Writing Place

journal issue #1

Literary Methods in Architectural Education

nai010publishers

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CONTENT

Writingplace

Preface

The Writingplace journal marks a next step in the exploration of the relationship between architecture and literature by the Writingplace collective: an explorative journey that started in 2011. After the launch of the online platform *Writingplace laboratory for architecture and literature*, the informal group initiated by students and teachers at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) evolved into an international network that organized the international Writingplace conference on literary methods in architectural research and design in 2013 and published the book *Writingplace: Investigations in Architecture and Literature* in 2016. The Writingplace journal is an open-access e-journal, published by nai010 publishers and TUDelft Open. Launched in 2018, it is the first peer-reviewed, international journal on architecture and literature. It acts as a vehicle for the Writingplace platform to continue its exchange of knowledge on the relationship between architecture and literature and to address and promote alternative ways of looking at and designing architecture, urban places and landscapes through literary methods. By acknowledging the possibilities of literature as a field of academic research, able to explore architectural imaginations, Writingplace hopes to establish a common ground to further investigate the productive connections between architecture and literature, or a place to engage in writing.

The journal presents thematic issues, which, while always centred around the productive relationship between architecture and literature, range from pedagogy, spatial analysis and critical theory to artistic practices, individual buildings, landscape and urban design. Next to academic articles the journal is open to accounts of experiments in education and works of design or spatial analysis in which literary tools have been explored.

All material submitted to the Writingplace journal is subject to a peer-review process. We welcome contributions from all over the world and invite authors, architects, educators, (PhD) students and those who generally deal with spatial design, analysis and/or literature to submit abstracts and proposals for contribution.

This journal has been made possible by financial support from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), in the form of a KIEM grant to set up the infrastructure and to publish the first two editions of the journal. We are thankful for the support of TUDelft Open and Frank van der Hoeven of 100% Research at TU Delft in particular for creating the online environment in which this project is accessible. Further, our gratitude goes to Marcel Witvoet of nai010 publishers for supporting and contributing to the initiative, to D'Laine Camp for the English copy editing, to Sanne Dijkstra for the graphic design of both the journal and the website and to Mike Schäfer for the practical and organizational assistance to the entire project. The Department of Architecture of TU Delft and the Faculty of Architecture of RWTH Aachen University have supported the initiative both in terms of their critical reflections and in terms of the time granted to their staff to work on this endeavour as authors, editors or reviewers. We express our sincere thanks to the academic committee for their critical reflections and to all of the authors and reviewers who contributed to this issue. Finally we thank you, as readers, for taking an interest in this journal and the topic of architecture and literature. Without your interest and support our exploration would have never attained this stage.

EDITORIAL

Klaske Havik, Davide Perrotoni and Mark Proosten

Literary Methods in Architectural Education

The topic of the journal's first issue, Literary Methods in Architectural Education, derived from our observation that many of the contributors to the 2013 Writingplace conference shared a particular practice: that of architectural education. Realizing that many scholars interested in the crossovers between architecture and literature find room to experiment, particularly in the environment of seminars and studios, we decided to dedicate the first issue of the Writingplace journal to this topic, in the hope of creating an international dialogue upon the topic of architecture and literature within the space of architectural education.

Too often, architectural education is based on problem solving, emphasizing issues of programme, formal composition and the rendering of stylistic images. Seeking to introduce other perspectives of architectural education, this journal issue explores the potential of literary methods to emphasize more experiential aspects of architecture and to investigate how literature can engage the power of imagination to conceive and analyse spatial futures. Literary language, in its many forms and applications, has the capacity to depict the multifaceted nature of lived space. From the values and meanings of myths to the hermeneutic illumination of a poem, literature allows us to grasp and express many values of space that go well beyond its positivistic representation and analysis. Would, by extension, a literary approach to architectural education teach students to explore their own sensitivity and creativity towards such ambiguous, multifaceted aspects of architecture? In which ways do literary modes of observation allow for a more focused and perceptive 'reading' of places and buildings? How could narratives and scenarios provide ways to develop possible new situations? Could creative writing exercises provide a way to engage the creativity of the designer in a different and fruitful way, a way to sketch by writing?

This journal issue intends to create a common platform to gather the many different possibilities offered by literature in our field and to give them space for discussion and diffusion. From academic research to pedagogical reflections and experimental student work, it offers a peek into the multifaceted relationship between architecture, in its wider meaning, and literature, and opens up perspectives as to how this relationship can be productive in architectural education.

This first issue opens with two articles that explore the ways in which literary influences have shaped the curriculum at two remarkable architecture schools: the School of Porto and the School of Valparaiso. Located at the periphery of the Western and Anglo-Saxon axis that is often dominant in architectural discourse, these two articles expand the discussion into different linguistic regions, while presenting insights into the key figures and developments of a poetry-influenced curriculum. Bruno Gil's article on the School of Porto (Escola Superior de Belas-Artes do Porto) provides an underlying cultural theory for the education of a generation of Portuguese architects, among them Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura. By focusing on the transition from fine arts school to university, and the written accounts of two key-figures, Fernando Távora and Alexandre Alves Costa, the author explores the intrinsic role of literature in architectural education in Porto.

In the second article, Óscar Andrade focuses on the Valparaíso School of Architecture in Chile. Here, the combination of word and action, and specifically what is called the Poetic Act as an origin of every process of building, is key to the school's educational approach. By providing insight into the teaching methods of professor and poet Godofredo Iommi, Andrade sheds light on the presence of poetry, the artistic production and the academic structures within the school.

The first section of this issue ends with an article by Willem de Bruijn that expands on the idea of the school as a place of experimentation; it introduces the notion of alchemy to reflect upon the laboratory as the workplace that historically accommodates experiments and proposes a particular connection between literature and science. With the introduction of laboratories, both within and outside the academic institutions, such as those of Walter Gropius in the early years of the Bauhaus, or today's 'Writing Labs' set up at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, argues de Bruijn, educators explore the boundaries and sources to investigate alternative ways of looking at architecture.

This reflection on the laboratory as a space of experiment with architecture and text opens the floor for the second part of the journal, a series of articles on recent projects in architectural education. Ranging from bachelor's degrees to master studios and PhD workshops, and from Canada to South Africa and Europe, these articles present current pedagogical experiments that, each in a different way, introduce literary methods to explore new directions in architecture. Architecture, and the studio design assignment in particular, involves the challenging double task of interpreting a multiplicity of forces – tangible, objective, implicit, subjective – and to organize them in a coherent result through the tools available to the designer. Anca Matyiku argues and demonstrates in her paper how literature and storytelling can play a decisive role in this interpretative task, by discussing an exploratory design project structured around the prototypical figure of the ancient Greek architect Daedalus. Through a series of exercises that required students to translate between tactile and literary mediums, it asked the students to concentrate on 'building' as a verb rather than a noun, an action rather than an object. The contribution by Christos Kakalis and Stella Mygdali discusses the roles of narrative and performance in a series of workshops in Athens and Edinburgh exploring notions such as urban emptiness and silence. In enhancing new techniques and methods, Angeliki Sioli's paper introduces the act of collecting words as a fruitful way of exploring the urban environ-

ment that opens unforeseen avenues. These words formed the poetic geography in which the students, through the use of different literary techniques, then continued their designs. By explicitly introducing these techniques, Sioli's students worked within a linguistic design process that is characterized by three stages: the collecting, the writing and the oral presentations.
Stephen Steyn and Sumayya Vally introduce us to dream readings and discuss how the condensation of dreams has an analogy in design, which can create new and remarkable readings of inglorious heritage sites throughout South Africa. Their students have been engaged in developing a new language that can expresses possibilities and that can go beyond the limitations of current political imagination.
While the examples of Steyn and Vally show the works of students who are quite advanced in their work and are challenged to take a political stance through their projects, we might wonder if literary methods are also applicable at the bachelor's degree level. The contribution of Mark Proosten and Katrin Recker had the ambition of teaching bachelor's degree students the understanding necessary to handle a relatively small architectural design project from concept to detail by introducing a fictive character in an imaginary place. Taking the character of a lighthouse keeper and a series of unique, remote islands as the two main starting points for the projects, students had to imagine their own narrative framework to develop the local, climatological and social conditions of their designs.

The third and final section of this issue presents individual projects in which students worked with literary methods and techniques. The tools applied vary from analytical and creative writing to study urban locations in Bogotá to poetry and comic strips that trigger the design of such varying programs such as a comics museum in Tampere, Finland, a series of three libraries in the Italian Alps and a sequence of follies scattered throughout the Scottish Isle of Islay. These master projects close this journal issue as testimony of the possible applications of the literary approach advocated in many different ways throughout the journal.

As most of the authors in this journal issue argue, literature can provide many new insights and tools into architectural pedagogy, from the ways in which it influences the whole educational philosophy of a particular school to the possibilities it offers to teaching methods in design studios and diploma works. What all presented educational efforts in this issue have in common is that the literary methods they apply open up our approach towards design, and that reinforces the acknowledgment, often taken for granted, that every design is, essentially, an act of imagination.

Many Voices Intertextualities as an Underlying Cultural Theory of 'Escola do Porto'

Bruno Gil

> *I created myself, echo and abyss, by reflecting. I multiplied myself, by going deeply into myself.*[1]

Several pedagogical experiences in architecture bring literary inputs to teaching, through a multidisciplinary curriculum with courses explicitly focusing on these relationships.[2] Other pedagogical scenarios, even if admitting the relevance of literature references into design, have blended these semantic and structural translations implicitly in their teaching processes.

The main goal of this paper is to acknowledge the many voices of an implicit transfer between literature and architecture within a learning scenario at the Escola Superior de Belas-Artes do Porto (Fine Arts School in

Porto) along with practice.[3] Here, a process of modern acculturation was key, while aiming at modernity filtered by the local culture and tradition, and vice versa. One of its essential figures, Fernando Távora (1923-2005), recurrently quoted Fernando Pessoa while sharing his ideas with students. Reflecting on life and architecture, space and the world, Távora's discourse was intuitively pedagogical.
We will recur both to written essays of Fernando Távora and Alexandre Alves Costa and to architectural works by Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura. For the first, we will consider a specific period in the school, when architects had to complete written and designed pieces to become professors, while for the latter we will pick few architectural examples that illustrate the main argument of this paper.

Acculturating Modernity as an Implicit Poetic

An improbable 'third way', understood as a specific synthesis between modern architecture and vernacular tradition, evolved at the Fine Arts School in Porto from the 1950s. The very specific geographical context in a southern peripheral boundary of Europe and the political regime of the dictatorship until 1974 have been considered decisive reasons to understand Portugal as a country that was never really modern. Actually, any local interpretation of the international modern canon was seen as a postmodernity in process. Jorge Figueira claims:

> *We speak of a **perfect periphery**, because in the full sense of a post-modern experience, no longer evaluated with reference to a 'modern' hegemonic centre, Portuguese architecture may finally be greater.*[4]

As a very rooted school working with timeless tools, such as freehand drawing, the Escola do Porto presented itself, conversely, as universal. Through the synthesis of life and practice, considered as a reciprocity between individual and shared experiences, conceptual affinities were reinforced and translated into a collective project: educating and learning through doing.

This approach reached from the idea of permanent modernity of Fernando Távora to Álvaro Siza's reinterpretation of that same modernity. Thus, to be modern was a permanent condition, whenever there was a very clear synchrony between the built work and the social, technological and, mainly, cultural paradigm of its time.
Simultaneously, the complex transition from a Fine Arts school to the so-called Superior Teaching framework translated into a change of the existing institutional structure. For instance, in order to become professors, practising architects had to fulfil theoretical requirements such as completing a theoretical work. Hence, the written theoretical reflections that accompanied the architectural designs – both required as evaluation documents for professorships – constitute, in the Portuguese educational context, a valuable body of architectural thinking. Even though the school started to connect with the centres of the modernist revision, such as CIAM and UIA, where the principles of architectural education were being rethought from the 1950s, architectural education in Portugal was still primarily done through the synthesis of an accumulated experience. And it is this background that invades the above-mentioned pieces of writing, a reflection that exceeded the scale and scope of the contributions of these architects in early small essays, in local newspapers or architectural magazines.

Evoking a Universal Voice

Within the competition for the position of Professor of Architecture in 1962, in which several proposals were presented, Távora wrote 'On the Organization of Space'.[5] This text constituted a universal reflection about space and architecture, imbued by his presence in the last meetings of CIAM in the 1950s, and his travels around the world in 1960. Also, the theoretical reflections by Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, 'The Architect's Social Function', and by João Andresen, 'For a more Human City', revealed a closer and umbilical relationship with the centres of cities. Hence, these essays reflected the central themes discussed in the international realm, and were furthermore crucial in translating a universal and urban approach to more local inter-

pretations resulting from the survey of Portuguese regional architecture, started in 1955 and published in 1961 in the 'Arquitectura Popular em Portugal'.[6]
Striving for pragmatic design situated within a context and dealing with an archaic condition, the School of Porto took a modern position, while the school first and foremost aimed to fulfil a role taking part in the 'evolution of the phenomenon of Architecture and Urbanism'. In 1952, Távora already contended in his fundamental text 'Lesson of Invariants':

> *The phenomenon of Architecture and Urbanism is universal . . . But we can ask, is there any common thing in the evolution of the phenomenon of Architecture and Urbanism? Surely. Three aspects, three invariants seem to us of capital importance: its permanent modernity, the effort of collaboration that it always traduced, its relevance as a conditional element of human life.*[7]

Conversely, the School of Porto happens to be poetic without saying it. In a subjective way, Fernando Távora embedded literature in his learning and teaching, while being highly engaged with everyday experience and practice. Távora integrated in his lifelong learning the writings of Fernando Pessoa, which among others implicitly contributed to the School of Porto. When travelling with his students, Távora frequently read narratives, blending the perception of the Portuguese patrimony with the sound of literature. When visiting the Alcobaça Monastery, he declaimed the Portuguese lyric poet Camões.
In his course 'General Theory on Space Organization' from the 1980s, Távora drew memories from his numerous travels, while mixing words from the more disciplinary books with the ones from the Portuguese poets. Roberto Cremascoli recalls:

> *On the auditorium's stage of the Fine Arts School in Porto . . . [his] travel tales was the whole architecture, the hands of Álvaro, the eyes of Eduardo.*

> *But there was also Porto, all the words of the city, of the poets, Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, Eugénio de Andrade, of many others.*[8]

Nevertheless, Távora blended multiple references within a conservative position to the world. The history of architecture was a broader constituent to his own parochial identity. In this way, intertextuality[9] became an underlying condition, as an expression of memory translated into operative architectural thought and design. Ultimately, this permanent modernity constituted a melancholic approach to rationalism in the School of Porto, essential to reinvent it as a poetic translation of a 'third way' into a 'third voice'.[10]

Educated at the Fine Arts School in Porto between 1949 and 1955, under Távora (with whom he collaborated), Álvaro Siza started to reinvent underlying architectural cultures, within a global and local awareness, most of the times integrating, sometimes denying them in his elaborate and complex translations. Siza expressed a 'third voice', while incorporating distant codes and conventions, inspiring an own poetics and generating an idiosyncratic corpus of cultural intertextualities. In 1980, Alexandre Alves Costa referred to him as the only theoretician and the least formalist of the Portuguese architects,[11] even if Siza reveals that some friends tell him he 'does not have any theoretical support or method. That nothing he does endorses a particular way. . . . A sort of boat that inexplicably does not sink with the waves'.[12] Hence, more than a lack of theory, Siza's words refer in a deeper way to an implicit condition of theory.

Echoing Voices and Memories

In the case of the writings of Alves Costa, educated under Távora in the early 1960s and, from then on, an essential professor and one of the main ideologists of the School of Porto, intertextualities are frequently present. Following the competition for a professor's degree in 1979 – in which Manuel Correia Fernandes, Domingos Tavares, Cristiano Moreira and Pedro Ramalho also enrolled[13] – Alves Costa included in his written essay,

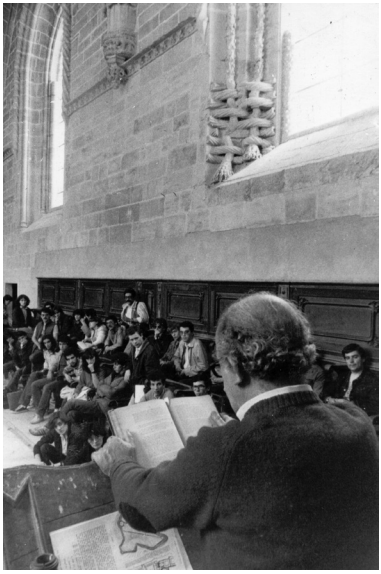

Fig. 1. Fernando Távora reading to students at Convento de Cristo, Tomar, 1982. © Courtesy of the José Marques da Silva Foundation Institute.

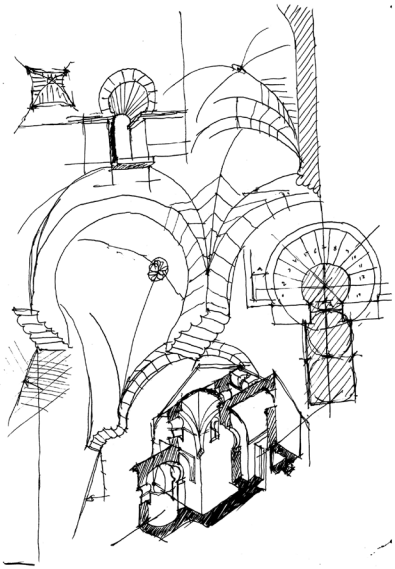

Fig. 2. Student's Travel Sketchbook, História da Arquitectura Portuguesa. © Courtesy of Alexandre Alves Costa.

memories of the Escola Superior de Belas-Artes in Porto, entitling it 'Memoirs of the Calaboose, Sophie's Disasters or Memoirs of a Donkey', evoking the titles of the Countess of Ségur's books. Furthermore, through the text he reinvented narratives, mixing his thoughts with those of Pessoa, Rilke, Pasolini and many others. His work was intentionally intertextual. In the foreword to the essays' new edition in 1982, Siza referred to Alves Costa's use of these cross-references as:

> *The acceptance of the complex field that goes along with the text, the search of methods capable of transforming it, more than in a registration, into a project. . . .*
> *As in a process of architectonic creation, different citations, almost instinctively assembled, to the taste of essential stimuli, are confronted with the increasing information, subject to the coldness or the burning of criticism, again fragmented, then reunited, in the interior of a fleeting reality, momentarily imprisoned.*[14]

What is more striking in Siza's reading of Alves Costa's method is the resemblance to drawing as a reinvention in every line or in every word. A concrete reference, within an abstract gesture, may reinvent the following, as a continuum of discoveries. And it is this intuitive memory, constructed from his own experiences within a collective project while filtering a modern culture, that continues Távora's permanent modernity.
From Alves Costa's early education as an architect, he experienced the emotional interpretation of poetry declamation. From the voices of the artists Manuela Porto and Maria Barroso in the 1940s, Alves Costa listened to poems of the neo-realist Portuguese poets:

> *Now I see, even going from Régio to Sofia, and with the echoes of Rimbaud, to Herberto Helder, I was the adopted son of some neo-realist poets, of João Cochofel, of Joaquim Namorado, of Carlos Oliveira and, mainly, of Gomes Ferreira who supported them.*[15]

Alves Costa refers to his own texts as partial and subjective narratives, and where certainties are scarce, hypotheses are proposed.[16] For Costa, hypotheses are storylines, and architectural research can result in poetry. It is this way of seeing that justifies how he introduces his teaching of a particular subject of 'History of Portuguese Architecture'. Here, he reads built objects as artefacts carrying all history within them, up to the present time. Costa asked his students to experience these artefacts, by travelling and visiting them. By drawing their forms, students were learning history and simultaneously learning about themselves. Ultimately, they were asked to reinvent those artefacts into a contemporary project and, through this, to reactivate their present condition and contemporaneity.
At the same time, Alves Costa connected to Távora's words when he defined the need for the School of Porto to blend practice with theory:

> *There can't be a solid practice without a solid theory. We are tired of being practical, and what we need is people with solid theoretical background. The idea that an architect should be primarily a wonderful pencil is an outdated idea, for there is no wonderful pencil if there are no wonderful heads.*[17]

Moreover, if theory should come directly from the buildings, the bibliography for the course 'History of Portuguese Architecture' could be either all or nothing:

> *In the extreme, I would say that any book serves, and even Rosselini is good for mendicants and the heteronyms of Pessoa for almost everything. What matters is that the exercise of thinking is indissolubly connected with the exercise of enjoying life. The role of the teacher is to stimulate each student to transform him/herself into the more irreplaceable of the human beings, and that does not come in the books.*[18]

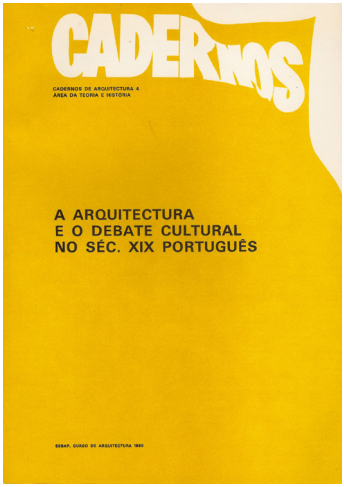

Fig. 3. Publication 'A Arquitectura e o Debate Cultural no Séc. XIX Português' (Architecture and the Cultural Debate in the Portuguese Nineteenth century), História da Arquitectura Portuguesa, Fine Arts School in Porto, 1985 © ESBAP.

Indeed, a theoretical work done by the students in the 'History of Portuguese Architecture' course of 1982/83, (a few years after Alves Costa completed his essay) helps to understand how the outcomes of Alves Costa's own research related to his teaching methods, and how literature was also an important reference for both his architectural thinking and his pedagogy. In that work, published in 1985 as 'Architecture and the Cultural Debate in the Portuguese Nineteenth Century', students were asked to write an essay on Portuguese architectural history, crossing their own thoughts and knowledge with quotes written by Portuguese writers, such as Almeida Garrett, Alexandre Herculano, Antero de Quental, Ramalho de Ortigão and Fialho de Almeida.[19] Over two weeks, this motivated students to discuss collectively, while in their individual essays each one presented urban scenes and architectural styles, through social and political readings coming from more or less fictional novels. Hence, these induced intertextualities were also crucial to stimulating a particular and underlying cultural theory in the School of Porto.

Underlying an Own Voice

Following this line of thought, we argue that the pedagogy of the School of Porto, between the 1950s and 1970s, may well reveal a specific geo-cultural approach to praxis, explaining a divergent transfer of literary references to architecture. Even if recognized, those references were underlying more than literal, which may emphasize the hypothesis that literal meanings are embedded in constructed architecture, as material conception,[20] thus as a *poetic profession* within a peripheral and 'marginal place'. As Frampton wrote in 'Poesis and Transformation: The Architecture of Álvaro Siza':

> *Today, this 'calligraphic' potential can perhaps only arise in marginal places; in those remaining interstices that delineate the frontiers between different worlds. Such a liberative fissure surely still exists in the mythical school or 'milieu' of Porto wherein Siza lives and works, surrounded on all sides by col-leagues, collaborators and the inevitable invisible enemies.*[21]

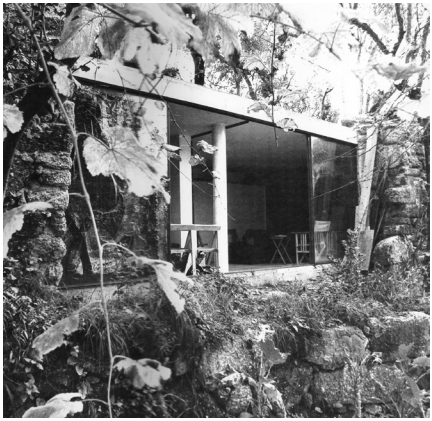

Fig. 4. Eduardo Souto de Moura, Ruin restoration, Gerês, 1980-82. © Photo by Manuel Magalhães. Courtesy of Eduardo Souto de Moura.

Fig. 5. Álvaro Siza, Carlos Beires House, Póvoa de Varzim, 1973-76. © Unknown author, Álvaro Siza Archive, Donation to Fundação de Serralves, Porto.

However, and in contrast to Frampton's reading of a critical regionalism, in the 1970s Siza was already connecting to the same world of his peers, dealing with the same constraints and possibilities, sharing the many voices of architecture, while working with his own subjective 'third voice'.
On the other hand, Eduardo Souto de Moura's work somehow conceptualizes an artistic autonomy and freely experiments with intertextualities. His references might address equally the architecture of Mies van der Rohe or the writings of the Portuguese poet Herberto Helder. Actually, Souto de Moura's education happens in-between school and practice, during the 1970s, after an experimental period of the Fine Arts school in Porto, framed by the outcomes of countercultural movements, after May 1968 and around the revolution of 25 April 1974.[22]
Following his collaboration with Siza, crossing the so-called 'Local Ambulatory Support Service' – the housing programme that followed the revolution – Souto de Moura designed several works taking ruin as a recurrent theme. If ruined stone walls are interpellated by Siza in the housing of S. Vitor, Souto de Moura also incorporates the ruin in one of his first works, the restoration of a ruined farmhouse, while citing Apollinaire: 'To prepare for ivy and passing time a ruin more beautiful than any other'.[23] Even when there was no memory he invented a fictional nostalgia, a narrative in which natural and artificial seemed apart but all the materials, *old* and *new*, could be prepared scenographically.
Writing about Távora in a text entitled 'The Art of Being Portuguese', Souto de Moura also prepares a loose collage of many voices.[24] In this text, he was utterly postmodern. It was a metamorphosis, a sign of a postmodern condition, which distinguished Souto de Moura from the shared affinities of the School of Porto, even if he was within the known chain of collaborations.[25]
On the other hand, the 'end of modernity', as elaborated in 1983 by the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo's concept of 'weak thought', *il pensiero debole*,[26] has also been one of the hypothetical readings to unveil the

peripheral context of Portugal, where a cultural intuition prevails, regarding an implicit recollection of 'first principles'. Vattimo's conception of intuition enlightens this argument:

> *Intuition, however, is not an invention of weak thought. Intuition is strictly bound to the metaphysical concept of evidence, of bringing an inner illumination into the open, of gathering first principles. Indeed, the ultimate object of* ***nous****, of intellectual intuition, is nothing less than first principles.*[27]

At the School of Porto, those 'first principles', which in their origin were also the modern instruments, were dislocated and filtered by specific circumstances full of cultural and semantic realities. In Beires House (1973-76), Siza reveals the crisis of reason. This 'Bomb house' is a cube that lacks one of its edges, as if it were the result of an explosion. Jorge Figueira refers to it as a 'narrative architecture', almost a ruin of modern reason.[28] While the cubic expression is violently shaken, a sole *piloti* remains. On Siza's work, Alexandre Alves Costa quotes the Portuguese poet Sophia de Mello Breyner Anderson: '[it] is a poem of geometry and silence, sharp and smooth angles, because between two lines lives the white.'[29]
We could say that the Beires House achieves melancholy because it deals with the fragments of the modernist cube immersed in an ordinary context. In his design, Siza intuitively works with the duration of time, perpetuated through the ochre tonalities, reaching a slow and permanent ageing. Siza was thus perpetuating modernity in time, still with a humanist lens, which the Beaux-Arts roots of the School of Porto never abandoned completely. In that sense, it was quite opposite to a theoretical re-reading of modern architecture, as researched and designed elsewhere.[30]

The Echoes of the School of Porto

In 2013, the exhibition 'Porto Poetic' in Milan, curated by Roberto Cremascoli, searched for an idiosyncratic poetry through the displayed works,

Fig. 6. ‘Poetic’, Exhibition ‘Porto Poetic’, curated by Roberto Cremascoli, Triennale di Milano, 2013. © Photo by Bruno Gil.

more than an explanation for this poetic aura behind the School of Porto.[31] Nevertheless, any explanation of the other is only possible until the other allows itself to be explained. Therefore, we argue that underneath the different ways of modern acculturation, followed by specific appropriations and revisions, the 'weakness of thought' became an 'augmented projectual capacity' of 'thinking itself':

> *In fact, weak thought has no reasons left to vindicate the supremacy of metaphysics over praxis. Does this indicate yet another weakness – that of accepting existence 'as it is' and hence one's critical incapacity both in theory and in practice? In other words, does speaking about the weakness of thought mean theorizing a diminished projectual capacity in thinking itself?*[32]

When this 'thinking itself' found its 'own voice', it allowed a creative disruption among the young students, listening to and attempting to work with other intertextualities, after the postmodern refusal by the school during the 1980s. Conversely, this was also the first sign of an alternative to an increasing self-referentiality of the School of Porto, around its main figures, which reached a mythical aura, but also constituted a cul-de-sac in the development of the school. As Diogo Seixas Lopes argued in the text 'Partir Pedra' (Breaking Stone) in 2004, after Távora's dictums – 'lessons of life' and 'lessons of history' – a new generation[33] 'introduced a variable X in the mythical space' of the school:

> *. . . the one that made them look at it already as a historical fact and process, the one that took them to discover without guilt or Lutheran restrictions a world which is also made from the banal and the exceptional.*[34]

As Seixas Lopes contended, that variable X seemed to free the following generations of the 'sacred place' without 'redemptive ideologies'. This posi-

tion could also be interpreted as the final cut of a unique voice that reverberated along with several timbres, that echoes in its own right, having now lost its shared tone. Nevertheless, a structural legacy of the school was still perceived in this generation, a 'disciplinary rigour, and of themselves'. We would say it is more than a collective voice, which shared the same desire of simply 'breaking stone', probably impelled by an underlying cultural theory, more than by recognizable formal codes or manneristic derivations. Therefore, paraphrasing Fernando Pessoa, the School of Porto 'multiplied itself, by going deeply into itself'.

Acknowledgements
I thank the *Writingplace* Journal editorial team for the deep exchange of ideas. I also thank to Alexandre Alves Costa, Álvaro Siza, Eduardo Souto de Moura, and Fundação Instituto Marques da Silva for generously allowing the publication of the images. And finally, I thank Carlos Martins for his memoirs of the História da Arquitectura Portuguesa classes and the two intense weeks when, along with his colleagues, he reflected upon the nineteenth century in Portugal, with the backing voices of Garrett, Herculano, Antero, Ortigão and Fialho de Almeida, ending with the brilliant corollary: 'De resto a novidade era a avenida' (At the end, the avenue was the novelty').

1 Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet, Composed by Bernardo Soares, Assistant Bookkeeper in the City of Lisbon*, translated by Alfred Mac Adam (Boston: Exact Change, 1998), 21.

2 It was the case of the Cooper Union School of Architecture, in New York, when John Hejduk, then the school's director, brought David Shapiro, an American poet, to lecture in the school.

3 It is not the aim of this paper to give a comprehensive reading of the school. Many approaches to the School of Porto have been written in essays (many by its protagonists, such as Alves Costa); books (see Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto: Um*

Mapa Crítico (Coimbra: e|d|arq, 2002); and theses (see Gonçalo Canto Moniz, 'O Ensino Moderno da Arquitectura. A Reforma de 57 e as Escolas de Belas Artes em Portugal (1931-69)', PhD thesis, University of Coimbra, 2011). All have originally contributed to a deep reading of the school, in questioning its theoretical position and also in a rigorous description of its multiple events. More recently, critical approaches on the questioning of the linearity of the school have been presented and alternative figures and experiences were brought forth, even if not so consequent and representative (see Nuno Faria and Pedro Bandeira, *Escola do Porto: Lado B - uma história oral (1968-1978) | Porto School: B side - an oral history (1968-1978)* (Guimarães: Documenta, 2014).

4 Jorge Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita. Pós-modernidade na arquitectura portuguesa, anos 1960-80* (Coimbra, 2009), 2. Free translation into English by the author.

5 Fernando Távora, *Da Organização do Espaço* (Porto: Edições do Curso de Arquitectura da E.S.B.A.P., 1962).

6 See Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos, *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal*, 2 vols., 1st ed. (Lisbon, 1961).

7 Fernando Távora, 'Arquitectura e Urbanismo, a lição das constantes', *Lusíada, Revista Ilustrada de Cultura*, vol. 1, no. 2 (November 1952). Republished in Fernando Távora, *Teoria Geral da Organização do Espaço, Arquitectura e Urbanismo, a lição das constantes* (Porto: FAUP publicações, 1993), 3, 9. Free translation into English by the author.

8 Roberto Cremascoli, 'Porto Poetic', in Roberto Cremascoli (ed.), *Porto Poetic* (Lisbon: Amag Editorial, 2013), 15. As Fernando Távora's student at the school of architecture in Coimbra in 1998, I also share these memories of Roberto Cremascoli.

9 Concerning the concept of 'intertextuality', Klaske Havik recalls Julia Kristeva's notion as 'a text does not exist in isolation, on the contrary, through direct and hidden references and quotes, a text is built up out of many other fragments of texts'. Klaske Havik, *Urban Literacy: A Scriptive Approach to the Experience, Use and Imagination of Place* (Delft, 2012), 209.

10 'Having exhausted the "third way" and definitely breaking away from "the problem of the Portuguese House", the School reinvented rationalism and its late poetic progressiveness giving, as in classic architecture, more importance to the structure than to the matter'. Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Illustrated fragments on the "Porto School"'. *Joelho*, 04 (2013), 35.

11 Alexandre Alves Costa, *Dissertação . . . Memórias do Cárcere Desastres de Sofia ou Memórias de um Burro* (ESBAP, Porto, 1980), 29. Free translation into English by the author.

12 Álvaro Siza, 'Oito Pontos', in Pedro de Llano, Carlos Castanheira (eds.) *Álvaro Siza, Obras e Projectos* (Santiago de Compostela: CGCA, 1995), 65. Free translation into English by the author.

13 All the candidates agreed to develop their written essays on their own idea about the school.

14 Álvaro Siza, 'Prefácio à edição de 1982', in Alexandre Alves Cos-ta, *Dissertação . . . Memórias do Cárcere Desastres de Sofia ou Memórias de um Burro* (ESBAP, Porto, 1982 (original edition 1980)), 3-4. Free translation into English by the author.

15 Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Pela pobre paisagem, irrenovada', in André Tavares, Pedro Bandeira (eds.), *Só Nós e Santa Tecla* (Porto: Dafne Editora, 2008), 15. Free translation into English by the author.

16 Alexandre Alves Costa, 'Introdução', *Textos Datados* (Coimbra, 2007), 19. Alves Costa evoked Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida's saying.

17 Fernando Távora quoted in Alves Costa, *Dissertação*, op. cit. (note 11), 88. Free translation into English by the author.

18 Alexandre Alves Costa, *Introdução ao Estudo da História da Arquitectura Portuguesa* (Porto: FAUP publicações, 1995), 51. Free translation into English by the author.

19 Alexandre Alves Costa, 'A Arquitectura e o Debate Cultural no Séc. XIX Português', *Cadernos de Arquitectura 4, Área da Teoria e História* (ESBAP, Curso de Arquitectura, 1985). It includes essays by students of História da Arquitectura Portuguesa in 1982/83: Paulo Lima, Luís Soares Carneiro, Carlos Martins, Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa, António Pestana, and José Florêncio Freitas.

20 Particularly remembering Souto de Moura on Novalis: 'When Novalis says: "The more authentic something is, the more poetic it is", this applies to architecture too, except that the methods are different. Whereas Novalis has to find musical rhythms and rhymes in his writing, we have to write with stone, iron and glass. The final goal is for the work to be anonymous and serene in relation to time; in other words, to become poetry. *There is no architect who does not wish to create poetry... mineral poetry.*' Eduardo Souto de Moura interviewed by Paulo Pais, 'In Search for an Anonymous Work: an interview with Eduardo Souto Moura', in Luiz Trigueiros (ed.), *Eduardo Souto Moura* (Lisbon: Blau, 2000), 34. [my emphasis].

21 Kenneth Frampton, 'Poesis and Transformation: The Architecture of Álvaro Siza', in Pierluigi Nicolin (coord.), *Professione poetica* (Milan: Quaderni di Lotus, Ed. Electa, 1986), 22-23.

22 See Faria and Bandeira, *Escola do Porto*, op. cit. (note 3).

23 Translation by Peter Read, from the original: *'Préparer au lierre et au temps une ruine plus belle que les autres . . .'* Apollinaire quoted in Eduardo Souto de Moura,

'Ruin restoration', in Trigueiros (ed.), *Eduardo Souto Moura*, op. cit. (note 20), 41.

24 Voices coming from literature: *Photomaton & Vox; A Colher na Boca* by Herberto Helder. *A Arte de Ser Português by Teixeira de Pascoaes. A Originalidade da Poesia Portuguesa* by Jacinto Prado Coelho. Interview with Pedro Cabrita Reis. *O Náufrago* by Thomas Bernhard. *Prefácio ao Livro de Qualquer Poeta, Elogio da Ingenuidade ou as Desventuras da Esperteza Saloia* by Almada Negreiros. *A Outra Voz by Octávio Paz*. See Eduardo Souto de Moura, A 'Arte de Ser Português', in Luiz Trigueiros (ed.), Fernando Távora (Lisbon: Blau, 1993), 72.

25 As in Herberto Helder's words, 'To embrace change, transformation and metamorphosis is to build our own destiny', words with which Souto de Moura ended his Pritzker Prize discourse in 2011. From the original version in Portuguese: *'Trabalhar na transmutação, na transformação, na metamorfose é obra própria nossa*', Herberto Helder, *O Corpo O Luxo A Obra* (Lisbon: & Etc., 1978), 21.

26 For Gianni Vattimo, weak thought relates to differences above a shared unity. See Gianni Vattimo, Pier Aldo Rovatti (eds.), *Il pensiero debole* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983). Vattimo's thought has been continued in architecture by Ignasi de Solà-Morales.

27 Gianni Vattimo, 'Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought', in Gianni Vattimo, Pier Aldo Rovatti (eds.), Peter Carravetta (transl.), *Weak Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 48.

28 Figueira, *A Periferia Perfeita*, op. cit. (note 4), 377. Free translation into English by the author.

29 Alexandre Alves Costa, 'The Poetic Art', in Cremascoli (ed.), *Porto Poetic*, op. cit. (note 8), 215.

30 At that time, in the other side of the Atlantic, Peter Eisenman was designing a generic and conceptual series of the modernist cube, where time as such was inexistent. It was the result of an analytical autopsy of modernity, which started in the early 1960s in Cambridge, as a post-mortem investigation of form, without time, without life, without history and no stories to tell.

31 The exhibition 'Porto Poetic', curated by Roberto Cremascoli, took place at the Triennale di Milano, from 13 September to 27 October 2013, and at the Galeria Municipal Almeida Garrett in Porto, from 6 March to 13 April 2014.

32 Gianni Vattimo, 'Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought', in Vattimo, Rovatti (eds.), *Weak Thought*, op. cit. (note 27), 50.

33 Diogo Seixas Lopes made this argument when reviewing the works of Jorge Figueira, Paulo Ferreira, Miguel Figueira, Pedro Pacheco and Marie Clément.

34 Diogo Seixas Lopes, 'Partir Pedra', *Jornal Arquitectos*, no. 214 (2004), 65. Free translation into English by the author.

The Word that Builds: Poetry and Practice at the School of Valparaíso

Óscar Andrade Castro & Jaime Reyes Gil

This article addresses the case of the School of Architecture and Design at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in Chile, which established an original position in arts and education by exploring the productive relationship between poetry and the trades of architecture and design.[1] In 1964, from this relationship with poetry, the members of the School of Valparaíso, together with other poets, artists, and one philosopher, formulated a poetic vision of the South American continent called *Amereida*, the Aeneid of America. *Amereida* was published as a poem in 1967, becoming a founding text of the school and occupying a central place in their artistic position, guiding many of their actions to this day.[2] After 65 years sustaining this position, the School of Valparaíso has created two fundamental endeavours in which students and professors are involved in collective building experi-

ences related to the poetics of *Amereida: the Ciudad Abierta* (Open City) and the *Travesías* (Crossings). *Ciudad Abierta* is located on a 270-hectare site 16 km north of the city of Valparaíso and was founded in 1970 to accommodate the central pursuit of the university reform movement initiated inside the school three years earlier, which entailed conceiving the university as a non-abstract community under the unity of life, work and study. Since then, members of *Ciudad Abierta*, professors and their families, together with students and guests, live, work and study on the sites, free of any institutional constraints and in the creative freedom of hearing the poetic word of *Amereida*. Another action born from the poetics of *Amereida* is that of the *Travesías*, incorporated into the school's curriculum in 1984. *The Travesías* are poetic journeys carried out by professors and students crossing the length and breadth of the South American continent, experiencing its emergence as a gift and donating a work of architecture or design to the visited location.

The focus of this article is to examine the pivotal presence of poetry in the school's artistic position and its role in the design and building actions carried out by students and professors, which are an essential trait of its educational approach. The article displays this trajectory from the poetic word to the act of building by discussing a crucial topic raised within internal debates of the School of Valparaíso: the relationship between word and action. While illustrating the role of poetry in the school's creative practices, the article argues that the poetic word is not instrumentalized as a concrete method or tool in design studio practices, but is present as an underlying element that opens a primordial creative field from which architecture operates. The article aims to contribute to the existing literature by clarifying the role of poetry in the School of Valparaíso's curriculum, which is a particularly unclear aspect surrounded by myths and assumptions. Therefore, this article focuses on the formulation and practice of the 'poetic act', its role in the design and building processes of the school projects, and the way in which the professors and students of the School of Valparaíso proceed with their works after the poetic act that takes place at the start of every project.

By clarifying these points, we expect to shine a light on the presence of poetry in the articulation of the school's artistic production and academic structures, locating the relationship between word and action at the centre of the school's debates, where it remains open and vividly discussed to this day.

The Axiom of Rimbaud

The poet and professor Godofredo Iommi stated in a lecture in 1983 that since the foundation of the School of Valparaíso in 1952, 'we have made ours the equation of Rimbaud, [in] which the word does not rhyme the action . . . from now on the word will go alone, ahead of the action'.[3] One of the interpretations of Rimbaud's proposition is that the conventional order, where poetry was 'to rhyme the action' meant that poetry would follow the action; for instance, that war or a journey first occurs, and then the poet sings its epic as in the Iliad or the Odyssey. According to Rimbaud, the order could be reversed: if the role of poetry had been to sing about the actuality the world, a radically different position would be for poetry to precede the action.

In the work of Iommi in particular and in the School of Valparaíso in general, a characteristic tendency has been to take certain poetic statements from other poets as axioms, translating them effectively into practice word by word and testing them in life.[4] Concerning the implications of enacting Rimbaud's proposition for the School of Valparaíso, Iommi questions the instrumentality of action in the construction of the world: he declares that the school 'radically disregarded everything that was called an action, because by definition it could not be at the forefront of anything'. Moreover, he insists, 'we believe that it has no interest in the conduct of the world – look to what I am saying – no action, categorically, none: moves anything'.[5] Godofredo Iommi argued that the possibility to modify the world did not reside in action, but in the poetic word, through the change of the significations that compose life. According to the poet, the commitment with an action, and therefore with its causes and meanings, implies the instrumen-

Fig.1. Godofredo Iommi at the School of Valparaíso, 1971, Viña del Mar.

Fig.2. Poetic experience, 1962, France.

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talization of the work of art. As a result – in Iommi's eyes – when conceiving a work of art committed to an external cause other than the work's internal structure, it is then flooded with symbolism. With this, the work is irremediably tied to representation, and thus, has exhausted the possibility of asking about things in a renovated way.

By not compromising to action, the artistic position of the School of Valparaíso aims to prevent any commitment to a cause and to remain independent from contingencies, currents or fashions. Nevertheless, this posture does not mean that the school is alienated from reality; instead it means that the signification or the symbol are not instrumentalizing their works. Modern poetry has tried to attain the possibility of a world where signification is not the favoured quota, and that is the primary concern of Iommi's interpretation of Rimbaud's axiom. Iommi proposes understanding the word as the real constructor of the world by freeing it from meanings; he argues that with the fall of signification, 'the sense of a world. What is going to happen? The splendid, again open, re-initiated, the adventure'[6] also falls. The internal debate around Rimbaud's axiom challenges the School of Valparaíso to continuously question conventions and to pursue the new. From the poetic point of view of the school, works of art, architecture or design, must always open a new field; presenting themselves – each time – as a renewed question from which to unfold human creativity again and again. By not being tied to any symbol, an architect may ask himself every time: what is a window, a wall, or a door?
The notion of 'invention' thus becomes a crucial element, actively orienting the educational position of the School of Valparaíso. As the architect and professor Fabio Cruz said, the idea supporting the school's position is 'that the human being by [his] very nature has a poetic condition, which leads him to reinvent unceasingly, each time, the figure of the world'.[7] This central idea appears consistently along the artistic discourse of this school. Its best-known formulation is on the blackboards written for the School of Valparaíso's 20th Anniversary Exhibition, where it reads: 'it seems to us that

the human condition is poetic; it means that for this, humanity lives freely and without ceasing in the vigil and courage to build a world'.[8] The open debate around Rimbaud's axiom sustains and nurtures this central idea of reinvention, giving to the poetic word – and not to action – the ability to change the world through the change of meanings. Moreover, it is a clear image of what is probably the major attempt of the group: the willingness to hear the voice of the poets as an inaugural one, as a voice that opens the field of possibilities from which architecture and design can undertake the never-ending task of renewing and building a world.

The Poetic Act as an Opening

By situating the poetic word in advance of the action, the School of Valparaíso aims to continually renew their perspectives of the world, and with it, open with each work of architecture and design a new field of invention. To accomplish this, Godofredo Iommi proposed at the beginning of the 1950s a new poetic formulation: the Poetic Act. As he explains in a letter to the Brazilian poet Napoleón López Filho: 'I have a manifesto for the next poetry. The fundamental turn of the poetic instrument. The abandonment of writing and the new creative possibility of poetry in the voice. It is not about recitation but creation in the voice and the act. An unrepeatable and improvised poetry that arises only from a complete abandonment of the existence, of submerging the existence into poetry'.[9] The practice of the Poetic Act proposed by Iommi could be understood as an extreme take on language, in which the uttering of words is a purely creative action. Poetry is understood as *poiesis*, capable of bringing to light something new – in Iommi's words – the making of the world as a game of appearance and disappearance. For Iommi, the Poetic Act opens the opportunities for existence, so the making of the world befalls in the poetic word, 'because the word is inaugural, it conveys, gives birth'.[10]

During his years living in Europe, Iommi probed into the possibilities of poetry in action around what he first called the Poetic Experiences, journeys carried out together with poets, actors, painters, sculptors and philoso-

phers. In these experiences, he started to question aspects such as the notion of the interpreter, the disappearance of the public and the author and the possibility of leaving behind the figure of the recital. Iommi also reflects on the importance of the costume or mask to burst in the middle of the ordinary and generate the atmosphere of the act when recognizing the body and figure of the poet. Iommi selected his characteristic red tights to constitute this figure, and in the same way, the students of the School of Valparaíso produce for every Poetic Act diverse costumes and masks made of paper. With the Poetic Experiences Iommi was seeking to be a 'witness of poetry' as a mode of existence and life, stating that with their realization he 'learned that poetry is also communicated by the music of the senses and not only by the melody of the sounds or the significations of the words'.[11]

The first central characteristic of the Poetic Act proposed by Iommi is the possibility for poetry to occur as an action in the place and the present moment. For this, the poet would assume the role of the 'bearer of celebration' and act as an instrument of poetry using his voice and present body as 'the earnest of what poetry unleashes', without requiring the written word as a medium. This implies the latent consequence of the poet exceeding literature and escaping from the idea of a 'poet of poems'. Furthermore, Iommi explains that 'poetry in act arises and is truly inserted into reality. Reveals the possibility that founds all effective existence and at the same time becomes an act in the world. I have seen the poet leave literature, surpass the poem, and even, abandon writing'.[12] The school members refer to this emancipation of the poetic word from the written poem and its feasibility to occur solely in the ephemerality of spoken word, as 'what is in the voice'. The second important element in the Poetic Act is the search for creative collectiveness. In this, Iommi followed Isidore Ducasse's indication that 'poetry must be made by all and not by one',[13] from which Iommi understood the 'all' as 'anyone'. Iommi explored this possibility in a particular kind of Poetic Act that was named *Phalène*.[14] This poetic game is led by the poet, who starts by summoning a group of participants, including the passers-

Fig. 3. Godofredo Iommi during a Poetic Act in the first Travesía, 1965, Patagonia.

Fig. 4. The School of Valparaíso during the Phalène of Reñaca, 1972, Chile.

by in the public spaces of the city. The only imperative of a *Phalène* is that anyone can participate, without restrictions. When the ones convoked are gathered, the poet uses a set of cards drawn specially for the occasion to provoke a word in the participants. After showing a card to each one of them, the poet collects the words that have been given and adds the connections to shape a poem made by all.
Moreover, the group attributes to the Poetic Act the capability to disclose a peculiarity of the place, revealing it in a renewed way to the eyes of the participants. Often, in the middle of the poetic game, a trace or mark is made in the place with the materials and resources at hand to signal this peculiarity. This plastic event, referred to as a 'Sign' during the early Poetic Experiences, cyphers the new sense or relation of the place that emerges during the Poetic Act, so 'the place is then surprised and suspended: it appears.'[15] The realization of the Poetic Act as a way to 'open' the place by revealing its peculiarity constituted a central practice during the first *Travesía* of 1965, in which many ephemeral works such as paintings and sculptures were made at the side of the road.

To understand the sense of the opening that the group confers to the Poetic Act, a crucial distinction needs to be made between the notions of opening and founding. For the group, founding is the 'day-to-day construction that gradually creates the city', while opening 'develops in a different time dimension from "founding". It is self-referential and self-reflexive in a creative way and makes "founding" both a possibility and reality'.[16] It is about the distinction between origin and generation. The role of poetry is thus to establish the origin of the work with the opening of the place, and then, the work is generated by the trades of architecture and design. The school members refer to this poetry that deals with the origin and opening of things, as the poetry of the *Ha-Lugar*. This expression, commonly employed in legal language – whose English equivalent is 'sustained' – refers to the existence of the necessary conditions for something to take place.
Following the central ideas of poetry *in act and made by all*, capable of

opening the place, the Poetic Act was established as a central practice at the School of Valparaíso and *Ciudad Abierta*. Poetry would – like the client with his brief – indicate the starting point of every work of architecture. Hence, one of the central roles of the poets in the School of Valparaíso is to allow the trades of architecture and design to hear the poetic voice that speaks in multiple senses and that sets the origin of their works. With the celebration of the Poetic Act, the school offers to the architectural project a point of departure free from the project's program – indeed the gratuitous dimension referred by the group as an *Unknown*. This notion is strongly related to the effort of situating the word ahead of the action. When Iommi asks about 'what is the method to stave in the unknown?', he again refers to Rimbaud's words, with 'the reasoned disorder of the senses'.[17] Again, Iommi's interpretation gravitates around the question of signification when he adds, 'it is not enough to understand senses as external or internal organs of perception. It is about the senses of language. Over there the new and unknown'.[18] Accordingly, it is in the attentive care and contemplation of this *Unknown* that the novel field that every project should bring forward can shine.

The idea of the *Unknown* is located in the centre of the creative ethos of *Ciudad Abierta* and represents a key component of the School of Valparaíso pedagogical position. This particular way to relate to knowledge as an 'unceasing return to not knowing'[19] was recognized during the opening acts of *Ciudad Abierta* as the poetic nature of the dunes at the sites. The sand has the capacity to erase the imprints of steps and marks during the night and reappear every morning in a virginal state. Like the dunes, the group affirms that 'we must empty ourselves of judgments so that we can give room to the question. . . . This return to not knowing, it is not about ignorance or ingenuity, on the contrary, it is a state of the spirit that tries to delve into the question, it is an opening and not a rush to answer as if it were to solve a problem'.[20] From this stance, 'without clinging to the acquired knowledge', the School of Valparaíso believes in the possibility of building a world

Fig. 5. Poetic Act during a Travesía of the School of Valparaíso, 2007, Purmamarca.

Fig. 6. Phalène of the graduation projects, 1973, Ciudad Abierta.

from an always renewed point of view.[21] Thus, with the celebration of the Poetic Act, the group seeks to produce an opening from where an unforeseen and indeterminate singularity emerges, tearing the veil of the known figure of the world.

The Project as an Adventure of the Unknown

Following the opening instance of poetry, the professors, students and open-city members dispose themselves to architecturally interpret the *Unknown* during the design and construction process of the building. The group has constituted a working structure called *Taller de Obras* (building workshop), which sessions on a weekly basis. Within the *Taller de Obras*, the works of architecture and design are conceived and materialized fostering an approach based on collective action, known within the group as working in *Ronda* (round).[22] In the *Ronda*, all the participants contribute with ideas in a non-hierarchical discussion: all proposals are valid, and everybody takes part in the decisions about the project form and construction process. As the *Unknown* indicated by the Poetic Act must be unravelled, but no determinate goal is formulated, the *Ronda* ventures on a speculative route. As a result, the logic of planning is questioned, and the opportunity of empirical experimentation is privileged.

This speculative and empirical way of proceeding demands tackling the design and construction processes in a different mode than the conventional projective and planning approach. Hence, instead of first conceiving an idea that is then 'thrown forward' in a planned succession of phases, the conception and the materialization of the building happen simultaneously. During the initial years of *Ciudad Abierta*, Professor Alberto Cruz led the graduation projects of several students employing the term 'non-projects' to refer to this generation process that implies thinking and building in unison, probing into the creative possibilities of the building in the making. Accordingly, the aim of this design and building approach becomes then to keep the project open to contingency, integrating unexpected aspects that

Fig. 7. Graduation project part of the building Hospedería del Banquete, 1973, Ciudad Abierta.

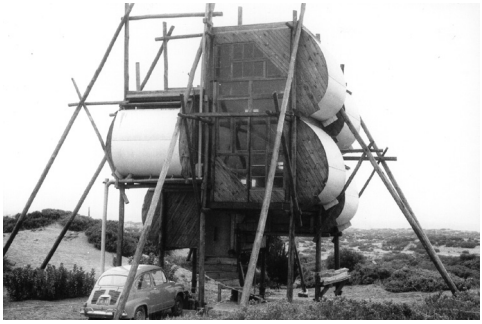


Fig. 8. Hospedería de la Alcoba, 1970s, Ciudad Abierta.

Fig. 9. Poetic Act at the Pavilion of Hospitality, 2017, Kassel.

emerge in the course of its construction, not projecting but erecting the building.

The attempt to conceive and materialize the project simultaneously in the present moment has caused a different understanding of the temporal dimension of the building process. The building seems to exist in a present trance of appearance, not waiting for a future and thus not seeking permanence. Godofredo Iommi called this nature of the architectural work 'in transit to be' a 'work of pure appearance.[23] This approach calls into question the period of the generation process of a project and leads to the valorization of the indefinite dilatation of the act of constructing. According to the group, 'if the "construction" is not determined by "duration", that is, not tending to last an expected time, then is not conceived as a future to be fulfilled. It excludes planning'.[24] Consequently, the architectural work acquires an open-ended nature that is addressed using design and construction tactics based on fragments, possible to undertake in the time span of a working day.
This way of addressing the realization of the project allows for successive participation of groups and tasks in a relay between graduation students, project studios, guest students, professors and open-city members.
This approach was described as '*work hic et nunc*', let us say improvised, which means made right there and not without preparation . . . and with all the time needed'.[25] The term improvisation, in this context, is distant from any connotation of arbitrariness and randomness, and refers to the idea of proceeding without foreseeing an outcome but distinguishing the structure that emerges from the execution of the building. Further, 'preparation' points to the idea that improvisation requires a calculation that sets the field of action within a certain degree of freedom. Hence, despite all the flexibility that this process allows, there is always a primordial directive ordering the whole system. The architects often attribute this cardinal intention to a core void, a spatial trait structuring the project. This spatial ordering directive is also employed among the fundamental pedagogical design studio practices of the school.[26] This rather rigorous approach to the design and construc-

tion processes makes a substantial effort to decipher the internal structure of the work, delineating rules that emerge from the insisted contemplation of its appearance. The novel field of each work thus unfolds from its internal structures, as an adventure of the Unknown.

Paired with this simultaneous thinking and building, the cornerstone of the educational approach of the School of Valparaíso is the practice of Architectural Observation. In their first year at the school, students focus entirely on Architectural Observation, and it is present as the beginning of every project studio during the entire curriculum. This creative practice consists in the contemplation and sensible experience of space and the acts of life by means of drawing and writing. It aims to formulate an affirmation concerning an order of inhabited space in relation to the notions of Act and Form. The Act refers to a particular way of inhabiting and to human actions that take place in space, and the Form relates to the spatial quality incarnating or accommodating that Act. In a more cryptic but precise way, the architect and professor Manuel Casanueva proposed that the Act is the Form, and the Form is the Act, addressing the idea of an architectural way of thought that sees space and life in unity.
The school seeks to constitute Architectural Observation as a habit, so that students can sustain a continuous creative reflection that enables them to engage with others in the decision-making process of the works on the spur of the moment. The constant Observation of space and life makes it possible to respond to any fortuitous situation of the project at any moment.
In the words of the school, this capacity of immediate action and readiness possible from the consistency of an internal creative discourse is known as *'A flor de labios'*, meaning that words bloom on the lips, that is, they are said at the same time as they are thought. In this way, through Architectural Observation, the thinking and building processes of the projects are blended in a rhythm in which the making is born from the contemplation of its execution. This way of doing in which thinking and constructing are firmly attached positions the rhythm of the work as a structural temporality of the

school and makes of the experience of the work a vital constituent of the curriculum.

The Work as a Possibility of Being

The School of Valparaíso has developed a significant part of its architectural and pedagogical position through the experience of the built project. Its works of architecture and design have been presented as the primary field of architectural reflection and experimentation, from which the school has formulated and practised its fundamental ideas. The school's community sustains the necessary rhythm of works, by engaging in the realization of concrete projects of architecture or design in the *Travesías* and the *Taller de Obras* in *Ciudad Abierta*. Both cases can be considered as fertile experiences in the educational sphere, as they are occasions for the students to encounter materials, constructive operations and multiple dimensions involved in the conception and construction of a work of architecture and design. However, what ultimately drives the actions of the *Travesías* and the *Taller de Obras* in Ciudad Abierta is the artistic endeavour of *Amereida*; as such they represent occasions where the poetics of *Amereida* transpire into the academic sphere of the school, defining and influencing its curriculum. An essential aspect that these poetically opened projects bring to the school is that they constitute the necessary conditions of creativity and freedom of study. In the school's understanding of improvisation, the projects are realised 'with all the time needed', meaning that there is an explicit care of undertaking them during a distended temporality without any pressure. This distention of time manifests itself most clearly in *Ciudad Abierta*, which was indeed conceived with the idea of the non-separation of life, work and study, allowing a continuous dedication. The *Travesías* also achieve this temporality through the experience of travel, as travels have the potentiality to submerge us in an extraordinary time of complete availability. We could venture that the School of Valparaíso is such, as long as it is driven by a rhythm of projects that enable the state of being-at-work, opening a necessary time of complete availability to contemplate, in the dis-

solved boundaries of life, work and study. The construction of this temporality is to understand the school as *Skholè*.[27]

In the realization of built projects, the School of Valparaíso recognizes the capacity to awaken a sensibility towards the work, allowing tackling an aspect that cannot be taught but can only be learned from the intimate and sustained relationship with the work: a vocation. Accordingly, the school holds that the experience of the built project has an 'aptitude for opening us to the reality of being'.[28] Within the School of Valparaíso this has been dubbed *La Santidad de la Obra* (The Sanctity of the Work). Hence, the works of architecture and design carried out during the *Travesías* and the *Taller de Obras* in *Ciudad Abierta* present themselves as the means to sustain a state of being, in the hope that by being-at-work an opening of the self towards a vocation will be provoked.[29]

1. Architecture and design are referred to as 'trades' *(oficios)* within the School of Valparaíso, to distinguish them from a discipline or profession, because they are constituted around the 'piece of work' as cornerstone of knowledge production and practice craftsmanship.
2. Following the poetic vision of *Amereida*, in 1965 the group departed on the first Travesía, a poetic journey that crossed the interior of the continent. Two years after the journey, the poem *Amereida* was published, without any author's signature, unnumbered pages and no capital letters.
3. Godofredo Iommi, *Hoy me voy a ocupar de mi cólera* (Viña del Mar: UCV, 1983), 1-2. Iommi is paraphrasing a passage of Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny, dated 15 May 1871, known as the Letter of the Seer. The original quote is *'En Grèce... vers et lyres rhythment l'Action.'* ['In Greece... poems and lyres turn Action into Rhythm.'] *'La Poésie ne rhythmera plus l'action; elle sera en avant!'* ['Poetry will no longer beat within action; it will be before it.'] in Arthur Rimbaud, *Rimbaud Complete: Poetry and Prose* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 367-369.
4. Among many other poetic axioms shaping the school position, some of the most recurrent are Hölderlin's 'Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth', Lautréamont's 'Poetry must be made by all and not by one', and Rimbaud's 'One must be absolutely modern'.

5. Iommi, *Hoy me voy a ocupar de mi cólera*, op. cit. (note 3).
6. Godofredo Iommi, *Hay que ser Absolutamente Moderno* (Viña del Mar: UCV, 1982), 8-13.
7. Fabio Cruz, 'Todo parte en Santiago por el año 1950', Inaugural speech at book launch ceremony, 16 October 2003. Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño PUCV, Viña del Mar.
8. Escuela de Arquitectura UCV, 'Exposición 20 años Escuela de Arquitectura UCV', (1972), Santiago. Blackboard #1.
9. See Godofredo Iommi, 'Carta Nº20', *Correspondencia a Gerardo Mello 1940-1980*, (2010), 34.
   Napoleón López Filho was a member of The *Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea*, a poetic guild formed in 1939 by the Brazilian poets Gerardo Mello Mourão and Abdias do Nascimento and the Argentinean poets Juan Rául Young, Efraín Tomás Bo and Godofredo Iommi.
10. Escuela de Arquitectura UCV, 'Exposición 20 años Escuela de Arquitectura UCV', op. cit. (note 8).
11. Godofredo Iommi, Jorge Pérez Román, Josée Lapeyrère, Carmelo Arden Quin, Michel Deguy, Antonio Asis, Bernard Olivier, Viky Messica, Yves Brunier, Michele Gleizes, Collette Parcheminier, Juana Prat-Gay, Henri Tronquoy, *Experiencia Poética* (Viña del Mar: Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño PUCV, 1962). All the reflections born during these poetic experiences were published in 1963 as the central ideas of the Poetic Act in Iommi's key text entitled *La Carta del Errante* (The Letter of the Wanderer).
12. Godofredo Iommi, 'Lettre de l'Errant', *Ailleurs*, I (1963), 14-24.
13. Lautréamont, *Obra completa* (Madrid: Akal, 1988), 591.
14. In French, a *Phalène* is a moth or nocturnal butterfly. For the poets of the school, this name gathers multiple senses, one of them being a reference to the definition of poetry made by Edgar Allan Poe in his Poetic Principle.
15. Iommi et al., *Experiencia Poética*, op. cit. (note 11).
16. Grupo Ciudad Abierta, 'Alberto Cruz, Cooperativa Amereida, Chile', *Zodiac*, 8 (1992), 188-199.
17. Iommi, *Hay que ser Absolutamente Moderno*, op. cit (note 6), 8-13.
18. Ibid.
19. Grupo Ciudad Abierta, *Apertura de los Terrenos* (Viña del Mar: Ciudad Abierta, 1971), 6.
20. Patricio Cáraves, *La Ciudad Abierta de Amereida. Arquitectura desde la Hospitalidad* (Barcelona: Editorial Académica Española, 2007), 15.
21. Grupo Ciudad Abierta, *Apertura de los Terrenos*, op. cit. (note 19).

22. Working in *Ronda* is to some extent a continuation of the *Bottegas*, which were implemented in the School of Valparaíso a short time before acquiring the *Ciudad Abierta* sites and consisted in a practice-based space composed by a lead professor and a group of students working around an external commission or project.
23. Godofredo Iommi, Alberto Cruz, 'Ciudad Abierta: De la Utopía al Espejismo', *Revista Universitaria*, 9 (1983), 17-25
24. Ibid.
25. Godofredo Iommi, Alberto Cruz, Fabio Cruz, François Fédier, Michel Deguy, Claudio Girola, Gerardo Mello, Jorge Pérez Román, Edison Simons, Henri Tronquoy, Jonathan Boulting, *Amereida* (Santiago: Lambda, 1967), 3-79.
26. The spatial trait or main ordering directive has diverse conceptualizations depending on the school members' own spatial language and approach, such as the Radical Structure of the Extension developed by Professor Fabio Cruz. This term, also known as ERE for its acronym in Spanish *(Estructura Radical de la Extensión)*, was employed by Fabio Cruz in the design studios as a tool to reflect on the relationship between the main spatial intention of the project ('the irreducible') and the place. This relationship is formalized in the ERE, usually constructed in a white paper sheet with minimal cuts and folds to achieve the three-dimensionality that expresses in a fundamental line the match or fit between the project and the land extension.
27. The term *Skholè* was linked to the School of Valparaíso practices by Professor Manuel Casanueva who understood it in the Greek sense of 'creative leisure', a synthesis of the time of free leisure and the time of school study.
Manuel Casanueva, *Libro de Torneos* (Valparaíso: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso, 2009), 63.
28. Jaime Reyes, *La Huella de la Santidad de la Obra* (Ciudad Abierta: Ciudad Abierta, 2011).
29. The concepts developed within the School of Valparaíso are not by any means fixed or definitive; they are indeed a quite dynamic universe constantly reinterpreted and rearticulated depending on the 'each time' of every project and situation. Godofredo Iommi used to describe this quality and practice of recommencing, as something that was 'always the same but never alike'. Therefore, this article displays just one of the possible lines of articulation and interpretation of some fundamental elements composing the school's approach, but only as momentary signals to scrutinize questions that can be restarted.

Writerly Experimentation in Architecture: The Laboratory (not) as Metaphor

Willem de Bruijn

Introduction

Within the last two decades, the use of the term laboratory or 'lab', as it is often abbreviated to, has become widespread in both the profession and in education. 'Spacelab', 'Arch LAB', 'Laboratory of Architecture' – these are but some of the names given to architectural practices today. Also, no self-respecting academic institution today lacks a 'research laboratory' or 'lab' of some kind, often set up in parallel to the conventional studio, but sometimes also as a substitute for it. In a more recent development, the laboratory has also been adopted as a place for exploring architectural themes through writing, as exemplified by the 'Writing Labs' set up at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. This development that has seen the laboratory become the very paradigm of conceptualizations of practice and research in architecture revolves, I argue, around a renewed interest in the notion of experiment and the spaces of experimentation. The question I want to raise here concerns

the role of the laboratory as a metaphor in constructing spaces for writerly experimentation. For, outside the domain of science, how can a laboratory be understood as anything other than a (mere) metaphor? This question is not entirely new and already occupied the organizers and participants of the 'Laboratorium' exhibition held in Antwerp in 1999, which brought together scientists, architects, artists and scholars in a debate around the meaning of the laboratory within art and science.[1] Opinions as to the value of comparing scientific laboratories with artists' studios were clearly divided. Artist Carsten Höller, for one, criticized what he referred to as the 'aesthetization' of the laboratory in art, which he considers a form of appropriation devoid of any further meaning:

> *Of course there is a fascination with how a laboratory looks like, with all the bottles and strange machines, which produce an uncanny effect. At the same time, I think it's just a form of appropriation, and it's not yielding any further result.*[2]

Others, however, have pointed to the difficulty in defining the laboratory in a spatial and more specifically architectural sense. To the historian of science Peter Galison, for example, the laboratory appears as a dynamic space, always in flux, 'polymorphous' and subject to 'constant mutation'.[3] As Galison explains: '[t]he laboratory is, at different times, a chamber of magic, a parliament, a home, a cottage industry, a factory, a monastery, a networked web'.[4] Is it still possible, then, to attribute any specific meaning to the laboratory metaphor within the context of education and writing in particular? To answer this question, this article takes a closer look at the laboratory in its historical connection with alchemy. In so doing, this article aims to show that alchemy, understood as a historical phenomenon associated with the early-modern rise of science, produced a varied body of literature in which alchemists conceived of 'their' laboratory as the space par *excellence* of a form of experimentation with texts.

The Educational Experiment in Architecture

Before delving into the world of alchemy, however, a few words need to be said about the conditions that gave rise to the laboratory in institutions concerned with the architect's education. For, although not immediately conceived on these very terms, the origins of the architectural laboratory are in the domain of design education. Indeed, the first space dedicated to experimental research in architecture was established at the Bauhaus, where new ideas about teaching and design first crystallized around the notion of 'experiment'.[5] During the founding stages of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius referred to this space as 'a large-scale experimental studio where practical workshop problems may be addressed in both the technical and formal senses, under the direction of a highly qualified practicing architect'.[6] Under Gropius's directorship, this 'experimental studio' became a cornerstone of the Bauhaus curriculum.[7]

The name given to the experimental studio was *Bauversuchsplatz*, literally 'place for building trials', which has been translated in English as 'building laboratory'.[8] It is significant, however, that the word laboratory does not appear in Gropius's early writing. In his manifesto for the Bauhaus, written in 1919, Gropius uses the term *Probier- und Werkplätzen*, literally 'places for attempting' and 'workshops', which, as scholars have pointed out, were modelled on the medieval guilds and the 'workshops' (*Werkstätte*) of the pre-industrial age.[9] Yet, in his *Scope of Total Architecture*, written whilst in America and first published in 1955, Gropius characterizes the Bauhaus workshops in retrospect as 'essentially laboratories in which the models for [industrially made] products were carefully evolved and constantly improved'.[10] Gropius's later writing thus reflects a marked shift in how the 'experimental studio' of the Bauhaus could be conceptualized, for it moves away from the medieval workshop of the past to the modern, technical laboratory of the present.

Yet, the historical process by which the architectural laboratory emerges is far from continuous. Already in 1928, under the directorship of Hannes Meyer, the *Bauversuchsplat*z was replaced by a *Bauatelier*, or 'building

studio', with direct connections to the construction industry.[11] This connection with the construction industry would continue to dominate the establishment of architectural laboratories during the post-war period, as at Princeton University, where the 'Architectural Laboratory' was built in collaboration with the engineering department for the testing of structures and the teaching of construction methods.

The first indications of a broader and extended interest in the laboratory as a place for scholarly research can be traced back to 1970s, with Bill Hillier's Space Syntax Laboratory established in 1972 at UCL and LADRHAUS (Laboratoire de Recherche Histoire Architecturale et Urbaine – Sociétiés) established in 1973 at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Versailles, to name two examples. It is not until the mid-1990s, however, that the laboratory becomes a staple of architectural design education. Among the first of this type of laboratory is the Architectural Association's Design Research Laboratory (AADRL), founded in 1996 by Patrick Schumacher and Brett Steele. It is here, in the context of design, that architectural educators recover the experimental ethos as articulated by Gropius in defining its intellectual premise:

> *The AADRL was created out of a belief that the conditions under which architects work, think and learn today are changing in profound and unprecedented ways, and that these demand above all a willingness to experiment with the most basic assumptions that guide not just how architects think, but also how schools, offices and other seemingly stable architectural forms are themselves organised and operate.*[12]

The laboratory thus evolved, in theory at least, into the very paradigm of 'a genuinely new kind of architectural pedagogy', itself conceived as an 'open experiment in architectural education'.[13]

The Writerly Laboratory

The slow and by no means smooth process of pedagogical reform that has placed experimentation at the heart of architectural design education today has in recent years extended beyond the realm of design to challenge established modes of practice in the domain of history, theory and criticism. The 'Writing Labs' conceived and organized by Emma Cheatle, Tim Mathews, Mathelinda Nabugodi, Emily Orley, Jane Rendell and PA Skantze at the Bartlett School of Architecture, for example, point to an increased interest in creating places where researchers and practitioners can explore 'what writing can do critically and creatively' across the disciplines.[14]

This latest development that sees the laboratory extended to the domain of writing can easily be misunderstood as another form of appropriation bearing no relation to the space 'with all the bottles and strange machines'. Yet, the appeal, itself very architectural, of the laboratory as a space combining aspects of the magical and the scientific is not without its literary qualities and origins. Indeed, its popularity as a cultural trope cannot be explained without reference to Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818, in which the protagonist (Frankenstein) is conflicted about the development of 'modern natural philosophy', preferring, at least for a while, the 'dreams of forgotten alchymists'.[15] Through Shelley's literary imagination, the laboratory thus finds itself on the cusp of a cultural and spatial transformation: populated by 'various machines', it first enters the mechanistic world of modernity, but still retains its appeal as a place of mystery and magic.

With Shelley, the laboratory emerges as space of experimentation that literature evokes through writing, which in *Frankenstein* is intimately bound up with the protagonist's own appetite for books and the medium through which the story is recounted, which consists of an exchange of letters. This connection with literature forms an intrinsic part of the laboratory as a spatial trope, I argue – one that is latently present in films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). In this film, a scene in Rotwang's laboratory is immediately followed by another in the library of his patron Joh Fredersen. Likewise, Peter Greenway's *Prospero's Books* (1991) portrays the magician's

library as a place of experimentation with words and images and the very medium of film. What I argue here is that these works are indicative of a connection between architecture and literature that defines the laboratory in its historical connection with alchemy.[16] In support of this argument I will point to an image of a laboratory produced for a publication by the German physician, writer and alchemist, 'Count' Michael Maier (1569-1622).

Michael Maier's Golden Tripod

The image in question appears on the title page of Maier's *Tripus aureus (The Golden Tripod)*, first published in 1618 in Frankfurt.[17] The book, as the expanded title indicates, contains three 'chemical treatises' by three different authors: 1) The *Twelve Keys*, written, allegedly, by a fifteenth-century Benedictine monk named Basil Valentine; 2) the *Ordinall of Alchemy*, a poem from about 1477 by the English poet and alchemist Thomas Norton (ca. 1433-ca. 1513); and 3) the *Testament* by a probably fictitious, fourteenth-century abbot of Westminster named John Cremer.[18] Below the title, Maier inserted an engraving depicting a space divided into two alcoves with bookshelves on the left and a workshop on the right (see Figure 1). In the centre we see a furnace and a workshop assistant attending the fire. On top of the furnace stands a three-legged stand holding a flask with a small dragon coiled up inside, the sign of an alchemical experiment taking place inside the vessel. Standing on the left and observing the experiment are three men who can be identified by their attributes as the authors (monk, abbot and poet) of the three alchemical texts mentioned in the title (Valentine, Cremer and Norton). Maier had collected these texts on a trip to England and translated them into Latin for consumption and dissemination among the learned circles of his patron Moritz, the Landgrave of Hessen, near Kassel in Germany.[19]

Of interest here is of course the spatial division of the alchemist's 'laboratory' into two halves, with a library on one side and a workshop on the other. This type of division between a place for study and a place for practical experimentation is not unique to Maier's work and can be found in other

TRIPVS AVREVS,
Hoceſt,
TRES TRACTATVS
CHYMICI SELECTISSIMI,
Nempe

I. BASILII VALENTINI, BENEDICTINI ORDInis monachi, Germani, PRACTICA vna cum 12. clauibus & appendice, ex Germanico;

II. THOMÆ NORTONI, ANGLI PHILOSOPHI CREDE MIHI ſeu ORDINALE, ante annos 140. ab authore ſcriptum, nunc ex Anglicano manuſcripto in Latinum translatum, phraſi cuiuſque authoris vt & ſententia retenta;

III. CREMERI CVIVSDAM ABBATIS WESTmonaſterienſis Angli Teſtamentum, hactenus nondum publicatum, nunc in diuerſarum nationum gratiam editi, & figuris cupro affabre inciſis ornati operâ & ſtudio

MICHAELIS MAIERI Phil. & Med. D. Com. P. &c.

FRANCOFVRTI

Fig. 1. The title page of Michael Maier's Tripus aureus (1618). British Library 1033.k.7.(2.).

texts as well, including Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (first published in 1595), which features an alchemist's studio that is divided in a similar manner, but with the addition of a desk in the middle, covered with writing implements and musical instruments. Carl Gustav Jung was the first to draw attention to the dual aspect of this type of imagery in his book *Psychology and Alchemy*, first published in 1944.[20] Here, Jung argues that the workshop and the library represent two sides of the *opus alchymicum*: one practical, the other theoretical, where the practical side consists of 'a series of experiments with chemical substances' and the theoretical side 'a more or less individual edifice of ideas' constructed, presumably, through writing.[21] Although not irrelevant to our search for a deeper connection between the laboratory and writing, this interpretation leaves room for doubt as to the meaning of the tripod, positioned in the middle of the space.

For, when we consider the title page in its entirety, we cannot escape the fact that there are *two* 'tripods': the first is mentioned in the title (Tripus); the second is depicted in the engraving. Since the tripod of the title refers to the three texts by Valentine, Norton and Cremer, as indicated by the two words Hoc est ('that is'), we may infer that Maier hints at a double meaning of the experiment taking place in the vessel. For, given that the title and image are presented together, we as readers can conclude by way of inference that the experiment in the vessel is, in actual fact, a literary one involving the three 'chemical treatises'. Considering that the three authors are not contemporaries merely reinforces the fictitious nature of their 'meeting' in the library. Maier thus used the title page to conceptualize alchemy as a form of experimentation practised with texts.

Seen from a literary perspective, the experiment here consists in the bringing together, in a single volume, of three literary texts (in the form of an allegorical treatise, a poem and a 'testament'), which had not been published together and in a Latin translation before. To a German audience eager to educate itself about alchemy, the book thus presented a means to understand alchemy as an intellectual and literary pursuit intent on exploring print

as a place where texts can be made to 'react' to yield new meanings.
The popular understanding of alchemy as the art of transmuting lead into gold, already satirized by Ben Jonson in his play *The Alchemist* (1610), may henceforth be called inadequate. At the same time, it retains a feeling for the theatricality and sense of play associated with the published works of alchemists like Maier, who visualize them as staged performances requiring active participation on the part of their readers.[22] The 'staged' aspect of alchemical texts thus resonates with the great, Shakespearean metaphor of their time ('All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players') to suggest a deeper concern for the spatial aspects of their literary and textual-curatorial practices, including writing, translating and publishing.[23]
Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), the famous English antiquary and amateur of alchemy whose library and collection founded the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, no doubt followed a similar impulse when he assembled his compendium of alchemical poetry and gave it the title *Theatrum chemicum britannicum*, first published in 1652.[24] In presenting his compendium through the metaphor of the theatre, Ashmole drew on a widely used literary device to invite his readers to see the publication as the staging of a literary event – something which today may strike us as strange or strangely literal, but which at the time resonated with a perception and experience of reading that was arguably more visual and spatial than our own.[25] This ability, which Ashmole and his contemporaries had, to conceive of the book in spatial terms as architecture, that is to say, by way of an alternative to building, should alert us to the fact that our own conception of writing and the text is perhaps less literally architectural than it once was and has closed in on the verbal in ways we are only dimly aware of.
Viewed in their historical connection with alchemy, it thus becomes possible to conceptualize the 'writing labs' and other 'laboratories' (for architecture and literature) not as mere figurative uses of speech or metaphors disconnected from the material and social reality of the world, but as concrete means to construct spaces for an alternative practice of architecture, at once inquisitive, open-ended and ever-changing.

Conclusion

The current and widespread use of the term laboratory across the domain of art and design no doubt reflects, in one way or another, the spirit of our age. A spirit we may describe as less concerned with maintaining the hard conventions of practice embodied by the traditional studio than with the possibilities which the laboratory opens up in its creative, if perilous, relationship to change and uncertainty – the very conditions, in other words, of our time.[26] This in itself may leave us ambivalent about the potential meanings of this development. For, while it may testify to the continued relevance of experimentation as a central pedagogic concern (the *Versuche* of Gropius), nothing can assure us of its continued operation or advancement at an institutional level. Which is why an expanded notion of writing capable of transforming the discipline is more relevant than ever. Alchemy, as this article has tried to show, offers us a conceptual model, at once literary and architectural, that recognizes in textual practices such as writing, editing and translating, so many means to construct spaces, both real and fictional, of experimentation and transformation. And so, as we search for new ways of looking at architecture, landscapes and the city, it becomes clear that writing as a resource for investigating alternatives is far from exhausted.

1 Hans U. Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden (eds.), *Laboratorium* (Antwerp: Dumont, 2001).
2 Höller quoted in Obrist and Vanderlinden (eds.), *Laboratorium*, op. cit. (note 1), 25.
3 Galison quoted in Obrist and Vanderlinden (eds.), *Laboratorium*, op. cit. (note 1), 99. See also Peter Galison and Caroline A. Jones, 'Factory, Laboratory, Studio. Dispersing Sites of Production', in Peter Galison and Emily Thompson (eds.), *The Architecture of Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 497-540.
4 Galison quoted in Obrist and Vanderlinden (eds.), *Laboratorium*, op. cit. (note 1), 97.
5 Rainer K. Wick, *Teaching at the Bauhaus* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 56.
6 Gropius quoted in Barbara E. Ascher, 'The Bauhaus. Case Study Experiments in Education', in AD: *Architectural Design*, 85, 2 (2015), 30-33, 31.

7 Ascher, 'The Bauhaus. Case Study Experiments in Education', op. cit. (note 6), 31.
8 Wick, *Teaching at the Bauhaus*, op. cit. (note 5), 58.
9 Ascher, 'The Bauhaus. Case Study Experiments in Education', op. cit. (note 6), 31.
10 Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 30.
11 Ascher, 'The Bauhaus. Case Study Experiments in Education', op. cit. (note 6), 33.
12 Brett Steele, 'The AADRL. Design, Collaboration and Convergence', in AD: *Architectural Design*, 76, 5 (2006), 58-63, 58.
13 Steele, 'The AADRL. Design, Collaboration and Convergence', op. cit. (note 12), 58.
14 https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/events/2017/nov/writing-labs [Accessed 19 February 2018].
15 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (London: Penguin, 2003), 48.
16 For a broader contextualization of the subject, see Willem de Bruijn, Book-building: A Historical and Theoretical *Investigation into Architecture and Alchemy*, unpublished PhD thesis (London: University of London, 2010).
17 Michael Maier, *Tripus aureus* (Frankfurt: Lucas Jennis, 1618).
18 Hereward Tilton, The Quest for the Phoenix: *Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier* (1596-1622) (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2003), 109.
19 See Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 2002), 118, and Bruce T. Moran, *The Alchemical World of the German Court: Occult Philosophy and Chemical Medicine in the Circle of Moritz of Hessen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991).
20 Carl Gustav Jung and Richard F. C. Hull (transl.), *Psychology and Alchemy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 291.
21 Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, op. cit. (note 20), 288.
22 See Urszula Szulakowska, *The Alchemy of Light: Geometry and Optics in Late Renaissance Alchemical Illustration* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 115.
23 See Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, op. cit. (note 19), 82-96, and Helmar Schramm, Ludger Schwarte and Jan Lazardzig (eds.), *Kunstkammer, Laboratorium, Bühne. Schauplätze des Wissens im 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003).
24 Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (London: Brooke, 1652).
25 Walter J. Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 163.
26 See on this note Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 298-99.

Project Daedalus: An Earnest Play of Building Between Storytelling and Metaphors

Anca Matyiku

Every place is built around shared values, norms, histories and myths that are assumed, implied, or tactfully left unsaid. Architecture is at its core an accomplice to the untidy matter of human stories and aspirations, even if the architect's work typically results in concrete and measurable compositions. The making of architecture, in every one of its pleasures and difficulties, involves the crucial task of interpreting among tangible materials and the multitude of implicit forces that characterize a particular place.

My proposition is that literature and storytelling can play an essential role

in this interpretive task, and that they are especially fruitful for architectural pedagogy.

This paper reflects on this proposition via examples of student work produced under my guidance at McGill University.[1] The work was the result of an exploratory design project structured around Daedalus, the prototypical figure of the ancient Greek architect best known for his craftsmanship and cunning intelligence. His works – amongst them the legendary labyrinth that enclosed the half-man half-bull Minotaur – were said to inspire a profound sense of wonder mingled with fear, akin to the presence of the divine.[2] *Project Daedalus* was not a studio project that resulted in a building design but an elective course which, taking its cue from Daedalus, focused on architectural craft. It asked the students to concentrate on 'building' as a verb rather than a noun, an action rather than an object. The final projects emerged through a series of exercises that required students to translate between tactile and literary mediums. For the first exercise, students picked three small objects and wrote about them in a way that revealed something not visible or immediately apparent. As a catalyst for this exercise, students were provided with examples of short literary texts, including Francis Ponge's poetic ruminations about quotidian objects.[3] Students were then asked to imagine one of their three objects as a character, and to write this character into an existing literary work. In two instances of my teaching the project, the students grafted their story onto the myths surrounding Daedalus.[4] In another instance, students located their story in one of a series of pre-selected imaginary places from literature.[5] These texts formed the basis for the next exercise which was to transpose aspects of the story into a series of intermediary drawings and collages, further distilling the architectural questions at the heart of each student's project. In the final stage of the project, students were asked to construct either an interpretation of the character or an armature that allowed their initial object to enact this character.

Overall, I observed that with *Project Daedalus*, literary constructs suspended commitment to a final and concrete outcome, while opening up the oppor-

tunity for play. Unlike traditional approaches to design, such as the *parti diagram* or a formal conceptual premise, students arrived at their general concepts *via* their creative writing. If the stories distilled general architectural preoccupations, these came already immersed within a universe of specific details. In other words, the creative writing operated as a depository of qualities and atmospheres that sustained play throughout the latter stages of the project.

Architectural educators Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne argue that the very nature of architectural design is that of 'play' conducted in earnest.[6] Transposing H.G. Gadamer's hermeneutics onto architecture, Snodgrass and Coyne explain that the design process unfolds like a game or a dialogue between the architect and the specific design situation.[7] The authors note that in sustaining a capacity for surprise, play is what allows unpremeditated possibilities to disclose themselves. Johan Huizinga, who also informed Gadamer's notion of play, was amongst the first to outline that play and poetry are crucial to engaging those elusive subtleties that contribute to a sense of culture. He writes that poetry, 'in its original culture-making capacity, is born in and as play'.[8]

That poetic constructs are a fertile medium for culturally consequential imaginative play has been elaborated by Paul Ricoeur, especially through his understanding of 'metaphor' and 'narrative'. Ricoeur explains that the metaphor, through an unexpected juxtaposition of words, generates a productive tension, which compels us to construct imaginative ways of seeing reality.[9] He argues that the essential 'function of fiction' is to propel this re-envisioning of reality.[10] In literary texts, metaphoric tensions are woven into a coherence which Ricoeur identifies as 'narrative' or 'plot' for action.[11] The value of narrative is that of 'emplotment', by which he means that it opens the possibility for creative action. *Project Daedalus* attests to the possibility for Ricoeur's notion of emplotment to go beyond the medium of language, and to become transposed into creative actions that engage construction processes and building details.[12]

In the projects that follow, we observe how the literary imagination height-

ened the element of earnest play: that each student's creative writing not only uncovered elemental architectural preoccupations but was also suggestive of particular atmospheres and construction processes. Literary constructs enriched the element of play by allowing otherwise unpremeditated possibilities to unfold. I focus on the work of four students who were all in the first year of their master's degree.[13]

Étienne began his project with an exquisitely crafted wristwatch that no longer worked. In his first text, he wrote how the watch 'senselessly tried to haggle her fate in every sense and direction; she was imprisoned in a rotating inferno'.[14] Building on this, Étienne's second text described the Minotaur's labyrinth as a complex but fragile apparatus that was in constant motion. Its machination was a seductive mirage that trapped its victims, not only by confounding their passage but by entangling the passage of time. Étienne writes that Theseus, who in the myth escaped the labyrinth, cunningly discerned 'that its machinations were fragile and delicate, its equilibrium merely hanging by a thread'. Drawing from this, Étienne's constructed object was a delicate headpiece that lured its victim with promises of mysterious visions (Figures 1-2). He interpreted the sensation of time-paralysis by creating the experience of mesmerizing kaleidoscopic visions that were in fact reflections of the victim's own eyes.

Étienne's process was among the smoothest I witnessed: moving from his stories to the drawings, he extracted the metaphor of a continuous thread and found a resonance with a Spirograph that would reveal the clockwork mechanism he had embossed on a sheet of paper (Figures 3-5). While working on the drawing, he felt that it was experientially conducive to a kaleidoscope of mirrors, so he built the delicate seductive headpiece around this. Taking cue from the mechanism of the labyrinth in his story, his headpiece was constructed from fragile segments of nearly invisible plexiglass, also connected by a continuous thread of fishing line.

Christina started with a box of matches, and wrote a poem imagining that a fire match, tightly ordered amongst the others in the darkness of the matchbox, was anxiously anticipating its destiny: 'This excitement of the unknown

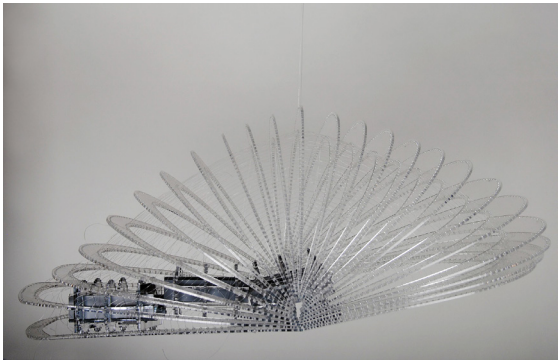


Fig. 1.
Étienne's final construction. (2013)
Source and credit: Étienne Sédillot

Fig. 2.
Étienne enacting the entrapment produced by his headpiece. (2013) Source and credit: Étienne Sédillot

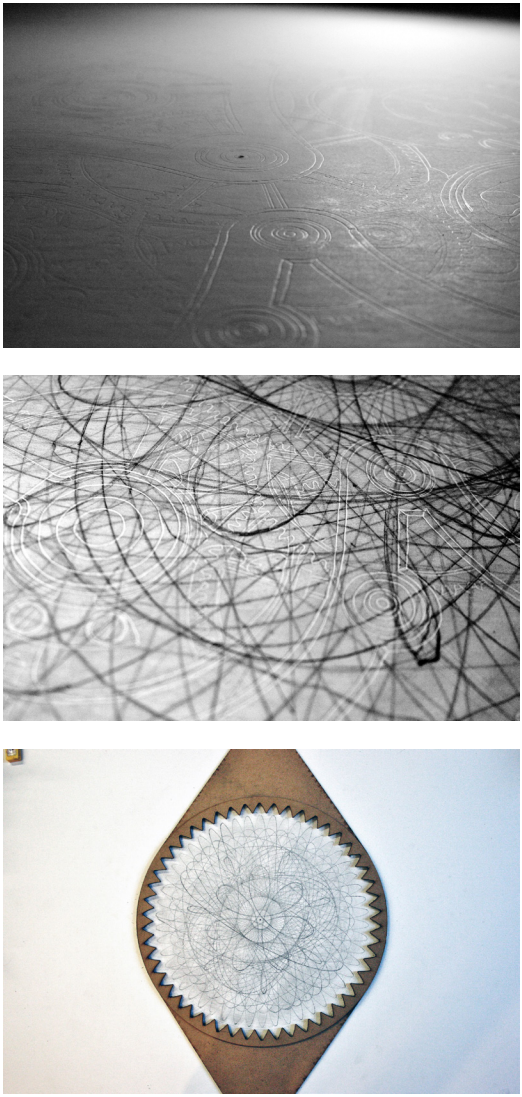


Fig. 3-5.
Étienne's intermediary drawing. (2013)
Source and credit: Étienne Sédillot

is burning inside me. /I am waiting impatiently for that one moment of enlightenment. /Where I will sway with the breeze, /Spreading my sparks through valleys and peaks'. She followed with a story that described the event of the queen's birthday, set in an imaginary place called Lanternland:[15]

> *Only when her Majesty took her place, the great feast began. Lanterns were served with fat, moulded candles, while the Royal Blooded were provided with walnut-oil candles. Special treatment was received by the Queen, which was served with great, stiff, flaming taper of white wax, slightly red at the tip. [The Midnight-oilers] were distinguished by the hanging bags [on which they carried the] Little Lights. Those Little Lights were particularly [shaped to] provide an ignition of a majestic lightshow. [On their own, they] appeared fragile, but once they built up an army they become an unstoppable ephemeral monster.*

Taking cues from her description of the various light-emanating characters at the queen's banquet, Christina began to shape and articulate different materials by using an array of fire sources such as matches and torches (Figures 6-11). The text she wrote enabled her to focus design intentions: she looked to capture *the* regal garment in her *particular* story. Christina eventually came to interpret the tale by building the queen's festive garment as a lantern that would cast light and shadows on its surroundings (Figures 12-14). In other words, her construction sought to render this event palpable rather than merely represent it. More generally, Christina's texts led her to explore questions about ephemerality and the architecture of event. In building the lantern, she discovered the cumulative power of seemingly mundane rituals: in her case the simple habit of lighting a match built up to an intricate performance of shadow and light.

Another student, Edith, worked with a moose tooth that she had found while she was a dental hygienist in northern Ontario. Drawing from this previous vocation, her first text about the tooth noted that it 'began its specificity as early as part of a foetus in a womb.' Grafting her own story onto the Daeda-

Fig. 6-11.
Christina's building process. (2016)
Source and credit: Christina Kordova

Fig. 12+13+14. Christina's final project: An interpretation of the event of the Queen's Birthday in Lanternland. (2016)
Source and credit: Christina Kordova

lus myth, she imagined the moment when Queen Pasiphaë gave birth to the Minotaur. She described how the king had a temple built atop a mountain specifically for this momentous event. Edith described the tooth to have fallen out of the queen's mouth during what she imagined would have been an excruciating delivery. She described the Minotaur's birth as so peculiar and horrifying that even the queen's midwives fled screaming. Edith writes that following this abandonment, the king,

> *scared for his wife, broke tradition and entered the bedchamber. Realising that he was not the father, . . . he turned on his heels and locked the door behind him. The queen was still linked to the Minotaur by the umbilical cord. . . . She had to use her fallen tooth to cut herself from the horrible monster . . . Once she was done severing the chord, she backed away from the creature, never turning her back to it, holding her tooth as her only weapon.*

Edith approached the drawing exercise by scratching an image of the tooth's anatomy onto a piece of wood. She eventually located her project – interpreted as the queen's entrapment – in the hard grain that remained after she sandblasted a vertical portion of an already existing wood cabinet. Using dentistry-inspired techniques, she made a series of casts of the tooth and the cabinet (Figures 15-17). From these she cast wax pieces which she joined and built up into a small armature that was eventually cast in bronze. The resulting project was an intricate ball-jointed bronze prosthesis and gouging foot that fated the tooth to a slow labour of carving itself an escape – a process by which it was also destined to grow increasingly intimate with its prison (Figures 18-20).

We can suggest that Edith's general preoccupation was to explore the dilemma inherent in building walls: that they negotiate between wildness and human culture but that in doing so they simultaneously protect and hold captive. This elemental condition is interwoven with the particular details of Edith's text, which tells the story of a queen who has just given

Fig. 15-20. Edith's process: moulds used for casting wax. (2013)
Source and credit: Edith Dennis-LaRocque

Fig. 18-20. Edith's final project. (2013)
Source and credit: Edith Dennis-LaRocque

birth to a monster and must now deliver herself from its rage. The text captures the bittersweet atmosphere of courage mingled with desperation. This atmosphere, as well as the actions described in Edith's story, focused her design intentions and were also suggestive of approaches to building such as carving, gouging and bonding. In other words, the metaphoric power of the story was generative of potential action beyond the medium of literature.

For Robert, it was the first writing exercise that became the stronger force in his project. He wrote about a cigar box that contained intimate mementoes that he shared with his partner:

> *Seeking out the treasures, one might be disappointed in what they find. To shuffle among the debris is an exercise in wonder. [What] is the worth of a crumpled paper crane? A sign lifted from a hotel room? Taken together, it turns out these are not treasures at all, but a map. And one might still be disappointed – this map only serves to retrace steps, [to] remember places seen and not seen. . . . But only two people can read it.*

We notice that Robert's text is less descriptive of atmospheric qualities and more expressive of a particular experience and mode of engagement. Through the writing, he became interested in how something might be simultaneously seen and unseen. He wanted to construct an object that would capture the experience of deciphering an intimate map whose secret could only be unlocked through patience and dedication. He built three nesting puzzle boxes by reinterpreting Japanese joinery in a way that combined laser cutting with hand carving (Figures 21-22). Puzzle boxes have no hardware but are held together through a series of sophisticated Japanese joints. In order to open them, the person must know (or patiently untangle) the particular sequence of movements by which the joints are unlocked. To further bewilder a possible intruder, each of the three boxes had a different puzzle sequence. The largest box would be 'hiding in plain sight' and it was only for the initiate to understand its true value. Like Christina's lantern,

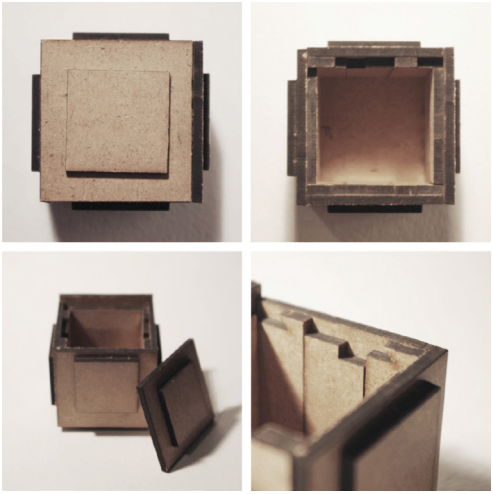


Fig. 21. Images of Robert's middle puzzle box. (2013)
Source and credit: Robert Hartry

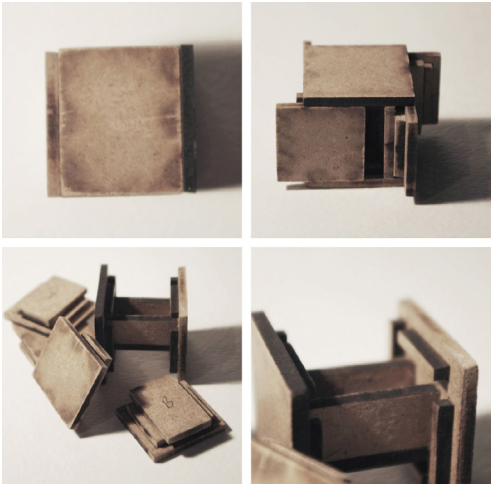


Fig. 22. The smallest of Robert's puzzle boxes. The two smaller boxes were so delicate that the slightest clumsy slip of one's fingers could sabotage the clever moves one had previously managed. (2013)
Source and credit: Robert Hartry

Robert's puzzle boxes made the sensation of wonder and secrecy palpable to those who welcomed their riddle.

While each student started their project by engaging the literary imagination in the same manner, their building process took on a course that was specific to each. Even if these literary constructs focused the students' design intention, they did not constrain the process to a prescriptive mode of engagement. That the students' trajectories were so varied indicates that the literary imagination allows each design circumstance to develop according to its own logic and the specific concerns of a particular design endeavour. As noted in the beginning, architecture operates within a complex constellation of subtle forces and implicit values. To appropriately engage this cultural ground is not a straightforward process: it involves astute transpositions across mediums. The correspondences are complex, slippery, and anything but literal: leaps must be made and intuitions courted. We have seen how the literary imagination can be a deft accomplice to this end – in its capacity to sustain an earnest play of possibilities that can be transposed into acts of building. It is perhaps not a stretch to suggest that the poetic strength of literary constructs holds an essential agility in the training and honing of this architectural perspicacity.

1 I am greatly indebted to Prof. Alberto Pérez-Gómez for the opportunity to carry out this pedagogic laboratory in conjunction with his graduate-level history and theory lecture courses.

2 For a discussion on Daedalus and how the notion of craftsmanship is important for architectural practice see Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 'The Myth of Dedalus: On the Architect's *métier*', in: *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Volume 1 (Montreal: RightAngle International Publishing, 2016), 1-21.

3 Francis Ponge, *Le Parti pris des choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967); Francis Ponge, *The Power of Language*: Texts and Translations (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

4 Extracts from Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: The Folio Society, 1996).

5 Selected from Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi, *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places* (New York: Harcourt, 2000).

6 Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006).
7 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1975).
8 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 122.
9 Elaborated more extensively in Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
10 Paul Ricoeur, 'The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality', *Man and World*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1979), 123-141.
11 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 45.
12 Although typically encountered in the context of design studio, most teaching tactics employ 'narrative' to emphasize architecture as a spatio-temporal vessel that sustains narratives of human inhabitation. See for instance Wim van den Bergh and Mark Proosten, 'Narrative as an Educational Approach', in Klaske Havik et al. (eds.), *Writingplace* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016), 110-130. For an extensive discussion of Ricoeur in relation to architecture, including examples of pedagogy, see Klaske Havik, *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2014).
13 I am grateful to Étienne Sédillot, Edith Dennis-LaRocque, Robert Hartry and Christina Kordova, who have granted me permission to discuss their work here.
14 Étienne's original text read: '*elle avait beau se débattre dans tous les sens, elle était prisonnière de cet enfer rotatif.*' My translation.
15 Manguel and Guadalupi, 'Lanternland', in *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, op. cit. (note 5), 357.

Performing Openness Episodes of Walking Urban Narratives

Christos Kakalis & Stella Mygdali

Introduction

This paper examines the pedagogical role of narrative in a series of urban workshops held by the international network 'Urban Emptiness' in Edinburgh and Athens between February 2016 and May 2016[1]. The aim of the workshops was to investigate new interdisciplinary and participatory ways of reading diverse urban environments by exploring silence and emptiness in contemporary cities. To fulfil this aim performativity and narrative were combined into a series of walking actions that critically revisited the different stages of the organization and execution of experiential teaching approaches: from the briefing to the performance of different actions and the mapping/documentation of their results.

In particular, a symposium of five workshops entitled 'Silence, Narrative and the Intimacy of the City' was held in Edinburgh, during 'Innovative Learn-

ing Week' (University of Edinburgh).[2] In them, students and scholars from various disciplines – architecture, art, digital media, anthropology – worked together, seeking to grasp the vagueness of urban atmospheres[3] by deploying tools of site reading in a way that would meaningfully interweave the different workshops through embodied narratives. Testing the incorporation of this relational and synthetic process, another workshop entitled 'Real and Imaginary Embodied Landscapes/Sensing Silences' was later held in Athens (National Technical University of Athens) and was open only to postgraduate students of architecture.[4]

From the personal to the collective and from the mnemonic and fictional to the present, narrative and walking were combined in both of the events to unfold hidden and imaginary qualities of the urban landscape in a performative way. The diverse synthetic potentials of narrative offered a pedagogical tool for walking actions to be performed in the urban context seeking to answer questions such as: What is a studio brief?[5] What is site reading and analysis? What is an architectural project's output?

Performing Walking Narratives

Performativity was examined through the agency of the walking body-subjects as expressed during their interaction with the city. Following a phenomenological point of view the project appreciates bodily perception and understands reality as the *liminal zone* where body and mind, the *physical* and the *psychical*, merge. This phenomenal spatiality can be fully perceived and 'mapped' only through our bodies and can thus be narrated in different ways depending on the context in which it is performed.[6] The examined actions created playful environments, contributing to the current discourse on performative education; they opened fields of interaction that were different from what is considered as 'ordinary life', changing the lens through which we usually interact through our body with our surroundings. The process unveiled how Elyse Pineau's argument about performative pedagogy can be applied in architectural education:

> *As a pedagogical method, performative play privileges full body involvement – literally, learning from the inside – combined with keen self-reflection on the nature and implications of one's actions. . . . The concept of play, with its attendant implications of experimentation, innovation, critique and subversion, breaks open conventionalized classroom practices.*[7]

The actions and their outputs have made clear that mapping the city deals with the expression of different kinds of embodied experience, something that clashes with the way cartography and architectural representation have been traditionally perceived as data-based, mathematical and abstract construct.[8] The agency of performativity opened the field for narrative and walking to be combined as the key research methods for both of these clusters of events.

Narrative led different stages of the explored educational processes to welcome a multiplicity of points of views, encourage a flux in leadership/facilitation and experiment with different ways of expression. The two clusters of actions explored narrative in *the briefing process* (using performative, deconstructing and montage methodologies), *the performance* (walking itineraries, oral history, site/process-specific designed sketchbooks), *the documentation and the communication*.

Narrative has the ability to (re)open an experience through the synthesis of a number of different events into an intelligible whole. According to Paul Ricoeur, through narrative a number of events are connected into a meaningful whole due to the dynamics of plot. Plot refers to the *configurational arrangement* of heterogeneous events that is based on their causal relation.[9] Further to this, Urban Emptiness questions the 'closed' character that plot traditionally suggests by exploring a sense of openness in the different ways in which narrative was deployed.

In the examined events this narrative understanding of spatiality was combined with walking. The walking motif has a strong presence in artistic practices, with projects that suggest, among other things, experiential forms of

engaging and mapping the surrounding environment as well as new forms of relating to the other co-walkers. Karen O'Rourke refers to two common methods used by artists to structure their walks: i) 'a map, with no directions' – a predetermined itinerary that shapes the walk but does not tell us how to walk it, ii) 'directions, but no map' – a set of instructions, scores or notations that frame a walk, leaving chance encounters and guidelines to direct our path.[10] Both methods leave room for interpretation, where, in some cases, planning and decisions have been made before hand, or where they are still being developed during the execution and management of the walking event. The meaningful synthesis of experiences through walking and narrative was explored in the Urban Emptiness actions, responding to what Christopher Tilley suggests as the narrative agency of a place:

> *Narrative is a means of understanding and describing the world in relation to agency. It is a means of linking locales, landscapes, actions, events and experiences together providing a synthesis of heterogeneous phenomena. . . . In its mimetic or phenomenological form narrative seeks to capture action not just through description but as a form of re-description.*[11]

Hence, the briefing of the actions ranged from more traditional ones giving instructions and prefiguring possible results, to briefs that developed gradually depending on the evolution of the workshops. In this sense, 'The Impossible Inaudible Soundwalk' workshop was briefed according to a series of clear instructions, carefully written and presented on the first day of the symposium, offering to the participants a 'safe'/pre-structured environment to interact with each other and the theme. With a different approach, the 'Urban Body' workshop followed a more organic briefing that was gradually unfolded, reflecting the course of the process. Every next part of the brief was based on the results of the actions of the previous one and without having a clear idea of how the body of work was going to evolve. In the case of the workshops held in Athens, the brief was rewritten in a more abstract

1. Be_ _ aware_ __ walking _ _ _ _

   silence. _ _ _ _ (Un)keep _ _ _ Shared _ _
   attention _ _ _ pause; _ _ _immersion_ _ _ _ sense.
   Stop _ _ _unstop _ Fulfilled.
   incomplete_ _ gap _ _ _ _create_

2. _Write_ _
   _ walkingplace_ _ _action,_ collective _ _ _ self.
   _ _ _ Pace._ _interaction _ _ _ touchingsmellinghearing _ _ _ pause.
   _ _ _ _ here_ _ _ record. _ _remember _ _ _ you
   _ _ _ place_ _ _ body.

Action for the second workshop..

TASK #1:
Slow Walk on the side walk

….. here.... walk.... slow... slow...
feel....
feet... hands... heart.... blood.... listen.... wind... door...steps...breath...pulse...

smell.... hole.... food... dead... corner...

….see.... scan.... horizon.... sky.... floor.... water...
become..archive... become...trace

no time.... your time....

you are here... this moment is you.... and you are all around you....

...who are you here...

...let your walk take you somewhere else....

Instruction: Stand on the sidewalk, determine a starting point... looking to the horizon walk as slow as you can until a predetermined ending point.

TASK #2
Door/Window Portraits:

stay.... stand.... still...
stay... sit... comfortably... watch....

window... doors... neighbors... balconies... roofs.. dust... ...nature
... manmade... sides.. angles...
...wander differences... shapes... textures...
…..interconnection
see yourself... document... one become all...

...one window.. many windows.
….one door..many doors.. one roof... many roofs.
...one you.... many yous... US on the window, doors, roofs.

Instructions: #1 Sit down at a door step (entrance) scan what you see/feel/sense/hear. Document its textures and colors. #2 Stand Still in the place of your preference: look up scan the landscape and documented document...

Task #3
The neighbors:

permission.... ask...
….history.... place.. location.. time... action...
where... going... staying... who... here... somewhere...
..attention... eyes... hands... life... movement.. story..
passing... passing... by... staying...
engaging... …. space... place.. personal... social...
language... communication.. verbal... movement... verbal... expressions.. non.verbal...
...encounter... elusive... ephemeral...
community... family... change...

Instructions: **Talk to a by passer... ask for the hour, ask about the place... ask them who they are... introduce yourself... Be inviting, not intrusive. If they do not speak greek, or any language you know, is there a way to communicate?**

3. Iam_ _ _ site_ _ _ story_ _ _ _ _i
   pause_ _ _ revisit _ _ _journey_ _ _
   transition. _ _ _ change_ _ _
   gap _ _ _
   Life_ _ _ project _ _ _ _dream.
   interrupt _ _ _ _ memory _ _ future
   _ I am_ _ _ location.

Fig. 1. Deconstructed brief of the workshop in Athens.

way, focusing on bodily actions, and was distributed to the students during the walking activities.

Acknowledging the values of walking practices in educational environments as well as their experimental potential in research, we wanted to invest in a process that stays open and continually changes as events unfold over time. Through walking and reflecting upon these walks, diverse urban spatialities emerged, revealing the importance of *openness* in an education process that is based on a discursive understanding of its different actions. Narrative and walking were mainly combined in a deliberate way as the workshops took place, as different episodes of one educational and research narrative gradually developing in different cities. In order to question the role of a 'plot' in performative educational processes, thread workshops were introduced. Working towards the idea of shaping openness in educational environments, the suggested threads questioned the traditional perception of plot as a closed form in education: the plot of a studio brief, the prefigured plot of a site diagram, the plot according to which a 'completed' and 'final' design output is expressed. By challenging the relationship between the facilitator and the participant, plots became 'narrative threads' by introducing a multiplicity of point of views while playing with the idea of 'having and losing control' of the process.
One of the thread workshops, 'Performing Silence: What happens when you shift the focus?', invited the facilitators to become its participants, opening a field for performative interactions that also influenced the happening of the parallel workshops. The leader was also a participant and the actions were organized around ideas of discursive walking exercises that were triggered by a number of indoor games, such as role-playing exercises, dialogues based on allocated words inspired by the themes explored. The thematic walks were developed as dialogues in pairs or groups of three, giving us the opportunity to explore different rhythms and conditions of movement as playful and subversive settings to bring together personal narratives and research approaches.

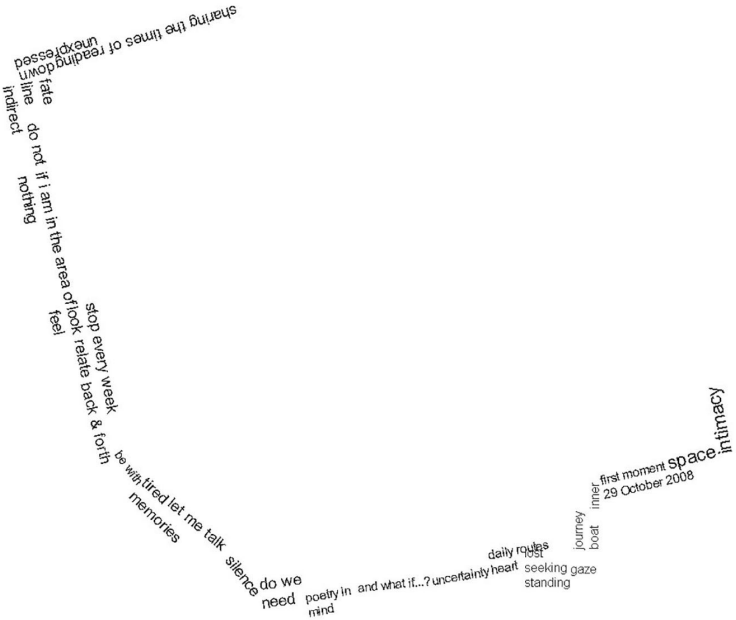


Fig. 2. ‘Loving Landscapes’: map produced by the two participants.

The free-association word games brought forward ideas, questions and memories unfiltered by expectations that shaped later forms of walking. For example, during a game of selected keywords, where the participants as pairs were asked to select two cards without knowing their content in advance and respond to them in a dialogical form, one of the resulting matches was 'intimacy and space'. The initial dialogue of these two participants came to structure their walk later in a pre-selected route, which developed poetically as a contemplation of personal stories responding to the urban context.

The workshop created a setting that would shift the state of mind of the leaders and redirected interests and ideas in new creative meetings. By constantly investing on generating new narratives as alternative perspectives on the themes explored, we managed to sustain a reflective mode of thinking towards each other's practices and to revisit the methodologies of each workshop while the process was still ongoing. Interestingly, this was manifested in the development of the second thread workshop 'Re/Reading Urban Emptiness and Silence' that was further transformed when moved to Athens, as we will see further on.
Narrative tools were deployed in the execution of the workshops in many different ways. The 'Urban Body' workshop, for example, focused on personal and collective stories created during open-ended walks that followed techniques of body awareness. The role of the silent walking body as a carrier of both collective stories was illuminated. Diverse narratives were generated while participants were engaging in individual, pair, or group tasks. A process of changing the walking rhythms and deconstructing everyday habits and rituals brought forward an immediate encounter with the surrounding environment. The experiences of the silent walks –when the silent body becomes a stylus that connects different places – were narrated in texts written as dialogues between participants before their execution as well as texts and mappings created after the walks as reflective narratives. These narratives touched upon ideas and notions of 'home', while engag-

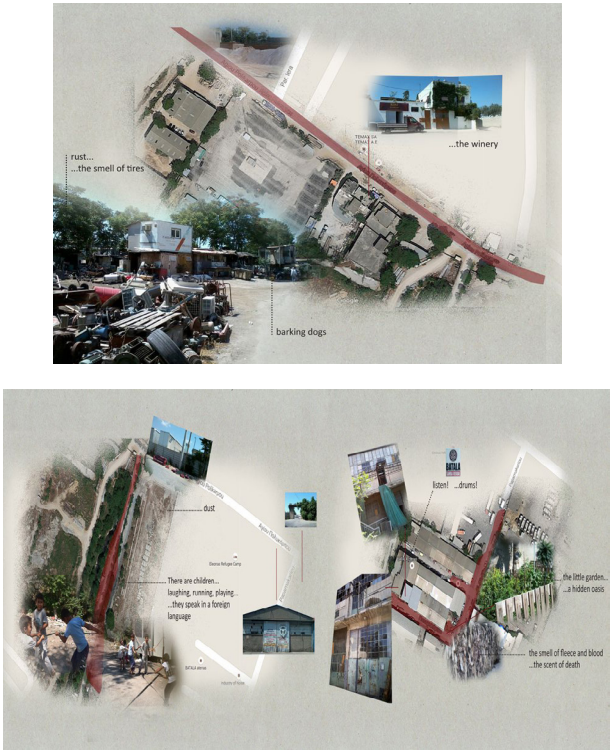


Fig. 3. Collage of St. B. documenting the area of Elaionas. Bringing together disparate elements of a place is evident by both the use of collage and audio archives to record the aural context of her encounters. Her closing reference to the Camus quote is even more intriguing as it attributes to Elaionas a quality she remembered from the description of an imaginary literary landscape.

ing on a multi-layered process of recording conditions of closeness and distancing between cities, places in the same city and people.

These different interrelations of narrative and walking unveiled the educational meaning of Michel de Certeau's description of walking as a 'tactic' experience during which the individual has the opportunity to interact with the natural landscape. For Certeau, walking thus becomes a kind of 'travelling' during which the individual is simultaneously reading and writing an embodied story. This story is organized into a sequence of encounters between the different characters involved in the process, things, humans, animals and elements of the natural landscape.[12]
The dynamic interrelation of performativity, narrative and walking was characteristically manifested in the work of V. S., who participated in the 'Urban Body' workshop, producing as a final output an interactive map. A Google image of the area of Edinburgh, where the walks of the workshop took place, was divided into a grid of 20 equal parts under which different stories were depicted through the combination of text and images. Memories, dreams, thoughts and representations of actions and other places were synthesized into a narrative following a 'montage' or 'creative writing' technique, seeking to express the idea that 'we [always] carry places with us', being unravelled in her case while walking through Edinburgh. The reader of the map is invited to unfold these different parts, but it is not possible to unfold all of them simultaneously because of the way in which the hidden montage is crafted. The map remains therefore open to new stories created by the people opening the enveloped episodes.

One of the students in the Athens actions went so far as to write a mystery story set in Elaionas about a man who wakes up and realizes he does not know where he is. In addition to texts, some of the participants of the actions used photo montages, video and sound design software as means of merging in-situ experience with the thoughts and memories they related to it.

Fig. 4. Views of V. S. 's map.

Fig. 5. The sketchbook/envelope of T.V.

A different thread workshop, 'Re/Reading Urban Emptiness and Silence', addressed both the participants and the facilitators of the different workshops by distributing a number of sketchbooks to be used during the events. The sketchbook was designed as a site-specific piece, taking into consideration the ideas of pause and interruption, and translating them through the combination of different kinds of paper, different extracts of texts, and suggestions of short actions/tasks to its user. In most of the cases the sketchbooks were used as reflective devices in which the individuals either wrote or sketched spontaneous thoughts while walking or used them as an a posteriori diary.
Challenging the more closed and site-specific narrative of the sketchbook used in Edinburgh and reacting to the openness suggested by 'Performing Silence: What happens when you shift the focus?', another *envelope/sketchbook* was handed to the students in Athens. This time, the envelope followed a process-specific method of design, informed by the briefing of actions taking place during the workshop, and was handed to the students at a key moment, in the break between two silent walks in the area of Elaionas. The envelope included different kinds of papers; the participants could use it as a drawing board, a notebook or even a container of elements of the landscape. Questioning traditional sketchbooks proved to be a very useful pedagogical exercise: providing a narrative device to read the city that invited an embodied interaction (open, kneel, sketch, collect, write, exhibit its material and so forth). By comparing a site-specific to a process-specific documentation tool it was realized that the latter was more effectively used as directly linked to the shaping of openness as expressed through performativity and walking. This reminds us of the distinction between the 'map/no directions' and 'directions but no map' logics discussed before. In the case of T.V., therefore, the envelope became a 'vessel' of found objects, sketches, rubbings, thoughts and photographs resulting from the walking workshop that were afterwards curated into his narrative of the place: the student re-arranged the material seeking to 'tell the story' of Elaionas by using the same things and ideas that were collected from the area as well

as the materials provided by the envelope itself, transforming the latter almost into a kind of a narrative 'cabinet of curiosity'.

Emerging Threads

The examined workshops suggest an educational methodology that combines performativity, narrative and walking into conditions of openness in which participants work on a kind of 'creative writing' exercise, inspired by the interaction with the site as well as their personal memories, thoughts and imagination. Alternative ways of writing a brief, reading and documenting urban places and landscapes suggest the dynamic role that narrative can play in architectural education as a tool that remains flexible, adjustable and open depending on the embodied character of phenomenal spatiality. The narrative threads of these processes are based on the participants resituating themselves in the city according to diverse actions that keep changing the given parameters of the brief through their interaction with the context. By deploying narrative and performativity through walking in the city the actions suggest a learning environment that, while structured, remains open, in terms of a particular aim. A design teaching method based on a narrative (episodes or stories *shared* between the participants/students and the facilitators, the city and its people) that emerges and evolves during the workshops. This challenges the 'problem-solving' preoccupation we often see in architectural education, where the final result is seen as the most effective answer to a 'problem' or 'question' set from the beginning in a brief. Through a process of redirecting, shifting focus and bodily realization of intimacy, risk and discovery, the process is about the unsettling continuity of an emerging plot that greatly benefits the architectural education seen as a process of organically interrelating different components into a whole.

Through the lens of this openness, architectural and urban research is framed not as closed and strategically oriented processes, but as more organic, flexible and relational. The diverse characters of the player, the collector, the observer and the narrator, deployed in the examined events,

questioned the abstract, diagrammatic and information-based approaches to site reading.

The realization of the pedagogical dynamics of these open structures, fields and processes that do not have a definite end but are based on a constant negotiation offers a dynamic field that can be complex enough – interweaving open threads – to suggest ever-shifting palimpsests of narratives as modes of creative learning environments.

1 For more information about the network please visit: https://urbanemptiness.org/

2 This five-day event involved the following five workshops, all running in parallel: 'Urban Body' led by Marielys Burgos Meléndez, 'The Impossible Inaudible Soundwalk' led by Katerina Taliani and Akoo-o Collective, 'The Parthenon(s): A "beautiful ruin" and an unfinished monument' led by Sofia Grigoriadou and Elli Vassalou, 'Performing Silence: What Happens when you shift the focus?' led by Stella Mygdali and 'Re/Reading Urban Emptiness and Silence' led by Christos Kakalis.
For detailed descriptions of the briefs see https://issuu.com/urbanemptiness/docs/programme_workshop_symposium.

3 See Tonino Griffero, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

4 The workshop was held in combination with lectures and studio tutorials and was integrated in the agenda of the course 'Methodological Tools of Analysis for Creating Strategies of Integral Urban Interventions' of the MSc 'Design-Space-Culture' of the National Technical University of Athens.

5 Further on this see Ella Chmielewska, 'Writing with the photograph: espacement, description and an architectural text in action', in A. Dahlgren, N. Lager Vestberg and D. Patersson (eds.), *Representational Machines: Photography and the Production of Space* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2013), 83-105.

6 Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 48.

7 Elyse Lamm Pineau, 'Teaching is Performance: Reconceptualizing a Problematic Metaphor', *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 31 (1994) no. 1, 14-15.

8 Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps*

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 144.
On the current architectural discourse on this see Mark Dorrian, 'Architecture's Cartographic Turn', in F. Pousin (ed.), *Figures de la ville et construction des savoirs* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2005), 61-72.
Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Angeliki Sioli, 2013. 'Drawing With/In and Drawing Out: A Redefinition of Architectural Drawing through Edward S. Casey's Meditations on Mapping', in Azucena Cruz-Pierre and Donald A. Landes (eds.), *Exploring the Work of Edward S. Casey: Giving Voice to Place, Memory and Imagination* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 153-161.
Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), especially Chapter 7: 'Representation and the Linguistic Imagination', 197-214. Neil Spiller (ed.), 'Drawing Architecture', *Architectural Design*, no. 225 (September/October 2013).
The seminal piece on this theme is Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building*, AA Documents 2 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).
The work of philosophers such as Edward S. Casey and Tim Ingold, as well as human geographers such as Edward Relph and Yi Fu Tuan, has also influenced the challenging of architectural representation.

9 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 64-70.

10 Karen O'Rourke, *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 47-98

11 Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), 32.

12 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 107-126.

13 On this as especially unfolded during the workshops in Athens, see also Nelly Marda, Christos Kakalis, Olga Ioannou, 'Pedagogical approaches to embodied topography: a workshop that unravels the hidden and imaginary landscapes of Elaionas', *ZARCH Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 8 (2017), 288-299.

The Word-Collector: Urban Narratives and 'Word-Designs'

Angeliki Sioli

Asking students of architecture to walk the staggeringly cold streets of Montreal during the winter months of January and February is not a request received with the utmost enthusiasm. Assigning to these walks the task of *collecting words* can actually transform the lack of excitement into genuine bewilderment. Indeed, both times I introduced the 'Word-Collector' – topic of an experimental studio project I taught in the Post-Professional Master's at the School of Architecture, McGill University, during the winters of 2013 and 2014 – the students' initial awkwardness was manifested in questions like 'what do you mean by words?' The familiar word seemed incomprehensible in its new context, 'collecting words', and the task nonsensical. Architecture students are used to roam urban environments drawing diagrams and maps, making quick sketches, capturing sounds, textures, images and motions with pencils, watercolours, video recordings, and mostly photographs. Words on their own are not something to be examined and even less 'collected' in a city.

No one would deny though that the public space of the cities all over the

world is saturated with words. Commercial signs, street names, posters or announcement boards, advertisements, city newspapers, graffiti inscriptions, bus schedules and mottos on car plates are just some of the most common writings we encounter in an everyday urban experience. Although usually unnoticed, our appropriation of each city's environment is significantly based on our reading of these words, not just in terms of functional circulation. If philosopher Michel de Certeau is right, some of these writings and their meanings or symbolic dimensions insinuate other routes into the functionalistic and historical order of movement in a city. They articulate a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal or permitted meaning, and thus influence our paths unexpectedly.[1]

Word-Collections

With Michel de Certeau's seminal essay 'Walking in the City', Walter Benjamin's 'One Way Street', Guy Debord's 'Theory of the *Dérive*', and excerpts from James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* inspiring the initial classes, the students were encouraged to walk the city and collect words;[2] words that impressed them, motivated them or triggered their imagination. With this premise in mind, and the pedagogical intention to explore the possibilities of language as a tool of architectural representation, we gradually built a theoretical basis on related bibliography. We explored the impact of writing on our consciousness through the philosophical works *Does Writing Have a Future?* by Vilem Flusser and *Orality and Literacy* by Walter Ong.[3] We discussed the metaphorical capacity of language through writings by philosopher Paul Ricoeur, cognitive linguists George Lakkof and Mark Johnson as well as the poet Jorge Luis Borges.[4] We looked into the effect of the written word on our imagination through the work of professor of literature and language Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book*, and of philosopher Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination*.[5] We questioned the predominance of vision in our encounter with the world through texts by philosopher Michael Levin and architect Juhani Pallasmaa.[6] Furthermore, relevant precedents from art, literature and cinema helped the students grasp the poetic potential of their

work and slowly create their own word-collections.
Alongside the collected words the students were also asked to write a short paragraph for every one of the words, *narrating* the reasons for choosing them. These short narratives were explicitly meant to be of a personal nature. As expressed by philosophers in the phenomenological hermeneutic tradition like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricoeur but also poets like Octavio Paz and Anne Carson, language is the vehicle to articulate our primary experiences of emotional and cognitive meaning, as given already to perception, in our embodied active engagement with the world.[7] Thus the students' collected words and relevant paragraphs foregrounded connections between language architecture and the city beyond a simplistic semiotic model that sees language as a system of neutral signs void of emotional content. They specifically revealed the fullness of meaning they may carry for the students as inhabitants of the city.
Moreover, given that words do not necessarily have a physical presence of their own and are hard to actually collect, the students had to decide on the means of their own collection. They also had to define parameters and rules as to how the items of their collections would be classified and exhibited – rules appropriate to the character of the collection they were creating. Carefully contemplating the different factors of the project, international Palestinian student Rana Abughannam set off on her city explorations. Emerged in a distinctively different climate, while both missing home and trying to understand and connect to her new environment, she ended up collecting words expressing these very intense emotions. This kind of engagement with the urban envelopment is a characteristic example of how emotions are ways of-being-in-the-world. As sociologist Nick Crossley explains in his study *The Social Body*, emotions are 'ways of making sense of and acting in the world and that to be in a particular emotional state entails perceiving the world in a particular way; noticing things that one might not usually notice'.[8]
As her words accumulated Rana decided to find a way to preserve all her findings for the years to come; her collection thus became one of preserved

“Canada Post”

As I pass by the Canada Post office I dream of a package from back home, Palestine. I wonder in my thoughts fantasizing about all the food that I could be getting from my mom, all the delicious meals and sweets that she makes for me. I dream about the scent of my bed oozing comfort and soothe. I long for a hug and a kiss from my parents confirming that everything will be alright. I remember my Mom’s sweet black coffee and piece of her Zaatar Manakeesh. I start missing all these days on the balcony during the summer nights with the cold breeze and a hot cup of tea with green mint. I wish Canada post could deliver a conversation or two with my dad. I close my eyes and I picture my friends and I sitting around the backyard of my house eating some watermelon with white cheese, the taste of the sweet and salty blending into perfection. And then I realize, no package could ever deliver what I need. It is not the material which I urge for, but the actual experiences and events that I need. Maybe a package with a plane ticket might be nice.

Ingredients:

· 1 paper bag from **Canada Post**
· 2 cups of Arabic Coffee
· A great love for your Mom

Preparation:

· Fold the paper bag and place in the jar. Make sure that the words are visible.
· Add 2 cups of Arabic Coffee and let it cool as you remember your Mom

Fig. 1. ‘Word-Collector’ project by Rana Abughannam, Handbook, McGill University, 2013.

words. She focused on how to physically compile and maintain this collection. Inspired by the Palestinian tradition of preserving food in jars (pickles), she decided to put each one of her words in a separate jar and 'pickle' it. She conceived three distinct word categories for her collection, each of which required a particular method of 'pickling'. The first category consisted of city-words that reminded her of family and friends in Palestine. These were 'pickled' in Arabic coffee – its colour and smell being connected with many personal memories. The second category consisted of words from food products she consumed while in Montreal trying to bear the winter (comfort food, like chocolates and coffee). She preserved them using the traditional Arabic recipe for vegetable pickling: hot water, vinegar, sugar, salt and lemon juice. The third category consisted of words that were supposed to remind her of Montreal in the future and did not yet carry very strong emotional content. They were 'pickled' in transparent gelatin, resembling the scientific way of preserving research samples, thus alluding to the possibility for her to re-examine them at some point later on.
More than 40 glass jars made up her collection, and while contemplating the practical difficulties of carrying them Rana decided to create a small handbook that would include photographs of each one of her jars, the narratives that accompany her 'pickled words, along with instructions on how the 'word pickling' should be done, almost like a surreal cookbook.

Word-Designs

For the project's second part, the students were asked to 'design with words' the appropriate space to exhibit their collection along with a small-scale dwelling for the collector. Building upon the characteristics of the word-collection they had already created, the nature of words they collected, the places where the words were found in the city, the physical presence of the words themselves (some students collected only recordings of words, for example) or even the meaning and form of the collected words (some students collected only verbs) they had, as designers, to create the appropriate space for this very collection.

To do that they had to put their ideas in writing right away and abstain from drawing sketches or resorting to any other method they would usually follow for a design project. Their writings, their 'word-designs' as we called them, had to explore thoroughly the interior of the spaces as well as the spatial connections with the external urban environment (views, sounds, position in the city) but not on the external form of the proposed space. The emphasis was placed deliberately on issues of atmosphere: how the space is lived and experienced from the inside, how the collection is exhibited and encountered, how the collector's private space is differentiated from the exhibition space. Geometry, materiality, lighting and furnishings of the different spaces had to respond to the particularities of the collections and the characters of the collectors themselves.

The students were guided towards their final 'word-design', experimenting each week with different modalities of writing (first- or third-person narrative, etc.) and different or even complementary temporalities (describing the space during the morning or the night hours, as a thick present or in the distant future). The premise was to experiment with language and allow for it to provide new possible architectural representations that speak to the embodied dweller, play with metaphors and personifications, describe elements of spatial character and mood, and explore the emotional engagement with architecture. To further develop the students' experimentations with language as a design tool, the process was also informed by excerpts from selected novels. These were novels that foreground Montreal as their plots' main protagonist, providing examples of how the urban environment of the city or Montreal's interior spaces are captured through language and how space is described as experienced.[9]

Sonya Kohut, whose collection consisted of words inscribed in the city's glass windows and experimented with issues of reflections and transparency, designed a small museum in one of downtown's walk-ups. Given the character of her collection her design focused on the creation of atmospheres informed by different degrees of transparency and translucency. She actually conceived of her 'word-design' as a compilation of notes which, like

Fig. 2. ‘Word-Collector’ project by Sonya Kohut, McGill University, 2013.

instructions, could guide the construction. Here is a small sample of her design for the space's entrance:

> *A glass wall will separate the interior entry, transparently dividing my living-space from the space where the visitor arrives. All will be silent and dim upon their first footsteps into the space. A beam of light will shine, but it should be impossible to detect if it is emitted from outside the wall or inside it as it will be forming circles upon its surface. A sound of breath will also appear from nowhere. A stream of warm air, emitted from across the room, will come to life like an exhalation, and a word will appear on the glass, hovering in mid-air, and then vanishing as the condensation evaporates. The visitor must decide what to do next. Do they wait for a repeat performance? Do they breathe on the glass highlighted by the light to see if further words appear?*
>
> *The unceremonious and narrow landing in which they find themselves will be followed by a single flight of stairs upwards. The original stairs will be stripped away and replaced with engineered treads with open stringers cantilevered off brick wall. The volumes of the apartment below, faintly visible through translucent glass encasements, will shine yellow with incandescent light. The partition wall between the old stair and my apartment will be cut away rudely to the baseboards, revealing the layers of lathing and the cut sections of dimensional lumber inside.*[10]

Imagining spatial qualities like a stream of warm air that fills the room as an exhalation, an unceremonious landing, a wall cut off rudely, to mention some of the images and metaphors drawn from Sonya's 'word-design', is an approach based upon and bound by language; an approach that speaks to our feelings of place and is interested in creating specific atmospheres way before creating forms and shapes. As Paul Ricoeur eloquently argues, the human imagination is primarily linguistic; only the emergence of new meanings in the sphere of language can generate new images that can be both

original and culturally significant.[11] This position is paramount for architecture and architectural education.
When the design process was completed, the students had a final assignment. They were exhorted to 'visit' each other's spaces, to read each other's 'word-designs' and narrate in class how they imagined their colleagues' spaces through these readings. This very last part, being an oral assignment unlike the previous ones, was an attempt to engage language in its spontaneous unedited everyday manifestation. It was a way to further examine issues of linguistic imagination but also understand how our own intentionality and pre-conceived expectations always colour our impressions and experience of a place.

Conclusion

This linguistic architectural design process developed thus in three stages. Through their word-collections and the related narratives, the students engaged in a unique understanding of the city. Deliberately framing perception and forcing a personal, emotional engagement, the city revealed deeper inter-subjective meanings. Through the different forms and modes of writing, engaged during the project's second part, the students attempted to envision an appropriate architectural space responding to both the city and the program. Lastly, oral language and narrative forms became a way to speak about the experience in the imagined new places on behalf of its potential future users.
Unlike the English idiom 'a picture is worth a thousand words' that seems to have dominated architectural education around the world, the project challenged one of the most basic architectural educational strategies: the almost exclusive use of pictorial means (sketches, diagrams, plans, facades, renderings) in imagining and designing space. It implemented a process in which language would work as architectural representation by bringing together Paul Ricoeur's insights with an understanding of the status of the work of architecture discussed by contemporary architectural theoreticians Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier in their historical

study on representation. As they have argued, ever since the eighteenth century reductive modes of architectural representation (unfortunately still dominant today) have been contested through 'theoretical projects'. These were projects like Piranesi's *Carceri* etchings, Ledoux's institutions for a new city, or more recently Hejduk's masques: creations understood fully as autonomous 'models' of architectural work in variable scales, modes and representations. Elaborating on the notion of architectural theoretical projects, they explain that they have always been poetic images inhabitable by the imagination, similar to metaphors in fiction, deliberately questioning any prosaic transcription into building.[12] In these terms the 'Word-Collector' put forward a 'theoretical project,' a fully autonomous architectural design vision constructed solely of words.

The project hardly exhausts, of course, the study of an active and creative use of language and literary means in architectural education. The development and implementation of language-based design is a vast field of increasingly growing interest and thus a fascinating one to investigate further. The issue of space appropriation by the inhabitant, for example, an aspect that was only broached briefly by my exercise, is one that can greatly benefit from the possibilities offered by language – oral (as engaged in my course) but also written.

1 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 105.

2 The readings were chosen for their compelling connection to walking and how the city and its writings can influence it. (Certeau, 'Walking in the City', ibid., 91-110; Walter Benjamin, 'One Way Street', in Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1996), 444-88; Guy Debord, 'Theory of the *Dérive*', in Tom Mcdonough (ed.), *The Situationists and the City* (London: Verso, 2009), 77-85; James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Penguin, 1992).

3 Vilem Flusser, *Does Writing Have a Future?*, Nancy Ann Roth (transl.)

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1988).

4 We looked into Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, Robert Czerny (transl.) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jorge Luis Borges, *This Craft of Verse*, Calin-Andrei Mihailescu (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

5 Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

6 David Michael Levin, *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation* (London: Routledge, 1988); Juhani Pallasmaa, *Encounters*, Peter MacKeith (ed.) (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2005).

7 For more see Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, op. cit. (note 4); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'On the Phenomenology of Language,' in Alden Fisher (ed.), *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Harcourt, 1969), 214-230; Octavio Paz, *Children of the Mire: Modern Poetry from Romanticism to the Avant-Garde*, Rachel Phillips (transl.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); Anne Carson, *Eros, the Bittersweet: An Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

8 Nick Crossley, *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire* (London: SAGE, 2001), 85.

9 Lance Blomgren, *Walkups* (Montreal: Conundrum Press, 2009); Nicolas Dickner, *Nikolski, a Novel* (Toronto: Knopf, 2008).

10 Sonya Kohut, 'Word-design' (Montreal: McGill University, April 2013).

12 Paul Ricoeur, 'The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality', *Man and World*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1979), 123-141.

13 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 77-87.

The Translation of Dreams

Psychoanalytic and Poetic Devices in South African Architectural Education

Stephen Steyn & Sumayya Vally

> *'The critique of ideology should not begin with critiquing reality, but with the critique of our dreams.'*
> *Slavoj Žižek*[1]

There are two kinds of dreams. There are the dreams that we share, and there are dreams that are our own. One could say 'I have a dream' (meaning 'I have an ambition'), which can be shared, and which then becomes political. And one could say 'I dreamt' (meaning, 'I hallucinated while unconscious'), which is a more personal experience. Architecture, and the politics of dreams – or the dreams of politics, for that matter – form the context of

this essay, and in particular how this thematized a design project in South African architectural education.

It appears that, in the current state of oneirology, the most prominent hypothesis for the function of dreams is that they are a by-product of processes of memory formation, consolidation and storage.[2] The fact that emotions are often overwhelming in dreams is likely due to condensation. Condensation is among the terms Freud used to describe the *dream work* – the transformation of the latent content of dreams into the manifest content (or, to simplify, the process of turning the meaning of dreams into the experience of dreams).[3] The application of metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche in condensation are immediately apparent. Metaphors are used to pack experience into denser forms, since single images can contain multiple meanings simultaneously. Metonymy can economize space, since something small could stand in for something large, or something simple for something complex. In synecdoche – when a fraction of something stands in for the whole – something small is recorded (or stored) in order to trigger a representation of the whole. The reason why these poetic devices are so popular in poetry is because of the reduction in space (higher density) that they make possible.

Condensation has an analogue in design. When formal and theoretical processes are combined, composed and conflated in designed products, the products themselves become dense repositories of intent, desire and context. Like dreams, these products are nebulous documents of struggle and aspiration. And, as such, they are subject to analysis and interpretation. Unlike dreams, however, designed products in general – and architectural works in particular – are experienced communally. They are shared, and by implication, that makes them *political*.

Memory serves here as a conceptual link between the different senses of the word dream; the highly personal visions of the unconscious, and the ambitions of our society. By establishing connections between architectural concepts and literary devices employed in mnemonic processes, we can reveal some of the workings of architecture as a cultural mechanism which

both stores shared memories, and, through interpretation and occupation, produces new culture.

Psychoanalysis has many well-documented applications in both medicine and literary criticism (some more contentious than others). We are, however, of the opinion that these investigations are at their most interesting, and necessary, when they are not required to be conclusive. Following Adam Phillips' assertion that '. . . it is more illuminating to read psychoanalysts as poets . . . rather than failed or aspiring scientists', we are not here interested in definitive diagnoses and treatment.[4] We are not attempting to *resolve* conflicts. We are, instead, attempting to mix some of the traditions of medical diagnostics with literary criticism in the context of South African heritage debates in order to illustrate 'different ways of living with ourselves and different descriptions of these so-called selves.'[5]

In psychoanalysis, the quarantine of memories is known as repression. And it is through repression that the ego seeks '. . . to exclude certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness but also from other forms of effectiveness and activity'.[6] In the South African context, where the past is often experienced as a nightmare, a fundamental inquiry into the precepts of architectural design and shared history has the potential to *relocate* repressed events of trauma. These events, which currently exist primarily in the historical record, can be translated into the present, and shown to still be active, but exerting their effects surreptitiously.

This essay aims to illustrate and elaborate these definitions through brief readings of three design-research projects conducted in Unit 11 of the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA) at the University of Johannesburg. Within the larger framework of *Transformative Pedagogies*, this programme aims to develop alternatives to that which is generally considered canonical, either by bringing research from the periphery to the centre, or by describing works in existing, established canons from new points of view, or in new languages. A number of projects are being developed which *work through* (rather than resolve) concerns of material memory, cultural edifices and politics, employing metaphors of ghosts, nightmares, phantom limbs, exquisite

corpses and plastic identities. By illustrating (or designing, if you will) such conditions, the unit attempts to bring to the surface some of the historical fragments haunting the South African collective subconscious.

In 2017, Unit 11 operated under the title *Radical Heritage*. As such, its primary interest is in the potential of processes that make significant changes to history and heritage not only on its surface (the narrative of history) but also its structure (the language in which history is recorded and legitimized). Design-research students are encouraged to make associations more or less freely in the early stages of the design process, after which, through critique, reflexive relationships are established between designed work and its interpretation. The unit makes extensive use of allegory and figuration to create a slight distance between the students' immediate frame of reference and the complex political realities with which the projects are entangled. This method allows students to expose and interrogate their biases and proclivities.

In something of a direct act of projection, the projects below experiment with the definition of architecture through a number of psychoanalytical analogies. It could be cast as the ego, sifting through experiences and storing (in built form) desired memories while repressing others. Or, architecture could represent repressed memories themselves, which are stored at a safe distance from the 'consciousness' of society. The projects define architecture as a collective dream, condensing, sorting and forgetting our (shared) history.

The reflexive relationship that exists between a society and its architecture means that architecture can not only function as a document of oppression, it is also an agent in oppression. Since the cultural production of architecture is selective, it can give permanent form to (and thus worsen) problematic conditions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a series of public hearings and confessions which took place between 1996 and 1998, was intended to purge institutions of their apartheid heritage.[7] But, while it is possible to imagine the reformation of institutions through confessions, hearings and amnesties, the procedures for the reform of architectural

structures are significantly less established. In order to address the implication of architecture in apartheid (and colonial) heritage, we rely on the weak links between physical objects and their intended meanings. In other words, buildings, instead of having to be physically dismantled, can be taken apart figuratively, and new meanings can be proposed for them. Though there may be truth, and there may be reconciliation, neither is absolute or final – they are a continuous process. We delve into our history over and over, digging up, revealing and confronting the conditions that give form to architecture and to which architecture gives form.

Projects

An 'Other' Archive by Sabine Waskow

Among the most significant of the political upheavals (or social mobilizations) in South Africa's recent past started on 9 March 2015 with the request to remove a statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the campus of the University of Cape Town. Known as 'Rhodes Must Fall', the movement has since developed into a number of subsequent protests, organizations and think-tanks, eventually leading to serious suggestions for a radical restructuring of South African society through the movement's transmogrification into 'Fees Must Fall' – which calls for free tertiary education. The monument was removed shortly after the protests began. But the protest against the monument was indicative of something else: it stood in place of a general awareness that things had not changed enough since the advent of democracy in 1994. And the removal of the statue (and a number of small concurrent concessions) is a symbolic act which, while defusing tensions at the time, did not appreciate the underlying conditions that led to the protests.

Jacques Derrida, one of the most influential thinkers on the subject of structural linguistics, on several occasions referred to himself as a 'historian', but was simultaneously undertaking to dismantle what he saw as the 'dominant Western historical narrative'.[8] Similarly, in *An 'Other' Archive*, Sabine Waskow explores the dissection and reconstruction of historically

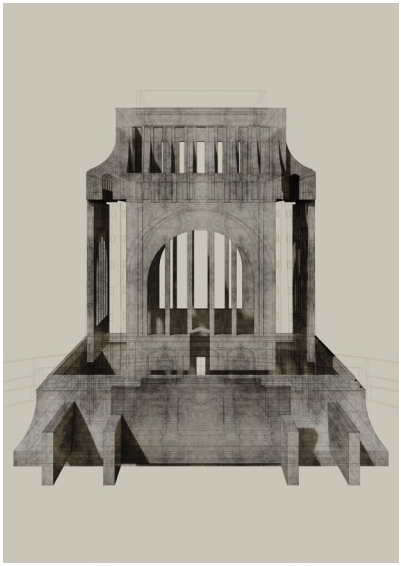


Fig. 1. The Voortrekker Monument, in the administrative capital Pretoria, is analysed by stripping it down in physical layers after which the various elements are critically rearranged. The image depicts visible parts of the structural system as well as the enclosing shell.

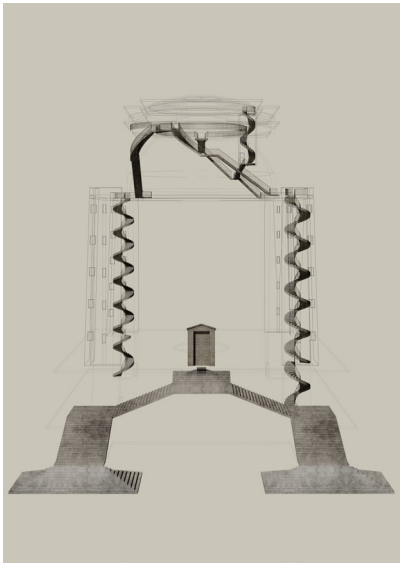


Fig. 2. Caption: Circulatory elements are isolated and represented as a layer of the monument before the elements are recomposed. This forms part of Waskow's process of deletion, reordering and insertion. Photos: Sabine Waskow, 2017.

Fig. 3. Project by Melissa Brand, 2017
A 1:20 scale model of an inhabitable kinetic object. This object reifies the memories of specific violent events that have taken place at Constitution Hill during the time when it served as a prison. By emulating the gesture of strangulation – through opening and closing continuously – the object gives visitors an experience of that event on the ineffable level, as they experience constriction without necessarily understanding the historical content.

prominent buildings and apartheid-era monuments (Figures 1 to 4). Currently, these structures stand unresolved and untransformed. Waskow's chimerical recompositions point to the possibility of new orders that may emerge from them if they are reconfigured rather than removed.
An 'Other' Archive seeks to find new means of expression for suppressed narratives and erased memories through subversive, deconstructive altering techniques such as syntactic re-ordering, altering the surface structure to alter the deep structure, as well as layering and stitching together contrasting narratives. These techniques seek to generate and inscribe new forms and structures that allow for alternative narrative histories to be read and experienced. By altering the placement, materials and hierarchies of elements of the monuments, *An 'Other' Archive* scripts and enables new functions, programmes and events.

Phantom Limbs by Melissa Brand
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was conceived as a mechanism to work through atrocities of the past by bringing trauma into the public realm, heralding the reform of society and the unification of a nation once divided. Monuments were designed and built on sites of struggle to commemorate the pain of the past and literally bring our newfound democracy 'into being'. Not being able to deal with the ineffable, however, the TRC mostly *addressed* these issues, without being able to *redress* them. The *Phantom Limbs* are composed through different readings of body memory, re-enacting fragments of past events and, simultaneously, establishing access to the past through experience, rather than through words or images.
A phantom limb is the sensation that an amputated or missing limb is still attached to the body, indicating the idea that toxicities, despite their removal, may still be felt and, in fact may be worsened if simply removed, since the source of pain can no longer be subject to direct intervention. The *Phantom Limbs* are an attempt to reconcile South African utopian ideals, such as the Rainbow Nation and the TRC, with the indelible memory of the

traumas of the events that brought them into being in the first place. Adopting Freud's reading of the *unheimliche* (the unhomely, the familiar unfamiliar, or a haunting) allows us to relocate the notion of 'buried' or concealed violent events into experience.[9] Treating the site as both body and memory, the project proposes a reading of the histories and characteristics of Constitution Hill as a place of incorporeal trauma. In this project, a series of bio-kinetic architectural mechanisms test, pressurize and unearth past events on the site, eliciting symbolic eruptions as a reflection of a cathartic need. One such event, is the legendary strangulation of an inmate at the prison that was housed on Constitution Hill until 1983. In Figures 5 to 7, we are presented with a scale model of an inhabitable kinetic object re-presenting the ineffable aspects of that violent event. These 'ghosts' bring '[that which] should have remained hidden and secret and . . . to light'.[10]
By reifying the phantom limbs, they are brought back from an immaterial realm. They are no longer ghosts, and as such, they are exorcized, ironically, through incarnation.

A Mausoleum for Pan-Africanism by Aisha Balde

Of particular interest in the current global political context, is the prevalence of walls as a metaphor for both security and exclusion. As the world now shifts from national to regional boundaries, South Africa has become a significant agent in the production of the region known generally as sub-Saharan Africa. Aisha Balde's project, *A Mausoleum for Pan-Africanism,* is located on the borderline between South Africa and Zimbabwe – a significant point of entry into South Africa. The borderline itself is a 600mm-wide, several-thousand-kilometre-long piece of 'no-man's land'. The *Mausoleum* is effectively a border wall with one significant departure from the type – it does not separate one side from the other. The wall is full of generous openings and is made primarily of very thin elements which, while having a substantial visual presence in the elevation (Figures 8 to 11) is almost non-existent in the cross section.
In her 2011 poem, *Conversations About Home*, Warsan Shire makes use

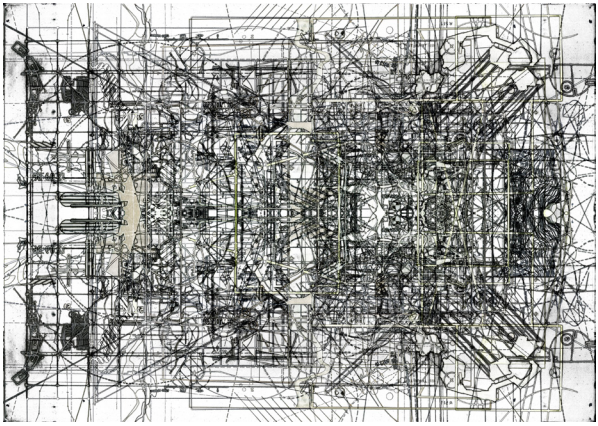


Fig. 4. The new border wall, while by no means definitively separating one nation from another, has a substantial presence in the elevation. Here a scale drawing of part of the elevation of the several-thousand-kilometre long wall. Author: Aisha Balde, 2017

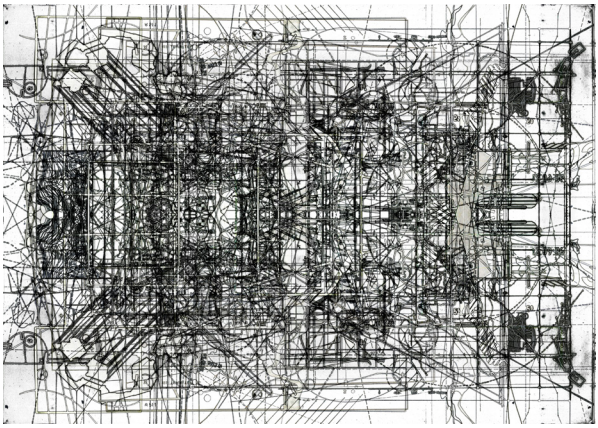


Fig. 5. The 600mm space of the borderline also takes the form of a threshold in a chapel, where a South African citizen and a Zimbabwean citizen (from either side of the line) undertake a ritual to wed. The wall alludes to limbs, bodies, fissures and gaps, allegorically describing the conditions and processes of bodies moving over borders through the wedding ritual. Author: Aisha Balde, 2017

of synecdoche when she writes: '*. . . the lines, the forms, the people at the desks, the calling cards, the immigration officer, the looks on the street . . .*' to allude to the entirety of the devastating experience of forced migration.[11] Platonic form, a function of synecdoche, could be summarized as the definitions that all instances of a type share. If we take the function of a chair, for example, as its platonic form, or essence (as architectural Modernism often does), it follows logically that, if defined only by that measure, a horse would become a chair once mounted. It is clear that there must be many other definitions of a thing other than its assumed function.
Similarly, architecture (and therefore walls) need to be defined by more than function. And Balde's project, by presenting us with a wall which does not perform its primary function, encourages us to be inventive in developing new rationales for its *raison d'être.* One such alternative function is that *The Mausoleum for Pan-Africanism* prevents separation, since it stands, metonymically, in the place of a functional wall. It is a mausoleum *to* the national border since the idea of a functional wall separating one nation from another is buried alive by its presence. With this gesture, Balde stakes a claim for a non-nationalist conception of Africa.

Over the Rainbow

In the 1990s, under the direction of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and a number of other notable political and cultural leaders, South Africa embarked on a self-conscious nation-building programme under the general banner of the 'Rainbow Nation'. The name represents a summary of the kind of language that was necessary in the early stages of South Africa's liberation narrative to loosen the grip of racist regimes. Entering the next phase means engaging with structures that lie beneath the veneer of peace, tolerance, freedom, transparency and rights. Any intervention cannot, in this context, simply be a rebranding exercise; it must engage meaningfully with the structures of society. For Unit 11 it is not enough to merely rephrase or expand the discursive field to include more dialectical considerations (for example adding 'privacy' to balance the rhetoric of 'transparency' and/or

'economic freedom' to 'human rights'). It is, instead, necessary to engage in the production of entirely new languages with which to express possibilities that transcend the limitations of the current political imagination. Architecture, as a condensed medium (where meanings are at all times multiple), can, through subjective interpretation from a variety of points of view, contribute to the development of such languages. Ultimately, we want to produce graduates who can draw the *real* architecture of our society, and for that, they must draw dreams.

1 Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2014),193.
2 J. Lee Kavanau, 'Sleep, Memory Maintenance and Mental Disorders,' in *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, vol. 12, no. 2, May (2000), 199-208.
3 Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (1923), translated by Joan Riviere (1927) (New York: Norton, 1960 reprint), 8.
4 Adam Philips, *One Way and Another: New and Selected Essays* (London: Penguin, 2013).
5 Adam Philips, 'The Art of Nonfiction No.7', in *The Paris Review*, no. 208, (2014). Available at: https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6286/adam-phillips-the-art-of-nonfiction-no-7-adam-phillips. Accessed 10 August 2017.
6 Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (1914), translated by M.D. Eder (New York: Dover, 2001 reprint).
7 Stéphane Leman Langlois and Clifford Shearing, 'Transition, Forgiveness and Citizenship: The TRC and the Social Construction of Forgiveness', in F. Du Bois and A. Pedain (eds.), *Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 206-228.
8 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, translated by B. Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 130.
9 Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"' (1919), in *The Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. XVII (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).
10 Ibid.,12.
11 Warsan Shire, 'Conversations About Home (At the Deportation Centre)', in *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (London: Flipped Eye Publishing, 2011).

Lighthouse: Dwelling on a Remote Island

Katrin Recker & Mark Proosten

After sailing for several months and more than 21,000 sea miles, I got to know some of the most remote environments our planet has to offer: For days I fought against the harsh climate and heavy seas around both Antarctic Bouvet and Laurie Island, experiencing that life beneath the 50th parallel is even more challenging than you can imagine. I was therefore happy to arrive at a marvellous getaway in the middle of the Indian Ocean, Île Saint-Paul, which turned out to be the long-desired solid ground under my feet. Finally, after passing through terrible storms and thick fog of the southern seas, the shallow and warm waters around the lagoon isle Pingelap expressed the warmest welcome to adapt myself to the islanders' rhythm and the laid-back lifestyle in the Pacific Ocean.

Within this article, a very curious storyteller will guide our way to remotely situated islands and their marvellous stories and stubborn inhabitants, invented by our students. In the summer of 2016, the bachelor diploma students of the department of *Wohnbau* at the RWTH-Aachen University were asked to develop a dwelling for a lighthouse keeper, a house with a beacon.

Within this article, we aim to give an insight into the project's boundaries, by describing the project brief and our tutoring approach. In addition, we have introduced this fictive first-person narrator who guides the reader on the journey. With the combination of these two parallel narratives, we hope to give an insight into the way we organized the project, while simultaneously showing the studio results of four students.
Instead of defining a fixed programme brief beforehand, or selecting one specific location, we embedded the entire project around a set of rules that would allow the students to develop a relatively small design from concept to detail. These rules are not strict boundaries, but rather parameters that influence each other vice versa.
The first rule resulted from the random distribution of a set of unique islands from around the globe, which the students would not be able to visit within the timeframe of the project. As a second rule the students had to develop a protagonist, a lighthouse keeper, whose personality would influence the dwelling and the programme of the lighthouse. Therefore the occupation of the lighthouse keeper and the requirements of his dwelling should respond to the climatic, geological and local characteristics of the island. These two rules established the literary character of the project: to make a design for a fictive character in an imaginary place. The design brief was particularly challenging due to the specific constraints imposed by these literary rules: a lighthouse keeper's dwelling within the physical boundary conditions of the isles themselves.

> *If I wasn't a volcanologist by trade, I would have never made this journey in the first place. Now, after experiencing all these different stages and conditions under which amazing natural phenomena these islands were created, I really need to get some rest and settle down, write and reflect about my keepsakes and collected data. Perhaps, Floreana shows the best conditions to perform this work. With its mild climates and amazing flora and fauna the island pleased me enormously. But maybe the working conditions turn out to be even better on Pingelap, since most people are nocturnal and one gets barely disturbed during the day.*

The fundamental idea of the project originates from the profession of a lighthouse keeper. A profession that triggers our imagination, partly because of its recurring theme in novels such as *Lighthouse at the End of the World* by Jules Verne and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, and films such as *Moonrise Kingdom* by Wes Anderson and *The Lighthouse of the Orcas* by Gerardo Olivares. In addition, the profession is often carried out in a remote place, bound by the local characteristics of the land- and sea-scape, while at the same time connected to a network of global transportation. But most of all it is a profession with a certain distance from (or: away from) everyday life patterns and programmatic challenges that students are used to dealing with.

Taking the lighthouse keeper as a starting point, we introduced a fictive character that the students had to compose and specify for themselves. This protagonist, his or her preferences and everyday life became an individually formed programme that each student had to narrate into the design. Within the narration of the design we focused on imagining daily routines and simple basic human needs such as shelter, nutrition and self-care. Because of this focus, the programme is developed around multiple scenarios and strategies that accommodate human behaviour. These scenarios are presented in a mid-term presentation and form the strategy throughout the design.

We consciously introduced the narration of the protagonist, since we wanted to prevent the students from merely designing the 'object' of a lighthouse. The idea of 'dwelling on a remote island' thus marks the main challenge of the design and goal of the project. The design brief focused on the area of tension between the specific characteristics of the locations and the spatial programme, which came forth out of the requirements of the lighthouse and the inhabitant's manner of dwelling. Emphasis was put on the idiosyncratic characteristics of a lighthouse keeper and on how these could influence the requirements of his or her individual dwelling. Hence, the students were encouraged to work within a fictional framework, which

they created themselves.
As a second 'rule', we did send out our students like explorers on a quest to research islands that – because of the inability to actually visit – could only be found in their imagination. Every student was assigned to a different island, which they had to study, map, draw and mould into a 1:50000 scale plaster model. We selected the isles from Judith Schalansky's *Atlas of Remote Islands: Fifty Islands I Have Never Set Foot on and Never Will*,[1] whose subtitle exactly describes our intention of taking these real islands as locations.
What can normally be seen as a barrier or detriment, namely the inability to visit the site, was fundamental to the pedagogy of this project, because it guaranteed that the students had to work within a fictive frame. After getting acquainted with their island's size, geography, vegetation and the characteristic of the landscape, the students continued their research through the study of blog entries of global sailors and environmentalists, of YouTube videos or online photo albums and of literary accounts of authors who visited some of the islands, such as Oliver Sacks and Margret Wittmer. Judith Schalansky's *Atlas* and the descriptive text of each island proved to be a great source for the students' research. The extraordinary tales of the early explorers, gold diggers, whalers and strange occupants described by Schalansky provided many starting points and declared the islands themselves as the second protagonist for our students' designs.

> *Most of the islands were barely accessible. I often had to wait for the right current or a specific tide to enter a safe inlet such as the crater bay of Île Saint-Paul. Luckily, I had the signals of the lighthouses to guide me or the transmissions of the radio operator around Bouvet Island. Man, how can you survive on such a rocky cliff only surrounded by water and ice?! The same applies to the incredible effort of the ascetic on Laurie Island, where only once a year a ship can land to supply you with all basic provisions you need on a snowy and God-forsaken isle . . .*

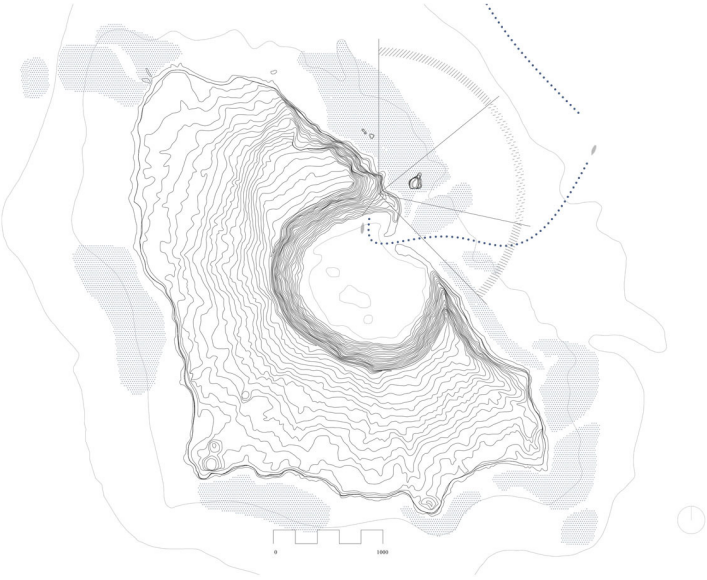


Fig. 1. The crater island of Saint-Paul, with its many underwater cliffs, drawn by Friederike Drewes.

The weekly mentoring sessions became a 'fictional travel', exploring the globe and the many different oceans and climate zones of the selected islands. We travelled from the cold seas of both polar regions to the archipelagos in the Pacific Ocean and everything in between. Since each of the islands had many challenges for our students to solve, from their isolated locations and climatic conditions to their geography and the (im-) possibility of finding local building materials, our mentoring approach existed in asking questions, trying to define the problems our students would have to solve. Since all the students were working within their own narrative frames, we could not compare programmes or sites between the students, yet we were able to contrast similar problems they all had to address. In defining the narrative frame, each student had to figure out the daily rhythm of his or her protagonist. Next to the responsible duty as a lighthouse keeper, the everyday routine of the island's inhabitant was determined and structured around a particular passion or distinctive side profession. Due to the remote and ecologically protected environments a large number of science-related professions such as geologist, (marine) biologist were introduced. These side professions were characterized by the islands themselves and simultaneously defined the programme of the dwelling. In defining the programme, we emphasized each distinctive profession and how that would influence the needs, the appliances and daily routines of the inhabitant. Here, we focused again on the scenarios and routines rather than on a certain amount of square metres.

Since dwelling on a remote island also implies a certain level of survival, each student had to take into account basic needs such as food, water, electrical power and a comfortable interior climate. Because of the manifold climates and soil conditions the number of solutions varied greatly. From kitchen gardens and greenhouses to annual deliveries, and from geothermal advantages to installations for filtering salt water. Each student created solutions that were derived from the characteristics of the islands themselves.

A major challenge was to design a building for an isolated island to which

not every construction material could be shipped, and not every location could be assigned as a construction site. Since many islands are or have been inhabited, we advised students to study these schemes of inhabitation and typical dwelling patterns. This often led to the study of vernacular architecture, the adaptation of local building techniques and materials or the transformation of abandoned structures. A process that resulted in a great diversity of architectural structures and building techniques, ranging from cathedral-like structures built from ice and snow to pneumatic greenhouses, from working with local masonry to the knotting of bamboo. All techniques and building methods were researched and tested by the students themselves in large-scale models and drawings.
Concluding the developed narratives and building techniques, the students, with emerging ingenuity and knowledge, explored their own sensitivity and creativity towards such ambiguous, multi-faceted aspects of architecture. The literary framework of the assignment, departing from a place that could not be visited and from a particular character, made their observations and readings of both programme and context extremely focused. A strategy we advanced by letting them develop a very precise set of plans and models, including a 1:2 scale study with their selected building materials.

During my travels I met some of the most peculiar lighthouse keepers who guided me with their light beams past shallow waters or unexpected cliffs into safe inlets and to secure landing points. These men proved to have many skills and a remarkable attitude towards dwelling. Next to providing all the necessary maintenance to keep the light operating, they were all enthusiastic with their own profession and their self-reliance for electricity, water and food.
The Cistercian monk I met on Floreana lead a balanced life between meditation and prayer, the work in the vegetable garden and the crafts he attended. He taught me to look at the fragile balance between imported and indigenous species within an isolated biodiversity. For sure, the balance of the flora and fauna can't be restored; however, by building several

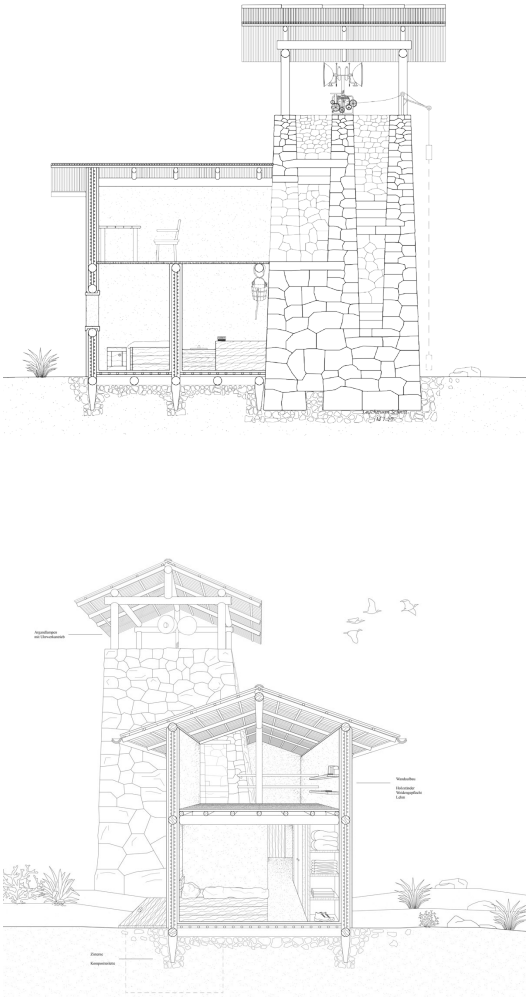


Fig. 2+3. Hanna Feldhagen: Floreana Island, 1°17'S / 90°26'W

structures across the island he not only trained himself to build with local materials using indigenous craftsmanship but also structured his daily routine finding a balanced life in between the magnificent landscape.

A few days after sailing past the most southern point of South America I was warned by an awkward combination of a wind turbine and lighthouse at Laurie Island. Its structure, a small basalt tower rising just above the cliffs, yet low enough to shine its light below the clouds and over the ocean, aroused my interest. What I expected to be an uninhabited island turned out to be permanently occupied by an Argentinian scientific station. At this station I was warmly welcomed by fellow scientists and researchers who helped me with retrieving data. After I made some remarks about the lighthouse structure, they told me about a man living in seclusion accompanied by a dog on a remote part of the island. They recommended I go and visit his house, a dry-stone construction built against the northern slope of the island. A hidden structure with more stockrooms than actual living quarters, the perfect hiding place for someone who wants to dwell in solitude.

Another remarkable fellow is the lighthouse keeper on Bouvet Island. A glacier- and cloud-covered island in the middle of the subantarctic waters, 1700 km north of Antarctica, is a breeding ground for many seabirds and the barely legal hideaway for a radio operator. Next to looking after the fact that his island doesn't become missing in the fog, he guides all the ships that sail in its proximity. Since he's passionate about technology and innovation, his lighthouse is quite a remarkable statement. A pneumatic greenhouse, using the heat of the volcanic soil and powered by specially equipped wind turbines. With everything covered under the pneumatic roof, the entire structure acts as a light beacon, one that is supplemented by the radio signals of its keeper.

Fig. 4+5. Felix Hübbers: Laurie Island, 60°44'S / 44°31'W

After zigzagging between the islands of both Indonesia and Papua New Guinea I finally arrived in the warm waters of Micronesia and headed for my final destination, the atoll of Pingelap. This almost completely sunken top of an ancient volcano is home to the pro rata biggest population of achromats. Here, every tenth inhabitant, all descendants of their late king who survived the 1775 Typhoon Lienkieke, doesn't care for the overwhelming colours of the azure blue ocean or the many green variations of vegetation, the colours of the ripe papaya, breadfruit or coconut. During the day, they keep their eyes closed, to protect them from the bright and reflective sunlight, yet at night they become active, lighting torches to catch flying fish inside the lagoon. However, having a bright and overwhelming lighthouse signal at the isle would devastate them with its strong light. That´s why the keeper uses a coconut oil-driven candle and a Fresnel lens to guide ships between the coral cliffs. The structure that shelters the signal is a true manifesto for the use of local materials, traditional techniques, craftsmanship and down-to-earth solutions. A house that keeps the bright sun outside, but glows through the night.

With this article and the introduction of our own curious narrator we intended to show how our approach has resulted in a great variety of narrated tales that were combined with profound building techniques and methods. The project made the students aware of the complex relationship between the subjectivity of the programme, which explored the boundaries of reality, and the objectivity of the design solutions, which had to show a certain level of practicality. The students learned consciously to work within a fictive framework, to work in different scales simultaneously, and to work independently.

The students explored their islands and treated the challenges for their protagonist to dwell on them in an accurate manner. They became sensitive to basic conditions of dwelling, such as landscape, climate, materials, building methods, and applied these conditions in their distinctive and tangible design solutions.

Fig. 7+8. Katrin Herrmann: Bouvet Island, 54°49′S / 3°21′E

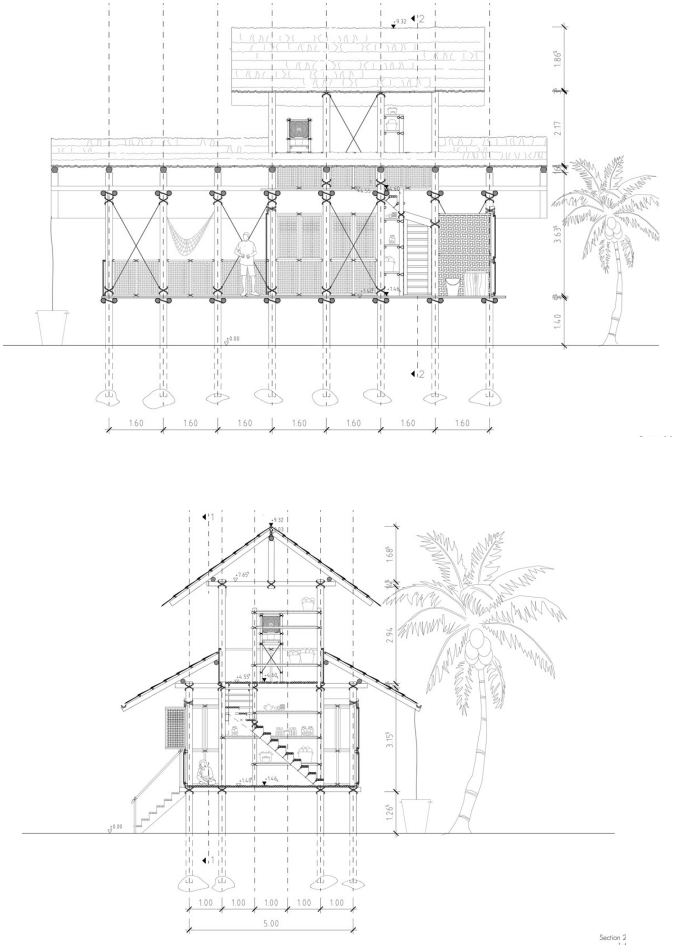


Fig. 9+10. Isabelle Bothe: Pingelap Island, 6°13'N / 160°42'E

In addition, the game rules of the entire project, in combination with the detailed requirements for the final presentation, did more than help examine the skills and knowledge we deem indispensable to obtaining the bachelor's degree. The students gained the understanding necessary to handle a relatively small architectural design project from concept to detail through imagining their own narrative framework and making their unique design of a lighthouse the starring role of their very peculiar and fantastic story.

1. Judith Schalansky, *Atlas of Remote Islands: Fifty Islands I Have Never Set Foot on and Never Will* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2010).

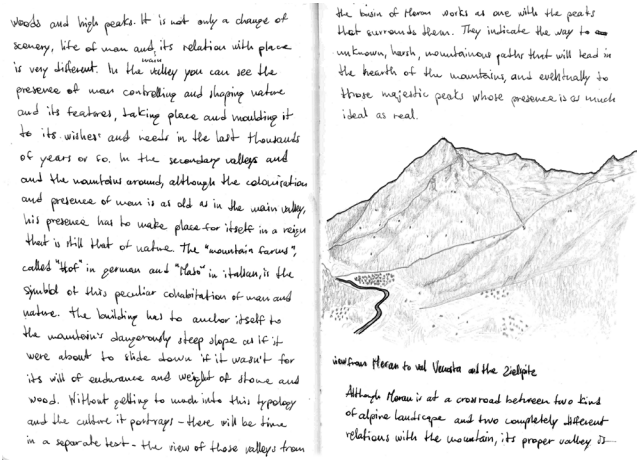
The Mountain and the Book Three Written Libraries in Meran

Davide Perottoni

> *The little iron banners which Hölderlin never drew himself subsequently invaded my drawings, and I am unable to answer any further the persistent question I am asked about them except to say that I have translated the last lines of Hölderlin's poem into my architecture.*[1]

To translate the lines of a poem into architecture; that is the fascination from which the work presented here was born, an investigation into the uses of literature as a design tool.[2] Literature has the ability to grasp atmospheres, to look at things from many points of view, to deal with the pragmatic as well as the poetic, with creativity and subjectivity; these and other qualities offer a wealth of possibilities to design. This work tried to define both the possibilities offered and the ways in which to employ them in the traditional design process. In doing so, literature was both a tool to understand and to create, a method to engage the mind and fuel creativity. Throughout the different phases it is a tool to read, to write and to continuously challenge all the elements of a design, from analysis to scenario, from

Fig. 1. *...the mountain is the bond between Earth and Sky...*



woods and high peaks. It is not only a change of scenery, life of man and its relation with place is very different. In the valley you can see the presence of man controlling and shaping nature and its features, taking place and moulding it to its wishes and needs in the last thousands of years or so. In the secondary valleys and and the mountains around, although the colonization and presence of man is as old as in the main valley, his presence has to make place for itself in a region that is still that of nature. The "mountain farms", called "Hof" in german and "Maso" in italian, is the symbol of this peculiar colonization of man and nature. The building has to anchor itself to the mountain's dangerously steep slope as if it were about to slide down if it wasn't for its will of endurance and weight of stone and wood. Without getting to much into this typology and the culture it portrays - there will be time in a separate text - the view of those valleys from

the basin of Meran works as one with the peaks that surrounds them. They indicate the way to the unknown, harsh, mountainous paths that will lead in the hearth of the mountains, and eventually to those majestic peaks whose presence is as much ideal as real.

view from Meran to val Venosta and the Ortlspitze

Although Meran is at a crossroad between two kind of alpine landscape and two completely different relations with the mountain, its proper valley is

Fig. 2. A travelogue made of texts and drawings.

site to detail. In this way the two key elements of the project, the mountain and the book, were defined and declined in the design of three libraries in the area of Meran in the Italian Alps. This process was carried out within the standard design phases, starting from the analysis of site and brief to the testing of the project in a scenario setting, passing through inspiration, concept and design.

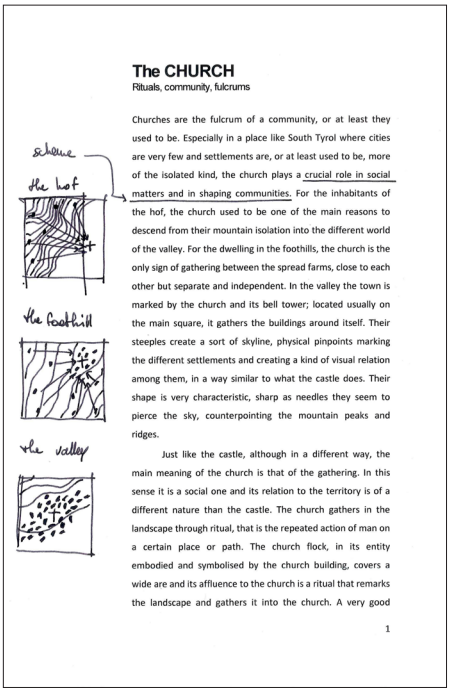
> *. . . the mountain is the bond between Earth and Sky. Its solitary summit reaches the sphere of eternity, and its base spreads out in manifold foothills into the world of mortals.*[3]

Always employing a multiplicity of accompanying tools, the site was first analysed through existing literature. *'Vivid the colours / clear the air / vitreous the silence / on which amused / bounces thought – transparent / cage of light / the day, lost / among these unreachable / enigmatic valleys.'*[4] Antonio Manfredi's poem, for example, gave a poetic rendition of what Stefan Zweig before him described in prose. Ranging from social reports to myths and legends, fictional narratives as well as real accounts, poems and academic reflections, the extreme variety of available literature made it possible to gather very different point of views on the site, its culture and its history.[5] For the site visits, on the other hand, literature was used in the form of a travelogue, recording different perceptions and observations and embedding notions gathered through the texts in the actual experience of the place.

The collection of these texts led to a very broad and multifaceted understanding of the place, which was then structured and collected as a whole through writing in the definition of ten landscape characters, ten very broad archetypes that define the site and to which the design will have to relate.[6]

> *. . . The church gathers in the landscape through ritual, that is, the repeated action of man on a certain place or path. The church flock, in its entity embodied and symbolized by the church building, covers a wide area*

Fig. 3. Site and design models, the library declined in the three landscape conditions: valley (city), foothill, mountain.



The CHURCH

Rituals, community, fulcrums

Churches are the fulcrum of a community, or at least they used to be. Especially in a place like South Tyrol where cities are very few and settlements are, or at least used to be, more of the isolated kind, the church plays a crucial role in social matters and in shaping communities. For the inhabitants of the hof, the church used to be one of the main reasons to descend from their mountain isolation into the different world of the valley. For the dwelling in the foothills, the church is the only sign of gathering between the spread farms, close to each other but separate and independent. In the valley the town is marked by the church and its bell tower; located usually on the main square, it gathers the buildings around itself. Their steeples create a sort of skyline, physical pinpoints marking the different settlements and creating a kind of visual relation among them, in a way similar to what the castle does. Their shape is very characteristic, sharp as needles they seem to pierce the sky, counterpointing the mountain peaks and ridges.

Just like the castle, although in a different way, the main meaning of the church is that of the gathering. In this sense it is a social one and its relation to the territory is of a different nature than the castle. The church gathers in the landscape through ritual, that is the repeated action of man on a certain place or path. The church flock, in its entity embodied and symbolised by the church building, covers a wide are and its affluence to the church is a ritual that remarks the landscape and gathers it into the church. A very good

1

Fig. 4. Text and drawings on the church as a character of the landscape.

and its affluence to the church is a ritual that remarks the landscape and gathers it into the church . . .
. . . It is difficult to explain, but the presence of the mountains has a power that goes beyond their shape and orientation, the shadows they cast and the way in which they direct the gaze. It is probably a mix of those things all acting together on perception to reach an incredible achievement. Being simultaneously real and ideal. They are literary topoi in themselves and here they are inextricably intertwined with what this place is and means . . .

While this was done for the site of the project, its brief was also approached through literary means. Thus, the library as a type was analysed by reading about real and fictional libraries, visiting existing ones in different cities and reflecting upon them through memory and imagination in different textual exercises.

. . . The library, still and silent, moves with the rhythm of the pages, under the green light of the reading lamps. An exponential coffer of treasures, from the library itself to every single book it contains . . . Physical and mental wanderings meet, in the experience of the library . . .

As the analysis reached not a final but a sufficient state of development, all the materials gathered were collected in a narrative in which a fictional character, working as an alter ego, bound together all of these considerations. This text, the world it created, was the frame of thought out of which the design would arise, its foundation as well as a germinal design in itself. Reading and writing here were not only ways to gather notions and point of views but also tools to define an understanding of the matter at hand, a way of looking at things that would inform how to approach the whole project. This made it possible to set forth a world, a coherent and multifaceted setting that the could be inhabited, thus designing from within it.

Fig. 5. The orography of Meran.
The presence of the mountains has a power that goes beyond their shape and orientation.

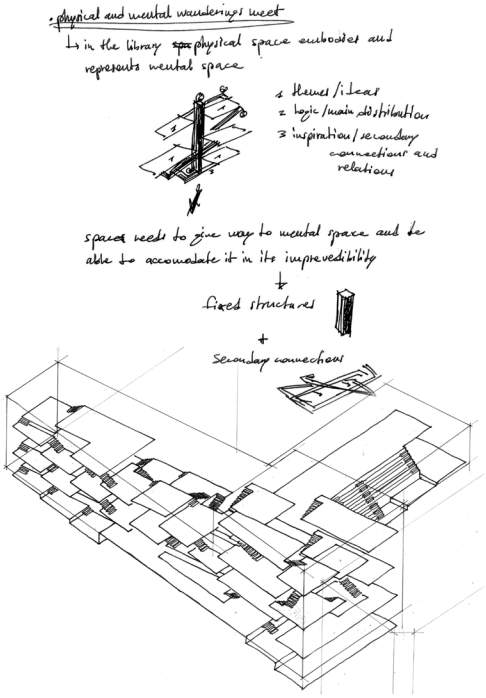


Fig. 6. Working sketches for the City Library.
Physical and mental wanderings meet, from abstraction to form.

. . . The mountains, this ethereal and yet so real presence. They are, in his mind, both an idea and a physical thing; they are the reason, at least the main one, for which he decided to abandon his native place on the seaside and travel north. North, such a powerful word. To the poet and painter it is much more than a geographical indication; it is colours and meanings, a sort of poetic covered in blue hues and grey rocks, the cold of the snow and the warmth of the candle light behind a cottage window. Window with falling snow is arrayed, long tolls the vesper bell . . .

Once this fictional yet real world was created it was time to step from within it into the second phase of the design, that of concepts and inspirations. Literature in this phase was employed as a source of inspiration, a light that illuminated the design and a lens through which to look at things. Some texts, read in the right way, informed the project and imbued it with meaning; they were open, resonating and reverberating, making it possible to bridge analysis with design, giving directions without creating constraints.

Window with falling snow is arrayed,
Long tolls the vesper bell,
The house is provided well,
The table is for many laid.

Wandering ones, more than a few,
Come to the door on darksome courses.
Golden blooms the tree of graces
Drawing up the earth's cool dew.

Wanderer quietly steps within;
Pain has turned the threshold to stone.
There lie, in limpid brightness shown,
Upon the table bread and wine.[7]

Fig. 7. The mountains of Meran. *The mountains, this ethereal and yet so real presence.*

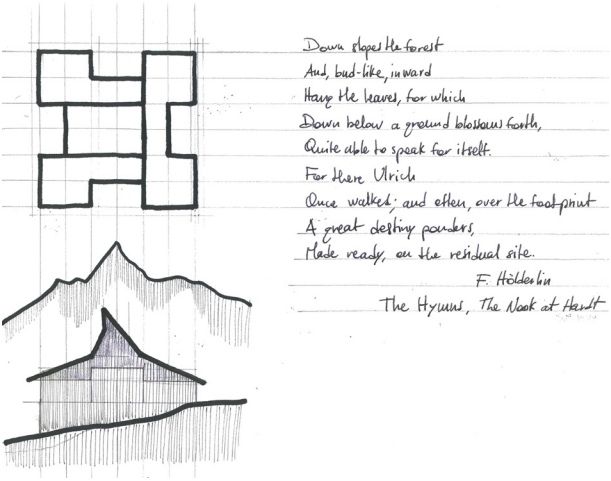


Fig. 8. The poem defining an opening act for the design to follow.

Such images provided a particular way to look at a building; they defined a relation between man and landscape, gave an insight on materiality or charged an element with significance. They defined an opening act that set the ground where the design had to take place, defining qualities and values without impairing the freedom of the design. Literature was thus employed as a light illuminating the projects, directing the gaze and charging it with significance, while the design had to translate these poetics into spatial and material considerations.
Again reading and writing went hand in hand, but in this phase the writing became poetic; it had to create, not only to consider these images that led the design and coloured it. In writing a poem the design was constructed out of words and images that are very clear and at the same time very open; the poem set the tone and directed the design while drawing, concretized, the poetic images into formal and technical considerations. The poem below, for example, guided the definition of a library from its general shape to its materials and details.

A wall to the east
to catch the new sun
through the jagged peaks.
Thick plaster and deep windows
to bathe in the light
and suck it in.
. . .
A wall to the south
looking over the valley
from a mountain throne.
Wood bathes in the sun
grass grows into plaster
being house and place.

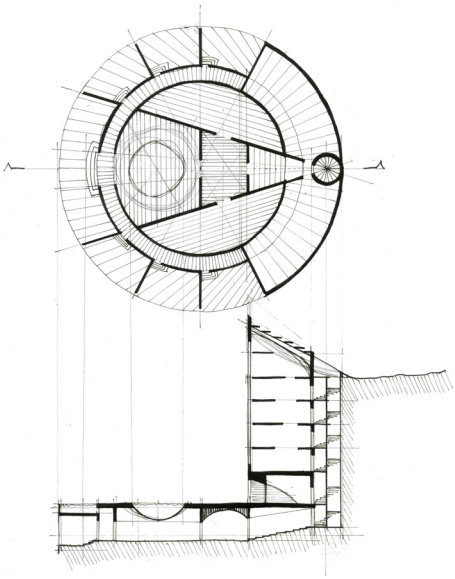


Fig. 9. Sketches for the Foothill Library.
A lighthouse in balance between valley and mountains.

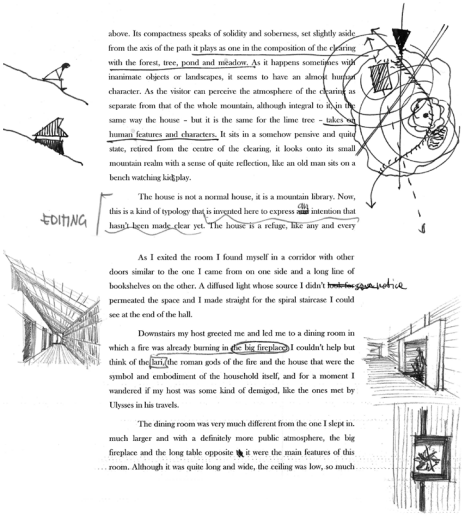


Fig. 10. Sketching with words and inhabiting the text.

Fig. 11. Roof plan and elevations. *Four walls*, from word to form.

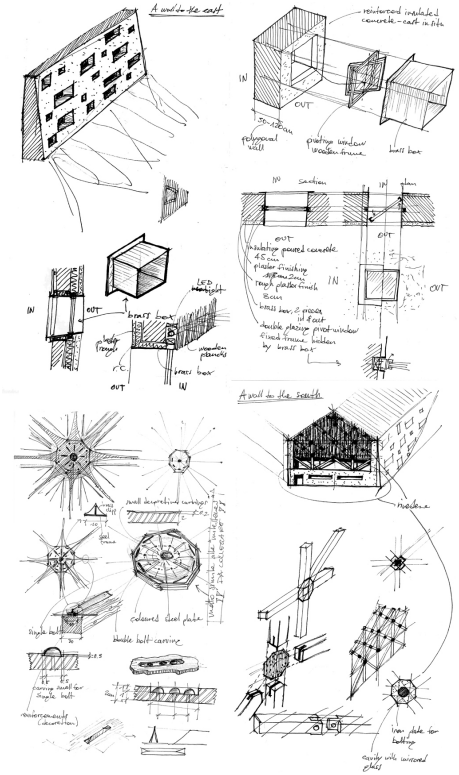


Fig. 12. *Four walls*, from form to material.

At this point in the process actual design came to the fore with the task of giving shape and matter to the images and words gathered so far. In this phase the relation between drawing and writing was at its strongest, creating a constant loop between text and drawing, employing both in a refinement process that exploited the different possibilities offered by different techniques. Writing became a tool to inhabit the world set forth by the previous phases; it was when the engagement of creating a text yielded its maximum results; writing became a way of sketching with words. For each of the designs this particular way of sketching was carried out in different ways, always drawing from materials gathered before while engaging creativity. Designing was always a loop from text to drawing, until the whole reached an acceptable definition and coherence in all of its parts.
To do so, for each design four different texts were developed, each one exploiting different possibilities of the many point of views available to literature. A poem, which acted as a bridge with the previous phase, set the tone for the design, explored it in its poetic qualities and tried to define its essence. It provided a way to explore those aspects most difficult to deal with in drawing and provided a bridge to translate them into shape and matter.

. . . A tower marks the site
where south turns into north,
a pillar of steel, concrete and stone
to gather thoughts and send them forth . . .

A manifesto defined what the design was, how it related to its site and function, how it operated and in which way this translated in architecture. Without actually defining the design it set its core principles.

. . . The building, hanging on the tip of the promontory towards the south, is both castle and lighthouse; it looks over the valley and marks the beginning of the mountain, balanced between the two forces and realms of

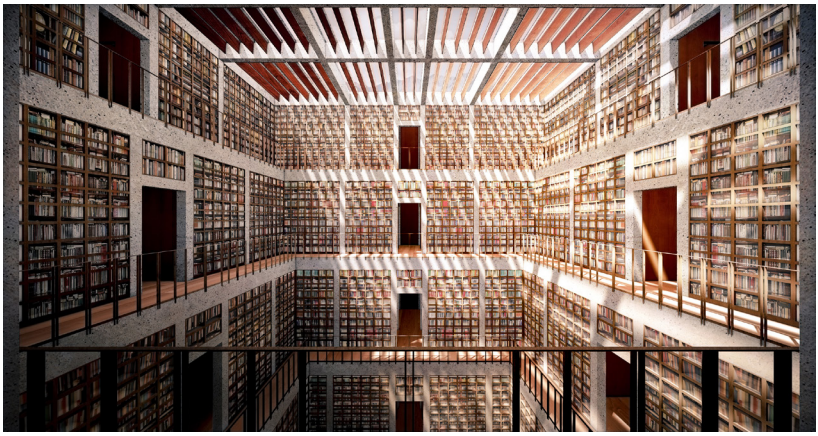


Fig. 13. Visualisation of the City Library ‘tower’ *…a coffer of treasures…*

the landscape. In this suspension, observation can take place. Close enough to things to relate to them but still far enough to be able to observe and judge them. This is a place where stillness is not quietness but the balanced clashing of forces; it is start as well as end, arrival and departure. It embodies the forces it balances and makes them explicit, part of an organic whole . . .

A description approached the design from a spatial and material perspective, bridging the concepts of the manifesto with the ways in which they should be shaped; it fixed the vague images of the poem while allowing to envision the design by describing it, and thus inhabiting it, through the text.

. . . Inside, a coffer of treasures unfolds around a pivotal axis that connects earth and sky. Galleries laden with books grow outward and upward under a glass ceiling permeated by light that washes down the back of books, making their authors and titles glimmer, finally reaching the librarians desks down below. Like an opened toolbox, this core of galleries opens on two opposite sides on a symmetrical arrangement of rooms and nooks, shelves and reading tables. Symmetrical because in here the most important balance of Meran takes place both in the architecture and in the books it holds. Pivoted around the vertical axis where the light of the sky, shadowed by the mountains above, reaches the shiny stone floor below, one side of the tower reflects on the other, connected by side galleries. On one side the Italian, on the other the German. South and North are balanced and meet in the axis of earth and sky, up and down . . .

A first-person narrative was the fourth kind of text of this design phase, and it was employed to be able to inhabit the spaces, to see them from the perspective of the visitor and to explore them perceptually and in time, filling them with life while shaping them through it. Narrative here was a fundamental tool to construct a logical sequence and to investigate values and relations while also being a way to engage creativity and to force the

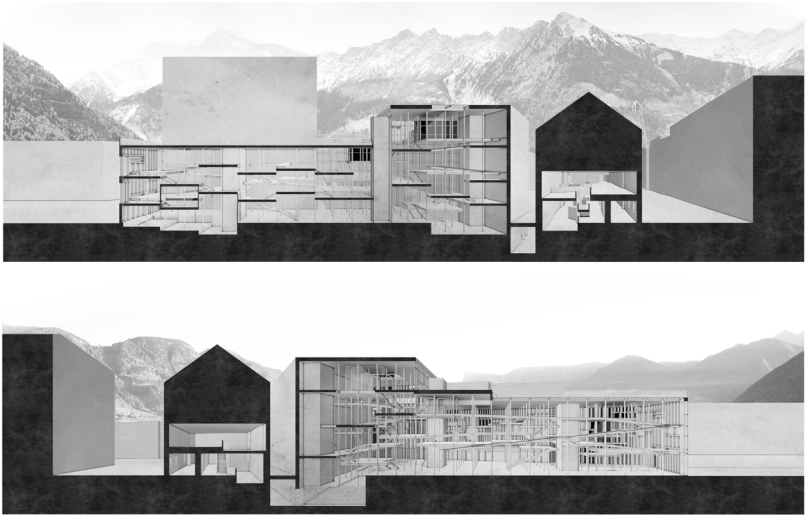


Fig.14. Ssections of the City Library ‘forest’. *...walking my thoughts...*

definition of particular elements. As a way to sketch with words, writing forced the definition of things as they emerged from the activity itself, the exploration of possibilities and features that vary from the choice of forms and volumes to the definition of a certain detail.

> *. . . Here is where most of the users and the books are, an open space filled with pillars that move through a slightly distorted perspective throughout the whole space. People, light, voices, air; after the archive it is as if I stepped back into the city, which is now completely awake. A forest, as I said, and that is no casual metaphor; this is the buffer between the cave and the mountain, the place where people and books – the animals of this particular jungle – meet. If the archive is the strongbox of knowledge, the dark universe one has to gaze into to find its secrets, here another aspect of the world of books is shown. When I walk this three-dimensional maze it feels as if I am 'walking my thoughts'. Moving up, down and across gives shape to what is usually only an activity of the mind. It fills me with pride when readers tell me that while looking for a book they found ten more while making their way through this aerial world . . .*

Finally, the last phase of the process, after the design was defined, employed literature as a way to test the project. The scenario writing developed for the analysis was completed in this phase by adding the new designs to the story. The narrative was thus employed as a way to inhabit the spaces and to test the ways in which they could be lived and perceived. Writing a narrative with an alter ego as protagonist made it possible to test the designs and to conclude the whole process by tying together all the elements that took part in it; the scenario collected in a single narrative all of the elements that the analysis brought to the design and tested their working as a coherent whole.

> *. . . Upstairs, underneath the pitched roof and the geometrical drawings of its beams, he spent the first of what will be many nights in a small room*

Fig. 15. Visualisation of the Mountain Library
…as close to the Rhine as you are to the Mediterranean…

where wood was as much present for the eyes as for the nose. Only a few steps from his room up the well of the staircase, caressing the smooth handrail which vibrates at his sliding touch, he can reach the library, the whole reason he came here.

Looking down the meadow and the valley beyond, Antonio spends his days writing and reading about the place and what it does to him. What started out as a small trip to visit the north turned out to be a much bigger thing. These valleys enchanted and welcomed him, becoming a new home in balance between the Italian south and the German north, where one can read Hölderlin and Montale in the same way, as close to the Rhine as you are to the Mediterranean, a place where word and world meet. Not Italy, nor Germany or Austria, but Europe.

1 Aldo Rossi, Scientific Autobiography (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 44.

2 Along with Rossi providing the fascination two other works were particularly important in the development of this work: Gaston Bachelard's The Poetics of Space (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994) and Klaske Havik's Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture, Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2014)

3 René Daumal, Mount Analogue (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1959), 22

4 Antonio Manfredi, 'I luoghi della nostalgia e quelli del pensiero' in Antonio Manfredi, Itinera (Milan: All'insegna del pesce d'oro, 1997) – author's translation

5 An extensive bibliography would be a paper in itself, as it varies from writings by Goethe to accounts by sociologists and journalist; the variety of the available materials, thanks to the fact that the city of Meran was a famous destination for the European bourgeoisie during the 1800s and 1900s and for the interests it more recently raised as a border region provided with a wealth of very varied material.

6 The ten landscape characters were: River, Valley, City, Road, Castle, Church, Field, Wood, Hof and Mountain.

7 Georg Trakl, 'A Winter Evening'.

Becoming Bogotá: Urban Analysis through Narrative Inhabitation

Matthew Cook

> *I have several names: La Soledad, Teusaquillo, Home. Depending on whom you ask, my boundaries shift and vary, but I know who I am. A lot goes on inside my limits. I am large; I, as they say, contain multitudes. At my heart is Parkway, it runs through me, gives me a structure and a centre. It's an important place. It's where all the life of the area pumps through. Eating, drinking, buying, sitting, watching, playing, walking, this is where it is all happening.*
>
> *(excerpt from the monologue 'District')*

This urban analysis, carried out within the framework of a master graduation studio at Delft University of Technology, focuses on an urban neighbourhood of Bogotá, Colombia. The city is a place of rapid urbanization,

inequality and development, a frontier between the global south and the global north that once colonized it. These tensions make it a prime location to investigate the wider interest of the studio, 'Constructing the Commons', the understanding of the city as a precious resource in itself, which can be used and shared in the population's evolution.

Arriving on site in the barrio of La Soledad, a well-functioning, pleasant residential neighbourhood, I noticed locations of intense social activity, places that had been appropriated and transformed. In an attempt to analyse the relationship between these spaces and the social practices of everyday life taking place within them, I decided to employ site writing as a mode of investigation. I began to 'inhabit' urban elements, writing monologues from their personified point of view of their experience of the city.

I developed *Narrative Inhabitation* as a practice of personifying the city, giving it a voice that describes the life happening within it. My method of inhabitation involved writing about the everyday life of Bogotá, in the form of a series of monologues told by architectural elements of the city itself. To sort the elements, I had used Kevin Lynch's classifications of the path, edge, district, node and landmark.[1] I reversed his analysis, developed in *The Image of the City*, from studying people's perception of the city, to the city's perception of its people. I combined this with Jane Rendell's site writing, a mode of investigation that combines objective and subjective critique and a simultaneous investigation of the intimate and the distant.[2]

Writing the city from the point of view of a bridge, wall, statue, park and the wider district helped me to deal with the complexity of what I was describing in a single coherent form. It gave me a way to investigate daily practices I had witnessed or been told about, things that could potentially happen or had ceased to occur. The elements were a series of locations that had grabbed my attention upon my arrival in the city, places of heightened social encounter where the elements' uses had been transformed and their space appropriated.

What follows are abridged extracts from two of the monologues, featuring the elements of the path and landmark. Through these texts Narrative

Inhabitation communicates a sense of Bogotá, demonstrating its everyday spatial practices.

The Bridge

It's a strange group that I live with. The six of us, all here, in the same place, but all leading very different existences. We all have different routines, and have different motivations, but basically, we are all the same, getting the job done. We all carry people from one place to another; it's as simple as that. You won't find a more interesting group of people than the ones I carry though. They must be the smartest collection of people in the country. They know everything apart from one crucial thing, though: what they will do with their lives, what they will turn into. I don't get many celebrities, politicians or famous people crossing. But mark my words, if you follow the people crossing right now, for the next 20 years, you are going to get to some pretty cool places. I'm certain of it.

I'm not saying the others don't have interesting people travelling along them. Look who I'm crossing over, the road down there. Almost every person in the entire city has to go through it. It knows everyone, as long as they can afford a car. From the bin men to the taxi drivers, to probably the mayor himself. They all know it.

That route next to the road, the parallel partner, it knows everyone too, but in more of a working-class hero kind of way. The route knows the street traders, the 9-5ers, the ones with two jobs, three kids and a leaking roof. They come from miles away, roaring through, crammed in, getting to know each other in silence, riding the bumps and holding tight for the corners. They don't call those two the spine of the city for nothing; everyone needs those two.

I feel a bit sorry for the bridge next to me, crossing that lot below. It's like the road, knows loads of people too, all the drivers, in their cars, vans and taxis. They don't care about the bridge, though; they just use it to get to the roads below. Just a stepping stone to something else.

My favourite two are that pair down there, although maybe don't mention that to the others. That duo take the cyclists and the pedestrians. They are quieter

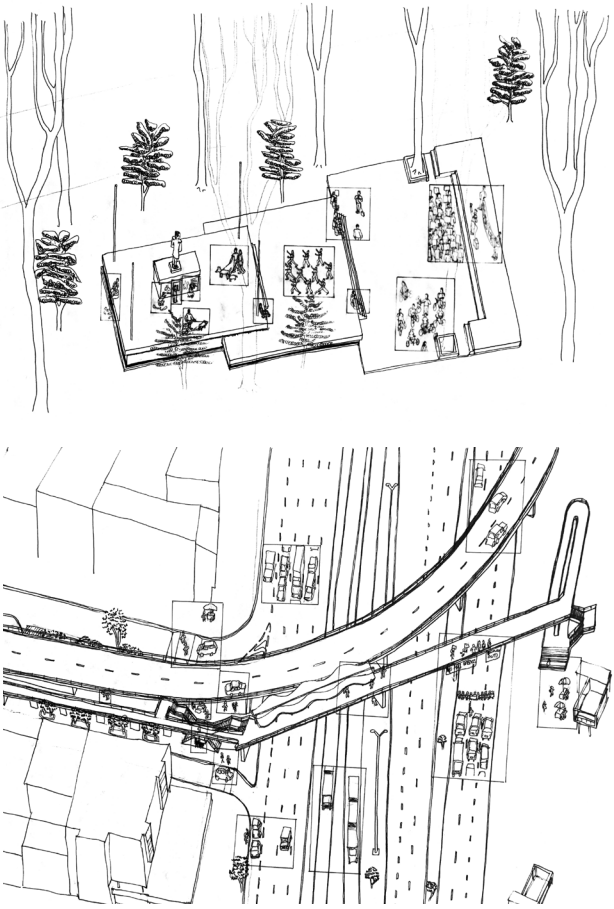


Fig. 1+2. Drawings by the author, Matthew Cook

about it and don't know as many people as the others, but that's where all the interesting stuff happens. People come from all over the city just to place themselves next to those two. Close to the people walking and cycling by, with the chance to interact, to distract them for a moment, to swap their money for food, drinks, goods, services. It's the place to be if you want to see or be seen. I'm kind of part of it too actually, slightly on the periphery, but crucial; at least I like to think so. They use me as a sheltered spot, a place to build a permanent shop, a bit of shade, a location to meet at, to sit and eat a meal.

The Landmark

I am Admiral Jose Prudencio Padilla Lopez, leader of the Colombian fleet, liberator of Santa Marta and Cartagena, scourge of the Spanish admiralty. [1] *am the protector of Teusaquillo in this city of Bogotá.*

I stand guard here, made from brick and brass, watching over the citizenry. I stand here tall above the parkland, the rolling waves of wind passing through the trees about me. The light shimmers through the foliage as though on the water's surface. I feel the rain on my face and am reminded of the spray from the Caribbean Sea.

Much life occurs in this park, for it belongs to all men, not just the wealthy aristocrats and merchants. As the sun climbs the local inhabitants will walk with their great hounds. They approach me, climbing my stairs, they walk around my feet, and then return. Occasionally a foul beast will take relief against me. I am enraged by this impertinence. If this was one of my men I would have the hound shot and the owner keelhauled for this indignity. When the sun reaches its zenith I am accompanied by a host of different characters. I believe they are local merchants. They sit by my feet to consume their midday meal. As my watch draws on and the sun sets, groups will appear beneath me. Sometimes they speak of topics important to the nation, standing with signs and making a great clamour. Sometimes they whisper revolutionary thoughts and I glower at their treacherous speeches.

As my night watch proceeds the miscreants emerge from their hovels. They

drink noxious juices on my steps, and allow themselves into a state of drunkenness and disorder that would see them locked up on a ship of mine.
Not so many moons ago a figure approached me in the darkness. It was a girl whom I had seen sitting at my feet at noon. I was shocked that such a girl would dare come out at this dark hour, especially without a chaperone. To my horror she began to smear posters onto my plinth. I could not read these posters but I know them to be sedition. I stood there, in humiliation, for days, until a young man tore the paper from me. I had previously thought the boy a scoundrel having seen him making crude remarks to the ladies on their afternoon promenades. I now suspect these women to be part of a radical female infiltration by the Spanish and the boy to be a good patriot.
There is only so much one man, one statue, can do to keep a city safe. It is up to the living men of this area to keep it secure from infiltration and to ensure the great nation of Colombia lives long as the jewel of the Americas. As God is my witness I will do all I can, and together, bricks and mortar, flesh and blood, we shall succeed in maintaining the security of the city and of this nation.

Conclusions

Narrative Inhabitation has been key to my analysis of Bogotá. It helped me overcome the constraints of limited time and local unfamiliarity to give a deep analysis of the elements, encompassing their history, their changing relevance and their daily rhythms.
Inhabiting the elements with site writing helped produce a breadth of analysis as I inhabited the city, forcing me to thinking empathetically and go beyond my own subjective experience. It also stopped me from presenting a universal experience of Bogotá, recognizing the multitude of views that belong to different people. By writing the city I have been able to investigate the emotions and personal motivations that Bogotá's elements provoke, the semi-fiction of the monologues giving me space to imagine and suppose whilst still creating a sense of place, accurate and useful for understanding the city's operation.

1 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), 204.
2 Jane Rendell, 'Site-Writing', in Jane Rendell et al. (eds.), *Critical Architecture* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 150-162

Stories of a Place in Time

Moomin Museum in Tampere, Finland

Diana Rimniceanu

In the 2017 spring term, the professional design studio of Public Building at Tampere University of Technology in Finland set a design task for a building that not only occupies and strengthens an urban place in Tampere but also presents imagined spaces: a museum for the stories, characters and places of the Moomin graphic novels by Finnish illustrator Tove Jansson. These graphic novels form the cultural and literary heart of many Finnish childhoods. For the design of such a cultural building, questions of place, landscape, the experience of spatial and material qualities are crucial.

> *The beauty arises from the unexpected. . . . And suddenly it was silence. The factory's interior courtyard has its own sound of silence. Beyond the brick walls the fuss of the city life does not enter, nor the sound of the rapids, nor the wind. It is a place out of time, out of space; it gives me shelter.*

The project by Diana Rimniceanu begins with a museum in search of a place of its own in the city of Tampere. But it is no ordinary building . . . and

thus . . . no ordinary place. The intervention aspires to provide the framework for the imagined spaces created by Jansson. And the place? Old bare brick factory walls and a river, right in the heart of Tampere; each with its own story, building a strong and lively identity.
The museum extension aspires to express the Moomin stories through an architecture that is specific and autonomous, capable of preserving the richness and uniqueness of the place while revealing the unexpected landscapes that it hides; an architecture that grows gradually, scene by scene, creating encounters between the Moomin creatures, the historic industrial buildings and the new visitors. The intervention reveals through space a sequence of atmospheres rooted within the darkness and light of the Moomin stories, while balancing between the reality of things and imagination.
In the given context, the challenge remains to transcribe the atmosphere of the Moomin graphic novel into spatial configurations. The project does not mimic the setting of the stories – the landscape of rocks, forest and sea, the caves and huts – but references them in a way that goes beyond the literal, capturing the friendly, modest, daring, inviting, strange or stubborn personalities of the Moomin creatures, the essence of Jansson's graphic novels. The first glimpses of the Moomin characters are revealed progressively from the outside, popping out and accompanying the museum visitors and the city dwellers along their everyday routes. Regardless of the fact that most of the intervention is constructed underground, it was worth questioning the way it relates to the factory building, as what remains visible becomes important. In that sense, the museum embraces rhythms and forms from the past, addressing them in new ways, with different materials, opposing the roughness of the brick to the smoothness of the concrete. The historic building acts as a bridge between the new intervention holding the exhibition and the learning centre, from the interior courtyard.

. . . but as soon as I enter, I am trapped in-between two worlds. Two different realities. One hundred years old and something . . . something else

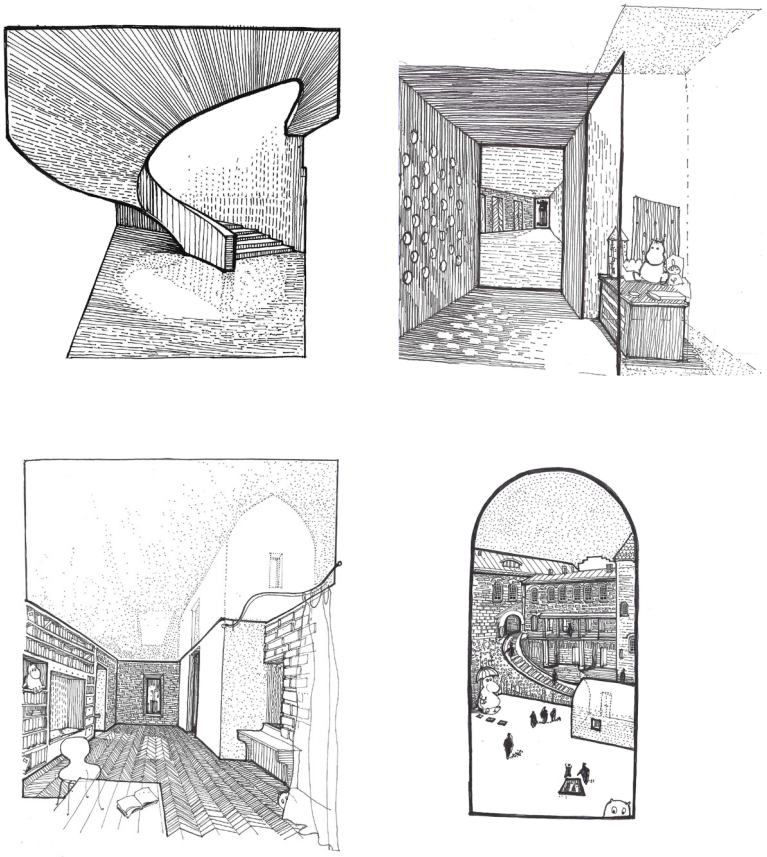


Fig. 1-4. Drawings by the author, Diana Rimniceanu.

> *there, outside, in the courtyard, unfamiliar but humble. Children play all around, witnessed by the factory walls. The courtyard seems to frame and restructure. It is 'the intimate', 'the silent', though sometimes loud, daring.*

The story writes itself between two worlds, as the existing industrial factory building separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits two places of strong identities: the city's liveliness and the absolute silence of the interior courtyard, completely detached from the city's reality, which has its own rhythm. The factory dominates the place and somehow protects you, makes you fearless before the heavy rapids that are 'shouting' from behind the building. Having to mediate between delicate pieces of history and the new, the unknown, the challenge remains in the construction of the intertwining links between them. While the intervention should remain respectful to the past, it questions the quality of space in the attempt to reach for different proximities, encounters and atmospheres that bring light upon Janson's collection. This sequence of very different atmospheres creates rhythm and moments of pause throughout the museum and a rich layering of spaces that is the essence of the Moomin stories. The museum portrays the Moomin stories revolving around the idea of *framing*, capturing characters, people and movements, while strengthening the essential tension between the different spaces.

> *As I am going back inside and look through the window, I notice two different, new frames that are facing each other trying to tell something, having their own purpose and story. They articulate the spine of the museum, the path that holds everything together underneath. The two windows frame the exhibition and the learning centre, coming together from underground.*

In between two worlds, the Moomin Museum aspires to deal with the intimate connection between literature and architecture, following Gaston Bachelard's reflections on the essential polarity between *the attic* and *the*

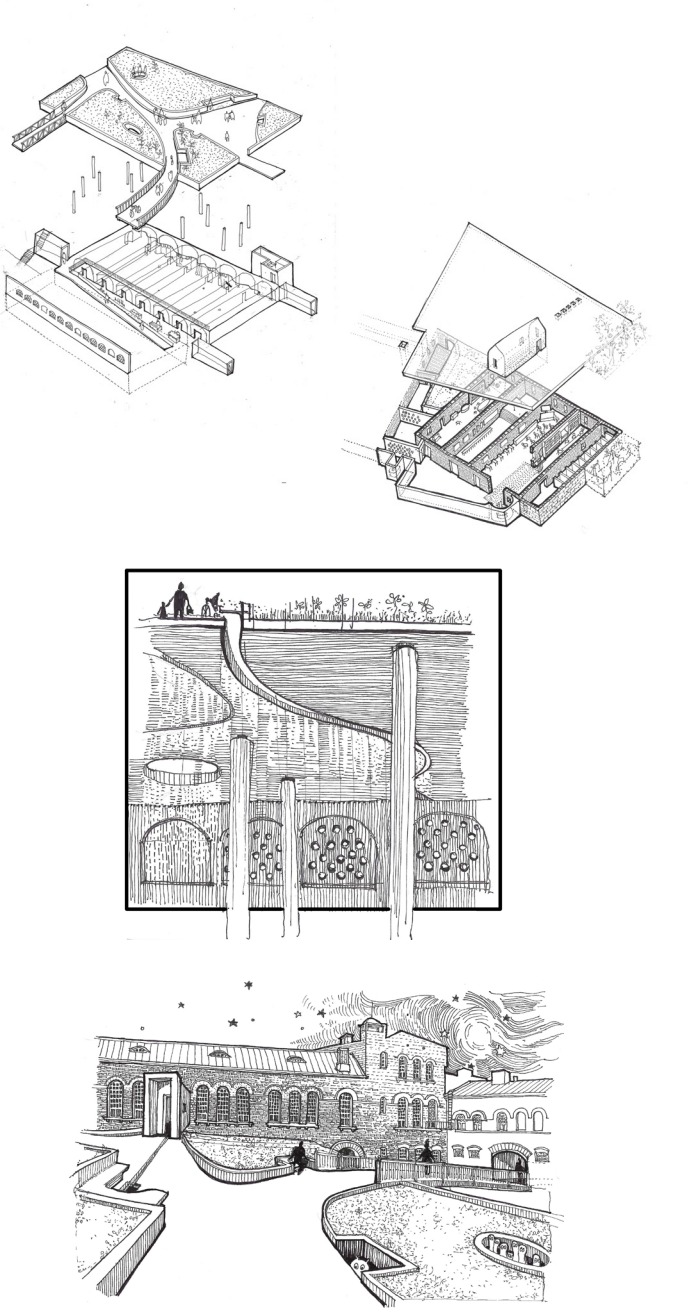


Fig.5-7. Drawings by the author, Diana Rimniceanu.

cellar. The intervention opposes the rationality of the roof to the irrationality of the cellar, playing with the different movements while shaping spaces where the visitors can freely wander, encouraging them to stay in a certain place or step towards another. The 'attic' resembles the symbolic storage of pleasant memories to which the dweller wants to return, and thus it becomes the entrance to but also the way out of the museum. It is the space that is imprinted first and last into one's memory. The naked structure of the roof inside shows its honesty decorating the high attic. It is the only space that simultaneously brings awareness of the two worlds: the silent courtyard and the city's fuss. The approach to the factory requires a careful and considered treatment, thus the intervention regenerates the space from within, reinforcing the structure with steel pillars and beams. The stairs that connect the 'attic' and the 'cellar', leading to the exhibition space, give a sense of tangibility, of intimacy. As the visitor descends the stairs, the smoothness of the concrete awakens the tactile sense and provokes tension with the nearby brick wall.

> *The staircase gives me a sense of nearness as I can touch it and feel its smoothness.*
> *But wait! A piano is playing! In an instant, it brings me back to my childhood. The sound escapes from the main hall. As I go through the dark corridor I stop for a little while to see a fragment of the Moomin world lighted in the niche. Following the sound, I end up between the heavy brick walls. They are so fortunate, absorbing all the beauty of the melodies.*

The 'cellar' is the hiding place where vaults shelter the Moomin Valley exhibit in darkness. Logical and sincere, the space is defined by its bearing walls, a series of diaphragms that cast deep shadows, dimming the sharpness of vision. The long series of caves is shattered and interrupted by small windows, revealing the thickness of the wall, fragments of spaces, atmospheres or people, emphasizing the permeability of the massive walls. The surprise plays against the anticipated, as captured in Jansson's graphic

novels. The punctuated light is drawing rhythms on the vaults, on the clear surfaces. Sometimes heavy, sometimes light, the curtains disclose the digital exhibition, with its all vibrant energetic colours, shapes and forms.

> *While entering the caves, a different atmosphere emerges. The light has turned into darkness, and the vaults shape mysterious shadows. The opacity of the heavy walls is shattered by the small windows. I can see miles away, glimpses of what is happening beyond the heavy thick concrete. But the sight is different. More concentrated, more punctuated. Long shadows are cast in front of me, dimming the sharpness of sight and calling for my unconscious peripheral vision. I touch the heavy caves. They reveal a sense of nearness and affection. As I pull the heavy curtain a combination of vibrant energetic colours, shapes and forms are moving around me. At the end of the tunnel, diving in light, are tiny models of the storytellers of the Moomin worlds imagined by Tove Jansson.*

Isle of Islay
Nature Observatory

Zhen Zhang

Prelude: Voyage into the Substance

SUN
centre of the Solar System perfect spherical ball of hot plasma
WATER
one oxygen and two hydrogen atoms
ROCK
granite is a combination of the quartz feldspar and biotite minerals
. . .
with mere finger clicks
nature = substances = nouns[1]
It is a man-made world.

stimuli after stimuli
they try with colours and light up the night
they try with scale, SMLXL
I am immune
my eyes sore
ears shut
I abandon my senses
or else they do violence to me
but I want them back[2]
a city won't help –
itself the root of my disease
. . .
I go into exile
a nomad
like my ancestors[3]
VOYAGE INTO THE SUBSTANCE
a true oceanic island it must be
ILA INSULA

Remembrance of a Forgotten Treaty between Man and Nature

2067 AD, Ila Insula

Fig. 1. Isle of Islay - Nature Observatory:
VOYAGE INTO THE SUBSTANCE

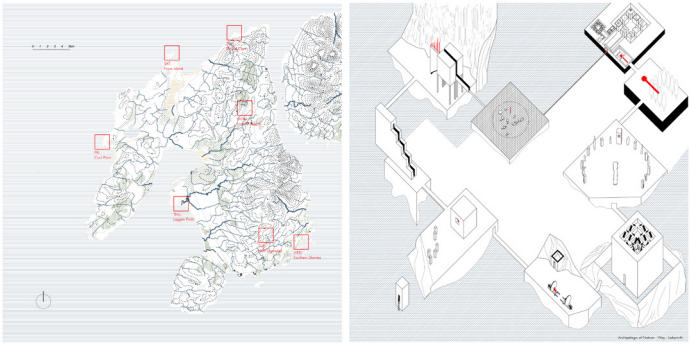


Fig. 2. 2067 AD, Ila Insula

Introduction

The contemporary condition of the human race is the root, the origin and the subject of the project. Our society is highly industrialized, digitalized and automatized – what the earliest pioneers of the enlightenment movement could only have dreamt of. On the one hand, modern citizens are enjoying this progress: washing machines, ovens, laptops take our burdens away and are becoming an indispensable part of everyday life; on the other hand, modern life and culture are dominated by rationalization and technology, turning human life into a banal regular formula, which is increasingly becoming a burden in itself and incompatible with feelings and dreams.

The paradox of our age today is therefore the combating force between rationality and feelings and dreams. A retrograde wish would be merely escapist; to deny rationality would lead to barbarism. Enlightenment pioneers discovered reason for us; today we embrace reason but need to go beyond rationality and rediscover romance and nature. The *tabula rasa* created by modern movements needs to be filled with new inventions and understanding of a more mature, empathic and loving human-nature relationship: a rational romantic mind, or enlightened primitiveness?
The project is therefore a social critique against the overrule of rationality over humanity, a frustrated plea for more emotional capacity (for love and nature) within (or beyond) a rational world. To overcome the conditions and paradox described above, I have developed various fictive concepts or utopias. The project here is one of such concepts, and perhaps also a radical and pessimistic one – the protagonist takes his frustration with an escapist attitude, leaves his city behind and tries to find his joy and purpose of life in a natural and prescientific environment. He arrives at a faraway island in Scotland, where natural elements, not rational human beings, are the dominating force. I designed various instruments or observatories for the modern man to get in touch with what he yearns for – nature: through folklores and tales he regains a prescientific eye; through the instruments he experiences the varied elemental existence of nature – sun, moon, stars, water, fire, wind, waves . . .

During this project I got inspiration through reading, writing and collecting. Travel logs written by English scholars, who travelled to Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as folklores and tales of the Scottish islands were great inspirations; like a time machine, these words took me a few hundred years back to a prescientific state of mind. Viewing the myths with an enlightened eye enabled me to filter superstitions and adopt a primitive mind-set towards a coherent human-nature relationship. The narrative style of the travel logs sets an example for describing and experiencing space with an empirical method. Through my own writing, my own perception and impression of spatial quality and characteristics become known to myself. To write down my thoughts with poetic expressions means that I can express impressions, hypotheses, assumptions and associations in unconfined, not thought-through, not necessarily well-founded fragments that enable the freest documentation of impressions of moments. Through collecting archetypical references of various instruments and observatories from different cultures throughout history, I try to see through the formal and functional aspect of the structures, grasp the potential inherent in their form and function and transfer the intelligence in my own design.

MONDAY BEFORE DAWN – ORIGIN – OUT OF DARKNESS

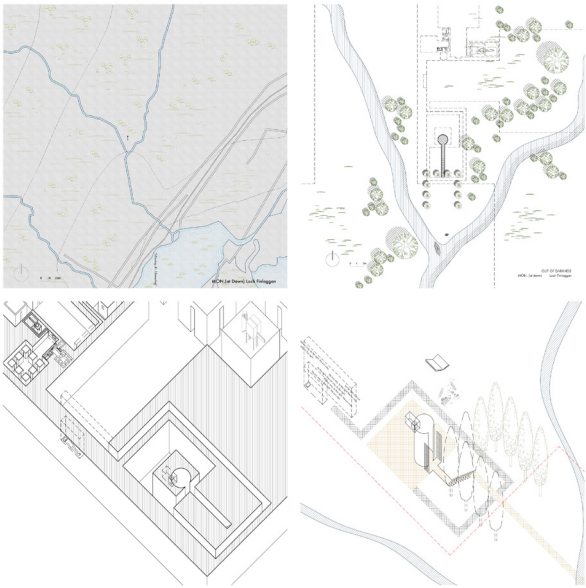


Fig. 3. Monday Before Dawn – Origin – Out of Darkness

In darkness he wakes up in a stone bed. Bumping into a wall, he feels his hands against it . . . It is uneven, carved with: '*the sun way, to the right.*'[4] Finally he arrives at a room where sun rays cast in. A red box is in a niche, with a guidebook of an island, INSULA ILA. His voyage officially starts. Up the stairs, morning sun rays shine in his face. Surrounded by conifers, in front of him two rivers join. Following the hints of the guidebook, he jumps in a boat: *follow the 'south flowing rivers' to meet the sun.*[4]

MONDAY - ODE TO THE SUN - LOCH FINLAGGAN

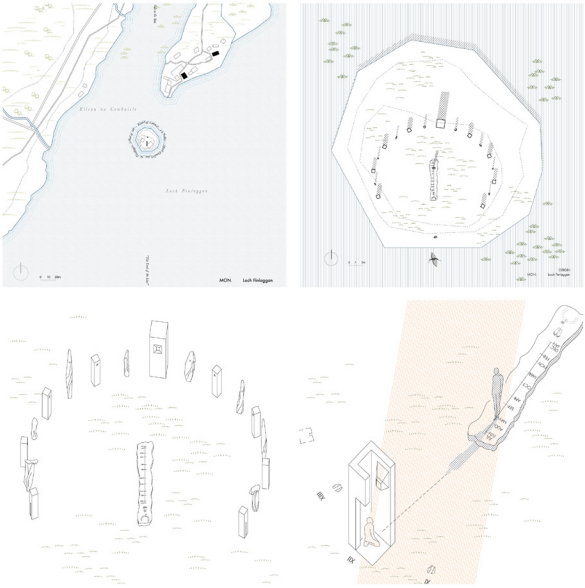


Fig. 4. Monday – Ode to The Sun – Loch Finlaggan

Almost circular, utopian, is the little island *Eilean na Comhairle* – island of council where 14 judges of the Lord of Isles used to meet.[5] Along a stone carved with names of months he walks towards the mark of the month 'May', *the sun behind him casts a shadow*, pointing to 'hour XII'. Around him are standing stones, smaller and bigger, like Stonehenge. They are holed stones, some of which have inner spaces.[15] Through the hole – mind's eye of the stone – he sees the sun. *At this very moment, the sun is in his eye, in this hole, and in this house and stone.*

TUESDAY – ODE TO THE LOCH – LOCH UIGEADAIL

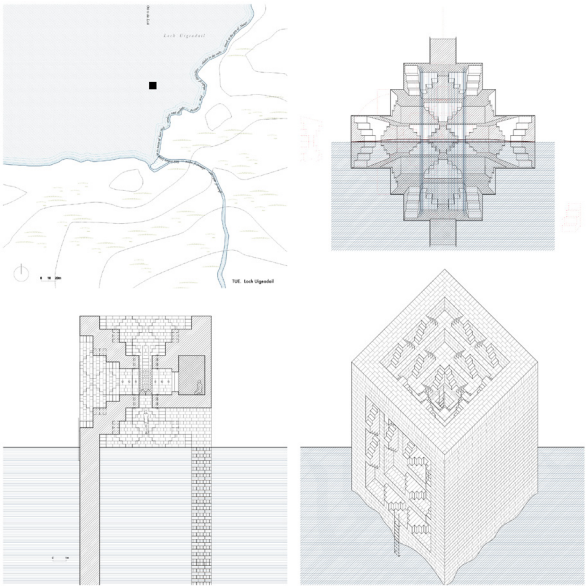


Fig. 5. Tuesday – Ode to The Loch – Loch Uigeadail

Amid white quartzite hills he arrives. White are the Stones, dark blue is the water, endless is the moorland and dramatic is the sky: *as if the loch has a reign.* In the midst of the loch is a cube with many stairs. He swims across and arrives at its centre surrounded by small niches. Opening an iron cover in the floor, he jumps into the water and sees a step well, like those in India.[15] At a touch, the mirrored reflection vanishes: *residence of the invisible soul of the loch.* On the top of the structure are little stones here and there. *He picks up one and puts it into a niche.*[6]

WEDNESDAY – ODE TO ALL LIVES – SOUTHERN SKERRIES

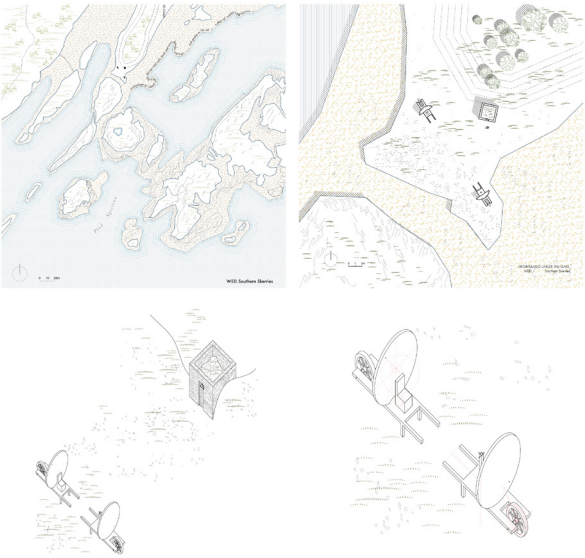


Fig. 6. Wednesday – Ode to All Lives – Southern Skerries

Archipelagos of islands and islets, skerries and rocks, atolls and coves, beaches and bays. Lush green with oak trees and deer grass – lives celebrate. Walking towards a cube he finds his nose against a triangle opening. Seeing nothing, out of curiosity he takes a breath. Earthy and fresh, familiar but intense: *It smells exactly like here!* He then sits on one peat cart and faces another, on top of which birds eat the seeds. How vivid their songs are! A perfect reflection of the birds' talk reaches his ears, *he feels like the magic hunter who can hear birds' talk*.[15]

THURSDAY – DELAY & WAIT – LAGGAN POINT

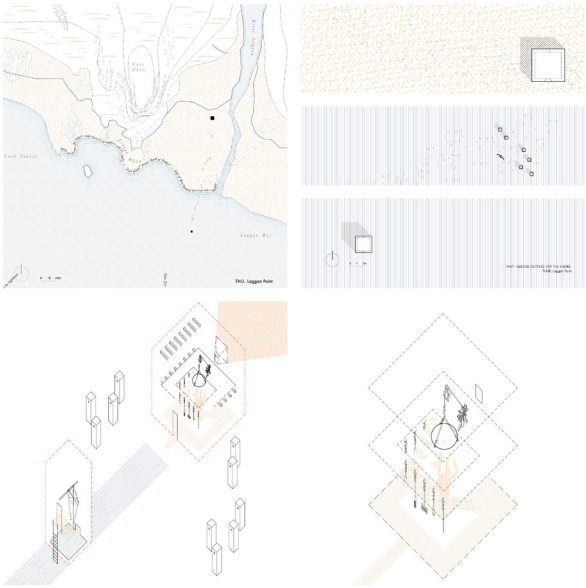


Fig. 7. Thursday – Delay & Wait – Laggan Point

Here the River Laggan flows into the sea. There were once many fish here, where a local decides to bury himself *with a spike ready to go fishing*.[7] Beside the river is a house. He walks in and pulled the pot up the central fire with *a spinning wheel*. He prepared some woods, took the hanging *spikes* and made himself a *Brochan Lom* - a traditional island dish. On the beach are standing stones quite like an Antony Gormley sculpture. With the help of these standing men he knows *the depth of the tide*.[8]

. . .

FRIDAY – IN MEMORY OF A LOST KINGDOM – COUL POINT

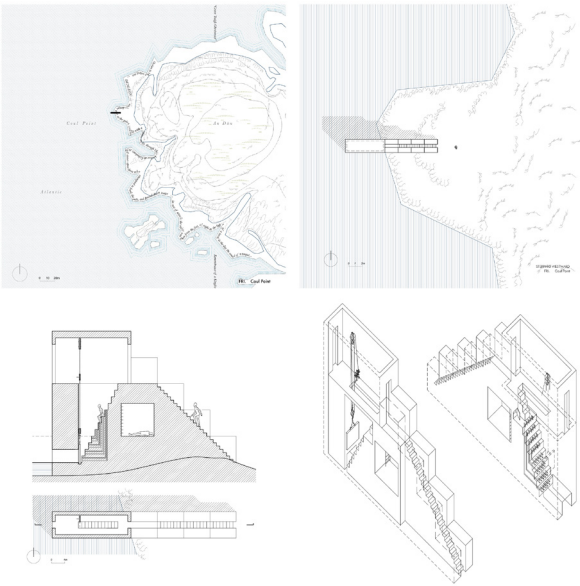


Fig. 8. Friday – In Memory of A Lost Kingdom – Coul Point

The islanders considered this to be the furthest western point and the back-side of the world. Step westwards, what a romantic notion.[9] Coul burg was *a defence place* nearby, steep at all sides with small passages easy to be blocked from within.[10] *A typical Scottish burg has an atrium at the entrance, so that from the top, stones could be rolled down, or fire could be initiated against invaders*. Here a tourist in the past might end up in a dungeon.[11] Friend or Foe? He walks up huge stairs, arrives at an atrium, lifts the door: huge waves rush in and the stairs become water organs,[15] *as if foes are rushing in and horning loud.*

SATURDAY – THE GLEN: ODE TO THE WIND – NAVE ISLAND

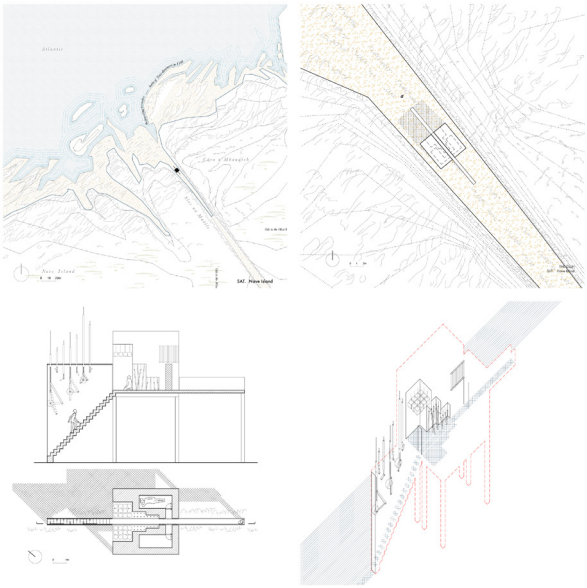


Fig. 9. Saturday – The Glen: Ode to The Wind – Nave Island

At the northern point on a little island, he finds himself facing an impressive glen. Opening the door of a stone house with pipes, he feels heavy wind against his back. Apparently it is not just him who felt the wind . . . *What a mixture of talks and singing and dancing.*[12] Something metallic rings, pleasant to the ear. On the wall strings of harp sing.[15] *All the works of wind.* What a theatre.

SUNDAY – IN MEMORY OF DARKNESS – BHOLSA CAVE

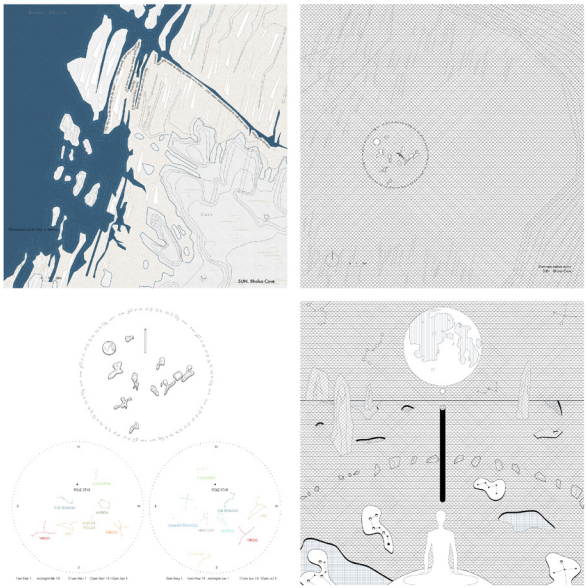


Fig. 10. Sunday – In Memory of Darkness – Bholsa Cave

. . . What a starry night! *He moves the stones carved with star patterns according to the overhead stars.* Bathing in moonlight with cold air, cold stones and colder feet, he thinks of saints who dwelled in stone chambers with stone beds and chairs.[13] With this thought he walks into the cave and arrives at a stone bed . . . Déjà vu.

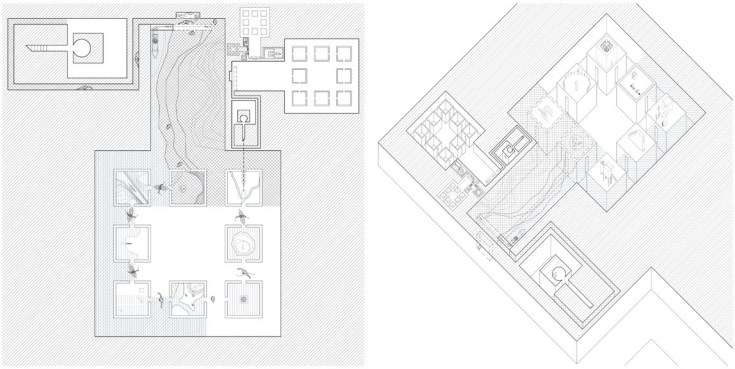


Fig. 11. Oceanic Island – Archipelago – Labyrinth

In his dream he is watching a play in the Book Theatre, and the eight places he visited are miniature rooms on the stage. What he does not yet know is – that when he wakes up, he would have forgotten everything and start the voyage all over again. An oceanic island of Deleuze it is, before Latour's immutable mobiles were invented. A true other worldly place called INSULA ILA. And it is a labyrinth.[14]

1 World transformed into a mathematical formula, see George Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903), in Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds.), *The Blackwell City Reader* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 14.
2 Precision, over-simulation and protective organism, see Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', op. cit. (note 1), 19.
3 Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002), 48.
4 *Deas* (Gaelic): south and right. *Dessil*: an auspicious ritual – sunways from left to right.
5 Joan Blaeu, *Blaeu Atlas of Scotland* (1654).
6 Water worship in J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. IV (Edinburgh, 1860), 314-346. James M. Mackinlay, *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs* (Glasgow: William Hodge & Co., 1893), 5-23.
7 Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1703), 240.

8 *Loch Indaal* (Gaelic) means Loch of Delay: ships wait here until storms pass.
9 William Wordsworth, *Stepping Westward* (1807).
10 Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, op. cit. (note 7), 240. Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides* (1772), 256.
11 Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), 252-255.
12 The battle of Traii-dhruinard took place north of Loch-Druinard.
13 Mackinlay, *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs*, op. cit. (note 6), 5-23.
14 The Gaelic tale *'Murchag a's Mionachag'*, describing a chain of cause-and-effect, indicates a labyrinth-like ancient mind-set. In J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, op. cit. (note 6), 157-163.
15 References to various instruments and structures for observation of natural phenomena. Sun: Stonehenge and holed stones. Water: step well. Sound: parabolic mirrors, whisper dishes. Water Organ: Greek hydraulic organ, sea organ by Nikola Bašic, Croatia. Stair: Jantar Manta, India. Wind: Aeolian Wind Harp by Kircher Athanasius, 1650.

BIOGRAPHIES

Authors

Óscar Andrade Castro is an architect, PhD candidate in the Chair of Methods and Analysis of the Department of Architecture at Delft University of Technology and assistant professor at the Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (e[ad] PUCV), Chile. Since 2003 he has participated in nine of the School of Valparaíso *Travesías* crossing the South American continent. He has lived, worked and studied as a guest at the Open City of Amereida. During the last several years he has been actively involved in several international exhibitions of the Amereida group, among them Lausanne (2013), Brussels (2015), Athens and Kassel (2017). His research is focused on experimental architectural procedures, methods and tools that follow the logics of non-planning and are employed in the conception and materialization of open-ended works.

Willem de Bruijn is an artist and academic with an interest in the crossovers between architecture, philosophy and the visual arts. He obtained an MSc in architecture from Delft University of Technology and a PhD in history and theory of architecture from the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. He is currently senior lecturer in architecture at the Arts University Bournemouth (AUB), where he runs the Contextual Studies programme. He has published several articles relating to his doctoral thesis in journals such as *The International Journal of the Book* (2005, 2007), *Library Trends* (2012) and *Footprint* (2012). He has also been involved in various editorial roles for publications such as *The Arcadian Library: Binding and Provenance* (2014), *Sigmund Freud's Desk* (Ro Spankie, 2015) and, most recently, *Black Mirror: Magic in Art* (2017), a book he also designed. Willem's current research revolves around the role of the image in visualisations of history and theory.

Matthew Cook is currently finishing his MSc in architecture at Delft University of Technology. He previously obtained his undergraduate architecture degree at Oxford Brookes University. He will be graduating within the chair of Methods and Analysis. His professional background

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Klaske Havik (editor) is associate professor of architecture, methods & analysis at Delft University of Technology. She studied architecture in Delft and Helsinki and literary writing in Amsterdam. She has developed a distinct research approach relating architectural and urban questions (such as the use, experience and imagination of place) to literary language. Her book *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (2014), based on her PhD research, developed a literary approach to architecture. She initiated the platform *Writingplace* and organized the international conference *Writingplace: Literary Methods in Architectural Research and Design* in 2013. The book *Writingplace: Investigations in Architecture and Literature* appeared in 2016. Klaske Havik is editor of *OASE, Journal for Architecture*. Havik's literary work has

appeared in Dutch poetry collections and literary magazines.

Christos Kakalis (Newcastle upon Tyne) is an architect (University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece). He obtained the interdisciplinary MSc 'Design, Space, Culture' at the National Technical University of Athens. He holds a PhD in architecture from the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA) and is a lecturer in architecture at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape of Newcastle University. His work focuses on the conditions of embodied experience of the architecture and natural landscape with special emphasis on the role atmosphere. He has edited (with Dr Emily Goetsch) the collection *Mountains, Mobilities and Movement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). He is currently working on the book *Grammars of Architectural Silences* and the edited volume (with Prof. Mark Dorrian) *The Place of Silence: Architecture / Media / Philosophy.*

Anca Matyiku is a PhD candidate in the History and Theory of Architecture programme at McGill University. With a focus on architectural representation and design process, Anca's research investigates how the literary imagination can effectively complement traditional tools of architectural design. Her work has contributed to a number of publications and has been previously presented in Montreal, Winnipeg, Hong Kong, Helsinki and at the Architecture Biennale in Venice. Anca holds a Bachelor of Architectural Studies from the University of Waterloo and a Master of Architecture from the University of Manitoba.

Stella Mygdali (Edinburgh) is a registered architect (University of Patras, Greece). She holds an MSc (Distinction) in research in architecture from the University of Edinburgh. Currently, she is a PhD candidate in architecture at the University of Edinburgh. Her academic work focuses on the performative interrelation of art and architecture with a particular interest in environments of intimacy and risk. She has presented her work in conferences and group exhibitions in Europe.

Davide Perottoni (editor), born in Rovereto, Italy, in 1991, studied for his Bachelor of Architecture at IUAV University of Venice and gained his master's degree at Delft University of Technology, where he graduated cum laude with a work on the relationship between architecture and literature in 2017. He has worked in practice in Italy and now in the UK and is a member of *Writingplace laboratory for architecture and literature*. Davide divides his time between his work in practice and the development of various collaborations focusing on the relationship between language and design.

Mark Proosten (editor) graduated as an architect in 2011 at Eindhoven University of Technology. Upon graduation he started working as an independent architect in the region of Maastricht in the Netherlands. Here he collaborated in multiple architecture offices before setting up his own practice. Since October 2013 he has been working as an assistant to Prof. Wim van den Bergh within the chair of Wohnbau at RWTH Aachen University. He is a guest teacher in the Master of Interior Architecture programme at ArtEZ in Zwolle and lectures at the Maastricht Academy of Architecture. Mark is one of the contributors to *Writingplace laboratory for architecture and literature*. He co-edited the book *Writingplace: Investigations in Architecture and Literature* (nai010 publishers, 2016). Mark's practice is based upon his academic interest in finding relevant solutions to spatial problems that transcend the boundaries between landscape and architecture. His research focusses on mid-century modernism in Scandinavia and North America, in which he is pursuing a PhD upon the topic of the so-called Utzonian houses of the Danish architect Jørn Utzon. His teaching and writing is devoted to narratives in general and the relationship between architecture and literature in particular.

Katrin Recker (b. 1988, Münster, Germany) graduated from RWTH Aachen University in 2015. Her master's thesis was awarded a travel grant from the Helmut Hentrich Foundation, which Katrin used for a study trip throughout China, Myanmar and Indonesia that same

year. Upon graduation Katrin started to work for several Cologne-based architecture offices. Since 2016 she has been working as an assistant to Prof. Wim van den Bergh within the chair of Wohnbau at RWTH Aachen University. Katrin's research is focused on the works of the French architect Michel Roux-Spitz, a Paris-based contemporary of Le Corbusier and Auguste Perret.

Diana Luiza Rimniceanu was born 17 March 1994, in a small town, Buzau, next to Bucharest. After taking piano lessons for several years, influenced by her grandfather's passion for painting and structure engineering she shifted her interests towards drawing, following the architecture programme early in high school. After getting into the University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest by winning the Architecture National Olympics, she earned a bachelor's degree in architecture, developing an interest for the experiential reading of places. The Erasmus programme gave her the opportunity to study in Finland for the first year of her master's degree, a period that has been extended, and she is currently finishing the degree at Tampere University of Technology in Tampere, Finland.

Angeliki Sioli is assistant professor of architecture at Louisiana State University, USA, and a licensed architect in Greece. She has taught courses at University Tec de Monterrey in Mexico and McGill University in Canada, where she completed her PhD in history and theory of architecture in 2015. Her research seeks connections between architecture and literature in the public realm of the early twentieth-century European city while also looking into pedagogical aspects of architectural education. It has been published in a number of edited books and journals, as well as presented at interdisciplinary conferences. It also appears in the book she recently co-edited titled *Reading Architecture: Literary Imagination and Architectural Experience* (Routledge, 2018). The volume touches on the interdisciplinary field of architecture and literature and was the outcome of the international symposium of the same name she co-organized in Athens, Greece in 2015.

Stephen Steyn
Stephen Steyn completed an MArch (Prof) at the University of Pretoria with a thesis that consisted (contentiously, at the time) of substantial portions of fiction interspersed with academic essays and architectural drawings. He is involved in the postgraduate (or graduate) programmes at both the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg's Graduate School of Architecture, where he is a Unit Leader (Unit 10) as well as course convener for the Theory and History programmes. His student design work has been recognized at the national level with the Murray and Roberts Des Baker Design Award (2010) and at the regional level with the Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year Award for Best Use of Clay Masonry (2013).

Sumayya Vally
Digital collage and a forensic approach to space expose Sumayya Vally's particular obsession with deconstructing and reconstructing image and space. Whether unpacking the city through a microscope or satellite imagery, Sumayya has a particular interest in exposing the parts of its constituency that are largely invisible. Her interests have admitted her into a host of prominent conceptual and investigative projects, including a position as assistant curator and film producer for the 2014 Venice Biennale (South African Pavilion). In 2015, she co-founded the experimental architecture and research firm *Counterspace*. She currently teaches design at the University of Johannesburg as co-leader of Unit 11 in the Graduate School of Architecture.

Zhen Zhang holds an MSc in architecture from RWTH Aachen University. Since April 2017 she has been a research and teaching assistant in the Department of Theory of Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture of RWTH Aachen. She was curator of the exhibition 'Planetary Urbanism' in the German Pavilion at the UN Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador in 2016 and assistant editor at *ARCH+* (Journal for Architecture and Urbanism), Aachen from 2015 to 2017. Her master's thesis 'Isle of Islay – Nature Observatory – Remembrance of a Forgotten Treaty between Man and Nature' received a BDA-SARP-

Award 2016 and was nominated for the Euregional Prize (EAP). She worked as an architect with Gerkan, Marg & Partners in Shanghai from 2011 to 2013. From 2008 to 2010 she worked on the planning and project management of the bamboo pavilions of the touring exhibition ‘Germany and China – Moving ahead together’, including the ‘German-Chinese House’ at World Expo Shanghai 2010.

COLOPHON

Writingplace, Journal for Architecture and Literature
Issue #1 Literary Methods in Architectural Education
www.writingplace.org

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Studio Sanne Dijkstra

Publisher:
Marcel Witvoet, nai010 publishers
Frank van der Hoeven, TU Delft Open

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Printed and bound in the Netherlands

ISBN 978-94-6208-281-6 (paperback)

Writingplace: Investigations in Architecture and Literature is also available as e-book:
ISBN 978-94-6208-282-3 (e-book)