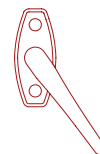


# Window Room



Mayu Takasugi

Masters Thesis in Spatial design  
Aalto University  
School of Art and Design  
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## Foreword

I am always fascinated by the space created by an architectural opening. In the past, people simply adored window spaces. They created various attractive scenes to surround the window, such as sitting in a bay window, getting sunlight in a glazed alcove and looking at a garden through widely opened sliding windows. A hole in the wall is not just for letting air and lights in or to keep out rain and dust, but an essential element that has numerous spatial qualities. In this book, I will focus on embodying a potential of a window into an interior component that broadens possibilities of space.

What is the role of window space and how can this particular depth in a room evoke activity? Window Room creates an experience, which stimulates your senses. We have lost its depth and the unobtrusive framed view; windows have become huge glass walls and the walls tend to be thinner. After the loss of all atmospheric window spaces, how to bring this quality back, becomes my main challenge. My intention also lies on articulating the identity of a window as a room. During the process, I found out that there are many examples focusing on the existence of windows as a comfortable seating place, but not many of them dealing with it as another room that inhabit a room.

The book consists of three parts. The first part explores various window features and scenes from paintings to architecture. The second part illustrates the concept of Window Room as a detached room in a room. The last part is about the execution of Window Room project.

Window space

The eyes of a house

## Space by the opening

An architectural opening possesses permanent presence in dwellings, when a new style or trend comes to architectural scenes, openings will never lose their place. It is hard to imagine living in a place that puts you out of touch with the outside. It is an ideal place at home where your senses are stirred.

Sights you will see when looking at space by the opening; a shadow of the afternoon sun, a cat quietly observing a street, herbs growing on the windowsill, candle frame shimmering; a window embraces everything; it is truly "the eyes of a house". It is a slit in a mass where air finds the way to come in, focused lights are recognised at last, air flows are continuous and we observe the outside world behind it.

According to my observations, there are five intriguing features of windows that will give us clues to find out how the opening could enrich a space.

City observatory  
Framed security  
Bright darkness  
Silence in depth  
In-between space

Furthermore, by analyzing windows in paintings and architecture, I describe what kind of window scenes we have had in the past and have in the present.

-The window completes all. How is the interior of the room enclosed? How does the opening confront the outside world? How do its shape and position and the way it opens and closes connect the inner and outer spaces? The window determines all these things. It also determines what kind of light the room seeks or rejects, what kind of scenery it wants to embrace or exclude, and what else it wants to invite inside: the wind, the leaves, the dancing butterflies. <sup>1</sup>

*Page 09: Helsinki, Finland 2008*





### City observatory

-The window and, in particular, the act of looking out of the window of the house to the yard or to the garden is a poetic and essential experience of home. The home is particularly strongly felt when you look out from its enclosed privacy.<sup>2</sup>

There is a significant difference between windows and doors revealed by their interactions with people and the views. A door's interaction with inhabitants consists of entering and leaving a room through it. The contact lies on both sides thus doors exist in the flow whereas the window's interaction with the view is one way only. The most fundamental quality of a window is to look out. This function distinguishes windows from the other inward openings such as, doors and movable walls; in an observatory, you are not expecting to be seen but to see. This hierarchy of windows makes your chamber into a city observatory.

### Framed security

A window exists as a window when it has a frame to crop the view and to control the opening function. When a large glass sheet covers the whole wall and the interior is trying to penetrate the outside or vice versa, the window will lose its character to some extent. A framed view gives the viewer the feeling of security and images of a safe home. The rigid frame sets the ever changing outside scene as a tempered background for inhabitants.

-The eyes of the house pre-select and pre-view the landscape on behalf of human eyes. The landscape and views, as framed and focused by the openings of the house, obtain a special intensity and meaning. The world seen through a window is a tamed and domesticated world.

<sup>3</sup>

*Page 10: Left, Ghent, Belgium 2010 Right, Paris, France 2011*

## Bright darkness

A window is an intriguing place where you can sense the darkness in your home. Darkness here does not mean only lack of sight but also a low volume of light, which you can be recognized from the shift of the sky. The darkness in the outside has a variety of colors and gradation -only in few places, for instance in the deep forest, you will completely lose your sight. Darkness has certain richness and a rare quality that allows you to not necessarily to see everything, yet you can gradually adjust your eyes to see some things. During the night, interior lightings reflect the inside on a windowpane, like a mirror, and desensitize you to the things behind the window. If you are not lighting everything up to dispel darkness, you can look out in a dark room to see the particular colors of the night city landscape, and turning off the light allows you to see yet another view. Having a notion of the darkness as a color is a subtle but bold change for city dwellers, who no longer have an opportunity to see stars in the dark sky.

-There is nothing more profound, more mysterious, more pregnant, more insidious, more dazzling than a window lighted by a single candle. What one can see out in the sunlight is always less interesting than what goes on behind a windowpane. In that black or luminous square life lives, life dreams, life suffers. <sup>4</sup>

## Silence in depth

Experiences of the space are born out of its form and characteristics. Recessed windows with a sitting place, such as bay windows, let people gather and talk in an intimate space. The height of windowsills determines boundaries, which affect the contact with people and the view on the street. What experiences can this depth provoke in us? Depth holds inward sounds and shuts out noise and visual information. It is a silence, which leads you to a contemplative experience. People have a tendency to stay close to the opening to think. While being in a depth, you have vast space in front of you to throw out your thoughts and imagination.

-Experiencing a building is not only a matter of looking at its spaces, forms and surfaces -it is also a matter of listening to its characteristic, unique silence. The innate silence of an experience of architecture results, it seems, from the fact that it turns our attention to our existence-I find myself listening to my own being. <sup>5</sup>





01

## In-between space

Transitional spaces, such as veranda, patio, and courtyard give depth to spaces. My example comes from traditional Japanese houses, where “engawa”, which goes along the perimeter of the house, is a typical “in-between space”, represents vagueness in the Japanese architecture. This space has a roof and shutters, but sometimes even no exterior walls. This absence of clear separation from the outside creates an in-between quality and a gradual shift towards the inward. When I refer to framed windows as an “in-between space”, the idea is more phenomenological and about mental states rather than a structural matter.

-Steven Holl analyzed Merleau-Ponty’s description about “in-between reality”. Beyond the physicality of architectural objects and practicalities of programmatic content, enmeshed experience is not merely a place of events, things, and activities, but something more intangible, which emerges from the continuous unfolding of overlapping spaces, materials, and detail. Merleau-Ponty’s “in-between reality” is then perhaps, analogous to the moment in which individual elements begin to lose their clarity, the moment in which objects merge with the field.<sup>6</sup>

This “in-betweenness” is transient and the edge of the space is subtle. As can be seen, the in-between space will not strongly separate you from the structures but bring things together, reflects the nuances of the surroundings. It is no longer providing a single experience but exists in symbiosis; things shift by the window.

*Page 14: Intermision space Left: patio in Italy, Right: Engawa in Japan*





*City Sunlight, Edward Hopper 1954*

02

## Scenes on canvas

A window in painting describes delight, solitude, ambivalence, and separation, among other things -it is seeing a drama on canvas. Painters depict various monologues by a window, and paintings have several dimensional expressions, which evoke thoughts in viewers.

-In the words of Merleau-Ponty, We see the depth, speed, softness and hardness of objects-Cézanne says we see even their odour.<sup>7</sup>

Paintings often reflect the era, historical incident, political situation, social status as an artist, and painter's own historical background. In several of those contexts, windows have been a metaphor of one's heart. To analyze touching scenes in paintings will tell us how much window spaces reflect and enrich our lives. In this section, I discuss paintings from the Romantic period in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and two painters from the 20<sup>th</sup> century who told many window stories behind the canvas.

The theme of open window, looking out with a longing, was a favored motif in Romantic paintings, especially in Germany. Windows emphasized confinement in one's own world so that the view beyond has distance and lightness, which represents unattainable freedom. Hence, at that time, windows still retained the authority as frames, which strongly divide outward and deny encounters.

The art of Henri Matisse expresses serene life on a canvas with its dazzling colors and strong expression. During his career, in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he painted many lively windows. Matisse's windows have strong character and they become a main part of the interior. They also introduce colorful outward as if through a pleasant gate.

The American painter Edward Hopper made numerous emotion-provoking paintings in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though many scenes in the paintings are in the urban landscape, there is only subtle sense of humans present. You can strongly feel the loneliness, emptiness and vastness of the city through their strong contrast of light and shadow and simplified elements. Hopper's work underlines the loneliness of the persons in the painting and the window gives them the connection to the outside world, although through apathy.



03

The restrained interior in the drawing optimizes the essence of the window. The thin frames and tiny latches show the ultimate role of the window: opening equipment as an aesthetic.

*View from the Artist's Studio,  
Window on the Right*  
Caspar David Friedrich 1806



04

In the studio, the lower window has wooden shutters so that the painter works with natural light only from above. The other window is also boarded up due to the light. Window is the device of adjusting darkness.

*Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio*  
Georg Friedrich Kersting 1811



05

The placement of the writing table and the different kind of parquet flooring create a cosy space by the opening and distinguish it from the stark and spacious interior.

*The Artist in His Room  
at the Villa Medici Rome*  
Léon Cogniet 1817



06

This shows one of the window's fundamental elements "the look-out". The view is restricted with shutters and only visible for the woman - an observer in the painting.

*Woman at the window*  
Caspar David Friedrich 1822



07

Each creates his own comfort by the opening, getting a seat, sitting on a blanket or a table. The window sets the place for the gathering with natural light, fresh air and a view.

*Danish artists in Rome*  
Constantin Hansen 1837



08

The scene captures encounter of pleasant morning lights. Recessed window space keeps lights and offers a comparison with enclosed bed space on right side.

*The Morning Hour*  
Moritz von Schwind 1860



09

The framed view attracts viewers with the vibrant and luscious scenery of a harbour. The atmosphere penetrates through the mirrored view on the windowpanes.

*Open window, Henri Matisse 1905*



10

The full curtains and the double panels secure the room. One can observe the outside from a separately movable panel without being seen from the outside.

*Woman on a sofa, Henri Matisse 1921*



11

Although the palm tree outside is overwhelming the interior, the division line clearly brings hierarchy. The interior shows stillness and silence as a comparison.

*The Egyptian Curtain, Henri Matisse 1948*



12

The rectangular windows set in the semicircular facade show the framed interior as a theatre stage. The windows crop the visible area.

*Night windows, Edward Hopper 1928*



13

Each table is located by a window. A small stand lamp and a screen on the lower part of the window create privacy and cosiness in the restaurant.

*Shop suey, Edward Hopper 1929*



14

The stark windows set the man being a far from the outside both physically and mentally though the eyes can see the outside. However, the same desolate ambience fills both the inside and the outside.

*Office in a small city, Edward Hopper 1953*



15

## Scenes in architecture

-Most of contemporary houses would be more pleasant with only half of their window.<sup>8</sup>

Since people left cave dwellings, and started to settle down and build up places of their own, windows have always been there and unobtrusively stayed in the wall. Now, if we look at the present, besides us getting brutally expanded windows, there are also windows that have started to act lively, telling stories by themselves, and personified all this during the last few decades. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, besides longing comfort of a classic dwelling, we can find various unconventional openings in architecture nowadays as solutions for our life situations.

The Japanese architecture studio, Atelier Bow-Wow's design approach underlines human's behaviour. They executed numerous lively, unique, and inviting windows for private residences. They are animated, personified, and living together with inhabitants. Each has its own preferences and habits influenced by customs, culture, and living neighbourhoods. Living styles change drastically and differ between each one of us, so paying attention on behaviour is the way to think design forward. A house has certain meanings to its dwellers, hence every window is different.

Pony Garden on the left page was designed for the client who was purchasing a pony for a company after her retirement. This unusual occasion shows us how flexible a window can be and how free from the rigid idea of windows as products. The house has a broad opening with wooden sliding shutters facing the pony's paddock. When it is fully opened, space becomes loggia or a spot to look at the pony and the mountain beyond. The low windowsill lets pony to come close to the inside, giving people an impulse to open the shutters.

A window is a complex and fascinating thing, which mirrors our behavior. It is no longer just a product, or a component of residence, but something we live with: a window changes our behaviors for the better.

-In the morning, opening a window and getting the shop ready and in the evening, close a window and call it a day. Windows live together with human's everyday routines. I would personify them.<sup>9</sup>



16

The opening makes this space more comfortable and intimate even though it is outside. A rough stone table and a framed view provide a place for a short break.

*Petite maison, Corseaux, France  
Le Corbusier 1924*



17

Two window glasses with an obtuse angle reorient the view from inside. It gives more depth and space to enhance the windowsill.

*Villa Mairea, Noormarkku Finland  
Alvar Aalto 1938*



18

Glass merged in exterior, the curtain and division lines look as if placed in the air. The same wall continues from the outside to the inside, creating unity and in-between space at the same time.

*Casa Barragan, Tacubaya, Mexico  
Louis Barragan 1947*



19

Strong perspective of the wall and the disappearance of the window frames make the view to the ocean more outstanding. Extraordinary depth of the window creates another room in between.

*Can Llig, Majorca, Spain  
Jorn Utzon 1972*



20

Underneath the big fixed window, a small window is arranged for each reading desk. The desk is put against the wall so that it makes private space in a public building.

*Exeter Library, New Hampshire, USA  
Louis I Kahn 1972*



21

Movable panels change the impression of the gallery space depending on where you stand. The window functions as a facade at the same time. At night, the lights from a busy street shines through the slits.

*Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York  
Steven Holl 1993*



22

Each unit has a bed, small drawers, a fixed window and windows for ventilation. The closeness to the opening makes this simple accommodation into a perfect observatory.

*Arthur & Yvonne Boyd art center  
West Cambenarra, Australia  
Glenn Murcutt 1999*



23

The internal arrangement is simple; a large main space without fixed walls and doors. The windows and the roof structure are the key to articulating the space according to different functions on the floor.

*House Asama, Nagano, Japan  
Atelier Bow-Wow 2000*



In front of the opening, there is a thick plastic sheet, which blurs the edge of the opening. Light penetrates and creates ambience for the whole wall. The in-between space is open only for air and lights.

*Verzameld Werk, Ghent, Belgium  
Jo Taillieu 2001*



24

The over-dimensioned thick wall creates a hollow space in between the walls. It offers vertical circulation in the building. The window becomes space, where one can move around.

*Casa Poli, Coliumo peninsula, Chile  
Pezo von Ellrichshausen Architectes 2005*



25

For children, a small window as tall as them becomes a new room and the best place to hide and enjoy one's own tiny space. The wall depth becomes a wall to enclose the window space.

*Dragen Children's House, Odense, Denmark  
C.F. Møller 2009*



The wooden doors cover the windows fully. As you would open a shelf, you can adjust the amount and composition of light. The other walls are shelves with similar wooden doors.

*Groeninge Hospital meditation room, Kortrijk, Belgium  
Phillipe Vandermaren, Richard Venlet 2010*

Helsinki windows

7 narratives of windows



### Echo

My window is often open. It becomes a source of varying sounds that echo clear inside my room; sound of a boat in the harbour, tram, car or people in the street. I live in the fourth floor. I can see the house on the opposite side with two women statues, a roof and part of the sky from my window. I can not see long distant view that is why I pay attention to the sounds that bring the outer world in.

Tanja/Kruunuhaka/10:30





### Shadow play

I like to watch the play of lights and shadows in the room. On an early summer morning the light can be incredibly bright and in winter evenings street lamps project the movement of bare trees on the wall. The paper curtains act like big lampshades passing the light partly through. The two windows also create a nice architectural composition; they give the room its character.

Tuulia/Alppila/14:30



### A window of opportunity

You may be stuck in a city that does not feel home anymore; You may feel an exciting pulse of the life calling from some distant place; You may live in a building that definitely needs rehabilitation -your neighbors might need rehabilitation themselves. Still, you feel content, and wonder. You may leave this city tomorrow, follow the world beat, but you know you will miss this window, this space that gave your dreams the life anew. They should make windows as furniture that you can take them with you.

Iipo/Kallio/11:00



### The opening

I like adjusting myself to the seasons. I have windows in two opposite directions and during summer I let all the light come in and wake me up early in the morning. Instead of switching the terrace lights on in the winter-time I prefer the darkness. -It is an infinite space for my thoughts.

Sisko/Kulosaari/16:30



### Eyes of the house

The window invites us to look, or take a chair next to it and read. I like occupiable windows which contain a space and thickness to stand or sit in. The thick walls of ancient brick buildings provide intimate and delightful “window rooms” for various activities. The modern window has entirely lost its depth and occupiable quality.

Juhani/Ullanlinna/17:00



### Inner/Outer Diversion

We made our windowsill into a bench, so that the space extends considerably to the outside space. As our office space is on the street level we tend to half shut the street off with the shutters because otherwise our work space becomes an extension of the public space. Our recent small participation to the post-it® War “movement” has created an interesting layer on the window. It does not cover the window, but it distracts the viewer, they are not looking so much inside anymore but at the window.

Petri/Hakaniemi/19:30



### The corner windows

The windows in my small apartment are pretty big. There are two windows in the corner of the room so the view is wide. The view consists of apartment buildings and my favorite office buildings. I can also see a glimpse of the Ruoholahti canal and the pipes of the power plant. My windows have no windowsills, but I like the detail of being able to climb through the window to the balcony.

Wilhelmiina/Ruoholahti/11:00

Window Room

Where does window end and room begin?



## Identity of a window

-Everybody loves window seats, bay windows, and big windows with low sills and comfortable chairs drawn up to them. It is easy to think of these kinds of places as luxuries, which can no longer be built, and which we are no longer lucky enough to be able to afford. In fact, the matter is more urgent. These kinds of windows which create “places” next to them are not simply luxuries; they are necessary.<sup>10</sup>

First and foremost, windows are architecture’s nature. All dwellings have openings to accommodate people and an aperture turns a structure into a house. Though it is hardly noticeable in contemporary residential buildings, a window plays a main role in creating the identity of the room.

From the discussion in the previous chapter it becomes clear that when we are contemplating our current living environment, we appreciate the existence of a window less than we used to. The window is losing its personality and hence we lose one quality of space. In most of the cases, windows do not have enough depth to establish them as a space in itself, though people are still using windowsills to put plants or books on them, for instance. This leads my thought to an initial idea to extend the window and shape it into a detached “room”.

When a window becomes another room in a room, I shall call it a Window Room, which has unique qualities to revitalize the living space.

-Good friends and family members probably do sit together beside windows. But that is not their only function. Windows look out upon both the visible scenery and that which is far beyond human sight. The person who pauses there in the midst of their solitude is confronted with this view. This, too, is the window’s role. Or perhaps it is the final form of a window that aspires to be a room.<sup>11</sup>



## Nesting room

-Architecture means nothing less than the exercise of human will to apply clear limitations to the nebulous space surrounding us. The limitations imposed are the room. The beginning of architecture is the building of a room.<sup>12</sup>

Window Room is a nesting room, the short trip from a room to a room. This enables us to play with a space without having to erect another wall to separate spaces from each other. The feeling of a small trip inside of the room to shift your mood is essential for expanding your limited living environment in a dense city, or a monotonous empty room.

How does it feel being in Window Room? What is the difference?

It is:

a shifted eye level

a new encounter with the natural light

a change of acoustics

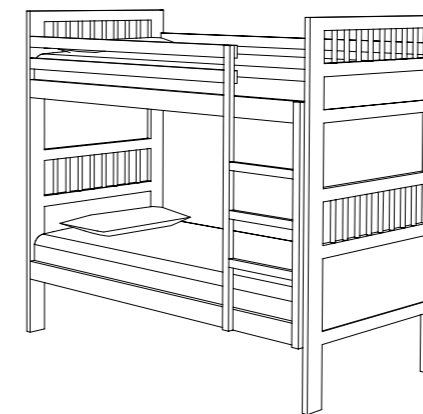
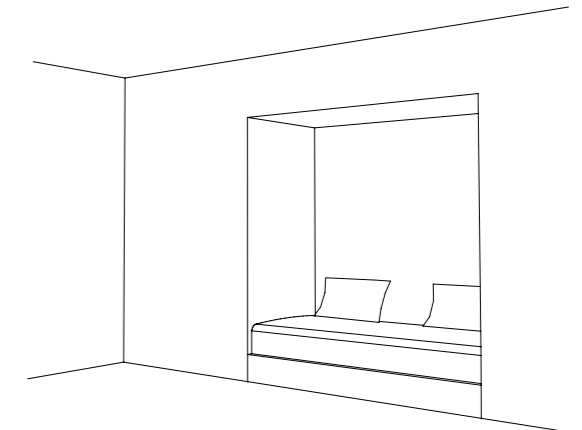
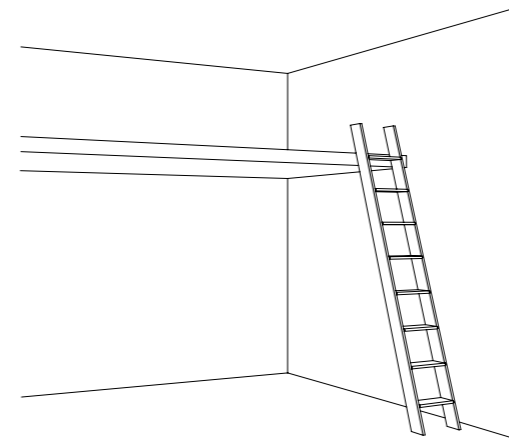
a feeling of floating

an effort to get to the room

an unobtrusive interfering

There are several examples of nesting rooms, such as a loft space in an apartment, an alcove, which has just enough size to install a bed or sofa, and a small space in a bunk bed. These examples articulate the nesting room through showing subtle indications, for instance the ladder to a loft, a hanging wall in alcove, and the whole structures of a bunk bed imply a boarder. A nesting room stands out from the existing room by different means and it does not need to be either spacious or practical. Moreover, the smallness of a room increases the value of a nesting room. To be able to see the perimeter of a room is the key for the coziness and a source of little excitement of being in a room of unusual dimensions.

To create a nesting room is to care about the existing space. The indication of a room can be subtle, like a smooth transition between two separate rooms. The conditions within the space by the window change every moment of the day and night following the outside one. A window is a naturally nesting room, so we only need to do a small change to emphasize this quality.





27

## FurnitureArchitecture

Window Room blurs the boundary between architecture and furniture, it is like a big table next to the window or an interior wall that expands from the window. It is a scene that comes from the intersection between architecture and furniture. If one can interpret space more freely, a homogeneous square apartment room will be turned into a more attractive and personalized one. It is a daily installation similarly asking questions about creating space also showing the idea of interplay between an element and a place.

The methodology of “FurnitureArchitecture” can be defined in three ways.

### 1. Furniture as an enclosing device

The piece does not have a complete wall to the ceiling but it clearly defines an enclosed space only by itself. If there are many of this furniture in an extra large room, the entire space might look like small village, which contains many small dwellings: furniture becomes a place.

### 2. Furniture as a trigger to create scenes

People will remember the space and the furniture as an experience, rather than its shape. Consequently, furniture loses its form and the meaning is transferred from giving comfort to users to creating a complete space by experience only.

### 3. Furniture as a platform

When each role and function of furniture becomes vague and more tolerant, when for instance, a table has less “tableness” than it used to have, it takes something else in exchange. The table becomes a platform, which can support any activities.

In his unconventional project “tables for restaurant”, Junya Ishigami designed tables which are places rather than furniture. He describes in his little book ;

-A table is a lot like a building. The top board is like a roof, the legs like columns. You could almost see it as an archetype of architecture. I see in a table not a piece of furniture to be placed in a space as much as a space in its own right.<sup>13</sup>

“To be able to serve five pairs of customers in a 50m<sup>2</sup> room, and client wanted each pair to be able to enjoy their own private space.” He solved this request by setting five unusually sized iron tables to divide space and to enable customers to recognize their own area without the use of walls. Tables separate the space and at the same time, they become architecture where you settle. They are like a foundation. (fig.27)

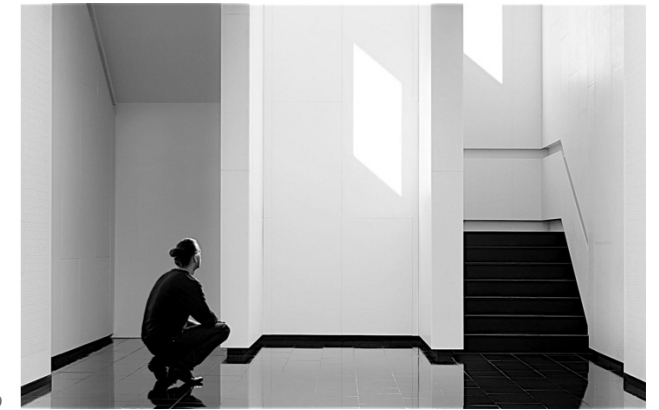
Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec are continuously producing pieces, which function as furniture and at the same time create a specific enclosed space. “Alcove” series is a sofa with high backrest and armrest, an isolated and intimate space reducing outside information, such as sounds and views. It immediately creates an enclosed space since its “three walls” surround you. (fig.28)

Daniel Rybakken reminds us of natural light scenery. His atmospheric work “Daylight Entrance” is an installation for entrance of an office building, which has no natural light, in Sweden. His focus is the subconscious effect of daylight. The light-source is LED lamps mounted beneath the surface; the light replicates reflections on the wall on a sunny day. Like a trigger, lighting exposes scenery. (fig.29)

Ingo Maurer implemented immense lighting in underground space. The lampshade is concave like a hat. Together with a bench under the light, this is a subtly enclosed space in the vast underground. Large-dimensioned lampshades give a unique character to the stark subway station. (fig.30)



28



29



30



## Neutral platform

-Windows are in fact faces, and they are treated like faces, given crowns, covered in cosmetics, as designers seize their many opportunities for development and decoration. Consequently, the window can be considered as the chief occasion for impromptu picnics. Serendipity is its real name. In short, windows are protean in their possibilities.<sup>14</sup>

Window Room is a platform for various activities. Traditional Japanese houses are flexible in use: one spacious room allows carrying out various activities as a flux. Non-fixed furniture gives freedom of space. Sliding partitions, culture of sitting on the floor, and low dining tables, all can change space and can adapt to the other use. Architecture becomes a platform, furniture is weightless.

I aim to make Window Room to become part of its surroundings, and create conditions, which vary with time, season, and inhabitant.

The Window Room has the most dense and concentrated qualities of the whole house. Window can embrace and reflect the ever changing phenomena from outside, though window itself keeps being modest, really just an opening. Window Room respects that humbleness, but it transforms usual facts to new experiences to awaken our senses. It can appear as anything, any matter, like invisible lights become visible in the air by hitting dust particles.

- Night cityscape covers the whole window
- You prepared a warm cup of tea for yourself
- There is Window Room in the corner of your room

Window Room transforms these segments into a sequence of experiences.

“I shall look out, my gaze catches some small moving object far beyond, cold air subtly touches my face and contrast with warm cup awakes my senses, sitting right next to the window pane, more night sky comes in my sight.”

Window Room exists as a backdrop.

*Page 54: Germaine Kruij, Daytime, The Reliance, London, 2006*

*Eight vertical, mirrored blinds, one side coated black, installed in two balcony doorframes of 2.44x1.17 m; one rotation completed every 14 seconds.*

Execution

Experience windows



32

## In Finland

In Tokyo, when I was small, I slept in the same room with my sisters pulling out a futon every night and putting it on the floor by the mattresses of my sisters. I always slept next to a big window reaching from the floor to the ceiling. It was the best place; a privilege for the youngest in our family. At the end of sweltering hot summer in Japan, it was precious to lie down in the dark and see a glimpse of the outside: one could sense the approach of the autumn by the dry air and chilly smell. I liked imagining street scenes beyond the window by using my senses. I could travel far even when staying in the room.

-In the discussion of windows, it is interesting to note the distinction of the diminutive window openings of masonry structures of the West with horizontally aligned windows of wood frame structures of Asia. In both masonry and wood frame structures. The realization of structural form concurrently determines the nature of the windows.<sup>15</sup>

Moving to Europe has altered my perception of windows. Windows become a mass, thicker, and heavier. It was natural for me to be attracted by the characteristics of windows as an enclosed space protected by thick outer walls, offering a framed view. Finnish climate also directed my interest towards the relationship of people's emotional relationship with windows, in the northern latitudes, where there are only a few hours of sunlight in winter, a window stands not only for the good but also cruelly showing the harsh dark landscape for the most of the day within several months. Since then, my ideal concept gradually took shape, "dramaturgy for a window space with an realistic approach"

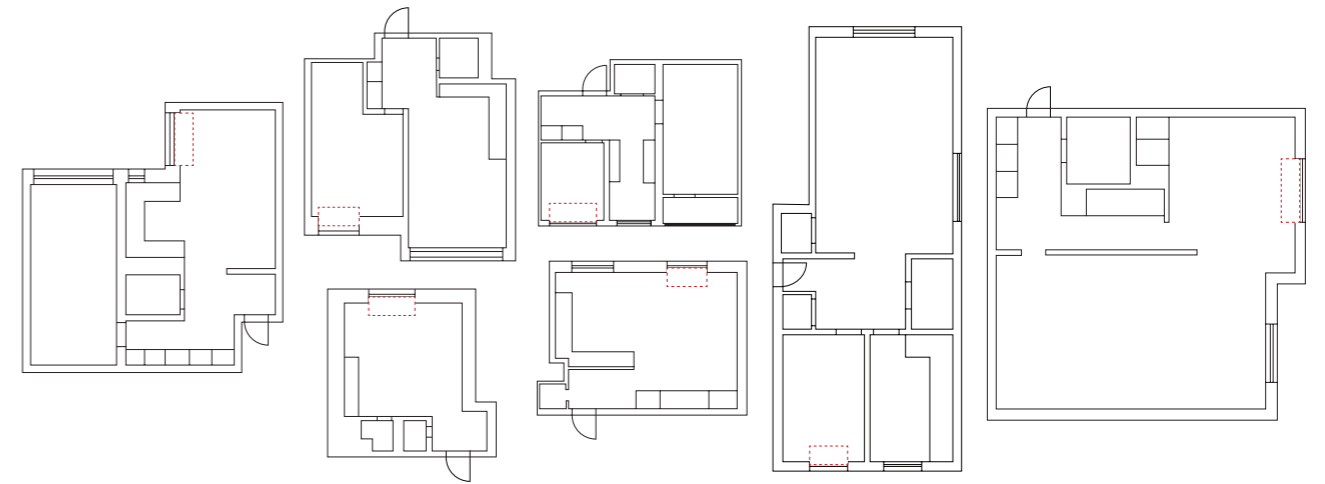
*Page 58: A typical window in apartment building, Left: Japan, Right: Finland*

## In apartment

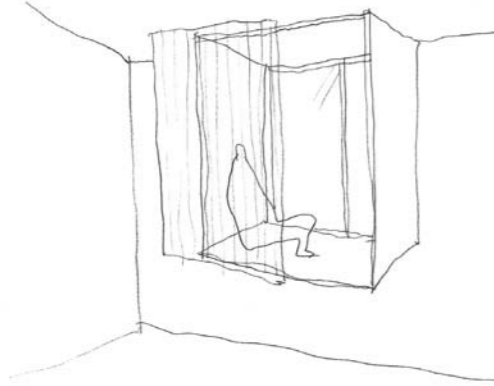
To get started, I looked for a place to install a prototype in a multi-storey apartment block from early to middle 20<sup>th</sup> in Helsinki. In reality, it is difficult to carry out any changes in an apartment building if you do not own the flat, thus it was necessary to upgrade the space without making any radical changes to the room.

Creating new space is not always a big construction work, small changes like buying a new sofa makes a difference. Therefore my priority was on feasibility, so that everybody can imagine having a Window Room in their apartment or house.

For this reason, it is relevant to choose apartment buildings from the 50s as an example to show the principle is possible. Their walls are thicker than in recently built apartments but thinner than Jugend buildings downtown. The width of a windowsill is about 20 to 30 cm, not enough to sit or store things but certainly there is a space that exists without any given purpose or name. This tiny space, which is about 0.3m<sup>2</sup>, was never recognized as a room, so to underline the potential of this space and give it a role as a room became the main focus of my project.



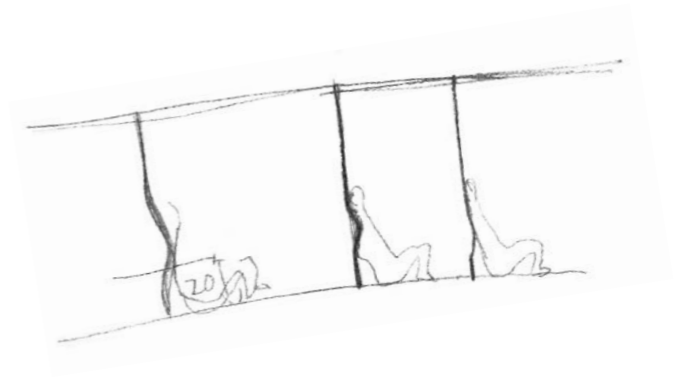
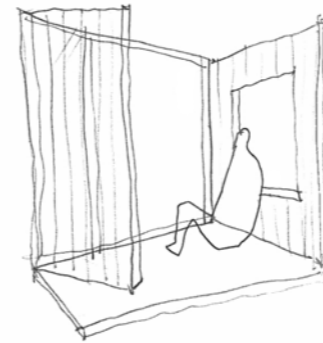
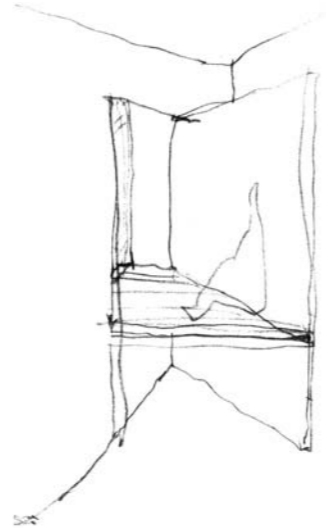
Page 61: Plans of apartment in Helsinki, possible space for Window Room



### A window is a square

How does the Window Room look like? After drawing several sketches, I realized how strongly fixed impression windows have given to me. It was not easy to get rid of box images and simply think what people would like to do in the Window Room. I got back to the basics: the shape follows function, I started again to think a window as a hole in the wall, which I refused to do in the beginning, and then I started to think over what kind of possibilities it would have for the better.





## Thoughts wander

Would it be interesting if you can close the space completely with a sliding panel?

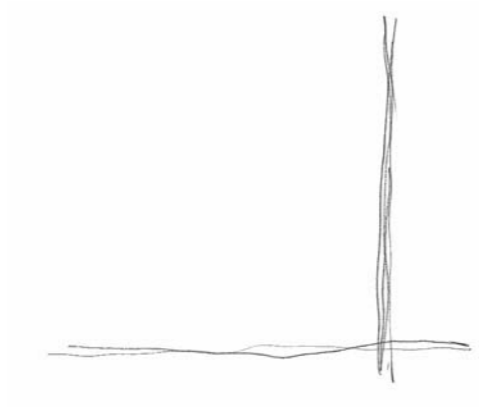
Could it have a diagonal wall against the windowpane to create dramatic encounter with the lights?

Is it like flipping pages, can we flip the window?

Or could it have a curved backrest to imply a seating place?

Windows are tempting: one can think 100 of possibilities behind them, so intent consideration was needed in the final phase of execution.

-Music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from dance- Ezra Pound <sup>16</sup>



### Archetype of Window Room

After several weeks of thoughts on paper, and trials and errors with the scale model, I started to eliminate elements one by one to make the function and meaning of the project clear. I also looked back to the role of Window Room, how would it appeal to inhabitants? Consequently, I set a platform and a board to lean on as a stage for an experience. One of the ideal concepts of the Window Room is to get an experience led by all features around the window space and its dialog with people. It evolves depending on habit, behaviour, climate condition, and location.

To conclude my thoughts, the Window Room revitalizes a space by the opening, and we increase the value of the Window Room.

Mock-up



floor+wall  
1000mm deep



floor+ceiling  
+wall+column  
1000mm deep



floor+ceiling  
1000mm deep



floor  
700mm deep



floor+left wall  
700mm deep



floor+right wall  
700mm deep

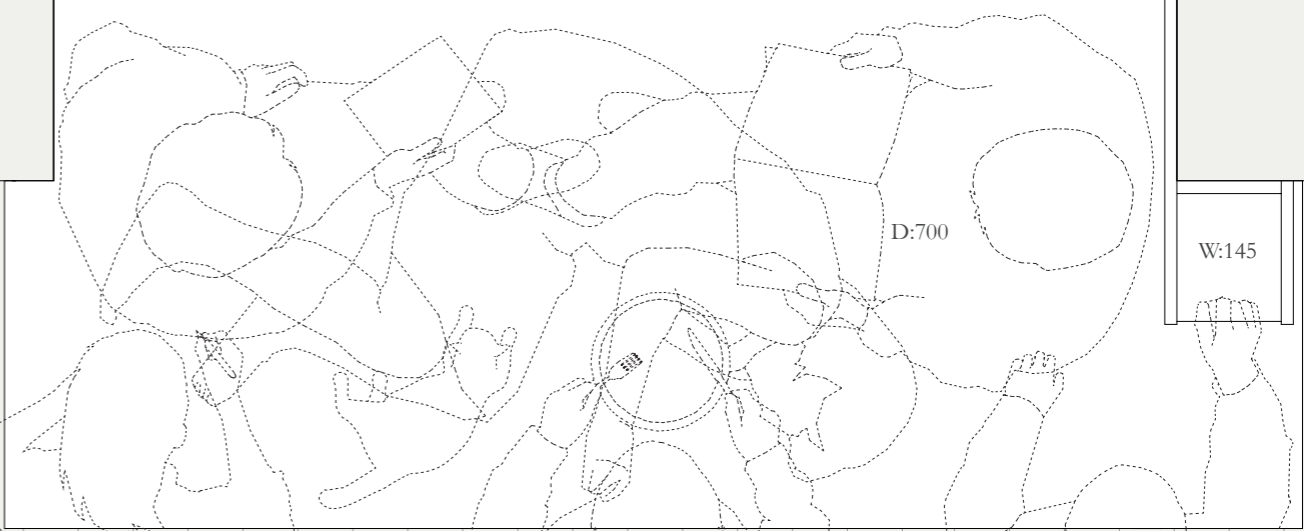
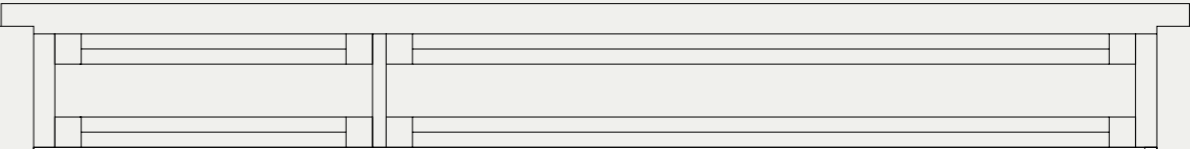
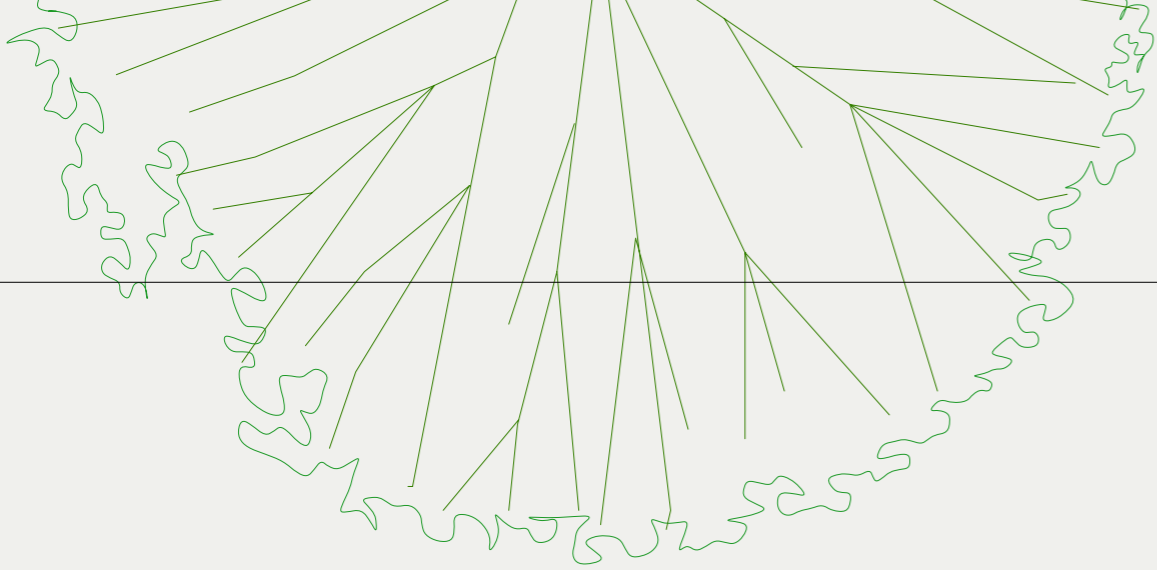
Drawings



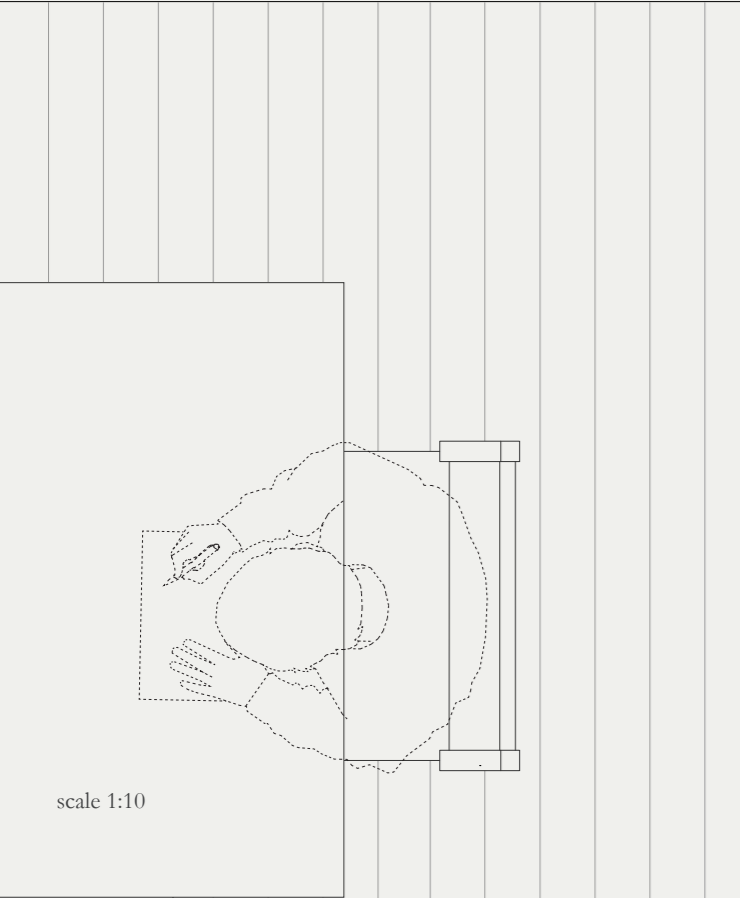
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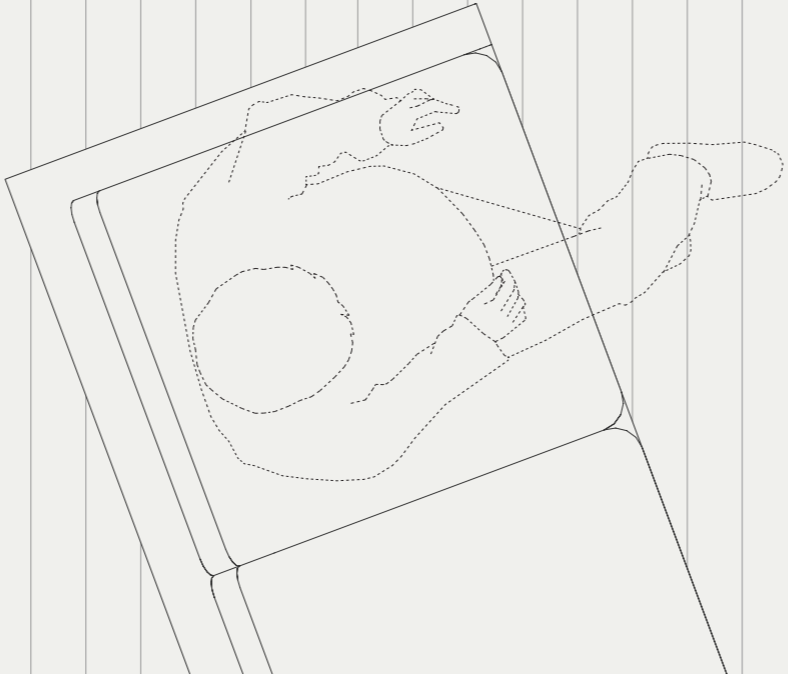
scale 1:20

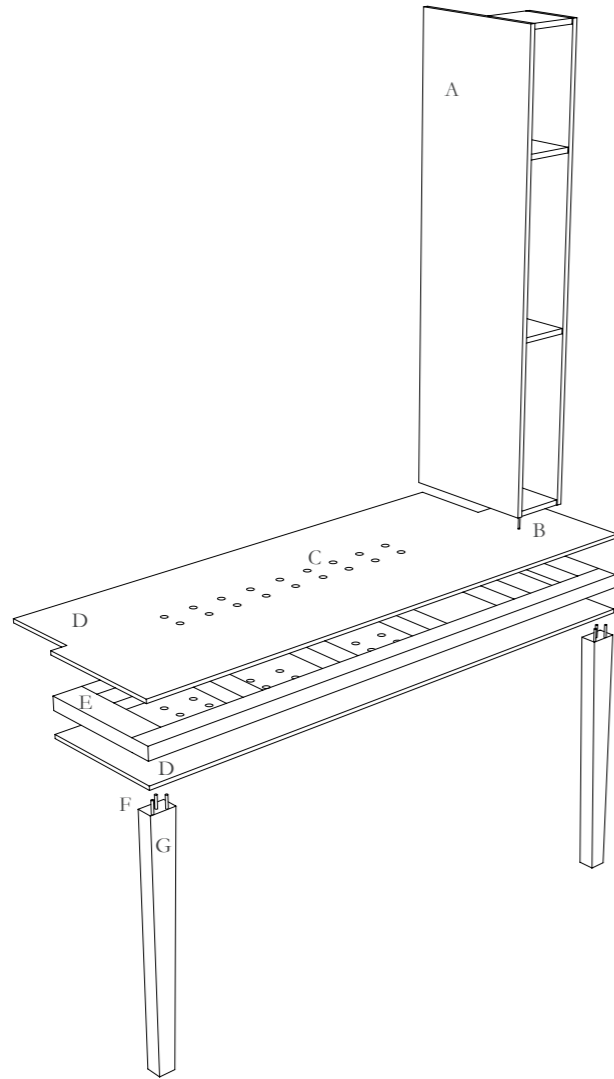


W:1720



scale 1:10





- A : 16mm MDF, Alder veneer
- B : Joint with a screw
- C : Holes for ventilation
- D : 12mm MDF, Alder veneer
- E : Cross laminated timber board
- F : Joint with wooden pins
- G : Massive wood, Alder



Photograph

### Window Room

A windowless room feels like going down to the sea and finding it without a horizon. I keep my most beautiful things on the window Room and find joy in seeing them every time my eye is drawn to the outside world. Windows are both for closing and opening, sometimes the best thing to do is to close the window tightly so you can wake up and let in the light and air again.

Nina/Arabia/15:00















## Notes

- 01 Louis I, Khan houses/P.32
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- 03 The Embodied Image/Juhani Pallasmaa/P.130
- 04 Charles Baudelaire, Le Spleen de Paris
- 05 encounters/Juhani Pallasmaa/P.305
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- 09 WindowScape/Tsukamoto Yoshiharu/P.157
- 10 A Pattern Language/P.834
- 11 Louis I, Khan houses/P.33
- 12 Louis I, Khan houses/P.31
- 13 small images/P.10
- 14 Primary Architectural Images Seminar document/P.44
- 15 The Japan Architect 74/Introduction
- 16 Ezra Pound/1885-1972

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Steven holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, Alberto Perez Gomez William Stout,2006

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