LIVE

EDGES

All Possible
Adjacencies

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All Possible Adjacencies

Rebecca Leffell Koren

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the Genius Loci

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ABSTRACT

Edge is a deceptive word. It suggests lines, borders, designations—a kind of certainty. I see edge instead as a porous adjacency—the noise at the intersection of planes that adds meaning, rather than separation. *Live Edges* is a design research practice that is hyper-observational and multi-planar. Equal parts training ground and methodology, what began as an effort to derive graphic form from the intangible qualities of place developed into an approach to parsing complexity.

Setting locality as my origin point, signifiers of place—materiality, behavior, orientation, architectural form—serve as catalysts for graphic response. I interpret landscape in order to construct my own, testing methods for framing that employ rhythm and topography across multiple surfaces (physical or virtual), to construct immersive experiences.

My methodology is structured around a set of relationships and across a spectrum, from place toward process—from specific to abstract, structural to sensorial, interior to exterior, contained to fluid. The work modulates along these variants, simultaneously addressing dimension, clarity, and poetics, and bringing structure to the amorphous.

I build up from and into surfaces, blurring the flat and spatial as a tool for tension, interest, and layered meaning. Informed by architectural practice and theory, *Live Edges* considers context and scale, and observantly prods the edges, addresses the gaps, and uncovers every facet of terrain in research and form. The act of mining for nuance, combined with an agile approach to framing, constructs a process that is broadly translatable.

FROM

Place

Process

Specific

Contain

Translate

Abstract

Frame

Derive

Structural

Physical

Static

Amorphous

Sensorial

Fluid

INTRODUCTION

Writers closely observe the world and record their observations. When we remark that a novel is "finely observed," we are praising the writer's ability to bear witness. This bearing witness is composed of two acts: the author's initial observation in the real world, and then the translation of that observation into prose. The more 'finely observed' the text, the better we readers recognize the thing or event in question. (Again—seeing and acknowledging are different activities.)

Peter Mendelsund
What We See When We Read [1]

Graphic design research (or the work of a graduate student in design) treads daringly close to the antithesis of "service-provider," often considered by others to be the designer's role in a transactional, albeit creative, exchange. Implicit in this term, and others associated with the field (ex: "faceless facilitator,"[2] "form-giver," and more), is that designers bring visual and or physical representation to content conceived by others. Tacking a modest hinge on the ongoing discourse around authorship in design, the above distillation of the writing process translates seamlessly into the conversation. This excerpt from art director and author Peter Mendelsund's *How We See When We Read*, a carefully tuned exploration of the reader's visual experience of literature, sees the process of writing is also about seeing. It is the outward reflection of what has been seen, felt, and gathered; but it is then edited, nuanced, re-formed. All begins with careful looking. When applied to graphic design, this distinction somewhat disrupts the false binary of either Author or Form-Giver. Authorship is a non-linear spectrum upon which numerous stations lie. There is a broad midsection in which close observation, noticing, and interpretation in visual form—even if there is no language—is a version of design writing. The work in this book resides in this fluid field.

In my approach, the strength of design lies in an ability to read and translate content or research through a keen awareness of cues, and in the ability to bring an inherency to complexity. I view graphic design as the nuanced framing of observations that build up an immersive environment or experience, and the richness of that environment resides in the tempering of reference and form. Much like the writer, we "witness." To an outsider's eye, the designer is relieved of this stage, however it is the observer's mind that allows designers to read context

1   Mendelsund, Peter. *What We See When We Read: A Phenomenology; With Illustrations.* New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House LLC, 2014. 139.

2   Rock, Michael. *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users.* New York: Rizzoli, 2013. 48.

and to identify patterns—of that which is present and of that which is missing, open, or unaddressed. We look keenly in order to identify the most succinct signifiers that can do the heavy lifting of expression, association, and conveying legitimacy. One may argue that we all observe. But just as hearing is not tantamount to listening, the act of seeing is not inherently interchangeable with observing. The challenge of truly observing is to take on with equal (if not more) energy what may be of some or little interest to others. To acknowledge its every facet, and to conceive it in such a way that it will intrigue, charm, share, question, and implore.

As a testing ground to develop methods for reading and inter-pretation, place is apt as it is ephemeral, complex, and ever-morphing. How can one frame that which is slippery or amorphous? Any locality is experienced differently by all, and for each person there is a duality of how a place is experienced in situ and how it is recorded in memory. The impetus to frame the ephemeral—be it nostalgia, physical experi-ence, or the sensorial, lays the foundation for a persistent attempt to develop an acuity for identifying and employing cues in design at a range of scales and levels of specificity. The intention is to ingrain instincts that respond even to what is seemingly straightforward with equal observance of richness and nuance, ripe for reference.

In studying interpretation in design through the lens of edges—as they relate to both locality and to more abstracted applications—my primary interest is the noise at the intersection of planes that adds dimension and complexity, rather than signifying a separation. This distinction of seeing the edge as at times a clean cut and at others a multi-faceted surface is a compass for design intention. It constructs a spectrum along which graphic response can move that is at times economical, stark, and exacting, and at others it is topographically and conceptually complex with multiple entry points and interpretations.

In this form of reading and designing, intersections are crucial. This is the case on a formal level, as I draw out connections and meaning in small moves—the collage of visual material that creates new planes, rewriting the story with newly intermingled ideas and narratives. At a larger scale, I address multiple surfaces so as to build a mood and experience. On a conceptual and experiential level, I maintain an awareness of and care for interactivity—for the edges in which scenario meets audience. The contact point between work and audience is a

moment of translation, a slippery edge that demands its own rubric of terms and process. What is the balance of elements that translate the content (be it locality, building, exhibition, or otherwise) most invisibly and inherently? And, alternately, how might one moderate these terms for an immersive or transportive outcome? For design to be pointing at its content without re-presenting or recreating it proves especially challenging when addressing physical forms as content. One needs to practice adjusting these levers of form, scale, and language to become fluent in the mechanics of their outcome. In his essay "The Matta-Clark Complex: Materials, Interpretation and the Designer," graphic designer James Goggin explains this careful balance I seek, stating that "there is a fine line between relevant, clever reference to the artist and more overt, less helpful pastiche."[3] In my work I strive to be more adept at massaging specificity and abstraction, clarity and ambiguity, to the appropriate frequency.

Adopting Mendelsund's terms, *Live Edges* observes the physical world and the variability of locality, and seeks to "translate...that observation" into graphic form by accessing a variety of viewpoints and methods of translation. Key signifiers in translating locality—materiality, scale, orientation, behavior, and architectural form—proved to be aligned directly with my own rubric for design. An awareness of these variables builds a diverse body of work with the agility to adapt and modulate, to achieve a balance of poetics without sacrificing complexity. I continue to reach for the ephemeral, and to use graphic design to ascertain or create a locality and space if only in the temporary container of the graphic work.

3   Goggin, James. "The Matta-Clark Complex: Materials, Interpretation and the Designer" *The Form of the Book Book*. Eds. Bondt, Sara D., and Fraser Muggeridge. London: Occasional Papers, 2010. 23.

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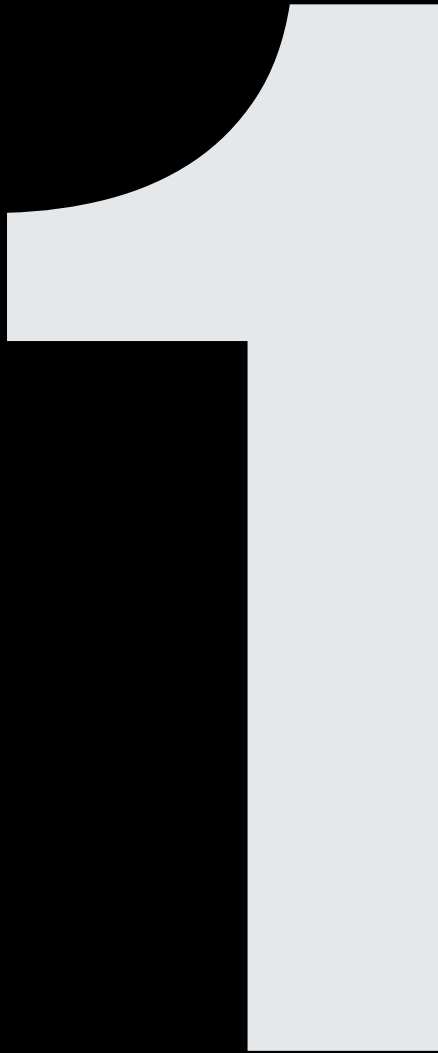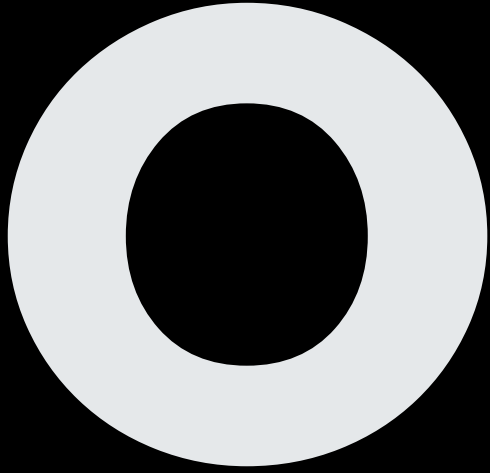
Searching For the Genius Loci

It is not a new, nor inherently novel, endeavor to address notions of placehood, landscape, territory, architecture, and the human experience of place as a catalyst for research. This desire is as old as our ability to record human experience—manifest in the red stained Cave paintings of Lascaux, France, in the elaborate recordings of exploratory voyages, and in today's polished frames of the world that are pulsing through the lens of social media. Framing, composition, scale, navigation; these variables are all at play in both our experience of place and in its representation. But the nature of their combination can achieve a broad spectrum of effect. We don't often turn to architectural renderings to sense what it is like to move through the Sistine Chapel—we think of Michelangelo's painted ceiling, imagine the echo of voices off of the stone. Rather than outlining placeness, or reproducing it, graphic design can be modulated to capture the *genius loci*,[1] the spirit of place. While architectural plans can convey scale or structure, to communicate experience and mood, to materialize the intangible sensations of moving through *that* space requires a layered and delicate approach.

In graphic design we trade in a commodity of signifiers, and an acuity for tempering them is crucial for tuning clarity and complexity to a desired outcome (be it coherent or veiled). To gain this fluency, my work begins with the first degree of transposition of place into graphic form; translation in the first person through what is immediately reached by the senses—the feet, the hand, the eye, the ear.

Place is more often considered in terms of measure and containment—walls, borders, districts, lines in the sand. Yet locality is often a fuzzy and intangible notion. Expressions of locality rely on a careful orchestration of defining characteristics, both physical and experiential. In reality place is not a list of traits—it is an amorphous, temporal, and breathing entity that we seek to comprehend and digest by bounding it within states and narratives, titles and histories, images and possession. Guided by what architect and designer Aldo Rossi terms "the relationship between ecology and psychology,"[2] the work in this chapter lays the groundwork for field methods, honing in on the signifiers of our psychological relationships with place, beginning with materiality and dialogue. Our connections with localities are both fleeting and permanent, as emotional and intellectual states morph while one is both present and beyond. This is a slippery notion—but the tools and forms at hand in graphic design make it possible to grasp this

1   Latin, dating to the 17th century; originally the name for deities in classical Roman religion that were protectors of place.

2   Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1982. 107.

THE POET UNDERSTANDS THAT THE MAST
OF A SHIP, THE GALLOWS, AND THE CROSS
ARE MADE OF DIFFERENT WOOD. HE
UNDERSTANDS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
THE STONE FROM A CHURCH WALL AND THE
STONE FROM A PRISON WALL.

      HE HEARS 'THE VOICES OF STONES,'
      UNDERSTANDS THE WHISPERINGS OF
      ANCIENT WALLS, OF TUMULI, OF MOUNTAINS,
      RIVERS, WOODS AND PLAINS.
HE HEARS 'THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE,'
UNDERSTANDS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SILENCES, KNOWS
THAT ONE SILENCE CAN DIFFER FROM ANOTHER.

amorphous "placeness," to give it temporary form, to sculpt a facet of its representation. In *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi employs the term locus to address the aspects of place that go between and beyond architecture; the relationship between the architecture of a place and memory, psychology, and the human presence. He asks "Where does the singularity of an urban artifact begin? In its form, its function, its memory, or in something else again?"[3] Rossi lays the foundation of the locus as being defined not only by the structure of the place but by the relationship that occurs between the locus and its denizens. Inherent in this is a certain movement at the intersection, a static between the individual and place, both at present and over time. He writes, "being the seat of a succession of ancient and recent events, by its memory."[4] Rossi elevates locus from site, or topography, to relational space, and to a collective conversation that occurs among populations and over time. In a parallel vein, Lucy Lippard addresses the makings of place in terms more akin to a mathematical proof: "Space defines landscape, where space combined with memory defined place."[5] Yet memory is a broad and moving term—what exactly are the mechanics of that memory?

In part it is what happens in the locus—human interaction, dialogue. It is also the physical point of contact—the material and texture of the landscape touching the human body. A step taken in the desert is not the same step taken on a paved road. The curb of the road in Jerusalem looks as different from that in Boston, as do their skylines. The sound of the street in Delhi will never sound like downtown Los Angeles; what is the melody and pitch of the car horn, what is the texture of the urban noise?

One entry into reading place is through the documentation and words of those who have a relationship with it, have been there, who have seen it change. We see this in photojournalism. This can also be achieved in a surface scraping, capturing uncoordinated and unexpected opportunities, and it can be gathered through portraiture, dialogue, questions, local insights. Photographer and researcher Ivan Sigal described his approach in making *White Road*, a rhythmic, immersive account of his time in Russia and Central Asia, as one in which he would "photograph, learn, absorb, then go back to my work and look for patterns."[6] This is a methodology for reading place rather than strategically re-rendering it. Rather than imposing on representations of place, he works with chance, pattern, and relationships.

3   Ibid. 106
4   Ibid. 107
5   Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society.* New York: New Press, 1997. 9.
6   Turkewitz, Julie. "Lens: A White Road and an Ambiguous Narrative." *The New York Times.* 8 May 2013. Web. 04 Mar. 2016.

Place also calls up associations of topography, of surface—the immediate structures, walls, barriers, enclosures, spaces. These are the surfaces and solids that construct our visual landscape, the scaffolding of our relationship with localities. We come to associate place with its distinct structures and with its coating. In many ways materiality is the silent codifier of locality, linking the experience and memory of a site as we subconsciously form these deeply rooted associations. Its texture, both visual and tactile, serves as a fundamental descriptor; a foothold that the memory can grasp, a signifier that is both universal and specific. Yet they are also subjective, as perception can morph the reality of surface in present and retrospect. As Steen Eiler Rasmussen writes:

> Some buildings have stuccoed walls so that you see only the plaster surface; in others the brick is uncovered revealing the regular pattern of the courses...Smooth surfaces must be absolutely homogeneous. It is difficult to explain why minute differences in textural character, barely large enough to be measured by scientific instruments, affect us so strongly. But when we consider that the essential difference between the tones of a fine violin and those of an ordinary one can only be ascertained by the human ear, it is understandable that the sensitive eye can perceive the difference between a firm, noble texture and a rather poor and shoddy one, even when there is no surface pattern and the materials are of the same stuff. You cannot give a reason for your different evaluations but the difference you perceive is real enough. Words can put you on the right track but you have to experience the textural effects yourself to realize what it is all about.[7]

The meaning ingrained in texture is more powerful than one might assume. Rasmussen points toward the innate understanding we have of materiality and time. This is important to consider when creating visual work, to understand and anticipate the sensitivities and associations viewers can or may have.

It is materiality, too, that helps us locate places in the temporal axis, and a key element in exploring the effect of time, entropy, and decay on a locality, building or site. The layperson is attuned to observe that there is a difference between newly laid stone and ancient ruins; that there is a distinction between freshly dyed curtains and centuries-old tapestry. In his book *Then & Now, Hollywood Boulevard 1973–2004*,[8] Ed Ruscha creates a photographic carbon copy that reveals the relationship between the architectural landscape and time. Shown from both directions, Ruscha retraces his step, rephotographing in parallel the

boulevard he documented thirty years earlier. At times the distinctions are subtle and others clear—we can trace the residue of the effect of time, economy, and taste on surfaces and structures.

The high contrast, textured Tudors of Boston are distinctly different from the visual landscape of the West's flat concrete and stucco surfaced homes. The stance of buildings and the incline of the street is how one might immediately identify San Francisco from downtown Chicago. This ability to identify material as a locater has moved into the digital realm as well. PlaNet, a recent adaptation to Google Maps currently in its early stage, enables users to reverse identify localities based on images.[9] By creating a database of geolocated images, the team was able to "teach" a machine to tag an unknown image based on its correlation of pixels with their database—matching the most essential material texture of an image with others in order to assign its location. Material—both digital and physical—is the DNA of the image.

Original imagery can also be used to paint a new read of place, joining dialogue and a kind of humanism with architectural form. In

7   Rasmussen, Steen E. *Experiencing Architecture*. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1964. 163–4.

8   Ruscha, Edward. *Then & Now: Hollywood Boulevard 1973-2004*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2005.

9   "Google Unveils Neural Network with 'Superhuman' Ability to Determine the Location of Almost Any Image." *MIT Technology Review*. Technology Review. 25 Feb 2016.

his work the artist JR rewrites the materiality of the urban landscape by enlarging portraits of locals to a super-human scale and inserting it back into the architecture. He empowers the citizen by involving them in the making process, and by renewing their presence within the locality while reforming its hierarchy and tone. These are dimensional, monumental yet human, accounts of place that capitalize on the surface area and prominence of the architectural.
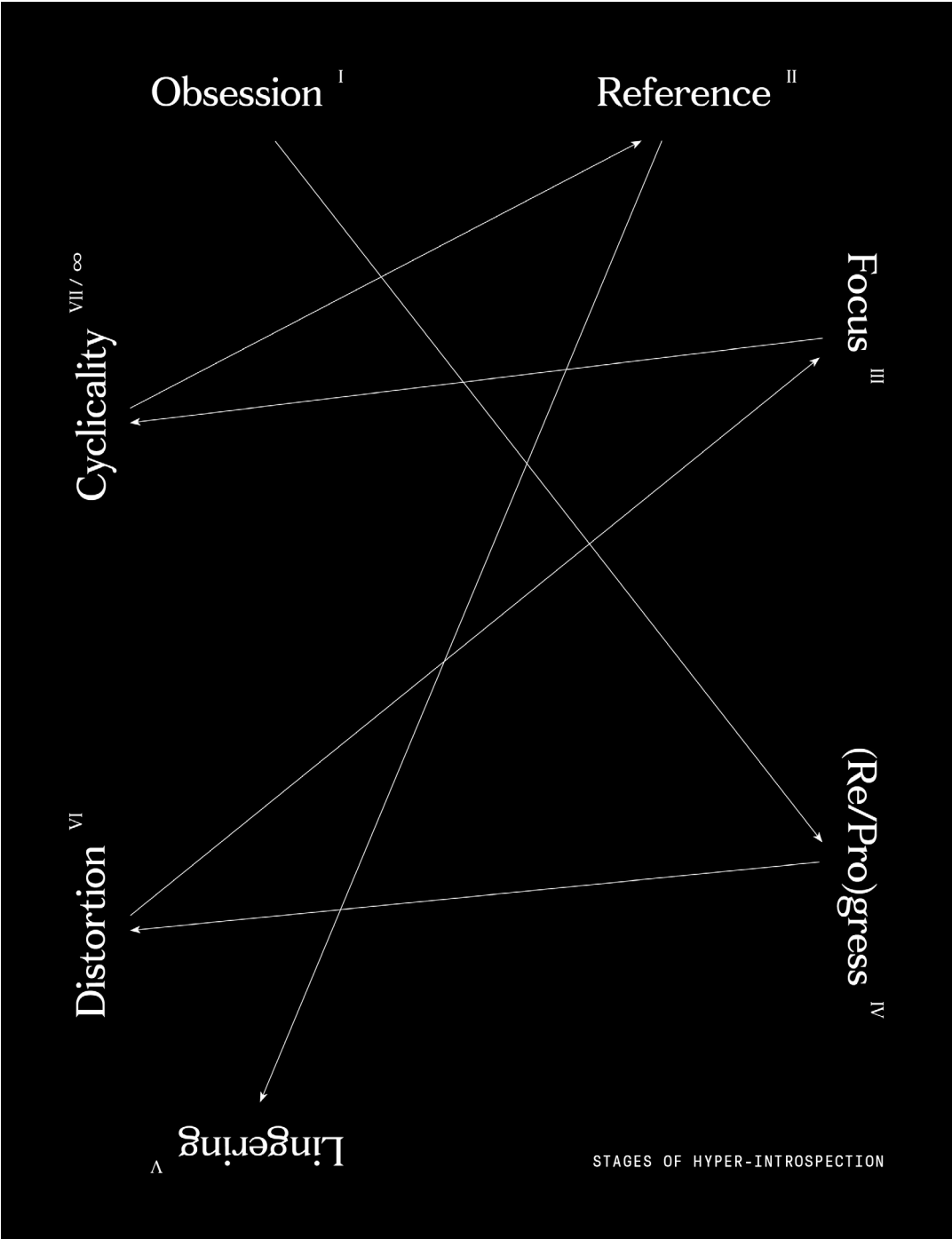
An awareness of the effects of materiality in locality is a utility available to the advantage of the graphic designer—as a flattener, an indicator of process, an invitation, or to call up a tone or mood. A book printed on Lulu has a different, subconscious effect than one printed on the letterpress and bound by hand. We can tell the difference in the same way that the big box is discerned from the country corner store. We must constantly consider the specifics of structure and material, texture and scale—which textures and coatings connote an intention or idea? How can new methods and tools be developed for achieving a desired effect (graphic or tactile) to call upon reference points, while providing a new experience and inference?

In designing form to capture or convey the spirit of place, there is an inevitable act of containment—the span of a video, the frame of the image, the edge of the book spread. The fluidity of content is limited by the physicality of format. The challenge in these works is how to address the relationship between the container of representation with its contents and balance the two, providing an experience that is both specific and open; one that provides an experience without restraining the viewer's space for inference. The malleability of experience must be matched with a certain porousness in form, and must be sensorial in function.

EDGES OR CONTAINMENT, THEY'RE AN
INTERESTING CONCEPT. ECOLOGICALLY EDGES
ARE EXTREMELY RICH ZONES BECAUSE IT TENDS
TO BE WHERE CONDITIONS CHANGE, SO THEY'RE
MORE DIVERSE.
THERE ARE MORE DIVERSE SPECIES AND
THEY'RE RARELY STRAIGHT. THEY ARTICULATE.
IT'S A REALLY DIFFERENT CONCEPT THAN A WALL,
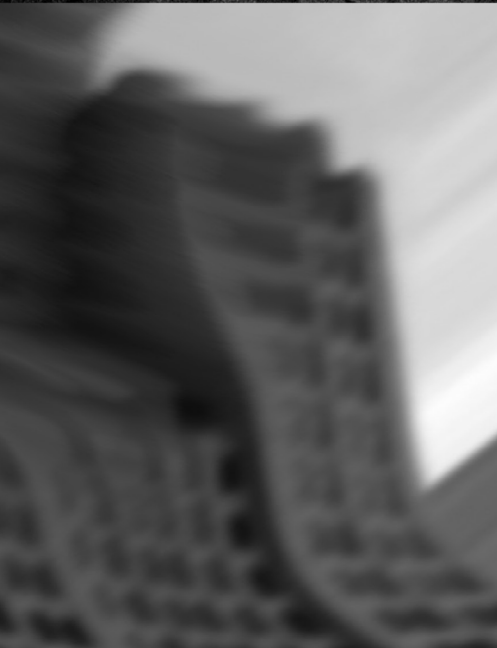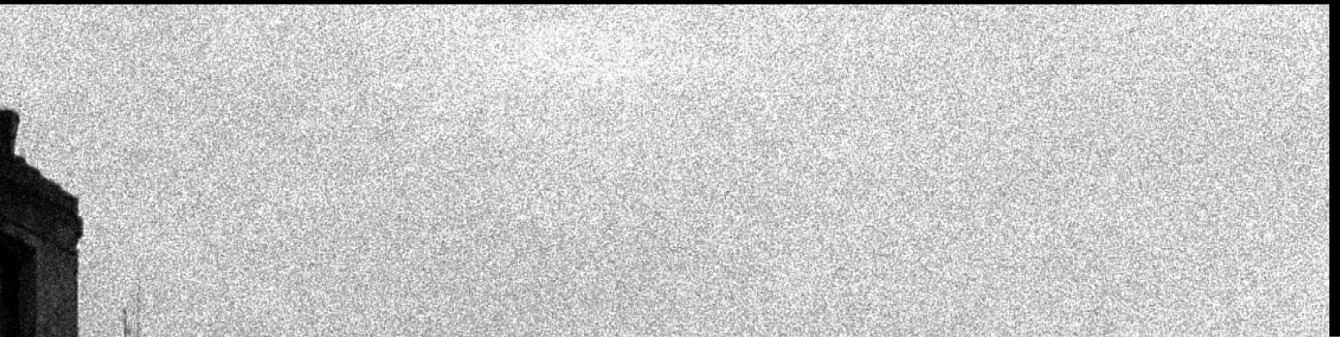WHICH IS THE FIRST THING YOU THINK ABOUT.
AN EDGE IS A WALL OR A CURB OR
SOMETHING VERY FORMED AND
FREQUENTLY VERY GEOMETRIC. BUT
ECOLOGICALLY THEY TEND TO NOT BE.

SCHERI FULTINEER, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Full interview on p. 105

Obsession [I]

Reference [II]

Cyclicality [VII / ∞]

Focus [III]

(Re/Pro)gress [IV]

Distortion [VI]

Lingering [V]

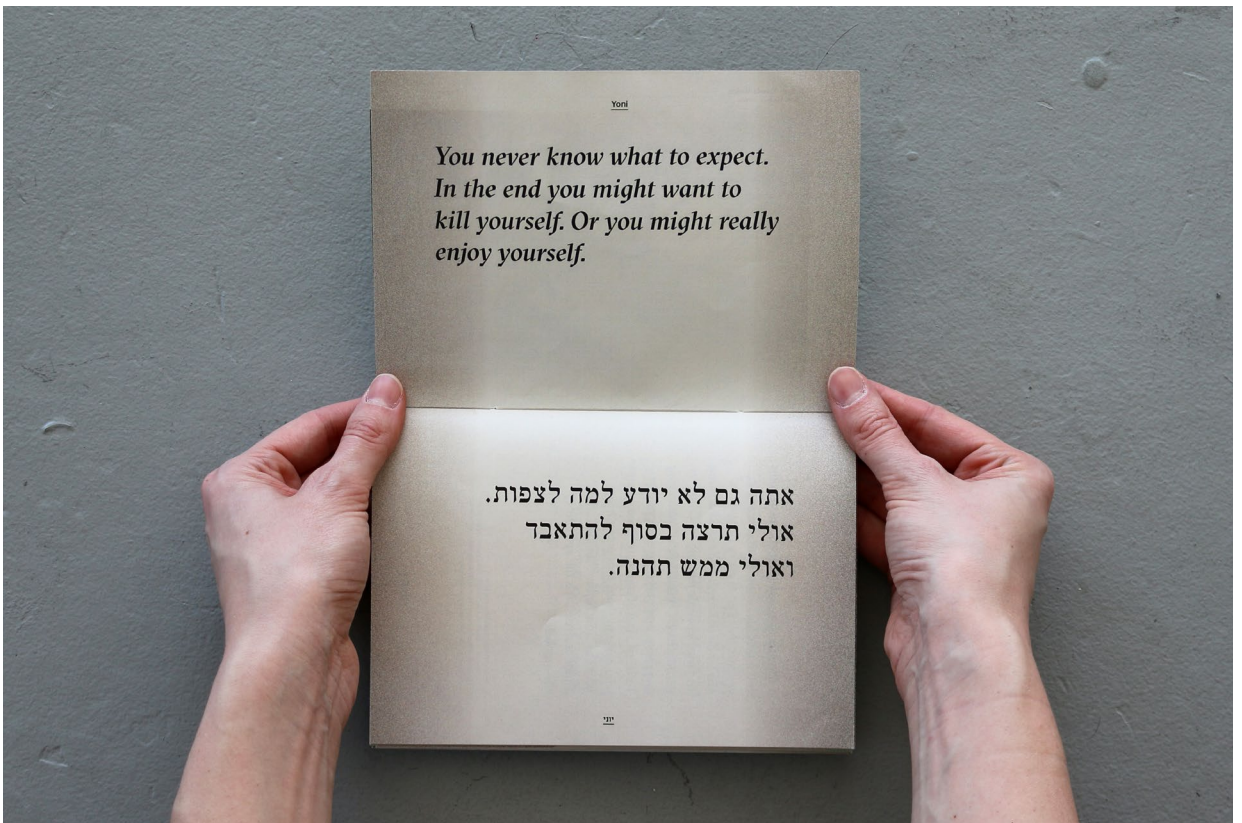STAGES OF HYPER-INTROSPECTION

1°

28

ATLAS

An exploration of hyper-introspection reconfigures a collection of images and writing (produced over one week) across a spectrum of scale. Spreads move through seven imagined stages, from the macro toward the micro. A black frame reduces over the course of the spreads, bringing its content forward and its intimacy closer. At times manifested in an intense focus on detail, and at others a distorted sense of place and time, this is an early attempt to exert control over an amorphous quality, to surface complexity—and to stir a sensory response.

16 pages, 8.5×11"
October 2014

Obsession [I]   Reference [II]   Focus [III]   (Re/Pro)gress [IV]   Lingering [V]   Distortion [VI]   Cyclicality [VII/∞]

In need of an excursion to retrieve a short list of food purchases, I did a quick search on Google maps for the closest market [1] (an act that has become second-nature of late, adjusting to new neighborhoods and norms). I had grown so used to relying on the local "Makolet" [2], or bodega, a critical and commonplace aspect of Israeli life. Need milk? Cottage cheese? Rice? Warm beer? A dozen eggs? It's around the corner, in a 12 m² shop the size of a closet, and in the case of my neighborhood [3] was manned by an elderly couple. Rabi in the morning, and Freda, his wife, in the afternoon. (At this size and condition, with dusty, bowed shelves that may collapse at any time, this store probably couldn't exist in the US due to any number of codes and rules). So when the closest red dot that appeared on the map read "Eagle Supermarket" and Seemed to be a brief walk from my apartment and would bring me to a new part of the neighborhood, I set out confident that with that kind of name they'd have what I needed. I set out excited to discover my new local "Makolet," where I'd do my fill-in shopping, the place that would serve as my neighbor with a cup-of-sugar-when-I-need-it [4], now that I no longer know my neighbors. Approaching the market it Seemed to be closed, its windows blocked from the inside with merchandise and little light coming through the door. The non-lit neon signage [5] read differently than the Google search returns, "EAGLE SUPER MARKET."

Gated porches to homes and less-than-fresh coats of paint give a distinctly different feel from the buildings neighboring mine, just a few blocks away, closer to Benefit Street and to College Hill [6]. I approached the door and it opened; I stepped through the threshold and it was though I was stepping back a few decades and into another time, just as I felt each time I ran around the corner in my Jerusalem neighborhood to exchange greetings and small-talk with Freda. Here the room was lined with a scattering of lonely shelves, two to three low-hanging levels, where items of varying categories sat, just one or two of each. Off-brand products made up the majority of the selection [7], and the unfamiliar labels and the dust that gathered on them bolstered the sense that I was experience some kind of visual time-travel. The lighting, the smell, and the selective inventory marked the inverse of the big-box supermarkets [8], which, upon my returns to the United States always induce stress and an overwhelming confusion about the American need for forty-four varieties of potato chips [9]. I retrieved a bottle of Diet Coke, although they didn't have caffeine free. But, as with Freda, I would have felt guilty leaving with nothing. So I paid the woman who sat at the cash and had soft, short curly hair, and I wondered if she was the owner. Our exchange induced few niceties, and as I left I found myself wondering, and doubting, whether she could be my new Freda.

I have never actively thought about the traits of my childhood bedroom. I always took it as a given, never tried to change or curate much, and still it is a soothing and safe place for me. I can maneuver through the room in the dark at night, it holds my life's library (save for the few, most important books that were worth the extra weight

to bring to Israel), and it is home to my beloved my Dream Machine alarm clock/radio, ca. 1994, that still works as it did when I was seven. All I know about this room is that here I will sleep well. If only I could transfer this to my bedrooms elsewhere.

I'm here, now, and sick, twenty-seven, and sleeping off a cold at my parents' house. I haven't done this since I was 20 — moving backwards and forwards at once. Yet, with all of this familiarity and comfort, there isn't really anything that I would consciously transfer to Providence (except for the light, perhaps). The bedroom is for the

unconscious, non-doing hours. It is for sleeping, and maybe for containing things, but that's about all. For the past four years I slept in a bomb shelter, left undecorated, and then a loft where you could not stand up straight, leaving little want or need to make the space more inviting.

(Re/Progress) IV

Distortion VI

Cyclicality VII

(See 'Liquid,' 'Solid,' 'Transition')

LOCAL EXCHANGE I

How can the experience of a place thousands of miles away be transposed into book form for others to experience? Seeking to provide a multi-sensory experience, a book and accompanying sound piece construct a read of the central outdoor market in Jerusalem through the voices of its patrons. Movement is an embedding mechanism between people and place, and in this book the intimacy of anecdotes and stories collected from Jerusalemites is mirrored by a symbiosis between the reader and the book's scale. Motion is inherent in its reading, rhyming with the physicality of moving through the market.

Shuk Machane Yehuda is the central outdoor market in Jerusalem. Seated at the entrance of the city, it is a network of alleys that weave a grid between three parallel streets. Referred to by all as *The Shuk* (Hebrew for market), it derives its name from the Machane Yehuda neighborhood where it was founded at the end of the nineteenth century. The market is a necessity for some and an attraction for others. It long served as the central source of groceries for locals, with cheaper produce than the supermarkets offered, and a variety that could be found only there. Mounds of raw olives in the Fall; fuzzy, fresh almonds and stacked, raw grape leaves in the Spring. To go to the *shuk* is both routine and celebratory, depending on the day. Monday evenings are calm, Fridays are crowded. As a friend aptly describes it in the book (opposite) "You never know what to expect. At the end you might want to kill yourself, or you'll really enjoy yourself."

Natalie

*Vendors that are kind to me when
I don't have enough money and let me
buy what I need with just a few shekels.
Once there was a vendor who weighed
out chestnuts that I put in a bag and
it came to exactly one kilo, so he said
I need to work for him and it made
me laugh.*

מוכרים שמפרגנים וכשאין לי כסף
נותנים לי בכמה שקלים לקנות.
פעם היה מוכר ששקל ערמונים
ששמתי בשקית והיה בדיוק קילו אז
הוא אמר שאני צריכה לעבוד אצלו
וזה הצחיק אותי.

Shai

Two weeks ago a 22 year old vendor at a cheese stall invited me inside his stall to smoke a joint with him.

לפני שבועיים מוכר
בן 22 בבאסטה של
גבינות הזמין אותי פנימה
לתוך הבאסטה שלו
לעשן איתו ג׳וינט.

I think that the shuk stands at the cultural center of Jerusalem. It's the meeting point of the city's residents – secular, religious, Arab (even though they have their own market). In the shuk everyone is equal. The shuk is special because it concentrates the diverse cultures of Israel, a wide variety of ethnicities, foods and spices from around the world. The food that doesn't have a brand-name, the seller that shouts all kinds of slogans, and in the age of supermarkets it's special and valuable, culturally and historically.

Guy

אני חושב שבאספקט התרבותי
של ירושלים השוק עומד במרכז.
כל שוק שהוא הוא מקום המפגש
של תושבי העיר, חילונים, דתיים
וערבים(ולמרות שלהם יש שוק
משלהם). בשוק כולם שווים.
השוק מיוחד בעיניי כי הוא מרכז
בתוכו את מגוון התרבויות הארץ-
ישראליות, מגוון אתני רחב
ומאכלים ותבלינים מרחבי העולם.
האוכל לא ממותג ולא מיוחצ׳ן
הרבה מעבר למוכר שצועק כל
מיני סיסמאות, ובעידן הסופרים זה
מיוחד ובעל ערך תרבותי היסטורי.

The book is rotated in the hand as it is read, mirroring the experience of moving through the market's winding alleyways.
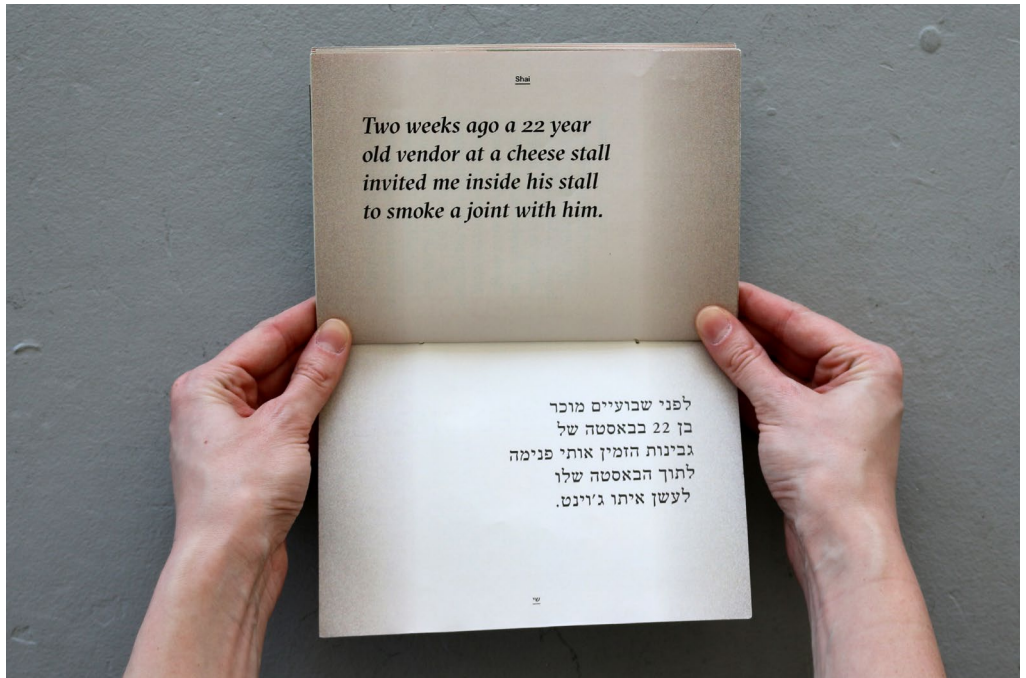
But they know all of these languages. So you learn it.
You learn to speak the language of the market.

LOCAL EXCHANGE II

The basis of the *shuk* is that of exchange—
both financial and interactive—between
its patrons and vendors. In the narratives
in *Local Exchange I*, a majority of the most
significant memories are those of interactions
with the vendors. However their perspective
is less sought out, only called upon come
election season as contenders make their
rounds asking questions and shaking hands.
It is the vendors that serve as a litmus test
for the mood of *ha'am*, the nation.

In the summer of 2015 I interviewed
over twenty vendors and documented the
market with them as my focus. This research
is employed in two formats, a video and
photography book, each with the intention
of bringing the individuality and narrative of
the vendors to the fore.

This work seeks to convey the humanity
of these individuals and all that entails—
challenges, joy, kindness, terseness, frust-
ration, humility, exhaustion. To convey their
nature and environment, but in a quiet way
that allows the viewer to feel that he or
she is a part of the dialogue. A two-channel
video weaves excerpts from interviews with
images that champion the vendor in each
composition. In every way the film vocalizes
their less sought out perspective, taking a
quiet and intimate approach—a contrast to
the loud and chaotic caricature that typically
represents the vendors of this market.
The proposed display of this video is at
human scale at eye-level, with the intention
of increasing the intimacy of the viewer-
projection relationship.

Two-Channel Video
5m 40s, December 2015

But all the time I'm calm.

Proposed installation view

But all the time I'm calm.
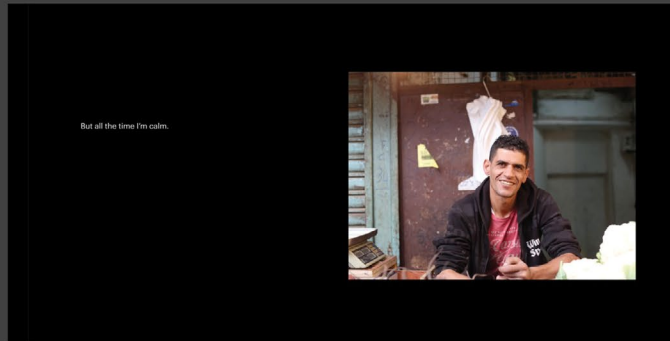
Do you guys drink instant coffee here?

Not instant coffee, this is hot chocolate and that's a cappuccino.

"Yea, we're *ashkenazim* here if that's the question." [Other shopkeeper]

This stall is different from the others.

When I worked in landscaping I drank black coffee (Turkish coffee). Now I drink cappuccino. We're moving up.

How long have you been here, in the world of the cappuccino?

Almost three years.

In this stall?

Yes, in this one.

What brought you here?

I had just finished working somewhere and my neighbor owns this stall and offered me a job. They're neighbors from before, from Tekoa.

Is that where you're from originally?

Not originally, I lived there for three-and-a-half years.

And are some of the products you sell from there?

Not a lot from Tekoa. There are some small farmers there, one who's pretty serious, that grows asparagus and raspberries. There's one farm that sells more and grows less. They do more importing and distribution.

So when I see shallots with a Tekoa label they aren't really grown in Israel?

No, the shallots are from Holland. The endive is from Belgium. This lemon—the lime, sorry—is from Keren Maharat (next to Haifa).

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Jerusalem.

Really? From which neighborhood?

Kiryat Yovel.

And is there an experience from this period of time that you're working here that stands out for you, something good or bad?

I have a continuous, growing memory of a change that's happening to me; of meeting many, many, many, many, many kinds of people, whom if I hadn't worked here I wouldn't have met. They're from every place in the world, and I just wouldn't have encountered them. Other people who work in these kinds of jobs—restaurants, stores... they haven't encountered these people. It opens you up. It's crazy, you wouldn't believe there are people like this, for the good and the bad. I just learned to contain, to open up, to get to know people, and also—also—to filter things out. To see something and to immediately ignore it and move onward. It's interesting.

Very. Is there a certain time of day or the week that you prefer to be here?

I like the morning and the evenings. You can hear music, there are fewer people around, it's nicer. A bit of empty time. And with people too, there are times when they're fun and sometimes someone can come and make your day. Sometimes I like the morning or the evening, or alone, or a gentle time.

Do you always work in pairs?

As the week moves toward its end [Friday] there are more people—more that come to buy and more that come to work. I've had times when I'd open on Friday at four in the morning until seven, eight o'clock. So I'd have four, hours of work when I can listen to music, in a sort of trance. It's cleansing.

This stall feels different from the others. I also see that you have an air conditioner, I've never seen that.

This place is also different because of what we sell, the way the work is managed, and the personality of the place. It's more welcoming to the employees and to the patrons. We try.

Do you have a relationship with the other vendors nearby?

Yes, it's unavoidable, unavoidable. We're vendors in the *shuk*, a strange character that's suddenly here together. But we—everyone—toughened up a bit. We learned how to speak the language of the *shuk*. It's really strange in the beginning, you don't know how to understand other people. Because everyone is really tough. But you learn. The bosses too, they are on this kind of seam. They're *Sepharadi*, *Mizrachi*, this is their home. They grew up in the *shuk*, but they know all of these languages. So you learn it too, you learn to speak the language of the *shuk*. And every person that you encounter here has his own language, the way he speaks and you need to speak to him.

What do you mean by the language of the shuk*?*

There are people that come to buy from you and immediately come to try and pull one off on you, to lower the price, to complain about the prices, or they come with a kind of brutalism. So if you aren't prepared or you don't know, as a—it's a bit troubling to say but—as an *Ashkenazi* who hasn't been here and didn't grow up here...I know the *shuk*, *achla*. But when you first begin working here you're in shock. Like, what did I do to you, why are you attacking me? I don't return their brutal way of talking. Or the opposite—a spoiled *Tel Avivi* or *Tzfoni* comes, and either you put him in his place or you speak to him a bit more...

I guess it depends on your mood.

Totally.

It sounds nice, overall.

Yes it's nice, delicious. It cleanses your eyes.

Do you have a sense for how long you want to keep working here?

Not right now, really. I want to move but I don't know when and how it will happen. But I know that it will be hard for me to leave here. Because I got used to a very, very high standard of living because I eat in the shuk, and most of the food I eat is from this shop, and it's really high class. Anything else will be really hard to get used to, so it's a bit scary.

Jerusalem, July 2015

LOCAL EXCHANGE III

A photography book compiles the documentation of the vendors with a selection of full-length interviews. The desire to elevate the perspective of the vendors in a book format presents a different kind of design challenge. Focused composition, a delicate typographic hierarchy, and the rhythm of imagery all point toward the vendor as the focal point. Within the *Local Exhchange* series, this output is an opportunity to enact more subtle cues for the reader to absorb the diverse voices and stories.

LOCAL

THE VENDORS OF
SHUK MACHANE YEHUDA
JERUSALEM

EXCHANGE

LOCAL

THE VENDORS OF
SHUK MACHANE YEHUDA
JERUSALEM

EXCHANGE

120 pages, 8×10"
May 2016

OSHRI

PERSPECTIVES
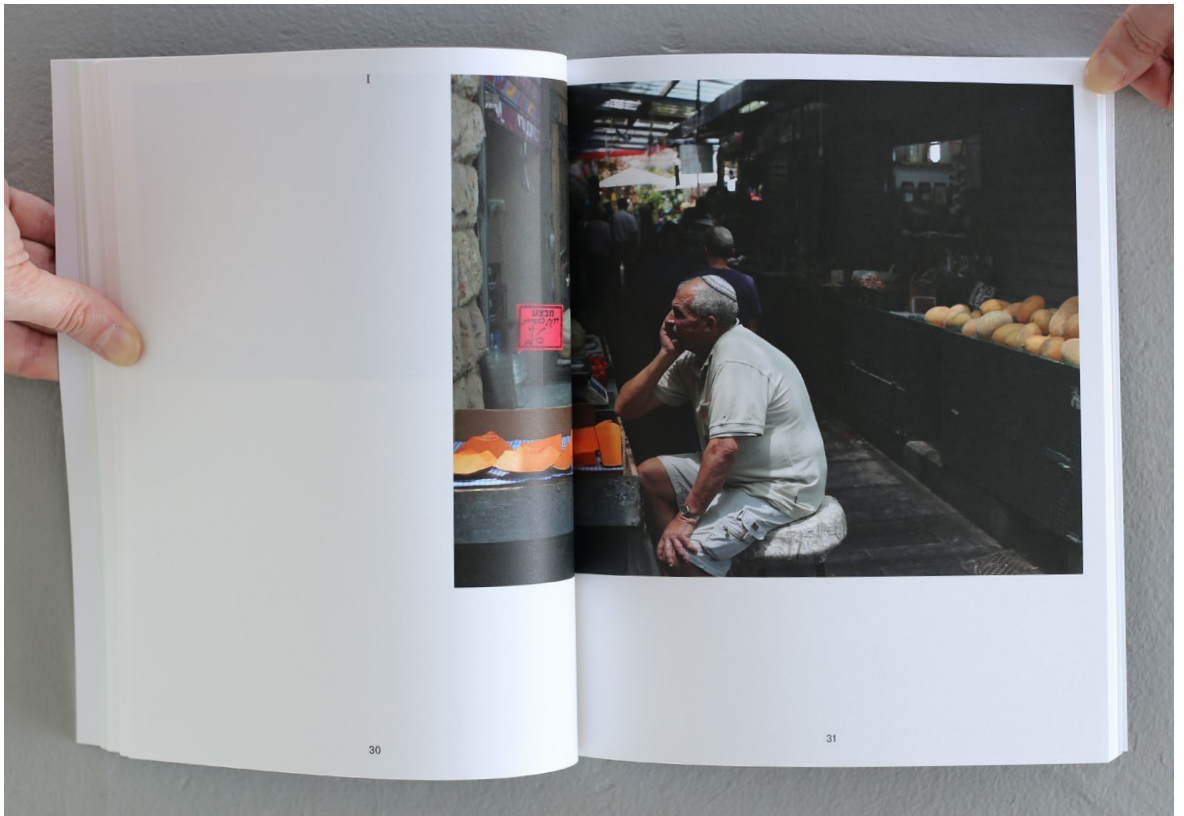
How many years have you been in the *shuk*?

Fifteen years.

Always at this spot?

No, I started selling candy and then after that I opened a vegetable shop for a short time. Then I came back to this shop to work, and now I'm a partner.

What brought you to the shuk?

I worked for the [national] Electricity Company. I left that job and my friend offered me a job with him and I've been here ever since.

And how is it?

It's really tiring, not just the physical nature of the work but also the hours. But it's very interesting. Because the whole world passes through here. That's what gives me the energy, every time you see different people, all different kinds of people. Other languages, other cultures, and it's fun. I am in touch with clients from Panama, the United States…

And what about the local community, are there also people you know?

There are people that come regularly, now they're friends. They come in as though it's their home — they do what they need on their own and I just take care of the bill, without asking questions.

Does that give meaning to this kind of work?

It's fulfilling that people return here and that people value me because of the way I treat them — as a client, without taking them for granted. It's most important to serve the client and to be kind, it doesn't matter if they are irritated or I'm irritated, because they're the client. The client is always right in the end, and it's fun for me.

On that note, another vendor said that it takes time to learn the language of the *shuk*. What does that mean to you?

It used to be that the language of the *shuk* was *schuna*.[12] More nerves, more curses and yelling — to sell what they have in the stall. Today it's not like that. In the last ten years the market's changed, with the restaurants, cafés, galleries. Who thought there would ever be galleries here? On the one hand it adds to the market, and on the other it takes away, because if I go twenty meters to the right or twenty meters to the left, there aren't any vegetable stands here. Maybe one or two. People used to come to the *shuk* for fruit, vegetables, meat, and fish — today there isn't any of that in my area. There are more tourists, fewer locals.

You see a difference in the population that comes here?

The population is young, between ages 25–40. Tons of them come. But it isn't 'going to the market' anymore. They come to the *shuk* for three, four hours to enjoy the café, to do some shopping and then a restaurant and then home. That's the process.

Do you think that's changing the character of the *shuk*?

The character is changing, it's more calm. People come knowing where they want to shop, they know where they want to go, what they want to buy and where. It's not what it used to be when every single stall was fruits and vegetables, so there was more of a selection.

Right, you wouldn't know who to go to.

Exactly. There was so much competition. Today there's just one area, the fruits and vegetables are in the Iraqi market[13] mostly, and over here it's the promenade. The *halma*, the candy, the cafés, the restaurants…

Someone else ventured that in two years there won't be a shuk anymore.

It's not that there won't be a *shuk* in two years, the *shuk* will change again before two years from now. Maybe there will be fewer produce stands, but it won't take two years.

It's hard to imagine.

It's very hard to imagine. Perhaps there will be less variety, but the *shuk* will be here forever.

1°   50
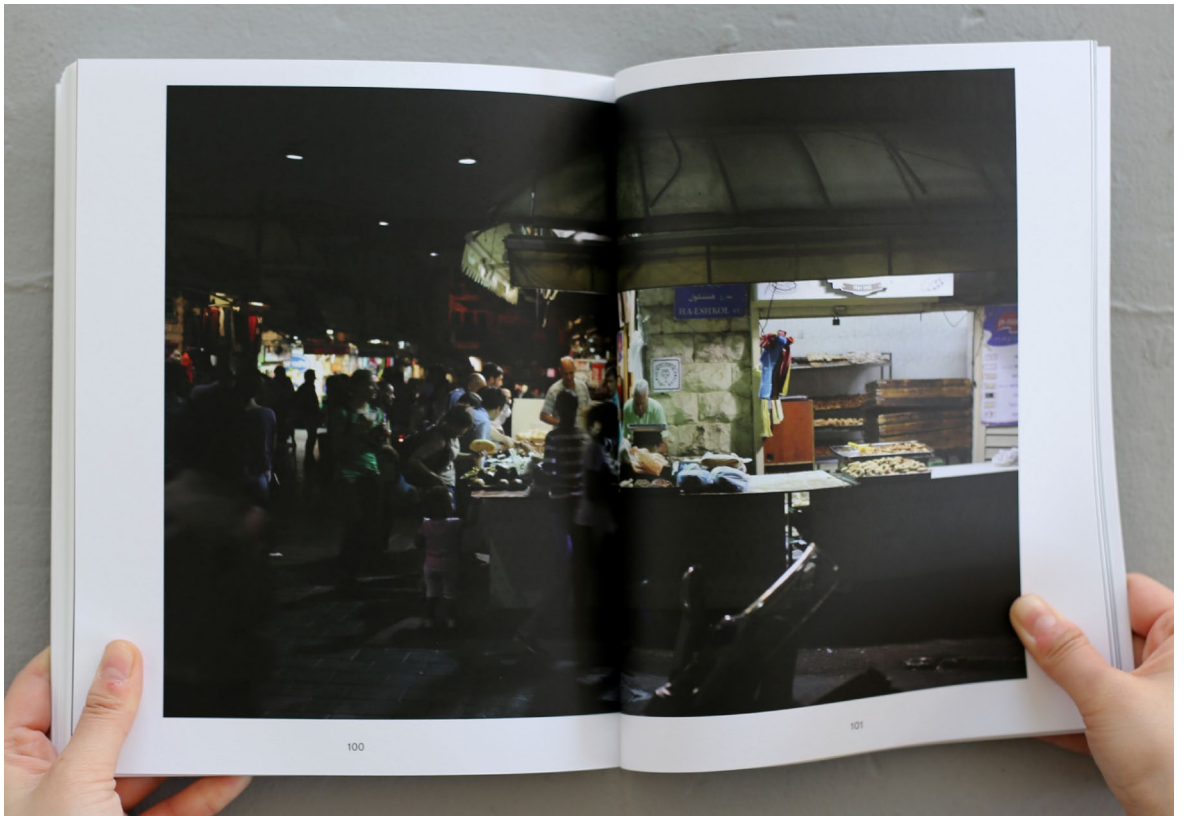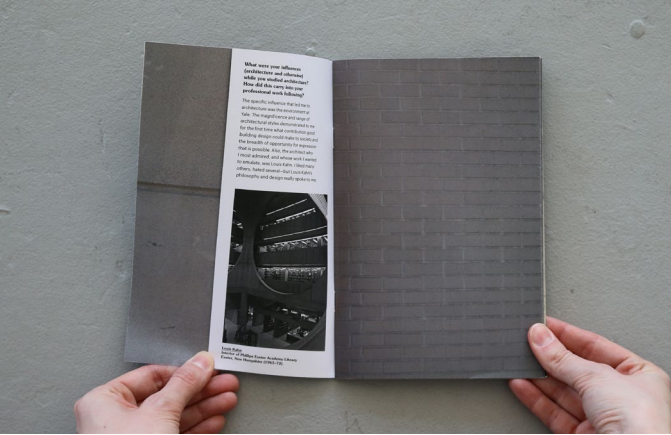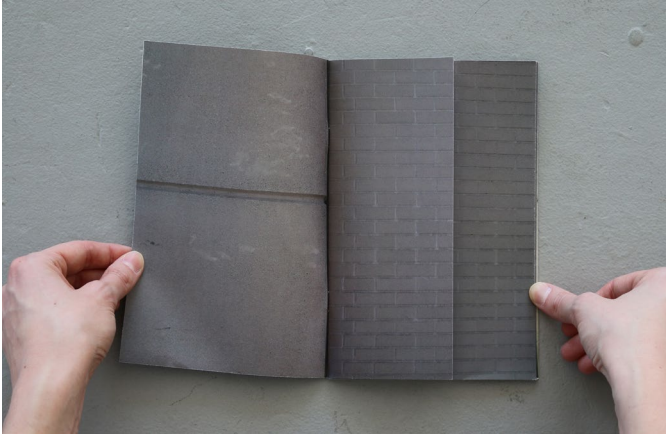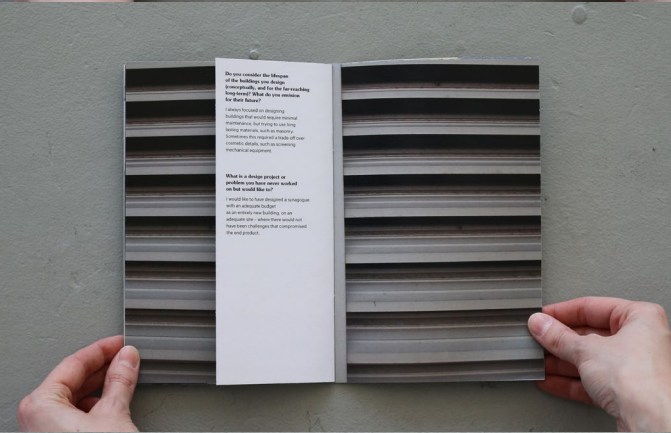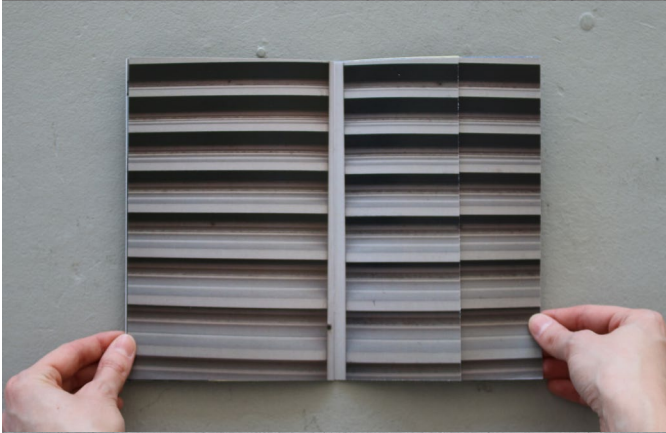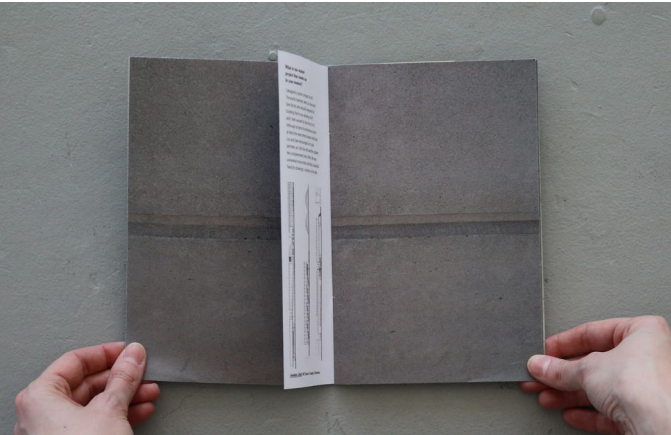
UNTOUCHABLE AVALON

Humans possess an innate sense for materiality in landscape, and for its change over time. We know this on subconscious level, and read place through its material coating. Italo Calvino describes one of the many intangibilities of place in his hypnotic meditation, *Invisible Cities*:

> "The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls."[1]

We sense decay and can identify the forgery from the original Gothic structure. But what of the sensations of closeness and distance one can have with a building? A booklet and set of posters address The Avalon, a luxury apartment complex in Providence, designed by my father's architecture firm over twenty years ago. The making of the book is a means of materializing the tension between my feeling of closeness to the building due to a personal connection, yet also a distance or coldness, as it is a luxury apartment complex out of my financial reach.

On its surface the booklet is a material inventory of the building's exterior surfaces, accessible to any pedestrian, and flaps reveal an interview conducted with my father about his architectural background and philosophy. This interplay constructs a relationship between the coating of the building and the interior philosophical texture of the architect, the distance there can be between exterior and interior.

1   Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1974. 11.

Luxury Rentals

AvalonCennCenterPlace.com
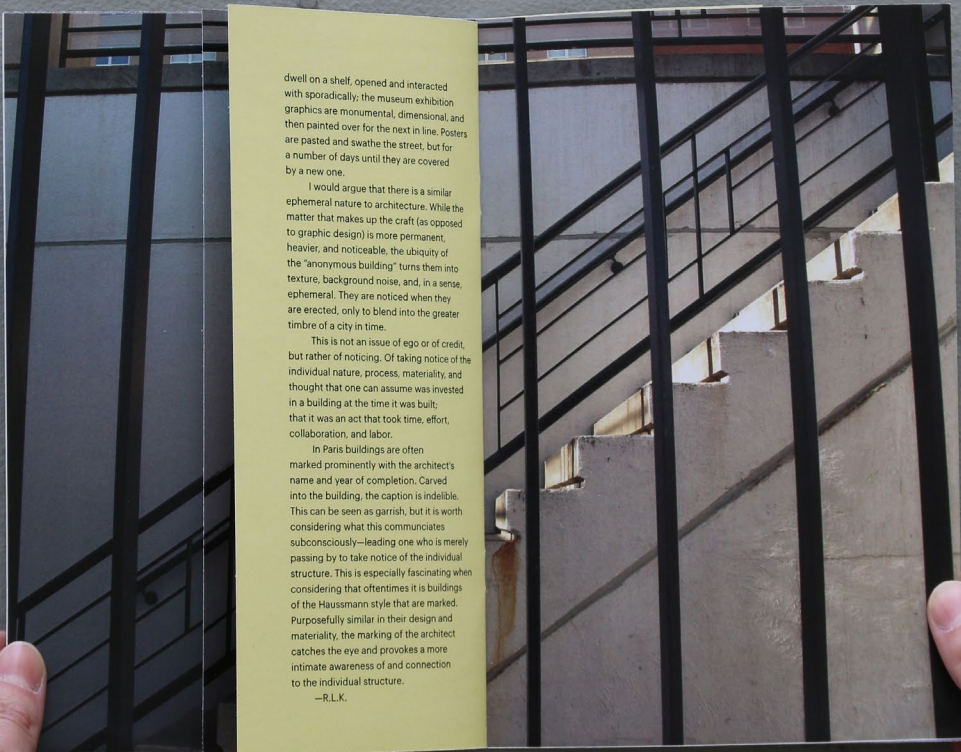
dwell on a shelf, opened and interacted with sporadically; the museum exhibition graphics are monumental, dimensional, and then painted over for the next in line. Posters are pasted and swathe the street, but for a number of days until they are covered by a new one.

I would argue that there is a similar ephemeral nature to architecture. While the matter that makes up the craft (as opposed to graphic design) is more permanent, heavier, and noticeable, the ubiquity of the "anonymous building" turns them into texture, background noise, and, in a sense, ephemeral. They are noticed when they are erected, only to blend into the greater timbre of a city in time.

This is not an issue of ego or of credit, but rather of noticing. Of taking notice of the individual nature, process, materiality, and thought that one can assume was invested in a building at the time it was built; that it was an act that took time, effort, collaboration, and labor.

In Paris buildings are often marked prominently with the architect's name and year of completion. Carved into the building, the caption is indelible. This can be seen as garrish, but it is worth considering what this communicates subconsciously—leading one who is merely passing by to take notice of the individual structure. This is especially fascinating when considering that oftentimes it is buildings of the Haussmann style that are marked. Purposefully similar in their design and materiality, the marking of the architect catches the eye and provokes a more intimate awareness of and connection to the individual structure.

—R.L.K.
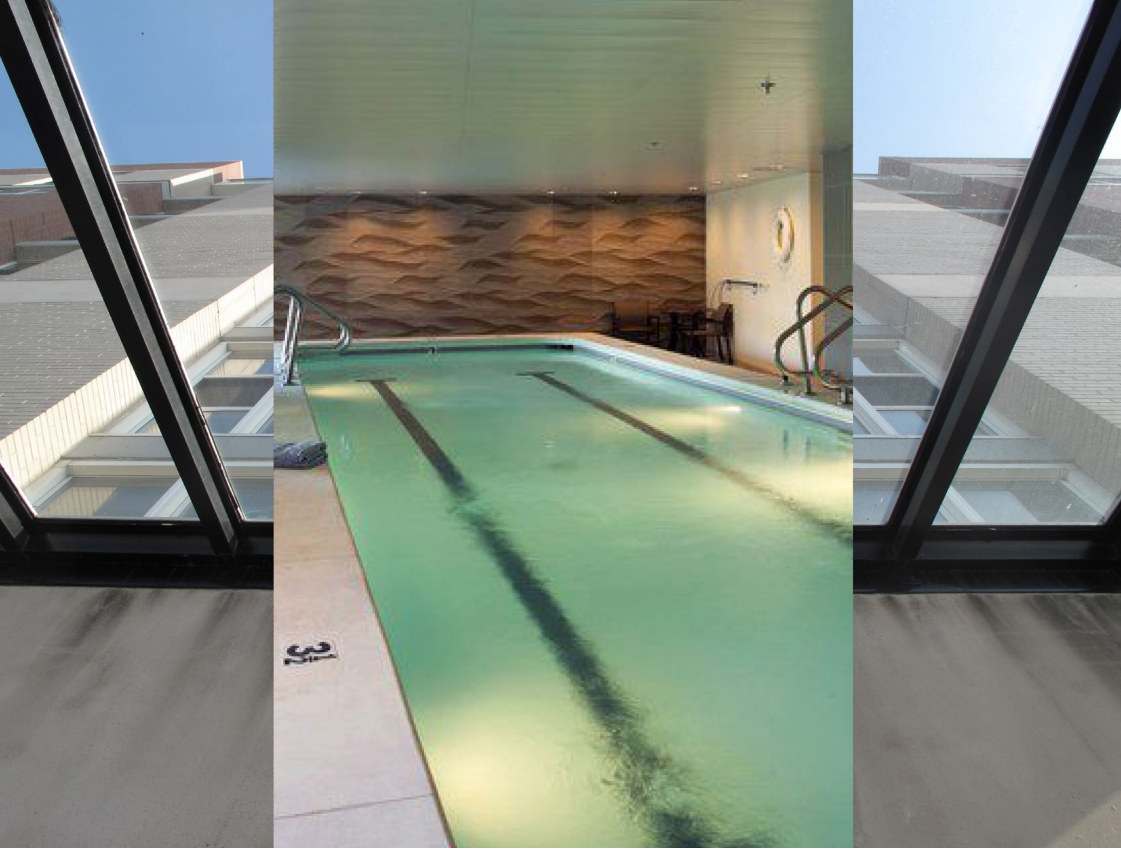
A set of two posters highlight the contrast and intersections between photographs of the Avalon's exterior and the aspirational renderings of its interior.

Series of three posters
18×24" each, February 2015

NOTES ON
ANONYMOUS ARCHITECTURE

A neighborhood, a city, a skyline—all are collections. Any collection is accumulated and curated over time, and this is true for the built landscape. Buildings of all sizes, forms, and textures are conceived and constructed; some remain for a long period of time and some move on – their cumulative topography varies much like book spines on a shelf. The systemized signaling in the book form developed over time is such that the title and author are exposed and immediately accessible to the peruser of the shelf. Neighborhoods and buildings are not so. The craftsmen, builders, and architects of these structures, those that are both utilitarian and artful in nature, are nearly always anonymous. Save for real estate moguls whose logo may mark a non-distinct shopping center, or branded "starchitects" whose names are the catapult for their building's identity and reputation, most structures live in quiet anonymity.

In Providence buildings are marked for their historic significance by those who dwelled there. This is not without value, as inhabitants make the space their own, redefine it, and form the identity of the neighborhood. But what does this mean for the identity of the unknown architect? And what of the appreciation for the individual structure? The provincial, old-style nature of Providence is often referenced as one of its most definitive attributes. Yet we give little note to those who crafted this style, selected these materials, and built up the landscape that – having been purposely preserved – silently wraps us in the sensations of what it may have felt like to live here in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

Graphic designers continue to struggle with the ephemeral nature of their work. A book is printed only to dwell on the bookcase, opened and interacted with sporadically; museum exhibition graphics are monumental, dimensional, and then painted over for the next in line. Posters are pasted and bathe the street, but for a number of days until they are covered by a new one.

I would argue that there is a similar ephemeral nature to architecture. While the matter that makes up the craft (as opposed to graphic design) is more permanent, heavier, and noticeable, the ubiquity of the "anonymous building" turns them into texture, background noise, and, in a sense, ephemeral. They are noticed when they are erected, only to blend into the greater timbre of a city in time.

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— R.L.K, February 2015
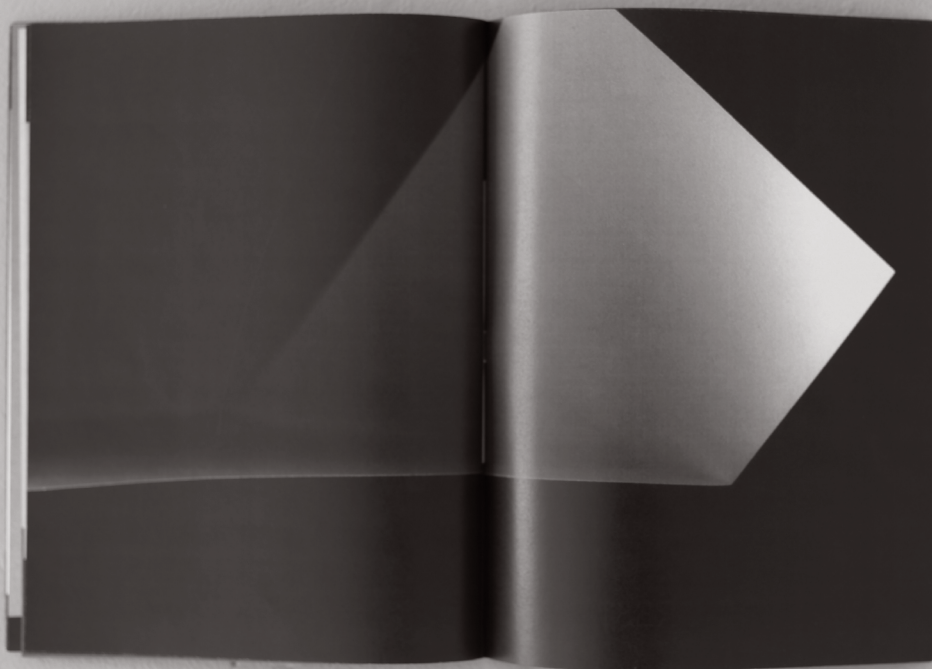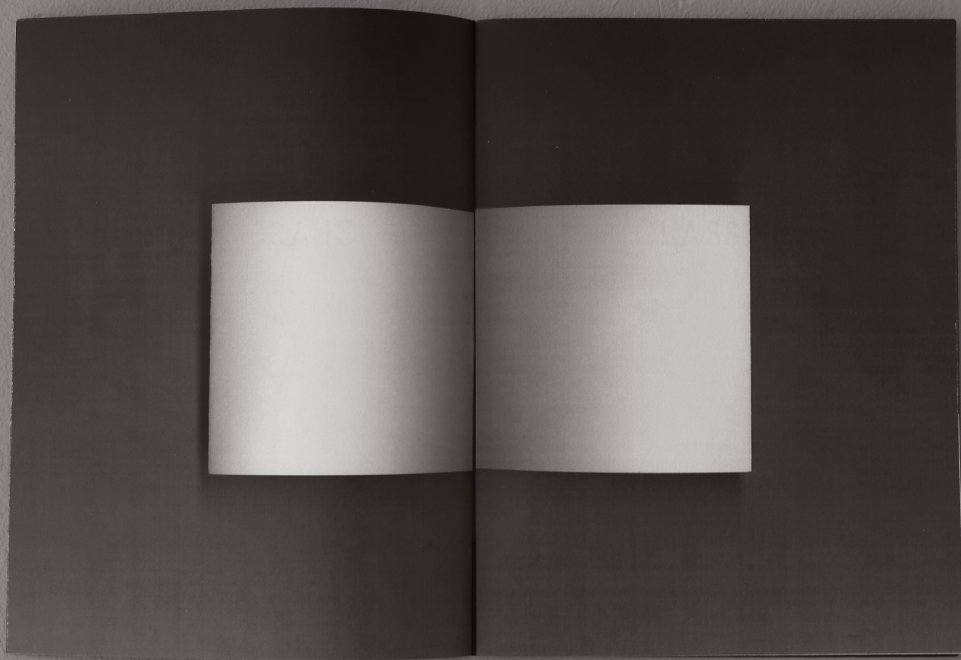
DEPTH OF FIELD

Locality can be large, untenable, and impossible to convey—but notions of the locus can also be small and finite. Multi-faceted, rich narrative can be culled from a mere fragment—we see this in the work of archaeologists, and revel in the opportunity that limited clues provide for building a story. In *Important Artifacts And...*,[2] Leanne Shapton curates and choreographs hundreds of fragments—objects, photographs, t-shirts, furniture, and bric-a-brac—the postmortem of a relationship, allowing the reader to read broadly and deeply into the images, drawing their own connections to construct the story and its denouement.

Acting on this impulse, *Depth of Field* implies architectural form with materials that are unexpectedly expected. One cannot necessarily mine the process that led to the making of these images—perhaps it is a photographed architectural remnant from decades ago; perhaps it lives in a museum in Cologne. It is this play on the narratives we build around histories of place that is intriguing, as well as the material study of taking architectural drawing paper, an expected medium, and affecting it beyond recognition. This means of working moves from responsive to inventive, reversing the process. Rather than reading and responding to place and its materiality, here I generate the artifact, presenting an architectural coating from which one might infer narrative, build stories around, or that will in the least draw up certain connotations of place.

...Art and archaeology also share a profound understanding of the primacy of the material in all culture, the overwhelming importance of mere "matter" and "stuff" in any attempt to intuitively grasp and read the cluttered fabric of the world, the cuneiform of things.[1]

16 pages, 8×10.5"
October 2015

1   Roelstraete, Dieter. *The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art in association with the University of Chicago Press, 2013. 47.

2   Shapton, Leanne. *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009.
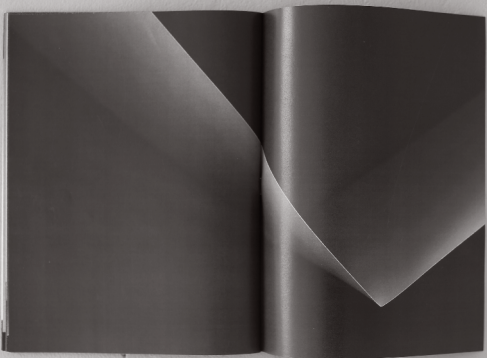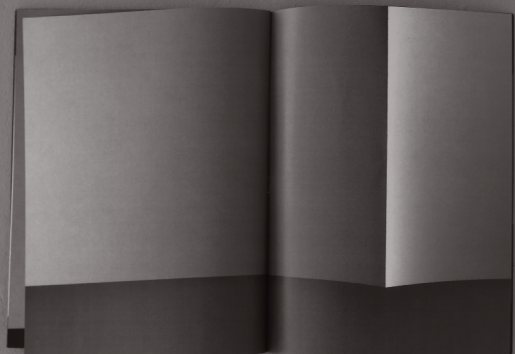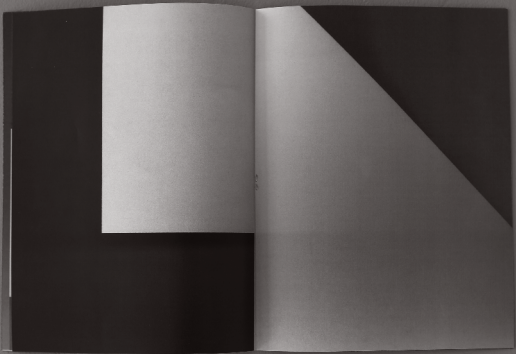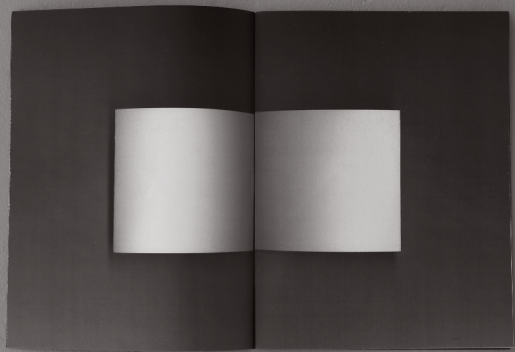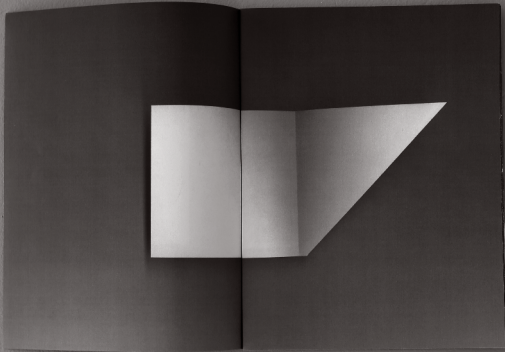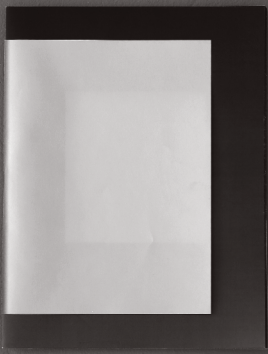
Fragment I, Poster
15.5×30", December 2015
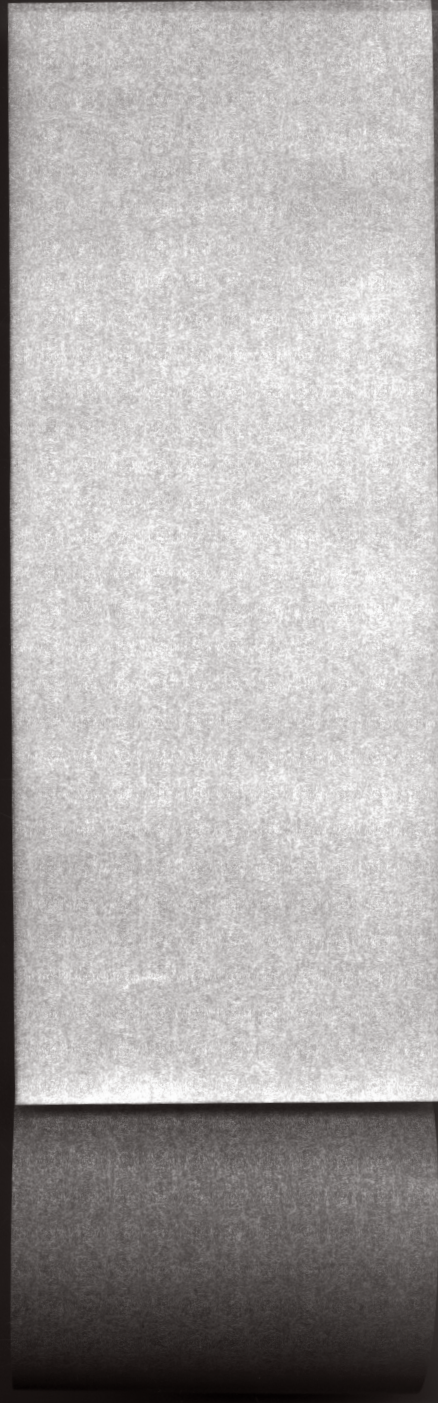
Fragment I, Poster
15.5×30", December 2015

Ivan Sigal is the Executive Director of Global Voices, a non-profit citizen oriented media network, a researcher of citizen media and digital storytelling at the Harvard Berkman Center, and a published photographer. Currently based in Washington DC, Sigal has spent most of his life abroad and demonstrates beautiful and articulate methods of reading and translating place. His photographic work addresses specific localities in ways that maintain an openness for the viewer— there are multiple entry-points, layers, and reads. The work can be different each time it is viewed. I was interested in learning from Sigal how he views formal methods and authorship as it relates to expressions of place.

R.L.K. Where are you from originally?

I.S. I'm originally from rural Pennsylvania, but I've lived overseas probably around thirteen years of my adult life.

Where?

Germany. Well, I've sort of lived and worked in somewhere between 80 and 90 countries, so it's complicated. But most of that time I was in the former Soviet Union — in Moscow, in Central Asia — and then also based out of Bangkok for a bunch of years. And I lived in Germany and Czechoslovakia before that.

What first brought you overseas?

I was a student in Germany.

What did you study there?

German literature and film and theater.

Were you fluent in German prior to that?

No, not prior to that. I was fluent, but I haven't used it in a long time, so I wouldn't say I'm fluent anymore. I'm functional, conversational. I used to have to write research papers in German, but it's been a really long time since I've done that.

Is academic German very different from spoken German?

There's Hochdeutch for high German, which is proper spoken academic German, which is the same as the written German, but then there's dialects all over the country because German like many languages wasn't actually a single language until the late 19th century. It was many dialects. So, Schwäbisch in the Southwest is very different from Bairisch in the Southeast. And Swiss German is something else again and Austrian German is something else again, but everybody speaks the same. Arabic is that way, too, right?

Right.

Classical Arabic everybody can read and understand, but the Moroccans and the Lebanese can barely understand each other.

Right. Can we go a little bit back to the beginning to learn more about how you came to photography and journalism? What is the relationship between these practices that you have?

The place to start for me probably is with the earliest stuff around learning how to shoot. The first mature body of work that I think that I did is probably on the basis of the first couple of years that I lived in Russia. Some of that work has been published, but most of it hasn't been. I had a very different understanding of it when I made it twenty years ago than what I understand now, actually. When I finished graduate school I won a photography fellowship to work in Russia. And it was a landscape project, so it was about the idea that the way we shape the land, the way we shape our cities, and the way we build our landscapes is premised on the logic of ideas and ideology. So, I was asking the question: was there an ideological shift in the former Soviet space? And if so, what did it look like? How was it manifested in the landscape?

It was a really interesting research question, but when I was working on this in the mid- to late '90s, the answer was mostly that it looked like decay. There wasn't actually that much to see and I wound up spending a lot of time working on refugee issues. I went to Grozny and I photographed the remains of the first Chechen War, and the most extensive body of work that was published was around the ruined landscapes of Grozny with a text piece that went with it. But it was still kind of an early idea for me to pair a body of images with a body of text, which is now the way I work in almost every case. What was interesting to me about that work is that I had a very kind of specific idea of what I wanted to do. And I was doing it, but while I was doing it I was also taking lots of other pictures that were just of interest to whatever was happening in my life. And that work has proven over time to

be much more interesting to me. The biggest body of that work, I would describe it as fragments of a whole, like discarded elements of sculptural findings in the landscape that together kind of give you an idea about a place. I'm actually revisiting it and thinking about how to show it very differently from the way I thought I wanted to show it a long time ago.

Do you envision that involving some new writing, to accompany those works?

Yes. New writing, a new way of printing, and collage work together. I find it really interesting to let work sit and for time to kind of inhabit the work. And everything about photography, to me, is about ambiguity and about the multiple ways that you can read an image. So, I'm not really interested in photojournalism for the sake of photojournalism — like, the idea that an image is a description of a place. I'm comfortable with that idea, but I'm not especially interested in it. It's kind of very reductive.

That's something that I enjoyed a lot in White Road. *That the photography itself has so much movement and leaves a lot of that ambiguity and that space. Even just thinking about the two pieces being separate [the written and photographic volumes], I found myself going back and forth between them. It leaves a lot of room for the person seeing the work to read into it. How do you toggle those levers of ambiguity? There is still a specificity to the way that you're approaching the work because you are writing and crafting.*

The editing process for that book was really extensive. Really extensive. We started with 900 photos. And Paul Roth, a curator at Corcoran, we did the photo edit together, or much of it, anyway. The text started with about 450 pages of writing. Time really mattered for that project because when I finished the work it was current events, but

by the time it was published it was history. And the work changed. The kinds of pictures that I decided to show changed, so most of the images that had kind of an iconic quality or were easy — like, one note, or about sensation — most of those pictures fell out. I'm so glad that it took so much time because all of the bullshit went away. All of the stuff that was about ego, all the stuff that was, like, easy, just dropped out.

That's very hard to do!
It is. It's really hard to do.

It's letting go of your darlings.
Killing your darlings. But once you do, you realize that they weren't actually your darlings. There are things that are repetitive or clichéd, and it's so hard to make an image that actually has its own character. I've actually become pretty comfortable with the idea now, as a result of that process, of letting work sit and being patient with it. There are some kinds of work that that's not true, but for the personal projects, time matters. The Pakistan project — *KCR* — I shot it two years ago and I've shown it in a couple

of different formats and a couple of different installation forms. The way the text works for that project is the use of code to structure the relationships between the images, so the images are coded by category. There are eight categories and then a single-channel 20-minute video. Every one of the images in the project is coded with a category and there's also the text that can be read as a linear text, but every sentence stands alone and can be read. Every sentence is also coded by the same category structure. The code edits sequences of image and text together in a randomized fashion so that you never experience the project twice in the same way. In each category it's the same body of text in the body of images that are cycling through that particular window, but each one is moving at its own pace.

How does the algorithm pull the nine images at any given time are? Is it one from each category so that it's always kind of the same distribution? How does that function? How many images are in the bank?

INTERVIEW: IVAN SIGAL

This version of it has 400 images, though I have 5,000. So this is the kind of advanced prototype. I rewrote the text recently, so this version of the text is about 6,500 words and I cut about 500 words out of it.

> When you were doing this photography and video work, how was your process different from your work on *White Road*? Was your approach different?

It was very different — it was programmatic and strategic. With this project *(KCR)* there are 24 stations, roughly. I visited them systematically and I shot in the same way — using the same lenses, same aspect ratios, about the same framing. So, for instance, for this channel every image is made on the tracks or perpendicular to the tracks. I'm standing physically on the track or right next to them for every image. This sequence, for instance, is a body of images that are made directly on the line of the tracks looking straight downward. And it just so happens that here the tracks are underneath pavement so you can't see them, but if you looked at the actual image you would see in the distance. Sometimes the tracks are visible and sometimes they aren't, but there's usually artifacts, remnants of the infrastructure somewhere even if it's way in the distance.

> When you were shooting this did you already have the nine-channel installation in mind?

I knew I was going to do something like this but I didn't know exactly what. I knew I wanted to write, so I shot at the same time, so every morning for three hours and every evening for three hours, with the same light and construction. Every text is a passage from one point to another point. It's a movement from either arriving or departing. Then there's a whole body of animated stills that are shot very intentionally — like, shooting nearly identical images that create a sense of animation or flow.

In the project that I did on the market, actually, I wasn't planning on using photography at all and was planning on just using the interviews. But I did shoot a lot of quick-moving images and I was glad that I did in the end because it gives that sense of movement. What I love here is the layering — it's almost how I would imagine the fog of moving through a new place.

Or moving through the same place every day, where you see slight variations. The idea of circularity and repetition and return for this project is really important, and that you can watch it and you'll never see it the same way twice, but you'll see almost the same thing every time.

> That's really powerful. And I believe you wrote in *White Road* about how the city is what it is only when you're in it, and when you leave it it's something else entirely. I think there's something so alive and ephemeral about the way that we experience places in that it's so different for everyone. I think that's what's amazing about this, that it feels so intimate but also very accessible. Was there any part of this, in using the algorithm—was that out of a desire for it to be a way of taking a step back, or as a more objective read?

It wasn't about objectivity. It was about chance. I'm not interested in objectivity, really. I mean, not the language of it. I'm interested in dependencies. I'm interested in interdependencies and contextualizations and playing with those ideas, and in this case I was interested in figuring out ways to allow randomness or chance to enter into the way the world is experienced, to try to give you a sense of what it feels like to move in that way. So, I never think about technology as being for the sake of itself, and so something like objectivity is for the sake of itself. I always think of it that way, anyway. And so, the

choice of the technology was in the service of trying to understand how something works.

I think that's a really powerful representation of—I know this might not be the best choice of word, authentic is a prickly word, but—in a way, being able to step into a place without it feeling overly choreographed. Because I think what you described about the perspective piece is really interesting.

Yeah, authenticity is not a word I... you probably got that.

Right. I say that with caution for lack of a better word on the spot, but if you could expand on that I'd be interested to hear more.

Authenticity, like purity, it assumes. I think it's a category error. There's something about that assumes that culture is static and that it's authoritative, and who gets to decide that? And I feel like that's a world view that ultimately requires there to be something like a Godhead, if you take the logic all the way to the idea that culture is somehow – especially culture, because that's what we're really talking about, right, or even construction – there's something original or universal or natural to it. It doesn't jive with my understanding of how we built human society. I think there's no bottom, basically. Authenticity requires a bottom.

Right. It creates this dichotomy. In saying that something is authentic, then that implies that there is a whole way that it's not. It's like a limitation.

That's right. And it requires you to make a very narrow selection, and there's a power gesture behind the assertion of authenticity, and who gets to make that claim?

I think it's a challenge, though. I've found that a little bit in my attempt at, let's call it, inviting people into a place in this way of working with photography in motion (in the market project). I've received some push back, I think, of people looking at it

and asking, "Is this authentic?" In many ways, people are looking for the politics in it. They're looking for the Israeli-Palestinian politics, when, if there are politics present there, it's not that necessarily (more likely local, municipal politics). So how do you address when the viewer or the person experiencing the work is bringing their own vision of the place?

I assume they are. I assume they always are, I guess. What I try to do is build a meta layer. So the text in *White Road* is a meta fiction. That's how we talk about it. It's like a book of memory. Some of it's real and some of it's memory. But it is a text that is reflective, self-reflective or self-aware, so I just try to make things that have some kind of self-aware quality to them. A counter point. One of the reasons I used multiple layers of engaging something is to leave space for the thing to be. So everything about your market project is contingent, right. Like, your decision investigate markets within those contingencies exist for everybody else who's in that space as well. It's not like anything about that is natural, anything about that is authentic. Nor is Jerusalem authentic, although some would have it so. The idea of a space or of an object being sacred is an imposition on the part of an individual, or even a class of individuals, to assert the sacredness. That's their assertion. I could assert that phone as sacred. You could assert it's not, or we could assert different versions of it, but at the end of the day it's an object.

When we make those kinds of claims, we're talking about ourselves and we're bringing different claims to a place. That's always the case. If I make an assertion about a stone or a wall being authentic or having value or sacredness or profanity or whatever that might be, there's a power assertion behind that and there's a claim behind that, and to me, the thing that is interesting is the claim.

Ivan Sigal, *KCR*, 2015

The object has its own thing-ness. Does that make sense?

Definitely. It's a difficult thing, though, to have control over that…
I've done some work like this in Kashmir or other contested territories, or Cyprus, where the claim of authenticity is much closer to the origin of power, and so more deeply felt by people who are contesting for it. With these projects, that is not necessarily the main kind of vocabulary or the main dividing line. People aren't necessarily expressing their concerns in that kind of language. It's a different kind of power dynamic in terms of what authenticity might mean. And so, it's not the same kind of dilemma that I think you probably experience when you try to do this work in Jerusalem.

It's a challenging thing because it almost strengthens the desire to make it as apolitical as possible because I think that every place has the right to be shared without the power or that signifier.
That itself is a political statement.
Absolutely.
If you take your apolitical idea to its logical outcome, it would be completely political in its framing. If you say Jerusalem should be an apolitical space, as an example. I've been to no man's land in Cyprus between the Turkish and Cypriot territories and it's like… minimal spaces like that are available for multiple interpretations, and one of the reasons I was so interested in the railway space is because it is a limited space. It's owned by the railway. There's all sorts of encroachments upon it. There's all sorts of integrations of nearby territory based on what else is there. But at the end of the day, the vista is always there and the track is always there, because it's still occupied by the public as a public concession. Other parts of it grow into that space, and so it becomes a road in one place and it's a barrier somewhere else.

And it's hidden in other places. You can see the evidence of the change happening on top of it and around it.
Right. So, this is the 20-minute video. In some places, it's like a complete dense overgrowth of acacia thorn. The railway's right there.

Are there parts of it that are still in use?
Parts of it are all along the intercity train line, and the trains that are running are the

intercity line. The commuter lines aren't running, but the intercity trains are running using the same corridor, and parts of it are like that [overgrown].

It's beautiful. How did you come to this system to this place, or line?
I've been working in Pakistan on and off for a decade, working with local radio stations mostly. But I've been interested in this kind of line of exploration of, like, urban spaces and cityscapes, landscapes, since my Moscow project. I came up with the idea a few years ago of investigating the geographies of conflict and trying to find points of infrastructure that stood in as proxies to help us understand how those conflicts play out, because I'm convinced that the way that we show conflict as a human drama is often understanding the nature of modern warfare, modern conflict, because modern war is an industrial process. That's not to say that people aren't involved in it. It's just that people don't stand a chance against the machines.

The dominant documentary image that we have of conflict is still hero narratives of individuals and all this stuff about being in bed with the soldiers and creating characters that are winning or losing. The real story is about who has the better machinery and who has the better supply line. I was interested in finding cities that have some way of talking about conflict that is very different from what we usually think about. In the case of Karachi I found this because this is a modernist, urbanist, architectural scheme, in the shape of the walkovers, and it's built in the 1960s. It's part of the Utopian scheme for urban renewal, at the same time as Brasilia was built and Chandigarh was built, Islamabad was built. This was part of that kind of effort, and there were whole neighborhoods in Karachi that were built along rationalist urban planning models. Tel Aviv–same thing–exactly the same thing. And this is a failure. That concept failed, and it failed because of political violence and

sectarian divides in the city. So this is a trace of an earlier vision of what a whole city might be that runs through all of those contested neighborhoods, and its failure is a result of people's fear and unwillingness to cross the sectarian lines.

That's really fascinating.
But that's just the subtext. When you look at it, you wouldn't know that. So it's like trying to show you some element of what conflict means without actually showing you violence. So, it's cerebral in that way, I guess.

Have you read any writing by Eyal Weizman? He is an architectural researcher posted in London and he writes about the relationship between contemporary warfare and architecture in the urban landscape. Just this weekend, I read a small book of his about the relationship between the roundabout—the traffic circle—and protest [*The Roundabout Revolutions, Critical Spatial Practice 6*]. He's doing some really interesting writing about forensic architecture.
I know people who work in that space. There's a really interesting firm in New York called Situ that does forensic architecture. They rebuild spaces of political violence for human rights purposes. They work with the International Criminal Court and they've been rebuilding the Maidan in Kiev, reconstructing it in order to find the angles of attack for criminal courts, things like that. I'd love to see that. Are you familiar with this book, *Bunker Archaeology*?

Yes, it's on my list! It's a whole new thing to me, the relationship between these structures how it parlays into this relationship between architecture and behavior, and when that comes into the way that conflicts are managed or orchestrated or experienced.
I actually just finished reading *Bunker Archaeology* about two months ago, but

I wish I'd found that book fifteen years ago. It's great. The other thing about this is there's a whole practice of people, some people call it experimental geography. The kind of drift or the Situationist practice. Which is also a little bit influential on this, though this is more the program, the strategic, than a lot of what the situationist work was.

I developed this particular practice by doing the same thing in my hometown in Redding which is the poorest city in America. I've systematically walked all of Redding for the last five years. I walked all the city streets and then also visited and revisited the same kind of archaeological spaces of colonial era ruins outside of the city, in all seasons and times again, different environments. So, that's an ongoing project that I've just been playing with these ideas and what they look like and so on and so forth.

> And I'm sure the passage of time in that is a fascinating marker if you are looking at the material.

And for me, that mattered. It also mattered because I left that place when I was seventeen and that's an alien space for me. It's like it's not mine, to what extent that it was. I have a couple other projects that I'm working on. One is about urban spaces, urban landscapes in twelve countries in Asia, shot over a seven-year period, and is about dense architectural spaces and empty landscapes.

> What kinds of openings in the urban landscape?

It's about absences and voids, and this image is an example of that. It's a shrouded building in the middle of Mali in the Maldives, and it's got this kind of bizarre shadow effect. It's like a shadowgram cast by the building in the atmosphere, and there are absences and voids and mental shifts in most of these pictures in one way or another, and nature is never unadorned. It's always some object, some kind of industrial or physical man-made object in all of these spaces. And then the landscapes are interspersed with interior scenes.

> The idea of the lapse or the opening in urban spaces is something I'm really interested in, and kind of what they invite thinking about what had happened there that invited the gap.

This, for instance, is not a shadow. This is paint. They painted that profile onto the wall.

> That's amazing. Where is that?

That's in Hanoi.

MIT Media Lab, Cambridge MA
Friday April 1, 2016

EACH SEPARATE TREAD WAS MORE THAN JUST A STEP,
IT WAS A SINGLE OBJECT WHICH HAS TO BE PASSED IN
ORDER TO COMPLETE AN ASCENT.

> A ROUNDED EDGE ALSO FORCED THE
> CLIMBER TO BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS
> OF EACH STEP BECAUSE IT BLURRED THE
> IDEA OF "EDGE"—

HE WAS FORCED TO PUSH HIS FOOT
INTO THE STEP, TOWARDS THE SHADOWS
FROM THE OVERHANGING TREAD OF THE
STEP ABOVE.

*In reference to the stairs at the Biblioteca Medicea
Laurenziana, designed by Michelangelo in Florence, Italy*

JOHN HOUCK, *UNTITLED #125*, 2012

Planes

JOHN GIPKYN, *SERMON AT ST PAUL'S CROSS*, 1616

GORDON MATTA-CLARK
CONICAL INTERSECT, 1975

JAMES TURRELL, *BLUE PLANET SKY*, 2004
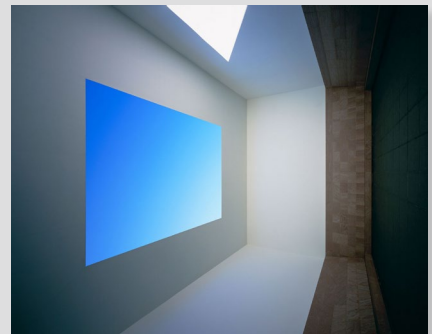
Geometry

DOROTHEA RATHBURNE, *LOCUS*, 1972

FRED SANDBACK, *UNTITLED (SCULPTURAL STUDY, FIVE-PART CONSTRUCTION)*, 1987/2009

GEOMETRY
PLANES
SIMULTANEITY
DEPTH

LOCALITY
TRANSITION
INTERSECTION
NUANCE

SCALE
MEMORY
PLACE
LOCUS

Surface

MICHA ULLMAN, *TABLE*, 2009
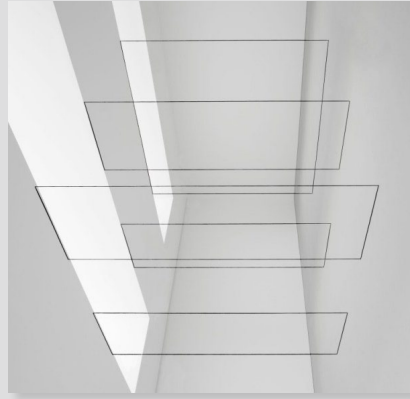
PERSPECTIVE ENVI-
RONMENT
STRUCTURE
EDGE

TAUBA AUERBACH, *S HELIX*, 2014

SURFACE
PLANE
FACET
SPACE

N.

Depth

GUELMIM TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL
SAAD EL KABBAJ, DRISS KETTANI,
MOHAMED AMINE SIANA

FRESCO, *VON MELOZZO DA
FORLI IN DER BASILIKA ZU LORETO* (DETAIL)

FRED SANDBACK, *UNTITLED (SCULPTURAL STUDY,
SEVEN-PART RIGHT-ANGLED TRIANGULAR
CONSTRUCTION),* 1982/2010

PORTICO TO THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE

KATE JACKLING, *BABINETS PLAYGROUND*

ROBERT SMITHSON, *MIRRORS AND SHELLY SAND*, 1970

SOL LEWITT, INSTALLATION VIEW AT DIA: BEACON

LEONARDO DA VINCI, *THE LAST SUPPER*, 1495–8

MIRIAM BOHM, *MATCH VIII*, 2012

INFERENCE
MEDIATION
HINGE

DIMENSION
REFLECTION
MOVEMENT

PRACTICE
BORDER
DESIRE LINE

RHYTHM
SPECULATION
RITUAL

VOLUME
LANDSCAPE
INFERENCE

N.

Reflection

2

2°
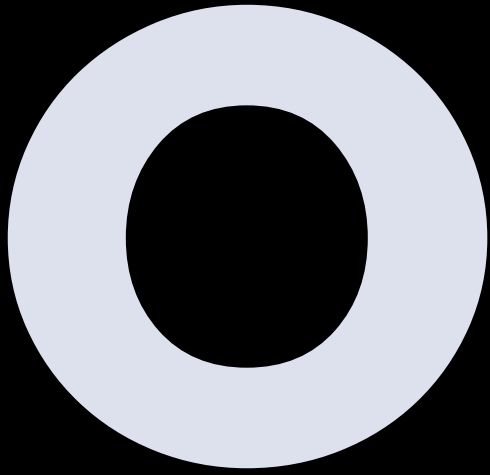
Elements of Echolocation

If the first degree of reading locality is human-to-surface contact, the second degree is something of the inverse—or the impact that place has on the movements of inhabitants, and the meaning that the pedestrian imbues back onto the landscape. In *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi expands upon the idea of the locus as that which defines a locality; it is both the empirical and emotional sum of its structures, topography, time, and human impact. The container of the "collective memory of man," Rossi states, "These places are real signs of space; and as such they have a relationship both to chance and to tradition."[1] Tradition, or more specifically, ritual, is a concept and framework that I am interested in on its own, and as it relates to the built environment. Rossi leaves room for the possibility, or inevitability, that our connection with place is not shaped merely by the fact that a stone wall stands—it is also the rounding of the corner of that wall to the other side, repeated over time, that creates our connection to a place. The ritual of grazing that wall, of the route repeatedly taken, the spaces we return to on foot or in memory; another cog in the emotional and cognitive mechanics that build connection and muscle memory.

RITUALIZED RETURN AND MOVEMENT

In essence, place is the layering of repeated behavior and the cumulative memory of that behavior. This is a cyclical process that builds upon itself over time and is most visible in the construction of spaces—typologies that are both the result of ritualized behavior (Arches of Triumph) and are intended to embed ritualized behavior (historic memorials, suburban shopping malls). They are each a sort of carbon copy, universal in their subscription to a certain ritual and aesthetic. The delineation of space, and architecture itself, can inform and even create rituals, silently dictating our movements and embedding behavior patterns.

Buildings and systems dictate how we move—this is often a designed experience, rooted in the building program, and affects a constellation of decisions in the design process. From the shopping mall to the museum, it is design that embeds walking rhythms and pattern—what we notice and how—and design that can refresh and redirect attention. We are guided in shopping malls to wander, loop, and peruse with sustenance at arm's length in the food court, encouraging prolonged circulation. This choreographed adherence, and at times submission, is a process in architecture that can inform graphic design.

1   Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1982. 106.
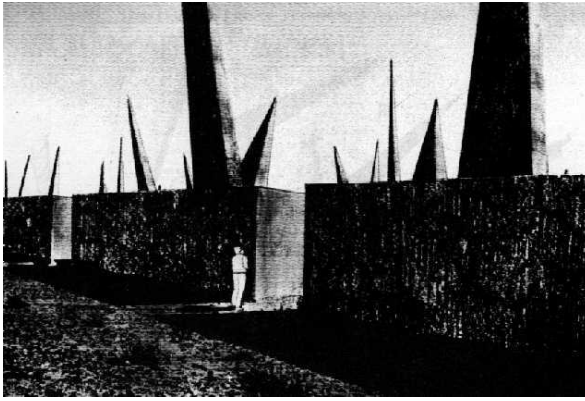
Structure is a universal language that can withstand time, translate across distance, and often communicate through cultural gaps. We read architectural form, and it can carry symbolic and inherent meaning. Invited by the Federal Government in 1990, a group of geologists, linguists, astrophysicists, architects, artists, and writers worked to invent messaging systems that could last 10,000 years, to warn and protect people of the future from a nuclear waste site in New Mexico.[2] One of the concepts, by landscape architect Mike Brill, is not an image but rather an environment. The site is surrounded by a ring of sharp, tall, and looming forms, a "landscape of thorns."[3] Intimidating in form, the idea relies on base human emotion—fear—as it relates to the scale relationship between human and structure. This architectural cue could guard the site as a cactus protected by its pins; the clarity of a clue from human nature as well as natural plant life could have a longer communicative lifespan than other symbolic cultural references.

Memorials are designed in both content and form to be lingered in, and to lead visitors to turn inward for introspection or a non-physical response. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, designed by architect Maya Lin, is a gash cut in the ground that one must descend into, with large, engraved names that force close reading. The *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* designed by architect Peter Eisenman and engineer Buro Happold in Berlin is a labyrinthine structure that embeds a certain kind of walking, of moving, or circling. Horst Hoheisel describes his own alternate submission for the same memorial, an "anti-monument",[4] one that has no frame or form, a space that only by its name invites a reflective experience. He states "The sunken fountain is not the memorial at all. It is only history turned into a pedestal, an invitation to passersby who stand

upon it to search for the memorial in their own heads. For only there is the memorial to be found." How might our memory of events change if the architecture is removed, if there is nothing to linger in? What is the balance in how the interplay between the structure and the amorphous draw out an emotional response?

ORIENTATION

Architecture can orient our memory and our movement—yet we are also informed by what we cannot see. We are increasingly reliant upon an invisible structure of devices and technology to guide us in our navigation. How we locate ourselves in and move through space is no longer limited by architecture and collectively agreed upon typologies of movement, but rather by our phones, tablets, and GPS. One might say that without the rule of structure telling us how to move we are enabled with a new kind of agency. Though I would argue, rather, that there is blurring of agency. "Would you prefer this route or that route?" Google Maps offers. Now I can get anywhere I want on the earth's surface with the aid of my iPhone's voice assistant. Yet isn't there a wisdom and curiosity lost? What I believe ties us to the physical world are these curiosities and relationships formed through observance and

2   99pi. "Ten Thousand Years." Http://99per-centinvisible.org/. 12 May 2014. Web. 3 May 2016.

3   Ibid.

4   James E. Young in "Memory and Counter-Memory, The End of the Monument in Germany," *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall 1999, 9.

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movement. Yet, if a green line on my screen is what guides me through space, will I develop the sensitivities that Rasmussen writes of, an innate understanding of nuance in materiality as it relates to quality and time? How can ritual and relationships embed without the consciousness of movement? In our subscription (or more often submission) to this technology we are redefining and rewriting the relationship between place and person, which ultimately and inevitably affect the relationship between design and user. In an interview with *The New Yorker* on the eve of a new exhibition of her well known interpretive maps, graphic designer Paula Scher explained her own frustration with this change:

> *She prefers to feel her way around European cities by picking up the socioeconomic clues offered by real estate. "The Old Town is always in the center," she explained. 'Near the Old Town are the major historical things, and, therefore, the expensive hotels, so, theoretically, you could navigate back to your hotel by saying, 'Oh, that looks richer over there.' Google Maps has taken the joy out of that, because it is efficient—you get there—but what's great is looking around and figuring it out." She especially dislikes "the voice" of G.P.S. "I think she's lying," Scher said with a laugh. "She's not adventurous. She wants you to go one way, damn it."[5]*

I share Scher's concern—that along with the prominence of digital navigation aids and our reliance upon them—our awareness of elements of echolocation, or self-location, are dissolving. We are losing our sensitivity toward place and our desire to interpret it. We might begin seeing less, noticing less, and caring less. This should raise concern for designers. If much of what we value and work to convey is the translation and interpretation of content through nuanced material (from paper stock, to typefaces, to the color and composition of typesetting), we must consider what will happen if the prominence of digital acuity displaces physical and relational sensitivity and observation.

The work in this chapter addresses the intersection of person and place through the physical and digital environments we construct, focusing on the middle-ground in which we currently tread between the two—between isolation and dependencies in self-location. Our ability to self-locate is based on intuition that is embedded and learned, both by our interaction over time with the landscape, and by the collection and practice of putting intuition to use. What is lost when we remove awareness, learned behavior, and the investment of time from designed objects and experience?

5   Belcove, Julie. "Off the Map." *The New Yorker.* 2016. Web. 21 Mar. 2016.

THE OPERATIONS OF WALKING ON CAN BE
TRACED ON CITY MAPS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO
TRANSCRIBE THEIR PATHS (HERE WELL-TRODDEN,
THERE VERY FAINT)
AND THEIR TRAJECTORIES (GOING THIS WAY AND NOT THAT).
BUT THESE THICK OR THIN CURVES ONLY REFER, LIKE
WORDS, TO THE ABSENCE OF WHAT HAS PASSED BY.
SURVEYS OF ROUTES MISS WHAT WAS:
THE ACT ITSELF OF PASSING BY. THE
OPERATION OF WALKING. WANDERING,
OR "WINDOW SHOPPING,"

THAT IS, THE ACTIVITY OF PASSERS-BY, IS
TRANSFORMED INTO POINTS THAT DRAW A
TOTALIZING AND REVERSIBLE LINE ON THE MAP.
THEY ALLOW US TO GRASP ONLY A RELIC SET IN THE
NOWHEN OF A SURFACE OF PROJECTION. ITSELF VISIBLE,
IT HAS THE EFFECT OF MAKING INVISIBLE THE OPERATION
THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE.
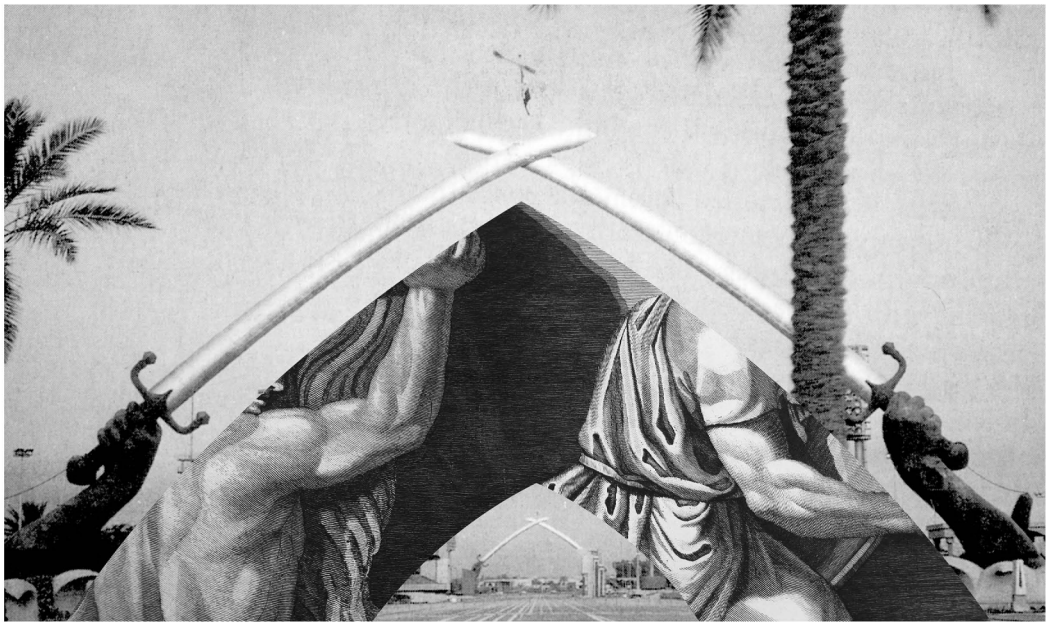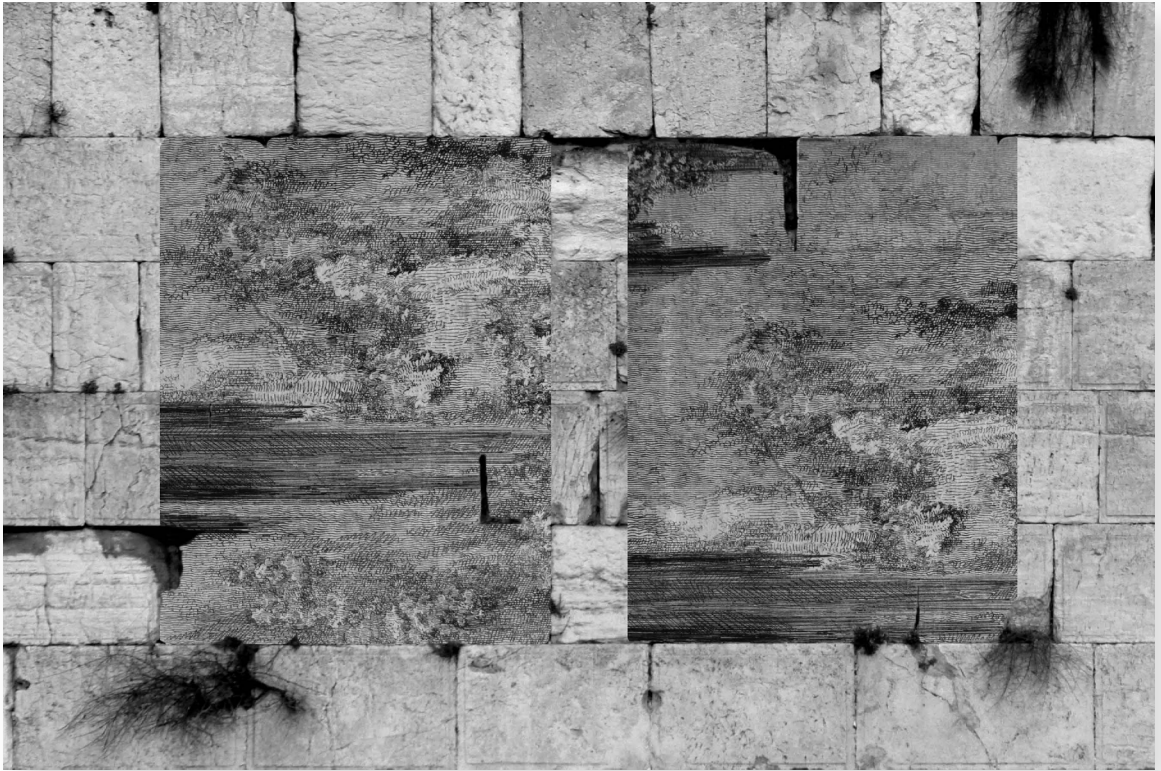
MONUMENTAL

A book of oversized engravings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi is housed at the Providence Public Library. Exquisite and cumbersome, the prints meticulously document the design and construction of Trajan's Column in Rome. Piranesi's book reads as a monument to the column, informing my desire to explore the architectural typology of monuments.

Why is a monument erected, and where? What is considered to be one? Who decides? A set of plates demonstrate formal and conceptual parallels, intersections, and overlaps between Piranesi's work and monuments from around the world. Testing the boundaries of what is considered to be a monument, included are monuments both enduring and ephemeral, built and human.

Piranesi's tome is a printed and bound monument to Trajan's column, which was itself a monument to military victory. Designed as double-sided plates, the alternate side of each can be arranged to form a new image, revealing my own monument to Piranesi's book—a three-dimensional rendering of his work.
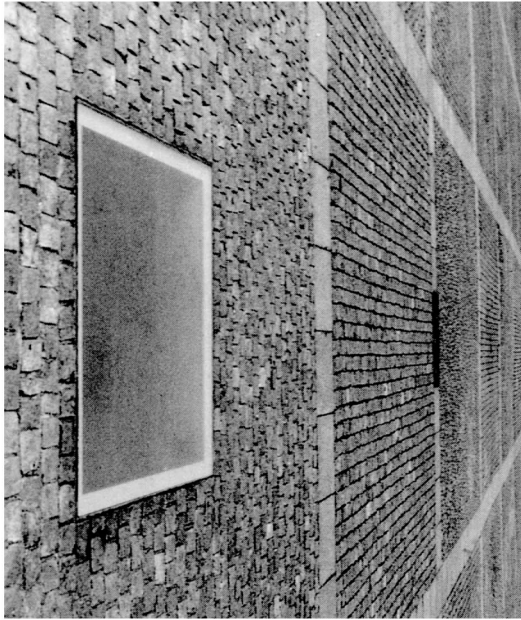
The reverse of the cards form a newly rendered monument to Piranesi's book as monument

(Opposite, above) Micha Ullman, Empty Library, Bebelplatz square in Berlin
(Opposite, below) The Berlin Wall, Germany

COLONNA TRAIANA
GIOVANNI BATTISTA PIRANESI
[ROME: S.N., 1775?]
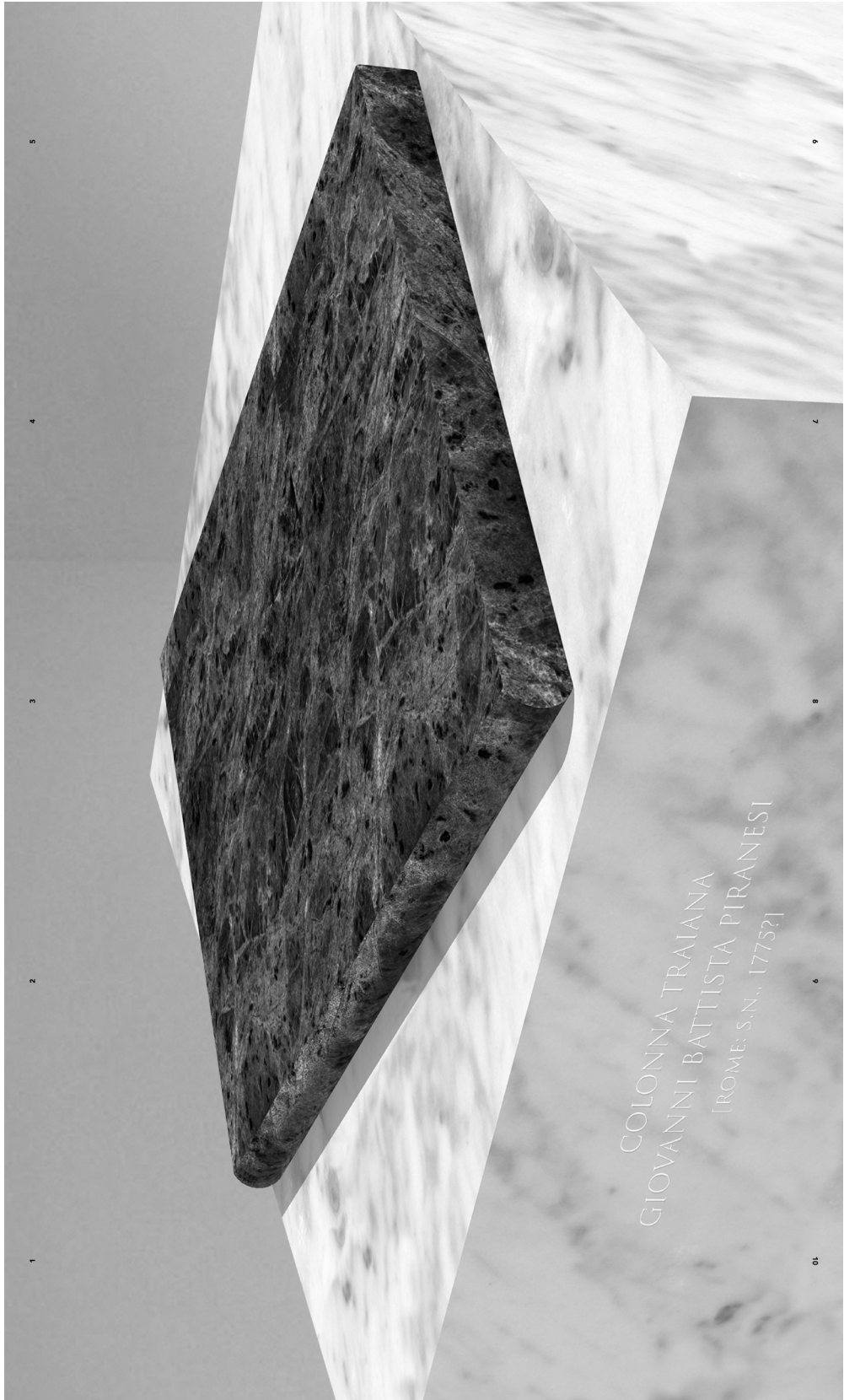
CITY WITHIN A CITY

A short film examines and morphs the relationship between architecture and movement, and the ripple effect of embedded behaviors. Cropped, slowed compositions draw a lingering gaze toward the microcosm of the shopping mall—its predetermined routes and navigation, and its lack of agency and opportunity for its visitors. Clips filmed at the Providence Place mall are narrated by an excerpt from Michel de Certeau's "Walking in the City." Read by a chorus of voices, it speaks to the democratic nature of de Certeau's vision of a city, running in contrast with the choreographed, controlled experience of the mall. In the soft and slow motions there is at once a criticality but also a sense of comfort. Perhaps we enjoy being shown how to move, happy to be delivered a rhythm and direction for briefs periods of leisure. A reprieve.

Voiceover:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk—elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers. Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.*[1]

1   de Certeau, and Steven Rendall. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. 93.

Video, 1m 40s
April 2015

ASPHALT CIRCUIT

A series of exploratory collages draw correlations between urban parking infrastructure and the circuit. This follows a formal inclination to uncover compositional adjacencies and intersections.

> "If redevelopers of downtown must depend so heavily on maps instead of simple observation, they should draw a map that looks like a network, and then analyze their data strand by strand of the net, not by the boles in the net."[1]

1   Jacobs, Jane. "Downtown is for the People." *Fortune Magazine*, 1958.
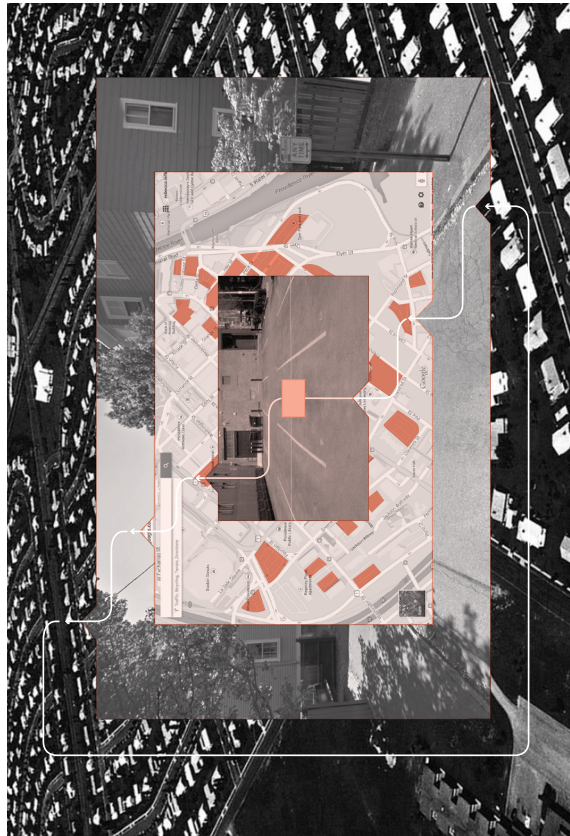
Collage (series of three)
6.5×10.5" each, April 2015

Official Intersect Revised Edition Vol. 1

Seekonk River

Governer St.

199 Benefit St.

Blackstone Blvd.

Butler Ave.

East George N.

DEAD

END

1

AREA MAP
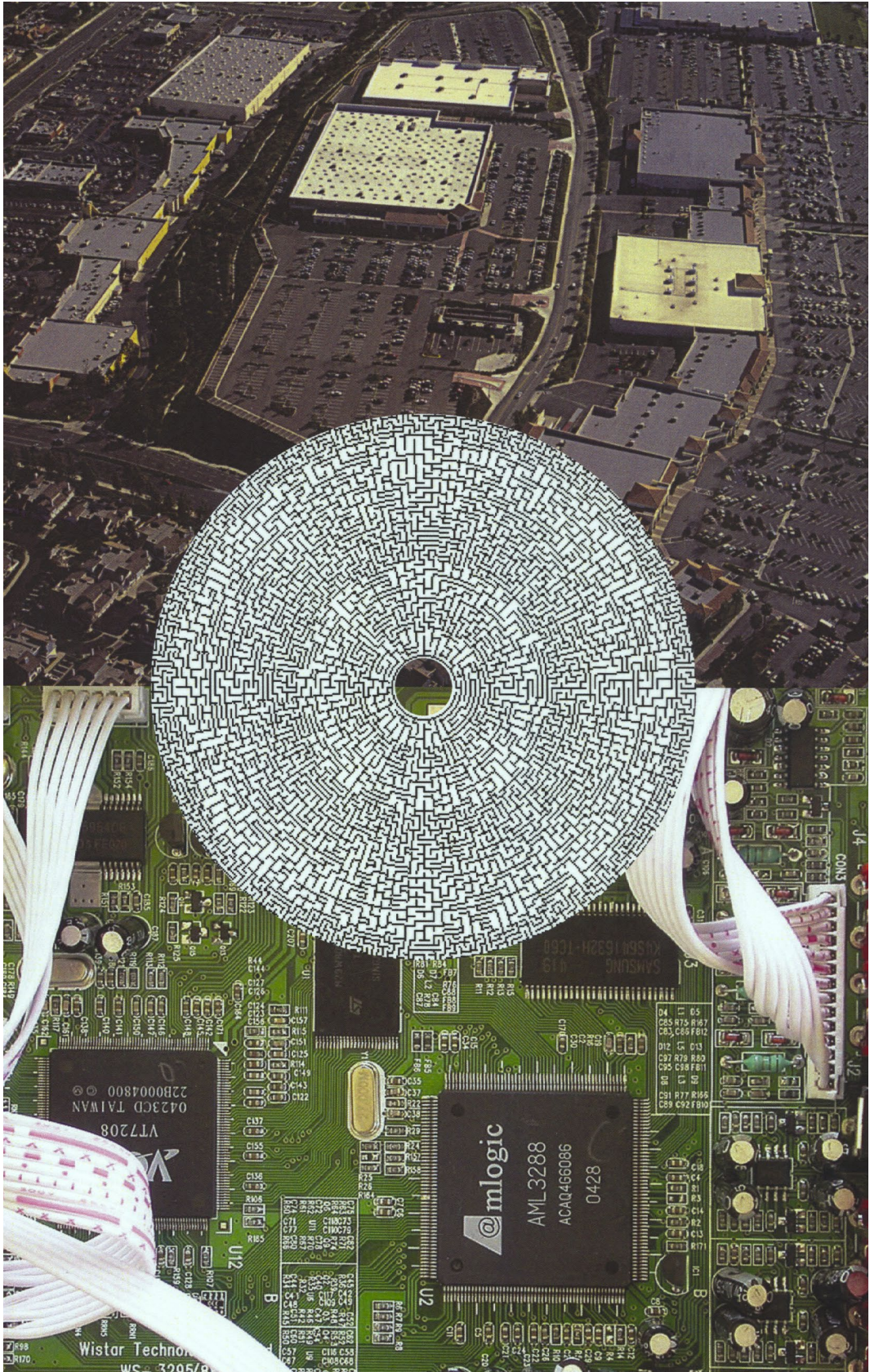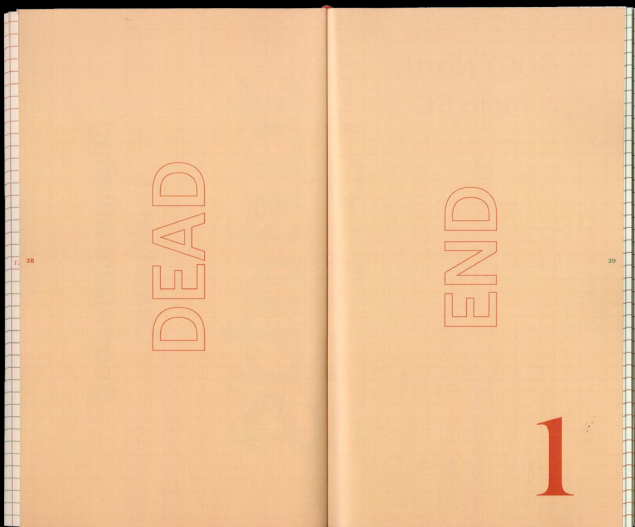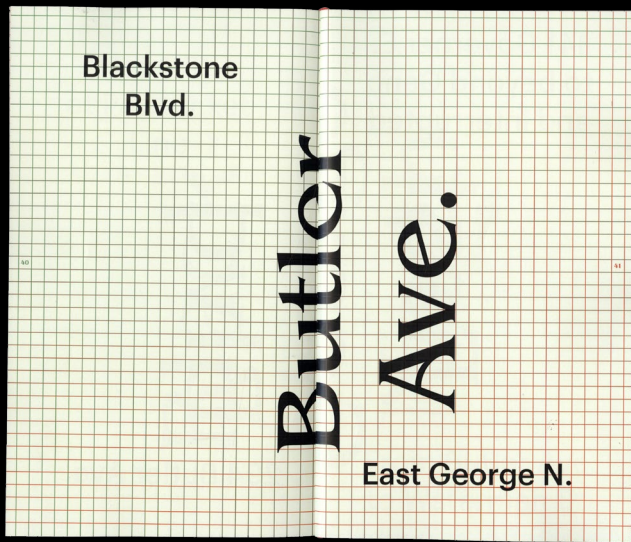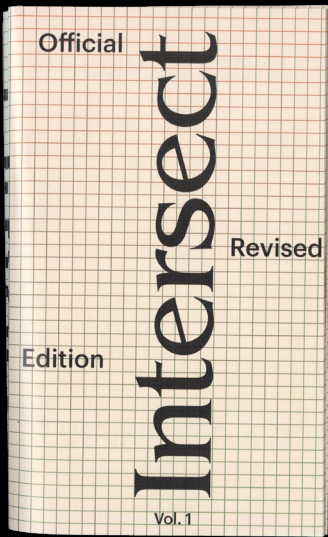
INTERSECT

Responding to an existing book, *Intersect* is based on the *Rhode Island Cities Arrow Street Guide* found at Cellar Stories, a used book store in downtown Providence. My derivative volume transforms a 1972 guide that lists every street in the state of Rhode Island, and traces every cross street and intersection. *Intersect* takes the first listings in alphabetical order and traces the first and last intersection of that street, following the chain of street names until reaching a dead end (literally, or upon return to a street whose chain has been traced previously in the book). Large text emphasizes the unique language attributed to these street names and other locations. The tension or suspense created by the choose-your-own-adventure style of the book is a purposeful contrast to the comforting density of the original book's abundance of information.

Book, 120 pages, 6.5×10.5"
October 2015
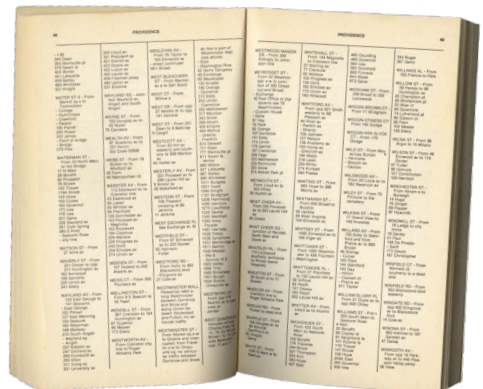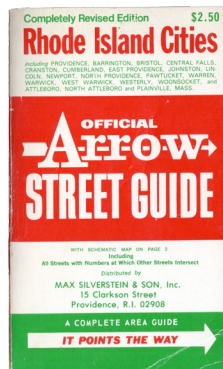
I Will

FOCUS

SEEK

CARE
DO
REFRAIN
FOCUS
PARTICIPATE

I Could

SEEK

PRACTICE

THINK

CARE
DO
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FOCUS
PARTICIPATE
SEEK
ATTEND
CONTEMPLATE

I Should

PRACTICE

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RESUME WAIT REMEMBER
PARTICIPATE CARE
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CALL LOOK
PREPARE
COMMUNICATE
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CARE
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PREPARE ABSTAIN THINK FOCUS
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PARTICIPATE CALL
STRETCH
SHARE
RUN THINK
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SEEK ATTEND
ANALYZE
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I Should

PLAY PRACTICE
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MAINTAIN WAIT

CARE EAT PREPARE
WAIT EXERCISE
THINK
ASSESS REMEMBER

FEEL **I Will** CARE WRITE
DO TRY SHARE
REFRAIN WAIT
MEET
PREPARE ABSTAIN THINK FOCUS
ENGAGE
READ PRAY
PARTICIPATE CALL LOOK
STRETCH
PRACTICE SHARE
RUN COMMUNICATE THINK
FINISH
SEEK ATTEND
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WILL

Repeated behavior builds a connection with place, and more fundamentally builds a relationship with itself—repetition ritualizes, ingrains, and embeds. In this cyclicality, what is the edge of behavior? Where does ritual begin, end, and regenerate? Using a large scale, sited installation, cyclical language invites passersby to locate their own behavior, and to consider what it is that causes the cycle to break, skip, or begin again. Small, sited booklets borrow visual reference from missionary pamphlets that are often distributed on the city street.

Projected Installation
CIT Lobby, December 2015

Booklet, 2.25×4.25", December 2015

Small booklets are to be left in a variety of locations and encountered by passersby, an invitation for reflection.

WILL

FOR NOW WE ROAM TOGETHER

Orientation is both a sensory and mechanical process, but ultimately it is a prominent human desire. This three-channel video engages with the psychological aspect of how we locate ourselves, and the dependencies inherent in orientation. In time, humans have relied on the sun, moon, stars, wind, semaphore, and countless other iterations of signaling to aid navigation and build relationships within the process. While GPS gives us the illusion of independence, the mechanics of the process are invisible. Still, it is yet another station of many throughout history demonstrating the human desire for companionship in journey and destination. We rely on this system for movement. That system has a voice. And some of us track one another within that system, in applications like Waze.

There is a false flag of isolation in location, and in the sense of security that GPS imbues. In reality, GPS is reliant upon triangulation, and the act of locating ourself is entirely relative—it is based on the position of two other points. This surfaces an intricacy, or ripple of the system, highlighting a point of structural and psychological complexity— that location is not quite discrete, that we are never truly alone.

Three-Channel Video, 4m 40s
February 2016

ALWAYS WATCHES

00:01:05

00:00:45

00:01:05

00:00:45

00:01:22

00:01:22
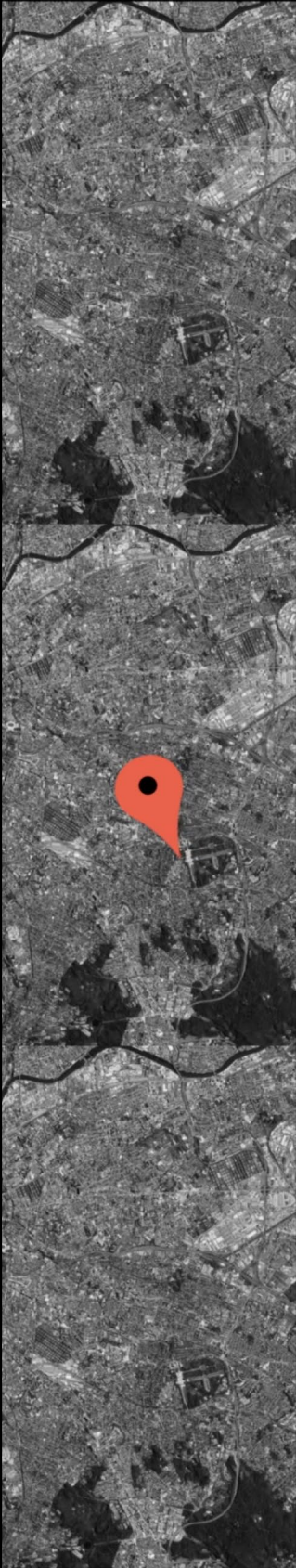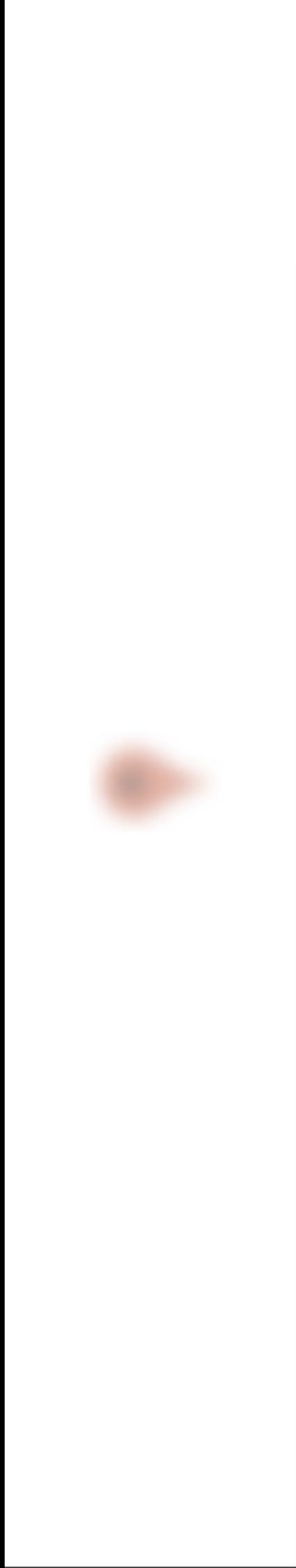
Voiceover Script

In our lives today, so long as you have a smartphone in hand, you can find your way and know exactly where you stand on the earth's surface. In time humans have sought numerous methods to locate ourselves, and to forge a path across land and sea. Tracing the stars, following the sun, tracking the wind's graze, seeking the company of the moon—our gaze has veered upward, finding a companion as routes were

carved over time. What we use today with such ease and reliance, GPS (the Global Positioning System), began as a United States Military endeavor and has become a system relied upon by the entire planet. The GPS system employs a constellation of 20 to 30 solar-powered satellites orbiting the earth, four of which are detectable at any given time from an earth-side receiver. Each satellite has a built in atomic clock set to true time,

and the positions of these satellites are tracked exactly. It is their distance from each other and from the receiver that triangulates our every position. We are all at the meeting point between three paths, at the intersection of three satellites. Without their position, we have none. Always moving, always there; in our heightened independence we are never alone.

Scheri Fultineer is a landscape architect currently serving as department head at the Rhode Island School of Design. She also holds a Masters Degree in Theology from the Harvard School of Divinity, and I was interested in discussing with Fultineer how she views the relationship between psychology and ecology — how these relationships can be orchestrated, and their inherent effect. I was also curious to learn how Scheri views edges within the landscape, to see if there is alignment with my investigation of edges as being at once delineated and porous.

R.L.K. To begin, I'd love to know more just about your background and how you came to landscape architecture and how you came to also study theology I'm really fascinated by that combination, if you might speak to that.

S.F.   Like a lot a lot of things you can think back and say "I think I did this because of this." But its a little bit of a post rationalization. I didn't know landscape architecture existed until I was probably in my late twenties and that's common for a lot of people. I studied art — studio art in college, and anthropology, and then I got out and started a weaving practice with a person I met in college. I was trained as a printmaker in college but had always been fascinated with textiles, partially because my family is all from the Appalachian mountains, Western Virginia and eastern Kentucky, and there are still very vibrant quilting and weaving traditions, or there were at that time. But the school I went to didn't allow you to do textiles because it wasn't fine art. So I did printmaking and I was very interested in texture, and I was very interested what I had observed in the older people in my family. They knew quite a lot about the place where they lived and a lot of it had to do with necessity because they relied on that place for food. All of my grandparents hunted, my grandmothers could go out and forage food, it wasn't called foraging —

Right, it was just what you did.
It was just what you did, so they knew so much about where they lived. My family moved more toward the suburbs and I found people didn't have the same, really direct relationship to their surroundings. Then for my grandparents generation some of that was dangerous, too. They lived by rivers that flooded and their houses would flood, so

your life wasn't portable, it was very anchored in place. The other thing that probably sent me on this path was that one of my grandparents was a minister and still did river baptisms, and all this was also happening in the Cole River Valley in West Virginia which became extremely polluted. A lot of chemical companies were located there, posts were all aborted too, actually, between the world wars. So it was like a lot of things piled on top of each other, and I found out about landscape architecture and was really intrigued with it because it seemed to pull a lot of things I was interested in together into one thing.

I went back to school, and what I was also interested in was the question of this place and meaning. The nineties was not a good time to talk about meaning in school. One of the reverberations of Modernism was that there was kind of was no agreed upon meaning — Modernism meaning Post-Modernism — for the modernist it was much more form follows function. Then there was sort of segueing into "there is no meaning," but I didn't really believe that and my experience with my family didn't really make me believe it. I was very interested in sacred space because it seemed like sacred space had a very clear meaning at least to the people who believed in that particular tradition. But I couldn't talk about that with anybody at the design school, so I went two blocks away it was the divinity school and they would talk about that because they were theologians and archaeologists and historians of religions. I went there and started taking classes and then decided to take a second degree. It was such an interesting bi-cultural experience for me because in one place everybody talked about form and place-making, or space-making, as the shift was happening.

In the other place everybody talked about meaning and they talked about place but it wasn't in a 3-dimensional structured way. So each side had this interesting set of

blinders on, or this total belief in the way they approach things. So for the designers it was "how big, how small? What's it made out of? Move this, move that. Sight lines. Light." On the other hand it would be "Wow, The meaning of passing through the gate is this." I would find myself sitting in one place thinking "Oh how big was that gate? And could you see through that gate?"

There were all of these questions about the physical experience of moving through a space, or being in a space wondering how the actual construction of that space contributed. Then the other place was like, "I understand how it's constructed but what are all these other things?" It's, you know modernist for them and in a way you could peel meaning away — we're not wired that way. That's why I ended up doing both. I was very interested in taking it one step further. We displace other organisms when we occupy place, and a lot of religions have traditions of building retreat centers in the wilderness or what could be called the wilderness and that continues — and it continues in a secular way too.

We seem to want that type of place to go to. We seem to need a sense of retreat or contemplative space. But then how does what we build there — how we occupy it — how is that driven buy our ethics? Toward the environment or the organisms in it, but then also towards a bigger idea of what is sacred on this planet? So I started working for mostly Buddhist groups who had retreats centers under construction and that sort of led me into my practice and my interests. I have designed works from the scale of gardens to institutional work. But this idea of place-making is very interesting to me, in how much changes, and what changes, but how much has to stay the same.

So nothing completely stays the same but in terms of creating place, memorable place — and landscape — or architecturally, I think this constant tension between the things

that change: the light, the plant material, the weather, and what sets up the container in a way; so that with all of that change it still feels like a place. I was very drawn to teaching right away because you get to keep asking those questions.

Why did I end up doing it? I think it was this combination of these very early years spent outside a lot with people who knew quite a lot about their environment even they didn't know the botanical Latin for the plants. They couldn't tell you the hydrology of the river but they lived with it. And it was a type of embodied knowledge and a relationship that I think spoke a lot to me about a sense of understanding of where you are in the world and maybe what you should do there. That interested me. I was also interested in the catastrophic change that resource extraction or industry can do — and my parents live in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh is an interesting landscape because two rivers meet and form the Ohio. One of those rivers was heavily industrialized with steel mills, so that was kind of its own landscape for a long time, and then the mills collapsed and so this river that had, you can say it had been ruined by the mills, was heavily polluted. It's been remade, and now it's surrounded by quite a lot of commercial and suburban growth, and the districts trying to figure out what to do with it. But that's been another one of these bookends for me of watching this constant negotiation between people staying alive in place, using the landscape for that, and then negotiating the changes that happen.

> I'm really interested in this idea of a truly symbiotic relationship between us and place, the way you describe your family. Even thinking about a retreat—that there is such a give and take. That we can also harm, or that the place could either harm or enact this kind of experience on us, but that's its like a living and changing relationship too. As you described it,

seasons change and materials decay or become more enriched as they age. I'd like to expand on what you said about the retreat creating a container. You used the word container—could you elaborate on that as it relates to sacred space or a retreat space? I imagine it's the kind of place-making that you would want to leave room for the person in it, as opposed to modernism where it's this statement of, "this is what we have, take it or leave it." Rather you're creating a place that is contained as you said but does leave room for the person in it to have that space to interact with it and let it be that living thing. How do you address placemaking, or edges in that way?

Edges or containment, they're an interesting concept. Ecologically edges are extremely rich zones because they tend to be where conditions change, so they're more diverse. There are more diverse species and they're rarely straight, they articulate. It's a really different concept than a wall, which is kind of the first thing you think about — an edge is a wall or a curb or something very formed and frequently very geometric. But ecologically they tend to not be, they tend to be vertically differentiated like a canopy of trees and then under story. They tend to be planerly differentiated as a complex edge rather than a line, and then all these things can happen because they're shady and sunny, they're moist, they're more humid. Then they're more dry than the woods, but more humid than the field. Plants tend to be vertically stacking in different ways, so that has been something that I've found really intriguing is that edges can be very nuanced, and in those nuances there are a lot of different scales of opportunities for things to happen that wouldn't happen if they were more simple.

In terms of containment, when I started working for this one Buddhist group who's group of American Buddhist following a

Tibetan tradition, it was interesting because in the Tibetan tradition there are the big monasteries that we all know about, but there was also a tent tradition. And a lot of Tibetans were herders, so they also were nomadic in a certain way.

But what I found fascinating working with this group was that they were amazing at making containers. They would produce these meditation classes and events all over the country and the world, you know like really grim places, hotel conference rooms or things like that, but they had really taken from this nomadic tent traditions of Tibet. They had taken all these lessons of how you set up and create a sacred place for their meditation rooms,. What they really understood were a system of focal points and of surroundings of creating a space that like our word is "leaky" It had enough confinement that you understood where the entry and exit was. You understood you transitioned into them, and then once you were in them, it could be very rich — you had all these things but even then there were clear focal points which they tend to accomplish by flower arrangements or the way that altars were laid out.

There was this really interesting dynamic of watching things that were portable and movable find a place, find the configuration. There were certain rigid things so that if you went to one of these events in Berlin or if you went to one in New York, the outer shell might be totally different but once you entered into this space there was just enough familiarity — the alter with the seven bulls, the flower arrangements — but then the cushions could be laid out really differently, other things could be completely different. They had it down. It was just really interesting to watch them and they could do it with very little.

I've worked on that project and a few others, that are sometimes in these very big tracts of lands. You're up in the Rockies or you're in the mountains in Vermont where it's a stunning landscape but much bigger than human scale, but then learning from them on sort of how to site buildings or how to begin to plant, so that you have kind of a similar opportunity for container. You begin to understand places that you can be that are of a certain scale for you or for 20 people or for 500 people. I learned a lot from them — that the container is not rigid, basically. It just needs an opportunity to be established and then within that the edges become very important because they are what give you a sense of entering; what gives you a sense of something simple: I can sit here with my back protected, or I know where to look, or know there are five places to look. It's sort of this progressive differentiation to attention but also of indicators of "I will fit comfortably here" or "I should go there."

Those cues were provided in a lot of different ways, like a cushion is just really big enough for one person to sit on. It was kind of fascinating to me how much could be conveyed just by having those there. You got it right away.

> It's fascinating. When I've been thinking about those signifiers—either material signifiers of familiarity, or like with the cushions, these signifiers that kind of tell us a little bit of how to behave. Not in a commanding way but in a comforting way as you describe. It's especially fascinating to hear about transportable signifiers, especially with something as living and temporal as flowers. Though it sounds daunting. How do you approach that kind of task, at that scale, when you're trying to create this space and address all of these scales of the container? That's such a vast delta.

I think what I also learned in this project is that you just start with one thing. Even though a lot of elements went together. There are two fascinating things there. One was that a lot of what they did people had been doing for hundreds if not thousands of years, so these

are sort of ritualized little knowledge seeds. The flowers may all be different and they may be different species and what you do with them will be different but the idea of creating certain dynamic relationships between odd numbers of stems — that's an old rule — so they would follow that, and then the people who would do the flower arrangements would only think about them. And that was their job, and they were really good at just sort of doing that. The people who would be setting up the altar and that's all they would do in a way. It all came together. But that's what I was saying with the flexibility — if your job was to make sure the altar was put up right and has a good relationship to the door, you did that.

There is a hierarchy to that. It wasn't easy to see sometimes because it was, the people who did it just did it, you know? But it did make me understand. One of the projects I was working on was over 600 acres, an edge of ridges with kind of a bowl of land within it and a stream. You just kind of have to go back and forth between some big objectives. Sometimes the bigger objectives are "just don't ruin this." Or "I know we're putting in five buildings, you need to walk between them and they all need to have views of this place."

It's rare that there are no parameters. But then there's a way in which you can't start with all of it, you figure out what's most important and you start there. And generally if you get that one thing in place then other things will follow. That's what I learned. Once you make a decision it's like setting up the altar, that decision is made. So everything else starts to fall into relationship to that. Even if in the end move the altar a little bit, you've already set up this set of relationships. And that might actually be useful to you because if you can identify "what is a core thing," "what is a core place." Or a focal point that then allows a place to be made — you can move that but you can also use it initially to understand the relationship within a number of other elements. And then in the moving of that core the other elements begin to shift. I know that when I am designing, that is one of the most fun things. And sometimes one of the most aggravating, it's like "Oh no, I need to move that and now everything else has to shift, and now what." But at that point it starts almost taking a life of it's own because you passed that point of not understanding these relationships. You're in it now, so there's a reciprocity to it.

Hearing you speak about that makes me think about a lot of the process of book design, how it's different each time. For instance, right now I'm designing a book that has many interview transcriptions. Last summer I interviewed vendors in the market in Jerusalem—that's the altar. What they have to say is the altar. So that typography has to be large for this purpose, so how does everything else—position, scale, and texture—form around that? And then when you decide to change the type the system gets massaged around it. So that definitely speaks to how that back and forth relationship works.

I think where people are concerned, well I think this is true of all species that there's some sort of heart, there's some core condition and if you hit that then it works, whether you're a hummingbird or a human. Then other things kind of deploy.

There seems to be such a strong framework for how you approach your work. Is there kind of that main condition or approach that is always elevated for you, or is it really dependent on who you're interacting with or who you're working with?

For the last five years what I've mostly done is teach and run the department. But I think there are corollary when you're teaching - and my mission here is that at a time, in our discipline a lot of people are actually sort of zooming out and only understanding sight

through different Geo-spacial programs and dated collection and people moving more, people have less opportunity to really know a place. My mission here working with some of the other faculty has really been: How do we teach? How do we have methods of teaching that really cause our students to look? To really look. To really go beyond looking and see and ask questions like, I see it doing that, why? Then how do you physically go to material ways of investigating that and finding form and spacial logic and tectonic logic in that? That's my mission — helping train a generation of people who care enough about place and what makes place to keep working in that way.

> That's really evidenced in the quality and the specificity in your studios from what I've seen reading through the materials. It really is focused on a place, oftentimes really close to here, getting to know the intimacy of this very site-specific and material-specific idea.

What you haven't seen is how they get there. Yesterday we had what I think is a very successful day. The students had been working on the river outside, and their studio means that they have to design a park for people, there's housing in the park, but then it also has to accommodate at least two other species. But at their mid-review it became apparent that although they had studied all these tide hydrology charts, they really didn't understand the difference between an incoming tide and an outgoing tide. Their assignment was that they had to go out and spend a few hours by the river. They had to design an experiment where they could learn something more about the water, about the type of flow, it's speed, all these things. I knew that was going on, but then I saw a student coming in soaking wet, because he had fallen in. We had warned them to be careful, but I was so happy to see that. I was happy to see he was safe too, of course. But there are

certain things you can't learn without getting close enough to fall in.

The modern world has a lot of things that remove us from place. It has air conditioning, it has heating. Our interior environments are controllable, which I think causes more and more people not to go outside a lot. So, this context of place in which you have an interior space is I think the relationships really has changed a lot, because of how we perceive comfort — especially in an environment that is either too hot or too cold a lot. Even we have buildings whose windows don't open anymore, and luckily here [in this building] they open, but this idea of you know what your context is and what the edge is. Like in here, there's a brick wall, but there's a glass window and so in a way my edge is that building across the river when I look out, because this is still porous.

The idea of comfort I think plays into some of this, what we will tolerate or not tolerate. Then the idea of memory becomes an interesting one because even though I remember this place because it's on the river, and I do spend a lot of time in here, but this would be a very different place to remember if it was up on the hill, or if it had no view, or if I didn't see the swans or the seals or the things I see in the river. These kind of broken edges, or porous edges where you see beyond and it allows you to place yourself in the new scale and you go I'm here, and I understand this containment but there's something bigger out there and there's probably something bigger beyond that if I want to look. That's the other thing about context and containment — it's kind of like those Russian dolls, you know, it keeps getting bigger and then depending on your belief system, it gets really big, or can. So you've bitten off an interesting question.

> That kind of onion skin is something that I also find really interesting—exhausting as well. Our being affixed to our devices is only further distancing us from the awareness that there's a relationship

between us and these locating signifiers of the building, the wall, and with each other. Much of that gets lost, certainly with climate control, but also with this interior gaze that has taken hold. In thinking of the openness or the texture of the landscape, with its edges and the scale shifts that you were addressing earlier, how that can bring the gaze back upward?

Yes, though I have to say that I've been doing a lot of work lately with different scientists, and I know how profoundly the landscape changed for me once I started being able to identify all the plants, because when you don't identify stuff there's this sort of, I think, comforting backdrop that makes your gaze be bigger. The more you know, though, the more you're honing in on specific information. As a landscape architect, I have a general knowledge of most things in the landscape, but it's general. When I go out on site with some of these scientists, they're immediately looking for a specific species of you know, amphibians or fish and it's a highly granular thing they were looking at.

I find that fascinating because I can still go to the woods and relax my eyes and stop thinking about the tree species and just go, "oh, the woods!" It's this blanket background. Going out with a forester it's really different, it's really hard for them to turn off the fact that they're seeing beetle kill, or this, or that fungus or the ants are under the bark of the cherries. Whereas I think many of them walk in a building and are like, "Oh, it's a building, it's an undifferentiated building," whereas most of us who are trained in architecture, we can't do that. And I'm sure you're that way when you look at books.

I think that touches on the beauty of looking and noticing, and that's what creates intimacy. Those specificities, while different for everyone—for one person it's the woods and for another person perhaps it's a building—but it's those signifiers or moments that connect us. Something I think about a lot is the way that the curb of the sidewalk looks here versus in Israel where I lived because it's so different, and that becomes like a nostalgic or a memory-place connection. Also, they would grow rosemary as the urban landscaping method, because it only needs a little water and it just grows—so we never bought rosemary, because if you ever needed some when you were cooking you'd just go down the street and pick some. I respond to that sense for noticing landscape landmarks too, and I think that creates an intimate engagement with place.

It's interesting you talk about rosemary because it has a smell and we now know how much memory and smell are related, this layering of senses. Understanding the curbs here are really hard because they're granite—if you go out west there aren't any granite curbs, they're concrete or asphalt curbs. You see and you feel something, or you smell it or you've touched it, I think it layers up into these, this sort of bank of memories that you use as your basis for comparison.

That was part of what originally brought me to this thesis—when something is so sensory, it's something of a challenge to try and to produce it in what we think of as graphic design tools, or even to contain it, because that in and of it itself is the tricky thing. If you are trying to represent a place or a location or landscape when it's such an expansive thing, when it's something that's different for every person. How do you contain a place? How do you share that with someone else?

Yeah, interesting.

RISD BEB, Second Floor
South Main Street, Providence RI
Wednesday April 6, 2016

INTERVIEW: SCHERI FULTINEER

ILLUSTRATION OF DORIC, IONIC,
AND CORINTHIAN COLUMNS
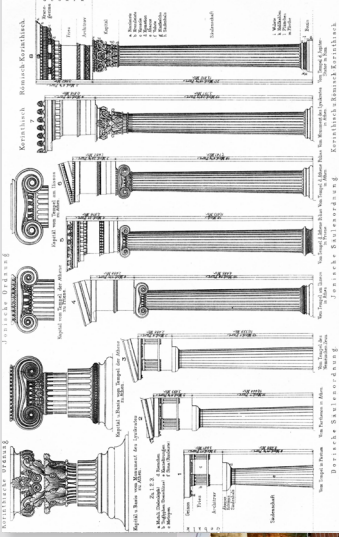
JOHN STEZAKER, *MASK XIV* 2006

FAVELA
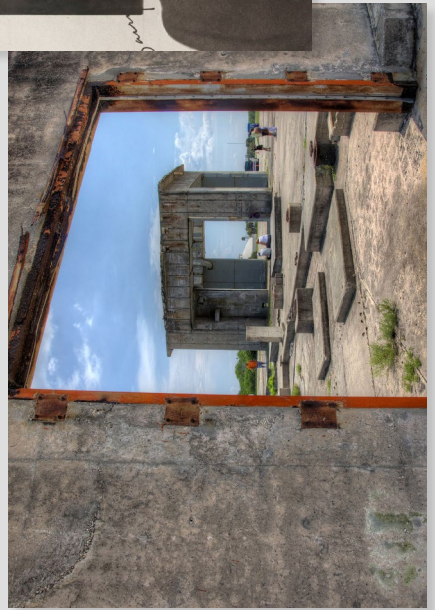
APOLLO I LAUNCH PAD
CAPE KENNEDY FLORIDA

Typologies
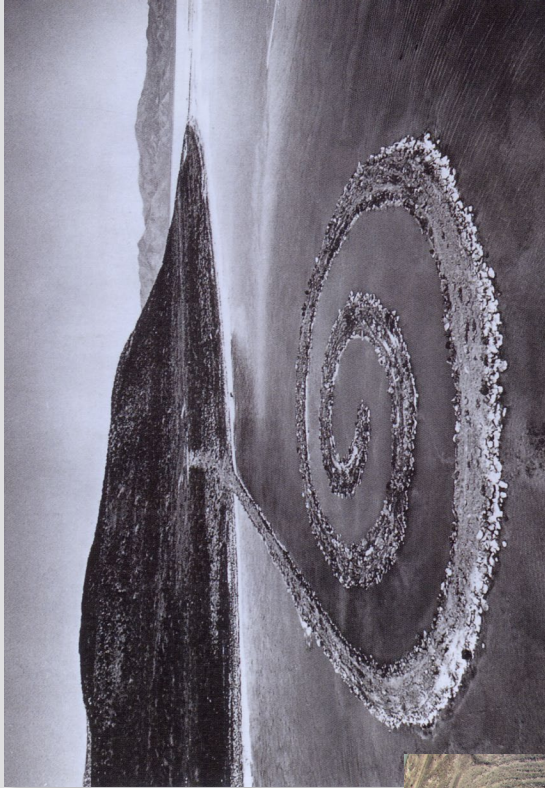
MARKUS BRUNNETTI, *MAGDEBURG, DOM ST. MAURITIUS
UND KATHARINA*, GERMANY, 2011–15.

112
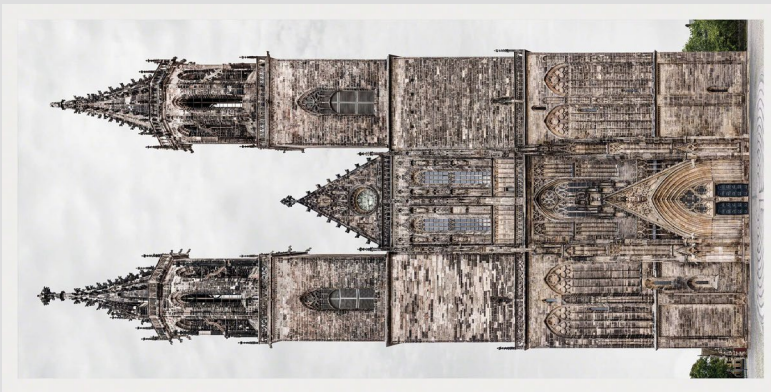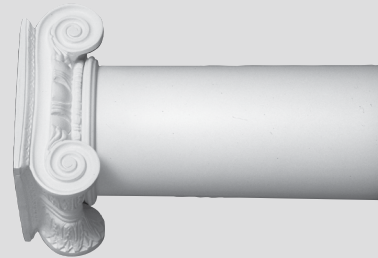
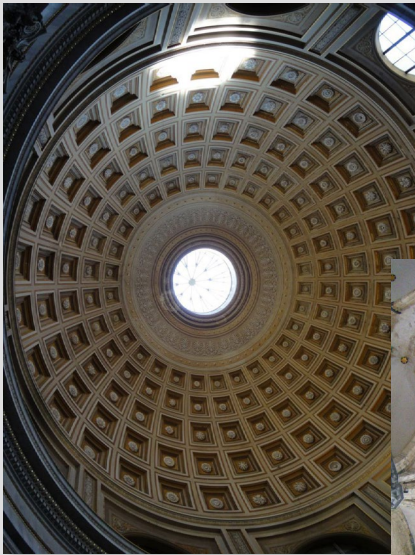ROBERT SMITHSON, *SPIRAL JETTY*, 1970

Ritual

Materiality

OPEN
FACETED
NUANCED

RHYTHMIC
CONSTRUCTED
WANDERING

STRETCHED
WRAPPED
FOLDED

HERODION PALACE

SALA ROTONDA (ROUND HALL),
VATICAN MUSEUM, VATICAN CITY

DIMENSIONAL
LIMINAL
FUZZY

FRESCO VAULT,
SINT-NIKLAASKERK GENT

MODULAR
POROUS
SPATIAL

ADJ.

VISUAL

ARCH OF TRIUMPH PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA

LA DEFENSE, PARIS
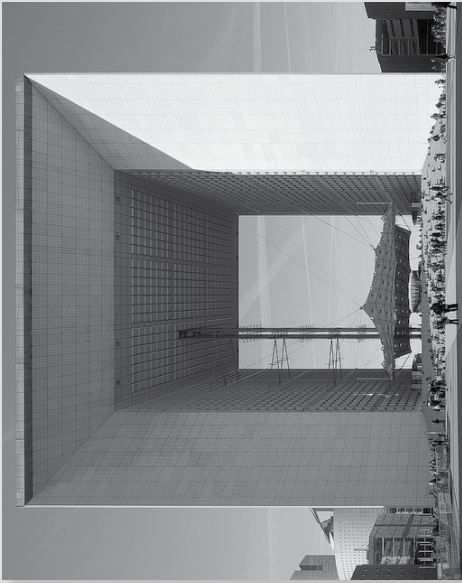
Arches

of

ARC DE TRIOMF, BARCELONA, SPAIN

SWORDS OF QĀDISĪYAH, BAGHDAD, IRAQ

ARC DE TRIOMPHE, PARIS

THE MONUMENTAL ARCH OF PALMYRA, SYRIA

Triumph

ITERATIVE
COATED
TEXTURED

MUNDANE
DERIVATIVE
MODULATED

ARCHITECTURAL
UNEXPECTED
REPETATIVE

SITED
REFLECTIVE
POTENT

UNIVERSAL
EVOCATIVE
INTERSTITIAL

ADJ.
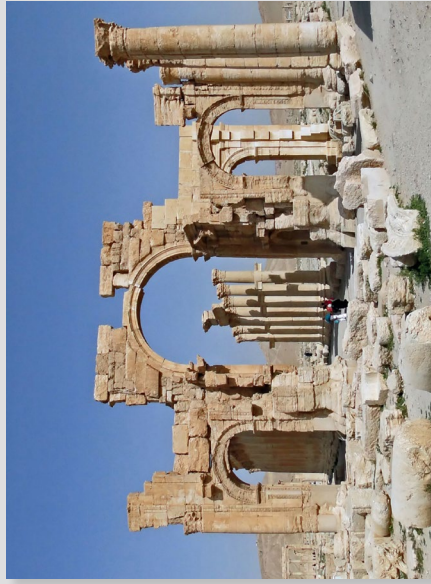
ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, ROME

RUA AUGUSTA ARCH, LISBON, PORTUGAL

3

3°
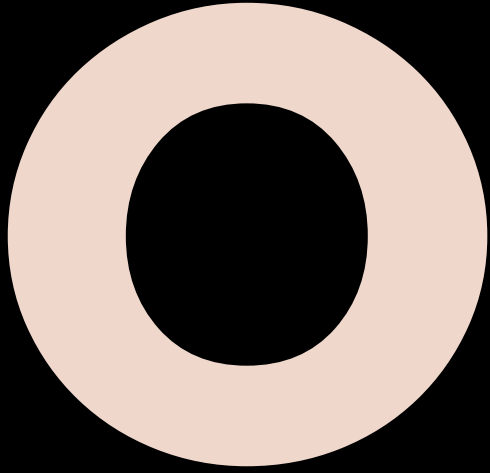
Framing
the Lapse

> *"Someplace" is what we are looking for. "No place" is where these elements are unknown or invisible, but in fact every place has them, although some are being buried beneath the asphalt of the monoculture, the 'geography of nowhere.' 'Placelessness,' then, may simply be place ignored, unseen, or unknown."*[1]
>
> Lucy Lippard, *Lure of the Local*

This unknown that Lucy Lippard writes of is of great interest to me. If we think about locality as a bordered or contained entity, what is to be done with the seemingly empty container? Or that which has no container—how can interest be drawn out from what is not immediately seen? In the expanse of the landscape—urban or otherwise—gaps are not to be skipped over, they are not devoid of meaning. Flying above the fields of the Midwest, I am captivated by their geometry; the new aerial perspective enables a rich appreciation for the deep visual expanse that at eye level reads as less complex and less intricate.

Framing the lapse is a means of constant looking and noticing, of creating opportunity. It is something that the eye must be tuned into, an activity that opposes apathy as we move about the landscape. Graphic designer Neil Donnelly, in describing his involvement with *Under the Elevated*, a project with the Public Design Trust in New York City, explained that "it was one of those rare opportunities for me to get to work on something that people don't choose to see, that you can just happen upon it when you're on your way from place to place and it just becomes part of the city."*(See p. 152)* Studio Spass, a graphic design studio in Rotterdam, takes an especially spatialized approach to design, and their identity for a local 2013 arts festival brings forward the gaps and the mundane in the urban environment. Language from the curatorial statement is reinserted into the city in unexpected, inventive, and economical means, highlighting the existing gestures in the urban streetscape.

Highlighting the lapse is a method for discovering new opportunities to shift perspective, to captivate with what others would not be able to see. It can derive interest and dimension in the seemingly flat. In her essay "Staring at Walls," in *Multiple Signatures*, Lucia Allais writes about what I see as a great strength in the work by the studio 2×4, and what I strive for in my own investigation. She explains that "when they treat the wall like a printed page, a thickness is worked up from the surface, reaching toward the viewer..." and that "for all its 'old media' quality, for 2×4 the wall is an ideal space for experimentation because it can slow down the floor, expose

1   Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place In a Multicentered Society*. New York: New Press, 1997. 9.

A HOUSE IS THE SPACE IT CONTAINS AND THE
SPACE IT RELEASES. ITS WINDOWS FRAME SPACE
THROUGH ABSENCE. A HOUSE INTERACTS WITH ITS
ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE PORTIONS THAT ARE
EITHER REMOVED OR NEVER BUILT.
AS MUCH AS A HOUSE IS DEFINED
BY ITS BUILDING, THE DAO SAYS, IT IS
ALSO DEFINED BY ITS UNBUILDING.

LEARNING AND UNRAVELING, INVENTING AND
DISRUPTING, SCALING AND DISSEMINATING—
YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER.
IF BUILDING IS THE CALL, UNBUILDING IS
THE RESPONSE.
THEY ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN, EACH
CONSTITUTING THE OTHER. FAR FROM OPPOSITE OF
BUILDING, UNBUILDING OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO BUILD FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE.[4]

ROB GIAMPIETRO
Unbuilding, Build Conference, Belfast, 2012

gaps, and act as a visual de-complicator through which illusions must pass."[2] An awareness to identify gaps and to build them up —both metaphorically and sculpturally—can intrigue and draw interactivity in the questioning of that space, and in sharing the surfacing of the lapse with others. *(See p. 165)*

On the subject of subtraction, beyond visual pleasure, there is meaning to be drawn from interstitials or blind spots in the landscape—stories that can be researched or invented. In her writing on subtraction as strategy in architecture, architect and researcher Keller Easterling opens her argument stating that "the subtraction of buildings is as important as the making of buildings."[3] What Easterling goes on to explore in her essay is that subtraction can be used as an advantage, an act of subversion, and a methodology. The gap is always active. Negative space in composition carries as much of the action and directs flow as the solid. This notion of deconstruction is also an important variable and tool in the process of working. Just as buildings are brought down as a means of urban editing, they have their own narrative, their own process. This balance of building and editing, sculpting with the unoccupied space, is a strategy for process, and a mode of measure. There is a necessity of simultaneity in construction and deconstruction, breaking things apart in order to layer them back up, renewed.

In my first drawing class in college, we shaped the facets of the models' bodies by laboriously drawing a charcoal ground only to slowly lift it with swipes of erasers in varying measures of pressure. The hardness and softness of the edge between black and white sculpt minute planes of the body. What may read as a blank ground—a sweep of black—in fact had its own history, its own coming to be, that was built upon with the motions of the eraser, bringing further depth to its surface. I find great fulfillment from elevating the gap to a level of interest, to draw and erase, layer and carve. In containing and building an environment around something seemingly bereft, it is an opportunity to build an edge around air, and to invent a new and fluid frame around a story uncovered to bring interest to the seemingly mundane.

2   Allais, Lucia. "Staring at Walls." Rock, Michael. *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users*. New York: Rizzoli, 2013. 211.

3   Giampietro, Rob. "Unbuilding." *Lined & Unlined*. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.

4   Easterling, Keller, Nikolaus Hirsch, and Markus Miessen. *Subtraction*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014. Print.
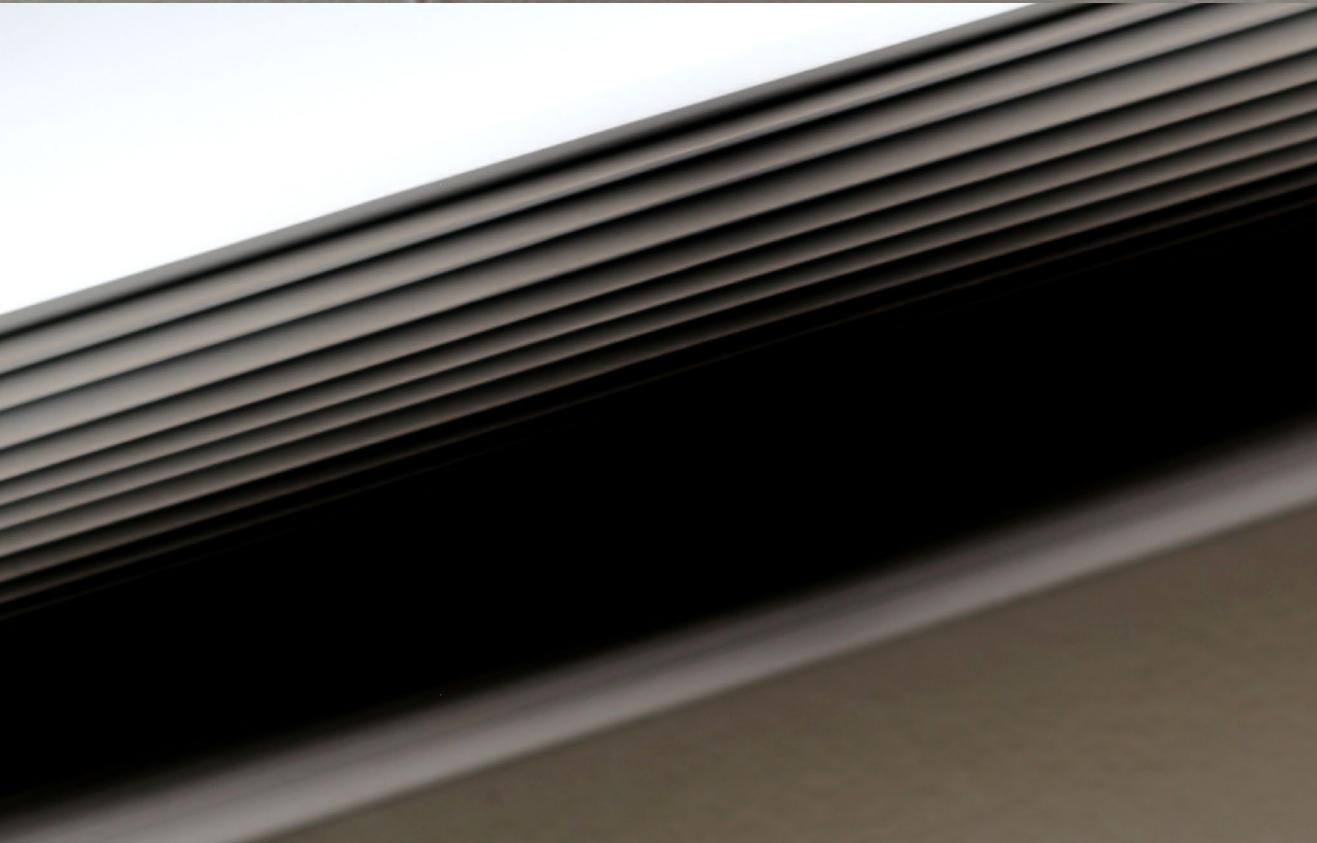
MONUMENTAL NOTHING

Building on a study of monuments, a concrete book enacts Martin Heidegger's text "What is Metaphysics?" in the attempt of bringing a physicality to nothingness. Printed on waterproof, non-tearing paper, French-folded pages form a sculptural shell for "nothing"— providing a tangible and ever-lasting monument to the intangible notion of nothingness. The content lives on the interior of the folds, but one can be equally, if not more, drawn to the space constructed by the fore-edge gradient as the surface of the book becomes a contemplative space or moment. The interaction of interior and exterior materializes that nothingness is a paradox: it is infinite and yet a void, nothing is quite certainly something.

Book, 64 pages, 5.5×8.5"
December 2014

DEAD MONUMENTS
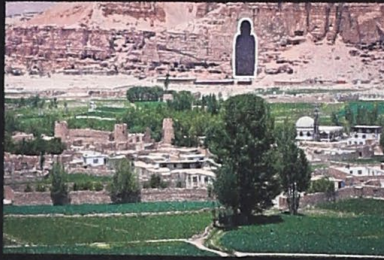
What about this nothing?

DEAD MONUMENTS

An awareness of gaps plays out in considering what meaning remains in localities that are vacated, and monuments destroyed, and what goes on to occupy that space long afterward. How is collective memory affected by the decay or distortion of a monument? This pamphlet harkens to the format of printed collateral at a tourist attraction, that of the destroyed or repurposed monument foot print. Part of a meditation on monuments, this work considers those that have disappeared, been destroyed, removed, abandoned or forgotten. How does the space that they occupy, and the way in which we relate to that space, shift?

(Opposite) Front cover

Pamphlet, 6×9"
December 2014

THE DEATH OF THE MONUMENT

But that is exactly what it is distinguished from. Interrogating the nothing — asking what and how it, the nothing, is —

turns what is interrogated into its opposite.

CREATES THE VACUUM FOR A NEW ONE
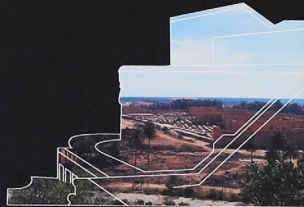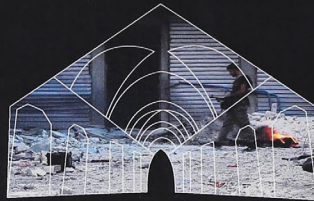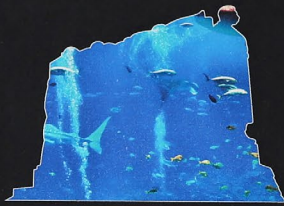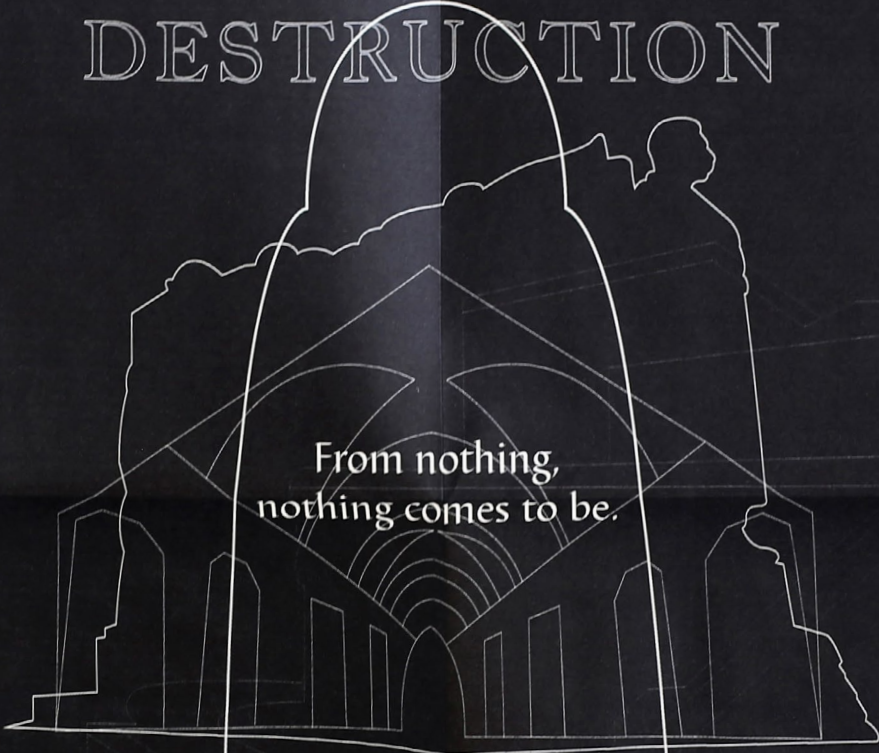
IN THEIR
DESTRUCTION

From nothing,
nothing comes to be.

THE VOID
REMAINS

Buddhas of Bamiyan
Hazarajat, Afghanistan
6th Century-2001

Al-Madina Souq
Aleppo, Syria
14th century-2012 (partially destroyed)

DEAD MONUMENTS

HERE

NOISE

IS

THERE

LIVES IN
COUNTERSPACES

PARTICULARITY
OF PLACE

Singularity

Begins

and

Ends
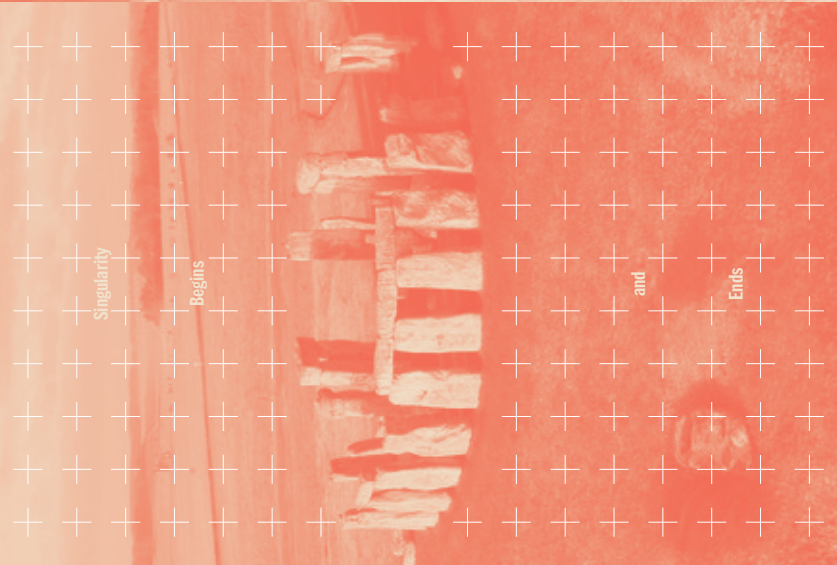
THERE IS NOISE HERE

Visual form speaks to the connection between Aldo Rossi's writing of the human interaction with place, and the discovery that same week of what archaeologists believe to be the earliest house found in England, at the site of Blick Mead, a mile away from the monumental Stonehenge.

> 'There's noise here,' Mr. [David] Jacques said, imagining the goings-on in 4300 B.C. 'There's people here doing stuff. Just like us. Same kids and worries.'[1]

While the timeframe of the house discovered and Stonehenge are significantly far apart, the relationship between the human contact with this land before the stones were rooted in place is undeniably linked to the structure's coming to be. This piece uses Stonehenge as a reference and a launchpad, enacting a different process of analysis on a site. It asserts that we should not only see place as a set of outlines or as a container—the contour of a monument, the skyline of neighboring structures or the topography of landforms. We cannot only measure the locus by its limits. It is also in the counterspaces, both of physicality and of time, that we define our connection with place—openings that leave room for the human contact and imprint.

1   Chang, Kenneth. "Stonehenge Begins to Yield Its Secrets." *The New York Times*. 09 Nov. 2015. Web. 15 Nov. 2015.

Poster, 20×30", November 2015

CAVITY

Equally relevant to addressing materials of the built environment and testing the boundaries of placehood are identifying the gaps in our surroundings. The lapses orient us as much as built structures—they define the visual texture of a city just as do walls of brick, stone, and shingles. They allow for their own set of behaviors and for improvised pathways—they invite the paving of desire lines. In the absence of buildings is both the activities they afford in the place of structure, and the invitation to consider the circumstance in which it was vacated, razed, paved.

   In *Cavity*, a series of photographic composites demonstrate a critical stance on the dominance of parking lots in the downtown Providence landscape. Rather than addressing that which rises, it is that which was gouged, un-built, and un-addressed that is of prominence. This method employs virtual splicing and deception, and explores how depth in form and concept can be pulled out from what is seemingly flat; how a surface can be built up or into. Toying with the viewer, the images draw our gaze toward these often overlooked surfaces, attracting interest while leaving room for inference from the viewer. Layered images and textures perhaps read like reflections, but in fact are not—an act of distortion that reflects back upon us our experience of the cavity-filled city.

Photographic composites, series of four
22×32", May 2015
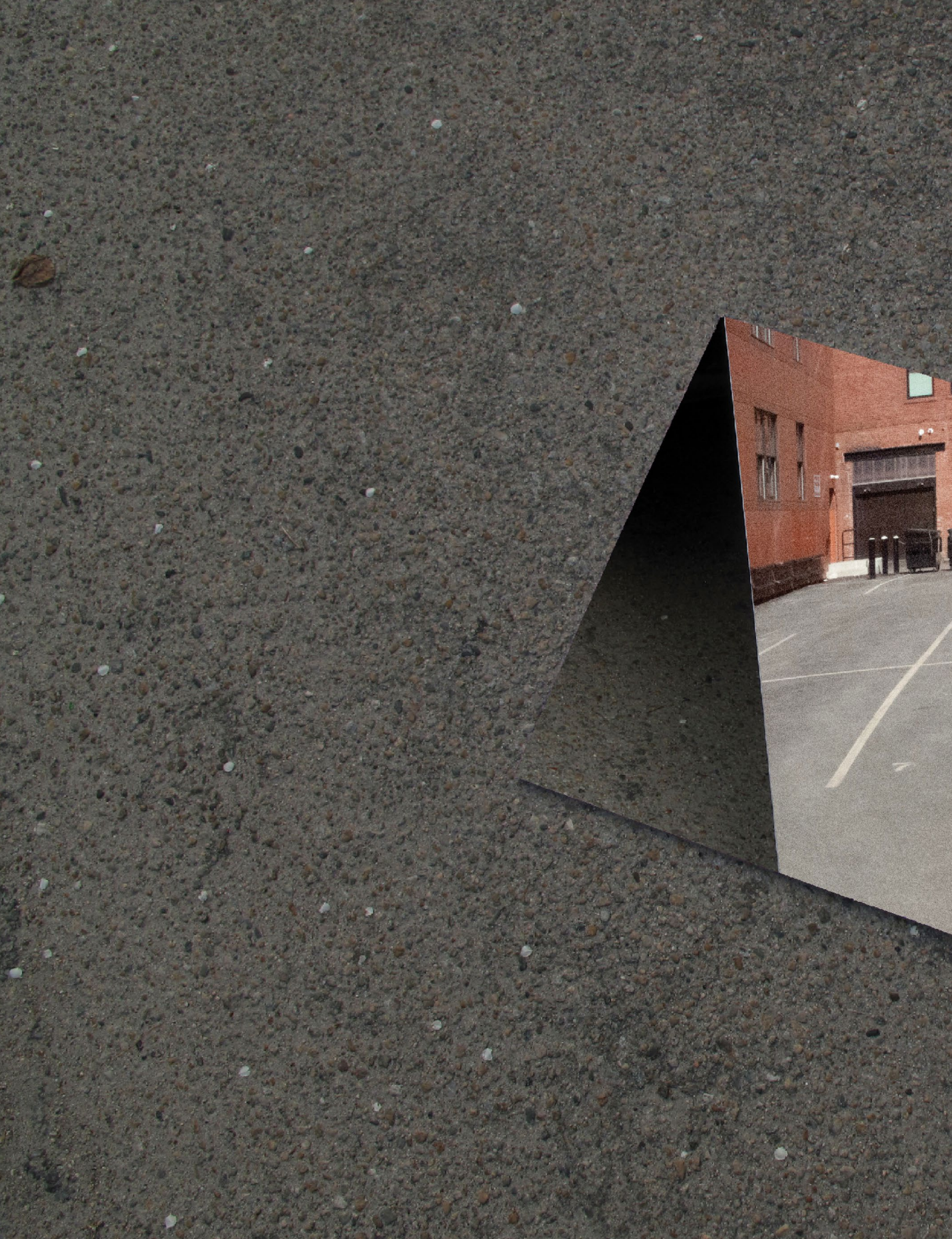
FRAMING THE LAPSE

Graphic design is a tiered practice—of reading and implementing cues to build a scenario or narrative, and delineating the space for it to occupy. This requires a certain kind of seeing, one that can respond to the environment and can see in the lapse the opportunity to delineate new ones. Flat, everyday materials are used to frame space; to make the invisible or unaddressed visible using architectural form as a counter-surface. In the space made where the wall meets the floor—two intersecting planes—is an opportunity to sculpt the air and make a new geometry, to complicate the intersection. This is an act of both noticing the gap, and finding new ways to bring flatness and dimension into a shared scenario.

Installation, masking tape
Approx. 5.5'×4', April 2016
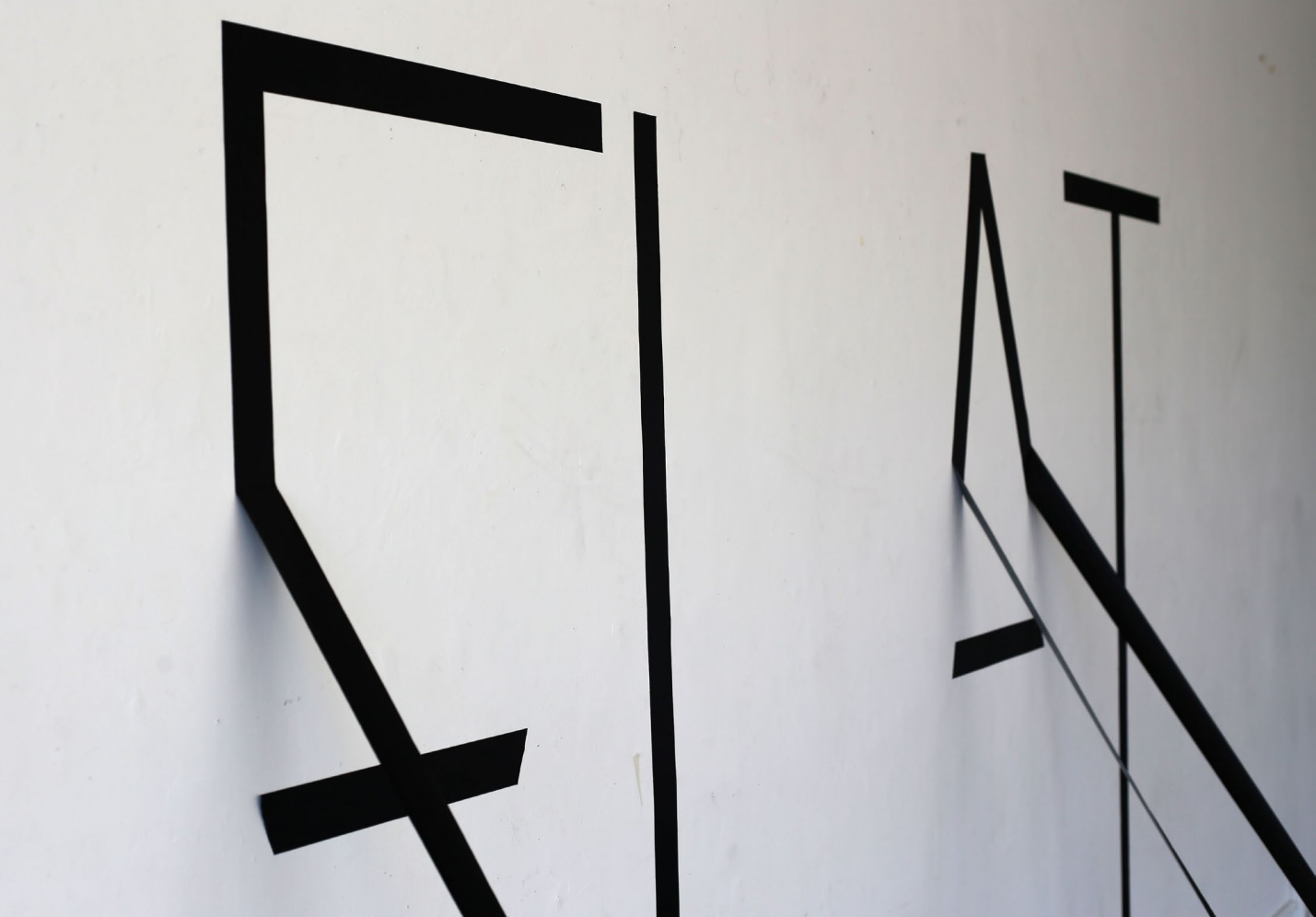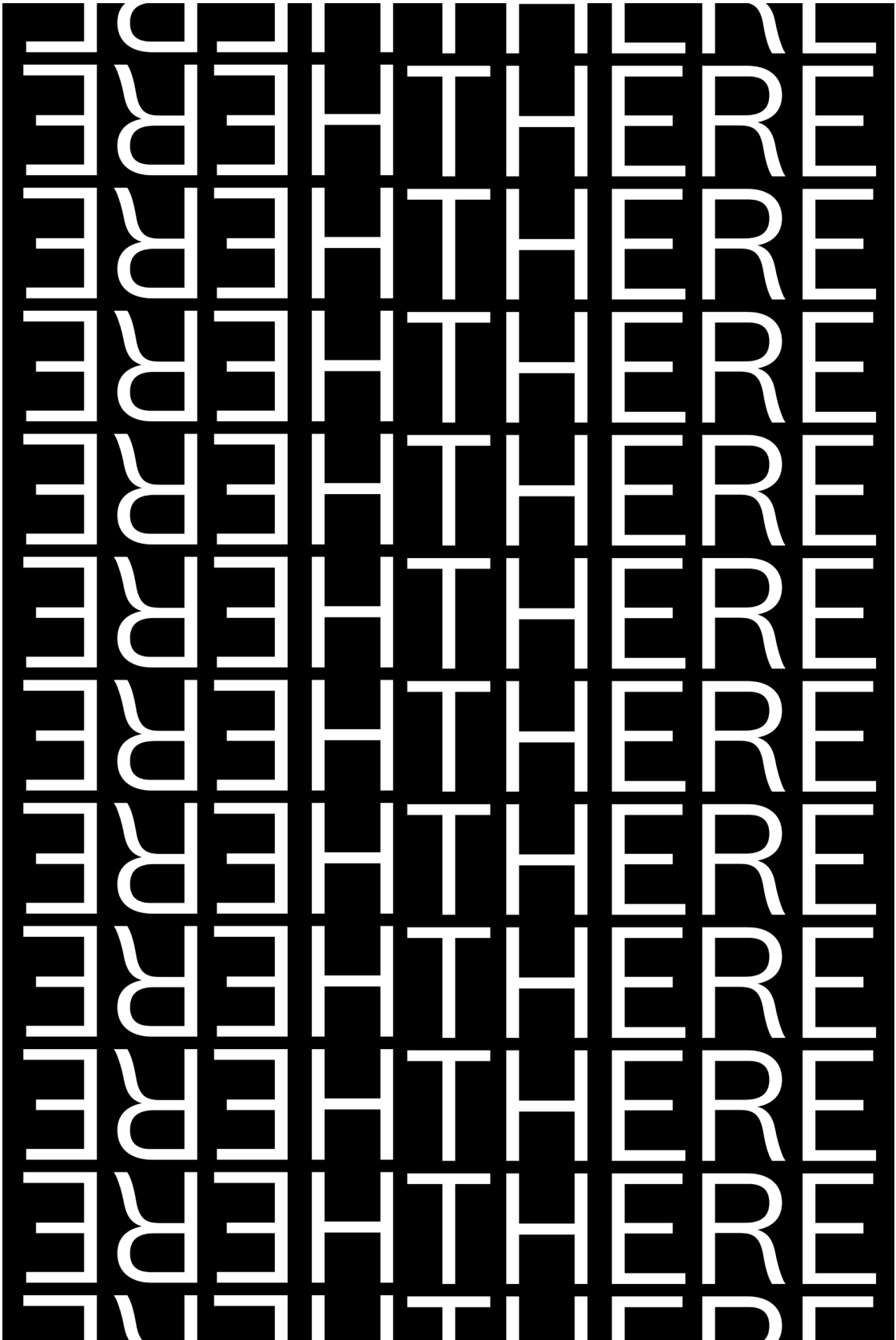
SPINE

Prominent in the experience of localities is the use of signage—both a structure and sculptural object, and a surface for directional language. This series of posters seeks out a kind of linguistic edge—one that surfaces the intricacies of intersections and overlap in language that speaks to orientation and location. What are these adjacencies in language and meaning that we may not see, and what exists between them?

Poster series, 20×30" each
April 2016
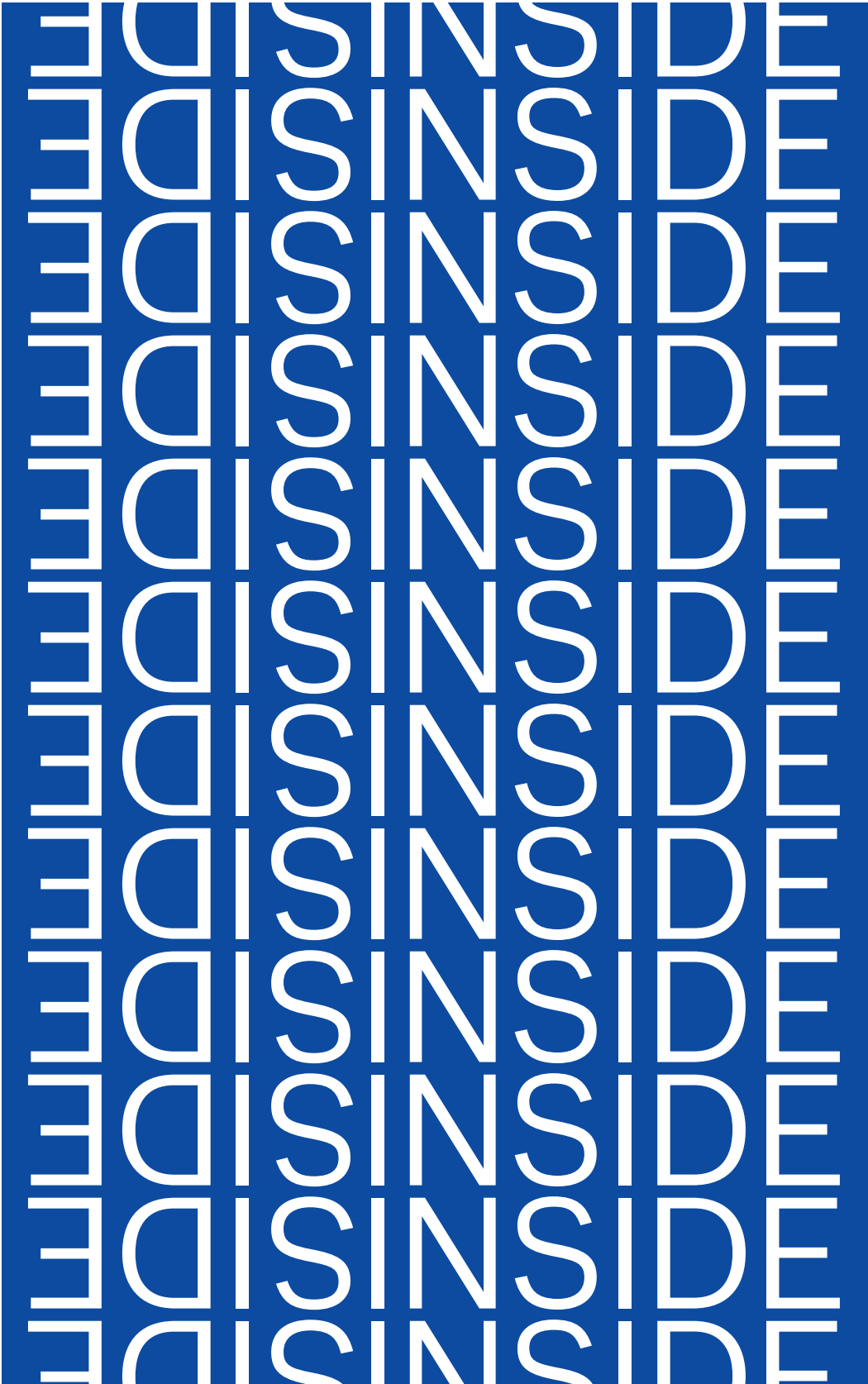
one way

this way

no way

wrong way

do not enter

yield

come over

over here

or there

go

stop

Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act tomorrow.
Perform the specified act today.

Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.
Perform the specified act the next day.

Sketch for dimensional poster
November 2015

INTERVIEW
NEIL DONNELLY

Neil Donnelly is a New York based graphic designer, and has a rich and multi-faceted breadth of work. Neil often works with clients in the field of architecture, and I was interested to learn about his approach to these collaborations and others, and to learn more about how he views the relationship between form and content, reference and graphic response.

R.L.K. I noticed that in the GSAAP [Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation] talk, you mentioned that you had a background in engineering. Is that what you studied in undergrad?

N.D. It is — material science. Manipulating the properties of things like steel and ceramics and semiconductors to get them to do what you want them to do. Working with materials to make a microstructural level.

Did you end up working in that, following your studies?

I worked with a research lab at Carnegie Mellon, which is where I went to school, and it was a lab that was focused on research on art materials. It was an art conservation science lab. The short version of the story is that when I was in high school, most of what I was doing on my own time was graphic design. I just didn't really know if that was what it was, or if that was something that you could do.

What kinds of things were you making?

Working on the newspaper and the yearbook and making t-shirts for bands, all of that. A lot of it was music-related, actually. But I also did a lot of drawing as a kid, and drawing logos and film titles and letters, not necessarily always people. My interest in type goes way back, but when it came time to go to college, I was good at math and science, and my parents were like, if you're good at this, why wouldn't you do something with it? So, that's how I ended up there. But then, I ultimately found my way back and working at this conservation research lab was kind of like a way to see if I could bridge the gap between my interest in art and what I was actually trained in. It was really interesting, and it was a great few years, but I decided ultimately

that it wasn't a thing I wanted to be doing. So I spent a lot of my own time doing projects for friends and family, and whatever I could do to build a portfolio of any kind.

> At work, were you still doing a lot of hand-drawn type?

Not so much, it was more working with type. Then I got a job with a firm in Pittsburgh. I worked for three years in Pittsburgh and two years in Chicago with them, and that's where I learned the most. I took a couple of design classes as an undergrad, which obviously were pretty instrumental, but working at this studio I learned a lot of about, not just type and how to build a file and practical things like that, but also running a business and dealing with clients. It was a very transparent place. I was involved in a proposal-writing process and managing projects and all of that. It was a small firm, so I got to do a lot of different things.

> That's really great. It makes a big difference. I think that's something that school often shields you from, just the ins-and-outs of production.

When I went to Yale it was like I got to this point where I felt like there was this split between what I was doing on my own time and I was doing at work in terms of what I was interested in with design, and I wanted to try to find a way to bring those two things back together. Then, you know this, I'm sure. You spend two years doing basically whatever you want, and it comes time to leave and you're like, I don't know how long you were out of school before going back, but I had already worked for a while and I don't really just want to go get a job somewhere. I think it would have been hard for me. I had all the desire and independence. I just felt like it was, I never would have been able to, I pretty much started working on my own after school and freelanced at a couple of places here or there initially, but I never would have been able to do that if I hadn't already learned so much about the practical mechanics of being a designer, running a practice.
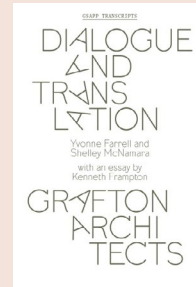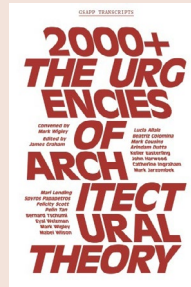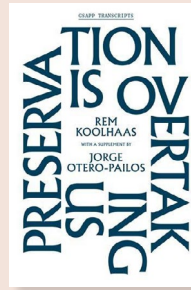
It's interesting, because I feel like I'm having a similar thought process of the next step, wanting it to be something that would give me those skills, because, where I worked previously was in-house, I worked at a museum. So I'm looking to learn more of the client relations and the inner workings of a studio. It's great that you were able to already have that. Did your time at Yale instill an approach that you're still working with today? How did that formulate things for you?

I don't really know how the thesis works at RISD. At Yale it's probably very similar. You probably have this topic or working method that, throughout your second year, you're using as a way to think about the work you're making. I never really put a name on a term for it. There were people who had ideas about, my whole thesis was going to be about this one technique, mirroring or error or something like that. I was never able to do that. I felt like every time I tried to reduce it into a thing to help me generate more work, I always made things that were bad. It really ended up being a dead end. It was much more useful for me as an analytical tool, as a way to look at the things I was making together, and to think

about what connects all these things, what makes them all make sense together.

> Was that a process that happened after you had made the body of work, and then you were drawing those connections?

It was, sort of, during. It was also looking back at things I had done in the first year to figure that out. Roughly speaking, it was about order and systems. My natural instinct is to organize things, and I think I had an approach to design before grad school that was very A to B. I had this idea and I would basically form it in my head and put it out into the world. One of things I learned in school was, and this sounds really dumb in hindsight, but it doesn't have to be that way. It can be a more circular process. You don't have to have all your ideas squared away before you actually make something. You can make things and it becomes a feedback loop, where you think about what you made and that can inform your concept. I think that led me to think more about how you can create organization or systems or some sense of order, but at the same time, in a way, you can build a machine that allows disorder to occur. Or, you can layer multiple systems on top of each other to create dissonance and end up with unexpected results. I think that just because of the way I was thinking about

it, I was reluctant to boil it down too much. In a way, I think that looking back at my thesis book, which I haven't done in a while, I think it's a document of the time I spent there, and I think it's an expression of a way of thinking about design that I still use, still very relevant to the way that I work.

> I really see that coming across. Something I especially enjoyed was the GSAAP transcript book series. Even seeing just the covers, what I love about those is that there is such a clear system. But it's that perfect balance of consistency, but also with that twist or that turn, so that they all feel of the same world but also all their own. It is a really delicate and smart balance, something hard to find. I also see that what you were talking about, that disruption even in the Keller Easterling website, where it's that balance between a clear structure but also this moment of disruption or moment of interruption.

That was a fun project for a lot of reasons, but one of them was working with Keller on it. Obviously her language is so specific to her. It does seem to be an important aspect to any site that I would design for. The initial idea was that the way that it works now, the tags that are associated with each piece of content, the more content you view, the more the navigation gets populated with these tags. It gets more unwieldy and strange, the more stuff you see. But, initially, my idea was just have all of that visible as the navigation at once. As more content gets added, that navigation grows, but it's all there from the beginning, just as a way of dumping the user directly into her.

> Right into her mind.

But in talking with her about it she felt it would be too overwhelming or just that it wasn't sneaky enough. It was actually her idea to not have it all visible at once, but to let it grow with the experience of the user on the site. Now I can't imagine having done it the other way.

Keller Easterling Website

Having the chance to work with her in such a deep way, not just using the content but having her eye on the design as well, was a really crucial part of the process.

She seems like she would be a really strong collaborator. What I especially enjoy is how that speaks so much to the way, it's pretty thick, so from what I understand that is surfacing is hidden infrastructures or tacit structures that we don't necessarily pay attention to, so that slow build is such a great way of visualizing that. It's a really refreshing website. I'm a little bit more into books and print, so when there's a website that feels as vibrant and alive and rhythmic as I find books can be, it really stands out for me. I was wondering if, maybe, we could talk a little bit about your experience as a fellow at the Design Trust for Public Space, and about the *Under the Elevated* project. That project is really interesting, in how as designers we're a little more attuned to noticing lapses or gaps or opportunities. Even if it's not necessarily in the graphic design canon, we're attuned to things spatially as well. I was wondering if you could speak a little bit about that experience, your role, and how that affected the way you look at the city or how you experience New York?

That was a great project to be a part of. For one, I feel like, as much as I want the things that I work on to be accessible and available to anyone, that's honestly not the case. Most of the things that I do are for a pretty self-selecting audience. Architects, but not even just architects, but a very specific kind of academic architect would be interested in reading the sorts of things that I design. Sometimes, other graphic designers, I guess, artists or people who are interested in art, some of the more art-related work that I do. But, this was something that was one of those rare opportunities for me to get to work on

something that people don't choose to see, that you can just happen upon it when you're on your way from place to place and it just becomes part of the city.

Even in a temporary way, it was really exciting for that reason. Also, to take interest that I have in typography and particular ways of approaching graphic design and figure out how to make them work for an audience that isn't so self-selecting. How does this relate to things we already see in the environment of the city? Which was why the typography was all Helvetica Textbook, which was sort of a way of tying what we were doing to the MTA graphics standards, but making it a little friendlier. Single-story 'A' and softer letter forms. Then, also, the logo was really just, it grew out of a pretty dumb idea about the letter L being shorthand for elevated, and just flipping it upside down, it sort of echoes the structural supports of things like elevated train tracks and highway overpasses and it also becomes a frame for content. Often, just the title of a program, sometimes images or other text.

Right, it immediately spatializes, even when you're looking at the supporting materials outside of the space itself— it gets you to that place really quickly. There are a couple of installations that I did with another fellow, Chad, one under the Manhattan Bridge in Chinatown and one in the Bronx on Souther Boulevard. Those were both temporary. They were meant to be pop up tests of some of the ideas that we were thinking about, and I think the kind of low-tech quality of them, which grew out of the fact that they had to be done pretty quickly and they weren't permanent, I think was also an important part of what we were trying to do with the program. I think it was as much about not papering over the things that were aesthetically interesting about these places, as much as they may have been derelict, it's not like we're trying to glorify

decay or anything. It's just that we're not putting something in these places that feels like it could be landed from Mars, that it feels humble and uses common materials. It was all MDF. Chad basically killed both of them himself. Figuring out a way to work, to apply what I do in other contexts to other different contexts was very satisfying.

> Were the conversations around materials and the form of it, was that something that you were also engaged with and interested in?

Yeah. It was a great fellowship because the four of us were always meeting together and talking and influencing each others' work. Particularly, with those installations with Chad. The kind of architectural design of them and the material choices were largely his, but I think there was a real sympathy between what all of us were trying to do in the project. It never felt like one of us was trying to pull the project in a direction that somebody else was really opposed to. It was really collaborative.

> That's really wonderful. It's something that, in some ways, it's hard to find those opportunities, having an active role as a designer with such an interdisciplinary team, I think is something that a lot of designers are really hungry for, but sometimes, it's hard to find those outlets or those opportunities.

There were aspects each of us did more independently. The book that we did that collects all of the world of the project. Since I was the graphic designer, that was mostly my responsibility, not in terms of the content, but of the form of it and the design. But, I have to credit the design trust with fostering that collaboration too, because the meetings were often between the four of us and the design trust and also the people from the department of transportation. The design trust staff members I think did a lot to create an environment in which all of us felt comfortable being involved in every aspect of the process.

> That's a really great system to have in place, or opportunity. Did that project affect, in any way, another way that you work? I'm also curious to know, since I now know you've lived and worked in a number of places, whether your work is affected by where you live, or your surroundings?

That's a tough one.

> It could be that that's not the case...

I feel like the answer has to be yes, but I don't know if I know why. In the case of *Under the Elevated*, the typographic reference to the MTA was critical to developing the identity. In that sense, I think I'm always looking for cues. I'm not the kind of designer who is interested in creating something out of whole cloth. My process usually starts with research and looking into background material and reading and writing. I always start by scribbling things in a notebook. It's funny to think about that, the context of what I was saying earlier, the strive towards organizing, because my notebooks look like ravings of a lunatic. I almost can't even read my own writing sometimes. That's where my id comes out, I guess. I think I'm always looking for these external things to grab onto, that can help generate an idea, but in a way, it's not even me coming up with an idea myself, but just taking pieces from other places and finding ways to make them my own or make them specific to the context in which I want to use them. So, in that way, I think I can't help but be affected by the place where I'm working. I did an identity for photography for [inaudible] in Cincinnati a couple of years ago, and one of the typefaces we used as part of the identity was this weird, late nineteenth century slab serif thing, but with really sharp slab serifs, that was made at a Cincinnati type foundry.

> Did you digitize it?

It already existed, strangely, because it's not something I had ever seen before. I found it in a type specimen book from the foundry,

and then realized that it actually existed digitally. It wasn't the best digital version, I have to say. It had some issues. But, I paired that with Helvetica and both were equally present in the identity. I also realized that the basic structure of the letters in both of those typefaces was really very similar. Laying them on top of each other, the bones were almost identical. It was like, the clothing they were wearing was different.

   I think I'm always looking for connections to, if not place always, then at least context. I think also, in addition to that, it's usually about, if the context isn't place, it's often relationships. It's the people that I'm working with, and trying to, the interactions between me and whomever I'm working with is what ends up combining to create the thing that I'm designing. It's a bit like what I was saying with Keller, that it was a very fluid design process, and I feel like I'm almost, without exception, lucky enough to work with people who are smart and interesting and generous and great collaborators.

> On that note of looking for footholds or those kinds of contextual notes that inform the process, something that I wonder about is: if you're doing work for architects that does have to do with the physical or the built environment or structures, what helps you contextualize it when it's about a form or something actually architectural? Where perhaps the cues might seem on the nose, and you're trying to maneuver around that rather than make a one to one relationship.

That's tough, because when you're working with architects or artists, as a designer, you want to find a way for the design to be in dialog with their work without trying to one up them or beat them at their own game. There's actually a great essay by James Goggin, I don't know if you've seen it, about books about Gordon Matta-Clark's work?

No, and he's my thesis adviser!
How could he not tell me about that?
Oh, that is so funny.
It was part of this book that Occasional Papers published called *Form of the Book Book*. It's in there. I teach introductory typography at Parsons, and I give it to my students every year to read, because I think it's this great survey of graphic design, about one particular artist who has a very particular approach, that designers always wrestle with in terms of their position in relation to his work. It's always this funny game of trying to find a way to relate without imitating or feeling like you're getting in the way. I guess that's something I'm always afraid of too, is trying to steal the spotlight, when most people who are interested in the book because of the work in it, not because of the design. How do you negotiate with that? Still wanting to have a hand in the way the work is presented, the ideas that were formed, without stealing the thunder of the person or the work that is the whole point of the thing.

> Perhaps the hand of the design is that you are setting this environment. Especially hearing you discuss the book series and the GSAAP lecture, and about those interiors—I find that the pacing and the design of a book when done well or done in that right balance gets you into a certain mood or a certain environment to receive the content. It creates a certain atmosphere, I think. This is something I've been wondering about because I think there is this unique affinity between architects and graphic designers. I do see more kinship there than necessarily with others. The amount of kinship or excitement between the two practices is at a higher volume. In thinking this through over the last couple of months—and I should say that my husband is an architect, my father is an architect—I've been trying to separate it out. Is this just my

personal connection? I think there has to be something more, though. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to spend this much time thinking about it. Part of me wonders whether it's that architects also clearly create these environments? That we're both creating these moods, shaping sur-faces that build an atmosphere? Is that the overlap? Do you have any thoughts on that kind of mutual attraction?

I guess I feel like it's form in the service of something else. If it becomes too much in the service of itself, in terms of architecture, it's just sculpture. Whereas, there is a certain practicality that you need to address, even if you decide you need to flaunt the traditional ways of expressing them flagrantly, it's still something you have to engage with. I think that's something that most design disciplines have in common. I feel very much the same way, that to me, graphic design is more like architecture, than it is a lot of other arts, I guess. But, in terms of the way that you're thinking about your thesis or all these ideas about physical space and graphic design, you said you were trying to separate whether it's your personal connections? I also think that it has to be something more than that. Have you come to any conclusions about that?

I think that I don't know that I've got any conclusions. I might be too immersed right now. But, I think there's also something really satisfying about, for me at least, it might sound really superficial or obvious, but even the architectural form and its angles. So much of what we have fun with in graphic design is the grid, the system, and breaking it. Architecture does so much of the same thing. And also thinking about that human-object, or the human-scale, relationship. James and I have talked about that a bit, the relationship between the hand and the book, the person and the space. I think that, while of course,

industrial designers are going to be thinking about the same thing and the sculptor is going to be thinking how a person might feel next to their piece, I think that we think, maybe, in a more utilitarian way, or in a more considered way, of how someone is going to interact with something. That might be too exclusive, I'm not sure. It could be the case that everyone thinks that way.

I think it also just depends a lot on the designer. I feel like in some cases, there is more kinship between certain graphic designers and certain architects and certain industrial designers, than two graphic designers who might have entirely different strategies or differences. That might be kind of obvious.

I think we are in a small niche, and this came up in the [GSAAP] talk, too. We're in this really small part of the graphic design world. By nature of being in a graduate program or in New York, you're already in such a specific niche, even further. We can say this conversation is about the bubble, a little bit. Maybe. I think something else that I wonder about, in that relationship, too, and maybe you'll have some thoughts on this, is that if part of the relationship is that graphic design is bringing expression in a different form to the work of the architect, I'm wondering if you have any thoughts of the inverse of that exchange, or that relationship? Is there something that architects can provide to art practice? I think there's kind of a clear service—I know it's a dirty word, but we can provide a certain service to architects that helps elevate or reformat their work.

I appreciate you putting it in those terms. It also relates to the barter economy of design. There will be cases where I've worked with architects who don't have as much money as I

would like to pay me for the work I'm doing. Usually, it's a situation where I'm like, I'll just do this because I want to do it and we'll make it work. It has occurred to me that, is there something I can ask them for? A kind of compensation that wouldn't be money? I've never come up with a good answer to that. I don't need a new house. They can't really do an addition to my apartment. It is a funny thing, where I think the things we make are generally, just because they package or present other peoples' stuff, that they're both services, but it's a very different service. To address the question, on a less mercenary level, you're asking in your mind, what is it that graphic designers offer to architects? Is it just the thing that we're making for them? Is it more something that can inform the way they work? Or both?

> In interacting with architecture students and helping my husband throughout architecture school, preparing presentations and a thesis book, I think what graphic designers are able to do is clarify communication—or be strategic if you don't want it to be clear. To be able to tune the communication to whatever note is desired. I think that, then, trickles down to everything from the typesetting to the form. If you want something to be deceptive or if you want it to be clear and pared down, we have those tools, but also the ability to tease out what the goal is, so that we can then deliver it. I think that graphic designers are really good at helping to help someone talk through and solidify what they're trying to say.

Professional therapists.

> Definitely. I feel like that's the part of the client relationship that people always neglect. I think 'therapist' is a great term for that. I think that's a lot of what we can bring to the table, and when I think about the inverse, I think about the way you talked about collaboration.

Graphic designers are really good about thinking spatially, but at least I found myself in trying to make work that is more spatial, there is the limitation of facility. If you've been working in certain formats for a long time, it takes time to become comfortable with other, oversized works or materials and things like that. When I think about what the reciprocity might be, perhaps it's actually finding collaboration much like the *Under the Elevated* project, where there's an opportunity to bring those two ways of working together to make something stronger than they may be apart.

I think your mention of materials is important, in talking about this, too, because obviously, architects have very particular opinions about the material qualities of pretty much everything. Yeah, I think that's informed. I also have an interest in that, and maybe that is one of the few ways in which my engineering background is somewhat directly tied to what I'm doing now, the interest in the tactile qualities of the things I make. That's certainly an area in which I feel like the conversation with architects about those issues is usually pretty fluid and productive just because it's something they are always thinking about, too. In some cases, more than graphic designers.

> Yes, I think the material piece is always a challenge because in some ways, we're almost limited. But getting back to when we were talking about the translation of form, you want the materials to also key someone into that kind of environment, but it's always this toggling of not wanting to veer to, or at least something I've been self-conscious about in the work I've been making in the thesis, is not wanting something to read as a gimmick, so that the materiality speaks of the content without being overwrought. That it is inherent, invisible in a way, because it's so right in its moderation.

I think that's a challenge. I'm interested to hear more about how thinking about materials from your background in engineering plays into how you approach that in projects.
How does it? I don't know. Again, it's one of those questions that is probably so fundamental that I don't spend much time thinking about it.

Perhaps it's so ingrained in your process. I think maybe it has more to do with an interest in contrast and interpretation, and finding ways not just through graphic ideas, but through material techniques, to reinforce the concept of a design idea. I'm always thinking about contrast and scale. I feel that it's always a fundamental aspect of what I talk about when I teach typography to beginning design students. You don't want two type sizes that are almost the same, but not quite different enough, in the same project. Just being intentional about your decisions and making the reader or the user or the viewer feel like they're in good hands, based on those small choices you make, that everything seems whole and intentional, and I feel like contrast is one way to do that, and also, to reinforce your ideas.

In terms of context, something I'm also interested in doing is taking these traditional approaches to things, specifically to graphic design, and twisting them a bit, or making them different from how you expect to see them in one way. Hopefully in a way that has meaningful connection to the rest of the content or the idea driving the design. But, it makes me think of this book that I designed that just came out, actually, for Moss Architects. Michael Meridith and Hillary Sample.

I saw that cover!
It's a blue cover, big type. One of the ideas that runs through that book is, we use these two typefaces through the whole book, but we've flipped the 'S's upside-down, and all of the 'W's are upside-down 'M's.

Throughout the book?
Yes, and at every scale of type. It's one of things, I was just talking to my students earlier this semester about this project, because it's one of these things, it's in relation to an essay I had them read, talking about traditions in typography in the way that 16th and 17th century printers would just use upside-down 'M's for 'W's when they ran out of 'W's, and how you can't do that because it's not the same letter, it's not the same glyph. Yeah, that's right. But, in this case, it was like, we were trying to make the design of the book respond to the weirdness of their work, and it's not a weirdness that really announces itself too loudly. I think, throughout their work, there's this sense that something is a little off. That was something we were trying to get at in this book, too. Just taking the letters 'M', 'O', 'S'. The 'O' is not going to change too much by flipping it, but also, the 'O' doesn't need anything in their name. 'M' is Meridith and 'S' is Sample, and the 'O' is just kind of a connector between the two. So, by turning all the 'W's into upside-down Ms and flipping all the 'S's, there's this quality in the type that, I hope, doesn't hinder reading it smoothly too much, in a way that maybe you notice it at first, but you become adjusted to it and it hangs out in the background as a weird quirk of the book.

I imagine it's something someone looking at it will sense that there's something off, but it might take some time with it to figure out what that is.
It's on the cover in really big letters. That was also our way to tip the reader off right away that something weird is happening here. We also use drop caps, but they're not really drop caps. The start of every project description has, it's essentially a drop cap, but it's a letter that is exactly the same size as the rest of the type in the project description, and it just has this carved-out space around. Again, it's responding to an age-old print tradition, but

just twisting it one small way to make it seem like something that feels a little alien.

> What I really appreciate is that you're making these kinds of turns, but are also inviting the reader, cluing them in. I think often times we want those moves to be as subtle as possible, and we think, "all right, you're just going to have to find it." I appreciate that note of making sure that whoever is encountering it can, maybe if they don't notice it at first, turn back and see that there's a reveal there.

I do think that I sometimes have a tendency toward didacticism and over-explaining and really being afraid that people aren't going to get something. I find myself sometimes having the kind of push against that. It's okay if somebody doesn't get it. The thing still works the way it's supposed to, even if someone doesn't notice you've turned the letters upside-down. But, in a way, it's such an important move for the book that I think featuring it up front in a pretty straightforward way also seemed important.

> And it makes for a really strong cover, too.

That was the hope.

> If I can ask you one last question: I'm curious to know what other disciplines you look to as references when you're researching a project. What are the other disciplines that are of interest to you?

In terms of the direct relation to my work, I think one of the things I like most about being a graphic designer is that it's a chance to dabble in generalism. It's always an exercise in learning about something new, even if a lot of my work is in particular spheres. Even there, I'm learning about different architects or different ideas in relation to architecture or art or design, or occasionally, public space. I feel like it always comes out of wanting to make the best thing I can make by knowing as much as I can about the material I'm working with. For one, because it's interesting, but also, when I'm presenting an idea, I never want it to seem like I'm imposing my will on my client or the collaborator.

And, I think I'm looking for these connections to their work or to context or other ideas in relation to what they do as a way to build a bridge to them, to their work. And also, I think from a purely practical standpoint, it's a lot easier to convince someone of the merits of something you're proposing if you can justify it with ideas related to the material you're working with, or what it is they do. Thinking more generally about what else I'm interested in — art. I'll go to museums or galleries, and I used to do it more often, when I would feel stuck on a project, just go and look at some things. Sometimes the best ideas come when you're not really staring straight at the problem that you're thinking about and you're thinking about something else, but in a way, I can say that about washing dishes, too. That exact same thing happens, and it has nothing to do with the sublime aesthetic experience of the pot that I'm cleaning. I think there's an element of both, I'm thinking about something else or there's time for your mind to wander.

And music, too. A lot of my initial interest in design came in the graphics associated with bands that I liked, and I think that relationship with music is still a strong one. Thinking again about these ideas of order and disorder that I was talking about before, a lot of the music that I'm most interested in, I don't think it's that interesting when something is straight down the middle and totally accessible, but I also don't think it's that interesting when it's completely inaccessible and harsh noise. I'm most interested in moments when people exist, what they're doing exists between those two poles. It's on one side or the other, but it finds a way to dip a toe in the other side. I think that probably applies to most things that I think are interesting, whatever they are, whatever discipline they exist in.

Not to put you on the spot, but now I'm just curious about which bands, if there's one example or song you're thinking of?

I'll give you an example that goes back to grad school: Brian Eno. In a way, that's almost a non-answer to the question, because his output is so wide-ranging and diverse, but I did a project when I was in school that was part of the Hundred Day Workshop that Michael Beirut does, and the first day we met with Michael, he introduced the project in the morning, and then by the end of that day, we had to have an idea for him about what we were going to do and just start. I don't even really know where this came from, but I decided I was going to listen to Eno's "Here Come the Warm Jets", the song, not the whole album, once a day, and then do something in response, visually in response to that, listening every day.

I would make something literally while listening to it, and then, for the duration of the song, two and a half minutes or whatever it is, and when the song ended, then, I would have to stop. In the first few days, it started to get really daunting, because I don't know how I'm going to keep making new things in response to the same song every day. I expected to get really sick of it. But, I never really did. I think I went through this moment right at the beginning, where I felt like, I don't know if I can do this. But then, I made my peace with it, and I realized that it wasn't going to be productive if I kept trying to make something completely new every single day. I started just taking something I had made and working with that again the next day, and then working that the next day, until I got to a point where I worked it to death and I would start something new. I think I picked that song partially because I just liked it and I was interested. Also, it's a really densely-layered song, but it also has a recognizable melody. It really does kind of hit this sweet spot for me between accessibility and texture and noise.

I did feel like, not every day, of course, but many times during the course of the project, I would hear things that I hadn't heard before in this thing that's under three minutes. The fact that he was able to do that on such a consistent basis over the course of many, many albums continues to inspire me. I still listen to his music pretty regularly.

That's a great example. I think that assignment is such a fascinating one, the Hundred Days assignment. It makes me think that your experience might be nearer, because I think all of us have probably experienced, when you're starting a project—that fear, that self-editing that might happen if you're doing this every day. Two and a half minutes, is it enough to make something good? And then that peels away that anxiety around getting started.

Talking about it now, I feel that's something I could keep in mind and continue to learn from about that project, because there's really not a project I do where I don't start with that sense of both enormous potential and also dread. Wow, what am I going to do here? That's where I can get kind of stuck in the research phase sometimes, looking for clues or looking for context. I can spend a little too much time marinating in that, not enough getting to work.
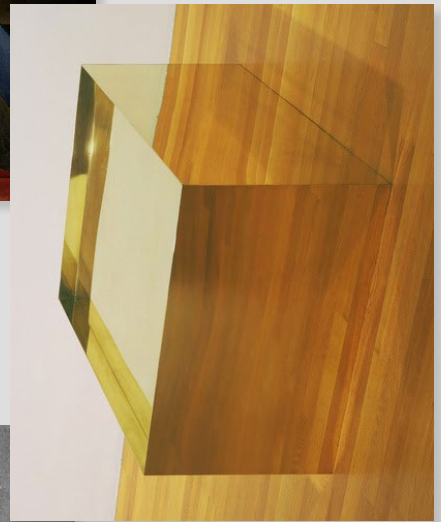
Outpost Cafe, Brooklyn NY
Saturday March 26, 2016

CHARLES DEMUTH, MY *EGYPT*, 1927

DONALD JUDD

ERICH MENDELSOHN, STAIRS AT EINSTEIN'S TOWER
POTSDAM, GERMANY

Refract

Build

MEL BOCHNER, *MEASUREMENT: SHADOW*, 1969

11' 6"

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY, *VIDEO QUARTET*, 2002

MICHAEL HEZIER, *CITY*

PORTRAY
INVERT
REFRACT

CONSTRUCT
DOCUMENT
STACK

FOLD
SCULPT
BUILD

STRETCH
TEST
EXPAND

PROD
OBSERVE
PROVOKE

V.

WOLFGANG TILLMANS, *BOOK FOR ARCHITECTS*, 2015

MICHA ULLMAN, *BOOK BURNING MEMORIAL*
BEBELPLATZ, BERLIN, 2015

DOMINGO MILELLA, *TOMBA DI RE MIDA*, 2011

Frame

MONA HATOUM, *CURRENT DISTURBANCE*, 1996
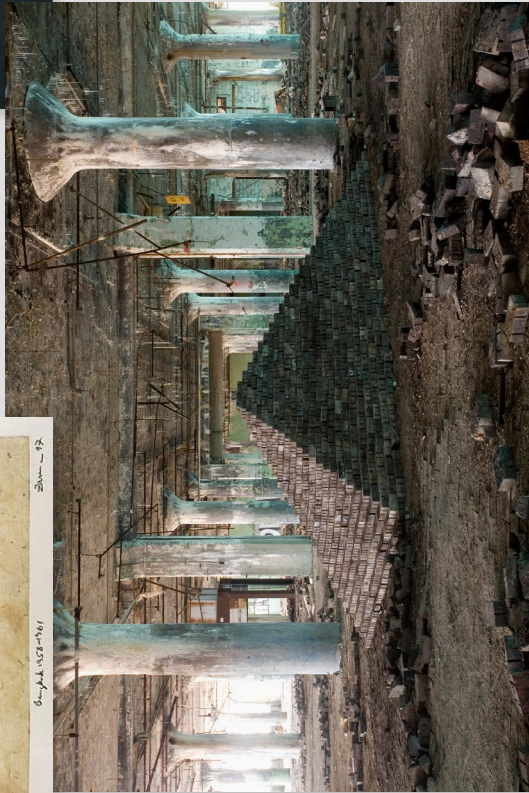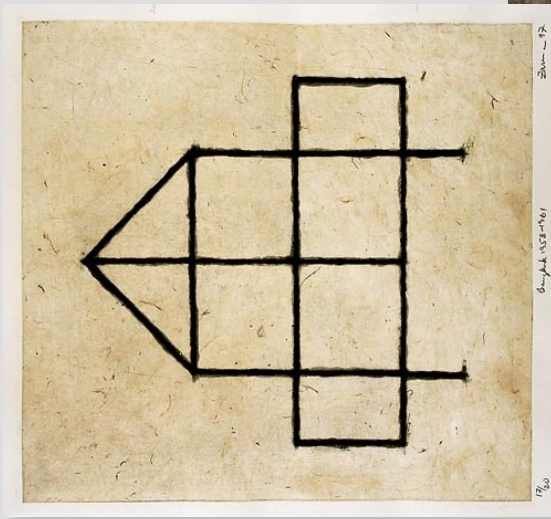
Scaffold

ALIGN
MEASURE
INVENT

DECONSTRUCT
LAYER
SCAFFOLD

SCOTT HOCKING, *ZIGGURAT EAST SUMMER II*, 2009

FRAME
WEAVE
MODULATE

EMBED
INVITE
NOTICE

ZARINA, *HOMES I MADE / A LIFE IN NINE LINES, 1997*

CAST
REMEMBER
IMBUE

V.

VISUAL

ANIA JAWORSKA, *MONUMENT FOR THEM*, 2012

JUSTIN HALLSTRÖM, *FLATPACK FILM FESTIVAL BRANDING*, 2016

HORT BERLIN, *CITY BY LANDSCAPE FOR RAINER SCHMIDT LANDSCHAFTSARCHITEKTEN + STADTPLANER,*

Scale

2×4, PRADA EPICENTER NEW YORK, 2015

STUDIO SPASS, TYPOJANCHI INTERNATIONAL
TYPOGRAPHY BIENNALE SEOUL, 2015
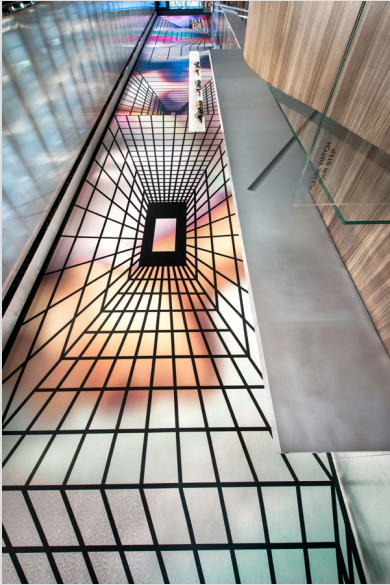
Sculpt

REBECCA LEFFELL KOREN
FACADE, PARIS, 2016

SPLIT
ROTATE

MODEL
FABRICATE

SCULPT
SURPRISE

SCALE
SUSPEND

TAUBA AUERBACH, *O.K.S*, 2007

RECOMBINE
STACK

V.

165

4°
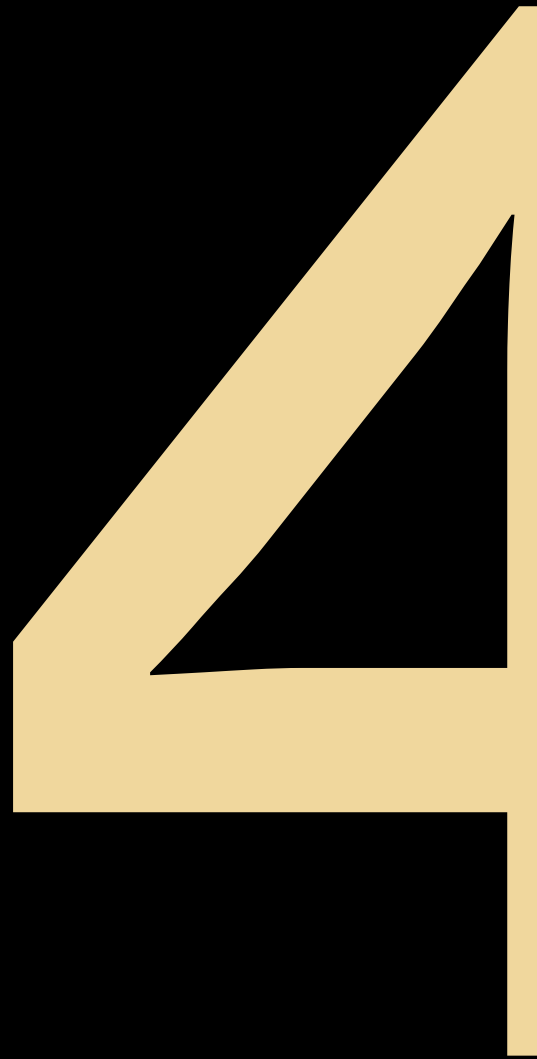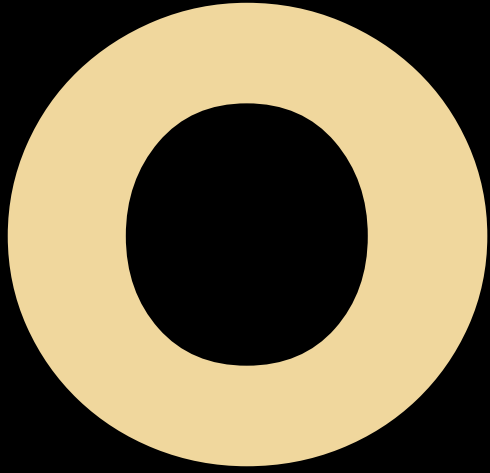
Tracking the Z-Index

How can graphic design play with surface to activate the z-index?
I see engaging design as that which immerses, balancing curiosity with accessibility. This can be achieved with bold moves or subtle, layered ones. My work seeks to activate a stronger fluency in these methods—to be employed with agency, able to achieve the desired effect
for a given context, be it inherency, provocation, or intrigue.

I track the z-index as both a tool and a strategy, and it functions on two levels. First, formal achievement—does this work address dimension (I note that not expressing dimension in the work is still an act of addressing it). What is read of the work at a distance—its texture—and what is earned by a closer look? This applies to works that are both spatial and flat, as flat surfaces can still be carved into through formal strategy. Second, does the work actively address the interactivity quotient? If 'x' and 'y' represent the lateral and longitudinal—the frontal and peripheral view of the work—then z-index thinking reflects the space between the viewer and the work, and their read into it. It is an approach that actively engages with a concern for the moment of engagement. Experiential depth (conceptual and visual), is prioritized, providing enough referents for one to engage while also leaving space for independent interpretation.

Simultaneity persists in my work—of complexity and clarity, of fluidity and containment, of developing ways for dimension and flatness to exist in a shared scenario. Simultaneity builds up a tension in the work that invites interest and questioning. In the film *Blah Blah Blah* (2012), the conceptual artist Mel Bochner discusses the impetus for his work, and I share his view of the word provocation: "The job of an artist is to provoke people. But the provocation that I'm seeking is not a hostile provocation, it's to provoke a conversation." A conversation is a space between its participants, and a good one leaves room for contribution. To do this in design wants for dimension. This can be visual, but moreso is found in layered research that finds the right transparency setting, making a statement while leaving room for conversation.

Pushing design to interact with the environment (sometimes directly and sometimes deceptively) brings forward its potential. With a crowded visual landscape (both physical and digital), it is a challenge to find new ways to interrupt the visual plane to invigorate interest and draw the viewer's gaze back toward the physical world we are still living in and moving through. It is important, though, to distinguish this method and considerations from design gestures that are for the sake of themselves, from gimmick. Tracking the z-index may result in spatial output at times,

but it is not driven by formal conceit—it is driven by depth. Linking both the formal and viewer oriented considerations balances the formal and interactive, a kind of checks and balances system.

Though not limited to spatial output, pushing the canon of graphic design toward more sculptural, scaled-up environments allows for new means of interacting with material. In *Book for Architects*, Wolfgang Tillmans constructs an oversized book spread out of the meeting point of two walls. The reading of the "book" takes on a new physicality, one that is in ways more passive as one sits and watches as virtual, projected pages "turn." But there is also an active quality in the scale relationship between image and viewer, placing us eye-to-eye with the human scaled architectural forms.

In linking architectural form to our emotional connection with place, I have also spent much time considering why it is that there is a certain kinship between the practices of graphic design and architecture, and what graphic design has to gain from architectural practice and principles. One of the guiding tenets is that, like architecture, graphic design ultimately shapes an environment across multiple surfaces to create an experience. Whether it is a poster, a book, or a brand identity, impactful design creates a world unto its own with rhythm, color, and scale: even a flat poster shapes a space, both in its siting and within the poster itself; the design and pacing of a book, in its moments of climax and staccatos, is an invitation to experience a certain environment that exists only in that world. In the role of graphic design there exists the opportunity and imperative to consider these rhythms, these surfaces, as opportunities to transport. To construct an environment is to address simultaneity—to consider multiple surfaces, and anticipate multiple levels of engagement.

IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, EUROPEAN PAINTERS
BEGAN TO PAINT THE BLUE OF DISTANCE. EARLIER
ARTISTS HAD NOT BEEN MUCH CONCERNED
WITH THE FARAWAY IN THEIR ART.

SOMETIMES A SOLID WALL OF GOLD BACKED UP THE
SAINTS AND PATRONS; SOMETIMES THE SPACE CURVED
AROUND AS THOUGH THE EARTH WERE INDEED A SPHERE
BUT WE WERE ON ITS INSIDE.

PAINTERS BECAME MORE CONCERNED WITH
VERISIMILITUDE, WITH A RENDITION OF THE
WORLD AS IT APPEARED TO THE HUMAN EYE, AND
IN THOSE DAYS WHEN THE ART OF PERSPECTIVE
WAS JUST ARRIVING,

THEY SEIZED UPON THE BLUE OF DISTANCE
AS ANOTHER MEANS OF GIVING DEPTH AND
DIMENSION TO THEIR WORK.
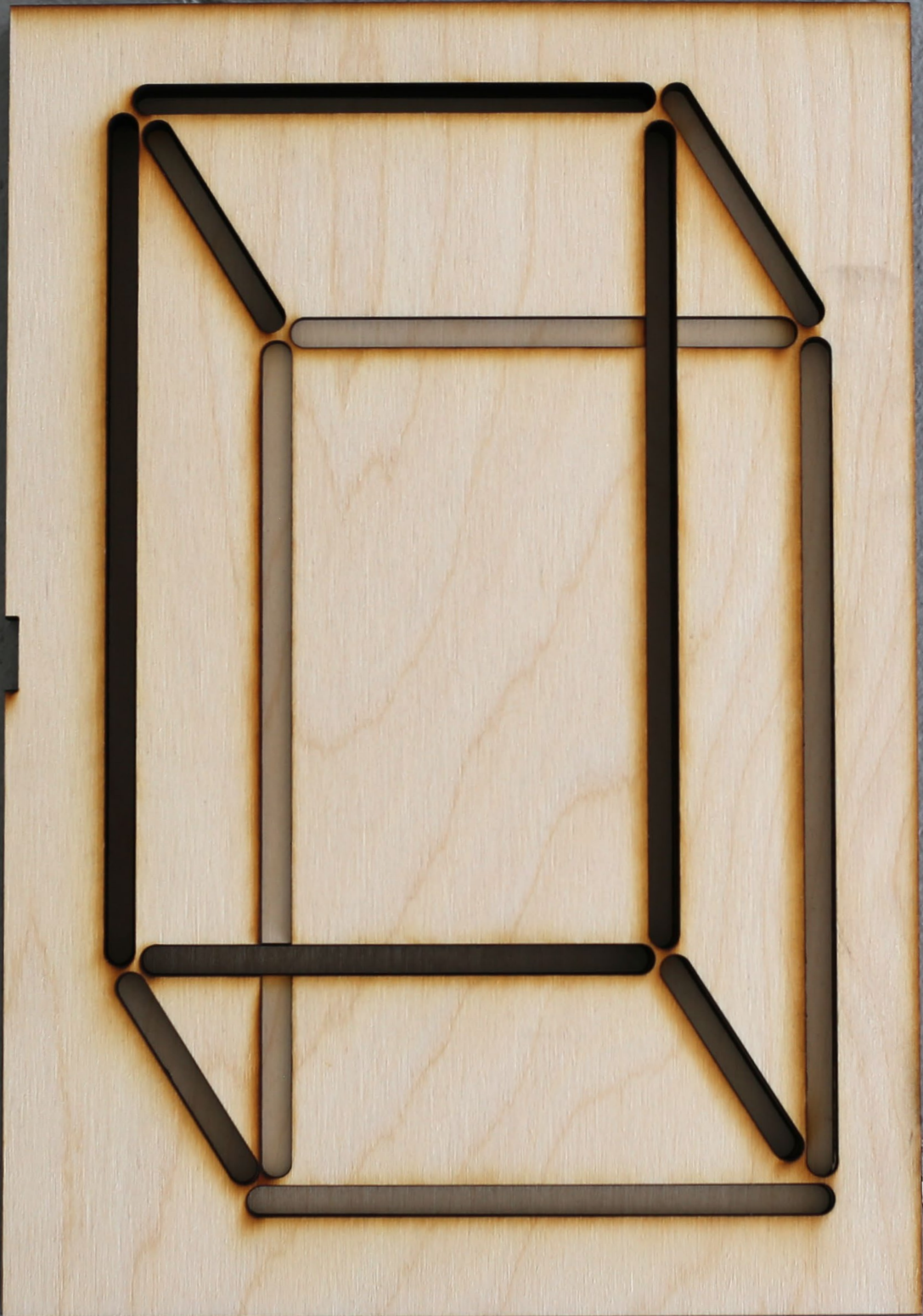
BUILDING THE BOOKSPACE

Building the bookspace is an attempt to make a book out of what is not intended to be one—to make the book a place. How can dimension be achieved by inventive means while utilizing what we intrinsically associate with the book form, and what we intrinsically know about building and structure? The individual "pages" of the book lack dimension, but possess cues toward inherent means of placement and structure. When constructed they create an architectural form of sorts, evidence of a certain innate understanding of the bookform and of incremental building upon a foundation, in order to be.

Set of three books: Laser cut wood, laser cut paper, and, laser-printed paper booklet
8.5×11", December 2015

BUILDING THE

BOOKSPACE
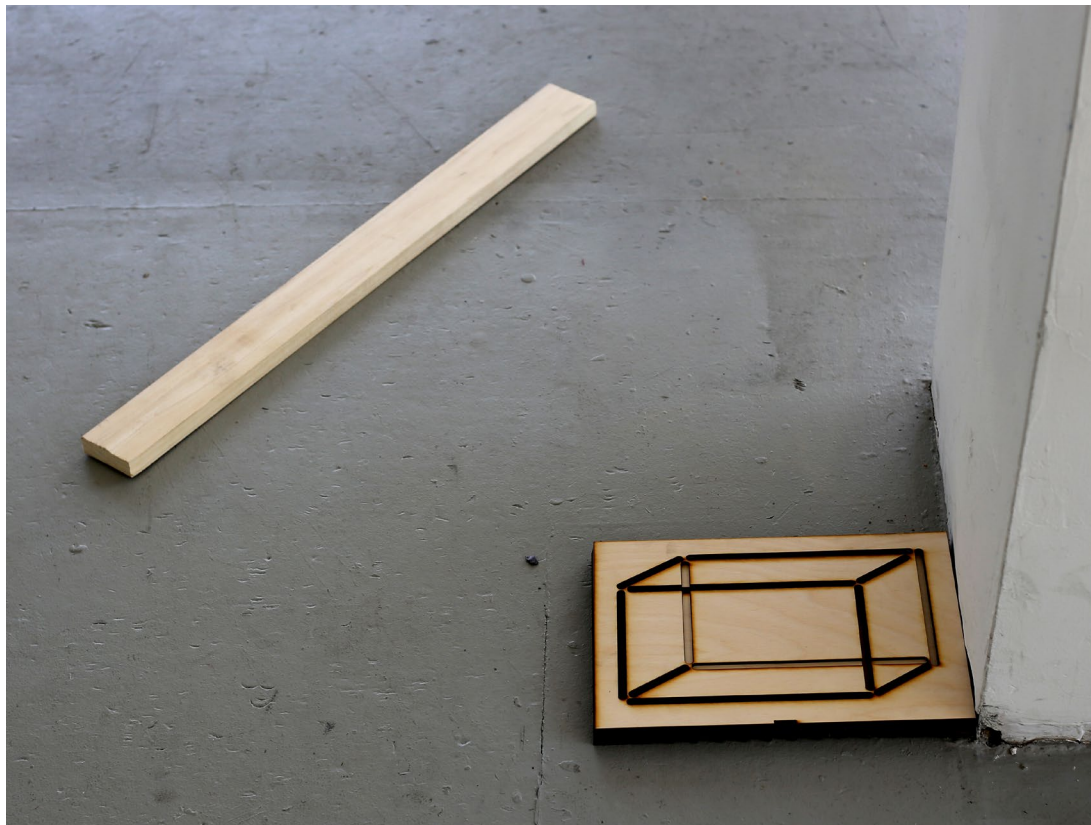
Seven plywood pages stack according
to the stair-step folio count on the spine.
As they layer, the dimensional figure builds,
confirming our intuitive relationship with
sequence and construction.
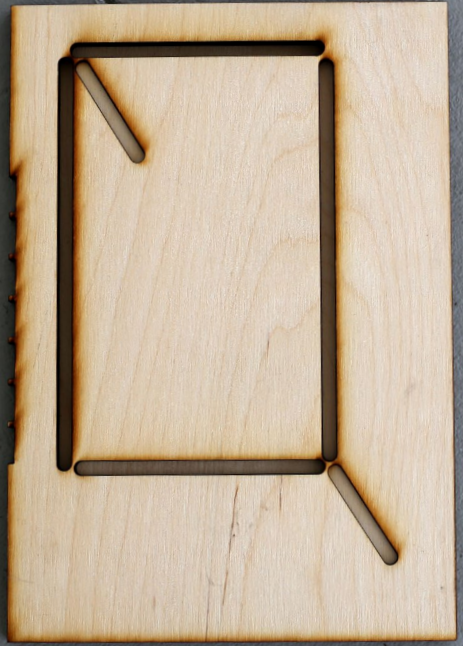
(Left) In an effort to test multiple structures and surfaces, a laser cut paper version of the book tests the design with traditional book materials.

(Opposite) The original vector files used for the laser cut are compiled into the codex format, maintaining the tool-specific line weight and color.

BUILDING THE

BOOKSPACE

REBECCA LEFFELL KOREN   REID OZAKI 2016
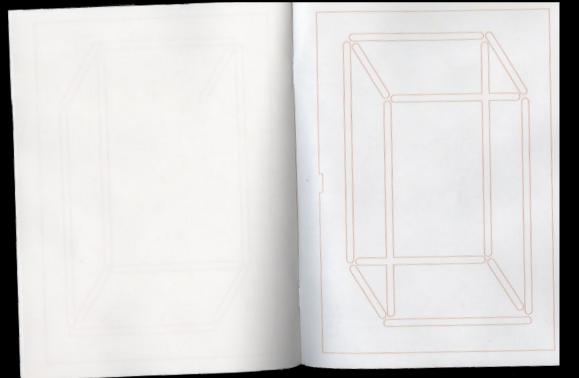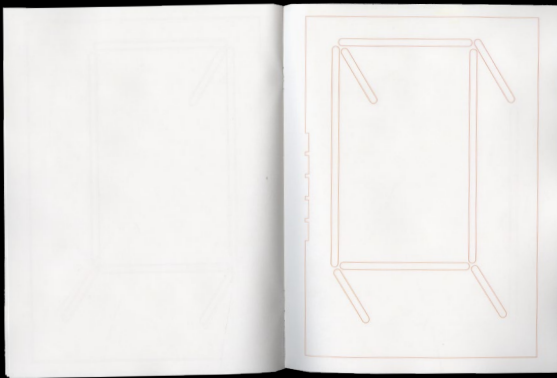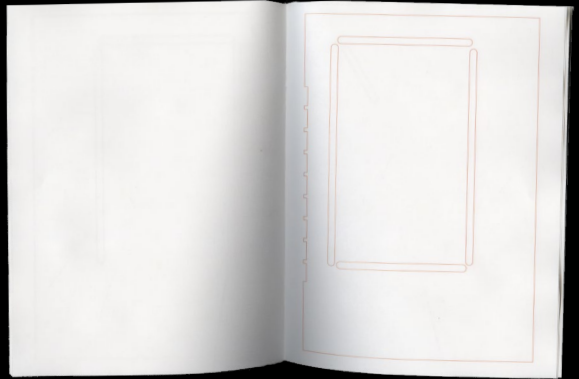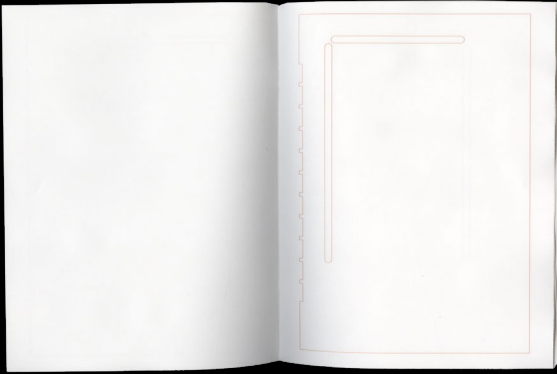
Seven
Books
In
Place

4A585° N 2.3808° E

City
Guide

KNOW WITHOUT LOOKING
FIND WITHOUT SEEKING
ALL INCLUDED!

The
Guide
Book

Country

"ONLY RESEARCHED
AND UPDATED"

PLACE

sweaters
ur pack
o find an
ce to sleep,*
wn a map
search for a city
o keep score for a
or to use as a
illow on an

BOOKS IN PLACE

Expressing architectural form in graphic design is a research area most interesting when pushing at the bounds of the practice. Seeing locality not as a doorway but as a hinge, *Books In Place* further exaggerates the coffee table book format as a structural surface for exploring book typologies that are tied to their place of use and place of rest.

Taking on the materials of architectural modeling, and inviting the physical act of building in its reading, the book's form implies a familiar shape or structure but of variant means. An equally exaggerated, parodic tone to both word and illustration result in an Alice in Wonderland-esque relationship between interior and exterior, between content and form. The book structure exaggerates the cumbersome, furniture-like quality of a number of these typologies in a bulky manner, yet its structure is hyper-specific, crafted to wrap around a specific table—ultimately anchoring the book to its site, mirroring its content. Referring to *Buliding the Bookspace* as smaller explorations building toward intention, this work builds on a process and on strategies for translation and inherency.

Sculptural book, laser cut and rasterized plywood
18×24", December 2015

The coffee t...
to be placed ...
onto a wood o...
surface. Items m...
stacked atop it: in...
other books, coffee ...
candles, coasters, and ...
framed photographs. ...
The spine must be visible ...
to salon sitters, and titles ...
need to be thoughtfully ...
and carefully aligned.

BOOKS

IN

ble book is
flat, directly
r glass
ay be
cluding
mugs,

The Coffee Table Book

Views & Taste

Size! Scale! Clout!

Country

...ed, and
...en sweaters
...your pack.
...to find an
...lace to sleep,*
...own... a map
...u search for a city
...o keep score for a
...ame, or to use as a
..., sturdy pillow on an
...ht train ride.

...he moment of printing

City Guide

KNOW WITHOUT LOOKING
FIND WITHOUT SEEKING
ALL INCLUDED

The Guide Book

As borders shift and wars are waged, the marks of the atlas dwell quietly in oversized swaths of paper, on generous shelves in dusty stacks. Unable to be removed from the confines of the library we visit the enormous tomes and seek the truth of their pages, lines, fills, and statistics.

BOOKS

IN

The Reference Atlas

Explore the world from the comfort of this stand

This is a book about other books that are inextricably tied to their place of use and place of rest. This document is designed to a custom fit, linking this book to its own table.

This book is a lasercut print on baltic birch wood, and can be customized to fit any coffee table. Typeset in GT Sectra Medium designed by Grilli Type and Graphik Medium designed by Christian Schwartz and Berton Hasebe.

Rebecca Leffell Koren, RISD GD MFA 2016

e cook book; while it
be stored in the living
library, need be
only in the
preparation
ssible, prop
stand,
salt

MASTERING THE ART
of French Cooking

Once a Year

TERRITORIAL FLOWS
2016 RISD MFA GRADUATE THESIS
EXHIBITION IDENTITY PROPOSALS

In the 2015 RISD MFA Thesis Exhibition, one might not have been able to differentiate between each department's offerings without labeling. Pieces of furniture were on display in the architecture department space, painters were showing sculptural works, digital media students projected images onto bookforms. In exploring conceptual directions for the 2016 show, I iterated the idea of territories bleeding into one another, that the notion of a delineated field is dissolving at its edges as we dip our tools and forms into one another's methods of making and display.

RISD

MAY 26 – JUNE 4

GRAD SHOW

2016

RISD.EDU/THESIS

HIDDEN GEOGRAPHIES:
KELLER EASTERLING
LECTURE POSTER

A set of posters was an opportunity to maneuver the variables of architectural form and flatness toward intention, and toward a more formal output. Keller Easterling's research addresses the soft currents of infrastructure that influence mobility, consumption, exchange, housing, and more. In these posters is an effort to reference the research without being overly representative.

The different modes of working spatially build the infrastructure she speaks of, using folds and texture to construct the hidden geographies she surfaces in her own work. In the flat poster the viewer is drawn in through a complication of deep space, and in the folded version there is a dual topography; that of the folds coming off the wall, and of the shadows that reverberate off of it, the poster extending and distributing its own effect on its surroundings.

Set of two posters
17×30", November 2015

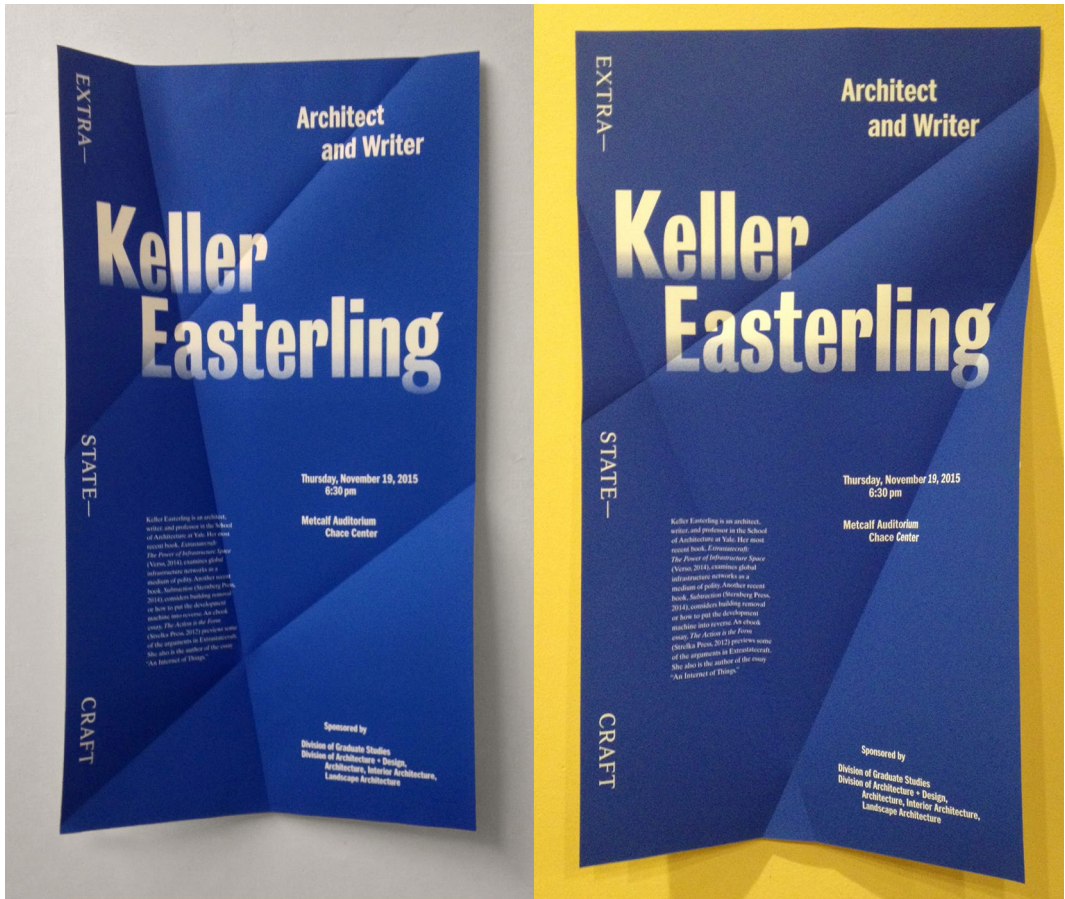# Keller Easterling

Keller Easterling is an architect, writer, and professor in the School of Architecture at Yale. Her most recent book, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (Verso, 2014), examines global infrastructure networks as a medium of polity. Another recent book, *Subtraction* (Sternberg Press, 2014), considers building removal or how to put the development machine into reverse. An ebook essay, *The Action is the Form* (Strelka Press, 2012) previews some of the arguments in Extrastatecraft. She also is the author of the essay "An Internet of Things."

EXTRA—
STATE—
CRAFT

Architect and Writer

Thursday, November 19, 2015
6:30 pm

Metcalf Auditorium
Chace Center

Sponsored by

Division of Graduate Studies
Division of Architecture + Design,
Architecture, Interior Architecture,
Landscape Architecture

EXTRA—

STATE—

CRAFT

**Architect
and Writer**

Keller
Easterling

Thursday, November 19, 2015
6:30 pm

Metcalf Auditorium
Chace Center

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machine into reverse. An ebook
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She also is the author of the essay
"An Internet of Things."

Sponsored by

**Division of Graduate Studies
Division of Architecture + Design,
Architecture, Interior Architecture,
Landscape Architecture**

Each instance of the folded poster is unique, producing its own topography—both within the poster, and in shadow—morphed by the lighting at each posting site.

Keller Easterling is an architect, writer, and professor in the School of Architecture at Yale. Her most recent book, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (Verso, 2014), examines global infrastructure networks as a medium of polity. Another recent book, *Subtraction* (Sternberg Press, 2014), considers building removal or how to put the development machine into reverse. An ebook essay, *The Action is the Form* (Strelka Press, 2012) previews some of the arguments in Extrastatecraft. She also is the author of the essay "An Internet of Things."

CRAFT

**Metcalf Auditorium
Chace Center**

Sponsored by

Division of Graduate Studies
Division of Architecture + Design,
    Architecture, Interior Architecture,
Landscape Architecture
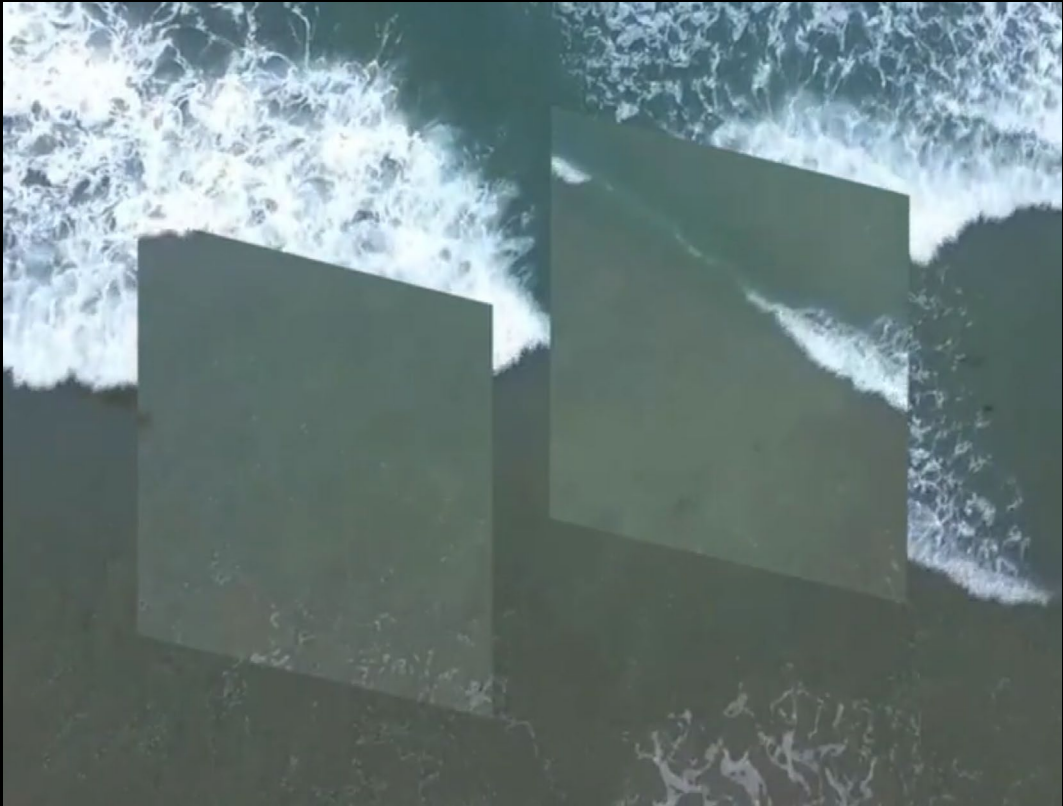
LIVE EDGES

In contrast with *Books In Place*, a sculptural and grandiose production, this investigation comes from a desire for minimal means to do heavy lifting. Originating in an attempt to build a writing machine that would write space using basic geometric forms, the output is a video in which few shapes create a sense of shifting perspective. A continuously relayered and redrawn geometry sits atop footage that is dissected by the shifting planes. Each plane affects the footage below, morphing its speed and blurring the line between content and container. Drawing out a pleasure in economy, textures move in and out of one another both building a dimension and breaking it.

Video animation, 3m
May 2016
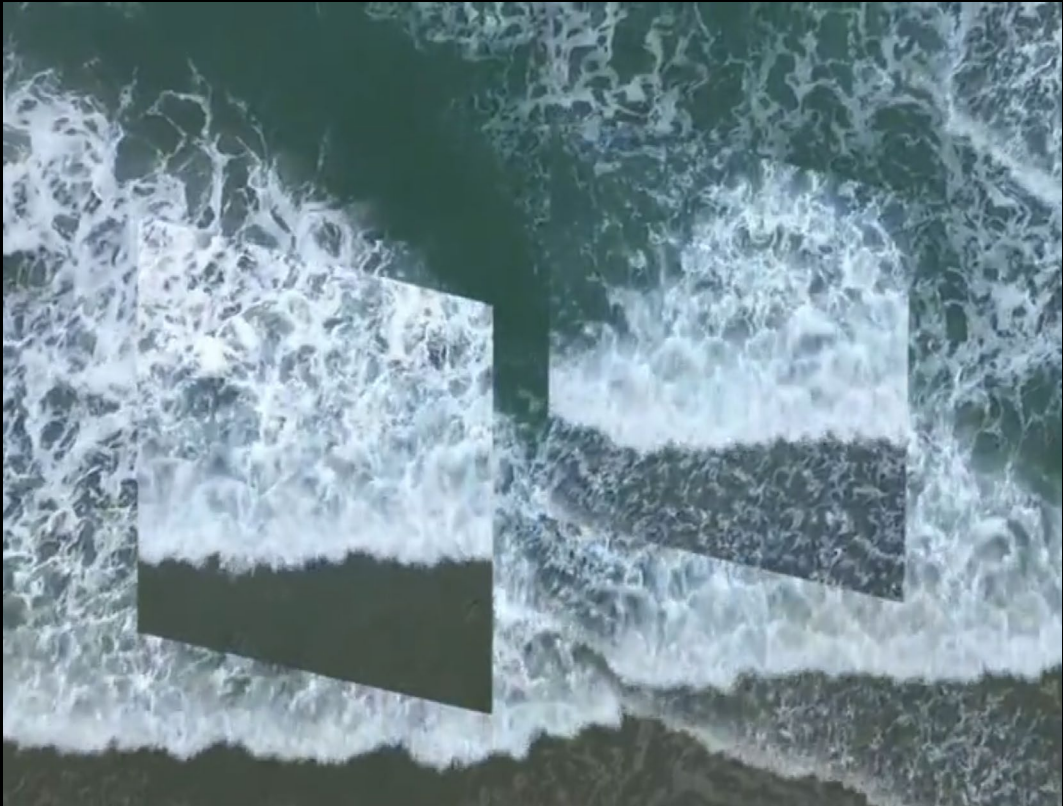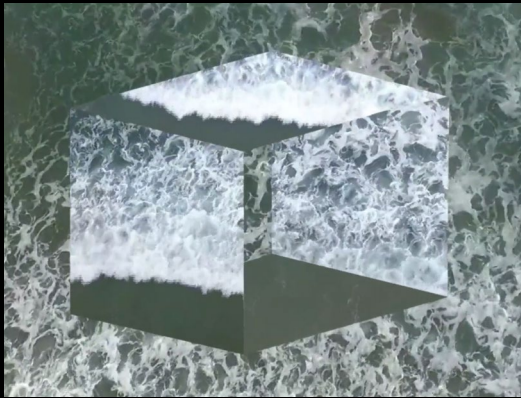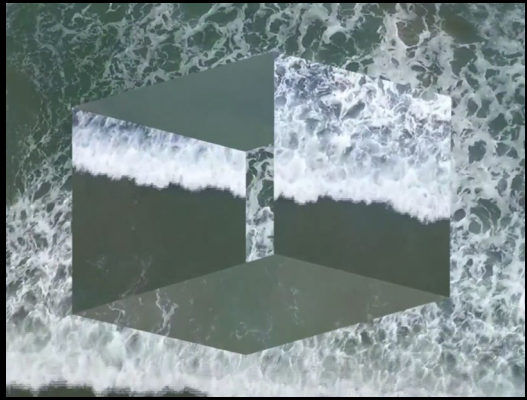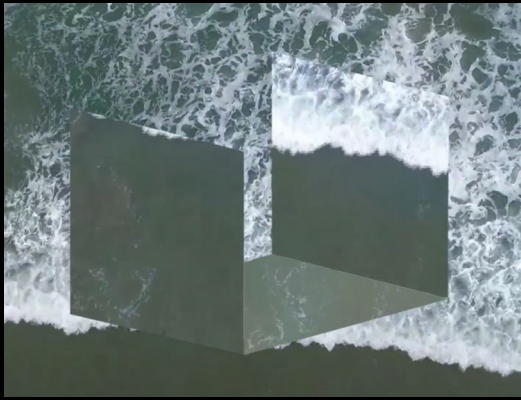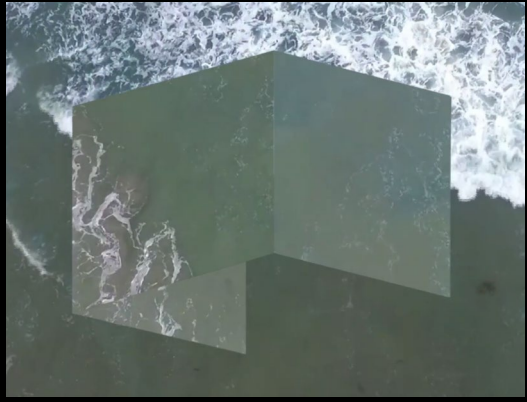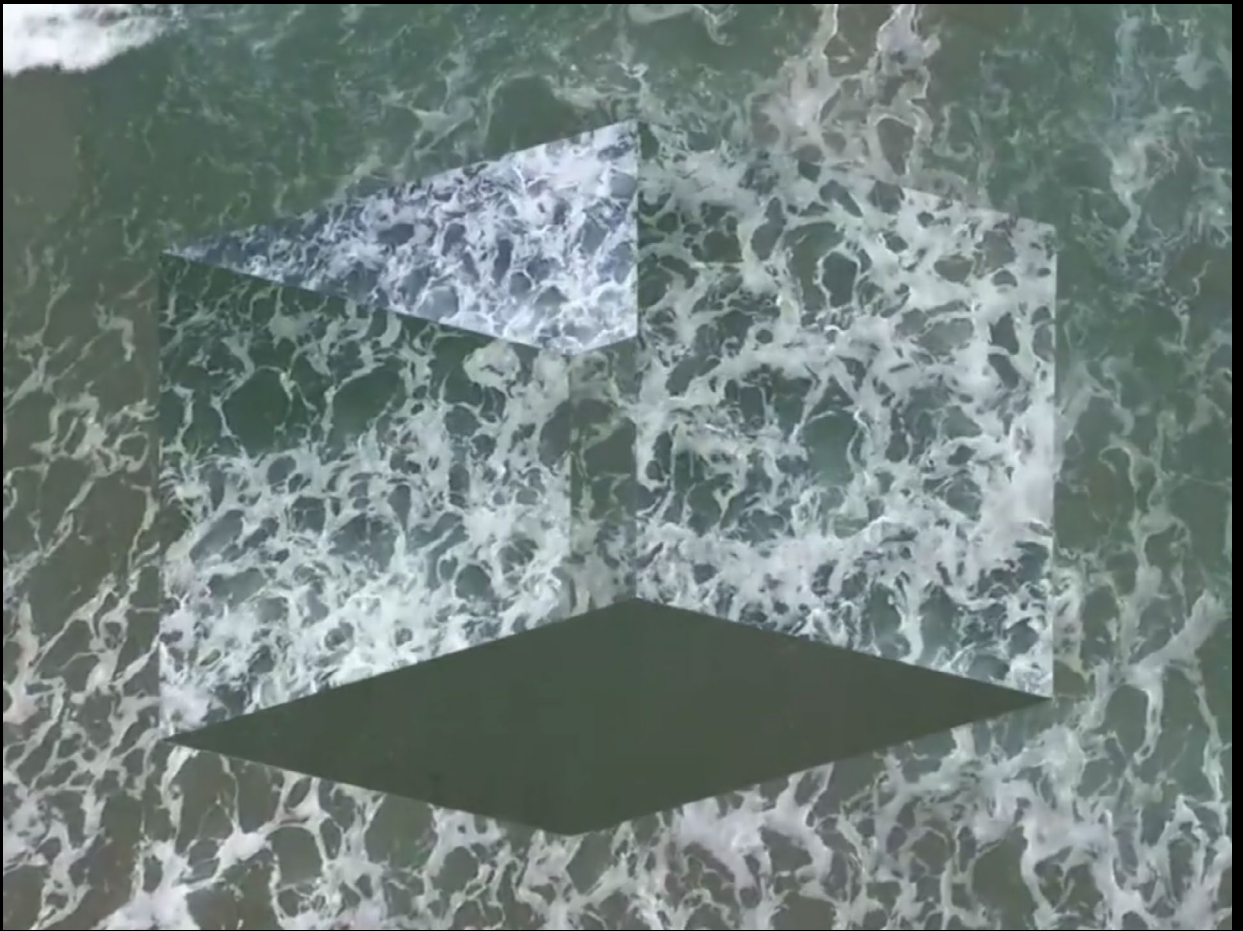
IN CONVERSATION WITH
SUSAN SELLERS

The work by Susan Sellers, both at 2×4 and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been an undeniable influence as I continue to develop a spatial and scale-aware process, and one that considers the effect of such manipulations on the viewer. I was eager to discuss with Sellers her approach to bold, spatial work at a large scale, and on the urban space as a living and changing setting for a mono-lithic institution such as The Met.

People crave depth of experience...
in diverse and multifaceted ways.

Susan Sellers, Insights 2016
Design Lecture Series, Walker Art Center,
March 22, 2016

There is a remarkable awareness of the z-axis evident in Sellers' work both as a partner at 2×4 and today as director of design at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Her work is ambitious and inventive, and I see this success as partially due to its ability to strike the right measure in form, breadth, and volume, that makes the work inherent and true in its impact; but in such ambitious work, that is really hard to maneuver. Part of this, Sellers explained, is a fluency earned with time and experience, but also it is ultimately achieved due to what she terms strategy. The work is not to be guided by a desired form or outcome, but by its underlying strategy, a task of clarity unto its own. It is a clarifying moment to realize that the stickiest moment in my process and work are when a vision of desired form impedes the process, the form forgets or begets strategy.

In her Walker Art Center lecture delivered on 22 March 2016, Susan provided an incredibly deep dive into the rich and highly complex restructuring and rebranding of The Met. In the lecture and in our conversation she stated that the overarching strategy in this enormous task was to "perforate the walls" of the museum, inviting participation, openness, accessibility, and a renewed approach to the way the collection is accessed. I found this alignment with my thesis—an invitation and imperative to dwell in the porous space—an exciting one. I also saw a certain alignment between this

perforation and my interpretation of Sellers' proposed *Museum of the Ordinary*,[1] a museum that goes beyond and between buildings, living in direct relation to urban landscape. "In M.O., the museum and the city are one."; there is no implied meaning."[2] The city is the museum, and an exercise in museum making. It is both sited, structure, and it is loose, "a directed walk, an informed wandering."[3]

Seeing a parallel between my interest in the way that spaces ingrain movement, and the description of the Museum of the Ordinary as one in which "the border between interior and exterior is inscribed by movement…" and seeks to "[understand] the role contemporary design plays in developing a sense of place and how it shapes the urban character of this area." I also found that this notion of a museum whose footprint, walls, apertures, and modes of display are dictated by the solids, lapses, and materials of the city addresses both many of my interests in research, and is a plan that also "perforates the walls." This is a striking and visual metaphor, and ultimately, perforating the walls is a strategy for inclusivity and for participation, of softening and breaking down barriers in the Met's built and digital landscape. While my work stakes a far less significant claim and presence, Susan's approach resonates strongly—that perforating the walls be both a formal and conceptual compass, to balance depth of research with an invitation for inference.

Highlighting this resonance, I was interested to learn whether there may be an interstitial ground between the current paradigm of the museum experience—the gallery space, its walls—and the *Museum of the Ordinary*. But ultimately, this was another opportunity to distinguish between strategy and form, as Susan pointed that the relevant variable in this paradigm is not the walls but the collection. It is the collection that needs to be porous, less so than the building (though in the scheme of branded materials there are many notes that invite participation and inclusion). In the renewed structure of the Met's branches the accessibility of the collection is increased, in a sense dictating a new kind of virtual walking, rewriting the behaviors of reading the works (as there are 32 million unique visitors to the Met website per year, a number which, as Susan pointed out, could not move through the Met's spaces). This populist approach, one of accessibility, of leaving open points for permeation, is one I subscribe to. Within the realm of the thesis this is reflected in a careful measure of communication that is purposeful, at times poses a statement, but leaves room for "perforation" and for inference on the part of the viewer.

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2   Ibid. 367.
3   Ibid. 368.

Phone Conversation
SS In car, driving from New York to New Haven
⟷
RLK At home desk, 24 John St. Providence RI, 02906

THE UNIVERSE

THE WORLD

EUROPE

FRANCE

SEINE

PARIS 16E

RIGHT HAND DOOR

THIRD FLOOR

STAIRCASE A

18, RUE DE L'ASSOMPTION

GEORGES PEREC

IMAGE SOURCES

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25 Ed Ruscha, *Then & Now, Hollywood Boulevard 1973-2004*
Photo: Rebecca Leffell Koren
at the Special Collections at the Rhode Island School of Design
Fleet Library, Providence RI

26 JR, *Les Bosquets* Trailer (video stills)
https://www.youtube.com/
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File:Porticoguardiagrele.jpg

Fred Sandback, *Untitled (Sculptural Study, Seven-part Right-angled Triangular Construction)*, 1982/2010
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77 Robert Smithson, *Mirrors and Shelly Sand*, 1970
Photo: Rebecca Leffell Koren
At *Unfinished*, The Met Breuer,
April 2016

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Miriam Bohm, *Match VIII*, 2012
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82   Mike Brill, *Expert Judgment on Markers to Deter Inadvertent Human Intrusion into the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)*, 1990
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83   Peter Eisenman and Buro Happold, *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*
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112   Illustration Of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian Columns
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121   Studio Spass, *De Wereld Van Witte De With Street Sculptures*, Rotterdam, 2013
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150–1   www.neildonnelly.com

160   Charles Demuth, My *Egypt*, 1927
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Erich Mendelsohn, Einstein's Tower, Potsdam, Germany
Photo: Rebecca Leffell Koren, 2014

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