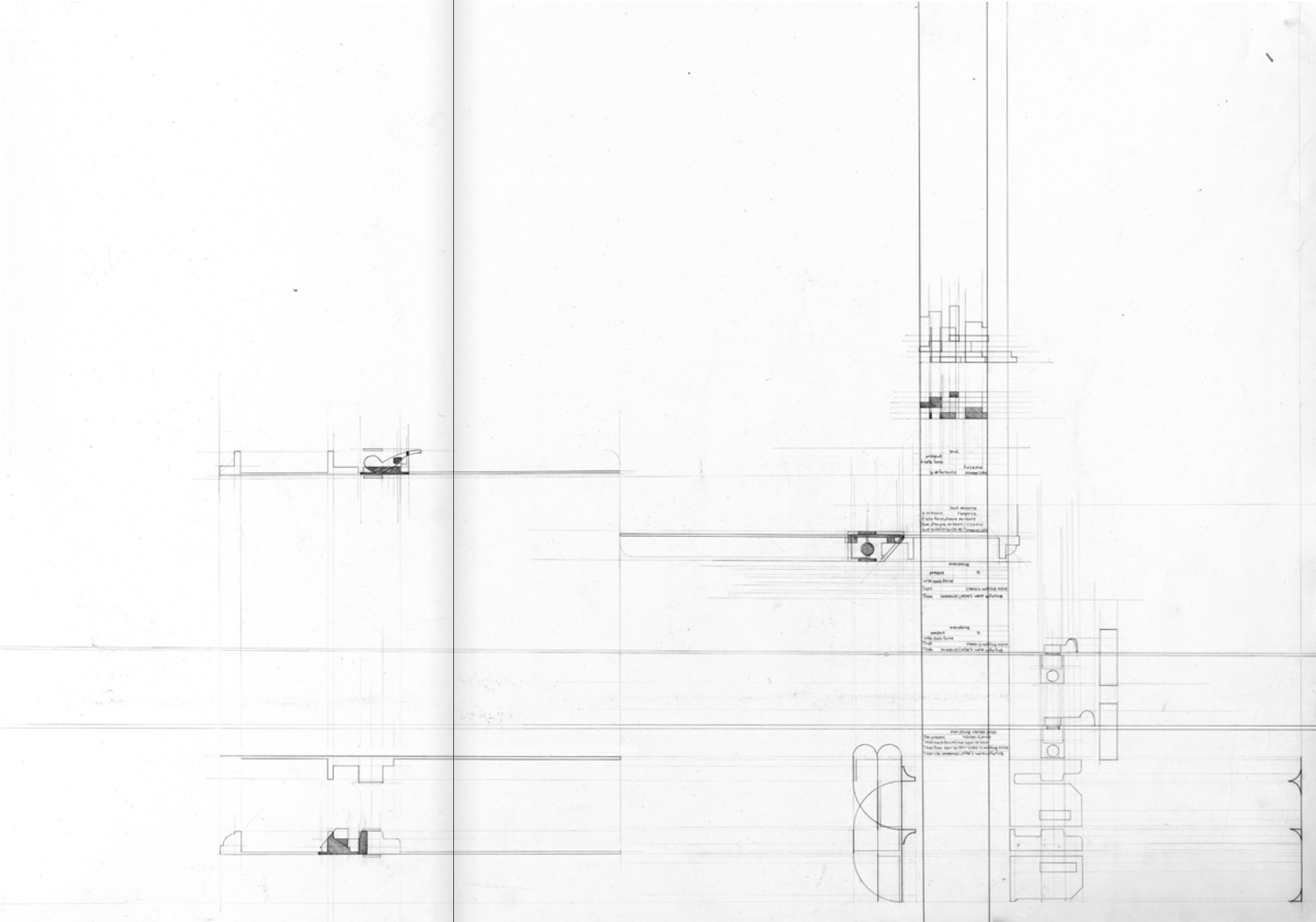
Clockwise from top right: a composing stick, composing stick analysis, morphological studies, Amadej Mravljak



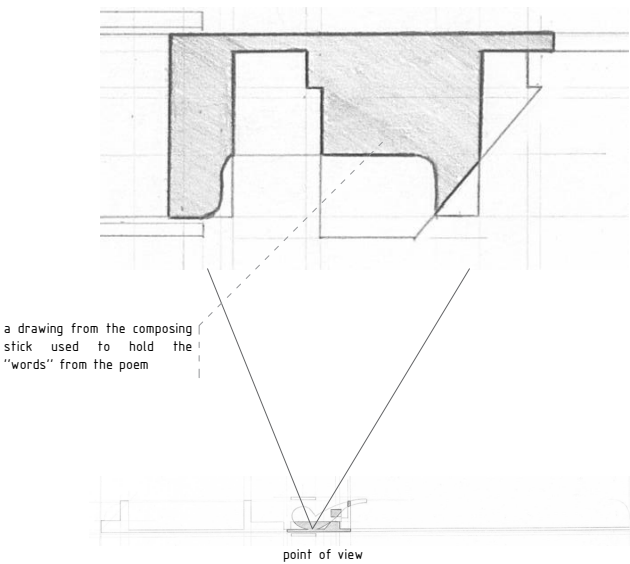
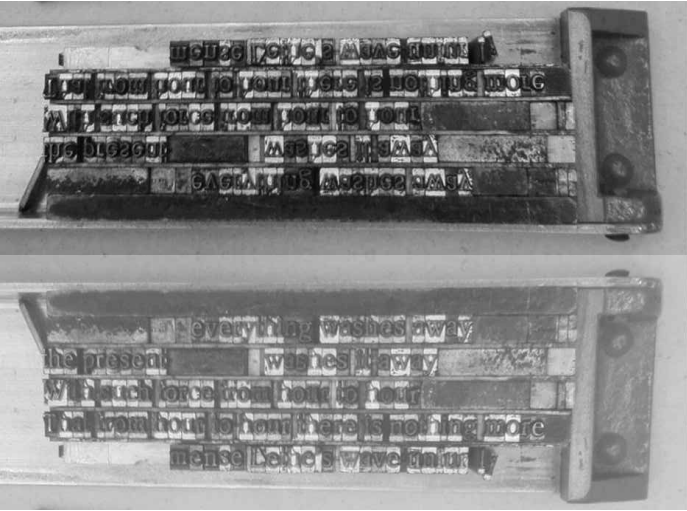
Composing Stick Analytique, Amadej Mravlak



Composing Stick Analytique, Tilen Mele



Composing Stick Analytique, Eva Pepovska



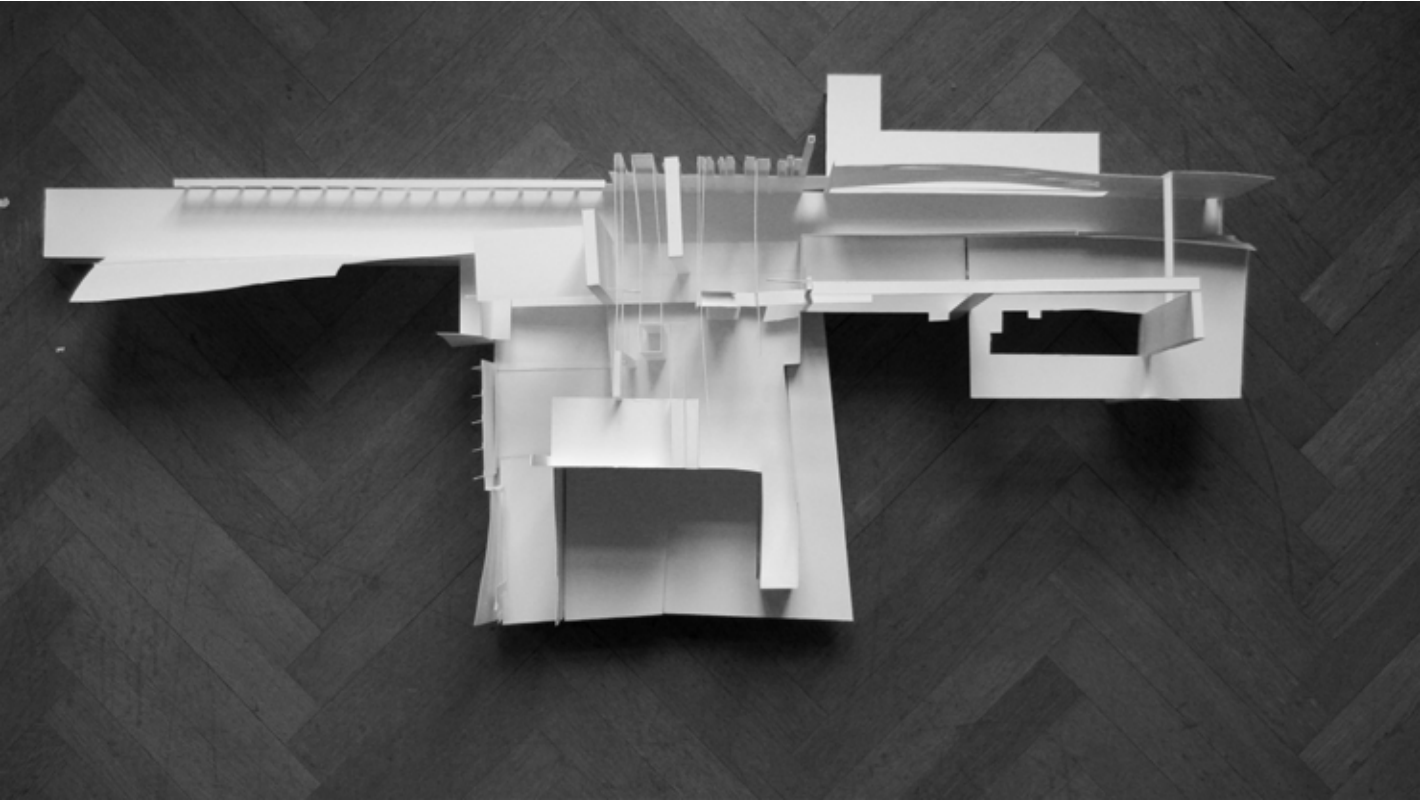
ANAMORPHIC VIEW (a distorted projection or drawing which appears normal when viewed from a particular point or with suitable mirror or lens) OF ONE PART OF THE DRAWING RELATING IT TO HOW A TEXT IN A COMPOSITION STICK IS POSITIONED AND HOW IT CAN BE READ WITH THE HELP OF A MIRROR

THAT PART OF THE DRAWING IS FORMED BY THE INTERSECTIONS OF THE SPACES THAT THE WORDS, FROM THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH VERSION OF THE POEM BY MICHEL DEGUY, TAKE WITHOUT ITS REPEATING WORDS

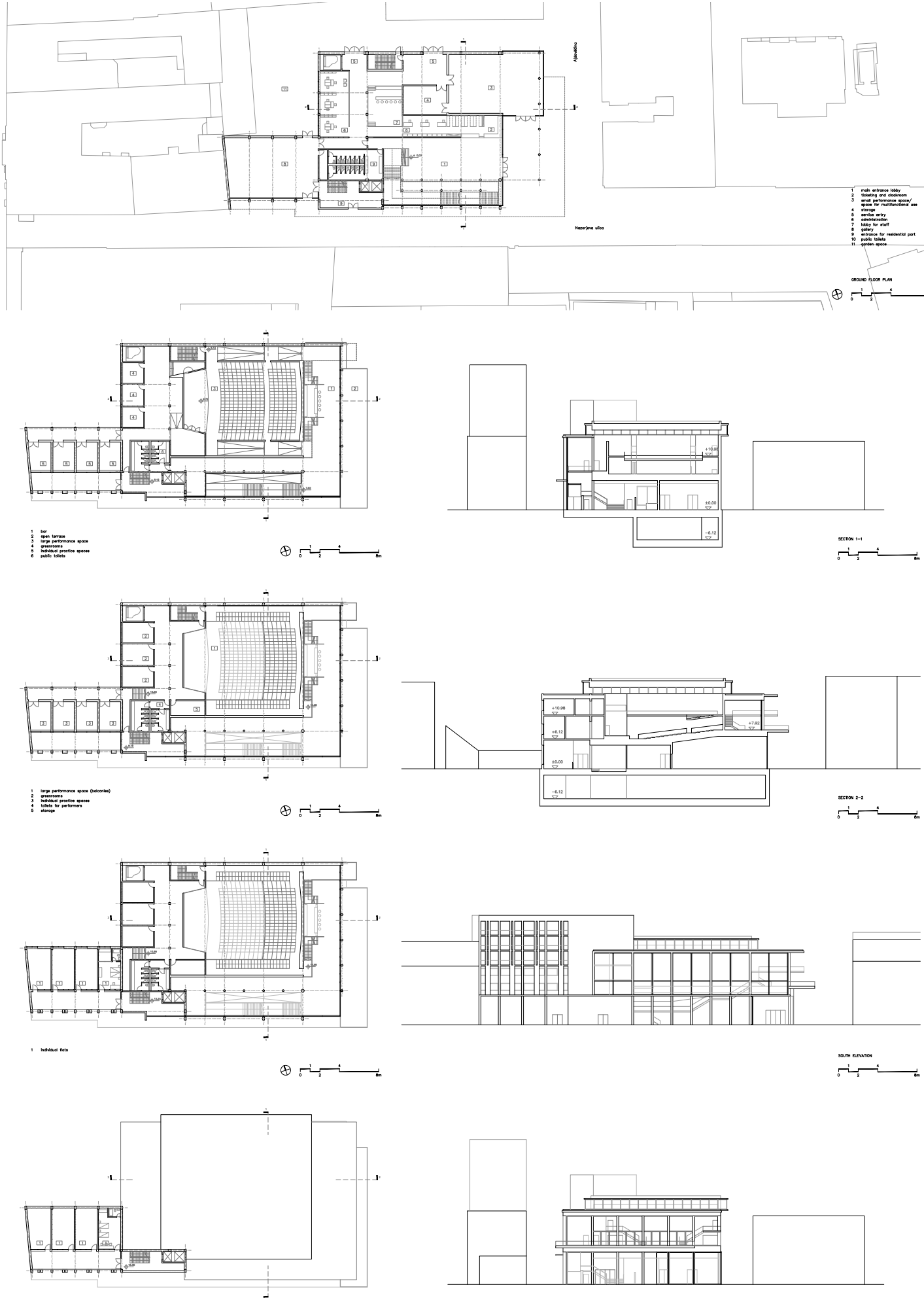
DEGUY EXPLORES THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH LANGUAGE SHAPES OUR EXPERIENCES AND OUR PERCEPTION OF THINGS
DEGUY IS A POET GROUNDED IN A PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION, HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY PHENOMENOLOGY (the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness)

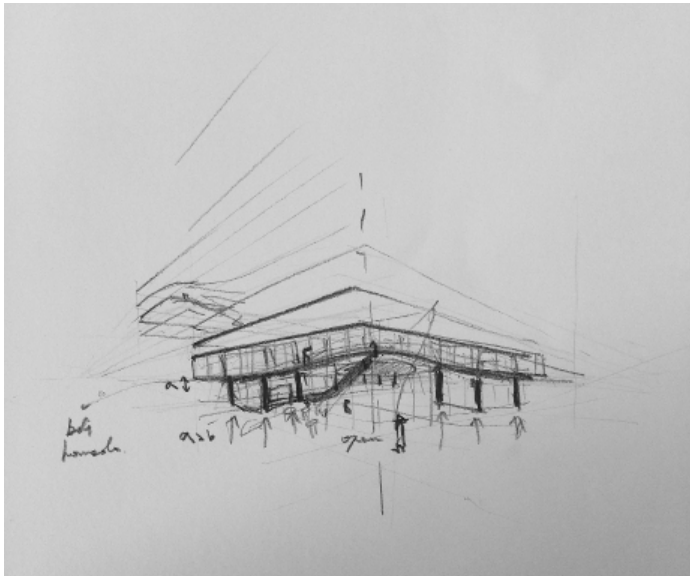
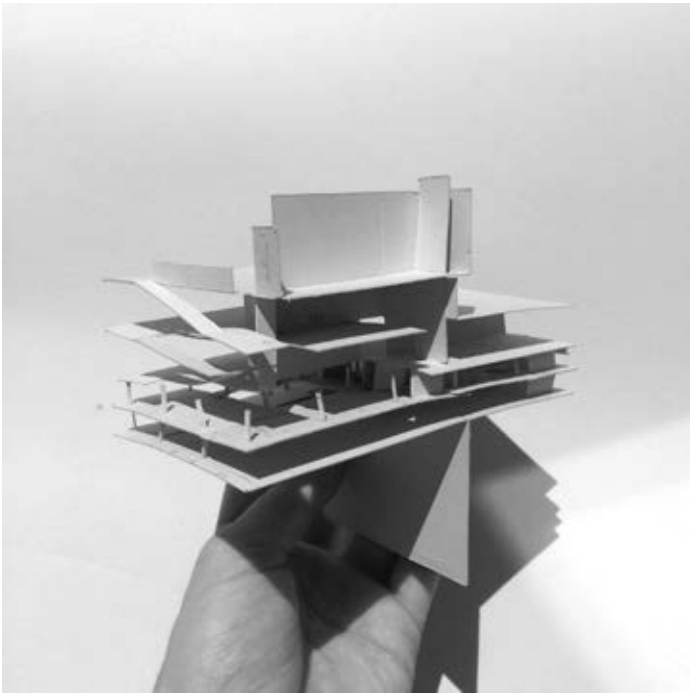
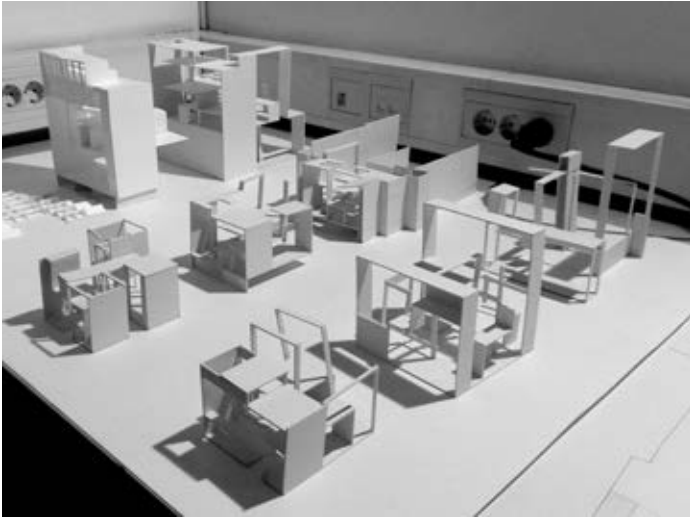
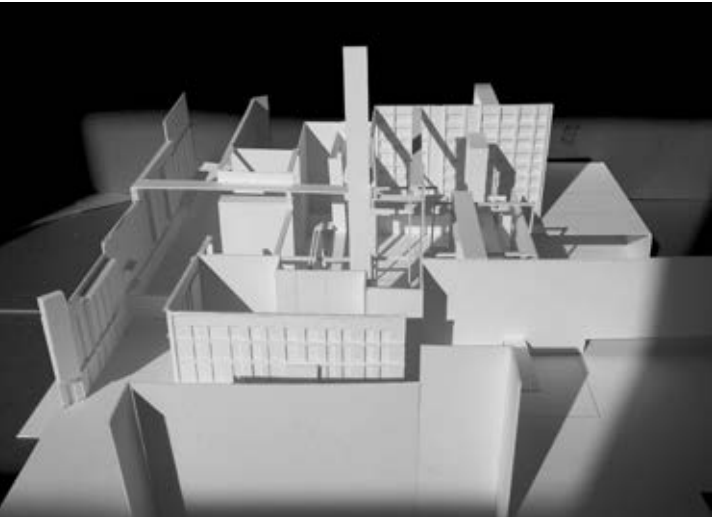
GIVING THAT IN CONSIDERATION, IN THIS SPACE HE CAN FIGURATIVELY VIEW HIS WORK THAT IS ALREADY FINISHED AND MOVE INSIDE, THROUGH ITS SEPARATE PARTS AND PAST EXPERIENCES TO HELP HIM DEVELOP NEW IDEAS

STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIGURATIVE CAPABILITIES OF LANGUAGE IN PARTICULAR, DEGUY INSISTS THAT COMPARISON IS THE CRUCIAL PROCESS THAT GIVES HUMANITY THE ABILITY TO CULTIVATE DIFFERENCE, RATHER THAN TO SUPPRESS IT, ALLOWING US TO ATTEND TO THE MATERIAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF EXISTENCE

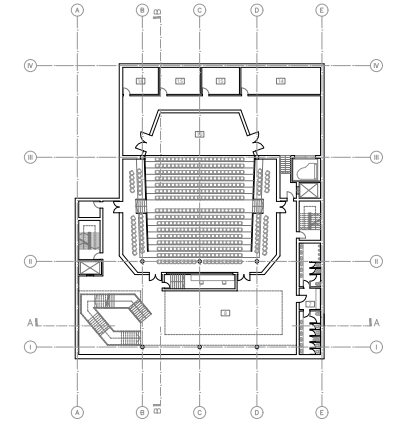


Above: composing stick analysis cont. and initial programming model for the Kronos Center; Opposite: The Kronos Center for Performing Arts, student: Eva Pepovska

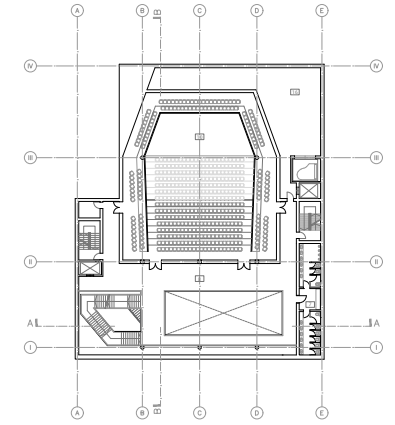




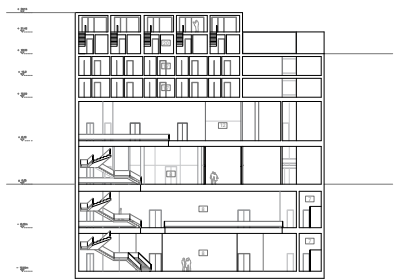
Above: program analysis and volumetric studies; Opposite: Kronos Center for the Performing Arts, student: Jasmina Filipova



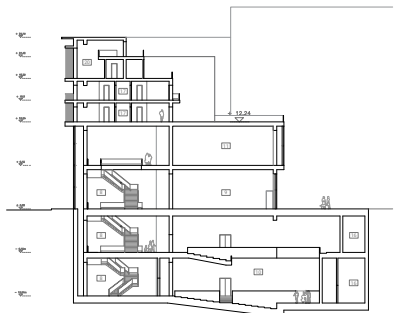
Level -12.24
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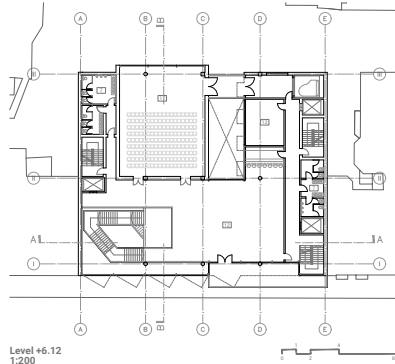
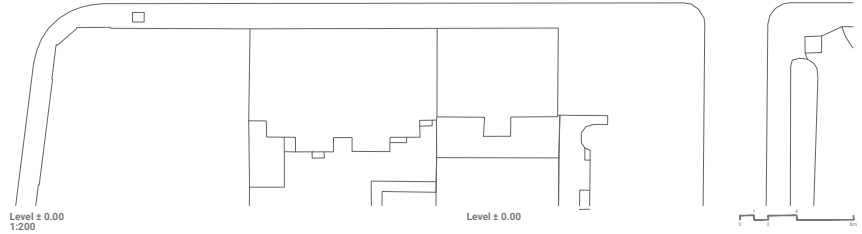
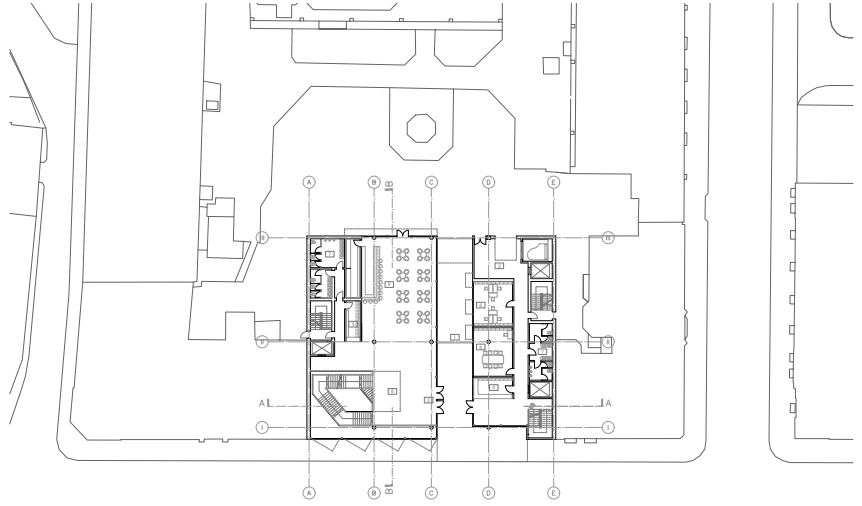
Level -6.12
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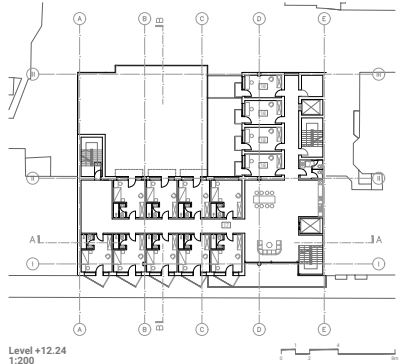
Section A-A
1:200



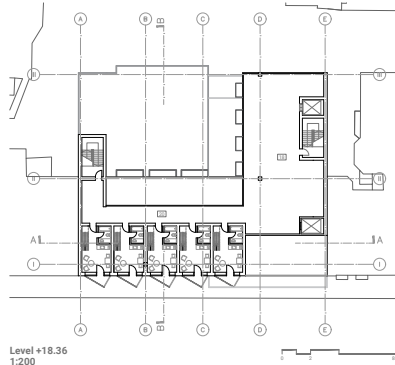
Section B-B
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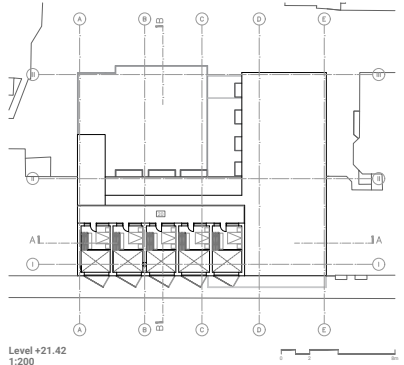
Level +6.12
1:200



Level +12.24
1:200



Level +18.36
1:200



Level +21.42
1:200



Elevation
1:200

- SPACES
- | | | | |
|----|------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Reception | 12 | Small performance space |
| 2 | Bar | 13 | Café |
| 3 | Exhibition | 14 | Classroom |
| 4 | Workshop | 15 | Open space |
| 5 | Workshop | 16 | Workshop |
| 6 | Workshop | 17 | Workshop |
| 7 | Workshop | 18 | Workshop |
| 8 | Workshop | 19 | Workshop |
| 9 | Workshop | 20 | Workshop |
| 10 | Workshop | 21 | Workshop |
| 11 | Workshop | 22 | Workshop |

Jasmina Filipova

Seminar Robinson 2018/19:
Programming the Vertical

General description given to the students:

Our 2018/19 seminar included discussions regarding the theoretical nature and historical path of the vertical program and the analysis of significant buildings and structures employing conceptual and physical ideas of verticality. The seminar sessions included assigned readings—theory, history, structure—that each student would present to the seminar in the context of round-table discussions. This resulted in “in-class” exercises where both conceptual models and drawings were made and discussed. The fundamental issue for the seminar was “programming”; this encompassed how program was considered regarding: context, assigned functions, social programming constructs, vertical spatial systems and general structure. Facade/Exterior/Elevation/Skin/Materiality was a tertiary consideration; and for this project it was to manifest as a byproduct of the relations between interior and exterior programming – as a continuous thread that would be part of the overall process...from conception to final design.

Project 1—begins by exploring the architectural roots of vertical design through the analysis of the body as both analogy and metaphor. Taken from the seminar syllabus: “You will use your body as the source for your analysis. You will begin by facing yourself and drawing yourself. Ideas of proportion, structure, joints, function and the historical politic of the body will define the course and processes of your analysis. The drawings will, in time, be developed as an analog that embodies ideas of tectonics and spatial hierarchy. All of these transformations will be considered as a means/ lens to consider the role of the vertical body in architectural programming.”

Project 2—will involve the study of verticality both as object and non-object (the contextualized tower) and as a necessary component within the urban context. Taken from the seminar syllabus: “You will be given a site and program that considers both social and functional aspects of vertical design. The project will also consider building structure and envelope as an integral part of programming within a complex urban site that will simultaneously challenge the nature and “relevance” of architectural object(ness): how can the vertical program integrate and compliment—formally and socially—open sites within the fabric of the city?”

To the Critics:

Project 1 – Spectral Body Analysis. The pedagogical charge of this project was how the student developed a strategy for: 1 - understanding the body as both analog and metaphor through the idea of reciprocity, that is, the challenges inherent in analyzing the “self” through the process of drawing. Issues

that were to be dealt with: the vertical diagram, the body in space (scale & measure), “the analogous body”, “the body politic” (no one took this on.), morphology, movement, gesture, internal hierarchies, the hierarchy of “organs”, the body and infrastructural syntax, one-to-one correspondences, truths and lies; 2 – How can the body be used as a construct to approach the design of vertical structures or, can it?

The first drawing was full scale, one-to-one and palimpsestic in nature, a drawing that would develop over time, and one that “embodied” layers of information that could be read as a diary of sorts. The student then reduced this drawing and used it as a “processual” tool for developing a vertical spatial system that could be traced back to the original. The student was then asked to locate a part of the drawing that would be “cast” as a spatial “artifact” representing a spatial joint located within the system. Each student did this using digital means in order to develop a “mold” for the casting. It was important to understand the mold as an intrinsic part of the process and, the mold could not be discarded after the casting was produced; it was to become a part of the spatial narrative of the “body/vertical” program. However, and although the mold drawings were very engaging, we ultimately were not able to make the molds due to various issues with professional responsibility of the production houses used to make the molds. Presented for the review will be “sketch-up drawings that were sent to the manufacturer for CNC carving. Each student should be able to discuss why the particular “place/site” was chosen to cast.

Project 2 – The mid-rise Tower. Each student was charged with designing a mid-rise tower on the site located on the southwest corner at the intersection of Slovenska cesta and Celovška cesta. The general program is attached to this project description. Program was introduced in a manner where each student had to make their own decisions based on context and the given—general—programmatic requirements; then the student presented the organization of the building program as a result manifold conditions. In effect, the project was presented as a critique of the building as isolated object, which is in direct contrast to the very idea of a—contemporary—tall building. Each student was allowed to alter the program in concurrence with critical discussions regarding the conceptual and strategic relevance of their particular “arguments”.

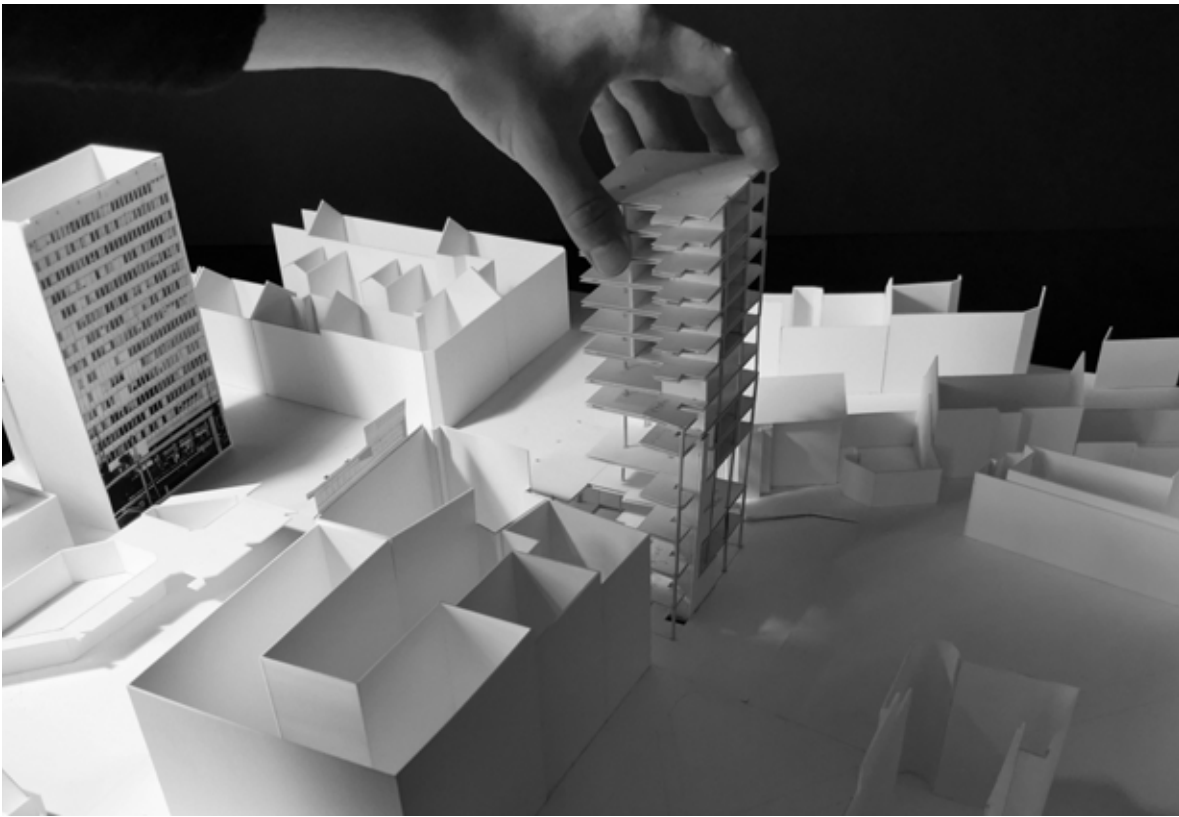
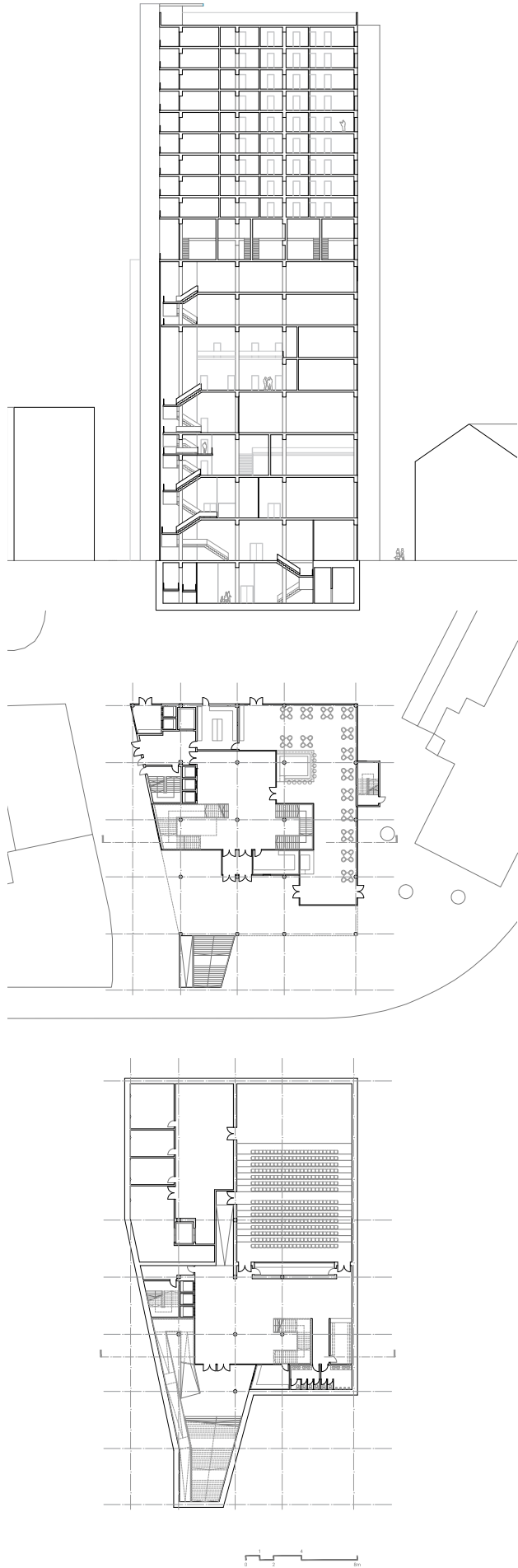
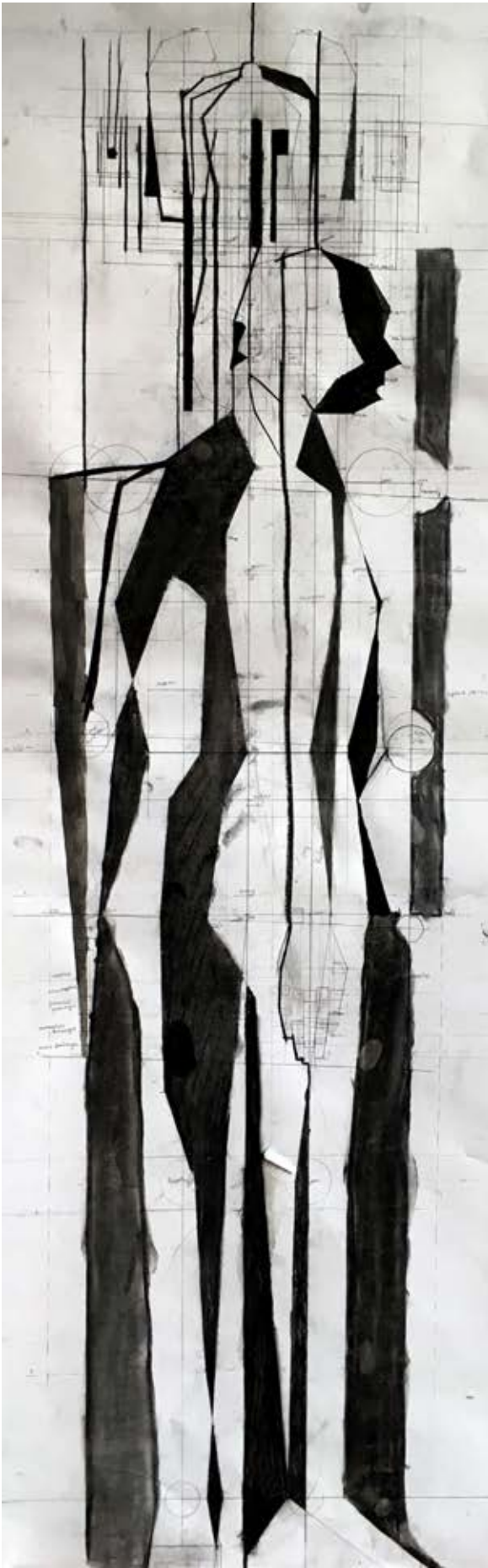
The idea of the building’s *countenance*—its facade—was to be a product of programming inside and outside, in other words, how context and the demands of the social program intersected to promote the building “skin” as a causal sign of that interstice. The student was to consider skin/envelop/elevation/facade not didactically, rather as hybrid of programming ideas.

General Schematic Program:

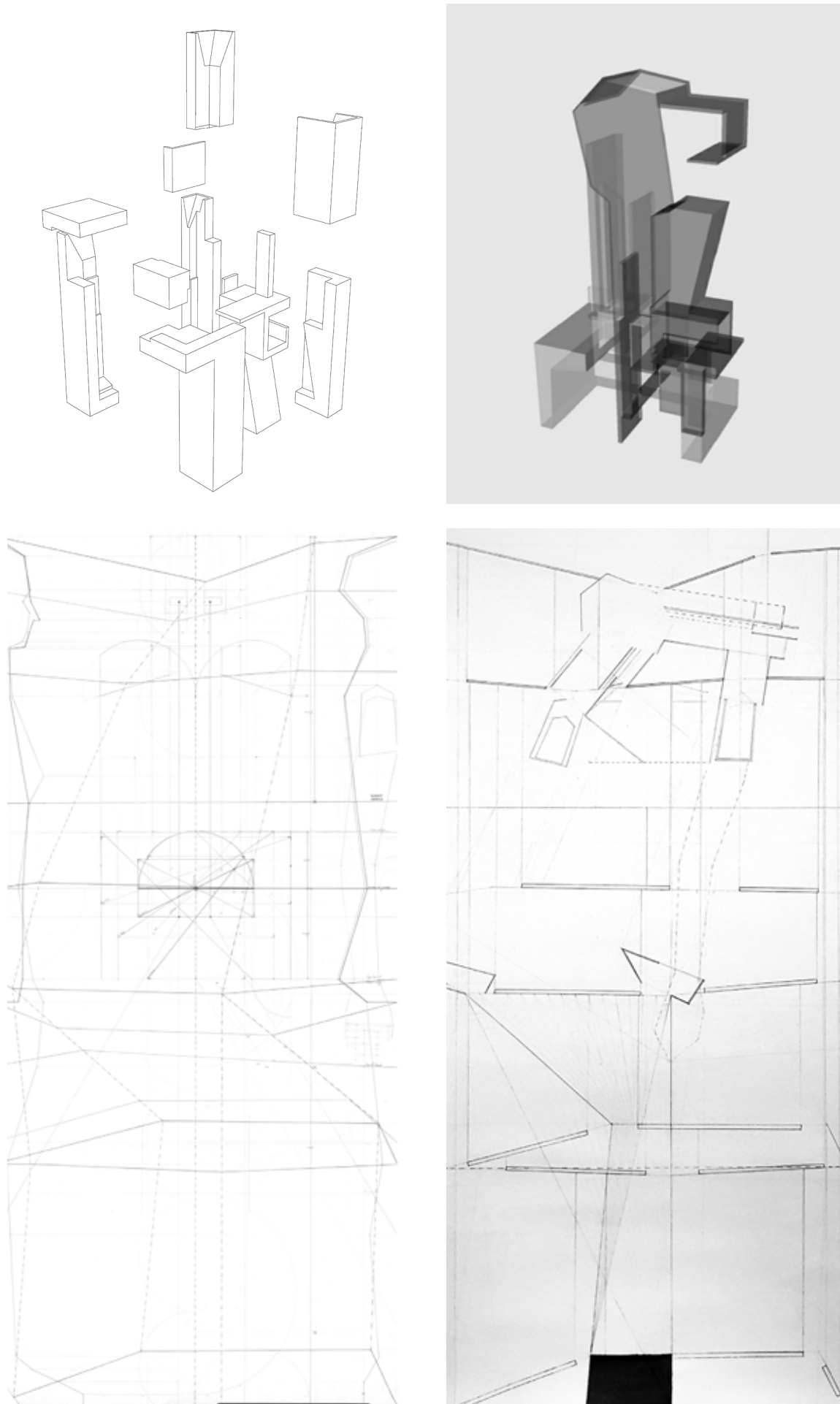
- 2 performance spaces: one open plan, one seated. Their relations to other programs and the general scale of the building will determine the spaces’ scale.
- 10 artist’s residences. Each residence includes sleeping, living, bathroom and small kitchen
- library, meeting rooms and offices for support staff
- residential/flats (amount to be determined)
- multiple bed hostel spaces
- 4 open plan flexible/multi-function conference/meeting spaces
- restaurant
- bar
- medical triage spaces
- general offices for administration and service staff including security.
- service systems/spaces e.g., delivery access
- circulation: public, private, service
- mechanical systems and spaces
- fire safety circulation



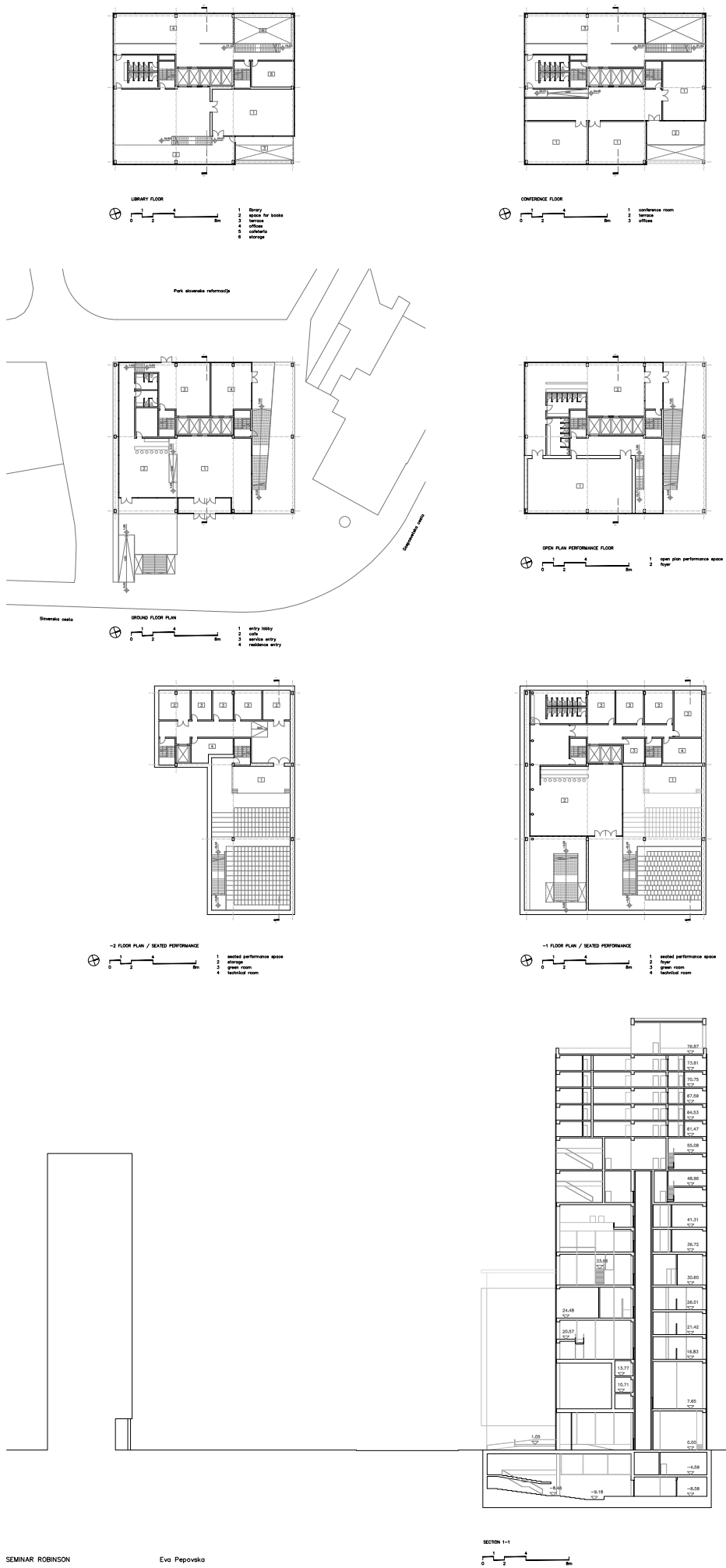
Full scale vertical body analysis, Theo Pare

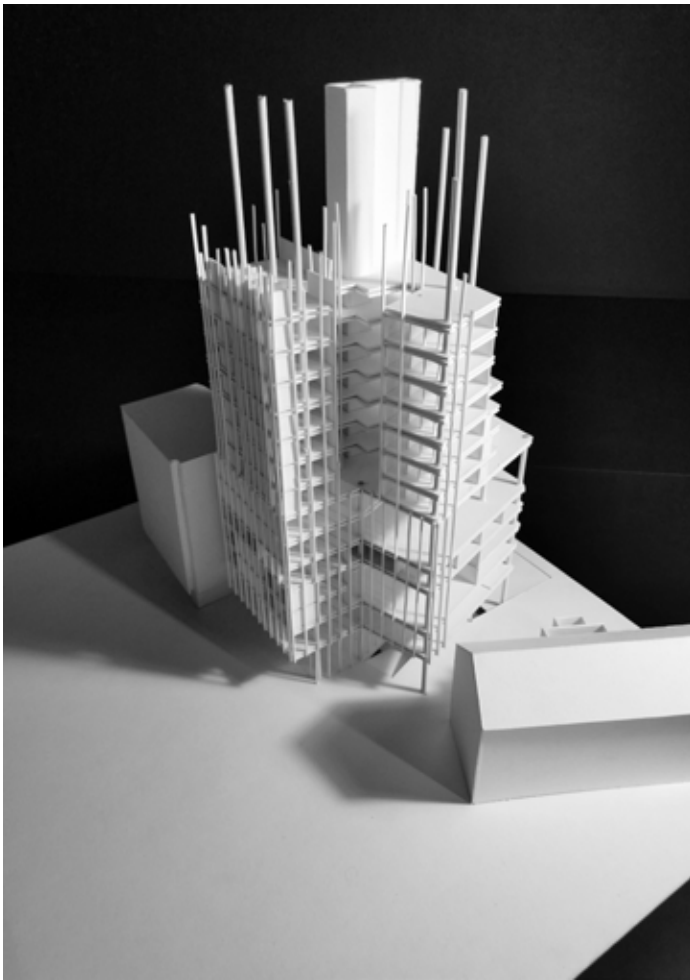


Left: full-scale vertical body analysis; Right: Hybrid vertical program; Opposite in the studio, student: Jasmina Filipova



Clockwise from top left: mold studies taken from the programmed body diagram; spatial joint mold-study, programmed body diagram, initial full-scale body diagram; Opposite: hybrid vertical program, Eva Pepovska





Left: full-scale vertical body analysis; Right: vertical program study model; Opposite: hybrid vertical program, Theo Pare



Joint Design Studio 2019/20:
Mapping the Archive

Project 1: The Room - An Archive for the Map
Spatial Mapping as a Generative Design Process

Project 2: The City - Unfolding the Archive and the Cultivation
of Context

Project 3: Contextual Programming: Seeding the Archive

The pedagogical objectives defining these three interconnected projects emerge from the desire to “reset” the 4th and 5th year student’s design process; in other words, within the advanced design studio, we will address core design modalities as a means to both conceptualize and realize strategies and processes for the augmented development of a personal tectonic language for creating space. This does not suggest that the student abandon his or her processes that have been developed during the previous four years of design education, what it can offer are augmentations to those processes by briefly returning to elemental constructs of making that critique and transform architectural conventions.

Project One: The Room - An Archive for the Map.
Etymology: early 16th century: from medieval Latin *mappa mundi*, literally ‘sheet of the world’, from Latin *mappa* ‘sheet, napkin’ + *mundi* ‘of the world’ (genitive of *mundus*).

- map** *noun*: 1a: a representation usually on a flat surface of the whole or a part of an area; b : a representation of the celestial sphere or a part of it; c : a diagram or other visual representation that shows the relative position of the parts of something Doctors use the images to construct a detailed three-dimensional map of the patient’s brain.
2: something that represents with a clarity suggestive of a map the Freudian map of the mind— Harold Bloom
3: the arrangement of genes on a chromosome — called also genetic map

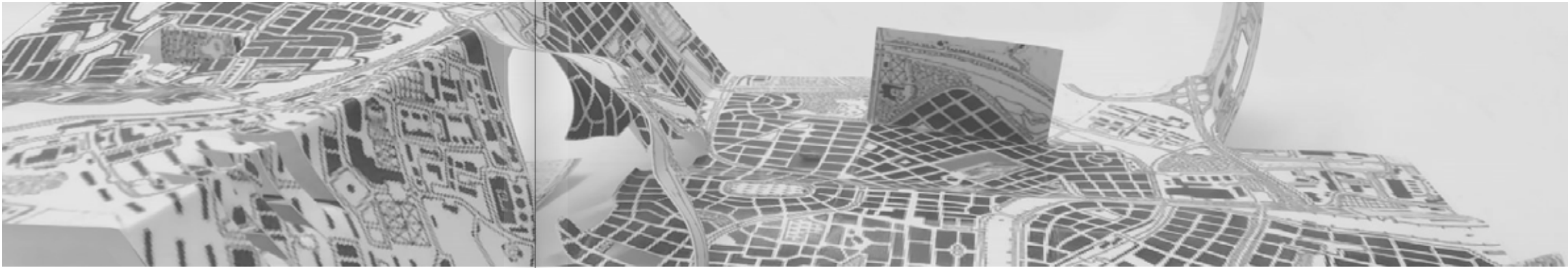
Verb: mapped; mapping
transitive verb
1a: to make a map or map the surface of the moon; b : to delineate as if on a map sorrow was mapped on her face; c : to make a survey of for or as if for the purpose of making a map; d : to assign (something, such as a set or an element) in a mathematical or exact correspondence map picture elements to video memory

2: to plan in detail —often used with *out* map out a program

3: to locate (a gene) on a chromosome

Generic Synonyms: diagram, plan, sketch, tracing, projection etc.

Project-One deals with “the map” (and mapping); we will use the map as a generative device for the development of An Archive for the Map. A map—generally— offers a codified set of analogs and signs that create systematic and narrative means for interpreting abstract information for a certain



purpose e.g., road maps, world maps, country maps, oceanic maps, celestial maps, body maps, maps of the brain, maps of fictional worlds, genome maps, migration maps, topographic maps, economic maps, climate maps and so forth. Maps are round, flat—folded and unfolded—maps are records of events in history, maps are secret and maps are public; maps are digital and analog, maps have pictures and numbers and lines and color.

The archive is in some ways self-referential, meaning that it—its spatial and tectonic character—emerges from formal and narrative investigations of a specific map (you will each be given a map to use as a generative construct). It is this map, the map you analyze, that will be the programmatic subject of the archive. You will also be focusing on the critical development of specific architectural conventions that we will refer to as “constructs”.

Construct: An idea or theory containing various conceptual elements, typically one considered to be subjective and not based on empirical evidence.

“*The Map*” qualifies a map as an “object”, as an “artifact” attesting to both formal and narrative intentions, and proposes that the map is a part of some broader set of orders and structures; not an artifact in the historic sense—necessarily—but an artifact that possesses inherent grammar and meanings that emerge as a source for locating someone or some *thing* (point/place) and setting forth the signs and symbols of itinerancy (journey/peripatetic) that serve, most often, to facilitate the comprehension of some abstract concept or entity.

“*The Map*” semantically differs from “*A Map*”. “The Map” proposes that the map in question has specificity regarding purpose (formal/technical) and potential meaning (narrative) that can be temporally traced via the interpretation of signs inherent in the map’s content. Hence, “that is the map”, is quite different from “that is a map”. “The Map” alludes to a finite world or system or a means of specifically processing—

making sense of—abstract projections; “A Map” is a general statement regarding multifarious contents and applications yet, **a** map proposes the possibility of being **the** map.

The Primary processual design constructs for your archive:
Threshold, Aperture, Path and Room

The context within which the archive will be developed is a simple 40 x 40 x 100cm rectangle. The dimensions of the context exist only as points of reference. “The Map”, your analysis, investigations and formal manipulations will define the physical context. You are not to breach the planar limits of the rectangle with your design. The materials for your model and drawings will be assigned upon your arrival.

Below are short lectures/discussions that will be given throughout the semester.

- *Correspondences with Descartes*
- *On the Map*
- *On Mapping*
- *The Contextual Frame*
- *Notes on reciprocity and thickness*
- *Straddling Convention: Folds and Abstractions*
- *Artifacts of occupation – habitation: thresholds, apertures and paths.*
- *The Room*
- *The Hidden Place*
- *Home(-lessness)*

To the Critics:

A note regarding the studio: This studio is comprised of a mix of incoming Erasmus students—students that apply to different schools in the EU that participate in the Erasmus program—and students from the Ljubljana Faculty of Architecture. The Erasmus students come for either one semester or a full academic year. The studio is “vertical”, combining, 3rd, 4th and 5th year students.

1 - The students began the semester by considering an “Archive for The Map”. Each student picked a particular map to use for their analysis. The formal structure (the visual and symbolic character of the map) combined with its narrative content as a modality, generated physical models and analytical drawings. These models and drawings were considered intersectional and synthetic.

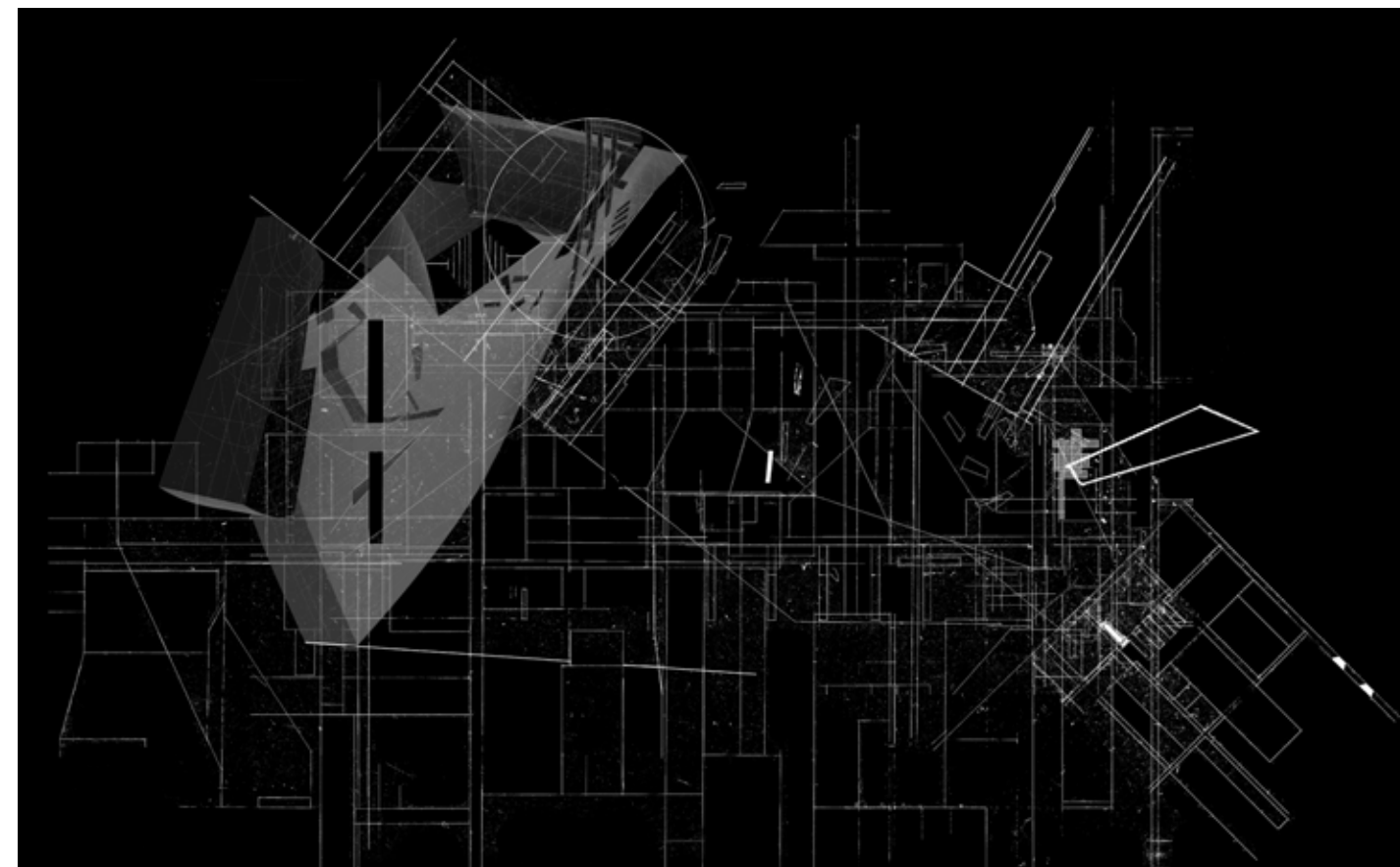
2 - Next they used their analysis to “site” the archive for the map within a three-dimensional construct—a “site” model that emerged from analysis—was 50x50x100 cm. After the models were made, they were placed side by side. The students then worked in groups of two. Each group created longitudinal sections through the models that in turn were used as a context within which the archive for the original map was sited. Generative words such as *threshold, aperture, path and room* were important conceptual constructs for the development of both context and the siting of the archive.

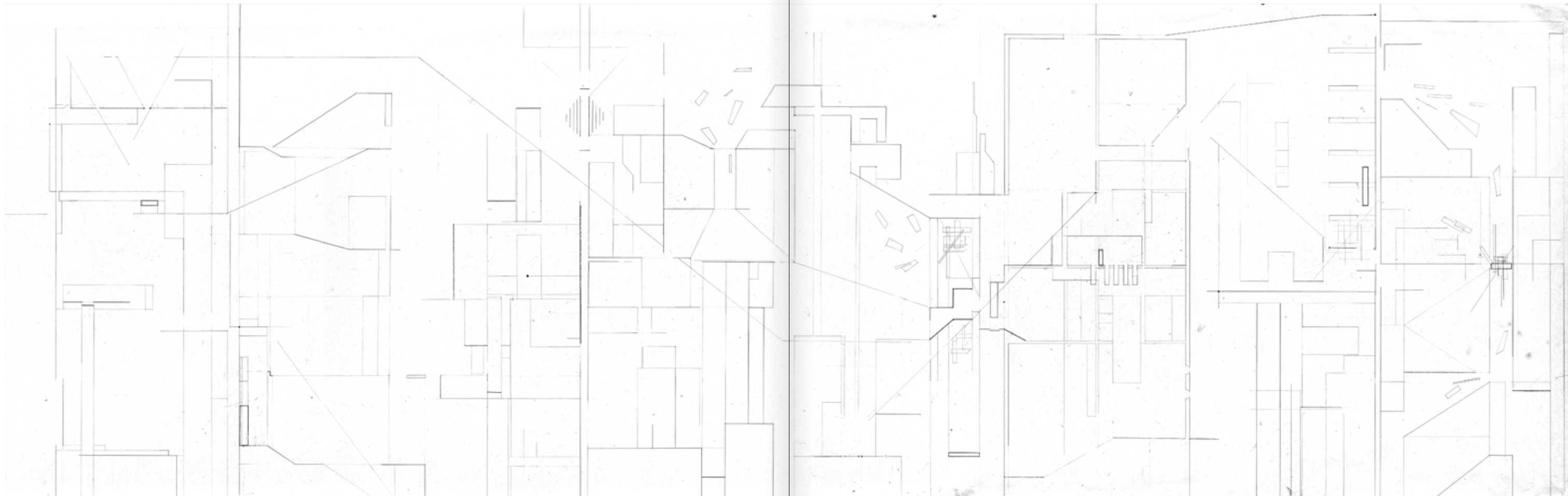
3 - The next phase repurposed and transformed the section drawings as contexts for the placement for an archive for a selected artist. Each student chose an artist from a list that included those who worked through multiple representational mediums: *Isamu Noguchi, Jannis Kounellis, Jan Svankmajer, Mark Manders* and *Roni Horn* were ultimately chosen.

The artist, their work and life became the narrative content behind the development of the project. The constructed context emerged as a means to situate the intersection of narrative, time and productional content. Each student considered their selected artist and his/hers work, the concepts relative to the artist’s output and its potential influence on the spatial/volumetric sequences of the archive and its locus within the site. The students were asked to define the relationship and difference between museum and archive programs.

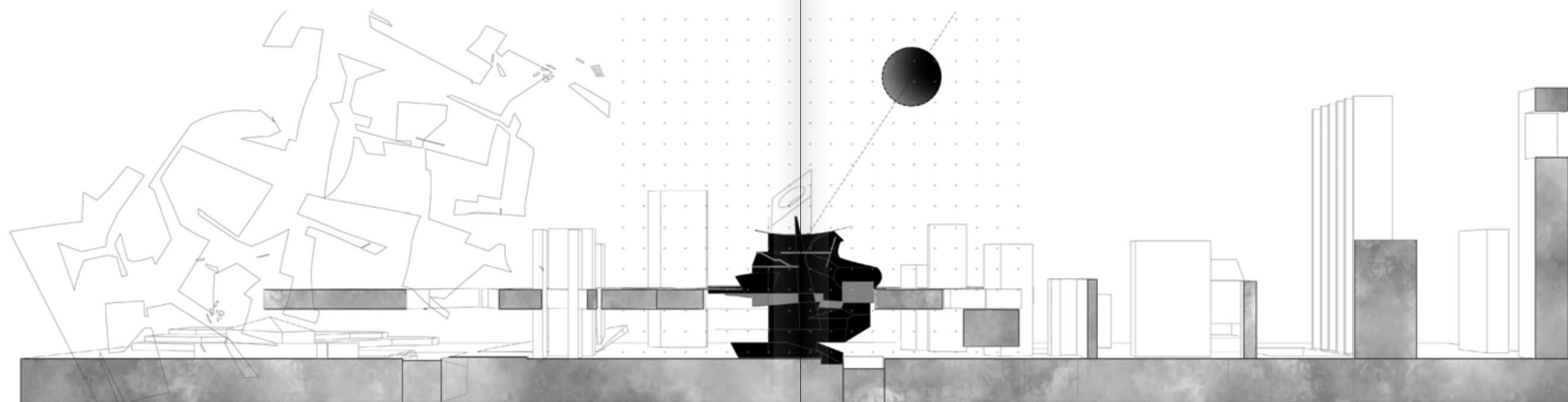


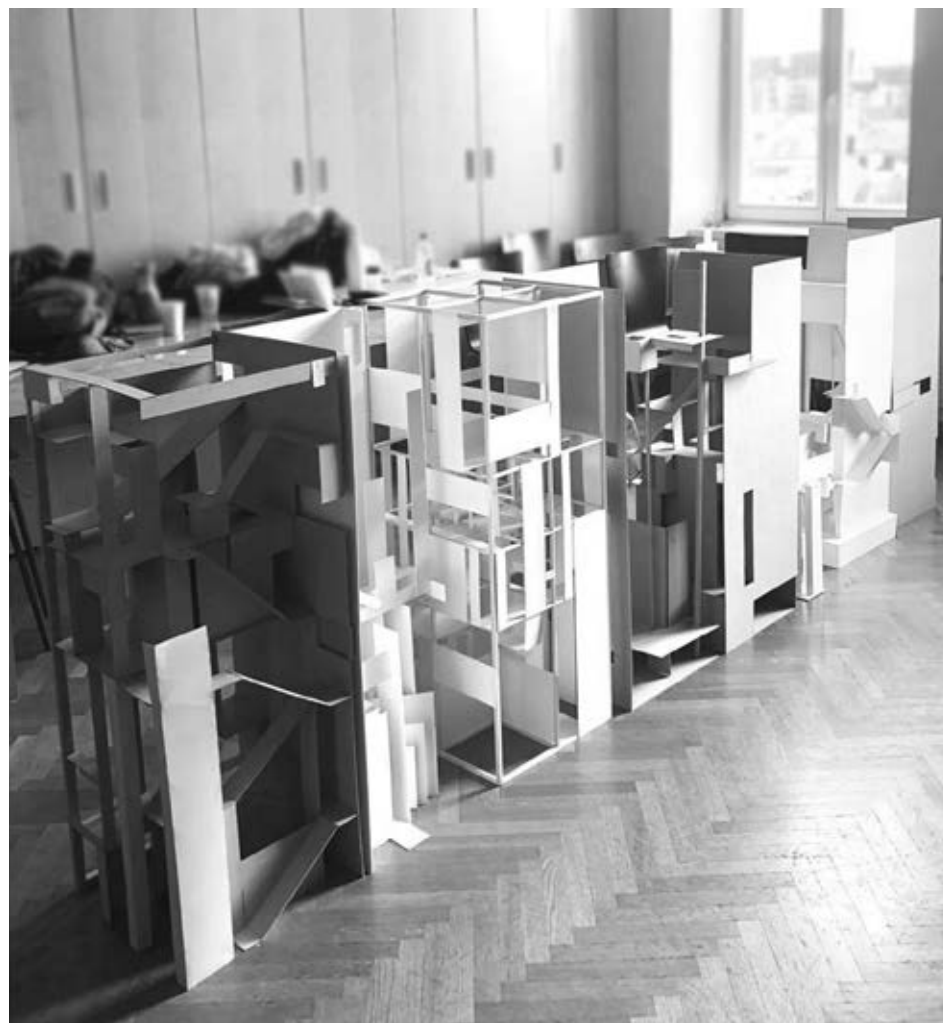
Above: map analysis; Opposite: unfolding the map - contextualizing, Bastien Lefèvre



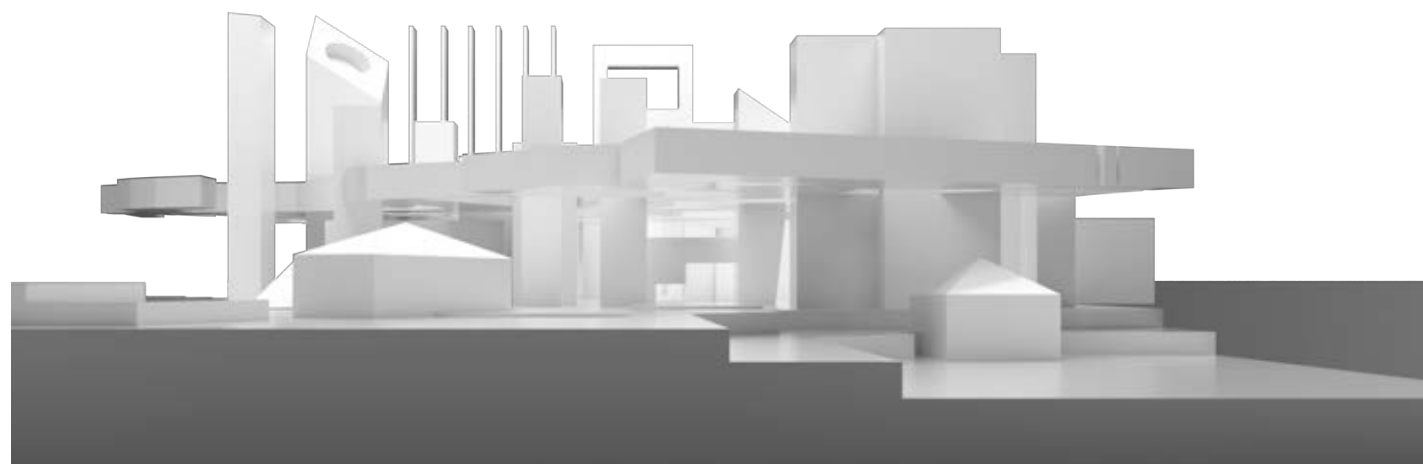
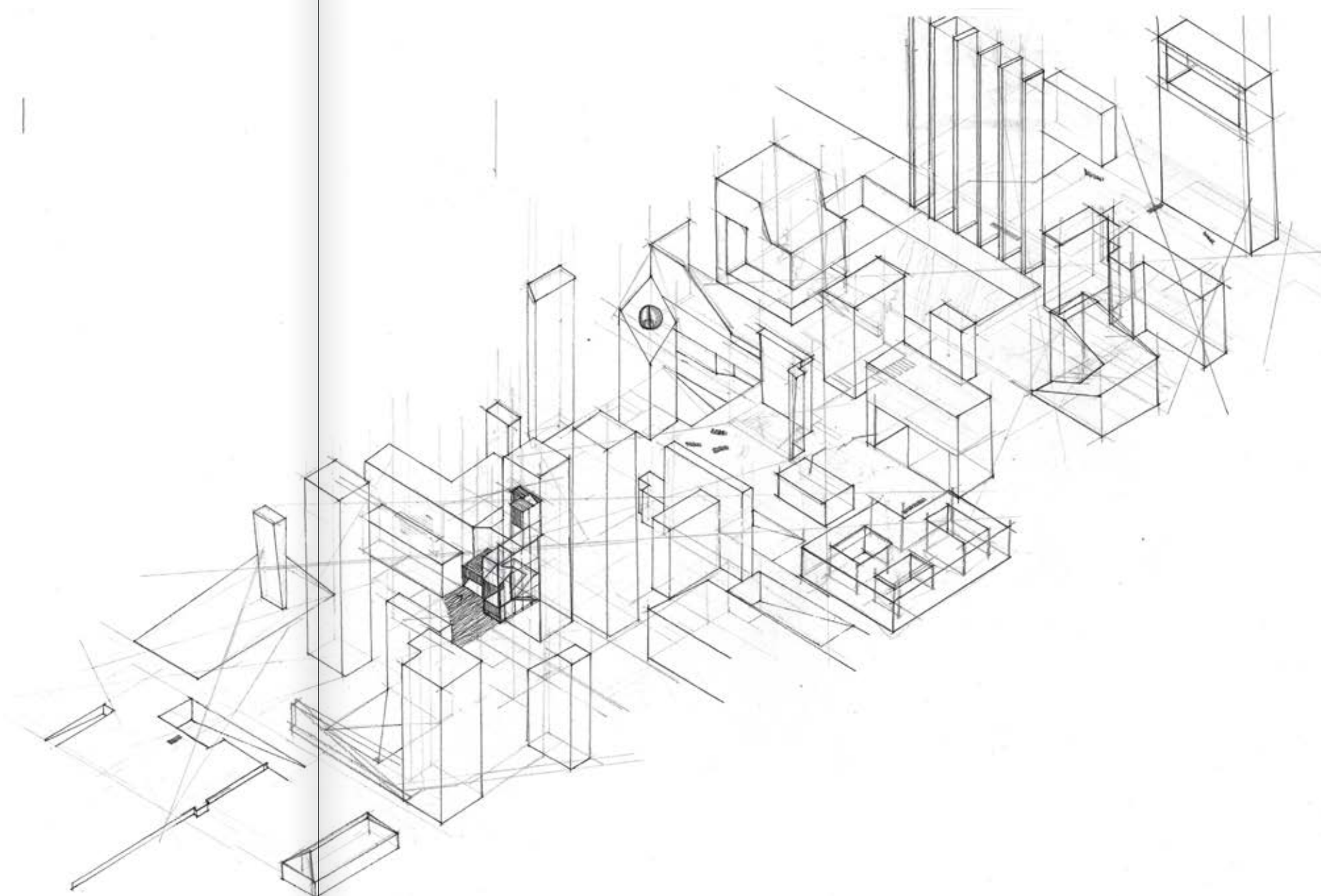


Top: eight model collective context section; Bottom: siting the archive, Bastien Lefèvre

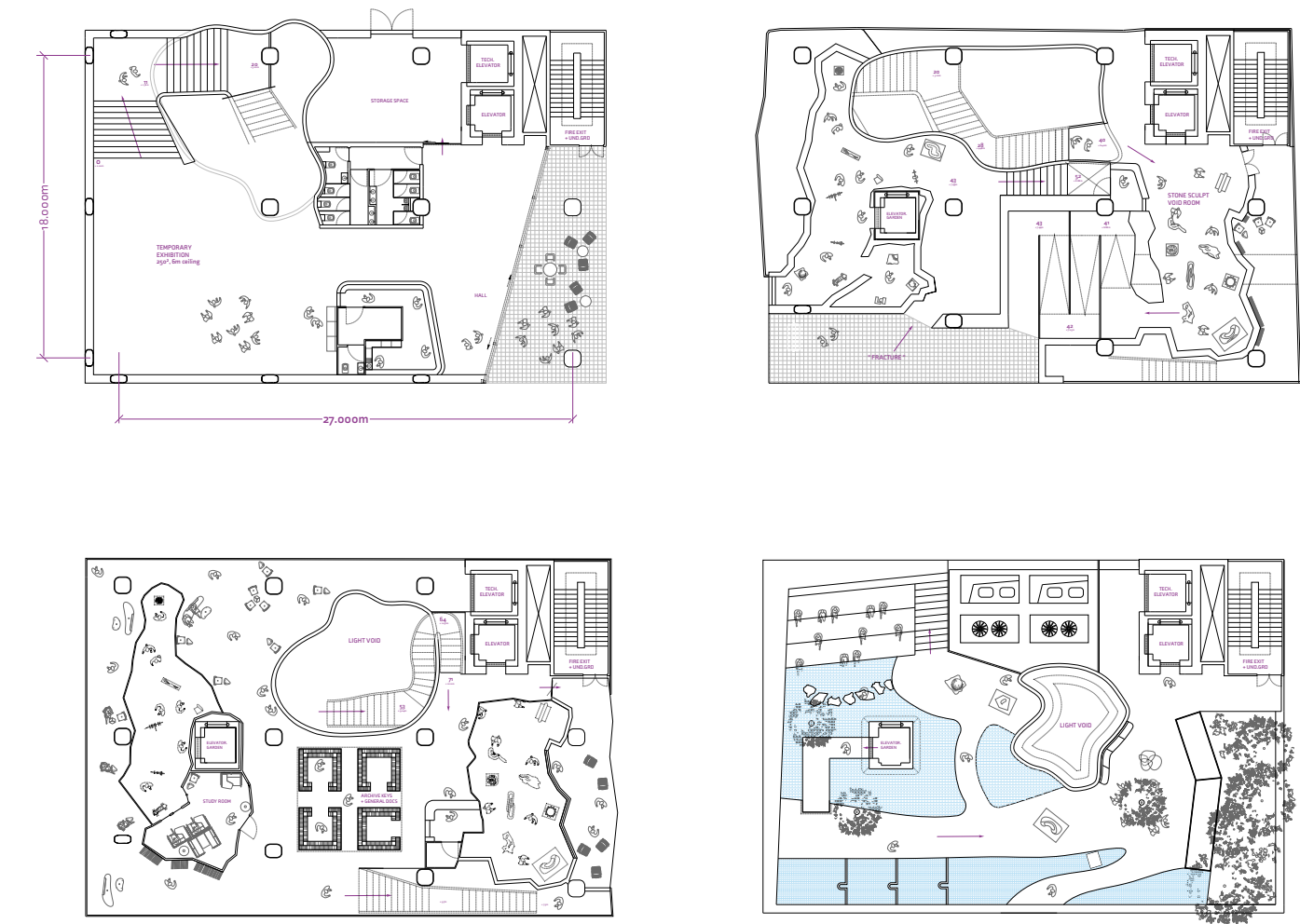




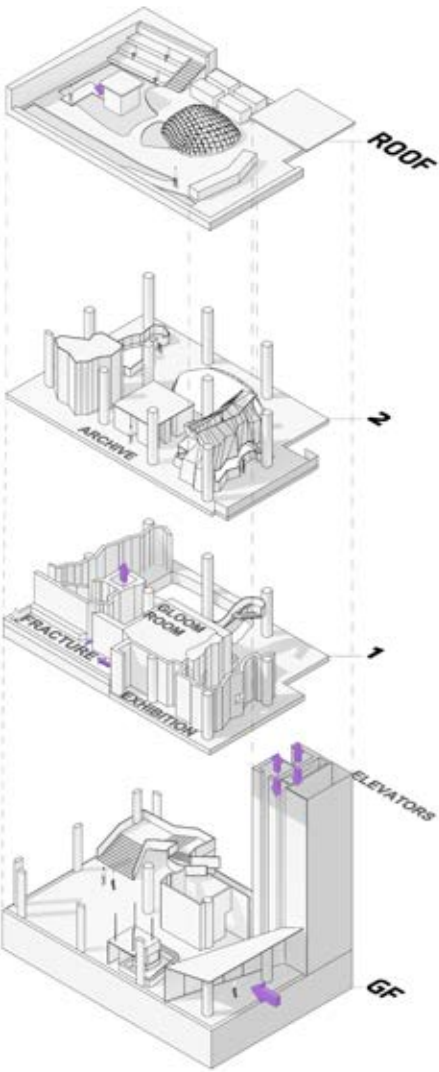
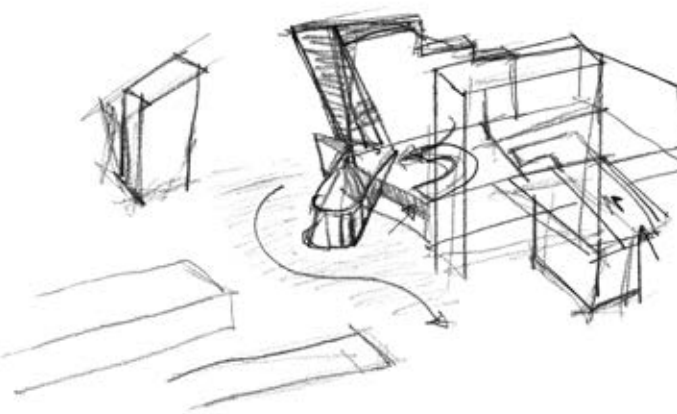
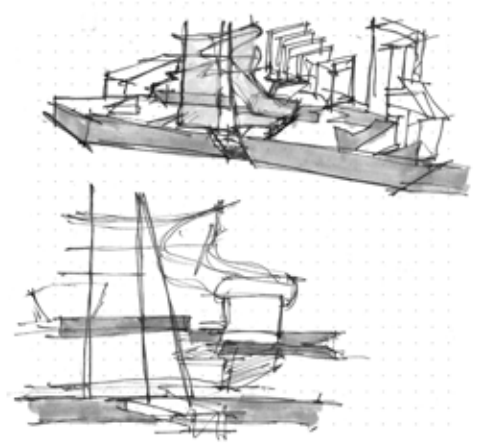
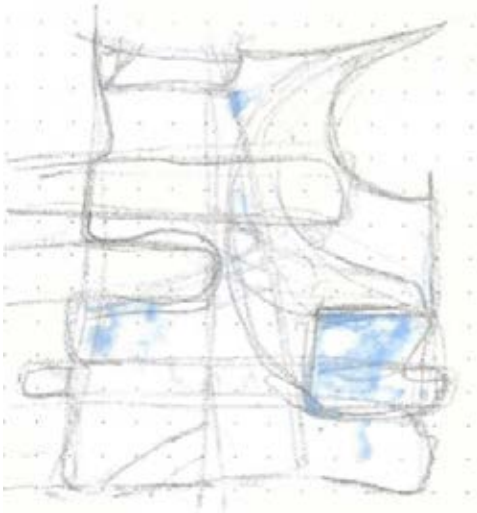
Collective context defined by adjacent models



Above and opposite: siting the archive, digital model, Bastien Lefèvre

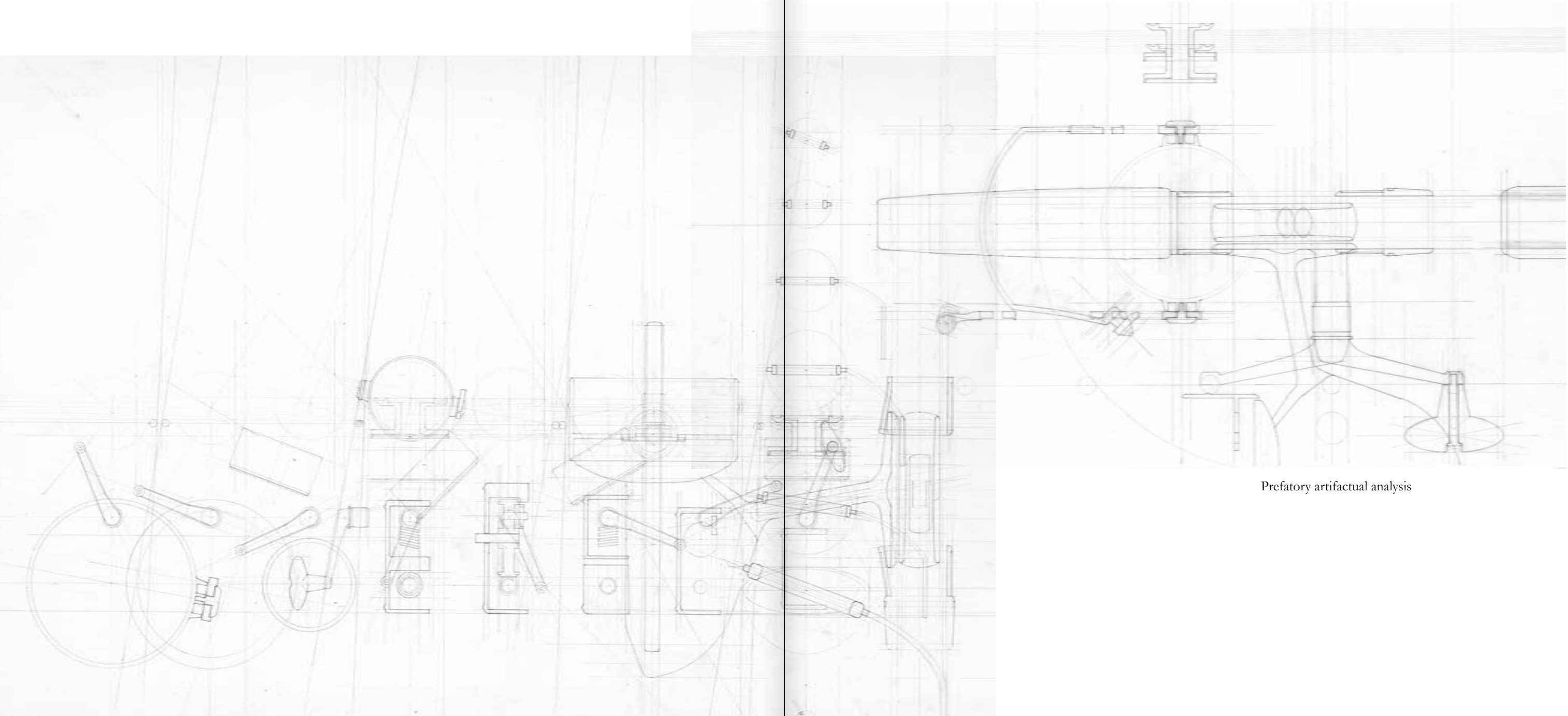
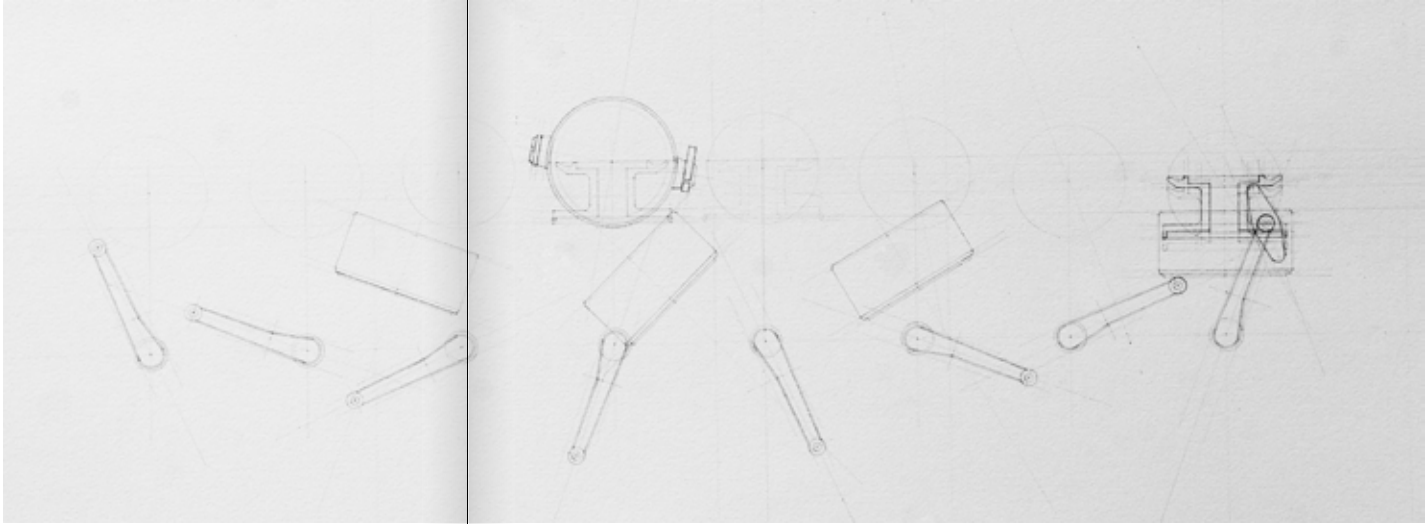


An archive for Isamu Noguchi, Bastien Lefèvre

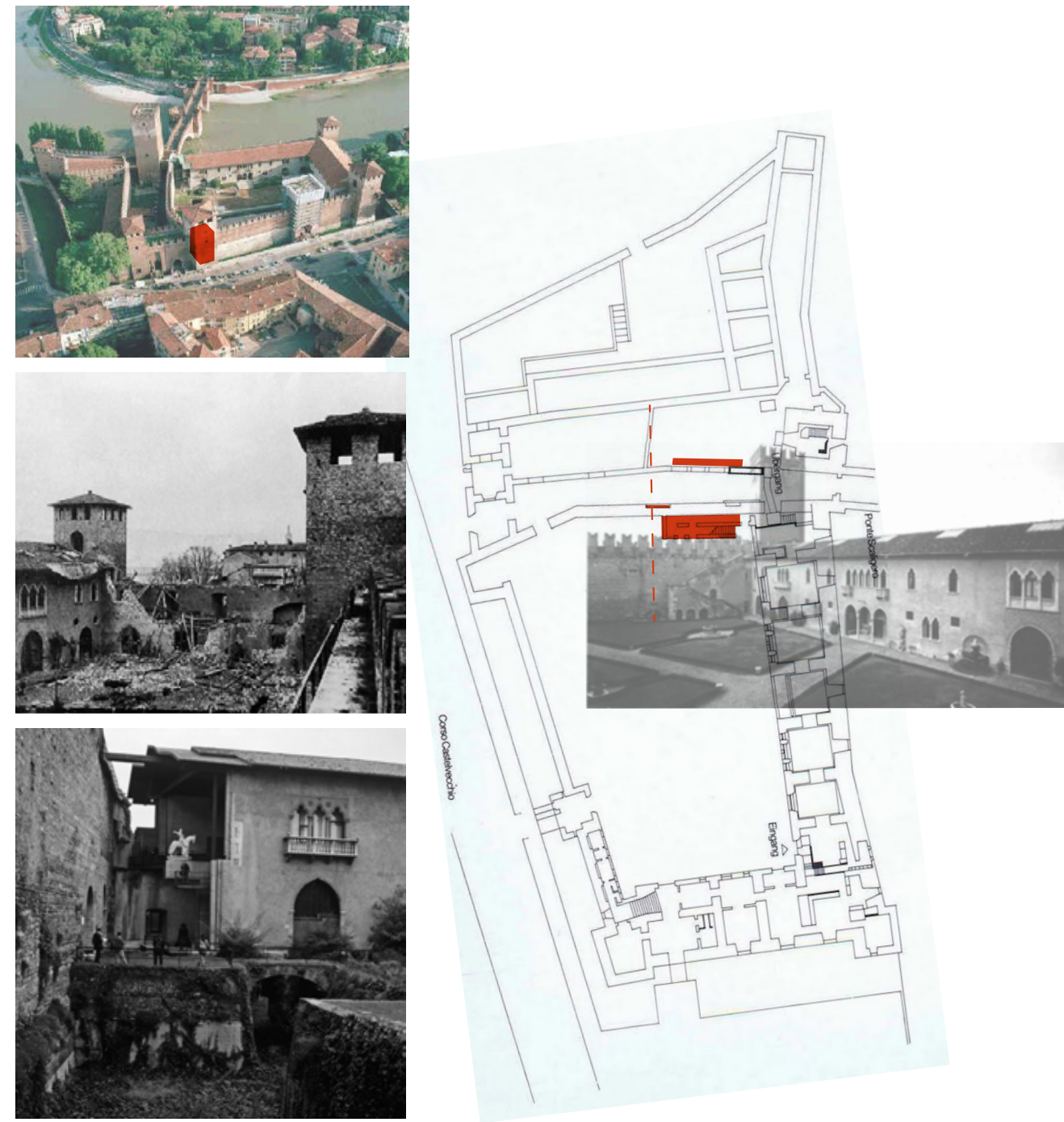


Exhibition space for Mark Manders
at Castelveccchio, Verona, Italy
Independent Study: Ana Klofutar

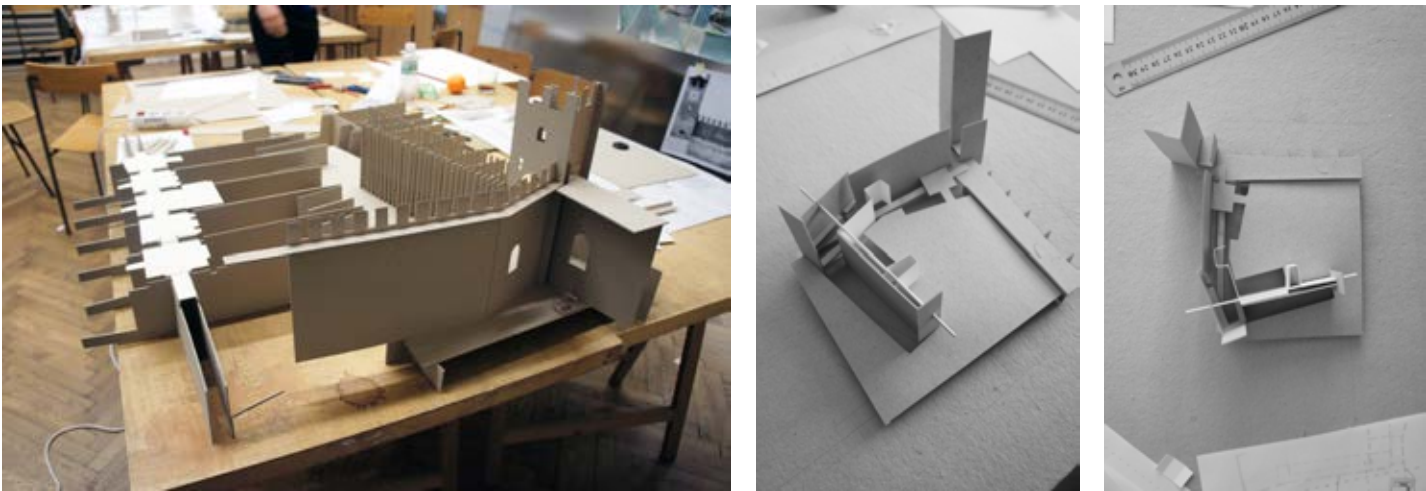
The project started with an analytical study of a personal artifact. This analysis transitioned into the analysis of the immediate context surrounding the project building Castelveccchio, located in Verona, Italy. The interventional program into Castelveccchio was an artist residence and exhibition space for the Dutch artist Mark Manders. Manders work became the artifactual material used to narratively program the intervention.



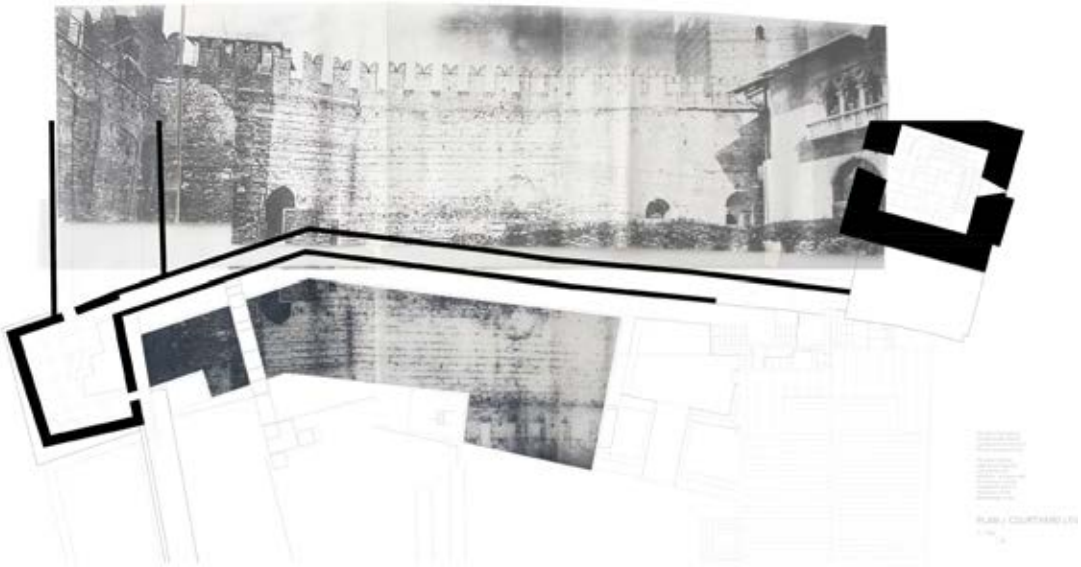
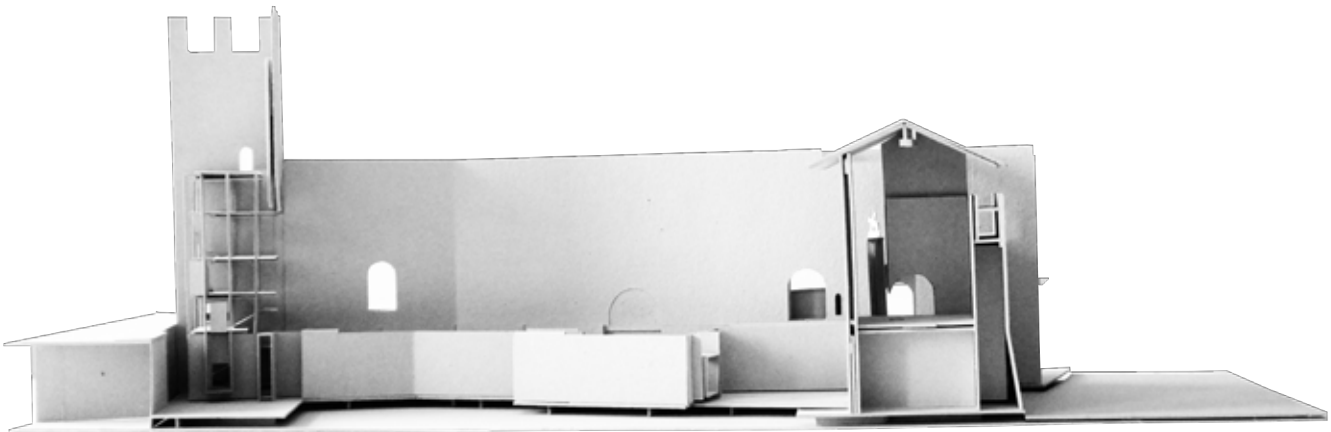
Prefatory artifactual analysis



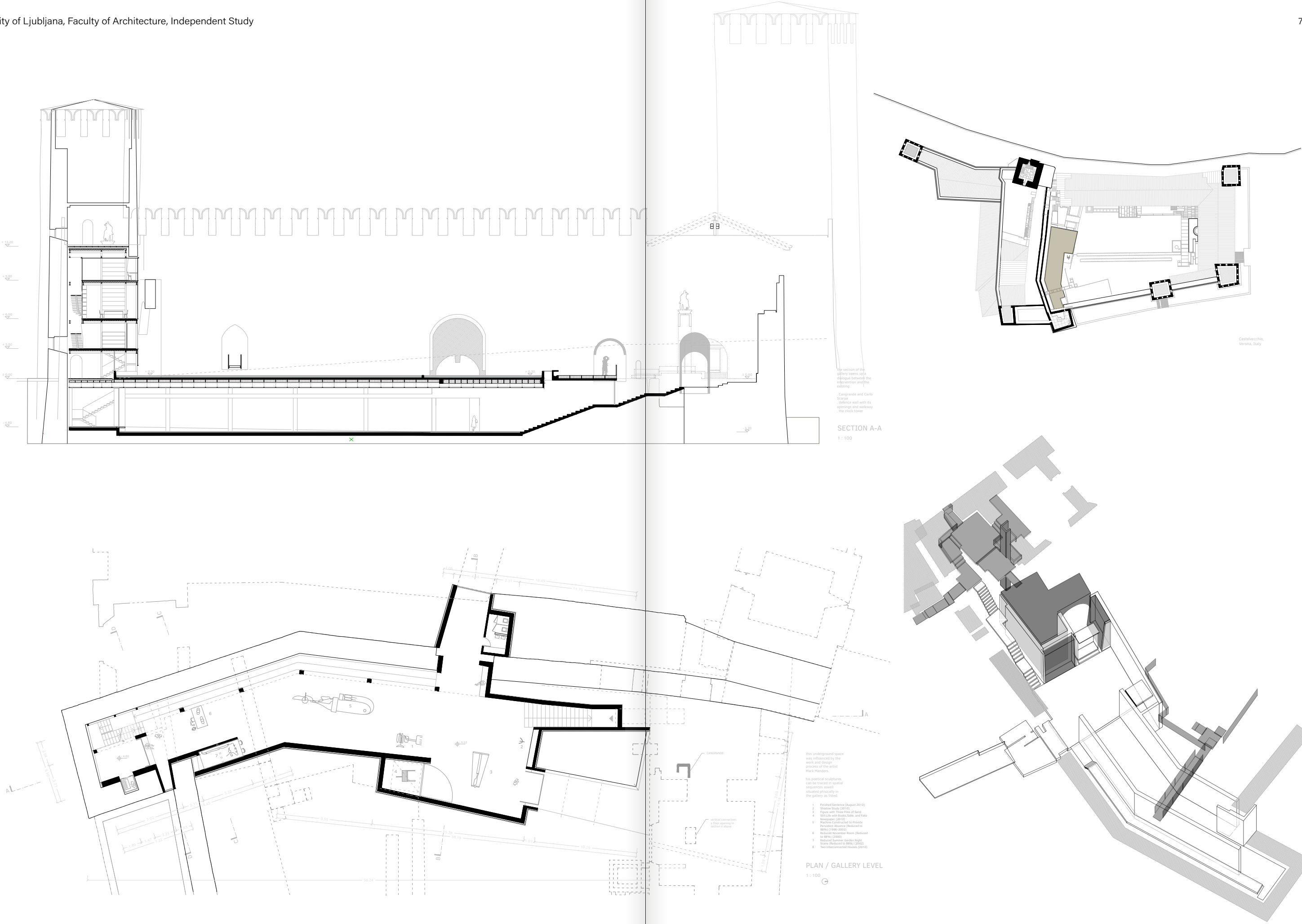
Top: project site; Center: damage from WWII;
Bottom: restoration/intervention by Carlo
Scarpa - Cangrande; Opposite: site plan collage



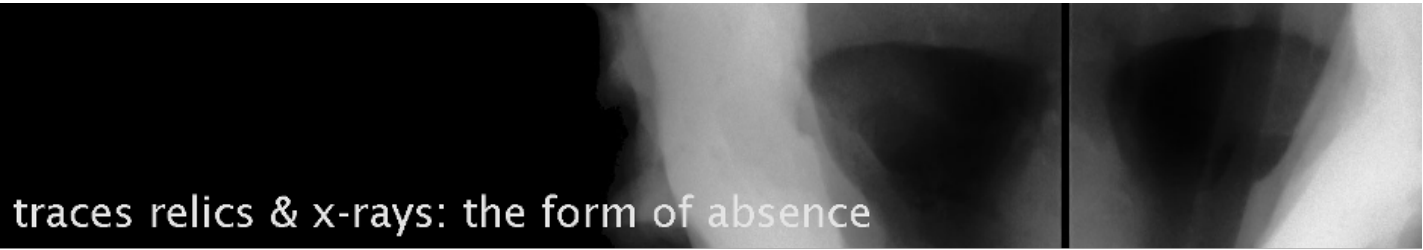
Study and detail models



Analytical model and site collage showing reflective roof surface



Longitudinal section and floor plan showing exhibition space with Mark Manders artworks



Traces, Relics & X-Rays: The Process of Form
A Practicum presented at Università
Iuav di Venezia

*"The X-ray is more a portrait of the silent exchange of
space—collapsing—revealing the contours of absence"*

The working basis for the 2015/16 practicum at la Università Iuav di Venezia explores the formal narratives of spatially transformed artifacts. Each artifact is seen as a primary source of engagement and the embodiment of our intentions and actions through making. The practicum tangentially addresses specific works that both support and challenge the modalities situated within the entwined space of artistic and architectural representation.

The student began by engaging the X-ray as an analytical—exploratory—tool. For our purposes the X-ray image is a morphological index of a particular material object or structure – it is an explicit form, yet, through the interplay of light and shadows, it exposes an inner world of tacit entwinements; the radiograph is in itself an artifact born from the rearrangement of molecules defined by a subject's material properties. It is an index by definition: it is causal; it can be read as a trace, and it is in want of a subtext if one is concerned about origins. Hence, what one does not know about the X-ray image, its analogous correspondences with alternative readings and the ease of which it can be construed, are equally as important to the designer as its objective indexical reading. In this sense the X-ray is an active tool employed to excite the imagination.

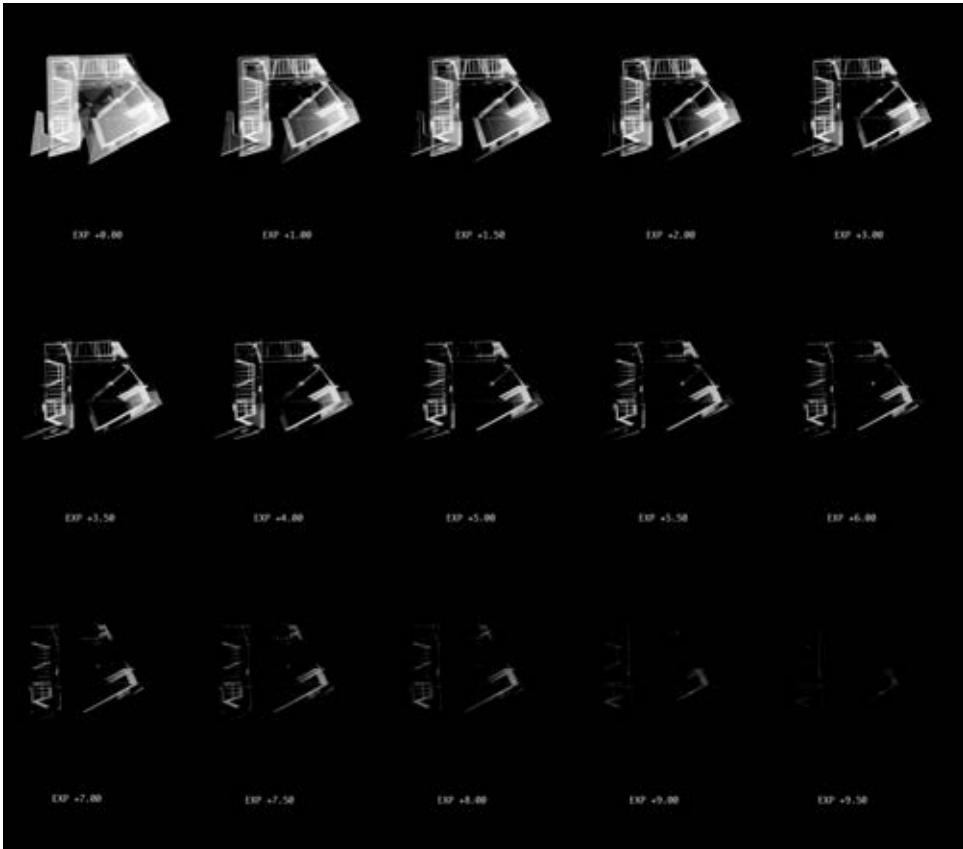
These minor beginnings posit the notion that a deep reading of existing evidence can become embedded within the design process. The practicum's explorations are not a totality, a linear process, or a closed-system approach born of analytic method. It does, however, promote the notion of a hermeneutic enfold and moments of departure—thresholds—through which one can test manifold processes of invention and representation.

The aforementioned does not promote a discernible—methodological—process or a directive towards abstraction,

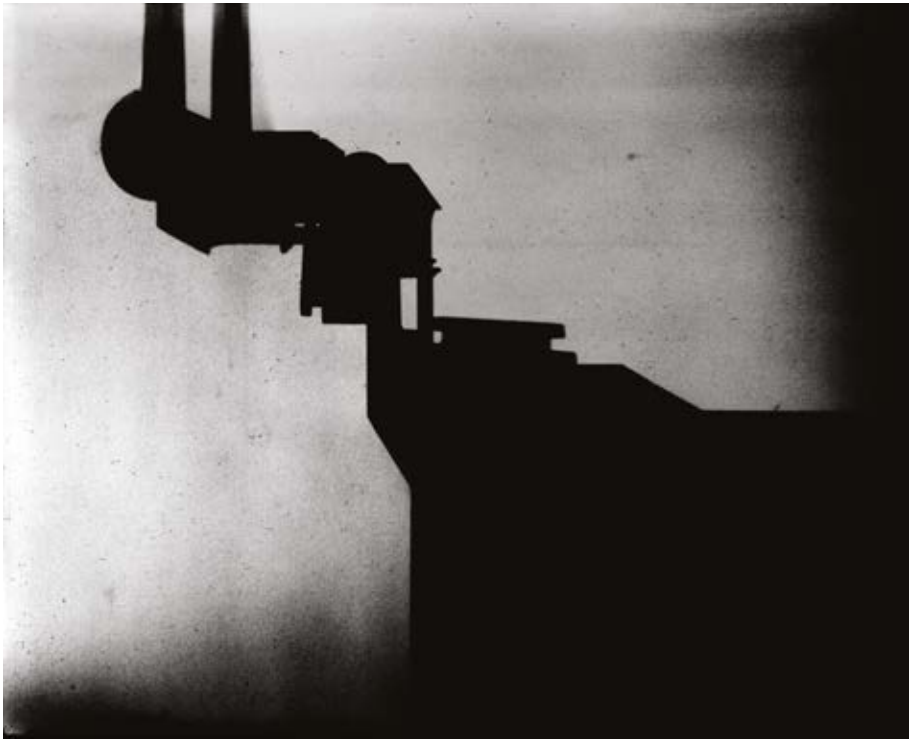
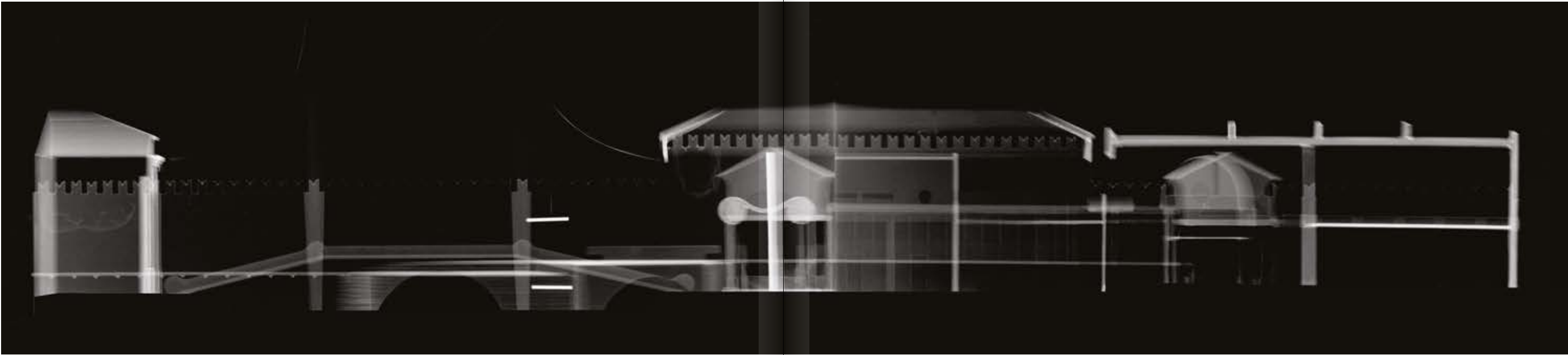
rather, it suggests that the accessible evidence found in the aftermath of occupation is not always what it seems: that the artifactual traces of habitation can be assembled associatively rather than linearly; that to experience something tangible may first require one to access the space that will mediate intention and existing in a manner outside accepted norms; that the evidentiary clues born of an existing presence are carved and sculpted by time into a poetical present through the artifice of absence and the laconic issuance of fragments and their traces.

As a single graphite line drawn by hand upon paper suggests density, contrast, depth, direction, personality—intention and beginnings, the X-ray, too, can be rendered a facile tool used for creative investigations into the spatial realm of light and shadows.

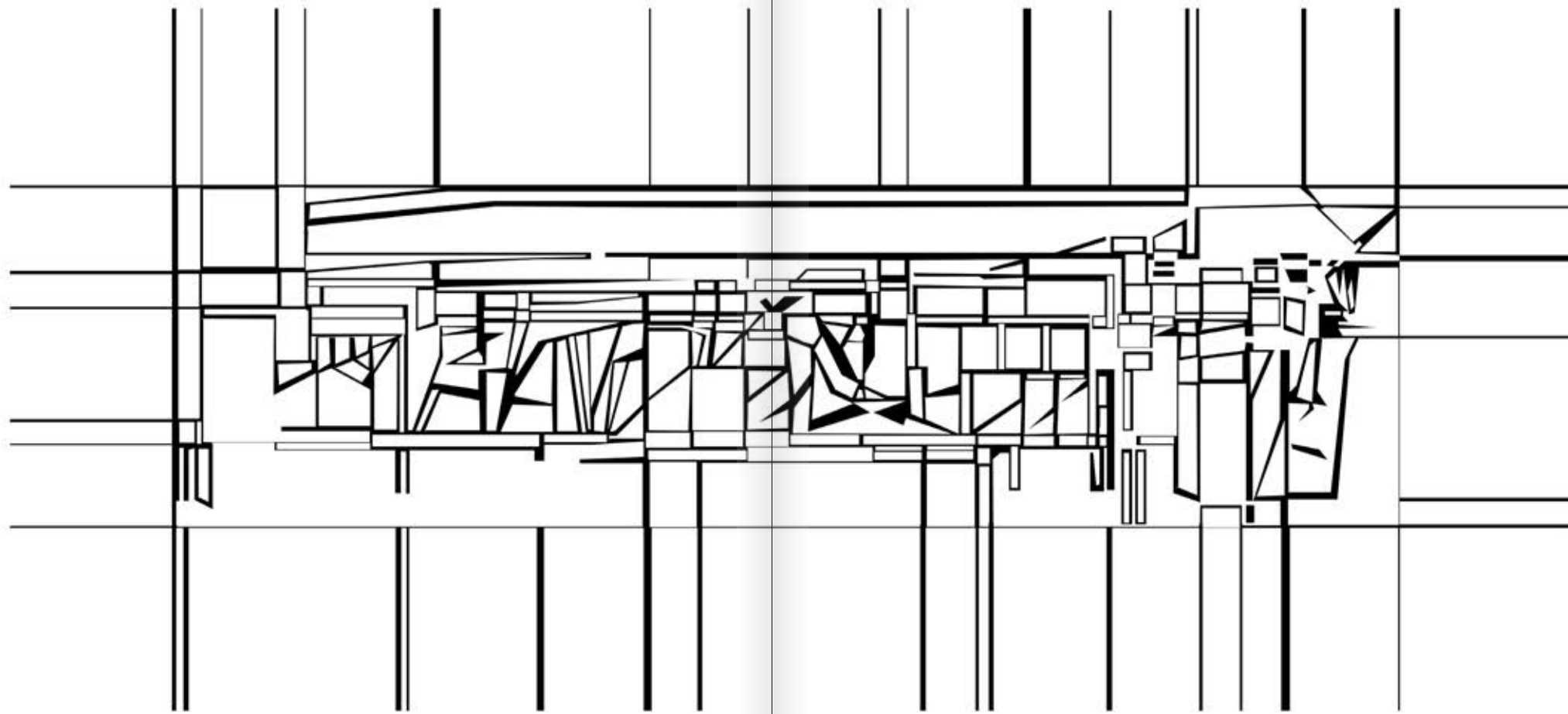
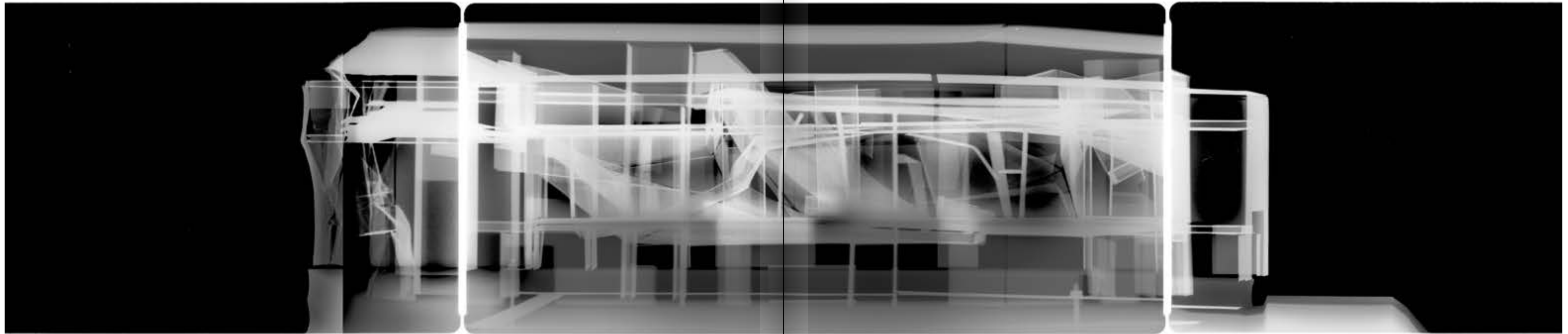
The works of the students participating in the Iuav practicum emerge through the imaging of architectural models provided by la Università Iuav di Venezia Archivio Progetti. Some models were eventually realized as interventions in Venice and others remain unbuilt projects. The students were tutored in the use of a portable X-ray device: its technical properties—perspectival projections based on intensity and distance, and safe usage. Each model offered different narratives regarding program, context, material and form. This formal narrative informed the character and angular projection of the X-ray source and resultant image. The physical imaging and post imaging manipulations—the transformations—produced in this practicum are considered the first phase. The second phase will reprogram and dimensionalize—unfold—the two-dimensional artifacts as spatial forms that will then be rescaled in specific sites within the context of Venice.



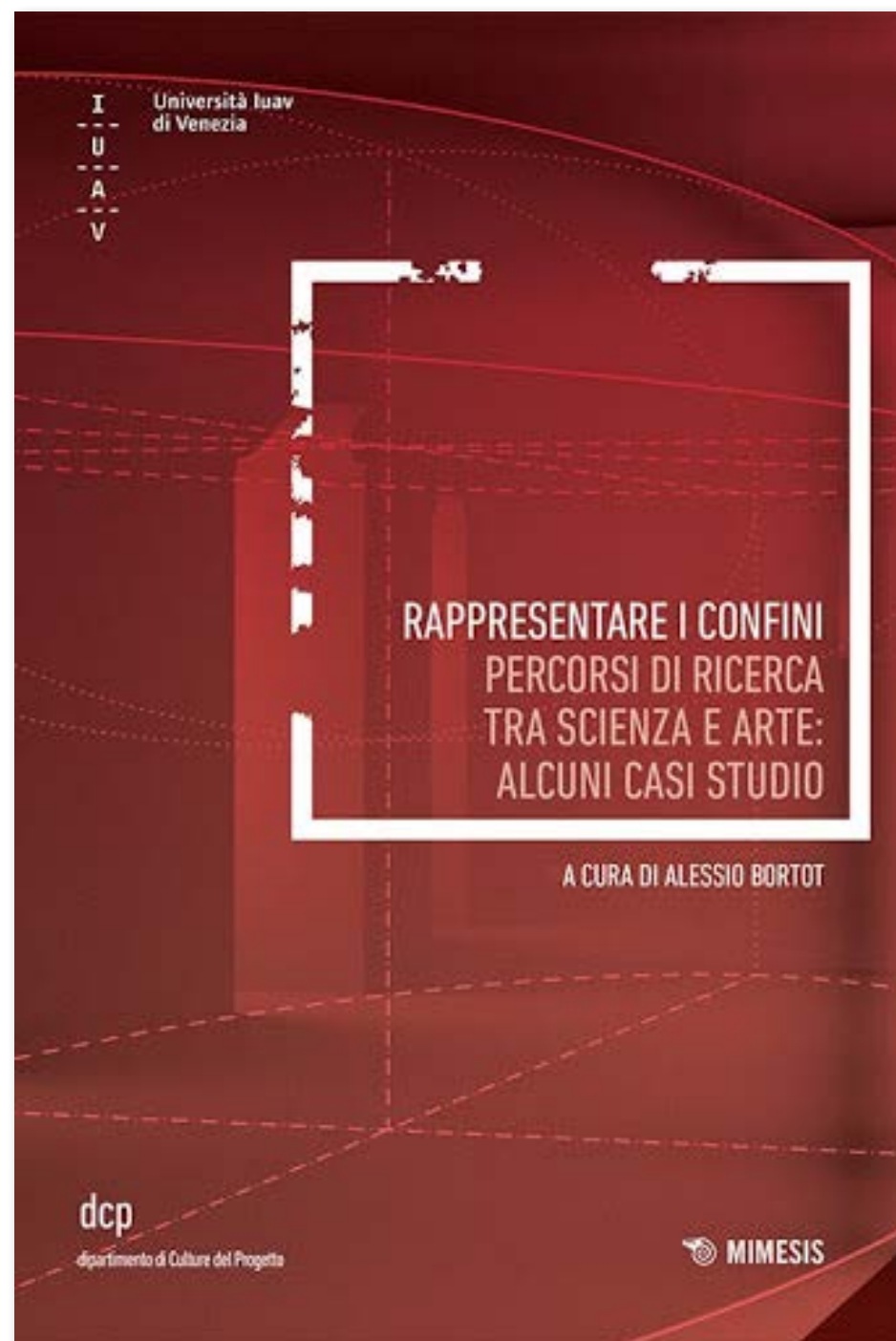
Top: in-situ radiography - Iuav archive; Bottom: initial radiographic sequencing, students: Giada Campigotto and Martina Fent



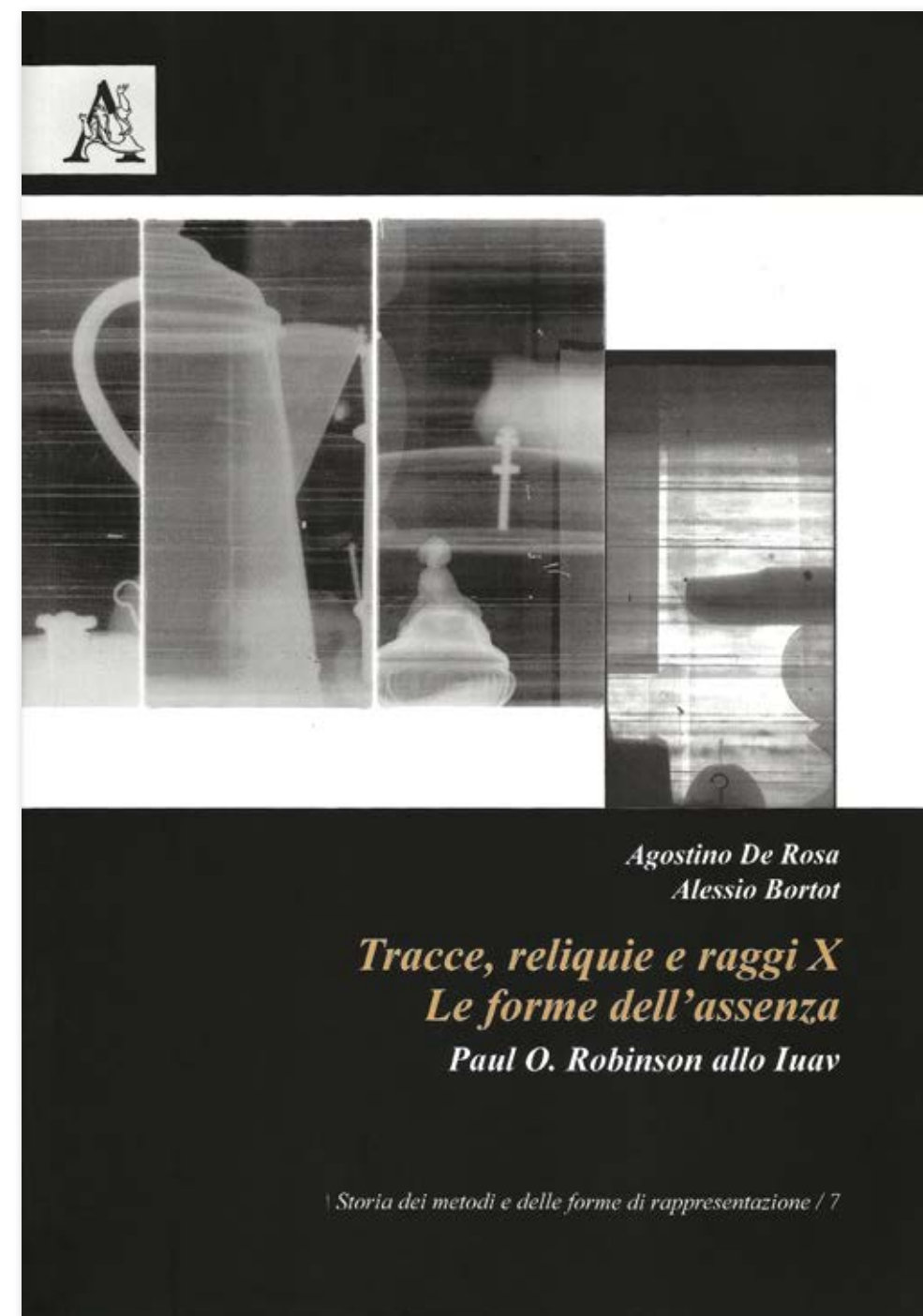
Students: Pauline Lacroix and Ilaria Cazzola, radiographic section studies



Student: Federica Sveva Caregnato
Radiographic section studies and diagrammatic analysis of competition entry
for Palazzo del Cinema al Lido di Venezia by Steven Holl Architects, 1991



Rappresentare i confini. Percorsi di ricerca, tra arte e scienza: alcuni casi studio (Representing the Boundaries. Paths in Research Between Art and Science: Case Studies), Mimesis Edizione, Milano, Italy 2015. Funding by Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, l'Università di Venezia Iuav, Dipartimento di Culture del progetto and others.



Tracce, reliquie e raggi X: Le forme dell' assenza, Paul O Robinson allo Iuav (Traces, Relics & X-rays: The Form of Absence, Paul O Robinson at Iuav) editors Agostino De Rosa & Alessio Bortot. Aracne editrice, Roma. 2018

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A
V

Università Iuav
di Venezia

DIPARTIMENTO
DI CULTURE
DEL PROGETTO

THE CELLA
WAS EMPTY
(LA CELLA
ERA VUOTA)

works by/opere di
Paul O. Robinson

exhibition/mostra
Agostino De Rosa e Alessio Bortot
curators/a cura di

25 maggio > 5 giugno 2015

Cotonificio
spazio Gino Valle
Dorsoduro 2196
Venezia

**The cella was empty
(La cella era vuota)**
works by/opere di
Paul O. Robinson

25.5 > 5 .6.2015

opening
25 maggio 2015 h. 17
Cotonificio, auditorium

The Cella Was Empty by Michel Deguy
*Emptiness as it is called
But enshrined
Placed in secrecy within the hollowed arch
Would be the part's absence for a whole
And removed from sight
The renouncement but peacefully hushed
Of possible symbolization*

La Cella Era Vuota, di Michel Deguy
*Il vuoto come lo chiamano
Ma incastonato
Messo nella segreta dell'arca scavata
sarebbe l'assenza di parte per un tutto
E sottratta allo sguardo
La rinuncia ma pacatamente taciuta
Alla simbolizzazione possibile*

In Michel Deguy's poem "The Cella Was Empty", the cella is a corporeal space – a present body, Emptiness, placed in secrecy within the hollowed arch. The arch supports a liminal space that enshrines emptiness.

In Deguy's cella absence is part, an artifact, held resonantly within and bound to the potential of becoming, of possible symbolization and to the detrital perspective confronting Walter Benjamin's Angelus Novus.

Within the cella's space is at once loss and reconfiguration and the tempting spirit of the imagination that provokes the process of new forms. The above has been constant within the lineage of recent works and specifically the previous exhibitions Form of Absence. It is part of the work. It does not promote method as much as constructing a lens for construing origins and experiencing outcomes.

The poetry is to be excavated as it lays below the surface, as do bones below the skin, transmuting a body's morphology to an atmosphere of constant resistance, forming form; as does the cellular nature of a room in defining the identity and anonymity of a city: the mold to the molded, betwixt – antidosi.

This quality of being dual is ever present and a means for generating transformative design processes.

The exhibition presents images and spatial talismans of artifacts and spaces of habitation that are in the process of reconfiguration; situated and primed for reuse.

Nella poesia di Michel Deguy intitolata "La cella era vuota", la cella assume il ruolo di spazio corporeo – un corpo presente, Vuoto, posto in segreto all'interno di un arco scavato. L'arco supporta uno spazio liminale che definisce il vuoto.

Nella cella di Deguy l'assenza costituisce una parte, un artefatto che intesse una risonanza all'interno e si lega al potenziale del divenire, ad una possibile simbolizzazione e alla prospettiva detritica postulata da Walter Benjamin nel suo Angelus Novus.

All'interno dello spazio della cella si trovano contemporaneamente perdita e riconfigurazione e lo spirito tentatore della fantasia che suggerisce il processo di creazione di nuove forme.

Questo approccio è stato un elemento costante nella genesi di alcune opere recenti e in particolare di quelle che hanno alimentato la precedente mostra intitolata Form of Absence. Si tratta di una parte dell'opera.

Non promuove una metodologia, quanto aspira piuttosto a costruire una lente capace di interpretare origini e sperimentare risultati. La poesia implica un'operazione di scavo in quanto essa si definisce al di sotto di una superficie, così come le ossa si collocano sotto la pelle, trasmutando la morfologia di un corpo in un'atmosfera di resistenza costante, di forma formante; così come la natura cellulare di una stanza contribuisce a definire l'identità e l'anonimato di una città: allo stesso modo lo stampo per lo stampato, collocandosi nel mezzo - antidosi. Questa qualità di essere duale è sempre presente ed è un mezzo capace di generare processi progettuali di trasformazione.

La mostra presenta immagini e talismani spaziali relativi a manufatti e spazi abitativi coinvolti in un processo di riconfigurazione; dislocati e attivati per un loro riutilizzo.

La Cella Era Vuota Poster and Exhibition view.



Antepurgatorio

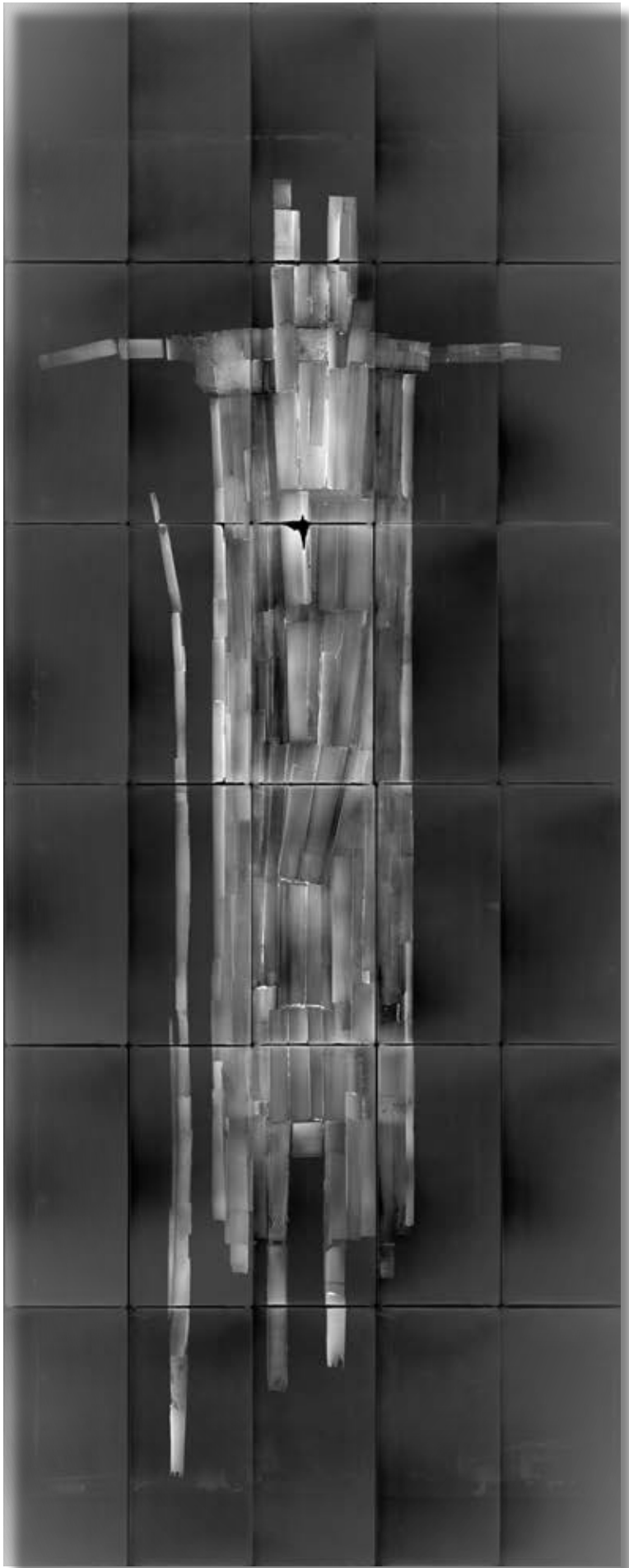
Like the dead in Jean Genet, they arrive in a place
That is other, spiritual, and we can understand
That they are not the dead, though they be configured
By the superstition of the dying whom we are
But free beings “like” the dead:
It is the place of Art whose Museum itself
Is but the shadow approximately recast of the shadows
The being-together of works indeed reappeared
Having left innumerable times and places
And gathered here around Tiresias
Come from wherever near to one another
Conversing barely articulate through my silence:
What the lovers in Lucretius cannot do
The dead in Homer can: the crossing of desire.

Michel Deguy

Translated from the French by Wilson Baldrige

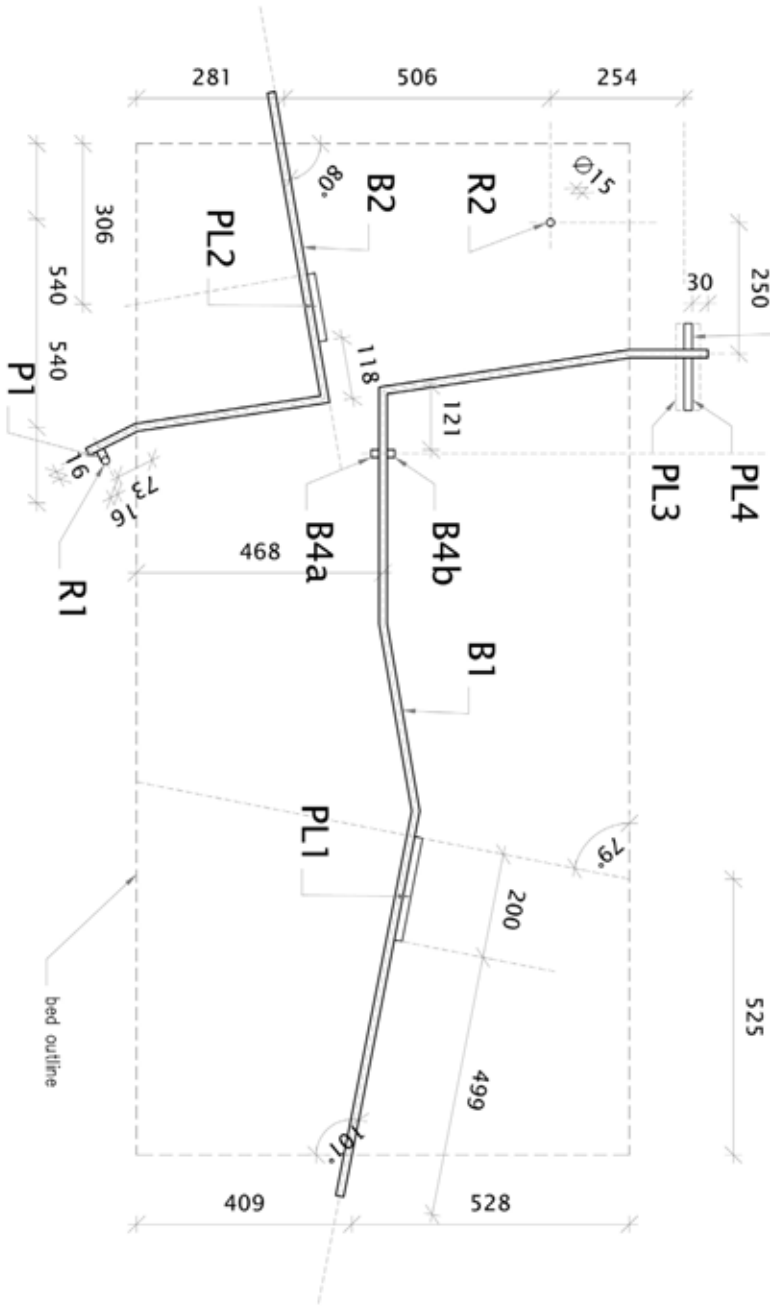
Above: *Antepurgatorio*, transformation, detail.

Opposite: *Antepurgatorio*, 2015, 30 panel original x-ray printed on archival rag paper, 110 x 259 cm.





Above: *Antepurgatorio*, armature study; Opposite: studio process and *The Cella Was Empty* exhibition image

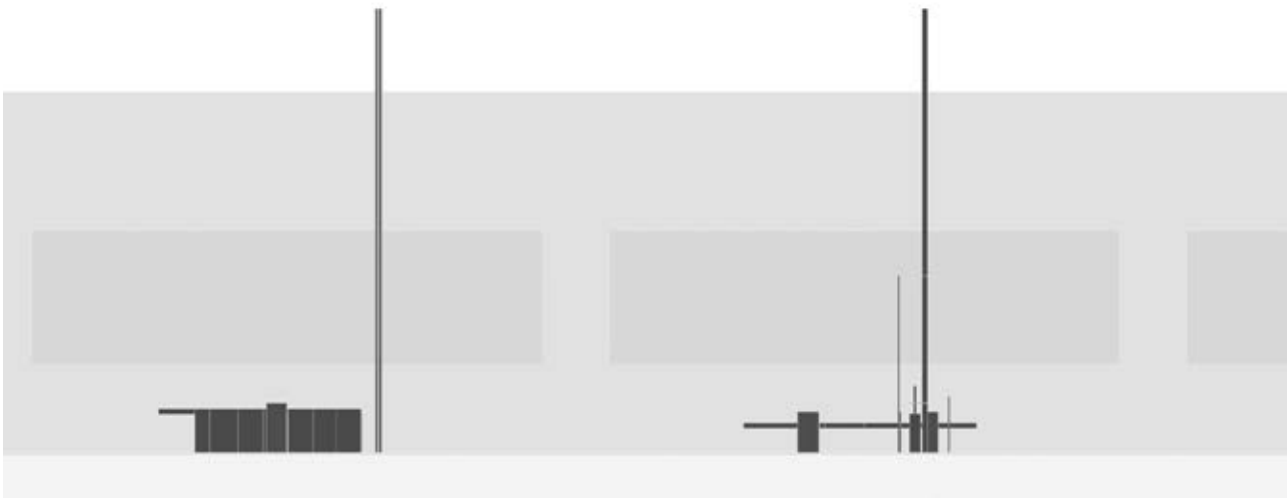
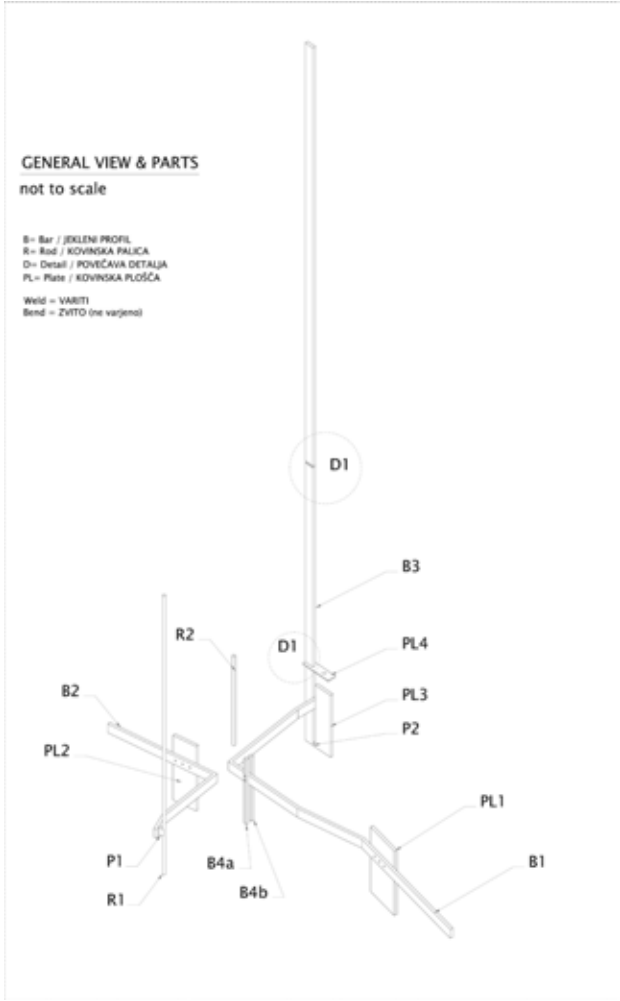


“But the imagination is as vast as the universe multiplied by all the thinking beings who inhabit it. It is the first come Among all things, interpreted by the first to come; and, if this last has not the soul that sheds a magical and super-natural light on the natural obscurity of things, then the imagination is a horribly useless thing; it is the first come contaminated by the first to come. Here, therefore, there is no longer analogy, if not by chance; but on the contrary murkiness and contrast, a multicolored field through the absence of a regular culture.” Charles Baudelaire



Above: *Kristus Indexus*, 2014, diptych

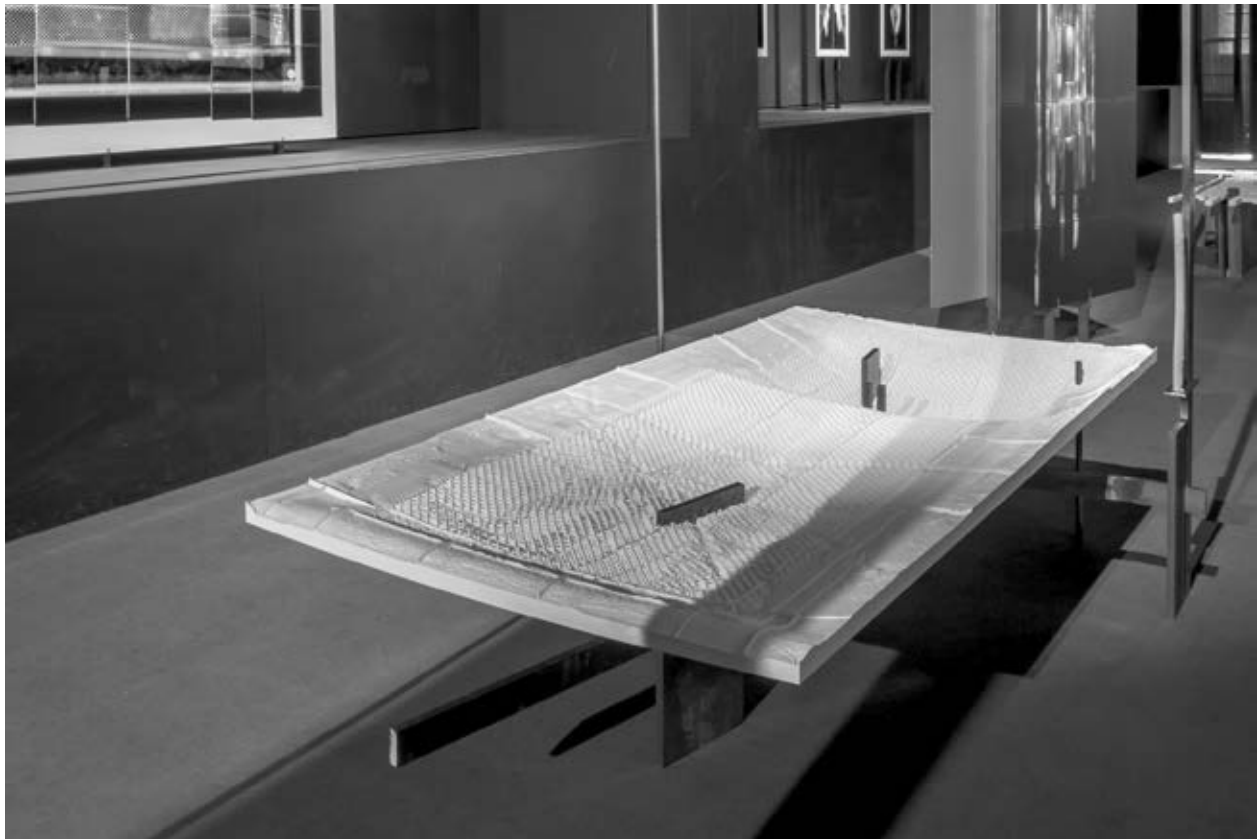
Opposite: *Bed* armature study



Top: *Bed*, 2015, Armature mock-up, cold-rolled steel, brass and apple wood.

Below: *Bed* installation study for *The Cella Was Empty*.

Opposite: *Bed*, *The Cella Was Empty* installation view.



Site Castings: Entwinements In Palazzo Fortuny

Site Castings is an ongoing work by *studio* Paul O Robinson begun in 2018 in collaboration with Venice’s Museo Fortuny. The palazzo within which the museum is housed serves as the spatial, artifactual, and narrative inspiration for the creation of an installation comprised of visual art, musical composition, and poetical narrative. The installation can perhaps be compared to a casting of extant and temporal contexts that are extracted from their “mold”, transformed and then repositioned as a synthetic experiential environment; the transformed situates itself through dialectical associations with its original. In opposition to the conventional template wherein a museum or gallery functions as a space engaging the visitor in a linear—one-way—conversation, “Site Castings” instead views palazzo Fortuny—its objects, stories, installations, and spaces—as “muse:” an active participant in the production of an entwined interdisciplinary work which will allow one to experience the palazzo/museum within a new contextual environment defined by the multiform installation.

The work can be considered a spatial, textual and musical “recasting” of the traces of habitation whose form is emergent from the entwinements of three mediums and whose source materials are the spaces and artifacts within the palazzo. The installation includes performative and narrative elements that will define the creation of a book embodying the work. The poet Laura Sims, the composer and performer Christopher Tignor and architectural historian and theorist Alberto Perez-Gomez will be collaborating with our studio on Site Castings.

The Fortuny-based installation creates an explorative discourse involving associative processes of object/space making informed by the collaborators’ quasi-anarchic correspondences.

Comprised of full-scale altered radiographs, transformative paintings and three-dimensional castings with integral armatures, entwined with live musical performances, the installation will reshape the extant spaces of palazzo Fortuny.

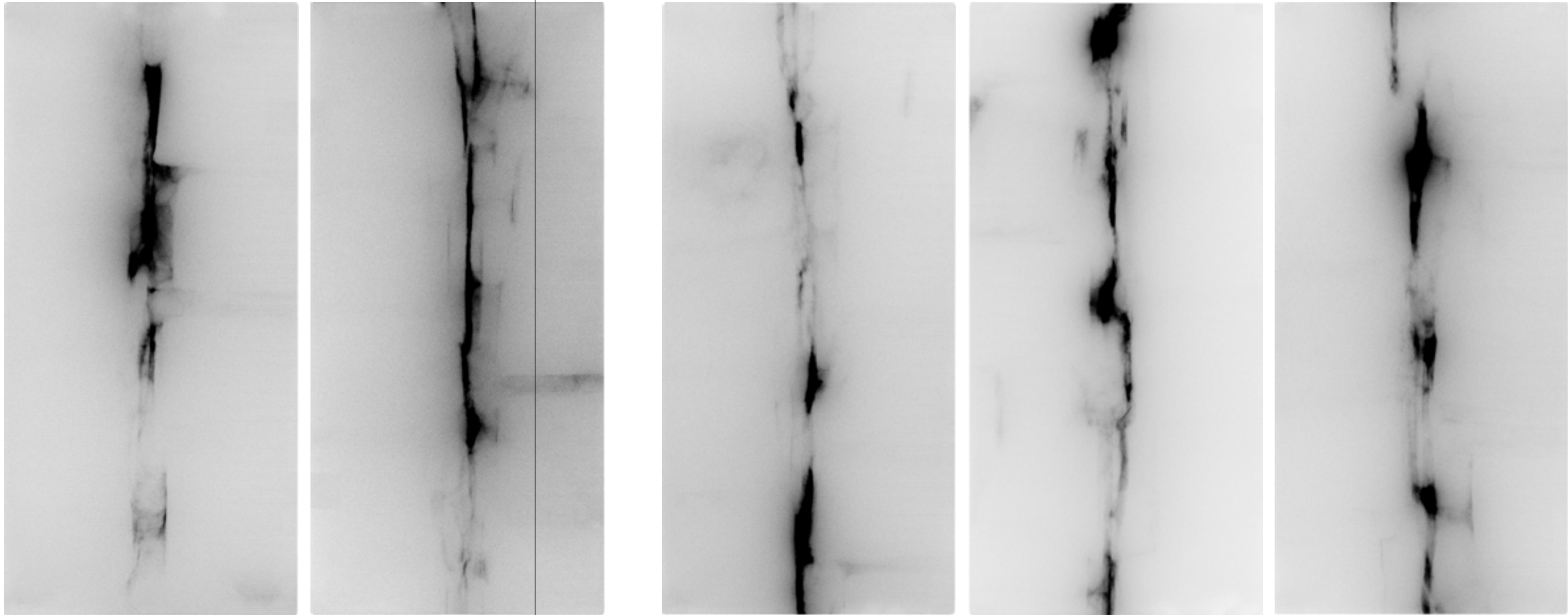
“Site Castings” begins with stories about perception... perceptions rendered as a form of space defined via the continuance of time and its presence within the artifactual traces of habitation. Through the creative embodiment of correspondence and narrative structure emerges the artifice of form and a means to shape experience through the construction of filters that link the body to the external world.

Link to the article “Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny” in Vesper, *SUPERVENICE* :

<https://www.quodlibet.it/rivista/9788822904164>

Links to *Site Castings* collaborators:
<http://www.laurasims.net/home/>
<http://www.wiresundertension.com/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_P%C3%A9rez-G%C3%B3mez
<http://fortuny.visitmuve.it/en/home/>

*As with several pieces comprising “Site Castings”, the artifact will move through transformative iterations resulting in a 3-dimensional forms carved from Marble: from ephemeral to permanent.

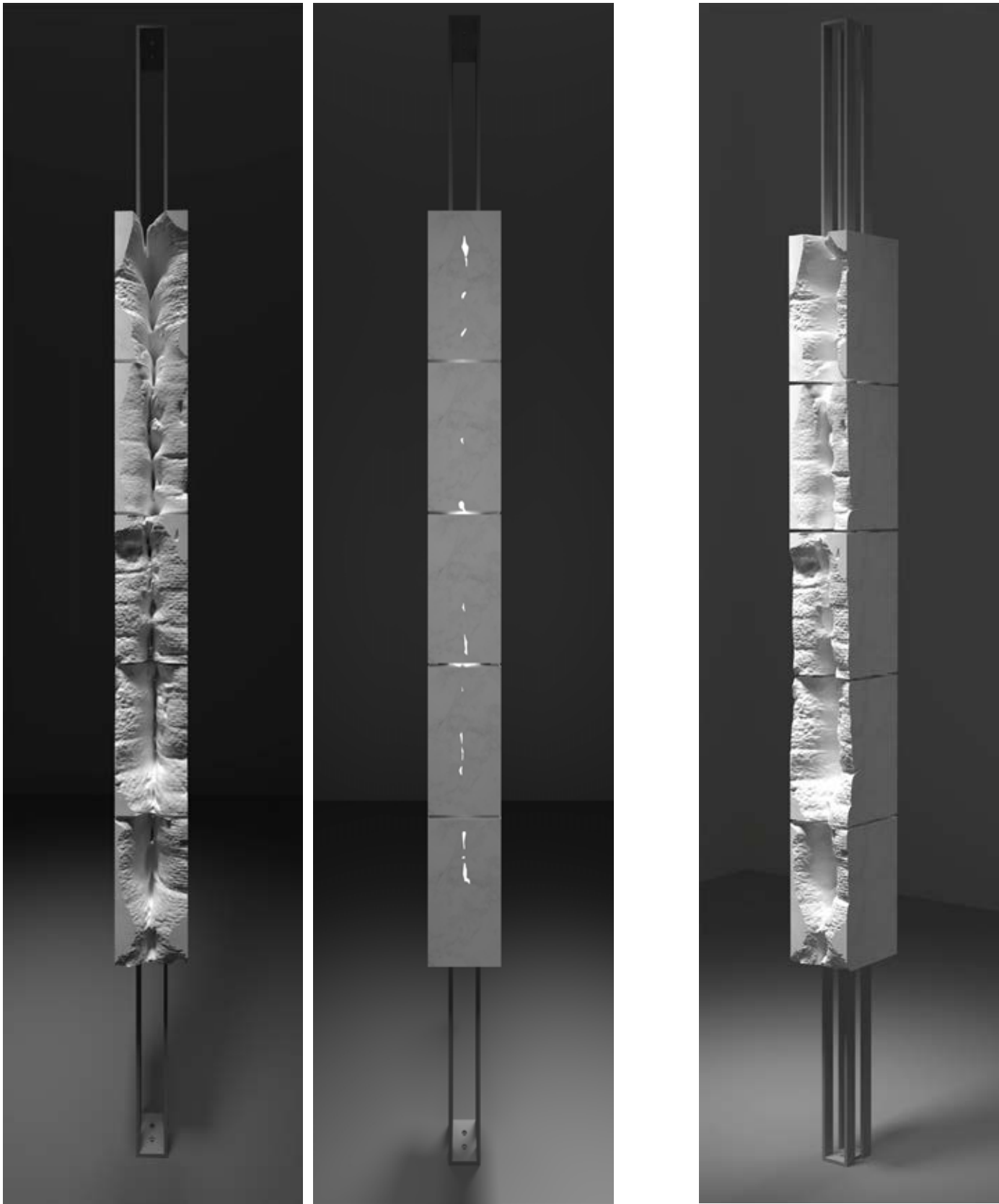


Fortuny Squint Sequence, 2018, radiograph on archival rag paper, 100 x 40 cm.

In Depth

In Venetian buildings it is normal to see the plasters’ surface marked by cracks and fissures. While these signs could alarm or worry the ‘foreigner’, they are so common for those who live in, that they tend to be ignored. Maybe it is because of this fact that, among all the art works that Paul Robinson obtained from his patient, long, precise researches in Palazzo Fortuny, the one which impressed me the most was the three dimensional representation of a crack found in the Gothic building’s walls. The fault’s void, made of marble’s plastic concreteness, stands in front of us, isolated and excavated from a vertical stony totem. This ‘stele’ tells us about a peculiar characteristic of Venice architecture with renewed evidence: how it is founded on swampy soils, loam, sands, clays, that settle in different and not really predictable ways through the centuries. It tells us how Venice is built to accommodate the static subsiding; its necessity of being unstable, without squared angles, asymmetric. It reminds us that also this fragility is part of the beauty of Venice.

Daniela Ferretti,
director of Fortuny Museum, Venice, Italy



Above: In-situ imaging of the *Squint*.

Opposite: *Fortuny Squint Stele*, 2019, rendering of marble stele with steel armature, 20 x 30 x 300 cm, Axonometric view (left), Front view (middle), Back view (right). Currently being produced by Aceto Marmo, Pescara, Italy.



Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny, Site Castings: Intrecci con Palazzo Fortuny
printed in Vesper, Rivista di architettura, arti e teoria Journal of Architecture, Arts &
Theory Volume 1 | Supervenice Autunno | Inverno 2019 Fall | Winter 2019

Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny



Paul O. Robinson

Entry to the second floor of the exhibition | Ingresso al secondo piano della mostra *Intuition*, Museo Fortuny. Ph. Federica Sveva Caregnato, 2017.

Site Castings. Intrecci con Palazzo Fortuny

Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny, *Site Castings: Intrecci con Palazzo Fortuny* printed in Vesper, sample pages

To the Reader

This essay emerges from two aspects of the 2018-2019 body of artwork titled *Site Castings*. *Brief 1* considers the constructs of *surface*-content (the causal arbiter of surface) and the artifice of perception. *Brief 2* posits the idea that Venice, as a consequence of its visual abundance, has been rendered a victim reimagined by the continual appropriations of its image.

The third brief, *Site Castings*, expands upon and connects the first two briefs as an entry into the specific modalities and works defining *Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny*.

There is an intentional disparateness between the briefs: they have their own identifiable trajectories, their own meanings and intentions, yet there is also an implicit interconnectivity regarding surfaces, content and the transmutations of the embodied evidence of place-site.

The connective link in *Site Castings* between *surface*, *evidence* and Venice is Palazzo Fortuny. The palazzo's spaces, artifacts of habitation and works from the 2017 exhibition *Intuition*, define an artifactual¹ *body* that is first examined, transformed and finally unfolded as a new spatial construct materially recasting the presence, and absence, of occupation.

Brief 1: Surfaces

Often the most obscure of beings houses a hidden God;
And like a nascent eye veiled by its lids,
A pure spirit buds beneath the husk of stones!
Gérard de Nerval, *Golden Sayings*

On page 21 of his compact Venetian memoir *Watermark*, Joseph Brodsky suggests that "[s]urfaces – which is what the eye registers first – are often more telling than their contents, which are provisional by definition, except, of course in the afterlife"². This is perhaps true when surfaces are seen through the eyes of a poet who envisions the anarchical compaction of time as a personal register of life events, where within its layers it is revealed to the poet-examiner's eye that contents, as harbingers of the perceived world, are never as forthcoming as one would presume. For Brodsky, surface has dimension, a kind of thickness where oft spurious narratives reside, serving as informants to a deeper body whose *provisional infrastructure* gives form, concrete or imagined, to things seen.

'Surface' from the old French *sur* – 'above' plus 'face' relating to *superficies* – above or on top, implying *superficial*: not deep or with cursory understanding comprehending only what is obvious. Surface may semantically imply superficiality, but its presence is suggestively causal and dialectical – that is to say, bilateral and correspondent. Regardless of fickle alignments, tautologies and concurrency, and although he states that '[surfaces] are often more telling than their contents', Brodsky alludes to an atmospheric reciprocity between surface and *sub*surface that is continuously negotiated by the arbiters of their interstice – the mutable space wherein content conspires to reveal its form.

In his 1976 essay *Less Than One*, Brodsky peripatetically evokes the Janus-space between exterior and interior, where a façade's palimpsestic surface is the first thickened layer, the distance he must traverse to engage the provisional artifacts of causality:

And I remember, as I passed these façades on my way to school, being completely absorbed in imagining what was going on in those rooms with the old billowy wallpaper. I must say that from these façades and porticoes-classical, modern, eclectic, with their columns, pilasters, and plastered heads of mythic animals or people – from their ornaments and caryatids holding up the balconies, from the torsos in the niches of their entrances, I have learned more about the history of our world than I subsequently have from any book. Greece, Rome, Egypt – all of them were there, and all

Al lettore

Questo saggio nasce da due aspetti del progetto curato nel 2018-2019 intitolato *Site Castings*. *Brief 1* prende in considerazione i costrutti del binomio *superficie*-contenuto (l'arbitro causale della superficie) e l'artificio della percezione. *Brief 2* si basa sull'idea che Venezia, come conseguenza della sua abbondanza visiva, è restituita come una vittima re-immaginata dalle continue appropriazioni della sua immagine.

Brief 3 Site Castings espande, collegando tra loro, i primi due *brief*, creando così l'accesso alle specifiche modalità e opere definendo *Site Castings: Intrecci con Palazzo Fortuny*.

Vi è un'intenzionale disparità tra i *brief*: gli stessi possiedono traiettorie, significati ed intenzioni propri, eppure vi è anche un'implicita interconnettività riguardo alle superfici, ai contenuti e alle trasmutazioni che trovano testimonianza nel luogo-site.

L'elemento di congiunzione in *Site Castings* tra *superficie*, *testimonianza* e Venezia è appunto Palazzo Fortuny. Gli spazi del palazzo, i luoghi abitati e le opere della mostra *Intuition* del 2017, definiscono un *insieme di manufatti*², che viene in un primo momento esaminato, trasformato ed infine è rivelato come nuovo concetto spaziale la cui occupazione o disoccupazione è ricostruita materialmente.

Brief 1: Superfici

Spesso nel più oscuro degli esseri alberga un Dio nascosto;
E come occhio nascente velato dalle proprie palpebre,
Uno spirito puro sboccia sotto lo strato di pietre!
Gérard de Nerval, *Golden Sayings*

Iosif Brodskij, a pagina 10 delle sue brevi memorie veneziane, *Fondamenta degli Incurabili*, suggerisce che "le superfici – cioè la prima cosa che l'occhio registra – sono spesso più eloquenti del loro contenuto, che è provvisorio per definizione, tranne, si capisce, nella vita dopo la vita"². Questo è forse vero quando le superfici sono viste attraverso gli occhi di un poeta che concepisce la compattazione anarchica del tempo come un registro personale degli eventi della vita. Strati all'interno dei quali l'occhio del poeta-esaminatore rivela che i contenuti, in quanto messaggeri del mondo percepito, non sono mai così imminenti come ci si potrebbe aspettare. Per Brodskij, la superficie ha una dimensione, una sorta di spessore dove frequentemente risiedono narrative spurie, che fungono da informatori per un corpo più profondo, la cui *infrastruttura provvisoria* dà forma, sia essa concreta o immaginaria, alle cose viste.

"*Superficie*", che viene dal latino *super* – "sopra" e *facies* "faccia" in relazione alle *superfici* – sopra o appunto in cima, implica la parola *superficiale*: non profondo o con una comprensione sommaria che include solo ciò che è ovvio. Superficie può anche semanticamente richiamare a qualcosa di superficiale, ma la sua presenza è evocativamente causale e dialettica, ovvero bilaterale e corrispondente.

Indipendentemente da volubili allineamenti, tautologie e coincidenze, Brodskij, sebbene affermi che le "[superfici] sono spesso più significative del loro contenuto", allude a una reciprocità atmosferica tra superficie e *sottosuolo* che viene continuamente negoziata dagli arbitri del loro interstizio – ovvero lo spazio mutevole dove il contenuto concorre a rivelare la sua forma. Nel suo saggio del 1976 *Fuga da Bisanzio*, Brodskij evoca peripateticamente lo spazio Giano tra esterno ed interno, dove la superficie del palinsesto di una facciata è il primo spesso strato, la distanza che deve percorrere per confrontarsi con i reperti provvisori della causalità:

E ricordo che mentre passavo davanti a quelle facciate per andare a scuola mi perdeva a immaginare che cosa mai poteva succedere in quelle stanze con le vecchie tappezzerie rigonfie e fluttuanti. Devo dire che da quelle facciate e da quei porticati – classici, moderni, eclettici, con le loro colonne e lesene e teste di gesso raffiguranti mitici animali o personaggi –, dalle loro decorazioni e cariatidi messe a sorreggere i balconi, dai torsi appostati dietro le nicchie degli atrii, ho imparato più

- 8 'X-ray' (noun) a form of radiation named by Prof. W. C. Röntgen of Würzburg in 1895, capable of passing in various degrees through many substances impervious to light, and of affecting a sensitized plate and thus producing shadow-photographs of objects enclosed within opaque receptacles or bodies, e.g. of the bones, or a bullet or other foreign body, within the flesh of a living person or animal; they also produce fluorescence, phosphorescence, and electrical effects, and have a curative operation in certain skin diseases; much used in modern surgical and medical practice. The X-ray image is an index by definition – it is causal, it can be read as a residual trace, and it requires a subtext, or code, to be understood or relocated within the immediate context of the reader. | "Raggi X" s. m. è una forma di radiazione che nasce con il Prof. Röntgen di Würzburg nel 1895, in grado di passare di vari gradi attraverso molte sostanze impermeabili alla luce e di colpire una lastra sensibilizzata, producendo così fotografie-ombra di oggetti racchiusi in contenitori o corpi opachi, ad esempio delle ossa, o di un proiettile o altro corpo estraneo, all'interno della carne di una persona viva o di un animale; producono anche fluorescenza, fosforescenza ed effetti elettrici e hanno una funzione curativa in alcune malattie della pelle; molto utilizzati nella moderna pratica chirurgica e medica. L'immagine radiografica è per definizione un indice – è causale, può essere letta come traccia residua, e richiede un sottotesto, o codice, da comprendere o trasferire nel contesto immediato del lettore.
- 9 Museo Fortuny is a rich amalgam of contemporaneous artistic collaborations. *Site Castings* is also a collaborative work involving correspondences between myself, composer/performer Christopher Tignor, poet/author Laura Sims and architectural historian and author Alberto Pérez Gómez. | Il Museo Fortuny è un ricco amalgama di collaborazioni artistiche contemporanee. Anche *Site Castings* è una collaborazione che ha coinvolto oltre a me, il compositore/performer Christopher Tignor, la poetessa/autrice Laura Sims e lo storico dell'architettura e autore Alberto Pérez Gómez.
- 10 An indexical reading can be seen as a rarefaction of an extant visual or spatial condition requiring the attachment of contemporaneous signs in order to be understood within an alternative context. Index is used here in reference to the definition coined by Rosalind Krauss. According to Krauss, 'as distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are the marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms. Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects'. | Una lettura *indicizzata* può essere vista come una rarefazione di una condizione visiva o spaziale esistente che richiede di allegare dei segni contemporanei per essere compresa in un contesto alternativo. L'indice viene qui utilizzato in riferimento alla definizione coniata da Rosalind Krauss. Secondo Krauss, "distinti dai simboli, gli indici stabiliscono il loro significato lungo l'asse di una relazione fisica con i loro referenti. Sono i segni o le tracce di una particolare causa, e quella causa è ciò a cui si riferiscono, l'oggetto a cui fanno riferimento. Nella categoria dell'indice, si collocano le tracce fisiche (come le impronte), e i sintomi medici. Le proiezioni delle ombre potrebbero anche servire come segni indicizzati degli oggetti". R. Krauss, *Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America*, in *October*, vol. 3, Spring | primavera 1977, p. 68.
- * An institution such as Museo Fortuny is filled with operational complexities hidden from public view, and as such I have many to thank for allowing my assistants and me to work in the museum during a particularly complicated time – the demounting of the 2017 exhibition *Intuition*. The museum staff scheduled, contacted the artists and galleries whose work I would engage, contacted insurance companies, were available for the constant moving of artworks and artifacts – irreplaceable pieces that required professional expertise to transport – and offered their knowledge when I asked questions about the works and spaces defining the museum. I am indebted to director Daniela Ferretti, who listened to my proposals and graciously opened the museum's doors to the work. Without her support the beginnings of *Site Castings* would likely remain idea over reality. I am especially grateful to Cristina Da Roit, who was my constant contact and liaison between all unknowable workings of the museum and the staff within; to Garance Laporte, Tiziana Alvisi and Georg Malfertheiner for their administrative assistance; to Mirco De Nat for his help in moving works; to my on-site assistant Federica Sveva Caregnato; to Ana Klofutar Hergeršič, who helped with transporting equipment from Slovenia to Venice and who continues assisting with studio work and digital transformations; to Lovrenc Košenina for digital modeling; to Nick Blair-Fish, who transported my equipment through the

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canals to and from the palazzo; to Domenico Potenza, and to Antonio Fontana and Loris Antenucci of Helios Automazioni (San Salvo, Italy) who graciously produced all stone sculptural works. Special thanks to Agostino De Rosa for initiating my contact with Museo Fortuny, but mostly for his continuing impact upon the work itself. Financial patrons for *Site Castings* include Roger Golden, Saša Hiti and Robert M. MacLeod. | Un'istituzione come il Museo Fortuny si caratterizza per le sue complessità operative, non visibili al pubblico; ed è per questo che devo ringraziare tantissime persone per aver permesso ai miei assistenti e a me di lavorare nel museo in un periodo particolarmente complicato: lo smontaggio della mostra del 2017, *Intuition*. Lo staff del museo ha organizzato le tempistiche, contattato gli artisti e le gallerie che avrei coinvolto, ha contattato le compagnie di assicurazione, si sono resi disponibili per la continua movimentazione delle opere d'arte e degli oggetti, pezzi insostituibili che richiedevano competenze di massima professionalità per essere trasportati: lo staff ha condiviso tutto ciò che sapeva quando ho posto domande sulle opere e gli spazi che definiscono il museo. Sono in debito con la direttrice Daniela Ferretti, che ha ascoltato le mie proposte e ha gentilmente aperto le porte del museo a quest'opera; senza il suo sostegno l'incipit di *Site Castings* sarebbe rimasto solo un'idea, senza divenire realtà. Sono particolarmente grato a Cristina Da Roit, che è stata il mio costante contatto e collegamento tra gli infiniti meccanismi del museo e il suo personale interno; a Garance Laporte, Tiziana Alvisi e Georg Malfertheiner per la loro assistenza amministrativa; a Mirco De Nat per il suo aiuto nello spostamento delle opere; alla mia assistente in loco Federica Sveva Caregnato; a Ana Klofutar Hergeršič che mi ha aiutato nel trasporto delle attrezzature dalla Slovenia a Venezia e che continua ad assistermi nelle trasformazioni digitali; a Lovrenc Košenina per la modellazione digitale; a Nick Blair-Fish, che ha trasportato le attrezzature attraverso i canali avanti e indietro dal palazzo; a Domenico Potenza, e a Antonio Fontana e Loris Antenucci di Helios Automazioni (San Salvo, Italia) che hanno prodotto con grazia tutte le opere tridimensionali in pietra. Un ringraziamento speciale va ad Agostino De Rosa per avermi messo in contatto con il Museo Fortuny, ma soprattutto per il suo continuo contributo all'opera stessa. Tra gli sponsor di *Site Castings* ci sono Roger Golden, Saša Hiti e Robert M. MacLeod.

On Poetic Radiography

Judiciously applying sophisticated technological instrumentality to the aims of poetic revelation, Paul Robinson allows us to see *more*, yet unlike analogously generated scientific images, the surplus offered by his radiographs is a celebratory mystery: a section through the cone of vision that does not simply 'clarify', and yet is also a cognition and not mere mystification. The work has the effect of overcoming the traditional dualities often invoked by philosophers, poets and art critics since the beginning of modernity; it exists beyond such concepts as form and content, surface and depth, to reveal a numinous *reversibility*.

This work deliberately acknowledges and leaves behind the dangerous oscillations of art from impressionism to contemporary experimentalism: attempts at depth caught in a metaphysical misstep, or celebrations of the surface that eventually wallow in superficiality. Instead we witness the hopeful unveiling of meaning for embodied sight, beyond the purely retinal: the moment depth *becomes* surface, and the work *presences* the enigma which is life, the *mind in body* or spiritual flesh. Unfathomable and erotic, mysterious and seductive: like the two sides of the *penumbra* that many centuries ago the insightful Giordano Bruno suggested was the true nature of everything that *is*, without ever becoming simply 'light' or 'shadow'.

Sulla radiografia poetica

Consapevole di piegare la raffinatezza tecnologica ai fini della rivelazione poetica, Paul Robinson ci permette di vedere *di più*. Eppure, diversamente da altre immagini scientifiche analogamente prodotte, il surplus generato dalle sue radiografie rappresenta un mistero da celebrare: una sezione della piramide visiva che non solo "chiarisce", ma è anche conoscenza e non mera mistificazione. Il lavoro supera le dualità tradizionali spesso evocate da filosofi, poeti e critici d'arte sin dagli albori della modernità. Esso esiste oltre concetti quali forma e contenuto, superficie e profondità, rivelando una *reversibilità* sovrannaturale.

Questo lavoro riconosce e oltrepassa volutamente le pericolose oscillazioni dell'arte dall'impressionismo allo sperimentalismo contemporaneo: abbagli di profondità presi in un metafisico passo falso o elogi della forma esteriore che finiscono per crogiolarsi nella superficialità. Invece si assiste fiduciosi ad uno svelamento di significato della vista latente, la quale va oltre la pura retina: l'esatto momento in cui la profondità *si fa* superficie e il lavoro *incarna* l'enigma che è vita, *mente nel corpo* o carne spirituale. Imperscrutabile ed erotico, misterioso e seducente. Come i due lati della *penumbra* che molti secoli prima con eccezionale lungimiranza Giordano Bruno aveva definito come la vera natura di ogni cosa che *è*, senza mai divenire semplicemente "luce" o "ombra".

Alberto Pérez Gómez

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Vesper | Supervenice



NYC Crime Scene, 1914, from *Evidence* 2006, by Luc Sante

Spring 2020 Advanced Graduate Studio: Artifacts of Transience: A Studio Practicum Concerning the Spatial Consequences of Human Transience and Abandonment given at the University of South Florida School of Architecture and Community Design

The charge: Our studio/practicum will explore the potent consequences of the contemporary urban experience through evidentiary investigations that excavate and expose the latent constancy of transience and abandonment. The studio will create a unique opportunity to work within the accelerated pace that defines marginalized sectors of Tampa's urban environment. Our work will forensically reveal, via X-ray technology, the palimpsestic traces found within the momentary crisis of abandonment; this documentation will be brought to the studio and transformed into two and three-dimensional spatial environments. Both process and outcome emerge as a critical lens for self-reflection concerning the oft unseen commingling of domestic mise-en-scènes and anarchy presented within the radicalized moments of forced abandonment. The work attempts to "capture" the liminal resonance of transience as matter for reforming and concretizing spatial narratives through the intersection of architectural and artistic processes. It is unavoidable that we will be confronted with the ethical boundaries defined by the consequences of violation, displacement, voyeurism and the tenuous lines between deeply private and public realms.

The Work: The student will experience physical—real—evidence by visiting and documenting, via X-Ray technologies, sites of abandonment located in Tampa. The sites will become the layered topography of multiple readings and projections. Our unique method of documentation and material transformations—the production—will define a full-scale spatial "casting" that will reoccupy the original site

and/or alternative spaces that contribute its own voice to the studio's work. Hence, we will assume the role of documenter, creator and curator.

As the production of the built environment moves ever deeper into the ephemeral sphere of images and singularly self-referential formal outcomes, this studio offers the design student the opportunity to speculate on narrative structures and cultural artifacts as modalities within the design process that manifest as a *matter* of spatial consequence. The conceptual premise is that an artifact—evidence—assumes meaning by virtue of its attachment to consequence, place and time, and that the traces left in the aftermath of abandonment emerge as a charged body of evidence that projects, then temporarily holds within itself, the present absence of occupation. The politics inherent in the process of memorialization are unavoidably entwined within the process and outcomes.

Robinson is professor at University of Ljubljana Faculty of architecture where he teaches studio and is the editor of AR/Architecture research, a monthly journal concerning the interface of architecture and art. He is a Visiting professor at Università Iuav di Venezia. His primary studio is located in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where X-rays, paintings, 3-dimensional constructions and castings are developed to induce intertwined correspondences between art and space; he continues to create exhibitions and installations in Europe and USA.

To the Critics:

The aforementioned studio brief provides a laconic description of the spring 2020 practicum given at the USF School of Architecture, Tampa, Florida. Upon arriving in Tampa I had to at once locate a site for the students to analyze (this became increasingly difficult to do while in Ljubljana). With the help of my graduate teaching assistant, we were able to obtain permission to work within a rather extraordinary site – Robles Park housing project.

Cursorily: Robles park is a low-income social housing district located in south Tampa. In 2018, through the investigative reporting of Tampa Bay Times investigative journalist Paul Ruzzo, it came to light that portions of Robles Park had been built atop Zion cemetery, an African American burial site dating from the late 1800's. The Tampa Housing Authority gave the studio permission to work, uninhibited, within the site.

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/hillsborough/2019/11/04/a-community-not-just-zion-cemetery-disappeared-to-build-homes-for-whites/#>

Due to the discovery of the cemetery and the socio-political/racial outcry it created, the buildings constructed directly over the site were evacuated and slated for demolition. We arrived on site while families were still in the process of leaving. The students were able to experience and forensically document "hot" sites that resonated with forced eviction – artifacts of recent habitation left in the wake of abandonment: clothes, furniture, food, writings, diaries, toys...those things deemed expendable, yet were of evidentiary value to the immediate narrative of abandonment and its aftermath.

The site was documented using various mediums – drawing, photography and forensic X-Ray technology. The process exposed the students to conditions that were in many respects unfamiliar to their perception of the domestic realm; they were in the midst of a transition that revealed a darker side—violence and poverty—of habitation juxtaposed to the intimacies of domesticity. The students also met with the Tampa housing authority and some of those who were being evicted (relocated) in order to document their stories.

The indexical and narrative evidence was taken to the studio and processually translated as a means to create spatial artifacts that would then occupy the existing buildings as a correspondent intervention that was in itself materially temporal; existing momentarily before the buildings were demolished. We were given permission to physically intervene within the actual site and to modify the existing architecture in order to interface with our installation.

As there was an inherent bias—the students' awareness of my own work—I pushed them to create a narrative process that was unique to their individual interpretation of the site and the artifacts they chose to work with. The process required each student to work one-to-one—full-scale. The transformation of the artifactual evidence, primarily the X-Ray, included casting, various modes of painting, collage and palimpsestic drawings. Studio discussions often revolved around the dialectical relationship between artistic and architectural processes, politics and inevitably, program, purpose, relevancy and, tectonics – *language*: architectural, sculptural, narrative, formal, subject...object. In preparation for full-scale interventions, the students were tutored in the use of CNC technology, welding and the use of essential woodworking tools.

The onset of Covid-19.

As with many teaching studio, working with physical models was extinguished—especially full-scale—and with that the obvious, and somewhat acquiescent shift to the digital realm emerged as our *modus operandi*. Drawing tables and the studio spaces that held them became absent, silent and

void; embodied processes – painting, casting and physical making—recent remembrances. The nervous excitement of working in situ, and the on-site exhibition, vanished.

And I wonder about the connection to the project at hand: the attempted recording and physical realization of the moment of abandonment forced in a different manner—our own forced abandonment—but nonetheless emotional and impactful. And with these shifts in work modes, the rare opportunity to physically reinvest the original site with our spatial artifacts – gone.

With that, the students have produced, via digital technologies, a different kind of project that forces different questions... perhaps, no less provocative.

Each student is asked to present all processual stages leading to the development of the most recent formal iteration, this includes both collective and individual documentation, developmental drawings, models and writings. I look at the review as both a presentation of work and a discussion regarding potentials and problems inherent in the charge and the nature of defining a tectonic language through the lens of narrative structures.



2 14 Kentucky Avenue, Robles Park, Tampa, Florida



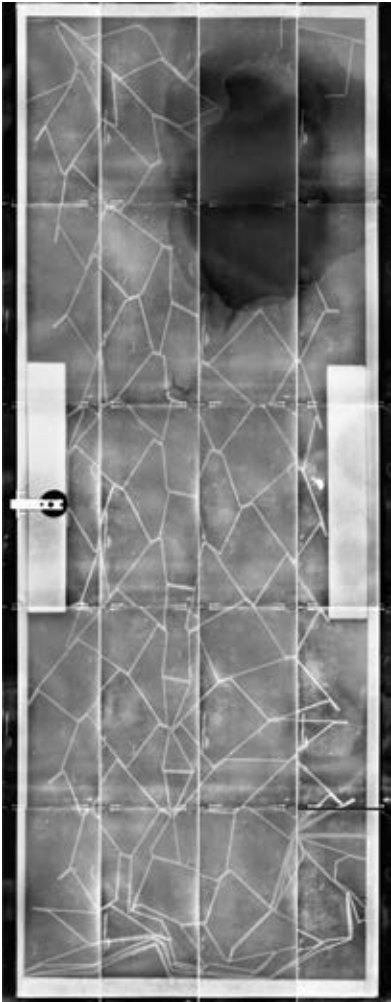
Above and Opposite: students X-raying on site artifacts at Robles Park



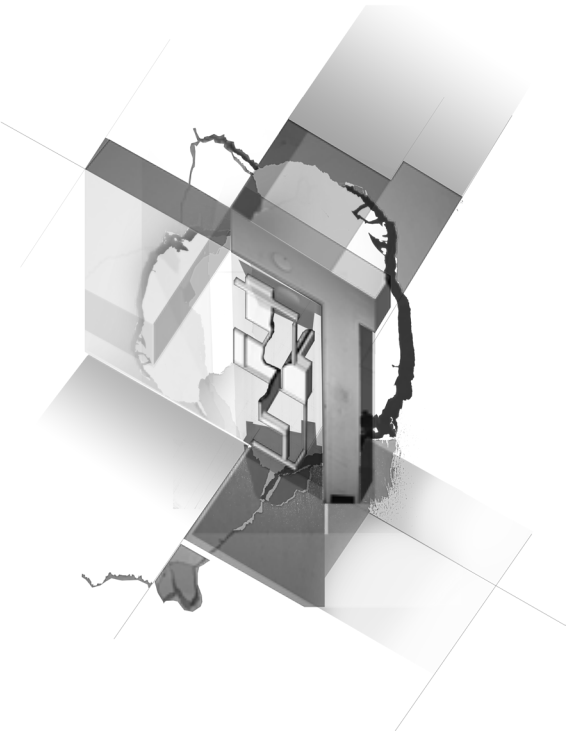


Above and Opposite: indexical X-rays taken at Robles Park

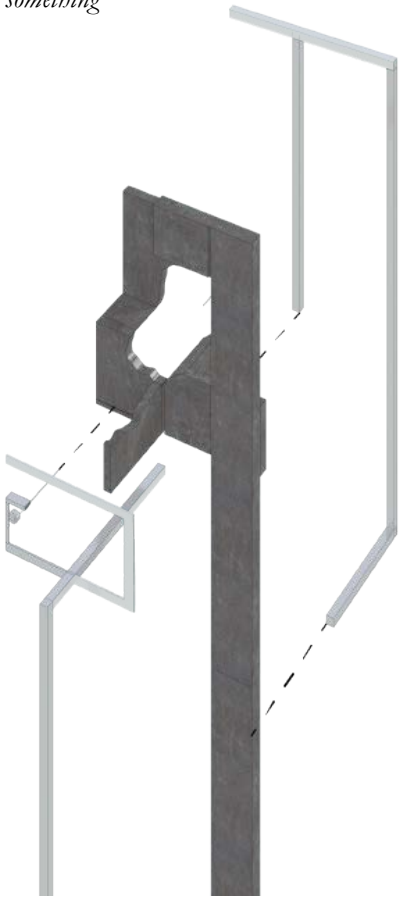




Clockwise from top left: door damaged by domestic violence, door X-ray, site-plan showing buildings over Zion cemetery; Student: Hannah Moore




Objectifying violence
I chose the x-ray of the door. It has qualities that express the violence inherent in the site of a forgotten cemetery. The hole in the door is a sign of violence and a sign of inhabitation in an abandoned place. In these preliminary investigations, I was expressively exploring the idea of violence by using the form and proportions of the hole in the door. I was giving form to something formless. Hannah Moore



Material character of the reliquary
An artifact is held within a reliquary. The reliquary is recalling the form of the existing architecture in order to memorialize the forced abandonment that the people of Robles Park experienced. Violence of erasure exists in this site because of the purposeful concealment of the truth of the cemetery. The material of the reliquary became frosted and reflective glass in order to begin to conceal the artifact held within. The ground carves away to hold the reliquary. This unites two worlds that were previously at odds with one another. The memory of Zion faded just as the glass allows the reliquary to fade into the landscape. Hannah Moore

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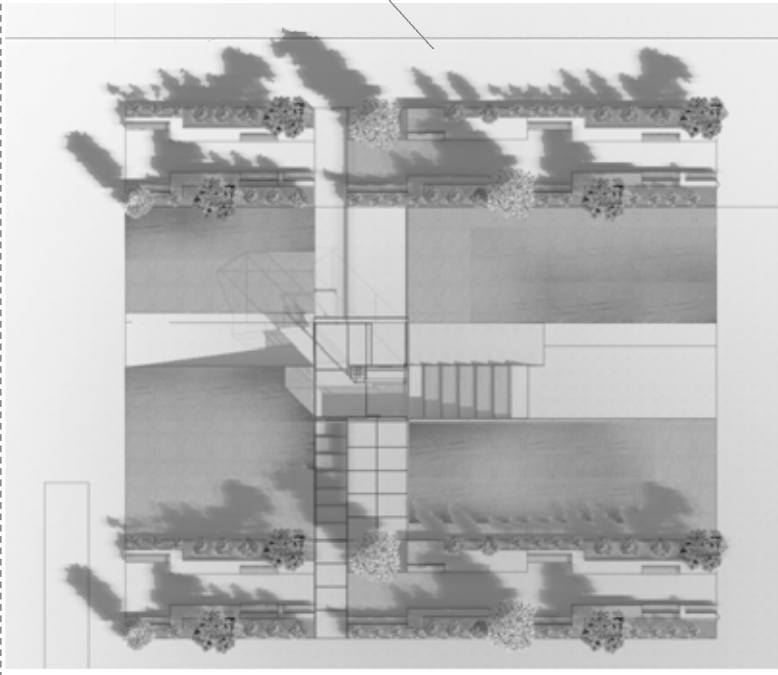
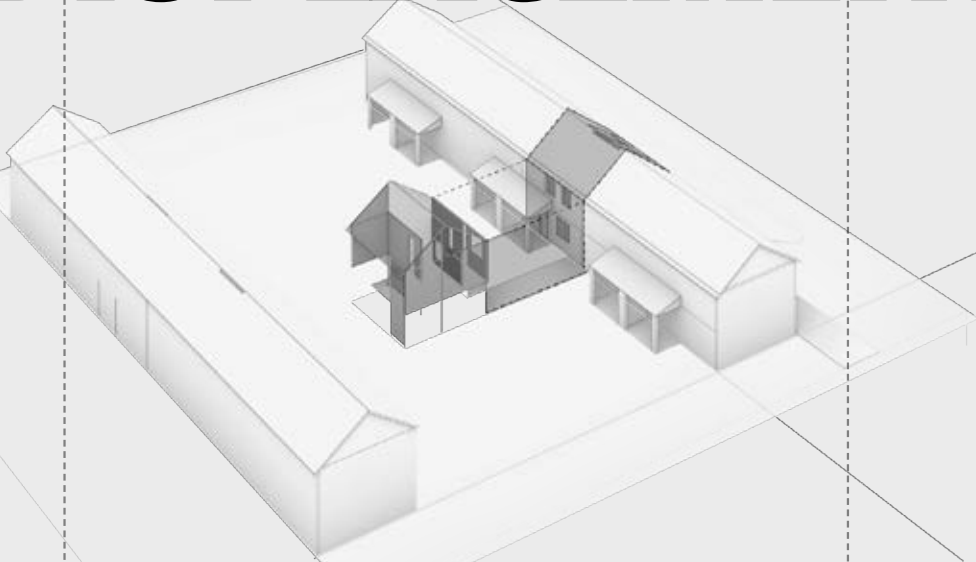
1 EXISTING BUILDINGS
2 DISPLACEMENT OF RELIQUARY

This plan and diagram show the displacement of the original location of the artifact and the unit it was found in. A spatial relationship is created through the displacement between the footprint of the existing buildings and the reliquary. The relationship is a spatial manifestation of the displacement of the residents of Robles Park. It can also be seen as a spatial move that signifies the rediscovery of meaning in the site. The shift in location shows the shift from a lack of knowledge to an uncovering of knowledge.

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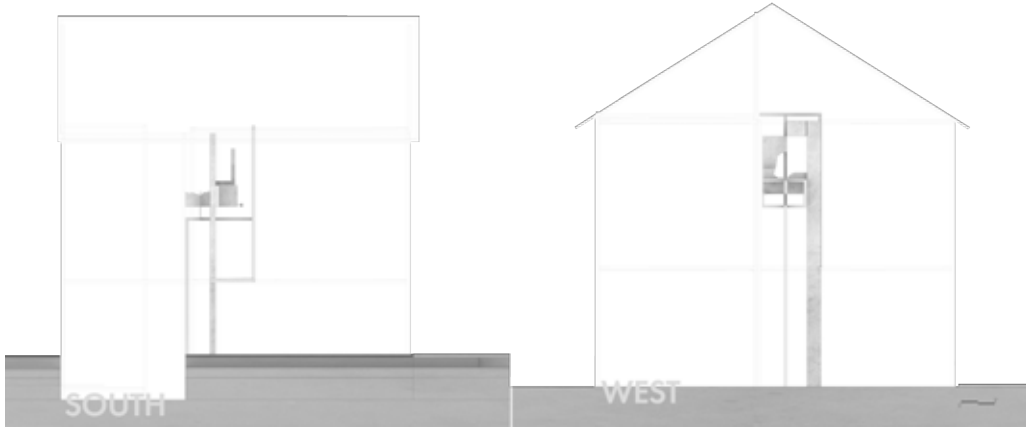
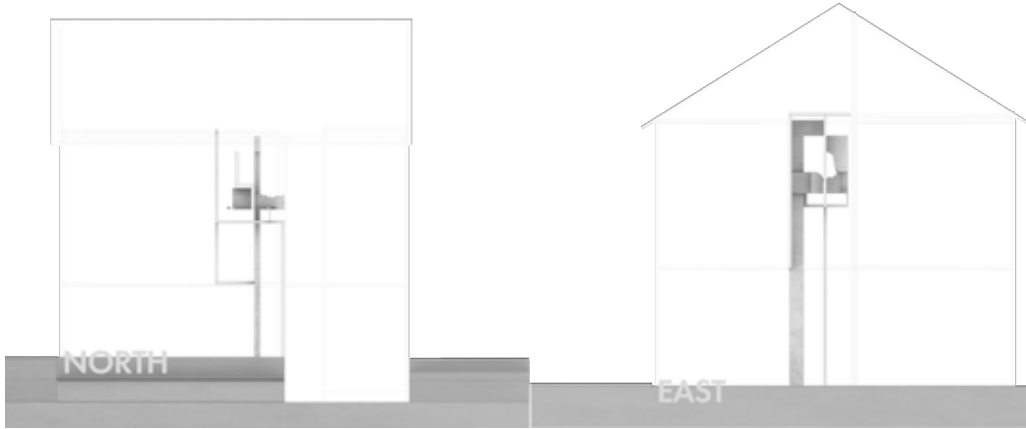
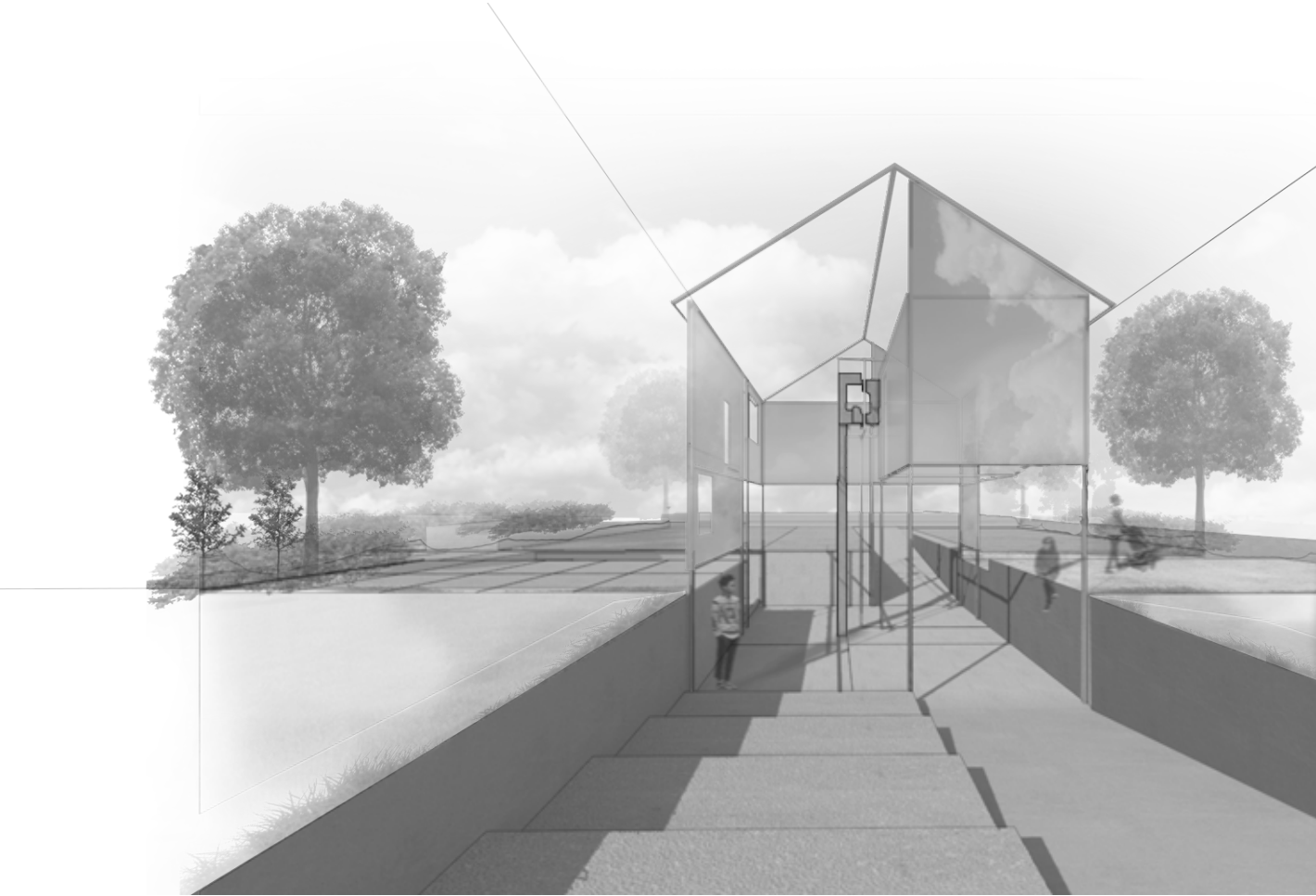
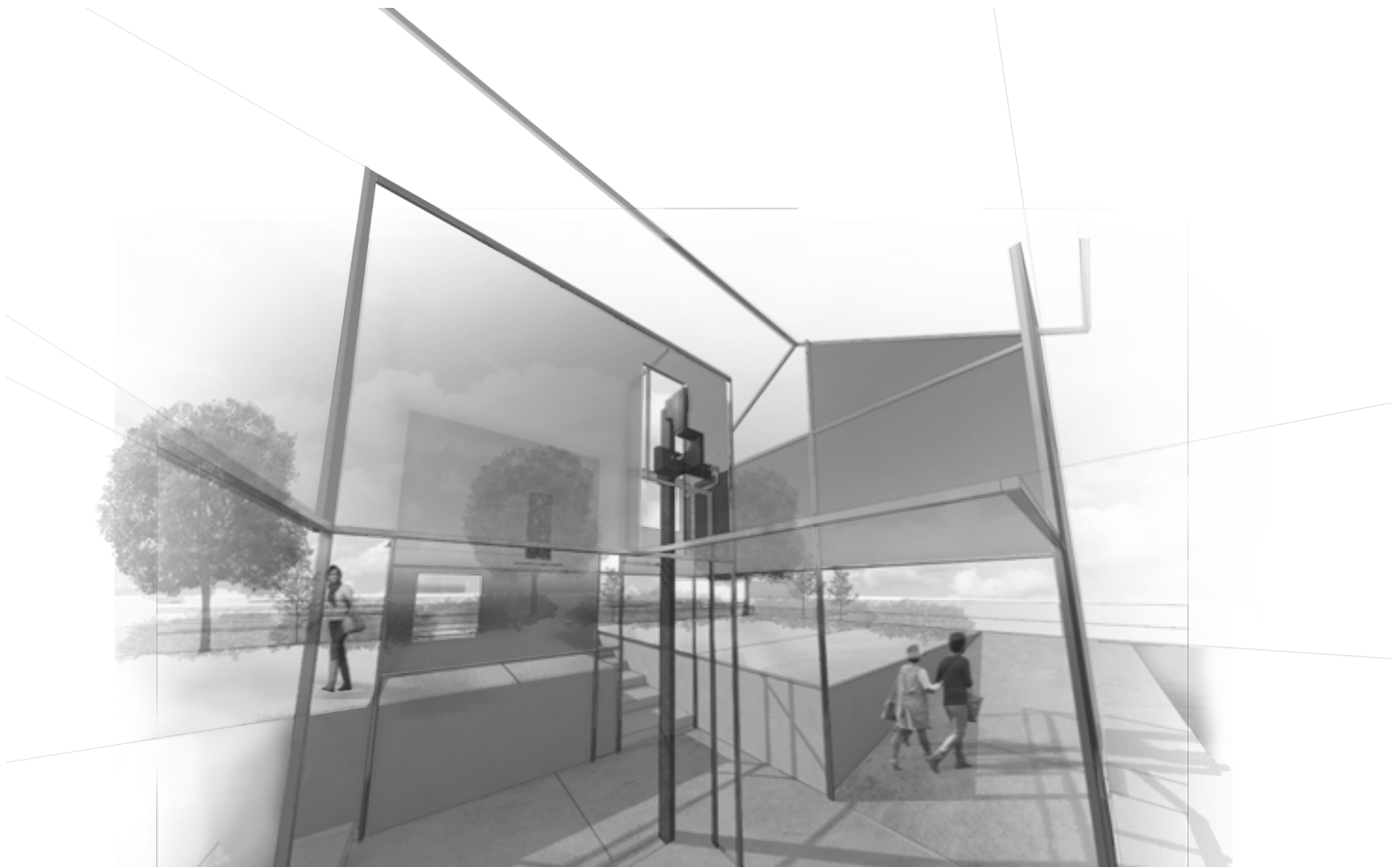
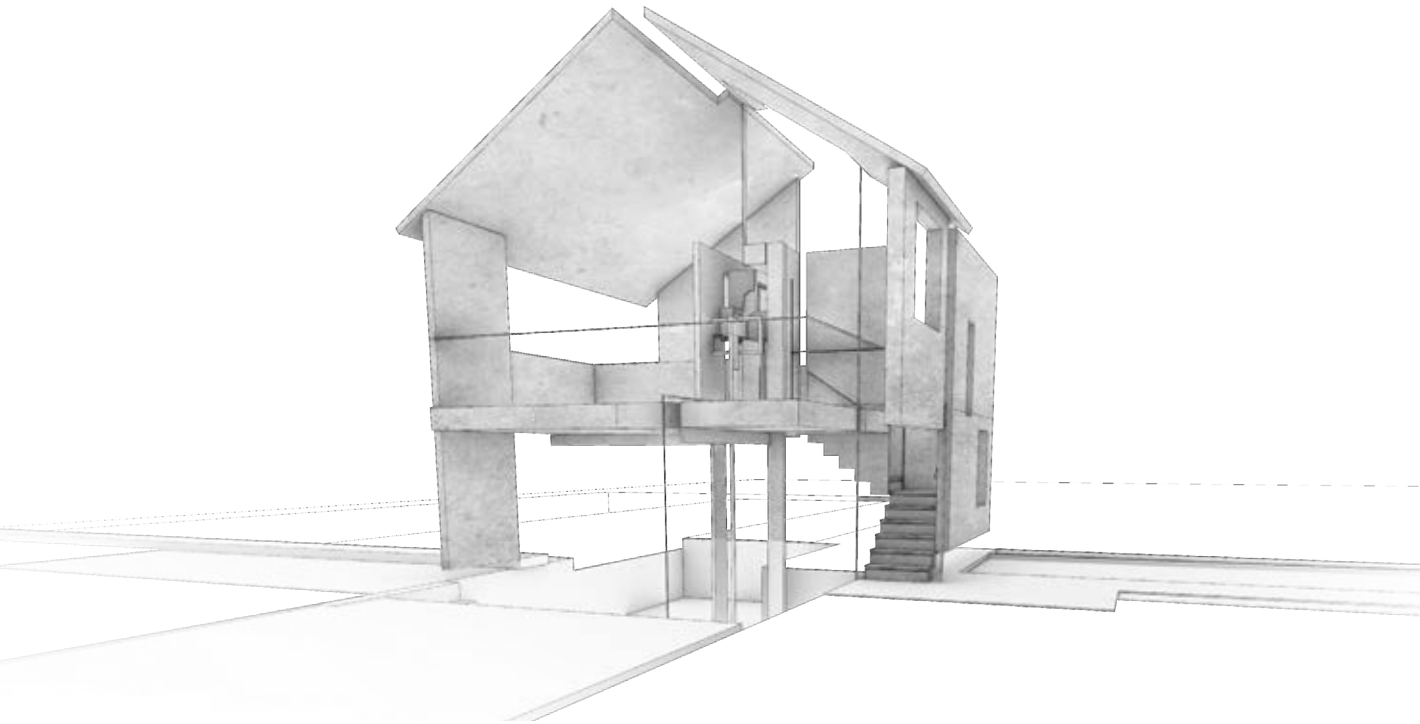
DISPLACEMENT

SPRING 2020

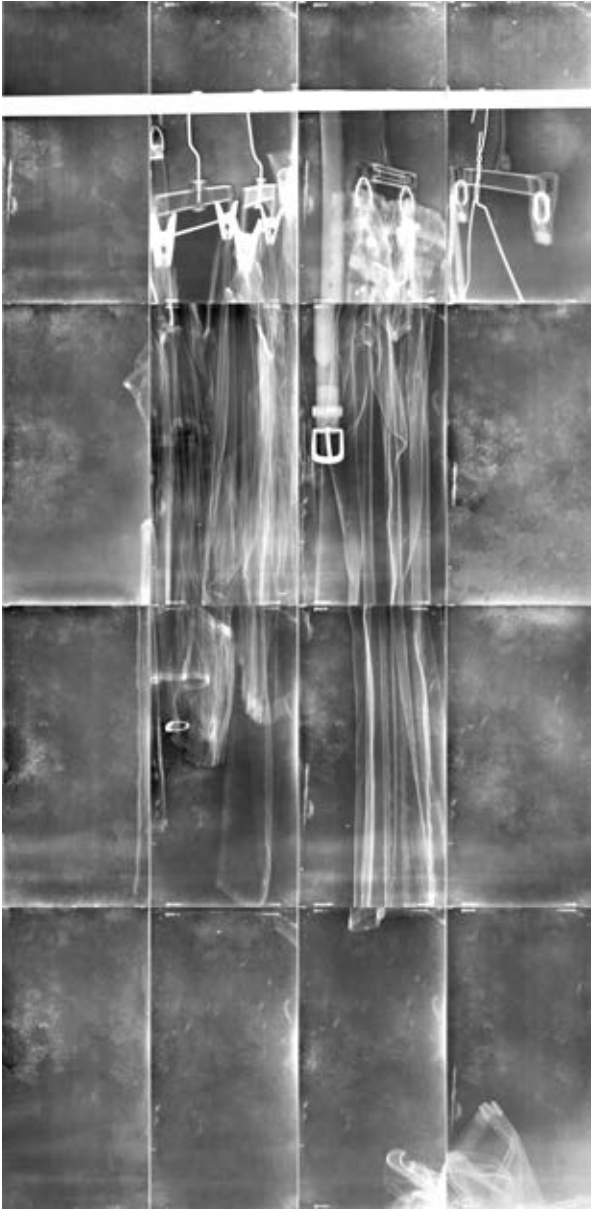


ADVANCED

FINAL PLAN



Clockwise from top left: artifact reliquary - opaque version, transparent frame version with landscape, transparent frame version with landscape, elevation studies of artifact. Student: Hannah Moore



From left: artifactual evidence, X-ray, transformative painting, narrative palimpsest.
Student: Jerri Stephanis



1.) **Hi my name is Jerri Stephanis.** Thank you for taking the time for being here today. I want to first acknowledge and thank archeologists Rebecca O'Sullivan from USF and Eric Prendregrast from Cardno, for sharing with us their research and GPR surveys. Their investigation is invaluable to our projects.

2.) To contextualize our project, Robles Park is a public housing complex built on top of Zion cemetery in Seminole Heights, Tampa.

3.) Zion Cemetery was established in 1901. It was the first African-American burial ground in Tampa.

- It is approx. 2.5 acres
- 98 family plots, it is estimated that nearly 400 people buried here.
- 1912- County Treasurer DR. JJ Head became the owner of Zion cemetery through a Law suit. He demanded that the cemetery was behind in its property taxes although public spaces like cemeteries didn't have to pay taxes. The court Ruled in his favor.
- During the 1920's, the burial ground began to shrink due to development and abandonment. Slowly shrinking in size.

4.) Then in 1951, construction for Robles Park began. It was first an all-white housing. During construction 3 children caskets were found. Though the police were involved in the retirement of the corpses, no further investigation was made, construction carried on, and the cemetery was officially abandoned by history, politics, and race.

5.) In 2019, Tampa Bay times journalist, Paul Guzzo wrote an article that resurfaced Zion's memory.

- Left image: Robles park units on Kentucky and Moore sit on top of Zion
- Top right image- Rebecca and Eric, scanning the ground with their GPR systems to confirm Zion was in fact still underneath
- Bottom right image: Scans confirming caskets are still there

6.) Once the Tampa Bay Times article by Paul Guzzo came to light, plans were made to demolish the buildings that were built on top of Zion. This caused the families living within these units to be displaced. During our forensic investigation of the abandoned units, we documented the site frozen in time. These spaces, void of occupancy, still carried the resonance of its occupants and their narratives. The families, though no longer there left behind not just a detritus of discarded things, but the weight of their presence as well. Like Zion cemetery, these things were left behind and forsaken.

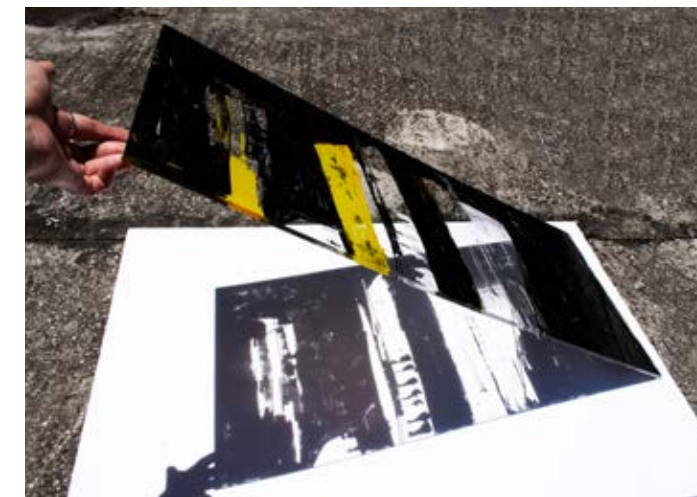
7.) We began our investigation through a series of x-rays of the things left behind. Among many, include clothes in a closet, a ravaged door, a toy box, a recliner chair, mattresses, shoes, etc.

Through the x-rays, we found an index of narratives that began to unravel themselves before us. The x-rays capture a certain silence and absence between object and the liminal space they occupy not just within the images, but the spaces we found them in.

During our brief time shared with the archaeologists, Rebecca mentioned something that resonated with me. She said that the silence and absence of the cemetery is a result of violence. I thought it was interesting, and almost ironic, how the very violent act of shooting through these artifacts, and shooting through the ground to confirm the caskets, is what brought the absence from both Zion and the objects we found to the surface.

8.) As we furthered our investigation, I became drawn to the closet. I found a diary entry ripped out of a notebook. Though only a few words are legible, I became interested in the text because it still communicates a speculative narrative about the memories and identity of the person it belonged to. I studied the closet as an organism that stores memories and identities layered over and over again through the years, creating a palimpsest of engrams behind the surface of the clothes hanging in it.

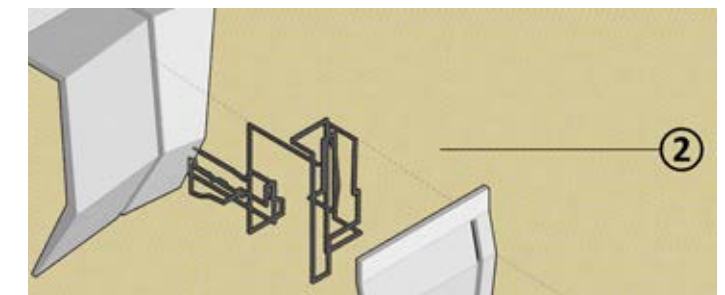
9.) Taking this idea of engrams beneath a palimpsest of information, I made an acrylic painting on plexi-glass. I first created an index of the x-ray itself. I did not know what the painting would become, but I began to layer paint, and scrape, and layer words, and scrape.... Reenacting the violence of the x-ray by bringing the absence to the surface over and over again until all I was left with, was a lens that captures light, and projects it's content on to a surface.



10.) I began to think about how I could introduce these ideas in the context of the closet, the room, and the building itself. I diagrammed the painting thinking about how light and shadow travel through a lens and how I can reinterpret the memories stored in a closet through experiential projections. The image to the right, is a model that begins to manifest ideas about how the existing architecture is affected by the engrammatic memories stored in the closet. Through this model, I began to question what parts of the existing architecture I should keep and what parts I should leave behind in order to create an experience that is both new and still memorializes the history of displacement and abandonment found in closet and the cemetery.

11.) As an ongoing question, I came up with four systems that begin to have a conversation with each other.

One is the ground intervention, the scar left behind by the projections of the lens. The ground receives the projected engrams and acts as the surface that tells their story as the sun travels in the sky throughout the day.



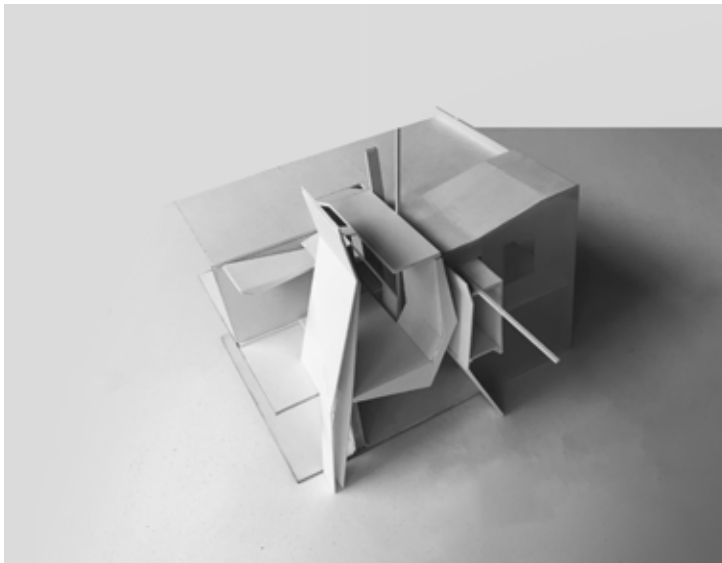
The second system is the diagrammatic echo. It mimics the Robles park buildings and it is the structure from which the projections hang from. It juxtaposes the vertical intervention by extending into the landscape in a horizontal gesture.

The third system is the lens. The perimeter of the closet reinterpreted.

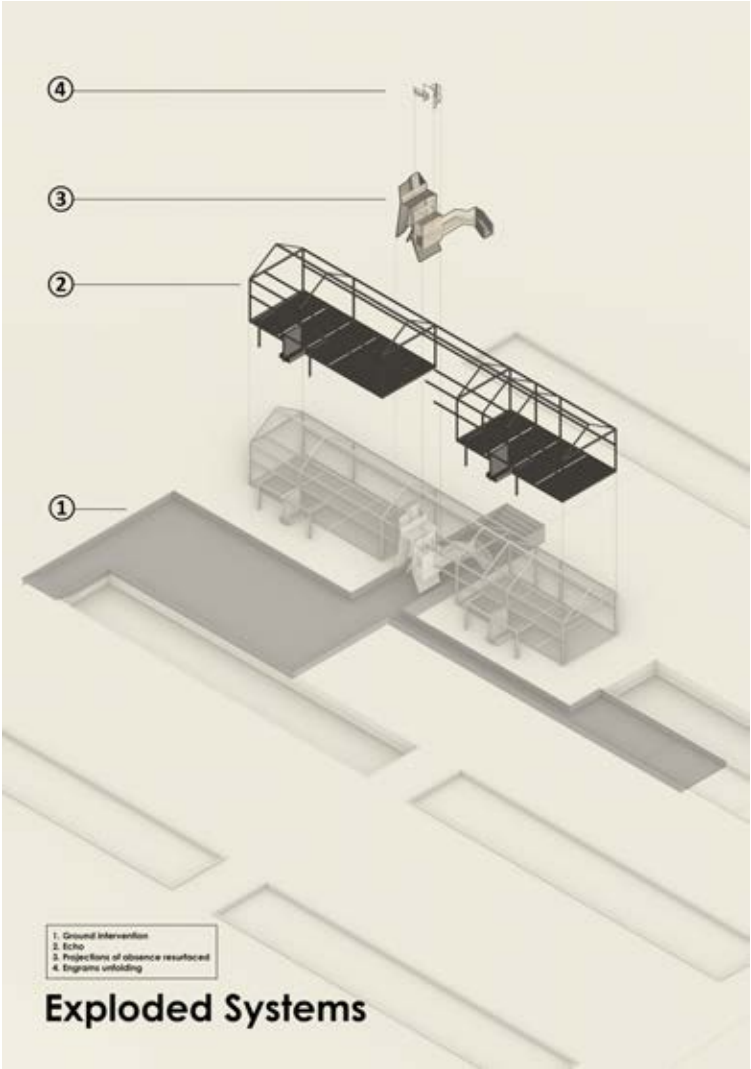
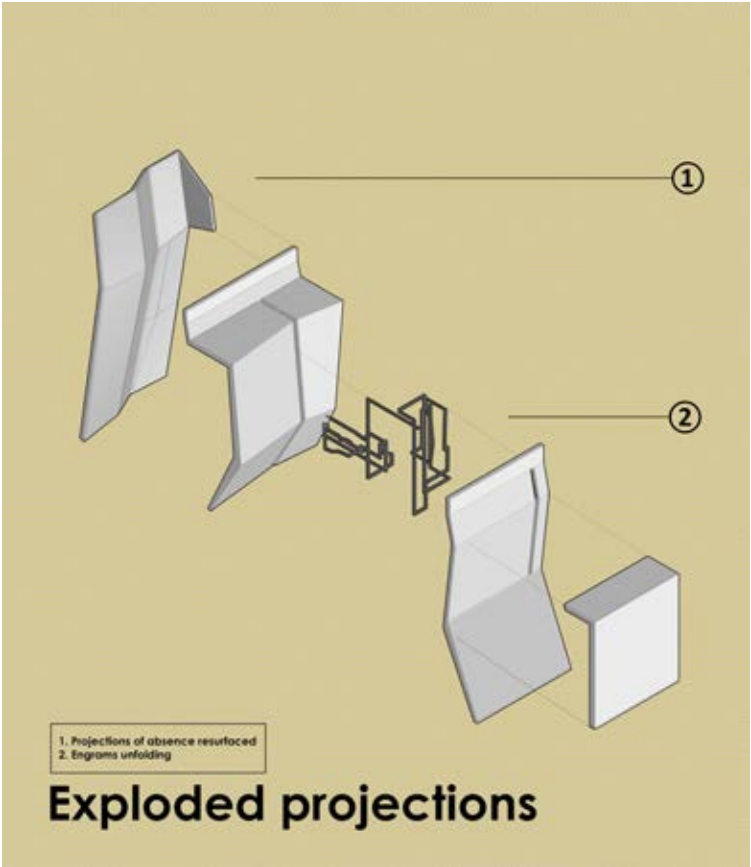
And lastly, we have the engrams unfolding within its new context. It begins to have a conversation with the lens it occupies. And is then projected onto the ground as an index.

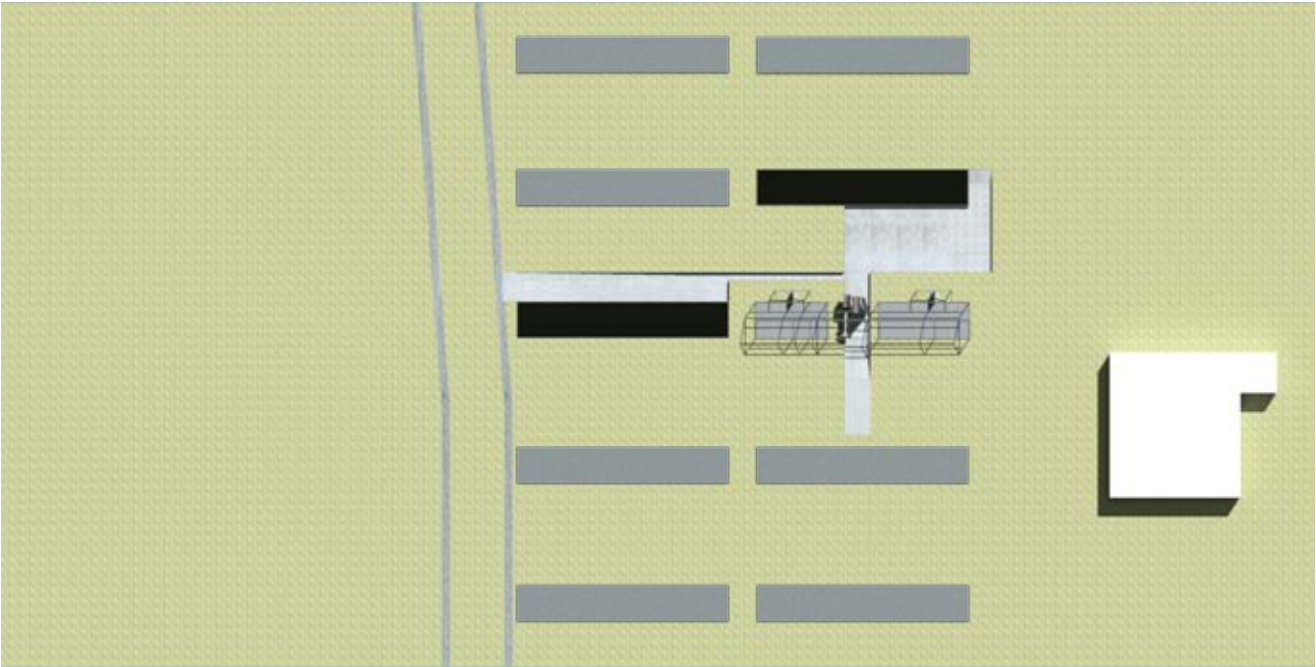
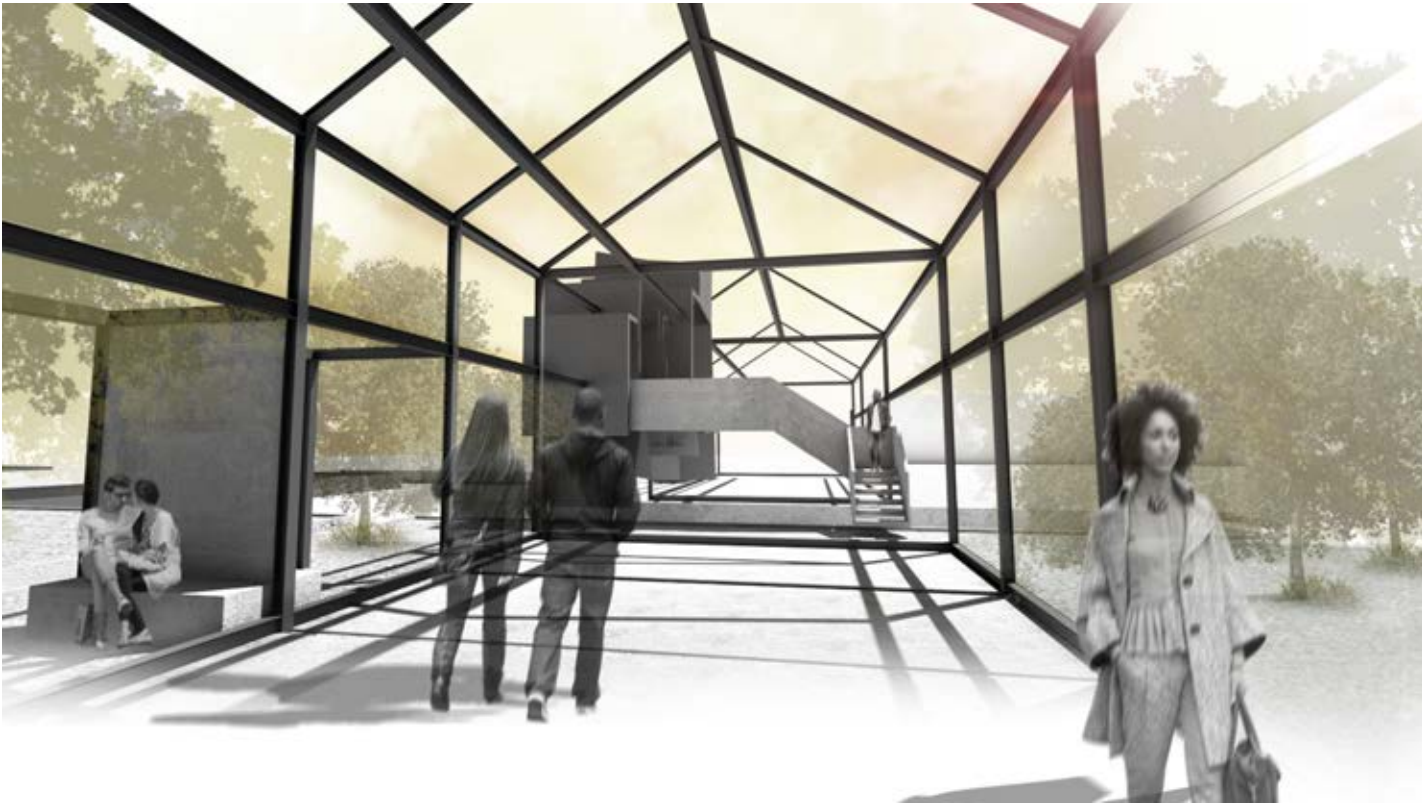
12.) Elevations.... Keep talking

13.) The lens then becomes a threshold into the past. The shadows project on the ground are a trace of history resurfaced to be experienced in a new way. It questions the persistence of memory and though it distorts and skews throughout the day, these memories and identities of the people who lived here, and by extension the people buried In the cemetery will always endure.



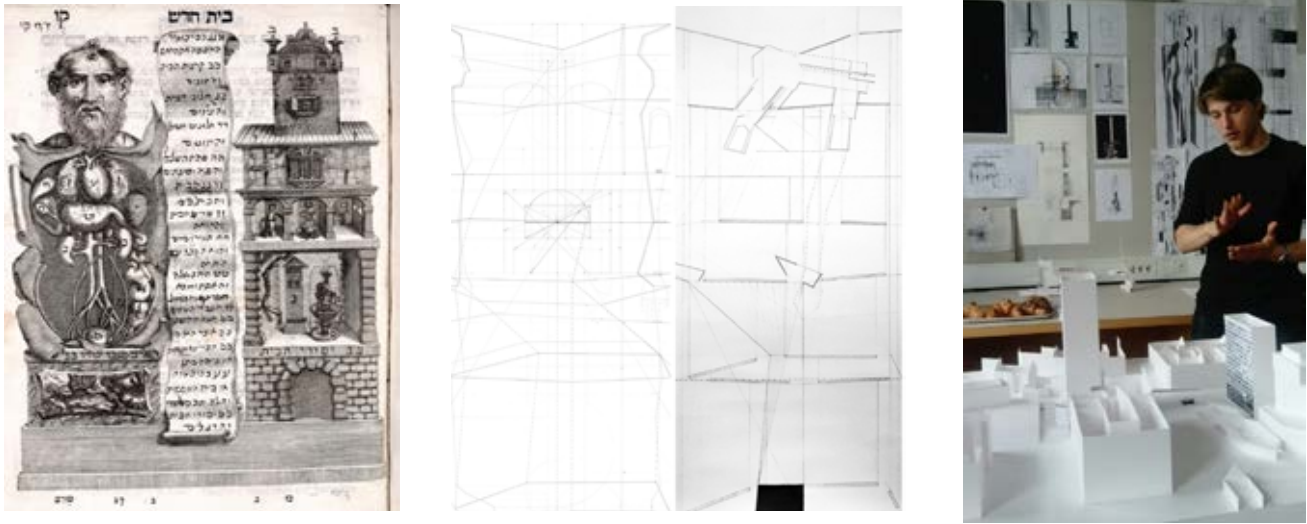
Above and opposite: study models and diagrams





Clockwise from top left: artifactual reliquary and landscape, elevation studies, interior view of artifactual reliquary, site plan, artifactual reliquary and landscape

Joint Design Studio 2022/23: Robinson



these analytical processes will then be used to consider tectonic spatial constructions – an architecture of the body.

Spring Semester

The spring semester will in part revisit ideas from the fall semester to design a programmed vertical intervention within the context of Ljubljana.

As a part of the studio, you will be given readings and are expected to participate fully in discussions and lectures.

The spring studio will take two excursions that will, among other things, explore contemporary architectural examples discussed in studio. The locations will be discussed.

Paul O Robinson
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Fall Semester Seminar:

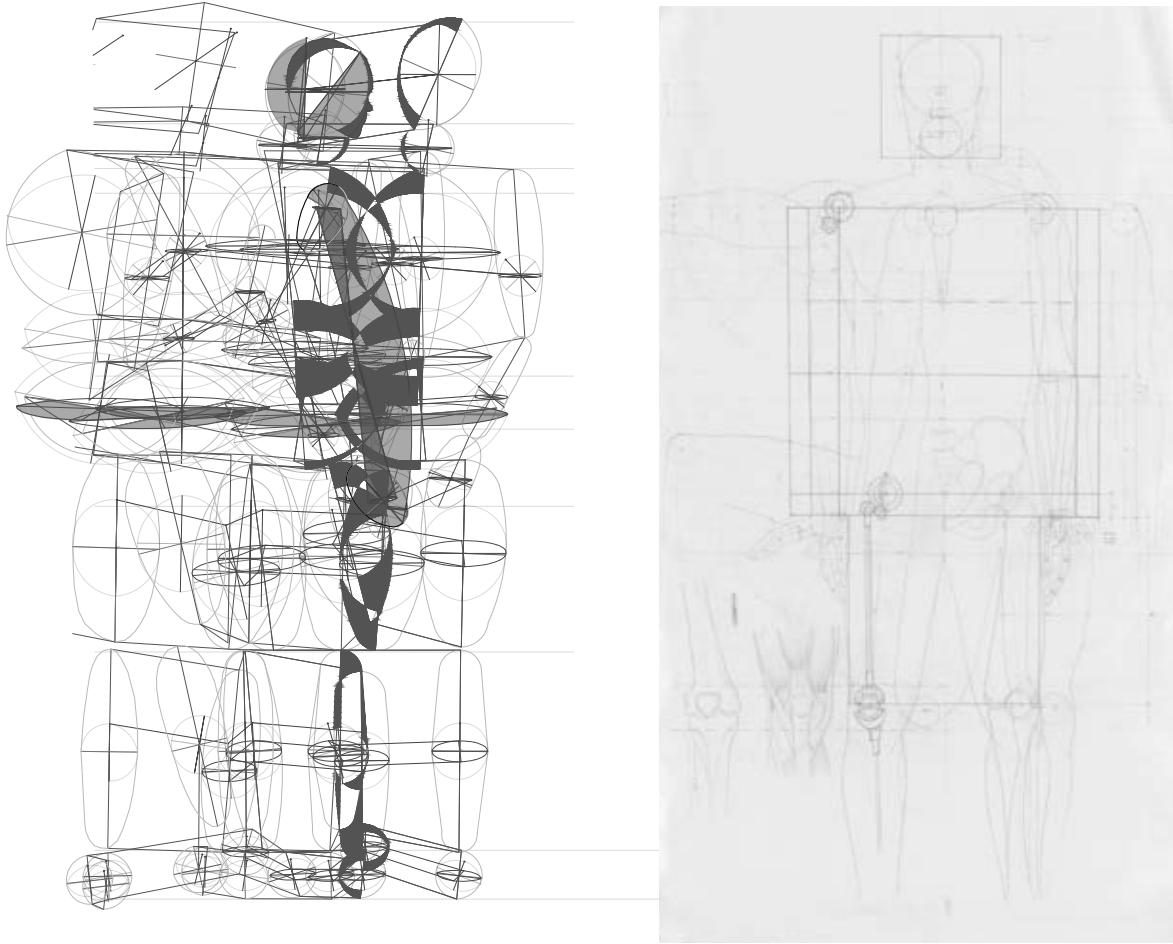
Vertical Bias and the Nexus of the Body Politic

Each day when we arise from sleep (horizontal - generally) we position ourselves within a vertical perspective—a world—defined by our body’s relationship with the phenomena that surrounds us. We often take our uprightness for granted: that we stand, we walk – we suspend ourselves by virtue of gravity and the mechanisms of our inner ear and the seemingly invisible presence of gravity. And as such, our constructed world conforms to the ubiquity and conventions of our body’s vertical performances.

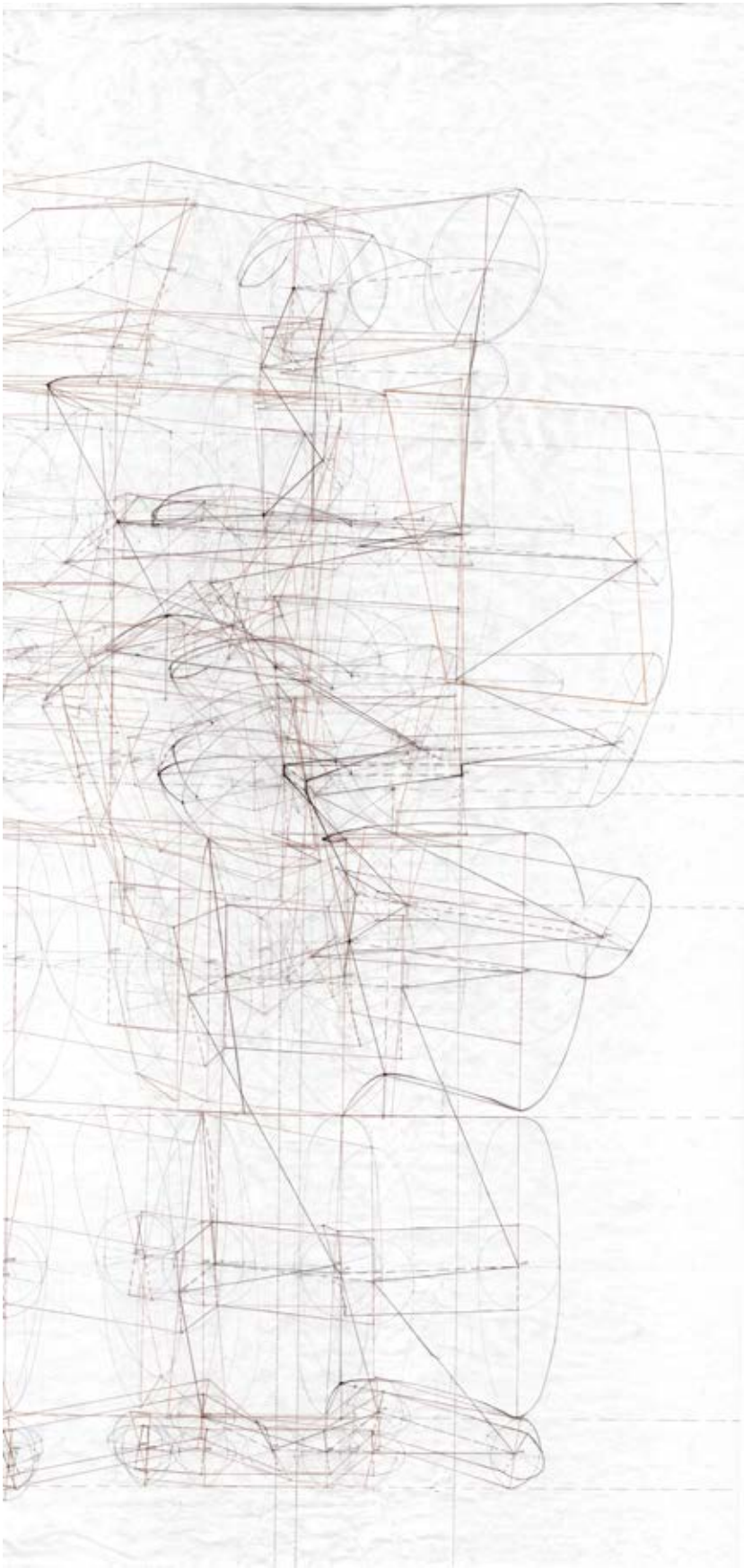
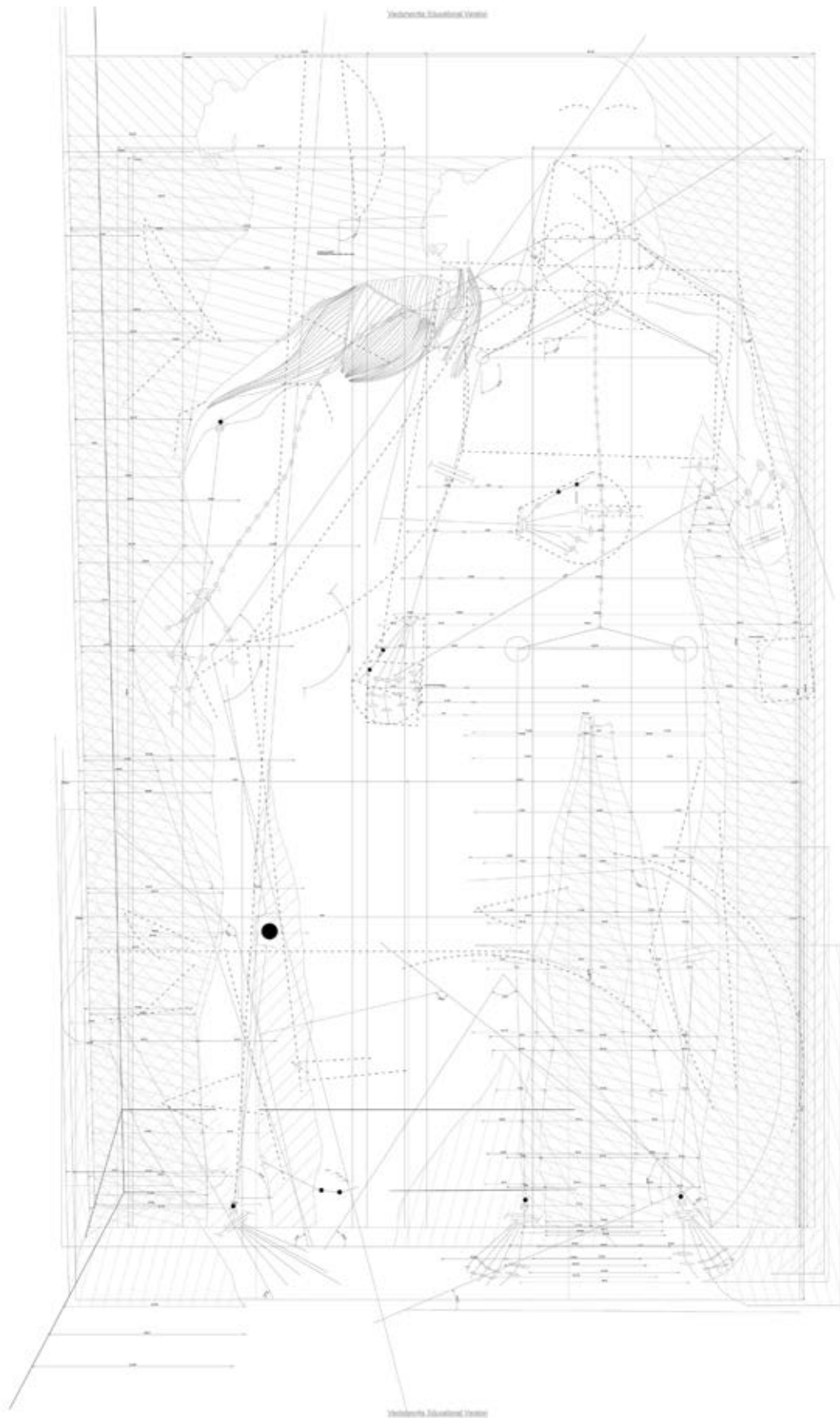
The seminar will first consider the dynamics between the spatial and political consequences of the vertical perspective; it will explore the inexorable relationship of the ‘human’ body to architecture and its contemporaneous dismissal as a means to conceptualize, construct and inhabit architectural space.

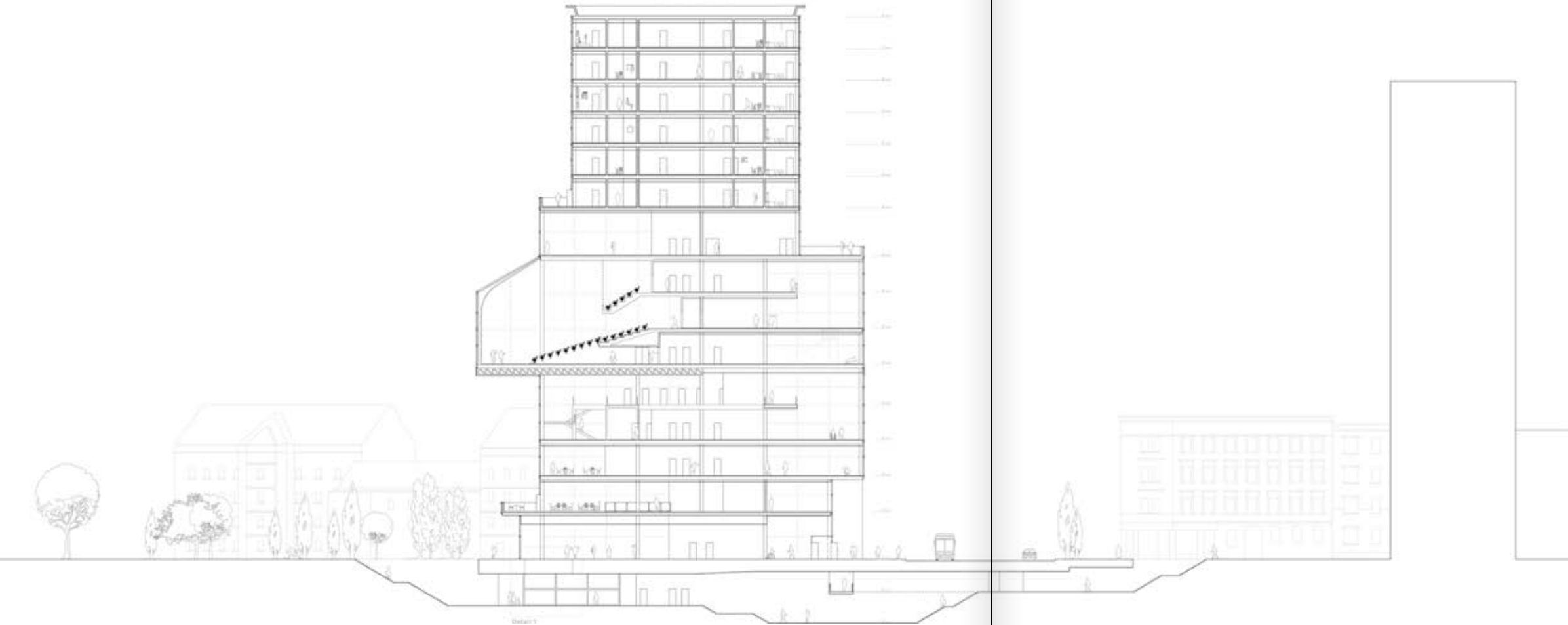
The studio begins with lectures and discussions regarding the role of the body—physically, symbolically, politically—within the manifold conventions used to construct the spaces within which we move and how the body has been commodified and reduced as a vehicle to perceive—and experience—constructed architectural form and space. It will move through notions of drawing and specular analysis; it will present scale as a manifestation of body-actions. You will use drawing as a mode for critically transforming symbolic and operational conditions of the body into a system that can be recalibrated as a tectonic spatial context within which you will select a “site” that will be re-scaled as a place of occupation, in this instance, spaces that will hold five selected works by Edmund De Waal.

The fall semester evolves from roundtable discussions into a dynamic analysis of one’s own body using drawing (hand and digital drawings and models), where one explores the physical structure of the body in relation to space and motion and how the intertwined intersection of vertical and horizontal systems define the way space is experienced. These drawings will be made at full-scale. The ideas derived from



Full-Scale Body Analysis, 200 x 100cm





Artifacts of Evidence / Dokazno gradivo

Artifacts of Evidence is a collective body of site specific two and three-dimensional artworks and the making of a book. The multivalent installation emerges from the material transformation of cultural artifacts and spaces beginning with the use of forensic X-Ray documentation. The spatially interconnected works can be considered processual translations guided by the syntactical relationship between form and narrative content. The radiographic translation between surface (countenance) and subsurface (content) construes the latent currency of evidence as a means to assess the concreteness of experience and re-forms the embodied—intwined—relationship between spatial and narrative structures. The residual evidence of circumstance defines the source material for addressing the politics of transience and art's contemporaneous role in the oft fraught process of abstraction and memorialization.

The work is processed from intensive forensic explorations—a museum, an artifact, a crime scene, a house...a room—using X-Ray technology. The critical X-Ray excites both the inanimate and narrative presences within the spaces and objects it penetrates; it forcibly dismisses superficialities and with controlled technicality illuminates unseen forms and their shadowy structures. The works manifest within the liminal interstice of X-Rays, painting, mold-making and sculpting as haptic experiences and visual forms.

One can refer to the excerpted topical criticism by the theorist, critic and writer Alberto Pérez-Gómez, where he states that the work:

...deliberately acknowledges and leaves behind the dangerous oscillations of art from impressionism to contemporary experimentalism: attempts at depth caught in a metaphysical misstep, or celebrations of the surface that eventually wallow in superficiality. Instead we witness the hopeful unveiling of meaning for embodied sight, beyond the purely retinal: the moment depth becomes surface, and the work presences the enigma which is life, the mind in body or spiritual flesh. Unfathomable and erotic, mysterious and seductive: like the two sides of the penumbra that many centuries ago the insightful Giordano Bruno suggested was the true nature of everything that is, without ever becoming simply "light" or "shadow".

Left Top: Puglia Stone used for Fortuny Hagioscope at Aceto Marmi, Pescara, Italy. Left Bottom: Fortuny Hagioscope mock-up. Right: Exhibition view showing *Gisant*, *Split Threshold* & *Fortuny Hagioscope*





Exhibition View



Exhibition View: *Gisant*, Stone and Cold-Rolled Steel, 200 x 90 x 500cm

Form of Resistance

Trees and Resistance

As a child I was fascinated by the shape of trees, especially the windswept ones that lined the marshes and beaches where I roamed. We called the contorted oaks Scrub Oaks, and then there were the hunch-backed cedars and the two-faced red bay trees; all of them were shaped by acts of resistance to the constancy of the Southeast Tradewinds. Their trunks and limbs—their bodies—overtly expressed the interstice of their internal and external resistance and the resultant potential energy held within. The intercourse between gravity-laden trajectory and wind gave way to trees that were short and twisted...gnarled, and the arched sweep of their limbs and leaves pointed westward, acquiescently bow-ing to the relentlessness of the prevailing winds. The story of their resistance was etched upon their barked surface as evidence made manifest through the reciprocity between interior and exterior forces. Their form was their story.

The trees were a frontline of resistance that gave notice to the two topographical sides of my own story. And when walking upon their exposed roots and climbing within their limbs, I felt a tactile entanglement, a kind of unified betweenness that I shared with the contoured roughness of their forms: an entwinement that embodied the wry indifference of the phenomenal world. This embodiment continues to foster the notion that perceivable forms are a captured interstice of the duality of resistance: the mnemonic trees; a body's countenance, made visible through the interface between DNA and gravity. And gravity – the silent harbinger of specular awareness, indifferent to both matter and emotion, all-the-while surreptitiously promulgating the latent poetry of decay.

Changeability

Both material and nonmaterial forms of resistance change when one part succumbs to another. Pushed beyond the intrinsic ability to resist, the stasis of stored potential energy shifts and re-forms as anarchic resettlements, and as such, forms change. Michel Deguy's timberline, too, despite the stoicism of its figurants, eventually forms hesitant correspondences: at the Timberline temporal displacements confound one's memory of place to the point of disorientation: symphyctic topographies—the familiar joints connecting two sides—become fractured...unknowable.

Superficies

Superficies are the observable countenance of the duality of resistance: the causal appearance or projection of counteractive forces that are most often defined by internal content. Yet the poet Joseph Brodsky notes that “surfaces—

which is what the eye registers first—are often more telling than their contents, which are provisional by definition, except, of course in the afterlife”. Brodsky suggests that the relationship between content and surface, and perhaps more importantly the distances between, are dialectically co-dependent, correspondent and liminal.

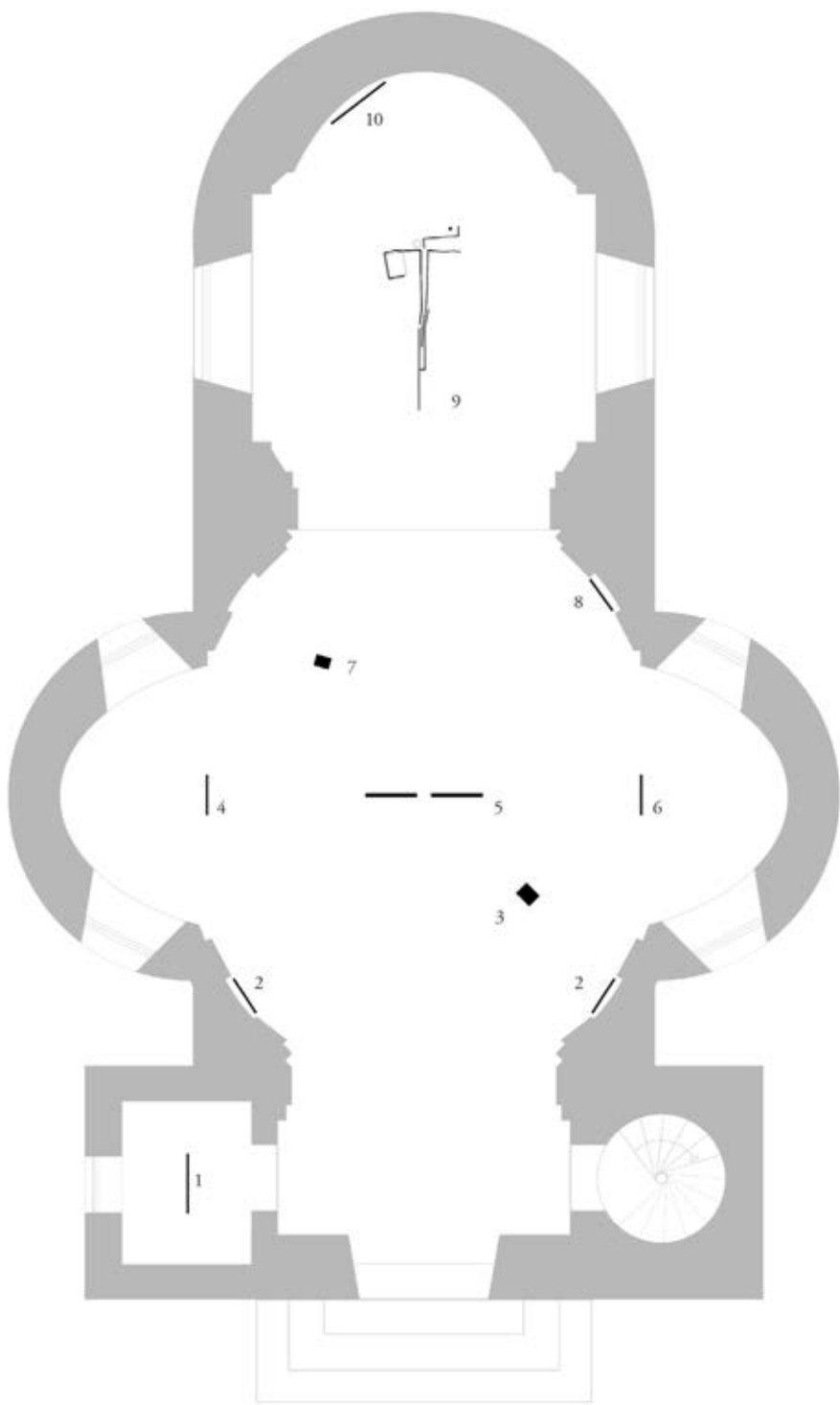
Walls, Doors and The Church of the Holy Spirit (Cerkev Svetega Duha):

The exhibition Form of Resistance uses archetypal forms whose narratives have typically become mundane – a door, a wall...even a religious figure. The penetrative X-ray dismisses external references and reversibly reveals the spatial form of its presence freed from the unconscious biases ingrained by their ubiquity.

One can say that the biases of superficial perception predicates acts of consecration (buildings, places, lovers, objects of desire); for example, the perception of the church form is in itself the “embodiment” of a system of beliefs that have been accepted (even outside of the particular belief system) and experientially normalized; hence, the form of the church gradually becomes deconsecrated by virtue of its ubiquity and distanced from its representational—consecrated—origins. This is also true for the building-as-body's syntactical elements—doors (liminal thresholds), windows (portals for light and the framed view) and walls (the form that is the embodied interstice between the inherent perils of the exterior world and the safe-haven provided by the interior spaces of the infused material body).

The subjects of the installation have been distanced and transformed by way of the X-Ray's penetrative technology. If consecration is the act of giving form—a building's embodiments—meaning beyond the material, then the X-Ray is a mode of releasing—through acts of resistance—the “core” syntactical evidence of that form.

Paul O Robinson
Ljubljana, July 2022

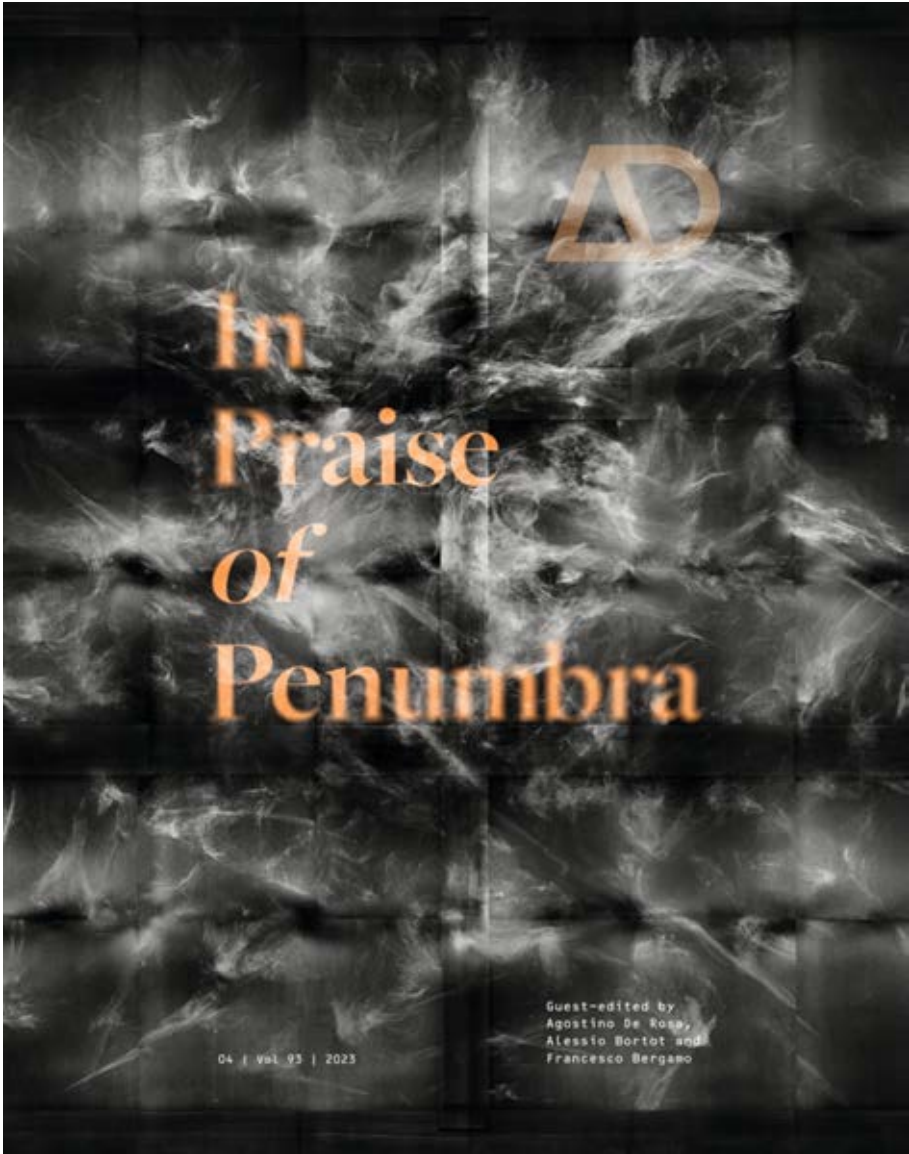
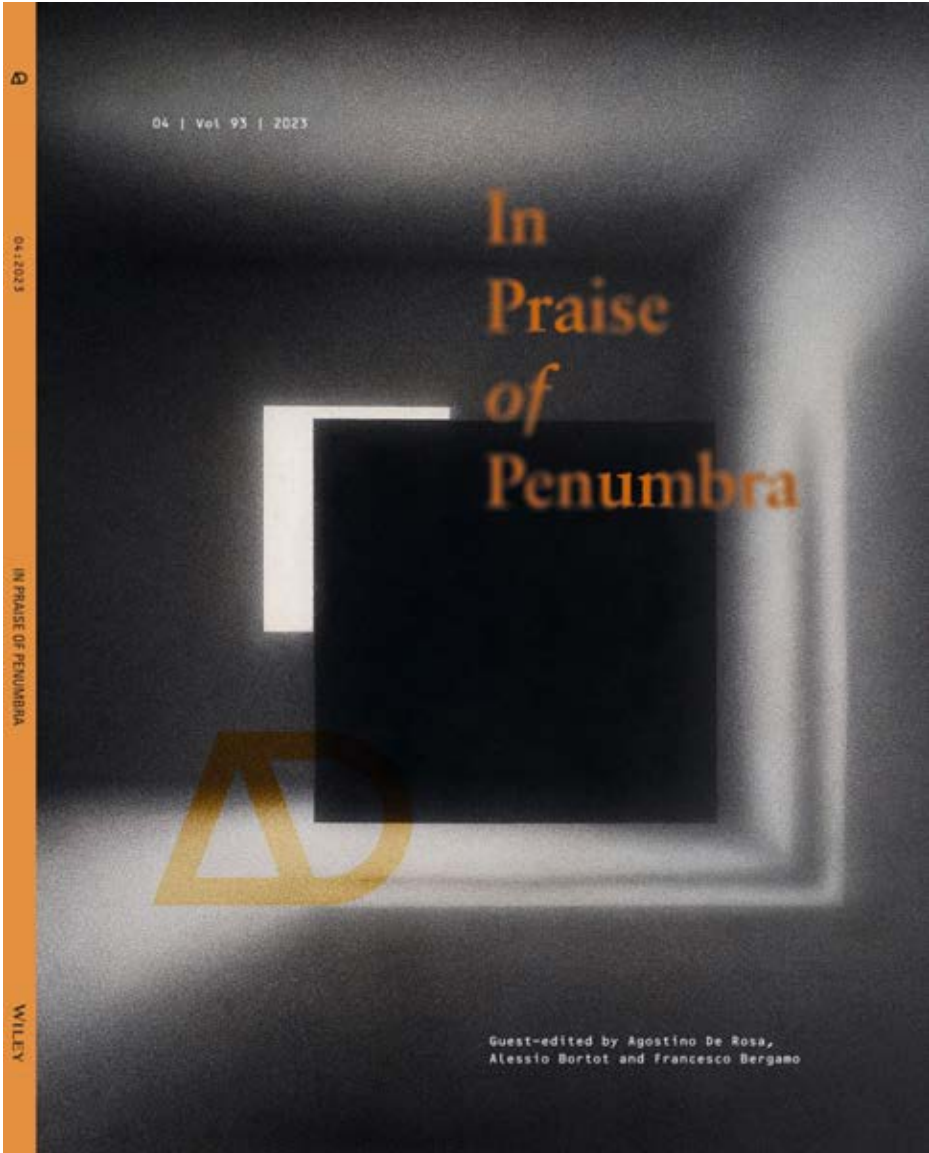


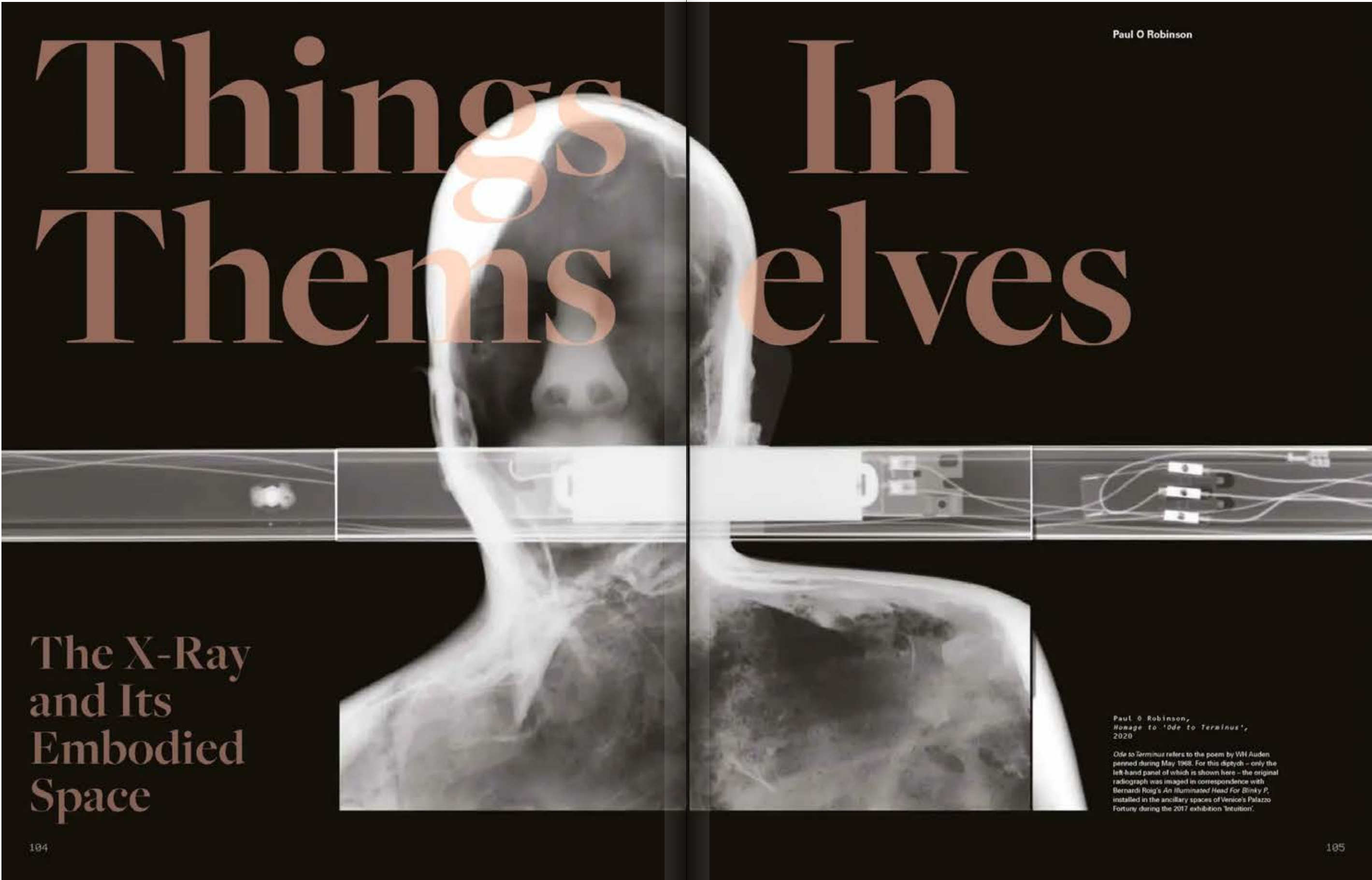
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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Crime Scene | 6. Untitled |
| 2. Homage to Angelus Novus. Diptych | 7. Stele: Fortuny Hagioscope |
| 3. 33 Knjig/33 Books | 8. Fortuny Squint |
| 4. Untitled | 9. Antepurgatorio |
| 5. Stele: Door Reprise | 10. Limen |



Left & Right: Exhibition views







Paul O Robinson

Things In Themselves

The X-Ray
and Its
Embodied
Space

Paul O Robinson,
Homage to 'Ode to Terminus',
2020

Ode to Terminus refers to the poem by WH Auden penned during May 1968. For this diptych – only the left-hand panel of which is shown here – the original radiograph was imaged in correspondence with Bernardi Roig's *An Illuminated Head For Blinky P.*, installed in the ancillary spaces of Venice's Palazzo Fortuny during the 2017 exhibition 'Intuition'.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the development of the x-ray and new-found visions of the interior of bodies inspired artists including Marcel Duchamp. Visual artist and architect Paul O Robinson explores these 'bones and organs' in a contemporary context, artistically exploiting the shadowy, invisible world of interiority, visible exterior form and the strange correspondence between them in a variety of situations and material manifestations.

And are we here,
perhaps, merely to say: *house, bridge, fountain,*
gate, jar, fruit tree, window – at most,
pillar, tower? But to say them, you understand –
to say them in such a way that even the things
themselves never hoped to exist so intensely.
— Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Duino Elegies*, 1922¹

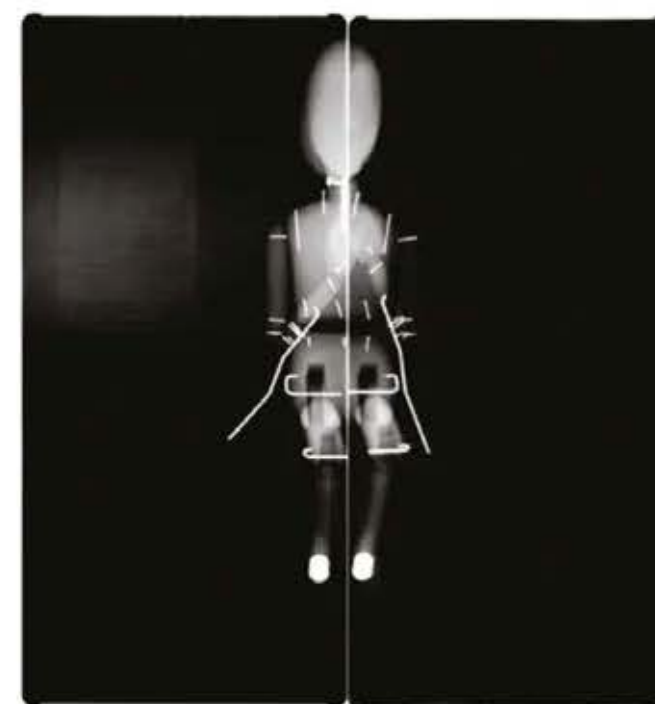
This article emerges from a body of work that uses forensic X-ray technology to induce correspondences between spaces, their constituent artefacts and their entwined narrative structures. The enfoldment of indexical castings (the X-ray image) with narratives derived from selected contexts initiates manifold processual modes leading to the manifestation of *embodied forms*. The work also explores a personal resistance against the prevalent tendency to exclude narrative content from the syntax of architectural/visual form.

The title is loosely derived from construed readings concerning the nature of things in themselves as presented in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781): the readings, readings against the work, and those confronting it, maintain a presence within both constructs and productional processes.² The work's processual trajectory and outcomes do not necessarily presume to reveal an object's thingness outside of self-referential processes; if anything, they proffer potential disruptions in assumed hierarchical directives towards the assessment – the reading of – the object at hand (and a nod towards circular processes). Notions of things in themselves gradually emerged through process rather than arriving as an a-priori preface to the work.

A Question of Content

At the time this work began, I was revisiting the marginalia in two books by Joseph Brodsky: *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (1986)³ and his Venetian memoir *Watermark* (1992).⁴ *Watermark* awakened latent questions regarding hierarchical assessments of surface and its connection to generative content (a core architectural problem), where he alludes to content's spuriousness and notes that 'Surfaces – which is what the eye registers first – are often more telling than their contents, which are provisional by definition, except, of course, in the afterlife'; and passages from *Less Than One* augmented a desire to integrate narrative content within the work's productional processes, particularly elucidated in Brodsky's description of a late-night-walk along the Neva River in St Petersburg, where he effectively renders surfaces – in this instance façades – a palimpsestic narrative excavated by his lucid, history-fuelled imagination.

One can logically conclude that Brodsky's notion of afterlife is connected to the finiteness of death, but his usage remains curious, as the finite could potentially close the door leading to any reassessment of content as a harbinger of origins and/or analogy, the very thing he addresses – the excavation of embedded origins – in *Less Than One*. For Brodsky, 'after-life' presciently presupposes those metaphors prompting liminal transferences, and as such, at least in terms of surface's provisional relation to content, he repositions the 'after' as an ontological preface forecasting the imagination's penetration of the finite, where the conventional modes of visual archaeology are necessarily challenged and reordered.



Paul O Robinson,
Homage to Angelus Novus,
2017

One panel of a diptych comprising a composite X-ray of a wooden figure over a hybrid oil painting. Due to variations in material density, the internal armature is visually located in the foreground, and the outer figure in the background. The figure's projection – being pushed forward into the future while facing the past (staring at the observer) – is analogous to Walter Benjamin's interpretation of Paul Klee's 1920 monoprint *Angelus Novus*, found in the ninth thesis of his 1940 essay 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'.

His words level a critique of content as the sole arbiter of truth and hence they question the efficacy of surface's – and form's – perceived morphology; as Brodsky alludes, one tends to rely on the linear myopia of the eye's expertise – its frontality – to order and then recount the layers of experience. Brodsky's peripatetical descriptions, however, are analogical, oblique, multifarious and suggest a less hierarchical arrangement of amalgamates serving to animate surface's *provisional* relation to content: those things less overt and marginal, even things 'unseen' and dependent on the poet's transformative prowess of analogy to shape surface. The poet's penetrative voice emerges as a catalyst to contemplate alternative tools for exploring the ways and means that entwine narrative content with its artefactual evidence – key constituents in the material formation of this work. The undercurrent of Brodsky's passages harbours a resonant spirit of melancholy, a kind of betwixt-and-between melancholy that buoys a practice questioning formalism's hubris and power of persuasion.

Penumbra Form

X-ray is there only momentarily to distance the reality of the object. The eidetic intensity of the work is not because of a phenomenological reduction, bracketing, that yields essences. It is there because the meticulous calibrations of each iteration altogether form a space of ordering that consciously discontinues the object while constantly referring back to it.

— Levent Kara, 'Not from Scratch, the Sweet Moment of Discontinuity', 2015⁵

Penumbra space is an inherent byproduct within the processes leading to both two- and three-dimensional works; perhaps by technical default, it is an intrinsic referent that interstitially holds – discontinuing and referring back to – space, and has a syntactical role in the narration of site-specific installations. Penumbra is conventionally understood as the luminous aura formed at the boundaries of the umbra – the form of absolute darkness – as projected by a source or sources; conversely, penumbra, as considered in the work, is not formed by boundaries, but rather via an indexing of electromagnetic energy – the radiant source – passing *within and through* the form of matter. Radiographic penumbras are visual artefacts shaped by the correspondences between variations of content, and as such this array of captured penumbral evidence can be reformed by alternative, at times anonymous, contextual narratives.

The X-ray Image, Form and Resistance

An X-ray *image* is a visual form of resistance that becomes manifest by way of the focused projection of photons upon an object whose shape and thickness determine a visual presence of manifold resistances. One can consider the X-ray image an indexical artefact of entwined causal resistances.

The X-ray is a controllable yet violent interloper. As the pulsating radioactive particles pass through a material, the material's molecular structure resists the onslaught; cellular associations are then shuffled and, depending on compositional form and density, the traversing photons cast a graded history of its path of least resistance upon sensitised film or directly, through digital mediums, as an image.

The X-ray beam is conical, and as such the resulting image can be construed as an infinite series of oblique sections; the broader the conical projection (as determined by the X-ray source's power and distance from the object²), the more distorted the image will be. In effect, the X-ray image is a series of splayed sectional slices through all the matter in the beam's path. The image is not a visual discourse on flatness; rather, it is a layered topography, a shadowy representation of interiority recomposed as surface – a spatial casting of the material content that animates surface.

The penumbral interstice between light and dark, shadow and surface is content; content forcibly sliced from the superficialities defining an object's protective carapace; content transposed and reformed by way of causal resistances, *form reforming form*, the mould to the moulded – betwixt.

In this sense the X-ray image presents a strange form of stereotomic transference, yet rather than borne via linear projection – lines geometrically projected upon surfaces – the invisible beam proffers an energy that embodies the strengths, weaknesses, fissures, breakages and blockages within the object, and as such the X-ray beam's terminus does not present a complete narrative; it projects an incomplete, at times inexplicable aura in the form of an image as embodied content. It offers only hints to its origins, which in turn incites transmogrifications and the intercourse of the spurious with the real; there is a deep quietude harbouring the potential for speculative appropriations and the machinations of abstraction. Penetrative incisions upon any surface, any *body*, are a type of violation, a violation of privacy, ownership, authorship and intentions – not only physical, but those incisional glances proffered by the focused voyeurism of the detached eye in want of something more.

Paul O Robinson,
Fortuny Wall Squint,
X-Ray sequence,
2018/2022

Radiographs of settlement fissures in stone walls separating private and public spaces in the Palazzo Fortuny. 'Squint' is the colloquial for hagnoscope – typically an oblique splayed opening/incision in the wall (interior or exterior) of a church enabling worshippers to view the altar (from *hagio* (saint) + *scope* (viewing instrument)).



Paul O Robinson,
Untitled Penumbrae,
2017

The X-ray was imaged in correspondence with Claudine Drai's *Untitled*, 2016, during the 2017 exhibition 'Intuition' at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy.

Paul O Robinson,
Squint Stele,
'Form of Resistance' exhibition,
Galerija Krško,
Krško, Slovenia,
2022

Made of Masiella stone and cold-rolled steel, *Squint Stele* is a material translation of *Fortuny Wall Squint*. The installation image shows its vertical correspondence with the ceiling at the Galerija Krško – the 19th-century former Church of the Holy Spirit in Krško, Slovenia, which was deconsecrated shortly before the Second World War.



Paul O Robinson,
Unpropped,
A Book for R Serra,
page 4 of 10,
2019

X-ray of a layered encaustic oil painting over an original X-ray used to initiate processes leading to three-dimensional enfolded reliquaries.

Embodiments

[In the work] we witness the hopeful unveiling of meaning for embodied sight, beyond the purely retinal: the moment depth becomes surface, ... like the two sides of the penumbra that many centuries ago the insightful Giordano Bruno suggested was the true nature of everything that is, without ever becoming simply 'light' or 'shadow'.

— Alberto Pérez-Gómez, in 'Site Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny', 2019⁷

In the above, two-sidedness implies that neither side can manifest as a totality, as each side is generatively codependent on the correspondence between each other and therefore forms a material/immaterial interstice held in a constant state of becoming. Penumbra is the embodied form of this correspondence, of potentiality, of becoming, and via this 'neither/or' condition the *thing – that is – in itself* unfolds into the vastness of the unknowable and within the realm of poesis. And herein lies the ephemeral space born of anticipation. Like that of the uncertainty felt while waiting for the dreamed response from a loved one, time is a conditional factor within the liminal threshold of becoming that introduces experience to the imagination.

Each installation emerges from the material transformation of evidence – a museum, an artefact, a crime scene, a house ... a room – initiated by forensic X-ray documentation. The X-ray is the processual point of departure and initiates an unscripted material exploration defining the tectonic language of embodied forms. The works are spatially interconnected by the syntactical relationship between the subject space, its artefacts and narrative content, where the radiographic inversion of surface (countenance) and subsurface (content) construes the latent currency of evidence and unwittingly addresses the oft fraught processes of abstraction and memorialisation – the *after-life*.



Paul O Robinson,
'Form of Resistance'
exhibition,
Galerija Krško,
Krško, Slovenia,
2022

Exhibition view showing layered
correspondences between
original X-Rays, enfolded
reliquaries and the gallery space.



Paul O Robinson with Maja Licul,
'Artifacts of Evidence' exhibition,
Galerija Kresija,
Ljubljana, Slovenia,
2022

Partial installation view showing pieces from work
done in the house and atelier of Jola Plečnik,
in particular the enfolded reliquary *Recumbent*
(2015/2022) – made of high-density mould foam,
cold-rolled steel and oak and measuring 180 by
100 by 350 centimetres (71 by 39 by 138 inches).



The space not only participates
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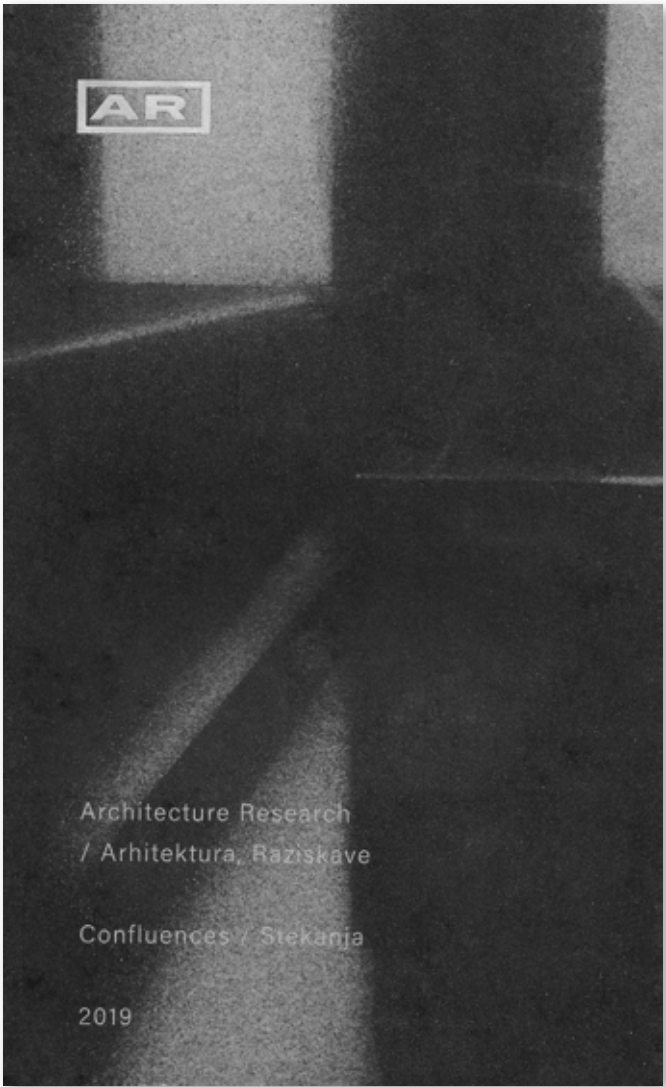
The multivalent pieces – radiographs, paintings, talismanic sculptures – are interdependent enfolded amalgams in constant correspondence with each other and where one's experience of the work is defined through obliquely layered associations. The organisation of each installation is formed by the parallaxic relationship between the works and the spaces that hold them. The space not only participates in the morphological character of the installation, but in many cases also becomes part of the work's processual narrative – its making. The space is considered an embodied form within which the preternatural pieces conjoin; it is not thought of separately or a place where objects are 'brought to', but as an interlocutor, where the movement of the observer animates reformed narrative structures as an entwined haptic experience.

There are many influences that reach as deeply into the body of this work as the writings of Brodsky, and I could have picked any one of them to begin this essay, in particular the French poet and translator Michel Deguy and his *Recumbents* (2005);⁸ Marco Frascari and his *Monsters of Architecture* (1991);⁹ the Austrian architect and artist Walter Pichler with his houses; or the architect, artist and educator John Hejduk, who reinforced the potential for narrative as a harbinger of form and structure. These influences are not mentioned as a post-facto courtesy; their imaginations contemporaneously encircle and permeate the work while continuing to induce fundamental questions regarding the entwinements through which art and architecture emerge. ▢

Notes

1. Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Elegy Nine' (1922), in *The Duino Elegies*, tr. Gary Mizansky, Tavern Books (Portland, OR), 2013, p. 11.
2. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), tr. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge), 1998.
3. Joseph Brodsky, 'Less Than One', in *Less Than One: Selected Essays*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986, pp. 4 and 5.
4. Joseph Brodsky, *Watermark*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York), 1992, p. 21.
5. Levont Kara, 'Not from Scratch, the Sweet Moment of Discontinuity', in *Paul O Robinson – Form of Absence: Radiographs/Paintings/Reliquaries, Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida Tampa* (Tampa, FL), 2015, pp. 75–7.
6. See 'XR200' product page on Golden Engineering website: www.goldenengineering.com/products/xr200.
7. Alberto Pérez Gómez in 'Sue Castings: Entwinements in Palazzo Fortuny', *Veiper 1* (Autumn/Winter 2019): *Supervision*, pp. 14–29 at p. 29.
8. Michel Deguy, *Recumbents*, tr. Wilson Baldridge, Wesleyan University Press (Middletown, CT), 2005.
9. Marco Frascari, *Monsters of Architecture: Anthropomorphism in Architectural Theory*, Rowman & Littlefield (Savage, MD), 1991.

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