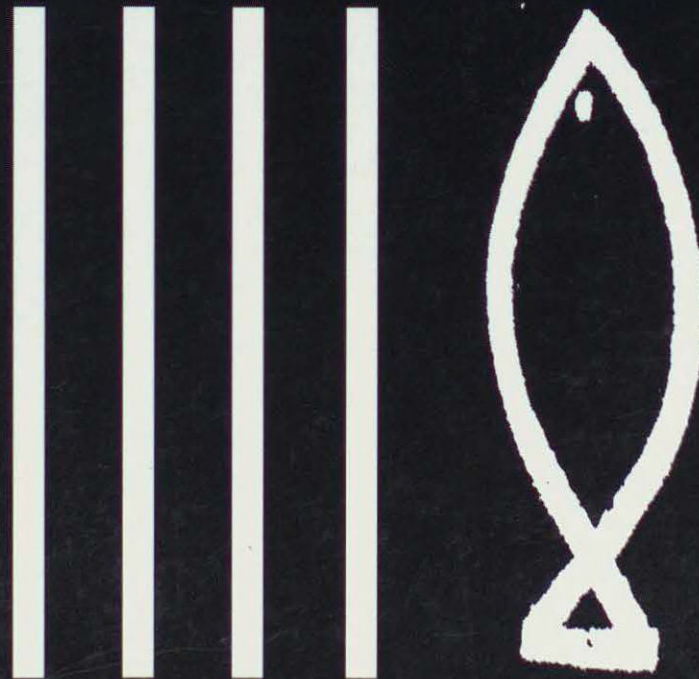


THE FIFTH COLUMN

LA REVUE CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTS EN ARCHITECTURE
THE CANADIAN STUDENT JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE

place



THE EAST OF ISSUE
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LA REVUE CANADIENNE DES ETUDIANTS EN ARCHITECTURE
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Production:

Vickie Vinaric
Luc Doucet
Conrad Gmoser
Dave Smythe
David Morin
Tina Spiratos
Annette Dudek
Paul Lalonde
Eric Stein

Thanks to Terry Galvin

THE FIFTH COLUMN

Regional Editors / Rédacteurs régionaux:

Technical University of Nova Scotia

Position Available

Université Laval

Martine Dion

Université de Montréal

Christiane Bergeron

Université du Québec à Montréal

Ghislain Bélanger

Carleton University:

Tim Dallett

University of Toronto:

Position Available

University of Waterloo:

position available

University of Manitoba:

Ann Murphy

University of Calgary:

Justin Saly

University of British Columbia:

Javier Campos

SVP, adressez toute correspondance, articles et avis de changement d'adresse à:

Please address all correspondence, articles and notices of change of address to:

THE FIFTH COLUMN
815 rue Sherbrooke ouest
Montréal, Québec
CANADA H3A 2A7

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The name of the Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, THE FIFTH COLUMN, is intended to be interpreted in a number of ways. First, there is an architectonic reference, the preoccupation with the development of a contemporary order of architecture that is at once respectful of antiquity and responsive to new conceptions of architecture. Second, there is a reference to journalism and the printed column of text. Finally, there is the twentieth century political connotation, an organized body sympathizing with and working for the enemy in a country at war.

These three references essentially define the role of THE FIFTH COLUMN. The magazine promotes the study of architecture in Canada at the present in terms of both the past and future. It attempts to stimulate and foster a responsible, critical sensitivity in both its readers and its contributors. Finally, THE FIFTH COLUMN provides an alternative forum to established views not for the sake of opposing them, but to make it possible to objectively evaluate them.

OBJECTIVES

To promote the study and the appreciation of a sensitive architecture within the architectural community and general population, thereby positively influencing the development of architecture in Canada;

To promote a forum for and to encourage the dialogue between students, academics, professional architects and interested members of the 'lay' profession;

To provide a critical alternative to the commercial trade magazines by publishing a journal that originates from the schools, traditionally the vanguard of architectural thought.

EDITORIAL POLICIES

1. To publish articles by students, academics and professionals and by other interested parties that would otherwise find little opportunity for expression and publication.

2. To publish a series of articles in each issue exploring a specific and relevant theme which contributes to an understanding and a greater awareness of current architecture.

3. To publish articles on the diversity of Canadian architecture as a means of promoting an understanding of these local traditions and their influence on current architectural thought.

4. To publish articles discussing historical influences on the development of architecture.

5. To publish student projects from the various schools in order to stimulate architectural debate.

6. To publish critical reviews of current works of architecture in Canada, as well as outside the country, in order to reflect on and positively influence the development of architecture in Canada.

7. To publish critical reviews of activities, publications, lectures and exhibitions of interest to our readership.

October 30, 1985.

THE FIFTH COLUMN, The Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, is a non-commercial, non-profit enterprise. The articles and opinions which appear in the magazine are published under the sole responsibility of their authors. The purpose of reproducing drawings, photographs and excerpts from other sources is to facilitate criticism, review or news journal summary. THE FIFTH COLUMN is not responsible in the event of loss or damage to any material submitted.

Le titre de la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, THE FIFTH COLUMN, a pour but d'inviter le lecteur à l'interpréter à plusieurs niveaux. Le premier niveau suggère une référence architectonique, celle consistant à l'élaboration d'un ordre architectural contemporain à la fois respectueux d'un passé antique et répondant aux nouvelles conceptions de l'architecture. Sur un autre plan, THE FIFTH COLUMN rappelle son orientation journalistique par sa connotation avec la colonne imprimée d'un texte. Enfin, la cinquième colonne, c'est aussi, depuis Franco, le nom donné aux partisans clandestins sur lesquels chacun des deux adversaires peut compter dans les rangs de l'autre.

Ces trois références définissent dans son ensemble le rôle de THE FIFTH COLUMN. La revue a pour but de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture au Canada, en terme de lien entre le passé et la future. Elle tente également de stimuler et d'entretenir un sens aigu de la critique chez ses collaborateurs ainsi que chez ses lecteurs. Enfin, THE FIFTH COLUMN propose un forum où il est possible d'établir différents points de vue, non dans le seul but de les confronter, mais plutôt de rendre possible leur évaluation objective.

OBJECTIFS

Promouvoir l'étude et l'appréciation d'une architecture sensible à l'intérieur de la communauté architecturale ainsi qu'à des plus larges groupes, et par conséquent influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada;

Promouvoir la constitution d'un forum dans le but d'encourager le dialogue et les échanges d'idées entre les étudiants, les architectes et les individus intéressés de toute autre province;

Offrir une alternative critique aux revues de type commercial, en publiant un périodique ayant ses racines à l'intérieur des Ecoles universitaires, traditionnellement pionnières dans l'évolution de la pensée architecturale.

POLITIKES EDITORIALES

1. Publier les articles d'étudiants, de membres du corps académique, de professionnels ainsi que d'autres groupes intéressés, qui autrement ne trouveraient que peu d'opportunités d'expression et de publication.

2. Publier une série d'articles dans chaque numéro explorant un thème spécifique qui contribuera à une compréhension approfondie et à une plus grande conscientisation de l'architecture contemporaine.

3. Publier des articles sur les diverses facettes de l'architecture canadienne dans le but de promouvoir la compréhension de ces différentes traditions locales et de leur influence sur la pensée architecturale contemporaine.

4. Publier des articles traitant des influences historiques sur le développement de l'architecture.

5. Publier les projets d'étudiants des différentes Ecoles dans le but de stimuler le débat architectural.

6. Publier les comptes rendus critiques de différentes oeuvres architecturales au Canada ainsi qu'à l'étranger afin de s'arrêter sur et d'influencer le développement de l'architecture au Canada.

7. Publier des comptes rendus critiques des différents événements, publications, conférences et expositions ayant quelque intérêt pour nos lecteurs.

30 octobre, 1985.

THE FIFTH COLUMN, la revue canadienne des étudiants en architecture, est une organisme sans but lucratif, dont l'objectif est de promouvoir l'étude de l'architecture. Les articles et opinions qui apparaissent dans la revue sont publiés sous la responsabilité de leur auteurs. Nous reproduisons des dessins, photographies et extraits d'autres sources afin de faciliter la critique. THE FIFTH COLUMN n'est responsable ni des dommages subis par le matériel envoyé, ni de sa perte.



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place

INTRODUCTION	3	Aaron Bourgoïn
THE PLACE OF WORK	4	Academy K/F
THE READING OF CONTEXT	5	Michael Carroll
BUILDING STUDIO PROJECT	11	Steve McFarlane
PLACE CREATION AND ARCHITECTURAL HYPOCRISY	12	Peter Yeadon
FIELD		
THE READING OF PLACE	15	Brenda Webster
ON THE ESSENTIAL PLACELESSNESS OF THE MACHINE	19	Jacob Allderdice
A PROGRAM IN PROGRESS: RICHARD MUELLER	24	Cliff Eyland
THE TRIALS OF AEOLUS	27	George Likourgiotis
BODY		
FROM NEW JERUSALEM TO NEW YORK	29	T.G. Galvin
PLACE SETTING	35	Stephen Parcell
BUILDING STUDIO PROJECT	37	Alexa Fotheringham
THESIS = PLACE	38	Ted Cavanagh
HOUSE		

MAKING PLACE: A Marginal Tragicomedy in One Act Rob Savell, Kevin Downey and Jake Allderdice

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Editor: Aaron Bourgoïn
Production Editor: Peter J. Russell
Cover: Niall Savage
Business Manager: Michael Shugarman
Editorial Assistants: Maia Pucetti
Bill Mitchell

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east of



MAKING
PLACE:
A
Marginal
Tragicomedy
in
One Act

by
Rob Savell,
Kevin Downey
and
Jake Allderdice



INTRODUCTION

Life is an affair of people not places,
but for me life is an affair of places
and that is the problem.

Wallace Stevens

This issue is comprised of a series of essays, written and drawn, upon the theme of the place. This is a predominant theme in the work of our School, but there is by no means a consensus among the authors as to its relevance within a larger architectural discourse. It is precisely this divergence of opinion that has led to the selection of place as a theme for the issue; one which should work against the notion that studying place has something to do with a naive regionalism best confined to the study of fishing sheds in the Maritime landscape.

In a school of architecture the specifics of a given problem are first suspended or left open to question in order to explore the essence of what lies beyond any one of them. Place is one such issue and in fact for many years the very first problem posed of architecture students at this university was one for which there was no site, one in which the rudiments of design were explored through the design of a placeless dwelling for one person: a hut.

For some this suspension of a physical context was a liberating experience. For others this first exercise marked a startling confrontation with themselves. However, both strategies share the common problem of confronting oneself in the world and the difficult first lessons of mark making. For some these first marks must be made into the earth. For others into the realm of the imagined place. In the past year, this has changed and the first year's studio began to turn toward measured reading of places alongside the design of a dwelling.

The East-Of issue is not intended to be read as a prospectus of work undertaken at the school. In some instances, this book does contain the traces of school projects and some attempts at searching beyond the specifics of a project. This book represents the steps of individuals attempting to act with a sense of will, of volition within the medium of design. As many of them would attest, this is a problem not easily translated to the medium of print. But the compilation of this collection of work suggests that a book does itself become a place, a figure and ground in which marks are made.

Just as a child will not learn to read until it has first developed an image of itself in the world, learning to read is central to one's notion of place: of location, time and culture. Attempting to remember the how of or the way one learned to read is a difficult if not impossible thing to do. What is far more essential is the knowing what to do with this gift..., of where one might go, of what one might be. Of what lies next. East of where....?





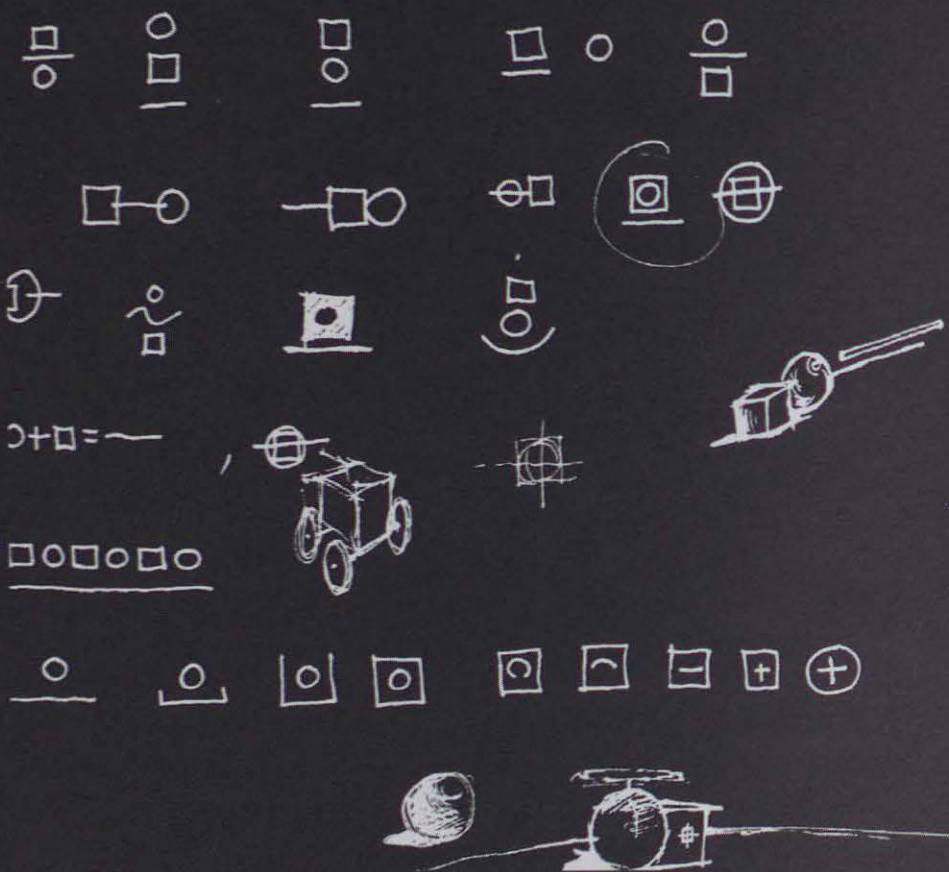
The tenet of "Making Place" is that the concept of "place" is stagnant. Overused, the word no longer means, and for this reason here at T.U.N.S. we have already seen its eclipse. Fresher constructs, words like "strategy" and "operational," have taken over our discussion. Outside of TUNS, too, authors like Benedikt in *Towards an Architecture of Reality* or Norberg-Schulz in *Genius Loci* have, through sheer repetition, promulgated "place" as jargon. The word's final death knell was surely rung by the "celebrated" American architect Robert A. M. Stern in his 1986 TV series, *Pride of Place*.

But the concept of place is an essential one nonetheless. "Sense of Place" names an existential necessity. And it has framed a large part of our discussions at TUNS over the years. The question is, how to revitalize it? How to reawaken its meaning?

One way is to continue to work from it as if it were untarnished. Write more essays citing Heidegger and the architecture of Louis Kahn, make more design projects about memory and beautiful rooms. This method will eventually yield results, because while "place" is overworked as a catchall noun, things like memory, meaning, and beauty will always be fertile starting points. The "places" that come into being through them will emanate meaning whether or not we speak the word "place."

Another way to approach reinvesting the word with meaning is to step outside it, and to consider what it has become. Such is our intent. We step outside the "Sense of Place," stand before it and sing of it. Thus we parody it ("parody" from the Latin *para*: "before" and *alerein*: to sing). We parody it not to ridicule it, but to show it to itself, through theatre. As Robert Jan van Pelt puts it in *Time, Types and Tectonics*, the theatre exists in a place simultaneously inside and out of society; its role is to reconcile people with the forces that form them.

FIELD — HOUSE □ BODY ○



In this project ACADEMY K/F attempts to address the subject of Place, specifically 'The Place of Work.' We approach it as a game. The game produces a series of algorithms derived from the three images produced in the first exploration of the subject. Having created the images, we annotated them. The annotation became the draft of a text, which was distilled to produce a sequence of formulas - the algorithms. Working the subject of 'The Place of Work' with a pseudo-empirical approach rather than an intuitive methodology, we hoped to derive insights ordinarily unavailable to the artist/architect.

MICHAEL CARROLL

THE READING OF CONTEXT

Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer

He stood on a point
on a sheet of green paper
proclaiming himself the center
with no walls
no borders
anywhere; the sky
no height above him, totally
unenclosed and shouted:

Let me out!

Margaret Atwood



Architects are like pioneers in that they inhabit vacant landscapes and try to cultivate them and increase their potential as habitable places in the world. If we work in an 'open' field, how can we be contextual? What informs us in the making of form? What gives meaning to a form?

The design process can address a wide spectrum of subject matter including political, social, economic, and technological issues. However, in architecture, it is the physical location that provides an immediate starting point. It is through location that we make contact with cultural and scientific issues on a national, regional or local basis. The physicality of the site, its ruins, traces and shifts are cues upon which we can build. The location, literally, provides a physical context that gives definition to a design. It is the context of the situation that gives significance to the utterance, (the architectural intervention).¹ Unlike the other arts, architecture deals specifically with a physical site and from its location draws meaning.²

If a work of architecture is context-dependent, how does it not become stagnated by the immediacy of the context? How can a work gain an objective distance to avoid nostalgia? If a work is to give commentary on where we are (i.e. location) and who we are (i.e. culture) we must interpret the physical context in a critical fashion. In order to interpret the context we must read it.

1. In linguistics, the context of the situation, is a term applied to the non-linguistic environment of the utterances (words, gestures, etc.). Meaning is seen as a complex of relations operating between linguistic features of the utterances and the features of the social situation in which the utterances occur. (eg. occupation of the speaker, the number of listeners present etc.) Contexts of situation are a means of specifying and classifying those situational features that are necessary in order to understand the full meaning of the utterances. *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*.

2. "A boundary is not that at which something stops but as the Greeks recognized the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing. That is why the concept is that of *horizon*, that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that which is that which room has been made, that which is always granted and hence is joined, that is by virtue of its location, that is by such thing as a bridge. Accordingly, spaces receive their being through location and not from space."

M. Heidegger, "Poetry, Language, Thought", *Building Dwelling Thinking*, London, Harper & Row, 1971, p.154.



CAST OF THE PLAY (in order of appearance):

.....STAGE MANAGER (S.M.)—slick and composed, her or his voice a smarmy replication of the whispering television golf tournament commentator.

.....CHORUS—three stagehands, dressed in black turtlenecks, black pants, black high-top sneakers, their hair in ridiculously short ponytails.

.....FIELDING LLOYD MELLISH (F.L.L.M.)—a student in the final moments of attaining the degree Master of Nouvel Architecture (MONA) at the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture (TUNA). Eager to please, nervous to the point of clumsiness, but strangely prideful. Unfortunate subject of a too-small bladder.

.....TONY MOLDY (REFERRED TO AS TONY OR "CRITIC")—A professor at the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture, his main physical feature is a large red moustache and beard which hide his reactions but through which he is capable of baring his teeth when necessary. FIELDING LLOYD MELLISH 's thesis advisor.

.....DR. GARISH BALLSASIDE, PHD (GARY OR "CRITIC")—Chairman of the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture, a man held in reverence and awe by students and faculty alike for his tremendous intellect, charm and spirit. Has a habit of slowly and deliberately cracking knuckle joints of his large expressive hands while

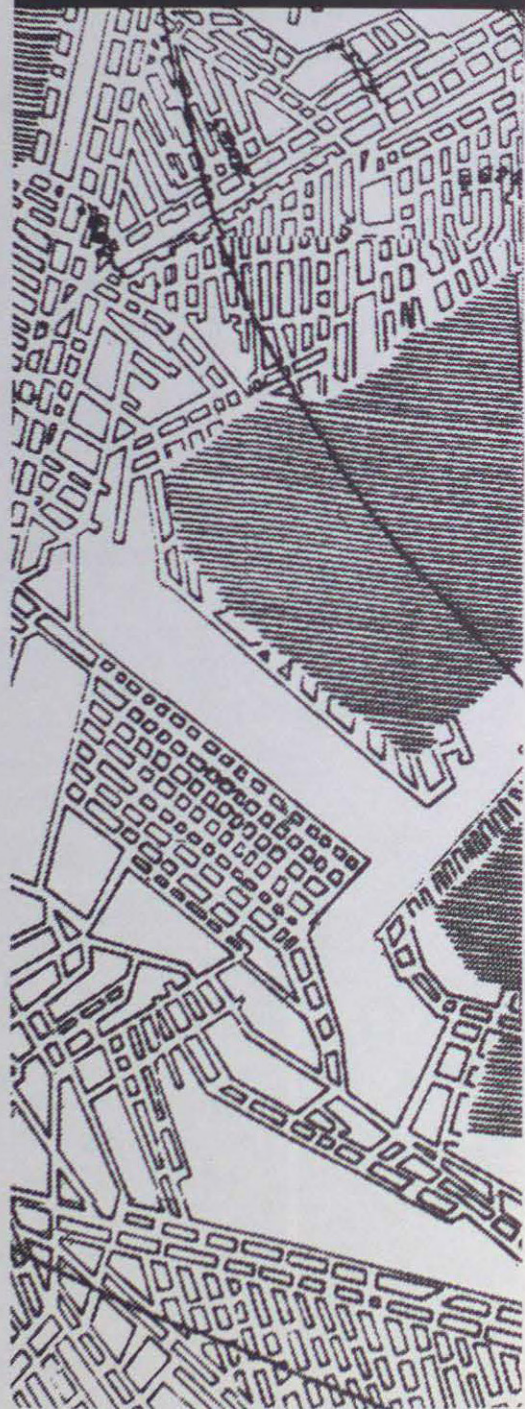
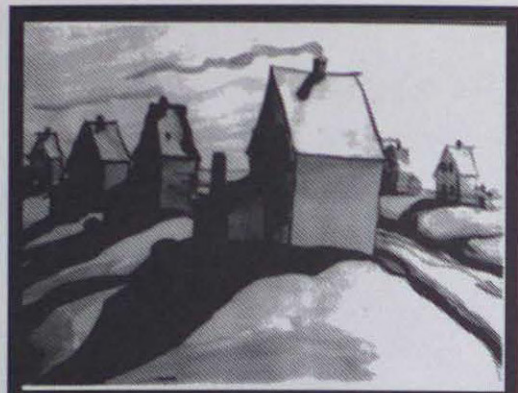
The physical context can be used as a point of departure just as a literary text can be used to animate the imagination³. We can read context as one reads a book: between the lines; in its fissures; within the connotations the (con)text carries with it. The (con)text, rather than serving as a descriptive tool, becomes an instrument to evoke invention.

The act of reading (con)text is a personal and frequently a silent act. However, unlike reading text, which is primarily a visual activity, the reading of context has the possibility of involving all the senses. One can feel context. As the existentialists attest, feeling is a way of registering our participation in the world.⁴ Heidegger speaks of *Gestimmtheit*—that is to say, being 'attuned' to the world. Ricoeur uses a similar metaphor when he talks of 'tonalité', as if one had to adjust to the pitch of the world.⁴

This attitude suppresses vision to heighten the other senses of smell, taste, touch and hearing. In his article, "Towards a Critical Regionalism" Kenneth Frampton, puts forth "The Visual versus the Tactile", as his sixth point for an architecture of 'resistance'.

"The tactile resilience of the place-form and the capacity of the body to read the environment in terms other than those of sight alone suggest a potential strategy for resisting the domination of universal technology."⁵

We must read the context like an instrument that has been sensitively tuned because the context is in a state of flux. The definition of the physical context is indeterminate. There is no solution to what is the 'proper' architectural response within the physical context, because it does not exist as a problem to be solved. A work of architecture can only be placed within a discussion with the physical context. In order to participate, we must adopt an attitude toward a region, a city, a neighbourhood, a specific site. From this vantage point, architecture moves beyond just a stylistic

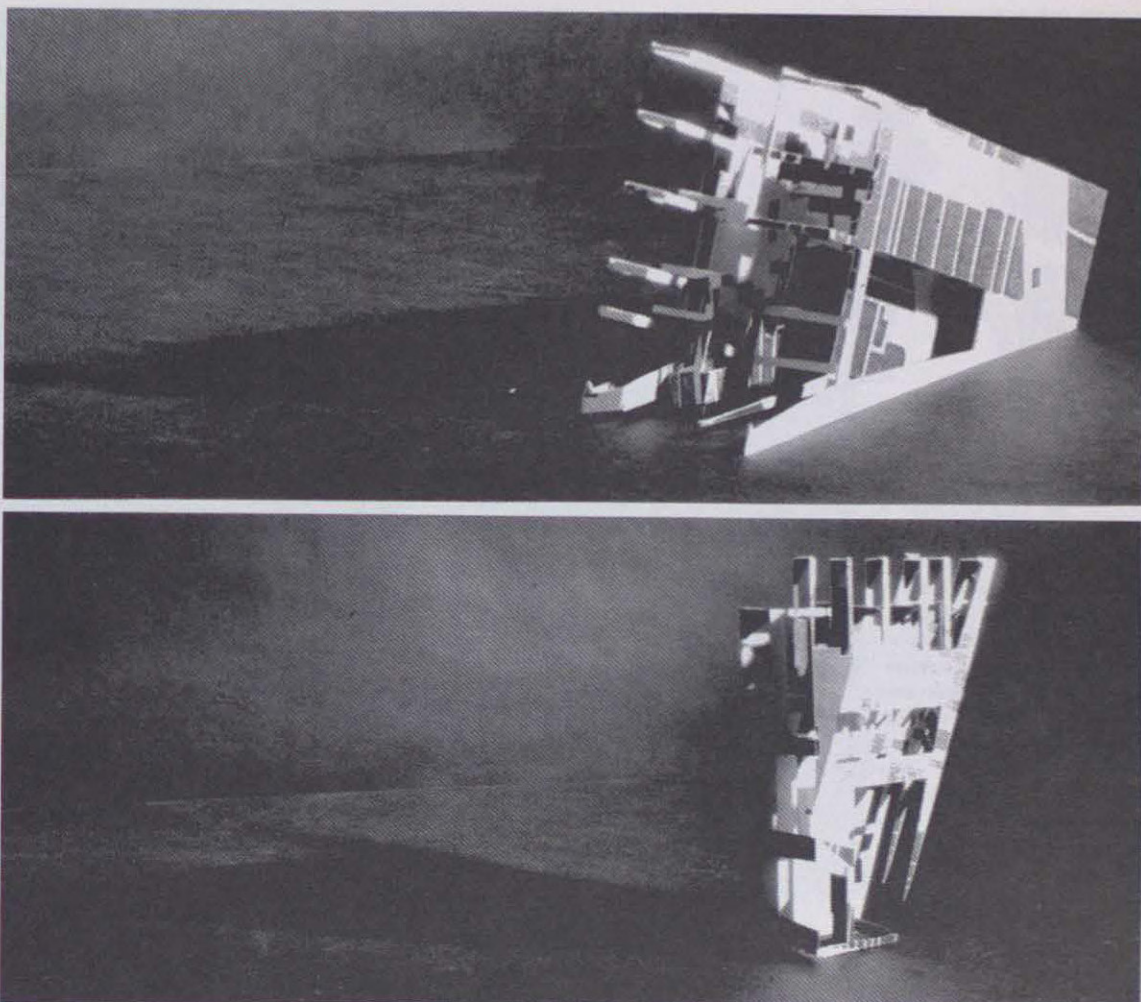


3. Dave Thomas, (3rd year, 1987), excerpted from *Invisible Cities*, by Italo Calvino:

Cities and the Dead # 4 :

What makes Argia different from other cities is that it has earth instead of air. The streets are completely filled with dirt, clay packs the room to the ceiling, on every stair another stairway is set in negative, over the roofs of other houses hang layers of rocky terrain like skies with clouds. We do not know if the inhabitants can move about in the city, widening the worm tunnels and the crevices where roots twist.

From up here, nothing of Argia can be seen; some say, "It's down below there", and we can only believe them. The place is deserted. At night, putting your ear to the ground, you can hear a door slam."



4. John Macquarrie, "Existentialism", (New York: World Publishing Company, 1972), p.157.

5. Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", *Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster, London: Pluto Press Limited, 1985, p. 28.

exercise; it demands that we take a 'position' toward a place. One must "confront the noise."

The fact that the context is continually shifting means in the reading of it we get only partial glimpses of it, there is really no present, only instants of present. We rely on memory to connect the instants, to continue the stream of consciousness.

In order to catch the knife-edge of the present, in architecture we draw in order to reread reality. In executing a drawing, we measure the immediate environment and accumulate maps which describe it. These maps may give a quantitative account of a place, but they tell us very little about the actual qualities of a place. The qualities may not be measurable, but they are perceivable. In order to catch a glimpse of the complete picture, we must overlay each individual frame, each instant in time so that a whole image is revealed and an underlying structure emerges.⁶ Therefore, through the drawing we attempt to capture the essence of the place and record its subtleties. The physical context is like a picture in motion made up of many frames, it has temporal depth which goes beyond the surface of its present reality.

By viewing context through time we observe not only what is variable but also the skeleton of a place. The layers of time, once opaque, become translucent; in the act of

6. excerpted from: Moira Edmonds, *Screaming Trees and Babbling Brooks*, (3rd year, 1987)

The construction was based on a series of maps. Viewed in its development through time, the map is a sensitive indicator of the changing thought of man. It is a mirror of culture and civilization. It has come to serve many functions, a tool in the comprehension of the spatial phenomena an efficient device for the storage of three-dimensional data, a tool for understanding distributions and relationship not otherwise understood. Cartography is the scientific and artistic pursuit of codifying — in the form of a map — objects and events as we become aware of them. The process of the construction of these maps was concerned with the presence of existing structures and the absence of others. A study of this construction is a means of generating ideas about future development for the block.

Moving beyond the digging tool the construction becomes a reflecting tool that reflects light, obscures light, filters light and creates pattern with absence of light. Thus, in the act of making, one is also writing. The text becomes both a new *topos* of invention and a means of representing that invention.



others are speaking.

..... DR. JULIA MINDFART, PHD (JULIA OR "CRITIC")—internationally respected architect and historian, upon whose hoped-for recommendation rides the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture's main bid for accreditation as a Master's degree-granting institution. A regular visiting critic at the school, her characteristic features include bushy eyebrows that connect across the bridge of her nose, thick glasses which she habitually removes and polishes on her blouse, and a briarwood pipe which she periodically relights.

NOTE: Any resemblance to characters or institutions living, dead, or dying is purely coincidental.

SETTING OF THE PLAY:

An empty classroom at the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture. A year-end review of a Master's thesis project is about to take place. As the action begins, the murmur of voices from another review can be heard off-stage.

STAGE MANAGER (enters): The Place: TUNA—the Technical University of Nouvel Architecture: Canada's finest English language school of architecture (East of Montreal). The Occasion: a year-end review of a MONA—Master of Nouvel Architecture—student's thesis. The Time: 1989. 1984 was five years ago, and 2001's just 12 short years away. These are heady days, folks, and here at TUNA we're right in the thick of them. This particular thesis review comes just as TUNA is gearing up its desperate bid for respect and accreditation as a Master's degree-granting institution. Many of you seeing this performance, whether you be potential students, potential faculty, up-and-coming custodial staff, or even the grand viziers and potentates of the

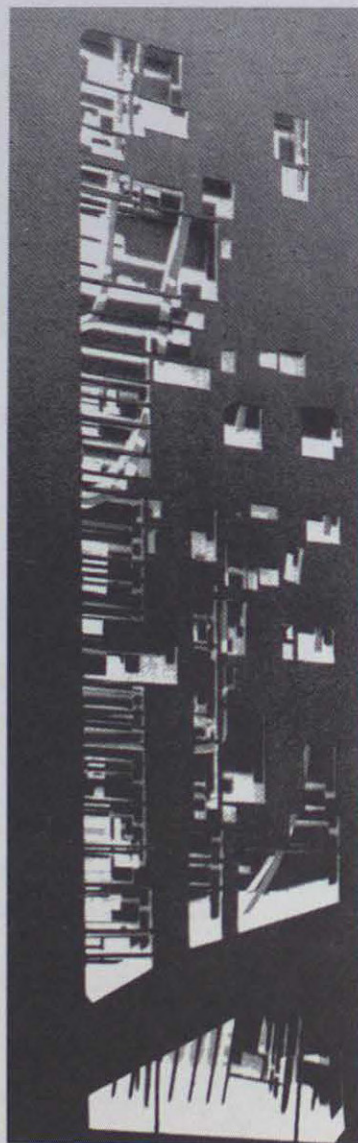
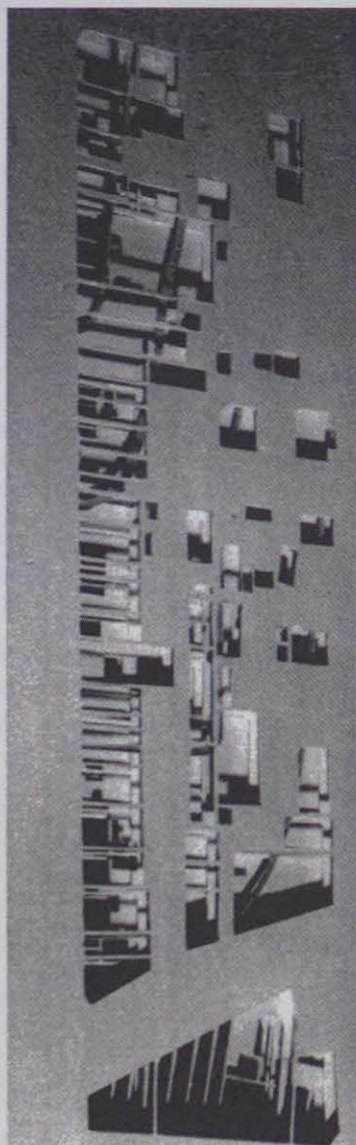
creating a palimpsest the present day map loses its immediate significance and the past erasures begin to rupture the surface. Through drawing, we are able to make an abstraction of place and by-

pass the actual context and project an idealized version of it. The abstract drawing becomes the 'site,' the new *topos* of invention. The representation becomes the metaphoric or utopian version of the actual context. Therefore drawing is an integral part of the design process. 'Drawing' is no longer used as a noun but as a verb, it becomes an act in which we draw the world out.

The discrepancy between the drawing and the actuality is not within the detail of a drawing but within its basic structure. The reading becomes increasingly successful as the discrepancy is checked with the reality of the site. In order to keep both within one's frame of vision, one must oscillate between the idealized scenarios and actual ones until there is a virtual one to one

correspondence. Although our initial relationship with the site may be from a distance, as we approach the place we become immersed in it. The physicality of the site becomes all-encompassing. The invisible aspects of a place become perceivable. As the painter, Paul Cezanne stated, "Nature is on the inside. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope. I live in it from the middle. I am immersed in it. After all the world is all around me, not in front of me." Instead of drawing the site, one can now actually handle it, collecting its fragments to fabricate a history⁷. Suddenly the extension of drawing the site is to construct it, face to face with reality. The 'work' site has replaced the drawing as the place of intervention.

Within the tight margins of the 'work' site lies the possibility of architecture to be an act of improvisation in which the discrepancy between the idealized and the actual plans begins to diminish. The architect begins to act and find meaning within the interstitial space of the





existing condition. This is not a new concept, apparently Gaudi lived on the site of Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. Ralph Erskine set up his office on site for the Byker Redevelopment in Newcastle-on-Tyne in England. Recently, architectural firms have experimented with 'installations', or full size mock-ups for actual pieces within existing infrastructures. The physical context becomes a place where we can intervene on a more immediate basis. The lucidity of our reading of the context increases.

Reading becomes a cyclical process. It involves observation, interpretation and the reconstruction (construction) of a context. In order for readings to become operative, the readings must not be descriptive of a place but attempt to unify its various aspects in a new way. Therefore reflection is not a passive activity; instead, it forms the basis of action. Reading leads to invention and finally intervention within the physical context. The cycle begins to complete itself as the new piece becomes a working part of that context which informs, in turn, subsequent built form.

7. excerpted from: Steven Robertson, *The Registry*, (3rd year, 1987.)

This project evolved in response to the changing nature of the North End community in Halifax. Up until the 1970's the community was inhabited primarily by blue collar workers. Recently, however, the make-up of the community has been changing and there is now a great diversity of inhabitants.

My concern over the issue of a changing neighbourhood led me to feel the need for the establishment of continuity between the past, the present, and the future. In order to illustrate my attitude, I created two characters: Jim and Emily. They are descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the community and represent continuity between generations. I felt they were best represented by the articles with which they worked and lived with in their daily lives. The articles/fragments seem to be the quintessential examples of the process of continuity which I am interested in. In the neighbourhood, there are many second-hand shops and junk stores where artifacts change hands and are being reused by different people. The fragments are scraps of the past and different ways of life. As the artifacts continue to change hands a cycle is set up linking people alive today with people long dead and people not yet born.



accreditation board, will be asking yourselves, "What is this Place?" and "What of TUNA, and why is it bothering me?" The short dramatization you are about to see will answer these burning questions.

(As S.M. speaks, CHORUS members enter and begin setting up the stage: arranging chairs for the three critics, bulletin board, ashtray, other props as required).

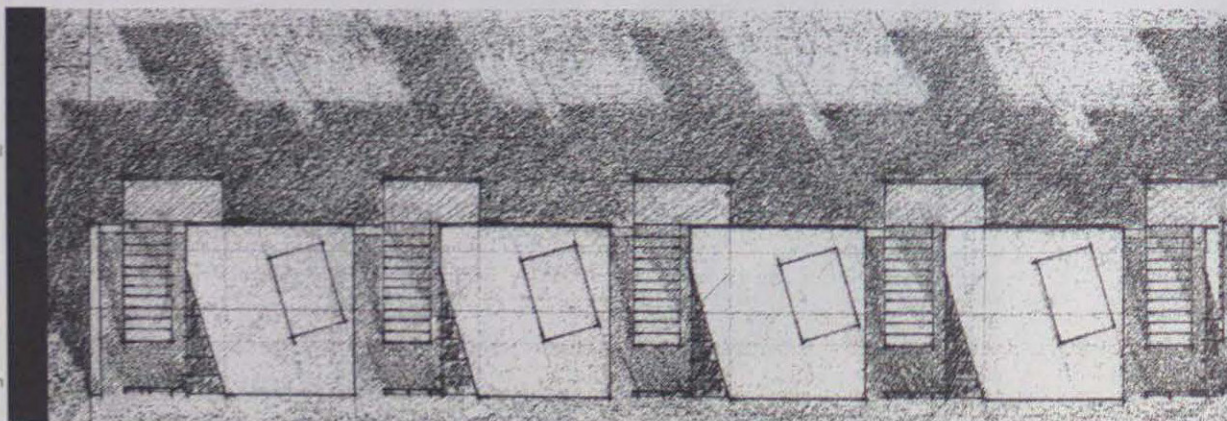
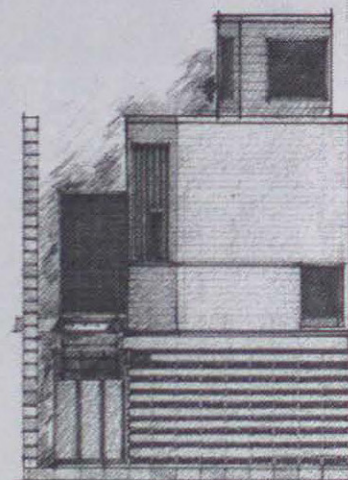
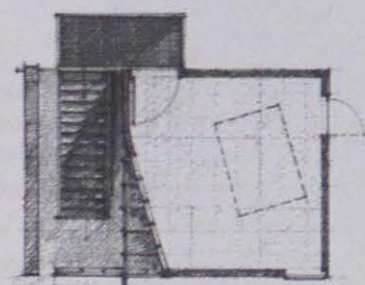
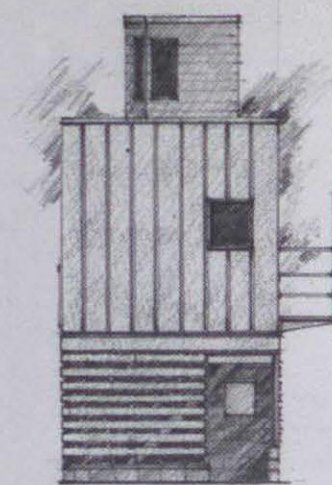
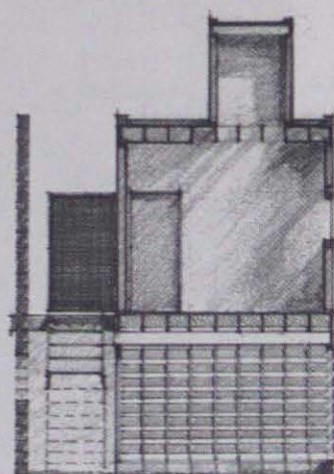
Our aim here is to hoist the standard of TUNA high enough to be seen all across this great, sprawling, multicultural mosaic of a patchwork quilt we call Canada, this vast region of messy vitality, this ambiguous but not ambivalent country of granite and quartzite, wheat and salt cod.

So "What is this Place," you ask? Well, perhaps most essential to understanding TUNA, the Place, is understanding the special bond between student and faculty found here. This bond can best be compared to that between newborn babe and its mum, or perhaps to that between lion and lion tamer: a relationship of mutual trust and admiration—and yes, a little fear—built up over hours and hours, years in some cases, of close collaboration at the drawing board between master and pupil.

In no place can that tight bond be better seen than in the student's final review, the public crit, (short for critique, from the Latin *cretonus cretinus*) where the months of hard work are brought from behind their veil of privacy into the public realm, to be presented before a panel of disinterested critics.

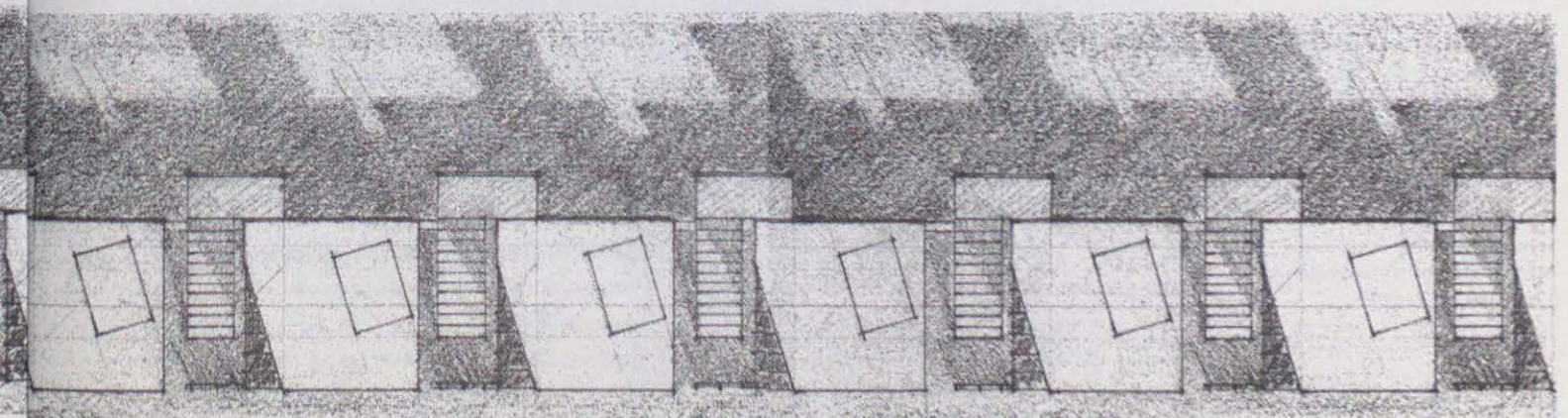
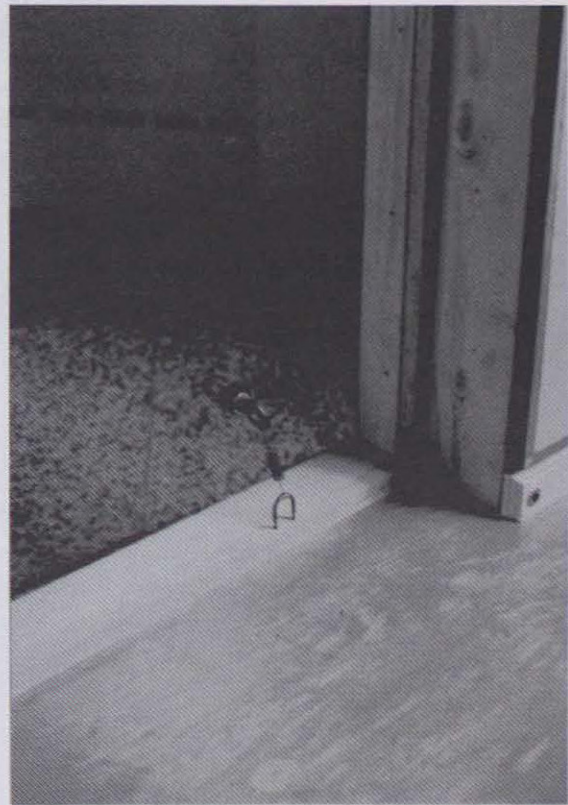
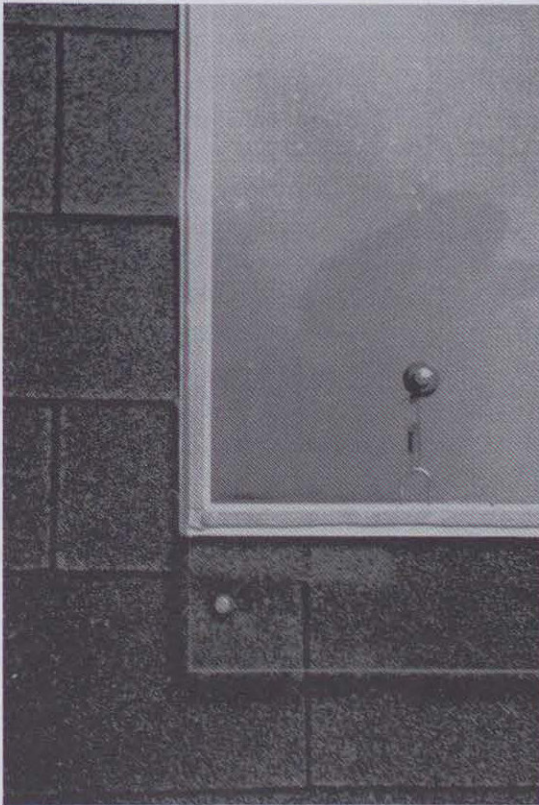
This particular crit features the design stylings of Fielding Lloyd Mellish—

F.L.L.M. (calls from offstage): With two LLs!



STEVE MCFARLANE

BUILDING STUDIO PROJECT





PETER YEADON

PLACE CREATION AND ARCHITECTURAL HYPOCRISY

STAGE MANAGER: —with two LLs. Fielding Lloyd Mellish has the distinction of being TUNA's longest continuing thesis extension student, having worked steadily at his thesis since 1983. It's been a long hard road, but in just a few moments he'll be bringing the results of his months and months of work to the public eye at last. In the meantime, why don't we see if we can hear the final seconds of the preceding crit, just winding down in the next room.

(Sounds of revving chain saw, loud voices, a scream—and a dismembered body is flung out on stage).

Hmm, I hope Fielding Lloyd Mellish copes with deconstruction more successfully than Clyde, here. (CHORUS member retrieves body and carries it away).

(CHORUS hums "Friendly Giant" theme)

STAGE MANAGER (as CHORUS member sets up child's highchair): Here's a chair for TUNA's own professor Tony Moldy, official figurehead of the MONA at TUNA's program. Of course, we all know who wields the real power around this school, but the Chairman's secretary doesn't usually show up at crits. Tony has been acting as Fielding's—

F.L.L.M. (offstage): Fielding Lloyd Mellish!

STAGE MANAGER: Tony has been Fielding Lloyd Mellish's—

F.L.L.M. (offstage): With two LLs!

STAGE MANAGER: Tony's been his thesis advisor, and in that capacity at the crit he acts as official timekeeper, synthesizer, masseuse, surrogate daddy, and—heck, what can I say—all around nice guy. Tony's a loving father to twelve tidy youngsters,

Place creation does not exist easily within architecture. The many minds, hands and timeframes which have contributed to the representation of one place as distinct from another have established complexities which are too widespread for architecture to articulate alone. Although architecture continually explores an elastic potential for place installation, it rarely questions its own position as spokesperson.

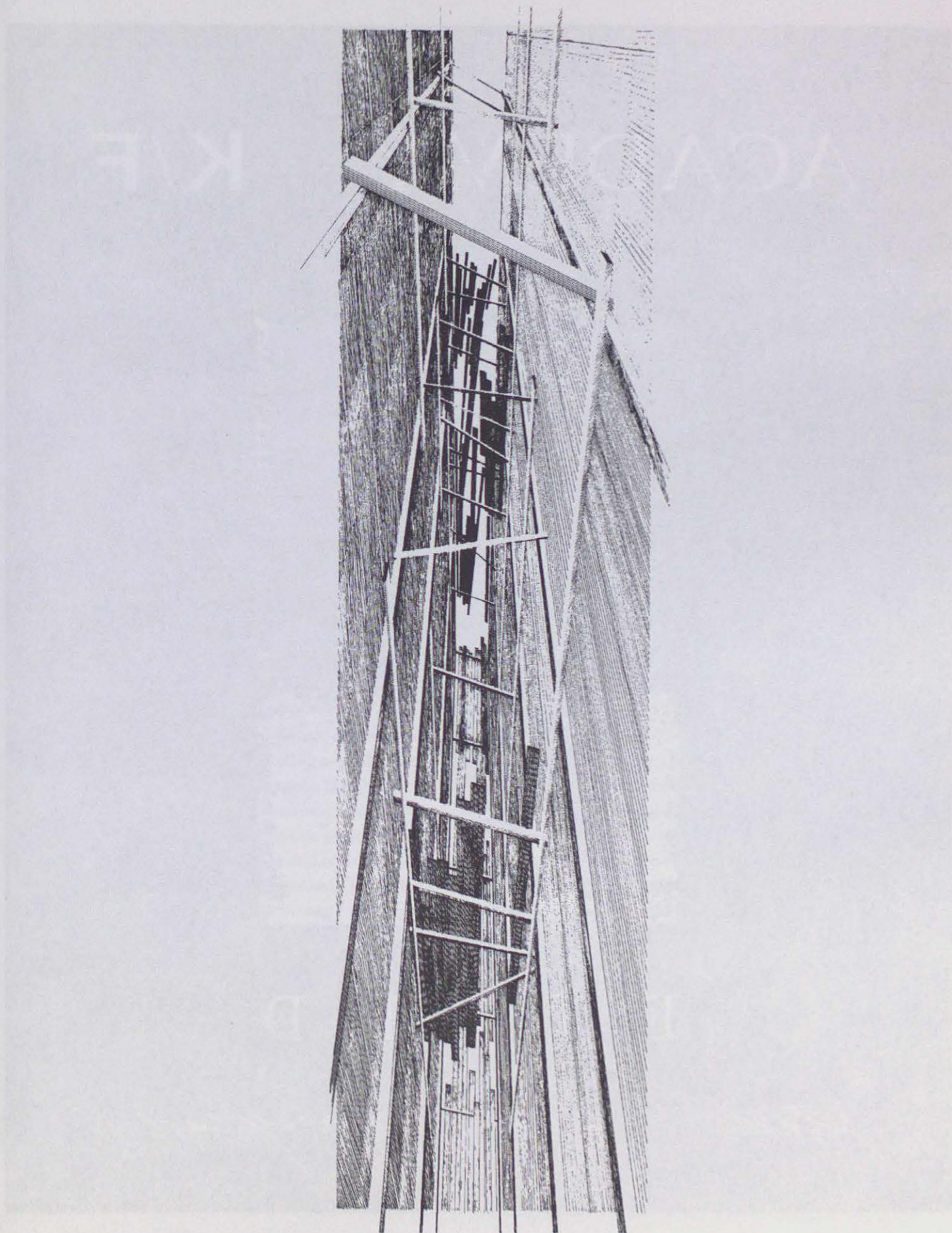
There is a fine margin between the universal and the peculiar - between archetypes and folklore. This is the margin of the architect concerned with place, a margin demanding of an understanding of both continuity and aberration. Still, s(he) operates within both, and remains at an arms length from a concentrated ontological insight. This insight, coupled with the complexities of a genealogy of place, creates matrices of place whose variables and parameters of characterization stretch far beyond the potential of architecture as it is directed presently by the architectural profession and schools of architecture.

Consider place understanding and university education. Contradictory terms are they not? Architects have become articulate through conditioning. So have many representatives of the positions which characterize *society* as a whole. University education, once dedicated to the consolidation of universal knowledge, has been divided into concerns; specializations of which architecture is only one of many. Important, accessible knowledge is continually being compromised by a system which favours concentrated effort over widespread understanding. Terminology sustains the disassociation between architecture and the constituents it represents. It seems that the very

foundation of education, that of communication and an exchange of knowledge, have been violated. The separation continues.

Too many architects are concerned with the words constituting an urban context, rather than the dialogue itself. They borrow symbols and artifacts of built culture instead of engaging the story line which has created places of mind and substance. The result is a plastic or cosmetic representation of a tightly woven subject. The persistence of certain architectural elements is deemed to be the built culture. These elements are replicated or abstracted so as to give something back to the growth of the city. Their existence is taken for granted; their presence is the understood. These character traits are pulled out of context and manipulated until the value of their meaning becomes inaccessible.

Architects must remind themselves that they are responsible for forming our places..., but they are not alone. If architecture is concerned with place creation, then it must try to address the multifaceted complexities which have, and will continue, to create place beyond space. Place conscious architecture needs to establish a dialogue with its particular place situation, establish a dialogue with the universals of a place - conscious architecture: boundary real; boundary imagined; collection; physical comfort; seclusion; field of defence; wall of defence; reality of suggested opportunities; layered regions; position of awareness; permanence; reuse; consolidation; predictability; symbol and cultural artefact; accessibility; time; services; comprehensible urbanity; extension of the immediate to the whole' This dialogue is vital to making these universals operable and valuable, their value being relative to the identification of architectural gesture as constituent.



ACADEMY

K/F

W E S T / C A N A D A / E A S T



F I E L D

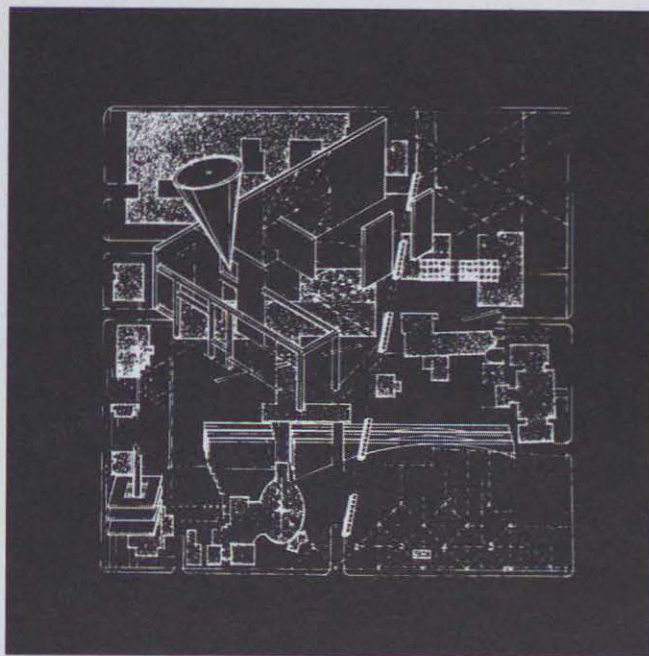
places to disappear

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

BRENDA WEBSTER

THE READING OF PLACE

"...confusion exists ... because we observe an infinite variety of cultural products, but rarely apprehend the universal human processes by which they are created."¹



Re-engagement of process and product is the focus of this work. The underlying assumption of this re-engagement is that "the function of being a means is not disjointed from the function of being an end."² Choice (conscious or unconscious) of a design process is inexorably linked to the architectural resolution. By shifting the focus from product to process, greater architectural understanding emerges. Process orientation aids in re-examination of architectural design conventions. The product grows out of the process and thus one is actively engaged in the present instead of focusing exclusively on some future product. This process approach aids in the suspension of preconceptions and external influences, allowing for the widest perception of reality and the greatest opportunity for innovation.³

"...Our appreciation of an object has to do with our appreciation of the processes that the latter has evidently undergone."⁴

For the purposes of this investigation, process is defined as a systematic series of actions, motions, or events.⁵ Process is revealed by the gap between what has been and what might be. This gap is bridged by substitutions, oppositions, reversals, inversions, and fragmentations. This Bridging is further facilitated by fading in and out between imagination to reality. Play between the subjective and objective worlds creates a lateral rather than linear approach to design.

1 John Blacking, *Process and Product in the Human Society*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1969), p. 5.

2 A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 495.

3 The particular methodology used in this thesis is elaborated on in the section referred to as Creative Evolution.

4 Michael Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality*, (New York: Lumen Books, 198), p. 44.

5 Dissection of this systematic series of actions through drawing, exposes the nature of one process.



who will themselves be offering a short mandatory elective course at TUNA this summer entitled "how to put away your toys." May I present, Ladies and Gentlemen, Tony Moldy. Tony Moldy.

CHORUS: (whistles Carpenter's song, "We've only just begun" as TONY MOLDY enters).

(TONY MOLDY waggles his huge moustache in recognition of audience applause. He sits).

STAGE MANAGER: Our next critic needs no introduction—

GARY (in shrill voice from offstage): God Damn right you'll introduce me! I'll cut off your arm! You are right handed, aren't you?

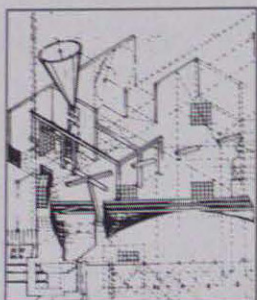
STAGE MANAGER: —But I give you TUNA's Chairman Garish Ballsaside, known lovingly by student and fellow administrator alike as simply "Gary," Gary hails originally from Abyssinia... descended from a long line of Kings and masterbuilders... The blood of untold thousands on his hands... among his most memorable achievements... but perhaps you've heard of the Ziggurat of Ur?... Please put your hands together for the Chairman... the one, the only, Chairman Gary Ballsaside! GARY!

(CHORUS plays kazoo snake charmer music).

GARY (enters, dressed in princely garb, borne aloft by two CHORUS members dressed in black): Jesus Christ! Be careful! Drop me and I'll be feeding you to my geese tomorrow!

STAGE MANAGER (as CHORUS member sets out chair): Our next and final critic, of solid South African stock, currently hails from M.U.T.T. where she is professor of architecture. Here

OPPORTUNITY IN LIMITATIONS



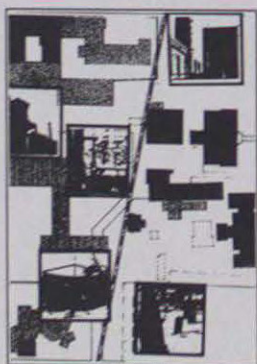
The TUNS campus, a self-contained block of buildings with no clear organization, is the chosen testing ground. The design process strategy is to develop a series of drawings that come from and inform the site.

Two simultaneous explorations are carried out on the site: a determination of the critical path of movement through the campus, and a spatial interpretation of the historical, physical, and programmatic layers of the site. The purpose of this approach is to foster continual play between analytical and intuitive investigations.

Analytical studies find the greatest density of movement forming a diagonal line running east-west through the site. This sets up an indication as to where growth might occur. The strategy works with the existing patterns of movement. A pathway runs through the campus, linking all the entrances to existing buildings and inviting future expansion to occur alongside. The process of remembering and drawing all the existing ways of proceeding through the campus becomes instrumental in producing the chosen course of action; process has become product.

The intuitive exploration focuses on a perception from memory of the relative importance of the architectural landscape. The drawing highlights the integration of layers of architecture and landscape over time. The layering of a perceptual interpretation of the site with a 'real' site plan, plays on the line between perception and reality. The opposition and interplay of these two layers allows for many readings of the same site.

PERCEPTION + INVESTIGATION



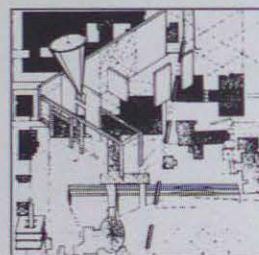
As a plan for the site is developed, a simultaneous understanding of the elements of the site is nurtured. The next layer of growth is developed along the new pathway, which acts as a spine for all existing buildings and future additions. Snapshots describe the

distinct areas of the site. The campus site is perceived as having five significant markers:

- The cemetery
- The oval gymnasium
- The engineering tools as outdoor sculpture
- The loading areas
- The visually rich rooftops.

At each site chosen for development there is a play between the nature of the markers and the nature of the required programmatic growth. For example, the cemetery location (residence for the dead) is developed with student quarters (residence for the living.) As one travels along the east-west route, the architectural additions both unify the site and describe its changing nature.

CREATIVE EVOLUTION



Creative evolution is at the heart of the 'process as product' exploration. Through a series of shifts and fragmentations of what is perceived in the existing context a new 'text' is developed.

The chameleon nature of the new buildings is meant to connect back to and simultaneously stand apart from the previous layers of history and the additive nature of the buildings already on the site. The drawings that follow are transformed to describe the experience of movement through the site. As the focus of this design grew out of a realization that the TUNS campus required both more space and a unifying element, the new path/spine provides for both these needs. The diagonal pathway both separates and unifies. Drawing on the analogy of the site markers (snapshots) as 'site plan', the newly recognized path is overlaid onto the markers as the first stage of transformation. Compression of images as they might register in the mind after having travelled through the path. This idea parallels the next stage in the design process, that is, exploration of the path to discover how the next layer might be added. This second transformation abstracts the original markers sufficiently to allow for an interpretation of the existing architectural language. Process dissection has created a series of architectural fragments which have their own life, both distant and distinct from their origins. Traces of both the subjective and objective worlds exist in this series. The original markers have evolved to a degree where they now provide cues for a new set of architectural pieces. Horizontal expansion brings the works back onto the site and stretches them to strengthen as much of the new path as possible.



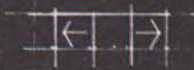
Diagonal +
Horizontal
split



Vertical
Condensation

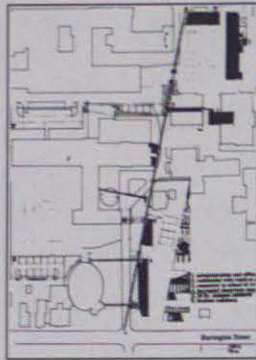


Horizontal
Expansion





A CLOSE-UP VIEW



Creative evolutionary change is a by-product of a process approach that sees perception as a tool for conception. In this project the architectural elements along the pathway that were seen as significant to the experience of the campus became the datum for the new layer.

at TUNA she serves as a junked professor: Julia Mindfart. Professor Mindfart, as external critic, helps to establish our school's credibility in the wider academic community, credibility we desperately need if our degrees are to mean anything at all. Ladies and Gents, a warm round of applause to a truly cutting critic, Professor Julia Mindfart (exit STAGE MANAGER).

(Enter JULIA, with bushy eyebrows intact, carrying chainsaw and clenching a pipe in her jaw. She acknowledges applause with wry expression, sits, FARTS, acknowledges audience again, and falls asleep).

(Stage is in semi-darkness. CRITICS consult quietly among themselves as F.L.L.M. clumsily sets up his presentation. Suddenly each critic reaches down and turns on spotlight, pinning the obviously unprepared and now dazed and blinded F.L.L.M. to the board).

TONY: Gary... Julia-I mean Professor Mindfart-I mean Julia-I'd like to introduce you to Fielding Lloyd Mellish-

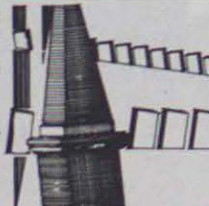
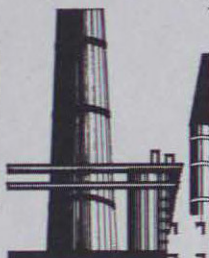
F.L.L.M.: That's with two LLs!

TONY: --with two LLs. I'm Fielding's advisor this year, but for the previous 72 months, he worked with professor Fritz Hemandhaw, presently on sabbatical. I think it's fair to say, isn't it Fielding, than you learned your basic stance from Fritz?

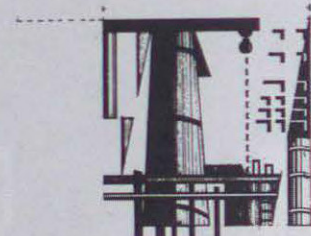
F.L.L.M. (chest caved in, chin stuck out, hands on hips, trousers hiked up



Objects on site



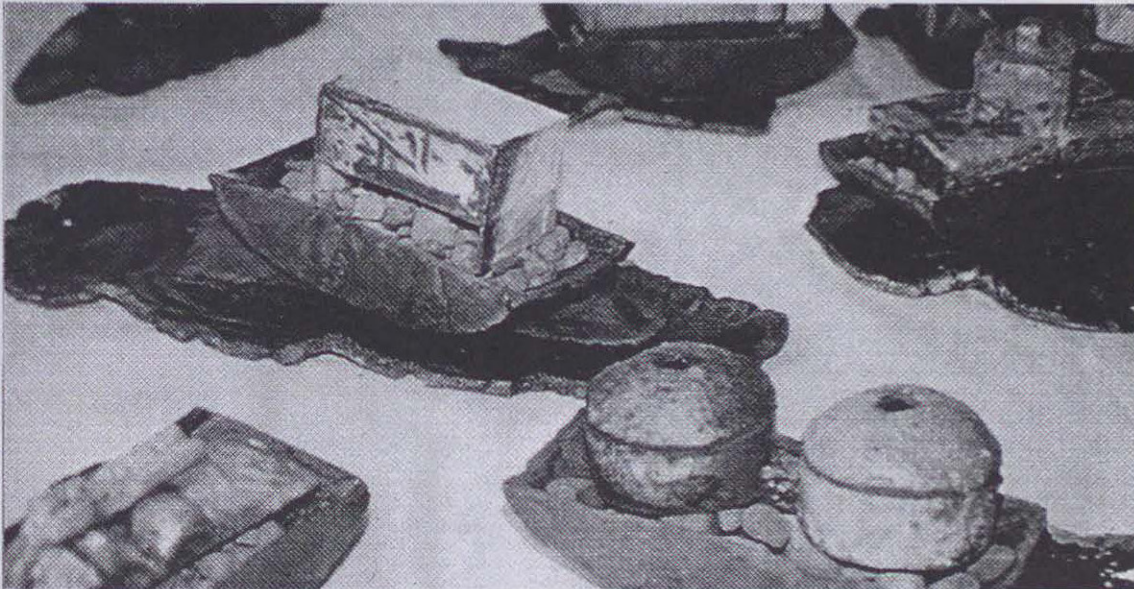
diagonal split of the path



Compress - as objects might register in the mind after a walk through the path

JAKE ALLDERDICE

ON THE ESSENTIAL PLACELESSNESS OF THE MACHINE



"The house is a
machine for living in."

le Corbusier.

Specificity of program has always been a part of architecture. But "the building as machine" is a specifically Modern coinage. Today, machine-buildings bearing no relationship to place (picture the Quonset hut or the Holiday Inn) dot the globe. Most of us experience daily this placelessness of the machine. In the meantime our world, which once viewed progress and obsolescence as inevitable, is slowly seeing limits, and realizing that disuse does not "refuse" make. Today we question plans to bulldoze abandoned churches, power plants, schools, and other miscellaneous "old buildings." Today we see an art gallery in a power plant, condos in a grain elevator, a laundromat in a church. Everywhere, new programs fit with interesting quirks into old structures. Taking a functionalist view for a moment, that the nature and form of the original structure is directly brought about by its purpose or program, one has to grapple with a contradiction when one sees how well a given place can adapt itself to new uses, especially uses far from the originating idea. Still more paradoxically, the old form reads clearly under the new layer of function: "power plant;" "church;" "train station" etcetera.¹ This essay proposes that the old structures are able to perform so well under new requirements because of the strictures of the original requirements. These strictures led, over time, to the development of recognizable types. As a test of this hypothesis, one could come up with extremely specific programs, new and unexpected programs, and see if the "machines" which result have that wonderful flexibility that seems to accompany our most "functionalist" edifices. Can this approach, which utterly denies the importance of

1. The church as "condominium" corresponds to the church as "type" precisely in the same way Magritte's painting, "The Betrayal of Images" corresponds to Le Corbusier's famous object type, the briarwood pipe. To say "This is not a pipe" evokes several kinds of response, a primary one being "Yes it is."





above navel, leaving about 30 cm between cuffs and floor): Fielding Lloyd Mellish, Fielding Lloyd Mellish, use my whole name!

TONY (explaining to critics): Fielding Lloyd Mellish--

F.L.L.M.: With two LLs!

TONY: --Has exactly 90 seconds (TONY looks at watch) starting. NOW--

(Loud sound of clock ticking. F.L.L.M. grows agitated and gamely struggles to interject and start his presentation as TONY's intro bites into his allotted time)

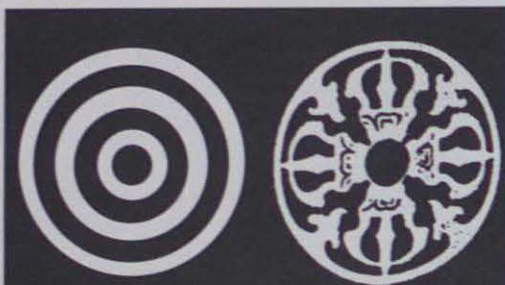
TONY: --to present his life's work. Following that, our critics' panel have as much time as they need to probe deeper and test the limits of the thesis. When they are done, IF anything remains to be said, faculty has agreed to allow an additional 15 seconds for student questions.

(TONY pans audience, waggles moustache, sits).

F.L.L.M. (practically foaming at the mouth, half-blind, and obviously in some sort of agitation bladder-wise): I... I... I have a prepared text. (reads diatribe, notes falling, mangling words and sentence order; CRITICS react according to character: GARY cracks knuckles; JULIA grunts and rumbles; TONY watches time). The starting point was a phrase of Foucault, the French epidemiologist and semi-idiotic philosopher, "Architecture is the epidermic play of perversity." ... My project is a multi-use playground, church, slaughterhouse, donut store, carwash. ... I try to subvert the opposition between the sacred and profane. ... Whereby the profanation of the sacred and the sacralization of the profane disclose that no-thing is truly sacred and thus nothing is simply profane--

"place," lead paradoxically to a heightened awareness of place?

Encircling the twin cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, forming a sort of modern analog to the medieval city wall, a railway cut and a divided highway sharply define a line of "inside" and "outside." The center of the circle, however, is no bull's-eye; it is missing. In its stead a gash spreads north and south, a long harbour, bleeding away from the center, denying the center's existence. Two bridges and some ferry lines



CONSIDER THE SYMMETRY OF HALIFAX / DARTMOUTH IN RELATIONSHIP TO ITS ATTRACTION TO BOTH THE MILITARY AND TO NEW AGE AND EASTERN RELIGIOUS GROUPS: BULLSEYE OR MANDALA?

baste the two halves together. It is a tenuous connection, at best.

Not insignificantly, the modern wall of road and rail is conceived not as a barrier but as an avenue, a line not to impede flight but to allow it. And like the wall, the harbour, a line of symmetry, is also a line of flight. But to the city dweller the harbour is foremost a line of discontinuity. Reaching the water's edge, we change modes and zones, we shed one skin to don another, whether sailing through the air on a bridge, or crossing the water by boat.

Recognizing its nature, I walked the wall: the railroad that cuts around Halifax, and the highway that rings Dartmouth. On foot, these are worlds outside the day-to-day lives of most city dwellers. We usually experience them in a train or automobile, our feet off the ground. On my treks, I made some sketches and gathered artifacts--litter--picking up objects that aroused interest or curiosity, evidence toward unanticipated

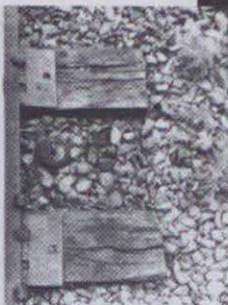
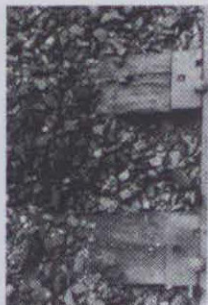


conclusions.

From the railway cut I gathered a brakehose, a bi-axial sign, and a playing card (among other generally heavy, earth-bound things); from the highway I brought back a leaf from the Yellow Pages, a wisp of cloth with some printed words, and a surveyor's stake (among other mostly light, windblown stuff).

Each of these objects was particularly suited to a function, without much possibility of generalized use, yet each could probably have been found along any railway cut or highway anywhere in the modern world. Like most modern machines, they were specific to purpose, but not to place. Modern times make inevitable this placelessness, but they also suggest a way to reconcile the universal with the particular. In the walled city of Halifax/Dartmouth with its empty center, they offer one source of a new "sense of place."

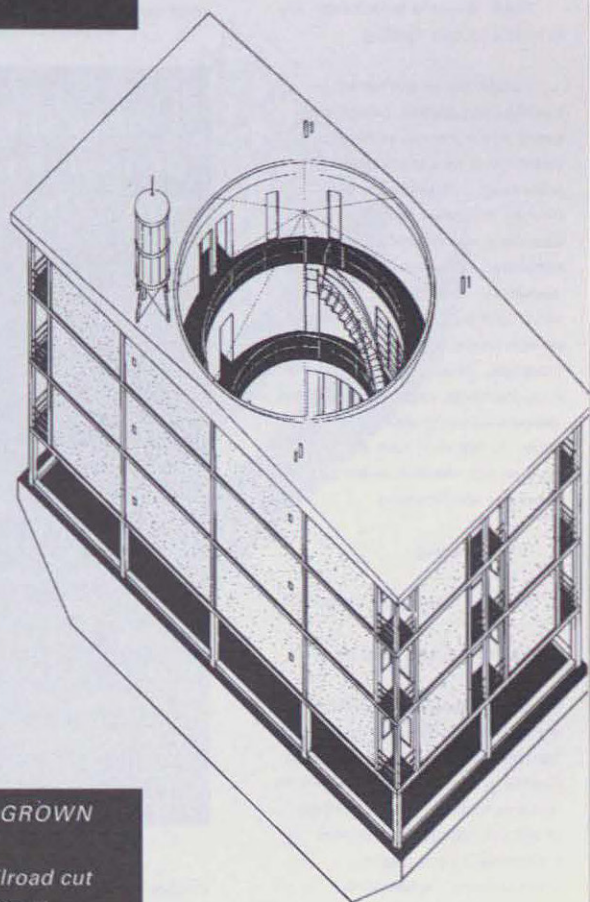
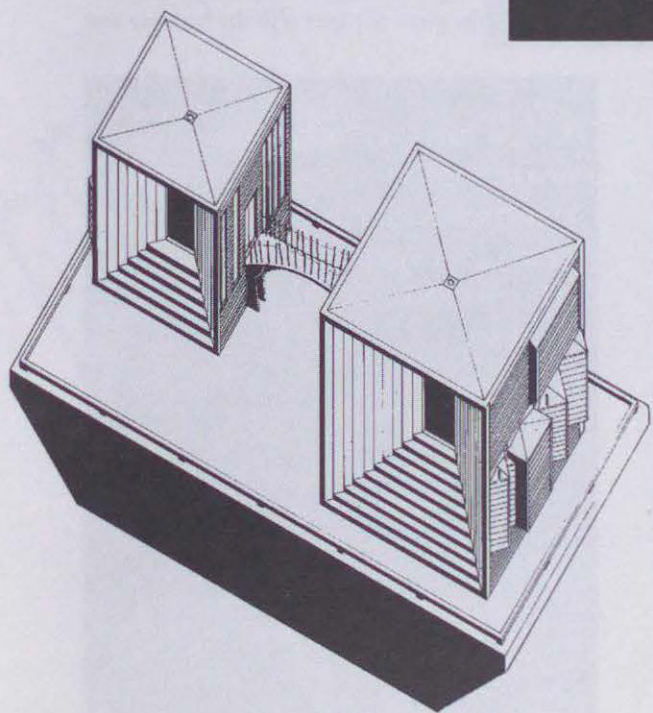
VISUALIZE TWO CIRCLES DISTANT FROM EACH OTHER ON A PLANE, THAT TURN OUT TO BE IN FACT SECTIONS OF ONE DONUT FORM THAT PASSES THROUGH BOTH.



DORMITORY FOR A MONASTIC ORDER

(pairing of the grinder from the railroad cut and the numberplate from the highway)

The program for this building called for a number of bedrooms grouped introspectively around an open central chamber, within and around which all public activity takes place: arrival and departure, administration; cooking, cleaning and eating; lectures and browsing in the library. Worship is private and takes place in each initiate's own room. Initiates work on fishing boats which are moored to the barge at night. The bottom level is open to the air and serves as a place for the gutting and resale of the day's catch.



HOUSE FOR PARENTS AND FULL GROWN CHILD

(pairing of a plastic "Bob" from the railroad cut and the automobile part from the highway).

This program called for living quarters for a middle-aged couple and their adult child, whom they still support. The forms are Platonic solids which have been deformed to allow inhabitation. The windows in each dwelling face the other dwelling, making it impossible not to spy when looking out. One may sit on the front steps, but any view of the other place is denied. Another view is possible by stepping out on the bridge that connects the dwellings, but one runs the risk of meeting up with one's counterpart, with the ensuing complications. The bridge, while appearing to be stretched to breaking, is of cast iron and is very strong.





(Loud buzzer sounds).

TONY (ever the fair-minded): Try to wind it up now, Fielding.

F.L.L.M. (faster and faster): Fielding Lloyd Mellish, (reads) and, based on the theories of Peter Eisenhower, who, in his House Q proposition. . . . A kind of random, ordered, redundant, ephemeral, discordant, neo-chaotic atonal sympathy. . . synchrony. . . symmetry. . . symphony. . . Whatever! (F.L.L.M. whips back curtain, revealing wobbly, pathetic model, and faint, unreadable drawings). Which I have reinterpreted in my thesis—no longer "House Q," but "skewed house!" (flattens model). Oops. To this end I have utilized a designer-like metaphor, of Beingness in Placeness and Timeness

TONY: Fielding—

F.L.L.M.: Fielding Lloyd Mellish—

TONY: We really must move on.

F.L.L.M. (Lapses into half-muttered buzzwords, picking up props from table as appropriate): Quiet yet deafening, hard yet soft, shredded yet whole (wheat), simple yet complex, animal yet mineral. . . existential. . . exponential. . . ornamental. . . phenomenon. . . pheromone. . . barley. . . oats. . . cow. . . horse. . . pig. . . Woof! Woof! Ba-a-a-a. . . (lapses into incoherent farm animal calls and grunts).

TONY: Fielding, SHUT UPI (pause). I would now like to open the floor to our critics. Do you have any questions?

(Silence. Long pause).

TONY: Yes, well, let me put this back to you Fielding—

Ranging the evidence from the Halifax side in a speculative spectrum of "the general to the specific" and that from the Dartmouth side as "the anonymous to the personal," I arbitrarily paired each of the artifacts in a relationship that spanned the gap: a) a circular grinder plate from the railroad with an aluminum tag numbered "J-7" found along the highway; b) a name, "Bob," in shiny chromed plastic from the railroad, and a plastic automobile part shaped like a funnel (with one wide mouth and one small mouth) from the highway; c) a brakehose from the railroad and a Polaroid photograph of two lawn tractors from the highway; d) a bi-axial reflective sign from the railroad and a glossy stockholder's report from the edge of the highway.

The pairing across the gap embodied the concept that two objects, separated in place and time, may be seen to be linked at a higher dimension: visualize two

made the leap to the architectural program, "Dormitory for a Monastic Order."

Similar leaps lead from the plastic "Bob" and the funnel shape to the "House for Parents and a Full-grown Child," from the brakehose and the Polaroid of the two tractors to a program for "Bachelor Pads," and from the bi-axial reflective sign and the quarterly report to a program for a "Barge for Wind-induced Noises Emanating from the Harbour."

Why a barge? It seemed appropriate that the random displacement of the litter along the highway or the railroad cut should be echoed in a floating world of "bargebuildings." The barge is to the harbour as the piece of paper is to the highway and

POETS SPEAK OF A FLASH OF INSPIRATION, LONG-AWAITED:

I ONLY KNOW THAT A ROOK
ORDERING ITS BLACK FEATHERS CAN SO
SHINE
AS TO SEIZE MY SENSES, HAUL
MY EYELIDS UP, AND GRANT
A BRIEF RESPITE FROM FEAR
OF TOTAL NEUTRALITY. . . .

MIRACLES OCCUR,
IF YOU CARE TO CALL THOSE SPASMODIC
TRICKS OF RADIANCE MIRACLES. THE
WAIT'S BEGUN AGAIN,
THE LONG WAIT FOR THE ANGEL,
FOR THAT RARE, RANDOM DESCENT.

SYLVIA PLATH, "THE COLOSSUS"

circles distant from each other on a plane, that turn out to be in fact sections of one donut form that passes through both. The problem became to design the "donut" that could unite each pair.

In uniting the two objects I relied on a kind of intuitive flash that can't be easily explained or rationalized, but in general what I tried to do was to devolve each artifact to a verbalization of its program or purpose, and to then connect the two verbalizations in a single program. An example would be the grinder, which presented an unparticularized unified whole greater than the sum of its parts, like an anthill, and the numberplate, which seemed to be about specifying one particular thing amidst many. Connecting these two, I

CAN THIS APPROACH, WHICH UTTERLY DENIES THE IMPORTANCE OF "PLACE," LEAD PARADOXICALLY TO A HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF PLACE?

"IN THE HUGE PIT OF FORMS
THERE LIES RUBBLE TO WHICH ONE
STILL CLINGS IN PART. IT FURNISHES
THE STUFF FOR ABSTRACTION.

"A RUBBLE FIELD OF SPURIOUS
ELEMENTS, FOR THE FORMATION OF
IMPURE CRYSTALS."

PAUL KLEE (DIARY ENTRIES)

as the chunk of rusted iron is to the railway. Like them, it is essentially placeless, of indeterminate, random location, moved there by powers not of itself.

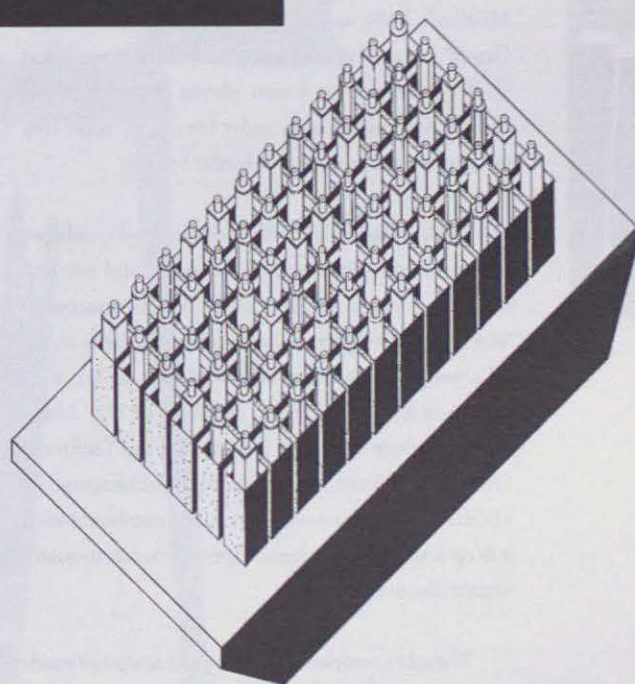
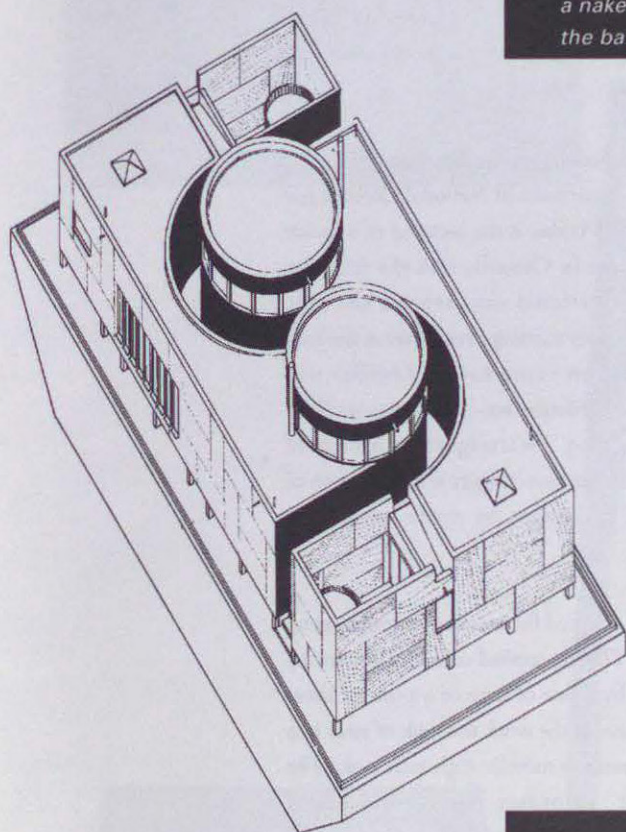
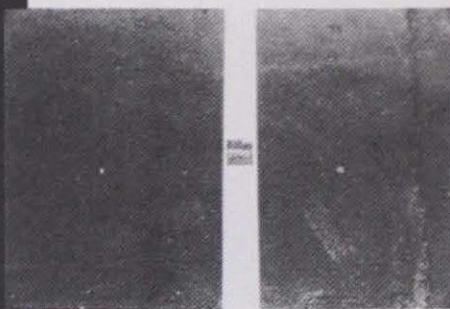
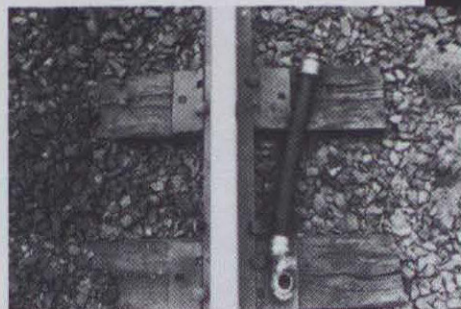
Though essentially placeless by nature, the modern machine holds the possibility to "make place" despite itself; it frames a view into another world of infinite possibility and infinite variation. It creates a place characterized by a line of flight extending in either direction, where "that which is absolutely necessary but does not exist," can exist.

"When a problem is properly stated in our epoch, it inevitably finds its solution." Le Corbusier.

"BACHELOR PADS"

(pairing of the brakehose from the railroad cut and the photo of two lawn tractors from the highway).

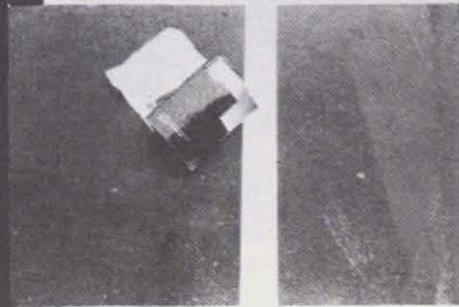
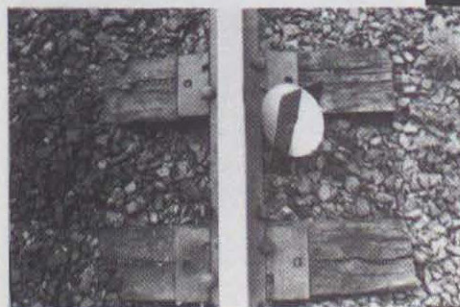
Here the program called for two apartments, each a reverse image of the other. Each apartment focuses on a large circular bed at one end and a hot tub at the other. The route from apartment to apartment is circuitous and deliberately intended, with opposing walls of green and red, to cause disorientation and visual dissonance en route. Arriving in an apartment, a curving gallery wall hung with etchings leads inexorably past a raised kitchen to the bed chamber, with its open fireplace. From the bed one sees through the rising flames an apparition: a naked body writhes under a cooling shower in the bathtub.



BARGE FOR WIND-INDUCED NOISES EMANATING FROM THE HARBOUR

(pairing of the bi-axial reflective sign from the railroad cut and the glossy stockholder's report from the highway).

This program was for a low-maintenance "art gallery" which displayed and took advantage of the harbour's natural resources. The resulting exhibition is of noise, caused by the ever-present breeze and wind blowing across the mouths of pipes, which have been filled to varying levels by rainwater and salt spray. The entire barge acts as a resonating chamber, allowing the ghostly and beautiful tones to be heard all the way out at the city wall.



CLIFF EYLAND

RICHARD MUELLER

RECENT WORK



Three small squares, one green and two red, are set in a ground of saturated colour in Richard Mueller's 1986 work *Is Red More Wicked Than Green?*, an acrylic and paper abstract painting. That is all you need to know about a much more complicated painting in order for me to make two quick characterizations of Mueller's work.

Firstly, Mueller is a natural colourist who delights in strongly saturated paint. Secondly, and one can read this between the lines of his artist's statement, Mueller's painting grows partly out of his life as an art educator, someone who continues to be art-educated himself through teaching at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design and the Technical University of Nova Scotia School of Architecture in Halifax. Mueller's native enthusiasm, combined with a deep respect for students, opens him out to many artistic discoveries.

The recent works in painting and sculpture mark a significant development for Mueller. For several years he has made investigative, formal paintings which easily align themselves with a certain long pedagogical art school tradition. If nothing else, *Is Red More Wicked Than Green?* is an analysis of the visual elements of painting; colour, line, form, material, perspective, and emotional weight are juggled for effect. Such painting gives one the sense of going over the evidence of an artist's quiet, philosophical play.

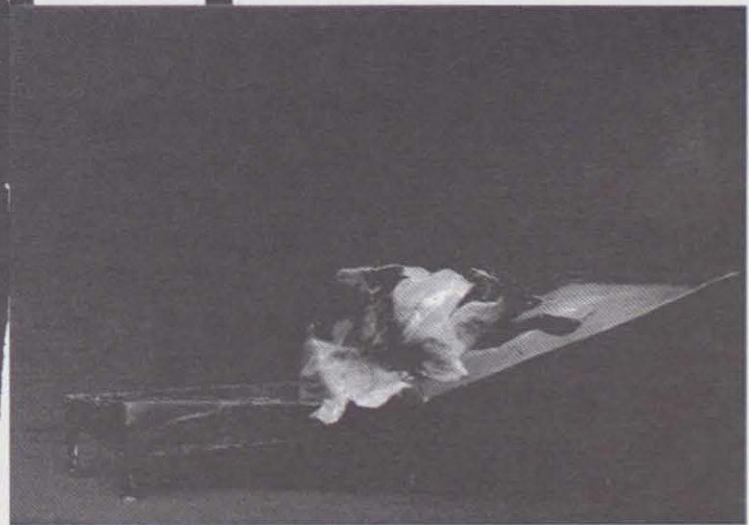
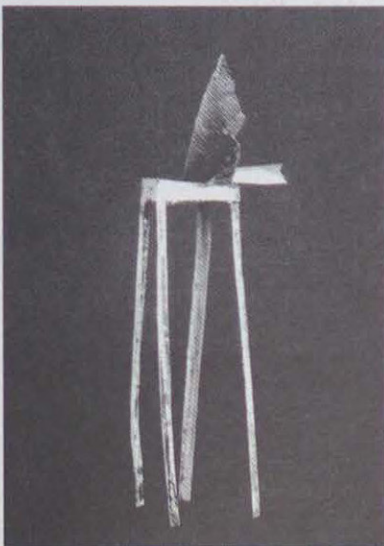
The recent works, however, add loaded imagery to formal play, setting the philosophical mix on edge. These paintings, sculptures and drawings participate with much other current art in the politics of environmental catastrophe. For Mueller, the

references to toxins highlight an essential paradox in technology, which he characterizes as being simultaneously symbolic of human annihilation and human salvation.

The artist's experience of the Emergency Training Centre for the Department of National Defence got the work started. Halifax is the location of a major armed forces base in Canada, and the military occupies many scattered sites around the city. Witnessing emergency training procedures at the base as he drove past on route home, Mueller was intrigued by one particular set-up of boxes used for training in fire fighting. He arranged for a full tour of the facility and the current imagery is a distillation of a broad range of images he made out of the experience.

Painted and sculpted flames shoot through many of these pieces. Thickly applied colour is sometimes complemented by a line of wire or a piece of sheet metal, giving some of the work the look of stray bits of military hardware - a metallic high-tech look. The surfaces of the paintings are scumbled and overpainted into rich portrayals of acrid smoke and searing flames. Many of the works are painted on, or cut out of, aluminum, a very thin support, and sometimes paint is scraped through, exposing a shiny ground. Tar, paint and metal combine to convey the repulsive 'beauty' of toxic chemicals. Like a rainbow patch of oil on the road, pollution can look good.

There are a number of repeated images in the paintings and sculptures: open boxes (sometimes on wheels and sometimes not), smoke and flame. Other images occur only in the earlier works, for example, a wind sock and some scaffolding.



RICHARD MUELLER

A PROGRAM IN PROGRESS



In my last year at the Maryland Institute of Art (1969), after completing six years of continuous art training, it occurred to me that art instruction, in appropriating traditional and current conventions, either focussed on the development of mimetic skills through formalized drill, or encouraged a random search for direction in a non-structured survey of media. Exercises were assigned, and assumed relevant to a fixed order that existed somewhere "out there." Generally students entered art school with vague notions of making art, and no real sense of what that meant. Most mastered the essential skills with varying degrees of success. Variations of approach, within the parameters of a problem, were considered indicative of a developing personal style, with little attention to the corresponding thought (or lack of thought). The eventual message was, given a basic repertoire of techniques, "anything goes." Art making had by then seen the impact of Dada, Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Minimalism, and Conceptualism, each rich in its own rhetoric, each unquestionably modern, each distinctly disjointed.

My response was to feel somewhat lost. I realized the properties and limitations of the various "schools", and had effectively worked my way out of having a particular subject matter. I could draw, paint, and sculpt from a set-up, but it all seemed somewhat repetitive and futile. Once the formal class exercises were removed, and I had to work alone, I became bored with the flash of Expressionism, and was seduced by the intellectual play of Conceptualism. My ideas were racing, but my adopted techniques and conventions provided no personal program.

Interested in perception and the way in which we understand the world, I found myself looking for some way to devise an imagery expressive of my ideas. Conceptualism seemed locked into dry academicism, as abstraction grew increasingly mannered. Each had evolved a contemporary and relevant vocabulary, but while one enshrined the primacy of material and process, the other renounced it. Abstraction, in its focus on surface and medium, compromised "content." Conceptualism, appropriating various natural or contrived systems, sacrificed spontaneous dialogue between concept and object. One satisfied my need for intellectual input, and the other encouraged me to rethink the role of the object in art.

The relevance of painting has been an ongoing debate in modernism. It is tempting to assume a certain static two-dimensionality in painting, and disregard the intimate interaction between the object/symbol and viewer. In their broader potential for cultural meaning, through various mechanisms of association, objects serve as powerful fixed physical symbols within an expanding network of ideas, some mundane, others profound, but all significant in the endless struggle toward a knowable "reality".

Striving for poignant reasoned imagery, relevant to circumstances of time, space and intellect, I seek works that come together dynamically through the working process. Elements within each work assume certain roles in an underlying conceptual drama. Interacting within rhetorical contexts, these "events" describe, through metaphor, the essential dialogue between our conscious selves, and the mysteries of the objective world.

GEORGE LIKOURGIOTIS

THE TRIALS OF AEOLUS

I recall an astonishing moment just three days after my house was constructed. It was early morning and no one else had yet arisen. I was baking bread and I went outside to collect eggs for us to eat. Our valley appeared very different that day. It was not so much a valley as an enormous stone bowl. The rock was quite reddish and it glimmered. It looked as if God had reached down and polished it. The crust at the top edge, jagged and black (or perhaps blue), was the only indication of the vastness beyond. I remembered my journey traversing it three weeks earlier. I looked at the red slopes that cascaded toward a deep, wide pond at the base of the bowl. An ephemeral violet mist, accepting the vital light of the morning sun, rested on the water.

All at once there was no distance between heaven and me. I wanted to throw my body into the singular vastness before me. My body stiffened and shook, my passion became stifled. I realized that I could not fly, but then there was no need to take possession of the unlimited space. It did not try to escape from me. Infinite space surrounded the whole of me, as surely as it surrounded the trees. The space was all around me, and all inside of me. I felt the beautiful; I cried.

We always eat our evening meal at dusk or later. The precious twilight celebrates and calms. It is a time for family to come together, a time to exchange thoughts between young and old. At other times we eat by the light of candles. There is a great fascination for fire in all of us. It is an element of purest contemplation; every flame so archetypal, part of one same spirit. How vulgar it is for those in the other world to reserve candlelight dinners; for the important to situate themselves in contrived splendour.

Upon eating we go to the lake's edge and gather about a fire, telling stories, dreaming, dancing to rhythms echoing through the bowl. There are glowing embers around the circle of the lake. Small worlds. This night was a night for singing. A single family begins to sing. A song about the night, a song about sadness and beauty, a song about life and death. Sometimes one voice is all that is heard. A single voice, an aeolian harp, stirring the quiet night. Rising up, filling the bowl. Then, in unison, all join in. Melodies, counter-melodies, reflections. Pure harmony.

The children often ask about the world we left behind. After dinner one night they asked if we would ever return. I told them the story of the salmon. How they leave their birthplace and then struggle back there to die. I told them that the salmon's birthplace is probably more enchanting than ours. Perhaps one day my children will have to see the outside world. Perhaps one day it will be suitable for life.

ACADEMY

K/F

W E S T / C A N A D A / E A S T



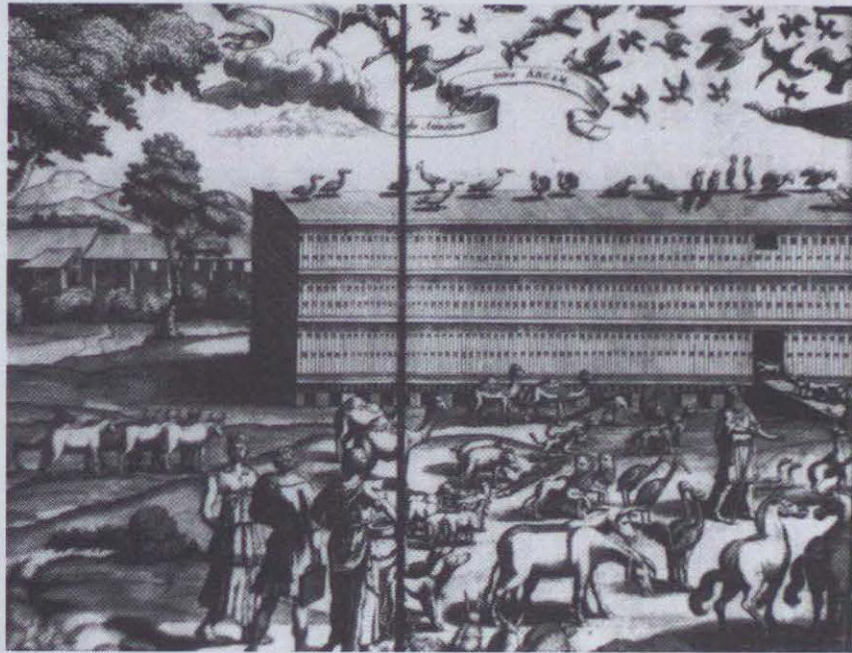
B O D Y

the body still knows best

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FROM NEW JERUSALEM TO NEW YORK: THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENTIAL DISPLACEMENT

1. The Ark of Noah, by Anthonis Kircher. From *Arca Noë*, Amsterdam: 1675.



The biblical struggle between man and God could be viewed as man's attempt to make architecture (as a form of knowledge) versus God's imposition of existential displacement. Existential displacement, whether literal or figurative, derives from the Fall.

1. In a recent interview entitled *The Great Teacher*, aired on C.B.C. television on Christmas day 1989, Northrop Frye stated that the Old Testament marked the history of human consciousness.

We are all familiar with the person who has had to leave her or his culture and move to a foreign place due to war or strife. Such people often try to rebuild the memory of the place through photographs, books, artifacts, and stories of the culture they left behind. This type of existential displacement produced Joyce's recollections of Dublin as he lived in Paris or Trieste. One's own identity is associated with a particular place, and loss of identity can result from loss of place. Thus, the development of Chinatown or Little Italy attempts to re-establish the culture from which their inhabitants have been displaced. It is an attempt to regain identity and cultural continuity.

The other type of existential displacement is associated with the children of Israel wandering in the desert (Exodus: ch. 12), a displacement that denies the possibility of rebuilding. Job alludes to "those who cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of shelter" (Job: ch. 23). I suggest that both these types of existential displacement are at the root of the origins of architecture, for the history of human consciousness begun by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden marks the birth of man having "to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Genesis: ch. 3). The themes of tilling, marking off territory and establishing foundations are related to the act of construction and the foundation of cities.¹



F.L.L.M.: Fielding Lloyd Mellish--

TONY: --and see if I've got it right. Please correct me if I'm wrong. I think we can all see that this thesis is about PLACE, FACE, and TRACE, yes?

F.L.L.M. (whipping piece of lace from trousers): Yes, but you forgot one thing: old lace!

TONY: Yes, good point. Old lace. Perhaps I'd like to now ask Julia-- Professor Mindfart--Julia I mean--for her comments. (waving and snapping fingers to get MINDFART's attention).

JULIA (wakes up, grunts, retrieves pipe, lights it with help from CHORUS member, peers at work through clouds of smoke): Ah... I see... Yes, you have a thesis. The question is, where is it?... Actually, Fielding,

F.L.L.M.: Fielding Lloyd Mellish--

JULIA: Yes, well, taking a cue from something I believe you said, or perhaps it was in another crit, about biflatulent symmetry, I'd like to lapse, (to TONY) if I may--

TONY: Yes, well, yes, by golly.

JULIA (lifts glasses, speaks slowly at first, but with increasing urgency):

(As she speaks, CHORUS provides slow build of background noise of tropical forest, changing at end to war sounds: machineguns, bombs dropping, planes crashing):

It reminds me of a time, long ago, in the deep forests of Botswana, when I had the responsibility of erecting worker's flats. It was truly marvellous, you know, how happy those people were, with the simplest of means. Two or three of them could sit for hours torturing one of the huge insects, while their women happily did

The departure from Eden is the origin of existential loss of place, which arises again in the person of Cain who slew Abel when they were in the field. The result of Cain's wandering East of Eden in the land of Nod is the founding of the city of Enoch, another attempt at establishing place in a chaotic world. Wandering somewhere between Eden in our pre-conscious state, and the New Jerusalem in the ideal state, what are we to do? Having once sought refuge from the tempest in the form of the ark, is man really architect of the ship, or is he shipwrecked, an analogy which Ortega y Gasset uses to describe the existential dilemma.

THE FOUR CONSTRUCTIONS:

From the beginning, three of the four constructions sited in the Old Testament were built by man under the instruction and supervision of God. The Ark of Noah (Genesis: ch. 6), the Tabernacle in the Desert (Exodus: ch. 25 - 27), and the Temple of Solomon (I Kings: ch. 6) are the results of the Divine architect through the figures of Noah, Moses, and Solomon. We know that the ark of Noah was made of gopher wood, 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits high, including a window and a door². The instructions given to Moses concerning the ark of the covenant were that it was to be made of shittim wood, 2.5 cubits long by 1.5 cubits wide by 1.5 cubits high, and it was to be placed in the inner sanctum, the most holy of places. The sanctuary preceding the inner sanctum contained a golden altar with incense placed upon it, a table upon which bread was placed, and a menorah with its seven candlesticks. Within the external forecourt of the building was placed a laver for ablution by water and another for a fire offering.

The wall, which marked off the territory in which the tabernacle was placed, was 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 5 cubits high. One entered the forecourt from the east. All the vessels were wrought from brass, and all the pillars fitted with silver.³ The children of Israel were exiled from Egypt, wandering errant for 430 years (Exodus: ch. 12). Led by Moses they became involved with the building of the Tabernacle to house the Word of the Lord in the form of the ark of the covenant. Like the commandments, the Tabernacle was inscribed. The act of inscribing the two tablets with the commandments coincides with the Lord's instructions for the inscription of the Tabernacle upon the Earth, as the process of erecting the building took place. Even the event of building the Tabernacle is marked by man's forgetfulness. Once Moses is not with the children of Israel, Aaron forges the molten calf of Gold, and the

people turn their back on the Lord, worshipping instead the molten icon.

A similar description of the house which King Solomon built for God after the children of Israel came out of Egypt states that the length of the Temple was 60 (threescore) cubits, the breadth 20 cubits, and the height 30 cubits. The porch before the temple was 20 cubits in length and 10 cubits in breadth. The temple contained narrow windows, and against the inner wall were built chambers of various dimensions. The material for the temple was stone, prepared before arriving on the site. The temple was covered in beams and boards of cedar. The beams were not fastened artificially to the walls of the house, nor was there any tool of iron on site during construction. The oracle to contain the ark of the covenant was constructed of cedar and overlaid with gold. The two doors on the face of the oracle were made of olive tree. Its dimensions were 20 cubits in length, breadth, and height. The temple took Solomon seven years to build, a secular equivalent to God's creation of the world.

The exception to the four constructions in the Old Testament is the Tower of Babel (Genesis: ch. 11), interpreted as a representation of human arrogance. The chapter in Genesis contains no description of how the tower was built or its dimensions. In the story of the Tower of Babel, we are told that the whole earth is of one language and one speech. This unity of language allowed a collective project in the building of the tower on the plains of Shinar; a project that the Lord knew represented the attainment of knowledge. This knowledge was reflected in the material of construction, since Babel was constructed of brick, a "worked" material. In the firing of clay to become brick, the clay undergoes a transformation connected to human artifice.⁴ Like the Fall, the building of the tower illustrates the struggle of human consciousness. The Lord states that "now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." The imagination of Man is a dangerous thing, since it allows him to strive for an ideal, which is the domain of the Lord, who describes himself as the Alpha and the Omega. This consciousness is linked to language in the case of the tower, a fact which the Lord immediately arrests through the confusion of tongues (babble), which causes the collective to be dispersed. The connection between language and building is together from the outset. This act of negating one language and one speech hearkens back to the idea that "in the beginning was the Word", and the Word is related to the ear, just as the building or object is related to the eye, and in turn our sense of synaesthetic awareness.

2. The Tower of Babel, by Gustave Dore. From *The Bible Gallery*, London: 1880.



The dual symbolism of the Divine Creator, being at once both benevolent and malevolent, can be seen in relation to the four constructions cited earlier. Paradise, the instructions for the ark, and the Tabernacle in the Desert are acts of benevolence. The Fall, the deluge, and the mass Exodus are related acts of malevolence. These situations create conflict and are followed by an attempted act of reconciliation. The history of the Old Testament is the history of man wandering after his lost soul. The angst which has been associated with existential thought from Kierkegaard to Camus is evident in the Book of Job. Job, "a perfect and upright man", is tormented by the Lord as a test and he laments:

Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not (Job: ch. 14).

This feeling of man being forsaken is a common theme in the Bible. Jesus, who is denied

2. A cubit is an ancient measure of length derived from the forearm; it is the distance from the elbow to the end of the fingertips. Varying at different times and places, it is usually between 18-22 inches (O.E.D.).

3. For an excellent discussion of the symbolism of the Tabernacle in the desert, see the article entitled *Philo of Alexandria and the Architecture of the Cosmos* by Jan Van Pelt in *AA Files* #4, pp 3-15.

4. The fact that the Tower of Babel is the only one of the four constructions made by a "worked material" was pointed out to me by Patrick Harrop, a colleague at McGill.



without the most basic of household amenities—no laptop computers, no microwave receivers, no running water. . . . Of course we changed all that, but, MY GOD, their sense of colour, I'm agog at the mere thought of it, the flies everywhere, the starving cattle swatting their tails at you as you passed, the land cruiser knocking up huge billowing clouds of dust and smoke, the rains when they finally came washing great gullies through the cricket field, The workers demanding their pay, the rhinoceros beetles at night dive-bombing the tin roofs of the cottages, severed skulls placed on stakes everywhere and left to rot... visions of twisted metal, bamboo shards, and . . . blood. . . . The Horror. The Horror.

(silence: a pause. TONY is gently shaking JULIA).

GARY: A simple question comes to me as I look at your work, Fielding—

F.L.L.M.:—Fielding Lloyd Mellish—

GARY:—With both LLs, yes, but looking at your model, I get no sense of the way the walls meet the floor. And what is architecture, after all, in its essence nothing more than walls, floor, the simplicity of a plan? You do not have to answer this question, if you do not feel it to be of central importance to your work, but the question must nevertheless be asked. How does the wall meet the floor? HOW DOES THE WALL MEET THE FLOOR?

F.L.L.M. (fiddles with model): Ah. . . . Ah. . . . for instance, when is a wall not a wall, you mean? Well, I might answer (ripping wall off model), when it isn't! The wall could meet the floor, or maybe the wall could BE the floor. . . . or it could have nothing to do with the floor or the wall. . . . The wall could be a name, like Walter, or a place to hide money, like a wallet! Or maybe

acceptance at least in this kingdom, expresses his sense of loss at the event of the crucifixion (St. Mark: ch. 15). Similarly, as the torment of Job continues, he echoes the sentiments of an outsider:

Behold, I cry out wrong, but I am not heard:
I cry aloud, but there is no judgement.
He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass,
and He hath set darkness in my paths.
He hath stripped me of my glory,
and taken the crown from my head.
He hath destroyed me on every side,
and I am gone:
and mine hope hath He removed like a tree.
(Job: ch. 19).

The separation between spirit and matter is one of the fundamental dualisms that causes the sense of loss. Man is constantly in search of *gnosis* (knowledge), that stage where spirit and matter would be reconciled. Often this revelation is through the form of a Saviour (the Lord) or a messenger (an Angel). The split between God and world, and that between man and world, are two gnostic dualisms that leave man with the anguished discovery of his cosmic solitude. That man turns away from the world is represented in the theme of light's imprisonment within darkness, just as the soul is imprisoned within the body. Camus' understanding of this solitude as an essential characteristic of the human condition is reflected in *L'Etranger's* Meursault, whose solitude is judged by the collective as a crime against society. What the search for Gnosis and existential thought share is the act of recognition of the 'self.' Ironically, one must go outside oneself, in essence, to pursue the Realm of Light. The body and the building are both vessels for this act of revelation.

MEMORY & RE-CONSTRUCTION:

Speechlessness and wandering seem to be the frustrating terms of the human condition. The concerns of architecture are the *event*, circumscribed by time, and the *site*, circumscribed by place. The image of the Lord answering Job from among the clouds in order to alleviate his angst is a memory, but the potential for constructing meaning in language and architecture remains. A passage from T. S. Eliot's poem "Ash Wednesday" (1930) illustrates that, as long as we have the faculty of memory,⁵ there still remains the potential to build:

Because I know that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place
I rejoice that things are as they are and
I renounce the blessed face
And renounce the voice
Because I cannot hope to turn again
Consequently I rejoice, having to
construct something
*Upon which to rejoice.*⁶

Camus' protagonist Meursault is wronged and forsaken and then imprisoned. His problem became how to occupy oneself when given so much leisure that it was a punishment. In Camus, as in the New Jerusalem, the body is once again the temple; the public can imprison Meursault, but his memory and imagination remain free. Meursault alleviates the boredom through the use of memory, the repository of experience. Like Van Gogh, he recalls his bedroom in great depth:

I made a point of visualizing every piece of furniture, and each article upon or in it, and then every detail of each article, and finally the details of the details, so to speak: a tiny dent or incrustation, or a chipped edge, and the exact grain and colour of the woodwork. At the same time I forced myself to keep my inventory in mind from start to finish, in the right order and omitting no item. With the result that, after a few weeks, I could spend hours merely in listing the objects in my bedroom. I found that the more I thought, the more details, half-forgotten or malobserved, floated up from my memory. There seemed no end to them.

*So I learned that even after a single day's experience of the outside world a man could easily live a hundred years in prison. He'd have laid up enough memories never to be bored.*⁷

These two passages point to the importance of construction, this time in relation to constructing a meaning for life, the thrust of an existential inquiry. The question of man's existential displacement has been closely related to the question of making architecture. In recognizing the theme of displacement in the Old Testament, the story of the Fall represents the dual

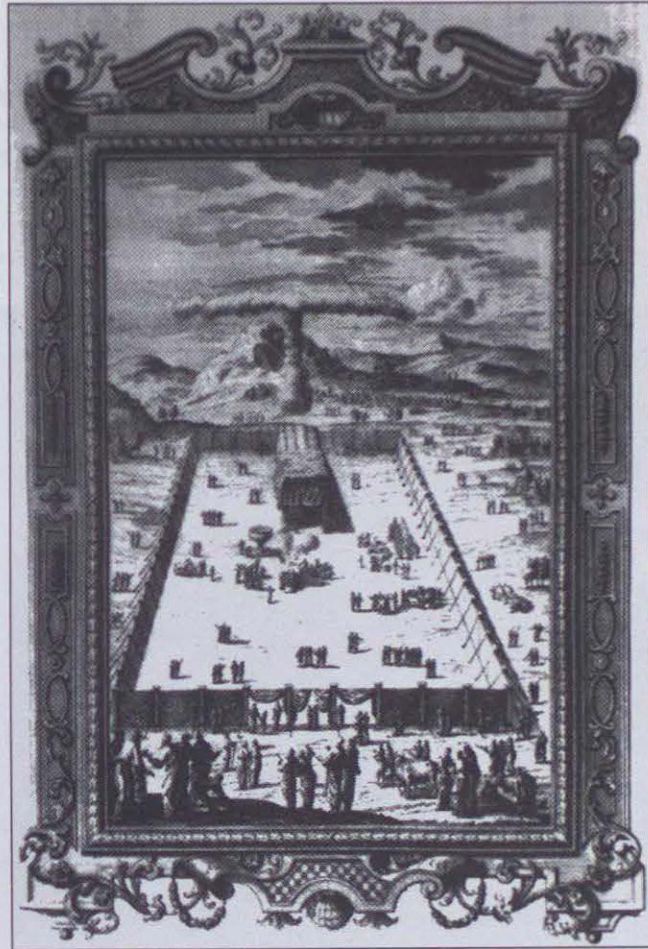
3. The Tabernacle in the Desert, from *Philo of Alexandria and the Architecture of the Cosmos*, by Jan Van Pelt. *AA files* #4, p. 6.

next page:

4. Plan of the Temple of Solomon, by Johann Fischer Von Erlach. From *A Plan of Civil and Historical*

Architecture, London: 1730.

5. The Temple of Solomon, by Johann Fischer Von Erlach. From *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture*, London: 1730.



condition of man's search for permanence against his fate of expulsion and existential displacement.

ARCHITECTURE & THE HEAVENLY CITY:

The heavenly New Jerusalem is of pure gold, with a surrounding wall of Jasper. Built on these foundations are twelve gates with inscribed names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The twelve gates have foundations garnished of precious jewels; these foundations represent the twelve apostles. Each gate is presided over by an angel. There is no temple built within, and there is no night. The glory of God is the Light, and the people are the temple, "for they house the tabernacle of God within them." The length and breadth and height of the New Jerusalem are uniform. The wall surrounding the city is 144 cubits in height, purported to be the measure of an angel. It is important that both the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem are enclosed within the wall, for the wall is a gesture of existential security, differentiating the chaos outside the wall from the order and harmony within. The wall is primarily symbolic, and only secondarily a defensive device.

We recall that in many cultures, the first architectural gesture is to stake out the territory upon which to build. The ritual of laying a foundation for a building or a city wall recalls the

5 In this context, "memory" denotes either a collective or a personal history.

6 T.S. Eliot, *Collected poems* 1909-62, London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974, p. 95.

7 Albert Camus, *The Outsider*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961, p. 81.



(ramming pieces of model together)
the wall and the floor get LACED
together, one running through the
other. You see?

TONY: We must come back to the
issue of scale. Have you considered
the scale of your project?

F.L.L.M. (produces rudimentary pan
balance-type scale): I'm glad you
asked that question, sir, believe me
scale is one thing I've thought a lot
about in the Architecture of Placeness.
See? Rocks... feathers... Rocks are
heavier!

TONY: Perhaps it would help to
understand your project if you
explained to Julia—Professor Julia—
Professor Mindart—your PROCESS
of design. Obviously you gave it great
thought.

F.L.L.M.: Process?

JULIA: Yes, that would help I
think... You seem to have been
concerned with a metaphysical
deconstruction of the existential self
(FARTS, pans audience). Thawed
music, if you will.

F.L.L.M.: Uh huh, Yeah, Um, sort
of a metaphorical bifurcation if you
will.

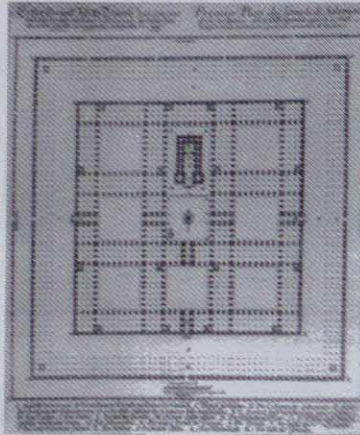
(in following speech, F.L.L.M.
shakes, scatters, distorts, spills model
as required).

The amazing thing about my
project is that it's more than what it is.
Not just one plan, for example, but any
number of plans, the ultimate in
flexibility. You don't like it this way? I
can change it! You don't like it still? I
can change it again! The overall effect
is like LACE

(F. L. M. drapes lace over model,
holds model up to show critics, all
loose pieces slide to floor).

importance of this act of circumscribing. The
initial markings of the place have a symbolic
meaning tied to existential security. This
provides a possible connection to the origins
of architecture, for the act of raising a wall is
to capture the light, to allow the invisible to
become visible. The feast of Jubilee
(Leviticus: ch. 25) recalls the ritual of place
whereby every 50th year
the people return to their
original territory.

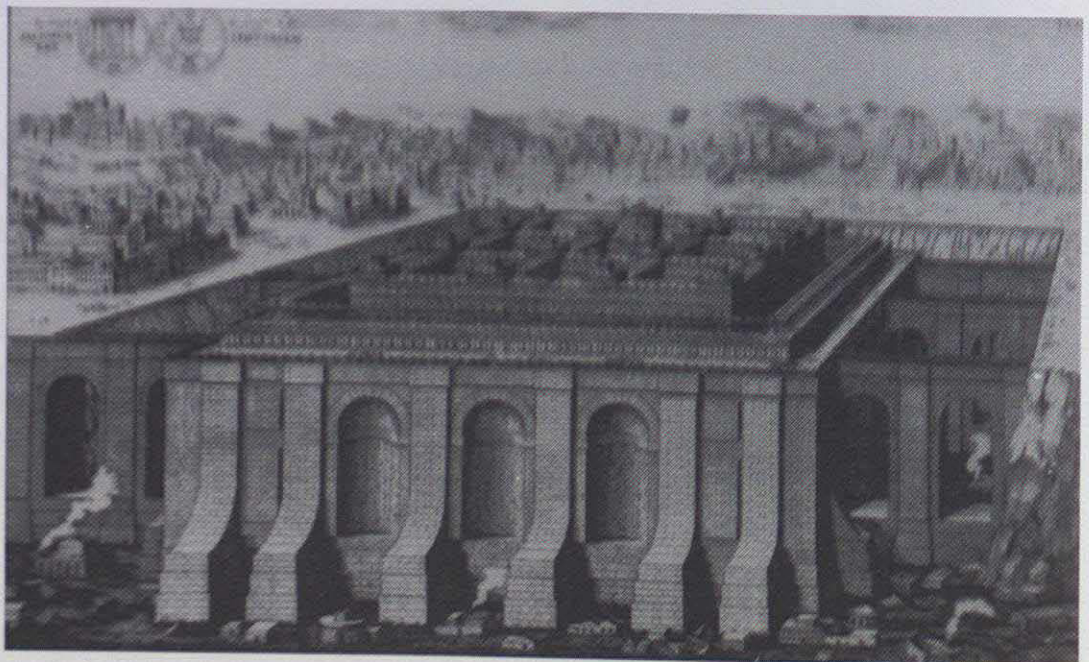
Within the heavenly
city, the crystal river runs
past the Tree of Life. The
river is a symbol of the
eternal cycle of birth,
death and rebirth. On the
banks of the river is the
Tree of Life, the
counterpoint to the Tree
of Knowledge. Often the
forbidden fruit is
associated with the apple, for "malum" is the
Latin word which denotes both "apple" and
"sin". The ideal purity of the New Jerusalem
contrasted against a man-made repository of
culture such as New York (also called the Big
Apple) makes the city sound like the
description of the reality outside the walls of
the New Jerusalem. The last passage in



Revelations (ch. 22) states that "outside of the
walls are dogs, and sorcerers, and
whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters
and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The
image of New York as a model of late
capitalism, complete with its array of
homeless and otherwise existentially displaced
"citizens" is the reality of our existence and is
symbolic of the city as an
artifact.

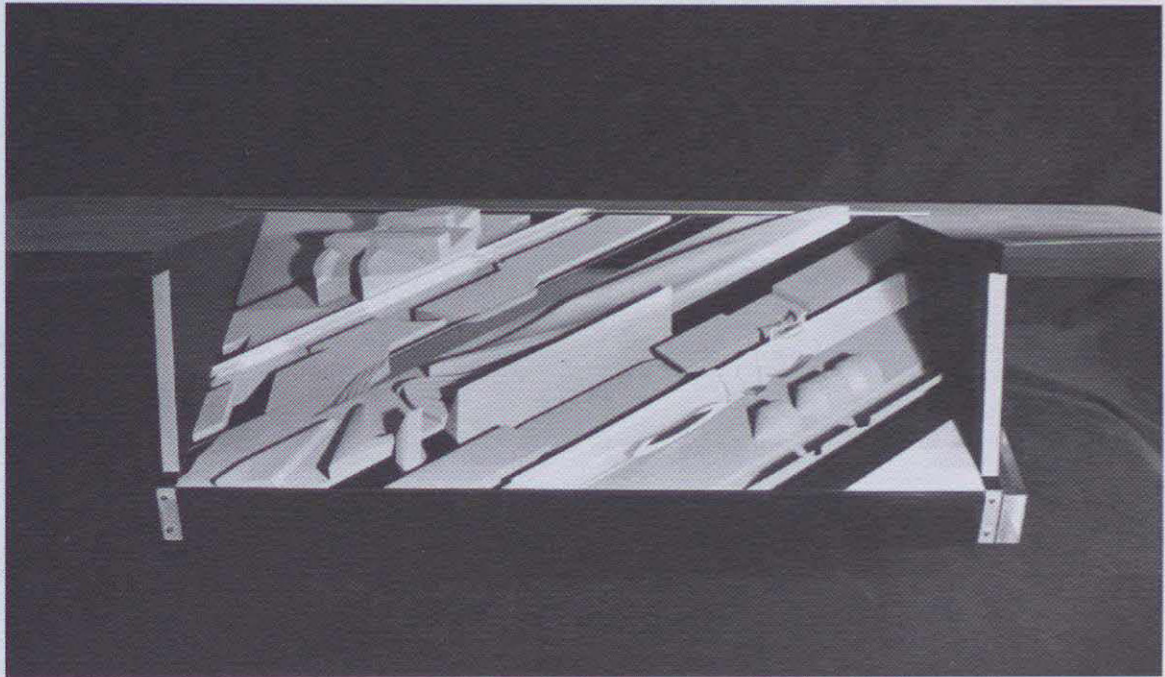
The Old Testament
begins and ends with an
ideal. The Alpha
corresponds to the Garden
of Eden (Genesis: ch. 1),
and the Omega
corresponds to the New
Jerusalem, the last image in
the New Testament
(Revelations: ch. 22).
Dwelling somewhere
between these two ideals

lies the quest for human
consciousness, which is manifested by what
we "make" in an attempt to define a locus, a
sense of existential security in an otherwise
constantly shifting world. We continue to
pursue the heavenly city on Earth. This is the
ironic fate of architecture and of the human
condition.



STEPHEN PARCELL

PLACE SETTING



The dining table is an artificial plinth, a small tabula elevated above the ground and surrounded by humans. Each person is allocated a territorial position of the table surface: a place setting.

Around the perimeter of the table are identical sets of utensils, each set occupying one person's grasp. At rest, the utensils are positioned according to specific axial alignments and sequential orders from left to right and near to far. Certain ones are metallic and certain others are ceramic. Some are broad and flat, like auxiliary table surfaces. Others are meant to be held and operate as specialized attachments for the hands: one stabs and shovels, one stirs and scoops, one saws and spreads. Their figurative manoeuvres work in conjunction with the silent resistance provided by the table surface below. Although many of the utensils are used together, only three of them (two metal and one ceramic) ever travel from table to mouth.

Conventional instruments and etiquette enable one to encounter a wide range of edible still lifes (*natures mortes*) with routine self-assurance. Confrontations which present more of a challenge (lobster, for example) require special tools and improvised strategies. The place setting with its attendant architectural equipment and choreography, provides a latent forum for one biological entity to sacrifice and devour others, coincidentally emulating the foundation rites of ancient cities. Elsewhere, the legendary oriental practice of eating live monkey brains requires a special place setting with a skull-sized hole in the table and a set of leather straps below.



GARY: Could you tell us something about the materials you have selected for this project. I do not wish to sound harsh, but you seem to have treated this project as if it were to be built of cardboard! Have you given any thought to the FACTS of the thing? The THINGNESS of the thing? The materiality of the MATERIAL! What is the intent of the intention? (Screams): WHAT IS IT TO BE MADE OF? Of course, you needn't answer this question, or any question.

F.L.L.M.: I have considered the material. Like this marble (hands sample).

GARY: But this is not marble. It's granite! (throws offstage. Crash of glass breaking).

F.L.L.M.: Ah, yes, well I do have marble here (holds up other sample).

GARY: Yes, of course, but you know, it isn't enough to consider alternatives, design is also about making choices! What have you chosen?

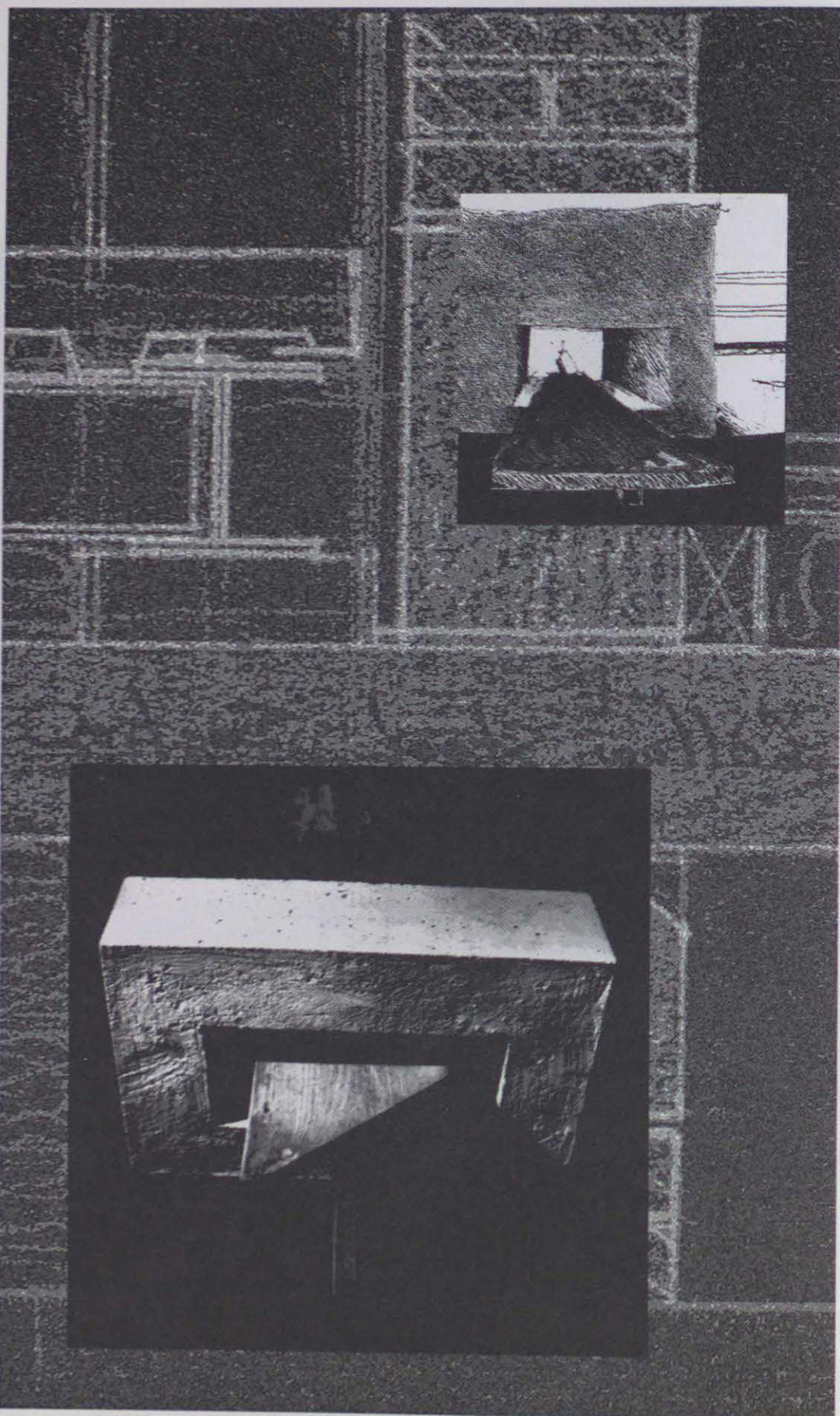
F.L.L.M.: I'm happy you asked that question, Gary (picking up can from table, prying at lid). In fact, in keeping with the randomness of the randomness, I've chosen marble. . . marbles! (can suddenly bursts open, spraying marbles into air and all over floor).

TONY (summing up): Well Fielding,

F.L.L.M.: Fielding Lloyd Mellish

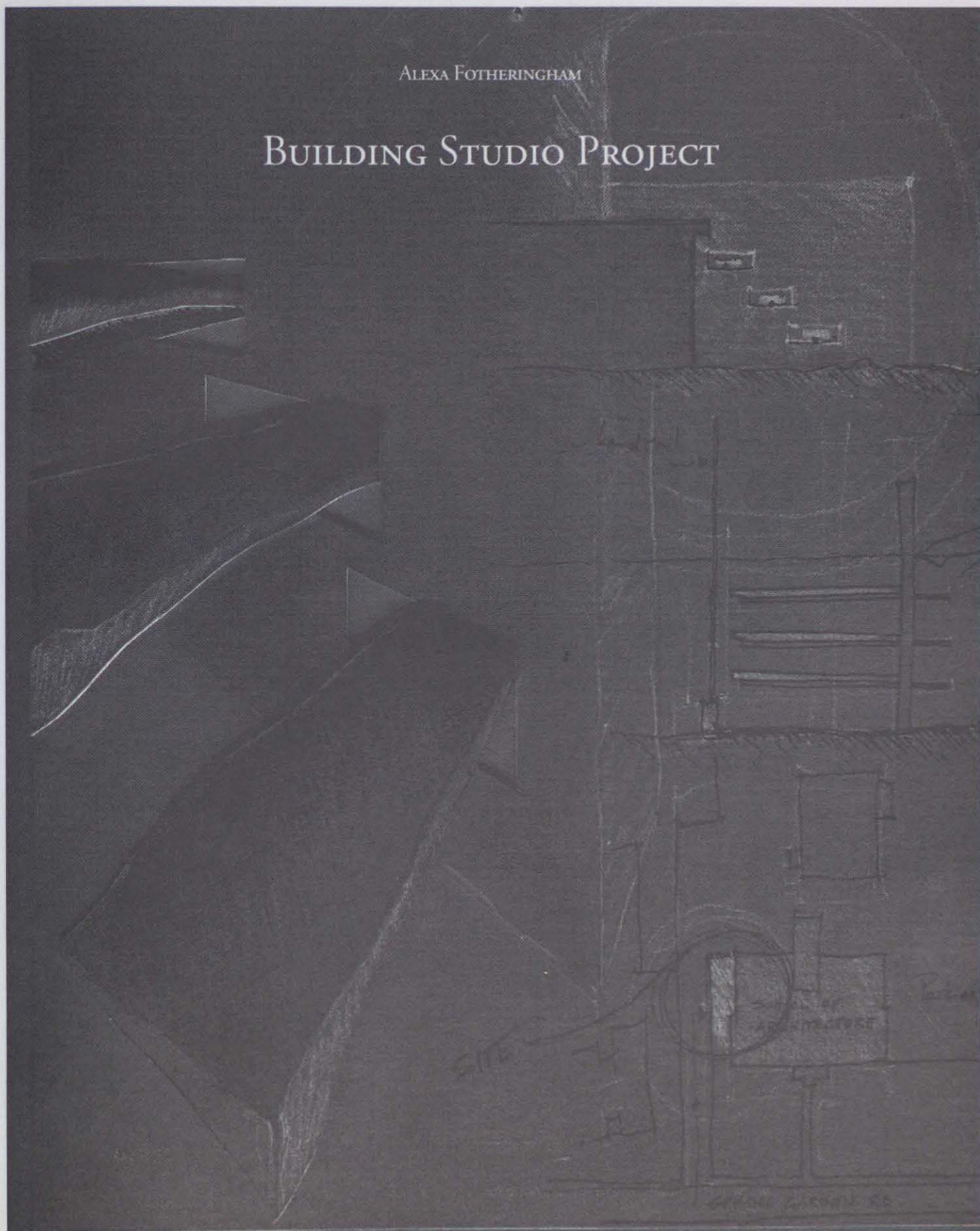
TONY: You seem to have covered the issues of face. . . and trace. . . and old lace. . . What about Natural Light. You don't have any windows in your plan.

F.L.L.M. (Squinting and shielding himself from glare of electric lights):



ALEXA FOTHERINGHAM

BUILDING STUDIO PROJECT





TED CAVANAGH

THESIS = PLACE

No. Because I believe the potential of artificial light to be far greater than yet realized. In fact artificial light, even in its most primitive form, can be just as fine as any natural light source. And as the philosopher Jean Paul Monsanto points out so lucidly, without electricity, life itself would be impossible. Electricity is a natural phenomenon. This means artificial light IS natural light! The unity of opposites!

(GARY, in boredom, wanders over toward board.)

TONY: Granted, but windows are also useful for ventilation, and it's nice to be able to see outside sometimes.

F.L.L.M. (sawing at model): Okay, you want windows, I'll give you windows. How about one here? (pokes window out, peers through new hole at critics.)

TONY (exasperated): It just isn't that simple, Fielding--

F.L.L.M.: --Fielding Lloyd Mellish--

TONY: You can't just poke a window in a wall. You've had 69 months to think about this now. How would the window open?

F.L.L.M. (with prop): It could HINGE...

TONY: Well, it seems to me the details are more important than that.

GARY (tapping at board with knuckles): Jesus Christ! What is this, a Crucifix?

F.L.L.M. (proudly): Uh, Yeah, it is. I tried to think of everything.

JULIA (speaks to audience): Gary, I believe there's an issue yet to be brought up here, and it's right up your alley. (FARTS) Our young designer

Thesis comes from the Greek language. The root -*the-* forms the Greek word *tithemi* (or place) as well as *thesis* (or placing). Implicit in the sense of placing is a defined or measured aspect of location as well as a meaning derived from the value of this location through time or intention. The distinction just made is not intended to suggest that these two aspects can be isolated from each other, but more to explain placing more completely.

Three other words contain (and modify) the word thesis: *hypothesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. *Hypothesis* adds to thesis the prefix *hypo-* or under, below, slightly (cf. *hyper-* or over, above, exceeding, excessive). This modifies thesis, or placing, by adding *at the starting point*. *Hypothesis* means placing at the starting point. Through time this defined (or measured) meaning of hypothesis has come to include the meanings *with foundation* and *with slight basis*. Thus it seems possible that the word has developed two completely opposite senses. There can be a hypothesis which sounds certain (with foundation), and something hypothetical which sounds uncertain (with slight basis). Instead, the meaning of placing at the starting point is still secure and the value of this starting point might be either solid or uncertain.

Antithesis adds to thesis the prefix *anti-* or opposition, contrast, in exchange, instead (cf. *ante-* or before). This modifies thesis, or placing, by adding *set against* (besides, not beside). *Antithesis* means placing against. This defined (or measured) meaning of antithesis has come to be superseded by the meaning of *placing in opposition*, rather than the equally correct senses of *placing in contrast* and *placing instead*. Again, the emphasis of the interpretation of antithesis should be on the defined, and perhaps more neutral, sense of *placing against* and to allow evaluation or intention to decide on the meaning of this placing whether it be in opposition, in contrast, or in exchange.

Synthesis adds to thesis the prefix *syn-* or with, together, alike. This modifies thesis or placing by adding *with* (cf. *ana-* *lysis* and *ana-* *thema*). *Synthesis* means placing with. This simpler, and perhaps more

neutral, meaning of synthesis has come to be superseded by senses of *placing together* and *placing with like*. The senses of matching and joining have become especially prevalent as synthesis has come to be described as joining (placing together) to form wholes and joining or matching to form systems. When synthesis is described as joining or matching it is important to realize that these are interpretations beyond the more defined, or neutral, sense of *placing with*.

The word *position* relates to the previous discussion of thesis as placing. In fact, *posit* has been suggested as an equivalent of thesis. *Posit*, in spite of its Latin root, shows some of the same overlaps and distinctions as thesis. It is from the Latin root *ponere*. *Posit* translated as place. Thus *positing* is placing, as is thesis. The importance of this apparent equivalence becomes clear when the derivatives of *positing* are identified; e.g. oppose, compose, propose, suppose, presuppose and juxtapose. Thus these operations might all be employed in the exploration of a hypothesis.

The word *pose* comes from an entirely different Latin root, *pausere* translated as pause, but the entry concludes with *pose...*, in some senses by confusion with the Latin *ponere* or place. Thus to pose a question is really to posit or oppose a question.

The hypothesis is the tentative statement of the thesis that is given initially and revised continually in order that the hypothesis approach the thesis. The thesis by contrast can be described as that which is to be maintained. The revisions to the hypothesis are due to explorations of antithesis and synthesis. The antithesis is a way of working within the thesis and extending or challenging the hypothesis. It is an attempt to exchange, oppose or contrast some aspects of the hypothesis so that they might or might not be maintained. The antithesis, then, forms an important part of the working method. Synthesis might occur many times during the working out, but definitely occurs each time there is an architectural representation of the hypothesis and antithesis in such a way that it allows synthesis in the critical viewer.

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H O U S E

how they work it out

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



has set out to consider FACE, TRACE, PLACE and LACE. He's given us FACE. He's given us TRACE. (slowly) He's given us—

GARY: LACE. Bloody right! Of course. Fielding Lloyd Mellish—

F.L.L.M. (incoherently, squirming with obvious need to relieve bladder): — With two LLs—

GARY: What about the PLACE? You've shown us LACE, but not PLACE. LACE-PLACE. Where is the P? To make a PLACE you need more than LACE. To make PLACE from LACE you need a P! WHERE IS THE P?

F.L.L.M.: I was hoping you wouldn't ask me that (Pees himself. Offstage water noises, toilet flushing, etc. Exit F.L.L.M. A puddle of water is left where he was standing).

GARY (examining puddle): Oh I see. That's Beautiful. It's very clear. It's simple, it's direct, it works. . . It's beautiful. . . Now I see. . . This is very moving. . . But you know, I have one lingering question. Julia, perhaps you could address this one, in the absence of our young friend. I'm not so sure he has given enough consideration to the placement. . . of the washrooms.

JULIA (grunts, walks over to puddle, extinguishes pipe in it, accompanied by appropriate fizzling sounds): Well it's a lot better than the shit I saw in the last review.

(BLACK OUT. Critics exit in darkness. Only the glowing eyes of the CHORUS may still be seen).

THE END

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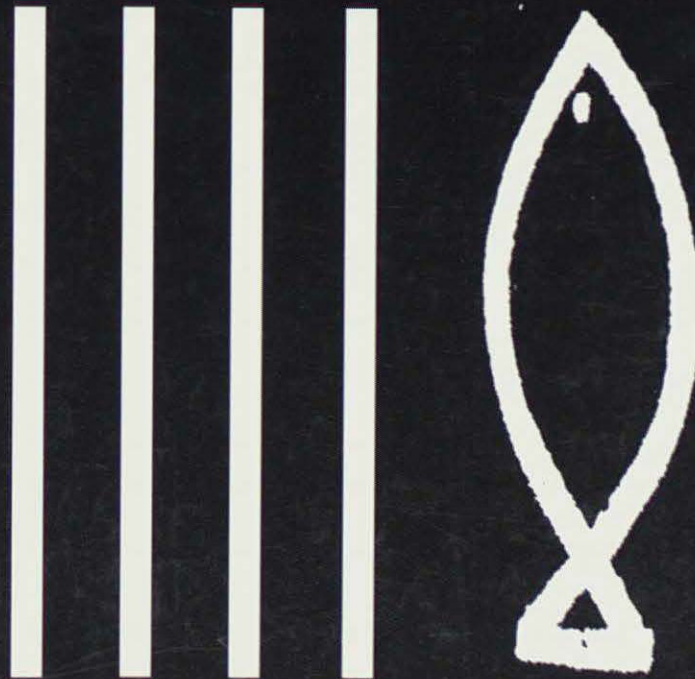
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