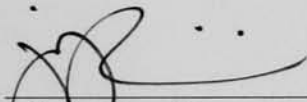UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
MASTER'S PROJECT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

TITLE: Digital Playhouse: Thresholds of Visual and Tactile Bodies
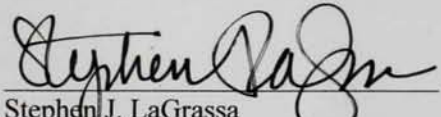
PRESENTED BY: Staci Lynne Seyferth

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5/07/04
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5/17/04
Date

Thresholds of Visual and Tactile Bodies /
Masters Project
By: Staci Lynne Seyferth

University of Detroit Mercy / School of Architecture
Julie Ju-Youn Kim, Associate Professor   April 23, 2004   AR 510 / Section 01

Abstract / Circumstance:

With the increasing speed of our society as our technologies grow, we have become increasingly static in the use and understanding of our physical bodies as we allow technology to go beyond the simple theory of mimicking the body to the actuality of replacing the body. We have replaced many of our functions with a substitution or imitation of that function which is often illustrated in a visual manor. We have, in other words, become an occularcentric culture where bodies of people, places and things are defined increasingly in a visual manor. The investigation that I chose to explore was the relating to the need for architecture in our current and future society as technology continues to grow. I wanted to emphasize the need for and existence of bodies as well as their relationship to the space around them. I chose to do this by acknowledging the importance of digital media to our culture and attempting to thicken the space of the digital projection, the digital image or digital body to a space that is not compromising to the physical bodies we have. This project is an exploration of thresholds between visual bodies and tactile bodies. Accentuating the concepts of peeling, thickening, layering, and moving through spaces in a cinematic fashion to accentuate the already intertwining relationship between digital and physical media and digital and physical bodies.

Project Description / Summary

The circumstance under which I choose to investigate these issues architecturally includes connections, collections, speed and depth as well as poetic interpretations of the body. I have also chosen film, a chronology of non-chronological events depicting within a thin film the depth of the human condition. Also, film is an example of the occularcentricity of our culture as well as the convergence of the various senses of the body and reinterpretation of all senses into the narrow categories of action and dialogue. The creation of film is anything but a transparent process and carries many layers of life beginning with the very tangible, written script and piecing in the visual, the audible, the pauses and implications of connections, and then finally put into motion to appear as one continuous piece.

The place that I would like to create will contain the peeling elements of a film revealing the density of even the most advanced technology. It will be an archive film reels and digital images, with coordinating spaces to separate, juxtapose and synchronize the pieces into endless possibilities of wholes. To put into motion still images through the interaction of these pieces of art with bodies and the environment, to create cinematic experiences with an extended (or contracted) concept of cinema. In a world where everything we say, do, write, and possibly even think is being recorded we are constantly conscious of the display case enframing us. Let us explore the possibility of no finished products but a perpetual motion of re-collaging. A place that has not one life, but a new one with every body that enters within it or passes by it. A place that is made to give hands to the postmodern body to reach within technology and get inside where our eyes cannot. Creating a delicate threshold between our bodies and our minds, between the physical and the digital, between the past and the present, between the street and the alley and between the backdoors that create the alley.

Critical Positions

An exploration of the concept of thresholds, connecting, dividing and emphasizing differences, changes and connections within the environment which our embodied minds occupy.

Sherry Turkle states that our ideas of what is real and what we define as natural in action or in body are all contingent upon a cultural disposition. The deeper that a form of technology is embedded into our culture, the more natural that it eventually begins to seem. Turkle describes a technologically enhanced form of physical mail system that was favored in France over the use of a telephone and reflects that, "the pheumatique's insistence on physical presence... has made e-mail seem oddly natural," (Turkle, p.237).

When dealing with the question of origin, I can't help but find the word "natural" appearing in my vocabulary. Where do the ideas of simple separations between the concepts of the natural versus the technological, the natural world versus the built world, the natural body versus the socially constructed body, the masculine versus the feminine originate from? It is a human characteristic to oversimplify very complex ideas and categorize them as a way of understanding them. To place seemingly different concepts in juxtaposition opposite one another when in fact they may serve paralleling functions.

Jennifer Bloomer, in her article "D'OR" in *Sexuality and Space* discusses the connection between the ideas of **or** and **door** or threshold. "Or, a contraction of 'other,' is conventionally the maker of the inferior category. It also refers to indefiniteness or uncertainty," (Bloomer, 69).

> The ornamental has long been tied to effeminacy and decadence...thus the ornamental has come to be associated with dishonesty, impurity (ordure)...characteristics that the Symbolic order has deemed feminine. As in: honest or dishonest, pure or impure, proper or improper, essential or excessive, (Bloomer, 168-9).

Two things sometimes to be viewed as opposites present an "Oedipal threshold," not to be crossed. By societies' standards, these lines are required to be forever oppositional, as if a coming together of these ideas would somehow be too perverse. It is "bisexuality...which must be repressed at all costs," (Bloomer, 172). However, the nature of writing, the weaving together of language, "is both literal and metaphorical...like the Muses' speech, ambiguously true speech and an imitation of true speech," (Bergren, p.71-73). As language is historically, spatially, and culturally interwoven to where it no longer makes sense when extracted from its contexts, it refers into and back onto itself in its ambiguous nature. When there is a space or an omission for reason of accident or depth of interpretation, the eye fills the space intuitively to complete the phrase. The implied pause or omission indicates that what is read between the lines often tells a stronger story than the object itself. This is the nature of speech, of writing, and of communication, thus making it impossible to separate into dualities concepts of a parallel relationship.

> Is there a purloined letter in this construction? That the place of which the apostrophe of d'or marks? An ellipsis of ellipse? But the "o" appears and reappears (and so is in plain view) as door, as initial in the writing. An elliptical ellipsis. The ellipses are misses in prints, those who are defective, who have a

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lack. This is a story of o. Of o-ther. (The phi of philosophy is an o under erasure.) This architecture is a weaving (a text) of openings, of orifices, of nooks and crannies, holey spaces. It is a woven proliferation of this tiny detail, easy to leave out, to leave behind. A construction like coral reef: a proliferation, made of many small, insignificant bits, resistant to because accepting of the force of tides, a delicate matrix as strong as the rock of Gibraltar. A barnacly dumping ground, (Bloomer, *Sexuality and Space*, p.180).

Perhaps it is these created situations of other that are not in actuality implications of difference, but in fact of similar origins, of convergence. Perhaps these conditions which we thrive on, which define our differences, are what bring us together like the threshold of a doorway, (d'or way).

Time represents itself as a semi-transparent ribbon that is seen folding through, over under, and between ideas and relationships With the basis of the interconnectedness of our oppositions, let us consider the interconnectedness of time in relationship to the creation of these ideas. It does not present itself in a one dimensional line that we can trace through the creation of these ideas. It grows more in depth, like the layers of a palimpsest rather than in length. We begin to lose perception of what was first, second and third, but see the very much three dimensional form begin to grow out of its layers, shadowing over some connections and emphasizing others. Perhaps the form of time is not a line, but that of our physical environment, that of our body with all of its subtleness and versatility.

"Poetry lies in the meeting of poem and reader."
-Jeorge Luis Borges from O Bra Poetica, Eyes of the Skin, p. 6

Technology

Wrapping, extending, covering, exaggerating our bodies innate functions, we have adapted our lifestyles to the use of these mechanisms of the human form. Technology has revolutionized the way that we understand and engage in our world, from our worlds within ourselves to the worlds that surround us. Our hands pull our inner worlds out and engage our minds with our surroundings, allowing the "body and environment [to] produce each other as forms of the hyperreal," (Grosz, Sexuality and Space). This transition is delivering us from a state of dependence upon the strength, coordination, mobility, and flexibility of our biological form to a stage of forgetfulness of our bodies. When the body used to represent the filter and mediator through our senses between the mind and the surrounding environment, in some ways technology has begun to amputate our extremities (McLuhan, p. 142) and replace them with nonhuman or technological filters of the environment. The printing press eliminates the need for the hand to reproduce written language. The telephone eliminates the need for travel for communication. The *mobile* phone eliminates the need for fixed place. The auto*mobile* eliminates the need for the feet. The *inter*net eliminates the need for bodily presence for interaction. All of these technologies mimic the functions of the body and extend the body out into the world in a way that was not conceivable before their creation. Like

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Elizabeth Bloomer's description of the muse's speech as an imitation of true speech, technological interventions could be imitations of true senses or true bodies. However, these apparatuses also deny the body its need to give and receive through the physical environment. The environment of work has mutated into a desensitized atmosphere that no longer "provides the worker with a stable identity," (Richard Bennett, *Architecture of Fear*). These adaptations to our lifestyle have altered our sense of the physical, even our sense of our senses. It comes to be questioned, is architecture of *place* relevant in today's technologically based society?

The term internet examined reveals *Inter*-net, implying connections without, outside of the body, without the use or need for the place of body, without the need for movement or travel of the exterior of the mind (the body), separating the body and the mind. In technology, the mind and body become victim to the concept of a relationship of "other." Virtual landscapes are designed for people to occupy with only their minds, not with their bodies. Although the body may occupy many aspects of the internet due to a need to orient oneself in a familiar way with others in an unfamiliar context, they are only projected through the mind into the virtual world. This loss of body is somewhat of a traumatic experience for the first time, as any introduction of technology until it has been fully appropriated by the body, but what is different about this particular instance is that it is appropriating the body itself. Anne Balsamo explains in her essay "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture," that the female body has always been experiencing the "invasion of cultural rhetorics that would define them according to a broader system of power," where as men are experiencing this idea of the "corporeal invasion" of the body for the first time. This notion thereby marks a "historically specific identity of the male body," the very body which we have previously used as the primary reference point for our culture.

In order to bring together these two systems, biological and the technological that are seemingly incompatible, the concept of the body as boundary must be reconsidered and become simultaneously a part of both of the two systems of "biological/natural" and "technological/cultural," (Balsamo). This returns one to the idea as body as mediator or filter rather than body as boundary or obstacle for the ultimate freedom of the mind.

Mind/Body Cartesian Split

"Place speaks to the soul through a medium we call our body with the ambiguity of a poem."
-Peter Zumthor, *Peter Zumthor Works*

Thus far the discussion has been the body, as a medium through which the mind is stretched outward onto the world and a filter for interpretation. As Marshall McLuhan states in the very title of his most famous book, *The Medium is the Massage,* media through which information is transmitted is worked as deeply into our understanding of a concept as the message itself. The way in which information is presented is directly related to the way that we interpret it. This reveals our direct need for embodiment as the world that we exist in exists to us only through our bodies, exemplifying why in the

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disembodied condition of the internet that physical relationships remain to be such a strong influence.

Even thought occupies within us a particular type of space, although this space is unique for each individual. The phenomenon of the recreation of our history into our dream worlds is known to us in poetry. Through this art we are able to communicate the incommunicable. What we hold dearest to us is the way in which we see, explore, understand and feel the world around us. Naturally, the way in which we do this is by a reference point. That reference point is beyond our own control as it is the very place that we were born into. The place that gives us comfort, the place in which we dreamed as well as the place that manifests itself into each of our dreams even beyond our relationship with this place. It becomes a part of us in such a way that we learn the outside world through our relationship with this space. Therefore, what makes a home is not the details of a space, it is not the exactness of positioning of one thing to another, it is not something that you can actually describe to another person, but a home is the poetic understanding that we have of the world through our relationship with that space. This dream world is created within our space of comfort, our own room. In this space we think about our dreams and we dream about our thoughts in such a way that one becomes the other and vice versa, (Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*).

Our minds are continually defining space through the poetic memory of the experiences of our bodies and it is upon this condition that we continue to create spaces.

> "Surface, volume, density and weight are not optical phenomena. [Wo]man first learned about them between his[/her] fingers and in the hollow of his [/her] palm." Whereas the eyes stay fixed on the outer surface of things, hands have a way of getting inside, and so they contribute more to our belief in the reality of the world, (McCullough, p.8).

Our sensual perceptions and our poetic understandings reach deeper into space than our surface brushing eyes ever could. Reflecting back to us are the constructions that we created on this premise, then, as a machine can extend the body, our "buildings…can make us more aware, by contrast, of the stuff of which we are made," (Jacobson, *Fabrications*). Buildings are made by the body, for the body, and like the body resulting in cities, as Elizabeth Grosz describes, that are in some respects a "simulacrum of the body," (Grosz, *Sexuality and Space*).

As the fabric of the human psyche the fabric of the urban structure and the interplay of the body between these woven pieces is exposed, it becomes apparent that McLuhan's statement of media as the communicated and communicator is very true. Consciousness represented in any medium other than the biological cannot remain unchanged "as if it has no connection with embodiment," (Hayles, "How We Become Posthuman," Toward and Embodied Virtuality).

Body As Amorphous Collector of Memories

Perception, combined with past experiences, perhaps creates the strongest determinant in how information is received. Perception shapes how information is received, but a memory shapes how it is perceived. A memory that is less than perfect. It warps and fades and sometimes even dreams. Hind-sight cannot be 20/20 if a perfect picture cannot be taken to recall from.

> For some reason, I feel that the older I get, the more "me" I become. I am not sure how this can be true, because the older I get, the more experiences I have to influence me, to change me and push me to become one thing or another. Am I stronger at resisting what is not honest to me or more able to choose by experience with understanding my own intuitions? Have I finally learned to speak my own language or is it that I have been fooled into believing that I have my own language or personality when in fact I can only use bits and pieces of those that already existed around me? *If I am a collage, can I be considered my own artist?* (Staci Seyferth, journal entry, October 2003).

We are all artists painting a memory for one another. We create each other and reciprocate it back. Other, we are the other of each other, where the space between us is the pause filled with implications and connections between our embodied minds. It is the way in which the collage is composed that creates the relationships and conveys the messages, so therefore, to answer my own question, we are our own artists as well as subjects within our own collages in a tunneling mirror to mirror folding of images back onto ourselves. My body is the container or filter of my history in the forms of experiences.

Constantly trying to detangle ourselves from this web that we inhabit and declaring ourselves beyond the natural world without possibly seeing the beauty of the connections we are born into is a fruitless process. "My dream is [an embracing of] information technologies… that recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being, and that understands human life is embedded in a material world of great complexity, one on which we depend for continued survival," (Hayles, "How We Become Posthuman," *Toward Embodied Virtuality*).

Through this investigation and the investigation of architectural engagements, it is my goal to cause people to remember that they have bodies. Realizing that our bodies are not the other part of us to grow out of and leave behind, I would like to propose a celebration of this interaction of all our connections to and understandings of our surroundings: A realization of place, a realization of body.

> "…literature and science as an area of specialization is more than a subset of cultural studies or a minor activity in a literature department. It is a way of understanding ourselves as embodied creatures living within and through embodied worlds and embodied words," (Hayles, "How We Become Posthuman," *Toward Embodied Virtuality*).

The Senses

Vision is seen as analogous to that which defines reality, truth, rationality, authority and masculinity. When one is aware that s/he is under the gaze of the eye, their reactions become controlled, tailored to the possibility of being caught in a private moment. The look or the possibility of its presence is internalized and it begins to direct our thoughts and actions subconsciously. Being the observer, one is in a position of power, a position by which s/he can direct others simply by the possibility of what might be behind that gaze. Georgia O'Keefe narrates a pastel painting of her own entitled *An Orchid* with the comment,

> "Well – I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower – and I don't."

Perhaps, O'Keefe's statement signifies that because we each see according to our own perceptions created by our own histories, that even the most truthful sense cannot communicate our inner fabrics. Perhaps what is most feared in the gaze of another is that which is within one's self.

Architecture organizes relationships including the order of the spectator and the spectacle. The female subject has long been the subject of the gaze, and well aware of this fact is she who is caught in public and forever marked with one of a contrasting category of "women of the streets," or "respectable married women," (Friedberg, *Window Shopping, p.35*).

What is the duality of vision then? If vision reveals reality, truth, rationality, authority, and masculinity, then its opposite must be surreal, ambiguous, intuitive, submissive, and feminine. These are the very qualities found in the poetic and the embodied connection to the environment described in the previous sections. Possibly this is not a given condition, but a created one by cultural standards in a culture defined by the acquisition of power and where power is given to the eyes alone.

What happens when the male figure becomes the subject of the gaze? "Men's culturally privileged access to vision," when reversed on him, "leaves him perpetually vulnerable to the risk of feminization," to the possibility of being objectified, (Joel Sanders, ed. *Stud: Architecture of Masculinity*, p. 22). This situation, similar to the disembodiment that the male figure is being faced with in the advancement of technology and introduction of virtual realities, is uncomfortable and still a bit shocking to the male subject. It was, however, his creation of this "occularcentric culture," (*Eyes of the Skin*, p. 7) that brought it upon him. With the creation of the media and mass reproduction of images, surveillance cameras watching our every move, even when we are unaware, and mass communication of these images via the internet, the male as the subject is found increasingly with greater frequency, although still far behind that of the female image. To paraphrase Anne Friedberg, the female subject, through her most vulnerable positions,

has begun to come full circle and receive some type of power again from these same principles. With the increase in mass production and introduction of commodity and consumer culture, she began to be empowered by her gaze with the creation of the department store and the storefront window when the streets were opened up to her as a consumer. She had buying power behind her gaze, and soon the windows were framing their storefronts for her eyes, (Friedberg, Window Shopping).

Here it is shown how the exploitation of a media can be used to in fact weaken its power. The eye was used both to build barriers as well as break them down. The reproduction of images was used to separate us from our bodies as well as emphasize our interconnectedness with our bodies.

Destination or Path

We often treat the world today as a series of destinations, probably because that is the manor in which the American city is constructed. Large box superstores in a sea of concrete and cars with more signage than design, which you reach by means of a superhighway on which you are virtually unaware of the landscape you are passing through. During which portion of this trip is part of our consciousness most disconnected? I believe it is along the path to the destination point as we exist within our bubble, as we fly down the concrete ribbon of highway, or rush from our garages to our homes, or places of work; it is in these transitions where we are passing from one condition to another that we have the greatest information for our senses to breath in and digest. In these places where contrast is greatest, the colors are brightest, and messages clearest.

Thresholds mark our initial engagement with a new condition including our initial engagement with any given building. Buildings, like simulacrum of our bodies are also amorphous collectors, records, players, and framers of memories; like a library of thoughts and experiences making each place unique and each interaction dynamic in the reciprocation of information between embodied minds. Is the stringing out of the highway actually analogous to the lack of distance between points that we experience when traveling through cyberspace? Any landscape that is designed for the non-body could then fall prey to the occurrence of a threshold-less distance. Any technological space could forget the speed of the human figure, lost in the dromology or speed pollutants of our ever-faster society. The destination is not what is important in the travel, but the distance between and the presence of the threshold or the place of convergence of opposing media. There is a place where technology meets the body, but like the poise of a dancer en pointe, it requires a balance that is neither more body nor more technology.

The circumstance under which I choose to investigate these issues architecturally includes connections, collections, speed and depth as well as poetic interpretations of the body. I have chosen a place for theatre, the mimicking of the body, the exaggeration of the physical to communicate the non-physical. I have also chosen film, a chronology of non-chronological events depicting within a thin film the depth of the human condition. Also, film is an example of the occularcentricity of our culture as well as the convergence

of the various senses of the body and reinterpretation of all senses into the narrow categories of action and dialogue. The creation of film is anything but a transparent process and carries many layers of life beginning with the very tangible, written script and piecing in the visual, the audible, the pauses and implications of connections, and then finally put into motion to appear as one continuous piece.

The place that I would like to create will contain the peeling elements of a film revealing the density of even the most advanced technology. It will be an archive of plays and screenplays, film reels and digital images, soundtracks and sound bites with coordinating spaces to separate, juxtapose and synchronize the pieces into endless possibilities of wholes. In a world where everything we say, do, write, and possibly even think is being recorded we are constantly conscious of the display case enframing us. Let us explore the possibility of no finished products but a perpetual motion of re-collaging. A place that has not one life, but a new one with every body that enters within it or passes by it. A place that is made to give hands to the postmodern body to reach within technology and get inside where our eyes cannot. Creating a delicate threshold between our bodies and our minds, between the physical and the digital, between the past and the present, between the street and the alley and between the backdoors that create the alley.

Case Studies

Thermal Bath Vals

By Peter Zumthor
Built between 1990-1996

Location:
In Vals, Graubunden
Elevation: 1,200 feet above sea level
Built over a natural spring with waters at a
temperature of 86 degrees F.
Valserrhein river valley

Origonal structure:
Spa hotel dating from 1893 w/ one outdoor thermal
waters pool still existing as main way of entry
(through underground passage) into the new
structure.
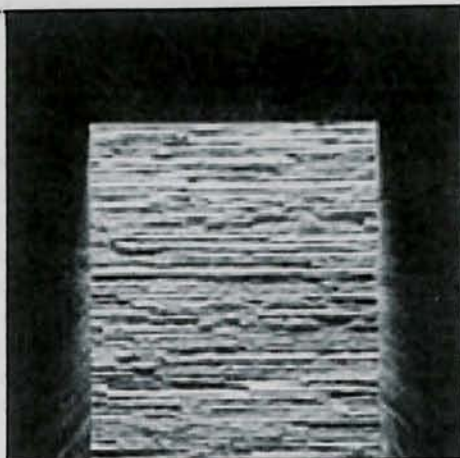
Second structure:
Built in 1960's was replaced by the new spa and therefore become obsolete. Not connected to the
new spa at all.

Goal:
"establishing of a special relationship with the mountain landscape, its natural power, geological
substance and impressive topography."
Should communicate "always having been in the landscape."

Critique:
I think that the space created by Zumthor was extremely successful internally, separating the
visitor from the outside environment from the very point of entry causing her or him to reorient
themselves with the landscape by a method of discovery as they move through the cavernous
spaces. The Hollowing out of the cavern feels very much like you are rising out of a mountain,
like this is something that has been buried and rediscovered, something that is growing slowly
apart from the landscape by the process of erosion, spitting out the non naturalistic form in a
similar way that the naturally heated waters from within the earth are rising to the surface and
escaping the mountain side here.

There is a beautiful play with light and textures, with cold and warm and contrasting sensations to
amplify their counterpart. Sometimes light seeps in from above revealing the connection to the
world beyond, and causing it to feel sunken still deep within the earth as the soft light reflects off
of the top of the dark waters leaving what is below the surface to remain a mystery to the eyes.
Sometimes the light is shone upwards through the waters causing the exact opposite effect where
the cave above you reveals itself only softly or through sound and reverberation. Close your eyes
and feel the space, for your ears know it better than your eyes can. Breath deeply the mineral
waters that wrap you, massage you and penetrate into the layers of your skin. You melt back into
the mountainside.

It seems incredibly successful from within, but I don't fall so deeply in love with the view from
without. Maybe that is why the underground entrance is so necessary, to cause this disconnect
from the cubic, monolithic, rigid form cutting ungracefully from the side of the mountain. The

blocks of space within the form are revealed on only a very large scale and you have no sense of the intimacy with which the smaller spaces hold you and cradle you within. I cannot feel the section from without at all. It only seems massive and overpowering to the human form like a cut through a mountainside for a highway.

Thesis Relevance:
This project definitely appeals strongly and gradually in a convincing manor to the senses, slowly winning over the body through a process of ritual and investigation. The nature of a thermal bath, bathing and heat appeal to and penetrate the mental stresses of everyday life revealing a definite mind-body connection. Most importantly though, this project causes a researching of a familiar landscape in order to reorient oneself and hopefully reveals new perspectives in this process of discovery. Despite the fact that this is a public space, I think that it becomes very personal. The sharing of your bathing space with strangers or even just others requires a new level of intimacy for many. Must you first separate yourself from the idea that there are others within the space as well before you can accept this? How much space is first required to achieve this new level of closeness?

These were my interpretive pastel drawings of Zumthor's thermal bath. They are showing primarily the light quality within the space. The space is very monolithic, however the surface of the water gives it an added depth as well as a more dynamic texture that is able to be changed by the direction of the light source. The left illustration is depicting light coming from a delicate ceiling condition causing the water to appear opaque and the right illustration is depicting the opposite condition with the light from below the water's surface giving a mystery to the space above. Both light conditions emphasize the condition where the water meets the stone and accentuate the relationship of the body to the earth.

Urban.Sushi

By awg_AllesWirdGut
Set up in Vienna in 1999

Location:
Vienna, Austria

Goal:
"to combine the various advantages of both industries – housing and automobile – and create a new experimental way of lifestyle: the TurnOn."
AllesWirdGut wanted to create one continuous, flexible, "transitional space" that would contain all living-programs.
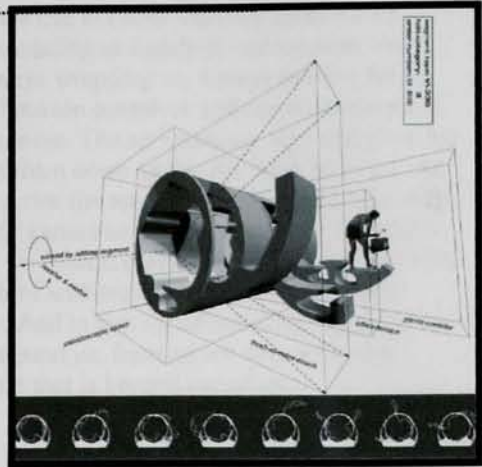

TurnOn Prototype Parameters:
Diameter = 3 meters
Depth = 1 meter
Weight = about 300 kg
Material = roofmate insulation core; wooden superstructure; fiberglass skin with non-flammable "plaster-resin"; steel base.

Critique:
I see this project as an excellent visual representation of the space a person might actually use throughout their daily activities. As the body is wrapped, one layer after another, the shape in some ways becomes more egg-like or circular eventually, but it also goes through many stages of morphing in between. Some features become exaggerated while others melt away into the larger bulge. What is prominent and what is secondary depends on how the body is wrapped and what it is doing. This project addresses these issues of the many degrees of the body's possible shapes seeing a line of movement as an equal "object" to be wrapped as the tangible layer of skin we know as our outer most organ.

It challenges the idea of always being only perpendicular to or parallel to the earth's surface. If I cannot be upside down, can I store the space that I am not using up there? The most amazing thing that this project does for me is to see air as a solid; to see space as the thing and its frame is our architecture. A rectangular frame does not fit so well in this case. It is so very static and uncomplimentary to the dynamic nature of "space."

Speaking of rectangular glasses, the windows of many buildings frame for me a flowing world unsuccessfully. However, Urban.Sushi, as it rotates and clips into infinite combinations presenting the world beyond this personal space in a unique manor. Like a life size rubics cube where it seems almost impossible to make the same pattern twice, the interior shapes the world outside into just as many endless combinations of views.

Inside the Urban.Sushi creation, I can occupy all dimension of my home. The floor, the ceiling, the walls and seats are all equally available to be viewed and used in different ways. It is the most creative that prefabricated elements ever allowed us to be.

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Thesis Relevance: This project expresses in many ways how our surroundings are an extension of our bodies and how our bodies shape the actual space we live in rather than our architecture. Architecture is a response to this formation of space, squeezing us tightly in one moment and allowing our bodies to push it away the next. Air is always wrapping us, always moving for us, always supporting us, and the most constant mediator between ourselves and our environment. I push the air with my hand or my breath and your hair moves. The air steals my heat and gives me its moisture. It lifts the leaves from the ground and sets them down again. Air whistles in my ear as it races around me, asking me to come with it. Air carries the scent of freshly baked rolls deep inside my nostrils from the kitchen downstairs, but still I cannot see it. Its presence is revealed to me when light strikes across it in a shadow. The space we inhabit is something we can sense with every part of our body, except for our eyes. It is the job of architecture to interpret for us the dynamics of this flowing blanket that binds us together. And in that act of revealing the space we inhabit, that a lively and provocative scope is created around us, framing not only with very regular shapes, but with the shapes of movement, the life that is beyond ourselves.
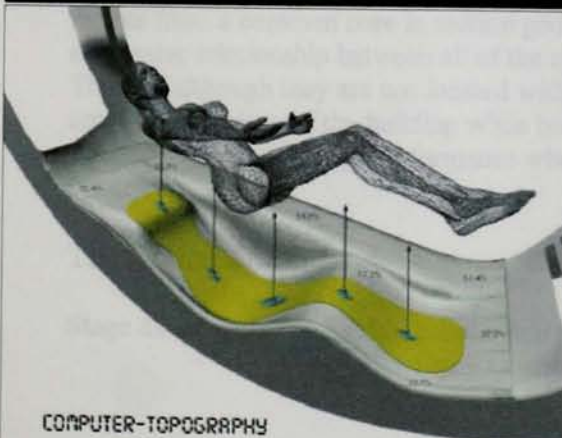
COMPUTER-TOPOGRAPHY

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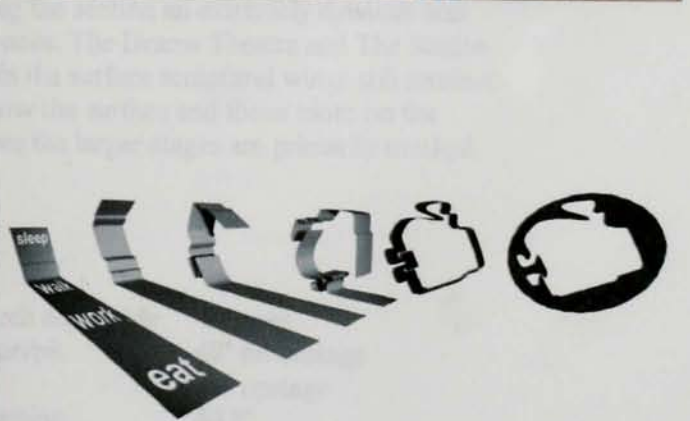
Program Precedent

Sydney Opera House: Drama Theatre
and The Studio
By Jorn Utzon

The Sydney Opera House is a multifaceted
complex of performance spaces, shopping, and
eating venues. The variety of performance
venues includes a Concert Hall, an Opera Theatre, Playhouse, The Studio, The Reception
Hall, and the outdoor venue The Forecourt. I am choosing to focus on two of the
performance spaces within the overall building for the majority of the precedent study
primarily for the reason that the scale of these spaces are much more comparable to those
that will exist in my digital playhouse, and these spaces are designed to be theatre spaces
rather than concert venues.

A shell, the natural form which not only comes from the sea, but also holds the sounds of
its origins within itself forever was the inspiration for Jorn Utzon's opera house. Curling
over and around itself, achieving amazing strength with its ribbed exterior texture, the
shell could be one of the most structurally amazing creations of nature.

The Sydney Opera House occupies a space almost within the water as its peninsula seat is
no larger than the building itself and it stretches upward revealing layers rising up out of
the aquatic scene. The resemblance of a shell gives a graceful, curving structure to the
building and mimics the sails of the ships that surround it, seeming as if it too is powered
by wind. This layering of spaces, differing scales of shells, and the different levels of
permeability of the spaces under the shells draws a strong connection between the
incorporation of every program element. The main restaurant shares the same qualitative
expression or significance as the 2,800 seat Major stage, (also described as the Concert
Hall) and becomes equally important in the overall composition, but is expressed in a
smaller scale. Corridors link horizontals spaces to one another on the interior, but they
radiate from a common core in section giving the section an extremely dynamic and
expressive relationship between all of the spaces. The Drama Theatre and The Studio
Theatre, although they are not located within the surface sculptural wings still retain a
sense of the nature of the building while below the surface and focus more on the
theatrical aspects of stage performance where the larger stages are primarily musical
venues.

The Drama Theatre:

Stage dimensions	Width- proscenium arch adjustable	45' max
	Stage extension/pit	48' downstage
	Apron	42' upstage
	Rear stage opening	40.8'

	Depth-	Apron to last fly set	37'
		Rear stage center	14.7'
		Stage extension/pit	9'
	Height-	Proscenium height	15.5'
		Maximum drift	33.5'
		Stage ht. above flr	3.4'
	Sq. Ft-	Max overall dim.	1665 sq. ft.

Dressing rooms	5 large w/showers	160 sq. ft.
	5 small	55 sq. ft.
Green room	1 shared w/ other venues	
Tech Spaces	1 Light/Sound Cntrl	40 sq. ft.
	2 Tech box	
	1 Recording studio	
	1 Patch panel	
	1 Plant rm.	
	1 Production office	
	2 A/C air intake	
	1 access lift	75 sq. ft.
	1 catwalk over mez.	60' linear
	storage is minimal	
Seating Spaces	max	544
	w/ stage extension	475

In the Drama Theatre, the stage is not public space physically, but visually it is, at least within the main window. All supporting spaces, such as the technical systems and staff spaces, the green room, dressing rooms, backstage, and catwalk areas are very private spaces. In this case, the private spaces tend to wrap all the way around the public, but only reveal themselves to the public at the point of the stage. Almost none of the spaces within the entire complex could be classified as individual, except for the small dressing rooms. The majority of the spaces are all collective serving large numbers of people, but only certain types of people. I suppose that the technical spaces would be the most exclusive or private as the actors/actresses would not be permitted in these spaces, nor would the audience.

The Studio:

Overall floor area			2420 sq. ft.
Stage dimensions		stage floor area	605 sq. ft.
	Height-	ceiling height	24.6'
		Gallery level	9'
		Catwalk level	19.7'
	Sq. Ft-	Max overall dim.	2420 sq. ft.

Dressing rooms	2 large w/showers	160 sq. ft.
Green room	1 shared w/ other venues	
Tech Spaces	1 Light/Sound Cntrl	40 sq. ft.

|		
	2 Tech box	
	1 Recording studio	
	1 Patch panel	
	1 Plant rm.	
	1 Production office	
	storage is minimal	
	2 A/C air intake	
	1 access lift	75 sq. ft.
	1 catwalk over mez.	60' linear
Seating Spaces	max	282
	Mezzanine	158
	On floor	124

In The Studio, the stage is still private in a physical sense, but instead of being faced with the audience, it is surrounded on three sides by the audience, as well as from above. The audience has extensive visual rights to the stage space, the space of primary activity and focus, and therefore due to their proximity, the audience is sometimes on stage, or within the visual space of the audience across the stage and the actors on the stage. This close relationship lends itself to a more intimate performance and allows the actors to respond more specifically to the audience. The supporting spaces are again wrapping the primary space as well as the seating areas. The supporting spaces still have a very exclusive nature, as in the case of the Drama Theatre, but there are simply fewer of them. The supporting spaces, although still restricted to technical systems operators, are sometimes shared with the other venues within the complex, especially the storage spaces and rehearsal spaces. This sharing of backstage supporting space is one way that the theatres interact with one another, although not in the primary focus area.

The significance of the stage area is less of mystery in this type of space and more about intimacy. The studio setting brings the audience into the performance, and the performer into the audience in a very unique way that a larger venue cannot. Although the stage is raised slightly, the performers are at a relatively similar eye level to the majority of the audience. The mezzanine level allows the audience to sit above and behind the stage area, causing the performer to have to speak to all sides of the stage, not simply forward. The mezzanine has a very special qualitative opportunity in this instance because the audience member is decidedly above the performer. In a larger venue, this may be true also, but the stage will be farther away therefore lessening the dramatic effect of this perspective. The backstage areas in this tiny venue are not so easily accessible to the actors/actresses, so the important supporting spaces become primarily those that are above in the catwalk. The curtain is of much less importance, if any at all and is used mostly for framing the projection screen when needed and is dropped from an above track.

A three-level plan of the Sydney Opera House

Auditorium Level   Podium Level   Car Entrance Level
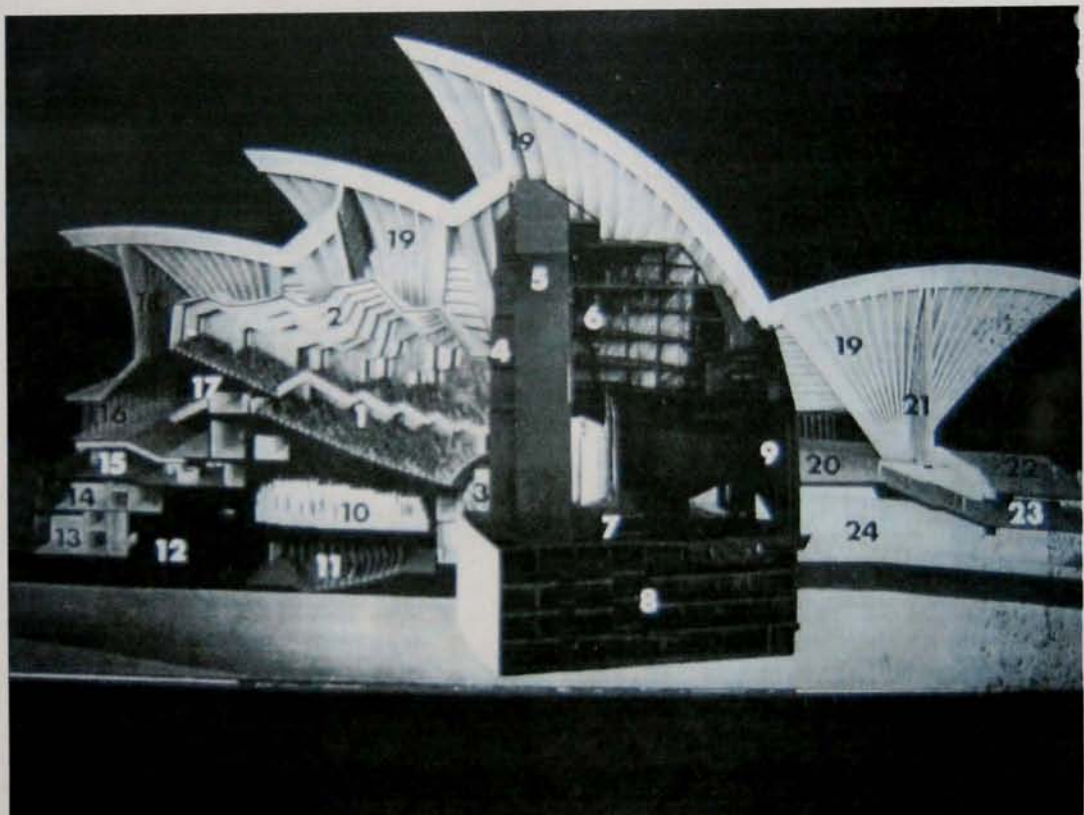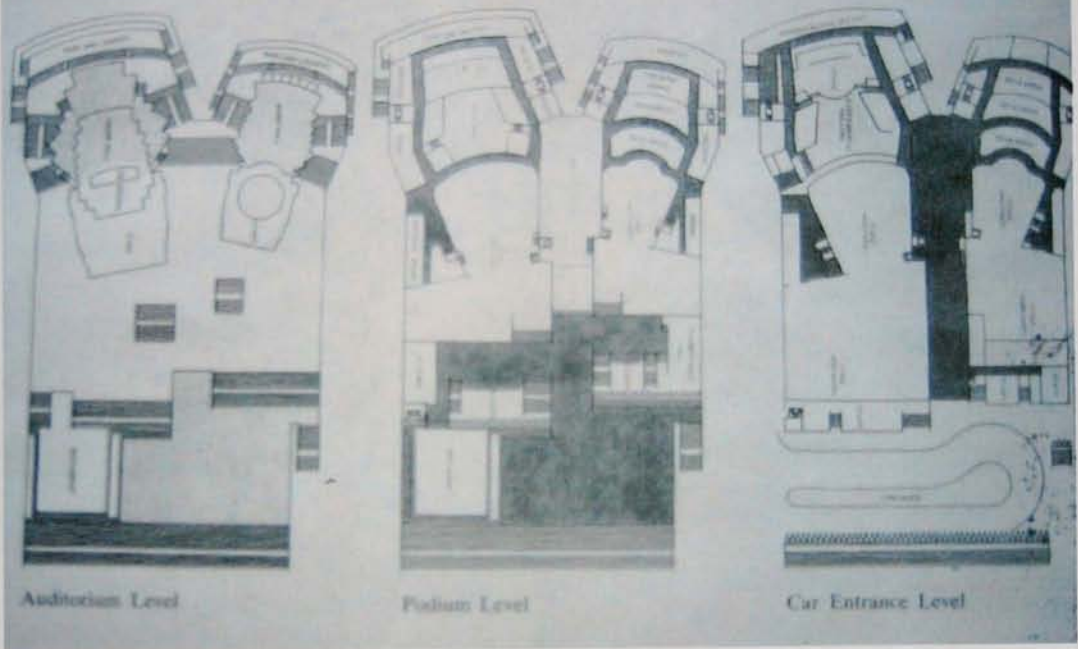
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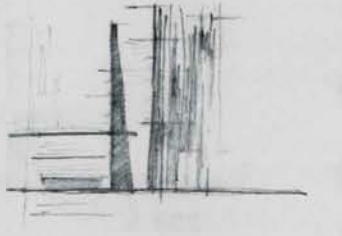
[re]LOOKING

Formed for, by, around, like the body

Allows the body to

Roll from outside back to inside front

Push

Flex

Twist laterally

Accentuates

The qualities of the body

Strengthens where the body is strongest

Cushions where the body pushes/ pounds hardest

Outside back to inside front it rolls

Projecting from the front, stabilizing from the back

The rhythm vibrates through the rest of the body with each compression.

In – out – in – out

The internal air spaces expand and contract like lungs in an almost double time rhythm

Two, maybe two and a half contractions for every breath

The heart is the third percussionist with the fastest and most violent beat

The muscles pull and release, pull and release

The tendons and ligaments, like rubber bands are pulled and spring back

In the midst of each motion, my arch flattens under the force of my entire body and IT pushes back.

The bottom is composed of layers with crevasses dug into them revealing layers below in crossing, sweeping patterns. Some have a circular stairway to nowhere motion that fit like teeth into the small undulations of the surfaces it grabs quickly and releases even faster.

Three sections divide the bottom plane with the largest having the greatest differentiation in depth and color and therefore shadow. The shadows are deep but narrow and I cannot get my rounded fingertips into them.

The farthest back section is separated from the largest section by a deeper yet section that curves into the object. Its materialization is by far the hardest with the loudest sound when struck. It is like the bones of the object revealed by a gouging out of the softer outer layers. These layers seem to be melted into one another showing definite seams but no signs of the glue that brings them together.

The outermost sides of this central dipping section are ribbed with each rib revealing yet another layer beyond, but the contrast of density is greatest here as the little ribs reveal that the core is softest of all the materials with a strong memory for its original shape. Perhaps this center, internal material surrounded by its negative ribs and melting uneven layers of middle density carvings is in fact the most important material for it is guarded by everything else. This material may have the greatest elastic memory of them all, but it also is the most easily formed. Perhaps this is what "breathes" as the object is pounded by the body; *expanding* and *contracting* in the rhythm of life.

Finally we reach the farthest back section along a very strong seam where the arching bone of the object collides again with the softer outer layer. This time it is carved very little, save one last deep cut that crosses the entire face and dives as deeply as the precious guts of the object revealing the layers one last time. This final section is perpendicular to the most important line in the object, **the line of motion**. The body rolls across the line and the revealed innards act as a joint or a fold along which the tough surfaces are contorted into a wheel like shape allowing what once was for stabilizing to transform into a rolling, gripping, pushing, breathing, beating, living form.

Now I see the shadows across the entire object and all of its sections make sense. There are more cutting perpendicular [to the line of motion] cuts into the layers of the fabric that divide the front section into three more sections that can fold together in a circular motion with softer inner layers revealed and acting as joints in the fluid movement. This front section, though it is not cut so deeply as the back rolls much more dramatically than the back section due to its gradual but considerable depletion in the depth as you follow from back to front.

The side elevation reveals this thinning of the protective out layers as well as the prized core. The core thickness is at least tripled from front to back. The rounding shape the form takes when in motion remains even as the object rests idly. The thin tip curves up from the ground as if two equally charged sides of a magnet were opposing each other in each surface. It curves up as high or as deeply as the central skeletal section pulls up in

the middle. Even the back section pulls away from the ground slightly, but only after its single, deep joint. Now, the shape appears to me to be similar to the corrugated core of cardboard with small scorings in the skin of the cardboard in order to better be able to wrap it around the uneven surfaces of its path.

The height of the waves of cardboard needed to support this object, to fill the space between itself and the ground, grows higher as the object begins to move. The rolling object shifts gracefully from one point of rotation to the next until it leaves the ground entirely to come back down again.

In motion again, I see the joints stiffen for impact,

Hit,

Roll

And compress,

Inhale again,

The central skeleton collapses slightly and rises to the memory of its core.

Watching this cross ways through the short section of the object, I see the outside is much straighter than the inside and the arching skeleton rises only towards the inside. Still a small rise remains visible on the outside, but the body on its own is much more stable here than towards the center.

I now see the central section has yet another line of movement and that is from to side to side. It twists laterally to accommodate not only the unevenness of surface as it rolls from front to back, but also as it must balance itself from left to right.

I realize that despite the amount of surface area in the flat view of its stabilizing surface, only a small portion of this touches the earth at any one time. When in the fastest motion, the least amount of surface area makes contact, when stationary contact is greatest, but also the gentlest.

An inverse relationship exists between *intensity* and **quantity** of contact.

The faster the movement, the harder and sharper the snap of the body and push off the opposing surface must be. Eventually rolling only on the front section of the object as the motion is too quick and the majority of the motion is transferred from ground to air.

[re]LOOKING

[re]LOOKING was an exploration of an object that is used as an extension of the body. I chose to examine my own running shoe, specifically the sole as it reveals how it

is formed for the body, by the body, around the body and like the body. The body, in the act of running reveals many amazing attributes in its ability to be rigid, fluid, flexible, and quick all at the same time. The shoe is most definitely a mediator between the body and the ground, accentuating the already given characteristics of the body. When I analyzed the motion, I found an inverse relationship existed between the speed of the body and the amount of surface are that made contact with the ground as the motion of movement, of running, was transferred primarily to the air. In the final piece, the apexes are areas where the shoe must make contact as they are points of vulnerability and in greatest need of support. This investigation actually reveals a pictorial view of the space that the shoe occupies in the motion of running.

MUTATIONS: a third skin

Clay leaves the residue of the body
In its form giving it an immediate history
In relation to the maker

The occupant of the space brings
A new condition to the screens or filters of
time

Reconsider the ground. Reconsider the
Use of material. Reconsider the materiality
of
An object that wraps the body.
The farther you wrap, the less like a body
it
Appears... where do I fit?

How is the conversation through a medium altered, as the medium changes? There is a conversation between my hands, between the maker and herself, between the maker and the observer, between the observer and the skin. Clay goes through a transformation of state at the same time that it is going through a transformation by way of my own hands. It will remain malleable for a period of time, but eventually begins to dry out. Soon, it is not able to be pushed and formed, but it is able to crumble or be shined and rounded out.

This project helped to allow myself to redefine the media of clay an screen as the woven screen filtered the clay through itself, weaving the clay in a way that clay is not usually seen, stretching and morphing the fabric of the screen as the clay is massaged into its structure. Revealing in the end the process of my making and giving notice to new ideas of clay with transparency it never revealed to my eyes before. My body left a permanent residue on the clay both of my process as well as of my shape, although in an unrecognizable way. That residue will remain forever as a part of this piece even as it continues to harden, to crumble and gradually grow farther away from the original intent and shape of my body.
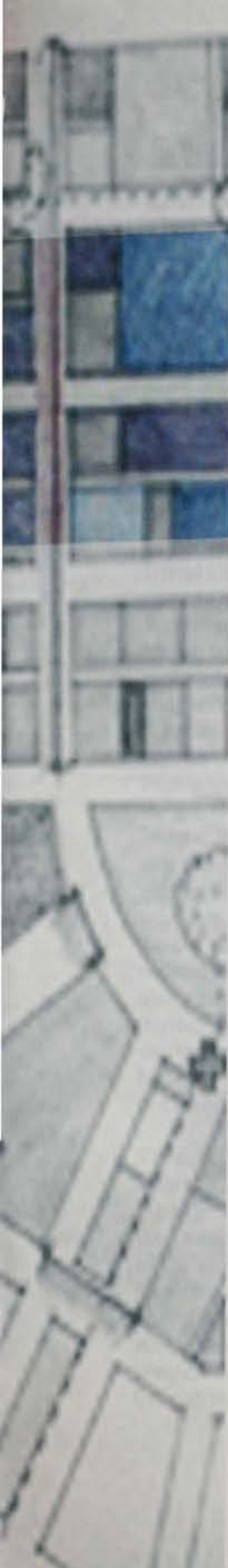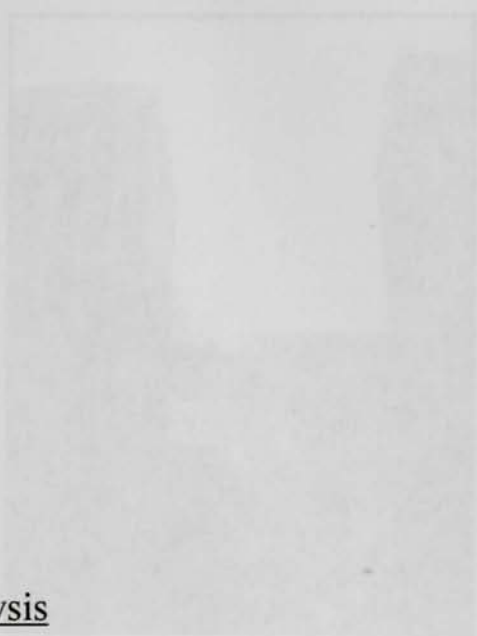
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Site Analysis

Grand Circus Park

Location:
I lot East of North-East corner of Park and Adams
St. on North edge of Grand Circus Park

Description:
Around the half circular park located on the central
axis of downtown Detroit, Woodward Avenue,
there is a relatively consistent alternating pattern of
building heights varying between tall and short. The
space squeezes itself between two unoccupied
buildings, but one of which is currently under
rehabilitation.

Historical Significance:
Grand Circus Park was a part of the plan for the
city of Detroit designed by Judge Augustus
Woodward in the early 1800's with the artery
known as Woodward Avenue running through the
center of it. Woodward an edge between the eastern
and western areas of the city, was an old Native
American trail between what is now Detroit to
Pontiac and eventually became the primary commercial path in the Detroit area.. Grand Circus
Park is the gateway from the business district to the old theatre district marked primarily now by
the grand marquee on the Fox Theatre. Although the region is becoming now to be known more
as an entertainment district with the newly constructed Comerica Park and Ford Field on the East
side of Woodward.
Adams Street. used to have such a high retail value that the entrance to some of the theatres that
were one lot north of Adams, still had their entrances off of Adams and then visitors walked over
the alley separating the entrance and the theatre to the main venue. This is still visible in the
walkway over the alley west of Woodward and north of Adams Street. The alley behind the site is
also a striking memory of the past as it displays the guts of the tall buildings and many old,
intricate fire escapes folding back and forth over themselves to create a very dynamic, narrow
corridor between the buildings. To the north and the west of this site used to exist the city's
highest concentration of hotels as this part of town was a great destination for visitors to the city
of Detroit.

Thesis Relevance:
This site is a point of convergence of many different aspects of the city currently and historically.
It has great potential for future development and success. A variety of textures surround it from
the greenery of Grand Circus Park, to the density of the buildings directly around it, the dynamic
of the alley behind with its traces of historical significance and the rising, falling and reemerging
districts surrounding Grand Circus beyond. The only fixed form of public transportation in the
city, the people mover, can be seen across Grand Circus from the site as well.
As I am exploring the concepts of thresholds and points of intersection and change as they convey
contrast and similarities as well as the impact that this has on the physical body and perception
through the senses, I think that this site has great potential for housing my thesis project.

Globe Trading Company

Location:
Corner of Orleans and Atwater St. along riverfront on east side of Detroit

Description:
The Globe Trading Co. was an old boat building factory in which the train line that used to exist in the area entered directly into the northern back end of the building on the west side and exited on the east end as it dropped off and picked up supplies. At this point, the tracks then turned north into what is not the famous and abandoned Dequinder Cut empty railroad core. The building covers on two levels about 50,000 square feet and is currently a deteriorating shell with a steel frame and brick cladding showing many different additions creating sections within the structure.

Historical Significance:
The Globe Trading Company is located on Atwater Street, a street that used to define the waterfront edge, or be at-water. Everything south of the Globe has been unnaturally built outward, including a dry dock slip that is directly across Atwater and opens out to the Detroit River where boats could be serviced. The land directly west of this slip is contaminated land separating the slip from a concrete company. Directly to the west is St. Aubin Park and marina. The general area used to be of intense industrial use, and later began to be adapted for mixed use buildings to attempt to give it a new life. This as of recently has disappeared leaving nothing but the shells and old signage as well as overgrown trails and buildings, much of which have been occupied by nomadic squatters for a number of years. Standing at the Globe, the Renaissance Center, which is still quite close, reflects luminously down upon the sparsely occupied shoreline in a stark contrast.

Thesis Relevance:
This site reflects many layers of history about the entire story of Detroit as it first began as an industrial center and later had to cope with the decentralization of industry as well as the change from an industrial society to a more technologically based system leaving many large hollow structures scattered across the landscape. The building itself was a significant point, a turning and stopping point along the railway system as well as occupying the original edge of the shoreline. The streets demarcating the names of the French farmers who held each narrow strip of land in the very early days of Detroit and the structure of the French Ribbon Farm plots. The function of the building as a boat building company reflects the early significance of the river as an essential link between the Great Lakes as well as an international boarder and a

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time when transportation by waterways was essential. This site most definitely has many layers that I see essential in my thesis investigation as well as a sense of awe in its scale and physical state of decomposition that alerts the senses in an intense manor.

Eastern Market

Location:
I lot east of the corner of Riopelle and Winder on east side of Detroit in the Eastern Market area just north of Gratiot and east of I-75.

Description:
This site is located just east of the main strip of Eastern Market, the largest farmers market in the state of Michigan. It is in a mixed use are of town between some industrial buildings, lofts, as well as meat factories. Just two blocks away

on the main strip of Eastern Market there are many small shops and restaurants. The texture of the area is rough as it is a conversion of an old industrial area and the building heights range between 1 and 4 stories tall.

Historical Significance:
Founded in 1841 and made an historic district in 1977, Eastern Market began as a center for agricultural trade In Detroit very early on. After WWII, when the beginnings of the modern supermarket began, it was converted into a great hub for southeastern Michigan food distribution industry housing many of the pre-packaged food industries. The open air market area has remained through this time along with many permanent shops and restraints making it a very diverse agricultural area. Eastern Market was also an important site along the Underground Railroad as well as the stop just before escaping slaves reached the Detroit River on their way to Canada.

Thesis Relevance:
The Eastern Market area is quite diverse in its make up of Industry, small scale commercial, and farmers market as well as loft mix. There are few areas in the city of such a broad composition that are successful on so many levels. The area is caught in the funnel like area between two major thoroughfares, Gratiot and I-75, and a dramatic view of the downtown area due to the closeness of the large scale buildings of the city in contrast with the relatively low buildings of the Eastern Market area. Boardering the eastern side of the area is the abandoned railroad core known as the Dequindre Cut. Just on the other side of this is a rapidly deteriorating area of town that is quite quickly returning to a natural state just over Bloody Run Creek, which has been covered over. This all makes for a very dynamic intersection of history, economics, politics, stability and visual relationships which I think would be an interesting setting for my thesis

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project where the body is confronted with so many different conditions at once, some dwarfing the individual and others much more inviting.

Adams Street Site Analysis

Address:
40 West Adams Street

Description:
One lot East of the North-East corner of Park St. and Adams St. on the North edge of Grand Circus Park. In between the Kales Building and the Fine Arts Building, the latter of which housed the gradually backward sloping lobby of the Adams Theatre, which actually occupied the site directly behind the Fine Arts Building on Elizabeth Street.
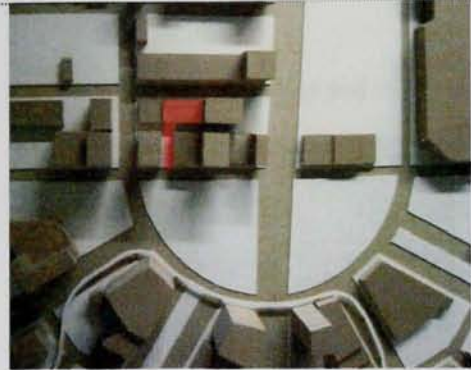
The site is located within the Theatre District of the downtown area of Detroit, just off the main axis of Woodward Avenue. The dimensions of the overall southward facing site are 100' deep by 40' wide. There is a narrow alley directly to the rear and a wide sidewalk separating the site from Adams Street. The site has a very vertical feel as it is between two fairly tall buildings.

Historic Significance:
The site is now a gap in what used to be a highly prominent street frontage. Located in the prime entertainment area of Detroit, store frontage was so greatly sought after that the designers of the neighboring Adams Theatre chose to have only a long narrow lobby space for the Theatre on Adams Street. The lobby sloped gradually backwards and the audience members entered the theatre by passing under the alley and rising up into the main theatre space, or by climbing up stairs and entering the mezzanine level via an enclosed walkway over the alley. This type of orientation is rare and is known as an "Alley Jumper."

There is considerable historic presence of the theatre in the Grand Circus Park area. Within less than a one quarter mile radius, there were many venues of various sizes and styles. Only four of these venues, The Fox Theatre, The State Theatre, The Detroit Opera House, and the Gem, are still functioning. The Michigan Theatre, The United Artists' Theatre, The Addams Theatre, The Madison Theatre, and The National Theatre exist only as decaying frameworks and reminders of a different period of time in Detroit's history.

Many of the theatres that eventually failed, as well as a few of the ones that were eventually saved transitioned uneasily through the introduction of technology as they covered many of the beautiful stages with screens, as well as some of the ornate ceilings with drop ceilings and, such as in the case of the Addams Theatre, sectioned off the main space into smaller venues for the possibility of showing many movies at one time. The nature of these shows digressed from glamorous theatrical productions focused towards the upper class, to less formal films, first silent and then with sound (which also interrupted the appearance of the space with the installation of

sound equipment), and eventually to horror and adult rated films before being closed down for good. Still playing around these ghosts, however, is the theatre of the everyday.

The Alley Space:

The alley is a backside space created primarily for functionality in dense areas and is

often the leftover, forgotten, dirty space where trash is kept, fire escapes are located and back exits. However, it is also the space of an interesting phenomenon of the artist. Its tall, narrow space allows for strong reverberations and is therefore the choice site for a street musician. It is also often the space of the graffiti artist, where there is

little light or traffic to expose the secretive communication between these visual artists who, especially within intercity areas, are known for having a fairly large influence. This art, although often only temporarily displayed, and most certainly illegally created is a kind of unofficial propaganda and cultural communicator. The alley is also the doorway of another type of artist, the performer. Creating a drastic contrast from the glamorous stage scene, the performer often enters secretly from behind the theatre through the space of the alley.

These are some of the surface signs of life that exist within this dynamic space. There is also the space of the exterior fire escape, which creates within the alley another layer of transparency. These lightly folding frameworks not only suggest the movement from inside the safety of the skin of a building to the more exciting, unwrapped exterior, but allow for the scale of the body and its navigation vertically to become apparent in even the largest of buildings. Theatrically, also, the alley is reminiscent of the back stage, which is usually quite sheltered from the audience, but the necessary structure for creating the magical illusions of the window of the stage or the main street performance of everyday life. In my opinion, the backstage space, with its ladders, catwalks, darkness, verticality, and mystery holds an equal but qualitatively different kind of beauty that the glittering front stage carries.

The site that I chose is bordered on one side by an alley and on the other by a prominent street as well as Grand Circus Park, the largest public park space in the downtown area, is in itself qualitatively a vertical alley space. Not in the shape of the traditional theatre, it has inherently the quality of a theatre in compression, or a theatre as influenced by technology. The space of the digital projection is critically thin, and therefore even more mysterious than the thickly layered physical theatre.

Program

Program Statement

Video Archive / Digital Playhouse

I see performance, as well as technology, as an exaggeration or mimic of the body, however in different qualitative ways. The incorporation of the two mediums could bring a deeper exposure of the body and its relationship to other spaces, bodies, and technology.

The site, being in Detroit gives a unique context. Detroit has sort of worn off its shiny coating, in a sense, and let the alley spaces, or the quality of the functional between spaces bleed out onto the streetscape. The modernist era is fascinated with exposing the guts of a culture, which is evident in the transparency of many things from building facades to appliance covers and ink pens. Exposing the function of life in form is something that Detroit has done in a very honest and messy way. In my opinion, the framework which the city of Detroit has exposed is much more real or sincere than those similar statements of clean modernism giving Detroit the quality more of a piece of artwork, or an artist's canvas than that of a designed modernist product. I would like to propose to paint within the city with the art of digital media and show how technology does not always exist beyond the body, but within the heart of it, and I would like to do this from the heart of the physical performance district, a district thickly clad in peeling layers of history.

The sense of understanding or control that transparency offers is found to be false more and more so as technology expands and becomes increasingly more complicated. Our understanding needs not to lie in the realm of precise mechanics, but rather in that of understanding for navigation and manipulation of a process or a simulation of the mechanics. Technology has become so thin that we are forced to use simulation or representation as the true method is invisible. The postmodern environment as effected by technology and simulation places us in *"a world without depth, a world of surface,"* (Turkle, *Life on the Screen*, 47). We live in the screen, so to speak, without the supposed clarity of the modernist exposure, but with the mystery of the postmodernist simulation. Simulations of our physical environment, and copies of those copies, create an environment of simulacrum. "The objects on the screen have no simple physical referent. In this sense, life on the screen is without origins and foundation. It is a place where signs taken for reality may substitute for the real. Its aesthetic has to do with manipulation and recombination," (Turkle, 47). A postmodern world of simulation references the real, but reorganizes it, thereby redefining it and reestablishing the spaces between as they become essential in our understanding of these new organizations.

Presently we live within the screen, but technology is soon to break this barrier of the two dimensional environment. This occurrence will bring forward the concepts of reorganization that simulation on a screen has produced thus far and establish a new relationship between our bodies and their environment, our bodies and other bodies, as well as within our minds and our bodies. It is the process of rediscovery and juxtaposition that reveals the consciousness of the physical.

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I would like to propose a space that embodies this evolution of our knowledge of our environment. Rising out of the earth and squeezing up from between two existing structures like a bold blade of grass between the joints of a sidewalk, lifting a space which mixes performance of physical bodies, digital bodies and the motion of light in both a natural and artificial form. The movement occurs from the place of entrance to the place of storage and testing upward through creation and experimentation to presentation and documentation intermingled with observation. Creating these situations precisely are spaces for digital manipulation of images, an archival space for experimental media and film, projection theatres for few or for many, gallery space, office spaces for the support of the building, a café for the observation of the theatre of the street below, as well as an interactive circulation space incorporating also pockets of breathing room or tension between the more definite program elements.

Project Program

Introduction:

Within the building itself, is housed a main lobby area, a primary projection theatre venue, and two supplementary projection spaces of a smaller scale and varying possibilities for relationships between the occupants of the space including play and display. The projection spaces also will house within them space for conversion to a gallery of film images as well as space for projection equipment. Storage spaces will occur on lower levels including also small booth sized spaces for viewing samples of stored data inside of a larger void space which moves through various levels of the building. Bathrooms, mechanical, and circulation are also intertwined within these spaces. An outdoor observation space below the primary theatre will occur as well as two floors of office space in an open floor format. The lobby space will contain a small café area and be used for various functions, one being the viewing of films or presentation of digital information to small groups in a manor that is visible to the street occupants.

Site Data and Program:

A

Size:	14,000 sq. ft. (or 0.3213 acres)
Topography:	level ground, no variation
Access:	40' wide access to Adams Street and pedestrian sidewalk on south side of site.
	40' wide access to alley way separating site from the Adams Theatre on the central north side.
Views:	Grand Circus Park and the alternating tall to short buildings that create the edges of the park are visible from the ground plane, as well as down Washington Blvd and out toward Cass.
	From above, the entire downtown could be visible all the way to the riverfront and the stadiums, the inner highway loop edge as well as Brush Park, Woodward Avenue and the bottom edge of the Cass Corridor.
Site Context:	The primary existing buildings around Grand Circus Park are mostly unoccupied at the present moment, but many of them including the Tuller Hotel, the Kales Building, The Mutual Building, and the site of the old Madison Theatre connected to the vacant David Broderick Tower are being renovated. Directly next to the site is the vacant Fine Arts Building connecting to the also unoccupied Adams Theatre behind via an underground and above ground passageway system. Slightly to the north and east are the still functioning venues of the State and Fox Theatres as well as the new athletic stadiums, Comerica Park and Ford Field. There is a public parking garage under Grand Circus Park as well as adjacent to the Adams Theatre and a People Mover Station directly across Grand Circus at Washington Blvd. as well as bus stops at Grand Circus on Woodward.

Each of the existing buildings around Grand Circus are between a height of six and 20 stories in height.

Site Functions: The site currently functions as an opening to the alley space behind and a storage space for construction materials for the surrounding buildings that are being renovated. It is a gap in the street wall that breaks the continuous edge that was created on Adams Street.

The Adams Theatre portion of the site functions only as a filler in the street wall currently as it is not a functioning theatre anymore.

Sun Data: The site is open on the south side, with little shade due to the fact that Grand Circus Park separates it far enough from the shadows of the buildings on the southern side of Grand Circus Park. The Kales building, an 18 story structure blocks the evening light, and the Mutual Building shades the site from the morning sun somewhat. The first six stories are completely shaded on all sides except for the front façade.

B

Climate: The northern climate presents issues of primary concern to include snow load, and solar gain. The average summer temperature in the mid to upper 70's and the average winter temperature in the 20's.

Program Quantitative Summary:

Projection Seating Space:	2 Main theatre seating:	1,600 sq. ft. (160 seats)
Gallery/Observation:	2	2,300 sq. ft.
Gallery/Projection lobby:	2	2,500 sq. ft.
Video Archive Spaces:	2	1,620 sq. ft.
Outdoor Entry Space:	1	650 sq. ft.
Outdoor Upper Level:	1	1,500 sq. ft.
Film Production Areas:	2	3,800 sq. ft.
Office/ Support Spaces:	2	3,600 sq ft.
Office Lobby:	1	400 sq. ft.
Access Elevators:	1	120 sq. ft.
Main Lobby:	1	2,030 sq. ft.
Public Restrooms	20	1,280 sq. ft.
Parking:	0	
Display Area:	within circulation areas	
Café:	1	570 sq. ft.

Estimated total floor area: 21,400 net sq. ft.
21,400 x (1.2) = 25,680

Space Detail Sheet:

Main Projection Seating Space:

32

There will be two main projection spaces on floors seven and eight. They will be open, folding floor plates without individual seats exactly, but would hold approximately 80 people each for a total of about 160 people. This is about 960 net square feet per unit and a total net area of 1,920 square feet.

The purpose and function of this space is for viewing films in the night hours or the projection of shadow or still, translucent film images from the gallery space surrounding. This space could also be used to capture video of the installations and interactions of people within the space at various times.

Gallery/Observation Area: This space is more of a circulation scale as it is meant to be experienced in a cinematic fashion (or a fashion of movement). There are small areas along the exterior of the building in which a person may step aside and view the surrounding setting without being in the main flow of traffic. The primary observation of the gallery space is actually not from within the gallery area directly (necessarily) but rather from the Projection/Recording spaces that are adjacent. However the idea is that you view the art from various perspectives throughout your use of the building.

Gallery/Projection Lobby: These spaces are for viewing the shape of the theatre space more than the elements put on display. You can view the underside of the folding plate seating areas as well as down or up to the undulating exterior walls and floors of the main theatre space. This division between lobby and projection viewing areas is to require a process of discovery and encourage an element of surprise as you travel up the stairs, through the lobby, around to the catwalks, through the gallery space and into the observation/projection area.

Video Archive Spaces: The archival spaces are to store media that is both created and shown within the digital and physical performance spaces of the entire building. There will be different categories of storage from electronic to actual film rolls, from sound clips to movie making equipment. These spaces are located one and two levels below, but open to in the vertical direction, the Projection/ Recording areas. They also require some amount of light and air quality control for the care if the equipment they will house and to prolong the life of the film.

Outdoor Entry Space: This space is slipped along side the edge of the Fine Arts Building and my building. It begins as a narrow entrance that widens as you enter in to become a type of exterior/interior space from which you first are able to experience the vertical flow of the building and the connection to the primary theatre space above as well as understand a relationship between the new and old structures and entering within the skin before entering the envelope of the building. You must go through a sequence of walking

around the main wall, which goes vertically for 7 stories to the main theater space. This wall is also what each element in the building has some play with from moving around it to projecting onto it or through it.

Outdoor Upper Level Space: This space is located directly below the actual main theatre space and is where the person can stand between the building and at the threshold of the rigid physical elements of the building and the amorphous physical elements. It is also the threshold where the dynamic of the vertical void spaces below becomes realized in an architectural form of the theatre space. The activities of this space are simply meant to be observation of the body and other bodies within the surrounding city as this is where the building is first freed of the visual limitations of the top of the Fine Arts Building and a full view of Grand Circus Park is visible as well as north towards the Fox Theatre.

Film Production Areas: These are small spaces with the purpose of experimenting with digital media. They need not be large, however I chose not to define the size of any particular space, but rather leave a somewhat open format/circulation space on the floors which they are located so that people can experiment with not only the media that they are using but also with the spaces in which they are occupying. They are for the pre- and post- production of film and digital media. These spaces are not meant for people to enter in large groups for a sedentary viewing, but small spaces for viewing other people's interaction with the media or a full length video projection for small groups is possible. These spaces could be used for many purposes such as critique of multimedia projects.

These spaces house the cameras, lighting, sound, and editing equipment. Their purpose is for teaching and rental by experienced individuals under the supervision of a staff member. Can the manipulation process be heard in other areas of the building? Is there a shadow of the film projected in adjacent areas of the building, this is especially evident vertically. The repetition, manipulation, and reworking that occurs within these spaces is the most exciting part of digital media to me and embodies the concept of trying to capture the human experience in a different medium and this should be felt both inside and outside of the building, although not easily occupied.

Office Support Spaces: These are for the individuals that make the building work, those who conduct the education of, exploring of, and production of digital media. These spaces are located on the upper levels, however I see the individuals floating to work stations throughout the building throughout the day to assist people in working with the various media. There is a main desk on the lobby level at the main entrance for accessibility to the public. The working spaces above the main theatre take on a free form quality

similar to the experimental projection spaces on the lower levels for I imagine that the people working here would also be engaging in their own digital creations and manipulations, possibly from footage caught within and around the building itself to document its growth and movement. The upper level office spaces could also double as meeting spaces for classes or presentations if necessary as well due to their flexible format.

Office Lobby: This is the space located on the lobby level at the main entrance in which a director will sit and it will also serve as a type of information desk and ticket booth for the exhibitions and working environments.

Access Elevators: There shall be one primary freight elevator through which all stages will have access to. It will be about 75 square feet.

The movement of equipment throughout the building could be an event to be seen. I would love to emphasize the movement of visitors to the building throughout the program as well as between its elements, so I don't see why the more functional spaces cannot adopt this quality as well. I may combine the circulation paths of the equipment and workers with those paths of the visitors at some points.

Main Lobby: There will be a main lobby area in which there will be reception, ticket booths, a small exhibition/projection space and main entrance. This will occupy the main level and about 3,500 square feet. Possibly a café could be incorporated onto this level and spill onto the sidewalk in good weather conditions. The office lobby area might be incorporated into the main lobby area and therefore should have an intriguing quality to it that provokes curiosity to new users.

Parking: Due to the extremely tight dimensions of the site and the close proximity of parking garages around the site, I do not believe that it is reasonable to incorporate a parking structure into this program.

Café: There is a small café at the entrance level. The actual service is in the rear of the building where the connection to the alley is made by the only non translucent window at the floor level (not the eye level) so you can see the dirt, or lack of concrete out the window. This service area is adjacent to the ticket booth/ office reception. The seating area would be the exterior entry space seating which is built in as an extension of the building skin, or the front gathering/viewing area that is visually open to the street level.

Technical Systems Analysis:

Structure:
        Materials Core of Building:
           -concrete and glass

-light gauge joists
-beam spans 20'0" to 18'2"
-depth to span ratio 1:20
Materials Main Theatre:
-glass and steel tension members
-steel post and beam structural system
-beam spans 20'0" to 18' 2"
-depth to span ratio 1:20
Conclusions:

I feel that the steel members should not be exposed where it is possible to cover them up, nor should any of the structural or mechanical elements be exposed. Fireproofing will be necessary in some areas as it will need to be exposed. The structure should most definitely be sprinkled being that it is such a tall structure and that there are few horizontal fire walls, especially in the lower portion of the building. This may be supplemented with a smoke escape hatch in the roof portion so as to insure the outlet of smoke in the case of a fire. Also, a high fire code should be abided by given the A-1 occupancy rating and required three hour, noncombustible fire rating.

Mechanical Systems Requirements:
Appropriate Systems:
-(VAV) Variable Air Volume heating and cooling
-one primary fan room in the basement level and another on the roof level. Relative dimensions would be approximately 1,500 sq. ft. per fan room.
-The VAV system allows for relatively small vertical circulation areas which are incorporated in with the stairwell areas allowing for about 60 sq. ft. per floor area for all vertical circulation needs.

Other System Requirements:
Elevators: 1 8'x9' elevator for a capacity of 3,000+ lbs
Toilet Rooms: 1 male, 1 female per floor. Total of 20 toilet rooms
Storage for Technical Equipment: due to the open plan nature of this structure I imagine that this type of storage will occur on the office levels which are not open to the public necessarily or else to utilize the empty space within the basement.

Site Utilization Analysis:
$$\frac{\text{Total site \& bldg functions}}{\text{Site area}} = \frac{25,680}{4,000} = 6.42$$

The only solution to this issue is to design a multi story building. My building has a total of ten levels plus a basement and a roof which may be utilized for mechanical systems and outlet of smoke in the case of a fire.

Schematic Design

I believe my schematic design process starts long before I actually think of any space. In the entire process of clarifying my thesis question, choosing a circumstance and a site, I was always seeing relationships, looking for connections, thinking of the given spaces and historic spaces of a similar nature. I try to let myself follow some sort of intuition within each step of my process. For instance, in my site analysis I put up a number of drawings that I felt expressed the nature of the space, although they were very abstract and I couldn't quite formulate into words exactly how that was. It is usually these pieces that I have to question myself later on in the process that help me most when I am at a point where I don't feel I can move forward.

These intuitive pieces are often beautiful objects or images, created with pieces of logical aspects of my project, but oriented in an unfamiliar way. I started, for instance taking photographs of my models for the jurors to be able to get inside my model the way that I do as I know that they often don't have this opportunity in a critique. Those images ended up being so compelling, they were actually much more successful than the actual models. I then take these abstracted forms one-step farther and try to uncover what is spatial about them. The difficult task here is not to get too far away from the original intent and I try to keep asking myself, "What does this have to do with the body? Is this the nature of the interstitial space or the space of the event? Does that even matter?"

Another way that I find inspiration is in investigating the more typical spaces that relate to my thesis question. I was investigating the theatre, for instance, and I spent a great deal of time analyzing it, visiting theatres, talking with actors/performers, understanding the functions of each piece within the entire structure of a theatre. Sometimes I would find my analyses so compelling that I would want to use them as my design, but I would find myself always feeling somewhat unsatisfied with that. Problems entered the scene such as how are we redefining the theatrical experience by rearranging the physical structure? Is it going to work? How do we introduce digital media into this space? Can we adapt any type of performance to this space, or is it a space for which the performances must be created? There seemed to be no way to test all or any of my questions on design issues like this and it seemed to be depending too heavily on theory. "Theoretically, this type of performance would be here, and the sound would travel like this, and the people will be able to experience this aspect of the performance that wasn't available to them before because of this organization..." I needed something more concrete to go on, so I returned to my abstract drawings.

All through these previous processes I was continuing to learn about different aspects of theatre, about film, about film criticism, about film writing and making, about developing a character, etc.. The site that I chose for this project was very narrow, and I went back and forth on the issue of utilizing another adjacent building with an old existing theatre. I became very frustrated with the lack of clarity in my sensual images, in the lack of space in my narrow site for my thick program, and in the stretching that I had done to the program of the theatre to try to mold it into something unique. It is at these times that I desperately need to take a break in some way. It is also at these times that it is most difficult to stop thinking about it. This is when I go on a long, hard run where I have no choice but to clear my mind and then I take a long nap and eat something. Then I return to my desk, and look at some piece of work, some drawing or model backwards or upside down and I ask myself what I liked about that piece. Then I think of some way to start working with that piece, even if it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the track I was on before, even if I don't see where it is going. I just keep shifting it around, rescaling, extruding, or reinterpreting that piece until I have either a rhythm of working or another idea of what I really want to do. This is the most difficult part of my process as I am never sure if I am wasting my time or if something great will come out of it. I always try to keep an open mind for these moments, but sometimes they end up being distractions and sometimes they end up being a catalyst for a new direction.
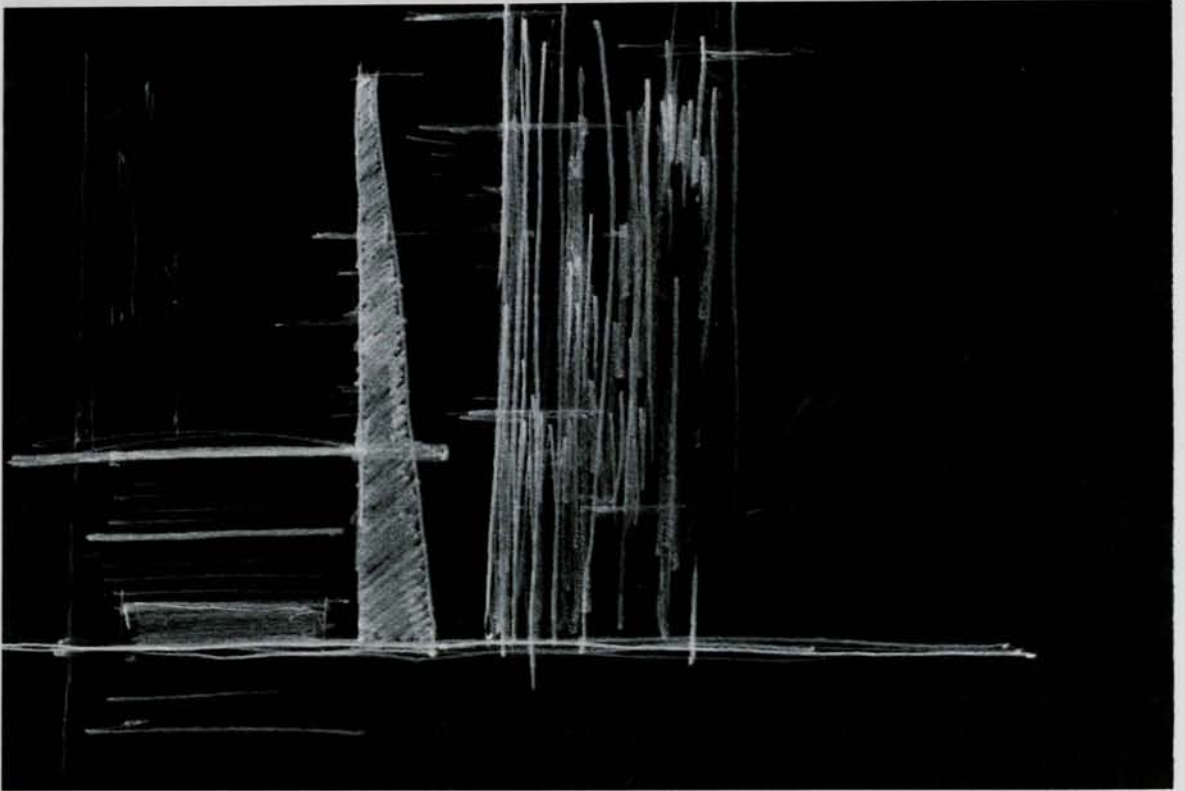
This was the first sketch in a series that finally got me moving somewhere after this long series of questions. The space of concentration here was the bridging of the alley space between my site and the existing Adams Theatre. It shows how I wanted to respond with a tall narrow space on both sides of the alley and not just at ground level. The Adams already connected to the Fine Arts Building at two different levels, (below ground and on the second level), so I felt that continuing upward made logical sense. Although this sketch was very abstract, it captured the emotion that I wanted each piece of the site to carry and began to formalize my attitude towards the very part of the site that had attracted me, the alley.
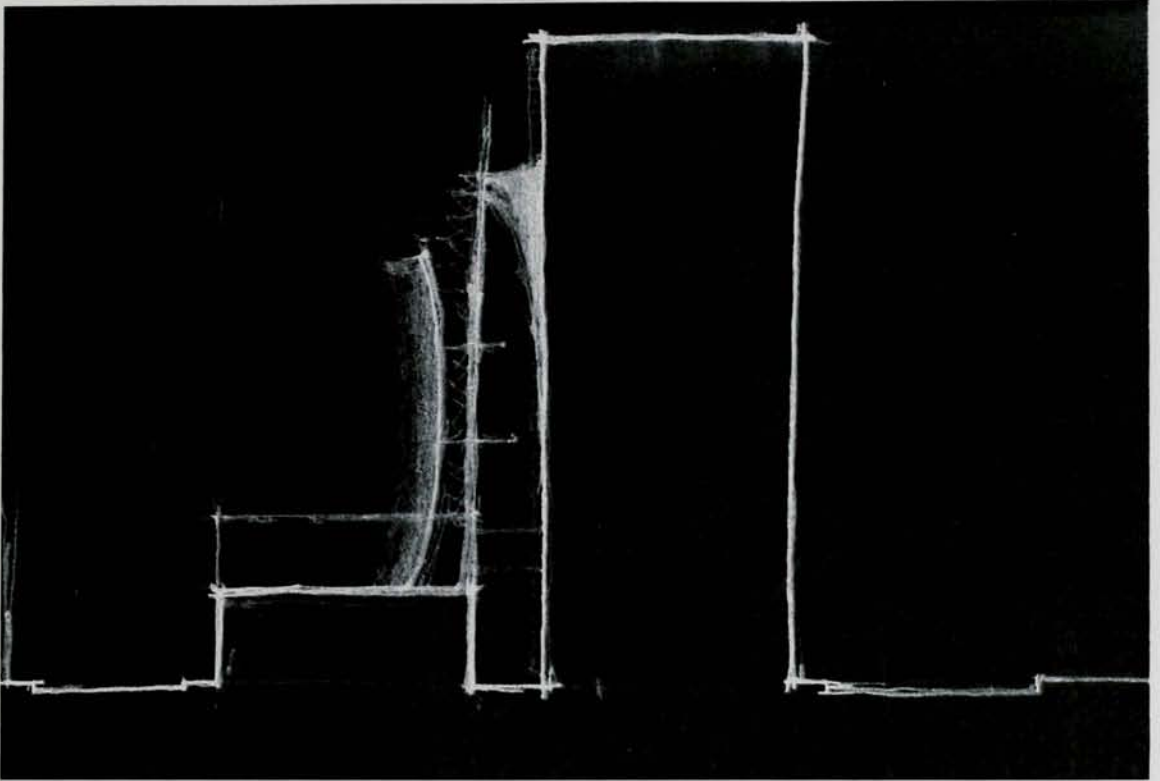
This was the next most detailed sketch of the same space of the alley that I felt communicated my ideas. Leading to my only architectural commitment before our final schematic critique, which was the stairwell spaces on either side of the alley with intermittent balconies and two delicate complete physical connections. One walkway being at the second floor level entering into the Adams' balcony level, which connected to the existing walkway utilized originally from the Fine Arts Building, and the other being at the top end of the structures which would enter the Adams Theatre above the roof of the existing structure.

This sketch illustrated my attitude toward technology being the collapsing of information. This also demonstrates my need to peel apart the layers of technology and allow it to have some relief or space between its layers for a body to occupy. Despite the narrowness of my site, I had discovered through my many abstract explorations that I definitely wanted spaces with degrees of program specifications, or degrees of an ability to be occupied. Similar to my program spaces holding pieces of different aspects of a completed film, the physical building would hold pieces of different parts of the body (for instance some would only be visual spaces, some only for sound, some for circulation and participation in projections, some spaces would be for creating projections as well.
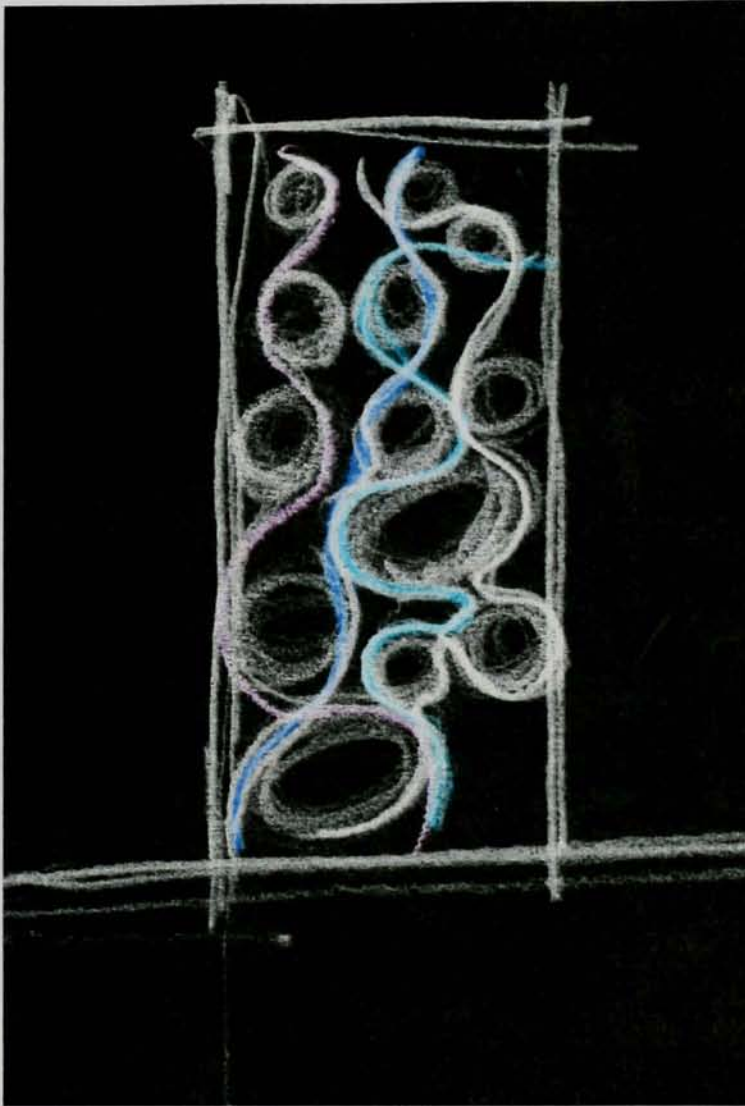
This diagram is a section emphasizing the crossing of paths and the creation of spaces for program elements as well as relief spaces according to the movement of the paths (or the bodies). The intention of this diagram, with the continual weaving of paths, is not to imply an ultimate beginning and ending, but rather a whole for exploration. Each time that you enter this building, you could follow a different rout through it and have a different experience. My problem was the issue of getting disoriented or lost, however, which doesn't seem so very likely in such a narrow space, but with such a complicated format might be a problem. (see also natural tree image at top of Schematic Design section in coordination with this path concept).

42
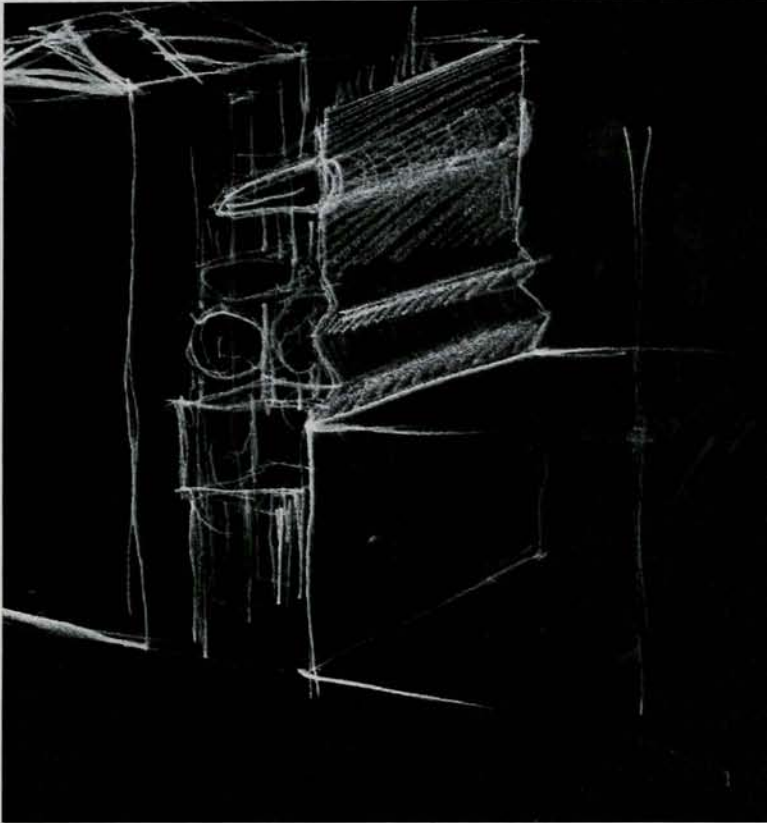
This perspective was simply to show the separation of building program elements and how the creation of the spaces between the program spaces could be equally as dynamic. It also showed my attitude towards the Kales Building on the left, a backing off or allowing of light and space to come between my building and the existing one, and towards the space above the Fine Arts Building on the right, which I wanted to be more solid but revealing the presence of activities in a subtle way.
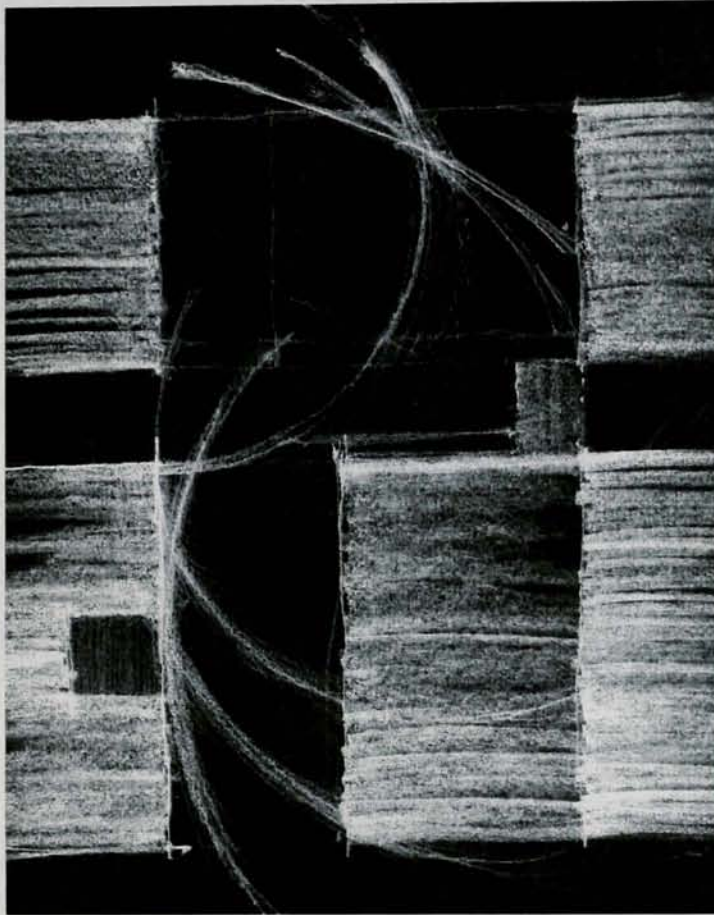
This plan began to reveal the light connections that I wanted to make over the alley between the Adams Theatre and my site. It also suggested interior possibilities for divisions, (with the white lines being spaces, not walls), that I wanted to make. The top white lines I anticipated as being a floating addition above the existing theatre, which could possibly function as an outdoor projection theatre.

The Alley Wall

These are views of the wall separating the site from the alley on the south side. The chipboard represents a more massive wall that light does not pass through around which the circulation flows in loops. So, in circulating up this stairway, you would move from inside the building to a view of the alley space in a circuit giving you not a continuous changing perspective, but intermittent experience as you travel upward. The skin along the alley side is a translucent material. The holes with light coming through in the second photograph are doorways. The more central doorways lead to balconies or connections to the other side of the alleyway.

The Kales Facade
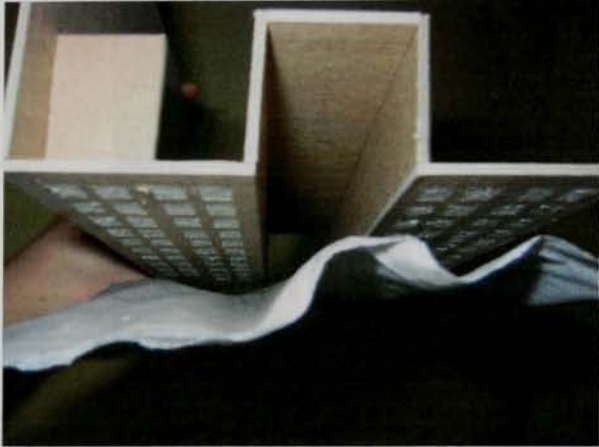
This series is and exploration of the space adjacent to the Kales building as it is all windows into a presently renovated building that will house residential units. I felt the need to express the peeling aspect (the thickening of technology) in this space and create a bit of tension between the two structures with a space that allows for privacy of both buildings, but light play to occur in the space between. The screen is meant to be a projection area upon which my building would project images or movies, some of which would seep through the screen and illuminate the space between the buildings. I wanted to insert many cables or rods so it appeared as if the screen was literally being pried off of the Kales Building and revealing not the exterior skin of the Kales, but a sub-skin.

Extrusions

These were examples of my greatest frustrations. An effort to find something in a much too abstracted version of the original.

Ribbon Model

48
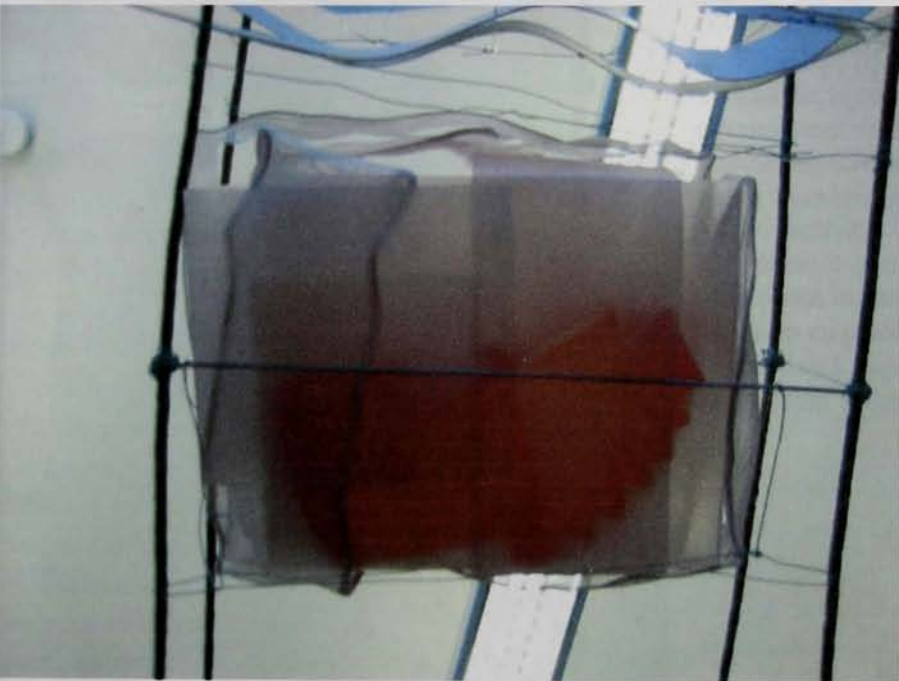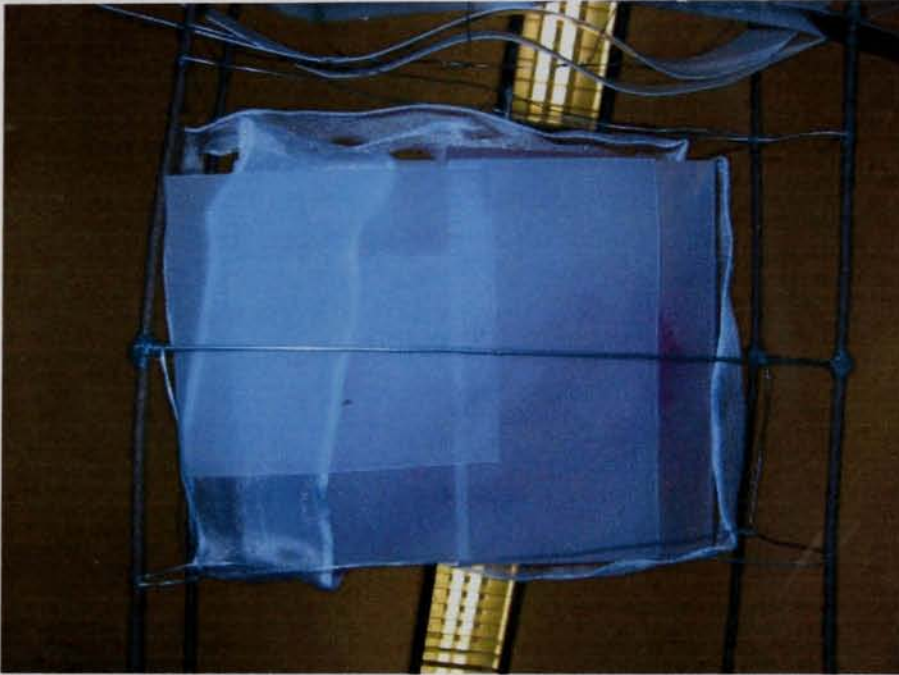
The ribbon models were to represent the idea of floating that I wanted to convey with the program spaces. Inside the white ribbons is the theatre space, which I originally was going to include in the primary building on Adams Street. The different lighting was me ant to reveal a different aspect or quality of the space. I wanted to

express the amorphous shape (formed for sound and visual accessibility) of the theatre as well as the layering planes with a translucent shell. The undulating screens above the space were meant to catch the light or activity of the theatre and reflect it or communicate it back down to the street level. This also emphasized the relief spaces that I wanted to have occur often within the building.
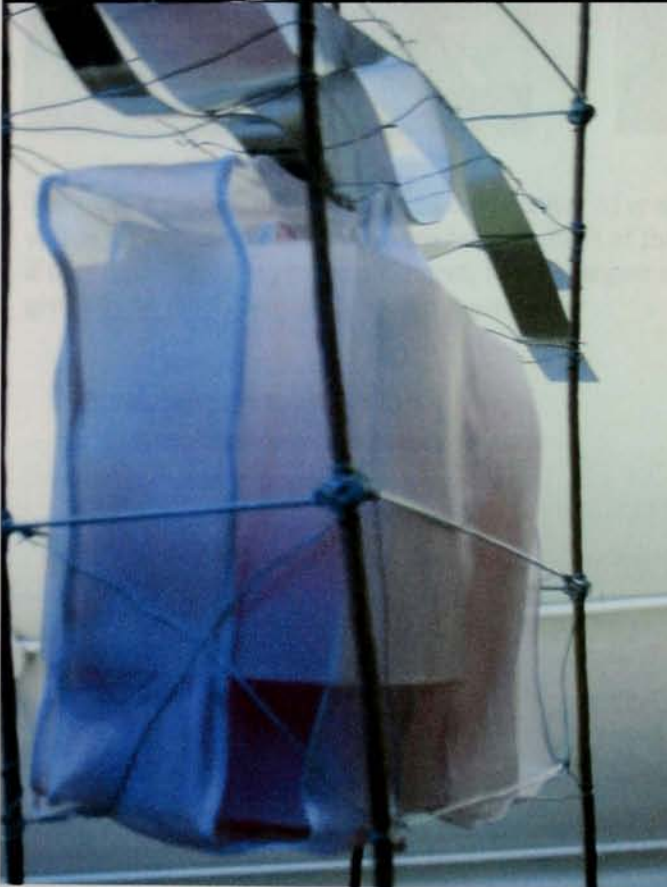
Trees

The trees were a natural example of the weaving of space that I had originally hoped for within my narrow plot. You can see how the lines of the limbs create pockets that feel as if they could 'hold' a program element, but the largest spaces are simply relief areas that give way to emphasize the program spaces.
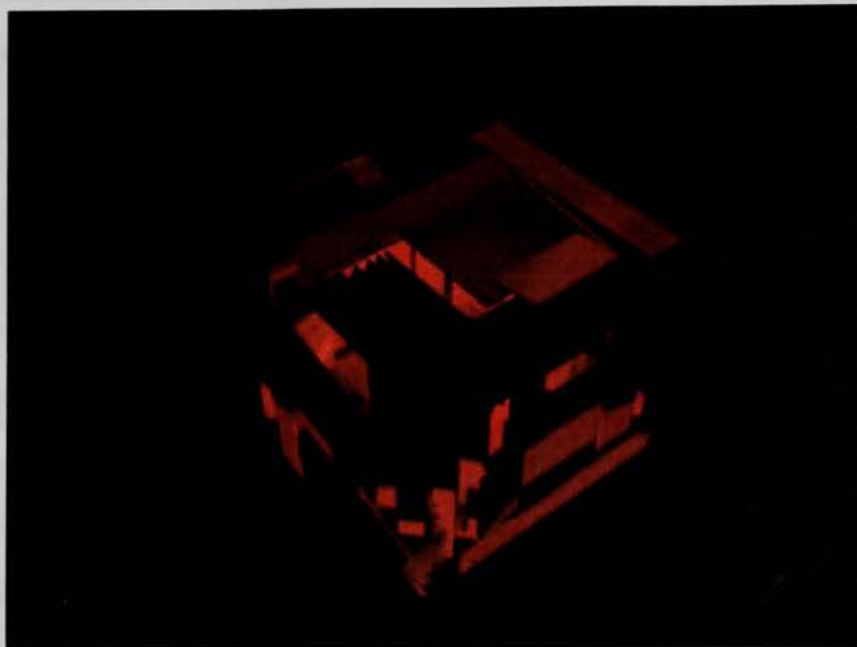
These were early computer sketches of the quality of light that I was thinking that the main theatre space may embody. These sketches explored the porous nature of the theatre space and the comparison of the boxlike exterior to the dynamic interior space of the theatre.

This model was my first attempt at carving vertical connections between the narrow
spaces of my vertical site. Each floor was unique, but all of the floor heights were similar

and relatively low. The complexity was too intense and a critique I received is that I needed to step back and let the building breathe.

Entry Sequence Model
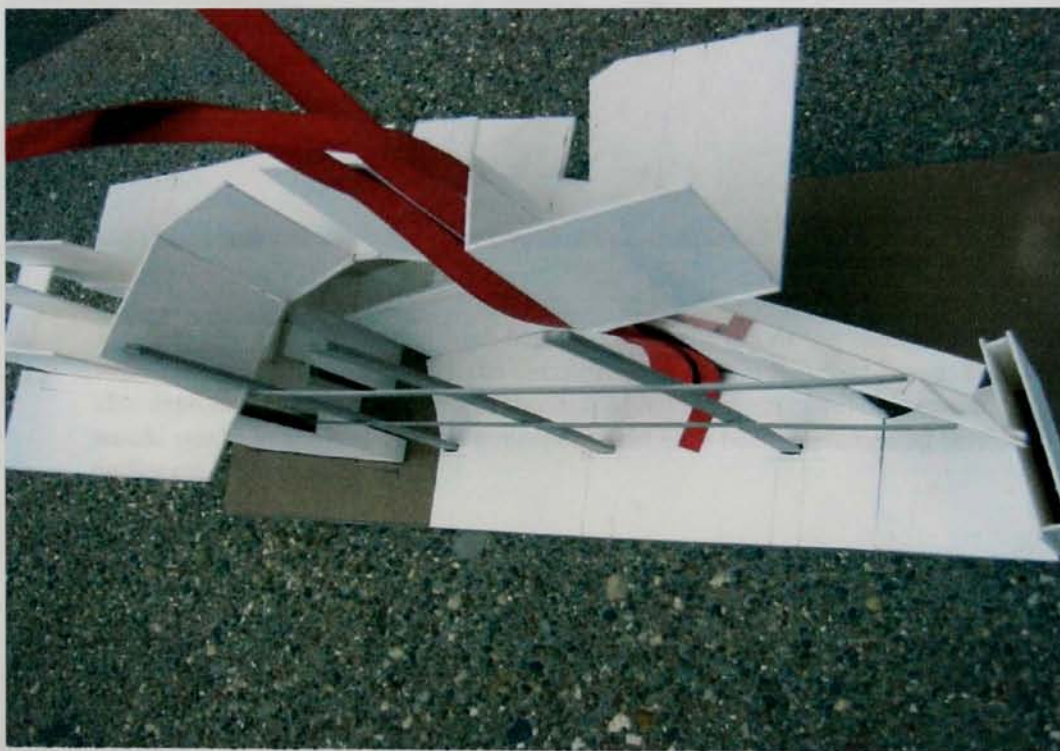
First Plan Sketches
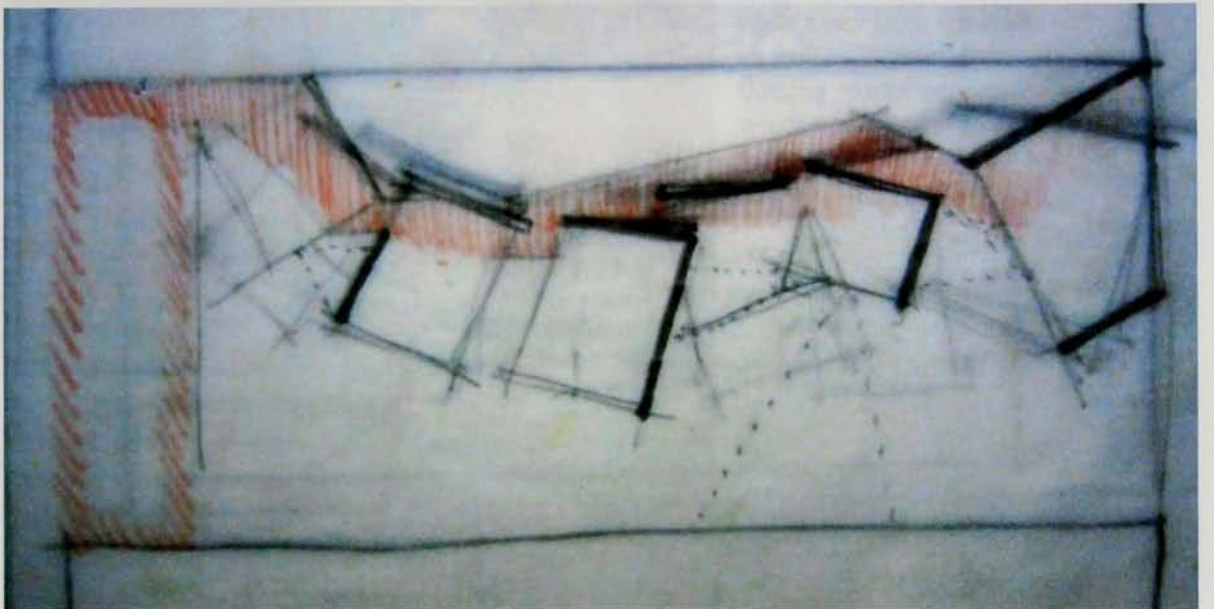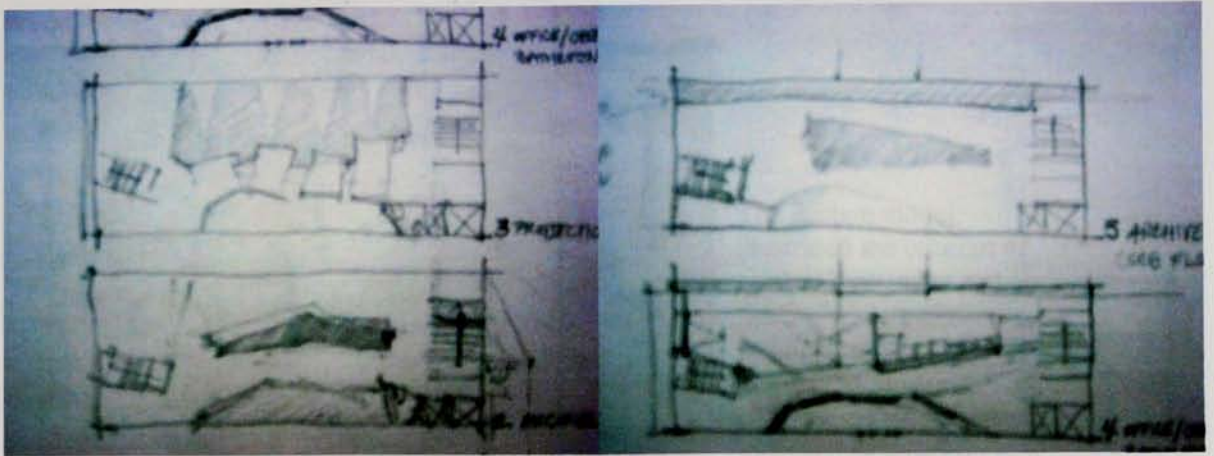
The first plan that I drew that I felt began to bring me out of the visions of simple white boxes was this one where the circulation concept is sketched in red. The idea depicted individualized spaces through which the main circulation space would weave in and out of. This concept should have been implemented vertically earlier on.

Peg and Ribbon Model

The Ribbon model illustrated the concept of vertical movement and peeling while maintaining a simple, regular structure. The model illustrates the concepts of strips in the longitudinal direction as it peels away from the Kales as well as illustrates the floating spaces concept, which could begin to occur between the paths of ribbon (movement).

Blocks
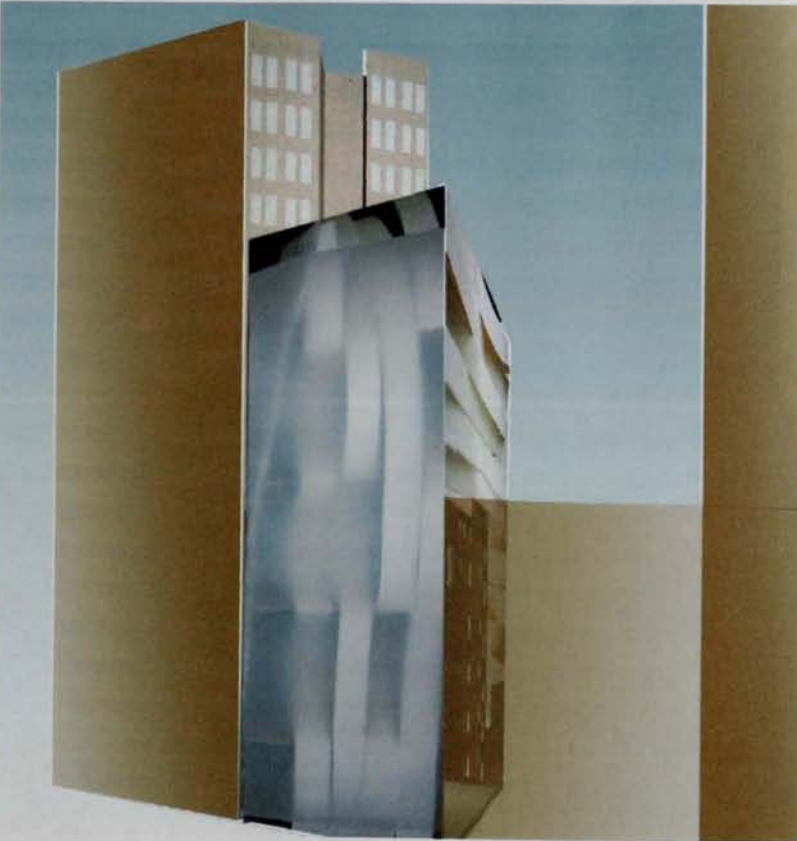
The stacking of similar spaces in a simple variation of a basic order is illustrated in the simple block model. The toy-snake-inspired model became the concept for the first perspective of the possible entire façade I created. I imagined people weaving from the interior to the surface of the exterior as they navigated through the building in these sketch models.

The concept behind the circle model was to have spaces that began to overlap and required different levels of transparency for different types of spaces. The flow of traffic was supposed to weave throughout the various overlapping spaces at different levels. This model combined many ideas in a messy way such as the simple circulation up the rear of the building, peeling from the Kales Building and varying levels of surfacing on the front façade. The collage of ideas was not seemingly successful or inspiring.

Finally I began to create images of what I felt the interior would feel like. These were to depict the various scales of the human body within the space due to projections intersecting with people and juxtaposing various scales of the body against one another.
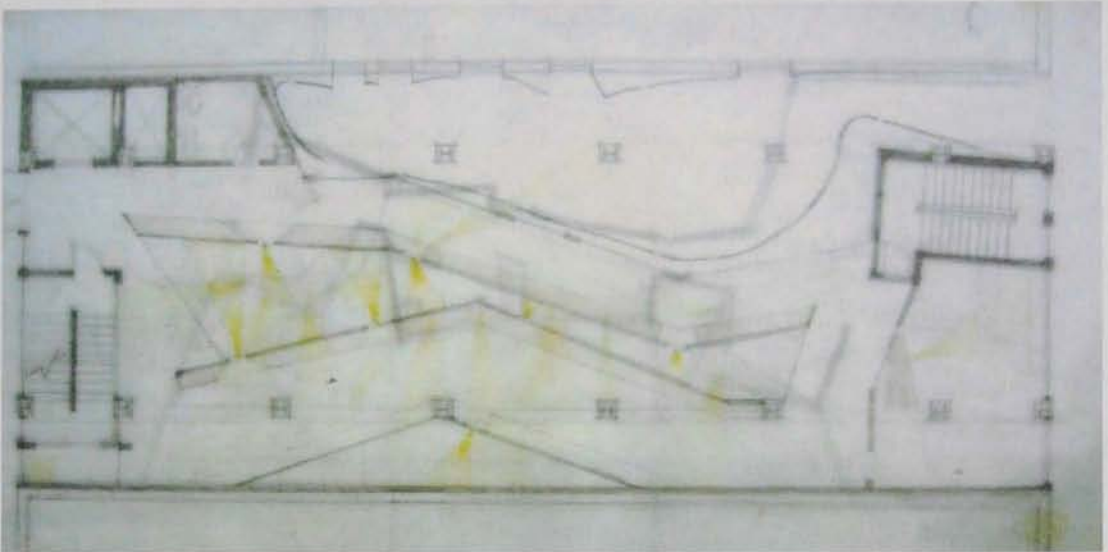
This was the first building plan that I was able to be happy with which was presented at the second to last review. The top drawing shows the fourth floor plan, but the lower levels show through the trace to reveal the changing nature of each floor plate and the overlapping effect that occurs. The yellow lines represent the projections that may occur on or be visible from that particular level. The drawing below depicts the same organization with the third floor plan on the top.
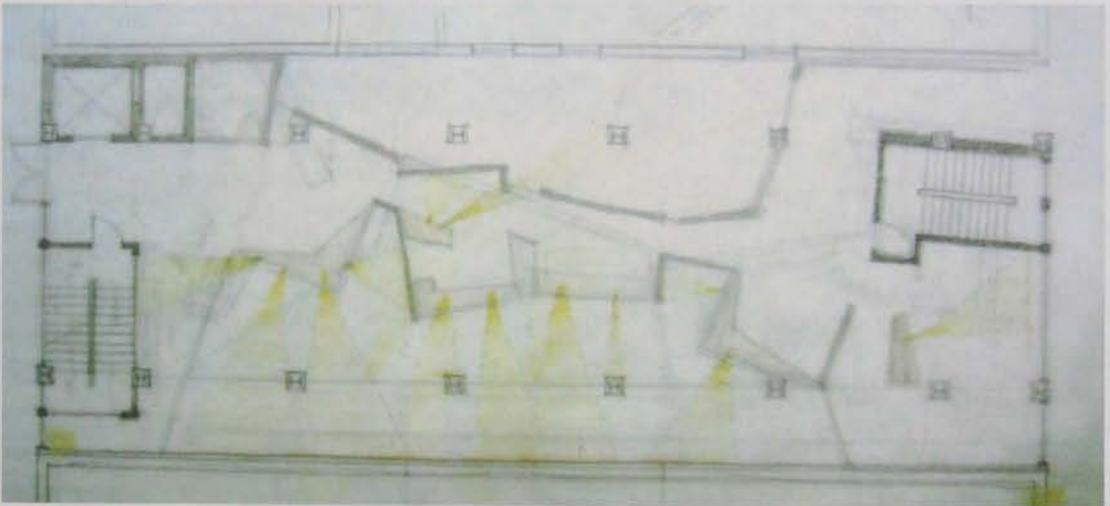
Final Project Documentation
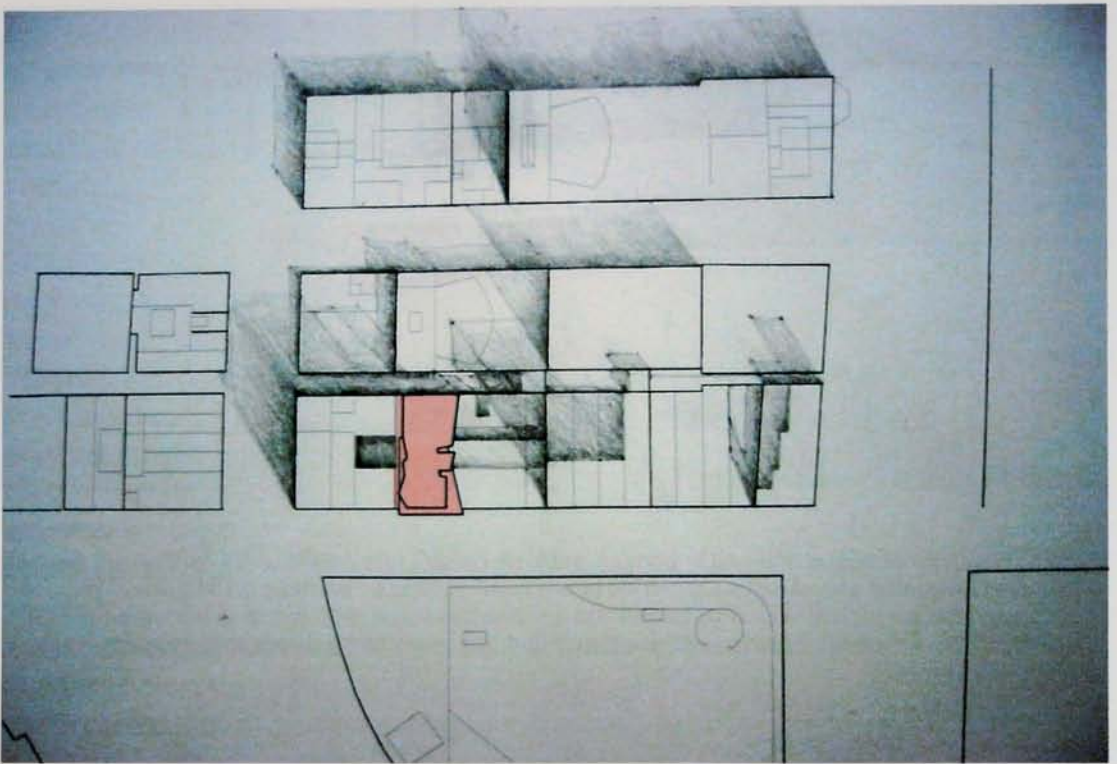
Site Plan. Located just north of Grand Circus Park on Adams Street between the Kales Build-
ing to the west and teh Fine Arts building to the east is the currently vacant lot that I chose
to utilize for my investigation.
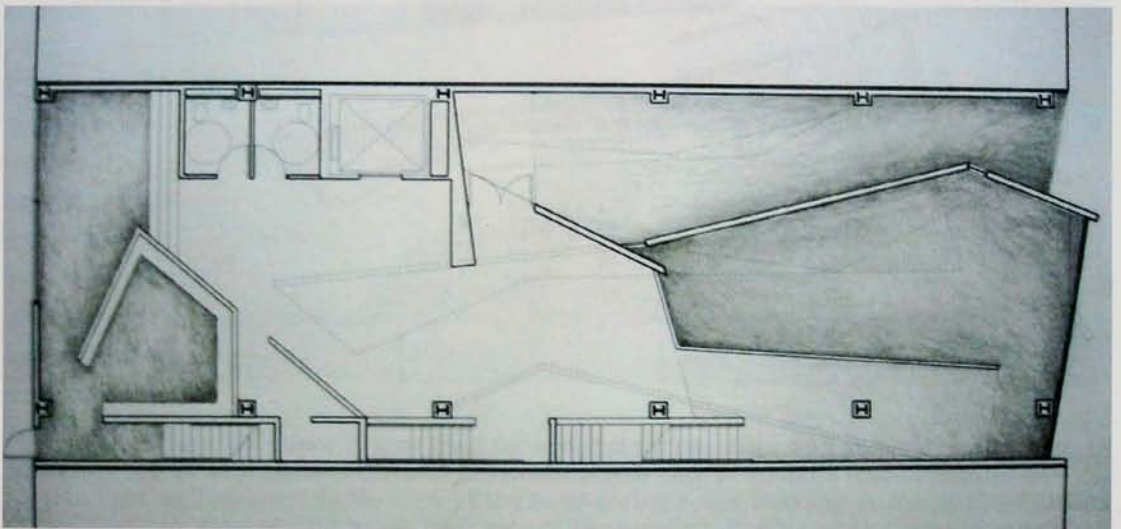
First Floor Plan: The entry slopes gradually upward from the Adams Street side along the
edge of the Fine Arts Building and opens from the small enclosed yet exterior courtyard into
the main lobby and projection area/ cafe space. The primary theatre space is visible from
multiple points at this level.
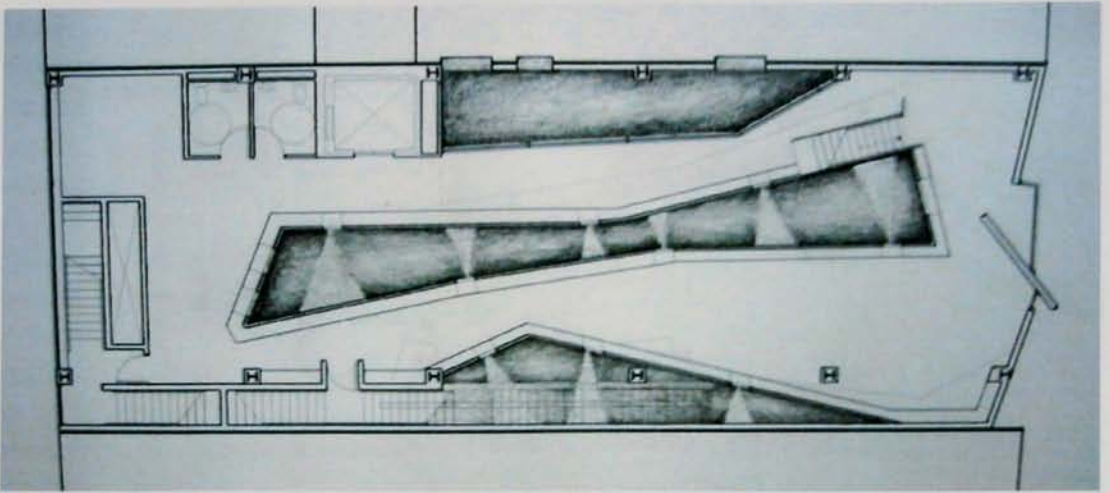
Second FloorPlan: Film, Video and Digital Archive spaces. The core space is utilized for projection testing before taking elements from the archive up to the levels where mixing and creating media is done. The rendered spaces are opend to below indicating the vertical fingers that move throughout the building up to the primary theatre space.
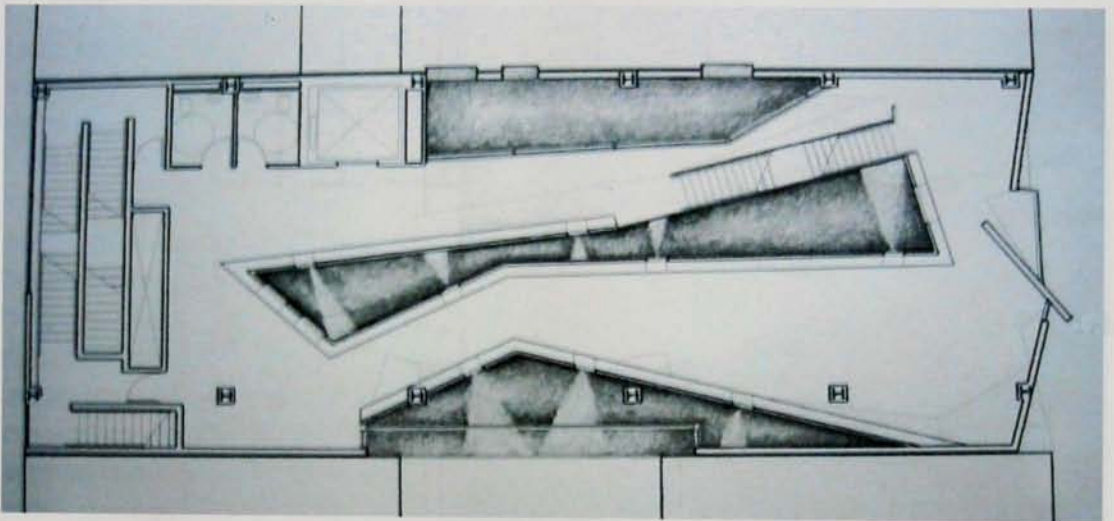

ThirdFloor Plan: This floor is also used for archival purposes as well as browsing through various media with short projection capabilities. It is able to address more fully the now present light well adjacent in the core of the neighboring Kales Building as the primary staircases begin to wrap around to the back side of the building, freeing up the west side of the lot for primary functions.
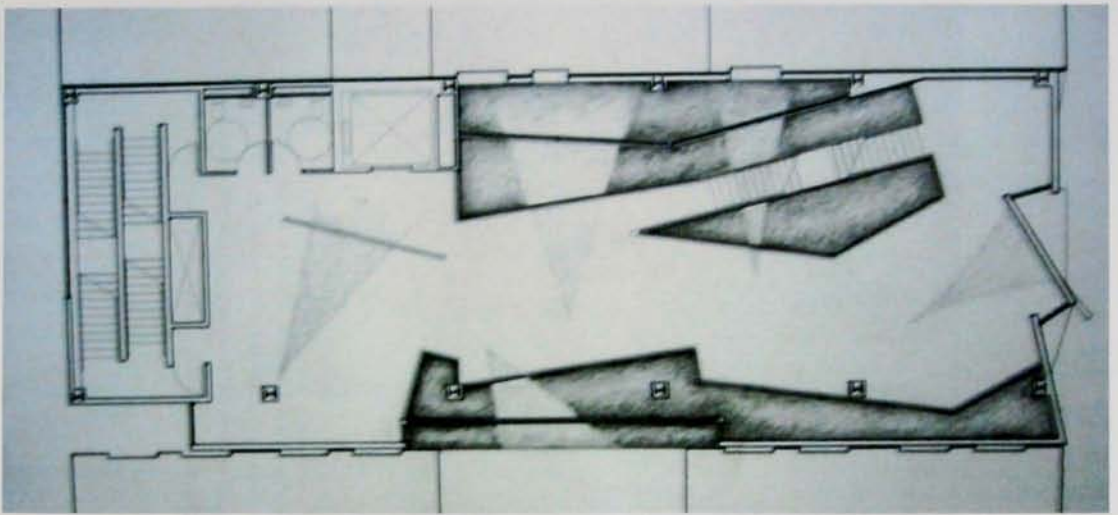
Fourth and Fifth FloorPlan: These spaces are for experimentation with the various media stored within the building. The open plan is to encourage interaction between individuals working in mixing media and people simply wishing to view this experimentation in a gallery style walkthrough. Complete projections may occur or segments of inprogress work. There are peeks into the surrounding site through the cracks in the skin of the building as well as vertically. Hopefully there would be interesting occurances between bodies on film and bodies between flims occuring within these spaces.
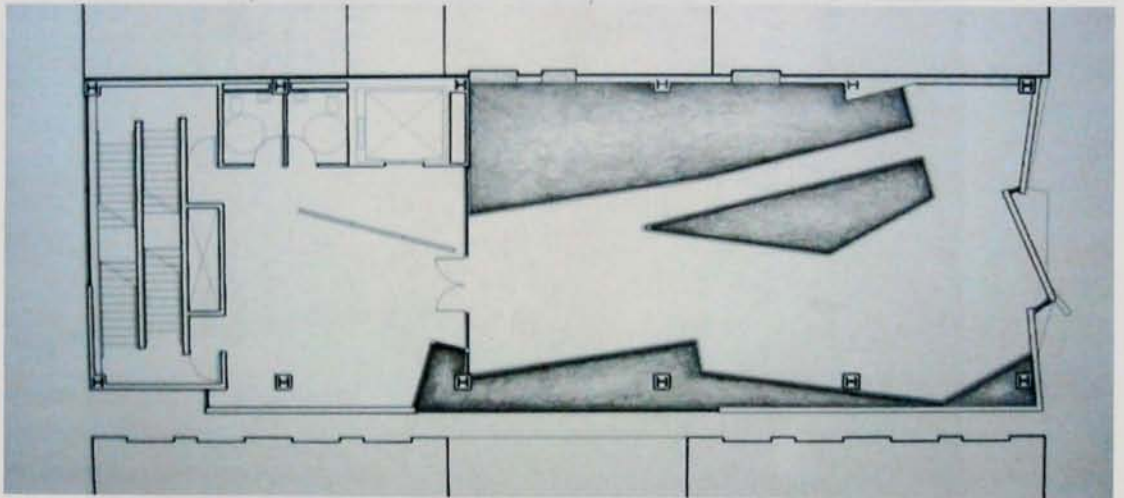
Sixth Floor Plan: This is the raised outdoor space within/without the building skin. The front portion of the floor plate is entirely open and the void spaces and portions of the outer skin break here to emphasize the primary theatre space directly above.
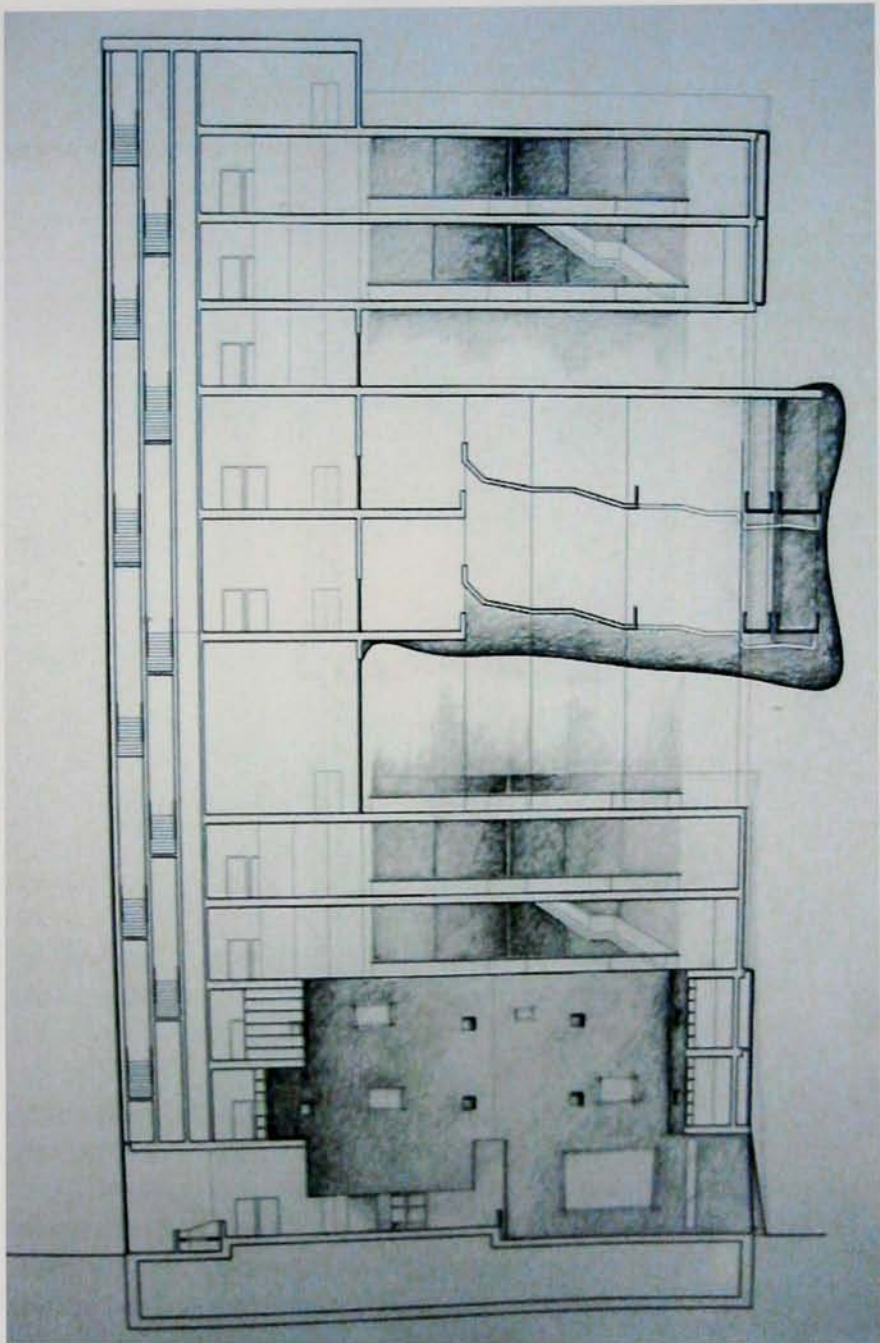
Longitudinal Section: This section sh ows well some of the linkages made vertically by the void spaces. The lower levels reveal the interior of the test projection areas in the archival spaces with the viewing windows to the interior and the connection to the main lobby/cafe area below,which is also visible from the street level. This also reveals the exterior space on the sixth level below the amorphous Theatre and Gallery spaces of the seventh and eighth floors. The catwalks around the edge of the primary theatre depict the layers of skins between the central viewing area and the exterior skin. The rendering emphasizes the void vertical spaces.
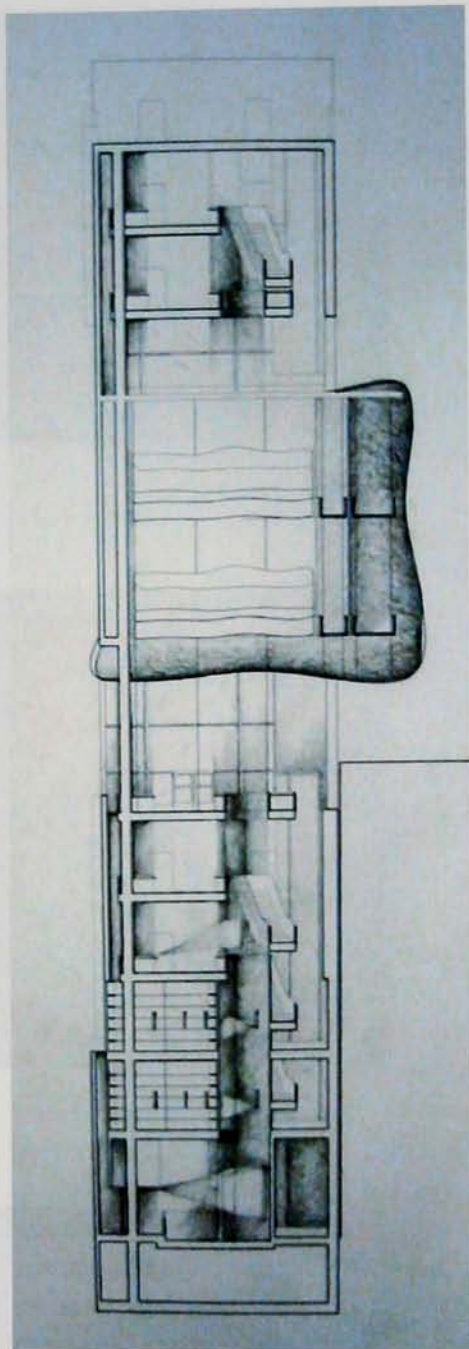
Short Section: This section shows the narrowness and dynamic of the vertical void spaces. It also shows the relationship between the interior void space that cuts through the archives and the adjacent exterior void space that separates the building from the existing Fine Arts Building. It is more clearly visible where the building breathes in to acknowledge its neighbor and the entrance towards teh base and then relaxes outward once it has cleared the height of the Fine Arts Building. The very slight pulling away that occurs on the side of the Kales Building is also visible as well as some of the material changes as you move vertically along the Kales facade

Wire Mesh Skin: This is a model of the skin that I felt was most appropriate for the primary theatre space. The model is composed of sewn metal mesh and wrinkled or crumpled to emphasize a clothlike quality.
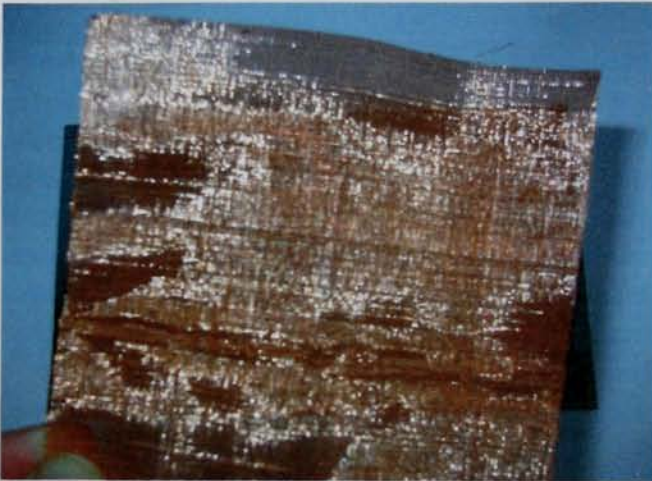

From Afar: The metal mesh can appear to be quite opaque from a distance or when light is shown upon

From Close Up: The same metal mesh can become almost completely transparent at close range allowing one to see through it clearly to the elements beyond.

Archive Spaces: This depicts the stacks and circulation spaces of the archival floors and shows the viewing windows into the central short projection areas.
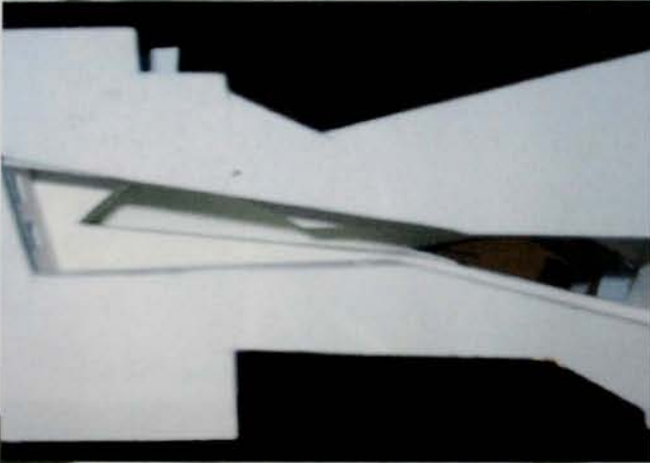
Looking UP: This is the view into the short testing projection areas of the archive spaces on up to the primary theatre space from the first floor lobby area.

Exterior Void: This shows the relationship of the exterior entry space on the main level to the two archival spaces above and then to the projection/working spaces on the fourth and fifth levels. These are the spaces that pull away from the Fine Arts Building to the east. This void space continues all the way to the seventh level.
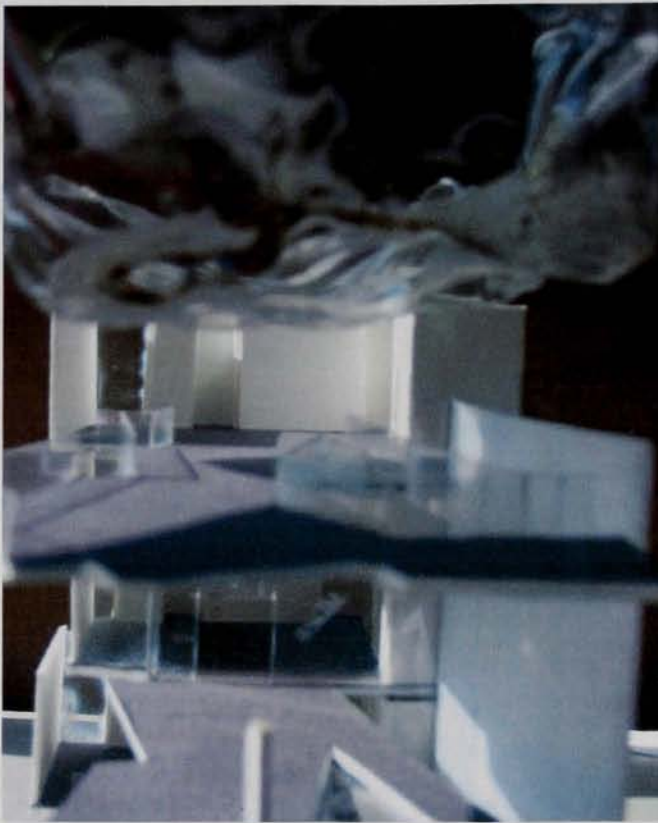
Main Theatre: The primary theatre space hangs above or floats over the remaining spaces, and this is emphasized by an exterior space directly below the theatre. The material is amorphous and translucent although would be more layered than this image implies.

Theatre Bubble: The flowing form contrasts with the more rigid spaces below, however the unbuilt spaces that sneak and flow upward to this floating centerpiece share the free-form quality of the primary theatre above.

The Skin: The heavy, very opaque skin is necessary for the control of light within the lower exploratory spaces, but even in its rigidity bends lightly and lets the areas where the separate strips slip past one another crack and give a sneaking view of the exterior.


The Facade: The strips are reminiscent of the layering quality of the stage of a traditional theatre space with overlapping, heavy layers between which the actors escape onto and off of the stage. This implies the stage of life in the city to be the street where the buildings are not always the set but also the back-drop and backstage as well.

The Street: The left side denotes the entry sequence and divided by a common wall is the main lobby/cafe area open to the street at the ground level. The heavy skin also floats here, (or looms) rather than continuing all the way into the ground plane.
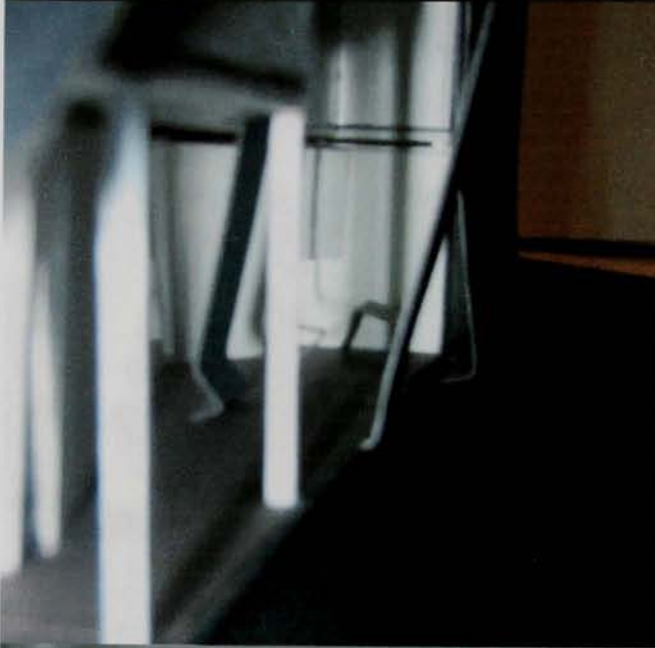
The Wall Between: The photo to the left depicts the entry sequence (minus the Fine Arts Building) with the folding skin pieces bending to become seating areas in the exterior courtyard. The opposite side of the dividing wall at the entry is the lobby projection space open to the street level as shown below. This wall continues vertically to become the edge of the archive spaces.
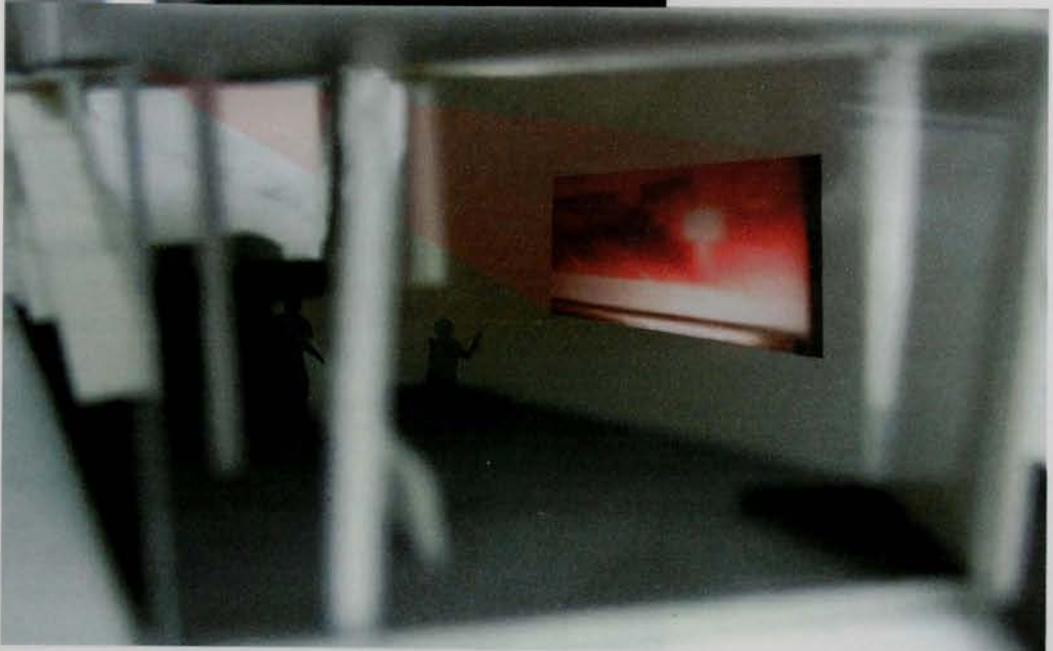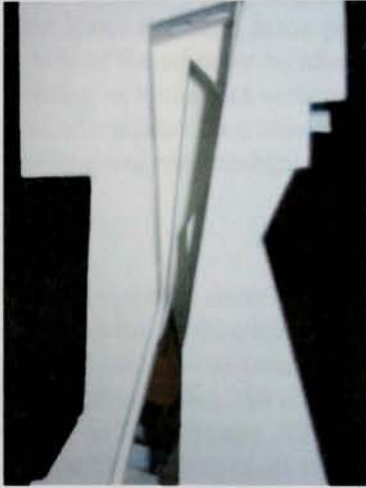
Opaque + Transparent Print: throughout this process I have experimented with ways of printing and the overlaying of an image on glossy transparency and an image printed on solid paper gives exhuberant color and depth to an otherwise static photo such as in the technique of overlaying and slightly offsetting cinematic images to produce a 3D image.

Conclusions

Conclusions

I find it funny to even include a section entitled "conclusions" when I feel that any good question only leads to deeper questions and possibilities. Perhaps in my life I will never reach any clear conclusion but that. Because of this I felt it appropriate to include a synopsis of the final discussion of this project at the April 5, 2004 critique with guest critics Dan Pitera (UDM, SOA), Gretchen Wilkins and Jason Young (U of M / Taubman College of Architecture and Planning), and Janine Debanne (Carlton University / SOA), along with my professors throughout the process Julie Kim and Will Wittig. The final critique not only allowed me to step back from my project and refresh the original ideas that I began this investigation with, but spawned further ideas of where this could continue to move in future studies.

-The elevator

I struggled greatly with the placement of the elevator and other core elements of the program as they required a straight shot vertically throughout the entire building and horizontal access at every floor, which was not a simple task in my given space. It was suggested by the jury that perhaps a very dynamic positioning for the elevator might have been along the light well of the adjacent Kales Building. Jason pointed out that it would be a very cinematic experience of the side of the adjacent buildings and the surrounding site as well as of the interior of the building as it changes vertically. The elevator door could give an impression similar to that of a shutter on a camera opening for a quick moment, revealing the changing experience and relationships of the spaces as you move upward.

-The walls/floors

There was a considerably in-depth argument about whether I was thinking more about the floors or the walls when designing the final building because the floors were organized in great detail and "eroded" very carefully to construct the vertical openings. The floors began to be too restricting and prescriptive, not allowing for creativity and freedom of events or movements to occur in these spaces. All of the spaces began to feel like circulation spaces to a degree and less like activity spaces. One side of the argument was that I did not think of the walls but only the floors where I should have done the opposite to achieve this sense of upward movement. The other side of the argument was that I thought only about the walls and that the floors remained so heavy and intrusive because I didn't think carefully enough about them or their possibilities. In any case it was a unanimous agreement that the floors were much too strong of an element breaking up the vertical flow of the building. The model building method was blamed as not allowing me to break this horizontal thought process because I was building in horizontal segments rather than vertical ones.

-The space of sound

Is the space of sound small or large? Does sound project throughout these spaces or are there many smaller sounds that you encounter in a more intimate fashion throughout the building? Can sound/light be materials that create spaces? I felt that the

theatre, my primary model for this project is a space of sound and light combined into a form, but the question of sound and light creating spaces without literal walls could have been more fully examined.

-Speed
The running shoe sketch problem Jason identified as an extreme slowing down of the act of running. He compared this to the entire building as being a slowing down or freezing of a moment in digital media's history. The topic of need for physicality of a space makes us ask if the speed of technology may soon outdate the need for a physical building. I would like to argue that physical spaces that are communal will always be necessary, whether this particular program will remain appropriate is a better issue to tackle than the need for physical space as I don't see our bodies being able to completely disappear. However, the permanence or nature of the physical place could be reexamined.

-Thickness
In an earlier sketch model I represented the exterior entry space using thin red strips of paper that wrap the building. These spaces were suggested to be expanded upon, to give depth to them or some of them to where some of the program spaces could be held within these spaces.

-Be Brave
Trust your intuition!

-Layering
Does layering mimic technology and video or does it mimic construction? The critics agreed that layering is a technique that is already applied in building construction and that my exaggeration of layering in comparison to the theatre and video was in fact also able to be seen as an exaggeration of the reality of the construction process. Possibly the building should take this one step further and acknowledge this as the nature of the composition of digital media and construction and then state its own presence.

-Program
What is the program really wanting or needing to be? Is this a space for working or really just a gallery? The current design works best as a gallery, but it would be a shame to give up that aspect of a working space. There needs to be more attention given to the possibility of creating and not just presenting within the building.

-Alley
The alley was my inspiration and then received a very uncelebrated condition. There is a definite back to the building and it seems too utilitarian with the core elements all grouped there. Remember the alley.

-Plans
Referring back to the floor plates, the plans remain very similar as you move vertically. Can you erode the *space* like you eroded the plans? Can you eliminate the "floor plate" feeling? Erode the walls more possibly.

-Walls

Remember both sides of the wall. Refer back to the "Third Skin" project. What is it like to occupy both sides and what type of communication is there between? Can the core elements be wrapped between the "walls" of the primary spaces? Does everything have to have its own walls or can we create spaces by overlapping skins? Do walls have to always be heavy such as for a bathroom or can a functional space such as this occur where other skins converge and create a type or sense of opacity through layering?

-Early models

The early models were said to be very sensual and the critics felt that these models communicated so much more than my final model and drawings. The problem was losing the fluidity of my studies in the final presentation.

-Subtle or not

Remember the differences between film and video.

Following the final critique, I felt prepared to once again begin the design process and attempt to merge the ideas of floating bubbles of space from my mid semester sketch model and the vertically focused flowing voids of the final model. I began to realize that this process could probably continue forever. As stated in the critique, my building that I presented at the final critique was but a frozen moment in the progression of technology. It also represented a frozen moment within the progression of my design. I began to feel that showing the growth or phases of the building was not only appropriate, but perhaps hitting on an aspect that hits closer to the true nature of the project than any static building could ever achieve. The building I created was meant to morph or change according to the activities within it, the time of day and the individuals interacting within and without it, but it still remained true to the traditional understanding of architecture as a structure that is concrete and constant throughout its lifespan. I feel now that it needs to have a greater ability to take on a life of its own, to grow and learn and express emotion. The human body changes so dramatically throughout its lifetime that a comparison of the shape of origination to that of termination is almost unrecognizable as the same body. However, the common thread of body exists, the individuality and influences of time are so strong that they appear as completely different elements. In fact, as the body is constantly regenerating and recycling its own components, perhaps by the time we die, we are nothing of the same elements from when we were born. How often are our bodies entirely regenerated? Does this ever occur completely? Can a building experience this same type of metamorphosis over time, and with the acknowledgement of the increasing speeds throughout our overall culture, how often can a building regenerate itself or portions of itself?

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