

Ambiguous Surfaces

Thesis Book 2017-2018

Danni Zhang

Dressing the Wall, Dressing the Room, Dressing the Building

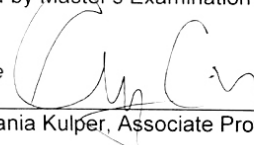
A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Architecture from Department of Architecture of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

by

Danni Zhang
2018

Approved by Master's Examination Committee:

Signature



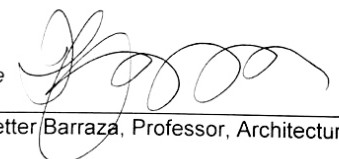
Amy Catania Kulper, Associate Professor, Architecture, Thesis Chair

Signature



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Hansy Better Barraza, Professor, Architecture, Thesis Coordinator

Only the ultimate SURFACE is decisive in architecture. The ultimate SURFACE is in itself the result of the construction. The development of the ultimate SURFACE is essential, only the surface is of importance to people. Man does not live within the construction, within the architectural skeleton, but only touches architecture essentially through its ultimate SURFACE (externally as the city scape, internally as the interior). The functional element becomes automatic, only the summarizing surface is of importance, for sensory perception as well as for psychological well-being. It has an impact on the morale of the inhabitant. Houses are like people. Their features, posture, gait, clothing, in short: their SURFACE, is a reflection of their thinking, their inner life.

--Theo Van Doesburg

*Fashion is momentary.
Fashion is image
Fashion is short lived.*

*Architecture is monumental.
Architecture is conceptual.
Architecture is long lived.*

*Architecture and fashion share the same
DNA: the body and the relationship be-
tween surfaces.*

*Architecture is fashion, of a different scale.
The scale of space and the scale of time.*

Fashion and architecture are the results of configuring surfaces. The surface of architecture is distanced and objective. The surface of fashion is tangible and sensible.

Dressing of an individual provides a definition of private space. Dressing of a group of people provides a definition of communal space.

My thesis interest is to explore the ambiguity between these two disciplines to create the intermedium layer of clothing surface and the building surface. The aim to explore different gradients of privacy between the private and the public, disconnections and reconnections, intimacy and distance to find a way in which they can all coexist.

The goal of my thesis is not to arrive to a solution, but to provoke, question and inquire through the process of prototyping.

By designing the prototypes to blur disciplinary boundaries between fashion and architecture. The blurry boundary is where I see the ambiguity, the matter between true and not true, between neither or both.

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Mask & Feature

Notion of Collection

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Clothing as the ambiguous expression, both mask and advertisement, of the unconscious self.

---Roland Barthes

The modern, intelligent person must present a mask to other people, this mask is the general life form, originating from necessity and culture, a person's life habits, his clothing and physiognomy, all crystallized together in his dwelling. His dwelling is his mask.

---Adolf Loos



Two sides of the object

The same object, the content you read could be entirely different based on how you open it. The hide and the reveal are all at present, but people would only be able to see the reveal side of the object.

Mask & Feature

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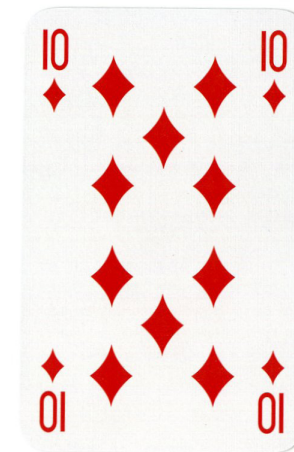
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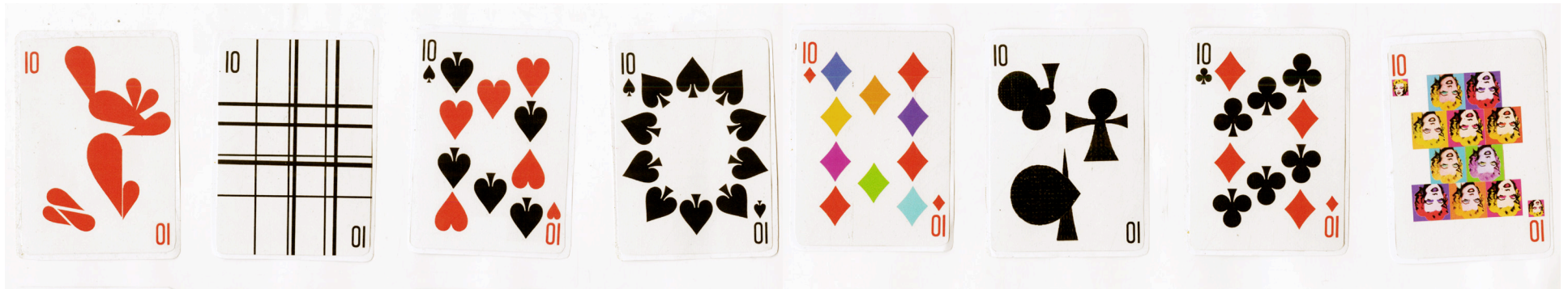
Dressing the building



Other than a personal statement, fashion is a collective activity, represents group identities by way of their material culture.

---Rise of Fashion

If a single garment is expressing a statement, then a collection is creating a language. Each of the piece from a collection has their own identity and similarity. The decipline of a collection defened the tone of the collection.



Fashion and Style

Fashion and style are two completely different things. Fashion is something superficial, a regular change, dependent on tastes, moods, which has nothing to do with real style. tyle is the true result that emerges from our time.

---Andre Courreges

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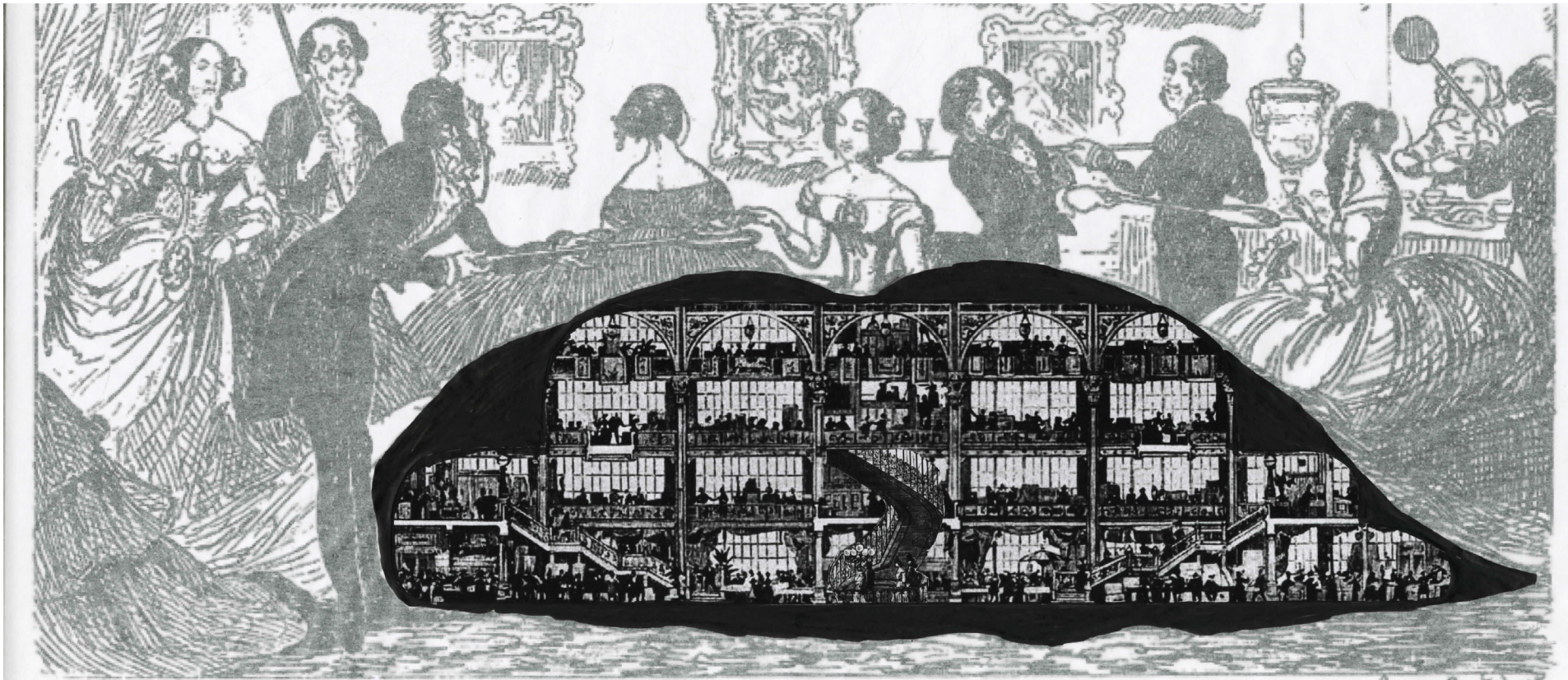
*To occupy a building is to wear it, then to wear
a modern building is to wear a new set of eyes*

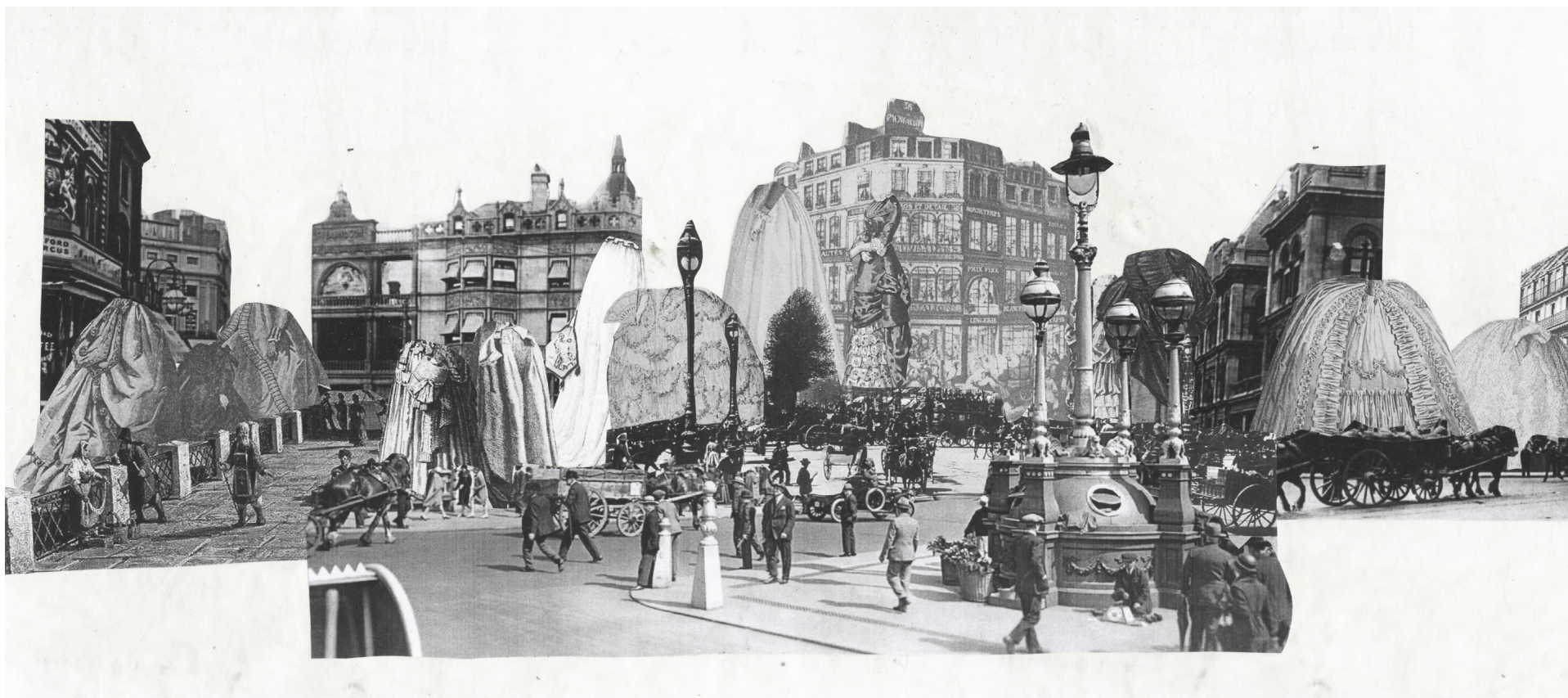
---Gottfried Semper

Someone said: "Architecture is a suit which has to fit."

Le Corbusier: "NO!"

"Architecture is more than a suit. The value of architecture does not depend on material and body size. Of course, both are elements in it: the technique and the spatial program. But the essence of architecture is expression that can be achieved through it, the design!"





It is not the fit that counts but the space defined by the shape of clothing the body is just the prop for a work of art. And as an art, architecture is more of a dress than a suit. Women's dress is the model for a modern architecture

----Le Corbusier

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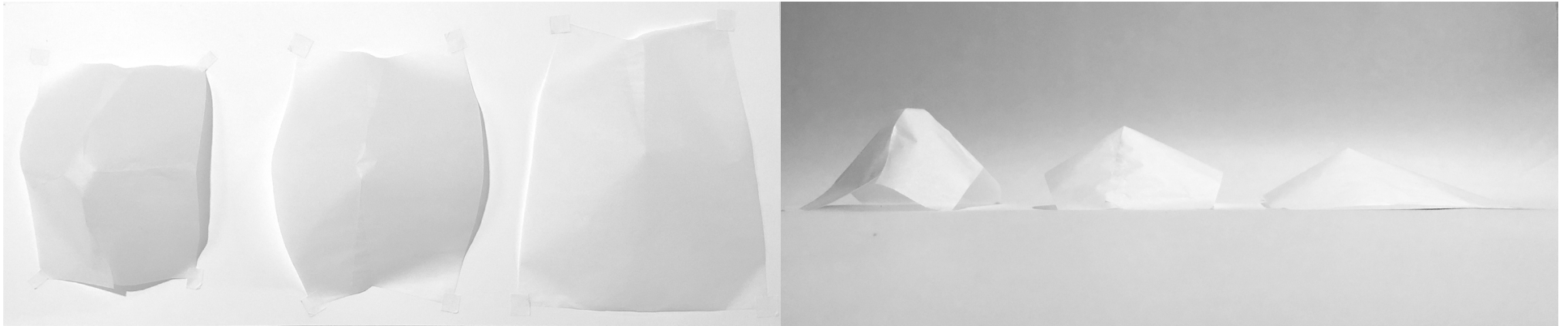
Dressing the building



The cut of clothes and the cut of body

----Kerstin Kraft

The shift from clothing worn as drapery to that sewn from cut patterns created new ways to represent the body. Because the seam allowed parts to contribute to a whole garment, the body's dimensions changes.



Three-dimensional human body is wrapped in cutting surfaces, the double curvature of which is based on special surface ends which are the result of cutting patterns. The process of transforming which is two dimensional into a spatial object according to a spatial plan.

Mask & Feature

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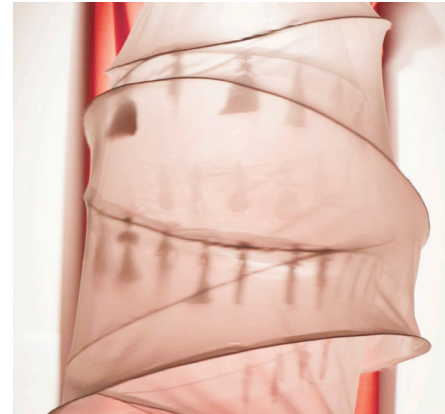
The Cut

Movement

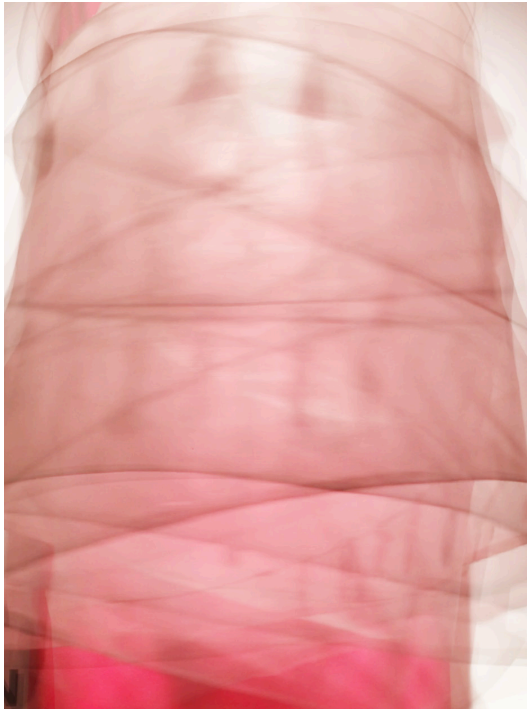
Transformation

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Motion creates a new form to the dress.



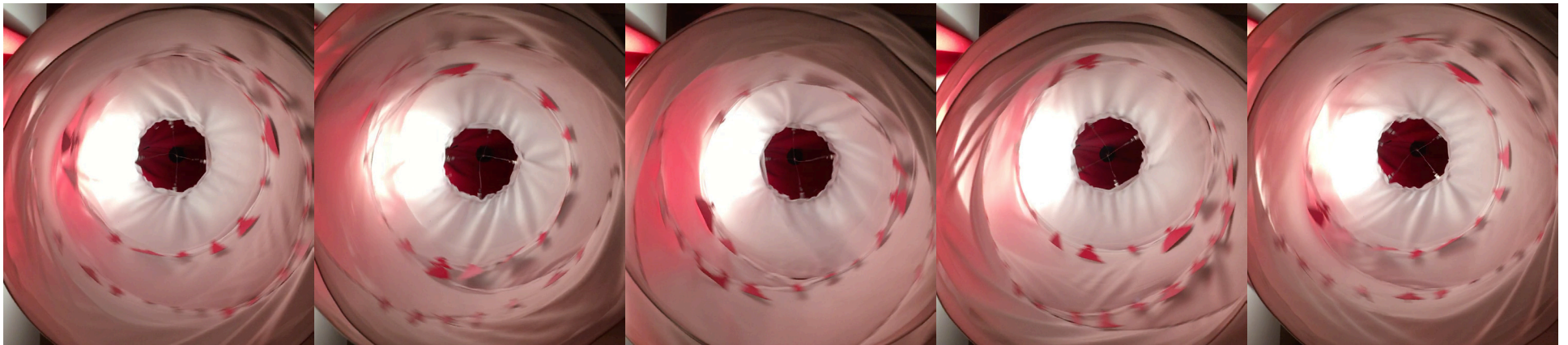
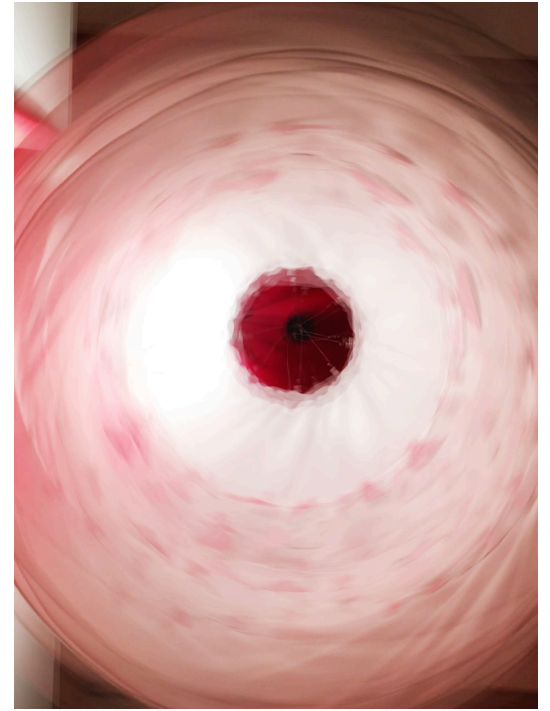
Interior and Exterior

The split between the intimate and the social life of the metropolitan being; outside, the realm of exchange, money and masks; inside the realm of the inalienable, the nonexchangeable, and the unspeakable.



The exterior of the house should resemble a dinner jacket, a make mask; as the unified self, protected by a seamless facade, the exterior is masculine.

The interior is the sense of sexuality and reproduction, all the things that would divide the subject in the outside world.





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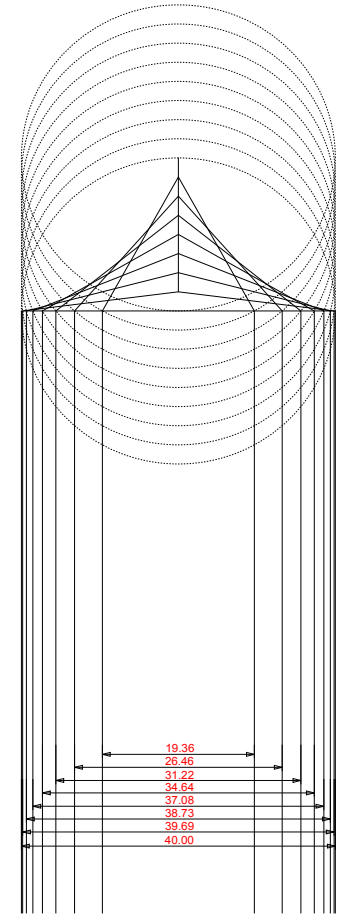
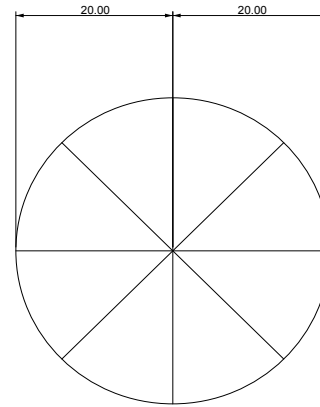
Transformation

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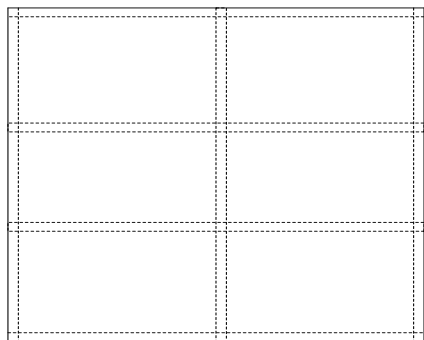


Fashion's obsession with change, it is constant search for the newest design, gave it demanded continuous innovation.





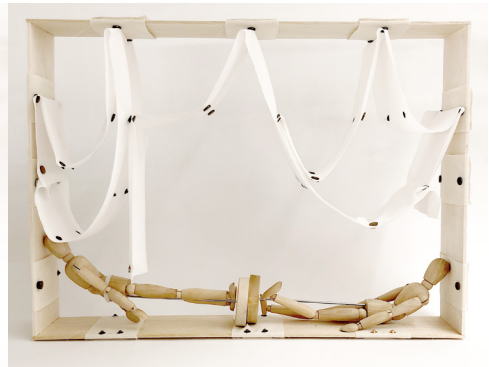
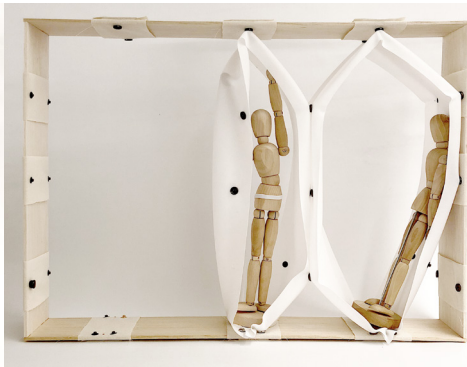
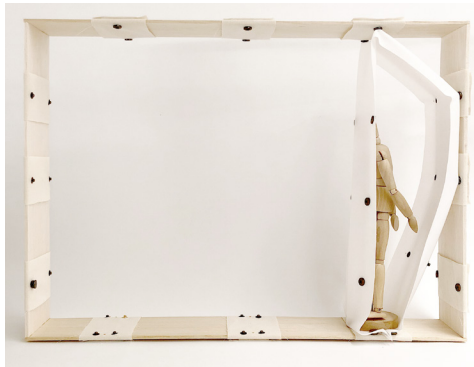
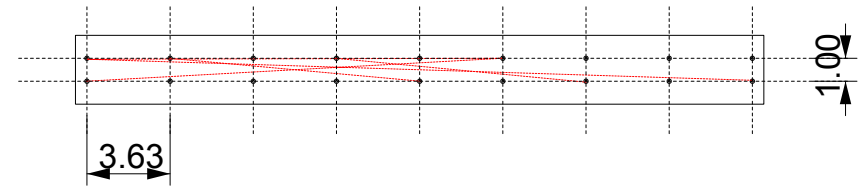
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*Dressing the wall, Dressing the room,
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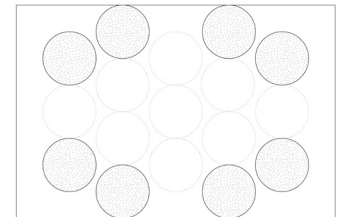
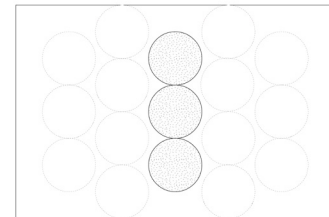
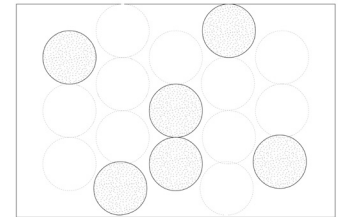
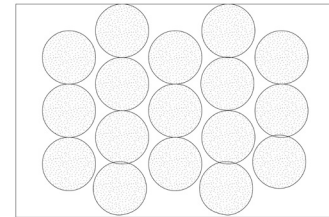
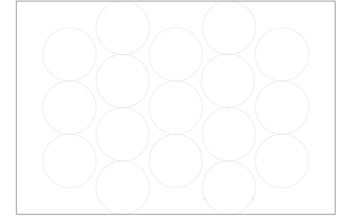
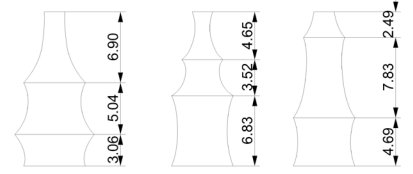
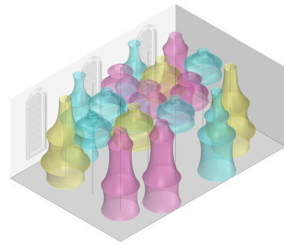
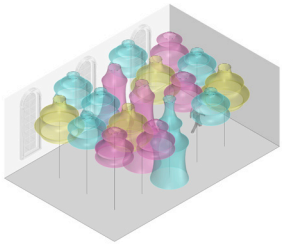
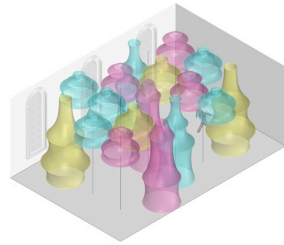
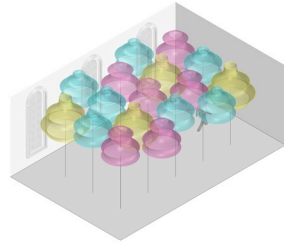
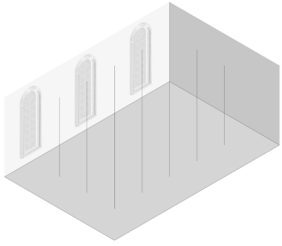
*Architect's imaginations create not spaces but section
of walls. That which is left over around the walls then
forms the rooms.*

----Adolf Loos



Dress the lights

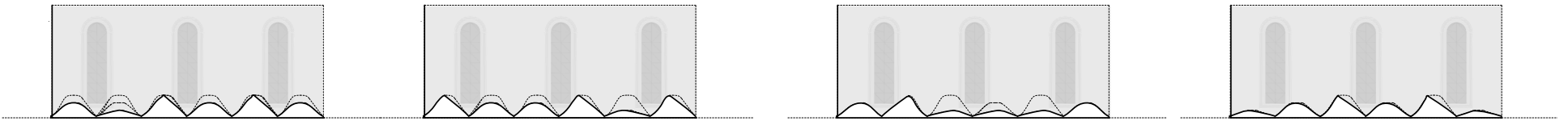
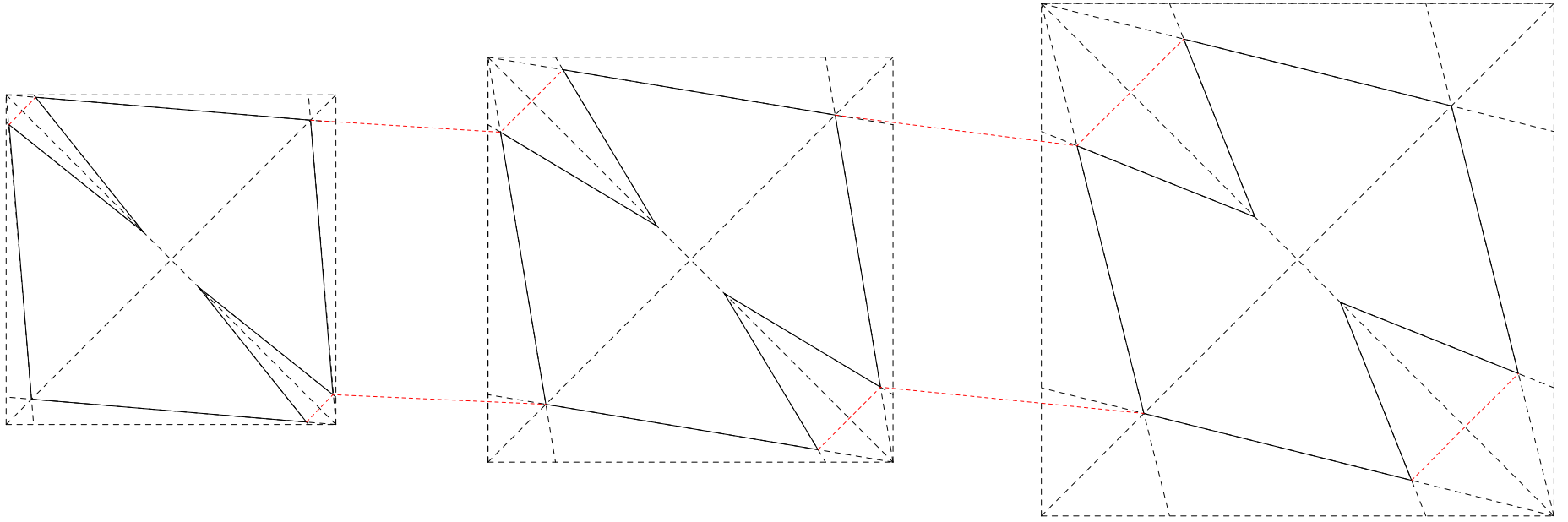
I explored the idea of dressing a light. Utilizing the structure of a hoop skirt, I created a personalized light diffuser that introduces various gradients of privacy into any room. Not only does this prototype give form to light, it can also produce different configurations and atmospheres within a single room.





Dress the floor

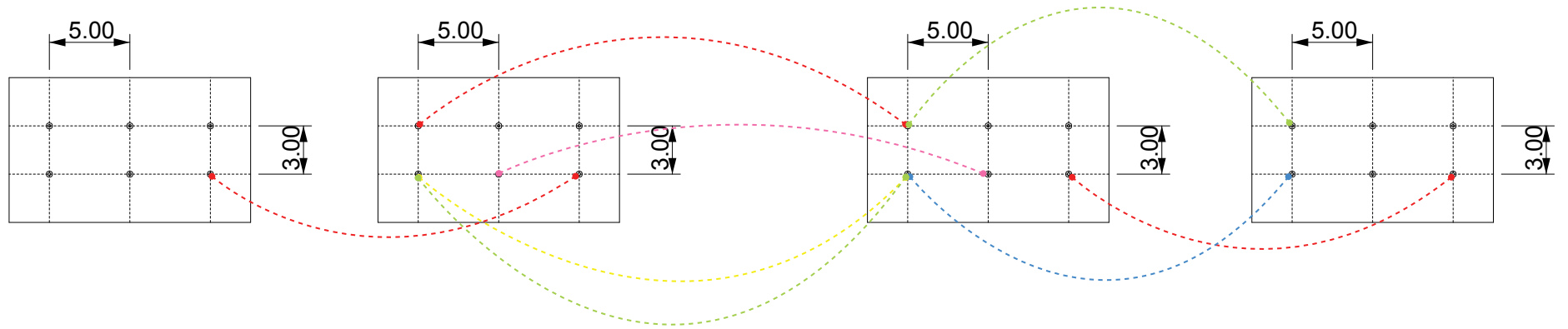
This prototype transforms a nondescript floor into a miniature landscape for lounging and relaxing, utilizing the technique of a dart. In fashion, a dart allows a flat piece of fabric to more precisely fit a curvaceous body. In this prototype these relationships are reversed and the flat floor is given a sinuous form, producing an interior landscape that softens the floor and provides the space with various gradients of comfort.





Dress the gap

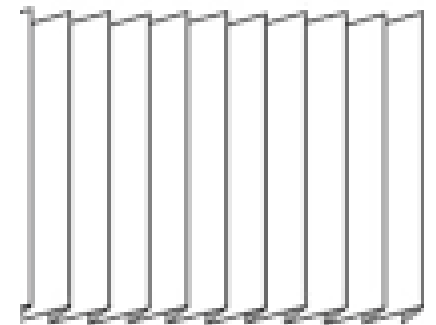
In general, architects consider the gap between buildings to be a dead and inaccessible space. Here, a system of connectors and elastic fabric produces gradients of accessibility in this interstitial space. This prototype allows for an endlessly reconfigurable section and silhouette animated through human interaction.





Dress the facade

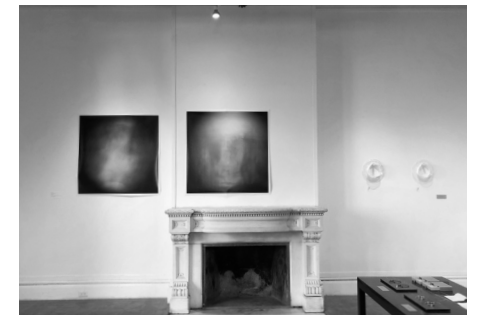
As a city grows, old buildings are demolished, and the ugly and undressed party walls are exposed. This Prototype dresses these unsightly facades using a pleating technique. Pleated hammocks provide temporary resting places that are refuges from the fast-pace of the big city.





Dress the wall

In fashion design practices, the human body is central. It is measured. It is sketched. It is duplicated in the dress form. It is panelized with black tape. It is draped with fabric. And in the end, it is covered, revealed, and adorned by the garment. Appropriating these techniques from fashion design, I began to explore the process for how to dress the wall.





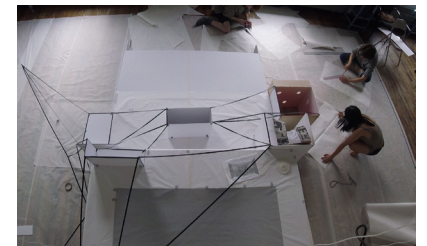
Tailoring the Body & Tailoring the Space

There are many similarities between fashion and architecture. Both disciplines engage the human body and they share similar vocabularies and techniques. Despite these similarities, their methods of design and production are interestingly different.

In order to understand how fashion designers work, I collaborated with two colleagues from RISD's Apparel Department. Peter DeFrancesca and Andrew Kim. In their fashion design practices, the human body is central.

It is measured, it is sketched, it is duplicated in the dress form. It is panelized with black tape. It is draped with fabric. And in the end, it is covered, revealed, and adorned by the garment.

I intended to utilize these techniques from fashion design to explore how to dress the space.



Fashion is momentary, short-lived;
Architecture is monumental and long-lived;

Fashion is not clothing; architecture is not building. They have already surpassed the function aspect of themselves. It is people's desire for the beauty.

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Special Thanks

My Dear Parents,

My Mentor,
Amy Kulper
Aaron Forrest

My Coordinators,
Peter DeFrancesca
Andrew Kim

My Peers,
Ann Motonaga
Daniel Stone
Diego Fernandez
Marcus Lee
Margaret Kiladjian
Socorro Fernandez Garcia
William Graham Rice

My friends,
Andy Hojoa
Christina Schaller
Hyojin Kwon
Jin Hang Huh
Nil Shang
Pablo Herraiz
Paul Kishimoto
Scott Seung-hyuk

Thank you for all of the physical and emotional support. I wouldn't be able to accomplish my thesis without all of you.

